CHAPTER - V

TRYST WITH JOURNALISM
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Subhas Chandra Bose’s tryst with Journalism began when he joined active politics as a young Chief Publicity Officer of B.P.C.C. (Bengal Provincial Congress Committee). In May 1921, as the Principal of National College, Calcutta and Publicity Officer of the BPCC, Subhas Chandra Bose had to meet and counter all the adverse criticism that were leveled against the policy of the Congress at that time. The Congress in Bengal during that period was in mess. It was riven with disputes and discords. Even though a great leader like C.R. Das was at the helm, there was no love lost between the older leaders and the newly emerging younger leadership. The formation of the Swarajya (Self-rule) Party by C.R. Das after the Gaya Congress in 1922, only went to expose in a clearer manner the divisions in the ranks. It may be remembered in this connection that the nationalist leadership of Bengal, comprising mostly of the old guards, with which C.R. Das had so
long been associated, not only dissociated from Gandhiji's non-cooperation movement and felt aggrieved at Das's desertion of their ranks, but sought to stifle the growth of the movement by trenchant and anti-propaganda. Among the old guards, there were such stalwarts as Bipin Chandra Pal, Byomkesh Chakraborty, Hirendranath Dutta and others, men who had deep roots in public life and it required great boldness and courage of conviction to join issues with such a powerful and prestigious group. But the young Subhas took the task upon himself and on the issue of continuing the actively fighting role of the Congress threw down the gauntlet to the old and strongly entrenched leadership. Bose's able defence of the Congress policy at that time drew everybody's admiration.

Apart from these, the public relation activities of Subhas Chandra Bose also surfaced in the world of mass communication and journalism by his editing and organizing of several Vernacular and English newspapers and periodicals like Banglar Katha (voice of Bengal), Atmashakti (self-actualization), Navashakti (new spirit), Forward, Liberty, Forward Bloc etc., all of which were rich in patriotic spirit and flavour.
**Vernacular Phase**

On 30th September, 1921 (Bengali 14 Ashwin, 1328), the Bengali weekly *Banglar Katha* (voice of Bengal), edited by Deshbandhu C.R. Das (Assistant Editor-Hemanta Sarkar) was first published and that same year on 23rd December, Mrs. Basanti Devi (wife of C.R. Das) took over its editorial charge, as its editor was in prison.

Aspiration of Subhas Chandra Bose as a young journalist was fulfilled in the year 1922 on 8th December, Friday (Bengali 22 Agrahayan, 1329). *Banglar Katha* was published as a daily under the editorship of Subhas Chandra Bose. The front page of the first issue of this newspaper was without any advertisement and it was a three-column type. The name of the founder, Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das, was printed above the newspaper and it was introduced as *Banglar Navojuger Dainik Mukhopatro* (daily organ of Bengal's new era.) It was published from 4, Ramtanu Bose Lane, Calcutta. It was a four-pages daily and its price was 5 paise per copy. There was a special announcement for price rise from 5
to 10 paise with the introduction of 12 pages in the first issue of first year. Though the policy was started on 26th of December, but few days later, it discontinued and its price became 5 paise (with four pages), as before.

Banglar Katha was not merely a daily. It was published with a patriotic essence and logical outlook in it. The life span of the first phase of Banglar Katha; was short. Its last issue was published on 6th March, 1923. Within this short period, it had created new ripples and a unique style of writing. The speciality of its news, views, analytical articles, patriotic and revolutionary poems and its strong editorials were highly appreciated by the Bengal intelligentsia. Its progressive literary sense of journalism owed its credit to some stalwarts in the field of literature and journalism, like Upendranath Bandyopadhyay, Kazi Nazrul Islam, Dilip Kumar Ray, Gopallal Sanyal, Akhil Neogi (nickname-Swapanburo) etc. Subhas Chandra Bose hadshouldered the responsibility of Banglar Katha, as well as of Swarajdal (believers of self-government) under the instruction of C.R. Das. Banglar Katha acquired its new dimension under the editorship of Bose.
Describing its popularity, a biographer of Subhas Chandra Bose has mentioned, "within few days, the newspaper has become so popular that Subhas Chandra had to present himself during the distribution of the paper among the large gathering of Hawkers." Many interesting editorials were written by Subhas Chandra Bose in his Banglar Katha. In an Editorial (First Year, Second issue), titled Samyo-O-Ekota (equality and unity), he wrote about the success of French Revolution and European Renaissance and gave a clarion call to form a new society based on equality, political and social justice in the light of those European changes. A political view on non-cooperation movement published in the Banglar Katha on January 26, 1923 is as follows:

"Non-cooperation has lost its terror. Inertness has taken the place of courage in people's heart. The clarion call of Mahatma is here no more, and the workers have become worn out with the struggle... Swaraj will neither fall from heaven nor will it come from beyond the seas as a reward from pleasing Parliament. It will have to be forced from the British Government, the necessary requisites being self-reliance and self confidence."

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In the editorial of *Banglar Katha* (1st year, 4th issue) titled, *Itihasher Ek Pristha* (one page of history), Subhas Chandra Bose mentioned the latent phase of contemporary Indian scenario, when the European civilization entered India in the guise of merchants. The situation prevailing during and after the Revolution of 1857, the emergence of the Indian National Congress and considering India’s ‘no changing’ phase, Subhas Chandra made a satirical comment as, ‘Dear Darling, My Lord, you may do everything that you wish, but please do not disturb our sleep.’ This passive phase of political scenario faded away during the Partition of Bengal in 1905. Subhas Chandra Bose talked about the role of Bengal and the Bengalis at that time in his writing ‘...though the Bengal’s soil is soft, but tigers are also born in Bengal’s forest.’

In the editorial of the 5th issue of *Banglar Katha*, titled *Gota Dui Gorar Katha* (few initial questions) Bose had discussed about dependence of the Indian National Congress on the alien rulers and how to overcome it through their own endeavour and
ability. This editorial is significant for an informative and emotional account of the after effects that the 1905 Partition of Bengal Movement had on the art, literature and political scenario of the nation. The fundamental question of contemporary politics was whether to enter into the Council or not. A number of articles and editorials were published in Banglar Katha on this aspect. The editorial of the 6th issue of its first year publication, titled, Srishti-Na-Dhangsho (creation or destruction) by Bose, deserves special mention. Subhas Chandra Bose had given importance to the issue of participation in the Council, as he thought that it was a strategy to combat the alien Rulers and to grab that opportunity to establish the nation’s rights. In the 7th issue of its first year publication, the editorial titled, Bartaman Samasya (current problems) also emphasized on the same topic. The subsequent editorials of Banglar Katha, viz. Council-O-Lokosiksha (council and folk education), 5th issue; Adhyatmik Nidra (spiritual sleep), 10th issue; Barjan-Na-Dhangsho (rejection or destruction), 11th issue, contained clarifications of the same issue from diverse angles. Deshbandhu C.R. Das’s article, titled, Council-er-Katha (an
account of the council), was published serially from 5th issue to 8th issue. The editorial of the 12th issue of Banglar Katha, titled, Khanti Asahojog (true Non-cooperation) was an important documentation on Self-rule and social thoughts. Besides, it also reflected the organizational ideas of a mass movement. In this article, Bose narrated, “the peasants in the fields and the labourers in the factories are the main producers of capital in this country. The rulers and the traders enjoy the lion’s share of this country-based capital and the English-knowing natives, while helping the rulers in the process, get only a partial share of it. The major portion is enjoyed by the English and we, while greeting the rulers, are satisfied with a bit... Hence, we need the peasants’ and labourers’ unions to come forward and stop the silent exploitation machinery, which is being spread all over the country. The Swaraj or Self-rule, which is not capable of solving the misery and sorrow of this toiling class, is synonymous to slavery.”

The proposal for forming an organization for the peasants and labourers was accepted in the Nagpur Session of Congress. Not only the rulers, but also some of the influential persons and
print media expressed their opposition towards this proposal. In an editorial published in the newspaper, *Servant*, this proposal was highly condemned. Bose logically and critically opposed this editorial. In this context, he wrote, “... the trust has at last been exposed; the vested interest, which was being camouflaged by spiritual theories, has come to light. The educated section, to whom the administrative power has been conferred by the British rulers, tried their level best to prevent that power being infiltrated to the majority people.”

Bose’s idea of *Swaraj* intended complete freedom for all classes of people and establishment of their fundamental rights. It did not mean transfer of power to any particular section of the society. This active role, which Bose played as the editor and manager of *Banglar Katha*, dreaded the British rulers and this is revealed in a secret intelligence report on *Banglar Katha*. The report mentioned that this political newspaper reflected some Bolshevik ideology of Russia:
“Bolshevic literature continues to arrive and articles based on this thought are appearing in huge numbers in the local print media. While the Banglar Katha has been advocating the formation of labourers’ and peasants’ unions, a leading article has defended the theory of Bolshevism....it has just been interpreted and is being proscribed.”

The subsequent issues of Banglar Katha reflected a shadow of the ensuing changes in politics of contemporary Bengal and India. In the 14th issue of Banglar Katha, it is found that a powerful section of the Indian National Congress and its Bengal chapter, under the leadership of C.R. Das, comprising of young, dynamic and conscientious personalities like Subhas Chandra Bose, Jatindra Mohan Sengupta, Birendra Nath Shasmal and others were enormously hopeful about the probable future change in the political scenario of the nation. During that period, the freedom-loving Congress workers were divided into two groups – the conservative group and the progressive group. The progressive group, which was the more enthusiastic one, was the driving force behind the formation of the Swarajya Party within the Indian
National Congress. The subsequent issues of Banglar Katha, in its editorials and articles, reflect about the probable formation of this Swarajya Party. In the editorial of the 25th issue of Banglar Katha titled Chai Swadhin Manush (wanted independent persons), Bose portrayed his concept of freedom in its true sense. “...the concept of independent nation, independent state and independent society is meaningless, without freedom of its individuals.” In the 26th issue of Banglar Katha, Bose compared humanity, which comprises of many nations, with a bouquet of five flowers. He furthers states that the nations are like petals of a lotus. Just as all the petals of a lotus are basically the same and they together form the whole flower, likewise, the various nations of the world are essentially similar to each other, without having any altercation between them. This article had revealed the literary mind of Bose. He has also said in this article, “it is impossible to define Swaraj, since it is the symbolf of the national soul.”

In the editorial titled, Sthiti-na-Goti (static or dynamic) in the 29th issue of Banglar Katha, Bose had clearly condemned the passive role of the Congress party, as it did not take any active
participation in the freedom struggle and also its Charkha (spinning-wheel) policy. The subject matters of the editorials, written by Bose, were not only confined within the national domain, but it also comprised of articles on trade, commerce and aggression policies of other countries like Europe, America etc. The 30th issue of editorial titled Jug Samasya (Problem of the Era); 31st issue of editorial titled, Swarther Samrajya, i.e. empire of selfishness and 32nd issue titled Samaje Upobibhag i.e. subdivisions in the society are few examples of Bose’s journalistic sensibility.

