CHAPTER-V
SUBHAS
HIS POLITICAL THOUGHTS
and SOCIO–ECONOMIC IDEAS

"If we want to make India really great we must build up a political democracy on the pedestal of a democratic society."

Subhas Chandra Bose

Subhas, a voracious reader of history, philosophy and international relations, takes a bird’s-eye-view of the entire panorama of the history of the world. He is struck by a constant process of evolution and degeneration of empires. Empires have come, flourished and following the inevitable law of nature, decayed. There are examples galore of this. And the fond anticipation of Subhas is that it might be that the same fate awaits the mighty British Empire.

Like an astute statesman Subhas bases his assumption on the critical analysis that he makes of the causes of the inherent weakness of the British Empire. The supremacy of Britain was mainly because of her immense sea-power. But in the twentieth century a new factor has emerged – Air Force. This has jeopardised the insularity of Great Britain. The clay feet of a gigantic empire now stand exposed. Well-versed in political philosophy as he is, it is not difficult for Subhas to understand the basic weakness of Britain. In his Presidential Address at the 51st session of the Indian National Congress held at Haripura in February 1938, Subhas clearly points out the predicament of Britain. “Within the mighty British Empire itself there are the fuming Ireland in the West, and in the extreme East, India, seething with discontent and
unrest. Palestine and the contiguous countries like Egypt and Iraq, Italy and Japan – belligerent and aggressive - are also exerting pressure from outside the empire in the Mediterranean and the Far East. And Russia, frowning at every imperialist state is also a cause of concern for Britain”.

Subhas, like a veteran statesman, has a clear grasp of the political situation. And he clearly enumerates the steps to be taken at the very beginning. First of all, the strong and weak points of the British power in relation to the Indian people have to be scientifically ascertained. Similarly, account has to be taken of the strong and weak points of the Indian people in relation to the British rule in India. Simultaneously, a study of the freedom movement in other countries is also necessary. And only then the magnitude of the task can be ascertained.

In a very interesting way Subhas draws an analogy based on his political philosophy to clarify the existing situation – British Government vis-à-vis India. The British Government in India may be visualised as a strong fortress fully geared with all the modern implements of war standing on a hostile territory – The Indian National Congress – which wants to capture the fortress. To accomplish this object either or both of the following measures may be adopted:

a) Economic blockade of the fortress which will economically cripple it.

b) Capture of the fort with the combined strength of all the people by means of force of arm.

Subhas remembers how during the last Great War though Germany

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1 Subhas Chandra Bose, Presidential Address at the 51st session of the Indian National Congress held at Haripura in February 1938, in Sisir K. Bose and Sugata Bose (eds), The Essential Writings of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, Oxford University Press, Calcutta, 1997, p. 200 (hereafter cited as Essential Writings).

emerged victorious, yet she had to suffer because of the economic blockade by the Allies. This became possible because the Allies had full control over all the chains of communication, including seas. But Indian leaders, being votaries of non-violence, could never think of capturing the fort by force. The Indian National Congress also could not impose this economic blockade because all the chains of communication were fully under the control of the leaders. But this does not definitely mean that India should opt for a compromise with the ruling powers.

And Subhas is quite clear about this point. He cautions that there should be no place for any sort of compromise with the rulers. According to him, a political compromise can only be possible when there are some common interests between the two parties. But in this case, where India and Britain are concerned, there are absolutely no common interests between the two nations. The reasons of this lack of common interest are not far to seek. Subhas enumerates them as follows:

a) There is absolutely no social kinship between the two countries.
b) The cultures of the two countries are totally different.
c) Economically also an unbridgeable situation is there. It is because India is a supplier of raw materials to Britain while the latter happens to be a supplier of manufactured goods. But India wants to be a manufacturing country so that she would be in a position to export manufactured goods. This would help her to be a self-sufficient country also. But this is against the vested interest of Britain because India happens to be a big market for her.
d) India is an excellent job market for young Britishers. Avenues of job are open in the army and civil administration.
India craves for the status of an independent country with her own flag, own army, navy and defence forces. Any compromise will naturally fall far short of such cravings.  

These are only some of the reasons because of which Subhas is against any sort of compromise. And that is why in his Presidential Address at the All India Anti-Compromise Conference, held at Ramgarh (Bihar) on 19 March 1940, he thunders: “The country eagerly awaits a clear and unequivocal declaration from the Congress Working Committee that the door has finally been banged on all talks of compromise with Imperialism. But will this declaration be forthcoming? If so, when?” On the contrary, Subhas angrily reminds the people that as soon as war began Gandhiji rushed to Delhi without even consulting the Congress Working Committee, met the Viceroy, and extended all help to Great Britain in the prosecution of war. Earlier also, Subhas had stood against pacts like the Gandhi-Irwin pact of March 1931. Subhas’ strong belief is that any talk of so-called compromise is utterly fruitless. And that is why he thinks that the term ‘Round Table Conference’ is a misnomer; he calls it a ‘Square Table Conference’. I do not know why our countrymen are keen on calling it Round Table Conference. Certainly it is not a ‘Round Table’ To my mind it should be called a ‘Square Table Conference’. And so he hurls a pertinent question: whether the terms agreed upon will be ratified by the British Parliament. In fact, the political thoughts of Subhas have been crystallised in his mind from his study of the history of the freedom movement.

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4 The Ramgarh Address, Essential Writings, p. 258.
5 In a pact signed on 5 March 1931, Lord Irwin agreed to release most of the political prisoners and to return the property that had been seized by the government; in return Gandhiji called off the Civil Disobedience Movement. Later the same month Congress met in Karachi and endorsed this ‘Gandhi-Irwin Pact’.
movements of other countries. He knows, for example, that in the case of South Africa the constitution drawn up in the Conference was finally ratified in the British Parliament. The draft was so sacrosanct that even the grammatical errors in the draft could not be corrected. 'That was truly a Round Table Conference' comments Subhas. He is not a believer in any type of sham conference. And very clearly he expressed his views on this in his autobiography. "As Congress President, the writer did his best to stiffen the opposition of the Congress Party to any compromise with Britain and this caused annoyance in Gandhian circles, who were then looking forward to an understanding with the British Government." 7

But Subhas is firm in his belief. "Speaking for myself", he says, "I stand for an independent Federal Republic. This is the ultimate goal which I have before me." 8 And to attain this objective, Subhas is convinced, India must avail herself of the most opportune time when it comes. He knows that England is desperate too – she must play all her cards to contain India. And in utter despair she is looking for a gap – a loophole in the Indian polity through which she can undermine the political forces operating in India. And the weapon she has found handy is the well-known divide the rule policy. Every empire, it cannot be denied, is based in some degrees on this policy of divide and rule. And the British Government is no exception. But Subhas doubts that if any nation used this filthy instrument so ruthlessly. And he is well acquainted with this. Ulster, as for example, was separated from the rest of Ireland by the machination of Britain. Similarly, Subhas says, Jews will be separated from the Arabs before any power is handed over to Palestinians. And the wily rulers of India are playing the same nefarious game in a different form while debating on the new Indian Constitution. Here the motive is to draw a line of dissension between the different communities of India and put

them separately into water-tight compartments. In the Federal Scheme envisaged by the rulers there is a juxtaposition of autocratic princes and democratically elected representatives from British India. Subhas does not look at anything with myopic eyes. The political foresight of Subhas can be discerned from his prophetic statement in his Presidential Address at Haripura Congress: “If the new Constitution is finally rejected, whether owing to the opposition of British India or owing to the refusal of the princes to joining it, I have no doubt that British ingenuity will seek some other constitutional device for partitioning India and thereby neutralise the transference of the power to the Indian people. Therefore, any constitution for India which emanates from White Hall must be examined with utmost care and caution.”

