CHAPTER V

MILITANT NATIONALISM OF BENGAL: ITS RESPONSE TO THE GANDHIAN POLITICAL THOUGHT

Subhas Chandra Bose was the acknowledged spokesman of militant nationalism of Bengal during the Gandhian era. His attitude towards the Gandhian thought may be taken, in a rough way, as an indicator of the response of Bengal's militant nationalism to Gandhism. Bose was the disciple of C.R. Das who was virtually the uncrowned king of nationalist Bengal during the first phase of the Gandhian movement, and he retained this position until his death in 1925. His reaction to the Gandhian thought will therefore be also relevant to our purpose. In the pre-Gandhian period Bipin Chandra Pal was recognized as the most outstanding thinker representing the cause of militant nationalism of Bengal. Though during the Gandhian period his views were largely changed, and he could not, for reasons explained later, retain his hold over the people of Bengal which he had during the Swadeshi days, still he remained active in the field, and his response to the Gandhian thought has been included in this chapter. Besides these three thinkers we would like to include Rabindra Nath Tagore and M.N. Roy also within our discussion. In spite of his critical view on nationalism, Rabindranath Tagore had a tremendous influence on the Bengali intelligentsia of the period including the militant nationalists, and their
recognized spokesman Subhas Chandra Bose. Rabindranath, who carried the rationalist and cosmopolitan tradition of Rammohun, was an institution by himself, and he had very close personal relations with Gandhi. He reacted to Gandhi's views on almost all the vital questions concerning social and political thought, and though on nationalism and nationalist movement his views were different from those held by Gandhi and the militant nationalists of Bengal, on many other points Rabindranath's criticism of Gandhism was shared by the Bengal nationalists. While discussing any aspect of Bengal's political thought in relation to Gandhism it would possibly not be proper to exclude Rabindranath. M.N. Roy who became the founder of communism in India started his political career in Bengal as a nationalist of the militant school. In his Marxist phase which lasted up to mid-forties his views towards Gandhism was as critical as those of the militant nationalists of Bengal. In course of the evolution of his ideas, Roy came to a position which led him to appreciate and admire at least some of the major tenets of the Gandhian thought. As a matter of fact, it may be stated that no political thinker of Bengal appreciated Gandhi so much as M.N. Roy in the last phase of his life. Therefore, we believe that Roy deserves our careful consideration in this chapter.

In this chapter we shall therefore examine the
political thought of these five thinkers of Bengal in the context of their response to Gandhism. They will be discussed in the following order:

1. Rabindranath Tagore
2. C. R. Das
3. Bipin Chandra Pal
4. Subhas Chandra Bose and

Before starting our discussion on the impact of Gandhism on the individual political thinkers of Bengal it is necessary to point out that it is not possible to carry on the discussion on abstract theoretical level. None of the political thinkers of Bengal except M.N. Roy were system-builders like Gandhi. They were more concerned with political movement than with political speculations. While leading the movement they developed many ideas, some of which were influenced by Gandhian thought and some went against Gandhism. We shall, therefore, try to understand their political thought and note the points where they agreed with Gandhi and where they differed with him.

Section I

Rabindranath Tagore and Gandhism

Before the advent of the Gandhian era in India's freedom movement Rabindranath Tagore had developed certain ideas which were
almost similar to those of Gandhi. When the anti-partition agitation broke out in Bengal in 1905, he took a leading part in it, but soon withdrew from the movement because it appeared aggressive and predominantly destructive in character. He sought to develop the movement along constructive lines and gave more emphasis on the organization of swadeshi industries and national schools than on boycott of British goods and of Government educational institutions. The atmosphere of intolerance which came with the Swadeshi movement was denounced by him and he preferred the movement to follow a perfectly constructive and non-violent path. He stood for tolerance and open non-violent resistance to oppression, and through his play, *Prayaschitta* (1909) he explained his ideas on non-violence. His concern for non-violence was also explained in his earlier novels, *Bouthakuranir Hat* (1883) and *Rajarshe* (1887). This theme is found in his tragedy *Bisorjan* (1890), where the young hero Jayasingha showed the superiority of non-violence by sacrificing himself voluntarily.

Dhananjay Bairagi of *Prayaschitta* (this play and *Bouthakuranir Hat* have the same plot but Dhananjoy Bairagi is a new character introduced in *Prayaschitta*) who led the peasants in a non-violent no-rent struggle against their oppressive king, was almost an anticipation of Gandhi.  

Besides constructive activities and non-violence, Tagore's social philosophy had many other vital points in common with that of Gandhi. He was critical of the elitist outlook of the Congress leaders and urged them to devote themselves to the work of organizing and educating the people instead of following a sterile policy of petition and prayer asking for concessions from the foreign rulers. Tagore believed that in the community life of India the society played a much more important role than the state, and he tried to retain it. Therefore, in his scheme of national movement the first priority was given to rural re-construction to be brought about through the introduction of better methods of agriculture and organization of village industries and people's co-operatives. Though opposed to foreign rule, he did not favour a national struggle based on racial hatred, but tried, instead, to remove the social evils which were responsible for India's downfall and to build up a new social order within the existing framework. He stood for Hindu-Muslim unity, removal of untouchability and other age-old social evils as well as for swadeshi and national education. Deeply religious with no sectarian outlook, he loved his country and humanity as a whole.

These were the major points which Gandhi and Tagore held in common though they developed then independently. These points were broad enough to provide a basis for their close cooperation. In his first letter to Gandhi offering thanks for sending his 'Phoenix boys' to Santineketan Tagore expressed his hope that these 'boys' would constitute "a living link in the sadhana of both of our lives".  

2. For the text of the letter see Prabhat Kumar Mukhopadhyaya, Rabindra Jivani (Viswa Bharati Granthalay, Calcutta, 1st Vol.in 1367 B.E.)
expectation was, however, belied. When Gandhi returned to India in January 1915 after a long struggle in South Africa, they came close to each other and their mutual regard began to grow but their sadhanas remained different and they could not cooperate with each other to realize a common objective. There was little positive impact of Gandhi on the evolution of Tagore's social philosophy. The poet remained a great admirer of Gandhi but also a severe critic of his political movements and ideas.

Tagore met Gandhi for the first time in March 1915 at Santiniketan. The atmosphere of Santiniketan could not, however, satisfy Gandhi and he wanted the teachers and students to follow the principle of self-help more strictly. Referring to his visit to Santiniketan Gandhi wrote in his autobiography: "As is my wont, I quickly mixed with the teachers and students, and engaged them in a discussion on self-help. I put it to the teachers that, if they and the boys dispensed with the services of paid cooks and cooked their food themselves, it would enable the teachers to control the kitchen from the point of view of the boys' physical and moral health, and it would afford to the students an abject lesson in self-help. One or two of them were inclined to shake their heads. Some of them strongly approved of the proposal. The boys welcomed it, if only because of their instinctive taste for novelty. So, we launched the


When Gandhi decided to leave South Africa and come back to India, he tried to send the students of the school established in his Phoenix settlement in advance of his own return. Andrews who was then working at Santiniketan was well-known to Gandhi and through his efforts a temporary accommodation was provided to these students at Santiniketan.
experiment. When I invited the poet to express his opinion, he said that he did not mind it provided the teachers were favourable. To the boys, he said, 'the experiment contains the key to Swaraj'.'

On Gandhi's suggestion this experiment was launched on 10 March, but it could not be continued and was soon given up, though 10 March is still observed in Santineketan as Gandhi Day as a mark of respect to his visit. The refusal of the Santineketan authorities to continue the experiment suggested by Gandhi was significant because it brought into surface one basic difference that existed between Gandhi and Tagore. Tagore accepted the principle of self-help only in so far as it was compatible with the modern life. He did not believe in the Gandhian doctrine of the sacredness of manual labour and did not consider it an essential pre-condition for a moral life.


5. Gandhi believed that working with one's own hands for several hours during the day was necessary for the moral development of an individual. This was the basis of his theory of Bread Labour. For an explanation of this theory in Gandhi's own words see Nirmal Kumar Bose, *Selections from Gandhi* (Navajivan, Ahmedabad, 1957), pp.50-53.

Gandhi was once asked: "Why should we insist on a Rabindranath or Raman earning his bread by manual labour? Is it not sheer wastage?" The reply of Gandhi was: "Intellectual work is important and has an undoubted place in the scheme of life. But what I insist on is the necessity of physical labour. No men, I claim, ought to be free from that obligation." *Ibid.*, pp.53-54.
The anti-Rowlatt Act movement was the first important mass movement started by Gandhi. It has already been noted that a nationwide hartal was observed on 6 April 1919 (originally it was fixed for 30 March) in protest against the Rowlatt Act. On 5 April Gandhi wrote to Tagore asking for "a message of hope and inspiration for those who have to go through the fire". On 12 April, the poet wrote to Gandhi paying him high tribute and comparing him with Lord Buddha but at the same time pointing out the danger inherent in his movement. He wrote: "Power in all its forms is irrational - it is like the horse that drags the carriage blindfolded. The moral element in it is only represented in the man who drives the horse. Passive resistance is a force which is not necessarily moral in itself; it can be used against truth as well as for it. The danger inherent in all force, grows stronger when it is likely to gain success, for then it becomes temptation. I know your teaching is to fight against evil by the help of the good. But such a fight is for heroes and not for men led by impulses of the moment". The main point of Tagore was that the people who would join the movement by the 'impulses of the moment' would not be able to maintain the moral standard expected by Gandhi. As feared by Tagore, the movement actually degenerated into violence and, as we have stated earlier, Gandhi suspended the movement on 18 April. In the statement issued by Gandhi on this occasion, he virtually admitted that Tagore was right in his warning. He said: "I had called upon the people to launch upon civil disobedience before they had thus qualified them-

7. Ibid., Appendix I, pp.495-96.
selves for it, and this mistake of mine seemed to me to be of a Himalayan magnitude. 8

In 1920 the 'Punjab Wrong' and the 'Khilafat Wrong' led Gandhi to prepare for the non-cooperation movement. During this period of revolutionary change in Indian politics Tagore was abroad on a foreign tour. He left India in May 1920, travelled extensively in England, Europe and the United States and came back in July 1921. During this period of absence he, however, kept himself fully in touch with the Indian developments mainly through the correspondence with Andrews, but his reaction to these developments was different from that of Gandhi. The attitude of the British Parliament towards the 'Punjab Wrong' aggrieved Tagore no less than Gandhi, and on reaching Paris from England he wrote to Andrews on 13 August: "Your Parliament debates about Dyerism in the Punjab and other symptoms of the arrogant spirit of contempt and callousness about India have deeply aggrieved me and it was with a feeling of relief that I left England."9 The British arrogance and callousness did not provoke the poet towards a non-cooperation movement. His view was that in order to avoid the suffering of such humiliating treatment in future, India must first of all set her house in order. "Do not mind the waves of the sea but mind the leaks in your vessel," he wrote.10 In other words, he was in favour of a constructive movement to build up the nation and not an anti-British non-cooperation agitation

carried on in a spirit of frenzied excitement. In September 1920 he wrote to Andrews: "I find our countrymen are furiously excited about non-cooperation. ...Such an emotional outbreak should have been taken advantage of in starting independent organizations all over India for serving our country. Let Mahatma Gandhi be the true leader in this; let him send out his call for positive service, ask for homage in sacrifice, which has its end in love and creation. I shall be willing to sit at his feet and do his bidding if he commands me to cooperate with my countrymen in service and love. I refuse to waste my manhood in lighting fires of anger and spreading it from house to house. ... It would be like using the fire from the altar of sacrifice for the purpose of incendiarism."  

His friend Andrews was, however, drawn to non-cooperation, though he could not agree with Gandhi on the Khilafat question. Supporting the Gandhian non-cooperation against the criticism of Tagore he wrote: "With such a volcanic force as the personality of Mahatma Gandhi, there will be much destruction. But the new life-urge from beneath has forced its way to the surface, and this in the end will be creative, not destructive; it will go forward until the whole people is at last awakened to full national consciousness."  

In his pamphlet Independence — the Immediate Need Andrews pleaded for India's independence so forcefully that Jawaharlal Nehru, referring to this publication, wrote: "It seemed to me not only to make out an unanswerable case for independence but also to mirror

11. Rabindranath Tagore, Letters to a Friend, n.9, pp.95-96.  
Andrews' support to non-cooperation appeared extremely disquieting to the poet. Moreover, during his (the poet's) absence, Gandhi, soon after the special session of the Congress in Calcutta (September 1920), visited Santiniketan and addressed the inmates. In his speech he denounced western civilization as the work of Satan. Maulana Shaukat Ali also came there to meet Gandhi and the atmosphere of Santiniketan was astir with a new life.14

The prospect of Santiniketan being drawn into the vortex of the non-cooperation movement caused great uneasiness to the poet particularly because he saw in it a serious danger to his ideal of universalism on the basis of which he was trying to develop his institution. In foreign countries he found enthusiastic response to his ideal and support for his institution, and he feared that the rising tide of non-cooperation might wash away the main objective of his mission. On 3 October 1920 he wrote: "Altogether Europe has come closer to us by this visit of ours. .... Now I know more closely than ever before that Santiniketan belongs to all the world and we shall have to be worthy of this great fact. ... Santiniketan must be saved from the whirlwind of our dirty politics."15 The whole social philosophy of Tagore was based on the principle of cooperation which was regarded by him as the basis of human progress. Therefore, the concept of non-cooperation movement appeared to him a retrogressive step having no positive significance. India's mission, he said, was to achieve "one grand harmony of all human races" and the non-cooperation movement which sought, in his view, "to alienate our heart and mind from

15. Rabindranath Tagore, Letters to a Friend, n.9, p.96.
The west was condemned by him as "spiritual suicide." The national movement, according to him, should give emphasis on what was to be achieved and not on what was to be boycotted. His ideal, he wrote, was mukti which "emphasized the fact of ananda, joy, which had to be attained", and not Buddha's nirvana which "emphasized the fact of dukkha, misery, which had to be avoided." The negative movement of non-cooperation was described by him as "political asceticism".  

This criticism of the non-cooperation movement which Tagore made in some of his letters to Andrews was published in The Modern Review and drew the attention of Gandhi. He, therefore, tried to defend his movement by maintaining that his non-cooperation was not absolute and that an attitude, however, positive, must have within it a negative element. He wrote that non-cooperation was not intended "to erect a Chinese wall between India and the West." "On the contrary", he continued, "non-cooperation is intended to pave the way to real, honourable and voluntary cooperation based on mutual respect and trust. The present struggle is being waged against compulsory cooperation, against one-sided combination, against armed imposition of modern methods of exploitation masquerading under the name of civilization". "In my humble opinion" Gandhi further argued, "rejection is as much an ideal as the acceptance of a thing. It is as necessary to reject untruth as it is to accept truth. All religions teach that two opposite forces act upon us and that the human endeavour consists in a series of eternal rejections and acceptances. Non-cooperation with evil is as much a duty

as cooperation with good.” The Buddhist view of Nirvana, he
wrote, was not simply a negative state and mukti was not wholly
a positive concept. “Mukti (emancipation) is as much a negative
state as nirvana.” he asserted. “Weeding” he wrote, “is as neces­
sary to agriculture as sowing”, and “this deliberate refusal
to cooperate” was compared by him with “the necessary weeding
process that a cultivator has to resort to before he sows.”

