

APPENDIX I

MANIFESTO OF KRISHAK PROJA SAMITI

1. Full responsible Government for India with adequate and effective safeguards for Mussalmans and with that in view work for the immediate replacement of the present Provincial Constitution and the proposed Central Constitution by democratic full self government.
2. To protect and advance the political and religious and other rights and interests of the Indian Mussalmans.
3. To promote friendship and union between the Mussalmans and other communities of India.
4. To maintain and strengthen brotherly relations between the Mussalmans of India and those of other countries.
5. Abolition of the present Zamindari System (permanent Settlement) which is highly detrimental to the interest of the people at large by legal and constitutional means.

(PROGRAMME)

1. To protect the religious rights of the Mussalmans. In all matters of purely religious character due weight shall be given to the opinions of Jamait-ul-Ulema Hind and the Mujahids.
2. To make every effort to secure the repeal of all repressive laws, e.g. the Bengal Criminal Law Amendment Act, the Public Security Act etc.
3. To resist all measures which are detrimental to the interest of Bengal and of India, which encroach on the fundamental liberties of the people and lead to economic exploitation of the country.
4. To reduce heavy cost of the provincial administrative machinery and allocate substantial funds for the nation-building departments.
5. To encourage development of industries including cottage industries

through (a) immediate steps for the fixing up of a minimum price for jute, (b) the organisation of marketing and sale of local commodities on a provincial scale, (c) the adoption of Indian products to be used for all Government purposes and (d) the provision of loans, against the security of the Government for the expansion of large scale and heavy industries.

6. To regulate currency, exchange and prices in the interest of 'the economic development of the country'.
7. To stand for the social, educational and economical uplift of the rural population, e.g. State provision and control of public utilities and social welfare services.
8. To sponsor measures for the relief of agricultural indebtedness by raising loans, if necessary.
9. To make elementary education free and compulsory immediately without the imposition of any fresh tax or cess on the tenantry.
10. To protect and promote Urdu language and script but with proper safeguards for the 'development of the vernacular'.
11. To devise measures for the amelioration of the general condition of the Mussalmans specially of Bengal.
12. To take steps to reduce the heavy burden of taxation, particularly on the poor.
13. To create a healthy public opinion and general political consciousness throughout the country.
14. Thorough overhauling of the Bengal Tenancy Act in the interest of agriculturists ensuring the vesting of proprietary rights in the tillers of the soil and including, (i) the abolition of the Zamindars' right of 'nazar' and 'salamy' right of pre-emption, (ii) Tenants' right of mutation of name without additional payment, (iii) Reduction of rate of rent.
15. To take adequate and effective measures against illegal exactions by the zamindars, money-lenders and their representatives.
16. To take steps for securing from the Government of India the entire amount realised on account of the duty on jute and to earmark the amount for expenditure on the improvement of agriculture and rural sanitation.
17. To adopt measures for the improvement of agriculture and cattle.
18. To provide for adequate water supply in villages.
20. To take steps for the adequate representation of Muslims and the Scheduled Castes in the Services with a view to ensuring justice to all the communities.
21. To derive ways and means for the solution of the unemployment problem.
22. To introduce measures for the amelioration of the condition of labourers by the provisions of minimum wages, and control of the condition of sanitation and housing.

APPENDIX II

LEAGUE MANIFESTO & PROGRAMME

(Excerpts)

After discussion lasting over four days, the A.I. Muslim League Parliamentary Board, under the presidentship of Mr. M.A. Jinnah, adopted a manifesto and issued it from Lahore on 11th June, 1936. It said inter alia... The Lucknow Pact, which is known as the "League-Congress Pact in 1916" will go down in Indian History as a landmark in the political evolution of the country as signal proof of the identity of purpose, earnestness and co-operation between the two great sections of the people of India in the task of the attainment of responsible government.

But the Pact was not the last word of the question of adjustment of political differences between Hindus and Mussalmans. Nor was it even intended or could be so considered in the new circumstances that arose and developed since then. The national demand for complete responsible government after the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms became more and more insistent from 1921 onward. Mussalmans stood shoulder to shoulder with sister communities and did not lag behind in their patriotic cooperation with Hindus. But as a minority they maintain the principle that this position in any future political constitutional structure should be protected and safeguarded... It deplors that as a result of the Round Table Conference, the British Parliament has forced upon the people of India a Constitution embodied in the Government of India Act of 1935. Its attitude towards the Constitution is defined by its resolution passed at the session of A.I.M.L. to the following effect : "while it accepts the Communal Award till a substitute is agreed upon between the communities concerned, emphatically protest against the constitution embodied in the Government of India Act 1935 being forced upon the people of India against their will and in spite of their repeated disapproval and dissent expressed by the various parties and bodies in the country."...