This divide and rule policy, according to Subhas’ political philosophy, though it might have temporary advantages for the rulers, may not be an unmixed blessing for them. There always remains the possibility of new problems and new embarrassments cropping up. And Great Britain seems to have fallen into this snare. In his Presidential Address at Haripura Congress, Subhas poses this question: “Will she (Britain) please the Muslims or the Hindus in India? Will she favour the Arabs or the Jews in Palestine – the Arabs and the Kurds in Iraq? Will she side with the King or the Wafd in Egypt?......... The contradictions and inconsistencies in Britain’s foreign policy are the direct outcome of the heterogenous composition of her Empire.”

There is only one way out of this intricate mesh, Subhas says. The only means adopting which Great Britain can pull herself out of such contradictions and inconsistencies is by “transforming the empire into a federation of free nations. If she could do that, she would be performing a miracle in history.”

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9 Essential Writings, n. 1, p. 199.
10 Ibid., p. 200.
11 Ibid.
Subhas knows very well that the strength of India lies in her inherent unity. India must face her opponent boldly with all her united strength. He is quite aware of the dubious motive of the British rulers which prompted them to sponsor the Federal Scheme. And so he gives a clarion call to his countrymen for open, unmitigated and unrelenting opposition to the monstrous Federal Scheme. And he further says, “If we are practical politicians we shall not shut our eyes to the actualities of the situation.”

India's ultimate destination being an Independent India, Subhas is greatly in favour of giving a final thrust in the direction of Swaraj. But before that ample preparation is a must. And he reiterates this point in his Presidential Address at the 52nd Session of the Indian National Congress at Tripura in March 1939, pointing out the need of adequate preparation. “In the first place, we shall have to take steps to ruthlessly remove whatever corruption or weakness has entered into our ranks ... Next, we shall have to work in close cooperation with all anti-imperialist organisations in the country, particularly the Kisan movement and the Trade Union movement. All the radical elements of the party must work in close harmony and co-operation and the efforts of all anti-imperialist organisations must converge in the direction of a final assault on British Imperialism.”

Indian unity also entails the problem of the minorities. And the Congress is not oblivious of this fact, says Subhas. In his Address at Haripura as President of the Indian National Congress he refers to the authoritative pronouncement made by the All India Congress Committee at its meeting in Calcutta in October 1937:

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13 Subhas Chandra Bose, “The Tripuri Address”, Presidential Address at the 52nd Session of the :Indian National Congress held at Tripura in March 1939, in ibid., p. 94.
"...... The objective of the Congress is an independent and united India where no class or group or majority or minority may exploit another to its own advantage and where all the elements in the nation may operate in a common good and the advancement of the people of India. The objective of unity and mutual cooperation in a common freedom does not mean the suppression in any way of the rich variety and cultural diversity of Indian life..."\(^{14}\) Subhas further cautions the people and very clearly reminds them that though attempts are being made in interested quarters to misinterpret and misrepresent the Congress policy, yet the All-India Congress Committee at its meeting in Calcutta has not failed to reiterate this policy. Some of the provisions in its resolution on Fundamental Rights are very clear and emphatic:

i) Every citizen of India has the right of free expression of opinion.

ii) The culture, language and script of the minorities and of the different linguistic areas shall be protected.

iii) All citizens are equal before the law, irrespective of religion, caste, creed or sex.

iv) No disability attaches to any citizen by reason of his or her religion, caste, creed or sex, in regard to public employment, office of power or honour, and in the exercise of any trade or calling.

v) The state shall observe neutrality in regard to all religions.\(^ {15}\)

And as President of the Indian National Congress, in his Address at Haripura, Subhas holds out the same assurance to the Muslims: "There remains but one question which may be a source of anxiety to the minorities, viz. Religion and that aspect of culture that is based on religion. On this question the Congress policy is one of live and let live – a policy of complete non-interference in matters of conscience, religion and culture as well as

\(^{14}\) Cited in n. 1, pp. 201-202.

\(^{15}\) Subhas Chandra Bose, Haripura Address see ibid., p. 202.
cultural autonomy for the different linguistic areas. The Muslims have, therefore, nothing to fear in the event of India winning her freedom”

It is interesting to note that Subhas adheres to the same philosophy when he was the Head of the State of the Provisional Government of the Azad Hind. In his Proclamation of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind, Subhas emphatically declares : “The Provisional Government is entitled to, and hereby claims, the allegiance of every Indian. It guarantees religious liberty as well as equal rights and equal opportunities to all its citizens. It declares its firm resolve to pursue the health and prosperity of the whole nation and all of its parts, cherishing all the children of the nation equally and transcending all the differences cunningly fostered by an alien government of the past.” It is evident that Subhas does not just preach his philosophy, but always converts his thoughts into action whenever he gets an opportunity.

After discussing at length the plausible ways of tackling different pending and perplexing issues, which, if properly dealt with, will usher in the much coveted independence, Subhas, in the same speech, like a true statesman, draws the attention of the Indian people to another significant issue – the question of foreign policy for India. Subhas has a clear-cut idea of what constitutes foreign policy. "Foreign policy, he says, "is a realistic affair to be determined largely from the point of view of a nation's self-interest. Take Soviet Russia, for instance, with all her Communism in her internal politics, she never allows sentiment to dominate her foreign policy. That is why she did not hesitate to enter into a pact with French Imperialism when it suited her purpose. The Franco-Soviet Pact and the Czechoslovak-Soviet Pact are instances in point. Even today Soviet Russia is anxious to enter into a pact

\[16\] Ibid., p. 203.
\[17\] Ibid., p. 298.
with British Imperialism. Frothy sentiments and pious platitudes do not make foreign policy.\textsuperscript{18}

And Subhas knows well that developing international contacts is of utmost importance in the context of present-day politics. He has a firm belief that this international contact will go a long way in furthering India's struggle for independence. But there is one a-priori condition. What is needed is a correct assessment of the world situation at every stage and reaping advantage out of it. Subhas, always ready with his encyclopaedic knowledge of international situation, cites the case of Egypt as an example. Egypt was successful in winning the Treaty of Alliance with Great Britain without shedding any blood because she had the sagacity to take advantage of the Anglo-Italian tension in the Mediterranean. And this is, Subhas thinks, a lesson for India to learn.

