

**STRATEGY OF SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE IN THE FREEDOM
STRUGGLE OF INDIA WITH REFERENCE TO HIS ALLIANCE WITH
THE AXIS POWERS (1897-1945)**

**Thesis submitted to Pondicherry University in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the award of the degree of**

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
IN
HISTORY**

**By
BITHIN THAKUR**

**Under the guidance of
Professor VENKATA RAGHOTHAM
Professor & Head, Department of History**



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PONDICHERY UNIVERSITY
PONDICHERY
DECEMBER 2011**



Professor Venkata Raghotham, Ph.D. (Hawaii)
Professor & Head
Department of History
Pondicherry University
Pondicherry – 605014

CERTIFICATE

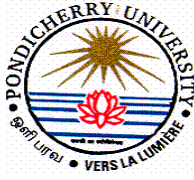
This is to certify that the thesis entitled, “**Strategy of Subhas Chandra Bose in the Freedom Struggle of India with reference to his Alliance with the Axis Powers (1897-1945)**” submitted to Pondicherry University in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History is a record of original research work done by **Shri. Bithin Thakur** during the period of his study 2006-2011 in the Department of History, Pondicherry University, under my supervision and Guidance and that the thesis has not formed the basis for the award of any Degree/Diploma/Associateship/Fellowship or any other similar titles before.

Place: Pondicherry

Date: 06.12.11

Guide & Supervisor

Professor Venkata Raghotham



Bithin Thakur
Ph.D. Student
Department of History
Pondicherry University
Pondicherry – 605014

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the thesis entitled, “**Strategy of Subhas Chandra Bose in the Freedom Struggle of India with reference to his Alliance with the Axis Powers (1897-1945)**” submitted to Pondicherry University in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Award of the degree of **DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY in HISTORY** is a record of original research work done by me, under the supervision and Guidance of **Professor Venkata Raghotham**, during the period of my study 2006 - 2011 in the Department of History, Pondicherry University and the thesis has not formed the basis for the award of any degree/ Diploma/ Associateship/ Fellowship or any other similar titles before.

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Bithin Thakur

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Abbreviation

AICC	All India Congress Committee
AITUC	All India Trade Union Congress
BAA	Burma Area Army
BBC	British Broadcast Corporation
BNA	Burma National Army; successor to the BIA or Burma Independence Army
BPCC	Bengal Provincial Congress Committee
DNB	German News Bureau
ECO	Emergency Commissioned Officer
FIPG	Free India Provisional Government
GHO	General Headquarter
GOC	General Office in Commanding
GOI	Government of India
ICS	Indian Civil Service
IGHQ	Imperial General Headquarters
IIL	Indian Independence League
INA	Indian National Army
ISEAS	Institute of Southeast Asian Studies
NBTI	National Book Trust of India
NCO	Non-Commissioned Officer
NRB	Netaji Research Bureau
SOE	Special Operation Executive
YMA	Young Malays Association

CHAPTER I

Introduction

Nationalism has undoubtedly been one of those intriguing processes that have invoked formidable social and political forces in the world since its first use in the French Revolution of 1789-1799 as a rallying cry for unity and defence against the enemies of the La Patrie. The response of the subjugated states in Africa and Asia to European nationalism and expansion was given full expression in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries and culminated in the independence of various countries in these continents. Even if the European model of nationalism was one of myths and idealizations, the response that it evoked in colonial-nationalism was even more complex. One such model of colonial-nationalism that developed in reaction to British rule could be observed in colonial India in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The first official contact between the English and the Indian subcontinent occurred in 1615 when representatives of the East India Company paid their first visit to the court of the still-powerful Mughal Emperor of India. It was from this footing that the East India Company established itself as a major economic force in the Indian subcontinent, later developed into a powerbroker in the rapidly disintegrating Mughal Empire in the early eighteenth century and finally became the arbiter of the fates of the post-Mughal states.

The first recorded massive revolt, between indigenous group's hostile to the East India Company and its Indian allies, which took place in 1857, is considered by most of the historians as the first struggle for Indian freedom which actually made a great sensation among the British. There were only a few states that did not answer to the Company politically and economically. The Indian National Congress (hereafter INC or Congress) was formed in 1885. Later, the INC became the main organization that carried forward the Indian national movement for freedom. In the Congress there were conflicts between two groups known as the extremists and moderates. The organization was at its best in the beginning of twentieth century under the leadership of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (hereafter Gandhi). In 1921, like many others, Subhas Chandra Bose (hereafter Bose) joined the Congress fascinated by Gandhi and due to his passion for the liberation of the country. He found that it was not possible

to achieve his goal of liberating the country in his own way by being in the INC due to ideological and radical differences with dominant leaders. This compelled him to continue his fight from outside the country, seeking help from Germany, Italy and Russia; in which he was not quite successful. Finally he joined hands with Japan which helped him in reshaping the Indian National Army and made successful efforts to enter the North Eastern part of India fighting against the British Army with Japanese collaboration. But it went in vain due to the defeat of Japan in the Second World War.

It is to be noted that Bose made a successful effort to gain popularity among Indian populace and inspired many of the younger generation to follow his path. But he was considered notorious by the British as he became a real threat for the ruling British, which was not the case with many other Indian leaders. The narrative and analysis of the thesis focuses on other pivotal events too; which includes the declaration of the death of Bose in the alleged plane crash in Taiwan (Formosa) on 18th August 1945 and the trial of Indian National Army personnel. Many of these events have become fiercely contested grounds between historians. The nationalist historians have maintained that there existed a monolithic anti-colonialist movement as exemplified by the INC while others oppose that claim.

This thesis looks at the life and activities of the controversial Indian nationalist revolutionary leader Bose during the period between 1921 and 1945. Attempts are made to examine the attitude of Indian political leaders towards Bose and bring forward the ideological differences between Indian leaders during the freedom movement that forced Bose to continue his struggle for the country from outside the country. The thesis argues that it was the activities of Indian revolutionaries like Bose and their theory of revolutionary violence that the British really feared, as those were possible forces that could cause serious damage to the stability of the British Empire in the Indian subcontinent, during a period when the non-violent civil disobedience style anti-colonial agitation of the INC was in its peak.

The thesis critically analyses the strategy and role played by Bose during the freedom movement of India in India and abroad. It makes an attempt to examine the reasons for Germany and Japan supporting the efforts in forming the INA through

military assistance programme and his strategies and its limitations by a case study of his struggle for India's freedom.

Objectives of the study

- To provide the political context of Indian nationalist scene during the formation of INC.
- To examine the ideological differences of dominant members of the Indian National Congress during the freedom movement.
- To analyse the role played by Bose during the freedom movement of India.
- To examine the various circumstances that led Bose to make alliance with Japan rather than Germany and the USSR.
- To examine the reasons why Bose was being supported by Germany and Japan in reshaping INA through economic and military assistance program.
- To critically examine the trial of INA officers considering them as deserters.
- To examine how far Japan had given assistance to Bose in his fight for freedom and how far his visit to the Andaman and Nicobar islands in 1943 had made any difference in the lives of the people of the islands which were under the Japanese regime.
- To analyse the reasons why Indian government was very keen to declare Bose's death without any proper investigation.

Methodology

- The researcher has used primary and secondary sources in the thesis and has used analytical and eclectic methods.

Sources for the Research

This research is based on a good deal of primary and secondary sources that are available in many languages, namely English, Hindi, Bangla, Tamil and Japanese. The twelve volume of *Netaji collected work* published by The Netaji Research Bureau of Kolkata is a good primary source for the research apart from the unfinished autobiography of Bose, *An Indian Pilgrim*, which is a basic source for the study of his

early life. Netaji Research Bureau of Kolkata has a number of manuscripts which facilitate better research. The National Library: Calcutta, National Archives of India: New Delhi, Teen Murti Bhavan: New Delhi provides enormous research material including primary and secondary sources. There is a vast and diverse collection of secondary sources for the study across the country.

Historiography

In contemporary Indian history, serious researches on Bose are rare. Most of the eminent historians who have written about him have discussed about the mystery of his death and political biography rather than his ideology and strategy in the freedom struggle of India. Research is usually done on him from two perspectives. The school of national historians understates his role in freedom struggle or picture him as a traitor of the country or as a radical fascist. On the other hand, the leftist historians glorify him for his role in the freedom struggle and most of them believed that he was alive till recent past. This thesis tries to bring out some aspects of Bose which are less discussed in Indian historiography like his political status in India, the reasons why he felt that India was not the right place to fight for Indian struggle of freedom, his strategy for the freedom of India, the grounds on which he joined hands with the Axis powers or the role he played in taking over Andaman islands in 1943. A few historians have worked on this, but more work should be done in this area.

Jayant Dasgupta in his book *Japanese in Andaman & Nicobar Islands: Red Sun over Black Water* tells the inside story of the Japanese occupation of the Andaman and Nicobar islands during Second World War. But what is not known generally is that the Imperial Japanese Army, after its victories in Southeast Asia landed in the Andamans in March 1942, and occupied it till October 1945 and they were there even after the unconditional Japanese surrender on 15th August 1945, till the Allied army took them back. The book also deals with a detailed account of the period of occupation and an exploration of the Bose connection.

Tilak Raj Sareen in his book *Sharing the Blame: Subhas Chandra Bose and the Japanese Occupation of the Andaman's, 1942-1945* critically examines the nature of the Japanese rule in the Andaman's, its relations with the members of the

provisional government of Azad Hind, who participated in the civil administration, the torturing of the so-called spies, the devastation caused to life and property of the people by the Allied air raids on the islands. The author presents objectively the circumstances leading to the atrocities committed by the Japanese and the Indian police officials on the innocent people and deals with the visit of Bose and his alliance with the imperial Japan that did not help Bose in liberating the Islands.

Joyce Chapman Lebra's *The Indian National Army and Japan*, traces the origin of the Indian National Army in the imagination of Iwaichi Fujiwara, a young Japanese intelligence officer, and the relationship between the Imperial Japanese Army and the Indian National Army as it evolved under the leadership of Bose. It also discusses the initial efforts of Mohan Singh to form the INA from among the Indian prisoners of war in Japan. The book also deals with the episode of INA trial in Red Fort.

Sugata Bose in his book *His Majesty's Opponent: Subhas Chandra Bose and India's struggle against empire*, discusses the political life of Subhas Chandra Bose in the context of Indian National Movement and the factional differences with the mainstream leaders of Indian National Congress. The ideological difference between him and the Congress leaders prohibited him in functioning properly and that led to the division of the Indian National Congress into two groups, the leftist group and the Rightist group, and also formation of Forward Bloc within the Congress under the leadership of Bose. The mainstream leaders of Congress became the opponents of Bose though they all shared the same goal of liberating India from the British rule. The radical view of Bose against the leading group of Congress prompted him to leave India and seek the assistance of Japan and Germany- the anti-British Powers. Bose's fundamental means did not achieve its anticipated target in Germany. Therefore Bose had to seek the help of Japan in order to achieve his target. With the Japanese support, he reorganised the Indian National Army in order to liberate India; in which he failed. Finally the author discusses the mysterious death of Bose.

Romain Hayes in the book, *Bose in Nazi Germany*, traces the relation between Bose and Germany and discusses the circumstances under which Bose had to leave Germany. The author starts with Bose's radical view against Gandhi's way of

struggle for independence through non-violence. Bose saw an opportunity to contribute to the freedom struggle by joining anti-British forces and had the idea to form an army against the British with the outbreak of Second World War. The author brings out a detailed study of the Bose-Germany equation. The book traces out the support Bose got from Germany and the reason why Germany considered Bose's ideas worthwhile. He further deals with several points where the ambiguity in their relation creeps up. The book addresses the basic question: Why did not the German alliance succeed?

Leonard A. Gordon in his book, *Brother against the Raj: A Biography of Indian Nationalists Sarat and Subhas Chandra Bose*, discusses the situation in Bengal during the freedom struggle of India and the development of Anti-British feeling in amongst the people of India. It tries to critically analyse the role played by Subhas Chandra Bose and his brother Sarat Chandra Bose in the Indian freedom struggle. Further, the author brings out the political obstacles that Subhas Chandra Bose had faced during his days in Indian National Congress due to his divergent views with other leaders of the Congress. His alliance with the Axis Powers, Germany and Japan, to drive the British out of India is also examined in great detail. It brings out a detailed picture of his leadership qualities with episodes from his life. The author describes Bose as a tragic hero.

Hugh Toye's *Subhas Chandra Bose: The Springing Tiger* is a very compassionate study of Subhas Chandra Bose which pictures Bose as purely anti – British and as a born revolutionary whose ultimate goal was to drive the British out of India. For this he sought the help of Hitler, Mussolini and the Russians and, in the Second World War, allied himself actively with the Japanese. Bose's escape from India through Afghanistan and Russia to Germany, his organising an Indian Legion there etc. is vividly described by the author. He also discusses Bose's failure in liberating the Andaman Islands.

Alexander Werth edited the book *A Beacon across Asia: A biography of Subhas Chandra Bose*. This biography of Subhas Chandra Bose, gives equal importance to his role in the Indian National Congress and the ideological and factional differences of Bose with the mainstream leaders of Congress as well as his

wartime efforts to procure the help for the liberation of India in Germany and Japan. Further, it deals with the Indian National Army which fought along with the Japanese, Bose's mysterious death in an air crash in Formosa as he was trying to go to the Soviet Union three days after the Japanese surrender.

Peter Ward Fay in his book, *The Forgotten Army: India's Armed Struggle for Independence 1942-1945*, gives a detailed account of the formation and operations of the INA during 1942-45. The history of the INA is explored from three perspectives. The author mentions the role of Subhas Chandra Bose and his Indian National Army in the military operations in Southeast Asia under Japanese sponsorship. The book also discusses in detail about his leadership role in the Indian National Congress, his escape from Calcutta in January 1941, his journey to Germany to seek Axis help for India's liberation, and his subsequent arrival in Sumatra and Singapore. Japanese intentions and Bose's relationship with them are discussed perceptively. The author also describes the efforts of INA soldiers and the Japanese soldiers in the war front and also the sufferings of INA soldiers during their campaign.

Chapter Scheme

The thesis has six Chapters including an introduction and a conclusion.

Chapter II: Ideology & Political Vision of Subhas Chandra Bose in Early Life

This chapter discusses the unique political vision of Bose. Some of the issues that would be discussed in the chapter include the socio-cultural environment during the early years of Bose's life. It discusses briefly the childhood of Bose, his education by means of school and Gurus. It also discusses his family background and its impact on him. It shows that he was inspired by the thought of nationalism and that he admired many great personalities likely Swami Vivekananda and Ramakrishna Praramahansa from his childhood itself. What appealed to Bose most was the life and message of Ramakrishna and his emphasis on character building and spiritual upliftment. Under the impact of Ramakrishna's ideology of renunciation and passion for spiritual and immortal life, Bose started thinking in terms of the service he could offer to humanity. The spirit of defiance that overtook him under the influence of

Ramakrishna Praramahansa prepared him to defy the imperial authority in future for the sake of national liberation. In this chapter his college life, during which he was seen taking a stance against racism and the treatment meted out to the Indians by the British, is also discussed briefly. Finally the Chapter narrates his journey to England for joining the Indian Civil Service. In 1920 he cleared the civil service examination and stood fourth in the rank list. During his stay in England he realised the shortcomings in INC. Despite the luxurious career at hand, he made up his mind to join the INC and make a difference there and serve his country.

Chapter III: Subhas Chandra Bose and the Indian National Congress

This chapter aims at discussing chronologically the nationalist political landscape in British India from 1885 to 1941. The chapter would give a brief background of the leading political parties, indigenous revolutionary organizations, their dynamics and leadership, and how they all interacted with each other and the nature of their relationships with the British rule in India. The intention is to contextualise the activities of Bose in the contemporary Indian political scenario and therefore it will not necessarily deal with the full spectrum of parties and politics but only those that had relevance with Bose's life and work. This chapter also discusses the unique political vision of Bose and the influences of social and political reformers such as Swami Vivekananda and Aurobindo Ghose on him. It also discusses the development of Bose's political ideology through the 1920s during his political apprenticeship under the All-India Bengali leader Chittaranjan Das whom he considered his political Guru. The chapter would further discuss the convergence of Bose's ideas into a concrete political ideology, influenced by Indian traditions and the influences of the dominant political ideologies of Fascism, National Socialism and Marxism on his thinking during his years of forced exile in Europe in the 1930's. Bose's views and solutions on problems peculiar to India, the question of caste etc. are also discussed.

The chapter concludes by looking at the clash between Bose and the INC high command in 1939 which led to Bose's decision to leave INC as well as India to start an armed struggle from abroad to free his country and to his eventual alliance with Axis powers.

Chapter IV: Subhas Chandra Bose and His Strategies for Armed Struggle

This chapter discusses Bose's dramatic escape from India during his house arrest by the British and his journey from Kabul to Germany. The chapter analyses his failure in getting assistance from Germany and Russia for the liberation of India, which was his main aim when he had been in exile in Europe during 1930's. Realising in 1943 that he was not benefitting India by his work in Germany and totally disillusioned by Hitler's declaration of war on Russia, he decided to approach and seek assistance from Japan.

Chapter V: Bose's Armed Struggle in Southeast Asia and the INA Trials

This chapter discusses the years from 1943 to 1946 in the context of the activities of Bose. The chapter also analyses the unique place of Bose amongst Indian revolutionaries and the characteristics that set him apart from his fellow revolutionaries which allowed him to single-handedly create a "Free India" movement in Occupied Europe and Southeast Asia. The reshaping of Indian National Army by Bose and the internal dynamics and limitations of the movements that Bose headed with Japanese collaboration is also discussed. This chapter critically examines the role of Bose in taking over the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and the level of success of his visit to Andaman as the head of Andaman & Nicobar Islands. The specifics of Bose's strategies for alliances, armed struggles and revolting against the British are critically analysed. The chapter also looks at how the INC viewed the activities of Bose and the Free India struggle during the war and how it utilized the countrywide unrest in favour of Bose during the INA Officers Trial of 1945 for their own ends. The chapter concludes by looking at how the British viewed Bose during this period, the precautions they took against the Indian National Army and the impact of the INA Officers Trial of 1945.

Chapter II

Ideology & Political Vision of Subhas Chandra Bose in Early Life

This chapter discusses the unique political vision of Indian nationalist leader Bose. Some of the issues that would be discussed in the chapter include the socio-cultural environment during the early years of Bose's life. It discusses briefly his childhood and education by means of school and Gurus. It also discusses his family background and its impact on him. It shows that he was inspired by the thought of nationalism and that he admired many great personalities likely Swami Vivekananda and Ramakrishna Paramahansa from his childhood itself. What appealed to Bose most was the life and message of Ramakrishna and his emphasis on character building and spiritual upliftment. Under the impact of Ramakrishna's ideology of renunciation and passion for spiritual and immortal life, Bose started thinking in terms of the service he could offer to humanity. The spirit of defiance that overtook him under the influence of Ramakrishna Paramahansa prepared him to defy the imperial authority in future for the sake of national liberation. In this chapter his college life, during which he was seen taking a stance against racism and the treatment meted out to the Indians by the British, is also discussed briefly. Finally the Chapter narrates his journey to England for joining the Indian Civil Service. In 1920 he cleared the civil service examination and stood fourth in the rank list. During his stay in England he realised the shortcomings in INC. Despite the luxurious career at hand, he made up his mind to join the INC and make a difference there and serve his country.

Bose was one of the finest products of Indian renaissance. The period when he was born, the Indian society was going through a dynamic transition. Old ideas and institutions were coming under the challenge of the new liberal rational tradition. The atmosphere was clouded with the ideas of reform movements and political agitation. The liberal idea that the British rule was for the benefit of Indian people was fast losing its currency and the era of 'petition and prayers' was nearing its end. All these were most prominently felt in Bengal which was for long the nursery of Indian nationalism and of which Bose was a product.¹

¹Hari Hara Das and B.C Rath, *Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose: Reassessment of his Ideas and Ideologies*, Jaipur: Pointer Publishers, 1997, p. 1.

Bose was born in a rich aristocratic Bengali family on 23rd January 1897 in Cuttack (in present day Orissa) as the sixth son and the ninth child among fourteen children of Janakinath Bose and Prabhavati Devi. Jankinath Bose was a practicing lawyer by profession. He was a public prosecutor in Cuttack and later became a member of the Bengal Legislative Council. Even though Bose grew up in the twentieth century world, India's past was vividly alive in his thoughts.

The family of Bose was a large one consisting of eight brothers and six sisters. At school, he was serious, reserved and did not take much interest in sports. The sadhus and pilgrims visiting Puri, the famous shrine near his place, fascinated him. He was an intelligent child and stood second in the School examination and took admission in Presidency College, Calcutta. An interesting episode happened there in 1916. There he stood against an English professor because of his racist attitude towards Indians and as a result he was expelled from the college. But his father refused to admit him to another college. Over the course of time he got readmitted in the same University in philosophy.

He passed with good marks and received first class Honors in philosophy. Recognising his son's intellect, his father was determined that Bose should become a high ranking officer in Indian Civil Service (ICS). With that intention, he sent him to England for further studies. In 1920, Bose resigned from the prestigious Indian Civil Service despite securing fourth place on the merit list, with the highest marks in English, as he wanted to liberate his nation, then a colony of the British. At this time Gandhi had established himself as a leader of the masses. Like many others, Bose was also influenced by Gandhi. So he went to Gandhi and offered to work for the INC. Gandhi was not able to turn down this humble request and sent him to Calcutta to work under Chittaranjan Das.

Bose evolved into an outstanding political personality in India. The goal of his life was the liberation of India and rebuilding it into a republic. Even though he joined the National movement under the leadership of Gandhi, he eventually came to think that Indian freedom could not be achieved by the Gandhian strategy. Besides, he was

sure that foreign assistance was essential for a country like India to win freedom and he tried his best to enlist the support of axis powers during the Second World War.²

2.1 Impact of the Family

Discussing the evolution of Bose's political personality, one cannot overlook the environment amidst which he was born and brought up. He himself wrote the circumstance of his family in his autobiography in Badgastein, Austria in December 1937.

“Ours was not a rich but might be regarded as well-to-do middleclass family. Naturally, I had no personal experience of what want and poverty meant and had no occasion to develop those traits of selfishness, greed and the rest which are sometimes the unwelcome heritage of indigent circumstance in one's early life. At the same time, there was not that luxury and lavishness in our home... in fact, considering their worldly means, my parents always erred and I dare say, rightly too - on the side of simplicity in the upbringing of their children.”³

Janakinath Bose, father of Bose, had migrated from Bengal to Orissa and had settled down at Oriya Bazaar, Cuttack as a lawyer. He was appointed by the British as a public prosecutor, Government pleader and a member of Bengal legislative council and was conferred the title of Rai Bahadur. But he was a nationalist and humanitarian at heart with immense love for his country. Apart from this Janakinath Bose was a man of broad thinking and vision. He never thought in terms of a narrow parochialism or provincialism. He lived in a Muslim locality and actively participated in Muslim festivals. The broad-mindedness of his father went a long way in instilling the ideal of a broad and integral nationalism which was not limited by region, religion or community in Bose and foreshadowed the possibility of national unity in Bose's Indian National Army⁴

² Shridhar Charan Sahoo, *Subhas Chandra Bose political philosophy*, New Delhi: Aph Publishing Corporation, 1997, p. 1.

³ Sisir K Bose and Sugata Bose, ed., *An Indian Pilgrim: An Unfinished Autobiography*, Netaji Collected Works. Vol 1, Calcutta: N R B and New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997, p. 4.

⁴ Shridhar Charan Sahoo, *Subhas Chandra Bose political philosophy*, New Delhi: Aph Publishing Corporation, 1997, p. 3.

Bose wrote in his autobiography:

“The earliest recollection I have of myself is that I used to feel like a thoroughly insignificant being my parents awed me to a degree. My father usually had a cloak of reserve round him and kept his children at a distance. What with his professional work and what his public duties, he did not have much time for his family. The time he could spare was naturally divided among his numerous sons and daughter”.⁵

The unusually large family in which Bose was born and the insufficient personal interaction between him and his father in early childhood created emotional ripples in his mind. But according to him being overawed by his parents was not the only misfortune in his life. The presence of so many elder brothers and sisters seemed to relegate him into utter insignificance. Perhaps, that was all for the better, since it made Bose to live with a sense of diffidence- with a feeling that he should live up to the level already attained by those who had preceded him.⁶

Bose had great respect for his mother and his love and regard for the members of his family distinguished him from many other Indian leaders of this period who, in course of their political or social activities, estranged themselves from their family relations. He wrote about his mother:

“Though she was more humane and it was not impossible at times to detect her bias, she was also held in awe by most of her children. No doubt she ruled the roost and, where family affairs were concerned hers was usually the last word. She had a strong will, and when one added to that a keen sense of reality and sound common-sense, it is easy to understand how she could dominate the domestic scene.”⁷

Bose’s mother Prabhavati contributed much toward his political evolution. The Bose family was devoted to the worship of Goddess Durga, the Goddess of power or Sakti. From his mother in Bose imbibed the worship of Sakti which later assumed the form of reliance on human effort or physical force for the sake of attainment of a noble goal like political independence.⁸

⁵ Sisir K Bose and Sugata Bose, ed., *An Indian Pilgrim: An Unfinished Autobiography*, Netaji Collected Works. Vol 1, Calcutta: N R B and New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997, p. 4.

