Bose returned to active political life by the middle of 1927. The previous two years marked by a general political slump and there were communal troubles throughout the country. Since the death of Das the situation in Bengal had deteriorated, Bose was troubled by the factionalism, disunity, corruption and lack of strong leadership in the Bengal political scene in which he was to reenter.  

Bose was elected President of Bengal Provincial Congress Committee in November 1927. In April 1928 at a meeting held at Basirhat, Bose moved a resolution calling for complete independence for India. It was passed with the support of the Provincial Congress President, J.M. Sengupta.

In 1928, Bose became a candidate for the election of Mayor of Calcutta. Sen Gupta withdrew his own candidacy and started to help Bose. But Bose was defeated.

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4. After Das's death, Gandhi backed J.M. Sengupta, a prominent Congress man from Chittagong, as Bengal's new chief nationalist leader.
and one candidate of Liberal Party was elected by 46 to 37 votes. This led to an bitterness among the different groups in the Bengal Congress.\(^1\)

In 1929, conflict emerged between Bose and Sen Gupta. Rival groups of the Jugantar and Anushilan parties rallied around the two leaders respectively.\(^2\) The rivalry between these two leaders and the various groups that supported them continued until the death of Sen Gupta in 1932 and Bose's temporary exist from the scene of Bengal politics in the same year.

THE LEFT WING IN THE CONGRESS

The Left Wing inside the Congress emerged as a "rationalist revolt" against Gandhi's philosophy and technique of nationalist struggle. In contrast to the subjectivism of Gandhi's philosophy and his introvert nationalism, the radical elements ideas were socialistic, for they believed that Swaraj must be interpreted in terms of the masses, providing to the purely political concept of freedom a social and economic content. For them political emancipation was only means to the ultimate end of emancipation from social and economic inequality and exploitation.

2. ibid- pp. 111-112.
Gandhi's main concern was with the means rather than with ends, he was more interested in specific issues than in ultimate objectives and his approach to all issues, whether moral or political, was intuitive rather than intellectual. To the radicals, all means were rational and justified if they could fulfill the ultimate objective. These forces began to come to the surface after the suspension of the non-co-operation movement in 1922.

The Left Wing was composed of the Congress Socialists, the Communists, the followers of M.N.Roy and some of unattached socialist inclined leaders such as Subhas Chandra Bose and Jawaharlal Nehru.

In this stage of his political life Bose emerged as a leader of the Left Wing in the Congress.

In his own words of Bose, the Left Wing, "held radical views on social and economic questions, i.e. questions relating to caste, to landlord versus peasant and to capital versus labour. This group also advocated a more vigorous and activist policy for the achievement of political freedom".  


BOSE'S CONCEPT OF LEFTISM

Bose was not a Leftist in the conventional sense of the term. For him leftism did not denote any political creed or sectarianism, but a rational principle, a political method of attaining complete independence for his country and of affecting her post-freedom national reconstruction on a modern line. His leftism was from his viewpoint, synonymous with anti-imperialism. "In the present phase of Indian life", he wrote, "Leftism means anti-imperialism. A genuine anti-imperialist is one who believes in undiluted independence as the political objective and in uncompromising national struggle as the means for attaining it". 1

His leftism was a protest against the policy of compromise and constitutionalism followed by the Gendhite Congress, and he urged them that it should be replaced by a policy of uncompromising national struggle against the Britishers. "After the attainment of political independence", he wrote, "Leftism will mean socialism and the task before the people will then be national reconstruction on a socialistic basis". 2

THE SIMON COMMISSION AND THE MADRAS CONGRESS

The nationalist movement received a new impulsion from the side of the government when in first week of November 1927, Lord Irwin made an announcement regarding the appointment of the Indian Statutory Commission, consisting solely of British members of Parliament to consider whether India was ready for a further instalment of constitutional reforms.¹ Since it had no representative of the Indian opinion, its announcement evoked condemnation from the Congress leaders of all parts of India as also from the public.²

The Congress passed a resolution in Madras in December 1927, under the Presidency of Dr. M.A. Ansari boycotting the Simon Commission at "every stage and in every form".³ Jawaharlal Nehru, who returned from abroad,⁴ on the eve of the Madras Congress, moved a resolution proclaiming the goal of Indian people as complete Independence. By complete independence he meant control over defence,

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2. R.C. Majumder writes: "Fortunately for India's struggle for freedom, the fatal inertia that had practically put an end to all its outward activities, was removed by an action of the British Government, namely, the appointment of Simon Commission in India in 1927, History of Freedom Movement in India, Vol. III, p. 307.
4. During his stay Nehru studied some of the latest developments in Europe, especially in Soviet Russia and returned with a new tone of radicalism which was extremely welcome to the Left Wing.
financial and economic matters.¹ This resolution, Bose pointed out, was but a logical fulfilment of a process going on within the Congress for a long time in the sense that the younger elements in the Congress had been demanding a more extremist ideology for some time past and under their influence resolutions had been passed from time to time by Provincial Conferences recommending to the Indian National Congress that the goal of the Indian people should be defined as complete national independence.²

Gandhi was not present at the proceedings of the session, but later when he learnt that resolution for 'complete independence' had been approved, he did not like it because he wanted to go slow.³ He also warned Nehru privately that he was proceeding too fast.⁴

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¹ V.T. Patel, Nehru and the Freedom Movement, (New Delhi, 1977) p.73.
³ Gandhi described the resolution as 'hastily conceived' and 'thoughtlessly passed' and the Congress as a whole as having descended to the level of schoolboy debating society. D.G. Tendulkar, Mahatma: Life of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, Vol.II, (New Delhi, 1969), p.304.
⁴ V.T. Patel, Nehru and the Freedom Movement, p.74.
Along with this resolution the Madras Congress took a significant step in appointing Subhas Chandra Bose, Jawaharlal Nehru and Shuaib Guereshi as General Secretaries. Thus, the Madras Congress, in the words of Bose, "may be regarded as standing for a definite orientation towards the left". It was at the Madras session at the end of 1927 that Bose made his debut on the all India stage.

The arrival of the Simon Commission in Bombay on 3 February, 1928, was greeted with an All-India Hartal. Wherever the Commission went, it was greeted with hostile demonstrations and black flags, with the cry 'Simon go back'. The government of India and the India office had originally decided that the Commission should not visit Bengal on this occasion. But Stanley Jackson (Governor of Bengal, 1927) urged John Simon to change this decision and stated that "if we failed to visit Calcutta not only would we alienate our friends but we would be accused by our enemies of faint-heartedness". The Viceroy supported his advice.

1. Subhas Chandra Bose: The Indian Struggle, p.162. According to Satyabrata Roychoudhury, "The Madras Congress also revealed that within the party there were two distinctly opposite groups - the orthodox elements who could be content with Dominion Status and the radicals who demanded complete independence. Satyabrata Roychoudhury, Leftists Movement in India, p.159.


3. -ibid- p.77.
The Commission visited Calcutta on 20 February, 1928. As a President of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee, Bose was responsible for organising Hartal.\(^1\) He was convinced that such a movement had tremendous possibilities and in Calcutta he set out to prove it. Bengali Provincial Congress Committee organised massive demonstrations and an intensive campaign for the boycott of British goods. Addressing a public meeting Bose said that "if a Commission, composed of Indians only similar to the Simon Commission, was sent to England to shape the destiny of the British people, they would have protested as Indians were doing, because the British knew very well that they were the sole judges in matters concerning their own constitution."\(^2\)

He added that they had no weapons, arms or munitions, but they had a far greater weapon and it was that they could make the British people starve by creating an economic blockade. He appealed people to enlist at least ten thousand volunteers to carry on the agitation for the attainment of Swaraj.\(^3\)

The declaration of the boycott of the foreign

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1. Bose said, "Our immediate task is among other things to make the boycott of the Simon Commission complete and effective. Selected speeches of Subhas Chandra Bose, p.36.