The poet returned to India in July 1921 when the non-coopera­tion movement was going on with all its fury. In August he deli­vered an important speech under the caption 'Shikshar Milan' (The
Unity of Education). In it he pointed out that instead of boy­
cotting the western education India should try to develop unity
between the East and West in the field of learning. This view of
Tagore was refuted by Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay, the famous
novelist of Bengal and at that time a great supporter of non-co­
operation, in a speech under the title 'Sikshar Virodh' (Conflict
of Education). Provoked by this speech Tagore defended his po­
sition more clearly and forcefully in a paper on Satyak Ahwan (The
call of Truth) read at the Calcutta University Institute on 29
August. In it we find his deep regard for Gandhi but a severe
criticism of his policy. He said that by his direct approach

17. Young India, 1 June 1921.
18. Rabindranath Tagore, Kalantar (Visvabharati, 1355 B.E.),
pp.162-188. The English version was published in The Modern
Review, November 1921. It is also included in Rabindranath
Tagore, Towards Universal Man (Asia Publishing House, New
Delhi, 1961), pp.231-251.
19. This speech is included in Sarat Chandra's Volume of Essays,
20. Rabindranath Tagore, Kalantar, n.18, pp.189-217. The English
version was published in The Modern Review, October 1921. It
is included in Rabindranath Tagore, Towards Universal Man,
n.18, pp.252-73.
based on love and truth Gandhi had captured the hearts of the teeming millions of India and their response to his call was overwhelming. But his call remained restricted to a narrow field with elements of compulsion and blind faith in it. The non-cooperation movement with its demand for uniformity had created in the country an atmosphere of intolerance, complained Tagore. Gandhi's promise of Swaraj within one year appeared to Tagore as absolutely irrational. Swaraj, he said, was a vast and difficult enterprise in which the human urge and emotion must be reinforced by knowledge and critical thinking. But Gandhi's assurance of Swaraj came to the people like the promise of a Sannyasi to create gold by the power of his mantra. The promise of Swaraj within one year encouraged blind faith and led people to give up their own critical thinking and judgment. Such an atmosphere was not conducive to a movement for Swaraj. In this paper Gandhi's cult of charkha and his support to the burning of foreign cloth were subjected to severe criticism. The poet did not believe that the charkha would solve any of the problems of India, and he asked: "Is this the gospel of a new creative age? If large machinery constitutes a danger for the West, will not the small machines constitute a greater danger for us?" He demanded a scientific investigation of the advantages claimed by Gandhi in favour of the spinning wheel. The burning of foreign cloth as 'impure' at a time when the poor had no cloth to put on was regarded by him as the height of irrationality and he boldly declared his inability to accept this 'order' of Gandhi. The problem of cloth, he said, was an economic problem and religion should not be brought in the controversy.
Tagore's firm and polite criticism of the non-cooperation movement evoked a reply from Gandhi which was equally firm and polite.\textsuperscript{21} He described the "bard of Santineketan" as "a sentinel warning us against the approach of enemies called bigotry, lethargy, intolerance, ignorance, inertia and the other members of that brood". But he did not endorse the charge that "there is any such blind obedience on a large scale in the country today". Gandhi, however, firmly defended his stand with reference to the \textit{charkha} and the burning of foreign cloth. His views on the \textit{charkha} were sought to be justified partly on economic and partly on moral grounds. He wrote: "Hunger is the argument that is driving India to the spinning wheel. The call of the spinning wheel is the noblest of all. Because it is the call of love. And love is \textit{swaraj}," "A plea for the spinning wheel", he argued, "is a plea for recognizing the dignity of labour". Regarding the burning of foreign cloth he stated that he in fact drew no distinction between economics and ethics. "Economics that hurt the moral well-being of an individual or a nation are immoral and, therefore, sinful", he asserted. Gandhi considered it 'sinful' for the Indians to use foreign clothes because it caused unemployment and starvation to their own countrymen. He wrote: "It is sinful for me to wear the latest finery of Regent Street, when I know that if I had but worn the things woven by the neighbouring spinners and weavers, that would have clothed me and fed and clothed them. On the knowledge of my sin bursting upon me, I must consign the foreign garments to the flames and thus purify myself, and thenceforth rest\textsuperscript{21}. "The great sentinel", \textit{Young India}, 13 October 1921.
content with the rough khadi made by my neighbours." He reminded the poet that according to his scheme everybody should burn only his own foreign clothes and, therefore, the question of forcibly denying the poor of their foreign clothes did not arise. The foreign clothes could not obviously be distributed among the poor; by boycotting and burning them a situation might be created which would give them an opportunity to earn their livelihood through spinning and weaving. "I must refuse to insult the naked", he wrote, "by giving them clothes they do not need, instead of giving them work which they sorely need."

Meanwhile, in September 1921, Gandhi came to Calcutta and met Tagore in his house at Jorasanko. During their conversation Gandhi’s followers organized the burning of foreign cloth in Tagore’s courtyard as a mark of protest against his opposition to their movement. When Gandhi was trying to convince the poet about the non-violent character of his movement, he showed Gandhi the burning of foreign cloth in his courtyard and, to quote the language of Elmhirst, told him: "... See what your non-violent followers are up to. They have stolen cloth from the shops in the Chitpore Road, they’ve lit that bonfire in my courtyard and are now howling round it like a lot of demented dervishes. Is that non-violence? We are, as you yourself know, Gandhiji, a very emotional people. Can you keep these emotions under a strict control with your non-violent principles? You know you can’t."

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22. Leonard Elmhirst, "Personal Memories of Tagore" in Rabindranath Tagore: A Centenary Volume (Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi, 1961), p.15. In a footnote Elmhirst wrote that the poet deliberately used the word 'stolen' in his conversation with Gandhi. Explaining the views of Tagore on this point he added: "The logical behaviour from Mr. Gandhi's standpoint would have been to have purchased the cloth first and then burnt it!"
point was that the movement was not actually carried on in the true spirit of Gandhian non-violence, and that it was not reasonable to expect the people, without prolonged training and education, to follow the ethical principles of Gandhi in a mass movement.

The way in which the non-cooperation movement was developing appeared alarming to Tagore. He was particularly perturbed by the Assam Bengal Railway strike and the Mopla rebellion.\(^{23}\) The severe riot which broke out in Bombay on the arrival of the Prince of Wales (17 November 1921) leading to the postponement by Gandhi of the proposed civil disobedience movement at Bardoli was a danger signal for the poet. Under such circumstances, the resolution of the Ahmedabad Congress (December 1921) calling for aggressive civil disobedience\(^{24}\) seemed sinister to Tagore, and this provoked him to write on 1 February 1922 an open letter to Nanalal Dalpatram, an important figure in the field of literature in Gujarat, explaining his apprehension about the future of the non-cooperation movement. In this letter he observed: "I believe in the efficacy of ahimsa as the means of overcoming the congregated might of physical force on which the political powers in all countries mainly rest. But like every other moral principle, ahimsa has to spring from the depth of mind and it must not be forced upon man from some outside appeal of urgent need. The great personalities of the world have preached love, forgiveness and non-violence, primarily for the sake

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But to take the cloth from a shop by force and not pay for it was, from the poet's point of view, stealing and not 'snatching'.
\end{quote}

\(^{23}\) Probhat Kumar Mukhopadhyay, n.2, Vol.III, p.96, For the railway strike and the Mopla rebellion see pp.179,182.

\(^{24}\) Young India, 19 January 1922.
of spiritual perfection and not for the attainment of some immediate success in politics or similar department of life. They were aware of the difficulty of their teaching being realized within a fixed period of time in a sudden and wholesale manner by men whose previous course of life had chiefly pursued the path of self. No doubt through a strong compulsion of desire for some external result men are capable of repressing their habitual inclination for a limited time, but when it concerns an immense multitude of men of different traditions and stages of culture, and when the object for which such repression is exercised needs a prolonged period of struggle, complex in character, I cannot think it possible of attainment. ...." 25 This letter was published on 3 February and Chauri Chaura incident took place on 5 February leading to the suspension of the movement.

The letter cited above clearly shows that Tagore was an admirer of the non-violent method of Gandhi but believed that it could not be properly applied to national mass movements in which "an immense multitude of men of different traditions and stages of culture" took part. During this time he wrote his famous drama Muktadhara where the ideal of non-violence was upheld. This drama also had one Dhananjoy Bairagi who expounded the philosophy and technique of non-violent non-cooperation. In December 1922 he went to Ahmedabad and visited the Sabarmati Ashram though Gandhi was then in prison. He first visited Gandhi's ashram in April 1920.

25. Bengalee, 3 February 1922.
and during the intervening period there was a severe clash between their ideas. But this clash of ideas did not undermine the poet's regard for Gandhi. He paid an eloquent tribute to Gandhi's contributions to humanity and described him as Visvakarma. 26

In February 1924 Gandhi was released from jail and in December he presided over the Belgaum session of the Congress. This session made spinning, instead of four annas per year, a qualification for membership of the Congress. 27 This supplied the occasion for the renewal of the controversy between Gandhi and Tagore on charkha. In May 1925 Gandhi paid a visit to Santineketan and had long talks with the poet. Shortly after this meeting, Tagore wrote two articles — one on charkha 28 and another on Swaraj 29 — explaining his differences with Gandhi. In the former he stated that the charkha would bring about a death-like "sameness" in the nation and would impose blind uniformity on the people which would be damaging for the unfoldment of man's creative intelligence in diverse directions. In the latter he pointed out that the majority of the people of India who were cultivators were not

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28. "Charkha" was first published in *Sabujpatra*, Bhadra, 1332 B.E. It is included in Rabindranath Tagore, *Kalantar*, n.18, pp.259-277. Its English version "The cult of the Charkha" was published in *The Modern Review*, September 1925. This article was written in reply to Acharya Prafulla Chandra Roy's criticism of Tagore's anti-charkha views.
29. This article under the title "Swaraj Sadhan" was first published in *Sabujpatra*, Aswin, 1332 B.E. and is included in Rabindranath Tagore, *Kalantar*, n.18, pp.278-90. Its English version "Striving for Swaraj" was published in *The Modern Review*, December, 1925.
accustomed to spinning, and, therefore, Gandhi's message of charkha would have no practical impact on them. Instead of spinning, the cultivators, the poet maintained, should be encouraged to learn better methods of cultivation. Moreover, the emphasis on spinning would keep the villagers isolated and each would remain attached to his own charkha. This would not promote village welfare activities on a co-operative basis which might lay the foundation of Swaraj.

On 5 November 1925, Gandhi came out with a rejoinder in Young India. He wrote that "there is sameness, identity or oneness behind the multiplicity and variety", and that "the charkha is intended to realize the essential and living oneness of interest among India's myriads." In Indian conditions, he further argued "every effort at cooperation has to centre round charkha" and "a national servant" he pointed out "would build up a programme of ... hundreds of other beneficial activities" round it. Tagore, however, continued to hold that in a predominantly agricultural country no comprehensive programme of village reconstruction could be taken up round the charkha. He stated: "In a country where the majority of the inhabitants are cultivators, it is absurd to put repeated emphasis upon their duty to turn the charkha instead of urging them to perfect their proper work with the help of a better method and wider knowledge. It would mean an all-India organization by the people of the country for the improvement of agriculture which would have a far wider range of beneficial activity than one for the propagation of khaddar. It would include the development of scienti-
fic methods of production on co-operative principles, improved method of seed distribution, facilities for soil analysis, and the use of suitable manures."

During this time Gandhi and Tagore expressed their views on birth control which clearly showed the basic difference in their outlook on life. After the first world war there arose a movement in different parts of the world in favour of the artificial methods of birth control. All over the world the people with an orthodox view of morality opposed this movement. Gandhi also belonged to this camp. In March 1925 Gandhi stated: "There can be no two opinions about the necessity of birth control. But the only method handed down from ages past is self-control or brahmacharya. It is an infallible sovereign remedy doing good to those who practise it. ... Artificial methods are like putting a premium upon vice. They make men and women reckless ... if artificial methods become the order of the day nothing but moral degradation can be the result."32

Provoked by this attitude of Gandhi Mrs. Margaret Sanger, a leading exponent of the birth control movement, wrote a letter to Tagore (12 August 1925) asking for his views. In reply Tagore wrote: "I am of opinion that Birth Control movement is a great movement not only because it will save women from enforced and undesirable maternity, but because it will help the cause of peace by lessening the number of surplus population of a country scrambling for food.

32. Young India, 12 March 1925.
and space outside its own rightful limits. ... It is evident that
the utter helplessness of a growing poverty very rarely acts as a
check controlling the burden of over-population. It proves that in
this case nature's urging gets better of the severe warning that
comes from the providence of civilized social life. Therefore, I
believe that to wait till the moral sense of man becomes a great
deal more powerful than it is now and till then to allow countless
generations of children to suffer provations and ultimately death
for no fault of their own, is a great social injustice which should
not be tolerated. I feel grateful for the cause you have made your
own and for which you have suffered." This letter of Tagore dated
30 September 1925 was published by Mrs. Sangar in her journal Birth
Control Review.33 This difference towards the problem of birth con­
trol was the expression of a fundamental difference in their out­
look on life. Gandhi stood for a traditional moral life and Tagore
adopted what we call a modern scientific attitude.

Gandhi's concern for the Hindu-Muslim unity and the abolition
of untouchability from the Hindu society was fully shared by Tagore.
But their approach to the problem was different. Gandhi's approach
was religious, Tagore’s was sociological. Gandhi approached the
problem from the assumption that there was no clash of interest or
genuine difference between the Hindus and Muslims of India, and he
thought that communal problem could be solved if everyone became
true to his own religion. He had equal regard for all religions and
he tried to solve the communal problem by encouraging such an atti­
tude among the people. "The first thing essential for achieving

33. Probhat Kumar Mukhopadhyay, n.2, Vol.IV, p.44.
such unity" he wrote, "is for every Congressman, whatever his re-
ligion may be, to represent in his own person Hindu, Muslim, Chris-
tian, Zoroastrian, Jew etc. ... He should have the same regard for
the other faiths as he has for his own." In order to promote
equal regard for all faiths he sought to project the universal hu-
man values preached by all major religions. His South African ex-
perience led him to believe that if the Hindus and Muslims could
be brought together in a common movement, they would realize the
importance of unity and learn to leave together in peace and har-
mony. This was one of the reasons why he supported the Khilafat
movement based on Pan-Islamism. In 1922 he wrote that "given a su-
fficient number of Hindus and Musalmans with almost a fanatical
faith in everlasting friendship between the Hindus and Musalmans
of India", it would be possible to solve the communal problem on
a permanent basis. He tried to promote this faith by frantic
appeals to the good will of both the communities without judging
the problem from the social and historical point of view. After the
miscarriage of the Khilafat agitation, a wave of communal riots
swept over the country culminating in the fierce disturbances at
Kohat in September 1924. On 18 September Gandhi imposed on himself
a twenty-one days' fast, and in the statement issued on 22 Septem-
ber 1922 he wrote: "To revile one another's religion, to make reck-
less statements, to utter untruth, to break the heads of innocent
men, to desecrate temples or mosques is a denial of God. The world

34. M. K. Gandhi, Constructive Programme: Its Meaning and Place
35. Young India, 16 March 1922.
is watching - some with glee and some with sorrow - the dogfight that is proceeding in our midst. We have listened to Satan. Religion call it by what you like is made of sterner stuff. ... I ask of no Hindu or Musalman to surrender an iota of his religious principle. Only let him be sure that it is religion." Thus Gandhi sought to solve the communal problem by an appeal to the good sense of the people and by arousing the spirit of true religion in their hearts. He, however, held the British responsible for the growing rift between the Hindus and the Muslims and believed that the problem might be solved if the wedge of the foreign rule was withdrawn.

Tagore, on the other hand, believed that there were social and historical causes of the Hindu-Muslim strife, and the communal problem could not be solved unless those causes were removed. The attempt to solve the problem by supporting the Khilafat movement appeared to him puerile. He did not deny the role of the British

36. "All About The Fast" Young India, 25 September 1924.
37. He actually said, "... I repeat what I have said elsewhere, that so long as the wedge in the shape of foreign rule divides community from community and class from class, there will be no real living solution, there will be no living friendship between these communities ..." 'Speech at Plenary Session of Round Table Conference' 1 December 1931, CWMG, Vol. XLVIII, p.365, whole speech, pp.356-368.
38. Rabindranath Tagore, "Hindu-Musalman" in Kalantar, n.18,p.336. During their conversations in September 1921 Gandhi told Tagore that he had already achieved Hindu-Muslim unity. To this claim Tagore's reply, as subsequently recorded by Elmhirst, was: "No, I do not agree. You have introduced it only on the political platform where Muslim and Hindu happily join together to crack a whip at the British. I have never had any love for British officialdom but can you really say you have a genuine friendship with the Muslim deep in your hearts? When the British either walk out or driven out what will happen then?" Leonard Elmhirst, n.22, p.15.
Tagore did not share the optimism of the nationalists that with the disappearance of the foreign power from India all her internal conflicts and discord would disappear. With the vision of almost of a prophet he warned his countrymen that this attitude of complacency might lead to the eruption of the dark forces of lawlessness and chaos during the transitional period preparatory to the transference of power to the Indian hands. 40 In order to prepare

39. The speech is included in Rabindranath Tagore, Samuha. See Rabindra Rachanavali, Vol.XII, p.809. See also Sachin Sen, n.10, pp.186-87.
the ground for the Hindu-Muslim unity he supported the policy of granting special favours to the Muslims so that they might raise their position and become equal to the Hindus. The early acceptance of the English education by the Hindus helped them to occupy almost all the Government posts and services pushing the Muslims far behind. This gap, he thought, should be narrowed, and, therefore, he urged the Hindus to accept voluntarily the extension of special favours to the Muslims for the time being. When the limit of such patronage would be reached, the Muslims, he hoped, would understand the importance of unity and support joint action to realise their common interests. Tagore believed that the unequal position of the two major communities would naturally encourage the weaker group, the Muslims, to raise their status separately and to gain more than the Hindus. Tagore wrote: "It is true that if both of us remain together the net gain would be considerable, but the main consideration before the Muslims is whether they would gain more than the Hindus. Therefore, it would not be improper for the Muslims to maintain that it would ultimately go to their benefit if they could rise to greatness separately. ... At present the Muslims are struggling their way to eminence maintaining their separate identity. This is the real way to perfect union, however unpleasant it may appear today and whatever inconvenience it may cause us." 42

41. Rabindranath Tagore, Samuha in Rabindra Rachanavali, Vol.XII, p.810.
Gandhi was, however, opposed to the grant of special favour to the
Muslins so far as the employment to the Government service was con­
cerned. On 29 May 1924 he wrote in Young India: "So far as employment
in the Government departments is concerned, I think it will be fatal
to any good government, if we introduce there the communal spirit.
For administration to be efficient, it must always be in the hands
of the fittest. There should be certainly no favouritism. But if we
want five engineers we must not take one from each community, but we
must take the fittest five even if they were all Musalmans or Parsis.
The lowest posts must, if need be, be filled by examination by an
impartial board consisting of men belonging to different communities.
But, distribution of posts should never be according to the propor­
tion of the numbers of each community". 43 Here Gandhi thought in
ideal terms of administrative efficiency, but Tagore thought against
the background of the particular conditions of India. For the same
reason G. R. Das also favoured, as we have already pointed out, dis­
tribution of Government posts in Bengal along communal line. 44

The ultimate solution of the Hindu-Muslim problem, according to
Tagore, however, lay in an intellectual revolution similar to the
one which ushered in the modern age in Europe. In a letter to Kalidas
Nag he wrote in 1922: "The solution may come only with a change of
heart and with the change of time. Europe emerged into the life of
the modern age out of the darkness of mediaevalism only with the
extension of her knowledge and with a devoted pursuit of truth. In
the same way, our two communities, Hindus and Musalmans, have to
break away from the limitations and march ahead. If the whole race

43. "Hindu-Muslim Tension - Its cause And cure", Young India,
29 May 1924.
44. See pp. 214-215
is buried under the tomb of the burden of the past, there cannot be any progress, and human unity will remain an impossible dream. The barriers and inhibitions are inherent in our present mental make-up. These we must shake off before we can hope to attain freedom in any sphere of life. Such a radical change can come only with true education and spiritual discipline. We must discard such worn-out conventions as teach us to hug the cage and forget the wings. And then and then only we shall attain real well-being for all. Hindu-Moslem amity waits for the fullness of time."

