APPENDIX - VI.

Rammanohar Lohia prepared the scheme of the Freedom Struggle Front in order to intensify the '42 Movement. Collected from the Government of India, Home Dept. File - F.N.3/83/42-Poll(I), 1942.

THE FREEDOM STRUGGLE FRONT

1. THE STRUGGLE OF REVOLT.

India is stirring as she has never stirred before. Robbed of organisation and leadership, denied of guidance and planning, the people of our country have started their revolutionary march to freedom. There is a tenseness in the air — every section, every man and woman is deeply moved and feels impelled to action. Established authority is reeling under its impact, and is striving to beat down the upheaval with desperate repression. There are faint hearts which are appalled, muddled heads that screech their condemnation, servile bodies that bend to crush this upsurge of spirit. But the fact of this outburst is here. It is the profoundest fact of recent history.

2. THE NATURE OF THE UPEAVAL.

Undirected, uncontrolled and leaderless, the masses are surging, heaving, swaying in their struggle for release. Every individual, every group is acting on its own, impelled by diverse ideals. In this lies at once the strength and the weakness of the movement. This strength Gandhi invoked where he called out to each Indian to feel free. That feeling stirring
in his breast makes him rise. The appeal is to the individual
direct; the response is of the individual direct. The medium
of a party or organisational machine becomes redundant. The
active units in this battle are individual, not mass formation
dependent for every move on extraneous command. This feature
invests the movement with a spontaneity, flexibility and deathlessness, an elemental and all-embracing quality which is
thrillingly unique in its national and international possibilities. Gandhiji has given us a new technique in revolution. It
is ethically superior to all other methods in that it eschews
collective massacre and entails the minimum of bloodshed. It
is a weapon of self-defence, self-expression and liberation of
a people, not of territorial aggression or exploitation of
another. It is economical in resources in that the enemy is
fought, not with a colossal array of costly armour, but by
paralysis of its organisation by individual resistance. It
is a process of mass education on the most extensive scale,
offering an inherent guarantee of the permanence of its achieve-
ment, in that it strengthens each individual participant by
bringing to him a consciousness of his latent power and a
realisation of his unity of interest with his fellow fighters.
Unity is not to be looked for in a static formula of percentage,
but is realisable only through this dynamic struggle, while
pursuing an obvious political objective, it simultaneously
solves the problems of fear, ignorance and disunity. In laying
stress on the common man and awakening him to power, it makes
sure that he will be the centre round which the structure of the
new state will be raised.
3. THE NEED FOR PLAN.

There can be no doubt about the essential soundness of this technique. Whatever the opinion about its universal applicability for all militant action, there can be no gainsaying that it is the only feasible method in the present circumstances of this country. But the stress it lays on the individual, which is the secret of its unique efficacy, is also the source of weakness one must most carefully guard. The individual is thrown on his own resources of thought and action. How small these resources are in a suppressed people we know. There are some who would eternally postpone the struggle on that account, forgetting that it is only through struggle that they may enlarge these resources. But this limiting factor dictates the form which the struggle must take. The objective must be immediately appealing to the common man, because immediately satisfying vital lack, (Sic) clearly defined, so as to be easily grasped by the meanest intelligence. The ultimate issue, the final goal is perceived and maintained aloft only by a sustained process of reasoning and must be allowed to emerge before the fighting ranks only in careful stages, through a progressive series of secondary and immediate axioms. The action demanded to cover each stage must be of the most direct and simplest kind. Else there will be perplexity and false manoeuvrings and despair. The final goal of the struggle must be kept steadily in view of some; the stages to its attainment must be carefully set by some. That is the task of planning.
4. THE SCOPE OF PLANNING.

