I WARNED MY COUNTRYMEN

Being the Collected Works 1945-50 of

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TO

THE PEOPLE

OF

INDIA AND PAKISTAN

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I WARNED MY COUNTRYMEN



Sarat Chandra Bose

CONTENTS

PART I : 1945

Call to Battle—pp 1-7 ; Meeting the Press—pp 8-18 ; No Cease Fire—pp 19-28 ; On Chiang Kai-Shek—pp 29-30 ; Address to the Calcutta Corporation—pp 31-42 ; On Truman's 'Sermon On The Mount'—pp 43-44 ; Asian Unity, Response to Aung San—pp 45-46 ; War, Imprisonment and Elections—pp 47-60 ; The I.N.A. Struggle : Reply to "The Statesman"—pp 61-67 ; Congress and the Hindu Mahasabha—pp 68-73 ; On Shri Guru Nanak—pp 74-76 ; Police Firing in Calcutta—pp 77-78 ; On Charges Against the I.N.A.—pp 79 ; Repression in Bikaner pp 80—81.

PART II : 1946

Atrocities in Chittagong By Civil Pioneer Corps—pp 85-86 ; Jalpaiguri and Tripuri—pp 87-93 ; British Atrocities in Indonesia and Indo-China—pp 94-96 ; Food For The People—pp 97-104 ; An Address to Students—pp 105-109, Enemies of India's Freedom—110-113 ; A Message to Students—pp 114-115 ; British Cabinet Mission to India (I)—p 116 ; Bretton Woods Report and Sterling Balances—pp 117-120 ; Police Terror in India—pp 121-130 ; British Cabinet Mission to India (II) pp 131-134 ; Budget Speech—pp 135-147 ; On The Trial of the Indian National Army—pp 148-153 ; On The Proposed Dissection of Bengal or Punjab—p 154 ; Recall Bengal Governor and Dismiss Ministry—pp 155-157 ; All-Party Ministry for Bengal—p 158 ; Resist Evil—pp 159-160 ; Remedy for Bengal's Troubles—pp 161-167.

PART III : 1947

Call for an Indian Volunteer Army for Vietnam—pp 171-172 ; Resignation from the Congress Working Committee—pp 173-174 ; Address to the Indian National Army—pp 175-177 ; Azad Hind Party—pp 178-180 ; On the Division of India—pp 181-182 ; United Independent Bengal—183-194 ; On the Mountbatten Plan (I)—pp 195-196 ; On the Mountbatten Plan (II)—pp 197-199 ; On the Mountbatten Plan (III)—p 200 ; The Indian Struggle—pp 201-204 ; What Bengal Demands Of India (I) —pp 205-208.

PART IV : 1948

What Bengal Demands of India (II)—pp 211-214 ; United Nations of South Asia—pp. 215-218 ;. The Sugar Industry of India—pp 219-230 ; I Warned My Countrymen—pp. 231-236 ; "The Nation" Greets You—pp. 237-239 ; Open Letter to Dr. Katju—pp 240-248 ; India's Neutrality Threatened—pp 249-253 ; United Independent Bengal and Jinnah—p 254 ; On British Assets in India—pp 255-257.

PART V : 1949

The Asian Conference and After—pp 261-264 ; The Republic Within the Commonwealth—pp 265-268 ; Jammu in Jeopardy—pp 269-271 ; The Problem of Refugees—pp 272-275 ; From Across The Seas—pp 276-281 ; At A Press Conference—pp 282-291 ; This Our Independence—pp 292-295 ; Impeachment and Trial—pp 296-297 ; Exchanges With Mao Tse-Tung—p 298 ; Recognize Peoples' Republic of China—pp 299-300 ; Hongkong Belongs to China—pp 301-303 ; Our Prime Minister Throws Off the Mask—304-306 ; Socialist Consolidation—The Need of the Hour—pp 307-316 ; Disgrace Abounding and the Remedy—pp 317-320 ; On Subhasism—pp. 321-329.

PART VI : 1950

A Constitution of Myths and Denials—pp 333-344 ; The Governor's Speech—pp 345-347 ; To My Brother Bengalees in East and West Bengal—pp 348-350 ; Appeal To India and Pakistan—pp 351-352.

INDEX 353

PLATES

Frontispiece

In Rome 1948

facing page 174

With Mahatma Gandhi 1947

facing page 175

With General Aung San 1946

The picture of the author on the cover was taken while making his last public address at the Calcutta Maidan on 20 August 1949.

PREFACE

There has been insistent demand for the publication of Sarat Chandra Bose's works during the past decade and more. This volume is the first product of a planned effort in this regard.

Collection and editing of all the material relating to Sarat Chandra's chequered public life of three decades will necessarily involve considerable time and work. This the Netaji Research Bureau has now taken up in right earnest. A beginning is being made with the more easily accessible material relating to the last phase of his life. The relevance of the work to the current situation in the country will be evident.

The four and a half years covered by this anthology followed four and a half years in prison for Sarat Chandra from 1941 to 1945. Towards the end of 1941, after four years of Muslim League rule, Bengal politics took a new and hopeful turn. The Muslim League coalition disintegrated and a broad new progressive coalition consisting of the Krishak Praja party, Congress (Bose group), progressive members of the Muslim League, Hindu Mahasabha, Independent Scheduled Caste Group, Anglo-Indians, Indian Christians and others, came into existence. Mr. Fazlul Huq, accepting the leadership of the Progressive Coalition party said on 3 December, 1941 :

> " ....The formation of this party, bringing together as it does the diverse elements in India's national life, is an event unprecedented in the history of India....Our united efforts will henceforth be directed towards the achievement of our common purpose and common ideals."

In a letter dated 5 July 1944 to Mr. R. G. Casey, the then Governor of Bengal, from his detention camp in Coonoor, Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose had this to say about this new development and his own role in it :

> "....You might have heard that the Fazlul Huq ministry was formed in December 1941 and that in its formation I took an active and prominent part....My activities in connection with the downfall of the previous Ministry and the formation of the Fazlul Huq ministry in December 1941 found me within prison bars very soon. But I do not regret it. The fact that I had succeeded in extinguishing the communal flames in Bengal was sufficient consolation to me, even though I had burnt my fingers in making the attempt."

He added :

> "I have always been of opinion — have never made a secret of it — that the rights and interests of the people of Bengal could be safeguarded and promoted only if the Hindu and Muslim members of the legislature combined to free themselves from the malignant influence of the agents of British Imperialism. With that end in view, I promoted the formation of a Coalition party in Bengal in November 1941 (known as the 'Progressive Coalition Party')."

On 11 December 1941 Sarat Chandra Bose was suddenly arrested under the Defence of India Rules. The same day the Progressive Coalition Ministry took the oaths of office and Mr. Fazlul Huq was expelled from the All India Muslim League.

The Government of India in a communique on the arrest vaguely alleged that "there have been contacts of such a nature between Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose and the Japanese as to render his immediate apprehension necessary." They failed to reply to Sarat Chandra's rejoinders to the allegation. Two and a half years later, in July 1944, the Government formally communicated to him the grounds of his detention wherein, in addition to another vague reference to "the Japanese", it was alleged that he "had been in contact with Subhas Chandra Bose and were a party to the latter's plans which were prejudicial to the defence of British India and the efficient prosecution of the war." Sarat Chandra's exchanges with the British Government on this and other matters will form the subject of a separate publi-

cation. What is more important, Sarat Chandra Bose's revolutionary role in Netaji's escape from India and in his plans for organising an armed assault from outside, will also in due course be documented on the basis of material now being collected and studied.

As Bengal passed from tragedy to tragedy with the progress of the imperialist war, the leader languished in successive prison camps in far-away South India. On 13 September 1945 the Government announced his release with a press note in the following terms :

> " With the effective surrender of the Japanese in Singapore, it has become unnecessary to keep any longer in custody a number of persons including Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose and certain members of his family who had been detained by order of the Central Government to prevent them from acting in a manner prejudicial to the defence of British India and the efficient prosecution of the war."

Sarat Chandra made a triumphal return home, broken in health but with the call of battle on his lips. This collection begins with his extempore public address at the mammoth reception he was given at Howrah. He lost no time in expressing his views, in his usual forceful and forthright manner, on all national and international questions (Part 1). He returned to his high position in the Indian National Congress on the basis of the 'Quit India' resolution and led the party to victory in the elections to provincial and central legislatures.

In January 1946 Sarat Chandra was elected leader of the Congress party in the Central Legislative Assembly. Five important speeches he delivered there as Leader of the Opposition, viz., on the food problem, sterling balances, police terror, the budget and the Indian National Army, are among the contents of Part 2. His observations on the negotiations with the British Cabinet Mission will be read with profit by students of history and politics. He was elected to the Constituent Assembly in July 1946. A visit

to Burma followed and where his talks with General Aung San opened a new relationship among the newly independent nations of South Asia. His was the first voice of protest against the proposed division of the Punjab and Bengal. His membership of the interim government of Pandit Nehru lasted only six weeks to the relief and comfort of the Congress leadership and British imperialists. The unprecedented communal strife that swept over Bengal in the latter half of 1946 kept him fully occupied with Bengal and her problems.

On 23 January 1947 Sarat Chandra performed the opening ceremony of Netaji Bhawan, which now houses the Netaji Museum, and dedicated it to national purposes.

In January 1947 he resigned from the Congress Working Committee and the final parting of the ways was not long in coming. He called for a new party based on the ideology of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. He warned again and again of the threat to India's national aspirations resulting from a capitulation of the Congress leadership to the British on the issues of unity and independence. He started a campaign against partition, particularly the division of Bengal, in February 1947. After prolonged and patient effort and undeterred by slander, he was able to evolve a plan for the creation of a United Independent Bengal as an alternative to partition. Available data on the plan have been compiled, suitably edited and included in Part 3. Sarat Chandra saw in the Mountbatten Plan a mortal blow to the fundamental objectives of India's national struggle and campaigned single-handed for its rejection.

With the transfer of power to the Rightist Congress and the Muslim League, Sarat Chandra finally broke away from the powers that be and formed the Socialist Republican Party to prepare the country for the socialist phase of India's struggle in accordance with the post-war programme of political action of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose.

Part 4 begins with his interesting proposal for an alliance of South Asian countries to safeguard independence, promote national development and defend their neutrality vis-a-vis the big power blocs. In August 1948 he launched a daily newspaper "The Nation" which soon became a powerful and popular organ of the alternative leadership he offered to his country. His signed editorials in "The Nation" on a whole range of national and international questions have been included in this collection. His efforts for the consolidation of the nationalist and socialist forces found tangible expression in the United Socialist Conference which met in Calcutta in October 1949. His presidential address at the conference—"Socialist Consolidation—the Need of the Hour"—may well be called his political testament (Part 5).

In the closing year of his life he wrote a frankly critical article on the Indian Constitution (Part 6) which will be studied with interest in the light of developments of the following years. His last days were given to finding a lasting solution of the continuing tragedy of the partition of Bengal. His last two editorials in "The Nation" on this subject—which conclude this anthology—together constitute his parting message to his people on either side of the border.

Netaji Research Bureau will now proceed to bring to light in a planned manner so much of other material that have remained unrevealed relating to the life and work of Sarat Chandra Bose. They include his speeches, writings and letters covering his public life of three decades, his prison diaries and political department files of the British period relating to him and Netaji. The Bureau will also endeavour to publish—in the interest of students of law—reports of some of the battles he fought in Courts of Law. We seek the support of his friends and countrymen, colleagues and pupils, in the task ahead.

Our warmest thanks and appreciation go to the following for their contribution to this publication : Mr. Jitendra

Nath Ghose who suggested the title of the book ; Mr. Harendra Nath Sengupta for the most engaging jacket design ; Mr. Arun Kumar Chakraborty for his tireless work in gathering material and in the preparation of the manuscript ; Messrs Gouranga Bandopadhyaya, Sankar Nath Chatterjea, Naga Sundaram and Ramani Mohan Das for help in diverse ways ; the National Library for letting us access to old papers ; Messrs Imperial Art Cottage for their excellent co-operation in the actual printing of the book ; and finally Mr. Benode C. Chowdhuri for piloting the entire process of publication with unflagging zeal.

Jai Hind

Netaji Research Bureau
Netaji Bhawan
Calcutta 20
9 December, 1967

Sisir K. Bose

I WARNED MY COUNTRYMEN

PART I · 1945

CALL TO BATTLE

The following is a free English translation of the speech delivered in Bengali by Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose at Howrah Maidan on 17 September 1945 at the first public reception accorded to him on his arrival from South India after his release from detention.

FRIENDS AND THE YOUTH OF BENGAL,

I have come back to you after four long years and I have much to tell you. But you will have to forgive me today as I do not at the moment have the necessary strength to make a long speech.

First, let me thank you all most sincerely for the great ovation you have given me. I know the young men and young women of Bengal can never forget me however long I may be in exile.

Today I am reminded particularly of the events of 1905 when, like many of you here, I was a college student. Those were the days of Bengal partition—when the seed of independence was first sown in this country. We used to roam about the streets in those days in large numbers singing the song given to us by the late lamented Aswini Kumar Dutt[1]—the strains of which are still ringing in my ears :

"চল্‌রে চল্‌রে চল্‌রে ও ভাই,
জীবন আহবে চল্‌
বাজবে সেথা রণভেরী
আসবে প্রাণে বল"

(Let us on to the battle of life, where the battle drums will beat—infusing strength in our hearts).

May be the drums are silent for a while. But sooner or later they will be sounded again. And when that happens, it will be testing time for the young men and women of

[1]This was an error. The song was actually composed by Manomohan Chakrabarty and popularised by Aswini Kumar Dutt.

Bengal. I hope the ideal, the example and the record set by them will make the people of the rest of the provinces follow the path shown by Bengal. I hope therefore that every young man and woman will sing Aswini Kumar's song as a *mantram.*

The freedom movement is countrywide today—but I wish to say, not in a boastful spirit but only to remind the youth of Bengal, that the struggle for freedom had its beginning in 1905 on the soil of Bengal. If the youth of Bengal have to justify themselves before their countrymen, let the cry go forth from every heart—may every drop of my blood help to nurture the seed of independence. Only lip service will not do. You must not even for one moment forget the ideal. I am aware that the August movement was followed by all manner of oppression in the different provinces of India. They might have been new to other provinces but such repression was not new to Bengal.

The youth of Bengal have braved British bullets and bayonets. I hope they will be prepared to do so again in the coming fight for independence. Let the youth of Bengal proclaim that they are prepared for blood sacrifice for the cause of freedom. British Imperialism cannot be destroyed by merely shouting 'Down with British Imperialism'. If you are prepared to lay down your lives in the cause, freedom will come, otherwise not. I expect the Congress will soon give the call to battle. I hope all the other organisations in the country will join in the chorus. We shall not show any indiscipline. The Muslim, the Hindu, the Sikh, the Jain, the Parsee, the Christian, one and all, will gather round the banner of freedom in a disciplined manner and be prepared for what in Urdu is called 'Kurbani'. The supreme sacrifice will of course not be required of everybody. Nevertheless, everyone must be prepared for the supreme sacrifice. If we can do so, it will not be in the power of British Imperialism or for that matter any other Imperialism, to refuse to concede India's demand. Our demand has been ignored over a long period of time, but they will not be able to do so much longer. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel has

said that we must have our birthright within five years. I wish to add my voice to his and say that freedom will come within five years if you are prepared. Mere chanting of slogans will not do.

Shouting slogans like 'Down with Imperialism' and 'People's War' will lead us nowhere. Had the war that has just ended been not an imperialist but a people's war, India would be free today. I agree it was a people's war for Soviet Russia. I agree it was a people's war for France, for Czechoslovakia, for Britain,—but how it could be people's war for India passes my comprehension. I shall put one question to my young communist friends and I hope they will give their answer in the public press. Is it true that Comrade Stalin told the British Foreign Secretary Mr. Anthony Eden in 1935,—"The British Empire is the greatest force for peace and stability in the world" ? I hold Lenin in esteem. He was a hero. But where is Lenin's Russia today ? Young communists need to be told that the Russia of today is not Lenin's Russia but Stalin's Russia. There is a world of difference between Lenin's Russia and Stalin's Russia. Yes, if Lenin was alive, he would have applied Russia's manpower and armed might for the emancipation of the world. The war that has just ended was not fought for world freedom. Why was the war fought ? It was an attempt on the part of Imperialism to defend its hegemony—to teach German Imperialism the lesson that it was beyond its power to defeat Britain. Communist friends forget that Stalin's Russia entered into a treaty of alliance with Nazi Germany. Nazi Germany was far from communist—it was rank imperialist. When Hitler declared war on Russia, Stalin came to terms with Great Britain. I would advise young men and women to leave slogans aside for some time and study the history of nations.

I hope the Asiatic nations will come together in the near future—a new awakening has dawned on Asia. I have faith that this reawakening will not pass away. Today some Congressmen are thinking aloud about a South-East Asiatic Federation and journalists are making a lot of noise about

it. Have you, my young friends, forgotten that in 1922 Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das mooted the idea of an Asiatic Federation ? The Asiatic Federation that he dreamed of stretched from Russia in the North to the smallest island in the South. Four years later the revered Shri Srinivas Iyengar endorsed Deshbandhu's proposal. We should not forget for one moment that it was Deshbandhu Das who initiated the concept of an Asiatic Federation. Now, after long twentyfive years, some have been dreaming of a South-East Asiatic Federation, but with whom ? Siam, Malaya, Afghanistan, Persia and such countries and India ! You know very well the power of Siam, Malaya is a British colony and whatever might have been Afghanistan in the past, she has very little power today. I do not expect the Congress will be inclined to join such a Federation. You know the present status of Persia. What is her history of the past six years ? On the one hand, Britain is trying to swallow her up and, on the other, Russia is standing by. Russia has not withdrawn her forces yet. No. Deshbandhu did not dream of such a Federation. We must fulfil Deshbandhu's dream. Only then will Asia be free.

Some of our eminent Congress leaders[1] say that they think of "freedom in the international setting, in the international background." I shall say in reply : Freedom in the international setting, freedom in the international background and India's freedom steadily receding into the background !

Thanks to the British Government, I have had the opportunity of making some serious study in prison. Even now I read books underlining passages as students do. I should like to request not only my young friends but also Congress leaders to study the history of Russia since 1917 down to modern times. After doing so, if they still talk of self-determination and Pakistan, one could argue with them. What is the situation in Soviet Russia ? There are fifty different nationalities there and a number of republics have been formed. The republics have been given full powers

[1]The reference is most probably to Jawaharlal Nehru. Ed.

in cultural and educational matters. But real power is in the hands of half a dozen persons in Soviet Russia. Orders issued by them from Moscow are binding on all the republics. Now for twentyeight years a strong central government has been in power in Soviet Russia and shall remain so for all time. Those who cite self-determination in Soviet Russia in connection with their dream of Pakistan are deceiving themselves and building on false premises. So, I again ask young men and women to read the history of Russia well. My respected friend Mr. Fazlul Huq is present with us here. I should like to ask him if he believes there is any real difference between him and myself. I know he does not believe so. He is a victim of the present order of things. Therefore, you will not hear him talk of Pakistan. Those who love their motherland and desire to see her free, will demand a United India. If India is fragmented, what will be her state ? The British will continue to rule over this country with the help of their bullets and bayonets. They desire such fragmentation. But if India stands united, they shall have to pack up and go. That day is not far-off. I appeal to all—Hindus, Muslims, Jains, Sikhs and Christians —to stand united and wipe off all the weaknesses of two hundred years.

The storm that passed over Bengal in recent years also touched me to a certain extent in my prison camp in Coonoor. It was not my privilege to serve Bengal in her distress. I think another opportunity has come to me today. And I shall have a chance once again to serve Bengal and India. If we can work together unitedly and in an organised way for the next months, we shall be able to convince British imperialists that their time is up.

Truth reveals itself first to a handful of men. I lay no claim to having undergone the *Sadhana* necessary for arriving at the Truth. If by chance Truth reveals itself to me, I shall give expression to it before the youth of Bengal even if all the rest of India turns against me. I read in today's morning papers that one Congress leader has regretted the failure of the Simla Conference. I shall

answer that on behalf of Bengal and on my own behalf by saying that we feel happy at the failure of the Simla Conference—there was nothing in the Simla proposals that should make us sorry for its failure, I thank Mr. Jinnah for having spoilt the Conference. Of course, he did not do so on purpose for the country's good. Well, the 50 : 50 formula did not emanate from Mr. Jinnah—it was Mr. Bhulabhai Desai who proposed it in secret. I shall say—if the Muslims are ready to fight for freedom, there is no harm in offering them hundred per cent of the seats. I should first like to find out who and what sort of a person I am dealing with, what is the stuff he is made of. Let us rather hand over all power to the Nationalist Muslim—but I have no faith in the 50 : 50 formula. That is why I feel delighted at the failure of the Simla Conference. India will not be free by the mere fact of a few seats in the Viceroy's Executive Council being given to Indians,—freedom will come through struggle.

I shall now recall some incidents at the Tripuri Congress. When I rose to move an amendment to the main resolution of the Tripuri Congress in 1939, I was told that as I had not sent due notice of my amendment, I could not be permitted according to the rules to move the amendment. I therefore opposed the main resolution. I said that the resolution disclosed no plan of action, gave no lead to the country,—the resolution was only words, words, words. I said that the war in Europe was approaching and therefore the country must be prepared. The Congress President had proposed that a six months' ultimatum should be given to British Government to transfer all power to the Indian people and quit India. And, six months later the European war broke out.

It has been said that two Congressmen asked Mr. Louis Johnson to request President Roosevelt to put in a word to Mr. Churchill on India's behalf. That any Congressman could wait upon Mr. Louis Johnson in this manner with a beggar's bowl is something that I cannot believe.

I shall also refer to the praise lavished on Chiang Kai-Shek by some Congressmen. It was Chiang Kai-Shek who encouraged Japan to fight China by not doing anything to resist her from 1931 to 1936. Chiang Kai-Shek has not uptil now given his own country freedom. It was the Chinese Communists who in December 1936 captured Chiang Kai-Shek and compelled him to enter into a contract to fight Japan.

In conclusion, I shall appeal to all to support the Congress. I hope that in the coming elections, Bengal will vote for the Congress. By doing so, the Bengalees will demonstrate that they shall not have the English continue their hold on this country any longer.

MEETING THE PRESS : Past Mistakes and Future Tasks

The following is a report of the first press conference addressed by Sarat Chandra Bose in Calcutta after his release from detention on 18 September, 1945. Ed.

THE 1942 AUGUST RESOLUTION AND CONGRESS LEADERSHIP

Sarat Chandra Bose : I need hardly say that the resolution of August 1942 was most welcome to me. From the beginning of 1939 up to the beginning of 1942 Congress had degenerated very much and simply passed academic paper resolutions (to use the words of my friend, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru with reference to the old moderate Congress).

During that period, the Indian National Congress under the leadership of my friend Pandit Nehru was passing over more and more to a central and even rightist position, wavering without a principle between struggle for independence and rank opportunism. The correctness of this view has been fully proved since the outbreak of the last European war in September 1939, when this central or rightist current of the Congress revealed itself more and more in all its pitiful helplessness. The position that Pandit Nehru took during that period can be rightly characterised as an attitude of passive radicalism, an attitude of negative expectancy.

I am mentioning only Pandit Nehru's name in this connection, because having read the resolutions of the Congress during that period carefully I have been forced to the conclusion that almost all these resolutions, if not all of them, were drafted by him. It is not as if the Congress High Command did not know that the country was demanding a bolder leadership.

The President[1] of the Tripuri session of the Congress in the message he sent to the Congress from his sick-bed voiced that demand in very clear and unequivocal terms.

1. Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose.

He (the President of the Congress) said, "In the first place I must give a clear and unequivocal expression to what I have been feeling for some time past, namely, that the time has come to raise the issue of Swaraj and submit our national demand to the British Government in the form of an ultimatum. The time has long past when we could have adopted a passive attitude."[1]

But the passive attitude was maintained from the time of the Tripuri Congress right up to 26th April, 1942 when Mahatma Gandhi apparently realising that the Congress was being driven more and more into the ruts gave a bold lead to the country which ultimately culminated in the resolution of August, 1942.

In my humble way I tried to impress upon the leaders of the Congress that the time had come for abandoning their passive attitude and for the purpose of doing so I even went the length of opposing the main resolution of Congress. These were the words I used, "This resolution contains nothing but words, ineffective words, which do not lay down any plan of action, words which do not give our people any lead."

I said further that I expected the framers of the resolution to realise that the time had come to give a definite lead to the people but I had to confess that my expectations had been rudely shaken. I asked, 'Do you want to postpone the struggle till all the people are united ?' If that is what the resolution means, it would be more honest to say 'let us abandon our fight, let us not deceive our people'.

I added : "It is time we asked the British Government in no uncertain terms as to whether they were prepared to concede the principle of self-determination to India. In order to enable them to give us a categorical reply to our demand we should fix a time limit so that we may be able to consider the question at the next session of the Congress.

[1] *Crossroads.* The Tripuri Address, pp 108-111, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1962.

It would be better to give six months' time but it may be even one year, as we will be meeting only next year.....If the reply is unsatisfactory or inadequate or if no reply is received it is my humble submission that the Congress should then resort to such sanction as it can impose."

Question : Do you, Mr. Bose, think that after the 1942 August resolution there is any difference between your stand and the stand taken by the Congress ?

Answer : There is none as far as I can see. Unfortunately, for the next three years certain members of the Congress High Command began courting and wooing the Anglo-American imperialists and some of them even went the length of declaring both publicly and in private that they had 100 per cent sympathy for the Allied powers—the so-called democracies ! Having declared 100 per cent sympathy for the Allied powers I suppose they had none left for their own country.

In this connection, I would like to say a few words about the so-called democracies. In almost all my public utterances before I was clapped in prison I said very definitely that freedom will not come to us from London, or Berlin or Moscow or Rome or Tokyo. But our Congress leaders began to talk about the 'democracies' and went on repeating that for about three years.

Now, who were the chiefs of the neo-democratic kitchen ? Roosevelt, Churchill, Stalin, Chiang Kai-Shek ? Roosevelt, that inexaustible layer-down of commonplaces ; Churchill, the hard-boiled Tory imperialist and feudal lord who spent 100 million pounds of British money to crush the Russian revolution and to restore Czardom ; Stalin, the man who was responsible for the imprisonment or murder of at least 6,000 officials of the Russian Communist Party—some of them trusted colleagues of Lenin and proven revolutionaries—the man who was responsible for the Communist retreat from the struggle against British and French imperialism, the man under whose inspiration the Soviet Union joined the League of Nations—'the thieves' kitchen'

according to Lenin—and entered into agreements and alliances with capitalist governments, the man who told Mr. Anthony Eden in March, 1935, that the British Empire was the greatest force in the world for peace and stability, the man who told the Dean of Canterbury in July 1945, 'I want to keep firm union with England, not only in words, but in deeds. We have no wish whatever to hurt England or hinder England.' As for Chiang Kai-Shek, let Tang-Leang-Li and Mr. Edgar Snow speak.

These were the leaders of so-called democracies with whom some of our Congress leaders were so much in sympathy.

Question : The August resolution, both in letter and spirit, expressed sympathy with the democracies and wanted to assure them that the Congress would be on their side. What you, Mr. Bose, have said just now, shows a difference in spirit.

Answer : I don't think so. When I said that there was no difference between the stand we took in 1939 and the stand taken in the Congress resolution of August, 1942, I was confining myself to the main demand in both, which was presentation of an ultimatum to the British Government in the first case and 'Quit India' in the second case. I do not feel at all bothered about the introductory passages or pious sentiments.

Even today I find that some of our Congress leaders in spite of all that has happened in the international sphere, have been indulging in cheap international claptrap. For instance, one of the Congress leaders[1] has said quite recently, 'We in India have therefore, to think, not only in terms of our own freedom, but the freedom of India against the background of world problems'. 'Background of world problems', 'Background of international events', 'Freedom in the international setting'— words, words, words. And unhappy India still continues to sit in the background.

1. **Pandit Nehru.**

Question : Will it serve, Mr. Bose, any useful purpose to criticise what has happened in the past and even to criticise some statements made at present ?

Answer : I think it is necessary. A nation that is oblivious of the recent past is bound to be forgetful about the future. I repeat it is most necessary that we should have our ideas clear about what we in India should stand for and should not cloud the real issues by the mask of fashionable internationalism. Just examine it from one point of view.

Is or is not the country entitled to know what Indian freedom against the background of world problems means, or what Indian freedom in the international setting means. Does it mean undiluted independence or does it mean something in the nature of Dominion Status or does it mean something in between Dominion Status and undiluted independence ?

The country does understand Mahatma Gandhi's stand 'Quit India' but I am sure very few people in our country understand what is meant by Indian freedom in the international setting, I doubt very much if the authors of these words themselves know their own mind.

UNITY IN THE CONGRESS :

Question : What do you think about unity in the Congress ranks ?

Answer : By unity in the Congress ranks I mean complete unity. That is certainly possible on the basis of 'Quit India' resolution. The main and only demand 'Quit India' stands, and I feel extremely grateful to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel for widening the demand by introducing the words, 'Quit Asia'.

Question : Are you, Mr. Bose, formally joining the Congress ?

Answer : I have always been inside the Congress. If you will forgive a personal reference, I have considered my-

self to be a Congressman since the time I was only 10 years old. My four-anna membership of the Congress ceased, not because of anything I had done, but because disciplinary action was taken against me by the Congress President. Now that the action has spent itself because of the time that has elapsed, I shall certainly enrol myself as a four-anna member of the Congress.

WAVELL PROPOSAL :

Question : Do you, Mr. Bose, agree with the decisions of the last meeting of the Congress Working Committee ?

Answer : I do agree with most of the decisions. But I cannot say I agree with all of them. By agreement, I mean the main points of the resolutions and not with all preambles or all the flourishes in them. On one matter I do not agree with the Working Committee. That is, in deploring the failure of the Simla Conference. I felt most happy when I read that the Simla Conference had failed and I see no reason to change my view.

Question : If you feel that the Wavell proposals are not enough, what are your alternative proposals ?

Answer : I would like to wait until Lord Wavell discloses his mind and I would be quite willing to answer that question after he has. But as apparently you will like to have something definite from me as to why I was and am against acceptance of the Wavell proposals in June last I shall most gladly indicate my reasons clearly and definitely. I was and am definitely of opinion that the Cripps proposals were much more acceptable from the Congress point of view than the Wavell proposals.

Some of the reasons for my saying so are :

1. Cripps on behalf of the British War Cabinet asked for India's co-operation in her own defence ; he did not attempt to lay down India's foreign policy in the future (that is, after the war, in so far as it concerns defence of India, was over) or to get an assurance or undertaking from

Indians that they would prosecute the war in the East outside India's borders with or without men and money from India.

Lord Wavell's first 'condition' was that India must agree to prosecute the war against Japan with utmost energy till Japan was utterly defeated and that obviously implied that India must agree to employ her own men and money until the successful termination of the war in the East from the point of view of the Allies. Lord Wavell thereby clearly and irrevocably laid down India's future foreign policy and denied India the right to determine her foreign policy.

2. Lord Wavell made a great point of his proposal that an Indian would also be charged with the management of India's foreign affairs and apparently some of our Congress leaders were taken in with that. But it is clear that all Indians would have been allowed to do under the Wavell proposals would have been to "manage" India's foreign affairs — the policy being laid down in advance by Britain.

3. Some of the Congress leaders have stressed that the entrusting of the portfolio of foreign affairs to an Indian was a big step in advance and have put forward that as one of the grounds for supporting the Wavell proposals. They have apparently overlooked the fact that under the Cripps proposals also the portfolio of foreign affairs would have automatically come to an Indian— and without India's foreign policy being laid down in advance. Cripps proposals made only one reservation. Cripps's words were : "The British War Cabinet's proposals contain one essential reservation — that in respect of the responsibility for the defence".

4. Lord Wavell said that the proposed new Executive Council would be entirely an Indian Council except for the Viceroy and the Commander-in-Chief. Cripps offered the very same thing. He made that clear when he was in

India and subsequently on the 28th of April, 1942, in his speech in the House of Commons where he said that "the only British members upon whom the new scheme insisted were the Viceroy and the Commander-in-Chief". Cripps was all in favour of giving to the Congress the whip hand and practically all his discussions were with the Congress and he himself said, "My association in the past has been more closely with my friends in the Congress than with the members of other parties or communities".

5. Lord Wavell reduced the Congress to the position of a communal organisation of the caste Hindus, not even of the entire Hindu community. He gave the whip hand to Mr. M. A. Jinnah and that was also made abundantly clear by Mr. Amery's speech in the House of Commons.

6. All nationalist Muslims were thrown overboard by Lord Wavell and I consider it a tragedy that my old friend Shri Bhulabhai Desai, a Congressman and member of the Congress Working Committee, practically suggested it.

7. The Muslim League which can speak for at the most 40 per cent of the Muslims in the country and is a communal organisation, is given the same position as the Congress in Shri Bhulabhai Desai's proposals and Lord Wavell's proposals which followed them. All the other Muslim organisations were completely ignored. The Hindu Mahasabha, a communal organisation of the Hindus, was not given a single seat at the conference, and I can tell you in this connection that I wrote down in my note-book between 16th June and 20th June last, "The inevitable result of this will be that Mr. Jinnah's demands will increase more and more and anything short of Pakistan will be turned down by him". I hope you will permit me to add that what I thought had exactly happened.

8. Cripps offered to Indians all the portfolios now offered by Lord Wavell and in addition, agreed to an Indian being Minister of Defence, although the subjects he agreed to allot for the Defence Minister were very limited.

9. The effect of Lord Wavell's proposals would be that the Hindus in the Congress majority provinces would have to give Muslims more seats in the provincial Council of Ministers than the Muslim number warrants.

10. The constitution-making body envisaged in the Cripps proposals, would have been a body with a Congress-cum-nationalist majority. It is more than certain now that Mr. Jinnah will take the opportunity for scrapping it, and having a constitution-making body over which he can dominate.

I have now given you my reasons why I thought in June 1945 and still think, that the Cripps proposals were superior to those of Lord Wavell from Indian nationalist point of view. And I was not a little surprised that those who rejected the Cripps proposals justified their support to Wavell proposals on the ground that they are seeking an interim agreement. Surely, the necessity for an interim agreement was very much and greater in March 1942 than in June and July 1945.

Question : Apart from the merits or demerits of the Wavell proposals, do you not, Mr. Bose, think that the Congress was justified in supporting the proposals in view of the circumstances then prevailing in the country ?

Answer : I have already impliedly given my answer. I do not think any impelling necessity arose in coming to an interim agreement.

BENGAL POLITICS :

Question : What lead, Mr. Bose, do you propose to give to Bengal at the present juncture ?

Answer : What I have already said shows quite clearly how my mind has been working. I have already said elsewhere that the Congress must fight the coming elections. As to the other important issues I have this morning given you a very clear indication of my views.

Question : How do you propose to bridge the differences in Congress politics in Bengal ?

Answer : I have already said that complete unity within Congress ranks is the most pressing necessity for the moment and I shall certainly do all that lies in my power to bring that about, not only in my own province, but in other provinces as well. I would also endeavour to do my little bit for bringing in all nationalist Muslims inside the Congress as early as possible.

Question : Did you give any sanction and blessing to the last League coalition ministry in Bengal, as has been said by the Hindu Ministers of that Cabinet ?

Answer : I would like not to go into recent history. But as you have put a direct question, I shall give a direct answer. It is true that my blessings were sought 'after' the formation of the last ministry and not before and the reply which I sent by telegraph on the 29th April, 1943, was as follows : "Can't express any opinion on your action until personal discussion". But as I was not permitted to write on political matters I even went the length of requesting Sir Nazimuddin, Mr. Abdur Rahaman Siddique, Mr. T. C. Goswami and Mr. Barada Prasanna Pain and one or two others to come and see me.

I learnt subsequently that the Government of India had refused to permit my interviewing them. As regards the attitude I took subsequently towards the ministry my opinion is given very clearly and definitely in the letter which I wrote to His Excellency Mr. Casey on the 5th July 1944, and I hope now that I am a free man, Government of Bengal will have no objection to publishing it.

Question : Are you going to meet the Congress President in Bombay and discuss with him the question of organisation of the Congress machinery in this province ?

Answer : I received a telegram from the Congress President yesterday, sending felicitations on my release and inviting me to attend and participate in the A.I.C.C.

meeting. I would certainly avail myself of all opportunities that I may have to discuss with him the question of organisation and all other essential matters affecting, not only this province, but the rest of India.

It is true that at the present moment I am not a member of the Congress executive, whether in the province or in the all-India executive. But I am entirely free to act as a four-anna member of the Congress and I hope that the fact that I am not a member of the executive will not hamper or prejudice me in the least so far as Congress work is concerned.

POLITICAL PRISONERS :

Before I conclude my interview with you — and I am very grateful to all of you for meeting me this morning — I must refer to several hundreds of leaders and workers who are still in detention in Bengal.

I am well aware that the Government of Bengal is the most reactionary government in India. It will therefore be necessary for us to exert our utmost to procure the immediate release of all political prisoners who are still behind the prison bars.

On behalf of the people of Bengal I demand the release of each and every one of them. There is absolutely no justification for keeping them in prison a single day longer. Heartless and cruel treatment meted out to most of them, must definitely stop, and there will be no peace in Bengal until it stops.

NO CEASE FIRE

Report of an Interview[1]

Till I met Sarat Chandra Bose, I had no idea. India also had a Churchill of its own — to match the Churchill of Britain. The same set expression, the same grim purpose, the same unquenchable spirit never to submit or yield—even the same cigar.

But above all, that same bull-dog determination reminiscent of Churchill's words during the crisis of his country—we shall fight in the hills, we shall fight in the streets —indeed as much determination to win the freedom of India as Churchill had, and although dethroned, still has, not to let her.

There is no milk-sop stuff about Sarat Babu. The first few words with him will tell you that quite plainly. It does not mean he indulges in brow-beating, but at the same time there is no beating about the bush.

He scores a political "bull's eye" with everything he aims at, whether it be the philosophy of Fascism or its synonimity with imperialism, whether it be the British trick of the trade or Chiang Kai-Shek's duplicity, whether it be the fiasco of Pakistan or the farce of Indian Communism.....

All this— and much more — within barely ten days of his release, after four long years of illegal incarceration. It is surely sufficient to make the hearts of his enemies sink into their shoes — for if this is just the beginning of the onslaught on them, what must indeed be the shape of things to come ?

[1]The interview recorded by Homi J. H. Taleyarkhan was published originally in 'Blitz' in September, 1945.

FIGHT FASCISM WITH FASCISM

Though just out of jail Sarat Chandra does not plead for rest. He asks for no breathing time. He is back in the harness of his country's service the moment he is free, although his health cries piteously for consideration and his broken constitution demands some haven of peace and quiet.

But there is only one haven for the restless spirit of Sarat Chandra — freedom for his country. Till then, no "Cease Fire" on those that obstruct the way to it.

Go-bang is his policy. Match Imperialism with Imperialism. Fight Fascism with Fascism. Even as the war has just proved, all warring countries were Fascists under different labels — the one Anglo-American, the other Italo-German. The difference without a difference !

AGREEMENT WITH G.B.S.

He had no less a man than George Bernard Shaw to agree with him. For in his latest book "Everybody's Political What's What ?" G.B.S. says when dealing with "the great corruption of Socialism which threatens us at present," that it calls itself Fascism in Italy, National Socialism (Nazi for short) in Germany, New Deal in the United States — and is clever enough to remain nameless in England — but everywhere it means the same thing.

Quoting further from the book, Mr. Bose expressed his complete agreement with the view that it produced a world war in which Anglo-American Fascism fights German and Italian Fascism because Fascism is international, while the capitalists are still intensely national.

For when Germany proposes to fascify (only G.B.S. can think of such a word !) the whole earth under the Fuehrership of Adolf Hitler and Italy the same under Benito Mussolini, the Anglo-American Fascists will see Germany and Italy damned before they accept any Fascism that is not of their own making under their own Fuehrers.

As it is, G.B.S. adds, the western Fascists are "combining with Russia to destroy the central and mid-southern Fascists and with Communist China to defeat Capitalist Japan."

The sum and substance of his argument, Sarat Chandra said, turning over a few more pages of "Political What's What," the great Shaw puts in a superb nutshell —this policy he writes, called Fascism in Italy, National Socialism or Nazidom in Germany, is in growing and vigorous practice in England and the so-called western democracies, where it is left unnamed.

CIVIL WARS BETWEEN EMPIRES—OR VAMPIRES

Yes, reflected Sarat Chandra, closing the book, there is a wealth of wisdom and insight in what Shaw says, it was a pity, he thought, that some of our Congress leaders did not give the same interpretation to history between the years 1939 and 1945. The interpretation they gave was entirely wrong and misleading. It was more or less the British old school-tie interpretation ! It was an internationalism of a sort—cheap, if not false.

For Sarat Chandra makes no difference whatever between Imperialism and Fascism. To what the late Romain Rolland said somewhere that Fascism is the blood-brother of Imperialism, the blood-brother of Subhas Bose would add, that it is the younger brother. The so-called democracies of today are empires possibly some people would like to describe them as Vampires.

Sarat Babu openly confessed his inability to understand how people who have declared their willingness to fight the Fascists could consistently at the same time declare their willingness to side with the Imperialists.

So, according to my reading of Sarat Chandra's theory, we are living in a world of Fascism and the wars we are fighting —or, lest Sarat Babu protests, I had better say, the wars that are being fought —are nothing more than civil

wars, India is, of course, not a part of this pernicious world federation of Fascists.

NO MATERIAL FOR VERDICT ON SUBHAS

Armed with that clue, I tried to place this death-dealer to the Fascist in what I thought would be in a tight corner. I meant to ask him : You have declared you are not in favour of having any truck with the Japs, then how do you associate yourself with brother Subhas's attitude ?

But I didn't get that far when he started speaking. He nipped me in the bud. He said he had no materials on which he could pass judgment. He had merely said, he had no truck with the Japs and added that whether it would be wise to make any alliance with any power, Eastern or Western, if any such offer was made in the near or distant future, was a matter on which no opinion could be expressed now.

For Sarat Chandra firmly believed that every nation in the world which had fought for independence in the past had fought with a certain amount of foreign help. It does not apply only to subject countries. Even independent nations have taken the help of foreign powers whose ideologies are completely different. The very war which has just terminated can come to the witness-box and give evidence. Even a mighty nation like Russia sought the help of Britain and America. Moreover, nations are becoming more and more interdependent on one another.

Am I to conclude from this, Mr. Bose, I asked with some misgiving that India can never gain her freedom without foreign assistance ?

The leader's faith and pride in his country's patriotic potential stepped into the gap which had made room for my question. No, I do not say that, he denied emphatically, with a Churchillian puff at his cigar which I was beginning to notice was as inevitable in his mouth as in the ex-British premier's.

I verily believe, he added, that India can acquire her independence without outside help but I shall not be surprised if in the course of the next struggle, world forces will line up with her and give her moral, and material help.

MAKE CONGRESS A FIGHTING ORGANISATION

Sarat Chandra Bose outspoken and fearless, a realist and not a theorist, a believer in mass power and not in power politics, warmed up to an exhilarating pitch of frankness as he said : I am not hypocritical enough to say that I can be the friend of Britain or for that matter of any country till the one concedes India her freedom and the other helps her in her fight to acquire it.

What is the best way to set about it then, Sarat Babu ? — I enquired. Do you see any hope in the latest Wavell proposals or the promises of the Labour Government ?

This was an invitation to revolt ! For Sarat Babu nearly jumped down my throat. The very idea of looking up to the Wavell Proposals is revolting and humiliating !

It was nothing short of a piece of showmanship on the part of the British.

He did not annihilate the Labour Government as mercilessly. I am free to confess, he said, that there are some good men in the rank and file of the Labour Party, but as far as leaders of that party are concerned, I have little or no confidence in them.

He does not know if he will be in a position to revise his views at some future date, but at present it seems that the ruling cliques in Great Britain have always been and still are practically the same in so far as their attitude towards India is concerned whether they are Liberal, Conservative or Labour. They are all rank Imperialists !

Thus relentless in his realism, he relented in his tone : we'll have to wait for some time before we can ascertain the

attitude from abroad. Till then, our duty is to intensify the struggle for Indian independence and for that purpose to make the Congress a more militant and fighting organisation than it ever was.

PAKISTAN

The Congress will not have to fight only against the British, will it, Sir ?.....I asked. What about the Pakistanis and the Communists, the 'indigenous' obstructionists in the path to freedom ? Pakistan, Sarat Chandra believed and hundreds of thousands believe with him, is not practical politics. Mr. Jinnah's Muslim nation theory is entirely unfounded in fact.

Why, the very founder of Pakistan movement, Choudhury Rahamat Ali, the daring darling of Bengal laughed, did not talk of Muslim nation. In a recent booklet which the "founder' had sent to Mr. Bose as a God-sent election campaign gift (!) he pleads for the scrapping of the All-India Muslim League as such and creating instead an alliance of the three nations of Pakistan, Bengal and Usmanistan.

In the same precious publication, the author said in another place, "We will build on the solid and secure foundations of Pakistan, Bengal and Usmanistan, three independent nations !"

In yet another and later booklet of his, the "public prosecutor" of Pakistan revealed, Rahamat Ali has suggested the creation of certain other 'stans' such as Siddiquistan, Faruquistan, Haideristan, Munistan (presumably after Hitler's Munich ! Maplistan, Safistan and Nasaristan. Our hats off to this prolific inventor of 'stans' !

So this is Pakistan, Taleyarkhan ! Sarat Babu exclaimed, with a shrug of hopelessness born of amusement. It does not surprise me at all, he added, that Muslim leaders like the late Sir Mohamed Iqbal, Jinnah, Zafrullah Khan, Yusuf Ali, H. S. Suhrawardy, and others not so long ago described the Pakistan scheme as a mere chimera

or in words to that effect. And it doesn't surprise me at all, he concluded, that Mr. Jinnah should fight shy of defining Pakistan.

Anyway, Mr. Bose should be hugely indebted to Mr. Rahamat Ali, the founder of Pakistan and the Inventor of the various Stans for providing him with a most handy weapon for his forthcoming election campaign in Bengal !

So much for Pakistan and its schemes — or rather schisms. The Communists were still to be explained away.

In deploring the fact that Indian Communists have done nothing to emulate the great Chinese Communist leader, Mao Tse-Tung, Sarat Babu surprised me with a hidden machine-gun nest which he started firing with relentless accuracy into the heart of Chiang Kai Shek's history.

We Indians have always had a great and sincere sympathy for the Chinese people, he said, in their struggle against the Japs, even though it may not have been within our power to render any material help except to send a medical mission. It was sent by the Congress but the full credit for the idea and the insistence on its execution must go to Subhas Bose, President, of the Haripura Congress.

CHIANG KAI-SHEK

Sarat Chandra's tone changed from sympathy to severity. It is one thing, he began, to express sympathy for the Chinese people. It is an entirely different matter to lionize a man like Chiang Kai-Shek, the Arch-Fascist tyrant of China.

But he is the hero, of China, I blurted out, in bewilderment and, as it transpired, in ignorance.

Hero, my foot ! retorted this past-master of "instantaneous exposure," his Bengali blood warming up red-

hot in his veins. That's what the world is given to believe. If only it knew the facts, it would not have a shred of respect for the man. And thereupon Sarat Chandra, emulating Emile Zola in his great "J'accuse," embarked upon an unprecedented indictment at the end of which all the glamour of gallantry attached to the Generalissimo lay prostrated at his feet in tatters. I accuse Chiang Kai-Shek, the 'great humanitarian", of indulging in numerous bloodbaths in China, "with the sanctification of foreign powers and the financial help of foreign capitalists."

I accuse Chiang Kai-Shek, "one of the Big Four," for pursuing a pro-Japanese policy from 1931 to '36, in defiance of the large and growing volume of public opinion in his own country.

I accuse Chiang Kai-Shek the "saviour of his people, for striking down mercilessly millions of his countrymen, men, women and children, for opposing his declared policy of no-war and non-resistance against the Japs.

I accuse Chiang Kai-Shek the "terror of the Japs," for giving the Japs Manchuria, Jehol, Chahar, the Tangku Truce, the Ho-Mumetzu Agreement and the Hopi-Chahar Council.

I accuse Chiang Kai-Shek, "the great patriot," for acquiescing, in the garrisoning of North China by Japanese troops.

I accuse Chiang Kai-Shek "the great Marshal of China," for directing and conducting as many as six extermination campaigns against his own people, their only crime being that they wanted him to lead the country against Japan which was pursuing her aggression into China in those years, namely 1931 to '36.

CHINA COMMUNIST LEADERSHIP

The terrific tirade to which I had listened with startled breath, ended. "The defence of "Dreyfus" began, the "Dreyfus" in this case being, the Communist leader Mao Tse-Tung.

But for Mao Tse-Tung, Chiang Kai-Shek would never have fought the Japs. The whole credit of coercing the Generalissimo into fighting Japan goes to Mao, Chuteh, Chou En-lai and other leaders of the Chinese Communists whom Chiang described and still describes as the Red Bandits.

I was not prepared for this appraisal of the Communists. Mimicking the style of the great Babu of Bengal as best as I could I said : It is one thing, Sir, to condemn Marshal Chiang Kai-Shek. It is quite another to think so highly of the Communists.

I am proud, came the prompt rejoinder, to think highly of the Communists who put their country before their Communism. Listen, Sarat Chandra commended me, to what Mao Tse-Tung said during the fateful years : "For a people deprived of its national freedom, the revolutionary task is not immediate socialism but the struggle for independence. We cannot even discuss Communism if we are robbed of a country in which to practise it."

Noble words these, don't you agree ? he asked. They never strike our home-made Communists over here. Of them, if I had a good opinion, you would have been justified in thinking ill of me. But I haven't. They merely try to mislead the country by false slogans and by defaming Congress leaders and workers.

I could only say at the end of this remarkable trial and conviction of Chiang Kai-Shek on the one hand and exoneration of Mao Tse-Tung on the other, that it was strange so little should be known about so much good and evil.

It was sad, commented Sarat Chandra Bose in summing up, that our internationalists never gave us the real and true picture of China during the days of our struggle and never mentioned one word about the great man and his heroic band of workers, but followed the British old school-tie in lionizing another who exterminated millions of

his countrymen, who executed hundreds of leftist writers, who put Madame Sun Yat-Sen in prison where probably she is still kept and — to sum up, who denied his country the smallest freedom.

DID NOT MINCE MATTERS

And so my long talk with India's "lost-and-found" leader concluded. It was sensational because Sarat Chandra Bose did not mince matters, he did not indulge in platitudes, he did not believe in compromise, he threw caution to the winds and with characteristic courage called a spade a spade and debunked the world of make-believe in which we are living.

Bengal's beacon-light, his attitude was the embodiment of its spirit, that spirit of a fighting free people full of such burning patriotism that they are devoured by the very flames which give them life — as was her greatest son and his great brother, Subhas Chandra Bose.

ON CHIANG KAI-SHEK

Press statement issued in Bombay on 28th September, 1945.

I have read the statement made to the Calcutta Press yesterday by Mr. C. H. Lowe, Director of Chinese Ministry of Information in India and published in this morning's Bombay papers.

The politically minded public have only to read a correct report of the speech I made at a meeting of the Progressive Group on the 26th and the statement of Mr. Lowe in order to decide for themselves as to who had lost the mental balance and who had been guilty of fantastic lie'—Mr. Lowe or myself.

I did say at the Progressive Group meeting that Generalissimo Chiang Kai-Shek was the 'Grand Fascist of the East.' It was certainly a charge I deliberately made as the result of a close study of Chinese affairs from the year 1926 onwards.

Without arrogating too much to myself I claim to be a diligent student of international affairs ever since the year 1914. If I did not speak about them all these years, it is because I did not consider it necessary to do so.

But during the last six years I have been noticing with sorrow and dismay that our fashionable internationalists have been systematically misleading the public either because they failed to appreciate facts correctly or because they were quite content to accept the lead of the British old school types of whom they are Indian counterparts.

If Mr. C. H. Lowe so desires, I am prepared to address meetings of intellectuals in Calcutta and elsewhere organised by him and in his presence and deal with the political and military activities of the great Generalissimo from the year 1926 onwards.

I am more than certain that if I place before intellec-

tual audiences in the direct presence of Mr. Lowe only a very small fraction of the evidence that unimpeachable historical records furnish regarding the great Generalissimo's 'purgations' in China, intellectual and political and otherwise, from the year 1926 to the end of the year 1936, Mr. Lowe and others of his mentality will have to beat a hasty retreat.

As regards what he did from the beginning of 1937 after he had been coerced into leading China to resist the Japanese aggression, I need not say anything in detail at the moment. It will be sufficient for present purposes to say that he did not fully honour the agreement which he had entered into towards the end of 1936.

I am aware that the President of the Congress sent a message of warm greetings and congratulations to Gen. Chiang Kai-Shek shortly after the V. J. Day. The message was most appropriately sent to Gen. Chiang Kai-Shek as he happened to be head of the Chungking Government.

I never said at the Progressive Group meeting or anywhere else that Madame Sun Yat-Sen was dead. What I did say was that Madame Sun Yat-Sen was in internment (which practically means imprisonment) for a number of years and that Stuart Gelder and others had referred to it quite recently.

May I appeal to Mr. C. H. Lowe to use his influence with Marshal Chiang Kai-Shek in order to bring Madame Sun Yat-Sen to India ? India worships the memory of the leader of the Chinese Revolution — the great Sun Yat-Sen who was by far the first to speak of an Asiatic Federation, and she adores Madame Sun Yat-Sen.

If Madame Sun Yat-Sen is allowed to come to India, we shall hear from her own lips a true story of China from the moment of her illustrious husband's death up till today. India and the world outside will then be able to pass final judgment on the question whether Gen. Chiang Kai-Shek was and is the Grand Fascist of the East.

ADDRESS TO THE CALCUTTA CORPORATION

The following is the text of Sarat Chandra Bose's address to the Calcutta Corporation in reply to the civic reception accorded to him on the 4th October, 1945. Ed.

Mr. Mayor, Aldermen and Councillors of the Corporation of Calcutta and citizens of Calcutta : The kind of generous sentiments contained in your address and the cordial and enthusiastic reception you have accorded me this afternoon have touched me deeply.

I come to you this afternoon as an old comrade of yours. I accept your greetings as greetings extended to an old comrade. These greetings I return to you with all the warmth that I possess. Standing before you this afternoon my thoughts and memories go back to the year 1924 when my political Guru and leader Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das selected his first band of workers, of which I was proud to be one, for undertaking the burden of civic work of this great city to which you and I belong.

As you all know, this Corporation was the creation of the great Sir Surendra Nath Banerjea and we under the leadership of Deshbandhu Das endeavoured in our own humble way, feebly perhaps, but according to the best of our lights to translate into action the ideals he placed before us. Even greater was to us his living personality from day to day. Though much remains to be done, I hope you will pardon me for claiming that during the eight years that it was my privilege to be here we did not consciously depart from the ideals with which Deshbandhu Das inspired us.

Speaking to you as an old comrade and as one who all these years through a somewhat crowded, contentious and chequered life has cherished those ideals and has kept touch with the daily work of this Corporation. —I hope you will pardon me if I say that something within me tells me that we have somewhat fallen from those high ideals. It

is for us to correct ourselves, it is for us to remember that the Corporation does not exist for the rich, the Corporation exists for the poor. It is for us, the so-called educated classes to remember that the Corporation exists for the poor workers and the masses.

The work of this Corporation should not be judged only by beautiful palaces but by the condition of the bustees and slums of the city. You will find that I am speaking to you without any trace of resentment or anger, but I am speaking to you as an old comrade of yours. Your work will be judged by the condition of bustees and slums of the city. Judged by that standard, our work has fallen short of what it ought to have been. Therefore, I ask you as an old comrade, I ask you again, to concentrate all your energies for the amelioration of the condition of the poor and the down-trodden.

Then, as regards the internal administration of the Corporation, this Corporation does not exist for its members, this Corporation exists for the workers of the Corporation. Members of the Corporation can take care of themselves but the workers of the Corporation have to be taken care of day after day (applause). Whether in the civic sphere or in the political sphere I must repeat what I had been saying for the last few days in Bombay and elsewhere, that I have much more faith in the workers and the peasants than in the so-called educated class, the class to which fortunately or unfortunately I belong. It is the workers and the peasants of the land who will fight the battle for civic freedom and political freedom.

I know that attempts have been made by the powers that be during the last few years to deprive the Corporation of the freedom which it was given by Sir Surendra Nath Banerjea. I congratulate your Mayor on the bold stand he had taken from time to time to repel the attacks levelled against the civic freedom of this great city. A short time ago I was afraid that the Corporation might succumb to these attacks. I had reasons to be afraid, because, I may

tell you quite plainly that during the time of Deshbandhu Das and ever since that time, when we had to decide what our policy should be towards the executive authority in Bengal we laid down the policy which we never deviated from.

There was the danger at one time that the polity was being deviated from. There was the danger at one time when hobnobbing with the executive authorities had begun, but fortunately, and I say with a certain amount of pride, — that your Mayor had put it down with a firm foot.

Mr. Mayor, during the years 1943-44 and even today, I have been thinking deeply about the solution of the problems that confront us. This city along with the rest of the province had to suffer from a famine which so far as its extent and intensity were concerned, have been unparalleled in the history of Bengal. It was undoubtedly a man-made famine ; a famine for which the Provincial and Central Governments were responsible ('hear' 'hear'). At the same time, I ought to tell you that we have our own duties to perform in order to repel the attacks of the powers that be.

I may tell you quite frankly that though great has been the work of relief your Mayor and the citizens of Calcutta have done, greater should be the work which you will have to do in future. True, during these two years words came out of my bleeding heart, words which were sought to be restrained by means of the provisions of the Defence of India Act and the Rules framed thereunder, but eventually I thought that I owed it to myself, even though it was not given to me to discharge my duties, that I should give expression to those words and convey to the gentleman who happened to be at the head of this province. I desire to repeat those words. It may be of interest to you to learn, it may possibly amuse you to learn that I was first told that my letter to His Excellency Mr. R. G. Casey had been suppressed (cries of 'shame', 'shame') by the C.I.D.

