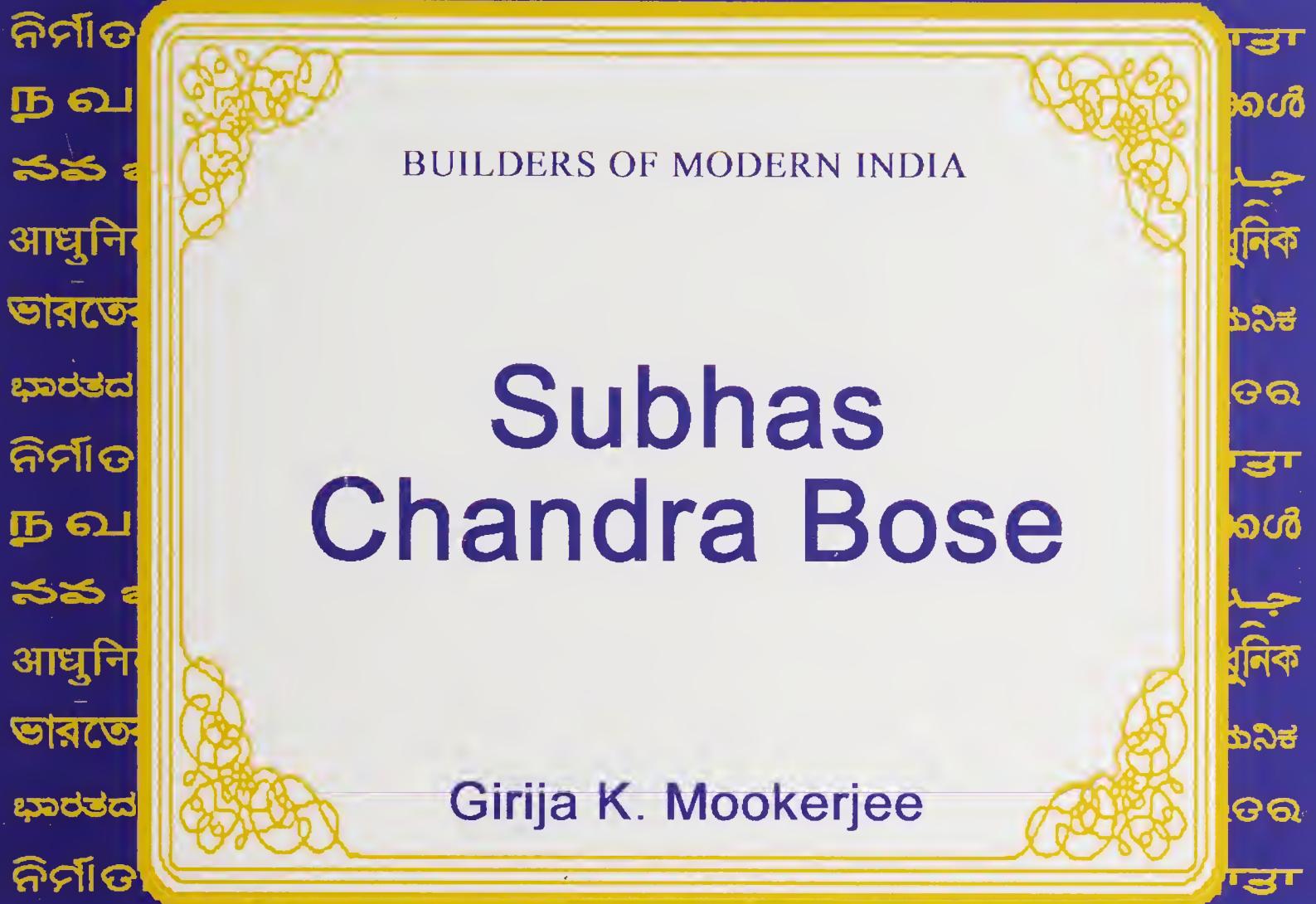


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BUILDERS OF MODERN INDIA

SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE

GIRIJA K. MOOKERJEE



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About the Series

The object of this series is to record, for the present and future generations, the story of the struggles and achievements of the eminent sons and daughters of India who have been mainly instrumental in our national renaissance and the attainment of Independence. Except in a few cases, such authoritative biographies have not been available.

The biographies are planned as handy volumes written by knowledgeable people and giving a brief account, in simple words, of the life and activities of the eminent leaders and of their times. These are not intended either to be comprehensive studies on the subject or to replace the more elaborate biographies.



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Introduction

FOR WRITING A biography—even a short biography—of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, one requires intensive preparation and careful study. Many books on Netaji have already appeared, but none of them, however, can be called a real biography of the great man that Subhas Bose was. Many of these books published so far are no more than mere source materials for the definitive biography that has yet to be written. The authors of books on Netaji have not claimed either to be his biographers nor have they recorded more than their personal impressions or, in some cases, personal observations on Netaji. They have done so in the expectation that ‘the biography’ will be published by someone some time. The truth is that such a biography cannot be written by one person within a short time and without intensive concentration and without the sifting of all available materials scattered in many parts of the world. For though he disappeared very young, yet the period of twenty years or so during which he was active, he achieved so much and spoke and wrote so often and had been to so many countries, that in order to publish a recorded narrative of all his various activities one requires sustained period of work and research extending for many years.

I am afraid I have not been able to devote so much time to the preparation of such a biography and, hence, this short and very personal estimate of Netaji Subhas Bose written at the request of the Publications Division of the Government of India. Nevertheless, it was necessary that such a book should be written because an assessment of his personality and his work should be attempted at various stages and by many people, so that eventually we can form a more objective and correct idea of his work and his personality. I have known Subhas Bose for many years. My first meeting with him goes back to early twenties when, as a

young school boy, I went to see him at the Gaudiya Sarva Vidyatan, the National University, which was founded by the Congress in Calcutta. I appeared at the examination of the newly-founded University, of which Subhas Bose was the Principal, and I remember I did very well at the examination. My next encounter with him was in 1923 when, as the Joint Editor of a Bengali weekly, I went to see him for an article. That memorable visit is still vivid in my mind, because Subhas was very shy and timid in those days and, as he did not want to give me his article in front of others, he asked me to sit next to him and put it quietly into my hand without attracting attention of others. We published that article and it was extremely well-written, for Subhas wrote an excellent Bengali and he had a style which many Bengali authors would envy. Afterwards, I met him often and when I became the President of the All Bengal Students' Association, we had also occasional brush against each other. Subhas had set up a rival students' organisation called Bengal Presidency Students' Association, and we had, on account of these two organisations, many differences of opinion. At any rate, he must not have taken these differences seriously, for when he was on his way to Europe in 1932, he wrote to me in London from the boat in which he was sailing, asking me to see him somewhere in Europe. I was not able to see him in Europe at that time, but we met in Europe in January 1942 in the middle of the war, in Berlin where I came to see him from Paris.

I have written quite a good deal about what we did in Berlin and what he did in Europe during the war and I do not think I need recapitulate all that here. In my two books *This Europe* and *Europe at War* I have tried to give my own estimate of his character and his personality which need not be repeated here either, but as in the light of new political and social developments in India, Subhas Bose's thinking, his activities and his political attitudes are being discussed more and more, it becomes necessary to study his thoughts and actions even more carefully than it has been done so far. In spite of more than a quarter of a century that

has passed since he disappeared, the interest of the people of India in him has not slackened much. Recently, while addressing a meeting in Gandhi Grounds in Delhi, I was astonished to see the number of people who had assembled to celebrate Netaji's birthday although for more than a quarter of a century he has not been amongst us. It is indeed a mystery how this man, within a short span of life, had succeeded in creating such an impact on the life of the Indian people in such a way that even today millions of people in this country think of him not as an old statesman or a politician of the kind of which we have so many in the last twenty-five years, but us a vivacious and fresh young national hero who left his home and comfort and travelled to distant countries with the determination to liberate his motherland. His dream has been realised today but, unfortunately, he is not with us to share the sunshine of liberty. Nevertheless, it is necessary that the glowing example of his life should be made available to generations of young Indians, so that they also can be proud of being compatriots of Subhas Bose as we were. Not many would probably follow his example, but everyone can have the sense of satisfaction that he was born in this country and that he sacrificed everything so that the people of this country could know the blessings of freedom from foreign rule. People who are used to freedom today cannot realise fully what it meant in those dark days to take such a decision and it is, therefore, more and more incumbent on us to keep the picture of this period as vivid in our mind as possible so that we may never forget what it was to be under foreign rule. Subhas contributed a great deal to the attainment of India's freedom and the nation would have been blessed if he had been with us to defend this freedom and make India a great and glorious country as he always contemplated it to be. The task of carrying on and bringing our country to the next state of development is ours and this task will be lighter if we knew more about Subhas Bose and how he struggled right from his early childhood to become what he became afterwards.

May 3, 1973

Girija K. Mookerjee

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Childhood and Early Education

THOUGH THE DATE of Subhas Bose's birth on January 23, 1897 is of some importance from the point of view of a biographer of his life, the more important fact is the social milieu and the family in which he was born. I would not here try, like many other writers on Subhas Bose, to prove that it was in some way an auspicious date; but for delineating the growth of Subhas Bose's character, his determination to work for a cause and later his sacrifices for the liberation of India, I would consider the epoch in which he was born is the more important factor, because the Indian society towards the end of the 19th century and in the beginning of the 20th, had, specially in Bengal, something very original in its composition and in its aspirations. The city of Calcutta, which had known remarkable prosperity and was considered to be the most important city in Asia, had also, unlike anywhere in India, brought into existence a new middle class which was a mixture of Indian and Western style of living and thinking. Various social reform movements and the political agitations, which had taken place in India since the beginning of the 19th century, had left deep marks on the society of the new middle class in which Subhas Bose was born. The "Kayasthas" of Calcutta had taken probably the fullest advantage of the new opportunities offered to the inhabitants of the city founded by George Charnac, and, the mercantile class which grew round Calcutta as a result of its pursuit of trade and commerce with the British and other foreign trading companies, was something entirely new in the context of India which was gradually rising. During the greater part of Muslim rule India's contacts with foreign countries had practically ceased and the great sea ports and harbours during this period had been reduced into insignificance.

on account of lack of possibilities of trade and commerce with other countries. Calcutta, which grew out of three fishing villages and slowly became an important port, attracted people of all kinds, first from various parts of Bengal and then from other parts of India, and it did not remain merely a centre of trade but slowly evolved into a centre of new Indian culture and mixture of Indian tradition and Western thinking. The family to which Subhas Bose belonged had been greatly influenced by the new current of events which they experienced in their own lives from the early part of the 19th century. Though Subhas Bose's father migrated to Cuttack in Orissa, the family ties with Calcutta remained as strong as ever and, though living and working in Cuttack, they did not cease to be a part of Bengali society of the period which was increasingly becoming more vocal in asking for greater self-determination for the Indian people. In manners of living and habits of eating and dressing, this new Bengali middle class was also becoming very different from the people of the rest of the country, and though the period which was characterised by unashamed imitation of English habits and customs parodied by Bengali writers of an early period, was yet the Bengali society when Subhas Bose saw the light of day, a far more sophisticated and a self-conscious society than elsewhere in the country. English education and knowledge of modern scientific researches in Western countries had created a norm of thinking which has been well expressed in the writings of Vidyasagar, Madhusudan Dutt and Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, not to speak of the young poet and writer called Rabindranath Tagore. An important feature of the society was that though the men began to live in a world which was half Indian and half Western, the women folk of such Indian families, however, retained their traditional character, and strangely enough without much opposition from their men folk. That is why one finds that the mother of Subhas Bose, who managed a family of eleven, remained a remarkable example of Indian womanhood, in that she silently behind the scene helped her husband not only in his

profession but also in raising the children without in any way opposing the method of new teaching which the children received in Public and Government Schools. She nevertheless, in her way, initiated Subhas to that burning love of country which consumed him later in life, not by opposing the type of English education he was receiving but by making him aware of the great and hoary traditions prevalent in India whose repositories were, in fact, India's women more than men. The touching letters written by Subhas to his mother from the age of 12 show how greatly he respected his mother and even when he was in the middle of bitter political struggle, whether in India or abroad, he never forgot for a moment, as he often told his friends, the great debt he owed to his mother. It was this deep regard for his mother which made him wander as a young boy through the entire length and breadth of India and all the great centres of Indian learning without, unlike many Western-educated Indians, for a moment turning contemptuous of those beliefs and ideals which the people of India had inherited from their ancient past. In fact, the past of India used to haunt him all through his career, because he never conceived of a free India which would uproot everything which belonged to India's glorious heritage.

Subhas Bose's great respect for his mother and his love and regard for the members of his family, distinguish him from many other Indians of this period who, in course of their political or social activities, estranged themselves from their family moorings because of the newness of thinking and living which distanced them so much from their family traditions and habits. But the Boses were a united family, at the apex of which stood Subhas's mother and his remarkable father who made a name for himself not only as a successful lawyer in Cuttack but also as an active social reformer whose many-sided activities are remembered even today by the people of Cuttack where he very soon acquired a respected position. Like most parents of that period, Subhas Bose's father also believed that in English education alone, lay the future of his children and he, therefore, sent his sons to the missionary

schools and colleges and made it a point to see that his children acquired good knowledge of English. Young Subhas, therefore, from his early childhood felt within himself the pulls of two different cultures and styles of living—one Indian and the other Western, one imbibed from his remarkable mother and the other from the school he frequented and the teachers and students he came to know in this environment. Such a situation was not, however, an isolated one in the case of Subhas Bose. Young people of this period, specially in Bengal, went through such conflicting loyalties practically everywhere. Despite his father's constant hammering into his mind that English education was the only real education, the influence of his mother and later that of his teacher at Ravenshaw College, Beni Madhav Das, made him aware more and more of the heritage which was his own, namely, the great cultural heritage of India. Nothing later swerved him from this deep faith which he acquired at an early age, as a result of the conflict which was generated in his mind when two different strands of acculturation seemed to fight within him for supremacy from his student days. When he was 14, he seems to have succeeded in making, at least within himself, a kind of synthesis of the two different cultures and later in a famous letter to his mother he sees clearly how, after resolving within himself the problem of cultural conflicts, he had reached the conclusion that he could never allow himself to be uprooted from the tradition of his forefathers. And this, to my mind, is one of the reasons why Subhas Bose never felt, wherever he was and whatever he did, that he was a rootless human being. He never for a moment considered himself anything but an Indian and the certitude that it gave him was at the base of his fearless actions often misunderstood and more often misinterpreted by his enemies and the enemies of India. The strong plank on which his deep faith in India was anchored, he found already at an early age due, largely to the influence of his mother. Very few writers have given credit to her for what Subhas Bose became later, because like all Indian women, she acted only behind the scenes and in

that sweet and silent manner which is so typical of Indian womanhood.

Gradually, as he grew up and became conscious of the world around him and his mind began to receive ideas from all quarters, he realised that the surroundings in which he had grown, though stimulating, had become stilted and static on account of the dead end which the new Indian society—a mixture of Indian and Western values—had eventually reached. It had certainly some of the charm of Edwardian society in England, *a fin-de-siecle* aroma which meant graceful living and intellectual pursuit. But most of it, as Subhas Bose saw it, was imitative and frustrating because all this operated in a society and in a country which did not enjoy political freedom. That is why he began to criticise and challenge its existence, because he became more and more convinced that Indian society could not be real and could not realise automative function unless the Indians were masters in their own country and the Western influence turned out to be something imposed on Indians not by their alien rulers, but something which they accepted by choice and by selection. This, he believed, could only be possible when India could manage her own affairs in her own ways and the sons and daughters of India could call India their own country without having the feeling that they were the hewers of wood and the drawers of water in their own country and that their work was being used by a foreign country for its own ends.

It is necessary here to relate that Subhas Bose belonged to one of those Bengali families which migrated to different parts of northern India at a time when the Bengali lawyers, doctors, judges and clerks were much in demand because the English-educated Bengalis of the prestigious city of Calcutta had almost a monopoly of Government services and of the liberal professions. The Boses originally belonged to a cluster of neighbouring villages near Calcutta and these villages—Kodalia, Harinavi and Rajpur—were the birth place of a number of distinguished Bengalis of the 19th and 20th centuries. Amongst them was Pandit Ananda Chandra Vedantabagish, the Editor of *Tattwabodhini Patrika*, one of the

earliest publications in India that took up the cause of social reform and became the mouth-piece of Brahmo Samaj, founded by Raja Ram Mohan Roy. The Editor of *Som Prakash*, Pandit Dwarkanath Vidyabhushan, also came from this locality and so did the celebrated M. N. Roy, a friend of Lenin and a member of the Comintern.

Subhas Bose's father, Janaki Nath Bose (later Rai Bahadur), was born there on May 28, 1860 and migrated to Cuttack in Orissa. His mother, Probhabati, born on 13th Phalgun, 1275, was from the well-known Dutt family of Hatkhola (the area is still known by that name) and she was also well-connected, one of her paternal uncles being Sir Romesh Chandra Mitra who was the first Indian ever to be the Chief Justice of the Calcutta High Court. Janaki Nath, who came under the influence of Brahmanand Keshab Chandra Sen of the new Brahmo Samaj in his student days, went to Cuttack in 1885 after taking his law degree from Calcutta University and joined the bar there. He rose later to be a Public Prosecutor but gave up his title Rai Bahadur in 1930 as a protest against oppressive policies of the Government. Janaki Nath's choice of Cuttack was determined by the opportunities which towns outside Calcutta offered to the Bengalis of liberal professions because of lack of severe competition in these places. There were also no such restrictions of movement from one region to another because the whole of India was being slowly shaped into one administrative zone. Though provincial boundaries were fixed at that time by the Government for administrative purposes, the educational institutions in many of the North Indian provinces were for a long time under the jurisdiction of the University of Calcutta, the result being that Calcutta continued to remain an intellectual capital of the elites of some North Indian provinces. It was not unnatural that Subhas Bose should receive his early education outside his home town Calcutta, because it was very common that the well-to-do families of Calcutta should have many professional and family connections with the towns in North Indian region. Subhas Bose, after finishing his early school training

at the Protestant European School in Cuttack which was under the management of the Baptist Mimon, went to Ravenshaw Collegiate School in Cuttack. While at the Mimonay School the majority of students were of Anglo-Indian origin, the latter was an Indian School. In this school, Subhas came under the influence of Beni Madhav Das, the Headmaster, who initiated him into love of nature, and Subhas Bose looked upon him all through his life as his Guru. Even in Berlin during the War, he spoke to me warmly of him and admitted that he owed much to him. At any rate, when one wonders at Subhas Bose's political career and the particular 'Weltanschauung' he developed in course of his manifold activities, one cannot but admit the seeds of all these were already sown in his school days. Having grown up in a family of many children, Subhas Bose acquired a feeling of diffidence which persisted all his life and which made him an 'introvert', as he himself claims in his *An Indian Pilgrim*. Similarly, being unable to wrestle, as he says, with his "sex-instinct", he developed the will to concentrate on certain particular objective which made him eventually a man of one-track mind, depriving him of some of the pleasures which a man derives from the diversities of this world. In fact, young Subhas developed most of his socio-political beliefs also during this period and, although later when he became a great national hero, he might often have adopted attitudes and views which conformed to the political sentiments of the people yet at the time when he was at school, he steadfastly held to certain principles he had learnt to value in his school days. In fact, when he joined the Presidency College, Calcutta, and turned out to be very different from the other students of the College, it was said that this was, due to his early upbringing in an atmosphere of austerity at the school. Presidency College, which he joined in 1913, had become an institution for the sons of Calcutta elite and, ssin those days when Indians were not yet very conscious of their national sentiments, the sons of rich industrial magnates of Calcutta never cared to do anything else except to pass their examinations in order to get eventually some good government jobs. It was in

this milieu that Subhas appeared like a bull in a china shop and crashed into the subservient student community of Presidency College and created the first important sensational event in this institution by organising an attack on the British Principal, F. E. Oaten, who was supposed to have made derogatory remarks about the Indians in one of his lectures to the students. Because of his involvement in the attempt, Subhas Bose was expelled from the Presidency College.

At Cambridge

SUBHAS LEFT INDIA on September 15, 1919, a few weeks before the signing of Armistice after the conclusion of World War I. The War had dragged on but its effect on the lives of the people of India was not very noticeable. Although the Jallianwala massacre had already taken place before Subhas's departure, yet he, like many other Indians of the period, was kept aloof because the whole story of 'the terrible happenings in the Punjab' was not yet known to the public in all its bestial details. True, there was martial law, and a little man called Gandhi was deeply stirred within himself and he had started moving about the country in order to find out the reaction of the people to this horrible tragedy. In England Subhas did not take much interest in the events, first, because he had to get on with his studies and, secondly, because the garbled account of Jallianwala Bagh massacre that appeared in the British Press did not make the Indians in England realise the gravity of the calamity that had befallen India. For Subhas, the immediate problem became urgent. He had promised his father to appear for the Indian Civil Service examination and he soon found that the subjects he had to learn to keep the promise were formidable. They were: English History, European History, Economics, Geography, Political Science and then also English Law, Philosophy, Sanskrit and English Composition. His acquaintance with these subjects was scanty as they were not taught in depth in India and he, therefore, spent all his time in reading and mastering them. He saw very few people. One of his colleagues at Cambridge at that time was the late C. C. Desai and he once told the writer that it was very difficult to take Subhas out even for a short walk, so absorbed he seemed to have been in his studies. He worked for eight months with intense

concentration, before he sat for the examination and, to his intense surprise, he came out fourth. It was after the results were out that he faced the great problem of his life: Should he or should he not accept a job under the British Government?

We know how he solved this problem. He immediately entered into a correspondence with the well-known Bengali leader C. R. Das to whom he offered his services and laid bare his personal and spiritual problems. He started this correspondence before his return to India and wrote his first letter to Das dated 16th February, 1921—a long and rambling letter. He sought his advice as to what he should do in order to be of some service to the country. He had already got over his dilemma as he had already decided that he would not serve in the Indian Civil Service and would devote his time and life to the service of the country. This being his general attitude, he wrote to C. R. Das:

“..... I should like to know what work you may be able to allot to me in this great programme of national service. Of education and intelligence I have but little—but I believe I have the enthusiasm of youth. I am a bachelor. As regards my education, I have read something of Philosophy because that was my Honours subject in Calcutta and I am doing the same subject in my Tripos here. Thanks to the Civil Service examination. I have had an allround education up to a certain standard—such as, Economics, Political Science. English and European History, English Law, Sanskrit, Geography, etc. ...I cannot visualise from here which are the suitable fields of work in our country at present. But I have the feeling that on my return to my country, I should be able to take up two kinds of work, teaching in college and writing for newspapers. I desire to give up the service with clear-cut plans. If I can do that, I shall not have to spend time in thinking and I shall be able to enter the field of work immediately after throwing up the service... My purpose in writing to you is only to ask you what work you may be able to give me in this gigantic programme of national service. If I know that I shall be able to write to my

father and brother at home accordingly and I shall be able to prepare my mind in that light ... I have quite a few ideas in mind regarding the Congress. I think there must be a permanent meeting place for the Congress. We must have a house for purpose. There will be a group of research students there who will be carrying on research on various national problems. As far as I am aware, our Congress has no definite policy relating to Indian currency and exchange. And then, it has probably not been decided what sort of attitude the Congress should adopt towards the Native States. It is perhaps not known what the stand of the Congress is in regard to franchise (for men and women). And further, the Congress has not probably made up its mind as to what we should do about the Depressed Classes. Because of lack of effort in this regard (that is, about the Depressed Classes), all non-Brahmins of Madras have become pro-Government and anti-nationalist. My personal view is that the Congress has to maintain a permanent staff. They will do research on individual problems. Each one will collect up-to-date facts and figures and the Congress Committee will formulate a policy vis-a-vis every individual problem. Today the Congress has no definite policy with regard to many national problems. That is why I think the Congress must have permanent quarters and a permanent staff of research students. Besides, the Congress should open an Intelligence Department. It has to be so arranged that all up-to-date news and facts and figures about our country are available in the Intelligence Department. Booklets will be published in every provincial language by the Propaganda Department on each and every question in our national life. In such a book the policy of the Congress will be explained and the grounds on which such a policy has been formulated will also be given. I have written so much. These questions are not new to you. I could not help writing about them, as to me they appear to be quite new. I feel that tremendous work lies ahead of us in connection with the Congress. If you so wish, I shall probably be able to make some contribution in this respect".

In his second letter dated 2nd March, 1921, he comes back to

the same thing and he chalks out a programme for himself which he thinks might be acceptable to Das, and he writes:

“Certain ideas are coming to my mind—I am communicating them to you.

1. I may take up teaching at the National College. I have read a little of Western philosophy.
2. If you publish a daily newspaper in English, I may work as one of the sub-editorial staff.
3. If you open a research department for the Congress, I may also work there. I have written about this at some length in my previous letter. I think we must have a band of research students. They will deal with individual problems in our national life and collect facts about them. Then the Congress will appoint a Committee and that Committee will consider all such facts and formulate the policy of the Congress on each question.
4. There is plenty of scope for work directed to the spread of education among the common people. Simultaneously with such activity, it will be necessary to establish Cooperative Banks.
5. Social Service.

“It is my view that there is scope for work in the above directions. But it will be for you to consider in which department you would have me. Of course, teaching and journalism are the sort of work that appeal to me. I may make a beginning with these for the present and then, as opportunities present themselves, take part in other activities also. To me, giving up the service means taking the vow of poverty; so I shall not refer at all to my emoluments; bare subsistence will be enough for me.

“If I can take up the work with full determination, I believe I shall be able to bring one or two Bengali friends here into it.

“In Bengal you are the high priest of the great movement of

national service that is now being organised. I have come to the end of what I had to say—now it is for you to let me participate in your great work. As soon as I quit the service, people here will be asking me what I shall do on my return home. So, for my own satisfaction and in the interest of self-justification to others, I am most anxious to know how you can utilise my services."

Both these letters are illustrative of a phase of Subhas Bose's life which supplies an answer to many daring and original things he did later in his life. They also show that Subhas had finally abandoned his wild and blind searchings and had left behind his adolescence. That is to say, he had become a man and was in search of a vocation in life. Again, they reveal to a large extent the determination Subhas showed in his later life, for finding solution to the problems that beset him as also the finality of any decision he happened to make. Lack of equivocation was one of the major characteristics of Subhas's life and we find this trait of his character in these letters, where after careful analysis of pros and cons of a problem he arrived at a conclusion and followed up that conclusion to its logical end.

This period of Subhas's life was also characterised by intense debate and discussion with his contemporaries as well as with teachers and acquaintances he came across. While in India, he had already started correspondence and conversation with a large number of friends not only about the aim of life and such other metaphysical subjects but also about the role he was destined or supposed to play for shaping the future of his country. However, while in India everything was speculative and remained more or less in the domain of phantasy and debate, in these letters written from Cambridge, one finds that Subhas has gone beyond mere debate and has come to definite and purposive conclusions about everything he was to do later in life.