Subhas Chandra Bose, in some of his essays, had expressed his deep faith in the fact that the working class, comprising of 75% of the total population of the nation, would one day certainly snatch their due rights and he was glad to notice its instance in Europe. Subhas Chandra Bose had a profound faith in his mind that the future change to this nation would be brought about through the Indian path, following the age-old Indian traditions and ideas.
In the editorial of the 34th issue of Banglar Katha, titled Bibad Kothay? (where lies the difference?), Bose while analysing the differences in the Congress Party, had given a clarion call to his countrymen to shed their passive and inert attitudes and jump into a new non-cooperation movement with vigour and spirit. He had also asked the Congress to bring about a change in their approach towards a dynamic non-cooperation movement and not to waste the valuable years. In the editorial titled, Nutan-O-Puratan (new and the old), 39th issue of Banglar Katha, Bose had dealt with a criticism against him in the newspaper, Servant, an organ of the Conservatives. In issue No.42 of BanglarKatha editorial, titled, Aprastut (embarrassed) and in another article, titled, Bhikshar Punorabritti (reiteration of begging), Bose repeatedly warned the inactive and non-courageous leadership. He had cited an example of a coward king from the story, ‘Etheriand the Unready.’ Some significant editorials of Bose, published in Banglar Katha were on contemporary issues like labour problems, peasants’ rights, political depression etc. Titles of these editorials were –

1. Abhiman-O-Abedan (Sentiment and Request) – 44th issue

2. Konta Aage? (Which one is first?) – 46th issue

4. *Swarther Samanjyasya* (Adjustment of vested interests) – 51st issue

5. *Mot Bado Na Desh Bado?* (Ideology or Country – which one is significant?) – 54th issue


7. *Bangla Kahar?* (Whom the Bengal belongs to?) – 57th issue

8. *Kaaj Kothay?* (Where is Employment?) – 63rd issue

Bose, during his tenure as the Congress President, had formed the first National Planning Committee in India in 1938 and long before that, as the Editor of *Banglar Katha*, he had written a number of editorials on rural reconstruction, *Panchayet* (local administration) elections, planning of rural and local administration etc. The editorials titled, *Gramyo Samaj* (Village Society)-64th issue and ‘*Gramyo Samaj Cholbe Ki Kore?’* (How a village society shall run?)- 65th issue had reflected Bose’s planning about the guidelines of *Gram-Panchayets* i.e. rural administration.
In the 73rd issue of *Banglar Katha* (6th March, 1923), a news appeared under the headline, *Bishesh Drastabya* (special notice) about the closing down of the newspaper. An announcement was thereby made that owing to diverse reasons, the authorities had decided to discontinue its publication and in future, if time demands, *Banglar Katha* would reappear in a new shape and form for its beloved readers.

*Banglar Katha*, in its new profile was published after four years, under the editorship of Satya Ranjan Bakshi, Comrade-in-Arms of Subhas Chandra Bose from Forward Press (19, British Indian Street, Calcutta) as a seven column, eight-pages daily Broad Street Newspaper. Its Registration Number was C1634. Its annual subscription rate in Calcutta was eleven rupees, in suburban areas fifteen rupees and in foreign it was twenty rupees. The cost of each issue was two paise. Besides its regular contributors, columnists and reporting staff, *Banglar Katha* also introduced a number of national and foreign news agencies like the Reuter, *Betar Barta (air news agency)*, Free Press and others. Political
news stories, bold editorials, post-editorial articles, analytical views on various issues and photographs were printed regularly in it. In addition to the display advertisements, nearly twenty-six different sections of items according to reader’s interests and choice were published regularly in the new phase of Banglar Katha. Some of its items are furnished below:

1. Banijya Parichay (News on Trade and Commerce)
2. Bigyapan (Advertisement rates)
3. AbhaaoarSangbad (Weather Forecast)
4. Bichar Bibarani (Legal News)
5. Share Market
6. Projapatir Baithak (Matrimonials)
7. Kroy Bikroy (Sales and Purchase)
8. Moffusil Sangbad (Suburban News)
9. Sangbadika (News Filler)
10. Chitrogupter Khotian (Death Reports)
11. Bigyan Prosanga (Science News)
12. Sahitya Parichay (Literary News)
13. Karmakhali (Job Vacancies)
14. Cricket Khela (Cricket news)
15. Kolkatar Ghor Dour (Horse Race)
16. Chithipatro (Letters to Editor)
This new form of Banglar Katha became greatly popular among the cross-section of society, particularly in revolutionary Bengal. Bose was the chief source of inspiration and was the driving force behind developing and modernizing this Vernacular daily.

The Bengali weekly, Atmashakti (self-actualization), was started in March, 1922. It was earlier edited by Upendranath Bandyopadhyay and was later enhanced under the leadership of Subhas Chandra Bose, who was the patroniser of this pro-swarajya newspaper.

The Atmashakti was published under the editorial-ship of Upendranath Bandyopadhyay as a weekly newspaper, consisting of 8 pages. Each of its issue cost 10 annas (1 anna = 1/6th of a rupee). Bose took charge as its Managing Director on 15th August, 1923. Soon after his joining, its volume augmented and its page numbers were enhanced from eight to twelve. Its design cover symbolized Bharatmata (Mother India). Atmashakti’s cover page, depicting Bharatmata (Mother India), standing on an elephant and lion with
the Indian flag, embossed with *charkha* (spinning wheel) hoisting in her hand, added a special significance and dimension to it. *Atmashakti* was not merely an organ of the freedom seeking patriots; it also published items of varied interests and contained editorials, filled with immense patriotic emotions and zeal.

The editorial column was in the second page of this newspaper. There was a verse from the *Bhagavad Gita* (holy Hindu scripture, chapter-2, verse No.3). Its English translation thus ran: *Oh Arjuna, do not yield to unmanliness. This is not worthy of you. Oh chastiser of enemies, giving up this base weakness of heart, rise up.* The aims and objectives of *Atmashakti* were to awaken the oppressed masses from the age-old tyranny, depression and slavery and motivate them to achieve freedom. Articles containing these aspirations for freedom were published in the 46th issue of *Atmashakti*.

Mr. Upendranath Bandyopadhyay was quite a successful editor of *Atmashakti* and when he was detained as a prisoner on 25th September 1923, Mr. Lal Mohan Ghosh took over its charge.
from him and Mr. Ghosh too exhibited the same courageous role as its editor. His editorial column was a blending of logical and emotional languages. Bose, as the executive head of *Atmashakti*, was the fountain of stimulation.

The photograph of Jatindranath Mukherjee, a great Indian revolutionary leader and martyr, popularly known as Bagha Jatin, was first published in *Atmashakti*. The editorial of the September 12, 1923 issue was on ‘Jatindranath.’ Under the clandestine name of Birupaksha, several political articles were published in *Atmashakti*. The British Government kept an intense vigilance on this newspaper. On October 6, 1923, at 1.30 p.m., the *Atmashakti* office was raided by police force. Seventy-five copies of its 12th September 1923 issues, its print orders and two volumes of the Register Book (year 1922-1923) were seized by the British police.  

Various secret intelligence reports indicate that the British Government was very rigid about the publication of *Atmashakti*, as they were aware of its immense popularity among the freedom craving Indians. Action under Section 124A Indian Penal Code
was to be initiated against *Atmashakti* with regard to its revolutionary literature. There were reasons to expect further issues of the articles on Jatindranath Mukherjee in *Atmashakti*.

Bose’s famous political essay, *Desher Dak* (call of the country) was first published in the 15th August, 1923 issue of *Atmashakti* and at a later time, this was inducted in Bose’s Bengali book, *Taruner Swapno* (dreams of the youth). Mr. Shibram Chakraborty had edited this paper for a brief spell with a patriotic tune. *Atmashakti* was profusely popular among the young Bengal and it revealed Bose’s bountiful capacity in planning, organizing and running a newspaper smoothly in the face of serious odds.

An example of the text of Advertisement translated from Bengali language for publicity of the weekly *Atmashakti*, which appeared as Box item in the daily newspaper, *Banglar Katha*, is furnished below:

India, Burma, Sri Lanka and places, where Bengalis first inhale, carry out their religious and working lives, take their
last breath – in those places the popularity and publicity of
‘Atmashakti’ is profusely appreciated: in places of the affluent,
residence of householders and in houses of the poor. If you
want to prosper in business, put your Advertisement in
‘Atmashakti’ – the ever yearned and unique Bengali illustrated
weekly of the Indians.
Special rebate on the rate of Advertisement are cordially
intimated to the interested parties in detail on receipt of letter.
‘Atmashakti’ is published on every Friday. Annual
subscription is Rs.4/-; per issue 10 annas* only.
The Forward Publishing Ltd.,
19, British Indian Street.

*One anna = one-sixteenth of a rupee.

From its very beginning, Atmashakti’s editorial policy was
in favour of the Swarajya party of C.R. Das. The following article
is a reflection of its pro-swarajya views: ‘Call it swaraj or what
you will, there are only two ways for a subject nation to be free
from the bondage of slavery. The one is true non-cooperation and
the other an armed rebellion. There is besides these, no other
course. It is the inherent cowardice of the nation that has prevented the non-cooperation movement from assuming a terrible form and from destroying the bureaucracy. So, first of all, attempts should be made to remove by all means timidity of the country. The object of the nation has now become clear and bright. What the nation now wants is full self-government and independence free from association with foreigners.... This cowardice has prevented us from carrying on the bright torchlights of awakening to the center of our strength, which is the united popular force of this vast India....it is quite incomprehensible that one should remain non-violent at all times and under all circumstances. No sane man will ever brand it as an act of bare impiety if we have to resort to brute force to combat brute force, with a view to secure freedom for our mother-land.11

It was article such as this, which landed Upendra Nath Banerjee in prison, for the Government of Bengal would not allow such advice to stream out uncensored. Although this article was published before Subhas Bose came closer to the operation of the paper, it is a view which he shared.12
In a typical *Atmashakti* editorial of the 1923-24 period, the writer described the full meaning of Swaraj as:

'The majority of the people of this country are composed of peasants and labourers, but so long the question of their hopes and fears has been avoided in all our so-called national agitations. But the tables have now been turned and there is no room in swaraj for those who want to make a cat's paw of others and live in luxury on other's money. In most cases those who raise crops, by tilting the soil in Bengal have no propeditary rights over the land. Those who enjoy profits, varying from 200 to 300 per cent, by establishing mills and factories, and whose mill-hands pass their lives with their little ones in tattered clothes and in dark rooms, never think that most of the money they earn ought morally to go to those labourers and that money which they spend on luxury is really stolen money. We often hear them speak of swaraj. To them swaraj means monopoly of committing this theft. It is high time to make it clear to them that swaraj and theft cannot go hand in hand. We must gird up our loins against those who, by refusing to identify their interests with those of the people, have become impediments in the way of swaraj, no matter whether they be our own countrymen or
foreigners. We must build up the ideal of making the interests of the masses the foundation of the movement and every attempt must be made to curb influences which are hostile to every just means for the establishment of that swaraj.'