After a few days I was told that my letter to Mr. Casey

had been delivered to him. And strangely enough, after a few days I was told that the information which was given me that the letter had been delivered to Mr. Casey was not correct. The letter, in fact, had been suppressed. I shall only read out to you the following relevant portions of the letter which was dated the 5th July, 1944 :

"From the prisons and detention camps in which I have been detained I have followed closely all that has happened and is happening in my province since the 11th December, 1941.[1] The rights and liberties of the people have been ruthlessly trodden under foot, they and their natural leaders have been distrusted, policies were thoughtlessly adopted in 1942-43 by the then Governor and the permanent departments behind the backs of the then ministers and in utter disregard of their disastrous consequences on the starving and half-starved masses, so-called British experts who know nothing of the people, their resources, their needs, their habits of life, the crops they grow, the food they take, the clothes they wear and to whom Bengal was, until they landed on her soil, little more than a geographical expression, have been and are being imported in increasing numbers to deal with problems with which they have not the slightest acquaintance — to mention only a few instances of how the administration has been run during the last three years. Since April, 1943, famine and pestilence have been stalking over the province and people have died not by thousands or tens of thousands or hundreds of thousands but by millions. It has become transparently clear during the last twelve months that the fate of my province is being decided by a handful of Britishers who pass by the compendious name of the "European Group" in the Assembly — estimable people, no doubt, in their private capacities but, all the same, the agents of British Imperialism in Bengal. The interests of the European group in the Assembly have always been in conflict with the interests of the children of the soil, as the records and proceedings of the Assembly bear witness. On the top of all these the communal monster has again reared its head. And to fill

[1] The day Mr. Bose was arrested under the Defence of India Rules.

the cup of agony to its brim, a bill known as the Secondary Education Bill has been introduced in the Assembly, the effect of which has been to convert the different parties in the Assembly into so many warring groups.

"..... I have no prejudice against you, though you happen to be an Australian and even though I know that no Indian, however eminent, will ever be suffered by your countrymen to occupy a similar position in your own country. My objection to British rule is more deep-rooted ; it is against the whole Imperialistic system which has so long deprived my country of her right to freedom and condemned my countrymen to slavery and starvation".

The letter had no response. But I thought, as I have said before, I owed it to my countrymen, however powerless I was, to give expression to the thoughts which were surging within me.

Those days are over, I do not wish to over-dramatise anything. During the last few days, during the last fortnight I have with the help of friends like my friend whom I see in front of me, Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq. and others, tried to consider what the real situation in the country is, and it seems to me that there is every reason to be forewarned. I know most of the things that the leaders of Calcutta and outside Calcutta had stated have been characterised as over-dramatisation. Even the attitude that was taken by 'The Statesman' of Calcutta was characterised by certain members of Central Government as over-dramatisation. Now, it is for you and for you acting together to take steps in time. I have every hope that we shall be able with our combined efforts to ward off the disaster.

It is true that our powers are extremely limited : the constitution whether Central or the provincial, are mere mockeries. But in spite of all the limitations we have our duty to perform and it will not do for us to throw all the blame on the Governmental machinery, Central or

provincial. It is true that the man-made famine of 1943 and 1944 was due to the inactivity, inefficiency, nepotism and corruption of the Central and provincial Governments. But we as citizens of Calcutta and Bengal have duties to perform. Are we satisfied in our own minds, that we performed all that was expected of us in 1943 and 1944 ?

It will not do to single out one firm and throw all responsibility on it. During the last fourteen days I have been trying to find out at some pains to what extent all the blackmarketing and profiteering and racketeering and other 'eerings' went on during the fateful years of 1943-44. And I find it quite impossible to apportion blame between Hindu businessmen and Muslim businessmen. Hindu businessmen and Muslim businessmen have jointly — I do not condemn all businessmen — but persons who were doing large business whether before the war or during the currency of the war, — indulged in blackmarketing, profiteering, racketeering to an extent undreamt of before. So let us not throw responsibility on one and one firm alone. The main responsibility lies on the Imperialistic system, the slaves of which we are today.

But slaves though we may be today, we have to consider ourselves free men and try to work in the spirit of free men, though our hands are in chains. We should be severe to those of our countrymen who were to some extent responsible for the ravages in Bengal during those fateful years. Therefore I say unto you, the Mayor and the citizens of Calcutta, that it would be better to be forewarned. To be forewarned is to be forearmed.

Then, there is another question in which you, the citizens of Calcutta, are vitally interested. It may be it will not be within the power of the Corporation to do very much in this matter. But the citizens of this great city under the lead of the Mayor for the time being can rouse the people of Bengal to such an extent that relief is bound to come. I am speaking of the large number of citizens who live in and outside Calcutta who are in detention.

Some of you may remember that when the Defence of India Act and the Rules framed thereunder were enacted, speaking in the Bengal Legislative Assembly as the Leader of the Opposition I said, "The Defence of India Act and the Rules made thereunder have not been enacted for the defence of India's freedom but for the perpetuation of India's slavery" (cries of 'hear' 'hear'). What followed in 1941, 1942, 1943, 1944 and even in the current year will no doubt convince all of you that my statement was not an exaggeration. What had been done to the citizens of Calcutta during these years and to the citizens who lived outside Calcutta was done for the purpose of perpetuating India's slavery. It is up to you, Mr. Mayor and the citizens of Calcutta to do all that lies in your power to see that the state of things which had continued for the last five or six years came to an end within next few days or at any rate few weeks.

The attitude that I have taken all along regarding that question is summarised so well by the late Romain Rolland that I shall address myself with his words. Rolland said : 'The worst murderer is he who assassinates liberty". Let us rouse the public opinion of this great city and if we do that, we shall simultaneously rouse the public opinion of the whole province. If you do that with all the strength that we possess today, I am sure, the state of things that had existed during the last five or six years will come to a termination within a short time.

There is another matter which is equally important and it is up to you, the citizens of Calcutta, to do your little bit in that behalf. I am speaking of the atrocities that were committed during the last few years in Calcutta itself and to a large extent, in the districts of Midnapore, Chittagong and other places. And the least that the citizens of Calcutta can do is to take the lead in having a non-official and independent enquiry committee to tour the whole of the province to gather reliable evidence of atrocities committed in the city and outside the City of Calcutta, in

Chittagong, Midnapore and elsewhere and place them before the public. You must have seen in the public press that steps in that regard have been taken in U.P. and other provinces. And so far as my province of Bengal is concerned, I would earnestly request you not to delay taking up the matter by a single day.

I shall now with your leave come to some of the special work which this Corporation have to do. You have always to remember — and I do not say so in a patronising way — that civic work and political work in this country so long as it remains a dependent country cannot be put into water-tight compartments. Our political ideas are bound to influence and ought to influence our civic ideals. Politics is the very breath of the nostrils of a subject nation. It was said many years ago that a subject nation has no politics. To that I replied, — even though I was a youngster at that time, — that a subject nation had nothing but politics (Cries of 'hear', 'hear'). Our civics is only a part of our politics and will remain a part of politics until our country is free. And our political ideals should dictate to us that all public utility services, such as electricity, gas, tramways and transport and other similar services should be fully and thoroughly municipalised. Therefore, there ought to be no compromise in a matter like that. I do not believe in compromises. As I said to my friends of the Progressive Group in Bombay, I am not fond of the word 'Progress'. The only word I am fond of and shall remain fond of is the word 'revolution' (Renewed applause).

It is for you, Mr. Mayor, Aldermen and Councillors and citizens of Calcutta, to bring about a social revolution, a social revolution which will go hand in hand with political revolution. Nothing more than that is expected of you and nothing short of it will satisfy the public of Calcutta.

Therefore, I will draw your attention to the task of municipalisation of our public utility services which has been long delayed. That is a work which we attempted to do under the leadership of Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das

and I am free to confess that we could not do very much. The opposition of the vested interests was very great, even much greater than it is today. We could break down some of the barriers. I am free to confess that we did not succeed in achieving what we had in view. It is high time for you, the people of Calcutta, to grapple with these problems and to bring about the municipalisation of all the essential public utility services within a short time.

You must remember, as I said in the beginning, that your work will be judged not by the beautiful palaces and beautiful roads but by the condition of the workers in the bustees and slums of the city. As far as I remember, in the year 1935, in reply to a civic address which this Corporation was pleased to give me, I drew the attention of the members of the Corporation to the work done by the Social Democratic Party of Vienna. I drew the attention of the members of the Corporation to the tremendous work that was achieved within the short space of ten years in Vienna. What was done in Vienna in ten years can certainly be done in Calcutta within this space of time. There is no reason why we should lag behind.

Now, I should like to say something about the spirit in which this work should be done. I can do no better than quote the words of the great French saint Anatole France. He said, "Charity is an insult to the poor". You have not to do that charity. You have to do it because it is your duty to do it. You owe it to your poor workers to do it. Do not bring in the idea of charity. If you do so, in the words of Anatole France, you only insult the poor.

Therefore, I repeat that the Corporation exists and it ought to exist not for the rich and the educated class because this class can take care of itself, the Corporation exists for the poor and the down-trodden. You can only make this city a city beautiful if you remove that blot and disgrace. That is on you today. I do not say it is only you, the members of the Corporation, it is also I and you, it is the whole body of the citizens of Calcutta, who are to see

that the conditions in the slums and the bustees are improved. May I ask you in all earnestness to grapple with the problem in all seriousness ? Let it not be said of us in a patronising way by the Britishers or Americans or Australians for the matter of that that our civic sense is wanting.

I read a few weeks ago, a lady placed in a high position talking to our Indian ladies in Calcutta and congratulating them on their civic sense. I felt humiliated, because I felt that the person who was addressing these ladies ought to have remembered how in the performance of their civic and political duties they shot down indigenous people of the country. But things seem to have come to such a pass that our religion is to be explained to us by quacks. Civic sense was developed in this country when Britishers and Americans were hardly civilized. If we have lost our civic sense to some extent it is because of the conflict between the West and the East. Let us always remember that the village panchayat was the highest embodiment of civic and political sense.

Village panchayat must be and is going to be the unit on which the constitution of India is going to be raised in future. So far as Europe is concerned, something approaching the village panchayat was attempted during the Paris Commune but the attempt failed within a few days. The village panchayat still exists in this country if only in name. Let us modernise it ; let us make it the embodiment of highest civic and political sense. Let us make it our cultural, political, judicial, executive, agricultural and industrial unit. I am sure, as I am standing before you, the village panchayat is going to be within a very short time the basis of our culture, the basis of our civilization and the basis of our constitution.

You will pardon me if I tell you something about the conditions that I saw with my own eyes in Bombay. It is my desire to tell you today and to tell you without offending your natural and proper vanity in civic matters, that Bombay is much ahead of us both in civic and political

work. There is more organisation, more discipline, more combined effort, more activity among women, not to speak of men, than I have found in this city of my adoption. I would desire the members of the Corporation to start a healthy rivalry with the city of Bombay, because I am sure if we start a healthy rivalry we shall not commit some of the blunders which we have committed in the past.

Then again, I desire to say one word about how the organisation, the civic and political organisation, is to be run. I would suggest to you to send some of your workers to Bombay to study the working of their civic and political organisation. I am sure that the Mayor of Bombay and the Secretary of the Bombay Provincial Congress Committee will be only too glad to help our workers to get an inside idea of their work. I am sure they will behave to our workers as if our workers were their own comrades. I am sure our workers will receive a very cordial reception from the civic and political leaders of Bombay. It is a work which ought to be done without delay. If you accept my suggestion and send a band of workers to Bombay I would also suggest to you to send a band of lady workers. Lady workers of Bombay would be an example to our lady workers in Calcutta. What I saw in Bombay impressed me so deeply that I cannot resist the temptation of saying what I feel. I hope my suggestion will be accepted.

I am afraid I have taken too much of your time. I know that you would like to be with me for hours and hours together and though I know your indulgence and the indulgence of the citizens of Calcutta towards me is unbounded, my physical powers today are extremely limited. Therefore, for the time being I must depart from this place. But let me assure you, Mr. Mayor and members of the Corporation, that wherever I may be, my thoughts will always be with you and the citizens of Calcutta. Wherever I may be, I shall always consider it my duty to contribute my humble share to the solution of the problems which beset you. What I shall ask of you today is

to always derive inspiration from great ideals, examples of great achievements, so that so equipped you can face with equanimity and without perturbation the attacks that have been levelled and will be levelled from time to time against the civic freedom of this great city. I hear again the siren voice of the tempters who through dubious and insidious means have been and will always be trying to deprive you of your civic rights and the freedom of this great city, which is the city of birth to most of you and to the rest, of your adoption as it is to me.

From the year 1905 I have made this city the city of my adoption. I have tried in my humble way to identify myself with the work, big and small, we have had to do since the year 1905. Time has come for us to strengthen ourselves, to strengthen the citizens of Calcutta, to strengthen the workers, both inside and outside the Corporation. Time has come for us to remember once again the ideals which were placed before us decades ago by Deshbandhu Das. Let us take the vow today, let us repeat the vow every day of our lives, that we shall not rest until this city is free.

ON TRUMAN'S 'SERMON ON THE MOUNT'

Report of a Press interview given on 30 October, 1945 on President Truman's "Twelve Commandments" of United States Foreign Policy.

I have read President Truman's "Sermon on the Mount" and in so far as it concerns the subject nations of the East, I shall say quite frankly that it is thoroughly distasteful to me. To my mind it only confirms what Senator E. C. Johnson revealed some time ago that the American official hierarchy "secretly hopes to develop commercial imperialism on a gigantic scale."

It reminds me of the words of the well-known American writer, Deemaree Bess that "Americans who cling to the notion that we are fighting to undermine imperialism in general and European empires in particular are altering all evidence to the country — went to war in Europe and in Asia because we decided that our own interests were being directly threatened by the German and Japanese attempts at empire buildings".

If we read only three of the so-called fundamentals of President Truman, the second, the fourth and the sixth— we cannot fail to notice that he is merely repeating the familiar words of European imperialists. British imperialists speak of the progressive return of sovereign rights and self-government to all peoples who have been deprived of them by force. President Truman says — Amen — and only substitutes the word "progressive" by the word "eventual". Peoples who are prepared for self-government should be permitted to choose their own form of government by their own freely expressed choice — and, of course according to them, subject nations are not prepared for self-government and never will be in the near future. President Truman almost echoes their words.

British imperialists have declared time and again that they refuse to recognise any Government imposed on any

nation by force by any foreign power — and of course according to them, that only applies to the case of foreign powers other than Britain. President Truman practically repeats the same words.

India and other subject countries of the East are entitled to demand of President Truman clear and unequivocal answers to the following questions :

(1) Have or have not India and other subject countries of the East been deprived of their sovereign rights and self-government by Great Britain, France and Holland ?

(2) Does the American President maintain that India and other subject countries of the East are not ready and prepared for immediate independence ?

(3) Does or does not the American President recognise that the Governments imposed on India and other subject countries of the East have been and are imposed on them by force by foreign powers ?

(4) Is the American President prepared to call upon Great Britain, France and Holland to quit India and other subject countries of the East, possession of which they have maintained by force so long ?

By his answers to the above questions President Truman will be judged. Pious expressions of sympathy for the subject nations of the East can deceive them no longer. San Francisco or 'san fiasco' is fresh in our minds and British, French and Dutch bullets are piercing our hearts today.

" Quit Asia " is the demand of all the subject countries of the East on the western imperialist powers. President Truman's so-called 'fundamentals' do not meet that demand and I cannot persuade myself to welcome them.

ASIAN UNITY :
RESPONSE TO AUNG SAN

Report of a Press interview given in Calcutta on 1 November 1945 in response to the call of U. Aung San, President of the Supreme Council, Anti-Fascist Peoples' Freedom League, Burma, for an immediate "Asiatic Potsdam Conference".

The necessity for the subject countries of the East uniting is most urgent and that unity will, I believe, lay the foundation of an Asiatic Federation. As I have said already, a maimed and mangled South East Asia federation does not appeal to me. If the subject countries of the East are to throw off the foreign yoke they must form a federation with the independent countries of the East.

The thought-provoking statement of the leader of the Burmese Nationalists, U. Aung San, has not come out a day too early. I was glad to find that he did not favour the formation of two Asiatic political blocs. That has been my view all through and I made that absolutely clear when I advocated the formation of an Asiatic Federation.

As the President of the Supreme Council of the Anti-Fascist Peoples' Freedom League I am sure, U. Aung San realizes that the greatest enemies of the subject countris of the East today are British imperialism, Dutch imperialism, French imperialism and American commercial imperialism. I entirely agree in this respect with George Bernard Shaw when he says : "The great corruption of socialism has produced a world war in which Anglo-American Fascists will see Germany and Italy damned before they will accept any Fascism that is not of their own making under their own Fuehrers. In the world war we claim to be fighting for democracy ; and Adolf Hitler retorts unanswerably that British democracy is nothing but Anglo Semitic plutocracy".

The events of the last few weeks have clearly demonstrated that Eastern nations have to fight against the forces

of the imperialisms mentioned above. In the course of our fight against them will emerge a gigantic Asiatic federation which will be proof against the machinations of Western imperialisms for all time to come.

My views about Pakistan are well known. I desire to repeat what I have already said, that Pakistan is not practical politics, and so-called 'self-determination' in the present Indian setting and under existing conditions is nothing short of fantastic nonsense. Pakistan cannot make for unity. The main obstacles to unity in India of today are the different communal organisations which have sprung up during the last few years.

I entirely agree with U. Aung San that nationalisation of big industries is necessary in the interest of India. It ought to be remembered that the idea of forming a National Planning Committee emanated from Shri Subhas Chandra Bose, President of the Haripura Congress ; and he gave effect to his idea and appointed Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Chairman of the Committee. It is well known that when he first gave expression to his idea of forming a National Planning Committee, it did not find favour with all Congress circles ; but it has since been realized that it was one of the biggest things done by any Congress President in recent times in the interests of India. I have every hope that when the report of the National Planning Committee comes out, other countries in the East will find in it considerable help and guidance in the matter of laying down their economic programmes.

As regards the Indian problem in Burma I have every hope that a happy and honourable solution will not militate against the interests of either. The Indians and Burmese realize today that they must live as brothers and fight as comrades if they are to achieve independence for their respective countries.

WAR, IMPRISONMENT AND ELECTIONS

The following is a summarised free English translation of the speech delivered in Bengali by Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose in Calcutta on 9 November 1945 while opening the Election Campaign for the Congress.

Bengal's mothers, brothers and sisters,

I have come out of prison after 4 long years only to find myself in the greater prison house that India is today. During these 4 years many a storm passed over Bengal and she passed through many calamities—famine and diseases and epidemics in its wake which devastated the districts of Bengal.

As a result of the famine 30 lakhs of Bengalees lost their lives and another 15 to 20 lakhs died of diseases and epidemics. Who is responsible for this huge loss of life ? This is a question which will be asked again and again. This question the British Imperialists will have to answer one day.

I know that Lord Linlithgow who was the Viceroy at the time did not come to Bengal. He did not think it necessary to come to Bengal for a single day. Perhaps he was engaged in activities connected with the war and it did not matter to him in the least whether Bengalees lived or died.

At the same time we must also say that all our countrymen were not absolutely blameless. There is no doubt that some amongst our countrymen took advantage of the opportunities offered by the war and engaged in black-marketing, profiteering and racketeering. And there were Hindus and Mahommedans among them.

So, I say on behalf of Bengal and in clear unequivocal language that you should not blame British imperialism alone, although there is no manner of doubt that they were chiefly to blame. I say that those who were engaged in profiteering, whether Hindus or Mohammendans, were traitors to the country.

I want to say in unequivocal language that these people have no place in the Congress. These Mahommedan friends, I feel ashamed to call them friends,-who were engaged in black-marketing, profiteering and racketeering during the last 4 years have no place in the Congress, however eminent they may be.

Some of them did it in secret no doubt but I ask Bengalees who have evidence of the dirty transactions of such persons to produce it before me and if I have any power I shall try to rectify such evil though much time has already elapsed.

Many of you perhaps remember that in the early part of 1939 the Bengal Provincial Conference was held at Jalpaiguri and I had the honour of presiding at that conference. Many of you perhaps remember that a resolution was adopted at that conference to the effect that when it was apparent that a European war was approaching, a 6 months' ultimatum should be given to British imperialism.

Who placed the resolution before the conference ? It was moved by Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. That resolution was unanimously carried and a copy of it was sent to A. I. C. C. office.

Two months after that, a session of the Congress was held at Tripuri. Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose was President of that session. In that session he sent out his Presidential address in which it was stated that as the European war was approaching, it was the duty of the Congress to give a 6 months' ultimatum to the British Government. That suggestion was not accepted. I had the honour to present that resolution before the Congress.

I do not blame anybody for what happened. On the contrary, I am glad to say that on 26th April 1942, after 3 years' 'Sadhana', Mahatma Gandhi resolved than an ultimatum should be given and that ultimatum he gave in his own language which defies comparison and that language is 'Quit India.'

I know that among Congress leaders there were men who opposed Gandhiji but it is a matter of pride that at least 3 Congress leaders stood by Gandhiji. They were Sardar Vallabbhai Patel, Babu Rajendra Prasad and Acharya Kripalani. Some thought that if Gandhiji's resolution was adopted, what would Americans and Englishmen think of them, as if we were friends of the Americans.

In reply to that Acharya Kripalani said, 'What does it matter to us what the Britishers and Americans now think about us ?' At the meeting of the Working Committee, Sardar Patel said, 'I follow the lead of Gandhiji, I feel instinctively that he has given us the right lead, the lead he gives us on all critical occasions'. Babu Rajendra Prasad also spoke in that strain. I know that after that resolution of Gandhiji was accepted by the Congress Working Committee, those who opposed it, on coming out of jail, were the first to own responsibility for the 1942 movement and raise the cry of "Chalo Delhi", but the fact was that they had opposed it.

Many of them claimed individually that the resolution had emanated from them. However, the plain thing that I want to say is that I consider that it was the duty of Indians to accept the 'Quit India' resolution of the 26th April, 1942. The reason why that resolution was not accepted before the 8th August was that many Congress leaders were opposed to it.

I do not blame anybody. I am not here to blame anybody. It is a matter of pride that at least three Congress leaders were in favour of Gandhiji's proposal. What happened in Tamluk in 1942, what happened in Chittagong, on the streets of Calcutta, at Balia, in U. P. and in Bihar and in many other places, it is not necessary for me to mention. You all know that.

When you consider that movement, who, do you think, were behind the Congress ? It was the peasants and workers who fought against British Imperialism. The Congress leaders and many workers of the Congress were cast into prison and it was the Indian peasants and workers who

braved British bullets and machine guns. To the memory of these unknown soldiers I bow down my head in respect on my own behalf and on your behalf.

It is my intention that I should read out extracts from the letter that I wrote to Lord Linlithgow and Mr. R. G. Casey [1] in 1943. I owe it to Bengal and India that I should let my countrymen know what thoughts arose in me while I was confined in British prison.

LETTER TO LORD LINLITHGOW

Coonoor,
Dated July 17/24 1943.

Dear Lord Linlithgow,

The march of events in the Far East during the last six years, and in particular, during the last nineteen months has progressively deepened the anxiety of all lovers of the country for its future. The retrogressive march of events inside India has increased their sense of frustration to an alarming extent. British rulers of the country may afford to be complacent ; they may feel that they have the situation well in hand. But children of the soil and particularly those who have closely watched and studied events in the Western world from 1933 to 1939 and in the Far East from 1937 to 1941 and subsequently, may not be far wrong if they treat that complacency as synonymous with Ostrichism.

Many a time have I thought of writing to Your Excellency from my detention camp — perhaps "menagerie" would be a better and more accurate description — regardless of the fact that I was unjustly maligned by your Government in December 1941. If I did not do so earlier, it was because of the apprehension in my mind that my letter might be relegated to an undeserved place. If I am doing so now, it is because I feel that the situation that confronts my country demands that I should banish sensitiveness

[1] Extracts from Mr. Bose's letter to Mr. Casey will be found in "Address to the Calcutta Corporation" pp 34 Ed.

from my mind and give expression to the thoughts surging within me.

I have had no opportunity in the past of discussing public affairs with Your Excellency. I have been quite content so far with the role of a back-bencher. But the time has come for back-benchers to speak out — and if possible to act.

I claim to be a realist and a nationalist — not of the type which says "my country right or wrong", nor of the type which subscribes to the "sacred principles of self-extermination", the ancient Christian principle of turning the other cheek, of which British diplomacy from 1933 to 1939 gives many illustrations. And, as a realist and a nationalist, I believe that my country can yet be saved from foreign aggression, saved not after a life and death struggle between Imperialists of different physical and political hues but without such a struggle on Indian soil.

In 1941 I did not entertain any serious apprehension in my mind that any foreign power would attempt to invade India. Nevertheless, having learnt the lessons of history and having noticed with consternation that British policy in recent years all the world over in China, in Abyssinia, in Spain, in Austria, in Czechoslovakia had been to retreat before the aggressors and in some cases, even to help them to their success, I felt it was the duty of the Government and the people of the country to make preparations in advance to resist foreign aggression and I said as much in some of the public statements I issued in the second half of that year. In 1942 foreign invasion seemed to be imminent but fortunately, did not take place and India was spared the horrors of war. This year the danger of foreign invasion (if at all) seems to have receded into the background. But who can predict with absolute certainty that the danger is wholly past and gone ? The contemplated offensive against Jap occupied Burma may suddenly and without any warning lead to a counter-offensive against some part of this vast country of long distances. And I do not want India to be Ethelred the Unready, as England undoubtedly was between 1933 and 1939.

There is one matter regarding which the rulers and the people of the country, at any rate the thinking section of it, are in agreement today and that is, that foreign aggression must be resisted. The difference between them is as to the ways and means. I shall not pretend to be a friend of British Imperialism. All my life, I have been its opponent and no amount of imprisonment can crush that feeling within me. But if British Imperialism has so far blighted India's hopes and aspirations for freedom, Imperialism of the Nazi, Fascist and 'Rising Sun' brands would, to my mind, prove much worse, and speaking for myself, I am prepared to do whatever in me lies to prevent my country from coming under the latter's domination. For the last ten centuries India has been under some foreign domination or other ; and her cup of bitterness is full. Speaking for myself and for men of my way of thinking, we do not wish to taste it any more, not to speak of exchanging it for something even more bitter ; we would fain dash it to pieces if we can. History has taught us that during all these centuries whenever a foreign army landed on Indian soil, whatever its protestation, it almost invariably became an army of occupation ; and we definitely do not want a repetition of the same experience. We shall continue our fight for India's independence as we have been doing for the last few decades ; and we know and we feel it is easier for us to fight those whose ways and methods are not unknown to us.

I have after deep thinking formed my own ideas as to how my country can be saved from foreign aggression and how her independence can be made a reality in the very near future. I start with the declaration that was made in March last year regarding Indian independence and India's right to frame her own constitution. But a mere declaration will fail, as it obviously has failed, to rouse the people. Suitable steps have to be taken without further delay to satisfy the people and their leaders that the declaration is sincere and really meant to be implemented. It will not do merely to say that if Indians fight in the deserts of Africa or the fields of France or the rocky heights of Sicily they

will be winning independence for India. Large promises were held out to India during the last Great War ; but they have remained unfulfilled. The constitution framed since then were mere mockeries of freedom. What the present situation in the country demands is that the people and their leaders should be made to feel that the pith and substance of independence has already come to them in action, the present constitution notwithstanding. I feel that a psychological change can be brought about in the mentality of the people and they can be galvanized into action if certain steps are taken immediately, not after framing a new constitution but within the framework of the present constitution itself. The steel frame of the present constitution can be made flexible, if there is a genuine desire to bend it and adapt it to the imperative needs of India. If it is sought to maintain it in its pristine rigidity, disaster will overtake it, sooner or later ; and that disaster will mean the ruination of all hopes of an understanding between India and Britain.

I wish it had been possible within the compass of a letter to give expression to the ideas I have formed and to enunciate the steps which, to my mind, ought to be taken forthwith to resolve the present discontent in India and to resist foreign aggression, if any. They have to be placed in some detail before Your Exeellency if your Excellency will give me a hearing and the opportunity of a discussion before you leave our shores. I am making a request the like of which I never made before, because I feel confident that I shall be able to awaken the people to a sense of realities and what is even more important, to harness for collective action workers belonging to diverse political groups who count in India's national life — workers who have no personal axes to grind, who have lived and suffered in order that India may be free.

Yours truly;
Sarat Chandra Bose.

To His Excellency the Most Honourable
the Marquis of Linlithgow, Viceroy and
Governor-General of India, New Delhi.

After coming out of prison I found in the papers that in July, 1943 Netaji Subhas Chandra had come to the East. Of course, when I wrote that letter to the Viceroy, I did not know that he was there.

When I was writing about resisting foreign aggression, I had no knowledge of what was happening outside India and about the Azad Hind Fauj. If anyone worked for resisting foreign aggression it was the Azad Hind Fauj. They worked for making India free. Many said in 1942 and some even in 1945 that they had a slavish sentiment and the slave's way of thinking. With public opinion asserting itself they changed their tone and were today raising slogans of 'Chalo Delhi' and 'Jai Hind'.

You know what was the result of this letter. From July, 1943 to September, 1945 I was in detention. I got a reply to my letter from the Private Secretary to the Viceroy that so long as I was in prison the Viceroy was not prepared to discuss anything with me. Perhaps they thought that if this bandit was allowed to come out the position of the British Government would be in peril.

The Congress has announced that it would contest the ensuing elections. Many of you have read the Congress election manifesto issued in this connection, some may not have read it. It was now time to decide whom would you vote for in the coming elections.

In the election manifesto, the Congress had abundantly cleared its stand. I want to ask you or rather the communal bodies in the country because I know in my heart of hearts whom the people of Bengal will vote for — I want to ask the communal bodies in Bengal if they had anything to say against this election manifesto.

The Congress has stated in unequivocal language in the last A.I.C.C. session held at Bombay that it was against Pakistan, because it never wanted to divide India. The Congress knew full well that once it conceded the demand

of Pakistan, demands for Dravidistan and other Stans would crop up and that is why the Congress stated clearly in the last A.I.C.C. session that it was against Pakistan.

The Congress is the organisation which has fought for the attainment of freedom of India for the last 60 years. Communal organisations like the Hindu Mahasabha and Muslim League have never launched any fight for securing the independence of the country. The year 1942 was a memorable year in the history of India. That year, inside India, Mahatma Gandhi launched the fight for the country's liberation, and outside the country, the Azad Hind Fauj launched a fight for the freedom of their beloved motherland.

But what were these communal organisations like Hindu Mahasabha and Muslim League doing then, may I ask them on your behalf ? I could have appreciated if they had even remained neutral. But far from adopting that course, they then co-operated with British Imperialism.

Brothers and sisters, I want to ask you to think twice before you cast your votes, as to which organisation had for the last 60 years fought for the freedom of India. I would like to ask all of you to prepare for the struggle ahead.

This battle may sometimes be carried out from inside the legislature and sometimes it might be carried on from outside it. Of course, there can be no denying the fact that the real battle would have to be fought from outside the legislature but it may be sometimes necessary to carry on the struggle from inside the legislatures. I again request my brothers and sisters of Bengal to remember this when they cast their votes.

Before going to Bombay I saw in the organ of the Hindu Mahasabha that it had asked what my opinion was in regard to the question of Pakistan. As if they did not know what my views were on the subject and as if I had not

on previous occasions stated clearly what my views were on the question of Pakistan. Immediately after my release I said in a meeting at Coonoor that Pakistan was not practical politics. I further said that all talk of self-determination in the present Indian context and in their present condition was fantastic nonsense. I reiterate that view.

The same organ has said that to the question Mr. Bose would give his characteristic evasive answer. But when it saw that I expressed my views in unequivocal terms it said that Mr. Bose's answer was not consistent with the Congress stand. But I want to assert that the stand I have taken was in no way inconsistent with the Congress stand.

There is no difference between what I said and what the Congress stands for. The real question is whether this talk of self-determination is feasible in the present circumstances. What percentage of people, may I ask, have votes ? To what meagre number has the right of franchise been granted ? That the right of self-determination cannot be denied to anybody goes without saying. Even the Hindu Mahasabha would admit that.

But our concern was what ought to be done under the present circumstances. And to that my answer is that all talk of self-determination in the present context of India and in the existing circumstances in the country is fantastic nonsense. I think that this does not in any way differ from the Congress stand. Perhaps the Hindu Mahasabha forgot that I am a four-anna member of the Congress.

On my return to Calcutta I saw it published in certain papers that I had declared war on the Hindu Mahasabha. In answer to that allegation I want to use a rather strong term and I hope that you would excuse me for that, *viz.*, there is a limit to bluff.

I myself had told Dr. Syamaprasad Mookherjee that if he wanted to go to the Central Assembly I would ask the Congress to let him go uncontested. Even before the Con-

gress Election Board was formed I assured him that we were prepared to give the Mahasabha two seats out of a total of eight in the Central Assembly. And as the Congress Election Board was not formed at that time I gave him word that I would see to it when the Congress Election Board was formed that it accepted the proposal.

Of course, there can be no doubt about the fact that no communal body had the right to contest the Congress in the elections. The history of India would prove that the Congress is the only organisation which has fought for India's independence during the last 60 years. But it is a convention to let go the leader of a party unopposed and that is why I was agreeable to allow the leader of the Hindu Mahasabha to go uncontested. I had also agreed to another member of the Hindu Mahasabha party coming in. It occurs to me now that perhaps I went too far. But I did it to avoid a quarrel amongst ourselves. But when the organ of the Hindu Mahasabha is carrying on a propaganda to the effect stated above, I think it to be my duty to answer the charges levelled against me. Otherwise, I would not have mentioned it. In a letter to Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee on October 30, 1945 I wrote :—

"The talks I had with you in Calcutta were with reference to two out of eight seats in the Central Assembly. You will no doubt remember that I told you at that time that I was discussing the matter with you entirely on my own responsibility and that personally I was entirely against discussion on a percentage basis. When you told me that two seats were not acceptable to you, I informed Congress friends accordingly and it was decided before I left Calcutta that the Congress should contest all the seats in the Central Assembly". The following are extracts from a letter which I wrote to a Hindu Mahasabha member in connection with the ensuing elections to the Central Assembly, on 30th October, 1945. The latter had asked me to reconsider his decision.

"I regret I cannot agree with you that a Hindu Mahasabha group in legislature is necessary to safeguard Hindu

rights. Take for instance the activities in the Bengal legislature between 1937 and December, 1941—the period for which I was responsible for Congress activities inside the legislature. Can you point to me a single instance where the Congressites were at fault and the Mahasabhaites came to the rescue ? You could not have forgotten that in the election manifesto of the Bengal Congress which was published towards the end of 1936, the Bengal Congress made it quite clear that it had been given the right to agitate against the Communal Award, and agitate it did both inside and outside the legislatures. Can you point out one single instance where I, as the spokesman of the Congress, compromised the rights of the Hindus ?

The Congress has declared in unequivocal terms its opposition to Pakistan. To be quite frank with you, if there is any organisation in the country which can defeat the Muslim League's demand for Pakistan, it is the Congress. Whether you like to admit it or not, the Congress is the only strong and militant nationalist organisation in the country. Communal organisations such as the Hindu Mahasabha and the Muslim League, whose main pillars are Raja Bahadurs, Rai Bahadurs, Rai Sahibs, Nawab Bahadurs, Khan Bahadurs and Khan Sahibs and other titled gentry can have no fighting programme, and the last six years have shown that they have always fought shy of a fighting programme. I remember reading sometime in 1942 (possibly in the month of April) that the Hindu Mahasabha had decided to launch direct action. I waited in vain for the direct action — it never came. And I hope you will pardon me for saying that I do not believe that either the Hindu Mahasabha or the Muslim League has the strength to start the struggle for freedom.

The main question before the country is how to achieve our independence. The other issues are comparatively unimportant. We have to ask ourselves, which is the organisation in the country which has the strength to launch that struggle ? There can be only one answer to the question — It is the Congress.

You have talked about freedom of speech, thought and action, etc. — in one word, about restoration of civil and religious liberties. There again, may I ask you, which is the organisation that has been fighting all these years for restoration of liberties ? There can be only one answer — It is the Congress. Will you forgive me if I were to tell you plainly that mere words will not bring independence nearer to us ? We have to fight for it and the only organisation which has shown uptil now that it has the mettle to fight — it is the Congress.

You have said that you are making a last-minute appeal for unity. I respond to that appeal with all the warmth in me by calling upon the Mahasabha and its leaders to present to British imperialism a united front under the political leadership of the Congress. That is the appeal I made in the columns of your paper, "The Nationalist" the other day. I am waiting to see whether the Hindu Mahasabha responds to my appeal. Pardon me for saying that the way the Hindu Mahasabha is moving cannot possibly lead to unity, it may lead to disruption.

Notwithstanding the views I hold, I had talks with Syamaprasad after my return from Bombay. In the course of my talks I made him a most generous offer. But the offer was not accepted and the talks ended. After that we decided that the Congress should contest all the Central Assembly seats, and to that decision we adhere."

To be frank with you if there is any organisation in the country which can successfully fight the Muslim League demand for Pakistan it is the Congress. The Hindu Mahasabha has made a last-minute appeal for unity. I respond to that appeal for unity by asking the Hindu Mahasabha leaders to present a united front against British Imperialism under the political leadership of the Congress. I hope the people of Bengal will support me in this appeal.

In the coming election we want to send those persons alone who have fought for the independence of the country

and suffered for it. I am rferring to the Congress candidates. I am not speaking of myself but of those political workers of the country who have suffered untold miseries and have undergone countless trials and tribulations and even mounted the gallows for bringing about the independence of their motherland. I salute those heroic sons of India.

Let every one of you go from this meeting with the resolve that whether Hindu or Muslim you would vote for the Congress and for no communal body. If you want the independence of India you should support the Congress. If you want the liberation of the Azad Hind Fauj you should support the Congress. If you want a feeling of love and unity to grow between Hindus and Muslims you should support the Congress. If you want India to be recognised in the Council of Nations you should vote for the Congress, I would like my Bengalee mothers, brothers and sisters to join my feeble voice with theirs to proclaim

Jai Hind ! Jai Hind ! Jai Hind !

THE I.N.A. STRUGGLE : Reply to "The Statesman".

From a speech delivered in Darjeeling on 16 November, 1945.

"The Statesman" has made several charges against Congress leaders including Pandit Nehru and I consider it my duty as I am addressing you this evening to give my reply to some of those charges. The first charge of "The Statesman" is that "The Congress Party has of late seized upon every happening in India or abroad capable of anti-British use and exploited it to the full". My reply to "The Statesman" is this, that even leaving aside the Congress Party, Indians have never been nor ever can be exploiters. They have been exploited by British imperialism whose organ I suppose "The Statesman" is today. I would call upon "The Statesman" to give up the language of abuse and judge every question and every single statement and every speech of the Congress leaders on merits.

I know that the British imperialists in India and "The Statesman" in particular, are extremely unnerved at the turn of events in South-East Asia — unnerved not because they were exploiting the situation in South-East Asia, but unnerved because Indians and other Eastern nations have realized today that the British domination or French domination or Dutch domination in the East have come out in all their nakedness.

I would ask "The Statesman" to examine every statement and speech delivered by Pandit Nehru and other Congress leaders and point out where Pandit Nehru or other leaders were wrong. I ask "The Statesman" : Does it support perpetuation of Indonesian slavery in South-East Asia ? Let us have a straight answer to the straight question. If "The Statesman" supports Indonesian slavery under Dutch Imperialists, reinforced by British Imperialists, let it say so plainly. Let it not make a vague and base-

[1] This has reference to an editorial entitled 'Balance' published in 'The Statesman', Calcutta, on 14 November, 1945. Ed.

less charge that we of the Congress Party have been seizing every happening in India or abroad capable of anti-British use and exploiting it. I repeat again that India has never in the past appeared — and I firmly believe will never in future appear — in the role of exploiter anywhere. India's past shows that she never dipped her hand in her neighbours' blood and when India comes to her own I am sure she will never dip her hand in her neighbours' blood. It is true that Indians have been forced in the last six years to dip their hands in their neighbours' blood. But who forced them to do so ? Did Indians do so of their own accord ?

The second charge of "The Statesman" is that as soon as the Simla Conference broke down — manifestly in the main because of Indian disagreements, not of any Viceregal or British fault — a campaign of vilification began which without pause has since been maintained. I ask "The Statesman" to tell us what is the campaign of vilification it is referring to. We of the Congress have always declared ourselves to be opponents of British Imperialism and for the matter of that the French, Dutch and American Imperialisms. What charge have we made against those Imperialisms which we have not been able to substantiate by facts and figures. The Congress Party is not out to vilify anybody ; it is out to fight for freedom of the country. Just remember this. When Lord Wavell called the Simla Conference, leaders of the Congress (including the country's leader who is not even a four-anna member of the Congress) said that they believed in the sincerity of Lord Wavell. Did it very much look like vilification ? "The Statesman" says that the Simla Conference broke down not because of any Viceregal or British fault. The Congress has said whose fault it was. We do not blame one single individual for the failure of the Simla Conference. Speaking for myself I have said from the 14th September, the day of my release, that though some people might feel sorry at the failure of the Simla Conference I was most delighted that it broke down ; because the success of the Conference on terms laid down by Whitehall

would certainly in my opinion, lead to perpetuation of India's slavery.

Nevertheless, the Congress leaders from Gandhiji downwards, agreed to consider the proposals because they believed that Lord Wavell was sincere. But it is one thing to believe in the sincerity of an individual and another thing to believe or to be asked to believe in British Imperialists whose champion apparently "The Statesman" today is.

"The Statesman" says : "It is souring Indo-British relations perhaps permanently.... " I ask the editor of "The Statesman" : "Was it only yesterday that the Indo-British relations became sour because of the speeches of Congress leaders ? I have neither the time nor the desire to climb th painful stairs of Chinese and Indian history during the last 200 years. Neither have I the time nor the desire at the moment to place before you the unchallengeable facts, both from Chinese and Indian history, which go to show that the relations between the West and the East have been poisoned by the British Imperialists, Dutch Imperialists, French Imperialists, German Imperialists, Italian Fascists and American Imperialists — in fact by the whole body of Imperialists of the British brand, the French brand, the Dutch brand, the Nazi brand, the Fascist brand, the American brand and the 'Rising Sun' brand. May I offer just a piece of advice to the editor of "The Statesman" ? Let him go back and shut himself up in his room for several months together and read a little bit of the Chinese and Indian history and then come to lecture to the Congress about the souring of Indo-British relations.

Again "The Statesman" says : "We do not suppose any British here, old or new, feel any hatred for India". I thank the editor of "The Statesman" on your behalf as well as on my behalf for his kind supposition. I only wish his supposition had been true. Indians have not been able to forget because they have not been allowed to forget the past. Letters and words on the doors of railway compartments, refreshment rooms, hotels and even water closets in

China, India and elsewhere, and a hundred and more kinds of differential treatment in the West and the East are rude reminders to them even today of the position of the coloured peoples.

I hope a higher power which rules over the destinies of men and nations will instil some wisdom into the minds and hearts of Imperialists ; and the day will come when it can truly be said of them that they feel no hatred towards India and the East.

"The Statesman" then comes to the question of Indian National Army and says : "Sustained and almost hysterical adulation of this Japanese sponsored body has poured from Congress sources ..... that the Congress Party should have conducted such one-sided propaganda is strange ....."

I shall not lose patience with "The Statesman". I have passed nearly 60 summers and have learnt to cultivate a little patience. May I ask the editor of "The Statesman" how his paper and the British Imperialists had been describing the partisans of France who were fighting against the Nazi domination ? They were described as patriots. How were they describing the Belgian partisans ? They were described as patriots. How were they describing Czech partisans who had been fighting against the Nazis ? They were described as patriots. If the Indian National Army or the Indian partisans had been fighting against the Japanese, German or Italian domination, the editor of "The Statesman" and the whole body of British Imperialists would have described them as patriots. The only difference was this. Outside the borders of India they were not fighting against Nazi domination of which there was none. They were not fighting against Fascist domination because of Fascist domination there was none. Outside the borders of India they were not fighting against Japanese domination because from the facts which have come out during the last six months it appears that during most of the period the Congress leaders and I were in jail the

Burmese people had been running their own civil administration.

Unfortunately for the editor of "The Statesman" and unfortunately for the British Imperialists, the Azad Hind Fauj had made up its mind to fight against British Imperialism and therefore they could not possibly be described as patriots. They had to be described as "Quislings" and traitors.

And I am not surprised that the editor of "The Statesman" should consider it a sin on the part of the Indians to take steps to defend them or to give pecuniary aid and relief to them, their families and dependents. Apparently British imperialists and the editor of "The Statesman" thought that the Congress would not do anything of that kind ; and it is only because the Congress and the leading Congressmen all over India have been taking steps to defend and give pecuniary aid and relief to the members of the I.N.A. and their families and dependents, the Congress attitude amounts, according to "The Statesman", to "hysterical adulation".

I need not and shall not reply to "The Statesman" accusation that the I.N.A. was a Japanese sponsored body. Statements and documents are now pouring into India in large numbers and it is for Indians to judge, it is for history to judge as to whether the Azad Hind Fauj was right or wrong. I shall not anticipate the judgment of history, though I have no doubt myself about what that judgment will be.

Speaking of Java, "The Statesman" says : "Events in that island have stirred a fresh chorus of abuse from the Congress sources for everything British." Here I would like to put to the editor of "The Statesman" a straight question and I hope he will give a straight answer through his columns. Will the editor of "The Statesman", tell us if he is prepared to support the British imperialists who have reinforced the Dutch imperialists and shoulder to

shoulder with Dutch imperialists have been suppressing the independence movement in Java ? I know Java is different from France. I know Java is different from Czechoslovakia. I know Java is different from Belgium. Imperialists cannot concede independence to Java possibly because it consists of coloured peoples and their Dutch rulers are white people. That I can understand. But will the editor of "The Statesman" kindly tell us what was wrong in condemnations by the Congress leaders of acts and the conduct of British imperialists in Java, who are out to suppress the independence movement there and to back up the Dutch Imperialists, judged by the standards of freedom and democracy ?

I remember many years ago — it was shortly after the declaration of European war—speaking on the war resolution in Bengal Assembly I said that the British Government in India had enacted the Defence of India Act and the Rules promulgated thereunder not for the defence of India but for the perpetuation of India's slavery.

Now British Imperialists have gone a step further. They are not satisfied merely with what they have. They want to perpetuate the colonial domination of all the subject countries of the East, e.g. Indo-China, Java, Sumatra and the rest of the Pacific islands. "The Statesman" proceeds : "It would be deplorable were the accumulated rancour co-mingled with electioneering rhetoric now streaming from the Congress Party to sway tolerant and detached men disposed naturally towards the liberal path, into reaction".

The question I put to the editor of "The Statesman" and British Imperialists is this ; Are they prepared to concede absolute independence to India here and now ? We have had enough of so-called liberalism in the past. We know what it is, we know it to our cost. We know what the British Imperialists' "progressive realisation of self-government" means ; we know what Truman's eventual self-government means ; we know what Chiang Kai-Shek's

"a good deal of autonomy for the subject countries of the East" means. None of those formulae will satisfy us any more. Our demand for India and her sister nations in the East is complete independence from British, Dutch, French and American domination. Let "The Statesman" give up its fancied liberalism and tell us if the British Imperialists are prepared to concede absolute undiluted independence to India here and now.

"The Statesman" did me the honour of not publishing the statement I issued on the situation in Indonesia and China two or three days ago. I am glad it ignored it. I am not anxious for publicity in the columns of "The Statesman". But I request the editor of "The Statesman" to examine my statement critically — as critically as he is capable of — and tell me in the columns of his paper what vilification or mis-statement of facts he finds in it. I desire in your name, also on your behalf as well as mine, to warn the British, French, Dutch and American Imperialists that they stand before the bar of history, — where all the pomp and glitter and the circumstances of their proud position today will avail them not ; where their words and promises will be critically examined and their actions and measures as critically judged — and that history will not fear to pronounce upon them its most awful censure that, whereas they for years together had spoken glibly of freedom and democracy, they merely gave lip service to it, and when the time came they did their very best for the perpetuation of slavery in subject countries of the East.

CONGRESS AND THE HINDU MAHASABHA

Letter to Syamaprasad Mookerjea

Gidhapahar

Kurseong

12th November, 1945

My dear Syamaprasad,

Your letter of the 10th was delivered to me a few minutes before I left for the Sealdah station. It was not possible for me to reply to your letter before leaving my house for Sealdah, nor could I find time to reply to it yesterday after my arrival here.

A mutual friend handed over to me before I left Calcutta some cuttings from your paper, "The Nationalist" and I read them last evening. I would request you to read the articles which appeared in "The Nationalist" on the 8th, 9th and 10th inst. and kindly let me know if you support the vile and untrue insinuations made therein. The insinuations are as follows (inter alia) :

1. "Mr. Bose's determination owes its origin to certain blandishments held out by the Congress High Command."

2. "Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose perhaps wants to purchase his entry into the coterie, and for that purpose it may be essential for him to capture all the seats in the Central Assembly in Bengal for the Congress candidates."

3. "Some associate his name with the leadership of the Congress Parliamentary Party as successor to Mr. Bhulabhai Desai. Others mention his name in connection with the Presidentship of the Congress as successor to Maulana Azad. Even then, even if

the rumours have any foundation in fact, it would provide poor justification for Mr. Bose to make the election a personal issue between himself and Dr. Mookerjea."

There are many more insinuations, but it would be sufficient for present purposes to refer to only three of them. Is it any use your talking about unity when your Party and your paper are at the same time doing their best to poison the minds of the public by making false insinuations ?

Your and your Party's main grievance seems to be that the Congress is not prepared at this stage to repeat the offer which I made to you on and before the 7th Oct. last. I am summarising below what happened on and before the 7th Oct. last, and I would request you to tell me if my summary is incorrect in any respect.

1. Two or three days before the 7th October last, I offered you on my own responsibility an uncontested seat in the Central Assembly and I told you that I would advise the Congress to accept that offer of mine ; and I had no doubt they would do so. You told me then that it was not possible for you to accept an uncontested seat for yourself as your Party would say that you had left your Party in the lurch.

2. On the 7th October last, I told you that I was not prepared to discuss the division of the Central Assembly seats between the Congress and the Mahasabha on a percentage basis, but that I was prepared on my own responsibility to offer to you two uncontested seats in the Central Assembly — one for you and the other for your Party's nominee. After I had made my offer of two uncontested seats to you, you said that you were afraid your Party would not agree to that. To that I replied that I could not possibly go further but I would discuss

the matter with some Congress friends the same evening and let you know whether it was possible to go further.

3. The same evening you had a Party meeting at your house, and apparently while your meeting was in progress, you phoned up to me enquiring whether I and my Congress friends were prepared to go further. To that I replied in the negative and added that Congress friends considered that the Congress could not possibly offer more than two seats. After hearing me, you replied in very clear and definite terms that the offer of two uncontested seats was not acceptable to your Party. Our talks ended then, and it was only after that we of the Congress decided to contest all the Central Assembly seats.

I do not think that you can possibly challenge the correctness of any of the facts stated above. Why then this grievance against the Congress and myself that we have forced the electorate to choose between Syamaprasad Mookerjea and Sarat Chandra Bose ?

You and your Party deliberately rejected my offer of two uncontested seats in the Central Assembly to the Mahasabha — an offer which, I maintain, was most generous. When your Party finds that the whole of Bengal has rallied under the banner of the Congress, it manufactures a grievance and starts crying.

The letter you wrote to me from Madhupur on the Bijoya Dashami Day made it quite clear that you on behalf of your Party were asking for four out of the eight Central Assembly seats. Your words were : "If your offer is two out of six general seats and Congress not to set up any candidate for the special constituencies, please send me an express wire". As requested, I am enclosing a copy of that letter herewith. By suggesting to me that the Congress

should not set up any candidate for the special constituencies, you were, in fact, asking me to hand over those seats to the Mahasabha. I did not enter into a long discussion with you in my letter of the 20th October last, but a member of your Party, Sj. Madan Mohan Burman, wrote a long letter to me on the 22nd October after having, as he said, a good talk with you on the 21st and 22nd October.

The suggestion he made to me was exactly the suggestion made by you in your Bijoya Dashami Day letter. To that suggestion, I sent the following reply on the 24th October :

"I did not tell any one that the Congress did not intend to set up candidates from the two special constituencies, namely, Bengal Landholders' and Mahajan Sabha. All that I said to one or two friends was that I had not seen the electoral roll of the Bengal Mahajan Sabha constituency and until I saw the roll I could not decide as to whether the Congress would be able to put up a suitable candidate there. As regards the Bengal Landholders' constituency, you and I know that the sitting member is a Congressman, and I do not think there can be any difficulty in finding a suitable Congress candidate to contest that seat.

"The suggestion you have made that the Congress should give two out of the six general seats to the Mahasabha and not set up candidates from the two special constituencies, is one which, in my opinion, cannot be considered. The Congress cannot possibly agree to give fifty per cent of the Central Assembly seats to the Mahasabha. In your letter you have referred to your talks with Suresh Babu [1]. I may tell you that Suresh Babu never advised me to give fifty per cent of the seats to the Mahasabha. I may tell you also that it was decided before I left Calcutta that the Congress should contest all the Central Assembly seats."

It is unnecessary at this stage to enter into a long discussion with you over Pakistan, self-determination and all the rest of it. You may think that my views and the views

[1]. Suresh Chandra Majumdar

of the Congress are completely inconsistent with each other, but pardon me for saying that I do not think so. Your paper, "The Nationalist" said not very long ago that I would give "evasive answers" to questions about Pakistan, self-determination, etc. I had given very clear and definite answers long before your paper threw out the challenge to me. I repeated that again very clearly in the course of a statement I issued with reference to what the Burmese Nationalist leader, U. Aung San, had said. When your paper found that my answers were not evasive, it felt compelled to start the propaganda that my views were inconsistent with those of the Congress.

The Congress is most definitely against Pakistan and the partition of India. Pardon me for saying that it is the Congress and the Congress alone that will be able to defeat Mr. M. A. Jinnah's claim for Pakistan and partition of India. The Mahasabhà may shout against both at the top of its voice, but when it comes to action I am certain, it will be nowhere. May I put you one question ? Which are the organisations that are today fighting Mr. Jinnah's Muslim League candidates over the Muslim seats in the Central Assembly ? You know by now that all the six Muslim seats in the Central Assembly are being contested — four by Nationalist Muslims and two by Congress Muslims. Is the Mahasabha in the picture at all ?

All that the Mahasabha seems to be doing today is to create disruption among the Hindus. It has not the strength to fight Mr. Jinnah, and it never had.

I shall not detain you longer. I believe I have said enough for the purpose of showing by unchallengeable facts that the present contest between the Congress and the Mahasabha is entirely the creation of the latter.

I would request you to issue to the Press copies of the correspondence that has passed between us since the last Bijoya Dashami Day and ending with this letter. Let Bengal and India be my judge.

Yours affectionately

Sarat Chandra Bose.

Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose made a final appeal to Mr. Syamaprasad Mookerjea through the Press on 17, November, 1945 in the following terms :

"I am making the final appeal to you to withdraw all Mahasabha candidates from the Central Assembly constituencies and thereby serve the cause of Indian unity and freedom."

ON SHRI GURU NANAK

Summary of speech delivered at the birth anniversary meeting of Shri Guru Nanak in Calcutta on 19 November, 1945

Though the life and teachings of Shri Guru Nanak are well-known to all of you I would like to say something about that. I want to emphasize the fact that Shri Guru Nanak is not only the Guru of Sikhs but also of every Indian, be he a Hindu or a Muslim. I can assure you that Nanak is regarded as an incarnation of God not only by the Sikhs but also by every Indian.

What Guru Nanak preached 500 years ago has proved to be true today. He preached 500 years ago about the unity of God and of mankind. Today the people of India have come to understand the full implication of his teachings. And the Sikhs have played a great role in that.

The heroic sons of the Punjab who had been outside India and were striving for Indian freedom during recent years all believed that they were Hindusthanis though they might belong to different communities e.g. Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs etc. Sehgal, Shah Nawaz and Dhillon all believed that they were members of the same family and had no difference among them. Perhaps everyone of you remember that these three have said that they do not want to be defended by any communal organization. As Indians they recognise only one organization and that is the Indian National Congress. This feeling is only an outcome of what Guru Nanak taught 500 years ago.

We would do well to remember another lesson from the life of Guru Nanak. Guru Nanak was himself a family man. He had wife and children. He proved by the way he led his life that even the life of a householder could be elevated to a high pitch of glory, dignity and rare distinction. The life of a householder is never an undignified one. A man is judged by his works and if a man really wanted to lead the life of a hermit he must prove it by his deeds. Mere donning of the robes of an ascetic would not do.

Guru Nanak had said that the law of sacrifice in life was more constantly at work in a household than in the cloister of a hermit. If a man led the life of a householder, he was prone to be bound to the members of his family with the ties of love and affection. He had in that case many duties to perform and he should bear that burden gladly.

The reason for it was that he was moved by an inner urge. If every one of them could look upon his fellow beings with the same love and affection, there would be no more miseries. If they could translate the teachings of Guru Nanak into practice, there would be an end of all miseries in no time.

Enunciating the cause of the degeneration of India Guru Nanak had said that it was due to the lack of unity among them. That was why he tried to unite and organise his countrymen. It was the duty of everyone of them to emulate his example.

Perhaps everyone of you remember that when Guru Govind lost his four sons he said, "What does it matter if I have lost four sons. I have 4,000 sons, amongst you". We should all take that lesson to heart. No matter whether Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians or Buddhists everyone of us should regard his son as the son of Hindusthan.

The great problem before us today is the problem of Hindusthan. It is now known to us that the Indian National Army was formed outside India for the liberation of the motherland. The sons of the Punjab took a leading part in its formation.

The leadership of this army devolved upon Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose and he is regarded today as the Leader of India. This glorious achievement was due to a large extent to the heroic sons of the Punjab — both Hindus and Muslims. The news of their trial created a stir all over India so much so that the whole country is now vibrating with the cry of "Azad Hind Zindabad".

But, the seed of this heroic self-sacrifice was first sown by Guru Nanak and was later nurtured by one Guru after another until it grew up into a mighty tree.

The work which commenced with Guru Nanak and was pursued by other preceptors of the Sikhs has not yet been finished. If the sons of the Punjab took up in right earnest the work that began 500 years ago and give the lead for the liberation of India for which thousands of them shed their blood outside India, they will be successful. So far as the elections were concerned the enthusiasm I have seen will not go in vain.

The work for which the members of the Indian National Army lived and marched together is yet to be achieved. But we should never be disheartened. We must have firm belief that the lives of thousands of our brethern have not been laid down in vain.

Our eyes are now rivetted on the Red Fort of Delhi where Sehgal, Shah Nawaz and Dhillon are detained. I want to emphasise on you that merely raising the slogan of "On to Delhi" will not help us in any way. If we can set about our work, goaded by an unquenchable thirst for freedom, the gates of the Red Fort of Delhi will surely open and I believe that we shall be able to get back in our midst those courageous sons of India, embrace them and march with them towards their coveted goal of independence.

The link that was forged between the provinces of Bengal and the Punjab 40 years ago has since been strengthened. You must have heard of the name of the trinity Lal, Bal and Pal. These words signified Lala Lajpat Rai of the Punjab, Bal Gangadhar Tilak of Maharashtra and Bepin Chandra Pal of Bengal. People of these three provinces shed their blood in the same place and for the same cause. The tie thus that grewup can not be severed by any one.

POLICE FIRING IN CALCUTTA :

Letter to Bengal Governor

Full text of letter to Mr. R. G. Casey, Governor of West Bengal, on police firing on students and others in Calcutta in connection with the movement for release of INA prisoners.

