CHAPTER – II

IDEOLOGY AND PERCEPTION: MAHATMA GANDHI AND SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE

I

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was born at Porbandar (Gujarat) on October 2, 1869. He belonged to a respectable middle-class Bania family whose members had long ago abandoned their traditional caste occupation of trade and taken to administrative service. His grandfather, father and uncle were Prime Ministers in some of the petty Indian states with which the peninsula of Kathiawad was studded before independence. About this in his Autobiography Gandhiji says: "... for three generations, from my grandfather, they have been Prime Ministers in several Kathiawad States." About his father Karamchand, Gandhiji writes that he was "a lover of his clan, truthful, brave and generous, but short-tempered.... He was incorruptible and had earned a name for strict impartiality...."¹ He had little book-learning. "But his rich experience of practical affairs stood him in good stead in the solution of the most intricate questions and in managing hundreds of men." He was courageous and he stood up boldly for what he considered right. "He had no ambition to accumulate riches and left us very little property," says Gandhiji.²

Gandhiji's mother Putlibai was the traditional Hindu wife and mother absorbed in the family. Deeply religious, she regularly said her prayers, visited the temple and fasted on the innumerable Hindu fast-days,

² Ibid., p. 4.
making light of the hardship that such a regulated and austere life involved. This was the customary life of the upper caste women in those days, as it is even today in many orthodox families. Like her husband, Putlibai had robust common sense. “She was well informed about all matters of State and the ladies of the court thought highly of her intelligence.”

As is usual in middle-class families, young Gandhi was sent to school. About his school days he says: "To be at school at the stroke of the hour and to run back home as soon as the school closed— that was my daily habit. I literally ran back, because I could not bear to talk to anybody. I was even afraid lest anyone should poke fun at me." As for others poking fun at him, Ghandhi evidently greatly changed in after life. It was not unoften that his ways made people indulge in fun at his expense. But he was supremely indifferent if he thought that what he did was correct. He could even stand alone as he had often to do. He describes himself as a "dud" in his school days, and could not put his heart in the mechanical teaching which was, and is still to a great extent, prevalent in India. Boys of tender age are segregated, often in overcrowded and sometimes ill-ventilated class-rooms, for many hours each day, to memorise lessons which they scarcely understand, with fear of the rod always hanging over their heads. The system is heartless and monotonous. Even an intelligent learner, under such a bleak system, may not show much enthusiasm for his lessons. When we make these allowances, young Mohandas could not have been such an unintelligent pupil as he makes himself out to be. With a habit of deprecating his good qualities which was usual with him throughout life, he writes that he had no high regard for his ability. Naturally, therefore, he was, surprised when

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3 Ibid., p.6.
4 Ibid., p. 7.
he was awarded prizes and scholarships. But one can clearly see that he was a fairly intelligent pupil. He was hard-working and conscientious in his studies. He very jealously guarded his character and was very sensitive to rebuke or punishment. He writes, "I did not so much mind the punishment as the fact that it was considered my desert."\(^5\) He, therefore, went prepared with his daily task, as he disliked to deceive or to be taken to task.

Is there anything in his school days which marks him out as the future great man in the making? Evidently nothing in particular except his conscientiousness born of a shy and sensitive nature and its scrupulous regard for truth. Of the latter we have some significant examples. When, during a school inspection, his teacher hinted to him to copy from his neighbor the correct spelling of an English word he failed to take the hint. About this his teacher rebuked him. But he says in his Autobiography: "I never could learn the art of 'copying'."\(^6\) This, however, as he tells us, made no difference in his respect for the teacher. In his high school days this sensitive boy belonging to an orthodox Vaishnavite family took to meat-eating on the sly. This he did, having been convinced by one of his companions that the superiority of the Englishman over the Indian lay in the fact that the former took a meat diet. If, therefore, the foreign yoke was to be thrown off, Indians also must take to meat-eating. This was the view current at that time among many educated Indians who felt the humiliation of foreign rule. Gandhiji, however, soon gave up meat-eating not because he was convinced that there was any flaw in the argument of his friend but because it involved concealment and deception before his parents and elders who would have been painfully shocked if they had known the truth.

\(^5\) Ibid.

\(^6\) Ibid.
As was the custom in those days, he was married at the early age of thirteen. About his married life at the time he writes: "It is my painful duty to have to record here my marriage at the age of thirteen. As I see the youngsters of the same age about me who are under my care, and think of my own marriage, I am inclined to pity myself and to congratulate them on having escaped my lot. I can see no moral argument in support of such a preposterously early marriage."⁷ He also records that he was a lustful and jealous husband. That a youth of that tender age should show these traits is nothing to be wondered at. However, his sensitiveness makes him exaggerate the import of his sinful behaviour. This over-powering idea of sin may be said - to have marked him throughout life. It made him put all sorts of restrictions upon himself. To carry these out meticulously, he resorted to vows to strengthen his will. His early marriage does not seem to have interfered with his studies, and he writes: "I was passionately fond of her.... separation was unbearable.... If with this devouring passion there had not been in me a burning attachment to duty, I should either have fallen a prey to disease and premature death, or have sunk into a burdensome existence. But the appointed tasks had to be gone through every morning, and lying to anyone was out of the question. It was this last thing that saved me from many a pitfall."⁸ This over-mastering sense of devotion to duty marked Gandhiji's conduct throughout his life.

Gandhiji does not seem to have been religious-minded. He complains that his teachers could have helped him in understanding religion but they did not do so. Like every Hindu, he had learnt that the final goal of life was self-realisation, but then he did not understand the full implication of this. He says that the routine household worship left him cold. But whenever he read or heard the scriptural stories of loyal and

⁷ Ibid., p. 10
⁸ Ibid., p. 13.
truthful conduct, they made a deep impact on him. He learnt the efficacy of uttering the name of God (Ramanama) from an old maidservant. He was devoted to his parents and nursed his father through a long illness.

Further, he says: "One thing took deep root in me—the conviction that morality is the basis of things, and that truth is the substance of all morality. Truth became my sole objective. It began to grow in magnitude every day, and my definition of it also has been ever widening."\(^9\)

"I regard untouchability as the greatest blot on Hinduism. This idea was not brought home to me by my bitter experiences during the South African struggle. It is not due to the fact that I was once an agnostic. It is equally wrong to think that I have taken my views from my study of Christian religious literature. These views date as far back as the time when I was neither enamoured of, nor was acquainted with, the Bible or the followers of the Bible."\(^10\) Gandhiji affirms that they date to the time when his mother told him not to touch the scavenger who came to clean their latrine.

When his high school studies were over and he passed the matriculation examination, the question of his future studies and career was debated in the family. But before that he had already joined college at Bhavnagar. His experience about his studies was not quite happy. He says: "I found myself entirely at sea. Everything was difficult. I could not follow, let alone take interest in the professors' lectures. It was no fault of theirs. The professors in that college were regarded as first-rate. But I was so raw. At the end, of the first term, I returned home."\(^11\) All this is

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\(^9\) Ibid., pp. 49-50.
\(^10\) Harijan, 28-09-1947, p. 349.
difficult to understand, considering that young Mohandas's school career was successful as he was a hard-working and conscientious student and had received prizes and scholarships. His father having passed away, he was under the guardianship of his mother and elder brother. The latter saw in the successful school career of his younger brother, the possibility of his one day occupying some position of responsibility in Government or State service, thus improving the financial position of the large joint family which had evidently deteriorated after his father's death. At this stage, a family friend advised that he be sent to England to prepare for the bar. This would brighten the prospects for State service as also, if need be, prepare him for an independent career. There were, in those days, many difficulties in the way of high caste people crossing the seas and going to foreign lands. Hindu orthodoxy could not be maintained there. Then there were other objections. Young men going to England learnt outlandish habits in food, drink, dress and general manners and morals. They took to a meat diet. Drink and sex were other temptations to which the inexperienced Indian youth in England was exposed. However, Gandhiji was keen upon going. It shows that in spite of his shyness he had high ambitions. His father, though occupying a high position, had left little money. Yet his brother was willing to invest borrowed capital on his foreign education. The final decision lay with the mother. She would allow the son to go abroad only on condition that he took three vows. He must promise that while in England, he would not touch wine, woman and meat. Young Gandhi was prepared to take the vows. The vows having been solemnly administered and taken, he was allowed by his mother to proceed to England to qualify for the bar. A part of the necessary funds was raised by selling his wife's ornaments. Gandhiji left India in his 18th year.
In England, this shy, retiring young man found himself at sea. He often yearned for home and the tender affection of his mother. The vow-never to touch meat left him half-starved and caused his friends much embarrassment, owing to a false sense of social decorum, born of inferiority complex from which most of the Indians suffered in those days. But Gandhiji would not yield to the importunities of his well-meaning friends. For him "a vow was a vow and could not be broken". After a long search he discovered a vegetarian restaurant where he had not only his fill for the first time but also came across literature on vegetarianism. This further strengthened his resolve. He was no more a vegetarian because of the vow but because of free choice. About this he says: "I had all along abstained from meat in the interest of truth and of the vow I had taken, but had wished at the same time that every Indian should be a meat-eater, and had looked forward to being one myself freely and openly some day, and to enlisting others in the cause. The choice was now made in favour of vegetarianism, the spread of which henceforward became my mission." The literature on vegetarianism that he made it a point to read initiated him in the science of dietetics, and experiments therein occupied an important place in his life. Also, it brought him in contact with some notable persons of the time. With a youthful zeal he became the secretary of a vegetarian club. But, as he says, he always felt tongue-tied. Not that he did not feel tempted to speak, but he was at a loss to know how to express himself. He says that his incapacity to express himself freely lasted throughout his stay in England. He adds: "...my constitutional shyness has been no disadvantage whatever. In fact I can see that, on the contrary, it has been all to my advantage. My hesitancy in speech, which was once an annoyance, is now a pleasure. Its greatest benefit has been that it has taught me the economy of words and given me a hold upon the audience."

