

Chapter I

A. THE BACKGROUND : THE BRITISH WORLD OF SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE(1897-1921)

Subhas Chandra Bose was born on Saturday, 23rd January, 1897 at Cuttack of Orissa. Janakinath Bose was his father and Prabhavati (or rather Prabhavati) Bose (nee Dutta) was his mother. He was the sixth son and the ninth child of his parents.

The family Subhas Chandra belonged to was large enough having a big size of family members containing thirteen siblings of him, a number of departments, servants and the representatives of the animal worlds. There was no possibility for the parents to contact their children intimately though Subhas yearned for it. He 'could not help envying those children who were lucky to be on friendly terms with their parents'.¹ Father Janakinath Bose had a cloak of reserve around him and had a little time to spare for his children due to professional and public activities. Mother Prabhavati was to maintain everything in the family affairs. She was so strict that her word was the law. The children were awed by their parents. Subhas Chandra felt that he had been overawed not only by his parents, but he had been 'relegated into utter insignificance' by the presence of his many elder brothers and sisters'.²

Though his parents were strict disciplinarian, their inability to spare time for the children made Subhas to feel himself 'a thoroughly insignificant being'³. This was his acute identity crisis. "The very basis of this identity crisis was, as is clear from his autobiography a feeling of insignificance, diffidence, frustration and maladaptation which he developed very easily in life....As he was of a shy, sensitive, eccentric, introvert and emotional temperament, which he admitted himself, the burden of this despondent feeling was too heavy on him, and he started life with a sense of diffidence, uncertain about his identity. He looked askance at the very existence of his self".⁴ Inevitably he developed the traits of a lonely child.

In 1902 , Subhas Chandra Bose , at the age of five was admitted into the Protestant European School at Cuttak authorized and run by the Baptist Mission. It was completely based on the English model, style and curriculum. At the very beginning of his school life , he had for the first time experienced a new setting the presence of the British in India. "From a wholly Bengali setting he arrived at a nucleus of the British presence in India".⁵ But what he experienced, it was with irk and warp due to the racial discrimination and differentiation openly practiced by the school authority. In the curriculum, geography and history of Great Britain were taught more than that of India. The Indian pupils could not join the volunteer corps, attend the scholarship examinations though they topped in the class examination, while the Europeans and the Anglo-Indians could do all these despite their worse results and performance. In school, Subhas Chandra felt, in fact, the Indians were treated as a class apart . The curriculum was formed as to make the pupils as English in their mental make-up as possible. Though there was no direct attempt seen to influence the religious ideas of the Indian pupils, Subhas Chandra felt that too much importance on the teaching of the Bible had not been adopted easily by them.

"And I must say that there was never any attempt to influence unduly our social and religious ideas. Things went on smoothly for some years and we seemed to have fitted into our milieu splendidly, but gradually there appeared a rift within the lute. Something happened which tended to differentiate us from our environment..... To some extent this differentiation was inevitable, but what was not inevitable was the conflict that arose out of it".⁶ Such a conflict initiated by the school environment in the P.E. School inevitably made him to feel himself lost. Under such an environment vitiated by racial prejudice and discrimination, he had a feeling of unhappiness and maladaptation to his surroundings .This feeling was accentuated by another factor. He did badly in sports and did not play any part in the bouts that took place. In the P.E. School, as studies did not have the importance, he came to cherish a poor opinion of himself. The feeling of insignificance and diffidence, as noted above, continued to haunt him and led him to

question the very justification of his identity. "It is true that he did not revolt against the school environment but he felt a strong undercurrent of hostile reaction against the school, against its very educational set up marked by injustice, partiality and discrimination. It was unfortunate for him that he was going to be a product of that school."⁷ Subhas Chandra was making up his mind to leave the school as early as possible to get rid of his feeling of unhappiness and maladaptation caused by the school environment under which he felt a nascent feeling of identity crisis. After spending seven years' formative period of his life at the Protestant European School, he left it in 1909 and was extensively satisfied to say good-bye to his teacher and school-mates without regret. "In truth, he was glad to leave a school where he felt maladjusted, and where his feelings of insignificance grew more acute."⁸

In 1909, joining the Ravenshaw Collegiate School, Subhas felt happy enough. Here there was no such environment which could ignore the Indian requirements, Indian conditions, Indian history, sociology, geography and everything. The school was largely adaptable to an Indian student. Having a congenial academic environment, Subhas laid importance on Bengali grammar and spelling. As the school did not lay much stress on sports which was not interesting to Subhas himself, he found gardening immensely interesting. Besides gardening, he did physical exercise and gymnastics regularly. His better command of English earned for him love and care of the teachers. "Of the teacher there was one who left a permanent impression on my youth mind."⁹ He was Beni Madhav Das, the headmaster of the Ravenshaw Collegiate School. The guidance of the soul steering headmaster "instilled in his young disciple an awareness of moral values and social responsibility".¹⁰ Though in the family of Subhas Chandra, politics was totally restricted the bewitching headmaster brought him into touch with the cultural revivalism and nationalism as well as religious tradition of India. The Vedas, Epics, the Upanishads were taught with more significance. "He continued his European education through out his life, but become less attractive to Anglicized way than his father or brother Sarat and

began to make his own synthesis of the cultures of the west and India. This became fully articulated when he reached adulthood."¹¹

The all round environment at the Ravenshaw collegiate school was pleasing him unbounded. "I enjoyed my new surrounding, the more as I had longed for the change. At the other School, though I had for seven years, I had not left behind any friends."¹² But at the same time, even under such a pleasing environment outside his budding mind, Subhas Chandra faced the stormiest period in his psychological life. "It was a period of acute mental conflict causing untold suffering and agony, which could not be shared by any friends and was not visible to any outsider."¹³ The two fold mental conflict of Subhas Chandra was the natural attraction of worldly life and secondly of worldly pursuits in general against which his higher self was beginning to revolt and the growth of sex-consciousness, quite natural at the age, but which he considered unnatural and immoral and which he was struggling to suppress or transcend. Though both of these were natural, Subhas considered it to be unnatural and thus was boldly against it. He wanted to lead a celibate life where there would not be any response to sex "which was erroneously taken by him to be something sinful."¹⁴ The sex-consciousnesses gradually became bitter to Subhas Chandra and the more he tried to suppress it, it became stronger than before sharpening his mental conflict. He had felt himself guilty and this feeling sharpened his identity crisis. He began struggling to suppress the unnatural needs, as he considered it, and simultaneously he was subconsciously groping after some ideal — some requirements to make up his mind in a concrete shape. "What I required, he wrote, and what I was unconsciously groping after was a central province, which I could use as a peg to hang my whole life on and a firm resolve to have no other distractions in life. It was no easy job to discover this principle or idea and then consecrate my life to it. My agony could have been terminated, or at least considerably mitigated, if I had either given in at the outset as so many have done, or had with one bold effort of the will fixed on an idea and heroically brushed aside all allurements. But I would not let me do so. I had therefore to fight on. And a stiff fight it was, because I was weak. For me the

difficulty was not about the determination of life's goal so much as about concentrating my entire will to that single goal. Even after I had decided what was the most desirable object in life, it took me long time to establish peace and harmony within myself by bringing under control contrary or rebellious tendencies, for though the spirit was willing the flesh was weak. A stronger will than mine would undoubtedly have managed things more easily."¹⁵