The difference between Gandhi and Tagore in their approach to the communal problem was thus fundamental. According to the former its cause was religious and according to the latter its cause was social and historical. Gandhi found the solution in the revival of true religion and Tagore found solution in the rise of modernism.

The problem of untouchability came into prominence in the politics of India with the announcement of the Communal Award by Ramsay Macdonald in August 1932. Gandhi was then in Yerawda jail and it was evident to him that this Award would have the effect of perpetuating divisions within the Hindu society. He, therefore, decided to resort to a fast unto death from 20 September. Tagore was equally opposed to this Award, but he thought that the main struggle of the Hindus should be directed against their own social system, rather than against the British Government. The foreigners would naturally take advantage of the weaknesses of the Indians.

45. Rabindranath Tagore, "Hindu-Musalm written to Kalidas Nag" in Kalantar, n.18, p.318; see also Sachin Sen, n.10, pp.182-183.
and unless they could remove those weaknesses by their own efforts, no movement against the British would yield any result. When the editor of the Leader of Allahabad requested Tagore to give his opinion on the Communal Award, the poet wrote: "Things have come to such a state that I hate even to complain, knowing the determined attitude of our rulers and hopelessness of our situation. We cannot expect fair dealings from a power which, for its self interest, would perpetuate differences amongst our people regardless of the ultimate consequences, which cannot be good for itself. I for my own part would prefer to remain silent when no words of reason from us are likely to prevail."

Tagore, however, could not in fact remain silent, and within few days he issued the following statement from Santinekatan: "My advice to my countrymen is that they should ignore this award and focus all their forces for the united consideration of these new measures that will soon be inaugurated. The solution of the communal problem is in our own hands and we should take advantage of the new feeling of resentment that is sweeping intellectual circles in our country today against irrational communal and class differences, come to agreement between ourselves and thus remove one of the greatest obstacles in the path of our national self-expression. But let us not be sidetracked by emotional consideration and let us meet the real issues that will soon be revealed to us, united amongst ourselves and prepared for any contingency." Tagore, thus, did not recommend a struggle against the Communal Award. He asked his countrymen to take advantage of "the

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46. All quotations from Tagore's letters, statements and messages used in this paragraph are taken from Probhat Kumar Mukhopadhyay Vol. III, pp.447-449.
new feeling of resentment' caused by this Award to remove this evil from the Hindu society. He gave his support to the epic fast of Gandhi at Yeravda jail expecting its salutary impact on the Hindu society and not on the British Government. On 19 September he sent a message to Gandhi in which he stated: "It is worth sacrificing precious life for the sake of India's unity and her social integrity. Though we cannot anticipate what effect it may have upon our rulers who may not understand its immense importance for our people, we feel certain that the supreme appeal of such self-offering to the conscience of our own countrymen will not callously allow such national tragedy to reach its extreme length. Our sorrowing hearts will follow your sublime penance with reverence and love."

After Gandhi began his fast Tagore tried to promote in the country a movement against the caste division and the evil of the untouchability. In a meeting at Santineketan he said that not only Britain had put thousands of Indians behind the prison bar, the Indian society itself had imprisoned a large section of its people by denying them human rights. This social enslavement, he explained, had retarded India's political emancipation. In Santineketan a reform society was also formed for the eradication of the evil of caste discrimination from the Hindu society.

On 24 September Tagore started for Poona and he was present in the jail when Gandhi broke his fast, after the conclusion of the Yeravda Pact, better known as Poona Pact. He was, however,

not satisfied with this Pact, nor did he actually approve of the use of fasting to realise a political objective. In a letter to Amiya Chakravarty dated 3 April 1939 he wrote that though he was aware of the injustice involved in the Poona Pact, he supported it to save the life of Gandhi. Expressing his disapproval of Gandhi's political fasts he further wrote that fasting for spiritual development would have been consistent with India's tradition but fasting to realize a political objective by exercising pressure on human compassion was strange.\textsuperscript{49} After the Poona Pact Gandhi started a Harijan movement from jail and brought out an English journal under the name \textit{Harijan}. Its first issue was published on 11 February 1933 and it contained a famous poem on sweeper (Methar) composed by Satyendranath Datta and translated by Rabindranath Tagore. In May 1933 Gandhi started another fast which was, however, not supported by Tagore.\textsuperscript{50}

\textsuperscript{49} Probhat Kumar Mukhopadhyay, n.2, Vol.IV, p.162. It appears that Tagore at first supported Gandhi's fast against the Communal Award in expectation of its impact on the Hindu society and not of a political pact or an understanding with the British.

\textsuperscript{50} For Tagore's message to Gandhi on this occasion see D. G. Tendulkar, n.8, Vol.III, p.201. Tracing the origin of this fast which commenced on 8 May 1933 Gandhi wrote on 29 April: "I had gone to sleep the night before without the slightest idea of having to declare a fast next morning. At about twelve o'clock in the night something wakes me up suddenly, and some voice - within or without, I cannot say - whispers. 'Thou must go on a fast'. 'How many days?' I ask. The voice again says, 'Twenty one days'. 'When does it begin?' I ask. It says, 'you begin tomorrow'. I went off to sleep after making the decision. I did not tell anything to my companions until after the morning prayer" (D.G. Tendulkar, n.8, Vol.III, p.198). Moreover, there were reports of several cases of immorality among some of the Harijan workers, and Gandhi in a statement issued on 30 April wrote: "I want more workers of unassailable purity. Shocking cases of impurity have come under my notice. I would like my fast to be an urgent appeal to such people to leave the cause alone." (D.G.Tendulkar, n.8, Vol.III, p.199).
Gandhi's movement against untouchability received whole-hearted support from Tagore, but when Gandhi described the Bihar earthquake of 15 January 1934 as "a divine chastisement sent by God" for the sin of untouchability, he raised his strong voice of protest. In his statement of 24 January Gandhi observed: "For me there is a vital connection between the Bihar calamity and the untouchability campaign." He then added: "We who have faith in God must cherish the belief that behind even this indescribable calamity there is a divine purpose that works for the good of humanity". The 'good' which he expected to come out of this calamity was obviously greater public support behind his movement against untouchability. Tagore could not approve of such irrational statement even for the purpose of promoting a laudable reform movement, because, as he said in his rejoinder of 5 February, "this kind of unscientific view of phenomena is too readily accepted by a large section of our countrymen." If Gandhi could advance an argument against untouchability "by exploiting an event of cosmic disturbance", others, Tagore pointed out, might hold Gandhi's movement itself responsible for the catastrophe. He thought it unfortunate that Gandhi should thus strengthen in the country the force of 'unreason' which, in Tagore's language, "is a fundamental source of all the blind powers that drive us against freedom and self respect." In reply Gandhi reiterated his faith that "Visitation like droughts, floods, earthquakes and the like ... are for me somehow connected with man's morals." "I cannot prove," he continued, "the connection of the sin of untouchability with the Bihar visitation even though the connection is instinctively felt by me." Such arguments based on blind faith and denying the basic facts of science were regarded by Tagore as serious impediments to real freedom for which the nation was struggling. 51

51. For the three statements, two by Gandhi and one
This controversy took the form of a battle of arguments which enlightened the people, but did not embitter the relations of the two contestants, Gandhi and Tagore. During that period (November 1933 to August 1934) Gandhi undertook an all-India tour to promote his movement against untouchability and he was scheduled to come to Bengal for this purpose. But after the conclusion of the Poona Pact, there arose as we have mentioned earlier, a strong anti-Gandhi feeling in Bengal and there was a movement to 'boycott' his tour. Under such circumstances, Tagore issued a remarkable statement on 7 February 1934, welcoming Gandhi. He said: "I would be failing in my duty were I not to raise my voice of protest against the slanderous campaign that is being carried on against him. I have often disagreed with him and even quite recently criticized his belief ... But I have enough regard for the sincerity of his religious convictions and abiding love for the poor, to hold differences of opinion with him with respect. I offer him a hearty welcome."

In the field of education also there was a wide difference between the ideas of Tagore and those of Gandhi. Both carried on various experiments with education and developed new ideas on the subject. Tagore started his school at Santiniketan in 1901, and founded his university, Visva Bharati, in 1921. Tagore's approach to education was intellectual and cultural, and the memory of his school days led him to stress freedom in the pursuit of education in natural surroundings. The object of higher education, in his view

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by Tagore, see D.G. Tendulkar, n.8, Vol.III, pp.247-251.


was to develop one's personality, to rise above all parochialism
and to realise the truth and unity of mankind.\(^5^4\) Gandhi was also
equally concerned with the problem of education. The Phoenix settle­
ment (1904) and the Tolstoy Farm (1910) in South Africa, the Satya­
graha Ashram and Kochrab in Gujrat (1915), the Sabarmati Ashram (1917)
and similar other institutions formed by Gandhi and his followers
in different parts of India carried on an experiment with a new
way of life including new methods of education.\(^5^5\) His ideas on edu­
cation were clearly formulated in 1937 when he explained his scheme
on Basic Education with the expectation that it would be implemented
by the Congress ministries already formed in different provinces.
Though his scheme was prepared in the context of the specific situ­
tion of India - the problem of spreading education among the milli­
ons of its poverty-stricken people with practically no fund at the
disposal of the Government - its basic approach was fully consistent
with the Gandhian philosophy of life. Gandhi judged the problem of
education from the moral standpoint, and in his concept of morality,
manual labour, self-reliance and austerity were given high priority.
His scheme of Basic Education was prepared in the light of these
values and it was meant to be applied to the existing conditions
of rural India.\(^5^6\) The scheme had two major features. First, it was

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\(^5^4\) Tagore's ideas on education remain scattered in his various
essays and speeches written through a long period of time. His
books \textit{Shiksha} in Bengali and \textit{Towards Universal Man} contain many
of his essays and addresses on education. See also Himanshu
Bhusan Mukherjee, \textit{Education For Fulness : A Study of the Educa­
tional Thought and Experiment of Rabindranath Tagore} (Asia
Publishing House, Bombay, 1962) and Sunil Chandra Sarkar. \textit{Tagore's
Educational Philosophy and Experiment} (Visva-Bharati, 1961).

\(^5^5\) A chronological survey of Gandhi's educational ideas is found in
M.S. Patel, \textit{The Educational Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi} (Navajivan,
See also R.S. Mani, \textit{Educational Ideas and Ideals of Gandhi and
Tagore} (New Book Society of India, New Delhi, 2nd ed. 1964). The 5th
Chapter of this book (pp. 53-79) deals with Gandhi's Educational
Experiments.

\(^5^6\) For details of the scheme see D.G. Tendulkar, \textit{n.s.}, Vol. IV, Chapter
on Basic Education, pp. 186-203.

\textit{Contd. ...}
craft centred. Craft was regarded not simply as one of the subjects of education; the whole education was centred around the craft. Secondly, it was a self-supporting scheme of mass education. The products of the manual labour of the students would be sold in the market and the income derived from the sale would provide finance to run the educational system.

This scheme of Gandhi could not satisfy Tagore and he wrote: "As the scheme stands on paper, it seems to assume that material utility, rather than development of personality, is the end of education." "I cannot congratulate a society or a nation", he added, "that calmly excludes play from the curriculum of the majority of its children's education and gives in its stead a vested interest to the teachers in the market value of the pupil's labour." Gandhi wanted an educational system which was in conformity with his ideals of plain living and ascetic morality, but the intellectual, cultural and aesthetic aspirations of Tagore were not satisfied with it.


In February 1940, one year before the death of Tagore, Gandhi came to Santineketan and the poet gave him a letter appealing to him to look after the interests of the Visva-Bharati after his (poet's) death. In reply Gandhi assured Tagore of his best assistance. Tagore knew that Gandhi did not share the ideals of the Visva-Bharati, but he did not find a better man to rely upon. This shows the tremendous impact of Gandhi on Tagore. It was not ideological. It was human. It was the impact of Gandhi, not of Gandhism. Tagore was the greatest admirer of Gandhi, without being his follower.

Few years after the death of Tagore, Gandhi again came to Santineketan in December 1945 and in course of a conversation said: "I have found no real conflict between us. I started with a disposition to detect a conflict between Gurudev and myself but ended with the glorious discovery that there was none." This view has been upheld by many writers. The entire book of Gurdial Mallik is based on this assumption. K.R. Kripalani also maintained that "Tagore and Gandhi have confirmed and upheld each other and represent a fundamental harmony in Indian civilization". After a study of the

58. These two letters were published in Visva-Bharati News, April 1940 as well as in Harijan, 2 March 1940.


various issues on which they differed, it is difficult to maintain that there was no real difference between them. Tagore carried the tradition of rationalism and liberalism of the nineteenth century Bengal and Gandhi represented the tradition of asceticism and renunciation of ancient times. Rammohun Roy, the founder of modern India, was the spiritual predecessor of Tagore but Gandhi did not belong to the school founded by him and other champions of modernization. In Tagore's view Rammohun was the noblest man of the present age, but in Gandhi's view he was a dwarf in comparison with Sri Chaitanya, Kavir and other religious leaders of medieval India. This divergent estimate about the role of Rammohun emanated from a fundamental difference in their outlook towards life and civilization. This difference prevented Tagore, as he himself analysed, from accepting Gandhi's line of action as his own. Tagore was a constructive genius. Gandhi also had a constructive programme. But the society which Gandhi was aiming at was different from the society which Tagore had in view. Moreover, the Constructive Programme was only a part of Gandhi's activities, and he believed that destruction was inherent in construction. But as a creative artist and as the builder of the cosmopolitan institution of Visva-Bharati, Tagore did not think of the Indian problem in terms of destruction. Both believed in non-violence, but if Gandhi tried to fight non-violently, Tagore wanted to create

62. Rabindranath Tagore, "Charkha" in Kalantar, n.18, p.276; also "East and West" in Towards Universal Man, n. 18, p. 133.

For Gandhi's derogatory remarks on Rammohun Roy see Young India, 24 April 1921.
non-violently. He thought that Gandhi's technique of national mass movements contained within them the seeds of violence. Both were humanists and loved mankind. Tagore stood for a harmony between the East and the West and he found good points in both the civilizations, but Gandhi fought against the West, and believed that Europe represented "not the spirit of God or Christianity but the spirit of Satan." Both stood for human values, and thought that the growing worship of the Mammon had gradually eclipsed the role of values in human lives. Gandhi considered the values integrally related to an ascetic view of life — he thought them in terms of simplicity and austerity. Tagore developed his values in the context of his aesthetic philosophy and considered them in relation to joy and beauty. Tagore found no special virtue in poverty and welcomed machinery which increased man's productive power and contributed to his prosperity. Gandhi was opposed to machinery primarily because he feared that the growing prosperity would lead to the gradual decline of the ascetic view of life and the ethical values associated with it. Tagore found himself quite in tune with the modern spirit represented by

64. Rabindranath Tagore, Samabaya Niti (Visva-Bharati, 1960), pp. 47-48, 44.
65. Gandhi wrote: "Machinery is like a snake-hole which may contain from one to a hundred snakes". Hind Swaraj (Navajivan, Ahmedabad, 1962), p. 96.

scientific progress, and he found no conflict between it and
the spiritual development of man. Fear of the technological
progress led Gandhi, on the other hand, to take a lukewarm atti­tude towards science, and he found in the modern trend a danger
to man's spiritual life. Both Tagore and Gandhi were essentially
humanists, but Gandhi led the nationalist struggle as a part of
his experiment to establish in the world a non-violent society,
and Tagore, except for a short period during the anti-partition
agitation in Bengal, remained outside the active nationalist
struggle. Gandhi tried to channelise nationalism through non-
vioence, Tagore was a votary of non-violence, and condemned
nationalism. The difference between Gandhi and Tagore was
real, though both of them understood and appreciated the
excellence of the other.