Many of the most sharply worded articles in *Atmashakti* were written by Subhas Bose's youthful companion, Hemanta Sarkar. In the same period, writers for *Atmashakti* also seemed to propose armed rebellion as an alternative in case non-cooperation were to fail to bring the Raj to its knees. These words from the February 10, 1923 issue resonate with Aurobindo Ghosh's (Bengal's revolutionary nationalist leader later turned to be a spiritual persona) very similar ones in his Swadeshi articles, 'The Doctrine of Passive Resistance.'

In a brief article in 1925, *Forward* congratulated *AtmaShakti* on entering its fourth year and commented:

'Founded and edited originally by the veteran journalist *Srijukt* Upendranath Banerjee, the paper was taken charge of by *Srijukt* Subhas Chandra Bose after its editor was thrown into prison in 1923, under Regulation III. *Srijukt* Subhas Chandra Bose, with his wonderful power of organization conducted the weekly with
credit, maintaining the traditions set up by its worthy founder, until sometime last year when he was deprived of his own liberty. Young Bengal has been watching the progress of the paper all these years with considerable interest and have no doubt that it has all along given a proper lead to the thinking section of our young men, whose organ it claims to be."\textsuperscript{15}

It is evident from the extracts of the *Atmashakti* and also from the Government reports that two clear messages were delivered to the readers during 1923 and 1924: (i) that the masses had to be organized and that their interests were not necessarily reconciliable with those of the upper classes. (ii) That the use of violence in the pursuit of freedom or Swaraj was not unthinkable.\textsuperscript{16}

In the first week of January, 1923, *Deshbandhu* C.R.Das formed a new forum, the *Swarajya Party* i.e. pro-changer group within the Congress. There was a clear division between Swarajists and Gandhi’s non-violent group (no changer group)\textsuperscript{17} At that time, very few number of newspapers were supporters of the *Swarajya*
party. Among them, Bandemataram (salute to motherland) was the only daily. The weekly Bengali newspapers, Bijoli (the light) and Atmashakti of Calcutta, Banglar Bani (words of Bengal) from Dacca, Panchajanya (conch of Shri Krishna, the Lord of Hindu mythology, later it became a daily from Chhattagram), Burdwan Bani (voice of Burdwan, a place of Bengal, edited by Balai Dev Sharma of Burdwan district), Jagoran (the awakening) from Kustia and some other newspapers published from suburban areas of Bengal were supporter of C.R. Das’s new Party. Subhas Chandra Bose had mentioned about this crucial period to Bengali novel writer, Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay in a letter dated 12.8.1925 from Mondalay Central Jail, in an article on the sudden demise of Deshbandhu C.R. Das. “......you have said somewhere -- ‘not a man, no funds, not a newspaper were in his favour, even non-entities were heaping abuse on him - what a predicament for the Deshbandhu!’ Memories of those days are still quite fresh in my mind. When we returned to Calcutta after the Gaya Congress, all the newspapers of Bengal were overflowing with untruths and half-truths. Not to speak of anything in our favour, they would not
even publish our point of view. Swaraj fund was by then almost completely depleted. When money was sorely needed, funds were not available. The house, that once used to overflow with people, was deserted by one and all, friend or foe. So, we, a handful of beings, kept the show going. Later, when the house regained its pristine glory—when outsiders and careerists came back to reoccupy the arena, we were not getting the chance, even to talk business. Outsiders do not know and will probably never know that labour, what grueling labour led to the building up of the fund; how we had a newspaper of our own and how public opinion was won back in our favour. But he, who was the initiator, leader and high priest of the great movement, has disappeared before the final fulfillment of the mission. His mortal frame could no longer bear the twofold stress of his inner fire and the burden of work outside....” 19

Since his return to Calcutta and his entry into politics, Subhas Bose was under the close scrutiny of the Intelligence Bureau, Home Department. His contacts with revolutionaries were known to them. They were also investigating weather C.R. Das
and Subhas Bose had made any positive response to communications from the Cominterns. These overtures they learnt, had been rejected, but the revolutionary contacts went on and the agents of the Raj watched, filed their log books and awaited.\textsuperscript{20}

On that very day of the birth of \textit{Liberty}, a new nationalist Bengali weekly, \textit{Naboshakti} (new spirit) was published, under the managerialship of Bose, the price of which was one \textit{anna} (one-sixteenth part of a rupee) per piece. The first article of the first issue was written by the famous Bengali novelist, Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay. It was his analysis of the speech of the Congress President. In this issue, Subhas Chandra’s speech was printed and various other topics were published like Ruskin’s Theory on Art by Prof. Jayanta Kumar Dasgupta, Indian Soap Industry by Dr. Shyamadas Bandyopadhyay etc. Stories and novels were also published in it. One Bengali story named ‘Dukkho’, (sorrow) by Buddhadeb Bose, serial novel, \textit{Bidroho} (revolt) by Sachindranath Sengupta, \textit{Ei Dandwa} (this conflict) by Shibram Chakraborty were published. The journal had not only a political angle, but also had a literary value to the Bengal intelligentsia. Many stalwarts of
various fields regularly contributed their writings in this weekly.
The foreign news items, history of football, radio-review, *pith-o-
pot*, (i.e. various religious places and pictorial art, which is a type
of folk art of Bengal) etc. were published. Features and also
different subjects of readers’ interests were published. It contained
some discussions on authors and their writings, tourism, book
reviews etc. There was a separate section for readers’ opinions,
which was termed *Jonomat* (peoples’ opinions). It had a separate
weekly news brief section the important event of the week under
the headline *Saptahiki* (weekly). The objective of Subhas Chandra
behind this journalistic venture was to form a programme forum
for young writers. There were a group of famous writers. Some of
them were Buddhadev Basu, Shibram Chakraborty, Sachindra
Nath Sengupta, Sarala Debi, Kazi Nazrul Islam, Nripendra Krishna
Chatterjee, Anil Baran Roy, Priyambada Debi, Bijoy Ratno
Majumdar, Brojendra Nath Shil and so many other talented
writers, who had enriched Subhas Chandra’s journal *Navashakti*. 
Forward Phase

Deshbandhu C.R. Das had raised some money for the publication of a daily paper under the name, Forward, of which he was the Editor-in-Chief. C.R. Das received thousands of money from his devoted followers of South India and Maharashtra for the publications of Swarajya Party. But before the paper saw the light of the day and just after the Delhi Congress, many leading workers of the B.P.C.C., including the Secretary, Bhupati Babu, Babu Manomohan Bhattacharyya (who was meant by Deshbandhu to be the manager of Forward) Babu Upendra Nath Banerjee, who was to be the Assistant Editor, Forward, were arrested under Regulation III of 1818. Deshbandhu C.R. Das immediately put Subhas in the Forward office and under his (Subhas's) management, the first issue of Forward came out on October, 25, 1923. Forward, as a nationalist English daily, soon captured the imagination of the readers in Bengal. Former Editor, Mrinal Kanti Bose and Associate Editors, Upendra Nath Banerjee and Kishorilal Ghosh, left Amrita Bazar Patrika (an English daily) and joined the Forward's editorial board. Within few days, sub-editors of
‘Bengali’, Upendra Narayan Neogi and Hem Chandra Nag joined this new daily. Veteran journalist, J.N. Sahani, had mentioned in his famous book, *Truth about the Indian Press*, that Das had mobilized most of the staff from the old *Yugantar* (new era), an extremist daily. The best among them had been suddenly arrested for terrorist activities. I welcome the opportunity to serve the great C.R. Das and the *Forward*. In spite of Subhas Chandra Bose, many dedicated people and stalwarts like Kiran Shankar Roy, Virendra Sharma, Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy, Nalini Ranjan Sarkar, Nirmal Chandra Chandra, Satyendra Chandra Mitra, Hemanta Kumar Sarkar, Pratap Chandra Guha, Hemendra Nath Dasgupta, Surendranath Biswas, Sukumar Ranjan Das, Sabitri Prasanna Chatterjee etc. were beside C.R. Das’s new venture. Outside Bengal, Pandit Motilal Nehru and Srinivas Iyengar had played a key role for Das’s newly formed party and its publications. But the formative stage of *Forward* was very tough and struggling. J.N. Sahani was unable to make his career in *Forward* due to its financial crisis at the primary stage of publication. Proprietor of a small hotel on Harrison Road, Calcutta, when he learnt that he
(Sahani) was working in the *Forward*, he even offered food to Sahani at concessional rates. J.N. Sahani had given a brief account of that period - 'As I reached the premises of the *Forward* next day, I found that the paper was still very much in the making. The building itself was a tumbledown structure; some of the office rooms being mere shacks. The machinery was old by half a century. The tables and chairs had undergone many repairs after having been obtained from an auction. What inspired me to put *Forward* my best, disregardful of chairs, tables or hours of work, however, was the enthusiasm of my colleagues, their spirit of service and their loyalty to the cause and to C.R. Das. Unfortunately, I could not be with the *Forward* long enough to see its first issue. The salary that was offered could not pay even for my austerity boarding and lodging at the hotel.27 During his Madras visit, *Deshbandhu* C.R. Das collected some amount of money and utilized it for publishing *Forward*. Mr. Monomohan Bhattacharyya, Secretary of the newspaper, *Servant* (which was against the *Swarajya* Party) left that paper and started primary preparation for publishing *Forward* in the month of November,
1922. The Forward Publishing Co. Ltd. was registered and C.R. Das was the President of its Directorate. The Members of its Board of Directors at different stages were - Birendra Shasmal, Sarat Chandra Bose, Nirmal Chandra Chandra, Tulsi Charan Goswami, Debendralal Khan, Subhas Chandra Bose, Provudyal Himmal Shinka, Nalini Ranjan Sarkar and Motilal Nuhru. Attorney Nripendra Chandra Mitra, who gave a constant legal fight against Government’s regulation from the early days of this publication house. Birendranath Sasmal was its first Managing Director and due to the heavy work load from Midnapore district Congress party and also for some other reasons, he resigned after three months. Deshbandhu C.R. Das reposed Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose (Barrister of High Court and elder brother of Subhas Chandra Bose) in the trust of managing the party publications. The office address of Forward was 128, Dharmotalla Street, Calcutta and later it shifted to 12, British Indian Street, Calcutta. Before its first publication, the Press Manager, Mr. Monomohan Bhattacharyya was arrested on 23rd September (Regulation III of 1818 Act) and at that time Subhas Chandra Bose took the charge as the Working Secretary (as
well as manager) of the paper. Mr. Sabitri Prasanna Chattopadhyay was inducted as the Press Manager of ‘Forward’ to organize its Press. According to Hemendranath Dasgupta of Forward, ‘Subhas was the manager here only for a few months and worked very hard; sometimes keeping awake for whole night. But he had not to remain long in the Forward office (then at Dharmotala Street), as he was meant for a more arduous work. I had to come in contact here too intimately with Subhas, as from January 1924 to April, I had raised about Rupees Forty Thousand in shares with Deshbandhu’s help for the Forward Publishing House under the auspices of which the daily paper used to come out. Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose was then the Managing Director. Eminent reporter of Forward, Mr. S.C. Dasgupta, a classmate and friend of Subhas Bose, wrote in an article about Bose’s interest in journalism. “The history of Forward in the early days is the history of Subhas Chandra Bose. It was Subhas in the making. Day and night he worked feverishly for the Paper. The general elections were drawing near and the time was short. In those days it was so very difficult to get good printing. Machines, rotaries and the
Linotypes were the precious possession of the privileged few. Others had to be content with flatbeds and hand-made compositions. The super-human effort made by Subhas Chandra succeeded in bringing out the 'dummy', but in the context of the present day mechanical age, one cannot help observing that it was so much energy wasted. For nights together, Subhas, his intimate friend, Sabitri Prasanna Chattejee and myself had to stay in Forward office at Dhormatolla Street, taking stock of the difficulties experienced in course of the day and planning to meet them the next day, sharing the same food from a nearby restaurant, lying on the office tables, the conversation drifted to a wide range of subjects. Poet Sabitri Prasanna, with his charming manners and never failing smiles, occasionally introduced lighter topics in the discussion to ease the tension. Subhas was never slow to take it up and there we had a glimpse of Subhas, - humourous, capable of relaxation and essentially a man of flesh and blood - and not the austere grave Subhas, who seldom smiled in public.32