November 28, 1945.

Dear Mr. Casey,

I have to address you with reference to the happenings last week. At an informal conference held at my house on Friday the 23rd instant, which was attended by persons belonging to different organizations, it was unanimously agreed :—

1. That the lathi charges and firing resorted to by the police were entirely unjustified ;

2. That a demand should be put forward for the appointment of a non-official enquiry committee to enquire into all the matter that led to the disturbances during the last few days and to bring the persons who resorted to unjustified lathi charge and firing to book ; and

3. That the persons arrested during the last few days, including students and others, should be forthwith released.

Having made my own enquiries as to the events which led to the disturbances on Wednesday and Thursday last, I must confirm what I said before, namely, that the lathi charge and firing resorted to by the armed forces of the Government were entirely unjustified.

It is true that the old, familiar story was repeated, as has been done during the last thirty years and more, that brickbats were thrown and subsequently the police had to

resort to lathi charges and firing. That story cannot deceive anybody, and least of all, those who have been in public life for the last three decades and more.

There can be no doubt whether that brickbats were not thrown by the students at all.

Spies and agent provocateurs have always been and are still handy in order to afford some justification for the acts and conduct of the police ; and I have not the slightest doubt that the police know quite well who those spies and agent provocateurs are.

I have also some evidence that some police officers were in the conspiracy themselves, but I shall say no more at this stage.

When I have completed collecting my evidence, I may have to inform you and the general public also.

The demands I have to make on behalf of the public are two : firstly, that all persons arrested on Wednesday and Thursday last, including students and workers, should be forthwith released ; and secondly, that those who resorted to lathi charges and firing should be suitably dealt with by the Government.

As regards the appointment of a non-official enquiry committee, that is a matter for the Congress organisation in Bengal.

I hope you will give your immediate attention to the contents of this letter.

Yours sincerely

Sarat Chandra Bose.

ON CHARGES AGAINST THE I.N.A.

Report of a Press interview in Calcutta on 2 December, 1945.

I feel compelled to say that the Government decision to put on trial between 20 and 50 persons will not be considered by the general public in India as an extension of clemency (to quote their own words).

The general public all over India have made it quite clear by now that their demand is that "not a hair on the heads of I.N.A. officers and men must be touched" — to quote the words I used in the course of a short speech on the platform at Victoria Terminus, Bombay, in September last.

I do not know on what evidence the Government of India have charged certain I.N.A. officers and men with acts of brutality. Brutality there always has been and there always will be when war is in progress, and the Western Imperialist Powers have been brutal to a degree.

Those who use atomic bombs on civilian populations are talking of brutality to-day. Whether I.N.A. officers and men have followed in the wake of Western Imperialistic forces is more than what I know today. Nevertheless, I shall say that it is difficult, almost impossible, for me to believe that members of the I.N.A. were guilty of acts of brutality.

Knowing my countrymen as I do, I make bold to say that Indians, particularly those who have been and are fighting for the independence of their country, are the last persons to be parties to acts of brutality.

REPRESSION IN BIKANER

Summary of speech delivered at a public meeting in Calcutta on 28 December, 1945.

The issue that is before the people of Bikaner today, has been before the people of India for the last 200 years. It is a matter of regret and shame that the rulers of Native States do not hesitate to pursue the same policy of repression as carried on by British imperialism. The rulers of the Native States lost no time in adopting a policy of repression with the passing of restriction and detention ordinances by British imperialism two years ago.

The native Princes are pursuing such policy because they know that they have the support of British imperialism behind them. But they should also reckon with the fact that they would not have that support behind them for long. British imperialism would not be able to hold its own in India and the reign of repression that it has been carrying on in India will come to an end in the near future. It is high time that the Princes of the Native States realised this.

The real owners of the land are the peasants and the labourers. There may be change of monarchs in a country but there can be no such change in respect of peasants and workers. As such, it is the duty of the rulers to respect the wishes of the subjects.

But instead of doing that the native rulers are imitating the repressive policy of British imperialism. This imitation of the British rule which is sure to end very soon can only result in the ending of the autocratic rule in the Native States. This can not go on for long.

Some of the political leaders of Bikaner have gone on hunger-strike as a mark of protest against this policy of repression. If no change of policy is evident, the 30,000

people of Bikaner State living in Calcutta will go to Bikaner and create such a movement as would compel the ruler of the State to concede their demands. With no disregard for anybody I want to sound this note of warning that there is the possibility of such a movement.

Monarchy had prevailed in India for a long time. But the love and respect that the people had for their kings in the past was gradually ebbing away. The reason is that the rulers are alienating themselves from the sympathies of their subjects. It is high time that such autocratic rule should stop.

Though India has been divided into British India and Native States, we do not believe in such distinction. If such acts of repression are carried on in the Native States any longer we shall carry on such a countrywide campaign that would surely put an end to the autocratic rule in the States along with British imperialism. For 60 years we have carried on a relentless struggle against vested interests. Our fight is as well against brown vested interests as against white vested interests. It is our demand that with the white vested interests, brown vested interests should also go.

PART II : 1946

ATROCITIES IN CHITTAGONG BY CIVIL PIONEER CORPS

Statement issued in Calcutta on 11 January, 1946

Hardly has Bengal forgotten the atrocities in Midnapore when distressing news comes from Chittagong of some members of a Civil Pioneer Corps setting fire to entire villages, committing rape and looting of property.

They seem to have emulated the example set by troops in Indonesia of burning down whole villages ! For no known fault, villages of Sathazari, Panchalais and Kaherpara (near Chittagong) have been subjected to unspeakable cruelties and brutality at the hands of certain beasts in human form, who let themselves loose on unarmed villagers.

As against this latest exhibition of jungle law, even the horrors and cruelties perpetrated since August 1942, pale into insignificance.

What led to the shameful acts and conduct referred to above is not yet clear ; but, whatever, may have been the reason, no one with human feelings — whether in the Government or outside can possibly condone them. That some members of a Civil Pioneer Corps could behave in that manner speaks very ill of the organisation they belong to. That they behaved like wild beasts is ample testimony to their lack of training in decent behaviour and disciplined conduct. And that is enough condemnation of the alien rule in this country.

Hundreds of villagers have been rendered homeless ; properties worth over lakhs of rupees have suffered irreparable damage and to fill the cup of misery to the full, there have been deaths of villagers and injuries to many.

In the opinion of the Government, Rs. 250 per family is ample compensation for their sufferings ! Contrast it with the judgment of a British Court awarding £100 as damages to a lady whose one finger was injured as the result of a cycle accident !

It has been and is the custom of the authority in this land to consider Indian life and property so cheap that it is no concern to them what happens. A few hundred rupees will, in their opinion erase the agony and restore the sufferers to their former position.

I must, on behalf of the people of Bengal, warn the authorities that the time is long past when we could watch with folded hands such occurrences as happened near Chittagong. What the Government should do immediately is to issue a detailed communique explaining the incident and describing what action has been and will be taken to relieve the distressed. What is more, the wild beasts who roam about in decent society should not be allowed to escape punishment for their preying upon innocent villagers. Will the Government act ? And when ?

JALPAIGURI AND TRIPURI : Beaconlight for the future

The following is a free English translation of the address delivered by Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose in Bengali at a mass public reception at Deshbandhu Park, Calcutta on 13 January, 1946.

Citizens of Calcutta,

After four long years, out of a small prison I have come to a greater one. Since the day I came out I have been receiving your unbounded love and affection. This has found expression in the reception which you have organised today. I am very grateful to you for this. I know this love and affection have not been shown to me personally, this is meant for the great national organisation, the Indian National Congress, of which I am a humble servant.

Standing before you today and going through your welcome address, my memory goes back to the past and I am reminded of the day in 1918 when in the High Court Bar I took my initiation from my political Guru, Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das. Twenty-seven or twenty-eight years have elapsed since then and many things have happened during this long period in our national life. It is not possible within the short space of time to narrate that long history here, nor is it necessary. Bengal and the Bengali people and Indians as a whole know the story very well.

You all know that the Indian National Congress was born sixty years ago. When the Congress was born it was an organisation of a handful of educated persons. But today it is a people's organisation ; it is an organisation of the educated and uneducated, it is an organisation of young men and young women, it is an organisation of kisans and mazdoors. Today the Indians are organised and have rallied under the banner of the Congress.

I do not think it is necessary to narrate the history of the Congress. But I feel that I must remind you of the

events that occurred in 1939. In that year in February, as you know, the Bengal Provincial Political Conference was held in Jalpaiguri. The leader of Bengal and of India [1] was present at that Conference. The conference adopted a resolution which will, I believe, remain written in golden letters in the history of India. The resolution was to the effect that a six months' ultimatum should be given to the British Government asking them to transfer all powers to the people of India and quit the land bag and baggage.

I do not like to say much about the presidential address delivered at that Conference. In 1938 from information received from England I thought that although there was the peace of Munich, yet there was a war impending in Europe. I thought that the war was bound to come in 1940.

In this connection I would like to remind you what I said in my presidential address at the Jalpaiguri conference. I said that another opportunity had offered itself before us to place the ideal of complete independence before the country. This opportunity had come in the shape of the international situation. A conflict between the Fascist Powers and the so-called Democracies was imminent. It is true that the conflict had been put off for a while at the sacrifice of Czechoslovakia. But the conflict could not be postponed for long. The conflict was not really between the Fascist forces and the Democracies. It was between the old imperialism and empires and the new imperialism and empires. I also said that in this conflict India's men and money would be exploited and that we should resist this exploitation. I did not say that India should not join the coming war under any circumstances. What I said was that we should have no interest in a war between imperialist and fascist forces. We should not be a willing partner in an imperialist war.

You know that after that speech of mine the Conference adopted the resolution to which I have referred earlier.

[1] Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose

At the time the resolution was adopted, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose made a speech which, I believe, will remain written in golden letters in the pages of Indian history for all time to come. That resolution you all know, had been sent to the All-India Congress Committee. It was a matter of regret that it was not adopted at the Tripuri session of the Indian National Congress.

I do not like to make any complaint against anybody for that. But in making a survey of our national struggle one cannot help referring to Jalpaiguri and Tripuri. You also know that the President of the Tripuri session of the Congress from his sick-bed sent that resolution to the Congress. But it was not accepted.

Three years passed since the Tripuri session of the Congress and many of us then were behind the prison bars. In April 1942 while inside the detention camp I came to learn and also read in the "Harijan" that Mahatmaji proposed to launch a new movement. The news greatly heartened us. We thought that although three years had elapsed there was yet time for a fight and Gandhiji's decision should be accepted by the country. On the 8th of August, 1942, the All-India Congress Committee endorsed Mahatmaji's decision with some modifications. Those of us who were behind the prison bars came to know what suffering and sacrifice the people of our country had to undergo since the passing of the August Resolution. We will remember this for long. Kisans and mazdoors rose to the height of the occasion and kept the prestige and honour of the Congress intact. The year 1942 will ever remain a memorable year in the history of India. In that year the Indian National Army was also formed outside India. Although the struggle that began inside India differed in character from the one that was waged outside India in that year, the objective of both was the same, namely, the independence of India.

At that time it greatly pained me when I came to know behind the prison bars that members of the Communist party were making the propaganda that Mahatma Gandhi was

pro-fascist and pro-Japanese and were also declaring that the war was a people's war. Today, the voice of the communists has become feeble and I have no doubt that in the course of time their voice will no longer be heard. The communists also made the propaganda that Netaji was a quisling and the I.N.A. men were displaying a slavish mentality. It is strange that today the communists are full of praise for the I.N.A. men. If they were today full of praise for the I.N.A. men it is because they have realised that their countrymen will not tolerate them any longer. But, my countrymen, I do not ask you to retaliate. Retaliation is against the nature of Indians. Nevertheless, so long as we shall have to continue our struggle for independence we should know who are our friends and who are our foes. Besides the communists, there were some who said that the members of the I.N.A. were misguided and misled.

When I came out of prison, I said that not a hair on the heads of I.N.A. men must be touched. Today when I find that Shah Nawaz, Sehgal and Dhillon have been released by the British Government, it is clear to me that the people of this country have gained much in strength. They have been released by the British Government, because the powers that be have realised that a country which can produce men like the officers and members of I.N.A. was sure to attain her independence in no time. I believe that all the imperialist powers, the British, the French and the Dutch, all put together, will not be able to resist India's demand for independence for long. When I said that not a hair on the heads of the I.N.A. men must be touched, I said that in the belief that under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi the people of this country have gained so much in strength that the British will not dare put off their release for long.

When the Congress was in prison some parties tried to extend their influence over their countrymen. But from behind the prison bars I felt sure that their influence was of a temporary character and that when the Congress came out these parties would be liquidated. The Congress has come out victorious in the Central Assembly elections. But

the elections to the Bengal Legislative Assembly were pending.

I would, therefore, like to appeal to my countrymen, Hindus, Muslims and Christians, to stand by the Congress in the Provincial Assembly elections. Winning of the elections formed part of their struggle for independence. I do not mean to say that the fact of our winning the elections will bring us independence. But it is my belief, — and this was also the belief of Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das and of those who were his disciples, that all the citadels of British imperialism in this country which are open to us should be captured by the Congress. The real struggle for independence lies outside the legislature. If we win the elections we would be strengthening the struggle outside. Therefore we have to organise the people, Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and Christians, under the banner of the Congress in the coming elections. The success of the Congress in the elections depends on the people. And I know that the people of India are behind the Congress.

As regards the communal organisations I would ask you to remember what Shah Nawaz, Sehgal and Dhillon have stated in respect of their defence. They stated that they would have no assistance from a communal organisation. I ask young men and women to remember these words and devote themselves wholeheartedly to the service of the country.

I would like to point out that the Congress and my countrymen are today following the path which had been chalked out by Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das 22 years ago. In his Gaya speech Deshbandhu urged upon his countrymen the necessity of capturing all citadels of British imperialism which were open to them and fight imperialism from there. I hope Bengal will follow that path. I hope also that Bengal will follow the path laid down by Deshbandhu's beloved disciple, Subhas Chandra Bose. That path is the path of independence. It may be that the I.N.A. men do not hold the same view as that of the Congress as regards

the means of attaining independence, but their objective is the same.

I, therefore, ask our young men and women to follow the path chalked out by the Congress. I have no doubt we shall gain our independence by following the path of non-violence. Independence is at our door. Like Sardar Patel I believe we shall be independent in a short space of time and I believe too that by following the path of non-violence we shall be independent. I believe we shall not have to adopt the method which the European powers had adopted in regaining their independence. Because I believe in that, I ask you to rally round the banner of the Congress.

In 1905 I had the privilege of coming in close contact with the revolutionary workers of Bengal. It will be impertinence on my part to talk about their suffering and sacrifices for the cause of the country. But young men and young women, I want to remind you of one thing. That is about the necessity of character and discipline. Character is not an ornament. It forms the backbone of man.

One of the reasons why we have not been able to attain our independence after so much suffering and sacrifice is that we have not learnt to move and act in a disciplined way. It is for this reason that I am in favour of military training for young men. I believe military training cannot militarise Indians. This is because Indians have never been empire-greedy. Because I am in favour of military training, it does not mean I support violence. India has no necessity of supporting violence. The *mantram* of non-violence is not a new thing to India. India will ever remain non-violent.

I would like to refer you in this connection to what Swami Vivekananda had said on this subject in his "Karmayoga". Swami Vivekananda had said : "Non-violence of the strong is of value ; non-violence of the weak is meaningless. What is the use of a beggar saying : I am throwing away my riches."

Therefore, so far as the question of non-violence is concerned, I think it is not a new thing for Bengal too. Swamiji had bestowed much thought over this matter. Therefore, I believe that violence is not necessary for India. If the Indian today, in unequivocal terms, demands 'I want independence' I believe, there is no power on earth that can resist that demand. If the officers and men of the I.N.A. had to adopt a different method, it was because they were compelled to do so by the realisation that they could only resist the European powers with the same weapons as the Europeans had been using.

Independence will not come as a gift. We shall have to snatch it from the hands of those who have deprived us of it. When the heroes of the I.N.A. are today prepared to fight for India's independence under the banner of the Congress, I believe there is no power on earth which can resist India's freedom. I ask you to emulate the sufferings and sacrifices of the I.N.A. men and also their discipline.

I shall ask young men and young women to read Swami Vivekananda's "Prachya and Paschatya". Please remember that nothing great can be achieved by imitation. India has a distinct culture and civilization of her own. It is true that today the glory of that civilization and culture is dim. When India regains her independence, I have no doubt her culture and civilization will shine in their pristine glory. We are all awaiting that day. I am in the evening of my life and I may not have the good fortune of witnessing that glorious day in the history of India. I have however no doubt that our children will be able to enjoy that day.

BRITISH ATROCITIES IN INDONESIA AND INDO-CHINA

Text of maiden speech as the Leader of the Opposition in the Central Legislative Assembly on 21 January, 1964

Though this is my first appearance in this House, I consider it my duty to raise my voice of protest on behalf of the wider Indian public outside this House, against the atrocities that are being committed and being perpetrated by the Government of India outside India's borders. I call atrocities deliberately — a word of which the Government seem to be fond when talking about others. Of course, they have not eyes to see the atrocities they commit. They have not ears to hear protests that are being levelled against them and against their conduct from far off India. The British Government whose agent the Government of India are today, talked and talked again and again of their moral obligation towards the Dutch — moral obligation of one Western exploiter towards another in order to perpetuate colonial domination over the subject countries of Asia.

And I was startled to hear the member who spoke on behalf of the Government of India this afternoon talking of terrorism — the representative of a Government and an administration which is based on terrorism talks of terrorism of others (applause).

So, let us not be deceived by smooth promises which the so-called democracies held out to us from 1939 onwards.

We were told, both during the first world war and also in course of the second world war that if Indians fought in the fields of France or in the deserts of Mesopotamia or on rocky heights of Sicily they would be achieving freedom for India. These words will not deceive us any longer. We know what the British Government is fighting for. We know what the Dutch Government is fighting for ever since

1939 and we know what the Government of India has been fighting for with the use of Indian troops ever since the second world war. They have been fighting not only for perpetuating their own domination on India but also to perpetuate the domination of the French imperialists and the Dutch imperialists and the American imperialists and the whole gang and brood of imperialists who occupy portions of Eastern countries today.

May I ask what is the moral obligation that the Government of India has in this matter ? If the Government of India feel that they have any moral obligation, their moral obligation is to the people of India and the people of India have declared with one voice their sympathy with and for the subject countries in the East.

A further thing has been said by Dewan Chamanlal that what is now being enacted, forms one of the most disgraceful chapters in Indian history. I entirely agree because that is not our history.

The real Indian history is very different. History records that India has never willingly dipped her hands in her neighbour's blood. India does not want to dip her hands in her neighbour's blood. It is British imperialism, represented by the British imperialist Government and their agents in India who have compelled the Indians to dip her hands in her neighbour's blood.

We on this side of the House, — both the Party which I represent and the Party which Mr. Jinnah represents — demand that every single Indian soldier and every single Indian seaman be withdrawn from Indonesia and Indo-China (Applause).

If the Government of India feel — I know they will not be feeling it today but they are bound to feel it tomorrow, they will be compelled to feel it tomorrow —if the Government of India feel that they have to represent the people of this country, I warn them, I ask them to feel what

their moral obligation is, to whom it is and discharge their moral obligation by withdrawing the last Indian soldier and the last Indian seaman from Indonesia and Indo-China.

Before I resume my seat I desire to warn the Government of India who are today in alliance with the British imperialists, French imperialists, Dutch imperialists and American imperialists, I desire to warn the Government of India that they stand before the bar of history, that all their present pomp and present glitter and the present circumstances of proud position will avail them not, that their words will be critically examined and their measures will be critically judged and that if they refuse to listen to the voice of this House, history will record against them the most awful censure. I desire to warn them that the East will come to her own. Let them read the signs of times and behave accordingly (Loud applause).

FOOD FOR THE PEOPLE : Task of Government of India

Full text of speech delivered in the Central Legislative Assembly on 30 January, 1946

As I may not be in this House during the later stages of this debate I desire with your leave, to make my own contribution to it today. The subject-matter of the debate is one which has agitated the minds of our people ever since the year 1941. It assumed larger proportions in 1943 when the man-made famine broke out in Bengal and in certain other parts of the country. The agitation in the public mind became greater. As the House knows, famine and pestilence began to stalk over my own province of Bengal and also in other parts of the country in the year 1943. The angel of death began to beat its wings. But the light-hearted revellers in the Government of India and the Government of Bengal went on merrily with their revels. Sir, it makes one sad to contemplate these things.

For feeding a nation in peace and in war, three things, to my mind, are necessary, firstly, that the Government should have a strong Scientific Division which is capable of advising on a food and nutrition policy ; secondly, that the Government should whole-heartedly implement their advice ; and thirdly, and that is, Sir, by far the most important of the three — that the Government should be completely identified with the people and enjoy their absolute confidence. It is such an organization and such a spirit that created a far better food situation in countries like Britain, the United States of America and the Soviet Union than we had in this poor country of ours during the last war.

In England, the policy followed and the action taken by the British Government have, it has been claimed, actually raised the nutritional level, particularly of the poorer sections of the population. In fact, Sir, it has been stated that the average stature of the British boy of 12 today is about 2½ inches higher than it was before this war. Britain,

as is well-known, is a country which normally produces far less food than she requires for her consumption ; and yet so successful has been the policy of the British Government regarding home production and imports of food, that not only has death from starvation been prevented, but people have been given more nutritious, if rather monotonous, food during the war than before.

Let us examine, now, Sir, the steps that were taken by the British Government which led to such good results under such difficult conditions. The Scientific Division of the Ministry of Food in England calculated first the nutritional needs of the total population of Great Britain in terms of various categories of foodstuffs according to an internationally accepted optimum nutritional standard. In looking after these nutritional needs, they considered the requirements for different age groups of the population of different occupations, as well as the special nutritional needs of expectant and nursing mothers. It was, indeed, Sir, a most thorough calculation of the exact needs of the population and, if I may add, a most thorough consideration of all the essential nutritive elements required for maintaining the highest nutritional level. After such calculation and consideration, the Scientific Division in Great Britain proceeded to get the figures of pre-war home production of food and decided which categories of foodstuffs should be grown in larger quantities according to a "Grow More Food Campaign" — unlike the 'Grow More Food Campaign' in India — and which should be imported in order to meet the deficit in existing home production. They advised increased production of the bulkier foodstuffs like cereals, potatoes, etc. and recommended importation of certain quantities of wheat and wheat products and more particularly, of concentrated protective foodstuffs like egg powder, milk powder, orange juice, liver oils and other vitamin concentrates. They recommended compulsory feeding of milk and certain protective foodstuffs particularly to the so-called vulnerable groups of the population namely children and expectant and nursing mothers. They also advised the establishment of community feeding

centres called "British restaurants" where cheap and nutritional meals were to be provided. Community feeding was also recommended through factory canteens. Milk was recommended to be distributed to the vulnerable groups of the population first and then if available, to others. The Scientific Division of the Ministry of Food also carried out regular investigations with human subjects regarding the effect that the current rationing and other administrative measures had on the health of selected groups of the population. The rationing policy was subject to periodical reviews in the light of those results.

Sir, that was not all. The British Government showed a high degree of responsibility to the British people under its charge by loyally implementing almost all the scientific advice without exception. They provided shipping space for all the food that was needed to be imported into the country and also helped the increased production of more food in the country principally by means of the system of subsidy.

Let me remind the Government of India, which is represented on the Treasury Bench before me, that throughout the war period the British Government subsidised the growing of food directly from the Exchequer to the tune of over Rs. 200 crores annually and recently they have sanctioned about Rs. 400 crores for direct subsidy and food production. The policy of the Government there was to buy foodstuffs on remunerative prices from growers and to sell them at greatly reduced prices to the consumers. That policy was mainly responsible for the success of the "Grow More Food Campaign" and for stabilising prices and bringing foodstuffs within the means of all consumers, rich and poor. In no case of a staple foodstuff did the price go up more than 25 per cent above the pre-war price level. The British Government's subsidy covered all the important foodstuffs including cereals, potatoes, milk and meat. Potatoes were sold in England at 2½ annas a seer during the war. And I call to mind today that during my detention days I read in the papers that potatoes were sold at some places in India at the rate of Rs. 5/- per seer !

As regards imports of food, the British Government never pleaded inability to provide shipping space for the importation of food that was necessary for feeding the people at an optimum nutritional level. In fact, Sir, throughout the war, sufficient stores of food were maintain in England, not only for current consumption, but also for consumption over a period of many months. It is the complete synthesis between scientific advice and administrative measures, a synthesis which is altogether absent in our country, which has given such good results in England.

When, Sir, we compare the policy of the Government of India with that of the British Government, what do we find ? The contrast is glaring, indeed. Rationing was introduced in India quite late in the war, although the position of food supply was not unknown to the Government and nothing was done even when the price-index of foodstuffs should have indicated to the Government that large masses of people were already living on a starvation diet. Yet, the Government of India keeps on its pay-roll, an Economic Adviser, whose duty ought to have been to draw the attention of the Government to the serious economic and food situation in the country as early as 1941 or 1942. The Government of India later pleaded ignorance of the impending crisis, whereas even lay people knew from a general knowledge of the soaring prices of the basic foodstuffs like rice and wheat and tens of millions of people were already going hungry.

Sir, a complete cleavage such as this between the Government and the people, whom it has undertaken to govern, has not any parallel at all in history, modern or ancient.

Rationing began in India, as the House will remember, almost towards the end of the war, except in the province of Bombay, which had introduced rationing earlier with commendable foresight. When ultimately rationing was introduced, the system was not based on the optimum nutritional requirements of the people of India, and even now rationing covers only the cereals and sugar, whereas practically all foodstuffs including potatoes, eggs, meat, fish, etc are in

short supply and should have been rationed. The rationing system therefore does not seem to take cognisance of the effect of its operation on the health of the people and does not even tend to meet the nutritional requirements of the people according to modern nutritional standards. It is typical of the Government of India, that it has a Rationing Adviser — I repeat, it is typical of the Government of India alone among all the Governments in the world that it has a Rationing Adviser, — who is not an expert on food and nutrition, is not even an Indian, and is hardly familiar with the intimate food habits of our people !

In spite of the fact that food subsidy has played a most important role in the production of more food in England and in stabilising the prices there, no approach even to this question has been made by the Government of India. It is well-known that large sections of the population are not able to buy even the ration of rice that is allowed. There is no reason why the Government of India should not follow the same policy as England and buy at least the foodgrains — rice, wheat and millets — at remunerative prices from the growers and sell them at reduced prices to the consumers. In Britain the Government is doing it for all foodstuffs and the Government is finding money for it there. Thereby the Government in England is distributing the burden of the higher cost of foodstuffs over the entire nation instead of compelling the lower income groups to starve. Why cannot this policy, I ask, be followed with respect to at least one or two important foodstuffs like rice and wheat ? If money can be found to finance the war, surely money can be found to finance the feeding of the people. Money can be raised by loans for keeping people alive. The Government of India says that it is making huge plans for the future reconstruction of India ; but apparently it has no plan at all for putting nutritious food into the mouths of the people who are required to reconstruct the country ! Budgets running into thousands and thousands of crores of rupees are being produced on paper, — on paper, I say, — for future plans of development ; but at present no sufficient or substantial amount

has been allotted for subsidy to the growers, which could have helped immediate production of more food and also the bringing of foodstuffs within the means of the poorer sections of our people.

Regarding imports, again, the lack of shipping space has often been pleaded in the past for not getting food into our country, while that plea was never put forward by the British Government to justify starvation in their own country. Even now, the allocation of food to India is going by default, because the Combind Food Board at Washington to which reference was made by my friend, Mr. M. R. Masani, which makes the allocation of the world's food supply for the United Nations, has no representative who can speak directly for India. It was reported in the Press the other day that even the Food Secretary of the Government of India, who went to Washington to plead for the import of, as far as I remember, about 1½ million tons of rice and wheat into India, was not allowed to represent the case of India directly to the Combined Food Board by the representative of the British Government, — our Trustees, as they describe themselves ! I repeat, Sir, that the Food Secretary of the Government of India who went to Washington to plead for the import of about 1½ million tons of rice and wheat into India was not allowed even to represent the case of India directly to the Combined Food Board by the representative of British Government, but had greatly scaled down India's demand and channelled it through the British Government's representative to the Combined Food Board. That the case for the feeding of a nation of four hundred million people should receive such treatment is a strong pointer to and also a sad commentary on our national status. If the food prospect in India is grim, the Government of India and the Treasury Bench who represent the Government of India in this House must hold themselves responsible for it.

Sir, there has been a lot of talk about hoarding and malpractice in India in relation to food situation and the Government of India during the last three years has always

taken cover under that plea. Some of it is, of course, undoubtedly true ; but it is clear that even the tendency to hoard in this country results largely from the fact that the people do not trust the Government to give them the food they need. And who can say from millions of deaths from starvation that mistrust is unjustified ? The crux of the problem lies in this — that a National Government does not exist either at the Centre or in the Provinces, which could have inspired the confidence of our people, could have put through measures of subsidy by raising loans, if necessary, and would have considered itself responsible for even a single death occurring in this country from starvation. If only the Government of this country had identified themselves with the joys and sorrows of our people, with their fortunes and misfortunes, as the British Government at home did with reference to the people of Britain, it would have pursued the same or similar measures which were taken in Britain and would not have allowed a single Indian to die in this country from starvation. Science is at our bidding, even to produce food from wood, as was done in Germany. But nothing is of any avail if the Government has neither a heart nor brains, and if the Government continues to be what it was, say thirty years ago, when one of the Secretaries of State for India described it as "too wooden, too inelastic, too antedeluvian".

Sir, I have had considerable opportunity given to me by the Government of India between December 1941 and September 1945 to study the subject and I have given much thought to it ; and I desire now to place before this House certain concrete proposals of my own to deal with the situation.

The concrete proposals I would put forward are :—

(1) That the Government must subsidise the production of staple foodstuffs by raising loans, national or international, if necessary.

(2) That the Government must bring the prices of staple foodstuffs within the means of the poorest of the poor ;

(3) That the Government must base the rationing system on the optimum nutritional requirements of our people and not merely on the basis of giving our people a few grains of rice or a few grains of wheat ;

(4) That the Government must take all help from science and technology to grow and produce more food ;

(5) That the Government must bring pressure to bear on the Combined Food Board to see that from the world pool of foodstuffs this country's requirements are met no less than the food requirements of Britain ; and,

(6) That constant checks are kept regarding the effect of all food measures on the health of the population.

The 'raison d'etre' of a civilised Government, according to modern concepts, lies in raising the standard of living of the people. I know that the Government of India is neither civilized nor Indian, nor even a Government worth the name. But every Government, which calls itself civilised, has to accept responsibility for not only feeding the people but feeding them at an optimum nutritional level. In so far as the Government cannot do it, it must quit and make room for another Government which can take and discharge the responsibility for feeding the people. The Government of India have one or two alternatives before them — either to root out corruption, inefficiency and nepotism within their own ranks and work hard for the well-being of the people, or to work their way out of this country, which they turned into a graveyard in the years 1943 and 1944.

AN ADDRESS TO STUDENTS

The following is a summarised English translation of a speech delivered in Hindi at a meeting in Patna organised on 1 February, 1946 by the Patna Students' Congress under the Presidentship of Dr. Rajendra Prasad.

My Young Friends,

You must know independence can not be achieved without a fight. Our fight for independence which began under Mahatma's leadership on "Quit India" basis in 1942 still continues and we are free soldiers still on the march. The 'Quit India' movement can not be suppressed by British might, not even with American aid. Britishers also realise this truth. They know that the time for their departure has come.

In every fight there is a stage for preparation. My appeal to you is to prepare and not to be disheartened because our 1942 struggle did not bear fruit. Our efforts can never go in vain. Before long we are sure to achieve independence.

For us, Indians, the moment for decision came when the European war broke out in 1939. Again it came in 1940, and again in 1941. The moment to take a decision again came in 1942 and Mahatma Gandhi did decide on April 26, 1942 when in the course of an article in the *Harijan* he gave us hints of the coming struggle which finally took its shape in the 'Quit India' resolution and which was passed at the A.I.C.C. session on August 8, 1942.

The man who represented and still represents the soul of India decided to the supreme satisfaction of the entire Indian nation that India's independence issue could be settled only on the 'Quit India' basis. I was then in jail but I can recall my happiness when I read it in the papers.

Friends, you must remember that the fight on the 'Quit India' basis still continues and will continue till inde-

pendence was won. When the history of Indian independence will be written, that of the year 1942 will be written in letters of gold. It is the year in which the 'Quit India' resolution was adopted and it in this year that the I.N.A. was formed. In the following year 1943, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose became the Head of the Azad Hind Government and the Azad Hind Fauj to supplement the fight that was being waged inside India.

The inside struggle was being conducted on non-violent lines and Netaji fought on different lines and invaded India. Though the weapons used in these two fights were different, yet the objective was the same. It is not for us to pass the verdict as to which was right and which was wrong. We better leave it to future historians. What we admire is the bravery and the defiance of death which our countrymen showed on the borders of Assam. I greet the great gallant soldiers who fought for India's liberation outside India.

These gallant leaders of the I.N.A. after their release expressed their desire in unequivocal language to fight for India's liberation as disciplined soldiers under the Congress Flag. I would ask my young friends to emulate their bravery and heroism and their spirit which defied death for the liberation of the country. If you can achieve that spirit I have no hesitation in saying that you will achieve independence through non-violent struggle.

On many occasions I found our boys lacking in discipline. Military training is needed to remove this handicap. By military training I do not mean every one should become a soldier. India never in the past dipped her hand in the blood of her neighbours. Military training gives you a sense of discipline and helps to form character — the two things which are essential in winning freedom. Man becomes infinitely stronger by possessing these two virtues.

The word non-violence, if it carries any meaning, means non-violence of the strong. By imbibing these two

virtues, you become true non-violent soldiers for the liberation of the country. I ask all young men and women to be physically and morally strong.

The Congress has been transferred into a peoples' organisation since the advent of Mahatma Gandhi. Of late, other organisations have cropped up under British patronage. The Communist Party and the Radical Party are all branches of British organisations. When the Congress went to jail, the Communist Party found the field open, entered it and raised the false slogan of "People's War" to mislead their countrymen. I concede that this war was a "people's war" for the people of England, France, Czechoslovakia and Russia and such other countries. I fail to understand how it was a "people's war" for us, If it was "people's war", how is it that the urge for freedom in the people of Indonesia and smaller countries in East Asia is being suppressed by those powers themselves. The object of these powers is to perpetuate the slavery of these people.

About the Radical Democratic Party — I must express my thankfulness to Dr. Ambedkar for the disclosure that the Radicals were getting Rs. 13,000 per month from the Indian Government. It has also been reported in the papers that the U. P. Government also gave Rs. 75,000 to the Radicals. So it is not difficult for the people to assess the colour and affiliation of this party. It is British interest and policy to help these parties so that they may misdirect the freedom urge of the people in India.

One thing that you must understand is that these parties which thrive on British patronage can never serve the interests of the Indian people which are diametrically opposed to British interests. I have no hesitation in proclaiming these parties as enemies of India's freedom. These enemies of the country's freedom took possession of the platform for three years or so in the absence of Congressmen. But as soon Congressmen came out of jail they fled from the scene.

I understand that they have set up some candidates here to measure their strength with the Congress. What fate awaits them needs no emphasis. When I was in the Punjab I invited them openly to come and convince the people how they called this war a "people's war". But nobody turned up.

I urge upon you, friends, not to be misguided by their slogans. Do not be carried away by isms. For a subject people there is only one 'ism' and that is nationalism—ardent nationalism. In this connection, I will ask you to know what the great Chinese Communist leader, Mao Tse-Tung said. Unlike the communists in India who are agents of British Imperialism, Mao has said that the first objective of the Chinese communists was neither the establishment of communism nor socialism. Their first objective was to make China free and independent.

If this applied to China, there is far stronger reason for it application to India which is a subject country unlike China. First, win your country's independence, then think of experimenting with socialism or communism. So, start with ardent nationalism first and win back your independence. The Congress is the only organisation which is fighting for the freedom of the country and it is your duty to see Congress strengthened.

You find that the Muslim League is going along a different path altogether. But that is all due to the Divide and Rule policy of Britain. The Muslim League's demand for Pakistan is preposterous and untenable. The country can never be divided to please the Leaguers. The country belongs to all Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and Christians.

While in jail I had occasion to read a few books on Pakistan sent to me by Rahamat Ali Saheb who is considered to be the father of the Pakistan idea. After careful reading of all the accounts, I was convinced that Pakistan cannot be a feasible proposition.

Do not forget that India has a mission in the world. It is not a mere accident in history that India has always remained a peaceful nation and was never an aggressor. It is not an accident that while Christians have given the go-by to the teachings of Christ, it was left to an Indian and a Hindu—I mean Mahatma Gandhi—to become the most pious Christian in the world. India has a mission. It is to preach the gospel of "non-violence" to the world. In this age of the atom bomb, it is non-violence and non-violence alone which can solve world problems. If anything is needed to construct or reconstruct the world, it is non-violence.

I am a born optimist. Many people feel sorry because of the Hindu-Muslim problem. But, if we become really good Hindus and good Muslims and rally round the Congress, this problem will disappear. I accept the invitation of Rajendra Babu and assure you that I will again come to Patna.

We of the older generation will leave you no legacy of a bed of roses. We shall leave you a legacy of our hopes and desires. We shall always pray that where we have failed you may win.

ENEMIES OF INDIA'S FREEDOM

Reply to M. N. Roy
Statement issued to the Press on 5 February, 1946

My attention has been drawn to a statement issued by Mr. M. N. Roy, the forgotten leader of the fast-dying Radical Democratic Party. Lest the public should make a mistake, I must inform them that this is the same Mr. M. N. Roy whose name is connected with a Central Government dole of Rs. 13,000 a month.

Mr. M. N. Roy has taken exception to certain remarks made by me during a recent speech at Patna. The greater portion of my speech was in Hindi — a language which, unfortunately for me, I know very imperfectly. I find that portions of my Hindi speech have been translated incorrectly ; but probably that was due to my faulty Hindi.

What I said at Patna was : The Communist Party and the Radical Democratic Party co-operated with British Imperialism during the war when the Congress was in jail, and tried to sabotage the "Quit India" movement. They helped British imperialists by raising the false and misleading slogan of "People's War" and in diverse other ways. Having regard to their acts and conduct, Communists and Radical Democrats ought, in my opinion, to be treated as henchmen of British imperialists and their organisations as branches of British imperialist organisations during the progress of the war.

I emphasize my statement and I am prepared to stand by it. And I repeat, with all the the responsibility that attaches to me and my position in the Congress, that the Indian Communists and members of the Radical Democratic Party are enemies of India's freedom. I made that charge first at Bombay on September 27, 1945 and have repeated that charge at several public meetings all over the country ; I have even challenged the Communists and members of the Radical Democratic Party to disprove my statement.

It has taken Mr. M. N. Roy more than four months to come out with a statement in reply to my charge. I say again that the Communist Party and the Radical Democratic Party not only became branches of British imperialist organisations during the war, but became sworn enemies of India's freedom. Their disgraceful part during 1942 and after needs no narration now.

Mr. Roy speaks of 'decency in public life'. I certainly do not lay claim to that kind of decency which is a speciality with him. As for Mr. Roy's 'decency in public life', let Mr. Jamnadas Mehta speak :

"If for a paltry sum of Rs. 13,000 a month, Mr. Roy could be tempted to play ducks and drakes with an organisation of which he was the Secretary, how can we entrust the affairs of the nation at any time in the hands of such an irresponsible person ? Mr. Roy's conduct has raised this fundamental issue ....."

Mr. Roy holds 'no brief for the Communist Party' as they know how to take care of their reputation. I must tell Mr. Roy at once that neither the Communist Party nor the Radical Democratic Party need be under the illusion that they have any reputation today.

I am thankful for Mr. Roy's caution about the law of libel, though I must tell him that he is the last person from whom I stand in need of hints about it. As for trying to "cross swords with political opponents on political grounds" though, I have never used a sword to stab opponents in the back.

Mr. Roy could not but refer to the Rs. 13,000 a month affair. As for this affair, and Mr. Roy's part in it, I only want the public to read the pamphlet entitled "The Story of a Sordid Edisode" (of Rs. 13,000/- a month) — published by Ganpat Raj, President, Mehta's Labour Union, New Delhi. (Price As. -/8/-).

Mr. M. N. Roy says : "The I. F. L. as well as the R.D.P. believed that India should help the United Nations to defeat the Axis Powers, and acted accordingly. There was nothing secret about their co-operating with the Government....."

Let Mr. Jamnadas Mehta (who was President of the I.F.L., when Mr. Roy was the Secretary) speak, regarding the "acceptance" of the grant (page 15 and 16 of the pamphlet) :

"Diwan Lal Chand Navalrai enquired of Government (in the Assembly) about the details of Rs. 13,000 and, among other things, the Government reply stated that the amount was being paid to the Federation but Government took no care to see whether the Federation had accepted its offer in the first instance or whether the Federation was receiving the money and spending it under the direction of its Executive. When the question was of the taxpayer's money to the extent of over Rs. 1,50,000/- a year, the least that they should have done was to satisfy themselves that the workers had agreed to accept that patronage and that money was being paid to the organisation whose co-operation was being sought. Nothing of this kind was done by Government.

"It is all the more surprising that when parting with such a big amount presumably to an organisation, as Government believed it, no care was taken to satisfy themselves that the organisation had ever heard of the offer or had considered it or had accepted it. It is almost evident that there was somebody in the Government who was anxious to oblige Mr. Roy and who, therefore, took no trouble to see that the necessary procedure followed in such cases was taken. The result has been that, while the Government wanted to give the amount to the Federation, they did not succeed in doing so. The amount was, in fact, paid to Mr. Roy personally, although for the purpose of raising the morale of the workers during the war. It is also amazing that it was Mr. Roy, not the Federation, who was

to account to the Government for the disbursments. Mr. Roy himself had never accepted that the amount was paid to the Federation. In May, 1942, he informed me that he had submitted a scheme to Government for propaganda among the working classes and that Government had given him Rs. 13,000/- a month for carrying on such propaganda. He took care not to inform me of the correspondence that had taken place. He was careful enough to create the impression that the initiative was taken by him in framing the scheme which resulted in its acceptance by Government ....."

Mr. Jamnadas Mehta's revelations knock the bottom out of the arguments of Mr. Roy. I need say nothing more.

Mr. Roy is obviously swearing by the card when he says that "the story about the U.P. Government paying to the Radical Democratic Party is fictitious". Disclosures by the "Leader" of Allahabad and the "Basumati" of Calcutta, regarding the U.P. Government paying about Rs. 75,000/- per month for maintaining the R.D.P.'s papers, were made long ago, but Mr. Roy had not the courage to challenge their correctness. Was it also a case of personal grant to Mr. Roy and not to his party ?

Neither I nor my esteemed colleagues in the Congress have ever held that it is a crime to carry on anti-Fascist propaganda. But what we cannot understand is how it is possible to carry on anti-Fascist propaganda by allying oneself with a Fascist regime — I mean the R.D.P. and the Communist Party, allying themselves with the regime of Fuehrer Linlithgow and his Deputy, Sir Reginald Maxwell in India.

As for the R.D.P. and its programme, the less said the better and one cannot help feeling amused when Mr. Roy speaks of the "growing influence of the R.D.P." None so blind as those who refuse to see and, evidently, Mr. Roy falls under the category.

A MESSAGE TO STUDENTS

Text of message sent to the Students' Conference in Chitagong from Allahabad on 17 February, 1946

The country's situation demands that different students' organisations working with different ideologies should dissolve and form one organisation working under the inspiration and political leadership of the Congress.

Students should play an increasingly braver and nobler part in India's freedom struggle. They should study and think about political, economic and social problems and make a lasting contribution to political thought and action. They should, in combination with students of other Eastern countries, sow the seeds of Asiatic federation, which alone can achieve and perpetuate independence, peace and socialistic order in the East.

The immediate duty of students is to preserve India's inherent unity and prevent disruption, and for that purpose they must defeat communal and reactionary forces. Incalculable harm is being done to India by the Muslim League's demand for Pakistan and the Indian Communist and Radical Democratic Parties' slogan : "People's War".

I repeat that Pakistan is a thoroughly unpractical proposition, politically, economically and socially and Indian Communists and Radical Democrats, during the last four years proved to be enemies of India's freedom. Communal harmony and Indian unity can surely be achieved if Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist and other students combine and work for it with the determination to do or die.

Students should emulate the patriotism, courage and self-sacrifice of the Azad Hind Fauj and Netaji and should spurn with contempt all approaches of the Indian Communists and Radical Democrats who described the Azad Hind Fauj and Netaji as quislings and traitors.

The coming provincial elections will test the students' devotion to the cause of the Congress and country's freedom.

Chittagong students have always been in the vanguard of India's fighting forces and I hope they will always so remain. I wish the conference all success.

BRITISH CABINET MISSION TO INDIA (I)

Statement issued in New Delhi on 20 February, 1946

The decision of the British Government is certainly wise from Britain's point of view. Whether it will prove wise from India's point of view remains to be seen.

India has not had in the past a very happy experience of Commissions and Missions. It is difficult therefore to say much at this stage about the present Cabinet Mission. If the present Mission starts discussions with leaders of Indian opinion on the basis of recognition of India's right to independence, undiluted and undefiled, the discussions will, I believe, prove to be fruitful. If the Mission talks about 'steps to be taken to promote early realisation of full self-government in India', then I am afraid it cannot and will not proceed very far.

Those words namely, "early or progressive realisation of full self-government in India", have already become odious to India. Lord Pethik-Lawrence has suffered for his political opinions in the past and I hope he will not fail to appreciate the viewpoint of those who in India suffered and are still suffering for their political opinions.

BRETTON WOODS REPORT AND STERLING BALANCES

Text of speech delivered in the Central Legislative Assembly on March 2, 1946

I congratulate the members of the Committee on Bretton Woods agreement on the unanimity which they have reached in submitting their interim report to this House. Those among them who represent the major parties in this House have demonstrated that party alignments cannot and will not be allowed to stand in the way of an agreement where the interests of India are at stake and, I hope Sir, that when the time comes for us to take our final decision, they and the parties they represent will demonstrate once again the inherent and essential unity and indivisibility of India in her opposition to the reactionary forces in the U.K. and elsewhere. ....

Sir, I do believe in unanimity but I do not make a fetish of it and speaking for myself and for the party which I have the honour to represent in this House, I shall say that where the interests of India demand, we shall not hesitate to be and to find ourselves in the minority for we know and history teaches us that all great movements in the world have begun and if I am not mistaken will always begin in the minority of one.

Sir, in considering the terms of the interim report before this House we cannot afford to forget the circumstances under which the sterling balances which are due to India accumulated in the hands of the United Kingdom.

Goods and commodities belonging to India which are now represented by these sterling balances, were taken from India during the war which was in no sense India's war and were in fact taken without her consent.

They were taken at a time when the civilian population of India was greatly in need of them and had in consequence to undergo very great privations.

In these circumstances, to treat those debts lightly would to my mind permanently destroy the basis of fair dealings and good relationship between one country and another and would also, I think imperil the negotiations which are going to be initiated by the British Cabinet Mission.

As far as we know, the British Cabinet Mission is coming out in a few weeks to this country and I would like to give a warning in this connection to propagandists in and outside India. I would tell them that to institute comparison between the loans from the U.S.A. to the United Kingdom and the sterling debts due to India would be nothing short of a cruel joke. We all know today that U.S.A. is the richest country in the world and India the poorest. To U.S.A. the Anglo-American loan represents, if I am not mistaken, only about 9 days' cost of war. To India, the sterling balances due to her represent 17 years' net income of the Central Government. So, the importance of repayment of the sterling balances due to India cannot possibly be exaggerated.

I should also like to remind the House in this connection that mischievous and insidious propaganda has been going on for some time past in order to deprive India of this money and the excuse put forward is that India has had and will have many political concessions and that India has been benefited during the war. What benefit India has derived from the war, we Indians know and I should have thought that it was high time that the propagandists in India and outside realised that it was no use carrying on their nefarious propaganda any more.

It will not do for the Finance Member to say that the report cabled out by the A.P.A. a few days ago was mere sensation-mongering. That report very clearly states the attitude of certain British officials. Unnamed though they may be, I should have thought that if the report was mere sensation-mongering, His Majesty's Government would have been the first to protest against the report and declare in clear and unmistakable terms that every word of that report was untrue. That has not been done up till now.

Sir, on behalf of my party, I accord my support to the interim report for the time being, but for one reason that the Cabinet Mission is coming out to India within a few weeks. Some of us at any rate expect that the Cabinet Mission will be prepared to deal with this vexed question here in India and in our presence. I hope they will not tell us that they are not prepared to discuss it. If they do so, we know what to do.

I would like to say in this connection just a few words on the supplementary note which has been signed by the members representing my party. I do accord my whole-hearted support and the support of my party to every word they have said in their supplementary note and wish particularly to stress certain words they have used in their note.

These are :—"Apart from India's membership of Bretton Woods institutions, the question of amending the Reserve Bank Act of 1934 has assumed very great importance as there is a continuous addition to our sterling balances."

I know the Finance Member has expressed his desire to amend at some future date certain sections of the Reserve Bank of India Act, but I do wish to impress upon him the importance of making those amendments with the least possible delay.

Sir, I am at the present moment racing against time and I do not want the Finance Member to nourish the grievance that I have not left him time to give an adequate reply to the numerous points which have been raised in course of the speech made this morning by my Hon'ble and learned friend Mr. Manu Subedar. I shall conclude with just a few observations.

It is time for us to remind His Majesty's Government, it is also time for His Majesty's Government to remind themselves that India's economy cannot any longer be tied to the chariot wheels of Britain's economy. I hope

that whether in the matter of repayment of sterling balances or in the matter of other issues that arise out of the interim report, they will always bear in mind that India is determined to come into her own politically and economically. I look upon this interim report as one more opportunity given to His Majesty's Government to do justice to India. The interim report gives His Majesty's Government a locus penitentiae. It is for His Majesty's Government to avail themselves of that opportunity. If they avail themselves of that opportunity, well and good, if they do not, we shall go our own way.

POLICE TERROR IN INDIA

Torture Chambers and Secret Directives
Text of speech delivered in the Central Legislative Assembly on 19 March, 1946

Within the short space of few minutes allowed to me, it is quite impossible to deal with all the grounds on which this censure motion is based, and I shall not attempt to do so. I shall only take up the first ground and that is the irresponsibility of the Executive Council, their inefficiency and corruption in their administration.

It is unnecessary to dilate at length on the inefficiency of the Executive Council or the corruption in their administration. What we find all over the country today — and we have been finding almost the same state of affairs since the year 1942 — are scarcity of cloth, scarcity of food, deprivation of the ordinary necessaries of life, inflation to an extent almost undreamt of, accumulation of sterling balances still further accumulating day after day, want of proper planning and development policy and in consequence of all these, untold misery throughout the length and breadth of the land ; and all these are sufficient to convict the Executive Council of inefficiency and their administration of corruption.

The Home Member, earlier this afternoon, practically admitted that there was corruption in the administration. He could not very well deny it, because the whole administration reeks of it ; but he put forward some sort of excuse or justification by laying the responsibility on the communities inhabiting this country of ours.

The Home Member has tossed the ball across the net to this side of the House, and, I am confident, I shall be able to return it with redoubled vigour.

In reply to him, I shall say that the communities inhabiting this vast country of ours have a higher sense of

honour, a better standard of honesty and rectitude, a nobler standard of public and private morality than what has been imported into this country by members of the ruling race.

I shall now come to the question of the irresponsibility of the Executive Council. I do not mean, and this side of the House does not mean, irresponsibility in the sense in which it was used by my friend Mr. Siddique. In using the word 'irresponsibility' we were not thinking of legal or constitutional irresponsibility ; we were thinking of the irresponsibility of the Executive Council which has brought into being an even more irresponsible police raj in this country. We were thinking of the irresponsible police raj in this country which has established itself under the patronge and with the blessing of the Executive Council of the Government of India — established itself by terror and is maintaining itself by terror.

You walk along the highways and you find the myrmidons of the police and C.I.D. round the corner or following your footsteps ; you sit in the privacy of your home and you find their eyes peeping through the key-holes or through doors and windows. You sit confined in jails and detention camps, and you find them eavesdropping in order to catch every word that is falling from your lips or from the lips of your companions.

And it is this irresponsible police raj which exists and flourishes under the patronage of the honourable members opposite, which has set up in many places — more numerous than I can mention — dark dungeons and torture chambers, the worst of which are in the Delhi and Lahore forts, dark dungeons and torture chambers where men like Sardar Sardul Singh Caveeshar, Jaiprakash Narayan, Ram Monohar Lohia, Lala Shankar Lal of Delhi, Dwijendra Nath Bose, Sisir Kumar Bose, Satya Ranjan Baksi, Niranjan Singh Talib and hundreds of others were subjected to third degree methods day after day, week after week, month after month.

That is what we mean when we use the word 'irresponsibility' of the Executive Council.

I have heard many members sitting on benches opposite talk during the last few weeks of the coming change of power. I am disposed at the moment to treat all that as loose, irresponsible talk. While they talk of the coming change of power, the recruitment to the I.C.S. and the I.P.S. goes on. Verily, verily, it is a coming change of power of a kind unknown in the history of any other country.

Now, Sir, this irresponsible police raj, which, I repeat, has been flourishing under the patronage of members of the benches opposite, has been spreading its tentacles over every department of the administration. And to illustrate what I mean, I shall read to the House a recent letter written by one Maj.-Gen. B.P.T. O'Brien, who signs himself as Director of Intelligence.

The terms of the letter will satisfy you and the House that, whether it is the Naval Services, or the Army Services, or the Air Services, or the Civil Services, the irresponsible police is there and must be there.

This is what Maj.Gen. O'Brien says in a letter, the date of which is, I believe, Feb. 13, 1946, if my copy is correct. Says the gallant Major-General :

"It has been decided to introduce a common policy regarding verification and (when necessary) disciplinary procedure in the case of service personnel in the Naval, Army and Air Services in the India Command and for civilian employment therein, on whom the police reports that they have previously participated in subversive or anti-Government activities.

"An Indian known to have taken part in subversive or illegal anti-Government activities will normally be recommended for rejection provided that in the interval he has not given positive evidence of change of attitude....."

That means evidence of a slave mentality.

Now comes the neo-Mosaic Law, if I may so describe it.

"If a report indicates that there is nothing known against the applicant himself, but he is closely related or connected with persons who have taken part in subversive or anti-Government activities, the case will be examined on merits. A recommendation for rejection would normally be made if there is reason to believe that the applicant himself has become tainted with the views of his relatives or close friends".

So the police is omniscient ; the police is omnipresent ; and the police report is sacrosanct.

Now comes the next paragraph :

"Should an adverse report on a sailor or airman (which terms include officers) be received after enlistment owing to faulty police verification or other cause, the case will be judged on its merits. If his services are satisfactory, he is to be placed under special observation in accordance with the security instructions in force in the Service concerned."

That, I hope, satisfies the House that apart from the normal rules of the Services, there are some security instructions in force which are to be followed, or shall I say, to be operated by the police section of it. The paragraph proceeds :

"Should the man, while under observation, be found to be attempting to convert his comrades, form a cell or to be otherwise attempting activity to assist his party, disciplinary action is to be taken in the normal way and full details reported to the security staff of the man's service immediately."

Now comes the fifth paragraph :

"When a person in service employed is dismissed as the result of an adverse police report of subsequent politi-

cal activities...." — not because of incompetence for the matter of that, but because of an adverse police report — "or of subsequent political activities, the following are to be informed by the man's Commanding Officer, as early as possible and the latest on the day that the man is discharged or dismissed :

i. The Superintendent of Police of the individual's home district ;

ii. The Superintendent of Police in which district the individual's unit is located ;

iii. In the case of Naval and Air Force personnel the Security Staff at N.H.Q. or A.H.Q. respectively ; in the case of Army personnel, H.Q. Command through such channels as they may direct. This conforms with the normal procedure on discharge of undesirables already laid down in G.H.Q. letter to H.Q.s Commands Number so and so dated so and so."

Sir, I started saying that this irresponsible police raj is one of the gifts to this country by members of the Executive Council who sit opposite.

That is not all. We have been told recently many a time by some members on the Treasury Benches and also by one or two of their Secretaries sitting behind them, that everything is being done for the release of I.N.A. officers and men, for the repatriation of I.N.A. officers and men or I.N.A. civilian personnel in Burma.

May I read to the House two letters in this connection, copies of which have reached my hands ? They are quite recent too, one is dated Feb. 5, 1946 and the other is dated Feb. 12, 1946. They will show that the irresponsibility of members opposite and of their statements in this House have no limits whatever.

The letter of Feb. 5, 1946 which purports to be written by a gentleman who signs himself as General-Officer Com-

manding-in-Chief, Eastern Command, and is written from Calcutta on Feb. 5 last to the Chief of the General Staff, G.H.Q., New Delhi, is as follows :—

"Subject :—I.N.A.—Lieut. Col. A. C. Chatterjee, I.M.S.

"This H.Q. is concerned at the probable return to Bengal in the near future of Lt. Col. A. C. Chatterjee, I.M.S.

"This officer had very considerable influence in this province, and apart from his official status as Director of Public Health in Bengal before the war and his personal contacts with leaders of political strife, was appointed by Subhas Bose as the Governor-Designate of the liberated countries. Had Bengal been invaded and captured, he would have been Governor of Bengal. This alone would give him popular support second only to Subhas Chandra himself.

"His return at this juncture would revive the excitement and enthusiasm in the I.N.A. which at present is showing a tendency to switch to other forms of political propaganda such as cloth shortage, famine, release of political prisoners and detenues and even defence of the Maharaja of Rewa.

"It is understood that in Intelligence Branch (C.I.D.) Bengal" — of course, Intelligence branches are supposed to have a monopoly of all intelligence, — "It is understood that the Intelligence Branch (C.I.D.) Bengal may petition the Government of Bengal to pass orders for the detention under Regulation III of Lt.-Col. Chatterjee on his release..."

As the House is aware, Regulation III of 1818 has come in handy in the past and will also come in handy in the future in spite of the statements and utterances of members opposite. They will say one thing here and, of course, their Police and C.I.D., who thrive under their patronage, will do quite a different thing elsewhere.

"As it is not known what the reaction of the Government of Bengal will be to such a request, the holding of this

officer for two or three months in military custody would tide over a difficult period, at the end of which it is hoped, the popularity of the I.N.A. will have been further reduced."

The fourth paragraph reads : "It is suggested therefore that Lt.-Col. Chatterjee should be kept in military custody in India outside this Command for as long as possible and at any rate till at least one month after the provincial elections in Bengal. In Bengal these are being held at the end of March."

What becomes of the statement which has been made time and again on the floor of this House by members opposite that in the case of those officers against whom no charge of atrocity or brutality is made or can be made, steps are being taken for their early release ?

