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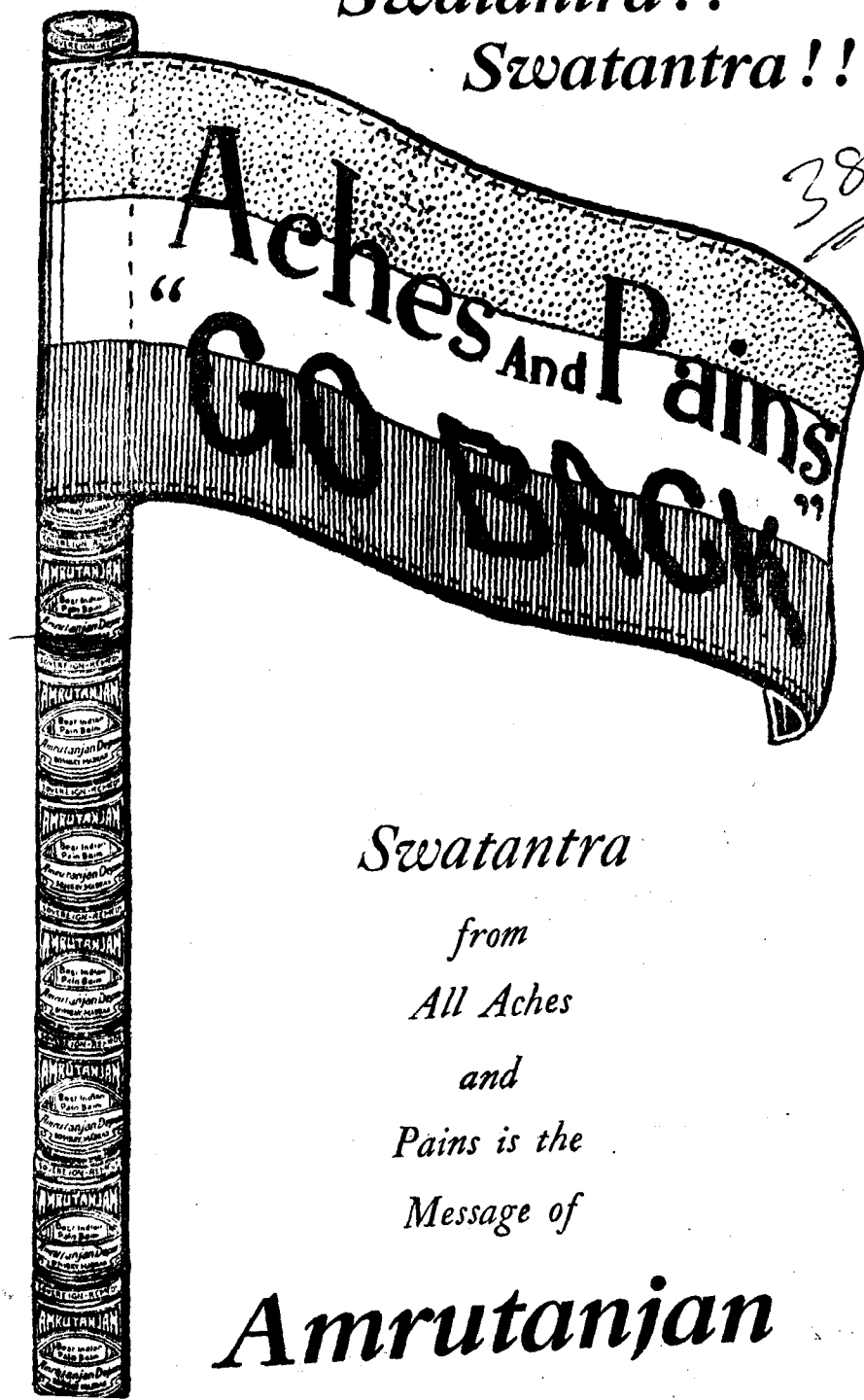
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Swatantra!

Swatantra!!

Swatantra!!!

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Swatantra

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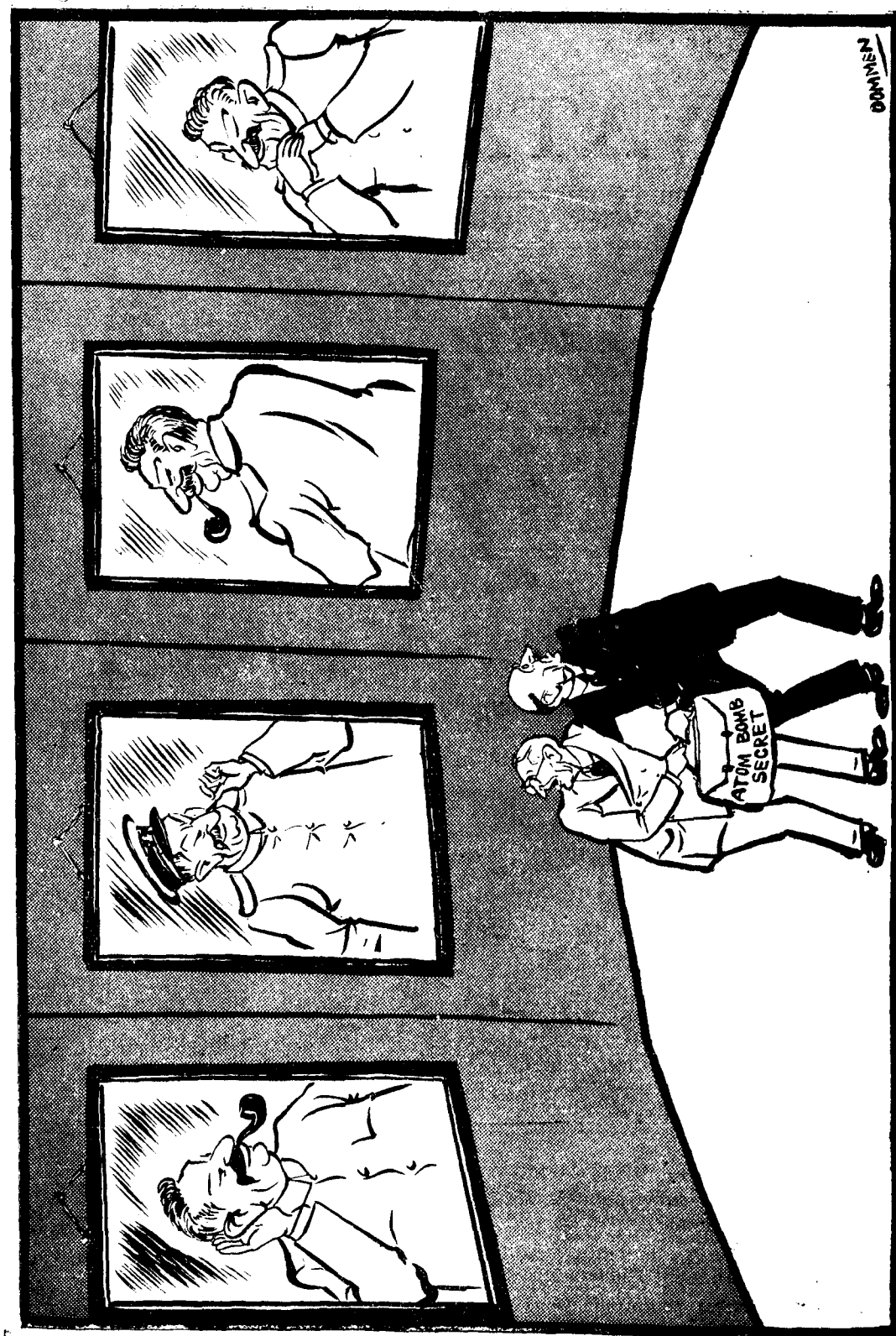
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THE PEACE-MAKERS



SWATANTRA

VOL. I
NO. 2

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 1946.

ISSUED
WEEKLY

THE FOOD CRISIS

NEARLY two months after the failure of the North East monsoon, officialdom has become aware of the certain prospect of widespread famine in the country, and has indulged in alarms and excursions which have spot-lighted our prospective food-scarcity into a topic of international concern. But the trouble with our Indian Government has always been the same: one never knows how to evaluate its pronouncements, whether they are complacent (as at the time of the Bengal famine), or seemingly panicky as now. Not that they are in possession of facts which they wish to suppress; the greater likelihood in our view is their own ignorance of or inability to command reliable data. Even where they are available, they are incomplete and hence misleading.

The following independent pronouncements on our food position are interesting for the reason that we are not told if they are all based on the same set of figures, and if so what they are! The London *Economist* was first in the field, for it forecast early in December last a deficiency in our requirements of from 5 to 8 per cent, accounted for by our pre-war imports from Burma and the Far East. Sir J. P. Srivastawa, the Food Member, stated in the Assembly that the deficit for the whole country was likely to be about 3 million tons. Sir S. V. Ramamurti assesses the loss due to the cyclone and failure of the monsoon in the East Coast as likely to be not less than one and three quarter million tons. And last, though by no means the least, President Truman has declared that

we are likely to suffer for want of 12 to 15 per cent of our normal requirements.

Granting the accuracy of the most alarming of these forecasts, it does not seem at first sight as if the deficit we are called upon to make good is catastrophic enough to justify the gloomy fears of officialdom. A 5 per cent cut in consumption already in force in our province, the extension of it with minimum delay to other provinces, vigorous measures of procurement, raising short-term crops, devising alternative kinds of food coupled with a wise conservation of stocks ought cumulatively to help us tide over the emergency. As Mahatma Gandhi pointed out in his statement, we ought to manage pretty well even without foreign help, since the means of salvation are in our own hands. In a finely conceived exhortation to the people at large, he calls upon them to exercise their will to live, thus evoking a psychological factor of tremendous value in the fight against famine. His next desiderata are equally pertinent. If the Government and the commercial community are honest, and discountenance anti-social activities associated with hoarding and conniving at hoarding, stocks should be made available to the country at large which might make all the difference between a measure of self-imposed austerity and wholesale deaths due to starvation. In the war years, Britain had apparently to make do with much more drastic cuts than are now in force here, and according to medical experts, she has been none the worse for them.

CENTRAL OFFICE, MADRAS.

P. S. SUBRAMANIA IYER & Co.,
Registered Accountants & Auditors.

ENGLISH WEEKLY ISSUED EVERY SATURDAY

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SUFFERING HUMANITY: Picture by Devi Prasad Roy Chowdhury.

Considering the problem of our deficit from the point of view of the world's surplus food stocks, we again see little justification for that degree of officially induced gloom which is now in evidence. Canada, Australia, Argentina, and the U.S.A. have all reported substantial surpluses of wheat crops which only require to be transported to deficit areas. President Truman has stated that U.S.A. alone will export about 6 million tons in the next six months. Assuming that the bulk of it is destined for Europe and 'liberated' areas, the surplus from other sources ought to be diverted in part at least to India. The Indian deputation proceeding to England, and later to Washington, are seized with the super-arrogatory task of appealing to the converted; for the readiness of all from President Truman downwards to help India has been trumpeted from the house-tops!

In all current speculations on the extent of our food deficit, we have not found due allowance made for a disturbing but indefinite factor in

Indian economics. We refer to the millions who never enjoy more than one daily meal of uncertain quantity and quality. It is this section of the public that will be exposed to its severest ordeal in the coming months, specially as it also comprises the chronically unemployed and habitually pauperised elements of our society. They form a fringe of varying depth that separates the urban from the rural population, the static from the nomadic. It is the casualties in this group that contributed to the most lurid features of the Bengal tragedy. Since they depend for their uncertain sustenance on the charitable or capricious overflow of the well-to-do classes, they are likely to be the first victims of any system of rationing that will include rural and urban areas.

There are administrative difficulties of great complexity to be overcome before we can make effective a system of rationing for the whole country—urban and rural. Surplus provinces must be as stringently controlled as the deficit ones, and waste discouraged with the punitive weight of existing laws. Wherever hydro-electric schemes require water at the cost of crops, even industrial activity must be arrested to ensure higher priority to the raising of short-term crops. When imports do arrive, they must be so allocated that relief is given to people, as far as may be, in consonance with the people's ingrained habits. What we mean is that wheat must not be thrust down the throats of those accustomed to rice diet, and vice versa.

But over and above all these palliatives and alternatives, the most potent factor that is likely to deepen the sense of a crisis is the continued existence of or recruitment to armies of occupation abroad. It is notorious that an army, whether it moves or stays put, does so on its stomach. How much of the normal, natural economy of the world has been diverted to the maintenance of these standing armies, how much of waste they are responsible for, how they are denuding the numbers required for the rehabilitation of

agriculture in all the countries of the world, and how they are thus directly responsible for promoting famine conditions throughout the world can become evident only in a retrospective view of a few years hence. It is imperative that the rulers of the world should hasten to demobilise the huge armies that still mount guard over prostrate mankind from China to Peru. Unless this is done with courage and vision and faith in the essential goodness and soundness of human nature, the peace that we pray for bids fair to be that of the grave!

WRONG WAY TO PAKISTAN

If, as Mr. Jinnah told the *New York Times*, "Muslims are willing to fight if the British fail to provide for Pakistan in the six northern provinces of India", he and they must first make up their minds as to whom they will fight and how. In certain circumstances, readiness to fight may connote desirable strength. But there are also occasions when it may easily degenerate into quarrelsomeness and bankruptcy of persuasive power and reasoning faculty. If differences of opinion with others are to be settled by fighting, all that is certain is that heads will be broken and blood split in the course of the fighting. There will be no finality about any conclusion reached that way; since the momentarily suppressed will then only bide their time till the next chance comes to turn the tables on their suppressors. But it is scarcely likely that the stage of a conclusion being reached at all will ever emerge as a possibility. There is nothing like a protected ring for a dog-fight between battling communities in India, the winner carrying off the prize in the form of uninterrupted domination, thereafter. Anything like an internal fight will only benefit the British who are masters in the art of making others' dissensions pay. The Pakistan of Mr. Jinnah's dreams will be buried in the ruins of the fighting for which he is so ready.