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12 Ibid., p. 45.
of words." This should be a lesson to politicians who are never tired of speaking even when they have nothing worthwhile to say.

Disappointing his friends in the matter of food, he tried to satisfy them by making of himself an English gentleman. He took lessons in dancing and playing on the violin, but had little success and soon gave up the effort. He succeeded better with his dress. The fastidiousness in dress persisted throughout his life, even when he was wearing a loin cloth and a chaddar. Though fastidious in dress, he lived a simple life. He had limited funds and these he used with the utmost economy, keeping account of every penny he spent. He writes: "This habit of economy and strict accounting as stayed with me ever since, and I know that as a result, though have had to handle public funds amounting to lakhs, I have succeeded in exercising strict economy in their disbursement, and instead of outstanding debts have had invariably a balance in respect of all movements I had led."14 One would wish that all those who are in charge of public funds kept in mind the restrictions that he imposed upon himself in their disbursement. This plain and economic living did not make his life dreary. On the contrary, his simple living, he says, "harmonised my inward and outward life; my life was certainly more truthful and my soul knew no bounds of joy".15 This shows that Gandhiji, in adopting the simple way of life, was not doing any violence to his inherent nature, swabhava rather because he worked in consonance with it, his life was not only easy' but also joyous.

In England, he had plenty of leisure. The examinations for the bar did not require much exertion. He, therefore, prepared for and passed the

13 Ibid., p. 58.
14 Ibid., pp. 48-49
15 Ibid., p. 51.
London Matric and learnt enough Latin to enable him to study Roman Law in the original. After subscribing to and attending the prescribed dinners, Gandhiji was called to the bar in 1891.

He had, during his stay in London, moved chiefly among vegetarians, reformers and clergymen. The last were anxious to mould and save his soul in their particular way, which, however, made no impression on him. But his contact with clergymen made him think deeply about religion and introduced him to his own. He studied the Gita in Arnold's translation and he greatly liked it. He also read Arnold's The Light of Asia. He read the Bible. The Old Testament did not impress him. But the New Testament, especially the Sermon on the Mount with its absolute and unconditional non-violence, appealed to him, as its teachings conformed with the Vaishnavite-cum-Jain ideas and practices in which he had been brought up at home. He thought then, as afterwards, that in spite of the war setting of the Gita, its fundamental morality was not different from that of the New Testament. In other respects he found the Gita a more profound scripture. That a young man at that time, when Western superiority in all fields including morality and religion was almost universally recognised, could come out unscathed from the shelter of Western civilisation, did hold a promise for the future.

What was the net result of his three years' stay in England? He remained as diffident and as shy as ever, "sitting tongue-tied, never speaking except when spoken to".¹⁶ His efforts at public speaking were a dismal failure. At a farewell party given to friends, all that he could with difficulty say was, "Thank you, gentlemen, for having, kindly responded to my invitation." He knew no law that would be useful to him in his practice in the Indian courts. But, it was a great good fortune for him that

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 67
he had remained true to the three vows he had taken at the instance of his mother before leaving for England. So far as sex was concerned, he believed his abstinence was due to God's grace. He writes: "Who that has prided himself on his, spiritual strength has not seen it humbled to the dust?"17

Gandhi returned home in 1891 after completing his study of law in England to settle down as a lawyer. But he could not find his feet in the legal profession in his country. He failed as a lawyer and was earning his living by writing petitions in Gujarat. However, hope came from a totally unexpected quarter. A firm 'Dada Abdulla and Company', had extensive business in South Africa. Their representative in Rajkot approached Gandhi's brother. They had a civil suit involving £ 40,000 pending in a South African Court. They had a European lawyer but he had to be helped as the accounts and correspondence of the firm were in 'Gujarati'. The engagement was for a year but circumstances detained him, with two brakes in between, till the end of the year 1914.18

The Indian community in South Africa consisted of indentured and free labourers and a few merchants and their clerks and assistants. The indentured labourers were treated by the white employers as semi-slaves. The rest suffered from various disabilities with regard to rights of citizenship, trade and owning of land and residence. They suffered from other rival disabilities, too. In trains they had to travel in separate compartments. They were not admitted to European hotels and generally they were looked down upon as belonging to an inferior race. For nearly twenty years, Gandhi fought against these evils. He organized Indian

17 Ibid., pp. 67-68.
community contacted concerned authorities, travelled to India and England to get support Gandhi as in South Africa for purely professional reasons and could easily have returned to India. But the indignities to which his countrymen were subjected, forced him to consider his position more deeply. "I began to think my duty", he later wrote in his autobiography, 'Should I fight for my rights or go back to India, or should I go to Pretoria without minding the insults, and return to India after finishing the case? It would be cowardice to run back to India without fulfilling my obligations. The hardship to which I was subjected was superficial—only a symptom of the deep disease of the contour prejudice, I should try, if possible, to root out the disease and suffer hardships in the process. Redress for wrongs I should seek only to the extent that would be necessary for the removal of the colour prejudice."\(^{19}\) Thus the condition of Indian community there so outraged his moral sensibilities that he was not allowed by his conscience to depart. Moreover, a bill was proposed in Natal Legislature to disfranchise Indian settlers there and his countrymen persuaded him to stay on and help them to fight the case. So South Africa became Gandhi's training ground for leadership. There he became a prosperous lawyer and found a situation which forced him into the leadership.

This decision of the Natal Government in 1894 to disfranchise the Indians provided him with an opportunity to mobilise and organise the Indians in South Africa with a view to prevent the Government from riding rough shod over the rights of the Indians. As a lawyer trained in the British system of law-making, he was fully aware that disfranchisement would ultimately mean losing the power to influence the policies of the Government. Keeping in view the role the Indian National Congress was

playing in India in influencing the policies of the Government, he founded the Natal Indian Congress on 22nd August, 1894, to promote the cause of the Indians in South Africa. However, the latter was not the carbon copy of the former. The Indian National Congress at that time was more or less a debating society, meeting once a year and passing resolutions. But the main objectives of the Natal Indian Congress were to inquire into the conditions of the Indians in South Africa and to take proper steps to remove their hardships and to do such work as would tend to improve the moral, social and political conditions of the Indians.\textsuperscript{20} The creation of the Natal Congress led to consolidation of Indians in South Africa irrespective of all distinctions of caste, creed or province. In all other three colonies similar associations were formed under Gandhi’s leadership.

The bill aimed at removing the names of Indians from the voters lists and depriving them of any political power. To Gandhi, it was a great blow to the self-respect of Indians and 'could only be the beginning of the end of what little rights they were then enjoying'\textsuperscript{21} and so it had to be checked. He sent urgent telegrams to the Government urging postponement of the further discussion on the bill until the Indians have been heard. He submitted petitions to the Natal Legislative Assembly and Natal Legislative Council. The petitions had no effect and the bill was passed. But it had yet to receive the Crown's assent before it became a law. Hence, Gandhi decided to take the matter to the Secretary of State for Colonies in London. A petition signed by over 10,000 Indians was

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\footnote{\textsuperscript{21} Gandhi, M. K., Satyagraha in South Africa (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House), 1972, p. 40.}
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sent to the Secretary of State for Colonies. Nearly a thousand copies of the petition were printed and mailed to prominent politicians and newspapers, both in India and Britain. This was the first organised agitation on the part of the Indians in South Africa. The result was that the bill was vetoed by the Crown. This was also the first lesson to the Indians in South Africa that a united and determined action of the people could check the arbitrary action of the Government. Encouraged by the initial success, the Indians insisted upon Gandhi to remain in South Africa and he consented, if they give him their legal work. This proposal was readily accepted and Gandhi enrolled himself as an advocate of the Natal Supreme Court.

Gandhi gradually realized that the issue was not only depriving Indians of their political rights that ensured some political power to them. The real object of the white Government was to force the Indians to leave South Africa as the whites could not meet the competition of the former in trade and agriculture. Gandhi now realized that the struggle of the Indians could not be of short duration. It demanded continuous vigilance on their part to guard against any attack on their rights. Besides, they should seek help from all quarters to strengthen their cause since their number was very small. So he took steps to mobilise the Indians in their home country in order to put pressure on the British Government in England to protect the rights of the subjects of their empire living in South Africa. Gandhi was equally conscious of the British sensitiveness to the public opinion. So he thought of building the public opinion in favour of the cause of Indians in South Africa in any part of the British empire whatever it was possible.