Under such circumstances, Subhas Chandra's identity crisis became acute and he began to feel himself lost. But fortune was afforded to him, when he visited a friend's house and saw there some works of swami Vivekananda. Hardly turning over a few pages, he got a signal of something, he had been subconsciously yearning for long. For days, weeks and months, he intensively read the works of Swami Vivekananda which for the first time stimulated and ideal in him. "It was the ideal of a devoted spiritual life and a dedication to social service for one's own salvation as preached and practiced by Vivekananda."¹⁶ Vivekananda's maxims were :service to man is service to God, the service of humanity includes the service of one's country. Though from the study of Vivekananda's works Subhas Chandra emerged with a vivid idea of the essence of his teachings, he could not be expected to understand the full significance of the teaching at that tender age "I was barely fifteen when Vivekananda entered my life. Then there followed a revolution within and everything was turned upside down. It was, of course, a long time before I could appreciate that full significance of his teaching or the greatness of his personality, but certain impressions were stamped indelibly on my mind from the outset."¹⁷

Subhas Chandra was equally impressed by the teachings of Ramakrishna Paramahansa, the master of Vivekananda. His message that only through renunciation was realization possible was adopted by Subhas Chandra. The two-fold renunciation — lust and gold were necessary for man to acquire a spiritual life. The complete conquest of lust, as Ramakrishna emphasized, helped him to sublimate the sex instinct. At this critical juncture, Ramakrishna and Vivekananda came as a great help to him.

But still he was not free from his identity crisis. "Rather, two things should be borne in mind in this context. Firstly, it was merely help and not a solution of his problems and, moreover, it was a partial help, not complete, related only to the intellectual or psychological and personal or private aspects of his problems. Secondly, curiously enough, it created problems elsewhere – conflict with his family because of his unflinching spiritual quest — which consequently aggravated the identity crisis in his life."¹⁸ This identity crisis became more acute after being influenced by the teachings of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda. "Ramkrishana's example of renunciation and purity entailed a battle royal with all the forces of the lower self. And Vivekananda's ideal brought me into conflict with the existing family and social order. I was weak, the fight was a long- drawn one in which success was not easy to obtain, hence tension and unhappiness with occasional fits of depression."¹⁹

Subhas soon took the mental and spiritual exercises or yoga. Concentration was practiced in many ways. Self- notification of various kind was also restored.

Numerous letters written by him to his mother and elder brother Sarat Chandra Bose indicate his moral, philosophical and spiritual views. He wrote to his mother in 1912, "The essence of human life — a continuous cycle of birth and death — is dedication to Lord Hari. Life is meaningless without it.... I must therefore have only Faith unquestioning Faith — Faith in the existence of the Lord; I want nothing else." He assessed moral values of the Indian religion ,the miserable conditions of the country in a letter. "How holy and eternal the Hindu religion was and how degraded our religion is now!".... Will the condition of our country continue to go from bad to worse — will not any son of Mother India in distress, in total disregard of his selfish interests, dedicate his whole life to the course of the Mother?" This feeling naturally originated in his mind which had already been acquainted with the teachings of Vivekananda and Ramkrishana.

Under Vivekananda's influence during the period between 1908-1912 Subhas

Chandra began to search for a Guru and he and some like minded friends undertook some works for social service. These activities were in no way liked by his family particularly his parents and conflict arose with his family. It did not escape from his parents' notice that a reserved, serious boy, an avid reader of introspective mind like him had a precocious concern for religious truth, self-control and psychic harmony.

“It is difficult to say which aspect of the conflict was more painful- the external or the internal. A stronger or less sensitive mind than mine would have come on successful more quickly or suffered much less acutely than I did. But there was no help; I had to go through what was in store for me. The more my parent endeavored to restrain me, the more rebellious I became. When all the other attempts failed, my mother took to tears. But even that had no effect on me. I was becoming callous, perhaps eccentric, and more determined to go my own way, though all the time I was feeling inwardly unhappy. To defy my parents in this way contrary to my nature and to cause them pain was disagreeable, but I was swept onwards as by an irresistible current. There was very little appreciation or understanding at home of what I was dreaming at the time, and that added to my misery. The only solace was to be found in the company of friends and I began to feel more at home when away from home.”²⁰ He began to feel peculiar pleasure defying the family members. He began to regard his mother's orders unjustified. “When I took to religion and Yoga seriously and wanted freedom to go where I liked and whatsoever I wished, I frequently came up against parental instruction. But I had no hesitation in disobeying them because by that time I believed, under the inspiration of Vivekananda, that revolt is necessary for self fulfillment –that when a child is born, its very cry is a revolt against the bondage in which it finds itself.”²¹

In his spiritual quest, he found “that for spiritual development social service was necessary. The idea came probably from Vivekananda for, as I have indicated above, he had preached the ideal of the service of humanity which included the service of one's

country.”²² Subhas Chandra was so influenced by Vivekananda’s ideal that he learnt his duty to his motherland. As an Indian he was proud of being born in the country. Because “India is god’s beloved land.”²³ He was also greatly amazed by Vivekananda’s teaching that the West was spiritually backward and that the whole world needed India’s religious message. To him it was religion for all. Subhas was highly impressed when Vivekananda said that India might be materially poor and technologically backward, but she was spiritually rich. Vivekananda argued that India had at the same time to learn some qualities from the west: self confidence, viability, skills and strength.

The teaching of Vivekananda and Ramkrishna began to twist two goals in his mind, one was his Motherland’s freedom and other was his selfless action for that end. But his goals were not yet politically motivated. “These were still pre-political days and his vision was a cultural and religious one, but the sense of a mission of life was awakening.”²⁴

In his life at the Ravenshaw Collegiate School, Subhas Chandra became well-equipped with spiritual teachings. But the important thing was that as long as he was at school, he did not mature politically. At his school life, after becoming familiar with Vivekananda’s teaching, he thought about his country, her fallen state of condition and necessity of her service but they were something like a consequential output of the spiritual quest of a precocious school boy like Subhas Chandra.

Subhas Chandra sat for the Matriculation Examination in March, 1913 and came out second in the whole University. His delighted parents decided to send him Calcutta for higher education and hoped that the atmosphere in Calcutta would help him to round off his eccentricity and to lead a normal life suitable to his age.

Subhas joined the Presidency College, Calcutta in 1913. But his parents hope was soon to be disillusioned. His mental conflict from which he had been suffering for the last few years was hardly resolved. In the very beginning of his college life, he had made

certain definite decisions for himself — he was going to lead life conducive to his spiritual welfare and the uplift of humanity; he was going to make a profound study of philosophy so that he could solve the fundamental problems of life. In practical life he was going to emulate Ramkrishana and Vivekananda as far as possible, and in any case, he was not going for a worldly life. Then there came a stage of doubt in his life. It was not merely an intellectual doubt, but doubt embracing the whole life. “Man begins to question his very existence — why he was born, for what purpose he lives, and what ultimate goal is. If he comes to a definite conclusion, whether of a permanent or of a temporary nature, on such problems, it often happens that his outlook on life changes — he begins to view everything from different perspective and goes in for a revaluation of existing social and moral values. He builds of a new world of thought and morality within himself and, armed with it, he faces the external world.”²⁵ Subhas Chandra believed that no great achievement, whether external or internal, is possible without a revolution in one’s life. This revolution had two stages - doubt or skepticism and reconstruction. “The intellectual doubt which assailed me needed satisfaction and constituted as I then was, that satisfaction would not have been possible without some rational philosophy. The philosophy which I found in Vivekananda and in Ramkrishna came nearest to meeting my requirements, and offered a basis on which to reconstruct my moral and practical life. It equipped me with certain principles with which to determine my conduct or line of action whenever any problem or crisis arose before my eyes.”²⁶

In 1913, when he joined the Presidency College, he had an idea, almost fixed that conquest of sex was essential for spiritual upliftment. Thus he continued his yogic and psychic exercises. Meanwhile, he began to be influenced by Aurobindo’s philosophy which emphasised on the reconciliation between matter and spirit or God and creation —

a gospel truth to Subhas Chandra. His philosophical outlook can be seen more clearly from a letter written by him to his elder brother Sarat Chandra Bose in 1915. "By all means build up a philosophy in order to harmonize all your present activities in life. Then proceed in accordance with that philosophy. On the other hand, in the inner recesses of your mind destroy and reconstruct it every moment of your life. Life progresses through continuous construction and destruction. Man proceeds from truth to higher truth. We must pass through inconsistencies. They fulfill life."