However ready one may be to fight, one cannot rush on and attack others without at least some ostensible provocation. If the British carry out their intention of calling a single constitution-making body, it is open to Mr. Jinnah to call upon his followers to abstain in a body. Or they may even invade the constitution-making body and out of its very deliberations evolve the secessionist move that is so attractive to Mr. Jinnah. There is no incompatibility between the convening of a single constitution-making body and Pakistan, any more than there is identity between splitting it into two such bodies and Pakistan. Independence is not going to drop down with the mere convening of any body. Mr. Jinnah's threat of "Muslim revolt throughout India" if only one constitution-making body and not two should come to be convened, imparts to the Pakistan of his conception a pitiable limitation. It equates it, as it were, with a mere procedural arrangement, and even carries its equative zest to the point of deeming a revolt justified, if any other arrangement were to be given effect to.

What form will Mr. Jinnah's revolt take? Will he carry on his fighting with those who are disposed to differ from him and elect to participate in a single constitution-making body? That would mean a relapse into the Middle Ages when knights-errant roamed about picking quarrels with all and sundry who failed to regard their lady-loves with the same superlative adoration that possessed their own souls. Time entails restraints on the mightiest. In modern times he that would fashion all to his own pattern of thought by force could scarcely be regarded as politically sane.

If in the Pakistan area the Muslim League is so powerful as Mr. Jinnah claims it is, there is no need at all to resort to threats of revolt and civil war. By merely non-co-operating from the constitution-making body the demand for secession, of the Muslim League,

would have been amply demonstrated. The rub seems to come from the difference in popular psychology between the Pakistan and non-Pakistan areas. In the latter, Muslims being in a minority, are given to a fear complex. Elsewhere in India, they have all the political advantages of a majority; the consciousness of being the owners and rulers of the land is already theirs. The Congress, representing the main political force of the non-Pakistan region of India, is not opposed to Pakistan provided it takes form by way of application of the principle of self-determination. The ricketty part of the technique of the Muslim League consists in the conversion of the fear complex of Muslim minorities in the so-called Congress provinces into a political faith for the Muslim majorities dwelling in the rest of India. This rickettiness carries with it grave danger of collapse for the whole structure of the League's ideology. Mr. Jinnah therefore is driven, on each occasion when a serious move is made for achieving riddance from British domination, to rouse communal passion, declare himself "first and last a Muslim", and trump up a panicky dread of Islam in danger, so that intransigence may look like virtue and saner elements yearning for settlement and unity may be cowed down

into renewed obedience to the League's barren leadership.

Art Gallery for Madras

Rumour has it that the inartistic stain on the cultural character of Madras is in the first stages of being removed by the ultimate creation of a gallery of paintings. The absence of such a gallery has long been a discredit to a city of such size and importance. For the citizen a carefully planned gallery of indigenous and associated paintings can be at once a pleasant relaxation in enjoying beauty in colour and form, and an education in the history of art in general in India and of its local variations expressing the visible life of different branches of the one Indian family. A hotch-potch of ill-hung paintings must be avoided. So must a mixture of eastern and western painting. What the people want first is a knowledge of and pride in paintings in the Indian manner, on Indian subjects and scenes, by Indian artists. When the artistic lag that alien suzerainty induced in the cultural as well as the political life of India is overcome, it will be time enough to talk of the arts of other peoples. The plea of internationalism, in art as in other matters, should not be turned into a subtle expedient for bringing the sensitive Indian mind under the domination of an alien nationalism that does harm to both.

FIRST ASIAN WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

Dr. J. H. Cousins writes: The Press note that "the first conference of the women of the East" is likely to be called at Cairo, as the result of plans formulated at the recent session of the All-India Women's Conference at Karachi, is not correct. The first All-Asian Women's Conference was held at Lahore from January 19 to 23, 1931. The attendance of delegates from outside India, owing to a number of difficult circumstances, was not large, but was fairly representative of continental womanhood, with leading women

from Afghanistan, Burma, Ceylon, Japan and Persia. Unfortunately the threat of war and its fulfilment made a second All-Asian Women's Conference impossible. Now that war is over, it is fitting that a second (not the first) gathering of representatives of women of the East should arise, as did the first, out of the All-India Women's Conference. The official report of the First All-Asian Women's Conference is a document of historical importance.

Sotto Voce



The God-Like Power

I have often wondered why people love to accumulate money; not perhaps because of congenital incapacity to emulate them but assuredly for lack of opportunity. But now I think I know. I have not in mind the poor industrious moles who hid their high denomination notes in rice pots only to find the simple truth painfully brought home to them that rice is any day more nourishing than paper; nor their self-righteous brethren who have it all lodged safe in the banks or in war bonds, though not perhaps as securely as they themselves will be some day in six feet of solid earth. I have come to realise the god-like power of will-making.

The man who can make bequests has a taste of omnipotence. This is the most distinctive gift of the West to the East. And I will admit that our people, though late starters, are apt pupils and are learning fast. Money, say our modern Manus, should "follow the natural course of affection"—the wife in preference to the children, the daughters rather than the sons, the 'own' family and not the joint family. But "natural affection" like the Damodar has a way of changing its course almost every twelve-month, even if it does not take queer shapes as in the case of the English lady who thoughtfully provided for the better housing of grey parrots in the Zoo so that "their amusing ways may be seen and they can enjoy life with their amusing ways." The prospect of a legacy is a powerful inspirer of simulated affection and ill-concealed fear.

Indian testators are as a rule timid and unambitious. For real

originality you must look West of Suez. George Bernard Shaw grudges paying taxes to the British Treasury, but this Irish rebel would posthumously impose on the captor race a phonetic alphabet by the power of the millions earned by laughing at them—as a last joke? His late wife was not to be outdone in feline courtesy. Being of British stock, she naturally gave her money to the noble cause of civilising the Celt by teaching Paddy table manners in the approved Bloomsbury style.

But it is the Canadian son of a Parsi mother, who has dedicated a tidy fortune to the abolition of caste in India, that takes the palm. Note how utterly disinterested he was. It was not a question of sour grapes; the Parsis and presumably the Canadians too have no caste complex. And, unlike the English lady with her grey parrots, he clearly did not find us caste-ridden Hindus amusing. He could not honestly exhibit us to the world as an ornament; and, greatly pitying, would not do so as a warning. It was the highest humanitarianism, we may be sure, that prompted him to try to remould us nearer to his heart's desire.

It would be churlish not to be grateful. Many of our ardent reformers indeed have done our Canadian friend the compliment of thinking that it was the most natural thing in the world for him to leave his money for our benefit. The one thing that leaves them guessing is why he should not have simply handed out the money to Gandhiji. Could it be that, unlike the darshan-seeking millions for whom Gandhiji is a living god, this Parsi-Canadian did not believe that

a rupee for the Harijan Fund was a blow struck for Swaraj?

For that, in substance, is what the masses think; though for Gandhiji himself Harijan uplift like virtue is its own reward. The common folk are mystified when he tells them that he does not believe in image-worship and at the same time demands that the temples be thrown open to the Harijans. They will not for a moment think him capable of suggesting that what is not good enough for him is good for the Harijans; any more than

they can bring themselves to believe that the orthodox oppose on the Machiavellian plea that what is good for them is not good for the Harijans. But the ways of the great are past understanding and their words may not be lightly questioned. So the devout throng humbly drops its rupee into the *hundi*—so reminiscent of Tirupathi—cranes its neck for a fleeting glimpse of the distant saint and goes its way vaguely content that it has piled up merit. As for abolishing caste, did money ever abolish anything?

VIGNESWARA.

VARIETY OF HUMANITY THAT IS INDIA

Terrible Contrast Between Haves and Have-Nots

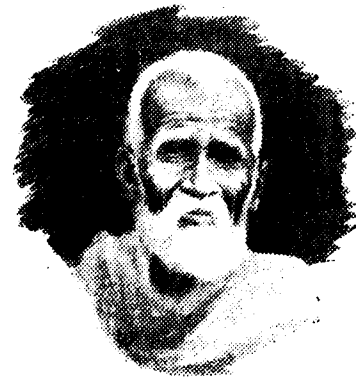
A British Officer on a visit to India writes:

I am not a Beverley Nichols so that after a six months' stay in India, I am unable to give a verdict or pass a sentence.

I also differ from that notorious British publicist on many other matters that the reader may discover for himself.



Poise



Shrunken Sockets

What I can do is to describe a few facets of Indian town life that have made a deep impression on my mind. Some of these sights strike the eye as harshly as the sound of the pneumatic drill strikes the ear.

India is a land of contrasts, and the most terrible is that between the haves and the have-nots.

Comfortably seated in the lounge of a luxury liner, it had been difficult to imagine the lives of these crores who live below the hunger level. Once ashore, paper statistics became translated into reality, and I saw what I had never seen before. The grim reality of hunger that crushes the human spirit to the

level of a beaten dog. The look of hopelessness in the eyes of a beggar. Eyes that should reflect joys and sorrows, laughter and love, sink to a dull leaden uniformity in the shrunken sockets of a starving man.

I have often stood at Round Tana watching the crowd sauntering by, and marvelled at the wide variety of humanity that is India. The deep rich brown coloring of the Southerner requires the skill of a Rembrandt to capture its subtle tints of light and shade.

What a delightful contrast to the whiteness of the European who will spend thousands of rupees if he can afford it, on a holiday in the South of France or Italy in an effort to acquire the correct shade of tan which is so fashionable. A cheaper, but equally efficacious method is to anoint the body with sun tan stain which can be obtained for a few pence from any chemist in England. Out of the crowd these scenes I shall remember. The sweating back of the coolie glistening in the sun as he toils grunting and panting at some impossible load. The graceful figure of the young wife as she carries her husband's lunch balanced easily on her head. Does she know that in the West, students of the Ballet attend select and expensive schools of dancing in an effort to acquire just such perfect poise and grace?



Some Impossible Load

I imagine that in every country in the world the student can be easily picked out in the crowd. In him is concentrated all the BEST traditions and cultures, ideals and beliefs that go to make a nation.

Dressed in a simple white shirt and dhotie, the clean cut aesthetic features of the student are easily recognised. Upstanding but not arrogant, he symbolises the future free India, and all those values which India only can give to the world.

Everybody Wants To Be The Headquarters

Everybody wants to be the Headquarters. "I am geographically central", says one. "I am good climate", says another. "I am Rayala Seema", says a third. "I have a good water supply", says the fourth. "I am an ancient ruin and therefore sacred", says a fifth. "I will very soon be a ruin and sacred", says a sixth. "I have had a history", claims a seventh. "Having had no history in the past, I want to have one in the future", says another. "I am backward, so push me forward", says yet another. And so forth.

—Sir C. R. REDDI.

SIDELIGHTS ::

Party standards are the shadows in which patriotism is buried, —St. Pierre.

All Andhra is agog over the recently announced selections of Congress candidates for the forthcoming provincial elections. From all I hear, the members of the Parliamentary Board seem to have made little effort to determine their choice from the standpoint of the competence of the competing candidates. Each of the members of the Board appears to have been allowed to have his own way in dealing with the candidates belonging to his district. In return, he conceded to his colleagues a similar pampering. Some districts are not represented on the Board. These were allotted to members belonging to other districts either individually or in combinations of more than one.

The members struck a bargain for agreed use, for personal interests, of the power placed in their hands for public purposes. No wonder that strange decisions should have been arrived at. Vennelakanti Raghaviah of Nellore was one of the applicants turned down. Not one of those selected for the various constituencies in the district can hold a candle to him either in point of public spirit, knowledge of affairs, intelligence, or actual record of loyalty to the Congress. I am averse to measure political worth with jail-going. For one thing, the strides that the national movement has taken, has left imprisonment much in the rear as a form of suffering. Jail has become a tame affair. These are days when maiming and shooting have come to be of too frequent occurrence for duress in prison to serve any longer as pull with the public for the elicitation of sympathy. Secondly, the exploitation of prison tenure for political purposes has gone much too far. Politicians with an eye on ministerial chances have,

in obedience to Congress mandates, gone to prison reluctantly, and from that moment onwards spent their ingenuity for achieving paroles and releases. The pretence of revolutionary zest is shown to be pretty thin in the light of doings of this sort, for all the proclamations in honour of it blown from public platforms. Some of Vennelakanti's successful rivals might have claimed attention at the hands of the Parliamentary Board for the spell of jail life that they have had. If so, he has had it too, not less often, and for as long if not more. Also, he stuck to it without angling for liberation through tenacious canvassings of influence.

Social service for the benefit of Yanadis, that deserves to be characterised as truly epic, stands to the credit of Raghaviah. The Yanadis are a tribe peculiar to Nellore district. Ten years ago they were a ragged, slovenly lot that found idleness heavenly, bathed rarely, lived on the streets, helped themselves to leavings of cast-off food from pavements and dust-bins and occupied a sub-human level midway between slaves and dogs and cattle. To-day they form a robust, lively, agreeable, decent-looking community on the social landscape of the district. Their traditional hang-dog look has disappeared. They have begun to dress smartly. They are taking to schools and brilliant young men are rising in their midst. For all this transformation, praise is due to Raghaviah more than to any other man. But the rich landlords do not like him. They look upon him with aversion, holding him responsible for loss of domination over this very community to which he has been able to impart a new consciousness of rights, dignity and self-respect.