...The manifesto laid down the following programme for the ensuing elections : To protect religious right of Mussalmans in which connections for all matters of purely religious character, due weight shall be given to opinions of the Jamiat-Ulema-i-Hind and Mujahids to make every effort to secure the repeal of all repressive laws: to reject all measures which encroach upon the fundamental liberties of the people and lead to economic exploitation of the country, to reduce the heavy cost of administrative machinery, and allocate substantial funds for nation building departments, to nationalise the Indian Army and reduce military expenditure: to encourage development of industries, including cottage industries; to regulate currency; to stand for social, educational and economic uplift of the rural population; to sponsor measures for the relief of agricultural indebtedness; to make elementary education free and compulsory; to protect and promote Urdu language and script; to

SPECIAL PROGRAMME OF BPML

The special programme announced by the Bengal Provincial Muslim League was as follows :

1. To protect the religious and other rights of the Muslims.
2.To take necessary steps by legal and constitutional means to minimise the evils of Permanent Settlement and the Tenancy Laws and if possible, to get them replaced by an equitable system suitable to the needs and requirements of all classes of people in the Province.
3. To take steps to secure the revision of the Bengal Tenancy Act with a view-
 - (a) to repealing the provisions relating to (i) enhancement of rent (ii) transfer fees (iii) pre-emption (iv) and other provisions affecting the interests of the tillers of the soil and
 - (b) to securing the betterment of the rights of the cultivators and tenure-holders, including reduction of rent, commensurate with the productive capacity of the soil and the general price level.
4. To relieve agricultural indebtedness and with this end in view
 - (a) To press for the enforcement of the Bengal Agricultural Debtors Act and
 - (b) to organise village societies of debtors and rent payers in order to enable them to reap the full benefit of the Act.
5. To devise effective measures to protect the rural population from victimisation and illegal exactions by Zamindars, Mahajans and their agents.
6. To take effective steps to raise the price of jute and other money crops.
7. To organise the marketing of agricultural commodities.
8. To undertake an agricultural survey of Bengal with a view to crop planning and cultivation of suitable money crops.
9. To improve the breed of cattle and to organise dairy and poultry farming and cultivation of fodder crops.
10. To reclaim and resuscitate the dead and dying rivers, waterways, drainage, channels, tanks and reservoirs.
11. To make provision for the supply of good drinking water, better medical facilities, village sanitation and public health.
12. Immediate introduction of compulsory and free primary education.
13. Amendment of the Calcutta University Act.
14. Establishment of a Board of Secondary Education.
15. Development of technical, industrial and agricultural education.
16. Adequate religious instruction for Muslim boys in schools and improvement of the standard of Madrassah education.
17. Proportionate representation of Muslims and other communities in the public services of the province.
18. To take steps to solve the unemployment problem.
19. Development of Cotton and Jute Industries.

APPENDIX III



Document

THE ROLE OF FORWARD BLOC

*Signed editorial by Subhas Chandra Bose in the
Forward Bloc,
the organ of the newly formed party Forward Bloc,
dated 12 August 1939*

After a number of preliminary skirmishes, the left-wing under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi succeeded in capturing the Indian National Congress in 1920. That was the signal for several of the erstwhile leaders like Messrs. Jinnah, B. C. Pal and B. Chakravarti to walk out of the Congress. The left-wing became the dominant party in the Congress and for a time commanded an overwhelming majority. With the suspension of the Civil Disobedience Movement in 1922, a rift occurred within the majority party and, over the issue of carrying the fight into the Legislatures, it

split into two groups — the Swarajists and the No-changers. After a time the differences were made up through the Congress accepting the Swarajist plan of extending the fighting front to the Legislatures.

With the publication of the Nehru Committee's Report in 1928, in which the majority of the members advocated a Constitution for India based on Dominion Status, a left-wing emerged in the form of the Independence League. At the annual session of the Congress held in Calcutta in December, 1928, the members of the League endeavoured but failed to induce the Congress to alter its creed so that Independence would be declared in unmistakable language to be the goal of the Congress. The opposition to this move came from the main body in the Congress led by Mahatma Gandhi. The conflict with the Independence League went on for a year, till at the Lahore session of the Congress held in December, 1929, the Congress at the instance of Mahatmaji, adopted Independence as its goal.

This compromise enabled all sections in the Congress to join hands and march shoulder to shoulder in the Civil Disobedience Campaign which was launched in 1930.