To attain the higher truth, spiritual development is necessary. For spiritual upliftment, Subhas followed the idea of Ramkrishna and Vivekananda – particularly the latter's teaching which emphasized on the social service as a means to spiritual development. He then came greatly under the influence of a group, which he had met a year ago in Cuttack. The group proceeded to give effect to Vivekananda's teachings. The group was popularly known as the neo-Vivekananda group of which the main object was to bring about a synthesis between religion and nationalism not merely on theoretical sphere, but on practical life as well.

In long vacation period of 1914, with his friend Hemanta Kumar Sarkar, Subhas Chandra without any information to his family disappeared for several months into the religious heartland of northern India in search of a guru and of spiritual truth. His family had become extremely anxious over his disappearance. Such behaviour of Subhas Chandra resumed his conflict with family. Though his family members were dissatisfied with him and anxious for him, he had no repentance. "Home had no attraction for me –for it was world quite different from that of my dreams."²⁷ But all this guru-hunting pursuit was in vain as he failed to find an enlightened guru he expected. He returned with a fallen health after a prolonged tour. He wrote to a friend about his return and repented enough. "I have become so callous; I really do not know why I have termed so stony-hearted. I do not feel at all for my parents – they wept and I could not help smiling".

The first two years of his college life quickly ended, and Subhas passed the

Intermediate Examination in the first division. From this account of his early life from infancy to adolescence, it seemed clear that he had got no political maturity. There were many significant factors which prevented his early political maturity.

(a) Home Atmosphere

One of these significant factors was the home atmosphere which was not congenial for politics. In fact, there 'politics was a tabooed subject'²⁸ by the dictate of his father Janakinath Bose.

Janakinath Bose was educated in Calcutta and Cuttack. He joined the Bar as an advocate at Cuttack in 1885 and became the first non-official Chairman of the Cuttack municipality in 1901. Gradually he built up his flourishing profession and became government pleader and public prosecutor in 1905. His thorough knowledge of the Orissa Tenancy Laws earned for him his nomination by the Government as a member to the Bengal Legislative Council in 1912. His loyal services to the Government deserved for him the title of Rai Bahadur in 1912—a government recognition of his loyalty.

Janakinath Bose agreed with the belief of the great minority of the western educated middle class Bengalis of the late nineteenth century that the British rule was benevolent. "He felt a sense of gratitude to the British for the gifts to India: law and order; reforms such as the creation of legislative councils with Indian members; and of course, their language literature and science"²⁹ The beginning of the twentieth century was a formative period for the Indian national spirit in which period Bengal in particular and India in general bitterly experienced the Partition of 1905. Yet no political atmosphere was made favourable within Janakinath's home. "My father, likewise, though he had a high standard of morality, and influenced his family to that end, was not anti-government."³⁰ The mental attitude of Janakinath Bose to politics prevented every

member to take part in any political activity. Subhas Chandra and his siblings were interested in cutting out pictures of revolutionaries from the papers and hanging those in their study room. But one day a visitor, a relative of the Bose family and a police officer saw these pictures and complained to Janakinath Bose. All the pictures were removed before his sons and daughters returned from school.

Janakinath Bose regularly visited the annual session of the Indian National Congress, "but did not actively participated in politics though he was a consistent supporter of Swadeshi"³¹ He always maintained detachment from politics. He led a life, 'curious, but familiar mixture of Indian and European culture.'³² He had a good intimacy with the top British officers at Cuttack of whom he was proud enough.

Thus there was, though, not to be a question of growing up any anti-British stratagem at his home, he was not a man of snobbish type and he never blindly supported the British Raj. Due to a difference with the District Megistrate, Janakinath resigned the post of the government pleader and public prosecutor in 1917 and gave up the title of Raj Bahadur as a protest against the repressive policy of the British Government in 1930. Both the royalties were previously awarded him for his loyalty to the government. Thus Subhas Chandra's father suffered from an ambivalent position, he was not in favour of any political activity at home or by his family members, yet his above activities may be termed quasi-political in character.

At home Subhas had found a religious atmosphere from his parents. His mother's orthodoxy and father's eclectic Hindu belief had a great impact on their children. Alongwith the other sons and daughters of Janakinath and Prabhavati, Subhas Chandra was introduced into the religion, literature, myths, and folklore of his own Indian society. He liked to hear from his mother the stories from the Indian epics, the Mahabharata and the Ramayan and the religious Bengali songs. Being introduced with religious counseling and general guide of his mother and his father's good attitude towards the religious

reformation, Subhas Chandra began searching for himself. He was also fond of music and singing.

He took a great interest in raising plants and working in the garden disregarding the sports. By nurturing the garden, he in fact, nurtured his personality and subsequently, he had to nurse others, often poor. He imbibed from his father sympathy for the poor and a genuine disposition towards charity, at a very young age. "His father, Janakinath Bose, was an able, public-spirited lawyer of broad social interests and orthodox nationalism."³³ While his father's constant advice to his children to follow plain living and high thinking had to lay a great impact on them, his pro-British attitude had also a grave influence at home. On the whole the home atmosphere was conducive morally, socially and spirinally but not politically.

(b) School Atmosphere

In his early school life in the Protestant European School at Cuttack, Subhas Chandra had no opportunity to develop politically. The first important thing was that the school was authorized and run by the Europeans where no political teachings were imparted. Though he bitterly experienced racial discrimination and differentiation openly practiced by the school authority, he never took it as a bad political outpouring. "It is true that he did not revolt against the school environment but he felt a strong undercurrent of hostile reaction against the school, against its very educational set-up marked by injustice, partiality and discrimination."³⁴

On the other hand, Subhas Chandra appreciated the discipline and deportment, neatness and punctuality of the school. The students received more individual attention at the hands of their teachers and daily work was done regularly and systematically. Though

Bible was taught in the class, “ I must say that there was never any attempt to influence unduly our social and religious ideas.”³⁵ “I was there for seven years, from 1902 to 1908, and was to all intents and purposes satisfied with my surroundings.”³⁶ It was significantly the sign of his broad mind which was basically an inheritance having nourished in a congenial environment like his neighbours of various communities at Cuttack, his family itself and his unceasing touch with the positive themes of English education. “ I was lucky, however, that the environment in which I grew up was on the whole conducive to the broadening of my mind. In my infancy I was brought into touch with English people, English education, and English culture.”³⁷

In his life at the Ravenshaw Collegiate School, Subhas Chandra became well equipped with spiritual teachings. As long as he was at the school from 1909-1913, he did not mature politically. This was due partly to his natural tendency which pointed in a different direction, partly to the fact that Orissa was a political back water, and partly to political restriction within the family circle. Subhas Chandra himself said, “Occasionally I did hear about the affairs of the Congress from my elder brother, but that did not make any impression on me. The first bomb thrown in 1908 created a stir everywhere and we too were momentarily interested.”³⁸ Uptill December, 1911 he was politically so undeveloped that he participated in an essay competition on the King George V's coronation. He stood first in English Composition but he was not awarded any prize on that occasion. During the Christmas he visited Calcutta when King visited that city. In 1912, Subhas Chandra received the first political impact from a student named Hemanta Kumar Sarkar who came to passionately about their duty to their country. He also told Subhas Chandra about his group in Calcutta. Subhas Chandra was greatly impressed, but such an impetus was not sufficient to develop him politically. He was not yet to penetrate into the political arena.