We should, however, never under-estimate the influence Cambridge had on the personality of Subhas Bose. Although he stayed there for a short time only and spent most of his time at

Cambridge in working for the exams, yet, the time spent there and the friends he made there, had been extremely important in shaping his moral conduct and mental make-up later. In India, he belonged to a small circle of young students in Calcutta who had taken the vow of serving their motherland without ever marrying, and this circle did not approve of his going to England when his father insisted that he should do so almost immediately. Subhas had remained very loyal to this circle and one of his friends of those days, Professor Hemanta Kumar Sarkar, was a special friend of his with whom he corresponded a great deal even while he was at Cambridge. The circle of friends resented the fact that Subhas should go for higher studies to England and that they would not, because they came from poorer families. From this correspondence, it appears that Subhas felt hurt by this attitude of his friends, but he found that his stay in Cambridge had indeed been extremely beneficial for his own development. In fact, Cambridge shaped him and made him what he was. When he left India, he was still a boy and at the threshold of life; but his experiences and acquaintances with people in many walks of life in England, rounded off all the angularities which a young man possesses before reaching manhood. By throwing himself into voracious reading of a variety of subjects, Subhas not only widened his knowledge but also took the fullest advantage of the time which he had at his disposal because in later life, he had much less time to study anything in such a systematic manner. Friends such as Dilip Kumar Roy or C. C. Desai, were extremely valuable to him because although they did not follow the course which Subhas adopted as his own, yet, in their youthful insouciance they discussed and debated every subject on earth and laid the foundation of a pleasant relationship which survived many social and political upheavals in India. The writer has known the late C. C. Desai very well, and he found that the mention of Subhas Bose would almost always bring tears to his eyes, so devoted he was to him and so fond were the memories of Bose to him. At any rate, the great world outside India as well as the free world of England made

the deepest impression on Subhas, and it was good that he was able to see how people lived in free countries and how they differed from the people of India which was under many centuries of subjugation. His eyes were opened, his mind drew many lessons from what he saw and heard and he became fully alert to the immense problems which India faced, for India had remained several centuries behind other countries in the march to progress.

For Subhas, progress was important and he did not think that because India had an ancient civilisation, it should not modify and change its social system in order to attain equality with other nations. It was at Cambridge that he realised that if India was to be at par with other nations, she had also to be as progressive as the others.

Recently, an American writer, analysing the position of the INA, was struck by its nearness to the British model of army organisation, and the author, Dr. J. C. Lebra, says that British influence was very pervasive not only in the INA but also among the army leaders. This is very difficult to deny, for Subhas himself, though anti-British for political reasons and as far as the British occupation of India was concerned, was not blind to many of the qualities which had made the British a remarkable nation in the world. In fact, a writer has described Subhas Bose's determined stance as comparable to Churchillian obstinacy and one can safely say that between these two men, there was much resemblance because both of them were undaunted, spirited and obstinate for realising their goals. In other words, though Subhas Bose considered himself an enemy of Britain, in many respects, he had an outlook which could be even described as British to the bone and the sense of discipline and honour which he inculcated into the INA could be regarded as the English side of his character. This is not something to be surprised at because Subhas Bose's first acquaintance with a British missionary, who taught him English, had left behind some pleasant impressions on him and at Cambridge he saw many aspects of British life which not only not displeased him but even made him admire them. The Bengali middle class

to which he belonged had, in the course of a century, acquired many of the qualities and faults of the British upper-class for having been very close to them because Calcutta was the capital of India and the Bengalis were the first to have acquired English education and mannerism in India. Not only that, being a man of an analytical bent of mind, Subhas was always ready to learn and to admit his mistakes, and though he felt bitterly against British domination of his country, he did not accuse every Britisher for the humiliation from which the Indian people suffered. In fact, his life-long friend, Dr. Dharma Vira, with whom he often spent the weekends in England was married to an English woman and it is said that Subhas Bose came to acquire the highest esteem for her. He always distinguished between the conduct of an individual Englishman and that of the British imperialist system.

At any rate, his stay at Cambridge had indeed given him an insight not only into the nature of the British people but also the nature of the imperialist system which worked so assiduously without, however, destroying the virtues of a people who were not often aware of what is being done in their name. Multiple conversations he had with friends of his own age had also enriched his mind, for, as one of his close associates Dilip Kumar Roy has mentioned in his book *Subhas As I Knew Him*, the interminable discussions which he carried on far into the night with his compatriots began to give him more and more certitude about the action he was contemplating to undertake. Cambridge in those days was an interesting melting pot where students of many parts of British Empire gathered and these students later greatly affected the history of the countries from which they came. An atmosphere of free discussion and an evaluation of the problems which various countries of the Empire faced in the early twenties, led very much to the gradual formation of a corpus of thinking which, in course of this century, has revolutionised Asia and Europe. Earlier, Nehru, who had also spent his college days in Cambridge, had tasted this freedom and it would not be wrong to say that the impressions

of these early days had left behind tremendous imprints on the mind of Nehru. He himself acknowledged this in his *Autobiography* and the study of Nehru's life and career makes one almost always realise that the British education had made an important contribution to the shaping of his life. The same can be said about Subhas Bose and though he was more rooted to the Indian soil and more a product of Anglo-Bengali culture, yet the period he spent at Cambridge had determined his future life to a very large extent indeed. It was for these reasons that when he was in exile in Germany, many Germans were unable to understand Subhas Bose because he displayed an attitude which the Germans did not associate with the Indian but with the British and, as the Germans were fighting the British at that time, it irritated them often because Subhas Bose was taking a stand which, to them, seemed to be totally British. However, young Indians, who were contemporaries of Subhas at Cambridge, have narrated their impressions of those early days of mental struggle which helped Subhas to come to a decision for the rest of his life.

Contribution made by many of his college friends in clarifying Subhas's thinking is not to be neglected. The late C. C. Desai often remarked that they all felt a bit ashamed afterwards because they themselves could not plunge into the national movement the manner in which Subhas had done although they discussed with him for hours together. Many of his contemporaries felt the same because for one reason or the other, they did not or could not follow the path pursued by Subhas. They regarded their inability as a failure and their admiration for Subhas was, therefore, greater.

Indian National Congress

HAVING RESIGNED FROM Indian Civil Service, and being determined to work for the salvation of his country, Subhas landed in Bombay on July 16, 1921, nearly a-year-and-a-half after the Nagpur session of the Congress, where the Indian National Congress had adopted the Gandhian formula of resistance to the British Government by passing a resolution on non-violent non-cooperation. One of the first things he did on landing in Bombay was to go straight to Laburnum Road where Mahatma Gandhi was staying and he had a long and important conversation with him about the programmes which Gandhiji had launched. He sought also his advice about his own intentions. Subhas had put several searching questions to Gandhiji about the programme he had adopted, and the answers he received from him did not satisfy him completely, and the meeting, though very fruitful, did not solve Subhas's personal problem as to the right course he ought to adopt to give expression to his desire to serve India. It was when he met C. R. Das on his return to Calcutta and after very exhaustive and continuous conversations with him about the object of the Congress movement, that Subhas began to see his way clearly and was able finally to take the decision of throwing himself heart and soul into the movement started by Mahatma Gandhi.

The first political act of some importance which he undertook after joining the Congress was to organise the boycott of the visit of Prince of Wales to India in December 1921. Owing to a decision of the Congress High Command, boycott of the Prince's visit was organised throughout the country and there was a complete hartal in Calcutta. The Government lost its nerve and C. R. Das and Subhas Bose and hundreds of others were arrested by the Police.

Subhas went to jail for the first time in December 1921, and it has been said that between 1921 and 1941, when he left India and went to Germany, that is during a period of twenty years, the British had arrested Subhas Bose no fewer than eleven times. When Subhas was arrested in December 1921, he was the Head of the Gaudiya Sarva Vidyatan or the National University which was established by the Bengal Congress, and he was also at the time the Publicity Officer of the Bengal Provincial Committee and the Captain of the National Volunteer Corps. Meanwhile political situation had greatly aggravated and the then Viceroy of India, Lord Reading, made an offer to the Congress for a political settlement in 1922. C. R. Das, still in prison, was in favour of negotiated settlement but when, after a lot of hesitation, Mahatma Gandhi agreed to a discussion with the Viceroy, it was considered to be too late and Lord Reading had already changed his mind. Subhas remained for a long time a mere spectator but he felt almost bewildered when in 1922, after the tragic events of Chauri Chaura, Mahatma Gandhi suspended the non-cooperation movement and the movement for non-payment of taxes, as a result of which the movement almost grinded to a halt. Soon after the suspension of the movement, Mahatma Gandhi was arrested in March 1922 and was sentenced to two years' imprisonment. Soon afterwards, C. R. Das and Pandit Motial Nehru, fearing that the urge for national liberation movement would dry up, formed the Swarajya Party in order to contest the elections and to offer resistance to the Government from within the Legislative Councils. Subhas, after his release, engaged himself with the relief work started by Sir P. C. Roy in order to help the people in North Bengal, where vast areas were flooded after severe rains. He also, during this period, became Editor of the Bengali daily, called *Benglar Katha* started by the Swarajya Party. Immediately afterwards, when C. R. Das's Swarajya Party began to function well, he made Subhas the Secretary of the Swarajya Party. In between he was in jail, but afterwards when he was released, he began to function as the Chief Executive Officer of the newly

formed Calcutta Corporation of which C. R. Das became the first Mayor. Municipal reforms carried out during this period were considerable and Subhas Bose earned a very good reputation of being an able administrator and the changes he brought about in the administration of the affairs of the city of Calcutta were applauded by everyone. The improvements in the civic facilities made by him in Calcutta were also considerable. However, in the meantime, in 1925, C. R. Das passed away and this created a tremendous personal problem for Subhas Bose. He had gladly accepted Das's leadership and, as Subhas was still too young to find his way entirely on his own, he felt at first rather lost and disheartened and his letters written after C. R. Das's death to Das's wife Basanti Devi show how deeply he had felt the cruel death of his Master and Guide. He was groping to find out a clear-cut path for himself.

While he was still the Executive Officer of the Calcutta Corporation, he was arrested in October 1924 in a case of conspiracy and, without any trial, he was kept in detention and moved to Mandalay Jail in Burma. He remained there for two-and-a-half years after which he was released in May 1927 on grounds of ill health. During his detention in jail in Mandalay, he had also gone on a hunger strike for six weeks. Gradually, Subhas Bose overcame the shock which he had received at C. R. Das's death and when he became the President of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee soon afterwards, he started his political activities once again with enthusiasm. At that time, the whole of India was agitated over the appointment of Simon Commission by the British Government in order to report to Parliament about the next stage of constitutional reforms. Subhas took part in the movement; but in the same year he also took active part in the youth movement in the Country and was elected President of All India Youth Congress to be held in Calcutta. As the National Congress was meeting in Calcutta in 1928, he also became the General Officer Commanding of the Volunteer Corps which performed laudable function in maintaining order and discipline in the Congress pandal.

In 1928, Subhas Bose also allied himself with Jawaharlal Nehru and created a Left wing in the Congress Party in order to press the demand for more radical measures against the Government. Although the Left wing lost the amendment it had moved to sever all British connections, yet, it was felt that the Left wing was becoming more and more effective within the Congress. During the sitting of the Calcutta Congress, a procession of nearly a lakh of workers came to present a petition to Mahatma Gandhi and the demonstration showed that the mass participation in the national movement had already become significant factor.

A few months after the Calcutta Congress, Subhas was elected President of All India Trade Union Congress and he remained in that position until 1931. This election also became a turning point in his career because it took several years for Subhas Bose to evolve his own image and personality after the death of C. R. Das, whose absence had practically paralysed young Subhas because from the very beginning, he had shown an inclination to work as the second man to someone whom he could respect. C. R. Das's death left a void within him which he took a very long time to fill. Unused to act on his own, he was not very sure of himself in the beginning and searched his way up; and when he became the leader of the Trade Union Congress, he knew that without depending on others, he could also lead and act. He became at the same time the uncontested leader of the youth. The leftist elements in the country also rallied round him, and, as he, by becoming President of the Trade Union Movement, was able to draw the so-far untapped strength of the working classes in India for the freedom movement, Subhas Bose became next to Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru, the third most important political leader in the Congress ranks around 1930. He had, in the meantime, resigned the office of the President of Bengal Provincial Congress Committee as a protest against police firing inside the Hijli Detention Camp. Before that he was also elected Mayor of Calcutta in 1930 and the Treasurer of the All India Trade Union Congress for 1931-32. In 1932, because of suspicion of tuberculosis of his

lungs, he went to Vienna for treatment, where he met the famous Vithalbhai Patel. It was there that Subhas Bose and Vithalbhai Patel, as a result of innumerable discussions, came to the conclusion that without taking resort to foreign help, India would never be able to become free. The Manifesto* which they issued at that time, showed the trend of their thinking and both of them were convinced that unless India developed international contacts, the Indian nationalist movement would not come out of its then static position and become a factor in international affairs. Both of them felt that the only effective way in which India's freedom could be hastened was to make it an issue between nations so that Britain could be made to face the problem of having to seriously alter its foreign policy because of India. So convinced they were of the need of international contact that Vithalbhai Patel, who was suffering from serious ailments, left the money he possessed, in a Will, to Subhas Bose so that he might carry on anti-British campaign in foreign countries. There was much litigation about this Will in Bombay High Court, but this fact revealed that at least two outstanding Congress leaders had come to the same conclusion and wanted to widen the sphere of activities of the Indian National Congress outside India's borders. Subhas Bose, specially from his extensive reading in Italian history and literature, had come to the conclusion that like the Italian freedom leaders, Garibaldi and Mazzini, Indian leaders should also try to enlist support in quarters and in countries which were anti-British in order to make it uncomfortable for Britain in India and to force Britain to grant independence to India immediately.

The Manifesto issued by Patel and Bose is indeed a landmark in the history of India's freedom struggle. Until then, except Nehru's participation at Congress of League Against Imperialism at Brussels, no important nationalist leader had taken the trouble to cultivate international opinion in India's favour. After the Nagpur session of the Congress where Mahatma Gandhi's resolution of

*See Appendix

non-violent non-cooperation was adopted, the Congress even abolished the small office in London it maintained for publishing literature in English on India to inform the British people about the conditions in India. This office also used to establish contacts with many liberal English politicians but after its abolition, there was no official organisation outside India to explain the position of the Indian nationalists and to pin-point the problems of India to the greater masses. Mahatma Gandhi maintained the view that other nations would take notice of India only when Indians themselves made the situation so difficult for the foreign rulers that the whole world could not but take notice of it. This guideline was adopted for a number of years and when Patel and Bose met in Vienna, they came to the conclusion that this policy did India no good. No one knew outside India how British treated the Indians. News agencies which operated in India were controlled by the British and, at that period, only occasionally some American journalists, who visited India, could report for a short period to their newspapers. Although because of the extensive reportage in the Herst newspapers by their correspondent Carl von Wiegand, the problem of Indian freedom came to be known and discussed, there was hardly any understanding and appreciation of Indian point of view abroad. On the other hand, in order to counteract some effects of reporting in the Herst newspapers, the British engineered the visit of an American writer called Catherine Mayo who wrote a scurrilous book on India called *Mother India* which, it was proved later, was highly subsidised by the British Government in order to defame Indian leaders and the nationalist movement. All this went to show that without an effective organisation to counteract British propaganda against India in the world, Indian nationalists would not be able to make any headway because the indifference of the world outside India to the Indian cause was fully utilised by the British in delaying a discussion of the question of Indian independence.

When one links up Subhas Bose's later flight to Europe during World War II with his confabulations with Patel in Vienna, one sees that the seed of this adventure was sown already in his mind

while he was discussing the problem of Indian publicity abroad. A very astute politician and a great Indian patriot, Vithalbhai Patel, a former President of Indian Legislative Assembly, had seen, like Subhas Bose, that the next stage of nationalist effort for winning Indian freedom should also include a comprehensive programme for publicising Indian struggle for freedom in foreign countries. Ten years of bitter struggle from 1920 to 1930 against Britain by non-violent non-cooperation, had produced very meagre results and both Bose and Patel had come to the conclusion that in order to give impetus to the nationalist movement, new methods had to be evolved. The *Manifesto*, a *facsimile* copy of which is included in the Appendix, shows that historically it was a document of tremendous importance because it represented a turning point in the thinking of the Indian nationalist leaders as far as the immediate action was concerned.

Subhas Bose returned to India Without Government's permission in order to see his dying father in 1934 and because of this violation of the Government rule, he was interned at home by a Government order. He went back to Europe for a major operation in 1934 and remained there until 1936. During this period, he took part at the Conference held by the Indian students in Vienna and addressed a meeting of the Asiatic Students' Conference in Rome inaugurated by Mussolini himself. He also visited Ireland and met De Valera and established many contacts with important European political leaders. On his return to India, he was unconditionally released and he left for Europe again in 1937 and in January 1938 when he was still abroad, he was elected President of 51st Indian National Congress, and the session was to be held at Haripura in Gujarat. Subhas returned to India in February 1938 and presided over the session of the Congress which proved to be a significant landmark not only in his life but also in the history of India's fight for freedom. It was at Haripura that he first conceived the idea of forming a National Planning Committee. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was made its first Chairman and Subhas himself was the Convener of this Committee. As his term of office began to come

to an end, Subhas Bose expressed the desire to stand for Presidentship again because he said that one year term of office of the President of the Congress was too short to carry out a meaningful programme. Mahatma Gandhi, however, did not approve of his desire to seek re-election and Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya was chosen by him as the candidate, and there was a very strong difference of opinion between him and Bose over this selection. Most of the members of the Congress Working Committee resigned as a result of this conflict between the two stalwarts of Congress but even against the wishes of Mahatma Gandhi, Subhas Bose stood for election for the second term and was elected. As a result, there grew a sharp rift between the Left and the Right wings of the Congress and, in spite of the fact that all the members of the Congress Working Committee resigned as a protest, the 52nd session of the Indian National Congress was nevertheless held at Tripuri in Madhya Pradesh in March 1939 in an atmosphere of tension with Subhas Bose as its elected President. Subhas Bose had, in the meantime, fallen ill and he was, therefore, not able to play a very important part either at the open session of the Congress or at the meetings of Congress Working Committee which he formed with those who supported his programme. At the Tripuri session, he made the Congress adopt a proposal to send an ultimatum to the British Government demanding independence from the British Government within six months at the termination of which India was to start a full-scale national struggle immediately. This proposal was opposed by the Rightist wing headed by Mahatma Gandhi himself and later, it was thrown out by the Congress. Subhas who, in the meantime, was more and more convinced that the war would break out in Europe within a short time, insisted on issuing a six-month ultimatum to the British. The reasons he advanced for issuing this ultimatum showed that Subhas did no longer judge politics from ideological or moral points of view, but from the angle of 'Realpolitik' and he introduced the element of absolute realism in Indian politics when, in his Presidential address at Tripuri, he said: "What more opportune moment could we find

in our national history for a final advance in the direction of ‘Swaraj’, particularly when the international situation is favourable to us? Speaking as a cold-blooded realist I may say that all the facts of the present-day situation are so much to our advantage that one should entertain the highest degree of optimism.” This cold-blooded realism made him later negotiate aid and assistance from various belligerent powers for continuing an armed struggle for Indian independence and the Tripuri address already indicated that Subhas would utilise Britain’s difficulty fully for attaining India’s independence. He was, however, offered very stiff opposition by the Rightist elements of the Congress who wanted that the Congress Working Committee should be formed with the total approval of Mahatma Gandhi. And when the All-India Congress Committee met in Calcutta in April 1939, all attempts to solve the dispute between the two wings of the Congress having failed, Subhas Bose resigned from the office of the President and formed the Forward Bloc within the Congress in May 1939. The new organisation set up by Subhas Boss was meant to win the support of the youth and the Left wing in his favour and also to combat the Right wing influence inside and outside the Congress which, it appeared, wanted to put a brake to the boiling enthusiasm of the people for a fresh struggle against the British for the attainment of independence. At any rate, the war broke out in September 1939, as Subhas Bose had predicted, and the Forward Bloc, under his leadership, launched a bitter anti-British propaganda campaign in the country. When British Government realised that the Forward Bloc was becoming a powerful instrument of opposition to them, they arrested him together with hundreds of his co-workers of the Forward Bloc in July 1940. The Government refused to bring him to trial and, as Subhas had no intention to rot in a British jail doing nothing during the most momentous period of world history, he issued an ultimatum to the Government at the end of November 1940 saying that he would go on a hunger strike for an indefinite period of time unless he was freed. The British did not take this seriously at first but, having realised the gravity of the situation,

they quietly set him free and interned him at his home. For some 40 days, Subhas Bose did not go out of his house and then, one morning in the third week of January 1941, the world heard with astonishment the sensational story that Subhas Bose had disappeared from his Calcutta home and nobody knew where he had gone to. Only after about a year, in April 1942, they heard his voice again speaking from Azad Hind Radio in Berlin and, with this, a new chapter began in the history of India's struggle for freedom.

In Search of Options

SINCE THE ADOPTION of the resolution on non-violent non-cooperation in 1928 by the Nagpur Session of the Indian National Congress, Subhas Bose gave serious thoughts to the practicability of the application of the idea of non-violent resistance to the British Government and his writings of the early twenties, some of them to be found also in the Bengali daily *Banglar Katha*, show that he joined the Congress at the instance of C. R. Das with a great deal of mental reservation. Not all the participants in the non-cooperation movement, including even C. R. Das and the Bengali school of nationalists, seriously believed that Mahatma Gandhi would succeed by means of non-violent non-cooperation and *satyagraha* to attain *swaraj* within one year. Nevertheless, as the movement acquired momentum and as mass participation began to augment, Subhas Bose and his like-minded colleagues thought that the unrest thus generated might acquire one day revolutionary proportions and create such a political crisis that it might force the British to grant India freedom. Bose had not yet thought out his strategies in case the 1920 movement failed or came to a halt, but those who knew him at that time, like myself, were impressed by his very lucid and critical approach to the non-cooperation movement. He considered this as one of many options which India had to adopt in order to deliver herself out of foreign rule. Suffering as all the Indian elitist class did from a total lack of communication with the Indian masses, political leaders like Bose enthusiastically supported Mahatma Gandhi's movement, because they realised that no other Indian leader would ever be able to erect a bridge between the masses and the elites, the gap among whom was constantly widening as a result of English education and unplanned urbanisation of Indian cities with very

little consideration for Indian requirements but with the main purpose of serving Britain's imperial interests. How great the differences were can be seen when one looks at statistics of English educated Indian communities living in metropolitan cities like Bombay, Madras, Calcutta, Allahabad and a few other small towns with modern amenities. For these figures reveal that the standard of living and the standard of education of Indian elite was probably twenty times higher than that of the Indian masses, still steeped in ignorance, superstition and surviving in sub-human conditions. Mahatma Gandhi discovered this difference first when he championed the cause of the peasants in Champaran district in Bihar where the British planters had reduced the Indian workers in the plantations to the status of slaves in their own country. Unfortunately, in the early twenties, no other political leader of all-India standing and with Mahatma Gandhi's knowledge of men and affairs, had any real and direct contact with the people who lived outside the metropolitan areas. Even in big cities, people with higher income and more modern conditions of living, often spent their whole lives, in a particular region without knowing anything about the people who lived in slums and *bastees*. It was Mahatma Gandhi who infused into Indian politics the realities of the Indian situation, and young political revolutionaries like Subhas Bose were quick enough to realise that by doing so, Mahatma Gandhi had added a dimension to the national struggle which they would not have been able to do, because of their lack of knowledge of the conditions in which the people lived and also because of their lack of any contact with more than ninety per cent of the population of India.

This, however, did not make Subhas Bose abandon his belief that without a revolutionary struggle it would be impossible to force the British to withdraw from India. His own conviction, reached after much reflection and study of history, was that British rule in India was a military occupation which could not be expected to wither away, without a bitter struggle. Being, however, a politician with a hard sense of realism, he very soon realised that

at the early stage of the struggle for freedom at least, Mahatma Gandhi's method was the best, as it would generate new forces and new activities which would create socio-political conditions leading to open revolt against the British rule by the Indians. He was not, therefore, surprised when Mahatma Gandhi, after Chauri Chaura incident, suspended the first Indian independence movement and appealed to the country to devote itself to constructive work. Bose did not fail to draw a lesson from the fact that the British arrested Mahatma Gandhi only when he had suspended the Civil Disobedience Movement. They saw in this decision not only a temporary collapse of the Movement but they were quick to sense in it also the undermining of Mahatma Gandhi's prestige and authority as a national leader. In spite of the fact that the British Judge who convicted Mahatma Gandhi compared him to Christ, the fact remained that the British rulers in India dared touch him because he had stopped the march of events at a moment when the masses of India were gradually being indoctrinated to a revolutionary ideology.

One must not forget that the events in Russia after the Bolshevik Revolution had also greatly influenced political thinking of the younger generation of Congress leaders who had begun to understand in a vague and nebulous manner, the forces which the revolutionary masses incarnated when properly directed by courageous leaders. Some Communist literature had begun also to infiltrate into India by the time Mahatma Gandhi halted the Civil Disobedience Movement at Chauri Chaura; but the Indian leaders had come to their own conclusion from the experience they had gathered after a year of campaigning for freedom from 1920 to 1921. They learnt that the nature of the struggle would have to be continuously changed keeping in mind the strategies applied by the British Government to crush the Movement for Freedom. By the time Chauri Chaura had become a well-known name in Indian history, the Congress had become a well-knit organisation with a cadre of workers and committed leaders and the unusual ability and talent of Mahatma Gandhi for organisation had given

the Congress an infrastructure which was to last many decades and which has not been swept away even today after the split within the Congress in 1969.

The logical sequence of the abandonment of the Civil Disobedience Movement by Mahatma Gandhi after Chauri Chaura was to develop a new political weapon with which the Indian leaders could, first, keep the revolutionary fervour intact and, secondly, to embarrass the Government in as many ways as possible in order to make the British ruling class realise that the desire for freedom of the Indian people was not ephemeral but a deep-rooted one. This weapon was to be found in the foundation of the Swarajya Party by Motilal Nehru and C. R. Das who, by refusing the negative strategy of Mahatma Gandhi, formulated the theory that by entering the Legislatures in order to wreck them, they would, first, be able to keep the agitation for freedom alive and, secondly, force the Government also not to pass legislations which would be against the interests of the common people. In fact, this new method of fighting the Government, which was not approved by Mahatma Gandhi, and the tactics of which were elaborated by C. R. Das in his Presidential address at Gaya, attracted Subhas Bose immediately, for he, unlike many of the pro-Gandhist no-changers of that lime, believed firmly that it was only by adopting several different forms of attacks against the Government—but the attacks to be coordinated by a central political agency—that the British government in India could be paralysed. It was no wonder that very soon afterwards, he agreed to serve as Secretary of the Swarajya Party and help C. R. Das and Motilal Nehru to build up the Party machinery in spite of the opposition of a section of Congressmen who thought that it was against the principle of non-violent non-cooperation propagated by Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhiji, though opposed to the split within the Congress which he deplored at first, eventually saw the importance, as well as the need of such a movement outside the Congress and reconciled himself eventually to the idea of opposition within the Legislatures conducted by the Congress nominees elected in the Provincial

Legislative Councils and in the Central Legislative Assembly. It was soon realised that this form of opposition was not irrelevant to the general strategy of the Congress, for the hard-hitting methods of attack which the Congress members of Councils and the Assembly resorted to against the Government, led to wide-spread hardening of national sentiment against the British rule. The Legislators, for instance, were able to say things inside the Councils and the Assembly, because of their Parliamentary immunity, which they could not say outside. Subhas Bose plunged himself into this movement although he did not think that only by carrying on opposition within the Provincial Councils and the Central Assembly, India would be able to force the British to grant national freedom. Throughout his life, he always used several options for the purpose of obtaining India's freedom. He regarded the Council entry as one such option and no more, although he was one of those political tacticians who wanted to fully utilise these given situations in order to strengthen the fight for national struggle in as many ways as possible.

