CHAPTER - III

ROLE OF SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE IN INDIAN NATIONAL MOVEMENT:

FIRST PHASE: (IN INDIA)
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His exile as a detenue from 24th October 1924 to May 16, 1927, without trial and his sufferings during the period, were a preparation for his future sufferings and sacrifices in the cause of the nation. He was equipped, in a way in the Mandalay jail, for the coming national movement in India. "The two years in Mandalay," wrote Hugh Toye, "were to be among the most important in his life."¹ He had thoroughly changed his way of life and thoughts. "The change in me was this that I decided to be honest."²

Subhas's return to Bengal politics, from his exile, provided a new blood and a new ray of hope. The death of C.R. Des, (on June 16, 1925) was an irreparable loss to the nation and particularly to Bengal. J.M. Sengupta, with the special blessings of Gandhiji, succeed to the positions held by C.R. Des, as the leader of the Swaraj party in the Bengal Legislative Council, as the Mayor of the Calcutta Municipal Corporation and as the president of the F.C.C.

It would have, definitely, been difficult for him to succeed

¹ Hugh Toye, Subhash Chandra Bose, Jaico Publishing House, Bombay, 1959, p.52.
to all these positions if Subhas were to be on the scene.

Sengupta's path was not so smooth as he faced a continuous opposition under the leadership of Mr. B.H. Samsal, until 1927. Actually, during the period, two sets of Congress organisations, one under Sengupta and the other under Samsal, worked as two rival Pradesh Congress Committees. So naturally, there were two sets of Congress candidates for the Calcutta Municipal Corporation elections in March 1927, in which the Samsal group was defeated.

The death of C.R. Des was also a great loss to the nation as a whole. Motilal Nehru succeeded as the leader of the Swaraj Party of India, which was the right wing of the Indian National Congress. The Nationalist Party, under Pt. Madan Mohan Malaviya and Lala Lajpat Rai, worked as the right wing of the Swaraj Party of India, which co-operated with the Hindu Mahasabha. After the temporary co-operation between Hindus and Muslims, during the Khilafat movement in India, the communal tension rose again during 1925 and 1926.

"On the one side," wrote Jawaharlal Nehru, "there were the Muslim fears of a Hindu Majority on the other side, Hindu resentment at being bullied by the Muslims. Many a
Hindu felt that there was too much of the stand-up and deliver about the Muslim attitude, too much of an attempt to extort special privileges with the threat of going over to the other side. Because of this, the Hindu Mahasabha rose to some importance.... Hindu communalism opposing Muslim communalism.... And so action and reaction went on, and in the process the communal temperature of the country went up. 3

The Hindu-Muslim communalism had split the Swaraj Party in Bengal into four factions like, Hindu Swarajists, Swarajist Hindus, Muslim Swarajists and Swarajist Muslims.

The Congress swept the polls in the third General Elections in November 1926, especially in Madras and Bihar but suffered in the U.P. Subhas was elected to the Bengal Legislative council when he was behind bars in Mandalay jail.

Under such circumstances of the Indian scene in general, and Bengal in particular, Bose returned from exile. The troubled politics of Bengal was waiting for his miraculous deeds. "Rarely did a leader receive such

co-operation from all sides as Bose did for a time." Bose emerged as an unanimous and common leader of Bengal in the rivalry between the J.N. Sen Gupta and the B.N. Samsel factions. Bose was elected for the first time, the President of the B.P.C.O. in 1927 and since then up to the end of his life in 1945, he had been recognised as the undisputed leader of Bengal. He was referred to as the leader of the nation by Rabindranath Tagore in May 1939. Since his activities in Germany, after his sensational escape from India, in 1941, he came to be called the "Netaji."

Bose faced a small jolt when he was defeated in the Mayoral election of the Calcutta Municipal Corporation by a liberal candidate, B.K. Basu.

National Politics:

Then came the national issue over the Simon Commission. Lord Irwin, Governor-General of India, who had succeeded Lord Reading in 1926, announced on 8th November, 1927, the appointment of the Indian statutory Commission under Section 84(a) of the Government of India Act of 1919, which provided for a review of the political situation in India every ten years. The Commission was appointed two years'

earlier in 1927 instead of 1929, because of, as it was argued, communal riots in India (during 1925 and 1926); secondly as part of Tory politics to avoid tension during the General elections in England in 1929; and thirdly as A.B. Keith argued, because of the youth movement in India, especially under Subhas Chandra Bose and Jawaharlal Nehru.

The all-white-commission consisting of seven members of parliament representing different political parties and sections under the chairmanship of Sir John Simon, was nominated by Lord Birkenhead, Secretary of state for India and which was condemned by all parties and sections of India for being all-white without any representation to the Indians. Never since the Amritsar tragedy, said Miss Ellen Wilkinson, was there such universal condemnation of any act of the British. 5

Motilal Nehru criticised the composition of the Simon Commission as both an injury and an insult to India, to its opinion, intelligence and self-respect. "A deliberate insult to the people of India," said the Liberal leader, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, ".... not only does it definitely assign to them a position of inferiority, but what is

worse, it denies to them the right to participate in the
determination of the constitution of their own country."

The Madras Congress Session of 1927, under the
Presidency of Dr. M. A. A. Noori, boycotted the Simon Commission
"at every stage and in every form". A resolution was passed,
on the other hand, by the Congress, to convene an All
Parties Conference to draw up a constitution for India
acceptable to all parties, in reply to the second challenge
made by the Secretary of State for India, Lord Birkenhead
in 1927, to produce an agreed constitution for India. The
first challenge was given by him in the House of Lords in
July 1925.

The Madras Congress (Dec. 1927) marked an important
stage in the life of Subhas, which brought him to the All
India level for the first time, officially, as one of the
three General Secretaries of the Congress along with
Jawaharlal Nehru and Shauq Qureshi. Subhas had already
attained national stature with his patriotic resignation to
the Indian civil service and through his sufferings in exile
in the Mandalay Jail. The year 1927 was politically an
important year in the life of Subhas, as he was released
in the same year (May 16, 1927), was elected the president
of the P.C.G. and as a General Secretary of the Congress
in Madras in December, 1927, when he was hardly thirty years old.

There was a Black flag demonstration against the all white seven member Simon Commission which landed first in Bombay, on February 7, 1928. There was a wide-spread hartal throughout the country, wherever the Commission went by all the parties, including the liberals and the Muslim League. "The lathi blows," roared the lion of Punjab, Lala Lajpat Rai, who was charged by lathi on his chest in Lahore, when the Commission was on tour, "that are hurled on me will one day prove as nails in the coffin of the British Empire." He breathed his last after a few weeks because of the blows he received, while the officer was murdered in avenge by mistake.

Similar hartsals and black flag demonstrations were held in Calcutta in particular and Bengal in general, under the leadership of Subhas.

In response to the resolution passed in the Madras Congress in December 1927, the All parties Conference was convened in Delhi on 28th February, 1928, under the presidentship of Dr. M.A. Ansari, while the Simon Commission was touring in India. Twenty nine organisations were
represented at the Conference and discussed an agreeable constitution for India. The Conference met again in Bombay on May 19, 1928 and appointed a sub-committee to draft a constitution for India. The Sub-Committee with Motilal Nehru as the Chairman, had Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Sir Ali Imam, M.S. Anco, Serdar Mangal Singh, Shauib Qureshi, G.R. Pradhan and Subhas Chandra Bose as Members. Jayakar and Joshi did not continue on the Committee. The sub-committee was formed giving representation to all parties like the Congress, the Swaraj, the Liberal, the Nationalist and different communities like the Hindus, the Muslims, the Sikhs through their organisations like the Hindu Maha Sabha and the Muslim League; the labour was represented by Joshi, and the old and young India. Subhas represented, especially, the young India, and even as a General Secretary of the Congress.

After twentyfive sittings, the Nehru Committee, as it is popularly known, drafted a constitution. The Committee was divided in its opinion on the issue of immediate objective and the remote objective of the draft constitution. The majority was for the dominion status for India immediately and for complete national independence in due course. The minority, on the other hand, which included Subhas, was for
complete national independence immediately and not for
dominion status. "Bose rejected Dominion status," wrote
Hugh Toye, "because he feared that it would perpetuate
British capitalist interests in India."\(^6\)

After the firm demand of Bal Gangadhar Tilak, who
said: "Swaraj is my birth right and I shall have it",
Subhas pleaded for complete national independence. He was
more progressive than Jawaharlal Nehru and Mahatma Gandhi,
who of course, pleaded for it a year later in 1929 in the
Lahore Congress. Subhas firmly stressed on of complete
national independence of India as the goal in 1928 itself,
in his dissenting view to the Nehru Report.

Subhas was even prepared to resign his General
Secretaryship of the Indian National Congress to organise
separately the Independence of India League (I.I.L.), to
fight for complete national independence. The controversy
over the immediate objective of the draft constitution for
India, in 1928, probably, was the main cause which turned
him into an activist and a pragmatist. Earlier he was
somewhat sober, passive and sincere follower of C.R.Das
from 1921, when he entered politics to the death of C.R.Das
in 1926.

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6. Hugh Toye, op.cit., p.34.
Subhas wanted to build up a strong national movement in 1928 itself, through an organisation like the Independence of India League for complete national independence. Subhas refers to this in his autobiography:

"There is absolutely no doubt that if the Congress working Committee had taken courage in both hands, they could have anticipated the movement of 1930 by two years.... When the writer (Bose) visited the Mahatma in May 1923 at his Ashram in Sabarmati, he reported to him the public enthusiasm which he had met with in many provinces and begged him to come out of his retirement and give a lead to the country. At that time the reply of the Mahatma was that he did not see any light, though, before his very eyes, the peasantry of Bardoli were demonstrating through a no-tax campaign that they were ready for a struggle.

"During the whole of 1928 and 1929", "Subhas wrote further, "there was no much unrest in the labour world that if a political campaign had been started at the time, it would have been well-timed. Moreover, in 1928 and 1929 there was more enthusiasm and excitement in provinces like Punjab and Bengal than in 1930.... The responsibility for not utilising the situation in 1928 devolves not only on the Mahatma but on the Swarajist leaders, who had the Congress machinery in their hands at the time but who had unfortunately lost their dynamic impulse."

Bose wanted to channelise the youth and the labour towards activism instead of passivism of Mahatma Gandhi and of Sri Aurobindo. He advocated the same in his speech

as the Chairman of the Reception Committee of the youth Congress:

"As I look around me today, I am struck by two movements or two schools of thought... which have their centres at Sabarmati and Pondicherry. I am not considering the fundamental philosophy underlying these two schools of thought. This is not the time for metaphysical speculation. I shall talk to you as a Pragmatist, as one who will judge the intrinsic value of a school of thought, not from a metaphysical point of view, but from experience of its actual effects and consequences."  

Bose concluded his speech with a call for activism:

"It is the passivism, not philosophic but actual, inculcated by these schools of thought against which I protest. In this holy land of ours, Ashrams are not new institutions and ascetics and yogis are not novel phenomena. They have held and 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. 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 adopt ourselves to modern conditions."

