CHAPTER VII

ROSE AND FASCISM
The life mission of Subhas Bose was to achieve independence of India. He was charged with militant, active, revolutionary nationalism for achieving the goal. Ultimately he became a martyr for the cause. After the independence of the country he wanted to reconstruct the Indian society with national plans, industrialization, rural and urban development. He wanted to strive towards socialism, welfare and justice for the people. Some of his socio-economic ideas began to take shape even before independence, viz., since 1938, when he was the President of the Congress. Bose, in short, was first an extreme nationalist and a socialist next, as already discussed in the previous chapter.

After the independence of the country, Bose wanted to achieve socialism on the basis of democracy and maintaining national and individual liberty. The main thesis of this chapter is that Bose was a democrat and not a fascist.

Bose was an ardent supporter of the principles of liberty, democracy and socialism. In his Presidential address at the Second Session of the All India Forward Bloc, Nagpur, in June 1940, Bose explained the role of his party
thus: "It will have to preserve liberty after winning it, and it will have to build up a new India and a happy India on the basis of the eternal principles of liberty, democracy and socialism."¹ His political ideas emerge clearly in this statement. Democracy was not only an eternal principle for him, but the happiness of the people itself depended on it. He thought of democracy as a way of life and not just a form of government and society.

Earlier, the All India Samyavadi Sangha, was also proposed to be organised on democratic lines. The party stood for liberty, equality and justice for the masses. He wrote: "this party must stand for the masses as distinct from the vested interests."² If the Nazi party of Germany under Hitler and the Fascist party of Italy under Mussolini, as generally criticised, were for the vested interests of the capitalists, Bose's "Samyavadi Sangha" stood for justice for all sections of the people and for freedom from bondage of every kind - whether political, economic or social. In order to ensure justice and freedom for all, the party must stand for equality and work for the destruction of all artificial barriers, whether of religion, creed, caste, sex or wealth. Thus, it should aim at a really democratic state in which we

¹ H.G. Jog, In Freedom's Quest, p. 287.
² S.G. Bose, The Indian Struggle, p. 381.
shall all be equal and in which there will be no problem of minorities." 3

From the very beginning Bose aimed at liberty, equality, fraternity, justice, in short democracy. He was a born democrat. The big joint family, a cosmopolitan environment of his residence in Cuttack, the Indian heritage, the teachings of Ramakrishna Paramahansa and Swami Vivekananda and, above all, his own spiritual bent of mind were a source of inspiration towards democracy.

The big joint family taught him love, generosity, kindness, patience, tolerance, co-operation and sympathy, the very ingredients of democracy. The cosmopolitan environment taught him unity, solidarity and secularism. The Indian heritage and teachings prepared him, first, to be a spiritualist and then a democrat. A spiritual bent of mind in a person would never permit an element of autocracy, dictatorship or authoritarianism in him. He was immensely impressed by, and lived upto the teachings of Swami Vivekananda, especially the dictum: "Atmano mokshartham Jagad hitaya cha" (for one's own salvation as well as the welfare of humanity).

"I was barely fifteen", Subhas Bose wrote about the indelible impact of Swami Vivekananda on him, "when

3. Ibid.
Vivekananda entered my life. Then there followed a revolution within and every thing was turned upside down. It was, of course, a long time before I could appreciate the full significance of his teachings, or the greatness of his personality, but certain impressions were stamped indelibly on my mind from the outset... Many of the questions which stirred my mind found in him a satisfactory solution.  

Swami Vivekananda was for him a hero, teacher, guide, philosopher and a beacon light. The teachings of the Swami were the seed bed for many of his socio-political ideas. Above all, he was a born spiritualist and so, naturally, he studied philosophy as a major subject at college. His spiritual bent of mind, his study of philosophy and an indelible impact of the teachings of the Swami, definitely, would have prepared him to be a great democrat and humanitarian.

Above all, he was a thorough gentleman. "If there is anything in life on which I pride myself", he wrote to Gandhi in 1939, "it is that I am the son of a gentleman, and as such, I am a gentleman... I shall not remain in the political field a single day if by doing so I shall fall from the

4. S.C. Bose, An Indian Pilgrim, pp. 33-34.
standards of gentleness, which are so deeply ingrained in my mind from infancy, and which I feel are in my blood."

He lived according to the dictates of his 'Swadharma' (once own principles). Life was more important to him than politics. He was inspired by the teachings of his political 'guru' (teacher) Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das who used to say "life is larger than politics."  

He did not fall from the standards of life, even when he rose to the height of the President of the Congress. Instead, he earned a good reputation as "one of the silent Presidents of the Congress." Even Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, then Member of the Working Committee of the Congress and later a rival candidate for Presidentship for the Tripuri Session, appreciated his first term of office as President. Dr. Pattabhi wrote: "while he (Bose) might have had his own opinions on several matters, he did not choose to parade them, or project them into discussions, and appeared to be singularly free from a desire to take sides. Not that there were no differences between him and other leaders over some matter or other, but that the differences, such as they were, did not create situations, much less scenes. It was all smooth sailing."  

6. Ibid.  
7. Ibid., p. 140.  
During the tussle and tension of his re-election as President of the Congress, he behaved, pleaded and acted on democratic basis and principles. When Gandhiji's bloc brought pressure on Bose to withdraw his candidature from contest, he replied them in a statement issued on Jan 21, 1939: "The issue is not a personal one. (as he was nominated by a number of Provincial Congress Committees)... if my services in office are demanded by the majority of the delegates, with what justification can I withdraw from the contest? If, however, the majority of the delegates vote against my re-election, I shall loyally abide by their verdict and shall continue to serve the Congress and the country as an ordinary soldier." 9 He was for the democratic principle of majority verdict.

D.K. Roy, Bose's close friend, thought that the decision of Bose to contest again was not wise one. Roy indirectly cautioned Bose not to be ambitious and not be after power. "Furthermore," he wrote, "Pandit Jawaharlal was surely right when he wrote to you that you hardly needed to cling to the President's chair in order to make your great influence felt in the country." 10 Roy's main fear, probably, was that Bose

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would fail in the contest and ruin his name, fame and career and also badly affect Bengal.

No doubt, Subhas was ambitious, but it was his ambitions to implement his policies, ideologies and programmes in the best interests of the nation. He was never an authoritarian or a fascist. Even after his victory, in the Presidential contest, he ventured to seek the cooperation of the other bloc. A series of letters he wrote to Gandhiji and Nehru and many statements that he issued bear testimony to his sincerity in this regard:

"It will always be my aim and object to try and win Gandhi's confidence," he wrote in a statement (issued on Feb. 4, 1939), "for the simple reason that it will be a tragic thing for me if I succeed in winning the confidence of other people but fail to win the confidence of India's greatest men."11

Bose lost, naturally, the confidence of Jawaharlal Nehru, who criticised the presidency of Bose, in his letter (dated 4-2-1939) from Allahabad to Bose: "you have functioned more as a speaker than as a directing president."12

Nehru's severe charge was, there was no progress, nor

activeness during the presidency of Bose. "The A.I.C.C. office", he continued has deteriorated greatly during the past year. You have not even seen it and letters and telegrams to you are seldom answered." 13

The Congress had condemned openly the attacks of Germany and Italy, but Bose was silent on this matter. So Nehru, indirectly, charged Bose as a fascist, in his lengthiest letter dated 3.4.1939, from Allahabad to Bose: "The fact that in international affairs you held different views from mine and did not wholly approve our condemnation of Nazi Germany or Fascist Italy added to my discomfort." 14 He stood for Freedom:

Subhas stood for freedom. A true lover of freedom could never be a fascist. He was ready for any kind of suffering and sacrifice in the cause of freedom. "We have got to suffer," he maintained, "a lot, both individually and collectively before the priceless treasure of freedom can be secured." 15 He was fed up with the British posing of racialism, superiority complexion and imperialism. He developed, since his student career, in himself, the mission of anti-racialism and anti-imperialism. "Nothing makes me happier," Subhas wrote from

13. Ibid.
14. Ibid., no. 695.
England to his friend in India, "than to be served by the whites and to watch them clean my shoes".  