66. Tagore wrote: "If you ask me what true modernism is, I will
say it is to look at the world with a detached objective
vision, and not with personal bias and prejudice. Only such
vision is luminous and pure, and results in pure spiritual
bliss. Modern poetry should try to cultivate that detachment
of spirit which modern science has been able to achieve. But
there is no point in calling it modern, it is eternal." Rabindranath Tagore, Sahityer Pathe (Visva-Bharati, 1356 B.E.),
p. 117.
Abu Sayeed Ayyub has quoted this passage in his article
"The Aesthetic Philosophy of Tagore" in Rabindranath
Tagore: A Centenary Volume, n. 22, p. 84.

67. Tagore described nationalism as "the organized self-interest
of a whole people, where it is least human and least spiri­
tual." "Nationalism", he declared, "is a cruel epidemic of
evil that is sweeping over the human world of the present
age, and eating into its moral vitality". Rabindranath

68. The attitude of Gandhi's followers in Bengal towards Tagore
was, however, different. We have already referred to the
burning of foreign cloth in the courtyard of Tagore (see
Fn. 22).
Chittaranjan Das (1870-1925) dominated the political scene of Bengal during the period 1917-1925 which constituted the first phase of the Gandhian era of Indian politics. He, however, had developed strong nationalist feelings in the pre-Gandhian period and he was made a Vice-President of the Anusilan Samiti. In his career as a lawyer he became famous as the defender of national workers. He defended Brahma Bandhab Upadhyaya, Bipin Chandra Pal and above all Aurobindo Ghosh who was one of the accused of the Alipore Bomb Conspiracy Case (1908-09). He worked heart and soul without taking any fee to defend Aurobindo who was ultimately acquitted. After his acquittal Aurobindo, expressing his gratitude to C.R. Das, said: "He came unexpectedly, a friend of mine ... You have all heard the name of the man who put away from him all other thoughts and abandoned all his practice, who sat up half the night day after day for months and broke his health to save me — Srijut Chittaranjan Das, When I saw him I was satisfied." The nationalist culture and the freedom struggle of Bengal, particularly the Swadeshi movement, left a deep impression on his mind and he became directly involved in it. In a speech delivered at Darjeeling


on 16 October 1905 Das observed: "The chief reason for which this Swadeshi movement is desirable appears to me that it provides the first step towards the path of self-reliance of the Bengali nation. For the same reason it is my firm conviction that our national progress depends upon the success of this movement. The histories of the world have proved that no nation can help another. As every person has to work out his future through his personal exertion, so is the case with a nation. It has to depend upon its own strength for achieving freedom. But if you depend on another nation, even in thousands of years you will not find the path of real freedom."  

Presiding over the Bengal Provincial Conference held in Calcutta in April 1917 he declared: "I feel a peculiar pride in calling myself a Bengali. The Bengalis have a mission of their own. They have their own Shastras, philosophy, practices, religion and valour. They have their own history and future. Those who describe the Bengalis as lacking in human qualities do not know my Bengal."  

By that period Das had developed a distinct theory of nationalism.

After coming in contact with Gandhi he entered into the arena of national politics and he soon rose into prominence by dint of his burning patriotism, sterling sincerity and great

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3. Ibid., p. 28. For full text of this speech see Manindra Dutta and Haradhan Dutta (ed.), Dashbandhu Rachana Samagra (Bengali Writings and Speeches) (Tulikalam, Calcutta, 1384 B.E.), Part II, pp. 150-156. Henceforth this book will be referred to as Bengali Works.

organizational powers. His nationalism also became all-India in character and he tried to accept many of the Gandhian ideas within the framework of his nationalist ideology. We shall now explain his views on nationalism and try to examine to what extent he was able to integrate them with Gandhism.

C.R. Das was much influenced by the cultural awakening of Bengal of the nineteenth century, particularly by its nationalist trend, which has been described by us in Chapter I. In an important speech delivered at Barisal on 14 October 1917 he traced the origin and growth of national consciousness in Bengal which provides us with a clue to understand his nationalist outlook and to locate the source of his inspiration. In this speech he described Rammohun as "the founder of modern Bengal" and admitted that "he was the first who held before us the ideal of freedom." He, however, did not believe that Rammohun and the movement which he inaugurated was able to touch the soul of Bengal. This failure, according to him, was due to the fact that his "ideal of freedom and culture was borrowed from European culture and civilization." What Rammohun stood for, in Das' words, was "the Europeanization of our culture systems." During that period, Das felt, Bengal did not become aware of its identity. "I do not admit", he asserted, that "in the days of

5. For a detailed account of his biography see Prithwis Chandra Roy, Life and Times of C.R. Das (Oxford University Press, London, 1927).

6. For his Barisal speech see Manindra Dutta and Haradhan Dutta (ed.), Deshbandhu Rachana Samagra (English Writings and Speeches) (Tulikalam, Calcutta, 1977), pp. 28-52. Henceforth this book will be referred to as English Works.
the Rajah the nation was self-conscious." In another lecture he pointed out that the Bengalis were superficially inspired by the scientific thoughts of Rammohun but they ignored his more important message that their ultimate salvation must be found in their own culture and civilization. "Das was, however, deeply influenced by the tradition of Bankim, and he believed, as he said in his Barisal speech which we have already referred to, that he (Bankim) made "an honest and sincere attempt to discover the soul of Bengal." Bankim's attempt to identify Bengal with the goddess Durga and "to dive deep into the history of our people, into the instincts and culture of our people" impressed him beyond measure. He considered the ideas of Sasadhar Tarkachuramani also as a "landmark in the history of the progress of Nationalism." Tarkachuramani, it may be pointed out here, was a blind defender of Hindu orthodoxy and stood for the revival of Puranic religion with all its conventional rites and ceremonies. Bankim at first co-operated with him in the paper Prachar, but, as one modern scholar has put it, "soon the rationalist Bankim found it difficult to share or approve the views of Sasadhar who had abandoned reason and defended orthodoxy quite blindly." C.R. Das did not deny the orthodox and irrational character of the movement started by Sasadhar, and referring to the "agitation of Sasadhar and his friends," he said at Barisal: "It was not a national movement — it started with a hatred of things European,

irrational hatred of everything European ..." Still he regarded this agitation as historically significant from the point of view of the development of nationalist ideas in Bengal. It was significant, because, as he said in the Barisal speech, through this agitation "the nation began to turn on itself, the nation began to criticise the wealth of culture which was brought from Europe."

The criticism of foreign culture and appreciation of one's own heritage — even if they were blind and irrational — were considered by Das necessary for the growth of nationalism. According to his analysis the national spirit implied in the ideas of Sasadhar was given a wider and more liberal interpretation by Vivekananda. He observed in the same speech: "All that was narrow in the movement of Sasadhar was widened, a more liberal note was sounded. The national spirit of which the first note was heard in the movement of Sasadhar was developed by Swami Vivekananda and in his hands it became a trumpet." All these ideas prepared Bengal for the swadeshi movement when, as he said in Barisal, "we became fully conscious of the futility of European culture." In an essay on Bankimchandra Das compared his contributions to the swadeshi movement with those of Voltaire and Rousseau to the French Revolution. 9 C.R. Das, thus, may be described as a spiritual descendant of Bankim Chandra.

C.R. Das believed that every nation, like every individual has a distinctive feature of its own, and the development of a country must take place in accordance with its own native

9. Manindra Dutta and Haradhan Dutta (ed.), n.3, Bengali Works, Part II, p. 188.
He considered history as the revelation or manifestation or 'leela' of God, and in the Presidential address which he prepared for the Ahmedabad session of the Congress held in December 1921 (he could not deliver it because of his imprisonment) he wrote: "Our philosophy recognizes that there is an essential unity behind all diversities and that these diversities — 'Baichitrya', if I may use that expression — constitute the 'Leela' of the Supreme Reality ... God's 'Leela' requires that each and every manipulation must have an unhampered growth. Every nation on the face of the earth represents such a manifestation. Like the diverse flowers in a garden the nations must follow their own laws and work out their own destiny so that in the end they might each and all contribute to the life and culture of Humanity. In order that Humanity may be served, and the ultimate Reality realized, that essential something which distinguishes one nation from another, must have unfettered growth. This is the essence of the doctrine of nationalism for which men have been ready to lay down their lives." 12

Though we found an echo of this doctrine in Vivekananda, Das believed that the good and weak points of a national life were so inextricably intertwined that it was not possible to separate them and no country could adopt even the good points

11. In his famous presidential address at the Gaya session of the Congress in December 1922 he said: "I took upon history as the revelation of God." See Manindra Dutta and Haradhan Dutta (ed.), n. 6, English Works, p. 157.
12. Ibid., p. 111.
from the national life of another country. It was, therefore, according to C.R. Das, not possible for India to regenerate herself on the basis of what might appear as the excellence of European culture. The development of each country would take place according to its own genius, and real co-operation among different countries of the world would begin after all countries have found scope for such development. Therefore, for the future development of India a sympathetic attitude towards her national genius was, in the opinion of Das, more important than an appreciation of the good points of the British or the western culture. That was the reason why Das believed that in spite of its parochialism, Sasadhar Tarkachuramani's approach was a landmark in the evolution of the national ideas of Bengal. By national independence he meant "the right to develop our own individuality and evolve our own destiny along our own lines", and this development, he emphasized, must remain "unembarrassed by what Western civilization has to teach us and unhampered by the institutions which the West has imposed on us." He became a critic of the western civilization not because it was inferior as such but because it was incompatible with the Indian tradition. He said: "I object then to the perpetuation of British domination as in my opinion it is impossible to find the fulfilment of our nationality, our individuality, our personality so long as that domination continues. In arriving at this conclusion

I have entirely ignored the character of the British rule in India. That rule may be good or bad, it may be conceded that it is partly good and partly bad, but my conclusion is based on the view that there is inherent in subjection something which injures national life and hampers its growth and self-fulfilment. Whether within the Empire or outside it, India must have freedom so that she may realize her individuality and evolve her destiny without help or hindrance from the British people.\^15

When C.R. Das tried to explain the basic features of what constituted the 'individuality' of Indian nationalism, he came very near to the Gandhian ideas. He condemned industrialism because it was opposed to the national tradition of Bengal and of India. In his Presidential speech at the Bengal Provincial Conference held in Calcutta in April 1917 he referred to this point and said that India must eschew the path of industrialism which was foreign to her nature.\^16 Instead of running after the western standard of comfort, the Indian people, he said, must remain content with their traditional simple life.\^17 After referring to many of the evils of industrialism he said that in spite of these evils it arose in Europe because it was consistent with the European character, and Europe, he maintained, would be able to solve these problems in its own way.\^18 But India must not follow that path. In an essay on \textit{Swarajer Patha} (on

\begin{itemize}
\item \textbf{15.} \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 101-102.
\item \textbf{16.} \textit{Manindra Dutta and Haradhan Dutta (ed.), n.3, Bengali Works, Part III}, p. 35.
\item \textbf{17.} \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 31, 42-43.
\item \textbf{18.} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 39.
\end{itemize}
the way to swaraj) he wrote that India's economy must be different from that of Europe and India should not enter into a competition with Europe in this field. During the non-co-operation movement, Das, addressing a large meeting of the students in Calcutta, said: "Keeping harmony with our past culture and tradition ... we want to realise ... what is in our blood for the salvation of our country. I want that. I do not want Bolshevism, I do not want industrialism. In short, I do not want Europeanism. I want to be a free man, and be myself again." When Das opposed industrialism on the ground that it was not in harmony with India's past culture and tradition, he naturally supported the old decentralized economic order of India based on agriculture and small industries. This led him to take a sympathetic attitude towards Gandhi's Charkha economy. Moreover, he believed that charkha would help to prevent, in large measure, the economic exploitation of India by Britain, and economic independence in this important field would help her to gain political independence ultimately. In a largely attended public meeting in Patna he said in February 1921: "Now just consider what charkha can do for you. From Manchester comes 50 crores of rupees worth of cloth every year. You will not have to pay these 50 crores of rupees which go out of India ... If the work is carried on all this year by every student and every householder, we will

19. Ibid., pp. 92-93.
20. Manindra Dutta and Haradhan Dutta (ed.), n.6, English Works, p. 79.
see the economic independence of India to-day. Along with it you will achieve your political independence."

C.R. Das' support to non-violence was also largely due to his faith that violence was foreign to the basic trend of India's tradition. In his famous Presidential address at the Bengal Provincial Conference held at Faridpur on 2 May 1925 he said: "... the method of violence is hardly in keeping with our life and culture." He did not deny that there were many examples of wars and violent events in Indian history, but these acts of violence, he maintained, must not be confused with "the real bent of our genius." "Violence is not a part of our being as it is of Europe," he asserted. He pointed out that the village organizations of India were guided mainly by customs and traditions without the application of force and their disputes were settled by peaceful arbitration. This peaceful tradition, according to Das, created a non-violent temperament in India, and "anything contrary or antagonistic to this tempera-

ment," he said, "is a method which is not only immoral from the highest standpoint, but is bound to fail." Moreover, he believed that the modern states were militarily so strong and organizationally so centralized that it was impossible to overthrow them by violent methods. In his Presidential speech at Faridpur he observed: "It is no use quoting the incidents of the French and


23. Ibid., p.321. Other quotations from the Faridpur speech in this paragraph which are not separately footnoted are taken from this page.
other Revolutions. Those were days when the people fought with spikes and often won. Is it conceivable that at the present moment we can overthrow any organized government of the modern type with such method? I venture to think that any such armed revolution would be impossible even in England to-day." In an appeal to the students during the non-co-operation movement he stated: "The armed organizations of powerful bureaucracies all over the world have made armed resistance well nigh impossible." Apart from these two grounds, C.R. Das thought that a violent movement by its very nature was incompatible with the ultimate ideal of freedom. In his Presidential address at the Gaya session of the Congress in December 1922 he said: "Violence defeats freedom." He explained his idea thus: "I maintain that no people has yet succeeded in winning freedom by force and violence. The truth is that love of power is a formidable factor to be reckoned with, and those who secure that power by violence will retain that power by violence. The use of violence degenerates them who use it, and it is not easy for them, having seized the power to surrender it. And they find it easier to carry on the work of their predecessor, retaining their power in their own hands. Non-violence does not carry with it that degeneration which is inherent in the use of violence." C.R. Das thus gave three major arguments in favour of his acceptance of the Gandhian theory of non-violence: first,

24. Ibid., p. 322.
25. Ibid., p. 82.
violence was against the tradition of the Indian people; second, it was impossible to overthrow a modern well-organized state by violent means, and third, the end of real freedom cannot be reached through violence as a means. The first two arguments were, at any rate, justified on nationalist ground.

C.R. Das gave his support to the Constructive Programme of Gandhi also. He made a distinction between independence and swaraj. Independence, he said, was simply a negative ideal — the mere absence of foreign rule. Swaraj, which included independence, had a positive content also. It was Gandhi's Constructive Programme which, according to Das, gave the positive content to the concept of Swaraj. The Outline Scheme of Swaraj in which C.R. Das and other leaders of the Swaraj Party explained the broad principles and basic features of the future Government of India was also based mainly on Gandhian principles. The draft envisaged a governmental structure on the basis of Panchayats with genuine decentralization of administration, substantial distribution of power, maximum of local autonomy and minimum of control by higher centres.

27. C.R. Das' attitude towards the Constructive Programme has been discussed in Chapter IV also.

28. In his Presidential address at the Bengal Provincial Conference at Faridpur (2 May 1925) Das stated: "Independence, to my mind, is narrower ideal than that of swaraj. It implies, it is true, the negative of dependence; but by itself it gives us no positive ideal. I do not for a moment suggest that independence is not consistent with swaraj. But what is necessary is not mere independence, but the establishment of swaraj," Manindra Dutta and Haradhan Dutta (ed.), n.6, English Works, p. 318.

29. For the full text of the Outline Scheme of Swaraj see P.C. Bamford, Appendix D, pp. 223-239. This document was placed before a meeting of leading members of the Swaraj Party in Bombay on 29 January 1923.
Thus we find that C.R. Das was much influenced by Gandhism. As stated earlier, it appears to us that he accepted some basic Gandhian ideas within the framework of his nationalist ideology. He was opposed to industrialism because it was against the tradition of India. He accepted non-violence at least partly because he believed that it was impossible to overthrow the British Raj by violent means and that violence was not in keeping with the basic character of the Indian mind.