The sudden demise of C. R. Das in 1925 on the eve of some hopeful offers from the then Secretary of State for India, Lord Birkenhead, weakened Swarajist Movement to such an extent that soon afterwards, the Indian National Congress began to formulate new policies in order to supplement the efforts made inside the Legislatures, so that greater pressure could be brought upon the Government by organised mass movements, in order to force the British to reconsider their attitude about the immediate granting of *swaraj* to India. In the meantime, the appointment of the Simon Commission without any Indian member in it, had disillusioned the Indian moderates to such an extent that when the Congress appealed to boycott the Commission, they did so. The boycott of the Simon Commission and the popular discontent which followed, was one more tactic, according to Subhas Bose, which would gradually culminate into a revolutionary situation in the country, leading eventually to an upheaval forcing the British to withdraw from India. Although at that time, not many Indian leaders realised it, yet,

looking at it from this distance, no historian of Indian nationalist movement would be able to underestimate the effect of boycott of Simon Commission in creating greater discontent within the country. In fact, because of its all-white membership, even the dissident Muslim League leaders joined the Congressmen in boycotting the Commission and, for a while at least, political leaders of both the communities found themselves in agreement and acted also in unison with each other. After the publication of the Simon Commission's Report which the political leaders of all persuasions found totally disappointing, the Congress appointed a Committee known as the Nehru Committee presided over by Motilal Nehru in order to frame a future Constitution of India which would be submitted to the British Government as the minimum political demand of the Indian people and this Report was to have been adopted by an All Parties Conference. Motilal Nehru who presided over the All Parties Conference and submitted this Report to the National Congress was also the President of the fiftieth session of the Indian National Congress at Calcutta held in December 1928. It was at this session of the Congress that Subhas Bose began to express clearly the multiple strategies which he had thought out for the attainment of Indian independence. He organised a Volunteer Corps on military lines for the purpose of maintaining order at the site where the Congress session was to be held and the Volunteer Corps was clothed in military uniforms and were also trained in a military manner, and he himself became the General Officer Commanding of the entire Volunteer Organisation which had acquired para-military formation. He was severely criticised by the Anglo-Indian press in India for having dared to don military uniform himself and to give his Volunteers military training. Undaunted by attacks and criticisms he upheld the military character of the Volunteer Organisation. Congress President Motilal Nehru praised him highly for the remarkable way in which the Volunteer Corps had maintained order and discipline both inside and outside the Congress pandal.

Now this action of his in 1928, is not unrelated to what he undertook in 1942 in Germany, and in 1944 in South East Asia.

His mind, as already mentioned, was working in the direction of a diversified programme of action against the British rule and he was convinced, and he convinced many of his colleagues afterwards that freedom's battle cannot be fought on one front only; it has to be fought on several fronts by many different tactics and that it was not wrong to anticipate the action of the enemy and to take measures to thwart the action which it was contemplating in order to weaken the fight. That was the reason why he did not think that it was wrong on the part of the Congress or any other national organisation to have intelligence reports from the British camps in order to forewarn themselves with the actions which the British Government was planning in order to destroy the national struggle for freedom. Thus, he evolved this many-sided policy which he wanted to apply in his fight against the British and this policy, did not eschew some rapport with the terrorists and the Indian revolutionaries, nor did he think that the Indian National Congress should be indifferent to the trade union movements which were gradually becoming important factor in the national life of the country. Suhhas Bose got himself elected as the president of one of the Trade Union Congresses and this action, together with the Movement amongst the *kisans* of U.P. by Nehru, not only created another front, which greatly strengthened the Congress movement but it also paved credibility to the ideology of several-fronted attacks against the British rule which Bose had formulated. After 1929, he was arrested several times but, because of the care and caution he had taken and the organisation he had built up, the work of organising the workers and the peasants and of mobilising all the national forces in the country against British rule, did not greatly suffer. The great talent for organisation which Subhas Bose showed in building up the Indian National Army first in Germany and then in South East Asia, was already evident in the early thirties when he, even from the prison in Burma and other places, conducted the policies of many organisations he had created all over the country and, in some cases, even directed their activities. He was able to give these organisations a purposeful policy and,

though the different organisations were working for different aims, yet, because of his ability to coordinate their activities, he succeeded in canalising all their efforts into one direction, viz., preparing them for the final struggle against foreign rule. One gets a glimpse of his thinking from his speech at the ‘Anti-Compromise Conference’ held side by side with the Ramgarh session of the Congress in March 1940, when he called for an immediate struggle with ‘no rest or break’ and without diverting the attention of the nation from its cherished goal, that is, immediate national independence.

Alongwith his activities amongst the peasants and the workers, he began his work of mobilising the youth of India for the coming struggle. Soon after the Calcutta Congress of 1928, several youth organisations had been formed all over India, the most important of which were the All India Youth Congress presided over by Yusuf Mehrali of which the writer was a member of the Executive Council, the All Bengal Students Association of which the writer was the President, and the Bengal Presidency Students Association which claimed to be more radical than the All Bengal Students Association. All these youth organisations received constant support from Bose who had realised that the youth of India would have to play a very important role in mobilising national forces to organise active resistance against the foreign government. Simultaneously, he clandestinely established contact with such revolutionary organisations as the Anusilan Samiti, the Jugantar Group and also the Hindustan Republican Armed Group led by Bhagat Singh. These revolutionary groups came to regard Subhas Bose as their supporter if not their leader, and they knew that because of tactical reasons he could not come into the open to endorse their action. Nehru, who objected to such clandestine methods, did not always approve of Subhas Bose’s close connection with the revolutionary groups but, true to his conviction that several strategies were necessary in order to bring the foreign rule to an end, Subhas Bose never failed to help these organisations, and although the fact of his association with these revolutionary

parties became known to the Intelligence services of the British Government, yet, as they did not have any positive proof, they could not prosecute him on this ground but interned him under the Regulation III of 1888 and banished him to Mandalay Jail in Burma in January 1925.

Soon afterwards when the British attempt to find a solution of the Indian problem failed in spite of the three sessions of Round Table Conferences in London, between 1930-32, Subhas Bose, still in prison, realised the weakness of the Congress strategy, for he saw that the Second Civil Disobedience Movement started by Mahatma Gandhi had not led to anything better than the Gandhi Irwin pact of 1930 which, to some sections of the Congress politicians, was considered to be a veritable triumph. As it has been revealed in Lord Halifax's (former Lord Irwin) Memoirs, the British had tried, by coming into some sort of an understanding with the Congress leaders, to gain time so that the momentum of the Movement could be checked and the British authorities could afterwards take action to suppress the Movement. It also happened in the way the British had wanted it to happen. The three Round Table Conferences, in one of which (that is, the Second Round Table Conference) Mahatma Gandhi also took part, led to no real solution because the British were not willing to hand over power to Indians in spite of the fact that Britain experienced a great economic crisis in early thirties and was obliged to go off gold standard. There was much hope in India because Ramsay Macdonald had become the Prime Minister of Britain, for many knew about his book on India in which he had condemned many of the actions of the British bureaucracy in India. The Round Table Conferences showed, however, that as regards the continuance of British rule in India, there was no difference of opinion between the British Liberals, the British Conservatives and the British Labour Party. It was not unexpected that after the Second Round Table Conference, Mahatma Gandhi should be arrested on his arrival in India with the full consent of the British Prime Minister, Ramsay Macdonald, who, as a Labour Member of Parliament, had

once condemned the way in which the Indian nationalist movement was being suppressed by the British. The stalemate created after the arrest of Congress leaders in 1932, confirmed Subhas Bose's belief that the strategy of non-violent non-cooperation for winning Indian independence had many limitations. He was able soon afterwards, on the plea of illness, to go to Europe and arrived in Vienna where he remained for some time under medical care and recovered his health. It was interesting that in Vienna he came to know closely Vithalbhai Patel, once the President of the Central Legislative Assembly, who was also in Austria. The two men had come to the same conclusion and both of them agreed that unless India's case was widely known in foreign countries and unless India was able to diversify her attempts to win freedom by asking for help from countries opposed to the British Empire—whether they be communists or non-communists—there was very little chance of realising the aim of Indian independence. That both Patel and Bose agreed on this question was shown by the fact that Vithalbhai Patel left all his life's savings to a Fund to be administered by Subhas Bose for conducting anti-British propaganda in all the countries of the world for the purpose of winning their sympathy and support for bringing an end to the British rule in India. There had been lot of troubles about this Fund and, in fact, there were also legal complications but the whole thing shows that already in mid-thirties, Subhas Bose had come to realise that without a new approach to the problem of Indian independence, it would not be possible to bring life to the non-violent non-cooperation movement which had reached its point of no return during the Viceroyalty of Lord Willingdon. The Viceroy had discovered all the weak points of the movement and till the Government of India Act of 1935 appeared as a Bill in Parliament, Lord Willingdon did everything in his power to suppress the Congress agitation and the result was that when the Government of India Act of 1935 came into force, the revolutionary character of the Congress movement had been greatly modified. The Congress contested the elections and was able to form Governments in most of the

Provinces by having won majority of seats in most of the Provincial Legislatures. The Central Legislative Assembly, however, was not affected by this Act and continued to remain as it was before. Provincial autonomy which was granted by this Act had made many Congress leaders believe that they would be able to use the machinery of the Provincial Governments to undermine the power of the British bureaucracy and eventually succeed in replacing them by a government formed by the elected representatives of the people. Very soon, however, they realised their mistake for, after having discovered the motive of the Congress leaders in using the machinery of the Provincial Governments, the British rulers in India, conceived the idea of creating greater divisions between the Hindus and the Muslims in order to weaken the efforts of the Congress to strengthen the nationalist character of the Congress movement.

After his return from Europe, Subhas Bose was elected President of the fifty-first session of Indian National Congress at Haripura in 1938. His experiences in Europe where he had witnessed the rise of national socialism in Germany and the great world-wide conflict that was in the making, gave him a wider vision and he began to devise means of combating the inertia which the Congress movement had fallen after Congress's acceptance to form Ministries in several Provinces. His stay in Europe had convinced him that a war was imminent and he, therefore, believed that India should be prepared to make the fullest use of this war in which British would certainly be involved. Though in Europe he was not able to make the kind of political contacts he wanted, yet he was supposed to have met Dr. Benes in Czechoslovakia, and Attlee and Sir Stafford Cripps in London. In Germany his success was very limited, because the National Socialists were not interested in Indian independence. Nevertheless he was able to create small units of supporters in Europe through whom he was able to convince some of the leading political personages in Europe that India's independence would be also beneficial to many countries of the world because Indian independence would lead to the

downfall of the British Empire. His task was difficult for no country except Nazi Germany was interested in a conflict with Britain, for all the European colonial powers knew fully well that if the British Empire went down, they would also not be able to hold their colonies for a long time. Subhas Bose had, therefore, to face a very serious problem because though he knew that it was only by winning active sympathy of countries which were opposed to Britain that he could undermine Britain's position in the world, he, however, discovered that Britain in the late thirties had become so powerful after having surmounted the economic crisis that no European country was willing to take the demand of Indian people for their freedom sympathetically. In fact, the more powerful Britain became, the less became the chance of other countries being sympathetic towards India. This was also largely due to the fact that the villainous character of national socialism and Italian fascism had so shocked the conscience of the world that any sympathies expressed by Germany or Italy for Indian freedom were likely rather to antagonise other countries against India. Except the Soviet Union, no other country in Europe or in Asia, showed much interest in the Indian struggle for freedom, and although the Soviet Union did make occasional noises in favour of India because of its world-wide programme of creating a world revolution against the capitalist society, these noises succeeded only in frightening the Indian bourgeoisie and alienating the sympathy of many European humanists, who dreaded the consequences of a communist revolution in India.

The dilemma for Subhas Bose was, therefore, great, and this dilemma was not resolved even when the war was declared because most of the countries of the world considered the rise of fascism such a menace to world civilisation that in spite of rapid and spectacular defeat of Poland, Holland, Belgium and France by Germany, no one considered that Nazi domination of Europe could contribute either to happiness of the people of Europe or to the liquidation of imperialism in the colonial countries. The new imperialism practised by Italy and Germany did not rouse any

kind of hope for the oppressed peoples of the world and, in spite of France's defeat in 1940, Subhas Bose could not seriously consider taking action by asking the victorious Nazi Germany to support the Indian cause of freedom.

His hesitation to seek assistance from Germany was due to a variety of reasons. First, he did not have any contact with any important National Socialist and when, during his stay in Europe, he tried to meet some German officials in the Foreign Office, he did not succeed and, in fact, he returned to India quite disappointed with the attitude of the German National Socialists towards the cause of Indian freedom. He expressed this disappointment in his letter to Dr. Thierfelder who was at that time the President of the Deutsche Akademie, a German cultural institution that had sponsored a scheme for giving scholarships to Indian students studying in Germany. In this letter Subhas Bose spoke strongly against Hitler's speech abusing the Indians. On his return to India also he did not try further to establish any contact with any German official. Nevertheless, he saw in the coming war between Germany and Britain an opportunity for India to pressurise England to grant independence to her. Though he never believed that the National Socialists would, for their own sake or out of sympathy for India, do anything to help the fight for Indian freedom, yet, he was convinced that whatever the outcome of the war, it would weaken Britain's military power and would therefore, contribute to the strengthening of India's resistance to British rule. In other words, it was not National Socialist Germany as such that he was interested in, but in the coming war, which he believed was inevitable, because he came to the conclusion that the war between two imperialist powers could be nothing but advantageous to the countries which were dominated by them. In the past also, the fall of great empires had led to the emancipation of the subject peoples and, as a good student of history, Subhas Bose knew that the fall of the Roman Empire had contributed directly to the emancipation of the countries which were ruled by Rome. The vast scale of changes produced by a war between Germany and Britain would,

according to his thinking, be beneficial for India although he did not see, while he was still in India, after the declaration of war, how he could take advantage of the situation which was developing in Europe. Information about the conduct of the war was very meagre in India and the Indian press and the Indian people read and heard only what the British publicity organisations handed out to the press and the radio. No other interpretation of the war was available to the Indian listeners or to the Indian readers of the press and the majority of the people in India remained for a long time merely idle spectators of a scene which they could neither change nor use to their national advantage. Fortunately, however, Subhas Bose, after his release from prison, was able to listen to broadcasts from Berlin and gradually was able to form in his mind a picture of the situation which was gradually developing in the world as a result of defeat and occupation of Poland by Germany, the partition of Poland by Soviet Union and Germany, the occupation of Czechoslovakia by the German army and the gradual occupation of Denmark, Norway, Holland and Belgium by the German *Wehrmacht*. These sudden and brutal changes brought about by the German army had created a situation which Europe had not known for decades. As assessment of the situation was hardly possible in India because no Indian politician had, specially before the War, much knowledge of international problems and for them it remained still a war in distant lands whose significance they were unable to grasp. Nehru, who was the only national leader acquainted with the problems which the war had raised, was a convinced antifascist and his approach to the war in Europe suffered from this limitation because he wished the defeat of Germany as it was a fascist country. In fact, he looked upon this war as an ideological war, a war between two ideologies, viz. that of freedom and democracy and fascism and totalitarianism. Here he differed from Subhas Bose almost fundamentally, for Subhas Bose did not care very much what happened to the German or to the British; for him the essential thing was how the war was going to affect the situation in India and how Indians could take advantage of the

critical situation in which Britain found herself, being cornered and isolated in its island. His pragmatic approach to the question of war and his estimate of the result of the war were the two factors which made him eventually take the step which he took in order to leave India for the purpose of securing sympathy and support for India's fight for freedom from the countries which were engaged in war, and specially those countries which had succeeded in inflicting heavy and mortal damages upon Britain.

This process of thinking arose also from his firm conviction, from the study of history in general and that of India in particular, that foreign domination of a country was based fundamentally on military occupation. No country can rule over another without militarily occupying the country, and whatever arguments are given later to justify foreign domination, the main reason remains, of course, superior force. Because of a long period of British domination of India, many Indians had forgotten or were not prepared to admit that the origin of British rule in India was India's military defeat and that the British, through the East India Company, carried out their policy of domination of India by military means. Apologists of British rule in India have often invented arguments justifying British domination on grounds of material and moral progress which India is stated to have made under British rule. But very few "would go to the heart of the question by facing the simple fact that the British ruled India by force." This truth was unpalatable to many; but Subhas Bose, having had experiences of Indian politics for nearly two decades and having had contacts with practically all the political leaders and all the political groups in India, had surmised that unless some radical and spectacular action was taken, people in India would not face the reality of the situation and go on deceiving themselves by believing that British rule could be wished away. His sojourn abroad had also contributed much to this thinking because, having seen how other countries functioned and having studied the method of the National Socialists and the British imperialists, he was convinced that no country could free itself from foreign domination without military revolt

and without efforts to destroy the military strength of the foreign power. This view he shared with a number of Indian revolutionaries who also had joined the Congress in order to bring their support to the Gandhian movement without, however, strongly believing that by Gandhian methods alone, India could be freed of British rule. Subhas Bose's association with the revolutionaries has been variously described by his biographers and by writers on Indian politics, but the fact is that though Subhas Bose was a prominent Congress leader and supporter of Gandhian policy in the Congress, he had never abandoned his belief in the futility of non-violent methods. In fact, he, after having questioned Gandhiji very closely, had come to believe that Gandhiji himself did not believe in non-violent means completely. With regard to the conditions prevailing in the country, non-violent opposition to the British rule was the only possible and practical form of political agitation, for it brought immediate responses both from the masses and from the ruling classes. Bose, like many Indian revolutionaries, thought that they should wait for the time when the mass movement will go out of hand and the revolutionary leaders could then assume the leadership of the movement in order to make a final effort to drive the British out of India.

In this regard, he was very different from Nehru who believed in the innate strength of the Indian people and thought that by a non-violent and mass action alone India could succeed in bringing the British to their heels and win independence in an original manner. He was, therefore, not sympathetic towards Subhas Bose's ideas, for he thought it was not only unpractical but also wrong to force the British out of India by military means. Disregarding totally Nehru's opposition to his ideas, Bose left India fully convinced that by associating the Indian freedom movement with the powers which were engaged in war, he would succeed in giving the Indian freedom movement a shape and a character which would alter the dimension of the Indian national struggle and bring out new forces in the country to give battle to the British. He had, of course, anticipated many complications in the countries

which he was to visit during the war, but he knew that without taking these risks, neither he nor any of the Congress leaders, would be able to bring the Congress movement out of stagnation in which it had been sunk. Bose not only thought that by seeking support from abroad he would make the attainment of independence a near certainty, but he also believed firmly that if he could lead the country in a dramatic manner, it would inflict such a psychological shock to the Indian people that it would electrify the whole nation and stimulate it for new efforts and hard efforts for the attainment of national freedom.

Bose and Gandhi

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN Netaji and Gandhiji is coloured in the public mind by the political clash that took place between them at and after Tripuri Congress, and this has been further strengthened in the years following independence by the neglect of Netaji by Congress. This has obscured the fundamental affinity and mutual respect they held for each other. Had Netaji returned to India, they (Gandhiji and Netaji) would have cooperated fully and unreservedly in building up the new state of free India. Why it would have been so would be apparent to anyone who would study the basic nature of two Indians who immensely influenced the people of India during their life-time. We would know this if we start first taking the life of Gandhiji and then try to find similarities between his life and that of Subhas Bose. For instance, the well-known Austrian writer, Rene Fulop-Miller, who wrote the first important book on Bolshevism “Geist und Gesicht des Bolschewismus” in 1926, in a later publication called *Lenin und Gandhi*, compared Mahatma Gandhi and Lenin and said of them that they had one thing in common, namely, that their chief concern was to ‘transform ideals into facts’. Fulop-Miller, quoting Gandhi in his book, says that he was not a visionary or a utopian but merely a practical idealist. To begin with, one can equally say that the common characteristics which united Mahatma Gandhi and Subhas Bose were also their ability to ‘transform ideas in facts’ and that both of them were more practical idealists rather than dreamers and theoreticians. Bose, though a discriminating reader and careful writer, was not an intellectual and, although it would be unjust to say that Subhas Bose had a one-track mind, yet, during his life-time, he, like Mahatma Gandhi, considered that fulfilment of a few ideas was much more important

than having too many of them, for they can neither be realised, nor can they be justified in the context of the Indian situation as they found them during their life-time, and, especially during the period of India's fight for freedom.

Subhas Bose was nearer to Mahatma Gandhi than many other Congress leaders, although many amongst them had upper middle class upbringing; and although some of them had, what was known at that time, good British education, yet, they differed considerably in their attitude towards things and specially in their knowledge and understanding of India. Though Subhas Bose was born in a well-to-do family, his family was not for that reason less connected with the reality of the Indian situation. A bourgeois Bengali family towards the end of the 19th century was somewhat different from a similar family or families in India at about the same period; but the fact remains that Bose's upbringing had been in a comfortable home probably more happy than many others, and this has been revealed by him, in letters written to his mother, sisters, and to his brothers and friends during his childhood and which have been compiled in a book called *Patravali* (a Hindi translation has also appeared). One sees in these letters that the atmosphere in his family was modern; it was not so anglicised as it was often the case with many families of the same status and income group, in other parts of India. The historical reason for this was, of course, that the first urge for anglicisation in Bengal had already exhausted itself, before the century came to its end; whereas, it was more or less at its early stage in other parts of India.

The Bengali 'Bhadralog' class, whether they belonged to the upper few or the many in the 'middle', all shared a common desire to establish a national identity which distinguished them from their English moorings and their anglicised egos. That is the reason why Subhas Bose, as he grew up, did not at any stage feel completely uprooted from the Indian soil or Indian environments, whereas in the case of some leaders, it just happened that they found themselves more isolated from Indian surroundings. Mahatma Gandhi, one can say, had more or less the same upbringing

as Bose, though the family to which he belonged did not have the same Western moorings, as that of Subhas Bose. Both of them, however, in their childhood, had enjoyed the blessings of being totally identified with their own tradition, own surroundings and, if I may say so, with the rich flavour and aroma of our Indian life. Thus, they grew up in truly Indian surroundings with their many shortcomings, beauties and joys.

Before we try to analyse the nature and character of these two great Indians, one should have some knowledge and understanding of their early background. It will not only simplify our problem but it will enable us to explain many of their thinkings, actions and activities, both on the national as well as on the international fields. That is to say, Mahatma Gandhi and Subhas Bose, in their separate ways, though deprived of some of the excellent habits, customs and thinkings, associated with good English education, inherited, so to say from the soil of India, some of the elemental and strong desire to dedicate their lives and sacrifices of which there are not very many examples in the history of modern world. In whatever situation they found themselves and wherever they were and whatever they were doing, their minds were always enveloped with the idea 'India', almost to the exclusion of other peoples and other things. Mahatma Gandhi, as we all know, has been regarded as one of the most universalist of men, and his ideas are today a patrimony of the whole of mankind. All over the world he is regarded not merely as an Indian but also as a great universal human being. His greatness surpassed all barriers of nationality and race and language and the message he gave to the world and the life he lived for the liberation of India, is considered to be a precious heritage for all time to come. Yet, whatever he did, he did essentially and completely as an Indian. He did all this almost as a Hindu, although his 'Hindutva' was something very different from what orthodoxy considers Hinduism to be. But the thing to ponder over is that by acting and living in the traditional Hindu way, he was able also to create values which were valid for other peoples and other civilisations also.

Subhas Bose, however, is not considered to be a universalist of the kind which Mahatma Gandhi had been, but he too, with his own limitations, lived and acted as Gandhi did that is to say, essentially and completely as an Indian. Both Mahatma Gandhi and Subhas Bose, because of their concentration on Indian problems, denied themselves a broader and more cosmopolitan culture of the kind which Tagore typified in himself. Their limitations in this respect also kept a large number of Indian intelligentsia away both from Gandhiji and Subhas Bose and this class felt much more at home with Tagore's clear-cut ideas on science and technology, his views on society and culture. It is, therefore, no wonder that the Western-educated classes all over India were not as much attracted to Gandhi and Bose, in spite of their meaningful allegiance to Indian nationalism. Subhas Bose and Gandhi had no difficulty to live, feel and act as one of the masses although they did not come from typical rural surroundings, nor was their family background particularly rural. This happened because Subhas Bose and Mahatma Gandhi had tremendous faith in the Indian way of life and their thinking very much coincided with that of an average Indian, in spite of their higher education and the greater knowledge of the world which they had acquired from the more sophisticated world in which they lived. This was one of the reasons perhaps which made Subhas Bose remark once that he did not require to write a book like *Discovery of India* because he was an Indian and he knew what India was without making an extra effort to discover it. Gandhiji, similarly, was completely at home in Indian surroundings without feeling the least embarrassment either with the habit, dress, way of eating or behaviour. The point about it is that the Indianness of Mahatma Gandhi and Subhas Bose was the link which united them even more than universalism preached by Tagore.

