

New India

— FORTNIGHTLY —

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My purpose is the drawing together of Musalmans and Hindus, for India can never become a Nation until Hindus, Zoroastrians, Christians, and Musalmans understand each other. There is no difference for us between Hindu and Musalman. Both are Indians, both come from the womb of the Mother. —Annie Besant.

ALLIANCE FOR PEACE

BY ROHIT MEHTA

The end of the World War II has brought India nearer to the threshold of her political and economic freedom. The people of this Land have begun to feel that their political, economic and social life will now be planned according to their national aspirations due to the establishment of an Interim Indian Government at the Centre. In other words, there is a new hope and a new cheer in the hearts of the people. In England and America, too, the reactions to these political changes on the Indian scene have been very happy. The world is expecting India soon to come into her own and to take her rightful place in the comity of nations.

But while this is the bright side in India's political and national life, the feelings of happiness and joy generated by this great turn of events are mixed with sadness and desolation. It is painful to see the two major communities of this Land engaged in a veritable civil war just at a time when they should come closer together for the refashioning of the Country's life. The orgy of bloodshed and murder let loose in Calcutta and Noakhali, in Bombay and Ahmedabad can be described only as a civil

war between the two sister communities of this Country—to call it “communal tension” is only political euphemism. In this fratricidal war each community is trying to throw the blame on the other, and while the various political parties in the Country look with suspicion at each other, hundreds of innocent men and women are being killed in different parts of the country. It is most distressing to see how ordinary men and women are being used as pawns in the game of ‘power politics’ indulged in by politicians. The recent uprisings have been blots on the fair name of India, and they have seriously undermined India's reputation in other countries, not to say of the demoralization they have brought into the national life to this Land.

Peace or War ?

The question is: what is the way out? Is India to go on in this madness till both the communities are exhausted and, therefore, weakened? Is India's entry into the portal of freedom to be attended by murder and looting, by bitterness and suspicion among the sons and daughters of the common Mother? We believe that the way out of this terrible situation can

be found only if we could rise above party loyalties, and look at the problem of India from the standpoint of the common man and woman in this Country—in other words, the solution of this problem lies either in 'total' war between the two communities, the outcome of which will be the peace of the graveyard; or, in putting our heads and hearts together—the latter far more than the former—and evolve a working understanding, irrespective of our differences on long-term arrangements, which can ultimately be settled only by a Constituent Assembly consisting of the elected representatives of the people. The time has come when we must choose between the 'total' war and the establishment of a 'Political Alliance' between the two communities till final settlement is arrived at by the Constitution-making body.

On what basis can this Political Alliance be built up? The purpose of such Political Alliance must be first, to restore security of civic life which has been so violently shaken during the last few months, and secondly, to evolve effective measures to tackle the immediate problems such as food and clothing and employment, which face us all, whether we are Hindus or Muslims. In order to realize this objective, we must steer clear of all other controversial constitutional issues and forget our party commitments. If the leaders of different political parties are not prepared for this line of action, the common men and women of both the communities must take the matter into their own hands, for it is after all they who suffer most in such fratricidal warfare, as is going on for the last few months.

A New Hope

It has been suggested that in order to restore security of civic life in Bengal, there should be a Coalition Government in that Province, instead of a Party Government as is the case today. We believe that this is an admirable suggestion and should be carried out without any delay. But we submit that not only in Bengal but in all the Provinces of India there should be

Coalition Governments established for the realization of the twofold objectives mentioned above. In some Provinces, the question of security does not loom so large as it does in other Provinces; still, a violent disturbance in one Province is bound to have repercussions in other Provinces too. Of course, establishment of such Coalition Governments will mean a sacrifice on the part of the majority community and on the part of the political party in power. But it is the sacrifice of the majority that will create confidence in the hearts of the minority, and it is out of such confidence that security of civic life can be built up. To restore confidence among the people should be the first concern of all Provincial Governments, for without that no amount of economic and social planning will have any effect. To keep large numbers of men and women in a state of continual fright, due to a threat, to their life and property—whether such threat is actual or potential—is to give a free hand to the forces of lawlessness so rampant at present throughout the Land.