This letter shows, Sir, quite clearly that the ground put forward is not that of fighting the British in another place, but because he is considered to be popular in this country and therefore Regulation III of 1818 must be applied to him.

Now, Sir, the last letter which I desire to place before the House is dated Feb. 12, 1946. It is addressed by a gentleman who signs for Chief of the General Staff, from General Headquarters, India, New Delhi, to Headquarters, Allied Land Forces S-E.A.

"Subject : Screening of Indian Immigrants.

2. The Government of India's views on the principles governing the repatriation of Indian civilians were communicated to H.Q. S.A.C., S.E.A. last October. You have presumably received instructions accordingly from the letter.

3. Briefly, these views are that individuals reasonably suspected or confirmed to have collaborated with the enemy during the occupation would be better outside

India for the present and should be given no official assistance to return ; but their eventual return under their own arrangements will not be resisted except in the case of a few individuals."

Sir, We had responsible statements made on the floor of the House not very long ago that persons, against whom the only charge was of having collaborated with the enemy, would find no difficulty in obtaining their release within a short time. But this solemn document says that individuals reasonably suspected or confirmed to have collaborated with the enemy during the occupation would be better outside India.

"The latters' names are contained ....."

That is, the names of the few individuals whose return must be resisted by the Government of India.

Mr. Philip Mason : Whom is this letter from ?

Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose : From Chief of the General staff, General Headquarters, India, General Staff Branch, New Delhi, dated Feb. 12, 1946.

"The latters' names are contained in a 'short list' which is about to be sent to S.A.C., S.E.A. by the Government of India....."

I suppose that means members opposite —

"In the Home Department with the request that their return should be impeded until further notice on grounds of internal security in India."

Not that their repatriation and release were to be accelerated but their repatriation was to be impeded under the instructions of Home Department of the Government of India, (Congress Benches : Shame ! Shame !).

"Non-suspects may return at any time, and there is no objection to their being repatriated under Government auspices.

4. Prior warning of the arrival of suspects, with all available information about their cases should be sent to the Provincial Governments concerned in India and to the Central Government."

It is presumed that the problem of Indian civilians wishing to return to India is being handled in accordance with these principles and not in accordance with the principles laid down so honourably either by the Honourable the Home Member or by the War Secretary.

And if so, this answers para 6(a) of No. 4 F.I.U's letter. Presumably, India will be informed of all persons on the "short list" to whom facilities to return to India are refused..... (At this stage Mr. Philip Mason made attempts to interrupt).

Shri Sarat Chandra Bose. I am not giving way as my time will be up.

Presumably, India will be informed of all persons on the "short list" to whom facilities to return to India are refused. Please note that all information and references on the subject of Indian civilian repatriation should be addressed to the Government of India in the Home Department....
and Sir, the words that follow are important —

"and also, if considered desirable, to the Director, Intelligence Bureau, Home Department, Government of India, and not to G.H.Q."

That, I believe, is the officer who is responsible for the treatment of Government of India prisoners in the dark dungeons and torture cells in the Delhi Fort and in the Lahore Fort.

My time is almost up, and I shall not allow myself to detain the House unnecessarily. I have placed before the House three documents which convict the Government which is represented in this House by Members of the Executive Council, of irresponsibility — I shall not, Sir, use the word dishonesty.

I believe I have satisfied the House that the record of members opposite is dark, it cannot be darker. In those circumstances I submit, on behalf of the Opposition, that I am right in saying that we do not owe Members of the Executive Council one farthing out of our reveneus. We do not owe them our confidence. I am not sure that we owe them even the common courtesies of life.

BRITISH CABINET MISSION TO INDIA (II)

Text of statement issued in New Delhi on 21 March, 1946

The Cabinet Mission is coming at an opportune moment. Mr. Attlee's speech is certainly on the right lines and if talks are carried on in the spirit which his speech reveals, one may hope that the talks will result in something satisfactory.

The speeches in the House of Commons in the past and even in the recent past failed to satisfy India. The words "progressive realisation of self-government" have become odious to Indians for these words have been used almost ever since the British rule began in India. I, therefore, felt encouraged when I read Mr. Attlee's speech saying that India had every right to elect for complete independence. If that is going to be the basis it ought not to be difficult to erect the super-structure.

Speaking for myself, I would refuse to consider Dominion Status. I am sure British statesmen realise the difference between India on the one hand and Canada and Australia, which I may describe as daughter nations. India is not. Indian culture is very different from British culture and Indian habits of life are also very different from British. It is true that by reason of contact with the British during the last two centuries we have adopted something which is essentially British but on the whole it ought to be recognised that Indian civilisation is very different from British civilisation.

As regards future relations with Britain, I have no reason to doubt that once India is independent, relations with the British will be friendly. I do hope that the bitterness of years will steadily vanish. In the sphere of trade I believe that once India is free she will be more ready to

enter into trade relations with the British than with any other country.

I consider Mr. Jinnah's recent utterances to be most unfortunate. I disagree with him all along the line. He is entirely wrong in saying that the Congress is indulging in threats. The Congress demand has been before the British and the world for many years. The Congress has tried in the past to enforce her demands by means of non-co-operation and civil disobedience. It may well be that if the coming talks do not succeed, Congress may have to resort to similar movements in the future. But if any Congress leader says that that may happen, it does not mean he is indulging in any threats. In saying so he is not saying anything new. If anyone indulges in threats, it is Mr. Jinnah himself.

As regards Mr. Jinnah's demand for Pakistan, I never had the slightest doubt in my own mind that it is an unpractical proposition. Pakistan can never solve any of the big problems of our country. Take, for instance, Foreign Affairs, Defence, Food, Railways, Customs, Civil Aviation and National Planning and Development — all these call for a united and indivisible India. And India divided within herself into Hindusthan and Pakistan can never solve these problems. If we arbitrarily divide India into patches of Hindusthan and Pakistan, all our energies will be directed to the framing of treaties between the two States on every conceivable subject and the big problems will be left unsolved.

What is really called for is the largest measure of provincial autonomy. As is well-known, the Congress has agreed to provincial autonomy which will give Muslim majority provinces all that they want. As regards Hindu majority provinces, notwithstanding what Mr. Jinnah has said from time to time, the charge that Ministries in those provinces coerced Muslim populations has been proved to be without foundation.

The Government in the Hindu majority provinces will certainly not be unfair to Muslims in those provinces be-

cause for one thing they realise that any unfairness to Muslims in these provinces may lead to very unhealthy reactions against the Hindus in the Muslim majority provinces. Mr. Jinnah's Pakistan cannot come into being without coercing the Hindus in the so-called Pakistan areas.

Let me start with Assam. The Muslim population there is only about 35 per cent. East Bengal has no doubt a big Muslim majority but what about West Bengal which has a big Hindu majority ? Coming to the Punjab, big portions of the Punjab have got a big Hindu majority. N.W.F.P. which is a Muslim majority province has already declared itself against Pakistan. In Sind, opinion is sharply divided even among Muslims.

Mr. Jinnah talks of the principle of self-determination — words which came into vogue after the first World War. If he invokes the aid of the principle of self-determination for Muslims, how can he deny the same to Hindus in the so-called Pakistan areas ?

In my opinion the Cabinet Mission should leave out of consideration the discussions of 1942 and start afresh. India has gone much further ahead during the last four years. The result of World War Second is that India is more than ever determined to achieve complete independence. The fight that the I.N.A. put up outside India's borders has strengthened that determination. I believe I am right in saying that the I.N.A. spirit — I mean the spirit that wants a free India — has permeated the British Indian Army and British Indian Navy. That army and that navy refuse to consider themselves as an army and a navy of occupation. I believe also I am right in thinking that British statesmen realise today that India can no longer be held by force. The time is ripe for a settlement between India and Britain and it ought not to be delayed.

As regards defence, my own view is very definite — that India does not need any outside help to defend herself. We have all the human material necessary to defend our-

selves and as for equipment we can have it in no time. Moreover, India attaining independence will have a most healthy effect on the whole of the Eastern World. Indian independence is sure to bring in its train the independence of other subject countries in the East. I believe that within a very short time the East will become one big family of free nations which will stand as solid rock against the ambitions of Imperialist Powers.

Indian independence will contribute more to the peace of the world that any other single factor.

Mr. Jinnah's Pakistan is the only hurdle we have to jump over. I cannot think of any other obstacles. Incidentally, I may say that Mr. Jinnah's Pakistan is very different from the Pakistan envisaged by Chaudhuri Rahamat Ali, the founder of the Pakistan movement. One has only to read Rahamat Ali's booklet in order to be convinced that Pakistan, whether of Mr. Jinnah's brand or of Rahamat Ali's is a chimera.

BUDGET SPEECH

Text of Budget speech delivered in the Central Legislative Assembly on 31 March, 1946

Immediately after the Finance Member delivered his Budget speech, I was asked as to what my impressions were. What I said on that occasion was : "It is a skilled budget and its approach to India's problems is somewhat different from that in previous budgets. But looking at it from the point of view of the poor, there is nothing very much in it to be enthusiastic about. On the expenditure side, civil and military expenditure continue to be extravagant. These are my first impressions."

A closer study of the Finance Member's speech and his financial proposals has confirmed my first impressions. I shall proceed to make a rapid survey of the financial proposals and equally rapid criticism.

But before I do so, I desire to say few words with reference to the observations of my friend, the Deputy Leader of the Muslim League Party in the House.

In course of his speech he said that the Congress wished to bypass the Muslim League. Let me tell him with all the sincerity and all the emphasis I can command that the Congress is not out to bypass anybody in this country, whether Muslim or Sikh or Buddhist or Jain or Christian. The Congress has endeavoured in the past, and is still endeavouring, to bring about unity, an indissoluble unity, among the different communities inhabiting this vast land of ours — unity which will be proof against the machinations of the Western imperialist powers and, may I add, which will be proof against the designs of people who are out to subjugate and dominate India in their own interest.

My friend further said that the Congress wished to dominate the Muslims. I am inclined to think that in his

heart of hearts he believes that the Congress is not out to dominate anybody or disrupt any community.

Then he laid down the rather paradoxical proposition, "divide to unite". Here in India we have unity in the midst of diversity ; but this paradoxical proposition 'divide to unite' I have never been able to understand. I will not refer in greater detail to the observations of my honourable friend ; but before I conclude dealing with his observations, I may tell him that, if he is willing to extend the hand of real and friendly co-operation in order that India may have a constitution, a national and independent constitution of her own, we on this side of the House will grasp it with alacrity and enthusiasm.

What we want — and I believe all Indians want, whether they be Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Parsees or Jains — is unity of India under a free and independent constitution. If his co-operation extends to enabling us to have a national and independent constitution under which we shall be free and independent citizens, the party which I have the honour and the right to represent in this House will certainly not be found lacking in extending its hand of co-operation to members on my left.

(Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan : Accept Pakistan. The hand of co-operation is there).

I have not the time, nor I have the inclination, to devote any portion of my speech this afternoon to Pakistan. I have expressed my views repeatedly on this subject without any reservation ; and I do not think any useful purpose will be served by bringing in a discussion of Pakistan into the debate of the financial proposals.

(Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan : But the hand of friendship is there).

I may tell my honourable friend that that subject I am prepared to discuss with him day in and day out in order

that he may have an opportunity of convincing me that I am wrong, or that I may have an opportunity of convincing him that he is wrong.

Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan : I cannot convince those who refuse to be convinced.

Sj. Bose : Nor can I.

Coming to the financial proposals, I have said already that, looking at it from the point of view of the poor, there is nothing very much in it to be enthusiastic about. What is it that the Finance Member has said in his budget speech regarding the poor ? He has said : "Some of the members opposite will be wondering whether I propose to do anything for the poor man." He did leave us wondering as to whether he was going to do anything for the poor man ; and to our wonder we found that these were what he was prepared to do for the poor man !

Firstly, duty on salt ; secondly, duty on matches ; thirdly, duty on tobacco ; fourthly, duty on betel-nut ; and fifthly, preservation of the inland postage rates as before. I do not know whether in his talks with my friend Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan, secret or otherwise, he was prepared to relent and cut out a portion of the duty on salt or a portion of the duty on matches, or a portion of the duty on tobacco or betel-nut or to reduce the inland postage rates.

Well, I am not in the Finance Member's confidence and I do not know what he was prepared to do. I can only proceed by the written word, I mean his budget speech and his financial proposals.

Proceeding by the written word, I have no doubt, Sir, that his financial proposals, as they are, cannot call for acceptance from this side of the House.

There is one matter to which I wish to refer in connection with the poor man and that is the cottage industry.

I have not the time to dilate on the subject. But may I remind the Finance Member that cottage industry in our country is the industry of the poor ? What has been done to encourage and promote cottage industries ? There is scarcity of cloth, but hand-loom weaving has not been encouraged. There is scarcity of paper, but manufacture of hand-made paper has not been encouraged at all.

Then I come to what the Finance Member describes as the man of moderate means — what we generally describe as the middle-class man. He says : "Now, I turn to greet the ordinary direct tax-payer", whom he later on refers to as the man of moderate means. What is the relief he has given to the man of moderate means ? Very little indeed. Is the Finance Member not aware that the value of the income of Rs. 2,000 a year today is nothing more than the value of Rs. 500 before the war, that the value of an income of Rs. 3,500 a year today is nothing more than Rs. 700 or Rs. 800 before the war ? What is the relief he has given to the man of moderate means ?

I believe I am not guilty of exaggeration of any sort or kind if I say that the only relief the Finance Member has given to any class of human beings is to the capitalist and the industrialist, people who did not need immediate relief. The abolition of the Excess Profits Tax was not really called for this year ; if it had been carried on for another year or two, the Finance Member would have been in possession of funds to devote to nation-building departments.

Similarly the relief to industrialists, meagre though it is, is not such as is calculated to benefit the poor at all. I wish I had the time to explain all that I have in mind with regard to the abolition of the Excess Profits Tax and the small relief given to the industrialists ; but unfortunately, I am racing against time at the moment and I must resist the temptation of going into those matters.

Then, I would come to civil expenditure. I have already said that civil expenditure continues to be extrava-

gant. In fact, it has been mounting year by year, and the main reason why it has been mounting up is the taking in of more and more British personnel. Our civil expenditure — if I were to go into the figures I can satisfy the House — can only be reduced appreciably if we had only Indian personnel ; and we have every right today to have only Indian personnel. But, of course, I known that that cannot suit the British imperialist ; that cannot suit the system which was described about two decades ago by a Secretary of State for India—I mean the late Edwin Samuel Montagu—as a system "which is wooden, which is inelastic, which is antediluvian."

Sir, that system exists today.

That system has been responsible for all the outrages and atrocities that have been committed during the last four decades in the name of law and order, including those that were committed in the year 1942 and in the succeeding years.

That system has been responsible for vast Draconian enactments in this country, beginning with the year 1908 and ending with the year 1945, and has introduced and is still continuing a reign of terror in this country.

Acceptance of the financial proposals and along with it the bill for civil expenditure means acquiescence in that system. We on this side of the House refuse to acquiesce in such a system.

Then, coming to military expenditure, no doubt there has been a great drop in the military expenditure. But that is not really due to my friends opposite ; it is due to the end of the war. But, here again, may I ask the Finance Member how much of this expenditure is due to maintaining foreign personnel in this country in the Army, Navy and Air Forces ? I would like to have an answer to this question when the Honourable the Finance Member rises to reply. How much of these Rs. 244 crores goes to paying

British personnel in the Army, Navy and Air Forces ? That is a pertinent question to ask.

(Sir Archibald Rowlands : I can give the answer straightaway : It is 20 crores).

I take the Finance Member at his word. We can therefore reduce the estimates by Rs. 20 crores immediately. I have taken—and my Party has taken—a very definite stand in this matter. We do not need any outside help today in defending our country. We would spurn it. We know we have the human material necessary to defend ourselves ; and as for the equipment necessary, we are confindent that we can have it within a short time.

Now, take the Air Arm of the defence services. At present there are about 1,600 Indian officers. I understand —and the Finance Member will correct me if I am wrong— that 700 out of these 1,600 officers in the R.I.A.F. are going to be demobilised. My friend Mr. Asaf Ali says, 'much more.'

But even taking the figure of demobilisation at 700 Indian officers, in whose interest are they going to be demobilised ? In the interest of the British personnel which is sought to be maintained and perpetuated in this country.

Demobilisation of Indian officers in the Air Forces becomes necessary only because Britishers are being retained ; and I may add that at the Air Headquarters, India unit, Britishers are today holding all the key positions, and Indian officers are not being given any responsible jobs at all, though most of them shared the burdens of the last war and gained valuable experience in Europe, in Burma, in Malaya, in China and elsewhere.

When we come to the Army, the same state of affairs exists. When we come to the Navy we find the same state of affairs. And when I hear the talk about the coming change of power, I feel surprised that far from replacing British per-

sonnel by Indian personnel, attempts are being made to maintain and perpetuate the British personnel in this country in all the services — civil and defence.

In the civil services, recruitment to the Indian Civil Service and the Indian Police Service is going on. In the defence services, whether it is the Army or Navy or Air Force, maintenance and perpetuation of British personnel is going on.

The truth of the matter is that my friends opposite do not yet dare to remove the army of occupation from India ; and that is the reason why, in spite of the end of the war, the defence expediture has not been cut down to the extent to which it ought to be cut down.

When I consider the civil expenditure and the defence expenditure for the year 1946-47, I recall to mind the words of that great French savant, M. Romain Rolland. His words were : "The British leopard has dug its claws into the sides of India so thoroughly that it can no longer either withdraw them or live cut off from its prey".

What I find in civil and military expenditure leads me to think and say quite publicly that they are calculated to help the British leopard to dig its claws deeper and deeper into the sides of India. The War Secretary in his speech this morning asked us whether we wanted evolution or revolution. I am glad he put the question to us. I shall reply to him straightaway.

We have heard and we have been hearing this word 'evolution' ever since British imperialist domination began in this country. It has been thoroughly sickening to us on this side of the House. The whole world is going through a revolution and at a tremendous pace.

There is no reason why we Indians should not reject evolution for revolution and thereby speed up the progress of our country. We do want to create a revolution in the

minds of Indians. We do not want to create a revolution in their ways and methods.

And I shall tell the War Secretary that we are distinctly in favour of a silent, non-violent revolution which will in no time enable India to come into her own.

Now, it is the usual thing in the course of a speech on the financial proposals to talk about planning and development. I have searched in vain the Finance Member's speech on the budget and his financial proposals for any real schemes of planning and development. Just consider that there has been a drop this year of about Rs. 400 to 500 crores in military expenditure.

Now, what is the contribution to planning and development ? A total of 50 crores. Money in hundreds and thousands of crores could be found all these years in the United Kingdom and also in India for war expenditure ; but when it comes to planning and development, all that the Finance Member promises to us is a sum of 50 crores, a mere pittance as compared with the vast amount that India needs for planning and development.

Here again, I say I do not, and this side of the House does not, take the Government of India's scheme for planning and development seriously.

As far as this side of the House is concerned, nationalisation is the keynote and should be the keynote of economic development in India. It is the keynote of all economic developments in the West except possibly America. But the slogan of nationalisation is an unknown slogan so far as members opposite are concerned. The Bank of England may be nationalised, a bank with a hoary past and great traditions, but the Reserve Bank of India cannot be nationalised because so long as British imperialist domination continues in this country, it cannot possibly be nationalised.

Coal mines can be nationalised in England but in India they cannot be nationalised, because British imperialist

domination does not want to tread on the corns of European industrialists and capitalists in this country.

I have already said, and I desire to repeat, that nationalisation should be the keynote of all economic developments in this country ; and as long as that is not accepted, all these so-called schemes of planning and development will vanish into thin air.

They will not benefit the masses in the least. They will create a number of capitalists and a number of industrialists, whether white or brown, but they will not touch the real problem, the problem of poverty in this country.

As regards the policy of my Party, I desire to quote the words of the election manifesto on the strength of which our Party came into this Assembly.

The relevant words of that manifesto were these : It will be necessary to plan and co-ordinate social advance in all its many fields, to prevent the concentration of wealth and power in the hands of individuals and groups, to prevent vested interests inimical to social control of the mineral resources, means of transport and the principal methods of production and distribution in land, industry and in other departments of national activity, so that free India may develop into a co-operative commonwealth. The State must, therefore, own or control key and basic industries and services, mineral resources, railways, waterways, shipping and other means of public transport. Currency and exchange, banking and insurance, must be regulated in the national interest.

That is our policy and that is the policy to which we shall adhere to the last. I am reminded in this connection of the speech that Sir Gurunath Bewoor delivered yesterday. When I heard his speech I felt I was living in the early 19th century. He was at some pains to impress upon us that private enterprise was much more efficient than State enterprise.

I was wondering whether he had forgotten that during the last war private enterprise was practically stopped in all the countries of Europe and that State took them over for the benefit of the people.

May I ask him : Was it for the sake of inefficiency that the State did so ? The old policy of laissez-faire, which is still the policy of the Government of India, will not do. That old policy still inspires all their plans and schemes for planning and development. That is an exploded policy.

We subscribe to the policy of nationalisation and if we come to our own, as I hope we shall very shortly, we shall introduce the policy of nationalisation into every sphere of economic activity in India.

I have not the time to devote myself to the speech of Dr. Ambedkar or to the speech of Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava. I have already made my suggestions on the food problem. I remember Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava saying that he welcomed my suggestions. There were six concrete suggestions which I made. I looked in vain for anything that might show that those concrete suggestions, which had been welcomed on the 30th January last, had been put into action in any shape or form, partially or otherwise.

I shall not devote more time to planning and development. I shall sum up the Government of India's policy in the words of one of the greatest men of modern times. I mean George Bernard Shaw. George Bernard Shaw in his book, "Everybody's Political What's What ?" has said :

"Nowadays the capitalist cry is nationalise what you like, municipalise all you can, turn the courts of justice into courts martial and your parliaments and corporations into Boards of Directors with your most popular mob orator in the chair, provided the rent, the interest and the profits come to us as before and the proletariat gets nothing but its keep."

That is the policy of the Government of India today. George Bernard Shaw proceeds :

"The great corruption of socialism threatens us at present. It calls itself Fascism in Italy, National Socialism (Nazi for short) in Germany, New Deal in the United States and is clever enough to remain nameless in England."

I do not know whether I should add the words "is equally clever to remain nameless in India too."

Bernard Shaw goes on :

"But everywhere it means the same thing : socialist production and unsocialist distribution".

Let me say, in one word, that what we want in India today is socialist production and socialist distribution. It is on that principle that our plans and our schemes for planning and development must be made.

What we have in view and what the whole country should have in view is not merely socialist production, but socialist distribution as well. We do not want to make the rich richer ; we do not want to create more capitalists in India ; we do not want to create greater industrialists in India ; we want to look to the masses of our people and we can only do so by our plans of socialist production and socialist distribution.

I have no desire to go at length into the so-called schemes for planning and development. I wish I had the time to do so. I believe I can resist the temptation today, because in the near future, I shall have time to examine these schemes for planning and development in greater detail.

I think I have said enough to show that this side of the House cannot acquiesce in the financial proposals which the Finance Member has placed before us. Whether it is a matter

of giving relief to the poor, or whether it is civil expenditure or military expenditure or planning and development, nowhere do we find any intention whatever to benefit the masses of our people.

It is not for nothing that we have waged a long warfare against British imperialist rule. That warfare we have carried on for the last sixty years, and that warfare we are still carrying on. That warfare we have carried on against British imperialist rule, its crimes, its vices, its enormous almost overpowering corruption.

I have had an appeal addressed to me that we should not reject the financial proposals because the British Cabinet Mission is here. I do not know what the presence of the British Cabinet Mission has got to do with the consideration of the financial proposals.

(Sir Archibald Rowlands : Nothing at all.)

I am glad the Finance Member said 'nothing at all'. The Finance Member has asked us to consider his financial proposals on their merits.

(Sir Archibald Rowlands : Only once.)

I have ventured to examine them on their merits. The motion for the rejection of the Finance Bill, which was moved from this side of the House, was moved on a consideration of its merits. Friends and allies of last year may desert us today.

(Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan : Because you declared war on them).

They may be impressed by small offers of reduction of one anna here or two anna there ; but our course is clear, our course is straight. That is the course which my friend the Deputy Leader of the Muslim League Party appreciated so much last year on the 26th March.

This is what he said then :

"The policy of the Muslim League with regard to the Finance Bill has been consistently uniform since 1941. We have always opposed the measure on the ground that so long as we have no real share in the power and authority of the Government, we cannot take the responsibility of placing funds at their disposal to be spent in any way that they may like. Some people seem to be under the impression that the Muslim League has changed its policy with regard to this matter only since the presence of the Congress Party in this House. It is not so".

I hope the Muslim League has not changed its policy in this matter this year because of the presence of the Congress Party in this House. As I have said, friends and allies from the year 1941 and onwards may desert us .....

(Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan : You were not here then. You have come after we won the battle).

I have examined the Finance Bill within the short time at my disposal. I say with the utmost emphasis I can command that it is not a Bill which can call for acceptance from this side of the House. We are not troubled, as I said just now, we are not concerned with any offer of reduction of an anna here, or two annas there or three annas elsewhere.

The whole of the Finance Bill is to be considered and considered in the light of the tests which I have already applied ; and applying those tests, I say, that the Finance Bill does not merit consideration by this House. I move the House for rejection of the Finance Bill.'

ON THE TRIAL OF THE INDIAN NATIONAL ARMY

Speech delivered in the Central Legislative Assembly on 6 April, 1946

After my release from detention, speaking in Bombay, I said that I demanded of the British Imperialist Government in India that not a hair on the heads of I.N.A. officers and men must be touched. In saying so I was not speaking for myself alone, I was voicing the demand of the entire Indian population, irrespective of race, religion or creed.

I was surprised, I was almost staggered, to hear certain words that came out of the lips of my friend Miss Maniben Kara (Royist-nominated member). I did not expect that in the year of grace 1946 any one in this vast land of ours would have the temerity to describe I.N.A. officers and men as misguided or misled.

I know that in 1942 and in the succeeding years, propaganda was carried on at the instance of or under the inspiration of my honourable friends opposite to the effect that the I.N.A. officers and men were quislings, were traitors, were misguided, were misled, were of slavish mentality and all the rest of it. But time has had its revenge and those who came to curse the I.N.A. and its officers and men in 1942, 1943 and 1944, have remained to bless them.

I say with utmost conviction that Shah Nawaz, Sehgal Dhillon, Abdul Rashid, Burhanuddin, Alagappan, Logonadhan, Chatterjee and thousands of others who followed them, will always be remembered and will be recorded in the history of India as fighters for freedom of the country.

In our eyes there is no difference whatever between Shah Nawaz on the one hand and Abdul Rashid on the other. In our eyes there is no difference whatever between a Dhillon on the one hand and a Burhanuddin on the other. Each and everyone of them is today looked upon, I will go

further and say, worshipped as the high priest of nationalism and lover of his country.

My honourable friend, Miss Maniben Kara, also talked about Fascists. The I.N.A.—I prefer to describe them in our own words, Azad Hind Fauj — were not Fascists or supporters of Fascists. When I was listening to the speech of Miss Maniben Kara, I was wondering in my own mind whether she was making any distinction between Fascists on the one hand and Imperialists on the other.

If anything, Imperialists are the parents of Fascists. I know, it has become almost the fashion, and I know at the same time it is safe to condemn Fascists and to leave Imperialists alone. As we are living under imperialist domination, it sometimes becomes dangerous to condemn Imperialists and Imperialism.

The last world war was a war between parents of Fascism on the one hand and neo-Fascism on the other, or if I may use the words of George Bernard Shaw, between Anglo-American Fascism on the one hand and Italo-German Fascism on the other. The difference that Miss Maniben Kara makes between old Fascists and new ones, I for myself fail to comprehend.

Now, as I said a few moments ago, in the year 1942 and in the years succeeding, propaganda was carried on at the instance of the British Imperialist Government in India that our own men across the borders had allied themselves with Fascists. That propaganda went on almost until the close of the last world war, but since then, other facts, facts disconcerting to British Imperialists and their supporters, have come out, and today I claim that I am right in saying that those of our own kith and kin, who were fighting outside India's borders, were doing two things at the same time. They were out to resist any possible aggression, I mean new aggression on the one hand and to rid the country of old aggression on the other. I have never been a supporter of any kind of new aggression but, at the same time, I

shall say quite plainly that I have always been a sworn enemy and, God willing, till the last breath of my life I shall remain a sworn enemy of the old aggression that still maintains itself in India.

If anything, the old aggression is worse than any threatened new aggression because time makes us forgetful and makes us acquiesce in old aggression.

The I.N.A. officers and men have shown by their example that they were not prepared to acquiesce in old aggression any longer. Theirs was a call to the whole country to stand up, to rise and to free the country from old aggression from which it has been suffering for the last 200 years.

I know the point will be made by the Government benches that some of these officers and men of the Azad Hind Fauj belonged to the British Indian Army and, in fact, a warning has been given to us by Mr. Mason that we should always be careful about the discipline and loyalty of the Army.

I am aware that some officers and men of the Azad Hind Fauj were officers and men of the British Indian Army and I very much regret it. But they were men in whom had been lighted the spark of patriotism. They were torn between two conflicting loyalties — one, the smaller loyalty they subscribed to at the time they joined the British Indian Army, and the other, the bigger loyalty they subscribed to from the dates of their respective births or of their adoption as the case may be.

The War Secretary has spoken of the tradition in military matters. He has appealed to that tradition. But I appeal to a tradition older, wider and far nobler, the tradition that was created by subject peoples in some other lands and in other times, and which it was time for us to create in our own land, the tradition which enjoins the laying down of our lives for the freedom of our country.

It is because I.N.A. officers and men created that tradition in this country that we love them ; it is because of that we adore them ; it is because of that we worship them.

The propaganda that was carried on in 1942 and the succeeding years having failed, recourse had to be had to something else. And what was it ? Talk of brutalities and atrocities was resorted to. Who has talked of brutalities and atrocities ?

Descendants of those who exhumed the body of Mahdi from its resting place, descendants of those in whose eyes in the year 1857-58 and the succeeding years it was a crime to be a Mohammedan, descendants of those in whose eyes since the last 50 years it has been a crime to be a Hindu.

When a Mohammedan in 1857-58 struck a blow for liberty, every member of his community committed a crime in the eyes of those whose representatives are sitting on the Treasury Benches today. If in 1905 a Hindu struck a blow, every member of that community was condemned as a terrorist and a revolutionary.

We have seen through that game. That game will not succeed any more in this country.

I ask what is the evidence in support of these charges of brutalities and atrocities. I venture to say, and if I get an opportunity at any time in my life, I am prepared to prove it to the hilt that it is all tainted evidence on which the War Secretary or the Home Member or any other member on the Treasury Benches is compelled to rely.

It is all tainted evidence, evidence coming from those whom they have kept in detention either in peril of their lives or in peril of life-long imprisonment or some other peril. In those circumstances it is easy to bring forward either documents or words in support of faked charges of brutalities and atrocities.

I would ask members on the Treasury Benches who have levelled these charges of brutalities and atrocities, I would ask them : Would they dare to bring forward these charges before ordinary courts of law in this country ? I know it is easy to bring them before court-martials and special tribunals. We have had ample experience of such tribunals in the past and we are still going through the same experience today.

The Home Member or the War Secretary has not had the courage to bring these men before the ordinary courts of the land for trial.

Mr. Mason : May I ask the Honourable Member whether he has read the statement of Dr. Katju, who with his experience of 40 years at the Bar, has never seen a trial with greater fairness than these court-martials ?

Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose : I have some experience of trials, civil, military and otherwise. Coming from the province of Bengal, and I say so with great respect to Dr. Katju, I have had more experience of special tribunals and court-martials than what Dr. Katju has had. I know what they are. And I know that the Government are so hard-pressed today that they have to rely on certificates from men belonging to our ranks.

Coming back to the subject of special tribunals and court-martials, the justice that they deal out, I make bold to say, is travesty of justice. We all know under what circumstances evidence has been collected. And knowing them I would ask those Honourable Members on the Treasury Benches, who are making such a lot of charges of brutalities and atrocities, to remove themselves from this country with 'their pedlars' pack of garbled evidence and surreptitious affidavits' — to use the words of Richard Brinsley Sheridan.

Even if there are charges against twentyfive to fifty of the I.N.A. officers and men, — I am reminded in this con-

nection of a communique which appeared not very long ago that the Government of India intended to put up not more than fifty I.N.A. officers and men for trial on such charges — what happens to the remainder ?

My friend Shri Sriprakasa has given the names of some of I.N.A. officers and men, who have been in this country since June last year. Ten months have elapsed and yet nothing has been done for their release. There are thousands of officers and men still rotting in detention. It is obvious that no charges of brutalities and atrocities could be made against an overwhelming majority of these officers and men. Then, why are they in prison today ?

Mr. Mason : There are not so many ; a number of them have been let out.

Mr. Bose : I am speaking only of those who are in prison. Not all have been let out. Thousands are still in prison today. Can the War Secretary deny it ?

Mr. Mason : I have been anxious this afternoon to speak and place the real facts before the House, but I had no opportunity to do so.

Mr. Bose : I say thousands are still in detention camps today whether it is Red Fort in Delhi or the Kabul Lines or military hospitals or elsewhere. Is that denied ?

Mr. Mason : I want to give the figures but I have no time.

Mr. Bose : Are not the figures running to thousands ? Why are they still in detention ?

ON THE PROPOSED DISSECTION OF BENGAL OR PUNJAB

Statement issued in Calcutta on 21 April, 1946

I have no information that any discussions have taken place between the Congress President and the Cabinet Delegation regarding the dissection of the Punjab or of Bengal.

As far as I am aware, the Cabinet Mission have not yet said anything regarding redistribution of provincial boundaries or division of existing Provinces.

I need hardly say that if any proposals are made in future for the dissection of the Punjab or of Bengal they will be strenuously resisted. There is absolutely no case for dissection either of the Punjab or of Bengal.

Redistribution of Provincial boundaries on a linguistic basis is another matter and it will have to be considered on its merits at the proper time.

RECALL BENGAL GOVERNOR AND DISMISS MINISTRY

Statement issued in Calcutta on 20 August, 1946

My considered and deliberate opinion is that the Governor has completely failed in the discharge of his special responsibilities to maintain law and order in the city. Whether it is due to utter incompetency or to surrendering himself completely into the hands of the Bengal Ministry, it is difficult for me to say.

But whatever may be the reason I shall say most emphatically that the Governor has proved himself unfit to discharge the duties of his high office.

I entirely agree that the Governor should be recalled and the present Ministry should be dismissed. I also agree that for a fortnight at least strong military pickets should be posted all over Calcutta and the suburbs under the command of a high military officer who may be expected to hold the scales even.

I entirely agree with what "The Statesman" said in its editorials of Sunday and yesterday morning. If anything, their criticism of the Bengal Ministry is mild.

I have no doubt whatever that the Bengal Ministry is and must be held responsible for all that has happened in Calcutta since Friday last.

Since Friday last I have met the Governor (Sir Frederick Burrows) four times on my own initiative and have tried to impress on him the seriousness of the situation. But, apparently I have failed to do so.

I asked him twice to come out with me and I offered to place my services at his disposal for going round the affected areas. But my offer was not accepted.

The Governor's tours, conducted by the Ministry which has been responsible for the present state of things, have little or no use. What has been done is to show the Governor large numbers of Muslim dead bodies. But he has been given no idea of the mass massacre of Hindus.

Since Friday last I have been going into the particulars of the different areas where trouble was apprehended. But in spite of the information I have had there was serious trouble in all those areas in the shape of mass murders, looting and arson.

I have no doubt whatever that what has taken place since Friday last could have been prevented to a large extent if firm action had been taken.

The Muslim festival Id will take place on August 28-29. I told the Governor on Monday that to prevent further murder, looting and arson which is seriously apprehended, steps should be taken to post military pickets all over Calcutta and, particularly, the affected areas. But as far as I am aware, no steps have been taken.

It must be remembered in this connection that the trouble started on a day declared by the Bengal Government to be a holiday as a concession to the demands of the Muslim League.

On August 28 and 29 a large number of Muslims will assemble in the Maidan and mosques of Calcutta and I am afraid that if steps are not taken now to prevent further outbreaks of lawlessness the position may become even more serious than it is now.

I requested the Private Secretary to the Viceroy yesterday morning in a telephone conversation to tell the Viceroy that it was most necessary for him to come to Calcutta and see things for himself.

What has happened in Calcutta will be very useful to British imperialists and reactionaries in carrying on their propaganda that India is not fit to govern itself.

British officialdom in Bengal is known to be thoroughly reactionary and it is quite apparent at the moment that they have not taken the necessary steps to put down lawlessness.

It must be remembered in this connection that there has been no disturbance in the rest of India, not even in the province of Sind. The Governor of Sind did take a strong attitude.

Clive Street (the centre of British commercial interests) has ruled Bengal all these years and the last few days have convinced me that they intend to perpetuate their rule with the help of the present ministry.

ALL-PARTY MINISTRY FOR BENGAL

Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose's proposals at a Press interview in Calcutta on 27 August, 1946

1. The first thing to be done is to have an all-party Ministry in Bengal.

2. The morale of the police force has to be restored immediately, and the communal spirit, which has infected them, must be completely wiped out. It must be impressed upon them that they are servants of the public, and not servants of any particular community.

3. Hindus and Muslims in towns and villages must combine for the purpose of counteracting communal propaganda and taking defence measures for protecting life and property.

   The riots have shown that the people were left at the mercy of goondas and police protection was not forthcoming. It is, therefore, up to the people to organise and help themselves.

4. Lastly, people must be made to realise that non-violence, and not violence, is the remedy.

RESIST EVIL

Press statement issued in Calcutta on 21 October, 1946

On the Azad Hind Government declaration day I solemnly appeal to the fighting elements and revolutionary forces in India to consolidate and organise themselves immediately to resist this mad orgy of intercine violence and to defeat it.

The present phase of aggression and internal distemper is only one of the many hurdles that Indian nationalism must overcome in order to reach its goal of complete independence. In our march to our goal we have to face them and defeat them.

The I.N.A. spirit, which recognises no distinction between Hindu and Muslim, between one community and another, between one class and another, between one caste and another, between one creed and another, has lighted the path for us all. That spirit must permeate more and more into all parts of the country if we have to overcome the seemingly insuperable barriers in front of us.

We cannot any longer allow this senseless fury to continue its work of destruction and sabotage the struggle for Indian independence. I appeal to the youths of India and Bengal to organise themselves in every town and village, to take initiative themselves and hurl back the forces of lawlessness and reaction. If they do so, I am confident, the forces of lawlessness and reaction will be defeated soon and India will march triumphantly to her cherished goal of complete independence.

The immediate task before me is and must be to devise ways and means as to how Bengal is to be saved from the anarchy and the lawlessness that have been prevailing in this province and that seem to have held her like a vice in their grip.

The people of Bengal appealed to the Government for protection. It was natural on their part to do so. The Government of Bengal, however, for reasons best known to themselves have failed to take adequate action up till this moment.

The orgy of wanton violence goes on leaving in its trail utter ruin and destruction in large areas in this fair province — murder, loot, arson and dishonour to our women-folk. And while the Government of Bengal have failed to discharge their duties to the people in their charge, the Government of India, for the moment, seemed to be powerless. 'What is to be done' — everybody is asking himself and is asking his neighbour.

For one thing, the sense of utter helplessness will never help us. The people of India and Bengal must learn and realise that self-help is after all the best help. We must do our duty ourselves and learn to defend ourselves against aggression and violence from whatever quarter they may come and however irresistible they may seem to be at the moment.

Is it difficult to realise that in this senseless and unashamed drama the hand is the hand of Esau, though the voice is the voice of Jacob ? The hidden hand, not even altogether hidden, has been doing this wicked work since August last.

REMEDY FOR BENGAL'S TROUBLES

Report of a Press conference held in Calcutta on 4 December 1946, after a tour of Noakhali and Tipperah

Impressions Of Tour

As a result of my tour in the Noakhali district and parts of the Tipperah district I have come to certain conclusions. I have no doubt whatever that what had happened there had been well-planned. Some outsiders including goonda elements may have taken part in the planning and in the execution. But what was done was done mainly by the local people including the local leaders. Among local leaders were persons who held positions of presidents of unions. Responsibility for what happened must be thrown on the local people and the local leaders. The peaceful and sober elements among the Muslims failed to exert influence and they failed mainly because large numbers of their influential co-religionists took direct and active part in the disturbances.

I cannot believe that local officials in these two districts had no idea as to what was coming. The evidence I obtained from several responsible persons during my tour justifies me in saying that the local officials had information of what was coming and in addition had been warned by several persons belonging to the two districts. As regards the local officials I shall go further and say that some of them either directly encouraged or purposely stood by doing nothing. And it is my firm conviction that the fact that they are continuing in the same stations even now is largely responsible for breakdown of public morale and confidence. Ever since October 20 last I have been demanding the transfer of the officials who had failed to preserve law and order but without success. It is because the local officials who had failed to maintain law and order are still in their respective stations that the principal criminals are still at large and moving about freely in the affected areas.

I have all along maintained that the Government of Bengal could have suppressed the disturbances in both the districts if they had acted with courage, firmness and determination. What I saw in most of the affected areas justifies me in saying that the Government could have prevented or at least suppressed the orgy of violence if they had acted promptly and firmly. It is, I think, the negligence or want of determination or both on the part of the Government that is responsible for the present state of things and for the helplessness that the people in the affected areas feel.

The situation would, I am sure, improve if the officials who failed to deal with the situation are removed and known culprits are apprehended. These two steps should have been taken long ago. Though nearly two months have elapsed since the disturbances in these two districts began I would repeat my demand and it is the demand also of the affected people in these two districts that officials who failed to prevent or suppress the disturbances should be removed without delay and the known culprits apprehended. It is true that five to six hundred persons have been arrested but it is also true that most of the ring leaders are still at large. It is not as if the local officials do not know who the ring leaders are. Apart from the information that local police and the local intelligence branches should have given the district authorities, the complaints lodged by the sufferers make specific allegations against people named by them. I cannot understand softness on the part of local authorities for criminals. The truth of the matter is that in many places local officials have taken and are taking sides and taking sides means that they are not doing what they ought to have done as to apprehending the criminals.

Before leaving Calcutta for Noakhali I suggested to one of the Ministers of the Government of Bengal that amongst others the following steps should be taken at once :—

(1) Persons known to have taken part in murder, loot, arson and offences against women should be apprehended at once.

(2) All possible steps should be taken to restore Hindu families — refugee families as well as those in the occupied areas — to their homes and their normal life and to guarantee them adequate protection.

As regards the first, I have already said that a large number of known and identified criminals are still at large. As regards the second, I feel compelled to say that little or nothing has been done by the Government to make it possible for the minority community to resume normal life. In fact, Government has made things worse by threatening to withhold relief which I can only describe as a form of coercion for forcing the refugees to return to the danger zones. Most of the affected areas are such that returning for them is hardly possible under existing circumstances. As you all know, that some people who had made up their minds to return to their homes and actually went there were waylaid and murdered.

As regards the abduction of women the complaint of people who were in the affected areas when the disturbances began is that the local authorities have not been helpful in tracing the offenders or in tracing the abducted women. I had the opportunity to talk to mothers of some abducted girls and I find it difficult to express in words the condition in which I found them.

What I saw and heard left the impression on my mind that the local authorities were not serious in tracing the abducted women. The local people feel that the military could have been more helpful in the matter if the local police had fully co-operated with the military.

What then is the remedy ? I have already said more than once that I do not expect much from the Government as it is at present constituted. Since my return from Delhi I have tried to impress upon the public the necessity of organising our own defence and taking all possible steps for the security and protection.

ORGANISATION OF VOLUNTEER CORPS

I have also advocated the formation of volunteer corps in each and every district of Bengal and before I left for Noakhali I took steps to form volunteer corps in some districts. During my tour I impressed upon all whom I met by private talks and public speeches the necessity of forming strong and well-disciplined volunteer corps in each and every district of Bengal. The response that I got is most encouraging.

Such volunteer corps should be drawn from all communities and sections of the people and they should be above communal and party considerations. Unless and until we have our own volunteer corps we cannot prevent disturbances taking place — I mean disturbances of the kind that took place in Calcutta, in the district of Noakhali, in the district of Tipperah and in certain other districts of Bengal. Our volunteer corps should be inspired by the ideal and the spirit of the I.N.A. and the immediate task should be promotion of peace and harmony amongst all sections of the people.

I said just now what their immediate task should be but their immediate task is not all that they have to do. They have to keep before them the ideals of political and social democracy in the context of independence and socialism. They will have to penetrate into every corner of the province, teach the people discipline, promote unity amongst all sections of the people and carry to them the message of independence and socialism. Our volunteer corps should work under district leadership and once all the districts have formed their respective volunteer corps, the corps should be linked together on the provincial basis. I am firmly convinced that once we are able to form strong and disciplined volunteer corps in every district in Bengal, a very large number of the problems that face us today will be solved.

It would not do for you to organise the volunteer corps from here. You will have to give a very large amount of initiative to district leaders.

I certainly expect that a number of Muslim young men will join this volunteer organisation. As regards the Tipperah district they have already joined the volunteer organisation there. In Mymensingh also I was told that the expectation was that they would be able to get Muslim young men there. Their number may not be very large at the present moment, it is true, but things being what they are you have got to do a lot of publicity and propaganda work before you can draw in young men from all communities. I want this to be an all Bengal organisation.

It may be necessary for them to take the help of I.N.A. men in the training of volunteers.

Gandhiji is working in his own way. He is doing everything for promoting Hindu-Muslim unity. It is too early to say, however, whether his movement will succeed.

I am aware that the Government of Bengal, while threatening to withhold relief from refugees who have come from East Bengal districts are at the same time extending enormous facilities to people from Bihar for inducing them to leave their own province. Why they are doing the latter ought to be obvious to everybody. It does not require any explanation from me.

The Government of Bengal as constituted at present is not a people's Government, it is a party Government.

We have to tell our masses what independence will mean to them. If and when they realise that independence will mean the creation of a Socialist State, the two principal communities are bound to come nearer to each other.

I shall admit that the disturbances which began from the 16th August have made a large number of Hindus think in communal terms. But I believe it is only a passing phase.

GANDHIJI'S WORK

What I have said about the formation of volunteer corps in each and every district does not to my mind conflict with what Gandhiji has said. Some of you may remember my utterances in the past. I have said more than once that it is because we are bad Hindus, bad Muslims and bad Christians that communal troubles have arisen. Gandhiji is trying to make us good Hindus, good Muslims and good Christians. He is working in his own way but I attach more importance to the formation of the volunteer corps in every district in Bengal than to anything else at the present moment. The volunteer corps should preach unity but it has more definite duties to perform. It will have to resist miscreants, prevent offences and defend people who are attacked. Mere preaching will not do. You have to give the volunteer corps training on military lines.

I do believe that if 25 young volunteers take a determined stand in one place, they can resist 500 miscreants. That has been done in some of the affected areas.

Our volunteer corps will not be there to break the peace but to restore it. In fact, our volunteer corps will be our police and military. Such an organisation could be raised within 30 days in each district.

BENGAL CONGRESS

It is regrettable that the Congress organisation of this province has not been able to play its proper part in relation to the present state of things. Much was and is expected of the Congress organisation and the vast population of this province who have stood by it in trials and tribulations have been of late overtaken by a feeling of disappointment at the inactivity of the Congress in many cases. I have said at several places and I repeat it this evening that no time should be lost to strengthen our provincial Congress organisation.

One reason for the failure of the Bengal Congress organisation to take proper and adequate steps is that the

Congress machinery is in the hands of persons who got into office six or seven years ago and in spite of the rapid and revolutionary changes that have taken place in the meantime these persons are still in office. Persons who were and are willing to shoulder the burden of responsibility have been kept out because of narrow party considerations.

After coming out of prison, I suggested that the past should be wiped out and that the Congress organisation in this province should take into its fold tried and active workers. Last year, shortly after my return from prison, I wrote a letter to the Secretary of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee in which I said amongst other things that the policy of keeping out tried and active workers would have a disastrous effect. The initiative in the matter of broadbasing and strengthening the Congress organisation ought to have come from those who were in charge of its office, but unfortunately it did not come.

It is unfortunate, but is a fact, that the Congress organisation in this province is not functioning as it ought to. It is unfortunate, but it is a fact that it is coterie-ridden. But there is time yet. If the Congress is to draw upon public support and sympathy the walls of the coterie have to be broken down and our great national organisation must be made to reflect the proper national outlook and that it can do only if it embraces within its fold workers of all sections and ideologies.

It is up to all of us to stand by the Congress. At the same time it is up to those who are in charge of the Congress machinery in the province to see that the Congress organisation also stands by and for everybody. It is not enough for Congressmen and Congress workers to take part in relief work after mischief has been done. It is for Congressmen and Congress workers to organise defence and to rally all the fighting and revolutionary elements among our young men.

PART III : 1947

CALL FOR AN INDIAN VOLUNTEER ARMY FOR VIETNAM

Statement issued in Calcutta on January 3, 1947

The battle of Indo-China is now entering its crucial phase. The French imperialists are mobilising their entire military and air strength to crush and destroy the young Indo-Chinese Republic and re-establish their colonial mastery over the Indo-Chinese people.

It is perhaps not an accident that a squadron of German junker transport aircraft is feeding the French Army at Hanoi from Saigon and dive-bombing British spitfires are clearing the way for French troops advancing on Hanoi. The Western imperialist powers are pooling their resources to smash the liberation movement in one of the ancient historic countries of the East.

The battle in Indo-China is not merely a war for the freedom of the Indo-Chinese people — it is a part, an essential part, of the larger struggle for Asiatic freedom. The defeat of the Indo-Chinese Republic at the hands of the French imperialists will mean consolidation and strengthening of Western imperialism in Asia.

It is in Indo-China, therefore, that the battle for Asiatic freedom must be fought and won by the Asiatic peoples. The defeat of French imperialism in Indo-China will mean the liberation of an important strategic centre in Asia from the stranglehold of Western imperialism. It is in this context that we should view and analyse the fateful struggle now going on in Indo-China.

We must realise that the fate of India is to some extent linked up with the fate of Indo-China. Indian freedom can only be conceived in the background of Asiatic freedom. The complete and utter destruction of Western imperialism in Asia is the only guarantee of our future

security. We cannot but, therefore, take an active interest in the heroic battle that is now being fought by the Indo-Chinese people for their country's freedom.

It is not enough for us to express sympathy and pass pious resolutions. Asia's future including that of India is now being decided on the battlefield of Vietnam.

It is time, therefore, that Indian youngmen should play their part and shed their blood in common with the youth of Indo-China for building the structure of Asiatic freedom. I hope young men from all over the country will come forward in thousands and tens of thousands and volunteer their services to the Vietnam Republic.

I am aware that the Government of India, as at present constituted, may not find it possible to render armed assistance to the Indo-Chinese Republic. But, I believe, there is nothing to prevent an Indian Volunteer Army from taking their stand alongside the Vietnam Republican forces and fighting shoulder to shoulder with them for the common battle of Asia.

RESIGNATION FROM THE CONGRESS WORKING COMMITTEE

Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose sent the following telegraphic message to the Congress President on 4 January, 1947

"Regret ill health prevents my attending Working Committee and A.I.C.C. meeting. I request the Working Committee and the A.I.C.C. to adhere to their own declared interpretation of paragraph 19(v) of the Cabinet Missions statement of May 16 and to reject British Governments interpretation of December 6. Acceptance of British Governments interpretation would mean ignoble surrender of rights of the Constituent Assembly and the end of Provincial Autonomy. British Governments interference entirely unwarranted and must not be tolerated by the Constituent Assembly and provinces.

—Sarat Bose."

The above was followed by the following message of 6 January 1947 :

"I have served on the Working Committee in spite of serious differences with my colleagues since May last over the acceptance of the Cabinet Mission statement and scheme but I regret I cannot do so any longer. The resolution drafted by the Working Committee stultifies the Congress, makes the Constituent Assembly a subservient body, irreparably destroys the integrity of India and actually compels provinces to accept grouping against their will and to surrender provincial autonomy while giving them misleading assurances that no compulsion or interference is involved and that provincial autonomy will remain intact.

A Constituent Assembly acting in accordance with the British Governments interpretation and mandate cannot possible frame a constitution for a sovereign republic of

India. I tender resignation of the Working Committee membership.

—Sarat Bose."

At a Press interview, Mr. Bose added :

"I was opposed to the acceptance of the Cabinet Mission's proposals and in fact, the decision of mine was the only voice in the Congress Working Committee raised against their acceptance.

"The acceptance of December 6 interpretation, to my mind, removes the last hope of success. I do not think the Muslim League will enter the Constituent Assembly even now. The Assembly will, in that case, sit without the League and probably draft a constitution for all India and proceed to enforce it as far as their power goes. Mr. Jinnah wants to have his 'Pakistan' by merely sitting quiet. The British Government's communique of December 6 will encourage him to keep out of the Constituent Assembly.''



With Mahatma Gandhi Calcutta 1947



With General Aung San Rangoon 1946

ADDRESS TO THE INDIAN NATIONAL ARMY

Presidential address at the All-India I.N.A. Conference held at Belgachia Villa, Calcutta on 26 January, 1947

Officers and men of the Azad Hind Fauj, members of the Rani of Jhansi Regiment and soldiers, Jai Hind !

I greet you all. I greet you in the name of Netaji Birthday Celebrations Committee. I greet you on behalf of those who have assembled here this evening. I greet you all on behalf of the wider public for whom it was not possible, because of circumstances beyond our control, to attend this meeting, and I greet you on behalf of my humble self.

There was a time not long ago — it was during the period of the War that British propagandists and some of their Indian counterparts, I feel ashamed to say the Indian counterparts also joined the British, — let loose calumny against you. It was said against you and your Supreme Commander, Netaji, that he and you were Quislings and traitors and that you were acting more in the interest of Japan than in the interest of India. But the truth has come out. Truth cannot be long suppressed.

As I have said on many occasions, if during the last World War there was any army which really fought for freedom and democracy, it was the Indian National Army (applause).

Some of my Indian colleagues had faith and some still have faith in the so-called democracies of the West. I never had any such faith at any time of my life. The War which was over in 1945,—if I may borrow a few words from George Bernard Shaw, — was a war between two rival Fascisms — the Anglo-American Fascism on the one hand and the Axis Fascism on the other. The Anglo-Americans who fought, claimed that they were democracies. But in fact — and George Bernard Shaw only spoke the truth — that was a war between two rival Fascisms, the Anglo-American and the Axis Fascism for the supremacy of the world. That really confirmed what I have been saying for two years

that if there was any army during the last war which really have fought for freedom and democracy, it was the Indian National Army under the leadership of Netaji.

Comrades, India knows today what you did outside. India knows today what you did outside for the sake of Indian unity. India knows today what you did and attempted to do for the sake of achieving Indian independence. You have won your laurels and may I in all humility tell you that you cannot afford to rest on your laurels. The whole country is looking up to you to give the training that you have yourselves received, inspire the rest of the country by your example and precept and to train our young men and women to be soldiers of freedom and also to take part in the political arena.

I have not the time to say more than a few words on the political situation in the country. I have to admit that clouds have gathered on the horizon but, I am sure, with your help we shall be able to overcome the obstacles in front of us. We are sure that when you come into the field, the clouds that have appeared in the horizon will vanish.

Some of you have asked, what is my idea of the future constitution of the country. I have always held the view that India must be a Union of autonomous socialist republics and I believe that if the different provinces are redistributed on a linguistic basis and what are today called provinces are converted into autonomous socialist republics, those socialist republics will gladly co-operate with one another in forming an Indian Union. It is not the Indian Union of British conception and British making. I look forward to that Union and not to the Union of British conception and British making.

I have always believed and I still believe that salvation of India and of the East can only come if we can bring into being a gigantic Asiatic Federation, a federation in which all the countries of Asia will join — Russia, China, India, Burma, Malaya, Philippines, Pacific Islands and Japan too. Yes, Japan too. We want a gigantic Asiatic Federa-

tion in which all the countries of the East will join. Unless and until that Asiatic Federation comes into being, we shall not be able to defeat the West.

Western domination will go on in new and fancy names until we can bring into being a gigantic Asiatic Federation which will defeat Anglo-French-Dutch imperialism on the one hand and the commercial American imperialism on the other.

I look forward to the day when those of you who are trained under the leadership of Netaji and are prepared to lay down their lives for the cause which you and your Supreme Commander made your own, I am sure, will be able, having regard to the experience you have had, to help in the creation of a great Asiatic Federation. We have here our friends from Burma who are anxious for an Asiatic Federation to come into being.

You and I know that Indonesia today is struggling against Dutch imperialism and Indo-China against French imperialism and India is struggling against British imperialism. That is a fact, — it is no use saying that British imperialism is dead and gone in India. British imperialism is still very much alive. It seemed to be dead and gone towards the end of 1945 and beginning of 1946 but it now appears to have come back to life again. British, French and Dutch imperialism still exist and we have to fight them with the strongest weapon we have.

In that fight which is going on everyday, I feel sure, we shall win. But I look forward to you to join in the fight with us. The fight has not been suspended ; it is going on. But when it is declared openly, I hope, you will join it and you will render an account of yourselves which only the followers of Netaji can render.

I am certain that the day will soon come when we shall find you amongst us giving training to our boys and girls and also taking part in the political struggle of the day. Apart from that, when the last fight against British imperialism is declared, — I am sure, you will be at the vanguard of the fight.

AZAD HIND PARTY

Aims and Objects

Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose proposed the formation of the Azad Hind Party with the following aims and objects at a conference of followers of Netaji including I.N.A. personnel held in Calcutta in January, 1947

The Azad Hind Party stands for complete independence of India and the establishment in this country of a Union of Socialist Republics.

The Party will seek to eliminate British influence, power and interests from India and for achieving this end, it will prepare the Indian people for a final struggle with British imperialism.

The Party accepts unconditionally the ideology of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose and considers the completion of his unfulfilled task as the main aim of its political, social and economic activities.

The Party believes that land in a free and liberated India must belong to the actual tillers of the soil. It stands for the abolition of landlordism in any shape or form and complete repudiation of rural debts.

The Party will encourage co-operative and scientific agriculture so that our national wealth may be increased and the standard of living of our people may be improved.

The Party believes that in the interest of the people as a whole all the basic and key industries in our country must belong to the community and must be managed and run by the State as an essential part of planned production for consumption of the people.

The Party believes that socialist industrialisation on the basis of electrification of the entire country must be the first and paramount aim of the Government of Free

India. A rapid and socialist industrialisation of our country is vital not only to secure an improvement in the standard of living of our people, but also to strengthen the defence of our country.

The Party will take upon itself the task of leading the Indian people in its fight against British imperialism and establishing a Provisional Government of Free India as a result of conquest of power.

After the British power is overthrown and the Indian people are completely liberated it will then be the task of the Provisional Government to bring about the establishment of a Union of Socialist Republics in India in accordance with the will of the Indian people and enjoying their confidence.