The suspension of the struggle in 1933 and the adoption of a parliamentary programme by the All-India Congress Committee in 1934 provoked a revolt from the Left. The Congress Socialist Party then came into existence and, thanks to its timely appearance and its dynamic activity, the drift towards Constitutionalism was checked to a large extent. The Congress Socialist Party soon

became the rallying-centre for the leftist elements in the Congress.

From 1934 to 1937, the Congress Socialist Party made considerable headway both in numbers and influence. But in 1938, at the Haripura Session of the Congress held in February, it was found that the C. S. P. was no longer forging ahead. In my Presidential Address at the Haripura Congress, I observed that the role of the C. S. P. within the Congress should be anti-imperialist left-wing role and not a Socialist role and only by playing the former role, would it continue to make headway.

Socialist and Communist friends with whom this matter was discussed after the Haripura Congress agreed with this view. It was generally felt that all progressive, radical and anti-imperialist elements in the Congress, who might not be ready to join the Socialist or Communist Party, should be organised on the basis of a common minimum programme. I felt, further, that only by that means could the onslaught of the Right be resisted and the soil prepared for the growth of a Marxist Party.

The Gandhi Seva Sangh, which may be regarded as the 'steel frame' of the present majority party (or Gandhi Party) in the Congress, held an important Conference at Delang, in Orissa, in March, 1938. At this Conference the Gandhi Seva Sangh decided to launch an offensive against the Left. The Sangh decided, among other things, to send its agents into the labour field with a view to ousting those trade-unionists who stood for a class-conscious trade-

union movement in this country. It decided also to depute its prominent members to capture provincial and other Congress organisations in the country.

The parliamentary programme adopted by the All India Congress Committee in 1934 found its culmination in the acceptance of ministerial office in the provinces in 1937. This enabled the Right-wing to so consolidate its position and strengthen its influence and prestige as to launch an offensive against the Left in 1938. Against this determined attack, the Left could hope to preserve its existence, only if it were consciously organised and disciplined.

If all the progressive, radical and anti-imperialist elements in the Congress had rallied together on the platform of the Congress Socialist Party, then matters would have been greatly simplified. But this did not happen. Because of this, the idea of a Left Bloc for organising all the left elements on the basis of a common minimum programme was mooted after the Haripura Congress. If the existing Leftist Parties had undertaken the responsibility of developing the Left Bloc (now renamed as the Forward Bloc) — then the task of Left-consolidation would by now have proceeded apace.

But though individuals or groups may fail us, the cause cannot be allowed to suffer to be neglected. Hence the Forward Bloc has been formed with such left elements as are now available. There is no doubt that the Bloc will grow and expand with unprecedented rapidity, despite the many obstacles that beset its path. And

the time will soon come when even those who are hesitating to join today, will shake off their vacillation and take plunge. Left-consolidation, winning over the majority in the Congress, and resumption of the national struggle — these represent the three-fold task before the Forward Bloc and before the Left in the Congress. Let those who criticise us or pick holes produce a better alternative. We shall not hesitate to accept it. We are afraid, however, that no other alternative is possible.

The Congress has to be saved from the clutches of the Right which has given up the idea of a struggle and is now thinking in terms of Constitutionalism and Reformism. Only the Left can preserve the revolutionary character of the Congress and bring about an early resumption of the fight for national freedom.

Today, in certain quarters, the word 'Socialism' has become cheap. One can even find Socialists in some provinces who are the henchmen of the Ministers. Let us therefore beware of Rightists who masquerade in the cloak of Socialism. What is wanted is deeds not words. Genuine Socialists must play an anti-imperialist left-wing role in their day to day activity. Uttering leftist slogans and making spicy speeches will not suffice by themselves.

Forward Bloc will rally all progressive, radical and anti-imperialist elements in the Congress, whether they be Socialists or not. Through this consolidation, the people will equip themselves for the anti-imperialist struggle that will bring

India her birthright of liberty. But the attainment of political Independence will not mean the dissolution of the Bloc. It will only mean a new phase in its life and activity. And that phase will undoubtedly be a Socialist one.

APPENDIX IV



Document

ALL POWER TO THE INDIAN PEOPLE

*Presidential address given by Subhas Chandra Bose at
the
All India Forward Bloc Conference at Nagpur on 18
June, 1940.*

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

course of action in the crisis which has overtaken India and the world, a crisis which is deepening and worsening, not only from day to day but also from hour to hour.