The Parliamentary Board stands condemned in withholding the Congress ticket from an applicant of

Raghaviah's sterling political worth. The same may be said of their manner of treating Sri Unnava Lakshminarayana and Ramakotiswara Rao, brave souls both, of singularly unostentatious manner, steadfast will and refined emotions. For purity of being they are household words in their localities. Discarding them, whom has the Parliamentary Board singled out for their favour? Among the candidates of their choice it is painful to find a good sprinkling of persons who ought not to have any place in a legislature: political non-entities, the war-made rich and time-servers of questionable antecedents.

The Board is accountable to the public for its mishandling of the whole business of selecting candidates. Love of Congress will

make the people vote for anyone put up in the name of the Congress, but wrong selection of candidates is turning what should be a source of joy at the polling booth into a matter of reluctant reconciliation with a painful contingency. These dispensers of Congress tickets are responsible for a reckless squandering of precious Congress influence stored with immense labour in the past, and in the very name of serving the Congress they have been disrupting it. When I carried my misgivings to Sri Prakasam, he gave a patient hearing but said nothing. But he somehow gave me the impression that he too has been a helpless witness to much he disapproved of and could not prevent, in the proceedings of the Parliamentary Board.—S A K A.

[These tit bits are collected from books and magazines. No claim is made to originality. Readers are also invited to contribute.]

TIT-BITS:

The *Christian Science Monitor* reports the story of a gift received by an American family from their soldier son stationed in India. Embroidered on the gift was the strange legend "TAM HTAB". They called a neighbour and asked if he could decipher the inscription. He, having no knowledge of the strange language, studied closely the piece of cloth spread out in all its beauty on a table. Finally he decided to turn the cloth over. "TAM HTAB" then became BATH MAT.

Walter Winchell tells an interesting anecdote of Mark Twain. Mark Twain was once instructed by the editor of a newspaper where he worked as reporter never to state anything as a fact that he did not know of his own personal knowledge. The following day Twain sent in this yarn: "A woman giving

the name of Mrs. James Jones, who is reported to be one of the society leaders of the city, is said to have given what purported to be a party yesterday to a number of alleged ladies. The hostess claims to be the wife of a reputed attorney."

A newspaper in a small American town waged a vigorous campaign against the town council. One of its stories was headed: "Half The Town Council Dishonest". The outraged members of the council protested, demanding a retraction. The editor agreed. Next day the newspaper carried the headline, "Half The Town Council Not Dishonest".

Advertisement in a newspaper for position wanted: "Secretary: wants position: no bad habits. Willing to learn".

I, the Irishman, see the English, not as born fools but as non-adult fat-heads spoilt by too much coal and iron in the days when these conferred a monopoly of steam power, and now bewildered in an age when nothing counts but brain power and atomic bombs.
—Bernard Shaw.

FATHER AND DAUGHTER

A Short Story

My friend was kind to all. He could not bear the sight of others suffering. To relieve pain, wherever he came across it, he emptied his purse, rarely thinking of the trials that he brought on himself for the sorrow. But within the home circle, he was a Nimrod of a man. The atmosphere became chilling on his entrance. He rarely spoke to his wife. She was a second wife, much younger than himself, the first having died years earlier leaving a daughter whose story provided matter for never-ending excitement to gossipers. By the second wife he had two daughters. He moved with them as with strangers.

The town where he lived was midway between rural and urban. It lacked the freedom of the big cities where immense jostling crowds reduced the atoms of humanity that composed them to an infinitesimal status, but conferred on them as compensation absolute freedom from prying eyes and the discomforts of neighbourly public opinion. It had outgrown the good-fellowship of village life. Interference without concern in the affairs of each other was the general social passion of the place. It abounded in busybodies whose chief occupation was scandal. They equated virtue with convention and gave no quarter to anyone found lapsing from it. The full force of their battery of criticism was day in and day out directed on my friend, whom let us call R.

Whispered backbitings carried on in an organised way can ruin the good name of any man. R. soon acquired a large reputation as a cruel domestic tyrant. He did nothing to combat it. One effect it had on him was to impart to his exterior a positively forbidding reserve.

Yet I could discern occasionally flashes of fond irrepressible yearning in his eyes for the children

whom he was accused of neglecting. Here was a man, I felt, to whom it had become a habit to throw a mask of indifference over life and look much worse than he really was at heart.

He was not the sort of man given to confidences over his own pains. It was only by piecing together scraps of information from here and there over a long period, that comprehension of what had occurred came to me. With R's recent untimely death, there is no more any reason why it should not be told.

II.

R. loved his first wife dearly. After her death, his whole being was wrapped up in Preeti the child of his first marriage. Preeti combined with an appearance of porcelain daintiness a strong will that put to shame grown-up people of twice and thrice her age. An over-refined delicacy of sensitiveness was the Achilles' heel of her will. Stray words not meant to hurt often inflicted on her indescribable agonies which her proud spirit would not let her betray by any sign. An endless capacity for silent misery ate into her vitals and marred the cheerfulness of an otherwise grandly moulded being.

When she came of marriageable age, discussion ensued in the family circle over the eligibility of this or that young man, as is the wont in Hindu households. Nobody was good enough for Preeti. She turned down all comers. It looked as though she would never marry. Then, suddenly to the surprise of all, her choice fell on a far from attractive gray-haired middle-aged man of asinine patience and no particular merit.

After marriage, she could not endure him. She had deep respect for human qualities in him like gentleness and compassion. But she could not bear his touch. He doted

on her. He became miserable over something unapproachable in her which he could not understand or overcome. But as he was a great gentleman, he never became rough as so many unsatisfied husbands do, but left her entirely to herself, swallowing his mortification as best he could, and hoping for a change that never came.

Within two months Preeti gave up the hopeless attempt to keep up appearances and came back to her father's house. Here she lived for a year. Then one day, when he returned from a journey, he found her gone. Where she is no one knows to this day. She had disappeared as completely as if she were dead.

III.

Shanta was closest to Preeti among her friends. She and another college mate, Leela, broke journey on their way home after the holidays for a day's stay with R.

In the garden they fell to talking of the past.

Leela asked: I have always wondered why Preeti, who was never tired of singing the glories of Sita and used to lecture to us so severely about our duties as wives, why she, such a lofty puritan, should have treated her own husband so unkindly? So nice to everybody else, why was she so harsh to him? He seemed to me to be a very good man.

Shanta, after some hesitation, said: "If Preeti had not been so utterly sincere, she might have won renown as a pattern for all wives. I can tell you this. Nobody struggled harder to be fair. Hers was a terrible fate. Physical repugnance *versus* friendship, loyalty, respect and—duty. With her strong will, she could have fought and subdued the

physical. It was her idealism that prevented her. She felt that to surrender to a husband without joy was no better than selling the body for the sake of reputation and respectability. She could not bring herself down to this, however hard she tried. She rarely slept at nights on account of restlessness of conscience."

Leela: "With such high principles, why did she marry at all a man she did not like?"

Shanta, grief-struck and overcome, sobbed out: "There you come upon the most tragic part of the story. One day Preeti overheard her step-mother complaining to a neighbour about the trials of parents with marriageable girls who found nobody good enough for them. The words went to her heart like an arrow. Losing reason and all in the hell-fire of sensitiveness, she gave herself to the next..."

A shuffling noise near by made the girls start. They had thought themselves alone. Looking round, they saw R. staring at vacancy with a mad look in his eyes.

Neither of them, I was told, ever forgot that look or the woe-begone, utterly crushed expression of that face and figure.

* * *

How a chance word can wreck a life—more than one life; what unbelievable chastity can abide in the derided victims of cruel slander; what unrelievable burden of remorse and despair can secretly weigh down the seemingly heartless—these thoughts, recurrently illustrated by the mess that over-runs the cosmos and is called Life, have made for me such a confusion of true and false that I am never sure when the one begins and the other ends.—X.

Those who have privileges almost always develop false or distorted ideas about themselves. They are under a compulsion to deceive themselves as well as others through some kind of irrational theory which will seek to justify their monopoly of those privileges, rather than to explain the annoying truths about how the privileges are in fact acquired and held.—James Burnham.

MEASURES TO TACKLE FOOD CRISIS

Grow More Food Campaign : Politics in North West Frontier : Calcutta Disturbances : Police Firing Incidents

To be forewarned is to be fore-armed, as the saying is. Now that the gravity of the food situation in the country has become apparent, it is part of prudence to tackle the problem with imaginative insight. But the present Government of India is notoriously lacking in it. If past experience were any dependable guide, the present system of Government at the Centre is incapable of coping with the food crisis, as the Bengal famine in 1943 abundantly illustrated with such disastrous consequences. Indeed, it was this realisation, and the fact that the people had no confidence in the Government, that must have made Lord Wavell turn to Gandhiji and Mr Jinnah for co-operation, without depending on his colleagues on the Executive Council.

There is far greater necessity now for a well-conceived Grow More Food campaign than ever before. What with serious damage of food-crops due to the last cyclone in the East Coast, the failure of winter rains in North India and the total failure of the north-east monsoon in South India, the country is faced with severe shortage of food-grains, official calculation placing the immediate shortage of food-grains at 3,000,000 tons. In the Commons debate on food shortage in this country, Mr. G. Nicholson stressed the anomaly of allotting 60,000 tons of Siam rice to Cuba which refused to ration rice, whereas India had been denied immediate help though the problem was more acute. Again, at the discussions in the General Assembly of the UNO none of the participants seemed to be over-anxious to help India, though Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar reminded them that his country did not allow a single foreign resident to starve in the war-years—even when people died like fleas in Calcutta! It is a tragic circumstance that the Indian Food Mission, sponsored by those

who had bungled woefully at the time of the Bengal famine, should wait upon other nations for help after the rulers of the country had neglected to take the precautions they ought to have taken.

The North-West Frontier Province has a population of about 3 millions, of whom nearly 90 per cent are Muslims. There could be no separate, independent Pakistan State (of Jinnah's conception) without the Frontier Province in it: it is just inconceivable. So the result of the elections in that Province just coming to a close is full of significance. According to the figures received at the time of writing, the Congress has captured 29 seats, the League 17, Nationalist Muslims 2 and the Akalis 1. With such a clear majority in the N. W. F. Legislature the formation of a Congress Ministry may be taken to be a foregone conclusion.

It is clear that the verdict of not only the rural people of the Frontier but even of the urban is against the League, and against Pakistan (as some would fain hope). In Peshawar City, which is supposed to be a stronghold of the League, only 16,000 voted collectively for the League candidates, while 22,000 voted against the League!

Not only has the Congress secured a majority of Muslim seats, it has even secured more Muslim votes than the League, not counting those obtained by Muslim candidates from other groups like Nationalist Muslims, the Akalis, etc.

Following demonstrations organised to protest against the (discriminatory) sentence by the Court Martial on Captain Abdul Rashid of the INA, disturbances broke out in Calcutta last week. The police promptly opened fire, which resulted in heavy casualties. The military were called in. The casualties tallied 53 dead and over 500 injured

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well-known in South India particularly and outside generally for fifty-five years as Chellaram Gianchand or Chellarams is now branching off.

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This intimate and personal acquaintance with the customers, the introduction of modern methods of business and the inclusion of up-to-date goods, with the firm adherence to sound and lasting principles that the old founders laid down—these ensure to the shopping public something extremely desirable. This firm, therefore, requests the public to extend to it their valuable custom.

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According to the version of the Government, there had been in existence an order prohibiting public assembly or procession without the permission of the Commissioner of Police; the object of the order was "precaution against possible obstruction, annoyance or interference with the conduct of public or private business in a locality in which the Legislative buildings, Government House, the High Court", etc., were situated. The procession on Rashid Day was taken out, it was stated, in violation of the order.

The question involved in the whole affair is not whether in Captain Rashid's case the authorities were right (legally or morally) in awarding seven years' R.I. for acts of "gross brutality" and "offending civilised behaviour" and not condoning "acts flagrantly abhorrent to civilised conduct." The real issue is

whether the people were within their rights in staging such demonstrations to express their feelings of protest.

* * *

Instances in which the Police have resorted to firing have multiplied in recent months, and it would be hard to convince the general public that in every case the authorities were driven to the necessity of opening fire to disperse unruly mobs. Rather than claim immunity from making mistakes for the police, the Government ought to hold a public inquiry into such incidents. Otherwise the public would never feel satisfied, whatever the vigour of the official measures taken to suppress expression of their resentment, and the prevailing ill-will between rulers and ruled would go on gaining in volume and intensity.

CRIME FICTION

I am now arrived at that stage of life when my first pre-occupation with the daily newspaper is to glance through the obituary column, and note with mixed feelings the passing of many of my fellows from the sunny to the sunless land. Normally I should have overlooked such an item as the death of Philip Oppenheim since he was neither one of the very great, nor one of the few, intimate personal friends or close kinsmen who alone justify our wearing black in public. But that tireless author of 'thrillers' of various kinds was honoured with an obituary notice in a contemporary, evidently composed by a young and enthusiastic 'fan.' And that reminded me of how I too was young once, and with what anticipatory thrills I used to devour the thrillers of thirty years ago, in colonial editions priced at the now incredible rate of six pence a volume. Guy Boothby, W. Le Queux, Haggard, and Oppenheim himself—what an impressive brotherhood they were, leading us as Beatrice led Dante, through charmed circles of high diplomacy, high finance, glamorous vamps, interna-

tional intrigue, mystery and murder and back once more to firm earth! I was delivered from such thralldom by mere efflux of time; for with St. Paul I decided to put away childish things from me, having lost the magic innocence of childhood which made them acceptable to me. Alas, the pressure of an urgent and, for the most part, inescapable reality all around me has weaned me from those fugitive escapes into the world of make-believe which novels in general, and the sensational varieties of them in special, hold out for the majority of readers. Wherefore I offer this tribute to an early love which, while itself remaining for ever young and fair, makes Tithonus of us all!