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In the middle of 1896 he visited India to take his family to South Africa. He utilised his stay in India informing his countrymen about the indignities to which their brethren were subjected in South Africa. He frequently addressed large audiences. He met prominent political leaders. He also met editors of important newspapers like 'The Times of India' and 'Pioneer' and discussed with them the problems of Indians in South Africa. Gandhi also published a pamphlet entitled, The Grievances of the British Indians in South Africa. This pamphlet later became popular as the 'Green paper'. Gandhi undertook a country-wide tour to build up public opinion in support of his cause. This produced good results.' Meanwhile, a distorted version of his activities in India reached Natal which agitated the Europeans there. So when he returned with his wife and two sons to South Africa he had to face great hardships and even attack on his life. Gandhi had to escape from the house of his friend in disguise. When the nexus of this episode reached England, Joseph Chamberlain, Secretary of State for Colonies, cabled to Natal Government to prosecute Gandhi's assailants. But Gandhi told the Attorney General that he had no wish to prosecute anyone as he could not blame his assailants since they had been inflamed by exaggerated reports of his speeches in India. He refused to move for redress of wrongs done to him personally.24

In the meanwhile two bills were introduced in the Natal Legislative Assembly, one of which was calculated to affect the Indian traders adversely and the other imposed serious restrictions on Indian immigration. Gandhi aroused the Indians to a consciousness of the danger

that threatened them. An appeal was made to the Secretary of the State for Colonies, but of no avail and the bills were passed.

Gandhi's strategy in raising the status of his countrymen in South Africa had both negative and positive aspects. In the first case he prepared them to fight against any attempt of the Government to lower their position through legal restrictions. In the second case he tried to raise them culturally so that they could claim equal status with the Europeans. Since most of them who had gone to South Africa were either hired labourers or traders, they were not fully accustomed to the Europeans' view of health and hygiene. So it was natural for the latter to look down upon them as belonging to inferior civilization. Consequently, Gandhi turned his attention to the reforms of his community. He not only exhorted them to keep their houses and surroundings clean but also helped them to organise themselves for this purpose. During the Boer War, he organised an ambulance corps of Indians as a loyal citizen of the Empire. He felt that at this time of crisis, the Indian community in South Africa must recognise and discharge its responsibility as British subjects. After the War, Gandhi decided to return to his country as he thought that his work in South Africa was finished. But, all classes of Indians insisted on his staying there and he agreed to return to South Africa in case they needed him within a year. He returned to India in 1901 but was called back to present the case of South African Indians to Joseph Chamberlain, the then Secretary of State for Colonies, visiting South Africa. When he reached there he was astounded by what he saw. He had hoped that the status of Indians would improve for having rendered in the war the voluntary and meritorious service but to his dismay and surprise their condition had become worse. Chamberlain gave them a courteous hearing.
but expressed his inability to help Indians on the plea that the Imperial Government had little control over the colonies.

In 1904, Gandhi assumed responsibility for conducting Indian Opinion, a weekly. Through it he mobilised the Indians in South Africa, educated them in various matters and issued instructions to the volunteers and supporters about his programmes and tactics when he launched Satyagraha in South Africa. It was very important for him as a political weapon and he kept tight control over it and poured nearly all his savings in it. Gandhi also used to write articles about the plight of Indians in South Africa in Indian and British newspapers and magazines. For, he was well conscious of the power of the press in the modern times. However, later on he realized that the British public was growing increasingly deaf to his pleas.

In 1906, in Transvaal the Government decided to introduce in the Legislative Council, Asiatic Law Amendment Ordinance. According to this Ordinance every Indian, man, woman or child of eight years or upward, entitled to reside in Transvaal, must submit to finger-print and register his or her name with the Registrar of Asiatics and take out a certificate of registration. Every Indian who failed to do so and did not possess the certificate, would automatically forfeit his right of residence in Transvaal. Gandhi called a meeting of his associates and decided that no Indian would submit to such a humiliating treatment which was meted out to criminals only. A mass meeting was held in Johannesburg to discuss the issue. Gandhi led a deputation to England. The Secretary of State for Colonies, Lord Elgin, disallowed the bill. But Transvaal got self-government in 1907 and the bill was passed by the Transvaal Assembly.

The Act was to take effect from July 1, 1907 and the Indians were called upon to apply for registration under it before July 31. The Indians resorted to passive resistance. Gandhi and other leaders were arrested and sent to jail. The struggle continued. However, an offer was made by General Smuts that if Indians voluntarily registered themselves, the Black Act would be repealed. Gandhi agreed to this and induced the community to do so. However, some of the Indians felt that Gandhi had been tricked or bought. He even faced a murderous assault but he remained determined. However, the Government did not repeal the Act. Believing that this was a breach of faith, Indians under the leadership of Gandhi, burnt their registration forms which under the laws they were obliged to carry. As the Indians’ agitation showed no sign of abatement, the Government resorted to illegal methods but of no avail. Soon another issue arose. A new bill called the Transvaal Immigrants Registration Bill was passed by the Transvaal Assembly. Ostensibly it was of general application to all Asiatics but was specifically meant for Indians. They had to pass an education test for entry into the Transvaal. Then, in 1913 the Government decided not to rescind the £3 tax imposed by Natal Government on indentured labourers who wished to remain in South Africa after their contracts of indenture had expired. Again on March 14, 1913 Mr. Justice Searle of the Cape Supreme Court gave a judgement in a case that all marriages in South Africa, with the exception of such as were celebrated according to Christian rites and registered by the Registrar of Marriages, were illegal. This judgement thus nullified at a stroke of pen all marriages celebrated according to Hindu, Muslim, and Zoroastrian rites. As a result, most of the married Indian women in South Africa in terms of this judgement ceased to rank as the wives of their husbands and were
degraded to the rank of concubines, while their progeny were deprived of their rights to inherit their parents' property.26

Though Gandhi was committed to truth and nonviolence, he was not averse to making new moves in a new situation. He resorted to Passive Resistance when he realized that the Government in South Africa would not listen to their appeals and petitions. Though it was a pragmatic move, it did not remain a mere strategy. It acquired a spiritual meaning in the framework of his world-view and commitment to truth and nonviolence. He, therefore, distinguished it sharply from passive resistance and named it 'Satyagraha'. In practice, Satyagraha took various shapes, depending upon the issues at stake ranging from burning of certificates to mass marches. In 1913, he organised a big strike of Indian labourers and headed the great strikers march of protest into the Transvaal which led to the arrest and imprisonment of the principal leaders and hundreds of the rank and file. This aroused furious indignation in India. The Indian Viceroy himself raised his voice against the harsh measures adopted by the South African Government against the agitators. In a public meeting in Madras, Lord Hardinge referred to the measures allegedly being used in South Africa to crush the passive resisters, 'measures which would not be tolerated for a moment in any country claiming to be civilized.'27 All these and several other factors compelled General Smuts to adopt once more the path of conciliation and compromise. As a result of a Commission of Inquiry, he undertook on behalf of South African Government to carry through other administrative reforms not actually specified in the new Act in correspondence with the demands of Gandhi.

Gandhi returned to India just after the outbreak of World War I. The Government of India marked its appreciation of the great services rendered by him to his countrymen in South Africa by recommending him for the Kaiser-i-Hind gold medal, which was conferred upon him amongst the new year honours of 1915.

The South African stage of Gandhi’s career is quite important, as the foundation of his leadership was laid down there. Unlike most of the present day political leaders, he did not have any opportunity to learn politics from seasoned campaigners and specialists of the name. He was pushed into action by the pressure of the situation he faced. He evolved his techniques according to the nature of the people he had to organise and the issues at stake, besides his commitment to truth and non-violence. Thus, South Africa had cast Gandhi in a distinct mould and when he returned to India in 1915, he had become a skilled political mobilizer who had evolved a political technique of superb flexibility.28

II

Subhas Chandra Bose was born on January 23, 1897 at Cuttack, Orissa. He was the sixth son and the ninth child of Janakinath and Prabhavati Bose. The large family into which Subhas was born made him feel insignificant. This affected his psychology in his early age and he became an introvert. His father with his strict reserved behaviour over­awed him and though his mother was more accessible, she was also held in awe by most of the children. He writes about his father:

"My father usually had a cloak of reserve round him and kept his children at a distance. What with his professional work and what with his

public duties, he did not have much time for his family. The time he could spare was naturally divided among his numerous sons and daughters.\textsuperscript{29}

His mother had a strong will and possessed a keen sense of realism and sound common-sense. She dominated the domestic scene and as far as family affairs were concerned her's was usually the last word. She was a devoted Shakta and she greatly influenced the early life of Subhas.