Secondly, the most important feature in the lives of Mahatma Gandhi and Subhas Bose, which strikes one most is that both of them had great gift of organisation. Mahatma Gandhi, because of his vast experience of men and affairs both in India and abroad,

knew the weaknesses of human nature, and, he was fully aware of the degeneration to which India had sunk as a result of many hundred years of foreign rule. His genius, therefore, consisted in getting the maximum results out of this medley of people with different pulls and directions and to marshal their energies for a definite purpose and a definite objective. It is very difficult for Indians of this generation to understand how impossible this task seemed at that time to the nationalist leaders who wanted India to be a great nation. The atmosphere in the country was surcharged with fear and the inferior position which Indians, high or low, enjoyed in their own country, complicated further any attempt on the part of any nationalist leader to bring out the capacity and will of the vast mass of the Indian people, for the dangerous and unrewarding task of liberating India from foreign rule. It is not easy to organise people for an action which may prove to be profitable in the end. It is even more difficult to organise a large number of people for an action which is likely to bring only suffering, imprisonment and privation and no advantage or profit in the end. People being what they are, they get normally attracted only to those things which are advantageous to them. Self-interest rather than self-sacrifice is what unites peoples for action or attracts them to enter into any organisation. At the time, when Mahatma Gandhi began to organise the masses of the Indian people, the idea of national independence was still in its infancy and considered to be a pipe dream. People did not look upon it as an immediate necessity because British rule was so firmly established and seemed to have survived so many ups and downs and political crises, in the course of nearly 150 years of its existence, that no one really believed that it would be possible even within one's life-time to bring it to an end. The fact that Mahatma Gandhi succeeded, in spite of these obstacles, to bring people from various classes and different environments and different ideas together, shows that his talent for organisation was something really unique. Very seldom, in any country, has one succeeded in creating a nationwide movement of this magnitude and then in holding it together for nearly 40 years,

knowing fully well that those who joined the movement and worked for it would have few rewards, but many risks. All historians of this period are still bewildered by the ability with which Mahatma Gandhi succeeded in not only keeping together for a common purpose such diverse elements in our national life, but also to strengthen it and cement it so well as to make it a formidable force to compel the British to come to terms with Indian nationalism. Subhas Bose also in the same manner, even under more difficult conditions, showed his ability to lead men and he even succeeded in imposing strict discipline and unity of purpose on the INA, a fact which almost perplexes one today. He achieved success with the hardheaded Japanese who, after having conquered practically the whole of South East Asia and Burma, were not particularly interested in India because, though there was a certain amount of sympathy for India in Japan, the majority of the Japanese did not think of India in terms of Asia, partly because of racial reasons and partly because of the complicated nature of Indian politics and the Indian social system. Subhas Bose's talent for diplomacy becomes all the more interesting to observe when we take these Japanese objections into consideration and see how, in spite of these obstacles, he was able to overcome their objections and bring them round to the idea of helping Indian nationalists not for the sake of India only, but for serving Japan's national interests. On the other hand, the diverse elements which comprised the Indian Prisoners of War in East Asia, who were still under the spell of British power and influence, were not easy to shape into any kind of disciplined unit, for fighting the battle of India's freedom. Subhas Bose succeeded even in banding them into a real instrument of fight against the British in India and though his ambition of marching into India was not successful, the fact that under such adverse conditions, he was able to build up a rebel army to fight the British and to hold them together in spite of setbacks, both from within and without, speaks highly of his knowledge of human beings, his natural gift for leadership and his power of inspiring people before the heaviest odds. These two examples show how Mahatma Gandhi and Subhas

Bose proved to be the two most superb tacticians and diplomats which India had known in modern times. No one before them or after them in India has shown such capacities of drawing men and women unto him for a dangerous objective and to make them work for a particular ideal without reward and without compensation. This skill in managing human beings is certainly the most important common attribute that brought about their mental affinity, and there is no doubt that because of this approach to all national problems, they esteemed each other, because they knew how difficult it is ‘to transform ideals into facts and action’ as mentioned by Fulop-Miller while comparing Mahatma Gandhi to Lenin.

Further, the characteristic which both Mahatma Gandhi and Subhas Bose had in common was an implacable sense of discipline. They never spared themselves in practising what they preached and they lived fearless and austere lives and believed that in political field or in national sphere, no real success could be achieved without discipline and without a high sense of duty. How ruthless this sense of discipline was, for example, in the case of Mahatma Gandhi can be illustrated by relating the following story. In 1925, soon after the death of C. R. Das, Mahatma Gandhi came to Calcutta and presided over a meeting of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee; and this meeting was held in the Samavya Mansion of Hindustan Insurance Company whose Director at that time was the late N.R Sarkar. At this meeting, BPCC, while referring to the agenda mentioned the action of Dr. Abdulla Suhrawardy who was to stand as a Congress candidate for the presidentship of Legislative Council. Dr. Suhrawardy, in order to ensure his victory in the election, (because the Congress did not have absolute majority in the Council) had canvassed support of the nominated European members of the Council whose votes could have made his election a certainty. Almost immediately, Mahatma Gandhi asked Dr. Suhrawardy whether what the Secretary had said was true. As Dr. Suhrawardy did not reply, Gandhiji, interpreting his silence as an admission, said in a sharp tone: “I will say Dr. Suhrawardy that you have been a traitor to our

country.” No one in the room stirred after this remark and Dr. Suhrawardy slowly walked out of the room without saying anything. We all imagined that Gandhiji was soft-going and indulgent to others, but how hard he could be when something concerning national interest or the discipline of the Party was at stake, can be well illustrated by this story, for as Gandhiji had imposed on himself a rigorous sense of discipline, he expected that those who worked with him should also come up to his own standard. This was true of Subhas Bose and behind his geniality and social amiability, there was something hard and adamant whenever he was confronted with a question that related to the question of greater interest of the country. Both Mahatma Gandhi and Bose, made a distinction between personal feeling and national requirement, and they never hesitated to disregard their own personal feelings and take decisions on vitally-important matters even when those decisions were not pleasing to many of their colleagues. Mahatma Gandhi did not even spare Kasturba and the famous story in *Young India*, when Mahatma Gandhi embarrassed Kasturba by fasting for her failure to adhere strictly to the disciplines of the Ashram when she acquired a few annas for giving a present to her grand child. This showed how implacable he could be. Similarly, Bose’s painful and dramatic decision to leave Germany only a few days after the birth of his only child, in order to go to South East Asia, was in the same category. He believed that his presence in Europe was no longer useful, and he thought he should be in South East Asia to carry on the fight for national liberation, nearer home. We thus see that in matters of self-discipline and also in matters of general conception of discipline itself, Mahatma Gandhi and Subhas Bose had many things in common, for both of them believed that in order to achieve results from any action of national importance, discipline was the most essential requirement and adherence to it unfalteringly was a duty not to be trifled with, especially in the case of a man who wanted to lead others.

Because of this common trait, they also respected each other, for people who do not believe in disciplining themselves and

fashioning their personal and public contact rigorously, cannot either achieve results nor can they really esteem each other. That is to say, however affectionate Mahatma Gandhi might have been towards many of his other colleagues, when one analyses the character of these two great Indians of this century, one is forced to come to the conclusion that Mahatma Gandhi and Subhas Bose were in more ways than one nearer to each other than many others. It is a great pity that Subhas Bose and Gandhiji could not meet after the war because the experience of the war and the experiences which Subhas Bose had gathered of men, affairs and countries during his stay abroad, in Europe and Asia, would have convinced Gandhi even more forcibly of the rightness of Bose's action, for these experiences had changed Bose so much that had he been able to return to India and meet Mahatma Gandhi, both of them would have found that their so-called differences were far less important than many people had made them out to be. It is also an added pity that in India people have remembered only the differences between Gandhiji and Subhas Bose which arose out of the controversy of Subhas Bose's election as Congress President to the Haripura session of Congress, and they have forgotten how very closely both of them had worked for nearly two decades, with no particular strain in their relationship. Gandhiji knew that Subhas Bose did not agree with him on many matters of policy but, in spite of these differences, Gandhiji worked with Netaji because he was convinced that the energy, the far-sight and the determination which he brought to the work to be performed, were invaluable for the advancement of India towards its national goal. Mahatma Gandhi, as a matter of fact, never laid stress on the difference which he had with Netaji on matters of detail, whenever he was convinced about Bose's sincerity and purity of purpose. We have seen this proved again and again in his dealing with, for example, the Indian liberals, and the correspondence he carried on practically throughout his life with such men as Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Srinivasa Sastri and others, shows clearly how his mind was free

from any preconceived notion in regard to people who differed with him politically. With Subhas Bose, his differences were not fundamental because he knew that those differences were not motivated by self-interest. Subhas Bose, like Gandhi, had dedicated his life to the cause of attainment of Indian independence, and although they disagreed from time to time on the means to be adopted and the methods to be followed, both of them knew that on essentials, there were no two opinions between them. Mahatma Gandhi also considered it to be natural that the younger political leaders of the Congress movement would show greater dynamism and be more impatient than he was himself, for he was one of the world's great men who accepted, the fact that between the old and the young there is bound to be certain conflict and certain differences of approach, if for nothing else but the difference in age. As a shrewd tactician, he also saw the political advantage of extremism amongst the younger generation of Congress politicians, because he could put forward the impatience of the younger leaders as an additional argument to the British, for immediate grant of independence to India. The impatience of the younger generation was used by him as an effective instrument for bargaining with the British and though many people thought that Subhas Bose's flight from India to Germany, and South East Asia, had distressed Gandhiji, they should read between the lines of his statements and articles on the subject, and they would never fail to see that Gandhiji never disapproved of his action because he knew that Subhas Bose's activities abroad could only supplement and greatly strengthen the work of national emancipation which was being carried on at home. Subhas Bose, on the other hand, considered his activities in South East Asia as a continuation of the work of the National Congress in India and never, for a moment, did he think that his activities were in any way opposed to those of the Indian National Congress whose devoted worker he had always been. He felt and he also said so in his many statements that his movement and the Quit India Movement in India ran parallel and horizontal

and that is why he had not the slightest hesitation in giving fullest support to the Congress activities in India from his Radio broadcasts. The declarations and speeches he made throughout the period of his stay in Germany and East Asia prove this point.

The question which is pertinent in this context is how far Gandhiji and Subhas Bose could have worked together if he would have returned to India after the war. Although it is merely a matter of speculation now, yet, all that we know about Subhas Bose makes one believe that if they had met again, they would have cooperated fully and unreservedly in building up the new state of free India and I do not think there would have been any real difference between them. Subhas Bose was a child of the Indian renaissance and he had grown up in the atmosphere of India of the early twenties, when the Indian national leaders made parliamentary democracy a cardinal plank of their political beliefs. Subhas Bose believed also in parliamentary democracy of the type which India has developed since independence. It is possible that in order to make this democracy function more efficiently, and to achieve speedy results, he might have been inclined towards a presidential form of government as it exists today in the United States of America, or in France. But there is absolutely no doubt that he would not have either suppressed freedom of expression or freedom of the individual, which he considered to be one of the essential conditions for India's freedom. In his mind and action, he did not separate independence from liberty and he did not think, that merely an independent India without liberty of thinking would be a desirable country for the Indian people. He valued discussions and debates even on military matters, and, he never imposed his own will against the consensus of his co-workers in the organisation of the INA. In the national sphere, he would have done the same, if he had been given by providence the opportunity of revisiting his country and sharing the burden of the Indian people in making a new India.

A word about the theory of means and ends which played such an important role in our political thinking during the period of our

national struggle. It has often been said that by organising an armed resistance, Netaji deviated from the path of non-violence which was an essential creed of our national movement. But I believe, even Gandhiji never denied the right of a national army to fight for national independence and to safeguard the integrity of national territories, in order to secure peace for the people. Netaji too believed that violence as interpreted by Mahatma Gandhi referred to personal violence, meaningless bloodshed, rowdyism etc., but not the strength of courage and the spirit of sacrifice which are inherent in an army which is maintained for the purpose of safeguarding freedom and liberty of the state and the people which comprise it.

Finally, how great was Subhas Bose's regard for Mahatma Gandhi is illustrated from his broadcast speech from Bangkok (October 2, 1943) on the occasion of Mahatma Gandhi's seventy-fifth birthday. He said: "The service which Mahatma Gandhi has rendered to India and to the cause of India's freedom is so unique and unparalleled that his name will be written in letters of gold in our national history for all time." Further, comparing him with Kemal Pasha, Subhas Bose said in this broadcast: "The nearest historical parallel to Mahatma Gandhi is perhaps Mustapha Kemal Pasha who saved Turkey after her defeat in last World War I and who was acclaimed by the Turks as the *Gazi*." Subhas then referred to the spiritual awakening brought about by Gandhi to India and compared it with the Risorgimento Movement in Italy and the contribution made by Mazzini and Garibaldi for the unification of Italy. Then he said that Mahatma Gandhi had given the Indian people "the two indispensable preconditions for the attainment of independence, namely self-confidence and a country-wide organisation which reaches the remotest villages of India." And then in a broadcast from Azad Hind Radio on July 6, 1944, after the death of Kasturba, Subhas addressed Gandhiji in these terms: "Father of our Nation! In this holy war of India's liberation, we ask for your blessings and good wishes."

German Episode

THREE is ALREADY a vast amount of uninformed criticism both in India and abroad on Netaji's political activities abroad and specially in Germany. This criticism centres round the controversy whether it was morally wrong to participate in the movement started abroad which involved some kind of cooperation with those States which were regarded during the Second World War as Fascist States. In many Western countries, Indians who worked and suffered with Netaji in Germany are looked upon, not as patriots, but as sympathisers of Nazism and Fascism. This accusation arises because, first, Subhas Bose's association in Germany with the German movement of resistance against Hitler is not known and, secondly, his dissociation from the Nazi elements in Germany is hardly ever mentioned by those who have written about his sojourn in Germany. It is, however, well-known now that he would have gone to the Soviet Union (he actually left India with the idea) if it would have been at war with Britain and if he was welcomed there. But the U.S.S.R. did not want him as a political agitator because he was waging a campaign against Britain, an ally of Soviet Union during World War II.

As to the question of particularising Subhas Bose's special role in history, we will have to determine first, since this role was somewhat unorthodox as far as the World War II was concerned, whether India could have been, or would have been free at the time she attained her independence, if the Second World War did not break out in 1939. Alternatively, if we admit that the World War II had hastened Indian independence, would it be true to say that if Netaji had languished in jail, instead of escaping first to Germany and then to South East Asia, it would have made no difference to the time when Indian independence came?

We know that when the World War II broke out in 1939, the British Empire was at the height of its power, and, England, after having recovered from the trade depression of the early thirties had become once again prosperous as well as militarily powerful and her prestige was very high in the world. Similarly, the French Empire, with the biggest and the best trained army in the world at its disposal, enjoyed equally a tremendous prestige, and this Empire, too, became allied to England and thus, both of them, making up the most formidable military and financial power, declared war against Germany in September 1939. It was, therefore, not a mere boast when Paul Reynaud, the Prime Minister of France, characterised the position of the Alliance by saying, '*Nous vaincrons parce que nous sommes les plus forts*'. In India, on the other hand, the Congress movement, after twenty years of non-violent struggle, interspersed with walk-outs in the Central Legislative Assembly and in the Provincial Councils, had reached a stalemate. Twenty years of incessant struggle had brought us only Provincial autonomy in 1937 and the British, militarily invulnerable and industrially ahead of other countries except perhaps the USA, were secure in their belief that nothing less than a revolution could ever shake their position in India. They had, therefore, become indifferent to Indian public opinion, so much so that when war was declared against Germany, the Central Legislature was not consulted and even the leaders of the so-called Indian Liberal parties were not asked about their views. On the other hand, the other actors in the scene, the Indian people, after having gone through the experiences of the First and Second Civil Disobedience Movements, the fireworks of the Swarajists and the bathos of the No-changers, had come to the conclusion that the promised freedom to them could come only when national efforts were revitalised with a new slogan and a new tactics. 'Quit India' became such a slogan after the outbreak of the War, but judging at a distance of thirty years, already at the Congress sessions at Tripuri and Haripura, the uneasiness felt by the people could be easily discerned. This uneasiness indicated that in India, the end

of an epoch had been reached, as such was the case also with the European State systems, as well as the European system of balance of power. India in 1939 was at the threshold of new possibilities and new horizons. If we link the events in India with those in the world, it would then seem that the path chalked out by Netaji was not only a logical one but also the path which seemed to have been dictated by the political stalemate into which our nationalist movement had drifted. In other words, Netaji's flight from India and his attempt to secure help in foreign countries for the liberation of India had almost the character of inevitability. It is equally true that the international scene during the World War II would have been less exciting without the participation of Subhas Bose at the very storm-centres of these gigantic up-heavals, which remain, in the judgment of historians up till now, the most impressive in human history.

Judged by the existing facts of the political situation from 1938 to 1940, both in India and abroad, it would appear that Subhas Bose's action in fleeing from India was the natural consequence of a deteriorating political situation at home which made this step inescapable. What he did afterwards followed automatically and logically, on account of ever changing and dynamic political situation in India, Europe and Asia. The war spread and continued, and the continuation of the war was something Subhas Bose, at the time he left India, had not speculated upon. He, like many others all over the world, was under the impression that after the debacle at Dunkirk and the defeat of France in 1940, a Peace Conference would soon be held and at this Conference, Germany as the victorious power would be in a position to influence the terms of peace. While still in India, he had often thought that a well-known Indian politician ought to be present in Germany to persuade the German statesmen to make the question of Indian independence an issue at the prospective Peace Conference. Twenty-five years after independence when we take free India for granted, it might be probably difficult for many of us, specially the very young, to appreciate this argumentation, but in 1940, no one in India, and,

not even the best friends of India abroad, ever thought that India would be free only within seven years. Subhas Bose had, however, come to believe that the outcome of war would be decisive for the future of India, and he was also convinced that whoever was the ultimate victor, the war was going to change the nature of the struggle for Indian independence. And because he saw in the war a chance for India, he did not hesitate, after the Battle of Stalingrad, to leave Germany and go to South East Asia, because he became sure that German victory was out of the question and that he could be more useful to his country if nearer home. Bose was not in the least interested either in the existing regime in Germany or in its future and that was why his sudden parting did not cause him any mental anguish, because, his main concern was India and not Germany. Let us ask this question honestly and objectively: if all this did not happen, what would have been the position of India today? It now appears incontrovertible that the flight of Subhas Bose from India and the establishment of the INA (and not to speak of its aftermath) formed two very essential elements in the new powerful forces whose rise in 1945 and 1946, contributed to the eventual withdrawal of the British Army from India. Furthermore, when viewed as a '*gesamtsbild*', these forces constituted equally a part of the century-old struggle of the Indian people to win national freedom, the struggle which came to be spearheaded by Mahatma Gandhi from 1920 onwards, with the aid of the superb organisational machinery of the Indian National Congress. The Congress and the INA, both of them indivisibly, have been thus instrumental in hastening our national freedom, and if Gandhi and Nehru have been two great architects of this freedom, Subhas Bose's place in history is certainly that of an equal, for without his imaginative action in 1940, it seems certain that Indian independence would have been delayed for long.

The question is often raised whether by going to Germany Subhas Bose succumbed to political ideology of the Nazis. This is a ticklish question because to face the fact that the entire civilised world has pronounced itself against Hitlerism; and as

Netaji happened to be in Germany for about two years during the war, he was likely also to receive—as he has done amply—some of the opprobrium meant for Nazi Germany. At any rate, in the first place, as Germany and Japan happened to be the only two countries with which England was at war, was it not natural that an Indian nationalist opposed to British rule, should try to secure their help against England? Netaji did so, as a National Revolutionary just as before him, Garibaldi, took help from the enemies of Austria to free and unify Italy, or Sun-yat-Sen did from Japan to destroy the imperial Dynasty in China or, for that matter, De-Valera and the Sinn Finns took aid from America to make Ireland free. One can give many examples in history, speak of the example of the help which the Western Powers sought and got from the Soviet Union to fight Nazi Germany although immediately after the war they regretted it and quarrelled with the Soviet Union. All this proves that it is possible and can be considered moral to cooperate with an unpopular regime for specific national purposes, without being involved in the ideology of such a regime or in its internal political methods, however obnoxious they are. The Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact of 1939, which sparked off the war, was signed by the Soviet Union with a Fascist Power, in order—as the Soviet Government thought at time—to safeguard the national interests of Russia; and the Allies went into war to defend a country, namely Poland, which had a dictatorial regime, also because, by doing so, they thought they were safeguarding their national interests. Greece of Metaxas, for whose defence so many young Englishmen gave up their lives, was also a Fascist country. The diplomatic history of the Great Powers is replete with examples of changing sides whenever the political exigencies demanded them, and, was it not a British Foreign Minister who said that England had neither eternal friends nor eternal enemies but she has only her national and imperial interests to defend? If such a political maxim was good for England, why should it be bad for India? Similarly, for strategic reasons, for reasons of economic advancement, countries, both big and small, form alliances, for short and long periods, and no one objects to these.

How can anyone find fault with the specific political action of Subhas Bose, in trying to enlist the sympathy and support of one country or many countries, who were temporarily at war with England? He knew that they would not be always at war with England (no one does, fortunately) and he was aware also of the risks he was taking, but he knew at the same time that in the politically complicated world of the twentieth century, specially, before the period of decolonisation, a country like India—disarmed and exploited by a Power which had both unlimited force and finance at its disposal—could not expect to free herself without some kind of foreign aid. Was it wrong for General de Gaulle to take Anglo-American help to liberate France? Were not Subhas Bose's tactics and motives comparable to those of General de Gaulle? Were not his motives, his conscience, as clear as those of General de Gaulle and of the men who rescued France from the humiliation of remaining an occupied country? One may probably say the German occupation of Europe is not comparable to British occupation of India. But why not? Is it because the British occupation had lasted longer? And was it because our senses had been so dulled by being under foreign domination for such a long time?

Before, however, coming to the question of Netaji's German association, we may discuss briefly the question whether it was less patriotic to have worked for the INA than to have worked in a non-violent manner for the freedom of India. Nowhere else in the world, the patriotism of a man or a woman is doubted because of the revolutionary means adopted by him or her to achieve the freedom of his country. In the case of members of the INA, however, different circumstances have also to be taken into consideration. First of all, many of them were in a foreign country; secondly, they were, most of them, captives, that is prisoners of war. These two facts both limited as well as determined their action, for if they had been in India, they would have perhaps acted in a different way or more likely, would not have acted at all. It is true that an estimate of the services of the members of the INA

is inextricably related to the question as to how much did the INA contribute to national liberation. This question can be satisfactorily answered only when the secret correspondence between the British viceroys and the British Cabinet become available to us, for then alone, we would know why the British decided to leave India, 'particularly in 1947' and not before or after. Those historians, who are now sifting the documents of this period, are coming more and more to the conclusion that the revolutionary situation which arose in India in 1946 and 1947 could not have arisen without the INA trial, that is, without the existence of the INA. As I have hinted before, had the War taken its course, without the INA movement, then in 1945, victorious Britain need not have to hurry to send the Cabinet Mission to India because in that case no unusual situation would have arisen which would have required the immediate attention of the British statesmen. In fact, most people in Europe could not understand why Britain decided to withdraw at a time when it seemed that its position in India was infinitely stronger, than before. British withdrawal from India in 1947 was strongly disapproved by such powers as France and Holland because their colonial possessions in Asia depended entirely on the British military power based on India. They collapsed when the British left India and, in fact, Indian freedom became thus the real prelude to Afro-Asian independence.

And although we will have to wait until the ban on the publication of secret documents of the former British Government in India is lifted, yet we know that the movement for non-cooperation, begun by Mahatma Gandhi at the Nagpur session of the Congress in 1920, lacked throughout the entire period, from 1919 to 1939, one immensely vital element of the Indian society and this element was the Indian members of the British Indian Army. The system of recruitment of the Indian personnel in the British Army adopted after the Revolt of 1857 shows that the British Government in India, after the experience of 1857, introduced a very carefully thought-out plan which made it practically impossible for the Indian personnel to be affected by the general discontent in the

country. In spite, therefore, of the nation-wide struggle for independence carried out from 1920 to 1939, Indian soldiers seemed completely unaffected by it. Neither Mahatma Gandhi nor Jawaharlal Nehru was able to pierce through the indoctrination that the British had fostered in them. There had been hardly any acts of disobedience inside the Indian Army, and, even when the war broke out in 1939, the British in deploying Indian soldiers in West Asia, South East Asia and other theatres of war, were not the least worried about the loyalty of the Indian soldiers. No one amongst our national leaders, except Subhas Bose, was able, in fact, to win over the loyalty and respect of the Indian soldiers and convert them to the national cause. It was Subhas Bose's great contribution to the nationalist struggle that he succeeded where other national leaders had failed. But, that he even succeeded in forming, out of this amorphous, half-educated, bewildered, Indian mercenary soldiers, an army for national liberation, disciplined and organised, was indeed a miracle. When one reads the vast literature which has grown up in French, in Italian, in Polish and other European languages regarding the resistance movements against German Occupation in Europe led by resistance leaders in France, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia and other countries, one is amazed at the difficulties which these leaders had to overcome, in order to keep their followers together although they were all drawn from countries where national sentiments were highly developed. But compared to what Tito, De Gaulle, Benes, Col. Anders and others had to go through, Netaji had much less disappointment. Compared with the forces of resistance in Occupied Europe, the whole INA machinery was run much more smoothly, and the courage, loyalty and bravery which India's peasant soldiers showed were in no way inferior to those of the anti-Fascist soldiers of the underground movements in Europe.

In order, therefore, to appreciate fully the role of Netaji and the INA in our national liberation movement, a discussion of Netaji's association with the Germans is necessary, first, in order to know the truth about this association and, secondly, for

understanding the image of Bose on the international front. Millions of people in our country who look upon Netaji Subhas Bose as one of the greatest heroes of our fight for freedom, will be shocked to know that both in Western and Eastern Europe, he is referred to as a Fascist, a Quisling and a Hitlerite stooge. In Germany, where Subhas Bose laid the foundation of INA between 1941 and 1943, his name is a taboo. Very seldom any mention of him is made in newspapers, and when mentioned at all, he is described as a Nazi.

This applies also to other Western European countries. In spite of a very handsome tribute paid to him by an inimical Englishman, Hugh Toye, in *The Springing Tiger*, people in many countries still go on referring to him as a Quisling, and when mild, as a Bengali revolutionary. Unfortunately, in India the opinion which exists about Netaji in European countries is practically unknown. This has happened because some of more important facts regarding his activities during the war, have not been publicised and consequently they have remained shrouded in mystery. This is also due to the official interpretation of our freedom movement. The impression has been deeply ingrained in people's minds that no revolutionary struggle was necessary to attain national freedom and that it was also non-violent on the side of India's adversary, England. Such a picture of peaceful and happy fulfilment of national demands is naturally disturbed when a resolute national revolutionary like Subhas Bose is brought into the scene. Had it been otherwise, the image of Netaji could have been brought into proper perspective and incidentally, a real assessment of his contribution to Indian independence be made. An objective study of Netaji's political doctrine and the action he took to implement this doctrine, would undoubtedly help us also to understand the combination of force which led finally to the deliverance of India from the British rule. At any rate, such a study would stop the cheap generalisations regarding the causes of Indian independence.

The full story of Netaji's negotiations with the German authorities and the establishment of the Free India Centre in Berlin need be

told for clearing up some doubts about his deals with the Germans. I have tried to give a brief account of these activities in my very personal narrative of experiences in Europe during the war in a book called *This Europe* which was published in 1951. The story of his negotiations with the Japanese Government has been told ably by S. A. Ayer in his book *Unto Him a Witness*.

The first thing we need to do in order to have a clear understanding of Subhas Bose's views on Germany, Italy and the countries which fought against England is to refer to Subhas Bose's numerous writings and statements on them. If we do that, we will find that nowhere in his speech or in writings and he has ever praised or supported Nazi or Fascist ideas. I have read practically everything he has written and nowhere could I discover any writing of his in which he shows that he was attracted by the ideas of depriving others of liberty or of oppressing people because of their political beliefs or because of the race they belonged to. On the contrary, a child of Indian Renaissance of the nineteenth century, Subhas Bose, who imbibed in his youth the ideas of Tagore, Aurobindo, Vivekananda and Gandhi, was a profound humanist in the Hindu sense of the term as revealed in his letters written in Bengali, published in the book *Patravali*. These letters are eloquent testimonies of his deeply ingrained sense of liberalism and love of liberty. We have a further testimony of this love of liberty in his now famous letter* he wrote to Dr. Franz Thierfelder of Munich in March 1936.

