

# *Anti-Compromise Conference*

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A POLITICAL WEEKLY

Editor : SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE

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CALCUTTA, SATURDAY, MARCH 9, 1940

ONE ANNA

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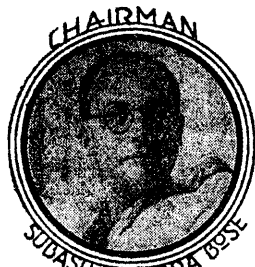
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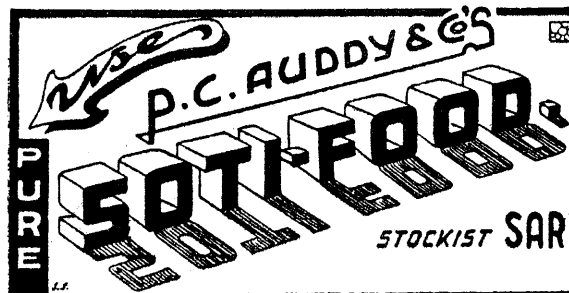
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SATURDAY, MARCH 9

## *Anti-Compromise Conference*

A week hence the All-India Anti-Compromise Conference will meet at Ramgarh. It will be decisively a landmark in the history of India's struggle for independence. Without equivocation, without vagueness of any sort, and without any confusion whatsoever, it has placed before the country the supreme issue of complete Independence. There is nothing to blur the view, nothing to efface the outline, no ifs and buts to condition or qualify our demand for Purna Swaraj. Representatives of anti-Imperialist organisations from all over the country will declare in no faltering accent and with no mental reservation that "nothing short of complete independence can be accepted by the people of India." India will not accept anything less than complete independence. And India, the real India, will not deserve anything less. The Kishan rally at Ramgarh will give to this national demand its proper content and significance.

Those of our friends who find it tiresome to face the hard realities of political life have begun to say that the Congress itself is the biggest anti-compromise Conference and that a separate All-India Anti-compromise Conference at Ramgarh will be superfluous and unnecessary. It ought to have been unnecessary and it would have pleased us immensely if it were superfluous. These easy-going, though possibly well-meaning friends excuse themselves by an

appeal to sentimentality and say that nothing should be done to "eclipse the Congress." They have allowed themselves to be misled by the Patna resolution of the Congress Working Committee which in its lengthy string of phrases contains the words—"complete independence" and "civil disobedience". The words were there in burning characters in many a Congress resolution passed in all solemnity year after year and they have failed to prevent us from accepting the Gandhi-Irwin Pact of 1931, and undertaking arduous pilgrimages to Delhi and Simla.

The ink with which the Patna resolution was written was not dry before Gandhiji came out with his own interpretation of the resolution. And the resolution as interpreted by Gandhiji must forewarn all those who hold fast to the ideal of complete independence. "My interpretation of the resolution", says Gandhiji, "is that the Congress has not closed the door" to compromise. Eternal vigilance, it is said, is the price of liberty. We must be prepared to pay that price and be warned against weakness or vacillation of any sort. Let India's voice proclaim itself—let India's determination show itself through the All-India Anti-Compromise Conference at Ramgarh.

## **Our Educational Problem**

The key-note of all the three addresses at the convocation of the Calcutta University which was held last week was undoubtedly a sense of realism. That was but natural. Life has assumed such a grim aspect to our students, particularly to those who have or are about to cross the portals of the University and stand on the threshold of the deadliest struggle—the struggle

for existence—that those who are called upon to advise them, cannot afford the luxury of aerial flights on the wings of idealism. Nor can the students themselves feel like accompanying them in those flights. From the time our students get into the precincts of the University, they are haunted by the spectre of a gloomy future; as they drag on, the gloom deepens and when finally they are landed into the wider world, utterly broken in body and mind, they can find nothing but piled-up darkness around them. Fortune smiles on a few who can get a footing in life. Others are buffeted by ill-luck, who, after knocking at many a closed door, are at last helplessly carried along the dismal current only to find themselves swelling the number of the unemployed. This is the life-story of the overwhelming majority of our students today.