* * *

Without being a highbrow, I cannot but blush at the greenness of my judgment in my salad days. But I have known my betters, to wit a busy lawyer, an exciting logician, and a fine student of the classics turning to the publications of the 'Crime Club' as to a diurnal soporific, or the conclusive 'night-cap' on the day's labours. I have seen one

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B.A., B.L.

Expressed

SURAJMAL'S

The
JEWELLERS

313, Esplanade, Madras.

scholarly 'fan' annotating these crime books with a minute particularity which was intended to expose the extent of the authors' versatile ignorance! As with the readers, so with their authors—they too are drawn from all sections of society,—many being already distinguished in other fields. Indeed, it looks as if it is a point of honour with present-day writers to try their hand at one 'crime' book at least, even as it was *de rigueur* in Elizabethan times for people to attempt sonnets, and in the eighteenth century (as Pope complains) for a mob of gentlemen to file up the heroic couplets with ease! Thus we see the vogue of crime fiction spread in the widest commonalty to-day! And I noticed too in a recent review of some of these books a gratified expression that the scene of one of the plots was shifted within the unexplored but hallowed precincts of the Cambridge University!

The artistic treatment of crime is at last as old as the classics. The ingredients have been basically unaltered, though flavouring elements have varied according to the resources of individual chefs. They are crime mystification, suspense and poetic justice. I wonder how many people realise that the Oedipus trilogy is a prophetic, supreme epitome of all modern crime fiction? Indeed, Shakespeare runs the classics close; for you will have to count a terrific number of murders in his plays, the technique of no two of which is the same! That you will agree is after all the essence of a crime story!

What the modern writer does is to begin with a murder which is the least exciting part of his story, and then to proceed to scatter a thousand clues as misleading as those furnished in a cross-word puzzle, until at last one of them leads to the solution of the mystery.

The chief distinction between the ancient and modern forms of this genre seems to me to lie in the ethical and philosophical attitude underlying them. The ancient clas-

sics, and even Shakespeare, recognised that mystery and morality went together. It is very curious that the medieval theatre drew its sustenance entirely from these concepts. Now in our age of emancipation, science has debunked all the mystery behind life, while morality has been proved no more than the fraudulent imposition of a governing class on the dumb and downtrodden proletariat. We have evolved a new, objective and rational attitude to morality of which we are proud; but it has had the result of emptying out the baby along with the bath!

It was with the exhaustion of aristocratic tradition in literature, and the weakening of the romantic view of life that we enter on the era of the common man who clamoured for literacy honours long before he begun to demand his political or economic freedom. Hence arose the Picaresque school out of the fading after-glow of the romantic impulse. It specialised in giving us the romances of real life. King Cambyses and Othello gave place to John Thumb the Great; Jack came forward to claim the title of 'giant-killer.' Every soldier in Napoleon's army (it was said) carried the marshal's baton in his knapsack; even so, almost anybody could be the hero (as every type of man the villain) of the modern crime novel.

The ethical or philosophical pre-occupation persisted down to the end of the nineteenth century. Masters of detective and crime fiction like Poe, Hawthorne, Stevenson—to mention only a few—were seized with the old-fashioned notion that the highest art subserved the highest morality. The modern crime story has pronounced the divorce between the two with a finality which has been effective because it has been unnoticed. It is power politics which has corrupted the human outlook through and through. The end justifies the means. Success is a sufficient solvent, if not sovereign absolution to the re-emergence of Machiavellism which

first appeared in the decadence of the medieval world. It was an early attempt at a scientific study and use of crime as means to ends. Note the spirit of Medicis who approached their problems in a spirit of amoral, professional detachment. Arsenics as well as Aphrodisiacs have played a venerable role in European history from the days of Aspasia to those of Mata Hari. To-day, we are caught in a no less decadence on the threshold of the Atomic age; and it calls for a revision of our values to give meaning to our changed pursuits. Who knows but that we are obscurely groping towards a new Morality which is dimly unfolded to us in the Crime Fiction of to-day? Though I doubt the possibility of any such miracle in the cause of the new enlightenment, I am willing to wait for decisive proofs. But I think it will be a bad day for the world, if it can ever argue itself out of the ancient theological attitude to crime as the one thing which we, men, are called upon to fight against. The habit of manufacturing new crimes results in discrediting, in the popular mind, crimes—both old and new!

Wherefore, I am tempted to relate the vogue of modern Crime fiction to many deplorable manifestations of mass psychology to-day. There is a general callosity of feeling and thought which condones, if it does not connive at, contraventions of the moral law. It is unfashionable to raise the question whether a particular course of conduct is in consonance with any system of Dharma. There is a deadening of conscience all the world over that tolerates atrocities as a normal

feature of existence. Men are thus pushed back in the scale to savour brutality with a new, intellectual zest.

Not only has virtue gone out of the traditional virtues, but tradition itself has suffered a seemingly irreparable eclipse. What is the supreme title of your Hitlers to greatness? That they came from nowhere, and were indeed nobodies! This is no doubt gratifying to the *amour propre* of the great majority of us who are all nobodies; but it does not seem to be of any other use to us. Are you a king, or an aristocrat or vain enough to trace your ancestry back a few generations? Then summary judgment is passed against you—'Off with his head!' Why, because you are *ex-hypothesi* identified with reaction, the satanic hordes of Fascism, or whatever else is the latest label by which we stigmatise an ancient and indestructible opposition.

Let me hasten to add that allisms whether of the right or the left, logically pursued, tend to tamper with the integrity of the individual, and debase him to the status of a pawn in chess—which is politics in theory. This inter-relationship between the quality of our entertainments and the calibre of our Governments is not as widely recognised as it should be. For look, how seductively the movies, like Crime fiction, make the worse appear the better reason! Such are the consequences of playing with fire, or of dallying with crime; they entail a payment which is out of all proportion to what we receive from them.

—P. M.

SIDELIGHTS

Comments (written earlier) in this week's "Sidelights" (Page 14) on the Selection of Congress candidates by the Andhra Parliamentary Board have been proved right by some of the changes made by the Central Parliamentary Board, just announced. The comments are allowed to go in this issue as they do not cease to be relevant for a proper understanding of the calibre of the Andhra Parliamentary Board.

THE "CLIQUE" THAT "COUNTS" IN THE OFFICIAL CONGRESS IN MADRAS

BY KHAS SUBBA RAU

IN the very first issue of *Harijan* (revived) Gandhiji paid to C. Rajagopalachari a glowing tribute in these words: "He (Rajaji) is a great social reformer, never afraid to act according to his belief. His political wisdom and integrity are beyond question. I was therefore pained to find a clique against him. It is a clique that evidently counts in the official Congress in Madras. But the masses are devoted to Rajaji".

Kamaraj Nadar, President of the Tamil Nadu P. C. C., was evidently piqued by the use of the word "clique" by Gandhiji. He assumed that it could apply only to him and to his supporters in the Tamil Nadu Congress Parliamentary Board. On that assumption he resigned from the board but advised his followers not to follow his example, not to resign, but to act differently, to remain on the board.

Why a leader, pursuing a line avowedly in the light of a principle, should think the principle well served by his followers adopting an exactly contrary line, is puzzling. But that is only a very minor part of the puzzlement of Kamaraj's reaction to Gandhiji's *Harijan* article.

The Mahatma picks and chooses his words most carefully. It is noteworthy that nowhere did he breathe a word about the parliamentary board. The reference that he made was to "the official Congress in Madras." If resignation was the proper reply to be made to it by Kamaraj, it should have been not of the chairmanship of the parliamentary board which is due to come to an end shortly anyway, but the Presidentship of the P.C.C., the actual embodiment of "the official Congress in Madras."

CAREFUL study of what Gandhiji wrote makes it clear however that the clique he had in mind was

not the official Congress, it was a body outside the official Congress, which counted in the official Congress. One cannot count in oneself. The content of counting is exclusion, separate existence. The sort of counting in the official Congress attributed by Gandhiji to the clique concerned is in no way affected by Kamaraj's resignation from the parliamentary board, since his resignation makes no change whatsoever in the organisational structure of the official Congress in Madras, which continues to be the same as before.

The public is thus confronted with a queer situation. The President of the Tamil Nadu P.C.C. makes a great furore about having been heart-struck by Gandhiji's stricture. But the whole point of it is left uncared for. An irrelevance is clothed with the portentous robes of a crisis marked with the label, "Resignation". The true heart of the matter is not touched at all.

The true heart of the matter cannot be reached by any process of continued tenderness to the clique named by Gandhiji. A severance of the relationship between the clique and the official Congress is alone what would have met the real point in Gandhiji's comment, and assuaged the pain confessed to by him.

A LEADING Press magnate is the moving spirit of the clique in question. There have been, in fact, more than one Press magnate concerned in publicity operations of an aggressive kind planned for the political undoing of C. R. Strange stories have been going the rounds, of one having been offered a ministership and another a Congress ticket, while the most toweringly ambitious of them all would seem to have been led into thinking that

"Chain" Newspapers

The Press in India should guard itself against big combines starting a chain of papers and dictating policies detrimental to the interests of the country, said Jawaharlal Nehru in his address to the Editors' Conference at Allahabad.

An admirable dictum. How is it to be given effect to, since the voice of the Press in India is itself being usurped by proprietors of 'chains' of papers? Just those against whom redemption is urged, dominate.

It will not merely do to clap hands. If Nehru's appeal is not to be lost, the Editors' Conference should exclude from representative positions exponents of the undesirable tendency condemned by him.

Working journalists have good cause to bless Nehru. When a new paper is started by the owner of an old one, it means that profits which could have meant higher pay to the staff are diverted outside. Very often the staff of the new paper are paid more liberally than that of the old with years of faithful service to the same proprietor to their credit.

It is also time that someone of commanding influence like Nehru denounced as it deserves the outrageous habit of the same person editing newspapers located hundreds of miles away from each other—a sheer physical impossibility. It insults the intelligence of people and, by tolerance being construed as approval, makes the Press of the country look silly and ridiculous.

the whole Government would come into his pocket. Election-eve is a great time for stories not all of which are credit-worthy and it is generally wise to ignore them. But when their purport is ratified by advance payment in the form of engineered publicity, then it would be equally unwise to refrain from taking note of them altogether. I give below, for what it may be worth, a sample of instructions conceived in the name of editing as part of the anti-C. R. Press campaign that is still going on, not wholly, I make bold to state, without the privity of "the official Congress in Madras."

- (1) Drop featuring C. R.'s speeches.
- (2) Publish only very brief reports, regarding C. R. as just an ordinary person "like anyone of us".
- (3) Use prefix "Mr." before C.R.'s name. Do not call him "Rajaji".
- (4) Give greater prominence to activities of Kamaraj Nadar in contrast to C. R.'s

It often happens that journalists and politicians work in unison. Objective impartiality and scrupulous fairness to all the contending sides in a controversy are perhaps unattainable to the generality of newspaper proprietors to whom journalism is a step forward from the stock exchange, a hectic dividend-earning venture. Taking sides may be objectionable if only because, even considered as propaganda, it is inexpert, unartistic, ineffective and eventually not very helpful to the side taken, (as it tends to create more prejudice than conviction) but it can be condoned as a common frailty natural to our imperfect human state. But what distin-

guishes error from offence is double-dealing.

THE author of the instructions I have cited above approached at about the same time a very distinguished citizen of considerable influence and put before him a suggestion like this: "We all want C.R. But we want him as the head of a strong Government uniting under his leadership all parties, and not merely as the partisan chief of one section having continually to struggle with another for maintaining his position. *Unanimity is the thing.* Now the opponents of C. R. are prestige-ridden. They do not want to look small. If their sense of importance is gratified, they themselves will be willing to make an overture to re-install C. R. I want you to use your influence to persuade C. R. to retire for the time being from the political field so that a little later he may come back with the support of all parties including those now opposing him."

The right to be in the wrong is not only a form of liberty, it is also an essential of the process of learning by mistakes, which is by no means negligible among the various methods of growth. But pursuing contradictory ends simultaneously with secretive piecemeal wooing of dissimilar interests is the mark of the intriguer monkeying with politics without any regard to public welfare. Collaboration with persons working as a clique in this manner does no credit to the Congress. It is precisely such collaboration on the part of the office-bearers in control that is involved when the clique is said to count in the official Congress.

How inadequate is Kamaraj's resignation from the parliamentary board for meeting the situation referred to by Gandhiji in his *Harijan* article!

Soviet Russia As We Saw It

By W. LAKSHMANA RAO AND MELLIE SCHOLINGER

[The Soviet State, which is twenty-eight years old, experienced many trials since it was born in the storms of the Socialist Revolution of 1917, the grimmest being in the years of war against Hitlerite Germany that ended only recently. It has emerged successfully from its latest trial, thereby demonstrating the undoubted vitality of the Soviet system. How the State apparatus was utilised for the promotion of the welfare and happiness of citizens, is illustrated in the story of the transformation of Russia from a backward country into a highly developed industrial State of modern culture and progressive scientific outlook. This story of absorbing interest is told in two parts by W. Lakshmana Rao and Mellie Scholinger from their own first-hand experience. This is the first part.—Ed.]

