

## *Chapter II*

### *BOSE'S STRUGGLE AGAINST THE BRITISH AT HOME*

*1921-1941*

Subhas Chandra Bose reached Bombay on July 16, 1921 and the same afternoon made a bee-line to Mani Bhawan on Luburnum Road, the residence of Mahatma Gandhi to obtain an interview with him. The Mahatma had already been accepted by the Indian people as the first and foremost leader and also an architect of the Indian freedom struggle. While a vast majority of the Indian people unhesitatingly accepted Gandhi as their sole leader, Subhas Chandra Bose wanted to get rid of some of his confusions arising in his mind. He wanted to clarify himself first and thus sought from the Mahatma a clear conception of his plan of action. The Mahatma received him with his characteristic hearty smile and put him at ease and the conversation started at once. During the last few years before he met Gandhi, Subhas Chandra made some study of the methods and tactics adopted by the revolutionary leaders in other parts of the world and in that light he wanted to understand the Mahatma's mind and purpose. Thus when he met the Mahatma, he was anxious to ask questions after questions and the Mahatma answered with his habitual patience.

There were three main issues on which Subhas wanted Gandhi's elucidation. First, how were the different activities conducted by the Congress going to culminate in the last stage of the campaign, namely the non-payment of taxes? Secondly, how could mere non-payment of taxes or civil disobedience force the government to retire from the field and leave us with our freedom? Thirdly, how could the Mahatma promise 'Swaraj' (that is Home Rule) within one year – as he had been doing ever since the Nagpur Congress?

His reply to the first question satisfied Bose; that to the second was disappointing

and the third was no better. After an hour's conversation, the answers of the Mahatma to the second and the third questions were not convincing. Subhas Chandra Bose whose reason told him again and again that there was a deplorable lack of clarity in the plan which the Mahatma had formulated. The first meeting with the Mahatma also made Subhas to believe that the former did not have a clear idea of the successive stages of the campaign which would bring India to her cherished goal of freedom.

Subhas Chandra Bose was neither impressed nor inspired by the Mahatma's procedures, how to approach the goal. He was neither influenced nor moved, particularly, by Gandhiji's plan of attaining Swaraj within one year and that too through passive non-cooperation movement. The Mahatma also must have felt that it was difficult to convince Subhas Chandra on the issue. So Gandhiji at the end of the meeting advised Subhas Chandra to report himself to Deshbandhu Chitta Ranjan Das on reaching Calcutta. When almost every Indian was influenced by the Mahatma, Subhas Chandra Bose was the only figure who was exception from it.

Subhas Chandra Bose had his own ideas of campaign against the British. Though he was a beginner in active politics, his political conviction had been moulded by his vast study of history and western philosophy which ultimately shaped his ideas regarding India's freedom struggle and which made him not to surrender to the idea of the Mahatma. "This might be a brash judgement, but it shows that Bose did not surrender himself to the Mahatma's magic as many others had done at their first meeting."<sup>1</sup>

Though he was much depressed by his conversation with Gandhi, he was determined to join Gandhi's movement since it was the mainstream of national movement in India. But he never accepted Gandhi's belief about the urge of non-violence in political life or Gandhi's conception and tactics of freedom struggle. "This meeting was the beginning of a complex and troubled twenty five years relationship which spanned sunshine and shadow."<sup>2</sup>

He returned from Gandhi's residence in Bombay and soon after reaching Calcutta, he met Chitta Ranjan Das, the then Congress leader of Bengal. He talked with C.R.Das and found a vast difference between the Mahatma and C.R.Das. Subhas Chandra writes : "During the course of our conversation I began to feel that here was a man who knew what he was about -- who could give all that he had and who could demand from others all they could give -- a man to whom youthfulness was not a shortcoming but a virtue. By the time our conversation came to an end, my mind was made up. I felt that I have found a leader and I meant to follow him"<sup>3</sup> This was the impression of C.R.Das on Subhas Chandra Bose in his first meeting after his return from England.

Subhas unhesitatingly followed C.R.Das who ultimately became the political guru of Subhas Chandra. He was accepted by Subhas as his mentor. Subhas had come under the spell of C.R.Das even prior to this meeting. He met C.R.Das when he was a student in 1916 and later had corresponded with C.R.Das from England and wrote two letters to the Desbandhu. In his letter from Cambridge on February 16, 1921, he had praised C.R.Das heartily: "You are today the high-priest of the festival of national service in Bengal." In the same letter Subhas had mentioned his idea of resigning from the civil service and getting some job in India. In his letters to C.R.Das, Subhas expressed his desire to serve the nation and requested C.R.Das to assign him some work for that purpose. Subhas wrote that he was prepared to do plenty of things @ teaching at the National College, writing and publishing books and newspapers, organization of village societies, spreading education among the common people etc.