In spite of his acceptance of various Gandhian ideas, the basic approach of Das was different from that of Gandhi. The main objective of C.R. Das was to make India free and not to build up a new civilization in the world. He asked the Indians not to follow the European path, but did not denounce the western civilization as satanic. His was not a world mission. His faith in non-violence did not prevent him from co-operating with the revolutionaries or from appreciating their virtues. In a speech at the Calcutta Corporation protesting against the arrest of its Chief Executive Officer, Subhas Chandra Bose, C.R. Das said on 29 October 1924: "If I believe in the revolutionary movement — if I believe it to-day that it will be a success — I shall join the revolutionary movement tomorrow. But my belief is that it will not succeed; that is why I do not join it. But so far as their enthusiasm for liberty is concerned, I am with them. So far as their love of freedom is concerned I am with them."

30. Ramananda Chattopadhyay, the famous editor of Modern Review, wrote about the close relations which Das maintained with the Bengal revolutionaries. See Modern Review, December 1924, pp. 740-741.

Here he opposed revolutionary violence simply on pragmatic ground — his faith that it would not succeed. On some occasions it is true he opposed violence on principle, but his attitude towards this subject was not as uncompromising as that of Gandhi. He held the British government itself responsible for the rise of violence in Indian politics. He said: "If a bomb was thrown anywhere or a pistol fired, we are accustomed to cry out 'It is a dastardly outrage'. ... But the time has come now to condemn not only the violence of the people ... but also to condemn the violence of the Government." "I really do not think that when a revolutionary, in the enthusiasm of his heart, fires a pistol or throws a bomb he is guilty of more violence that what the Government is to-day," he added. "I know the cause of these revolutionary movements," he asserted, "is nothing but hunger for freedom." Such an approach to the problem made it possible for C.R. Das to adopt not only a tolerant but also a respectful attitude towards the revolutionaries.

Though he gave his support to the Constructive Programme of Gandhi he did not consider it adequate for the political movement. He sought to supplement it by a struggle-oriented programme in order to keep the spirit of resistance alive. Through the non-violent non-co-operation movement Das tried to bring pressure

32. In his Presidential speech prepared for the Ahmedabad session of the Congress (December 1921) C.R. Das, for example, wrote: "The first (it refers to armed resistance) I must dismiss as beyond the range of practical politics. Even if it were not so, on principle I am opposed to violence." Ibid., p. 102.

33. Manindra Dutta and Haradhan Dutta (ed.), n.6, English Works, pp. 296, 297, 298.
on the government, and it does not seem that he had any faith in the Gandhian theory of change of heart. It appears that he did not accept the Constructive Programme in the true Gandhian spirit. This would become clear if we compare their attitudes towards the labour and peasant movements. According to Gandhi, these movements, as parts of constructive activities, should try to promote the interests of the workers and peasants without bringing them into the field of practical politics. C.R. Das could not accept this view. In the Gaya session of the Congress he said: "There is an apprehension in the minds of some Non-co-operators that the cause of Non-co-operation will suffer if we exploit Labour for Congress purposes. I confess again I do not understand the argument. The word 'exploitation' has got an ugly association, and the argument assumes that Labour and Peasants are not with us in this struggle for Swaraj. I deny this assumption." Das wanted to organize the peasants and workers both from the point of view of their special interests as well as from the point of view of the struggle for swaraj. Through the Constructive Programme Gandhi tried to lay the foundation of a new society but the main objective of Das was to use it for political independence of the country. He took khaddar simply as a 'symbol of swaraj' and not as a means of attaining swaraj. On the communal problem also the approach of Das was quite different from that of Gandhi. Gandhi's approach, as we have already seen, was religious, but Das' approach was

34. Manindra Dutta and Haradhan Dutta (ed.), n.6, English Works, p.163. In his scheme of Constructive Programme Gandhi categorically stated that the labour and peasants must not be exploited for the political movement. See Chapter IV for a detailed examination of his Constructive Programme.

35. Manindra Dutta and Haradhan Dutta (ed.), n.6, English Works, p. 166; see also P.C. Bamford, p. 83.
political and economic. He had serious misgivings about Gandhi's attempt to bring about Hindu-Muslim unity by supporting the pan-Islamic Khilafat movement. He tried to promote Hindu-Muslim cooperation by satisfying the political and economic aspirations of the Indian Muslims and not by encouraging their pan-Islamic sentiment. In a letter to Lajpat Rai he wrote: "I am not afraid of seven crores (of Muslims) in Hindustan, but I think the seven crores of Hindustan plus the armed hosts of Afghanistan, Central Asia, Arabia, Mesopotamia and Turkey will be irresistible." In the Bengal Hindu-Muslim Pact which was concluded by C.R. Das a large part of the Government posts remained reserved for the Muslims. Whether right or wrong this was a measure to satisfy the political and economic interests of the rising middle class Muslims. Gandhi was, however, thoroughly opposed to such reservations.

Thus, C.R. Das was essentially a nationalist who accepted Gandhian ideas as far as possible within the framework of his nationalist ideology. He influenced Bengal politics as a nationalist and not as a Gandhian.

Section III

Bipin Chandra Pal and Gandhism.

Bipin Chandra Pal (1858-1922) remained a severe critic of Gandhism all through his life. His political ideas passed through


37. See B.R. Ambedkar, Pakistan or Partition of India (Thacker, Bombay, 2nd ed. in 1945), p. 75.


39. For Gandhi's views see fn 43, Section I of this Chapter.
a process of evolution which contained three distinct stages. During the first phase (1885-1900), he, like many liberal thinkers of the time, was an admirer of the British rule in India, and had a burning faith in its liberating character. During the second phase (1901-1910) he appeared as the leader of the swadeshi movement of Bengal and an ardent advocate of swaraj or complete independence. During the third phase (1911-1932) he developed the idea of imperial federation and stood not for complete independence but for equal partnership within the Empire. The idea of imperial federation implied full autonomy in internal matters and a common policy in foreign and inter-Dominion affairs. Explaining its constitution Pal wrote: "This Federation, when it is properly and finally constituted, will necessarily have its own Cabinet or Council of the Empire. In this Council of the Empire, India will have an equal place and an equal vote with representatives of Great Britain and other self-governing Dominions. But submission to the decisions of the Federal Council in all inter-Dominion or international questions will not in any way destroy her title to sovereignty or her freedom except to the extent that every association does restrict individual freedom". During this period complete independence appeared to him as isolated independence. These ideas alienated Pal from the general ...

people of Bengal and he lost the popularity which he once enjoyed as the leader of the swadeshi movement. Therefore, when he opposed Gandhi, he did it more as an individual Congress leader than as a spokesman of the Bengali people.

Pal supported non-cooperation as a strictly constitutional movement with limited objective, but he feared that Gandhi's concept of absolute non-cooperation would not remain confined to the constitutional field. He said: "Absolute non-cooperation can never be a constitutional movement. The primary function of every state or government is the preservation of peace and order. Therefore, any movement which strikes at the primary functions of the state cannot call itself a constitutional movement". At the Calcutta Special Congress (September 1920) Pal, as we have already pointed out, opposed Gandhi's resolution on non-cooperation. He could not support the idea of an all-comprehensive non-cooperation launched to paralyse the government. If a non-cooperation movement was to be launched at all, it must be limited in character and must be preceded by an intensive campaign for educating the people. In spite of his opposition in Calcutta as well as in Nagpur, the non-cooperation movement was started, but even then Pal stood for a compromise with

2. Bipin Chandra Pal, Non-cooperation (The Indian Book Club, Calcutta, 1920), p.68. This book contains four lectures of Pal on non-cooperation delivered sometime before the special session of the Congress was held in Calcutta in September 1920.


According to Bipin Chandra Pal's son the main factor which led Pal to oppose Gandhi's movement in 1921 was the "dominance of the Khilafat Committee in the Non-cooperation movement". See Jhananjan Pal, "Bipin Chandra Pal" in A.C. Gupta (ed.), Studies in Bengal Renaissance (The National Council of Education, Bengal, Jadavpur, 1958) p.270.
the British and withdrawal of the movement. In his Presidential speech delivered at the Bengal Provincial Conference held at Barisal in March 1921 he said that the British Government should be persuaded to make a declaration accepting self-government for India at the end of ten years. This declaration, he said, should be interpreted to the people as swaraj which was promised to be won for them within one year, and the Congress then should withdraw the movement and come to a compromise with the British Government. He said: "It will spell disaster to our cause if we allow the masses to interpret this declaration in any other sense. That will be bound to create a reaction against the whole movement when the year is out, and they see that the British are still in possession of their country."^4

His ideal of imperial federation and his faith that a strictly constitutional movement would be able to realise it, led him to adopt a lukewarm attitude towards the non-cooperation strategy of Gandhi. He believed that the spirit of disobedience which was being fostered by the Congress leaders among the masses would create difficulties for India when she would become independent. During the Civil Disobedience movement he wrote: "Disobedience is easy to instigate, but exceedingly difficult to lay when the need of it is over. What the Indian leaders are sowing today, they will have to reap inevitably when they are charged with the responsibility of law and order themselves".\(^5\)

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Under the leadership of Gandhi the nationalist movement of all the provinces of India was brought under a central direction. Previously the different provinces had passed through different types of movements, and there was no all-India character of the struggle. Bipin Chandra Pal wanted to retain these regional or provincial variations instead of giving the movement an uniform character under the supreme command of Gandhi. As the President of the Provincial Conference at Barisal he asked the audience not to be guided by outside dictation because that would undermine provincial individuality. He said: "Conditions are different in different provinces, and though it may be conceded that the non-cooperation propaganda in the provinces should generally follow the non-cooperation resolution of the Nagpur Congress, complete freedom must be given to them to take up particular items of this programme and emphasize these more than the others with a view to suit provincial temperaments or conditions". Bipin Chandra Pal thought that the different provinces of India were at different levels of political development, and, therefore, a uniform type of movement could not be successfully applied to all of them. This might have prompted him to maintain provincial individuality. Or, it might also be an attempt to keep the rising influence of Gandhi within a limited area.

It has already been pointed out that one of the objectives of the non-cooperation movement was to achieve *swaraj*, though no attempt was made to give the term a precise meaning. Pal wanted to remove

this vagueness and to explain in concrete terms the form of government to be established under swaraj. In the Nagpur Congress (December 1920) he proposed the term 'Democratic Swaraj' instead of simply swaraj. As President of the Bengal Provincial Conference at Barisal (March 1921) he referred to the same point, and described his own ideal of 'Democratic Swaraj' which would be founded on village institutions. These institutions would send their representatives to elected District and Provincial Governments and ultimately to the Central Government. 7 Pal was very much impressed by the Swiss Constitution and in his concept of democratic swaraj such devices as initiative, recall and referendum were included.

Pal's repeated demand for a definition of swaraj (he raised this point several times in many of his speeches even before the Provincial Conference was held at Barisal) caused much resentment in the Gandhian circle of Bengal. C. R. Das, as the leader of the non-cooperation movement of Bengal, was also very much annoyed with Pal. He repeatedly pointed out that swaraj did not mean any form of government; it meant simply the right of the Indian people to have a government of their choice. Pal, however, thought that instead of asking the people to fight for an undefined ideal, the Congress should, as he said in its Nagpur session, explain to the

7. Bipin Chandra Pal, Rashtraniti in Bengali (Bipin Chandra Pal Institute, Calcutta, 1377 B.E.), pp. 59-60. This book contains 12 essays of Pal on various political subjects such as swaraj, western democracy, principles of representation, nationalism, etc.
people "the form of government that we must have in India in con­sonance with the spirit and traditions of our people, and in con­sonance with the spirit of modern thought and culture." 8

Referring to Pal's criticism, C.R. Das said in a public meeting at Patna on 11 February 1921: "The criticism which has been levelled against the Congress is this, namely, that the Congress has not defined what swaraj is. Many people at Calcutta have taken this objection. My answer to that is very simple. The very nature of Swaraj is such that it is impossible to define it. Swaraj is that which you realise in your heart today." 9 After the Presidential Speech of Pal at Darisal on 25 March 1921, C.R. Das reiterated his views emphatically on the following day stating that Swaraj was Swaraj and it did not refer to any form of government. This provoked Pal to observe: "I never dreamt that there would be any protest against my presentation of the ideal of Swaraj. This protest, coming from one who is the leader of the present movement in Bengal, has given me the greatest surprise in my life. I have been asked "Why seek to define swaraj? Why call it democratic or anything else? Swaraj is swarj. Swaraj is to be felt within and not defined by words ... I confess that I am very much perplexed. My only salvation from this confusion lies in accepting one of those various authorities as established on Divine revelation and rejecting the others as human fancies." "I regret my inability", Pal

continued, "to accept pontifical authority in politics after I have discarded it in religion.  
If this be the new gospel of swaraj, I am afraid, some people will find it difficult, if not impossible, to agree with those who proclaim or accept this gospel. I for one have no option but to part company with them. Conscience demands this practical protest against a tendency which I believe to be fatal to our future."  
He resigned in protest from the BPCC and the AICC and then entered the Indian Legislative Assembly as an independent member defeating the Swarajya candidate and two others in the elections of 1923.

The entire basis of Gandhi's popularity in India appeared to Pal highly irrational. It was built up, he thought, on the slippery foundation of the hero-worship mentality of the people which was

10. When he was a boy of about eighteen years of age, Pal raised his voice against the popular superstitions of the Hindu society and became a member of the Brahma Samaj severely straining the relations with his father. Later on, he rose to revolt against Keshub Chandra Sen when he developed what appeared to Pal irrational tendencies.


It may be recalled here that in 1923 C.R. Das himself placed before the country an Outline Scheme of Swaraj. As President of the Gaya session of the Congress (December 1922) he observed: "Our demand for Swaraj must now be presented in a more practical shape. The Congress should frame a clear scheme of what we mean by a system of government which may serve as a real foundation for Swaraj. Hitherto, we have not defined any such system of government. We have not done so advisedly, as it was on the psychological aspect of Swaraj that we concentrated our attention. But circumstances today have changed. The desire is making us impatient. It is, therefore, the duty of the Congress to place before the country a clear scheme of the system of government which we demand." Manindra Dutta and Haradhan Dutta (ed.), n. 9, p. 143.
inimical to the development of democratic spirit and free thinking in the country. His feelings against this aspect of the Gandhian politics were clearly expressed in a letter which he wrote to Motilal Nehru on 10 September 1920, immediately after the special session of the Congress in Calcutta was over. He wrote: "Blind reverence for Gandhiji's leadership would kill people's freedom of thought and would paralyse by the dead-weight of unreasoning reverence, their individual conscience". "I am not blind", he continued, "to the possibilities of good in the great hold that Mahatmaji has got on the populace, but there is the other side; and in the earlier stages of democracy these personal influences, when they are due to the inspirations of mediaeval religious sentiments, are simply fatal to its future. This does not remove the inherited slave mentality which is the root of all our degradations and miseries". 12

Though Bipin Chandra Pal did not, like many political thinkers and leaders of Bengal, denounce non-violence or praise the terrorist revolutionaries during this period, he considered Gandhi's theory of non-violence at least inconsistent with the universal Hindu faith and the Bengali nationalism in particular. He explained his views on this subject clearly and briefly in The Englishman which was reproduced in The Modern Review. His point of view can possibly be understood better by quoting him instead of trying to summarise him. He wrote:

The last bomb propaganda in Bengal was built upon the Gita doctrine of the soul. The soul never slays or is slain: this is the essence of the Gita doctrine. The apotheosis of the body which is implied in the doctrine of physical ahimsa as preached by Gandhi is unknown to our thought and culture. Does not God kill his creatures? But he kills not in anger or out of spite, but in love, not to destroy but to save. This is the central teaching of the doctrine of incarnation in Hinduism. Those who are killed by the hand of the avenging Lord go direct to the realm of eternal bliss. This is the Hindu belief.

The Gandhi dogma of non-violence is out of tune with this universal Hindu faith; in any case, it is entirely against the spirit of Bengalee Nationalism.

The Bengalee revolutionary has no patience with it. The Bengalee Moderate though opposed to it on political grounds and consideration of expediency, is not a believer in absolute non-violence. Violence is a crime, because it has no chance of success. Like rebellion, unsuccessful revolutionary propaganda is criminal. But if justified by its success, it ceases to be a crime but is counted as a virtue. The Bengali Moderate though publicly condemning the revolutionary, never refused to recognise that he helped him to win the Government over to his side. The political assassin paved the way of the Minto-Monley Reforms. This has been generally recognised though it was never publicly acknowledged by the Bengalee moderate. So the Bengalee politician, whether Moderate or Extremist,
is temperamentally opposed to the Gandhi cult of non-violence.\textsuperscript{13}

Bipin Chandra Pal was, however, not indifferent to the moral excellence of the Gandhian approach. When Gandhi, for example, started his fast unto death in 1924 for restoring communal harmony in the country, Pal said: "The thing that is happening in Delhi is really a very rare event in the history of the world. I have political differences with Mahatma Gandhi and on this account I have argued, debated and sometimes even quarrelled with him. But the place where he stands today is far above the field of politics. I doubt if an example of such great sacrifice has ever been set by anybody else in the past.\textsuperscript{14} In spite of this appreciation he remained essentially hostile to Gandhi's politics mainly because of two reasons: his changed attitude towards the British government and alleged mediaeval foundation of Gandhism.