Moscow was in the hands of the builders; it was being re-built to meet the new needs. Before the Revolution in 1917 the city's population was 1½ millions, but when we went there it had increased to 4 millions—which meant a terrible shortage of houses. Much had been achieved during the first five-year plan. Economy and speed were then the guiding considerations; the result was not pleasing. But later things became different. The tempo was relaxed. Building for comfort and beauty had commenced. Already many beautiful apartment houses had been built. Nearly every apartment house had its cinema, children's theatres, department stores, playgrounds and kindergarten.

Town-planning

Moscow has struck a new note in town-planning. Yesterday the Kremlin—once the residence of the Tsars and now the seat of the Government—was the heart of the city's life and the city grew round it.



The Authors

But to-day the factories are the nerve-centres of Moscow's life. There are many factories in Moscow and these are the centres round which the city's life revolves.

We are convinced that, slowly but surely, dirt, filth, disease and poverty are being liquidated. To have a conception of the grand fashion in which this stupendous work of reconstruction is being accomplished, the thoroughness with which every detail had been thought out with a central co-ordinated plan, so that the whole city represents an organic unity, one should visit the Building Exhibition. There you see huge electrified models of Moscow City as it stands now, and another as Moscow would look five years hence—after the completion of the current 5-year plan.

The only means of communication in Moscow used to be the rattling, rumbling, old-world tram cars. They are still there but

hundreds of new motor buses and diesel trolley cars—all manufactured in Soviet Russia—are now plying in the city. Except for the few motor cars belonging to foreign Embassies and the Consulates, almost all the automobiles in the city are Russian-made. The 6-cylinder 80/120 h.p. 6-seater "Stalin", the first product of the Stalin-grad Automobile Factory, was really a magnificent pro-

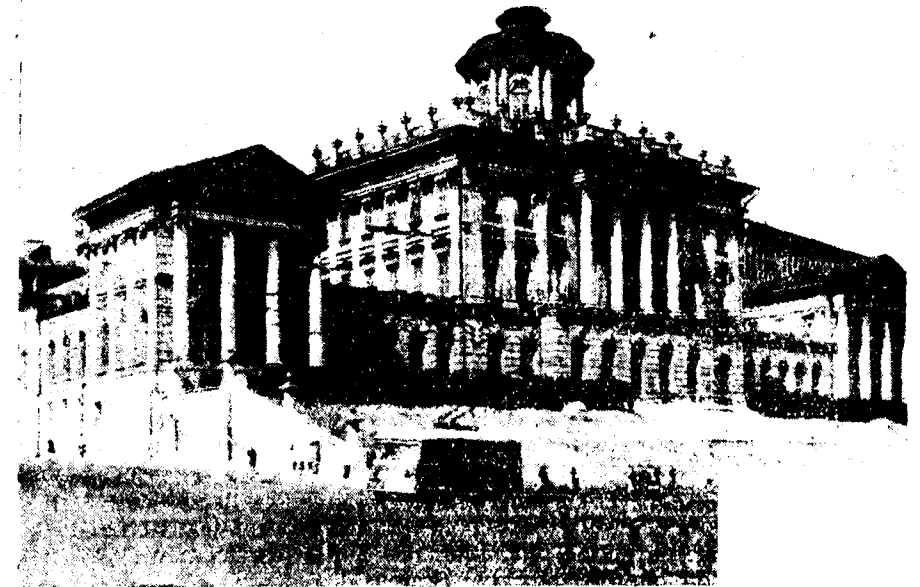
duction, every part of it having been manufactured in Russia.

The underground railway, the "Metro", is the best built one in the world and beats the Tube in London, the sub-way in Paris and the Underground in Berlin.

The Moscow Soviet and the 5-year plans have decided that Moscow shall not have more than 5 million people. In the Moscow of the future, there would be no overcrowding, no indiscriminate building, no choking out of children's play-grounds and open-air spaces, no congested thoroughfares, provided (as the woman guide told us) nothing from the outside world interferes with Moscow's plans.

With one stroke the young Soviet nation has abolished private property, profit and capitalism. The land, its crops, and its hidden treasures, the railways, steamers and airways, colleges and schools, factories and workshops—all these are owned by the people and for their benefit and the benefit of their children.

Daily we set out on a fact-finding mission, visiting institutions and



The Lenin State Library in Moscow.

places of interest and meeting people with a view to gathering as much grist as possible to our mill.

Prices were high in Moscow but the bazars were full of things and willing buyers. While in capitalist countries each family had a single bread-winner, supplemented by the spare-time earnings of one or two other members, in the U.S.S.R., every citizen was a worker earning wages or earning a pension or being supported by the State; and in a family of say five, everyone, except the baby, generally contributed something to the family expenditure.

Education

A child's education commences at the age of 3 or 4 at the kindergarten where it remains till the age of 8. There it learns everything by itself in the play-way. As the child gets older, it gets a couple of short lessons, of about an hour's duration, in reading, writing, arithmetic, dancing, gymnastics, singing and painting. In these years the little ones are taught to live, work, learn and play in a collective spirit.

At 8 the child enters regular school and from then on till 16.

attendance is compulsory and education is free. The teaching is supplemented by visits to museums, factories, industrial establishments and political lessons. History and Geography are taught from the Marxist view-point. The whole keynote of education is to build character and personality rather than to cram the mind.

After leaving the secondary school, the young persons must choose a profession or continue at the college till 16, if they reside in town, or till 15 if they belong to villages. If they decide on a technical profession, they join one of the technicums and put in a four-year study side by side with practical work for nearly half this time. Factory apprentices have also to undergo courses at these technical colleges and attend their own trade schools attached to their factories.

Entrance to the university is strictly on merit and the State regulates the number of new admissions according to plan, i.e., according to the needs of the State. In every subject, both theoretical and applied research are encouraged.

Education, whether at the secondary school or at the *technicum*, or at the university or at the technical college, was absolutely free. No distinction was made between man and woman or between one race and another, and the system of education was identical in such widely dispersed places as Moscow, Alma Ata, Komsomolsk and Tiflis.

* * *

With the gigantic strides made in education in less than two decades, the movement to make reading popular among the people spread, and there were, at the time of our visit, 70,000 libraries in the Soviet Union. In Moscow itself there were as many as 500 libraries, and the famous Lenin Library was designed to house 9 million volumes and was the biggest of them all. The book-publishing business is carried on by trusts, of which the Moscow State Publishing Trust is the biggest, employing 8,000 workers. The annual output of books was 30,000,000!

In the U.S.S.R. there is perfect equality between man and woman. Equal status, recognition of motherhood as the highest gift of woman to the nation, the protection of children, the right of divorce—all these are guaranteed in the Constitution.

Equality

Marriage for woman is no barrier to a career. She is no more compelled to leave her job than a man is. No pregnant woman can be dismissed from a job, or refused work on the plea that she is unable to turn out her full quota of work; and if any factory manager or director does so, he is liable to imprisonment for a term of two years. An expectant mother after 5 months of pregnancy is put on light work on full pay and gets 5 weeks' leave with full pay before confinement and 4 weeks after confinement.

A working mother can, during work, leave her child at any one of the innumerable *creches* or kindergartens or at the nurseries compulsorily maintained by the establishment where she works. These *creches* and kindergartens and nurseries receive the child and give it a bath and clean clothes, food at the proper time, and all the while the child is in the company of others of its age, and works and plays and sleeps and romps about under the watchful eyes of competent instructors and attendants.

The State encourages large families by granting liberal yearly allowances. The director of the Mother's Clinic told us that no woman need refuse to become a mother, and no man need think of avoiding parenthood merely on the plea of 'can't afford it'.

* * *

We paid a visit to the nearest *Zags* or Bureau of Births, Deaths and Marriages to get acquainted with Soviet laws on marriage and divorce. Soviet laws on marriage are designed to protect the mother and child and to safeguard their interests and rights. In the U.S.S.R. marriage is a voluntary union of persons of equal status. Registration



Soviet children at an Automobile School.

of marriages is encouraged for the purpose of maintaining vital statistics, but it is not at all compulsory and both forms of marriage are equally valid in the eyes of law. All children are legitimate and enjoy equal rights. Divorce can be obtained by mutual agreement of the parties or by notification by one of them. In cases where there are children, the State determines, before the divorce is granted, how much each of the parties has to contribute to the upkeep of the child and with whom it should live. Failure to make regular payments of the alimony is punishable with imprisonment up to a term of 2 years.

* * *

All women are self-supporting. The spectre of unemployment does not haunt any woman. So no woman need marry just to provide economic security for herself. "What to do with daughters?" is not a question which assails Soviet

parents, causing sleepless nights. Women are found in every profession and trade.

Daughters of the Revolution

We talked with many of the young women—typical products of the Revolution. They are efficient and self-made women, smart in their jobs, intensely patriotic and thoroughly feminine. Once off work, Soviet women dress themselves with charm when they appear in public. In reply to our good-natured joke that the smart Soviet women deserved smarter clothes and finer stockings and better shoes, one of them said: "We want, firstly, machines, secondly, machines to make machines, and thirdly, machines to make machine-guns."

After witnessing the part Soviet women were playing in their country's affairs, it was depressing to think of Nazi Germany where women were consigned to *Kinder, Kueche* and *Kirche* (child-bearing, kitchen and church)!

Rabindranath Comes South

BY JAMES COUSINS

Towards the end of 1918 I was visited at Madanapalle College by Professor P. Kodanda Rao of the Central College, Bangalore, who brought the request of the Amateur Dramatic Association of that city that I should organise an art section of a proposed Festival of Fine Arts, and that I should induce Sir Rabindranath Tagore to come from Bengal and preside over it. After some demur on account of my newness to such functions, the then paucity of available examples of Indian painting, and my short friendship with the overwhelming poet, I agreed.

Luck was with us. Sir Rabindranath succumbed to the temptation to renew a boyhood's visit to the south; and the painters of the Bengal movement responded cordially to our desire to make their work known. A big school and its compound were given over to the Festival, and commodious class-rooms provided wall-space for the paintings. It was then that I first perceived the educational possibilities of such exhibitions in the inclusion of reproductions of some of the Ajanta frescoes and Rajput and Mughal miniatures which indicated the historical background of the new movement in Indian painting.

Unforgettable Sight

The arrival of Rabindranath Tagore at Bangalore City station was an unforgettable sight. The platform from end to end was jammed tight



with people, and crowds struggled in the darkness of night outside the railings to get the *darshan* (blessing of the sight of the holy person) of the King of Poets. Some of the organisers, including myself, had places near a table at which an address of welcome was to be presented. The table and its chair for the visitor were placed at a point opposite which it was calculated

that the carriage would stop. The calculation did not work. The tall, bearded, long robed poet had to pick his way along the edge of the platform among the cheering and peerings and reverent touchings of the ecstatic multitude. When he ultimately reached the saluting-point we all squatted; and I had the happiness of a smile of recognition.

The Festival of Fine Arts and the first mofussil exhibition of modern Indian paintings was a great success. Its first exhibit was its President. His majestic and beautiful presence ennobled us all. Many thousands got the touch of achievement that inspires fine action. India's cultural heritage appeared as a rebuke, and her possibilities in the future as a challenge, to the degenerate but aspiring present. Yet, for all the popular enthusiasm and the uplift of the intelligent and artistically inclined, no pictures were sold.

A First Attempt At Art

All the same there was one sale from the exhibition. A student of Madanapalle College had procured clay and a photograph of Rabindra-

nath, and proceeded straight-away, without instruction, to translate the photograph into perhaps the most difficult phase of modelling, low relief. The distinctiveness and familiarity of the Poet's head, like Gladstone's collar, made failure to produce a likeness difficult. The model was cast in plaster of Paris, and the young modeller insisted that his first attempt at art be exhibited at Bangalore. In the casting of the model, some of the red material used in the process got mixed into the white plaster and with what appeared a puckish sense of humour concentrated itself on the poet's nose. The "brandy blossom" was at its rosiest when I took Rabindranath round the exhibition after the ceremonial opening. I said nothing, but watched for his response to the accusation. First a look of puzzlement wrinkled his brow. Then the puzzlement changed into hilarious laughter when he saw the alcoholic implication of the red nose, an implication which I solemnly rubbed in by quoting one of his poems with the refrain "to be drunken and go to the dogs." As a memento of the event the Amateur Dramatic Association bought the cast, and paid a hundred rupees for it towards the artistic education of the lad.

From Bangalore Rabindranath made a tour of South India, and came to Madanapalle in February (1919) tired and sick and disturbed by the sight of fabulous wealth stored away in temples when it might be put to the education of the young. When he sat down for the first time in our small living room and noticed the panellings of framed reproductions of Bengal paintings round the walls, he said: "I have often wished for something like this." But he objected to our surrounding hills; though they were not much to boast of they got, he said, between him and infinity. I perceived that poets can have their imaginative frontiers, for the hills that shut him in were to me stepping-stones to the infinite firmament.

A Dog Family

Preparations for the coming of Rabindranath to recuperate with us at Madanapalle included the ejection

of a pariah dog family from a niche in the wall of our house adjacent to the little cottage in which he was to be put up. Quiet was, in my opinion, necessary to a sick person, and the mother and three pups barked and yelped at all comers by day, and all night when the moon cast suspicious shadows. A procession of men carrying the pups to some distant place across water, the mother walking wonderingly alongside, looked final. But they were back home and more vocal than usual next day. Not to be beaten by the sub-human creation, I had the mother inserted in a gunny-bag and the three pups squirming and whining in another, and sent off in a jutka to the railway station eight miles away, with a request that they be consigned under any appropriate designation to a station not less than a hundred miles off, and released there to fulfill their destiny. I sent five rupees for expenses, also some food. The jutka returned some hours later with a letter. The station-master knew of the coming of the great poet and sympathised. He had managed to find owners for the family in the train, and they were gone to distant homes. He returned the five rupees. The dog family did not return.