The Party believes that complete liberty, sovereignty and freedom of development should be guaranteed to all the cultural and linguistic groups in India, and in that development there should be no interference from the Union Government.

The Party believes that simple Hindustani written in Roman script should be the common language of all the people of India as the language of intercourse between different linguistic and cultural groups.

The Party believes that for a proper economic development of the entire country, a Central Planning Commission should be set up by the Union Government which will seek to modernise and industrialise the country in 20 years.

The Party believes in complete equality of sexes, and the right of Indian women to take their due share in the social, cultural and public life of the country.

The Party believes that in a free and liberated India, religious freedom should be guaranteed to all.

The Party believes that military service should be made compulsory for the youth of India up to the age of 40 years.

The Party believes that free compulsory education including University education should be guaranteed to all.

The Party believes that in a Free India all must have the right to claim food and shelter from the State in return for his due contribution to society.

The Party adopts the flag conceived by Netaji as its own.

ON THE DIVISION OF INDIA

Text of a statement to the Press released at Calcutta on 15 March, 1947

I think I ought to raise my voice of protest and sound a note of warning against the resolution passed by the Congress Working Committee with reference to the Punjab. The resolution in question recommends a division of the Punjab into two provinces—one predominantly Muslim and the other predominantly non-Muslim. In the course of a Press interview, the Congress President has announced that the principle of division underlying the resolution applies also to Bengal.

I confess that the resolution has surprised me not a little. By accepting religion as the sole basis of the distribution of Provinces, the Congress has cut itself away from its moorings and has almost undone the work it has been doing for the last sixty years. The resolution in question is a violent departure from the traditions and principles of the Congress. And I am forced to the conclusion that it is the result of a defeatist mentality. A sort of fear complex seems to have worked havoc in the minds of many of us. To my mind a division of Provinces on the religious basis is no solution of the communal problem. Even if the Provinces were to be so divided, Hindus and Muslims will still have to live side by side in them and the risk of communal conflicts will remain. Supposing we divide Bengal and the Punjab on the basis of religion, what about the Muslims in Western Bengal and the Hindus in Eastern Bengal or about the Muslims in Eastern Punjab and the Hindus and Sikhs in Western Punjab ? What again is going to happen to the minority religious groups in the other Provinces of India ? Are we going to have Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Buddhist, Christian, Parsee and other religious states or pockets throughout the country ? The resolution of the Congress Working Committee pushed to its logical conclusion would mean the creation of such religious states or pockets and the result would be that the risk

of armed communal conflicts or clashes would increase hundredfold. The concept of religious or theocratic States is not a new one, but all the advanced countries of the world have dismissed it or grown out of it. To accept that concept in the year of grace 1947 and to apply it to India will mean pushing her back into the medieval ages. It is obviously a reactionary and anti-revolutionary step and shuts out progress for long years to come. It will further aggravate the communal problem, and will make its solution extremely difficult, if not altogether impossible. As the population of India all over the country is composite in character, this sort of communal segregation or religious quarantine is neither desirable nor feasible. We have to find out a solution that applies to the entire country. The solution of the communal problem lies ultimately in social justice, and, so far as our collective life is concerned, in an emphasis on the political and economic aspects and interests of life and in the divorce of religion from politics and economics. Whether we are Hindus or Muslims, Sikhs or Christians, our political and economic problems and interests are the same for all of us. In Socialism, therefore, and in all it means lies a solution of this vexed communal problem. Any division of the country or of the provinces on religious basis will not help us in bringing about amity, not to speak of unity, which the Congress has so long stood for. An over-hasty surgical cure will involve us in confusion and disaster.

UNITED INDEPENDENT BENGAL

SARAT BOSE FORMULA

I. On 12 May 1947 the Associated Press of India released a report based on enquiries from authoritative sources that Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose took the initiative in January 1947 in the matter of settling communal differences and bringing about an agreement regarding the formation of a new Cabinet in Bengal and also regarding the future Constitution of Bengal. The report that Mr. Bose's talks with some Bengal Muslim leaders followed the appointment by the Provincial Muslim League Working Committee of a sub-committee to contact leaders of other parties was stated to be incorrect.

It was stated that Mr. Bose's basic ideas were as follows :—

(1) Bengal to be a Socialist Republic.

(2) The Bengal legislature to be elected after the Constitution of the Republic is framed, should be elected on the basis of adult franchise and joint electorate.

(3) The Bengal legislature so elected should decide the relations of Bengal with the rest of India.

(4) The present Muslim League Ministry should be dissolved and a representative interim Cabinet formed without delay.

(5) The public services in Bengal should be manned by Bengalees, and Hindus and Muslims should have equal share in them.

(6) An ad hoc constitution-making body consisting of 30 or 31 members should be set up by the Congress and the Muslim League in Bengal.

It should frame the Constitution of the Republic of Bengal expeditiously.

It was further stated that in the course of discussions that had taken place between Mr. Bose and Congress and Muslim League leaders during the last four months, other relevant matters had also been discussed and some were still under consideration. Details regarding them were not yet available. It was however authoritatively stated that the report that had been circulated in certain quarters that Mr. Bose had entered into a secret pact with certain Muslim League leaders was entirely without foundation.

II. In the course of a Press statement on 20 May 1947 Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose said :

During the last few years I have given considerable thought to the question of the future constitution of India and of the provinces. On the 29th January 1944, when I was in prison, I recorded my ideas in the following words :

"I conceive of my country as a Union of Socialist Republics—an immense melting pot in which the characters of all the races and nationalities comprised in it will be mixed and out of which a new world-ism will arise which will recognise no frontiers, no races and no classes."

In spite of all that has happened during the last few months in Bengal and in other provinces, I adhere to those ideas. In January last I took the initiative in the matter of settling communal differences and bringing about an agreement regarding the formation of a new Cabinet in Bengal and also regarding the future Constitution of Bengal and discussed my ideas with Mr. Abul Hashim, Secretary, Bengal Provincial Muslim League (now on leave). A few days thereafter — to

be exact on the 26th January last — I spoke at the reception given to Azad Hind Fauj officers and men at Belgachia Villa. I said among other things — "I have always held the view that India must be a Union of autonomous Socialist Republics and I believe that if the different provinces are redistributed on a linguistic basis and what are called provinces are converted into autonomous Socialist Republics, those Socialist Republics will gladly co-operate with one another in forming an Indian Union. It would be an Indian Union of Indian conception and Indian making. I look forward to that Union and not to the Union of British conception and British making.

Since then I have had opportunities of discussing my ideas with several Congress and Muslim League leaders in Bengal as a result of which concrete proposals have emerged. During the period, events have happened in Bengal and in other parts of the country which have driven large sections of my countrymen to desperation and have led persons prominent in public life, who until recently had unequivocally declared that they were against Pakistan and partition, to lend their support both to Pakistan and to partition. Notwithstanding all that has been said and is being said, I hold firmly to the opinion which I have expressed more than once that conceding Pakistan and supporting partition would be suicidal to the cause of Indian independence and also to the cause of social progress. It will make the partitioned provinces happy hunting grounds for imperialists, communalists and reactionaries. It will dissolve the existing linguistic bonds and instead of resolving communal differences will accentuate and aggravate them. Instead of thinking and talking of Pakistan and partition and thereby bringing into existence armed communal camps, we have to devise ways and means as to how to live and work together and how to form people's governments which will look not to communal interests but to common political, social and economic interests of the people. The real solution of

the existing communal differences, to my mind, lies in the creation of Socialist Republics on a linguistic basis and in the establishment in this country of a Central Union of Socialist Republics.

We cannot and must not allow ourselves to be led by the British imperialists or the Indian Communists and reactionaries in framing our policies. It is the common interest of the common man which will form the basis of a new and Socialist unity and dissolve communal antagonisms. I call upon the youth of the country to take part in this great adventure with robust faith and optimism in the future of our people. It is for them to light the path which the common man has to tread.

It is to me a matter of very deep regret that on account of my continued ill health since December last, I have been unable to take as much part in public affairs as I had been accustomed to do. But as I have been feeling somewhat better during the last fourteen days, I propose to take the field in the very near future and to convince my countrymen that the solution which I have offered is the right solution.

III. The Associated Press of India reported on 22 May 1947, quoting very authoritative sources, that complete terms had emerged out of the discussions that took place between Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose and certain prominent Congress and Muslim League leaders regarding the future constitution of Bengal and the formation of a new Cabinet.

The terms were as follows :

1. Bengal will be a Free State. The Free State of Bengal will decide its relations with the rest of India.

2. The Constitution of the Free State of Bengal will provide for election to the Bengal Legisla-

ture on the basis of joint electorate and adult franchise, with reservation of seats proportionate to the population amongst the Hindus and Muslims. The seats as between the Hindus and the Scheduled Caste Hindus will be distributed amongst them in proportion to their respective population, or in such manner as may be agreed among them. The constituencies and the votes will be distributive and not cumulative. A candidate who gets the majority of the votes of his own community cast during the elections and 25 per cent of the votes of the other communities so cast, will be declared elected. If no candidate satisfies these conditions, that candidate who gets the largest number of votes of his own community will be elected.

3. On the announcement by His Majesty's Government that the proposal of the Free State of Bengal has been accepted and that Bengal will not be partitioned, the present Bengal Ministry will be dissolved and a new Interim Ministry brought into being, consisting of an equal number of Muslims and Hindus (including Scheduled Caste Hindus) but excluding the Chief Minister. In this Ministry, the Chief Minister will be a Muslim and the Home Minister a Hindu.

4. Pending the final emergence of a Legislature and a Ministry under the new constitution, the Hindus (including the Scheduled Caste Hindus) and the Muslims will have an equal share in the services, including military and police. The Services will be manned by Bengalees.

5. A Constituent Assembly composed of 30 persons, 16 Muslims and 14 non-Muslims, will be elected by the Muslim and non-Muslim members of the Legislature respectively, excluding the Europeans.

IV. At a Press interview on 23 May 1947, Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose said :

> If the Free State of Bengal comes into being, it will be a republic ; and its nature and character will be socialist. Details of the Socialist Republic will have to be worked out if and when Bengal will have a Constituent Assembly of her own. There is no difference as far as fundamentals are concerned between me and those with whom I had discussions on the subject since the last five months.
>
> I want to impress upon the public of Bengal and of the rest of India that the cure for communalism is not communalism. We have to approach things from an altogether different and healthier outlook — and that is the socialistic outlook.
>
> No one knows more than I do that there is deep distrust between the communities all over India. It has been growing since August last. But Bengal and India will perish unless that is removed and it has to be removed.
>
> The solution I have offered is the creation of socialist republics — call them free states, if you will — that is the expression that has been used in the terms of agreement that were published this morning. By the word 'free' I mean freedom not only from political bondage but also freedom from social and economic servitude.
>
> In order to change the outlook of people, the first step to be taken is to form a new Government of Bengal. The present communal ministry should be replaced by a ministry which would command the confidence of the general public. That has to be done without delay. That, by

itself, will remove a large portion of the distrust that exists in the minds of the people of Bengal. The character of the administration is bound to change rapidly from the moment a new ministry commanding the confidence of all sections of the people takes place. Proposals for legislation will then be examined not from the communal but from the national standpoint. The basis for all legislation will be the economic, social and cultural interests of the people as a whole, and not the benefits of only a section.

Separate electorates have been in existence since the days of Lord Minto. This is the first time after several decades that Congress and Muslim League leaders of any province in India have agreed to the introduction of joint electorate and adult franchise. It is true that certain safeguards have been introduced in the clause. But they are intended to be temporary and I expect they will be allowed to lapse after a period of about 10 years, if not earlier.

We have said that votes will be distributive and not cumulative, — that means that a voter will not be permitted to give all his votes to one candidate.

The terms will have to be considered by the Congress and the League organisations.

I need not dilate further at the present moment except to give you an indication as to how my mind has been working.

It is true that our political vision has become clouded for the moment but I have every hope that our political workers, both Hindu and Muslim, will seize the present opportunity and combine to open a new chapter in the history of Bengal and eventually in the history of India itself.

My information is — and I believe my information is reliable —that in case partition is awarded, Burdwan Division, 24 Parganas District and Khulna District and possibly Calcutta will be allotted to Western Bengal and the rest of the divisions and districts in the province will be allotted to East Bengal. I want the people of Bengal to consider whether they can possibly agree to such a partition.

Speaking for myself, I have always been in favour of our attempting to put our own house in order and not to make British imperialists arbiters of our destiny.

V. A special messenger carrying a sealed cover from Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose to Mahatma Gandhi left on 22 May 1947 for Patna where the latter was then staying. In this connection the following letter to Mr. Bose from Mahatma Gandhi from Sarat Bose papers is of great interest.

Patna 24/5/47

My dear Sarat,

I have your note. There is nothing in the draft stipulating that nothing will be done by mere majority. Every act of Government must carry with it the co-operation of at least two-thirds of the Hindu members in the Executive and the Legislature. There should be an admission that Bengal has common culture and common mother tongue — Bengali. Make sure that the Central Muslim League approved of the proposal notwithstanding reports to the contrary. If your presence is necessary in Delhi I shall telephone or telegraph. I propose to discuss the draft with the Working Committee.

Yours
Bapu

VI. The Associated Press of India released the following report, based on authoritative sources, on 26 May 1947 :

> Some changes are understood to be under discussion in the terms relating to the future constitution of Bengal that have emerged from the talks initiated by Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose with certain League and Congress leaders.
>
> The authors of the terms have been continuing their discussions with a view to improving them and these talks have mostly centred round the provisions relating to (1) the Bengal Free State's relations with the rest of India and (2) elections to the Legislature. It is authoritatively learnt that these two paragraphs have now been redrafted by some of their authors.

Amended Paragraph 1 : Bengal will be a Free State. The Free State of Bengal will decide its relations with the rest of India. The question of joining any Union will be decided by the Legislature of the Free State of Bengal by a two-thirds majority.

Amended Paragraph 2 : The Constitution of the Free State of Bengal will provide for election to the Bengal Legislature on the basis of joint electorate and adult franchise, with reservation of seats proportionate to the population amongst Hindus and Muslims.

The seats as between Hindus and Scheduled Caste Hindus will be distributed amongst them in proportion to their respective population or in such manner as may be agreed among them. The constituencies will be multiple constituencies and the votes will be distributive and not cumulative.

A candidate who gets the largest number of votes of his community cast during the elections and at least 25 per

cent of the votes of the other communities so cast will be declared elected. If no candidate satisfies the above conditions then that candidate who gets the next largest number of votes of his own community cast during the elections and at least 25 per cent of the votes of the other communities so cast will be declared elected. If no candidate satisfies the conditions laid down in the previous sentence, then that candidate who gets the largest number of votes out of the total votes polled will be elected.

It is further learnt that the question whether decisions in the present Legislature and also in the Interim Bengal Government when formed under these terms should be taken by a bare majority or a higher majority is engaging the attention of some of those who took part in the discussions.

VII. Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose told the Associated Press of India in New Delhi on 31 May 1947 that he had discussed with Mahatma Gandhi the Bengal situation and particularly his plan for the formation of Free State of Bengal as an alternative to its partition into two provinces.

Mr. Bose expressed the belief if the Congress High Command would accept his plan, then it would be easier to persuade the League High Command to agree to Mr. Suhrawardy's scheme of United Bengal which was virtually the same as his own plan.

Mr. Bose said : I have faith in my proposal and shall stick to it to the last. I shall meet other Congress leaders and explore all possibilities of preventing the partition of Bengal.

I do not say that Bengal should remain outside the Union. What I say is that only a Free Bengal can decide her relations with the rest of India.

VIII. Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose addressed the following letter to Mr. M. A. Jinnah on 9 June 1947 :

1, Woodburn Park,
Calcutta
9th June, 1947

My dear Jinnah,

I have to thank you most sincerely for your courtesy and cordiality towards me and for the consideration you gave to my suggestions. Bengal is passing through the greatest crisis in her history, but she can yet be saved. She can be saved if you will kindly give the following instructions to Muslim members of the Bengal Legislative Assembly :

(1) At the meeting to be held of all members of the Legislative Assembly (other than Europeans) at which a decision will be taken on the issue as to which Constituent Assembly the province as a whole would join if it were subsequently decided by the two parts to remain united, to vote neither for the Hindusthan Constituent Assembly nor for the Pakistan Constituent Assembly, and to make it clear by a statement in the Assembly or in the press or otherwise, that they are solidly in favour of Bengal having a Constituent Assembly of her own ;

(2) At the meetings of the members of the two parts of the Legislative Assembly sitting separately and empowered to vote whether or not the province should be partitioned, to vote solidly against partition.

The request I am making to you is in accordance with the views you expressed to me when we met. But it seems to me that if you merely express your views to your members and not give them specific instructions as to how to vote, the situation cannot be saved. I hope you will do all in your power to enable Bengal to remain united and to make her a free and independent State.

If the Muslim members of the Bengal Legislative Assembly vote solidly as suggested in paragraphs (1) and (2) above, I think Lord Mountbatten will be compelled to convene another meeting of all members of the Assembly

(other than Europeans) at which a decision can be taken on the issue as to whether the province as a whole desires to have a Constituent Assembly of her own.

I shall be coming to Delhi again on the 13th or 14th and shall call on you on the 14th or 15th.

Thanking you and with kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
Sarat Chandra Bose

Quaid-e-Azam, M.A. Jinnah,
Barrister-at-Law,
10, Aurangzeb Road,
New Delhi

The above letter was sent to Mr. Jinnah by special messsenger by air and delivered into his hands. Further conversations with him had to be dropped as the Congress High Command turned down Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose's scheme for a united and independent Bengal. Thereafter Gandhiji said in one of his prayer speeches that he "had been taken to task for supporting Sarat Babu's move". Ed.

IX. Mahatma Gandhi wrote the following letter to Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose on 21 June 1947 :

Hardwar
21-6-'47

My dear Sarat,

I have a moment to myself here. I use it for writing two or three overdue letters. This is one to acknowledge yours of the 14th inst.

The way to work for unity I have pointed out when the geographical (unity) is broken.

Hoping you are all well.

Love,

Bapu

ON THE MOUNTBATTEN PLAN (I)

Interview to the Free Press Journal, Bombay, released at New Delhi on 5 June, 1947

H.M.G's India Plan has dealt a staggering blow to the cause of Indian unity and independence — a blow from which we may not be able to recover for many years. It is true that the plan has been accepted by the two High Commands, but if we analyse it carefully, we shall find that instead of accelerating our pace towards the goal of freedom, it makes its attainment more difficult. What has surprised me most is that those who were until recently most vehement in demanding that India should remain one and undivided should have so readily supported division of India and even partition of provinces.

The plan has given no satisfaction to the Sikhs of the Punjab and I feel sure that within the next few weeks we shall find that it will give no satisfaction to the people of Bengal also. The demand of the people of the N.W.F.P. both Muslims and Hindus, for the establishment of an independent Pathan State has been ignored and what has been offered them is a choice between Hindusthan and Pakistan.

The tragic happenings in Bengal, Bihar, the Punjab and the Frontier Province are as fresh in my mind as in that of anybody else ; nevertheless, I feel that a different and more satisfactory remedy could have been found for the ills that have overtaken our body politic. If the people of Bengal, the Punjab and the Frontier Province had been allowed to find their own remedy themselves without any interference from the top, I am certain they would have found it. I feel more than ever convinced that the ills we are suffering from today call for a new order—a socialistic order — an order which recognises no distinction between man and man, and between class and class. The establishment of free and independent States in Bengal, the Punjab and the N. W. F. P. would have laid the foundations for a

real and lasting peace among the different communities inhabiting those provinces, and would have accelerated their social, economic and political progress. It would have eventually led to the establishment of the Indian Union of our dreams. I have all along maintained and still maintain that if the Indian provinces were reconstituted on a linguistic basis and converted into republics, they would before long demand in their own interests the establishment of an Indian Union. The British attempt to impose an Indian Union from the top has failed. I wish very much that an opportunity had been given to us to work from the bottom and bring into being an Indian Union of our free choice.

Some people felt elated at the prospect of India's getting Dominion Status by August, but I am not at all enamoured of Dominion Status. What India wants is undefiled independence. History warns us to beware of Dominion Status. Dominion Status has been conferred on several countries during the last few decades by the British Government, but wherever and whenever it has come, it has come to stay.

ON THE MOUNTBATTEN PLAN (II)

Extract from a statement to the Press released at Calcutta on 8 June, 1947

British Imperialists have won. "Divide and Rule" has been their policy for the last 150 years and it continues to be their policy, even at the moment when they are supposed to be quitting India.....The top-ranking Congress leaders have already begun to talk in the Churchillian strain about "Co-operative Commonwealth". Some of them have envisaged very close relations with Britain. In that background, British Imperialist manoeuvering will go on, but possibly in a more subtle and insidious way. If the two Indias are going to be republics, they will be republics only in name. In the days to come, there will be increasing competition between them for securing help and favours from Imperialist Britain. We may continue to talk big and I have no doubt we shall. But the dream of independent India, free from British Imperialist control and influence, will more and more become a forgotten dream.

.....Among the politically minded sections in Bengal, both Hindu and Muslim, there is today a large and growing volume of opinion in favour of a United and Independent Bengal and of a Bengal having a Constituent Assembly of own. But the Plan gives the members of the Bengal Legislative Assembly no opportunity to express their minds on the proposal that Bengal should have her own Constituent Assembly ; their choice is limited to Hindusthan Constituent Assembly and Pakistan Constituent Assembly. Now that the Plan is before the public of Bengal with all its details, if the verdict of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee and the Hindu members of the Bengal Legislative Assembly is sought, I have no doubt that the verdict of the majority of them will be against the Plan and in favour of a United and Independent Bengal, with a Constituent Assembly of her own.

I know that the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee and the Hindu members of the Bengal Legislative Assembly will not be asked to pronounce their own verdict on the Plan. It has appeared in the papers already that the Congress Working Committee is about to issue detailed instructions to Congress members of the Bengal Legislative Assembly. The democratic way would have been to leave it to them to exercise their own judgment after taking into consideration their election pledges and the interests of Bengal as a whole. But that is not to be. Bengal's voice has to be stifled and she has to continue to be a pawn in the all-India game.

It has been said by some persons that Hindu opinion in Eastern Bengal is unanimously in favour of partition. But to say so is a travesty of truth. I know that a section of the upper middle classes in different parts of East Bengal have expressed themselves in favour of partition. But the upper middle classes do not reflect the opinion of the one crore and odd lakhs of Hindus in Eastern Bengal. From reports I have received and from personal contacts I have made, I make bold to say that the overwhelming majority of the Hindus in Eastern Bengal are dead against partition. The sop that has been thrown to them that Western Bengal Hindus will come to their rescue has made and can make no impression on their minds.

It is true that members of the two parts of the Bengal Legislative Assembly sitting separately will be empowered to vote whether or not the province should be partitioned. But the question is, "Will the members be allowed freedom to vote in democratic way" ? If such freedom is given to them, I am certain about the result. The result will be a decision against partition and in favour of a united and independent Bengal with a Constituent Assembly of her own.

I feel more and more convinced everyday that if Bengal is rent in twain, the two Provinces of Bengal will be exploited more and more by exploiters, white and

brown. The Bengali Hindu and the Bengali Muslim will become quill-drivers of those exploiters. Establishment of Free and Independent States in Bengal, the Punjab and the North Western Frontier Province would have laid the foundations for a real and lasting peace in those areas, would have led to the formation of non-communal parties on the basis of a common social, economic and political programme and would have accelerated the social, economic and political progress of the people of those areas. It would have slowly but surely led to the establishment of a Union of them all. The free and independent states I envisage would be socialist in character and in them there would be no danger of Hindus swamping the Muslims or Muslims swamping the Hindus. I have no doubt what H. M. G's plan would lead to. It is bound to lead to perpetual conflicts between the Hindus and the Muslims in the Hindu majority provinces as well as in the Muslim majority provinces. If peace is what we seek, we cannot get it by accepting H. M. G's plan. If independence is what we seek, the Plan sounds its death-knell. It is possible even now for Congress and Muslim League leaders to retrace their steps. Will they have the vision and the courage to do so ? ' Let them reform the provinces on linguistic basis and give them full measure of independence. Let them introduce in the reformed provinces adult franchise and joint electorate. If they do that, they will be sowing the seeds out of which will grow an independent and united India, an India not of Hindus against Muslims, or Muslims against Hindus, but an India of Hindus and Muslims, an India which will take her rightful place among the nations of the world.

ON THE MOUNTBATTEN PLAN (III)

Text of a message to "Free India Supplement" Free Press Journal, Bombay, released at Calcutta on 24 June, 1947

June 3 Plan marks the triumph of British diplomacy. Acceptance of the plan by Congress means surrender of all that Congress stood for and fought for since 1928. Domination and exploitation of the two Indias will continue under the fancy name of Dominion Status. Congress will rue the day when it accepted Dominion Status, conceded Pakistan and demanded partition of provinces.

THE INDIAN STRUGGLE—A NEW PHASE

Full text of a statement to the Press announcing the formation of the Socialist Republican Party, released at Calcutta on 1 August, 1947

The Indian struggle has entered on a new phase. The sufferings and sacrifices of the people during the last twenty years raised hopes in their minds that independence of India free from British influence and control was within their grasp. The acceptance of the June 3 Plan by the two major political organisations in the country has, for the time being, dashed those hopes to the ground. We have to-day a dismembered India and, instead of independence, Dominion Status under British influence and patronage.

The Flag of Independence was unfurled at the session of the Indian National Congress which was held in Lahore in the year 1929. The people rallied under that flag and were prepared at all times for the utmost sacrifices in order to make independence a reality. Why then have we failed ? We have failed because of weakness and vacillation on the part of our leaders, we have failed because of anxiety on their part to accept compromises even on matters fundamental, we have failed because of their failure at all critical moments to give a bold correct lead to the country.

The Tripuri Congress disclosed serious cleavage and conflict between the rightist and leftist forces inside the Congress. Subhas Chandra Bose as President of the Tripuri Congress sounded the clarion call for action, but his call was ignored by the rightist leaders of the Congress. The rightist leaders went on passing long resolutions full of hot phrases at successive Congress sessions and at meetings of the Congsess Working Committee. But behind the smoke-screen of resolutions, negotiations were carried on for compromise with British Imperialism. The second World War came in September, 1939, and found the country un-

prepared for a struggle. In March, 1940, as President of the All India Anti-Compromise Conference held at Ramgarh, Subhas Chandra Bose gave a warning to the country against the dangers of compromise with British Imperialism and said that such a compromise would land the country in confusion and disaster. His warning went unheeded. During the progress of the War, rightist leaders at first offered unconditional help to Imperialist Britain in the prosecution of the war, then changed their policy to one of non-embarrassment, and, subsequently, in August, 1942, passed what is known as Mahatma Gandhi's "Quit India" Resolution. No steps, however, had been taken by them to prepare the country for the struggle that was bound to follow in the wake of that resolution. British Imperialists came down with a heavy hand on the people, but be it said to the glory of the people that they revolted against British Imperialism and unflinchingly faced bayonets and bullets. Even during this period some rightist leaders carried on negotiations with British Imperialists for a compromise and for the sake of such a compromise even went the length of suggesting dismemberment of India. The suggestion that India may be dismembered and, if necessary. Bengal and the Punjab may be forsaken, was however repudiated by the people. It is a tragedy that what was repudiated in 1944 has been accepted in a slightly amended form by the leaders of the Congress in 1947.

The fight for India's independence which was launched outside India's borders under the leadership of Netaji and the glorious achievements of the Azad Hind Fauj raised the tempo of the people. Netaji and the Azad Hind Fauj were within an ace of success but, unfortunately, circumstances went against them. After the war ended and officers and men of the Azad Hind Fauj were brought back to the country, the tempo of the people rose even higher. British Imperialists felt that India which they had exploited for the last 150 years was passing out of their hands and they started the old familiar British tactics of sending out missions and commissions to this country. The May 1946 Plan which had in it the seeds of dismemberment of India

was unfortunately accepted in its entirety by the Congress Working Committee in spite of protests. That Plan, however, had to be abandoned because of opposition by other political parties and groups. Then followed the June 3 Plan—a Plan even worse than the May 1946 Plan. The June 3 Plan is based on division of India and partition of two of the major provinces and for the time being, puts it beyond the power of the people to raise the edifice of a Free and United India. The Plan has been accepted because of the weakness and vacillation of our leaders and their anxiety to arrive at a compromise even at the sacrifice of all that the people fought for during the last twenty years.

The crisis that has overtaken India because of the acceptance of the June 3 Plan was not entirely unexpected, regard being had to all that has happened since the year 1939. It may also be said that such crises sometimes appear in periods of transition. We must, however, overcome the crisis that has overtaken us and for that purpose we must strengthen and consolidate all the leftist and revolutionary forces in the country. We have to distinguish real leftists and revolutionaries from pseudo ones. We have to distinguish between those who offer lip service to the ideology and programme of Netaji and those who really believe in it and are prepared to take upon themselves the completion of his unfulfilled task. We have to rally people of all communities — Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Buddhists and others—who do not subscribe to communalism in any shape or form and are prepared to undertake the work of reunifying the country on a socialist basis. The communal poison that has entered into our souls has to be completely eradicated if India has to live and that can only be done if we are able to approach all the problems facing us from the nationalist and socialist points of view, and form ourselves into a cohesive, well-knit and disciplined Socialist Republican Party for the purpose of implementing the ideology and programme of Netaji. The need for the formation of such a party was emphasized and accepted at the conference which was held in Calcutta on the 11th, 12th and 13th of last month at the Subhas Institute of Culture.

In pursuance of the resolution passed at that conference and after further consultation with friends and co-workers all over the country belonging to all communities, I have decided to form such a party immediately and announce its formation to-day under the name of Socialist Republican Party.

I appeal to friends and co-workers all over the country and to the people at large—the unknown soldiers who are and will be the makers of India's destiny—to join the party in their thousands and tens of thousands and to serve the cause of Freedom, Democracy and Socialism with undying faith and devotion. It is for us to wring down the curtain on an age that is fast passing away and to usher in the dawn of a new era. We stand to-day at one of the crossroads of history and it is for us to show by our work and actions that we shall not allow anyone to undo the heritage of India's past or to compromise India's future. "All power to the Indian people" shall be our battle cry, as it was the battle cry of Netaji. With that battle cry on our lips, we shall march to action and victory.

WHAT BENGAL DEMANDS OF INDIA (I)

Full text of a statement to the Press released at Calcutta on 19 August, 1947

The axe has fallen on Bengal and she has been cut in twain. Only about a third of what was Bengal has been allotted by the Radcliffe award to the new province of West Bengal. A cursory glance at the map of divided Bengal will show that the province of West Bengal as constituted will be poor in wealth, power and resources. If West Bengal has to live, it is imperative that the provinces of the Indian Union should be immediately be reconstituted on a linguistic basis. The newly constituted province of West Bengal should demand—she has the right to demand—the inclusion within her territories of the districts of Manbhum, Singhbhum and Santhal Parganas which now form part of Bihar and also of the Bengali-speaking areas of Bhagalpur and Purnea. This is not the first time that I voice this demand for the redrawing of Bengal's boundaries. As early as 1939, I drew the attention of the people to the importance of this question in my address as President of the Bengal Provincial Conference held at Jalpaiguri. I said among other things :—

"I must speak of what Bengal demands of India. The first and the most important demand is that all Bengalees should be included in one province. Even up to this day some extensive areas inhabited by Bengalees and Bengali-speaking people are outside Bengal and form parts of other provinces. The All-India Congress should make all possible efforts to restore those areas to Bengal. The Congress can raise no objection in regard to this matter, when it has accepted as its basic principle the reconstitution of provinces on a linguistic basis. It is true that Bihar and Assam, the two neighbouring provinces of Bengal, will suffer some diminution of their population and area if the boundaries of provinces are changed on the basis of language ; but this cannot be helped. No Bengalee can possibly relinquish this legitimate demand.

"It is, I think, not Bengal alone, but all the provincial units of India which should be reconstituted on a linguistic basis. Hindi-speaking Bihar should not artificially remain bound up with Chota Nagpur ; instead she ought to be united with Hindi-speaking United Provinces. Similarly the present provinces of Madras and Bombay should have their boundaries re-drawn. There is no reason to fear that this will lead to the creation of innumerable provinces in India, for whatever the census might say, the fact remains that India has no more than ten or eleven principal languages, namely, Bengali, Oriya, Hindi and its Islamic counter-part Urdu, Gujerati, Marathi, Telegu, Tamil, Malayalam, Kanarese, Pushtu and Assamese. Of these, Pushtu and Assamese are not spoken by a very large number of people. Other languages current in India do not from any point of view deserve to have the same place as these eleven languages and naturally these languages, even if they are to be used for educative purposes in certain areas, can be dispensed with in respect of demarcation of provinces. So the conclusion is inescapable that not more than twelve provinces will be created in India, if the linguistic principle is accepted in connection with the reconstitution of provinces."

As to the specific claims of West Bengal, I refer first of all to Manbhum. The district is contiguous to Bankura in West Bengal and a comparative study of 1931 and 1941 census figures indicated that the Bengali-speaking people constitute a clear majority of the population. In 1931, the total population was 1,819,896 of which the number of Bengali-speaking was 1,222,869. The census of 1941 does not record any linguistic division of people but, assuming that the proportion of different linguistic groups does not substantially change, out of the total population of 2,032.146, the Bengali-speaking people must be in the neighbourhood of 1,350,000 and that means they form 67 per cent of the total population. These figures are their own commentary. The same linguistic principle applies with full force to Singhbuum and Santhal Parganas and also to large areas in Bhagalpur and Purnea. The demand for the inclusion of the Bengali-speaking areas in Purnea derives added strength from the

Radcliffe award and the map based on it.

I may point out in this connection that three principles should guide the alteration of India's political and administrative geography. The first is, as I have stressed above, the linguistic principle. It is common knowledge that the existing boundaries of the provinces of British India and of Indian States were never scientifically planned. They were in fact determined by accidents and administrative exigencies, and the inevitable consequence was territorial maladjustments which were mainly calculated to impede the cultural as well as political development of the areas concerned. To undo this evil, the principle of linguistic homogeneity should at once be accepted and acted upon, for unity of speech imparts greater cohesion to an administrative unit and gives it the necessary scope to educate itself on its own lines and to maintain its tradition and culture.

The second principle is to ascertain the wishes of the people inhabiting a particular area and to demarcate its boundaries accordingly. The case of Sylhet is an instance in point. Sylhet goes to East Bengal primarily because it is a predominantly Bengali-speaking area. Now if this Assam district was given the choice to join East Bengal, there is no earthly reason why the districts of Manbhum, Singhbhum and Santhal Parganas and the Bengali-speaking areas of Bhagalpur and Purnea should not be incorporated in West Bengal.

The third principle is economic. Every province should have a substantial measure of economic stability and self-sufficiency, and now that West Bengal cannot bank upon much jute, she must have something by way of compensation. Naturally she claims the inclusion of the rich mineral district of Manbhum within her territories to consolidate her economic position. The mica of Santhal Parganas will also prove to be a valuable asset to her.

I hope the Indian Constituent Assembly will effect a speedy reconstitution of provinces on a linguistic basis.

This will eliminate all chances of future conflict between contiguous areas and ensure the stability and well-being of the country as a whole. The demand of West Bengal for the inclusion of the above areas is just. At several meetings I have addressed in Bengal since October last I have voiced the demand. It is now up to all of us in West Bengal to combine and put forward our united demand and make it heard in a tone which will secure its prompt recognition and acceptance.

PART IV : 1948

WHAT BENGAL DEMANDS OF INDIA (II)

Extract from a statement to the Press released at Calcutta on 2 January, 1948

..... In some of my public speeches since the 19th August, I pressed the demand and expressed the hope that the Congress, now in power, would redeem the pledge it reaffirmed only two years ago in its Election Manifesto of 1946. The matter has now acquired new significance as the Hon'ble Babu Rajendra Prasad has appeared on the scene with a word of admonition to the Bihar Hindi Sahitya Sanmelan for its "negligence and inactivity" in not propagating Hindi in the Singhbhum and Dhalbhum areas in his home province. He is reported to have said at a meeting of the Sanmelan held on the 20th December last, a little unwittingly I am afraid, that "these areas (Singhbhum and Dhalbhum) are being claimed by West Bengal for their being non-Hindi-speaking areas" and to have "emphasized the need of propagating Hindi in Singhbhum, Dhalbhum and such other areas so that these tracts might be claimed as absolutely Hindi-speaking areas and thus the danger to territorial integrity of Bihar might be averted."

It seems strange that Babu Rajendra Prasad, holding as he does the high position of Congress President, should go out of his way to show such a partisan spirit for retaining within his own province of Bihar non-Hindi-speaking areas, in manifest disregard of the Congress policy of linguistic demarcation of the provinces in India. Surely the Congress President should have hesitated to make statements which might have the effect of prejudicing legitimate claims of West Bengal.

I have, all the same, reasons to be grateful to him for his clear admission that Singhbhum and Dhalbhum are non-Hindi-speaking areas and his tacit recognition of West Bengal's claim for reinclusion of these areas within her territory. West Bengal's claim is, in fact, irrefutable and Babu Rajendra Prasad's speech shows that he feels

that it cannot be refuted. In order to defeat West Bengal's claim, he called upon the Bihar Hindi Sahitya Sanmelan to actively propagate Hindi in Singhbhum and Dhalbhum, so that those areas might in the course of time be claimed as Hindi-speaking areas. Babu Rajendra Prasad's extreme anxiety at this moment to propagate Hindi in areas which have always been and are Bengali-speaking only strengthens the claim of West Bengal for reinclusion of those areas within her territory.

West Bengal does not want to grab an inch of what really belongs to Bihar. She only demands back what was once and still is legitimately her own. It is common knowledge that following the annulment in 1912 of the partition of Bengal, the then Government of India arbitrarily transferred Manbhum, Singhbhum and some other areas then within Bengal to the then newly created province of Bihar and Orissa, with the sinister intention of weakening the revolutionary forces of Bengal. The demarcation of provinces all over India was largely artificial and the Congress had all along felt and declared the need for the redrawing of provincial boundaries on the linguistic basis. Now that it is in power, it should right a wrong that an alien government did with the deliberate purpose of furthering its own imperialist ends and undermining the unity of the country by sowing the seeds of dissension among people inhabiting contiguous areas.

West Bengal's case requires no special pleading. A mere statement of facts makes it unassailable. The total population of Manbhum, according to 1941 census, is 2,932,146, of which 1,357,284, (i.e. 67.3% of the total population) people speak Bengali, 3,57,057 (i.e. 17.5%) Hindi and 267,619 (i.e. 13.1%) Santhali (all of whom use Bengali as a second language). This calculation is made on the basis of the 1931 census which records the linguistic distribution of the people in that area. So far as the Dhalbhum sub-division of Singhbhum is concerned, the total population is, according to the census of 1941, 5,33,402 and of this, Bengali-speaking people number 1,93,275, Hindi-

speaking 68,124 and Oriya-speaking people 61,290. In Santhal Parganas a large percentage of Adibasis cannot speak or understand Hindi—and this is admitted by Babu Rajendra Prasad himself and, indeed linguistically they have very close affinity with the Bengali-speaking people there because of their long association with them. Thus on purely linguistic consideration, Manbhum and at least, part of Singhbhum (i.e. Dhalbhum sub-division) and Santhal Parganas should be restored to West Bengal.

The acceptance of the principle of language in demarcating provincial boundaries has of late been discountenanced in certain quarters on the specious plea that it will result in linguistic fragmentation of India and cultural disruption which, in its turn will hamper the growth of political unity and may even prove disastrous to our national welfare and progress. The argument is wholly fallacious, bacause the reconstitution of provinces on the basis of language will lead to the creation of only about twelve provinces in the whole of India. It is unnecessary to discuss the matter in greater detail as I made it quite clear in my address as President of the Bengal Provincial Conference at Jalpaiguri in 1939.

But does this denunciation of the linguistic principle reflect the spirit of the Congress that has always stood pledged to territorial readjustment to be effected on the basis of language ? If top-ranking Congress leaders are now so enthusiastic about unity, why did they demand the "linguistic fragmentation" of Bengal ? And if they could with equanimity accept only a third of Bengal as a result of the Radcliffe Award, why do they suddenly develop this anxious solicitude for maintaining the territorial integrity of provincial units ? Indeed, the present attitude of some Congress leaders creates misgivings in the minds of West Bengal people, and these can be removed only if they are given back the areas that really belonged and belong to West Bengal. A common language plays a dominant role in fostering cultural and also political unity among the people of the areas in which it is spoken. It is to achieve this cultural and political unity that West Bengal claims back Manbhum, Dhalbhum and Santhal Parganas.

Geographically also, West Bengal can make out a very strong case for getting back these areas. Bankura and Manbhum, for instance, constitute a single geographic unit, having the same climatic conditions and physical features. The same river system runs through these two districts and the resuscitation of the dead rivers can be effected more speedily in a homogeneous administrative unit. Similarly the working of the Damodar Valley Project can be made easier if Santhal Parganas are transferred back to West Bengal.

The strip of land farther north adjoining the northern part of West Bengal should at once be included within her territory, for she cannot afford to have her integrity permanently impaired by the axe that has fallen upon her in the shape of the Radcliffe Award. This is an administrative necessity which the Constituent Assembly cannot ignore if it seeks to make the foundations of the Indian Dominion strong and durable.

I do not at the moment want to discuss further the cultural and economic aspects of the question, though they are of vital importance in delimiting the boundaries of linguistic provinces. What I want to emphasize here is that the issue must be clinched immediately and decided to the satisfaction of the Bengali-speaking people who form the overwhelming majority in the above-mentioned areas in Bihar and of the legitimate claims of West Bengal. The adoption of dilatory tactics in this matter—which unfortunately seems to be the policy of the Indian Constituent Assembly—will only stir up and accentuate provincial exclusiveness that seems to be rampant in some parts of India. The people of West Bengal and of the border districts of Eastern Bihar have long been smarting under a sense of injustice and they are in no mood to allow this state of uncertainty to continue indefinitely. It is for the good of the country as a whole that justice should be done to West Bengal immediately....

UNITED NATIONS OF SOUTH ASIA

Extract from an Address on Burma Independence Day, at Calcutta on 4 January, 1948

.....To-day is a red-letter day in the history of Burma. It marks the consummation of Burma's struggle for freedom, a struggle in which Indians under the leadership of Netaji played no inconsiderable part. To-day we recall with pride Netaji's association with that brave and gallant son of Burma, General Aung San, now unfortunately no more, and the fighters for Burma's freedom. The seeds of friendship between India and Burma which were sown as a result of that association will, I am sure, fructify and our association will be closer and closer in the days to come.

.... We wish and we hope that Burma's newly constituted Republic, will make for peace, for alliances, military and otherwise, with her neighbouring countries, for commerce not merely in the limited sense in which that word is generally used, but also intellectual and cultural commerce—and for enlightenment. Men in these days want little more than that ; they are lucky if they get so much. But that is not all. If you want the foundations of your Republic to be sounder still, if you wish to dig deeper and broader and stronger its foundations, you want something more than even peace, alliances, commerce and enlightenment. You must take care that the corner-stones of your new structure are not simply those that I have just mentioned, but honour, justice, and fair dealing to all who live within your borders. We Indians have been fortunate in obtaining in a large measure the affection of your people ; and we shall hope and pray that your Republic may earn our respect for upright government, for scrupulous truth, for straight-forward dealing and for all that makes and will make for the well-being not only of your country, but also of the other nations of South Asia.

.... We desire to co-operate with the people of Burma in all matters of common concern and in all that vitally

affects and will affect the future of our respective countries and the adjoining countries of South Asia. We shall, among other things, endeavour to make our humble contribution to the shaping of the foreign policies of the countries I have just referred to. India intends to be friendly with the powers of the East and of the West, and I have no doubt, so does Burma. But it will not do for us merely to declare a policy of friendship and neutrality towards the powers which are competing for the mastery of the world. In the context of the present world situation, neutrality will undoubtedly be the wisest policy for our country and may I venture to say, it will also be the wisest policy for yours. But we have to prepare our countries for such a neutral position. A policy of neutrality has to be backed up by requisite action in our country as well as in yours. There are groups of people in India who have been and are advocating India's participation in the Anglo-American Bloc. There are other groups in our country who believe that in the third World War which is already in the offing, India should line up with the Soviet Union. As far as I am aware, there are similar groups in your country as well. Both the groups I have just mentioned have considerable support inside our country ; and the risk is that in the event of a third World War they may divide our country on this issue and what may start as a world War may be transformed into and assume the character of a Civil War, not only in our country but also in some other countries in the East. We can avoid such a calamity only if we succeed in keeping India, Burma and other countries in South Asia out of that war and in maintaining strict neutrality in the world conflict if and when it comes. I have already said that it will not suffice merely to declare a policy of neutrality. Steps have to be taken and from now to base such a policy on firm and solid foundations. The urgent and immediate necessity for taking such steps will become more apparent to all if I go into a little detail. If, for instance, Pakistan decides to participate in the coming world war, it will be difficult, if not impossible, for India to maintain a policy of neutrality. If Ceylon remains, and continues to remain, the key Naval Base of Britain in the Indian Ocean, India's

neutrality will be imperilled. The foreign policies of India. Pakistan, Nepal, Burma and Ceylon are bound to affect the position of one another. If we are to maintain our neutrality we have to endeavour from now to bring all those countries on a common platform as far as foreign policy is concerned and to set up an International Organisation in South Asia on a regional basis which may be described as the "UNITED NATIONS OF SOUTH ASIA" with India, Pakistan, Nepal, Burma and Ceylon as its constituent members. The United Nations of South Asia will have to function as a Neutral Bloc and should not have any military alliance either with the Anglo-American Bloc or the Soviet Bloc. It will, of course, be necessary for the constituent members of the U. N. S. A. to have military alliances with one another, but they will have to decide also that no single member of the U.N.S.A. is to be permitted to enter into military alliances with any outside power or powers. It will also be necessary for the U.N.S.A. to enunciate a doctrine somewhat similar to the Monroe Doctrine for the Indian Ocean and to see to it that no power other than a member of the U.N.S.A. is permitted to possess or control any naval or military base in the countries of its constituent members. It will also help the policy of neutrality if we are able to establish a Customs Union on the basis of the regional grouping I have just referred to. It ought to be our endeavour and our aim to encourage foreign trade and commerce among the members of the U.N.S.A. so that the U.N.S.A. may increasingly become an economically self-sufficient unit. What I have indicated in outline does not, to my mind, conflict with the rights and duties of our countries as members of the U.N.O. I feel that a regional international organisation on the lines suggested by me will pave the way to peace and progress and will be able to implement to a large extent and in an effective manner the declared policy of the U.N.O.

I realise that it is not possible for our respective Governments to give their sanction and seal immediately to the idea which I have put before you. But the world is moving and we cannot afford to keep quiet. Considerable amount

of spade-work will have to be done not only in our country but also in Pakistan, Nepal, Burma and Ceylon, if we are to bring into being such an International Organisation. The work has to be started and without delay by a non-official council representing and functioning in all the countries named by me. We in India and you in Burma should form with the least possible delay representative committees in our respective countries which will popularise the idea of the U.N.S.A. and as soon as the idea takes root, launch what I may describe as the diplomatic offensive and thereby prepare the ground for the formal entry of our respective Governments into the field already indicated by me. I hope you and the government and people of Burma will give due consideration to the suggestions I have made and start work for the maintenance of everlasting peace in South Asia, which will mean peace in the East and all the world over. If we are left free, our way will be the way of peace, of thinking not in terms of selfish interest or of petty power, but of human beings living as they have a right to live for the best that their own energies and their States can give, and contribute at the same time to the world the best that is in us. I feel that other States of South Asia can face the task in a similar spirit and with equal hope and because of that conviction and of the mutual help I know we can render to one another, the Subhas Institute of Culture and I feel thankful that the opportunity has been given to us to greet you, the representatives of the Government and the people of Burma on this historic occasion, to wish Burma a glorious future and to give expression to our ideas for building up an organisation which can make effective contributions to the cause of peace and progress all over South Asia.....

THE SUGAR INDUSTRY OF INDIA

Full text of the Presidential Address at the All-India Sugar Factory Workers' Conference held at Sakhotitanda, Meerut, on 28 February, 1948

Mr. Chairman and Friends,

I am thankful to you for the honour you have done me by asking me to preside over this conference. It is not the honour that I prize so much as the affection you showed me last month by changing the date of your conference at the last moment. Reasons of health forced me, to my sincere regret, to ask for a last minute change which, I am afraid, must have caused you a good deal of inconvenience. You readily consented to adjourn your conference till the 1st of this month but your arrangements were upset by the sudden tragedy that overtook the country. We meet today under the shadow of a great calamity. The Father of the Nation is no more with us, and we who are orphaned seem to be moving in a sort of vacuum, paralysed by an overpowering sense of despair and frustration. The present appears dark and the future blurred. But the immortal spirit of Gandhiji is there to give us light and inspiration, and we shall be guilty of betraying the trust he reposed in us if we succumb to our sense of personal loss and sorrow. His death in the darkest hour of India's history has made our responsibilities all the more onerous and the only way to offer true homage to the departed great is to shoulder those responsibilities with grim determination and accomplish the work left unfinished by him—the work of winning complete independence for India.

After two adjournments we are meeting in conference today and I feel happy that here I am in your midst. I consider it a privilege to have the opportunity of studying first-hand the varied and intricate problems that confront you and making my own contribution to their solution.

All over India labour is almost at the end of its tether today. You, I know, have to face your own baffling problems, but I must tell you that in tackling the problems you cannot afford to develop an attitude of detachment towards issues affecting the country as a whole. It is common knowledge that the problem of labour is mainly economic, but that does not mean that it can be viewed apart from politics. You have to take stock of the political situation prevailing in India today for the simple reason that you form an integral part of the body-politic of this vast country.

The basic fact that forces itself on our attention is that India is yet to achieve her independence. The 15th of August, 1947, was in the nature of a sad anti-climax ; it did not witness the consummation of the mighty struggle India had waged against a foreign, imperialistic power for several decades. It only marked the ignominious acceptance of the status of a Dominion within the British Commonwealth and the price we had to pay for it was the loss of the unity of India. It was a betrayal of the noble ideal our predecessors and we had cherished and fought for so long—the ideal of an undivided and independent India free from foreign influence and control. And the pity of it is that the betrayal was on the part of some of our top-ranking Congress leaders, who had made no small contribution to the freedom movement of the country. Lured by the illusive prospect of a safe journey to the promised land of freedom, they demanded the division of India and the creation of two dominions and unfortunately failed to realize that that would not solve the communal problem but would only aggravate it. And if they sowed the wind, they have already started reaping the whirlwind in the form of mass slaughter perpetrated in certain parts of both the dominions, and of growing bitterness between Pakistan and Hindusthan. I had sounded the timely note of warning on more than one occasion that any compromise on the issue of the unity and independence of India was bound to land the country in disaster. But my warnings went unheeded and we are already feeling the conse-

quences of the blunder that the Congress High Command committed at the most crucial moment in our history.

It is indeed my considered opinion that the acceptance of the June 3 Plan of Lord Mountbatten was a definitely retrograde step and marked a distinct setback in our struggle for freedom. What is the exact political set-up that we witness today all over the country ? It is indeed the same old story of bureaucratic administration run by I.C.S officials. The brown prototypes of the white bureaucrats still remain and are, on all showing, going as strong as ever. Persons at the helm of affairs have evidently to play second fiddle to them and that seems to be the only plausible explanation of the continuation of all the evils associated with the old regime—namely, corruption, jobbery, red-tapism, profiteering and black-marketing.

I present a very dismal picture to you—but that is the grim reality and you cannot afford to ignore it and shut yourselves up in the ivory tower of make believe and imagination. It will not do to believe in the periodic utterances of Congress leaders that we have achieved freedom and that we have now only to strive hard to stabilize that freedom. Freedom, I say, is yet an ideal to be realized through hard toil and suffering and ceaseless opposition to reactionary forces working at full speed all over this country.

That reaction is let loose throughout the length and breadth of India is evident from the fact that you continue to feel the tightening grip of exploitation, in spite of the so-called transfer of power from British to Indian hands. Our indigenous capitalists are in alliance with the powers that be and are doing all manner of wire-pulling from behind the scenes to run the governmental show. The recent deal which the U.P. Government made with the Indian Sugar Syndicate is an instance in point. Completely impervious to the interests of consumers, labourers and cane-growers, the Government fixed the price of sugar at Rs.

35/7/- per maund thereby raising the price by nearly 75 per cent and the immediate result was that the consumer had to pay the retail price of Rs. 1/8/-per seer as against nine annas odd during the days of control. The vexed question of control versus decontrol naturally crops up in this connection and I may say here and now that the Government of India has bungled all along the line. Prices of necessaries had to be controlled because of demand exceeding the supply and leading inevitably to the growth of profiteering and black-marketing. If that measure is no longer felt to be necessary, it is to be assumed that the position of supply is not bad and that the price of the article concerned—if it is a necessary, and sugar is undoubtedly so—will, after decontrol, be lowered or at least be not allowed to rise high. Incidentally this is the policy pursued in Soviet Russia with regard to decontrol of necessaries, but here in India what happens is that immediately after the decontrol of an article it practically disappears from the market for some days and is then available at almost three times the control price. The price that is stabilized ultimately is nearly twice the control rate. The case of sugar supports my contention. Decontrol is often a godsend to big millowners who arbitrarily raise the prices and resort to open blackmarketing, while the running authorities remain mere passive spectators of the sordid game or at best utter from time to time pious platitudes urging the people to accept in a philosophical mood the existing state of affairs and develop their power of imagination to visualize a glorious future ushering in an era of peace and prosperity and happiness !

The maintenance of a three years' industrial truce is claimed to be a condition precedent to the creation of this El Dorado, and Congress leaders have started a regular campaign with a view to enlist popular support for their plan. The plea is that we have to increase production at all costs. to "guard" the "independence" we have just "achieved" —I am here referring particularly to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's recent broadcast talk on 'Produce or Perish"—for "production means wealth", he says and now "we want a stream of wealth pouring out from our fields, factories and

workshops and reaching our country's millions so that ultimately we might be able to see our dreams fulfilled." And naturally we must have to taboo strikes and lockouts and similar other stoppages of work and brand them as anti-social activities. Pandit Nehru did however assure his audience that it had been decided to set up a machinery "so that the worker, the labourer and the peasant would have his due and would have a fair deal and would even take some part in the management and more especially in regard to his own needs". The Congress Working Committee has also, in its recent session, appealed to employers "to redress without loss of time all legitimate grievances of their workers, pay them a fair wage and create healthy conditions of work."

But the trend of recent events belies any such expectation of a fair deal to be accorded to labour either by the Government or by Capital. While discussing the subject of distribution, Pandit Nehru has discountenanced the idea of wealth accumulating in the hands of a few, but does he seriously want us to believe that an equitable distribution of wealth is a practical proposition in the existing schemo of things ? So long as Capital continues to enjoy the present *status quo*, it is rank hypocrisy to think or talk of any possible shifting of the centre of gravity. Mere expression of pious wishes for social insurance leads us nowwhere unless there is an effective machinery to enforce it. It is all very well to say that the Government and employers should jointly contribute to a fund for social insurance and that workers should also voluntarily forego a small fraction of their wages towards subscribing to the said fund — a system which is working more or less satisfactorily in the U.S.A., U.K. and even in the backward countries of Europe in order that labourers may tide over such risks as sickness, accident, invalidity and old age. But have paper schemes which remain as such for a indefinite length of time any appeal for famished stomachs ?

You, workers in sugar factories, for instance, have your minimum salary fixed somewhere at Rs. 45 per month

and you have to carry on with this amount when the cost of living has mounted by at least 400%. You enjoy no security of service or standardization of wages, you are deprived of your bonus and 25 per cent share in the profit, fixed by the Government, on the strength of balance sheets that are prepared by your employers, and you have to run into debts for meeting family and incidental expenses. You have to work in insanitary conditions and get yourselves huddled into small hovels—sometimes as many as nine of you into a house eight by eight feet. Your life has a brief span of only one hundred days in the course of a year and then most of you are thrown out of employment to seek your fortunes elsewhere.

But if you suffer so much, you have no right, says the present Government, to stage strikes or lockouts, for that will hamper production and the increase of wealth. You must not embarrass your employers in any way, for if they are unsympathetic towards you at the present moment, they will soon have a spiritual shake-up and become metamorphosed into being your trustees ! So believe in your big bosses and go on quietly with your work to hit the target of maximum production—that is what the Congress advises you to do, and in order that you may not be led astray by any organization, its far-sighted leaders have discovered a good shepherd for you, namely the I.N.T.U.C. which will guide you along the right path and help you to realize your long-cherished ideals ! You are also told that you have nothing to say against its objects which seem to constitute the quintessence of successful trade unionism. It seeks, for example, to eliminate social, political and economic exploitation and inequality, the profit motive and the anti-social concentration of power in any form ; to place industry under state ownership and control ; to ensure full employment ; to secure the increasing association of workers in the administration of industry ; and to promote the civic and political interests of workers. Laudable objects they are, but are we to measure their worth in terms of growing unemployment, mounting cost of living, inflation and the continuing exploitation of labour by its capitalist

masters ? The I.N.T.U.C., we know, is godfathered by the Congress. Any trade union, affiliated to it, easily gets itself recognized by the Government, but all manner of obstacles are put in the way of a genuine trade union seeking such recognition. It takes nearly six months' time to have itself registered and sometimes in a most illegal manner and on the most flimsy grounds registration is refused to trade unions which do not support the policy of the I.N.T.U.C.

Now, what is the exact achievement of the I.N.T.U.C. which has been bolstered up with so much zeal by some Congress leaders ? With all its protestation of loyalty to the cause of labour, workers remain where they were under foreign domination. In fact, they find themselves in a worse predicament. The genesis of the I.N.T.U.C. is to be found in the growing suspicion among the Congress leaders of the revolutionary role, which labour by its very nature is expected to play in the years to come. They, therefore, thought it wise to follow in the footsteps of our alien masters, to revive the Indian Federation of Labour which was sponsored by the British Government and helped with secret funds during the years of War, and to christen it Indian National Trade Union Congress. The emphasis is on the word "National" and the obvious game is to exploit the nationalist sentiments of the masses. The tactics followed here have the familiar dictatorial ring about them, for in Germany and Italy also appeal was made to this nationalist feeling, and all that was done in those countries and also in China by the Kuomintang leaders were supposed to uphold the interests of the nation. Here in India also the cry of "The State in danger" is raised whenever it is found that the labour movement is gathering momentum in any particular area. Blame is laid at the door of "certain elements" that "are anxious (here I quote from the recent Working Committee Resolution) to exploit the ignorance of the workers to advance their own ends regardless of the real interests of the working class and impervious to their suffering and financial loss." And labour is urged to "beware of this danger, to keep the interests of the country above any group or party, to rise equal to the grave crisis

that faces the nation, to do everything in their power to increase production by avoiding strikes and to make full use of the machinery set up by law for the redress of their legitimate grievances". The present ruling authorities however feel that mere sentimental appeal or persuasive eloquence—like that so frequently demonstrated by Pandit Nehru, Sardar Patel and others through the press, from the platform and over the air—is not enough to suppress labour movements and so they resort to a sort of new despotism and in manifest disregard of all the principles of liberty and democracy which they held so dear until recently they have in many provinces promulgated 'lawless laws"—like the West Bengal Security Act—that make one recall with horror the worst days of the Anderson regime in Bengal and the years of the Second World War when the entire country was ruled by Draconian enactments such as the Defence of India Act and the Rules made thereunder.