In his childhood Subhas yearned for a more intimate relationship with his parents and envied those children who had friendly relations with their parents. The presence of a large number of brothers and sisters in the family also added to his feelings of being relegated into utter insignificance. His sensitive and emotional temperament fostered these feelings in him. He started life with a sense of diffidence and was confronted with the challenge of catching up with those who had preceded him and had higher levels of attainment. This developed in him the feeling that industry and good behaviour were the sole passports to success.\textsuperscript{30}

The relationship between the servants and the family members in Bose's family was not commercial. It was characterised by a great deal of attachment between them. In later life this experience influenced the attitude of Subhas towards servants as a class. The environment of a large family helped Subhas to broaden his mind, but he could not shed his shy reserve, which haunted him in his later life when he became a man of the masses.\textsuperscript{31} However, Bose became self-assertive during his adult years and

\textsuperscript{29} Bose, S. C., An Indian Pilgrim – An Unfinished Autobiography and Collected Letters, 1897-1921 (Bombay: Asia Publishing House), 1965, p. 3.
expressed pride in being a gentleman.\textsuperscript{32} While in prison, he demanded the privileges due to him by virtue of his 'rank and station in life.'\textsuperscript{33} He wanted to help the improvement of his ancestral village of Kodalia near Calcutta, together with his brother Sarat Chandra Bose.\textsuperscript{34} Subhas also tried to extend the Kayastha marriage circle in order to make their sub-caste less provincial.\textsuperscript{35} All these are evidences of the fact that he had a sense of pride for his own high status in Bengali society and the closeness he felt to his family and caste traditions.\textsuperscript{36}

At the age of five Subhas was sent to an English elementary school in Cuttack from where he finished the seven years' course with top honours. In those days education was not within the easy reach of many children. Only the sons and daughters of rich people could indulge in this luxury. The magnificent colleges, grand universities and well-furnished schools started by the rulers were meant for the privileged classes in the society and not for the sons and daughters of cultivators and labourers. As education was a costly venture, the economically backward classes were deprived of their right education. The children of the zamindars, princes, lawyers and civil servants were singularly fortunate in getting western education which was a social and economic possibility for pillions of poor children.

Bose was one of those lucky children whose parents could afford a good education for them. The reason for his parents having selected an

\textsuperscript{34} Ibid, pp. 81, 91-95, 139, 148.
\textsuperscript{35} Ibid, p. 158.
English school for him is evident, as English had a premium in those days and it would have been easier on his part to master the English language sooner than other schools. He did very well in his years of study in the English school but felt frustrated by the racial discrimination practised in the school. As the Indian students were not allowed to the sports club he could not become a member of the club and as such could not take part in sports and games which formed an important part of education in English schools. Indian boys were also not admitted to the Boys Volunteer Corps. Though some of the Indian boys topped the class in the annual examination, they were not allowed to for certain scholarship examinations, simply because they were Indians. This discrimination made Subhas conscious of the two different worlds existing in India—one representing the arrogant attitude of racial superiority in a school run on European lines and the other representing his family and the Indian society. Subhas was extremely hurt by the discrimination practised in the English school in different aspects of its life and developed a sense of isolation and diffidence. This was natural on the part of a shy and sensitive child, who was very different from his brothers and sisters and from other children of his age. Thus the race complex which he developed in his school and college days profoundly influenced his attitude and behaviour.

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41 Ibid, p. 1.
42 Max Weber, "Behavior will be called human "behavior" only in so far as the person or persons involved engage in some subjectively meaningful action. Such behavior may be mental or external; it may consist in action or omission to act."—Basic Concepts in Sociology (New York: The Citadel Press), 1964, p. 29.
towards the Britishers in his later life. He became almost uncompromising in his personal dealings with the Britishers. This is evident from one of his letters written from Cambridge in November, 1919, "What gives me the greatest joy is watch the white skins serving me and cleaning my shoes."\(^{43}\)

He was able to show his inferiority complex when he joined the Ravenshaw Collegiate School, Cuttack. He felt quite at home with the Indian culture and the Indian way of life that prevailed in the school.\(^{44}\) He came upto the expectations of the teachers and proved his worth in the first quarterly examination. This helped him regain self-confidence which he had lost during his studentship in P.E. School, and which is the *sine qua non* of all success in life.\(^{45}\)

His yogic exercises at a very early age, in concentration and meditation, did not bring for him any higher psychic experience or power. However, he developed a feeling of confidence, achieved greater self-control and more peace of mind than before. This made him all the more conscious of the lack of a guru\(^{46}\) who can only successfully guide in yogic exercises and help reaching the higher regions of spiritual consciousness.

\(^{43}\) Roy, Dilip Kumar, The Subhas I Knew (Bombay: Nalanda), 1946, footnote, p. 53.
\(^{44}\) The main reason why Subhas left the P.E. School was that Bengali was not taught there and the new regulations of the Calcutta University made it a compulsory subject in Matriculation, Intermediate and Degree Examinations and introduced other changes in the Matriculation curriculum.
\(^{46}\) The importance of a Guru in pointing out the real path has been admitted by Subhas in one of his letters; "I think it is here that the Guru becomes useful—because the real Guru knows more about ourselves than we do—and he could at once tell us what Mantra we should take up and which method of worship we should follow". — Letter to Dilip Kumar Roy, March 5, 1933.
His persistent efforts to find a guru brought him to an old sanyasi at Cuttack under whose instructions he decided to become a vegetarian and start his day with doing obeisance to parents. In spite of initial difficulties he followed the instructions of the sanyasi for a few months, only to go back to the teaching of Ramakrishna Paramahansa and Vivekananda with great conviction in the principle of defiance and that spiritual realisation without renunciation was impossible. Spiritual realization in accordance with the teachings of Vivekananda meant service of humanity and helping the poor and needy. Gradually his craze for yogic exercises was transformed into an irresistible desire for social service as he realised that social service was necessary for spiritual development. He had the experience of village reconstruction work. This enabled him to gain first-hand knowledge about the difficulties of the rural people and the way they were exploited by the tax-collectors and other Government officials.

Subhas did not mature politically as long as he was in the school, though in other matters he was far advanced from the students in his age-group. This is because he was more interested in religion, mysticism and spiritualism than in political activities. As his father was working as a Government Pleader and Public Prosecutor, politics was taboo in his house and there was no inspiration for political activities in the family circle. Moreover, Orissa being in the political backwaters did not

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47 Gupta, Hemendranath Das Gupta, Subhas Chandra (Calcutta: Jyoti Prakasalaya), 1946, p. 55.
48 "The most striking feature of the changes that have taken place is that not all parts of the Subcontinent have become active at the same time, and that political consciousness has spread unevenly among the people". Gordon Johnson, ‘Chitpavan Brahmans and Politics in Western India in the Late Nineteen and Early Twentieth Centuries’, quoted in Edmund Leach and Mukherjee, S.N. (ed.) Elites in South Asia, (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson Press), 1970, p. 95.
witness scenes of hectic political activities directed against an alien government.

In 1912 Subhas got the first political impetus when he was introduced to Hemanta Kumar, a student visitor from Calcutta of about his age, by his Headmaster Beni Madhav Das. He was connected with a group in Calcutta which had as its ideal, "spiritual uplift and national service" along constructive lines. He gave emotional speeches to Subhas and his group about their duties to the Motherland and highlighted the activities of the Calcutta group which was devoted to the cause of the country. His speeches made a deep impression on Subhas and he established regular contacts with the group. Social service, religion and yogic exercises took away most of the time of Subhas. Due to the increased intensity of religious impulse, studies were no longer considered of primary importance. He was coming to the end of his school career. His parents were worried and wanted to send him to Calcutta after he completed his Matriculation, thinking that the change of environment and the realistic atmosphere of Calcutta would shed his eccentricities and restore him to normal life like other students.

The parents of Bose were delighted by his grand success in the Matriculation examination and decided to send him to Calcutta. In his school days, Subhas, with his serious pursuit of Yoga and religion and love for excessive freedom to meet whomsoever he liked and to go wherever he intended, must have appeared to his parents and teachers as eccentric, wayward and obstinate. Many a time he violated instructions given by his parents and revolted more and more against parental res-

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50 Ibid.
trictions: "I believed, under the inspiration of Vivekananda that revolt is necessary for self-fulfilment—that when a child is born, its very cry is a revolt against the bondage in which it finds itself." The rebellious spirit which was noticed since childhood characterised his life and political career in later years. He was against all kinds of bondage and restrictions and the very idea of subjection to a foreign country was sufficient to steel his determination to sacrifice everything for the independence of his Motherland.

Before leaving for Calcutta, Subhas had reaffirmed his determination to pursue a meaningful life and to make his best contribution to the improvement of mankind and to his own spiritual attainments. His spiritual quest became more intense in the realistic atmosphere of Calcutta. In the summer vacation of 1914, when he was barely 17, he quietly left on a pilgrimage with a friend, without informing anybody at home. But there ended his guru hunting. He returned thoroughly disappointed and disillusioned.

