

Our Problem

FORWARD BLOC

A POLITICAL WEEKLY

Editor :—SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE

VOL I. No. 24

CALCUTTA, SATURDAY JANUARY 20, 1940

ONE ANNA

SHILPA PEETH

Gold Medal—Pabna (1938)

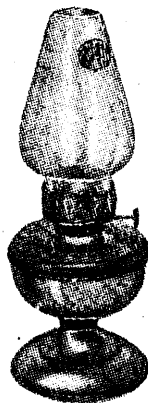
LIMITED

1939 Gold Medal—Mysore
Exhibition

Manufacturers :

BRASS : SPIRIT STOVES
KEROSENE TABLE LAMPS
& LAMP BURNERS

Durable, Unique
and Swadeshi



Specialists in :

SHEET METAL WORKING
DIES OF ALL DESCRIPTION
LET US HAVE YOUR
REQUIREMENTS OR SAMPLES.

Quality, Reliability
and Precision

FORWARD BLOC SUBSCRIPTION RATES

(Including Postage)

FOREIGN

Annual 12s. 6d.

BURMA

Single Copy 6 Pice

INLAND

Annual Rs. 4 -

Half-yearly Rs. 2 -

Quarterly Re. 1 -

Gram :—Aryoplans.

Phone :—Cal. 1048.

1049.

WAR BOOMit is TIME to
get rich

from

'SHARE MARKET'

with a nominal

capital to start with.

ASK FOR 'SHARE MARKET REPORT'

Specimen copy free on request.

Please apply to :

Messrs. BENGAL SHARE DEALERS' SYNDICATE

3 and 4, Hare Street, Calcutta.

*Offers all that is best in***LIFE INSURANCE***Insure* WITH
REPRESENT**TROPICAL**
INSURANCE CO., LIMITED.

FOR PARTICULARS APPLY TO:-

LALA SANKERLAL
Managing Director.Phone :
Cal. 3409Manager
CALCUTTA BRANCH.

P. 14, BENTINCK STREET.

FORWARD BLOC

SATURDAY, JANUARY 20

Our Problem

The All India Conference of the Forward Bloc was held in Bombay on the 22nd. June, 1939 and the Constitution and Programme of the Bloc were adopted there. We have, therefore, had a little more than six months to organise ourselves throughout the country. What have we been able to achieve within this period?

At the outset, it should be noted that from July last we have been the target of a vehement drive against us from the Congress Working Committee. They have not given us any breathing time and during the last six or seven months, we have been actually fighting on a double front.

There are occasions when it is comparatively easier to fight foreign Imperialism than Indian Reaction. This is perhaps one of such occasions.

Nevertheless, we can legitimately claim that today "Forward Bloc Zindabad" (Long live Forward Bloc) has become a mass-slogan. Its message has reached the remotest villages and has roused the sympathy and support of the masses everywhere. The Forward Bloc has, moreover, an All India organisation at its back today.

The mass-sympathy that the Forward Bloc has met with from the very start has been quite phenomenal and has surpassed our fondest expectations. One wonders how this has been possible, especially when one remembers that there

has been persistent and widespread opposition from interested quarters. The only explanations available is that the masses have instinctively felt that the Forward Bloc stands for something bold and dynamic—something forward and progressive.

The Bloc has stopped the drift towards constitutionalism and compromise in the Congress and has thereby stemmed the rot that had set in. The Congress is consequently much stronger today than it would have been without the Forward Bloc. What is more, today it is possible for the Forward Bloc to stand up before the British Government and the Congress High Command and tell them that in the last resort, the Forward Bloc is prepared to go ahead and launch a struggle, should the older leaders fail us in this crisis.

But the real problem that faces us is an organisational one. Our organisational development has not been able to keep pace with our growing popularity.

Perfecting an organisation and building up a new cadre need time and money—perhaps time more than money. We have had very little time at our disposal and the international crisis overtook us very early in our career. But we cannot put off facing the crisis boldly, till we have perfected our organisation. The crisis has to be met with such resources as we now possess. National Struggle and organisational development must proceed hand in hand. There is no other option before us.

