

FAMOUS SPEECHES AND LETTERS
OF
SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE



140 Chandra Bose

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OF
SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE

EDITED BY

GANPAT RAI

AUTHOR OF

Congress Struggle - Kasturba Gandhi

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PREFACE

A number of books have been written on Subhas Chandra Bose. This is an addition which presents, in its own way, what others have lacked and missed. I do not claim any originality about it but I do claim that I have succeeded to a great extent, in helping the reader to know more intimately how the mind of Netaji worked on the intricate problems confronting our country in her hour of agony, distress and trial. The contribution, which he has made to our struggle for emancipation, is reminded through these pages.

Lest we forget, his addresses, speeches, letters and writings, which comprise the four parts of this volume, are the only instruments left to us to help us to be near him, be acquainted with him, assess the value of his great work and then follow in his footsteps.

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Here are some of his historic addresses, outstanding speeches, great letters, and important but thought-provoking writings. They reveal his moving sincerity, his unquestioned patriotism, his imperturbability in political struggle, and his triumphs in the wake of the tragedies of the past and the present. Taken together they present not only the actor but also the scene. In their sequence they may be the stepping-stone of historical narrative.

Regarding these chapters the reader may feel that Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose is not dead. He is still one of us raising his voice and finger to ask us to march on till the final goal is achieved. Each one of us will sing with conviction :

“ No more a foreigner shall live on our soil !

“ No more shall chains sully us”.

India is on the threshold of freedom. We should not falter in our steps. We have

with us the great old giants who lived and died for us. They have shown us the way and given us the light. Let us march on and finish the task left unfinished for us by our great leaders like Subhas Chandra Bose and others.

GANPAT RAI

Part One—Presidential Addresses

CHAPTER I

Presidential Address delivered at Haripura Congress in 1938.

CHAPTER II

Presidential Address delivered at Tripuri Congress in 1939.

CHAPTER III

Presidential Address delivered at the Maharashtra Provincial Conference at Poona.

CHAPTER IV

Presidential Address delivered at Anti-Compromise Conference held at Ramgarh.

CHAPTER V

Presidential Address delivered at the Punjab Students' Conference held at Lahore.

CHAPTER VI

Presidential Address delivered at the Second Session of the All-India Forward Bloc Conference held at Nagpur.

CHAPTER VII

*Presidential Address delivered at the All-India
Nau-Jawan Bharat Sabha Conference held at
Karachi.*

Give Me Blood—

Promise You Freedom!

—*Netaji*

CHAPTER I

INDIA FOR INDIANS*

The objective of the Congress is an independent and united India where no class or group or majority or minority may exploit another to its own advantage, and where all the elements in the nation may co-operate together for the common good and the advancement of the people of India.

Subhas Bose

Mr. Chairman and Friends,

I am deeply sensible of the honour you have done me by electing me as the President of the Indian National Congress for the coming year. I am not so presumptuous as to think for one moment that I am in any way worthy of that great honour. I regard it as a mark of your generosity and as a tribute to the youths of our country, but for whose cumulative contribution to our national struggle, we would not be where we are to-day. It is with a sense of fear and trepidation that I mount the tribune which has hitherto been graced by the most illustrious sons and daughters of our 'motherland'. Conscious as I am of my numerous limitations, I can only hope and pray that with your sympathy and support I may be able in some small measure to do justice to the high office which you have called upon me to fill.

*The Presidential Address delivered by Shri Subhas Chandra Bose at the 51st Session of the Indian National Congress held at Haripur in February 1938.

At the outset, may I voice your feelings in placing on record our profound grief at the death of Shrimati Swaruprani Nehru, Acharya Jagadish Chandra Bose and Dr. Sarat Chandra Chatterji? Shrimati Swaruprani Nehru was to us not merely the worthy consort of Pandit Motilal and the revered mother of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. Her suffering, sacrifice and service in the cause of India's freedom were such as any individual could feel proud of. As compatriots we mourn her death and our hearts go out in sympathy to Pandit Nehru and other members of the bereaved family.

To Acharya Jagadish Chandra Bose India will always remain beholden for being the first to secure for her an honoured place in the modern scientific world. A nationalist to the core of his heart, Acharya Jagadish gave his life not merely to science, but to India as well. India knows it and is grateful for it. We convey our heartfelt sympathy to Lady Bose.

Through the untimely death of Dr. Sarat Chandra Chatterji, India has lost one of the brightest stars in her literary firmament. His name, for years a household word in Bengal, was not less known in the literary world of India. But if Sarat Babu was great as a literateur, he was perhaps greater as a patriot. The Congress in Bengal is distinctly poorer to-day because of his death. We send our sincerest condolence to the members of his family.

Before I proceed further I should like to bow my head in homage to the memory of those who have laid down their lives in the service of the country since the Congress met last year at Faizpur. I should mention especially those who died in prison or in internment or soon after release from internment. I should refer in particular to Syt. Harendra Munshi a political priso-

ner in the Dacca Central Jail, who laid down his life the other day as a result of hunger-strike. My feelings are still too lacerated to permit me to say much on this subject. I shall only ask you if there is not 'something rotten in the state of Denmark' that such bright and promising souls as Jatin Das, Sardar Mahabir Singh, Ramkrishna Namadas, Mohit Mohan Maitra, Harendra Munshi and others should feel the urge not to live life but to end it.

When we take a bird's-eye view of the entire panorama of human history, the first thing that strikes us is the rise and fall of empires. In the East as well as in the West, empires have invariably gone through a process of expansion and after reaching the zenith of prosperity, have gradually shrunk into insignificance and sometimes death. The Roman Empire of the ancient times and the Turkish and Austro-Hungarian empires of the modern period are striking examples of this law. The empires in India—the Maurya, Gupta and the Mogul empires—are no exception to this rule. In the face of these objective facts of history, can any one be so bold as to maintain that there is in store a different fate for the British Empire? That Empire stands to-day at one of the cross-roads of history. It will either go the way of other empires or it must transform itself into a federation of free nations. Either course is open to it. The Czarist empire collapsed in 1917 but out of its debris sprang the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. There is still time for Great Britain to take a leaf out of Russian history. Will she do so?

The British Empire is a hybrid phenomenon in politics. It is a peculiar combination of self-governing countries, partially self-governing dependencies and autocratically governed colonies. Constitutional device and human ingenuity may bolster up this combination

for a while, but not for ever. If the internal incongruities are not removed in good time, then quite apart from external pressure, the empire is sure to break down under its own strain. But can the British Empire transform itself into a federation of free nations with one bold sweep? It is for the British people to answer this question. One thing, however, is certain. This transformation will be possible only if the British people become free in their own homes—only if Great Britain becomes a socialist state. There is an inseparable connection between the capitalist ruling classes in Great Britain and the colonies abroad. As Lenin pointed out long ago, “reaction in Great Britain is strengthened and fed by the enslavement of a number of nations.” The British aristocracy and bourgeoisie exist primarily because there are colonies and overseas dependencies to exploit. The emancipation of the latter will undoubtedly strike at the very existence of the capitalist ruling classes in Great Britain and precipitate the establishment of a socialist regime in that country. It should, therefore, be clear that a socialist order in Great Britain is impossible of achievement without the liquidation of colonialism and that we who are fighting for the political freedom of India and other enslaved countries of the British Empire are incidentally fighting for the economic emancipation of the British people as well.

It is a well-known truism that every empire is based on the policy of divide and rule. But I doubt if any empire in the world has practised this policy so skilfully, systematically and ruthlessly as Great Britain. In accordance with this policy, before power was handed over to the Irish people, Ulster was separated from the rest of Ireland. Similarly, before any power is handed over to the Palestinians, the Jews will be separated from the Arabs. An internal partition is necessary in order to neutralise the trans-

ference of power. The same principle of partition appears in a different form in the new Indian Constitution. Here we find an attempt to separate the different communities and put them into water-tight compartments. And in the Federal scheme there is juxtaposition of autocratic Princes and democratically elected representatives from British India. If the new Constitution is finally rejected, whether owing to the opposition of British India or owing to the refusal of the Princes to joining it, I have no doubt that British ingenuity will seek some other constitutional device for partitioning India and thereby neutralising the transference of power to the Indian people. Therefore, any constitution for India which emanates from Whitehall must be examined with the utmost care and caution.

The policy of divide and rule, though it has its obvious advantages, is by no means an unmixed blessing for the ruling power. As a matter of fact it creates new problems and new embarrassments. Great Britain seems to be caught in the meshes of her own political dualism resulting from her policy of divide and rule. Will she please the Muslim or the Hindu in India? Will she favour the Arab or the Jew in Palestine—the Arab or the Kurd in Iraq? Will she side with the King or the Wafd in Egypt? The same dualism is visible outside the empire. In the case of Spain, British politicians are torn between such alternatives as Franco and the lawful Government—and in the wider field of European politics, between France and Germany. The contradictions and inconsistencies in Britain's foreign policy are the direct outcome of the heterogeneous composition of her Empire. The British Cabinet has to please the Jews because she cannot ignore Jewish high finance. On the other hand, the India Office and Foreign Office have to placate the Arabs because of Imperial interests in the

Near East and in India. The only means whereby Great Britain can free herself from such contradictions and inconsistencies is by transforming the Empire into a federation of free nations. If she could do that, she would be performing a miracle in history. But if she fails, she must reconcile herself to the gradual dismemberment of a vast empire where the sun is supposed not to set. Let not the lesson of the Austro-Hungarian Empire be lost on the British people.

The British Empire at the present moment is suffering from strain at a number of points. Within the Empire in the extreme West there is Ireland and in the extreme East, India. In the middle lies Palestine with the adjoining countries of Egypt and Iraq. Outside the empire there is the pressure exerted by Italy in the Mediterranean and Japan in the Far East, both of these countries being militant, aggressive and imperialist. Against this background of unrest stands Soviet Russia whose very existence strikes terror into the heart of the ruling classes in every Imperialist State. How long can the British Empire withstand the cumulative effect of this pressure and strain ?

To-day, Britain can hardly call herself "the Mistress of the Seas". Her phenomenal rise in the 18th and 19th centuries was the result of her sea power. Her decline as an empire in the 20th century will be the outcome of the emergence of a new factor in the world history—Air Force. It was due to this new factor, Air Force, that an impudent Italy could successfully challenge a fully mobilised British Navy in the Mediterranean. Britain can rearm on land, sea and air up to the utmost limit. Battleships may still stand up to bombing from the air, but air force as a powerful element in modern warfare has come to stay. Distances have been obliterated and despite all anti-

aircraft defences, London lies at the mercy of any bombing squadron from a continental centre. In short, air force has revolutionised modern warfare, destroyed the insularity of Great Britain and rudely disturbed the balance of power in world politics. The clay feet of a gigantic empire now stands exposed as it has never been before.

Amid this interplay of world forces India emerges much stronger than she has ever been before. Ours is a vast country with a population of 350 millions. Our vastness in area and in population has hitherto been a source of weakness. It is to-day a source of strength if we can only stand united and boldly face our rulers. From the standpoint of Indian unity the first thing to remember is that the division between British India and the Indian States is an entirely artificial one. India is one and the hopes and aspirations of the people of British India and of the Indian States are identical. Our goal is that of an independent India and in my view that goal can be attained only through a federal republic in which the Provinces and the States will be willing partners. The Congress has, time and again, offered its sympathy and moral support to the movement carried on by the States' subjects for the establishment of democratic government in what is known as Indian India. It may be that at this moment our hands are so full that the Congress is not in a position to do more for our compatriots in the States. But even to-day there is nothing to prevent individual Congressmen from actively espousing the cause of the States' subjects and participating in their struggle. There are people in the Congress like myself who would like to see the Congress participating more actively in the movement of the States' subjects. I personally hope that in the near future it will be possible for the Indian National Congress to take a forward step and offer a helping hand to our fellow-

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fighters in the States. Let us not forget that they need our sympathy and our help.

Talking of Indian unity the next thing that strikes us is the problem of the minorities. The Congress has, from time to time, declared its policy on this question. The latest authoritative pronouncement made by the All-India Congress Committee at its meeting in Calcutta in October 1937, runs thus :

“The Congress has solemnly and repeatedly declared its policy in regard to the rights of the minorities in India and has stated that it considers it its duty to protect these rights and ensure the widest possible scope for the development of these minorities and their participation in the fullest measure in the political, economic and cultural life of the nation. The objective of the Congress is an independent and united India where no class or group or majority or minority may exploit another to its own advantage, and where all the elements in the nation may co-operate together for the common good and the advancement of the people of India. This objective of unity and mutual co-operation in a common freedom does not mean the suppression in any way of the rich variety and cultural diversity of Indian life, which have to be preserved in order to give freedom and opportunity to the individual as well as to each group to develop unhindered according to its capacity and inclination.

“In view, however, of attempts having been made to misinterpret the Congress policy in this regard, the All-India Congress Committee desire to reiterate this policy. The Congress has included in its resolution on Fundamental Rights that—

(i) Every citizen of India has the right of free expression of opinion, the right of free association and combination, and the right to assemble peacefully and

without arms, for a purpose not opposed to law or morality ;

(ii) Every citizen shall enjoy freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess and practise his religion, subject to the public order and morality ;

(iii) The culture, language and script of the minorities and of the different linguistic areas shall be protected ;

(iv) All citizens are equal before the law, irrespective of religion, caste, creed or sex ;

(v) No disability attaches to any citizen by reason of his or her religion, caste, creed or sex, in regard to public employment, office of power or honour, and in the exercise of any trade or calling ;

(vi) All citizens have equal rights and duties in regard to wells, tanks, roads, schools and places of public resort, maintained out of State, or local funds, or dedicated by private persons for the use of the general public ;

(vii) The State shall observe neutrality in regard to all religions ;

(viii) The franchise shall be on the basis of universal adult suffrage ;

(ix) Every citizen is free to move throughout India and to stay and settle in any part thereof, to acquire property and to follow any trade or calling, and to be treated equally with regard to legal prosecution or protection in all parts of India.

“ These clauses of the Fundamental Rights resolution make it clear that there should be no interference in matters of conscience, religion, or culture, and a

minority is entitled to keep its personal law without any change in this respect being imposed by the majority.

“The position of the Congress in regard to the Communal Decision has been repeatedly made clear in Congress resolutions and finally in the Election Manifesto issued last year. The Congress is opposed to this decision as it is anti-national, anti-democratic and is a barrier to Indian freedom and the development of Indian unity. Nevertheless the Congress has declared that a change in or supersession of the Communal Decision should only be brought about by the mutual agreement of the parties concerned. The Congress has always welcomed and is prepared to take advantage of any opportunity to bring about such a change by mutual agreement.

“In all matters affecting the minorities in India, the Congress wishes to proceed by their co-operation and through their goodwill in a common undertaking and for the realization of a common aim which is the freedom and betterment of all the people of India.”

The time is opportune for renewing our efforts for the final solution of this problem. I believe I am voicing the feelings of all Congressmen when I say that we are eager to do our very best to arrive at an agreed solution, consistent with the fundamental principles of nationalism. It is not necessary for me to go into details as to the lines on which a solution should take place. Much useful ground has already been covered in past conferences and conversations. I shall merely add that only by emphasising our common interests, economic and political, can we cut across communal divisions and dissensions. A policy of live and let live in matters religious and an understanding in matters economic and political should be our objective.

Though the Muslim problem looms large whenever we think of the question of the minorities and though we are anxious to settle this problem finally, I must say that the Congress is equally desirous of doing justice to other minorities and especially the so-called depressed classes whose number is a very large one. I would put it to the members of the minority communities in India to consider dispassionately if they have anything to fear when the Congress programme is put into operation. The Congress stands for the political and economic rights of the Indian people as a whole. If it succeeds in executing its programme, the minority communities would be benefited as much as any other section of the Indian population. Moreover, if after the capture of political power, national reconstruction takes place on socialistic lines—as I have no doubt it will—it is the ‘have-nots’ who will benefit at the expense of the ‘haves’ and the Indian masses have to be classified among the ‘have-nots’. There remains but one question which may be a source of anxiety to the minorities, *viz.*, religion and that aspect of culture that is based on religion. On this question the Congress policy is one of live and let live—a policy of complete non-interference in matters of conscience, religion and culture as well as of cultural autonomy for the different linguistic areas. The Muslims have, therefore, nothing to fear in the event of India winning her freedom—on the contrary they have everything to gain. So far as the religious and social disabilities of the so-called depressed classes are concerned, it is well known that during the last 17 years the Congress has left no stone unturned in the effort to remove them, and I have no doubt that the day is not far off when such disabilities will be things of the past.

I shall now proceed to consider the method which the Congress should pursue in the years to come as well as its role in the national struggle. I believe more

than ever that the method should be *Satyagraha* or non-violent non-co-operation in the widest sense of the term, including civil disobedience. It would not be correct to call our method passive resistance. *Satyagraha*, as I understand it, is not merely passive resistance but active resistance as well, though that activity must be of a non-violent character. It is necessary to remind our countrymen that *Satyagraha* or non-violent non-co-operation may have to be resorted to again. The acceptance of office in the provinces as an experimental measure should not lead us to think that our future activity is to be confined within the limits of strict constitutionalism. There is every possibility that a determined opposition to the forcible inauguration of federation may land us in another big campaign of civil disobedience.

In our struggle for independence we may adopt either of two alternatives. We may continue our fight until we have our full freedom and in the meantime decline to use any power that we may capture while on the march. We may, on the other hand, go on consolidating our position while we continue our struggle for Purna Swaraj or complete independence. From the point of view of principle, both the alternatives are equally acceptable and *a priori* considerations need not worry us. But we should consider very carefully at every stage as to which alternative would be more conducive to our national advancement. In either case, the ultimate stage in our progress will be the severance of the British connection. When that severance takes place and there is no trace left of British domination, we shall be in a position to determine our future relations with Great Britain through a treaty of alliance voluntarily entered into by both parties. What our future relations with Great Britain will or would be, it is too early to say. That will depend to

a large extent on the attitude of the British people themselves. On this point I have been greatly impressed by the attitude of President de Valera. Like the President of Eire, I should also say that we have no enmity towards the British people. We are fighting Great Britain and we want the fullest liberty to determine our future relations with her. But once we have real self-determination, there is no reason why we should not enter into the most cordial relation with the British people.

I am afraid there is a lack of clarity in the minds of many Congressmen as to the role of the Congress in the history of our national struggle. I know that there are friends who think that after freedom is won, the Congress party, having achieved its objective, should wither away. Such a conception is entirely erroneous. The party that wins freedom for India should be also the party that will put into effect the entire programme of post-war reconstruction. Only those who have won power can handle it properly. If other people are pitchforked into seats of power which they were not responsible for capturing, they will lack that strength, confidence and idealism which is indispensable for revolutionary reconstruction. It is this which accounts for the difference in the record of the Congress and non-Congress ministries in the very narrow sphere of Provincial Autonomy.

No, there can be no question of the Congress party withering away after political freedom has been won. On the contrary, the party will have to take over power, assume responsibility for administration and put through its programme of reconstruction. Only then will it fulfil its role. If it were forcibly to liquidate itself, chaos would follow. Looking at post-war Europe we find that only in those countries has there been orderly and continuous progress where

the party which seized power undertook the work of reconstruction. I know that it will be argued that the continuance of a party in such circumstance, standing behind the state, will convert that state into a totalitarian one ; but I cannot admit the charge. The state will possibly become a totalitarian one, if there be only one party as in countries like Russia, Germany and Italy. But there is no reason why other parties should be banned. Moreover, the party itself will have a democratic basis, unlike for instance, the Nazi Party which is based on the "leader principle". The existence of more than one party and the democratic basis of the Congress party will prevent the future Indian State becoming a totalitarian one. Further, the democratic basis of the party will ensure that leaders are not thrust upon the people from above, but are elected from below.

Though it may be somewhat premature to give a detailed plan of reconstruction, we might as well consider some of the principles according to which our future social reconstruction should take place. I have no doubt in my mind that our chief national problems relating to the eradication of poverty, illiteracy and disease and to scientific production and distribution can be effectively tackled only along socialistic lines. The very first thing which our future national government will have to do, would be to set up a commission for drawing up a comprehensive plan of reconstruction. This plan will have two parts—an immediate programme and a long-period programme. In drawing up the first part, the immediate objectives which will have to be kept in view will be threefold—firstly, to prepare the country for self-sacrifice ; secondly, to unify India ; and thirdly, to give scope for local and cultural autonomy. The second and third objectives may appear to be contradictory, but they are not really so. Whatever political talent or genius we may

possess as a people, will have to be used in reconciling these two objectives. We shall have to unify the country through a strong central government, we shall have to pull all the minority communities as well as the provinces at their ease, by allowing them a large measure of autonomy in cultural as well as governmental affairs. Special efforts will be needed to keep our people together when the load of foreign domination is removed, because alien rule has demoralised and disorganised us to a degree. To promote national unity we shall have to develop our *lingua franca* and a common script. Further, with the help of such modern scientific contrivances as aeroplanes, telephone, radio, films, television, etc., we shall have to bring the different parts of India closer to one another and through a common educational policy we shall have to foster a common spirit among the entire population. So far as our *lingua franca* is concerned, I am inclined to think that the distinction between Hindi and Urdu is an artificial one. The most natural *lingua franca* would be a mixture of the two, such as is spoken in daily life in large portions of the country and this common language may be written in either of the two scripts, Nagari or Urdu. I am aware that there are people in India who strongly favour either of the two scripts to the exclusion of the other. Our policy, however, should not be one of exclusion. We should allow the fullest latitude to use either script. At the same time, I am inclined to think that the ultimate solution would be the adoption of a script that would bring us into line with the rest of the world. Perhaps, some of our countrymen will gape with horror when they hear of the adoption of the Roman script, but I would beg them to consider this problem from the scientific and historical point of view. If we do that, we shall realise at once that there is nothing sacrosanct in a script. The Nagari script, as we know it to-day, has passed

through several phases of evolution. Besides, most of the major provinces of India have their own script and there is the Urdu Script which is used largely by the Urdu-speaking public in India and by both Muslims and Hindus in Provinces like the Punjab and Sind. In view of such diversity, the choice of a uniform script for the whole of India should be made in a thoroughly scientific and impartial spirit, free from bias of every kind. I confess that there was a time when I felt that it would be anti-national to adopt a foreign script. But my visit to Turkey in 1934 was responsible for converting me. I then realised for the first time what a great advantage it was to have the same script as the rest of the world. So far as our masses are concerned, since more than 90 per cent are illiterate and are not familiar with any script, it will not matter to them which script we introduce when they are educated. The Roman script will, moreover, facilitate their learning a European language. I am quite aware how unpopular the immediate adoption of the Roman Script would be in our country. Nevertheless, I would beg my countrymen to consider what would be the wisest solution in the long run.

With regard to the long-period programme for a free India, the first problem to tackle is that of our increasing population. I do not desire to go into the theoretical question as to whether India is overpopulated or not. I simply want to point out that where poverty, starvation and disease are stalking the land, we cannot afford to have our population mounting up by thirty millions during a single decade. If the population goes up by leaps and bounds, as it has done in the recent past, our plans are likely to fall through. It will, therefore, be desirable to restrict our population until we are able to feed, clothe and educate those who already exist. It is not necessary at this stage

to prescribe the methods that should be adopted to prevent a further increase in population, but I would urge that public attention be drawn to this question.

Regarding reconstruction, our principal problem will be how to eradicate poverty from our country. That will require a radical reform of our land-system, including the abolition of landlordism. Agricultural indebtedness will have to be liquidated and provision made for cheap credit for the rural population. An extension of the co-operative movement will be necessary for the benefit of both producers and consumers. Agriculture will have to be put on a scientific basis with a view to increasing the yield from the land.

To solve the economic problem agricultural improvement will not be enough. A comprehensive scheme of industrial development under state ownerships and state-control will be indispensable. A new industrial system will have to be built up in place of the old one which has collapsed as a result of mass production abroad and alien rule at home. The Planning Commission will have to carefully consider and decide which of the home industries could be revived despite the competition of modern factories and in which sphere, large-scale production should be encouraged. However much we may dislike modern industrialism and condemn the evils which follow in its train, we cannot go back to the pre-industrial era, even if we desire to do so. It is well, therefore, that we should reconcile ourselves to industrialisation and devise means to minimise its evils and at the same time explore the possibilities of reviving cottage industries where there is a possibility of their surviving the inevitable competition of factories. In a country like India, there will be plenty of room for cottage industries, especially in the case of industries including hand-spinning and

hand-weaving allied to agriculture.

Last but not least, the State on the advice of a Planning Commission, will have to adopt a comprehensive scheme for gradually socialising our entire agricultural and industrial system in the spheres of both production and appropriation. Extra capital will have to be procured for this, whether through internal or external loans or through inflation.

Opposing or resisting the provincial part of the constitution will be hardly possible now, since the Congress Party has accepted office in seven out of eleven provinces.

All that could be done would be to strengthen and consolidate the Congress as a result of it. I am one of those who were not in favour of taking office—not because there was something inherently wrong in doing so, not because no good could come out of that policy, but because it was apprehended that the evil effects of office-acceptance would outweigh the good. To-day I can only hope that my forebodings were unfounded.

How can we strengthen and consolidate the Congress while our Ministers are in office? The first thing to do is to change the composition and character of the bureaucracy. If this is not done, the Congress Party may come to grief. In every country, the Ministers come and go, but the steel frame of the permanent services remains. If that is not altered in composition and character, the governmental party and its cabinet are likely to prove ineffective in putting their principles into practice. This is what happened in the case of the Social Democratic Party in Post-war Germany and perhaps in the case of the Labour Party in Great Britain in 1924 and 1929. It is the

permanent services who really rule in every country. In India they have been created by the British and in the higher ranks they are largely British in composition. Their outlook and mentality are in most cases neither Indian or national and a national policy cannot be executed until the permanent services become national in outlook and mentality. The difficulty, of course, will be that the higher ranks of the permanent services being, under the Statute, directly under the Secretary of State for India and not under the provincial Governments, it will not be easy to alter their composition.

Secondly, the Congress Ministers in the different provinces should, while they are in office, introduce schemes of reconstruction in the spheres of education, health, prohibition, prison reform, irrigation, industry, land-reform, workers' welfare etc. In this matter, attempts should be made to have, as far as possible, a uniform policy for the whole of India. This uniformity could be brought about in either of two ways. The Congress Ministers in the different provinces could themselves come together—as the Labour Ministers did in October, 1937 in Calcutta—and draw up a uniform programme. Over and above this, Congress Working Committee, which is the supreme executive of the Congress, could lend a helping hand by giving directions to the different departments of the Congress-controlled provincial governments in the light of such advice as it may get from its own experts. This will mean that the members of the Congress Working Committee should be conversant with the problems that come within the purview of the Congress governments in the provinces. It is not intended that they should go into the details of administration. All that is needed is that they should have a general understanding of the different problems so that they could lay down the broad lines of policy. In this respect, the

Congress Working Committee could do much more than it has hitherto done and unless it does so, I do not see how that body can keep an effective control over the different Congress ministries.

At this stage I should like to say something more about the role of the Congress Working Committee. This Committee, in my judgment, is not merely the directing brain of the national army of fighters for freedom. It is also the Shadow Cabinet of Independent India and it should function accordingly. This is not an invention of my own. It is the role which has been assigned to similar bodies in other countries that have fought for their national emancipation. I am one of those who think in terms of a Free India—who visualise a national government in this country within brief span of our own life. It is consequently natural for us to urge that the Working Committee should feel and function as the Shadow Cabinet of a Free India. This is what President de Valera's republican government did when it was fighting the British Government and was on the run. And this is what the Executive of the Wafd Party in Egypt did before it got into office. The members of the Working Committee while carrying on their day to day work should accordingly study the problems they will have to tackle in the event of their capturing political power.

More important than the question of the proper working of the Congress Governments is the immediate problem as how to oppose the inauguration of the federal part of the Constitution. The Congress attitude towards the proposed federal scheme has been clearly stated in the resolution adopted by the Working Committee at Wardha on February 4, 1938, which will be placed before this Congress after the Subjects Committee has considered it. That resolution says :—

“ The Congress has rejected the new Constitution and declared that a constitution for India which can be accepted by the people must be based on Independence and can only be framed by the people themselves by means of Constituent Assembly without the interference by any foreign authority. Adhering to this policy of rejection, the Congress has, however, permitted the formation in Provinces of Congress Ministries with a view to strengthening the nation in its struggle for Independence. In regard to the proposed federation, no such consideration applies even provisionally, or for a period, and the imposition of this Federation, will do grave injuries to India and tighten the bonds which hold her under the subjection of an imperialist domination. This scheme of Federation excludes from the sphere of responsibility the vital function of a Government.

“ The Congress is not opposed to the idea of Federation, but a real Federation must, even apart from the question of responsibility, consist of free units, enjoying more or less the same measure of freedom and civil liberty and representation by a democratic process of election. Indian States participating in the Federation should approximate to the Provinces in the establishment of representative institutions, responsible Government, civil liberties and the method of election to the Federal House. Otherwise Federation as it is now contemplated will, instead of building Indian unity, encourage separatist tendencies and involve the States in internal and external conflict.

“ The Congress, therefore, reiterates its condemnation of the proposed scheme and calls upon Provincial and local Congress Committees and the people generally as well as Provincial Governments and Ministries, to prevent its inauguration.

“In the event of an attempt being made to impose it, despite the declared will of the people, such an attempt must be combated in every way and the Provincial Governments and Ministries must refuse to co-operate with it.

“In case such a contingency arises, the A.I.C.C. is authorised and directed to determine the line of action to be pursued in this regard.”

I should like to add some more arguments to explain our attitude of uncompromising hostility towards the proposed Federation. One of the most objectionable features of the Federal Scheme relates to the commercial and financial safeguards in the new Constitution. Not only will the people continue to be deprived of any power over defence or foreign policy, but the major portion of the expenditure will also be entirely out of popular control. According to the budget of the Central Government for the year 1937-38, the army expenditure comes to 44.61 crores of Rupees (£33.46 millions) out of a total expenditure of 77.90 crores of rupees (£58.42 millions)—that is, roughly 57 per cent of the total expenditure of the Central Government. It appears that the reserved side of Federal Government which will be controlled by the Governor-General will handle about 80 per cent of the Federal expenditure. Moreover, bodies like the Reserve Bank and the Federal Railway Authority are already created or will be created which will work as *imperium in imperio* uncontrolled by a Federal Legislature. The Legislature will be deprived of the powers it possesses at present to direct and influence railway policy, and it will not have any voice in determining the currency and exchange policy of the country which has a vital bearing on its economic development.

The fact that external affairs will be a reserved

subject under the Federal Government will prejudicially affect the freedom of the Indian Legislature to conclude trade agreements and will seriously restrict, in effect, fiscal autonomy. The Federal Government will not be under any constitutional obligation to place such trade agreements before the Legislature for their ratification, even as they decline at present to give an undertaking to place the Indo-British Trade Agreement before the Indian Legislative Assembly. The so-called fiscal autonomy convention will have no meaning unless it is stipulated that no trade agreement on behalf of India shall be signed by any party without its ratification by the Indian Legislature. In this connection, I should like to state that I am definitely of opinion that India should enter into bilateral trade agreements with countries like Germany, Czechoslovakia, Italy and the United States of America with whom she has had close trade relations in the past. But under the new Constitution, it will not be within the power of the Federal Legislature to force the Federal Government to enter into such bilateral trade agreements.

The iniquitous and inequitable commercial safeguards embodied in the Act will make it impossible for any effective measures to be adopted in order to protect and promote Indian national industries especially where they might, as they often do, conflict with British commercial or industrial interests. In addition to the Governor-General's special responsibility to see that provisions with regard to discrimination, as laid down in the Act, are duly carried out, it is also his duty to prevent any action which would subject British goods imported into India to any kind of discriminatory or penal treatment. A careful study of these stringent and wide provisions will show that India can adopt no measures against British competition which the Governor-General cannot, in effect,

stultify or veto whether in the legislative or in the administrative sphere. It is, of course, preposterous to permit foreigners in this country to compete with the nationals on equal terms and there can be no genuine Swaraj if India is to be denied the power to devise and adopt a national economic policy including the right, if her interests so require, of differentiating between nationals and non-nationals. In a famous article in "Young India" under the caption "The Giant and the Dwarf" written soon after the conclusion of the Gandhi-Irwin Pact in 1931, Mahatma Gandhi declared plainly that "to talk of no discrimination between Indian interests and English or European, is to perpetuate Indian helotage. What is equality of rights between a giant and a dwarf?" Even the meagre powers enjoyed by the Central Legislature at present to enact a measure like the reservation of the Indian coastal trade for Indian-owned and Indian-managed vessels has been taken away under the so-called reformed Constitution. Shipping is a vital industry which is essential for defensive as well as for economic purposes, but all the accepted and legitimate methods of developing this key industry including those adopted even by several British Dominions, are henceforth rendered impossible for India. To justify such limitations on our sovereignty on the ground of "reciprocity" and "partnership" is literally to add insult to injury. The right of the future Indian Parliament to differentiate or discriminate between nationals and non-nationals, whenever Indian interests require it, should remain intact and this right we cannot sacrifice on any account. I would like in this connection to cite the Irish parallel. The Irish Nationality and Citizenship Act of 1935 provides for a distinct Irish citizenship in connection with the electoral system, entry into public life, merchant shipping law, aircraft as also in connection with special privileges which it is thought proper to reserve for

Irish nationals, such as those conferred through measures for assisting Irish industry. Irish citizenship, in other words, is distinct from British, which cannot claim equal rights in the State of Eire (or Ireland) on the basis of British citizenship which is not recognised there. I feel that India must similarly seek to develop her own distinct nationality and establish a citizenship of her own.

While on the question of fiscal autonomy and commercial safeguards, I might refer briefly to the need of an active foreign trade policy for India. India's foreign trade should be viewed not in a haphazard or piecemeal manner as is often done in order to provide some immediate or temporary benefit to British industry, but in a comprehensive manner so as to co-ordinate India's economic development with its export trade on the one hand and its external obligation on the other. The very nature of India's export trade makes it essential that it shall not have any restrictive agreement with England such as would jeopardise its trade with the various non-Empire countries which have been in several respects its best customers, or such as would tend to weaken India's bargaining power *vis-a-vis* other countries. It is unfortunate that the protracted negotiations for an Indo-British Trade Agreement are still proceeding, while the Ottawa Agreement, even after the expiry of its notice period and despite the decision of the Legislative Assembly to terminate it, still continues, and along with the differential duties on British steel and textiles, the said Ottawa Agreement secures the prevailing advantages for British industries. There is no doubt that under the existing political conditions, any trade agreement between England and India is bound to be of an unequal character because our present political relationship would weigh the scales heavily in favour of England. There is also no doubt that the

British preferential system is political in origin and before we permit non-Indian vested interests to be established or consolidated in this country under the shelter of a trade agreement, we should be careful as to its political repercussions and economic consequences. I trust that the present Indo-British Trade negotiations will not be allowed to impede the conclusion of bilateral trade agreements with other countries whenever possible and that no such trade agreement will be signed by the Government of India unless it is ratified by the Indian Legislature.

