

*The Way to Swaraj*

# FORWARD BLOC

A POLITICAL WEEKLY

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ONE ANNA

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I am glad to receive some sample products of "Shilpa-Peeth Limited" an industrial concern which manufactures Spirit lamps, Stoves and the like. The designs and the quality of the articles produced by them are excellent and are in no way inferior to any foreign products. The management, I am told, rests with Sj. Prafulla Kumar Dutta, B. Sc., (Eng.) an ex-detenu and Sj. M. Roy, who are ex-students of the Benares University. I fully appreciate the enterprise of our young man in the direction of manufacturing articles without caring for service. I wish "Shilpa-Peeth" all success.

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*Subhas Chandra Bose*



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SATURDAY, MARCH 2

## The Way To Swaraj

The Congress Working Committee with Ramgarh in view have made once again a confession of their political faith. In the course of a lengthy resolution calculated to capture the mind and imagination of the rank and file of Congressmen, they state as follows :

"Indian freedom cannot exist within the orbit of the British Imperialism and Dominion Status or any other status within the Imperial structure is wholly inapplicable to India and is not in keeping with the dignity of a great nation and would bind India in many ways to British politics and economic structure. The people of India alone can properly shape their own constitution and determine their relations to the other countries of the world, through a Constituent Assembly elected on the basis of adult suffrage."

In the course of the last six months after the declaration of War by Great Britain, the Congress Working Committee have changed their minds and moods as often as it has suited them, and there can be no knowing when, if at all, they will settle upon a final position. Their first political reaction was to go back upon the Haripura Resolution on War and to forget altogether the Tripuri Resolution on National Demand. Gandhiji as the

*de facto*, though unofficial, leader of the Congress, stated in unambiguous terms that he stood for unconditional co-operation with Great Britain. The Congress Working Committee did not dare to be as unvarnished in their confession of faith as that, and therefore they sought to hide their light under a bushel of words, which, they claimed, embodied the charter of liberties for All sub-merged peoples. They began to think of twenty-five countries ; they seemed to strut upon a *world* stage. So for as India was concerned, and her immediate issues, they could only temporise. Then began pilgrimages to Simla and Delhi and learned essays on war aims and the coming world order. India and the problem of Indian Independence were definitely relegated into the status and importance of minor issues. All of us, for a spell, came to be citizens of the world, and became tuned to the still, sad music of humanity. The practical Mr. Rajagopalachari however chimed in his theses about Dominion status, and preached to the Indian people that Dominion status, for certain unanswerable considerations, might be even better than complete Independence for, then, we would get a navy without cost.

The keynote of Congress policy during the last six months of the war has been its attitude of compromise with British Imperialism on the issue of independence. It has shunned the way of struggle and has depended on peaceful consultation and negotiation for a solution of the Indian problem. Its shilly-shallying—its weaknesses—the many detours it has made in statements of its policy and programme—its pro-British bias—and its general

anti-struggle attitude have been fully availed of by representatives of the British Government, and the latter have shown a progressive stiffening of attitude regarding the problem of Indian independence. Called upon to face some awful moment to which the Time-spirit and the complex of world events have joined great issues, so far as the Indian people are concerned, the present Congress leadership showed itself singularly wanting in faith and courage and the power of initiative, bereft of high purpose, and divided in its aims. When action was called for, it failed to act. It had shed the revolutionary content of its emphasis and its programme.

It is not enough now to pass another resolution on Purna Swaraj. What if the newest resolution, ever so high-sounding, goes the way of the Haripura and Tripuri resolutions into the limbo of old, forgotten things ? The rank and file of Congressmen—and the vast mass of the Indian people must remember that Purna Swaraj is our *inalienable* right and cannot be contracted away by any one however great, by any body of men however *patriotic* they be ; that Purna Swaraj cannot be won by pilgrimages to Simla and Delhi but must be won by the Indian people by sufferings undergone and sacrifices made in that behalf. We cannot sing our way to Swaraj, nor spin our way to Swaraj. We must fight our way to Swaraj. Purna Swaraj is our goal ; Satyagraha our method. And there must not be any more of temporising and prevarication about either the goal or the method.