Refashion the Governments

One-Party rule in the Provinces will, under the present disturbed conditions, call out a spirit of defiance and insubordination everywhere. In India, today, there are sufficient irresponsible elements that depend for their prosperity upon fishing in troubled waters. Such irresponsible goonda-elements, moving either in communal or political garb, can be brought to book only by strong Coalition Governments. It is, therefore, necessary that both the Congress and the Muslim League should refashion their governments in different Provinces with a view to establishing Coalition Governments without any delay. That such Coalition Governments, because of the restoration of confidence that they will bring about, will be able to show greater turn-over of constructive work, goes without saying. It may be that the tempo of radical construction will be slowed down because of the inevitable compromises these parties will have to enter into, but still the

(Continued on p. 7)

New India

Benares

1 November 1946

Let us cast aside communal claims and quarrels, and let our only emulation be: Who shall serve best and who shall sacrifice most for the Motherland? Let us unite the experience of age with the enthusiasm of youth. Let us substitute the good of the Nation for struggles for safeguards, and burn up communalism in Nationality and Patriotism.
—Annie Besant.

ANXIOUS EXPECTATIONS

The fortnight following the first issue of New India has been a period of anxious expectancy: anxiety because of the horrors of communal carnage raging in East Bengal, and expectancy as to the outcome of political parleys taking place in New Delhi. Although a Congress-League understanding that was sought to be brought about by the Nawab of Bhopal ended abruptly, the decision of the Muslim League to enter into the first National Government of India is a forward step on which the League has to be heartily congratulated. But what is not comprehensible is the darkness in which the Country is still kept by the Muslim League as to its intentions in joining the Government at the Centre. The Muslim League Working Committee has not yet taken the Country into its confidence, nor are we aware of the terms of understanding said to have been arrived at between His Excellency the Viceroy and Mr. M. A. Jinnah. Reports of such understanding emanating from New Delhi are but unofficial. Whatever the terms of such understanding may be, we wish the League Members had come to some workable compromise with their colleagues on the Cabinet. The Country, however, ought to be happy that representatives of the Muslim League are now installed in the Interim National Government of India.

A Novel Experiment

Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan, addressing his first press conference as a member of the Government and explaining the Muslim League's intentions and ideals in entering

the Interim Government, stated that just as the Congress bloc in the Government had a leader of its own, the Muslim League bloc also would have its own leader. He has stated that there is no such thing as joint or collective responsibility, but has fortunately emphasized, and rightly too, that "it should be the desire and determination of every member of the Government to work in harmony and in co-operation for the good of the man in the street." It is a very desirable, though novel, experiment that the Congress and the League have embarked upon. The experiment is novel in the sense that it is not a Coalition Government, as Coalition Governments are understood in terms of Constitutional Science, and still it has to function as if it were a Coalition. A Coalition Government presupposes the existence of an immediate common objective, and the acceptance of a common leadership, however temporary such acceptance may be. The strangeness in the present experiment is that it has no common objective that has brought the two major parties of the Interim Government together—the common objective has yet to be discovered, and we hope the two parties will soon be able to evolve such a common objective more particularly for the tiding over of the present crisis. We also hope that the members of the Interim Government will elect to stand by its leader to carry out policies in furtherance of the common objective. In other words, the Government at the Centre should soon become a Coalition Government in the true sense of the term.

First Fruits

However, the Country is justified in hoping that the immediate effect of the League's entry into the Cabinet will be the complete abandonment of its policy of 'direct action' that has already resulted in horrible communal clashes. If this objective is achieved, as it ought to be achieved by any and all means, by the timely intervention of the re-formed New Delhi Cabinet, that in itself would be a right start for the New Dispensation.