8. J.S.Bright (Ed.): Important Speeches and Writings of Subhas Bose, The Indian Printing Works, Lahore, 1947, p. 81.
9. Ibid., p. 32.
Bose had given a similar call to the youth and the labour in his presidential speech to the Maharashtra provincial Conference in Poona, earlier in May 1928. He wanted to utilise the labour unrest for the national movement in 1928, as that year was known for labour unrest. There was a trade union movement with textile strike in Bombay, the jute mills strike in Calcutta, the East India Railway strike at Lillorah, the oil and petrol works strike at Dudge-Budge and the Tata Iron and Steel Works strike at Jamshedpur. Bose had taken the leadership of the latter.

The draft constitution, popularly known as the Nehru Report, prepared by the Nehru Committee was ratified by the All parties Conference held at Lucknow, in August 1928. The Report, though supported by the Congress and nationalist muslims, was opposed by the Sikhs, Harijans, and the Muslim league. The All Parties Muslim Conference held in Delhi on December 31st, 1928, rejected the Report. M.A.Jinnah put forward his Fourteen Points as an alternative to the Nehru Report in a convention of the all-parties Conference held in Calcutta, prior to the Congress session of December 1928.

The 43rd Congress session held in Calcutta, under Motilal Nehru, in December 1928, ratified the Nehru Committee Report, though Bose, still stood for complete
national independence as the immediate goal. A Resolution, moved by Mahatma Gandhi, giving a year more to the British Parliament to accept the Report in its entirety, was accepted by the Congress. Bose moved vainly an amendment to the resolution demanding complete national independence immediately, opposing the Dominion status Resolution in the Subject Committee.

Bose raised a volunteer force specially for the Calcutta session of which he was the General officer Commanding on military lines with different cadres.

Gandhiji moved the following Resolution in the session: "Subject to the exigencies of the political situation, this Congress will adopt the Constitution (the Nehru Report), if it is accepted in its entirety by the British Parliament on or before the 31st December 1929, but in the event of its non-acceptance by that date or its earlier rejection, the Congress will organise a campaign of non-violent non-co-operation by advising the country to refuse taxation and in such other manner as may be decided upon."

Bose objected to the Resolution and said:

"In the main resolution you have given twelve months' time
to the British Government. Can you lay your hands on your heart and say that there is a reasonable chance of getting Dominion status within the period? Pandit Motilal Nehru has made it clear, in his speech that he does not think so. Then why should we lower the flag for these twelve months? why not say we have lost the last vestige of faith in the British Government, and that we are going to take a bold stand?"\textsuperscript{10}

Some were afraid that the Mahatma would retire from the Congress if his resolution was amended. So Bose's amendment to the Resolution was lost by 973 votes to 1350, and later a compromise Resolution was passed.

Bose was not disheartened, as he had complete faith in his plea for complete national independence, which he anticipated, definitely, in the coming Lahore session of the Congress. At the Haagpur Political Conference, on March 30, 1929, he said, "..... The present year is a year of preparation. If we work in right earnest we shall be able to resort of civil disobedience campaign, and no-tax campaign, next year. There is no doubt that in the Lahore Congress the resolution for complete independence will be adopted."

\textsuperscript{10} S.A. Ayer (ed.), Selected Speeches of Subhas Chandra Bose, Publication Division, Government of India, Delhi, (1955), 1962, pp. 42-43.
Bose toured extensively in India and addressed Youth Organisations, student communities and labour world advocating for their organisations to participate in national movements. In his presidential address at the Punjab Students' Conference, held in Lahore, he encouraged the students to take part in politics. "If in a dependent country all the problems are fundamentally political problems", he said, "then all national activity is in reality political in character. There is no ban on participation in politics in any free country, on the contrary, students are encouraged to take part in politics."  

Bose pleaded for both evolution and revolution, at the Berar students' Conference at Amravati. "There is no inherent difference in evolution and revolution. Revolution is evolution compressed into a shorter period, evolution is revolution spread over a longer period. Both evolution and revolution imply change and progress, and in nature there is room for both. In fact, nature cannot do without either."

Bose gave a call for boycott of the Whitley Commission, appointed to report on labour conditions in India.

12. Ibid., p. 95.
A special meeting of the A.I.C.C. was convened in August 1929 to select the president for the Lahore session. Naturally, opinion was in favour of the Mahatma, who declined to give scope for youngsters, probably. Then the opinion turned in favour of Vallabhai Patel, a hero of Bardoli no-tax campaign, but the Mahatma nodded negatively, probably because he was from his own native province. Later, the Mahatma came out suggesting Jawaharlal Nehru, one of the young Leftists. Bose commented on this choice in his autobiography:

"For the Mahatma the choice was a prudent one. But for the Congress Left Wing it proved to be unfortunate because that event marked the beginning of a political rapprochement between the Mahatma and Jawaharlal Nehru, and a consequent alienation between the latter and the Congress Left Wing.....

"Therefore for the Mahatma it was essential that he should win over Jawaharlal if he wanted to beat down the Left Wing opposition and regain his former undisputed supremacy over the Congress. The Left Wingers did not like that one of their most outstanding spokesmen should accept the Presidentship of the Lahore Congress because it was clear that the Congress would be dominated by the Mahatma, and the President would be a mere dummy..... Since then Jawaharlal Nehru has been a consistent and unfailing supporter of the Mahatma."

Jawaharlal has revealed his heart and accepts that he was brought, instead of coming on his own to such an honourable position, in his autobiography:

"I have seldom felt quite so annoyed and humiliated as I did at that election. It was not that I was not sensible of the honour, for it was a great honour, and I would have rejoiced if I had been elected in the ordinary way. But I did not come to it by the main entrance or even a side entrance, I appeared suddenly by a trap door and bewildered the audience into acceptance. They put on a brave face on it, and like a necessary pill swallowed me. My pride was hurt and almost I felt like handing back the honour. Fortunately I restrained myself from making an exhibition of myself and stole away with a heavy heart."

Lord Irwin, Viceroy of India, announced on October 31, 1929, that "I am authorised on behalf of His Majesty's Government to state clearly that in their judgement it is implicit in the Declaration of 1917 that the natural issue of India's constitutional progress, as here contemplated, is the attainment of Dominion status" and he referred to the convening of the Round Table Conference after the publication of the Simon Commission Report. Bose considered

this Proclamation of Lord Irwin as just a trap as Lloyd George did earlier in the case of Ireland suggesting a convention consisting of all parties for framing a constitution and which was boycotted by the Sinn Fein Party.

On the initiative of Vithalbhai Patel, President of the Legislative Assembly, a leaders' conference was convened at Delhi, and a joint Manifesto was adopted accepting the Viceroy's Declaration and which was signed by Mahatma Gandhi, Motilal Nehru, Jawaharlal Nehru, Dr. M.A. Ansari, Pt. Madan Mohan Malaviya, Shrinivas Shestri, Sir Toju Bansiwar Sapru, Dr. Moonje, Mrs. Annie Besant and many others. Within 24 hours of its announcement, the Proclamation was accepted. Bose, Srinivas Ayenger, Dr. Kitchlew and Abdul Bari, on the other hand, signed a separate Manifesto opposing the terms of the Viceroy's announcement.

Bose's apprehensions about the Announcement being a trap became true later. Jawaharlal Nehru confirms the same in his autobiography.¹⁵

Bose's group succeeded in the election of office bearers in the P.C.C. over its rival group of Sengupta, who had the blessings of Mahatma Gandhi. It was the first

defeat, in a sense, of the Mahatma at the hands of Subhas, earlier to the historic defeat of Gandhiji's candidate, Pattabhi Sitaramayya in 1939.

The Lahore Congress, under the presidency of Jawaharlal Nehru, in December, 1929 agreed with, though late by a year, what Bose had advocated through an amendment to the Resolution of Gandhiji, in the previous Congress at Calcutta. The mistake was rectified at Lahore. Gandhiji himself moved a Resolution advocating complete independence for India as the goal of the congress and rejected the Nehru Report which was accepted earlier in the Calcutta Congress. It was complete volte-face from the Calcutta Congress, and a triumph for Bose. The Leftists, under the leadership of Subhas, hailed the Resolution but they were not satisfied with the steps such as civil Disobedience Movement, demanding resignations from the legislatures etc.

Bose, true to his spirit and hot blood, was always ahead of the Gandhian thought. He was a pragmatist, an activist and above all an extremist. On behalf of the Leftists, he moved an amendment vainly to the Resolution, advocating a parallel government in the country immediately and for organising workers, peasants and the youth. He
declared himself an extremist and his demand was "All or Nothing"! 16

Not only Bose's amendment to the Resolution was defeated, but also he and his group, including Srinivas Iyenger and others were excluded in the election to the Congress working Committee. It was a sort of direct action against the Leftists in general and against the revolutionary, Bose, in particular.

The Leftists walked out of the Congress. Bose organised a new party, the Congress Democratic Party, on January 2, 1930, for his progressive, revolutionary and even militant programme. He requested Basanti Devi, widow of C.R. Das, by telegram seeking her blessings for his new party.

The Lahore session was symbolic, as Jawaharlal Nehru, President of the session, and the first prime Minister of Free India later, hoisted the flag of independence on the midnight of December 31, 1929, on the banks of Ravi, under the guidance of Gandhiji. But Bose had left the Congress and later the country for ever without seeing a free India. Lahore itself though was freed later, went to Pakistan.

Arrests and Imprisonments:

The Congress working Committee passed a Resolution on January 2, 1930 (the same day Bose organised his new party, the Congress Democratic Party) declaring January 26 as the Independence Day (which has been observed since 1950 as the Republic Day). In his presidential speech at a meeting at Hazarpark, on January 9, 1939, Bose stressed the significance of the Independence Day. As the President of the Trade Union Congress, he inspired the workers to the independence movement. Three days before the First Independence Day (26 January 1930), Bose was sentenced on his birthday, the 23rd January, in a case which was pending against him since August 11, 1929, when he was arrested on a charge of sedition for leading a procession on the All Bengal Political Sufferers' Day, to a year's rigorous imprisonment and was sent to the Central Jail. So he could not participate, in the very first Independence Day on 26th January, 1930.

Under the leadership of Gandhiji, 79 members of the Sabarmati Ashram (in which Mahadevappa Mylar of Karnataka was also included) and students of Gujarat Vidya Peeth left the Ashram on 12th March 1930 for Dandi, which is historically known as the Dandi March and broke the Salt
Law on 6th April, 1930, the first day of the national week, celebrated annually to commemorate the Jallianwala Bagh tragedy. Bose compared this march to Napoleon’s march on Paris on his return from Elba and to Mussolini’s march on Rome with a view to seize political power.