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

It was clear in 1939 that most of those who had entered the Congress as Leftists in 1920 and 1921, and had retained the leadership of the Congress in their hands for nearly two decades, had ceased to

be revolutionary or even radical. Any further political progress under such circumstances presupposed a consolidation of all anti-imperialist, radical and progressive forces in the country and particularly in the Congress.

Towards the end of April 1939, when I was seriously considering the idea of resigning the presidency of the Congress and inaugurating the Forward Bloc, I had an interesting and important discussion with a very prominent Leftist leader of the Congress who has since then thrown himself into the arms of the Gandhiites. He advised me to refrain from either course and he added that since an international storm was brewing, we should avoid everything in the nature of a split within the Congress. I replied saying that since a war was inevitable in the near future, it was all the more necessary that the Leftists should be organised and prepared in advance, so that in the event of the Rightists developing cold feet in a war situation, we at least could do something off our own bat. Differences had become so fundamental between the Right Wing and Left Wing that a split — whether permanent or temporary — had become inevitable. That being the case, it was desirable that the internal crisis should come and should be transcended before the external or international crisis overtook us. I added that if I accepted my friend's advice and lay low for the present, the consequences would be far worse for us when the international crisis appeared. In such a crisis, we would never agree with the Rightists. But many people would blame us for causing a split, if we attempted to act on our own at that time.

Moreover, if we did want to act independently then we would have no organization behind us to fall back on. Consequently, the argument of my friend only strengthened my case.

Looking back on the last twelve months, can we not claim that events have justified our policy and line of action? Barring the Kisan Sabha of Swami Sahajananda (and Prof. Ranga, Comrade Yajnik, etc.) and the Forward Bloc, who is there to stand up to the Rightists today? The Left Consolidation Committee which came into existence in June 1939, after the formation of the Forward Bloc, has disintegrated by now. The Royists (or Radical Leaguers), the Congress Socialists and the Communists (or National Fronters) have in turn deserted the Left Consolidation Committee and only the Kisan Sabha and Forward Bloc have been functioning as the spearhead of the left movement in this country. This was evident when we held the All India Anti-Compromise Conference at Ramgarh in March 1940. There we found that the Royists, Congress Socialists and National Fronters boycotted that Conference and threw in their lot with the Gandhites. There can be little doubt today that if there had been no Forward Bloc and no Kisan Sabha, no voice would have been raised against the policy and the line of action pursued by the Gandhites during the last 12 months.

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

In the first place we can claim to have successfully resisted the tendency towards

constitutionalism and compromise within the ranks of the Congress. Thanks to our efforts, the Congress Ministries had to vacate office as a protest against the policy of the British Government. If they had not done so, they would have been carrying out the war policy of the Government of India, as agents of British Imperialism. In spite of all efforts made hitherto, no compromise has yet been made with the British Government, and for this we can legitimately claim some credit. Secondly, we have so far frustrated all attempts to secure the co-operation of the Congress in the prosecution of the war. Friends will remember that in September 1939, when His Excellency the Viceroy invited Mahatma Gandhi for a talk at Simla on the war situation, the latter gave out that he was of the view that India should give unconditional help to Great Britain during the present war. This was reiterated by Mahatmaji in a Press statement issued soon after the above interview. Nevertheless, up till now, the Congress Working Committee, which usually follows Gandhiji blindly has ignored his views on such an all-important issue. Would the same thing have happened if there had been no Kisan Sabha and no Forward Bloc?

Thirdly, we can perhaps claim that we have succeeded in creating an atmosphere of struggle. Today we find Congress leaders drilling in shirts and shorts and Congress Committees being converted into 'Satyagraha' Committees. Moreover, the Rightist leaders have been constantly talking of a struggle. Would all these

have taken place, if there had been no Forward Bloc and if the Anti-Compromise Conference at Ramgarh had not shown which way the wind of public opinion was blowing? There is no doubt that today the talk of a struggle is everywhere in the air and the more our people talk of it, the more will they move away from a compromise.

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

The national struggle we launched at Ramgarh has been steadily gaining in strength and volume. The campaign has made considerable headway in Bihar and the United Provinces. In Bengal, the struggle was launched as early as January 1940 over the question of civil liberty, which had been violated by the drastic ordinances promulgated by the Government in September 1939. Thanks to the civil disobedience movement launched by the Bengal Congress, we have restored in a large measure the *status quo* which existed prior to September 1939. The special session of the Bengal Provincial Political Conference which met at Dacca on the 25th and 26th of May, 1940 took stock of the situation in the province and

formulated a plan for intensifying the struggle and widening its scope. The Bengal Provincial Congress Committee will give effect to this plan.