Work as One Team

Whether the League came into the Interim Government by its own right, or in the spirit in which Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and His Excellency the Viceroy invited it to do so, the fact remains that the Muslim League representatives are now in the Interim Government along with the representatives of other parties and communities in India. The charge that the Interim Government is a one-party Government is no longer tenable. It is a real Indian Government, and it should work as one team despite ideological differences, which, as is often proved in practical politics and in the course of the day to day administrative work, are bound to undergo modifications. Long term plans apart, the Interim Government has plenty of urgent work to do to alleviate the condition of the ordinary man and

woman in the Country. As all parties are agreed on the urgency and need for this ameliorative work, it should not be difficult for the various representatives to work in active co-operation with one another, placing the needs of the Country first and subordinating party allegiances to the principal need of the hour. Food, clothing, housing, education, health, sanitation, transport, all these essential problems have to be tackled by the Interim Government on a nation-wide basis, and in all these fields of ameliorative work there is no room for communalism, party politics, or prejudices born of ideological convictions. And no less in importance and urgency is the setting into activity of the new Constitution-making body. We dare hope that the present really Indian National Government will rise equal to its great opportunities.—R. M.—G.R.V.

SPARKS FROM THE ANVIL

The Use of Freedom

The value of Freedom lies in the use made of it. The right use of the political Freedom that is coming to us, was emphasized by Lord Pethick-Lawrence, Secretary of State for India, while speaking at a reception arranged in his honour recently by the London Majlis. "What are you going to make of your Freedom and your country?" he asked: "Will it lead man in all the ideas of human progress and be an example which other nations will try to follow? Or, will it be a warning to other countries to avoid? The choice is before you. India can become the beacon-light of human freedom, prosperity and happiness, which will be the lasting glory for the human race."

The choice is indeed before us, and in the approaching Freedom, there lies a wonderful opportunity for India. She has an age-long tradition of brotherly living, of ever seeking and resting on Unity in the midst of diversity, and of stable political, economic and social organizations, based more on the concept of *duty*, than of *rights*.

Such tried and proved traditions have lately been relegated to obscurity because

of the impact of glamorous, disruptive influences that are alien to our thought and civilization. Even in our aping of foreign institutions and ideas we are blind. It is their worst side that we have cultivated to copy. While thinking people all over the world are full of admiration for India's genius, it is deplorable that we have habituated ourselves to looking outside for our inspiration. Such pernicious influences are only of recent origin and growth. They flourish because of an alien system of education to which India has unfortunately been subjected for several decades now, and the keynote of which is ruthless competition. Our hope lies in restoring the indigenous type of education and in establishing once again in the hearts and minds of individuals those great subjective values that once characterized our Nation and in the light of which our life's activities were conducted. Even among the western nations, great thinkers are beginning to admit that the present economic, social and political conflicts in the world are attributable to a sense of rank godlessness and the consequent shifting of values.

What is needed, therefore, is a fundamental change in the outlook of individuals and nations. Our outlook so far has been what may be termed as 'oppositional attitude', and this must give place to 'constructional attitude', such construction being based on our own culture and civilization, and not on something imported from another country. "This should be the basis", as Sir Stafford Cripps said, "created out of her own tradition and philosophy which is far deeper than the philosophy in this country."

Of course, in developing our new government, suited to our own national character and genius, we should not fail to take lessons from the experiences of others and adapt them to our own circumstances. —G.R.V.

A Worthy Recognition

The Indian Women's University at Poona is shortly to be granted a Charter by the Bombay Government. The announcement made by the Bombay Premier to this effect at the golden jubilee celebrations of the Indian Widow's Home, constitutes a well-merited tribute to Dr. D. K. Karve, the well-known pioneer and worker in the cause of women's education in India for over half a century now.

With the grant of this Charter, the Indian Women's University will have an equal status with other Universities. This recognition is long overdue, and we rejoice that the noble pioneer of a cause that had for long but few people to sponsor it, will have the satisfaction of seeing in his 88th year that his long and continued services are bearing fruitful results.

It is easier today to champion any cause or reform, but in the closing decades of the last century to sponsor such causes, particularly where they concerned women, and other caste inequities existing under pseudo-religious sanctions, was to invite risks of social obloquy and ostracism. Undaunted, however, Dr. Karve and his enthusiastic colleagues founded in 1896 the Indian Widow's Home and promoted the cause of women's education in India. A Training

College for Women and a Girls' School became the nucleus of the Women's University, founded in 1916, and today it has four Colleges and twenty Schools affiliated to it. We offer our hearty congratulations to the great veteran reformer, and wish him several more years of joyous life in the service of Indian women. —G.R.V.

