

The Indian National Movement: Vision of Subhas Bose and Mahatma Gandhi in Retrospect

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Abstract: Both Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948) and Subhas Chandra Bose (1897-1945) are charismatic personalities, both played distinctive role in the Indian National Movement and earned laurels and reputation for their contribution in India's independence. The former is viewed as a "saint," the father of Indian national awakening, while the latter is seen as a "soldier" of Indian National Awakening, even called 'the father of Indian Revolution.'

Both indeed had a shared destiny; both worked towards raising mass consciousness of the Indian nation against the colonial rule. But their strategic style, thoughts and tactics were so different that it seems inconceivable to bring them together under any conceptual frame. Hence, despite a seeming communality in their dream of a free India, truly speaking, they were not partners-in-struggle, except for a very brief period. Rather as time passed along, they emerged as adversaries, with a differing vision of India : while Subhas Bose sprang more and more as a revolutionary in his strategic formulations as well as in his organizational frame fighting the perceived British enemy, Gandhi had been leaned towards an alignment with the British against a fellow nationalist traveller.

The paper takes a sympathetic view of the role perception of Subhas Bose in India's anti-colonial national struggle; it does so with no spite towards the other nationalist celebrity, Mahatma Gandhi, who had indeed left far more exalted, indelible mark in the history of mankind, though, it is viewed, in the narrower field of Indian national movement there seemed a conspicuous failure on his part to work in harmony and in reciprocity with a fellow traveller for a common cause of a free and united India. That would be a major actor in the international system.

Finally, the paper also draws a comparative parallel in their ultimate destiny. Bose, the revolutionary, gave his life in a fatal

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accident, before he could complete his 'assignment of history'; Gandhi, the votary of *ahimsa* and non-violence, did negotiate a relatively peaceful end to colonial rule; but the process saw the division of India into two entities, though he himself became a victim of *himsa* and violence in a India that honoured him as 'Father of the Nation,' and the new India created saw both its physique and soul divided. Bose, who had envisioned an India free in harmony and unison had to wait even in ashes half a century to be officially recognized as a "patriot of patriots", with a reversal of "wrong assessment" made of him by a whole generation of leadership of truncated India. It is time that Bose gets his due share of honour in all the South Asian countries which he had envisioned to keep together in struggle as well as in peace.

Introduction

The National Movement in India saw the advent of a number of political celebrities who earned laurels and reputation for their distinctive roles in the anti-colonial struggle. Some of them even have established images of their own as "charismatics," perceived as heroes by their respective following. The most prominent of them are, first, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, popularly known as Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948) and, second, Subhas Chandra Bose (1897-1945). While Gandhi has been viewed as the father of Indian national awakening, Bose is seen as 'the father of Indian Revolution' (Das, 83 : Preface; Bose and Sinha, 1979 : Foreword, 72). Dick Wilson, a distinguished Western analyst, sought to project Gandhi as the "saint" and termed Subhas Bose as "the soldier" of Indian National Movement (Wilson, 72 : 406), though in terms of strategic vision i.e. policy, strategy and tactics, they were different in the course they charted and they had different destinies, too.

Indeed, some Gandhi enthusiasts not only call him 'Farher of the Nation' but also credit him for launching a movement which converted "Indian nationalism from an

intellectual middle class into a revolutionary mass struggle" (Panikkar, 63 : 179). The Mahatma, no doubt, symbolized the aspirations of the multitude of the India's impoverished people and is still projected internationally by many as one of the visionaries of peace. Bose, on the other hand, a philosopher cum revolutionary, to many, provided "hope in an age of disillusionment" over India's future and is acclaimed as "a paragan celebrity of the universe of 20th Century chronicle" (Kumar, 92, I : Preface).

In manner and political style, ideology and action, Bose's life was packed with drama and daring events. For this reason as well as for his self-sacrificing spirit, his personality was perceived as the most attractive of all the nationalist leaders of that time and his reputation in some places even rivalled that of Gandhi himself (Toye, 84: 43).

It may be true that both Gandhi and Bose had a shared destiny, a dream of a liberated India; both worked towards raising mass consciousness of the Indian nation against the colonial rule. But their strategic style, thoughts and tactics were so different that it seems inconcievable to bring them together under any conceptual frame¹. Hence, despite a seeming commonality in their dream of a free India, truly speaking, they were not partners-in-struggle, except for a very brief period. Rather as time passed along, they emerged as adversaries, with a differing vision of India : while Subhas Bose sprang more and more as a revolutionary in his strategic formulations as well as in his organizational frame fighting the perceived British enemy, Gandhi had been leaned towards an alignment with the other side of the barricade i.e. with the British empire-builders against a fellow nationalist traveller, although both presumably were wedded to the cause of India's independence.

The paper takes a sympathetic view of the role perception of Subhas Bose in India's anti-colonial national struggle; it does so with no spite towards the other nationalist celebrity, Mahatma Gandhi, who had indeed left far more exalted, indelible mark in the history of mankind, though, it is viewed, in the narrower field of Indian national movement there seems a conspicuous failure on his part to work in harmony and in reciprocity with a fellow traveller for a common cause of a free and united India that could secure far itself an honourable place in the comity of nations.

Negative Image of Bose

It has to be conceded that there was no universal admiration for Subhas Bose. Bose was viewed as "the roaring tiger of Bengal" who provided the Indian nation their true emblem of emancipation [Safrani, 93 : 38] and "the most revered and the most feared leader" in the nationalist struggle who was perceived by the Indian youth as "the idol of their aspiration" (Anand, 85: 149). Such a view of Bose was not, however, universal. Some analysts tend to view him as "a dynamic advocate of violence" (Hutheesing, 70 : 138) — as an 'arch-rebel' against the British *raj* who "tolerated no rebellion against himself" (Toye, 84: 177).

A more recent Western analyst called him "a gifted though a volatile politician" of India's liberation movement who sought to build up "an alternative tradition ... of militarisation of politics and of the infusion of nationalism with military values" (Robinson, 89 : 166, 183). There was indeed an element of truth in the last view, since Bose did portend through large-scale mobilization of forces, political and military, an alternative to the prevailing pattern of struggle for India's independence. His story may be viewed as the story of India of his time, given the constraints of the

political environment within which he had to operate; it was also the story of the most critical moments of India's national struggle in which Bose found himself embattled against some of his own compatriots like Mahatma Gandhi who, presumably, were co-fighters for the same cause.

It is imperative to appraise their differing lineage and ideological roots so that the contrasting nature of their vision, their strategic style and plan of action can be placed in their proper perspective.

Gandhi and Bose: Differing Lineage and Ideologies

Gandhi, who guided the destiny of the INC for nearly 28 years, was a Bar-at-Law, trained in the British School. He had his semi-feudal antecedents, having been born in the midst of a Bania family at Porbandar in Kathiawad peninsula and his father Karamchand Gandhi served as Diwan in Porbandar, Rajkot and Venkaner princely states². His later simplicity and self-control notwithstanding, this little feudal background of Gandhi continued to colour his dream and destiny of India. Indeed, Gandhi appeared quite ego-centric, as he allowed organizations such as 'Gandhi Sangh' to evolve and himself did not hesitate to suggest that "*Gandhi may die but Gandhism will live forever*" (Italics original) [Sitaramayya, 43 : 37 (note 4)].

Bose's attitude towards life and the world, on the other hand, had been largely shaped by the intellectual and political climate of Bengal and India. He had a pride in the Indian nation, which was combined with his pride in Bengal's cultural achievements, but this did not prevent him from a great open-mindedness towards the world beyond [Voigt, 87 : 24].