Subhas had full appreciation, praise and devotion for C.R.Das who sacrificed everything for the nation's cause. His devotion and sacrifice largely influenced Subhas Chandra Bose who writes : "With the reckless abandon of a Vaishnava devotee, he had plunged into the political movement with heart and soul and he had given not only himself but his all in the fight of Swaraj."<sup>4</sup> The kind of Swaraj, C.R.Das wanted, influenced Subhas Chandra Bose. At a public meeting, C.R.Das said that the Indians wanted the right to establish their own system of government. That was the central idea

of Swaraj advocated by C.R.Das. He further said that the Indian people had got the right to establish their own system of government according to their temper and genius. He himself wanted his liberty. He wanted his freedom. He wanted his right to establish the Indian system of government. "If that is consistent with our being within the Empire, I have no objection to being within the Empire. If that is inconsistent with our being within the Empire, my love for my freedom is greater than my love for the Empire."

This idea of Swaraj influenced Subhas Chandra Bose. This distinct programme of action propounded by C.R.Das naturally attracted another man of action, Subhas Chandra Bose. Regarding how Swaraj could be achieved, C.R.Das emphasized on his views of non-cooperation. He was of the opinion that 'whatever other people may mean by non-cooperation I do not know. But I know that it means to me. And in the light of what I understand it to be, I maintained and still maintain that the only method of fighting this government and winning Swaraj is by applying Non-cooperation everywhere'. C.R.Das again said "we must be the judges of what system of government is good for us and what system of government will not suit us. It is not for other people to constitute themselves as our judges." All these views of C.R.Das had a great impact on Subhas Chandra Bose.

The year 1921, in which year Subhas came into personal influence of C.R.Das marked the beginning of his political career in Indian politics. Since he had been coming under the spell of C.R.Das, his political apprenticeship had already started. By then India witnessed much confused activity and excitement in political arena. The triple boycott of legislatures, courts and educational institutions as a programme under non-violent non-cooperation movement under Gandhiji reached its climax with popular support throughout the country. The first anniversary of Lokamanya Tilak's death on August 1, 1921 was observed with huge bonfires of foreign cloth which created tremendous patriotic fervour throughout the country.

During such a period of political excitement throughout the country, Subhas was

assigned with responsible work of constructive nature by C.R.Das which Subhas heartily accepted. Thereby the public life of Subhas started during this non-cooperation movement. He was made the Principal of the Bengal National College, the Captain or Organizer of the National Volunteer Corps, the editor of a nationalist Bengali weekly, 'Banglar Katha'. All these works Subhas Chandra had sincerely completed. Subhas Chandra always gave importance to a system of national education as education forms the sine qua non of national reconstruction. Moreover, Subhas gave importance on a network of school and colleges to educate children who had left the government schools and colleges in response to the call given by the Congress.

C.R.Das was immensely satisfied with the ability and sincerity of Subhas Chandra. Then he was placed in charge of the Publicity Board of Bengal Provincial Congress Committee of which C.R.Das was himself the President. Subhas Chandra was entrusted all these responsibilities and activities and was considered by C.R.Das as the right man to do justice to the work

Subhas Chandra Bose was to organize the non-cooperation activities and demonstrations in 1921, such as boycotting European goods and British controlled and regulated institutions, spinning the Charka. He organized the propaganda activities of the Congress in such an effective manner that the Government felt terribly embarrassed. He also had to write some political episodes like Punjab and Khilafat grievances and with a view to fertilizing the communal harmony between the Hindus and Muslims. Subhas Chandra became popular among the young Bengalis and being inspired by him, many young men joined the national volunteers. On November 17, 1921, the non-cooperations shut down Calcutta on the occasion of the Prince of Wales' visit to India. The Hartal was completely successful and Subhas Chandra was one of the key organizers.

Subhas came in contact with the prominent Congress leaders of the country for the first time when they had come to Calcutta in September, 1921 under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. Since then Subhas Chandra came to be considered as the second

rank leader of Bengal next only to C.R.Das. He attended Gandhi's secret conference which was held for formulating plans and programmes for new non-cooperation.

Subhas participated first in the meeting of Bengal Pradesh Congress Committee in November, 1921 as a member. C.R.Das was the President of the meeting. This was his first political activity as an office-bearer of the Congress.

