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A POLITICAL WEEKLY
 Editor :—SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE

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ONE ANNA

'ECONOMIC FREEDOM'

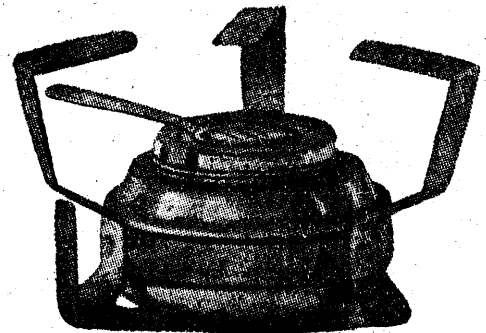
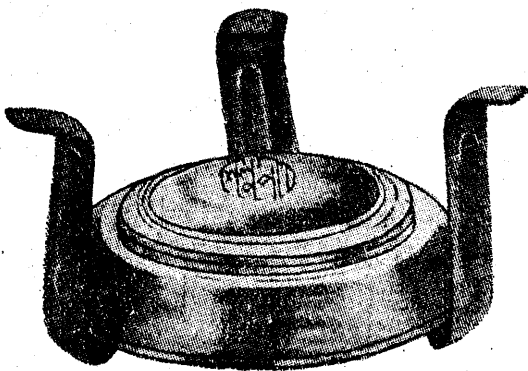


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SATURDAY, OCTOBER 28

Heart-Searching

In the life of every nation there come occasions when momentous decisions have to be taken which may make or mar its future. It often happens that on such occasions the final decision has to be made by a few individuals or even by one individual. What would have happened to Russia if Lenin had given a different lead in 1917, is today a matter for speculation or conjecture.

How is this tremendous responsibility to be discharged by those who hold the future of their nation in the hollow of their hands? They have naturally to think and to think deeply. They have to look fore and aft—to consider possible alternatives and to weigh the probable consequences. But even then it may be difficult to decide. Not every leader can make a bold and clear decision when face to face with a crisis. But even if one has that capacity, the human intellect may fail to supply us with all the facts and considerations that are necessary for arriving at a definite conclusion.

We are sometimes told that where reason fails, *instinct* or *intuition* succeeds. The great heroes of history have felt their way through impenetrable darkness and their decisions based on instinct or intuition have been justified by subsequent events.

There is a great deal of truth in this assertion. Within the ken of our limited experience we have seen leaders make striking decisions in crucial moments, being guided solely by unerring political instinct and such decisions have proved to be correct in the light of subsequent developments. Now what is this elusive instinct or intuition? Is it something mystical—something beyond one's comprehension—something which is inborn? To a certain extent it is inborn. The successful painter or musician has a delicacy of touch and a fineness of perception

which cannot be wholly explained by education or training. If he does not start with an innate artistic tendency, he can never reach the heights of artistic excellence. So also in the case of the political fighter. He must have a political sense at the very outset.

But instinct has to be sharpened by training and that training has to be continuous. If instinct or intuition has served as an unerring guide on half-a-dozen occasions, that is no guarantee that it will always do so. Now what is it that can help to make one's political instinct as faultless as possible?

It is absolutely necessary, in the first place, that one should be perfectly selfless in his pursuit. If instinct is warped by selfish considerations, whether conscious or unconscious, it will not lead—but mislead. And when *self* dominates *instinct*, disaster is ahead of us. Consequently, when playing with the destinies of a nation one should endeavour to be as selfless as humanly possible.

Secondly, one should try to merge one's individual consciousness in mass-consciousness—so that the mass-mind may speak through our individual instinct or intuition. This is not an easy thing for the ordinary man. Fortunately, some people can merge their identity more easily in the life of the people than others and they can accordingly have a better understanding of the mass-mind. We know from our own experience that, all things being equal, that leader is more influential, more powerful and more successful who has a better appreciation of mass-psychology. This appreciation is not possible through reason alone, but requires the help of instinct as well.