From the above, it will be quite clear that there is no analogy between the powers of the provincial ministries and those of the proposed federal ministry. Moreover, the composition of the Federal Legislature is reactionary to a degree. The total population of the Indian States is roughly 24 per cent of that of the whole of India. Nevertheless, the Rulers of the States, not their subjects, have been given 33 per cent of the seats in the Lower House and 40 per cent in the Upper House of the Federal Legislature. In these circumstances, there is no possibility, in my opinion, of the Congress altering its attitude towards the Federal Scheme at any time. On our success in resisting the imposition of Federation by the British Government will depend our immediate political future. We have to fight Federation by all legitimate and peaceful means—not merely along constitutional lines—and in the last resort, we may have to resort to mass civil disobedience which is the ultimate sanction we have in our hands. There can be little doubt that in the event of such a campaign being started in the future, the movement will not be confined to British India but will spread among the States' subjects.

To put up an effective fight in the near future, it is necessary to put our own house in order. The

awakening among our masses during the last few years has been so tremendous that new problems have arisen concerning our party organisation. Meetings attended by fifty thousand men and women are an usual occurrence now-a-days. It is sometimes found that to control such meetings and demonstrations, our machinery is not adequate. Apart from these passing demonstrations, there is the bigger problem of mobilising this phenomenal mass energy and enthusiasm and directing them along proper lines. But have we got a well-disciplined Volunteer Corps for this purpose. Have we got a cadre of officers for our national service? Do we provide any training for our budding leaders, for our promising young workers? The answers to these questions are too patent to need elaboration. We have not yet provided all these requirements of a modern political party, but it is high time that we did. A disciplined Volunteer Corps manned by trained officers is exceedingly necessary. Moreover, education and training should be provided for our political workers so that we may produce a better type of leaders in future. This sort of training is provided by political parties in Britain through Summer Schools and other institutions—and is a speciality in totalitarian states. With all respect to our workers who have played a glorious part in our struggle, I must confess that there is room for more talent in our party. This defect can be made up partly by recruiting promising young men for the Congress and partly by providing education and training for those whom we already have. Everybody must have observed how some European countries have been dealing with this problem. Though our ideals and methods of training are quite different from theirs, it will be admitted on all hands that a thorough, scientific training is a requisite for our workers. Further, an institution like the Labour Service Corps of the Nazis deserves careful study and, with suitable modification, may prove beneficial to India.

While dealing with the question of enforcing discipline within our own party, we have to consider a problem which has been causing worry and embarrassment to many of us. I am referring to organisations like the Trade Union Congress and the Kisan Sabhas and their relations with the Indian National Congress. There are two opposing schools of thought on this question—those who condemn any organisations that are outside the Congress and those who advocate them. My own view is that we cannot abolish such organisations by ignoring or condemning them. They exist as objective facts and since they have come into existence and show no signs of liquidating themselves, it should be manifest that there is an historical necessity behind them. Moreover, such organisations are to be found in other countries. I am afraid that whether we like it or not, we have to reconcile ourselves to their existence. The only question is how the Congress should treat them. Obviously, such organisations should not appear as a challenge to the National Congress which is the organ of mass struggle for capturing political power. They should, therefore, be inspired by Congress ideals and methods and work in close co-operation with the Congress. To ensure this, Congress workers should in large numbers participate in trade union and peasant organisations. From my own experience of trade union work I feel that this could easily be done without landing oneself in conflict or inconsistency. Co-operation between the Congress and the other two organisations could be facilitated if the latter deal primarily with the economic grievances of the workers and peasants and treat the Congress as a common platform for all those who strive for the political emancipation of their country.

This brings us to the vexed problem of the collective affiliation of workers' and peasants' organisations to the Congress. Personally, I hold the view that the day

will come when we shall have to grant this affiliation in order to bring all progressive and anti-imperialist organisations under the influence and control of the Congress. There will, of course, be difference of opinion as to the manner and the extent to which this affiliation should be given and the character and stability of such organisations will have to be examined before affiliation could be agreed to. In Russia, the united front of the Soviets of workers, peasants and soldiers played a dominant part in the October revolution—but, on the contrary, in Great Britain we find that the British Trade Union Congress exerts a moderating influence on the National Executive of the Labour Party. In India we shall have to consider carefully what sort of influence organisations like the Trade Union Congress and the Kisan Sabhas will exert on the Indian National Congress in the event of affiliation being granted and we should not forget that there is the possibility that the former may not have a radical outlook if their immediate economic grievances are not involved. In any case, quite apart from the question of collective affiliation, there should be the closest co-operation between the National Congress and other anti-imperialist organisations and this object would be facilitated by the latter adopting the principles and methods of the former.

There has been a great deal of controversy over the question of forming a party, like the Congress Socialist Party, within the Congress. I hold no brief for the Congress Socialist Party and I am not a member of it. Nevertheless, I must say that I have been in agreement with its general principles and policy from the very beginning. In the first place, it is desirable for the leftist elements to be consolidated into one party. Secondly, a leftist *bloc* can have a *raison d'être* only if it is socialist in character. There are friends who object to such *bloc* being called a party,

but to my mind it is quite immaterial whether you call that *bloc* a group, league or party. Within the limits prescribed by the Constitution of the Indian National Congress it is quite possible for a leftist *bloc* to have a socialist programme, in which case it can be very well called a group, league or party. But the role of the Congress Socialist Party, or any other party of the same sort, should be that of a left-wing group. Socialism is not an immediate problem for us—nevertheless, socialist propaganda is necessary to prepare the country for socialism when political freedom has been won. And that propaganda can be conducted only by a party like the Congress Socialist Party, which stands for and believes in Socialism.

There is one problem in which I have been taking a deep personal interest for some years and in connection with which I should like to make my submission—I mean the question of a foreign policy for India and of developing international contacts. I attach great importance to this work because I believe that in the years to come, international developments will favour our struggle in India. But we must have a correct appreciation of the world situation at every stage and should know how to take advantage of it. The lesson of Egypt stands before us as an example. Egypt won her Treaty of Alliance with Great Britain without firing a shot, simply because she knew how to take advantage of the Anglo-Italian tension in the Mediterranean.

In connection with our foreign policy, the first suggestion that I have to make is that we should not be influenced by the internal politics of any country or the form of its state. We shall find in every country men and women who will sympathise with Indian freedom, no matter what their own political views may be. In this matter we should take a leaf out of Soviet diplomacy. Though Soviet Russia is a

communist state, her diplomats have not hesitated to make alliances with non-socialist states and have not declined sympathy or support coming from any quarter. We should therefore aim at developing a nucleus of men and women in every country who feel sympathetic towards India. To create and develop such a nucleus, propaganda through the foreign press, through Indian-made films and through art exhibitions would be helpful. The Chinese, for example, have made themselves exceedingly popular in Europe through their art exhibitions. Above all, personal contacts are necessary. Without such personal contacts, it would be difficult to make India popular in other countries. Indian students abroad could also help in this work, provided we in India look to their needs and requirements. There should be closer contact between Indian students abroad and the Indian National Congress at home. If we could send out cultural and educational films made in India, I am sure that India and her culture would become known and appreciated by people abroad. Such films would prove exceedingly useful to Indian students and Indian residents in other countries, who at present are like our non-official ambassadors.

I do not like the word propaganda—there is an air of falsity about it. But I insist that we should make India and her culture known to the world. I say this because I am aware that such efforts will be welcomed in every country in Europe and America. If we go ahead with this work, we shall be preparing the basis for our future embassies and legations in different lands. We should not neglect Great Britain either. We have even in that country a small but influential group of men and women who are genuinely sympathetic towards Indian aspirations. Among the rising generation, and students in particular, interest in, and sympathy for, India is rapidly on the increase.

One has only to visit the Universities of Great Britain to realise that.

To carry on this work effectively, the Indian National Congress should have its trusted agents in Europe, Asia, Africa and in North, Central and South America. It is a pity that we have so far neglected Central and South America where there is profound interest in India. The Congress should be assisted in this work of developing international contacts by cultural organisations in India, working in the field of international culture and by the Indian Chambers of Commerce working in the sphere of international commerce. Further, Indians should make it a point to attend every International Congress or Conference ; participation in such conferences is a very useful and healthy form of propaganda for India.

While talking of international contacts, I should remove a misgiving which may be present in some minds. Developing international contacts does not mean intriguing against the British Government. We do not need go in for such intrigues and all our methods should be above board. The propaganda that goes on against India all over the world is to the effect that India is an uncivilized country and it is inferred therefrom that the British are needed in order to civilize us. As a reply, we have only to let the world know what we are and what our culture is like. If we can do that, we shall create such a volume of international sympathy in our favour that India's case will become irresistible before the bar of world opinion.

I should not forget to refer to the problems, the difficulties and the trials which face our countrymen in different parts of Asia and Africa—notably in Zanzibar, Kenya, South Africa, Malaya and Ceylon.

The Congress has always taken the keenest interest in their affairs and will continue to do so in future. If we have not been able to do more for them, it is only because we are still slaves at home. A free India will be healthy and potent factor in world politics and will be able to look after the interests of its nationals abroad.

I must in this connection stress the desirability and necessity of developing closer cultural relations with our neighbours—*viz.*, Persia, Afghanistan, Nepal, China, Burma, Siam, Malaya States, East Indies and Ceylon. It would be good for both parties if they knew more of us and we knew more of them. With Burma and Ceylon, in particular, we should have the most intimate cultural intercourse, in view of our age-long contacts.

Friends, I am sorry I have taken more of your time than I had intended at first, but I am now nearing the end of my address. There is one important matter—the burning topic of the day—to which I should now draw your attention—the question of the release of detenus and political prisoners. The recent hunger-strikes have brought this question to the forefront and have focussed public attention on it. I believe that I am voicing the feelings of at least the rank and file of the Congress when I say that everything humanly possible should be done to expedite release. So far as the Congress ministries are concerned, it would be well to note that the record of some of them has not come up to public expectation. The sooner they satisfy the public demand, the better it will be for the Congress and for the people who are suffering in provinces ruled by non-Congress ministries. It is not necessary for me to labour this point and I fervently hope that in the immediate future, the public will have nothing to complain of so far as the

record of the Congress ministries on this point is concerned.

It is not only the detenus and political prisoners in jail and detention who have their tale of woe. The lot of those who have been released is sometimes no better. They often return home in shattered health, victims of fell diseases like Tuberculosis. Grim starvation stares them in the face and they are greeted, not with the smiles but with the tears of near and dear ones. Have we no duty to those who have given of their best in the service of their country and have received nothing but poverty and sorrow in return? Let us, therefore, send our heartfelt sympathy to all those who have suffered for the crime of loving their country and let us all contribute our humble mite towards the alleviation of their misery.

Friends, one word more and I have done. We are faced with a serious situation to-day. Inside the Congress there are differences between the right and the left which it would be futile to ignore. Outside, there is the challenge of British Imperialism which we are called upon to face. What shall we do in this crisis? Need I say that we have to stand four-square against all the storms that may beset our path and be impervious to all the designs that our rulers may employ? The Congress to-day is the one supreme organ of mass struggle. It may have its right *bloc* and its left—but it is the common platform for all anti-imperialist organisations striving for Indian emancipation. Let us, therefore, rally the whole country under the banner of the Indian National Congress. I would appeal specially to the leftist groups in the country to pool all their strength and their resources for democratising the Congress and reorganising it on the broadest anti-imperialist basis. In making this appeal, I am greatly encouraged by the attitude of the

leaders of the British Communist Party whose general policy with regard to India seems to me to be in keeping with that of the Indian Congress.

In conclusion, I shall voice your feelings by saying that all India fervently hopes and prays that Mahatma Gandhi may be spared to our nation for many, many years to come. India cannot afford to lose him and certainly not at this hour. We need him to keep our people united. We need him to keep our struggle free from bitterness and hatred. We need him for the cause of Indian Independence. What is more—we need him for the cause of humanity. Ours is a struggle not only against British Imperialism but against world Imperialism as well, of which the former is the keystone. We are, therefore, fighting not for the cause of India alone but of humanity as well. India freed means humanity saved.

Bande Mataram

CHAPTER II

INDIA AND THE WORLD*

Speaking as a cold-blooded realist, I may say that all the facts of the present-day situation are so much to our advantage that one should entertain the highest degree of optimism. If only we sink our differences, pool all our resources and pull our full weight in the national struggle, we can make our attack on British Imperialism irresistible.

— *Subhas C. Bose.*

Comrade Chairman, Sister and Brother delegates,

I thank you from the bottom of my heart for the great honour you have done me by re-electing me to the Presidential chair of the Indian National Congress and also for the warm and cordial welcome you have given me here at Tripuri. It is true that at my request you have had to dispense with some of the pomp that is usual on such occasions—but I feel that that enforced step has not taken away one iota of the warmth and cordiality of your reception and I hope that nobody will regret the curtailment of it on this occasion.

Friends, before I proceed any further, I shall voice your feelings by expressing our joy at the success Mahatma Gandhi's mission to Rajkot and the terms

*Delivered at the 52nd session held at Tripuri in March 1939.

nation of his fast in consequence thereof. The whole country now feels happy and tremendously relieved.

Friends, this year promises to be an abnormal or extraordinary one in many ways. The Presidential election this time was not of the humdrum type. The election was followed by sensational developments culminating in the resignation of twelve out of fifteen members of the Working Committee, headed by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Maulana A. K. Azad and Dr. Rajendra Prasad. Another distinguished and eminent member of the Working Committee, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, though he did not formally resign, issued a statement which led everybody to believe that he had also resigned. On the eve of the Tripuri Congress, events at Rajkot forced Mahatma Gandhi to undertake a vow of fast unto death. And then the President arrived at Tripuri a sick man. It will, therefore, be in the fitness of things if the Presidential address this year can claim to be a departure from precedent in the matter of its length.

Friends, you are aware that the Wafdist Delegation from Egypt have arrived in our midst as guests of the Indian National Congress. You will join me in according a most hearty welcome to all of them. We are extremely happy that they found it possible to accept our invitation and make the voyage to India. We are only sorry that political exigencies in Egypt did not permit the President of the Wafd, Mustapha El Nahas Pasha, to personally lead this Delegation. Having had the privilege of knowing the President and leading members of the Wafdist Party my joy today is all the greater. Once again, I offer them on behalf of our countrymen a most hearty and cordial welcome.

Since we met at Haripura in February, 1938, several significant events have taken place in the inter-

national sphere. The most important of these is the Munich Pact of September, 1938, which implied an abject surrender to Nazi Germany on the part of the Western Powers, France and Great Britain. As a result of this, France ceased to be the dominant power in Europe and the hegemony passed into the hands of Germany, without a shot being fired. In more recent times, the gradual collapse of the Republican Government in Spain seems to have added to the strength and prestige of Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany. The so-called democratic powers, France and Great Britain, have joined Italy and Germany in conspiring to eliminate Soviet Russia from European politics, for the time being. But how long will that be possible? There is no doubt that as a result of recent international developments, in Europe as well as in Asia, British and French Imperialisms have received a considerable set back in the matter of strength and prestige.

Coming to home politics, in view of my ill-health, I shall content myself with referring to only a few important problems. In the first place, I must give clear and unequivocal expression to what I have been feeling for some time past, namely, that the time has come for us to raise the issue of Swaraj and submit our national demand to the British Government in the form of an ultimatum. The time is long past when we could have adopted a passive attitude and waited for the Federal scheme to be imposed on us. The problem no longer is as to when the Federal Scheme will be forced down our throats. The problem is as to what we should do if the Federal Scheme is conveniently shelved for a few years till peace is stabilized in Europe. There is no doubt that once there is stable peace in Europe, whether through a Four-Power Pact or through some other means, Great Britain will adopt a strong Empire policy. The fact that she is now showing

some signs of trying to conciliate the Arabs as against the Jews in Palestine is because she is feeling herself weak in the international sphere. In my opinion, therefore, we should submit our national demand to the British Government in the form of an ultimatum and give a certain time-limit within which a reply is to be expected. If no reply is received within this period or if an unsatisfactory reply is received, we should resort to such sanctions as we possess in order to enforce our national demand. The sanctions that we possess today are mass civil disobedience or Satyagraha. And the British Government today are not in a position to face a major conflict like an All-India Satyagraha for a long period.

It grieves me to find that there are people in Congress who are so pessimistic as to think that the time is not ripe for a major assault on British Imperialism. But looking at the situation in a thoroughly realistic manner. I do not see the slightest ground for pessimism. With Congress in power in eight provinces, the strength and prestige of our national organisation have gone up. The mass movement has made considerable headway throughout British India. And last but not the least, there is an unprecedented awakening in the Indian States. What more opportune moment could we find in our national history for a final advance in the direction of Swaraj particularly when the international situation is favourable to us? Speaking as a cold-blooded realist, I may say that all the facts of the present-day situation are so much to our advantage that one should entertain the highest degree of optimism. If only we sink our differences, pool all our resources and pull our full weight in the national struggle, we can make our attack on British Imperialism irresistible. Shall we have the political foresight to make the most of our present favourable position or shall we miss this opportunity, which is rare opportunity in the life-time of a nation?

I have already referred to the awakening in the Indian States. I am definitely of the view that we should revise our attitude towards the States as defined by the Haripura Congress resolution. That resolution, as you are aware, put a ban on certain forms of activity in the State being conducted in the name of the Congress. Under that resolution, neither parliamentary work nor struggle against the State should be carried on in the name of the Congress. But since Haripura much has happened. Today we find that the Paramount Power is in league with the State authorities in most places. In such circumstances, should we of the Congress not draw closer to the people of the States? I have no doubt in my own mind as to what our duty is today.

Besides lifting the above ban, the work of guiding the popular movements in the States for Civil Liberty and Responsible Government should be conducted by the Working Committee on a comprehensive and systematic basis. The work so far done has been of a piecemeal nature and there has hardly been any system or plan behind it. But the time has come when the Working Committee should assume this responsibility and discharge it in a comprehensive and systematic way and, if necessary, appoint a special sub-committee for the purpose. The fullest use should be made of the guidance and co-operation of Mahatma Gandhi and of the co-operation of the All-India States' Peoples Conference.

I have referred earlier to the advisability of our making a final advance in the direction of Swaraj. That will need adequate preparation. In the first place, we shall have to take steps to ruthlessly remove whatever corruption or weakness has entered our ranks largely due to the lure of power. Next, we shall have

to work in close co-operation with all anti-imperialist organisations in the country particularly the Kisan movement and the Trade Union movement. All the radical elements in the country must work in close harmony and co-operation and the efforts of all anti-imperialist organisations must converge in the direction of a final assault on British Imperialism.

Friends, today the atmosphere within the Congress is clouded and dissensions have appeared. Many of our friends are consequently feeling depressed and dispirited. The cloud that you see today is a passing one. I have faith in the patriotism of my countrymen and I am sure that before long we shall be able to tide over the present difficulties and restore unity within our ranks. A somewhat similar situation had arisen at the time of the Gaya Congress in 1922 and thereafter, when Deshbandhu Das and Pandit Motilal Nehru, of hallowed memory, started the Swaraj Party. May the spirit of my late Guru, of revered Motilalji and of other great sons of India inspire us in the present crisis and may Mahatma Gandhi who is still with us guide and assist our nation, help the Congress out of the present tangle is my earnest prayer.

CHAPTER III

A REVOLUTIONARY PROGRAMME*

Political institutions grow out of the social life of the people and are shaped by their social ideas. If we want to make India really great we must build up a political democracy on the pedestal of a democratic society. Privileges based on birth, caste or creed should go and equal opportunities should be thrown open to all irrespective of caste, on religion.

— *Subhas Chandra Bose.*

Friends,

I thank you from the bottom of my heart for the high honour you have done me by requesting me to preside over the deliberations of the 6th Session of the Maharashtra Provincial Conference. You are probably aware that I did not at first venture to accept the kind invitation, but by referring to the old relations between Bengal and Maharashtra some of my friends touched a most tender chord in my heart. The appeal then proved to be irresistible and every other consideration had to stand aside.

After paying a glowing tribute to the late Lokmanya Tilak and emphasising the political entente between Bengal and Maharashtra, he said :—

Before I proceed to place before you my own

*Address delivered at the Maharashtra Provincial Conference held at Poona on May 3, 1928.

views with regard to our present policy and programme, I would like to raise some fundamental problems and attempt to answer them. It is sometimes urged by foreigners that the new awakening in India is entirely an exotic product inspired by alien ideals and methods. This is by no means true. I do not for one moment dispute the fact that the impact of the West has helped to rouse us from our intellectual and moral torpor. But that impact has restored self-consciousness to our people and the movement that has resulted therefrom and which we witness today is a genuine *Swadeshi* movement. India has long passed through the traditional period of blind imitation—of reflex action, if you put it in physiological language. She has recovered her own soul and is now busy reconstructing her national movement along national lines and in the light of national ideals.

I agree with Sir Flinders Patric that civilizations like individuals grow and die in a cyclic fashion and that each civilization has a certain span of life vouchsafed to it. I also agree with him that, under certain conditions, it is possible for a particular civilization to be reborn after it has spent itself. When this rebirth is to take place, the vital impetus—the “elan vital”—comes not from without but from within. In this manner has Indian Civilization been reborn over and over again at the end of each cycle and that is why India in spite of her hoary antiquity is still young and fresh.

The charge has often been levelled against us that since democracy is no Occidental institution, India by accepting democratic or semi-democratic institutions is being Westernised. Some European writers—Lord Ronaldshay for instance—go so far as to say that democracy is unsuited to the oriental temperament and political advancement in India should not, there-

fore, be made in that direction. Ignorance and effrontery could not go further. Democracy is by no means a Western institution; it is a human institution. Whatever man has attempted to evolve political institutions, he has hit upon this wonderful institution—Democracy. The past history of India is replete with instances of democratic institutions. Mr. K. P. Jayaswal in his wonderful book, "Hindu Polity," has dealt with this matter at great length and has given a list of 81 republics in ancient India. The Indian languages are also rich in terminology required in connection with political institutions of an advanced type. Democratic institutions still exist in certain parts of India. Among the *Khasis* of Assam, for instance, it is still the custom to elect the ruling chief by a vote of the whole clan; and this custom has been handed down from time immemorial. The principle of democracy was also applied in India in the Government of villages and towns. The other day while visiting the Verendra Research Society Museum at Rajshahi in North Bengal, I was shown a very interesting copperplate inscription in which it was stated that civic administration in the good old days was vested in a committee of five, including the *Nagar Sreshthi* (*i.e.*) our Modern Mayor). With regard to village Self-government, it is not necessary to remind an Indian audience about the village *Panchayats*,—democratic institutions—handed down to us from days of yore. Not only democratic but other socio-political doctrines of an advanced character were not unknown to India in the past.

Communism, for instance, is not a Western institution. Among the *Khasis* of Assam, to whom I have referred above, private property as an institution does not exist in theory even today. The clan as a whole owns the entire land. I am sure that similar instances can still be found in other parts of India and also in

the past history of our country.

I think it necessary at this stage to warn my countrymen, and my young friends in particular, about the attack that is being made on Nationalism from more than one quarter. From the point of view of Cultural Internationalism, Nationalism is sometimes assailed as narrow, selfish and aggressive. It is also regarded as a hindrance to the promotion of Internationalism in the domain of culture. My reply to the charge is that Indian Nationalism is neither narrow, nor selfish, nor aggressive. It is inspired by the highest ideal of the human race, *viz.*, *Satyam* (the truth), *Shivam* (the good), *Sunderam* (the beautiful). Nationalism in India has instilled into us truthfulness, honesty, manliness and the spirit of service and sacrifice. What is more, it has roused the creative faculties which for centuries had been lying dormant in our people and, as a result, we are experiencing a renaissance in the domain of Indian Art.

Another attack is being made on Nationalism from the point of view of International Labour or International Communism. This attack is not only ill-advised but unconsciously serves the interests of our alien rulers. It would be clear to the man in the street that before we can endeavour to reconstruct Indian society on a new basis whether socialistic or otherwise—we should first secure the right to shape our own destiny. As long as India lies prostrate at the feet of Britain, that right will be denied us. It is, therefore, the paramount duty not only of Nationalists but of all anti-Nationalistic Communists—to bring about the political emancipation of India as early as possible.

I have already hinted that I plead for a coalition between Labour and Nationalism, (I am using Labour

here in a wider sense to include the peasants as well). It has to be admitted that though we have passed resolutions from the Congress platform time and again regarding the desirability of organising labour much has not been achieved in that direction.

If we review the programme of the Congress during the last few years we shall find that only in our *khadi* programme have we been able to offer something to our masses, which means bread and butter to them. *Khadi*, I am glad to say, has brought food to thousands and thousands of hungry mouths all over India. Given money and organisation, there is plenty of scope for pushing on *khadi*. There are lacs and lacs of poor Indians living on the verge of starvation to whom *khadi* can offer a means of subsistence. But the appeal of *khadi* cannot be universal. We find from bitter experience in some parts of Bengal that as soon as the masses are a little better off, their *charkhas* lie idle and that the peasant who gets a better return from paddy or jute cultivation will refuse to cultivate cotton.

Except when Congressmen have joined the *kisan* movement as in the U. P. or have taken up the question of jute cultivation as in Bengal, or have undertaken a campaign for non-payment of taxes in order to resist illegal taxation or oppressive legislation as in Gujerat—we have seldom been able to make a direct appeal to the economic interests of the masses. And until this is done—human nature being what it is—how can we expect the masses to join the freedom movement?

There is another reason why I consider it imperative that the Congress should be more alive to the interests of the masses. Mass consciousness has been roused in India—thanks to the extensive and intensive

propaganda under-taken during the non-co-operation movement; and the mass movement cannot possibly be checked now. The only question is, along what lines this mass consciousness should manifest itself? If the Congress neglects the masses it is inevitable that sectional—and if I may say so, anti-national—movement will come into existence and class-war among our people will appear even before we have achieved our political emancipation. It would be disastrous in the highest degree if we were to launch class-war while we are all bed-fellows in slavery, in order that we may afford amusement to the common enemy. I regret to say that there is at present a tendency among some Indian labourites to belittle the Congress and to condemn the Congress programme. This re-primination should cease and the organised forces of the Labour and of the Congress should join hands for furthering the economic interests of the masses and promoting the cause of India's political emancipation.

Friends! You will pardon me if for one moment, I ask you to lift your eyes from the realities of the present and attempt to scan the future that looms before us. It is desirable that we should search our hearts in order to find out what it is that we are running after, so that, we and our succeeding generations may grow up in the light of that ideal and shape our course of action accordingly.

Speaking for myself, I stand for an Independent Federal Republic, that is the ultimate goal which I have before me.

India must fulfil her own destiny and cannot be content with colonial Self-Government or Dominion Home Rule. Why must we remain within the British Empire? India is rich in resources, human and material. She has outgrown the infancy which

foreigners have been thrusting upon her and not only take care of herself but can function as an independent unit. India is not Canada or Australia or South Africa. Indians are an oriental people, a coloured race and there is nothing in common between India and Great Britain for which we may be led to think that Dominion Home Rule within the British Empire is a desirable consummation for India. Rather India stands to lose by remaining within the Empire. Having been under British domination so long it may be difficult for Indians to get rid of the inferiority complex in their relations with England. It may also be difficult to resist British exploitation as long as we remain an integral part of the British Empire.

The usual argument that India without the help of Britain cannot defend herself is puerile. It is the Indian army—much more than the British army—which is defending India today. If India is strong enough to fight the battles of England outside our borders—*viz.*, in Tibet, China, Mesopotamia, Persia, Egypt and Flanders—she is certainly strong enough to defend herself from foreign aggression. Moreover, once India is able to free herself, the balance of power in the world will save India, as it has saved China. And if the League of Nations becomes a living organisation with some sanction behind it, invasion and aggression will be a thing of the past.

While striving to attain liberty we have to note all its implications. You cannot free one half of your soul and keep the other half in bondage. You cannot introduce light into a room and expect at the same time that some portion of it will remain dark. You cannot establish political democracy and endeavour at the same time to resist the democratisation of the society. No, my friends, let us not become queer mixtures of political democrats and social conserva-

tives. Political institutions grow out of the social life of the people and are shaped by their social ideas and ideals. If we want to make India really great we must build up a political democracy on the pedestal of a democratic society. Privileges based on birth, caste or creed should go and equal opportunities should be thrown open to all irrespective of caste, creed or religion. The status of woman should also be raised and woman should be trained to take larger and a more intelligent interest in public affairs.

While I do not condemn any patch-up work that may be necessary for healing up communal sores I would urge the necessity of discovering a deeper remedy for our communal troubles. It is necessary for the different religious groups to be acquainted with the traditions, ideals and history of one another because cultural intimacy will pave the way towards communal peace and harmony. I venture to think that the fundamental basis of political unity between different communities lies in cultural *rapprochement* and as things stand today the different communities inhabiting India are too exclusive.

In order to facilitate cultural *rapprochement* a dose of secular and scientific training is necessary. Fanaticism is the greatest thorn in the path of cultural intimacy and there is no better remedy for fanaticism than secular and scientific education. This sort of education is useful in another way in that it helps to rouse our "economic" consciousness. The dawn of "economic" consciousness spells the death of fanaticism. There is much more in common between a Hindu peasant and a Muslim peasant than between a Muslim peasant and a Muslim *zamindar*. The masses have only got to be educated wherein their economic interests be and once they understand that they will no longer consent to be pawns in communal feuds.

By working from the cultural, educational and economic side, we can gradually undermine fanaticism and thereby render possible the growth of healthy nationalism in this country.

One of the most hopeful signs of the time is the awakening among youth of this country. The movement has spread from one end of the country to the other, and as far as I am aware, has attracted not only young men but young women as well. The youth of this age has become self-conscious; they have been inspired by an ideal and are anxious to follow the call of their inner nature and fulfil their destiny. The movement is the spontaneous self-expression of the national soul and on the course of this movement depends the nation's future weal. Our duty, therefore, is not to attempt to crush this new born spirit but to lend it our support and guidance.

Friends! I would implore you to assist in the awakening of youth and in the organisation of the youth movement. Self-conscious youth will not act, but will also dream; will not destroy, but will also build. It will succeed where even you may fail; it will create for you a new India—and a free India—out of the failures, trials and experience of the past. And, believe me, if we are to rid India once for all of the canker of communalism and fanaticism, we have to begin work among our youth.

There is another aspect of our movement which has been somewhat neglected in this country, *viz.*, the women's movement. It is impossible for one half of the nation to win liberty without the active sympathy and support of the other half. In all countries—and even in the Labour Party in England—women's organisations have rendered invaluable service. There are various non-political organisations among

women in different parts of the country, but I venture to think that there is room for a country-wide political organisation among them. It should be the primary object of these organisations which will be run by women alone, to carry on political propaganda among their sex and to help the work of the Indian National Congress.

Our benign rulers and our self-appointed advisers are in the habit of lecturing day after day on our unfitness for Swaraj. Some say that we must have more education before we can hope to be free; others maintain that social reform should precede political reform; still others urge that without industrial development India cannot be fit for Swaraj. None of these statements are true. Indeed it would be far more true to say that without political freedom—*i.e.*, without the power to shape our own destiny—we cannot have either compulsory free education or social reform or industrial advancement. If you demand education for your people as Gokhale did long ago, the plea is put forward by Government that there is no money. If you introduce social legislation for the advancement of your countrymen, you find Miss Mayo's cousins on this side of the Atlantic arrayed against you and on the side of your social die-hards. When you are working yourself to death in order to bring about the economic and industrial regeneration of India, you find to your infinite regret and surprise that your Imperial Banks, your Railways and your Stores Departments are least inclined to help your national enterprise. You pass resolutions in your Municipalities and in your Councils in favour of Prohibition and you find that the Government meets you with a stone-wall of indifference or hostility. I have no doubt in my own mind that Swaraj and Swaraj alone is the sovereign remedy for all our ills. And the only criterion of our fitness for Swaraj is the will to be free.

How to rouse the national will within the shortest possible period is then the problem before us and our policies and programmes have to be drawn up with a view to this end. The Congress policy since 1921 has been a dual policy of destruction and obstruction; of opposition and consolidation. We feel that the bureaucracy has entrenched itself in this country by erecting a network of organisations and institutions and by appointing a hierarchy of officials to run them. These constitutions are the seats of bureaucratic power and through them the bureaucracy has a grip on the very heart of the people. We have to storm these citadels of power and for that purpose we have to set up parallel institutions. These parallel organisations are our Congress offices. As our power and influence increase through the organisation of Congress Committees, we shall be able to capture the bureaucratic seats of powers. We know from personal experience that in districts where Congress Committees are well-organised, the capture of local bodies has been possible without any difficulty. The Congress offices are, therefore, the forts where we have to entrench ourselves and whence we have to stir out every day in order to raid the bureaucratic citadels. Congress Committees are our army and no plan of campaign, however skilfully devised, can succeed unless we have a strong, efficient and disciplined army at our command.

Friends! You will remember that when, after the Gaya Congress of 1922, there was a tendency among a large section of our countrymen to concentrate wholly on the constructive programme to the exclusion of everything else, Deshbandhu Das pointed out in the manifesto of the Swaraj Party that it was absolutely necessary to keep up a spirit of resistance to the bureaucracy. He firmly believed that without an atmosphere of opposition it was not possible to push on the constructive programme or to achieve

success in any other direction. But this basic principle we often seem to forget. "Non-co-operation is barren"—"opposition has failed"—"obstruction is fruitless"—these are catchwords which mislead the unwary public. The most tragic element in our character is that we do not look ahead; we are easily upset by failures. We lack the dogged tenacity of John Bull, and unlike him, we cannot therefore fight a lasting game.

I have often been asked how the end will come, how the bureaucracy will ultimately be forced to accede to our terms. I have no misgivings in this matter for I have already had a foretaste of what will come. The movement will reach its climax in a sort of general strike or countrywide *hartal* coupled with a boycott of British goods. Along with the strike or *hartal* to bring about, with which Labour and the National Congress will heartily co-operate, there will be some form of civil disobedience because the bureaucracy is not likely to sit idle while a strike is going on. It is also possible that there may be non-payment of taxes in some form or other but this is not essential. When the crisis is reached the average Britisher at home will feel that to starve India politically means economic starvation for her. And the bureaucracy in India will find that it is impossible to carry on the administration in the face of a countrywide non-co-operation movement. The jails will be full as in 1921, and there will be general demoralisation within the ranks of the bureaucracy who will no longer be able to count upon the loyalty and devotion of their servants and employees. There will be a paralysis of the administration and possibly of foreign trade and commerce. The bureaucracy will consider the situation as chaotic, but from the point of view of the people, the country will be organised, disciplined and determined. The bureaucracy will then be forced to yield to the

demands of people's representatives for saving themselves from unnecessary trouble and anxiety and for restoring their trade with India.