Subhas Bose was in Munich towards the end of 1935 and he tried to meet an important German Minister in order to make him acquainted with the Indian situation. Dr. Thierfelder, the founder, together with Dr. Taraknath Das of the Indian Institute of Munich, tried to arrange this interview. As he was unable to meet him and

*This letter, together with a number of articles on various aspects of India written by eminent German scholars and scientists, appeared in *Indien und Deutschland—Ein Sommelband*, edited by me under the pseudonym of H.O. Gunther on the occasion of the official visit of Prime Minister Nehru to Germany in 1956.

as he was deeply pained at the racial discrimination practised by the Nazis, he left Germany in disgust and expressed this feeling in a letter to his friend Dr. Thierfelder. For a long time, Dr. Thierfelder had hesitated to publish this letter, but he found, as he says in Introduction:

“the danger remained that the historian of the future might judge this legendary Bengali political leader by his action for Indian freedom, during the last years of the War and thus do injustice to his character and political faith.”

He, therefore, decided to make it public. In fact, he himself gave it to me and we published it in the book I have just mentioned, which was afterwards ceremonially presented to Pt. Nehru. In this letter, Bose writes that before leaving Germany (1935) he should say a few words about what he thought of the country and the people. He writes: “When I first visited Germany in 1933, I had hopes that the new German nation which had risen to a consciousness of its national strength and self-respect would instinctively feel a deep sympathy for other nations struggling in the same direction. Today, I regret that I have to return to India with the conviction that the new nationalism of Germany is not only narrow and selfish but arrogant.”

Referring to a speech made by Hitler, Bose writes:

“Herr Hitler has talked of the destiny of the white races to rule over the rest of the world. But the historical fact is, that up till now the Asiatics have dominated Europe more than have the Europeans dominated Asia ... We who are struggling for our own freedom desire that all nations should be free and that Europe and Asia should be at peace with one another. It, therefore, pains us that the new nationalism in Germany is inspired by selfishness and racial arrogance”.

He then adds:

“Germany in her desire to curry favour with Great Britain finds it convenient to attack India and the Indian people... The attempt began nearly 10 years ago, when the party published a pamphlet

in English for propaganda in England consisting of anti-Indian passages from the books of Herr Hitler and Dr. Rosenberg".

Bose takes exception to a speech delivered by Hitler and writes to Thierfelder:

"After the speech of Herr Hitler I have issued a very strong statement to the Indian press which I hope will be published in due course. But I would like to say this before I leave Europe that I am still prepared to work for an understanding between Germany and India. This understanding must be consistent with our national self-respect. When we are fighting greatest Empire in the world for our freedom and for our rights and when we are confident of our ultimate success, we cannot brook any insult from any other nation or any attack on our race or culture".

These extracts from one of the many letters of this kind on world problems prove, if proofs are necessary, that Netaji was not only not sympathetic to national socialism, but he was opposed to it from its very inception. If still he wanted to seek German aid, it was because, first, Germany was at war with 'India's enemy', and, secondly, because—as he writes in the same letter—"according to our past experience the Germans were a very warm-hearted people, particularly friendly to Indians" and finally because his plan of going to the Soviet Union had failed.

We have also seen from these extracts how deeply attached Subhas Bose was to the ideas of racial equality and the freedom of all the nations of Europe and Asia. His liberalism and humanism abhorred racial arrogance and blind nationalism. It is true that his humanism was not based on inaction. He was essentially a Hegelian in his world view, and as he wrote on August 5, 1939, he believed that 'Progress is neither unilinear, nor is it always peaceful in character. Progress often takes place through conflict,' he said. And then as regards commitments to the Axis Powers, it is difficult to find in his speech or writing anything praising or supporting them. Did he not of his very first broadcasts from Berlin make his attitude to the Axis Powers crystal clear?

He said on May 1, 1942:

"I am not an apologist of the three powers and it is not my task to defend what they have done or may do in future. That is a task which devolves on these nations themselves. My concern is, however, with India, and if I may add further, with India alone."

Similarly, his approach to European and German problems was that of an Indian nationalist interested in exploiting the world situation in favour of India. Though aware of German sympathy for Indian independence, Subhas Bose was not uncritical of German foreign policy. Speaking on the German defeat of 1943, he said in a broadcast from Singapore on May 25, 1945:

"It was the foreign policy of Germany vis-a-vis Soviet Russia and other countries that was fundamentally responsible for the military disaster which has now overtaken the German nation. One of the blunders committed by the German Government in the realm of foreign policy was its total disregard of Bismarck's advice to the German nation, never to fight on two fronts."

Similarly, discussing the meaning of the word 'fascist', a term which has often been used against him, Subhas Bose in the context of Indian criticism of Forward Bloc wrote on August 19, 1939: "If by 'Fascist' is indicated those who call themselves Hitlers, Super Hitlers or budding Hitlers, then one may say that these specimens of humanity are to be found in the Rightist Camp." Subhas obviously had always belonged to the leftist camp.

We know also that his association with the war-time German Government was purely opportunistic and formal in character, motivated by his desire to exploit the war situation in favour of India. He was neither an admirer of Hitler nor of National Socialism and, had it been so, then, his closest collaborator in Berlin could not have been Baron von Trott zu Solz, the man who plotted the assassination and overthrow of Hitler together with Count Stauffenberg and others on July 20, 1944. Baron von Trott, as the head of the Indian Section of the German Foreign Office, was not

only in daily touch with Subhas Bose, he was also his only friend and guide in Berlin.

Herr Adam von Trott zu Solz came from a well-known German family, and he was the first Rhodes scholar after World War I at Oxford in the thirties where he met a number of Indians. He became interested in the question of Indian freedom first at Oxford. Trott joined the German Foreign Service before the war and at the time when Subhas Bose arrived in Berlin, he was at the Anglo-American desk at Wilhelmstrasse. Trott, who was nicknamed the ‘Red Baron’, was a Fabian Socialist, and later joined the German Resistance Group led by von Moltke, von Weizsaecker and others and it was later established that if the *coup d'etat* had succeeded, Herr von Trott would then have become the German Foreign Minister for negotiating the terms of armistice and peace with the Allied Powers. It was actually he who had launched Subhas Bose in Berlin and it was because of his report to the German Foreign Office that the Germans gave up their initial hostility to Netaji. Trott also used his association with Free India Centre as a cover for his anti-Nazi activities. In fact, he travelled to neutral countries like Switzerland and Sweden to establish contacts with the agents of the Allied Powers on the pretext that these journeys were in connection with his work for the Free India Centre. In the meantime. Bose and Trott had become close friends and as they were more or less of the same age and had the same political ideas, they, therefore, discussed with each other the problems they had in mind and there is no doubt that Subhas Bose was fully aware of Trott’s activities and sympathised with them. Trott’s English biographer, Christopher Sykes, says that Trott told his wife Clarita, soon after he met Bose in Berlin, that Bose suspected that he was not enthusiastic about National Socialism.*

It was also Trott who helped Subhas Bose eventually to escape from Germany when after the Battle of Stalingrad, Subhas Bose

*Troubled Loyalty: A Biography of Adam von Trott (London, 1966) p.362.

realised that German collapse was near. He realised the futility of staying in Germany, which, he knew would be destroyed if the Germans lost the war. And had it not been for Trott, Subhas Bose would not have perhaps been able to leave Germany at all because the Nazi Party bosses, unhappy about Bose's independent views, would not have hesitated to keep him as a hostage. They did that certainly in the case of Grand Mufti of Jerusalem and Rashid Ali of Iraq. Trott also helped Bose, because he was convinced already in 1942 that the war was lost for Germany and that in the interests of Indian freedom movement, Bose's departure from Germany was highly desirable. The pretext which Trott invented for Subhas Bose's departure was that Bose would be able, when in Tokyo, to iron out some of the difficulties which had arisen between the German Supreme Command and the Japanese High Command in South East Asia. Herr Adam von Trott zu Solz was hanged by the Nazi's after a summary trial, together with the other heroes of German resistance, and, his brother in a small book *Das Gewissen Steht Auf* has described how this German nobleman patiently bore all the tortures the Nazis inflicted on him without even revealing the names of his associates or his contacts abroad. Trott's execution by the Nazis took away the last feeble reason Bose had for working in war-time Germany, for Indian freedom.

Subhas Bose's close association with one of the best known anti-Nazi leaders and a German patriot should make it clear to everyone that Netaji could not have had any sympathy for Nazism. Secondly, it is necessary to put the record right about Netaji's association with various public authorities in Germany during his stay in that country. This association, as we know, has been variously, and often wrongly, interpreted both by the supporters of Netaji as well as by his critics. Recent investigations of the records of the German Foreign Office have, however, shown that Trott had several foreigners as accomplices, and these investigations have also revealed that a foreigner had helped Trott to establish contact with an English Bishop in Stockholm who had conveyed Trott's proposals for an armistice to Anthony Eden, Lord Avon at

that time, the Foreign Minister of Great Britain. Netaji met Trott very soon after his arrival from Rome where an interview with Ciano proved to be fruitless and the Italian Government, which had flown Netaji from Kabul, sent him to Berlin. The meeting of the two men was an immediate success and, as a result, the German Foreign Office decided that in view of the fact that India would acquire an independent status anyhow after the war, it would be a good investment for the German Government to support the Indian cause for freedom. It may also be mentioned that even Imperial Germany during the World War I had taken up the cause of Indian independence and the German Foreign Office had, therefore, a precedent to go by. Men who weighed this question at the Office were men of career, who were neither National Socialists nor did they belong to the inner coterie of Hitler. They were German civil servants who performed their duties as good German citizens during the war. These men, guided by the desire to advance German national interests in India, thought it advisable for political reasons to support the movement sponsored by Netaji in Germany. The only association with the German public authority Subhas Bose had was with those members of the German Foreign Office. This association was purely formal and without the slightest ideological involvement on his side. He had no contact whatever with any prominent member of the Party, and the Free India Centre, established by him in Berlin with semi-diplomatic status, entertained relations only with the German Foreign Office, like many other neutral missions accredited to the German Government. Those who are now familiar with the working of various departments of the German Government during the war as a result of publication of German Documents, certainly know that all the organisations supported by the *Auswartiges Amt* were viewed with the greatest suspicion both by the Gestapo and the Ministry of Propaganda who again were at loggerheads with each other. These same Documents have also proved that the understanding between Bose and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, honoured by both sides, was that Indian cooperation with Germany was limited to

Germany's war with England. Bose had made it clear that the Indians did not want to be involved in Germany's quarrel with other countries or with her own internal quarrels. The Germans, i.e. the German Foreign Office accepted this point of view and never wanted Bose to support them in their war with other countries. Neither Bose nor the Azad Hind Radio ever defended the policy of the National Socialist Party in continental Europe or elsewhere. The work done by the Indians under Bose in Germany was based on the firm understanding that without being ideologically involved in the National Socialist doctrine, the Indians in Germany could advance the cause of Indian independence, because Germany happened to be at war with England. This understanding (both written and oral) remained the only basis of the relationship between the Free India Centre and the German Government.

The Indians in Germany were not asked to sympathise with the National Socialist cause nor could they be National Socialists, because the privilege and honour of being National Socialists were reserved only for people of German birth. They were also not subjected to any kind of control or censure by the German authorities, because of the initial agreement entered into by Bose with them, and this agreement the Germans observed scrupulously.

As a National Revolutionary dedicated to the cause of Indian independence, Subhas Bose was moved in all his actions by desire and one desire alone, that is, to find ways and means to fight for the liberation of his motherland. He had resolved within himself the problem of the Left and the Right as he had successfully reduced within the INA all differences between the Hindus and the Muslims and other Indians, from different regions of our vast country. In this, as in his plans and ideas for the future of India, he represented more the future than the past, much more the twenty-first century than the nineteenth. Many of our political leaders who still think in terms of nineteenth century distinction of Left and Right, are not yet aware of the fact that in the post imperialist age of decolonisation, this distinction is rapidly disappearing not only in affluent societies of Western Europe and

America but also in the Soviet Union and some Communist countries. Socio-political changes which have taken place all over the world since the Second World War were somewhat mirrored already in the political thinking of Netaji who, as a result of his highly developed sense of political realism, had embodied in a very remarkable way the hope of tomorrow and the shape of things to come.

In South East Asia

WHILE BIDDING FAREWELL at a ceremony in Berlin to the first contingent of Indian Legionaries on their way to a training centre in East Germany, Subhas broke down and wept because, as he said, being in a foreign country, he had nothing to offer them except hardship and suffering. A group of twelve young men, who had volunteered and who formed the first corps of the Indian Legion that expanded later into a Brigade formation of nearly 2500 men, had assembled in the Office of Free India Centre in Berlin and Subhas sorrowfully remarked that he felt so unhappy that, being in a foreign country, he had really nothing—not even some presents—to give to those young men who were going to risk their lives. This feeling of being dependent on foreigners, and being unable to finance the INA with national resources, haunted him all the time.

Being scrupulously correct in money-matters, Subhas always felt uneasy because the financing of his work was done not by Indians but by Germans and Japanese and this feeling of uneasiness always gnawed at his soul. The slightest hint that his organisation depended on foreign money would fly him into a rage, and that was why, as soon as he was able to raise money from Indians in East Asia, he made payment towards the loan the Germans had given him and the record of this payment has now been registered by the German Foreign Office. Similarly, the letter, which we are reproducing here—written by Subhas from Indian Independence League Headquarters in Singapore to the Japanese Headquarters of the Hikari Kikan—clearly states that the assistance given by the Japanese to the Indian Independence League will be honoured and repaid by the Free Indian Government. In money-matters at least, Subhas did not want to remain in debt to any country. Those

enemies of India, who described Subhas Bose as being on the pay of the Germans and the Japanese, will have a bad time now to prove their thesis because the correspondence relating to financial matters of the INA, recently published, proves that the Azad Hind Government was in same position with Germany and Japan, as were the exiled governments in London from many parts of Europe who depended for their survival on the bounty of the British and the Americans.

CONFIDENTIAL

UNITY- FAITH -SACRIFICE
 INDIAN INDEPENDENCE LEAGUE HEADQUARTERS
No. 7 Chancery Lane, Syonan

The Headquarters,
 The Hikari Kikan,
 Syonan.

Bangkok, 26th August, 1943

Dear Sirs,

We are grateful for the material assistance in cash and in kind that we have received from time to time and that we are going to receive in future through the Hikari Kikan from the Imperial Japanese Army Authorities. We desire very much to treat the above material assistance *as a loan from a friendly power* which the Government of Free India will duly *honour and repay*. I shall, therefore, feel obliged if the above material assistance given to us is put under one account—to be called the “Indian Account”—and the *interest thereon is duly calculated*.

When the Provisional Government of Free India is formed and is recognized by the Imperial Japanese Government, the above material assistance given to the Indian Independence League, East Asia, should be debited to the Provisional Government as a loan duly incurred—which the Government of *Free India will honour and repay*.

I shall be thankful if this arrangement is approved.

Yours truly,
 Subhas Chandra Bose
President,
 Indian Independence League,
 East Asia

In fact, one of the reasons why he decided to leave Germany was that he began to feel more and more uncomfortable for having to seek financial help from the German Foreign Office, and it gradually occurred to him that he would be able to raise funds from the Indians in South East Asia and pay back the debt which he had incurred in Germany and which he considered to be a loan to the Provisional Government of Free India, a loan which he wanted to pay back after independence. Just before he went to Taiwan on his fatal journey, he never forgot to transfer sums of money from a Japanese bank to Berlin, as mentioned before, as a part payment of the sums advanced by the Germans to the Azad Hind Sangh. Subhas was always from his childhood scrupulous about money transactions and it particularly hurt his sensibilities that he had to take help from foreigners.

Nevertheless, he undertook a great sea voyage to East Asia in a German submarine in the hope of being able to be (i) near to India, and (ii) amongst the Indian community in South East Asia who, he had learnt from Japanese reports, were willing to support his campaign against the British in India. His main feeling was that by being in South East Asia, he would be able to get rid of the suspicion which the British had tried to propagate all over the world that Subhas was working as a stooge of the Germans. His hope was that when he would be in South East Asia, he would be amongst his own countrymen and he would not be dependent on foreigners either for material or moral support. This hope was largely fulfilled and, on his arrival in Singapore on July 2, 1943, he immediately found himself amongst an enthusiastic Indian crowd who had been expecting his arrival since a long time.

People of Indian origin in South East Asia—businessmen and workers, clerks and lawyers, the poor and the rich—all welcomed him with open arms, for they had come to believe that with the arrival of Subhas Bose in South East Asia, a new phase of the campaign against the British would begin. Subhas Bose's predecessor, Ras Behari Basu, a well-known revolutionary had fled from India after having thrown a bomb on Lord Hardinge,

the Viceroy of India, as he was entering Delhi on an elephant soon after the announcement of Delhi as the capital of India. Ras Behari had fled to Japan and married a Japanese lady and was a protege of the famous Japanese nationalist Toyama. In Japan, there was also a small group consisting of Japanese and Indians which clustered round Basu and, throughout the years, kept up the light of Indian freedom movement alive and, when the Japanese army overran the whole of South East Asia, these people and Ras Behari Basu thought that the time had come when they would really be able to fulfil the dream, which they had cherished so long, of marching to India in order to challenge the British army. But the difficulty which Ras Behari Basu experienced was that being away for so long a time from India, he was not able to understand fully the mind of the young Indians, nor was he very familiar with the current problems. Besides, he had great difficulty in appreciating the new generation of Indians—officers and other ranks—who had joined the British Indian army and who had afterwards fallen into the hands of the Japanese as prisoners of war. Ras Behari Basu left India before the non-cooperation movement was started by Mahatma Gandhi and the upsurge of nationalism which swept the whole country between 1920 to 1942 was only a hearsay to him. He had not lived through those epochmaking years. Basu's idea of India was still the pre-World War I India, and he was unable, therefore, to understand the working of the mind and the thinking of those young Indians who rallied round the Independence of India League under Captain Mohan Singh. The generation gap was too big and as the Indian Army officers followed the British military model, it was very difficult either for the Japanese or for Ras Behari Basu to perceive clearly what these Army officers and private soldiers felt about the Japanese and the British. They had all very strong nationalist sentiments though they were in the British Indian Army, because they were greatly influenced by the nationalist movement in India itself. At the same time, as the Indian soldiers and the officers were trained by the British in the manner of British armies, they did not think very much either of

the Japanese war machine or of the Japanese themselves. There were, therefore, inevitable clashes between the prisoners of war and the organisation led by Ras Behari Basu. Differences went on piling up and, being quite out of touch with post-War India, Ras Behari Basu went on committing one mistake after another without realising that the organisation he had built up with so much care and courage was crashing because he was not able to establish his own credibility with the Indians. It was at this moment that Subhas Bose arrived on the scene.

He was well known to the Indians who had joined the British Indian Army and who were captured by the Japanese. They knew Subhas Bose not only as a young nationalist hero but also as a man who had been honored by the highest office in the country at the age of 41. His differences with Mahatma Gandhi notwithstanding, every Indian, who found himself in South East Asia, knew how great was his patriotism and when, by skill and patience, Subhas Bose began to reorganise the League and the Indian National Army, it was apparent that his arrival had worked as an electric spark to the entire Indian population in South East Asia. Subhas Bose, however, had learnt a great deal from his stay in Germany and he knew that the Great Powers, who were engaged in war, were not very seriously interested in Indian independence. He had, therefore, to proceed very cautiously and when he met General Tojo, the Japanese Prime Minister, he did not ask for too much but, in his conversations with the Japanese Prime Minister, he made it a condition, as he had earlier made it a condition with the German authorities, that the organisation and the Indian National Army, would function independently and outside the Japanese war machine. He obtained an assurance from the Japanese Prime Minister that the Japanese military authorities would not interfere with the inner working of the INA and that the administration and the training of the INA would be left entirely to Subhas Bose and his colleagues. General Tojo was a man of remarkable vision. He agreed to the conditions set by Netaji and gave him free hand to reorganise the Indian prisoners of war in South East Asia in the way he thought

would serve the Indian cause best. Subhas Bose having been assured of this support and a great deal of sympathy at the highest level, proceeded cautiously and step by step, firstly, in reorganising the League which had been much battered by internecine quarrel and, secondly, by forming a Provisional Government of Free India with its capital in Singapore. He knew that both these organisations were necessary, firstly, because even a Government in exile must have a political party behind it to give it political and popular standing and, secondly, unless there was a semblance of Government with all the paraphernalia of administration and other regular activities, it was impossible to obtain loyalty and action from other people who were not inclined to take orders from merely a political organisation. These two steps, which he took in order to boost up Indian morale in South East Asia and to prepare for his march to Burma for a confrontation with the British Indian Army in Assam, showed what a master tactician he had developed into and what talent for organisation he had acquired.

Both the League and the INA became indispensable parts of the same organisation functioning with the sole objective but, by keeping them separate, he really succeeded in winning the loyalty and support of all the Indians in South East Asia. By enforcing discipline and a sense of order, he was also able to establish a hierarchy without which, he knew that an army, not to speak of a volunteer army, could ever function properly. As he knew young Indian mind well, he knew also how delicate and difficult it was to make young Indians accept the iron discipline of a liberation army, where men and women had to be drafted without holding out any hope of a reward or profit.

Young Indians were patriotic but were they also amenable to discipline? This was the problem he had to face when he arrived in South East Asia and he solved the problem in a way which no other Indian leader could have solved, because no other Indian leader understood young Indians in the army as well as Subhas Bose did. Subhas's success in this respect was indeed unique and, by winning over the prisoners of war to the dangerous cause of

Indian freedom, he even excelled Mahatma Gandhi in his power of organisation, for even Gandhiji had never succeeded completely in breaking the resistance of Indian soldiers who still thought that they ought to be loyal to the British.

Before Subhas Bose arrived in South East Asia, 20,000 Indian soldiers and officers had already surrendered to the Japanese military authorities and were made prisoners of war by them. In the meantime, soon after the hostilities broke out in East Asia, Ras Behari Basu, who lived in Japan, had announced on the radio to Indians throughout South East and East Asia to form Independence Leagues in order to get rid of the British in India. Singapore fell in February 1942; and in June 1942 Ras Behari Basu presided over a meeting of representative Indians from all over South East Asia in Bangkok. At this meeting a resolution was passed to ask Netaji to assume the leadership of the independence movement, to be organised later in South East Asia. Subhas Bose had, however, some difficulties in leaving Germany and it was only in June 1943 that he was able to reach Japan after landing in Singapore, passing through the coasts of Africa and the Indian Ocean, to Sumatra and Penang in a very risky ninety-day journey in a German submarine from Kiel which was used by the German Navy at that time as a harbour for war vessels. Subhas did not lose much time on his arrival. In fact, at his meeting with General Tojo, Prime Minister of Japan, soon after his arrival, he was able immediately to prepare his plan to liberate India in consultation with the military advisers of the Japanese Government. He received firm assurances from the highest Japanese authorities that his venture would be fully supported; and Japan also promised to deliver arms and equipment to the INA. He was able also to set up a radio network in South East Asia in order to appeal to the people both in India and outside to give him as much help as they could to organise the INA.

After his consultation with the Japanese, he flew from Japan to Singapore on July 2, 1943. Two days later, Ras Behari Basu handed over the leadership of the freedom movement to Netaji in a memorable speech, before the assembled Indians of the Indian

Independence League from all over East Asia. Netaji, in accepting this responsibility, assured Basu that he would form a Provisional Government of Free India and that the army of liberation would be placed under its control. With this army, he said, he expected to march to India. Having installed himself as the Supreme Commander of the Indian National Army, Subhas Bose made a tour of various parts of South East Asia; for example, he visited Malaya, Thailand, Burma and French Indo-china and appealed to Indians living in these countries to come forward with monetary help and also to volunteer for the Indian National Army. The response was remarkably satisfactory and all the Indians in South East Asia gave him whole-hearted support and thousands volunteered to join the Army. On his return to Headquarters, he took action soon afterwards to put Indian Independence League in order and its headquarters were divided into seven different departments, and the League branches throughout South East Asia were also strengthened. When he was satisfied that the INA had been thoroughly reorganised and that the Indians in East Asia were ready to offer help and support for a total mobilisation of the resources for the fight, he formally established the Provisional Government of India in Singapore on October 21, 1943. Almost immediately after its establishment, the Government of Azad Hind declared war on Britain and America; and soon after the declaration of war, Netaji addressed a gathering of Indians and they took the pledge that they would sacrifice everything in their power in waging war for the liberation of India. The Government of Azad Hind established by Netaji was afterwards recognised by Japan, Germany, Italy, Croatia, Burma, Thailand, Nationalist China, the Philippines and Manchuria. A week after its formation. Netaji flew to Tokyo and was received by the Emperor of Japan with all honours due to the head of a state; and he also attended the Greater East Asia Conference held in Tokyo in the first week of November 1943. At this Conference, General Tojo announced on November 6 that Japan had decided to hand over the Andaman and Nicobar Islands to the Provisional Government of Azad Hind. The

Provisional Government established soon afterwards its authority for the first time on Indian territory. Netaji visited the Andamans on December 31, 1943, and during his visit, the two Islands were renamed ‘Shahid’ and ‘Swaraj’ Islands. After the taking-over ceremony, Netaji flew back to Bangkok; and he established soon afterwards the headquarters of the INA in Rangoon. As a result of these arrangements, there were now two headquarters—one in Rangoon and the other in Singapore. The purpose of establishing new headquarters in Rangoon was that Burma had a common frontier with India, and Netaji wanted Burma to be a base from which Indian Army could enter Indian territory and establish its authority on Indian soil.

The march to India was undertaken very soon after the shifting of Army headquarters in Rangoon and the first battle engaged by the INA with the British took place on February 4, 1944, on the Arakan front and on 18th March, 1944, the INA crossed the Burma border and, for the first time, stood on the soil of India. This day of March 21 was proclaimed by Netaji to be a national day, for it was on this day that the Indian soldiers, for the first time, re-conquered a parcel of Indian territory from British hands. Thus, we saw that within nearly nine months after his arrival in Singapore, Netaji had succeeded in organising the INA and made it into an instrument of fight against the British, so much so that the INA forces were able to penetrate into Indian territory. He had also been able to move the entire army from Malaya and Thailand up to the Indian border in Burma, a military feat considered to be remarkable having regard to bad terrain and very primitive methods of transportation. He also created the first National Bank of Azad Hind in Rangoon on April 5, 1944, and he then moved his headquarters to the front-line across the Burmese frontier.