The statesmanship of Subhas is also revealed in the advice that he gives in this connection. His advice is that "We should not be influenced by the internal politics of any country or the form of its state. We shall find in every country men and women who will sympathise with Indian freedom, no matter what their own political views may be."\textsuperscript{19} To facilitate this, it is necessary to nurture a nucleus of men and women sympathetic to the cause of India in every country. This is very much necessary because there is no lack of propaganda against India in foreign countries. The main purpose of this propaganda is to tarnish the image of India. An attempt is there to malign her as an uncivilised country unfit to manage her own state of affairs. The presence of the British is essential to civilise them and help them put their house in order. So it is obvious that effective counter-propaganda is needed to counteract such sort of slander.

\textsuperscript{19} \textit{Essential Writings}, p.216.
In his Presidential Address (delivered in absentia) at the Third Indian Political Conference, held in London, on 10 June 1933, he dwells upon the same theme: "This propaganda must be both positive and negative. On the negative side we must refute the lies that we are told about India consciously or unconsciously by the agents of Great Britain throughout the world. On the positive side we must bring to the notice of the world the rich culture of India in all its aspects as well as India's manifold grievances."  

It is interesting to note how Subhas became conscious of the importance of presenting abroad a true picture of India. In fact, the idea was mooted by Deshbandhu C. R. Das at Allahabad in February 1923. Deshbandhu and the late Pandit Motilal Nehru were working on a new scheme of work for the Swaraj Party. In Deshbandhu's draft there were two schemes in which he was keenly interested. He felt that sufficient thrust should be given to these two points - Indian Propaganda in Foreign Countries and the organisation of a Pan-Asiatic League. Subhas says that his interest was revived again after a lapse of several years when he was interviewed by an American journalist who narrated how China had successfully upheld her true image and influenced other nations. And there was no reason why attempts should not be made by India to bring herself before the attention of the world. The journalist had commented that "the need was an imperative one in India's own interests."

Subhas says that two other factors deepened this conviction that Indian propaganda abroad is absolutely necessary for the progress of India. The first was the experience he gathered during his long sojourn in Europe from March 1933 to March 1936. The second factor was his keen interest in history. Subhas, in fact, during his preparation for the ICS in England, studied modern European history and international affairs. He also imbibed many of his ideas and beliefs from his close study of the speeches, writings and

\[20\text{n.2, p.1, 141.}\]
activities of statesmen and freedom fighters. Now, when he started thinking about the matter, he realised that "every where there is a colossal ignorance about India - but at the same time there is a general feeling of sympathy for, and interest in India. This sympathy can easily be enlarged and developed, if necessary steps are taken from our side."\(^{21}\)

But, unfortunately for India Subhas is shocked to find a dismal picture being painted by the so-called missioneries and 'civilizing agencies'. He finds India being painted "as a land where widows are burnt, girls are married at the age of 5 or 6 and people "are virtually unacquainted with the art of dressing."\(^{22}\) Subhas says from his own experience that in 1920 when he was in England, he found a pictorial advertisement announcing that a lecture on India would be delivered by a missionary. The lecturer wanted to raise some funds for 'civilizing' India and so there were pictures of some half-naked men and women of the blackest complexion. The same story is also repeated in some anti-Indian films like 'India Speaks.' And this makes an angry Subhas blurt out : "But I am afraid there has not been sufficient exposure of the mischief which is being done by the film 'Everybody Loves Music' in which Mahatma Gandhi appears in his own dress dancing with a European girl."\(^{23}\)

To counteract this sort of propaganda is a must. And that is why Subhas is of the opinion that propaganda may be regarded as one of the normal and legitimate activities of the Government. But unfortunately, as Subhas has found out from his own experience, there is a complete lack of appreciation on the part of the Indian leaders regarding the urgent necessity for this propaganda abroad; it is regarded by them as a superfluous luxury and not as an indispensable necessity. The main objectives of Indian propaganda, according to Subhas, would be to:

\(^{22}\) Ibid.
\(^{23}\) Ibid. p.359.
i) To counteract false propaganda about India.

ii) To enlighten the world about the true conditions obtaining in India today.

iii) To acquaint the world with the positive achievements of the Indian people in every sphere of human activity.\(^{24}\)

But Subhas is against indulging in any sort of blasphemy or slander, even against the British. He enunciates his philosophy in very clear terms:

"Developing international contacts does not mean intriguing against the British Government. We need not go in for such intrigues and all our methods should be above board."\(^{25}\) This statement clearly brings out the political integrity of Subhas.

Subhas, in fact, is a believer in buoyant optimistic philosophy. In his Presidential address at the 52\(^{nd}\) Indian National Congress at Tripura in March 1939, he tried to buoy up the sagging morals and the pessimistic mentality of his compatriots: "It grieves me to find that there are people in the Congress who are so pessimistic as to think that the time is not ripe for a major assault on British Imperialism. But looking at the situation in a thoroughly realistic manner I do not see the slightest ground for pessimism."\(^{26}\)

Subhas takes a realistic purview of the existing political scenario. He finds the strength and prestige of the national organisation at a very high peak. Moreover, there is an unprecedented awakening in the Indian States. He refers to himself as a cold-blooded realist and fervently asks: "What more opportune moment could we find in our national history for a final advance in the direction of Swaraj, particularly when the international situation is favourable to us? Speaking as a cold-blooded realist, I may say that all the facts of the

\(^{24}\text{Ibid.}, \text{p.365.}\)

\(^{25}\text{Essential Writings, n.l. p. 217 (italics mine)\text{\text{\)}}}\)

\(^{26}\text{Subhas Chandra Bose, "The Tripuri Address", March 1939 in \textit{Essential writings, p 225.}}\)
present-day situation are so much to our advantage that one should entertain the highest degree of optimism ... Shall we have the political foresight to make the most of our present favourable position or shall we miss the opportunity in the life-time of a nation?" To deliver India from foreign yoke and to create a new independent and sovereign state in India, Subhas envisages the formation of a 'centralised and well-disciplined All India Party – the Samyavadi Sangh'.