## BLUFF AND BLUSTER

The speeches that Herr Hitler and Mr. Chamberlain delivered on the same day (24th February) have no very striking novelty that can arrest our attention. Both of them indulged in a lot of boot-thudding and sabre-rattling. Both of them re-iterated once again their pompous "war-aims". The Fuehrer declared that "after the last Great War Germany was a victim of a gigantic world swindle" and proceeded to say :

It is true we were not alone because others were also taken in. Italy was deceived. India was deceived for the Indians had been promised independence in the event of a British victory. The Arabs were deceived, indeed the Jews were also deceived because the same territory which the Arabs were to receive according to British promises, was also promised to the Jews.

And he concluded this part of the speech with the last angry thrust at Britain :

It is not God's wish that three quarters of world should be ruled by one race. We, therefore, demand return of German property of which we were robbed.

Whatever be the Fuehrer's sentiments, there is no haze of ambiguity in them. Indeed, it is not his way to speak through equivocation. We need not take all that he has said on their face value. The man who is brimful of his Nordic pride, can not be moved with any genuine sympathy for the "inferior races". One whose whole life has been one long-drawn record of inhuman persecution of the "Jewish under-dogs," cannot be expected to develop suddenly any real solicitude for them. Evidently Herr Hitler used a convenient big stick wherewith to belabour his declared enemy. He is wincing under the grievous

wrong that Germany was dispossessed of her property in the last War. His grabbing propensity has found a blatant expression in his speech.

Now, let us look to the other side of the picture. We quote the relevant extract from Mr. Chamberlain's peroration :

You have the Nazi aims—destruction of this nation and domination of world. We, on the other hand, are fighting against German domination of the world but we do not desire destruction of any people. We are fighting to secure that the small nations of Europe shall henceforth live in security, free from the constant threat of aggression against their independence and extermination of their people but we do not want domination for ourselves nor do we covet any one else's territory. We are fighting to right the wrongs inflicted by Germany.....

This sounds verily like the bluster of one Philip Drunk against another. The imperialist *status quo* is to be maintained for good. Henceforth the nations of *Europe* shall live in security but those of *Asia* and *Africa* are to remain as comfortable foot-stool of their white imperial masters. There is the keen tie as to who will capture the spoils of the loot. Germany is whining because she is dispossessed, and Britain is swaggering with her sense of domination and unwilling to part with even a slice of the vast empire over which she holds sway at present. The bewildered spectator of this terrible drama asks, where is the meeting-ground between the two? How can peace be restored? Is not the mission of Sumner Welles only a will-o-the-wisp? Will it not fare the same fate with similar antecedent efforts? Look with what reckless bravado both the speeches ended. The Fuehrer said in conclusion :

Germany is bound in friendship to Italy by the knowledge that our two

countries will have to rely on each other in the future, but our relations with Russians are changed. Our two countries are too good to bleed one another...Japan too maintains friendly relations with us. This means a powerful bloc of mighty States...Germany can not be broken economically or militarily.

And then Chamberlain :

We have no reason to fear the result of this struggle, however long it may last. We do not stand alone.

However may the swelled tribunes of the rival imperialisms rant and rave, History knows its course and will inevitably work out its process in the end. Empires have risen and crumbled to the dust before. Whether the present conflict will change the old vicious order for ever, remains to be seen. At any rate, that is the hope that sustains human idealism to-day.

## VIVE LA BAGATELLE I

The *Statesman* whimpers again. It has been shell-shocked by the resolution of the Congress Working Committee and comes out with its sjambok to make the Congressmen realise their folly. It now leaps from the *Forward Bloc* upon the *Indian National Congress* and declares that the Congressmen are "on the side of Hitler and Stalin; of Hitler who regards all Indians as natural born slaves and Congressmen in particular as beneath his contempt; of Stalin, whose party at the Oriental Conference at Baku decided that all the Oriental nationalism is bogus and bunkum..." The Working Committee have decided that the "sovereignty in India must rest with the people" and the *Statesman*, the tout of the

imperialist Britain, says that it is "a challenge which will be taken up by the British, the Princes and the non-Congress world". The gory vision of civil war is being conjured up to gorge the devil of Indian nationalism and the poor Mahatma has been asked to deal with "the desperate follies of his followers" on pain of throwing India in the boiling cauldron of blood-shed and confusion.