Our immediate task is among other things to make the boycott of the Simon Commission complete and effective. We, Congressmen, have never accepted the pernicious preamble to the Government of India Act, 1919. This Act has been forced down our throats but we have never owed willing allegiance to it—in fact we have tried our level best to non-co-operate with it. We take our stand on the sacred and inviolable rights of men—and the principle of self-determination. We maintain that it is for India to frame her own constitution according to her needs and it is for British to accept it *in toto*. This procedure has been followed not only in the case of countries that have won back their independence but in the case of the self-governing dominions within the British Empire including the Irish Free State.

The counterpart of this boycott in fact, its positive aspect, is the framing of a national constitution. The All Parties' Conference has taken this matter in hand and all lovers of India should wish the Conference a complete success. The Secretary of State for India has in a fit of pompous pride challenged India to produce an agreed constitution. If there is a spark of honour and self-respect left in us, we should take up the gauntlet and give a fitting reply by producing a constitution.

I shall not tire you with any details of the constitution that should be drafted. I shall leave that task to our constitution framers and shall content myself with referring to three cardinal points. These three points are as follows :—

(1) The constitution should guarantee national sovereignty, *i.e.*, the sovereignty of the people. What we want is Government of the people, by the people and for the people.

(2) The constitution should be prefaced by a 'declaration of rights' which will guarantee the elementary right of citizenship. Without a 'declaration of rights', a constitution is not worth the paper it is written on. Repressive Laws, Ordinances and Regulations should be unknown in a free India.

(3) There should be a system of joint electorate. As a temporary arrangement, there may be reservation of seats if that is found necessary. But we should by all means insist on a joint electorate. Nationalism and separate electorates are self-contradictory. Separate electorates are wrong in principle and it is futile to attempt to build up a nation on a bad principle. We have had a bitter experience of separate electorates and the sooner we get rid of them the better for us and for our country.

In order to enforce our national demand, it is necessary to take such steps as lie in our power—because mere appeal to the sweet reasonableness of Britishers will be of no avail. Weak and unarmed though we are, Providence has in His mercy given us a weapon which we can use with great effect. This weapon is economic boycott, *i.e.*, boycott of British goods. It has been used with great effect in Ireland and in China. It was also used to great advantage during the Swadeshi movement nearly 20 years ago and partly during the non-co-operation movement.

Boycott of British goods is necessary for the revival of Swadeshi and for effecting our political salvation.

It is also necessary that, while the political fight is going on, some of us should take up the work of village reorganisation. In a vast country like ours—with so many departments in our national life—there is room for a variety of talent and scope for diversity of temperament.

We must all be pained to notice that our masses and particularly our labourers are at present passing through a severe economic crisis. Drastic retrenchment is going on in the different railways, and particularly in the Railway Workshops. I understand that several crores worth of railway materials are imported from Great Britain for our railways whereas these could easily be manufactured in India if the workshops were extended. If an attempt were made to manufacture these goods in India, far from retrenching the existing labour staff, the administration would be able to provide employment for many more. But here again the interests of the Britishers and their industry have to be safeguarded at the cost of poor India.

It is the bounden duty of all Indians—and of Congressman in particular—to come to the aid of labour in their hour of trial. Let us try and help them with all the means at our disposal.

Friends! We have reached a most critical stage in our nation's history and it behoves us to unite all our forces and make a bold stand against the powers that be. Let us all stand shoulder to shoulder and say with one heart and with one voice, that our motto is as Tennyson said through Ulysses—"To strive, to seek, to find and not to yield."

CHAPTER IV

NO TRUCK WITH IMPERIALISM*

The crisis that has overtaken us may be rare in Indian history, but it is nothing new in the history of the world. Such crises generally appear in periods of transition. In India, we are now ringing down the curtain on an age that is passing away, while we are at the same time ushering in the dawn of a new era. The age of imperialism is drawing to a close and the era of freedom, democracy and socialism looms ahead of us.

—*Subhas Chandra Bose*

You have done me a very great honour by inviting me to preside over the deliberations of the All-India Anti-Compromise Conference at Ramgarh to-day. At the same time, the responsibility you have thrown on my shoulders is onerous to a degree. This Conference is intended to focus all the anti-imperialist forces in the country that are now determined to resist a compromise with imperialism. To preside over such a Conference is by no means an easy task. This task becomes all the more serious and arduous when the Chairman of the Reception Committee is no less a person than Swami Sahajanand Saraswati. It is in response to Swamiji's clarion call that we have assembled here to-day.

I shall fail in my duty if before proceeding to

* Full text of the Presidential Address delivered at the Anti-Compromise Conference held at Ramgarh on March 19, 1940.

discuss the problem of the day, I do not pay a tribute to those who are responsible for organising this Conference. I happen to know something of the obstacles and the difficulties that had to be overcome before this Conference could meet and I can therefore speak with a certain amount of authority. These obstacles and difficulties were of a twofold character. In the first place, there were physical and material obstacles and difficulties to be overcome at Ramgarh before adequate arrangement for the Conference could be made. In the second place, persistent hostile propaganda all over the country had to be faced by the Conference. The most surprising and painful part of this propaganda was the determined endeavour of a section of Leftists (or shall I say pseudo-Leftists ?) to make this Conference impossible by openly condemning it and also by trying to sabotage it. As a matter of fact, during the last few months it has become more and more evident that a number of Leftists have begun to play the role of apologists of the Rightists but such a phenomenon is not new in history. Man lives to learn and the longer he lives, the more does he realise the aptness of the oft-repeated truism that history repeats itself.

It has been argued by the apologists of the Congress Working Committee that the Congress is itself the biggest Anti-Compromise Conference and that such a Conference is therefore unnecessary. The resolution of the last meeting of the Congress Working Committee which met at Patna is held up before our eyes in order to demonstrate that the Congress has adopted an uncompromising policy. One cannot but admire the naivete of such an argument, but is it meet and proper for politicians and political workers to be so very naive ?

One has only to go through the whole of the Patna resolution and particularly through the latter

portion of it in order to realise that there are loopholes which detract from the intrinsic value of that resolution. No sooner was this resolution passed than Mahatma Gandhi came forward with the statement that the door had not been banged on future negotiations for a settlement. Mahatmaji's subsequent lengthy remarks on Civil Disobedience do not assure us by any means that the period of struggle has commenced. In fact, what has distressed and bewildered us during the last year and a half is the fact that while on the one hand red-hot resolutions are passed and statements issued by members of the Congress Working Committee, simultaneously other remarks are made and statements issued either by Mahatma Gandhi or by other Rightist leaders which create a totally different impression on the average mind. Then there is the moot question as to whether the Patna resolution would have been passed at all, but for the pressure exerted by the Left during the last six months.

The country eagerly awaits a clear and unequivocal declaration from the Congress Working Committee that the door has finally been banged on all talks of a compromise with Imperialism. But will this declaration be forthcoming? If so, when?

Those who aver that the Congress is the biggest Anti-Compromise Conference perhaps suffer from shortness of memory and their brains consequently need refreshing. Have they forgotten that as soon as the war began Mahatma Gandhi proceeded to Simla without caring to consult the Congress Working Committee and informed His Excellency the Viceroy that he was in favour of rendering unconditional help to Great Britain in the prosecution of the War? Do they not realise that Mahatma Gandhi being the sole Dictator of the Congress, his personal views necessarily

have a far-reaching implication? Have they forgotten that since the outbreak of war the Congress Working Committee has side-tracked the main issue—namely, our demand for Purna Swaraj—by putting forward a demand for a fake Constituent Assembly? Have they forgotten that some prominent Rightist leaders, including members of the Congress Working Committee, have been continuously whittling down the implication of a Constituent Assembly and that they have gone so far as to accept separate electorate and the existing franchise for the Legislative Assembly as the basis for electing the Constituent Assembly of their dreams? Have they forgotten that after the resignation of Congress Ministries, several Congress Ministers have been showing an inordinate desire to get back to office? Have they forgotten the consistent attitude which Mahatma Gandhi has adopted during the last six months in the matter of a compromise with the British Government? And do they not know that behind the smoke-screen of hot phrases, negotiations for a compromise have been going on apace?

Unfortunately for us, the British Government have ceased to take the Congress seriously and have formed the impression that, however much Congressmen may talk, they will not ultimately show fight. Since September, 1939, there has not been any dearth of resolutions or statements. Some members of the Congress Working Committee opine that these resolutions have impressed the world. But whether they have impressed the world or not they have certainly not impressed the British. Who are essentially a realistic race. During the last six months we have offered them only words and we have received the time-worn reply that so long as the Hindu-Muslim problem remains unsolved, Purna Swaraj is unthinkable.

Since September last, India has been passing through a rare crisis when men's minds have fallen a prey to doubt and vacillation. The first to fall were the leaders themselves and the demoralisation that seized them has been spreading as a contagion throughout the land. A determined and wide-spread effort is needed if we are to stem the rot. To make this effort really effective our activities should be focussed at an All-India Conference of all those who are determined to have no truck with Imperialism.

The crisis that has overtaken us may be rare in Indian history, but it is nothing new in the history of the world. Such crises generally appear in periods of transition. In India, we are now ringing down the curtain on an age that is passing away, while we are at the same time ushering in the dawn of a new era. The age of imperialism is drawing to a close and the era of freedom, democracy and socialism looms ahead of us. India, therefore, stands to-day at one of the cross-roads of history. It is for us to share, if we so will, the heritage that awaits the world.

It is not to be wondered at that men's minds should be bewildered when the old structure is crushing under its own weight and the new has yet to rise out of the ashes of the old. But let us not lose faith in ourselves, or in our countrymen or in humanity in this hour of uncertainty. To lose faith would be a calamity of the first magnitude. Such crises constitute the supreme test of a nation's leadership. The present crisis has put our own leadership to the test and the latter has been unfortunately found wanting. It is only by analysing and exposing the causes of its failure that we can learn the lesson of history and lay the foundation of our future effort and achievement. But such analysis and exposure will necessarily be painful to all concerned, though there is means of avoiding it.

I may digress at this stage and draw an analogy with similar crises in other climes and ages. When the October Revolution broke out in Russia in 1917, nobody had a clear conception as to how the revolution should be directed. Most of the Bolsheviki were then thinking in terms of a coalition with other parties. It was left to Lenin to denounce all coalitions and give out the slogan—'All Power to the Soviet.' Who knows what turn Russian history have taken but for this timely lead of Lenin's, during a period of doubt and vacillation? Lenin's unerring instinct (or intuition), which ultimately proved to be prophetic, saved Russia from disaster and from a tragedy similar to that which overtook Spain the other day.

Let us now take a contrary case. Italy in 1922 was, to all intents and purposes, ripe for Socialism. All that she needed was an Italian Lenin. But the man of the hour did not arrive and the opportunity slipped out of socialist hands. It was immediately seized by the Fascist leader, Benito Mussolini.

By his march to Rome and his seizure of power, Italian history took an altogether different turn and Italy ultimately went Fascist instead of going socialist. Doubt and vacillation had seized the Italian leaders and so they failed. Mussolini had one supreme virtue which not only saved him but brought him the laurels of victory. He knew his mind and he was not afraid to act. This constituted the essence of leadership.

To-day our leaders are wobbling and vacillation has demoralised a section of leftists as well. "Unity," "National Front," "Discipline"—these have become cheap slogans which have no relation to reality. Befogged by such attractive slogans, they seem to have forgotten that the supreme need of the hour is a bold, uncompromising policy leading us on to a national

struggle. Whatever strengthens us for this purpose is to be welcomed. Whatever weakens us is to be eschewed. Unity which ties us to the apron-strings of rightist politicians is by no means a blessing. We might as well induce the Congress to effect unity with the Liberal Federation—if unity is to be desired under all conditions and circumstances.

In the present crisis, the most distressing phenomenon is the disruption within the ranks of those who were hitherto regarded as leftists. The immediate future will prove to be the acid test of leftism to India. Those who will be found wanting will be soon exposed as pseudo-leftists. The members of the 'Forward Bloc,' too, will have to demonstrate by their work and conduct that they are really forward and dynamic. It may be that in the ordeal that is ahead of us, some of those who are branded as rightists to-day, will prove to be genuine leftists—in action, I mean.

A word is necessary here in order to explain what we mean by leftism. The present age is the anti-imperialist phase of our movement. Our main task in this age is to end imperialism and win national independence for the Indian people. When freedom comes, the age of national reconstruction will commence and that will be the socialist phase of our movement. In the present phase of our movement, leftists will be those who will wage an uncompromising fight with imperialism. Those who waver and vacillate in their struggle against imperialism—those who tend towards a compromise with it—cannot by any means be leftists. In the next phase of our movement, leftism will be synonymous with Socialism—but in the present phase the words "Leftist" and "Anti-Imperialist" should be interchangeable.

The problem of the hour is—"Will India still

remain under the thumb of the rightists or will she swing to the left, once for all?" The answer to this can be furnished only by the leftists themselves. If they adopt a bold uncompromising policy in their struggle with imperialism regardless of all danger, difficulties and obstacles then the leftists will make history and India will go left.

To those who may still be thinking of a compromise, the recent history of Ireland and the sequel to Anglo-Irish Treaty should prove highly instructive and edifying. A compromise with imperialism will mean that an anti-imperialist national struggle will soon be converted into a civil war among the people themselves. Should that be desirable from any point of view?

In the event of a compromise being effected with imperialism in this country Indian leftists will in future have to fight not only imperialism, but its new-fangled Indian allies as well. This will necessarily mean that the national struggle against imperialism will be converted into a civil war among the Indians themselves.

Let us take time by the forelock and let us act while it is not too late. Swami Sahajanand Saraswati has sounded the clarion call. Let us respond to it with all the strength and courage that we possess. From this Conference let us send out a warning to both imperialism and its Indian allies. The success of this Conference should mean the death-knell of compromise with imperialism.

Before we part, let us also set up a permanent machinery for implementing the resolutions of this Conference and for waging an uncompromising war with imperialism. Everybody now relises that if the

Working Committee of the Congress does not give the call for launching a national struggle—others will have to do so. It would therefore be in the fitness of things for this Conference to set up a permanent machinery for undertaking this responsibility—should the Working Committee fail us in this crisis. I hope and trust that the deliberations of this Conference will be a prelude to work and struggle on a nation-wide scale and on an All-India front.

CHAPTER V

NOTHING BUT POLITICS*

Freedom from bondage of every kind—this hunger for freedom is the song of the soul. The path to freedom is no doubt thorny but it is a path which also leads to glory and immortality. Let us break with the past, destroy all the shackles which have bound us for ages, and like true pilgrims let us march shoulder to shoulder towards the destined goal of freedom. Freedom means life, and death in the pursuit of freedom means glory imperishable. Let us, therefore, resolve to be free or at least die in the pursuit of freedom.

—*Subhas C. Bose*

Sisters and Brothers of the Punjab,

I thank you from the very core of my heart for the warm and cordial welcome you have given me on the occasion of my first visit to the 'sacred land of five rivers.' I know how little I deserve the honour and the welcome which you have been pleased to accord me and my only wish today is that I may be a little more worthy of the kindness and hospitality with which I have been greeted here.

You have summoned me from distant Calcutta to come and speak to you. Here I am, standing before you today, ready to respond to your call. But why

*Full text of Presidential Address delivered at the 22nd Punjab Students' Conference held at Lahore on October 19, 1929.

have you summoned me of all persons? Is it because the East and the West must meet to solve their common problems? Is it because Bengal, which was the first to come under the foreign yoke, and the Punjab, which was the last to be enslaved, have need of each other? Or is it because you and I have something in common—sharing the same thoughts and I cherishing the same aspirations? And what an irony of fate that you want me—once an expelled student of a sister university—to address a gathering of students here at Lahore? Can you now object if our elders complain that the time is out of joint for strange persons and novel ideas now find favour with the world? If you have invited me with full knowledge of my past record, you ought really to be able to anticipate what I am going to say.

Friends! You will pardon me if at the very outset I take this opportunity of giving public utterance—however feeble it may be—to the feelings of gratitude that surge within me as I think of what the Punjab—and particularly the youth of the Punjab—have done for Jatindranath Das and his co-sufferers from Bengal during their stay in the Punjab jails. The arrangement for their defence, the extreme anxiety and solicitude felt for them as long as they were on hunger-strike and the sympathy, affection and honour bestowed on Jatin during his life-time and after, have stirred the heart of Bengal to its depths. Not content with what they have done at Lahore, prominent members of the Defence Committee travelled all the way to Calcutta to escort the mortal remains of the great martyr and hand them over to us there. We are an emotional people and the largeness of your heart has endeared you to us to an indescribable degree. Bengal will ever remember with thankfulness and gratitude what the Punjab did for her in one of her darkest days.

One of your distinguished leaders was describing to us one day in Calcutta, while referring to the great martyr, how the sun rose in the East and set in the West and how after sunset, the moon rose in the West and travelled back to the East. Thus did Jatin live and die. From Calcutta to Lahore he travelled in life and after death his mortal remains went back to Calcutta. They went back not as dead clay but as a symbol of something pure, noble and divine. Jatin today is not dead. He lives up in the heavens as a star of "purest ray serene," to serve as a beacon-light to posterity. He lives in his immortal sacrifice and in his celestial suffering. He lives as a vision, as an ideal, as an emblem of what is purest and noblest in humanity.

And I believe that he has through his self-immolation not only roused the soul of India, but has also forged an indissoluble tie between the two provinces, where he was born and where he died. I, therefore, envy your great city which has been the *tapasya-kshetra* — the place of penance — of this modern Dadhichi.

As we are gradually approaching the dawn of freedom, our cup of suffering and sorrow is becoming full. It is but natural that our rulers like despots elsewhere, should become more and more relentless as they find power gradually slipping out of their hands. And one should not be surprised if by and by they cast off all pretensions to civilisation and rid themselves of the mask of decency in order that the mailed fist may be used freely and without hesitation. Punjab and Bengal are at the present moment enjoying the largest doses of repression. This is indeed a matter for congratulation for we are thereby qualifying for Swaraj in an effective manner. The spirits of heroes like Bhagat Singh and Batukeshwar Dutt cannot be

cowed down by repression; on the contrary, it is through repression and suffering, through humiliation and sorrow, that heroes will be made. Let us, therefore, welcome repression with all our heart and make fullest use of it when it comes.

Little do you know how much Bengali literature has drawn from the earlier history of the Punjab in order to enrich itself and edify its readers. Tales of your heroes have been composed and sung by our great poets including Rabindranath Tagore and some of them are today familiar in every Bengali home. Aphorisms of your saints have been translated into elegant Bengali and they afford solace and inspiration to millions in Bengal. This cultural contact has its counterpart in the political sphere and we find your political pilgrims meeting our not only in the jails in India but also in the jails of distant Burma and in the wilds of the Andamans across the seas.

Friends! I shall make no apology if in this discourse I refer at length to political questions and endeavour to answer them. I know that there are people in this country—even eminent personages—who think that a 'subject race has no politics' and that students in particular should have nothing to do with politics. But my own view is that a subject race has nothing but politics. In a dependent country every problem that you can think of, when analysed properly, will be found to be at bottom a political problem. Life is one whole as the late Deshbandhu C. R. Das used to say and you cannot therefore separate politics from economics either from education. Human life cannot be split up into compartments.

All the aspects or phrases of national life are inter-related and all the problems are, as it were, inter-

woven. This being the case, it will be found that in a subject race all the evils and all the short-comings can be traced to a political cause, *viz.*, political servitude. Consequently, students cannot afford to blind themselves to this all-important problem, the problem of how to achieve our political emancipation.

I do not understand why a special ban should be imposed on participation in politics if no such ban is imposed on national work in general. I can understand a ban on all national work, but a ban merely on political work is meaningless. If, in a dependent country, all problems are fundamentally political problems—then all national activity is in reality political in character. There is no ban on participation in politics in any free country—on the contrary, students are encouraged to take part in politics. This encouragement is deliberately given, because out of the ranks of the students arise political thinkers and politicians. If, in India, students do not take active part in politics, from where are we to recruit our political workers and where are we to train them? Further, it has to be admitted that participation in politics is necessary for the development of character and manhood. Thought, without action, cannot suffice to build character and for this reason, participation in healthy activity—political, social, artistic, etc.—is essentially necessary for developing character. Book-worms, gold-medalists and office clerks are not what universities should endeavour to produce—but men of character who will become great by achieving greatness for their country in different spheres of life.

One of the most encouraging signs of the times is the growth of a genuine student's movement all over India. This movement I consider to be a phase of wider youth movement. There is a great deal of

difference between the students' conference of today and those of the previous decade. The latter were generally held under official auspices and on the gateway appeared the motto—"Thou shall not talk about politics." These conferences could in a manner be compared with those sessions of the Indian National Congress in the earlier stages of its history, where the first resolution passed was one confirming our loyalty to the King-Emperor. We have fortunately outgrown that stage not only in the Indian National Congress but also in the students' movement. The students' conferences of today meet in a freer atmosphere, and those who participate in these conferences think and talk as they like subject to the restrictions imposed by the Indian Penal Code.

The Youth Movement of today is characterised by a feeling of restlessness, of impatience with the present order of things and by an intense desire to usher in a new and a better era. A sense of responsibility and a spirit of self-reliance pervades this movement. Youths of the present day no longer feel content by handing over all responsibility to their elders. They rather feel that the country and the country's future belong more to them than to the elder generation and it is therefore their bounden duty to accept the fullest responsibility for the future of their country and to equip themselves for the proper discharge of that responsibility. The students' movement, being the phase of the larger youth movement, is inspired by the same outlook, psychology and purpose as the latter.

The students' movement of today is not a movement of irresponsible boys and girls. It is a movement of responsible, though young men and women who are inspired with one ideal, *viz.*, to develop their character and personality and thereby render the most effective

and useful service to the cause of their country. This movement has, or should have, two lines of activity. In the first place it should deal with the problems which relate exclusively to the student population of the day and endeavour to equip him for the battle of life and for this purpose, it should give him a foretaste of what problems and activities are likely to confront him when he enters the arena of life.

The first aspect of the students' movement, to which I have just referred, may not in the ordinary course of things be looked upon with disfavour by the powers that be—but the other aspect of the movement is likely to be discouraged, condemned and even thwarted at times. It is neither desirable nor necessary for me to attempt to give a detailed programme of what you should undertake under the first head. That will depend partly on your own special needs and short-comings and partly on the arrangements, if any, that are made by the educational authorities to fulfil those needs and remove those short-comings. Every student requires a strong and healthy physique, and sound character and a brain full of useful information and healthy dynamic ideas. If the arrangements provided by the authorities do not conduce to the proper growth of physique, character and intellect, you will have to provide facilities which will ensure that growth. And if the authorities welcome your efforts in the direction all the better for you—but if they do not, leave them alone and go your own way. Your life is your own and the responsibility for developing it is after all yours, more than anybody else's.

In this connection there is one suggestion I have to offer to which I should like to draw your attention. I wish our students' associations could start co-operative Swadeshi stores within their respective jurisdiction

for the exclusive benefit of the student population. If these stores are run efficiently by the students themselves, they will serve a dual purpose. On the one hand Swadeshi goods will be made available to the students at a cheap price and thereby home industries would be encouraged. On the other hand, students could acquire experience in running co-operative stores and could utilise the profits for advancing the welfare of the student community.

For advancing the cause of students' welfare other items in your programme would be—physical culture societies, gymnasiums, study circles, debating societies, magazines, music clubs, libraries and reading rooms, social service leagues etc.

The other and probably more important aspect of the students' movement is the training of the future citizen. This training will be both intellectual and practical. We shall have to hold out before the students a vision of the ideal society which they should try to realise in their own life-time and at the same time chalk out for themselves a programme of action which they should try to follow to the best of their ability—so that while performing their duties as students they may at the same time be preparing themselves for their post-university career. It is in this sphere of activity that there is a likelihood of conflict with the authorities. But whether the conflict will actually arise or not, depends largely on the attitude of the education and governmental authorities. If the conflict does unfortunately arise there is no help for it and students should once for all make up their minds to be absolutely fearless and self-reliant in matter of preparing themselves, through thought and action, for their post-university career.

Before I proceed to give you my conception of the

ideal that we should all cherish, I shall, with your permission, indulge in a digression which will not be altogether irrelevant. There is hardly any Asiatic today to whom the spectacle of Asia lying strangled at the feet of Europe does not cause pain and humiliation. But I want you to get rid of the idea, once for all, that Asia has always been in this state. Europe today may be the top-dog—but time was when Asia was the top-dog. History tells us how in days of old Asia conquered and held sway over a large portion of Europe and those days Europe was mightily afraid of Asia. The tables are turned now, but the wheel of fortune is still moving and there is no cause for despair. Asia is at the present moment busy throwing off the yoke of thralldom and the time is not far off when rejuvenated Asia will rise resplendent in power and glory out of the darkness of the past and take her legitimate place in the comity of free nations.

The immortal East is sometimes stigmatised by the hustlers from the West as “unchanging”—just as Turkey was once upon a time called the “Sickman of Europe.” But this abuse can no longer apply to Asia in general or to Turkey in particular. From Japan to Turkey and from Siberia to Ceylon, the entire Orient is astir. Everywhere there is change, there is progress, there is conflict with custom, authority and traditions. The East is unchanging as long as she chooses to be so, but once she resolves to move, she can progress faster than even Western nations. This is what is happening in Asia at the present day.

We are sometimes asked if the activity and the agitation that we witness in Asia and particularly in India—are signs of real life or whether they are simply reactions to external stimuli. Even dead organisms can react to stimuli and one has to be sure

that the movements we behold are not like the reflex actions of muscles that are dead. My conviction is that the test of life is creative activity and when we find that present-day movements give evidence of originality and creative genius, we feel sure that we are really alive as a nation and the renaissance that we witness in different spheres of our national life is a genuine awakening from within.

In India today we are in the midst of a whirlpool of ideas. Numerous currents, cross-currents and under-currents are flowing from all directions. A strange intermingling is going on and in the midst of confusion of ideas that has arisen, it is not possible for ordinary man to distinguish between good and bad, and right and wrong. But if we are to rejuvenate our country and guide it along the right path, we must have a clear vision of the goal and of the path we shall have to travel in order to reach that goal.

Indian civilization has just emerged out of the dark ages and is now entering on a new lease of life. At one time there was a genuine danger as to whether that civilization would die a normal death like the civilizations of Phoenicia and Babylon. But it has once again survived the onslaught of time. If we want to continue the work of rejuvenation that has begun we must bring about a revolution of ideas in the world of thought and intermingling of blood in the biological plane. Unless we refuse to accept the verdict of history and the considered opinion of thinkers like Sir Finders Petrie, we have to admit that it is only by this means that old and worn-out civilizations can be rejuvenated. If you do not accept this view of mine, you will have to discover by your own investigation the law underlying the rise and fall of civilizations. Once we succeed in discovering this law, we shall be able to advise our countrymen as to what

is necessary for us to do if we are to create a new, healthy and progressive nation in this ancient land of ours.

If we are to bring about a revolution of ideas we have first to hold up before us an ideal which will galvanise our whole life. That ideal is freedom. But freedom is a word which has a varied connotation and, even in our country, the conception of freedom has undergone a process of evolution. By freedom I mean all-round freedom, *i.e.*, freedom for the individual as well as for society; freedom for the rich as well as for the poor; freedom for men as well as women; freedom for all individuals and for all classes. This freedom implies not only emancipation from political bondage but also equal distribution of wealth, abolition of caste-barriers and social inequities and destruction of communalism and religious intolerance. This is an ideal which may appear Utopian to hard-headed men and women, but this ideal alone can appease the hunger of the soul.

Freedom has many facets as there are aspects in our national life. There are individuals who when they talk of freedom think only of some particular aspect of freedom. It has taken us several decades to outgrow this narrow conception of freedom and to arrive at a full and all-round conception of it. If we really love freedom and love it, not for some selfish end but for its own sake—the time has come for us to recognise that true freedom means freedom from bondage of every kind and freedom not only for the individual but also for the whole of society. This, to my mind, is the ideal of the age and the vision of completely free and emancipated India.

The only method of achieving freedom is for us to think and feel as free men. Let there be a complete

revolution within and let us be thoroughly intoxicated with the wine of freedom. It is only freedom-intoxicated men and women who will be able to free humanity. When the "will to be free" is roused within us, we shall then proceed to plunge headlong into an ocean of activity. The voice of caution will no longer deter us and lure of truth and glory will lead us on to our cherished goal.

Friends! I have tried to tell you something about what I feel, think and dream about my life's goal and what is at present the motive-power behind all my activities. Whether this will attract you or not, I do not know. But one thing to me is perfectly clear—life has but one meaning and one purpose, *viz.*, freedom from bondage of every kind. This hunger after freedom is the song of the soul—and the every first cry of the new-born babe is a cry of revolt against the bondage in which it finds itself. Rouse this intense desire for freedom within yourselves and in your countrymen—and I am sure India will be free in no time.

India is bound to be free of that there is not the slightest doubt. It is to me as sure as day follows night. There is no power on earth which can keep India in bondage any longer. But let us dream of an India, for which it would be worth while to give all that we have—even life itself and for which we could sacrifice our dearest and nearest. I have given you my own conception of freedom and I have tried to portray before you India as I want her to be. Let a completely emancipated India preach to the world her new gospel of freedom.

Even at the risk of being called a chauvinist, I would say to my countrymen that India has a mission

to fulfil and it is because of this that India still lives. There is nothing mystic in this word "mission". India has something original to contribute to the culture any civilization of the world in almost every department of human life. In the midst of her present degradation and slavery, the contribution she has been making is by no means a small one. Just imagine for a moment how great her contribution will be, once she is free to develop along her own lines and in accordance with her own requirements.

Therefore people in this country—and some of them eminent and respectable personages—who will not agree to an all-round application of the principle of freedom. We are sorry if we cannot please them but in no circumstances can we give up an ideal which is based on truth, justice and equality. We shall go our own way, whether others join us or not—but you can rest assured that even if a few desert us, thousands and even millions will ultimately join our army of freedom. Let us have no compromise with bondage, injustice and inequality.

Friends! It is time for all lovers of freedom to find themselves into one happy fraternity and form the army of freedom. Let this army send out not only soldiers to fight the battle of freedom but also missionaries to propagating the new cult of freedom. It is from amongst you that these missionaries and these soldiers will have to be created. In our programme of action we must have intensive and extensive propaganda on the one hand and a country-wide volunteer organisation on the other. Our missionaries will have to go amongst the peasants and factory workers and preach the new message. They will have to inspire the youth and organise youth leagues all over the country. And last, but not least, they will have to rouse the entire women-folk of the country—for women

must now come forward to take their place in society and in the body politic as equal partners of men.

Friends! Many of you must be now training yourselves for joining the session of the Indian National Congress. The Indian National Congress is undoubtedly the supreme national organisation in this country. In it all our hopes are centred. But the Indian National Congress itself depends, and should depend for its strength, influence and power on such movements as labour movement, youth movement, peasant movement, women's movement, students' movement, etc. If we succeed in organising our labour, peasantry, depressed classes, youths, students and women-folk we shall be able to rouse such a force in the country as will make Indian National Congress a potent movement for achieving our political liberation. If therefore you want to have the Indian National Congress work effectively you will at the same time have to promote the allied movements to which I have referred above.

Next door to us is China—let us therefore take a leaf out of recent Chinese history. See what the students in China have done for their mother country. Can we not do the same for India? The renaissance in modern China is due almost wholly to the activities of Chinese students both men and women. They have on the one hand gone out into the villages and into the towns and factories to preach the message of freedom and on the other hand they have organised the whole country from one end to the other. We shall have to do the same thing in India. There is no royal road to freedom. The path to freedom is no doubt thorny one but it is a path which also leads to glory and immortality. Let us break with the past, destroy all the shackles which have bound us for ages and like true pilgrims let us march shoulder to shoulder

towards our destined goal of freedom. Freedom means life and death in the pursuit of freedom means glory imperishable. Let us, therefore, resolve to be free or at least die in the pursuit of freedom and let us show by our conduct and character that we are worthy of being the countrymen of the great martyr—Jatindra-nath Das.

CHAPTER VI

INTENSIFY THE STRUGGLE *

The whole world is watching us today. What will the free nations of the world think of us if we miss the golden opportunity that has now come, an opportunity that is rare in the lifetime of every nation? But nobody will think ill of us if we fight and then fail.

— Subhas Chandra Bose

Early in May, 1939, the *Forward Bloc of the Indian National Congress* was inaugurated in Calcutta following a momentous session of the *All-India Congress Committee*. In the last week of June, 1939, the first session of the *All-India Conference of the Forward Bloc* was held in Bombay and the constitution and programme of the Bloc were adopted there. Since then, a year has rolled by—a year which will be memorable not only in the history of India, but in the history of the whole world. We are, therefore, meeting at a most opportune moment and not a day too soon. We shall have to do a great deal of heart-searching as well as stock-taking. We shall then have to determine our course of action in the crisis which has overtaken India and the world—the crisis which is deepening and worsening, not only from day to day but also from hour to hour.

The first question which I shall pose before you

* The Presidential Address of S. Subhas Chandra Bose delivered at the second session of the All-India Forward Bloc Conference held at Nagpur in June, 1940.

is "Have our policy and line of action been a correct one? And have we acted in the best interests of the country by launching the *Forward Bloc*?" To that my reply is—"Most certainly, yes." I shall remind you that we were constrained to start the *Forward Bloc* in the light of four considerations. The *Right Wing* had definitely told us that they would not work in co-operation with the *Leftists* in future and they had rejected the proposal of a *Composite Cabinet* which was our demand. Secondly, Mahatma Gandhi and the *Right Wing* had told us that a national struggle in the near future was out of the question. Thirdly, the attempt to consolidate the anti-imperialist and radical elements in the Congress under the name of the *Left Bloc* had been given up by the Socialists and Communists. Consequently, a further attempt at *Left-consolidation* could be made only by us and for that the *Forward Bloc* had become indispensably necessary. Fourthly, the *Gandhites* or *Right-Wingers* had already consolidated themselves under the aegis of the *Gandhi Seva Sangh* and any further delay on our part would have meant the strangling of the Leftist elements in the Congress by the Rightists.