A clear analysis of his political thought can be found from his 'Message to Countrymen' issued exclusively to 'Free Press' prior to his sailing for Europe on 25 February 1933. "It will be the task of this party to deliver India from foreign yoke. It will be the task of this party to create a new, independent and sovereign state in India. It will be the task of this party to execute the entire programme of post-war socio-economic reconstruction. It will be the task of this party to create a new generation of men and women in India fully trained and equipped for the battle of life. Last, but not least, it will be the task of this party to lead India on to her honoured place among the free nations of the world." Subhas wants that this party will have its representatives practically in all organisations like the Indian National Congress, and also in the Peasants' Organisations, in the youth organisations, in the All-India Trade Union Congress, in the women's organisations and if necessary, in the interests of the great cause, in the sectarian or communal organisations as well. Subhas, in a letter to Kitty Kurti from Geneva on 23 February 1934 explains the significance of the name 'Samyavadi Sangh'. He says: "'Samya' means 'equality'. 'Samyavadi' means 'one who believes in equality'. 'Sangha' means 'Society', 'Association'. The idea of 'Samya' is a very old Indian conception - first popularized by the Buddhists 500 years before the Christ."
But, Subhas says, ".... We shall have to fight hard and fight strenuously before we can alter the present status of India in international affairs. Nevertheless, it is imperative that the attempt should begin without delay." He says this because he finds that 'Swaraj is still a distant dream'. Instead of one, the people have waited for fourteen long years. And the question that haunts his mind is why, in spite of having such a large number of followers, the Mahatma has failed to liberate India. Subhas in his autobiography, *The Indian Struggle*, tries to analyse the reasons for the failure of Gandhiji. And this gives an interesting glimpse of the political thoughts of Subhas. Other leaders of other countries with a much smaller following have been able to liberate their countries while Gandhiji with a much larger following has failed. According to Subhas, the inherent cause of his failure lies in the fact that though he is thoroughly acquainted with the nature of his own countrymen, he has abjectly failed to ascertain the nature of his opponents. His charisma was of no use there. And his logic and arguments fell flat on them. His is not the logic that appeals to John Bull.

Secondly, Gandhiji's policy of putting all his cards on the table, however generous it might be, is fruitless. As Subhas says: "We have to render unto Caesar what is Caesar's - and in a political fight the art of diplomacy cannot be dispensed with. He has failed because he has not made use of the diplomatic weapon. If we desire to win our freedom through non-violence, diplomacy and international propaganda are essential. .... Last but not the least, the Mahatma has failed, because he had to play a dual role in one person - the role of the leader of an enslaved people and that of a world-teacher, who has a new doctrine to preach. It is this duality which has made him at once the irreconciliable foe of the Englishman, according to

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30 Ibid., p. 260.
Mr Winston Churchill, and the best policeman of the Englishman according to Miss Ellen Wilkinson.\textsuperscript{31}

Gandhiji, in fact, according to Subhas, is in some ways a complex personality. He is a typical exponent of the last generation and there is a big gulf between his generation and the modern generation. To understand the modern generation is to understand modern India. And to understand modern India it is necessary to consider three relevant factors. According to Subhas, the first factor is the glorious civilization and the culture of ancient India. The second point is India's struggle for independence since 1857. And the third factor is the influences from abroad which have made their way into India. The impact of Western thought is one of those outside influences the significance of which cannot be ignored. The history of the revolutionary struggles in different parts of the world also appealed to the Indian mind.

The story of the Risorgimento (resurrection)\textsuperscript{32} Movement in Italy under the leadership of Mazzini and Garibaldi enthralled Subhas and many a freedom fighter of India. Giuseppe Mazzini (1805-72), the Italian patriot and revolutionist, founded the secret society Giovine Italia (Young Italy) which led a vigorous campaign for Italian Unity under a republican government. Mazzini went to Switzerland, then to London, working untirely to disseminate revolutionary ideas. His influence on the Italian youth was tremendous. His programme was not only political, but also social, aiming at human redemption on a religious and moral basis. No doubt, Subhas' political thought was profoundly influenced by him.

\textsuperscript{31} Subhas Chandra Bose, "The Role of Mahatma Gandhi in Indian History," in Essential Writings, p.149.

\textsuperscript{32} Risorgimento: Italian for 'resurrection' The name given to the movement for unification of Italy in mid-19th C. led by Victor Emmanuel, King of Sardinia, his Prime Minister Cavour, Mazzini and Garibaldi. In 1847 Cavour also started a newspaper called 'Risorgimento.'
Subhas waxes eloquent while speaking of Mazzini. In a speech at Ambica Memorial Hall of Faridpur on 20 April 1931, he speaks of the dream of his life: "Dreamers have everywhere built up destinies of nations. Mazzini was dubbed a mad man when he gave expressions of his dream of free Italy. Persecution came thick and swift on him - persecution by those men in powers that did not like these young men whose musings were unknown. They felt instinctly that these apparently meaningless dreams contained in them seed which would in course of time assume serious proportions and threaten their very existence. That is why I chose to follow the lines of my dream and discarded the temptation for power and position."

Again in his speech at Noakhali Youth Conference on 17 May 1931, while exhorting the student community to march forward for the emancipation of their motherland, he reminds them of the example of Mazzini and Italy of those days and say how the hundredfold divisions and other barriers then existing in the way of freedom, could not freeze the genial current of Mazzini's youthful heart and thrust him from realising his ideal of securing freedom for Italy." And again elsewhere he says: "Look around what created modern Italy. Surely, the dreams of Mazzini and his band of co-workers and co-dreamers."

Subhas, during his enforced exile in Europe from March 1933 to March 1936, toured practically the whole of Europe 'as an unofficial ambassador of India's freedom'. He also visited Italy in 1934 to get a first-hand idea of the nation where Mazzini, years ago, had played so important a role. Subhas' main object was to study something of the work of the Fascist Party.

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Fascism, in fact, was a much-debated topic at the time and it may be worthwhile to discuss the views of Subhas - how he looks at it.

Italian Fascism owes its name to 'fasces' - ancient Roman symbol of the regal and later the magisterial authority. The 'fasces' were cylindrical bundles of wooden rods, tightly tied together, from which an axe projected; they were borne by guards (called 'lictors') before proctors, consuls, proconsuls, dictators and emperors. The 'fasces' symbolized unity as well as power. Fascism was the form of Government prevailing in Italy under the dictatorship of Benito Mussolini from 1922 until the Italian defeat (1945) in the Second World War. Fascism introduced no systematic exposition of its ideology or purpose other than a negative reaction against socialist and democratic equalitarianism. Nevertheless, a few concepts are basic to Fascism. First and the most important is the glorification of the state and the total subordination of the individual to it. The state is defined as an organic whole into which the individual must be absorbed for its own and the state's benefit. This 'total state' is absolute in its methods and unlimited by law in its control and direction of its citizens. 36

A second ruling concept of Fascism is embodied in the theory of Social Darwinism. 37 The doctrine of survival of the fittest and the necessity of struggle for life is applied by Fascists to the life of a nation-state. Peaceful, complacent nations are seen as doomed to fall before more dynamic ones, making struggle and aggressive militarism a leading characteristic of the Fascist state. Imperialism is the logical outcome of this dogma. Another element of Fascism is the elitist bent. Salvation from rule by the mob and the

37 Charles Robert Darwin's (1809-1882) (author of the monumental Origin of Species) He principle of natural selection or survival of the fittest is applicable to the life of a nation-state also. The Fascists believe that according to this theory of Social Darwinism weak nations are doomed and aggressive nations flourish.
destruction of the existing social order can be effected only by an authoritarian leader who embodies in his person the highest ideals of the nation.