A Cambridge graduate in philosophy with a First Class, Bose qualified for, and joined, the much-coveted Indian Civil Service (ICS), as was desired by his father, but to his father's disappointment³, he became the first Indian to resign from the ICS (April 1921), which, to quote from Nirad Chaudhuri, "all middle Class Indians regarded as the highest worldly prize" (Chaudhuri, 87 : 473). Soon he returned to India to offer himself at the feet of Mahatma Gandhi, then supreme leader of the Indian National Congress (INC) and the 'godfather' of the Indian National Movement. While the pleasant personality of Gandhi fascinated him, a seeming absence of a clear perspective in Gandhi's plan of action for India's liberation had disappointed him, even had left him completely bewildered.

The very first encounter turned out as a 'fateful meeting' between Gandhi and Bose, which set the tenor for their subsequent relations. For Bose came to view the Gandhi's *satyagraha* or passive resistance was no more than "a political warfare based on the principle of maximum suffering for ourselves and minimum suffering for our opponents" (Das, 83 : Appx. II, 348). The Gandhian strategy, Bose thought, could hardly succeed without active resistance waged on all fronts, though Gandhi had his different thoughts for his strategic leanings.

"Gandhian ideology," in essence, consisted of *ahimsa* (non-violence), *satyagraha* and/or civil disobedience, which were combined with tactics such as *maum* (silence), *hartal* (strike), non-payment of taxes, fasting, picketing and boycott [Patil, 83 : 133-144 (Note 2); Sitaramayya, 43 : 188-232]. Gandhi felt that all these were interrelated. As an exponent of *ahimsa*, he firmly rejected revolutionary notions of struggle, as the words 'fight' and 'defeat' do not fit in the

satyagrahi's political vocabulary. Constructive programme, such as inherent in the *ahimsa* symbol of the spinning wheel (calling for home-spun simplicity of life and self-purification), he believed, could only ensure ultimate success⁴.

Secondly, Gandhi placed a greater emphasis on internal aspect of India's socio-political problem than on the external or colonial imposition. He was fully convinced that India's problems such as the question of Hindu-Muslim unity, prohibition, and the abolition of untouchability are impossible without non-violence. It was strongly viewed that Without the spinning wheel [*chakra*], without the Hindu-Muslim unity, and without the abolition of untouchability there can be no civil disobedience. Civil disobedience presupposes willing obedience of our self-imposed rules, and without it civil disobedience would be a cruel joke [See Kalam, 97 : Appendix 7].

In the socio-economic field as a whole Gandhi was opposed to family planning, setting up of big industries, while emphasizing cottage industries such as *charka* and a system free enterprise [Huq, 85 : 9 (note 5)].

In essence, Gandhi, to many, was backward-looking, since he sought to combine politics and religion, which he saw as "no more apart from each other than body and soul" [Sitaramayya, 43 : 234]. He stood for *Hind Swaraj* (India's Home Rule), which was to be achieved by raising individual's consciousness against British colonialism; but unconcerned about feelings of other religious communities of India he also viewed cow as "a poem on piety," typified as "the entire subhuman world... worshipped as the mother to millions" (Sitaramayya, 43 : 236). He had his inspiration from *Bhagavata Gita* in his mission to recreate an Indian

Nation, what he called *Ramarajya*, an ideal state or utopia being the "kingdom" of the legendary Rama. Gandhism sought to rediscover the whole plan of ancient structure of Hindu Dharma and planned propagation "of an old thought in a new garb" (Sitaramayya, 43 : 40). All this, together with his living style of a Hindu *yogi* and *sanyasi* (ascetic), and his use of terminologies such as *asram* (shelter for the destitutes), *Satyagraha*, *harijana* (untouchables), and such other alphabets of struggle, taken from Hinduism not only did not have much appeal for very many of his Muslim countrymen but also alienated most radicals from the mainstream of Indian politics.⁵

It seems that Gandhi's ideal state conceivably was of an asymmetric order, based on a sort of cultural hegemonism, with a mystical politico-religious combination and his strategy of *satyagraha* or *ahimsa* were intrinsically related. Though he called his strategy "a different and higher weapon" in his struggle against the British, in reality he sought to work out an accommodation of the indigenous socio-political forces with colonial regime. Gandhi's utopia of *Ramarajya* appeared somewhat hegemonic and his praxis of accommodation was perceived as a useful method for organizing the Indian masses in favour of the hegemonic goals of the dominant community. In the whole strategic scenario Gandhi merely featured as a tragic tool of that dominant community of the Indian society (Ahmed, 93).

Gandhi's critics even felt that Gandhism stood for nothing but "rejection of civilization and reason." There was also a popular notion that he sought "to re-establish Hinduism"; in politics and in practice, it was suggested that Gandhism "came to stand for very little else but a concealed mass of atavistic aspirations and prejudices" (Chaudhuri, 51 : 440-41).

Bose's Political Engagement: C.R. Das and Tagore Connections

Bose began his political career in 1921 as an apprentice of C. R. Das, who had opted for a life of relative poverty and nationalist agitation, by giving up his highly lucrative legal practice. He admired Das's self-sacrificing example as well as his fiery brand of nationalism—whose base was Bengal.⁶ The Bengal base of Das's nationalism and its secular content made a deep impression on Bose : "Whether Hindu, Musalman or Christian a Bengali is a Bengali for all that", as Das wrote. "He has a distinct temperament of his own and a distinct religion. He has a place in the world and a mission to perform. A Bengali must become a true Bengali."⁷

Such a broad nationalist, secular bias of thinking made a deep impact on Bose's political career. Soon he earned the confidence of C R Das and moved to the centre of Congress activities in Calcutta, having been concurrently placed in charge of several Congress organs. Because they were in active agitation against the British, Bose and his political *guru* C.R. Das, were jailed for six months in December 1921 for their part in the civil disobedience movement. They spent much of their imprisonment together, shared their dissatisfaction with, and indignation over, general policy of the Indian National congress (INC), as it withdrew from the civil disobedience movement in 1922. At that time both the leaders found it most difficult to work in close harmony with the Congress. It was a moment of contemplation for both the leaders about the future course of their action. Both the leaders, then bent on launching a greater anti-colonial struggle in Bengal, got the opportunity to chart out the future of India's political movement.

In 1924 at the age of only twenty-seven, Bose was elected Chief Executive Officer of the Calcutta Corporation, while Das became its Mayor and Hussein Shaheed Suhrawardy its Deputy Mayor. The three of them worked as a team and together they worked hard to introduce dramatic changes in Calcutta : they reduced their own salaries, renamed streets and public places after nationalist heroes, popularized home-made *khaddar* dresses, introduced free primary education, improved social welfare and public health-care services⁸.

Bose was not, unlike Gandhi, a believer in any escapist philosophy but a revolutionary who was drawn "to politics inspired by the love of his country and mankind."⁹ His nationalist credentials did not keep him free for long, and he suffered almost intermittently, often in poor health, in British jails (which virtually became his second home) until May 1927 when he was released unconditionally, and in November, fit enough to be drawn back to political life, Bose was elected Chairman of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee. Soon his early philosophic humility and mysticism gave way to oratory and political outburst. He began to draw enthusiastic and packed nationalist audiences whose "acclamation had for him the sound of popular sanction. The chanting and cheering audiences also gave him "strength, eloquence and confidence". "A subject race", echoing his roaring voice, "has nothing but politics. There is no power on earth which can keep India in bondage any longer."¹⁰

Bose was also forced to spend almost the entire period from 1932 to 1938 in prison or in Europe; yet his charisma as a self-sacrificing leader continually began to rise and twice he was elected as President of the INC, defeating on the

second occasion a protégé of Gandhi. He was later expelled from the INC for his staunchly anti-British views. Yet he felt so confident about the ultimate success of his mission of India's liberation that he was prompted to escape from his confinement in a dramatic fashion so as to drum up mass support in his home province, Bengal, and throughout India, as well as mobilizing international support.