Webb Miller, journalist, reported the scenes of Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930, as follows:

"In eighteen years of reporting in twenty-two countries during which I have witnessed innumerable civil disturbances, riots, street fights and rebellions, I have never witnessed such a harrowing scene as at Dharasana (a salt depot). Sometimes the scenes were so painful that I had to turn my eyes away momentarily. One surprising feature was the discipline of the volunteers. They were thoroughly imbued with Gandhi’s non-violent creed”.

The Anglo-Indian papers, on the other hand, like The Statesman, through its Editorial ridiculed that Gandhi could go on boiling sea water till Dominion Status was attained. Brailsford, an English journalist, described it as "Kindergarten stage of revolution" and he laughed at "the notion that the King-Emperor can be unseated by boiling sea water in a kettle."
There was a rift between political prisoners in the Central Jail on April 1950 and the jail staff - in which the latter attacked and beat the prisoners. Even Bose, Sengupta and Kiron Shankar Roy were the victims. Bose, especially, was "beaten to unconsciousness for more than an hour". People crowded outside the jail under the rumour of the death of Bose. After an enquiry by a Committee the Jail Superintendent was transferred.

At the end of July 1950, Bose went on hunger strike in the jail for the redress of grievances of political prisoners.

Bose was elected, second time from behind the bars, Mayor of the Calcutta Municipal Corporation, and he was released from jail on 29th September, 1950. As Mayor and freedom fighter, he started his socio-economic and political activities in Bengal. He organised the Bengal Swadeshi League in December 1930 and Co-ordinated the activities of industrialists, businessmen and social workers, probably in search of socialism for India.

The historic First Round Table Conference convened under Wedgwood Benn, Secretary of State for India in London on 17th November, 1930 was adjourned on January 19, 1931.
89 delegates (15-represented three major political parties in the British Parliament, 16- the Indian Princely States; 57- the British India) participated but the Congress party of India did not participate. Braileford, British journalist, felt the absence of the Congress in the following words: ".... in St. James palace they did assemble Princes and untouchables, Sikhs, Muslims, Hindus and Christians and spokesmen of landowners, trade unions, and chambers of commerce, but Mother India was not there".

It was like Hamlet without the Prince of Denmark. Bose also felt the absence of the Congress party. He said: "With the Labour Cabinet in power in England in 1930 and Lord Irwin in Delhi the Congress could have given a different turn to the Conference."

The year, 1931, opened its account, with arrests and lathi charges, especially, for Subhas Bose. In January, 1931 Bose was arrested and imprisoned, though he was a Mayor, for seven days for visiting a disturbed area (Maldha district) of Bengal."17 On the second anniversary of the Independence Day, on 26th January, 1931, he was severely injured in the Police lathi charge, while leading a procession as Mayor of Calcutta. There were "five injuries" on

his body "including the fracture of two fingers of his right hand". The police authority anticipated his activities and had taken precaution. The Police Commissioner had ordered Bose, that very morning through a police-officer, not to lead a procession. The injured Bose was taken to Lalbazar police station, and he was "detained overnight without food, change of clothes or medical attention". Next day he was sentenced to six months' rigorous imprisonment. After undergoing the imprisonment of one month and thirteen days, however, he was released on March 8, 1931, under the general amnesty, given as part of the Gandhi Irwin Pact (March 5, 1931).

Sir Winston Churchill, a high priest of British imperialism commented on the Gandhi-Irwin meeting as follows:

"It is alarming and nauseating to see Mr. Gandhi, a seditious Middle Temple lawyer, now posing as a 'fakir' of a type well-known in the East, striding half-naked up the steps of the viceroy's palace, while he is still organizing and conducting a defiant campaign of civil disobedience, to partly on equal terms with the representative of the King-Emperor."

Bose as a representative of young India, called the pact a "curse". He expressed unhappiness for the pact to Gandhiji directly, in Bombay and discussed it during the journey with him (Gandhiji) from Bombay to Karachi for the Congress meeting, scheduled for March 29, 1931. He (Bose) wanted to continue the civil disobedience movement with greater vigor till the attainment of complete independence.

In his Presidential address at Navajawan Sabha at Karachi, which was held simultaneously with that of the Congress session, and showed black flags to Gandhiji for concluding the Pact with Lord Irwin, Bose said:

"It is exceedingly unsatisfactory and highly disapponting. What pains me most is the consideration that at the time the Pact was drawn up actually had more strength than would appear from the contents of the document."

The Sabha condemned the Pact. Subhas urged for the formation of the Socialistic Republic in India. Similarly the Provincial Conference of the Sabha held at Nathana in May 1931 and the All India Trade Union Congress, held at Calcutta, on July 4, 1931, under the presidentialship of Bose condemned the Pact. He welcomed the Resolution of Fundamental Rights, passed by the Karachi Congress as a "definite move in the direction of socialism."
The new Governor-General, Lord Wellington, who succeeded Lord Irwin, on April 17, 1931, broke the Pact on his own secret oath of suppressing the Congress within six weeks under the direction of the Tory party.

Mahatma Gandhi participated in the Second Round Table Conference, as the sole representative of the Congress. The torrential selfish communalism was loaded completely against Gandhiji, who claimed to represent the people of India as a whole.

Bose commented on the delicate position of Gandhiji in the Conference: "Alone in an assembly of about one hundred men, with all kinds of nondescripts, flunkeys and self-appointed leaders arrayed against him like a solid phalanx, he was at a great disadvantage." 19

Bose compared the failure of Gandhiji at the Conference to that of President Woodrow Wilson at the Versailles Conference:

"The professor-president of America was no match for the Welsh Wizard, Mr. Lloyd George; nor was the saint politician from India any match for the wily Mr. Ramsay MacDonald". 20

20. Ibid., p. 228.
Bose criticised the double roles of Gandhiji in London as a Political leader and a world teacher thus:

"Sometimes he conducted himself, not as a political leader who had come to negotiate with the enemy, but a master who had come to preach a new faith - that of non-violence and world peace. Because of his second role, he had to spend much of his time with people who were quite useless in promoting his political mission."

Jawaharlal Nehru on the other hand, rightly observed the failure of the Conference due to intrigues, opportunism and the like and sympathised with the position of Gandhiji:

"The scales were terribly loaded against us at the Conference and ....... we watched its proceedings with amazement and ever-growing disgust....... the pacts and intrigues and manoeuvres, the joining of hands of some of our own countrymen with the most reactionary elements of the British conservative party....... It was all jobbery.... opportunism was rampant, and different groups seemed to prowl about like hungry wolves waiting for their prey....... No one thought in terms of independence......."

"In that crowded and guilded hall Gandhiji sat, a very lonely figure. His dress.... distinguished him from
all others...... even wester difference between his thought and out-look and that of the well dressed folk around him...."21

The Conference concluded on December 1, 1931, without any definite results.

There was an attempt on the life of the District Magistrate at Dacca, followed by police atrocities. The Congress sent an Inquiry Committee, with Bose as a member, to investigate the matter at Dacca and to report. Bose was physically prevented from reaching Dacca and he was arrested at Tejgaon, but was released on November 14, 1931.

Bose was specially invited to attend the Congress Working Committee meeting in December, 1931. On his way to Bombay he presided over the Maharashtra Youth Conference held at Poona, in which a Resolution was passed to urge the Congress Working Committee to resume the Civil Disobedience Movement. On his way to Calcutta, after attending the CWC meeting at Bombay, he was arrested at Kalyan, on January 2, 1932, under the Government order for the general arrests of leading Congressmen, to crush at the root, the coming Civil Disobedience Movement in the country.

Two days earlier to his arrest, he had written a letter to his friend Dilip Kumar Roy, on 31.12.1931: "Do you want the fragrance of the full blown rose? ..... And the price of liberty is suffering and sacrifice..." 22

Bose was sent to Seoni jail, and he was removed from there to the Jabalpur Central Jail and later to the Madras Penitentiary, on July 17, 1932, on health grounds where he spent three months. He was weak physically and he was living mostly on tea and water mixed with lime juice. But he had a strong "will-power" to live, to serve and to suffer for others. In a letter (September, 1932) to Dilip Kumar Roy, at the Pondicherry Ashram, he wrote:

"I have been studying a bit and thinking more; at times I feel as if I am groping in the dark. But I cannot go wrong as long as I am sincere and earnest—even if my progress towards truth be more zig zag than straight. After all, life's march is not as straight as a straight line." 23

Bose was not worried about his health. Even he

"It is not necessary to bother you with details about my 'physical' health........ I don't think I have suffered

from 'mental' ill-health as I have been suffering from the physical and my usual 'spirits' are therefore unaffected."\(^{24}\)

Bose used to cook and feed his fellow prisoners in the Madras penitentiary. Mukundalal Sarkar, a fellow detainee in the same jail, wrote:

"He (Bose) would not eat but would feed others, and for that he would cook himself. That was his pleasure. His preparations were really excellent. One day he said in all humour that when he would be released, he would be able to earn at least Rs. 40/- per month as a cook, and thus remove himself from the list of vagabonds."\(^{25}\)

Bose tutored his fellow political prisoners, about 125 of them in a Sunday class, in the jail. Mukundalal Sarkar observed: "He (Bose) must give something new every week either in politics or eatables."

In the Madras Penitentiary itself Bose prepared the first draft of the *Indian Struggle*, an autobiography, of about 100 pages. That was smuggled, according to M. Sarkar, out of jail and printed in Coimbatore. But Bose has not mentioned this in his preface to the book, *The Indian Struggle*, was later published in Britain in 1935.

\(^{24}\) Ibid., p. 64.

Bose had in mind, according to M. Barker, in Madras penitentiary, the idea of Hindustan Samyavadi Sangha, which he incorporated later in the political statement issued from Vienna.

Bose was really courageous in spirit. He retorted the Chief Presidency Magistrate of Madras, who once paid his routine visit and asked Bose whether he was comfortable:

"You should feel ashamed of yourself and your Government to keep me a prisoner without any charge or trial. Don't you think it is sheer mockery to ask a prisoner if he is comfortable?" Why don't you put yourself in this position and then get the answer?"

His ill-health affected his gall bladder, making his condition still worse. A majority report of the Medical Board, appointed by the Government of India recommended for his removal to a bracing climate, preferably out of India. He was transferred to the Bhawali Sanatorium in the J.P. on October 9, 1932. A majority report of another Medical Board, appointed by the Government of India, upheld the earlier view.

Later, he was released on February 22, 1933 on an agreement that he should proceed straight to Europe, at his
own expense. He was not allowed even to see his parents and friends, except a very few in jail. "The police officers who escorted him to Bombay surrounded him like a pack of hounds until the S.S.Ganges by which he sailed, left the harbour on February 23, 1933".  

Exile in Europe:

Bose arrived in Vienna (Switzerland) on March 6, 1933, and entered Dr.Furth's Sanatorium.