3. ibid
goods, particularly British goods, had been hailed in all the quarters. It could be judged from the mammoth meetings that they were being daily held over the city to bring home to the people the necessity of an economic boycott. In fact Bose had succeeded in enrolling a large numbers of volunteers to carry out the work.¹

Occasionally the demonstrators came into conflict with the police, leading to lathi charges and firing in Bombay, Madras and other places. The news of the death of Lala Lajpat Rai on 19 November, following a police assault, when the Simon Commission visited Lahore inflamed tempers throughout India. Public anger against the government reached a high peak, Bose thought that at that time a nation wide movement should be launched against the British government. He visited Gandhi at his Ashram at Sabermati and urged him to come out of his retirement and give a lead to the country at that crucial hour. Gandhi, however, did not share his views and refused. Bose was disappointed and wrote later that "during the whole of 1928 and 1929 there were so much unrest in the labour world and more enthusiasm and excitement in provinces that if a political campaign had been started at that time, it would have been well timed.

¹ S.R. Bakshi, Simon Commission & Indian Nationalism, p.79.
than in 1930 when Mahatma launched a movement".1

In November 1927, Lord Birkenhead, the Secretary of State for India challenged Indian politicians to produce an agreed constitution for India. In pursuance of the directive of Madras Congress to call an All-Parties Conference and to prepare an agreed constitution, a committee under the chairmanship of Motilal Nehru was appointed to determine the principles of the new constitution of India. Bose was also a member of that Committee. The Committee ultimately issued its report in August which was mainly drafted by Motilal Nehru and popularly known as the Nehru Report. It was well received by the nationalist as it nullified the Simon Commission Report. The report was unanimously adopted by the All-Parties Conference in Lucknow in August 1928.

The Nehru Report envisaged for India the status of a Dominion as other self-governing Dominions in the British Empire. On the highly sensitive issues of communal representation and safeguards for the minorities, the Report prescribed joint mixed electorates for the country with the reservation of seats in the Central and Provincial Legislatures.

The younger elements, however, were not happy over the recommendation regarding Dominion status as it conflicted with the resolution of independence set by the Madras session of Congress. Bose also reacted sharply as the recommendation was quite unacceptable for him.1

In view of the need of presenting a united front to the Simon Commission, Bose and Jawaharlal Nehru suggested to the members of the Congress Left Wing in a private meeting held at Lucknow that those who agreed with them should only voice their protest at the Conference instead of dividing and wrecking it.2 This decision was accepted in the meeting of Left Wingers. Both Bose and Nehru offered to resign their general secretaryship of the Congress and to organise an Independence of India League. They were advised by the Congress Working Committee not to resign,3 and that they could go ahead with their proposed independence league without conflicting with the Congress policy. The Independence of India League was founded in November 1928 to propagate the cause of complete independence as the goal of the Congress.4

2. -ibid- p.169
4. According to D.P.Nisha, "the League, like the Swaraj Party, might have led to the formation of a separate party but for the fact that the senior leaders gradually moved towards the acceptance of the ideal of complete independence", Living An Era, Vol.I, (Delhi, 1975), p.134.
In the late twenties Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose, despite fundamental differences in mental constitution and ideological foundations, emerged as the spokesmen of the rising Left in Indian politics.

Since the very birth of his political consciousness, Bose stood for complete independence of his country. In 1914 he thought that "Political freedom was indivisible and meant complete independence of foreign control and tutelage." He thought that India should sever all British connections. In his Presidential address at the Maharashtra Provincial Conference he said, "I stand for an independent Federal Republic. That is the ultimate goal which I have before me. India must fulfil her own destiny and cannot be content with colonial self-government or Dominion Home Rule. Why must we remain within the British Empire?" 2

Bose was the Chairman of the Reception Committee of the third All-India Youth Congress, which was held on 25 December 1928, two days before the annual session of the Congress in Calcutta. In


2. Presidential address at the Maharashtra Provincial Conference, Poona, 3 May 1928, selected speeches of Subhas Chandra Bose, p.34.
In his speech as a Pragmatist, he strongly advocated activism as opposed to the passivism which he thought was being preached by Gandhi and Aurobindo:

"The actual effect of the propaganda carried on by the Sabarmati (i.e. the Gandhian) School of thought is to create a feeling that modernism is bad, large scale production is an evil, wants should not be increased and the standard of living should not be raised, that we must endeavour to the best of our ability to go back to the days of the bullock cart and that soul is so important that physical culture and military training can well be ignored."

"The actual effect of the propaganda carried on by Pondicherry School of thought is to create a feeling, and an impression that there is nothing higher or nobler than peaceful contemplation... It is the passivism, not philosophic, but actual, inculcated by these schools of thought against which I protest... In India we went today a philosophy of activism. We must be inspired by robust activism. We have to live in the present and to adopt ourselves to modern conditions. We can no longer live in an isolated corner of the world."

2. *Ibid*.
When India is free, she will have to fight her modern enemies with modern methods, both in the economic and in the political spheres. The days of the bullock cart are gone and gone for ever. Free India must arm herself for any eventuality as long as the whole world does not accept wholeheartedly the policy of disarmament.  

Nobody had so far attacked Gandhi from within the Congress. Bose's direct criticism of Gandhi was particularly resented by latter's followers, even Bose's friends were astonished at his boldness.

Bose wanted that the Congress should adopt a radical programme of active resistance. He was not prepared to accept anything less than complete independence. He came forward with the strong protest whenever he found that the older leaders were not taking bold steps towards an uncompromising policy.

DOMINION STATUS VERSUS COMPLETE INDEPENDENCE

The Calcutta Congress was marked by an open clash between the Right and the Left Wing. Motilal Nehru wanted at Calcutta to secure the adoption of the Nehru Report by the Congress, and of the acceptance of

1. Amrit Bazar Patrika, 26-12-1928, p. 5.
Dominion status without prejudice to the ultimate goal of complete independence.¹ He had full support of Gandhi and the Right Wing while on the other side were Jawaharlal and Bose, who were equally determined to fight for their goal of complete independence.²

At the Calcutta Congress Gandhi emerged from his self-chosen seclusion and comparative retirement to plead for acceptance of the Nehru Report.³ Gandhi moved a resolution accepting that the Congress adopt the 'Nehru Report' in its entirety, including the Dominion status formula, if the British Parliament accepted the Report as a constitution for India before December 1930. In the event of non-acceptance he proposed another mass civil disobedience campaign.⁴ Bose and Nehru moved an amendment rejecting Dominion status recommended in the Nehru Report and reiterating the goal of complete independence as set out in the Madras Congress Session. Their aim was to put no time-limit, not even by implication, to accept

³ ibid, p.135.
for Dominion status as contemplated in the constitution
drawn up by the All-Parties Conference,¹ and a split
appeared inevitable.

After a heated and lengthy debate,² the
Congress leaders held an emergency session in the
evening to arrive at a compromise. Bose and Nehru agreed
to the persuasion of Gandhi to maintain party unity.
At the same time, weighing the situation Gandhi acted
as compromiser, he withdrew his original resolution
and proposed another.³ This resolution was passed
in the subjects committee by 118 votes against 45. Both
Bose and Nehru abstained from the voting and promised
that they would not oppose Gandhi's resolution at the
open session. Gandhi moved the agreed resolution.⁴ It
stated that, while adhering to the resolution relating
to complete independence as passed at Madras Congress,
the Congress approved of the constitution drawn up by
the All Parties Committee, but in the event of its
non-acceptance by the British Parliament on or before
31 December, 1929, the Congress would organise non-
vviolent non-cooperation.⁵

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² For this see, J.N. Bajpeyi, The Extremist Movement in India (Allahabad, 1974), pp.315-319.
⁴ J.N. Bajpeyi, The Extremist Movement in India, p.327.
This compromise resolution was an improvement upon the earlier one, so far as it lessened the period of two years' notice to the Government by one, and secondly, that it deleted the idea of making any petition to the Viceroy.¹

Everything appeared to be going smoothly when Bose suddenly stood up and moved an amendment in the open session "to the effect that the Congress would be content with nothing short of independence which implied severance of the British connection".²

He asked a straignt question to the delegates that "in the main resolution you have given twelve months' time to the British. Can you lay your hands on your hearts and say that there is a reasonable chance of getting Dominion Status within this 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?". "Even if Dominion status is conceded today, he declared, "we cannot accept it as a fulfilment of our national demand."

