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Topics of the Week.

Decency in Journalism.

THE non-Brahmin Conference in Nagpur has done well to condemn the recent campaign in certain Indian journals of personal attacks on Mahatma Gandhi with a view to bilittling him. Some journals, particularly a few conducted in the Indian languages, have recently descended to deplorable depths of bad taste in attacking the Mahatma. It is one thing to attack the Mahatma's views in so far as they are of public importance; it is quite a different thing to systematically bilittle him and hold him to ridicule and contempt. It is difficult to see what national service is rendered by this campaign. Some self-restraint in the interests of decent journalism may well be practised.

WE should not, of course, countenance any restrictive action by the State in this respect. State interference in matters of journalistic decency and taste will be a greater evil than the evil it may seek to remedy. But the profession itself and the general public should discourage such degradation of journalism, if the individual journalist is incapable of restraint. It is lamentable that Indian journals published in the Indian languages do not, on the whole, attempt to maintain the standards of Indian journals published in the English language. It is surprising that the same individual will write with greater restraint and decency in English than in an Indian language. For some unknown reason, lower standards are accepted and even professed in Indian vernacular journals than in journals published in the English language.

Congress and the Harijans.

DR. AMBEDKAR in Bombay and Mr. Rajah in Madras have bitterly criticised the policies of the Congress Ministries in the two provinces with regards to Harijans and suggested remedies. In a speech to Harijans in Ahmedabad on the 22nd October Dr. Ambedkar is reported to have said that he had no faith that Mahatma Gandhi or the Congress would do any good to the Harijans. He made some specific complaints. It is not necessary to refer to all of them here as we reproduce elsewhere a statement issued by Mr. A. V. Thakkar, a member of the Servants of India Society and the General Secretary, since its inception, of the Harijan Sevak Sangh, who is perhaps the most competent authority on the subject. Even Dr. Ambedkar could not have so soon forgotten the emphasis that Mahatma Gandhi placed on the removal of untouchability all through his public life and the unprecedented propaganda he organised for the purpose. The annual reports of the Harijan Sevak Sangh indicate some of the improvements in the status of the Harijans that the Mahatma's propaganda has brought about. We do not yield to Dr. Ambedkar in his impatience that the progress has not been greater than it has been. But is it necessary to under-estimate the progress achieved or be ungrateful to those who have helped in the good cause to make out a case for more rapid improvement? Dr. Ambedkar would have been on sounder ground if he had done better for the Harijans. His advice was that Harijans should form a separate organization and have nothing to do with the Congress. We have ourselves been no blind admirers of the Congress. But we fail to understand how the Harijans will improve their lot by forming a separate party. As a matter of fact, the bulk of the Harijans in the Bombay Legislative Assembly form part of Dr. Ambedkar's party in opposition to the Congress. It was because of it that the Congress Cabinet in Bombay does not include a Harijan,—which is one of the grievances of Dr. Ambedkar.

DR. AMBEDKAR referred to the difference in the attitude of the Mahatma towards the Muslims and the Harijans at the Round Table Conference. The difference does credit to the Mahatma. If after heroic efforts to eliminate separate electorate for the Muslims, the Mahatma submitted to it as a *fait accompli*, and resisted the further division of the Indian people for electoral purposes, if he resisted the extension of an admitted evil, he has done no wrong to the Harijans. Mr. Rajah, too, overlooked all that has been done for the Harijans in Madras and made such a mortal grievance that his Harijan Bill was opposed by the Congress Government in Madras

that he advocated the denunciation of the Poona Pact and the substitution of a separate electorate for Harijans. The Madras Government was frankly apologetic about its conduct in asking Mr. Rajah to withdraw his bill in favour of a Government bill of more limited jurisdiction. It must have been humiliating for Mr. C. Rajagopalachari, who, when he was an "irresponsible agitator", swore that the whole of India was ready for a radical anti-untouchability bill, should, when he himself becomes a "responsible" administrator, admit that even the Madras Presidency was not quite ready for it and seek to go slow. It only means that Mr. Rajagopalachari was over-optimistic in his estimate of the country's preparedness for the reform, but it does not in the least discount his own personal zeal for the reform. He is not behind Mr. Rajah in deploring that the country was not ready for a more sweeping reform.

MR. RAJAH'S second grievance was that the Harijan members of the Congress Party voted against his bill and defeated it. He felt scandalised that a Harijan bill should be opposed by Harijans. He put it to the discipline exacted by the Congress which is largely a non-Harijan body. Mr. Rajagopalachari explained that he had permitted the Harijan members of his party freedom to vote as they wished on that particular bill, and if they voted with the Government and against Mr. Rajah, it only meant that they agreed with the Government. Mr. Rajah did not accept this explanation and complained to Mahatma Gandhi that the method of election of the Poona Pact was a failure. The Harijan members returned under the Pact were not truly representatives of the Harijans but of the non-Harijans. He has now come to the conclusion that joint electorates, even the joint-cum-separate electorates of the Poona Pact, were unsatisfactory and that undiluted separate electorates were better for Harijans. Granting that Mr. Rajah has legitimate grievance against the Congress Ministry in Madras, he has not shown how a separate electorate for Harijans would improve matters for them. Grievances may be real and galling, but the remedies should be relevant to the grievances, and not be merely desperate.

Rajkot.

It is time that authoritative statements are issued by all parties concerned regarding the happenings in Rajkot: the Praja Mandal, the Dewan, the Thakore Sahib and the Paramount Power. For, according to the *Bombay Chronicle* Correspondent, the Thakore Sahib and the Dewan are willing to concede, in principle, the demand for responsible government, but the Paramount Power is vetoing it. The news that the Thakore Sahib and the Dewan have made up their quarrel and that they have both agreed to concede the demand for responsible government is too good to be true. If it be true, both the Thakore Sahib and the Dewan deserve to be congratulated on such good sense, which is indeed very rare among the Indian Princes and their Dewans. Rajkot will have the unique distinction of being the first State in India to concede the righteous demand of its people for responsible government.

BUT it appears that the good intentions of the Rajkot authorities are being thwarted by other Indian Princes in Western India. For

they fear that if the demand for responsible government is granted in Rajkot, similar demands in other States will gain enormously in strength and become irresistible. No other Indian Prince is yet prepared to go so far. As a body the Princes are unwilling to let the Rajkot Ruler break their solid front.