It is power politics that dominates the Congress today. Its leaders are now out to consolidate the power that has come into their hands and with a view to ensure success at the next general elections, they give the go-by to labour, align themselves with capital, and arm themselves with the most drastic powers. All opposition must be nipped in the bud, that seems to be their policy. The I.N.T.U.C. started some time ago playing its insidious game of creating divisions in the ranks of labour and thereby breaking their solidarity. Now the services of I.C.S., Police and C.I.D. Officers are being requisitioned, and big business is already there to extend its helping hand to the Government in times of emergency.

The A.I.C.C.'s Economic Programme Sub-Committee's Report and Pandit Nehru's elaborate commentary on it serve to underline the present reactionary attitude of the Congress towards labour and industry. The principle of nationalization of basic and key industries which the Congress accepted seventeen years ago has been relegated to the background and now what the Prime Minister empha-

sizes most of all is that there should be no sudden change anywhere which might upset the present structure without its being replaced." This runs almost like a refrain throughout the entire speech, punctuated of course by apt references to "the changing dynamic world" of today and to the rapid and enormous "progress that is being made in technology and in science" and which is bound to revolutionize industry in course of a few years. The whole idea of the *status quo* being maintained at all costs evidently emanates from his continuing obsession that any change in the existing order will lead to disaster, and with a view to save the country from such a disaster he presents the illuminating thesis that nothing should be done to undermine the foundations of the existing Capitalist regime and that labour should extend its hand of co-operation to it without looking forward to any equitable distribution to be effected in the immediate future. Pandit Nehru and his government thus deliberately play into the hands of capitalists and betray the cause of labour. How apologetically does Pandit Nehru say in answer to the criticisms of the Economic Programme Sub-Committee's Report by industrial magnates that it has carefully considered many of the problems that face the country even from the point of view of industrialists and others. And in sad contrast with his solicitude for industrialists is his almost complete silence about the problems of the labour !

This is the perspective from which you are to view all that is happening today in the country. You cannot hope for any compromise with your masters, for your interests are fundamentally in conflict with theirs. And the so-called national government also is at the present moment antagonistic to you and no piecemeal legislation, however well-intentioned that may be, can be of any real help to you. You, I know, have your specific problems that cry for immediate solution, and you have to make all possible efforts and undergo a good deal of suffering in achieving your objects. A decent standard of living, fair wages, security in service, education for your children and yourselves, good housing arrangements in sanitary conditions, provisions for

recreation and amusement, proper medical arrangements—these are some of your immediate requirements, and it is the duty of the government to meet them promptly and ungrudgingly. But that is not to be, for reasons I have already mentioned to you. You have to work for your own salvation and what does not come to you with good grace from your employers will have to be wrested from them.

You, for instance, demand that the minimum labour wages should be raised from Rs. 45 per month to Rs. 90 per month. It is a most legitimate demand, for its fulfilment will reduce the millowner's profit of Rs. 10 per maund by only Rs. 2 and give him a Profit of 60% on the block capital. At the present rate their profits will amount to Rs. 25 crores on sugar produced in the current season and they can well afford to give you a minimum wage of Rs. 90/- per month. But the perversity of the millowner and governmental inertia stand in your way and what you have to do is to gird up your own loins and bring such pressure on both the government and the millowner that they are forced to yield ground. The Congress, now in power, could have intensified the growth of sugar-cane and evolved some sort of sliding scale to cut down the profits of the millowners, but it did nothing of the kind. Several factories in U.P. made a net profit of over fourteen lakhs in the year 1944-45, and 1945-46 and that sum was almost equal to the original block capital invested in each factory. The present position is that the government has offered to pay the Sugar Syndicate a net profit of Rupees three crores on the stocks held by them from last year's production over and above the profit of Rs. 25 crores on this year's production, and as is to be expected of a Government which is in alliance with big business, it has not in any way impaired the money-grabbing interests of the Syndicate by raising the price of sugar-cane. So with direct government help, millowners thrive at the expenses of labourers, cane-growers and consumers. Is it, therefore, unjust to say that the present day government upholds not the interests of the masses but those of millowners and capitalists ?

I have seen the agreement arrived at by the Indian Sugar Syndicate with the Sugar Workers' Federation sponsored by the former and called the U.P. and Bihar Sugar Workers' Federation. I am not a little surprised that Government has ratified this agreement. This agreement is a gross betrayal of the interests of the workers and has been dictated by the Indian Sugar Syndicate. The Government by ratifying this agreement has made it impossible for Unions not affiliated to this capitalist sponsored Federation even to get the bonus and other amenities to which they are entitled unless they change their present affiliations and affiliate themselves to this capitalist sponsored Federation. Apart from the utter illegality of the agreement, it shows how intimate the Government's alliance with the Indian Sugar Syndicate is and how shamelessly it is helping the Capitalist sponsored Federation in their attempt to destroy workers' unity and solidarity.

Sugar industry has a great responsibility for creating better conditions of labour as it has developed in a phenomenal way under protection. Taxpayers have a right to enquire if the workers have also shared in the general prosperity of the industry. Now this is what the Second Tariff Board of 1937 said about the matter : "In regard to the remuneration paid to the different grades of labour and to the tenure of employment, the situation is not generally satisfactory. In a protected industry it is to be expected that the labourer in the factory should share in the benefits of protection but we find that the interests of labour have not received the consideration they deserve". Quoting these words in the Report on Labour Conditions in Sugar Factories the Labour Investigation Committee, 1943 commented : "The verdict was true not only in 1937 but also today". I can only add that the same state of affairs prevails even to this day.

The present indeed is dark and dismal. All the forces of reaction have ranged themselves against you and even the stoutest among you may be disposed to shrink from the fight against them. But fight is inevitable. If you

strike, you must strike hard with faith in the future and in the justice of your cause. Your slogan should be attuned to what was raised from across the borders of India by Netaji and his heroic soldiers—unity, faith and sacrifice. Unity is the surest defence against all attack. It does not merely mean solidarity among your own ranks ; it also means alignment with all other progressive labour organizations now functioning in India. The policy of isolation, you must bear in mind, is a negative policy ; it is even detrimental to your cause. Only concerted action can enable you to achieve your object. The cementing force of this unity is faith—burning faith in your cause. Labour is a giant that is lulled to sleep by soporifics administered to it from time to time by capital which is ever conscious of its inherent weakness. Once this giant is awakened from its stupor and shakes its invincible locks, inspired by faith in the revolutionary role that it is bound to play in the years to come, there is no power on earth which can successfully grapple with it. You need unity, you need faith. At the same time I have to remind you that unity and faith are not all that are required of you. You must also be prepared to make supreme sacrifices for your cause.

But I have confidence in you. I know that you are equal to your task and the cry that you raise today—Land belongs to the actual tillers, and industries to the community—will be realized in the near future. On behalf of the Socialist Republican Party I can assure you that I shall always be with you in your fight for undiluted and undefiled freedom, for decent living for all and such measures and steps as are necessary for insuring your lives and the life of the Nation.

"JAI HIND"

I WARNED MY COUNTRYMEN

Extracts from a speech at the Opening Ceremony of Hindi daily "Netaji" at New Delhi, on 13 April, 1948

....You all remember that the Congress has since the year 1929 been fighting for an independent and united India. The election manifesto which was issued by the Congress Working Committee in the year 1945—I was then a member of the Congress Working Committee — made it absolutely clear that the Congress would resist partition and Pakistan. Signs of weakness appeared in the Congress leaders from the year 1946 when the British Cabinet Mission came to this country. Weakness increased from month to month until I felt compelled, in the beginning of the year 1947, to resign my membership of the Congress Working Committee. Shortly thereafter — to be exact in March 1947 — the Congress Working Committee passed a resolution recommending the division of the Punjab into two provinces — one predominantly Muslim and the other predominantly Non-Muslim. On the 15th of March, 1947, I raised my voice of protest and sounded a note of warning against the resolution passed by the Congress Working Committee with reference to the Punjab..... My warnings went unheeded and members of the then Congress Working Committee suggested one compromise after another and eventually accepted Pakistan and the division of the country. In the month of April or the beginning of May, 1947, Mahatma Gandhi came to Calcutta and I met him at Sodepore and discussed with him the situation in the country. As most of you are aware, Gandhiji was against partition. I requested him again and again to assert himself and resist partition. I told him in the course of discussion that I clearly visualised that two things would happen immediately partition was effected. One was that the North-Western Frontier Province would pass into the hands of the League. The next was that Kashmir would be swallowed up by Pakistan. Gandhiji was against partition but he did not agree with me that the two results I had men-

tioned to him would flow from it and he gave me his reasons for disagreeing with me. Towards the end of May, 1947, I came to Delhi and had discussions with Gandhiji and also with Mr. Jinnah. I have not the slightest doubt myself that if the Congress leaders had displayed a certain amount of statesmanship, the partition of Bengal could have been prevented. Whether the partition of the Punjab could have been prevented is more than I can say. It is for the leaders of the Punjab to express themselves. Then came the June 3 Plan, popularly known as the Mountbatten Plan. Two days after the announcement of the Plan I said at New Delhi that H.M.G.'s India Plan had dealt a staggering blow to the cause of Indian unity and independence, a blow from which we might not be able to recover for many years.... On my return to Calcutta from Delhi I issued a statement on the 8th June, 1947, saying among other things, that British Imperialists had won.....I said further that what had been said by the partitionists to the Hindus of Eastern Bengal and the Hindus and Sikhs of Western Punjab namely, that Western Bengal and Eastern Punjab would come to their rescue respectively was a mere sop.....

Two weeks after that I said in a message to the Free Press Journal of Bombay that June 3 Plan marked the triumph of British diplomacy and that Congress would rue the day when it accepted Dominion Status, conceded Pakistan and demanded partition of provinces.

The time has now come for the Indian people to judge whether I was right or the Congress leaders were right. After what happened immediately after 15th August, 1947, all over the country, I believe I can claim that every word of what I said has come out true.

On the 24th June, 1947, I said that acceptance of June 3 Plan marked the triumph of British diplomacy. To those words I shall add that it also marked the bankruptcy of Indian statesmanship and the betrayal of the nation by eminent Congress leaders.

At that critical moment in the history of our nation, the Indian press had tremendous responsibilities to discharge. It was their duty to protest against the dismemberment of their country. It was at least their duty not to stifle public opinion which had expressed itself in different parts of Bengal and the Punjab and also elsewhere against partition of the country. But I shall say that with a few honourable exceptions the Indian press did not discharge its duty. It tried its best to suppress all opposition to the partition of India. Reports of meetings in different parts of the country opposing partition were suppressed by it. If the Indian press now looks back on what it did, I believe it will be ashamed of its acts and conduct since the British Cabinet Mission arrived in our country in May, 1946. I cannot believe that the Indian press did not realise what was happening and what would be the effect of acceptance of the Mountbatten Plan. It acted as it did because it had lost fearlessness and independence which were its characteristics even during British Imperialist rule. It felt it was serving its own interests by "kowtowing" to the will of the powers that be.

Let me now come to the Kashmir issue. The Government of India hastily referred it to the U.N.O. and now they are repenting at leisure. At the time that matter was referred to the U.N.O. we were led by them to believe that the U.N.O. would deal out even-handed justice. A short time thereafter, the persons who were responsible for referring the Kashmir issue to the U.N.O. said that the U.N.O. was dominated by "power politics". What has happened with regard to Kashmir fortifies me in what I said in Bombay in September, 1945, namely, that we do not want "fashionable" internationalists but "real" internationalists—internationalists who really know the international situation, who can follow it and judge it from day to day and give us a correct advice and lead. We do not want mere talkers ; we want men of action.

Let me now come to what I might describe as domestic matters. It was not long ago when Congress leaders talked

big about rooting out corruption, favouritism, nepotism and all the rest of it which were rampant in the land. Has anything been achieved in that direction ? I ask you, citizens of Delhi, to tell me if corruption has been rooted out here. Examine the appointments that have been made and are being made to important positions in India and outside India. Shall I be wrong in saying that favouritism and nepotism have played a big part in those appointments ? It is for you, gentlemen of the press, to start a campaign against corruption, favouritism and nepotism. I ask you, "Do you think you have discharged your duty ?"

Then coming to the administration as we find it today, may I remind you that what Gandhiji demanded was "Kisan Mazdoor Proja Raj". What have we got in its place? We have got Capitalist Raj. I may use the expression "Birla Raj", using the word "Birla" as a symbol for capitalists. As regards policy, we have yet none. It will be the truth to say that what we have to-day is want of policy. This morning, I read in the local papers the propaganda news that the Congress administration had launched the Mahanadi scheme for multi-purpose development of that river and its valleys. Here again, it is only the truth to say that the Mahanadi River Valley Project, the Damodar River Valley Project and the Kosi River Valley Project, were all thought out and designed during the British Imperialist regime. I know something about them because I had to deal with them during the few weeks I was a member of the Government. The Notes which I circulated then may still be in the files of the Cabinet Ministers who are still in office. Let us not take credit for things others have done. Let the Government of the day try to do something which will remove the ignorance, the poverty and the disabilities of our Kisans and Mazdoors and then it will be time for them to take credit.

Talking about policy, I come to the question of our foreign policy. You and I have heard utterances of members of the present Government to the effect that our policy will be a policy of neutrality in the event of a third world

war. It is not enough for us merely to declare a policy of neutrality. We have to prepare our country for such a neutral position, I mean, prepare militarily. If Karachi, Trincomalee, Calcutta and Chittagong, among other ports, are allowed to be used as British or American bases, India's neutrality will be imperilled. I, therefore, on Burma Independence Day, which fell on the 4th January, 1948, advocated the formation of an organization to be known and described as the United Nations of South Asia with India, Pakistan, Nepal, Burma and Ceylon as its constituent members. I have circulated copies of my speech on that day among members of the Governments of India, Pakistan, Nepal, Burma and Ceylon. I have received replies from some of them, but they are mostly non-committal. It is for you, gentlemen of the press, to examine and, if necessary, to criticise the scheme I have put forward for the formation of the U.N.S.A. organization and if you are of opinion that such an organization is necessary in the best interests not only of India but of South Asia as well, to throw your weight in its favour. It is for you to judge my scheme from the correct international perspective. Speaking for myself I am confident that if such an organization is formed in the near future, India, Pakistan, Burma, Nepal and Ceylon will be able to keep out of both blocs—I mean the Anglo-American Bloc and Soviet Bloc. "Hands off Asia" should be the demand of such an organization on the Western Imperialist powers. If such an organization is formed and gathers strength, the countries of the East will come to their own.

May the watchwords of Netaji—"Unity, Faith and Sacrifice"—be your watchwords! May you keep always with you the inspiration of his great ideals, the example of his great achievements and if I may add, the consolation of his great failures. So equipped, you can discharge your duties without fear or favour. So equipped, you can help in the fulfilment of his unfulfilled task—the establishment of Socialist Republics on the linguistic basis and an Union of them all. Beware of the word "State" which is now sought to be substituted in the place of "Republic". I know

that the suggestion that the word "State" should be substituted for the word "Republic" has emanated from a Britisher holding a high official position. Work unceasingly as I have already said for the establishment of a Socialist Republic in this land, free from British or any other foreign influence or control.

"THE NATION" GREETS YOU

Signed editorial in the first issue of "The Nation" published at Calcutta on 1 September, 1948

Jai Hind ! The honour that my colleagues on the Editorial Board of "The Nation" have done me by asking me to write an article for the first issue of our paper is rooted in perplexity. I am not quite clear in my own mind why they should have pressed for an article from me. In the field of journalism, I do not know that I am— and I do not claim to be — anybody in particular ; unless, of course, the Managing Directorship of "Forward" and its successor "Liberty" has made me the particular person to whom the request for a signed article should have been addressed. "Forward" and "Liberty" made their impress on Indian journalism and played their part in India's struggle for freedom ; and, though they have passed away. I believe that when the history of India's fight for freedom comes to be written, it will not be said of them that they were bells that tolled silently and then passed away like things that were not.

Now that 'Liberty' has come to us, I have been asked what is the necessity for a new paper. My answer is, that at no time in the contemporary history of India has the need for a really free and liberty-loving press been so imperative as it is to-day. The country has been and is passing through a great crisis. Stupendous problems, bigger than anything that has ever confronted our country, are crying for solution. The liberty that we have achieved as a result of negotiations with the British Imperialist Power has during the last twelve months, proved to be an oppressive mirage to the common man. Corruption, bribery, nepotism, profiteering and black-marketing have all entered into an unholy conspiracy to crush life out of our people. Little schemes of reconstruction announced from time to time by our ruling authorities with a flourish of bugles, horns and trumpets, have all but foundered. It is only an independent and fearless press that will have the courage to criti-

cize and the intelligence, foresight and wisdom to construct, that can liberate the country from the parlous condition in which it now is. The existing newspaper press in India has on the whole failed to stand up to the test. With a few honourable exceptions, it shows from end to end of the country drab uniformity and chronicled regimented news and views. "The Nation" will attempt to revive and restore the pristine glory of the newspaper press in India.

What does "The Nation" stand for ? It stands for the Complete Independence of India, Independence undiluted and undefiled, free from British or any other foreign influence and control, beyond the reach of any power on earth. It regards Dominion Status as a snare to our feet and will ceaselessly warm the people not to suffer the country to be betrayed with a kiss. It stands for the ending of autocratic rule in the Indian States and will, in this regard, demand, amongst other things, the enunciation and execution of a clear, firm and bold policy vis-a-vis Kashmir and Hyderabad and will not be content with what I shall describe as nothing more than a vigorous array of remonstrances and protests, well-intentioned it may be, but without result. It will resist any attempt at partnership or alliance between British Imperial interests and Indian reactionary forces. It believes that land in a free and liberated India must belong to the actual tillers of the soil and will work for the abolition of all intermediate interests between them and the State. It will encourage co-operative and scientific agriculture so that our National Wealth may be increased and the standard of living of the toilers in the fields may be improved. It believes that the interests of the country as a whole demand that all our basic and key industries should belong to the community and be run and managed by the State. It believes that rapid socialist industrialization on the basis of electrification of the entire country is essential not only for the purpose of improving our standard of living but also for strengthening the defences of our country. It believes in complete equality of sexes and in the right of our women to take their due and proper place in the social, cultural, economic

and public life of the country. It will demand of the State that religious freedom, secular education and civil liberties should be guaranteed to all. Lastly, it will demand that in a free and liberated India all must have the right to claim food and shelter in return for their due contribution to society.

These are, in short, the articles of our faith. In that faith we start ; in that faith we shall persevere. We do not know if we shall be able to make ours an ideal newspaper ; but we shall always endeavour to make it idealistic in character and realistic in outlook. If the great voices of the India of to-day are dumb at the moment, we shall rouse them to speech and action. Mass is Lord, as Meredith said somewhere, and served it must and will be. We shall serve it not by surrendering our judgement to it, but making its cause our own. We know and realize that a newspaper can only live and thrive in the full breath of popular favour. It will get suffocated if it attempts to live in a cloistered chamber of impossible virtues. We shall and must be full-blooded ; for, otherwise, we cannot transfuse life and vigour into our body politic and rid it of its impurities. We shall not make a fetish of any particular "ism" ; for, with Netaji, we believe that "what we in India would like to have is a progressive system which will fulfil the social needs of the whole people and be based on national sentiment. In other words, it will be a synthesis of Nationalism and Socialism.... The conflict between thesis and antithesis has to be resolved in a higher synthesis. That is what the Law of Dialectics demands. If this is not done, then human progress will come to an end."

"The Nation" greets the common man. It will be with him in joy, also in sorrow ; in prosperity, also in adversity. It will seek help, co-operation and encouragement from him in delivering the country from the galling yoke of domestic factions and of foreign and indigenous vested interests, in making the State the organ and servant of the masses and in building the New India of our dreams. With faith in its future and in the future of our nation. "The Nation" launches forth on its enterprise in a spirit of service.

OPEN LETTER TO DR. KATJU

Full text of Open Letter published in "The Nation" at Calcutta on 2 September, 1948

DEAR DR. KATJU,

One year of bitter disappointment and barren stock-taking has made it necessary for me to address you. The time for empty glorification of our so-called Independence is past and gone and with it the complacence that has been the excuse for irresolution and inaction. The time has come for a thorough heart-searching. Now that one year of freedom has passed away in utter futility, we should consider how to set things right. It is a feeling of impatience at the tragic indecision and hesitancy on the part of our national leaders, at their inactivity and want of initiative, at their blundering and erratic movements, that prompts me to put to you, in course of this communication, some questions which the eloquence of your very frequent utterances has left confused and eventually unanswered. But affecting as they do the very existence of this "infant" province of West Bengal, the problems posed in my questions demand a speedy and satisfactory solution. I can tell you, even at the risk of being dubbed a false prophet, that evasion and dilatory tactics, if pursued in regard to these problems, will only lead this province to utter ruin.

The antecedents of the unfortunate partition of our country, which in itself was symptomatic of national inertia and cowardly evasion of struggle, need not be recalled here. Now that the axe has fallen and cut across a land which we fondly believed to be geographically, racially and culturally, indivisible, let us accept that as a "fait accompli" and turn our eyes to the character of our freedom, maimed and mangled as it is. Would you kindly tell me what really is the significance of this freedom of a mutilated State that has to be nursed, cherished and bolstered

up as an "infant" ? Is not the attempt, very often made, to represent West Bengal as an "infant State" a mere eye wash, a convenient way of camouflaging the bankruptcy of statesmanship that prevails within the administration, and of neutralizing any oppositional movement that may, nay, is sure to, develop within the country ?

Speaking about freedom, therefore, I should like to ask you how far the Government of this province has gone forward to give a real taste of freedom to the common man. This question, I know, will embarrass you, because, so far as the common man is concerned, the freedom of his dreams, for which he shed his blood, is either dead or powerless to be born. At any rate, it does not exist today. Political sovereignty, as you know very well, is the mere structure of freedom, and its substance is economic independence, freedom from exploitation. What has the Prime Minister of the Indian Union, who often professes to be a Socialist, and at the same time exhorts people to follow Gandhian ideals, done to alleviate the sufferings of the common man ? Surely, Socialism does not preclude this programme, nor Gandhiism denounce it. Never before did profession and practice vary so widely as now when Congress, wedded to the ideals of democracy, should ally itself with capitalism to perpetuate that slavery upon the masses which it had pledged itself to root out. The industrial policy, enunciated by the Prime Minister in the Constituent Assembly a few months ago, was a clear indication that an "Entente Cordiale" between the Government of India and our industrial magnates and reactionaries has preceded it, and meant a continuation of economic slavery on mass level "sine die".

In one of your recent utterances, you are reported to have said that freedom is the most valued possession of a nation and that its evolution does not depend on a few isolated instances of success or failure. This sentimental assessment of freedom appears to me to be another dose of opium to the people, so that their seething discontent may be kept anaesthetized under the spell of an emotional

appeal. Freedom, it is probably needless for me to remind you, is not divine manna sent by kind Gods ; it is of the earth, earthy and has its bearings in solid earth. The freedom that was granted us by the British Imperialist Power on the 15th August, 1947, was ill-conceived ; it was born out of an unholy compromise and ignoble capitulation, not wrested from the reluctant hands of a foreign power. It was planned, negotiated and hatched by astute British diplomats and, as I said on the 24th June last year, it marked the triumph of British diplomacy. We are asked by the present leaders of our country to glorify our freedom, but we are still within the British Commonwealth, tied to their apron-strings. Our Premier is reported to be expected to join a proposed conference of Dominion Premiers, where the chains which British Imperialist politicians and diplomats have so long been forging will be bound and riveted on us. If we do not beware, in the event of a Third World War, whose ominous shadow can already be seen in the offing, India will not be able to remain neutral, in spite of the professed desire of her leaders to do so, if they continue to play second fiddle to Great Britain.

If this is freedom, Dr. Katju, then what is not ? Slavery might as well be a bed of roses. It is not this freedom we fought for. If you want to actualize freedom, tear off the shackles that bind India to the feet of the British Commonwealth, nationalize the basic and key industries, abolish all intermediate interests between the tiller of the soil and the State, annihilate black-marketing, corruption, bribery and nepotism and make our State the organ and servant of the masses. It is this freedom that is our birthright and it is this and this alone that can usher in the New India of our dreams.

This is only in a general way. I shall now put to you some specific questions, which vague replies and strategic evasions have left so long unanswered.

First, you as an old Congressman know very well that the re-distribution of provinces on the linguistic basis has

been one of the items in the Congress programmes since the annulment of Lord Curzon's pernicious partition of Bengal in 1911, and was embodied in the Congress Election Manifesto of 1945. India's administrative geography was made by the British in order to suit their Imperial interests and not to promote the healthy growth of organic units within the country. The Congress rightly determined to undo this British arbitrariness by revising the political and administrative map of India from a nationalistic and linguistic point of view. At the present moment, the Indian Constituent Assembly has set up a Boundary Commission to report on the formation of new provinces, of which Bombay and Madras are entitled to get the benefit, but not West Bengal.

But far more important and serious than the problem of any other province is the problem of West Bengal, reduced as she is to a third of her former size, with the daily pressure of refugees threatening her national economy, already badly shaken on account of the partition. It is a well-known fact that the district of Manbhum, the subdivision of Singbhum and some other areas now within Bihar originally formed parts of Bengal and were transferred to Bihar only after the annulment of the partition of Bengal in 1911. In demanding these areas back West Bengal is only asserting her legitimate claim. I could produce abundant statistical data to prove the legitimacy of West Bengal's claim over those areas. In fact, I have proved it in detail in the statements I have issued to the press from time to time since the 19th August last year. I shall not repeat those data here. I would only request you, as the Governor of West Bengal, to identify yourself with the legitimate claims, aims and aspirations of West Bengal, line up with her people, render to West Bengal the things that are West Bengal's and not to align yourself with the unjust and unfair attitude of the Congress High Command. As the head of the executive of this province, do you not feel that you are committed, legally and morally, to supporting her legitimate claims and promoting by all means in your power her security, self-

sufficiency and prosperity ? Your indifference in this respect would amount to a breach of trust, would it not ?

The demand for the redistribution of boundaries on the linguistic basis is not a craze, nor a separatist tendency as Pandit Nehru would have us believe. It is a demand voiced long ago and reiterated since then with frequency, during the last four decades. As early as in 1939, in my presidential address at the Jalpaiguri session of the Bengal Provincial Conference, I pointed out inter alia : "I must speak of what Bengal demands of India. The first and most important demand is that all Bengalees should be included in one province. Even up to this day some extensive areas inhabited by Bengalees and Bengali-speaking people are outside Bengal and form parts of other provinces. The All India Congress should make all possible efforts to restore those areas to Bengal." Since the 15th August last year, I have been constantly voicing this demand in statements issued to the press and in my public speeches. Four days after the partition, I, in a statement dated the 19th August, 1947, expressed the hope that the Indian Constituent Assembly would effect a speedy redistribution of provinces on the linguistic basis. But my hope was sadly belied. In a statement dated 2nd January, 1948, I reiterated West Bengal's claim with emphasis. In a subsequent statement dated the 20th May, 1948, I expressed the grave apprehension that some sort of conspiracy was afoot to deprive West Bengal of her legitimate dues. This dark misgiving in my mind received confirmation from the Hon'ble Babu Rajendra Prasad's taking up the cudgels on behalf of Bihar on and since the 20th December, 1947, and from your predecessor's speech at Darjeeling on the 23rd May last. In a statement dated the 26 May last, which, of all "nationalist" newspapers, two or three alone had the courage to publish, I pointed out the fallaciousness of your predecessor's arguments in his sermonzing speech at Darjeeling. There I said : "The inclusion in West Bengal of the Bengali-speaking areas of Bihar is, I say, not a domestic matter. It is a question of principle and policy, repeatedly declared by Congress

since 1911. That principle and policy, I may remind Rajaji, is being given effect to in his own home province." In yet another statement bearing date the 2nd July, 1948, I strongly condemned the attitude of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and his attempt to bypass West Bengal's claim.

There are three considerations, amongst others, which should induce India's ruling authorities to recognize West Bengal's claim for the inclusion of the Bengali-speaking areas of Bihar within her territory. The first is, the formation of administrative units on the linguistic basis, because linguistic and cultural homogeneity gives greater impetus to the growth of integral and organic units within the country and leads to greater co-ordination with the Centre. Secondly, the fact that Bengali-speaking people are in an overwhelming majority in the said area. Thirdly, economic self-sufficiency is a very important factor. West Bengal, impoverished beyond measure, is now in need of some compensatory replenishment, which the rich mineral Bengali-speaking district of Manbhum and the subdivision of Singbhum, historically her own, will afford her.

I come now to the question whether the real desire of the people in those areas can be ascertained by means of a referendum. So far as Bengalees in Bihar are concerned, it is not possible to say that it can or will be. The Hon'ble Babu Rajendra Prasad has of late been pleading in favour of a referendum to decide the Bengal-Bihar dispute, which, of course, he did not do in the case of Seraikella and Kharswan, where only three per cent of the people speak Hindi. But referendum in the case of the Bengal-Bihar dispute is bound to be reduced to a mere farce by suppression of free voting and other tactical manoeuvrings which are said to have been successfully rehearsed in connection with the defeat of the resolution for integrating Manbhum with Bengal in the Manbhum District Congress Committee. Moreover, we all know today the nature and character of the propaganda that is being carried on in the Bengali-speaking areas in Bihar at

the instance or the instigation of the Bihar Government.

Relegating West Bengal's claim to the scrapheap, top-ranking Congress leaders are now raising the bogey of provincialism and are thus trying to malign and silence the grievance that spontaneously springs out of West Bengal's lacerated heart. The Hon'ble Babu Rajendra Prasad has shaken off his assumed impartiality and has advised linguistic conquest of the Bengali-speaking areas of Bihar. H. E. Mr. C. Rajagopalachari sermonizes in solemn tones on the de-provincialization of boundaries. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru cannot afford to remain unperturbed and must speak, as he did in Madras, on 24th June, decrying what he described as "narrow provincialism" which fortunately, does not exist in West Bengal. To assert one's own legitimate rights on the basis of language and culture, is no provincialism, no separatist tendency. The formation of the new provinces of Andhra, Karnataka, Kerala, and Maharastra is not looked upon with disfavour by the Congress High Command. Why should West Bengal's claim alone be construed as "Provincialism"? Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru too has at times tried to cajole West Bengal into acquiescing in her present status quo, and has, at other times, turned positively hostile. The "Indian Nation" (Patna) of the 4th June, 1948, reports him to have said in Ootacamund, on the 2nd June, the following (inter alia) : "Bengal has made a demand for inclusion of certain areas of Bihar in the Province simply because Bengali-speaking people happen to be in a majority in the areas. Those areas had been of Bihar for more than a century (?) and there was no justification for bringing them under Bengal. This cannot happen and the Government of India cannot allow any alteration in the existing boundaries of the provinces." No contradiction of this report has come from the Pandit.

There is another demand yet, in this connection, which I must mention here. It is this—the redistribution of Bengal-Bihar boundary must be effected before the draft Constitution of India is adopted. Because, once the cons-

titution is put into force the initiative for redistributing the boundary will irrevocably pass into the hands of Bihar. It is clearly laid down in Article 3 of the Draft Constitution that for altering the boundary of any State, representation must be made to the President by the majority members of the Legislature of the province "from which the territory is to be excluded or separated." This is the grave danger threatening West Bengal today. Is it not your duty to make the right move immediately so that West Bengal's rightful claim may be upheld to the satisfaction of the Bengali-speaking people, before the initiative passes into the hands of Bihar ? In this connection, it is a matter of very great disappointment that your Council of Ministers have been are inactive and irresolute and have been lying supinely on their backs, with their eyes fixed on New Delhi.

My next question is, what have you and your Council of Ministers done to put an end black-marketing, bribery, corruption and nepotism ? What have you and your Council of Ministers done towards scaling down the sky-high prices of things and bring them down within the reach of the common people who have been and are on the verge of starvation ? I am not here speaking only of the labour population , whose case stands self-supported. Look into the life of the middle class people and collect statistics of the standard of their life and you will be surprised at the appalling poverty and its attendant evils that darken their life. Black-marketing is going on openly and no penalty, extreme or otherwise, so much talked of by our leaders, follows it. Corruption and nepotism are rampant. The cloth situation in West Bengal for the last few months has been simply scandalous. Some big industrialists have been carrying on their own interested campaign in the very nose of the Government with impunity. Would you kindly tell me why it was that the order for freezing the cloth stock was not immediately given effect to in West Bengal ? This may be an embarrassing question for your Council of Ministers but to the public you owe an explanation as the head of the executive.

My letter has already become far too long, but in view of the serious problems before us and the present position of the Province and its people, I considered it necessary to express myself at length. The situation in the Province today is extremely tense and it is high time that you and your Council of Ministers tackle it in a courageous and statesmanlike way. No amount of sermonizing or public haranguing will or can silence the grievances that West Bengal rightly nurses and neither the callousness of the top-ranking Congress leaders nor the intransigence of the Government of Bihar can stifle or browbeat West Bengal's demand for her national reconstruction. I shall not apologize for the length of this letter, because I know that in what I have said I have merely voiced the views of the overwhelming majority of the people in my province. We of West Bengal shall not resort to entreaty and humble supplication. We demand recognition of our just claims and we expect of you as the executive head of the Province, to identify yourself completely with them and secure their prompt recognition.

Yours sincerely,
Sarat Chandra Bose

INDIA'S NEUTRALITY THREATENED

Full text of a signed editorial in "The Nation" published at Calcutta on 4 September, 1948

Mr. Louis Fisher, the well-known American journalist and author, who is now on a tour in India to collect materials for a biography of Gandhiji, has spoken and we are not in the least surprised at what he is reported to have said. Addressing a meeting of the Indian Council of World Affairs at the Constitution Club, New Delhi, on September 1, he warned India that she "would derive no benefit by aligning herself with Russia in international positions" and that "on the other hand, India stood to gain by associating herself with the democracies." The reasons advanced by Mr. Fisher for this warning and advice were that "the Russian programme of Imperialist expansion constituted a serious threat to World peace, and that the foreign policy of America and other democracies was directed towards the prevention of a Third World War".

India has recently come into the focus of much speculation and propaganda on the part of the Western Powers who are competing for mastery of the world. Interested power-politicians of the world, with the chess board opened before them, are speculating and also devising ways and means as to how to exploit India's possibilities in furthering their own ends. And so long as India does not declare her foreign policy unequivocally and follow it up by tangible preparations, both in the diplomatic and military spheres, speculation and propaganda will continue unabated. The diehard Churchillian Group will continue spreading diabolical lies about her. The disillusioned "New Times" will cast aspersions upon her. And the anti-Soviet American Capitalists suffering from a Red nightmare, will suspect the Right Wing Indian Government of pro-Red leanings.

Only the other day the Indian Ambassador at Moscow felt so uneasy at the Soviet Anti-Indian propaganda, that

she was compelled to make a statement—and that to an American Agency that India stood for neutrality, having neither Eastward nor Westward leaning.

Mr. Louis Fisher's speech comes as a confirmation of the suspicion lurking in many minds that there is a well-laid design in the minds of power-politicians in general, and British diplomats in particular, for bringing India in line with the Anglo-American bloc. It is no longer a matter for doubt and dispute, but is a grim and undeniable fact that the Dominion Status granted to India on August 15, 1947, is a staggering blow to Indian Independence on the one hand, and a triumph of British diplomacy on the other. By dividing India, Imperialist Britain is still ruling it in a manner, far more subtle and civilized than ever before, and at the same time justifying her own conduct before the bar of World opinion. Imperialist Britain no doubt made the gesture of withdrawing from India, but she made the gesture only to remain. History tells us that whenever and wherever Dominion Status has come, it has come to stay. As early as the 8th June 1947, I visualized that Dominion Status would come to stay in India. I further said in that connection, "Top-ranking Congress leaders have already begun to talk in the Churchillian strain about 'Co-operative Commonwealth.' Some of them have envisaged very close relations with Britain. In that background, British Imperialist manoeuvring will go on, but possibly in a more subtle and insidious way". My prophecy in this regard received confirmation from the lips of Sir B. N. Rau, the Constitutional Adviser to the Government of India, who is reported to have told pressmen at Brussels the other day that India was unlikely to go out of the British Commonwealth. In fact, the grip of the British Commonwealth is likely to be tighter and tighter day by day, unless we are forewarned and forearmed. Like the Chameleon, Imperialism changes colour with astonishing rapidity. British Imperialism now appears before India in the garb of a friend, philosopher and guide, and offers to her the hand of fellowship which the unaware and the

uninstructed may feel tempted to grasp. The British Imperialists' game in South Asia has taken a grim and relentless turn. In Malaya, they are frantically defending their citadel of Imperialism which is being stormed by the desperate insurgents, described by propagandists as "Communist bandits". The important sea ports of Singapore, Rangoon, Chittagong, Trincomalee and Karachi are already within the British sphere of influence. Ceylon shows possibilities of being used as a British Naval Base in the Indian Ocean. In the circumstances, it is natural that Britain should try to keep India tied to the chains she has been forging in her own commercial and military interests. In the event of a Third World War, which is daily becoming more and more certain, Britain is making every endeavour to rope in India as a loyal and useful ally and India will be dragged into it, unless she definitely and resolutely refuses to join the Anglo-American Bloc. Mr. Louis Fisher's advice to India that she should join what he describes as the "democracies", and thereby prevent a Third World War is one of the many baits offered to India.

India's foreign policy is at the moment in a condition of grave uncertainty, tossed by doubts, hesitancies and prejudices. India's Ministry of Foreign Affairs seem to be puzzled and confused as to how they will take their bearing in the affairs of the World. In the absence of any definite and clear-cut foreign policy, Indian Embassies in foreign capitals are drifting aimlessly, thus giving scope to the share-dealers in politics to speculate and vilify. We therefore demand of our Ministry of Foreign Affairs that they should lay down unmistakably and unequivocally a clear-cut policy, specially in regard to the tug-of-war now going on between the Soviet and the Anglo-American Blocs—the two camps into which the world is now sharply divided.

With her unique position and immense possibilities, India is bound to play an important role in the comity of nations, if her present leaders are clear-sighted and pres-

cient enough. The confusing and apparently compelling power-politics of the world must not be allowed to stampede her into siding either with the Anglo-American or the Soviet Bloc. In order to maintain this position of judicious and happy equipoise, she must be strong enough to frame her own foreign policy, uninfluenced by the siren voice of tempters on either side. In this respect, she does not stand in need of any counsel from an interested foreigner. She has only recently come out of a devastating world war, to which she was made a party without her consent. She must by all means within her power avoid being dragged into a Third World War, more devastating than any before. In the present political context of the World, it is absolutely necessary in India's own interest for India to remain strictly neutral. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru has often declared India's intention of remaining neutral. But, unfortunately, he has not followed up that intention with any concrete action that may inspire confidence in the minds of India's millions. If our present shaky and uncertain foreign policy remains as it is, then there is every apprehension that China's disastrous fate will overtake India, and the country embroiled in a bitter internecine war. The different political ideologies that have been and are fighting each other in Europe and America have won adherents almost in every country of Asia and in India too. Divided between many ideological camps internally, India cannot afford to side with this bloc or that without jeopardising her domestic peace and tranquility. It is necessary, therefore, that she should declare her complete neutrality and maintain it with her own moral, diplomatic and military strength.

Further, India's neutrality is indissolubly bound up with that of her neighbours. Pakistan, Ceylon, Nepal and Burma—India's nearest neighbours—are bound to act and react on her in respect of her foreign policy. The countries of South Asia are interlinked by political, and economic ties, and every major catastrophe in one country is sure to be followed by reactions in the other. The fighting in Burma is already having repercussions in India

and that in Malaya is affecting India commercially. It is, thus, evident that the belligerency of one of the countries in the event of a Third World War will naturally disturb, and probably, destroy, the neutrality of the other. So what is needed today is an organisation to be known as the "United Nations of South Asia", a foreign policy to be framed by UNSA and a planned, compact neutrality decided upon and maintained by all of them—a neutrality which will be one and indivisible. If these countries form a Third Bloc, with the purpose of broadening, enlarging and maintaining their independence and prompting goodwill in the East, it is at least doubtful if the Western conspiracies abroad will be able to drag them into a Third World War. India will be able to remain neutral only in such circumstances. Left alone, she will not be able to maintain her neutrality unimpaired. This common and united neutrality of the UNSA will stand as a bulwark against aggression and the threat of aggression from whichever quarter it may come. It will be proof against the machinations of the Western Powers and the fleeting vicissitudes of Eastern Politics.

UNITED INDEPENDENT BENGAL AND JINNAH

Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose issued the following statement on 12 September, 1948 on the death of Mr. Jinnah

By the death of Quaid-e-Azam Mohammed Ali Jinnah the Muslim world has lost one of its greatest statesmen and Pakistan its life-giver, philosopher and guide. No one within living memory has done more to raise the stature of the Muslims of India than he. In the presence of death all controversies are hushed and though I have had my differences with him and sometimes they were very serious, I shall not refer to them now. But in justice to him I must disclose that in June, 1947, he agreed, in his conversations with me in New Delhi, to Bengal remaining united and becoming independent with a Constituent Assembly of her own to decide to which union she would accede.

What he agreed to was conveyed by me to Mahatma Gandhi immediately and it will be remembered that on or about the 10th June, 1947 Mahatmaji said in a prayer meeting that he "had been taken to task for supporting my move".

I pay my tribute to the memory of one who was great as a lawyer, once great as a Congressman, great as a leader of Muslims, great as a world politician and diplomat and greatest of all, as a man of action.

May his soul rest in peace !

ON BRITISH ASSETS IN INDIA

Full text of a statement to the Press released at Calcutta on 6 October, 1948

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru will be leaving for London this evening to attend the Commonwealth Conference. There will thus be an opportunity of a personal discussion between the members of the British Government and the Prime Minister of India. I shall not deal here with the political problems that will face Pandit Nehru at the Conference and which certainly demand solution. I shall only deal here with the question of India's sterling balances, which, in my view, should be re-opened by Pandit Nehru and finally settled. Our country's present economic position makes a settlement of this question a matter of urgency.

India's sterling balances at the end of the war in £ millions were 11,380. The sterling releases between the years 1945 and 1947 made in favour of India and Pakistan were £ 65,000,000. Out of this sum, however, approximately £ 63,000,000 were carried forward to 1948. In 1948-49, sterling releases in favour of India will amount to £ 21,000,000 and hard currency allocations out of the sterling balances in favour of India will amount to £ 25,000,000. It is also expected that sterling releases in favour of India from 1949 onwards will amount to £ 80,000,000 a year.

It is clear from the above that if sterling releases are made at this rate in India's favour, it will take years before India's sterling balances are used up. Already responsible British journals including the London 'Economist' have raised grave doubts whether Britain's economic resources will permit such sterling releases from India's sterling balances held in London. It may be that England will find it impossible to maintain this rate to Indian economy. Of course, at this stage, it is necessary for me to mention that a substantial amount of our sterling balances has already been used for purchasing British military stores

in India. Whether such an expenditure out of our sterling balances has been a judicious one is indeed doubtful. But even if we take into consideration the amount that we have spent out of our sterling balances for the purchase of British military stores and also the annual sterling releases in favour of India, a considerable amount of sterling balances will remain at our disposal. I suggest that we use these balances for immediate purchase of all the British assets and investments in India. It should be the task of Pandit Nehru to negotiate this purchase when he is in London.

I am not suggesting to Pandit Nehru to do anything to which the Congress Assembly Party is not already committed. In March 1946, when I happened to be Leader of the Congress Assembly Party, there was a debate in the Central Assembly on the Bretton Woods Conference Agreements. In the course of that debate demands were made on behalf of the Congress Assembly Party that India's sterling balances should be used for the purpose of transferring British assets to India. Today Pandit Nehru happens to be the Leader of the same Congress Assembly Party. In March, 1946, this was a demand made by the Congress as an opposition. Today we expect that Congress as the Government of the country, will make arrangements for the fulfilment of that demand.

If all the British assets and investments are immediately transferred to India, the Government of our country will be in a position to deal effectively with the problem of inflation. From the year 1939 there has been a progressive increase in the supply of money in our country and if one takes the year 1939 as the base year, one finds that in January 1948, there was an increase of 403 p.c. in the total money supply. On the other hand, the total production in India in December 1947 was in fact 5 p.c. less than that of 1939. This explains the phenomenal rise in prices throughout the country which, at the moment, seems to be unchecked. Even if our productive machinery is geared up to its fullest extent, it is doubtful if the total

production in our country can be raised by more than 20 per cent over the production of 1939. Therefore, it is clear that whatever may be the long term effects of increased production, increase of production by itself will not solve the problem of inflation. The problem can only be solved by diverting excessive purchasing power from the market for consumption goods to the market for investments. If the Government of India are able immediately to acquire huge British assets in India, the Government may invite the people to invest their money on those assets and thereby arrange for a large scale diversion of purchasing power from immediate consumption to investment.

If Pandit Nehru succeeds in arranging immediate purchase of British assets in India by using India's sterling balances, three-fold benefits will follow :—

1. British assets in our country will be converted into national assets.

2. If proper use is made of these assets, effective measures can be taken by the Government of India for checking and controlling the dangerous inflationary rise in prices of consumption goods.

3. The Government will acquire control of important and key industries in India and will thus have a considerable influence over the entire productive machinery. Of course, in that event, the Government of India should set up an autonomous Production Council consisting of experts and business managers to run those businesses and industries efficiently.

Will Pandit Nehru have the courage and the vision to negotiate the transfer that I have suggested above ?

PART V : 1949

THE ASIAN CONFERENCE AND AFTER

Full text of a signed editorial in "The Nation" of 25 January, 1949

The 19-nation Asian Conference which started with such a fanfare of publicity, has dispersed after passing three pious resolutions and making an eight-point recommendation. The briefness of its career is attributed to the smoothness of its course. But if it has been smooth, and not roughened by the legitimate questions of challenge and overthrow, it is the smoothness of compromise and eventually, of futility. The delegates themselves are said to have been surprised that this august assembly should have ended only with the expression of pious wishes dressed up in a big array of words without the means of implementing them. The main resolution, we are told, has been cabled to the Chairman of the Security Council of the U.N.O. The usual rubberstamping being over, what will Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru the Chairman of the Conference do now to implement the resolutions ?

Indonesia has been a test case for Pandit Nehru and India. It seemed for a time at least, as if the Nehru of the Commonwealth Premiers' Conference had been jolted out of the Anglo-American conspiracy to assume on behalf of India the leadership of resurgent India. But that was not to be. British wire-pulling is still there as strong as before, and time and circumstance have tamed Pandit Nehru into becoming an instrument in the hands of the same reactionary forces which he is ideologically pledged to repudiate. That is why he yielded to the temptation of a doubtful advantage accruing from British friendship. That is why he hopelessly succumbed to the political acrobatics of the Commonwealth Premiers' Conference, and that is why he allowed himself to be seduced by the wiles of the Western Union. This dramatic sequence of events has culminated in Pandit Nehru's timid treatment of the Indonesian case ; and it is not difficult to see that his passion for

Asiatic freedom which fitfully flares up, now flickers, tapering into the tranquility of a compromise.

Only the other day, Pandit Nehru declared from the platform of that "pompous pageant for a perishing people" —we mean the Jaipur Congress—"The Dutch action will have serious repercussions in India and other Asiatic countries and we will have to consider what we may have to do under the circumstances..... The days of Imperialism are over because no imperialist power can stay in Asia." Is not the spirit of this statement in flagrant contradiction to his refusal or hesitation to form an Asian Bloc ? While the Big Powers are forming their own blocs to maintain their colonial tentacles, Pandit Nehru is reluctant to form an Asian Bloc to overthrow the same. How then does he propose to apply the necessary brake on Imperialism's joy-ride over Asian countries ? What steps does he propose to take in case the U.N.O. refuses or is reluctant to implement the resolutions, or the Dutch pay scant courtesy to them ? The U.N.O. is already a happy pasture for the Anglo-Americans, and we are told that plans are maturing under the guidance of their astute diplomats to scuttle Pandit Nehru's Asian Conference to which even Asians—Russians and Japanese—have not been admitted. How does Pandit Nehru propose to cross the hurdles that are being placed across Asia's path ?

Pandit Nehru seems to have no plan of action or, if at all, any that will not alienate or offend the British and the American. There are indications to show that the British are already on the move to sabotage Asian freedom. Astute British diplomats are already on Asiatic tours for this purpose. The permanent Under-Secretary of the British Foreign Office—that citadel of reaction—Sir William Strang, is already on a vigilant tour in Delhi and is said to have contacted Pandit Nehru, Sir G. S. Bajpai and Mr. K. P. S. Menon. He is reported to have advised Pandit Nehru that the formation of an Asian Bloc would be inopportune at this moment and would lead to bitterness, and that imperialism could be liquidated by a slow and

gradual process and through co-operation. Sir William Strang's tour, we understand, will soon be backed up by Mr. Anthony Eden's—private and non-official no doubt. What equally is the significance of the likely appointment of Mr. Frank Roberts, an important man in the British Foreign Office, as the British Deputy High Commissioner in India ? Pandit Nehru should not be unaware of the fact that the British Under-Secretary's pose of patronage can have no other purpose than to delay freedom to Asia. He should also not be unaware of the fact that the Western Imperialists, whose hands are stained with Asia's blood, are in no mood to liquidate their empire through evolution or revolution. Their clear purpose is to form an Eastern Bloc minus Asiatic Russia and Japan as a counterblast to the Asian Conference ; and it is not difficult to see that the Western Powers will soon form it, with the declared object of fighting Communism, but with the real object of retaining their political and economic control over their colonies and dominions. Pandit Nehru stands confronted by his own inner contradiction. Between the Commonwealth Premiers' Conference and the Asian Conference convened by him there is no stand but a stand of vacillation and drift. The manner in which the Indonesian case has been disposed of at the Asian Conference is symptomatic of the deep degeneration which has set in Indian political leadership. I have since January 1948 been advocating the formation of a "United Nations of Asia" organisation, which alone can liberate Asia from Imperialist grip. Speaking at Dublin in December last, I said that there was no other way of defeating the machinations and overthrowing the domination of the Imperial powers, British, French and Dutch, than by forming a United Nations of Asia organization. A month before that, speaking at Zurich, I gave the same remedy as the only solution of the problem of freedom of Asia. But Pandit Nehru's affiliations with the British Commonwealth have, we are afraid, prevented him from taking a determined and decisive stand in this regard. On my arrival in Calcutta, I drew pointed attention to the startling disclosure recently made that preparations were being made at Lake Success to take the wind out of the

sails of the Asian Conference, and expressed my apprehension that the Conference convened by Pandit Nehru "would end in long speeches and longer resolutions, to be followed only by inaction". My apprehension seems to be on the way to confirmation. Pandit Nehru has chosen the easy path of compromise which Britain has chalked out for him and would not take the path of consolidation, unity and challenge. The Dutch action in Indonesia gave Pandit Nehru momentous opportunity to vindicate India in the eyes of the world, to switch on Asia's dynamic energy. But instead, it has left him a cold, compromising leader of a collapsing politics, inspired and dominated by the Western Imperialist Powers—a "lost leader."

THE REPUBLIC WITHIN THE COMMONWEALTH

Full text of a signed editorial in "The Nation" of 18 April, 1949

In the course of an interview with the New Delhi correspondent of the 'Daily Mail' (London), India's Prime Minister, unwearied in his lip-service to India's independence and neutrality, has at last found a recipe for nailing the Republic of India to the mast of the British Commonwealth, in complete disdain of constitutional law, theory, and precedent applicable to the matter. Since the Dominion Prime Ministers' Conference in October last, the irreconcilability of the two concepts of Commonwealth and Republic has been a thorn in the flesh of our Prime Minister, specially because of the increasing volume of public opinion in its favour. Not disconcerted, however, he has been scattering a harvest of uncertain assurances and unmeaning promises to resolve doubts and allay suspicions. But if there is any significance in Pandit Nehru's interview to the 'Daily Mail', it is this, that the sinister move initiated at the last Dominion Premiers' Conference is likely to receive its crowning consummation in the next, possibly, with the willing co-operation of this erstwhile, redoubtable champion of India's independence and neutrality.

Panditji's pontifical pronouncement does not augur well for India's future. It shows that India's neutrality is a myth, that India's severence from the British Commonwealth is an old forgotten dream, that Asia, which is no longer the 'fringe', (to quote Panditji) but the centre, must once more prepare for the insidious re-entry of British Imperialism into the Indian stage. "It might be that the interests of India would require her participation in it" (war), says Panditji. But the public have a right to ask him what dire necessity makes belligerency imperative for India in her own interests, and what are those interests which war alone can advance and peace retard. No, it is not merely that ; it is much more. It is an unerring indica-

tion of a misguided Commonwealth mania. It is the working of the British mind in the Indian body. The Commonwealth to-day is synonymous with war, immediate or remote. Two of the members of the Commonwealth, namely, Great Britain and Canada are signatories to the Atlantic Pact, and the Commonwealth countries' association with the Western Powers is an undeniable fact. But, says Panditji almost in the same breath, that "it would not be in the interests of India to engage herself in any pact which would automatically involve her in war". Pact—what is in a name, after all ? Call it a Pact or not, the proposed link with the Commonwealth is enough to compel India's automatic surrender to British Imperialist designs and her consequent entanglement in an avoidable war.

Pandit Nehru's new formula for fitting the Republic of India into the framework of the British Commonwealth is a superb example of the loose and confused thinking that befogs the minds of the many of the Congress leaders. Mesmerized by the spell of the British Commonwealth, our Prime Minister has presented a curious amalgam of the sublime and the ridiculous. India's association with the Commonwealth, according to him, involves changes "in matters of form only". At the present moment the appointment of India's Governors-General and Ambassadors must await the formal assent of the King, which is given almost as of course. But what about the India of the near or remote future when she becomes a full-fledged Republic ? Pandit Nehru visualises the future in these words : "The substitution of a Governor-General by the President of the Indian Republic as the head of the State would not necessarily affect the ties of interest that unite the various nations of the Commonwealth for their mutual benefit." Does he ask us to believe that India's change-over to a Republic means only the substitution of a President for a Governor-General, with or without the accredition of His Britannic Majesty ? Pandit Nehru is attempting to build his political structure upon fleeting sands. Field-Marshal Smuts has recently exploded the

myth of Republic fitting into a Commonwealth. With him, it is no matter of form only. It is a matter that vitally affects the character and pattern of the Commonwealth, its very pith and substance. He argues : "My view, for what it is worth, is that you are either in the Commonwealth or out of it. If you are out of it, as an Indian or other Republic, you can only be in relationship with it according to the accepted principles of international law—that is, in treaty relationship.....There is no middle course between Crown and Republic, between in and out of the Commonwealth. If in some nebulous or muddled way you can be both in and out of it, the whole concept of the Commonwealth goes, and what remains is a mere name without substance, the grin without the cat in Alice in Wonderland." Canada and Australia might agree to the connotation of the term Commonwealth being extended ; and as for the Crown, why, let him remain the central link, or for purposes of adornment, the peak of the pyramid. But did India ever stand where Canada and Australia did and does she stand to-day where the latter do ? Pandit Nehru seems to have forgotten all too soon the working of the cruel forces that made the West the exploiters and the East the exploited. The historian of the World and the discoverer of India is apparently oblivious of recent Asiatic and Indian history—the Imperialist and commercial domination and its bitter race-hatred. Or does he consider it wise in the interests of the Commonwealth to shut his eyes to the fact that Britain's hand of fellowship is tainted and tinted, and that not all the persuasiveness of Anthony Eden or the ingenuity of Stafford Cripps, can remove the taint or the tint ?

In the course of six months only, pressure of circumstances has forced the Britisher to convene a second Conference of Dominion Prime Ministers, to which Pandit Nehru is an invitee. On the eve of his departure, let Pandit Nehru read the writing on the wall, the inexorable decree of fate, if he does not retrace his steps. The demand of crores of Indians for Independence, undiluted and undefiled, their demand that India should keep clear of the rival power

blocs, their demand that India be saved from the horrors of a Third World War, cannot be flouted, except at the peril of those who flout them. India's declared goal, at any rate, since 1929, has been Complete Independence as distinct and different from Dominion Status. India's professed policy since August 1947 has been one of complete neutrality. In conformity with her declared goal, in keeping with her professed policy, in the larger interests of Asia, in the still larger interest of world peace, India must go out of the British Commonwealth of Nations.

We ask Pandit Nehru again to read the writing on the wall. We ask him to feel the heart throb of the people of India. We ask him to honour the solemn declarations and professions to which he has been a party and not to raise a dust-storm of assurances about India's independence and neutrality within the frame-work of the British Commonwealth. We ask him to realise that the British wooing of India is part of the master strategy to encompass the Indian Ocean and the Pacific for the purposes of the Empire Defence Plan. If Pandit Nehru goes to honeymoon over it, perfect bliss may be his, but India will be undone. "The moving finger writes and having writ moves on".

JAMMU IN JEOPARDY

Full text of a signed editorial in "The Nation" of 20 April, 1949

Two years ago, the leaders of the Indian National Congress in their misguided zeal for a negotiated freedom, cast the sturdy Pathans of the North-West Frontier Province to the four winds, in the most callous, or, shall we say, cruel, manner. This pathetic history is we apprehend, going to repeat itself in Kashmir before long. What behind-the-scene talks were exchanged between India and the U.N.O. Commission, we do not pretend to know. But indications are numerous enough to forecast that Kashmir, after taking a heavy toll in India's resources in arms, men and money, will go the way the Anglo-American desire her to go, and that Sheikh Abdullah's heroic assertion that Kashmir will decide in favour of joining the Indian Union, will, in all probability, remain heroic only in words.

This being the probable fate of Kashmir, what is going to happen to Jammu? Is the fate of Jammu sealed along with that of Kashmir? The ways of the ruling authorities of the Government of India are mysterious and inscrutable. Only the other day, they whipped up a war-enthusiasm in Kashmir to enable them to drive out the last raider, hazarding much in men, money and prestige, and now they have thawed down into an almost enforced freemasonry with Pakistan. In the event of a plebiscite or of a negotiated peace, do they expect the 'Sher' of Kashmir will be able to win for them either the much-coveted paradise on earth known as Kashmir or the less known tract of earth known as Jammu ?