It was clear in 1939 that most of those who had entered the Congress as Leftists in 1920 and 1921 and had retained the leadership of the Congress in their hand for well-nigh two decades, had ceased to be revolutionary or even radical. Any further political progress under such circumstances presupposed a consolidation of all anti-imperialist, radical and progressive forces in the country and particularly in the Congress.

Towards the end of April, 1939, when I was seriously considering the idea of resigning the Presidency of the Congress and inaugurating the *Forward Bloc* I had an interesting and important discussion with a very prominent Leftist leader of the Congress

who has since then thrown himself into the arms of the Gandhiites. He advised me to refrain from either course and he added that since an international storm was brewing, we should avoid everything in the nature of a split within the Congress. I replied saying that since a war was inevitable in the near future, it was all the more necessary that the *Leftists should be organised and prepared in advance, so that in the event of the Rightists developing cold feet in a war-situation, we at least could do something off our own bat.* Differences had become so fundamental between the Right-Wing and the Left-Wing that a split, whether permanent or temporary, had become inevitable. That being the case, it was desirable that the internal crisis should come and should be transcended before the external or international crisis overtook us. I added that if I accepted my friend's advice and lay low for the present, the consequences would be far worse for us when the international crisis appeared. In such a crisis, we would never agree with the *Rightists*. But many people would blame us for causing a split, if we attempted to act on our own at that time. Moreover, if we did want to act independently then, we would have no organisation behind us to fall back on. Consequently, the argument of my friend only strengthened my case.

Looking back on the last twelve months, can we not claim that events have justified our policy and line of action? Barring the *Kisan Sabha* of Swami Sahajanand (and Prof. Ranga, Comrade Yajnik, etc.) and the *Forward Bloc*, who is there to stand up to the *Rightists* today? *The Left Consolidation Committee* which came into existence in June, 1939, after the formation of the *Forward Bloc*, has disintegrated by now. The Royists (or Radical Leaguers), the Congress Socialists and the Communists (or National Fronters) have in turn deserted the *Left Consolidation Committee*

and only the *Kisan Sabha* and the *Forward Bloc* have been functioning as the spearhead of the *Left-Movement* in this country. This was evident when we held the *All-India Anti-Compromise Conference at Ramgarh in March, 1940*. There we found that the Royists, Congress Socialists and National Fronters boycotted that Conference and threw in their lot with the Gandhiites.

There can be little doubt to-day that if there had been no *Forward Bloc* and no *Kisan Sabha*, no voice would have been raised against the policy and line of action pursued by the Gandhiites during the last 12 months.

We shall now consider another question—"What has been our actual achievement during the past year?"

In the first place, we can claim to have successfully resisted the tendency towards constitutionalism and compromise within the ranks of the Congress. Thanks to our efforts, the Congress Ministries had to vacate office as a protest against the policy of the British Government. If they had not done so, they would have been carrying out the war policy of the Government of India, as agents of British Imperialism. In spite of all efforts made hitherto, no compromise has yet been made with the British Government and for this, we can legitimately claim some credit.

Secondly, we have so far frustrated all attempts to secure the co-operation of the Congress in the prosecution of the war. Friends will remember that in September, 1939, when His Excellency the Viceroy invited Mahatma Gandhi for a talk at Simla on the war situation, the latter gave out that he was of the view that India should give unconditional help to Great Britain during the present war. This was reiterated by Mahatmaji in a press statement issued

soon after the above interview. Nevertheless, up till now, the Congress Working Committee, which usually follows Gandhiji blindly, has ignored his views on such an all-important issue. Would the same thing have happened if there had been no *Kisan Sabha* and no *Forward Bloc*?

Thirdly, we can perhaps claim that we have succeeded in creating an atmosphere of struggle. Today, we find Congress leaders drilling in shirts and shorts and Congress Committees being converted into "*Satyagraha*" Committees. Moreover, the Rightist leaders have been constantly talking of a struggle. Would all these have taken place, if there had been no *Forward Bloc* and if the Anti-Compromise Conference at Ramgarh had not shown which way the wind of public opinion was blowing? There is no doubt that today the talk of a struggle is everywhere in the air, and the more our people talk of it, the more will they move away from a compromise.

Lastly, we can claim that at Ramgarh we launched our struggle with such strength and resources as we possessed. During the last three months, a large number of our fellow-workers, including men of outstanding influence in the country, have been arrested and incarcerated. Nine members of the All-India Working Committee of the *Forward Bloc* are at present in prison or internment. In addition to them, leaders of the *Kisan Sabha* headed by Swami Sahajanand Saraswati, Prof. Ranga and others, are behind the bars.

The national struggle we launched at Ramgarh has been steadily gaining in strength and volume. The campaign has made considerable headway in Bihar and the United Provinces. In Bengal, the struggle was launched as early as January, 1940, over

the question of civil liberty, which had been violated by the drastic ordinances promulgated by the Government in September, 1939. Thanks to the civil disobedience movement launched by the Bengal Congress, we have restored in a large measure the 'status quo' which existed prior to September, 1939. The special session of the Bengal Provincial Political Conference which met at Dacca on the 25th and 26th May, 1940, took stock of the situation in the province and formulated a plan for intensifying the struggle and widening its scope. The Bengal Provincial Congress Committee will give effect to this plan.

Before I proceed to deal with the international situation, I shall refer to one or two criticisms which are constantly levelled at us. We are told, for instance, that we have created a split in the Congress. The fact, however, is that it is the *Gandhiites* who have created a split by refusing to co-operate with the *Leftists*. We have all along been strongly in favour of joint action and a composite cabinet for ensuring such action.

We are also told that we have brought disruption within the ranks of the Leftists. But it is not we who have caused disruption or disunity. The *Royists*, the *Congress Socialists* and the *National Fronters* (or Communists)—have, one after another, deserted the *Left Consolidation Committee*. We stand to-day exactly where we did twelve months ago. During these months, we have passed through an ordeal. Suffering, persecution, banter, ridicule—such have been our lot. But we have gone ahead along the path of uncompromising struggle in a most unflinching manner. Numerous fellow-workers of ours have been persecuted by the Congress High Command and in the province of Bengal, owing to the disaffiliation of the Provincial Congress Committee, all Congressmen of our way of thinking have been virtually thrown out of the Congress.

The question which will naturally arise at this stage is—"why have the Royists and others deserted us?" So far as I can judge, they are afraid of being expelled from the Congress and they feel, perhaps, that once outside the Congress, they will be completely lost. What amuses me, however, is that these comrades had been hoping to fight the Rightists and had not anticipated that before being defeated by the Leftists, the Rightists would do their worst and would do all in their power to maintain their supremacy in the Congress. The backbone, the stamina and toughness that are needed in order to fight the Rightists successfully—these Leftist (or shall I say pseudo-Leftist?) comrades do not possess. We are now passing through a phase of our struggle when history itself will put all of us to the test and declare to the world as to who the genuine Leftists in India are.

We are also told that without the help of the Gandhites, the struggle we have launched will prove to be a failure. To this allegation, our answer is as follows. It is too early to say whether our struggle will be successful or not. That will depend on whether the masses will join it or not. It always takes some time to get the masses to rally round the banner of a non-violent struggle. Let us, therefore, hold ourselves in patience yet awhile.

But, supposing for argument's sake that the struggle will fail—does that mean that it should not have been launched? Could we not argue, on the opposite side, that the campaigns of 1921, 1930 and 1932 should not have been launched because they had not brought us Swaraj? Failures are often the pillars of success. So what does it matter if we fail for the fourth time! Not to try at all is more dishonourable than making the attempt and failing to achieve success. The whole world is watching us to-day. What will

the free nations of the world think of us if we miss the golden opportunity that has now come—an opportunity that is rare in the lifetime of every nation? But nobody will think ill of us if we fight and then fail.

There is another point which we should not overlook either. Shall we not consider what posterity will think of us twenty or fifty years hence, if we do not acquit ourselves manfully to-day? What do people to-day think of the leaders who mismanaged the affairs of the country between 1914 and 1919? I, therefore, make bold to say that if we do not rise to the occasion and join the struggle without delay, neither history nor posterity will ever pardon us.

Twelve months ago, when the *Forward Bloc* was formed, we were obsessed, as it were, with the idea of the coming struggle and how to prepare for it in advance. At that time we did not know how far, if at all, outside events and international developments would aid us in our efforts to win *Purna Swaraj*. Consequently, we had to make “self-reliance” our motto in life and action. To-day, the situation has altered to some extent. In the war between rival Imperialisms, the old ones have been faring very badly indeed. During the last few weeks the Germans have carried on the campaign with lightning rapidity. Kings and kingdoms have toppled down in the course of a few days and the German Army—the Reichswehr—has proceeded to the gates of Paris and occupied that queen of cities in a way which appears to the layman as a miracle in military warfare. What has been happening in Europe in a kaleidoscopic manner has had its inevitable repercussion on India. With every blow that she receives in Europe, the imperialist might of Britain is bound to loosen its grip on India and other dependencies. The wheels of history are grinding on, quite regardless of what we may be doing in India. Even a child

should, therefore, understand that in order to win *Purna Swaraj* under the altered conditions of to-day, we need much less effort and sacrifice than we did twelve months ago. But in order to fully utilise the opportunity which international events have presented to us, we must have sufficient unity and solidarity among ourselves. If India could speak with one voice to-day, our demand would indeed be well-nigh irresistible. It follows, as a consequence, that while we should think of intensifying the national struggle and widening its scope, we should at the same time try to develop national unity and solidarity to the maximum limit. But a struggle is needed in any case. Without it, our rulers may not easily bend. We know from experience that imperialists never learn the lessons of history. Further, our own leaders may be induced to go in for a compromise with British Imperialism if the Leftist pressure, exerted through a national struggle, is withdrawn. You will, therefore, have to consider what steps you should immediately take in order to intensify and widen the struggle and simultaneously to develop national unity and solidarity. National unity will presuppose unity within the Congress on the basis of a dynamic programme of struggle and at the same time unity between the Congress and other organisations like the Muslim League.

If we can develop sufficient unity and solidarity among ourselves in good time, we may very well hope that even if the country passes through a struggle and even if catastrophic events take place in Europe, the transference of power from the hands of British Imperialism to those of the Indian people will take place in a peaceful manner. It is not necessary that the Indian revolution should be a bloody one or that it should pass through a period of chaos. On the contrary, it is desirable that it should be as peaceful as possible and a peaceful transition can be ensured if the people

are united and are determined to have their freedom.

My own suggestion to you is that we should immediately go out into the country with the rallying-cry—"All power to the Indian people." This will galvanise the masses in a moment. In order to put forward this demand in an effective and irresistible manner, we should leave no stone unturned in our effort to attain national unity. This effort will necessitate the setting up of a machinery which will preserve harmony and good-will among the people under all circumstances. Such a machinery will be provided by a Citizens' Defence Corps organised on an all-party basis. But such a Corps should be quite independent of the Government and will not work for the safeguarding of an enslaved India. Our Citizens' Defence Corps will only aim at preserving internal peace, harmony and good-will. The question of defending the country militarily from any other force or power is one which should concern the Government only and not the people, so long as India remains subjugated. What interest can we have in fighting for the perpetuation of our slavery, for that is exactly what is implied in fighting to defend an enslaved India.

Before coming to the epilogue of this address, which will be a consideration of the international situation of to-day and to-morrow, I should like to remind you of the *historical role of the Forward Bloc*. *The Bloc has come into being as the result of historical necessity*. It is not the creation of an individual or of a group of individuals. So long as it will serve a historical purpose, it will live and thrive—despite all obstacles, internal or external. We should also bear in mind that the *Forward Bloc will have a role to play in the post-struggle phase of our history*. It will have to preserve liberty after winning it and it will have to build up a new India and a happy India on the basis

of the eternal principles of *Liberty, Democracy* and *Socialism*. Let us not commit the fatal mistake of thinking that our mission will be over once we win our freedom. The organisation or party that wins freedom must undertake the responsibilities of post-war reconstruction. Only in this manner will continuity of progress be maintained.

Let us now proceed to consider the international situation as we find it to-day and as it will probably be tomorrow. After reading the outspoken statements of Messrs. Winston Churchill and Paul Reynaud we cannot blink the prime facts of the situation as they emerge from the quick tempo of war. Everyday makes it more clear that M. Paul Reynaud's summing up of the situation in the Chamber of Deputies (that victory of the Allies could only be brought about by a miracle) was a true measure of the military conditions then obtaining. Dark as was the picture then, it has grown darker since. The prospect to-day is positively bleak. And when one remembers this is a totalitarian war, it dawns on us how impossible is the situation in which the losing side is placed.

We may also concede that Monsieur Reynaud's ringing resolution "to intensify the struggle... and not to give up" is brave and resolute, and his words not empty heroics. For all that, he fails to convince when he says: "We will shut ourselves into one of our provinces and if we are driven out we will go to North Africa, and, if necessary, into our possessions in America."

That is hardly the way to carry a war through to victory. If the Allies lose their foothold in Europe they may conceivably fight on in Africa, in Asia, even in America; but it is, for the ultimate aim of victory, useless.

To-day we have every right to examine the stark realities of the war as it has developed until we see them in the white light of clarity. The leaders of the French and British peoples have been frank. We should also be frank with ourselves.

The cause of the Allies' continuous defeat seems to-day lodged somewhere in their system. It was a system which Mr. Clement Attlee, speaking, I believe, for the last time from the Opposition benches, said had failed to meet the need of the crisis. It was the fundamental weakness of a system in which slavery and freedom existed side by side that had resulted in Britain being "decisively beaten" on the propaganda front. This was what the *Daily Mail* said was happening. Propaganda radio-casts from the Reich, it wrote at the end of March, were "influencing not only the civilian population of Britain, but also our armed forces." ... "Goebbels," it asserted, "has had a walk-over."

But we are not so much interested in a particular method as in the basic principles of action. And we are not to be dissuaded from pressing home our demand for the admission of our fundamental rights by a clouding of the issues and cry of '*saboteur!*' We have too long been taken in by the cleverest Imperialist propaganda.

We cannot but ask ourselves where we stand in this international flux. Following the sombre thoughts of Allied statesmen and strategists, we cannot but ask ourselves what we should do if British resistance collapses. This is by no means impossible. In fact, the Premier, Mr. Churchill, has already talked in terms of defeat for Britain. He talked much earlier in the strain in which Premier Reynaud has now talked—of dispersing to the far ends of the Empire to

carry on the struggle. Some of our statesmen, it seems, have been possessed with the dream of India being converted into a bastion of democratic resistance against the dictators' hordes. What a grotesque picture!

Almost the whole of the English Channel coast on the French side is in the hands of the Germans, making ordinary communications difficult and hazardous and the transport of troops all but impossible. Some of the best industrial regions of France are in the hands of the invaders. Paris, the heart of France, has ceased to throb. In the Champagne region a powerful German drive is developing to isolate the Maginot Line from the rest of France. In the South-East the powerful and fresh Italian legions are pressing, and everywhere the retreating French forces are harried by the admittedly superior air arm of the admittedly superior Reichswehr. Such is the gloomy picture of the Allied position in Europe. From the Northern Arctic regions to the Atlantic, the Nazi eagle has spread its wings in an unbroken line. It is not surprising we should be told that there is no cause for optimism.

When the Nazi hordes crossed the German frontier into Holland and Belgium only the other day with the cry of "nach Paris" on their lips, who could have dreamt that they would reach their objective so soon? A miracle in military warfare has happened, as it were, before our eyes and for an analogy, one has to turn to the Napoleonic wars or to the catastrophe at Sedan in the Franco-Prussian war of 1870. Whatever the French High Command may say, in the face of mechanised transport, innumerable tanks and dive-bombers, no resistance worth the name is possible after the capitulation of Paris. The days of trench warfare are over.

But what next? It is clear that Revnaud's

Government will not make a separate peace with Germany, leaving Great Britain in the lurch. But how long will he be able to retain the confidence of the French people? The fall of his Cabinet, a tempting offer from Germany and Italy, a new Cabinet ready to make peace on those terms—these are events not altogether beyond the domain of possibility. The British Premier, Mr. Winston Churchill, made an ominous reference to this in his historic speech the other day.

And England! What is she likely to do, with or without France? The answer to this question could be furnished by that inexplicable factor—'the public morale.' Unfortunately, the morale of the British people has been badly shaken and the speeches of the Premier and of other Ministers give ample proof of it. Why should it be necessary to tell the British people that they should not go about with long faces as if they were at a funeral? Why should it be necessary to tell the world that even if Great Britain is overrun by the Nazis, the Empire will go on fighting and in God's good time, the New World will come to the rescue of the Old World? The British people are famous for their dogged pertinacity and their unflinching nerves. They are now confronted with what is perhaps the severest ordeal in their history. Let us see how they will acquit themselves.

The Nazis have performed a miracle with the help of a new military technique, invented by the younger generals and military strategists. The Allies have fallen back on their war-renowned, hoary-headed generals who have been found wanting, however. Have the Nazi Generals exhausted their new technique? Have the Allies any military secrets or any new technique up their sleeves? Much will depend on the answers to these two questions.

We used to hear much of the chemical preparations of the Reichswehr (German Army). Have they really perfected a new technique of chemical warfare? If they have, then we shall get evidence of it in the days to come. And it will then be seen how men's nerves behave under those new conditions. Will they collapse as the nerves of the brave Abyssinians did when attacked by Italian aircraft? Or will the soul conquer matter?

Judged from the realistic point of view, it is difficult to realise how the war can continue, if Great Britain is overrun. The United States of America cannot go beyond a certain limit in helping the Allies, lest Japan should make a trouble in the Far East. And there is no hope, whatsoever, that Sir Stafford Cripps will succeed in dividing Germany and Soviet Russia. It is more than probable that there is a definite agreement between Soviet Russia on the one side and Germany and Italy on the other. If I were to make a guess as to the terms of that agreement, I should hazard a statement of this sort :—

(1) Germany will have a free hand on the Continent minus the Balkans.

(2) Italy will have a free hand in the Mediterranean region.

(3) The Balkans and the Middle East will be the Russian sphere of influence.

(4) The resources of Africa should be shared by all the Big Powers.

Since both Germany and Italy—and perhaps Soviet Russia now regard Great Britain as public Enemy No. 1, it is also likely that they have a plan of

carving up the British Empire. In this task they may invite Japanese help and co-operation, knowing that Japan has always cast longing eyes on the entire Archipelago, from the Dutch Indies right up to Australia.

Such being the situation, if Britain cannot save herself and her Empire from the German-Italian attack, it would be idle to expect like Mr. Churchill that the Empire would save itself and Britain on the top of it. Let us, therefore, cease talking of saving Britain with the Empire's help or with India's help. India must in this grave crisis think of herself first. If she can win freedom now and then save herself, she will best serve the cause of humanity. It is for the Indian people to make an immediate demand for the transference of power to them through a Provisional National Government. No constitutional difficulties can be put forward by the British Government with a view to resisting this demand, because legislation for this purpose can be put through Parliament in twenty-four hours. When things settle down inside India and abroad, the Provisional National Government will convene a Constituent Assembly for framing a full-fledged Constitution for this country.

Friends. These are some of my thoughts and suggestions to-day. I hope and trust that you will give them due consideration. In any case, I appeal to you not to leave Nagpur till you have in your pockets a concrete plan of action for winning Purna Swaraj in the immediate future.

Let us proclaim once again—"All power to the Indian people, here, and now."

CHAPTER VII

GANDHI-IRWIN PACT AND LAHORE EXECUTIONS*

India is the keynote to the world edifice and a free India spells the destruction of Imperialism throughout the world. Let us, therefore, rise to the occasion and make India free so that humanity may be saved.

—*Subhas Chandra Bose.*

Friends and Comrades! Today we are meeting under the shadow of a great tragedy. Our minds are too full to speak. At such a critical movement in the history of our country you have asked me to preside over your conference for which I feel grateful to you.

We are concerned here with the consideration of that socio-economic structure and body politic which will help to foster manhood and develop character and the will to translate into reality the highest ideal of collective humanity. We are also interested here in investigating the methods that will bring about the earliest attainment of this goal. I am led to the conclusion that the principles which should form the basis of our collective life are justice, equality, freedom, discipline and love. Therefore in order to ensure equality, we must get rid of bondage of every kind, social,

*Address delivered by Shri Subhas Chandra Bose at the All-India Nau-Jawan Bharat Sabha Conference held at Karachi on March 27, 1931.

will avoid unnecessary conflict with the Congress leaders at a time when such conflict may tend to weaken the people and strengthen the Government. Above all let us have restraint and self-control even when we have to criticise others. We shall lose nothing by being courteous and restrained and we may gain much.

India is the keynote to the world edifice and a free India spells the destruction of Imperialism throughout the world. Let us, therefore, rise to the occasion and make India free so that the humanity may be saved. (Loud cheers).

Part Two—Speeches

CHAPTER I

Speech delivered before Indians in Burma.

CHAPTER II

A Broadcast from Bangkok on Gandhi Jayanti.

CHAPTER III

Netaji asks blessings of M. Gandhi.

CHAPTER IV

A Speech delivered at Bangkok while celebrating Provisional Government Day.

CHAPTER V

A message broadcast to Indians during Simla Conference.

CHAPTER VI

Speech delivered at National Planning Committee.

CHAPTER I

GIVE ME BLOOD! PROMISE YOU FREEDOM!!*

Gird up your loins for the task that now lies ahead. I had asked you for men, money and materials. I have got them in a generous measure. Now I demand more of you. We must have the motive-power that will inspire us to brave deeds and heroic exploits.

—*Subhas Chandra Bose.*

Friends! Twelve months ago a new programme of "Total Mobilisation" or "Maximum sacrifice" was placed before Indians in East Asia. To-day I shall give you an account of our achievements during the past year and shall place before you our demands for the coming year. But, before I do so, I want you to realise once again what a golden opportunity we have for winning freedom. The British are now engaged in a world-wide struggle, and in the course of this struggle, they have suffered defeat after defeat in so many fronts. The enemy having been thus considerably weakened, our fight for liberty has become very much easier than it was five years ago. Such a rare and God-given opportunity comes once in a century. That is why we have sworn to fully utilise this opportunity for liberating our Motherland from the British yoke.

*A speech delivered by Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose at a huge mass rally of the Indians in Burma on the first day of Netaji Week, on Tuesday, July 4, 1944.

I am so very hopeful and optimistic about the outcome of our struggle, because I do not rely merely on the efforts of three million Indians in East Asia. There is a gigantic movement going on inside India and millions of our countrymen are prepared for maximum suffering and sacrifice in order to achieve liberty.

Unfortunately, ever since the great fight of 1857, our countrymen are disarmed, whereas the enemy is armed to teeth. Without arms and without a modern army, it is impossible for a disarmed people to win freedom in this modern age. Through the grace of Providence and through the help of generous Nippon, it has become possible for Indians in East Asia to get arms to build up a modern army. Moreover, Indians in East Asia are united to a man in the endeavour to win freedom and all the religious and other differences that the British here tried to engineer inside India, do not simply exist in East Asia. Consequently, we have now an ideal combination of circumstances favouring the success of our struggle—and all that is wanted is that Indians should themselves come forward to pay the price of liberty.

According to the programme of "Total Mobilization," I demanded of you men, money and materials. Regarding men, I am glad to tell you that I have obtained sufficient recruits already. Recruits have come to us from every corner of East Asia—from China, Japan, Indo-China, Philippines, Java, Borneo, Celebes, Sumatra, Malaya, Thailand and Burma.

The only complaint that I have is that considering the population of Indians in Burma, the number of recruits from Burma should have been larger. You will, therefore, have to exert yourselves still more in future in order to furnish more recruits from this part.

With regard to money, you remember that I demanded 30 millions from Indians in East Asia. I have actually got much more in the meantime and, from the arrangements that have been made, I am confident that a steady flow of money will be maintained in future.

From my experience of more than 20 years' work inside India, I can properly assess the worth and value of the work done here. I must, therefore, warmly thank you for the hearty co-operation that you have extended to me. At the same time, I must draw your attention to the work that still lies ahead of us.

You must continue the mobilization of men, money and materials with greater vigour and energy, in particular, the problem of supplies and transport has to be solved satisfactorily.

Secondly, we require more men and women of all categories for administration and reconstruction in liberated areas. We must be prepared for a situation in which the enemy will ruthlessly apply the scorched-earth policy, before withdrawing from a particular area and will also force the civilian population to evacuate as was attempted in Burma.

Last, but most important of all, is the problem of sending reinforcements in men and in supplies to the fighting fronts. If we do not do so, we cannot hope to maintain our success at the fronts. Nor can we hope to penetrate deeper into India.

Those of you who will continue to work on the Home Front should never forget that East Asia—and particularly Burma—form our base for the war of liberation. If this base is not strong, our fighting forces can never be victorious. Remember that this is

a "Total War"—and not merely a war between two armies. That is why for full one year I have been laying so much stress on "Total Mobilization" in East.

There is another reason why I want you to look after the Home Front properly. During the coming months I and my colleagues on the War Committee of the Cabinet desire to devote our whole attention to the fighting front—and also to the task of working up the revolution inside India. Consequently, we want to be fully assured that the work at the base will go on smoothly and uninterruptedly even in our absence.

Friends, one year ago, when I made certain demands of you. I told you that if you give me "Total Mobilization," I would give you a "Second Front." I have redeemed that pledge. The first phase of our campaign is over. Our victorious troops, fighting side by side with Nipponese troops, have pushed back the enemy and are now fighting bravely on the sacred soil of our dear Motherland.

Gird up your loins for the task that now lies ahead. I had asked you for men, money and materials. I have got them in a generous measure. Now I demand more of you. Men, money and materials cannot by themselves bring victory or freedom. We must have the motive-power that will inspire us to brave deeds and heroic exploits.

It will be a fatal mistake for you to wish to live and see India free—simply because victory is now within reach. No one here should have the desire to live to enjoy freedom. A long fight is still in front of us.

We should have but one desire today—the desire

to die so that India may live—the desire to face a martyr's death, so that the path to freedom may be paved with the martyr's blood.

Friends! My comrades in the War of Liberation! To-day I demand of you one thing, above all. I demand of you Blood. It is blood alone that can avenge the blood that the enemy has spilt. It is blood alone can that pay the price of freedom. Give me blood and I promise you freedom.

CHAPTER II

MAHATMA GANDHI*

The final struggle for liberty will be long and hard and we must go on fighting till the last Britisher in India is cast in prison or thrown out of the country.

—*Subhas Chandra Bose.*

The Indian people are so well-acquainted with the life and works of Mahatma Gandhi that it would be an insult to their intelligence, if I were to begin narrating the facts of his life, I shall, instead, devote myself to an estimation of the place of Mahatmaji in the history of India's struggle for independence.

The service which Mahatma Gandhi has rendered to India and to the cause of India's freedom is so unique and unparalleled that his name will be written in letters of gold in our national history for all time.

In order to correctly estimate Mahatma Gandhi's place in Indian history it is necessary to take a bird's-eye-view of the British conquest of India. You all know that when the British first set foot on Indian soil, India was a land flowing with milk and honey and it was the wealth of India which had attracted poverty-stricken Englishmen from across the seas. Today we find that as a result of political enslavement and economic exploitation the Indian people are

*An address broadcast from Bangkok on October 2, 1948.

dying of hunger and starvation, while the British people who were once so poor and needy have grown fat and rich on the wealth and resources of India. Through sorrow and suffering, humiliation and torture, the Indian people have learnt at long last that the only solution of their manifold problem is the recovery of their lost liberty.

Turning to the methods of the British conquest of India, we see that the British never attempted to fight the entire Indian population in any part of the country, nor did they try to conquer and occupy the whole of India at once. On the contrary, they always tried to win over a section of the people, through bribery and corruption, before they commenced military operations. This was the case in Bengal, where the Commander-in-Chief Mir Jafar was won over by the British, by offering him the throne of Bengal. At that time the religious or communal problem was unknown in India. The last independent king of Bengal, Siraj-ud-Dowla, who was a Muslim, was betrayed by his Commander-in-Chief, who was also a Muslim—and it was the Hindu Commander, Mohanlal, who fought with Siraj-ud-Dowla till the very last. The lesson that we have learnt from this episode in Indian history is that unless timely steps are taken to prevent and to punish treachery, no nation can hope to preserve its independence. The developments in Bengal did not unfortunately open the eyes of the Indian people in time. If even after the fall of Siraj-ud-Dowla in Bengal the Indian people had made common cause against the British, they would have easily succeeded in throwing the unwanted foreigner out of Indian soil.

No one can say that the Indian people did not fight in order to retain their freedom—but they did fight all together. When the British attacked Bengal,

nobody attacked them from behind. When, later on, the British fought Tippu Sultan in South India, neither the Mahrattas in Central India nor the Sikhs in the North came to the rescue of Tippu Sultan. Even after the fall of Bengal, it was still possible to overthrow the British through the combination of Tippu Sultan in the South, the Mahrattas in Central India and the Sikhs in the North. Unfortunately for us, this was not done. It was, therefore, possible for the British to attack on part of India at a time and gradually extend their rule over the whole country. The lesson that we have learnt from this painful chapter of Indian history is that unless the Indian people stand united before the enemy, they will never be able to achieve their independence, nor will they be able to preserve it even if they acquired it.

It took a long time to open the eyes of the Indian people. Ultimately, in 1857, they woke up and they then made a concerted attack on the British, in different parts of the country. When the fight began—the fight that the British historians call the “The Sepoy Mutiny” and we call the “First War of Independence”—the British were easily defeated at first. But two factors accounted for our ultimate failure. All parts of India did not join in the fight; and what is more significant, the technical skill of our army commanders was inferior to that of the commanders of the enemy forces.

Then after the tragic events of Jallianwalabagh the Indian people were stunned and paralysed for the time being. All the attempts for achieving liberty had been ruthlessly crushed by the British and their armed forces. Constitutional agitation, boycott of British goods, armed revolution—all had alike failed to bring freedom. There was not a ray of hope left and the Indian people, though their hearts were burn-

ing with indignation, were groping in the dark for a new method and a new weapon of struggle. Just at this psychological moment, Mahatma Gandhi appeared on the scene with his novel method of Non-Co-operation or Satyagraha or Civil Disobedience. It appeared as if he had been sent by Providence to show the path to liberty. Immediately and spontaneously the whole nation rallied round his banner. India was saved. Every Indian's face was now lit up with hope and confidence. Ultimate victory was once again assured.

For twenty years and more Mahatma Gandhi has worked for India's salvation, and with him, the Indian people too have worked. It is no exaggeration to say that if, in 1920, he had not come forward with his new weapon of struggle, India to-day would perhaps have been still prostrate. His services to the cause of India's freedom are unique and unparalleled. No single man could have achieved more in one single life-time under similar circumstances.

Since 1920 the Indian people have learnt two things from Mahatma Gandhi which are the indispensable preconditions for the attainment of independence. They have, first of all, learnt national self-respect and self-confidence—as a result of which revolutionary fervour is now blazing in their hearts. Secondly, they have now got a countrywide organization which reaches the remotest villages of India. Now that the message of liberty has permeated the hearts of all Indians and they have got a countrywide political organization representing the whole nation—the stage is set for the final struggle for liberty—the last war of Independence.

It is not in India alone that a struggle for freedom has been heralded by a spiritual awakening. In the

Risorgimento movement in Italy, it was Mazzini who first gave the spiritual inspiration to the Italian people. He was then followed by the fighter and the hero—Garibaldi, who began the march to Rome at the head of one thousand armed volunteers. In modern Ireland too, the Sinn Fein Party, when it was born in 1906, gave the Irish people a programme which was very much similar to Mahatma Gandhi's Non-co-operation programme of 1920. Ten years after the birth of the Sinn Fein Party—that is 1916.—the first armed revolution in Ireland took place.

Mahatma Gandhi has firmly planted our feet on the straight road to liberty. He and other leaders are now rotting behind the prison bars. The task that Mahatma Gandhi began has, therefore, to be accomplished by his countrymen—at home and abroad. Indians at home have everything that they need for the final struggle but they lack one thing— an army of liberation. That army of liberation has to be supplied from without—and it can be supplied only from without.

I would like to remind you that when Mahatma Gandhi commended his Non-co-operation programme to the Indian nation at the annual session of the Congress at Nagpur in December, 1920, he said, "If India had the sword today, she would have drawn the sword." And proceeding further with his argument, Mahatmaji then said that since armed revolution was out of the question, the only alternative before the country was that of Non-co-operation or Satyagraha. Since then times have changed and it is now possible for the Indian people to draw the sword. We are happy and proud that India's Army of Liberation has already come into existence and is steadily increasing in numbers. We have, on the one hand, to complete the training of this Army and send it to the field of battle, as soon as

possible. We have simultaneously to build up a new army that can go on reinforcing the Army in the field. The final struggle for liberty will be long and hard and we must go on fighting—till the last Britisher in India is either cast in prison or thrown out of the country. I would like to warn you that after our Army of Liberation—the Azad Hind Fauj or the Indian National Army—sets foot on Indian soil, it will take at least twelve months—and perhaps more—to liberate the whole of India from the British yoke. Let us, therefore, gird up our loins and prepare for a long and hard struggle.

CHAPTER III

FATHER OF OUR NATION! WE ASK FOR YOUR BLESSINGS!*

The only reward that we desire for our effort, for our suffering and for our sacrifice, is the freedom of our motherland.

—*Subhas Chandra Bose.*

Mahatmaji! After the sad demise of Srimati Kasturba in British custody, it was but natural for your countrymen to be alarmed over the state of your health. . . For Indians outside India, differences in method are like domestic differences. Ever since you sponsored the Independence Resolution at the Lahore Congress in December 1929, all members of the Indian National Congress have had one common goal before them. For Indians outside India, you are the creator of the present awakening in our country. The high esteem in which you are held by patriotic Indians outside India and by foreign friends of India's freedom, was increased a hundredfold when you bravely sponsored the "Quit India" Resolution in August 1942.

It would be a fatal mistake on our part to make a distinction between the British Government and the British people. No doubt there is a small group of idealists in Britain—as in the U.S.A.—who

* In the above words Netaji asked blessing of Mahatma Gandhi through his address over the radio on July 6, 1944

would like to see India free. These idealists, who are treated by their own people as cranks, form a microscopic minority. So far as India is concerned, for all practical purposes, the British Government and the British people mean one and the same thing. Regarding the war aims of the U.S.A., I may say that the ruling clique at Washington is now dreaming of world domination. This ruling clique and its intellectual exponents, talk openly of the American Century. In this ruling clique, there are extremists who go so far as to call Britain the 49th State of the U.S.A.