BUT what is even more disconcerting is the reported attitude of the Paramount Power. It appears that the Paramount Power is averse to giving its consent to the progressive intentions of the Rajkot Ruler and his British Dewan. If this be true, it is a violation of the pledge which Earl Winterton gave in the House of Commons some time ago, when he said that the Paramount Power would not veto any progressive reforms initiated by an Indian Prince. The demand of the people both in British India and in the Indian States has been that the Paramount Power should use its influence with the Princes to democratise their administrations. The Paramount Power does nothing of the kind. It does not maintain an attitude of even benevolent neutrality in the matter. It is said to be actively opposing the intentions of the Rajkot authorities to concede the demand for responsible government. This is the unkindest cut of all. We would fain not believe it.

Tradition and Innovation:

THE political evolution of the Rajkot State has a deep moral which is worth considering. The late Thakore Sahib of the State who, by all accounts, was a benevolent ruler intent on promoting not only good government but self-government among his subjects, inaugurated in 1923 a constitution for the State which was in many respects far in advance of anything of the kind in British India, not to speak of the other Indian States. He constituted a Representative Assembly, the members of which were elected by six electoral colleges based on adult franchise. No officials were nominated to the Assembly, but it was both the right and the duty of the Dewan to attend the Assembly, answer interpellations and expound the budget and the policies of the Government. He had, however, no vote. The President of the Assembly was elected and not nominated. The Assembly had a system of committees, to which particular questions were referred for consideration. The Assembly had wide powers. Its decisions were subject to the veto of the Ruler. The late Thakore Sahib was interested in the success of the constitution and watched over its progress with paternal interest.

WHEN he passed away in 1930 the constitution suffered. The present ruler left everything to his erstwhile Dewan, Mr. Viravalla. And the latter, partly under the pressure of the economic depression, cut down many beneficent services and increased taxation and avoided criticism by gradually eliminating the Legislative Assembly. The constitution thus fell into disuse. It was only during the last few months that the people began to demand the restoration of the Assembly and the conferment of full responsible government. It is a sad commentary that during the interval between the passing away of the late Thakore and the present agitation the people of the State acquiesced in the gradual emasculation and final elimination of the Representative Assembly. If democracy had been the breath of their nostrils, they would have resisted long ago this process,

even if they had failed in the attempt. If democracy had sunk deep into the political consciousness of the people, they would have been shocked and scandalised by the infringement of their rights. The violation of a conventional taboo, such as an inter-caste, or inter-religious, marriage, the entry of a Harijan into a Hindu temple, would have moved the people of the State far more profoundly than the violation of the constitution. The democratic constitution was a novel toy, a luxury. One Thakore gave it; another took it away. Nobody missed it. It came unsought; it went un lamented.

PRINCELY autocracy has a tradition of centuries behind it; democracy is but a tender seedling. The late Thakore planted it, but before it struck deep root, he was called away and it wilted. Now the situation is changed. The people have become conscious of their right to be self-government. The future is more hopeful.

Baroda.

PRESIDING over the Baroda Praja Mandal Conference Sirdar Patel made perhaps the most uncompromising pronouncement regarding the attitude of the Congress towards federation. "Unless and until popular legislatures are established in the States and the States' administration is carried on with the full consent and approval of the people's representatives it is futile to talk of federation", said the Sirdar. In view of the insinuations in certain quarters that the Congress was weakening in its opposition to federation as contemplated by the Government of India Act, it is good news to have the opposition so emphatically reiterated by no less a person than the Sirdar. This confirms the view recently expressed by Mahatma Gandhi that there was no difference of opinion between himself and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru on the question.

SIRDAR PATEL entered into an elaborate explanation of the Haripura Congress resolution regarding the attitude of the Congress towards the States. He traced to it the emergence of the present political agitations in various Indian States. But it is unnecessary to examine at the moment whether the current agitation was due to the Haripura Resolution or some other cause. It is good, however, that most of the leaders of the Congress have actively associated themselves with the agitations in the States, Sirdar Patel himself being no exception. Mahatma Gandhi himself did not hesitate to intervene in the affairs of Mysore and Travancore.

SIRDAR PATEL made handsome acknowledgment of the pioneering work in progressive administration of the Maharaja of Baroda. Time was when Baroda led not only the Indian States but British India as well. If the Maharaja's progressive administration has had any results at all—and nobody denies that they had notable results—it follows then that the people of Baroda are more fit than the peoples of other States for responsible self-government. Instead of being driven by his subjects, the Maharaja himself had in the past led them along the path of progress. Now the time is come for him to put the coping stone of his life-work. It is earnestly to be hoped that the Maharaja of Baroda will again lead the Indian States and British India by conferring responsible government on his people.

Travancore Memorandum.

SINCE writing last on the subject we have had occasion to peruse the Memorandum which certain members of the Working Committee of the Travancore State Congress submitted to the Maharaja of Travancore along with a Memorial, dated the 30th May last. This was the Memorandum to which Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar took strong objection and which he insisted that its authors should withdraw. It was the refusal of the authors to do so that brought about most of the trouble in Travancore. Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar announced when the amnesty was proclaimed that the Travancore Government intended to prosecute the authors of the Memorandum in the law courts.

BEFORE we read the Memorandum we ourselves had advocated such a course. A perusal of it, however, convinces us that it is not a matter for the courts to decide. The complaints and allegations are mostly, if not entirely, of a political and administrative character. They ought to be investigated by a Commission of Enquiry and not by the ordinary law courts. The Travancore Government should appoint a competent commission to enquire not only into the disturbances that took place, but also the allegations in the Memorandum. That will be a more satisfactory course than prosecution in the courts.

WE ourselves share the doubt whether the judiciary in Travancore is independent enough of the executive as to inspire for its judgments confidence in the public both in and out of Travancore in such political disputes. The State will do well to be above suspicion in this matter.

A PLEA FOR A CONFERENCE.