It may be mentioned that Subhas Bose also enjoyed both deep affection and admiration of Tagore. After his resignation from the ICS Bose had journeyed back home from England in the same ship with Tagore. Since then Tagore had shown an enduring affection for Bose; the world poet had never failed to extend his blessings to all the designs charted by Bose¹¹.

Apart from C R Das and Tagore, Bose was also influenced by Karl Haushofer, whom he visited in 1934, and praised as a 'friend of India' (Voigt, 87: 24), who, in his turn was influenced by another very distinguished Bengali scholar, Benoy Kumar Sarkar (1887-1949)¹², famous for his geo-political ideas, whose concept of a 'League of Oppressed Nations' had been taken up by Haushofer. Indeed, the teachings of Sarkar exercised a strong influence on the younger generation of the time (Voigt, 87: 24).

With such influences upon him and the frame of his struggle it was natural that Bose would be critical of the Gandhian approach to struggle. He saw himself on the side of modern values, reason, science and against the most deplorable traits of an enfeebled India, which, it was felt, Gandhian school was exploiting. Analyzing India's predicament in the comity of nations, he underscored the need to bring forward the cause of its current decline in the

material and political sphere. It was her 'inordinate belief', as he perceived, in the fate and in the supernatural—her indifference to modern scientific development—her backwardness in the science of modern warfare, the peaceful contentment engendered by her latter-day political philosophers and their "adherence to *Ahimsa* (Non-Violence) carried to the most absurd length" (Gordon, 79 : 262) — that engendered her. That possibly was the reason why Bose was bitterly critical of the Gandhian philosophic approach to the whole notion of struggle.

Bose's Destiny of Struggle

Bose's struggle consisted of a nationalist phase—directed against British imperialism, and an inter-class phase, or an internal struggle directed against "all privileges, distinctions and vested interests", against the "appalling poverty" and illiteracy of his countrymen (Ghosh, 69 : 194; Das, 83 : 186). Both the phases were to go hand in hand, but given the humiliations imposed on the Indian nation by a foreign colonial power, an emphasis was naturally laid on the phase of anti-imperialistic or nationalistic struggle.

Bose was not as a narrow nationalist, however. He seems to have had a broad vision and his approach to regional problems and international relations had been shaped to a considerable extent by geo-political ideas. The deification of India as the mother and the glamour attached to sacrifice for the motherland constituted the main trends of Bose's strategic thought and contributed to the development of his concept of nationalism. India featured in his thought not as a mere territory but as a spiritual being, "a living thing. It is the mother in whom you move and have your

being" (Das, 63 : 313). Freedom and independence of India was his supreme political aspiration-the *policy* destiny or ultimate aspiration, which was to determine the entire framework of his strategic conduct in the course of the anti-colonial struggle.

In undertaking such a task Bose was armed with the doctrine of synthesis of Sri Ramakrishna, the sincere devotion and kind soul of Swami Vivekananda and the activist stance of C. R. Das. he had, as well, been converted to the revolutionary ideals of Sri Aurobindo and had the full blessings showered upon him as a national leader (*Deshanayaka*) by the very farsighted world-poet Tagore. Naturally his strategic line and thought represented as the diffused but "the only distinctive, independent and alternative current in India's national politics" which is able to compete "with the major current led by Mahatma Gandhi" (Bose and Sinha, 1979 : Foreword; Shailen Dey, 89, II : 78; Bose, 69 : 154).

However, Bose's struggle was not, as he argued, for India alone but his cause was that of oppressed humanity. He perceived the Indian independence struggle with a historical Pan-Asian perspective and mentioned the idea of the spiritual affinity of the oppressed nations of the world (Voigt, 87 : 229). There was perhaps an element of an abstraction in such a stance, but his strategy was a militant one, that is of *direct action* or violence against foreign imperialism and a de-human approach adopted by the colonial regime against Indian nation, and that made him an ardent advocate of radical approach and of revolution, as against Gandhi's plea for moderation and negotiated settlement based on constitutional methods. Bose sought to arouse consciousness of power among the Indian people and

exhorted all people to be prepared for *dharmayuddha* i.e. making sacrifice for a righteous cause, as he likened patriotic struggle to a spiritual goal. It was this strategic approach which made him for no good reason a subject of bitter controversy in Indian politics in the late 1930s and 1940s (Das, 63 : 314-17, 340).

Secondly, Bose was of firm view that no country could win its independence without any sacrifice and without fighting a war in which international support or foreign assistance is to be an essential element. This was integral to his notion of strategic struggle.

Bose sought to win "the fullest confidence" of his countrymen, including Gandhi himself, in his judgement of the international affairs and fully devoted himself "for enhancing India's prestige before the world and for advancing the cause of India's freedom"¹³. Unencumbered by any sentimentalism such as inherent in Nehru's anti-Axis foreign policy posture, Bose's means and methods were destined to be different from those of the INC hierarchy : he wanted to take the maximum advantage of Britain's difficulties and hence was bent on launching a gigantic movement to attain his objective of India's liberation (Bose and Sinha, 79 : 112; Das, 83 : 318; Anand, 85 : 148).

Even if the INC was to commit itself to a confrontational course against the British, Bose came to the conclusion from his own analysis that all the efforts of the Indians themselves may not be sufficient to expel the British and therefore he wanted to rouse international public opinion in favour of India's liberation movement. He was of the view that India must exploit an *opportune international situation* and seek foreign help to drive out Britain from India. He welcomed the possibility of international conflict because that would

offer *an opportune moment* to strike a blow to Britain in Europe and would weaken her grasp on India (Shailen Dey, 89, II : 41).

Contrasting Political Frame and Strategic Style

Bose was impatient to launch a movement against 'a handful of Englishmen' who continue to rule and exploit India and hence desired a clear understanding of the details—the successive stages—of Gandhi's plan leading on step by step to the ultimate seizure of power in India. Having seen the spontaneity of the people's struggle in non-cooperation and civil disobedience against the British *raj*, he was convinced that while the country was ready for the battle "the leaders were not", as he felt that Gandhi had no "clear idea of the successive stages of the campaign which would bring India to her cherished goal of freedom" (Toye, 84 : 23, 44-45; Baus, II, 83 : 31).

At this point the salient points of difference between the two nationalist leaders of India's freedom movement needs to be addressed a little more. Gandhi, of course with his habitual patience, believed not in any revolutionary plan but in *ahimsa* or non-violence. Bose agreed with Gandhi on the ultimate objective of India's independence, but had fundamental differences with him on the strategy or method of achieving the objective as much as in time-frame: "With the Mahatma, non-violence was a living creed; with Subhas, it was an article of faith that the use of force was necessary to dislodge the alien ruler from Indian soil" (S A Ayer quoted in Das, 83 : 93). It was almost "a question of faith" for Gandhi that "Swaraj would be won within one year", whereas Bose felt it as highly unreal and he personally was prepared to work for a much longer period.

C. R. Das, equally a critic of Gandhi, yet projects his personality in somewhat different but unequivocal terms : "The Mahatma opens campaign in brilliant fashion, he works it up with unerring skill, he moves from success to success till [he] reaches the zenith of his campaign, but after that he loses his nerve and begins to falter" (quoted in Shailen Dey, 1389, II : 409).