The sense of pride in him did not prepare him to serve the alien masters. He cared not for the worldly comforts. It is because this fire of freedom was burning in him since his young age, he resigned even "the heaven born", "the dream-job", I.C.S., to be free himself first and to be prepared to free the nation in turn.

Subhas priced freedom more than his life. "Our cause is", he maintained, "the cause of freedom and truth... our bodies may fail and perish but with faith undiminished and will unconquerable, triumph will be ours."  

"Release me or shall I refuse to live" Bose gave his ultimatum in his letters to the Governor of Bengal, the Chief Minister and the Council of Ministers, (on the 26th Nov., 1940) to undertake fast unto death in the jail from the 29th.  

"What greater soleace can there be", Bose maintained in his letters, "than the feeling that one has lived and died for a principle? What higher satisfaction can a man possess  

17. Hugh Toye, Subhas Chandra Bose, p. 35.  
18. S.K.Bose (Ed.), A Beacon Across Asia, Appendix 4, p. 278.
than the knowledge that his spirit will beget kindred spirits to carry on his unfinished task? What better reward can a soul desire than the certainty that his message will be wafted over hills and dales, and over the broad plains to every corner of his land and across the seas to distant lands? What higher consummation can life attain than peaceful self-immolation at the altar of one's cause?  

Such a principled patriot could never be a fascist.

His principle was: "The individual must die," he continued, "so that the nation may live. Today I must die, so that India may live and may win freedom and glory."  

Bose maintained that even his countrymen should follow the principle. "To my country I say", he concluded his letters with a message, "Forget not that the greatest curse for a man is to remain a slave. Forget not that the grossest crime is to compromise with injustice and wrong. Remember the eternal law: You must give life if you want to get it. And remember that the highest virtue is to battle against inequity, no matter what the cost may be."  

Bose wanted to win freedom but not beg for it. The freedom won with sufferings and sacrifices, he thought would

19. Ibid., p. 279.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid.
remain for ever. "By shedding our blood in a sacred cause," Bose addressed the members of the I.I.A., after succeeding Rash Behari Bose, as President, on 4th July, 1943, "We shall be paying the price of liberty and, at the same time, we shall be laying the only enduring foundation for our national unity... by winning freedom through our own efforts and sacrifice we shall be acquiring the strength whereby we shall preserve our liberty for all time." 22

Bose, as a true democrat, wanted to participate in the struggle and to suffer and sacrifice along with his followers. He assured the I.N.A. after taking the command of it, on 5th July 1943: "I assure you that I shall be with you in darkness and in sunshine, in sorrow and in joy in suffering and in victory... I shall lead you to victory and freedom. It does not matter who among us will live to see India free. It is enough that India shall be free and that we shall give our all to make her free." 23

Bose lived "24 hours of every day only in completely disinterested dedication", as a Japanese Colonel said, "to the cause of his country's emancipation... and has not shown any interest in the common pleasures of life". 24

22. Fred Saito & Hayashida, "To Delhi! To Delhi!" 1943-45, A Beacon Across Asia, p. 176.
can forego his personal pleasures. Major Takahazi, a Japanese, went to the extent of saying: "The Indian leader (Netaji) appeared to me to be a superman." 25

Bose's main ideal was freedom. His conception of the term 'freedom' was wide. That referred to one and all and in every respect. "By freedom I mean," he said, "all round freedom, i.e., freedom for the individual as well as for society, freedom for the rich as well as for the poor, freedom for men as well as women, freedom for all individuals and for all classes." 26 No fascist leader can be expected to aim at such an ideal. A fascist, first, thinks of himself then his group and party interests. Here the word 'his' should not be forgotten. That means a fascist's concept of freedom is always a narrow, self-centred, and egoist one.

Bose aimed at a comprehensive freedom political, economic, social and religious. "This freedom implies," he continued, "not only emancipation from political bondage but also equal distribution of wealth, abolition of caste barriers and social inequities, and destruction of communalism and religious intolerance." 27

25. Ibid., p. 218.
27. Ibid.
Achieving freedom for all in all aspects was not an utopia to Netaji. "This is an ideal", he continued, which may appear Utopian to hard-headed men and women, but this ideal alone can appease the hunger of the soul."

Freedom, in short, for Netaji, was the life-breath of every individual. He aspired for freedom not only for Indians but to the humanity as a whole. So he wanted to wage a war not only against British imperialism but against world imperialism at large. "Ours is a struggle not only against British imperialism" said Netaji, "but against world imperialism as well .... we are, therefore, fighting not for the cause of India alone but of humanity as well." Bose was a humanitarian but not a fascist.

Here, Netaji, sounds at once a saint, a saviour, a philosopher. One cannot even imagine an iota of fascism in him. If he were a fascist, he would have thought on lines of Indian imperialism over the rest.

A socialist cannot be a Fascist:

Subhas Bose was a true socialist, but not a communist or a fascist. A true socialist can never be a fascist.
Bose's main task was first to achieve national independence

28. Ibid.
and then to reconstruct it on socialistic lines and democracy. "Our main task", he said in his Presidential address at the All India Anti-Compromise Conference, Ramgarh (Rihar on 19th March 1940) "in this age is to end imperialism and win national independence for the Indian people. When freedom comes, the age of national reconstruction will commence and that will be the socialist phase of our movement." 29

Bose was probably, the first freedom fighter who wanted to achieve all the high values of life through socialism, like liberty, equality, fraternity, justice and welfare of all, across the world. "Clearly for this beloved political leader of India", writes Appadorai, "socialism included all the values which he cherished and liked to see established in India." 30

Bose was an "Utilitarian" in a true sense. He had a broad vision of life and he saw the whole life through socialism only. In his letter dated 9.10.1925 from the Central Jail, Mandra, addressed to D.K.Roy, Bose wrote: "Never think that my vision is narrow or parochial. I do, indeed, believe in the 'greatest good of the greatest number' 31 Such an utilitarian cannot be branded with a dry phrase of

30. Appadorai, Political Ideas in Modern India, Impact of the West, p. 49.
'fascism'. Bose aimed, not only at the material good of all, but even moral good. "But that good", he continued, "I do not equate to the purely material. Economists say that all work is either productive or unproductive." 32

Bose hoped "to create a new India at once free, happy and great". 33 A nation, under fascism can never provide a "free" and "happy" atmosphere. Such an atmosphere would be possible only under democracy and socialism. His image of a "great" nation was not of the military but of material and more important than that of moral. His vision of a free India was "a perfect synthesis of all that is good in the east and in the west." 34

Bose was against the very idea of bondage, tyranny and oppression. In that respect he supported the youth movements in his speech at Sagpur in 1929. He said: "The youth movement is an emblem of dissatisfaction with the present order of things. It stands for the revolt of the youth against age-old bondage, tyranny and oppression. It seeks to create a new and better world for ourselves and the humanity by removing all shackles and giving the fullest scope to the creative activity of mankind." 35

52. Ibid.
33. J.S.Bright (Ed.), Important speeches and writings of Subhas Bose, p. 81.
34. Ibid., p. 95.
35. Ibid., pp. 85-86.
Bose stood for activism, optimism and modernity, which were far from fascism. "In India we want today a philosophy of activism" said Bose. "We must be inspired by robust optimism. We have to live in the present and to adopt ourselves to modern conditions." 36

Bose was not for any particular vested interest but he was for the interests of one and all, like the youth, the peasants, the workers, etc. He welcomed, in his address to the All India Trade Union Congress at Calcutta (1931), the recommendations of the Whitley Commission and the Fundamental Rights Resolution, passed by the Karachi Congress on 29 March, 1931.