Training for Service

Social Service in India has so far been spasmodic, ill-organized and unskilled, in spite of the most praise-worthy efforts of non-official philanthropic and political organizations whose limitations and handicaps are necessarily far too many. The field of work is so vast and the tasks are so varied that any isolated voluntary effort here and there is too inadequate to meet the requirements of the two fundamental aspects of Social Service—the ameliorative and educative.

A nation-wide organization with a perennial supply of skilled personnel is very essential to achieve worth-while results in Social Service. The U. P. Government's scheme, to conscript the youth of the Province for Service, to be introduced from next year, will, therefore, be widely welcomed because of its two-fold advantage. It benefits the community on the one hand and trains young men at the same time for skilful Social Service.

The U. P. Government scheme stipulates that every young man, who has finished his secondary education, shall render one year's free Social Service to the community.

The Government, we understand, does not intend to introduce conscription in the beginning. It is proposed to debar those who do not offer themselves for recruitment from all privileges accruing from their secondary education diploma. They will, for example, not be eligible for service under Government or any institution recognized by the Government or admission to any technical or training institution recognized by the Government. It is expected that they will not be able to gain admission to universities either.

The cadets will receive a general cultural and intellectual education in a camp or camps situated in the rural areas and will have to undergo an intensive course of physical training. After this preliminary physical and mental re-conditioning, they will have to carry out projects of manual work, including agricultural labour, and take up the problem of adult illiteracy. They will work under the actual conditions in which the Indian labourer works and in accordance with well-planned programmes. In the end a certificate of having completed the course will be given.

The scheme will considerably help to bridge the gulf that at present divides the educated classes from the masses of the population, establish living contacts and bonds of sympathy between educated youth and their poor and ignorant countrymen.

With the growth of experience in the working of the scheme, it is to be extended to all young-men and later, perhaps to women as well. This experiment will doubtless be watched with keen interest by all patriotic Indians. We hope other Provincial Governments will soon initiate similar schemes of Social Service.

—G.R.V.

CONTEMPORARY COMMENT

Public Service and Partisanship

Some day we hope our democracies will devise fool-proof methods to ensure that only real talent and efficiency will constitute tests for public service. Communal or sectional claims alone ought not to determine the choice either for Ministries or for other top-ranking responsible situations. In a recent issue of *Harijan*, discussing the claims put up on behalf of various sections of the people in the several Ministries purely on communal grounds, Gandhiji states :

“Soil corrosion eats up good soil. It is bad enough. Caste corrosion is worse. It eats up men and divides men from men. Letters continue to come from Christians, Parsis, naturally from Scheduled Castes, and Women. They require representation in the Ministry. Provincial competition is already there. The makers of ministries are not free from that taint, and even when they do not favour it, they will lose caste if they dare to do the right thing, and restrict their choice to merit only. Those who feel that they are left out should have patience, and rise by dint of service and merit. Those who happen to be Ministers should feel that they are servants, not masters of the nation.”

The following interesting comment on Gandhiji's salutary advice is reproduced from a recent issue of *The Hindustan Review* of Dr. Sachchidananda Sinha, India's veteran journalist-thinker :

“The above extract from Gandhiji's article enunciates sound principles for the working of democratic institutions—namely, that ability and efficiency should constitute the only true test and passport to inclusion in public services, right from top to bottom, and more particularly in the Ministries, which govern a State and administer its affairs.

“But is it possible to do so under the democratic system which is modelled in India on the British party system? We fear not. The American system, under which the President of the United States appoints his Ministers, who are not necessarily members of the Legislature, affords a better guarantee for the inclusion of the ablest and the most efficient persons available in the State. Not so the British parliamentary system (on which our own India is modelled and based) under which inclusion in the Ministry is dependent on one's being a member of the Legislature. Surely all the best men—the ablest, the most experienced, and the most efficient—are not to be found in a Legislature, elected on a pure party basis. One need not waste time in taking concrete examples from the eleven Provincial Legislatures recently elected in British India, not only in the matter of constituting their Ministries but even in the election of their Speakers and Deputy-Speakers—which are, and should be regarded

as, non-party jobs. They all had elected none but their party men. When such is the strong partisanship displayed by our political parties in favour of their own followers, what wonder if there be a rush of claimants for Ministerships on the ground of caste, community, or cult? What wonder, indeed."