The November hartal had already thundered the government. Again a call was given by the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee for civil disobedience. Subhas was put in-charge of the same. On the other hand, the Bengal government became rude against the nationalists and under the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1908, many were imprisoned. Subhas Chandra Bose, C.R.Das, Das's wife, son and others were arrested on December 10, 1921. Subhas and C.R.Das were sent to jail for six months. That was Subhas's first baptism of imprisonment, an inauguration of his chain of imprisonment, eleven times in toto upto his sensational escape from India on January 17, 1941. Subhas Chandra was proud of having himself side by side with C.R.Das. He himself described, "I had the privilege to be in the same jail with him for eight months in 1921-22."<sup>5</sup>

Subhas Chandra was immensely influenced by Desbandhu C.R.Das. During the period, Subhas spent with him in jail, he came to know C.R.Das really well. Subhas expressed the influence of C.R.Das on himself, "... at least, I can safely say that having known him most intimately my love and admiration for him increased a hundred fold."<sup>6</sup> Subhas Chandra judged C.R.Das as an astute politician, an idealist and a visionary. "He was clear-headed, his political instinct was sound and unerring and unlike the Mahatma he was fully conscious of the role he was to play in Indian politics. He knew, more than anyone else that situations favourable for wresting political power from the enemy do not come often and when they do come, they do not last long ... He was conscious of his exact role, namely that of a practical politician."<sup>7</sup>

The month after his release Subhas served as the Chairman of the reception committee of the All Bengal Youth Conference and advocated mass education, Swadeshi,

unity amongst different communities, removal of untouchability, prevention of early marriages, abolition of dowry, social service, discipline, upholding truth and justice everywhere. In the last week of 1922, the Congress session in Gaya was held under the presidentship of C.R.Das. There, Das resigned from presidentship as well as membership of the Congress on a dispute regarding the issue of contesting the elections to the legislatures which C.R.Das supported and Gandhi with his followers rejected. In a revolutionary struggle, Das thought, no point of vantage should be left in the hands of the enemy. Therefore, all elective seats in the legislatures, as also on the other bodies, he suggested, should be captured by Congressmen

Coming out of the Congress, C.R.Das with the backing of Motilal Nehru organized the Swaraj Party. The main aim of the Party was to fight for freedom from within the legislatures. Subhas Chandra Bose had to do his lot for the new Party. A journal 'Banglar Katha' and an English daily 'Forward' were started, to conduct propaganda for the new party. Subhas Chandra was appointed editor of the former and manager of the latter. As a loyal follower of Das, Subhas took a vigorous part in the activities of the Swaraj Party. He built up the 'Forward' as a powerful party organ. He also gradually earned a name as a youth leader. He formed the 'All Bengal Youth League' with himself as a president

The Swarajist policy aroused a great enthusiasm in Subhas. He believed that the policy of Gandhi's cooperation and compromise which seemed to be moderate in character was fruitless for attaining India's independence. He saw that the Swarajist policy of boycott, national education and Swadeshi was considered by Subhas to be effective than the policy of passive resistance under Gandhi. He always advocated active resistance. He never believed that the peaceful meetings, processions and demonstrations that had been held in the last few years would give the Indians their freedom. In spite of all demonstrations of the Indians and in spite of seventy thousand persons having gone to prison, the government could boast that they did not care if the general population in India were passively hostile. Such a deplorable situation of India's struggle for freedom

was expected from Gandhi's policy of passive resistance.

It was out of his faith in active resistance, Subhas joined the Swarajya Party of C.R.Das and Motilal Nehru. The Party came into existence as a protest against Gandhi's decision of suspending the civil disobedience movement at Bordoli in 1922 as a protest against violence at Chauri Chaura and for dispute between pro-changers and no-changers in connection with the council entry. The essence of the Swarajist policy was constitutional obstruction from within the legislatures. In 1924, the Swarajists by carrying the fight within legislatures were able to wreck the Constitution, in at least some of the provinces.

In 1924, in the Calcutta Municipal Corporation election, as the Swaraj Party's candidate Subhas Chandra returned unopposed and was appointed as its chief Executive officer. C.R.Das as its Mayor had full faith in the Executive officer who was able to earn name and fame of a conscientious administrator. The success of the Party in creating a spirit of resistance to the British government had become a thorn on the side of the government. A hasty and unjust policy of arrest was undertaken by the government and mass arrest were made in the early hours of October 25, 1924. Subhas Chandra was also unjustly arrested. The government made an unauthentic allegation to justify his arrest on a speculation that the brain behind a revolutionary conspiracy to overthrow the government was Subhas Chandra Bose. The unjust arrest created a wave of indignation throughout the country. C.R.Das was immensely angered and he remarked that Bose's arrest was a sheer brute force on the part of the bureaucracy. Bose's arrest proved that the government was run by oppression and injustice.