In his plea for an indigenous type of socialism for India, one could see his individuality. He was not a blind follower of any one or of any ideology. "India should learn from and profit by the experience of other nations", Bose advised the Trade Union Congress, "but she should be able to evolve her own methods in keeping with her own needs and her own environment. In applying any theory to practice, you can never rule out geography or history. If you attempt it you are bound to fail. India should, therefore evolve her own form of socialism. When the whole world is engaged in

36. Ibid., p. 82.
socialistic experiments, why should we not do the same? It may be that the form of socialism which India will evolve will have something new and original about it which will be of benefit to the whole world."37

He had a knowledge of all "isms", like Communism of Karl Marx and Engels, Fascism of Italy, Nazism of Germany, Fabianism of England, Syndicalism of France and Liberalism of Europe, out of which he wanted to select only the good elements which would suit the Indian environment. A person who seeks goodness everywhere, could never go fascist. He was for a synthesis of all good elements from all 'isms' across the world. Then how can he be branded as a fascist?

He was for original thinking and fresh experiment. "I have no doubt in my own mind", he said in his address, read in his absentia at the Third Indian Political Conference, London, June 10, 1933, "that in solving the problems of our national life, when India is free, original thought and fresh experiment will be necessary, if we are to achieve success. The experience of the older generation and of the teachers of the past will not be of much avail."38

He was for perfect equality which was the mainstay of his socialism. He said in his address: "All privileges, distinctions and vested interests will have to be abolished, so that a reign of perfect equality may be established in our country." He was clear in his mind about achieving social and political democracy. "Free India", he said, "will not be a land of capitalists, landlords and castes. Free India will be a social and political democracy." 40

"The Samyavadi sangha", he concluded, "will stand for all-round freedom for the Indian people — that is, for social, economic and political freedom." 41

Some of the objectives of his new party speak volumes for his preference for democratic methods and principles:

1. The party will stand for the interests of the masses, that is of the peasants, workers, etc., and not for the vested interests, the landlords, capitalists and money-lending classes.

2. It will stand for the complete political and economic liberation of the Indian people.

3. It will stand for a Federal Government..." 42

39. Ibid., p. 372.
40. Ibid., p. 377.
41. Ibid., p. 378
42. Ibid., pp. 312-13.
He visualised, by the end of 1934 itself, the idea of
democratic decentralization and the Panchayat Raj system.

"5. It will seek to build up a new social structure on
the basis of the village communities of the past, that were
ruled by the village 'Panch' and will strive to break down
the existing social barriers like caste." 43

But the 6th outline perhaps strengthens the charge
that Bose was a fascist.

"8. It will not stand for a democracy in the mid-
Victorian sense of the term, but will believe in government
by a strong party bound together by military discipline, as
the only means of holding India together and preventing a
chaos." 44

He was for the dictatorship of the party in the interest
of law and order and the unity of the nation and her progress
but not for the dictatorship of a person, like that of the
fascist ideology.

In his famous Haripura address Bose referred to socialism
but not to communism nor fascism. He hoped that the Congress
Socialist Party would "prepare the country for socialism
when political freedom is won." 45

43. Ibid.
44. Ibid.
Bose had a clear idea that the present age was the age of freedom, democracy and socialism. "The age of imperialism", he said in his presidential address to the All India Anti-compromise conference, Ramgarh (Bihar), 19 March, 1940, "is drawing to a close and the era of freedom, democracy and socialism looms ahead of us." He gave the example of the Russian October Revolution (1917) referring to the slogan of Lenin: "All power to the Soviet". He opined that even Italy, the mother-land of Fascism, was ripe for socialism in 1922. "But the man of the hour did not arrive," said Bose, "and the opportunity slipped out of socialist hands...and Italy ultimately went Fascist instead of going socialist."47

Bose, in short, stood for socialism and not for fascism. He felt sorry for Italy having-slipped into fascism instead of socialism. He, in fact, wanted to save Italy from fascism. How such a saviour himself be a victim to that vice?

At the 2nd Conference of the Forward Bloc, Nagpur, in June 1940, he gave a new slogan "All power to the Indian people here and now."48

46. S.K. Bose (Ed.), op.cit., p. 269.
47. Ibid., p. 270.
He was for a multi-party system:

Bose was for more than one political party in the country and he wanted to organise the Congress party on democratic lines. This strongly supports the view that he was a democrat and not a fascist. Referring to the continuation of the Congress Party even after independence, Bose said, in his Presidential address to the Haripura Congress, Feb. 19, 1938: "The state will possibly become a totalitarian one if there be only one party, as in countries like Russia, Germany and Italy. But there is no reason why other parties should be banned. Moreover, the party itself will have a democratic basis unlike, for instance, the Nazi party, which is based on the leader principle. The existence of more than one party, and the democratic basis of the Congress party will prevent the future Indian state, becoming a totalitarian one. Further, the democratic basis of the party will ensure that leaders are not thrust upon the people from above, but are elected from below". 49

One of the programmes of the Forward Bloc, drawn at its 1st Conference held in Bombay on June 22, 1933, was to democratise the Congress Party:

"(4) The Congress should be freed from the influence of the vested interests and from the domination of the Congress ministries. Democracy should be restored within the Congress and should replace the present authoritarian policy."  

An editorial, entitled "Our Critics", in the Forward Bloc, on August 19, 1939, maintained that the Bloc had to fight against double enemies, the British Imperialism and the Congress Bureaucratism: "A member of the Bloc has to fight on two fronts—British Imperialism and Congress Bureaucratism and has to suffer persecution at the hands of both."  

The editorial repudiated the charges of opportunism and fascism on the part of the Forward Bloc. "It is difficult", the editorial continued, "to understand what exactly is meant by 'fascist' in the Indian context, if the word is used in its scientific or technical sense. Nevertheless, if by 'fascist' is indicated those who call themselves Hitlers, super Hitlers, or budding Hitlers, then one might say that these specimens of humanity are to be found in the Rightist camp".  

50. Ibid., p. 170.  
52. Ibid.
He blamed the dictatorial tendency of the Mahatma over the working Committee of the Congress and particularly on the Rightists. "The Committee today has no existence of its own," maintained another editorial, "it is but the shadow of Mahatma Gandhi, in whose favour it has voluntarily abdicated.... He is the dictator only of the Right Wing of the great organisation, and of some erstwhile Leftist leaders." 53

He even accused the high-handedness of the High Command of the Congress Party. "The more I think of Congress Politics," he wrote to his brother Sarat on Oct. 31, 1940, "the more convinced I feel that in future we should devote more energy and time to fight the High Command. If power goes into the hands of such mean, vindictive and unscrupulous persons when swadesi is won, what will happen to the country?" 54

He directly criticised the dominance of the Mahatma in the Congress. "One is forced to wonder," he said, "which is a greater menace to India's political future the British bureaucracy or the Gandhian hierarchy. Idealism that is devoid of realism, and whose only content is a frothy sentimentalism of a sanctimonious character, can never be fruitful of results." 55

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53. Ibid., Dec. 30, 1939.
These views, in short, of democratization of the Congress Party prove that Bose was a democrat and not a fascist.