WHILE not taking a tragic view of the situation we cannot but deplore the growing bitterness between the Bombay Congress Government and the leaders of the Trade Union Movement over the Bombay Trades Disputes Bill. It is not necessary here to dwell at any length on the prolonged debates in the

Legislative Assembly, the bitter tone of the speeches, the stretching of every rule and convention of procedure to its utmost limits to prolong or to curtail the debates and the under currents of irritation and resentment, and the fraying of tempers provoked by the Bill. The Trade Union authorities have not only disapprov-

ed of the Bill on its merits but resented the claim of the Government that it had the support of the workers. They have ultimately decided on calling a general strike of one day on the 7th inst. in order to demonstrate that the workers were not in favour of the Bill. Be it remembered that it is not a referendum arranged with the friendly consent of the Government and the Trade Union leaders in order to ascertain the opinion of the workers. The prevailing opinion of the workers might have been gathered, if not correctly measured, by the holding of public meetings. But in the present instance, the Labour leaders are out to challenge the claim of the Government to represent Labour and have asked the workers to go on a day's strike and sacrifice a day's wages to prove their loyalty to these leaders. The Government was perforce obliged to accept the challenge. Both parties are out to win and have let loose propaganda and all that it means. It is one thing for a few legislators to hurl arguments and epithets against one another in a legislature under the supervision of a Speaker; it is quite another thing to subject the comparatively innocent and ignorant mass of workers to high-pressure propaganda, not always illuminating and enlightening but almost always super-charged with emotion. It is hardly necessary to dwell longer on this aspect.

The trial of strength between the Government and the Trade Union leaders is to take place on the 7th. It is immaterial for the present argument whether the strike will be complete or partial, or whether the verdict will be clearly in favour of the Government or the Labour leaders. Whichever side claims victory, the poor workers are bound to suffer. It is over-optimism to anticipate no violence and its more deplorable after-effects. The contest between the claimants to leadership of the workers is not like a game of foot-ball or even a boxing match in which the contestants certainly do their utmost to win, but at the end shake hands. In the present instance, the parties are not likely to shake hands over the result and part as friends. Defeat will lead to bitterness and desparate counsels.

It is not in the interests of the country as a whole that the Congress should be weakened and suffer in prestige by an internecine war at this stage. The defeat of either the Congress Government or the Trade Union Congress in the present contest will be equally deplorable.

It may not yet be too late for the Government and the Trade Union Congress to explore the possibilities of an agreement. Anxious as we are at the moment to plead for conciliation, we shall not pause to discuss the past and attempt to apportion blame for the present *impasse*. We shall most earnestly appeal to both parties to agree to a Round Table Conference to explore the possibilities of reaching an agreement in an at-

mosphere of friendly collaboration over a common problem.

In this matter great responsibility rests with the Government if only because they are the Government. It is rendered greater by their subscription to the high idealistic doctrines of Mahatma Gandhi, namely, *ahimsa* not only in deed but in thought. Moreover, it is of the essence of democratic government that the minority should be content to dissent, but not be driven to desperation and sabotage. A Government chosen by the people and responsible to the people will not suffer in prestige simply because they are willing to confer with the Labour leaders to arrive at an agreed solution and avoid strife. The Mahatma did not lose in prestige when he, sick and frail as he was, undertook a long journey to Bombay to meet Mr. M. A. Jinnah. The Government is powerful and can be magnanimous; they need not stand on ceremony. If the Labour leaders refuse to accept their invitation, they will put themselves in the wrong, not the Government.

We would appeal to the Labour leaders to forget the slights they felt or fancied in the past, to waive points of ceremony or prestige and earnestly seek opportunities to come to an agreed settlement. A day's strike is not merely the loss of a day's wages to the workers which in all conscience is no small sacrifice for them, but it has far-reaching consequences. Out of their very love for the workers, whom they invite to make more serious sacrifices they may not hesitate to make the smaller sacrifice, of overlooking any personal slight or injustice they may labour under. Both the Government and the Labour leaders must cheerfully undertake some small sacrifice in order to serve the cause of the workers better. Let all the goodwill that there is offer its good offices to ward off the fratricidal war.

P. KODANDA RAO.

INDIAN FRANCHISE IN SOUTH AFRICA.

ADDRESSING the Indo-European Council in Durban in September last, Mr. Duncan Burnside, M. P., gave it as his opinion that the time had arrived when Indians in South Africa should get some form of political representation. It is not clear how representative of white opinion is the view of Mr. Burnside. It is, however, good news that there is at least one Member of Parliament in South Africa who publicly advocated in Natal the view that Indians must have political representation in South Africa.

The story of Indian political rights in South Africa is a sad one to recall. Time was when in Natal, long before the Union, Indians had the political franchise. The right was subsequently taken away from them on the plea that no immigrant should have the right in Natal who had no similar right in his own homeland. This was about 1896, when there was no political franchise

in India. The law, though worded in general terms, was specially intended to disqualify Indians for the political franchise in Natal. Such a law was a very retrograde step. Nobody emigrates to another country to be no better off than at home. The very first object of emigration is to better one's position in every possible field. There was no justification for denying the Indian immigrant in Natal the political franchise because he did not enjoy a similar right in India. In any event, that justification no longer exists as Indians in India have now political franchise.

In the Transvaal under Boer or British rule and both before and after the Union Indians had no rights of any kind; they were just helots, which they continue to be to this day. In the more enlightened Cape Province Indians till recently had the political franchise with the whites and, what is more, in common with them. But this right was taken away recently, long after the conclusion of the Cape Town Agreement by which the South African Government acknowledged the same obligations towards the Indian as towards any other section of the population in South Africa.

The position of Indians had with respect to political franchise so far deteriorated that it had become delicate for any Indian to suggest its restoration. The initiative was best taken by the whites themselves. In any event, a proposal for Indian franchise has a chance of being given some hearing only if the whites in South Africa take it up. From that point of view it was wise and courageous of Mr. Burnside to publicly plead for Indian political rights in South Africa.

He was aware that nothing less than political equality with the whites on a common roll would satisfy the Indian leaders in South Africa. He was however, of the opinion that there was no chance of getting the kind of representation demanded by the Indian leaders within a reasonable time. In such circumstances he felt that it was the duty of Indian leaders to consider very carefully any offer of communal representation. He, however, hastened to add that this was not suggested as an end, but rather as a beginning, to their legitimate aspirations. It is clear that Mr. Burnside himself is no believer in communal representation but suggested it only as the most that was at all possible.

He supported his plea by recalling that during the last budget debate not a single voice was raised on behalf of the Indians. The Bantus had representatives, albeit they were whites, and Mr. Burnside thought that they had been a conspicuous success. He thought that it was essential that Indians should have in the South African Parliament some representatives who, owing to the fact they were responsible only to the Indians, would voice their needs without fear.