Thus we find that his infancy at home, his school life at the P.E. School and the

Ravenshaw Collegiate School, Cuttack and his early College life at the Presidency College, Calcutta provided a fertile ground for his identity crisis. He was not yet sure of the very purpose of his existence. The feeling of a thoroughly insignificant being himself, a sense of diffidence which developed at home continued to haunt him to escape from which he kept his mind engaged in a spiritual quest with a moral and philosophical penchant. Looking back to Vivekananda and Ramkrishna's teachings he dedicated himself to service of humanity and renunciation of lust and gold. He was also inclined to the teaching of Aurobinda who argued that the immediate need of every Indian was the political independence without which the reconstruction of exploited was impossible. He also pointed out three kinds of resistance to oppression: armed revolt, aggressive resistance, and defensive resistance, whether passive or active.

When under the inspiration of Aurobindo and Lal-Bal-Pal, revolutionary terrorism stormed the city of Calcutta, Subhas entered the Presidency College of the city, which was one of British India's most prestigious College. Though the promising student were admitted into the college, the college had a bad name in the eyes of police. "The College fraternity was divided into several groups - from royal son's of Rajas and zamindars to budding revolutionaries."³⁹ But Subhas was still at a stage where the idea of social service appeared more than direct political activity..... Although there were political groups among the youth and the revolutionaries used the college campus and hostels and messes as recruiting grounds for new members, Subhas was not enticed. He had developed a powerful identification with his Indian homeland - especially seen as an impoverished and wretched Mother India - but his commitment was to be fulfilled through social service."⁴⁰ In Presidency College, Subhas Chandra, accompanied with the neo- Vivekananda group had an ample scope of being dedicated to the social service. Thus he came into contact with the group of earnest boys who considered themselves the spiritual heirs of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda.

Politically the group to which Subhas Chandra was connected was against terroristic activity and secret conspiracy of every sort. Even occasionally there was

friction between the groups of Subhas Chandra and members of some terrorist revolutionary organization engaged in recruiting. The revolutionary upheaval was the direct products of the long drawn events of politics. The group to which Subhas Chandra belonged was not interested in politics, but in national reconstruction. Subhas himself said, “ So long as politics did not interest me, my attention was directed towards two things — meeting as many religious teachers as possible and qualifying for social service”⁴¹

In such a critical moment of extremist uprising, the Central Investigation Department suspected the group to which Subhas was connected. The group was raided but no proof of revolutionary activities was found and they were left to themselves.

Subhas Chandra coolly detached from the terrorist revolutionary movement. He himself observed, “In spite of 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 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” ⁴² Subhas Chandra was as religious activist searching for the spiritual truth and for a guru with a view to constructing his own ideas about Indian culture, traditions, and society, as a step in the reconstruction of India.

But the situation in Calcutta was rapidly changing, and it was tainted by the misbehaviour of Britishers to Indians. Subhas Chandra was forced to develop politically by the misbehaviour of Britishers and the Great War.

Since 1909 Subhas Chandra had had very little to do with Britishers and he occasionally saw British official visiting the school at Cuttack. But in Calcutta he had

had bitter experience about the British. Everyday while going to or returning from College, Subhas Chandra saw that Britishers, in tramcars intentionally misbehaved with the Indians. Sometime they put their feet up on the front seats, their shoes touching the bodies of Indians. On streets also Britishers expected Indians to make way for them ,if the latter did not do so, they were pushed aside by force or had their ears boxed. In trains also Britishers always used to occupy the higher class compartment not allowing the Indians to come in. The railway authorities as Britishers (or Anglo-Indians) themselves did not intend to protect the Indian passengers from the Britisher's misbehaviour. On tramcars, street, trains and other transportation, racial superiority exhibited by the British led to confrontation with the Indians. Subhas Chandra Bose strongly reacted to this type of insult and humiliation meted out to the Indians by the British and he had full sympathy for his countrymen in this confrontation. He even openly protested sometimes against this misbehaviour of the Britishers as experienced by him in Calcutta. However, this reaction was of a temporary nature, a matter of spontaneous reaction only and did not create in him any permanent racist attitude towards the Britishers. It is in the same light that we should assess his reaction in the Oaten Incident in the Presidency College in 1916 and his attitude towards the Britishers in Cambridge between 1919 and 1921. These cases may be examined as follows.

Two years of his life in the Presidency College ended and Subhas Chandra passed the Intermediate Examination in the first division . Then he was admitted to B.A Course. While he began his serious study, an incident known as 'the Oaten Incident' rocked the Presidency College in 1916 and had a far-reaching effect on his life.

Edward Farley Oaten, Professor of History, who was cordial both to the students at first, soon changed his attitude and his haughty behaviour to the students was unfortunate enough. "Professor Oaten, marked by a spirit of Anglo-Indian arrogance, always misbehaved with the Indian students of the College and even manhandled them."⁴³

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One day, Professor Oaten manhandled some students who were walking along the corridor adjoining the room where Oaten was lecturing. "The spark that now lighted the short fuse of student nationalist sensitives were struck by Mr. E.F Oaten, Professor of History of Presidency College."⁴⁴ As the class representative, Subhas took up the matter with the Principal and suggested among other things that Prof.Oaten should apologise to the students whom he had insulted. The Principal's reply failed to satisfy him and next day a general strike was declared. After the Principal failed to break the strike with coercive and diplomatic measures, he levied a general fine on the absent students. At the end of the second day's strike, Mr.Oaten amicably settled the dispute with the students and next day classes were held in an atmosphere of forgive and forget. Though it was naturally expected that the Principal would withdraw the penal measures, it had not been done and the fine rankled in the minds of the students, but nothing could be done. Perhaps nothing more was attempted by the students to go against the Principal's order because the fine was not the matter — matter was the racist arrogance of an Anglo-Indian Professor like Oaten who in an address to the students at the Eden Hindu Hostel in late 1915 said, 'As the Greeks had Hellenized the barbarian people with whom they came in contact, so the mission of the English is to civilize the Indians.'

About a month later a similar incident occurred in which Mr Oaten was again involved. "The students were excited, militant, determined to dramatise, to see the affair as a test of the manhood of Indian Youth, and hence of Indian's own future."⁴⁵ They saw that a strike would simply provoke a disciplinary action like fine. They decided to take the law in their own hands. The result was that Mr. Oaten was subjected to receive a solitary stroke from behind, but that was of no account.