Mussolini in 1922, as leader of his National Fascist Party presented himself as the strong-armed saviour of Italy from anarchy and Communism. He made use of an elite party militia - The Black Shirts - to crush opposition and to maintain power. His party adopted as its emblem the Roman 'fasces' - symbol of strength through unity, and thus came to be known as Fascists. Subhas, during his sojourn in Europe, wanted to make a first-hand study of the work of the Fascist party. His main object was to explore how it was working in cooperation with the Government for the uplift of the nation. He was given all facilities by the authorities. He visited the party offices and scrutinized the party administration. He was given all facilities and opportunities to elicit information by putting all sorts of questions to the party officials. It seems from his statement that Subhas did not harbour any adverse opinion of the party machinery at that time. He categorically says: "I could see and feel that the Fascist Party was out to create a nation according to its ideas and ideals. The Party takes charge of every individual in the state, regardless of age and sex. No individual is isolated from the state and it is the function of the Party to train citizens for the state." 38 Subhas also got an opportunity of meeting Mussolini and presenting him with a copy of his book, *The Indian Struggle*.

The views of a Subhas may be clarified by a comparison, which Subhas himself makes, with the opinion held by Jawaharlal Nehru regarding Fascism and Communism. In a Press statement issued on 18 December 1933, Jawaharlal had said: "I do believe that fundamentally the choice before the world today is one between some form of Communism and some form of Fascism, and I am all for the former, that is Communism. I dislike Fascism intensely and indeed I do not think that it is anything more than a crude and

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brutal effort of the present capitalist order to preserve itself at any cost. There is no middle road between Fascism and Communism. One has to choose between the two and I choose the Communist ideal". 39

Subhas naturally, does not see eye to eye with him. He does not like the idea of restricting the choice to two alternatives. So, according to him, this choice can be restricted only when "we are at the end of the process of evolution or intentionally deny evolution altogether." And so Subhas opines :”

"Whether one believes in the Hegelian or in the Bergsonian or any other theory of evolution - in no case need we think that creation is an end. "40 Subhas is of the belief that the next phase in world-history will produce a synthesis between Communism and Fascism. And he asks "Will it be a surprise if that synthesis is produced in India?" 41 He adds further that in spite of antithesis between Communism and Fascism, it cannot be denied that there exists certain traits which are common to both Communism and Fascism. The first trait common to both is the supremacy of the state over the individual. Secondly, both abhor parliamentary democracy. Thirdly, both are staunch supporters of party-rule. Fourthly, both favour dictatorship of the party, and finally, both believe in a planned industrial reorganisation of the party. These common traits will be the foundation of a new synthesis. And Subhas gives this synthesis (as discussed earlier) a new name - Samyavada - an Indian word which according to him means 'the doctrine of synthesis or equality.'42

39 It should be made perfectly clear that this is Pandit Nehru's personal opinion and not the opinion of the Indian National Congress. Nor does his popularity imply that his views find acceptance among the rank and file of the Congress... " says Subhas Chandra Bose. N. C. W., Vol 2, p. 351.
40 Ibid.
41 Ibid.
But it seems subsequent happenings in the international arena made him give second thought to this crucial question. The military aggression, so inherent in Fascist philosophy, exploded in the Italian invasion of Ethiopia in 1935. Since Mussolini came to power in 1922, Italy started thinking aggressively of expansion. As Subhas states: "The Laval-Mussolini Pact in January 1935 gave Italy a scope for future expansion. According to the terms of the Pact Italy relinquished her territorial ambition in Europe. And France, in return agreed to give her a free hand in Africa."43 The result "Subhas says with vehemence," the rape of Abyssinia."

Fascism, in fact, had not exposed its imperialist fang when Subhas wrote *The Indian Struggle*. There were also subsequent developments in the political thought of Subhas, and he frankly admits it. In the 'Report of an Interview with R. Palme Dutta' published in the *Daily Worker*, London, on 24 January 1938, the latest views of Subhas regarding Fascism have been clearly expressed. The query was, "Many questions have been asked about the reference to Fascism in the closing part of your book *The Indian Struggle*. Would you care to make any comment on your view of Fascism?"44 The answer of Subhas was categorical: "*My political ideas have developed further since I wrote my book three years ago*. What I really meant was that we in India wanted our national freedom, and having won it we wanted to move in the direction of Socialism. This is what I meant when I referred to 'a synthesis between Communism and Fascism. Perhaps the expression I used was not a happy one. But I should like to point out that when I was writing the book, Fascism had not started on its imperialist expedition and it appeared to me merely an aggressive form of nationalism. ..................*It is clear, however, that the position today has fundamentally altered.*"45

43 Ibid.
45 Ibid. (Italics mine)
The subsequent views of Subhas on Fascism are also clearly expressed in his Presidential Address at the All-India Anti-Compromise Conference, at Ramgarh, Bihar, on 19 March 1940. Strongly holding the brief for the anti-compromise issue, he thunders, : "In India we are now ringing down the curtain on an age that is passing away, while we are at the same time ushering in the dawn of a new era. The age of imperialism is drawing to a close and the era of freedom, democracy and socialism looms ahead of us." But Subhas warns proper utilisation must be made of the prevailing situation; wobbling and vacillation will not do. As illustration he cites the case of Italy and explained how Fascism got a foothold there. Italy, in 1932, Subhas says, was ripe for socialism. All she needed was a personality like Lenin who was capable of leading his country to its long awaited destination. But none came forward to take charge and the opportunity was grabbed by the Fascist leader Benito Mussolini. By his march to Rome and his seizure of power, Italian history took an altogether different turn and Italy ultimately went fascist instead of going socialist. The Anti-Fascist attitude of Subhas can be deciphered from such remarks. In fact, a close study indicates that there is no place of Fascism in the political philosophy of Subhas. "He did not accept some of the basic philosophical and political foundation of the Fascist philosophy. Fascism regards the state as the absolute goal of human life: it stands for a state of affairs where there is everything for the state and nothing against the state...... Subhas was too much of a humanist and a liberal thinker to subscribe to the basic tenets of Fascism and Nazism."

The views of Subhas regarding Nazi philosophy also underwent a change. Subhas had first visited Germany in 1933. He had formed a

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46 Subhas Chandra Bose, The Presidential Address at the All-India Anti-Compromise Conference, Ramgarh, Bihar, 19 March 1940. Essential Writings, pp. 259-60.
47 Ibid.
favourable impression about the new German nation. His belief was that this nation which had risen to a consciousness of its national strength and self-respect, would instinctively feel a deep sympathy for other nations struggling in the same direction. Subhas writes to Dr. Thierfelder of the Deutsche Akademie from Badgastein, on 25 March 1936, when this belief was rudely jarred by subsequent happenings, and frankly gives vent to his feelings: “Today I regret that I have to return to India with the conviction that the new nationalism of Germany is not only narrow and selfish but arrogant.”