The *Statesman* should realise that it is useless to float Stalin-Hitler-myths among the Indian people as they are sufficiently aware of the cause of this sprattling fire which is threatening to engulf the world today. To make a capital out of the camaraderie between Hitler and Stalin may be a sort of desperate self-abandonment but it is a brunt weapon to carry out one's own evil designs. What is going on in Baku, Berlin or Moscow is not the immediate concern of the Indian people. What Whitehall is conspiring and conniving at that is Indian's concern. It is really funny that when the murderers are abroad the chief of the gang should preach cheap and sickening gospels of love and freedom to the wretched victims.

We, the Congressmen and the people of India, re-iterate with utmost emphasis that nothing short of complete independence will satisfy us. If to demand this birth-right is to commit a wrong we are ready to multiply that wrong hundred times by acquiring it as we will. Lastly, if according to the *Statesman*, these are all "desperate follies," we shout today *Vive La Bagatelle*. Amen!

## CURRENT COMMENTS

### Addresses At Kisan Conferences

The two recent addresses in Kisan conferences at Motihari and Goalghat by Rev. Rahul Sankirtayana and Swami Sahajanand Saraswati respectively, should deserve more than a mere passing notice. Both these leaders are names to reckon with, and have won the undisputed leadership of the Kisans by virtue of the fearless advocacy of their cause. Both of them, again, have the right vision of the order of things that is to be ushered in on the attainment of Swaraj. It is for these reasons that they could not mince matters in regard to the open and underhand activities of the present Congress leadership to sabotage the true interests of the agricultural producers. Rev. Rahul Sankirtayana opined:

The assurances given to Kisans at the Faizpur Congress had not been carried out by the Congress ministries, who entered into a compromise with the Zamindars on their (latter's) own terms.

It is needless to point out once again the relation that the Congress ministries (now on leave) bore to the High Command. Swami Sahajanand, too, was equally unsparing in his condemnation of the attitude of the Congress authorities to the interests of the Kisans and went on to allege that the resolution on Fundamental Rights adopted at Karachi was flagrantly violated by the former in their deal with the latter. We hope that henceforth the Kisans will awake to the realities of the situation and learn to discriminate between the faked and the real. Minor changes on the fringe of the *status quo* will not give them much, its complete overhaul is urgently called for.

### The Fate of the Bengal Jute-growers

Since the outbreak of war there has been an increased demand for jute and the jute-growers of Bengal much weighed down by mounting debts looked for better days. And instead of introducing measures to alleviate their growing economic difficulties the Huq Ministry was found busy hammering Bills to restrict the output of jute in the province. People were startled at the sinister move of the Ministry that banks upon the support of the people for the measure was retrogressive insofar as it aimed at maiming the peasants. On the floor of the Assembly different parties aired their views on jute restriction and the Congress Party found it ill-timed and unacceptable, since it was hedged in with conditions that rightly interpreted would mean further taxation upon the poor jute-growers. But sanity dawned upon the Huq Ministry late and the combined opposition of various political groups including the Europeans has led to the withdrawal of jute Restriction Bill.

This may mean that Mr. Huq has earned the gratitude of the jute-growers of the province. Has he? It must be answered with a categorical no, for he has already betrayed the masses and is ranked with the reactionary.

### Significant Silence

While the Working Committee have been talking occasionally of a struggle to keep up the show and working clandestinely for a compromise with the Government, the latter have been carrying on a drastic drive against the Leftists in the different parts of the country. In Bengal things are fast being pushed on to the brink of a crisis.

In the present issue of our paper is published an article by Sj Manmatha Nath Gupta, the well-known Congress worker of the United Provinces, which sets forth a brief account of the governmental repression to which the Leftists, as a body, are being subjected in that province. But the most tragic part of the story, as our esteemed comrade has rightly pointed out, is that the Congress leadership has not thought it necessary to utter even a syllable of protest against it. Even that wordy volcano, we mean Pundit Jawaharlal, has chosen to keep absolute mum over this vital issue. Evidently, to the High Command, co-operation with the Government is a worthier end for pursuit than that with the Leftists, whose proffered hand they threw off most unceremoniously. Alas! what can be a more cruel paradox than this?