It is possible to so discipline and train one's mind that one can be in tune with the mass-mind. But this entails continuous effort and vigilance. Imagine a torrential stream breaking through a mountain gorge. Cannot the drops composing that cataract merge their identity in and put themselves in tune with the stream as a whole? Imagine the *elan vital* of Bergson. Cannot the human spirit plunge into the heart of reality and identify

itself with its unceasing flow? Imagine the *Absolute Idea* of Hegel unfolding itself through a world-process. Cannot the individual merge himself in that evolutionary development and thereby comprehend it? Imagine the '*Divine Shakti*' manifesting itself in a kaleidoscopic creation. Cannot the human soul seek to attain oneness with it in thought and feeling?

In short, it is possible for the individual mind to put itself in tune with the mass-mind. But this instinctive or intuitive perception may go wrong and may lead us on to the blind alley of mysticism if we are not mentally fortified with a rational understanding of the evolution of the world and of man. We must therefore, in the third place, have a rational understanding—based on analysis, criticism and extensive study—of history. Where reason fails, instinct can guide us. Where instinct misleads by creating a mystical haze, reason can put us on the right path.

Fourthly, we must have a correct appreciation of international events and developments. We are living in an age when frontiers have, in a way, been obliterated. The world is today one unit. What happens in one corner has far-reaching repercussions throughout our globe. Consequently, even if we are in tune with the mass-mind, even if we have a correct understanding of historical development—we may still go wrong if we lack the international sense.

We are now passing through a most critical period in the history of India and of the world. The All-India Working Committee of the Forward Bloc at its meeting at Wardha on the 8th September and the following days made a momentous decision which was duly conveyed to the Congress Working Committee. Was the decision a correct one? Will it pass the four tests mentioned above? The future alone can give a convincing reply. Meanwhile let us give effect to that decision to the best of our ability. Whatever happens we can certainly claim that we have no other wish, no other desire, but to serve the Cause in the best possible manner.

Subhas Chandra Bose

The Political Prisoners

On October 18 last the Government of Bengal came out with a *communiqué* which recounted the offences and sentences of forty political prisoners in Jails and summed up the position of the Government with regard to the question thus :

Government have now completed their examination of all the cases of terrorist and civil disobedience prisoners which were placed before the Advisory Committee. 149 prisoners have been released unconditionally, 43 have been released or offered their release on conditions, 7 have been granted substantial remission, and in 40 cases clemency has been refused. These figures compare very favourably with the recommendations of the Advisory Committee which were that 146 prisoners should be released unconditionally, that remission should be granted in 15 cases and that clemency should be refused in 45 cases.

So ends the chapter of ministerial consideration of the question exactly two months and a half after the political prisoners in jails had been persuaded to suspend their hunger-strike in order to give the ministry in Bengal a more favourable atmosphere in which they could probably make good their election pledge of releasing the political.

Things have moved apace since the day of their suspension of the hunger strike. Mightier events have overshadowed the political life of the country, and the people, who were impatient to have the political prisoners back to liberty, have also reacted to the fateful happenings that are to make or mar the future of nations. Release of the political prisoners under the circumstances appears to them no longer to be the *only* burning issue that calls for their suffering and sacrifice. The issues have been enlarged; they are at last crystallising into one definite issue of issues, broad enough to encompass all the partial problems and definite enough to leave no room for vague and vagrant idealism to ignore it. This is the issue of War and Indian Independence.

This, of course, does not signify that the difficult question of the release of our political prisoners has, therefore, now receded to the background or can possibly be shelved for the present. On the contrary, we know, the decision of the Bengal Government further strengthens the view we have been forced to take that only struggle, struggle on every front, struggle disciplined and unceasing, can

make the popular will find its way and establish itself.

