

*At it again*

# FORWARD BLOC

A POLITICAL WEEKLY

Editor :—SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE

VOL I. No. 18

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ONE ANNA

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**Treading on a Perilous Path**

By Swami Sahajanand Saraswati

**The Tragedy of European Liberalism**

By Prof. Hirendra Nath Mukerjee

Etc.

Etc.



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Translated.

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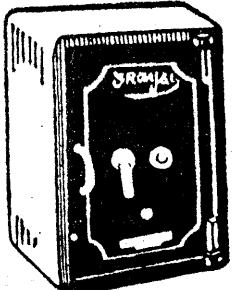
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## FORWARD BLOC

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 9

*At it again*

After a temporary lapse from its customary role, the "Friend of India" has once again appeared in its true colours. During a temporary lapse, it shows balance, dignity and sense of proportion in dealing with affairs both internal and external. But when it comes back to its own, it appears as rabid as a mad dog. In one matter, however, the "Friend of India" has been consistent throughout viz., its deep dislike and hatred for the present writer. Unlike most Britons, it cannot stand straight-forwardness in politics, but fancies those who can cringe and fawn.

One can only hope that the "Friend of India" does not really reflect the mind of Britons in India—whether official or non-official. For if it does, then one must indeed have a poor opinion of them. It is difficult to conceive that they are so erratic and eccentric, changing their views as quickly as a political weather-cock. For months, our "Friend" had been advocating a liberal and progressive policy with regard to India. But on the eve of the Viceregal statement in October, it suddenly assumed a die-hard complexion. Subsequent thereto, it has been blowing hot and cold alternately.

In foreign affairs, the "Friend of India" was, prior to the war, remarkably well-informed, though its foreign policy might not have met with approval in all quarters. In the old days it was anti-Soviet

to the core. But the rise of the Nazis to power served to blunt the edge of its hatred for Russia and things Russian. A soft corner for the U.S.S.R. gradually became noticeable and the wrath of the paper was directed against Nazi Germany. This tendency persisted even after the outbreak of war in Europe and the absorption of Eastern Poland in the U.S.S.R. But since hostilities broke out between Finland and Soviet Russia, our "Friend" has gone off its head and its writings have been more like the raving of a lunatic than the arguments of intelligent and responsible journalism. Owing perhaps to this stroke of lunacy it has drifted along the path of dishonest journalism. When the All-India Working Committee of the Forward Bloc was holding its deliberations in Calcutta on the 24th November and the following days, all the papers published its resolutions and also reprinted the editorials of "Forward Bloc", our official organ, but the "Friend of India" did not. Nevertheless, on the 4th December, it commented editorially on the above in the course of a very significant article under the caption "You have been warned."

That the "Friend of India"—has always had a specially soft corner for us—who in India does not know? And this affection deepened since it had to appear and answer before a Court of Law. But in spite of all this, should there be no honesty in journalism? In the old days, Indian nationalists who had to be denounced used to be painted red as agents of Moscow. Communism was the bogey that had to be raised every now and then and the picture of Red gold flowing into India then used to

be dangled before the public eye. After some time the Rome-Berlin-Tokyo Axis supplanted Moscow and Russia became respectable for a while. Whether it was Soviet association with Geneva or Stalinite repudiation of Trotsky or superior hatred for Berlin on the Friend's part that accounted for this respectability, one does not know. But it was amusing to notice our "Friend" fraternising with Moscow in order to spite Berlin. It was no longer dangerous for an Indian nationalist to be called a friend of Moscow. To have any sympathy for the Nazis or for the partners of the Rome-Berlin-Tokyo Axis constituted the real danger. To our "Friend's" eyes, the flow of Red gold into India ceased—and henceforth it was the Axis gold that began to poison Indian nationalists. Certain sentences in the writer's book, "The Indian Struggle 1920-1934", taken out of their context, proved handy and a series of denunciatory articles appeared in the columns of the "Statesman." This tirade was reminiscent of a similar campaign directed against the writer about eight years ago, preparatory to his incarceration without trial under Regulation III of 1811.