### Penal Reform In India

The first All-India Penal Reform Conference which recently held its sitting at Bombay, has been undoubtedly a move in the right direction. As a matter of fact, the Conference ought to have received its start much earlier; for if there is a country where penal reform has been urgently and immediately called for, it is India. Prisons in this country are like so many dungeons and the system that obtains there at present is calculated to make their denizens more hardened criminals than before. Fortunately the whole outlook towards human delinquency has undergone a radical change today and crime has come to be recognised as not due to any original sin in its perpetrator, but as the outcome of the social environment in which he is placed. Prison

should, therefore, serve as a reformatory and not a squeezing machine. The resolutions that the Conference has adopted, have happily reflected this healthy outlook towards the important problem. And the sooner they can be given effect to, the better. The stupendous waste of human materials that the present hellish arrangements involve, has to be stopped as speedily as possible. In this matter, as in many others, the Soviet system should serve as an example to us.

### Pursuing a Mirage

*Reuter* recently cabled the following from London:

The Indian Swaraj League sent a letter to President Roosevelt through the American Embassy, London, suggesting that Mr. Sumner Welles should receive an Indian delegation when he arrives in London and expressing the view "that any peace settlement cannot be enduring unless freedom is restored to India."

Mr. Sumner Welles is getting a good press and a good deal of praises in regard to his peace mission but nothing is transpiring as to what extent it is meeting with success. The declared aim of President Roosevelt which inspired the present mission was the emergence of a Federation of Free Nations on the termination of present conflicts—a magnificent plan all-comprehensive in its sweep. Certainly it does not contemplate a discrimination among white, black or yellow nations. But even the latest pronouncement of Mr. Chamberlain has declared the war aims of Britain in terms of the freedom of European nations only. The Asiatics and Africans are providentially destined to remain helots for ever! Excluding other belligerents from consideration for the present, Mr. Welles is certain to dash against a veritable wall at least in Britain. How he and the

Government he represents will react to it, remains to be seen. In the meantime, we may tell the Swaraj League that it will be very easy for Mr. Welles to make up things with India, or for the matter of that, with any other subject nation. As a matter of fact, they have no role in the drama except that of silent spectators. The hurdles that will evidently baffle him lie elsewhere.

### The Black Sea Menace

Different interpretations have been put upon recent Turkish Foreign Policy and Great Britain merrily toyed with the idea of building up a bulwark against the Soviet Union in collaboration with Turkey. But the objective is defeated and the latest broadcast of the Turkish Premier has smothered the huge body of lies manufactured by the Press. The Turkish Premier has defined his attitude towards war and it is one of strict neutrality, for the question of active participation in war would be determined by the broader issues of national interest. And this is likely to shock the Allies that had nursed the illusion of having roped in Turkey. About the present Russo-Turkish relations the world is kept in blank ignorance, and the press has spun out the story of rapid fortification of Turkish frontier only to put up resistance against Soviet invasion. The Turkish Premier's utterance should merit close attention since he has defined the Russo-Turkish relation with striking boldness and sagacity that burkes the certainty of an anti-Soviet Bloc on this side of Black Sea.

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By Prof. Subodh Krishna Ghoshal

## NATIONALISM IN INDIA AND ABROAD

The doctrine of the national soul is one of the most fundamental spiritual ingredients in the cultural consciousness of Young India. It had already been a substantial force in the mentality of the Indian intelligentsia during the last half of the 19th. Century. *Bande Mataram* (Heil Motherland), the national hymn, composed by Bankim Chandra Chatterji for the Bengali novel *Ananda Matha* (The Abbey of Bliss, 1822) was conceived in an atmosphere of the country and the people as being animated by a collective spirit or the national mind. This was composed about the time the Indian National Congress was established (1885). The fathers of the Congress movement, especially in Bengal, were as a rule inspired by the cult of the country and the people as a personality with a collective conscience or group-soul. National individuality, national ideals, national traditions, national character, the soul of the people, the spirit of the people, race-characteristics, race-consciousness and so forth were fundamental items in Swami Vivekananda's (1862-1902) teachings. By the time the "glorious Swadeshi revolution" broke out in Bengal in 1905, the concept might be regarded as having become almost a part and parcel of the Bengali literary and middle class consciousness. The poetical works, songs and essays of Rabindra Nath Tagore also contributed to the development and popularisation of this doctrine.