Referring to this experience he writes: "This tour which lasted nearly two months brought us to touch not only with a number of holy men, but also with some of the patent shortcomings of the Hindu society, and I returned home a wiser man, having lost much of my admiration for ascetics and anchorites. It was well that I had this experience off my own

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52 Ibid, p.61.
53 Analysing some of the themes of Bose's political and psychological life Leonard Gordon writes that he had "A tendency to rebel against many kinds of authorities, while also displaying a desire for authority, discipline, and order. Bose continued to try to be both a "good boy" and chief "mischief-maker"—two important elements in his youthful self-imagery". Gordon, Leonard, A., Bengal: The Nationalist Movement 1876-1940, op. cit., p. 225.
bat, for in life there are certain things which we have to learn for ourselves."\textsuperscript{54} He did not find the guru for whom he was searching untiringly for so many years. In his own words: "...I was somewhat crestfallen, not having found the guru I had wanted so much."\textsuperscript{55}

The disappointment in not finding a guru was in a way a blessing in disguise as it made him free to a very great extent from the obsessions of asceticism and helped him to develop a pragmatic approach to social and political problems. This journey may be interpreted both as a spiritual guest and also as an expression of the feeling of rebellion against his parents.\textsuperscript{56}

Subhas Chandra Bose practised asceticism for the purpose of purifying his character and developing the qualities of self-discipline so that he could successfully utilise himself in the service of the people. As a disciple of Vivekananda he was free from many religious prejudices and superstitions and for him religion was meaningless if it did not help the cause of humanity.\textsuperscript{57} This led him to identify spiritualism with social service. For him Yoga and other spiritual exercises were meaningless if they did not aim at promoting the good of the society. This is evident from his reaction after seeing an old, decrepit woman, who used to beg

\textsuperscript{55} Ibid, p. 83.
\textsuperscript{57} In later years once when he was asked by his friend Dilip Roy to learn to lean on Divinity in some form or other to shake off his sense of human bankruptcy Subhas replied: "I too once wanted to petition Divinity as a conscious Boongiver to our orphaned humanity, but of course I could not persist. I could not be deaf to the miseries of our teeming millions. India calls to me in my blood". — Dilip Kumar Roy, Netaji—The Man (Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhawan), 1966, p. 18.
for alms. He writes: "Her sorrowful countenance and her tattered clothes pained me whenever I looked at her or even thought of her. By contrast, I appeared to be so well-off and comfortable that I used to feel like a criminal. What right had I - I used to think—to be so fortunate to live in a three-storied house when this miserable beggar woman had hardly a roof over her head and practically no food or clothing? What was the value of Yoga if so much misery was to continue in the world? Thoughts like these made me rebel against the existing social system." To lighten his guilty conscience he started going and returning from the College by walking the distance and spent the money he got for tramfare in charity. This sense of social service also accounted for his joining a party of his friends who were going to the interior on a nursing expedition in a locality which was stricken with cholera. It was a dare-devil effort on the part of the group to render humanitarian service to the people affected by cholera about which the Government officials and well-to-do people did not bother. Subhas did not inform his people that he was going in a party to nurse the people who were affected by cholera, since he would not have been allowed to go there. The party could not give any actual medical relief but it helped Subhas to gain rich experience about village life in India and the suffering of the people. He writes thus: "Nevertheless, a week's experience opened a new world before my eyes and unfolded a picture of real India, the India of the villages where poverty stalks over the land, men die like flies, and illiteracy is the prevailing order."

The atmosphere of Calcutta helped Subhas to provide meaning and purpose to his spiritual urge and his vague ideas of social service. In

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59 Ibid, p. 78
Calcutta he realized "that social service was an integral part of Yoga and it meant not merely relief to the half, the maimed, and the blind, but national reconstruction on modern lines".60

With a view to helping national reconstruction on modern lines Subhas and his group tried to prepare themselves to undertake the responsibility in the sphere of education. A proper national education is the sine qua non for making the people inspired with national urges, to promote free thinking in them, to make them free from unhealthy social prejudices and to develop in them the courage and character which are essential for making a nation strong and determined. The aim of Subhas and his group was naturally concentrated "in the direction of a first-class educational institution which would turn out real men and would have branches in different places."61 With this ideal in view some members of the group studied the working of some of the model national educational institutions like Tagore's Shanti Niketan and the Gurukul University in Upper India. Members of the group spent week-ends and holidays mostly, away from home visiting religious places and institutions and interviewing important personalities. Once they "visited the poet Rabindra Nath Tagore also and he gave a discourse on village reconstruction. This was in 1914, years before the Congress took up this work."62

A student with lofty ideas about education was bound to be disappointed and disillusioned with the system of education which was devised by the Britishers to create clerks and bureaucrats who would be

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60 Ibid, p. 68.
61 Ibid, p.69.
62 Ibid, footnote, p 70.
"Indians in body, colour and complexion but Britishers in spirit, attitude and their mental make-up."

Thus it was no surprise that most of the college classes and lectures were uninteresting to Subhas. He would sit absentmindedly in the class. As he did not find interest in studies he engaged himself in various public activities of the students' community to "make life more interesting and purposeful."\(^1\)\(^6\)\(^3\) He took active part in organising debates, collecting funds for flood and famine relief, going out on excursions with fellow-students and representing their grievances before the authorities.\(^6\)\(^4\)

Even at the age of sixteen or seventeen Subhas was most unlike the ordinary students of the College who were either busy mugging portions from the book for a better position in the examination and to secure a prosperous career or indulged in the luxuries of life as many students from the richer families used to do. Vague ideas of spiritualism and social service were taking positive and constructive strides and in the College his personality was undergoing a dynamic transformation. He was slowly but steadily shedding his introvert character and taking greater interest in constructive works of national reconstruction.\(^6\)\(^5\)

The strength of his will-power, sincerity of purpose and a deep concern for the suffering millions added new dimensions to his programme of action and personality.\(^6\)\(^6\) Dilip Kumar Roy, one of the intimate friends of Subhas pays glowing tributes to his forceful

\(^1\) Ibid, p. 76.
\(^6\)\(^3\) Ibid.
\(^6\)\(^4\) Ibid.
\(^6\)\(^5\) Ibid.
\(^6\)\(^6\) Julien Freund: "For the fact is that valuating the means in terms of the end, choosing that end, foreseeing the possible consequences, reaching a decision, and finally executing it—all the various processes involved in meaningful behavior—are matters for the individual will. —The Sociology of Max Weber, 1968, p. 112.
personality in the following words: "He had a native power to lead, and
he knew it. I know this consciousness has its deep drawbacks, and I will
not say it never did him any harm. But this I will say with confidence that
he had never once made people who obeyed him feel that they were his
inferiors or subordinates. Those who, during the last war, dubbed Subhas
an intolerant Fascist, inclined to treat all human beings as menials or
underlings, cannot have known him."67

In those days the terrorist revolutionary movement had a peculiar
fascination for the students of Bengal but Subhas and his group were
against terrorist activity and secret conspiracy of every sort.68 Occasionally, there was friction between the group of Subhas and
members of some terrorist revolutionary organisations engaged in
recruiting. The group to which Subhas belonged was not so much
interested in politics as in works of national reconstruction and unlike the
terrorist revolutionary organisations it followed the path of non-violence.
This constituted its main difference from the terrorist organisations and
therefore his group could not gain the popularity which was the monopoly
of some of these terrorist revolutionary organizations. In this connection
Subhas made the following observation:

"In spite of the political atmosphere of Calcutta and the
propaganda carried on among the students by the terrorist revolutionaries,
I wonder how I would have developed politically, but for certain
fortuitous circumstances. I often met, either in College or in the Hostel,
several of those who I learnt afterwards were important men in the
terrorist revolutionary movement and who later were on the run. But I

68 Bose, S. C., An Indian Pilgrim – An Unfinished Autobiography and
Collected Letters, 1897-1921, op. cit., p. 70.
was never drawn towards them, not because I believed in non-violence as Mahatma Gandhi does, but because I was then living in a world of my own and held that the ultimate salvation of our people would come through the process of national reconstruction.\textsuperscript{69}

It is quite interesting to note that Subhas for whom terrorism had no appeal during his student career and who had decided to follow the path of national reconstruction developed traits of political extremism in his later life when he decided to join politics for making the people free from the exploitation and miseries of foreign rule. It is pertinent therefore, to distinguish between the object and method of the terrorists and the revolutionaries. The terrorists had the limited object of creating panic or chaos. But the revolutionary movement was neither an anarchist movement nor merely a terrorist movement.\textsuperscript{70} “The revolutionaries did not aim at creating anarchy or chaos. While it is a fact that they do occasionally resort to terrorism, their ultimate object is not terrorism but revolution and the purpose of the revolution is to install a National Government.”\textsuperscript{71}

The revolutionary movement attracted the attention of Subhas after he joined politics because like many other Indians he became convinced that to the Britishers, physical force alone makes an appeal and that the sword must be fought with the sword. The sacred object of independence justified the use of force all the more, as he was convinced that the British could not be driven out by any other method. Many of the earliest revolutionaries, as he himself, studied about revolutionary methods in other countries, but the inspiration for the revolutionary movement in

\textsuperscript{69} Ibid, p. 84.
\textsuperscript{70} Subhas Chandra Bose, The Indian Struggle, 1920-1934, op. cit., p. 416.
\textsuperscript{71} Ibid.
India did not come from abroad. "The movement was born out of a conviction that to a Western people physical force alone makes appeal. It is not generally realised by Britishers that it is they who have been primarily responsible for teaching the Indian people the efficacy of physical force."^72

Moreover, Subhas aptly realised in later years that a proper balance should be maintained between the demands of the spirit and of matter of the soul and of the body. He was of the view, that when the Indians gave too much emphasis to intellectual and spiritual side and neglected the development of science and the material and physical side of life, the country became the victim of foreign aggression and occupation. "Emphasis on the intellectual and spiritual side caused us to neglect the development of science and left us comparatively weak on the material and physical side of life. The glorious periods of our history were, when we were able to strike the golden mean between the demands of spirit and matter, of the soul and of the body and thereby progress simultaneously on both fronts. Owing to the interrelation between the soul and the body, the neglect of the body not only weakens a nation physically, but in the long run, weakens it spiritually as well. India at the present moment appears to be suffering not merely from physical weakness but from spiritual exhaustion as well—the inevitable result of our neglecting one aspect of life. And if we are to come to our own once again, we have to advance simultaneously on both fronts."^73

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^72 Ibid.
Subhas was greatly influenced by his father Janakinath Bose. He was a kind-hearted man, was deeply religious and always had a soft corner for the poor and the needy.