⁶ Ibid., p.5.

⁷ Ibid., p 5.

⁸ Shridhar Charan Sahoo, *Subhas Chandra Bose political philosophy*, New Delhi: Aph Publishing Corporation, 1997, p. 5.

2.2 Bose During School Days

Subhas early schooling commenced in the protestant European school at Cuttack run by Baptist mission. The school was mainly meant for the European and Anglo –Indian boys and girls. He was very keen about going to school as he wrote in his autobiography:

“I was nearing my birth day (January, 1902) when I was told I would be sent to school. I do not know how other children have felt in similar circumstances, but I was delighted. To see my elder brothers and sisters dress and go to school day after day and be left behind at home simply because you are not big enough – or old enough— is a galling experience. At least, so I had felt, and that is why I was overjoyed it was to be a red-letter day for me, at long last I was going to join the grown-up respectable flocks who did not stay at home except on holidays.”⁹

At school, he was always serious, reserved and did not take much interest in sports. The sadhus and pilgrims visiting Puri, the famous shrine near his place, fascinated him.

The school was based on English model and run on English lines, as far as Indian conditions permitted. Bose liked many features of the school, particularly the emphasis on deportment, neatness and punctuality and its lack of unhealthy emphasis on studies which usually happens in Indian schools and. Moreover, the standard of English taught was much higher than that of Indian schools.¹⁰ Bose was quite happy in the school but yet, in course of time, there were some incidents or features of the school which, even as young boy, he could not appreciate. He could not accept Indian students of the school being discriminated against the European or the Anglo-Indian students in respect of certain privileges. The Indians could not sit for the scholarship examination even if they score a high mark in the class. Anglo-Indian boys could join the volunteer corps and shoulder a rifle but the Indians could not. Small incidents like these were eye-openers for Bose of the fact that as Indians they were a class apart even though all of them belonged to the same institution.¹¹

⁹ Sisir K Bose and Sugata Bose, ed., *An Indian Pilgrim: An Unfinished Autobiography*, Netaji Collected Works. Vol 1, Calcutta: N R B and New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997, p. 21.

¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 22-23.

¹¹ Shridhar Charan Sahoo, *Subhas Chandra Bose political philosophy*, New Delhi: Aph Publishing Corporation, 1997, p. 6.

Bose was there in the school for seven years, from 1902 to 1908; so it would be wrong to assume that he was in revolt against his school. The disturbing factors were passing incidents which did not seriously affect his school life. Towards the end of 1908, he felt a strong desire to join an Indian school where he expected to feel more homely. Finally in January 1909, he left the school and joined the Ravenshaw Collegiate School, Cuttack, for his further studies and spent four years there to complete his school studies after which he left for Calcutta for higher studies.

These four years were very much significant in the evolution of the poetical personality of Bose. Outside of his family circle, his head master of the Ravenshaw Collegiate School, Babu Beni Madhav Das, left a permanent impression on his life. Bose discovered an irresistible moral appeal in his personality. Till now he had not developed the sense of paying respect to anyone other than his own parents. The very sight of Babu Beni Madhav Das effected a radical change in his attitude. Babu Beni Madhav Das roused in Bose a vague perception of moral values. He learned from him that the most important thing in the world is to serve the interest of the motherland. This emphasis on service to the nation made Bose to dream of the liberation of it from the British. This was instrumental in helping him to grow up with a spirit of dedication to the independence movement.¹²

Apart from the influence of Babu Beni Madhav Das, Swami Vivekananda signally contributed to the evolution of the political personality of Bose. Vivekananda entered into the life of Bose when he was barely fifteen. Bose lost himself in the works of Swami Vivekananda, which became his inspiration. As he wrote: “One day by sheer accident I stumbled upon what turned out to be my greatest help in this crisis. A relative of mine, who was a new-comer to the town, was living next door and I had to visit him. Glancing over his books, I came across the work of Swami Vivekananda. I had hardly turned over a few pages when I realised that here was something which I had been longing for. I borrowed the books from him, brought them home, and devoured them. I was thrilled to the marrow of my bones. My headmaster roused my aesthetic and moral sense and had given a new impetus to my

¹² Ibid., pp. 7-8.

life, but he had not given me an ideal to which I could give my whole being. That Swami Vivekananda gave me.”¹³

Apart from coming under the influence of Swami Vivekananda, Bose also came under the influence of his master Ramakrishna Paramahansa. Life and message of Ramakrishna emphasized on character building and spiritual upliftment. Under the impact of Ramakrishna’s ideology of renunciation and passion for spiritual and immortal life, Bose started thinking in terms of service to humanity. This passion for the ideal of service to humanity, the spirit of renunciation and the spirit of defiance contributed to Bose’s love for the nation and prepared him to defy the imperial authority in the future for the sake of national liberation. As Bose writes, “as long as I was at school, I did not mature politically.”¹⁴ However under the influence of Vivekananda and Ramakrishna Paramahansa and particularly under the influence of their philosophy of service to humanity, renunciation and self-negation, Bose developed the trait of egalitarianism which subsequently blossomed into his theory of socialism.

Bose himself claims in his autobiography that till December 1911 he was politically undeveloped. He claims to have received the first political impetus in the year 1912 from a student of his age who visited Cuttack and was connected with a certain group in Calcutta which had as its ideal spiritual upliftment and national service along constructive lines. This meeting took place at such a time when Bose’s mind was full of social and national problems. The interaction with him impressed Bose greatly. After the connection with the politically, socially and nationally conscious student from Calcutta, the sense of patriotism and nationalism was roused in Bose.¹⁵

By the end of his school tenure his religious impulse began to grow in intensity; which made him to think of a life of independence where he was free to do whatever he wants and frequently disobey his parents. He did not hesitate in this as he

¹³ Sisir K Bose and Sugata Bose, ed., *An Indian Pilgrim: An Unfinished Autobiography*, Netaji Collected Works. Vol 1, Calcutta: N R B and New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997, pp. 36-37.

¹⁴ Shridhar Charan Sahoo, *Subhas Chandra Bose political philosophy*, New Delhi: Aph Publishing Corporation, 1997, p. 9.

¹⁵ Sisir K Bose and Sugata Bose, ed., *An Indian Pilgrim An unfinished autobiography Netaji collected works*. Vol 1, Calcutta: N R B and New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997, p.46.

believed that he was under the inspiration of Vivekananda and that revolt is necessary for self-fulfillment. Finally when he finished his matriculation examination in March 1913, in which he came out with the second rank, his parents decided to send him to Calcutta for a change of environment; where they hoped that he could shed his eccentricities in the realistic atmosphere of Calcutta and live a normal life like the rest.¹⁶

2.3 Bose During College Days

In 1913 Bose joined the Presidency College in Calcutta. By that time he had set his mind in a definite direction and had decided not to follow the beaten track and to lead a life helpful for his spiritual growth. Bose wanted to pursue a meaningful life and was convinced that self-discipline was the way, which helped him in his future struggles. Though the college was a Government institution, the students were free thinkers and the British rulers' secret police often kept an eye on them. The main hostel of the college was considered as the centre of revolutionaries was often raided by the police. Bose and his friends called themselves the neo-Vivekananda group and tried to create a harmony between religion and nationalism. However, for this group, service did not just mean rendering help to the poor, needy, distressed or disabled; they believed in national reconstruction as the right form of social service.¹⁷

Thus during his college days, Bose developed politically in a revolutionary atmosphere. He evolved into a nationalist and non-loyalist opposed to British domination and exploitation. The spirit of nationalism that took root in Bose during these days was a spiritual type of nationalism. This was due to the influence of Ramakrishna Paramahansa and Swami Vivekananda, which kept him away from the revolutionary and extremist elements among the students.¹⁸ His group was against terrorist activity and secret conspiracies and was not much popular among the other

¹⁶ Ibid., pp.46-50.

¹⁷ Daya Mukherjee, *Subhas Chandra Bose Accelerator of India's Independence: Political History, Biography*, New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House, 1997, pp. 21-22.

¹⁸ Shridhar Charan Sahoo, *Subhas Chandra Bose political philosophy*, New Delhi: Aph Publishing Corporation, 1997, p.12.

students since the students and youth of Bengal those days were fascinated by the violent revolutionary movement.¹⁹

During his college days, there were many great leaders in Bengal, and Bose was fascinated by the philosophy of Aurobindo Gosh. But by that time Aurobindo's political career came to an end and had retired to Pondicherry. Bose found Aurobindo's philosophy inspiring and interesting. As he writes; "it was so refreshing, so inspiring to read Aurobindo's writings as a contrast to the denunciation of knowledge and action by the later-day Bengal Vaishnavas."²⁰

Bose was still not much attracted to politics as he was more interested in meeting religious teachers and doing social service, like serving the needy and poor people. He found a society for the aid of the poor. This society use to collect money and food. He did not hesitate to beg door to door with a sack in hand for getting rice.²¹ At college he was more interested in social activities and neglected his studies as he found most of the lectures uninteresting. But he was quite impressed by Sir P. C. Ray, the eminent chemist and philanthropist, who did not belong to his department but was extremely popular with students. With him Bose busied himself in various activities like organizing debates, collecting funds for flood and famine relief, representing the students before the authorities and going out for excursions with fellow students. According to him, this gradually helped him to overcome his introversion.²² During this time, he used to go out with his friends to nurse cholera patients in rural areas. The experiences of poverty both in urban and rural areas aroused egalitarian sentiments in him. He did a sort of self-sacrificing by saving his train fare in order to help the poor.²³

In spite of the political atmosphere of Calcutta and propaganda carried on among the students by the violent revolutionaries, Bose was not completely evolved in his in political orientation. Then he believed in non-violence as Gandhi did and

¹⁹ Sisir K Bose and Sugata Bose, ed., *An Indian Pilgrim: An Unfinished Autobiography*, Netaji Collected Works. Vol 1, Calcutta: N R B and New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997, p. 60.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 63-64.

²¹ Ibid., p. 64-65.

²² Ibid., p. 65.

²³ Shridhar Charan Sahoo, *Subhas Chandra Bose political philosophy*, New Delhi: Aph Publishing Corporation, 1997, p. 14.

believed that the ultimate salvation of people would come through the process of national reconstruction. Two aspects which forced him to evolve politically and to develop an independent line for himself was the rude behavior of the British in Calcutta and the First World War. As he writes; “incidents in tram-cars occurred not infrequently; Britishers using these cars would be purposefully rude and offensive to Indians in various ways.”²⁴ Even on the roads the British expected the Indians to make way for them and in case of failure, they pushed the Indians aside by force or had their ears boxed. It was quite impossible for a man like Bose to persuade to be insulted by a foreigner in his own country.

In conflicts of inter-racial character, the law was of no use or benefit to the Indians. As a result the Indians began to hit back and word went around that the Englishmen understand and respect physical force alone. This influenced Bose’s political consciousness. Yet it was not enough to give a definite turn to his conceptual temperament. During a time when he was ill, lying in bed he re-examined his outlook and attitude towards moral and national problems, and started re-evaluating the values that he had so far adhered to. Out of this re-evaluation and re-examination he understood that a nation that did not possess military strength could not hope to preserve its Independence.²⁵

Bose had not shown much interest in his studies in the college for two years, yet he passed the Intermediate Examination and was placed in First Division. Then he joined for the B.A. Honours Degree in philosophy and started taking his studies seriously. But it could not last long. A British professor named E.F. Oaten violently pushed back some students when they were walking together in a corridor. Since Bose was the class representative, he immediately took the matter to the principal and suggested that professor E.F Oaten should apologize to the students whom he had insulted. But he failed to get any satisfactory response from the authorities. The next day a general strike was called, for which the absent students were fined by the principal. A successful strike in a presidency college was a source of great excitement

²⁴ Sisir K Bose and Sugata Bose, ed., *An Indian Pilgrim: An Unfinished Autobiography*, Netaji Collected Works. Vol 1, Calcutta: N R B and New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997, pp. 72-73.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 74.

throughout the city. Even after the settlement of the strike, the principal did not withdraw the penalty which he had handed out during the strike.

Less than a month later, professor Oaten was assaulted by a group of students for some racial remarks. Bose was an eye-witness of the incident but not a part of it. The government ordered the closure of the college; the principal disagreed over the wording of the order and another order was passed to place the principal under suspension. This was taken as a gross personal insult by the principal and hence, before leaving, he called for all the students including Bose who were black listed and told “Bose, you are the most troublesome man in the college, I suspend you.”²⁶ Bose thus stood expelled from the college.

Bose taking the side of the students in the act of assault on a professor was not in the nature of condonation of act of indiscipline or violence but a clear manifestation of his anti-racial, anti-imperialistic and nationalistic fervour. He had sacrificed his career for a noble cause like the vindication of the self-respect of an Indian and it gave him sufficient satisfaction and helped him to march ahead towards nationalism. As he says:

“I had already some theoretical conception of social morality and nationalism, but on this day I passed through the first real test of them, and indeed a test in flames. Having passed this most difficult test successfully I found the course of my life and its future programme had been decided once for all.”²⁷

Meanwhile the political atmosphere in Calcutta worsened. Activists from the city were arrested collectively; among the latest victims were some expelled students from the presidency college. The stay in Calcutta became extremely risky for Bose and he was packed back, by his parents, to Cuttack where the atmosphere was comparatively safer.²⁸ On his way back to Cuttack, Bose realized the significance of being expelled from the university. He wrote:

“My principal had expelled me, but he had made my future career. I had established a precedent for myself from which I could not easily depart in future. I had stood up

²⁶ Ibid., pp.75-78.

²⁷ Shridhar Charan Sahoo, *Subhas Chandra Bose political philosophy*, New Delhi: Aph Publishing Corporation, 1997, pp.17-18.

²⁸ Sisir K Bose and Sugata Bose, ed., *An Indian Pilgrim: An Unfinished Autobiography*, Netaji Collected Works. Vol 1, Calcutta: N R B and New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997, p. 79.

with courage and composure in a crisis and fulfilled my duty. I have developed self-confidence as well as initiative, which was to stand me in good stead in future. I had a foretaste of leadership, though in a very restricted sphere, and of the martyrdom that it involves.”²⁹

The patriot and nationalist in Bose was aroused and he decided to become a fighter and be ready to lay down his life in the battle for the liberation of India. This must have helped in developing a sense of self-confidence and perseverance in him, which gradually helped him amply in evolving into a fighter during the Second World War and take the leadership in the national struggle. This incident also foreshadowed his commitment to independence that was revealed magnificently in the years to come.³⁰

Bose was a bit worried about what to do next as he could not continue his studies as the expulsion was for an indefinite period. It was not certain whether the university authorities will allow him to resume his studies after the period of expulsion. He planned for his further studies abroad; but it was not appreciated by his father as he wanted him to get the degree first from the university.³¹ After almost two years during which there was no response from the university, Bose went back to Calcutta in order to try his luck once again with the university authorities. It was a difficult job, but the key to the situation was with Sir Asutosh Mukherji, the dictator of the university. By his influence the university authorities agreed that Bose can resume his studies, but he should find some other college where he can continue his studies.

The Bangabasi College offered to take him but there was no provision for honours course in Philosophy. So he went to Scottish Church College and approached the principal who was very much impressed by Bose. He instructed Bose to get a no objection certificate from the university. That was procured by his elder brother who was his guardian in Calcutta and finally in July 1917, Bose joined the Scottish Church

²⁹ Ibid., pp. 79-80.

³⁰ Shridhar Charan Sahoo, *Subhas Chandra Bose Political Philosophy*, New Delhi: Aph Publishing Corporation, 1997, p. 18.

³¹ Sisir K Bose and Sugata Bose, ed., *An Indian Pilgrim: An Unfinished Autobiography*, Netaji Collected Works. Vol 1, Calcutta: N R B and New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997, p. 82.

College where he led a quiet life.³² From his youth Bose was interested in military and he subsequently participated in the University unit of the India defence force, India's Territorial Army. He enjoyed the military training, camp life and the mock –fights in the dark. As he writes: “What a change it was from sitting at the feet of anchorites to obtain knowledge about god, to standing with a rifle on my shoulder taking orders from a British army officer.”³³ Further he writes:

“I wonder how much I must have changed from those days when I could find pleasure in soldiering. Not only was there no sign of maladaptation to my new environment but I found a positive pleasure in it. This training gave me something which I needed or which I lacked. The feeling of strength and of self-confidence grew still further”³⁴

The feeling of self-confidence and strength that Bose acquired as a result of his participation in the University unit of the India defence force helped him further in the liberation of his motherland. It also foreshadows Bose's military approach to the struggle for national liberation with his Indian National Army.

In 1919 Bose wrote his B.A examination and got first class honours in Philosophy but was placed second in order of merit. Then Bose was asked by his father whether he would like to go to England to study for the Indian Civil Service (I.C.S). In those days, I.C.S was a prestigious and revered career for young Indians. He was not interested in doing his M.A in Philosophy and so he made up his mind to travel to England. By 15th September 1919, he sailed for England.³⁵

2.4 At Cambridge in England

After reaching England five weeks later, he got admission in Cambridge University. Though he joined the University, he was in a dilemma as he could not think in terms of joining I.C.S and accepting a job under the British Government. At the time when he sailed for England, the situation in India was grim. Punjab was stunned by the Jallianwala Bagh massacre, Punjab was under martial law, and strict censorship ensured that there were only vague rumours in Bengal of some terrible

³² Ibid., pp. 88-90.

³³ Ibid., p. 91.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 92.

³⁵ Ibid., pp. 93-95.

happening at Lahore and Amritsar. By and large, the Indians were ignorant of what had been going on in Punjab and Bose left for England unenlightened.³⁶

Bose stayed in Cambridge for about twenty months. The stay in England played a significant role in the evolution of his political personality. It strengthened the passion of the leader and revolutionary in him. At Cambridge he was very much impressed by the measure of freedom given to the students. Apart from the freedom enjoyed by the students, what appealed more to Bose was the free atmosphere in which the British students were born and brought up. Students were allowed to take part in the debates at the Union society where even prominent members of Parliament and Cabinet were subjected to severe criticism. This forced him to compare it with his own country and the measure of freedom there under the British rule, which further strengthened his nationalistic fervour.³⁷

Bose was exposed to racial arrogance and discrimination in India; he found the same state of affairs even at Cambridge which made him feel bitter about the British. He has written in his autobiography about incidents of racial discrimination and bias against Indians in the university affairs and derogatory comments on Indians in printed leaflets. He encountered insulting references about Indians in the printed instruction for Civil Service probationers under the caption 'care of the horses in India' which insultingly remarked that Indians eat the same food as a horse and that the Indian traders are dishonest.³⁸ Bose could not digest such insulting comments on Indians and he, being totally unconcerned of official pleasure or displeasure, was the only one among the civil service probationers to strongly protest to Raberts, the secretary of Civil Service Board, against such derogatory references. This bitter experience turned him more against British imperialism.³⁹

While preparing for the Indian civil service examination, Bose studied Modern European history where he came across some original sources like Bismarck's

³⁶ Daya Mukherjee, *Subhas Chandra Bose Accelerator of India's Independence: Political History, Biography*, New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House, 1997, p. 24.

³⁷ Sisir K Bose and Sugata Bose, ed., *An Indian Pilgrim: An Unfinished Autobiography*, Netaji Collected Works. Vol 1, Calcutta: N R B and New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997, pp. 98-101.

³⁸ Shridhar Charan Sahoo, *Subhas Chandra Bose political philosophy*, New Delhi: Aph Publishing Corporation, 1997, p.21.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

autobiography, Matternich's memoirs, Cavour's letters etc. which helped him to understand the inner currents of international politics. Apart from this, at Cambridge he learnt that a nation can be made only by the uncompromising idealism of Hampden and Cromwell. He also studied the methods and tactics employed by the foreign revolutionaries in the struggle for their freedom. The Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 and the success of Lenin in establishing the first socialist republic in the world showed him the power of the people which again strengthened his belief that India's progress could be achieved only by the common people of India.⁴⁰

The resurrection movement of Italy and its heroes made a great impact on Bose; he was also influenced by the unification movement in Germany, the Sinn Fein revolution of Ireland and the great revolution in Russia which led to the destruction of the oppressive and corrupt Czarist regime and the establishment of the first socialist republic of the world. He was also influenced by Joseph Mazzini who exerted a tremendous influence on the Indian patriots in the fourth quarter of the nineteenth century. Bose was inspired by his great belief in the cause of women's liberation, which later helped him in liberating women and organizing the women's troop of his Indian National Army.⁴¹

Early in July 1920, the civil service open competitive examination was held and Bose was not satisfied with his performance in the exam. But when the result was declared he secured the fourth rank. As he had already decided that he would not serve the British by joining Indian Civil Service, he wrote to the well-known Bengali leader Chittaranjan Das on 16th February 1921 saying; 'I would like to know what work you may be able to allot to me in the great programme of national service.'⁴² He thought that he would teach in some college and write for the newspapers after going back to India. He felt that the INC had room for improvement and was interested in contributing his services to it to make some changes in the organization, in the light of what he has learnt so far from his life and education in India and abroad.⁴³

⁴⁰ Ibid., pp. 21-22.

⁴¹ Daya Mukherjee, *Subhas Chandra Bose Accelerator of India's Independence: Political History, Biography*, New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House, 1997, pp. 28-29.

⁴² Sisir K Bose and Sugata Bose, ed., *An Indian Pilgrim: An Unfinished Autobiography*, Netaji Collected Works. Vol 1, Calcutta: N R B and New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997, p. 211.

⁴³ Daya Mukherjee, *Subhas Chandra Bose Accelerator of India's Independence: Political History, Biography*, New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House, 1997, pp. 25-27.

CHAPTER- III

Subhas Chandra Bose and The Indian National Congress

This chapter aims at chronologically discussing the political landscape of nationalist politics in British India from 1885 to 1941. The chapter will give a brief background of the leading political parties, including indigenous revolutionary organizations, their dynamics and leadership; how they interacted with each other and the nature of their respective relationships with the British in India. The intention is to contextualise the activities of Bose in the contemporary Indian political scenario and therefore it will not necessarily deal with the full spectrum of parties and politics but only those that had relevance with Bose's life and work. The chapter will finally look at the clash between Bose and the INC high command in 1939 and its consequences that led to Bose's decision to leave INC as well as India, to start an armed struggle from abroad to free his country which led to his eventual alliance with Axis powers.

The emergence of INC marks was an important turn in Indian History. However, before the INC came to existence there were a few other associations for the purpose of liberating India but lacked any systematic program or plan of action, and almost all of these associations essentially had a regional character. Notable among them were the British Indian Association of Bengal which was started in 1851, the Bombay Presidency Association, the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha and the Indian Association in 1876.¹ The INC and the rise of other Indian political parties were basically the outcome of the revolt of 1857-1858. The consequences of the revolt of 1857-1858 effected a complete overhaul of the political system in the Indian subcontinent. The British government was hoping to institute some kind of establishment which guaranteed to keep the channels of communication open with the Indian leaders; to ensure that an event like the revolt of 1857 did not happen again. The direct result of this was the creation of the INC in 1885. Though this organization came into existence in the year 1885 through the efforts of a retired English officer, A. O. Hume who had for a long time held the high post of Secretary to the Government of India in the Home Department, its seeds may be said to have been sown in 1835 by

¹ Hari Hara Das and B.C Rath, *Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose: Reassessment of his Ideas and Ideologies*, Jaipur: Pointer Publishers, 1997, p.12.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy, one of the makers of Modern India and whose effort was partly responsible for the introduction of English education in the country.

The English education which was introduced in India with the aim of training clerks to run the machinery of the Government churned out some awakened young men also, who after receiving higher education in India and abroad became politically conscious and became sensitive to the racial discrimination to which Indians were subjected to. It awakened in them self-respect, patriotism and the desire to see their country free. With this began the revolt against the British sense of racial superiority and their attitude of rude domination towards the subject races. At this juncture, A.O. Hume placed a proposal before the socially advanced Indians and later before the then Viceroy Lord Dufferin that an association must be formed to promote mental, moral, social and political regeneration of the people of India, in order to ensure lasting peace and permanent maintenance of law and order. The idea pleased the Viceroy who believed that “as the head of the Government he had found the greatest difficulty in ascertaining the real wishes of the people; and that for purposes of administration, it would be a public benefit if there existed some responsible organization through which the Government might be kept informed regarding the best Indian public opinion.”² Hume, after earning the consent of Lord Dufferin, strived sincerely and on 28th December 1885 held the first session of the Indian National Congress at Bombay under the president-ship of W. C. Banerjee.

Western education was introduced with the purpose of meeting the human resource requirement for running the huge machinery of the British Government in India and their expanding trade and growing industries. The main objective was to create people who will be Indian in blood and colour but English in taste and opinion.³ The western-educated class was the elite which occupied various posts in the administration and monopolized other professions. In early phases they developed a feeling as if they were the real leaders of the country, representing their country and they were chosen to speak for all their countrymen. They believed in the legitimacy of the British rule in India and formed the ideological base for the future moderates of

² Venkatesan G, *History of Indian Freedom*, Rajapalayam: V C Publications, 2006, pp. 92 -108.