Bose misrepresented:

Enemies and critics of Bose accused the latter as 'fascist' because, they suspected his actions, views and alliances, like worshipping of 'shakti' (power), revolutionary and even terrorist activities, anti-communist views, synthesis of communism and fascism, militarism, his pleas for a strong centre and the party, his ardent nationalism and patriotism and, above all, his alliance with the axis powers - Italy, Germany and Japan. The following discussion would reveal that they were mere apprehensions but not realities.

The British critics of Bose mis-represented him as a revolutionary, a terrorist, a communist and a fascist. During his exile in Europe (March 8, 1935-1936), the British agents were after him. "In fascist or pro-fascist countries they tried to paint him as a communist. In democratic or socialist countries they described him as a fascist." 56

The Communist party of India, then, accused Bose's Forward Bloc as a "fascist fifth Column" and branded Bose

56. Ibid., p. 106.
as a "traitor, hangman and puppet of the Axis Powers". The Right Wing, even in the Congress Party blamed the members of the Forward Bloc as opportunists and fascists. These observations and accusations require to be examined carefully.

The term 'fascist' or 'fascism' comes from the main Roman root 'fasces', which according to the dictionary meaning, connotes a "Bundle of rods and an axe carried by lictor before magistrate." 'Fascism' also stands for "methods of Italy, or the anticommunist revolution of 1922". Thus a fascist may be one who holds the mass (bundle) with the help of the power (axe).

"In the beginning", according to the International Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences, "fascism showed a strong socialist inspiration". Bose throughout his life was a socialist. His critics accused him a fascist, but not in this sense of socialism.

"By the end of 1920, however, nationalism rather than socialism was providing the main driving force of fascism". Bose's main life current was that of nationalism. But he was not a fascist, even in this sense of nationalism or his nationalistic spirit.

57. Ibid., p. 179.
60. Ibid.
Nationalism, in Italy, by 1922, developed into a militant movement.⁶¹ Even in this sense Bose was not a fascist. Bose was of course, a revolutionary, militant nationalist, but it was to free his mother land, but not to capture power for himself, as Mussolini did in Italy on "Oct. 29, 1922, the day of the fascist seizure of power."⁶²

Italian fascism generally stands for "the March on Rome" and to the "23 year dictatorship of the fascist party under the leadership of Mussolini."⁶³ Bose, also gave a clarion call to his followers and to his I.N.A. to "March on to Delhi", but only to free the motherland from the shackles of the British imperialism. On some occasions, he too pleaded for the dictatorship of the Congress Party, but only to achieve unity, solidarity and progress of the country. Bose was an ardent nationalist, patriot, socialist but not a fascist, in the Italian sense.

"Fascism" is also used to identify the political system by which Italy was ruled from 1922 to 1945.⁶⁴ Such a system was never aspired for by Bose. In every respect he wanted an Indian type, and an original form and fresh thinking.

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⁶¹ Ibid., p. 335.
⁶² Ibid.
⁶³ Ibid., p. 334.
⁶⁴ Ibid.
Fascism is also used to identify a prototype of totalitarianism and is applied to variations of political systems thought to parallel the Italian one. Bose was for liberty, freedom, democracy and socialism and he was never for totalitarianism.

"In 1925... fascism built the totalitarian structure. The press was silenced or taken over. All parties were abolished except the Fascist Party. Constitutional changes were begun that created the unique figure of the leader embodying in his person the sum total of power." Bose was for multi-party system, though he wanted his Congress party to be strong. He did not bother either for Constitution, or for the Constituent Assembly until the freedom of the country was won. In an editorial of his paper, the Forward Bloc of Dec. 23, 1939, he was clear in this respect. He said: "We have made some serious study of history and politics, and in our view a Constituent Assembly, if it is not a misnomer, can come into existence only after the seizure of power... Only a provisional national government can summon a Constituent Assembly for framing a detailed Constitution for India."

65. Ibid.
66. Ibid., p. 335.
The Motilal Nehru Report (May 1928), of which Bose was a co-author, recommended for fundamental rights, including the freedom of speech, expression and press. And Bose welcomed, in his presidential address to the All-India Trade Union Congress, at Calcutta (1931), the Fundamental Rights Resolution, passed by the Karachi Congress (March 29, 1931). Such a freedom mover could not silence the press, nor could he ban the opposition parties.

"By 1935 fascism had realised ... the goals of a state-controlled society ..... In its third period, 1935 to 1943 violence and war became the substance of fascism." 68 It was for holding the power and position by a single party and a person. Bose was, also, for violence and war like methods but only to free the nation. He gave, as the President of the Tripuri Congress, an ultimatum to the British authority in March 1939 and waged war ultimately as the Supreme Commander of his I.N.A. during the second world war against the allied powers.

Hence, in the technical and even the scientific sense Bose was not a fascist. Since the collapse of Italian fascism in 1943, fascism has been interpreted in different manners. "The philosopher Giovanni Gentile sought to link it to

68. *International Encyclopaedia..., op. cit.*, p. 736.
Hegelian idealism. Bose too was under the influence of Hegelian idealism. In his first editorial of his new paper, The Forward Bloc, Bose justified the formation of the new party, the Forward Bloc, with his favourite Hegelian Dialectic:

"Out of the conflict between 'thesis' and 'anti-thesis' 'synthesis' is born. This 'synthesis', in its turn, becomes the 'thesis' of the next phase of evolution. This 'thesis' throws up an 'anti-thesis' and the conflict is resolved by a further 'synthesis'. Thus the wheels of progress move on." 70

The critics of Bose could not brand him as a fascist in the sense of the Hegelian Dialectic, but they branded him the way that suited them.

Bose was probably dubbed as a fascist because of his praise for power and admiration for dictators like Hitler and Mussolini. "He was a worshipper of Shekti (power) and he seemed to have entertained an admiration for Hitler, Mussolini and Kemal Ataturk as strong men, regardless of the ideologies they professed." 71

The British imperialists branded him, as a revolutionary and even a terrorist. "After Mr. Bose's arrest in 1924,"

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69. Ibid., p. 336.
the Home Secretary of India, Mr. Hallett defended the government's action in detaining Bose, when an adjournment motion was moved in the Indian legislative Assembly by Milkanth Das, on March 23, 1936, "his record was examined with great care by two judges who held that there was reasonable ground for the belief that Bose was a member of a revolutionary conspiracy, and if allowed freedom he could be a danger to the state, more particularly because of his public position and outstanding organizing capacity."^2 It is clear, therefore, that the authority was afraid more of his public position and outstanding organizing capacity than his revolutionary activities.

"Bose published in 1923 an article in Atmaahakti", continued Mr. Hallett, "a revolutionary paper of Bengal, asking youths to sacrifice their lives. Bose was personally in touch with the terrorist party and was cognizant of its plots for the assassination of government servants. He preached the message of communism and urged a parallel government at the Lahore Congress. Bose was the head of the Jugantar Party responsible for the Chittagong armoury raid, the Pahartali outrage and other crimes."^3

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72. Ibid., p. 127.
73. Ibid., pp. 127-128.
Even, the Home Member, Sir Henry Craik, made the allegations: "The Semysvedi Sengha movement founded by Bose in 1932, later on converted its name into the Hindustan Socialist Republican Army. A pamphlet in Bose's own hand, intercepted from Vienna, regretted that no attempt had been made to win over the Indian army and the police and noted that the national movement would succeed only if the revenue collection was prevented, and help from other quarters of a financial or military kind did not reach the Government in times of distress."\textsuperscript{74}

"This man had a definite terrorist connection," concluded Sir Henry, "and had, to the best of our belief, a definite idea of violent revolution. The Government of India would be acting in criminal folly if they allowed a man of Bose's intellect and organising capacity to have liberty to put these ideas into execution".\textsuperscript{75}

It is curious to note that even Sir Henry Main was, also, afraid of "Bose's intellect and organising capacity". It is clear that the authority wanted to suppress the freedom movements by detaining such effective organisers.