Subhas imbibed many qualities of his father like his interest in constructive work, the secular approach to various problems of life and his broadmindedness which kept him above provincialism and parochialism. Subhas writes: "So far as the members of our family were concerned, we could never think or feel in terms of narrow parochialism or provincialism. For that we have to thank our parents. Such parental influences work unobtrusively and only in later life can the children discover by a process of analysis what helped to mould their character or give their life a definite direction."74

Besides the parental influence, the influence of the headmaster of Ravenshaw Collegiate School, Beni Madhav Das, left a permanent impression on his youthful mind. There was an irresistible moral appeal in his personality. Subhas was frank in his confession: "I could only feel that here was a man who was not an ordinary teacher, who stood apart from, and above, the rest of his tribe. And I secretly said to myself that if I wanted an ideal for my life, it should be to emulate him."75

It was at this stage of his life that he came under the spell of the second great influence in his life. He came across the works of Swami Vivekananda with one of his relations who was a new-comer to the town of Cuttack. After turning few pages of a book he realised that there was something for which he was searching so long. Subhas Chandra Bose pored over the books and speeches of Swami Vivekananda and the in-

75 Ibid, p. 37.
fluences of his writings brought a revolutionary change in his outlook on life. He writes about the influence: "I was thrilled to the marrow of my bones. My headmaster had roused my aesthetic and moral sense—had given a new impetus to my life—but he had not given me an ideal to which I could give my whole being. That Vivekananda gave me."

Subhas Chandra Bose was barely fifteen when Vivekananda entered his life, brought a revolution with him and turned everything upside down. Of course at that age he was not in a position to fully understand the significance of his teachings or the greatness of his personality but he left certain indelible impressions on Bose's young mind. Vivekananda's secular philosophy free from local customs and superstitions and his new conception of religion, viz., "the worship of God through the service of man", deeply influenced the life of Subhas Chandra Bose. Vivekananda loved the multitudes of Indians with all their poverty, illiteracy and caste differences and wanted all of them to be forged into one powerful nation: "Say brothers at the top of your voice—the naked Indian, the illiterate Indian, the Brahman Indian, the Pariah Indian is my brother."

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76 Hayashida, Tatsuo, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, op. cit., p. 2.

He exhorted people to say "The soil of India is my highest heaven, the good of India is my good ... O Thou Lord of Gauri. Thou Holier of the Universe, vouchsafe manliness unto me: O Thou Mother of Strength, take away my weakness, take away my unmanliness, and make me a man:" — The complete works of Swami Vivekananda, Almora, Vol. IV, pp. 408-13.
The third influence was that of Aurobindo. Aurobindo's conception of the synthesis of Yoga was something original and unique. "It was so refreshing, so inspiring, to read Aurobindo's writings, as a contrast to the denunciation of knowledge and action by the latter-day Bengal Vaishnavas." The teachings of the Gita that "you are what you are, and you must find out what you are called to do in the world's scheme and you must do it without brooding over the consequence", served as eternal ideals for Subhas. As a mystic he was conscious of the concept of a single divine reality behind all superficial manifestations but was not oblivious of the pragmatic realities of the world. The teaching of Gita where Krishna tells Arjuna to conquer his petty sell, and enter into the higher selfhood of God the realm of truth—through ardent devotion and disinterested action in keeping with his own calling, became the philosophy of his life.

The study of the speeches and writings of Aurobindo removed from his mind the impact of Sankara's doctrine of Maya. "The reconciliation between the one and the many, between the God and creation, which Ramakrishna and Vivekananda had preached, had indeed impressed me but had not till then succeeded in liberating me from the cobwebs of Maya. In this task of emancipation, Aurobindo came as an additional help. He worked out a reconciliation between Spirit and Matter, between God and Creation, on the Metaphysical side and supplemented it with a synthesis of the methods of attaining the truth — a synthesis of Yoga, as he called it."

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81 Ibid, p. 73.
Bose was born in Cuttack which unlike Calcutta had a calm life and was free from the ostentatious manifestations of British imperialism and the hectic political activities of the nationalists as also from the terrorist activities of the Extremists.

The mixture of rural and urban culture in the small town of Cuttack, its comparatively simple life, its historic importance, its proximity to places of religious importance and pilgrimage like Puri, Bhubaneswar and Konark all combined together produced in young Subhas a sense of great pride in the glory of the past and developed in him a tremendous urge for philosophical introspection. In his later life he had sweet memories of his small native town though he accepted Calcutta as the centre of his political activity and public life. He writes thus:

"Though a comparatively small town with a population in the neighbourhood of 20,000, Cuttack had an importance of its own owing to a variety of factors. It had an unbroken tradition since the days of the early Hindu Kings of Kalinga. It was defacto capital of Orissa which could boast of such a famous place of pilgrimage as Puri (or Jagannath) and such glorious art relics as those of Konark, Bhubaneswar, and Udaigiri. It was the headquarters not only for the British administration in Orissa, but also for the numerous ruling chiefs in that province. Altogether, Cuttack afforded a healthy environment for a growing child, and it had some of the virtues of both city and country life."

He lived in Cuttack for the first sixteen years of his life and must have acquired the formative influences from the political and social life of this town. At Cuttack, Subhas rarely came across an Englishman or a European. But at Calcutta while going to or returning from the College he

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82 Ibid, p. 3.
passed through the quarter inhabited by them and also met a large number of them in tram cars. Britishers using these cars would be purposely rude and offensive to Indians in various ways. The sensitive mind of Subhas, who was accustomed to a different treatment from his childhood, revolted against this insult and the rude behaviour, and on many occasions there was an exchange of hot words between him and misbehaving Britishers. "When I came across such an accident", he records, "my dreams would suffer a rude shock, and be shaken to their very foundations. It was quite impossible to persuade myself that to be insulted by a foreigner was an illusion that could be ignored."84

The conflicts of an inter-racial character were very frequent and the law could not give any protection to Indians in such cases of conflict with Europeans. When no other remedy was available the Indians started retaliating and then they were treated with consideration. "The effect was instantaneous. Everywhere the Indian began to be treated with consideration. Then the word went round that the Englishman understands and respects physical force and nothing else. This phenomenon was the psychological basis of the terrorist revolutionary movement at least in Bengal."85

For his B.A. he took the honours course in philosophy—a long cherished desire. He found genuine interest in his studies in the College for the first time. He had expected at school that the study of philosophy would give him wisdom to solve the fundamental questions of life and the world, but contrary to his expectations the study of philosophy gave him intellectual discipline and a critical frame of mind. The study of western

83 Ibid, p. 85.
84 Ibid, p. 86.
85 Ibid.
philosophy helped him to develop a critical bent of mind and emancipated it from preconceived notions. An emancipated man should not take anything on trust, without evidence and argument. He questioned the truth of the Vedanta on which he had taken his stand so long and wrote essays in defence of materialism, purely as an intellectual exercise. He came in conflict with the atmosphere of his group and it struck him for the first time that they were dogmatic in their views, taking certain things for granted.

There took place what is known as "the Oaten incident," while Subhas was thus proceeding merrily with his studies. This incident had far-reaching effect on his life.

As a consequence of the incident the Presidency College was summarily closed and a commission of inquiry was appointed by the Government. Though Subhas Bose was not directly involved in the incident as the leader of the rebellious students he was singled out for deterrent punishment. He was rusticated and expelled from the College. His application to the University to allow him to study in some other College was also rejected and this virtually meant rustication from the University.

Later when he appeared before a commission of inquiry, presided over by Sir Asutosh Mukherji, former Vice-Chancellor of the University and a Judge of the Calcutta High Court, to the question whether the assault was justified, he answered that though it was not, the students were forced to take recourse to such a step under grave provocation. Without any fear he narrated the various sins of omission and commission
of Professor Oaten and other English Professors in the Presidency College. Many thought that by not unconditionally condemning the attack on a Professor Oaten he ruined his case. But Bose says: "I felt, however, that I had done the right thing regardless of its effect on me."88

The political situation in Calcutta had worsened and wholesale arrests were made including some expelled students of the Presidency College. The continued stay of Subhas in Calcutta without any avocation was risky. His elder brothers, therefore, decided that he should be packed off to a quite corner like Cuttack where he could have comparative safety.

Subhas did not feel sorry for his activities.89 The urge for service and the urge for renunciation were there in his heart. He used to derive supreme satisfaction when he sacrificed himself for the noble cause. He writes in his autobiography: "Lying on the bunk in the train at night, I reviewed the events of the last few months. My educational career was at an end, and my future was dark and uncertain. But I was not sorry—there was not a trace of regret in my mind for what I had done. I had rather a feeling of supreme satisfaction, of joy that I had done the right thing that I had sacrificed myself for a noble cause. After all, what is life without renunciation, I told myself. And I went to sleep.