³ R.C. Mishra, *History of Education Administration*, New Delhi: APH publications, 2009, p. 33.

the INC.⁴ In the beginning, the formation of INC was never viewed as the consummation of political forces in the country which might act as a political organization in future demanding rights and liberties.⁵ The INC, at its beginning, was a modest institution consisting of middle-class Indians who were loyal to the British. The second half of 19th century witnessed the flowering of a national political consciousness and the foundation and growth of an organized national movement. The Bengal Renaissance commenced in Bengal, the capital of the British government, where the percolation of British and European ideas stimulated Indian reformers such as Raja Ram Mohan Roy, who was one of the first Indian leaders to start a program of social reforms. This period witnessed an awakening in diverse spheres of Indian life. Indian leaders who were not satisfied with the insufficient political concessions from the British Government understood the political aspect of the Renaissance and it generated an increasing awareness among them. The result was that a new group of leaders like Bal Gangadhar Tilak emerged, who proclaimed the need for more aggressive methods of agitation to attain complete independence from the British Raj.⁶

By 1905, the INC was divided into two groups known as the Moderates and the Extremists. The rise and evolution of extremism was a reaction against the endeavours of the western reformists who wanted to renovate India in the image of the West. It is difficult to demarcate as to when the Congressmen came to be divided into these two groups. The moderate section of the INC wished to work for the limited objective of administrative reform, primarily through petitioning the colonial rulers. The militant section, the 'Extremists', who were gaining a stronger hold over the organization felt that they would make no progress in the fruition of their demands unless the Congress broke out of the 'petition mode'. The extremists believed in agitation-al methods of struggle, even sacrificing one's life if it is needed, for the nationalist cause. The period from 1905 to 1919 of INC may be described as the era of Extremists while the initial two decades is known as the Moderates Era.

⁴ Hari Hara Das, *Subhas Chandra Bose and the Indian National Movement*, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Private Limited, 1983, p. 1.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13.

⁶ Bipin Chandra, Amles Tripathi and Barun De, *Freedom Struggle*, 10th ed. New Delhi: National Book Trust, India, 2007, p. 49.

The origin of Extremism may be traced back to the 1890's. It was Aurobindo Ghosh (1872-1950) who sowed the seeds of Extremism through his writings.⁷ The nationalist leaders like Dadabhai Naoroji, P.M Mehta, M.E. Wacha, W.C. Banerjee, S.N. Banerjee and many others dominated the Congress politics during the period from 1885 to 1905. They were staunch believers in liberalism and 'moderate' politics and came to be labeled as Moderates. Prominent leaders of Extremists were Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Bipin Chandra Pal, Aurobindo Ghosh and Lala Lajpat Rai who demanded self-government for India free from the tutelage of British supremacy.

1905 is important as it ushered in political extremism. This can be traced back to Lord Curzon's partition of Bengal in this year. This administrative step radicalized the Bengali middle class. Rash Behari Ghosh took Curzon responsible for the rise of extremism. The situation was changing very rapidly in 1905 that in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904 the Japanese defeated the forces imperial Russia. This victory of Japan, an Asian country, was interpreted as the symbol of the rise of the east. The Indians drew the inspiration from the war and started believing that it would not be difficult to drive away the English from India if it was possible for an Asian country to defeat a European power.⁸ Lord Curzon could have pacified the agitated Indians, had he followed a policy of compromise based on tact and pragmatism. But he had a dim view of India and the capacity of Indians to govern themselves.⁹

The agitation following the partition of Bengal (1905) brought the Extremists into prominence in the INC. As a result of this rift within the INC, the conference held in the city of Surat in 1907 witnessed extremist nationalists headed by Aurobindo Ghosh trying to get control of the organization from the Moderates, still mostly constitutionalists and gradualists, but failed and left the INC in disgust. Aurobindo created a separate Nationalist Party for those INC members who left with him and until the commencement of the First World War it was Aurobindo's activities that were at the epicenter of nationalist politics. Aurobindo himself fled in 1910 to the relative safety of the French enclave of Pondicherry to escape being arrested for his incendiary articles. Once there, he renounced politics altogether and the Moderates

⁷ Venkatesan G, *History of Indian Freedom*, Rajapalayam: V C Publications, 2006, pp. 109-121.

⁸ Hari Hara Das, *Subhas Chandra Bose and the Indian National Movement*, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Private Limited, 1983, p. 16.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

were bent upon altering the resolutions of 1906 National Congress Session regarding Swadeshi movement, boycott movement and self-government.¹⁰

Running parallel to this divide was the religious revivalism in Bengal, which was an integral part of the ideology of extremism. The religious revivalism was led by two men Sri Rama Krishna and Narendranath Datta, later known as Vivekananda. Rama Krishna was the apostle of divine realization and by his practical example he proved that Hinduism was not a dying religion. This shocked the western-educated Indians, who used to think that Hinduism was a dead religion and therefore believed in Christianity. Rama Krishna and Vivekananda gave a new shape to the Hindu religion, by rising above the distinctions of caste, creed and baneful rituals and proved that Hinduism is an everlasting source of spirituality. Vivekananda toured throughout the nation and abroad and tried to enlighten all with his theory and spread the cultural heritage of India. Many concepts of Vivekananda were accepted by extremists like Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Aurobindo and later Bose, in their struggle for the liberation of the country.¹¹

Rabindra Nath Tagore, Nazrul Islam and Bankim Chandra Chatterji also played a vital role in motivating Indians by their work of literature. Bankim Chandra gave the clarion call of 'Bande Mataram' through *Ananda Math*. He implored the Indians to revive the primeval purity of Indian culture and traditions and inspired a new sense of self-conscious nationalism.¹² He had great love and respect for Indian culture and tradition and was aggrieved when he found the western-educated youth worshipping the West and ridiculing the culture and the heritage of the country. He was responsible for raising nationalism to the dignity of religion in Bengal. He identified patriotism with religion and tried to get rid of any feeling of indifference towards nationalism. In his work *Kamalakanter Daphtar*, Bangabhumi (Bengal) was identified with goddess Durga and motherland; motherland and the goddess should be considered inseparable.¹³ Bankim Chandra exercised great "influence upon the new nationalism, consciously channeled religious discussion in political direction and

¹⁰ J. K. Chopra, ed., *Unique Quintessence of Indian history and National Movement*, New Delhi: Unique Publishers, 2007, pp. 124-127.

¹¹ Hari Hara Das, *Subhas Chandra Bose and the Indian National Movement*, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Private Limited, 1983, pp. 4-7.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

helped to bring about a fusion of religion and politics which so excited many young Hindu Bengalis and so disturbed officials in twentieth century.”¹⁴

Meanwhile, Gandhi had returned from England after qualifying as a barrister in 1891. He started his legal career in Bombay but made little headway. He decided to settle down at Rajkot in Gujarat to make a normal living. He, however, fell out with the British Political Agent in Rajkot, in whose court most of his work lay. It was at this time that Dada Abdullah, an Indian merchant in Natal (South Africa), offered to engage him for a civil suit in that country. The contract was for a year; the remuneration was 105 pounds, a first class return fare and actual expenses. The fee was modest, and it was not quite clear whether he was being engaged as counsel or a clerk. As Gandhi wanted to get away from Rajkot, he accepted the offer eagerly. Towards the end of May 1893, he landed in Durban. It took Gandhi no time to witness the humiliation was being meted out to the Indians. He also had encounters with white racism in South Africa. Gandhi initiated a fight for justice for the Indians in South Africa and in due course of time became quite popular among them. In 1896 Gandhi went to India to bring his wife and children and to canvass support for the cause of Indians overseas. Distorted versions of his activities and utterances in India reached Natal and inflamed its European population. On landing at Durban in January 1897, he was assaulted by a white mob. But he continued his struggle for the cause of the Indians and managed to make some improvements in the condition of the Indians. Gandhi told the British High Commissioner in South Africa; “it is not political power, but we do wish to live side with other British subjects in peace and amity, and with dignity and self-respect.”¹⁵ Europeans did not want that to happen. In 1906 the Transvaal government published a particularly humiliating ordinance for the registration of its Indian citizens. The Indians held a mass protest meeting at Johannesburg and under Gandhi's leadership took a pledge to defy the ordinance if it became law and to suffer all the penalties resulting from their defiance. Thus Satyagraha was born, a new method of rectifying wrongs and fighting oppression without hatred and without violence.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 10.

¹⁵ Stanley Wolpert, *Gandhi's Passion: The Life and Legacy of Mahatma Gandhi*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2002, p. 57.

The Satyagraha struggle in South Africa lasted eight years. It had its ups and downs, but under Gandhi's leadership the small Indian minority sustained its resistance against heavy odds. Hundreds of Indians chose to sacrifice their livelihood and liberty rather than submit to a law which was repugnant to their conscience and self-respect. In the last phase of the struggle in 1913, hundreds of Indians including women went to jail and thousands of Indian labourers, who had stopped work in the mines, faced imprisonment, flogging and even shooting. It was a terrible ordeal for the Indians, but it was also a bad advertisement for the rulers of South Africa.

On 9th January 1915 Gandhi returned to Bombay. He was applauded by the Indians for his struggle and sacrifice in South Africa. In 1915, Gokhale died in Poona which came as a great shock to Gandhi for he had accepted him as his political mentor. After Gokhale's death, Gandhi never left the country again except for a short trip that took him to Europe in 1931. Though he was not completely unknown in India, Gandhi followed the advice of his political mentor, Gokhale, and took it upon himself to obtain a familiarity with Indian conditions. He traveled widely for one year. Over the next few years, he became involved in numerous local struggles, such as at Champaran in Bihar. In 1919 Gandhi took the first major decisive step in establishing himself as a nationalist leader by opposing the Rowlett Bills. By this time, Rabindranath Tagore had already titled him 'Mahatma' or 'Great Soul'.¹⁶

Gandhi followed the policy of Gokhale faithfully and extended all cooperation to the British war-efforts during the war. But the obduracy of the Chelmsford Government in passing the Rowlett Bill forced Gandhi to lose faith in the British sense of justice. He had shared the bitter experience of the Indians, suffering indignity and hardship due to the oppressive measures of the British rule. Gandhi realized that in order to enable the Indians to live with freedom and dignity they must be organized so that they could fight against exploitation and oppression. He however was opposed to violence and terrorist activities.¹⁷

¹⁶ B.k. Ahluwalia and Shasi Ahluwalia, *Netaji and Gandhi*, New Delhi: Indian Academic Publishers, 1982, pp. 53-54.

¹⁷ Hari Hara Das, *Subhas Chandra Bose and the Indian National Movement*, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Private Limited, 1983, pp. 33-34.

3.1 Joins The Indian National Congress

With the determination to work for the salvation of his country and especially after resigning from the Indian Civil Service, Bose landed in Bombay on 16th July 1921. A few months earlier he had talked with M.N. Roy, a prominent leftist leader in Calcutta, about the possibilities of revolution in India. Bose was impatient about beginning the battle and probably thought that this is what Gandhi offered. He had returned determined to be a revolutionary. Without wasting any time he arranged a meeting with Gandhi because by that time Gandhi had become the undisputed leader in the Indian political set up. He had a long conversation with Gandhi about the program of non-violence and non-cooperation that Gandhi had launched. He also sought his advice regarding his intentions and future.¹⁸

During his meeting with Gandhi, Bose had asked many questions about the program the former had adopted and the answers received could not satisfy him completely. Bose was “depressed and disappointed” and felt that there was a deplorable lack of clarity in the plan which Gandhi had formulated and that he did not have a clear idea of the successive stages of the campaign which could bring India to her cherished goal of freedom.¹⁹ The meeting, though productive, did not solve Bose’s personal doubts as to the right course he ought to adopt to fulfill his desire to serve India. Bose craved for action but Gandhi’s plan of action was largely passive. Instead of pursuing a revolutionary plan, Gandhi hoped that the British would have a change of heart as a result of his methods. It was only when Bose met Chittaranjan Das on his return to Calcutta and after exhaustive and continuous conversations with him about the object of the Congress movement that Bose began to see his way clearly and was finally able to take the decision of dedicating himself to the movement started by Gandhi.²⁰

Bose found a leader whom he desired to emulate in Chittaranjan Das and decided to follow him as he felt that Das was the man who knew what he was about

¹⁸ B.k. Ahluwalia and Shasi Ahluwalia, *Netaji and Gandhi*, New Delhi: Indian Academic Publishers, 1982, pp. 53-54.

¹⁹ Shridhar Charan Sahoo, *Subhas Chandra Bose Political Philosophy*, New Delhi: Aph Publishing Corporation, 1997, p. 27

²⁰ Girja K Mookerjee, *Builders of Modern India Subhas Chandra Bose*, New Delhi: publication Division Government of India, 1984, p. 17.

and could give all that he had, and demand from others all that they could, for the cause of the country.²¹ By this time Das was at the peak of his political career and was a well-known leader throughout Bengal and was best suited for Bose. Bose made him as his political mentor. In 1921, during the initial period of his political career, Bose was made the principal of National College which was started by Das. Bose was not much interested in the college and wanted to be a part of the political activity in the country as the whole country witnessed a sequence of political activities such as Gandhi's call for Swaraj and the first death anniversary of Bal Gangadhar Tilak on 1st August 1921 which was observed all over the country with huge bonfires of foreign textiles created a patriotic fervor in the country. In spite of his eagerness in joining politics, he gave importance to education as he believed that it would be helpful in the reconstruction of the nation. He tried to establish a network of schools which was necessary to educate the students who left the Government schools and colleges in response to the call of INC. Soon he was made in-charge of the publicity board of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee (hereafter BPCC) and the head of the National Volunteer Corps. Bose knew his responsibilities in these posts and without letting down the expectations of Chittaranjan Das, he organised the propaganda in such a way that it made the Government feel embarrassed. His main slogan was: "To make our non-cooperation with the British successful, Indians must have the fullest cooperation among themselves."²² *The Statesman*, a leading Anglo- Indian newspaper of Calcutta, observed that the Congress got a person with rare skill and ability, whereas the Government had lost a competent officer.²³

In September 1921, many Congress leaders came to Calcutta with Gandhi to coax the former extremist leaders of Bengal to join the new non-cooperation movement. Bose was entrusted with arranging the meeting between Gandhi and the extremist leaders; which seems ironic on hindsight. The conference took place behind closed doors in the presence of Chittaranjan Das. Gandhi and Das had talked to the revolutionaries and tried to convince them that non-violent non-cooperation, instead of weakening or disheartening the people, would strengthen their power of effective

²¹ Sisir K Bose and Sugata Bose, ed., *The Indian Struggle, 1920-1942 Subhas Chandra Bose*. Netaji Collected work volume II, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997, p. 55.

²² Hari Hara Das, *Subhas Chandra Bose and the Indian National Movement*, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Private Limited, 1983, pp. 94-95.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 95.

resistance. The conference ended with the decision to give a chance to the Congress to strive for Swaraj and do nothing which will get in the way of its goal. Many of the extremist leaders even joined Congress organization as loyal and active members. This was the first time Bose had an opportunity to come in personal contact with prominent leaders of the Congress.²⁴

As a result of the meeting, the non-cooperation movement became the most effective non-violent weapon to protest against the proposed visit of the Prince of Wales to India with the idea of pacifying public feelings and to make the Indians cooperative in their attitude towards the inauguration of the Montford reforms. The country was still on the road to recovery from the trauma of Jallianwala Bagh massacre and the declaration of the Rowlett act. Instructions were issued by the Congress Working Committee to boycott the visit of the Prince of Wales. A call for a strike on 17th November was given and it was decided to wave black flags and observe complete hartal at the time of visit.²⁵

As a precautionary measure all the prominent leaders of the province including Chittaranjan Das, his wife and son, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad-an outstanding Muslim leader of Calcutta, and Bose were arrested and sentenced to different terms of imprisonment. Government was now confident that Calcutta would roll out a royal welcome to the Prince. Chittaranjan Das gave a stirring message to Bengal:

“I feel the handcuffs on my wrists and the weight of iron chains on my body. It is the agony of bondage. The whole of India is a vast prison. The work of the Congress must be carried on. What matters whether I am taken or left? What matters whether I am dead or alive?”²⁶

The message from Das along with the strenuous efforts of Bose, who was now released from prison, had created quite a psychological atmosphere for a complete hartal. The hartal was a grand success and the whole administration was paralyzed in

²⁴ B.k. Ahluwalia and Shasi Ahluwalia, *Netaji and Gandhi*, New Delhi: Indian Academic Publishers, 1982, pp. 55-57.

²⁵ Daya Mukherjee, *Subhas Chandra Bose Accelerator of India's Independence: Political History, Biography*, New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House, 1997, p. 34.

²⁶ Durlab Singh, *The Rebel President A Biographical Study Of Subhas Chandra Bose*, Lahore: Hero Publications, 1946, P. 52.

Calcutta, as result of which a government notification was issued within 24 hours declaring the Congress volunteer organization illegal.²⁷

In response to this Provincial Congress Committee of Bengal held a secret closed-door meeting to discuss the situation. Chittaranjan Das, the president of the Provincial Congress Committee was vested with all powers and was also authorized to nominate his successor. Bose who was earlier a member of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee was now made in-charge of the new movement by Das. Thousands of people came forward to join as volunteers for courting arrest. There was no room in the jails and orders were issued for summary release, but no one was prepared to leave the prison. On 10th December 1921, Bose was arrested for parading illegally and received a sentence for six months imprisonment. In the prison Bose lived in close proximity with Das and served him as secretary, cook and valet. His long discussions with him on several subjects helped in his political growth.²⁸

In February 1922, Gandhi got the news of outbreak of violence at Chauri Chaura. The police had opened fire on a mob had retaliated by setting fire to the police station and burning to death twenty one constables and the son of a sub-inspector of police. Hearing this Gandhi immediately called off the civil disobedience movement which was almost near to its goal as he felt that the nation was not yet ready for non-violent non-co-operation. Many leaders, including Bose, Chittaranjan Das, Motilal Nehru and Lala Lajpath Rai resented the suspension of the movement when it was at its climax. They called it Gandhi's greatest blunder and protested strongly against the embarrassing and ill-timed capitulation. Gandhi was at the verge of success of a massive experiment in the world's history but he decided to quit and the British did not miss this opportunity to arrest him.²⁹

Towards the end of 1923 Bose became the general secretary of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee. Chittaranjan Das was then the president. On 24th April 1923, Das became the first mayor of Calcutta Corporation. Bose carried out

²⁷ Ibid., p. 52.

²⁸ Daya Mukherjee, *Subhas Chandra Bose Accelerator of India's Independence: Political History, Biography*, New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House, 1997, pp. 34-35.

²⁹ B.k. Ahluwalia and Shasi Ahluwalia, *Netaji and Gandhi*, New Delhi: Indian Academic Publishers, 1982, pp. 57-59.

several municipal reforms during this period and earned a very good reputation of being an able administrator. He was only twenty-seven years old then. By this time the Calcutta Municipal Corporation had become a very powerful forum for nationalist activities and some of the most forceful speeches of Chittaranjan Das were delivered from the mayor's chair.

After joining the office, Bose decided to contribute half of his monthly salary of three thousand rupees for charitable purposes. The entire system of administration was changed and it proved popular too. The newly elected Swarajist councilors and Aldermen, including the mayor, came dressed in home-made Khadi clothes. The education department, for the first time, started to provide free primary education to the citizens. Besides, free medical dispensaries and a milk-kitchen for supplying free milk to the poor children were established. The departmental heads of the corporation who were chiefly British began to realize that they were public servants and not masters. If any officer still felt racial or official superiority, the Swarajist executive officer proved strong enough to deal with them. Khadi became the official uniform of municipal employes. The British government came down heavily on the Swarajist workers when Bose had hardly occupied office for six months.³⁰

The government was in search of an opportunity to suppress the Swarajist party by any means as it was dynamically growing and proving to be a challenge to the British administration. The murder of a European by Gopinath Saha provided that opportunity. Saha wanted to murder Charles Tegert, the commissioner of police of Calcutta, instead one Mr. Dey was killed by mistake. He was executed for terrorist murder.³¹ The government still doubted that this incident might lead to more rebellious activity and as a precautionary measure it wanted to strike harder on the Swarajist as their popularity had far surpassed the popularity of the Congress leaders³²

Bose and Das had great admiration for the sacrifice and dedication of the revolutionaries even though they were opposed to terrorism. The Swarajist made an

³⁰ Daya Mukherjee, *Subhas Chandra Bose Accelerator of India's Independence: Political History, Biography*, New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House, 1997, pp. 36-38.

³¹ Hugh Toye, *Subhas Chandra Bose: The Springing Tiger*, Mumbai: Jaico Publishing House, 2007, p. 29.

³² Hari Hara Das, *Subhas Chandra Bose and the Indian National Movement*, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Private Limited, 1983, pp. 105-106.

official condemnation of terrorism.³³ Chittaranjan Das succeeded in getting a resolution passed in the Sirajgunj Bengal provincial conference praising Saha for his terrorist deeds. This created a bitter controversy between Das and Gandhi. The same difference in attitude continued, when Jatin Das died in the Lahore prison following a hunger strike. 600 rupees was sent by Bose on behalf of the citizens of Calcutta to the family of Jatin Das who was seen as a martyr for the nation. This failed to make any impression on Gandhi and he just kept silent on the incident. On asking he replied that he had purposely refrained from commenting, because if he had done so he would have done so unfavorably.³⁴

Gandhi took the same stand on the incident of the attack on the life of the viceroy, Lord Irwin, just a week before the Lahore session of the Congress. As the dynamite did not explode in time, Lord Irwin had a narrow escape. The independence resolution which was moved in this session of the Congress included a clause congratulating the viceroy for his providential escape which read:

“The Congress deplores the bomb outrage perpetrated on the viceroy’s train and reiterates its conviction that such action is not only contrary to the creed of the Congress but results in harm being done to the national cause. It congratulates the viceroy and Lady Irwin and their party including the poor servants on their fortunate and narrow escape.”³⁵

Bose was opposed to the inclusion of such a clause in a political resolution and he wrote:

“The feeling in the Congress was that, that clause was uncalled for in a political resolution, but the Mahatma instead of retaining it, probably because he wanted to placate Lord Irwin and prepare the ground for a rapprochement in future.”³⁶

Bose had a soft corner for the revolutionaries and knew many of them personally. “Inevitably official suspicion turned against him: to the British he was that most sinister of objects, an enigma.”³⁷ As it was not sufficient, a new emergency ordinance was issued by the viceroy, called the Bengal ordinance, and Bose was

³³ Ibid., p. 106.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 106.

³⁵ Ibid., pp. 106-107.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 107.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 107.

arrested, as one of the most dangerous, under the Regulation III. On 25th October 1924, in the early hours of the morning, Bose was roused from the sleep by some police officers. He was told that they have a warrant to arrest him and for searching his house for arms, explosives, ammunition etc. But nothing was found from his house and no charge was made against him. No compensation was asked from him and no reason was given for their intrusion. He was just told that they have got brute force and that they shall drag him to prison.³⁸ “No charge was ever brought, and such was the clamour against his arbitrary detention that, had conviction been possible, the authorities could hardly have refrained from trying him.”³⁹

A large number of arrests were made so suddenly and unexpectedly on October 25th 1924. These arrests were made partly under Regulation III of 1818 and partly under an emergency (called the Bengal Ordinance) promulgated by the viceroy (Rufus Daniel Isaacs) on the midnight of 24th October which created tremendous excitement in the country. Official circles came out with the excuse that a revolutionary conspiracy was on foot and the arrest had to be made before anything serious happened; but it was hard to make the public believe that those who had been arrested were engaged in revolutionary conspiracy.⁴⁰

In the Alipore jail, Bose performed his municipal duties for two months. His subordinates were allowed to call on him with files. Chittaranjan Das also met him several times. This arrest only succeeded in making the whole country, including Gandhi, convinced that the Swaraj party's success had led the government to take such repressive measures. Bose's arrest made Das extremely bitter over the British attitude:

“All that I want to say is that Subhas is no more revolutionary than I am. Why have they not arrested me? I should like to know why? If love of one's country is a crime, I am a criminal. If Subhas is criminal, I am a criminal. Not only the chief executive officer of the corporation, but mayor of this corporation is eventually guilty. I can

³⁸ Sisir K Bose and Sugata Bose, ed., *The Indian Struggle, 1920-1942 Subhas Chandra Bose*. Netaji Collected work volume II, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997, pp. 141.

³⁹ Hugh Toye, *Subhas Chandra Bose: The Springing Tiger*, Mumbai: Jaico Publishing House, 2007, p. 30.

⁴⁰ Sisir K Bose and Sugata Bose, ed., *The Indian Struggle, 1920-1942 Subhas Chandra Bose*. Netaji Collected work volume II, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997, pp. 116-118.

only say these ordinances are directed against us only to put down lawful organization.”⁴¹

There was a very strong objection against the arrest of their popular leader by the people of Bengal. On the other hand, *The Statesman* and *The Englishman*, the two leading Anglo –Indian dailies of Calcutta, strongly exhorted the authorities for his detention on the plea that he was “the brain of the revolutionary conspiracy.”⁴²

Government was forced to think seriously about releasing Bose but the prestige of the police, at whose insistence the arrests had been made, stood in the way and the proposal was dropped. The agitation over Bose’s arrest gained more strength at that time since the public thought that the object of the government was to strike at the Swarajist administration of the new corporation. Officials and semi-official circles were therefore at pains to put forward an excuse for the arrests to find some credence among the public. Bose’s solicitors at once filed legal proceeding against both the papers which reported against him for defamation. The proceedings dragged on for months and in the meantime attempts were made to secure the help of the government for obtaining proofs to substantiate the charges made against Bose in the press in support of the government. As the government did not agree to help in the matter, an attempt was made to secure the assistance of the Indian office in London. By that time there had been a change in the cabinet in England.