This incident naturally a wide publicity everywhere in Bengal from the newspaper office to Government House. The Government of Bengal closed the College and appointed committee of enquiry. The Principal called Subhas to his office and said,

“Bose, you are the most troublesome man in the College. I suspend you.”⁴⁶ Subhas simply answered, “Thank you” and left the room. The Governing Body also approved the Principal’s decision. Thus the Oaten incident led to the rustication of Subhas from Calcutta University. But the Anglo-Indian Professor, after fifty-four years of the incident, acknowledged that “Subhas Chandra Bose was suspected to have been connected with the affair, though I never had any proof of this.”⁴⁷

The incident had some great inner significance on Subhas Chandra. He learnt to stand up with courage and composure. The incident developed his self confidence as well as initiative. For the first time he learnt to overcome his shyness and diffidence. He had acquired character and could face the future with equanimity in his own words. According to Leonard A. Gordon, in a microscopic form this event became a rehearsal for the bigger and more directly political event of the coming years in his life.⁴⁸

One year after his rustication, Subhas Chandra was admitted into the Scottish Church College in B.A(Hon) Class in philosophy after he had produced a no-objection certificate from the former college. Returning to the mainstream of college life he now became most attentive to his studies.

In 1919, his father proposed to him to go to England to study for the Indian Civil service and gave him twenty four hours to make up his mind. While his father was more enthusiastic to have his son as an ICS, his son was in an acute dilemma whether power meant corruption and whether it would upset his principle of renunciation of lust and gold and whether it would mean conflict with his love for his motherland. He ultimately decided to go to England on academic ground to study M.A. in experimental Philosophy in Cambridge University than getting ICS. He set sail on September 15, 1919.

His life in Cambridge was short but very significant. With the help of Mr. Reddaway, the Censor, Subhas Chandra was admitted into the Cambridge University in M.A. He started preparation for both ICS and M.A. There he had got opportunity to study

various English works. He highly admired the lectures of the British Professors of Cambridge, the academic atmosphere there, the respect shown by the Englishmen to the students, the regular debates on some social, political, cultural, economic and religious matters in the Union Society's meetings where prominent members of Parliament and even members of the Cabinet took part, and sense of optimism, discipline and punctuality. He was highly impressed by a debate on India. One of the participants, Sir Oswald Mosley, a great social worker, openly criticized General Dyer and O'dwyer and remarked that the event of Amritsar in 1919 were the expression of racial hatred.

During the six terms of his Cambridge life, he found the relation between the British and the Indian students on the whole, although a sense of racial superiority was present in the background and very soon he encountered a racial confrontation. When the Indian students attempted to join the University Officers' Training Camps, they were refused. Subhas Chandra as a spokesman of other student presented the matter at the War office and the India Office. Each ministry blamed the other. Though Subhas Chandra tried his best to obtain justice, the ban was not removed. This event indicated that the British government was not eager to train up the Indians enabling them to demand jobs in the British Army in future. This political motivation of the British was easily understood by him. Subhas Chandra had no intention to demand a job in the British Army, but he wanted to train up himself in western model as he felt that India was deficient in military skills and organization. Again he argued for simultaneous holding of the ICS examination in India, because, thereby enormous expenses of foreign travel could be avoided. But the British government was not in a mind to easily accept his arguments. Behind these feelings of these Subhas Chandra, there was a nationalistic view, though at that moment, he had not yet been involved in politics. His political maturity developed gradually.

However, Subhas Chandra appeared in the Indian Civil Service Examination and occupied fourth position in order of merit with the first position in the English composition. But from the very beginning Subhas was not mentally prepared to join the civil service. Thus he wrote a letter to Sarat Chandra Bose, "A nice fat income with a

good position in after life I shall surely get But after all is service to be the be - all and end- all of my life?"⁴⁹ Again in another letter to Sarat, dated 26th January, 1921, he wrote: "I am now at the cross-ways and no compromise is possible. I must either chuck this rotten service or dedicate myself whole heartedly to the country's cause or I must bid adieu to all my ideals and aspirations." In another letter on the 16th February, 1912, he wrote to Sarat, "If C.R. Das at this age can give up everything and face the uncertainties of life — I am sure a young man like myself, who has no worldly cares to troubles him, is much more capable of doing so. If I give up the service, I shall not be in want of work to keep my hands full. Teaching, social service, cooperative credit work, journalism, village organization work — there are so many things to keep thousands of energetic young man busy....Further the very principle of serving under an alien bureaucracy is intensely repugnant to me."

In this way six letters were written by Subhas Chandra Bose from Cambridge to his elder brother Sarat Chandra Bose explaining the arguments for his decision to resign from the ICS. "He know that it would mean great suffering but he was prepared for that for the sake of his motherland."⁵⁰

Simultaneously, he wrote two important letters to Dasbandhu Chitta Ranjan Das, the foremost national leader of Bengal, informing him his decision to resign from the ICS and to join the Indian national movement Considering the Dasbandhu as the high priest of the festival of the national cause. He also informed C.R. Das that on his return to India he would be able to take up two kinds of work, teaching in a college and writing for newspapers. This letter also expressed the ideas in his mind regarding the Indian National Congress. He wrote to C.R. Das about various shortcomings of the Congress and requested him to take effective measures to remove these Subhas also expressed his desire to do everything for the upliftment of the Congress. His second letter to Dasbandhu C.R.Das revealed his plan to work for national reconstruction under the aegis

of the Indian National Congress. Thus we find first glittering rays of political consciousness and interest in Subhas Chandra and that became a crucial factor behind his resignation from the heaven - born service. The dastardly cruelties of the Jallianwalabag massacre and the clarion call of the non- cooperation movement roused this developed political consciousness to a high pitch.

Subhas Chandra finally made up his mind and submitted his resignation in the face of opposition of his father and set sail for India in June, 1921

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B. BOSE'S STUDY OF BRITISH IMPERIALISM

To Subhas Chandra Bose, "imperialism is an opposition to nationalism, freedom and progress — a blatant violation of the principles of truth, justice, liberty, equality — a symbol of slavery, exploitation and degradation"¹. It is "a question of freedom vs. slavery; no scope of choice".²

Subhas Chandra Bose understood it well that a business company like the British East India Company came to India on a trading mission, but gradually it sought political power and to fulfil their desire of political supremacy over India, they began 'to ignore the pre-British era of Indian history'³. At the time of their penetration into India, there was no doubt, a political disunity prevailing in the country. As world's one of the famous propagandists, the British took the chance of the internal dissension. Ironically thanking the British propaganda, Subhas said, "India has been portrayed before the world as a country full of internal conflicts in which peace has been preserved by the might of England."⁴ According to Subhas Chandra "Though geographically, ethnologically and historically India presents an endless diversity to any observer — there is none the less fundamental unity underlying this diversity."⁵ The famous historian Vincent Smith is also of opinion that "India beyond all doubt possesses a deep underlying fundamental unity, far more profound than that produced either by geographical isolation or by political suzerainty."⁶ But the British neglected the Indian historical glory, created a new path which had no similarity with the old. Subhas is of opinion, "The British people, unlike the invaders of old, did not make India their home."⁷ They always kept themselves alien. In India their practical aim was the cultural, political and economic domination for the establishment of a British Indian Empire.

The pre-British history of India was a history of experiments in which Buddhism and Hinduism were tested and with the cooperation of all, India got a huge store of

political, cultural and social ideas of prosperity. All such religious experiments gifted the Indian people the principle of tolerance. On the basis of this principle, Akbar, the Mughal Emperor introduced a new religion called the Din-i-Ilahi and Raja Rammohun Roy established the Brahmo Samaj. In political sphere also, India had experience of a republican form of government in the ancient times. But the imperial Britishers consistently ignored the great history of India.