Incidentally, Mr. Burnside examined the Indians' objection to communal representation in that it meant a stigma on the ancient civilization of India.

He rightly remarked that the pride of ancient civilization did not fill hungry stomachs or help to solve problems which needed a realistic approach. The argument that communal representation implies a stigma is unwarranted inasmuch as the Moslems and Europeans in India, the Europeans in Kenya and Fiji have insisted on communal representation without being conscious of any stigma on their civilizations, ancient or modern. The real objection to communal representation is political inasmuch as it keeps the communities apart for political purposes and renders democratic self-government impossible.

But to return to the main plea of Mr. Burnside that Indians in South Africa should accept communal representation. India has had plenty of experience of communal electorates. And no Indian nationalist, but bitterly laments its imposition on India to serve the British imperial purpose of "divide and rule." And no nationalist will ever wish to see the vicious and anti-democratic system extended. It must be confessed with sorrow, however, that there are Indians in India who clamour for communal representation. The British in India, in Kenya and Fiji have insisted on communal representation. Some short-sighted Indians in Ceylon are asking for communal representation. Under these circumstances, it is futile to refuse to look at communal representation.

Mr. Burnside, however, may as well shed his illusion that communal representation is only a half-way house to common representation. If the experience of India is any guide, communal representation, once introduced, has a tendency to perpetuate itself and extend indefinitely. Those who would wish that some day, however distant, South Africa should have a true democracy will shrink from advocating communal representation.

But what are the chances of such a democracy in South Africa? When even the Christian Church, not to speak of the secular State, accepts as an axiom the doctrine that there shall be no equality between black and white in South Africa, democracy has no place in South Africa at any time that one can foresee. When the much larger Bantu population had perforce to submit to communal and inferior representation, the Indian population may also have to submit to it, under protest, even as the Indians in Kenya and Fiji have had to do. If the alternative is no representation at all, and in the special circumstances of South Africa and of Indians therein it would be unwise for Indians to reject out of hand, in the sense of non-cooperation, communal representation, if it was offered.

Mr. Burnside did not, naturally enough, go into details regarding the number of representatives and as to whether the representatives might be Indians by race or should be white people as in the case of the Bantus. The discussion of these matters was at the moment premature.

Mr. Maurice Webb, the President of the Indo-European Council and one of the very few white men in South Africa who have risen above colour and race prejudices and who has been a champion of fair dealing for all irrespective of race and colour, threw out a very valuable suggestion at the meeting. The South Africa Act provides for four white people to be nominated to the Senate by the Government to represent the views of the non-Europeans in South Africa. Since these Senators are nominated by the Government, the question of communal representation does not arise. Mr. Webb mentioned that next year there was likely to be a vacancy among the four Senators and suggested that the Government might be requested to nominate to the vacancy a person to represent Indian interests. This is a very helpful suggestion and deserves to be immediately pursued.

BUT even this suggestion is not without its drawbacks. Only recently the South African Government have given an idea of their appreciation of the power to nominate Senators. They have made it a convenience to get into the Cabinet a person who could not otherwise get into the Legislature, Mr. Hofmyer thought the Government's action so great a violation of the purpose of the nomi-

nation system that he took the extreme step of resigning from the Cabinet. Even if Government were persuaded to nominate a person in the interests of Indians, it is unlikely that they will select a person who will fearlessly do his job and not be subservient to the Government, and in that way, do more harm to the Indians than good. But supposing that they did select a true representative of Indians, the amount of good that he could do in the Senate is likely to be very limited. The *Indian Opinion* of South Africa refers in its issue of the 30th September last to the opinions of certain Senators on the conduct of Senator E. H. Brooks, one of the Senators elected by the Bantus, when he protested against the way the Government neglected the Senate and against the way Mr. Fourie was nominated to the Senate. Senator M. J. Vermeulen said, "the Senators representing natives would only enjoy the cooperation of other Senators if they impressed upon the natives that they were receiving the best possible treatment from the Government."

HOWEVER ineffective a representative of Indian interests may be in a Senate of this kind, he will at least do some good and little harm if he is nominated on the selection by the Indians themselves by means of an informal election. Preferably still, if he is an Indian.

THE 7TH OF NOVEMBER.

*All the past we leave behind,
We debouch upon a newer mightier world, varied world,
Fresh and strong the world we seize, world of labour and
the march,*

Pioneers ! O Pioneers !

—Walt Whitman.

THE coming 7th of November will go down the corridors of time as a red letter day in the history of the Labour Movement in India. On that day, workers all over the Province of Bombay will consciously and deliberately take a new and definite step in the development of their struggle for emancipation. Backed up by the Nagpur resolution of the Working Committee of the All-India Trade Union Congress and under the guidance of the Bombay Provincial T. U. C. and the Independent Labour Party, the workers of Bombay have decided to declare a one-day general strike on 7th November to demonstrate their unmitigated opposition to the anti-strike Labour Bill now on the anvil of the Bombay Legislative Assembly and popularly known among the working class circles as the Bombay Black Bill. It is for the first time in India that workers, under the direction of an All-India organization of their own class, are bracing themselves up to conscious political action; and the Congress Government of Bombay

are to be congratulated upon being the first to furnish this occasion to the Indian Labour Movement.

We heartily support the one-day strike move on the part of the workers of this Province. That is the only way in which they can effectively indicate their views to the public. The other more common methods of creating public opinion are not available in a sufficient degree to the working class in any capitalist society. Under capitalism, not only the means of producing the necessaries of life are privately owned by a few individuals, but the means of producing public opinion also are privately owned and controlled. The school, the cinema, the radio and the most immediately important of all, the newspaper—all these institutions, which serve to mould public opinion, are completely under the domination of the owning class and cleverly manipulated by it to serve its own purpose. Why, the capitalist State itself, though it loudly protests that it keeps the ring clear for the working class and the owning class to fight their own battles, cannot, by its very nature, remain neutral. As Prof. Laski observes :

It (the State) does not stand over and above the conflicting groups, judging impartially between them. By its very nature it is simply coercive power used to protect the system of rights and duties of one process of economic relationships from invasion by another class which seeks to change them. For, on analysis,

the State appears as a body of men issuing orders to fulfil purposes they deem good. Their conception of good is the outcome of their place in the process which is challenged.