Gandhi was viewed by independent scholars as 'an eclectic' who borrowed his ideology and method of action from varied sources and went on improvising them as and when his movement gathered momentum or lost them as the case might be. The very vagueness of his intentions sometimes proved to be an asset, because his opponents were kept guessing; but such vagueness precluded him from taking suitable or timely action. India, however, had to pay dearly more often for this sheer lack of planning and forethought by its premier leader, although this very nebulous state of his mind and thought gave even his failures a mystical penumbra which his acolytes never failed to capitalise for their own selfish ends. From the beginning Bose, however, felt that there "was a deplorable lack of clarity in the plan which the Mahatma had formulated and that he himself did not have a clear idea of the successive stages of the campaign which would bring India to her cherished goal of freedom" (Sinha, 64 : 61-62).

Bose, Gandhi and the Hindu-Muslim Question

On the issue of national unity against a common external enemy, which Gandhi had emphasized, neither had he any clear plan how to unite the two dominant communities of India in a common platform. Bose was clearly inclined towards the guideline of C R Das; the latter, a pragmatic

nationalist leader, had realized that to be an effective leader in Bengal he would require support of the Muslims, who were the majority community in the province. In 1923 he worked out with the Muslim leadership a provisional accord, later called the Bengal Pact. It offered to reserve 60 per cent of all new appointments for the Muslims till such time as they achieved proper representation according to their population ratio. He even went further in respect of the Calcutta Corporation and offered to reserve 80 per cent of the new appointments to the Muslims on similar terms. Das went on to declare that "so long as the Musalmans were not properly represented in public life and in the services, there could be no true democracy in Bengal"—a declaration that "impressed not only Bengal but the whole of India..." (Maulana Abul Kalam Azad quoted, in Gordon, 79 : 195; Sinha, 64 : 130).

Bose not only fully endorsed Das's pact with the Muslim leadership but regretted that the INC had rejected the pact on the plea that "it showed partiality for the Muslims and violated the principles of Nationalism" (quoted in Sinha 64 : 130). Indeed, Bose did not hesitate to acknowledge his indebtedness to Das and candidly stated in his acceptance speech as elected Mayor of Calcutta : "I have tried to follow the torch that he held aloft for the nation with all the reckless abandon of which a sentimental Bengali is capable" (Gordon, 79 : 246).

Bose's election in 1938 as the INC President was supported by Gandhi himself, despite his ideological differences with Bose. That was the only moment when there was a perceptible convergence of interests of the two leaders. But Gandhi's support for Bose's candidature at the time was based only on the premise that the latter, with his 'secular approach' and his acceptability to the Muslims,

would be able to arrest the mounting tide of communalism in India (Das, 63 : 164). In aspiring for the top INC leadership position Bose himself also confidently knew about his capabilities. And once elected he assured the Muslims that they had "nothing to fear in the event of India winning her freedom—on the contrary they have everything to gain" (Bose, n. d. : 16).

Bose even entered into correspondence with Jinnah for the purpose of resolving the communal question once and for all as well as for marshalling Hindu-Muslim joint demands in his anti-colonial struggle. But by that time he was already ousted from the Congress itself, which was perhaps a prelude to his removal "from the political scene in India and his dream of a united India was belied" (Das, 63 : 164; Prasad, 86, 154).

Gandhi himself may perhaps be seen as non-communal in his personal approach, but he often allowed himself to be swayed by various communal forces, thereby indirectly helping to sow the seeds of separatism in Indian socio-political life (Sinha, 64 : 131, 179). This created a separation image of Gandhi, which is very different from that of Bose.

Bose worked with his brother, Sarat Chandra Bose, then leader of the Congress in the provincial legislature in Bengal, to bring about Hindu-Muslim understanding, leading to a coalition government with *Krishak Praja* Party headed by A.K. Fazlul Huq; but Gandhi, then under tremendous influence of the *Marwaris* headed by Ghansayadas Birla who dreaded any kind of Hindu-Muslim understanding as a threat to their economic dominance, was opposed to Hindu-Muslim coalition arrangement in Bengal¹⁴ (Chaudhuri, 1401: 149-50).

Bose, Gandhi and the Anti-colonial National Struggle

So long as he was in the INC Bose wanted to see it developed into a mass-based political organization able to articulate and marshal all the energies of the nation for the attainment of the goal of India's freedom. Hence he firmly believed that India's independence was to be won by the development of the INC organization into a parallel government, with each department and instrument of administration to be duplicated by the Congress. He wanted India to be a republic and its future constitution to be republican. He rejected Dominion Status, Gandhi seems interested in, as he was concerned that it would merely help the British to perpetuate their imperialist and capitalist interests in India (Toye, 84 : 32; Das, 63 : 319).

Indeed, such a stance on the part of Bose compelled Gandhi himself, to move a resolution in 1929 at the Lahore session of the Congress which defined INC objective as 'complete independence' Prasad, 62 : 111. And Gandhi was content with that and that remained his ultimate objective, not the political or economic structure of the future India's independent entity.

As for the external outlook, only Bose and the Gandhi adherent Nehru were the two INC leaders who were imbued with a world outlook, as they both kept themselves abreast of all developments in international affairs and both attempted to set up some kind of relationship between the Indian nationalist movement and the international situation, though between them they had qualitative differences (Chaudhuri, 87 : 543). Nehru's attitude towards the Nazi and fascist dictators was somewhat similar to that of the typical English leftists. His problem was that he was always

suggesting a "deteriorating international situation without being very definite about what worried him" (Chaudhuri, 87: 543).

To Bose, the Munich crisis and the respite in its aftermath seemed to offer the first opportunity to prepare for the grand occasion of seizing India's independence from the British. Indeed, it was in November 1938 that Bose started to propagate his much-debated plan : the INC should demand independence by confronting the British with an ultimatum. If independence was not granted within a period of six months, India should arm itself for a 'national war of independence' (Voigt, 87 : 25).

In a plan of action presented to Gandhi and Nehru on 21 December 1938, Bose sought to skillfully combine the concept of exploiting a crisis with constitutional procedures with the application of Gandhian *satyagraha*. As a first step, Bose advocated that the INC members should join as partners of the government in the provinces of Bengal, Punjab and Sind, so that it could claim the right to speak for the whole of India. Then, at the next Congress in Tripuri, they could demand full independence from Britain.

As Bose saw it, confronted with an international crisis, London could hardly reject such a demand outright. Should, however the British response turn out to be negative or insufficient, a *satyagraha* movement would be launched after proper warning. Since Britain could hardly afford such a conflict in India during an international crisis, the movement would most probably lead to an Anglo-Indian peace conference and a positive resolution of the British colonial question in India. Any other option, Bose felt, would be suicidal.

It was no doubt a 'dreadful' option, one of the 'most Machiavellian character', yet it was consistent with India's classical doctrine of '*mandala*'-- 'enemy's enemy is friend'--that had covered inter- state relations in the past. Bose felt, somewhat frantically, that such a strategic option should be revived again, that "it must be done. It is our only way out. India must gain her independence, cost what may be" (Shailen Dey, 89,II : 97; Bhakari, 81 : 138-139).

The Axis Powers, whose support he sought for India's liberation, would be doing no favour to India as, mere "commonsense should tell... that the most natural thing for the enemies of British Imperialism is to support India's demand for liberty" (quoted in Ghosh, 69 : 138-39).

It seems obvious that Bose's efforts to declare assistance from the Axis Powers was a *tactical component* of his strategy of direct action against the perceived colonial enemy and in his overall policy consideration for India's independence. Such a tactical approach did not mean the acceptance of the fascist political ideology as his own (Ghosh, 69 : 138).

However, Gandhi was unwilling to apply *satyagraha* to extract concessions from the adversary during a period of international emergency (Voigt, 87: 25-26). He viewed the Axis Powers as greater evil and threat than the British colonialists.