Though Subhas worked with C.R.Das as a trusted lieutenant of the latter so long as Das was alive, there was however a difference of opinion between them. Desbandhu's concept of Swaraj was Dominion Status, while Subhas believed in complete independence from the outset of his political career. He was opposed to Dominion Status because it would not satisfy the aspirations of the awakened masses of the country; it



would not stop India's financial exploitation by the British and there was nothing to warrant that Britain would give up her imperialist hegemony over India even after Dominion Status.

In spite of his strong objection to Dominion Status, Subhas Chandra Bose chose to acquiesce in it partly for the sake of party unity and partly for his regard for Desbandhu.<sup>8</sup>

As a Swarajist activist, Subhas Chandra "remained Das's right-hand man in all his multifarious activities and imbibed from him valuable lessons which were to serve him well in his public life."<sup>9</sup>

Before he came out of his imprisonment in Mandalay, Subhas lost his friend, philosopher and guide, Deshbandhu Chitta Ranjan Das on June 16, 1925. The news of C.R.Das's death was thundering Subhas who regarded that if the death is irreparable for the nation, it was cataclysmic appalling for the youth of Bengal. Desbandhu's death was to Subhas a national calamity.

The political ideas of C.R.Das had an important role in building of Subhas Chandra's political philosophy. Under Desbandhu's influence, Subhas became the standard bearer of radicalism and leftist thought in the Congress. Since his joining the national movement Desbandhu remained as Subhas's political preceptor and between 1921 and 1925 until the latter's death, Subhas Chandra was under his influence. "It was a period of political apprenticeship of Subhas Chandra — a transitional and formative period in the evolution of his political ideas, which, lying in a nebulous and incoherent state in his mind were to gradually develop and mature against the backdrop of Desbandhu's ideology."<sup>10</sup>

Subhas Chandra subscribed to the concept of unity envisaged by Desbandhu who formed the Swaraj Party not to divide the Congress, but to unite it on a firm basis. The concept of unity was a cardinal principle of Subhas Chandra, testified by the character of his Forward Bloc, which was initially, as he saw, within the Congress, to fight in the

name of the Congress. He also subscribed to his Guru's devotion to the Gandhian principle of non-violence non-cooperation which was envisaged in his Swaraj Party in his own form that non-violence should not be merely passive resistance, it should be active resistance. Desbandhu and Subhas's outlook tallied that any method of opposition should not be mild or passive in nature, it should be radical, active and forceful in action.

Hence Swarajism came into being. "It was a nationalist revolt against the spiritual and mystic character of the Gandhi cult. Ascetism and saintliness of the Mahatma transformed into an 'Avator' to a large number of people prone to supernationalism and mysticism. . . . Swarajism was a pragmatic protest against this irrationalism. . . . Swarajism was the first phase in the evolution of his theory of radicalism."<sup>11</sup>

Desbandhu inculcated in Subhas the necessity of international propaganda in favour of the Indian freedom movement. Subhas himself observed that it was the late Desbandhu who opened first his eyes to the necessity of making India known in other countries. Again Subhas subscribed to Desbandhu's idea that the world should be a federation of nations — a federation of human race and that India has a positive role to serve the cause of humanity. Notwithstanding these similarities, there were vital points of differences between the political ideas of Subhas Chandra and Desbandhu C.R.Das. While Desbandhu advocated for non-violence or civil disobedience movement, Subhas thought it not to be sufficient to win freedom from the British. He preferred militant struggle coupled with civil disobedience to get freedom. But it is to be acknowledged that such a radical idea possessed by Subhas Chandra had poured from Desbandhu's attitude as the latter always emphasized the idea of active resistance. Moreover, Desbandhu advocated for Dominion Status, while Subhas stood for complete independence. Thus any notion of imitation of Desbandhu's view point by Subhas Chandra can be ruled out. The influence of Desbandhu on Subhas Chandra merely served to lay the political foundation of the latter's ideology. The years, in which Subhas Chandra had close touch with Desbandhu served as a period of his political

apprenticeship. “But he had in no sense become a blind follower (of Desbandhu),” observes N.G.Jog, “and never tried to model his life on that of Das’s, or to cultivate his mannerisms, as some of the followers of Gandhi did. Despite his loyalty to Das, he retained his independence of outlook and judgement.”<sup>12</sup>