Meanwhile let us always remember that our chief problem today is an organisational one. We have to face the coming struggle boldly and at the same time go on with our task of organisational develop-

ment as best as we can. Perhaps, with good luck, we shall emerge out of the struggle with a perfected organisation.

Sukhan Chandra Bora

INDEPENDENCE DAY

The 26th January is again almost upon us. Once more Congressmen all over the country will be called upon to renew their vow of attaining Purna Swaraj. Independence, that was once the dream of a handful of idealists, was accepted by the Congress as its goal ten years ago. Since then it has toiled, suffered and sacrificed a tremendous lot for reaching its destination. But the goal is not yet. Hurdles have yet to be crossed and march continued. Let there be no stepping back, no wavering, no falling on the wayside. Let us once more resolve, and resolve grimly, that we will not stop till we burst into the glory of the Promised Land as quickly as possible.

The Working Committee is now in session at Wardha. The Viceroy's Bombay speech has given rise to an intriguing situation which it shall have to deal with. Disquieting rumours are in the air. It is said that the Congress is bent on bargaining a settlement with the Government. We are further told that an influx of prominent Congress leaders to Delhi is shortly to begin. Lord Linlithgow's speech has been put to a searching scrutiny in the light of the National Demand and found wanting. We cannot make out how it can be any basis for settlement. Not that we don't want it and thus avoid a

racking conflict. But any squaring up of accounts with the Government must presuppose the unqualified and straight recognition of India's right of self-determination. The foreign power must stand off the scene. It must neither dictate nor manoeuvre things in its own interest. In the matter of framing the Constitution there must be no temporising or make-believe. A hodge-podge body, composed of various conflicting interests, must not be entrusted with this task. The teeming millions of the country, the destitute and trodden masses of this great land, must have the final say in the matter. No quibbling, no casuistry must be allowed to creep in. The Working Committee should make the position of the Congress absolutely clear. Will a settlement be possible on this basis? It is for the British statesmanship to answer. The Government has to make the first move and settle things.

If the Demand in its entirety is not acceded to, the Congress must decide on a struggle. There is no other conceivable alternative. It has been said that there are tides in the affairs of a nation; yea, there are golden moments in its life too. One such moment, a unique opportunity, has now arrived for us. We must not let it slip by and thus allow the nation to lapse again into the backwaters. Let no metaphysical cant, no fanciful obstacles deter us. Let us unite, forge ahead and achieve our destiny. We have to remember, realise and take to heart today the slightly altered adage of Edmund Burke that little minds and great purposes go ill together. It hath a lesson of supreme value for us at present. We must purify ourselves and be steeled anew with unbreakable determination. That

is the message of the 26th January which we shall be celebrating within a few days. May we prove fully worthy of this inspiring message.

As an Englishman Sees it

This is the title of a dissertation that Mr. F. E. James, M.L.A. (Central), a stalwart of the European Association, delivered recently at Madras on the present War and India. The speech is not much different from the Viceroy's recent peroration at Bombay and if we have taken it up for comments it is only to show how an influential Englishman, usually residing in this country and unencumbered by any exalted office, views the situation that faces both Britain and India today. For all practical purposes, as has been mentioned before, Mr. James's voice is indistinguishable from that of Lord Linlithgow and its explanation is not difficult to make out. However much Englishmen may boast of their individuality, they are ever ready to cast off that inconvenient thing when imperial issues are their concern. Then they speak with one voice—the voice of the imperialist Albion. It is commonly said that by scratching a Russian you will discover a Tartar; similarly, by scratching an Englishman you will discover a *Bania*. Britishers as a race, according to the estimate of all impartial observers, are always cautious, calculating and bargaining. They themselves pass off this national characteristic of theirs as a shrewd sense of realism. They hold fast to their possessions and part with them in a piecemeal way only under inexorable pressure or at the lure of greater gains in a different way. The history of Britain in

relation to India bears the most unmistakable testimony to this fact.