Though Bose was physically sick, he was mentally alert. His activities in Europe, during his sojourn of three years provided the ground for his future plans, programmes and aspirations for free India. This was his second exile under detention, after the first one in the Mandalay jail. Even, this exile was a turning point, in his personal life. There was nothing like personal for him. He had fully dedicated himself to the cause of the nation. But during his stay in Europe, a personal incident happened viz., his love affair with a German lady, Fraulein Schnekl, whom he married later in 1942 and got a daughter by her who is now married happily to an American. This personal matter was kept as top secret until it was revealed in his letter (February 8, 1943) to

his elder brother, Sarat, before he left Germany by submarine for Japan.

Bose came in contact with Vithalbhai Patel, former President of the Indian Legislative Assembly, who was also then in Vienna for medical treatment. Both became friendly because of their common views, common approach for, and common objective of national freedom. Both were fiery "patriots and ardent Leftists." Both were practical politicians. They were for revolutionary activism. So, naturally both opposed Gandhiji's method of passive resistance. It was the irony of their fate that both died outside the mother country.

Both Bose and Vithalbhai Patel were furious on hearing of the suspension of the Civil Disobedience Movement in India by Gandhiji in May 1935. Both condemned the act of Gandhiji by issuing joint statement on May 9, 1935:

"... the latest action of Mahatma Gandhi in suspending the civil disobedience movement is a confession of failure so far as the present method of the Congress is concerned. We are clearly of opinion that as a political leader, Mahatma Gandhi has failed. The time has, therefore, come for a radical reorganisation of the Congress on a new principle and with a new method. For bringing about this re-organization, a change of leadership is necessary, for it would be unfair to Mahatma
Gandhi to evolve or work a programme and a method not consistent with his life-long principles. If the Congress, as a whole, can undergo this transformation, it would be the best course; failing that, a new party will have to be formed within the Congress, composed of all the radical elements. Non-cooperation cannot be given up, but the form of non-cooperation will have to be changed into a more militant one, and the fight for freedom is to be waged on all fronts.”

Bose drafted the script and handed it over to Patel who finally approved and signed it. Alfred Tynanuer, a journalist, was specially invited on phone to the Vienna Hotel, de France, by Vithalbhai Patel in connection with the statement. "I can well remember", wrote Alfred Tynanuer in The Saturday Evening Post, with an account how the statement was issued, with a photostat of Bose's draft, "the strange picture of a modernly furnished Vienna hotel room in which the two striking Orientals (Patel and Bose) sealed their portentous agreement.”

"After a cordial welcome Patel explained," Alfred's account continued, "we are about to issue a joint declaration against the passive resistance policy of Gandhi. We are both of the opinion that India had arrived at a stage of revolution where a more active policy is called for.....

28. Ibid., p.1417.
My young friend, Bose believes that an attack must be sharp like a dagger.....

Both Bose and Vithalbhai Patel thought that they would put an end to the useless talks at Round Table Conferences by their Joint Statement.

"Bose interrupted his writing; "the account continued, "No real change in history has ever been achieved by discussions\' he said."

"Well, the only alternative is violence," Alfred answered, "revolution, war, under the present tension - laden circumstances even a world conflagration."

"\'What of it?\' retorted Bose passionately, 'India can well afford to bring a bloody sacrifice for her liberation. Three hundred and fifty million miserable lives are waiting for deliverance!'

"Patel turned to me with a faint smile. \'He speaks the mind of young India', he said slowly. \'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?\' 29

Bose utilised the period of his exile for propaganda in favour of the freedom movement of India. He realised the value of propaganda abroad. He had written a letter in 1921 from Cambridge about it to C.R.Das, who wanted to organise an Asiatic League for the same. He was inspired further in the same matter by Vithalbhai Patel, who, on the initiative of Eamon de Valera, undertook a propaganda tour in the U.S.A. during 1932-33, and delivered 85 lectures, all over America, in less than five months. Bose started the Indo-Irish League in Dublin for Indian propaganda.

Bose visited almost every country in Europe but he did not visit the U.S.S.R., though he had been invited as he was dissuaded by Vithalbhai Patel, who thought that link with that communist country would hamper his (Bose's) utility to India. Bose visited several times Berlin (Germany) and Rome (Italy) and met the top hierarchy of the Nazi and the Fascist parties. Several times he met Mussolini, but Hitler, it seems, was not liberal in that respect to receive him. He stayed a long time in Germany. He was fluent in German. He came in contact with, not only politicians and bureaucrats, but also the public. He paid a number of visits to Mrs. Kitty Kurti, wife of a Czech engineer who had settled in Germany. The lady has also written a book: Subhas Chandra Bose - As

Bose spoke at several gatherings on politics and even on culture, including the heritage of India. He used to wear the Indian national dress, 'chudiar Payjama', long black coat with buttons up to neck and a white cap. He had spectacles on always. He used to take help of notes while giving lectures. He insisted on Indians there to wear Indian dress.

Bose spoke in such a way as to rouse Germans against Britain. He used to say: "Britain is our traditional enemy. We will fight her whether you support us or not." 31

Britain was also alert about the activities of Bose in Europe. The British embassies, consulates and special agents misrepresented him as a communist in Fascist or pro-Fascist countries and as a Fascist in democratic or socialist countries. The British Ambassador in Yugoslavia requested the Yugoslavian Press not to publish views of and interviews with Bose. Even the British members of Parliament campaigned against him. Sir Walter Smiles, a British M.P.,


agitated against a speech by Bose in Geneva in September, 1933 and suggested to put him in jail on his return to India. Bose challenged the M.P. to point out any objectionable matter in his statement during the speech. The challenge was not accepted by the other Party.

Bose was not allowed to visit Britain, where he was scheduled to preside over the Third Indian Political Conference in London. His address was read in absentia, in which he had analysed India's freedom struggle and suggested the formation of the Samyavadi Santha, "the party of the future", as Bose called it, with its double role to fight against Britain and to build a New India.

Bose spent few months in Geneva (Switzerland) observed keenly the role of the League of Nations particularly for the cause of India's freedom. He had contacts there, with the International Committee on India and he helped in the publication of a monthly bulletin on India.

Before his death (October 22, 1933), Vithalbhai Patel had made a will appointing Goverdhanbhai I.Patel, his biographer later, and Dr. Purushottamdas J.Patel as his executors. He had mentioned in the will to give four gifts and to hand over the remaining balance to Bose to be
utilised in the cause of the nation. Clause 5 of the Will reads:

"The balance of my assets, after disposal of the above mentioned four gifts, is to be handed over to Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose (son of Janakinath Bose) of 1, Woodburn park, Calcutta, to be spent by the said Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose, or his nominee or nominees, according to his instructions, for the political uplift of India, and preferably, for publicity work on behalf of India's cause in other countries."

Bose struggled for about six years to get the balance of Vithalbhai Patel's assets, according to the Will. The executors and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, younger brother of Vithalbhai questioned the claim, as Vithalbhai Patel's signature was attested by all the three Bangalies. Mr. Justice Wadia of Bombay High Court held the bequest void. That was confirmed by an appellate court on September 28, 1939. The balance of Rs. One lakh was given to the Indian National Congress by cheque by Sardar Patel, depriving Bose, who, by then, was expelled from the Congress.

While in Europe, Bose was busy writing his book *The Indian Struggle*, in 1934, which was published in Britain at the end of the year.
A cable news of ill-health of his father Janakinath, forced Bose to fly from Europe to Karachi on December 3, 1934. But his father had passed away a day earlier when Bose arrived in Calcutta from Karachi. He was interned at his house at 38.2, Elgin Road, under Regulation III of 1818 with restrictions. He was not to be absent from the premises of the said house, and not to interview any visitor at any time." He was "not to correspond, converse or communicate or associate in any manner with any body save the members of the family actually living in the house. He was "to deliver unopened, to the police, all books and communications received from any source whatever. And finally, when so required by the police commissioner or any magistrate, to facilitate in every way access of such person to the premises." He was warned: "if you knowingly disobey any of the directions you will be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to seven years, and be also liable to a fine."

Bose could not see his father before his death. He stayed in agony with his family for a month and left for Europe in exile, on January 8, 1935 and continued his medical treatment in Vienna and he was operated upon there.
Meanwhile, in India, the Congress Socialist Party was formed out of the Congress, in May 1934 by Sri Jaya Prakash Narayan, reviving the left wing. The congress won in the November (1934) Elections to the Central Assembly, 44 out of 49 general seats in a House of 130. The Congress Working Committee rejected the Joint Parliamentary Committee's Report in December 1934.

The 1935 year was the Golden Jubilee year of the Indian National Congress. True to the spirit of the year Bose launched a propaganda abroad in favour of his mother country. He issued a statement "our internal and external policy" from Geneva in February 1935. He issued another statement in March 1935, on the Congress socialist party.

Bose was in correspondence with Romain Rolland, the French Savant and Philosopher, during his exile in Europe. He called at Rolland's residence at Villa Olga (France), on the morning of April 3, 1935, and discussed the politics of India, especially of Mahatma Gandhi's non-violent movement in India. An account of the same was contributed later by Bose to The Modern Review (September, 1935) of Calcutta.

"I would be sorry", said Rolland, "if Satyagraha failed. But if it really did, the hard facts of life would
have to be faced and he would like to see the movement conducted on other lines."

"That was the answer," observed Bose, "nearest to my heart. Here then was an idealist who did not build castles in the air but who had his feet planted on terra firma."

Bose was invited by the Leftists of India to attend the Lucknow Congress session (1936), to be held under the presidency of Jawaharlal Nehru. He was eager to attend the same. But he was warned by the British Government through the Consul in Vienna, against it.

There was an uproar in the Indian Legislative Assembly on the issue of Bose's exile. On March 23, 1936, an adjournment motion was moved by Hilkant Dass, and that was carried by 62 to 59 votes. The Indian representatives pleaded for his release and to allow him to return to India. Home Secretary, Mr. Hallett, defended, on the other hand the action of the Government and he appraised the House of the activities of Bose since 1924 upto his detention (1932) in the following words:

"After Mr. Bose's arrest in 1924, 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.

Bose published in 1923 an article in Atmashakti, 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."

Sir Henry Craik, Home Member of the Government of India defended the Government action on the ground that Bose instigated the police, the Army and the public against the Government. He said:

"The Samyavadi Sangha 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 time of distress."

He concluded:

"This man had a definite terrorist connection 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 organizing capacity to have liberty to put these ideas into execution."

Bhulabhai Desai, the leader of the opposition argued:

"If Government had evidence, let Mr. Bose be tried. Its answer to this was that people who were not police informers and who gave the information, would find their lives in danger thereby. Was it not better that these lives be risked than that a person be deprived of his liberty and the opportunity of doing service for his country, because the deprivation of such opportunity was worse than death?"

Bose wrote to Nehru from Vienna conveying his decision to come to India defying the British Order:

"The personal factor does not count at all with me..... Going to prison also has its public utility and there is much to be said in favour of defying an official order like this and deliberately courting imprisonment."32

Bose left Vienna and sailed for India, arriving in Bombay on April 8,1936. Soon after his arrival, he was

arrested and sent to Yerawada jail, near Poona, from where he sent a brief message: "Keep the flag of freedom aloft," to the Lucknow Congress session, in which it was read out. Nehru sent him a letter of sympathy and appointed him a Member of the Congress Working Committee.