A general election had taken place in October and as a result of the scare created by the Zinovieff letter, there had been a landslide in favor of the Conservative Party. Following the defeat of the Labour Party at the polls, the Labour secretary of state for India, Lord Oliver, had made room for the Conservative secretary of state, Lord Birkenhead. Though the India office was inclined to help the Anglo-Indian papers in the suit brought against them for defamation, they were unable to find any documentary evidence to prove Bose’s complicity in a revolutionary conspiracy.⁴³

⁴¹ Hari Hara Das, *Subhas Chandra Bose and the Indian National Movement*, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Private Limited, 1983, p.107.

⁴² Daya Mukherjee, *Subhas Chandra Bose Accelerator of India’s Independence: Political History, Biography*, New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House, 1997, pp. 36-37.

⁴³ Sisir K Bose and Sugata Bose, ed., *The Essential Writings of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose*, Netaji Collected Works. Vol.9. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998, pp. 117- 119.

3.2 Life in Mandalay Jail

In January 1925, Bose was shifted to Mandalay Jail with seven other prisoners. He was taken by a ship from Calcutta to Rangoon. His cabin was heavily guarded by police. The ship reached Rangoon after four days and from there Mandalay was about a day's rail journey. Bose was upset by his arbitrary arrest without trial and his speedy and secretive removal to the remote Mandalay prison. He did not have any idea about how many days he was to be detained behind bars. Though being behind bars was not a new experience for him, the circumstances were totally different this time. The government was not ready to provide him with books and they decided that he could not even have his favorite paper *The Forward*, commonly known as *The Jewish Daily Forward*, the publication of which began in 1897 as a Yiddish-language daily issued by dissidents from the Socialist Labor Party of Daniel De Leon. The authorities thought that this would prevent him from his revolutionary ways. Bose used his time well in Mandalay. He managed to read widely, he wrote innumerable letters and articles, classified his ideas and planned for the future. His two and a half years in Burma were a turning-point in his life. He was brought to prison as a 28-year-old activist full of dedication but without properly developed political ideas. He left as a hardened, skeptical man of 31, brimming with ideas and plans. He made great efforts to get to know Burma and although the climate did not agree with him, he was full of admiration for the Burmese.⁴⁴

He wrote many letters from the jail, sharing his knowledge and experience, to his friend Dilip Kumar Roy (22 January 1897–6 January 1980) who was a Bengali Indian musician, musicologist, novelist, poet and essayist. In Presidency College of Kolkata, he was closely associated with Bose.⁴⁵ The depression due to his jail sentence soon lifted as his philosophic nature once again helped him to develop his typically strong enthusiasm which characterized the rest of his life. His optimistic temperament is evident from his letters to his friend Dilip Roy:

⁴⁴ Mihir Bose, *Raj, Secrets, Revolution: A Life of Subhas Chandra Bose*, England: Grice Chapman Publishing, 2004, p. 72.

⁴⁵ Daya Mukherjee, *Subhas Chandra Bose Accelerator of India's Independence: Political History, Biography*, New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House, 1997, p. 38. see also, Hari Hara Das, *Subhas Chandra Bose and the Indian National Movement*, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Private Limited, 1983, p.108.

“You write you are getting daily a sadder, if not a wiser man, to contemplate how our earth is soaked by tears of humanity from crust to centre. But then these tears are not all of pain and anguish: there are drops of compassion and love as well. Would you really decline to traverse the shoals of pain and suffering, if you knew that there are richer tides of blessing waiting? So far as I am concerned, I see little warrant for pessimism and despondency. On the contrary, I feel, sorrow and suffering should impel us to courage for a higher fulfillment. Do you think what you win without pain and struggle has any lasting value?”⁴⁶

Bose knew the price of liberty and from the moment he decided to join the freedom struggle, he was mentally prepared for the worst. He could, therefore, adjust himself to any circumstance and see a silver lining in every dark cloud. On another occasion he said:

“Do you want the fragrance of the full-blown rose? If so, you must accept the thorns. Do you want the sweetness of the smiling dawn? If so, you must live through the dark hours of the night. Do you want the joy of liberty and the solace of freedom? If so, you must pay the price. And the price of liberty is suffering and sacrifice.”⁴⁷

It was in Mandalay that Bose received the greatest shock of his life when the news of Chittaranjan Das’ death on 16th June 1925 reached him. More than a great loss to the nation it was a severe personal loss for Bose as Das was his friend, philosopher and guide. Bose was extremely depressed after the death of Das. The grief coupled with the climate of Mandalay did not agree with his constitution and he fell seriously ill with an attack of bronchopneumonia in the winter of 1926. It turned out to be a case of suspected tuberculosis and Bose was transferred to Rangoon for medical examination. The medical board composed of Lieut. Col. Kelsall and Bose’s brother Dr. Sunil Chandra Bose, who naturally wanted his brother out of prison, recommended that he should no longer be detained in prison. Instead of releasing him on the basis of the medical report, the Government made a conditional offer in the Bengal Legislative Council that Bose would be released from detention provided that he agrees to go straightaway to Switzerland from Burma, without touching Indian soil, for recuperating his health at his own expense. The motive was obvious. The

⁴⁶ Daya Mukherjee, *Subhas Chandra Bose Accelerator of India’s Independence: Political History, Biography*, New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House, 1997, p. 39.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 39-40.

government considered him as a dangerous political personality. Bose rejected this conditional offer with contempt as this would have meant the acceptance of indefinite exile. In his letter to Sarat Chandra Bose he wrote: "I have no desire to become a voluntary exile from the land of my birth."⁴⁸

The philosophy that influenced his thoughts is reiterated in his words: "Ideas will work out their own destiny and we who are but clods of clay encasing sparks of the Divine Fire have only to consecrate ourselves to these ideas. A life so consecrated is bound to fulfill itself regardless of the vicissitudes of our material and bodily existence. My faith in the ultimate triumph of the ideas for which I stand is unflinching and I am, therefore, not troubled by thoughts about my health and future prospects... I am not a shopkeeper and I do not bargain. The slippery path of diplomacy I abhor as unsuited to my constitution. I have taken my stand on a principle and there the matter rests. I do not attach such importance to my bodily life that I should strive to save it by a process, of haggling. My conception of values is somewhat different from that of the market place and I do not think that success or failure in life should be determined by physical or material criteria. Our fight is not a physical one and it is not for a material object either. As St. Paul said 'We wrestle not against flesh and blood but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world', against spiritual wickedness in high places, 'Our cause is the cause of freedom and truth and as sure as day follows night, that cause will ultimately prevail. Our bodies may fail and perish but with faith undiminished and will unconquerable, triumph will be ours. It is, however, for providence to ordain who of us should live to witness the consumption of all our efforts and labours and as for myself, I am content to live my life and leave the rest to destiny."⁴⁹

Detained in jail without any trial, his health was getting worse day by day. Due to great public pressure, orders were issued for his transfer to Almora Jail. Arrangements were made for his transportation, with top secrecy early one morning in May 1927 by a boat sailing from Rangoon. It took four days to reach Diamond Harbor on River Hooghly. Before his boat reached Calcutta, he was removed to the Governor's lounge for another medical examination. There he met with Lowman, the Director of the Intelligence Department. The board wired the report to the Governor at

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 40.

⁴⁹ Ibid., pp.40- 41.

Darjeeling. The police was opposed to the release of Bose and the police officers tried to influence the medical board to submit a report in favour of his transfer to Almora or deportation to Switzerland, but they could not succeed. The doctors urged the immediate release of Bose in view of his health. He was released on 16th May 1927, after a long incarceration of about three years.⁵⁰

After his release, people's choice fell naturally upon Bose to lead the province after Chittaranjan Das. He was elected President of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee. Gradually Bose overcame the shock he had received at Das' death and started his political activities once again with renewed enthusiasm. In November 1927, Viceroy Lord Irwin (1926-1931) made an announcement regarding the appointment of Simon Commission. The non-cooperation movement had failed and there was a lull in political activities thereafter. In 1927 the British Government wanted a report on the political reforms to be introduced in India and on amending the Government of India Act. So it appointed a commission and it consisted of Sir John Simon and six other members. All of them were members of the British Parliament. There was not a single Indian member. The Congress felt that the commission was an insult to Indians, for these English men were to shape the future of India. This disturbed the political atmosphere in India and gave a definite left-wing orientation to the Congress, which was seen in annual session of the Indian National Congress held at Madras.⁵¹

In December 1927, the annual session of the Indian National Congress held at Madras under the president-ship of Dr. Ansari, the Muslim leader of Delhi, a resolution was passed to boycott the Simon commission. Bose was not able to attend the session. He sent a message saying complete independence should be the ultimate goal of Congress. Jawaharlal Nehru (hereafter Nehru) and Srinivasa Iyengar were among those who worked for and made possible the passage of the resolution declaring complete independence to be the goal of Congress.⁵²

⁵⁰ Leonard A Gordon, *Brother Against the Raj: A Biography of Indian Nationalists Sarat and Subhas Chandra Bose*, New Delhi: Rupa & co, 2005, p147.

⁵¹ Hari Hara Das, *Subhas Chandra Bose and the Indian National Movement*, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Private Limited, 1983, pp.119-120.

⁵² Leonard A Gordon, *Brother Against the Raj: A Biography of Indian Nationalists Sarat and Subhas Chandra Bose*, New Delhi: Rupa & co, 2005, p. 164.

The other significant event of the Madras session of Congress was the appointment of Bose, Nehru and Shuaib Qureshi as general secretaries of the party. This event provided a left orientation to the Congress organization. Nehru was new to the Indian politics as he had just returned from Europe. In the initial stage of his political career in the Congress, he was associated with Bose for a few years.⁵³ The rivalry between the two, Bose and Nehru, started when the dominance of the Nehru faction asserted itself in the Congress. In 1928, Bose was elected President of the All India Trade Union Congress. He occupied the post till 1931. Apart from this he became the General Officer in Command of the Volunteer Corps. During this time Bose realized that he could also lead and act. By becoming President of the Trade Union Movement, Bose was able to draw the so-far untapped strength of the working classes in India for the freedom movement.⁵⁴

The years 1928 and 1929 saw a new drive in youth movements' revolutionary activity and unrest in the labour world. Bose found it the right time to start a political campaign. Bose thought Gandhi alone could give the leadership to the country. He met Gandhi in Sabarmati in May 1928 and requested him to start a vigorous campaign. But Gandhi refused saying he could not see any light. Later on 12th March 1930, Gandhi launched The Civil Disobedience Movement by conducting the historic Dandi Salt March, where he broke the Salt Laws imposed by the British Government. But by that time the labour unrest had subsided to a large extent. Gandhi agreed that he should have launched it two years earlier. Unfortunately Congress and the Swarajist leaders who had the Congress machinery in their hands lost a bit of their charisma for not utilizing the situation in 1928.⁵⁵

This was probably the view of the left wing of Congress led by Bose and Nehru. Their assessment was based on the study of the political situation of the country. In February and March of 1928, an all-party conference was held in Delhi to discuss the directive of Madras Congress and to meet the challenge of Lord

⁵³ Hari Hara Das, *Subhas Chandra Bose and the Indian National Movement*, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Private Limited, 1983, p. 120.

⁵⁴ Daya Mukherjee, *Subhas Chandra Bose Accelerator of India's Independence: Political History, Biography*, New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House, 1997, p. 42

⁵⁵ Hari Hara Das, *Subhas Chandra Bose and the Indian National Movement*, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Private Limited, 1983, pp. 121-122.

Birkenhead. Lord Birkenhead had earlier challenged the Indian political leaders to come forward with a better constitution for India and thus prove the British Government of India to be unworthy. The Motilal Nehru Report was published in the month of August as an outcome of the conference. The report regarded Dominion Status as the next immediate objective. On this the Committee could not be unanimous since the left-wing minority did not accept it. They were in favour of complete national independence (Purna Swaraj). Bose and Nehru opposed the report and they also offered to resign their general secretary-ship. It was decided by them that a separate body called the Independence League should be formed with a view to protest against the decisions of Nehru Committee and consequently of the All-Party Conference. Bose for the first time raised the banner of revolt against the compromising tendency visible in the Congress programme.⁵⁶

The second significant event of the year was the arrival of the Simon Commission in India. Bose implored Gandhi to take a positive lead for the country against the arrival of the Simon Commission. The Indian National Congress again adopted a passive stand with mere black flag demonstrations and the boycott of all the functions connected with it.⁵⁷

In December 1928, the Calcutta session was held. This was the largest attended meeting since the inception of Congress and it witnessed the open rift between Gandhi and Bose on the issue of Dominion status. In this session Bose raised a uniformed volunteer force trained on military basis. Bose had devoted much time to gathering and training two thousand volunteer corps. They were mainly to look after the delegates during the meeting. The idea behind this was Bose's ambition of the Indianization of the Indian army, since free India would have to defend itself and military training was better sooner rather than later. This made a great impact on the members of the Congress. The session was followed by a long discussion on the Nehru report on the Dominion status. Gandhi was personally satisfied with the report, but Bose, Jawaharlal Nehru and the younger section in the party opposed his view. Gandhi suggested by way of compromise that the dominion status be accepted and a

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 122.

⁵⁷ Daya Mukherjee, *Subhas Chandra Bose Accelerator of India's Independence: Political History, Biography*, New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House, 1997, p. 43.

time limit to be given. If Britain did not accept the proposal by the end of 1929, or reject it before that, the Congress will be free to organize a campaign of non-violent non-cooperation.

The Calcutta session created two groups in Congress which was noticed earlier also, but not as dominant as of now. The senior group in the Congress agreed to the Dominion status. This was not accepted by the left wing led by Bose. The compromise resolution of Gandhi failed to satisfy Bose. With the support of Jawaharlal Nehru, Bose moved an amendment to it that the Congress would be content with nothing short of independence which implied severance of the British connection. Then Gandhi's resolution was put to vote and the vote could hardly be called as free vote. The followers of Gandhi made it a question of confidence in their leader and opined that if Gandhi was defeated in the voting he would retire from the Congress. The party members did not want Gandhi to be out of Congress. This can be seen as personal politics and the use of his popularity to make the left wing weak. Jawaharlal Nehru absented himself from voting as the resolution said nothing about independence. The amendment moved by Bose and supported by Jawaharlal Nehru lost by 973 votes to 1,350. The margin of defeat of the left wing proved that it was beginning to be strong and influential.⁵⁸

Bose was a bit disappointed with the Congress for the decision of Dominion form of Government and for not utilizing the opportunity. In the early months of 1929, he presided over a series of students' and youth conferences in Bengal, Punjab, Nagpur, Amraoti and Maharashtra. He preached to them the values of integrity and sacrifice and infused them with the courage for adherence to the national goal of complete Independence. In that year the Meerut conspiracy case took place. It was a controversial court case, in which several trade unionists, including three Englishmen were arrested for organizing Indian-rail strike. This immediately caught attention in England since it affected their colonization and industrialization. The agitation among the nationalist intelligentsia, students, youth and growing unrest in the working class

⁵⁸ Leonard A Gordon, *Brother Against the Raj: A Biography of Indian Nationalists Sarat and Subhas Chandra Bose*, New Delhi: Rupa & co, 2005, pp. 190-195. See also, Hari Hara Das, *Subhas Chandra Bose and the Indian National Movement*, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Private Limited, 1983, pp. 124 -126.

made Bose think seriously about a bigger political campaign against the British government.⁵⁹

Bose had a strong feeling that the Lahore Congress will adopt a resolution in favour of complete independence. The youth movement was rapidly gaining momentum. To some extent this movement was responsible for the development of militant and radical trends in the country. Many young leaders were attracted towards Bose's new lines of activity. It is seen that wherever the older generation failed, the younger became self-conscious and took up the responsibility to further the struggle for freedom. Due to his extremist views and ardent support for activism and revolutionary methods Bose thought the philosophy of Gandhi and Aurobindo is harmful for the country. He was of the opinion that the time was not the one for metaphysical speculation.

He said:

“the actual effect of the propaganda carried on by the Sabarmati school of thought is to create a feeling and an impression that modernism is bad, that large scale production is an evil, that wants should not be increased, that the standard of living should not be raised, that we must endeavour to the best of our ability to go back to the days of bullock-cart, and that the soul is so important that physical culture and military training can well be ignored. The actual effect of the propaganda carried on by the Pondicherry school of thought is to create a feeling and an impression that there is nothing higher or nobler than peaceful contemplation, that Yoga means Pranayama and Dhyana, that while action may be tolerated as good, this particular brand of Yoga is something higher and better. This propaganda has let many a man to forget that spiritual progress under the present day conditions is possible only by ceaseless and unselfish action, that the best way to conquer nature is to fight her, and it is weakness to seek refuge in contemplation when we are hemmed in on all sides by dangers and difficulties. It is passivism, not philosophical but actual, inculcated by these schools of thought against which I protest. In this holy land of ours, Ashrams are not new institutions and ascetics and Yogis are not novel phenomenon: they have held and they will continue to hold an honored place in society. But it is not their lead

⁵⁹ Daya Mukherjee, *Subhas Chandra Bose Accelerator of India's Independence: Political History, Biography*, New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House, 1997, pp. 43-44.

that we shall have to follow if we are to create a new India, at once free, happy and great... In India we want to a philosophy of activism. We must be inspired by robust optimism. We have to live in the present and to adapt ourselves to modern conditions.”⁶⁰

Bose had a strong feeling that the leaders must have the capacity to think ahead of their contemporaries and must take the responsibility of creating public opinion. While doing so many might court unpopularity, but this should not bother the leaders in their determination to fight against the whole world, if necessary, for the good of his country.⁶¹

On 31st October 1929, Lord Irwin issued a statement saying that “I’m authorized on behalf of His Majesty’s government to state clearly that, in their judgment, it is implicit in their declaration of 1917 that the natural issue of India’s constitutional progress, as there contemplated, is the attainment of Dominion status”⁶². After this, leaders of several parties including the Congress met in Delhi and expressed appreciation of the sincerity underlying his offer, and decided to offer cooperation in formulating a Dominion constitution for India. The signatories, including Gandhi and Motilal Nehru, expressed their belief that the business of the Round Table Conference would be to draw up a Dominion constitution for India. Jawaharlal Nehru at first was not willing to sign the Delhi manifesto. But Gandhi’s wishes prevailed here also, and the younger Nehru signed it (here it is notable that prior to this Jawaharlal Nehru had the same view that Bose held for the freedom of the nation, and opposed the idea of Dominion status). Several who called themselves left wingers, including Bose and Dr. Kitchlew of Punjab, issued a separate statement and opposed the goal of dominion status and the participation in the round table conference. Feeling that he was no longer in accord with the great majority of the Congress Working Committee and that his membership in it would prevent him from voicing his opposition, Bose sent in his letter of resignation from the Working Committee. However, after discussion with Gandhi and Motilal Nehru, Bose withdrew his resignation, feeling that he could still agitate for the independence and

⁶⁰ Hari Hara Das, *Subhas Chandra Bose and the Indian National Movement*, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Private Limited, 1983, pp. 129-130.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 130-131.

⁶² Leonard A Gordon, *Brother Against the Raj: A Biography of Indian Nationalists Sarat and Subhas Chandra Bose*, New Delhi: Rupa & co, 2005, p. 215.

continue in the Working Committee. Bose recognized that Jawaharlal has now given up independence at the instance of Gandhi. Bose always hoped that the younger Nehru would stand with him and push the Gandhian leadership to a more radical position; but often Nehru retracted his genuine opinions which were more in concordance with Bose. This often left Bose exposed and ally-less, which did not stop Bose from continuing to make his challenges, but often without much success. And Bose, slowly but increasingly, came to feel more resentment against Jawaharlal Nehru than Gandhi. Moreover, he gradually came to feel that he could not follow his path of action while staying in Congress.⁶³

The Lahore session of Congress was at hand by December 1929 and a president needed to be elected for the session. At this juncture Jawaharlal Nehru became the president with the support of Gandhi and Bose was deprived of his general secretary-ship sooner. This tactical move of Gandhi proved fatal to the left wing in Congress. On one hand, the left wing lost a strong and popular leader from their ranks and on the other, Jawaharlal Nehru was prevented from implementing his left wing ideas as he was surrounded by right wing members instead of leaders like Bose in the working committee and thus rendering him ineffective. The Lahore Congress saw the culmination of Bose's dream of the declaration of the national goal as complete independence. But what Bose demanded at Lahore was a complete programme of action based on the organization of the peasantry working classes and the youth in one solid mass to enforce the national demand. According to him there could be no half-way measures in the national struggle. It had to be a "total boycott of British rule and administration leading to a parallel government"⁶⁴. One can notice that Bose was alienated in Congress due to ideological differences with a majority of Gandhian followers.

The difference in opinion between Bose was not the only difficulty that Congress faced during the last weeks of 1929. The first serious split in the All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC) also took place in December just as Bose was assuming the presidency of this organization. Since renewed trade union activity got

⁶³ Ibid., pp. 215-216.

⁶⁴ Daya Mukherjee, *Subhas Chandra Bose Accelerator of India's Independence: Political History, Biography*, New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House, 1997, p. 44.

under way in the late 1920s, the communist, socialist, and nationalist left within the AITUC had been growing. At the Nagpur session of the trade unionists, in early December, the politically-left nationalists defeated the right on a number of issues. These included affiliation with the Pan –Pacific trade union Secretariat (which the Right maintained was a communist organization), boycott of the Whitley Commission on Indian Labour and membership of the Girni Kamgar Union (a section of textile workers union in Bombay, which branched out from Girni Kamgar Mahamandal in 1928) in AITUC. With their defeat in all of these issues, the right-wing members of the AITUC executive committee walked out and their rift came out in open.⁶⁵

In a statement published on 9th December, 1929 in *Liberty* (Chittaranjan Das brought out a paper called *Forward* to fight the British Raj and later changed its name to *Liberty*), Bose appealed those who left AITUC to return. He said, in part: “there is a fundamental difference of mentality and outlook between the right wing and the left...I should state most empathetically that it is a mistake to regard a right winger as an agent of British imperialism and a left winger as an agent of Moscow...I do not know why the right wing suddenly developed a defeatist mentality and withdrew from the Congress. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru has made it perfectly clear...that if the right wing had rallied all their supporters they could still have commanded a majority...if they (i.e., the right wings) believe in democracy, they cannot object to the growing importance of the left wing in the T.U.C., nor can they grudge the recognition granted to the Girni Kamgar Union. Further, they should take the verdict of the executive council...on the question of the boycott of Whitley Commission, in a sporting spirit and abide by the decision of the majority.”⁶⁶

Bose wanted to reconcile the factions and thus strengthen AITUC. Jawaharlal Nehru who was in accord with Bose’s views, praised his conciliatory efforts, but neither he nor Bose could bring about a compromise. The right wing of the AITUC moved to form a separate organization, the Indian Trade Union Federation, which later became the National Trade Union Federation. The factional issues spilling out to the public was affecting the Congress in organizational level.

⁶⁵ Leonard A Gordon, *Brother Against the Raj: A Biography of Indian Nationalists Sarat and Subhas Chandra Bose*, New Delhi: Rupa & co, 2005, p. 220.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 220.

The gradual dropping of leftist members from the Congress Working Committee made the relation worse between the rightists and leftists in the Congress. Bose found it difficult to work within the Congress and formed Congress Democratic Party on the 2nd January 1930. This party advocated a militant political programme and drew the sympathy of the leftist followers. But the new party could not become effective as Bose was arrested and taken to Alipore Central Jail, as soon as he returned to Calcutta from the Lahore Congress and was sentenced to one year imprisonment.⁶⁷

During the early months of 1930, Gandhi was preparing along with the Congress Working Committee for a new campaign, civil disobedience movement, for the implementation of the independence resolution of Lahore Congress. This was meant to lead the country to complete freedom (Purna Swaraj). It was decided by the Working Committee that the campaign should be controlled by the followers of Non-Violence. Gandhi was afraid of eruption of violence and was a little worried about the impatient youth. Gandhi felt that the government would not be more accommodating to the Congress demands without the pressure that a mass campaign could bring. Gandhi launched his salt march (Dandi March) on 12th March 1930 while Bose was coping with his imprisonment in Alipore jail.⁶⁸

Gandhi had accepted the idea of ‘complete Independence’ under the pressure of the prevailing circumstances during Lahore Congress. The year of grace given to the British government for the fulfilment of the conditions of Motilal Nehru report by Gandhi and the Congress in the all parties meet in Delhi had expired. And he did not have any other option rather than starting the campaign. Bose watched the movement from the prison with full admiration of Gandhi’s leadership.