¹ J.N.Bajpeyi, The Extremist Movement in India, pp. 319-320.
² The Indian Annual Register, 1928, II, pp.363-365. Also selected speeches of Subhas Chandra Bose, pp. 39-41.
We stand for independence as our immediate objective.1

Bose further said that, "You can say, what do we gain by this resolution of independence? I say, we develop a new mentality... If you want to overcome the slave mentality you will do so by encouraging our countrymen for complete independence. "By placing the goal of independence before our countrymen we shall bring up a new generation".2

When Nehru also supported Bose’s amendment3, it seemed that the amendment would be passed. The conduct of these two leaders annoyed Gandhi who gave expression to his feelings in a very strong term4. Gandhi’s appeal proved effective. Bose’s amendment was lost by 973 votes to 1350. According to Bose, as the followers of Gandhi made it a question of confidence, most of the members voted for his resolution not out of conviction but because they were unwilling to be a party to forcing Gandhi out of the Congress.5

1. The Indian Annual Register, 1928, II, pp. 363-65; also selected speeches of Subhas Chandra Bose, pp. 39-41.
2. -ibid-
5. Subhas Chandra Bose, The Indian Struggle, p. 175.
Nevertheless, the voting revealed that the strength and the support of the left wing led by Bose and Jawaharlal Nehru was considerable despite Gandhi’s magnetism.

There was another aspect of the Calcutta Congress where the first expression of Bose’s militarism was seen. For the Congress and the national exhibition connected with it, a large body of volunteers had been necessary. Bose had been entrusted by the Congress authorities to organise and training of the Corps.¹ The Bengal Volunteer Corps came into existence at the time of the Calcutta Congress. Bose issued a call for 2,000 volunteers. For the first time, military discipline and training in military drill was imparted to the volunteers and they were also given a semi military uniform.²

At the Calcutta Congress, Bose raised a strong well-disciplined and uniformed volunteer force³ of

2. The Military character of the Corps did not escape the notice of the Viceroy who directed the Intelligence Branch to report further on matter. It was found later that the question of Military drills with arms had been considered at the time volunteers were organised for the Non-co-operation Movement. Govt. of India, Home Deptt., Political File No. 233/1928, N.A.I., New Delhi.
3. Although a large number of non-revolutionary youth undoubtedly volunteered for corps, almost every revolutionary party of Bengal was represented in Bengal Volunteer Corps. David M. Lauhey, Bengal Terrorism and the Marxist Left, Calcutta, 1975, pp. 59-60. Also in Buddhadeva Bhattacharya, Freedom Struggle and Anushilan Samiti, p. 233.
which he was the General Officer Commanding. Motilal Nehru, President elect of Calcutta Congress, was taken round in a procession led by Bose.¹

The British Government did not fail to take notice of the emergency of the Left Wing as a powerful group within the Congress. Describing the Calcutta Congress as "a clear triumph for extremism", a secret circular of the Government dated 21 February, 1929, wrote:

If the experience of the Calcutta Congress is any guide, the decision of future policy appears to lie almost entirely with the young men notably Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Babu Subhas Chandra Bose... The situation contains serious potentialities of danger... If the extremist leaders press on with their programme, it appears to the Government of India that they should not have a free hand to develop their organisation, and increase their following with a view to striking at the moment most favourable to themselves".²

¹Bose's interest in the military and military like behaviour did not wane as he became a powerful political figure. He organised a Volunteer Corps in Calcutta in 1928, which was hardly appreciated by Gandhi. Stephen P.Cohn, The Indian Army: Its contribution to the Development of a Nation,(Berkley, 1971) p.101. According to Durgadas, "It might appear a rehearsal for the role he was to perform as Commander of the Indian National Army".Durgadas, India from Curzon to Nehru and after,(Calcutta,1969), p.128.

²Home Secretaries to all Local Governments,21 February 1929, Govt.of India, Home Deptt.,Political File No. 168 of 1929. National Archives of India, New Delhi.
Some speeches of Subhas Chandra Bose and Jawaharlal Nehru delivered in 1928 were regarded by Government of India as particularly mischievous and dangerous as those were thought to advocate the use of force.\(^1\) Harry Haig, the Secretary of the Home Department, wrote on 4 January 1929, "When the idea of independence first emerged, the Home Department considered there was a reasonable prospect that it would be generally recognised as either visionary or dangerous and that it would not be brought forward as a practical issue. In the last few months, however, independence has ceased to be an academic ideal. We are forced now with a party who, it would be seen, mean to translate it into a definite policy and to organise themselves with a view to attaining their object by force. Active steps are already being taken to develop organisations with this end in view. Youth movements and volunteer organisations are being discussed and started. I think there is no doubt that Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose do not mean to stop at words; they are preparing for action."\(^2\)

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1. Government of India, Home Department, Political, File No. 179/1929, National Archives of India, New Delhi.

The Government regarded Bose and Jawaharilal as the most dangerous leaders:

"It would probably be necessary in the first instance only to proceed against Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose. These two men are the undoubted leaders of the new movement. Successful prosecution of these two followed by adequate sentences may do a good deal to disorganise the movement, and would act as a warning to many who are at present somewhat half-heartedly dabbling with these ideas."  

After the Calcutta Congress Gandhi declared that if government did not concede Dominion status to India, by 31 December, 1929, he would turn an "Independencewallah" on 1st January, 1930.

SUBHAS BOSE & THE YOUTH & WOMEN’S MOVEMENT

The boycott of the Simon Commission had created a new upsurge in the country, the youth movement was also gathering force. The years 1926 and 1929 witnessed an unprecedented awakening among the youths. Youth conferences were held and youth leagues were formed in many cities. Bose and Jawaharlal Nehru joined the hand and together started working for complete independence. The youth leagues all

over the country hailed them as their leaders.
The youth movement marked the emergence of radical
trends in the national movement.

Bose emphasised upon the need to organise
the students, youths, peasants, workers and women in
the country under the banner of the Congress and only
then "we shall be able to rouse such a force in the
country as will make the Indian National Congress a
potent movement for achieving our political liberation". ¹
Out of the ranks of the students arise political thinkers
and politicians. If in India students do not take active
part in politics", Bose said, "from where are we to
recruit our political workers and where are we to
train them ?²

To Bose, youth movement was an integral
part of the national movement. Bose felt that a great
responsibility rested on the youth of the country to
create a new India. According to him, "a youth
association is characterised by a feeling of dis-
satisfaction with the present order of things, and a
desire for a better order accompanied by a vision of
that order. Youth movements are not reformist in
outlook but revolutionary... They have realised that
it is for them to create a new India-free, great and

¹ Presidential address at the students' conference
held at Lahore, 19 October, 1929, Selected
speeches of Subhas Chandra Bose, p.55.
² -ibid- p.50.
Bose thought that the youth of the country should not only be content with the attainment of political freedom but they should also go forward, and the concept of freedom with them would be more extensive and be comprehensive of every class of freedom. "This freedom implies not only emancipation from political bondage but also equal distribution of wealth, abolition of caste barriers and social inequalities, and destruction of communalism and religious intolerance".  

At the Central Provinces Youth Conference in Nagpur in 1929 he dealt on the features of the youth movement. "Broadly speaking the youth movement has five aspects, viz., political, social, economic, physical and cultural. The aim of the movement is a two-fold one — to break this five-fold bondage and as the result of this emancipation to give impetus to self fulfilment and self-expression".

Bose urged youths to take responsibility for the future of their country. "A sense of

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2. Presidential address at the Students' Conference held at Lahore, 19 October, 1929, selected speeches of Subhas Chandra Bose, p.53.

responsibility and a spirit of self-reliance pervade this movement. Youths of the present day should no longer feel content to hand over all responsibility to their elders... It is their bounden duty to accept the fullest responsibility for the future of their country and to equip themselves for the proper discharge of that responsibility.¹

Bose urged his young audience not to be led away by love of popularity. "On occasions you will have to take the responsibility of creating public opinion or of stemming to tide of public feeling. If you want to solve the fundamental problems of public life, you will have to look miles ahead of your contemporaries. The mass mind is often unable to cut itself off from present-day moorings and visualise the future. It is not improbable that the mass mind will refuse to accept your prescription". "On such occasion", Bose said, "you must summon courage to stand out alone and friendless, in the presence of the cross as it were and fight the rest of the world. One who desires to swim with the tide of popular approbation on all occasions may become the hero of the hour, but he cannot live in history... For the most unselfish actions, we should be prepared to get

¹. Presidential address at the Students' Conference held at Lahore, 19 October, 1929. Selected speeches of Subhas Chandra Bose, p.51.
abuse and vilification; from our closest friends we should be prepared for unwarranted hostility".  