After a short lull the attack has started again, the spearhead being its leader of the 4th December. There is, however, one difficulty before our "Friend" on this occasion. What is the scare it is to raise? Moscow or Terrorism or Berlin Revolution or What? To solve this obvious difficulty, the Frankenstein it is trying to create is the Hitler-Stalin combination. And to prepare the necessary background for the panic it has to rouse in this country, it has made a medley of all possible bogeys in

two articles on "Communism in India" in its issues of the 6th and 7th December. In this motly crowd the villain of the piece is no longer Hitler—it is now Stalin.

Perhaps there is one piece of miscalculation on the part of our "Friend." The Indian public are no longer as unsophisticated as they were some years ago. They can now see through the "Friend of India's" game and through the elaborate official propaganda conducted in its columns. We would, however, like to know if this is cricket as generally understood.

Coming events cast their shadows before. So do these articles. We know what is coming, but we are not disturbed. Everything has its price, so has Liberty. We have to pay the price of Liberty, but it is as well for Britishers to remember that browbeating and bullying—with or without gloves—will no longer do. It is a changed India that we live in.

And the Europe that India faces today is also a changed Europe.

*Sir Stafford Cripps*

### British Statesmanship on Trial

Sir Stafford Cripps has, it appears, come with a hopeful message for India. Of course, he is visiting this country in a private capacity and the opinions he airs are only his own. What concerns India are not his views of the difficult situation that confronts Indo-British relations today, valuable though they undoubtedly are. It is rather his impressions about the present attitude of the ruling classes in Britain towards India that interest us most profoundly. "There

is a distinct change" Sir Stafford has said, "even on the part of Conservatives with regard to India and nobody wants to alienate the sympathies of the country. A movement is rapidly gaining ground in England in favour of India and some are making very careful investigations in this direction." The news is certainly assuring if true, but we have our doubts as to how far this study of the Conservative British mind is real, and how far of it is mere wishful thinking.

The picture, as we visualise it, does not appear to us to be as bright as Sir Stafford would make us believe. An Attlee, a Cripps or a Laski may afford to be generous. But those who stand at the centre of the stage, those who are guiding or misguiding the destinies of Britain today, have remained either discreetly silent or vague and halting in their utterances regarding India. Neither the pressure of Liberal opinion in England nor the scorching gibe of Hitler has been able to induce Mr. Chamberlain to comprehend India, Egypt and other dependencies and protectorates in the dreamt-of Federation of free nations which, we are told, will be born on the termination of the present war. Lord Halifax, quite true to the team to which he belongs, has also been talking of "International peace" but he is too careful to mention if his international scheme counts India as a constituent unit in it. By nations they evidently mean only Whites and the Darks are to remain tied to their dark destiny for all time to come. That is the plan of the British Statesmen and we have as yet found nothing in their numerous pronouncements that may change our belief in any way.

The truth of the matter is that

England has now found itself between the horns of a grave dilemma. No amount of solemn declarations will convince the world that after the most callous sacrifice of Czecho-Slovakia, Abyssinia and Austria, it was merely at the spur of a democratic conscience that Britain was driven to take the field against Nazi Germany. But the rabid aggressiveness of Hitler was fast developing into a serious challenge to the *status quo* of Europe. It had got to be resisted. So Britain had to raise the cry of democracy and future world peace in order to plump for the support and co-operation of enlightened world opinion and build up a bulwark against Nazi aggressiveness. Now she has been caught into the snare of her own rash professions for, their carrying out into practice would mean the disintegration of her own vast Empire. The other day Prof. Harold Laski disclosed in his letter to the *Manchester Guardian* that an "impressive" section of American opinion has already been worked up to bitter indignation against British policy regarding India. America possibly does not stand alone in this respect, people in other countries too, must have felt like that. This is discomfiting, if not dangerous to Britain. So she has been forced by circumstances to have recourse to evasions, subterfuges and falsehoods. She has to save her face and save her Empire, too. So far as India is concerned, there is the excuse of the problem of minorities to set up as a bar to the recognition of the right of national self-determination. In a quite convenient moment the British Government has almost begun to burst for its solicitude for the minorities; and naturally with every additional

expression of the same Mr. Jinnah has begun to shriek louder and louder. The broad historical truth has been forgotten that there have been minorities, even dissenting, in almost all countries and they have nowhere constituted an insuperable barrier to the attainment of national freedom. This is a problem for India herself to solve and once the right of self-determination is recognised, it will automatically resolve itself. Let not Britain, in her overflowing benevolence, worry too much about it.