The Dandi march created a mass awakening in the entire country, while the revolutionaries were carving a niche for themselves. They did not believe in mercy but in retaliation. The incidents of Chittagong, Dhaka Comilla, Calcutta, Midnapore and many other places are the evident examples of this. Bose was released from the

⁶⁷ Hari Hara Das, *Subhas Chandra Bose and the Indian National Movement*, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Private Limited, 1983, pp.132-134

⁶⁸ Leonard A Gordon, *Brother Against the Raj: A Biography of Indian Nationalists Sarat and Subhas Chandra Bose*, New Delhi: Rupa & co, 2005, pp. 222-223.

jail on 23rd September 1930 and the moment he was outside, he started travelling around the country in a campaign to infuse a new spirit into the organizations of the country. In connection with this programme, he made a visit to the northern parts of Bengal. On his visit there, an order was passed by the D.M. prohibiting his visit to Malda. The District Magistrate of Malda's anxiety was evident in the order, 'no entry for Bose in this region'⁶⁹. Bose protested saying, "this order is illegal" and proclaimed that "as a self-respecting citizen of the country I refuse to abide by the D.M.'s order." Thus, for disobeying the order Bose was arrested again and taken to the first class chamber and his trial started immediately. Disobeying the order of District magistrate was not an ordinary offence and the verdict was imprisonment for seven days. The authorities however realized that the news of his arrest would result in a wave of processions taking place in the region. As the Malda town was small, it would not take much time for things to go out of the D.M.'s control. So without taking further risk, Bose was sent to Alipore Central Jail via Natore.⁷⁰

He was later released from the jail later in the month of January 1931. By January 26th 1931, dissatisfaction peaked again in the INC. The Congress had been declared an illegal institution by the British Government and meetings and conferences were banned. However, 26th January was supposed to be the day of taking oath for the independence of the country. Hence all the orders were ignored. The national flag was to be hoisted and processions to be staged. The procession in Calcutta was led by Bose. There was a vast police force to make sure no one got near the dais. Bose had been warned privately by a senior police officer not to take part in it: 'tell your boss' he replied to the messenger, 'that I will break the law.'⁷¹ In the court, as a Congress man he could make no defense, but he vigorously, as Mayor, spoke about the conditions in the lockup in which he had spent the night. Bose went straight ahead with his processions chanting *Bande Mataram* without bothering about the police force. With no option left, the police commenced a brutal Lathi-charge on the gathering. Even Bose was injured in the Lathi-charge and was arrested for another six month imprisonment. Later he was released with other political prisoners under

⁶⁹ Reva Chatterji, *Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose Bengal, Revolution and Impendence*, New Delhi: Ocean Books Pvt. Ltd, 2000, p. 81.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 82-83.

⁷¹ Hugh Toye, *Subhas Chandra Bose: The Springing Tiger*, Mumbai: Jaico Publishing House, 2007, p. 36.

the agreement between Gandhi and the viceroy, known as the Gandhi-Irwin pact. There followed ten months of liberty before the new crisis, on Gandhi's return to India from the Second Round Table Conference in December 1931. While Gandhi had been negotiating, Bose had abstained from embarrassing him, although he saw no hope of a successful issue. But as the unrest of 1931 began to grow he became a thorough nuisance to authorities in Bengal, criticising, inciting, prying into any situation of political delicacy, displaying a haughty detachment to British officials who impeded him, disregarding orders, injunctions and prohibitions. He was naturally included in the general arrests of leading Congress men.⁷²

On 5th March 1931, the Gandhi-Irwin pact or the truce document was signed according to Gandhi's terms and all the prisoners held during the Civil Disobedience movement were released. Gandhi however did not make any request for the release of prisoners held for violent activities. On the 23rd March 1931, Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukhdev were hanged. The 'divide and rule' policy of the British had succeeded. Once again they made compromises with Congress but dealt with an iron hand with the revolutionaries. This shows clearly that Gandhi's prejudice against the resort to arms was too deeply ingrained by that time. As a result the Yugantar and Nuojawan institutions expressed such dissatisfaction that the whole country seemed to be losing faith in the leadership of Gandhi.⁷³ The terms of the Pact were a great disappointment to Bose. On his release he rushed to Bombay to meet Gandhi, travelled with him to Delhi and held lengthy discussions with him. The Karachi Congress was held under the shadow of tragedy as Bhagat Singh and his comrades were executed in total disregard of public opinion in India.⁷⁴

This made Gandhi to foresee an impending storm. But he was determined to prevent any such upheaval. The Round Table Conference was to be held soon and to join that conference he would have to go to England. The Congress was the only all India organization then; but on the issue of Bhagat Singh and the others, it could get

⁷² Ibid., pp. 35-37.

⁷³ Reva Chatterji, *Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose Bengal, Revolution and Impendence*, New Delhi: Ocean Books Pvt. Ltd, 2000, pp. 85-86.

⁷⁴ M. K. Singh, *Encyclopaedia of Indian War of Independence*, New Delhi: Anmol Publications Pvt. Ltd, 2009, p. 143.

divided which would not be desirable at all. Then Gandhi realized that there was only one person who could tackle the situation, the undeniable leader of the young - Bose. Bose was called to Gandhi's presence and the whole situation was explained to him. Bose agreed to see to it that there would not be any difference of opinion at the Round Table Conference since he felt that any disunity in the Congress would only benefit the British. He imposed only one condition. Whereas there would be no untoward comment inside the conference, he must have the right to protest outside it. While Bose did not allow the conference to be disrupted, in his speeches outside he kept taking up the challenge:

“Why should the Civil disobedience movement be abandoned? Why was the release of the revolutionaries, particularly the release of Bhagat Singh and the others, not included in the pact? What have Indians achieved by the Gandhi-Irwin Pact? When the Indians had at last got up from their century old slumber and actively taken part in the liberation movement, the pact has only succeeded in putting them back to where they had begun. Was it the policy of Gandhi only to bring all active efforts of the people to a standstill?”⁷⁵

These were the questions which made Bose restless and which he articulated with great vehemence and fervor. After these questions raised by Bose, Gandhi called a special meeting to pay tribute to Bhagat Singh and the revolutionaries and the great non-violent leader himself praised the bravery and sacrifice of these shaheeds. A resolution was passed and Gandhi named Bhagat Singh as Sardar Bhagat Shingh. This action of Gandhi was widely appreciated.⁷⁶

But somehow Bose personally felt that the Round Table Conference was not as great as it seemed and that it was just a bluff by the British Government. He thought the main idea of the British was to prove to the whole world that the Indians were not worthy of attaining independence. Gandhi did not want to believe this as he never had any lack of faith in anybody's word and did not harbor any hatred or antagonism towards any one. The British were no exception. Thus he had no doubt in his mind about the good intentions of the British Government. Studying the mind and resolve of Gandhi, Bose at last said in dissatisfaction: “I will not stand in the way of

⁷⁵ Reva Chatterji, *Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose Bengal, Revolution and Impence*, New Delhi: Ocean Books Pvt. Ltd, 2000, p. 85.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 86.

Gandhi going to the Round Table Conference. Let him come back disillusioned. I will then stand vindicated.”⁷⁷ Bose was opposed to the Round Table Conference and said that no useful purpose could be served by such conferences. “Even If Dominion Status is offered tomorrow”, said Bose, “our duty will be to organise the younger section into a republican party as was the case in Ireland and to keep up the agitation for Independence.”⁷⁸ When Gandhi was selected by the Congress Working Committee as the sole representative of the Congress to the Second Round Table Conference, Bose considered this to be a tactical error. Despite his misgivings, Bose sent the following telegraphic message to Gandhi on the eve of his departure for England: “Our hearts are with you. Wherever you go awakened India will follow you with expectant eyes confident that the Nation’s honour will be safe in your keeping. We shall fight again if need be but not accept less than our birth right.”⁷⁹

As anticipated by Bose, the conference turned out to be a mockery of the ideals it had set out to achieve. The British government set up a whole lot of self-appointed leaders and sectarian elements against Gandhi and swiftly turned the tables on him by focusing on the problem of minorities and that of the future federal structure of India, neatly sidestepping the main issue of national independence. According to Bose, Gandhi’s London visit was badly planned from all points of view. It was a disillusioned Gandhi who returned from London. Further, Bose regretted that no attempt was made to put Gandhi in touch with the people and circles who counted in European politics outside England.⁸⁰

According to the view of Bose, the nomination of Gandhi as the sole representative of the Congress was a great blunder. Bose is a person who never minced words and whatever he felt he expressed it boldly. He had great respect for Gandhi, but did not agree with the methods he adopted for winning India’s independence. He said, “Mahatma Gandhi has rendered and will render phenomenal service to his country. But India’s salvation will not be achieved under his

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 90.

⁷⁸ B.k. Ahluwalia and Shasi Ahluwalia, *Netaji and Gandhi*, New Delhi: Indian Academic Publishers, 1982, p. 45.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 46.

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 46.

leadership”⁸¹ shortly after Gandhi’s return from the Round Table Conference on 28th December 1931 with a huge burden of ‘failure’ on his head. He had acquired a great deal of publicity, and a new name given by Winston Churchill- the ‘Half Naked Fakir from India’. Gandhi was surprised to find the repressive measures let loose by the government in different parts of the country. Despite Bose’s opposition, on December 29th 1931, the Congress Working Committee authorized Gandhi to seek an interview with the new Viceroy Lord Willingdon, but the Viceroy refused to discuss with Gandhi any measures adopted by the Government. As Bose had feared, the wish of the British was fulfilled and massive propaganda was unleashed in different countries of the world. “What can we do? We were ready to give them freedom. They themselves are not fit enough to receive it because of their internal differences in views and opinions.”⁸²

In May 1931, Bose presided over the Naujawan Bharat Sabha conference in Uttar Pradesh and in July the Calcutta session of the All India Trade Union Congress. The Bengal Political Conference held in December under Bose's inspiration felt that civil-disobedience should be restarted. After getting a negative and unfriendly reply from the Viceroy, the Congress Working Committee passed a resolution calling upon the nation, on 1st January 1933, to resume Civil disobedience movement considering the time was ripe for reviving the movement.

While the first Civil disobedience movement may have caught the British Government napping, Gandhi's novel method of resistance in 1932 saw them better prepared to deal effectively with the second civil disobedience movement and they went on the offensive. Lord Willingdon had replaced the milder Lord Irwin as Viceroy and he cracked down heavily on the agitators. Bose presided over the Maharashtra Youth conference in Poona and a resolution was passed asking the Congress Working Committee to resume the Civil Disobedience movement. The Government had issued orders to strike hard at Congress organizations. All the leaders were rounded up. By 2nd January 1932, Bose was arrested at Kalyan on his

⁸¹ Hari Hara Das, *Subhas Chandra Bose and the Indian National Movement*, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Private Limited, 1983, p. 141.

⁸² Reva Chatterji, *Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose Bengal, Revolution and Impedence*, New Delhi: Ocean Books Pvt. Ltd, 2000, pp.88-92. See also Hari Hara Das, *Subhas Chandra Bose and the Indian National Movement*, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Private Limited, 1983, p. 142.

way back to Calcutta. Nehru was arrested earlier on his way to Bombay. On 4th January Gandhi was arrested along with Sardar Patel and it became evident that next to Gandhi and Nehru, Bose has become the third most important leader in the Congress ranks.⁸³ In January 1932, Bose was first lodged in a small jail in a remote place called Seoni in Madhya Pradesh. He was soon joined there by his elder brother Sarat Chandra, a leading lawyer, front rank Congressman and Alderman of Calcutta Corporation.⁸⁴

The repressive measures adopted by the government could not successfully snuff out the Civil Disobedience movement which was in full swing. When the country was thus engaged in a life and death struggle, Gandhi declared his 'fast unto death' on September 20th to protest against the 'Communal Award' to grant permission for separate electorates to minority communities by Ramsay Macdonald, the then British Prime Minister. Such an unexpected step by Gandhi surprised Bose and Nehru and considerably weakened the tempo of the movement. Bose records his feelings from the Seoni sub jail of Madhya Pradesh:

“While the Mahatma’s fast had a remarkable effect on his countrymen, in the international sphere it did not prove to be an unmixed blessing. It served to advertise to a disproportionate degree the issue of the depressed classes. Hitherto the world had known only one issue relating to India, the political issue- India’s grievance against England. Now the leader of the Nationalist movement himself announced to the world that there was another issue- the internal issue- of such vital importance to India that he was prepared to stake his life for it. And the British propagandists were not slow to take advantage of the opportunity.”⁸⁵

On 26th January 1933, the Independence Day celebration was organized with great enthusiasm to accelerate the tempo of the civil disobedience movement. The Government used repressive methods to break the demonstration and processions; but processions were organised in defiance of Government orders. At such a critical juncture, Gandhi announced his decision about the suspension of the Civil

⁸³ Hari Hara Das, *Subhas Chandra Bose and the Indian National Movement*, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Private Limited, 1983, pp. 142-143.

⁸⁴ B.k. Ahluwalia and Shasi Ahluwalia, *Netaji and Gandhi*, New Delhi: Indian Academic Publishers, 1982, p. 47.

⁸⁵ Sisir K Bose and Sugata Bose, ed., *The Indian Struggle, 1920-1942 Subhas Chandra Bose*. Netaji Collected work volume II, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997, pp. 248- 49.

Disobedience campaign for six weeks, which was subsequently extended for six weeks more. While suspending the movement Gandhi appealed to Viceroy Willingdon to withdraw ordinances and release the Civil disobedience prisoners, but this request was rejected by the Government.⁸⁶

Hindu leaders assembled in Bombay and finally an agreement was reached about abolishing completely separate electorates. The Poona Pact enabled Gandhi to break his fast. The turn of events completely bewildered Bose who felt that the prime issue of Indian independence was side-tracked and drowned by the emotional excitement over Gandhi's fast. He thought that the cunning British Government had once again got the better of the Congress by successfully side-tracking the main issue of national independence. Civil disobedience and mass Satyagraha took a sudden back seat as issues like anti-untouchability campaigns and debates on temple entry bills came to the forefront. Bose and the radical elements could not help but feel resentful.⁸⁷

The Poona Conference of the Congress in July, 1933 authorized Gandhi to make another attempt to meet the Viceroy to arrive at an understanding with him failing which the Congress should resume 'Individual Civil Disobedience'. Gandhi's request for an interview met with a humiliating rebuff. In accordance with the decision of the Poona Conference, Gandhi along with some followers proceeded to start the Civil Disobedience movement individually and by August, 1933 all of them were in prison without producing any desirable impact. While in prison Gandhi served a notice to the Government that he would resort to fasting if he was not granted facilities to conduct his anti-untouchability campaign as he was given during his detention in September 1932. He was immediately set free as the Government realised by then that the movement had fizzled out. After being released from prison Gandhi declared that he would consider himself a prisoner till August 1934, since he have been released by the Government before the expiry of his prison term and hence would not offer Civil Disobedience during that period. The Congress was now preparing itself to turn to its Parliamentary Programmes and this was approved by the

⁸⁶ Hari Hara Das, *Subhas Chandra Bose and the Indian National Movement*, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Private Limited, 1983, p. 143.

⁸⁷ B.k. Ahluwalia and Shasi Ahluwalia, *Netaji and Gandhi*, New Delhi: Indian Academic Publishers, 1982, pp. 47-48.

All India Congress Committee called at Patna in May 1934. At the same time the Socialist Congressmen met there in a conference to prevent the outright drift of the Congress to constitutionalism. They put forth a very radical and dynamic programme of action before the country but could not succeed in preventing Gandhi from suspending the Civil Disobedience movement.⁸⁸

3.3 Exile in Europe

Since the health of the Bose brothers was getting worse in the jail, they were shifted to Jabalpur Central Jail. From there Bose was shifted from place to place allegedly for medical diagnosis and treatment; first to Madras and then to Bhowali Health Centre. But no improvement could be perceived and his health went on failing with a persistent fever and finally he was taken to Balaram Hospital, Lucknow. However, his health failed rapidly. The English doctor Colonel Buckley felt that things had gone far enough and that he should be sent to Europe, if he was to live. Left with no option, the British Government agreed to allow Bose to proceed to Europe for treatment and cure, and not to release him in India. Before his departure, he was brought back for a while to Jabalpur jail where his brother was held. On 13rd February 1933 Bose sailed for Vienna. At Bombay port, one of the two police chiefs was allowed to see him off. He was brought to the port in a closed ambulance where he boarded the Italian ship S.S. Ganges on another enforced exile which was destined to open a new chapter in his political career.⁸⁹ Over a span of twenty years, Bose was incarcerated eleven times by the British, either in India or in Rangoon (which was his first forced exile). During the mid-1930s he was exiled by the British to Europe, where he championed India's cause and aspiration for self-rule before gatherings and conferences.

A few days before his departure to Europe he sent two letters, one to Rabindranath Tagore and another to Gandhi, asking letters from them for introduction while he was convalescing in Europe. He got the letter from Rabindranath Tagore

⁸⁸ Hari Hara Das, *Subhas Chandra Bose and the Indian National Movement*, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Private Limited, 1983, pp. 143-144.

⁸⁹ Reva Chatterji, *Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose Bengal, Revolution and Impendence*, New Delhi: Ocean Books Pvt. Ltd, 2000, p. 94. see also B.k. Ahluwalia and Shasi Ahluwalia, *Netaji and Gandhi*, New Delhi: Indian Academic Publishers, 1982, pp. 47-48.

immediately but Gandhi sent a message saying that he was not prepared to give any letter of introduction. Bose got a rude shock as he was hoping that Gandhi would not deny him such a small favour. Probably Gandhi did not do it for he thought that Bose's way of struggle for independence was not appropriate. Bose tore up the letter from Rabindranath Tagore and made up his mind to proceed with his own work and identity and not to depend on anybody else's recommendation letters for introduction.⁹⁰

Like many Indians before Independence, he carried a British passport and in his passport his stay in Europe was restricted exclusively to Austria. On the 8th of March, 1933, Bose reached Vienna and was placed under the treatment of Dr. Furth. Bose was not happy with Dr. Furth's diagnosis that the main problem lay not in the lungs but in the abdomen, particularly the gall-bladder and the duodenum. When, by the first week of March 1933, there had not been much progress, he wrote to the secretary of state for India requesting for facilities for his passage to Germany and England. The India office had expected this, and their position was minuted by W.J. Clauson on 25th March.

The objections to his visiting Berlin or London are well-known: both were centers of Indian youth, vulnerable to be led into extremist paths. Even before he left India, when he was supposed to be very ill, Bose was indulging in terrorist intrigues: he was, of course, a very experienced organizer and his presence among the more or less unorganized or disorganized students in England or Germany would likely be very undesirable.⁹¹ Bose later found very good physicians and received satisfactory medical treatment in Vienna. After a few weeks of treatment and rest, he began to recover rapidly. As soon as he felt stronger physically, he began to take active interest in his new surroundings and sought to establish contact with people in Europe in the interest of the nationalist movement in India. He found a kindred spirit in another leading Indian politician then convalescing in Europe, Vithalbhai Jhaverbhai Patel (hereafter V.J. Patel), an elder brother of Vallabhbhai Patel. V.J. Patel not only shared

⁹⁰ Reva Chatterji, *Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose Bengal, Revolution and Impedence*, New Delhi: Ocean Books Pvt. Ltd, 2000, pp. 94-95.

⁹¹ Mihir Bose, *The Lost Hero a Biography of Subhas Bose*, London: Quartet Books Limited, 1982, pp. 92-93.

his interest in promoting international goodwill for Indian nationalist aspirations but also his antipathy towards Gandhian way of independence struggle.

3.4 Political Activities in Europe

Bose began meeting people in Vienna for the purpose of launching an Austrian-Indian society there. He made influential friends from cultural and economic circles in Austria and this helped him in establishing many cultural and economic ties between Austrians and Indians. He opened channels of communication with many European writers and scholars such as Romain Rolland and spent time to develop constructive discussions and relations. By personal contacts, correspondence, lectures, writings etc. He endeavoured to create in the people of Europe an interest in the Indian national movement and to win their sympathy for the struggle for freedom being carried on by the INC and moral support against Britain. In Vienna he met diplomatic representatives of many countries at the functions organized by the Austrian-Indian society. While representatives of some countries were totally indifferent, Bose soon discovered with great satisfaction that the neighboring countries of Austria, viz. Czechoslovakia and Poland, reacted very positively to his efforts and showed a great deal of understanding of the struggle for national independence being fought by the Indian people. He drew inspiration from the freedom struggle of these two nations that sought the help of other nations (Russia and Japan) for the achievement of their goal⁹². In due time, he received a visa to visit Czechoslovakia from the Consul General of that country and travelled to Czechoslovakia to continue his treatment.⁹³

On 29th June 1933 he reached Prague. While being there, he often had political discussions with Edouard Benes, the then Foreign Minister of Czechoslovakia. He studied the Czechoslovakia Youth Movement, 'Sokol' and the history of Czechoslovakia Legion which was created during the First World War outside Czechoslovakia with the support of Great Britain and Russia to fight for their liberation from Austrian domination. In Prague he also met Professor Lesny, a well-

⁹² Sugata Bose, *His Majesty's Opponent: Subhas Chandra Bose and India's struggle against empire*, New Delhi: Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd, 2011, pp. 90-91.

⁹³ Alexander Werth, ed., *A Beacon Across Asia: A Biography of Subhas Chandra Bose*, Hyderabad: Orient Blackswan, 1996, pp. 39-40.

known ideologist, a friend and biographer of Rabindranath Tagore and one-time Professor at Viswa Bharati. They discussed on the significance of the cultural and economic ties between India and Czechoslovakia and to further such ties the Czechoslovakia-Indian Association was brought into existence in 1934, with Lesny as the president. At the inauguration of this society at the Lubkowitz Palace in Prague, Bose spoke on the struggle for freedom of India carried on by the INC.⁹⁴

Bose was able to procure a visa to travel to Poland from a visiting Polish minister he had befriended and went there to make further connections with prominent Polish leaders. There he studied the history of Polish legion which was trained by the Japanese and fought for the freedom of that country. Meanwhile news of the cancellation of civil disobedience movement reached Bose in Vienna. He and V. J. Patel were upset over the cancellation of the mass movement and issued a scathing statement, part of which read:

“The time has 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 expect him to evolve or work a programme and method not consistent with his lifelong principles. If the Congress as a whole can undergo the 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.”⁹⁵

Here one can note that the ideological rift between Gandhi and Bose has been widening, particularly with the suspension of civil disobedience movement. Soon thereafter, Bose was invited to preside over an Indian Political Conference in London. As he was not allowed to enter England, his presidential speech was read at the meeting by Dr. Bhatt in absentia. In the speech he appealed to the Indian residents there to contextualise the situation in India in the light of the changes that had been

⁹⁴ Sugata Bose, *His Majesty's Opponent: Subhas Chandra Bose and India's struggle against empire*, New Delhi: Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd, 2011, p. 90. See also Alexander Werth, ed., *A Beacon Across Asia: A Biography of Subhas Chandra Bose*, Hyderabad: Orient Blackswan, 1996, p. 40.

⁹⁵ Alexander Werth, ed., *A Beacon Across Asia: A Biography of Subhas Chandra Bose*, Hyderabad: Orient Blackswan, 1996, pp. 97-98. see also Sanford Krolick and Betty Cannon, *Gandhi in the "Postmodern" Age: Issues in War and Peace*, The University of Michigan: Colorado School of Mines Press, 1984, p. 5.

taking place all over the world and to express the need of Indian independence. Criticizing the policy of Gandhi, he said:

“If the Delhi pact of 1931 was a blunder, the surrender of 1933 was calamity of the first magnitude. By suspending the Civil Disobedience Movement at a critical hour, work was suffering and the sacrifices of a nation for thirteen years are virtually undone.”⁹⁶

In this conference a committee was formed of twenty-two members namely ‘Samavadya Sangh’⁹⁷ The speech, which is rightly considered to be one of his fundamental political writings, showed clearly that his own political preparation was already far advanced, both in respect of the strategy of the fight against Britain and the ultimate aim of Indian National Revolution. He set out his own messianic faith in India’s destiny in the following words:

“In the seventeenth century, England made a remarkable contribution to human civilization through her ideas of constitutional and democratic government. Similarly, in the eighteenth century, France made the most wonderful contribution to the culture of the world through her ideas of ‘liberty, equality and fraternity.’ During the nineteenth century, Germany made the most remarkable gift through her Marxian philosophy. During the twentieth century Russia had enriched the culture and civilization of the world through her achievement in proletarian revolution, proletarian government and culture. The next remarkable contribution to the culture and civilization of the world, India will be called upon to make”⁹⁸

From Warsaw, Bose went to Germany on 17th July 1933, as he wanted to establish further contacts with other politicians. He was keen to meet and know leaders of Germany and Italy because these countries had then become centers of important political movements in Central Europe. He was fascinated by how Hitler and Mussolini had succeeded in creating extraordinary national consciousness amongst the German and Italian masses. In July 1933, Bose arrived in Berlin from Warsaw at the railway station of Friedrichstrasse. The German Foreign Office had

⁹⁶ Daya Mukherjee, *Subhas Chandra Bose Accelerator of India’s Independence: Political History, Biography*, New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House, 1997, p. 50.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 50-51.