To consolidate the British Empire in the country, the British initially a trading concern became a virtual arbiter of the political destiny of India. In 1773, an Act was passed called Lord North's Regulation Act which provided for governmental control over the policy and administration of the East India Company. In 1784, by Pitt's India Act, a Board of Control was appointed and the entire operations of the company were brought under its control. "The appointment of a Board of Control, composed partly of Cabinet ministers, eventually led to the establishment of the supremacy of the British Parliament over India,"⁸ said Subhas Chandra Bose who was aware of the nature and motivation of the British imperialism in India. The Charter Act of 1833 shaped the company as a purely political and administrative body, governing India on behalf of the British Crown. In 1857, the Sepoy Mutiny broke out against the British Raj. It failed, but remained an example of the Hindu-Muslim united struggle against the British. The post-Mutiny period witnessed ruthless suppression of all anti-British movements in India and atrocities on the unarmed people. In 1905, the Viceroy, Lord Curzon ordered the partition of Bengal. In 1909, the Indian Councils Act provided for separate electorate for the Muslims to create a split between Mohammedans and the Hindus. In 1919, the Government of India Act introduced a new system of government called the Dyarchy. In the provinces, the government was to be composed of two sections, called 'transferred' and 'reserved'. In the central government there was to be no diarchy. The transferred departments like Education, Agriculture, Excise and Local Self-government were to be administered by the ministers of the Legislative Council who were removable by a vote of that council. All these strengthened the hands of the imperial power.

In 1919, a countrywide agitation was raised against the British imperialistic policy and it was led by Mahatma Gandhi. In an attempt to suppress the agitation in Punjab, terrible massacres were committed by the British troops in Amritsar under General Dyer. The incident called the Jallianwallabag massacre exposed the ruthless nature of the British Raj in India.

In Kaye's 'Life of Metcalfe', it is stated : "It was our policy in those days to keep the natives of India in the profoundest state of barbarism and darkness, and every attempt to defuse the light of knowledge among the people either of our own or of the independent states, was vehemently opposed and resented. Imperialism must function in this way or else it ceases to be imperialism."

Subhas Chandra Bose had not possessed enmity towards the Englishmen as a whole. While he became sworn enemy of the British imperialism, he never forgot to appreciate the talents of the Professors of Cambridge and Mr. Bates's family where he was a paying guest at the time of his life in Great Britain. In a letter to his elder brother Sarat Chandra Bose on 22.9.1920 from Cambridge, Subhas Chandra wrote, "Mr. Bates represents English character at its very best He is altogether unlike the ordinary run of Englishmen who are proud, haughty and conceited and to whom everything that is non-English is bad." He believed that enmity with Britain could be easily avoided if the British would have voluntarily left India. "India had no quarrel with the British nation and their struggle was against imperialism that nation had set up."⁹

Subhas Chandra Bose had no personal grievance behind his anti-imperialist stand. He was anti-imperialist more because of the degrading acts of repression of the British Raj in India and less because of any prolonged personal experience of racial discrimination at home or abroad. "Some scholars ascribe a racial factor to his anti-imperialistic attitude ascribing it as product of his long experience of racial discrimination by the British. It is true that this factor, which bred in him a revolting

spirit of hatred, fury and even vengeance, served to lend an anti-British bias to him, and thereby provide the psychological background of his anti-imperialist bias, but at the same time its importance should not be exaggerated."¹⁰

Great Britain as an imperialist power was the enemy of the Indians, Subhas Chandra believed. He saw that the composition and character of the bureaucracy were important factors of British imperialism in India. He wanted it to be immediately changed. "In India they (bureaucrats) have been created by the British and in the higher ranks they were largely British in composition. Their outlook and mentality are in most cases neither Indian nor national and a national policy can not be executed until the permanent services become national in outlook and mentality."¹¹ Thus he never expected India's freedom from such an administration. "It is sometimes urged by our British friends that the British public have an open mind on the Indian question and that we would gain much if we could win their sympathy by means of our propaganda. I do not, however, think the British public have an open mind on the Indian question — it is not humanly possible. In India, administration and exploitation go hand and hand, and it is not exploitation by a group of British capitalists and financiers, but the exploitation by Great Britain as a whole. The British capital that has been invested in India has not come from the upper class alone, but also from the middle class, and probably to some extent from the poorer classes as well. Further, even the working class of Great Britain cannot afford to see the Indian textile industry thrive at the expense of Lancashire. That is why India has not been made a party question by the great political parties in Great Britain. That is why the policy of brutal repression and persecution was continued in India even when there was a Labour Government in power in London. I know that there are individual members in the Labour Party who rise above selfish consideration and who are sincere in their desire to do justice to India. But however much we may admire them and however cordial our personal relations with them may be, the fact remains that they are not in a position to influence party decisions. And, judging from our past experience, we

may say that we cannot expect any improvement in the Indian situation through a change of Government in Downing Street."¹²

Subhas understood that standing on the cross-roads of history, the British empire had two alternatives before it – either going the way of other empires or transforming itself into a federation of free nations. Only economic independence could transform her into a federation of free nations and economic independence would be possible only if Great Britain becomes a socialist state. But the establishment of a socialist state is impossible until the emancipation of the colonies abroad was achieved. It was because that, to Subhas Chandra, “There is an inseparable connection between the capitalist ruling classes in Great Britain and the colonies abroad. As Lenin pointed out long years ago, reaction in Great Britain is strengthened and fed by the enslavement of a number of nations. The British aristocracy and bourgeoisie exist primarily because there are colonies and overseas dependencies to exploit. The emancipation of the latter will undoubtedly strike at the very existence of the capitalist ruling class in Great Britain and precipitate the establishment of a socialist regime in that country. It should, therefore, be clear that a socialist order in Great Britain is impossible of achievement without the liquidation of colonization and we who are fighting for the political freedom of India and other enslaved countries of British empire are incidentally fighting for the economic emancipation of the British people as well.”¹³ Hence, Subhas Chandra was convinced that the British imperialism which stood on the way of the freedom of India and other dependencies, was to be destroyed completely so that she might not recoup and raise its head again.

Though the British theoretically professed to champion the principle of democracy, freedom, liberation, nationalism, yet practically in India, they proved themselves to be against these principles. Subhas Chandra pointed out that the White Paper issued by the British cynically disregarded the fundamental rights of the Indian

people. "There is no mention in this connection of such elementary rights as freedom of speech, freedom of association etc., nor is there any assurance given that the scanty of rights to be conceded will be made altogether inviolable."¹⁴

In the race of her imperialism, Great Britain was totally prepared to suppress by any means India's anti-imperialist movement. Subhas Chandra pointed out that the British government, in preparing for the brutal suppression of the national will to freedom of the Indian people, was acting in total and cynical disregard of the principles of freedom so pompously enunciated in the Atlantic Charter by Churchill and the President of United States.

The British Government in India proved themselves to be most inhuman. In the interest of suppressing the anti-British movement, they never hesitated to adopt any barbarous means. "The inhuman treatment of the detenus, i.e. persons kept in detention without any trial is one of the most tragic chapters of British rule in India and recalls the memory of barbarous methods pursued by tyrannical rulers in medieval Europe. Numerous tragic episodes concerning the lot of these detenus were regularly brought to the notice of the government through petitions and public press, but without any result Every available evidence indicates that in the name and under the disguise of suppressing revolutionary crimes, the British Government adopted the most unscrupulous methods to stifle national urge for freedom and inflict upon the helpless detenus behind the iron curtain varieties of physical torture"¹⁵. Subhas himself faced the atrocities caused by the British Government. Pretending to be democrats, the British patronized Fascism and there is a little distinction between Fascism and Imperialism, the Fascist countries and England - The Fascist Dictators and their Imperialist kiths – as Subhas Chandra calls them.