\textsuperscript{13} The Modern Review, July 1925.
Subhas Chandra Bose was born on 23 January 1897 in an upper middle class Kayastha family near Calcutta. When he met Gandhi for the first time in 1921, he was only 24 while Gandhi was about 52 years old. Therefore, the social and political ideas of Bose were developed and matured at a time when the public life of India was dominated by Gandhi. But still the impact of Gandhi on the growth of Bose's ideas was only marginal. The political thought of Bose arose more in opposition to than under the influence of Gandhism. Gandhi's ideas failed to attract Bose because, in his boyhood, he, mainly under the influence of Vivekananda's writings, had developed a strong nationalist outlook, and the subsequent development of his political thought was determined mainly by the logic of militant nationalism. He was indeed the highest produce of the nationalist thought that developed in Bengal in the pre-Gandhian period described by us in Chapter I.

In many of his letters written during his student life he referred to Vivekananda and his ideas with great admiration and profound respect. He tried to build up his character in accordance with the ideas and principles preached by Vivekananda with

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1. The Kayastha of Bengal are an aristocratic and intellectual class. Generally they are Sakti worshippers and possess the qualities of warriors like that of the Khatriya communities of Northern India.

2. See, for example, his letters to his friend, Haranta Kumar Sarkar, dated 20 September 1915, 19 October 1915, 8 December 1915 and 23 March 1920 in Subhas Chandra Bose, Patravali 1912- contd ...
the ultimate objective of dedicating himself completely to the
service of his motherland. When he was only eighteen years of
age he wrote to his friend, Hemanta Kumar, about the "definite
mission" of his life, and observed: "I am not to drift in the
current of popular opinion". He wrote about his mental restless-
ness and inner urges which, he believed, "will not end in nothing
but will bring me something positive". In another letter of the
same period he told his friend that his life was not for "enjoy-
ment" - it was "a mission, a duty". There is possibly no other
leader of nationalist India who prepared himself so thoroughly
and so consciously from his very boyhood in order to play his role
in the struggle for freedom. In 1919 he was faced with a great
dilemma of his life. He was asked by his father to go to England
to study for the Indian Civil Service examination. Bose obviously
had no desire to join the I.C.S. and serve under the British, but
he agreed to go to England in order to, as he wrote to Hemanta
Kumar on 26 August 1919, obtain a "university degree". When he
was actually preparing for the Indian Civil Service examination
he wrote from Cambridge that he could not deceive himself into
believing that it was good to join the I.C.S., and asked his
friends not to form any "hasty opinion" about him. In July 1920
he sat for the examination and came out successful securing the

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3. Ibid., pp. 49, 52, 65.
4. Ibid., p.78.
5. Ibid., p.86.
fourth position. In September he informed his elder brother, Sarat Chandra Bose, that if the matter was left to his decision he would never join the I.C.S. In another letter he wrote:

"The illustrious example of Aurobindo Ghose looms large before my vision. I feel that I am ready to make the sacrifice which that example demands of me." In spite of opposition of his parents he was firm in his resolve to sever all relations with the I.C.S. and accordingly sent his resignation. In his letter to his elder brother, Subhas wrote on 28 April 1921: "We have got to make a nation and a nation can be made only by the uncompromising idealism of Hampden and Cromwell. ... I have come to believe that it is time for us to wash our hands clean of any connection with the British Government. ... The best way to end a Government is to withdraw from it. ... I sent in my resignation a few days ago." Before making his fateful decision on resignation, Subhas wrote two letters to C.R. Das, one on 16 February 1921 and another on 2 March, expressing his desire to join the nationalist movement. In July 1921 he came to India and started a career of ceaseless activities for the liberation of his country which continued unabated till he was heard no more.

6. Ibid., pp. 95-97.
8. Ibid., p. 116.
10. It is reported that Subhas Chandra Bose died at Formosa on 18 August 1945, in a plane crash after the I.N.A. suffered
We have referred to these incidents and letters of his early life because they revealed some of the basic aspects of his character and personality which shaped and moulded not only his activities but also his thought. He was an ardent nationalist, self-confident and self-willed, fully conscious of the mission of his life and constantly preparing himself with unflinching devotion to fulfil that mission. Inspired by the nationalist tradition of Bengal, and particularly by the ideals of Vivekananda and Aurobinda, he was determined to carry that tradition into the Gandhian period of Indian politics. A born patriot, he was not prepared to dilute his nationalism by other considerations and was, in course of time, profoundly influenced by nationalist movements in other countries. He believed that "Bengal has a message of her own", and that her "innate nature is always dynamic and not static". "She might well be called 'revolutionary'", he said. This 'dynamic' and 'revolutionary' tradition of Bengal led him to conclude that Bengal would play a leading role in the Indian struggle for Swaraj. He had prepared himself thoroughly to play his role in that struggle.

When Subhas Chandra Bose actually started his political career, India was in the midst of the Non-cooperation movement. reverses at the hands of the British. But there is a popular belief in Bengal that he is still alive and will appear at the opportune moment to lead the country.

He, however, in his letter to Sarat Chandra Bose on 28 April 1921 categorically stated that his decision to join the movement for India's independence was determined not by Gandhi's propaganda or Tolstoy's principles but by his own inner conviction. Tendulkar's observation that "inspired by Gandhi's appeal, Bose, at the age of twenty-five, resigned from the Indian Civil Service" did not contain the whole truth. During the freedom struggle the leader who impressed him most was not Gandhi but C.R. Das, who had a link with the nationalist movement of Bengal in the pre-Gandhian era.

We have already referred to Bose's first meeting with Gandhi in Bombay and with C.R. Das in Calcutta, and have seen how the former was depressing and disappointing and the latter exhilarating. He spoke eloquently about his debt to C.R. Das and described him as a "pure and living embodiment of self-sacrifice." In 1940, when his conflict with the Gandhian group reached its zenith, Bose, on the occasion of the death anniversary of Das, wrote: "The writer was a devoted disciple of the Deshbandhu and when speaking of the departed great, it is difficult for him to do so with restraint. The debt he owes him is one that cannot be repaid. In fact, Deshbandhu's teachings have become a part of his very being." He considered C.R. Das' activities as a continuation of the work.

15. See p. 177-178.
16. Subhas Chandra Bose, Taruner Swapna, n. 9, p. 64.
   See also his two letters on Das, one written to Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay, the great novelist of Bengal, and another to Hemendra Nath Das Gupta, the biographer of C.R. Das, Ibid., pp. 65-82.
17. Forward Bloc, 15 June 1940, editorial; Crossroads, p. 305.
started by Vivekananda. "The first step towards nation-building", he observed, "is the creation of true men and the second step is organization. Vivekananda and others tried to make men, while Deshbandhu tried to create political organization."  

The political thought of Subhas Chandra Bose was a continuation of the nationalist thought of Bengal reinforced by new nationalist experiments in Europe. If the dependent country was to accept any 'ism' whole-heartedly, it must be nationalism, said he. The burning passion of his life was to achieve complete national independence for his country, and like the militant nationalists of Bengal he believed that it could be realized only by an uncompromising mass struggle supported by violent movements whenever possible. He also thought about the political and economic systems that should be established in India after independence in order to make the country strong, powerful and prosperous. The two major problems around which his political ideas developed were: how to make India independent and how to turn India into a strong and prosperous country after independence. These were the two phases of the leftist movement led by him, and he tried to combine these two phases into one integrated political philosophy.

Essentially a fighter, he could not build up a comprehensive and unified political philosophy though he stated his ideas emphatically.

18. Selected Speeches of Subhas Chandra Bose (Publications Division, Government of India, Delhi, 1965), Biographical introduction by S.A. Ayer, p. 50.

and explained his purpose unambiguously. His approach to political philosophy as well as the basic values underlying that approach were different from those of Gandhi. If Gandhi tried to create history in the light of his philosophy, Bose tried to build up his philosophy in the light of historical experiences. Unlike Gandhi, Bose's approach was thus more pragmatic than ideological. Gandhi tried to create a new world based on old values, and Bose tried to re-arrange the existing system. Gandhi's methods were derived from his ideal system and Bose's methods were derived from successful historical experiments. The values underlying Gandhi's political thought were ethical in nature, and the values emphasized by Bose were political. Bose sought to adopt means which had proved their effectiveness in history, and Gandhi sought to adopt means with reference to their coherence with his ultimate objective. As a full-blooded nationalist Bose was a votary of Real Politik, and as a religious humanist, Gandhi led the freedom movement in order to realize his dream of a social order based essentially on truth, religion and non-violence. The conflict between the nationalist aspirations and the Gandhian ideals which existed in the Congress since 1920 found a strident expression through the Bose-Gandhi controversy.

In his search for new ideas Bose found little to accept from Gandhi except his technique of non-cooperation struggle. He was convinced of the immense potentialities of non-cooperation as a method of struggle against the British, but, like the revolutionary nationalists of Bengal, he believed that Gandhi was not

20. See pp. 187-188
in a position to use this method in the most effective way.
This failure of Gandhi, according to Bose, was due, in large
measure, to his attempt to link up the non-cooperation move­
ment with his philosophy of Charkha and the doctrine of non­
vioence. In November 1939, the Congress Working Committee,
at its Allahabad session, decided that regular spinning was
an indispensable condition for launching any movement and
Gandhi naturally gave full support to this resolution. By
that time Subhas Chandra Bose had already formed the Forward
Bloc, and though he was critical of Gandhism from the very
beginning, he now felt himself completely free to express his
ideas clearly and unambiguously. Referring to this resolution
of the Working Committee he wrote ironically in the editorial
of the journal Forward Bloc on 30 December: "Under the order of
the Congress Working Committee we have to spin yarns and also
spin our way to Swaraj."21 In his Presidential address at the
All-India Students' Conference at Delhi in January 1940 he was
more forceful and categorical. He said: "We are now expected to
spin our way to swaraj, but how can we be conceived of the effi­
cacy of this 'magic mantra' of Mahatma Gandhi when we know that
a century ago when the Indian people knew nothing but khadi and
hand-spinning, they fell a victim to foreign domination. No,
it is time to call a spade a spade and to tell our people clearly
that the idea of winning Swaraj through spinning is moonshine.
Spinning has its place in our national economy, but let it not be exalted into the method of our national struggle.
And let not the Independence Day pledge be vulgarised

by introducing clauses about spinning etc”. It may be mentioned here that the Congress Working Committee in its meeting at Wardha held at the end of December 1939 passed a resolution on the celebration of Independence Day falling on 26 January 1940, and decided that the independence pledge should contain a reference to the charkha. The amended pledge was to include the following passage:

"We shall, therefore, spin regularly, use for our personal requirements nothing but khadi and, so far as possible, the products of village handicrafts only, and endeavour to make others do likewise".

Bose opposed this revision of the independence pledge and introduction of the passage on Charkha. In a press statement he said:

"The political significance that is being given to spinning now and the manner in which it has been quietly converted by the Congress High Command into a method of political struggle need unequivocal condemnation; consequently the members of the Forward Bloc would be justified organizing separate meetings and demonstrations on Independence Day".

The way in which Gandhi insisted on non-violence had also, according to Bose, the effect of emasculating the non-cooperation movement. The suspension of the non-cooperation movement by Gandhi on account of the violence at Chauri Chaura and his refusal to launch a movement unless the people were prepared by his standard of non-violence appeared to Bose as serious obstacles for the

22. Ibid., p.243.
24. Ibid., p.221.
development of the national struggle for independence. Instead of imposing such conditions as Charkha or non-violence, he thought that to be successful, the non-cooperation movement should adopt the following measures:

1. Prevent collection of tax and revenue.

2. Through labour and peasant organization prevent all kinds of help from reaching the Government when they are in difficulty.

3. Win the sympathy and support of the Government's own supporters by means of our superior propaganda.

He referred to these measures for a successful non-cooperation movement in his Presidential speech at the third Indian Political Conference held in London in June 1933. After stating these measures he added: "The Congress has failed simply because it has not succeeded in giving effect satisfactorily to any of the above three measures".  

Five years earlier, in May 1928, Bose, referring to the same topic, said at the Maharashtra Provincial Conference:

"The movement will reach its climax in a sort of a general strike or country-wide hartal coupled with a boycott of British goods. ... And the bureaucracy in India will find that it is impossible to carry on the administration in the face of a country-wide non-cooperation movement. ... The bureaucracy will then be forced to yield to the demands of the people's representatives. ..."


26. Selected Speeches of Subhas Chandra Bose, n.18, p.38.
He thus tried to develop the non-cooperation movement into a country-wide challenge to the British rule and the whole Gandhian philosophy appeared to him not only irrelevant but a positive hindrance to this process. He, therefore, held that "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." Bose felt that instead of leading the nationalist struggle according to its own logic and dynamics, Gandhi virtually stultified the movement by trying to channelize it along certain preconceived notions which had behind them the sanction neither of human history nor of human nature. Non-violence under all circumstances, as prescribed by Gandhi, was against human nature, and history provided no example of a country becoming independent through this method. Referring to the Indian national movement Bose said in 1933: "The movement of the future must therefore be made to rest on an objective and scientific foundation in keeping with the facts of history and of human nature. Hitherto, too much appeal has been made to 'inner light' (it refers to the 'inner voice' politics of Gandhi) and to subjective feeling in guiding a political campaign which is after all an objective movement." 

After his escape from India in January 1941 he found an opportunity to apply violent methods directly against the British and he wrote in 1943: "India's immediate requirements were an

27. Subhas Chandra Bose, The Indian Struggle 1920-1942, n. 25, p. 357.
28. Ibid., p. 371.
uncompromising struggle with British Imperialism and methods of struggle more effective than what Mahatma Gandhi had produced. Gandhism had been found wanting, because it was wedded to non-violence. ... To this end (i.e. to win India's independence), all possible means should be employed and the Indian people should not be hampered by any philosophical notions like Gandhian non-violence...

"The Younger generation in India", he further observed, has, however, learnt from the last twenty years' experience that while passive resistance can hold up or paralyse a foreign administration, it cannot overthrow or expel it, without the use of physical force. Impelled by this experience, the people today are spontaneously passing on from passive to active resistance. .... The last stage will come when active resistance will develop into an armed revolution. Then will come the end of British rule in India".

Even before his escape from India Subhas Chandra Bose considered his country to be at war with British, and as a Congress leader he accepted non-violence as a strategy of war and not as a moral substitute for war. He, therefore, sought to reinforce non-violence with diplomacy and international propaganda. While explaining the defects of the Gandhian leadership and strategy, Bose told Romain Rolland about his (Gandhi's) "incorrigible habit of putting all his cards on the table, his opposition to the policy of social boycott of political opponents, his hope of a change of heart on the part of the British Government etc." Moreover", he wrote in another context, "it (Gandhism) lacked a proper understanding of inter-

29. Ibid., p.337.
31. Ibid., p.390.
national affairs and of the importance of an international crisis for achieving India's liberation." What appeared to be the shortcoming of the Gandhian leadership in the nationalist estimate of Bose was possibly its excellence judged in the light of Gandhi's own moral philosophy. He put all his cards on the table because secrecy was anathema to his moral approach. His fight was against an evil system and not against the individuals who had evolved it. He tried to change the system by changing the hearts of the individuals who administered it and not by slighting or boycotting them. He was even opposed to taking any advantage of an international difficulty of England for achieving India's independence. He wrote: "I do not want the freedom of India if it means the extinction of England or the disappearance of Englishmen ... There is no room for race-hatred there. Let that be our nationalism." Gandhi's attempt to raise Indian nationalism to an ethical doctrine was repugnant to Bose. He considered Britain as the enemy of his country and tried to defeat the enemy by all possible means.

32. Ibid., p. 337.
33. Jawaharlal Nehru, for example, wrote: "Our experience of 1930 and 1932 showed that it was easily possible for us to organize a secret network of information all over India. Without much effort, and in spite of some opposition, good results were produced. But many of us had the feeling that secrecy did not fit in with the spirit of civil disobedience ... Gandhiji condemn all secrecy in July 1933". An Autobiography (Allied Publishers, Calcutta, 1962), p. 337.
34. Explaining his views on the relations between the individuals and the system Gandhi wrote: "I have discovered that man is superior to the system he propounded. And so I feel that Englishmen as individuals are infinitely better than the system they have evolved as corporation." N.K. Bose, Selections from Gandhi, (Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad, 1957), p. 28.
35. Ibid., p. 42.
Gandhi's fight, on the other hand, was directed ultimately against the western civilization and his purpose was not to defeat but to convert the British people. His moral approach transcended all national boundaries. He wrote: "I work for India's freedom because my swadeshi teaches me that being born in it and having inherited her culture, I am fittest to serve her and she has a prior claim to my service. But my patriotism is not exclusive; it is calculated not only to hurt another nation but to benefit all in the true sense of the word." His nationalism was based on his religion, and he wrote: "My religion has no geographical limits. If I have a living faith in it, it will transcend my love for India herself." Bose's patriotism urged him to use every conceivable means to hurt the British interests. When the second world war broke out, Gandhi's humanism came in sharp conflict with Bose's nationalism. England's difficulty appeared to Bose as India's opportunity, but Gandhi wrote: "Strange as it may appear, my sympathies are with the allies. Willynilly, this war is resolving itself into one between such democracy as the west has evolved, and totalitarianism as it is typified in Herr Hitler." Referring to a resolution of the Congress Working Committee seeking "an honourable settlement" with the British Government even after the outbreak of the second world war, Bose wrote: "This is not Politics as we understand it or as the modern

36. Young India, 3 April, 1924.
37. Ibid., 11 August 1920.
38. Selected Speeches of Subhas Chandra Bose, n.18, p.228.
World understands it — but perhaps it is in accordance with Biblical or Vaishnavic traditions. Such a policy may appeal to one or to a few persons, but will it be acceptable to the nation that is more interested in freedom, which is a life-and-death question, than in the whims of individuals?  