Referring to the Oaten incident Subhas said on December 1, 1929 presiding over a students' conference: "That was indeed a red-letter day for me in many respects, a turning-point in my life's career. It was the first occasion in my life when I had a taste of the joy derived from suffering for a cause—a joy, in comparison with which, the other joys of life pale and fade into insignificance. It was also the first occasion in my life when my theoretical morality and theoretical patriotism were put to a test and a very severe test—and when I came out of the ordeal unscathed, my future career had been chalked out once for all." Quoted by Kalicharan Ghosh in "A Saint Turns Patriot". Sharma Shri Ram (ed.), Netaji; His Life and Works (Agra: Laxmi Narain Aggarwal), 1948, p. 31.


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"Little did I then realise the inner significance of the tragic events of 1916. My Principal had expelled me, but he had made my future career. I had established a precedent for myself from which I could not easily depart in future. I had stood up with courage and composure in a crisis and fulfilled my duty. I had developed self-confidence as well as initiative, which was to stand me in good stead in future. I had a foretaste of leadership—though in a very restricted sphere—and of the martyrdom that it involves. In short, I had acquired character and could face the future with equanimity."\(^{90}\)

He returned to Cuttack in March, 1916 after his expulsion from College and was given a hearty welcome by fellow-students and also the public at large. He was a changed person and was not the same boy who had left it three years earlier.\(^{91}\) He was regarded with sympathy and respect and even his family did not blame him. His father did not question him about the happenings in the College at all. Subhas had developed strained relations with his group at Calcutta because he had not sought its advice and the group also did not approve of his activities. But he did not care very much for such disapprobation as he had now gained new confidence and moral certainty. His shyness and diffidence had disappeared and he had developed a new social awareness.

After a year's absence Bose returned to Calcutta and joined the Scottish Church College in July, 1917. At this time Government permitted the starting of a University unit in the Indian Defence Force—India's Territorial Army. Subhas joined this University Training Corps with great relish, since his earlier attempt to join the Territorial Army had

\(^{90}\) Jog, N. G., In Freedom's Quest: Life of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose (Delhi: Orient Longman), 1969, p. 27.

\(^{91}\) Ibid., p. 8.
proved unsuccessful due to his defective eye sight. He enjoyed the camp life for four months and felt delighted when the British instructor was beaten by Indian boys in a shooting competition.

In 1916, Subhas had met a demobilised officer of the Bengal Ambulance Corps who was a prisoner of war in Turkey. He was greatly excited by the officer's tales of adventure and wanted to join the army. The exploits of the first Indian Pilot, Lt. Indralal Ray, in the Royal Air Force, who was awarded Distinguished Flying Cross posthumously in the First World War had also thrilled him. Thus there was a mental preparedness to join the army and he took it with all his heart. The change in him was remarkable—from individualistic yoga to military training. "What a change it was from sitting at the feet of anchorites to obtain knowledge about God, to standing with a rifle on my shoulder taking orders from a British army officer." "I wonder how much I must have changed from those days when I could find pleasure in soldiering. Not only was there no sign of maladaptation to my new environment but I found a positive pleasure in it. This training gave me something which I needed or which I lacked. The feeling of strength and of self-confidence grew still further. As soldiers we had certain rights which as Indians we did not possess. To us as Indians, Fort William was out of bounds, but as soldiers we had right of entry there, and as a matter of fact the first day we marched into Fort William to bring our rifles. We experienced a queer feeling of satisfaction, as if we were taking possession of something to which we had an inherent right but of which we had been unjustly deprived. The route-marches in the city and elsewhere we enjoyed, probably because it gave us a sense of importance. We could snap our fingers at the police...

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and other agents of the Government by whom we were in the habit of being harassed or terrorised.”

No other member of Janakinath’s family had ever taken part in hardy games. So, it was rather unusual on the part of Subhas to have joined an organisation like the University unit of the Territorial Army in which arduous life was the most important factor. But Subhas wanted to excel the British in physical power which he knew was the cause of their superiority. He was made of sterner stuff and he took military training with great interest and pleasure.

There might be another psychological reason which impelled Subhas to accept the challenge of rigorous military training. The following words give an indication of the inner working of Subhas’s mind: "Macaulay wrote a scathing denunciation of the Bengalis and called them a race of cowards.... Government took the step of excluding the Bengalis from the army on the ground that they were not sufficiently warlike or brave.”

Subhas was convinced that in the moral and intellectual sphere and in the domain of philosophy and culture and almost in all other spheres excepting physical strength the Indians were superior to the British people. He, therefore, took great interest in military training to prove superior to average Britisher and to remove the stigma attached to the Bengalis by Macaulay.

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94 Sharma, Shri Ram (ed.) Netaji-His Life and Works, op. cit., p. 32.
95 Hugh Toye writes: "To show himself superior to the white-faced, foreigner now became his one pointed aim." The Springing Tiger, p. 30.
96 Roy, Dilip Kumar Roy, Netaji-The Man, op. cit., p. 31.
At the age of 22 Suhhas got his B.A. degree and with his handsome and well-built personality was the natural leader. Though his puritanical traits created a gulf between himself and his friends yet he was not unsociable and gave himself freely to his friends: "Subhas's character, even in his temporary intolerances or aberrations, did not forfeit its impressiveness because round about us we spotted none who could come anywhere near him in stature or one-pointed ardour—specially in our College days in England."97

After his graduation like many other students he enrolled himself in the M.A. class with experimental psychology as his special subject. Before he had settled in his post-graduate studies, one evening his father, when he was in Calcutta, sent for him and asked whether he would like to go to England to study for the Indian Civil Service. At that time it was a craze among most bright students of India to enter the 'heaven-born-service' but Subhas protested that he did not want to be a limb of the British steel frame. He was given twenty-four hours to make up his mind and if agreed he was to leave for England as soon as possible.

Despite his mental reservations to join the I. C. S. Subhas did not like to miss the opportunity of studying in a British University. Even when he was a student, he had entertained an idea to visit some foreign country to get a degree in education to qualify himself for the teaching profession. This profession he liked most as like his spiritual preceptor Vivekananda, he wanted to become a 'maker of man' and the words of Swamiji 'Man-making is my mission', had greatest appeal for him.98 Moreover, for the fulfilment of his mission in life—it was necessary that

97 Kalicharan, Ghosh, “A Saint Turns Patriot” in Sharma, Shri Ram (ed.), Netaji: His Life and Work, op. cit., p. 34.
he must study—"study the world around—both India and abroad and for this foreign travels are necessary."

Bose's mental conflict was evident from his letter to Hemant Sarkar: "My primary desire is to obtain a university degree in England; otherwise I cannot make headway in the educational line. If I now refuse to study for the Civil Service, the offer to send me to England would be put into cold-storage for the time being (and for all time). Whether it will ever materialise in future, I don't know. Under the circumstances, a great danger will arise if I manage to pass the Civil Service Examination. That will mean giving up my goal in life... I have agreed to sail for England. But I am at a loss to understand what my duty is."99

Besides their desire to make him, compete for the I. C. S., the parents of Subhas very much wanted to keep him away from the explosive political atmosphere in India during 1919.100 "The year 1919 was as traumatic in Indian history as was 1857. The Jallianwala Bagh massacre in Amritsar had taken a toll of 379 persons killed and 1,200 wounded, according to official figures,101 the non-official estimates being much higher."102 Although there was strict censorship, reports of the atrocities reached people and created sorrow and indignation throughout the country. Comparing the two incidents of 1857 and 1919 he writes elsewhere: "But if the great revolt only strengthened British rule over

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99 Dilip Kumar Roy writes: he had to sit for the I.C.S. because otherwise he would not have been sent by his father to England. So lie had taken a secret vow to resign his post-in case he passed, of course." Netaji-The Man, op. cit., p. 26.
100 Toyes, Hugh, The Springing Tiger, op. cit., p. 23 footnote.
102 Jog, N. C., In Freedom Quest, op. cit., p. 31.
India, the reign of blood and iron in the Punjab in 1919 gave it a jolt from which it was never to recover.”103

In July, 1920, barely eight months after his arrival in England, Subhas appeared for the Civil Service Examination. He was not hopeful about his success. "Much to his pleasant surprise”, recalls Y.N. Sukthankar: "Subhas not only passed but passed out high. He stood fourth in order of merit in the list of successful candidates. It was a brilliant success considering that he had only eight or nine months for preparation for the stiffest test in the British Empire.”104

Subhas received the news of his success with a mixed feeling of surprise, relief and joy. A cable was sent to his father at once. Immediately after the publication of the I. C. S. Examination result, Subhas wrote to his brother Sarat on the 22nd September: "You will readily understand my mental condition as I stand on the threshold of what the man-in-the-street would call a promising career. There is much to be said in favour of such a service. It solves once for all what is the paramount problem for each of us—the problem of bread and butter. One has not to go to face life with risk or any uncertainty as to success or failure. But for a man of my temperament who has been feeding on ideas which might be called eccentric—the line of least resistance is not the best line to follow. Life loses half its interest if there is no struggle—if there are no risks to be taken. The uncertainties of life are not appalling to one who has not, at heart, worldly ambitions. Moreover, it is not possible to serve one's country in the best and fullest manner if one is chained to

104 “Subhas we knew at Cambridge,” Indian Express, January 26, 1970.
the Civil Service. In short, national and spiritual aspirations are not compatible with obedience to Civil Service conditions."\(^{105}\)