The situation in Jammu itself is thoroughly disquieting. There is a strong undercurrent of conviction in the minds of the people of Jammu that the chances of a plebiscite do not augur well for them; that Jammu, if it is

to be saved to India, must have a separate plebiscite. What appears to have disturbed them even more is the communal mentality that has manifested itself in many of Sheikh Abdullah's followers and in the spirit of the administration in Jammu.

There is more too than meets Indian eyes from a distance. It is reported on good authority that things are rotten in the State of Jammu. The administration smacks of autocracy and high-handedness particularly towards one section of the people there; and it is said that too much eagerness on the part of our Prime Minister to placate Sheikh Abdullah's chosen followers has installed and inspired it. Sheikh Abdullah's personality seems to be our Prime Minister's only trump card, but we shall not be surprised to find that the situation has gone out of the former's control. During his last visit to Bombay, Sheikh Abdullah said : "Kashmir has decided to come to India. Nothing will prevent us from implementing the verdict of the people." But the situation in Jammu, if not in Kashmir also, snaps the spell of facile optimism, scattered by his and other peoples' glib garrulity, as hard realism stares one in the face. The report of Mr. Mihir Lal Chattopadhyaya, Member, Constituent Assembly, published in 'The Nation' of the 18th March last, has brought out the skeleton in the cupboard. There is stink of maladministration, corruption, even partiality, coming from behind the curtain ; and the growing pessimism of the people of Jammu about the result of the prospective plebiscite is creating strong cross-currents which may develop into whirlpools. Democracy is the vanishing point of the Jammu administration; and in the hurry and scramble for a so-called democratization of the State, the minorities have not unoften been treated with indifference, if not with absolute disregard and unfairness. To crown all, there is the crusade of Sheikh Abdullah's over-zealous followers against the stabilising forces in the State. It has, of course, the Flag of Democracy in front of it. But to the worried minorities the Flag has given no assurance yet of fair dealing. Instead of rallying the people, it may

unnerve them and lead to a mass exodus somewhat similar to the kind we witnessed in the Punjab.

With shibboleths of secularism, socialism and democracy, Sheikh Abdullah has hitched his wagon to the star of a lofty idealism. But hard facts are too stern and stubborn to melt at the warm touch to idealism; and unless the much-needed brake is applied, will throw Kashmir, and even Jammu, into the arms of Pakistan or of the Anglo-American bloc. Our Prime Minister has already staked too much on the personality of Sheikh Abdullah. Personality counts to a certain extent, beyond which it is inoperative. Neither has the Government of India's submission to the delusion of personal magnetism smoothed out matters for them so far. It is desirable, therefore, that they turn their look more realistically at the problem of Jammu. India and Pakistan have now entered into a period of laurel leaves. But these must be unsullied laurels, not sullied by dishonour or disdain, base expediency or ignoble surrender. If, however, it should unfortunately so happen that Kashmir eventually becomes the price for a negotiated peace, let not Jammu also be sacrificed along with it. Price has to be paid for liberty ; but surely, surely, it should not be paid for inaction on the part of the Government of India. Kashmir and Jammu acceded to the Indian Union, and the latter accepted the accession. If the Government of India weakly hesitate and falter at this critical moment in the history of Kashmir and Jammu, the heritage of the past shall be undone, the interests of the present shall be compromised, and as for the future, they will have lost all claims to be regarded as a Government which is proof against the machinations of Western Powers and the fleeting vicissitudes of Western Power politics.

THE PROBLEM OF REFUGEES

Full text of a signed editorial in "The Nation" of 1 May, 1949

The problem of the refugees in the East and in the West of India has once more been manoeuvred out of the picture and pushed into a less noticed corner of the public forum. The traditional methods of lathi charge and tear-gas having failed, woolier means of large promises and smooth excuses have been resorted to, to create a false sense of security in the minds of the refugees. The leaders of the West Bengal Congress and the Ministers of the West Bengal Government are untiring in their 'apologia' and assurances to cover their own inability to face the problem, which is the creation of the Congress leaders. One of the Hon'ble Ministers of West Bengal was reported to have said at a public meeting on the 5th February last that the problems of the country, including that of the refugees could not be solved "by the touch of a magician's wand". A few days later, the same Hon'ble gentleman was reported to have described the East Bengal refugees as "brother foreigners" from "another country", and offered a novel solution of their problem by saying that "the question of rehabilitating the refugees in West Bengal was not as important as the question of sending them back to their own country". Another honourable colleague of his in the course of his statement (see "The Nation", 12th February), felt a nerve-shake at my taking up the refugees' cause, magnified the difficulties of the matter to his advantage and side-tracked the whole issue with sweet "consolatories" and ex gratia advice. He exhorted the wandering refugees from East Bengal not to "create a sort of minority problem" but gallantly to put up with the difficulties "as inevitable results of a great historic change". The change is "great", he says, and its bitter results have to be borne with fortitude ; because, according to the Hon'ble Mr. N. R. Sarker, "a partition of Bengal was necessary, vitally necessary". The country-side for a time echoed and re-

echoed with the frenzied demands of Congress leaders for the vivisection of the country ; and the Congress, then the greatest nationalist organisation in our country, consigned the Punbjab and Bengal to their doom. Its leaders had not the vision to foresee that tragic caravans of homeless men, women and children would stream into their newly-created haven as a consequence of the acceptance of their demand.

The days of miracles are gone ; the days of economic planning have succeeded. What I demand of our Governments, both Central and Provincial, is not an Aladdin's lamp, but a well-thought plan, and the intelligence, efficiency and energy to switch it into action. Our Governments seem to be conspicuous by plan-less-ness in some cases, and over-planning in others,—both, of course followed by inaction. As regards refugees, random talks about resettling them will not yield any useful results. It is regrettable that even accurate statistics of the number of refugees, registered or unregistered, is difficult to get, what to speak of statistics about their classes, occupations, and other details.

It has been pointed out again and again that there are vast tracts of lands lying fallow and unused which may profitably be taken advantage of for resettlement purposes. Here also our Governments proceed in an altogether haphazard and unplanned way. A few "Hastinapuras" or a number of "grams" or "nagaras", the foundation stones of which are laid by Ministerial hands are no solution. It was reported on the 10th February that the West Bengal Government were acquiring 3,700 acres of land in this province for rehabilitation purpose. In my statement dated 20th March, 1949 I pointed out that about 23,000 acres of land were lying unused in West Bengal alone. I should like to ask the West Bengal Government why they have not taken cognizance of this fact, why they are acquiring this small and hopelessly inadequate area and how far even this pigmy scheme of theirs has materialised. It is only a perversion of facts to suggest that land is short in India or in West Bengal. Taking India as a whole, the total area of cultivable land

is, according to statistics, about 87 million acres of wheat, say about half of which will be necessary to grow food. The other half may be largely utilised for residential and industrial purposes. There are also vast tracts of land measuring about 10 million acres which have gone out of cultivation and lying fallow due to weeds and other growths, which can also be reclaimed for growing food. The cost of reclaiming virgin lands would be Rs. 100/- per acre, and that of used lands about Rs. 40/- per acre. In view of these statistics, it would be perfectly idle for our Governments to complain of shortage of lands. It would be far better to settle the refugees on these lands than to send them away to the prisoners' "paradise" of Sir Henry Craik, now turned into heaven for the refugees.

In respect of economic rehabilitation, there is no evidence uptil now of anything achieved. Will our Governments tell the people what they have done so long in this respect ? Have they made any attempt to start small scale industries or co-operative organisations, agricultural and industrial, or opened up other avenues of income, by which the refugees may become economically self-sufficient ? In this connection, we would like to put a question to Mr. Mohanlal Saxena, the Minister of State for Relief and Rehabilitation at the Centre, who in the course of a reply in the Central Legislature on the 16th February last said that between September, 1947 and December, 1948, his ministry has spent about Rs. 22 crores in connection with refugee rehabilitation. Would he vouchsafe the public information as to how much was spent on refugees in the West and in the East and under what heads ?

How long will our Provincial Governments keep the refugees hanging in the waiting list of their inactivity, piping to the tune of the Central Government ? In a statement dated the 30th January last, I called attention to the seriousness of the refugee problem created by the erstwhile champions of the dismemberment of the country.

I said, "Those who made large promises to the Hindus of East Bengal in order to get their support to the partition of Bengal, are either completely silent now or making smooth excuses". In a Press conference at New Delhi on the 10th March last, I pointed out that our Governments, Central and Provincial, had hopelessly defaulted in their duty towards the refugees and had betrayed a lamentable lack of foresight in not having anticipated a transfer of population, voluntary or involuntary, as an inevitable corollary of the partition of the country. At yet another meeting, at the Sunderbai Hall in Bombay on the 15th March last I voiced the demand on behalf of the dumb processions from Western and Eastern Pakistan that something real, something concrete, something constructive must be done for them and done immediately.

But all these exhortations seem to have fallen on deaf ears. Our Governments are following the same old, dilatory and tortuous process of red-tapism and rubber-stamping. Our Central Government has sanctioned a loan of Rupees five crores to the West Bengal Government, which sum is but a drop in the ocean of the refugees' requirements. Even that does not seem to have yet come out of the seasoning or, shall I say, the mothy process of the secretarial files. The problem of the refugees is a test-case for our Governments ; it is also an object lesson to them. They should remember that it was they who, only two years ago, announced that they had given India's collapsing politics life, vigour and vitality by demanding partition of the country. It is they no less than the Muslim Leaguers, whom the accusing fingers of history will point at as perpetrators of the vivisection of the country, and the creators of the refugee problem. It is now their duty to lay aside all their ornamental schemes and to rivet their whole attention to the amelioration of the condition of the refugees, the innocent victims of a political massacre.

FROM ACROSS THE SEAS

Full text of Manifesto issued on the eve of the South-Calcutta Bye-Election from Glion, Switzerland, 3 June, 1949

FRIENDS,

Jai Hind ! I greet you all. I greet you across the seas and oceans that roll between you and me today. Though for reasons of health and under medical advice, I am thousands of miles away from you at the moment, still I feel as if I can almost hear your voices calling me back to work inside the West Bengal Legislative Assembly. Yes, I shall come soon, I shall come back to you fully restored to health and vigour before two months are out. I shall come over the mountains with the light of faith and the song of hope in West Bengal's and India's future.

I was a member of the Congress and its organization from 1918 to December 1946 with a break of a few years caused by my expulsion from the Congress, shortly after my brother's (Netaji's) expulsion. Why is it then that some members of the Congress High Command cannot tolerate me ? Is it because in September 1945, shortly after my release from prison, I had the hardihood to criticize the Grand Fascist of China and to say that he was leading his country to ruin and at the same time, to express my surprise that some of our so-called Anti-Fascist leaders had been idolizing him ? Is it because in 1946, as a member of the Congress Working Committee, I persistently opposed the acceptance of the British Cabinet Mission's scheme and set my face against any compromise with British Imperialism ? Is it because in December 1946 I advocated the rejection of the British Cabinet's interpretation of that scheme and resigned my membership of the Congress Working Committee on that issue ? Is it because in March 1947 I condemned the resolution of the Congress Working Committee asking for the division of the Punjab and said it would inevitably lead to the vivisection of India and increase armed communal clashes and resigned my primary member-

ship of the Congress on that issue ? Is it because I opposed the partition of Bengal ? Is it because on the 19th August, 1947, that is four days after the partition of India, I demanded that the Bengali-speaking areas in Bihar should be given back to West Bengal, in implementation of the policy consistently declared by the Congress since December 1911 and have been carrying on public agitation for acceptance of that demand ? Is it because I have been demanding of the Government of India and the Provincial Governments that adequate steps should be taken for the relief and rehabilitation of refugees from Western and Eastern Pakistan ? Is it because I have been exposing in my speeches and statements and also in the columns of "The Nation", nepotism, favouritism and corruption in our administrations, central and provincial, and also in some of our Embassies abroad ? Is it because I have been demanding of our Government stern action against black-marketers and profitteers and exploiters of the peasants and workers of the land ? Is it because I have been condemning the smothering of the Press, the suppression of civil liberties of the people and police and Governmental terrorism in different parts of the country ? Is it because I have been describing our State as a "Capitalist Raj" and have been demanding the establishment of a "Kisan-Mazdoor-Praja Raj" (to use Gandhiji's words) or, in other words, of a Sovereign Independent Socialist Republic free from British or other foreign influence or control ? And, finally, is it because I condemned the decision that the Prime Minister of India took in London last month and have been demanding that India must cease to be a member of the British Commonwealth of Nations and that her neutrality must not be imperilled in any way ?

Friends, in all that I have said and done in my public life now extending over three decades, as well as in my private life, I have endeavoured to serve the interest of my province and country. During all these years, whether inside the legislatures or outside, I have shrunk from no labour or sacrifice, have incurred no odium whatsoever in the fight for our country's independence, have made no com-

promise with British Imperialists or Indian reactionaries. It was possible for me to work and fight under the banner of the Congress until December 1946, because I believed till then that the Congress was determined to achieve 'Complete Independence' for the country and to execute the programmes and policies it had repeatedly declared. When in December 1946 it became clear to me that the majority in the Congress High Command were anxious for a compromise with British Imperialism (about which warning had been given by my brother, Netaji, with almost prophetic vision as far back as 1939) and that British diplomacy had got the better of them, I felt I would be utterly false to my conscience, my convictions and our fighting tradition if I continued to be a member of the Congress Working Committee and of the Congress. British diplomacy succeeded in its game of dividing the country and the acceptance of Lord Mountbatten's June 3 Plan by the Congress Working Committee marked its triumph and the failure of the Congress to implement its declarations since 1929. What have happened in our province and country since then are so painfully known to you that it is unnecessary to recapitulate them.

I have been watching closely and with anxiety the work of our legislatures, central and provincial, since the attainment of Dominion Status on the 15th August 1947. I have been noticing with consternation the progressive deterioration in our administrations, central and provincial, since then and the rapid increase in them of nepotism, favouritism and corruption. The state machinery is being run by a handful of Capitalists and those who were until yesterday reactionaries and exploiters have now become our masters and benefactors ! No wonder that black-marketing, profiteering and graft have increased in geometrical progression. The Press has been gagged, civil liberties of the people have been ruthlessly suppressed and the demands of the exploited, the repressed and the neglected have been met by lathis, teargas, batons, bayonets and bullets, as in British times. Inflation has not been checked, prices of the necessaries of life have been soaring higher and higher and food and clothing are beyond the reach of the poor and middle classes. Our one-

party legislatures, central and provincial, are merely registering the dictates of the few high and mighty. They have not the mind to conceive, the intelligence to construct, the power to create.

Coming now to the situation in our province of West Bengal, particularly since the beginning of last year, what do we find? Every word of what I have said in the preceding paragraphs fully applies to it. Several departments of the Government of West Bengal have become cesspools of nepotism, favouritism and corruption. Disclosures have been made by me in my speeches and statements and also in the columns of "The Nation" about their working, supported by authentic reports of men in the departments; but, the Congress legislators of West Bengal have not had the courage to demand an enquiry. The Civil Supplies Department has earned an unenviable notoriety for graft; and yet Congress legislators are silent. It is uncivil and uncivic, its supplies of food, clothing and building materials do not find their way to the poor and middle classes but to the rich and the blackmarketeer; and yet, there is not one among the Congress legislators to call for an investigation.

The province has been ruled by the "lawless law" known as the West Bengal Security Act, which I have previously described as the "concentrated essence of repressive legislations in British times" ; and yet, not a single Congress legislator has demanded its repeal. Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code was promulgated in Calcutta and elsewhere and remained in force for the good part of the last eighteen months and police and Governmental terrorism resorted to on the slightest or no provocation ; and yet, no one among the Congress legislators raised his voice of protest.

Our people have demanded the inclusion of the Bengali-speaking areas in Bihar into West Bengal; and yet, not a single Congress legislator has been able to summon sufficient courage to table a motion in its support. The

Manbhum Satyagraha movement was started as a protest against the wrongs done to and the penalties inflicted on the Bengali-speaking population there; but, there was no response at all, not to speak of sympathy or support, from the Congress legislators of West Bengal. What are the Congress legislators of West Bengal afraid of? Are they afraid of being chastised with whips of the West Bengal Government or with the scourge of New Delhi ? Or, are they "dull clods of earth untroubled by a spark of patriotism or desire for the common good or the well being of their province ? Or, are the honest, the well-meaning and the men of character among them denied scope for work by the present ruling factions ?

The situation in our city and province being what it is I felt happy when the A.P.I. announcement that the Government of West Bengal had declared a vacancy in South Calcutta was communicated to me in my sickbed. I could not help feeling that the Government had somehow received information regarding my illness and the medical advice that had been given to me to proceed without delay to Switzerland for treatment and cure and that was what had led them at long last to declare the vacancy. But though I was due to leave Calcutta within a week of that announcement and the election would take place in my absence, it did not take me a minute to decide that I should contest the seat. I decided that the fight that I, with the help and co-operation of progressive and leftist forces, have been carrying on since the 19th August 1947 has to be carried into the legislatures as well for the purpose of carrying us to victory.

The very existence of West Bengal is at stake ; her economy is in a perilous condition. If West Bengal is to live, if we of and in West Bengal have to win freedom of speech, freedom of association and assembly, freedom from the galling restrictions on civil liberties, freedom from want, freedom to live cleaner, healthier and happier lives, freedom from the yoke of domestic factions and of capitalist and vested interests, if we are to build a New and

Greater Bengal and a New and Greater India, the fight has to be carried on on all fronts, including the legislative front. The fact that you had in the past repeatedly shown your confidence in me encouraged and emboldened me to take my decision. I felt perfectly sure that you would acclaim my decision and that I could leave my candidature and its success entirely in your hands in the fullest confidence that you would do all in your power to defeat the reactionary forces that might be arrayed against me in my absence, backed, though they might be, by "big business".

Friends, I look forward to the 12th June in the hope that you will reiterate your confidence in me by your votes.

Yours in love and service,
Sarat Chandra Bose
3rd June, 1949.

AT A PRESS CONFERENCE

Report of a Press Conference published in "The Nation", Calcutta on 6 August, 1949

Speaking at a Press Conference, Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose said : "Dominion Status has been in action now for two years and the time has come for us to review its working. I have said already—and I repeat it—that the last two years have been years not of freedom, but of slavery and frustration for the Common Man. Why do I say that they were years of slavery ? Firstly, because civil liberties do not exist. I shall put a question to the Prime Minister of India in his own words. This is what he said as President of Lucknow session of the Indian National Congress in 1936 : 'A Government that has to rely on the Criminal Law Amendment Act and similar laws that suppresses the press and literature, that bans hundreds of organisations, that keeps people in prison without trial and that does so many other things that are happening in India is a Government that has ceased to have a shadow of justification for its existence'.

"Applying these words of Panditji to the present state of things, may I ask him if his Government has not 'ceased to have even a shadow of justification' for its existence ?

"All the repressive legislations of the past are still there. In addition, we have Security Acts in every province ; and one has only to read one of the Security Acts to be convinced that they are a complete negation of civil liberties.

"The Constitution as drafted is even worse than the Government of India Act 1935, from the point of view of civil liberties and the liberties of the constituent states forming the Indian Union. The wide powers that are being conferred on the Provincial Authorities and the Central Authorities are bound to convert our so-called democratic State into a totalitarian State. The Draft Constitution is

a bad paraphrase of the Government of India Act 1935, which no one was more loud in condemning than our Prime Minister.

"But why have these two years been years of frustration for the Common Man ? Because the four furies, namely, black-marketing, favouritism, nepotism and corruption, are now at the service of the Congress.

"It is undeniable that black-marketing has been on the increase, that favouritism and nepotism are the order of the day both in our Central and Provincial administrations, and that corruption in our administrations and in our public life in general, has been on the increase. Our Government cannot possibly make the claim that they have made any serious attempt to check black-marketing or favouritism or nepotism or corruption.

"I know appeals have been made by our ruling authorities to the people to have confidence in them. But such appeals have fallen flat on the people because the people know that those who have made these appeals have not set any standard of honesty, integrity and character.

"You have only to examine the appointments made in India and abroad to find out that many of those who made such appeals have themselves been guilty of favouritism and nepotism of the worst type. You have only to find out what has been happening in the Food, Industries and Commerce Departments both in the Centre and the Provinces in order to satisfy yourselves that no permits or licenses can be obtained unless money flows into pockets of somebody.

"If the Central and Provincial Governments, in spite of all the evidences that are available to the Common Man, challenge these statements, I would ask them to set up a judicial enquiry, both in the Centre and the different Provinces, to be conducted by judges of character and integrity. Six months ago I demanded of the Government of India to

appoint a tribunal like the Lynskey Tribunal in England. But the Government has not yet the courage to accept the demand."

Speaking about West Bengal, Mr. Bose, said, "The Government of India through its propagandists, both in our country and in England, have been trying to cloud the real issues by throwing all blame on West Bengal and describing West Bengal, both in the Indian papers and British papers as a 'Problem Province'.

"The truth of the matter is that today all the provinces in India are problem provinces, because the problems in every province are almost the same, namely, black-marketing, favouritism, nepotism and corruption. I do not think that the province of West Bengal occupies the first place in the list of problem provinces. Another province very near our borders can certainly claim to be Number One in the list of problem provinces. Can you conceive a more serious and scandalous state of things than this that a Governor of a province had to resign because he found that he was quite helpless in the matter of solving problems which I have just mentioned ?"

Summing up the present-day Indian situation, he said, that it was, "A one-party Government, a one-party Legislature, a one-party administration, a one-party black-marketing, a one-party favouritism, a one-party nepotism and a one-party corruption.

"What then is the remedy ? The remedy lies in the unity of the socialist and progressive forces in the country and in the early displacement, I deliberately use the stronger word 'displacement' instead of the weaker one 'replacement', of our one-party Governments, one-party legislatures and one-party administrations.

"I see unmistakable signs of the coming unity of those forces. Some party or parties may fall back for the moment but the general awakening all over the country will, I think, force even them to line up within a short time.

That there is a general awakening all over the country admits of no doubt. But mere awakening by itself is not enough. You have to organise all these socialist and progressive forces throughout the length and breadth of the land and that by itself is a tremendous task.

"But the condition to which the masses have been reduced by the Governments functioning for the last two-years has done a lot to unite the different socialist and progressive forces. The present-day industrial workers are more awakened and organised than the peasantry. The rural areas have been neglected. The Congress has neglected them in the past. Now there is awakening because of hunger. But by itself, it will not carry us through. One will have to organise them. The message of socialism should be spread in the villages.

"I am free to confess today that it is not possible for one of the socialist parties to defeat the Congress all over India, because the fact is that one of the socialist parties is strong in one province, but has no roots in other provinces. But a combination of the existing socialist parties will, I believe, be strong enough to defeat the Congress in the majority of provinces in India. I would go a little further and say, in the overwhelming majority of provinces. There are two provinces about which I have some doubts. In West Bengal, Maharashtra, Andhra, Karnataka and one or two provinces, the Congress would not even have a look-in.

"Of the factors that are helping the growth of unity among the socialist forces in the country, the weakness and vacillation of the Congress administration have been helping the process considerably. Going back on the promises and pledges given by the Congress to the people in the past is also one of the things which has contributed to the general awakening among the masses.

"The hesitancy of our ruling authorities to form provinces on linguistic basis is also one of the things which has created very great resentment in different parts of

the country, particularly in Karnataka, Maharashtra, Andhra and West Bengal."

Criticizing the common Congress plea that the formation of provinces on linguistic basis would make for disunity, he said, "Mergers have been effected overnight in different parts of the country without any talk or thought of plebiscite, because such measures just suited our ruling authorities. Seraikella and Kharswan were annexed to Bihar against the wishes of the rulers and the people of the States, not on any basis at all, but because one or more members of the Congress Working Committee wanted it.

"Seraikella had a population of 1,44,000, according to the census of 1931, of which Hindi-speaking population was only 5,000. Kharswan, according to the same census had a population of about 44,000, of which the Hindi-speaking population was 5,500. The population of Manbhum, on the other hand, was at least 70 per cent or more Bengali-speaking. But the claim of West Bengal on Manbhum which was a legitimate one and acknowledged to be legitimate from December 1911 to 1946 was being resisted because it now formed part of Rajendra Babu's home province. There is no other conceivable reason for the non-acceptance of West Bengal's claim over Manbhum and over Bengali-speaking areas of Bihar. The demand of the united Karnataka province and also of Maharashtra were also based on irrefutable grounds. But, for some reason or other, our ruling authorities feel that the formation of the united Karnataka and the united Maharastra provinces may weaken their present hold and their present strength.

"For the past 35 years the Congress had repeatedly promised to the people to form provinces on linguistic basis as soon as they would come to power. It had not struck them that this would make for disunity. The Congress leaders repeatedly condemned, in the past, the arbitrary division of India made by the British and promised its nullificaton after their assumption of power. They

said that they would constitute the provinces on a national basis, meaning on the linguistic basis. What is at the bottom of the present hesitation to implement the promises of the Congress is not a fear of disunity but the fear that power politics would in that event not be able to run the course it is running."

Commenting on the Central Government's decision to centrally administer Cooch Behar, he said, "I thought that there could not be a moment's hesitation in making the State of Cooch Behar a part of West Bengal. The overwhelming majority of the population in the State is Bengali-speaking. The princely house of Cooch Behar had had very intimate ties with Bengal. There is hardly any Hindi-speaking population there and no Assamese-speaking population at all. But it must be centrally administered because the present Prime Minister of Cooch Behar does not want the State to be linked up with West Bengal. If you will kindly try to ascertain who are the persons who are in charge as premiers or otherwise of the different unions and princely states since August 15, 1947, you will find that in the majority of cases they are the nominees of capitalists sitting at New Delhi. It is so in Rajasthan. It is so in Cooch Behar and other places."

Mr. Bose countered the charges of provincialism, now-a-days being levelled against West Bengal, saying : "I shall claim that of all the provinces in India, Bengal in the past had been and still is the least provincial. It is not open to Rajendra Babu or any other member of the Working Committee to make any such charge against West Bengal. I would respectfully request them to clean up their minds and their houses before they make such charges against West Bengal. The Congress Working Committee has apparently realised, though rather late in the day, that it will not do for the Government of Bihar to proceed in the way they have been proceeding. Matters came to a head when I was member of the Congress Working Committee. A solution of the trouble was arrived at after discussions, but it is only the truth to say that the solution was not implemented into practice. Matters again

came to a head recently with the launching of Manbhum Satyagraha movement and now we read the resolutions of the Congress Working Committee regarding bi-lingual areas. I have not the slightest doubt it will prove to be stillborn.

"The real solution consisted in handing over the Bengali-speaking areas of Bihar to West Bengal. As regards Cooch Behar, India Government would be well advised not to delay the transfer of Cooch Behar to West Bengal. There cannot be and will not be peace in the country until the repeated promises to form linguistic provinces are carried into effect. If that is done, it will make for unity. It is only if and when people are contented that they can be expected to pull together and contribute to the strength of the centre."

Citing the example of Soviet Russia in this connection, Mr. Bose said : "There the Socialist Republics formed on the linguistic basis contributed to the strength of the state as had been amply proved in the Second World War. In giving example of Soviet Russia, I was not talking of Soviet ideology or the method they had adopted in the revolution. Soviet Russia had had within its confines people of more numerous races, cultures and languages than what India has. The Muslim in Soviet Russia constituted, then, one of the most difficult problems. The Muslims were afraid and were even up in revolt. In spite of opposition from some of his associates, Lenin pursued the principle of founding the Socialist Republics on linguistic basis. That had enabled them to build up a strong Centre as had been amply demonstrated in the last world war. The formation of provinces on linguistic basis in India, at this stage, will not lead to civil war. There cannot be and will not be any civil war, provided the ruling authorities are so minded and have the strength to take the right steps."

About the move for Leftist Consolidation, Mr. Bose said : The unity of the socialist and progressive parties, I am thinking of, should be, in the beginning, on the lines

of co-ordination and consolidation. All the socialist and progressive forces should be represented in a Co-ordination Council or Board and the work should proceed on the basis of agreed fundamentals. The fundamentals are :—

1. Faith in scientific socialism, subject to such variations and modifications as are and may be necessary on account of conditions in our country.

2. The Indian State must be a Sovereign Independent Socialist Republic free from British or any other foreign influence or control.

3. The Indian State must cease to be a member of the British Commonwealth of Nations.

4. The Indian State and all its departments must be administered on socialist lines and workers and peasants must be given their rightful place in the administration.

5. Land in India must belong to the actual tillers of the soil and landlordism must be completely abolished without compensation.

6. Key and basic industries must belong to the community and must be run and managed by the State as an essential part of planned socialist production for socialist distribution among the people.

7. Boundaries of existing provinces in India must be reformed and re-distributed on the linguistic basis.

8. Civil liberties must be guaranteed to all.

9. Religious freedom must be guaranteed to all.

10. Free education including military education must be guaranteed to all.

11. In the Indian State all must have the right to claim food and shelter in return for their contribution to society.

"All the parties that have discussed these fundamentals uptil now, have agreed with them. It is my idea that as regards the fundamentals, the constituent parties should accept the programme of work laid down by the Co-ordination Council or Board. As regards matters of local or minor provincial nature, the different constituent parties in the different provinces may work unfettered by any decision of the Co-ordination Council or Board. But even there, my idea is that if any of the constituent parties in any of the provinces wish to take up any local issue or any minor provincial issue, as a matter of courtesy they should inform the Co-ordination Council or Board.

"If we continue working on these lines, I expect that a united party will evolve. In my opinion, it is not practical politics at the present moment to talk of liquidating all the socialist parties except one. And one of the reasons why I say so is that unfortunately today there does not exist a party which will be able by its own unaided strength, to defeat the Congress all over India.

"I would appeal to my socialist friends to be realistic in their outlook, to appreciate the difficulties in our way and to make their respective contribution towards socialist unity. I have no doubt myself that, to start with, that contribution should be on the lines of co-ordination and consolidation of the existing socialist forces."

Asked if the Communist Party of India would be admitted as one of the constituent parties in the proposed United Socialist Organisation, Mr. Bose stated : "In my opinion, no. The matter, however, would come up for consideration at the forthcoming Nagpur Conference of the Leftist parties where the final answer will be given. I am making a difference between Communism and the Communist Party of India, the experiences during the last world

war had left suspicions about the C.P.I. rooted in public mind that they took orders from elsewhere and that their outlook was not National. These suspicions have to be removed completely before there can be any question of admitting the C.P.I. into the proposed United Socialist Organisation."

Referring to the recommendation of the Congress Working Committee about the proposed general elections in West Bengal, Mr. Bose observed : "I shall repeat what I said in Bombay that holding of the elections in the present limited franchise is, to my mind, definitely wrong. Nevertheless, I welcome the recommendation of the Congress Working Committee and I hope it will be accepted by the Government of India. It will give us an opportunity to demonstrate, once for all, that the Congress has no hold in West Bengal. I welcome it for another reason. Victory of united socialist forces in West Bengal over the Congress will have tremendous repercussions in other provinces and it will by itself do an amount of propaganda which can only be done by months and months of hard work. The Congress is bound to be defeated in West Bengal ; and in the parts of the country I have travelled since my arrival in Bombay, no one seems to have any doubt that even on the limited franchise, the Congress is bound to lose."

THIS OUR INDEPENDENCE

Full text of a signed editorial in "The Nation" published at Calcutta on 15 August, 1949

Twenty years ago, on the banks of the Ravi, a new chapter was written in India's history—written all in fire. It was then that our Congress leaders, shaking their hesitancy and indecision of the previous year, solemnly took the vow that not Dominion Status, but 'Purna Swaraj' or Complete Independence would be the goal of India's fight for freedom. For the British Imperialist Government being what it was—and is no better today—a compromise with that Government was considered equivalent to a compromise with slavery. Therefore said they, that nothing short of Complete Independence could satisfy the aspirations of the Indian people. It was in that year, the year 1929, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, untutored and unsophisticated, declared from his Presidential chair, "Independence for us means complete freedom from British Dominion and British Imperialism.....The British Empire today dominates over millions of people and holds large areas of the world's surface despite the will of the inhabitants....The embrace of the British Empire is a dangerous thing. It is not and cannot be the life-giving embrace of affection freely given and returned. And if it is not that, it will be what it has been in the past, the embrace of death".

British Imperialism is there, unchanged and unchangeable in its essentials. It holds large areas of the world's surface despite the will of their inhabitants. Exploitation of other races is still its chief means of sustenance. There are millions of people in Asia and Africa still drinking from its poisoned chalice. There is also our Prime Minister, now, of course, playing a different role from that of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru of 1929 to 1945 and in the context of recent history, a major partner in a negotiated freedom. Only the fire is gone from him and his collea-

gues, the fire that was lighted in 1929 and burnt intermittently till 1945. The compromise of the Congress leaders with British Imperialists was not, however, unforeseen. As early as 1939, Netaji had a prophetic premonition of it, gave expression to it at the Anti-Compromise Conference at Ramgarh and later took the field himself at the head of the Azad Hind Fauj with the words "Unity, Faith and Sacrifice" as his battle cry, to give the death-blow to British Imperialism. The hurling of the atom bomb — that crime against humanity — brought to an end the war in the East and, with it, the determination to "do or die" that had animated our people from 1942 to 1945. From the end of 1946, the leaders of the Congress began to develop cold feet, which process of cooling steadily progressed from the bottom to the top and benumbed them into acceptance of the Mountbatten Plan of June 3, 1947. British diplomacy triumphed ; the Congress leaders capitulated and compromised. But that was not the last inglorious chapter in our revolutionary tradition. More ignominy was to come and it came with India's Prime Minister surrendering our proposed Republic into the lap of the British Commonwealth. He, who not long ago, declared that "the embrace of the British Empire was a dangerous thing", has sought in that same embrace the quiet composure of his erstwhile revolutionary zeal.

This then is the independence we have got, a gift from the British and mortgaged back to them for some dubious advantage. This then is our independence—a limping offspring of base opportunism and ignoble capitulation. This then is the independence we are called upon to celebrate, as though it was wrested from unwilling hands and was the crowning consummation of the country's patriotic travails for more than half a century. A few years ago, Pandit Nehru said : "Freedom is not a thing of law, argument or document. It cannot be brought from outside. It must be wrested from the power that held it". It is a pity that the freedom he is now gloating over is a travesty of that which he was once so loud in heralding.

Take the gilt off the freedom and you find the pith

and substance of independence conspicuous by total absence. The valued ingredients that mix up in the rich chemistry of a free nation's life—liberty, equality, prosperity, social justice, are not to be found. The people look up for food and clothing ; they are fed with words. They demand civil liberties ; they are overwhelmed with teargas and bullets. They ask for social justice.; they are flooded with words of wisdom. Our ruling authorities talk of food drive on a war footing, of industrial drive on a peace footing, of social drive on a non-violent footing ; but all these drives remain on the lips of the few !

On the anvil of a dull and docile Constituent Assembly, that has entirely forfeited its representative capacity, they are hammering out a Draft Constitution, which is the longest in size, the biggest in volume but the poorest in democratic quality. Drawing a red herring across the track, our legislators are denying the Indian masses their fundamental rights. Trained under British Imperialist tutelage, hardened in British Imperialist traditions, those who once spoke the language of patriots are now treading in the footsteps of despots. The various Security measures and emergency legislations with which the Central and the different Provincial Governments have equipped themselves, are a challenge to the fundamental concept of civil liberties. Suppression of public opinion, restrictions on the right of association and assembly, banning of political and social organisations, gagging the Press, detentions without trial—these are some of the furies which the Governments have let loose upon the people. And all in the name of "law and order"—the law and order of the capitalist order !

And within the steel frame the British Imperialists left behind, we see corruption running rampant, with its hand-maidens, blackmarketing, profiteering, favouritism and nepotism. And the moraliser who once thought of hanging the blackmarketeer, is now a silent.withness of the latter's triumph. Favouritism and nepotism have their fountain-heads in New Delhi and contaminate and corrupt

all the springs that flow from them. The spirit of the times is blamed, and no attempt is made to raise "the moral standards which now seem to be on the downgrade".

We have often been regaled with stories of our foreign embassies, the inefficiency of many of which has often been exposed in the columns of this paper. These white elephants are reported to have absorbed Rs. 1,62,24,400 from our national exchequer. Read with this, Pandit Nehru's statements a few years ago in a different context, of course : "We would not submit to some people feasting and racing and flaunting their luxury while the mass of the people suffered the agony of starvation"....."When we win Swaraj, the first task that will face us is to wipe out poverty in India so that every man in our country may have enough food, enough clothing and comfortable accommodation. We must see to it that every man in our country is usefully employed." These pious resolutions have evaporated with the first touch of power, the power that corrupts, the absolute power that corrupts absolutely. Socialization is gone with the wind. The common man is being starved. Democracy is being crucified and a veritable Police Raj is let loose, offering bayonets and bullets in the place of bread and butter. All the promises held out and pledges given to the people of "revolutionary changes in the present economic and social structure" of the country by those who are now our ruling authorities have been broken during the last two years. Pieced together, these present a true picture of our so-called independence. Our Prime Minister offers allegiance to the British Commonwealth. Our Finance Minister offers allegiance to the "Sterling". And between these two allegiances, the allegiance to the land we live in is crushed out.

IMPEACHMENT AND TRIAL

Full text of a signed editorial in "The Nation" on the Calcuttta University published at Calcutta on 26 September, 1949

MY COUNTRYMEN,

From my sickbed I am dictating a few lines on the affairs of our University for publication in the editorial columns of "The Nation" in the hope that they will provoke your thoughts and spur you on to decisive action.

The startling disclosures that have been made recently have put the authorities of our University into the dock. One serious allegation against them being under investigation, others follow in its wake, exposing to public view more skeletons in the University's obnoxious cupboard. Favouritism, nepotism and malpractices are not the monopoly of our administrations, central and provincial ; some of our University authorities have also specialised in them and for a much longer period than you can imagine. They are bad enough when they exist in our administrations ; their effect on our public life and morals is infinitely worse when they entrench themselves in our "Alma Mater" from where flows fresh blood and life and our young men and women get the baptism of their faith and fire.

Our University which was founded in the year of the first war of Indian Independence created for itself a glorious tradition. It refused to remain a mere machinery for turning out clerks for helping an alien administration and after a hard struggle was able to free itself, partially at any rate, from the thraldom and bondage imposed upon it. But what was once a glorious institution has now become a huge edifice of corruption and fraud. A few families of Calcutta have for three decades and more been ruling the roost in this institution, and mastery over it is being transferred by a queer law of inheritance from one man to another, from one family to another. The inside of the University administration and finances has been kept

all these years behind an iron curtain. An orgy of favouritism and corruption has been its main ritual. Preferment in our University, whether in examinations or in other things, goes, to quote the words of the greatest of British poets, "By letter and affection and not by that old gradation where each second stood heir to the first." That has been our University's disorderly order of merit.

It has also appeared in the press that the Vice-Chancellor who has recently resigned, has been drawing for 42 long months a monthly salary of Rs. 900|- as salary for leave on deputation ! It has also been alleged that some books of the Publication Department of our University have been tampered with leading to the suspicion that University publications have found their way to unauthorised booksellers or to the blackmarket.

My Countrymen, too long, far too long have you and I suffered all this rank favouritism, nepotism and corruption inside the sacred portals of our "Alma Mater" to continue. It is up to all of us to wake up, to atone for our sins of omission of the past and to demand that the families which have corrupted our sacred institution and the officials who have played second fiddle to them be removed from its management and from public life and that they be placed before a judicial tribunal to answer charges of malfeasance, misfeasance and corruption. We have no illusions as to who are responsible for the present state of affairs in our University and we refuse to be deceived by the attempt to make scapegoats of Tabulators or Head Examiners or Examiners. We demand impeachment and trial of the families which have been guilty of crimes against society, of those who have betrayed the trust our University reposed in them and of those who have sullied the ancient honour of our nation. More than that we do not demand ; less than that will not satisfy the cause of education or the demands of an honourable society.

EXCHANGES WITH MAO TSE-TUNG

FROM SARAT CHANDRA BOSE

Mao Tse-Tung
Chairman Central People's, Government of Republic of China
Peiping (Peking)

Sincerest felicitations to you and people of China on behalf of self and Socialist Republican Party and progressive forces and newspaper "The Nation" on your unanimous election as Chairman. Feel gratified today that I predicted in September, 1945 Chiang Kai-Shek's early overthrow and your coming into power as Chinese leader. Hope you will cement good relations, diplomatic and otherwise, between China and India and lay foundation of Asian Bloc for counteracting machinations of Western imperialists and freeing all Asiatic countries from foreign yoke.

Sarat Bose
1, Woodburn Park, Calcutta
1-10-1949

FROM MAO TSE-TUNG

Very urgent 11. 50 p.m.
388, Peking 22nd
Sri Sarat Chandra Bose
1, Woodburn Park, Calcutta

Thank you for your greetings to the People's Republic of China. The Chinese people welcomes the establishment of a broad friendship with the Indian people and all oppressed nations jointly to oppose imperialist aggression.

Mao Tse-Tung

RECOGNIZE PEOPLES' REPUBLIC OF CHINA

Full text of a signed editorial in "The Nation" published at Calcutta on 3 October, 1949

The formation of the Peoples' Republic of China and of its Government which was announced by the Peiping Radio on the 30th September last is an event of historic importance and marks the beginning of a new era in Asiatic history. For twenty long years, the people of China have struggled hard and struggled with varying success against the corrupt, autocratic and, one might even say, the barbarous Government of Chiang Kai-Shek. Today their struggle has been crowned with success and the victorious march of the liberation army through the vast expanse of China has become irresistible. The Chinese Communists now control the entire Sino-Russian border from Manchuria to Sinkiang. The last remnants of the Kuomintang power in South China are collapsing with surprising speed. The Government of Chiang Kai-Shek has, for all practical purposes, ceased to exist in China. Chiang Kai-Shek himself is today a fugitive from justice at the hands of his people.

In this situation, the Government of our country has a clear duty and that duty is to grant immediate recognition to the Peoples' Republic of China and its Government at Peiping. It is well established that while the granting of recognition is within the discretion of States, it is not a matter of arbitrary will and must be given or refused in accordance with legal principles. In recognising a new State as a member of the International community, the existing States declare that in their opinion the new State fulfils the conditions of Statehood as required by International Law. The Peoples' Republic of China, with its capital at Peiping, does fulfil all the conditions of Statehood as required by International Law and has, therefore, the right to immediate recognition from the Government of our country. It is unavoidable that political interests and considerations may, from time to time, influence the

act or refusal of recognition. This is a circumstance which may also determine the attitude of a State in granting recognition to a new State. But even from the point of view of India's political interests and considerations, recognition of the new Government in China and the establishment of diplomatic relations with it are called for immediately.

It will be impolitic for India to continue to recognize the Chiang Kai-Shek Government. The Government of Chiang Kai-Shek has lost its independence ; it has ceased to be effective and, as a belligerent party in a civil war, it has been utterly and completely defeated.

Chiang Kai-Shek must now find his recognition — or shall we say, condemnation — in the pages of Chinese history. From the political arena his exit is final and irrevocable. To recognize his Government now is to recognize the dead past. Let India accord her recognition to the living reality in China and let her do so with alacrity and enthusiasm and lay the foundations of Sino-Indian collaboration in the affairs of Asia.

HONGKONG BELONGS TO CHINA

Full text of a signed editorial in "The Nation" published at Calcutta on 13 October, 1949

With the setting up of the Peoples' Republic of China, Hongkong has become an issue of international importance. This rugged island with an area of thirty square miles lying at the gateway to South China has, indeed, had a chequered history. Hongkong is an "open port", with a halo of foreign luxury round its high hills, but it is built with the toil and sweat of tens of thousands of Chinese workers, who live in ghastly poverty.

Great Britain wrested Hongkong from China at the end of the First Opium War. Her present rights over this island must be determined by the circumstances in which she seized it. The cause of the Opium War was very simple. China refused to allow Great Britain's importation of opium ; the latter imposed that importation upon the former, by force.

The earliest Edict against the opium habit was promulgated in China nearly two hundred years ago. This was by the Emperor Yung Chang in 1729. Upto that date, so far as is known, only two hundred chests a year had been used in China, although opium had been a monopoly of the Moghul Emperors for more than a century. But, from the beginning of the 18th century with the steady rise of Christian Power in the East, the opium trade steadily increased, in spite of the opposition of the Peking Government and of the Chinese people themselves. This increase was almost entirely due to British trade. Britain forced more than one war upon the unfortunate Chinese people solely in the interest of the vendors of this pernicious drug. She siezed Chinese territory in order to afford harbour to her smugglers, who landed increasing cargoes of opium in China in defiance of the Chinese Government. Although the Imperial Government of China never ceased to denounce this importation as ruinous to China, and passed Edict

after Edict against the smuggling of opium, the combination of Chinese merchants known as "the Hong" was always ready to assist Britain in a business which brought to the former a steady income in bribes and gave the latter enormous profits. Finally, a war was forced on China by the Christian Power in the year 1840 in defence and for the expansion of a commerce which is now universally admitted to have been an immoral and accursed one.

The result of the war was a foregone conclusion. It was, indeed, not a war, but, as history records, a succession of butcheries and massacres, in which the aggressors ran little risk and covered themselves with infamy. They fought for the right to poison the Chinese people in defiance of the prohibition of the importation by the Chinese Government and solely in the interest of the opium-smuggling profiteers. Thus was the Treaty of Nanking of 1842 forced down the throats of the Government and people of China. The island of Hongkong was, under that Treaty, ceded to Great Britain. Hongkong was then organized openly as an enemy stronghold, where English and Chinese smugglers, and pirates and desperadoes of every description, found protection under the British flag.

The Treaty of Nanking of 1842 was an "unequal" treaty from every point of view. Consent, real and true, on the part of the representatives of a State concluding a treaty is a condition of its validity. There was, in the case of the Treaty of Nanking, no such consent on the part of China. It was a surrender of China's sovereign rights under duress and force majeure. The Treaty of Nanking of August 29, 1842 has therefore neither legal validity nor moral justification.

Hongkong belongs to China and must be restored to her by Britain. Britain can erase a few pages of her black record in China by following the example of the Soviet Union. In the agreement between China and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics signed on May 31, 1924, Russia and China agreed to annul all previous treaties

between China and the Czarist Government and to replace them with new treaties and agreements on the basis of equality, reciprocity and justice. Thus, by one stroke, Russia surrendered voluntarily all her special rights, privileges and interests under "favoured nation" treaties and otherwise and assumed a relationship with China on the basis of full eqality, reciprocity and justice.

Britain must annul the unequal Treaty of Nanking and surrender to China what rightfully belongs to her. "Render unto Ceaser the things that are Ceaser's".

OUR PRIME MINISTER THROWS OFF THE MASK

Full text of a signed editorial in "The Nation" published at Calcutta on 16 October, 1949

What I had apprehended has happened. Our Prime Minister has thrown off the mask of neutrality, which he has been wearing since the 15th August 1947. He has succumbed to America's deft diplomacy. America showered on him volleys of tributes, hailed him as the Columbus of 1949, put him on a par with Abraham Lincoln, made him the focus of her flashlight propaganda. The result of that, no doubt, has been that our Prime Minister's name has reached the farthest corners of the New World, but at Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's expense. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's political corpse lies today on the floor of the Congress of the United States. A much lesser dose of hero-worship would have done as much. For, our Prime Minister's neutrality was after all a pose and a pretence.

In an article entitled "India's Neutrality Threatened" published in "the Nation" of the 4th September 1948, I said : "Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru has often declared India's intention of remaining neutral. But, unfortunately he has not followed up that intention with any concrete action that may inspire confidence in the minds of India's millions. If our present shaky and uncertain foreign policy remains as it is, then there is every apprehension that China's disastrous fate will overtake India."

Seven months later in an article entitled "The Republic within the Commonwealth" which was published in "The Nation" of the 18th April, 1949, I warned my countrymen that "Panditji's pontifical pronouncement does not augur well for India's future. It shows that India's neutrality is a myth, that India's severance from the British Commonwealth is an old forgotten dream, that Asia, which is no longer the 'fringe' (to quote Panditji) but the centre, must once more prepare for the insidious re-entry of British Imperialism into the Indian stage."

In the course of the same article I said, "We ask him (Pandit Nehru) to realise that the British wooing of India is part of the master strategy to encompass the Indian Ocean and the Pacific for the purposes of the Empire Defence Plan. If Pandit Nehru goes to honeymoon over it, perfect bliss may be his, but India will be undone."

On the 6th of this month, that is to say, on the eve of our Prime Minister's departure for America, in the course of an exclusive interview to the United Press of America I said that "my apprehension was that our Prime Minister would make India a collaborator in America's preparations for war against Soviet Russia." My apprehension has, unfortunately, come true — and much sooner than I had imagined. I had not imagined that in his very first public utterance in America, our Prime Minister would throw off his mask, set the seal publicly upon his secret, though ill-concealed, alignment with the Anglo-American Bloc and thereby precipitate a Third World War.

Our Prime Minister has tried to raise a dust-storm by his platitudinous speech. Using high-flown rhetoric he has said, "Where freedom is menaced, or justice threatened, or where aggression takes place, we cannot be and shall not be neutral". Freedom has been and still is menaced in Malaya. Justice has been threatened in Indonesia. Aggression continues in Hongkong and Vietnam. Yet our Prime Minister never declared in the past that India cannot be and shall not be neutral.

Since the 15th August 1947, he has practically acquiesced in British, French and Dutch Imperialism and has not dared to raise his voice against the menace to freedom, or the threat to justice, or aggression in South-Asian countries. The political clap-trap he resorted to on the 13th of this month was in the interests, if not at the bidding, of the Anglo-American Powers. It cannot deceive Indians, except, of course, those who are willing to be deceived.

India which should have been the refuge of the afflicted nations in the East, India which could have been the terror of Imperialist and colonial tyrants now lies prostrate at the feet of the Anglo-American Powers. America's purpose has been fulfilled, but India has been betrayed.

SOCIALIST CONSOLIDATION—THE NEED OF THE HOUR

Full text of the Presidential Address at the United Socialist Conference held at Calcutta on 28 October, 1949

COMRADES,

Believe me, I am not using conventional language when I say that it is not without emotion that I am extending to you a cordial and sincere welcome. Your presence here in such large numbers in response to my invitation I receive as an expression of your goodwill towards me and of your determination to deliver our country from the galling yoke of a foreign Commonwealth and of domestic tyranny coupled with inefficiency and corruption. For many months past, I have been eagerly looking forward to such an occasion as this when representatives of different Socialist, leftist and progressive parties in India and socialist-minded comrades would meet together and deliberate on the tasks ahead of us. I am happy that that occasion has come at last—an occasion charged with deep political significance and pregnant with immense possibilities, which, I have every hope, will materialize.

2. The United Socialist Conference which is now in session has been the generating idea of my political conception for some time past. The conviction has been fast growing upon me that socialism alone is the cure for our country's ills, that the right-wing Congress leadership's blundering policy has led the country from one fold of slavery to another and is sure to bring about the complete political and economic ruin of our country. On the other side, I saw a large number of groups, big and small among the Socialists, leftists and progressives, each working according to its own lights, and without any cohesion among them. I felt that if the Socialist, leftist and progressive parties could be brought on the same platform, welded together on some fundamental bases and made to present a united fighting front, they could easily defeat the forces

of reaction and the foreign and indigenous vested interests in alliance with them and establish the Socialist order in our country. With that conviction and in that hope, I made some pronouncements calling attention to the imperative necessity of Socialist consolidation in India. In April last, some of us met in Bombay and formed the Leftist Co-ordination Council, which has made some headway since then. Other comrades have for a considerable time been making untiring efforts for building up a United Left Front. The victory of the united Socialist, leftist and progressive forces at the South Calcutta Bye-election convinced me that the time had most definitely come for Socialist consolidation in the country, that the soil was ready for it and that the seeds of Socialist consolidation must be sown right at that moment. For that reason, during my stay at Geneva in the middle of July last, I announced my decision to convene a United Socialist Conference at an early date, to be followed by the formation of the United Socialist Congress and the holding of its first session towards the end of this year. My announcement received warm support from almost all the Socialist, leftist and progressive parties and after consultation with their representatives, the dates for the Conference were fixed for the 25th, 26th and 27th September and the venue at Nagpur. Unfortunately, I had a heart attack on the 20th August last and had to keep to bed under medical advice. Thereupon I sought the advice of representatives of some of the parties whom I was able to contact and in accordance with their advice, the conference was postponed till today, much to my regret and to your inconvenience. I feel happy, however, that we have been able to meet today and commence our deliberations.

3. We are meeting today under the threatening shadow of a third World War. The atomic race is on at a terrific speed. The Russian discovery of the atomic weapon will not, I am sure, be the last link in the formidable chain of armaments. The war of nerves between the two Power Blocs is daily reaching an unprecedented degree of intensity and there is no knowing when it will

burst into flames and set the whole world ablaze. Western Imperialism is taking a new lease of life by changing its colour, almost chameleon-like. It is attempting to cover up its brutality and ruthlessness by its make-believes of Commonwealth relations and Dollar aid. But there is one happy sign of the times. The whole structure of Western Imperialist machinations in the East has been upset by the victory of the Peoples' Liberation Movement in China and the balance has gone in favour of Socialism. This is what I had ventured to predict as early as 1945. The corrupt and fascist regime of Generalissimo Chiang-Kai-Shek and his reactionary Kuomintang is dying, if not already dead, and a new Peoples' Republic is functioning in China under the leadership of Mao Tse-Tung and his gallant comrades Chu-Teh and Chou-Enlai. I hope the leaders of the People's Republic in China will lay the foundations of an Asian Bloc, drive the last nail into the coffin of Western Imperialism in Asia and thereby save Asian continent from being dragged into a Third World War. Our present Government's timid submissiveness to Anglo-American diplomacy has, so far, stood in the way of its recognising the Peoples' Republic in China. The terms for British, United States and Australian recognition of that Republic have been announced by Dr. Evatt, Australian Minister for External Affairs. But our Prime Minister and Minister for External Affairs is still maintaining a dubious, if not dissembling silence, inspite of his recent high-level contacts in Britain, U.S.A. and Canada. Nevertheless, I shall say that in the otherwise dark international firmament, China is a silver lining of great significance.

4. Our country's sky also is, for the moment, tarred with irredeemable black. We find an unholy alliance between the top national bourgeoisie and the semi-feudal elements of the country under the tutelage of British Imperialism. The result naturally is an orgy of power-worship, a fury of autocratic misrule and fanaticism of mass-exploitation. The evil star of Chiang Kai-Shek which has fortunately set in China has risen in the North-West of India and it is my apprehension that our Government is

going the Kuomintang way. People are being subjected to severe repression, they are being hemmed in on all sides by Security Acts, Ordinances and Emergency measures, and thousands have been cast into prison without trial. The press has been practically gagged and all the methods that British Imperialists used to employ for suppressing freedom of speech, freedom of association and freedom of assembly are being employed by our ruling authorities. We have today Dominion Status in action and along with it, the concentrated essence of all the repressive legislations passed in British Imperialist times. It can truly be said of our ruling authorities, as was said of the Roman Tribune by Baroncelli, that they "spoke the language of patriots but are treading in the footsteps of despots". The Congress-capitalist alliance has sounded the death-knell of freedom, democracy and social justice in Indian life. Corruption has been let loose, black-marketing and profiteering are stalking through the land, favouritism and nepotism are creating havoc in all places, high and low. What is the remedy for all these ? I say in one word Socialism. Socialism is the consecrated formulary of our political faith.

5. Socialist consolidation is, therefore, the need of the moment. The spirit of the times demands it. Early in 1941, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose envisaging the dialectic process in history, wrote : "Philosophically speaking, right-consolidation is the 'thesis' which demands its 'anti-thesis' or left-consolidation. Without this anti-thesis and the conflict following in its wake, no further progress is possible. All those who believe in progress and desire it should therefore actively assist in this task of leftist consolidation and should be prepared for the conflict resulting therefrom." The Indian National Congress, which so long carried on an anti-Imperialist fight intermittently, has, unfortunately, been converted by Rightists into a reactionary organization. Against this stronghold of reaction, against right-consolidation which the Congress today represents, left-consolidation is the logical anti-thesis. I remember in this connection another remarkable utterance of Netaji which runs thus : "History will separate the chaff from

the grain—the pseudo-leftists from the genuine leftists. When this elimination takes place, all the genuine leftists will come together and fusion will take place. By this natural, or historical process, left-consolidation will be achieved". That historical process is already in operation. That fusion, let me emphasize, is already taking place, here in our midst, in this Conference itself. The chaff is being separated from the grain. There are one or two parties who, as I said previously, are "still of the Congress though not in it." With their numerous shifts and make-shifts, with their vacillations and hesitancies, they are playing a counter-revolutionary role and are a hindrance to left-consolidation. I would like in this connection to remind you of the bases of the future left movement as envisaged by Netaji early in 1941. They were :—

(i) Complete national independence and uncompromising anti-Imperialist struggle for attaining it (in the present context this struggle is one for complete severance from the British Commonwealth of Nations). (ii) A thoroughly modern and Socialist State. (iii) Scientific large scale production for the economic regeneration of the country. (iv) Social ownership and control of both production and distribution. (v) Freedom for the individual in the matter of religious worship. (vi) Equal rights for every individual. (vii) Linguistic and cultural autonomy for all sections of the Indian community. (viii) Application of the principles of equality and social justice in building up the new order in Free India.

6. I shall put before you certain concrete proposals. In my view, we should immediately form an All India Socialist Organisation under the name of United Socialist Congress or Samyukta Samyavadi Sangh, the fundamental aims and objectives of which I shall set out in a few minutes. All the existing Socialist, leftist and progressive parties which accept the fundamental aims and objectives of the United Socialist Congress and seek affiliation to it, will be affiliated to that organisation. In addition to them, all adult men and women in India who subscribed to the said

fundamental aims and objectives should be admitted to membership of the United Socialist Congress. In my view, the United Socialist Congress should not just be a federation of the existing Socialist, leftist and progressive parties ; it should be an organisation based on mass membership. The mass-character of this organisation must be steadily and speedily increased so that within a short time, it can wrest the leadership of the country from the hands of the present reactionary leaders and become the only political organisation claiming the true allegiance of the Indian people and enjoying their confidence. It should have branches in every province which in provincial matters will enjoy full autonomy. This Conference should elect a Central Council of the United Socialist Congress. The Council should take steps to summon the first plenary session of the United Socialist Congress at an early date and in a central place.

7. The main work of the United Socialist Congress will be to rouse the consciousness of the peasants and workers of the land, of the intelligentsia and lower middle classes and of the masses in general, in order to prepare them as a fighting force against the forces of reaction which have gained ascendancy today. It will also contest the Parliamentary elections in order to return to the legislatures, Central and Provincial, the real representatives of the people, and to establish Socialist Republics in the different provinces of India, and in the Centre, a Union of Socialist Republics.

8. We consider the present Constituent Assembly, brought into being by indirect elections, as thoroughly unrepresentative in character, and the best evidence of this is furnished by the fact that the Constitution of India framed by it so far, is the very negation of democracy.