Under these tremendous odds, direct action is the only available and effective remedy left to the working class to use. This is pre-eminently true in a country like India where most of the workers are illiterate and insufficiently organised. In this particular case, all the available resources of publicity and propaganda, including the machinery of Government, are being marshalled and exploited to divide the ranks of workers and to belittle the importance of their momentous decision of a general strike. The bourgeois Press, either refuses to give any publicity to the activities of the workers or publishes news in an extremely distorted form, thus misleading the reading public as to the real nature and object of the proposed strike. It is, therefore, idle to dub the strike as an unconstitutional and even an undemocratic method of bringing pressure on Government. We believe, this is the most constitutional and democratic means of impressing upon the mind of Government as well as the public the resentment felt by the working class towards this Bill. Otherwise, as has been indicated by them on several occasions, Government are only too willing to regard the opposition to the Bill as an affair got up by half a dozen 'undesirable and self-styled' labour leaders. In order to disabuse the general public of this misunderstanding created by Government and the bourgeois Press, it is necessary for the working class, which has no other way of giving proper publicity to its views, to do something which cannot possibly be neglected by anybody. In fact it is the duty of the working class to take the whole misguided community into its confidence by effectively bringing to its notice the real state of affairs. And the only effective thing that the working class can do is to down tools.

The forthcoming general strike is, however, significant in more respects than one. The contentious Bombay Industrial Disputes Bill has served the very salutary purpose of helping the whole Indian Labour Movement to galvanize on an issue which is very vital to the working class. The Independent Labour Party of Dr. Ambedkar, with all its influence among the downtrodden masses of this Province, has given its whole-hearted and tangible support to the idea of the general strike. This move on their part is fraught with great potentialities. Provincial Committees of the Trade Union Congress all over India have passed resolutions condemning the Bombay Bill in the most unequivocal terms, expressing class solidarity with the workers of Bombay and encouraging them to carry out their resolve of the one-day general strike. The Bengal Provincial T. U. C. has gone a step further and asked for a special session of the Trade

Union Congress or at least a special emergent meeting of its General Council to discuss the urgent question of the Bombay Bill and also the general question of the relation of the T. U. C. with the Indian National Congress whose Ministry in Bombay is responsible for the obnoxious Bill. The Central Provinces T. U. C. has given its support to this idea which is speedily gathering strength among the working class circles. If such a special session of the T. U. C. is held, or if an emergent meeting of its General Council takes place, it is sure to repeat the Nagpur resolution of the Working Committee of the T. U. C. regarding the Bombay Bill and that is bound to have serious repercussions on the relations between the T. U. C. and the National Congress.

On the one hand, the theory of the united anti-Imperialist front with the Indian National Congress, erstwhile cherished even by the radical section of the labour movement has already been dashed to pieces on the issue of the Bombay Labour Bill; and on the other hand, the Congress High Command, following the lead given by the Mahatma, have started giving furious thought to the idea of purging the Congress of all its 'turbulent' elements. These forces running counter to each other are bound to meet in a clash at least the day after, if not today or even tomorrow. We wish such a clear configuration of political forces takes place in India. The earlier it does, the better for all concerned. And we hope, that out of it and as a resultant from it, will arise on a higher plane a more conscious and broadbased movement of the masses for political and economic emancipation, that is to say, for freedom and for socialism. The pattern of history decrees such a course of events and there is no thwarting its eternal dialectical process.

The proposed strike of the 7th November, therefore, is a straw indicating the direction in which the wind is blowing. It is a clear pointer to the fact that in India, the political movement of the masses has now come to a stage at which it has perforce to start fighting on a double front. It will have to carry on its fight with British Imperialism and it will also have to face the fury of indigenous oppressors who will even go to the extent of making common cause with the foreigner. Leonard Barnes has classified the main phases through which the British-Indian relations have passed upto now and are passing to-day. This classification is very relevant in this connection. He speaks of the first, mercantile phase in which India was only a source of supply to British and European markets; the second, industrial phase in which India was regarded primarily as a market for surplus British goods; the third, financial phase in which India was regarded primarily as a field for the investment of surplus British savings. And the fourth, through which we are now passing, is the phase of compromise and class policy, "in which British pro-

perty interests form a working alliance with Indian property interests, for the purposes of consolidating imperialism both against Indian nationalism and against socialism whether in Britain or in India." Thus the Indian Working Class Movement has a tremendous and doubly difficult task before it. That the movement would have to face it one day or the other was not very clearly realised up to now, because of the circumstance that, both the haves and the have-nots of this country, the kings as well as the slaves of industry and agriculture, had plenty of common ground on which to stand by each other's side and fight with the foreign intruder.

With the advent of Provincial Autonomy and the transfer of at least a modicum of power from an imposed bureaucracy to elected Ministries in Provinces, issues began to be more clearly defined. During the former regime, the leaders of the national movement could not be blamed for what the Government did to keep the masses of the people under political and economic subjugation. The whole obloquy was shifted (and rightly so) on to the shoulders of the foreign Government. This is no longer possible in a large number of spheres and popular Governments are now being held responsible for the miserable conditions of the people.

It is true that these conditions cannot be improved overnight, but people have begun to see that somehow or other, even the popular Governments are interested in the continuance of the existing basic conditions. Masses of the people, in some cases dismayed and disillusioned, have started slowly realising the real implications of this situation and are in that process receiving invaluable political education. They had entertained very high hopes of reforms in many spheres and at least considerable economic relief as soon as the popular ministries came into power. But disappointment has not been late in coming. They are gradually realising that even the ministries elected by them are in many cases, not unable but unwilling to do things which would be to their benefit. There is consciousness growing among them that even the loudest political party hitherto known to them is very unwilling to act up to its election pledges; and that even the Congress Ministries are not slow in making use of the repressive State machinery which is now at their disposal, to put down the movement of the masses for the betterment of their miserable living standard. Thus the Kisan Sabha workers and the workers in the Trade Union Movement are being looked upon with greater and greater disfavour by the Congress bosses and it is being increasingly made clear by the Congress Governments that they would not stand any 'leftist nonsense.' This attitude of the Congress towards the emancipation of the masses coupled with their blatant advocacy of definitely retrograde measures such as the present Labour Bill in Bombay has now brought to the

forefront the class character of those who hold the Congress under their sway.