There is nothing to wonder if under the existing conditions the speakers in the convocation cannot bring to our young hopefuls (alas, the irony of the term!) any very cheerful message. The students are the victims of circumstances over which they have no control. At first some dull years in the school, then a fearful life at the college—fear at the approach of the inevitable dark Destiny—then the Destiny itself, what a vicious circle our boys have to move about, against their will, under the present scheme of things! As a consequence, the waste of youth that the educational system involves is staggering indeed. The future of a country whose youthful energies are allowed to run into such chaotic ruin, can not but fill one with grave apprehension and despair.

It is a sheer superfluity to suggest that the problem of education in our country should be attacked at its very source. No

piecemeal or superficial changes can possibly do. For this reason we feel inclined to think that the convocation addresses should be directed more to those who are responsible for running the educational show than to the students who play the automatic dolls there.

The present aimless, wasteful system should be replaced by *strict planning*. After a preliminary course of general education for all, say, up to the Matriculation standard, talents and tastes should be carefully sorted out and each has to be tacked on to the kind of training that best fits him. That will prevent overcrowding in general line which appears to us to be the greatest bane of education today. In fact, educational policies should be shaped with a strict eye to *employment*, whose avenues have to be expanded in all possible directions. Sir Mirza Ismail in his admirable address touched on a vital point when he referred to scientific agriculture, industrial expansion and admission of larger numbers of Indians in Army and Navy. That is urgently called for today. We are not among those who see in science nothing but evil; we believe that it can be rationally utilised to serve the ends of human welfare. We have the vision of an India industrially advanced, proudly taking her place among the foremost nations of the world,—a country that will assure full meals and comfortable living to her teeming millions of sons and daughters. Both Sir Mirza and the Vice-chancellor rightly called upon the students to address themselves to the glorious task of bringing about communal harmony and that of broader nation-building. But we have over legitimate doubts if a sullen regiment of unemployed can ever be fit for that

noble mission. We cannot also share the view of the Vice-chancellor that the communal problem is *wholly* due to cultural reasons. We believe it to be, to a very great extent, *economic* at bottom, springing from a scramble for loaves and fishes of office—a problem of sheer existence on earth. This brings us back to the question of employment. And as we said before, what is sorely needed today is a *comprehensive and planned educational policy on an All-India basis*, to be given effect to as early as practicable. But where are the vision, the will, and above all, the resources for that stupendous task? That diverts us to a different problem altogether—taking us from educational to a political plane. But how can we keep away from politics since national life is not divided into water-tight compartments?

### THE WAR BUDGET

As was apprehended, the Budget estimates presented by Sir Jeremy Raisman in the Central Assembly have proposed to burden the country with more taxations. It does not matter if the Budget for the current year carries along with it a surplus of Rs. 91 lakhs from last year. It does not also matter if the increased railway freights and fares bring heavy sums to the Government exchequer, pressing, at the same time, too hard on the impoverished population of the land. Even it does not matter if the newly imposed Excess Profits Tax fetch, according to the calculation of the Finance Member himself, an additional 300 lakhs of rupees. More monies are called for, because a war is on. So it has been found necessary to increase the sugar

excise duty from Rs. 2 to Rs. 3 per cwt and petrol tax from ten annas to twelve annas per gallon, bringing altogether no less than Rs. 330 lakhs to the Government funds. It has not worried Sir Raisman that the increased excise duty on sugar will deal a hard blow to an important Indian industry, still in its infancy; that it will hit the vast number of Indian consumers of this daily necessity, has neither weighed with him. Then again the increase in the petrol tax will badly affect the bus transport to and from villages and will be a burden on the numerous taxiwallas all over the country—this too, has not been certainly a matter of much concern to Sir Raisman. All these considerations have paled into insignificance before the all-important question of carrying on the war. The war is on—that is the mightiest argument and let the poor people of the land be squeezed for that. And what a huge sum does it call for and on what various pleas it has been proposed to be drained off! Let us turn to the heads of expenditure and figures as presented by Sir Raisman. Regarding the first, India shall have to bear the stupendous military charge under four different kinds of demands, namely, (a) a fixed annual sum representing the normal net effective costs of the army in India under peace conditions (b) an addition called for the rises of prices (c) the cost of such war measures as can be regarded as *purely India liabilities* and (d) a lump sum of one crore of rupees towards the extra cost of maintaining India's external defence troops overseas. All told, the total military budget for the current year has been estimated at Rs. 5352 lakhs—more than half of the total expenditure of Rs. 8665 lakhs. It

is no use arguing that India was committed to the present war without her consent and against her will; it is no use arguing, further, that it is being waged for British imperial ends to which our country can not conscientiously be a party. The gory war-chariot must move on because the powers that be have willed it, although it may grind down the people of this land under its wheels. The penalty of national bondage has to be undergone in ever increasing measure until the shackles can be cast off. It is almost fatalistic in its rigours and shall compel submission till the country can stoutly and effectively refuse to bow to it.