Subhas Chandra had managed all the difficulties of publishing the paper during the early phase of Forward. '....it was
easy enough to tide over the difficulty by another son of Bengal, who was so long busy in other spheres. He responded to the call and placed his services ungrudgingly - this was no other than our Subhas Chandra Bose. Rabindranath Tagore's famous poem *Freedom* was published in the very first issue of *Forward* and it was significant with the motto and objective of the paper and its call to the nation.

'Freedom from the burden of ages,
bending your head, breaking your back,
blinding your eyes to the beckoning call of future;

*Freedom from shackles of slumber*

wherewith you fasten yourself to night's stillness,
mistrusting the star that speaks of truth's adventurous path;

*Freedom from the anarchy of a destiny,*

*Whose sails are weakly yielded*

To blind uncertain winds,

and the helm to a *hand*

*ever rigid and cold as Death.*
There were so many stalwarts like Chittaranjan Das, Pandit Motilal Nehru, Birendra Shasmal, Pravudayal Himmatsinka, Sarat Chandra Bose, elder brother of Subhas Chandra Bose in the Board of Forward Publishing House, who were in the group of publishing the Swarajya Party. Later, there were some changes. The Forward started a new horizon in the field of Indian journalism at that time, particularly its wide angle of news, views and editorials. The 'Forward' was a twelve-page daily and on Sunday, it was of eighteen pages. The price per copy was one Anna (i.e. one-sixteenth of a Rupee). In the regular editions, the front page was the advertisement page. The second page contained job vacancies and other advertisements. The third page was full of commercial news consisting of Foreign Trade News, Business News, Economical articles, Share Market and Notice of Shipment etc. The fourth page was the editorial page, containing analytical articles and features on contemporary issues and incidents. The fifth and sixth pages were full of news. The seventh page contained news from suburban areas, coverage of party meetings, Calcutta Radio Programme schedules and news. The eighth page was
allotted for Letters to Editor, besides some small news stories and advertisements. Mainly the sports news and sometimes other news were covered in the ninth page. The tenth page was allotted for the news of the Calcutta High Court and other items. The eleventh page contained jumped portion from the news page and other news stories as well. The twelfth and the last page was allotted for Advertisements, but on Sunday, it included book-reviews; the thirteenth page covered health related news; the fifteenth page contained Trade and Business news and the next page was allotted for some other news stories. The seventeenth page was allotted for news reports, especially foreign news and views of the foreign writers about their country and nation. The last page of the Sunday newspaper was the Advertisement page.

Subhas Chandra Bose had tried his best to bring the newspaper to a respectable position in the world of journalism. Noted journalist and critique, Prof. Binay Kumar Sarkar had mentioned in his memoir that the sincere efforts of Bose was directed towards Forward's quality control. Binoy Kumar Sarkar used to send foreign news for Forward as a correspondent from
Lugano city of Switzerland, as per the advise of Bose. Binoy Kumar Sarkar was the first Bengali foreign news correspondent. Sarkar had mentioned in his book, "...insignificant person like me was appointed for Forward as a foreign correspondent. My duty was to send the world news broadcasted in the language of French, Italian and German through telegraphic message to Forward regularly. Subhas had mentioned in his letter, ‘.....we are to defeat Reuter’ - I was very proud of this sentence. Probably Forward was the first Bengali daily that appointed its first Bengal foreign correspondent."35

Earl Winsterton, at the floor of the House of Commons of Britain, gave a motivated and distorted description on the interned Bengali revolutionary. Subhas Chandra protested against it. At that time he was seriously ill. His protest letter to Earl Winterton was published in the Forward with a true description of the interned revolutionaries and available photographs. The language of Subhas Chandra Bose was – "If the speech had been directed against me alone, I would prefer to maintain a dignified silence, knowing, as I do, that a reply to his speech would involve an amount of physical
and moral strain which I can hardly bear in the present state of my health. But as he had been so unchivalrous as to attack persons, who, being immune within prison walls are unable to reply, I consider it my duty to enter an emphatic protest on their behalf as well as my own.  

Here is an interesting British Archival document during the *Forward* phase (which was intercepted by the British intelligence):  

**COPY OF INTERCEPT P&J(S) 769 1927**  

Eastern Telegraph Co. Ltd. No. 4145E 0526  

From Central Committee, COMMUNIST PARTY,  

Leicester Square, London  

To  

Subhas Chandra Bose, Forward Office,  

Calcutta, Dated 18.5.27  

Text : Congratulations on release after splendid struggle. We would point out that although ordinances were promulgated by Labour Government, British workers never approved such action and Communist Party vehemently opposed such imperialist betrayal of workers' movement from start.  

Copy to Scotland Yard  

Date : 20.5.1927
Subhas Chandra Bose also had secret international connections with Italy. Mr. M.K. Johnston, Deputy Commissioner of Police, Special Branch, Calcutta, had written a 'strictly secret' note\textsuperscript{38} in connection with the Pro-Italian and Anti-British attitude of Bose’s paper. Part of the said report runs as follows:

"....information was received that the Consulate had instructed the Italian clergy in India to mix with the Indian population for the purpose of carrying on anti-British propaganda.

"On 29\textsuperscript{th} November, 1935, an independent and reliable source stated that the Consul-General had paid a substantial sum to Forward and had promised Rs. 5,000/- to Dr. Anklesaria if he would do propaganda work for Italy through the All-India Trade Union Congress.

"During December we continued to get information of the Consul-General’s propaganda activities. On the 18\textsuperscript{th} of the month, information was received that the Consul, while interviewing some Indian nationalists, suggested that the Indians should resort to ‘direct action’ in order to exact their power and to oppose the
Governor and the Government. He said that it was men like Sarat and Subhas Bose, of whom India stood in most need at the moment, and that India should resort to class collaboration in order to overthrow British Imperialism.”

This report also stated that on 23rd December, 1935 the Consul-General wrote a letter to the editor of the Bishan. In this letter he wanted to know whether the article in Forward titled, India and the Italo-Abyssinian War dated 20th December, expressed the real views of the Congress or merely those of the writer, J.B. Kripalani and indicated that, if they were the views of the Congress, he wanted to get in touch with members of the Congress Working Committee.

On 2nd January, 1936, further information was received to the effect that the Consul published three pamphlets, one of which was thoroughly anti-British. He also said that he had written to Italy saying that the Indian Congress had rejected the British theory of the Italo-Abyssinian war and that he was trying to
organize a students’ meeting with the help of Bensaglio in his capacity of an Italian professor of the Calcutta University.

The editorials of *Forward* were inspiring for motivating its readers in patriotism and nationalism. Congress leader, Ms. Sorojini Naidu, had made her comment on Forward’s role during the freedom struggle: “Forward was steadfastly held aloft the beautiful and resplendent torch of vision, faith and courage, kindled by the immortal genius and sacrifice of Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das. May its unwavering luster light the nation’s path to the goal of victory.” Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, in his newspaper, *Young India*, had written about *Forward*, “By its dash, enterprise, resourcefulness and above all fearlessness, it proved a thorn in the side of the Government. It was, therefore, marked out for destruction....A spirit has been awakened that cannot be crushed by any power on earth. *Forward* is dead; long live *Forward*.“

Courageousness and objectivity of *Forward* were accepted by the people, as it was a more reliable source of information to them
than any Government dominated newspaper. News was reported in the Forward about a railway accident near the Majdia Station of Ranaghat (Nadia Dist. of Bengal) and it narrated the negligence of railway authority towards the injured passengers. The East India Railway authority filed a defamation suit against Forward. Justice Mr. Buckland of Calcutta High Court ordered to pay Rupees one lakh fifty thousand as demurrage charge to Forward. the Forward Publishing Limited had gone through a crisis period after getting the court order.

There was an announcement in the first issue of New Forward by the Director of the Forward Publishing Limited, which was as follows: 'But today we are placed in circumstances that leave us with no choice but to suspend the publication of the papers conducted by the Forward Publishing Limited viz. the English daily Forward; Bengali daily, Banglar Katha and the Bengali weekly, Atmashakti. We make this announcement with regret that is hard to express in words.' In the same issue of New Forward, an editorial, titled Ourselves was published with the vision of Deshbandhu and the dream of freedom: 'Many of the
obstacles that will be set on our path and the storms will overtake us like the faithful pilgrim destined to reach his heaven. We shall travel, may be alone and friendless, but certainly fearless and self-reliant. The claims that bind us may make us falter and the thorns may make us bleed. But we shall march on, confident that the reign of darkness is well high over and the kingdom of light is before us."^42

This newborn newspaper was nipped in the bud. The address and Press was the same as *Forward*. Liquidation of the court alleging the editor, Subhas Chandra Bose and printer, Kunjo Behair Sarkar, as they were using the goodwill of its previous newspaper *Forward*, the *New Forward* was shut down by the court order.\(^43\) Within six years of passing the Official Secret Act, 1923, the *Forward* and the *New Forward* were closed down by the British Government.\(^44\) But Subhas Chandra Bose was indomitable and within one night, just after getting the court verdict regarding ban on *New Forward*, with only one night’s effort, the very next day a newspaper, *Liberty* was published on 4th May, 1929. In that issue, under the headline of *Why Liberty Has Been Started*, Subhas
Chandra wrote, ‘Having regard to the injunction, the publication or
sell of any paper under the name of New Forward is suspended till
the disposal of the above application. I am glad to announce that I
have taken steps to publish a daily English newspaper under the
name of Liberty. May I not count upon the sympathy and support
of patriotic men and women all over the country.’ By this
announcement, the New Forward was shifted to Liberty and the
Forward Publishing Limited was changed into Liberty Newspapers
Limited.