To Subhas Chandra, another imperialist nation, America helping Great Britain, stood in the way of India's freedom. "It is only out of the defeat of Anglo-American imperialism, that India can hope to win her freedom."¹⁶ Wishing the Indian National

Congress to be the common platform for all anti-imperialist organizations, Subhas Chandra told, "Ours is a struggle not only against British imperialism but against world imperialism as well, of which the former is the keystone. We are, therefore, fighting not for the cause of India alone but for humanity as well. India freed means humanity saved."¹⁷

In a statement expressing concern over the debate in the House of Lords, November 8, 1929, Subhas Chandra Bose said: "It has been definitely stated by His Lordship that there is no certainty as to whom Dominion Status will be granted." Maintenance and preservation of power and supremacy in India were the determination of the British Government. "Domination was its creed and duplicity was its method."¹⁸ To Subhas Chandra, to hope that the mighty British Government would concede the Dominion Status without a struggle was an act of madness and folly. The British Government promised everything and did nothing for the Dominion Home Rule. In a broadcast from Azad Hind Radio on 31.3.42, Subhas Chandra said, "History of British rule is a history of broken pledges and unredeemed promises." Subhas Chandra who understood well tactics of the British imperialists commented that those who were convinced of the promises of the British Government were frail human beings who had been "led to hope and to believe that there was a short cut to freedom which does not entail a long and bitter struggle and protracted suffering and sacrifice."¹⁹

Divide and rule was main goal of the British Imperial rule over India. The first feature of this kind of rule was the British plan to divide the Hindus and the Muslims in India and to investigate them against each other. "This marked the dawn of the communal problem in India, largely an artificial handiwork of the British."²⁰ Introducing the Bill of 1909, Morley openly emphasized, "The difference between Mohammedanism and Hinduism is not a mere difference of articles of religious faith or dogma. It is a difference in life, in history, in all the social things as well as articles of belief that constituted a community."²¹ In a letter to Lord Linlithgow on 29th December, 1940, Subhas Chandra Bose pointed out: "Since April, 1937, Bengal has been ruled by a

Ministry which is predominantly communal in outlook and purpose. Behind this rule, stands an alliance — between some Muslim MLAs on the one side and the British Government and the British mercantile community on the other. On communal questions, the Muslims are given free hand, while on political issues the will of the Governor and the British mercantile community is allowed to prevail Rank communalism seems to be the basic principle of administration, the other features of which are inefficiency and corruption.”²² The alliance was fully responsible for creating a separatist mentality and communal feeling in India. Subhas Chandra rightly believed that the presence of foreign ruling power has complicated the communal problem.

Another feature of the divide and rule policy of the British Raj was the grant of separate electorates to the Mohammedans. With a view to have a certain number of seats reserved for the Mohammedans in the legislative councils, the British Government introduced the scheme. Subhas Chandra strongly raised protest against it because it was inconsistent with the principle of nationalism and it encouraged the growth of communalism. He writes : “The Mahatma asked me if I had any objection to separate electorates since it could be argued that in absence of the third party the different communities would live and work in concord. To this I replied that separate electorates were against the fundamental principles of nationalism and that I felt so strongly on the subject that even Swaraj on the basis of separate electorates was, in my opinion, not worth having.”²³ Some of the Nationalist Moslim leaders including Dr. Ansari, Mr. Sherwani never supported the separate electorates, “because they were convinced that separate electorates were bad not only for the country as a whole, but for the different communities.”²⁴ On the other hand, the British, according to Subhas, would “move heaven and earth in order to divide the Moslem community on this issue.”²⁵

The British Raj issued the Communal Award in India on August 17, 1932. The protest began from the moment the Communal Award was announced. From 1932 onwards, numerous meetings were held to protest against the Communal Award and it achieved no positive result.

“The whole object of the Communal Award embodied in the White Paper seems to be to divide India still further ... The entire scheme is based on the pernicious principle of ‘Divide and rule’.²⁶ He also pointed out that time to time the British Government had been trying to make a rift between the Hindus and the Moslims with a view to weakening the anti-imperialist struggle of the Indian people. In 1905, both the Hindus and the Moslims took part in the anti-partition and Swadeshi movement. To weaken the united spirit, the British Raj instigated some Moslim leaders to demand for separate electorates. Hence the separate electorates were granted by the Morley-Minto Reforms of 1909. Despite the grant of separate electorates, the British never ceased to be afraid of defeat in the Legislatures. Therefore the Communal Award was issued to the Indian Christian, women, depressed classes etc. in addition to Moslims, Europeans, Anglo-Indians and Sikhs. “Bose was convinced that this policy would not be a success, and he gives various reasons for it. The Communal Award had merely given better representation and as the Constitution would give no power to the Indian people as a whole or to any section of them, the representatives of different communities would soon realize that the government had merely given them seats and not power and as such they would not be able to do anything for the betterment of the entire community. And gradually when the different communities would realize that their representatives were not able to do anything for them, they would cease taking any interest in the Legislatures and popular discontent would grow against the new constitution.”²⁷

Another scheme of Divide and Rule advocated by the British Empire was the partition. In 1905, the British partitioned Bengal aiming the dismemberment of the province. Subhas Chandra foresaw another British design of partition of the whole India into two pieces. “The British are advocating ‘divide and rule’ and in accordance with that will be partitioning India, thereby neutralizing the transference of power to the Indian people,”²⁸ he said. He reacted to the plan of partition of India.

“Pakistan is, of course, a fantastic plan and an unpractical preposition — for more reasons than one, India is geographically, historically, culturally, politically and economically an indivisible unit. Secondly, in most parts of India, Hindus and Muslims are so mixed up that it is not possible to separate them. Thirdly, if Muslim states were forcibly set up, new minority problems would be created in these states which would present new difficulties. Fourthly, unless Hindus and Muslims join hands and fight the British, they cannot liberate themselves and their unity is possible only on the basis of a free and undivided India. An Independent Pakistan is an impossibility and Pakistan, therefore, means in practice, dividing India in order to insure the British domination for all. It is noteworthy that in his latest utterances, Mr. Jinnah, the President of the Muslim League, and a champion of Pakistan, has acknowledged that the creation and maintenance of Pakistan is possible only with the help of the British.”²⁹ The British spread out a propaganda that the Indian Muslims were opposed to the freedom struggle and wanted India to be divided up. “The British themselves know that what they propagate is quite false....”³⁰ To Subhas Chandra, the Britishers may be dividing India not only into two pieces but also five or six pieces — Rajasthan for the Indian Princes, Khalisthan for the Sikhs, Pathanistan for the Indian Muslims living in the North-West of India etc. besides Pakistan for the communal Muslims. Though the British adopted communal policy to divide and rule India, many of the communities like the Nationalist Muslims, the Indian Christians and even the Depressed classes were no longer in support of the British Raj in India. He spoke for the Hindu-Muslim unity, asked the Hindus to respect the rights of the Muslims. He said that dividing along communal lines would weaken the fight for freedom.