The workers and the peasants of this country are slowly but surely realising the situation and the workers being, by their very conditions, more advanced, are already being very much exercised about it. The coming general strike, though its immediate cause is the objectionable Labour Bill, is a decisive indication of this growing unrest and increasing want of faith in the Government of the day in spite of the fact that it is a *swadeshi* Government. This strike will teach the Indian workers, what they had not the opportunity to learn before, that no Government in a capitalist society can do them full justice. The Government may be entirely foreign, it may be completely *swadeshi*; it may be black, it may be white; but if it is not the Government of the toiling masses themselves, that is to say, if it is not a genuinely socialist Government, it is inherently incapable of giving the workers their due. This great truth the workers of India will learn on the 7th of November. On that day, the pioneer workers of Bombay will start a movement which, we believe, will go from strength to strength until the time for the decisive struggle comes. And for all we know, it may come all too soon. That is why we say, the 7th of November will be a red letter day in the history of the Indian Labour Movement.

EX-GERMAN COLONIES.

I

THERE is trepidation in what was once a German Colony, South West Africa. There is equally vigorous agitation in East Africa. Owing to the apprehension that East Africa may be surrendered to Germany's avarice, the Kenya Legislature met and declared that Tanganyika is a vital factor in the future of the Empire in Africa. The European population in South West Africa is now 30,000, including 21,000 South Africans, 6,000 Germans who are naturalized British subjects and 3,000 Germans.

It is as a result of Germany's occupation of Sudetenland that the Germans are declaring openly that Germany will regain South West Africa. The Spanish Republic is not unaware of the fact that the Great powers are preparing to meet German Colonial demands in their usual way. In order to deflect the demands from themselves, they are beginning to talk of the colonies of the weaker powers: Holland, Belgium and Portugal, especially the last. *La Vanguardia a Barcelona* says, "In the face of a problem of this nature, Spanish differences and hates disappear and all Spaniards are united."

This question was also mooted when the British Prime Minister visited Herr Hitler, and one would be justified in supposing that the latter would not have consented to stay the entry of his army into Czech State but for the diplomatic understanding that ere long the Colonies question would be also settled. German population is

increasing, and the economic conditions demand increased supplies of raw produce and exports of manufactures. She has been chaffing ever since the Treaty of Versailles that she has been denied her due share of the world's raw produce and imports. By that Treaty, Germany was compelled to abandon all her rights and claims to her overseas possessions on the ground that she would use them as submarine bases and arm the natives and use them to oppress others. She had also to hand over to the Allied and Associated Powers the whole of the private property of her nationals that was situated in the victor countries. She lost all her plantations, settlements, industrial establishments and commercial undertakings. It is not that Germany too readily yielded to the demand. She addressed a detailed note that she should not be compelled to cede her colonies for the following reasons :

1. She acquired them by legitimate means, and she successfully developed them through vigorous endeavours made to that end. She incurred numerous sacrifices. Her title to these possessions was recognised by all the Powers.

2. The colonies were more necessary for her after the War than before because, in view of the unfavourable development of her currency, she must be able to obtain from her colonies as many as possible of the raw materials required by her industries. The outcome of the War had diminished the scope of her economic activities, and she was, therefore, in need of the profits to be gained by being a producer country herself.

3. She needed the colonies as a market for the sale of her industrial products so that she might preferably pay for her imports of raw materials by her own manufactures.

4. She needed colonies to settle a part of her surplus population.

5. She had the right and duty to co-operate with other nations in scientific exploration and the uplift of the undeveloped races.

Public opinion has of late given strong impetus to the claim for restoration of the colonies. It has veered round to the view that Germany could not be charged with having planned the War of 1914 long before that year. Mr. Lloyd George in 1920 had stated that the charge was untrue. Sir Arnold Wilson in the *Times* wrote in 1936; "Let us frankly recognise that the clauses of the Treaty of Versailles which deprived Germany of all her oversea possessions must be reconsidered. The problem of Africa will soon be so difficult as to demand the co-operation of every European power. To exclude Germany is to dam and embank a torrent in its upper reaches, thus imperilling fertile lands below. The retention of former German colonies and the maintenance of the *status quo* in Africa do not, in my judgment, constitute one of those 'just causes' for which the present generation in this country are prepared, or should be asked, to fight." The *Manchester Guardian* also

stated in September 1936: "We cannot have it both ways. If it is good for us to be a colonial power it is good for Germany; if it is bad for Germany it should be bad for us."

The claim for colonies is two-fold. It is based on material and economic needs which are common to all European States and the civilising mission of the white races. Mr. Oswald Pirow in welcoming the crew of the German Cruiser *Emden* said: "But more important than even her share in the maintenance of the world peace is her work as a civilising factor: Germany is one of the main pillars supporting our western civilisation. That civilisation is a white civilisation and can be only preserved by the close collaboration of all." "At a time like the present when the *coloured flood rises higher and higher*, the active assistance of a strong Germany is indispensable to it." Mr. Oswald Pirow was then as he is now the South African Minister of Defence, and he expressed the wish and the hope that Germany might soon become a Colonial power again, and that in Africa. "Now that commonsense is even making itself felt in international politics, the *question will be surely solved.*"

The justice of the claim for restoration is acknowledged by almost all the Powers. It was stated recently by M. Raymond Patenotre, Member of the French Chamber of Deputies: "We may indeed defer the day of settlement, but we cannot avoid it, and its postponement may make its effect more fatal. Without envisaging the actual annexation of our territories by Germany, Italy or Japan, the time will come when our resistance will provide the spark, and will be interpreted as a provocation. What then prevents the granting of the Colonies and raising of the mandatory in favour of Germany?" M. Raymond echoes what is uppermost in the British mind when he says, "we must also show our readiness to comply with conditions granting important advantages to Germany, which are, at the same time, compatible with our need of security. This is the only sincere and rational response we can make to the German demands. ... Those members of the democratic group who are prepared to disregard any stipulations are to suffer from an intellectual myopia which they may afterwards bitterly repent."