"Gandhian Satyagraha", he wrote, "must end in a compromise". He, therefore, believed that Gandhi was incapable of leading the anti-imperialist struggle of India. "A genuine anti-imperialist", he wrote in 1941, "is one who believes in undiluted independence (not Mahatma Gandhi's substance of independence) as the political objective and in uncompromising national struggle as the means for attaining it."  

A political compromise", he further

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40. *Forward Bloc*, 25 November 1939, editorial; Crossroad, p.216.


Even after the Lahore session of the Congress accepted the ideal of complete independence and decided to start a civil disobedience movement in 1930, Gandhi was prepared to put off the movement and even the demand of complete independence if Britain would grant what was called the substance of independence. The substance of independence consisted of eleven items and Gandhi said: "Let the Viceroy satisfy us with regard to these very simple but vital needs of India. He will then hear no talk of civil disobedience." D.G. Tendulkar, n. 14, Vol. III, p. 10. The eleven items of the substance of independence were: Total prohibition; reduction of the exchange rate (of the rupee to the pound sterling) from 1s. 6d. to 1s. 4d.; fifty percent reduction of the land revenue; abolition of the salt tax; reduction of the military expenditure by at least fifty percent to begin with; reduction of civil service salaries by half; protective tariff against foreign cloth; enactment of a Coastal Traffic Reservation Bill (reserving to Indian ships the coastal traffic of India); discharge of all political prisoners save those condemned for murder; abolition of the Criminal Intelligence Department; issue of licenses to use fire arms for self-defence, subject to popular control.
observed, "is possible only when there is some community of interest. But in the case of England and India there are no common interests which can make a compromise between the two nations possible and desirable."\(^{43}\) As a militant nationalist Bose thought in terms of seizure of power and defeating the enemy, and, therefore, a political compromise with Britain was ruled out by him. As a satyagrahi Gandhi stood for the change of heart, and a "synthesis of the two opposing claims",\(^{44}\) and, therefore, compromise was inherent in his philosophy.

So far as the second phase of Bose's leftism was concerned, there was nothing common between it and Gandhism. In its second phase, leftism stood for socialism. Socialism, as conceived by Bose, would remain in alliance with nationalism, and promote the interests of the masses as against the vested interests. As a national socialist Subhas Bose stood for (a) rapid industrialization of the country under state ownership and state control, (b) a totalitarian state and a centralized government acting as the agent of the masses, and (c) one party rule over the country. He derived these ideas from the socialist experiments of the Soviet Union, and the nationalist resurgence of the Fascist countries as well as of Turkey under Kemal Pasha. Though he did not find any

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44. While explaining the Gandhian concept of satyagraha Bondurant observed: "The satyagrahi must recognize that elementary to his technique is the first step of a full realization that his immediate goal is not the triumph of his substantial side in the struggle but, rather, the synthesis of the two opposing claims." John V. Bondurant, *Conquest of Violence* (Oxford University Press, Bombay, 1959), p. 198.
nationalism in the Marxist philosophy and could not accept the materialist interpretation of history and "anti-religious and atheistic" tendencies of the communists, he was very much impressed by the success of the Soviet Union in ensuring rapid economic development of the country. "This marvellous progress in Russia in a very short period", he stated in 1938, "deserves our careful study and attention, irrespective of the political theories on which this State is based." The achievements of the Fascist or National Socialist Germany in promoting national unity and solidarity seemed to Bose equally impressive, but its success in the economic field appeared to him limited. In his famous address to the students of the Tokyo University in November 1944 he said: "National Socialism has been able to create national unity and solidarity and to improve the condition of the masses. But it has not been able to radically reform the prevailing economic system which was built up on a capitalistic basis." Bose was opposed to capitalism and the future ideology which he had in view would be based on socialism. It would be socialism in alliance with nationalism, though it would be different from National Socialism of Germany. Referring to the social system which he expected to arise in India he said in his Tokyo speech: "It will be a synthesis of Nationalism and Socialism. This is something which has not

46. Crossroads, p. 67.
been achieved by the National Socialists in Germany today." He considered India to be the most suitable country for the rise of such a philosophy because the first phase of her struggle (anti-imperialist phase) was nationalist in character and the second phase would take the form of socialist reconstruction.

Bose did not regard Communism and Fascism as mutually exclusive, and thought that instead of choosing one as against the other it was necessary to evolve a synthesis between the two. He wrote: "Considering everything, one is inclined to hold that the next phase in world history will produce a synthesis between Communism and Fascism." He expected India to evolve this synthesis to which he gave the name Samyavada, an Indian word which means equality. He has not explained anywhere in detail the meaning of this philosophy or Synthesis which was regarded by him as the ideology of the future. In an interview with the British communist leader R. Palme Dutt he, however, stated: "What I really meant was that we in India wanted our national freedom, and having won it, we wanted to move in the direction of socialism. This is what I meant when I referred to 'a synthesis between Communism and Fascism'. Perhaps the expression I used was not a happy one." He, therefore, expected the emergence of a new social ideology based on a synthesis between nationalism of the Fascists and Socialism of the Communists.

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While explaining his concept of a synthesis between Communism and Fascism he referred to certain traits common to both which would form the foundation of the new synthesis that he had in view. He wrote: "Both Communism and Fascism believe in the supremacy of the state over the individual. Both denounce parliamentary democracy. Both believe in party rule. Both believe in the dictatorship of the party and in the ruthless suppression of all dissenting minorities. Both believe in a planned industrial organization of the country. These common traits will form the basis of the new synthesis." Subhas Chandra Bose, therefore, believed in the supremacy of the state over the individual, dictatorship of the party, suppression of dissenting minorities and planned industrial organization of the country. Long before the actual formation of the Forward Bloc he expected the rise of a revolutionary party in India out of the left-wing revolt within the Congress. That party, which was yet to be born, would, according to the programme drawn up by him, stand for a Federal Government for India as the ultimate goal, but would believe in a strong Central Government with dictatorial powers for some years to come, in order to put India on her feet. It would denounce democracy in the mid-Victorian sense of the term (in other words, parliamentary democracy) and support government by a strong party bound together by military discipline. It would also believe in a sound system of state planning for the re-organization of the agricultural and industrial life of the country and would champion the interests of the masses and not of the vested interests such as the landlords, capitalists and money

lending classes. 53 This programme was a clear indication of some aspects of his political faith. "Dictatorship of the party both before and after Swaraj" — this must be our slogan for the future." Bose wrote this in a letter to the United Press of India from Vienna and it was published in the Indian papers on 15 March 1935. 54 He believed that it was possible for a party to represent the interests of the masses of a country, thus making the rise of a second party unnecessary. Under the control of such a party the state would become "the servant of the masses", promoting their welfare promptly and efficiently.

Though these views influenced the political activities of Bose he made no direct attempt to convert the Congress fully to these ideas. He, however, placed before the Congress a radical programme of rapid industrialization, and this gave rise to a conflict with Gandhi. As Congress President he pleaded for "abolition of landlordism", liquidation of agricultural indebtedness and "industrial development under state ownership and state control." 55 In independent India, "the state, on the advice of a planning commission", he declared, "will have to adopt a comprehensive scheme for gradually socialising our entire agricultural and industrial system in the spheres of both production and

53. Ibid., p. 312.
55. Subhas Chandra Bose, Fundamental Questions of Indian Revolutions, n. 47, p. 82.
appropriation." In reply to a question by Meghnad Saha, the well-known scientist of India, about the future economy of the country, Bose said in August 1938: "Whether we like it or not, we have to reconcile ourselves to the fact that the present epoch is the industrial epoch in modern history. There is no escape from the industrial revolution. We can at best determine whether this revolution, that is industrialization, will be a comparatively gradual one, as in Great Britain, or a forced march, as in Soviet Russia. I am afraid that it has to be forced march in this country." Inspired by the ideal of socialist planning Bose, as Congress President, set up an All-India National Planning Committee in December 1938. After the elections of 1937, held under the provisions of the Government of India Act 1935, the Congress governments were formed in seven provinces, and this gave the industrial policy of the Congress a chance of being immediately implemented at least in part. This made the formation of a Planning Committee relevant. Its formation was preceded by a conference of the Industries Ministers of the Congress-administered provinces which was held in Delhi on 2 October 1938. In his address at this conference Bose said: "No industrial advancement is possible until we pass through the throes of an industrial revolution. If the industrial revolution is an evil, it is a necessary evil. We can only try our best to mitigate the ills that have attended its advent in other countries."  

58. Selected Speeches of Subhas Chandra Bose, n.18, pp.82-83. See also Sankari Prasad Bose, Subhas Chandra O National Planning (Subhas Chandra and National Planning)(Joysee Prakashani, Calcutta, 1970) for a detailed account of Bose's ideas on National planning and industrialization.

59. Science and Culture, September 1938, p.139. This journal was edited by Meghnad Saha.

60. Crossroads, p.68. See also his speech inaugurating the All-India National Planning Committee at Bombay on 17 December 1938 in Selected Speeches of Subhas Chandra Bose, n.18, pp. 97-99.
Gandhi found in Subhas Chandra Bose a challenge to the ideals which he tried to promote through the Congress. Though there were many influential leaders in the Congress who did not agree with all the views of Gandhi, there was never in the past such an open challenge to his ideals from within the Congress. In February 1939 he (Gandhi), in reply to a question, pointed out that the Congress was not committed to any scheme of industrialization. He said: "Although schemes for industrialization of the country might be put forth, the goal that the Congress has set before it today is not industrialization of the country ... You cannot have mass awakening through any elaborate scheme of industrialization that you may put before the Kisans. It would not add a farthing to their income. But the AISA (All India Spinners Association) and AIVIA (All India Village Industries Association) will put lakhs into their pockets within a course of a year."\(^61\)

During the controversy that arose after the Tripuri Congress, Gandhi in a letter to Bose on 10 April 1939 referred to their divergent views on the economic policy, which, he maintained, would preclude their co-operation in the political field. He wrote: "Do you not see that we two honestly see the same thing differently and even draw opposite conclusions? How can we meet on the political platform? Let us agree to differ there and let us meet on the social, moral and municipal platforms. I cannot add the economic, for we have discovered our differences on that platform also."\(^62\)

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\(^61\) The Amrita Bazar Patrika, 19 February 1939.

The Planning Committee set up by Bose with Jawaharlal Nehru as its Chairman was also denounced by Gandhi in unambiguous terms. In a letter to Nehru (11 August 1939) he observed: "I have never been able to understand or appreciate the labours of the Committee ... It has appeared to me that much money and labour are being wasted on an effort which will bring forth little or no fruit." The vision which Subhas Chandra Bose had of a free India was thus fundamentally different from Gandhi's scheme of a decen­tralized social order based on cottage industries and village self-sufficiency with limited government. The social system as envis­saged by Gandhi was regarded by him as antiquated and thoroughly unsuitable for the modern age. Addressing the All-India Youth Congress in Calcutta on 25 December 1928 he observed: "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 the soul is so important that physical culture and military training can well be ignored." "In this holy land of ours", he continued, "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". "We have to live in the present and to

adopt ourselves to modern conditions," he asserted in the same speech. In a letter to his elder brother, Sarat Chandra Bose, Subhas wrote from the Presidency jail on 31 October 1940: "Gandhism will land free India in a ditch if free India is sought to be rebuilt on Gandhian, non-violent principles. India will then be offering a standing invitation to all predatory powers."

Bose condemned Gandhian social and economic ideas from the standpoint not only of a modernist but also, though to a lesser extent, of a socialist. In his Presidential address at the Karachi Conference of the All India Naujawan Bharat Sabha in March 1931 Bose referred to his idea of a Socialist Republic in India and in that context said: "The fundamental weakness in the Congress policy and programme is that there is a great deal of vagueness and mental reservation in the minds of the leaders. Their programme is based not on radicalism but on adjustments — between landlord and the tenant, between the capitalist and the wage-earner ....". As a socialist, Bose could not approve of the principle of adjustment or compromise between the interests of opposing classes on which the Gandhian doctrine of Trusteeship was based. The conflict between the Gandhian Congress and his own party, Forward Bloc, was described by Bose as the political expression of an underlying class struggle. In the editorial of his party journal he wrote: "We have no doubt that behind

64. Jagat S. Bright, Important Speeches and Writings of Subhas Bose, n. 12, pp. 57-58.
66. Selected Speeches of Subhas Chandra Bose, n. 18, p. 62.
the facade of a party struggle within the Congress, there is in reality a class struggle going on all the time." 67 "Socially, Gandhism", Subhas Bose wrote, "is intimately linked up with the 'haves' — the vested interests." 68

Though Gandhi did not believe in class struggle and he had no quarrel with the 'haves', he also was opposed to all exploitation, and developed a socialist idea on the basis of his philosophy of non-violence. He wrote: "Socialism is a beautiful word and so far as I am aware, in socialism all the members of society are equal. In it the prince and the peasant, the wealthy and the poor, the employer and the employee are all on the same level ... This socialism is as pure as crystal. It, therefore, requires crystal-like means to achieve it. Impure means result in an impure end. Hence the prince and the peasant will not be equalized by cutting off the prince's head, nor can the process of cutting off equalize the employer and employed ... To my knowledge there is no country in the world which is purely socialist. Without the means described above the existence of such a society is impossible." 69

Explaining the importance of means for the achievement of socialism he further observed: "If the revolution is brought about by violence

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67. Forward Bloc, 23 December 1939, editorial; Crossroads, p. 252.
68. Subhas Chandra Bose, The Indian Struggle 1920-1942, n. 25, p. 412.
the position will be reversed (that is, those who are now exploited would become exploiter), but not altered for the better. With non-violence, i.e., conversion, the new era which people hope for must be born". 70 He was opposed to the western concept of socialism because, as he wrote, "unfortunately, western socialists have, so far as I know, believed in the necessity of violence for enforcing socialistic doctrines". 71 In order to establish socialism Gandhi would not deprive the present exploiters, landlords or capitalists, of their property, but would appeal to them to use their property for the benefit of the people. In other words, he would convert them into trustees of their property. He explained his view thus: "As for the present owners of wealth they would have to make a choice between class war and voluntarily converting themselves into trustees of their wealth. They would be allowed to retain the stewardship of their possessions and use their talent to increase the wealth, not for their own sakes, but for the sake of the nation and therefore without exploitation". 72 With reference to the landlords he wrote earlier: "We may not forcibly dispossess the Zamindars and Talukdars of their thousands of bighas. ..... We need not dispossess them. They only need a change of heart. When that is done, and when they learn to melt at their tenants' woe, they will hold their lands in trust for them, will give them a major part of the

70. N. K. Bose, Selections from Gandhi, n.34, p.101.
72. N. K. Bose, Selections from Gandhi, n.34, p.80.
produce keeping only sufficient for themselves". process, therefore, eliminated both state ownership and confiscation of private property. In reply to a question about the ownership of the property held under trusteeship Gandhi said: "Legal ownership in the transformed condition was vested in the trustee, not in the State. It was in order to avoid confiscation that the doctrine of trusteeship came into play, retaining for society the ability of the original owner in his own right". To end exploitation from society, therefore, "what is needed", according to Gandhi, "is not the extinction of landlords and capitalists, but a transformation of the existing relationship between them and the masses into something healthier and purer". Gandhi believed that such a transformation was possible because the "so-called privileged classes", as he said in an interview published in the Amrita Bazar Patrika, "are not insusceptible to the higher appeal". "It has been my invariable experience", he continued, "that a kind word uttered goes home to them. If we win their confidence and put them at their ease, we will find that they are not averse to progressively sharing their riches with the masses". He, therefore, did not believe, as he said in the same interview, that "the capitalists and the landlords are all exploiters by an inherent necessity, or that there is a basic or irreconcilable antagonism between

73. Ibid., p.83.
74. Ibid., p.102.
75. Ibid., p.93.
their interests and those of the masses". 76

It has already been pointed out that Subhas Chandra Bose did not believe that the interests of the landlords and the peasants, and of the capitalists and the workers could be reconciled and a harmonious relations between them could be established. The interests of these classes were regarded by him as mutually exclusive and he felt that the conflict of their interests would affect Indian politics not only after independence but during the freedom movement itself. He wrote: "The Mahatma has endeavoured in the past to hold together all the warring elements - landlord and peasant, capitalist and labour, rich and poor. That has been the secret of his success, as surely as it will be the ultimate cause of his failure. ... The vested interests, the 'haves', will in future fight shy of the 'have nots' in the political fight and will gradually incline towards the British Government. The logic of history will, therefore, follow its inevitable course. The political struggle and social struggle will have to be combined simultaneously". 77 Gandhi, Bose was certain, was not in a position to lead such a revolutionary struggle. Gandhi's attitude towards various classes of the existing society led Bose to conclude that "the Mahatma does not intend pulling down the modern industrial structure if he were to get political mastery over his country, nor does he desire to completely industrialize the country.