There was a country-wide hartal on May 10, 1936 demanding the release of Bose. But instead of releasing, he was taken to Kureong on May 20, 1936 and was interned in his brother's house at Girda Hill. After about seven months' detention there he was brought to Calcutta on December 17, 1936 and was kept there in the Medical College Hospital for treatment. Later, on March 17, 1937 he was released unconditionally as his health deteriorated. That was the end of a long period of detention of more than five years (from January 2, 1932 to March 17, 1937) in India and abroad.

President of the Congress:

After his release, Bose took medical treatment for about a month under Dr. Sir Nilratan Sircar and on April 25, 1937 he left for Dalhousie, a hill station in the Himachal Pradesh and stayed with his friend, Dr. Dharmavir for about five months. Bose had come in contact with Mrs. and Dr. Dharmavir at Lancashire in England, where the doctor had
built up a lucrative practice since 1921. "Mrs. Dharmavir, born of English parents in Russia, spoke both Russian and French... she was married to Dr. Dharmavir, a Punjabi physician." Bose was charmed by Mrs. Dharmavir and called her 'didi' (sister). Warm hearted by nature, he was overwhelmed by her beautiful personality and flawless hospitality." Bose was too much shy of fair sex, especially during his student life. He used to warn his friends to be aloof from "so called European culture: wine and woman." But in case of Mrs. Dharmavir, Bose was not reserve and shy. "She was the one English woman in England to whom he had ever opened himself emotionally."  

During his stay at Dr. Dharmavir's house at Dalhousie Bose wrote some articles, such as "Japana role in the Far East", which was contributed to the Modern Review.

Bose returned to Calcutta on October 7, 1937. For some time he had been to Kurseong to his brother. He participated in the A.I.C.C. meeting convened in Calcutta, during which Mahatma Gandhi stayed as a guest of the brother of Bose at 1, Woodburn Park, for about two weeks. It was

34. Ibid.
35. Ibid., p.38.
36. Ibid., p.37.
informally decided then that Subhas Bose would be the president at the Haripur Congress session.

Ill-health of Bose, forced him to take another trip to Europe for medical treatment, on November 18, 1937. He stayed at Badgstein, health-resort in Austria, for about six weeks. Then he left for Britain on January 8, 1938. There he was informed officially of his election, in absentia, as the President of the Congress. His reaction was:

"It will be agreed on all hands that we have to bring India before the World more than we have done so far. India's problems, after all, are world problems. On our close contacts with the progressive movements abroad will depend not only the salvation of India but also of the suffering humanity as well."

He had talks with top leaders of England, like Lord Atlee and Lord Bevin; and of Ireland like Eamon de Valera, who was then in London. He received a number of receptions in London and Cambridge.

Bose left London for India on January 22, 1938 and arrived in Calcutta after two days. He was busy with his Presidential work, as the Congress session was too near.
He went to Wardha to attend the Congress Working Committee, on February 3, 1933, in which he sought the advice of Mahatma Gandhi while preparing his presidential address.

The Fifty-first (51st) session of the Congress met on February 19, 1938, on the bank of Tapi (Tapti) at Hari pura (Gujarat). The venue of the session was named "Vithal Nager", in memory of Vithalbhai Patel, former President of the Indian Legislative Assembly, (elder brother of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel), an activist, a freedom fighter, who died in Vienna (Switzerland), on October 22, 1933. It was symbolic that one of the co-authors of the Joint statement issued in Vienna on May 9, 1933, became the president of the Congress session in the Venue, named after the other, after about five years. To mark the 51st session, there were 51 gates, erected; 51 national flags, hoisted; the presidential chariot was drawn by 51 white bullocks to the chanting of 51 national songs. 

"It was Bose's political coronation." 37

It was the first occasion when the provincial ministers (under the Government of India Act of 1935, after the General Elections to the provincial legislatures in 1937) attended a Congress Session as delegates. While hoisting the

national flag, on the eve of the Congress Session, Bose referred to the resignations of Chief-Ministers of the U.P. and Bihar on the issue of the release of political prisoners.

The retiring President of the Congress, Jawaharlal Nehru, requested the new president to take the chair. The chairman of the Reception Committee welcomed the gathering. Then started the Presidential address.

His speech, which ranged from the British imperialism to socialism of the day, and covered from foreign policy to family planning, was remarkable. "Few Congress Presidential addresses", wrote N.G. Jog, "have proved as prescient as Bose's. He anticipated many of the problems of a free India. His warning about partition came true within nine years. His hope that the Congress should remain in the seat of power even after independence, has been fulfilled despite Gandhi's wishes to the contrary."38 His plans for foreign policy, socialism and family planning were realised later, though Bose did not get the credit. The entire credit went to Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India.

Bose first attacked British imperialism thus: "The British Empire is a hybrid phenomenon in Politics. It is

a peculiar combination of self-governing countries partially
self-governing dependencies and autocratically - governed
colonies."\textsuperscript{39}

He sounded a prophetic note of the impending fall of
the Empire and said: "Constitutional device and human
ingenuity may bolster up this combination for a while, but
not for ever. If the internal incongruities are not removed
in good time then, quite apart from external pressure, the
Empire is sure to break down under its own strain."\textsuperscript{40}

He referred to the divide and rule policy of Britain
and stated: "It is a wellknown truism that every empire is
based on the policy of divide and rule. But I doubt if any
empire in the world has practised this policy so skilfully,
systematically and ruthlessly as Great Britain."\textsuperscript{41}

As the President of the Congress, Bose was naturally,
accorded many receptions, addresses, throughout the year,
all over the country, including brickbats on one occasion.
"During a visit to Chittagong (East Bengal) a crowd of
Muslim Leaguers threw brickbats at the presidential party,
injuring Bose and some others."\textsuperscript{42}

\textsuperscript{39} All quotations are from the address as reproduced in
\textsuperscript{40} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{41} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{42} N.G. Jog, op. cit., p. 137.
He was presented with an Address by the Bombay
Municipal Corporation, in May 1933. It was appropriate as
he had served as the chief-executive Officer and even Mayor
of the Municipal Corporation of Calcutta. In his address,
he narrated the achievements of the Vienna and Birmingham
municipalities and urged for Municipal socialism.

Bose had to his credit the convoking of the conference
of Chief Ministers of Provinces with Congress majority, in
Delhi, in May 1938. The main agenda of the Conference was
national planning. He called, five months later, a conference
of ministers for Industry to pursue the same. He was
successful ultimately in appointing a committee on National
Planning under the Chairmanship of Jawaharlal Nehru, and
he inaugurated the same on December 17, 1938. The committee
got generous donations to the tune of £ 50,000 from the
provincial Governments.

July 12, 1938 was observed as All India Chinese Day,
under the presidentship of Bose, to sympathise, with the
Chinese against the aggression of Japan (July 7, 1937). Bose,
in his Presidential address, appealed to the public for funds
and volunteers for the Indian Medical Mission sent already
to China on July 7, 1938.
Bose, as the president of the Congress, had to arbitrate over the wrangles of ministers and chief ministers of the provinces. He handled firmly the episode of Dr. N. B. Khare, the chief minister of the Central provinces, according to the majority opinion of the Congress working committee then, though he was against it. Bose went to Dr. Khare's room, as Dr. Khare narrates in his Political Memoirs, at Wardha at about midnight on July 25, 1938 and told him "Gandhi and the Congress Working Committee were doing him (Khare) a great injustice. They were in a majority and Bose as the President was in a minority. Therefore Bose was obliged to support the Congress policy of injustice to Khare and he was sorry for it. He further advised Khare to sign Gandhi's draft and keep quiet for about four months when the matter would be raised again."

A.I.C.C., meeting was held under the presidency of Bose, in September, 1938, in Delhi, in which a resolution was moved on civil liberties and the latitude of the meeting was towards the leftists.

Bose, in short, though a firebrand, acted as "one of the silent presidents of the Congress," of the year 1938.

The year 1939 opened up with a storm in the Congress on the issue of election of President. "It was a storm
reminiscent of the split in the Congress at the Surat session in 1907 though its consequences were altogether different."43 Two rival camps were formed naturally when Bose declared his candidature for Presidentship for a second term. There were statements and counter statements from different quarters. Bose issued four statements (on February 21st, 25th and 27th, 1939) from Calcutta, in reply to statements of Sardar Patel from Bardoli, Jawaharlal Nehru from Almora, Dr. Rajendra Prasad from Patna and the Mahatma from Wardha.

The Mahatma, the ever undisputed king of the congress, suggested Nehru for the post, though he had already occupied it thrice (1929, 1936, 1937) "including two consecutive terms just before Bose (1933)." Nehru, probably for this reason, declined it. Then the Mahatma leaned towards Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, probably to placate the Muslims, but he declined on grounds of his health. Finally, Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya was recommended by Gandhiji and Bose was asked to withdraw from the contest.

Bose, on the other hand, was nominated by a number of Provincial Congress Committees, which was a democratic method. So, he refused to withdraw from the contest. "The issue is not a personal one", 44 he stated in his first statement.

43. N.G. Jog, op. cit., p. 140.
44. S.C. Bose, Crossroads, p. 87.
issued on February 21, 1939. He wanted the election on the basis of policy and programmes. He further said: "...... people are consequently veering round to the opinion that, as in other free countries, the presidential election in India should be fought on the basis of definite problems and programmes so that the contest may help the clarification of issues and give a clear indication of the working of public mind."

"In view of the increasing international tension, and the prospective fight over the federation, the new year will be a momentous one in our national history."

A counter statement was issued on January 24, 1939, by seven members - Sardar Patel, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Jairamdas Daulatram, J. B. Kripalani, Jerralal Bajaj, Shanker Rao Dee and Bhulbhai Desai - of the Congress working Committee, which met at Bardoli and supported Gandhi's nominee, Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya.

They argued, first for a unanimous choice of president and not for election. It meant that the nominee of Gandhiji should be accepted. Secondly, they were not for re-electing the same person except under very exceptional circumstances.

45. Ibid., p.87.
But Nehru was elected for two consecutive terms (1936 and 1937)! Were there exceptional circumstances then? Thirdly, the position of the president, they maintained was just that of a chairman and a symbol of unity of the nation. Even then they would have readily accepted Bose. Why did they plead for Dr. Pattabhi?

He (Bose) had his own doubts and apprehensions on the prospective compromise between the Mahatma's Camp, the Rightists and the British Government on the federal scheme. His second statement issued on February 25, 1939 went on to say:

"It is widely believed that there is a prospect of compromise on the federal scheme between the Right wing of the Congress and the British Government, during the coming year. Consequently the Right wing do not want a Leftist president who may be a thorn in the way of a compromise and may put obstacles in the path of negotiations."