Our country has been demanding Swaraj for long and England has sought to stem the march of the nation to its goal by throwing out sopps and repeating specious pleas and platitudes *ad nauseum*. Britain had been going that way and thinking that all would be right in time. In this way she would be able to carry on for an indefinite length of time. It remained, it seems, too complacent to ignore the lessons of history. Then the War broke out which upset its applecart. Verily, it has been a grave difficulty to England as it has been an opportunity to India. Now the accents of the Britishers have been changing, though slowly, as the War has been growing in its menacing proportions. The Viceroy's recent utterances as those of Mr. James and other Englishmen, for whatever they are worth, would have been inconceivable, say six or eight months ago. The Englishmen, it appears, have realised the truth of the well known Indian proverb that when everything is at stake, the wise man should give up the half and they are now ready to act up to it.

But the imperialist ways, with their peculiar British leaven, will take long to die. So to Mr. James the Constituent Assembly is an impracticable proposition. He is still for the Britisher's traditional game of divide and rule with a view to retain England's grip on India and sponge on her resources. So various sectional and conflicting interests have been brought up by him, but the broad, all-important national interest, the interest of the Indian masses irrespective of communities, has been conveniently given the

go-by. To Mr. James and numerous other Englishmen of his way of thinking we say, the War has no doubt opened their eyes but it has only made them "see" half clearly. Mist still hangs about their vision which is bound to disappear shortly. India of today firmly refuses to be put off its birth-right any longer. No half-measures will do. And after all, even to an Englishman it *should* appear that a free and friendly India is far better than to have none of it.

CURRENT COMMENTS

The Sukkur Slaughter

Even in this unfortunate riot-ridden land of ours, Sukkur has verily made history. According to the recently published official report, on the lowest computation no less than about two hundred lives were lost and properties worth lakhs of rupees destroyed there. As we went through this harrowing tale of carnage and loot we wondered whether the Allah Bux Ministry, usually liberal in its communal outlook, had for the time being abdicated its authority leaving the field entirely to the hordes of bestial hooligans. Otherwise, how could such a ghastly state of things happen under its very eyes? We do not believe that it willingly connived at this horrible communal frenzy, but that does not absolve it of incompetence to deal with the situation. At present we do not propose to go into the sources of the tragedy, either open or subterranean. But it should be made absolutely clear that a repetition of Sukkur or anything of its kind must be prevented in future at all costs. The Congress Working Committee in its present sitting has this tragedy as

one of its items on the agenda. We wait to see how it decides to proceed about the matter. A sifting enquiry by an impartial body must be the first essential preliminary step in the procedure. The sinister forces operating behind the curtain have to be tracked down, correctly localised and appropriately dealt with. Nothing less will do.

Strange Indeed !

To the chorus of approval and acclamation of the Viceroy's Bombay speech, Mr. Savarkar has, strangely enough, added his voice. The Mahasabha leader is no believer in the Constituent Assembly. According to him, "the best and most practical way would be that the British Government should frame a Constitution on the broad and universally accepted principles of democracy after consulting all parties and interests in India in general." Mr. Savarkar, it seems, has not learned or unlearned anything about the traditional diplomatic game of the Britishers. Otherwise, how can it escape him that given a free hand in meting out even justice to the various interests, the Government will not hesitate to play the proverbial Monkey's role? Not that we believe in the brand of Constituent Assembly advocated by the Working Committee. More than once we have made that abundantly clear. Real democracy can only come through a Constituent Assembly after the nation has won the right of self-determination, it can never be a gift from an alien power. Out of Mahasabha atmosphere, Mr. Saverkar might have easily realised this simple truth. But alas! he is not now his old self.

Pandit Jawaharlal's Metamorphosis

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, it seems, is fast developing into a *pucca* Congress bureaucrat. Till Tripuri he hang about the aerial zone with his professed Leftism and intrinsic Rightism. But after that he has been making staggeringly rapid strides towards his real place in the Congress organisation. Now the wheel has come the full round and his metamorphosis is complete. A member of the homogeneous Rightist Cabinet, a socialist believing in the mystic efficacy of charkha as the supreme weapon in the national fight for freedom, really, we wonder, what is left of old Jawaharlal? His latest fiat forbidding Cogress Committees in U. P. "to dissociate themselves from any tours or visits of leaders who undertake them independently of official Congress sanction" will undoubtedly come on many as a shocking surprise. Poor Pandit, how has he failed to understand that "courtesy and consideration" to an illustrious visitor cannot go together with dissociation from functions organised in his honour? And as regards "opposition to or denunciation of the Congress policy or programme," the country needs hardly be told anew who have dragged down the fair name of the Congress to the mire. Considering the pace of Panditji's "advance," it is not difficult to anticipate that ere long he will be found to completely out-Herod the Herod. Is it not just honest of him to make a public declaration of his change of faith from Socialism to full-fledged Gandhism? We think that has been overdue.