Subhas, in fact is deeply hurt by a speech of Herr Hitler in Munich which revealed the essence of Nazi philosophy. The racial philosophy expostulated by Herr Hitler which, according to Subhas, has a very weak scientific foundation, stands for the glorification of the white races in general and the German race in particular. In his speech, Herr Hitler, had the audacity to affirm that it was ‘the destiny of the white races to rule over the rest of the world.’ “It therefore pains us that the new nationalism in Germany is inspired by selfishness and racial arrogance.”, says Subhas.

Subhas has also another grouse against Germany. To appease Great Britain (in the words of Subhas, “to curry favour with G B’) Germany spares no pain to attack India and the Indian people. “The attempt began,” “says Subhas, “nearly ten years ago when the party published a pamphlet in English for propaganda in England consisting of anti-Indian passages from books of Herr Hitler and Dr. Rosenberg.” And it is an angry Subhas who blurs out: “......... We cannot brook any insult from any other nation or any attack on our race or culture.”

50 Ibid.
51 Ibid.
52 Ibid.
A close study of Subhas’ political thought reveals another very important feature. His heart always goes to the oppressed and humiliated nation. While giving his views, for example, on Japan’s Role in the Far East (published in the *Modern Review* in October 1937) he applauds Japan for shattering the white man’s prestige in the Far East and for putting all the Imperialist powers on defensive. “.............. But could not all these achieved”, Subhas asks, “without Imperialism, without dismembering the Chinese Republic, without humiliating another proud, cultured and ancient race? No, with all our admiration for Japan, where such admiration is due, our whole heart goes to China in her hour of trial. ........Out of the ashes of this conflict she will once again rise phoenix – like as she has so often done in the past. ”

Later in his farewell message to Congress Mission to China he reiterates the same sentiment : “With China our relations have always been intimate and cordial. Both our nations are peace-loving and have a culture and philosophy akin to each other. Like the Indian missioneries of old our medical men are now going out to China as ambassadors of service, goodwill and love........ Nevertheless, behind this small gift there is the soul of the Indian people. ”

Subhas also reviews ‘Japan’s Role in the Far East ‘(published in *Modern Review* in October 1937) and there is a replenishment in his political philosophy. “Let us learn the lessons of this Far Eastern Conflict”, he says. “Standing at the threshold of a new era, let India resolve to aspire after national self-fulfilment in every direction – but not at the expense of other nations and nor through the bloody path of self-aggrandisement and imperialism.” And to this it may be added as corollary, his political belief :

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54 Subhas Chandra Bose, Speech at University Institute Hall, 12 August 1938 at a reception to Prof. Tai-Chi Tao, Director of People’s Education, China, *N. C. W.*, Vol 9, p. 38.
"In connection with our foreign policy, the first suggestion that I have to make is that we should not be influenced by the internal politics of any country or the form of its state. In this matter we should take a leaf out of Soviet diplomacy. Though Soviet Russia is a Communist state, her diplomats without interfering in the internal politics or squibble of a foreign country, have not hesitated to make alliance with non-socialist states and have not declined sympathy or support coming from any quarter." 56

This basic philosophy of Subhas emanates from the essential criterion of Indian nationalism of which he is very much conscious. He believes that, "Indian nationalism is neither narrow, nor selfish, nor aggressive. It is inspired by the highest ideals of the human race, viz. ‘Satyam’ (the true), ‘Shivam’ (the good) and ‘Sundaram’ (the beautiful). This nationalism can have full play only in an independent country." 57 And regarding the form of government in this independent country, Subhas has his own ideas. ...."

Speaking for myself, I stand for an independent Federal Republic. This is the ultimate goal which I have before me. " 58 He further says that this political democracy must be built up 'on the pedestal of a democratic society. " 59 The endeavour of this political system should be to foster and nurture the economic system in the best possible way. Subhas, as a true statesman, can look far ahead and think of the problems that India, has to tackle once she is free. He has in mind all the socio-economic problems that have to be dealt with once India is free.

56 Subhas Chandra Bose, ‘Japans’ Role in the Far East”, “Modern Review”, October 1937, in Essential Writings, p. 90,
57 Subhas Chandra Bose, “Demoracy in India”, Presidential Address at the Maharashtra Provincial Conference, Poona 3 May 1928, Essential Writings, p. 84.
58 Ibid., p. 85.
59 Ibid., p. 86.
An article, ‘Free India and its Problems”, published in the German periodical *Wille and Macht* in August 1942 and reprinted in *Azad Hind*, the official publication of the Free India Centre in Berlin, gives a clear idea of Subhas’ political thought. Subhas is very much aware of the gigantic problems that India has to face once she is free. It might be worthwhile to consider some of the basic problems discussed by Subhas.

To Subhas a strong central government is of first and foremost importance. “For a few years at least after the end of British rule in India there must be a dictatorship. No other constitution can flourish in this country. And it is to India’s good that she should be ruled by a dictator to begin with. None but a dictator can wipe out such dissensions. India does not suffer from one ailment. She suffers from so many political ills that only a ruthless dictator can cure her.” 60 He reiterates the same idea in an address, “The Fundamental Problems of India “, to the faculty and students of Tokyo University in November 1944. Subhas categorically asserts his view : “Therefore, we must have a political system – a State – of an authoritarian character”. 61 Such remarks obviously produce an idea that there is an authoritarian leaning in the thoughts of Subhas.

But a psycho-analytical study of the mind of Subhas clearly reveals what he actually means by such statements. India, Subhas knows, is beset with problems. These problems can only be solved only if socio-economic reconstruction schemes are successfully implemented without impediment of any kind from any quarter. But, in a fully democratic system, it might be difficult to give a concrete shape to these schemes. So Subhas makes a stringent stipulation : “We must have a government that will function as the servant of the people and will have full powers to put through new reforms

concerning industry, education, defence etc in Free India.\textsuperscript{62} To Subhas this is nothing but a transitional arrangement made to meet the exigencies of the situation. As a critic remarks: “Subhas Chandra had no interest bias for dictatorship or authoritarianism. His views on question of dictatorship was entirely determined by the question of expediency.”\textsuperscript{63}

Regarding the new state that will be formed, his sagacious opinion is that various political experiments in different parts of Europe have to be studied and only after that the particular requirements of the Indian situation are to be taken into consideration. He feels at the same time that, “India has had experience of several empires in the past and this experience will serve as the background”\textsuperscript{64} And only then the exact form of the new state can be determined. A strong central government is of first and foremost importance. This will imply the reorganisation of civil administration. This new government will lay down a new policy, a new programme. It would be necessary to built up a national Army and also a Navy and Air Force.