Gandhi once stated that he was "out to destroy this satanic [British] Government"; yet in the course of the Second World War he categorically placed his "sympathies with England and France from the purely humanitarian standpoint". For, as he said, he

could not contemplate, without being stirred to the very depth, the destruction of London which had hitherto been regarded as impregnable. As I was picturing... the House of Parliament and the Westminster Abbey and their possible destruction, I broke down. I have become disconsolate.

... I am not, therefore, just now thinking of India's deliverance. It will come but will it be worth, if England and France fail or if they come out victorious over Germany ruined and humbled? (quoted in Shailen Dey, 1389, II : 36-38).

Similarly, Nehru, the leading Gandhi supporter, who had "a heart union" with Gandhi which "no intellectual differences can break", viewed that "The Japanese must be resisted... In spite of all that has happened, we are not going to embarrass the British war effort in India..." (Shailen Dey, 89, II: 273). Bose certainly had tremendous personal respect for both Gandhi and Nehru, but his character was such that he had never allowed uncritical loyalty to cloud his political judgement (Sinha, 64 : 178).

Bose's point was that India under Gandhi's leadership also collaborated with the Western democracies during the First World war; the return she was offered not freedom but the brutal massacres of Zalinwalabagh. Moreover, while Britain did drag India to the Second World War she herself declared on the Axis powers but the Indian opinion on that war itself was never taken into account (Sinha, 64 : 178).

From his readings of "the history of revolutions all over the world" he sought to discover the methods which had enabled other nations to obtain freedom. But I had not found a single instance in which an enslaved people had won freedom without foreign help of some sort. In 1940 I read my history once again, and once again, I came to the conclusion that history did not furnish a single instance

where freedom had been won without help of some sort from abroad¹⁵.

In its foreign policy orientation, the INC was under the grip of influence of both Gandhi and Nehru. Both of them sought to negotiate with Britain and denounced the Axis alliance in no uncertain terms. Thus Bose was cold-shouldered by the INC, which had manifestly adopted an anti-Fascist, or rather pro-British approach and had betrayed even the essence of Gandhi's own *satyagraha* strategy. Not only was Bose isolated in the INC for his views and forced by the same lobby to resign, but he was also expelled unceremoniously; even the Bengal Pradesh Committee which had backed him up was also banned and immobilised. Bose felt outraged with the speed and manner of his expulsion from the INC. It was in sheer disgust and remorse he stated in Delhi on 12 October 1939 that he was "opposed to Hitlerism whether in India, within the Congress of any other country" (quoted in Das, 69 : 338).

Bose was also critical of Gandhi, because the latter hovered between his two roles, political leader and world teacher, because he tended to trust the British, not a fellow traveller, was unwilling to seek international help and, above all, had no comprehensive plan of action for Free India (Toye, 84 : 48). Thus a perception of mutual antipathy had developed between the two critical players of the Indian liberation struggle against the British colonial authorities.

Gandhi's Personal Antagonism: Bose's INC Presidentship

In fact, Bose and Gandhi's adversarial relationship became extended at the level of personality. Bose was elected INC President for a second term on 29 January 1939

at the Tripuri Congress, against the wishes of the Congress hierarchy led by Gandhi (Sarkar, 83 : 372). Gandhi first tried to convince Nehru to take over the INC Presidentship for a second term, but the latter refused. Then acting upon Gandhi's instructions, Patel urged Bose to step aside in favour of Congress historian Pattabhi Sitaramayya. Bose knew that he had the support of student, worker, and peasant delegates of the All-India Congress Committee, and hence he decided to fight to retain his position. It was the first contested presidential election in INC history and in the end Gandhi's candidate was defeated by Bose, with massive majorities in Bengal and substantial leads in Kerala, Karnatak, Tamilnadu, U. P. and Assam. The former immediately made the election issue a matter of personal prestige by declaring Sitaramayya's defeat to "more mine than his" (Sarkar, 83 : 372-73; Wolpert, 82 : 327).

The difference between the two leaders also surfaced over the nomination of a new Working Committee of the INC. As per the INC Constitution, the INC President nominates the Working Committee, but a controversy had been created over the matter by the Pandit Pant resolution passed at the Tripuri Congress, which provides *inter alia* that the Working Committee should be formed in accordance with the wishes of Gandhiji and it should command his implicit confidence.¹⁶

The controversy actually involved basic difference between the two over selection of persons in the new Working Committee, and more importantly, over the principle of policy continuity. Bose viewed that to "ensure the continuity of policy, majority of old committee members may remain. But in a vast country like India, the highest executive of the Congress should not be made the close

reserve of a group of individuals." Bose indeed wanted some changes in the Committee "every year under the normal circumstances" so that the Committee may develop dynamism with the inclusion of fresh blood. Considering the serious and critical times ahead, he felt that the INC "must pool all our resources and pull our whole weight if we are to emerge triumphant out of the external crisis that is fast overtaking us."

To this end, Bose advocated the abandonment of traditional approach of 'homogeneity' as inherent in the selection of INC Working Committee members on the basis of their traditional loyalty or subservience to particular rank of leadership; he preferred "a strong cabinet with a dynamic urge", with an inclusion of representatives of different shades of opinion in the Congress, which may appear heterogeneous in a composite cabinet but may nevertheless contribute "in power and in potency" (see Kalam, 97 : Appendix 7).

Whatever may have been Gandhi's objectives or ultimate mission, it was obvious that he was absolutely unwilling to accept the continued leadership of Bose, a man whose ideas were so antagonistic to his own. Hence he persuaded ten out of the twelve members of the INC Working Committee (exceptions were Sarat Bose and Nehru) to refuse to serve with Bose, and thus the latter was forced to resign. Bose's successor as INC President was Rajendra Prasad, who gave the Bengal seats on the INC executive to the factions opposing Bose and the latter was also removed from the post of President of Bengal Pradesh Congress Committee. Given such a raw deal Bose's reply was the formation of the 'Forward Bloc' inside the INC to "rally all radical and anti-imperialistic progressive elements in the country" and

the organisation of protest demonstrations against INC hierarchy decisions. The reply of the INC hierarchy included debarring Bose from all INC office for three years on the ground of 'grave indiscipline', and, alleging financial malpractice, the INC Command also disbanded the Bengal Pradesh Congress Committee and handed control of its affairs to an ad hoc committee, from which all of Bose's sympathies were excluded (Broomfield, 68 : 308; Sarkar, 83: 374; Khan, 61 : 6).

It was only natural for Bose to view with great anguish that the "entire intellect of the Congress has been mortgaged to one man"-- Gandhi, whose programme of non-violence and civil disobedience had only met a "self-confessed failure" (Shailen Dey, I, 1389 : 38; Broomfield, 68 : 302).

It was so obvious that the Gandhi adherents, with their somewhat feudal loyalty to a single person leadership, sought to ensure Gandhi's sole control or guardianship of the Congress, while Bose was to be a mere figurehead as the INC President. Nevertheless, Bose made frantic effort to "win the confidence of India's greatest man" so as to turn his electoral victory into meaningful direction or at least to work out a compromise with Gandhi¹⁷ (Sarkar, 83 : 374). Having failed to win that confidence or to work out a rapprochement, as Gandhi was not prepared for any kind of reconciliation, he felt deeply frustrated in pursuing his policy objective (Voigt, 87 : 26). "Ordinarily", Bose said, "Mahatmaji's word is law to me, but where the principles are involved, I sometimes feel unable to accept his advice or suggestion." (see Kalam, 97 : Appendix 7).