The editorial of the first issue (4th May, 1929) of Liberty was
as follows: “By the time the morning sun floods the earth with
heavenly light, Liberty will be in the hands of thousands of Indian
readers. An unexpected guest is often a welcome one and so we
hope is Liberty. Liberty brings with it the pure light of morn, the
sweet smell of fresh blown flowers, the gentle greeting of summer-
breezes. It appeals to all and its appeal is irresistible. It comes with
a life-giving message, for its one mission is to transform this land
of lotus-eaters into a region of action and reality....Once more will
India’s sons take an honoured place among the free nations of the
free world, once more will Mother India rise in all her glory and dazzle the whole world with her light and learning.

The political news coverage of *Liberty* was very popular among its avid readers. There was a special coverage on the Legislative Council Election period. Some of the interesting editorial articles like, *The debacle of the Ministerialists or to Hukums; The Finishing Touch; Bureaucracy is buried four fathom deep* etc. were intensely stirring among the young freedom fighters.

*The Calcutta Municipal Gazette* (dated 1\textsuperscript{st} November, 1930), published a news item about a social gathering organized by *Liberty*.

*Entertained by "Liberty": Cosmopolitan Gathering*

Europeans and Indians, Japanese and Chinese, Hindus and Moslems, Congress and non-Congressmen gathered at the "Liberty" Office, at 19, British Indian Street, on Saturday, the
25th October, in response to the invitation of Mr. Satyaranjan Bakshi, Editor of "Liberty," to meet the Mayor of Calcutta, Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose, at an Afternoon Party.

The hall on the second floor of the premises was tastefully decorated with flowers and foliage and the guests were received by Mr. Bakshi and Mr. B.N. Dutta, Manager. Covers were laid for about two hundred persons and the guests were sumptuously treated to refreshments both in Indian and European style. Mr. S.C. Bose, the Managing Director of "Liberty," went round the guests talking to them. The Avenue Music Club discoursed sweet Indian music to the delectation of the guests.

Among those present were:

The Consul-General of the Chinese Republic; Viscount H. Kauo (Yokohama Specie Bank), Consul-General of Sweden; Mr. Andes Granberg; Mr. Anandji Haridas; Mr. Gaganvehari Mehta; Mr. C.S. Rangaswami; Mr. N.R. Sarker, The Rev. B.A. Nag; Mr. Scholefield ("Reuters"), Mr. Modi; Councillor Haji Mahomed Akber; Fakir Mahomed Waziz
Mahomed; Haji Jan Mahomed; Mr. Jadabjee; Mr. Mobsin Ali; Councillors Harisanker Paul and Rajendra Narayan Banerji; Mr. Sailapati Chatterji; Mr. V.V. Ramiah; Mr. Suresh Sanyal; Mr. Kalyan Sinha; Mr. R. Mazumdar; Haji Abdul-Rashid Khan; Councillors Amritalal Chatterjee; Dr. Brojen Ganguli and Mohan Lal Mackar; Lieut. Nalini Mohan Roy Chowdhuri; Captain Naren Dutt, Mr. Kumudini Niyogi, ("Associated Press"); Mr. Jnanjan Niyogi; Mr. Ramesh Ghosh (of Malda); Councillor M. Saadatullah; Mr. M.P. Gandhi (Indian Chamber of Commerce); Mr. K.J. Purohit; Mr. S.C. Roy; Mr. Surhid Ghosh; Mr. Jatin Hui; Mr. S.H. Das Gupta; Mr. Hemendra Guha Ray; Mr. C. Sarker ("Free Press"); Mr. Manmohan Bhattaryya; Mr. Sailen Ghosal; Mr. Amar Krishna Ghosh; Mr. Suresh Das; Councillor M.G. Rasool and Mr. Mukundalal Chakrabarty (Iron Merchants' Association).

Among those who regretted their inability to be present on account of previous engagements were the Consul-Generals of Czecho-Slovakia, Belgium, Norway, the Netherlands; Manager, National City Bank of New York; Mr. Amritalal
Ojha and a number of representatives of continental nations and firms.

The above news depicts how a newspaper can successfully communicate with a cross-section of the society and make an effective community relation, which has now become a trend of the corporate media houses. This also reflects a blending of a unique and modern outlook of the Liberty group under colonial rule, which was perhaps the first of its kind in the history of Indian journalism.

Liberty, November 25 and December 2, 1930, gives accounts of Bose’s meetings with Indian merchants and his concerns for meeting foreign competition. Bose was still friendly with Mr. Nalini Sarkar in this period and Sarkar was a rising star in Indian business circles.

In a speech, reported in Liberty, November 5, 1931, Bose mentioned his study of Irish history and its significance for Indian
nationalists. In other speeches, reported in Liberty, April 5, May 4, October 29, he also made extensive use of Irish parallels.

_Liberty_, October 29, 1931, Bose felt that repression should be resisted, but that it often rebounded to the favour of the nationalists. In _Liberty_, December 17, 1931, Bose said, “I want full freedom for the masses and I know the terrorism can do no good to the masses. The masses are silent and disarmed. They do not know how to kill. I do not talk of individual instances, but the masses of India have never manned in that direction.” Bose had made this point on several occasions in the previous few years. For example, in a speech to the Howrah district political conference, September 28, 1929, he said that a few bombs would not bring the revolution that India needed. He said the age of terrorism has passed and that India needed a mass movement leading to freedom and socialism. He called for mass organizing to bring this about. 47

A small news item in _Liberty_ on January 3, 1932 indicated the direction in which the Government of India had decided to make during civil disobedience programme decided by Congress Working Committee: “Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose, who left for Calcutta this afternoon was arrested on the train at Kalyan, 30
miles from Bombay, under Regulation III of 1818. He was taken by the same train to an unknown destination.”

On February 6, 1932, another small item appeared in *Liberty* concerning its Managing Director: “Sij. Sarat Chandra Bose, Barat-Law an alderman of Calcutta Corporation, was arrested on Thursday night at Jharia, where he went on a professional call. Under Regulation III of 1818 and taken by Bombay Mail to Seoni sub-jail, Sij. Subhas Chandra Bose has been kept detained under the same Regulation.”

Apart from his direct association with the *Liberty*, Bose had also some journalistic ideas towards the development of civic administration and he had implemented it through the publications of Calcutta Corporation.

**Asia’s Premier Municipal Journal**

*The Calcutta Municipal Gazette* an organ of the Calcutta Corporation, Asia’s premier Municipal journal, was also his
brainchild. Subhas Chandra's association with the Calcutta Corporation began in 1924, when his mentor, Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das, the First Indian Mayor of Calcutta, appointed him as the First Chief Executive Officer of Calcutta Corporation. However, Subhas Chandra Bose could not complete his tenure as its Chief Executive Officer. The British Government let no chances and sent him into prison by the virtue of a weapon taken out from old armoury of the East India Company within six months of assuming his office in October 1924. He worked only for six months in the capacity of Chief Executive Officer. He was released after a spell of two and a half years, towards the middle of 1927. He was elected Councilor and became more involved in Corporation affairs. He paid his attention to even the minutest details of civic welfare activities, particularly in Primary Education, Health and Bustee Services.

Before the *Calcutta Municipal Gazette* (C.M.G.), there was a weekly of the Calcutta Corporation, titled *Current Market Price*, where the Corporation market rate of vegetables, fish, meat etc. were declared and its publication was mandatory. The *Current
Market Price was transformed into the Calcutta Municipal Gazette (Proposal placed by the Councillor, Madan Mohan Burdhsan in 1924, June). The Calcutta Municipal Gazette was first published on 15th November, 1924. Subhas Chandra was directly or indirectly involved with this journal for a long seventeen years, from 1924 to 1940. In his book, The Indian Struggle 1920-34, he wrote briefly about the Calcutta Municipal Gazette. According to Bose, the purpose of this journal was to give expression to the ‘new civic consciousness’ for promoting the welfare of the citizens. In this connection, Subhas Chandra coined a new term, i.e. ‘Municipal Socialism’, which is but a collective effort for the service of the entire community.

Subhas Chandra Bose was elected Mayor of the Calcutta Municipal Corporation (C.M.C.) in the year 1930 for a very short spell. But afterwards, he was able to remain in a key position of Corporation, either by serving as Councilor or as alderman, till the end of 1940. The weekly began its journey at the initiation of Subhas Chandra Bose. Even when Bose was arrested in the month...
of October, 1924, he was busy in scheming the manner in which this Gazette will be published regularly. 52

In the Corporation, Subhas Chandra exercised his mighty ability for coordinating and using the many divergent forces for the accomplishment of the one-programme that Deshbandhu C.R. Das had placed before the New Corporation: Free Primary Education, Free Medical Relief for the poor; purer and cheaper food and milk-supply; better supply of filtered and unfiltered water; better sanitation in Bustee (dwelling places of the unprivileged) and congested areas; improved transport facilities and lastly, greater efficiency of administration at cheaper cost. The same programme was pursued along the same line, as marked by Bose, by the followers of the young Mayor, who looked upon civic freedom with the vision of a national internationalist. 53

Subhas Chandra was primarily responsible for inducting Mr. Amal Home as the Editor of the Calcutta Municipal Gazette. Mr. Amal Home had written in his memoir, ‘Ek Dui Tin’, (One Two Three) about that period — “During the puja festival I was in
Darjeeling. There, on 20th October, I got a telegram from Subhas Chandra saying—'Appointed Editor of Municipal Gazette (stop) First issue must come out on 1st week of November (stop) Please came take charge (stop).’"

Though Subhas was in prison when the first issue of the Gazette came out, yet from the very first issue and almost in every number it followed Subhas Chandra’s guidance. Subhas Chandra cherished the memory of association with the Gazette in almost every message he sent annually. In the year 1930, he wrote, as Mayor, “Being one of those, who were primarily responsible for starting the Calcutta Municipal Gazette, I have naturally cherished a warm corner in my heart for this journal all these years. ….. I am also glad that my choice of the Edition, when I was Chief Executive Officer in 1924, has been abundantly justified. The ‘Gazette’ has been conducted at a high level of efficiency. I congratulate the editor, Mr. Home, on the excellence he has attained and I wish his journal an increasingly useful and prosperous career.”
In the light of this statement, when we look into the pages of the Gazette, we find it contains reference to the major events of Subhas Chandra’s career in the Corporation, in Bengal and in India as a whole. His association with this journal had fetched some write-ups from him in the midst of his busy activities. Even when he was away in Europe, he never forgot to send article for the annual number of the Gazette. This shows his intimate relationship with this journal. His endeavour to make it available to every important Municipality can be ascertained from the fact that whenever he went abroad, he handed over the issues of the Gazette with pride. In a word it can be said that he functioned as the ambassador of this journal in the countries he visited.  

C.M.G., the official organ of C.M.C. was a Saturday weekly, in which much stress was given on Subhas Chandra. What it contained are as follows:  

(a) PROCEEDINGS of the weekly corporation meeting, served as the hot bed of politics of that period. The addresses delivered by Subhas Chandra were published regularly.
(b) **EDITORIALS** which bore the testimony of wisdom and also that of foresightedness on the part of the editor in revealing the truth. The manner, in which these editorials were written on Subhas Chandra, sometimes compelled us to look deep into the background, transcending the barrier of time.