\textsuperscript{74} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{75} Ibid., p. 128.
The opposition leader Mr. Bhulabhai Desai and Mr. Silkantha Das protested against the allegations and challenged them. "If Government has evidence", said Mr. Desai, "let Mr. Bose be tried." 76

No doubt, Bose was a revolutionary, in his own way but not in the way the British imperialists thought. "By revolutionary, I mean", explained Bose in a broadcast (June 27, 1943), "a person who stands for the complete independence of his country, and who is not prepared to compromise over the question of Independence." 77 He was revolutionary in the sense that he fought for freedom. "Furthermore," Bose continued, "a revolutionary believes that the cause for which he is fighting is a just one, and that cause, therefore, is bound to triumph in the long run. . . . for us, as revolutionaries, the independence of India is a settled fact. There is no power on earth that can stand between us and our goal of freedom." 78

Bose drew inspiration from revolutionaries like Veer Savarkar, Lala Hardayal, Reja Mahendra Pratap, Maulvi Barkatullah and Maulvi Obedullah (the last 3 had formed the first Provisional Free India Government in Kabul during the

76. Ibid.
77. Arun, Testament of Subhas Bose, p. 130.
78. Ibid., p. 130.
war 1914-19) and Rash Behari, who personally handed over... the torch of revolt to him in 1943."79

He was a pragmatist, activist and extremist. He was, naturally, a critic of Gandhi's passivism and of Aurobindo's asceticism. "It is the passivism", said Bose, "not philosophic but actual, inculcated by these schools of thought (of Sabarmati and of Pondicherry) against which I protest .... In India we want today a philosophy of activism. We must be inspired by robust optimism. We have to live in the present and to adapt ourselves to modern conditions."80

Bose was a real follower of the teachings of Swami Vivekananda: "awake and arise and stop not until the goal is reached". Bose wanted to continue and intensify the non-cooperation movement without stopping until freedom. He was for complete independence when the Gandhian bloc was for Dominion status. He was for provisional government when the latter was for complete independence (1929), and he had no patience to wait for the British authority to change its attitude.

The Communists of India branded Bose as a fascist, probably because of his anti-communist views. "I should

point out also", said Bose in an interview given to R. falsa Butt in 1933, "that communism .... seemed to me anti-national and this impression was further strengthened in view of the hostile attitude which several among them exhibited towards the Indian National Congress." Bose changed his earlier view at the time of interview. "It is clear", he said, "however that the position today has fundamentally altered."  

"I should add that" he continued," .... communism, as it has been expressed in the writings of Marx and Lenin, and in the official statement of policy of the Communist International, gives full support to the struggle for national independence, and recognises this as an integral part of its world outlook".  

Many were trying to read fascist tendency into the synthesis between communism and fascism, developed in the chapter "A Glimpse of the Future," in his book "The Indian Struggle" (1935). "considering everything", Bose wrote, one is inclined to hold that the next phase in world history will produce a synthesis between communism and fascism."  

He grasped certain common traits between the two, communism and fascism, which were of a fascist tendency:

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82. Ibid.
83. Ibid.
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 the dissenting minorities. Both believe in a planned industrial reorganisation of the country. These common traits will form the basis of the new synthesis ... called...

Semayava - an Indian word, which means literally 'the doctrine of synthesis or equality'..."85

The synthesis of Bose aimed at national freedom and socialism but not an undemocratic thing like fascism. "My political ideas have developed further, said Bose in an interview to R. Palme Dutt in Jan. 1938, since I wrote my book three years ago. 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".86

Fascism was used by Bose in the sense of an aggressive or militant nationalism but not in the sense of aggressive

85. Ibid.
imperialism. "I should like to point out," Bose continued, "that when I was writing the book, fascism had not started on its imperialist aggression, and it appeared to me merely an aggressive form of nationalism." Hence, Bose was a militant nationalist but not a fascist.

M. Shiveram, Bose's Publicity Chief in South-East Asia, referred to Bose's plan of a fascist-communist dictatorship: "Subhas planned a fascist-communist dictatorship for India combining the politics of fascism and the economics of communism, blending the two systems into a pattern of benevolent autocracy adopted to Indian conditions." 88

Again, M. Shiveram referred to it, but in a different form: "Netaji had other plans including a ten-year dictatorship. His idea was for a patriotic benevolent dictatorship suited to Indian conditions, and acceptable to India's masses." 89

Mr. N.G. Ganpuley, Bose's associate in Germany, went further. He writes: "He (Bose) visualised the danger of democracy in an illiterate country like India and was for 20 years of benevolent dictatorship of the type of President's rule which are now forced to clamp on so many states." 90

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87. Ibid.
89. M. Shiveram, "If Subhas were Alive", The Sunday Standard, Jan. 23, 1966.
Hiren Mukherjee also writes that Bose leaned towards fascism: Bose "was drawn towards certain meretricious features of fascism".  

Lahiri quotes Subhas himself, who said: "we must have a political system... a state... of an authoritarian character... with a democratic state we cannot solve the problems of free India."  

He was for the strong Government and the strong party: 

Bose was criticised as a 'fascist' because of his plea for the strong central government and the strong party. He mooted the formation of Samyavadi-Sangha, "the party of the future" in his presidential address to the Third Political Conference, London, in 1933, which was read in his absentia as he was not allowed to visit Britain. That party believed in a strong central government with dictatorial powers for some years to come. "The Samyavadi-Sangha", the address maintained, "would be a centralised and well-disciplined party".  

Still, the party was not fascist because it did not stand for the vested interests. It gave representation to

92. Lahiri, Said Subhas Bose, p. 130.
93. N.G.Jog, In Freedom's Quest, p. 110.
94. Ibid., p. 115.
one and all. "It would have its representatives" the address continued, "working in the Indian national congress and the All India Trade Union Congress, in the peasants', women's and youths' organizations, and also in the sectarian or communal organizations, if necessary." 96

Instead of suppressing the people, the party stood for freedom: "The Sangha would stand for all-round freedom of the Indian people—that is for social, economic and political freedom. It would wage a relentless war against bondage of every kind till the people are really free." 97

The party aimed at national freedom: "It will stand for political independence for India, so that a new state could be created in free India on the basis of the eternal principles of justice, equality and freedom." 98

Even, it was the mission of the Indian heritage across the world: "It will stand for the ultimate fulfilment of India's mission so that India might be able to deliver to the world the message that has been her heritage through the past ages." 99

Such a party could never be fascist. Again, in his statement on "Our Internal and External Policy", issued from

96. Ibid.
97. Ibid.
98. Ibid.
99. Ibid.
Geneva in Feb. 1935, referred to his party of his dreams, the Sansavadan-Sangha. Its main features were: "Firstly, India must be consolidated under a strong central Government before we can hope for an internal reconstruction and security from external attack. Secondly, a strong and disciplined party must be organised before we can hope for a National Government and the entire nation must be brought under the influence and control of this party."\(^\text{100}\)

But the third feature of the party cleared the misgiving of his not being a fascist: "Thirdly, this party must stand for the masses as distinct from the vested interests."\(^\text{101}\)

The party stood for justice, equality and democracy. "It must stand for justice for all sections of the people and for freedom from bondage of every kind whether political, economic or social. In order to ensure justice and freedom for all, the party must stand for equality, and work for the destruction of all artificial barriers whether of religion, creed, caste, sex or wealth. Thus it should aim at a really democratic state in which we shall be equal and in which there will be no problem of minorities."\(^\text{102}\)

How could the author of such a party be a fascist?