⁹⁸ Alexander Werth, ed., *A Beacon Across Asia: A Biography of Subhas Chandra Bose*, Hyderabad: Orient Blackswan, 1996, p. 41.

been alerted by the Indo-German Society in Berlin to receive him at the station and to help him during his stay in Berlin. Bose did not, however, want to become a guest of the German Government, but wanted to discuss with them issues relating to the overall German policy towards India and particularly to her struggle against Britain. He, therefore, left the guesthouse and went to stay in Grand-Hotel-am-Knie in Charlottenburg at his own expense. In Berlin, Bose was anxious to speak to Hitler to change his erroneous judgment regarding the Indian people and the fight for freedom which the Indian people were carrying on to liberate themselves from the British yoke. He wanted Hitler to change his damaging comments about Indians in the new edition of his book *Mein Kampf*.⁹⁹

Bose sincerely believed that if he succeeded in persuading Hitler to retract the passage, he would then have fulfilled an important mission in Europe and would have won some political advantage for India. So he tried through the officials of the German foreign Office and also through the Office of the Chancellor to meet Hitler; but failed to meet him. The spokesmen of the German Foreign Office maintained that the German government should remain neutral in the fight which the Indian people were carrying on against Britain.¹⁰⁰ The Imperial German Government had taken considerable interest in the Indian revolutionary movement during the First World War and they could not remain completely uninfluenced by the efforts of Bose to project the current Indian struggle in Germany. All that he could do was to write a letter of protest to the well-known daily of the National Socialist Party, the *Volkischer Beobachter*, which in an issue in July 1933 wrote that “Germany has no interest whatsoever in the internal affairs of India”.¹⁰¹

Bose could, however, meet the leaders of some of the dissident groups of the National Socialist Party. These secret but dissident groups of the National Socialist Party assured Bose that they would help the revolutionary organization in Bengal with technical equipment, arms and ammunition as well as instruments for sending secret messages etc. if a reliable method of transporting these materials from Germany to

⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 42.

¹⁰⁰ Sugata Bose, *His Majesty's Opponent: Subhas Chandra Bose and India's struggle against empire*, New Delhi: Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd, 2011, pp. 91-92.

¹⁰¹ Alexander Werth, ed., *A Beacon Across Asia: A Biography of Subhas Chandra Bose*, Hyderabad: Orient Blackswan, 1996, p. 43.

Bengal could be established.¹⁰² However, attempts for establishing liaison between secret organizations in Germany and the underground organizations in Bengal failed to achieve anything.

In Berlin, Bose also studied the state of affairs of the colony of Indians in Berlin. Since the end of the First World War, Indians living in Berlin had been divided into three separate groups and one such group consisted of those political exiles who, during the First World War, had worked together with the German Foreign Office to organize a revolt against the British in India. One of the groups consisted of newly arrived young students in Berlin and its organizer was A.C.N. Nambiar, who had been asked by Jawaharlal Nehru to organize an Indian Information Office in Berlin. The function of this office was to supply information to German newspapers about the arrival of important Indians in Germany, provide advice and help to Indians coming to Germany and find seats in German universities or apprenticeships in industries for Indian students who were then coming to Germany in large numbers. Nambiar later went on to become a close associate of Bose in Germany during the Second World War.¹⁰³

Thus, even the members of the German Foreign Office who were not enthusiastic members of the National Socialist Party, could not do much to help the Indian cause. They eventually asked Bose to see Dr. Franz Thierfelder who was then director of the German Academy in Munich. Accordingly he went to Munich and met Dr. Franz Thierfelder, with whom he discussed the prospects for improving Indo-German relations. Bose and Thierfelder became good friends and began to keep up a correspondence with each other. As a result of all these efforts and Bose's positive attempts to improve Indo-German relation, anti-Indian reporting in the German media was somewhat reduced. But the constant reference to Indians as 'coloured people' in the German press was not stopped. This attitude of the National Socialist Party towards the Indians did not sit with ease with its theory of Aryan origin of the Indians and the Germans and also led to the rejection of whatever suggestions Bose and his German friends made to the German Government. Goebbels reportedly said to an

¹⁰² Ibid., p. 44.

¹⁰³ Sugata Bose, *His Majesty's Opponent: Subhas Chandra Bose and India's struggle against empire*, New Delhi: Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd, 2011, p. 90. See also Alexander Werth, ed., *A Beacon Across Asia: A Biography of Subhas Chandra Bose*, Hyderabad: Orient Blackswan, 1996, p. 44.

Indian journalist, Habibur Rehman (published later in the German press), that the Japanese and the Indians possessed a culture of high order which reflected their racial qualities. But even the publication of this statement did not prevent the German press from labeling Indians as an inferior race again.¹⁰⁴

It was very clear that official Germany, during this particular period, did not take any interest whatsoever in Indians affairs. It can be emphasized that the claim of the German Foreign Office to conduct the relations of the Third Reich with foreign countries independently was not fully accepted by the party. It shows the ambivalence of Hitler's attitude towards Britain and also shows how mistaken Bose was in the beginning as to the true nature of the Nazis.¹⁰⁵ After leaving Germany, Bose spent most of the autumn of 1933 with V.J. Patel who helped him set up the Indian-Irish Independence league. Patel died of heart attack on 22nd October 1933 and he had willed a portion of his fortune to Bose to be spent "for the political uplift of India and preferably for publicity work on behalf of India's cause in other countries."¹⁰⁶

Bose was invited to attend an Asian students' Congress in Italy from 22nd to 28th December. Some six hundred Asian students from different Universities and colleges in Europe attended the Congress. Unlike the Germans, the Italians were only too eager to welcome Bose. His stay was much pleasanter in Italy than in Germany; and he had no problems in meeting Mussolini. He met him three times on this visit and twice subsequently, and had long discussions with him about India.¹⁰⁷ When Bose went to the Palazzo Venezia to meet with Mussolini, Bose was greeted with the words: "Viva l'India" (long live India). Guards of honour accompanied Bose and he was taken to Mussolini's office by the Foreign Minister, Conte Galeazzo Ciano. Mussolini congratulated Bose for his insightful speech made before the students in

¹⁰⁴ Alexander Werth, ed., *A Beacon Across Asia: A Biography of Subhas Chandra Bose*, Hyderabad: Orient Blackswan, 1996, pp. 45-46. See also Leonard A Gordon, *Brother Against the Raj: A Biography of Indian Nationalists Sarat and Subhas Chandra Bose*, New Delhi: Rupa & co, 2005, p. 275.

¹⁰⁵ Alexander Werth, ed., *A Beacon Across Asia: A Biography of Subhas Chandra Bose*, Hyderabad: Orient Blackswan, 1996, p. 46.

¹⁰⁶ Sugata Bose, *His Majesty's Opponent: Subhas Chandra Bose and India's struggle against empire*, New Delhi: Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd, 2011, p. 93

¹⁰⁷ Mihir Bose, *The Lost Hero a Biography of Subhas Bose*, London: Quartet Books Limited, 1982, pp. 97- 98.

Berlin, in which he clearly outlined the future of free India and the strong centralization and powerful organization that were needed there.¹⁰⁸

Bose's meeting Mussolini was not out of romanticism or ideology, but rather by the pragmatic consideration that Mussolini was the leader of an important country with certain conflicts of interest with Britain in the Mediterranean. Bose emphasized on the possibilities of cultural relations between Italy and India. The Senator Giovanni Gentile had sent him a draft of the Indo-Italian Cultural Relationship Scheme which, he hoped would materialize as soon as the war was over. On this suggestion, Bose replied:

“First things come first. Our first preoccupation is to free India from foreign yoke. To tell you the truth, we have at present relegated culture and cultural relationships to the last place. Before we could think of any cultural relationship, we have, first of all, to free India from the claws of the British Lion. Then we have to embark upon freeing India from many internal tyrants like the dead tradition, religious taboos, communal cancer, medieval feudalism of the Indian princes, and many other evils. When we have sufficiently clothed our naked limbs and fed the walking skeletons, then we may give our attention to culture, self-realization and all the rest of it. First we are determined to live and then speculate and philosophize.”¹⁰⁹

During his visit to Europe, Bose took up the task of studying the popular movements that succeeded against the ruling class. He studied the history and nature of such upheavals and closely examined the way they seized power from the ruling class. The ideological colour which each movement gave to their battles for liberation was less critical to him. This might have forced him to believe in the chance of success of an armed revolt through disciplined and trained soldiers. Bose examined how Lenin, Stalin, de Valera, Kamal Ataturk, Hitler and Mussolini succeeded in stirring up the nationalistic spirit of the people of their countries for the realization of their goals. At the same time, he also studied the apathy of Indian masses towards the freedom movement as well as their miserable condition. He thought about the

¹⁰⁸ Anthony Elenjmittam, *The Hero of Hindustan*, Calcutta: orient Book Company, 1947, p. 44.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 41-44.

possible ways of stirring and organising the Indians for the fight for the liberation of their nation.¹¹⁰

In Berlin, Bose frequently used to tell his friends that the realisation of a national transformation in India required battles on a large number of fronts simultaneously. Frequently he spoke acidly in opposition to the 'Moderates' or the 'Reformists' in the Congress, who accepted that by being amiable and obliging to the British they could gain concessions from them and in reality never received any significant favour from the rulers. Bose was, therefore, of the opinion that a dominated people like the Indians would be able to liberate themselves only if they were truly awakened and organised; and it was the organised masses that the British feared most. It was clear to him that India could never realise her goal of freedom just because her cause was just and that waiting for a 'change of heart' of the British administrators would only take a long time. In the view of Bose, it was not for the British to give India a constitution but Indians themselves.¹¹¹

Bose often came into open conflict with Gandhi, because of his views on the aims and technique of the struggle. Bose wanted, as early as in the early thirties, the question of Indian independence to become a global issue and the world opinion to be mobilised in favour of Indian independence. In this respect also, Bose's ideas were against those of Gandhi. Bose regarded the work in opposition to Britain to be simply a stepping stone towards a higher socio-financial goal. Already in the thirties, he had gone around Europe gathering information which could be useful in the reconstruction of autonomous India; and the thought of national reorganisation which he later gave expression to as the Congress President in 1938 had taken shape in his mind during his European exile. It was clear already that on all financial and social issues, Bose's thoughts were absolutely left-oriented though his socialism was of a more realistic nature.¹¹²

Some historians were of the opinion that despite long stay in Europe Bose never developed a proper world outlook. Bose's eclecticism, or what one of his more

¹¹⁰ Alexander Werth and Walter Harbich, *Netaji in Germany: An Eye-witness Account of Indian Freedom Struggle in Europe during World War II*, Calcutta: NRB, 1970, p. 48.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 48-49

¹¹² *Ibid.*, p. 49.

uncritical supporters has called his rejection of monotheism (the path of salvation), made him pursue any movement that would help the cause of Indian freedom. He realised that a slave India did not have the luxury to choose friends and that it had to do with what was offered. This surely made him ignore to an extent the way Nazism viewed India. For Hitler the Indian freedom fighters were ‘Asiatic Jugglers’ who could achieve little, and he once advised an astounded Halifax that the solution for Gandhi was simple: ‘shoot him.’¹¹³ India was a nation in which Germany had small strategic and even less commercial interest and one which in any case was solidly barred from human advancement by the Nazi racial philosophy. Alfred Rosenberg, Germany’s philosopher who was credited with great insight into Indian culture, could find little virtue in these ‘Poor Bastards’(Indians) and was convinced that from the ‘Nordic as well as German point of view the British rule in India must be supported.’¹¹⁴ Bose also failed to see that Nazism could have been an even more terrible menace for India than the British, and it is certain that his pragmatism ran close to opportunism.¹¹⁵

While in exile in Europe, Bose received the news that his father had fallen seriously ill and he decided to fly to India. The moment he landed in India he was served with an order under Bengal Criminal Law Amendment Act. The order put restriction on his movements and ordered him as follows:

- “
1. To proceed at once to 38/2, Elgin Road and reside there till further orders.
 2. Not to be absent from the precincts of the said house and not to interview any visitors at any time.
 3. Not to correspond, converse or communicate or associate in any manner with anybody, save the members of your family actually living at 38/2, Elgin Road.
 4. To deliver unopened to the Deputy Superintendent of Police, Special Branch, Calcutta, or the officer specially deputed by him for the purpose, all books or communication (Whether such communications

¹¹³ Mihir Bose, *The Lost Hero a Biography of Subhas Bose*, London: Quartet Books Limited, 1982, p. 94.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 96-97.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 91.

be in the nature of telegrams, letters, postal packages or otherwise) received by you from any source whatever or intended for to whomsoever address and whether the same be received by you or by some agent or servant on your behalf.

5. When so required by the Deputy Commissioner of Police, Special Branch, or by any Magistrate, to facilitate in every way access of such person for any lawful purposes to the premises in which you are living.
6. If you knowingly disobey any of the directions, you will be punishable with imprisonment from a term which may extended to seven years and liable to fine.”¹¹⁶

Bose's father died on the day he arrived. He was allowed to do the final rituals of his father. However he desired to stay for some more time in India but the Government ordered him to return to Europe within a week. Bose kept in touch with the British Government requesting permission for staying for one month. He stated, “Incarceration in my nation is a cut above luxury abroad”.¹¹⁷ His request was not granted. In addition, his health had weakened and his doctor urged him to return to Vienna. On 10th January 1934, he left for Europe again.

He first landed at Naples, a city of Italy, and then went to Rome and spent about a week there. Rome greatly fascinated him and he said: “It is a blend of the old and the new”.¹¹⁸ He spent his early visit for touring and understanding the municipal administration, but his second visit was that of a sharp political observer. The second exile in Europe brought real changes in Bose’s views. Bose was interested in certain viewpoints of fascism and expressed his view that a synthesis of that ideology and socialism could be beneficial in the reconstruction of the nation. His detailed comments on the matter in his book, *The Indian Struggle: 1920-1934*, which was first published in 1935, precisely outlines the views he kept throughout the greater part of his life. The most important of them, along with Bose’s activities and thought during

¹¹⁶ Durlab Singh, *The Rebel President A Biographical Study Of Subhas Chandra Bose*, Lahore: Hero Publications, 1946, pp. 91-92.

¹¹⁷ Daya Mukherjee, *Subhas Chandra Bose Accelerator of India’s Independence: Political History, Biography*, New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House, 1997, p. 55.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

this second exile could be discussed for the purpose of comprehending his ideology better.

Programme Outlined:

Contending that the INC was somewhat “out of date,” and suffered from a lack of unity and strong leadership, Bose predicted in *The Indian Struggle* that out of a “left-Wing revolt there will ultimately emerge a new full-fledged party with a clear ideology, programme and plan of action.”¹¹⁹ The programme and plan of action of this new party would, Bose wrote, follow this basic outline:

- “ 1. The party will stand for the interests of the masses, that is, of the peasants, workers, etc., and not for the vested interests, that is, the landlords, capitalists and money-lending classes.
2. It will stand for the complete political and economic liberation of the Indian people.
3. It will stand for a Federal Government for India as the ultimate goal, but will believe in a strong Central Government with dictatorial powers for some years to come, in order to put India on her feet.
4. It will believe in a sound system of state-planning for the reorganization of the agricultural and industrial life of the country.
5. It will seek to build up a new social structure on the basis of the village communities of the past that were ruled by the village “Panch” and will strive to break down the existing social barriers like caste.
6. It will seek to establish a new monetary and credit system in the light of the theories and the experiments that have been and are current in the modern world.
7. It will seek to abolish landlordism and introduce a uniform land-tenure system for the whole of India.
8. It will not stand for a democracy in the Mid-Victorian sense of the term, but will believe in government by a strong party bound together by military

¹¹⁹ Sisir K Bose and Sugata Bose, ed., *The Indian Struggle, 1920-1942 Subhas Chandra Bose*. Netaji Collected work volume II, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997, p. 349.

discipline, as the only means of holding India together and preventing chaos, when Indians are free and are thrown entirely on their own resources.

9. It will not restrict itself to a campaign inside India, but will resort to international propaganda also, in order to strengthen India's case for liberty, and will attempt to utilize the existing international organizations.
10. It will endeavour to unite all the radical organizations under a national executive so that whenever any action is taken; there will be simultaneous activity on many fronts.¹²⁰

During the second exile, in Italy, Bose attempted to study again in detail various national liberation movements across the continent. One of the most successful examples, of movements for national liberation and national unity of a divided people, he came across was that of Italy. One of the subjects of his special interest was the underground organisation known as Carbonieri. This Italian secret organisation actually came into existence in South Italy at the time of the Vienna Congress. Its members were recruited from among high officials of government and officers of the army. From their high position they were able to influence the Italian masses in favour of national unity, more or less in the same way as the Bengali nationalists did in Bengal. One can observe that like the Italians, the Bengali people were deeply emotional and could be roused quickly to action when it concerned their vital problems.

The 'Carbonieri' were the pioneers of Italian freedom movement and of Italian 'Risorgimento' and it was their movement which led finally to the establishment of the Italian State. Their method consisted of direct action as well as *attendant* revolt, that is to say, organised popular rebellion together with occasional limited conflicts with the authorities which today, after the Second World War, would be termed as 'guerilla warfare'. Bose was fascinated by their method of agitation and propaganda for national freedom as the political conditions in India showed certain likenesses, even though in different centuries. In his conversations with his friends in Europe, he often referred to the writings of Mazzini (1805-72) who had formed a small group called 'Young Italy' from amongst the members of 'Carbonieri' in order to unite all the Italians who represented the forces for freedom, who believed in republican ideals

¹²⁰ Ibid., pp. 349 -350.

of government and who accepted the slogans of the French Revolution -liberty, equality and fraternity. One can state that both Mazzini and Bose became, in their contemporary times, new prophets of nationalism in their respective countries. They can be regarded as the path-finders for their people in their search for nationhood. It is noteworthy that they showed remarkable similarities in their political concepts and ideas.¹²¹

From his study of the history of Italian Freedom Movement, Bose gained an insight into the technique to be employed in the first stage of the national awakening of the Indian people. He believed that young trained cadres could create awareness among Indian mass and bring forth a national consciousness. Some of the thoughts he shared with his friends in Berlin on the basis of his experiences and studies in Italy related particularly to the training of young cadres for national revolution. He understood that the fore-runners of a new and strong national consciousness could only be the youth. They were to be inspired and trained in such a way that they would be ready to sacrifice everything, when the call came, for Mother India. But the fulfillment of this aim -creation of inspired young cadres- could not be achieved in the conditions then existing in British India except through secret organisations.¹²²

It should be noted here that his conversations with Mussolini helped him in formulating or at least thinking about his revolutionary methods. In a conversation which Bose had with Mussolini and which he afterwards related to his friends. Mussolini asked Bose: “Do you really and firmly believe that India will be free soon?” When he said “Yes”, Mussolini asked him again: “Are you for reformist or revolutionary methods for achieving Indian independence?” Bose said in reply that he preferred revolutionary to reformist methods. Mussolini said, “Then indeed you have a chance.” Continuing the discussion, Mussolini asked him again: “Have you got any plan for such a revolution?” As Bose remained silent, Mussolini told him: “you must immediately prepare a plan for such a revolution and you must work continuously for its realisation”.¹²³ This was during the first of Bose’s visits to Italy and in the further

¹²¹ Alexander Werth, ed., *A Beacon Across Asia: A Biography of Subhas Chandra Bose*, Hyderabad: Orient Blackswan, 1996, pp. 49-50.

¹²² *Ibid.*, p. 50.

¹²³ Leonard A Gordon, *Brother Against the Raj: A Biography of Indian Nationalists Sarat and Subhas Chandra Bose*, New Delhi: Rupa & co, 2005, p. 275.

visits Bose made all efforts to grasp the features and aspects of revolutions and liberation movements of Europe.

Of all the European Nations, Ireland was in all probability the one most essentially intrigued him. Ireland had, like India, suffered under British domination and had to assert its independence by an open revolt. British oppression and exploitation of the Irish people and of the Indian people appeared similar. In Ireland, Bose could usefully learn the practicability of underground organisations set up by the Irish revolutionaries. German friends of Bose considered the Sinn Fein movement as a successful historical model for India's fight for freedom, particularly as India was facing the same enemy. As the Sinn Fein movement became stronger and acquired a popular base in Ireland, it became necessary for the new national leaders to put the organisation underground and bring its activities under control in the interest of post-war administration of the new Free State. This Irish experience was not lost on Bose who did not encourage in practice the formation of too many underground organisations in Bengal or India. Another important historical parallel which appealed to him was the idea of an alliance with Germany as a potential enemy of Britain. The Imperial German Government had declared during the First World War that if Germany won the war, she would immediately concede Ireland's independence.

On a comparative study, Bose recognized interesting parallels between political movements in pre-independence Ireland and India. The Irish Nationalist Party looked like Indian moderate parties and like the Indian Liberal Federation, was in favour of established routines like 'home rule' which indicated restrained independence under British command. The 'United Irishman' which arose out of the Sinn Fein movement resembled the Indian radicals, of whom Bose was one, and this party wanted to free Ireland completely of British domination and make it an independent state. But until the First World War, the radical elements in Ireland played a very small and insignificant role. They refused to take part in the British Parliament because they desired the end of British Empire altogether.¹²⁴

¹²⁴ Alexander Werth, ed., *A Beacon Across Asia: A Biography of Subhas Chandra Bose*, Hyderabad: Orient Blackswan, 1996, p. 51.

During the First World War, the radical elements in Ireland were able to acquire certain significance in the Irish struggle for freedom. After the failure of the Easter Rebellion in 1916, the former leaders of the separatist movement became the recognized leaders of Ireland. Although they were not able to attain complete unification of their country, they consoled themselves with the idea that they had achieved at least a partial victory. In order to assess the effectiveness of German help in the freedom struggle of Ireland, Bose took great pains to study how the Easter Rebellion had taken place. From German sources he gathered material to reconstruct the rebellion as a student of history and to find out the avoidable mistakes committed by the leaders. Bose read in the German archives the decoded telegrams in which the Irish had asked Germany to send arms and the German promise to send twenty thousand machine-guns with ammunition as well as hand-grenades to the west coast of Ireland between Good Friday and Easter Monday of 1916.¹²⁵

From Berlin, Bose took the first steps to establish personal contact with the Irish President Eamon De Valera, who belonged to a group of hundred volunteers who had participated in the Irish Rebellion and was not hanged but was just sentenced for life-long imprisonment. Bose was eager to meet de Valera, which he did in 1936. De Valera warmly received Bose in Dublin and bestowed him the status of a high dignitary from a friendly foreign country. De Valera interrupted his busy schedule and held three meetings with him: a formal exchange of views in the government building, an informal tea reception hosted by his Fianna Fail party and a private dinner at his residence outside Dublin. They discussed the possibilities and limits of external help for a country that was struggling for freedom from colonial rulers. Bose hoped that he could appeal to the conscience of the world from Ireland. He therefore wrote a number of letters to Irish papers and supplied them with news and articles on the repressive measures of the British imperialists in India.¹²⁶ He also planned to publish a monthly bulletin on India in English, French and German languages in Ireland and to distribute it from there to the international press. He was greatly disappointed when

¹²⁵ Ibid., pp. 51-52.

¹²⁶ Sugata Bose, *His Majesty's Opponent: Subhas Chandra Bose and India's struggle against empire*, New Delhi: Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd, 2011, pp. 105-106. See also Leonard A Gordon, *Brother Against the Raj: A Biography of Indian Nationalists Sarat and Subhas Chandra Bose*, New Delhi: Rupa & co, 2005, p. 305.

he came to know that the leaders of the All-India Congress Committee had rejected his plan for methodical propaganda in foreign countries on behalf of the Congress.¹²⁷

On 12th February 1936, Bose returned from Ireland, reached France and spent a few days in Paris meeting political and cultural leaders, like Andre Gide and Andre Malraux. On 17th February 1936, Bose addressed a conference in Paris under the auspices of the League against Imperialists, where Bose analyzed two aspects of the Indian freedom movement: the struggle for national liberation and the endeavor to create a new social order. He noted that many were concerned about the Japanese imperialism in Asia. “If tomorrow China could be strong and unified, if tomorrow India could be free, I am sure it would influence the balance of power in Asia and serve to check the spread of Japanese imperialism.”¹²⁸ On the question of ‘social freedom’, he noted that there was popular pressure on the INC to “declare itself more explicitly on the side of masses.”¹²⁹

During his stay in Berlin, Bose observed the developments in Turkey too. With the help of Germany, Turkey was able to modernize its army, build up an efficient administration and make it more independent of other powers. Bose found out from his conversations with some Turkish leaders that the Turks were able to continue with their National reconstruction independently, sometimes by rejecting German proposals, in spite of the presence of the German army in the country. This could have made Bose think that Germany could become an ally in India’s fight for freedom and also in the national reconstruction after gaining independence.

The Young Turks’ revolution was led by the ‘Unity and Progress Party’ led by Mustafa Kamal Pasha. Bose was interested in finding out the experiences of an oriental state in introducing radical social reforms in order to catch up with the technologically advanced countries of the world. Bose found that India and Turkey had a significant number of comparable situations and that both required countless social changes. He desired to introduce in India some of the social and regulatory measures which Turkey had found vital in modernizing the nation. Such changes,

¹²⁷ Alexander Werth, ed., *A Beacon Across Asia: A Biography of Subhas Chandra Bose*, Hyderabad: Orient Blackswan, 1996, p. 53.