He was of course, ready to withdraw if any genuine leftist and antifederationist candidate like Acharya Narendra Deva, would be accepted. The statement continued:

"If the right wing really want national unity and solidarity they would be well-advised to accept a Leftist
as president. They have created considerable misapprehension by their insistence on a Rightist candidate at any cost, and by the unseemly manner in which they have set up a candidate who was retiring in favour of Maulana Azad. .... The real issue before the country is the federal scheme. All those who believe in fighting federation and in maintaining our national solidarity in this crisis, should not endeavour to split the congress by insisting on a candidate who was voluntarily retiring."

In his third statement (February 27, 1939), Bose charged the Rightists and suspicion about others. The statement ran:

"Can anybody challenge the fact that the belief is widely held that during the coming year, a compromise will be effected between the British Government and the Right wing of the congress?.... and nobody can deny its existence. Not only that, it is also generally believed that the prospective list of ministers for the federal cabinet has been already drawn up."

He gave his last warning to avoid the contest, otherwise the blame of the split of the congress, he maintained would be on the Rightists. His last statement (27 Feb., 1939) ran:
"If a contest does take place, the responsibility for dividing the congress will devolve entirely on the Right-wing. Will they shoulder that responsibility or even at this late hour will they decide to stand for national unity and solidarity, on the basis of a progressive programme?"

He stated his firm decision of not withdrawing from the contest, in his first statement itself, which stated:

"..... 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."

Some, even his close friends like Dilip Kumar Roy, underestimated Bose and thought he was over-ambitious and after power. Dilip Kumar Roy wrote to Bose:

"You simply cannot afford to be blind to the probability that even if you were substantially right in your assessment of the political situation, this unseemly apparent eagerness to be re-elected would look too personal to be convincing. Nehru 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." 46

The Mahatma in his Editorial in the Harijan, complained of strife, indiscipline, anarchy in the Congress and he anticipated the same at the Tripuri Congress. 47 The Mahatma was doubtful of the success of his candidate, Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya. "I am mathematically certain", said Bose, on the other hand, to a journalist on the day of the election (Jan., 30, 1939), "that I shall beat Sitaramayya".

Bose's mathematics came true. He won with 1580 votes against 1375. It was an extraordinary event in the history of the Congress. It was the success of the Leftists over the Rightists, of democracy over the autocratic nomination, of definite policy and programme of anti-federation over the prospective compromise over federation. Above all, it was the success of Bose, even in the Gandhian era from 1919 to 1947, over Gandhiji the unchallenged crown of the Congress.

Gandhiji accepted his defeat in a statement he issued on January 31, 1939:

"The defeat is more mine than his (Dr. Pattabhi). I am nothing if I do not represent definite principles and policy.

46. D.K. Roy, Netaji - The Man, p.82.
Therefore, it is plain to me that the delegates do not approve of the principles and policy for which I stand. I rejoice in the defeat."

But his advice to the minority was not laudable. "The minority", the statement continued, "can only wish it all success. If they cannot keep pace with it, they must come out of the Congress." It was virtually a revenge for his failure at the election. It was "neither sporting nor democratic."48

Bose, on the other hand, was still optimistic of winning the confidence of Gandhi, "It will always be my aim and object," said Bose in his statement, issued on February 4, 1939, "to try and win Gandhi's confidence 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 man."

Bose did not want to loose even a single opportunity of attacking the British authority. He was sorry for Gandhi who was on his way. "... in the event of an international crisis, Gandhi would not seize the opportunity for attacking the British", Bose wrote, "and that Gandhi regarded a

struggle with Britain in the near future as outside the
domain of possibility."49

A resolution was passed at a conference of the B.P.C.C.,
in conformity with Bose's views, when it met at Jalpaiguri,
under the presidentship of Sarat Chandra Bose, during the
first week of February, 1939, which Bose attended, that a
six months' ultimatum should be given to the British Govern-
ment to give Swaraj to India. The same matter was stressed,
later in the Presidential address of Subhas at the Tripuri
Congress, on March 10, 1939.

Bose moved heaven and earth to win over the confidence
of Gandhi and his co-operation, so that the Tripuri Congress
would be a success. He rushed to Wardha to meet the Mahatma
on February 15, 1939. The only decision that emerged was to
hold a meeting of the Congress Working Committee at Wardha
on 22nd February, to discuss the agenda for the Tripura
session.

Bose was severely ill after his return from Wardha.
He had no other way except sending a telegram on February
21, requesting Gandhiji to postpone the meeting of the
Congress Working Committee. But that was wrongly interpreted

by the dissident (Gandhi) group, that he (Bose) had lack of confidence in them. The dissidents revolted with their resignations. Twelve members resigned from the C.W.C. 
"doubtless with the knowledge and concurrence of Gandhi." 50 

"Nehru did not actually resign and the other one who remained was Sarat Chandra, Subhas's elder brother. The Mahatma also showed his non-cooperation to Bose, by leaving for Rajkot and staying there for two months.

Under such circumstances the A.I.C.C. was held on March 7, 1939, at Tripuri, (Madhya Pradesh) under the presidentship of Subhas, who 'lay in an invalid's chair with doctors in attendance.' A resolution was moved by G.B.Pant, one of the members of the C.W.C. who had resigned, urging the president (Bose) to nominate the new working committee according to Gandhi's wishes. The President agreed to put the matter to the Subjects Committee but he did not allow a discussion on it.

The plenary session (The 52nd) of the Indian National Congress, was inaugurated on March 10, 1939, with nearly two lakhs of people attending, but in the absence of the president, Bose, as he was too weak to attend. "If his health had not been on the verge of another breakdown, Bose might

have survived what followed.... When the congress assembly
met on March 10th (1933) Gandhi was absent and Bose was
lying on a stretcher; his photograph did duty for him in
the presidential procession". M. Azad was on the Presidential
chair. Sarat Bose read out the presidential address, the
shortest on record. Giving ultimatum to the British Government
to give Swaraj for India which was the main theme of the
address. It said:

"The time has come for us to raise the issue of Swaraj,
and submit our national demand to the British Government
in the form of an ultimatum. The time is long past when we
could have adopted a passive attitude and waited for the
federal scheme to be imposed on us... In my opinion we shall
submit our national demand to the British Government and
give a certain time limit within which a reply is to be
expected. If no reply is received within this period, or if
an unsatisfactory reply is received, we shall resort to such
sanctions as we possess in order to enforce our national
demand. The sanctions that we possess today are mass civil
disobedience or Satyagraha. And the British Government today
are not in a position to face a major conflict like an all-
India Satyagraha for a long period." 52

51. Hugh Toye, op.cit., p.57.
52. Sirir K Bose (Ed-in-chief), A Beacon Across Asia,
Appendix III, pp.263-4.
Bose thought that national and international situations were opportune and in favour of Indians to start immediately a mass movement.

The Address continued:

"What more opportune movement could we find in our national history for a final advance in the direction of Swaraj, particularly when the international situation is favourable to us? Speaking as a cold blooded realist, I may say that all the facts of the present day situation are so much to our advantage that one should entertain the highest degree of optimism. If only we sink our differences, pool our resources and pull our full weight in the national struggle, we can make our attack on British imperialism irresistible. Shall we have the political foresight to make the most of our present favourable position or shall we miss this opportunity which is a rare opportunity in the lifetime of a nation."\(^{53}\)

Bose was aware of the problems of the Indian states. The address continued:

"I have already referred to the awakening in the Indian States. I am definitely of the view that we should

\(^{53}\) Ibid.
revise our attitude towards the states as defined by the Haripura Congress resolution. That resolution.... put a ban on certain forms of activity in the states, being conducted in the name of the Congress. Under that resolution, neither parliamentary work nor struggle, against the state should be carried on in the name of the Congress.*54

Bose suggested lifting the ban and to guide the popular movements in the states towards civil liberty and responsible Government. The Address continued: "Besides lifting the above ban, the work of guiding the popular movements in the states for civil liberty and Responsible Government should be conducted by the working Committee on a comprehensive and systematic basis."55

The address, though a brief one, was systematic which covered the briefly the international scene and his suggestions to the national and the Indian States' Politics.

A resolution moved by G.B.Pant, a member of the Congress Working Committee who had resigned, on the third day of the session, confirmed fully the old policy and programmes of the Congress, only under the guidance of Gandhiji and at the cost of Subhas. The resolution ran:

54. Ibid., p.264.
55. Ibid.
"This Congress declares its firm adherence to the fundamental policies which have governed its programme in the past twenty years under the guidance of Mahatma Gandhi, and is definitely of opinion that there should be no break in these policies and they should continue to govern the Congress programme in future. This Congress expresses its confidence in the work of the Working Committee which functioned during the last year and regrets that any aspersions should have been cast against any of its members.

"In view of the critical situation that may develop during the coming year and in view of the fact that Mahatma Gandhi alone can lead the Congress and the country to victory during such crisis, the Congress regards it as imperative that the Congress executive should command its explicit confidence, and requests the president to nominate the Working Committee in accordance with the wishes of Mahatma Gandhi."

"The resolution was passed by an overwhelming majority. It came as a slap on the face of the President."

Bose was caught in a dilemma on the one hand, the resolution insisting on organising the working Committee according to the wishes of Gandhiji, and non-cooperation of Gandhiji on the other hand, who was not suggesting any names. Bose's repeated attempts to get the guidance, suggestions and confidence of Gandhiji to form the committee were in vain. Nehru intervened in the matter and tried to influence Gandhiji. Nehru wrote the following letter to Gandhiji.

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56. S.C. Bose, Crossroads.
58. Details are discussed in the chapter.
"I think now, as I thought in Delhi, that you should accept Subhas as president. To try to push him out seems to me to be an exceedingly wrong step. As for the working committee, it is for you to decide. But I do think that the idea of homogeneity, if narrowly interpreted, will not lead to peace or effective working. ... After all, we must remember that by having a homogeneous executive, we do not create a homogeneous Congress. The latter is easier of achievement if we have a larger homogeneity in view."