## CURRENT COMMENTS

### Bombay Strike

Of late there has been a plethora of strikes all over India and in important industrial cities thousands of workers have downed their tools. The cause is primarily economic and the sudden rise in commodity prices after the outbreak of war has not been followed by corresponding increment of wages. Economic difficulties of the workers are multiplying and at present the city of Bombay is facing a big strike, and the total number of textile workers affected is estimated at 2 lacs. The story of Bombay strike, though of recent origin, is complicated and reveals the reactionary attitude of the mill-owners wriggling in the entwining tangle of miles of red tape. Since the outbreak of war the cost of living has gone up by 40 p. c. on foreign and indigenous articles and this implies an extra profit. Textile workers of Bombay demanded 15 p. c. dearness allowance and in case of its non-compliance

they were to stick to 25 p. c. general increment. Petitions, prayers, representations came to nothing and mill-owners' callousness, equalled by Government's indifference, has precipitated this crisis. There is no denying the fact that war has given a fillip to Indian industries and mill-owners have already earned a mint of money. Is the demand of Bombay textile workers improper and ill-timed? Life of Indian workers is tragic, they are drained of every drop of vitality and robbed of all interests in life. But times are changed and the era of glorying in the possession of wealth is over, and interests of the owners are to be sacrificed to the general well-being of the workers. Bombay mill-owners should repair the error before the entire industrial life is deadlocked. Government must know that denial of rights of association and discussion will breed hatred and rule out the possibility of early settlement. We do not believe that the sterile method of threatening workers into submission will defeat the sense of unity that is the only heritage of the working class.

### Reality and Appearance

The Patna resolution of the Working Committee has been hailed in certain quarters as a brave call to the nation. But we think that it is not really as it appears. The rider in the resolution that fight will be launched when Gandhiji thinks the country fit for it, has undoubtedly neutralised much of the valour displayed in the former part of the same. For, if the country has to wait till it fulfils the conditions laid down by Gandhiji *in toto*, then verily it shall have to sit idle till the Greek Kalends. But this is not all that

fills us with misgivings about the real intention of the resolution. There are wheels within wheels in the inner Congress circle and things are believed to be passing there behind the painted curtain. In this connection we present to our readers certain informations which cannot be disposed of as mere nothings. Sardar Patel has sung in chorus with H. H. the Aga Khan regarding the way of resolving the present tangle and Mr. Satyamurti has echoed the refrain of the song. Then the Indian correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian* reports that both Mr. Rajagopalchari and Mr. Bhulabhai Desai commend Dominion Status for India and a recent *London Times* report tells us that there has been a change in the Congress attitude towards Constituent Assembly and adds that the suggestion of drafting a Constitution by a body drawn from provincial legislatures, is approved at present by Congressmen. Moreover, only the other day Mr. Kidwai, the erstwhile Congress minister of U. P. said that Mahatma Gandhi was still in negotiation with the Viceroy for an early compromise. It is not without significance that all these reports have hitherto remained uncontradicted. To crown everything else, there is the statement of Gandhiji himself that "the Congress has not yet closed its door." Surely, there are more mysteries in the inner Congress world than can be apprehended by the uninitiated public.

### A Free Citizen, Not a Propagandist

Mr. H. G. Wells, one of the originative intellectual workers of Great Britain who are re-conditioning human life, explained in a recent broadcast address to the English-speaking world the reasons for which he and his fellow Liberals are supporting the Allied Governments in the present war. As a free citizen he supports the British Government in this war, and says :