¹²⁸ Sugata Bose, *His Majesty’s Opponent: Subhas Chandra Bose and India’s struggle against empire*, New Delhi: Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd, 2011, p. 107.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 107.

Bose perhaps suspected, could sway the Muslim population of India towards a new social concept after independence had been achieved. Bose immensely admired the founder of modern Turkey, Kamal Ataturk, whom he considered to be one of the greatest creative statesmen of this century and whom he tried to emulate in several ways.

Ataturk viewed his government as democratic, but curtailed social and individual liberalism as a part of the reconstruction of the nation to prevent any political crisis that could weaken the foundation of the nation. Bose was intrigued by that form of government and it is clear from his writings that he preferred such a system to the typical western democracy, at least in the initial stages of an independent India. He realized that India with its divergent religious and racial population with varying value systems could be successfully integrated to a nation with any prospect of a conflict-less future only if there is a centralized authority to guide them through.¹³⁰ It is to be mentioned here that Bose was able to impress many European intellectuals with his ideas on democracy, revolution, terrorism, use of violence for freedom struggle, national reconstruction, socialism etc. Evidence of this could be found in the published diaries of French scholar Romain Rolland who considered him intelligent and pragmatic.¹³¹

Meanwhile in India, the promised election under the Government of India Act, 1935 was to be held in 1936. Although it was the INC's first attempt as a party at the elections, it virtually swept the polls. Congressmen had participated in earlier elections in their individual capacity or as members of the Swaraj Party. The former rebels had now formed governments in six provinces of British India (Bombay, Madras, Bihar, Orissa, the United Provinces and the Central Provinces). In Assam the Congress formed the largest single party but could not assume power. In Bengal it could win only sixty out of two hundred and fifty seats as a consequence of the infamous 'Communal Award' imposed by the British and tacitly accepted by the Congress. The 'Award' gave undue and unfair weightage of seats to communalist forces and ensured their victory through 'separate electorates' for different religious communities. This was the new 'charter of liberty', enacted after eight years of

¹³⁰ Alexander Werth, ed., *A Beacon Across Asia: A Biography of Subhas Chandra Bose*, Hyderabad: Orient Blackswan, 1996, pp. 54-56.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

deliberation through the Simon commission, Round-table conferences and innumerable debates in Parliament. It was Diarchy by more sophisticated means. The British Governors held wide reserved powers in the system and though a federal center was created, it was left weak and ineffectual since its very existence was subject to the agreement of the princes (Encouraged by Churchill and the Conservative Right, The princes refused to agree to this part of the act and it was never implemented).¹³²

At a meeting of the All-India Congress it was informally decided that Bose should be elected president of the ensuing Congress session at Haripura (Gujarat), an honour which he fully deserved in view of his long record of service and suffering. News reached Bose in Europe that he had been elected president of the Congress session to be held in April 1938. In his first public statement after receiving the news of his election, he declared:

“It will be agreed on all hands that we have to bring India before the world more than we have done so far. India’s problems, after all, are world problems. On our close contact with the progressive movements will depend not only the salvation of India but also of the suffering humanity as well.”¹³³

This statement was characteristic of Bose. He had realised that no country could live in isolation since the world was shrinking due to the modern advancement in speedy communication; every national problem ought to be viewed in the international context. In fact, he had devoted a good part of his exile in Europe to conducting propaganda for Indian freedom and in educating people and nations on the real state of affairs in India. He considered that publicity on India should always have a three-fold objective: “to counteract false propaganda about India, to enlighten the world about the true conditions in India, and to acquaint the world with the positive achievements of the Indian people in every sphere of human activity.”¹³⁴ Bose wanted the Congress to contest in the elections and then reject the Government of India Act. He had no illusions about the act of 1935. Many others felt it could turn out to be

¹³² Mihir Bose, *The Lost Hero a Biography of Subhas Bose*, London: Quartet Books Limited, 1982, pp. 59-60.

¹³³ V. S. Patil, *Subhas Chandra Bose, His Contribution to Indian Nationalism*, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1988, p. 73.

¹³⁴ Alexander Werth, ed., *A Beacon Across Asia: A Biography of Subhas Chandra Bose*, Hyderabad: Orient Blackswan, 1996, pp. 58 -60.

dangerous in a way that it would leave the British free to organize collaborators to win the election and prove that Indians did support the British.

3.5 Back to India

In March 1936, Bose sailed on S.S Count Verde for Bombay. As the ship arrived at Port of Bombay police officers came aboard, seized his passport and imposed a guard on him and was taken to jail. He was prepared for arrest since he had left Europe under the order of the British. After a few weeks' detention in Yeravda jail, Bose was taken to Kurseong in the Darjeeling district of Bengal and interned in the house of his own brother. This vindictive treatment of Bose was widely resented. The issue was raised by an adjournment motion in the Central Legislative Assembly. The government spokesman gave a laboured defense, accusing Bose of having 'a definite terrorist connection' and of entertaining 'a definite idea of violent revolution'. These charges were indignantly repudiated by the Leader of the Opposition who challenged the government to prove them in a court of law. The adjournment motion was carried by sixty-two votes to fifty-nine though it had no effect on an autocratic regime.¹³⁵

Through the summer and autumn of 1936, public protest about Bose's detention continued. There were more motions in the Delhi assembly, angry demands by Nehru and others, questions raised in the House of Commons etc. But the Government always gave the same answer- that he was a man of great ability, but dedicated towards revolutionary violence and imprisoned for that reason. When, in December, his intestinal troubles aggravated again, he was brought down to Calcutta and admitted to the medical college hospital. With the election just a month away, the Government had successfully prevented Bose from organising the Congress during a crucial period. The question was what the Congress would do if it won the elections. The debate within the Congress regarding the acceptance of office had reached a crucial stage. Though the session held on 27th – 28th December 1936, had re-affirmed the Congress determination to wreck the act, it was not clear whether the Congress would accept office in the provinces.

¹³⁵ Daya Mukherjee, *Subhas Chandra Bose Accelerator of India's Independence: Political History, Biography*, New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House, 1997, p. 64. See also Alexander Werth, ed., *A Beacon Across Asia: A Biography of Subhas Chandra Bose*, Hyderabad: Orient Blackswan, 1996, p. 58.

From the British perspective, a free Bose would strengthen the Left and complicate the matters. So, while waiting for the election results, the Government decided that Bose should be interned once he was out of hospital. On 10th February 1937, the Home Department sent the Bengal Government the necessary warrant. Meanwhile, legal experts discovered that the previous ‘relaxed’ detention had been technically illegal; and wider political events had made Bose’s detention impossible now. Ultimately, having no ground to detain him any further, he was released unconditionally on 17th March 1937 and he resumed his political activities.¹³⁶

He left for Europe on 18th November 1937 to improve his health and reached Naples by air on 21st November en route to Bad Gastein. Bose married Emilie Schenkl, an Austrian national, who was his secretary. According to Schenkl, she and Bose were secretly married in Bad Gastein on 26th December 1937. They had one daughter, Anita, born in 1942. Bose wrote many letters to Schenkl during the period from 1934 to 1942, of which many have been published in the book *Letters to Emilie Schenkl*, edited by Sisir Kumar Bose and Sugata Bose.¹³⁷ The last phase of his visit to Europe was spent in London with an intensively busy schedule of receptions, dinners, public meetings and personal interviews. He met many important personalities including Lord Zetland, ex-governor of Bengal, who had become the Secretary of State for India. On 18th January 1938, J.B Kripalani, the general secretary of INC, formally announced in India that Bose was elected the president of the 51st session of the Congress to be held in Haripura. Bose left for India on 19th January 1938 and reached Calcutta on 22nd January.¹³⁸

In his speeches as Congress president, he vigorously denounced the British rule. He quoted Lenin and praised the British communist party as he sought to re-affirm his left wing credentials while being careful not to antagonise the conservative Gandhian right wing. Nevertheless, as rumours spread about an impending war in Europe, Bose thought that he should keep his channels of communications with

¹³⁶ Lt. Manwati Arya, *Patriot The Unique Indian Leader Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose*, New Delhi: Lotus Press, 2007, pp. 85-86. See also Mihir Bose, *The Lost Hero a Biography of Subhas Bose*, London: Quartet Books Limited, 1982, pp. 112-113.

¹³⁷ M. G. Lion Agrawal, *Freedom Fighters of India*, New Delhi: Isha publication, 2008, p. 251.

¹³⁸ Lt. Manwati Arya, *Patriot The Unique Indian Leader Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose*, New Delhi: Lotus Press, 2007, pp. 91-92.

Britain's enemies open. Bose started reaching out to foreign powers, particularly to enemies of the British. Among the actual and potential antagonists of the British, he included Germany, Italy, Japan and the Soviets. During his visits to Europe from 1933 to 1938, he had made contacts with officials of Germany and Italy. He had been denied a visa to the Soviet Union, but now he sent a letter to Comintern officials via his nephew Amiya Bose, who was going to Europe for his advanced studies. On 22nd December 1938, Bose met the German officials Dr. O Urchs and Dr. F Wulfestieg in Bombay.¹³⁹

Bose tried to reach out to the Japanese too as they were allies of Germany in the Anti-Comintern Pact. Japan was powerful and was the only Asian power that could challenge militarily the British dominance in Asia. Rash Behari Bose, an earlier Indian revolutionary who now resided in Japan, tried to contact Bose and his letter was intercepted by the British. It said in part:

“The fetish of non-violence should be discarded...Let us attain our goal ‘through possible means’: violence or non-violence. The non-violence atmosphere is simply making Indians womanly men...The Congress should devote attention to only one point, i.e., military preparedness. Might is still the right...

The Congress should support the Pan-Asia movement. It should not condemn Japan without understanding her motive in the Sino-Japanese conflict. Japan is a friend of India and other Asian countries. Her chief motive is to destroy British influence in Asia. She has begun with China...we should make friends with Britain's enemies...It is now the best policy for the Indians to support Japan and utilise this opportunity to increase their influence in world politics...As in time of war, dictatorship is indispensable, at the present in India's struggle for freedom, dictatorship is equally indispensable...

I have faith in you. Go ahead irrespective of criticisms, obstacles and impediments. Lead the nation along the right path. And success will be your's and India's.”¹⁴⁰

Though Bose could not receive the letter, some of the views of Rash Behari Bose were quite congenial to him. At the same time, Nehru, another Congress leader

¹³⁹ Romain Hayes, *Bose in Nazi Germany*, U.P. India: Random House Publisher India Pvt. Ltd, 2011, pp. 19-20.

¹⁴⁰ Leonard A Gordon, *Brother Against the Raj: A Biography of Indian Nationalists Sarat and Subhas Chandra Bose*, New Delhi: Rupa & co, 2005, p. 371.

with considerable foreign exposure and concern said that, ‘... no enemy of the United Kingdom [is] necessarily our friend.’¹⁴¹ During the mid and late 1930s, and especially during his presidency, Bose advocated the use of the International situation to India’s advantage. In March 1938, he wrote to Nehru:

“What has happened in Czechoslovakia recently is but a sequel to the Munich Pact. As a matter of fact, I have been telling Congress friends during the last six months, on the basis of information which I had been getting from Europe, that there would be a crisis in Europe in spring which would last till summer. I have, therefore, been pressing for a dynamic move from our side- for an ultimatum to the British Government demanding Purna Swaraj... there is no sign of any intention on your part or on the part of the Gandhian group to utilise the international situation for our benefit... I feel that either we should take international politics seriously and utilise the international situation for our benefit- or not talk about it at all.”¹⁴²

His demand for issuing an ultimatum to the British, backed with a threat of a renewed non-violent mass movement, was not acceptable for Gandhi. Gandhi and his supporters maintained the Indians were not ready for such a nation-wide movement yet. Bose felt that the Congress right-wing was short-sighted in opposing his position on the matter. He also realised that even though he was the Congress and BPCC president, he was still an outsider to the Gandhi group which controlled the Congress.

Even though he had numerous commitments as Congress and BPCC president, Bose still devoted some of his energies to the Calcutta Corporation. He was elected an alderman in 1937 and returned briefly to Calcutta in November 1937. By February 1938, he started on his task of reforming the Corporation through the Congress Municipal Association. The corporation was reportedly plagued by corruption and nepotism. His ringing indictment of the Corporation was met with the resignation of many members of the Congress Municipal Association. Shortly thereafter, Bose himself resigned from the association and as alderman.¹⁴³ Throughout the year of his presidentship, he was intensively busy with the Congress work and often visited Gandhi in his efforts to get along with him.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., p. 371.

¹⁴² Subhas Chandra Bose, and Sisir Kumar Bose, *Congress President: Speeches, Articles and Letters January 1938 - May 1939*, India: Orient Blackswan, 2004, pp. 209-210.

¹⁴³ Leonard A Gordon, *Brother Against the Raj: A Biography of Indian Nationalists Sarat and Subhas Chandra Bose*, New Delhi: Rupa & co, 2005, P. 368.

3.6 Gandhi's Fury

Before 1938 ended, a new, more important conflict began over the presidency of the INC for the following year. As Bose's presidency neared its end, to the surprise of many, Gandhi in particular, he sought re-election for a second term. Gandhi wanted a moderate Gandhian to succeed Bose. Even Bose knew that there was less chance of him becoming president again. In a letter written to his wife Emilie in January 1939 from Wardha where he went to see Gandhi, he told her, "Though there is a very general desire for my re-election as the Congress president, I do not think I shall again be the president. In a way it will be good not to be president again. I shall then be more free and have more time to myself."¹⁴⁴

Although he well understood the limitations of Congress presidency, Bose felt, as his term was drawing to a close, that he was one of the few who could represent the Indian left wing. He said that if a leftist leader like Acharya Narendra Dev stepped forward to contest for the post, he would withdraw; but nobody did. Gandhi and the high command met and picked Maulana Azad and Pattabhi Sitaramayya as possible candidates.¹⁴⁵

Meanwhile, there was another point of dispute between Gandhians and Bose. The federal parts of the Government of India Act of 1935 had not become operative, while the provincial autonomy parts had. The federal structure of the Act called for involved significant participation by the Indian states through their princes. Officially the Congress was against it. Bhalubhai Desai, a Congress leader from Bombay, was apparently misquoted by a British politician, Lord Lothian, who announced to the British press that the Congress was ready to compromise on the federal elements of the 1935 Act. G.D.Birla, a conduit from the nationalists to the British, also made such hints. During December 1938 and January 1939, as the election campaign developed, Bose was quoted in the press as having said on several occasions that there was a

¹⁴⁴ Lt. Manwati Arya, *Patriot The Unique Indian Leader Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose*, New Delhi: Lotus Press, 2007, p. 98.

¹⁴⁵ Leonard A Gordon, *Brother Against the Raj: A Biography of Indian Nationalists Sarat and Subhas Chandra Bose*, New Delhi: Rupa & co, 2005, pp. 368-369.

possibility of the right-wing compromising on the federation issue and he, as a staunch anti-federationist, would stand against a right-wing candidate.¹⁴⁶

In October 1938, Gandhi wrote to a confidant, “There is bound to be some difficulty this time in electing the president.”¹⁴⁷ Rabindranath Tagore proposed that Bose should be re-elected in a letter to Gandhi, but Gandhi said it would be better for Bose not to run. Once the Gandhian group had caucused with Gandhi in December 1938, Gandhi wrote to Nehru, “Maulana Saheb does not want the crown of thorns. If you want to try again please do. If you won’t or he won’t listen, Pattabhi seems to be the only choice.”¹⁴⁸ Nehru and Azad did not accede to this request and Pattabhi Sitaramayya from Andhra became Gandhi’s candidate. The Gandhi group in the Working Committee, with Sardar Patel as their spokesman, including Rajendra Prasad, J.B. Kripalani, Bhalubhai Desai, Jammalal Bajaj, Shankarrao Deo and Jairamdas Doulatram asked Bose to step down and not to run again. Patel sent a telegram to Sarat Bose to advise Bose to not divide Congressmen by running again. Sarat Bose answered that members of the Working Committee should not take sides and that Patel’s proposed statement to the press would further accentuate the split between the right and the left in the Congress. He added: “Dr. Pattabhi will not inspire country’s confidence in coming fight. Please do not divide Congress.”¹⁴⁹

Patel issued his statement on behalf of his majority group in the Working Committee, putting forth Sitaramayya as their candidate and asking Bose to step aside and allow the election to be a unanimous one. Bose declined and challenged the Gandhians, stating in part:

“...the position of the Congress president has been raised to a higher level...The president is like the Prime Minister or the President of the United States of America who nominates his own cabinet...questions of policy and programme are not irrelevant... after the Congress of 1934, a leftist has been elected as President every time with the support of both the right and left-wings. The departure from this practice this year and the attempt to set up a rightist candidate for the office of

¹⁴⁶ Subhas Chandra Bose, Compiled by Netaji Research Bureau, *Crossroads: Being the Works of Subhas Chandra Bose 1938-1940*, India: Asia Pub. House, 1962, pp. 85-86.

¹⁴⁷ *Gandhi, Works, Vol.LXVIII*, p. 72, ‘Letter to Manibehn Patel’ October 28 1938.

¹⁴⁸ *Gandhi, Works, Vol.LXVIII*, p. 227, ‘Gandhi letter to Nehru from Wardha’, 21st December 1938.

¹⁴⁹ Subhas Chandra Bose, Compiled by Netaji Research Bureau, *Crossroads: Being the Works of Subhas Chandra Bose 1938-1940*, India: Asia Pub. House, pp. 88-90.

president is not without significance. It is widely believed that there is a prospect of a compromise on the Federal scheme between the right-wing of the Congress and the British Government during the coming year. Consequently the right-wing do not want a leftist president who may be a thorn in the way of a compromise...it is imperative...to have a President who will be an anti-federationist to the core of his heart.”¹⁵⁰

The result of the election which was announced on 29th January 1939 went in favour of Bose. Bose won the election against Gandhi’s personal candidate Pattabhi Sitaramayya by 1580 votes against 1377 and became the president of Congress for the second time. Gandhi took the defeat of his candidate as a personal defeat. Two days after the victory of Bose, Gandhi issued a statement:

“Shri Subhas Bose has achieved a decisive victory.... I must confess that from the very beginning I was decidedly against his re-election for reasons into which I need not go. I do not subscribe to his facts or the arguments in his manifestos. I think that his references to his colleagues were unjustified and unworthy. Nevertheless, I am glad of his victory; and since I was instrumental in inducing Dr. Pattabhi not to withdraw his name as a candidate where Maulana Sahib withdrew, the defeat is more mine than his. And, I am nothing if I do not represent definite principles and policy for which I stand, I rejoice in this defeat.”¹⁵¹

Bose was now a president in his own right. Gandhi said that he should form his own working committee and rule the Congress. He hinted that, the Congress had become a ‘corrupt’ organisation in that its registers contained a very large number of ‘bogus’ members. And he concluded ominously:

“After all, Subhas Babu is not an enemy of his country. He has suffered for it. In his opinion his is the most forward and boldest policy and programme. The minority can only wish it all success. If it cannot keep pace with it they must come out of the Congress. If they can, they will add to the majority. The minority may not obstruct on any account. They must abstain, when they cannot co-operate. I must remind all Congressmen that Bose, who being Congress-minded remain outside it by design,

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.,p. 91.

¹⁵¹ Sisir K Bose and Sugata Bose, ed., *The Essential Writings of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose*, Netaji Collected Works. Vol.9. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998, p. 87.

represent it most. Those, therefore, who feel uncomfortable in being in the Congress, may come out not in a spirit of ill-will but with the deliberate purpose of rendering more effective service.”¹⁵²

By this Gandhi in his own characteristic way, had declared war. He says that the vote was a defeat for his principles. It was also a defeat for the Gandhians who had for long run the Congress organization, and it was also an indicator towards the support Bose received in his resolute opposition to the British Government. Even as Bose celebrated his victory, Gandhi was meticulously preparing in his own way to oust Bose.¹⁵³

According to the Congress constitution, an elected president could not be removed and the vote could not be reversed. But the presidency could be made ineffective if the Working Committee and AICC do not support the president. Gandhi had the advantage here of having these two bodies filled with his supporters. Bose’s presidency could hence be rendered ineffective with the help of Working Committee and AICC, with their lack of support. In short Bose could be the president of INC only nominally without the support of Gandhi and his supporters.¹⁵⁴ Immediately after the election and throughout the next few months, Bose was conciliatory towards Gandhi and the Gandhians. Bose did not express the bitterness he felt about Gandhi’s statements. He just reciprocated:

“I do not know what ... opinion Mahatmajji has of me. But whatever his view may be, it will always be my aim and object to try and win his confidence for the simple reason that it will be a tragic thing for me if I succeed in winning the confidence of other people but fail to win the confidence of India’s greatest man.”¹⁵⁵

Bose had been keen to attend the Working Committee session at Wardha on 22nd February 1939. But the doctors warned that, if he did, he would not be able to

¹⁵² Mihir Bose, *The Lost Hero a Biography of Subhas Bose*, London: Quartet Books Limited, 1982, pp. 127-128

¹⁵³ Leonard A Gordon, *Brother Against the Raj: A Biography of Indian Nationalists Sarat and Subhas Chandra Bose*, New Delhi: Rupa & co, 2005, pp. 347-375. See also Mihir Bose, *The Lost Hero a Biography of Subhas Bose*, London: Quartet Books Limited, 1982, pp. 126-128. .

¹⁵⁴ Mihir Bose, *The Lost Hero a Biography of Subhas Bose*, London: Quartet Books Limited, 1982, p. 130

¹⁵⁵ Leonard A Gordon, *Brother Against the Raj: A Biography of Indian Nationalists Sarat and Subhas Chandra Bose*, New Delhi: Rupa & co, 2005, p. 375.

attend the annual session of Congress in Tripuri. So Bose sent Patel what he thought was an innocuous telegram:

“KINDLY SEE MY TELEGRAM TO MAHATMAJI. REGRETEFULLY FEEL WORKING COMMITTEE MUST BE POSTPONED TILL CONGRESS. PLEASE CONSULT COLLEAGUES AND WIRE OPINION- SUBHAS”¹⁵⁶

This message triggered a sequence of events which proved disastrous for him. The Congress right argued that the telegram revealed his dictatorial ambitions. The annual session was only few weeks away, but because of an obscure illness that even his own doctors could not diagnose- he would not allow the committee to carry on with its normal business. Patel and eleven other working committee members issued a statement drafted by Gandhi that they were resigning. Nehru issued a separate statement of withdrawal and Bose and his brother found themselves alone on the Working Committee.¹⁵⁷

Gandhi successfully converted a trivial political dispute in a princely Indian state of Rajkot into a major diversion so that Bose was unable to meet Gandhi before Tripuri and agree on who should serve in his Working Committee. Just before the Tripuri session began, Gandhi declared that he had to stay back in Rajkot –a thousand miles far from Tripuri – and began a fast to death in order to obtain a solution to the aforementioned affair and as a result the public and political attentions were successfully diverted. At Tripuri, the carefully planned Gandhian counter-offensive was about to succeed.

In a meeting of the All-India Congress Committee, which preceded the open session, the Gandhian faction moved a resolution which requested the president to nominate the Working Committee in accordance with the wishes of Gandhi. In the midst of the debate a news report was issued that, on the telephone from Rajkot, Gandhi had approved the text of the resolution. Gandhi later denied this; but that was enough to secure a narrow victory. The open session – attended by more than 200,000 people – was Bose’s first public setback. Bose, in his short presidential speech (read out by Sarat Bose) repeated his demand that this was the moment to submit an

¹⁵⁶ Mihir Bose, *The Lost Hero a Biography of Subhas Bose*, London: Quartet Books Limited, 1982, p. 131.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 131.

ultimatum to the British government over Indian independence, ending his speech with a prayer for Gandhi's good health. The voting on the resolution clearly revealed that Bose's broad left coalition had disintegrated. The Congress socialists led by Jayaprakash Narayan abstained and though the followers of the former communist M. N. Roy stayed with Bose, they agonised about supporting Bose. The debate in the open session was dramatic, with more than a hint of violence, some of it from Bose's supporters. But in the end the Gandhians had the vote.¹⁵⁸

Bose was shocked by the incidents that happened in Tripuri and even thought of leaving politics. He was pained by the lack of support showed by his comrades and felt cheated, especially by Nehru who used to share leftist sentiments. He wrote to his nephew: "Nobody has done more harm to me personally and to our cause in the crisis than Pandit Nehru. If he had been with us – we would have had a majority."¹⁵⁹ In a letter to Nehru he says:

"...for some time past you have become completely biased against me....since the presidential election, you have done more to lower me in the estimation of the public than all the twelve ex-members of the Working Committee put together. Of course if I am such a villain, it is not only your right but also your duty to expose me before the public."¹⁶⁰

In the same letter Bose accused Nehru of laxity in the fight for complete independence when Nehru had been the president of the Congress. He also said that he could not understand why Nehru was not with him in his demand for issuing an ultimatum to the British to leave India.¹⁶¹

It should not be considered that Nehru was against Bose's policies or staunch opposition towards the British. It is clear from his own words that he was forced to prioritize his commitments even though he approved of Bose's intentions. He reportedly said years later: "Yes, I had let Bose down; but I did it because I have realized that, at that stage, whatever one's view might be about the way India should develop, Gandhi was India. Anything which weakened Gandhi weakened India. So I

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 132.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 133.