After a reasoned analysis of the situation arising out of repercussions of the Treaty of Versailles, George Glasgow, writing in the recent issue of the *Contemporary Review*, says, "Altogether Germany lost 1,140,000 sq. miles of territory. Of that total no fewer than 8,26,000 sq. miles, or more than two-thirds of the whole, were added to the British Empire. ... For all practical purposes the new mandated territories have been added to the Empire. We can hardly pretend that it was done in the interests of the natives. ... To give Germany so deep a sense of injury is a stupid thing. It makes real peace between the two countries impossible. When Mr. Chamberlain last Nov. sent

Lord Halifax to Berlin he already knew, and Lord Halifax on his return confirmed it, that one of the things Germany wanted was colonies. Her Hitler has often said so. What the British Government could do would be to surrender its own mandates to the League, and make the suggestion that Germany should be appointed the new mandatory. As regards Tanganyika, the Camerouns and Togoland the British can directly surrender the mandates. Tanganyika has a strategic value. But if one should desire the infusion of a new spirit in international relationship it would constitute a generous act."

II

At the present moment there is strong opposition restoration. Of course, it is based on self-complacent apologies based on self-styled and self-satisfying virtues and ideals spun out by the mandatory powers. The usual pleas of trusteeship for the welfare of the inhabitants, the elevation of the barbarous races, the expenditure already incurred on the development of the resources, are all conjured up. The Republican Federation group of the Chamber in Paris issued a *communiqué* energetically opposing all new German demands with regard to the colonies. They declare opposition to any abandonment of colonial or mandated territory in any form. The Southern Rhodesians unanimously adopted a motion for keeping off the Germans from their territory "until she could behave in a civilised manner." Mr. Tom Johnston, ex-Lord Privy Seal, in a speech at Kilsyth apprehended danger in enabling Hitler to raise millions of black soldiers to penetrate the "white settlement" and suggested the formation of an International Board to administer the non-self-governing peoples and the primitive races for their benefit. The Australian Minister for External Affairs, Mr. W. W. Hughes, raised a plea of what is called in legal language *estoppel*: "when the mandate was given, there was no mention of any restriction on the term of our tenure. Unless or until the peoples of New Guinea cease to be backward and are in a position to protect themselves, Australia has a sacred duty as a guardian." America is no less express in the matter: she is against the establishment of naval bases by Germany in restored colonial territory which might make the Reich a danger to American security.

III

In all these suggestions there is no thought devoted to the South African settlers other than the Europeans, the interests of the indigenous populations in varying degrees of civilization, and the Indian interests in Tanganyika. There is no earthly benefit in securing peace among the European powers at the cost of the native interests or to the hindrance of the development and extension of Asiatic populations in the economic field. Nor can we forever forget the

desire of the coloured races to have autonomy in their native lands.

The truth, however is that these mandatory authorities have no other motive than sweating coloured races for their own advantage. It is not the development the indigenous races. In the report published in the *Asiatic Review* of the 22nd session of the International Colonial Institute held in Lisbon Mr. John Coatman says: "The opinion was expressed in more than one quarter that it would be desirable in future to go slow in the matter of economic development and to subordinate it to the general welfare of the natives whose countries are being developed. By no means are we satisfied that these white races have any justification to hold those territories for other than the development, the elevation and the economic and social benefit of the indigenous races, barbarous and savage as they are called". After a close study of the morals of these peoples and the condition of their social state, A. R. Wallace had said: "Now it is very remarkable that among people in a very low stage of civilisation we find some approach to a perfect social state. Each man scrupulously respects the rights of his fellows and infraction of those rights rarely or never takes place. In such a community all are nearly equal. Although we have progressed vastly beyond the savage state in intellectual achievements, we have not advanced equally in morals".

P. P. SARATHI.

Review.

FRENCH INDO-CHINA

FRENCH INDO-CHINA. BY VIRGINIA THOMPSON. (Allen and Unwin.) 1937. 24cm. 517p. 21/-.

THIS is a welcome addition to the scanty literature on French Indo-China in English. The writer observes in the preface that there are more than three thousand books in French on Indo-China but that works in other languages are few and negligible. Indo-China has been lost to view "between the more stimulating and turbulent countries of India and China." "But since the War the growth of Chinese communism, the growing recognition of the importance of the Pacific, and the more recent sop to Cerberus in the form of African colonies preferred to Hitler have all given new significance to the lands bordering upon it."

Miss Thompson has based her study not only on very wide reading to which the Bibliography at the end bears witness but also upon personal observation on the spot. It is an objective, scientific and comprehensive delineation of conditions—cultural, economic and political, in what the French statesman, Sarraut, described as from all points of view the most important, developed and prosperous of French colonies.

Miss Thompson begins with a review of Annamite civilisation and follows it up by an

acute, though sympathetic, analysis of the French administration of Indo-China. In contrast with England, France has a tradition of centralisation in her domestic and colonial administration. One of the most interesting aspects of Indo-Chinese administration is the struggle of the authorities on the spot for freedom from the leading strings of Paris. On the other hand, a bureaucracy has grown up in the colony and the governor finds it difficult to overcome any opposition to his policy on the part of the permanent civil servants. There has also arisen the problem of the employment of "natives" in the public services and, behind it, the wider and deeper problem of self-government for the country. Miss Thompson bears witness to the intellectual attainments of the Annamites but she is inclined to challenge their professional integrity and disinterestedness. All this recalls to an Indian the traditional British attitude to Indian aspirations. It is regrettable that the problem is barely touched in the book under review. A searching analysis of the problem by a writer so well informed as Miss Thompson should have been instructive and should have added to the value of the book.

A detailed and comprehensive survey of economic conditions and resources is followed by an arresting chapter on the contacts of civilizations and another on peoples of Indian culture in the land. "Annamite civilization reveals a wonderfully harmonious unity, built up through endless modifications, so old and so refined that it is inevitably somewhat decadent. . . . The evolution was characterized by a love of home and of village, by a respect for justice and by a veneration for learning and the written word, and by an absolute obedience to unalterable divine law." Unfortunately, it was weak on the military side and failed to adapt itself to the new conditions arising out of the impact of the West in the nineteenth century. At last the sluggish waters were stirred by the Russo-Japanese war whose moral repercussions were felt from the Dutch Archipelago in the east to Egypt in the west. The spell of Western invincibility was broken in the East, and stupendous possibilities of modernisation were revealed and a new hope and a new programme followed. From the cultural point of view it is instructive to note that it implies a new attitude towards Western civilization, an attitude neither of slavish imitation nor of thoughtless rejection. It opens up prospects of assimilation of the expansion and enrichment of old elements; altogether a new social and psychological adjustment.