After spending long years of political apprenticeship under C R Das, his disciple, Subhas Chandra Bose emerged as an independent, vocal, mature and radical politician imbibing revolutionary radical ideas after the death of his guru. Under the spell of his radical revolutionary thought, he considered ‘Swaraj within one year’ – a promise of the Mahatma to be unpractical. He understood well that the passive resistance policy like compromise with the British Raj would no longer give freedom to India. The passing of the year 1921 without Swaraj was the great proof of his belief. Subhas was encouraged by the non-payment of taxes and civil disobedience programme launched by Gandhi, but was equally discouraged when Gandhi suspended the movement on the plea that at Chauri-Chaura violence had taken place contrary to the policy of non-violence. He again saw that no passive resistance would force the Raj to abdicate their imperialistic programme in India. He supported C R Das’s plan of capturing legislatures through election which the Mahatma and his supporters utterly disregarded. Subhas believed that capturing the legislatures, a plan of active resistance would be continued against the British Raj within the legislatures. C.R.Das in protest resigned the Presidentship of the Congress and formed the Swaraj Party. Das cleared the path of his plan of action and Subhas, the great disciple of C R.Das remained hand in hand with him. To Subhas, it seemed that a historic transformation was made by the formation of the Swaraj Party from passive resistance by the compromisers to active resistance against the British Raj by the no-compromisers.

Having been elected as a General Secretary of the Congress session in Madras, Subhas reached platform as an office bearer where he could afford an opportunity to establish his idea regarding the aim of the struggle. When the Nehru Committee drafted a

constitution, majority of the opinions was in favour of Dominion Status. But Subhas vehemently opposed the Dominion Status and pleaded for complete national independence. Subhas stood for an independent Federal Republic. "That is the ultimate goal which I have before me. India must fulfil her own destiny and cannot be content with colonial self-government or Dominion Home Rule."<sup>13</sup>

To Subhas, a compromising attitude like dominion status was harmful to the noble objective of the Indian struggle. He was prepared to resign the General Secretaryship of the Congress in protest of the Dominion Status and to organize separately the Independence of India League to fight for complete independence. Accordingly the Independence of India League was founded in November, 1928 to propagate complete independence as the goal of the Congress. Under the banner of the League, he revolted against the Mahatma's resolution on Dominion Status. He declared, "Even if Dominion Status is conceded today, we cannot accept it as a fulfillment of our national demand. We stand for Independence as our immediate objective .... We are not prepared to lower the flag of Independence even for one single day."<sup>14</sup>

The controversy over the objective of the draft constitution turned him into an activist and a pragmatist. Subhas believed that if the Indians were to create a new India once free, happy and great, they must want a philosophy of activism. Any kind of submission to Dominion Status would misguide the purpose of the freedom struggle. Thus he said at the Rangpur Political Conference on March 30, 1929, "The present year is a year of preparation. There is no doubt that in the Lahore Congress, the resolution for complete independence will be adopted."

Optimism made him to believe in complete independence. He always suggested and guided the younger nationalists to organize themselves within the Congress in order to carry on an active propaganda in the country in favour of complete independence. He wanted to build a temple of nationalism in India on sacred lease of sacrifice and was

prepared to accept gladly all kinds of suffering and torture in return of freedom of his motherland.

Subhas had strong belief that India, a nation of three hundred millions would no longer remain as slaves at their names, if the Indians applied all the available resources that they had at their command to force the British Raj to admit their right to be completely free. He was totally against the compromising attitude. He was rightly of opinion, "While striving to attain liberty we have to note all its implications. You can not free one half of your soul and keep the other half in bondage. You cannot introduce a light into a room and expect at the same time that some portion of it will remain dark."<sup>15</sup>

It was seen that day by day activism developed in Subhas Chandra's mindset on more and more radical revolutionary base. He was fully convinced that India would never get back her political power or be in a position to re-establish her political freedom if she could not bring about a radical change, a wholesale revolution in every sphere. Being inspired by an idea of active resistance, Subhas Chandra undoubtedly became a radical revolutionary. But during this period, Subhas never believed that a few bombs and pistols would bring freedom to India. A bomb and a pistol could bring terrorism, but never could bring revolution. To Subhas, revolution is born in the larger world of thought and literature. Thus it was necessary to bring a revolution in the mental world of the countrymen to bring the British rule in India to an end.

He emphasized on a radical revolution in his Presidential Address at the C.P. and Berar Students' Conference on December 1, 1929 at Amravati; "What we want, therefore, is an awakening from within, which will bring about a radical transformation of our life .... What is wanted is a transfiguration of our whole life -- a complete revolution, if you will. Do not fight shy of the word, 'revolution'.