The Bengal Government had indeed never given any hope for a logical or honest settlement of this question. Words given by its ministers are not made good; pledges are as easily broken by them as their old bureaucratic masters; and 'understandings' have little value with them. For reaction was well-entrenched in Bengal as we saw. This is no surprise. Even in the Congress provinces it began to strike root under a deceptive reformist garb. Congress leadership itself was thrown into its arms without knowing it. No wonder therefore that in a province like Bengal the Huq ministry thought of saving itself only with the help of the European votes in the legislature and European community's support outside. The Europeans are here as the guardsmen of the foreign vested interest and the exploiting system known as Imperialism. They were given by the Imperialist Parliament power and representation proportionate for that object. And they, therefore, now exacted from the Bengal ministry the price for their support for keeping it in saddle. People's will and voice were in consequence suppressed more and more; workers in the cause in the Trade Union movement, in the Kisan Sabha movement or in the Congress, placed under restraints; the grip of reaction in the insidious shape of European influence tightened on the ministry harder and harder. It was evident that the Huq ministry had bartered away its popular aims to the Europeans. In its desperation the ministry sought to hoodwink the supporters of it by banking on the communal passions and jealousies of these ignorant masses. This was designed to cover up the ministry's betrayal of the popular cause to the European vested interest and its hangers on, the Indian vested interests.

The hunger strike of the political prisoners, undertaken when all the efforts of theirs had failed to effect their release in the way Gandhiji had expected, exposed the character of the present Bengal ministry. On this question, there was and could be no two opinions, Hindu or Muslim. But the ministry was, as was known, helpless against its masters, the Europeans of Bengal. They were said to be against the release of some

important revolutionaries. Their case for release was overwhelming as everybody admitted and even the ministers knew. But the Europeans would not agree to that and the ministry found no way to release them.

The hunger strike revealed this cringing ministerial attitude. Even the Muslim supporters of the ministry felt uneasy on its account. Prominent members of it avowed the fact almost openly. The ministry tried to persuade them that it was prevented from having its honest way with the prisoners only because there was a hunger strike on. Pronouncements of the Congress leaders from outside, upholding the orthodox cause of prison, discipline and orderly Government, did not at the hour go to strengthen the case of the prisoners. So, the prisoners were asked to give a further opportunity to their Muslim supporters to test the sincerity of the Bengal ministry. The people outside and the leaders hatched no illusion regarding its upshot. But they nevertheless recognised the advantage of disarming the mistrust of the Muslim friends who still hoped anything from the ministers. They also knew that the case of the prisoners was too strong to be harmed by the suspension of the hunger strike. And they had already pledged themselves to a campaign for direct action if all other means failed to effect the release of the dear sons of the country.

This gesture of good will and honesty, we know, has been sadly abused by the Bengal ministers. They dared not disobey the masters; they feared to challenge the people too. Just at the moment the war came to present them with an opportunity to suppress the popular movements by putting the entire province under a ban.

For the people the duty now is clear and unambiguous. Their decision was made long ago. Now is their time to act.

The people know their answer, the prisoners behind the prison bars are sure of it. Let the Congress leadership, freeing itself from its constitutionalist illusion, give the call.

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Current Comments

Alternative Leadership

For sheer brilliance of the type which beats chameleon, Mr. Fazlul Huq of Bengal had a serious rival in the ex-revolutionary Bengali (or ex-Bengali revolutionary?), Mr. M. N. Roy. "In course of our revolving moon," he can play as many *role* as that character of the English satire. His latest wisdom is worth quoting :

"In an interview to the 'United Press' on the Working Committee's resolution about the resignation of Congress Ministries, Mr. M. N. Roy said that he apprehended ruinous consequences if prestige and emotionalism overwhelmed realistic political considerations. There was no sense in the resignation of Ministries, he added, except as a beginning of the campaign of Civil Disobedience. But experience should occasion grave doubt about the efficacy of that form of struggle. *The best result was possible, he said, from another Delhi pact and another Round Table Conference as the Viceroy proposed.* (Italics our)

Proceeding he asked : Is it worthwhile risking unnecessary repression for another Round in a vicious circle? It is time to realise the futility of cheap martyrdom."

But he has not "concluded" in fact. He has written to the Congress President on an "alternative policy." The experience of three continents, of "revolutionary leadership" in Mexico, Moscow, China and in other unknown lands by the unknown seas, has helped Mr. Roy to formulate a theory of "alternative leadership" against Gandhism. It is the *Viceregal Leadership*. Mr. Roy's is an inheritance of costly martyrdom indeed.