Miss Thompson's work was published only last year but much has happened since to alter the balance of forces in the East as well as in the West. It will be interesting to observe how it all reacts on the cultural and political situation in French Indo-China and elsewhere.

BENI PRASAD.

SHORT NOTICES.

INDIA, THE FOUNTAIN OF PEACE.
EDITED BY N. LAKSHMANAN. B. 26. R. S. Puram, Comibatore.

THIS dainty little volume is a wellcome publication in these days of communal rancour and bigotry. An extract from a speech of Dr. Brajendra Nath Seal, reproduced in the book furnishes the thesis for the book. He says that India

has always been the meeting ground of diverse civilizations. India is at once ancient, mediæval and modern. Universalism and synthesis have, therefore been India's message throughout the ages, and that perpetual fountain of universalism has not dried up.

The effort of the Editor has been to elaborate this thesis of Dr. Seal by arranging in its support extracts from the weighty writings and speeches of our leaders and friends like Mr. K. Natarajan Tagore, Mr. C. F. Andrews, Sir Akbar Hydari and others. The Editor has done well through this book to remind his readers that narrow and sectional patriotism is not only harmful but suicidal to national interests. We have no of doubt that a perusal of the book is bound to be instructive and elevating.

Every library and every student of public affairs will be richer to possess this book.

S. R. VENRATARAMAN.

LITTLE PLAYS. By EMILY GILCHRIST HATCH
(Keston House, Trivandrum) 1938, 2nd Edn. 77p.

THE six plays in this book were written to be used in connection with the Rural Uplift Movement. However, three of the plays are of general interest for they present rules for good health, the value of various cereals as food, and the evils of toddy drinking. The other three plays concern the rural interests of bee-keeping, and how better and more profitable cattle and poultry may be had.

All of the plays can be simply staged and could be easily translated into any language. The plays might also be used to advantage by classes beginning to learn English and wishing to give an entertainment, for the plays are interesting, the speeches are short and the language is simple.

In addition to these plays, the book contains a nice ceremony for a guest night of a campfire group.

M. C. RAO.

Miscellaneous.

Mr. A. V. Thakkar, General Secretary, Harijan Sevak Sangh has issued the following statement, refuting some of the charges made by Dr. Ambedkar in his recent speech at Ahmedabad.

I have read the summary of the speech made by Dr. Ambedkar, the leader of the Maharashtra Mahars, at Ahmedabad as reported in the A. P. L. telegram dated 22nd instant. I am sorry to find that the bitterness and animosity unjustifiably shown usually by him against Mahatma Gandhi, Congress Governments, and Hindu reformers who are doing their bit for the improvement of the condition of Harijans, has not in the least abated.

The Doctor's charge sheet consists of (1) Mahatma Gandhi's not agreeing to reservation of seats for Harijans at the Second Round Table Conference in London, (2) Gandhi's not urging the Congress Ministries to include a Harijan Minister in all the provinces and (3) Bombay Congress Ministry having not done anything to carry out the recommendations made by the Committee appointed by the previous Government, in the interests of Harijans.

I am not a deep student of politics, nor was I in personal touch with the Round Table Conference affairs, so I cannot speak authoritatively on that charge. But this much is beyond controversy that it was on account of Mahatma's 1932 fast unto death that Harijans secured a total of 148 seats in all Provincial Assemblies, in place of 71, that they had secured by the communal award of Mr. MacDonald.

This figure of 148 grew into 151 as a result of the separation of Orissa from Bihar. Moreover, in Bombay the Harijans secured 15 seats as a result of the Poona Pact in place of 10 seats for Bombay and Sind put together guaranteed by the MacDonald decision. And still he has no faith in Mahatma Gandhi that he will do any good to the depressed classes? This was in 1932

The second charge is that Gandhiji has failed in imposing on all Premiers of Congress Ministries a uniform rule that they should include a Harijan Minister, whether the Harijans be from the Congress party or in the opposition party. The Doctor conveniently forgets that there is one Minister in Madras, one in Bihar and two in Assam, and two Parliamentary Secretaries in the U. P., one in Bihar and one in Madras, all of Hindu Harijan caste.

It is no doubt true that there is no Minister or Parliamentary Secretary from Harijan M.L.A.'s in Bombay and that is because Dr. Ambedkar and all his Harijan followers, who are 12 out of 15, have chosen to remain in the opposition. And how can a uniform rule be made that a Minister from such and such castes shall be appointed, irrespective of any other considerations?

As regards the third charge, it must be said that it is absolutely untrue, and I am surprised at the audacity of the Doctor in making a mention of it. The Doctor and myself were both active members of the Committee and it is a matter of history that the recommendations made in the year 1930 were not given effect to by the previous Governments upto April 1937 not even by the interim Ministry upto July '37, on the plea

of want of finance. No doubt the Backward Class Board was formed in 1933 or thereabouts and the same has now been enlarged by the Congress Ministry and made more active.

But the achievements of Bombay Congress Ministry for the advancement of Harijans have been too numerous to be mentioned. Hostels for Harijans and aboriginal students by private and State agencies are enlarged and aided by the Government, the College and secondary school students are exempted from the payment of fees, scholarships in schools and colleges including foreign scholarships have been made very liberally now, the temple worship Act has been passed, (but perhaps that does not affect the Doctor), public hotels and restaurants have been thrown open, and the Ministry is following a strong policy in enforcing the rights of the Harijans for use of public wells and have budgetted large amounts for construction of wells in rural areas.

Harijan children are being freely admitted in common schools, even in conservative Gujarat, and last but not least, the prohibition policy is doing enormous moral and material good to Harijans, wherever it is and will be brought into force. Any reasonable man would be grateful for these achievements in the short space of 15 months by the Bombay Congress Ministry and not try to spread untruths or half truths in the interests of the society at large.

The Bombay Premier has all along been more of a social worker than a political worker and even his bitterest critics will testify that he is one of the greatest friends of the Harijans.

BOOKS RECEIVED.

- THE STRUGGLE OF MUSLIMS IN EDUCATION. By S-ALTA F ALI BRELVI. (The Hony, Secretary, All-India Muslim Educational Conference, Aligarh.) 1938. 21cm. 79p. As. 12.
- THE PRESS LAWS OF INDIA. By K. B. MENON. (Author, Indian Civil Liberties Union, Mutual Building, Bombay.) 1937. 21cm. 52p. As. 4.

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