As an active resistance to the British Raj and for attaining freedom of India from the Raj, Subhas believed that the Congress programme should be as follows :

“(1) Organisation of peasants workers on a socialistic programme.

(2) Organisation of youth into volunteer corps under strict discipline.

(3) Abolition of the caste system and the eradication of social and religious superstitions of all kinds.

(4) Organisation of women’s associations for getting our womenfolk to accept the gospel and work out the new programme.

(5) Intensive programme for boycott of British goods

(6) Creation of new literature for propagating new cult and programme.”<sup>16</sup>

Subhas Chandra Bose was determined that India must have complete independence in all its aspects, in all spheres of life. For, complete independence is like a lamp in a room which when kindled enlightens every nook and corner of the house.

Subhas was highly dissatisfied when the Civil Disobedience Movement was suspended even after it had reached the height of popularity. Subhas expressed his concern : “But the die has been cast. Suspension of the Civil Disobedience campaign for one month means virtually a permanent suspension because mass movement can not be created overnight.”<sup>17</sup> He was annoyed when the Gandhi-Irwin Pact (Delhi Pact) was signed in 1931. Because the Pact did not hold any single word of commitment on the point of the British Government on major issue of Swaraj.

Subhas considered such acts of the Congress to be a passive resistance. He rightly believed that no periodical compromise would be able to bring political freedom to the country. Subhas Chandra considered the periodical compromise as the greatest thorn in the flesh of India’s freedom. He was rightly of opinion that from the practical point of view such a compromise was impossible, because the British would in no way be prepared to hand over the government to the Indian people, because Britain would always think that if she were to hand over power and offer that if Indians refuse to help

them, then they would be in an awkward position. Therefore a practical compromise was impossible.

India should adopt an uncompromisingly militant plan of action for winning political freedom. On the other hand, Subhas also saw that a compromise between India and Great Britain could not be desirable. Because there was no social kinship between the two countries. There was hardly anything in common between the cultures of India and of Britain. When India was to Britain a supplier of raw materials and a consumer of British manufacturers, India aspired to be self-sufficient. The industrial progress of India therefore was against Britain's economic interest. India's freedom was totally against Britain's interests. Thus a compromise between India and Britain was unexpected for Britain though the Congress leaders aspired for it. "Therefore, in determining our future policy and plan, we should rule out, once for all, the prospect of periodical compromises."<sup>18</sup>

Subhas said that "a nationalist movement can succeed in paralyzing a foreign government only when either or all of the following steps are taken :

- (1) Prevention of tax and revenue collection.
- (2) Adoption of measures whereby help from other quarters — whether financial or military — may not reach the government in times of distress.
- (3) Winning over the sympathy and support of the present supporters of the British Government in India — that is, of the Army, the Police and Civil Servants — so that orders given by the Government for crushing the movement will not be carried out.
- (4) Actual attempt to seize power by force of arms.

The last step has to be ruled out, because the Congress is pledged to non-violence. But it is nevertheless possible to paralyze the present administration and compel it to

submit to our demands if we can adopt the following measures :

- (1) Prevent collection of tax and revenue.
- (2) Through labour and peasant organization prevent all kinds of help from reaching the Government when they are in difficulty.
- (3) Win the sympathy and support of the Government's own supporters by means of superior propaganda

If these three measures are adopted the Governmental machinery can be thrown out of gear. In the first place, they will have no money to meet the cost of administration. In the second place, the orders they may issue will not be carried out by their own officers. And, lastly, help sent to the Government from other quarters will not reach them.

There is no royal road to success in winning political freedom. The above three measures have to be adopted in part or in whole if victory is to be achieved. The Congress has failed, simply because it has not succeeded in giving effect satisfactorily to any of the above three measures<sup>19</sup>

Subhas was fully aware of the British propaganda against India. To him every Britisher was a born propagandist. Thus he felt that there was a need of both national and international propaganda which would be able to convince the world about the political domination, economic exploitation and inhuman acts of oppressions to prisoners by the British Raj in India and about the justification of India's claim to attain freedom. He believed that an active propaganda by India throughout the world would beat the hostile propaganda of Britain and inform the world of the real condition of India and her grievances against the British Raj. Subhas was determined in the need of radicalization of the Congress Party. For this there was a need of assembling all the radical elements and oppressed sections in the country under the banner. He also emphasized upon the



necessity of organizing youths, peasants, workers, women and students in the active politics so that they could proceed further in the path of complete independence. After unification of all these radical elements, the method of passive resistance and compromise and its bias for federation would be discarded and replaced by a militant line of action against the British.