I can assure you, Mahatmaji, that before I finally decided to set out on this hazardous mission, I spent days, weeks and months in carefully considering the pros and cons of the case. After having served my people so long, to the best of my ability, I could have no desire to be a traitor, or to give anyone a justification for calling me a traitor.

Thanks to the generosity and to the affection of my countrymen, I had obtained the highest honour which it was possible for any public worker in India to achieve. I had also built up a party consisting of staunch and loyal colleagues who had implicit confidence in me. By going abroad on a perilous quest was risking not only my life and my whole future career, but what, was more, the future of my party. If I had the slightest hope that without action from abroad we could win freedom, I would never have left India during a crisis. If I had any hope that within our life-time we could get another chance—another golden opportunity—for winning freedom, as during the present war, I doubt if we would have set out from home. . .

There remains but one question for me to answer with regard to the Axis Powers. Can it be possible

that I have been deceived by them? I believe it will be universally admitted that the cleverest and the most cunning politicians are to be found amongst Britishers. One who has worked with and fought British politicians all his life, cannot be deceived by any other politicians in the world. If British politicians have failed to coax or coerce me, no other politician can succeed in doing so. And if the British Government, at whose hands I have suffered long imprisonment, persecution and physical assault, has been unable to demoralize me no other power can hope to do so. . .

I have never done anything which could compromise in the least, either the honour or the self-respect or the interests of my country.

“There was a time when Japan was an ally of our enemy. I did not come to Japan, so long as there was an Anglo-Japanese Alliance. I did not come to Japan, so long as normal diplomatic relations obtained between the two countries. It was only after Japan took what I consider to be the most momentous step in her history, namely, declaration of war on Britain and America, that I decided to visit Japan of my own free will. Like so many of my countrymen, my sympathies in 1937 and 1938 were with Chungking. You may remember that as President of the Congress I was responsible for sending out a Medical Mission to Chungking in December 1938.

“Mahatmaji, you know better than anybody else how deeply suspicious the Indian people are of mere promises. I would be the last man to be influenced by Japan if her declaration of policy had been mere promises. . .

Mahatmaji, I should now like to say something

about the Provisional Government that we have set up here. The Provisional Government has, as its one objective, the liberation of India from British yoke, through struggle. Once our enemies are expelled from India, and peace and order is established, the mission of the Provisional Government will be over. The only reward that we desire for our efforts, for our suffering and for our sacrifice is the freedom of our motherland. There are many among us who would like to retire from the political field, once India is free.

“Nobody would be more happy than ourselves, if by chance our countrymen at home should succeed in liberating themselves through their own effort, or if by any chance, the British Government accepts your ‘Quit India’ Resolution and gives effect to it. We are, however, proceeding on the assumption that neither of the above is possible and that an armed struggle is inevitable. India’s last war of independence has begun. Troops of the Azad Hind Fauj are now fighting bravely on the soil of India, and in spite of all difficulty and hardship, they are pushing forward slowly but steadily. This armed struggle will go on, until the last Britisher is thrown out of India and until our Tri-Colour National Flag proudly floats over the Viceroy’s House in New Delhi.

Father of our nation! In this holy war for India’s liberation we ask for your blessing and good wishes.”

CHAPTER IV

AGAINST HEAVY ODDS*

A nation which loses its morale and its faith in ultimate victory can never hope to be victorious. On the other hand if in spite of temporary setbacks and defeats, we continue the struggle with undiminished faith in our final success, no power on earth can deprive us of our well-deserved victory. Since we are fighting for justice and truth and for the birth-right of liberty, and since we are prepared to pay the full price of that liberty, freedom is bound to come if only we fight on.

Subhas Chandra Bose.

Sisters and Brothers,

After I spoke to you in January last, the war situation has undergone considerable change. In Europe, German resistance has collapsed completely. Here, in Burma, we have lost the first round in our fight for freedom. Nevertheless, there is no reason why we should lose heart. If our enemies did not lose heart when they were expelled from Europe and East Asia—if your enemies, despite such staggering defeat, would continue the war and even launch a counter offensive, we should exhibit at least as much strength and tenacity as our enemies have. You know that I have always said that we shall deserve to be free, only if we are more courageous, more tenacious, and more far-sighted than our enemies. If our enemies, after

*Full text of speech delivered on May 21, 1945, at Bangkok while celebrating "Provisional Government Day."

being expelled from Burma, could stage a come-back, there is no reason why we should not return to Burma again. The main point is whether our morale has broken down and whether we consider ourselves to be beaten. The Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces in the last European War, Marshal Foch, once made a historic remark—"That Army is beaten." Among those who have come with me from Burma, there is not one man or woman who considers himself or herself to be beaten. No doubt we have lost one round in India's war of liberation, but many more rounds are to be followed, and the last round will decide the final result of this war. War is in many ways like a match between two wrestlers. When the wrestlers are more or less equal in strength, victory will go to him who can hold out longer. If we have more spiritual strength than our enemies, then only shall we deserve to win freedom. Unfortunately, there are among us a few men who get easily upset and even panicky over slight setbacks. This is the psychological effect of slavery. The Indian people will have to overcome this weakness and to carry on the fight under all circumstances if they are to win in the long run.

There is another thing I should like to tell you in this connection. In a modern war and especially in a war of the present magnitude, many things may happen which are least expected or anticipated. A famous military strategist and one of the founders of the science of the modern warfare, the German General and writer, Clausewitz once said, "War has many surprises." I shall give you a few instances to illustrate the truth of this remark. In the Balkan War of 1912, four Powers, Rumania Bulgaria, Greece and Serbia made a combined attack on Turkey. Turkey was defeated in one battle after another, until the Balkan Powers almost reached the gates of Constantinople

(Istanbul). Everything seemed to be lost for the Turks and there was not even a glimmer of hope. All of a sudden, disagreement and discord broke out among the four **Balkan Powers** which quickly developed into a war among themselves. Constantinople was saved. The Turkish forces launched a counter-offensive and they managed to recover most of the lost territories. We see, therefore, that if Turkey had surrendered when all hopes seem to have gone, she would not have been able to turn the tide of the war as she actually did.

Take another example from the recent history of Turkey. In the last World War, Turkey fought alongside of Germany and Austria-Hungary. But she was ultimately beaten. Constantinople, the proud capital of Ottoman Empire, was occupied by the Allied forces and the Sultan who was also the Caliph, was virtually made a prisoner. Seeing that the war was completely lost, the Sultan submitted to all humiliating treatment imposed by the Allied forces and asked the Turks to cease all resistance. In that dark hour, there was, however, one man who would not accept defeat. **Mustapha Kemal Pasha**, who was then only one of the able Turkish Officers, left Constantinople and crossed over to Anatolia. He got together a band of faithful Officers and with their help organised a new Army from among the Anatolian Turks. That Army proved to be invincible and the Turks, by their valour, tenacity and indomitable faith, recovered the freedom and victory that they had lost when they had such powerful allies as Germany, and Austria-Hungary. It is indeed one of the miracles of history that Turkey was badly beaten when she was fighting side by side with powerful allies and that when she put up a fight all alone after her defeat, she came out victorious in the long run. The secret of this miracle was that **Kemal Pasha** and his fellow-fighters did not accept the defeat at a

time when all the other Turks headed by the Sultan himself did so.

I shall now give another instance from another part of the world, namely, Ireland. During the last World War, when Ireland's enemy, Britain, was engaged in life and death struggle for her own existence, the Irish revolutionaries made a bid for freedom. True to their motto that "Britain's difficulty is Ireland's opportunity" they rose in revolt during the Easter week of 1916. The Easter rebellion was, however, crushed inside of a week. At that time, there were Irish people, who called their own revolutionaries "Madmen." But though the Easter rebellion was crushed so easily, the forces of revolutions continued to work among the Irish people, and ultimately broke out in a more powerful revolution in 1919—that is, one year after the end of the war. It is a strange phenomenon in history that while the British could easily crush the Irish rebellion of 1916 at a time when they were engaged in a life and death struggle, they had to acknowledge defeat at the hands of the same Irish revolutionaries after they (the British) emerged victorious from the World War. If the Irish revolutionaries had accepted defeat in 1916, the revolution of 1919 would not have taken place and Ireland would not have been what she is today.

Similar phenomenon took place in India. During the World War (I) the Indian revolutionaries tried to organise a rebellion in order to overthrow the British power in India. That attempt was easily crushed. But the spirit of the Indian people did not acknowledge defeat. After Britain's victory in the last war and after the Jallianwalla Bagh massacre in 1919, a political awakening of the Indian people under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi took place on such a grand scale that the British had not been able to suppress it up to now.

The lesson to be derived from all these events is that a nation which loses its morale and its faith in ultimate victory can never hope to be victorious. On the other hand, if in spite of temporary setbacks and defeat, we continue the struggle with undiminished faith in our final success, then no power on earth can deprive us of our well-deserved victory. Since we are fighting for justice and truth and for the birth-right of liberty, and since we are prepared to pay the full price of that liberty, freedom is bound to come if only we fight on.

There is no need to hide the fact that we have lost the first round in our war of liberation. But that does not mean that the fighting in Burma has come to an end. On the contrary, the Azad Hind Fauj and the Japanese Army are still fighting on various fronts in Burma and they will continue the fighting so long as it is humanly possible to do so. Those of us who left Burma have not withdrawn from the fight. We have come with the sole intention of continuing the struggle on other fronts. We are moving from one battle-field to another. We have but one goal before us—and only one method of achieving that goal—the method of armed struggle. Therefore, the various reverses we have suffered recently in Burma do not affect our future programme in any way. “CHALO DELHI” continues to be the slogan and the war-cry of the Azad Hind Fauj. It may be that we shall not go to Delhi *via* Imphal. But the roads to Delhi are many like the roads to Rome. And along one of these many roads we shall travel and ultimately reach our destination, the Metropolis of India.

In all our recent experiences there is one thing which is to us tragic and humiliating. Whatever reverses we have suffered during a campaign of about 15 months, have been due not so much to the British

forces, as to the British Indian Army. In the spring of 1944, it was the British Indian Army that barred our way to Imphal, Calcutta and Delhi. This year, it has been the British Indian Army, more than anybody else, that has been responsible for the re-entry into Burma of the British. In the last century, it was with the help of India that the British conquered Burma. There is, however, one silver lining in the cloud that has overtaken us and that is that the British Indian Army of today is not the British Indian Army of the last war. Soldiers of the Azad Hind Fauj have had numerous opportunities of coming in close contact with members of the British Indian Army. Very often our soldiers were told by the latter that if they (that is, Azad Hind Fauj) succeed in advancing further, members of the British Indian Army would then come and join them. There is no doubt that at heart large sections of British Indian Army sympathise with the Azad Hind Fauj and its fight for freedom. But the British Indian Army have lost their self-confidence and they are afraid that the British might ultimately win, in which case they would be in a difficult situation. Moreover, they have been influenced to some extent by the propaganda of our enemies that the Azad Hind Fauj (Indian National Army) is a puppet Army of the Japanese. After coming into Burma the eyes of the British Indian Army will be opened. They will see for themselves what the Provisional Government of Azad Hind and the Azad Hind Fauj have done and how they have fought for India's freedom. They will hear "JAI HIND" which is the greeting of all free Indians. They will also hear India's inspiring National Anthem sung by freedom-loving Indians in Burma. The effect of this experience on the British Indian Army, and on all other Indians who have come to Burma alongside of the British, is bound to be great in the days to come.

Friends! I shall once again refer to the war in

Europe. There was a time when German armies had advanced inside Russia right up to Stalingrad. I wonder how many people there were who, in those days, could imagine that the tide would turn, that one day the Soviet Army would be in Berlin. Germany's defeat is one of the surprises of this war. Clausewitz was perfectly right when he said that "War has many surprises." But there are more surprises to come and some of these surprises will not be welcome to our enemies. You know very well that I have been always of the opinion that if Germany collapsed, it would be a signal for the outbreak of an acute conflict between the Soviet and the Anglo-Americans. That conflict has already broken out and it will be intensified in the days to come. The time is not far off when our enemies will realise that though they have succeeded in overthrowing Germany, they have indirectly helped to bring into the arena of European politics another Power, Soviet Russia, that may prove to be a greater menace to British and American Imperialism than Germany was. The Provisional Government of Azad Hind will continue to follow international developments with the closest interest and endeavour to take the fullest advantage of them. The fundamental principle of our foreign policy has been and will be: Britain's enemy is India's friend.

It is clear by now that the war aims of the Soviet Union are quite different from those of the Anglo-Americans, although they had a common enemy in Germany. This has been further confirmed at the San Francisco conference where the Soviet Foreign Commissar M. Molotov refused to submit to the Anglo-American demands. In fact, M. Molotov went so far as to challenge the credentials of the puppets of Britain and America who came to represent India and the Philippines, respectively. The differences that became visible at the San Francisco conference are only a

precursor of a much wider and deeper conflict between the Soviet and the Anglo-Americans which the future has in store for the world. While the conflict between the Soviet and the Anglo-Americans is going on we should not fail to understand the real position and strength of our principal enemy Britain. So long as Britain was without the aid of America whether in Europe or in East Asia she was badly beaten in every battle. Britain's recent successes have been due first and foremost to American leadership and American assistance. I have no doubt in my mind and I have said so again and again in the past, that the days of the British Empire are drawing to a close. The British Empire is a decadent and decaying empire, and it is endeavouring now to prolong its life with the help of the United States of America. But though the life of an old man may be prolonged with the help of skilful doctors and efficacious medicines and injections, it can never be restored to useful vitality. The British Empire is endeavouring to march on with the help of the American crutches, but these American crutches cannot help Britain very long. All that we have to do is to deliver a knock-out blow to British Imperialism in India which is the basis of Britain's world Imperialism.

Our programme in East Asia remains unaltered. I demand from my countrymen in East Asia "Total Mobilisation." We want more money, more men and more materials to replenish the losses we have recently suffered. Above all, we want an indomitable will and unshakable determination. Let me remind you that it took the British full 100 years from 1757 to 1857 to finally subjugate India. Therefore, if we are to fight on for a few years more, in order to recover our liberty, nobody should grudge it. It is no doubt encouraging to us in East Asia to find that Indians all over the world even in enemy countries are wide-awake. You

have seen this recently in the case of San Francisco conference where Indians in America, headed by Sreemati Vijayalakshmi Pandit, demanded complete independence for India. Even a flunkey of British Imperialism, Sir Firoz Khan Noon, had to say in public that no power on earth could deprive India of her freedom. According to him the forces of Nationalism inside India and world forces outside India, make India's demand for independence irresistible.

In conclusion, I call upon you—my countrymen in East Asia—to come forward and do your duty to India in the difficult days that are still ahead of us. Above all, I want you to cherish the same optimism and confidence in final victory as we have. It is this spiritual strength that is our sheet-anchor. India shall be free and before long. With this unshakable belief let us all continue the struggle for India's emancipation.

“JAI HIND”!

CHAPTER V

RIGHTEOUS CAUSE MUST PREVAIL*

India's independence is a settled fact. The only uncertain factor is the time factor. I am confident that if we fight on and if we play our cards well in the international field, we shall win our freedom by the end of this war.

Subhas Chandra Bose

Comrades,—To-day I am addressing you as a revolutionary speaking to fellow-revolutionaries as I would have done, if I had been in your midst. India is now facing a political crisis and if a wrong step is taken we might suffer a setback in our march towards independence. I cannot tell you how worried I feel today because, on the one hand, independence is within sight—while on the other hand, if a wrong step is taken, that independence may recede into the distance.

At the outset, let me tell you that enemy propaganda in India has been so successful that influential sections of our countrymen, who, only three years ago, were convinced that independence was within grasp, and who were determined to “Do or Die” in order to win that independence, are now thinking in terms of

*A broadcast by Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, Head of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind, and Supreme Commander of the Azad Hind Fauj, addressed to his countrymen inside India from Syonan during Simla Conference of 1945.

the Viceroy's Executive Council. We, who are outside India at this critical juncture, can take a much more objective view of the entire world situation than many of our countrymen at home. It is, therefore, our duty to tell you frankly what we think and to advise you accordingly.

After we withdrew our Headquarters from Rangoon, it was open to us to move to another place inside Burma—just as the Government of Independent Burma did—on the ground that our troops were still fighting inside Burma. But we instinctively felt that the enemy would immediately exploit his military successes in Europe and in Burma, and launch a new political and military offensive. Consequently, we should be ready to meet that offensive and we should be at a place from where we could speak to India, if necessary. That is the principal reason why I am in Syonan today.

The crisis that faces India today has arisen because some influential sections among our countrymen, who, only three years ago, were shouting Liberty or Death, are now prepared to enter into a compromise with the British Government on Lord Wavell's own terms. This attitude is entirely mistaken and unjustified for two reasons. Firstly, there can be no compromise on the question of Independence. Secondly, the situation is not what these countrymen of ours think, and if we continue our resistance to British Imperialism, we shall win our independence by the end of this war.

If among those who are listening to me now there is anyone who has any doubt as to whether I am in close touch with what is happening all over the world, he can himself judge from one simple fact. He must have noticed from my daily talks during the last week that I am in intimate touch with the daily

developments inside India. And if I am in touch with the daily developments at home, I can easily be in touch with what is happening all over the world. On the other hand for those who are inside India and who cannot see what is happening in that part of the world that is not dominated by the Anglo-Americans and who are victims of skilful enemy propaganda, it is difficult to form an objective opinion of the entire world situation. Today, the whole world is in the melting pot and India's destiny is bound up, to some extent, with what is happening all over the world.

Now, why am I so optimistic at a time when some of our prominent leaders have developed such a defeatist mentality? It is because of two principal reasons. Firstly, we are carrying on an armed struggle against the British and their Allies, and we are not pessimistic about the situation in East Asia, in spite of our recent reverses in Burma.

Secondly, India has become an international issue and if that issue is not converted into a domestic issue of the British Empire, India's case will come up before the bar of world opinion. Can't you see with your own eyes or hear with your own ears how Syria and Lebanon are exploiting the world situation to their advantage by creating a split within the camp of the so-called Allied Nations? We are not less intelligent or less farsighted than the leaders of Syria and the Lebanon. But if we want to bring the Indian issue before the bar of world opinion, we have to do two things.

Firstly, we have to prevent any compromise with British Imperialism. Secondly, we have to assert India's right of freedom with arms. If our countrymen at home cannot take up arms or they cannot continue even Civil Disobedience against Britain's

war effort, let them at least keep up the moral resistance to British Imperialism and refuse to come to any compromise. We shall continue to assert India's right to freedom with arms, and so long as we do so, no power on earth can prevent India remaining an international issue, provided you do not let us down by compromising with the British Government.

I understand that some of the leaders at home are furious with me for opposing their plans for a compromise with the British Government. They are also furious with me for pointing out that the Congress Working Committee has constitutionally no right to take such a fateful decision behind the back of the All-India Congress Committee and the Congress. And they are furious with me for pointing out that the Congress Working Committee does not represent Left wing opinion in the Congress and in the country. These infuriated leaders are abusing me for taking the help of the Nipponese.

I am not ashamed of taking the help of Nippon. By co-operation with Nippon on this basis, Nippon recognises India's complete independence and has granted formal recognition to the Provisional Government of Azad Hind or Free India. But those who now want to co-operate with the British Government, and fight Britain's Imperialist war, are prepared to accept position of subordinates, responsible to Britain's Viceroy in India. If they were to co-operate with the British Government on the basis that Britain grants formal recognition to a government of Free India, that would be a different matter.

Moreover, Nippon has given us the arms with which to organise an army, which is Indian from top to bottom. This Army, the Azad Hind Fauj, has been trained by Indian instructors using the Indian language.

This Army carries India's National Flag and its slogans are India's national slogans. This Army has its own Indian Officers and its own Officers' Training Schools, run entirely by Indians. And, in the field of battle, this army fights under its own Indian Commanders, some of whom have now reached the rank of General. If one talks of a puppet army, then it is the British Indian Army that should be called a puppet army, because it is fighting Britain's imperialist war under British Officers.

Am I to believe that in an army of two-and-a-half millions, in which so many Indians are found fit to obtain the highest honour in the British Army, namely, the Victoria Cross—not one single Indian could be found fit to hold the rank of General?

Comrades, I have just said that I am not ashamed to take the help of Nippon. I shall go further and say that if the once mighty British Empire can go round the world with the begging-bowl and can go down on its knees in order to obtain help from the United States of America, there is no reason why we—an enslaved and disarmed nation—should not take help from our friends. Today, we may be taking the help of Nippon, tomorrow we shall not hesitate to take help from any other quarter—if that be possible, and if that be desirable, in the best interests of India.

Nobody would be more happy than myself if we could achieve India's independence without foreign help of any sort. But I have yet to find one single instance in modern history where an enslaved nation has achieved its liberation without foreign help of some sort. And for enslaved India, it is much more honourable to join hands with enemies of the British Empire than to curry favour with British leaders or political parties. Our whole difficulty is that we do

not hate our enemies enough and our leaders do not teach us to hate India's enemies—though they teach us to hate those whom they regard as the enemies of other nations. Is it not ridiculous for some of our leaders to talk of fighting Fascism abroad, while shaking hands with Imperialism at home?

Comrades, I would never have opened my mouth and said one word to you, if I had been sitting as an arm-chair politician here. But I and my comrades here are engaged in a grim struggle. Our Comrades at the front have to play with death. Even those who are not at the front have to face danger every moment of their existence. When we were in Burma, bombing and machine-gunning was our daily entertainment. I have seen many of my comrades killed, maimed and injured from enemy's ruthless bombing and machine-gunning. I have seen the entire hospital of the Azad Hind Fouj in Rangoon raised to the ground, with our helpless patients, suffering heavy casualties.

That I and many others with me are still alive today is only through God's grace. It is because we are living, working and fighting in the presence of death that I have a right to speak to you and to advise you. Most of you do not know what carpet bombing is. Most of you do not know what is to be machine-gunned by low-flying bombers and fighters. Most of you have had no experience of bullets whistling past you, to your right and to your left. Those who have gone through this experience and have nevertheless kept up their morale, cannot ever look at Lord Wavell's offer.

Comrades, we have to consider what to do about Lord Wavell's offer. First of all, though the time at your disposal is short, you will have to do everything possible to prevent the acceptance of this offer by the

Congress Working Committee. Secondly, if you fail in that, you will then have to create a situation which will force the Congress representatives to resign from the Viceroy's Executive Council. This will not be difficult. You will have to insist on the release of all political prisoners which will, in itself, bring about a crisis between the Viceroy and the Congress members of the Executive Council. There is no doubt that when the new Executive Council is formed, the Viceroy will begin to exploit India's resources in men, money and materials for fighting Britain's future war in the Far East.

This will naturally raise numerous issues in which India's interests will clash with those of Britain. If you keep up your agitation and propaganda, then the Congress members of the Executive Council will be forced to stand up for India's interests against those of Britain, in which case a clash with Viceroy will be certain. Then you will have to agitate in order to prevent Indian troops being sent as cannon-fodder to the Far East.

If you fail in that, you will have to undertake some other form of resistance movement in the country. As you are aware, during the last 5 years the British were giving valuable instructions for organising and carrying on an underground movement in countries which went out of their control or influence. If you make use of all those instructions and apply them against British in India, you will achieve valuable results. Last but not the least, you will have to form contact with the Indian Army and try to influence it. The Indian Army of today is not the Indian Army of 1939. It is an Army which, according to British report, is two-and-a-half million strong. In this army there are many who are politically-minded and nationalist at

heart. The time for a action will come when this army is demobilised, if India is not free by then. Thanks to this war, two-and-a-half million Indians have been trained in the use of arms. When the time comes for their disbandment, they can try to the arms with which to fight our enemies. The Chit-tagong Armoury Raid in 1930 was an excellent example of how arms belonging to our enemy could be procured and then used against them.

Comrades, I shall now close for the day. But before I conclude I would remind you that a revolutionary is one who believes in the justice of cause and who believes that cause is bound to prevail in the long run. He who gets depressed over failures or setbacks, is no revolutionary. The motto for a revolutionary is "Hope for the best, but be prepared for the worst."

I am confident that if we fight on and if we play our cards well in the international field, we shall win our freedom by the end of this war. But that does not mean that if, by any chance, we fail to do so, we should be disheartened or depressed. Consequently, if the worst happens and India does not emerge as an independent state by the end of this war, our next plan shall be a post-war revolution inside India. And if we fail in that too, then there will be world war No. 3 to give us another opportunity to strike for our freedom.

I have no doubt that World War No. 3 will break out within ten years of the end of this war, if not earlier, in case all the suppressed nations of the world are not liberated during the course of the present war. India's independence is a settled fact. The only uncertain factor is the time factor. At the worst, it may take a few more years for India to be free. Why then should we be easily discouraged and rushed to

the Viceroy's House for a compromise? Your task as revolutionaries will be to keep the Flag of Independence flying until such time, as that Flag proudly floats over the Viceroy's House in New Delhi.

JAI HIND !

CHAPTER VI

PLANNING AND INDUSTRIALISATION*

We will have to consider the most important problem of finding the necessary capital and credit for our plan of industrialisation. Unless this problem is solved, all our plans will remain mere paper schemes and we shall not make any headway in our industrial progress.

—*Subhas Chandra Bose.*

In the beginning of his speech* Shri Subhas Chandra Bose, the Congress President, outlined the industrial possibilities of the country and emphasised the need for the Committee to see that in whatever suggestions it made for the industrial regeneration of the country, the interests of the smaller village industries were strictly safeguarded. Shri Subhas said :

During the last few weeks, I have noticed an apprehension in certain quarters as to the possible effects of our efforts to industrial planning on the movement that has been going on since 1921 for the production of *Khadi* and the promotion of cottage industries under the auspices of the All-India Spinners Association and the All-India Village Industries Association respectively. It may be remembered that at Delhi I made it perfectly clear in my opening

* Speech delivered when Shri Subhas Bose inaugurated the first meeting of the All-India National Planning Committee at Bombay on December 17, 1938.

speech that there was no inherent conflict between cottage industries and large-scale industries. As a matter of fact, I divided industries into three classes: cottage, medium-scale and large-scale industries and I pleaded for a plan which would lay down the scope of each of these classes. Not only that. In the National Planning Commission we have reserved a seat for a representative of the All-India Village Industries Association and a similar seat could also be arranged for in the National Planning Committee. It would be doing us a grave injustice if it be urged or even apprehended that the promoters of the National Planning Commission want to sabotage the movement for the revival of cottage industries.

Everybody knows or should know that even in the most industrially-advanced countries in Europe and Asia, *e.g.*, Germany and Japan, there are plenty of cottage industries which are in flourishing condition. Why then should we have any apprehension with regard to our own country?

I may now add a few remarks on the relation between cottage industries and large-scale industries. Among large-scale industries, mother industries are the most important, because they aim at producing the means of production. They put into the hands of artisans necessary appliances and tools for facilitating quicker and cheaper production. For example, if in the city of Benares we could supply electrically-driven looms along with electrical power at the rate of half-anna per unit, it would be possible for the artisans working in their own homes to twin out *sarees* and embroidered cloth of different varieties at about five or six times the present rate of production and it would enable them to compete successfully with foreign imported goods of this description. With a good marketing organisation and an organisation for

the supply of raw materials, these artisans can be rescued from the depths of poverty and misery to which they have fallen.

This is not the only instance which can give. If the power industry and the machinery manufacturing industries are controlled by the state for the welfare of the nation, a large number of light industries like the manufacture of bicycles, fountain pens and toys can be started in this country by men of the artisan class working with the family as a unit. This is exactly what has been done in Japan. Success depends entirely upon the fact that power and machinery are extremely cheap and the Japanese Government have set up boards for the supply of raw materials and for proper marketing. I believe that this is the only way by means of which the handloom industry and the silk industry of our country can be revived.

The National Planning Committee will have to tackle specific problems. It will have first to direct its attention to the mother industries, *i.e.*, those industries which make the other industries run successfully—such as the power industry, industries for the production of metals, heavy chemicals, machinery and tools, and communication industries like railway, telegraph, telephone and radio.

Our country is backward in respect of power supply compared with other industrially-advanced countries. In the matter of electrical power particularly India's backwardness can be gauged from the fact that while in India, we have at present only seven units per head, a backward country like Mexico has ninety-six units per head and Japan about five hundred units per head. In developing electrical power, the Government has squandered money: take the instance of the Mandi Hydro-Electric Scheme on which

the Government have spent ten times as much as other countries have done on similar efforts. How I wish an enquiry could be made into the manufacture of machinery and machine tools with a view to keeping up supplies in the event of interruption of communications with foreign countries owing to war or any other causes. The other key industries into which an enquiry should be started are the fuel industry, the metal production and heavy chemical industries. In this respect the resources of the country have not been properly investigated and, whatever little industry there is, is being controlled by foreigners, with the result that there is a lot of wastage. This is particularly true of the fuel industry.

The last key industry is the transport and communications industry which includes railways, steamships, electrical communications, radio, etc. At present the railways are controlled by the Railway Board, which is entirely under European management and only a small fraction of the requirements of the railways is manufactured in the country. As regards steam navigation, excepting coastal traffic, the entire communication is in the hands of non-Indians owing to unfair privileges enjoyed by them. Electrical goods are entirely supplied by foreign countries. As regards radio, I would like to suggest the setting up of a special sub-committee to investigate its possibilities.

Lastly we will have to consider the most important problem of finding the necessary capital and credit for our plan of industrialisation. Unless this problem is solved, all our plans will remain mere paper schemes and we shall not make any headway in our industrial progress.

Part Three—Letters

CHAPTER I

Letters to the President of the Bengal Legislative Council.

CHAPTER II

Letter to his brother about refusal to be released conditionally.

CHAPTER III

Five letters written during his last detention in 1940 to Bengal Government.

CHAPTER IV

Letter from Vienna to a friend at Lahore.

CHAPTER V

Letter written to the "Manchester Guardian."

CHAPTER VI

Letter to Major G. S. Dhillon of the Indian National Army.

CHAPTER I

ILLEGAL DETENTION*

Sir,

I have the honour to address the following lines to you not because I acknowledge the meeting of the Bengal Legislative Council held on the 11th January, 1927 to be a valid one but because I can address the members of that Council only through one who claims to be its President.

2. I have been elected a member of the Bengal Legislative Council from the Calcutta North Non-Mohamedan constituency, but I have not been allowed to attend the meeting of that body. I am at present detained in the Mandalay Central Jail under Bengal Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1925. I have not been convicted by any court of law, neither has any charge been yet preferred against me by court of law. I therefore possess the constitutional right as the duly elected representative of the electors of Non-Mohamedan North Calcutta Constituency to attend the meetings of the Bengal Legislative Council.

*Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose wrote this letter to the President of the Bengal Legislative Council of which Mr. Bose was a member. The letter discusses at great length the privileges of members of the Council. It was written on the 18th January 1927 from Mandalay Jail where Mr. Bose was a detenu prior to his removal to Calcutta and subsequent release on May 16, 1927.

Act 1919 Violated

3. I confess, I am unable to understand how the Bengal Legislative Council could meet and transact business on the 10th and 11th January 1927, when one constituency (*viz.*, the Calcutta North Non-Mohamedan) was unrepresented owing to the detention in custody of its lawful representative. The number of members of the Bengal Legislative Council is fixed by statute and sub-section (2) of section 72-A of the Government of India Act, 1919, expressly states that "the member or members of the Governor's legislative councils shall be in accordance with the table set out in the first Schedule of this Act, etc." I venture to think that this provision of the Government of India Act cannot be strictly and honestly observed if the executive officers of the Bengal Government forcibly prevent a lawful representative from attending the Legislative Council by detaining him in custody. It is clear that the effect of such forcible prevention is to nullify the real purpose and intention of the statute as quoted above.

4. I maintain further that, as contended by Lord Shelburne, Sir George Saville and other distinguished authorities on constitutional law in the British House of Commons and House of Lords on the occasion of the election of John Wilkes, M.P., by the Middlesex constituency in 1768, the forcible prevention of a single lawful representative from attending the meeting of a legislature invalidates the proceedings of that body.

Privileges of M.Ps.

5. You are aware, Sir, of the privileges enjoyed by members of the House of Commons. One of the most important of these privileges is that of immunity from arrest, detention and molestation during a session

and for forty days before the beginning and after the close of a session-of the House of Commons.

6. The members of the legislatures of the Dominions throughout the British Empire are also entitled to privileges practically identical with those of members of the House of Commons. As the Government of India Act 1919 is to be interpreted in the light and in keeping with the spirit-of the British constitution, it stands to reason that members of the legislatures in British India should also be entitled to these privileges, whether there be any specific mention to that effect in the Government of India Act or not.

7. You are aware, Sir, of the long and bitter fight that was waged in British history between the Crown and members of Parliament over the question of parliamentary privileges and that in several crises the Speakers of the House of Commons took a leading part at considerable risk to themselves and, in some cases, at considerable sacrifice. Again and again has the issue been raised and fought, *e g.*, in Thomas Tripes' case in 1453, in George Ferrey's in 1543, in Sir Thomas Shirley's case in 1603, in Sir John Eliot's and Sir Dudley Digges' cases in 1926 and in John Wilkes' case in 1768. By refusing to vote supplies in some cases and in others by refusing to function at all till the imprisoned members were released from custody. Parliament was able to compel the Crown to recognise the privilege of immunity from arrest, detention and molestation during a session and for forty days before and after it. Today not only are the privileges of members, their "ancient and undoubted rights" held as sacred and inviolable, but outsiders encroaching on these privileges are also liable to be punished by the House of Commons.

British Constitution

8. The legislatures of the Dominions too have been able to secure parliamentary privileges for themselves, but they have been conceded by the Governments concerned without any struggle. It is for the future to show whether parliamentary history of Britain will be repeated in India or whether the growth of Parliament in this country will follow the peaceful path trodden by the Dominions. In any case the position that I have definitely taken up is that if the Government of India Act is to be worked in the light of the British Constitution, not only should I be released forthwith in view of the present privileged period, but executive officers of the Government who have prevented compliance with the summons issued by order of His Excellency the Governor of Bengal by detaining me in custody during this period should also be made liable before the bar of the Bengal Legislative Council.

9. It is likely to be urged that under the British constitution the privilege of immunity from arrest, detention and molestation does not extend to those guilty of treason, felony or breach of the peace. I may, however, state that I have not been convicted by a court of law, neither has any charge been framed against me by a court of law. It is clear that according to the constitution of Great Britain and the Dominions, only those who have been convicted of any of the above offences forfeit their parliamentary privileges.