This movement is decentralised, individualistic, anarchical. Yet because it is a movement and not an involuntary explosion of pent-up energy, it has a direction, and its anarchy is deliberate and purposeful. The object of planning is to set the direction, inform and animate the participants with the purpose. But the scope of central direction and control in a movement of this atomistic character is strictly limited. The function of planning in this movement is threefold: It must furnish the ideological perspective at each stage; it must indicate the broad principles which will guide action; and it must provide a general co-ordination of the efforts of groups and individuals, by arranging contacts, dissemination of intelligence, suggesting avoidance of overlapping or mutually cancelling actions. Central direction can not attempt much more without destroying the elasticity and decentralised initiative which constitute the essential quality of this movement. The detailed application of the general principles in concrete acts and manoeuvres must be left to the primary fighting units. The movement will not conform to a uniform pattern in all areas for this reason. Its outward manifestation will exhibit as great a variety as local problems and circumstances will vary. This infinite diversity of expression should be welcome. It is bewildering to the enemy and should be encouraged by working up and bringing to a head the particular local grievance which is most acute in any area. It may be a shortage of foodgrains in one place, the exaction of
rent-collector in another, the refusal of permission to irrigate
the fields in some other, the realisation of collective fines is
still another. Each such problem is the focal point for the
initiation of the movement in that area. The general plan will
direct the search for such force; point out why our festering
economic sources will be the most suitable starting points for
local agitation, being the most deeply felt and the quickest,
most natural and the most unifying inciting agents for the local
people; explain how these issues can never be solved within the
framework of the existing system; and as this understanding
spreads and the agitation has reached a sufficient pitch,
suggest the precipitation of the next wider issues, taking the
people forward to the next higher phase of the struggle.

5. THE MACHINERY FOR PLANNING.

The machinery set up to undertake this planning must be
suited to its special and limited purpose. That purpose is, as
indicated already, to outline the general policy and direction
and to provide a loose and flexible co-ordination of the work
of already established parties, groups and individuals to whom
the widest discretion is to be left in carrying out the day to
day programme of the struggle. These are old organisations
claiming the membership of disciplined bodies of men and women,
who have been already working for the subversion of the present
order of things for a long time. They may have varying methods
and varying creeds but as long as they do not plan counter to
the general direction of this movement, they will be welcome and
will find a place. The invitation must be open even to individuals in their own right as children of this country. This struggle is a total struggle in its present phase, the upsurge of a whole people. It is not sectional, partisan, exclusive, but that is not yet, not till after the riddance of foreign exploitation. It is arguable that in the course of this struggle the shift of forces will get power to the proletariat even in the process of overthrowing the foreign hold, the two vital phases being simultaneous, not successive. Be that as it may, this must be clear now that the organisation required for central guidance of the movement in its present stage is not the rigid organisation of an exclusive party, professing a dogmatic creed and enforcing an iron discipline. We do not want to set up a new party which must immediately come into conflict with existing parties and can only prevail by fighting and destroying them. What we need to set up is a meeting place for parties and groups, a forum for discussion, a clearing house of ideas where the greatest common measure of agreement on policy can be worked out. What we need is a coming together of parties not their supersession by a new body. What we need is a combination, a joint enterprise, a common stand. What we need is the Freedom Struggle Front, where every group, every party, every class and section and every individual can find a place to fill without losing their separate identities. There are many revolutionary parties in the field. They differ in their methods, their traditions, their special experience of particular lines of work; but there is little difference in the ultimate goal of
their endeavours. Their organisation, discipline, resources, special talents and aptitudes for special tasks must be all utilized. They can be all roped in on the common platform of the Freedom Struggle Front, and this can be done in the present phase of the struggle without calling upon them to renounce their immediate loyalties. To a much more limited extent, yet in some measure, the same is true of social groupings also. There is no class or section, no social or functional unity, which is not disaffected against the present State. Let that discontent and frustration in each layer of society be exploited and nursed into a disruptive force. If the rich mill owner or banker is willing to finance the revolution, let his help be eagerly seized. He may be acting from calculated self-interest, desiring a freer field for his capital investments; or as happens more often than the text book communist will think, he may be moved in spite of himself by the patriotic change in the air. In any case, the course of development of the struggle which can only succeed through the people awakening to power, he must either identify his interest with that of the masses, or be submerged in the rising tide of their power. Let not a virginly horror of outraging the class issues stand in the way of seeking and taking his help. Let him be roped in too.

6. THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION:

There are as many battle fronts in this war as there are classes and sections and individuals waging it, and action on all fronts is simultaneous. But the most extensive and
significant field of work lies in the countryside, where our peasantry offers the biggest reserve of man-power and where village economy is threatened with imminent break down. Let peasant representative in the villages be approached by our central agents. The agents themselves must be selected from tried workers of existing organisations and parties, some now disbanded by law, such as the Spinners' Association, some still countenanced openly, such as the Krishak-Projas, who have already established connections in the interior. Let them select the initial targets for assault in each village or group of villages. Let the rising and simmering discontent against these immediate grievances be churned up into an angry ferment; first, through informal discussions then through open meetings, all the while attempting to relate the immediate problems to wider and bigger issues in simple, understandable terms. Open conflict with authority should be avoided at this stage by representing the agitation as a lawful demand for economic concessions. As soon as the discontent has crystallized to some extent, orderly but confident processions should be organised, for its collective representation before the local authorities. On their failure to redress, which is inevitable, the more extreme and militant spokesmen of the peasants should be helped to take the lead and prepare the man for direct action; by organised and orderly seizure of stocks of essential goods; by refraining payment of rents and debts; by refusing to part with crops; by ignoring court processes for distraint and refusing to attend
or bid at sales; by taking possession of the machinery of local administration, such as Union Boards, Chowkies, Thanas and running it themselves; by setting up new machinery where necessary. If the developments can be fairly synchronised in a number of areas from the centre, - and to a great extent this will be helped by the natural infectiousness of the process, - the forces of the State will be helpless to check this progress, the disturbances will be too widespread and scattered. The police and military may advance on one village and reduce it to ashes. But their flanks and rear and front will be constantly harassed, their communications will be constantly cut off, their food supplies will be precarious. The tactical plan of defence for the villagers will be to isolate their area, organise scouts to give warning of the enemy's approach, retire and disperse before its advance and return like the tide when the enemy must presently withdraw, having nothing to do and little to subsist on. The suffering of the villagers will be great. But the stakes are also high. If they have been made to realise these at the outset, if they know that the alternative is inaction and suffering no less, if they have been trained what to expect and do, then this suffering will not break them, then each time they will return to their razed villages with a grimmer determination of spirit, an increased bitterness of heart. And the news of happenings in other villages, other districts must filter through to fortify their resolve.
7. OTHER FRONTS:

We have a better organisation and greater experience of work among industrial labour. Here also unrest must be brought to a head on immediate economic issues. The situation will be directly helped by the campaign in the villages which will dry up the sources of food supply and raw materials to the urban and industrial areas. Dearness allowances can never keep pace with prices, which will soar higher and higher with a progressive inflation of the currency. Price control will show up as the senseless deception it is. Strikes should be easy to organise in this context. Propaganda should be meanwhile pressed home on the capitalist front, appealing to this class on emotional patriotic grounds to view the strike programme with favour. The bourgeoisie must be exhorted to keep up political discontent at high pressure, 'declass' members of the petit bourgeois sections must be recruited to lead militant demonstration of students and labourers. The Indian officialdom should be approached for secret contributions in money and information and sabotage of vital processes of the administration. The precise points and methods of attack must be left to their own decision in this as in other cases, but countless illustrations can be cited and innumerable opportunities discovered once the general lines of our movement are clearly grasped. The general analysis of the struggle should be made known in every suitable case.
8. ADMINISTRATIVE TASKS.

The training of workers; the issue of leaflets, news sheets, slogans; the organisation of contacts; the raising of funds; frequent reviews of progress; issue of directions to the fighting line — These are the urgent administrative problems of the Freedom Struggle Front. Help is pouring in from all sides. The tasks will be done. But in administra- tion, as in programme, the greatest decentralisation should be provided for. In that, rather than in secrecy for which the scope is strictly limited in a movement of this character, lies the biggest safeguard against its suppression.