On the January 26, 1921 he again wrote to his brother on the same subject: "The amount of good that one can do while in the Service is infinitesimal when compared with what one can do when outside it.... I am now at the cross ways and no compromise is possible. I must either chuck this rotten service and dedicate myself whole-heartedly to the country's cause—or I must bid adieu to all my ideals and aspirations and enter the Service."\(^{106}\)

The letter of 23rd February 1921 proves his determination to resign from I. C. S. and the impact that Aurobindo Ghosh had made on him by his example of sacrifice: "Ever since the result of the I. C. S. was declared, I have been asking myself whether I shall be more useful to my country if I am in the service than if I am not. I am fully convinced now that I shall be able to serve my country better if I am one of the people than if I am a member of the bureaucracy. I do not deny that one can do some amount of good when he is in the service but it can't be compared with the amount of good that one can do when his hands are not tied by bureaucratic chains. Besides, as I have already mentioned in one of my letters, the question involved is mainly one of principle. The principle of serving an alien bureaucracy is one to which I cannot reconcile myself. Besides the first step towards equipping oneself for public service is to sacrifice all worldly interests—to burn one's boats as it were—and devote oneself whole-heartedly to the national cause.... The illustrious example of Aurobindo Ghosh looms large before my vision. I feel that I am ready


to make the sacrifice which that example demands of me. My circumstances are also favourable."\(^{107}\)

When he wrote another letter to his brother Sarat Bose, on the April 6, 1921 by their he had already received the letter of his father disapproving his plan to resign from I. C. S. But by then he had definitely made up his mind to resign: "Father thinks that the life of a self-respecting Indian Civil Service will not be intolerable under the new regime and that home rule will come to us within ten years. But to me the question is not whether my life will be tolerable under the new regime. In fact, I believe that, even if I am in the service, I can do some useful work. The main question involved is one or principle. Should we under the present circumstances owe allegiance to a foreign bureaucracy and sell ourselves for a mess of pottage?... In the whole history of British India, not one Indian has voluntarily given up the Civil Service with a patriotic motive. It is time that members of the highest service in India should set an example to members of the other services. If the members of the services withdraw their allegiance or even show a desire to do so—then only will the bureaucratic machine collapse... I know what this sacrifice means. It means poverty, suffering, hard-work, and possibly other hardships to which I need not expressly refer, but which you can very well understand. But the sacrifice has got to be made—consciously and deliberately."\(^{108}\)

After sending in his formal resignation on April 22, 1921 he wrote another letter to his brother Sarat explaining the reasons for such a momentous decision: "My greatest objection to joining the service was based on the fact that I would have to sign the covenant and thereby own

\(^{107}\) Ibid, p. 130
\(^{108}\) Ibid., pp. 130-32.
the allegiance of a foreign bureaucracy which I feel rightly or wrongly has no moral right to be there. Once I signed the covenant, it would not matter from the point of view of principle whether I served for, three days or three years. I have come to believe that compromise is a bad thing—it degrades the man and injures his cause... I have come to believe that it is time for us to wash our hands clean of any connection with the British Government. Every Government servant whether he be a petty chaprasi or a provincial Governor only helps to contribute to the stability of the British Government in India. The best way to end a Government is to withdraw from it.”

Earlier in the letter from Cambridge to C. R. Das, on February 16, 1921, he had expressed his heart and sought his advice. Explaining the reason as to why he wrote to him Bose, said, "In Bengal, you are the foremost man in the service of the motherland. I am therefore writing this letter to you... The wave of patriotism you have raised in India has reached Britain as well. Here too the call of the motherland has been heard.”

Again: "For service and sacrifice on the altar of the motherland, you are the principal personality. I present myself to you with whatever little learning, intelligence, power and zeal I may possess. I have not much to dedicate at the feet of their motherland except my body and mind.”

Even before resigning from the I. C. S. Subhas had studied the organisation and working of the Congress and was aware of its various

109 Ibid, pp. 133-134.
110 Gupta, Hemendranath Das, Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das (New Delhi: S. Chand), 1969, p. 56.
111 Ibid, p. 57.
shortcomings. In his letter to C. R. Das he laid stress on research work and publicity on all aspects of national life.

"I have some plans of work about the Congress. I think Congress must have a house of its own with accommodation for a number of research students who will make investigations about different problems of the country. As far as I know, our Congress has no defined policy over Indian currency and Indian exchange. The policy to be pursued with regard to Indian States has also not been settled. It has not also expressed its views with regard to franchise for men and women. The Congress has not yet done its duty to the Depressed Classes. In the Madras Presidency, neglect has driven the non-Brahmins into pro-Government and anti-national bodies."\textsuperscript{112}

Subhas was a mystic but he was not an escapist leading a life of seclusion unaffected by the miseries of the people. He could not rest in peace as long as India was oppressed and exploited by an alien Government, "I could not be deaf to the miseries of our teeming millions. India calls to me—in my blood."\textsuperscript{113} This concern for the oppressed humanity made him a Karma Yogi—a pragmatist first and last. "For mystics came and mystics went but didn't Man go for ever—if you will allow me to alter the quotation to suit the context? So, I harked back. I did, because... well, I wondered whether it would not be wrong to go on, unheading... not lending the needy a helping hand.\textsuperscript{114}

When asked by his friend Dilip Roy to fall back on God and to seek for peace rather than go after 'politics which was not his Swadharma', Subhas gave equally powerful replies in defence of his stand.
for the cause of the people. He was always conscious of his debt to his country. Though in his later life Subhas became a fatalist yet he was not one among those who would take the excuse of destiny to lead a life of idlers or of non-activism. In his reply to Dilip Roy he said:

"If one can't shake off the serpent-coils of Karma one must trudge along somehow carrying them clinging around one's neck, if only to do one's bit even when one was not a master of one's own destiny."\(^{115}\)

Subhas was a born leader\(^{116}\) with a consciousness of life's mission. His decision to resign from the I. C. S. was the natural culmination of his patriotism and idealism and in that decision he was not deterred by any hardship or trouble. His father stopped sending money to him to exercise pressure on him not to resign from I. C. S. Neither his father's insistence nor his indisposition could influence him. He sarcastically remarked:

"If we build our ideals thinking, first and last of our family happiness won't the ideals be wonderful?"\(^{117}\) He was conscious of the deceitful professions of many young men who promised to work for the country and conveniently forgot everything when they got a good job. He had a genuine disgust for such careerists, opportunists and safety-seekers:

"How often have I seen young men come with a genuine aspiration to sacrifice their all for the country, burning to emulate the martyrs to start with, but for how long? Only till they get a safe start and secure a good job. As soon as this is assured, alas, that become turn-coats over night, out to stabilise their worldly position. When you see this over and over again, tell me, don't you catch yourself wondering whether all

\(^{115}\) Ibid, p. 20.
\(^{116}\) Ibid., p. 27.
\(^{117}\) Ibid, p. 40.
professions of serving the country were not mere masks which hid for the nonce the greedy faces of careerists at worst and safety-seekers at best."118

By resigning from the I.C.S. Subhas Bose wanted to set an example before such people. He was determined to follow the life of adventure away from the beaten track as he once said in later life:

"There is nothing that lures me more than a life of adventure away from the beaten track and in search of the unknown. In this life there may be suffering, but there is joy as well there may be hours of darkness but there are also hours of dawn. To this path I call my countrymen."119

This life of reckless abandon and single minded devotion to the cause of the Motherland constituted the spirit of his life. It was this mystic spirit of reckless abandon that led him to resign from the I. C. S. It was mystic in him that was also responsible for his philosophy of renunciation.

Subhas had a sense of great relief after his resignation. He was prepared for a life of uncertainty and a life of adventure, but he was not sure as to what exact course of action he would pursue. This feeling has been expressed in a letter to his friend Charu Charan Ganguly on the day of his resignation:

"You are aware that once before I sailed forth on the sea of life at the call of duty. The ship has now reached a port offering great allurement—where power, prosperity and wealth are at my command. But the response from the innermost corner of my heart is—you will not find

119 Ibid, p. 52.
happiness in this. The way to your happiness is in your dancing around with the surging waves of the ocean."

"Today, in response to that call, I am sailing forth again with the helm in his hands. Only He knows where the ship will land. I have not been able to decide yet what I shall do. Sometimes I am feeling like joining the Ramakrishna Mission. At other times I feel like going to Bolpur. And, then again, I have the desire to become a Journalist. Let us see what happens."120

In spite of his robust optimism the sense of uncertainty which he had at the time of his resignation haunted him even in his later years when he was actively engaged in the freedom struggle. But he was sure that his sincerity and earnestness will help him to progress towards Truth. This invincible faith in the progress towards the truth was the outcome of his mysticism. In one of his letters to Dilip Roy written in September 1932 when he was under detention in Madras he has expressed this feeling:

"At times I feel as if I am groping in the dark. But I cannot go wrong as long as I am sincere and earnest even if my progress towards Truth be more zig-zag than straight. After all, life's march is not as straight as a straight line."121

It was this aspect of his character that all the more steeled his determination when he faced troubles and turmoils on the path of his struggle for India's freedom.

121 Roy, Dilip Kumar, Netaji-The Man, op. cit., pp. 64-65.