Even Rabindranath Tagore, requested the Mahatma to be kind to Bengal. Tagore wrote to Gandhi on March 29, 1939:

"Dear Mahatma,

At the last congress session some rude hands have deeply hurt Bengal with an ungracious persistence. Please apply without delay, balm to the wound with your own kind hands and prevent it from festering."\(^60\)

Gandhi was not moved. He replied:

"Dear Gurudev,

I have your letter full of tenderness. The problem you set before me is difficult. I have made certain suggestions to Subhas. I see no other way out of the impasse."\(^61\)

\(^{60}\) All quotations from B. C. Bose, Crossroads, pp. 126-170.
\(^{61}\) Ibid.
Bose tried again to get the names suggested by Gandhiji, immediately after the arrival of the latter in Calcutta to attend the A.I.C.C. Session. Gandhiji refused again. He (Gandhi) had even informed some of the leaders like Sardar Patel, not to go to Calcutta for the session. He himself decided earlier to remain absent, but probably on the request of Nehru arrived in Calcutta (Even then he was not ready to attend the session). Nehru wrote to Gandhi:

"... I would beg of you to address yourself to the latter, even at the cost of not attending to Rajkot affairs for a while. The idea that you may not attend the A.I.C.C. Session at Calcutta is alarming. That simply means that conditions would go on deteriorating and that the congress should go to pieces. I wish you could have met Bose. Quite apart from any feasible outcome of this visit, this could have been helpful in many ways."\textsuperscript{62}

Bose referred to the detailed correspondence between himself and Gandhiji in his speech as the President at the A.I.C.C. Session at Calcutta, on 29th April, 1939:

"I regret very much that since the Tripuri Congress I have not been able to announce the personnel of the new

\textsuperscript{62} Ibid.
Bose put-forth his dilemma:

"After Mahatmaji's arrival in Calcutta we have had prolonged conversations, but unfortunately they did not lead to any solution. Mahatmaji's advice to me is that I should myself form a Working Committee, leaving out the members who resigned from the previous Working Committee. But this advice I cannot give effect to for several reasons. To mention two of the principal reasons, I may say that such a step would be contrary to the directions in Pantaji's resolution, which provides inter alia that the working committee should be formed in accordance with the wishes of Gandhiji, and it should command his implicit confidence". 64

He also revealed his idea of a composite cabinet:

"...Moreover my conviction is that in view of the critical times that are ahead of us in India and abroad, we should have a composite cabinet commanding the confidence of

63. Ibid.
64. Ibid.
the largest number of Congressmen, possibly reflecting the composition of the general body of the Congress."  

He was ready for any Committee, appointed by Gandhiji. He tried vainly for a compromise with the old members. He thought that the matter could be settled only with his resignation:

"I have been deeply pondering as to what I should do to help the A.I.C.C. in solving the problem that is now placed before it. I feel that my presence as president at this juncture may possibly be a sort of obstacle or handicap in its path. For instance, the A.I.C.C. may feel inclined to appoint a working Committee in which I shall be a misfit. I feel, further, that it may possibly be easier to settle the matter, if it can have a new president. After mature deliberation, therefore, I am placing my resignation into your hands."  

Bose requested Sarojini Naidu to preside. Next day Nehru moved a resolution suggesting Bose to withdraw his resignation and to nominate the old Working Committee of 1938. Bose agreed to do so if his views on reorganisation of the committee with the inclusion of fresh blood would be accepted by the Congress.  

65. Ibid.  
66. Ibid.  
67. Ibid.
Serojini Haidu appealed to Bose from the chair to accept the resolution of Nehru. "... I thought I made my position perfectly clear" was Bose's reply. Nehru thought that Bose's statement was vague and he withdrew his resolution. On the request of the Chairman, the A.I.C.O. elected a new president, Dr. Rajendra Prasad. That was a triumph for the Gandhian bloc at the cost of Bose, Bengalis, and in general the youth. The old working Committee was re-organised, excluding Bose and Nehru, as both declined to serve on the Committee, though the latter promised his co-operation, which was naturally approved by Gandhi.

Bose had resigned, earlier, in Cambridge from the I.C.S. joyously and willingly with patriotic spirit not to serve the British imperialism, but now he was forced to resign because of the Gandhian-Congress imperialism. It is the irony of history, that his political 'guru' also had resigned, seventeen years back in 1922, for the same reason.

Hugh Toye commented on the event emotionally thus:

"It was indeed his second turning point; the first, he would have claimed had been the result of a British injustice; now it was the injustice of his own people, his own political comrades. For he had been democratically elected in
preference to Gandhi's nominee; he was president, leader, by the will of the people, in spite of the will of Gandhi. Those who had voted for him had known his views and had deliberately chosen them. His popular mandate had been denied by intrigue, intrigue not only against himself, but against the democracy which had elected him. He had been forced to show himself to the Congress as a leader who had failed. That was the grievous injustice.68

The only disqualification of Bose was he did not follow Gandhi blindly, otherwise, he would not have been forced to resign. Hugh Toye writes: "Perhaps in very truth he had failed, failed where a lesser man, a less brilliant man, a less confident man might have succeeded. For there was no compromise in Bose's make-up, no middle way, no shades between light and dark, no toleration of any opinion but his own. You either agreed with him or you were an enemy to be fought."69

"I am an extremist - all or nothing" - Bose himself used to say. "This was always his way: it was his strength and his weakness, and the undoubted cause of his downfall now."70

69. Ibid., p.59.
70. Ibid.
The Forward Bloc

Within three days of his resignation as president of the Congress, Bose announced the formation of a new block, the Forward Bloc, within the Congress, "to rally all the radical and anti-imperialist progressive elements in the country on the basis of a minimum programme." Naturally, he became the president of the new party, Sardar Sardul Singh Caweeshar, the Vice-president and A.V.Kemath, a Kannadiga, the Chief Secretary.

The first All India Conference of the Forward Bloc was held in Bombay on June 22, 1939 and framed its constitution and programme. Its constitution made it clear that it was an organization within the Indian National Congress. It was meant for all Leftists inside the Congress. Its goal was complete political independence for India and the establishment of a socialist state. It assured full religious freedom to its members, but it was opposed to provincialism, communalism and corruption. It aimed at liberating the Congress from the influence of vested interests and from the domination of the Congress ministries. In short, it wanted to restore democracy within the Congress replacing the authoritarian policy of the Congress.
The left consolidation Committee emerged out of the first conference of the All-India Forward Bloc. It consolidated the Congress socialist party, the National Front (as the Communists called themselves then), the Radical Democratic Party (M.N. Roy group). "It was a mechanical mixture, not a chemical compound. The Forward Bloc, in short, gave a single common platform to all the leftists of the country to march ahead of the Congress.

The Congress met soon and passed two resolutions to check the activities of the Forward Bloc: Firstly, no Congress-man may offer or organise any form of satyagraha without the sanction of the concerned P.C.C. and secondly, any difference between the P.C.C. and the Congress Ministry should be referred to the parliamentary sub-committee of the Congress Working Committee.

The leftist leaders like Bose, Swami Sahajanand Saraswati and others protested against the Congress resolutions. Even several Pradesh Congress Committees opposed, as the P.C.C.'s were virtually subordinated to the Ministries, and the party organisations to the legislatures. Bose, as the leader of the Left Consolidation Committee, gave a call to observe July 9, (1939), as the protest day against the A.I.C.C. resolutions.
The open rivalry between the Congress and the Forward Bloc continued. The President of the Congress, Dr. Rajendra Prasad warned the leftists to remain aloof from the protest move to the Congress resolutions. The Radical Democratic Party (M.N. Roy Group) did not join the protest, and even it withdrew itself from the Left Consolidation Committee. It was the first split in the Forward Bloc. Bose did not deter from his venture. He continued the protest with full responsibility for organising demonstrations. The Congress took Bose to task and asked him to explain his indiscipline. Bose explained and pleaded for his constitutional civil rights to express his views on any matter including the resolutions of the Congress otherwise, he (Bose) thought, it would be an open suppression of civil liberty and democracy in the Congress.

The Congress was not satisfied with Bose's explanation and argument. Bose was disqualified as president of the F.C.C. and was debarred from being even a member of any elective Congress Committee for three years from August 1939, by a special resolution drafted by Gandhi himself. However, the B.P.C.C. affirmed its faith in Bose by 213 to 158 votes on August 30, 1939. CWC suspended the B.P.C.C. itself and appointed an ad-hoc committee under Maulana Azad. C.C
suspected that the B.P.O.C. financed the Forward Bloc. But that was disproved by an auditor's probe.

Gandhi defended his stand against Bose in his editorial in the Harijan in the following words:

"...Subhas Babu has invited action. He had gallantly suggested that if any action was to be taken it should be taken against him as the prime mover. In my opinion, the action taken by the working Committee was the mildest possible. There was no desire to be vindictive. And surely the word 'vindictiveness' loses all its force and meaning when the position of Subhas Babu is considered".

Bose, in his statement, issued on August 19, 1939, stated that, the decision of the Congress for his expulsion was a logical sequel of the rift: He "welcomed the decision virtually expelling me from the congress for three years. This decision is the logical process of 'Right-consolidation' which has been going on for the last few years and which has been accentuated by the acceptance of ministerial office in the provinces. The action of the working committee has served to expose the real character of the present majority party in the Congress, and the role it has been playing. The punishment accorded to me is, however, thoroughly justified from its point of view."
It was a penalty for the crime, he stated ironically, he committed. The statement continued: "By trying to warn the country about the continued drift towards constitutionalism and reformism, by protesting against resolutions which seek to kill the revolutionary spirit of the Congress, by working for the cause of Left Consolidation and, last but not least, by consistently appealing to the country to prepare for the coming struggle, I have committed a crime for which I have to pay the penalty."

Bose appealed to his followers to remain calm and continue the work.

The Forward Bloc, a weekly journal was started by Bose to popularise his party. In the very first issue, in his editorial, "Why Forward Bloc" he attacked the Rightists in the Congress:

"The slogan of unity at any price and under all circumstances is a convenient slogan in the mouth of those who have lost dynamism and revolutionary urge... The Right wing today wants nothing less than complete surrender on the part of the Left."

He justified the formation of the Forward Bloc in the same editorial on the lines of Hegelian Dialectic: "Out of
the conflict between 'thesis' and 'antithesis', 'synthesis'
is born. This 'Synthesis,' in its turn, becomes the thesis
of the next phase of evolution. This 'thesis' thrown up
an 'anti-thesis' and the conflict is resolved by a further
'synthesis'. Thus the wheels of progress move on."

Bose repudiated the charges, particularly made by
Jawaharlal Nehru, that the Forward Bloc was opportunist and
fascist. In his editorial of the issue of 19th August, 1939,
he wrote: "To accuse the Forward Bloc of opportunism is
amusing indeed. A member of the Bloc has to fight on two
fronts. British imperialism and Congress bureaucracy - and
has to suffer persecution at the hands of both. From the
personal point of view he has nothing to gain but everything
to lose. The line of least resistance and the path of
opportunism, however, take one straight to the Rightist Camp.
And as for fascists, if this term indicates those who call
themselves Hitlers, Super-Hitlers and budding Hitlers, then
these specimens of humanity are to be found in the Rightist
Camp."

Bose accused Gandhi as a dictator of the Right wing of
the Congress, and the Congress Working Committee, his shadow,
in his editorial in the issue of December 30, 1939.
"The Committee today has no existence of its own; it is but the shadow of Mahatma Gandhi, in whose favour it has voluntarily abdicated. But Mahatma Gandhi is no longer the dictator of the Indian National Congress. He is the dictator only of the Right wing of the great organisation, and of some erstwhile Leftist leaders — for the Left wing will most definitely not take orders from him blindly."

The Second World War broke out on September 3, 1939, when Hitler invaded Poland. "India was dragged into the War by a special ordinance of the Governor-General." The congress working committee met to discuss the war problem. Bose was expectedly invited to the same, though he was suspended from the Congress. Bose, as in Tripuri Congress, urged again for immediate ultimatum to the British Government. But the Committee repeated its mistake of disregarding Bose's plea.