Origin Of "Janaganamana"

From the memory of a week of intense happy activity around the poet stands out the event that made literary history, and carried the name and thought of Tagore into the minds and hearts of millions of the young in schools and colleges and outside them. It happened, as so many great events of the spirit do, without anticipation and without collusion. The poet, sufficiently recovered to move about and watch the games on our playground, followed a hint that he would not be refused admission if he came to the sing-song and fun that made Wednesday nights, after dinner, times of healthy hilarity, usually in our small living-room, but this time in the art-room of the College to accommodate a possible large number with half a thought of being in the presence of the poet. When Rabindranath came to the door, we suspended a throw-

ing-and-catching game to make room for him on the floor in the centre of the crowd. We sang a chorus (perhaps the Marseillaise or "There's never any trouble if you S.m.i.l.e."). I sang an Irish song as a hint that individual contributions to the extemporaneous programme were not excluded. After another chorus Rabindranath asked if he might sing one of his Bengali songs. Leave was granted. In a voice surprisingly light for so large a man he sang something like a piece of geography giving a list of countries, mountains and rivers, and in a second verse a list of the religions of India. The refrain to the first verse made us prick up our ears. The refrain to the second verse made us clear our throats. We asked for it again and again, and before long we were singing it with gusto: "Jaya hai, jaya hai, jaya hai, jaya jaya jaya jaya hai," "Victory, victory, victory to thee." We had no idea of who or what was to have the victory; and if anyone had prophesied that we were at the beginning of the era of "Jana-ganamana," and that one day, years hence, I would offer it to a great audience of university men and women in the shadow of the dome of the White House in Washington, not as the anthem of one nation versus the others, but as an international anthem of co-operation in which all were winners, I would have called in a doctor. Next day Rabindranath gave the swarams (notes) of "Jana-gana" to Mrs. Cousins so that the melody should have accurate permanent record. He also made the first translation of the song into English as the "Morning Song of India." That night under the peepul tree at the back of our home he went over the song line by line in Bengali, with its English equivalent for understanding, until we could sing it with assurance. It took its place in the "daily dedication" of the combined school and college in the great Besant Hall, and through students and visitors was carried to the borders of India.

MORNING SONG OF INDIA

Thou art the ruler of the minds of all people,

Thou Dispenser of India's destiny.

Thy name rouses the hearts of the Punjab, Sind, Gujerat, Maratha, Dravida, Orissa and Bengal.

It echoes in the hills of the Vin-dhyas and the Himalayas,

Mingles in the music of the Jumna and Ganges, and is chanted by the waves of the Indian sea.

They pray for thy blessing and sing thy praise,

Thou Dispenser of India's destiny,

Victory, victory, victory to thee.

Day and night thy voice goes out from land to land,

Calling Hindus, Buddhist, Sikhs, Jains around thy throne, and Parsis, Mussalmans and Christians.

Offerings are brought to thy shrine by East and West to be woven into a garland of love,

Thou bringest the hearts of all peoples into the harmony of one life,

Thou Dispenser of India's destiny,

Victory, victory, victory to thee.

(There are three more verses, but the above are usually sung).

A village went on fire on the evening when Rabindranath's "Sacrifice" was to have been performed. The call for the Scouts, who were trained in fighting fires, necessitated the abandonment of the drama. Rabindranath substituted a recital of another of his plays. The proceeds went to the dispossessed villagers. A cheque for a poem in a newspaper came to him. He handed it over to the fire-fund. He took Mrs. Cousins with him to sing to the patients in a neighbouring hospital. A purse was presented to him. He gave it to Mrs. Cousins to add to the fire-fund. Out of these sacrifices of Tagore, in lieu of Tagore's "Sacrifice," the villagers were supported until their homes and their activities were restored. He left what he called "the Santiniketan of the South" well and happy.

THE DEMONETISATION ORDINANCE

By "Aristides"

The second week of January last saw the promulgation by the Government of India of three ordinances one after the other in quick succession. These measures have literally created a storm in a tea-cup provoking considerable resentment in a small but powerful and extremely vocal section of the public, while they left the man in the street singularly unaffected. The first ordinance was a preparatory one requiring the banks to furnish a statement of their holdings of notes of the value of Rs. 100 and above as on 12th January. The second issued later during the same day announced that notes of the value of Rs. 500, Rs. 1,000 and Rs. 10,000 ceased to be legal tender and prescribed the manner by which they could be exchanged for notes of lower denominations. The third ordinance empowered the Reserve Bank, *inter alia*, to inspect the books of banks in British India. The objects underlying this move was set out in a Press communique which was somewhat unfortunately worded and provided scope for attack by critics. The statement that the Government believes that the working capital of the black-market is held largely in the form of notes of higher denomination, delinked from the statement that followed, namely, that it was hoped that the ordinance would serve to bring black-marketing operations within the knowledge of the tax-gathering authorities, provoked the most violent criticism for the reason that the capital of the black-market is not destroyed by this ordinance but can continue to exist though in the form of notes of smaller denomination. The principal object of the measure, however, was to enable the tax-gatherer to trace the secret hoards of the profiteer and the black-marketeer who have evaded payment of the taxes legitimately due from them.

Libertarians

The criticism of this measure has been many sided. It was said that it offended against the liberty of the individual to keep his money in whatever form he liked, without being called upon to give the details of how he came into possession of it. It can scarcely be that those who have held out this objection do not realise that libertarian ideas even of the John

Stuart Mill variety, are not capable of application in the absolute. It is surprising that with the now generally accepted ideas of the duties of the State and with the provisions of existing tax legislation, this objection should be considered valid even by some people. The avowed object of the measure being to catch the anti-social elements which have made money at the expense of the public besides attempting to cheat the Government of its share of the tax due, these arguments if accepted as valid would mean the conceding of the right of such elements to prey upon society.

The possible mal-effects on the stability of the currency system and the shaking up of public confidence thereon was yet another objection. The five weeks that have passed since the publication of the ordinance have proved these fears groundless. Illiteracy of the large majority of the people and the harassment that many of the illiterate and semi-literate holders are likely to be put to, was another argument against the measure. It seems that the holders of notes of these denominations are not likely to be many amongst this class of people, and such as there are can easily obtain the necessary assistance to change their holdings into notes that are still legal tender. Such objections fail to take into account the fact that very few can afford to keep with them notes of the value of Rs. 500 and above and the fact that it would be difficult to change the notes of the variety except in banks and Government treasuries will deter an appreciable section even amongst this class from indulging in this habit.

Economic Cannibals

The plea that it would be impossible to obtain anything like one hundred per cent results for this measure is not an argument against it as such. If critics can suggest a better method of achieving the desired objective where the loopholes are fewer, I have no doubt the Government will welcome them. Human ingenuity to evade Governmental regulations is limitless. In this particular instance the measure is directed against a class which happens to contain pastmasters in the art of evasion of control measures besides

evasion of the payment of income and other allied taxes. It is true that many holders of these notes use dummies to encash their holdings. It may be true that such notes disappear into Indian States and into Ceylon to re-appear later as the property of the residents of such areas. It is also possible that a black-market has developed in such notes, the more resourceful amongst this class of holders playing the role of the cannibal towards the less fortunate ones in the same class. Surely no one will seriously suggest that it is the duty of the State to prevent panic amongst war-profiteers and black-marketeers. How all this has affected the economy of the country and how the life of the ordinary citizen has become any the worse, none of the critics have been able to tell the public.

A Vicious Fling

In these circumstances it is surprising that a group of eminent Indian economists who had recently issued a cogently argued statement protesting against the continuance of the inflationary policy by the Government with the sole object of providing rupee currency for British needs even after the hostilities have ceased, should have chosen to detract from the strength of the statement by a vicious fling at the Demonetisation Ordinance. Nor can one appreciate the numerous arguments against the measure put forth by an economist who prefers to be anonymous in a recent booklet brought out by the Kitabistan Publishing House of Allahabad, all of which miss the central purpose of the ordinance, namely, to make the tax-dodger who has hoarded his wealth in the form of currency cation.

notes of the higher denominations to come out in the open. It is irrelevant to urge in this connection that people of this class who have secreted their wealth in the form of gold and precious stones escape.

Such measures have been taken by Governments of other countries notably in the United Kingdom and no great harm seems to have arisen out of them. The fact as announced by the Finance Member to the Government of India in the Central Assembly, that out of the total of the notes issued of this variety of the aggregate value of Rs. 143,97 lakhs, notes of the value of Rs. 101,70 lakhs have been received by the Reserve Bank, appears to indicate that the ordinance has worked smoothly. Whatever might be the ultimate result of the ordinance even if it be that it helps the tax-collecting authorities to collect no more than a few crores of rupees by way of taxes besides what they would have otherwise done, the measure is fully justified, and if it causes hardship to one class of people, necessarily limited in number, few amongst the public will regret it. **Even a belated attempt to remind the anti-social elements in the country that the Government is not willing to allow them the unhampered enjoyment of a Heaven on earth is very welcome.** Much as I dislike the present set-up of the Government of India I am nevertheless inclined to congratulate the Finance Member who has been able to overcome for once the influence of his reactionary colleagues, rather than cavil at the imperfections of a measure which avowedly is limited in its scope and application.

ARISTIDES.

Culture Pearls.

Pearls are, as is now generally known, found inside pearl oysters. If a grain of sand or a parasitic worm gets inside a pearl oyster, it covers it up with several layers of pearly mineral matter and the projection so made is the precious pearl. The Japanese are able to produce artificial irritation to the oyster and get a precious pearl almost made to order. These are known as culture pearls and they are very cheap and just as good. Only with the X-ray can the difference between the two be made out. In India where pearl oysters are found in plenty, the production of culture pearls has not yet become a commercial proposition.

Denis Compton, True Child of Lords

A luminous passage has declared that when Prince Ranjitsinhji appeared on the greenswards of England, he brought with him visions of an exotic and barbarian land, where peacocks overran the public roads and where the people did not tuck in their shirt tails inside their trousers; that, in fact, he trailed clouds of India. Times have altered much more than mere means of communication, but if ever England deemed it desirable to repay the compliment, she could not have done it better than to have sent Denis Charles Scott Compton into our midst.

For Compton is much more than an individual, who perhaps more successfully than other players, endeavours to prevent, with the aid of a wooden implement, a ball of leather from deranging three wooden sticks. In a rarefied sense, he is the embodiment of cricket as it is practised at its fascinating phase, that is to say, at Lords. He is a scrupulous Augustan who holds rigorously to the unities of the game.

The obloquy which used to be poured on that frame of mind has been now largely dissipated. Though it has its unlovely austerities, critics have come to realise that it has some benefactions for humankind. The fascinating romantic attitude is seldom capable of being sustained. In weak hands, it ends in mere *gaucherie*, for the descent from the heights of enthusiasm to the depths of banality, is fatally easy of accomplishment. Classical refinement, on the other hand, is enduring and less liable to lapses.

Compton is an example of classical repose at the wickets. He is less a whirlwind that would buffet the bowler than a gentle breeze that would beguile him. He commences his innings with unostentation, being content to gain knowledge of the attack, which will later come to fruition in his poems of skill and delicacy.

This is not the language of hyperbole. Those who were fortunate enough to have set eyes on him at Chepauk two years ago will recall what a gentle lyric his innings was. There was nothing of your rude thwackings then, but an ornate procession of unhasting strokes. When at last his stump was uprooted, it appeared to be a sacrilegious interference with a beautiful ritual.

It has been complained by the pestilential Zoiluses of this world that he has the false elegance of Turvey-drop. If this accusation means that he is silky and sleek, it is true; but nothing more can be conceded. His criticism of life is exercised through the bat, but undoubtedly there is nothing finicky about the process.

He is a true child of Lords. He is the Castor to Edrich's Pollux. Nothing in the history of the more modern English cricket is more remarkable than the complete ascendancy which these two young players have established at the Headquarters. But there is a curiously vast dissimilarity of style between these two batsmen. Edrich is never more true to himself than when bowling like whirlwind. He has little faith in gentle methods, but enjoys himself when larding the lean earth. No greater contrast to Compton's style can be conceived.

The leading young English batsmen are, in fact, remarkably diversified in their methods. Hutton, the greatest of them all, is a duplication of Sutcliffe, his mentor; Hardstaff is a refined fury; and Edrich is a violent storm. On none of them has the mantle of Palaret or Spooner fallen more assuredly than on Compton.

His interlude of three years in India has spread his gracious charm in this country. It will be the most favourable epitaph of Gen. Tojo that he was instrumental in making possible this benefaction.—N.S.R.

Science Marches On

By C. Srinivasan

Science marches on and the bounds of knowledge are continually expanding. The scientist in his hour of exultation sings with the poet:

"O world invisible, I view thee
O world intangible, I touch thee
O world unknowable, I know thee
Inapprehensible, I clutch thee".

The scientist is proud of his achievements; he has worked miracles; he has split the atom and released the atomic energy; he has ended the war in one stroke. He has every reason to be proud. But has the world reason to be happy?

Happy or unhappy, we are in the age of the atom bomb—an age of great and unprecedented strides in the path of scientific knowledge. The ruling passion of the age is the complete conquest of nature by scientific investigations. It is certainly worthwhile to know something about these investigations and about the work of the great men of science of the past who have laid the foundations of the present day Physics or who have, by their errors, pointed to the right direction of scientific enquiry.