"I support my Government in this war, wholly and solely, because it accords me this freedom of speech and because I believe it is doing its best now according to its lights to fight for this same freedom for me and for the rest of the people who agree with me; not only in Britain but throughout the world." We have heard him on many topics, from Utopian schemes of World Federation to unemployment, providing us with an inexhaustible flow of vague, well-sounding exhortation, the precise purpose of which is largely wrapped in mystery and miracle, and which can only be understood by intellectuals of his way of thinking. The only comment we can make upon his speech is that when he says that Britain is fighting for the freedom of all and simply not for her own, we cannot help thinking that he lapses a little from those standards of judgment which we expect in a representative intellectual of Britain in such circumstances. Unfortunately, we are constrained to remark, he and his like with their bits of intellect and stick and smoking pipe, have always been out-witted, frustrated and discredited by the valiant fighters for freedom with their bombs and tanks and torpedoes. Hence Mr. Wells does not speak about freedom as a free citizen of the world. He speaks as an agent, as a propagandist of the British Ruling Class. He may deny this, but it is a fact that intellectuals of Mr. Wells' brand do live in a fool's paradise and the nursery tales of "Federation and Freedom" are the results of their "heat-oppressed" brains.

### The Purist Pose

That illegitimate offspring of the Working Committee, we mean the Bengal Congress Election Committee, has issued a *firman* regarding the coming Corporation elections in Calcutta. With a right purist pose it has made a grievance of the fact that the B.P.C.C. had entered into an arrangement with the Hindu Mahasabha for running the elections. That arrangement has since been dissolved for reasons which it is needless to repeat here. We fail to understand how even if

it stood, the Congress would have been compromised in any way under the terms of the arrangement. But that is a dead issue now. What amazes us is that how the persons composing the body dare vaunt their purism in view of the fact that not very long ago one of its shining lights entered into a pact with the Europeans, headed by Mr. Rooney, to torpedo the Congress in the Corporation. Even the later feats of this bluffing minority junta of the Bengal Congress in the civic affairs of Calcutta have remained unforgettable to the people of this province. Has not this group, in open league with the Europeans and other reactionary elements in the Corporation, been seeking to foil every measure sponsored by the Congress Party even now? By a fiat of the High Command the Congress executive in the province has to-day been robbed of its official seal, which it bore till the other day. But what justification could there be *at that time* in opposing the Congress on every occasion in combination with the elements mentioned before? Was it not pure and simple betrayal of the Congress cause? Indeed, the shameful Plassey tradition still lingers on and it is for the people of this great province to give it a decent burial today. We have no doubt they know who is who and what is what in the present scheme of things.

### American Neutrality

Mr. Joseph Kennedy, the U.S. Ambassador in London said in a press interview: "If isolation means a desire to keep out of the war, I should say that it is definitely stronger now in America. I think very definitely that this feeling of isolation has increased by the examination of mails and the stopping of ships. Such things as the sinking of neutral ships makes an impression on American minds, but does not make America want to go to war." This is not an insignificant utterance. There are the non-belligerents today who are frankly discontented with their present state of affairs and leave little doubt that when the time comes—to borrow a recent discour-

teous phrase from *New York*—they "will jump in to help the upper dog." But as regards America the case is different. U.S.A. has not forgotten the disappointments that were inflicted upon her when President Wilson was unwise enough to come to Versailles and she hopes that this time by keeping out of the broil she will be strong enough to have a decisive voice on the drafting of the next peace treaty. Recent improvement in business situation in U. S. A. lends additional weight to this expectation. It is estimated that between July 1939 and July 1940 there will be a 33 p. c. increase in sales of radio sets and gramophones; and other indices of national prosperity such as refrigerator, passenger motor vehicle, and motor lorry sales will rise respectively by 30,26 and 23 per cent. This swift return to prosperity may serve in domestic affairs as a potent factor in President Roosevelt's recently rumoured decision for a third term of office and also, in foreign affairs it will give assurance to America's already influential voice. It is America's interest to see that she is not embroiled in this war, and the longer she will be able to maintain her neutrality, the greater will be her prosperity and stronger will grow her influence.

### FOR THE SOCIALIST PANDIT

D. N. Prith K. C. M. P. writes to Pandit Nehru :

"I have read with respect your condemnation of Soviet action in Finland. I feel that you have not considered Soviet case fully, and indeed you may not have had the opportunity to know that case properly.

I would suggest to you and all Congressman not to express judgment of condemnation till all facts are available for consideration. There is a full discussion of this problem in my new book—*Must The War Spread*. All the praise of Russian socialism and past history expressed by you and others in India should convince you of the extreme unlikelihood of Russia behaving in the manner described by the British imperialist press."

Will Panditji respond ?