The liberation forces were unfortunately halted within three miles of Imphal and, as they lacked air cover, they were unable to go further into Assamese territory and the British forces, under Lord Mountbatten, reinforced by air, were able successfully to stop their march. Not only that, the torrential rains of Burma,

which started just at that time, submerged the INA supply lines. Netaji ordered the retreat of forces because he did not see any hope of further combat and also in order to prepare a more elaborate attack on Imphal from a better position. But the debacle happened in June-July, 1944, and many, wounded and suffering from malaria and dysentery, had to be evacuated and sent to Mandalay and Rangoon. The tide, however, turned against the liberation army because the British, by increasing their air power and mechanised equipment, were able to smash their way through to Meikhtila and, ultimately, succeeded in reaching Rangoon. The Provisional Government of Azad Hind, therefore, decided that INA should be evacuated from Burma and the retreat began on April 24, 1945. The march back was eventful and the three weeks it took to retreat were packed with sensation and many hair-breadth escapes from the enemy fighters and through the perilous passings of the jungles and forests. Netaji reached Bangkok mid-May, 1945, a week after the surrender of Germany to Allied Forces, but the signing of Armistice by Germany did not deter Japan from continuing the war because the Japanese decided to fight on. Netaji, after the retreat, had many discussions with his colleagues. At about this time, the news came through in June 1945 that the British Viceroy of India, Lord Wavel, was trying to convince Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress leaders that they should cooperate with British in carrying on the war, in return for the inclusion of more Indians in the Viceroy's Executive Council. On hearing about the offer, Netaji flew from Bangkok to Singapore and spoke on the radio and asked the Congress leaders not to accept the offer made by the Viceroy. He argued that the British offer was meant to divert the attention of the world from the Indian problem and make it merely a domestic issue of the British Empire. He also said that the purpose of the Conservative Government to make this offer was that it hoped that by settling the Indian problem, it would be able to win the next general election. He, therefore, believed that if the Congress turned down the British offer, it would stand a better chance of getting a more liberal offer, when the British

Labour would come into power. He also pointed out that if the Congress continued the struggle, it would improve India's position with the international community and he, therefore, appealed again to them not to accept the British offer until the elections were held in Britain.

His appeal had effect and the Congress finally rejected the offer made by Lord Wavell. But, in the meantime, the United States had dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima; and Japan surrendered on August 11, soon after the declaration of war on Japan by the Soviet Union. The INA had no other alternative but to stop its activities because it could not fight any more under the circumstances created by Japanese surrender. Netaji, as a result, went back to Singapore and issued instructions to the civilian and army wings of the Government as to what they should do. The Cabinet Ministers agreed to leave Singapore and move further east. In the meantime, the surrender of Japan was officially announced on August 15 and on August 17, 1945, Netaji took a plane from Saigon and five days later, on August 22, Tokyo Radio announced that Subhas Chandra Bose had died in an air crash in Formosa on August 18, 1945, on his way to Japan. Many of those who knew Netaji were under the impression that he wanted to go to Dairen where he could cross over and contact the Russians. The paralysing news, however, was extremely depressing for those who fought for the INA. After the surrender of the Japanese in South East Asia, the INA forces were made prisoners by the British army and were brought to India where a trial was staged at the Red Fort in Delhi on the charge that they had committed high treason against the King Emperor. Eventually, the trial was given up and the members of the INA were released when Sir Stafford Cripps came out to India with fresh proposals for transfer of power from British to Indian hands.

Epilogue

IT IS PROBABLE that Subhas will become a legendary figure in our history; it is, however, certain that we will not forget him for a long time. In order, however, to understand his personality in full perspective, it seems to me that we ought to know who he was. By this, I do not mean his antecedents or the records of his public career. They are well-known because for nearly thirty years, Suhhas Bose had remained continuously prominent in the public eye. There is, however, some relation between his political life and his political beliefs in the context of the social environment in which he grew up. This relation cannot be denied because Subhas was deeply influenced by the atmosphere of the time in which he lived, and the social milieu and the political cross currents in India in the early twenties amidst which he grew up.

The first important fact of his life, if one looks at it this way, is that he belonged to the powerful Kayastha community of Calcutta. During his early struggle for recognition, this fact was of considerable importance. Some of the earliest settlers in Calcutta had amassed wealth and property during the John Company's days and dominated the social and political life of the city for nearly a century because of their financial power. The rise of the revolutionary struggle for freedom started by Gandhiji in 1920, developed suddenly into a threat to their long-established position in the city. Some of them were the oldest inhabitants of the city and their contribution to its development was considerable. Until the 'invasion' of the city by the gradually increasing middle class from the provincial towns, they were more or less the undisputed leaders of the Indian community of Calcutta. Even when, with the foundation of the British Indian Association and later, of the Indian National Congress, a large number of people from 'mofussil'

began to take part in Calcutta's civic life, their influence did not diminish much and all the men who distinguished themselves in India's capital, such as Kristodas Pal, Rajendralal Mitra and others, were born in Calcutta.

The pattern of struggle for political freedom that emerged with Gandhiji was something new to them and the all-India character of the struggle robbed them of the importance they enjoyed in the life of the Metropolis. First, it was far too revolutionary and, secondly, not confined to Calcutta and Bengal alone. The Lals, the Borals and the Mullicks, the Indian equivalent of 'two hundred families', saw red. They did not understand the movement and generally kept away from it; yet, their financial power was such that at the first municipal election of Calcutta, under the reformed Constitution, C. R. Das sought their help. This realistic approach proved to be wise and the Swarajya Party swept the election. On the other hand, as these families had survived many upheavals in the life of the city, they soon realised the strength of the upsurge and as they did not want to be left behind, they supported, though not openly but privately, those leaders of the movement with whom they had social affiliations. Thus they gave their support first to C. R. Das and then to Subhas Bose in the hope of preserving at least some of their influence which was being challenged by the appearance in the political arena of new group of men from the lower middle class, hailing often from the interior of the province. This was not characteristic of Bengal alone, for after the first setback of Chauri Chaura, when Indian nationalism reasserted itself in the form of Swarajya Party, people with money realised that it had come to stay. Hence one witnessed the curious spectacle of our well-known tycoons, edging their way slowly to the Congress platforms, in order to ensure their earthly possessions which they had acquired by being loyal to the British.

This introduction is necessary because until he emerged as a national leader and became the President of Congress, Subhas's life had followed the usual path of a Bengali nationalist. His commitment to Bengali culture was self-evident and as he grew

up in the home of a cultivated Bengali family of early 20th century, he had acquired all that was finest in that culture and his touching letters to his mother (*Patravali*) show how deeply integrated he was in life and ideology of Bengal of that period. When he joined the Non-cooperation Movement, he still did so as a Bengali patriot and that was why he could easily accept C. R. Das's leadership but left somewhat disappointed when he met Mahatma Gandhi. Poetry and literature of Bengal was impregnated with a neo-nationalism and Subhas came to the political arena with his mental and spiritual equipment of a nationalist Bengali. He soon shot into prominence and caused much 'bonivessements' to the class and society he belonged. However, the well-established Calcutta society had begun to realise that the new current of thought was going to undermine its position. The 'Bonedi' or the firmly established middle class needed someone to represent them in the turmoil that was to change India and it just happened that Subhas won their approbation. At the same time, soon after the death of Das, serious antagonism had broken out in Congress politics between the Swarajists and the No-changers which was also a fight for power between the Congressmen rooted in the social life of the city and the 'outsiders' who had 'invaded' Calcutta from the district towns. In this fight, Subhas had the support of the Calcutta families who resented the influence of the country folk in the political life of the town. All that was mental and intellectual refinement had sprung from them and one should not forget that the Tagores had laid down the law for social conduct in Bengal for half a century. It is true that Subhas had received substantial support of the revolutionary youths of the districts, but until the end, the conflict, though under the surface, remained a fight between the Capital and district towns although ideological labels such as 'Swarajists' and 'No-changers' were given to them.

With this initial scene, Subhas made his debut in politics and, although he grew more and more revolutionary in his outlook, the influence of his early environment as well as his later association, coloured vastly his political thinking. It is important to remember

that his intellectual formation took place at a time when Gandhiji was not yet the idol of the nation and when specially in Bengal, Vivekananda, although long dead, was the source of inspiration to the youth. Subhas had missed the influence which Gandhiji exercised so strongly over a whole generation, for at the time of Gandhiji's appearance in Congress politics, Subhas was already a young man of definite ideas who knew his mind and who had already found his vocation in life. He was free from the mental conflict which tormented his younger contemporaries, because they were torn between the two ideologies—of Tagore and Gandhi. Subhas knew what he was fit for and he went for it and almost always got it, whereas the youth of India in the early twenties remained afflicted with indecision. After the failure of the first Non-cooperation Movement, i.e., after Chauri Chaura, many young men drifted to Viswabharati and many others found their ways to Sabarmati and Pondicherry. Since his school days, however, Subhas had set before himself the idea of a Sanyasi-statesman, and he went right into the political fight without ever doubting the rightness of the course he had taken. Some of his best friends, like Dilip Roy and Hemanta Sarkar, did not follow him in his venture and few of his earlier comrades even adopted a way of life which was quite opposed to his. He had found something worth following in the positive assertions of Swami Vivekananda, and although Vivekananda's exhortations lacked in the idealism of Gandhi and in the profundity of philosophy of Tagore, to Subhas they seemed to have the validity of truth, for he had opted for a life of action after having rejected that of meditation and inaction.

It has been said that the popularity he began to enjoy from the very beginning of his career, rather than his own decision, had led him to militant politics. This does not seem to be fair to Subhas for he was proverbially modest and could always rise above his immediate surroundings. In fact, very few popular leaders have used their power with so much humility. Even long after the death of C. R. Das, Subhas had kept himself very much in the background allowing the elderly leaders to dominate the political scene although

he could have easily taken their place if he wanted to. Similarly, throughout his stay in Europe before the War, he seldom took advantage of his position as an outstanding nationalist leader of India, although there were occasions he could have made use of his position. His politeness towards his colleagues and the anxiety he showed constantly for their welfare, brought into relief his self-effacing nature and his remarkably human approach to his friends. Even at the height of his fame, he always remained self-possessed, kind and deeply human. He made all his major decisions, whether political or personal, entirely on his own without an eye for public applause. He was one of those rare men who could lead the masses without being strictly one of them and in whatever situation he found himself, he never lost his balance nor the sense of proportion and his own judgment of men and things.

But in what exactly consisted his greatness? Subhas was not a great orator. He could never come near to such great orators as Surendranath Banerjea, C. R. Das or Srinivasa Sastri. He spoke too slowly, his imageries were often faulty and his choice of words was far from being dynamic. Still he was effective and he could move people. This success lay only in the directness of his speech and the homeliness with which he touched unsophisticated hearts. Subhas's art of speaking was quite different and his success in that field was not unlimited.

Similarly, his intellectual range was not that of some of our national leaders; and as a busy politician, he had very little time to read or to inform himself after he left Cambridge. His mind concentrated so much on a single problem that his friends often felt embarrassed to bring up in front of him subjects of a speculative nature. It was not that he was not familiar with them but he had made up his mind at a certain stage of his life not to deal with them, because he had already made his choice in life and had shut his mind to things which were not of immediate interest and concentrated on the work he had in hand. It would be unjust, however, to say that he was insensible to the finer side of things or to the finer arts. He loved Bengali poetry and Indian music and

he was much moved by songs and his knowledge of Bengali literature was considerable. Those who can still remember his writings (in *Banglar Katha*) will admit that Subhas wrote an elegant and chaste Bengali and, in fact, he contributed a great deal to polemical and political literature of Bengal. He had also a flair for philosophical controversies; but like everything else, this too he had forgone, in order to give himself entirely to the vocation he had chosen for himself.

This vocation for him was the attainment of freedom for India; and having found what he wanted to do, he set about it without any mental reservation. The search for the vocation that befits him led him perhaps not to the discovery but to the belief that India's urgent need was to learn how to organise. India had intelligence, courage, fortitude and patience, but she lacked in the spirit of organisation, hence the will to freedom of the Indians did not result in its achievement.

The superiority of the Western world, specially of Britain over India, was its superiority in organisation only, and in nothing else. Indians were good at improvisation, he said, but they did not know yet, how to organise themselves in a way that would lead to tangible and perceptible results. Hence he considered it to be the mission of his life to organise India's national energy in a way as to lead to the maximum of results and he succeeded in being perhaps the greatest political organiser in India, second only to Mahatma Gandhi.

All problems to him appeared as problems of organisation and he judged them according to their organisational possibilities or impossibilities. That was why, although he suffered fools readily, he could not tolerate vague ideas or eccentric proposals. If an idea seemed to be devoid of practical possibilities, he rejected it without ceremony and without regret. This attitude gave him an advantage over others inasmuch as everyone who came in contact with him aspired to no other relationship with him than that of a particular type of work or the completion of a mission or a project. He thus

became the idea of action personified and everything about him centred round this single object. Even his great courtesy, his gentleness of demeanour, his touching references to one's health or the simple acts of human kindness were all parts of a great single purpose and they all emanated from his one idea of getting something done for the fulfilment of the plan he was pursuing at a given time. That was why he seemed so inaccessible to many, in spite of the great personal interest he took in them. His anxieties about his colleagues were genuine but they were not purposeless, the purpose being to harness as many men as possible—their will and their energies—into a common organisation to build up India's strength, step by step, in opposition to her scheming enemy and to finally overwhelm, outwit and destroy him. He did it in such a concentrated and singular manner that even his ardent followers found it hard to keep pace with him or his ideas.

The fact of the matter was, of course, that Subhas was not interested in persons as such. He accepted them or rejected them according to the degree of their worth in achieving an object or part of an object he was pursuing at the time. That was why it was almost impossible to win his confidence or esteem unless one had some particular work to do together with him. And it is a fact that he never relaxed and never enjoyed anything thoroughly in a spirit of abandon. Neither his mind nor his spirit was ever free from an all-consuming idea and his colleagues and co-workers had the impression that he was all the time debating within himself the problems which his ambitious project went on creating for him. That was why basically, he was a very lonely man although his loneliness never depressed others, nor did he seek any one's sympathy.

He was completely devoid of self-pity and, as becomes a man who took great risks, Subhas's one great desire in life was to face all the consequences of his action as far as possible without involving others. This very often hurt the feelings of his colleagues, for they too wanted to share his disappointments but he had moulded his character in such a pattern that he wanted to feel and make others also feel that he was the strongest of them all and,

I believe, it is for this reason that even some of his intimate co-workers felt sometimes a bit afraid of him. He naturally towered above everyone round him and men of talent who wanted to work with him often felt that he was too overpowering to allow them a personal development. Besides, as he kept his innermost secrets to himself, even those who thought that they knew him well, found afterwards that it was not true. His secrets were not necessarily of a personal nature, but he guarded them zealously because he held the view that the success of a political action depended largely on its initial secret being carefully preserved, but to his co-workers this seemed to be unjust although soon they got used to his way of doing things. He was never expansive when he was thinking of some new steps, for although Subhas was a fearless man, yet he was terribly afraid of failure.

Real greatness of Subhas, thus, lay in his capacity to organise men for some pre-determined action. It was all the more remarkable because of the conditions in India and because of national character of the Indians. Indians are so used to an unorganised living, that to most of them an organised society seems almost undesirable. By training and tradition, Indians have become strong individualists that they often fail to distinguish between communal and personal needs. To organise and shape such a people is never easy and to organise those of them who happened to be abroad during the war for diverse reasons, was even more difficult. Yet, both in Europe and East Asia, Subhas succeeded in shaping an efficient army and a well-knit political organisation to sustain this army. And he did it without dangling before them any prospect of rewards, and under painful circumstances that would have broken the patience of a much lesser man. He had to deal with the Germans and the Japanese on the one hand and, on the other, he had to overcome the lack of experience of Indian legionaries in organised political work in foreign surroundings.

He got what he wanted from the Germans and the Japanese but he was also able to inspire the Indians to give their best, so much

so, that looking back at the amount of work the Indian legionaries and the INA had put in, it seems to me now that without his driving power and his almost uncanny gift of making others work, they would have never been able to achieve even the hundredth part of all that was done. No one but Subhas could have persuaded Indian POWs to accept the drudgery and hardships of work with so much cheerfulness. No other Indian leader could have kept such a team together for a long time.

His broad understanding of men, his insight into the failings of others and his great ability to turn such failings into positive qualities, were remarkable and whatever be the judgment of history on Subhas, it would never underestimate his almost unparalleled genius for organisation. And had he chosen another career, say that of an industrialist, there is no doubt that his contribution to India's industrial renaissance would have been as great as that of a Jamshedji Tata or Sir P. C. Roy. Like them, he too had started practically on nothing except the will to show the world that Indians were also capable of doing things. And like them, he had fashioned out of neglected human beings an army of which any nation could be proud, dispelling at the same time the world-wide stigma on the inability of the Indians to fight against their real enemy. Thus, Subhas gave India the most impressive example of the ability of Indians to unite, to fight and to win.

Subhas's dynamism, however, was always leavened with a fine sense of diplomacy and that was why his success was so conspicuous. Very few Indians before him had the opportunity of conducting discussions with foreign chanceries at the highest levels, and although some inexperienced in the ways of European diplomacy, Subhas, nevertheless, met some of the shrewdest professional diplomats and came out with flying colours. The circumstances under which he was placed in Germany and Japan were not very happy to say the least, yet, by sheer superiority of his native intelligence, he dominated the situation and got what he wanted for his country without either compromising his honour or

the interests of India. Because of his close contact with international policy-making, his outlook was widened and he could speak with knowledge of world affairs. Regarding India's foreign relations, he had developed very definite ideas, for he had had very wide experiences in that field. He valued greatly all contacts with foreign countries and believed that such contacts would be beneficial, if India's foreign affairs were conducted by men with personal and practical experience of world affairs. It was a pity, he often said, that few Indians had personal experiences of countries other than England and America. Indians were too much used to seeing world events through Anglo-Saxon eyes and that was why he wanted many young Indians to live all over the world to gain experience.

He strongly believed that the foreign affairs of a country should not be conducted on an ideological basis, for no country worth the name sticks to such principles when its vital interests are involved. The inclination to judge foreign nations by their political ideologies is still strong in India, but, according to Bose, India could not afford to do so, situated as she was, geographically, in the modern world. That was also the reason why he did not hesitate to take help from the Axis powers although it was clear, in spite of his formal declaration to the contrary, that he did not sympathise with their ambitions or their ideologies. "I have done" he said to me once, "what free India would have done if she were endangered by the non-Axis powers". That was why, those of his co-workers who saw him day to day, while doing small things or big, the idea that he was a Fascist or a Nazi, never came to their mind. As a man, because he was a great Indian nationalist, they all found him always deeply human and as a leader, the most noble.

If he had any political theory, it was that of Indian nationalism, far above everything, Subhas was an Indian nationalist, and his nationalism was an integral nationalism of the kind whose exponent General de Gaulle turned out to be in France. Subhas's love for India was, no doubt, tinged with some romanticism, but he did not love India because he had acquired this love from beliefs in

some theory or other. He was completely an Indian and felt it his duty to free India from her bondage by all possible means.

Such being the basis of Subhas's life, it is difficult to analyse his political beliefs according to the categories of 'isms'. He did not shape his action in conformity with a pre-determined theory. He took first thing first and the first thing in his opinion was to get rid of the British at any price.

As to the future of India, the only thing he held necessary was a strong Central Government during the period of transition, after which the people of India were to decide for themselves what form of government they would like. Some of his political concepts may have less relevance in post-independence India, but he certainly did not lay down some immutable solution for India's problems, for the simple reason that the picture of a free India was not yet clear either in his mind or in anyone's mind.

Though Subhas Bose indicated here and there how he would like to see India governed, he never drew a definitive plan because he knew that when India would be independent, it would draw its own plans and would set up its own form of government. Judging from the type of government he had set up for the purpose of carrying on the struggle in India, it can be presumed that Bose wanted a strong central government and he was, of course, opposed to the division of the country. Brought up in the cosmopolitan atmosphere of Calcutta, Subhas Bose, though a good and cultivated Bengali, never thought of free India in provincial terms and he was profoundly convinced of fundamental unity of India and united nationhood of the Indian people. Faced with a situation which developed on the sub-continent after 1945, he might have still tried to prevent the 'vivisection' of the country, but how much he would have succeeded is today only a matter of speculation.

At any rate, as far as the future constitution of India was concerned, Subhas Bose had no definite views, for he, like many of his contemporaries, took it for granted that India was one and, in his scheme of things, Pakistan had no place at all. Even this

opinion was not sacrosanct to him, for in political matters, his way of thinking was purely empirical. He did not want to foresee a political situation which was still in the making, and, above all, he did not want to bind himself to a hard and fast formula, although he planned in advance for the realisation of a certain objective. Such plans, he believed, were liable to changes, for a liberated people, according to him, make their own laws and do not readily attach themselves to an established convention.

“India”, he said again and again, “would make history and a people who make history can never be saddled with dogmas whether social or political”. But it did not mean that he had not thought of a social programme. He had outlined such a programme in his book, *Indian Struggle: 1920-1934*, and he had remained more or less convinced of its validity although, in the changing circumstances, after independence, he would have modified it also. All this does not look like either Fascism or nearFascism, and it holds good, in spite of the fact that Subhas admired some aspects of German life. He liked the German form of military discipline although he was never a militarist himself. He liked to see people well turned out, and spruce, and that was why he felt attracted by the order and cleanliness which reigned in Germany and in the German Army. His ambition was to build an Indian Army, as efficient and as well-trained as the German Army.

A wish to have a strong Indian Army to defend Indian territory against all foreign invasions is not militarism, and, if he emphasised the value and need of a well-organised Army, it was because he knew how difficult it would be for a country like India to keep its independence after centuries of foreign rule. Similarly if he was a revolutionary, it was because he did not believe in sitting with folded arms, while a foreign government used all manners of violence against India. And in spite of his close association with some of the secret revolutionary organisations in India, he was never their leader; on the contrary, he persuaded them to adopt a really revolutionary programme which, to his mind, consisted in preparing the masses for a rising against their exploiters. It is,

therefore, necessary to make it clear that Netaji never accepted a German or any other model for India. Though bitter opponent of British rule in India, he admired the British political system, which appeared to him as the state-system of a mature people. He knew very little of Germany's past, but he admired Italy of 'Risorgimento' and Garibaldi was, for him, a great hero and it was probably because of his admiration for Garibaldi, that he named his only daughter after Anita, a life-long companion of Garibaldi in his fight for the liberation of his Italian motherland.

Thus, it seems practically impossible to classify Subhas's political loyalties according to the well-known labels of political doctrines, for he was above all an Indian nationalist and an Indian politician. His first postulate to both social and political democracies was the absence of foreign rule in India, and he did not believe that until the British rule had been finally abolished, any experiment on political systems could be undertaken in India. The most outstanding example of this difficulty, he pointed out, was the attitude adopted by the Communist Party of India which found itself obliged to ally with British Imperialism during the War, in spite of its known hostilities towards Imperialism of all kinds. The Congress, more anti-imperialist than anti-British, took an anti-British attitude in spite of its open anti-Fascist declarations, and this in spite of the fact that Britain received support of all the anti-Fascist elements in Europe. Subhas's view was that until British rule had ceased completely and until India had grown into a stable modern state, there should be a truce amongst the parties in India in order to concentrate all their energies on the fight at hand. "Ideological disputes are luxuries for a subject people", he said, and it was his genius to make others see this point of view also, for both in the Azad Hind Sangh and the Provisional Government formed by him in Singapore, there were not only members of all the communities of India but also they represented every kind of political inclinations and ideologies beginning from Communists up to Hindu revivalists. In spite of his early upbringing in an upper middle class milieu, Subhas was fully aware of the new forces in the modern world, as

well as in India, and although it is difficult to put his political views down to a neat and a well-defined political doctrine that would please a professor of political science, yet, there is not the slightest doubt that they were progressive and socialistic in their main outline.

But the mere and correct determination of his political views and programmes cannot, however, do full justice to Subhas as a man. As a man, he was even superior to the idea he lived and died for. His deep humanity, broad culture and passionate pride in being Indian were not the results of his holding a particular political view. These were things apart and part of the man himself.

No special political ideology alone could have made him as kind as he was. The unostentatious way in which he did many minor acts of kindness, could not have been the mere expressions of a political scheme. His cultivated manners reminded one of the great epoch in Indian history when we the Indians were not only free but also uninhibited. This trait in his character he inherited from the world in which he was born and from which he drew his moral and intellectual sustenance. This world was the twilight world of Bengali culture of ‘fin de siecle’, which also harboured such great Indians as Bankim Chatterjee and Tagore and which ended with Subhas Bose. From Ram Mohun to Subhas Bose there had been a continuous flow of men and women in the Eastern part of India comparable with the personalities of European Renaissance who shaped modern Europe. Subhas Bose seemed to have been the last of these Titans in India. He shared in full all the anxieties which people were undergoing in the war years.

Men, who created modern India, had never the misfortune of being in exile in foreign countries except Subhas. That is why he was also somewhat different from them, because he carried his struggle for the modernisation and the progress of India from distant lands and brought to Indian renaissance the aroma and colour of other countries and the romance of battles fought in far off regions and borders of the motherland. World figures who

resembled him in similar efforts were Mazzini and Garibaldi who too fought Italy's battle for liberation away from their homes. So did Lenin and de Gaulle, but the only cruel difference that existed between them and Subhas was, alas, the tragic fact that while all of them were able to be back in their homelands after their liberation, Subhas was not. He must have died with the bitterest thought that at the end of his life he could not see again his beloved India for whom he strove and fought so hard! His last thoughts must have been India, for his first thought every morning was also India.

How great was his love for India was brought home to me one evening when, talking of some Indian leaders, I asked him what he thought of them. Subhas listened to me carefully and kept on simply saying, either, "he will remain in history" or "his name will not be remembered in history". Today, after so many years, as I think of him again and as my mind becomes crowded with hundreds of details of contact and conversations with him, it seems to me that Subhas, too, judged himself on his ability to 'remain in history' and I believe, how, as I try to recapture many fragments of conversations with him that the criterion he employed in judging human beings was whether one has worked well enough to be remembered in the history of his country.

The question for all of us is then: Will Subhas be remembered by the generations to come ? I think he will. At least it was for this recompense that his restless soul traversed oceans and foreign lands in search of an answer to India's freedom. It is too horrible to think that he is no longer amongst us. To his colleagues he will remain ever alive, and immortal. He imposed on them his vivid personality so much so that and they at least will not forget him as long as they live, but I hope those who will come after them will also gratefully remember this magnificent man, born to be a 'grand signeur' who lived and died so that India could be great and so that men and women of our race may not have to be born into this world with the stigma of being a subject people and not free and independent as we are today.

APPENDICES

The Bose-Patel Statement

THE EVENTS OF the last thirteen years have demonstrated that a political warfare based on the principle of maximum suffering for ourselves and minimum suffering for our opponents cannot possibly lead to success. It is futile to expect that we can ever bring about a change of heart in our rulers merely through our own suffering or by trying to love them. And the latest action of Mahatma Gandhi in suspending the Civil Disobedience Movement is a confession of failure as far as the present method of the Congress is concerned. We are clearly of opinion that as a political leader Mahatma Gandhi has failed. The time has therefore come for a radical reorganisation of the Congress on a new principle and with a new method. For bringing about this reorganisation a change of leadership is necessary, for it would be unfair to Mahatma Gandhi to expect him to evolve or work a programme and method not consistent with his life-long principles. If the Congress as a whole can undergo this transformation, it would be the best course. Failing that a new party will have to be formed within the Congress, composed of all radical elements. Non-cooperation cannot be given up but the form of non-cooperation will have to be changed into a more militant one and the fight for freedom to be waged on all fronts.