The motive force of creative experimental work has nearly always been a theoretical idea; it is the search for an answer to a question enunciated by theory. Scientific theory is merely an attempt to form a logical mental picture of the reality that surrounds us. The attempt of the scientist has always been to bring all natural phenomena under the sway of certain natural laws and thus introduce by means of theories and postulates, logic and reasoned behaviour into the realm of natural events. Revolutions are not the monopoly of politics nor are revolutionaries found only in the political camp. There have been revolutions and revolutionaries in the scientific camp also; in our own century a

great revolution was started in December 1900. The leader who led the revolt against classical ideas was Max Planck and he made the declaration of war by reading a paper on his Quantum Theory on the 14th day of that month. There have also been other equally important revolutions led by equally great men like Einstein and Bohr.

Curiously enough scientific revolutions have aimed more at reconciliation and assimilation than at overthrow and destruction of old scientific ideas and ideologies. Ptolemy, long long ago, held that the earth was at rest and the sun was moving. Later on, Copernicus came and said that Ptolemy was wrong and it was the sun that was at rest and the earth was moving round the sun. Who is correct and who is wrong? The Relativistic revolution of Einstein has given the verdict that both are correct and both are wrong. The theory of Relativity has introduced a new factor into science, revealed a new aspect of phenomena and solved the problem in a novel and unexpected manner. Another great problem that was agitating the minds of scientists was about the nature of light. Is light propagated in the form of corpuscles in straight lines or is light propagated in the form of waves? Newton advocated the corpuscular theory; later scientists exploded it. But the corpuscular theory was resurrected in the early days of the present century. That theory, however, is not the last or latest word on the subject. The latest wave-mechanical theory reconciles the two warring theories and points out that radiation exhibits a dual aspect—it is both corpuscular and wavy.

So, science marches on. Does this march of science advance humanity in the path of progress and prosperity? The question cannot be answered by scientists.

Profile—Beatrice Webb

When Rosalind instanced her plight among the denizens of Arden as commensurate with that of "honest Ovid among the Goths", she did not weigh properly the grave disadvantages of a residence among the far from honest Philistines of the present generation. For no less than thirty years from 1893 to 1923 there lived at 41, Grosvenor Road, London, two individuals to whom Bloomsbury and Belgravia were impartially anathema. Modern English life bears traces of that residence. The two individuals were Beatrice Webb and Sydney Webb.

It has often enough been pointed out that nature likes to break the mould. Fire-eating Pistols have emerged more often from placid rectory houses than from any other source. Beatrice Webb was a living incarnation of this wilful paradox. For that she should set herself pertinaciously to destroy capitalism was an unexpected conclusion of a childhood of ease and wealth. She was one of the numerous daughters of a captain of industry in that most deadly of epochs, the late Victorian. If words retain their meaning, the most powerful opponent of privilege was an ingrate.

Beatrice Webb early came to the conclusion that "the sweater is the whole nation." She had also the perspicacity to realise that the benignant efforts to counter a growing evil, such as that represented by the Charity Organisation Society, were exceedingly naive and ineffective. She set herself to inform the revolutionary movement with learning. When the Fabian Society burst upon an astounded world, and commenced its salutary career of prodding the complacent, insulting the stupid, and generally making itself unbearable to the privileged, she welcomed it with transports of delight, and continued to be its member while brighter spirits had either broken with it or had outgrown it.



Beatrice Webb

Passion for Facts

Among her many transcendent gifts, that of comeliness of thought could not be fairly reckoned one. Her passion for that dull thing, facts, would have rejoiced the heart of Mr. Gradgrind himself. With what was undoubtedly, to her opponents, exasperating tenacity, she devoted herself to building England's green and pleasant land on blue books. Tastes undoubtedly differ, but it is surely significant of much that after she had married Sydney Webb whom her horrified relatives described most untruthfully as a "cockney cad", the couple spent their honeymoon in the romantic occupation of "looking up trade union records in Dublin and Belfast."

"Dogged Writing"

But these are unregenerate sneers. In her just published biography on Beatrice Webb, (Longmans, 1sh. 6.) Margaret Cole has been able to demonstrate how thoroughly the



Webbs spent themselves in their mission. Bernard Shaw has since written with amusement of "our eternal political shop; our mornings of dogged writing; and our ravenous plain meals". For the couple believed intensely in committees, and their labours were essentially academic. The corpus of their writing is impressive. Beginning with the *Co-operative Movement*, the Webbs took for their province trade unionism and social welfare. It was not until late in their lives that, after an obstinate refusal, they found in Communism a living creed. A visit to Russia at the invitation of the Soviet authorities had confirmed them in their already strong views. This amiability was to prove of benefit when the time came for the formation of the Labour Government. But though Sydney Webb who had blossomed into Lord Passfield took office in that Cabinet, it cannot be claimed that he made his mark on the administration of the country. It only proved that their forte lay in writing.

There is much unconscious laughter in their lives. When, by the agency of free tickets, they were inveigled into a theatre to witness *Parsifal*, they spent the period in discussing with a kindred spirit the "incidence of sickness among the poor". But only the foolish will insult their memory with laughter. In no uncertain sense were their lives a memorable example of devotion to duty. Beatrice Webb was undoubtedly "one of the greatest women of our generation".

THE WEEK ABROAD

A Survey of Foreign Affairs

The first session of the General Assembly concluded its labours in an atmosphere of forced complacency which must have been unconvincing even to the protagonists themselves. Anonymous but inspired apologists have hastened to assure a doubting world that history has been enacted almost under our noses as it were! Beyond the publicity which international dark corners have received, the net result of the Assembly session has been a spate of unctuous oratory which will be preserved for posterity in a multi-lingual setting. The commentators on the new constitution of the General Assembly have pointed out that executive functions have yet to be assumed by the smaller body—the Security Council—and that therefore, it is at least premature to assess the contribution of the new bodies to the shaping of the brave new world.

U.N.O. SESSION

The adjournment of the Security Council itself was not brought about in happy circumstances. The Levant issue which provoked a crisis, like every other issue which was debated by the Council, was disposed of in an original fashion. An American-sponsored, exonerative resolution passed with the requisite majority was scotched in the final stage by the Russian exercise of the power of veto. This is the most disagreeable manifestation of the widening rift between the Western and the Eastern blocs into which the 'United Nations' are ineluctably splitting up. Russia has given unambiguous notice that she will pillory Britain on every opportunity that might present itself to her; and God knows that Britain has too many commitments in too many parts of the world to emerge from the ordeal unscathed. Thus the diplomatic alignments re-

vealed in the course of the last few weeks bid fair to be crystallised into the landmarks of the Atom age. Russia's role will tend more and more openly to encourage the backward areas of the world which are as a rule under the hegemony of Britain or America. The empires and the empire-ideology are to be stripped and laid bare without a rag to cover them, first in propaganda and, as occasion should serve, in deed.

AN UNEASY EUROPE

The adjournment of the Security Council seems like running away from the post of duty in the present unstable conditions in East Europe. There has been a cabinet crisis in Egypt; Arabs are mounting a boycott against the Jews in Palestine. Syria and Levant are on the war-path fortified by the thought that Soviet Russia is a sympathetic neighbour. Above all, a Polish army is said to be moving towards the Yugoslav borders, and thus offering a threat to peace in that part of the world!

CHINA'S DEMAND FOR HONGKONG

In a recent debate in the House of Lords, many of the elderly statesmen deplored the development of 'imperialist' trends in the policy of the Chinese Government, and wondered what the British Government proposed to do about them. It was pointed out more specifically that the students' demand for the return of Hongkong to China was an alarming symptom. Only seasoned imperialists can achieve this degree of naivette. It is not so much a case of hypocrisy as of consummate acting plausible for the time being. For the simple point that is evaded is the one about Britain's right to be anywhere within a thousand miles of Hongkong!

BOOKS



Ambedkar Refuted. By C. Rajagopalachari. (Hind Kitabs, Bombay. Re. 1.)

In "Ambedkar Refuted" Mr. C. Rajagopalachari examines the main charges levelled against Congress and Gandhi by Dr. Ambedkar in his latest book. Dr. Ambedkar wrote a very bulky and heavily documented book running into more than 380 pages. C. R.'s reply is contained in exactly 38 pages. Each page of C. R. contains, on the average, less than half the number of words of the Doctor's. The reply in point of size is a tiny one-twentieth of the charge. But it more than suffices for fulfilling the hope voiced by C. R. in the preface. It suffices because every little word is made to count. There is no wastage or over-elaboration. The drafting is done with perfect economy of space.

Dr. Ambedkar sought to establish that the Scheduled Classes are not behind the Congress claim for Indian freedom. C. R. says that the freedom claimed by the Congress is conceivable in terms of democracy, with majority-rule as one of its fundamentals, and it is idle to talk, like Mr. Jinnah, in terms of separate nationalities when the persons claiming the benefit of national self-determination do not occupy a definable and divisible territory. Dr. Ambedkar aimed at disconnecting the Scheduled Classes from the Congress movement by an analysis of electoral figures. With just the same figures, C. R. claims that the seats won by the Congress (73 out of 151) "do not by any means make a bad show." If, as complained of by Dr. Ambedkar, 'middle' and 'intellectual' classes are intensely pro-Congress, and 'labour' too is the same as everybody knows, "Who is left over for Dr. Ambedkar?", asks C. R. "It seems as if Dr. Ambedkar considers

overwhelming public support itself as an unfair element in political contests."

Dr. Ambedkar was angry at the slow pace of improvement in the condition of the Scheduled Classes. C. R. says that the progress of conditions respecting the Scheduled Classes in India does not compare at all with what has been done in America for Negroes, or in the South African Republic for the natives of Africa, or for Jews in civilized Europe. Naively he pleads, "All that flows from poverty in capitalist society cannot be imputed to the wickedness or folly of the Congress in India."

Everyone, wrote Dr. Ambedkar, "knows that Mr. Gandhi values more his reputation as the saviour of the untouchables than his reputation as the champion of Swaraj or as the protagonist of *ahimsa*." Is it not remarkable, retorts C. R., "that Dr. Ambedkar should try to establish that Gandhiji is sedulously working against his own dearest objective!"

Until 1917, all questions of a religious or quasi-religious character had been kept out of the deliberations of the Congress, founded as it was for constitutional political agitation. But in that year the Congress adopted a definite resolution "urging upon the people of India the necessity, justice and righteousness of removing all disabilities imposed by custom upon the Scheduled Castes". Dr. Ambedkar was apparently more perturbed than pleased over this. He struggled hard in his book to prove that this change of attitude on the part of the Congress was not born of generosity or honest penitence, but was developed only out of a desire to make the case for democracy unassailable. C. R.'s reply is, "Surely, even if this should be so, there is nothing dishonourable in adopting

a just attitude in regard to minorities in order to qualify for democracy."

He goes on:

"Any fair-minded person must appreciate the service rendered by Gandhiji to the cause of social reform in India and admire him for having brought about a revolutionary upheaval of conscience about the so-called untouchables. He has succeeded where others have failed. He has integrated social and religious reform with political activity in the Congress and changed the whole character of the Congress. Carping criticism of the pace of results in a Herculean task benefits no one and this is what characterises all that is spoken or written by Dr. Ambedkar and which the British imperialist caste welcomes as an answer to world-opinion in regard to their obstinacy towards Indian political aspirations."

The most surprising of Dr. Ambedkar's charges was the one that "before 1932 Mr. Gandhi was opposed to allow untouchables to enter Hindu temples," but made a "somersault" in that year. After citing quotation after quotation from Gandhiji's writings in 1925 and 1926 in refutation of Dr. Ambedkar's charge, C. R. for once lets himself go: "If one does not care or have the opportunity to acquaint oneself with Gandhiji's activities and writings one should not venture to bring up a charge of making a somersault and impute an unworthy motive for an imaginary change of opinion." As a sample of the manner in which Dr. Ambedkar approaches and disposes of vital subjects, C. R. caustically observes, "A wrong assumption of fact is first made and then an interesting search is made for motives to explain it."

The book is compactly packed with facts to the credit of the Congress pitted against Dr. Ambedkar's wrong assumptions of facts to the contrary. Its most interesting part is the end where C. R. enters on a study of the psychology underlying the violent dislike for Congress and Gandhiji of Harijan leaders of the

stamp of Dr. Ambedkar. His conclusion is that scheduled as the Harijans are for special favours intended for their uplift, the advantages of the concessions made for the benefit of the community as a whole accrue most to the educated leaders, who, thriving on the scheduled status, want it to continue intact and become detractors and enemies of any efforts that seek to reduce or remove it.

For its combination of brevity and effectiveness, "Ambedkar Refuted" will rank as a masterpiece in the controversial political literature of our time. Its economy of phrasing is superb. Nowhere is emphasis concretised verbally. Yet the effect is devastating. It is a feat in the art of making logic tell without resort to loudness of expression, somewhat in the manner of the great masters of the stage and screen whose whispers are more expressive than the ringing declamations of less gifted actors.

Chittagong Armoury Raiders Reminiscences. By Kalpana Dutt. (People's Publishing House, Bombay. Re. 1)

The Chittagong armoury raid was the most daring of the exploits of the Bengal revolutionaries. One of them, Kalpana Dutt, narrates in her "Reminiscences" the story of the raid and its leading figures and of her own conversion from terrorism to Communism. In the repressive campaign that went on for years in the wake of the raid, she herself was brought to trial along with two others. They were hanged. She escaped the death sentence because of her youth and sex, as the judge declared in pronouncing sentence. She was convicted to transportation for life, but was released in 1939. Her release was largely due to pressure on the Government exerted by Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore.