\(^{100}\) Ibid., p. 381.
\(^{101}\) Ibid.
\(^{102}\) Ibid.
He was again mistaken as fascist when he pleaded that the Congress Socialist Party itself should draft a constitution instead of waiting for a Constituent Assembly. "I have no doubt" said Bose in his statement to United Press of India from Vienna on Congress Socialist Party, which was published in Indian papers on the 15th March 1935, "that if today a Constituent Assembly is convened in India on the basis of adult suffrage—the Congress Socialist Party will be in a minority... Instead of committing political suicide in this way, the Congress Socialist Party, if it has confidence in its own principles, methods and programme and if it does not suffer from an inferiority complex, should claim the exclusive right to draft a Constitution for India. The party that is going to fight for freedom is the party that is entitled to draw up the Constitution." 103

He himself was afraid of such an undemocratic and unconstitutional suggestion. "What I have just said", continued Bose, "may shock the democratic and constitutional instincts of many of our countrymen. But I should like to urge most emphatically that democracy as understood today in a large portion of this wide world is different from democracy as understood in the mid-Victorian era." 104

103. Ibid., p. 384.
104. Ibid., p. 3845.
cited the examples of one party rule in Russia, Italy, Germany and Spain, instead of the mid-Victorian parliamentary method. 105

His slogan for the future was, in short, "Dictatorship of the party both before and after Swaraj is won." 106 He strove for the realization of programmes of the party instead of the mere principles of democracy and constitution. Here one could strongly suspect fascist tendency in him. But at the same time one should not forget his ardent patriotism in his desire to build a great nation.

He pleaded for the continuation of the Congress party even after the freedom was won. "I know", said Bose in his historical presidential Speech to the 51st Session of the Congress at Haripura, on Feb. 19, 1938, "that there are friends who think that after freedom is won, the Congress party having achieved its objective should wither away. Such a conception is entirely erroneous. The party that wins freedom for India should also be the party that will put into effect the entire programme of post-war reconstruction. Only those who have won power can handle it properly." 107

He denied the charge that the continuation of the party would invite totalitarianism. He rightly argued: "The state will possible become a totalitarian one if there be only

105. Ibid., p. 385.
106. Ibid., p. 396.
one party, as in countries like Russia, Germany and Italy. "

He was for more than one party and for the democratization of the Congress party: "The existence of more than one party, and the democratic basis for the Congress party, will prevent the future Indian state becoming a totalitarian one. Further, the democratic basis of the party will ensure that leaders are not thrust on the people from above, but are elected from below."  

His Alliance with the Axis Powers:

The main charge of Bose being a fascist was because of his alliance with the axis powers like Italy, Germany and Japan, during the second world war and his admiration for dictators like Hitler, Mussolini, Kemal Pasha, Lenin, Stalin and others.

On many occasions, Bose himself denied these charges and he pleaded that whatever he was doing was for the freedom of the nation. His mind, spirit and actions were those of Churchill who said when Hitler invaded Russia: "I would willingly shake hands with the devil himself if it meant saving my country."  

108. Ibid.
110. Ibid., p. 187.
Bose had the firm belief that without the help of the foreign powers India would not be freed. Naturally he leaned towards Italy, Germany and Japan, the enemies of British imperialism. He did it merely on the principle of enemy's enemy is a friend. Secondly, he wanted to take out a thorn with a thorn.

During his four years' (1933-36) exile in Europe, Bose was preparing for the future struggle against British imperialism. He "visited Berlin (Germany) and Rome (Italy) several times and met the top echelon of the Nazi and Fascist parties. In Rome he was received by Mussolini several times, but it is not clear whether he met Hitler too, at that time".\footnote{111. Ibid., p. 112.}

He sought the help of Germany, at that time, to fight against Britain simultaneously. He replied when the German rulers were reluctant. Britain is our traditional enemy. We will fight her whether you support us or not."\footnote{112. S.O. Bose, On to Delhi, pp. 67-8.} It is clear that Bose sought the help of Germany but did not beg for it. He moved with the axis powers, from the beginning as an equal, but not as a puppet or a stooge.

Being a political disciple of the C.R. Das, Bose had developed in himself a revolutionary mind, an extremism, from
the very beginning, since 1921. It had sprouted in him even
at his college career in prof. Baton's episode (1916) and
his (Bose's) suspension from the college. He later developed
it into militant nationalism, when he heard of the suspension
of non-co-operation movement in India during his exile in
Europe.

"Non-co-operation cannot be given up" said both Bose and
Vithalbhai Patel in their Joint Manifesto in Vienna, on
9.5.1933, "but the form of non-co-operation will have to be
changed into a militant one, and the fight for freedom is to
be waged on all fronts".113

"My young friend, Bose, believes" said Vithalbhai Patel
at the time of issuing the statement, to Mr. Alfred Tyranuer,
a correspondent to The Saturday Evening Post," that an attack
must be sharp like a dagger".114

When the correspondent said that the Round Table discus-
sions "had shown no definite results", Bose said "No real change
in history has ever been achieved by discussion."115 One
might say that Bose was anti-democratic and a fascist. "India
can well afford" Bose said again, "to bring a bloody sacrifice
for her liberation. Three hundred and fifty million miserable
lives are waiting for deliverance!"116

114. Ibid., p. 1217.
115. Ibid., pp. 1217-19.
116. Ibid.
One might conclude, in the words of Vithalbhai Patel, who said to the correspondent: "He (Bose) speaks the mind of young India. It may be a brilliant mind and may be a foolish one. It may be creative or it may be suicidal. But it is here and if the gods are thirsty, what can we do but offer our blood?"\(^{117}\)

Mr. N.G. Ganpuley, a Maharastrian by birth, educated up to Matriculation at Hubli (Karnatak), a close associate (from Sept. 1941 to 10th April 1945) of the Netaji in Germany, first met Bose in Berlin (Germany) when he (Netaji) visited Germany during his exile in Europe (1933-36).\(^{118}\) Bose wanted to see the economic and political development of Germany under the new regime of Hitler.\(^{119}\) It shows that he was impressed by the progress of Germany at the time.

Some suspected that Bose had secret contacts with the German authorities in India, in 1938, when he was the President of the Congress and was striving for the second term also. Gandhiji opposed a second term for Bose, it was said, because of such activities on Bose's part. A.K. Majumdar explained on the basis of information supplied by K.M. Munshi: "Bose, when he was in Bombay in 1938, was in active contact with the German Consul. He would take great precautions while meeting

\(^{117}\) Ibid.

\(^{118}\) N.G. Ganpuley, An Autobiography, unpublished work, which is with Dr. H.Z. Valdys, Chatprabha (Karnatak, India).