Both Subhas Chandra Bose and Vithalbhai Patel were fiery politicians and ardent leftists. While they were in Vienna for medical treatment, they preached for revolutionary activism and opposed Gandhiji's method of passive resistance. Both Bose and Patel issued a joint manifesto in May 9, 1933 becoming furious on hearing of suspension of civil disobedience movement by Gandhiji in May, 1933.

"... The time has, therefore, come for a radical reorganization of the Congress on a new principle and with a new method. For bringing about this reorganization, a change of leadership is necessary, for it would be unfair to Mahatma Gandhi to evolve or work a programme and a method not consistent with his life-long principles. If the Congress, as a whole, can undergo this transformation, it would be the best course; failing that a new party will have to be formed within the Congress, composed of all the radical elements. Non-Cooperation cannot be given up, but the form of non-cooperation will have to be changed into a more militant one, and the fight for freedom is to be waged on all fronts."

The new party mentioned in the manifesto was coined 'Samyabadi Sangha'. To him, it would be a new party of determined men and women who would have a clear notion of the plan of action that would be necessary for the conquest of power and also of the programme which would be necessary for the reconstruction of the free India. Subhas planned the party to be a centralized and well-disciplined All India Party. "This party will have its representatives working in the Indian National Congress, in the All-India Trade Union Congress, in the Peasants' Organisations, in the student organizations, in the depressed classes' organizations and if necessary in the interest of the great cause, in the sectarian or communal organizations as well." This party would cooperate with the other parties working for the same end. "The Samyabadi Sangha will stand for all round

freedom for the Indian people — that is for social, economic and political freedom. It will wage a relentless war against bondage of every kind till the people can become really free. It will stand for political independence for India so that a new state can be created in Free India on the basis of the eternal principles of justice, equality and freedom. It will stand for the ultimate fulfillment of India's mission, so that India may be able to deliver to the world the message that has been her heritage through the past ages.”<sup>20</sup>

The Samyabadi Sangha was an important landmark in the evolution of active resistance ‘in his political thought from radicalism to revolutionary radicalism.”<sup>21</sup>

Subhas Chandra's dream of making a Free India by waging an uncompromising struggle against British imperialism was embodied in his concept of the new party mentioned above. After three days of his resignation from the Congress Presidency on April 29, 1939, Subhas announced the formation of a new party called the Forward Bloc on the model of his project of the Samyavadi Sangha.

To Subhas Chandra, the Congress had lacked progressive, radical and anti-imperialist elements. Though as an organization the Congress had failed, as Subhas Chandra saw, the noble cause could not be allowed to suffer. Hence there was a need of alternative leadership and an alternative organization not breaking the Congress but within the Congress. Consequently, the Forward Bloc came into existence in order to save the Congress from the clutches of the Right which, according to him, had given up the idea of a struggle and was ambiguously preaching for Constitutionalism and Reformism. Subhas firmly believed that only the Left could preserve the revolutionary character of the Congress and bring about an enthusiasm for the fight for national freedom. Thus Forward Bloc was a historical necessity.

The Forward Bloc was the expression of time-spirit. It was meant to give vocal expression to the vague feelings, hopes and aspirations which stirred the masses. If the Forward Bloc continued to be forward, everything would be well for the country and for itself. The foremost aim of the Bloc was complete political independence and the

establishment of a socialist state in India. Contrary to the passive role of the Congress, through the Forward Bloc, the people would equip themselves for the anti-imperialist struggle that would bring back India's freedom.

The first All India Conference of the Forward Bloc was held in Bombay on June 22, 1939. Constitution and its programmes were framed there. The Conference also assured full religious freedom to its members. But it was opposed to provincialism, communalism and corruption. In short, it aimed at restoring democracy within the Congress replacing the authoritarian policy of the Congress.

He launched a weekly journal named after the Party in August as the mouthpiece of the Forward Bloc. In his first editorial of August 6, 1939, he started a fierce attack on the Rightists' passivism of the Congress :

“The slogan of unity at any price and under all circumstances is a convenient slogan in the mouth of those who have lost dynamism and revolutionary urge. Let us not be led away by its fascinating appeal.... The Right wing today wants nothing less than complete surrender on the part of the Left.”