9. Once the United Socialist Congress succeeds in defeating its reactionary opponents at the polls, its representatives will constitute the Indian Parliament. That Parliament will scrap the Constitution framed by the pre-

sent Constituent Assembly and frame the Constitution of the Union of Socialist Republics of India and of its different constituent Socialist Republics. It will establish Socialist Governments in the Centre and in the provinces, constituted in accordance with the declared will of the Indian people and enjoying their confidence.

10. I need hardly say that if I had considered it possible to bring about the immediate dissolution of all the existing Socialist, leftist and progressive parties and to form a United Socialist Party overnight, I would have recommended that step. I am conscious, however, that there are some practical difficulties that way. What I have recommended to you is the result of deep thinking and consultations with representatives of different parties spreading over several months. Some people may consider me to be over-cautious, but beginning with a flash and ending in smoke has never appealed to me in my political career of nearly three decades and the political experience that I have gained. I am recommending at this stage the formation of the United Socialist Congress with the firm hope that through common endeavour the existing Socialist, leftist and progressive parties will gradually dissolve themselves and a United Socialist Party will evolve out of the United Socialist Congress.

11. I am aware, there are some who desire a detailed programme. I for one do not think that it is necessary at this stage. Details will have to be worked out at a later stage. Materials for working out those details we have in abundance. I may remind you in this connection that the National Planning Committee that was formed by Srijut Subhas Chandra Bose as President of the Indian National Congress has published reports on different subjects which will always be very helpful in working out details. In fact, blue-prints of schemes of national reconstruction are there. At the present moment what is most necessary is that we should be clear about and agree on the fundamentals.

12. I shall now place before you what, according to

me, should be the fundamental aims and objectives of the proposed United Socialist Congress :—

(*i*) The United Socialist Congress declares its faith in scientific socialism with such variations and modifications as are and may be necessary on account of conditions in India and in the course of its working.

(*ii*) It demands that the Indian State must be a Union of Socialist Republics free from British or any other foreign control.

(*iii*) It demands that the Indian State must cease to be a member of the British Commonwealth of Nations.

(*iv*) It declares that the present Constituent Assembly is thoroughly unrepresentative in character and has no right to frame the constitution of free India and that it is only a Constituent Assembly elected on the basis of adult franchise that has the right to do so.

(*v*) It demands that the Indian State in all its departments must be administered on socialist lines and the workers and peasants of the land must be given their rightful place in the Administration.

(*vi*) It declares that land in India must belong to the actual tillers of the soil and that landlordism must be abolished without compensation.

(*vii*) It declares that basic and key industries must belong to the community and must be run and managed by the State as a part of planned production for consumption of the people.

(*viii*) It demands that all enterprises belonging to foreign capital must be nationalised.

(*ix*) It demands that the boundaries of the existing provinces be reformed and redistributed on the linguistic basis.

(*x*) It demands that civil liberties be guaranteed to all.

(*xi*) It demands that religious freedom be guaranteed to all.

(*xii*) It demands that free education in schools be guaranteed to all.

(*xiii*) It demands that in the Indian State all must have the right to claim food and shelter from the State in return for their due contribution to society.

(*xiv*) It declares that Socialist industrialization on the basis of the electrification of the whole country and scientific co-operative agriculture must be undertaken by the state and that a Central Planning Commission should be formed for that purpose.

(*xv*) It declares that Hindusthani written in Roman script should be the lingua franca of India.

(*xvi*) It declares its belief in complete equality of sexes.

(*xvii*) It demands that military service should be compulsory for the youth of the country.

13. Comrades, I have now placed before you my ideas as to what the fundamental aims and objectives of the proposed United Socialist Congress should be. It is for you to make such changes and modifications as you may consider necessary. I would again emphasize that it is needless at this stage to go into elaborate details. If we can agree on the fundamentals, I have no doubt that we will agree on the details too when the time comes to settle the details.

14. I need hardly impress on you that the future of the Left or the Socialist movement in India, and in fact, the future of our country itself, rests to a large extent, upon the outcome of our deliberations. Let us chart out that

future in clear and concrete outline and go forward unitedly with faith in the future — prepared to make the sacrifices that may be demanded of us and determined to overcome all the obstacles that the forces of reaction will throw in our way. Let no discord break the harmony of our rhythmic march. Let us take our decisions unanimously and not by the majority vote. Let us not forget that the brave men who gave their lives in the struggle for India's independence and for the establishment of a Socialist State in India have already hallowed the ground under our feet and also the battle-ground of the future. It is for us, the living, to dedicate ourselves to the unfinished task which they who fought and fell have so nobly advanced. Comrades, I welcome you once again and invite you to enter upon your deliberations. Jai Hind.

DISGRACE ABOUNDING AND THE REMEDY

Full text of a signed editorial in "The Nation" on the Calcutta University published on 6 November, 1949

Once again I have to take up my pen for a cause which is sacred to all of us. The body is still weak ; but the cause of education, which is not only our cause, but also the cause of those that come after us, demands that we should not acquiesce in the inexplicable action of the Chancellor of our University or in the will of a few families and intriguers who have defiled its main stream. I have it from unimpeachable sources that interested and influential persons are at work to sabotage the public demand for an open judicial enquiry into the affairs of our University. Since the unmasking of the University marks scandal, "The Nation" has been systematically publishing other facts relating to abuses and malpractices there, in spite of the iron curtain put up by the Vice-Chancellor or by any of the departmental heads of our University. What have been published so far are but samples of what have been going on there for the last three decades and more at the instance and bidding of the family cliques and coteries that have been controlling the University administration and have not yet freed it from their malign influence. Tampering with marks and mark-sheets and destroying cover pages of answer papers are but one instance of our academic brigandage. Other instances which have come to light also partake of the same character. The ex-Vice-Chancellor drawing salary for the period of leave on deputation of 42 months is an instance of selfless public service for which there is, as far as I am aware, no precedent or parallel. Similarly the grave irregularities detected in the publication department are heavy with the heritage of favouritism and nepotism, which has almost become our University's tradition. Nomination of Fellows of the Senate by crafty manipulations, making packed bodies of the Syndicate and the Faculties so that they may register the will of the family cliques and coteries, photostatic disclosures in these columns and also in the columns

of other papers are some of the links in the chain of staggering revelations regarding the serious abuses and malpractices in our University administration.

In a signed editorial entitled "Impeachment and Trial" ("The Nation", 26th September, 1949), I said : "My countrymen, too long, far too long have you and I suffered all this rank favouritism, nepotism and corruption inside the sacred portals of our Alma Mater to continue. It is up to all of us to wake up, to atone for our sins of omissions of the past and to demand that the families which have corrupted our sacred institution and the officials who have played second fiddle to them be removed from its management and from public life and that they be placed before a judicial tribunal to answer charges of malfeasance, misfeasance and corruption." In our leading articles entitled "Our Varsity Vampires" (The Nation—3rd October) and "Between Courage and Cowardice" (The Nation—14th October) we demanded an open judicial enquiry into all the departments of the University to be conducted by men of unimpeachable integrity and character. The Enquiry Committee which was reported to have been recommended by the present Vice-Chancellor did not answer to that description and was no better than a farce of an Enquiry Committee. We know that scuttling attempts are being made by interested persons in order that the enquiry demanded by the public may spring a leak even before it starts and one of the attempts is to constitute the Enquiry Committee with a few titled gentry who never had any record of public service, who never could claim any reputation for independence in British Imperialist times, whom the people looked upon as stooges of the British, but who had become national patriots overnight. Such insidious attempts are still being made by persons belonging to some of the ruling family cliques and by persons who have always played second fiddle to them. And I desire to tell the Chancellor and the Vice-Chancellor of our University that if they aid and abet such attempts or encourage them in any way, they will be doing the greatest disservice imaginable to the cause of education in this Province and will be covering themselves up with infamy.

I reiterate the demand so persistently made in these columns for a judicial enquiry into our University affairs. I do so because I know that the educated community in this Province are overwhelmingly behind me. I do so, even though I have just heard that the Chancellor has announced the formation of an Enquiry Committee consisting of some of the names which "The Nation" published and condemned two or three days ago. I do so, because I feel that the Committee announced by the Chancellor will prove to be a still-born Committee. I do so, because I am certain that the educated community will never give them their confidence or even the common courtesies of life. If the Chancellor is really keen on removing favouritism, nepotism, malpractices and corruption from the University of which he is the head he must scrap the Committee he has just announced, seek the good offices of the Chief Justice of the Calcutta High Court and form a Committee with the Chief Justice as its President and two or more Judges of the Calcutta High Court, whose names may be suggested by the Chief Justice and who have been unconnected with the University administration, as its members. It is only such a Committee that can or will inspire public confidence. It is only such a Committee that can rid the University of its long standing abuses and malpractices and set it on its feet. A group of superannuated gentlemen whose past is known, whose antecedents and connections are public property, and some of whom are known to be friends and associates of the ruling cliques and coteries in our University cannot and ought not to be raised to the dignity of members of a University Enquiry Committee. The educated public of West Bengal will not tolerate it.

Mr. Chancellor, let me tell you that you have made yourself, possibly unwittingly, the blind instrument of the ambitious will of a few ruling families and of a few corrupt and crooked intriguers, whereas you ought to have been an apostle of the noblest cause that could inspire the human breast—the creation of the people of the future. You ought to have taken the necessary steps to create the people of the future. That cannot be accomplished through

crooked ways, by submitting to family intrigues, by false notions of prestige and expediency. That can only be accomplished by the sweat of the soul, by the boldness of faith, by refusing to compromise with corruption and crime. You got the chance of a lifetime. You have thrown it away for the time being. May you have the wisdom and the courage to retrace your false step.

ON SUBHASISM

Full text of the Inaugural Address at the All-Bengal Subhasist Students' Conference held at Calcutta on 26 December, 1949

MY YOUNG COMRADES,

I thank you for the invitation you so cordially extended to me to deliver the inaugural address at your Conference. It is with a feeling of deep responsibility that I respond to it. At this time of widespread distress, political, social and economic, Conferences such as yours have great value. The time has most definitely come for those who describe themselves as leftists or socialists and subscribe to Netaji's ideology to take stock of the harvest of woe which twenty-eight months of so-called "National Government" have raised in this country and decide upon their course of action. This is pre-eminently the time to speak the truth, the whole truth, frankly, freely and boldly. Values have sunk to extremely low levels ; our workers, peasants and middle class people are half-starved and half-clothed ; large numbers of factories are without the raw materials and orders necessary to keep them going ; vast fields lie uncultivated ; taxes have risen ; our ability to pay has fallen ; the common people are faced with serious curtailment of income ; the means of exchange are partially frozen ; the withered leaves of agricultural and industrial enterprise lie on every side. I repeat that this is pre-eminently the time to speak the truth. You call yourselves Subhasist students, by which I understand that you believe in Netaji's ideology. Let me remind you that by far the most significant of the same is the ending of slavery, exploitation and tyranny, domestic and foreign, and the establishment of a Socialist State and Government in India, — "a Socialist System" to quote Netaji, "in which the initiative will not be left to private individuals, but the State will take over the responsibility of solving economic questions" It is time for you to re-assess your role in the present set-up in the light of Netaji's ideology and make

your own distinctive contribution to the building up of a socialist order in your country.

2. Do not assume for a moment that our struggle is over. The uncompromising struggle which Netaji foresaw and initiated has to be carried on and consummated. The much-publicized "Independence" that we have got is only one of the varieties of Dominion Status within the British Commonwealth and marks of bondage are still on our minds, hands and feet. Our foreign policy is being influenced, if not dictated, by Whitehall, and without the latter's assent, formal or implied, our Government has not the courage to recognize the People's Republic of China, which was formed three months ago. Our so-called neutrality is only on the lips of a few Ministers in New Delhi ; it is about to be mortgaged in advance to the British Commonwealth and its ally. This being the type of 'Independence' we have got, I felt amazed when I read in August, 1947, and subsequently also, reports of speeches of a few top-ranking I.N.A. officers in Delhi and elsewhere, saying that Netaji's dream had been fulfilled. Such utterances from the lips of those who received inspiration directly from Netaji and who fought for the Complete Independence of India—India one and undivided—under his leadership, sounded in my ears like the language of blasphemy. I hope the experience of the last twenty-eight months has made them realize that the dream of Netaji has yet to be fulfilled, that the fight for Complete Independence is continuing and has to continue until the goal is reached and that a Socialist State has yet to be established, a State which, to quote Netaji himself, "will function as the servant of the people". It is only then and not until then that the students of the country and those to whom Netaji administered the oath can rest.

3. I must recall in this connection the tragic history of the partition of this country and how jaundiced and weak-kneed statesmanship, supped full of an irrational despair, found in that pernicious partition the panacea for the ills of the country. March, 1947, to August, 1947, was

the period of gigantic national suicide, in the course of which all the reactionary elements of and in the Congress and the Hindu Mahasabha, casting to the winds the advice of Mahatma Gandhi, clamoured for a self-inflicted death. Warnings given to them went unheeded, drunk as they were with the heady wine of despair. Their propaganda machine worked and they kept the whole country etherized upon the surgeon's table for the knife to be applied. What followed is recent memory—blood-bath, and caravans of homeless refugees pouring in from the east and west of India. But partition is now a fait accompli and we have to accept it, and decide upon our course of action in the present set-up.

4. Do you realize what havoc two years of Congress rule have caused in our country ? On August 15, 1947, India started as one of the most solvent countries in the world. Now she has been reduced to one of the poorest by the reckless actions and thoughtless inactions of her Prodigal Sons, the eminent Congress leaders ! Her Sterling balances depleted, her development projects all but stopped, India is going about in the West with a beggar's bowl in her hand. Inside the country, the picture is no better. Corruption, favouritism and nepotism are running rampant, and black-marketeers, profiteers and corruptors of public morals are at large with the Government looking on helplessly, almost pathetically. Commissions and Committees we have galore. Of paper-schemes and assurances we have a barren exuberance. Our present regime can truly be decided as the regime of "Schemers". The common man is going bankrupt of the barest necessaries of life. But go to any of the capitals, Central or Provincial, you will find opportunists and careerists trafficking in controls, permits and licences, and many Ministers and officials going about quite unaffected by public misery. Ministers and officials, with honourable exceptions, of course, think that their duty begins and ends with doling out hopes for the future. Inefficiency in the Government departments and State managed concerns, such as railways, posts and telegraphs, telephones, transports, etc., has increased to a degree which

was hardly imaginable and evidence of which we are getting everyday of our lives. To give one small instance, I can mention the new classification of railway compartments and within a few months thereafter, cancellation of the same and reversion to something like the old classification, taking a toll of lakhs and lakhs of public money only on account of the bare technicalities of classification coupled with the whims of a Minister.

5. India's prestige abroad has in fact gone down considerably, though our ruling authorities have been declaring from the Secretariat tops that it has increased. This is partly due to the decision taken by our Prime Minister this year in London that India should remain within the British Commonwealth of Nations and partly due to the incompetence, thoughtlessness and extravagance of some of our ambassadors abroad. Defeating the External Affairs Ministry's "hush-hush" policy truth sometimes trickles through the bamboo curtain and we get unimpeachable evidence of the true state of affairs in some of our embassies abroad and of profiteering, corruption and malpractices going on around them.

6. One of the weapons with which the capitalist-dominated Congress party is maintaining its precarious balance in the country is ruthless suppression of civil liberties and another is the gagging of the Press. We find today that if a newspaper or newspapers dare to expose the corruption and malpractices inside the administration, their reward comes in the shape of a vindictive order from the Government cancelling their Press Cards. The West Bengal Government alone has a record of passing restrictive ordear on as many as thirty newspapers and journals. If a newspaper dares to publish inside information regarding corruption and malpractices in the acceptance of railway tenders supported by unimpeachable evidence, it does not receive congratulations from our Central Government for the public service rendered ; on the contrary, pat comes the order from Olympian heights, secret, of course, directing the railway administration to stop *advertizing in that paper.*

7. Formation of linguistic provinces has been a part of Congress policy and programme ever since 1911. What tribute has the Congress, now in power, paid to it ? Andhra, of course, has partially succeeded and I offer my congratulations to her. But the demands of all other provinces have been bypassed by the Congress. The demands for Samyukta Maharastra, Samyukta Karnataka, Aikya Kerala and the redrawing of the boundaries of West Bengal, Bihar and Assam on linguistic basis are, in fact, being flouted by the Congress, under the leadership of J-V-P, in spite of repeated Congress pledges to meet them. Four days after the partition of the country, that is, on the 19th August, 1947, I put forward the demand for the inclusion of the Bengali-speaking areas of Bihar within West Bengal and since then I have been voicing the demand at public meetings and in my statements, messages and otherwise. In April last, I demanded that Cooch-Behar, a Bengali State, in every sense of the term, should be integrated into West Bengal, a demand which has been supported by public men all over the province and also by the people of Cooch-Behar, as the columns of "The Nation" bear witness. I have demanded also the inclusion of Tripura. But there seems to be a deep-laid conspiracy somewhere to keep this truncated province of West Bengal politically and economically helpless and inert and hence her legitimate demands are being systematically ignored. Look, on the contrary, at Seraikella and Kharswan, the two tiny States where Hindi-speaking population was and is negligible. But they have been tagged on to Bihar for no other reason, perhaps, than that a few top-ranking Congressmen of Bihar demanded it. This is, of course, not provincialism in the Congress dictionary. But when you and I put forward our legitimate demands, sanctioned by history, language and culture, and recognized by the Congress itself since the year 1911, we are dubbed "provincialists" and disrupters of the country's unity.

8. These then are some of the dark realities of the moment and only a foolish and blind optimist can deny them. What then is the remedy and what the role the

students should play in the present set-up ? It will not do for you, my young comrades, to lie supinely on your backs and allow yourselves the luxury of quiet contemplation. I am well aware that those who uptil recently advised students to boycott schools and colleges, give up their studies and throw themselves into the political fight, have now shifted their ground and are calling upon the students to keep clear of politics. That is because they feel that if the youth, the vanguard of our national army, remain inactive, hypnotised by counsels of perfection and unmoved by all that has happened during the last twenty-eight months, then the present regime which failed through its own stubbornness and its own incompetence, and which in any other country would have been forced to abdicate, may still continue. That is why they want to paralyze the revolutionary core of the country, out of which dawn has, in every epoch, flown and put to rout the darkness of the world. I do not ask you to give up your studies. Far from it. What I ask of you is that you should as serious students of politics, take a real, living interest in it outside your class-rooms, prepare yourselves physically, morally and intellectually for the tasks ahead, and strike the blow for political and economic freedom and social justice at the right moment. That right moment, that auspicious moment, I feel has almost come. Those who want to be free, who must be free, themselves must strike the blow.

9. In the present context of things, Socialism is, to my mind, the only solution of the problems facing the country. Political struggle can only then be complete when it is carried on on the political as well as on the economic plane. As early as 1953, Netaji said that "the fight for political freedom will have to be conducted simultaneously with the fight for socio-economic emancipation. The party that will bring political freedom to India will be the party that will also put into effect the entire programme of socio-economic reconstruction". The Congress failed to achieve political freedom of the country in the real sense of the term. As regards economic freedom, it is only the truth to say that it is fast reducing the

country to economic slavery. It is for you now to fight for both, beset with difficulties, even though the fight may be. Netaji visualized a period in our national history when "leftism will mean Socialism and the task before the people will then be the reconstruction of national life on a Socialist basis." That period has come. The birth of the United Socialist Organisation of India has synchronized with the arrival of that period. That Organisation is the product of the labours of several leftist and socialist parties and individuals extending over a decade. Its aims, objectives and programme are before you. I commend them to you for careful study and I feel sure they will enable you to decide what your role should be in the struggles ahead of us. I feel sure also they will impress upon you the imperative necessity of forming a United Students' Organisation, which will subscribe to Netaji's ideology and work and fight for "the reconstruction of our national life on a Socialist basis". My words will, I hope, not be confined within the four walls of this Conference, but will reach the wider student community outside them in all parts of the country and the different students' organisations which have been functioning for years. I appeal to you and them not to be narrow or parochial in your outlook, not to give to party what is meant for the country as a whole, but to put your heads together and devise ways and means for bringing into being the United Students' Organisation I envisage.

10. At this stage, I would like to draw your attention to another matter. Some, if not all, of you must have read in "The Nation" of the 7th December, 1949, a resolution passed by the Provisional General Council of the United Socialist Organisation of India on the previous day, calling upon the people to observe the 23 January, 1950, not only as Netaji's birthday, but also as "Anti-Commonwealth Day"—a day of protest against the Constitution passed by the Indian Constituent Assembly, which was of an entirely unrepresentative character, representing as it did a small fraction of the population and even that, by indirect election. Those of you who followed the draft constitution

and the debates that took place in the Indian Constituent Assembly will not need to be convinced that the Constitution that has been passed there to fit into the framework of the British Commonwealth is the very negation of freedom, democracy and social justice. It could not be otherwise ; firstly, because "a Republic within a Commonwealth" is a thing unknown to Constitutional law or history, and secondly, because the combined wisdom, or unwisdom, of patriots and courtiers, republicans and King's friends, capitalists and pseudo-socialists, high-priests of confused liberalism and champions of absolute despotism, could not possibly produce anything better. Some of you, no doubt, remember that in the year 1939, Netaji gave the warning at the Anti-Compromise Conference at Ramgarh that the Rightist Congress leaders were anxious for a compromise with British Imperialists. What he said then came true in 1947. It is now up to the student community all over India to declare with one voice on the 23rd January, 1950, that they reject the Constitution, which is sought to be enforced on and from the 26th January, that they will rouse the people to the realization that it is a snare to their feet and that they will not rest until it is scrapped.

11. I shall now speak to you about the value of character and discipline, not in a general way, but with special reference to political life. I am not quoting copy-book maxims to you as some Congress leaders frequently do ; I am giving you facts from real life. I have been repeating since 1935 and I am not tired of repeating that he who is morally wrong can never be politically right. Many of the Congress leaders who declare in season and out of season their adherence to Gandhian principles, have really no right to take Gandhiji's name. How many members of the Central and Provincial Governments can stand examination in the light of Gandhian principles of truth, non-violence, high conduct and exemplary character ? How many of those who are now waxing eloquent over prohibition can vouch that they have religiously eschewed liquor ? How many of them can lay their hands on their hearts and say that they possess in their own lives the character and discipline that they want students

to cultivate ? I, therefore, advise you not to look up to them for example and guidance. The example of Netaji is before you as a pattern, according to which you can mould your lives ; and, if you do so, you cannot go wrong. Be to your comrades as loving and indulgent as he was to his co-workers and followers. Try your best to restrain misguided youths who believe in the cult of bombs and acid bulbs and to persuade them that salvation does not lie that way. Above all, your duty is to restore unity among the ranks of students and youngmen—the unity which Netaji visualized and described in the following words, "We have to distinguish between real unity and false unity, between the unity of action and the unity of inaction—between the unity which makes for progress and the unity which brings stagnation." Work that your Motherland may prosper ; suffer that she may rejoice. *Jai Hind.*

PART VI : 1950

A CONSTITUTION OF MYTHS AND DENIALS

Full text of an article published in the "Indian Law Review" in January, 1950

The 26th January, 1950, has passed into history. It came like a day of doom to atrophy the dreams and aspirations of the Indian people and their long-cherished expectation of liberty, equality and social justice. That day, the noose of the new Indian Constitution was hung round their necks with military pomp and ceremony. On what shall we look with the vision of Tilak, the passion of Chittaranjan Das, the reverence of Gandhi ? On this Constitution of ours, framed by the inmates of our political hothouse, whose touch with the people has been long time-barred ? It is a stroke of singular misfortune that we have to find our so-called Sovereign Democratic Republic in this Constitution which, to my mind, is the Magna Charta of our slavery. This is not the Republic that India and her known and unknown martyrs fought for. Theirs should have been the reward of a People's Socialist Republic that would have defied the scourge of tyranny, and the polluting touch of absolutism—a Republic where happiness of the people would be the only good, reason the only torch, justice the only worship, humanity the only religion.

History has not yet furnished an instance in which power abdicated of itself out of an idealistic urge. It is the nature of power that it will concede freedom in inessentials ; but when the essence of freedom is an attack upon its monopoly, it will call it treason, sedition or blasphemy and use all the weapons in its armoury to repel the attack with fury. Our Constitution is the expression of acute power mania. Its very name is absolutism. In it, freedom and justice perish by emaciation. Symptomatic of the degeneration of the Congress since the end of 1946, it is forged in the Congress smithy and under Congress High Command pressure, as Sir Mohammad Sadullah hinted the other day. Through it, the Congress High

Command who are our ruling authorities today, conspire to dwarf the people that they may better contemplate the stateliness of their Police State.

The very preamble of the Constitution is conceived in fraud. It has the trappings, but none of the substance of sovereignty or democracy or republicanism. Yet "'Sovereign Democratic Republic" they call our State—a glamorous appellation indeed for political trickery outside and police tyranny within. Our external sovereignty has been timidly surrendered by our ruling authorities to the British Commonwealth, of which His Britannic Majesty is the head. India continues to be under the British Sovereign, even though, by resort to confused constitutional casuistry, the latter is represented merely as the "symbolic head" of the British Commonwealth of Nations, and the offending word "Royal" is being removed from some of our institutions. But "Royal" our Constitution makers are intrinsically, and loyal, too, to the Empire of His Britannic Majesty which now passes by the fancy name of "Commonwealth". India's foreign policy is held in fee by Whitehall. As early as April last, General Smuts exploded the myth of a Republic within the Commonwealth, saying that "there is no middle course between the Crown and the Republic, between in and out of it". But our political acrobats headed by our Prime Minister have consecrated the myth and have thereby compromised India's sovereignty and surrendered her neutrality. In a signed article entitled "This Our Independence" published in "The Nation" of the 15th August, 1949, I said : "British diplomacy triumphed ; the Congress leaders capitulated and compromised. But that was not the last inglorious chapter in our revolutionary tradition. More ignominy was to come and it came with India's Prime Minister surrendering our proposed Republic into the lap of the British Commonwealth." Earlier, in April last, in a signed article entitled "The Republic within the Commonwealth" published in "The Nation" of the 18th April, I said : "In conformity with her declared goal, in keeping with her professed policy, in the larger interests of Asia, in the still larger

interest of world peace, India must go out of the British Commonwealth of Nations." Earlier still, in September, 1948, in an article entitled "India's Neutrality Threatened," I warned Indian leaders that there was 'a well-laid design' for bringing India in line with the Anglo-American Powers, that "Britain is making every endeavour to rope in India as a loyal and useful ally, and that India will be dragged into it (Third World War) unless she definitely and resolutely refuses to join the Anglo-American Bloc". My prognosis has, unfortunately, come true. The ruling authorities of India have mortgaged India's freedom to the British Commonwealth. The I.R. (Indian Republic) has gone under R.I. (Rex Imperator).

As regards internal sovereignty, it does not vest in the people. What matters it, that great leaders and statesmen in different parts of the world have said that a "country, with its institutions, belongs to the people who inhabit it". Our Constitution having been framed by persons who have had no touch with the people since the end of 1946, who cannot feel their pulse-beat, it is naturally unrelated to popular urge and aspirations, and leaves to the final control of a handful of bureaucrats the authority which ought to be exercised by duly elected representatives of the people. Turn to the Irish Constitution and you will find that Article 6 (i) of it states that "all powers of the Government, legislative, executive and judicial derive, under God, from the people whose right it is to designate the rulers of the State and in final appeal to decide all questions of national policy according to the requirements of the common good." Where is this emancipating touch in our Constitution ? Tearing off from the progressive ethos of this century, and concentrating all power in the hands of a few, it condemns the people to a fresh term of political, economic and social thraldom.

Articles 3 of the Constitution is a clog upon the free voice of the people desiring territorial changes on linguistic basis. This Article provides that no Bill for such purpose shall be introduced in either House of Parliament,

except on the recommendation of the President. This is a further accretion to the concentration of powers in the hands of the omnipotent President. To the demand for linguistic provinces the Congress leaders have, since they assumed power, proved impervious except in so far as it served their own purposes ; and on and from the 26th January, their nominee, the President of India, will have in his hands the brake to apply to that demand and stifle it. Well might our Congress leaders say like Caeser : "Hence ! wilt thou lift up Olympus," to the demands of the suffering people in Maharashtra, Karnataka Kerala and West Bengal.

The State is the disseminating point of rights, no less than the focus of duties. As allegiance converges to it, so is right maintained by it for the people whose collective will it ought to represent. Constitutional embodiment of rights is a modern practice and under constitutions, whether written or unwritten, certain rights are treated as fundamental and the rule of law is of essence. One way of judging the character of the State lies in the contribution it makes to the substance of human happiness by the maintenance of fundamental rights. Constitutional embodiment of fundamental rights is a reciprocal reminder of what is to be under sanctification received and what given. In embodying fundamental rights in our Constitution, our legislators, true to the character bred in their bone, have excluded the most fundamental among them, namely, the right to food, shelter, employment and security. Part III of it, that is, the part which deals with fundamental rights, bears testimony to the fact that we do not live in a "Welfare State" but in a Police State. It is conspicuous more by what it omits than by what it commits, and what it commits is hedged round by too many restrictions to be of any real value to the people. Right to equality under Article 14 is only a white-washing expedient ; for, in a Capitalist State and in a capitalist society, inspired by acquisitive motives, equality before law is a fine yarn woven by constitutional myth-makers. Apparently, there is one law ; but actually there is one law for the poor,

another for the rich ; as the fundamental omissions in the part on fundamental rights so clearly demonstrate. Article 19 clause (1) declares inter alia that all citizens shall have the right (a) to freedom of speech and expression. (b) to assemble peaceably and without arms and (c) to form associations or unions, compendiously described as "the right to freedom". But under clauses 2, 3 and 4 of the same Article, there is nothing to prevent the State from imposing restrictions upon the right to freedom either by the operation of any existing law or by making fresh laws. In fact, the said Clauses 2, 3 and 4 make it clear that nothing in Sub-clauses (a), (b) and (c) of Clause I of the said Article 19 shall affect the operation of any existing law or prevent the State from making further laws seriously curtailing the so-called right to freedom. To make my meaning absolutely clear, I am setting out below the said clauses 2, 3 and 4 :

(2) Nothing in Sub-clause (a) of Clause (1) shall affect the operation of any existing law in so far as it relates to, or prevent the State from making any law relating to, libel, slander, defamation, contempt of court or any matter which offends against decency or morality or which undermines the security of, or tends to overthrow the State.

(3) Nothing in sub-clause (b) of the said clause shall affect the operation of any existing law in so far as it imposes, or prevent the State from making any law imposing, in the interests of public order, reasonable restrictions on the exercise of the right conferred by the said Sub-clause.

(4) Nothing in Sub-clause (c) of the said clause shall affect the operation of any existing law in so far as it imposes, or prevent the State from making any law imposing, in the interest of public order or morality, reasonable restrictions on the exercise of the right conferred by the said Sub-clause.

In this connection, it is necessary to refer also to the wide, hitherto unknown and, I would add, dangerous,

definition of the words "the State" in Part III. Article 2 defines "the State" as follows :—

"In this Part unless the context otherwise requires, 'the State' includes the Government and Parliament of India and the Government and the Legislature of each of the States and all local or other authorities within the territory of India or under the control of the Government of India".

It is clear, therefore, that anything which may undermine the security of even local or other authorities or which may affect their reputation or credit or any restriction that may be asked for in the name or on the plea of decency, public order or morality, may be made the subject of further legislation, which will sound the dead march over the so-called right to freedom.

An eminent political thinker has said, "Freedom of speech, in fact, with the freedom of assembly therein implied is at once the catharsis of discontent and the condition necessary for reform. A Government can always learn more from the criticism of its opponent than from the eulogy of its supporters." But in our Constitution, to stifle that free voice of criticism, a wide breach has been deliberately left for the infiltration into it of the concentrated essence of the repressive measures enacted in India in British Imperialist times and the double-distilled essence of repression extracted by a new-fangled indigenous despotism.

In England and America, no one can be deprived of his life or liberty, except for a clear breach of the law and without due process of law ; whereas, all that Article 21 of our Constitution provides is that "no person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to procedure established by law". Our Constitution does not secure due process of law ; it secures procedural process only. It affords no protection against what the late Sir Rash Behari Ghosh described as "lawless laws". Article 22 of our Constitution guarantees protection against arrest and detention, but only in certain cases. Sub-clause (b)

of Clause 3 of that Article denies the protecting arm of the law to persons who are victims of preventive detention. Clauses 4, 5 and 6 of the same Article legalize preventive detention without trial and give power to an Advisory Board nominated by the Executive to report that there is sufficient cause for extending the period of detention beyond three months. Clause 7 of the same Article gives the Parliament power to prescribe the circumstances under which a person can be detained for a period longer than three months, without even obtaining the opinion of an Advisory Board. Our Constitution has given its sanction to the pretension of Executive, and its encroachment into the domain of the Judiciary, to the prejudice of the lives and liberties of the subjects. It has put its imprimatur on what a Lord Chief Justice of England described as "administrative lawlessness." The exercise of arbitrary power by the Executive is neither law nor justice ; it can only be described as a negation of law, a travesty of justice. The policy of secrecy that the Advisory Boards will have to adopt and consideration by them of ex parte statements not tested by cross-examination are in themselves sufficient to condemn their opinion ; for, as Lord Hewart has said, "it is a queer sort of justice that will not bear the light of publicity". I could not have imagined in 1945 and 1946 that the leaders of the Congress would in 1949 enact a Constitution containing the clauses mentioned above—clauses similar to which they themselves denounced in British times. That they have done so only proves that the observation of Lord Acton that "absolute power corrupts absolutely" is as true today as it was before the 15th August, 1947.

Coming now to the question of the liberty of the press, it is significant that there is no reference to it in Part 111 of the Constitution. But it was argued in the course of the debates in the Constituent Assembly that specific reference to the liberty of the press was unnecessary, as it was covered by Sub-clause (a) of Clause (i) of Article 19 which declared that "all citizens shall have the right to freedom of speech and expression". Assuming that argument to be correct, one has only to read Clause (2) of Article 19 to find that what has been given by Sub-clause (a) of

Clause (1) has been practically taken away by Clause (2). Clause (2) provides that "nothing in Sub-clause (a) of Clause (1), shall affect the operation of any existing law in so far as it relates to, or prevent the State from making any law relating to, libel, slander, defamation, contempt of court or any matter which offends against decency or morality or which undermines the security of, or tends to overthrow the State". The plain English meaning of Clause (2) is that not only does it preserve the operation of all existing press and security laws, but it gives further powers to the State to make even more stringent ones. In England, "the liberty of the press" as Lord Mansfield laid down, "consists in printing without any previous license subject to the consequences of law". Another English Judge said, "we have not what is called a imprimatur; there is no such preliminary license necessary". The above principles of English Law are wholly inconsistent with any right on the part of the Government to require the press to take out a licence or the right to impose censorship or pre-censorship or the right to demand a preliminary deposit as security for good behaviour or the right to forfeit the security or demand increased security in certain circumstances, but all of such rights are given to Governments in our country by the existing press laws, the operation of which has not been affected at all by the new Constitution. Such preliminary licenses and deposits, censorship and pre-censorship, checks and super-checks, preventive measures and measures in terrorism are entirely unknown to and inconsistent with English Law. But, here in our country the different Press Acts passed in British Imperialist times which were scathingly denounced at one time by the Congress leaders who are responsible for the new Constitution, give enormous powers to the executive to suppress the liberty of the press; and the Security Acts passed by the different provinces under Congress rule since the 15th August, 1947, make what was enormous an enormity. All the Press and Security Acts remain in full force and effect and power is given to the Indian Parliament to increase and multiply them. The existence, preservation and expansion of the rights to detain persons without trial for an indefinite period, to suppress the liberty of the press, to ban assem-

blies, processions and public meetings and demand that previous permission must be taken for them from the Executive, to restrict formation of associations or unions (to mention just a few), constitute, to my mind, a denial of the rights of democracy and transgression of the rule of law. These atom bombs are kept ready to be hurled at the people on the least assertion on their part of their fundamental rights and liberties. And yet, the new Constitution describes our so-called Republic as a "Democratic Republic !"

In the previous paragraphs, I have laid bare the designs of our new despotism. I have exposed the hollowness of their pretensions that in framing the new Constitution, they have framed the Constitution of a "Sovereign Democratic Republic". But I shall not do them any wrong or injustice. I shall admit that there are two freedoms or rights they have absolutely guaranteed. One, is the "freedom of conscience" ; the other is, the "right freely to profess, practise and propagate religion" (See Article 25). Guaranteeing "freedom of conscience" can only raise a derisive smile ; guaranteeing "the right freely to profess, practise and propagate religion" in India which has been tolerant for ages is an unmeaning superfluity. The real freedom which is life and vigour to society and, in assertion of which, people in all ages and in all climes have struck the blow have all been countermanded.

A cursory glance at the powers conferred by the Constitution on the President of India will also reveal its undemocratic character. The President who will owe his election to a very indirect process and extremely limited franchise, is the repository of absolute power. It is he who appoints the Governor of a State. His legislative powers are various and varied and, I would add, menacing. He is given the power to nominate twelve members of the Council of State. The emergency provisions empower him to act like a veritable Grand Moghul. They are time-bombs kept in readiness to explode as soon as he presses the button or lights the fuse. If he feels that the Government of a State cannot be carried on according to the Constitution, he may assume to himself all or any of the func-

tions of the State and all or any of the powers vested in the Governor and can make incidental and consequential provisions including provisions for the suspension in whole or in part of the operation of any provisions of the Constitution. While a proclamation of emergency is in operation, even the meagre fundamental rights conferred by Part III of the Constitution are suspended. Part XVIII of the Constitution conferring emergency powers upon the President has a remarkable family-likeness to Section 42, 43 and 45 of the Government of India Act, 1935, the quintessence of which is re-incarnated in our Constitution with a minimum of verbal changes. The President is thus made a time-defying monument of absolutism.

Federalism has been said to be "distribution of the forces of the State among a number of co-ordinate bodies each originating in and controlled by the Constitution". The essence of federalism, according to Dr. Jennings, "is a division of power between central and local legislatures that the Central Legislature has no power to alter." The centripetal tendency in the Indian Constitution militates against the spirit of federalism. Apart from the Union List of subjects, there is a Concurrent List, but in the case of conflict, the Union's jurisdiction becomes valid to the exclusion of the States'. According to Article 249, the Union Parliament is entitled to legislate even on the State List if the Council of State (our Indian House of Lords) declares by two-thirds majority that the matter has become of national importance. The 97 items on the Union List in the 7th schedule contain everything from the star to dust heap, from amoeba to man. They take away the cream of power to the Centre leaving a none-too important residue to the States, thereby reducing autonomy of the States to a mockery. Preventive detention without trial cannot, apparently, be wholly entrusted to the weak hands of a State ; it is, therefore, included within the Union jurisdiction concurrently with the States'. On an Emergency being proclaimed, Parliament is empowered to legislate on any State matter and also to confer on the President unrestricted legislative and dictatorial powers

far surpassing those of despots, ancient and modern.

Federalism depends for its purity and success upon respect for law and supremacy of the Judiciary. In the U.S.A., the Federal Judiciary is co-ordinate with the President and the Congress and cannot without revolution be deprived of a single right by the President or the Congress. As Dicey says, 'This system which makes the Judges the guardian of the Constitution provides the only adequate safeguard which has hitherto been invented against unconstitutional legislation." But in the Indian Constitution, this supremacy of the Judiciary is not provided. The Prime Minister of India himself said some time ago that "no Judge, no Supreme Court, can make itself a Third Chamber !" That is the spirit that unfortunately pervades the Constitution. That is the spirit which is responsible for vesting in the Executive the power to decide questions of a judicial nature to the exclusion of the jurisdiction of Courts of Law.

A mixture of rank autocracy and milk-soft liberalism, our Constitution is the vanishing point of sovereignty, democracy and republicanism. All the ideals which the Congress had so long made such a fetish of have found in it their decent grave. All Governments tend to deteriorate through power, said Rousseau, and power corrupts everybody, including the noblest. Our Constitution is the product of the putrid state of power-corruption. Its only purpose is to keep the ruling coterie in power by neutralizing the resurgent voice of the people. The stern voice of the people, they dare not face. That is why so many ingenious attempts have been made in the Constitution to stifle opposition and to prevent it from asserting itself. The Constitution is an undeclared war upon opposition, present and future.

This then is the Republic the Constitution has given us. It is not the Republic of our dreams. It is not the Republic for which the fighters for India's freedom fought and fell. They did not fight for a divided India or for a "Republic within the British Commonwealth", which is only an euphemism for "British Dominion". They fought

for the unity and indivisibility of India and the establishment of a Socialist Republic free from British or any other foreign influence or control. India was divided at the instance of those who now control her destiny. Her Constitution has also been framed by them, through a Constituent Assembly of an entirely unrepresentative character consisting mostly of their nominees and representing only a small fraction of the people, and even that by indirect election,—a Constitution which vouchsafes to the people only the shadow of Sovereignty, which is a travesty of Democracy and mockery of Republicanism. I never expected that they would be able to produce anything better. The words which I used in the course of my address at a Students' Conference in December last will possibly bear repetition. I said, "Those of you who followed the draft Constitution and the debates that took place in the Indian Constituent Assembly will not need to be convinced that the Constitution that has been passed thereto fit into the framework of the British Commonwealth, is the very negation of freedom, democracy and social justice. It could not be otherwise ; firstly, because 'a Republic within a Commonwealth' is a thing unknown to Constitutional Law or history, and secondly, because the combined wisdom or unwisdom, of patriots and courtiers, republicans and King's friends, capitalists and pseudo-socialists, high-priests of confused liberalism and champions of absolute despotism, could not possibly produce anything better".

"The great question is to discover", as Lord Acton said, "not what governments prescribe, but what they ought to prescribe ; for no prescription is valid against the conscience of mankind". I hope the conscience of the Indian people will revolt against the Constitution that has been framed. I hope the Indian people at large and the unknown soldiers who will be the makers of India's destiny will reject the Constitution, "exercise their constitutional right of amending or their revolutionary right to dismember or overthrow it" (to use words of Abraham Lincoln), and set up in its place the Constitution of a People's Socialist Republic.

THE GOVERNOR'S SPEECH

Full text of a signed editorial in "The Nation" of February 8, 1950

As it is not possible for me for reasons of health and other reasons to attend the West Bengal Legislative Assembly this week, I feel I owe it to myself to tell my colleagues in the Assembly and the wider public outside the Assembly what I think of His Excellency the Governor's speech and the address in reply to it.

The speech has grievously disappointed me. It has none of the diction that we have learnt in the past to associate with gubernatorial pronouncements on important occasions. As a statement on Government policy, which a speech in opening a new session is expected to contain, it is poor, slipshod, uniformative. As a recital of facts it is full of inevactitudes. . As an expression of opinion on national and international matters, it betrays a superficiality and lack of knowledge, surprising in one supposed to be learned in the law.

The speech begins by offering to God what is described as "Solemn Thanks"—an uncommon expression possibly used to impress upon the members of the Assembly the solemnity of the occasion. "Solemn Thanks" for what ? For having "reached the glorious end of the historic progress of our country to complete independence" ! Complete Independence, forsooth, as a member of the British Commonwealth owing allegiance to Rex Imperator !

The Governor spoke about "India's inauguration as a Republic." I suppose what he meant to speak about was the inauguration of the Indian Republic or constituting India into a Republic. He just mentioned that its "deep significance" to world history should not be missed ; but what the deep significance was he did not deign to tell his audience. Its deep significance, apparently, is that, as a result of an unlawful political tryst, a hybrid has been

created hitherto unknown to constitutional law or history. The next passage in the speech is richer still. Our Governor proclaims : "The Indian Republic forms a symbol of Asian unity." These are days of symbols, it is true. We have in recent times, added many more symbols to the old, acknowledged ones—white, the lion, the thunderbolt, the Asoka pillar, the cross etc. But how and in what sense can the Indian Republic possibly be a symbol of Asian unity ? If anything, it is a symbol of Imperialist unity.

Coming now to governmental policy, the little that the speech says foreshadows an era of administrative lawlessness and not of the rule of law. The period of supersession of the Corporation of Calcutta is to be extended. Special powers will be asked for and taken, professedly to meet the activities of anti-social elements, but really with the object of sounding the dead march over what little remains of civil liberties. These "Lawless laws" will be kept ready to be applied to the people on the least assertion on their part of what they believe to be their fundamental rights and liberties. Measures for the speedy trial of some offences have been indicated. Such measures have, in the past, proved to be encroachments into the domain of the judiciary ; and, I have no doubt they will put their imprimatur on the pretensions of the executive and amount to a travesty of justice. So-called speedy justice has more often than not proved to be a denial of justice. The speech confirms the analysis I made recently of the character of our so-called "Sovereign Democratic Republic", namely, that it was a glamorous appellation for political trickery outside and police tyranny within.

Of constructive work of the State of West Bengal, very little is said. Pious hopes are expressed regarding increase in food production, relief and rehabilitation of displaced persons and amelioration of the condition of the people. The experience of the last thirty months raises the suspicion that they are hopes raised only to be dashed to the ground. Constructive work and characterless administrators go ill together.

The Secretary of the Congress Assembly Party has given a certificate to His Excellency the Governor and described the latter's speech as a "most excellent speech". The procedure adopted by him and his colleagues may be in keeping with the traditions of a Monarchical State, where a humble address is voted to the Sovereign expressing thanks to him for his "most gracious speech". It is entirely out of place in a State which is described as a constituent part of a Republic.

I regret I cannot congratulate the Governor on the speech he delivered. His speech does no credit to him or to the Legislature to which he belongs. The proposed address in reply to his speech makes the proceedings of the Legislature almost farcical in the eyes of the world outside.

TO MY BROTHER BENGALIS IN EAST AND WEST BENGAL

Full text of a statement to the Press released at Calcutta on 11 February, 1950

My views on the present situation have been reflected in the editorial articles in "The Nation" ending with yesterday's article under the caption "This is not the way". Nevertheless, I consider it necessary and right that I should, in my capacity as President of the U.S.O., address a few words of appeal to my brother Bengalis in East and West Bengal, both Muslim and Hindu. I appeal to them for peace, for peace with honour — honour to prudence, honour to sobriety, honour to sanity.

I am really pained that disturbances of a communal character should have broken out in certain areas of East Bengal, followed by disturbances in Calcutta and its suburbs. I am pained all the more to think that the disturbances could have been prevented by the exercise of a little kindly feeling, tact and firmness on the part of the ruling authorities in both Bengals and by a little restraint upon injudicious statements. As regards those who have allowed themselves to be swayed by or have whipped up communal passions, I can only say that retaliation is never a virtue, but very often only a fresh link in the chain of vengeance and crime which recoils upon those who advocate it. I appeal to the people of East and West Bengal in all sincerity and seriousness to refuse to be pawns in the hands of those who may be instigating reprisals in the name of the safety of the minority community across the border. I appeal to them not to listen to the voice of those tempters, who are really enemies of society in disguise.

News have been reaching me for some time past about alleged excesses committed on the minorities in certain parts of East Bengal. They compelled me to write to Mr. Nurul Amin, Premier of East Bengal, from my sick-bed, requesting him to enquire into them and take the necessary

steps to reassure the minorities that their lives, liberties and properties were safe. This I did as early as the 2nd January last.

I cannot overlook for a moment that responsibility for some of the disturbances in Calcutta rests in no small measure on a few journalists because of their irresponsible and inflammatory writings and purveying and display of news at a time when according to the West Bengal Premier his Government "did not know what the actual situation was in East Bengal". Fortunately, their number is very small. It is again they, by a revealing coincidence, who had carried on a tearing and raging campaign for the partition of Bengal. Partition is however, a settled fact now. I had expected that in the present changed situation they would realize their changed duties and that they would not imperil by their writings the lives, liberties and properties of the minorities in both Bengals. If they were so anxious to defend and protect the minorities in East Bengal; they should have left their editorial sanctums in Calcutta and gone to East Bengal to fight for the minorities. It is easy enough to be brave in places where there is no risk of a fight.

I must also refer in this connection to persistent reports that in some cases advantage is being taken of the disturbances by some owners of lands and bustees to serve their own selfish interests. It is up to the West Bengal Government to enquire how far these reports are true and to take necessary steps if found to be true. Reports are also persistent that goonda elements are abroad with no other object but to indiscriminately loot and victimize innocent people, irrespective of creed or religion. It is up to the West Bengal Government and their police and the military to stop this menace.

That the result of the partition of the country will be no solution of the communal problem but will mean its continuance in another form has been my prognosis since the idea of dismembering the country was first mooted by

the then leaders of the Congress and the Hindu Mahasabha. As early as March 15, 1947, I said : "To my mind, a division of provinces on the religious basis is no solution of the communal problem. Even if the provinces were to be so divided, Hindus and Muslims will still have to live side by side in them and the risk of communal conflicts will remain.....It will further aggravate the communal problem and will make its solution extremely difficult, if not altogether impossible. As the population of India all over the country is composite in character, this sort of communal segregation or religious quarantine is neither desirable nor feasible.....Whether we are Hindus or Muslims, Sikhs or Christians, our political and economic problems and interests are the same for us". This being my political opinion about the communal problem, I never made any distinction at any time of my life between Hindu and Muslim in undivided Bengal or in divided Bengal, when the division took place. Even after the division of Bengal, the population in both the Bengals remains as composite in character as before, the difference being only in degree. Therefore, the standpoint of broad social justice and economic equality is the only standpoint from which we should look upon the minorities in both the States. Solution lies that way and in no other way and I hope the Governments of both the States will appreciate this point of view. The States are two, but the people in each are one and indivisible, whether they are Hindus or Muslims. Both the communities are integral to each other ; whether here or across the border, they are each other's bone of bone and flesh of flesh.

Brother Bengalis of East and West Bengal, I appeal to you in the name of all that is sacred, in the name of Bengal's past, in the name of the comradeship that was and will remain, in the name of humanity, to abjure the cult of violence, to restore sobriety and sanity and re-establish communal peace and harmony. Do not look Delhi way or Karachi way, for light will not come from there. Be guided by the light that is within you.

APPEAL TO INDIA AND PAKISTAN

Full text of a signed editorial in "The Nation" written half an hour before his death and published on 21 February, 1950

Writing on Saturday before last, the 11th instant, under the shadow of a great personal bereavement, I appealed to my brother Bengalis in East and West Bengal for peace, for peace with honour—honour to prudence, honour to sobriety, honour to sanity. I appealed to them in the name of all that was sacred, in the name of Bengal's past, in the name of the comradeship that was and will remain, in the name of humanity, to abjure the cult of violence, restore sobriety and sanity and to re-establish communal peace and harmony. I asked them not to look either Delhi way or Karachi way, for light would not come from there. I asked them to be guided by the light that was within them.

During the last eleven days I have been thinking deeply as to what is the real solution for the present state of things. I have considered in turns the suggestions offered from different quarters, namely, mass evacuation of Hindus from East Bengal or exchange of population between the two Bengals. As a result of deep thinking and mature consideration, I have been forced to the conclusion that neither of them is the solution. I need only remind the people of India and Pakistan that compulsory mass evacuation in and from the Punjab has left behind numerous problems each of which has defied solution up till now.

The solution that I offer for the acceptance of the people of India and Pakistan is that East Bengal as a distinct and separate State should join the Indian Union and that the people of India and Pakistan should bring pressure to bear upon their respective Governments to bring it about as soon as possible. I have been saying repeatedly during the last three years, that to my mind, a division of provinces on the religious basis was and is no solution of the communal problem, that even if the provinces were so

divided, Hindus and Muslims would still have to live side by side and that communal segregation or religious quarantine was neither desirable nor feasible. That being my political opinion, I have never made any distinction at any time of my life between Hindu or Muslim in undivided Bengal or in divided Bengal. The population in both the Bengals remains as composite in character as before. I do not want to disturb the partition of Bengal which has already taken place. I am well aware that there was in the recent past a sense of frustration among the people of East Bengal, which was one of the reasons which gave rise to the demand for partition. The solution which I am offering will mean the least possible interference in the present state of things. Let East Bengal live and flourish as a distinct and separate State, but in the interests of the future well-being of the communities living in the two Bengals which, as I have said before, are integral to each other, which are each other's bone of bone and flesh of flesh, let East Bengal live and flourish under the fostering care of the Indian Union.

In the name and on behalf of my colleagues in "The Nation" as well as on my own behalf I offer this solution for the consideration of and acceptance by the people of India and Pakistan. "The Nation" believes that this solution will conduce to the peace and prosperity not only of the two Bengals, but also to the peace and prosperity of India and Pakistan and it will dedicate itself to the task of speeding up the solution by all peaceful and legitimate means.

INDEX

A

Abdullah, Sheikh—269, 270-271
Acton, Lord—339, 344
Alagappan S. C. (Major-General)—148
Ali, Asaf—140
Ali, Yusuf—24
Ambedkar, B.R. (Dr.)—107, 144
Amery, L.S.—15
Attlee, C.R.—131
Aung San—45, 46, 72, 215
Azad, Maulana A.K.—68, 154

B

Bajpai, G.S.—262
Baksi, Satya Ranjan—122
Banerjee, Surendra Nath—31-2
Bess, Deemaree—43
Bewoor, Gurunath—143
Bose, Dwijendranath—122
Bose Sisir Kumar—122
Bose, Netaji Subhas Chandra—6, 8, 9, 21, 22, 25, 28, 46, 48, 55, 75, 88, 89, 90, 91, 106, 114, 126, 175, 176, 177, 178, 180, 201, 202, 203, 204, 215, 230, 235, 239, 276, 278, 293, 310, 312, 321, 322, 326-9
Burman, Madan Mohan—71
Burrows, Frederick—155, 156

C

Canterbury, Dean of—11
Casey, R.G.—17, 33, 34, 50-53, 77-78
Caveesher, Sardar Sardul Singh—122
Chamanlal, Dewan—95
Chatterjee, A.C. Maj-Gen.—126, 127, 148
Chattopadhyaya Mihir Lal—270
Chiang Kai-Shek—7, 10, 11, 19, 25, 26, 27, 29, 30, 66, 276, 299, 300, 309.
Chou En-Lai—27, 309.
Churchill, Winston—6, 10, 19, 22, 249, 250.
Chu-Teh—27, 309.
Craik, Henry—274
Cripps, Stafford—13, 14, 15, 16, 267
Curzon, Lord—243

D

Das, Deshbandhu Chittaranjan—4, 31, 33, 38, 87, 91, 333
Desai, Bhulabhai, 15, 68
Dhillon, G. S.—74, 76, 90, 148
Dicey—343
Dreyfus—26
Dutt, Aswini Kumar—1, 2

E

Eden, Anthony—3, 11, 263, 267
Evatt, Dr.—309

F

Fazlul Huq, A. K.—5, 35
Fisher, Louis—249, 250, 251, 252
France, Anatole—39

G

Gandhi, Mahatma—9, 12,48, 49, 55, 63, 89, 105, 109, 165, 166, 190, 192, 194, 202, 219, 231, 232, 234, 241, 249, 254, 277, 333
Gelder, Stuart—30
Ghosh, Rash Behari—338
Goswami, T. C—17

H

Hashim, Abul—184
Hewart, Lord—339
Hitler, Adolf—3, 20, 24, 45

I

Iqbal, Mohamed—24
Iyengar, Srinivas—4

J

Jennings, Dr—342
Jinnah, M. A.—6, 15, 16, 24, 25, 72, 95, 132, 133, 134, 174, 192, 193, 194, 232, 254
Johnson, Louis—6

K

Kara, Maniben—148, 149
Katju, Kailas Nath—152, 240-8, 317-8, 319-20, 345-7
Khan, Nawabzada Liaquat Ali—135, 137, 146-7

Khan, Shah Nawaz—74, 76, 90, 91, 148
Khan, Zafrullah—24
Kripalani, J. B.—49

L

Lal, Lala Shankar—122
Lenin—3, 10, 11, 288
Lincoln, Abraham—304, 344
Linlithgow, Lord—47, 50-53, 54, 113, 156
Logonadhan (Major-General)—148
Lohia, Ram Monohar—122

M

Majumdar, Suresh Chandra—71
Mansfield, Lord—340
Mao Tse-Tung—25, 26, 108, 298, 309
Masani, M. R.—102
Mason, Philip—121, 129, 141, 142, 150, 151, 152, 153
Maxwell, Reginald—113
Mehta, Jamnadas—111, 112, 113
Menon, K. P. S.—262
Minto, Lord—189
Montague, Edwin Samuel—139
Mookerjee, Syamaprasad—56, 57, 59, 68-73
Mountbatten, Louis (Lord)—193, 195, 197, 200, 221, 232, 233, 278, 293
Mussolini, Benito—20

N

Nanak, Shri Guru—74-76
Narayan, Jaiprakash—122
Navalrai, Diwan Lal Chand—112
Nazimuddin, Khawaja—17
Nehru, Jawaharlal—4, 8, 11, 46, 61, 222, 223, 226, 227, 241, 242, 244, 245, 246, 252, 255, 256, 257, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 270, 271, 277, 282, 292, 293, 295, 304, 305, 325, 343
Nurul Amin—348

O

O'Brien, B.P.T. Maj-Gen.—123

P

Pain, Barada Prasanna—17
Pal, Bepin Chandra—76
Pandit, V. L.—249, 250
Patel, Vallabhbhai—2, 12, 49, 92, 226, 325
Pethik-Lawrence, Lord—116
Prasad, Rajendra—49, 105, 109, 173, 181, 211, 212, 213, 244, 245, 246, 286, 287

R

Radcliffe, Cyril (Sir) — 205, 207, 213, 214
Rahmat Ali, Choudhury—24, 25, 108, 134
Rai, Lala Lajpat—76
Rajagopalachari, C.—244, 245, 246
Rashid, Abdul—148
Rau, B. N.—250
Rewa, Maharaja of—126
Roberts, Frank—263
Rolland, Romain—21, 37, 141
Roosevelt—6, 10
Rousseau—343
Rowlands, Archibald—118, 119, 135, 137-140, 145, 146
Roy, B. C.—349
Roy, M. N.—111, 112, 113

S

Sadullah, Mohammad—333
Sahgal, P. K.—74, 76, 90, 91, 148
Sarker, N. R.—272
Saxena, Mohanlal—274
Shaw, George Bernard—20, 21, 45, 144, 145, 175
Sheridan, Richard Brinsley—152
Siddique, Abdur Rahaman—17, 122, 149
Smuts, Field-Marshal—266, 267, 334
Snow, Edgar—11
Sriprakasa—153
Srivastava, Jwala Prasad—144
Stalin—3, 10
Strang, William—262, 263
Subedar, Manu—119
Suhrawardy, H. S. 24, 192
Sun Yat-Sen—30
Sun Yat-Sen, Madame—28, 30

T

Talib, Niranjan Singh—122
Tang-Leang-Li—11
Tilak, Bal Gangadhar—76, 333
Truman, Harry S.—43, 44, 66

V

Vivekananda, Swami—92, 93

W

Wavell, Lord—13-16, 23, 62, 63

Y

Yung Chang (Emperor)—301

Z

Zola, Emile—26