(c) **LETTERS** addressed to Subhas Chandra and some letters had connection or reference of Subhas Chandra.

(d) **NEWS** were published in the C.M.G. in two ways. Those, which were less important in nature to others in those days, were placed in a box and side by side, important news appeared in special box. There were also some important news under the sub-heading of ‘notes & news’ or ‘comments on chronicles’ on ‘news and views.’

(e) **ADDRESSES** given in many occasions by Subhas Chandra were reproduced in entirety.

(f) **APPEALS** made by Subhas Chandra in connection with various movements have also been found.

(g) **ARTICLES** written by Subhas Chandra during his stay in Europe and also that of the time when he was engaged closely in Corporation affairs were reflected.
(h) PHOTOGRAPHS of Subhas Chandra (which got published during the period of 21 yrs., i.e. from 1924 to 1945) could be found.

(i) MESSAGES which were sent by wire and others which bore the originality of his handwriting were produced side by side of all other materials.

From the standpoint of history, C.M.G. also served a useful purpose under the guidance and direct supervision of its editor, Mr. Amal Home, who was in that office for a quarter of the century. Since its inception, Mr. Home thoroughly and in silence recorded all the happenings in the career of Subhas Chandra Bose not only in Calcutta Corporation, but in other parts of the country and also abroad.

*Bose’s New Party and Its Organ – The ‘Forward Bloc’*

Subhas Chandra was re-elected President of the Indian National Congress for the second time at the Tripuri Session held
in 1939, despite concerted opposition of the right wing group headed by Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Ballavbhai Patel and others, who put up Pattabhi Sitaramaiya as their candidate. Subhas Chandra was then overwhelmingly supported by the entire left forces within the Congress. In his Presidential address at the Tripuri Congress on 10th March, 1939, Bose made the historic proposal that the Congress should give an ultimatum to the British Government demanding independence within six months and should simultaneously prepare for the final battle for freedom. Analysing the prevailing international situation, with the possibility of an imminent world war, Subhas Chandra further advocated that it was ‘a rare opportunity in the lifetime of a nation’ to launch the final struggle for freedom. But his proposal was bitterly opposed by the rightist Gandhi wing, who were rather inclined to take the path of collaboration and conciliation with the ruling power. They made concerted efforts to curb Bose’s power and foil all his action programmes. The right wing succeeded in imposing such conditions on the President, through their ‘Pant Proposal’, that he would not be in a position to appoint the National Executive of his choice and that even if he did, the
rightists would made it impossible for him to function. Subhas Chandra did not agree to fall prey to their conspiracy and to become a puppet President, sticking to power anyhow. So he resigned from the Congress Presidentship at the A.I.C.C. (All India Congress Committee) Session held at Wellington Square, Calcutta on 29th April, 1939. Soon after, on 3rd May, 1939 at a public meeting held at Sraddhananda Park, Calcutta, declared the formation of a new political party, the Forward Bloc, to consolidate all the left forces within the Congress and to continue his uncompromising relentless struggle against the British imperialism. He declared its three-fold objectives as: Consolidation of left forces, winning over the majority section of the Congress and launching the national struggle for freedom. Subhas Chandra Bose wrote in his editorial article in Forward Bloc weekly, dated 12th August, 1939. : ‘The Forward Bloc will rally all progressive, radical and anti-imperialist elements. Through this consolidation, the people will equip themselves for the anti-imperialist struggle that will bring India her birth right of liberty. But the attainment of political independence will not mean the dissolution of the Bloc. It
will mean a new phase in its life and activity and the phase will undoubtedly be a Socialist one.'

For further strengthening the left consolidation with the Congress Socialists, Radical Democrats (led by M.N. Roy) and the National Frontiers (or the banned Communists), the First All India Conference of the Forward Bloc was held at Bombay, on 22nd June, 1939, where the Constitution and programme of the Forward Bloc was adopted. Subhas Chandra Bose was then at the forefront of left consolidation.

The World War II broke out on 3rd September, 1939, as very accurately predicted by Bose six months prior to its occurrence. Britain became involved in this War. Subhas Chandra felt that the much-awaited international crisis had arrived and from the platform of Forward Bloc, he called upon the people to utilize this golden opportunity emanating from the international situation for launching the final assault on British Imperialism. Unfortunately, neither the Gandhi Congress nor the other left parties responded to his call. So, Bose went ahead alone under the banner of Forward
Bloc with tremendous public support behind him. He addressed hundreds of meetings throughout the length and breadth of the country and created a strong public opinion in support of his call for uncompromising anti-imperialist struggle.56

A major incident in the history of anti-imperialist left movement in India was the holding of Anti-Compromise Conference at Ramgarh under the Presidentship of Subhas Chandra Bose on 19th March, 1940. The pioneer of the Peasants' Movement of India – Swami Sahajananda Saraswati actively participated in this Conference as the Chairman of the Reception Committee. This Conference was held parallel to the Congress Session held in an adjoining site, but it succeeded in drawing a much bigger crowd than that of the Congress Session. Bose, in his Presidential address, while defining the characteristics of left movement in India, said:

'The immediate future will prove to be the acid test of Leftism in India.... In the present phase of our movement the Leftists will be those who will wage an uncompromising fight with imperialism. In the next phase of our movement, Leftism will be synonymous with socialism.' Thus giving a clarion call for left unity for furthering
the anti-imperialist movement, Subhas Chandra declared in his address: "In India we are now ringing down the curtain on an age that is passing away.... The age of Imperialism is drawing to a close and the era of freedom, democracy and socialism looms ahead of us. India stands today at one of the crossroads of history."

Following the spirit of the Anti-Compromise Conference, Subhas Chandra Bose gave a call for observing a National Week from 6 to 12 April, 1940 throughout the country. In response to the call, thousands of Forward Bloc leaders and workers took part in the Civil Disobedience Movement and were promptly arrested. In fact, that was the beginning of 'arrests' of Forward Bloc members, which continued unabatedly throughout the British regime.

To consolidate the countrywide movement through a party discipline, the First Plenary Session of the All India Forward Bloc or the First All India Conference was held at Nagpur from June 18 to 22, 1940, under the Presidentship of Subhas Chandra Bose, where the Forward Bloc was declared as a socialist party. In the
history of the Party, 22\textsuperscript{nd} June, 1940, is, therefore, regarded as the foundation day of the All India Forward Bloc.

The twelve months duration from June 1939 to June 1940, was a more rigid experience for Subhas Chandra and Forward Bloc than the earlier period, due to of the tremendous opposition and humiliation from the quarters of the rightists in general and the Gandhiites of the Congress in particular. These twelve months were, in fact, a clear acid-test for the national politics and for the uncompromising freedom struggle, in determining who were the real leftists and who were not. This a period of a number of incidents and a 'crossroad' for Bose, particularly on the question of identity and the future course of action of the 'Forward Bloc.' Bose saw the Forward Bloc as a function of the Zzeitgeist - the spirit of the times. In his 1941 essay, \textit{Forward Bloc – Its Justification} Bose wrote 'when the mainstream of a Movement begins to stagnate, but there is still vitality in the Movement as a whole – a Left Wing invariably appears. The main function of the Left Wing is to stimulate progress when there is danger of it being arrested.'\textsuperscript{59}
In a signed article on June 15, 1940 in *Forward Bloc*, the organ of the party, Subhas Chandra Bose gave the call of ‘Come to Nagpur’. This event took place just on the eve of the All India Conference of Forward Bloc. ‘What will be the task of the Conference’, Subhas Chandra asked and himself replied: ‘No doubt we shall have to do a lot of stock-taking and heart-searching. After recapitulating the events of the last twelve months, we shall have to ratify our present policy and programme or modify it, if necessary. But more urgent than that is the need to determine our policy and programme vis-à-vis the British Government. The struggle launched at Ramgarh in March will have to be intensified and widened in its scope. Simultaneously, we shall have to work for national unity and solidarity. Those two issues will naturally raise a host of questions which will have to be answered satisfactorily. This All India Conference of the Forward Bloc held at Nagpur thus came before the people of India not simply as a meeting to gather formally for some paper-resolutions, but to declare the opening of a new chapter of history.’ The *Forward Bloc* was established as a party, a complete party with a definite ideology and a very definite target. There, at Nagpur, it was a
simple but stormy declaration: All power to the Indian people here and now. Here lies the history of the struggling people of India for achieving independence and here a new history is born. In the Presidential Address, Bose gave a concrete plan of action for winning Purna Swaraj or complete independence in the immediate future. The Conference resolved that, in order to preserve it, the following steps be taken as soon as possible: (1) The struggle launched at Ramgarh (March, 1940) be intensified locally and further widened in its scope under the slogan ‘All Power to Indian People’ (2) Steps be taken to promote and develop national unity on as many fronts and in as many directions as possible. (3) Measures be adopted for forming Panchayat in every locality, beginning from the village right up to the center, to function as organs of struggle and later on as organs of administration.

Being inspired by the Party’s Nagpur Session, the Forward Bloc started direct movement, firstly, on demand to remove the Holwell Monument, which was falsely erected by the Britishers, representing the so-called ‘Black Hole Tragedy’ to malign the good name of Sirazuddaula, the Nawab (Lord) of Bengal. Subhas
Chandra picked up the issue to develop among the people a spirit of communal harmony, nationalism and hatred towards British imperialism. The Government came down heavily upon the party workers and arrested Subhas on the eve of the movement on 2\textsuperscript{nd} July, 1940.

Yet the movement started on 3\textsuperscript{rd} July, 1940, as announced earlier, and continued for days together, with hundreds of people being arrested daily, till the Government was forced to remove the Monument from the Dalhousie Square, renamed as Binoy Badal Dinesh Bagh, at the center of Calcutta. Being imprisoned for the eleventh time, Subhas Chandra Bose realized that the British Government would not allow him to go beyond the bars till the end of the war. He became impatient with the idea of wasting his days in the prison and thus frustrating the revolutionary possibilities of freeing India through his planned anti-imperialist struggle.

This phase of Subhas Chandra's political as well as journalistic journey was a colourful and eventful one. The Anti-compromise Conference at Ramgarh and formation of a new
Leftist political party, the Forward Bloc was a new turn of India’s colourful freedom history, before the I.N.A.(Indian National Army) phase of Subhas Chandra’s life and his great escape from Calcutta. Bose’s new political party, the ‘All India Forward Bloc’, alarmed the British Government and its English weekly political organ, the Forward Bloc, edited by Subhas Chandra Bose, was a new threat to the British intelligence. Some of the findings of archival documents had proved this claim. The last court case against Subhas Chandra Bose in British India was connected with the editorial of weekly Forward Bloc.  