From its inception, Subhas Chandra promised to remain a loyal soldier of the Congress. The Forward Bloc was to work within the Congress. To be a member of the Forward Bloc, one must have membership of the Congress first. Even after his respect towards the Congress, he was expelled from the Bengal Pradesh Congress Committee for three years in August, 1939.

On September 3, 1939, the Second World War broke out. When Great Britain begged cooperation from the Congress, Subhas suggested not to cooperate, but to give an ultimatum to the British Government for its announcement of India's independence. He was of opinion that only free India could determine what her policy should be in the event of war. Whether war or no war, the immediate need of India was her independence

and she must have it. Bose's opinion was disregarded

Arranging a separate Anti-Imperialist Conference in October, 1939, Subhas Chandra reminded the nation that Britain's difficulty was India's opportunity. An All India Anti-Compromise Conference at Ramgarh (Bihar) was held on March 9, 1940 intending to focus all the anti-imperialist forces in the country. The Conference resolved that a country-wide Satyagraha against the war effort would be commenced. Once the struggle began, there was to be no rest, no break, no Chauri Chaura as in 1922, no Delhi Pact as in 1931, no side-tracking of the struggle, as happened in 1933 when the Harijan movement was launched. He was so optimistic that he foresaw a free India. He said at Ramgarh :

“The age of Imperialism is drawing to a close and the era of freedom, democracy and socialism looms ahead of us. India, therefore, stands today at one of the crossroads of history. It is for us to share, if we so will, the heritage that awaits the world.” He also warned the nation that a compromise with Imperialism would mean that an anti-imperialist nationalist struggle would soon be converted into a civil war among the people themselves.

In his presidential address of the second conference of the Forward Bloc held at Nagpur in June 1940, Subhas Chandra stated that the Bloc has successfully resisted the tendency towards constitutionalism and compromise within the rank of the Congress. The Bloc had also frustrated all attempts to secure the cooperation of the Congress in the war. The Bloc had been able to create an atmosphere of struggle moving the people away from compromise. “I realized in a trice that the Forward Bloc has caught the imagination of the masses.”<sup>22</sup>

It is to be noted that Subhas vehemently opposed the Federal Scheme embodied in the Government of India Act, 1935. Any compromise with British Imperialism over the Scheme would be a great danger to the cherished goal of India's independence. Rather

he said “ Our own path is clear. We are passing through the anti-imperialist phase of our movement. We have to rally all uncompromisingly anti-imperialist elements for the next move .... When Imperialism is ended, the Socialist phase of our movement will commence. Those who win power must undertake the task of post-struggle reconstruction.”<sup>23</sup>

In such a critical hour of the Great War in which Great Britain was to involve herself, the Congress had to force the Raj to declare India’s independence. To compel the Raj to do that the Congress should work with a dynamic spirit and prepare the country for all eventualities. Subhas felt a fighting mentality should be earned by the Congress. Militant nationalism seemed to be more effective and necessary than Constitutionalism.

He ironically blamed British for her hope of India’s help in the war. Simultaneously he also criticized the role of the Congress in this regard. In his editorial in the Forward Bloc, June 15, 1940, he wrote :

“Confronted with danger at home, the British Government now wants to fall back on India and her resources. As if an enslaved India, impoverished and exploited, can save imperialist England in the present crisis ! With a leadership that is seized with mental and moral paralysis and is determined not to embarrass British Imperialism, the outlook for India is indeed gloomy.”

In the same editorial, he also stated .

“Confronted with such an unprecedented crisis in our own history we say to our imperialist rulers with a full sense of responsibility : “We have accepted your challenge. You may do your worst but you will not succeed in resisting our march to Liberty.”

Subhas suggested the Indian people to go on with rallying cry – “All power to the Indian people.” This will galvanize the masses to action. In order to put forward this

demand in an effective and irresistible manner, the Indian people should leave no stone unturned in their effort to attain national unity.

The revolutionary radicalism of the Forward Bloc had received so popularity that it made Subhas Chandra Bose 'feel confident that before long' the Forward Bloc would 'be able to rejuvenate the Congress, restore to it its revolutionary character and role and resume the struggle for independence in the name of the Indian National Congress.'<sup>24</sup>

Subhas Chandra was again arrested on the eve of the Sirajuddaula Day to be observed by the Bengal Provincial Congress on July 3, 1940. This was his eleventh and last imprisonment in India. He was released on December 5, 1940 as he had commenced fast unto death. Though he was released, he was kept under house arrest. On the night of January 16, 1941, he made the historic escape from India to Europe through Afganistan.

Thereby the history of Bose's struggle at home for India's independence came to an end and his struggle for the same goal began in Europe and South-East Asia respectively.

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