76. Ibid., pp. 93-94.
77. Subhas Chandra Bose, The Indian Struggle 1920-1942, n.25, p. 298.
His programme is one of reform—he is fundamentally a reformist and not a revolutionary. He would leave the existing social and economic structure much as it is today (he would not even abolish the army altogether) and would content himself, with removing the glaring injustices and inequalities against which his moral sense revolts. His theory of socialism buttressed on the doctrine of trusteeship urged Gandhi to oppose not only the abolition of landlordism, but also the "cancellation of debts owing by peasants and workers". The suggestion for the cancellation of debts was regarded by him as "a proposition which the debtors themselves would never subscribe to, for that would be suicidal. What is necessary is an examination of the debts some of which, I know, will not bear scrutiny". Gandhi also opposed the abolition of the rule of the princes in the native states of India and tried to convert them into trustees. Referring to the native princes he wrote: "for my part I desire not abolition, but conversion of their autocracy into trusteeship, not in name but in reality".

Bose stood clearly for the abolition of the princely rule and extension of the freedom struggle to the native states also. In 1942 he published an article in a German periodical where he stated: "The Indian Princes and their States are an anachronism which must soon be abolished". Gandhi's trusteeship socialism based on

78. Ibid., p.316.
As we have stated earlier in this chapter (see n.58) Subhas Chandra Bose in his Presidential address at the Haripura session of the Congress proposed both the abolition of landlordism and cancellation of agricultural indebtedness.

Contd. ...
conversion appeared to Bose as an impediment to social progress. The expectation of a change of heart from the exploiters in the existing society prevented Gandhi from supporting those institutional reforms and structural changes which Bose considered essential for ending injustice and exploitation.

Their philosophical differences led them to solve the communal problem of the country differently. Gandhi's religious approach to this problem has been referred to while explaining his difference with Rabindranath Tagore on this issue. Here we shall briefly discuss Bose's approach to this problem. Like many other nationalists Bose also believed that the communal problem was a British creation and that the separatist movement among the Muslims was created by them in order to prevent national unity and to play one community against the other. He, however, did not deny that there did exist a social distance between the two major communities of India, and he tried to bring them closer to each other by promoting cultural intimacy between them, by exposing them to the influence of scientific and secular education, by emphasizing the common economic interests of the large majority of the people of all communities and by organizing an uncompromising united struggle against the foreign rule. He was opposed to all negotiations with or concessions to the Muslim separatist movement which, he believed, was nurtured by the British. Gandhi once asked him about his opinion on the

The article which was first published in the German periodical, While und Macht, and then reprinted in Azad Hind, the official publication of the Free India Centre in Berlin, is reproduced in the book.
separate electorates, and "to this I replied", Bose himself wrote, "that separate electorates were against the fundamental principles of Nationalism and that I felt so strongly on the subject that even swaraj on the basis of separate electorate was, in my opinion, not worth having."\textsuperscript{82} Instead of satisfying the separatist demands of the Muslims from above he tried to create conditions favourable for the development of closer communal understanding from below. He realised that in spite of living for centuries as neighbours the Hindus and Muslims were foreigners to each other culturally. He, therefore, thought that it was "necessary for the different religious groups to be acquainted with the traditions, ideals and history of one another, because cultural intimacy will pave the way towards communal peace and harmony". "I venture to think", he continued, "that the fundamental basis of political unity between different communities lies in cultural rapprochement. As things stand today, the different communities inhabiting India are too exclusive".\textsuperscript{83} In order to promote cultural rapprochement, "a dose of secular and scientific training", he said, was necessary, because "fanaticism is the greatest thorn in the path of cultural intimacy, and there is no better remedy for fanaticism than secular and scientific education". Moreover, this sort of education, he

\textsuperscript{82} Subhas Chandra Bose, \textit{The Indian Struggle 1920-1942}, n.25, p.215.

\textsuperscript{83} \textit{Selected Speeches of Subhas Chandra Bose}, n.18, p.35.
continued, would help to rouse the economic consciousness of the people leading ultimately to the erosion of communal feeling. Explaining this point further he added: "The dawn of economic consciousness spells the death of fanaticism. There is much more in common between a Hindu peasant and a Muslim peasant than between a Muslim peasant and a Muslim Zamindar. The masses have only got to be educated wherein their economic interests lie, and once they understand it, they will no longer consent to be pawns in communal feuds. By working from the cultural, educational and economic side, we can gradually undermine fanaticism and thereby render possible the growth of healthy nationalism in this country". Bose believed that by bringing into focus the common economic and political interests of the exploited people of all communities and by promising a policy of non-interference in religious affairs, the Congress would be able largely to overcome the communal barrier and mobilize the people to the struggle for independence. In his Presidential address at the Haripura session of the Congress (February 1938) he said: "I shall merely add that only by emphasising our common interests, economic and political, can we cut across communal divisions and dissensions. A policy of live and let live in matters religious and an understanding in matters economic and political should be our objective". Keeping this objective in view it was possible, he believed, to create such a fighting and revolutionary

84. Ibid., pp. 35-36.

85. Ibid., p.78.
atmosphere in the country that the problem of communalism would lose much of its complexity and challenging character. He wrote in February 1940: "When people become 'comrades-in-arms' in the struggle for liberty, a new esprit d'corps will develop -- and along with it, a new outlook, a new perspective and a new vision. When this revolution comes about, Indians will be a changed people and a revolutionary people at that. It will then be easy for them to solve many of the questions which today appear difficult to solve. Under present conditions, it appears well-nigh impossible to destroy the canker of communalism and foster all-round nationalism in our public life. But how easy this task will become, once we develop a revolutionary mentality on a nation-wide scale."86 Bose was able to create this revolutionary mentality in the Indian National Army from which all traces of communalism were actually removed.87

The approach of Subhas Chandra Bose towards the communal problem which we have discussed above, in brief outline, was different from the religious approach of Gandhi. But the latter was nevertheless much impressed by the success of Bose in building up an army with no communal distinction whatsoever. On 23 January 1948, on the anniversary of Bose's birthday, Gandhi referred to this achievement of Bose

86. Forward Bloc, 24 February 1940; Crossroads, p. 266.
87. See Krishna Bose, "Sainiker Smriti" (Memoirs of a Soldier), Desh, Autumn (Puja) Number, 1386 B.E., pp. 17-18. This article is based on a long interview with Abid Hasan, a close associate of Bose during the INA period.
in his prayer meeting and asked the people to cleanse their hearts of all communal bitterness in memory of that patriot. Just after one week Gandhi fell a victim to the communal frenzy of the country.

Subhas Chandra Bose represented Bengal's tradition of militant nationalism in the Gandhian period of Indian politics. During this period this tradition was influenced by contemporary nationalist movements in Europe (Germany, Italy, Turkey and Ireland) as well as by socialist ideas. So far as socialist ideas were concerned it was influenced not by Marxist internationalism or materialism but by the Soviet achievements and by the concept of class struggle. Class struggle was regarded as a force which weakened national solidarity and socialism was accepted as a means to realize social justice within the nation. As worshippers of motherland determined to break the shackles of her bondage, the militant nationalists of Bengal were attracted towards a heroic way of life and Gandhi's asceticism had little appeal for them. They found in Subhas Chandra Bose an embodiment of their ideal.
Narendranath Bhattacharya, later known as M. M. Roy (1887-1954), the founder of communism in India, was a severe critic of Gandhism. Early in his life he joined the underground revolutionary movement of Bengal and became a leading member of the Yugantar Party. In 1915 he left India to secure German arms for a violent struggle against the British. In the same year Gandhi came back to India from South Africa with his message of non-violence. While abroad, Roy came in contact with the Marxist ideas, and became one of the top leaders of the Communist International. He tried to promote a communist movement in India at a time when the nationalist politics of the country was entering into the Gandhian phase. Roy denounced Gandhism as a reactionary ideology imposed on a potentially revolutionary national movement. He differed with Lenin on the nature and perspective of the Indian revolution and the role of Gandhi in it. Analysing this difference he wrote in his Memoirs: "The role of Gandhi was the crucial point of difference. Lenin believed that as the inspirer and leader of a mass movement, he was a revolutionary. I maintained that a religious and cultural revivalist, he was bound to be a reactionary socially, however revolutionary he might appear politically. ¹ The anti-British non-cooperation movement under Gandhi's leadership, therefore, appeared to him as a "potentially revolutionary movement restrained by a reactionary ideology". ² In one of his earliest books he wrote about Gandhi: "He embodies simultaneously Revolution and

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² Ibid., p.543.
Reaction: he must perish in the fierce clash.\textsuperscript{3} The withdrawal of the non-cooperation movement after the Chauri Chaura incident was condemned by Roy as a "rank betrayal of the revolutionary forces" by the Gandhian leadership, and he wrote: "Non-cooperation of the doctrinarian pacifists, of the Tolstoyan passive-resisters, has proved futile, as was to be expected".\textsuperscript{4} Gandhism was regarded by him as inconsistent with the revolutionary anti-imperialist struggle. The removal of the imperialist rule was necessary for the economic and social progress of the country, but the Gandhian economy with its emphasis on the charkha, opposition to industrialism and voluntary restriction of human wants was itself an obstacle on the way to the economic progress.\textsuperscript{5} The Constructive Programme of Gandhi was described by Roy as "purely reformist and non-revolutionary", and his attempt to mobilize all sections of the Indian people, landlords and peasants, capitalists and proletariat, in a common struggle for swaraj as futile.\textsuperscript{6} An advocate of class struggle, Roy believed that no programme of national independence would be able to unite people belonging to different classes with contradictory interests. He was equally opposed to the Gandhian doctrine of non-violence and observed: "The Government maintained by violence and brute force cannot be overthrown without violence and brute force".\textsuperscript{7} Roy believed that non-cooperation itself was


\textsuperscript{5} Ibid., p.5.

\textsuperscript{6} M.N.Roy, \textit{One Year of Non-Cooperation from Ahmedabad to Gaya}, (Communist Party of India, Calcutta, 1923), pp.72,56.

\textsuperscript{7} M.N.Roy, \textit{India's Problem and its Solution}, 1923, p.17.
a very powerful weapon, but the Gandhian ideas had made it ineffective. He wrote: "Non-cooperation as a tactics in our political struggle has not failed; it has not been tried. ..... In the hands of the revolutionaries who will know how to wield it, the methods of mass strikes organized on a nation-wide scale are sure to develop as powerful onslaughts against the citadel of state power". As a Marxist Roy was confident that the economic compulsions which drove the Indian people to launch mass movements against the foreign rule would inevitably give rise to a leadership appropriate to the movement. He observed: "The economic forces that are awaking them (the Indian masses) out of their age-long stagnation and apathy will assert themselves and the leadership of the political movement must conform to their imperious dictates". He believed that Gandhi would soon lose his control over the Indian political movement.

In 1930 Roy came back to India after being expelled from the Communist International. He was arrested in July 1931 and was sentenced to imprisonment for twelve years which was reduced, on appeal, to six years. Released on 20 November 1936 Roy joined the Congress with the programme of an alternative leadership. He tried to replace Gandhism with a revolutionary ideology to guide the Congress movement. His earlier optimism about the economic forces inevitably throwing up new revolutionary leadership to the anti-imperialist struggle was no longer retained. Gandhism, he now believed, was rooted in the mediaeval mentality of the people, and, therefore,

8. M.N. Roy, One Year of Non-cooperation from Ahmedabad to Gaya, n.6, p.72.
to combat Gandhism it was necessary to change that mentality first. In 1940 he said: "Gandhism could not influence the mass mind unless there was a predisposition. The mediaeval mentality of the culturally backward masses makes them easy victims of the Gandhist propaganda". Roy, therefore, started a new intellectual movement in India, to which he gave the historically famous name Renaissance Movement, in order to replace the mediaeval mentality of the people by modern, rational and scientific outlook. The diatribe against Gandhism, however, continued with unabated fury. The religious-ethical views and revivalist ideas of Gandhi were regarded by Roy as the breeding-ground of fascism. He wrote: "If Gandhism is to be regarded as a body of religio-ethical doctrines, the quintessence of ancient Indian culture, then the world has already experienced its modern political expression. Gandhism as a philosophical tradition has led to Hitlerism". The Gandhian theory of class collaboration (this was implied in the doctrine of trusteeship) coupled with non-violence would, Roy pointed out, actually lead to the perpetuation of class domination and exploitation. Thus, judging Gandhism purely from the Marxist point of view, M.N. Roy found it reactionary and dangerous.

Immediately after the second world war and largely due to it, M.N. Roy's views on Marxism were radically changed. He now tried

14. For an analysis of the causes that led Roy to change his views on Marxism, see G.P. Bhattacharjee, Evolution of Political Contd. ...
to re-examine Marxism in the light of the achievements of the Soviet Union. He found that instead of approaching the Marxist ideal of withering away of the state, the Soviet Union has developed into a totalitarian country with social and cultural life fully regimented. Though the society was classless in form, it was ruled dictatorially by a party which had reduced the Soviets, the trade unions, the co-operatives and other peoples' organizations into its subordinate agencies. This was not the way to freedom, Roy argued. He wrote: "The era of proletarian revolution heralded by the Communist Manifesto, and believed to have been actually inaugurated by the Russian Revolution, has thus opened up the perspective not of a higher civilization; the perspective is positively apocalyptic. Has the optimism of a whole century been a day-dream, to end in a grand frustration? Or was it all a nightmare?" Socialism, as realised in the Soviet Union, appeared to him to better than state capitalism, and he realized that centralization of authority in the hands of the state would not lead to freedom. He now stood for a decentralized social order and a government with limited functions. The Soviet experiment convinced him that freedom cannot be realized by that means, and that man must be changed first before changing the society. Moral men alone can create a moral society, he concluded. "Politics cannot be divorced from ethics", he wrote, "without jeopardising

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the cherished ideal of freedom". In order to reconcile freedom of the individual with industrial economy he warned that "machine should not be the Frankenstein of modern civilization". "Created by man", he continued, "it must subserve man's purpose—contribute to his freedom". On the basis of these ideas he built up a new social philosophy to which he gave the name New Humanism or Radical Humanism.

When M. N. Roy looked at Gandhism from the Radical Humanist standpoint, it appeared to him in a new light. Though he still remained a materialist with full faith in human reason, in his social philosophy he came to occupy a position which was not very far from Gandhism. Gandhi was, however, assassinated soon after Roy developed his philosophy of New Humanism and the few articles which Roy wrote after this tragic end were revealing. In the article 'The Message of the Martyr' he wrote that Gandhi's message contained a moral, humanist and cosmopolitan appeal which, however, could not be reconciled with his nationalist politics. He wrote: "The lesson of the martyrdom of the Mahatma is that the nobler core of his message could not be reconciled with the intolerant cult of nationalism, which he also preached. Unfortunately, this contradiction in his ideas and ideals was not reali-

16. Ibid., p.55.
17. Ibid.
zed by the Mahatma until the last days of his life". Explaining his new appreciation of Gandhi's doctrine of non-violence Roy wrote in the same article: "The implication of the doctrine of non-violence is the moral dictum that the end does not justify the means. That is the core of the Mahatma's message which is not compatible with power politics. The Mahatma wanted to purify politics; that can be done only by raising political practice above the vulgar level of a scramble for power". 19 Gandhi's attempt to introduce ethics in politics was now fully appreciated by Roy, and in another article on Gandhi he stated that his "endeavour to introduce morality into political practice was the positive core of Gandhism". 20 Paying his tribute to the immortality of Gandhi's message Roy again observed: "Practice of the precept of purifying politics with truth and non-violence alone will immortalise the memory of the Mahatma. Monuments of mortar and marble will perish, but the light of the sublime message of truth and non-violence will shine for ever". 21

It should, however, be noted here that Gandhism had no positive role to play in bringing about the change of Roy's ideas from Marxism to New Humanism. But once the change took place, Roy was able to appreciate Gandhism in a new light. He found that many of the ideas which he had developed after long experience were already told by Gandhi in his own way. In the context of Roy's new philosophy many of Gandhian ideas assumed a new significance. Among the followers of Roy in Bengal, Gandhism found a number of sympathisers.

20. Ibid., 18 April 1948, p.176.