Eventually, as Bose found it impossible to function effectively as per the INC constitution as an elected President of the Party, he chose to resign, unwilling to compromise

his principle or to play a surrogate role. Rather, he suffered the stiff disciplinary action of being expelled from the INC. Even the Gandhi loyalist Nehru, who did not hesitate to call the form as 'the permanent super-President' of the Congress (quoted, in Khan, 61 : 3), viewed such a step as 'very unusual' against an ex-President (Basu, II, 83 : 192- 93; Prasad, 62 : 109; Gupta, 82 : 176, 178).

Some of the subsequent conscientious but politically alert Indian scholars chose to call Gandhi 'an autocrat' who "for the most part of his political career in India" sought principally to neutralize opposition to whatever he thought was correct, both at the personal and group or party level. Gandhi was also known to be "allergic ... to independence of thought and action... and supported by his obedient acolytes, he did not hesitate to strike at anybody who dared to oppose him and his ideas with all the subtlety at his command and, if required, with complete ruthlessness" (Sinha, 64 : 103).

Bose was not, of course, the only nationalist leader who had to face high-handedness of the INC hierarchy and suffered the fate of expulsion from the Congress¹⁸. But his expulsion was "unquestionably the most glaring" and "the most shameful instance" in this connection, especially when one recalls his immense sufferings in the hands of the colonial authorities as well as his incomparable sacrifices in the interest of nationalist struggle in India (Sinha, 64 : 103, 112). The falling out of the two leaders was thus complete.

External Aspect of Rivalry: Bose's 'Great Escape' and INA Leadership

Ever since the outbreak of the Second World War, Bose displayed his great impatience with the efforts of the

Congress hierarchy led by Gandhi, to reach a negotiated settlement with the British. He thought that the British defeat in the Second World War or possible break-up of the British Empire in its aftermath might offer the best opportunity for India's independence as well as unity. When in March 1940 the Congress met in its annual session at Ramgarh, Bose held a conference of his followers at the same time and place, called the "Anti-Compromise Conference", to protest against the INC policy and began fighting the British without waiting for a call from the Congress. Inevitably, he was taken to custody by the British authority but was released by them after a short while.

The last major political conference in which Bose participated as a free person Bengal was in Dhaka (25 May 1940), where he renewed his call to his countrymen, Muslims as well as Hindus, "to prepare for the final assault on the British Power" (Anand, 85 : 148; Bose and Sinha, 79; Shailen Dey, I, 1339 : 495).

Bose's arrest sooner for alleged 'seditious activities' thereafter angered the leadership of both the communities of Bengal, provoking the Chief Minister of Bengal, A. K. Fazlul Huq, to publicly condemn British action against Bose and to assert with deep affection and admiration : "We love Subhas. We respect him and all of us admire him, too. He is the one most popular in the rank of political leadership of the country" (Shailen Dey, I, 1389 : 500). It was only the INC leadership which remained silent, apparently offering tacit support to the repressive policy pursued by the British authorities toward Bose.

During his "Great Escape" in January 1941, Bose slipped out of his house and made his way to Germany via Afghanistan and the USSR. He himself saw his leanings

towards the Axis Alliance as a 'hazardous mission' and his sole object was the expulsion of the British from India; in this case, foregoing his personal ego he stated, if he had any triumph he would share that with Gandhiji and the Indian people (Toye, 84 : 118-119). Indeed, at no stage did he show any loss of his personal esteem for the Mahatma.

It was Bose who protested like a wounded tiger the exhibition in Europe of a propaganda film demeaning the Bengali and Indian nation and depicting an ugly projection of Gandhiji himself (enjoying a ball-dance in his half-nude, tattered dress with an embracing English woman). It was also Bose who demonstrated a distinctive audacity to protest Hitler's projection in a radio address of positive side of British rule in India, forcing the Fuhrer to withdraw his address, admitting his mistake¹⁹.

During the war and the period of his exile, Bose himself was received with full dignity and honour wherever he went as Head of the Azad Hind Government. He chose to attend the Greater East Asia Conference (held in Tokyo under the Japanese tutelage on 5-6 November 1943) merely as an observer, not as a participant, so as to avoid any implication of a clientele status, he was not prepared to commit himself to and certainly without ascertaining the wishes and full consent of the Indian people (Ghosh, 69 : 161). Even the Japanese suggestion at that Conference of Bose being 'all-in-all in Free India' provoked a sharp response from him, as he asserted "that Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Nehru and Maulana Azad are the fittest, the ablest and the trusted persons to form the Government. I am but a servant of theirs. I am just doing from the Far East what they are doing in India" (quoted from Hayashida, Das, 83 : 288-89).

Despite their ideological differences, Bose even did not

fail to recognize Gandhi as the 'Father of the Nation' and seek his blessings while starting his new career as Commander-in-Chief of the INA, the vanguard of the liberation force fighting the British colonial authorities in India (Sarkar, 83 : 410). While subsequent scholars did not fail to note "the innumerable bungling (sic) and vacillations" of Gandhi, who was "mortally frightened of revolution", and Bose himself was hounded out of the INC by Gandhi, yet Bose lived up to his standard till the very end. One of the INA brigades was christened as Gandhi Brigade in recognition of Gandhi as 'Father of the Nation' (Gupta, 82 : 119, 163-164).

But there were many in the rank of the INC hierarchy who looked upon British rule as "an act of Providence" and genuinely believed that only through the British connection India would finally regain her national independence, her economic and social salvation (Sinha, 64 : 2). Nehru, for instance, of late a Gandhi convert, was 'terribly disturbed' by Bose's anti-colonial manoeuvre from abroad and felt convinced "that victory for the Allied nations was vital for world freedom" (Hutheesing, 70 : 173). Bose was opposed by this pro-Gandhi section of the Congress leadership, for he not only did not share their notions, but totally abhorred the whole system of British colonial subjugation and was determined to attain national salvation through anti-colonial national liberation struggle. Neither Gandhi himself nor his protégés ever reciprocated the demonstrated esteem of Bose for the INC leadership.

'Alliance in Post-mortem': Utilizing Mantle of Bose's Image

It was only after the sad demise of Bose and during the INA trials that the INC leadership sought to utilize the mantle of Bose's image to serve their ends. That almost looked like

'an alliance in post mortem'. The mood of revolt in India during the INA trials, involving a Hindu, a Muslim and a Sikh (R.K. Sahgal, Shah Nawaz, Gurbaksh Singh Dhillon) that had spread across political platform was to demonstrate the impact that Bose would have in Indian consciousness. The trial itself became a *cause celebre*, as only then the heroic story of the INA began to unfold itself to the Indian nation (Sahgal, 93 : 23) and the sudden awakening that it had created brought the country to what was suggested as "the edge of a volcano" (Perderel Moon quoted, Sarkar, 83 : 418). From the very day of the trial of the INA officers they were seen as outstanding heroes and public sentiments rose to an extraordinary height. INA poems, portraits, photographs and emblems appeared everywhere (Thorner, 80 : 97).

Above all, Bose's leadership in the Indian freedom struggle then catapulted him to dizzy heights of fame, not attained by any other leader in the same struggle. By then he became idol of the Indian masses. It was hence pointed out that Gandhi-Nehru and almost the entire batch of Congress leadership felt envious of Bose's popularity, "ran halter skelter to pay homage to him, and thus refurbish their broken image"... (Gupta, 82 : 181).

Even Gandhi, who had once called Subhas Bose 'a spoilt child' (Shailen Dey, I, 1389 : 491), now wrote about Bose in glowing terms : "Netaji's name is one to conjure with. His patriotism is second to none. His bravery shines through all his action" (quoted in, Gordon, 79 : 290), Bose indeed became a greater hero in death than he had ever been perceived in life.