“ Ancient Rights ”

10. It may be said that there is no specific mention of the privilege of immunity from arrest, detention and molestation in the Government of India Act and

hence no such privilege has been contemplated by it. I may, however, point out in reply that the privileges of Parliament do not rest merely on statute. They existed prior to the first statutory enactment in 1604, and were from the very beginning claimed by Parliament as their "ancient and undoubted rights" and except on comparatively rare occasions were respected by the Crown. Further, as the principles of English Common Law and the Law of Equity are applicable in law courts in British India when there is no specific legislation to the contrary, the general principles and the spirit of the British constitution should govern the interpretation and the working of the Government of India Act, when there is nothing in the latter repugnant to the former. The argument for the applicability of English law in the present case is further strengthened by the fact that Calcutta is a Presidency town and my constituency fell within the original jurisdiction of the High Court of Judicature at Fort William. I am inclined to think that in this predicament the attitude of the Bengal Legislative Council will largely determine what course the executive officers of the Bengal Government will take.

Privileges Accrue on Election

11. It may be maintained further that, because I was arrested ~~Jong~~ before I became a member of the Legislative Council and my constituents before electing me knew that they were considering the claims of a detenu, there is no force in my demand for release during the present privileged period. But I may urge in reply that no matter when I was first arrested, the moment I became a member of the Legislative Council the rights and privileges of members accrued to me. Consequently, with the commencement of the privileged period, the privilege of immunity from arrest, detention

and molestation has automatically vested in me. It would not be out of place to mention here that Sir Thomas Shirley was arrested in 1603 before Parliament met; nevertheless he had to be released by the Crown, otherwise the House of Commons would not proceed to business. Further, it was perfectly legitimate and justifiable for my electors to expect that after my election I would be released when a session of the legislature drew near by virtue of a parliamentary privilege and that thereafter I could be able to take part in the proceedings of the Council. If that legitimate expectation has not been fulfilled, the fault certainly does not lie with my electors.

A Constitutional Question.

12. You will easily understand, Sir, that my forcible detention in custody during session of the Bengal Legislative Council has raised a very important constitutional question. In all modern constitutions the independence of the legislature has been specially safeguarded and freedom of the legislator from the domination of the executive has been regarded as one of the cardinal requirements of democracy. If the executive can, of their own free will, lock up members of the legislature during a session of that body, they can control the entire course of legislation in the country. For the executive to usurp judicial or quasi-judicial functions by ordering the imprisonment without trial of citizens of the State for an indefinite period is bad enough. But when arrested persons who happen to be members of the legislature are not even permitted to take part in the deliberations of those bodies, the situation becomes intolerable. In these circumstances can any reasonable man resist the conclusion that the real object of the executive is also to strike a blow at the Opposition Party in the legis-

lature? And, Sir, what is there to prevent the executive from detaining in custody a larger number of members of the Council belonging to the Opposition Party in order that it may be possible to have unpopular legislation passed by a rump legislature? There is no doubt that, if legislation comes under the thumb of the executive, whatever responsibility there is in the transferred departments will disappear. My present detention, therefore, raises not only the question of parliamentary privileges but the more important and fundamental question of the independence of the legislature. If the present anomalous position be not immediately righted, a most obnoxious precedent will be set up which will be a standing menace to the constitutional liberties of the people.

Limits of the Executive.

13. Even if it be assumed for the sake of argument that under the Bengal Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1925 or Bengal Regulation III of 1818, the executive have the legal right to arrest and detain whomsoever they please, it does not follow that they are empowered to forcibly detain a member of the Legislative Council during a session of that body. Only by an act or resolution of the legislature can the privileges of members be forfeited. In the case of Thomas Therpe, M.P., who was detained in custody during session of the House of Commons in 1453 during the reign of Henry III, the judges to whom the matter was referred, held that the courts of law could not measure the privileges of Parliament, those being matters which could only be determined by Parliament itself. If this verdict of the judges is right much more is it true the privileges of members of the legislature cannot be determined by the executive officers of the Crown.

14. The illegality of my present detention will also be apparent from the fact that while the summons calling upon me to attend the Council was issued by order of His Excellency, the warrant under which I have been detained here was issued by a civil servant subordinate to His Excellency. I am sure that it will be admitted on all hands that when orders emanating from the members of the Government conflict with another, that of the superior officer should prevail. Further, the summons of His Excellency being much later order, that warrant should supersede it in law and should therefore have been complied with. It is, thus, clear that when the above summons was issued I should have been released forthwith in order to enable me to act in obedience to it.

Oath of Allegiance.

15. One of the results of my continued detention is to prevent me from taking the oath of allegiance to the Crown. Rule 25 of the Bengal Electoral Rules states that if a member does not take oath of allegiance within a reasonable time, his seat will be liable to be declared vacant and this rule is certainly applicable in my case. The pathos of the situation will be evident when it is remembered that Government are themselves responsible for preventing me from taking the oath of allegiance.

16. You are aware, Sir, that when in 1463 Thomas Thorpe, M.P. was arrested and imprisoned during a session of the House of Commons and Parliament by taking a bold stand not only effected his release but also penalised the officer of the Crown responsible for his arrest and detention, the then King of England, Henry VII, commended the action of Parliament and in honourable words declared, "We at no time

stand so high in our estate royal, as in the time of Parliament, wherein we as head and you as members are conjoined and knit together into one body politic so as whatsoever offence or injury during that time is offered to the meanest member of the House, is to be judged as done against one person, and the whole court of Parliament, which prerogative of the court is so great that (as our learned counsel informeth us) as all acts and processes coming out of any other inferior court must for the time cease and give place to the highest." And thereupon Sir Edward Monteouth, Lord Chief Justice, very gravely told his opinion confirming by diverse reasons all that the King had said, which was resented into by all the residue none speaking to the contrary." I have no doubt that if the Bengal Legislative Council do their duty in the present constitutional crisis, they will have a similar encomium from the head of the Government in our province.

17. I am inclined to think that the fact that the Government of India Act requires the President of the Bengal Legislative Council to be elected by holding that the independence of the legislatures has been contemplated in the Government of India Act.

18. I feel very strongly that it is for the Bengal Legislative Council and for no other individual or body, to declare whether I am for political reasons to be debarred from taking part in the deliberation of that body. It is open to the House to take disciplinary action against me if they feel so inclined. I would welcome an expulsion by the Bengal Legislative Council as in the case of John Wilkes, M.P. in 1769 rather than be prevented from attending the Council by an arbitrary order of the executive, provided the privileges of members of the legislature are once for all recognised by the Government.

19. It is not for me to say what steps the Bengal Legislative Council should take in order to resist this invasion of its rights and privileges, but I have not a shadow of doubt that it is within the power of the House to take steps which will compel the Government to give due recognition to the rights and privileges of members. It is for the members to decide whether following the glorious example of the House of Commons they should refuse to vote any supplies or refuse to do any business at all. And it is for you, Sir, to decide whether in this emergency, failing any other remedy, you should bring pressure to bear on the Government by adjourning the House again and again, till the wrong is righted and due amends are made.

Legislation Necessary.

20. I would like to suggest that if the privileges of the members are not recognised by Government forthwith it is possible to secure them by legislation. Such legislation is possible in India and there is nothing in the Government of India Act to prevent or prohibit it. You are aware, Sir, that in Cape Colony and Newfoundland the constitution contains no hint of these privileges but they have nevertheless been secured there by ordinary legislation. Further, it is a well-known fact that in the province of Canada, the legislatures of Ontario, Quebec, British Columbia, Manitoba, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Alberta and Saskatchewan have at various periods passed Acts conferring parliamentary privileges on themselves, though the constitution of these provinces contains no mention of parliamentary privileges. The validity of such legislation has been finally recognised by the Judicial Committee of the British Privy Council in the celebrated case of Field-

ing versus Thomas in 1896.

21. In conclusion, I hope that members of the Bengal Legislative Council will realise the gravity of the issue—its bearing and consequences and adopt all possible measures within their power to vindicate their rights and privileges. And I hope that you, Sir, following the inspiring example of so many illustrious Speakers of the House of Commons will take the lead in what I consider to be an episode in the great fight for constitutional freedom. If the members under your guidance rise to the height of the occasion, their names will be handed down to posterity as heroes in a holy fight.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your most obedient servant,
(Sd.) S. C. BOSE.

CHAPTER II

IN THE CAUSE OF FREEDOM AND TRUTH*

I do not feel up to writing a long letter and I must wait till I can summon sufficient energy for the purpose. I had a long heart-to-heart talk with Bardada (eldest) about the Government offer and he must have acquainted you all with my views. I appreciated the opportunity given to me of having a private interview and the Hon'ble the Home Member has my profound thanks for the courtesy shown. It is a welcome departure from the sort of treatment hithero meted out to me. The reply from the Bengal Government which Bardada communicated to me on the 27th April (the day before he left) has made the issue clearer for both parties. Taking stock of the present position, I have to say that I affirm the attitude I took up in my reply of the 11th April to the Government offer. My decision follows directly from my general outlook on life and close thinking only serves to confirm it.

The longer I live in jail, the stronger does the conviction grow within me that the struggles in this world are at the bottom, conflict of ideas, conflict between false and true ideas, or as some would like

* Shri Subhas Chandra Bose wrote this letter to his brother from Insein Jail on May 8, 1927, when he was offered conditional release by the Government after his continuous ailment in detention.

to say, between different degrees of truth. Ideas are the stuff of which human movements are made and they are not static but dynamic and militant. They are as dynamic as the absolute ideas of Hegel, the blind will of Hartmann and Schopenhauer, the 'elan vital' of Henri Bergson. Ideas will work out their own destiny and we, who are but clod of clay encasting sparks of the divine fire, have only got to consecrate ourselves to these ideas. A life so consecrated is bound to fulfil itself, regardless of the vicissitudes of our material and bodily existence. My faith in the ultimate triumph of the idea for which I stand, is unflinching and I am not, therefore, troubled by thoughts about my health and future prospect.

I have stated my point of view clearly and unambiguously in my letter to the Government and no sophistry is possible thereafter. I am sorry that some critics should be so unkind as to say that I am bargaining for better terms. I am not a shopkeeper and I do not bargain. The slippery path of diplomacy I abhor, as unsuited to my constitution. I have taken my stand on a principle and there the matter rests. I do not attach so much importance to my bodily life that I should strive to save it by a process of haggling. My conception of values is somewhat different from that of the market place and I do not think that success or failure in life should be determined by physical or material criteria. Our fight is not a physical one and it is not for a material object either. As St. Paul has said: "We wrestle not against flesh and blood but against principalities, against powers, against the rules of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Our cause is the cause of freedom and truth, as sure as day follows night, that cause will ultimately prevail. Our bodies may fail and perish; but, with faith undiminished and will unconquerable, triumph will be ours. It is, however,

for Providence to ordain who of us should live to witness the consummation of all our efforts and labours, and, as for myself, I am content to live my life and leave the rest to destiny.

One word more before I close. It is not possible for me at this stage to decide whether I should go to Switzerland. I am at present physically incapable of undertaking a journey to Switzerland and I need preliminary treatment at some healthy resort in India. How long it will be before I am declared fit to travel abroad, following a course of preliminary treatment I do not know. One thing is certain. Until I am very much better, a journey to Switzerland is, from the medical point of view, out of question. Further, if I improve remarkably well while I am at a health resort in India, it may not be necessary at all to go abroad except for the purpose of voluntary externment. Then there is the financial question. I shall have to consult my purse which is none too full. I shall also have to consult the members of our family, particularly our parents, before I can decide to leave my home and country for an indefinite period. The political situation in India may change during the next few months and the Bengal Government may of their own accord feel inclined to alter their angle of vision.

All these factors have to be weighed carefully before I can finally make up my mind. Above all, I would like to feel myself a free agent before I make my choice and I would prefer not to be stampeded into signing my warrant of exile. If the question of my compulsory residence in Switzerland is regarded by the Government as a *sine qua non*, you need have no hesitation in breaking off all negotiations. God is great and certainly greater than His own handiwork, man, and while we trust in Him we shall not come to grief. I am pained to realise what anxiety and worry

I have been causing in too many loving and sympathetic hearts, but I console myself by thinking that those who believe in a common motherland (I shall not say fatherland) have common heritage and have to share their joys and sorrows.

CHAPTER III

THE MORAL PROTEST*

First Letter*

1. I have been in jail for about four months under a section of the D. I. Rules which does not necessitate a trial by a court of law. Over and above that, I have been an under-trial prisoner for the last two months. Detention without trial under one section and prosecution under another section of the above Rules—constitute a combination of executive fiat and judicial procedure which is not only unprecedented, but is manifestly illegal and unjust.

2. Further, when bail applications were made before the trying Magistrates, the Public Prosecutor opposed them, presumably under instructions from the Local Government, with the result that the applications were not granted. This is an evidence of undue Government interference in the course of judicial proceedings. This interference is all the more objectionable because the Local Government are not giving effect to the instructions issued by the Government of India with regard to cases under the D. I. Rules.

3. It is unfair, unjust and illegal to forcibly

*Sj. Subhas Chandra Bose, while detained in the Presidency Jail, Calcutta, addressed this letter on October 30, 1940, to the Home Minister of the Bengal Government, through the Superintendent of Presidency Jail.

detain me in prison in this manner when I am being prosecuted. Once I have been produced before a court on the charge of offending against the D. I. Rules, the law should be allowed to take its own course. How can I again be imprisoned without trial under the same D. I. Rules ?

4. It is surprising and painful that all this is happening under the ægis of a "popular" ministry. I have been watching how the self-same ministry has been behaving in the case of citizens professing the Islamic faith—particularly when they happen to be members of the Muslim League. It is not necessary to furnish Government with numerous relevant instances, culminating in the sudden release of the Maulvi of Murapura in Dacca district. Every single instance of this sort has been duly noted by me.

5. In view of these and numerous other considerations, Government should release me forthwith. My election to the Indian Legislative Assembly also demands that I should be permitted to attend its sittings which commence on the 5th November—of course, health permitting. If the Burma Government could allow a convicted prisoner to attend the Assembly sittings—should not the "popular" ministry of Bengal allow the same facilities to one who is not a convicted prisoner ?

6. Last, but not least, my continued detention in the present state of my health is nothing short of a vindictive policy on the part of Government which is altogether inexplicable to me.

This letter is written in all seriousness and I pray that it be given the consideration that it deserves.

Second Letter*

I have addressed the Hon'ble the Home Minister to day on the question of my continued detention in jail. I desire that along with that letter, Government should be informed of the consequences, for me, of their refusal to withdraw the order of detention. I am, therefore, writing this to you with the request that you may kindly bring the contents to the notice of Government as confidentially as possible. I am sending it to your office under closed cover, so that nobody else may see it. This letter is not a threat and I hope it will not be treated as such. It is meant to be a frank communication regarding certain developments which may soon become unavoidable for me.

I do not expect that Government will be moved by the considerations mentioned or implied in my letter to the Hon'ble the Home Minister. I have, therefore, been pondering for the last two months over the course of action that I should adopt. There is no other alternative for me but to register a moral protest against an unjust act and as a proof of that protest, to undertake a voluntary fast. This fast will have no effect on the "popular" ministry, because I am neither the Maulvi of Murapura—(Dacca) nor even a Muhammedan by faith. Consequently, the fast will in my case become a fast unto death. I know that even that will not move this Government and I have no illusions on this point. The "popular" ministry like other bureaucratic Governments will raise the question of official prestige and the familiar argument will be trotted out that Government cannot be coerced by a fast. I was in England when Terence Macswiney, a Lord Mayor of Cork, was on hunger-strike on similar

*Sj. Bose addressed this letter to the Superintendent of Presidency Jail, on the 30th October, 1940.

issue. The whole country was moved—all the political parties in Parliament and H. M. the King also were visibly affected, but Lloyd George's Government was adamant. As a consequence, the King had to declare publicly that because of the Cabinet's attitude, he could not exercise the Royal Prerogative. I am recounting all this just to convince you and the Government that I have examined the whole situation in the cold light of common sense and logic and that I have not been thinking light-heartedly.

Thus, while I do not expect any tangible result to follow from the fast, I shall have the satisfaction of recording a moral protest against iniquitous action of Government. Britishers and the British Government have been talking of upholding the sacred principles of freedom and democracy, but their policy nearer home belies these professions. They want our assistance to destroy Nazism—but they have been indulging in super-Nazism. My protest will serve to expose the hypocrisy underlying their policy in this unfortunate country, as also the policy of a Provincial Government that calls itself "popular", but which in reality can be moved only when there is a Muhammedan in the picture. Incidentally, I shall have the further satisfaction that my fast and its sequel shall have repercussions outside India, for I happen to be one of the Indians known outside the frontiers of this country.

The only other point to consider is as to whether the remedy suggested is not worse than the disease and I have taken long days and nights to ponder over it. My answer to the question is that life under existing conditions is hardly worth living. In this mortal world, everything perishes except principles. These principles can live only when individuals do not hesitate to die for them. When individuals perish for a sacred principle, that principle does not die—

but incarnates itself in other individuals. And it is through vicarious suffering alone that a cause can flourish and prosper. Just as flesh begets flesh—so also does spirit begets kindred spirits. Consequently, if I have anything worthy in me, neither my country nor humanity will lose as a result of my death. On the contrary, God willing, they may be elevated to higher moral plane for, after all, the highest sacrifice that one can make is the voluntary sacrifice of one's life without taking the life of another.

One word more before I finish. I have been in jail for long periods and have also been on hunger-strike before. I know all the steps that over-zealous officials sometimes take in order to frustrate the object of hunger-strike. Naturally I shall be prepared for them in advance. Moreover, I shall not permit forced feeding. Nobody has any moral right to feed me by force. This point was thrashed out with the British Cabinet in the case of Terence Macswiney and at a later period with the Government of India during our hunger strike of 1926. Any circulars or Jail Code provisions which may have come into existence since then, will have no binding effect on me.

I repeat that this letter written on the sacred day of Kali Pujah should not be treated as a threat or ultimatum. It is merely an affirmation of one's faith written in all humility. Hence it should be handled as a confidential document to be so communicated to Government confidentially. I only desire that the Government should know how my mind has been working so that they may appreciate my motives as well as the consequences for me of their decision.

Thanking you for your uniform courtesy.

Third Letter*

I hope you have duly forwarded to Government the confidential letter I wrote to you on the 30th October last—the day of Kali Pujah. This is in continuation of that letter and both the letters are to be read in conjunction with my letter to the Hon. the Home Minister on the same date, *viz.*, 30th October.

2. Since I wrote to you, the Government of India have made it clear in connection with the adjournment motion tabled by Pandit L. K. Moitra, M. L. A. (Central) before the Indian Legislative Assembly that the responsibility for my arrest and imprisonment rests exclusively with the Government of Bengal which is claimed by its supporters to be controlled and run by a “popular” ministry. It is clear that the way I have been treated by this “popular” Government is unique and unprecedented in this country and violates the instructions of the Government of India in using the D. I. Rules not for defending India but in order to shield a procedure that is at once illegal and unjust.

3. Yesterday, when an application for bail was made by my lawyers, the trying Magistrate at Bankshall Court granted the application, but was constrained to remark that his order would remain infructuous because of the action of the Government in detaining me without trial under section 26 of the D. I. Rules. I cannot conceive of a more flatant example of interference in judicial procedure on the part of the Executive. Were the D. I. Rules enacted for “defending” India or for “defending” injustice and illegality of this sort? I wonder.

* This letter was addressed to the Superintendent of Presidency Jail, Calcutta, on the 14th November, 1940.

4. I am sorry that this Government have perpetrated another wrong by supplying the Secretary of State for India with incorrect information about my arrest and detention. As is already known, in reply to Mr. Sorensens's query, the Secretary of State announced in the House of Commons, on the basis of the information received by him, that I had been taken into custody in connection with the Holwell Monument affair. If the whole truth had been told then one would have heard more on the subject in England, for I have friends there, both in the Commons and among the general public.

5. For the vindication of what I consider to be a legitimate right, there is now but one course open to me, *viz.*, to content myself with recording a moral protest—since every other door has been banged on me by the “popular” Government. Consequently, as already intimated to you on the 30th October and in accordance with the vow I have prayerfully taken on the Kali Pujah day, I shall commence my fast very soon. I shall send a formal intimation to Government in due course mentioning the exact date, but that will be on the very eve of commencement of the fast. I wrote on as far back as the 30th ultimo. Government have already had sufficient notice.

I shall be obliged if you treat this letter as confidential and kindly forward it to Government confidentially as early as possible.

Fourth Letter*

I am writing this in connection with my letter of the 30th October, 1940, addressed to the Hon. the Home

* This letter was addressed to His Excellency the Governor of Bengal, the Hon'ble, the Chief Minister and the Council of Ministers, on the 26th November, 1940.

Minister (copy of which was forwarded to the Chief Minister) and my confidential letters to the Superintendent, Presidency Jail, dated the 30th October and 14th November, which were forwarded to Government in due course. Herein I shall recapitulate what I have to say regarding my own case and shall also put down in black and white the considerations that are impelling me to take the most fateful step in my life.

I have no longer any hope that I shall obtain redress at your hands. I shall, therefore, make but two requests—the second of which will be at the end of this letter. My first request is that this letter be carefully preserved in the archives of the Government, so that it may be available to those of my countrymen who will succeed you in office in future. It contains a message for my countrymen and is, therefore, my political testament.

I was arrested without any official explanation or justification on the second July, 1940, and as per orders of the Government of Bengal, under Section 129 of the D. I. Rules. The first explanation subsequently emanating from the official sources came from the Rt. Hon. Amery, Secretary of State for India, who stated in the House of Commons quite categorically that the reason of the arrest was in connection with the movement for the Holwell Monument in Calcutta.

The Chief Minister virtually confirmed this announcement at a sitting of the Bengal Legislative Assembly and stated that it was the Holwell Monument Satyagraha which stood in the way of my release. When the Government decided to remove the Monument, all those who had been detained without trial in connection therewith were set free, with the exception of Mr. Narendra Narayan Chakravarti,

M. L. A., and myself. These releases took place towards the end of August, 1940 and almost simultaneously an order for my permanent detention was served under Section 26 of the Defence of India Rules, in lieu of the original order under Section 129 which provided for temporary detention.

Strangely enough, with the new order under Section 26, came the news that prosecution was being launched against me under Section 38 of the D. I. Rules before two Magistrates for three of my speeches and for a contributed article in the weekly journal, "Forward Bloc", of which I had been the editor. Two of these speeches had been delivered in February, 1940, and the third one early in April. Thus the Government created a unique and unprecedented situation towards the end of August last by detaining me permanently without trial under one Section of the Defence of India Rules and by simultaneously prosecuting me before judicial tribunal under another Section of the same Rules. I had not seen a similar combination of executive fiat and judicial procedure before this occurrence took place. Such a policy is manifestly illegal and unjust and smacks of vindictiveness, pure and simple.

One cannot fail to notice that the prosecution was launched long after the alleged offences had taken place. Nor can it be overlooked that for the relevant article in "Forward Bloc", the paper had already been penalised through forfeiture of the security of Rs. 500 and deposit of a further security of Rs. 2,000. Moreover, the attack on the paper was made all of a sudden after a long period during which no warning had been given to the paper in accordance with the practice of the Government.

The attitude of the Bengal Government was

further exposed when applications for my release on bail were made before the two trying Magistrates. Both these applications were stoutly opposed by the Government spokesmen. On the last occasion, one of the Magistrates, Mr. Wali-ul-Islam, granted the bail application, but was constrained to remark that his order would remain infructuous till the Government withdrew their order for my detention without trial under Section 26 of the D. I. Rules. It is thus as clear as day-light that the Government have been pursuing a policy which fetters the discretion of judicial tribunals and interferes with the administration of law. The action of the Local Government appears all the more objectionable when it is remembered that they have given the go-by, to the instructions of the Government of India with regard to such cases.

Another interesting feature of the Government's policy is my simultaneous prosecution before two Magistrates. If the intention was to place more than one speech of mine before a court of law, that could very well have been fulfilled without resorting to two Magistrates, for I have delivered any number of speeches during the last twelve months within the limits of Calcutta proper. The man in the street is, therefore, forced to think that Government are so keen on seeing me convicted that they have provided for a second string to the legal bow.

Last, but not least, Government's action appears to an impartial man to be altogether malafide, because proceedings were instituted so long after the alleged prejudicial acts had been committed. If the acts in question were, in fact, prejudicial, then action should have been taken by Government long ago, *i.e.*, at the time that the alleged offences were committed.

May I request you to compare for one moment

your attitude towards people like myself and towards Muslims arrested and imprisoned under the Defence of India Rules? How many cases have occurred up till now in which Muslims apprehended under the D. I. Rules have been suddenly released without rhyme or reason? The latest example of the Maulvi of Murapura is too fresh in public mind to need recounting. Are we to understand that under your rule there is one law for the Muslim and another for the Hindu and that the D. I. Rules have a different meaning when a Muslim is involved? If so, the Government might as well make a pronouncement to that effect.

Let it be argued or suggested for one moment that for my incarceration, the Government of India, and not the Local Government, are responsible—I may remind you that in connection with an adjournment motion concerning myself tabled by Pandit L. K. Moitra, M.L.A. (Central) before the Indian Legislative Assembly only the other day—it was stated on behalf of the Government of India that the matter should not come before the Central Assembly, since I had been incarcerated by the Bengal Government. I believe a similar admission was made in the Bengal Legislative Assembly on behalf of the Ministry.

And we cannot forget that here in Bengal we live under the benign protection of a “popular” ministry.

My recent election to the Indian Legislative Assembly has raised another issue—that of “immunity” from imprisonment for members of the Legislature while the Legislature is in session. This is a right inherent in every constitution, no matter whether it is explicitly provided in the statute or not, and this right has been established after a protracted struggle. Quite recently, the Burma Government

allowed a convicted prisoner to attend the sittings of the Burma Legislative Assembly, but though I am not a convicted prisoner, I have been denied that right by our "popular" ministry.

If apologists attempt to invoke the precedent of Captain Ramsay, M.P. in support of the Government, I may point out that Captain Ramsay's case stands on a different footing altogether. Serious charges have been preferred against him, but all the facts not being known to us, it is difficult to argue either way. One may, however, urge that if Captain Ramsay has been unjustly imprisoned, and no redress will be ultimately forthcoming, it would lend substance to what Mr. Kennedy (American Ambassador to Great Britain) and others are reported to have said—namely, that democracy is dead in England. In any case, Capt. Ramsay has had the opportunity of getting his case examined by a Committee of the House of Commons.

In dealing with my case generally two broad issues have now to be considered. Firstly, have the Defence of India Rules any sanction, ethical or popular? Secondly, have the Rules, as they stand, been properly applied in my case? The answers to both the questions are in the negative.

The D. I. Rules have no ethical sanction behind them because they constitute an infringement of the elementary rights and liberties of the people. Moreover they are essentially a war-measure and as is known to everybody, India was declared a belligerent power and was dragged into the war, without the consent of the Indian people or the Indian Legislature. Further, these rules militate against the claim so vociferously made in Britain that she is fighting the cause of freedom and democracy. And, lastly, the Congress Party in the Central Assembly was not a

party to the adoption of the Defence of India Act or the Defence of India Rules. In these circumstances, it would not be improper to ask whether the Defence of India Rules should not more appropriately be called the Suppression of India Rules or the Defence of Injustice Rules.

It may be urged on behalf of this Government that the Defence of India Act being an Act of the Central Legislature, all provincial Governments are obliged to administer the Rules framed thereunder. But enough has already been said above to justify the charge that the Rules, even as they stand, have not been properly applied in my case. There has been manifest illegality and injustice. Only one explanation can, to my mind, account for such a strange conduct, *viz.*, that Government have been pursuing a frankly vindictive policy towards me for reasons that are quite inexplicable.

For more than two months, the question has been knocking at the door of my conscience over and over again, as to what I should do in such a predicament. Should I submit to the pressure of circumstances and accept whatever comes my way—or should I protest against what, to me, is unfair, unjust and illegal? After the most mature deliberation I have come to the conclusion that surrender to circumstances is out of the question. It is a more heinous crime to submit to a wrong inflicted than to perpetrate that wrong. So, protest I must.

But all these days, protest has been going on and the ordinary methods of protest have all been exhausted. Agitation in the press and on the platform, representations to Government, demands in the Assembly, exploration of legal channels—have not all of these been already tried and found ineffective? Only one method remains—the last weapon in the hands of

a prisoner—*i.e.*, hunger-strike or fast.

In the cold light of logic I have examined the pros and cons of this step and have carefully weighed the loss and gain that will accrue from it. I have no illusion in the matter and I am fully conscious that the immediate, tangible gain will be nil, for I am sufficiently conversant with the behaviour of Governments and bureaucracies during such crises. The classic and immortal examples of Terence Macswiney and Jatin Das are floating before my mind's eye at the moment. A system has no heart that could be moved, though it has a false sense of prestige to which it always clings.

Life under existing conditions is intolerable for me. To purchase one's continued existence by compromising with illegality and injustice goes against my very grain. I would throw up life itself rather than pay this price. Government are determined to hold me in prison by brute force. I say in reply, "Release me or I shall refuse to live—and it is for me to decide whether I choose to live or to die."

Though there may be no immediate, tangible gain, no sacrifice is ever futile. It is through suffering and sacrifice alone that a cause can flourish and prosper and in every age and clime the eternal law prevails—"the blood of the martyr is the seed of the church."

In this mortal world, everything perishes and will perish—but ideas, ideals and dreams do not. One individual may die for an idea—but that idea will, after his death, incarnate itself in a thousand lives. That is how the wheels of evolution move on and the ideas, and dreams of one generation are bequeathed to the next. No idea has ever fulfilled itself in this world except through an ordeal of suffering and sacrifice.

What greater solace can there be than the feeling that one has lived and died for a principle? What higher satisfaction can a man possess than the knowledge that his spirit will beget kindred spirits to carry on his unfinished task? What better reward can a soul desire than the certainty that his message will be wafted over hills and dales and over the broad plains, to every corner of his land and across the seas to distant lands? What higher consummation can life attain than peaceful self-immolation at the altar of one's cause?

Hence it is evident that nobody can lose through suffering and sacrifice. If he does lose anything of the earthy, he will gain much more in return, by becoming the heir to a life immortal.

This is the technique of the soul. The individual must die, so that the nation may live. Today I must die so that India may live and may win freedom and glory.

To my countrymen I say—"Forget not that the greatest curse for a man is to remain a slave. Forget not that the grossest crime is to compromise with injustice and wrong. Remember the eternal law—you must give life, if you want to get it. And remember that the highest virtue is to battle against inequity, no matter what the cost may be."

To the Government of the day I say—"Cry halt to your mad drive along the path of communalism and injustice. There is yet time to retrace your steps. Do not use a boomerang which will soon recoil on you. And do not make another Sind of Bengal."

I have finished. My second and last request to you is that you should not interfere forcibly with my

fast but should permit me to approach my end peacefully. In the case of Terence Macswiney, of Jatin Das, of Mahatma Gandhi and in our own case in 1926—Government did decide not to interfere with the fast. I hope they will do the same this time—otherwise any attempt to feed me by force will be resisted with all my strength—though the consequences thereof may be even more drastic and disastrous than otherwise. I shall commence my fast on the 29th November 1940.

P. S. As in my previous fasts, I shall take only water with salt. But I may discontinue this later on, if I feel called upon to do so.

Fifth Letter*

1. This is my final appeal to you.

2. I have already written to Government requesting them not to resort forcible feeding and informing them that if this is, nevertheless, attempted, I shall have to resist it with all my strength, though the consequences thereof may be “more drastic and disastrous than otherwise.” In my confidential letter to the Superintendent, Presidency Jail, dated the 30th October last and in my letter to Government dated the 26th November, I made my position perfectly clear. I was, therefore, surprised when I got hints from the jail authorities that forcible feeding was still being contemplated in my case.

3. I shall not repeat all the arguments urged by me on this subject in the above two letters, but I desire to briefly recapitulate my position once again.

* This letter was addressed to the Hon'ble the Chief Minister and the Council of Ministers on the 5th December, 1940.

4. Firstly, Government have no moral right to feed me forcibly when they are responsible for making my life intolerable through injustice and illegality, strongly tinged with communalism.

5. Government have no legal authority either to forcibly feed me in these circumstances. There is no law that I know of, which empowers Government to use force in this manner. A departmental order of Government cannot take place of law, particularly when it infringes the elementary rights and liberties of the individual.

6. If any attempt is made to forcibly feed me in spite of my repeated requests to the contrary, all those directly or indirectly responsible for it will become civilly and criminally liable for any injury or pain bodily or mental, that may be inflicted on me thereby.

7. Apart from the above points of principle, my physical condition both before and after the commencement of the fast should render it impossible for forcible feeding to be attempted in my case. It should be quite clear that under such circumstances, forcible feeding will defeat its own purpose and instead of prolonging life will haste its end. Civil and criminal liability for the use of force will, owing to this consideration, be naturally aggravated.

8. I may inform you in this connection that in the event of forcible feeding being resorted to, I shall have no option but to take steps to relieve myself of the unbearable, protracted agony resulting from it. This could be done only by suicide and the responsibility for it will rest entirely with the Government. For a man who has turned his back on life there are a hundred ways of reaching his end and no power on

earth can prevent his death. I have chosen the most peaceful method and it would be sheer brutality to force me to adopt a less peaceful or more drastic remedy. The step that I have now taken is not an ordinary fast. It is the result of several months' mature deliberation finally sealed by a vow prayerfully taken by me on the sacred day of Kali Pujah.

9. I have been on hunger-strike several times before, but this fast is of an unusual type, never resorted to by me previously.

10. Man does not live by bread alone. He needs moral and spiritual sustenance as well. When he is denied the latter, you cannot expect him to live, merely to further your plans or fit in with your scheme of things.

11. I have already said in my letter of the 26th November that I have but two requests to make of you—firstly, that my letter of the 26th November, which is my political testament, be carefully preserved in the archives of the Government and, secondly, that I be allowed to approach my end peacefully. Is that asking too much of you?"

CHAPTER IV

AMONG ITALIANS AND AUSTRIANS*

“As you know I left Bombay on the 23rd of February by the *Gange*, a Lloyd Triestino boat. Thanks to the Bombay police, those who wanted to see me off had to return disappointed. The voyage was on the whole a pleasant one up to Port Said, as the sea was calm, and except for a couple of days near the entrance to the Red Sea, it was not hot either. Up to Port Said, we all could use our summer clothing and my khaddar clothes proved useful. I proved to be a source of great interest to the European passengers on board, partly because they had seen me being carried to the boat on a stretcher and partly because of the khadi clothes I was wearing on the boat. As usual the European passengers kept aloof for the first few days, but as we passed the limits of Asia and Africa, they seemed to become more human.