Bose convened, separately, an Anti-Imperialist Conference in October, 1939, to proassurise the Congress to accept his view. He reminded the nation through his speech to the conference that Britain's difficulty was India's opportunity and gave a call to the Indians to launch a total struggle for freedom. In the same month the Congress ministries resigned.

Gandhi retorted it in his editorial in the Harijan and impressed his views on compromise with Britain, as to him, the time was not mature for the struggle.

Bose started an All India anti-compromise movement and convened the All India Anti-compromise Conference at Ramgarh (Bihar) on March 19, 1940, under the joint auspices of the Forward Bloc and the Kisan Sabha, of which he was the president. Bose said in his presidential address:

"This conference is intended to focus all the anti-imperialist forces in the country that are now determined to resist a compromise with imperialism.... It is in response to Swamiji's (Swami Sahanand Saraswati) clarion call that we have assembled here today." 72

He questioned those, who claimed the Congress to be the biggest Anti-Compromise Conference:

"Have they forgotten that as soon as the war began, Mahatma Gandhi proceeded to Simla without caring to consult the Congress Working Committee and informed His excellency the Viceroy that he was in favour of rendering unconditional help to Great Britain in the prosecution of the war? Do they not realise that Mahatma Gandhi being the sole dictator of

the Congress, his personal views necessarily have a far reach­
ing implication? Have they forgotten that since the outbreak of war, the Congress Working Committee has side-tracked the main issue - namely, our demand for Purna Swaraj - by putting forward a demand for a fake Constituent Assembly?"73

The Conference resolved that:

"... The sixth of April, the first day of the national week, should mark the commencement of a country-wide satyagraha against the war effort.... British imperialism... and to make the final effort for the achievement of India's independence. Once the struggle began, there was to be no rest, no break, no Chauri Chaura as in 1922, no Delhi Pact as in 1931, no side-tracking of the struggle, as happened in 1933, when the Harijan movement was launched."

The Congress Socialist party and the National Front (the Communist party) instead of participating in the struggle, came out of the Forward Bloc. Thus the Ramgarh Conference instead of cementing the units of the Left Consolidation Committee, precipitated them. The Congress socialist party perhaps thought that the time was not yet ripe for the struggle. The national Front criticised the

73. Ibid., p.268.
satyagrahis of the Forward Bloc as "disrupters of unity" and called the Bloc the "Fascist fifth column". Bose retorted it as a "dog in the manger" policy.

According to the resolution of the All India Anti-Compromise Conference, leaders of the Forward Bloc offered Satyagraha and were arrested, including the nine members of the Bloc Working Committee, except Bose.

The Second Conference of the Forward Bloc was organised at Nagpur in June 1940 under the presidency of Bose, who in his presidential address surveyed the achievement of the Bloc in the previous year:

"What has been our actual achievement during the past year? — In the first place, we can claim to have successfully resisted the tendency towards constitutionalism and compromise within the ranks of the Congress. Secondly, we have so far frustrated all attempts to secure the co-operation of the Congress in the prosecution of the war. Thirdly, we can perhaps claim that we have succeeded in creating an atmosphere of struggle. Today the talk of a struggle is everywhere in the air, and the more our people talk of it, the more will they move away from a compromise. Lastly, we can claim that at Ramgarh we launched our struggle with such strength and
resources as we possessed. During the last three months a large number of our fellow workers have been arrested."

The resolution of the conference reiterated the aims and objectives of the Bloc thus:

"It will be a party within the Congress with mass membership. The objective of the Forward Bloc will be the capture of political power by the Indian masses, as early as possible, and the reconstruction of India's national economy on socialist basis."

The conference gave a new slogan: "All power to the Indian people, here and now". (The old one, given at the All-India Anti-Compromise Conference, held at Ramgarh, on 19th March 1940, was: "Freedom, peace and Bread").

This Nagpur conference of the Forward Bloc was the last one, at which Bose, as its president, associated himself with it actively. Later, in the following month (July), he was arrested, and the next year, he escaped for ever from India. His militant nationalist party, the Forward Bloc, was declared illegal on June 22, 1942.

June 1940 was the critical month for Britain in the second world war. Belgium and France fell to Hitler in the
same month. Italy, under Mussolini, joined as an axis nation, in the war in the same month. With these events, Bose predicted that the defeat of Britain was very soon. "I predict", said Bose to Birendra Choudhary in June 1940, "that England will accept defeat and surrender by July 16." 74

After the Bagpur Conference Bose hurried to Wardha and met Gandhi. This was the last meeting among the two. It was an irony of history that even in their last meeting they would not agree in their views. Bose pleaded that it was the most opportune time to strengthen the countrywide struggle for freedom and requested Gandhi to assume the leadership of the struggle. Gandhi's reply was like throwing cold water on the fire of fierce nationalism. He said:

"Why do you think we cannot get better opportunities later on? Whether England loses or wins this war, she will be weakened by it... Both politically and morally, I feel, we should not be hasty in launching a movement at the present juncture. My conscience tells me to wait for better times." 75

But Bose's conscience was telling him that it was the best opportunity to continue the struggle. The climax of the scene was in his (Bose) request for, at least, to be

74. Hugh Toye, op.cit., p.60.
75. Sisir K. Bose (Ed.), A Beacon Across Asia, p.98.
him to launch the struggle. "... If your conscience tells you," said Gandhi with blessings, "that this is the best time for striking out, go ahead and do your best. If you come out successful, I shall be the first to congratulate you." 76

This proved to be the last blessing of the Mahatma to Bose. Gandhiji succeeded in the freedom fight, only after many a gallant martyr; like Bose sacrificed.

Bose proceeded to Bombay from Wardha and stayed there for a few days. He met Veer Savarkar, the veteran revolutionary and the Hindu Mahasabha leader. It was revealed later in 1954 by Savarkar's private secretary, in his letter to K.C. Das, that Savarkar directed Bose to escape to Germany. The letter ran:

"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

76. Ibid.
on the eve of the Japanese declaration of war."

The Bengal Provincial Conference at its Special session convened at Dacca on May 25, 1940, passed a resolution to demolish all monuments of political servitude and decided to observe July 3, (1940) as the Sirajuddowla Day, the last independent ruler of Bengal, who fought against the East India Company at Plassey and was defeated and which paved the way for the Company to assume political role from that of a commercial one. The eyes of the nationalists naturally fell on the Holwell Monument which stood in Calcutta for the last 150 years. Bose decided to lead the first batch to the Holwell Monument on the Sirajuddowla Day (July 3). On the eve of the agitation Bose was arrested, as a precaution to protect the Monument, under section 129 of the Defence of India Rules and was put in the Presidency jail. That was his last (eleventh) imprisonment in India.

The Mahatma actually justified, in the Harijan, the arrest of Bose in the following words:

"The arrest of a big man like Subhas Babu is no small matter. But he has laid out his plan of battle with deliberateness and boldness. He thinks that his way is the

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77. J.G. Ohasha, The Two Great Indians In Japan, Appendix VI, Kusa Publications, 123/1, upper circular Rd., Calcutta, pp. 94-95.
best. He honestly thinks that the Working Committee's way is wrong... He was impatient of delay... But I warned him that his way was wrong. My opinion, however, matters little."

In the following month (August, 1940), the Bengal Government, however, decided to remove the Holwell statue and all detainees who were arrested in that connection, were set free, except Mr. Narendranarayan Chakrabarti and Bose. Bose was turned into a permanent detainee under the new section 26, instead of the original section 129 which was for temporary detention. Simultaneously, the Government launched prosecution against Bose under Section 38 of the Defence of India Rules for three speeches delivered by him in Feb. 1940 and one in April, 1940 and an article written by him in the Forward Bloc, for which "the paper was penalised through forfeiture of the security of £500 and deposit of a further security of £2000." They were launched before two separate magistrates. He was tried in two courts. He could not get bail because of section 26 which was for permanent detention. He was not released, even though he was elected to the Central Legislative Assembly. It was common for Bose to get elected while behind the bars.

Bose realised the vindictive policy of the Government in detaining him, until at least upto the end of the war. He had been thinking for months in the prison to manage somehow to escape from the prison, even if possible from the country itself, the big British imperialist prison, and to strengthen the struggle from outside the country to beat his enemy during its difficulty. He decided ultimately to protest against the government with hunger-strike, so that he might be released from prison, or seek the death of martyr. Bose wrote on October 30, 1940 to the Superintendent of the Presidency jail, informing him of undertaking a voluntary fast and which was to begin on November 29, 1940.

Three days earlier to the commencement of his fast, Bose wrote letters, on November 26, 1940, to the Governor, the Chief Minister and the Council of Ministers of Bengal, stating about his fast. He wrote:

"Life under existing conditions is intolerable for me. To purchase one's continued existence by compromising with illegality and injustice goes against my very grain. I would throw up life itself, rather than pay this price."

"... It is through suffering and sacrifice alone that a cause can flourish and prosper and in every age and clime,

80. Ibid., p.278.
the eternal law prevails - 'the blood of the martyr is the seed' of the church." 81

"The individual must die, so that the nation may live. Today I must die, so that India may live and may win freedom and glory.

"To my countrymen I say, '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 iniquity, no matter what the cost may be". 82

Bose commenced his fast on 29th November 1940, as scheduled. The jail authorities tried to feed him forcibly. Bose warned the authorities of suicide if they would try in that direction. The government had, then, no other way except to release him on the same day (Dec. 5, 1940). But the two prosecutions, pending on him, were not withdrawn.

Subhas Bose's role in the Indian national movement was a remarkable one. He was a unique freedom fighter who fought against the British both from within the country and from abroad viz., from Germany and South-East Asia.

81. Ibid.
82. Ibid., p.279.
In this chapter his role in the national movement at its crucial period is discussed at length. After his return from the Mandalay jail, he re-organised the Bengal political base to fight against the British. He raised his voice against the Simon Commission. He pleaded for immediate and complete independence, as a member of the Nehru Committee. He infused new blood into the All India Congress as one of its General Secretaries, representing the Indian youth, the young India.

He was even ahead of the historic Lahore Congress Session with his idea of the formation of a parallel Indian government. He wanted to strengthen the national movement instead of wasting time at the Round Table Conferences. Of course his ill-health was always coming in his way.

He utilised his exile in Europe for publicity and propaganda in favour of the Indian movement. He was furious against the Gandhian passivism. He condemned it in his joint statement with Vithalbhai Patel.

His role as President at the Haripura and Tripuri Congress Sessions speaks for his political achievements. But because of his non-submissiveness to the Gandhian high
command he was expelled from the Congress and indirectly forced him to escape from his mother country for ever. He tried first to combat against the British imperialism and the Gandhian authoritarianism, through his new party, the Forward Bloc. When he felt uneasy in his new venture, he decided to flee the country and to fight the British with some foreign aid.