\(^{119}\) Ibid.
the Consul. For example, he would go to a friend's house for lunch after which he would retire for rest, and all the guests would naturally depart. He would then change his dress, disguise himself sufficiently to hide his identity, and go to meet the Consul in the house of another friend, changing his taxi on the way. However, some coded messages from the Consul to Germany were intercepted by the British Secret Service in 1938, and sent to the Government of India who managed to forward them to Gandhiji, through Munshi. Netaji's secret activities took Gandhiji entirely by surprise and he decided that he (Netaji) should not be re-elected President of the Congress. This led to his opposition to Netaji's re-election, and after the latter was re-elected, to withhold co-operation, which forced him to resign.120

However Gandhiji has nowhere revealed it, either before or after the re-election of Bose, not even after (Netaji's) sensational escape from India. At the same time the fact can not be totally denied also, because, the very next year in 1939, Mr. N.G.Ganpuley met Bose in Bombay during May and arranged a meeting of the latter with the German officers at his residence on the Marine Drive.121

Veer Savarkar, if his private secretary's version is to be believed, suggested Bose, in June 1940, when the letter had come to Bombay, via Wardha, after meeting the Mahatma, after the Second Conference of the Forward Bloc (June 1940) at Nagpur. This was revealed after fourteen years by the private secretary to Savarkar in his letter to K.C. Das: "A definite suggestion was made to Subhas Babu by Savarkarji that he should try to leave India and undertake the risk of going over to Germany to organise the Indian forces, fallen in German hands as captives, and then with the German help should proceed to Japan to join hands with Rash Behari Bose. To impress this point Savarkarji showed to Subhas Babu a letter from Rash Behari Bose, written just on the eve of the Japanese declaration of war." 122

But nowhere has this fact been revealed either by Bose or by Rash Behari Bose. But it was a fact that he had come under the influence of Savarkarji.

Suspicion of Bose being a fascist was confirmed when he escaped secretly to Germany in Jan. 1941. The British imperialists, the Indian communists and the right wing of the Congress always called him a fascist.

It was a difficult task for him to get aid from Germany for the cause of Indian freedom. "For months" writes P.G. Gampuley, "certain Nazi officials went on insisting on terms which were impossible for a nationalist and patriot like Subhas to accept. Rather disgusted with them he told his Nazi partners: "For the sake of my country I have risked my neck to come to Germany. For the same reason, I am prepared to return to India if I cannot achieve my purpose. The British C.I.D. is very efficient, but just as I escaped in spite of it, I shall escape your Gestapo also'."123

Bose's aim was to free his nation but not to follow the fascist ideology of the three axis powers. He made it clear in a broadcast on May 1, 1942: "I am no apologist of the three powers, and it is not my task to defend what they have done or may do in future. That is a task which devolves on these nations themselves. My concern is with India and, if I may add further, with India alone".124

He was for self-determination as an internal policy of free India and for collaboration with the enemies of Britain in her foreign policy. He broadcast on March 1, 1943: "The internal policy of free India is, and should be the concern of the Indian people themselves, while the external policy

123. M.G. Gampuley, Netaji in Germany.
should be one of collaboration with the enemies of Britain. While standing for full collaboration with the Tripartite Powers in the external sphere, I stand for absolute self-determination for India where her own national affairs are concerned, and shall never tolerate any interference in the internal affairs of free India.”

This statement proves that he was a true democrat and a patriot. Paul Leverkuehn, a German, writes: "Bose was in no way a collaborator in the evil sense which the word has acquired in recent years. Rather, he was a true Indian patriot with but one idea. He was prepared to do nothing simply for Germany's sake, but anything and everything, including the harnessing of German interests for India."

Bose approached Japan for aid on terms of equality and as the head of the I.I.L. But his critics in India and abroad who called him a puppet, a stooge, were wrong. He always maintained his individuality, the dignity of the Indians and India. Many instances can be quoted to substantiate this claim:

In his very first speech, after taking the change as the President of the I.I.L. (4th July, 1943), Bose declared his allegiance to India but not to Japan: "My loyalty is to

125. Ibid.
126. Ibid., p. 296.
India and India alone; not even our enemies will have the
 audacity to urge that I am capable of betraying my country." 127

Bose, as the President of the I.I.L. pledged for the
freedom of India and for welfare of Indians but not for the
ideology of the axis powers. "We pray that Providence may
bless our work and our struggle for the emancipation of our
Mother-land. And we hereby pledge our lives and the lives
of our comrades-in-arms to the cause of her freedom, of her
welfare, and her exaltation among the nations of the world." 128

His provisional government aimed at, first, the expulsion
of the British authority from India and then to establish a
government "Constituted in accordance with the will of the
Indian people and enjoying their confidence". 129 Until the
time, it wanted to administer the affairs of the country in
trust for the Indian people". 130 In this there is not even
an iota of fascist element could be found.

When the Premier of Japan, Mr. Tojo, said at the Greater
East Asia Conference (Nov. 24, 1943), that Bose would be all
in all in free India, Bose rose at once and replied that it
was not for Gen. Tojo to decide but the people of free
India. 131 It shows that Bose was not after the dictator's
favour to impose himself on free India.

127. Ibid., p. 237.
128. S.K. Bose (Dr.), A Beacon Across Asia, Appendix VII,
"Proclamation of the Provisional Govt. of Azad Hind,
1943", p.297.
129. Ibid. 130. Ibid. 131. N.G.Jog, op.cit.
The Provisional Government guaranteed "religious liberty, as well as equal rights and equal opportunities to all its citizens. It declares its firm resolve to pursue the happiness and prosperity of the whole nation and of all its parts." 132

A doubt was expressed that if Japan succeeded over the allied nations in the II world war, India will have some under Japanese imperialism in place of the British. But Bose had firm belief in Japan's sincerity in this respect. The I.N.A., Proclamation, issued on 4th April 1944 maintained: "The Provisional Government is fully convinced of Hippon's sincerity towards India. The Provisional Government is convinced that Hippon has no territorial, political, economic or military ambitions in India. The Provisional Government is convinced that Hippon is interested only in destroying the Anglo-American forces in India which are the enemies not only of India, but of Asia as well. The destruction of Anglo-American Imperialism alone will terminate this war and bring peace to the world". 133

Bose was ready to take action against Japan itself if the latter went against its word. "If ever you find", Bose warned the first I.N.A., Division, which was leaving

for the Imphal front, (Feb. 1944), "the Japanese trying to establish any type of control over India, turn round and fight them as vigorously as you will fight the British".  

His Provisional Government was quite independent with its own flag, stamps, "currency in Rupee-Notes of different denominations", officers, ministers, Army, national anthem, national language (Hindi) and script (Roman).

Bose pleaded with the Japanese military authority for an allied status instead of an auxiliary status to the I.N.A. He wanted his I.N.A. to be at the front and to shed blood on the Indian soil. He got an assurance from Japan that only the Indian Tricolour would fly on the Indian soil, and not the Japanese with the Rising sun.

Bose refused to receive Hechiya, the Japanese Minister-Designate to the Provisional Government at Rangoon as the latter failed to produce the credentials. It shows how he maintained the dignity and status of his Government. Neither he had an inferiority complexion nor did he considered himself to be subordinate to Japan. If he were a fascist puppet he would not have asserted in this fashion.

137. Ibid., p. 294.
The Japanese officers treated him as the head of the State. Thakin Nu, a high official explained in his book how he honoured Bose leaving his chair at a dinner for Netaji. 138

Hugh Toye charges him, as a fascist based on some instances. It seems Bose did not care, for example, for cabinet decisions: "there was never any question then or later of his absolute authority, the cabinet had no responsibility and could only tender advice." 139

"He suspended", writes Toye, "all elections for the duration of war, and ordered the expulsion of anyone not whole-heartedly co-operating or making counter propaganda... he offended himself, directing many of the investigations personally". 140

While collecting funds he used his tactics from persuasion to threats. "At first", writes Toye, "donations flowed in freely from rich and poor, but the early eager generosity did not last and his persuasion gave place to threats." 141

Bose's utterances, like- "Japan has been defeated not we!", and "everyone surrendered except we the Indians" - show his independence, status and dignity and prove that he was not a puppet. After the surrender of Japan (Aug. 14, 1945),

139. Hugh Toye, Subhas Chandra Bose, p.100.
140. Ibid., p.103.
141. Ibid., p.103.
Bose decided to try, once again, his luck, in seeking help from Russia. His fatal final flight was undertaken, in fact, with this intention only.