“We reached Suez on the 2nd March and were fascinated by the picturesque landscape stretching in a semi-circle round its port. We enjoyed the scenery on both sides of the Suez Canal and round about the Ismalia Lakes as we moved towards Port Said. On our way we passed an Italian man-of-war and there

*Shri Subhas Chandra Bose wrote this letter to a friend at Lahore on March 16, 1933, from Vienna where he had gone for treatment.

was an exchange of greetings between the cruiser and the *Ganges*, which was an Italian boat. We reached Port Said at night and sailed again on the morning of the 3rd March. As we passed the statue of the French engineer Lesseps and entered the Mediterranean a rough sea greeted us. I am not ordinarily a bad sailor, but on this occasion, owing probably to my weak condition, I was very much upset. It seemed as if the improvement resulting from the sea voyage had been undone in a day's time. We reached Brindisi on the 5th March and on arrival I was greeted with a message of welcome and good wishes on behalf of the Hindustan Association of Rome (or Roma as they say in Italy). After a brief halt we sailed again and reached Venice at about 11 a.m. on the 6th March.

“The warmth and sunshine of Italy were altogether absent when we approached Venice and the city of canals and gondolas appeared before us in a cloak of fog and rain. Before we reached the port, the agents of Lloyd Triestino Company who had arrived on board, came up to my cabin accompanied by the Purser and informed me that they had received instructions from Rome to look to my comforts at the time of disembarking and they wanted to know what they could do for me. Soon after this, the Manager of Lloyd Triestino Company also arrived on board and, after welcoming me, informed me that he had instructions from the Italian Consul to see that I was well looked after. The Customs formalities were waived in my favour and I could disembark at once and leave for my hotel.

On my way to the hotel, I had an interesting experience. The representative of the Lloyd Triestino Company who was guiding me stopped at two places to speak to the policemen on duty and spoke something in Italian to them—which I could guess referred

to me. At once the policemen on duty stood to attention and saluted me. Returning the salute, I began to wonder how strange it was that a man who had been harassed and persecuted by policemen in his own country should be saluted by policemen in a foreign land, where he was a stranger.

I stopped in Venice for a day to rest after the strain of the voyage. Owing to my physical condition and the cloudy weather, I had to give up the idea of visiting the places and objects of interest in the city. I could not, however, avoid the press representatives who came to interview me. What struck me was the remarkable grasp which the representatives of the Italian press had of the Indian situation and the fairly correct information which they had of the prominent public men in our country. The next day the Italian papers of Rome, Milan, Bologna, Florence and Venice came out with long notes on the Indian political situation.

The following day (that is, the 7th March) I left Venice for Vienna. I took an evening train and the morning found us in the beautiful snow-clad mountain valleys of Tyrol. But thanks to the excellent arrangements, the freezing atmosphere outside did not interfere with our warmth inside the train.

On my arrival in Vienna, I was greeted with a warm welcome from the community of Indian students in the city who had assembled in full strength at the station. They had already made the hotel arrangements and we went straight to the hotel. After consulting the Indian medical students and obtaining the necessary medical information, we settled our course of action. The next day—the 9th of March we called in a prominent physician of Vienna, who examined me with great care and thereafter recommended my re-

moval to a sanatorium in the city for further examination.

On the 11th I removed from the hotel to the Sanatorium of Dr. Furth in the city. This sanatorium is on the model of a hospital with its own X-ray plant, laboratory, etc. and is meant for paying patients only. It is a combination of a hospital and a nursing home—a sort of institution which unfortunately is rare in our country. It is something like the tuberculosis sanatoria with which we are familiar in our country—but these Viennese sanatoria are meant for all diseases and patients are permitted to take rooms and live with their relatives.

At the time of writing, clinical and X-ray examination are still going on and a definite diagnosis has not yet been made. From the X-ray and clinical examination so far made, it is clear, however, that the condition of the lungs is far from normal. There is evidence of thickened pleura on the right apex and the left apex also shows abnormality. The doctors are now searching for the cause of the abdominal pain which has been daily recurring since my departure from Bombay.

Since my arrival at Vienna, there has not been any marked improvement so far, though on the whole I have been feeling better. I am still under orders to take complete rest and avoid exercise. I am still feeling very weak—but it is a hopeful sign that I have not lost any weight after reaching Europe. Another hopeful sign is that whereas in India the temperature used to rise with unfailing regularity—here in Europe, the fever does not come every day. It is too early to say whether the break in the regularity of the daily fever is going to lead to further improvement or whether it is only a temporary effect

of the change from a warm climate to a cold climate.

The preliminary diagnosis made by the doctors after a superficial examination and without the rigid scientific tests is as follows. There is tubercular infection in the lungs which may be the cause of the temperature—but the pain in the abdomen is due to something like duodenal ulcer. They are, however, going through all the tests once again in order to prepare the latest data for an accurate and final diagnosis. When the clinical and X-ray examination is over and all the required data are available, we shall call in three or four specialists for consultation and await their diagnosis and their prescription as regards treatment. Subject to what doctors may hereafter prescribe, my intention is to go to a Swiss sanatorium from here.

In Vienna quite a large number of people can speak understandable English and this is particularly the case with medical men and women. Many of the hotels also have employees who can speak broken English which is sufficient for our purpose. Thus, the inconvenience of strangers like ourselves who cannot speak German is largely minimised.

There is a great deal of public interest in Indian affairs in this country (Austria) as in Italy and the representatives of Viennese and European papers have not spared me. I hear that about a fortnight before my arrival here there was a lecture on Mahatma Gandhi—the speaker being Mr. Fulop Miller, the author of the book ‘Lenin and Gandhi.’

CHAPTER V

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA'S THREAT

Sir*—The other day I received a letter from the British Consul in Vienna which runs thus —

12th March, 1936.

Sir,—I have to-day received instructions from the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to communicate to you a warning that the Government of India have seen in the press statements that you propose to return to India this month and the Government of India desire to make it clear to you that should you do so you cannot expect to remain at liberty.

I am, etc.

J. W. Taylor, His Majesty's Consul.

I was arrested on January 2, 1932, in India and detained in prison till February 22, 1933, without any trial. Though I repeatedly asked for it, I was never informed of the charge or complaint which the Government of India had against me. When I fell seriously ill and several medical boards appointed by the Government to examine me recommended that I should be either released or allowed to proceed to Europe for treatment, the Government of India permitted me to sail for Europe and withdrew the order of detention. I

*Text of a letter written on March 17 from Austria and published in the "Manchester Guardian," London.

have been in Europe virtually for the last three years. Only once have I been to India during this period—namely, in December 1984, when I went to see my dying father and stayed there for six weeks. During my brief stay in India I was made a prisoner in my house.

I now want to go home and I am served with this official threat. My last imprisonment was bad enough legally and ethically. But the proposed imprisonment, in the event of my returning to India now, beats all records. May I ask if this is how British Law is going to be administered in India and if this is a foretaste of the expanded liberty which the new constitution will usher in?

Yours, etc.,
Subhas Chandra Bose,
(President, Bengal Congress Committee)
Kurhans Hochland, Badgastein, Austria, March 17.

CHAPTER VI

PRICE OF INDIA'S LIBERTY*

Sadar Daftar Ala Kaman Azad Hind Fauj
(Headquarters, Supreme Command,
Indian National Army).

Rangoon,
12th March, 1945.

Major G. S. Dhillon,

Jai Hind !

I have been following the work of your Regiment and of yourself with the closest interest and I want to congratulate you on the manner in which you have stood up to face bravely the situation that is difficult. I want to express my complete confidence in you and in all those who are standing by you in the present crisis.

Whatever happens to us individually in the course of this historic struggle, there is no power on earth that can keep India enslaved any longer. Whether we live and work, or whether we die fighting, we must

* This letter was produced as exhibit "ooo" in the Court-Martial trial at Delhi of Shah Nawaz, Major-General of the I. N. A., Prem Sahgal, Colonel of the I. N. A. and G. S. Dhillon, Colonel of the I. N. A. It is being reproduced in full.

under all circumstances, have complete confidence that the cause for which we are striving is bound to triumph. It is the finger of God that is pointing the way towards India's freedom. We have only to do our duty and to pay the price of India's liberty. Our hearts are with you and with all who are with you in the present struggle which is paving the way to our national salvation. Please convey my warmest greetings to all the officers and men under you and accept same yourself. May God bless you and crown your efforts with success.

“Jai Hind !”

(Sd.) Subhas Chandra Bose.

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CHAPTER I

PROVISIONAL NATIONAL GOVERNMENT*

The recent statement of His Excellency the Viceroy, the utterance of the Commander-in-Chief and the moves of the provincial Governors have made it perfectly clear that at long last the British Government are going to make a really serious effort to exploit India for Britain's war purposes and this effort will be made without satisfying India's demand for independence.

Personally, I am of the opinion that the British Government have felt emboldened to adopt this new policy because of the recent utterance of Mahatma Gandhi wherein he has stated clearly and unambiguously that India should not embarrass Great Britain in her hour of danger. This view is endorsed not only by Gandhian leaders but also by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. It would, therefore, be wrong to infer that the Congress Working Committee is indirectly responsible for the new policy of British imperialism in India.

So far as I can judge, the British Government will not easily slacken their efforts in that direction. Consequently, for all those who stand by the War Resolution of the Haripura Congress, a serious situation has arisen. I have no doubt that if the armed forces

*This is the full text of a statement issued by Shri Subhas Chandra Bose on June 8, 1940, from Karseong :—

of Great Britain happen to suffer more reverses in future, the British will inevitably fall back on India more and more, regardless of what Indian public may declare.

But what interest can we have in European affairs, so long as India remains enslaved? We want our independence and that too without delay. Promises made by the Government to be fulfilled at some future date will fall flat on our people. We shall judge the British in the light of what we shall get, here and now. We have had enough experience of political promises that are made only to be broken. Let not the Government try to bluff us once again with high-sounding pledges.

Short-sightedness has been the character of British foreign policy in recent years. It is this, more than anything else, which has brought disaster to Great Britain. I am afraid that the same short-sightedness is still hanging to the coat-tails of British politicians. They are thinking of saving Britain now with the help of India. But how can an enslaved India save England, or any country for the matter of that?

India has first to save herself. And she can save herself only if the Hindus and Muslims put forward a joint demand for a provisional national government to whom all powers should be immediately transferred. This is the procedure followed in every revolutionary crisis in history. This provisional national government at the Centre can fit into the existing constitution with certain consequential changes made in the Government of India Act of 1935. But the provisional national government must have full sovereign power. After a time, when the present crisis flows over, the provisional national government, free from British control, will

convene a Constituent Assembly for framing a detailed constitution for India in keeping with her new status of independence.

The first task of the provisional national government will be to arm the Indian people as fully as possible and also to enter into alliances with friendly foreign Powers, so that India's safety may be completely ensured under all circumstances. If these measures are adopted, we need not be afraid of internal chaos any more, nor should we be afraid of any untoward consequences accruing to India, as a result of the military success of the Nazis in Europe. When India is free and strong enough to save herself, she can lend helping hand to other friendly countries.

The immediate duty of the Indians is, therefore, to stand up for the slogan —“all power to the Indian people”— and make an immediate demand for a provisional national government vested with full sovereign powers. This demand can be made irresistible, if it be a joint demand put forward by the Hindus and Muslims of India. Can the Congress and the Muslim League agree on this issue? If they can, then they will save India once for all.

If, unfortunately, this demand is turned down, we shall have no other option but to invite the Indian masses to the path of struggle.

I respectfully warn the British Government not to seek to exploit India's resources while India remains enslaved. Let them not be led astray by the soothing words of Mahatma Gandhi or of any Gandhian leader or leaders. When these leaders talk of compromise and co-operation, they do not represent Indian public opinion or the Indian masses. The suggestion now being made in some quarters that because of the Nazi

successes the present war has ceased to be an imperialist war, is a puerile one and will not deceive any intelligent person in this country.

In conclusion, I would request the British Government to coolly consider what consequences will follow if they endeavour to save Britain with the resources of an enslaved India. This path will not bring salvation to England—but it may bring further disaster to India. A free, strong and united India will not only save herself unaided from every conceivable danger but may also bring succour to other friendly nations, including Britain. If British politicians still continue to be bankrupt, despite all our passionate appeals, we shall be no party to the new policy being adopted by the Government of India, regardless of what Mahatma Gandhi may say or do.

CHAPTER II

A WORD ABOUT GERMANY*

It seems that in modern warfare speed and mobility are exceedingly important factors. There is an old saying—"Well begun is half done." One should in these days modify it and say—"Quick begun is half done." Germany has been practising this teaching with scrupulousness and precision. Whether in the military occupation of the Rhineland, or in the annexation of Czechoslovakia or in the invasion of Poland or in the latest inroad into Scandinavia, she has always acted with lightning rapidity. By attacking suddenly the enemy's nerve-centres she has tried to overwhelm or paralyse him before he could realise what had happened. Such swooping tactics presuppose careful planning over a long period and adequate preparation in accordance with it. Nazi Germany has been a past master in this art of detailed planning and careful preparation.

Besides detailed planning and adequate preparation, energy and vigour are needed to fulfil a particular programme according to a time-table. All these qualities the Nazis certainly possess. Owing to their speed and mobility they have invariably caught the enemy napping and overpowered him without much difficulty.

*An article written in the 'Forward Bloc,' dated April 13, 1940.

The ease with which Czechoslovakia was overpowered and annexed by Germany came as a surprise to many. The conquest of Poland within three weeks was a still greater surprise, because Poland was reputed to have a powerful army with the necessary modern equipment and the Poles were known to be fearless fighters.

The annexation of Czechoslovakia was necessary on strategic grounds in view of the coming attack on Poland. The annexation of Poland, or at least of the Polish Corridor, was necessary in order to link up East Prussia with the main portion of Germany. The annexation of Austria, of Danzig, of Memelland—one can understand and account for on grounds of race and nationality among other reasons. But what about poor Scandinavia?

The small Scandinavian countries of Denmark and Norway never constituted a menace to powerful Germany. Why, then, did the latter violate their territorial integrity? The ostensible ground is that Great Britain had laid mines in Norwegian waters. Germany acted in retaliation.

But this answer is not an adequate one. If Britain was responsible for laying mines in Norwegian waters, Germany should have struck hard at her in retaliation. Why did she strike at Denmark and Norway instead.

The reason is that Germany had grounds for believing that Great Britain was planning to occupy Denmark and Norway—just as she had occupied Salonika in Greece during the Great War. So Germany forestalled her enemy and herself occupied the two Scandinavian countries. Because of greater speed and mobility, Germany could do that in advance of

Britain. The occupation of Denmark was like a picnic and that of Norway was like a cake-walk. With careful planning and preparation all this could be accomplished with lightning speed.

The occupation by Britain of the Faroe Island which belonged to Denmark, shows that German anticipation of the British occupation of Denmark and Norway was not ill-founded.

Both Denmark and Norway can now be used as a jumping-off ground for a future attack on the British Navy, as also on the British territory.

Germany may be a Fascist or an Imperialist, ruthless or cruel, but one cannot help admiring these qualities of hers—how she plans in advance, prepares accordingly, works according to a time-table and strikes with lightning speed. Could not these qualities be utilised for promoting a nobler cause ?

B—After Paris*

When the Nazi hordes crossed the German frontier into Holland and Belgium only the other day with the cry of "nach Paris" on their lips, who could have dreamt that they would reach their objective so soon ? A miracle in military warfare has happened, as it were, before our eyes and for an analogy, one has to turn to the Napoleonic wars or to the catastrophe at Sedan in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870. Whatever the French High Command may say, in the face of mechanised transport, innumerable tanks and dive-bombers, no resistance worth the name is possible; after the capitulation warfares are over.

*An article written in the "Forward Bloc", dated June 15, 1945.

But what next? It is clear that Reynaud's Government will not make a separate peace with Germany, leaving Great Britain in the lurch. But how long will he be able to retain the confidence of the French people? The fall of his Cabinet, a tempting offer from Germany and Italy, a new Cabinet ready to make peace on those terms—these are events not altogether beyond the domain of possibility. The British Premier, Mr. Winston Churchill, made an ominous reference to this in his historic speech the other day.

And England? What is she likely to do, with or without France? The answer to this question could be furnished by that inexplicable factor—'the public morale'. Unfortunately, the morale of the British people has been badly shaken and the speeches of the Premier and of other Ministers give ample proof of it. Why should it be necessary to tell the British people that they should not go about with long face as if they were at a funeral? Why should it be necessary to tell the world that even if Great Britain is overrun by the Nazis, the Empire will go on fighting and in God's good time, the New World will come to the rescue of the old World? The British people are famous for their dogged pertinacity and their unflinching nerves. They are now confronted with what is perhaps the severest ordeal in their history. Let us see how they will acquit themselves.

The Nazis have performed a miracle with the help of a new military technique, invented by the younger Generals and military strategists. The Allies have fallen back on their war-renowned, hoary-headed Generals who have, however, been found wanting. Have the Nazi Generals exhausted their new technique? Have the Allies any military secrets or any new

technique up their sleeves? Much will depend on the answers to these two questions.

We used to hear much of the chemical preparations of the Reichswehr (German Army). Have they really perfected a new technique of chemical warfare? If they have, then we shall get evidence of it in the days to come. And it will then be seen how men's nerves behave under those new conditions. Will they collapse as the nerves of the brave Abyssinians did when attacked by Italian aircraft? Or will the soul conquer matter?

Judged from the realistic point of view, it is difficult to realise how the war can continue, if Great Britain is overrun. The United States of America cannot go beyond a certain limit in helping the Allies, lest Japan should make trouble in the Far East. And there is no hope, whatsoever, that Sir Stafford Cripps will succeed in dividing Germany and Soviet Russia. It is more than probable that there is a definite agreement between Soviet Russia on the one side and Germany and Italy on the other. If I were to make a guess as to the terms of that agreement, I should hazard a statement of this sort :—

(1) Germany will have a free hand on the Continent minus the Balkans.

(2) Italy will have a free hand in the Mediterranean region.

(3) The Balkans and the Middle East will be the Russian sphere of influence.

(4) The resources of Africa should be shared by all the Big Powers.

Since both Germany and Italy—and perhaps Soviet Russia—now regard Great Britain as Public Enemy No. I, it is also likely that they have a plan of carving up the British Empire. In this task they may invite Japanese help and co-operation, knowing that Japan has always cast longing eyes on the entire Archipelago, from the Dutch Indies right up to Australia.

In this scheme of things, how and where does India stand? Let those who claim to be leaders of the Indian people answer this question.

C.—Long Live Deshbandhu!*

Fifteen long years have passed since Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das left this world of ours. He did not live to see his dream of a free India fulfilled, but he did achieve success in some of his immediate plans. Just when people had begun expecting greater things from him, death laid its cruel hand on him. He had won the confidence of his countrymen in an unmeasured degree and they had enthroned him in their hearts. Hence the mourning over his death was as universal as it was sincere. But while grieving over his untimely demise, we should not forget what he did in a blaze of glory. He was not one of those unfortunate beings who outlive the period of their greatness and linger on until life begins to ebb away, turning them into reactionaries.

To-day, on the eve of the anniversary of his death, there is one thought uppermost in our mind—“Oh, friend of the Nation! in this hour of trial and tribulation, India hath need of thee.” We want more

*An article written in the “Forward Bloc,” dated June 14, 1940.

than ever before, that rare combination of Idealism and Realism which constitutes the essence of leadership and which was the secret of his greatness. We want that unbounded love which made him a friend of the people and which drew the Muslims and the backward classes so close to him.

We want that dynamism which would not let him rest and which drove him from struggle to struggle. We want, above all, that all-consuming passion for liberty which is the source of all inspiration and the main-spring of all activity.

Let us pay our annual tribute of respect and gratitude to his hallowed memory. Those who want to be great, have to begin life by worshipping greatness wherever they find it. Those who desire to become heroes should first learn to do hero worship. Hence the annual function on the 16th of June is a much-needed one and all sections of the people should rally gather on the occasion.

The writer was a devoted disciple of the Deshbandhu and when speaking of the departed great, it is difficult for him to do so with restraint. The debt he owes him is one that cannot be repaid. In fact, Deshbandhu's teachings have become a part of his very being.

D—Wake up, India !*

Events in Europe are rapidly heading towards a crisis. The Nazi invasion of Holland, news of which has reached us, is a sure indication of the determination and ruthlessness of the present-day

*An article written in the "Forward Bloc", dated May 11, 1940.

rulers of Germany, as well as of the speed with which they can act. What has happened since the outbreak of war has not taken us by surprise, except perhaps the Scandinavian exploits of the Nazis. In fact, actual events have confirmed our prognostications to a very large extent.

In October, 1938, we began to talk publicly about the impending war-crisis in Europe. The resolution passed unanimously at the Bengal Provincial Conference at Jalpaiguri in February, 1939, gave expression to this thought and suggested the presentation of an ultimatum to the British Government on the issue of India's national demands. The Jalpaiguri resolution was brought before the Tripuri Congress in March, 1939, but it was unceremoniously rejected. If it had been adopted there, the ultimatum would have been presented to the Government, preparations for the national struggle would have begun in right earnest and on the expiry of the stipulated period of six months, the national struggle would have been launched. But nothing of the kind happened. On the contrary, the Congress Working Committee launched the offensive against the Left Wing. This drive has continued till to-day.

Six months after the Tripuri Congress, war broke out in Europe in September, 1939. With the outbreak of war, hopes were raised in many quarters that there would be a closing-up of the ranks, preparatory to a commencement of the struggle for freedom. The resignation of Congress Ministries in the provinces intensified these hopes, but they were soon dashed to the ground. Various arguments were advanced with a view to evading a struggle with the British Government. We, on our part, consistently and continuously urged an immediate launching of the struggle—for more reasons than one. One of the major con-

siderations lay in the fact that in the spring of 1940, the war would enter on a critical phase and it was but natural that we should try to time our own movement accordingly. If we wanted a crisis in India in the spring of 1940, it was necessary for us to launch the campaign a few months earlier. But our argument and our appeal did not go home. It was contended against us that when the crisis in Europe would not come till April, 1940, we should not be in a hurry to start our movement.

Our leaders talked and talked—argued and argued, as the months rolled by. Nothing effective was done and the spring of 1940 arrived. With the breath of spring, the military activities of Germany assumed an aggressive form. One fine morning, Denmark was occupied and Norway was invaded. Germany struck with lightning speed. The Allies were surprised and outmanoeuvred.

Holland has now been invaded and will probably be overrun in no time. What more surprises are in store for us—nobody can tell. People are talking of a Japanese attack on the Dutch East Indies. The Italian army seems to be getting ready for the fray—with the Duce making bellicose speeches from the balcony of Palazzo Venezia and the crowd outside shouting—“Tunisia, Tunisia.” The Cabinet in London is tottering after the debacle in Norway.

But what is India doing? What is the Indian National Congress doing?

Hindus and Muslims are drifting apart. The Congress Right Wing is attacking the Forward Bloc and the Kisan Sabha. The Forward Bloc and the Kisan Sabha, on their part, are endeavouring to carry on without the help of the Congress High Com-

mand. The Congress High Command is undecided as to what should be done and its attitude of doubt and vacillation is proving contagious and demoralising to a degree. The Muslim League is more concerned with communal than with national problems. The cumulative effect of all these is that India as a whole is in a morass to-day. In the absence of a dynamic leadership, the people as a whole seem to have lost their dynamism.

How can we save our country from this political rut, utilise the international crisis to India's advantage and win freedom for ourselves? This is the supreme problem of the hour.

As every day passes, one feels like biting his fingers in helpless agony. Can nothing be done to save India even at this late hour? Will not the enslaved people of India cast off their lethargy, sink their petty differences and stand up as one man to demand liberty for this great and ancient land?

We are prepared to play our humble part at this critical juncture, so that we may yet be able to retrieve what we have lost and achieve our national liberation. Let the supreme executive of the Congress call upon the nation to resume the struggle. We shall then fall in line with them in that great and noble task. Unity within the Congress could be achieved on the basis of a dynamic programme of national struggle. And we can then make a desperate attempt to achieve Hindu-Muslim unity on a permanent and enduring basis.

When Europe is in the melting-pot, who can withstand the united demand of three hundred and fifty millions of Indians. Freedom is now almost within reach. We have only to seize it with our united strength. Shall we do so?

CHAPTER III

WHY I LEFT INDIA*

I would like to tell you quite frankly what made me leave home and homeland, on a journey that was fraught with danger of every kind. I was lodged safely in a British Prison, when I silently resolved to risk everything in the attempt to escape from the clutches of the British. Having been in prison eleven times, it was much easier and much safer for me to continue there, but I felt that the cause of India's independence demanded a journey abroad, regardless of the risk that it involved.

It took me full three months of prayer and meditation to decide if I had strength enough to face death in fulfilling my duty. Before I could slip out of India, I had to get out of prison and in order to do so, I had to go on hunger-strike, demanding my release. I knew that neither in India, nor in Ireland, had a prisoner succeeded in forcing the British Government to release him. I knew also that Terence MacSwiney and Jatin Das had died in the attempt to force the Government's hands. But I felt convinced that I had an historic task to fulfil. So I took the plunge, and after seven days of hunger-strike, the Government

*Why Shri Subhas Bose left India? He felt that he had an historic task to fulfil,—as he later told his countrymen in South-East Asia. He told them: "My object in leaving India was to supplement from outside the struggle going on at home."

The above are the reasons and objects, as given out by Netaji Subhas, on his leaving his native land.

unexpectedly got unnerved and set me free, with the intention of taking me back to prison again after a month or two. But before they could seize me again, I became a free man.

Friends! You know that I have been actively working in the independence movement ever since I left the University in 1921. I have been through all the civil disobedience campaigns during the last two decades. In addition to this, I have been repeatedly put in prison without trial, on the suspicion of having been connected with secret revolutionary movements—whether non-violent or violent. In the light of this experience, I came to the conclusion that all the efforts that we could put forward inside India, would not suffice to expel the British from our country. . .

“To put it briefly, therefore, my object in leaving India was to supplement from outside the struggle going on at home. On the other hand, the supplementary help from outside, which the national struggle at home so urgently needs, is in reality very small. The help that our countrymen at home needed and still need is a twofold one, moral and material. Firstly, they have to be morally convinced that their victory is assured. Secondly, they have to be given military help from outside.

The time has come when I can openly tell the whole world including our enemies, as to how it is proposed to bring about national liberation. Indians outside India, particularly Indians in East Asia, are going to organise a fighting force which will be powerful enough to attack the British Army in India. When we do so, a revolution will break out, not only among the civil population at home but also among the Indian Army which is now standing under the British Flag. When the British Government is thus attacked from

both sides—from inside India and from outside—it will collapse, and the Indian people will then regain their liberty. According to my plan, therefore, it is not even necessary to bother about the attitude of the Axis Powers towards India. If Indians outside and inside India will do their duty it is possible for the Indian people to throw the British out of India and liberate 38 million of their countrymen...

Friends, let the slogan of three million Indians in East Asia be: 'Total Mobilisation for a Total War... Out of the total mobilisation, I expect at least three lakh soldiers and three crores of dollars. I want also a unit of brave Indian women to form a death-defying Regiment who will wield the sword which the brave Rani of Jhansi wielded in India's First War of Independence in 1857....

Our countrymen at home are now hard-pressed and they are demanding a second front. Give me total mobilisation in East Asia and I promise you a second front—a real second front for the Indian struggle.

CHAPTER IV

HUNGER, THIRST, SUFFERING AND DEATH*

“Soldiers of India’s Army of Liberation :

“To-day is the proudest day of my life. To-day it has pleased Providence to give me the unique honour of announcing to the whole world that India’s Army of Liberation has come into being. This Army has now been drawn up in military formation on the battlefield of Singapore, which was once the bulwark of the British Empire. This is the Army that will emancipate India from British yoke. . . . Every Indian must feel proud that this Indian Army has been organised entirely under Indian leadership, and that when the historic moment arrives, under Indian leadership, it will go into battle. . . . Standing to-day on the graveyard of the British Empire, even a child is convinced that the mighty British Empire is already a thing of the past.

“Comrades! My soldiers! let your battle-cry be “To Delhi, to Delhi.” How many of us will individually survive this war of freedom, I do not know. But I do know this, that we shall ultimately win and

*On 5th July, 1943, a Military Review of the soldiers of the Indian National Army was held in front of the Town Hall, Singapore. S. Subhas Bose who raised this ‘Army of Liberation,’ after watching the march past gave the above stirring message to the men.

our task will not end until our surviving heroes hold the Victory-parade on another graveyard of the British Empire—the Lal Killa of Ancient Delhi.

“Throughout my public career, I have always felt that though India is otherwise ripe for independence in every way, she lacks one thing: an army of liberation. George Washington of America could fight and win freedom, because he had his army. Garibaldi could liberate Italy, because he had his armed volunteers behind him. It is your privilege and honour to be the first to come forward and organize India’s National Army. . . . Soldiers who always remain faithful to their nation, who perform their duty under all circumstances, and who are always prepared to sacrifice their lives, are invincible. Engrave these three ideals in the inmost core of your hearts.

“Comrades! You are to-day the custodians of India’s national honour and the embodiment of India’s hopes and aspirations. So conduct yourselves that your countrymen may bless you and posterity may be proud of you. I assure you that I shall be with you in darkness and in sunshine, in sorrow and in joy, in suffering and in victory. For the present, I can offer you nothing except hunger, thirst, suffering, forced marches and death. It does not matter who among us will live to see India free. It is enough that India shall be free and that we shall give our all to make her free. May God now bless our Army and grant us victory in the coming fight!”

CHAPTER V

AZAD HIND GOVERNMENT PROCLAMATION*

“After their first defeat at the hands of the British, in 1757, in Bengal, the Indian people fought an uninterrupted series of hard and bitter battles over a stretch of one hundred years. The history of this period turns with examples of unparalleled heroism and self-sacrifice. And in the pages of that history the names of Sirajuddoula and Mohanlal of Bengal, Haider Ali, Tippu Sultan and Velu Tampi of South India, Appa Sahib Bhonsle and Peshwa Baji Rao of Maharashtra, the Begums of Oudh, Sardar Shyam Singh Atariwala, of the Punjab and last, but not least, Rani Laxmibai of Jhansi, Tantia Topi, Maharaja Kunwar Singh of Dumraon and Nana Saheb—among others—the names of all these warriors are for ever engraved in letters of gold.

“Unfortunatey for us, our forefathers did not at first realise that the British constituted a grave threat to the whole of India, and they did not, therefore, put up a united front against the enemy. Ultimately when the Indian people were roused to the reality of the situation, they made a concerted move and under the flag of Bahadur Shah in 1857, they fought their

*It is the full text of the Proclamation read out by Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose setting up the Provisional Government of Free India (Azad Hind Government).

last war as "free men." In spite of a series of brilliant victories in the early stages of this war, ill-luck and faulty leadership gradually brought about their final collapse and subjugation. Nevertheless, such heroes as the Rani of Jhansi, Tanti Topi, Kanwar Singh and Nana Saheb live like eternal stars in the nation's memory to inspire us to greater deeds of sacrifice and valour.

"Forcibly disarmed by the British after 1857 and subjected to terror and brutality, the Indian people lay prostrate for a while but with the birth of the Indian National Congress in 1885, there came a new awakening. From 1885 till the end of the last World War, the Indian people in their endeavour to recover their lost liberty, tried all possible methods, namely, agitations, propaganda, boycott of 'British goods,' terrorism and sabotage and finally armed revolution. But all these efforts failed for a time. Ultimately, in 1920, when the Indian people, haunted by a sense of failure, were groping for a new method, Mahatma Gandhi came forward with a new weapon of non-cooperation and civil disobedience.'

"For two decades thereafter, the Indian people went through a phase of intense patriotic activity. The message of freedom was carried to every Indian home. Through personal example, people were taught to suffer, to sacrifice and to die in the cause of Freedom. From the centre to the remotest villages, the people were knit together into one political organisation. Thus Indian people not only recovered their political consciousness, but became a political entity once again. They could now speak with one voice and strive with one will for one common goal. From 1936 to 1939, through the work of the Congress Ministers in eight provinces, they gave proof of their readiness and capacity to administer their own affairs.

“Thus on the eve of the present World War, the stage was set for the final struggle for India’s liberation. During the course of this war, Germany with the help of her allies has dealt shattering blows to our enemy in Europe while Nippon with the help of her allies has inflicted a knock-out blow to our enemy in East Asia. Followed by a most happy combination of circumstances, the Indian people to-day have a wonderful opportunity for achieving their national emancipation. For the first time in recent history, Indians abroad have also been politically roused and united in one organisation. They are not only thinking and feeling in the tune of their countrymen at home but are also marching in step with them along the path to freedom. In East Asia, in particular, over two million Indians are now organised as one solid phalanx, inspired by the slogan of total mobilisation. And in front of them stand the serried ranks of India’s Army of Liberation, with the slogan ‘Onward to Delhi’ on their lips.

“Having goaded Indians to desperation by its hypocrisy and having driven them to starvation and death by plunder and loot, British rule in India has forfeited the good-will of the Indian people altogether and is living a precarious existence. It needs but a flame to destroy the last vestige of that unhappy rule. To light that flame is the task of India’s Army of Liberation. Assured of the enthusiastic support of the civil population at home and also of a large section of Britain’s Indian Army and backed by a gallant and invincible allies abroad, but relying in the first instance on its own strength India’s, Army of Liberation is confident of fulfilling its historic role.

“Now that the dawn of Freedom is ahead it is the duty of the Indian people to set up a provisional Government of their own and launch a last struggle

under the banner of that Government. But with all the Indian leaders in prison the people at home, totally disarmed, it is not possible to set up a provisional Government within India or to launch an armed struggle under the ægis of that Government. It is, therefore, the duty of the Indian Independence League in East Asia, supported by all patriotic Indians at home and abroad to undertake this task—the task of setting up a provisional Government of Azad Hind (Free India) and of conducting the last fight for freedom with the help of the Army of Liberation (that is, the Azad Hind Fauj or the Indian National Army) organised by the League.

“Having been constituted as the provisional Government of Azad Hind by the Indian Independence League in East Asia, we enter upon our duties with a full sense of the responsibility that has devolved upon us. We pray that Providence may bless our work and our struggle for the emancipation of our motherland. And we hereby pledge our life and the lives of our comrades-at-arms to the cause of her freedom and of her welfare, and stand among the nations of the world.

“It will be the task of the provisional Government to launch upon and to conduct the struggle that will bring about the expulsion of the British and of their Allies from the soil of India. It will be then the task of the provisional Government to bring about the establishment of a permanent National Government of Azad Hind constituted in accordance with the will of the Indian people and enjoying their confidence. After the British and their Allies are thrown out and until a permanent National Government of Azad Hind is established it will administer the affairs of the country in the interest of the Indian people.