In 1929, Bose presided over a number of Youth Conferences. He spoke at the Punjab Students' Conference in Lahore, at the Pabna Youth Conference in Bengal, at the Suras Valley Students' Conference in Assam, at the Khulna Youth Conference in Bengal, at the Central Province's Youth Conference in Nagpur, at the Noogoah District's Students' Conference in Calcutta, at the Zerar Students' Conference in Amraoti and at the Midnapore Youth Conference in Bengal.

According to the Government of Bengal, the youth movement in Bengal owed its origin to a great extent to Bose, who, after his return from England in 1921 "made strenuous efforts to bring together all educated young men, whether studying in Colleges and Schools and employed in earning their livelihood, and with their assistance he drew up a political programme of constructive work to be put into immediate operation".  

In a Youth Conference at Kushtia in March 1928, Bose said, "We are not alive but are living the lives

1. J.S. Bryant, Important speeches and writings of Subhash, p.87.

of beasts; we must live, if we are to live the country, must be free. In the past we lived as an independent nation. There is no power on earth that can keep us as slaves if one can resolve to be free. I appeal to you to come forward and join the national struggle".

The secret report of the Government of Bengal says:

"The appeal of Subhas Babu and his other revolutionary associates was not made in vain and they are getting active support from the youth associations in carrying out all the items of their programme, both open and secret. The All-Bengal Youth Association has introduced a form of vow for the boycott of foreign goods, particularly cloths, which its members must take and induce others to subscribe to it, while repeated exciting and inflammatory speeches and constant secret propaganda have so changed the outlook of mind of the youths of Bengal, that they are no longer afraid to give vent to seditious and blood-thirsty feelings and to declare openly their demand for complete independence".1

Regarding women's movement he pointed out

"It is impossible for one-half of the nation to win

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1. Govt. of India, Home Department, Political File No. 112/1930, N.A.I., New Delhi.
liberty without the active sympathy and support of the other half. He thought that there should be "a country wide political organisation among them. It should be the primary object of this organisation, which will be run by women alone, to carry on political propaganda among them and to help the work of the Indian National Congress". In an address at Dublin on 10-2-1936 he prescribed three lines of activity for them - movement for giving Indian women literary, artistic and practical training through institutions like the Seva Sadan of Bombay, Indian Women's University of Poona, the Saroj Nalini Association of Calcutta; movement for women's rights conducted by the All-India Women's Conference and other organisations run on feminist lines; the political movement which is clearly associated with the Indian National Congress.

SUBHAS BOSE AND LABOUR UNREST

The awakening among the youth was contemporaneous with a widespread unrest in the labour world and there were strikes all over the country. The labour strikes which were started in 1928, continued in 1929 and posed a great threat to the government.

1. Presidential address at the Maharashtra Provincial Conference, Poona, 3 May 1928. Selected speeches of Subhas Chandra Bose, p.34.

Geraldine Forbes, who had interviewed many of the women active in politics in those days, writes, "It was Subhas Chandra Bose, considered by many of the women revolutionaries, Bengal's greatest champion of Women's rights", Geraldine Forbes, "The Women Revolutionaries of Bengal", The Oracle, Vol. II, No. 2, April, 1980.

2. Private papers of Subhas Chandra Bose, National Archives of India, New Delhi.
The Textile Mills of Bombay, the Jute Mills of Calcutta and the Tata Iron and Steel Works in Jamshedpur—all were affected by it. The labour movement was becoming class-conscious, being alarmed by it government arrested thirty-one labour leaders on 29 March 1929. They were brought to Meerut for trial. The prosecution case was that the accused had conspired "to deprive the King of the sovereignty of India and with the help of the communist International had endeavoured to set up a government on the Soviet model".  

Bose visited Meerut to meet the under-trial labour leaders as he was connected with the defence committee. Expressing his deep concern over the arrest of labour leaders, Bose observed that until the labour movement is able to gather strength, possibilities of repression will remain. He thought that it would not be possible to gain political or economic freedom, unless the huge power of Indian labour was organised. He, therefore, insisted that the labour organisations should cooperate among themselves and the Congress should be actively associated with the national movement.  


Bose became involved during 1928 in three important strikes in Bengal. There were the strikes of the Railway Workshop workers at Lillooah and other parts of the E.I. and B.N.Railways, the first major strike of Bengal Jute Workers, and the strike of workers at Tata Iron and Steel Corporation at Jamshedpur.¹ He played a leading part in the settlement of the Tisco strike. This marked the initiation of the Bose in the labour's movement. He took a very keen interest in the Golunri Tin Plate Workers strike, simultaneously he led the peasants of Bandabilla Union Board in Jessore district against the raising of local taxes.²

In an address, which Bose gave in reply to a reception given to him by the railway workers at Kharagpur on 15 April 1928, he said that the working class would soon assume a very significant role in the national movement which was to bring not only freedom but also social equality.³

In a statement on the labour trouble at Lillooah issued to the press on April 1928, he said that

¹. Amrit Bazar Patrika, 17 and 21 April, 1928.
². There are many articles on Bose's activities in this period in Forward, 1928.
all the powers of the State were behind the capitalists and the working classes were fighting against these powers.¹ In his presidential address at Poona on 3 May, 1928, Bose was particularly eloquent about the role of the masses in the Indian National movement and the responsibility of the Congress for their economic emancipation. "It has to be admitted", he said, "that though we have passed resolutions from the Congress platform time and again regarding the desirability of organising labour, much has not been achieved in that direction".²

In the Fortnightly Report of the Bengal Government for the second fortnight of April 1929, it is stated that efforts were being made by Bose and his party to extend their influence over labour of all varieties and the railways, docks, river transport, tramways, and road transport, jute mills and other large industries were under their purview, so that the workmen might be ready to strike when the time came. It was also reported that an All-India Automobile society of drivers of taxis and buses, and of conductors was formed of which Bose was elected treasurer.³

². Presidential address at the Maharashtra Provincial Conference, Poona, 3 May, 1928, Selected speeches of Subhas Chandra Bose, p.31. Bose used 'labour' word here in a wider sense to include the peasants as well.
In the Calcutta Congress Gandhi drafted a resolution laying down a programme of work among city labourers and of village reconstruction and it was passed. In pursuance of that resolution the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee of which Bose was the President, passed a resolution calling for closer ties between "the Congress and the peasants' and labourers' organisation". The same year Bose started an Independence of India league in Bengal with the object of associating labour with the national movement.

After the split which occurred amongst the Trade Unionists following the Nagpur session of the Trade Union Congress held in 1929 Bose was in deep anxiety about the future of the working class movement in the country and its active links with the national movement which he earnestly desired. In his presidential address at the All India Trade Union Congress session in 1931 Bose made a strong plea for trade union unity as an integral part of national unity and, therefore, desired that the Trade Unions should join the Indian National Congress. Bose regretted that the Civil Disobedience movement had diverted attention from the

1. The Indian Annual Register, 1928, II, p.378.

Trade Union movement. He said that he could contemplate a situation in which the "Trade Union movement could have benefited by the Civil Disobedience movement and could have gained in strength as a result of it". ¹

In the same address he raised three issues about trade unionism - the questions of foreign affiliation and representation at Geneva and mandatory character of the Trade Union Congress resolutions. He rejected the need of foreign affiliation and representation at Geneva. He was of the view that the Indian Trade Union Movement should not be under the influence of foreign powers, stressing this point he said, "we should not surrender to the dictates of Amsterdam or Moscow. India will have to work out her own methods and adapt herself to her environment and her own special needs". ² With regard to the mandatory of the Trade Union Congress resolutions, Bose said, "I am afraid there can hardly be any compromise, if the Trade Union Congress is to exist and function. If it is to work for the attainment of working class solidarity in the country, the resolutions of the Trade Union Congress should be binding on all unions affiliated to the Congress". To reduce the Trade Union Congress to the position and status of a loose federation or to

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¹ Presidential address at the All India Trade Union Congress session in Calcutta, 4 July, 1931, Selected speeches of Subhas Chandra Bose, p. 59.
² -ibid- p. 60.
something like an All-Party Conference would be suicidal".1

Later, when Bose became President of the Congress in 1938, in his presidential address at Haripura, he introduced the most controversial matter regarding the Congress organisation. And this related to the relationship between the Congress and the Trade Unions and Kisan Sabha. About the working class organisations he said that, "we have to reconcile ourselves to their existence. Obviously such organisations should not appear as a challenge to the National Congress which is the organ of mass struggle for capturing political power".2 About the question of "collective affiliation of workers' and peasants' organisations to the Congress he said that the 'day will come when we will have to grant this affiliation in order to bring all progressive and anti-imperialist organisations under the influence

1. Presidential address at the All India Trade Union Congress session in Calcutta, 4 July, 1931, Selected speeches of Subhas Chandra Bose, p.61. The association of the Congress with labour was not at all liked by the convinced communists. They felt that the Congress leaders could not rise above their class interest. Gandhi's association with the capitalists revealed him as only masquerading as a labour leader as they took an attitude in creating disorder in any meeting organised by the Congress leader. In the session of AITUC in 1931 the proceedings were disorderly and the President Bose seemed for some time to have lost control over the meeting. Citaaraa Benerjee "Working Class movement in Bengal" during the Thirties, The Oracle, Vol. IV, April, 1979, p.41.