Bose's alliance with axis powers was the main reason for Bose being charged as a fascist. Common interests or common characters, generally, it is said, are responsible for alliances. British imperialism was the common enemy to Bose and to the axis powers. Enemy's enemies become friends, temporarily, to fight against their common enemy.

Why the axis powers, particularly, Germany and Japan, helped Bose? Some raised this question for the reason that either the axis powers were imperialists or Bose himself was an ambitious fascist.

Germany had been helping the Indian revolutionaries since the First World War to beat her enemy, the British. "Germany's interest in Indian freedom dated back to the First World War, when the Kaiser's Government had sent a ship-load of arms to help Indian revolutionaries. Dr. Schaeht, the German financial wizard, had toured India and established contacts on the eve of the Second World War." 142

Germany, naturally, aided Bose who was known for his intellectual genius and organising capacity and who had a

following of his own strong leftist party, the Forward Bloc in India. And above all, he was, already, idolised as a great patriot in India. Germany wanted to exploit the situation with aiding Bose towards organising the Indian legion out of the Indian prisoners of war in Germany. Bose, also was calculating to free his mother-land with foreign help.

Bose had close contacts with Mr. Baron Von Trott, the head of the Indian section of the German Foreign Officer and who influenced the German Foreign Office to extend facilities for establishing the Free India Centre in Berlin and for raising the Indian legion. Trott was so close to him that he was one of the two witnesses to Bose’s marriage with Franklin Schenkl in 1942. Trott was hanged by the Nazis along with Count Steffenburg and others for his anti-Nazi plot to assassinate Hitler, on July 20, 1944. It is clear that both Trott and his close associate, Mr. Bose, were anti-Nazis. Bose did not like either Nazism or Fascism or Nipponism, but he got aid from them only to beat the common enemy.

India was inspired, long back, by Japan with her historic victory over Russia in 1904-5. The Indian revolutionaries

143. Ibid., p. 297.
144. Ibid.
were aspiring for Japanese aid to root out the British from India. The Japanese also, at the same time, were anxious to exploit the situation to destroy the Anglo-American imperialism in Asia. They were in search for prominent personalities to organise the Indians in the South-East Asian territories, occupied by Japan, and to mobilise them in their favour. They, first, found Rash Behari Bose and then Subhas Bose.

Instead of suspecting Bose as a fascist, the Indians, inside and abroad, were thrilled and inspired by his patriotic speeches and by the legendary activities of his Provisional Government and the I.N.A. Chatter Singh Sehra explains this impact on Indians:

"They knew and idolized Bose, the dedicated patriot. Their foremost concern being national liberty, they saw eye to eye with patriot that their enemy's enemy was friend. They were thrilled to learn that with the assistance of an Asian power, their revolutionary leader Subhas had set upon Indian National Army to challenge the mighty British Empire in the field of battle, for the emancipation of the motherland. The very idea of an Indian army founded and commanded by an Indian of unquestionable patriotism was enough to evoke enthusiasm and applause from an unarmed people, long used to watching the displays of British military might. The people's vision
on the complex issues of the war was conventional, and was conditioned by feelings of national pride, racial revenge and repeated frustrations in the freedom struggle.145

In his radio address to Mahatma Gandhi from Rangoon on 6th July, 1944, Bose revealed his mind and heart which would be helpful to assess whether Bose was a fascist or a democrat: "... after twenty years' experience of public service in India, I came to the conclusion that it was impossible to organise an armed resistance in the country without some help from outside-help from our countrymen abroad as well as from some foreign power or powers."146

Before leaving the mother-land he thought fully whether it was right for him to take help from abroad.147 He came to the conclusion that history did not furnish a single instance where freedom had been won without help of some sort from abroad.148 He had carefully considered the pros and cons before leaving the country. "After having served my people so long to the best of my ability, I could have no desire to be a traitor, or to give any one a justification for calling me a traitor."149

147. Ibid.
148. Ibid., p. 309.
149. Ibid., pp. 309-10.
Bose denied all the allegations of his detractors: "only that man can be a puppet who has either no sense of honour and self-respect or desires to build up a position for himself through the influence of others".150

"Not even my worst enemy", he continued, "can dare to say that I am capable of selling national honour and self-respect. And not even my worst enemy can dare to assert that I was a nobody in my own country and that I needed foreign help to secure a position for myself."151

He assured the Mahatma that he would not be deceived by the Axis Powers- "If British politicians have failed to coax or coerce me no other politician can succeed in doing so."152

He explained why he went to Japan: "It was only after Japan took what I consider to be the most momentous step in her history—namely, declaration of war on Britain and America that I decided to visit Japan of my own free will".153

He spoke of his impressions of Japan: "But what I realised after my visit to Japan and what many people at home do not yet realise, is that since the outbreak of the war in East Asia, Japan's attitude towards the world in General, and

150. Ibid., p. 311.
151. Ibid.
152. Ibid.
153. Ibid., p. 312.
towards Asiatic nations in particular, has been completely
revolutionised.\textsuperscript{154}

He had an enduring faith in the promises made by Japan.
"I would be", he continued, "the last man to be influenced
by Japan if her declarations of policy had been mere
promises... Japan is true to her word and her actions are
in full conformity with her declarations."\textsuperscript{155} He gave
instances of the recognition of his Provisional Government
of Free India, and of the transfer of administration of the
Andaman and Nicobar Islands to the Provisional Government.

If Bose were a fascist, he would have developed in
himself a dictatorial mind and a high ambition. Even amidst
the long company of dictators for four years (1941-44), he
maintained his democratic mind and attitude. "Once our
enemies", he said, "are expelled from India and order is
established, the mission of the Provisional Government will
be over. It will then be for the Indian people themselves
to determine the form of Government that they choose and
also to decide as to who should take charge of that Govern-
ment."\textsuperscript{156} Only a born democrat with a religious bent of
mind could say it, and none else.

\textsuperscript{154} Ibid., p. 313.
\textsuperscript{155} Ibid., p. 315.
\textsuperscript{156} Ibid., p. 316.
He assured of such an intention not only on his own behalf but also on behalf of all his associates. "I can assure you, Mahatmaji", he continued, "that I and all those who are working with me, regard ourselves as the servants of the Indian people. The only reward that we desire for our efforts, for our suffering and for our sacrifice is the freedom of our motherland". Therefore they became the legendary figures in the minds of the Indians.

Bose and his associates aspired only for freedom and not for high position. "There are many among us", he continued, "who would like to retire from the political field once India is free. The remainder will be content to take up any position in Free India, however humble it may be. The spirit that animates all of us today is that it is more honourable to be even a sweeper in Free India than to have the highest position under British rule". His critics, particularly inside India, who accused him of being a fascist, traitor etc., would have repented after knowing the truth.

Ironically Bose shifted the criticism of being a fascist on to the rightist camp in the Congress: "It is difficult to understand what exactly is meant by fascist in an Indian context, if the word is used in its scientific or technical

157. Ibid., pp. 316-17.
158. Ibid., p. 317.
Nevertheless, if by fascist is indicated those who call themselves Hitlers, super Hitlers, or budding Hitlers, then one might say that these specimens of humanity are to be found in the Rightist Camp."159

Mr. S.A. Ayer, Minister for Propaganda of the Provisional Government in South-East Asia under the Prime Ministership of Bose, rightly observed that Bose was "a democrat at heart and a dictator in effect."160

Bose was, undoubtedly, a born democrat. His spiritualism, his devotion to Vivekananda's teachings would never allow him to be a fascist or a dictator. He was a democrat at heart but a revolutionary, a terrorist, an extremist and even a fascist in his outside appearance, with his "over-powering personality",161 in the company of dictators for four years.

161. Ibid.