“The provisional Government is entitled to and

hereby claims allegiance of every Indian. It guarantees religious liberty as well as equal rights and equal opportunities to all its citizens. It declares its firm resolve to pursue the happiness and prosperity of the whole nation and of all its parts, treating all the children of the nation equally and transcending all the differences cunningly fostered by an alien Government in the past.

“In the name of God, in the name of bygone generations who have welded the Indian people into one nation and in the name of dead heroes who have bequeathed to us a tradition of heroism and self-sacrifice,—we call upon the Indian people to rally round one banner and to strike for India’s freedom. We call upon them to launch the final struggle against the British and all their Allies in India and to prosecute that struggle with valour and perseverance and with full faith in final Victory until the enemy is expelled from India’s soil and the Indian people are once again a Free Nation.”

Signed on behalf of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind.

(1) Subhas Chandra Bose, Head of the State, Prime Minister and Minister for War, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Supreme Commander of the Indian National Army.

- (2) Capt. Miss Lakshmi (Women’s Organisation.)
- (3) S. A. Ayer (Publicity and Propaganda.)
- (4) Lt.-Col. A. C. Chatterjee (Finance.)
- (5) Lt.-Col. Aziz Ahmed.
- (6) Lt.-Col. N. S. Bhagat.
- (7) Lt.-Col. J. K. Bhonsle.
- (8) Lt.-Col. Gulzara Singh.
- (9) Lt.-Col. M. Z. Kiani.

- (10) Lt.-Col. A. D. Longnadhan.
- (11) Lt.-Col. A. D. Rao.
- (12) Lt.-Col. Ehsan Qadir.
- (18) Lt.-Col. Shah Nawaz.
- (4-13) Representatives of the Armed Forces.
- (14) A. M. Sahay, Secretary with Ministerial Rank.
- (15) Rash Behari Bose, Supreme Adviser.
- (16) Karim Ghani.
- (17) Deb Nath Das.
- (18) D. M. Khan.
- (19) A. Yellappa.
- (20) I. Thivy.
- (21) Sardar Ishwar Singh.
- (16 to 21) Advisers.
- (22) A. N. Sarkar (Legal Adviser.)

SYONAN, October 21, 1948.

CHAPTER VI

GANDHI-IRWIN PACT*

I desire to make a statement in order to define our attitude towards the truce terms. We look upon the truce terms as unsatisfactory and disappointing, but for reasons which I shall presently explain, we feel that at the present juncture it would not serve the best interests of the country if we were to create a division in the ranks of the Congress over this issue. The execution of Sardar Bhagat Singh and his comrades Rajguru and Sukhdev in the teeth of popular opposition on the eve of the Karachi Congress has revealed the real temper and attitude of the Government, and we feel we would be walking into a trap so cleverly laid for us if we were to create a division in the Congress now. A Government which did not condescend to commute a few death sentences in spite of country-wide demand made for it, will not, in our opinion, readily part with power and will not easily hand over India to the people's representatives. We, therefore, feel sure that the fight will have to be resumed by the Congress once more and that at no distant date. It

*During the Congress session at Karachi Gandhiji moved the main resolution in the Congress Subjects Committee on March 28, 1931, for the ratification of the Gandhi-Irwin Pact. After his speech whatever opposition might have been expected quickly collapsed. Except a few all amendments given notice of were withdrawn. Finally Shri Subhas Chandra Bose made the above statement, announcing amidst prolonged cheers that the Left Wing of the Congress had decided not to create a split over the resolution.

would consequently be advisable for us to avoid a split amongst ourselves and be prepared for the fight that is ahead of us. Now more than ever it is necessary for us to present a united front to the bureaucracy and make it clear to them that the Indian National Congress stands united under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi in its demand for complete independence.

CHAPTER VII

INDIA SHALL BE FREE*

To my Indian and Burmese Friends in Burma !

Brothers and Sisters ! I am leaving Burma with a very heavy heart. We have lost the first round of our fight for Independence. But we have lost only the first round. There are many more rounds to fight. In spite of our losing the first round, I see no reason for losing heart.

You, my countrymen in Burma, have done your duty to your motherland in a way that evoked the admiration of the world. You have given liberally your men, money and materials. You set the first example of Total Mobilisation. But the odds against us were overwhelming and we have temporarily lost the battle in Burma.

The spirit of selfless sacrifice that you have shown, particularly since I shifted my headquarters to Burma, is something that I shall never forget, so long as I live.

I have the fullest confidence that that spirit can never be crushed. For the sake of India's freedom, I beseech you to keep up that spirit, I beseech you to hold your heads erect, and wait for that Blessed Day

*Last Message of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose to his co-workers before finally leaving Burma.

when once again you will have an opportunity of waging the war for India's Independence.

When the history of India's last War of Independence comes to be written, Indians in Burma will have an honoured place in that history.

I do not leave Burma of my own freewill. I would have preferred to stay on here and share with you the sorrow of temporary defeat. But on the pressing advice of my Ministers and high-ranking Officers, I have to leave Burma in order to continue the struggle for India's liberation. Being a born optimist, my unshakable faith in India's early emancipation remains unimpaired and I appeal to you to cherish the same optimism.

I have always said that the darkest hour precedes the dawn. We are now passing through the darkest hour, therefore the dawn is not far off.

I cannot conclude this message without publicly acknowledging once again my heartfelt gratitude to the Government and people of Burma for all the help that I have received at their hands in carrying on this struggle. The day will come when Free India will repay that debt of gratitude in a generous manner.

INQUILAB ZINDABAD !

AZAD HIND ZINDABAD !

JAI HIND !!

(Sd.) Subhas Chandra Bose.

WAY TO ULTIMATE SUCCESS AND GLORY

Brave Officers and Men of the Azad Hind Fauj !

It is with a very heavy heart that I am leaving Burma, the scene of the many heroic battles that you have fought since February 1944 and are still fighting. In Imphal and Burma, we have lost the first round in our fight for independence. But it is only the first round. We have many more rounds to fight. I am a born optimist and I shall not admit defeat under any circumstances. Your brave deeds in the battle against the enemy on the plains of Imphal, the hills and jungles of Arakan and in the oil-field area and other localities in Burma will live in the history of our struggle for Independence for all time.

Comrades ! At this critical hour, I have only one word of command to give you, and that is that if you have to go down temporarily, then go down as heroes ; go down upholding the highest code of honour and discipline. The future generations of Indians who will be born, not as slaves but as free men, because of your colossal sacrifice, will bless your names and proudly proclaim to the world that you, their forebears, fought and lost the battle in Manipur, Assam, and Burma, but through temporary failure you paved the way to ultimate success and glory.

My unshakable faith in India's liberation remains unaltered. I am leaving in your safe hands our National Tricolour, our national honour, and the best traditions of Indian warriors. I have no doubt whatsoever that you, the vanguard of India's army of liberation, will sacrifice everything, even life itself, to

***Last " Special Order of the Day " to the Fauj before finally leaving Rangoon.**

uphold India's National honour, so that your comrades who will continue the fight elsewhere may have before them your shining example to inspire them at all times.

If I had my own way, I would have preferred to stay with you in adversity and share with you the sorrow of temporary defeat. But on the advice of my Ministers and high ranking Officers, I have to leave Burma in order to continue the struggle for emancipation. Knowing my countrymen in East Asia and inside India, I can assure you that they will continue the fight under all circumstances and that all your suffering and sacrifices will not be in vain. So far as I am concerned, I shall steadfastly adhere to the pledge that I took on the 21st of October, 1943, to do all in my power to serve the interests of 38 crores of my countrymen and fight for their liberation. I appeal to you, in conclusion, to cherish the same optimism as myself and to believe, like myself, that the darkest hour always precedes the dawn. India shall be free and before long.

May God bless you

**INQILAB ZINDABAD !
AZAD HIND ZINDABAD !
" JAI HIND "**

Dated
24th April, 1945.

(Sd.) Subhas Chandra Bose,
*Supreme Commander,
Azad Hind Fauj.*

CHAPTER VIII

SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE*

By Rabindranath Tagore

Poets in the East have ever voiced their peoples' tribute to the national heroes, and as Bengal's poet, I today acknowledge you as the honoured leader of the people of Bengal. It has been assured in our Scripture that from time to time the eternal principle of the good arises to challenge the reign of the evil. When misfortunes from all directions swarm to attack the living spirit of the nation, its anguished cry calls forth from its own being the liberator to its rescue. Suffering from the deadening effect of the prolonged punishment inflicted upon her young generation and disintegrated by internal faction, Bengal is passing through a period of dark despair. Every day, at every effort of ours to move, we are thwarted by vicious rents in the social, economic and moral structure of our life. In all our political adventures we are dismayed to find the helm of our ship disabled and the oars pulled in a discordant lack of rhythm. A suicidal mania seems to be prevalent in our society that takes a peculiar pleasure in sapping the strength of the country by insidious dealings and all this at a time when it should be our duty to justify our existence before the doubting gaze of the world. Wearied by the concerted conspiracy of

*This address was written in May 1930, when Shri Subhas Chandra Bose, visited Shantiniketan. The *Hindustan Standard*, Calcutta, has published it for the first time.

sinister forces both outside and within, we are increasingly losing the vital power to resist them and recover from their attack.

At such a juncture of nation-wide crisis, we require the services of a forceful personality, the invincible faith of a natural-born leader, who can defy the adverse fate that threatens our progress.

Subhas Chandra ! I have watched the dawn that witnessed the beginning of your political *sadhana*. In that uncertain twilight there had been misgivings in my heart and I had hesitated to accept you for what you are now. Now and again I have felt hurt by stray signs of your weakness and irresolute hesitancy. Today you are revealed in the pure light of midday sun which does not admit of apprehensions. You have come to absorb varied experience during these years. To day you bring your matured mind and irrepressible vitality to bear upon the work at hand. Your strength has sorely been taxed by imprisonment, banishment and disease, but rather than impairing, these have helped to broaden your sympathies,—enlarging your vision so as to embrace the vast perspective of history beyond any narrow limits of territory. You did not regard apparent defeat as final ; therefore, you have turned your trials into your allies. More than anything else, Bengal needs today to emulate the powerful force of your determination, and your self-reliant courage.

With patience we are sure to reach our great end. *if* only we can all work together. But why should there be a big *if* ? Why should we be faint in faith ? We must unite, if we want to live. Let it be your untiring mission to claim of your countrymen the resoluteness, the unyielding will to live and to conquer, strengthened by the inspiration of your own life. Let

Bengal affirm in one united voice that her deliverer's seat is ready spread for you. Let her mutual recriminations and self-insults vanish for ever in your person. Let everything mean and cowardly be put to shame by the magnitude of the task awaiting us. May she offer you honour worthy of a leader by retaining her self-respect in trials as well as triumphs.

The Bengali mind, proud of its logic, is caught in the meshes of its own genius. It takes enormous pleasure in spinning out subtleties of argument for their own futile sake and proudly asserts the independence of its intellect by contradicting all schemes of enterprise from their inception. No practical proposal, no organisation, is safe from its destructive casuistry. But this is not the time for idly indulging in the sterile game of polemics, splitting things to pieces. We need the creative inspiration that would rouse the nation into unity of will. Let this united will of Bengal ask you to take your place as our guide and also seek to create you by the force of its claims. Through that creation will be revealed the spirit of the people in this individual personality of yours.

The vision of this will, I did once realise during the Bengal Partition movement. The sword that was raised to divide her living body into two parts was baffled by its resistance. On that day Bengal did not sit down vainly to argue like a wiseacre, weighing her pros and cons against the decree of a mighty imperial power. She willed and the obstruction vanished.

In the following generation we have witnessed the manifestations of this will in the heart of the Bengali youth. They were born with the fiery spirit that could light up the torch of freedom; but they burnt themselves, they missed their path. Despite the fatal futility of their tragic mistake, this fact will ever

remain luminous in our history, that these young souls personated in their lives the irresistible will of their country and suffered.

The negative testimony of the weakness of our country must not be allowed to breed pessimism in our minds. Wherever the signs of her strength have ever made themselves evident, we must know that there lies her truth. They are like living seeds that keep the promise of her future in their core. It should be your life's work to make fruitful in the soil of Bengal all nascent hopes that are waiting in obscurity.

You may say that work of such stupendous responsibility is impossible for one single individual to achieve. But you must know that it is still more impossible for a crowd to do this in the chaos of its scattered multiplicity. It must find its soul in one who has the spiritual power to assimilate all into a comprehensive unity. The born leaders of men are never alone, and they never belong to the fugitive moment. The eternal message of the sunrise of the future they carry in their own lives.

As I feel that you have come with an errand to usher a new light of hope in your motherland, I ask you to take up the task of the leader of Bengal and ask my countrymen to make it true.

Let nobody make such a grievous mistake as to think that, in a foolish pride of narrow provincialism, I desire to see Bengal as an entity separate from the rest of India, or dream of setting in my own province a rival throne to the one on which is seated a majestic figure representing a new age in the political history of the world. What I have tried to express is my wish that Bengal should in every way be worthily related to the vaster body, so that she will not be relegated to a

back seat, that her membership in the body politic may be complete, and fruitful. I have no doubt that the blessings of Mahatmaji will always be with you and the comradeship of the other valiant sons of India, in that larger struggle in which I pray, that your *sadhana* may help Bengal to come out with her self-dedication that will represent her true gift of "Indian Nationalism."

Long ago, at a meeting I addressed my message to the leader of Bengal who was yet to seek. After a lapse of many years I am addressing at this meeting one who has come into the full light of recognition. My days have come to their end. I may not join him in the fight that is to come. I can only bless him and take my leave, knowing that he has made his country's burden of sorrow his own, that his final reward is fast coming as his country's freedom.

CHAPTER IX

STORY OF INDIAN NATIONAL ARMY *

The Indian Independence Movement in East Asia was in certain respects a spontaneous Indian effort, while, in some aspects, it was inspired by the victories gained by the Japanese forces against the Anglo-Americans.

When the Japanese attacked the British in Malaya, the majority of the Indian population in that country, numbering about seven lakhs, were not quite clear in their own minds as to their reactions to the incident. There were of course frantic efforts at evacuation, resulting in panic in the public mind. But the background of British rule in Malaya for the previous few years, spotlit by the firing on estate labourers, who had struck work demanding an increase in wages in keeping with the rise in cost of living, and other prejudicial acts towards Indians, like ordering pre-censorship of the Indian-owned papers, while the British-owned press were free, and similar acts had produced a spirit of suppressed antagonism to the British in the Indian mind. In the case of Indian troops, particularly among the officers, there was disaffection owing to the exhibition of colour prejudice, as in the case of the order

*The article giving a brief history of the Indian National Army, which was created by Netaji Subhas Bose for India's liberation is reproduced from the Freedom Supplement of 'Free Press Journal,' Bombay.

prohibiting Indian officers from using the swimming pool of the Singapore Swimming Club, though they were allowed membership, after much agitation. Among the men, there was a feeling that they were not getting a fair deal in being sent to fight, with particularly no air protection and with poor equipment.

Singapore fell on February 15, 1942. On the 17th February, a few Indians were invited to meet Major Fujiwara of the Japanese Military Headquarters. The Major said that England's power was dwindling and that it was the opportunity for India to strike for Independence. He said that Japan was prepared to give all assistance to Indians, to attain Independence for India. Indians, though British subjects and technically enemy nationals, would not be considered as such by the Japanese in the conquered countries, since they realised that Indians were not British subjects of their own will. He suggested the formation of an Indian Independence League to organise all the Indians for fighting the India's Independence promising to place all facilities, to that end. The Indian leaders said that they would consider the proposal and meet him again in a few days' time.

A meeting of Indian leaders from different parts of Malaya was held in Singapore, on the 9th and the 10th March, 1942. Meanwhile, there was an invitation from Sri Rash Behari Bose in Tokyo for representatives in Malaya and Thailand to go to Tokyo for a conference. So, the meeting of the Indian leaders in Malaya, to which some representatives from Thailand had also come, decided to send a Goodwill Mission to Tokyo. This decision was taken against the desire of the Japanese, who preferred an official delegation to be sent, committed to a specific course of action.

A conference at Tokyo was held from 28th to 30th

March, 1942, with Sri Rash Behari Bose as Chairman. Apart from the Goodwill Mission from Malaya, there were Indian representatives from Hong Kong, Shanghai and Japan. Thailand was not represented owing to the death of the representatives in a plane crash on the way to Tokyo.

At the Conference it was decided that the time was opportune for starting an Independence Movement among the Indians in East Asia and that,

“Independence complete and free from foreign domination, interference or control of whatever nature shall be the object of the Movement.”

It was resolved,

“That military action against India will be taken only by the Indian National Army and under the command of Indians, together with such military, naval and air co-operation and assistance as may be requested from the Japanese Authorities by the Council of Action of the Indian Independence League to be formed.”

The Conference also decided,

“That the framing of the future constitution of India will be left entirely to the representatives of the people of India.”

It was decided at Tokyo that another Conference, more fully representing all the territories in East Asia should be called at Bangkok in June, officially to inaugurate the Indian Independence Movement. As General Mohan Singh told at a press conference at Lahore, the Conference at Tokyo was attended by him along with Col. Niranjana Singh Gill. Both were released only recently.

Accordingly a Conference of Indians in East Asia was held at Bangkok from 15th to 23rd June, 1942. Over 100 delegates, representing Indians in Japan, Manchukuo, Hong Kong, Burma, Borneo, Java, Malaya and Thailand, as well as representatives of the Indian Army (prisoners of war) in Malaya and Hong Kong were present. The resolutions passed at this Conference formulated the basic principles on which the Indian Independence Movement was to be organised in all territories.

The outstanding conclusions of the Bangkok Conference were:—

1. To organise Indians in East Asia into an Indian Independence League to strive for India's Independence.
2. To raise Indian troops in East Asia, as well as from Indian civilians.
3. To control and direct the programme and plan of action of the Independence Movement, to bring them in line with the aims and intentions of the Indian National Congress.
4. To demand from the Japanese Government a further clarification of their policy towards this Movement, as well as towards India.

Thus, the Indian Independence League was inaugurated by the Bangkok Conference. Its headquarters was established in Singapore. Sri Rash Behari Bose was elected President of the Indian Independence League. A Central Council of Action was formed, with branches organised in all territories in East Asia. The news of the "Quit India" resolution and the arrest of the Indian leaders in August brought enthusiasm and

determination to a pitch. Beginnings were made towards the organisation of the Indian National Army under Captain Mohan Singh as G.O.C. from the Indian soldiers who had surrendered in Malaya. A call for volunteers from Indian civilians made in Malaya had also a very great response.

But in the meanwhile, relations between the Council of Action and the Japanese were becoming strained. The reasons for this were, mainly :

(a) The absence of any specific reply from the Tokyo Government to the Bangkok resolutions. There was a general reply renewing Japan's determination to help Indians to get Complete Independence and stating that Japan had no territorial or other ambition over India. But the Council of Action was not satisfied with the reply.

(b) The attitude of the Iwakuro Kikan, which had been organized by the Japanese, as their Liaison Department between the Indian Independence League and the Japanese Military Authorities and the Japanese Government. The Council of Action resented attempts by the officials of the Iwakuro Kikan, to interfere in the working of the League as well as the Indian National Army.

A crisis was reached in December, 1942, when the Council of Action refused to allow the Indian National Army, that had been organised in Malaya, to be transferred to Burma before all outstanding points were clarified by the Japanese Government. The situation was made critical on the 8th December 1942, by the arrest of Col. N. S. Gill of the Indian National Army by the Japanese, as a suspected British spy, without prior consultation with the Council of Action. The members of the Council of

Action resigned. By the third week of December General Mohan Singh was also put under arrest. Both he and Col. Gill were kept in solitary and dark cells.

The President, Sri Rash Behari Bose, declared that he would go to Japan and try to get the necessary clarification of issues from the Tokyo Government and requested that, till then, the organization, *i.e.*, the branches of the Indian Independence League, should carry on. This was agreed to. The Malaya Branch agreed, but added a rider:

“That Sri Rash Behari Bose be requested to try every possible means to secure a clarification of all matters relating to the Movement from the Tokyo Government by declarations, statements and otherwise at as early a date as possible and that while the normal working of the Movement will be carried on as usual, any further forward move will be decided only after such declarations and statements.”

The Iwakuro Kikan started trying to build up parallel organisations to weaken the Indian Independence League. A Youth Movement was launched secretly by them and intensive propaganda was carried on against the leaders of the Independence League. In February 1943, the Committee of the Malaya Branch of the Independence League, after three days' meeting, decided to present a Memorandum to Sri Rash Behari Bose as President of the Indian Independence League, setting out the difficulties of the situation. The decision of the Committee was that they should resign if no improvement was noticed.

The Japanese managed to get information of the Memorandum before it reached the President, Sri Rash Behari Bose, and they brought pressure to bear

on Sri Rash Behari Bose, to insist on the resignation of his office by the President of the Malaya Branch, Sri N. Raghavan. As a result, Sri Raghavan resigned. The other members of the Malaya Branch felt that their resignation was exactly what the Japanese wanted, so that the Japanese can put in their own men—Indians who would be amenable to Japanese desires—in key positions. This would have created an Indian organisation, which would be a puppet body, managed by the Japanese. To prevent that possibility, the other Indian members of the Malaya Branch refrained from resigning along with Sri Raghavan.

In April 1943, another Conference of delegates from all territories in East Asia was called at Singapore, in which Sri Rash Behari Bose announced that Sri Subhas Chandra Bose would succeed him in the leadership of the Movement.

On July 2, 1943, Sri Subhas Chandra Bose, arrived in Singapore and at a Conference of delegates held on July 4, he took over the Presidentship of the Indian Independence League from Sri Rash Behari Bose, who resigned.

The organisation of the Indian Independence League was overhauled, including the Indian National Army. At a review of the Indian National Army, held in Singapore on 5th July, 1943, the formation of the Army was announced to the world.

With the assumption of leadership by Sri Subhas Chandra Bose events moved rapidly.

Women joined in large numbers as members of the Indian Independence League. Volunteers from women members formed a regiment called "Rani of

Jhansi Regiment." Many women also enlisted in a Red Cross Section. A camp for training women recruits was opened in Singapore in October 1943, and later another training camp was started in Rangoon also.

In 1942, there had been a call for volunteers for the Indian National Army. A large number had enlisted. But owing to difficulties put by the Japanese in the way of training the recruits no progress was made. Now, recruiting started in full vigour and four training camps were opened in Malaya, with a total capacity of training nearly 7,000 recruits at one time.

An Officers' Training School was also started to train Officers for the Indian National Army from among the N.C.O.'s and sepoys of the Indian Army as well as from the civilians. Donations from Indians towards the Indian Independence League Fund started to come in, in large amounts. Much of the goods required by the League and the Indian National Army were received free from the Indians.

To strengthen the Movement further, a Provisional Government of Free India was formed on 21st October, 1943, with Sri Subhas Chandra Bose as Head of the State. It was recognised by all countries then fighting against England. On October 23, the Provisional Government formally declared war on England and America. It was felt that the Headquarters of the Provisional Government and the Indian Independence League should be transferred to Burma, to be nearer to India. This was effected on 7th January 1944.

The situation in Burma was that the Japanese were not desirous of an offensive campaign. The

Allied offensive in the Hukwang Valley and the later threatened crossing of the Chindwin River forced the hands of the Japanese. Even then the Japanese plan was to take Imphal and then to let the Indian National Army come into action.

On 4th February 1944, the Indian National Army went into action and on 18th March 1944, they crossed the Indo-Burma Frontier.

The Indian National Army detachments, along with the Japanese detachments, surrounded Imphal after taking Morai, Kohima and other villages. But the lack of air support and the disruption of supplies owing to monsoon forced the Indian National Army to withdraw.

The Indian National Army engaged in a defensive campaign, when the British forces invaded Burma. During this campaign, many Staff Officers of the Indian National Army went over to the British forces. There were other officers, who remained loyal to the Indian National Army. When Meyktila fell and the 14th Army's progress was seen to be too fast for the Japanese to stop, it was decided to evacuate Rangoon.

Sri Subhas Chandra Bose and his colleagues left Rangoon on 24th April 1945 for Bangkok,—they were the last to leave. The Japanese Commander-in-Chief and the Burma Government had left on the 23rd. A force of over 6,000 men and officers of the Indian National Army was left in Rangoon to protect Indian life and property under Major-General Lokanadhan. The Indian Independence League was left in charge of Sri J. N. Bahaduri, Vice-President.

All liabilities incurred in the name of the Provisional Government of India were met in full, before

Sri Subhas Chandra Bose withdrew from Rangoon.

The Indian National Army took control of the City of Rangoon and there was not a single case of dacoity or robbery during the period of transition from Japanese to British control.

Later reports showed that the branches of the Indian Independence League had prevented any harm befalling Indian lives and properties in the districts of Burma also.

This is in strange contrast to what happened, when the British evacuated Burma in 1942. Murder and robbery of Indians throughout Burma reached a peak, so far undreamed of. Indians in Burma still speak in shivering tones of the horrors of those days.

On 5th May 1945, Brigadier Lauder of the 36th Indian Infantry, who was in command of the Rangoon area, sent for Sri Bahaduri. On his request Sri Bahaduri described to him what the Indian Independence League was. Brigadier Lauder suggested that the League should continue with its non-political work and he agreed to do this. In Rangoon, the Indian Independence League had been running five free dispensaries. These were reopened.

The National Bank of Azad Hind, which had been organized in Rangoon in April 1944, was allowed to continue operating till the 19th May 1945, when the Bank was seized by the Military authorities. The activities of the Indian Independence League came to a close on 28th May 1945, when Sri Bahaduri and other office-bearers of the League were arrested by the Field Security Service. Since everyone who had been even remotely connected with the Indian Independence League has been arrested. The Field

Security Service would ask a man to "come for a few minutes" and take him and hand him over to the Field Interrogating Unit. The man would have come in the clothes in which he stood. The Field Interrogating Unit would generally take days to "finish" a case and all these days the 'suspect' would be kept in the Rangoon Central Jail where there was no arrangement at all for supplying mats or clothing.

Some of the suspects after interrogation were allowed to return home. Others were kept in jail for some time and then allowed to go home but with their movements restricted and under police surveillance. Some had to report to the Police daily. This included a girl, who was a member of the "Rani of Jhansi Regiment." A few had been taken away to India. Many have been sentenced, without any trial, to varying terms of imprisonment and were kept in Insein Jail.

Brigadier Lauder, in the early days, it is reported, had told Major-General Lokanadhan that the Indian National Army personnel would be sent to India. It is also said, that at the request of Brigadier Lauder, Major-General Lokanadhan asked the non-Indian Army members of the Indian National Army not to wear uniforms and to ask those who were previously in the British Indian Army, to put on their old uniforms. Brigadier Lauder had also assured, according to reports,

(1) that the Indian National Army would not be used for fatigue duty except in company with British Indian troops in equal numbers, to do essential duties ;

(2) that the Indian National Army camp could be guarded by their own members,

(3) that they could fly their own flag—the Indian National Flag—and sing their own Anthem.

But, after the Indian National Army had disarmed, the members were placed under restraint under British guards and the men were made to do road fatigue,—cleaning and sweeping, under supervision of British Indian troops. Senior officers of the Indian National Army have been taken to India under custody. The other officers and men were kept as prisoners in the jails in Burma.

The Provisional Government of Azad Hind had Ministers, who acted through departments of the Indian Independence League. Since January 1944, the Headquarters of Azad Hind Government and the Indian Independence League were in Rangoon. There were 19 departments in the League Headquarters.

There was a Rear Headquarters of the Indian Independence League at Singapore, which supervised activities in Malaya, Samatra, Java and Borneo.

The Indian Independence League had 70 branches in Malaya with a membership of over two lakhs. In Burma, there were over 100 active branches. In Thailand there were 24 branches. There were branches in Andamans, Sumatra, Java, Celebes, Borneo, Philippines, China, Manchukuo and Japan.

Men were recruited for the Indian National Army and for Civil Service. There were nine military training camps at a time. There was an Officers' Training School in Singapore and another in Rangoon.

There was nose parate cooking in the camps for different communities. The recruits themselves cooked by turns. All training was given by Officers and N.C.O's in Hindustani. Words of Command were in Hindustani.

Total number of civil recruits who were given training and absorbed into the Indian National Army was nearly twenty thousand from Malaya alone.

The Indian Independence League Movement was supported by Indian money. From all over East Asia contributions were received. Nearly 8 crores of rupees were collected in Burma alone. In Malaya, 40 lakhs of rupees were collected as New Year Gift to India in two weeks in January 1945. All the needs of the Indian National Army, excepting arms and ammunition, were met by purchases by the Indian Independence League, with its own funds.

The Indian Independence League was a political organization, formed with the purpose of fighting for Indian Independence. But, along with that, it also carried out a programme of social service. Large funds were spent for relief work among Indians, who were hard hit by the war. In Malaya, particularly, among the labour population in the estates, distress was acute, and the various branches of the League appointed doctors and organized relief centres, where food and medicine were given free, in all deserving cases.

The biggest Relief Camp in Malaya was in Kuala Lumpur, where at one time, there used to be a daily average strength of over one thousand men, women and children, and the monthly expenses came to over 75,000 Malay dollars.

In Burma, the Indian Independence League was running a number of free dispensaries.

There was a fully equipped hospital for Indians, run by the Indian Independence League in Thailand.

To relieve distress, the Indian Independence

League also undertook a programme of settling Indians on land. This was mainly done in Malaya where over 2,000 acres of land, mostly virgin jungle land, were cleared and allotted to Indian settlers for planting.

The Indian Independence League undertook the education of Indian children. Good progress was made in three years in the study of Hindustani by Indians in East Asia, than in all previous years. National schools were opened and run by the Indian Independence League in all territories. In Burma itself, there were 25 Indian schools run under the supervision of the League.

CHAPTER X

THE RANI OF JHANSI REGIMENT*

Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose arrived in Singapore on July 2, 1943 and on July 12 he addressed a mass rally of Indian women at Singapore. He exhorted the women that they should take an active part in the fight for freedom and cited the examples of Indian heroines in history, particularly that of Rani Lakshmi-bai of Jhansi who died fighting sword in hand in 1857. He called for volunteers to join the army as fighters and thousands of women gave their names on the spot. Among them was Dr. Lakshmi Swaminathan. Dr. Lakshmi was selected as the fit person to command this regiment not only for her name but for her patriotic zeal and attractive personality, and she was sent for officers' training.

August 22, 1943, was a red-letter day in the history of the Independence movement, for on this day was the opening ceremony of the Rani of Jhansi training camp near Bras Basah, Singapore, and Dr. Lakshmi was commissioned as Captain and given the command. The Rani of Jhansi Regiment was divided into two sections. The first section was a purely fighting unit, in which volunteers were given the same severe training as recruits in any other I.N.A. training camp. The other section was a nursing section including those

*The above article is based on an interview with Major George Muller Lee of I.N.A.

who were not temperamentally fit for combatant purposes and physically unfit to stand the severe training, and were given lectures and training in medical work at the I.N.A. base hospital at Bidadari, Singapore.

When the Ranis first started training, crowds of Chinese, Malays and other nationalities used to gather round the parade ground reminding one of the crowds at a football cup match. The Ranis got shy and could not carry on. High ranking officers of I.N.A., from the supreme command, then decided to fence the parade ground with matting about six feet high to avoid the vulgar gaze of spectators. After about two months the Ranis became quite seasoned and used to take part in route marches with full marching kit, ceremonial parades and public demonstration in arms training. It was a thrilling sight to see the Ranis demonstrating bayonet fighting on dummies, yelling "Delhi Chalo, Delhi."

Japanese officers used to scoff at the idea of women soldiers. but after witnessing a demonstration they used to scratch their heads, look puzzled and then say that the sleeping Indian tiger had really been roused with a vengeance. Indian shirkers used to slink away after seeing the Ranis in training and then be seen the next day at the recruiting office. Chinese, Malay and Javanese women of Singapore looked on in amazement, which soon turned into admiration, and Indian sarees began to come into fashion with them. The Ranis dressed in field service caps, shirts and Jodhpur breeches, and boots and wore I.N.A. cap badges, party badges and insignia. Their officers wore bush shirts and long trousers. Major Lee tells the reporter that when in Singapore he went to a Chinese tailor to have some alterations in a pair of riding breeches which had become rather tight for him the tailor and the assistants

began to laugh and say: "This is not a military officer's dress. It is worn by Indian women!" So Major Lee had to give up riding breeches.

The Ranis were trained by selected instructors who were formerly of the crack regiments of the British Indian Army and had seen fighting in many lands. In the beginning seasoned warriors of I.N.A., who had served from the age of 16 in the army and had put in ten to fifteen years' service, used to feel very awkward to salute an officer of the Rani of Jhansi Regiment. But in the course of time this feeling changed to that of genuine admiration and respect. But there were certain cases which caused a bit of amusement. There was a Dr. Podumal of Bangkok who was attached to the welfare department of the Indian Independence League of Thailand. Mrs. Podumal joined the Rani of Jhansi Regiment and in the course of time rose from a lance naik to naik havildar, sub-officer and then second lieutenant. She came to Thailand for recruiting with a small band of the Ranis. There was a ceremonial parade where she was given preference and gave the words of caution to units and recruits. When Dr. Podumal came face to face with Lieut. (Mrs.) Podumal during the function, he had to come to attention and salute to the vast amusement of the people assembled there. He was only an Independence League officer, but she in virtue of her commission was senior to him and had to be given precedence.

The Ranis of the nursing section displayed the highest devotion to their duties on the front under severe and almost continuous bombing and machine-gunning from the air. In the Burma campaign hospitals were a special target and many casualties occurred among the wounded and the sick in hospitals and convalescent depots.

One remarkable feature of the patriotic spirit of Indians in East Asia was that families took part. Major Lee tells us of an old Sikh, who sold his rubber estate and all he possessed and gave it to the League. He, his son and daughter-in-law enlisted. The son became a recruit in the Seletar training camp, the daughter-in-law joined the Rani of Jhansi regiment, while the old man, who had lost his wife some years ago, joined the Seletar training camp but as he was too old and not physically fit for the firing line, he was an officer orderly to the commanding officer and used to run about with great enthusiasm and pleasure on his duties.

There is another instance of Mrs. Ponniah, a sub-officer in the Rani of Jhansi regiment. Her husband, Dr. Ponniah, was attached to the welfare department of the Indian Independence League as he was not physically fit and over-age for the army. Mrs. Ponniah's son joined the I.N.A. Officers Training School at Singapore and, after passing out, was commissioned as second Lieutenant. He was somewhere on the Burma front and has not been heard of yet.

The Rani of Jhansi regiment reached the strength of two battalions and was disbanded in May 1945, just when Rangoon fell.