### Herder—an Indirect source of Indian Nationalism

It is difficult to appraise to what extent the concept of the national soul as prevalent in India down to 1905, was an independent creation of the Indian social thinkers and to what extent they were indebted for it to their studies in European literature, philosophy and history. Be this as it may, it is questionable if the German philosopher, anthropologist and sociologist Herder (1744-1805), the father of the doctrine of *Nationalgeist* (national spirit) or *Volksseele* (people's soul) was at all known anywhere in India. But among the European thinkers, statesmen, jurists, political

propagandists and savants in the middle of the nineteenth century, there was hardly any body who did not come in one way or other under the influence of Herder. It so happened that in the last quarter of that century the most outstanding European personalities in the field of politics that inspired the Indian patriots were Bismarck (1815-1898) the German and Mazzini (1808-1872) the Italian, and both of them as nationalists were Herderian. Then, again, British social scientists like Maine (1822-1888) and Mill (1806-1873) were counted among the greatest intellectual forces in Indian Universities or academic circles. Herder's influence on such thinkers had been, as is well-known, inestimable. It is thus not directly but through indirect agencies that Herder could exercise a spiritual sway over the intellectual and patriotic activities of the Indian people until the beginning of the present century. But the name of Herder was hardly known among the Indians.

### Studies in Bankim, Dante and Herder

As a student of comparative literature, I have been greatly fascinated by the ideas of Herder. While writing my brochures *Samaj-Chintay Bankimchandra* (Bankim in Social Thought, 1937) and *The Messages of Dante* (1938), it occurred to me that I should devote some attention to the ideas of Herder who may rightly be described as the father of my science. The most important of Herder's works for the purposes of this study is his *Ineen zur philosophie der Geschichte* or "Ideas for the Philosophy of History" (1784-1790). It is my purpose later to investigate to what extent Condorcet (1743-1794) and other French social philosophers are spiritually allied to Herder. Condorcet's celebrated work on the *Progress of the Human Mind* was published in 1795. As a Bengalee I should commence by drawing attention to the fact that our Rammohun Roy (1772-1833) was a junior contemporary of Herder (1744-1803).

### Nationality and Culture

Herder's conception of nationality brings him to believe in the doctrine of diversities in the domain of culture. Just

as there are several nationalities each constituting a distinct and unique growth, so there are several cultures each different from the others. Culture is the product of a national soul and not of an individual soul. Literature and sciences, strictly speaking, ought to be called national literature, national art and national science. Each nationality develops a peculiar culture of its own which is unique and incomparable. Any attempt to compare it with any other culture so as to evaluate and measure its worth will necessarily be futile. The environmental forces not only mould the physiognomy of a person or group of persons inhabiting a certain tract of land within the orbit of its influence, they have also their effect on the national soul and as such on culture which is its expression.

Herder recognises five formative forces in the building up and moulding of national culture. The most important of the factors differentiating cultures is the physical environment. Herder repeatedly stresses the importance of climate in the development of cultural organism. Man in his scheme of things is a creature moulded by the climate. The body, the way of life, the occupation, even the ideas are simply the products of the climate. He takes up a number of nationalities and by pointing to their distinctive features which have been the gift of the climate, comes to the broad generalisation that the group, no less than the individual, is simply a child of environment and partakes of its nature.

The next in importance comes education. The mode of education, according to him, decides the national character. The peculiar characteristics of the Chinese and the Hebrews, he maintains, have been the results of their education.

Then comes intercourse. Communication with other national groups is another factor which goes to develop national characteristics. Active competition with other nationalities gives a tremendous impetus to the growth of the national soul. The national soul, secluded and cut up from outside intercourse, may grow peculiar but it cannot have that versatility which can only be achieved through