The state will have to take all measures to unify the whole nation. And Subhas suggests that the media – radio, cinema etc should be utilized for the purpose. Offences against national unity should be severely dealt with. If necessary, even law will have to be amended for this. Proper education should also be imparted to students so that they can imbibe the spirit of national unity early in their life. Subhas refers to the great revolution of 1857 as a glaring example of national unity; it was fought under the banner of

\textsuperscript{62} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{64} Subhas Chandra Bose, “Free India and its Problems”, This article by Subhas was first published in the German periodical \textit{Wille}, and \textit{Macht} in August 1942 and reprinted in \textit{“Azad Hind”}, the official publication of the Free India Centre in Berlin. Essential Writings p.290.
Bahadur Shah, a Mohammedan. Subhas asserts that “the Mohammedan (or Muslim) problem in India today is an artificial creation of the British similar to the Ulster-Problem in Ireland and the Jewish Problem in Palestine. It will disappear when the British rule is swept away.

Subhas has also in mind important socio-economic problems like poverty and unemployment. He diagnoses and finds two causes of this malady – one is systematic destruction or Indian Industries by the British rulers who were also allergic to scientific agriculture and mechanised production. The main interest of the British was to cripple Indian Industries so that India could only be a supplier of raw material. The unemployment problem raised its head as an inevitable corollary. In fact, the entire Subhas’ political thought of Subhas includes his views on the major socio-economic issues. And he spared no pains to expostulate his socio-economic standpoint and give concrete suggestions for their implementation.

It may be worthwhile to ponder over these socio-economic views to which Subhas clung so desperately. He asserted: “Since political and economic issues are inextricably bound up together in India – and since British rule in India exists not only for political domination but also for economic exploitation – it follows that political freedom is primarily an economic necessity for us.” 65 Subhas firmly believed that socio-economic norms in India should be shaped according to the ideals and needs of India. In his speech at the Lahore Session of the Punjabi Students’ Conference on 19 October 1929, he cogently explains what according to him is the essence of Socialism that he would like to see established in India.

Subhas believes that five principles should be the basis of collective life. These are – justice, equality, freedom, discipline and love. All human

65 Subhas Chandra Bose, n. 7, p. 372
affairs and relations should be guided by a sense of justice. To be just and impartial all men should be treated as equal. And to be equal one should be free – free from all bondage within the socio-economic or political system which deprives man of his freedom. The next principle enunciated by him is discipline, because freedom never entails indiscipline. And lastly, an unifying bond of love holds together all these five principles. And it was the ardent belief of Subhas that adherence to these principles would help India evolve a socio-economic and political structure which would be an object lesson for the world.

Subhas, in fact, firmly believes that after political power has been attained national reconstruction will take on socialistic lines- "it is the ‘have-nots’ who will benefit at the expense of the ‘haves’ and the Indian masses have to be classified among the ‘have-nots’. 66 And Subhas opines that the principal problem regarding reconstruction would be to explore ways and means to eradicate poverty. Subhas himself suggests four measures to be taken to achieve this end. First, the existing land system should be radically reformed. Along with this, the landlordism should be discarded. Secondly, agricultural indebtedness should be liquidated and the rural population should be given the advantage of cheap credit. Thirdly, co-operative movement should be given ample scope of expansion – this will be beneficial for both the producers and the consumers. Lastly, agriculture, with a view to increasing the production, should be carried on a scientific basis. All these he cogently enunciated in his Presidential Address at Haripura Congress.

But Subhas is also very much conscious of the fact that only agricultural development will not bring about the desired goal. What is needed and needed desperately, is a comprehensive scheme of industrial development and for this state-ownership and state control will be an indispensable factor. It

66 Subhas Chandra Bose, n.1, p. 203
may be that there are many who condemn modern industrialisation and its effects on the people. He was quite aware of the views of Gandhiji who was never tired of castigating industrialisation and all scientific methods: "... It is not the British people who are ruling India, but it is modern civilization, through its railways, telegraph, telephone and almost every invention which has been claimed to be triumph of civilization .... Medical science is the concentrated essence of black magic. Quakery is infinitely preferable to what passes for high medical skill ... India's salvation consists in unlearning what she has learned during the past forty years. The railways, telegraphs hospitals, lawyers doctors and such like have all to go ...." 67

But Subhas firmly clings to his views. Prof. Meghnad Saha, the renowned scientist, put him a pertinent question at the third General Meeting of The Indian Science News Association presided over by Subhas: "May I enquire whether the India of the future is going to receive the philosophy of village life, or the bullock cart, thereby perpetuating servitude, or is she going to be a modern industrialised nation, which, having developed all her natural resources, will solve the problems of poverty, ignorance and defence and will take an honoured place in the comity of nations and begin a new circle of civilization?" 68 Subhas' categorical reply was: "National Reconstruction will be possible only with the aid of science ... India is still in the pre-industrial stage of evolution. No recovery or revival is possible until we first pass through the throes of industrial revolution. Whether we like it or not, we have to reconcile ourselves to the fact that the present epoch is the industrial epoch in modern history ..." 69 Elsewhere Subhas reiterates the conviction he holds: "... India will therefore, need industrialization and scientific agriculture

68 The Indian Science News Association invited Subhas Chandra Bose to preside over the Third General Meeting of the Association on 21 August 1938. Here is a question by Professor Meghnad Saha to Subhas. N.C.W._. Vol 9, p. 43.
69 Ibid.
through State aid, if she has to solve the problem of poverty and unemployment.”

Subhas, in his inauguration speech at the first meeting of the All India National Planning Committee held in Bombay on 17 December 1938, outlined the industrial possibilities of the country. He dwelt upon what he considered to be a vital question – the industrial regeneration of the country should never hamper the interests of the indigenous village industries. In fact, according to him there is no inherent conflict between cottage industries and large-scale industries. And under one head 'Industries,' he places three classes of industries: Cottage, medium-scale and large-scale industries. Among the large industries, according to Subhas, the most important are the mother industries', defined as “industries which make the other industries run successfully – such as, power industry, industries for the production of metals, heavy chemicals, machinery and tools, and communication industries like railway, telegraph, telephone and radio.” This would provide the artisans with necessary facilities for quicker and cheaper production which would help the revival of the handloom industry and the silk industry.

Subhas, in this connection, makes a few relevant observations regarding the principles on which the national planning should be based. Some of his observations are “... We should adopt a policy aiming at the growth and development of the mother industries, viz. power supply, metal production, machine and tools manufacture of essential transport and communication industries.” And as a preliminary step towards national planning “there should be an economic survey of the present industrial position

70 Subhas Chandra Bose, n.7, p. 409.
71 Subhas Chandra Bose. Inauguration speech at the first meeting of the All India national Planning Committee at Bombay on 17 December 1938, N.C.W., Vol 9, p.63.
72 Subhas replies to certain questions put by Professor Meghnad Saha at the Third General Meeting of Indian Science News Association N.C.W., n.12, p. 46.
with a view to securing the necessary data for the National Planning Commission."  