2. Presidential address at the Indian National Congress session in Haripura, 19 February, 1936, Selected speeches of Subhas Chandra Bose, p.83.
and control of the Congress".1

In his presidential address at the Tripuri Congress of 1939 he again urged the Congress to work in "close cooperation with all anti-imperialist organisations in the country, particularly the Kisan movement and the Trade Union movement".2

In the year 1929 there was under-current of revolutionary's activity in Northern India. On 8 April, 1929, two revolutionaries hurled two bombs along with red pamphlets entitled Hindustan Socialist Republic Army Notice, into the Assembly Chamber in New Delhi. They said in the statement before the court that the bombs were thrown not with the object of taking anybody's life but only of attracting the world's attention to conditions in India.3 The fearless and dignified behaviour of Bhagat Singh and his comrades made a deep impression on the public mind.

Among others arrested and put on trial in the Lahore Conspiracy Case was Jatindra Nath Das, who had served as a volunteer under Bose at the Calcutta Congress4

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1. Selected speeches of Subhas Chandra Bose, p.84.
2. Presidential address at the selected Congress session in Tripuri, 10 March, 1939. Selected Speeches of Subhas Chandra Bose, p.96.
In protest against the treatment given to them in the court and prison the accused went on a hunger strike which created a countrywide stir. Jatindra Das continued his hunger strike until his death on the 61 day - 13 September 1829. His martyrdom acted as a profound inspiration to the youths of India. Bose took a leading part in arranging the last rites of his former comrade in Calcutta.

THE LAHORE CONGRESS

In August 1929 a special meeting of the All-India Committee was called to decide who should preside over the ensuing Congress. The consensus of the opinion was in favour of Gandhi. But Gandhi decided to back the candidature of Jawaharlal Nehru. Gandhi said that the reason behind such a decision was that future lay in the hands of the younger generation and in Nehru he saw this hope for the future. But Gandhi was also deeply troubled by Nehru’s drift to the far left and his criticism of the moderate and middle-of-the-road policies. It was hoped that the responsibility of the high office would restrain and moderate his exuberance.

3. V. T. Fatil, Nehru & the Freedom Movement, p.84.
4. -ibid, p.84.

Hiren Mukerjee is also of the same opinion, "Gandhi must have argued himself to place Jawaharlal Nehru at the head of the Congress, so that he could realise the necessity of keeping off extremist policies and supporting compromise moves that Gandhi always had in mind. Hiren Mukerjee, The Gentle Colossus, (Calcutta, 1964), p.96.
Gandhi hoped Jawaharlal Nehru to use him to heal the cleavages of generation and ideology in Congress and also to prevent him becoming a focus and mouth piece of opposition to a less extreme demand - if that should appear necessary in the circumstances of December.1

Bose saw this event unfortunate for the Left Wing. Mahatma's gain was 'Leftists' loss, as left wingers did not like Nehru to play into the hands of Gandhi by accepting the Presidentship. They were fully aware of Gandhi's strength and were of the opinion that as they were not in a position to have their programme adopted by the Congress, it was useless for Nehru, one of their outstanding spokesmen, to accept the Presidentship. By sponsoring Nehru's candidature, Gandhi could successfully "beat down the Left Wing opposition and regain his former undisputed supremacy over the Congress".2 Bose observed that event "marked the beginning of a political rapprochement between him and Mahatma and Pandit Nehru and a consequent alienation between the latter and the

1. Judith M.Brown, Gandhi and his civil disobedience - The Mahatma in India Politics 1928-34. p.58. She writes, "At the same time there was evidently a growing pessimism in the Mahatma's mind about his own wish or capacity to lead a movement of protest, in view of the feeble enactment of the terms of leadership he had laid down at Calcutta Congress, (Cambridge, 1977), p.58.

A labour government came into power in British India in May 1929. A mood of intense anticipation was characteristic of the Indian political scene in the autumn of 1929. With a view to averting the impending clash, the Viceroy, Lord Irwin, made a policy declaration on behalf of the British government on 31 October 1929 which conceded the principle of Dominion status and also invited the Indian leaders for a Round Table Conference with the British Government in London.²

At a conference of political leaders in Delhi in early November a joint manifesto was adopted accepting the Viceroy's declaration, in the belief that it would be fulfilled soon.³ It was signed by Gandhi, Nehrus (Motilal and Jawaharlal), Madan Mohan Malviya, Vallabhbhai Patel, Dr. Ansari, Dr. Moonje, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Mrs. Seasont and Mrs. Sarojini Naidu and others. Bose alone suspected that "it was a trap in which the Congress should not be caught". At the conference, Bose, Dr. Kitchlew and Abdul Bari issued a

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1. Subhash Chandra Bose, The Indian Struggle, pp.187-88;
Jawaharlal Nehru was himself unwilling for the Presidency as he thought that his election would reduce his effectiveness in many directions", S. Gopal, Jawaharlal Nehru, Vol. I (Bombay, 1975), p.127.
issued a separate manifesto opposing the terms offered in the Viceroy's announcement.\textsuperscript{1} Jawaharlal initially refused to sign the manifesto, but later signed under pressure of Gandhi and Motilal Nehru. Bose saw in this the triumph of Gandhi's personality over Jawaharlal's principles.\textsuperscript{2}

The Lahore session of the Congress was historic as it accepted the resolution of complete independence. Gandhi himself sponsored the resolution of complete independence as the Congress goal to be achieved by civil disobedience if necessary.\textsuperscript{3} At the mid night hour of the last day of December 1929, Jawaharlal Nehru unfurled the flag of independence. Leftists were no doubt pleased by the turn of events. Bose was of the opinion that no plan had been evolved to achieve the Congress goal.

On behalf of the Left wing, Bose moved an amendment to the effect that the Congress should aim at setting up a parallel government in the country and to that end should take in hand the task of organising the workers, peasants and youths. In his speech he said that there is reference to civil disobedience in the resolution, but civil disobedience would never come until the workers,

\textsuperscript{1} J.S. Bright, Selected speeches of Subhas Chandra Bose, (Lahore, 1947), p. 82.
\textsuperscript{2} Subhas Chandra Bose, Correspondence, 1924-32 (Calcutta, 1967), p. 403. Later on Nehru wrote angrily, "None of the conditions (laid down by the leaders) were satisfied and most of us lay in Jail", Autobiography, p.
\textsuperscript{3} Judith M. Brown, Gandhi & Civil Disobedience, p. 64.
peasants and depressed classes would not be organised on their specific grievances. He urged to adopt his programme which would be sufficiently effective for the march on the road of independence.¹

Gandhi criticised Bose’s amendment as unpractical. He said that the declaration of parallel government meant complete independence from that very moment. But the country hardly had the required discipline, organisation and strength for doing all that. He further stated that the working committee had taken “the longest possible step” through his resolution and a step further might lead us in a pitfall.² Bose’s amendment was defeated.³ This resolution was defeated”, Bose indignantly remarks, “with the result that though the Congress accepted the goal of complete independence as its objective, no plan was laid down for reaching that goal, nor was any programme of work adopted for the coming year”. Srinivas Iyengar and others of their persuasion were excluded from the working committee on the specious plea of having a homogeneous body, the leftists walked out.⁴

¹ Bose’s speech and the text of his amendment are found in Govt. of India, Home Dept., Political File No.65/1930, N.A.I., New Delhi.
³ Hemendranath Dasgupta, Subhas Bose, pp. 120-23.
Bose promptly formed the Congress Democratic Party on 2 January, 1930 but his imprisonment soon after, made the new party still born.