During the INA trials also the political moderate Nehru²⁰, who had put his barrister's gown on after a lapse

of 25 years and joined the prominent team of lawyers defending the INA veterans, felt provoked to state that "it was India's duty to 'revolt' and if the country was not prepared for a revolution to free itself it was a dead nation" (cit., Ghosh, 69, 215). Bose's position on revolution was thus redeemed and the British simply could not afford to confront such an exalted mood of a revolutionary nation and found little option but to work out a plan so as to quit India.

It was so obvious that "for the Gandhian Congress," as Chaudhuri, a bitter critic of Bose, wrote (Chaudhuri, 99), "Subhas Bose provided a windfall by his death. If he lived and come back to India he would have swept the opinion in the whole country to his side, and for the Congress not to have identified itself with him would have been suicide".

It may also be noted that, it was during the period of the trial that the leadership across political platforms had been emphasizing Hindu-Muslim unity and for the first time since 1921 the Congress as well as Muslim League flag were marching and cruising side by side in popular protests from Calcutta to Karachi to give vent to a sense of common destiny, so much desired by Bose. It was 'the hypnotism' of the INA, wrote Gandhi himself, that had cast its spell on all Indians, irrespective of ethno-religious differences (quoted, Ghosh, 69, 224). "The catalytic agent in this case", wrote *The New York Times*, "was the Indian National Army, organized by a Japanese collaborator named Subhas Chandra Bose..." (cit., Ghosh, 69, 222). In the course of the INA trials, the British themselves felt convinced that "they could no longer rely on the (Indian) armed forces unless the political problem of India was satisfactorily solved" and hence they swiftly moved the process of transfer to power (Azad, 88 : 142).

The spirit of patriotic fervour and unity among most segments of Indians demonstrated during the INA trials could not, however, be sustained or rather had been lost in leadership and power squabble in the subsequent period. In the process the quest for India's unity, alongside its freedom and independence, had been abandoned. And Bose's mission to attain social justice, secularism and communal harmony had remained a far cry in the whole of the subcontinent.

Nevertheless, it may sound ironic but it is indeed true that, while after Bose's sad demise the revolutionary mantle of his image had been fully used in the subsequent years by his political opponents within the Indian national movement for promoting their political ends, he actually suffered persecution from the Gandhi-led INC. It hardly needs reminding that Bose himself was elected twice as President of that organization (but had to resign under pressure and was later unceremoniously expelled) and presumably a co-fighter in a common cause against foreign colonialism. He was subject of still greater persecution by the British colonial authorities for what he believed and consistently worked for as a valiant fighter--India's unity and independence; yet the INC under Gandhi did not support his cause; rather it chose to side with the colonialists.

Conclusions

By precept and style Bose's struggle was directed against an intruding, alien power; but, regrettable as it may seem, he was at odds with the main current of the Indian National Movement, the INC that was led by Gandhi. In style and ideas Bose was seen so different from those of Gandhi that the latter chose to treat him as a 'spoilt child'

who did not deserve any support, despite a similarity of their cause. That seemed surprising. Even independent foreign scholars did not fail to notice the manner in which Bose had been hounded out of the INC and the malice with which he had been treated by Gandhi. Thus Michael Edwardes wrote : "Gandhi now [during the critical period of anti-colonial struggle turned the technique of Non-co-operation, not against the British, but against Congress's own president..." (quoted in Shailen Dey, I, 1389 : 39).

Given a convergence in British policy of persecution toward Bose and Gandhiji's seeming attitude of malice toward the same person who presumably was a co-fighter in the anti-British nationalist cause, Ellen Wilkinson even went further and remarked that Mahatma Gandhi was "the best policeman the Britisher had in India" to implement or execute colonial notion of law and order or legality (quoted in Sinha, 64 : 121).

Bose sacrificed everything for what he thought was a noble cause, the cause of India's unity and independence. He failed to see the fruition of his vision, the vision that the Indian nation should become one single unified and free community, leaving aside the artificial division of people on the basis of language, region or religion, but the failure was contrived by his opponents. Yet even the darkest hour of defeat and surrender of Japan did not disillusion him, as he asserted, like Gen. de Ganlle of France, that "the darkest hour precedes the dawn", that "Japan's surrender was not India's surrender", that the latter had only lost the first round, and that the justness of India's liberation was such that it was "bound to prevail in the long run" (Toye, 84 : Appx. ii, 224; also quoted in Das, 83 : 292). This kind of revolutionary fervour did not simply feature in Gandhi's strategic planning.

Indeed, there was never any real intimacy between Gandhi and Bose, despite the political marriage of 1938 when Bose was elected to the INC presidency, with Gandhi's approval. If Gandhi had any influence on Bose it was perhaps a negative one, as they had different utopia and vision, and the course of politics they charted were also all too different. Their mutual antipathy had a long history. To quote from Nirad Chaudhuri :

For over sixteen years Subhas Bose presented himself as an alternative... to Gandhi and they remained side by side in the nationalist movement like the tiger and the elephant in the jungle, for just as Bose could not overlook Gandhi's national and international stature, Gandhi too could not disregard the status of Bengal in the nationalist movement and that of her representative. This kind of symbiosis, achieved leaving each other well alone, seemed to be coming to an end with Gandhi's support for Bose. At last Bose was to be drawn into the mainstream of the movement led by Gandhi. He was, for a short spell; but the two fell out very soon....

The break (between the two) was *fatal* for Bose, and very injurious to Bengal. It led to his miserable death in 1945, brought a greater estrangement between Bengal and India, and finally completed the eclipse of Bengal in Indian politics [and partition of India itself] (Chaudhuri, 87 : 501) (emphasis added).

Bose's ouster from the Congress and his attempted political diminution deliberately pursued by the INC leadership under Gandhi had the effect of providing upper hand to the communal forces within and beyond Congress, paving the way for the subsequent partition of India (Toye, 84 : 92). Bose himself did not care much about what was fatal for him as an individual, given his personal commitment to the unity of Bengal and liberation of an undivided India, but his disappearance and subsequent accidental death and demise was quite fatal to the integrity of

both Bengal and India as well as to the economic and social well-being of their people.

In external affairs, as is well-known, Bose's grand design involved co-ordination of all nationalist forces within India as well as those from without in a versatile politico-diplomatic framework of action, involving a strategy of direct action and combining it with multifarious tactics; the idea was to convert the anti-British liberation struggle into a gigantic national movement, powerful enough to overthrow the colonial administration of Great Britain, thereby attaining the ultimate policy objective of an independent India. Bose himself had pinned his hope on an anti-British popular revolt in India with the appearance of the liberation army on India's eastern border. But the Congress leadership had totally different allegiance to the other side of the barricade, and hence Bose's campaign plan (involving a frontal 'battle for Chittagong and the gateway to Eastern Bengal' resulting in the so-called Arakan and Imphal campaigns) of a successful offensive from the "rear base" had been aborted.

Given the exalted revolutionary mood of the whole Indian nation and patriotic consciousness raised, as demonstrated during the Red Fort trial (Allen, in Bond, 91 : 235), it seemed certain that the history of the region would have been completely re-written in a different fashion if Bose with his mission could have returned to India to complete his 'assignment of history' (Bose and Sinha, 79 : Foreword). Had Bose been alive and active after the termination of the Second World War, he would have fought the partition of the subcontinent to the bitter end, conveniently agreed to by the leadership on either side of the communal divide. Already planning to seek Soviet support for India's liberation, Bose also would have done his utmost to arrive at

a satisfactory political settlement with his fellow Muslim countrymen on the just and durable basis of sharing political power in an united and independent India. As a C.R. Das loyalist he had both the background, competence, wide-ranging popularity and the contour of personality to fulfil such a mission, for that was the essence of the Hindu-Muslim problem, and certainly he could have frustrated the heinous ambitions of all enemies of India to see to the division of the country. Gandhi was quite far from being equipped to cope with such a grand nationalist assignment.