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

We are also told that we have brought disruption within the ranks of the Leftists. But it is not we who have caused disruption or disunity. The Royists, the Congress Socialists and the National Fronters (or Communists) have, one after another, deserted the Left Consolidation Committee.

We stand today exactly where we did twelve months ago. During these months, we have passed through an ordeal. Suffering, persecution, banter, ridicule — such has been our lot. But we have gone ahead along the path of uncompromising struggle in a most unflinching manner. Numerous fellow-workers of ours have been persecuted by the Congress High Command and in the province of Bengal, owing to the disaffiliation of the Provincial Congress Committee, all Congressmen of our way of thinking have been virtually thrown out of the Congress.

The question which will naturally arise at this stage is : 'Why have the Royists and others deserted us?' So far as I can judge, they are afraid

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

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

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

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

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

Twelve months ago when the Forward Bloc was formed we were obsessed, as it were, with the idea of the coming struggle and how to prepare for it in advance. At that time we did not know how far, if at all, outside events and international developments would aid us in our efforts to win Purna Swaraj. Consequently, we had to make 'self-reliance' our motto in life and action.

Today, the situation has altered to some extent. In the war between rival imperialisms, the old ones have been faring very badly indeed. During the last few weeks the Germans have carried on the campaign with lightning rapidity. Kings and kingdoms have toppled down in the course of a few days and the German Army — the Reichswehr — has proceeded to the gates of Paris and occupied that queen of cities in a way which appears to the layman as a miracle in military

warfare.

What has been happening in Europe in a kaleidoscopic manner has had its inevitable repercussions on India.

The wheels of history are grinding on, quite regardless of what we may be doing in India. But in order to fully utilize the opportunity which international events have presented to us, we must have sufficient unity and solidarity among ourselves. If India could speak with one voice today, our demand would indeed be well-nigh irresistible. It follows, as a consequence, that while we should think of intensifying the national struggle and widening its scope, we should at the same time try to develop national unity and solidarity to the maximum limit.

National unity will presuppose unity within the Congress on the basis of a dynamic programme of struggle and at the same time unity between the Congress and other organizations like the Muslim League.

If we can develop sufficient unity and solidarity among ourselves in good time, we may very well hope that even if the country passes through a struggle and even if catastrophic events take place in Europe, the transference of power from the hands of British Imperialism to those of the Indian people will take place in a peaceful manner.

It is not necessary that the Indian revolution should be a bloody one or that it should pass through a period of chaos. On the contrary, it is desirable that it should be as peaceful as possible; and a peaceful transition can be ensured if the people are united and are determined to have their

freedom.

My own suggestion to you is that we should immediately go out into the country with the rallying cry — 'All power to the Indian people'. This will galvanize the masses in a moment. In order to put forward this demand in an effective and irresistible manner, we should leave no stone unturned in our effort to attain national unity. This effort will necessitate the setting up of a machinery which will preserve harmony and goodwill among the people under all circumstances. Such a machinery will be provided by a Citizens' Defence Corps organized on an all-party basis.

But such a Corps should be quite independent of the Government. Our Citizens' Defence Corps will only aim at preserving internal peace, harmony and goodwill. The question of defending the country militarily from any other force or power is one which should concern the Government only.

Before coming to the epilogue of this address, which will be a consideration of the international situation of today and tomorrow, I should like to remind you of the historical role of the Forward Bloc. The Bloc has come into being as the result of historical necessity. It is not the creation of an individual or of a group of individuals. So long as it will serve a historical purpose, it will live and thrive — despite all obstacles, internal or external.

We should also bear in mind that the Forward Bloc will have a role to play in the post-struggle phase of our history. It will have to preserve liberty after winning it and it will have to build up

a new India and a happy India on the basis of the eternal principles of liberty, democracy and socialism.

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

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

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

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

The cause of the Allies' continuous defeat seems to be lodged somewhere in their system. It was a system which Mr. Clement Attlee, speaking, I believe, for the last time from the Opposition benches, said had failed to meet the need of the crisis.

It was the fundamental weakness of a system in which slavery and freedom existed side by side that had resulted in British being 'decisively beaten' on the propaganda front. This was, what the *Daily Mail* said was happening. Propaganda radiocasts from the Reich, it wrote at the end of March, were 'influencing not only the civilian population of Bratain, but also our armed forces.' Goebbels, it asserted, had had a walk-over.

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

We cannot but ask ourselves where we stand in this international flux. Some of our statesmen, it seems have been possessed with the dream of India being converted into a bastion of democratic resistance against the dictators' hordes. What a grotesque picture!

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

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

SARAT BOSE FORMULA

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 leader 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 1947 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