EDITORIAL NOTICE  

Forward Bloc Vol.1 No.29

Forward Bloc invites suitable articles for publication in the paper. Political articles bearing specially on all Left movements such as Labour, Peasant, Youth, Student and States’ people are particularly welcome. But though primarily a political paper, Forward Bloc will gladly lend its columns to well-written contributions on other aspects of national life as well. So articles on economic, commercial, social, educational and artistic subjects will be carefully considered. In fact, Forward Bloc will seek
to reflect a forward outlook in various aspects of national life. Correspondences from provincial headquarters such as Bombay, Madras, Lahore, Nagpur, Allahabad etc. setting forth the Leftist position in those provinces may be sent for publication.

Poems will not generally be published, although satirical or humorous verses may very occasionally be used. Short stories or sketches will be gladly accepted for publication. It is desirable that they should have a pronounced Leftist drift. Contributions should not usually exceed 1000 words and should preferably be typewritten. Rejected contributions will not be returned unless accompanied by suitably stamped covers.

Views expressed in the contributed articles are not necessarily ours.

Some important articles and editorials of Subhas Chandra Bose were - 'Our Critics', 'The need of the Hour', 'The Friend's Voice', 'Heart Searching', 'Looking Back', 'When they Fight', 'A Reminder', 'The Correct Line', 'Towards Communal Unity', 'The Caravan Marches', 'Swamiji's Message', 'Wake up India', 'Forward Bengal', 'Long Live
Deshbandhu', 'Task Before the Community', etc. These articles reflected Subhas Chandra Bose's political, philosophical, historical and journalistic temperament. His clarion call for freedom and total mobilization of people were echoed in those writings.

EDITORIALS

Long Live Deshbandhu

Signed editorial in the Forward Bloc, 15 June, 1940

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

Today, on the eve of the anniversary of his death, there is one thought uppermost in our minds – 'Oh, friend of the Nation! In this hour of trial and tribulation, India hath need of thee'. We want more than ever before, that rare combination of Idealism and Realism which constitutes the essence of leadership and which was the secret of his greatness. We want that unbounded love which made him a friend of the people and which drew the Muslims and the backward classes so close to him.

We want that dynamism which would not let him rest and which drove him from struggle to struggle.

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

Signed editorial in the *Forward Bloc*, 15 June, 1940

The second session of the All-India Conference of the Forward Bloc will meet at Nagpur on the 18th June, after or along with the meetings of the Working Committee of the Muslim League and of the Congress. Apart from the fact that it is time to hold the All-India Conference, the present crisis which is deepening and worsening from hour to hour, makes an early session imperative.

...The statement made by Mr. Amery, the Secretary of State for India, to the London Correspondent of *The Hindusthan Times* is illuminating. It reveals once again that imperialists will never learn the lessons of history. This statement was made when the Germans were at the Gates of Paris!

Confronted with danger at home, the British Government now want to fall back on India and her resources. As if an enslaved India, impoverished and exploited, can save imperialist England in the present crisis! With a leadership that is seized with mental and moral paralysis and is determined not to embarrass British Imperialism, the outlook for India is indeed gloomy.
But are we to throw up our hands in despair? Our comrades in prison are looking through the barred windows on the world outside. What shall we say to them?

The imperialist offensive against the Forward Bloc, in Bengal and outside, is becoming more and more ruthless. Simultaneously, War committees are being formed throughout the country for exploiting enslaved India for war-purposes. Confronted with such an unprecedented crisis in our own history, we say to our imperialist rulers with a full sense of responsibility: 'We have accepted your challenge. You may do your worst but you will not succeed in resisting our march to Liberty.'

Towards Communal Unity

*Forward Bloc* Vol.1 No.29; Calcutta, Saturday, February 24, 1940

".....When people become 'comrades-in-arms' in the struggle for liberty, a new *esprit d'crops* will develop – and along with it, a new outlook, a new perspective and a new vision. When this revolution comes about, Indians will be a changed people and a
revolutionary people at that. It will then be easy for them to solve many of the questions which today appear difficult to solve.

...Communalism will go only when the communal mentality goes. To destroy communalism is, therefore, the task of all those Indians—Muslims, Sikhs, Hindus, Christians etc., who have transcended the communal outlook and have developed a genuine nationalist mentality. He undoubtedly has a genuine nationalist mentality who wages a war for national freedom.

In every fight, a special responsibility devolves on the vanguard of the army. In the war against communalism, a special responsibility similarly falls on the shoulders of the front-fighters. It is their task to lay the foundation of inter-communal—i.e. national unity. Hindus and Muslims, Sikhs and Christians who fight for India’s Independence must be specially commissioned to solve the communal problem. Once they solve this problem and announce it to the whole country—the atmosphere will automatically change and the death-knell of communalism will be sounded. If the front-fighters show the way, the nation will ultimately follow.
Let us not, therefore, sit with folded hands waiting for the day when the High Command of the Congress and of the Muslim League will bring about a solution of the communal problem. Let us rather see to it that the real fighters for freedom get together and solve this problem. If they succeed, the first and the most formidable hurdle will be overcome and the general public - the entire nation will follow in their footsteps. Those who love freedom and will die for it can solve the communal problem more easily than anybody else. Forward, therefore, all frontfighters and fulfil the mission that today is yours!"

The article titled, *Hour of Trial*, which appeared on Page No.3 of the English weekly newspaper, *Forward Bloc* in its issue dated 25th May 1940, created a furore among the British rulers in India. This article had an anti-British tune, which seemingly posed a genuine threat to the British governance. A letter was written by the then Commissioner of Police, Calcutta to the Additional Secretary to the Government of Bengal, Home Department, Calcutta regarding this anti-British attitude of Bose’s paper.
This issue of *Forward Bloc* contained some other political views and book reviews on contemporary subjects and advertisements. It was flooded with thirty-one advertisements given by different companies from all over Bengal like the Duckbag from Calcutta, *Shakti Oushadhalaya* from Dacca, Bengal Chemicals, Tropical Insurance Company etc. The first page of this issue portrayed advertisement of the Everest Engineering Company on their ‘ECO Fans’ with a caption that the *Forward Bloc* offices are provided with ‘ECO Fans’. It is interesting to note that during an hour of crisis, the business community of Bengal, dealing with indigenous items, stood by the side of Bose and supposedly extended their supportive hands to him.76a

List of Advertisers as appeared in the *Forward Bloc* 76b

OUR ADVERTISERS:

Abhoya Ghee

Anti T.B. Pharmacy

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Banga Lakshmi Insurance Co. Ltd.

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South India General Assurance Co. Ltd.
Subhas chandra Cotton Mills Ltd.
Tropical Insurance Co. Ltd.
Venus Assurance Co. Ltd.
FORWARD BLOC
49-L, Dharmotola Street, Calcutta

Business Notice

The Forward Bloc is published from Calcutta every Saturday and is sold throughout India at one anna per copy.

Rates of subscription (including postage) (Payable in advance)

Annual ... Rs. 4/-
Half-yearly ...Rs. 2/-
Quarterly ...Re 1/-
Foreign ... 10 shillings (annual)

Complaints of non-receipt of any week's issue should reach this office by Wednesday following quoting the subscriber's number.

ADVERTISEMENT RATE

Advertisements will be based on the inch scale, the charges being calculated at the following rates provided a minimum consumption of 100 column inches per annum is guaranteed (Position not guaranteed) :-

100"-250" Rs. 2/8 per inch
251"- and above Rs. 2/ per inch
Belowe 100" and casual Rs. 4/8 per inch
Advertisements appearing below or adjoining reading matter will be specially charged; Railways, Shipping, Government, State, Military, Court, Legal, Municipal, Local Boards, Co-operative Societies, Personal, Patent Trade-mark and Notification of Public and Corporate Bodies displayed Advertisements in the Front Page will be charged at Rs. 5/- per column inch per insertion.

Front Page Full ... Rs. 60/- Box ... Rs. 5/-
Front Page ½ ... Rs. 35/-
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   Full ... Rs. 45/-
   Half ... Rs. 25/-
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Rates for special position on application.

All remittances should be made to the Manager.

Terms are strictly CASH, or Value Payable on delivery by post.

Those who feel compelled to send Cheques on Banks situated outside Calcutta will please send annas eight extra for Bank Commission.
Editorial Notice

All communications intended for publication in the Forward Bloc should be addressed to the Editor and not to individual members of the Staff.

All such communications should be accompanied by the name and address of the writer not necessarily for publication but as a guarantee of good faith.

In preparing M.S.S. for the Press correspondents are requested to write on one side of the paper only.

The Editor cannot be responsible for the return of rejected communications, though, as far as practicable they will be returned when stamped and addressed envelopes are enclosed.

Some features of Bose's political weekly, 'Forward Bloc':

Registration No. : C 2625

Date of First Publication : August 5, 1939(Vol.I No.I)

Day of Publication : Every Saturday

Price : One anna

Size : Tabloid (three-column)

No. of Pages : 20 (Twenty)
The 'Forward Bloc' was a combination of all the left intellectuals, left writers, left political thinkers and all that. All the brilliant personalities gathered here in response to the golden invitation of Subhas Chandra Bose. He tried to convert all the intellectual fits into a power, which will help our countrymen to think, to observe, to motivate and to put steps into struggle.

Some significant articles published in 'Forward Bloc':

1. War Aims by A.J. Alexander: (Vol.I. No.31)
2. From Paris by A.C.N. Nambiar (Vol.I. No.43)
3. Bihar Clash by Sudhi Pradhan (Vol.I. No.2)
4. The Indian Film - its Problems and Possibilities by A.K. Sen (Vol.I. No.33-34)
5. On Guard for Indian Freedom by Prof. Hirendranath Mukherjee (Vol.I. No. 6)
7. A Spectre haunts the Kremlin by Nirod C. Choudhuri (Vol.I. No. 29)
8. National Value of Education by Prof. A.C. Dasgupta
   (Vol.I. No. 29)

9. War and the Second International by Binoy Ghosh
   (Vol.I. No. 29)

10. Science and National Planning by Prof. Meghnad Saha
    (Vol.I. No. 11)

11. The Red Army by Mrs. Tatiana Shaha (Vol.I. No. 11)

12. Industrial Planning and Economic Autarchy by
    Prof. Binoy Kumar Sirkar (Vol.I. No. 11)

13. The Rightest Onslaught and our immediate task by
    Somnath Lahiri (Vol.I. No. 3)

It is interesting to note that a Controversy on Finland issue with NIRAD C. CHOU DHURI and HIREN MUKHERJEE had appeared in the Forward Bloc. Editor had given a note “with the publication of Mr. Hiren Mukherjee’s present article and Mr. Nirad Choudhuri’s brief note the controversy is closed” (vol-I, No-30), Viwa-Kavi Rabindranath Tagore’s full text of address, on the occasion of laying the foundation stone for Mahajati Sadan planned by Subhas Chandra Bose and the speech of Mr. Bose “the
House of the Nation” had been printed with photograph in the Forward Bloc (19th August, 1939, Vol.I No.3)

The last paragraph of Tagore’s address is as follows:

“..... May Bengal’s arm give strength to the arm of India, Bengal’s voice give truth to India’s message; may Bengal, in service of freedom for Insdia, never make itself ineffective by betraying the cause of unity.”