The British government adopted from time to time some constitutional measures in the name of popular government in the country. But in its practical aspect, they were not for Indian interests, but for the consolidation of the British Empire in India. The constitution was adopted on the basis of the divide and rule policy. In the name of federation, Subhas Chandra observes, the British formed secret understandings with

communal Moslems, the Indian Princes and the so-called Depressed classes. On November 12, 1930 the first session of the Round Table Conference was held in London under the chairmanship of Ramsay Macdonald. In this regard, Subhas Chandra strongly reacted. He was right to understand the fact that the representatives of the Indian states were invited to the Conference made it evident at the very outset that the British Government were anxious to bring the Indian States within the future Constitution. The first step in that connection had been taken by Sir John Simon when he wrote to the British Prime Minister for an enlargement of the terms of reference with a view to including the question of the relations between British India and the Indian States. The Simon Commission also reported that the ultimate Constitution of India must be a federal one. According to Bose, immediately after the visit of H R H. the Prince of Wales to India, a reapproachment between the British Government and the Indian Princes was developed. Faced with a nationalist upheaval in British India, the British Government turned to the Indian Princes for sympathy and assistance. The Princes, on the other hand, were also faced with a democratic movement with their territories which had the support of the Indian people and they wanted the help of the British Government to hold in check the popular revolt. It was in pursuance of this demand that the Indian States Bill was introduced by the Government in the Indian Legislative Assembly in September 22, and when thrown out by the Legislature, was certified as law by the Viceroy. The culmination of this friendship was the idea of federation — an unholy alliance between the British Government and the Indian Princes in order to thwart the mass awakening in India.

The federal scheme was, to Subhas Chandra, a dangerous embodiment in the Government of India Act of 1935 encouraging the revival of the Princely states in India. It was the counteraction of the radical forces and the glorification of the conservative elements in India's constitutional history. The representatives from the Princely States would be nominated by the British imperialists and those from the British India would be

elected directly or indirectly by popular franchise to the Federal Parliament. No doubt, the nominated would remain loyal to the British Imperialism and in return, the nominated Princes would be allowed to continue their autocratic rule in their states. No democratic elements were embodied in the constitution. In a Forward Bloc Editorial, November 4, 1939 Subhas wrote, "I felt constrained to draw public attention to the danger of a compromise with British Imperialism over that scheme. I added that I felt so strongly over that issue that if by any chance the Congress by a majority approved of a compromise over the Federal Scheme, I would deem it my duty to resign the Presidentship of the Congress and initiate a campaign against it."³¹

The federal scheme was, according to Subhas Chandra, not only harmful, but also it would affect the commercial and financial interests of the Indian subjects. "One of the most objectionable feature of the Federal Scheme related to the commercial and financial safeguards in the new Constitution. Not only will the people continue to be deprived of any power over defence and foreign policy, but also the major portion of the expenditure will be entirely out of popular control. . . . The fact that external affairs will be a reserved subject under the Federal Government will prejudicially affect the freedom of the Indian Legislature to conclude trade agreements and will seriously restrict, in effect, fiscal autonomy."³²

The British design to introduce the Princely element into the Indian Legislature on the basis of Federal Scheme would upset the principles of nationalism and democracy according to Subhas Chandra. He declared at his Friars Hall speech in London, . . . "The proposal of Federation with the Princes is an impossibility and an unacceptable proposition. We shall certainly work for the unification of the whole of India ® for a federation of the Indian people. But we can not accept the present proposal of substituting the Princes for the present official bloc in the Legislature."

Subhas Chandra saw that the retention of imperial power and prerogatives both in the Centre and Provinces was the worst feature of the Federal Scheme. He understood well that the White Paper had never approved the transference of power from the foreign

government. Retaining most of the powers, the Secretary of State would exercise his control over the Governors of the Provinces and the Governor-General of the Centre. Subhas Chandra foresaw that the autocratic power of the Federal Government under which the Governor-General would continue to control the higher services and all legislations enacted in India would be liable to his own veto. Appointment of High Court and Federal Court Judges and of members of the Federal Public Service Commission would be made by him. In India the Governor-General would be made more autocratic and powerful than at present. Under some label or other like 'reserved departments', or 'special responsibility', or 'discretionary power', he would wield wider powers than at present. Even in matters ordinarily within the control or supervision of the Legislature, he would have ample scope of interference. 80 per cent of the total expenditure would be non-votable. Even the business of the Legislature would be controlled by him more stringently than it was. Moreover, the composition of the Federal Legislature would be much more reactionary than that of the Central Legislatures. In order to strengthen the Imperial powers and prerogatives, the British Government, in the name of the constitution introduced various devices like, 'special responsibility', 'discretionary powers', 'reserved departments', 'separate electorates', 'Princes' 'nominees' and 'safeguards'. "The Central Government", observed Subhas, "is as reactionary as ever". Subhas Chandra regretted that the Rightist Congressmen were prepared to cooperate with the British Raj on this issue of a new Constitutional arrangement sought to be imposed on the Indian people by the British.

On the economic side, the British imperialistic aim was to exploit the economic resources of India. He rightly observed that India was the jewel of the British Empire. Her untold natural resources and incalculable potential wealth were exploited by the Britishers. England's aim was to keep India in perpetual impoverishment and economic bondage and to reserve India for her own, exclusive exploitation. Similarly, India's involvement in the World War II was one of the British policy of exploitation. Really

India was never a party in the war. But she was used by Great Britain as a military base. India's geographical situation and her wealth and raw materials were used by Great Britain to meet their own requirements and to win the war. To Subhas Chandra, the British Empire was nothing but a relentless plunderer of the politically weak but economically resourceful nations. It was a nation which plundered raw materials from India to England and sold the manufactured goods in India bringing from England. To consolidate their monopoly in industry, the Britishers unhesitatingly ruined the cotton industry and all kinds of village artisans. He said that unjust, coercive and uneconomic methods were applied against the Indian industry in the past. He strongly resented the British policy of ruthless exploitation of India and this drain of wealth. British aggressions in India have been territorial, economic, military and political.

Subhas Chandra Bose, therefore, advocated an uncompromising struggle against the British imperialism to get rid of England's political and economic exploitation and territorial and military aggressions. There was no scope of compromise between England and India, observed Subhas Chandra. There was no common interests between the two countries. There was no social kinship between England and India, hardly anything common in cultural aspects. On economic side, India was used by Great Britain as the supplier of raw materials and a consumer of British manufactures. Thus England never expected the industrial progress of India which would go against her own economic interests. India could be able to stand on her legs without the patronage of England, because of her ample resources. Therefore, India wanted status of a free country, not a Dominion Status. To Subhas Chandra, a policy of no-compromise could only win freedom of India. Thus he launched an uncompromising struggle against the British from active resistance to armed resistance which reached climax with his INA movement whose sole objectivity was to save his motherland from moral degradation, cultural ruin, economic impoverishment and political enslavement. He was confident and hopeful of both political and economic freedom for India if a ceaseless struggle was continued. He observed that if eternal vigilance is the price of political liberty, it is no less true that

ceaseless struggle is the price of economic freedom of a nation.

Thus we find that this was an indispensable link between political and economic aspects of British imperialism in India. India's economic bondage was to be the most important instrument in the British hands to establish her absolute supremacy over India and perpetuate India's political bondage. Similarly, India needed her political freedom for attaining her economic freedom. These two sides – political and economic – were thus complementary to another both from the British and the Indian points of view, according to Subhas Chandra.

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