THE CAMPAIGN OF 1930

The Lahore resolution on complete independence was followed by a meeting of the working committee on 2 January, 1930. 26 January was fixed for the declaration of independence by country-wide celebrations and the independence pledge had to be taken all over the country.

On his return to Calcutta, Bose began preparations for celebrating the Independence Day. On 9 January, he presided over a meeting at Hazra Park to explain to the people significance of the day. As the President of the Trade Union Congress he specially appealed to workers to observe the day, as without independence their economic exploitation would never end. While he was engrossed in this organizational work, judgment was delivered in the case which was pending against him since August 1929.

In August 1929 Bose had led a procession in Calcutta in protest against government repression of

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1. Michael Brescher, Nehru, (London, 1959), p.60. This new party was supposed by Government at the time to indicate that the attempt to placate the Left Wing had not really succeeded and that a split was, after all, imminent. Pattabhi Sittaramayya, History of the Indian National Congress, Vol. I, p. 360.
revolutionaries and political prisoners. He had been arrested immediately and released on bail. He was sentenced to one year's rigorous imprisonment on 23 January 1930. Even after sentencing him, the Magistrate was prepared to grant bail, if Bose and the others would promise, "to lead ordinary lives of private citizens". Bose refused it. Bose had thus to remain a passive and helpless observer of the stormy political events that took place in 1930.

The principal part of the Lahore resolution on complete independence related to the starting of a campaign of civil disobedience. It was clear to all, that Gandhi was to decide the future course of action. But Gandhi himself depended upon his "inner voice" for more than two months. On 18 January, to a question of Rabindranath Tagore, Gandhi replied that he did not yet see any light coming out of the surrounding darkness.2

When every moment the people were expecting Gandhi to lead the way for an appropriate course of action, Gandhi suddenly announced on 31 January 1930 that he would call off the threatened civil disobedience movement if the British Government conceded his Eleven Points which contained the "substance of independence". Bose

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1. Details of Bose's prosecution are found in Govt. of India, Home Deptt. Political, File No.257/VII/1930, N.A.I., New Delhi.

2. J.B.Kripalani, Gandhi, "His Life and Thoughts", (Delhi, 1970) p.128.

thought on this issue that while starting the civil disobedience campaign Gandhi wanted to leave the door open for a compromise. Bose also felt that some of Gandhi's wealthy supporters the Indian capitalists were alarmed at the resolutions of Lahore Congress. Therefore some sort of explaining was necessary, particularly because the word 'independence' implied severance of the British connections.¹

Gandhi decided to launch the 'Satyagraha' campaign by manufacturing salt at Dandi, a village on the sea-coast in Gujarat and thereby opening a break in the salt law. He wrote a long letter to the Viceroy Lord Irwin, on 2 March 1930, communicating this decision.² He announced that if his letter made no appeal to the Viceroy's heart to the extent of removing the evils of British rules, he would proceed with his followers to disregard the Salt Laws on the eleventh day of May. He also asked for an interview, but Irwin refused to see Gandhi. Irwin wrote back regretting Gandhi's "contemplated action which was clearly bound to involve violation of the Law and danger to the public peace".³

Gandhi started for his historic march to Dandi on 12 March and reached on 5 April. Every day of the

¹ Subhas Chandra Bose, "The Indian Struggle", p.197.
² For the full text of the letter see Tendulkar, Mahatma, Vol. II, p.18.
³ -ibid- p.19.
march added to the public enthusiasm and gave a momentum to the movement.

The simple act of picking up a pinch of salt set entire nation in motion. Immediately in the cities and villages of India, huge public meetings were held and defiance was hurled at the alien government by violating the Salt Law. Uptil now the government and the European community in India and their newspapers, had ridiculed Gandhi's proposed salt satyagraha as a huge joke. The government now started a reign of terror before which, in the words of Gandhi, even Dyerism paled into significance. But the people continued to break the laws regardless of the reign of terror and the arrest of their leader. The spirit of revolt spread even to the Indian Army when a detachment of the Royal Garhwal Rifles refused to obey the order to fire on peaceful demonstrators in Peshawar.

In order "to make plain without further delay our intention to continue governing", the Viceroy's Council ordered Gandhi's arrest on 4 May.1 Despite Gandhi's arrest the movement gathered force every passing day. Morning processions, observance of special days, hartals, mass raids on salt depots, boycott of foreign goods - all these kept the movement at fever heat. The spirit of discipline and non-violence

observed by the people in the face of police brutalities was the most notable. Bose himself experienced some of the violence. He always suffered in prison but for the first time in a British Jail, he was the subject of such a severe beating from the Jail staff that he was rendered unconscious for more than an hour. A committee of enquiry was later appointed and the Jail Superintendent was transferred.¹

Bose, from behind prison bars, watched the mounting tempo of the movement with satisfaction. He was thrilled by the inspiring lead of Gandhi and his capacity to evoke the highest acts of bravery and sacrifice from common people.

On 15 September, Bose was released and soon after, he was elected Mayor of the Calcutta Municipal Corporation. In his acceptance speech as Mayor of Calcutta Bose recalled the municipal aims of C.R. Das and his own long-standing civic concern. He put forth a programme for education, medical care, aid to the poor, development of suburban areas, improved transport facilities and greater efficiency of administration at a cheaper cost.² Bose took a keen interest in civic affairs since 1924. He visited other cities both in

India and Europe to seek out model for civic importance.¹

In December 1930, he started the 'Bengal Swadeshi League' for co-ordinating the activities of industrialists, businessmen and social workers.²

Bose was severely injured by Police on 26 January 1931, the Independence Day, while he was leading a procession as the Mayor of Calcutta. The Commissioner of Police, Charles Tegart was determined not to allow the demonstration for that would mean "the control of the City would have been handed over to the Congress". He sent a Police officer with an order not to lead the procession. Bose, who refused to obey the order, was lathi-charged and injured. The following day he appeared before the Chief Presidency Magistrate. He refused to plead or take part in the proceedings, and was sentenced to six months' rigorous imprisonment.³ He was, however, released soon after, on 8 March in the general amnesty.

GANDHI IRWIN Pact - 1931

The report of Simon Commission was published in June 1930 and Government of India sent its review

3. Details of Bose's celebration of Independence Day are found in the Govt. of India, Home Deptt., Political, File No. F-30/1931, N.A.I., New Delhi.
to Britain as a preliminary to the discussions at
the Round Table Conference. First Round Table
Conference was opened in London on 12 November, 1930.
The Congress, of course, was conspicuous by its
absence. When the Conference adjourned on 19 January,
1931, the British Prime Minister Ramsay Macdonald
made a significant declaration. "If in the meanwhile,
there is response to the Viceroy's appeal from those
engaged at present in civil disobedience, steps will
be taken to enlist their services". Lord Irwin ordered
an unconditional release of Congress leaders. He also
appealed to them to withdraw the civil disobedience
movement and to participate in the constitution-making
processes in London.

These appeals of Prime Minister Ramsay
Macdonald and the Viceroy Lord Irwin to Gandhi were
supported by leading Indian delegates on their return
from the Round Table Conference. They persuaded Gandhi
to have heart to heart talks with the Viceroy. These
talks which began in February 1931 and continued till
5 March, when an agreement known as the Gandhi-Irwin
Pact was signed. Gandhi on behalf of Congress agreed
to suspend the civil disobedience movement and to
participate in the Round Table Conference.¹ The

¹ D.A. Low, "The Government of India and the Civil
Disobedience Movement", 1930-34, D.A. Low, Ed.
Congress and the Raj, p.170.
Viceroy offered to withdraw the emergency ordinances, to release all political prisoners, to permit peaceful picketing and the manufacture of salt, free of duty, within a certain distance of the sea-shore.¹

It can be confidently said that the terms of the Pact had almost nothing in common with the Lahore resolution of complete independence, or even with the Eleven Points mentioned by Gandhi in his letter to Lord Irwin.

Bose, Nehru and the leftists felt not so happy over the Pact. The politically trained section of the people could analyse the terms of the Pact and to them it was a great disappointment. But it was hailed with relief by the country at large.