In the same occasion, Bose delivered a speech showing respect to Rabindranth Tagore, the concluding lines are as follows:

“.....Gurudev (mentor), we welcome you as a high priest in today’s national festival; proceed to lay with your hands the foundation stone of “Mahajati Sadan”. Give us your blessings so that we may able to make this the ‘House of the Nation’ – the living center of all those beneficial activities which will bring about the emancipation of the individual and of the nation, as well as the arround development of India’s manhood and nationhood. Bless us that we may hasten along the path that will lead to India’s liberty and to our national self-fulfilment.”
An article by Subhas Chandra Bose was published in Volume I No. 46, June 29, 1940 in the Weekly Forward Bloc, titled, 'Holwell Must Go': 'There has been unavoidable dealy in bringing out this issue. In fact, we have been forced to miss one week, thanks to the kind attention of the Government of Bengal. The Forward Bloc office was searched and our security was forfeited. Fresh security to the tune of Rs. 2000 had to be deposited before we could bring out the next issue. This has been all to the good. It has put our back up. We have, therefore, to push on with our plan of work and put more zest and more zeal into it. The campaign against the Holwell Monument, which was the mandate of the Bengal Provincial Conference, has to be taken up at once. The third July, 1940, is going to be observed in Bengal as the Sirajuddulah Day – in honour of the last independent King of Bengal. The Holwell Monument is not merely an unwarranted stain on the memory of the Nawab, but has stood in the heart of Calcutta for the last 150 years or more as the symbol of our slavery and humiliation. That monument must now go.'
The following Order was published by the Manager, *Forward Bloc* in the same issue, informing its readers about the difficulties faced by *Forward Bloc* from the British rulers.

**TO OUR READERS**

Owing to unavoidable difficulties arising out of Government’s action in forfeiting our security and demanding a fresh one, the last issue of the paper could not be brought out, though all arrangements thereof were made in time.

Manager,

62, Bowbazar Street, Calcutta.
29th June, 1940

FORWARD BLOC

The editorial by Bose and the Order published in the above issue of *Forward Bloc* created an enormous reaction in the British Govt and on 3rd July, 1940, the *Forward Bloc* newspaper office was raided. The Press Manager, printer and the compositors were arrested. The manuscripts of Bose’s statement on removal of
Holwell Monument and its printed copies of 29th June, 1940 issue were forfeited and seized.

Bose had written a number of articles in various newspapers and journals, both in Vernacular and in English. He was also attached with different periodicals, besides his own publications. Few examples of the topics of his writings are furnished below:

1. Our Needs and our Duties: *National Front*, October, 1938
4. The Austrian Riddle: *The Modern Review*, April, 1934
6. Labour in Jamshedpur – the other side of the picture:
   *The Modern Review*, February, 1936
   (Reprinted – Through Congress Eyes, 1938)
   (Reprinted – Through Congress Eyes, 1938)
During the Tripuri Session of Congress, when Bose was suffering from high fever, few political persons criticized his illness as 'political fever.' A pain-stricken and emotionally hurt Subhas Chandra Bose wrote an article, titled 'My Strange Illness' from Jamadoba, District Manbhum. Few paragraphs of this article is reproduced below, which depicts Bose's fundamental faith over mankind, in the face of all odds:

MY STRANGE ILLNESS (Modern Review, April 1939).

"...But I am sorry that I have digressed. This is not a 'political' article and when I began scribbling, I wanted to write about 'My Strange Illness' and to explain why I called my illness 'Strange'. I shall now continue my story.

Till the evening of 21 February, I was hoping against hope that I would be able to attend the Wardha meeting of the Working
Committee or at least fly there on the 22nd. But the doctors had no such worry. For them, Wardha was out of the question – their eyes were on Tripuri. Their one effort was to pull me up to such a condition during the next few days that I could at least undertake the journey to the Tripuri Congress. Sir Nilratan Sircar’s bulletin had banned even the Tripuri Congress, but I pleaded and argued with my doctors and ultimately told them plainly that so long as I was alive, I could not keep away from the Tripuri Congress during such a crisis in our history. I gratefully confess that they did all that was humanly possible for them to enable me to attend the Congress.

As I look back on my five week's illness, I must make one confession. From the beginning, I did not take my illness as seriously as the doctors did – in fact I thought that they were unduly alarmist – and I did not cooperate with them as much as I should have. On the one hand, I have a legitimate excuse to offer. It was quite impossible for me to take complete physical and mental rest. I fell ill at a most critical period. The resignation of the members of the Working Committee aggravated the crisis. Statement after statement was being issued attacking me. The
“unkindest” cuts came from a quarter where they were least expected.

.... But every time the pathological test would be negative. If one day the fever shot up to 104 degrees, the next day it would come down to normal and people would expect a permanent remission. But the third day it would mount up again. The arbitrariness of the fever and the variety of symptoms would baffle both doctors and lay-men. And the excessive weakness and exhaustion, which have got hold of me, remain a mystery. Even today, I do not think I look half as bad as I really am.

During the last five weeks or more, though I have been cut off from the outside world to a large extent – in another sense I have been in close touch with it. People who have no connection whatsoever with Politics, whom I do not personally know at all, people in remote corners of the country – even orthodox Pundits have shown such solicitude and sympathy for me in my illness that I could never imagine. I have often asked myself – ‘What is the bond that bind us? Why do they feel for me? What have I done to
merit such affection? The answer to these questions can be given by them alone.

One thing I know. This is the India for which one toils and suffers. This is the India for which one can even lay down his life. This is the real India in which one can have undying faith, no matter what Tripuri says or does.”

Jamadoba
Jealgora P.O.,
District Manbhum

The following Government Order was released to prevent the publication of such anti-Government articles by Bose and others.

ORDER

To all Printers, Publishers and Editors in Bengal.

No. 4016P – 17th July, 1940

In exercise of the powers conferred by sub-rule(1) of rule 41 of the Defence of India Rules, the Governor is pleased to prohibit
absolutely the printing or publishing within the Province of Bengal-

(1) any document containing a reference by way of statement, advertisement, notice, new, photograph or comment to any of the following topics:

(a) the arrests made in connection with the Holwell monument agitation and

(b) any procession, meeting, assembly or demonstration held, speech delivered or thing done or omitted to be done in connection with the said agitation; and

(2) any document containing a reference by way of comment to this order.

By order of the Governor,

O.M. Martin,
Secy. to the Govt. of Bengal

B.G. Press – 1940-41-5840G-1,500

When the fortunes of the World War in the earlier stages were turning against Britain and her allies were repeatedly facing
defeat on land, air and sea, Subhas Chandra published an article in his paper Forward Bloc (18 May, 1940, vol-I, No-41.) titled, The Day of Reckoning. This led to his arrest and prosecution on a charge of sedition in Calcutta. This was at a time, when, after compelling his release from Jail by a prolonged fast, he was lying ill at his home in Elgin Road. Incidentally, at that time, he had grown a decent beard, which largely changed his profile in the eyes of outside observers. Subhas Chandra’s friend, Mr. Santosh Kumar Basu, in his memoir, described it interestingly: “One day later, I was asked by Subhas Chandra to see him at his house. I was confronted with the unusual spectacle of a bearded Subhas Babu lying in bed. He asked me about the chances of his acquittal, which I informed him were almost nil, as he had never thought of sparing the British Government when he had written that most outspoken article, the ‘Day of Reckoning.’ He smiled and asked me about the quantum of punishment that I expected. I replied that it might be the maximum sentence that lay within the power of the Magistrate, namely, rigorous imprisonment for two years and a fine of Rs. 1000/- or in case of default, a further term of six months. He recalled that Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru had been given only one
year’s imprisonment in a sedition course in Calcutta. I reminded him that sentences might vary with the persons and the times. Unfortunately, it fell to my lot to announce to the court and to the world that Shri Subhas Bose had disappeared from his house. That was in 1941.”

From testimony of his contemporaries, we know that he did write and help to manage these papers. Although it is always hard to measure the impact of one or several nationalist papers, the Government of Bengal, Home Department, certainly felt that these papers played a major role in directing the minds of the young to the nationalist cause.

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3. Neogi Akhil - Subhas Sritimalya

4. Bagchi Mani - Deshbandhu-o-Subhas Chandra
5. Bagchi Mani - Deshnayak Subhas Chandra p.32

6. 13th issue of Banglar Katha

7. Freedom Movement File No. 31 p.3. Department of Archives, Government of West Bengal

8. Editorial titled, Congress-O-Janosadharan i.e. Congress and the countrymen, issue No.32, Banglar Katha

9. Atmashakti, 2nd year, Number 32, October 10, 1923

10. Freedom Movement File No.31, p.17, Second half of September, 1923. State Archive, West Bengal


13. Government of Bengal reports of the native press, No. 12 of 1923, Article of March 14, 1923


15. Forward, October 20, 1925.

16. This is clear from the many extracts of AtmaShakti in the Government of Bengal, reports of native press for these years. For e.g. Article March 14, 1923 on the meaning of Swaraj, in reports of the native press, Government of Bengal, No.12 of 1923; Article of January 31, 1923, reports of the native press No.6 of 1923.

17. Sanyal Gopallal - 'Je Kathar Sesh Nai' –pp. 13
20. A hint of the kind of surveillance underway can be gathered from Government of India, Home Department, Political File No. 61 of 1924, ‘Note of the Connection between Revolutionists and the Swarajya Party in Bengal.’

21. Dasgupta Hemendranath, Subhas Chandra, pp.-64

22. Sanyal Gopallal - 'Je Kathar Sesh Nai' – pp. 14

23. Dasgupta Hemendranath - Subhas Chandra – pp. 64

24. Sanyal Gopallal - 'Je Kathar Sesh Nai' –pp. 15


27. Sahani J.N. : Truth About the Indian Press – p.29

28. Sanyal Gopallal - 'Je Kathar Sesh Nai' - p.90

30. Chatterjee Sabitriprasanna : Subhas chandra - O- Netaji Subhas Chandra - p.50

31. Dasgupta Hemendranath - subhas Chandra – pp. 64-65

32. Hindustan Standard (23-01-1946) p.4, Post-edit article by S.C. Dasgupta

33. Forward. October 26, 1925 - Anniversary Number

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55. Ibid - Editorial Introduction

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57. Ramgarh Lecture, 19th March, 1940.

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61. Signed Editorial of Forward Bloc – ‘The Day of Reckoning’

62. Editorial - Forward Bloc, August 19, 1939

63. Ibid - August 26, 1939

64. Ibid – September 2, 1939

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66. Ibid – November 4, 1939

67. Ibid – November 25, 1939

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71. Ibid - April 13, 1940

72. Ibid - April 28, 1940

73. Ibid - May 11, 1940

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76a. Forward Bloc – Vol.I. No.2, Calcutta, Saturday, August 12, 1939 issue
76b. Forward Bloc – Vol.I. No.8, Calcutta, Saturday, September 23, 1939

77. Calcutta Municipal Gazette- S.C. Bose Birth Centenary Number

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