Extraordinarily vivid are the scenes depicted by Kalpana Dutt. The word "terrorism" conjures up unfeeling blood-spilling. But these terrorists of the "Reminiscences", as seen with the author's admiring eyes, are undoubtedly, most of them, extremely sensitive and kind-hearted persons. To their company belongs Preeti Waddadar who took her own life with potas-

sium cyanide, but could not bring herself to slaughter a goat for mutton. "When I am ready to give my own life for the country's freedom I won't hesitate a bit in taking somebody's life too if necessary", she used to say. "But I shall not be able to kill a poor harmless creature like that". Then there was Mani Dutt, nicknamed Lecturer, who said of himself, "If I had not become a revolutionary, I would have become a **Sadhu** (ascetic). I just can't stand seeing people suffer". There were also among the revolutionaries born leaders of men whom their followers positively idolised and who possessed the secret of exercising a magnetic spell on all they came in contact with, including their jailors when they were in prison. Surjyasen, reverently called Masterda, was the top leader of them all. He is described as deeply human and amazingly calm in the face of danger. There were many legends going round the country-side about his presence of mind. Of the impression he made on her at their first meeting, Kalpana Dutt writes:

I was overwhelmed by this first meeting with Masterda. I felt a sense of joy, deep respect, wonder, a touch of fear—I felt as if I could do whatever he wanted me to do at a moment's notice. I was bristling to tell anyone I met after that—"I have talked to Surjya Sen".

The most colourful of all the revolutionary figures pictured in the "Reminiscences" is Ananta Singh. He was the executive genius of the whole order. He set up many physical culture clubs. He taught the revolutionaries horsemanship, lathi and sword-play, boxing, the handling of automobiles and the preparation and use of explosives. He wrung the admiration of Government officials. Mr. Springfield, then Superintendent of Chittagong, said of him, "I have the greatest admiration for Ananta Singh. I have never seen a lad like this. It is difficult to find such a character even in free countries." Kalpana writes ecstatically of him, "To me the highest honour in the world was to have won his trust".

The concluding pages of the book are given to an account of how Kalpana Dutt became a Communist after her release in 1939. "I could not help confessing to myself", she writes, summing up the impressions of her study of the various political groups

in the district, "that the Communists were more widely read and knew a lot more than us of men and things, of the world at large and of the people and their past, and so I nursed a sneaking admission of our own inferiority". Even those with no love in their hearts for Communists and Communism cannot help deeply venerating the personality of Kalpana Dutt as unfolded in these "Reminiscences", and in their detached moments it may even be possible for them to nurse in their turn a "sneaking admission" that a party graced by the loyalty of one like her, so brave and so steadfastly given to service of the people, cannot be all black and must be having some good in it.

Is this Peace? By Dr. Sir S. Radhakrishnan. (Hind Kitabs, Bombay. Rs. 1-4.)

Has the end of the second world war brought real and enduring peace to mankind? Answering this question, Sir S. Radhakrishnan gives a brilliant expose of the pretensions of the victor powers that the war was fought for exalted objectives and won by correspondingly noble means. Sir Sarvepalli in this book shows the world that the motives and actions of the victors have not been different in fundamentals from those of the vanquished. He classifies the atomic bombing of the two Japanese cities, for instance, as massacre and not as war; such acts are "contemptible crimes."

It is not, the author points out, democracy or love of freedom that has saved the Allied Nations. "We won the war by the power of physical force, scientific cunning, industrial organisation and ruthless determination to defeat the enemy, unenfeebled by any scruples of conscience, honour or international morality."

The machinery set up by the United Nations Organisation is, to Sir S. Radhakrishnan's mind, inadequate for ensuring the peace of the world, which, he suggests, can only be done by the creation of disciplines to control the integral life of nations. We must, he says, develop a world culture and a world conscience.

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LETTERS

Freedom of the Press: American Version

Politics of the Press in the international sphere has recently been the subject of comment in more than one Indian journal. Most of them refer to American criticism of the Soviet Press and raise the question: How much more free is the American Press than the Soviet Press?

Some of us tried to make the Delegation of the American Society of Newspaper Editors see this question from this point of view when they visited New Delhi last year, but with little success. At a Press Conference held in Delhi, my friend, Phanindra Bajpai, asked whether it was the view of the A. S. N. E. that the capitalist-controlled American Press was more free than the Government-controlled Soviet Press. Both Mr. Wilbur Forrest and Mr. Ralph McGill assured us that it was; there was no doubt about it, they said.

But in their Report on their Mission for the free flow of news, which was published a few months ago, the Delegation stated that all the other questions asked at the Press Conference were intelligent but that this question was simply silly, and they drew the conclusion that the questioner was "the local Communist". They went on to say that there was surprise when we were told that the Communists ran their own paper, the *Daily Worker*, in New York! We, special correspondents in New Delhi, may be ignorant people, but we are not so ignorant as all that! The Delegation's Report went on to say that the views of Indians on the American Press depended on what they read in "The Brass Check" and books of that sort. Now, nobody mentioned

"The Brass Check" at the Press Conference except Mr. Wilbur Forrest, but the Report mentions one correspondent as stating he had read such and such in "The Brass Check". It is quite possible these questions were asked in some other country, like China, but they were put in the mouth of a New Delhi correspondent. When, therefore, the Delegation expressed the opinion that Indian journalism is where American journalism was twenty years ago, one wished it would remain there.

One newspaper, to wit *The Hindu*, asked in an editorial on the "Politics of the Press" whether the American Press was controlled by people like Hearst and whether a strike was ever reported favourably in the American Press. I myself put this same question directly to Mr. Wilbur Forrest, leader of the Delegation, the next day. I suggested that the American Press was largely controlled by the advertiser and pointed out that no newspaper, outside of the official organs of the Labour organisations, published the proceedings of the Congressional enquiry into Henry Ford's anti-Union activities, because Ford is the biggest advertiser in America, and publication of the proceedings might result in the withdrawal of the ads. One of the leading New York dailies, which sent their representative to cover the enquiry, recalled him the same afternoon after the receipt of his first despatch, because they were stupefied by the sensational disclosures about Ford's use of jabber-jacks to prevent the workers from forming trade unions. I stated that the American newspaper *PM* and Mahatma Gandhi's *Harijan* which published no ads were naturally more independent

and free. Mr. Forrest made no reply.

It is surprising that the Report on the free flow of news contains a statement in which the Delegation approvingly quotes officials of the United States Office of War Information, who expressed alarm at the publication of race disturbance news from America. They deplore that competition among certain news agencies resulted in the publication of what is actually happening in America!

A versifier from America has put it somewhat vehemently, and at the other extreme, in his "Advice to W. L. White and other Vanishing Americans", which appeared in the *Saturday Review of Literature*:

Don't write about Russia, Comrades,
Write about anything else;
Write about Hearst and America first
And the sins of the Saxons and Celts.
Don't stir up the Bennettsky Cerfskys
By taking a poke at Stalin,
Write as you will—it's a free country still—
But not about Russia—that's mean.

V. V. PRASAD
New Delhi.

I.N.A. Officers in Malaya

Malaya is a most interesting country. One can see that under normal peacetime conditions the standard of living was much higher than in India, although at present things are bad.

Inflation is rampant and prices are fantastic. The rice ration at controlled prices is about one-third of the country's requirements. People have to purchase the remainder at nearly Rs. 2 per pound. The cheapest lungi costs Rs. 30. A simple meal of rice and fish for three people cost Rs. 33.

For hundreds of miles you can travel through Malaya and see nothing but rubber tree plantations. They grow no rice or wheat, no cotton or silk. In peacetime, with un-

interrupted imports and exports, this caused no hardships. It has required a war to demonstrate the tragedy of such an unbalanced economy.

The three races—Chinese, Malays and Tamils—appear to have no social or political relations with each other. They each have their own schools, restaurants, shops, etc., each speak their own language only and are not bi-lingual. Yet I feel that on the plantations the Malays and Tamils in their own interests organize and fight together. The Chinese receive higher wages than the other races.

I visited several I.N.A. officers the other day. I found a complete ignorance of what has happened in other countries, as was only to be expected when one understands that these people have been sealed off from all democratic ideology for four years.

At the same time I noticed a pride of race and patriotism so often lacking among Indian troops, and the complete eradication of any slave mentality and servility. By and large the I.N.A. has succeeded in imparting a basic patriotic belief, and a new political outlook to its rank and file. That it has made positive contributions in this respect no one can deny.

In the light of what I have said, it is a mistake to antagonise the rank and file by branding them as puppets, and stressing the political errors which they undoubtedly made.

They are eager to learn, and are fertile soil on which to build fine politically conscious Indian patriots.

Incidentally I have not heard a good word for the Japanese.

A BRITISH VISITOR
Kuala Lumpur.

International Eye-Wash

Paradoxically, the Bevin-Vyshinsky exchanges at the United Nations Conference constitute a good beginning for the U. N. O.

When the first moves were made to have Iran, the Balkans, Greece and Indonesia discussed at the United Nations Conference, there

were signs of shocked disapproval. The strain was too much for the new baby, it was said, and it would meet with an abrupt death. It is surprising that such an inept suggestion should have been made by the big men assembled in London, who seemingly, depended on Time to solve the world's problems.

The danger of the U. N. O. breaking down under the weight of too many controversies is very real. But the alternative to a bold approach is for the U. N. O. to become just another debating Chamber of the Geneva pattern. And the new crusading spirit that is abroad in the world to-day, will not tolerate such international eye-wash any more.

In international, as in national affairs, public opinion is the final arbiter. And the function of any world organization is to focus public opinion on matters vital to the world's peace and well-being. No useful purpose is served by creating an artificial atmosphere of formalities, international etiquette and drawing-room manners. In M. Vyshinsky, Mr. Bevin has found a foeman worthy of his steel. Between them they have evolved a new technique in international diplomacy, symptomatic of the changed times, which might well be adopted universally.

MENON

English Outlook on Indian Affairs

As usual one finds very little interest in Indian affairs here. The public has so many things to think about, what with economic difficulties at home and abroad, demobilisation and all this tangle in Europe, that what happens in Asia or Africa comes in for little attention. I wish I could write that everyone is full of enthusiasm for a more democratic policy in India or the Empire generally, but actually

most people are not interested and those that are, are fairly well baffled by the intricacies of Indian affairs. Still we must see what happens after the elections in India.

I don't think most people here are at all aware of the seriousness of this country's economic position. We are still exporting less than half of what we need to pay for our imports and nothing stringent is being done about it. For instance, we import about £15,00,000 worth of films from the U.S.A. annually and goodness knows how much tobacco. Both unnecessary luxuries. My own impression is that the Labour movement is afraid to tell people the unpalatable truth that we cannot afford these things and that the Tories are deliberately conniving at running this country into economic subjection to U. S. capital as the best means of keeping it (and thus a large part of the world) safe for their system. Of course, Mr. Bevin is behaving indistinguishably from any Tory. Except of course that in saying this one is comparing him with Tories during the war who were then on their best behaviour.

It is astonishing how far the reactionaries are going. Only the other day there was a long article in the *Manchester Guardian* by Bertrand Russell openly appealing for a monopoly of armed force in the hands of the United States and for an immediate attack on the Soviet Union to secure this if that country did not submit voluntarily. Of course I suppose the M. G. would say that this did not represent its view but only Bertrand Russell's; but it is sufficiently alarming that any paper should spread such views, most of all a supposedly responsible liberal and progressive one.

J.

Eastbourne (Sussex).

Hopefully or maliciously, jealously or generously, old boys look on and cannot be anything better than lookers-on. We lived essentially, forty years odd ago. The young are life, and there is no hope but in them.—H. G. Wells.

SAROJINI NAIDU

Poets and Patriots—Nota Bene!—

We've only had one SAROJINI:

Her works are many—but few know 'em

So well as her life—itsself a lyric poem!

Jai Hind

March four-square, in rhythmic time,
And sing as you march along:
'We give our lives in youthful prime
To right a nation's wrong.'

You are the country's valiant sons—
Cast out the fear of death:
Rise to the stars, disdain the guns
To the people bring fresh breath.

When your glories multiply,—
Soon, by the Grace of God,
Your foes will break their ranks and fly
Or burnt out mix with the sod!

Your heart—it is your supreme court—
Jai Hind—Do not lag!
But on to Delhi, to the Red Fort,
To plant th'undying flag!

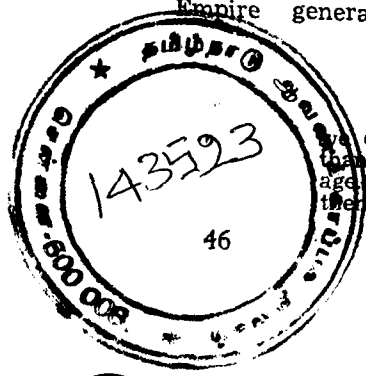
The stanzas above are an English version of Jai Hind—the marching of the I.N.A. which has made history.

FAREWELL TO HOPE

Ours is a land of Paradox—
For we gladly bid farewell to Hope!
And although 'midst us famine stalks,
Waste has endless scope!

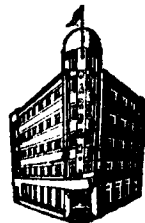
There have been cuts in our rations
But bureaucrats swell their ranks;
And profiteers engaged in fresh evasions
Hope for Government's thanks!

Let all of us—saints or sinners
Practise Austerity,
By discussing famine at sumptuous dinners
Though damned by Posterity!





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