Bose met Gandhi at Bombay and had long talks with him on Gandhi-Irwin Pact.² After criticising it, Bose said, "the point I urged was that we would be prepared to support him as long as he stood for independence - but the moment he gave up that stand, we would consider it our duty to fight him".³ From Bombay they travelled together to Karachi. Bose was greatly impressed by the Ovation Gandhi received...

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¹ For the full text of the Pact see S. Gopal, The Viceroyalty of Lord Irwin, Appendix, pp.140-44.
everywhere which proved his undiminished popularity with the masses.

THE KARACHI CONGRESS 1931

The main item on the agenda of the Karachi Congress which met on 29 March, 1931, under the presidency of Vallabhbhai Patel, was to ratify the Gandhi-Irwin Pact. There had been a countrywide demand for the commutation of the death sentences passed on Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru of the Lahore conspiracy case. Pressure was brought upon Gandhi to try to save the life of those young men. Gandhi himself had approached Lord Irwin on 19 March and in the interest of good relations and peaceful atmosphere, he pleaded for the commutation of death sentences on Bhagat Singh and his comrades. That time Bose suggested that Gandhi should, if necessary, break with the Viceroy on the question because the execution was against the spirit of the Delhi Pact. But Gandhi who did not want to identify himself with the revolutionary prisoners, would not go so far and it naturally made a great difference when the Viceroy realised that Gandhi would not break on that

question. Irwin told that he would postpone their execution for the time being and give serious consideration to the matter.

But Bhagat Singh and his comrade's execution took place on 23 March. A poignant grief stirred the country from one end to the other. Bhagat Singh had become the symbol of the new awakening among the youths. Every one felt that the Congress was meeting under the shadow of a bereavement.

When Gandhi along with the President-elect Vallabhbhai Patel approached the Karachi station, a number of young men, belonging to the Naujawan Bharat Sabha greeted him with black cloth, flowers and black flags and shouts of "Gandhi go back" and "Long Live Bhagat Singh".

The resolution on Bhagat Singh was moved by Nehru at the Congress session, although it had been

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1. Subhas Chandra Bose, "The Indian Struggle", Bose was reminded of a similar incident during the armistice between the Sinn Fein Party and the British Government, when the strong attitude adopted by the former had secured the release of an Irish political prisoner sentenced to the gallows. Ibid. p.226.


4. According to Pattabhi Sitaramayya, "People's admiration for these revolutionaries was so great that at that moment Bhagat Singh's name was as widely known all over India and was as popular as Gandhi". Pattabhi Sitaramayya, "The History of Indian National Congress", Vol.I, 1885-1935, p.456.

drafted by the Mahatma himself. The Congress
dissociated itself from and disapproved of political
violence in any shape or form but placed "on record
its admiration of the bravery and sacrifice of
Bhagat Singh and his comrades, Sukhdev and Rajguru".1

At Karachi session although the left wing
had decided not to approve at the Gandhi-Irwin
pact, they refrained from precipitating a split
by forcing the issue because as Bose points out,
"the official party machinery" had worked up with
such great thoroughness that they could expect little
support for the elected delegates "who alone could
vote at the Congress" - nothing would be gained, they
felt, by creating a split in the Congress, particularly
when government was so eager for a division in the
Congress.2 For this reason, though disapproving the
pact, the Left Wing did not oppose it in the plenary
session of the Congress. Bose accordingly read a
statement in the subjects committee, which was
greeted with jubilation by the supporters of the Pact.

1. Pattabhi Siteramayya, History of the Indian
National Congress, pp. 456-457. This resolution was on the same lines as the
"Gopinath Saha resolution" adopted by the
Bengal Provincial Conference in 1924, of which
Gandhi had strongly disapproved. All that
C.R. Das had failed to get for Gopinath Saha
in 1924 was now given to Bhagat Singh and his
Comrades in 1931. It was clear that between
1924 and 1931 the mood of the nation had been change
and so also the attitude of Gandhi.

2. Judith N. Brown, Gandhi & Civil Disobedience,
p. 200.
although it caused disappointment to the leftists.\footnote{1}

However, at Karachi the Left Wing had the satisfaction of getting the Congress to pass a resolution on 'Fundamental rights' which "represented a new outlook in the Congress". In that resolution it was recognised for the first time in its history that "to end the exploitation of the masses political freedom must include real economic freedom".\footnote{2} Bose welcome it as "a definite move towards Socialism". He thought that the resolution stands for a departure from the old tradition, and for a recognition of the workers and the peasants\footnote{3}.

Bose presided over a session of the Navjawan Bharat Sabha held simultaneously with that of the Congress.\footnote{4} He had kept silent at the Congress session, but in a presidential address to the Navjawan Bharat

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1. According to Judith M. Brown, Bose's reluctance to oppose the Mahatma outright probably also stemmed from his recognition of Gandhi's considerable popularity at that juncture, despite the hostility of distinct groups, and the calculations that opposition would jeopardise his own political standing, Judith M. Brown, Gandhi & Civil Disobedience, p.200.

2. \textit{ibid}- p.200


Sabha he criticised the Gandhi-Irwin Pact as, "exceedingly unsatisfactory and highly disappointing". He said what pains him most was the consideration that "at the time this Pact was drawn up we actually had more strength than would appear from the contents of the document". ¹

In his speech Bose urged the foundation of a socialist republic in India. He appealed the young men to do some positive work which would strengthen the nation and the nation's demands. For this purpose he outlined his programme which would avoid unnecessary conflict with the Congress leaders at a time when such conflict may tend to weaken the people and strengthen the government. ²

He criticised the Gandhi-Irwin Pact on the following grounds. There was not one word of commitment on the part of the British Government on the major issue of Swaraj, the Congress having no reaction to it. There was a tacit acceptance of the proposal of federation with the Indian Princes. ³

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¹ Presidential address at the Karachi Conference of the All-India Navjawan Bharat Sabha, 27 March, 1931. Selected speeches of Subhas Chandra Bose, pp. 58-59.

² -ibid-

There was no provision for the release of the following classes of prisoners: State prisoners and 'detenus' imprisoned without trials, the prisoners convicted of revolutionary offences, prisoners under trial for alleged revolutionary offences, the under-trial prisoners in the Meerut Conspiracy Case, prisoners imprisoned in connection with labour strikes and other labour disputes, the Garhwal soldiers, prisoners sentenced in connection with the Civil Disobedience movement, the charges against whom referred to violence of some sort, and finally other classes of political prisoners not convicted for participation in the Civil Disobedience movement.¹

Bose thought that by refusing to espouse the cause of the aforesaid classes of political prisoners "it deprived the Indian National Congress of the claim to be the central organ of the anti-imperialist struggle in India. By declining to be the spokesman of these militant anti-imperialist elements in India, the Indian National Congress stood out before the Indian public as the spokesman of the "Satyagrahis" (Civil resisters) alone".²

¹. Subhas Chandra Bose, Fundamental questions of Indian revolution, pp. 9-10.
². -ibid- p.10.
THE SECOND ROUNDTABLE CONFERENCE

On 29 August, Gandhi sailed for London to attend the second Round Table Conference as the sole representatives of the Congress. In his first meeting with the Sir Samuel Hoare, the conservative secretary of state for India, told Gandhi that there could be no question of immediate independence for India or even of Dominion status. The best that could be done was to move slowly towards it. Gandhi's claim to represent the whole India was rejected not only by the British spokesmen but also by some Indian delegates.

Gandhi delivered speeches, elaborating his ideas of peace and good will on earth, and explaining the supreme need of a partnership between Britain and India as between two equal nations. His speeches were politely listened, but his repeated appeals to the delegates to present a united front had no effect. Gandhi had openly declared that the "causes of failure to reach a communal agreement were inherent in the composition of the Indian delegation." He had realized that he was waging a vain fight against a foreign power which had set up a plethora of feudal and communal interests to defeat the Congress demand. At the concluding session, Gandhi declared, "The Congress will wander no
matter how many years, in the wilderness rather than
hand itself to a proposal under which the hardy
tree of freedom and responsible government can never grow.