The socio-economic standpoint of Subhas is also clear from his outspoken replies to the questions put by Prof. Meghnad Saha when he asserts: "... I may say without any exaggeration that the rising generations are in favour of industrialization and for several reasons: Firstly, industrialization is necessary for solving the problem of unemployment. Though scientific agriculture will increase the production of land, if food is to be given to every man and woman, a good portion of the population will have to be transferred from land to industry. Secondly, the rising generations are now thinking in terms of socialism as the basis for national reconstruction and socialism presupposes industrialisation. Thirdly industrialization is necessary if we have to compete with foreign industries." 

It is not that India is lacking in natural resources. "Her mineral wealth and other natural resources," says Subhas, "are superabundant. What is wanted is their systematic, organised exploitation by us in the best interests of the nation. Every country in the world that has grown rich and prosperous has done so through the fullest development of the industries." He cites the example of Russia which was mainly an agricultural country and no better than India, but within a span of 16 years, she was transformed into a sophisticated industrial country due to its planned industrialization.

The socio-economic views of Subhas are also amply illustrated by his unequivocal statement: "Equal opportunities for all, equitable distribution of wealth, abolition of all social barriers, including caste and emancipation from

73 Ibid. p.47.
74 Ibid. p. 50
foreign rule – these should be some of the basic principles of the new society we want to build.” 76 And again in a speech at Midnapore Youth Congress on 21 December 1929, he reiterates: “I want a society in which the individual will not be pressed down by heavy injunctions, a society in which caste system will find no place, a society in which the woman will be free and will enjoy equal rights with man and take upon her all civic and political responsibilities, a society rid of all inequalities of wealth and in which everyone will get equal opportunities for education and development.” And forcefully he asserts his conviction: “Free India will not be a land of capitalists, landlords and castes. Free India will be a social and political democracy.” 77

Subhas firmly believes that politics and economics are intricably bound up together in India. And it follows from this as its inevitable corollary that economic exploitation by the British is impoverishing the country. Subhas was aware how systematically India was being ‘robbed’ by the British and he spared no pains to expose it and hold before the world the true picture of this systematic exploitation. Very cogently he puts forward his points: “From the economic standpoint, India is to Britain a supplier of raw materials and a consumer of British manufactures. On the other hand, India aspires to be a manufacturing country so that she could become self-contained in the matter of manufactured goods and could also export not only raw materials but manufactured goods as well. India is at present one of the biggest markets for Great Britain. The industrial progress of India therefore is against British economic interests.” 78 And he adds, “... Further, even the working classes of Great Britain cannot afford to see the Indian Textile Industry thrive at the expense of Lancashire.” 79

77 Subhas Chandra Bose, n. 7, p. 409
79 Ibid. p. 372.
Subhas, when he was at the helm of the Indian National Congress, got an opportunity to give concrete shape to his concept of National Planning. In the Industries Ministers’ Conference in Delhi on 2 October 1938, Subhas pointed out the need for formulating a firm economic policy. He brought in focus the whole gamut of economic activities from the development of hydro-electricity to the problem of soil erosion, scientific methods to be adopted for checking the menace of annual floods and also sophisticated irrigation process. He drew the attention of the ministers to the problems that they may encounter and suggested a course of action:

“1. Arrangement for a proper economic survey of each province.
2. Co-ordination between cottage industries and large-scale industries with a view to prevent overlapping.
3. The advisability of having regional distribution of industries.
4. Rules regarding technical training in India and abroad for students.
5. Provision for technical research.
6. Advisability of appointing a committee of experts to give further advice on the problems of industrialization.”

In December 1938 Subhas formed the National Planning Committee. To rope in the support of the followers of Gandhiji he offered the chairmanship of the Committee to Jawaharlal who accepted the offer not without trepidation. He did not fail to give vent to his views in his The Discovery of India where he commented that the committee was a strange assortment of different types and it was not clear to him how such a strange mixture would work. But, in fact, the Committee comprised the luminaries of the day like - Sir M. Visvesvaraya, Sir Purusottamdas Thakurdas, Sri Ambalal Sarabhai, Shri A.D. Shoroff, Sri K. T. Shah, Dr. V. S. Dube and Shri V. V. Giri. The first conference of the Planning Committee was held at Bombay on 17 December 1938. It was

inaugurated by Subhas, the then Congress President, amidst great enthusiasm of the like-minded people. Besides Jawaharlal, who presided over the conference, Sri Vallabhai Patel, Sri Bhulabhai Desai, Sri J.B. Kripalani were also invited to participate in the deliberations of the Conference. The main theme of the speech delivered by Subhas was that there was no basic conflict between cottage industries and large scale industries. He referred to developed countries like Germany and Japan where quite a good number of cottage industries flourished along with the large-scale industries. Another recommendation of Subhas was that the Planning Commission should give due thought to the development of what he called light industries like bicycles, fountain pens, different kinds of sophisticated toys etc. The main advantage of the project was that it could be started on family unit basis.

Subhas, in fact, stands for a balanced economic growth. Complete economic emancipation is his goal. He wants complete social equality and "a fair, just and equitable distribution of wealth. For this purpose it may be necessary for the state to take over the control of the means of production and distribution of wealth."82 Subhas’ concept of socio-economic development is never one-dimensional. It is multi-dimensional comprising a variegated sphere of activity - social, economic and political. A perfect synthesis of the traditional and the scientific is the basis of his economic philosophy. And "the last gift which India will make to the world is a new socio-economic order and a body politic which will have lessons for the whole of humanity."83

Subhas is not a politician with myopic eyes. He is a true statesman with a vision. An in-depth study of the political and socio-economic thoughts of Subhas opens up a vista into the inner recesses of his mind. Subhas believes that ultimately India would be able to evolve a unique socio-economic

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82 Subhas Chandra Bose, "Socialism in India", Speech at All-India Naujawan Bharat Sabha in Karachi, 5 April 1931, Essential Writings p. 113.
83 Ibid., p. 120.
political structure. His main object is to evolve a new system that would become a synthesis of the systems in vogue in different parts of the world. He believes in the philosophy of evolution. Every evolution not only draws its sustenance from the soil from which it springs – it also assimilates nourishment coming from outside. And the interaction of the two – internal sustenance and external nourishment – are vitally necessary for a dynamic evolution. In this way the process of evolution is ever going forward. And as Subhas says in his ‘My Political Testament’ "... that is how the wheels of evolution move on and the ideas and dreams of one generation are bequeathed to the next."  

In this process, Subhas firmly believes, the students have a very important role to play.

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