Sd/- V. J. Patel

Sd/- Subhas Chandra Bose

9-5-33

Role of the Youth Movement

ON BEHALF OF the Reception Committee of the Third Session of the All-India Youth Congress, I accord you a most hearty welcome on your visit to this city of ours. The fact that the third session of the Congress is being held this year is an unmistakable indication of the growing vitality of the youth movement.*

There is probably some apprehension that this year the proceedings of the All-India Youth Congress may be somewhat over-shadowed by the deliberations of the Indian National Congress and of the All-Parties Convention. But nothing to my mind can detract from the intrinsic importance of a congregation like the Youth Congress. Without minimizing in any way the importance of political problems in our life, I would maintain that the problems of youth are vital problems; they have an importance of their own. And we who are members of the Republic of Youth attach great value and significance to them. I have no doubt that the deliberations of this Congress will be carried on with a sense of seriousness commensurate with the responsibility which has been cast on our shoulders. I have no doubt that this Congress will give a definite lead to the youth of this country on some of the most vital problems of our present-day life. I, therefore, consider it a privilege and an honour that I should be authorized by the Reception Committee to welcome you on such an important occasion.

If we cast our eyes beyond our frontiers and take a bird's eye view of the march of world events, there is one outstanding phenomenon which greets us in every land; and that is the

*Speech at the third session of the All-India Youth Congress, Calcutta, December 25, 1928

renaissance of youth. From North to South, from East to West, wherever we may happen to glance, the Youth Movement has become a reality. It is necessary for us to be clear in our own minds what the characteristics of the Youth Movement are, what are its mainsprings on the one side and its ultimate objective on the other.

Any association of youth men or women does not deserve the designation of a youth association. A social service league or a famine relief society is not necessarily a youth association. A youth association is characterized by a feeling of dissatisfaction with the present order of things, and a desire for a better order accompanied by a vision of that order. Youth movements are not reformist in outlook but revolutionary. A feeling of restlessness, of impatience with the present order, must come into existence before any youth movement can start. Personally, I do not consider such a movement to be a twentieth-century phenomenon or an accidental phenomenon. From the time of Socrates and Buddha, men have been inspired by the vision of a better world and under that inspiration have endeavoured to reconstruct society. That youth movements of the modern age are characterized by a similar vision in Italy of the Young Turk movement in Turkey, whether it is a movement in China, in Persia or in Germany, everywhere you will find the same impulse, vision and objective. Wherever the older generation of leaders have failed, youth have become self-conscious and have taken upon themselves the responsibility of reconstructing society and of guiding it on towards a better and nobler state of existence.

Friends, let us now come nearer home. It is not only the youths of Germany, Russia, Italy and China who are roused. Even in this land of lotus-eaters the awakening has come. I firmly believe that it is an awakening from within and not merely a ferment on the surface. The youth of India are no longer content with handing over all responsibility to their older leaders and sitting down with folded hands or following like dumb driven cattle. They have realized that it is for them to create a new India—free, great and powerful. They have accepted the responsibility, they have prepared

themselves for the consequences, and they are now busy schooling themselves for the great task that awaits them. At this critical juncture, it is the duty of well-wishers of India to speak out fearlessly what they think of the movement or movements going on today. It has to be analysed critically, what defects there are have to be ruthlessly exposed and the entire movement has to be guided along healthy and fruitful channels.

As I look round me today, I am struck by two schools of thought about which it is my duty to speak out openly and fearlessly. I am referring to the two schools of thought which have their centres at Sabarmati and Pondicherry. I am not considering the fundamental philosophy underlying these two schools of thought. This is not the time for metaphysical speculation. I shall talk to you today as a pragmatist, as one who will judge the intrinsic value of any school of thought not from a metaphysical point of view but from experience of its actual effects and consequences.

The actual effect of the propaganda carried on by the Sabarmati school of thought is to create a feeling and an impression that modernism is bad, that large-scale production is an evil, that wants should not be increased, that the standard of living should not be raised, that we must endeavour to the best of our ability to go back to the days of the bullock-cart, and that soul is so important that physical culture and military training can well be ignored. The actual effect of the propaganda carried on by the Pondicherry school of thought is to create a feeling and an impression that there is nothing higher or nobler than peaceful contemplation, that Yoga means *pranayama* and *dhyana*, that while action may be tolerated as good, this particular brand of Yoga is something higher and better. This propaganda has led many a man to forget that spiritual progress under the present-day conditions is possible only by ceaseless and unselfish action, that the best way to conquer nature is to fight her, and it is weakness to seek refuge in contemplation when we are hemmed in on all sides by dangers and difficulties.

It is the passivism, not philosophic but actual, inculcated by these schools of thought against which I protest. In this holy land

of ours Ashrams are not new institutions and ascetics and Yogis are not novel phenomena; they have held and they will continue to hold an honoured place in society. But it is not their lead that we shall have to follow if we are to create a new India, at once free, happy and great.

Friends, you will pardon me if in a fit of outspokenness I have trod on your sentiments. As I have just said, I do not for one moment consider the fundamental philosophy underlying the two schools of thought but the actual consequences from a pragmatic point of view. In India we want today a philosophy of activism. We must be inspired by robust optimism. We have to live in the present and adapt ourselves to modern conditions.

We can no longer live in an isolated corner of the world. When India is free, she will have to fight her modern enemies with modern methods, both in the economic and in the political spheres. The days of the bullock-cart are gone and gone for ever. The free world must prepare itself for any eventuality as long as the whole world does not accept whole-heartedly the policy of disarmament.

I am not one of those who in their zeal for modernism forget the glories of the past. We must take our stand on our past. India has a culture of her own which she must continue to develop along her own distinctive channels. In philosophy, literature, art and science we have something new to give to the world which the world eagerly awaits. In a word, we must arrive at a synthesis. Some of our best thinkers and workers are already engaged in this important task. We must resist the cry of "Back to the Vedas" on the one side, and on the other side the meaningless craze of modern Europe for fashion and change. It is difficult to restrict a living movement within proper bounds, but I believe that if the pioneers and the leaders of the movement are on the whole on the right track, things will take proper shape in due time.

Friends, one word more and I have done. The present year is a landmark not only in the history of our political movement but also in the history of the Indian Youth Movement. I hope and pray

that this session will give a bold and definite lead to the youth of this country. We are fortunate today in welcoming as our President one who needs no introduction to the youth of this country, Mr. Nariman of Bombay. Mr. Nariman may be more intimately known, loved and respected by youths in Western India, but it is also a fact that he is known, loved and respected by youths in other parts of the country as well. We have during the last few years followed his career and activity with the closest interest, and it is a privilege for us to be able to welcome him in our midst. Under his able guidance and leadership, we shall have a most successful session.

Towards Complete Independence

BEFORE I PROCEED to lay my case I take this opportunity of conveying my cordial and hearty thanks to Mahatma Gandhi for coming forward to move a resolution which declares Swaraj to mean complete independence. But I move this amendment because I believe that the programme laid down by his resolution is not such as to carry us towards the goal of complete independence. My amendment is consistent with the goal, and in keeping with the spirit of the times. I have no doubt it will find favour with the younger generation in this country, if not now at least in the next Congress.*

Mine is a programme of all-round boycott. I do not think it will be of any use to take up one item in the programme of boycott and leave out others. It will not be consistent with our creed of independence to go and practise in the law courts. It will not be consistent either to enter local bodies, some of which, like the Calcutta Corporation, require the oath of allegiance to be taken. There is another reason why you should give them all up. The task before us is so arduous, and the responsibility on our shoulders is so great, that we shall have to concentrate our whole time and energy on the programme of work. I should like to submit at this stage, that if you are not prepared to go in for complete boycott, it will be no use to boycott the Councils only. Let us be consistent. Let us be for complete boycott or none at all. I am an extremist and my principle is—all or none. If I am to advocate a policy of the capture of public bodies I would like to capture every public body. If we are to boycott at all, why not boycott completely and concentrate our attention and energy on some other programme?

*Speech at the Lahore session of the Congress. December 1929

Therefore I would earnestly plead for the acceptance of my amendment. I know public opinion in India today requires it.

Now a word or two on Mahatmaji's resolution. In the preamble, you are asked to endorse the action of the Working Committee in subscribing to the Delhi manifesto.* I am not prepared to advise anyone to do it. Again, are you prepared to accept the reference to the Round Table Conference? I would not call it a round table. It is certainly not round. I could call it square. A round table conference is a conference between two belligerent parties, between plenipotentiaries representing opposite sides. I ask you whether the people of India are invited to send any of their representatives with full powers to negotiate with the representatives of the British Government. Are we assured that the conclusions reached at this conference are to be ratified by both parties? Are we sure that the conclusions of the conference are not to go up for reconsideration before the British Parliament?

You know that when the treaty was drawn up between Britain and South Africa, the conclusions reached at the conference of both the parties were regarded as sacred by both. I know for a fact that in the case of the South African constitution drawn up at the conference, in spite of its grammatical errors, it had to be ratified by the British Government, and the British Parliament could not even correct those grammatical errors. That is what a round table conference means. What is the character of the conference that has been offered to India? The Simon Commission and paraphernalia are to be there, and the conclusions of conference are to go before the Parliament. It is not merely the people of European Chambers of Commerce and the Ruling Chiefs. Is there a fight between the British Government on the one hand, and the European Chambers

*The manifesto was issued by the All Parties Conference convened at Delhi by the Congress President, Pandit Motilal Nehru. It welcomed the Viceroy's Prononucement of October 31, 1929, which held out the prospect of Dominion Status, and offered cooperation in evolving a Dominion Constitution for India, Subhas Bose and a few others dissociated themselves from the manifesto.

and Ruling Chief's on the other? Is there any fight proceeding between Government and the loyalists? I know of no such fight. When there are these bodies to send in their representatives to the conference, I say it is not round table conference. But, unfortunately, people in this country insist on calling it so and the Britishers are equally insistent on not calling it a round table conference.

One argument more and I have done. The resolution refers the constructive programme as the method whereby we have to achieve the political emancipation of India. I would like the House to consider whether the constructive programme, which the Congress has been pursuing for the last few years, is something which is sufficient to enable us to reach the goal of complete independence. No doubt there is a reference to civil disobedience in the resolution. But I submit that the civil disobedience will never come until we can organize the workers and peasants and depressed classes on their specific grievances. If my programme is adopted, it will be sufficiently effective for us to march on the road to independence. I appeal to the supporters of the resolution to note the altered circumstances and feelings of the people, particularly the younger generation, and accept my motion.

Why I Resigned

THE VOTING AT the last Presidential election was unexpected in many quarters. It indicated how the mind of the general public and of Congressmen in particular was working at the time. In my election appeal, I had stressed two principles to uphold which I would strive my utmost, viz., democracy within the Congress and resistance to the Federal Scheme. There was no reflection at all either against Mahatma Gandhi or his principles or policy in any of my statements. Nevertheless, after the result was declared, Mahatmaji issued a statement declaring that the defeat of Dr. Pattabhi was his own defeat. This came as an utter surprise to everybody. Those Congressmen who had faith In Mahatmaji personally, but not in the High Command, were affected by this statement and withdrew their support from me. There is no doubt that a large majority of the Congressmen who disliked the High Command did not want to give up Mahatma Gandhi.*

When I met Mahatma Gandhi at Wardha on February 15, he suggested that I should form a new Working Committee, without the old members who followed the High Command. We had a long discussion on the question of a homogeneous vs. a composite cabinet. Towards the end of our conversation I said that I would try my best to persuade Sardar Patel and others to remain on the Working Committee. Mahatmaji said that he had no objection if I could persuade them to do so.

My unfortunate illness intervened and I could not meet the members of the Working Committee when they met at Wardha for

*Excerpts from speech at Hazara Park, Calcutta, on May 16, 1939, explaining the reasons for his resignation a week earlier from Presidentship of the Congress

the meeting on February 22. On that day they sent in their resignation. What happened thereafter at Tripuri is too fresh in everybody's mind to need renarrating. I shall only say this, that it is seriously claimed on behalf of the High Command that there was no obstruction on their part at Tripuri.

After the Tripuri Congress, I was too ill to meet Mahatma Gandhi. He wanted me to go to Delhi and stay there, but my doctors thought that that was not possible. They sent a long telegram to Mahatmaji explaining my condition and suggested that we should try correspondence instead. About a fortnight later when I was somewhat better and I found that our correspondence was not leading to a settlement, I became eager for a personal discussion with him. I was so frantic in my desire to meet him that I was prepared to defy the doctors and go to Delhi for a couple of days. Unfortunately, Mahatmaji had to leave for Rajkot suddenly and we could not meet.

Then came our meeting in Calcutta on April 27. Mahatmaji's position was virtually the same as at Wardha on February 15, and as he had consistently adopted in his letters to me in March and April he wanted me to appoint a new Working Committee leaving out the members who had resigned. For reasons which I detailed in my letters to him and in my statements before the All India Congress Committee on April 29, I could not accept his advice. Such a Committee would not have commanded Mahatmaji's confidence and would have, therefore, militated against the requirements of Pandit Pant's resolution. Moreover, it would have been contrary to my own views, because I believed in the principle of a composite cabinet as being in the best interest of the country. Consequently, I repeatedly requested Mahatmaji in my letters and my talks in Calcutta to undertake the responsibility vested in him by the Tripuri Congress and announce the personnel of the Working Committee.

Any decision of his would have been binding on me. When in Calcutta he finally declined to undertake this task we arrived at deadlock. There appeared no other alternative but to place the matter before the All India Congress Committee. At this juncture

**The manifesto was issued by the All Parties Conference convened at

it was suggested that I should discuss the matter with Dr. Rajendra Prasad and other members of the old Congress Working Committee and endeavour to arrive at an arrangement as to the personnel of the new Committee. I told Gandhiji that I would gladly do so. If this attempt had succeeded I would have placed our informal agreement before the AICC for formal ratification. But unfortunately we could not arrive at a settlement. The question now is: why did we fail and who is responsible for the failure?

Negotiations commenced first with Dr. Rajendra Prasad. I suggested that four new members should be taken on the Committee and I suggested four names. My proposal assured a majority in the Working Committee to the members who had resigned, but provided at the same time for fresh blood. After some discussion at Sodepur we moved to Maulana Abul Kalam Azad's residence for a further talk. There I was told that the names I had suggested were not acceptable. Some other names were proposed instead and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's name was suggested for the office of the General Secretary. I warmly welcomed the idea and pressed Panditji to accept it. Before we could arrive at a definite conclusion, we again adjourned for a discussion with Mahatmaji.

When we resumed the thread of our discussion at Sodepur we were faced with an entirely new proposal, viz., that the old Working Committee should be reappointed en bloc. I had gathered from our earlier talks that there was no serious objection to the principle of having four new members and that the disagreement was about the names only. I was naturally staggered when this new suggestion was mooted and was supported by Gandhiji. I was told that some time later two vacancies would occur and two new members could be taken in their places. On further enquiry I was told that that was the maximum number of new members I could have. I wanted to know if these two new members could be appointed right at the beginning, but the reply was in the negative... To clarify the position further, I enquired if, in the two vacancies which would occur later on, my nominees would be acceptable to them, and I suggested

two names in this connection. Both these names were turned down. Then I inquired if out of the two new members, I could have a second Secretary of my choice who could be stationed in Calcutta. I told them that formerly there used to be three Secretaries and I proposed to have two this year—one to be stationed at Allahabad and the other at Calcutta. This was absolutely necessary in order to help me in my work. Once again my proposal was turned down.

When we reached this stage in our negotiations I told Mahatmaji that it was quite clear that in no single detail was my proposal acceptable to the others. In the total absence of the spirit of accommodation on the other side, I did not see how we could work together in future. I had no desire to remain a dummy President, or to hang on to office at any cost. I would, therefore, place my resignation in the hands of the All India Congress Committee and thereby enable them to take steps to elect a new President and a new Working Committee. I have no doubt in my mind that in submitting my resignation I adopted the right course.

It was not possible for me to appoint a purely Leftist cabinet not only because that was against my conviction, but also because it would have been in contravention of the Pant resolution which I had previously declared I would implement. I should add in this connection that I had explicitly asked Mahatmaji if he would empower me to announce before the AICC that a Leftist cabinet of my choice commanded his implicit confidence—in case I accepted his advice regarding a homogeneous Leftist cabinet and gave effect to that advice. Mahatmaji could not empower me to do so; consequently the appointment of a homogeneous Leftist cabinet would have amounted to an open defiance of the Tripuri Congress resolution.

As I have repeatedly declared, my resignation was decided upon in an entirely helpful spirit and, in my view, will prove to be in the best interest of the country. Self-respect, honour and duty towards my country demanded that I should resign, after having made all possible attempts to reach an honourable compromise and to avert a crisis within the Congress.

The Cripps Mission

THIS is Subhas Chandra Bose, who is still alive, speaking to you over the ‘Azad Hind’ Radio. British news agencies have spread all over the world the report that I died in an aeroplane crash on my way to Tokyo to attend an important conference there. Ever since I left India, last year, British propaganda agencies have from time to time given contradictory reports of my whereabouts, while newspapers in England have not hesitated to use uncomplimentary language about me. The latest report about my death is perhaps an instance of wishful thinking. I can imagine that the British Government would, at this critical hour in India’s history, like to see me dead since they are now trying their level best to win India over to their side for the purpose of their imperialistic war.*

I have not before me the full particulars of the aeroplane disaster referred to above. I cannot, therefore, say if it was the result of sabotage on the part of our enemy. In any case, I beg to offer my respectful homage to the memory of those who lost their lives in that tragic event. Their names will be written in letters of gold in the history of our struggle for independence.

I have considered very carefully the offer of the British Government to India and the radio speech of Sir Stafford Cripps in that connection. I feel perfectly convinced that it is now quite clear that Sir Stafford has gone to India to try the agelong policy of British imperialism—‘divide and rule’. Many people in India did not expect Sir Stafford Cripps to play a role which might very well have been reserved for a Conservative politician like Mr. Amery. Sir Stafford has himself assured us that the terms offered to India are, in his opinion, the soundest and the best, and

* Broadcast from Azad Hind Radio, Germany, March 25, 1942

that the members of the British Cabinet were all unanimous over these proposals.

This affords one further proof that, in Britain, all party differences disappear when the question of India comes up. Sir Stafford has told us that India is a sub-continent inhabited by many races and peoples. I would like to remind him that India was unified under the empire of Asoka the Great, several centuries before the Christain era—more than 1,000 years before England was unified.

Britain has, in other parts of her Empire, for instance in Ireland and Palestine, used the religious issue in order to divide the people. She has been utilizing in India for that same purpose not only this issue but other imperial weapons like the Indian Princes, depressed classes, etc. Now Sir Stafford is in India to use the same instruments for imperialistic ends. It is no less striking that Sir Stafford is applying the old imperialist policy of working for compromise with one section of the people while simultaneously suppressing the other. That is why on the one side Sir Stafford is conferring with one set of politicians, while on the other the fearless and uncompromising fighters for independence are safely lodged behind prison bars. The Indian people are fully aware of this nefarious policy of British politicians. I have no doubt that the spirit of our freedom-fighters will hurl down the prison walls and inspire the people of India to know that this is an insult to India's self-respect and honour.

As the London paper, the *Daily Telegraph*, has remarked Sir Stafford's proposals contain nothing that is fundamentally new. The essence is Dominion Status within the Empire, which will be realized only when the war is over. But according to the terms of the offer, the speech of Sir Stafford Cripps, and the comments of English papers like the *Manchester Guardian*, it is quite clear that the real intention of the British Government is to split India into a number of States, just as Ireland was split up at the end of the last war. I am doubtful whether India will even look at such an offer. Indians are by nature hospitable, and Sir Stafford will be

committing a grievous mistake if he interpreted such hospitality to mean the acceptance of his offer.

Sir Stafford reached the height of imperialist hypocrisy when, at a press conference at Delhi, he remarked that Indians have not been able to produce an agreed constitution. But the Indian people know from their bitter experience that only the British Government is responsible for the corruption and bribery in India. The Indian people are, therefore, convinced that they can no longer hope to win their freedom by discussion or argument, propaganda and passive resistance, but must now resort to other methods that are more effective and powerful.

Sir Stafford also mentioned that while the war is going on, a new constitution cannot be framed for India, and hence the inauguration of Dominion Status will begin on the termination of the war. I may remind Sir Stafford Cripps that, as early as October 1939, I replied to the British Government by suggesting that a Provisional National Government, commanding the confidence of the majority of the people, should be set up at once. This Provisional National Government could be made responsible to the present Indian Legislative Assembly. In other words, the Provisional National Government could be made responsible to the elected members of the Indian Assembly. This suggestion was first of all put forward by me on behalf of the Forward Bloc of the Congress, and it being practicable and reasonable, the official Congress Committee also adopted it as their own demand. The fact, however, is that the British Government is not ready to part with power at the present moment. By raising the issue of the minorities or of the Princes or of the so-called depressed classes, they can at any time find a plea that Indians are not united. Sir Stafford must be living in a fool's paradise if he thinks that by making such hopeless offers, he can satisfy India's hunger for freedom. In the last World War, with the help of India, the war was won by England but India's reward was further suppression and massacre. India has not forgotten those episodes, and she will see that the present golden opportunity is not lost.

Since the beginning of this century, the British Government has been using another organization as a counter-blast to the Congress in order to reject its demands. It has been using the Muslim League for this purpose, because that party is regarded as pro-British in its outlook. In fact, British propaganda has tried to create the impression that the Muslim League is almost as influential a body as the Congress, and that it represents the majority of India's Muslims. This, however, is far from the truth. In reality there are several influential and important Muslim organizations which are thoroughly nationalist. Moreover, of the 11 provinces in British India, out of which only four have a majority of Muslims, only one, the Punjab, has a Cabinet which may be regarded as a Muslim League Cabinet. But even the Punjab Premier is strongly opposed to the main programme of the Muslim League, namely the division of India. But even then it is said that the majority of the Muslims will not stand for Indian independence. As far as the defence of India is concerned, it is stated in the British proposals that, so long as the war lasts, the full military control of India will be directly in the hands of Britain, not even in the hands of the Viceroy or the Commander-in-Chief in India. By this policy, Britain wants to achieve a two-fold purpose. She desires, on the one hand, to utilize to the fullest extent India's resources for the whole Empire, and, on the other, to force thereby the enemies of Britain to attack Britain's military base in India, so that the Indian people may be provoked into voluntarily entering the war as Britain's ally.

I would like to affirm, with all the emphasis at my command, that all the pro-British Indians who are participating in Britain's war will alone be responsible if the war comes ultimately to India. I would like further to warn my countrymen that Britain's sole object now is to drag the Indian people into the war. It has been a successful game of the British people to get other nations involved in the war. Up to the present time they have been carrying out glorious retreats and successful evacuations. Recently they have adopted a novel policy of burning and destroying everything

before taking to their heels. If the British Government apply these scorched-earth tactics to their own country, that is no concern of ours. But I have every reason to believe that they have decided to apply these scorched-earth tactics in Ceylon and India, should the war come there. Therefore, participation in Britain's war will not only hinder Britain's defeat and overthrow, but will also delay the attainment of independence for Indians.

The ‘Quit India’ Movement

COMRADES! SINCE I spoke to you last, about two weeks ago, the movement in India has been continuing with unabated vigour, and has been spreading like wild fire from the towns to the countryside. The British propaganda machinery throughout the month has tried to give the impression that the campaign is now subsiding and that things are quietening down. But this attempt has completely failed, because in the same breath the BBC and its agents have given, or rather have been forced to give, news of more shooting on unarmed men and women all over the country. I can assure you that in the year of grace 1942, India can no longer be isolated from the rest of the world, however much Britain may try to draw a veil over that land. As a matter of fact, every bit of news regarding India’s national struggle, every incident in Indian towns and villages, every case of shooting, whether in Ramnad or in Wardha, in Bikrampore or in Lucknow, is immediately flashed all over the world, is broadcast over the radio and published in the Press in all those countries that are either hostile to the Allied Powers or are neutral. Comrades, I know very well how in all the previous campaigns we were hard put to it to inform the outside world about the happenings in India and about the atrocities committed by British Imperialists. Today the problem does not exist, and it is my pleasant task to keep the outside world informed about all events in India and to secure all the sympathy and help that India may need in her hour of trial. If today you could see with your own eyes and hear with your own ears all that is being propagated by your friends abroad about India’s epic struggle, you would realize the measure of sympathy that

India is receiving from the enemies of British Imperialism, and this sympathy for India is bound to grow in volume and intensity as British terror and brutality increases. The more we suffer and the more we sacrifice in the pursuit of our national freedom, the more will India's prestige go up in the eyes of the world.

I should like to tell you further while we have gained the moral sympathy of public opinion throughout the world, it is also possible for us to obtain from abroad any help that we may need for our emancipation. Therefore, in the fight against all the modern forms of terror and brutality, if you feel overwhelmed at any time and if you desire your friends abroad to give you the hand of assistance, you have only to say so. But these friends, who are anxious to see India free, will not offer their help to you, so long as you do not need it, and for our national honour and self-interest, we should not ask for any assistance so long as we can do without it.

In this connection, I would appeal to you once again to trust fully your countrymen abroad who are working heart and soul with you for the speedy liberation of India. We are today the custodians of India's national honour, the unofficial ambassadors of free India. As at home, so also abroad, we stand, always for Independence, and we shall never permit vital encroachments on our national sovereignty by any foreign power.

Do not be carried away by ideological considerations; do not bother about the internal politics of other countries, which is no concern of ours. Believe me when I say that the enemies of British Imperialism are our friends and allies. It is to their interest to see the British Empire broken up and India once again free. And they know very well that so long as India remains under the British yoke, there can be no victory for them and there can be no peace. In the political field, I should be the last man to expect foreign Powers to sympathize with us if it were not in their own interest to do so.

Comrades, you must have observed how during the last few months the British Empire has been passing through its darkest

hours. Gone are the days when London was the metropolis of the world. Gone are the days when kings and statesmen had to wend their way to London in order to have their problems solved. Gone are the days when the American President had to come to Europe to meet the British Prime Minister. As an English poet, Tennyson, has himself said, "The old order changes yielding place to new, and God fulfils himself in many ways." Consequently, the British Prime Minister has now to run to New York and Washington, and Americans in Britain are declared to be outside the jurisdiction of British laws. Thus, Britain and her Empire are fast becoming a colony of Roosevelt's 'New Empire'. But India has no desire to remain in any empire, and she must, therefore, now fight the old imperialism as well as the new. The most interesting phase of the metamorphosis that has overtaken the British Empire is the fact that the High Priest of Imperialism, the arch-enemy of Indian nationalism, the sworn opponent of all forms of socialism, the British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, has had to swallow all his former imperialist pride and present himself at the gates of the Kremlin in Moscow.