History has its irony. Bose was a revolutionary who gave his life in a fatal accident, before he could complete his 'assignment of history'. Gandhi was the exponent of *ahimsa* and non-violence and he did negotiate with the British a relatively peaceful end to colonial rule; but the process saw the division of India into two entities, though in its aftermath he himself became a victim of *himsa* and violence in an India that honoured him as 'Father of the Nation.' However, it was an India that saw both its physique and soul divided. Bose, who had envisioned an India free in harmony and unison, had to wait even in ashes half a century to be officially recognized as a "patriot of patriots," with a reversal of "wrong assessment" made of him by a whole generation of leadership of truncated India. It is time that Bose gets his due share of honour and due impact in policy making in all the South Asian countries which he had envisioned to keep together in struggle as well as in peace as an honourable member of the international community.

Notes

1. For somewhat different view see P.S. Ramu, *Gandhi-Subhas and 'Quit-India'* (Delhi : S.S Publishers, 1995)
2. Dr S. H. Patil, *Gandhi and Swaraj* (New Delhi : Deep and Deep Publications, 1983), pp. 9-13.

3. Bose's father, Janakinath Bose, was a very conscientious and public-spirited lawyer of high reputation, the first elected Chairman of the Cuttack Municipality (1901). His public positions include membership of the Bengal Legislative Council (1912). He was honoured by the British with the title of 'Rai Bahadur'. Initially he felt a little disappointed about Bose's resignation from the ICS, but soon he became reconciled to the ideals of his brilliant son and had learnt to be proud of the distinguished rebel he had become. In fact, Janakinath Bose not only had resigned his official position but also had even given up his title in 1930 as a gesture of protest against the British policy of repression and alleged maltreatment of nationalist prisoners (Toye, 84 : 41; also Basu, I, 80 : 4-5, 316).
4. For further enunciation of the doctrine of *ahimsa* and *satyagraha*, see Dr B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, *Gandhi and Gandhism (A Study)* (Allahabad : Kitabistan, 1943); Dr S.H. Patil, *Gandhi and Swaraj* (New Delhi : Dee and Deep publications, 1983).
5. Azizul Huq, "Politics in Bangladesh Conflict and Confusion", *Foreign Affairs Report*, Vol. xxxv, No. 1 (January 1985), pp. 3,9.
6. J. H. Broomfield, *Elite Conflict in a Plural Society : Twentieth Century Bengal* (Berkeley : University of California Press, 1968), p. 208.
7. Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 220.
8. Subhaschandra Basu, *Samagra Rachanabali*, Part II (Calcutta : Anada Publishers Private Limited, 1983), (Bengali), pp. 54-55; Toye, *op. cit.*, p. 29.
9. Hari Hara Das, *Subhas Chandra Bose and the Indian National Movement* (New Delhi : Sterling Publishers Private Limited, 1963), pp. 312-13.
10. Toye, *op. cit.*, p. 34.
11. At one stage during the political turmoil in the Congress involving Bose and Gandhi Tagore intervened, seeking to bring about a rapprochement. Even he wrote to Gandhi drawing his attention to the fact that "some rude hands have deeply hurt Bengal with an ungracious persistence". Tagore passionately requested Gandhi to "apply without delay balm to the wound with your own kind hands

and prevent it from festering." (see Das, 69 : 175-76). When Bose was forced to resign from the INC Tagore suggested that it was merely a temporary defeat which once would lead to permanent victory. After his 'great escape' Bose sought Tagore's blessings and Tagore wrote rendering his full support to the efforts of the country's 'revered leader' (Basu, 82 : 54, 258; Shailen dey, I, 1389 : 472-73, 477; Basu, 82 : 54, 258; Shailen Dey, I, 1389 : 472-73, 477).

12. Born in Maldah, Binoy Kumar Sarkar's ancestral home was in Dhaka. With an exceptionally brilliant academic background, he also so refused to join the Indian Civil Service for which he qualified and chose of join the *Swadeshi* movement. Between 1914-1925 he went around the world and taught in many foreign universities. Eventually he settled in Calcutta, where he served the Calcutta University as a professor of economics from 1925 until his death in 1949.
13. 'Subhas Chandra Bose to Mahatma Gandhi', *The Oracle*, vol, xvi, No. 1 (January 1994), p. 3.
14. Chaudhuri, "Mahatma Gandhi-O-Subhas Chandra Basu", *op. cit.*, pp. 149-150
15. "Subhas Chandra Bose to Mahatma Gandhi", *The Oracle*, *op. cit.*, p. 5.
16. Pandit Pant, Premier of the United Provinces (UP) and a follower of Gandhi, submitted a resolution in the Tripuri Congress (March 1939) which assured Gandhi the sole leadership of the party and called upon the Congress President to chose the leaders in the Working Committee in such a manner that Gandhi would agree to it. This resolution tied Bose's hands, which was contrary to INC constitution, and if he accepted it he would have to bow to the leadership of Gandhi and if he rejected it he would be isolated. Having witnessed from a stretcher already how his resolution on a 'national demand' was replaced by one of J. P. Narayan, calling merely for the convening of a Constituent Assembly to replace the Act of 1935 or strengthening of the party organs, the ailing Bose sought to give up his position as the INC President, having made a futile attempt to work out a rapprochement or reconciliation with Gandhi (Voigt, 87 : 26).

17. See, "Gandhi, Congress and the Resignation of President Bose, A Report, 1939" (Document), Kalam, 97 : Appendix 7.
18. Other notable names in the category included Srinivasa Iyengar, the President of the Congress who was expelled in 1926, and . F. Nariman, the outstanding Congress leader of Bombay, who could have been expected to become the first Chief Minister of the province after the 1937 general elections. Both of them were also made to leave the Congress for their independence of mind and their courage to call Gandhi's ideas and action in question.
19. In 1934 when Bose was in Munich the local branch of the Nazi Party decided to host a municipal reception in honour of Bose. On the day preceding the reception, Hitler in a radio address, praised the system of British rule in India. In disgust Bose refused to join in the reception, stating that "Hitler is at liberty to lick British boots", but he himself would be unwilling to attend any reception offered by his (Hitler's) party. The world was indeed amazed to know the audacity of the Bengali revolutionary but Hitler at the end did actually withdraw his views (Shailen Dey, 1389, II : 102-103).
20. Jawaharlal Nehru, though a close adherent, and Bose at times were close allies and worked hand in hand; but the former had contradictions and high leadership ambitions. Nehru, like Bose had socialist leanings and also nominally shared much of his views on violence against the colonial *raj*. In fact, though known as an avowedly Gandhian in his political approach, nonviolence as a political creed had never fully appealed to Nehru, who once wrote to the Mahatma, "For myself, I delight in warfare" (quoted, Tonker, 66 : 224). Despite this lip-service and empathy shown in the course of the INA trials, Nehru was somewhat envious of Bose's aspiration in leadership position and indeed there was also a degree of difference in the 'ideological tie' : in spite of all his opposition to British rule, Nehru still cherished with British parliamentary democracy, whereas Bose was more keen on role playing as a leader like Mustapha Kemal Pasha. Similarly, if "for Nehru it was ultimately a question of receiving independence from Britain, Bose was firm in wresting it from Britain by force" (Voigt, 87 : 25).

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