Russian Riddle

For most of us Russia is still a riddle. She is in friendly relation with Germany, we suspect; but she has refused military aid to Hitler, we are told. This is not surprising. It can after all never be the intention of Stalin to gain for Hitler a victory on the British and the French. At most, he might sit neutral, happy in the sight of the warring capitalists working for the destruction of each other. But repeated messages credit him with the intention of pleading for peace. Why, is explained by Sir Strafford Cripps in the *Tribune* of London. Because, so far

SJ. SURESH CHANDRA DEB EXPLAINS THE REASON OF HIS JOINING THE FORWARD BLOC

Sj. Suresh Chandra Deb, who has been appointed organiser of the "Forward Bloc", for the Surma Valley, explaining why he joined the "Forward Bloc" has issued the following statement:—

"I have been an enthusiastic member of the Congress Socialist Party since its inception and even today I remain a firm believer in Scientific Socialism. But circumstances have forced me to resign from that Party. The manner in which the affairs of this Party have been handled during the last few months has shown a lack of foresight on the one side and a spirit of weakness and vacillation on the other. Since the Tripuri Congress we had been expecting a general conference of the Party which would have given the members an opportunity of making their voice heard in the higher circles of the party but in this we have been disappointed. I have been attracted and impressed by the bold dynamic lead given by the "Forward Bloc" and I have, therefore, joined it as a member. I hope that through the instrumentality of the "Forward Bloc" the ultimate consolidation of all Leftist forces will take place and as a result thereof we shall be able to bring about a radical change in the outlook, policy and programme of the Congress. I would not have voluntarily resigned from the Congress Socialist Party and I wish the party had given individual liberty to its members to join the "Forward Bloc". But I am constrained to resign because until I do so I cannot become a member of the "Forward Bloc". As I was elected a member of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee and the All-India Congress Committee, on the ticket of the Congress Socialist Party I have resigned from both these bodies as a logical sequence of my resigning from that party. I hope nevertheless that I shall be able to serve my country in the best way possible as a member of the "Forward Bloc"

as Russia is concerned, the Nazis are checked thoroughly. And then Sir Strafford goes on to remind :

"If my supposition is the right one—that the Russians are genuinely seeking to end the war from their own point of view—then it would not seem likely that if, having applied what they consider the maximum of pressure, they fail, they would enter into that war themselves. Whether or not they adopt this attitude will no doubt depend upon the calculations of their expert advisers as to the likelihood of success in such a venture; as would our attitude in the same way depend upon similar considerations."

SJ. SUBHAS BOSE ON PRESIDENT'S ADVICE

Sj. Bose says in a statement issued on Oct 26, last:—"I have already stated that I welcome wholeheartedly the resignation of the Congress Ministries at the present juncture. But resignation by itself may be ineffective and even futile if it is not followed to its logical conclusion. In the light of such knowledge as I possess, I cannot but entertain the fear that perhaps resignation of ministerial office has been resorted to as an isolated event. Until we know the future programme of the Congress Working Committee we cannot have that implicit confidence in it which will enable us to follow blindly the instructions of that Committee or of the President. If the immediate programme is a forward move then only can we pledge our loyalty to the Working Committee. If on the other hand we feel that the official policy is still one of hesitation and vacillation we shall follow our own course of action."

"The working Committee was apprised of our viewpoint in this matter at its meeting at Wardha in September. People of my way of thinking will find it impossible to obey the instructions issued by the President unless they are first convinced that the Working Committee really intends giving a bold lead to the country. At present there is an impression in several quarters that after the resignation of Ministries there is no further programme and that the Congress will keep the door open for further negotiations with the British Government. This impression, if wrong, should be removed at once."

"If real unity within the Congress is desired by the Working Committee then its attitude towards the Left-wing should be revised and the latter should be taken into confidence with regard to the future programme, if any, of the Working Committee. Otherwise it is but natural that the Left-wing will do what it considers desirable in the best interests of the nation."