Not a Mystery

War has its mysteries, enigmas, etc. in any member. They are

generally international in character. Light shines on them only to make a mystery a blinding many-coloured haze. The inner politics of British democracy, however, is not supposed to be so puzzling. The politicians share their problems and decisions with the public. But can the British people tell us why Sir Hore-Belisha, their War Minister, was dismissed? Then they can read more than what language would tell. In the Minister's half-uttered reference to democratisation of an army which was fighting for democracy we are asked not to place any emphasis. The Jewish origin of a British minister is not of much importance too. Sir Hore-Belisha's abilities are admitted. But these very qualities are said to require his resignation. But how? The reply would perhaps be another volley of such Parliamentary compliments and eloquence.

Italian Neutrality.

Three great 'neutrals' in the present war may shape it differently. They are America, Japan and Italy. Of them Italy is nearest to the war zone and has interests in the war which are plain. Her claims on the Mediterranean, particularly on the French possessions of Tunisia, Corsica, etc. are well-known facts. Italy are not so loudly voiced—at least we do not hear the demands being echoed by the foreign press. But certainly Mussolini is not the man to forget it. For the moment the Balkan must be rescued from the shadowing menace of Bolshevism and the danger of Anglo-French alliance slowly extending through Rumania and Turkey. The Balkan is being thus shaped by Italy into an independent bloc,—of course, to

be dependent on Italian leadership. This meaning of Italian "neutrality" is made plain by the recent utterances of the new Secretary of the Fascist Party. With such "neutrals" in the neighbourhood, the warring nations of course have to be very 'considerate' at every step.

Cloud In Far East

Japan is the neutral *par excellence*. She is still officially not at war with China. The "neutral" of the Far East observes neutrality with care, and, so the belligerents have also to be careful about her. Britain cannot obviously offend her. Germany does not forget that a damaged "Axis" would be of no value to her at this hour. But the "Axis" has to be repaired with some thing else. The old "anti-Comintern" mortar would not hold the structure together. The retirement of the Abe Cabinet and coming in of the Yonai Cabinet with General Arita as its Foreign Minister, is probably a recognition on the part of Japan that the "Axis" must be kept in order, and possibly on a pro-Soviet

policy. So, a Soviet understanding is expected soon, and, as the latest messages indicate, this may cancel the Red fury in China and, also thereby force Chiang Kai Shek into the Japanese parlour. If the Yonai ministry accomplishes such a 'liquidation' of the 'Chinese affairs', it will be a great triumph for Japan, a questionable relief for China, but, above all, an anxiety for Britain.

Late Khagendra Nath Chatterjea.

Death from high blood pressure deprived the country of one of the most valued workers, Khagendra Nath Chatterjea of Baranagore, at the age of 48. Like many other sons of Bengal, Khagendra Nath was a revolutionary from his teens and passed three terms in jail—internment without trial. His strong physique and wit and winning manners made him a pleasant figure everywhere and lightened the heaviness of his companions in jails. The *Forward Bloc* lost in him an active member, and the void will not be easy to fill.

ESTB : 1913

INDUSTRIAL & PRUDENTIAL

ASSURANCE COMPANY, LTD.

Moderate Premiums, High Bonuses, and all up-to-date privileges.

Total Business in force nearly 5½ Crores.

Calcutta Office : 12, DALHOUSIE SQUARE.

INDIAN TEA HOUSE

ALWAYS AT YOUR SERVICE

96 B, Clive St.,

29, Strand Road.

Calcutta.

Phone :— Cal. 1842.

Sole Prop :—

P. C. SEIN.