Bose was not surprised by the failure of Gandhi
at the Second Round Table Conference. In his view
Gandhi's decision to constitute himself as the sole
representative of Congress was thoroughly wrong. He
criticised Gandhi's lack of planning for the Conference
and also his manner "in which he conducted himself not
as a political leader who had come to negotiate with
the enemy, but as 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".2 "His goodness, his frankness, his
humble ways", Bose thought, "his profound consideration
for his opponents - not only did not impress John Bull
but was construed as weakness. His habit of putting
all his cards on the table was all right for India, but
damaged his prestige among British politicians".3

3.-ibid- p.253. According to R.C.Majumder "Gandhi's
idealis made no impression on British politicians,
his frank gesture for peace and cooperation at any
price was taken as a sign of weakness, his lack of
diplomacy in putting all his cards on the table was
fully exploited by the astute British politicians.
This might have been different, if, he took a bold
stand on the inherent strength of the institution
he represented, and make a defiant gesture of
leaving the Conference if it failed to give due
recognition to the Congress which could legitimately
claim as the only All-India organisation. His
conduct in the conference added one more illustration
of his utter inability to carry on negotiations with
trained politicians", R.C.Majumder, Struggle for
Freedom, p.497.
Bose felt that if Gandhi had desired to cooperate with the Round Table Conference, he should have been there in 1930. "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."

While Gandhi was in London, the political situation in India was deteriorating. The promised enquiry into the alleged police excesses in connection with the collection of revenue in Bardoli, on the basis of which Gandhi had agreed to attend the Round Table Conference, ended in fiasco. It was conducted in such a manner as to prove worse than useless. In the North-West Frontier Provinces the government arrested Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan, the Frontier Gandhi, and his organisation, 'Khudai Khidmatgars', or Red Shirt volunteers was declared illegal. There were several terrorist outrages in Bengal, generally believed to have been acts of reprisals for oppressive conduct. The murder of the Inspector General of Prisons and of three successive Magistrates of Midnapore was evidently the result, respectively of ill-treatment of prisoners and the atrocities committed to suppress the no-tax campaign.

These acts of terrorism served to stiffen

the attitude of the government and a stronger
dose of repression was administered. The town of
Chittagong was left at the mercy of non-officials.
Europeans and a band of hooligans for three days. They
looted it in broad day lights while the authorities
remained passive. Even the State prisoners at Bijli
camp were fired by the arm-guards. The two State
prisoners were killed and twenty seriously injured.
At Dacca in the wake of an unsuccessful attempt to
murder the District Magistrate batches of policemen
raided the houses of respectable citizens, destroyed
property, assaulted innocent persons and made a large
number of indiscriminate arrests. Bose, who was a
member of the Committee appointed to enquire into
the incidents, was prevented from reaching Dacca.1
The moment he was free, he tried to enter Dacca from
north. He was arrested at Tejgaon under section 144
of the Criminal Police Code and was taken to Dacca
jail. Vallabhbhai Patel had telegraphed him not
to get arrested.2 But Bose had been unable to avoid
it. Self-respect, manhood and the rights of the people
have been trampled under foot. He said at the time
of arrest, "and it is the duty of the people to
vindicate them".3 Bose was released on 14 November, 1931

The Bengal Provincial Congress Committee decided in December that the government had practically ended the Gandhi-Irwin Pact. It asked the Congress Working Committee to resume the civil disobedience movement with special emphasis on the boycott of British goods. Bengal was already under Ordinances. In United Provinces and North West Frontier Provinces also repressive Ordinances were forced by the government.

On 30 November, the Bengal Government had secured the Viceroy's permission to promulgate another Ordinance that allowed it extraordinary powers to deal with the growing revolutionary movement. The Bengal Government, to whom Bose was a thorough nuisance, naturally included Bose in the list of the persons, to be arrested on 7 December 1931. W. S. Hoskyns forwarded to the Home Department in Delhi a seventy-five pages documents about Bose. It had a complete alleged record of all Bose's words and activities between January 1930 and October 1931, which was based on the reports of government informers.¹

It was the same old story of Bose's connections with revolutionaries as financier, friend and as father-figure. After joint discussions between the Viceroy's Executive Council and the Bengal Government, Govt. of India posted the warrant of arrest for Bose to the

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¹ Govt. of India, Home Department, Political, File No. 31/XXVII/1932, N.A.I., New Delhi.
When Gandhi returned to India on 26 December, 1931, he found, "deputations waited on him from morning to evening, repeating the tales of official excesses in Province after Province." It was clear that officialdom had realised the blunder of concluding an agreement with the Congress. It was now resolved to treat it as only a scrap of paper. But as was usual with Gandhi, he would never take for granted anything against his opponents without conclusive evidence. The next day of his arrival the Congress Working Committee met at Bombay and authorised Gandhi to apply for an interview with the Viceroy and accordingly he sent a telegram in which he expressed his readiness to call on Lord Willingdon, the Viceroy to explore all avenues of peace. The Viceroy refused to discuss with Gandhi any measures his government found it necessary to adopt. The Viceroy refused even to think of an interview "held under the threat of resumption of civil disobedience." Gandhi was arrested on 4 January 1932. On the same day Ordinances


2. -bid- p.511

3. In the meeting of the Working Committee, Bose was alone in expressing the opinion that it would be humiliating for the Mahatma to apply for an interview. The Indian Struggle, p.263.
were made effective all over the country and sweeping arrests of Congress leaders were made before they could find time to launch the civil disobedience campaign. Bose was also arrested on 2 January on his way back from Bombay to Calcutta. He was taken to Seoni Jail. Congress organisations were declared illegal and Congress offices were taken in possession of and its funds were seized. But the campaign began to gain in strength without any direction from leaders. According to official statistics, 14,800 arrests were made in January and 17,800 in February 1932. The movement was intensified with the boycott of British goods. Publication of unauthorised bulletins, picketing of liquor shops, organisation of processions and hartals. From 6 April to 13 April the National Week was observed and in spite of severest police restrictions a token session of Congress was held on 24 April at Delhi. The movement flourished for first eight months and the declaration of the Government that Congress would soon be down was falsified.

In the third week of September 1932 public attention was diverted to the fast unto death by Gandhi in Yeravada prison. The fast was against the “communal Award” of the British Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald. The “Communal Award” provided for not only a certain numbers of seats for the depressed classes on the basis of separate electorates but also
granted the additional right of contesting seats in the general constituency.\(^1\) Macdonald said that the award could not be changed unless an alternative was agreed to by all communities concerned. Frantic appeals were made to the Gandhi by his friends and followers to save his life. Government offered to release him under certain conditions, but he declined conditional release. On the fifth day of his fast a formula was evolved which was acceptable both to Gandhi and Dr. Ambedkar, the leader of the Depressed Class.

Bose, who was behind the prison bars, was only an observer of all these happenings, found that "all rational thinking was completely suspended, and the one thought of the countryman was how to save Mahatma's life. The civil disobedience movement was completely sidetracked and soon lost its momentum."\(^2\)

Bose fell ill within a few weeks in Seoni Jail\(^3\) and on 30 May he was transferred to Jabalpur Military Hospital. He was again transferred to the Madras Presidency Jail on 17 July. A Medical Board

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3. Details about Bose's ill-health in Seoni Jail are found in Govt. of India, Home Deptt., Political, File No. 31/34/1932, N.A.I., New Delhi.
appointed by the Government came to Madras
to examine him. Doctors were convinced that he was
suffering from Tuberculosis, which could only be
completely cured in Switzerland. But Government
decided to send him to the Bhowali Sanatorium. There
was no improvement in Bose's health and another
Medical Board was appointed to examine him. It also
recommended that he should be sent to Europe for
treatment and change of climate.¹

The Govt. of India agreed to release him
provided he proceeded to Europe at his own expense.
On 12 January, 1933 a passport was issued for Bose's
travel to Europe. It had only been endorsed for
France, Switzerland, Italy, Austria and Denmark.
Great Britain and Germany were expressly excluded.²
Bose was not allowed to visit Calcutta to meet his
parents before his departure.³ Just before he left
for Europe, he was allowed to meet some of his relatives
in Jabalpur Jail which was the last place of his
detention. He was escorted by the Police officers from
Jabalpur to Bombay and was only released when the
ship S.S. Ganges, by which he sailed, had left the harbour
on 23 February, 1933.

2. Govt. of India, Home Deptt., Political, File No. 31/103/32, N.A.I., New Delhi.
3. Bose in several thunderous letters to the Home Deptt. in Delhi expressed the view that the Government
had ruined his health by "kicking him about like a
football". His letters are found in Govt. of India,
Home Deptt., Political, File No. 31/103/1932, N.A.I., New Delhi.