Is it not significant that in his desperation this representative of British imperialism should do everything else, but under no circumstances will he think of recognizing India's independence? India is the jewel of the British Empire, and in order to keep this jewel the British people will fight to the last. The Indian people, therefore, and particularly the leaders, should banish all hopes that Britain will accede to India's demands, and should carry on the struggle till the last Britisher is expelled from India. In the last days of our campaign there will be much suffering and massacre. But that is the price of liberty and it has to be paid. It is but natural that in its last hours the British lion will bite hard, but it is after all the bite of a dying lion, and we shall survive it.

In this critical hour our strategy should consist in continuing the fight for our independence regardless of the consequences. The British Empire will soon collapse and break up as a result of shattering defeats in all the theatres of war. And when the final

dismemberment of the Empire takes place, power will automatically come into the hands of the Indian people. Our final victory will come as a result of our efforts alone. Consequently, it does not matter in the least if we in India suffer temporary setbacks, specially when we are confronted with machine-guns, bombs, tanks and aeroplanes. Our task is to continue the national struggle in spite of all obstacles and setbacks till the hour of liberation arrives.

There is no cause to be depressed because the leaders are imprisoned. On the contrary, their sufferings will serve as a perpetual inspiration to the entire nation. Moreover, those who are now away from the field of action have given you the plan that has to be executed by you now.

Comrades, I have already assured you that whatever I have been doing abroad is in accordance with the wishes of a very large section of my countrymen. I will not do anything which the whole of India will not wholeheartedly endorse. Ever since I left home I have remained in intimate contact with my countrymen at home through more channels than one, in spite of all the efforts of the Intelligence Bureau of the Government of India and the British Secret Service. During the last few months you have had proof of my close contact with my countrymen in India and many of you know by now how you can communicate with me whenever you so desire. I may now tell you that it is no longer possible for the British to prevent my going to India or getting out whenever I wish to do so.

At the present moment all the countries that are being suppressed or dominated by Britain are either in a state of revolt or are preparing for one. If we in India continue our struggle we shall not only effect our emancipation speedily, but will also expedite the liberation of all countries exploited and dominated by Britain. On the other hand, if the Indian people remain inactive, the enemies of Britain will take the initiative in expelling the British from India. The British Empire is in any case doomed, and the only

question is as to what will happen to us when its final dissolution takes place. Shall we obtain our freedom as a right from other powers or shall we win it by our own effort?

I would request Mr. Jinnah, Mr. Savarkar, and all those leaders, who still think of a compromise with the British, to realize once for all that in the world of tomorrow there will be no British Empire. All those individuals, groups or parties who now participate in the fight for freedom will have an honoured place in the India of tomorrow. The supporters of British imperialism will naturally become non-entities in a free India. I will appeal earnestly to all parties and groups to consider this and to think in terms of nationalism and anti-imperialism, and to come forward and join the epic struggle that is going on now. I appeal to the progressive elements of the Muslim League, with some of whom I have had the privilege of co-operating in the work of the Calcutta Corporation in 1940. I appeal to the brave Majlis-i-Ahrar, the Nationalist Muslim Party of India that started the Civil Disobedience campaign in 1939 against Britain's war effort before any other party did so. I appeal to the Jamiat-ul-Ulema, the old representative organization of the Ulemas or the Muslim divines of India, led by that distinguished patriot and leader Mufti Khifayat Ullah. I appeal to the Azad Muslim League, another important organization of the nationalist Muslims of India. I appeal to the Akali Dal, the leading nationalist Sikh party of India. And last but not the least I appeal to the Praja party of Bengal, which commands the confidence of that province and is led by well-known patriots. I have no doubt that if all these organizations join in this struggle, the day of India's liberation will be drawn nearer.

The campaign that is now going on in India may be described as non-violent guerrilla warfare. In this guerrilla war the tactics of dispersal have to be employed. In other words, we should spread out our activities all over the country so that the British police and military may not be able to concentrate their attack on one point. In accordance with the principles of guerrilla war, we should also be as mobile as possible and should move continuously

from place to place. The authorities should never be able to predict where our activities will emerge next.

Friends, as you are aware, I have been through each of the campaigns between 1921 and 1940, and I know the cause of their failure. I have now had the opportunity of taking expert advice with regard to the tactics of guerrilla warfare, and I am in a position to offer you some suggestions as to how this present campaign should be brought to a victorious end. The object of this non-violent guerrilla campaign should be a two-fold one. Firstly, to destroy war production in India, and, secondly, to paralyze the British administration in the country. Keeping these objects in view, every section of the community should participate in the struggle.

Firstly, you should stop paying all taxes that directly or indirectly bring revenue to the Government. Secondly, workers, in all industries should either launch a 'stay-in' strike or try to hamper production by conducting a 'go-slow' campaign inside the factories. They should also carry out sabotage with such methods as the removing of nuts and bolts in order to impede production. Thirdly, students should organize secret guerrilla bands for carrying oil sabotage in different parts of the country. They should also invent new ways of annoying the British authorities, for example, burning stamps, etc. in post offices, destroying British monuments, and so on. Fourthly, women, and especially students, should do underground work of all kinds, either as secret messengers or by providing shelter for the men who fight. Fifthly Government officials who are prepared to help the campaign should not resign their posts, but those in Government offices and in war industries should give all available information to fighters outside, and should try to hamper production by working inefficiently. Sixthly, servants who are working in the houses of Britishers should be organized for the purpose of giving trouble to their masters, for example by demanding higher salaries, cooking and serving bad food and drinks, etc. Seventhly, Indians

should give up all business with British banks, firms, insurance companies, etc. Eighthly, listen to the broadcasts of Col. Britton in the European Service of the BBC and apply the Colonel's tactics to the Indian situation.

For the general public I also suggest the following activities:

- (a) Boycott of British goods, including burning of British stalls and Government stores.
- (b) Total boycott of all Britishers in India, and of those Indians who are pro-British.
- (c) Holding of public meetings and demonstrations in spite of official prohibition.
- (d) Publishing of secret bulletins, and setting up of secret radio stations.
- (e) Marching to the houses of British Government officials and demanding their departure from India.
- (f) Organizing of processions for entering and occupying government offices, secretariat buildings, law courts, etc., with a view to hampering the administration.
- (g) Arranging to punish police officers and prison officials who oppress and persecute the people.
- (h) Erecting barricades in the streets where there is a likelihood of attack from the police and the military.
- (i) Setting fire to government offices and factories which are working for war purposes.
- (j) Interrupting postal, telegraph and telephone communication as frequently as possible and in different places.
- (k) Interrupting railway, bus and tram services, whenever there is a possibility of hampering the transport of soldiers or of war material.
- (l) Destroying police stations, railway stations and jails in isolated places.

Comrades, I can assure you that as soon as this programme is put into operation, the administrative machinery can be brought to a standstill. In this connection, I must remind you that in non-violent guerrilla campaign the peasantry always plays a decisive part. I am glad to observe that in several provinces—in Bihar and in the Central Provinces—the peasants are already in the forefront. I earnestly hope that Swami Sahajanand Saraswati and other peasant leaders, who together with the Forward Bloc started the fight long before Mahatma Gandhi, will now lead the campaign to a victorious conclusion. I will appeal to Swami Sahajanand and the leaders of the Kisan Movement to come forward and fulfil their leading role in the last phase of the fight.

We want Swaraj for the masses, Swaraj for the workers and the peasants. It is, therefore, the duty of the workers and the peasants to emerge as the vanguard of the national army at a time when the future of India is being made. It is the law of nature that those who fight for liberty and win it will retain power and responsibility. It is very encouraging, friends, to find that the people of the Indian States have begun to participate in this all-India struggle. Reports to the effect have already come from Baroda, Mysore and Hyderabad, and I am confident that the day is not far off when the States people will line up with the people of British India and form a common front against the combined forces of British Imperialism and the Indian Princes.

Most gratifying of all is the news that the clarion call of liberty has reached the ears and the hearts of our soldiers at home and abroad. They have no doubt been court-martialled characteristic British brutality. But the fire is spreading from one place to another. A number of soldiers have voluntarily deserted to join the Axis forces in Egypt and they are being welcomed with open arms by them. All the Indian fighting units have been withdrawn from the El Alamein front, as being unreliable. No wonder some supporters of British Imperialism have been brought up from India in order to impress the Indian troops. But their efforts have so far

failed. I will be able to keep the outside world informed of all the facts of the Indian situation so as to secure from the enemies of Britain all the help that India may now need.

In conclusion I must point out that the campaign in India should be carried out for weeks and if necessary for months. If the non-violent guerrilla war should continue sufficiently long, freedom will come because British Imperialism will ultimately break down owing to the cumulative effect of defeats sustained on different fronts. Do not forget for one moment that the British Empire is now on its last legs.

At the same time, be prepared for every suffering because the apostles of freedom and democracy and the authors of the Atlantic Charter may do their very worst in the days to come. Before dawn comes the darkest hour. Be brave and continue the struggle, for freedom is at hand. Let your slogans be 'Now or Never', 'Victory or Death', 'Inquilab Zindabad'.

To Delhi, To Delhi!

SOLDIERS OF INDIA'S Army of Liberation! Today is the proudest day of my life. Today it has pleased Providence to give me the unique privilege and honour of announcing to the whole world that India's Army of Liberation has come into being. This army has now been drawn up in military formation on the battlefield of Singapore—which was once the bulwark of the British Empire. This is not only the Army that will emancipate India from the British yoke, it is also the Army that will hereafter create the future national army of Free India. Every Indian must feel proud that this Army—his own Army—has been organized entirely under Indian leadership and that when the historic movement arrives, under Indian leadership it will go to battle.

There are people who thought at one time that the Empire on which the sun did not set was an everlasting empire. No such thought ever troubled me. History had taught me that every empire has its inevitable decline and collapse. Moreover I had seen, with my own eyes, cities and fortresses that were once the bulwarks but which became the graveyards of by-gone empires. Standing today on the graveyard of the British empire, even a child is convinced that the almighty British empire is already a thing of the past.

When France declared war on Germany in 1939 and the campaign began, there was but one cry which rose from the lips of German soldiers—"To Paris, To Paris!" When the brave soldiers of Nippon set out on their march in December 1941 there was but one cry which rose from their lips—"To Singapore, To Singapore!" Comrades! Soldiers! Let your battle-cry be—"To Delhi, To Delhi!"

*Speech at a military review of the Indian National Army, July 5, 1943

How many of us will individually survive this war of freedom, I do not know. But I do know this, that we shall ultimately win and our task will not end until our surviving heroes hold the victory parade on another graveyard of the British empire—the Lal Kila or Red Fortress of ancient Delhi.

Throughout my public career, I have always felt that though India is otherwise ripe for independence in every way, she has lacked one thing, namely an army of liberation. George Washington of America could fight and win freedom, because he had his army. Garibaldi could liberate Italy, because he had his armed volunteers behind him. It is your privilege and honour to be the first to come forward and organize India's national army. By doing so, you have removed the last obstacle in our path to freedom. Be happy and proud that you are the pioneers, the vanguard, in such a noble cause. Let me remind you that you have a two-fold task to perform. With the force of arms and at the cost of your blood you will have to win liberty. Then, when India is free, you will have to organize the permanent army of Free India whose task it will be to preserve our liberty for all time. We must build up our national defence on such an unshakable foundation that never again in our history shall we lose our freedom.

As soldiers, you will always have to cherish and live up to the three ideals of faithfulness, duty and sacrifice. Soldiers who always remain faithful to their nation, who are always prepared to sacrifice their lives, are invincible. If you, too, want to be invincible, engrave these three ideals in the innermost core of your hearts.

A true soldier needs both military and spiritual training. You must, all of you, so train yourselves and your comrades that even soldier will have unbounded confidence in himself, will be conscious of being immensely superior to the enemy, will be fearless of death, and will have sufficient initiative to act on his own in any critical situation should the need arise. During the course of the present war, you have seen with your own eyes what wonders scientific training, coupled with courage, fearlessness and

dynamism, can achieve. Learn all that you can from this example, and build up for Mother India an absolutely first-class modern army.

To those of you who are officers, I should like to say that your responsibility is a heavy one. Though the responsibility of an officer in every army in this world is indeed great, it is far greater in your case. Because of our political enslavement, we have no tradition like that of Mukden, Port Arthur or Sedan to inspire us. We have to unlearn some of the things that the British taught us and we have to learn much that they did not teach. Nevertheless, I am confident that you will rise to the occasion and fulfil the task that your countrymen have thrown on your brave shoulders. Remember always that officers can make or unmake an army. Remember, too, that the British have suffered defeats on so many fronts largely because of worthless officers. And remember also that out of your ranks will be born the future General Staff of the Army of Free India. To all of you I should like to say that in the course of this war you will have to acquire the experience and achieve the success which alone can build up a national tradition for our Army. An Army that has no tradition of courage, fearlessness and invincibility cannot hold its own in a struggle with a powerful enemy.

Comrades! You have voluntarily accepted a mission that is the noblest that the human mind call conceive of. For the fulfilment of such a mission no sacrifice is too great, not even the sacrifice of one's life. You are today the custodians of India's national honour and the embodiment of India's hopes and aspirations. So conduct yourself that your countrymen may bless you and posterity may be proud of you.

I have said that today is the proudest day of my life. For an enslaved people, there can be no greater pride, no higher honour, than to be the first soldier in the army of liberation. But this honour carries with it a corresponding responsibility and I am deeply conscious of it. I assure you that I shall be with you in darkness

and in sunshine, in sorrow and in joy, in suffering and in victory. For the present, I can offer you nothing except hunger, thirst, privation, forced marches and death. But if you follow me in life and in death, as I am confident you will, I shall lead you to victory and freedom. It does not matter who among us will live to see India free. It is enough that India shall be free and that we shall give our all to make her free. May God now bless our Army and grant us victory in the coming fight! Inquilab Zindabad! Azad Hind Zindabad!

On Gandhiji's Birthday

THIS DAY, INDIANS all over the World are celebrating the 75th birth anniversary of their greatest leader, Mahatma Gandhi. It is customary on such an occasion to relate the life-experiences of the man whom we honour and to whom we pay our homage of love and respect. But the Indian people are so well acquainted with the life and work of Mahatma Gandhi that it would be an insult to their intelligence if I were to begin narrating the facts of his life. I shall, instead, devote myself to an estimation of the place of Mahatmaji in the history of India's struggle for independence. The service which Mahatma Gandhi has rendered to India and to the cause of India's freedom is so unique and unparalleled that his name will be written in letters of gold in our national history for all time.*

In order to estimate correctly Mahatma Gandhi's place in Indian history it is necessary to take a bird's eye-view of the British conquest of India. You all know that when the British first set foot on Indian soil, India was a land flowing with milk and honey and it was the wealth of India which had attracted poverty-stricken Englishmen from across the seas. Today we find that as a result of political enslavement and economic exploitation the Indian people are dying of hunger and starvation, while the British people who were once so poor and needy have grown fat and rich on the wealth and resources of India. Through sorrow and suffering, humiliation and torture, the Indian people have learnt at long last that the only solution of their manifold problems is the recovery of their lost liberty. Turning to the methods of the British conquest of India, we see that the British never attempted to fight the entire

*Broadcast from Bangkok, October 2, 1943

Indian population in any part of the country, nor did they try to conquer and occupy the whole of India at once. On the contrary they always tried to win over a section of the people, through bribery and corruption, before they commenced military operations. This was the case in Bengal, where the Commander in-Chief, Mir Jaffar, was won over by the British by offering him the throne of Bengal. At that time the religious or communal problem was unknown in India. The last independent king of Bengal, Siraj-ud-dowla, who was a Muslim, was betrayed by his Commander-in-Chief, who was also a Muslim, and it was the Hindu Commander, Mohanlal, who fought for Siraj-ud-dowla till the very last. The lesson that we have learnt from this episode in Indian history is that unless timely steps are taken to prevent and to punish treachery, no nation can hope to preserve its independence.

The developments in Bengal did not unfortunately open the eyes of the Indian people in time. If, even after the fall of Siraj-ud-dowla in Bengal, the Indian people had made common cause against the British, they would have easily succeeded in throwing the unwanted foreigner out of Indian soil. No one can say that the Indian people did not fight in order to retain their freedom, but they did not fight all together. When the British attacked Bengal, nobody attacked them from behind. When, later on, the British fought Tippu Sultan in South India, neither the Marathas in Central India nor the Sikhs in the North came to the rescue of Tippu Sultan. Even after the fall of Bengal, it was still possible to overthrow the British, through the combination of Tippu Sultan with the North. Unfortunately for us, this was not done. It was, therefore, possible for the British to attack one part of India at a time and gradually extend their rule over the whole country. The lesson that we have learnt from this painful chapter of Indian history is that unless the Indian people stand united before the enemy, they will never be able to achieve their independence, nor will they be able to preserve it even if they acquire it.

It took a long time for the eyes of the Indian people to be opened. Ultimately, in 1857, they woke up and made a concerted

attack on the British, in different parts of the country. When the fight began, the fight that the British historians call the Sepoy Mutiny and we call the First War of Independence, the British were easily defeated at first. But two factors accounted for our ultimate failure. All parts of India did not join in the fight; and, what is more significant, the technical skill of our army commanders was inferior to that of the commanders of the enemy forces. It is a fact that Europe had made considerable progress in the art of modern warfare in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and the Indian people had not kept abreast of the times. Consequently, when the final clash with the British forces took place our army leaders were found wanting. The lesson that we have learnt from our failure in 1857 is that, in future, the Indian people must keep up intimate contact with the progress made by other nations in every walk of life, especially in the art of warfare.

After the defeat in 1857, the Indian people were disarmed by the British. It was the greatest folly and mistake on their part to submit to disarmament at that time. If the Indian people had not been disarmed and thereby rendered helpless, it would have been possible for them to strike for their liberty once again, within a short period of time. Owing to disarmament, however the Indian people lay politically prostrate and despondent for nearly thirty years. Ultimately, in 1885, a political awakening took place through the birth of the Indian National Congress. The Indian National Congress was in the beginning a moderate body. The leaders of the Congress were at first afraid of demanding complete independence and the severance of the British connection.

Within a brief span of twenty years, however, new life was infused into the Congress. By 1905, we find leaders like Aurobindo Ghosh demanding complete independence for India. Along with this demand for independence, more extreme methods were adopted for achieving liberty. In Bengal the boycott of British goods was adopted as a retaliation against the partition of that Province, and this method of boycott was gradually taken up all over India. Not content with economic boycott, Indian youths next took to the cult

of the bomb and the revolver. A number of youths were sent abroad to learn revolutionary sabotage in Paris and other European centres, while Indian youths as a whole began to study the revolutionary methods adopted in other parts of the world, notably in Russia and Ireland.

During the last World War, the Indian leaders were duped by false promises made by unscrupulous British politicians and, as a result, Indian blood and money were poured out in the service of Britain and in order to strengthen the chains of India's bondage. It must, however, be said to the eternal honour of the Indian revolutionaries that they did not allow themselves to be deceived by Britain and they did their very best to work up a revolution in the country. But, unfortunately for India, they failed.

When the last World War was over and the Indian leaders began to demand the liberty that had been promised to them, they discovered, for the first time, that they had been betrayed by perfidious Albion. The reply to their demand came in the form of the Rowlatt Act—or the Black Act—in 1919, which deprived them of what little liberty they still possessed. And when they protested against that Black Act, the Jallianwalla Bagh massacre followed. For all the sacrifices made by the Indian people during the last World War, the two rewards were the Rowlatt Act and the Jallianwalla Bagh massacre.

After these tragic events of 1919 the Indian people were stunned and paralyzed for the time being. All the attempts for achieving liberty had been ruthlessly crushed by the British and their armed forces. Constitutional agitation, boycott of British goods, armed revolution—all had alike failed to bring freedom. There was not a ray of hope left and the Indian people, though their hearts were burning with indignation, were groping in the dark for a new method and a new weapon of struggle. Just at this psychological moment Mahatma Gandhi appeared on the scene with his novel method of Non-cooperation and Satyagraha or Civil Disobedience. It appeared as if he had been sent by providence to show the path

to liberty. Immediately and spontaneously, the entire nation rallied round his banner. Every Indian's face was now lit up with hope and confidence. Ultimate victory was once again assured.

For twenty years and more Mahatma Gandhi has worked for India's salvation, and with him the Indian people too have worked. It is no exaggeration to say that if in 1920 he had not come forward with his weapon of struggle, India would today perhaps have been still prostrate. His services to the cause of India's freedom are unique and unparalleled. No single man could have achieved more in one single life-time under similar circumstances. The nearest historical parallel to Mahatma Gandhi is perhaps Mustapha Kemal Pasha who saved Turkey after her defeat in the last World War and who was acclaimed by the Turks as the "Gazi". Since 1920 the Indian people have learnt two things from Mahatma Gandhi which are the indispensable preconditions for the attainment of independence. They have, first of all, learnt national self-respect and self-confidence as a result of which revolutionary fervour is now blazing in their hearts. Secondly, they have now got a countrywide organization which reaches the remotest village of India. Now that the message of liberty has permeated the hearts of all Indians and they have got countrywide political organization representing the whole nation, the stage is set for the final struggle for liberty, the last war of independence.

It is not in India alone that a struggle for freedom has been heralded by a spiritual awakening. In the Risorgimento movement in Italy, it was Mazzini who first gave the spiritual inspiration to the Italian people. He was then followed by the fighter and the hero Garibaldi, who began the March to Rome as the head of one thousand armed volunteers. In modern Ireland, too, the Sinn Fein Party, when it was born in 1906, gave the Irish people a programme which was very much similar to Mahatma Gandhi's non-cooperation programme of 1920. Ten years after the birth of the Sinn Fein Party, that is, in 1916, the first armed revolution in Ireland took place.

Mahatma Gandhi has firmly planted our feet on the straight road to liberty. He and other leaders are now rotting behind the prison bars. The task Mahatma Gandhi began has, therefore, to be accomplished by his countrymen, at home and abroad.

Indians at home have everything that they need for the final struggle, but they lack one thing—an army of liberation. That army of liberation has to be supplied from without and it can be supplied only from without.

I would like to remind you that when Mahatma Gandhi commended his non-cooperation programme to the Indian nation at the annual session of the Congress at Nagpur in December 1920, he said, "If India had the sword today, she would have drawn the sword". And proceeding further with his argument, Mahatmaji then said that since armed revolution was out of the question, the only other alternative before the country was that of non-cooperation or Satyagraha. Since then times have changed and it is now possible for the Indian people to draw the sword. We are happy and proud that India's Army of Liberation has already come into existence and is steadily increasing in numbers. We have, on the one hand, to complete the training of this Army and send it to the field of battle as soon as possible. We have, simultaneously, to build up a new army that can go on reinforcing the Army in the field. The final struggle for liberty will be long and hard and we must go on fighting, till the last Britisher in India is either cast in prison or thrown out of the country. I would like to warn you that after our Army of Liberation sets foot on Indian soil, it will take at least twelve months, and perhaps more, to liberate the whole of India from the British yoke. Let us, therefore, gird up our loins and prepare for a long and hard struggle.

Message to Gandhiji

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

It would be a fatal mistake on your part to make a distinction between the British Government and the British people. No doubt there is a small group of idealists in Britain - as in the USA who would like to see India free. These idealists, who are treated by their own people as cranks, form a microscopic minority. So far as India is concerned, for all practical purposes, the British Government and the British people mean one and the same thing. Regarding the war aims of the USA, I may say that the ruling clique at Washington is now dreaming of world domination. This ruling clique and its intellectual exponents talk openly of the 'American Century'. In this ruling clique, there are extremists who go so far as to call Britain the 49th State of the USA. I can assure you, Mahatmaji, that before I finally decide to set out on this hazardous mission, I spent days, weeks and months in carefully considering the pros and cons of the case. After having served my

*Broadcast from Azad Hind Radio, July 6, 1944

people so long to the best of my ability, I could have no desire to be a traitor, or to give anyone a justification for calling me a traitor. Thanks to the generosity and to the affection of my countrymen, I had obtained the highest honour which it was possible for any public worker in India to achieve. I had also built up a party consisting of staunch and loyal colleagues who had implicit confidence in me. By going abroad on a perilous quest, I was risking not only my life and my whole future career, but what was more, the future of my party. If I had the slightest hope that without action from abroad we could win freedom, I would never have left India during a crisis. If I had any hope that within our life-time we could get another chance—another golden opportunity—for winning freedom, as during the present war, I doubt if I would have set out from home.

There remains but one question for me to answer with regard to the Axis Powers. Can it be possible that I have been deceived by them? I believe it will be universally admitted that the cleverest and the most cunning politicians are to be found amongst Britishers. One who has worked with and fought British politicians all his life cannot be deceived by any other politicians in the world. If British politicians have failed to coax or coerce me, no other politicians can succeed in doing so. And if the British Government, at whose hands I have suffered long imprisonment, persecution and physical assault has been unable to demoralise me, no other power can hope to do so. I have never done anything which could compromise in the least either the honour or the self-respect or the interest of my country. There was a time when Japan was an ally of our enemy. I did not come to Japan so long as there was an Anglo-Japanese alliance. I did not come to Japan so long as normal diplomatic relations obtained between the two countries. It was only after Japan took what I considered to be the most momentous step in her history, namely, declaration of war on Britain and America, that I decided to visit Japan of my own free will. Like so many of my countrymen, my sympathies in 1937 and 1938 were with Chunking. You may remember that as President

of the Congress I was responsible for sending out medical mission to Chunking in December 1938.

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

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

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

Father of our Nation! In this holy war of India's liberation, we ask for your blessings and good wishes.

India Will Be Free

BROTHERS AND SISTERS! A great chapter in the history of India's freedom struggle has come to a close now. India's sons and daughters living in East Asia have secured a permanent place in this chapter. By contributing men, money and supplies to the struggle for Indian independence, you have set up a shining example of patriotism and sacrifice. I can never forget your generous and enthusiastic response to my call of Total Mobilization. Like a perennial spring you sent your sons and daughters to the Azad Hind Fauj and Jhansi Rani Regiment. You gave generous donations in cash and kind to the war fund of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind. In short, you have carried out your duty as the real sons and daughters of India. I am more aggrieved than you by the fact that your sufferings and sacrifices have not yielded immediate results. Nevertheless they have not gone waste, because they have paved the path of deliverance of our motherland and will be a perpetual source of inspiration to Indians living all over the world. The future will bless you and will speak with pride of your sacrifices at the altar of Indian independence and of your solid achievements. At this unprecedented juncture in our history I have a word for you. Do not be disheartened by our temporary defeat; be cheerful and optimistic. Above all, never lose your faith in the destiny of India. There is no power on earth which can keep India in bondage. India will be free and, that too, soon. Jai Hind!

Message of August 17, 1945, to Indians in East Asia, retranslated from the Tamil version published by *Swantantra India*, Singapore

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Subhas Bose is well known for organising an armed struggle against the foreign rule in India. He is seen as a tough, disciplined and hard task-master in popular view. Very little is known that he was actually a very shy and timid person in his formative days. His experiences during school and college days, and happenings on national arena thereafter, transformed him into a personality which later came before all.

The book attempts to assess this magnanimous personality with a view to eventually forming an objective and correct idea of Netaji's thinking, his activities and political attitudes.

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