As for India, her stand is firm and clear. She has spoken out her mind in unequivocal language. Nothing short of complete independence will satisfy her. Does Sir Stafford Cripps believe that Britain will rise to the height of statesmanship and satisfy India's national demand? Let us wait and see. For the moment we cannot persuade ourselves to a sense of elation at what Sir Stafford has said.

### The Bogey Bgain

"They would come, they would come," in the last quarter of the nineteenth century our fathers were silenced with the spectre of a Czar who would swoop down through the Himalayan Passes into our planes, like some Timur or Scythian Terror. So, they were to sleep in the secure arms of British imperialism. Japan struck the death blow to the Czar myth. Then was discovered the Lenin legend. We knew little of Bolshevism but were kept in constant terror of the Bolshevik bogey during the years of post-war ferment when diarchy was the panacea. Then, Russia failed—failed our masters as a

bogey. As the War came, the fog descended again—this time on the soul of the British imperialists themselves. If only the Soviet could be netted on their side—But then, the Soviet was, in the last analysis, the Enemy.—Indian journalists were warned by their mentors that they must not question the *bona fide* of Stalin when he appeared in Poland. For he had a 'community of interest' with Britain! Now, Finland has helped to revive the old bogey. Perhaps Indian publicists are again to be warned now why they do not question the *bona fide* of the Soviet still.

We were Nazi creatures during the last three months if we asked for our right of self-determination. We are Bolshevik conspirators today, when we refuse to forego that inalienable right. Tomorrow we shall prove to be the agents of the Martian imperialists who are designing to destroy the civilization of this globe, and, incidentally, *Pax Britannica* in India. Our metamorphosis in the imperialist press amazes ourselves, but would not insult the intelligence of its readers. They can even now chalk out the paths that lead from Moscow to Delhi. They would tomorrow point out the inter-spatial batteries set up by those conquering Martians against the Himalayan ramparts. And we are to live in constant tension of the attack from across the Himalays of the Marxians or the Martians, and seek, therefore, our salvation in slavery to God's good Englishmen. According to their conception, we cannot yearn for or strive for anything but slavery. If British chains go, Bolshevik chains are to fetter us. The psychology of the slave-drivers is only the complement of the slave-psychology. The bogey they

create out of their imperialist interests they come themselves to believe in out of an inertia of soul. But a people endeavouring to free itself has vision enough to see that freedom does not mean changing masters, and has courage enough to think that in the world of today freedom is not to be postponed by the raising of any bogey.

## CURRENT COMMENTS

### Not A Nazi Story

Old gods never die, so say our anthropologists. In Bengal the old regime never ends. The political prisoners are meant to be a reminder that the early thirties of the century must not be a past chapter in the late thirties or for that matter in the early forties. Sir Nazimuddin is there to spell out the syllables with the same accents that he has learnt in his unbroken period of tutelege at the bureaucratic school. So, detention without trial has re-appeared, and our Elysian immortals reign and rule as of old. Nothing new is learnt, nothing old unlearnt. In the pages of a contemporary we read the account of torture in the police lock-up practised on S. Nripendra Chakraborty, an Assistant Editor of the Ananda Bazar Patrika, and Secretary, Bengal Congress Socialist Party, who was recently arrested under the Defence of India Act. India was defended *valiantly*, we see, by the Bengal police. We need not go into the horrid details. If only the proper names are changed these would pass for an account of Hitler horror, a Nazi story, and not of Huq regime. It is to be expected that the