Central Responsibility

Bengal has demonstrated and is still demonstrating the tragedy of a weak Centre pitted against worse provinces. The Suhrawardy government, avowedly communal and partisan, has for the second time shown itself a miserable misfit in the office which it has come to hold. And the Governor of the Province in the person of an ultraconstitutionalist has proved himself an unfortunate victim of British Labour's incapacity to choose administrators. And the Central Government has hitherto not shown any inclination to step in where the province has failed. But it is not only in the matter of law and order that central co-ordination and guidance has been proved essential. In the matter of food, the deficit provinces have often to depend upon the mercy of the surplus ones like the Punjab and Sind. On the question of industrialization, the controversy

now raging in Madras on textile policy points to the need for an all-round co-ordination to prevent duplication, over-lapping or lopsidedness. Mr. Jagjivan Ram has just expressed the desirability of having a uniformity of labour legislation. The Interim Government has been rendered weak by the anxiety to have a quota of irreconcilables in it. In spite of it, it must forge ahead with plans for the development of an all-India front, and although a reluctance to interfere in provincial matters is understandable, a long spell of pusillanimity will undo in advance its good potentialities. Whatever the form of the new constitution, the Interim Government ought not to let go any chance to let even the recalcitrant units mellow themselves down by interprovincial consultation and co-operation.

—*The Social Welfare*, 25 October 1946.

India's Problem Province

Bengal, owing to her continued tragic inefficiencies of administration throughout the last four years, has become India's problem-province, whose unremedied ills require much more of New Delhi's and Westminster's attention than they somehow get.

—*The Statesman*, 25 October 1946.

Alliance for Peace: Concluded from p. 2.

progress towards the solution of immediate problems will be more steady and substantial. The loss of speed will be compensated for by the gain in substance. The problems of food, clothing, and employment, are essentially Provincial Subjects and hence are the chief concern of the Provincial Governments—the Central Government comes into the picture only as a co-ordinating agency. How can the Provinces turn their full attention to these vital problems when all the time their preoccupation consists in putting down communal disturbances? How can common men and women be enthused about any scheme of economic and social planning when their life and property are being continually threatened? If the present conditions continue,

all our provincial administrations will have to reduce themselves to 'Police Raj', suppressing a communal riot here and a violent disturbance there. All declarations of ideologies and pronouncements of economic planning will be empty talk so long as uncertainty of civic life continues and so long as immediate problems remain unsolved. Coalition Governments in the Provinces will make Coalition at the Centre a reality, which it is not today. Once these Coalition Governments begin to function both at the Centre and in the Provinces, the political atmosphere in the Country will radically change, and we will certainly be nearer the solution of the long-term issues on which depends the future of India's political and economic structure.



RECIPE FOR PREJUDICE

BY WILLARD JOHNSON

We are prejudiced :

If we believe that our race is born with more brains and character than other races ;

If we think that members of our own church [Religion] are good and most others queer or bad ;

If we ever accuse a whole group of people of anything ;

If we repeat rumours or gossip about other groups ;

If we believe that members of some groups should stay out of certain jobs and schools ;

If we keep our children or friends from associating with members of other races and creeds.

Why are we prejudiced :

Because we do not know the truth about other groups ;

Because we have pictures-in-the-head about other groups which are false ;

Because we think a whole group is like a few of its bad actors we know or hear about ;

Because we listen to gossip and rumours

which are spread by propagandists for their own profit and power ;

Because we blame other people for our own troubles and failures ;

Because we are afraid that others may grab our jobs or outvote us or drag down our neighbourhoods ;

How can we build goodwill :

By judging each person on his own record ;

By having good friends in all racial and religious groups ;

By learning the truth about all groups ;

By knowing how much all groups have done to help make our country free and prosperous ;

By seeing that every person has the same rights and opportunities that we want for ourselves ;

By working for good jobs, good homes and good schools for everybody ;

By working for good government which will guarantee liberty and justice for all.

(With acknowledgment to Building Bridges)

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