¹⁶⁰ Subhas Chandra Bose, Compiled by Netaji Research Bureau, *Crossroads: Being the Works of Subhas Chandra Bose 1938-1940*, India: Asia Pub. House, 1962, p. 115.

¹⁶¹ Leonard A Gordon, *Brother Against the Raj: A Biography of Indian Nationalists Sarat and Subhas Chandra Bose*, New Delhi: Rupa & co, 2005, pp. 382-384.

subordinated myself to Gandhi, although I was in agreement with what Bose was trying to do.”¹⁶²

Bose attempted to stabilize the situation and pacify the Gandhians and Gandhi since the question of the nation’s freedom was at stake. For the higher goal of national liberation, he was willing to compromise with Gandhi- which shows how much dedicated he was to his goal. He wrote letters and telegrams offering compromises so that he can form his Working Committee and decide on further action. But Gandhi was non-cooperative and refused every solution for compromise proposed by Bose, claiming that his involvement would only be futile.¹⁶³ Bose even suggested that he shall resign from all official positions if Gandhi would resume the mass movements for national liberation. He was sure that it would turn out to be effective since a war in Europe was just around the corner and an ultimatum to the British backed up by a mass movement could win India its freedom. Gandhi did not agree to this too, as he thought that it will only end up in violence.¹⁶⁴ Even when Bose offered to accept all nominees of Gandhi in his Working Committee, Gandhi remained non-cooperative. Even Nehru was astounded by Gandhi’s attitude towards Bose and wrote to him saying: “to try to push him out seems to me to be an exceedingly wrong step.”¹⁶⁵ Bose, faced with an unsympathetic Gandhi, felt that the nation would not benefit if he continued to be the president, as he was not yet able to form his Working Committee and pursue the goal of national liberation. In April 1939, four months after his election as president, on the first day of the AICC session in Calcutta, Bose presented his resignation. Despite Nehru’s attempts for a compromise there, Bose stood firm in his decision and Rajendra Prasad from the Gandhian faction assumed the presidency.¹⁶⁶

Bose did not want to weaken the Congress by remaining the president is clear. Even on the event of his resignation, he duly acknowledged the political might of

¹⁶² Mihir Bose, *The Lost Hero a Biography of Subhas Bose*, London: Quartet Books Limited, 1982, p. 133.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 135.

¹⁶⁴ Mihir Bose, *Raj, Secrets, Revolution: A Life of Subhas Chandra Bose*, England: Grice Chapman Publishing, 2004, p. 160.

¹⁶⁵ Sankar Ghose, *Jawaharlal Nehru, A Biography*, India: Allied Publishers, 1993, p. 135.

¹⁶⁶ Mihir Bose, *Raj, Secrets, Revolution: A Life of Subhas Chandra Bose*, England: Grice Chapman Publishing, 2004, p. 169.

Gandhi by saying; “It will be a tragic thing for me if I succeed in winning the confidence of other people but fail to win the confidence of India’s greatest man”.¹⁶⁷ He did not want the national movement to be sidelined at such an opportune moment because of differences in opinion in the Congress regarding his presidency. He felt that Congress should move on with its mass struggle despite all differences.

3.7 Forward Bloc

Three days after the AICC session in Calcutta, Bose formed his own party, The Forward Bloc. The party technically remained in Congress and attempted to bring together the left and the right factions towards their common objective. Many, including Gandhi, dismissed the Forward Bloc as ‘evil.’¹⁶⁸ Bose’s life after his resignation was proving to be tough on the face of adverse criticism and non-cooperation from many a Congressman. There were a number of issues over which he had to differ in opinion with the Gandhians and Gandhi, which in turn led to his expulsion from INC. As a result of the expulsion from Congress, he lost the control over Bengal Congress too. He had to work hard to forge the Forward Bloc along the lines of his own expectation. But the popularity of Bose as a leader and administrator helped in attracting huge crowds to his meetings and speeches. Though he wrote about the need of the hour and the objectives of his party in subscribing to that need, the party failed to gain a nation-wide momentum.¹⁶⁹

Bose conceived the Forward Bloc as a common platform to bring together various radical leftist groups to form a minimum programme. Many leftist groups joined the party, but the bigger ones, like the one led by M.N. Roy, were not willing to join. But a Left Consolidated Committee was successfully formed.¹⁷⁰ On 22nd June 1939, the first All India Conference of the Forward Bloc was held in Bombay, where Bose explained the aim of the Bloc to be:

¹⁶⁷ Peter Ward Fay, *The Forgotten Army: India's Armed Struggle for Independence 1942-1945*, New Delhi: Rupa co, 2005, p. 196.

¹⁶⁸ Sisir K Bose and Sugata Bose, ed., *The Essential Writings of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose*, Netaji Collected Works. Vol.9. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998, p. 281. (Gandhi Statement, 31 January 1939)

¹⁶⁹ Mihir Bose, *The Lost Hero a Biography of Subhas Bose*, London: Quartet Books Limited, 1982, p. 137.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 137-138.

- “
1. To organise and rally all radical anti-imperialist elements on a platform
 2. To check out a minimum programme representing the greatest common measure of agreement among all the radical shades of opinion; and
 3. To work for real national unity of action.”¹⁷¹

Public meetings were held at various places in the country under the aegis of the Forward Bloc and Bose spelt out the tasks of the Bloc as:

- “
1. To arrest the drift towards constitutionalism
 2. To institute revolutionary impulse in the existing programme of Congress
 3. To prepare the country for the coming struggles
 4. To revamp the Congress volunteer corps; and
 5. To establish close and intimate relationship with Kisan Sabhas, Trade Unions, youth and students organisations and State people movements.”¹⁷²

The immediate main objective of the Forward Bloc concurred to Bose’s views and ideas on national liberation; to achieve India’s freedom from the British by taking advantage of any international crisis that might weaken Britain. He used his party to voice his concerns and to implore the people as to what they ought to do for Indian freedom in the event of a war in Europe. As the Forward Bloc gained overwhelming popularity, Gandhi himself had to admit that “the popularity of Subhas Chandra Bose had increased after his resignation from the Presidentship of the Congress”¹⁷³

It is evident that Bose had anticipated the Second World War and he had been warning the nation as well as his comrades inside and outside the party about it. In September 1939, Britain declared war on Germany and the Viceroy of India, Lord Linlithgow, declared that India is at war with Germany.¹⁷⁴ He did this without even consulting the Indian Legislative. When Gandhi or the Congress did not take up the issue as he had hoped, Bose propagated the slogan “British adversity is India’s

¹⁷¹ Lt. Manwati Arya, *Patriot The Unique Indian Leader Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose*, New Delhi: Lotus Press, 2007, p. 99.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 99.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, p.100.

¹⁷⁴ Mihir Bose, *Raj, Secrets, Revolution: A Life of Subhas Chandra Bose*, England: Grice Chapman Publishing, 2004, p. 172.

opportunity”¹⁷⁵ and the Civil Disobedience Movement started across India by the Forward Bloc reached its zenith.

Bose organized and addressed innumerable public meetings and asked the nation to take advantage of the opportunity by strengthening their movement against the British. When Bose requested Gandhi to initiate the mass movement under the more popular Congress banner, he did not respond positively. When Bose asked for Gandhi’s blessings for his party’s nation-wide movement, Gandhi replied:

“Subhas, you don’t need my blessings or even permission. How can I bless a movement which I consider inopportune? You have got the quality of a great leader and if your conscience tells that it is the best time for striking, go ahead and do your best, if you come out successful, I shall be the first to congratulate you.”¹⁷⁶

In Nagpur, the All India Conference of the Forward Bloc was held on 18th June 1940. Bose, in his speech, enumerated the achievements of the Forward Bloc since its inception. The key achievements according to him were successes in:

- “ 1. Controlling the drift towards constitutionalism
2. Frustrating the efforts of the British to secure the Congress support for the British war efforts; and
3. Creating an atmosphere of struggle.”¹⁷⁷

He also reciprocated to the wide accusation against him, that he was fond of only a bloody revolution that might be impracticable in India’s contemporary scenario, saying:

“It is not necessary that the Indian revolution should be a bloody one or that it should pass through a period of chaos. On the contrary, it is desirable that it should be as peaceful as possible and a peaceful transition can be ensured if the people are united and determined to have their freedom.”¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., p.172.

¹⁷⁶ Lt. Manwati Arya, *Patriot The Unique Indian Leader Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose*, New Delhi: Lotus Press, 2007, pp. 100-101.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 100.

¹⁷⁸ P. K. Ray, *Down Memory Lane: Reminiscences of a Bengali Revolutionary*, New Delhi: Gyan Books, 1990, p. 195.

He asserted again that an ultimatum should be issued the British to quit India and gave the nation the slogan of “All power to the Indian people here and now.”¹⁷⁹

Criticism against the Forward Bloc still managed to spread, mostly initiated by the Congress, and there was a recurring accusation that Bose was recruiting fascists. To that accusation Bose had already responded in August 1939 in an article in the party newspaper saying that if fascists meant “those who call themselves Hitlers, super Hitlers or Budding Hitlers, such ‘specimens of humanity’ were to be found in the Rightist camp.”¹⁸⁰ The spread of adverse criticism did not tire Bose. He was still impressed by Germany and its military victories. While he accepted that Germany might be “fascist or imperialist, ruthless or cruel”, he admired the military discipline and planning of Germany; “how she plans in advance; prepares accordingly, works according to a time table and strikes with lightning speed.”¹⁸¹

While the German forces occupied Holland and Belgium on its way to France, Bose insisted again that the time for the final massive thrust against the British had come. But Gandhi did not feel that the time is opportune and Congress did not respond positively to Bose’s call. On the fall of France, Gandhi advised the British to: “invite Herr Hitler and Signor Mussolini to take what they want of the countries you call your possessions. Let them take possession of your beautiful island with your many beautiful buildings. You give all these, but neither your souls, nor your minds”¹⁸²

He also offered to Lord Linlithgow that he was prepared to go to Germany and plead for peace if the British cabinet desired it and even went on to say that Hitler was not as bad a man as he was portrayed.¹⁸³

Recognizing the futility of appealing to the Congress to initiate a mass movement and non-cooperation with British war efforts, Bose started to think about

¹⁷⁹ Alexander Werth, ed., *A Beacon Across Asia: A Biography of Subhas Chandra Bose*, Hyderabad: Orient Blackswan, 1996, p. 82.

¹⁸⁰ Sisir K Bose and Sugata Bose, ed., *The Alternative Leadership: Speeches, Articles, Statements and Letters, June 1939-January 1941*. Netaji collected works Volume 10, Calcutta: NRB and Delhi: Permanent Black, 2004, p. 12.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 82.

¹⁸² Romain Hayes, *Bose in Nazi Germany*, U.P. India: Random House Publisher India Pvt. Ltd, 2011, p. 22.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

the possibility of leaving India and opening another front abroad from where he can continue his efforts against British imperialism. But this was a tough task as he was constantly under British surveillance. By the summer of 1940, Bose sent Shankerlal, general secretary of All India Forward Bloc, to Japan to investigate on the possibility of a second front and also to meet Rash Behari Bose and the Japanese minister of foreign affairs. Bose also wanted him to meet the representatives of German, Italian, and Russian governments secretly to find out whether a second front for Indian independence struggle was possible in any of these nations.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸⁴ Lt. Manwati Arya, *Patriot The Unique Indian Leader Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose*, New Delhi: Lotus Press, 2007, pp. 106-109.

CHAPTER IV

Subhas Chandra Bose and His Strategies for Armed Struggle

This chapter discusses Bose's dramatic escape from India during his house arrest by the British and his journey from Kabul to Germany. The chapter analyses his failure in getting assistance from Germany and Russia for the liberation of India which was his main aim when he had been in exile in Europe during 1930s. Realising in 1943 that he was not benefitting India by his work in Germany and totally disillusioned by Hitler's declaration of war on Russia, he decided to approach and seek assistance from Japan.

Even after the resignation of Bose from Indian National Congress Presidentship on 29th April 1939 as desired by Gandhi due to the ideological and tactical discordance with him, Gandhi was not entirely satisfied with it. Gandhi and Nehru could not stand Bose as he had been working intensively from the platform of his new-born Congress wing, the All India Forward Bloc. Gandhi felt that the Forward Bloc made Bose more popular with a bigger following than when he was the Congress President. On 19th August 1939 Gandhi passed a resolution disqualifying Bose as the President of Bengal Provincial Congress Committee for three years on the imposed ground of 'deliberate and flagrant breach of discipline'. It made no difference to Bose as his popularity and mass following all over the country was due to his sincere and dedicated work and impressive speeches. But it created a rift between the two.¹

On 18th June 1940, at the second All India Conference of Forward Bloc, Bose proclaimed; "It is for the Indian people to make an immediate demand for the transference of power to them through a provisional National Government... When things settle down inside India and abroad, the provisional National Government will convene a Constitutional Assembly for framing a full-fledged Constitution for the Country."²

¹ Lt. Manwati Arya, *Patriot The Unique Indian Leader Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose*, New Delhi: Lotus Press, 2007, p. 106.

² *Ibidi.*, pp.108-109.

4.1 Decision to Leave India

The British government was alarmed by the activities of Bose. Gandhi was perceived as naïve and harmless; but Bose, in contrast, was seen as dangerous and a threat to them and they were looking for any opportunity to control him and his activities. On July 2nd 1940, a day before the Siraj-ud-daulah Day was to be observed in Calcutta, he was arrested and sent to the Presidency Jail for an indefinite period of detention. In jail he planned his adventurous escape through Afghanistan. Shanker Lal, his emissary to Japan returned with encouraging information. By the end of June; but as no one was allowed to meet him in the jail Shanker Lal could not get access to meet Bose personally. So he sent the good tidings in code language through an insider secretly, which read: “All friends are well and happy and anxious and are waiting to welcome you. We see no reason for you to be where you are when there is so much to be done outside.”³

Bose himself had arranged Shanker Lal’s visit to Japan. Government sources reported that Shanker Lal had met the Japanese foreign Minister and German, Italian and Russian ambassadors and that he was also channelling some Japanese money to Forward Bloc. Bose had already established contacts with the Japanese in Calcutta. In 1938, just before the annual Congress session, Japan’s Vice-Foreign Minister Ohasi visited Calcutta and met Bose secretly at a rented house of the wealthy Bengali communist politician S.K. Acharya.⁴

The only evidence that has ever been presented about all this was the treaty between Bose and the Japanese which Shanker Lal showed K.M.Munshi in 1942, claiming that the treaty had been arranged via Shanker Lal’s good offices. But even if the treaty is fanciful (and, if there was a treaty, why did not Bose head to Japan when he escaped- as he could have done as the British thought he had done-instead of Russia?) the British government was convinced of his Japanese contacts. It tried unsuccessfully to prosecute Shanker Lal for travelling to Japan under false passport, and on 10th September 1940 Linlithgow was informed that a warrant could be issued

³ Mihir Bose, *Raj, Secrets, Revolution: A Life of Subhas Chandra Bose*, England: Grice Chapman Publishing, 2004, p. 177.

⁴ Leonard A Gordon, *Brother Against the Raj A Biography of Indian Nationalists Sarat and Subhas Chandra Bose*, New Delhi: Rupa & co, 2005, p. 416.

based on what the government knew about Bose's relation with Japan, if all the prosecutions launched against him failed.⁵

This message made Bose anxious to get out of the jail as soon as possible. In the face of the detention which was expected to continue till the end of the war, he wrote to the Home Minister; "There is no other alternative for me but to register a moral protest against the unjust act of this indefinite detention and as a proof of that protest, to take a voluntary fast unto death... Life under existing conditions is intolerable for me....Government is bent on holding me in jail by brute force. I say in reply: Release me or I shall refuse to live and it is for me to decide whether I choose to live or die... The individual must die so that the nation may live. Today I must die, so that India may live, may win freedom and glory." ⁶

On 29th November, after writing this political testament, Bose went on hunger strike. He would drink only water with a little salt and would not allow himself to be force-fed. The government was in panic. The words of Bose could not be taken lightly by those who knew the strength of his determination. The government could not let him die in prison. Attempts were made to feed him forcibly but Bose resisted successfully as he said. The eloquent 'moral protest' achieved its desired result. On 2nd December 1940 it was decided to release Bose if his condition deteriorated. Three days later doctors reported that it had indeed done so, and argued that unless he was released he might die. On the afternoon of 5th December the decision to release Bose unconditionally was reached. The government was following a cat-and-mouse policy-the moment Bose recovered, he would be jailed.⁷

4.2 Escape from India

An unhealthy Bose was taken back to his Elgin Road house in an ambulance. But by then the plan of escape from the country was well sketched out in his mind. Staying in his father's room, where for the next six weeks, he received relations,

⁵ Mihir Bose, *The Lost Hero a Biography of Subhas Bose*, London: Quartet Books Limited, 1982, pp. 146-147.

⁶ Lt. Manwati Arya, *Patriot The Unique Indian Leader Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose*, New Delhi: Lotus Press, 2007, pp. 109-110.

⁷ Mihir Bose, *The Lost Hero a Biography of Subhas Bose*, London: Quartet Books Limited, 1982, p.147. see also Hari Hara Das, *Subhas Chandra Bose and the Indian National Movement*, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Private Limited, 1983, pp. 218-219.

colleagues and friends and carried on an extensive correspondence. Bose started writing letters on political matters to Gandhi. He wrote about the need of a mass movement. He was in touch with Jayaprakash Narayan about secret plans to rebuild the left. On December 29th Bose wrote to Viceroy Linlithgow, whom he met some months before, about the coalition government in Bengal and growing communalism. He said that, 'on communal question, the Muslims are given a free hand; while political issues, the will of the governor and the British mercantile community is allowed to prevail'.⁸

Bose thought a small circle of political workers and family members had to be told of the plan, but he tried to keep the circle of those who knew as small as possible. Months before, there had been a rumour that he might try to leave India. From his window he could see the police watching him; he knew of the deceitful cousin and others with loose tongues around him. He had to be extremely careful.

The government files contain this report; "C.207 reports on 15th Dec. That Akbar Shah (F.B) of N.W.P is expected to come to Calcutta to see Subhas in a day or two in connection with the A.I.F.B. Conference to be held at Delhi on 22nd 23rd Dec".⁹ Akbar Shah's visit concealed the most vital ingredient in Bose's developing plans. The plan and the arrangements of his adventurous escape were kept strictly secret even from those who were allowed to meet him, his brother Sarat Bose and the nephew Sisir Bose were told about his programme merely two days before his exit from the house. Funds for his secret plan were collected intensively by the all India Forward Bloc from all sources and passed on to him.¹⁰

He was also working out all the practical details of his planned escape from India with as much foresight and precision as he could. Agents of the Kirti Party were contacted and several were sent to Afghanistan and two to the Soviet Union to try to prepare the way for Bose. One of the two entering the Soviet Union died in an accident en route. Mian Akbar Shah, a member of the Forward Bloc Working

⁸ Leonard A Gordon, *Brother Against the Raj a Biography of Indian Nationalists Sarat and Subhas Chandra Bose*, New Delhi: Rupa & co, 2005, p. 418.

⁹ Mihir Bose, *The Lost Hero a Biography of Subhas Bose*, London: Quartet Books Limited, 1982, p. 148.

¹⁰ Lt. Manwati Arya, *Patriot The Unique Indian Leader Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose*, New Delhi: Lotus Press, 2007, p. 110.

Committee, came to Calcutta and then went back to the Frontier Province, to work out the necessary contacts. Bhagat Ram Talwar, a young Indian whose family lived in the frontier area was recruited as he knew the necessary language and the frontier area well. He was considered to be the perfect companion for Bose as the Indian leader made his way across the frontier and out of British India.

Bose fixed 16th January as the day of his departure. He had already announced, and evidently convinced his largely ignorant family, that he was going into seclusion to pray and meditate. Part of his large bedroom was partitioned with screens, leaving a small aperture for the cook to serve the food. Nobody was to disturb him while he was in retreat. To make the impression complete, Bose decided to have a ritualistic family dinner. On the evening of 16th January, then after the meal as his family retired, Bose disappeared behind the curtains to begin his 'retreat'

Only four people remained-his niece Illa and his nephews Aurobindo, Dwijendranath and Sisir who arrived with the car in which he escaped. At night 1.30 a.m. of 16th / 17th January 1941, when all the members of the family including the servants went to sleep, Bose disguised as Mohammed Ziauddin, Travelling Inspector, Empire of India Life Assurance Company Limited- permanent address: Civil Lines, Jubbalpore. Sisir and Aurobindo trooped into to the car with him and Bose was driven away.¹¹

Bose had left a number of letters bearing different dates and address to different people, to be posted gradually according to their dates, after his departure, to give an impression that he was writing letters as usual from his seclusion. He had also left a number of slips roughly scribbled in casual manner, informing his inability to meet anyone as he was observing complete silence in connection with his meditation.¹²

¹¹ Mihir Bose, *The Lost Hero a Biography of Subhas Bose*, London: Quartet Books Limited, 1982, p. 150.

¹² Lt. Manwati Arya, *Patriot The Unique Indian Leader Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose*, New Delhi: Lotus Press, 2007, p. 111.

4.3 Activities in Kabul

After the midnight of 16th January 1941, Bose started the greatest adventure of his life for achieving the liberation of India with the help of an organised army and support of anti-British foreign powers. Bose reached Peshawar on 19th January as Maulvi Mohammed Ziauddin and left for Kabul after the arrangements were made, accompanied by Bhagat Ram Talwar who passed as Rahmat Khan. In Kabul, which was the hub of international intelligence during Second World War, Bose faced an agonizing wait in the pursuit of his life's aim. Upon arrival in the Afghan capital on 31st January, Rahmat Khan and his deaf-mute relative Ziauddin had found lodging in a serai (inn) near the Lahori Gate. During the first few days in Kabul, Bhagat Ram alias Rahmat Khan made a couple of futile attempts to establish contact with the Soviet Ambassador.¹³

In the beginning Bose was not interested in going to either Berlin or Rome. He had a desire to go to Russia and seek Russian help as it was an anti-British power. This hope was further strengthened by the signing of the non-aggression pact between Germany and Russia in 1939, which was known as The Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact, named after the Soviet foreign minister Vyacheslav Molotov and the German foreign minister Joachim von Ribbentrop. It was a pact under which the Soviet Union and Germany pledged to remain neutral in the event of either nation being attacked by a third party. In Bose's view, Russia was the only country which could help to liberate India. So he tried his best not to go anywhere else other than Moscow.¹⁴

Meanwhile, in Calcutta, on 26th January 1941, at Bose's Elgin road home, it was discovered that Bose had disappeared. The news of Bose's disappearance was published in two friendly newspapers, the *Ananda Bazaar Patrika* and the *Hindusthan Standard*, on the morning of January 27. It was then picked up by Reuters and transmitted to the world, leaving British Intelligence officers embarrassed and bewildered. The police arrived at the Elgin Road home and started questioning everyone. One agent reported that Subhas Chandra Bose had left his home on 25th

¹³ Sugata Bose, *His Majesty's Opponent: Subhas Chandra Bose and India's struggle against empire*, New Delhi: Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd, 2011, p. 195.

¹⁴ Hari Hara Das, *Subhas Chandra Bose and the Indian National Movement*, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Private Limited, 1983, p. 222.

January for Pondicherry, to join his old friend Dilip Kumar Roy in religious seclusion. Sarat and Sisir made subtle efforts to propagate the renunciation theory. An anxious telegram from Gandhi elicited a three-word reply from Sarat; “Circumstances indicate renunciation.” But he would not deliberately mislead Rabindranath Tagore, who had stood by Bose during his political battles with Gandhi in 1939. “May Subhas receive your blessing wherever he may be,” was the cable Tagore received from Sarat in response to his query.¹⁵

The police could see that Prabhabati was genuinely disconsolate. Most of the police officers and intelligence agents floundered and blamed one another. J.V.B. Janvrin, the deputy commissioner of police of the Special Branch in Calcutta, believed there were “grave reasons to doubt” that sudden religious fervor was the “true explanation” for Bose’s disappearance. On 27th January Janvrin forwarded to Delhi an intercepted letter, dated 23rd January, from the amateurish Aurobindo to a colleague, saying the reason he could not accept an invitation to travel outside Bengal would become evident on 27th January. But this error brought the police no closer to fathoming what had really taken place. One report from Punjab claimed to know of a plot to fly Bose toward Russia. Another conjectured that Bose’s friend Nathalal Parikh, who had visited from Bombay in December, may have got him a false passport to travel to Japan. There was serious speculation that Bose may have left Calcutta on 17th January on a ship called the *Thaisung*, which had sailed for Penang, Singapore and Hong Kong.

While Governor Herbert considered Bose’s disappearance a convenience, Viceroy Linlithgow believed that Bose’s escape reflected very poorly on those who were responsible for keeping him under surveillance. Richard Tottenham, of the Home Department in Delhi, categorically stated that the government had “wanted to prevent Bose from doing harm within India or abroad,” and also that “Bose had hoodwinked the police.” “How he arranged to escape and where he now is,” he wrote on 13th February, “is still a mystery.” Tottenham told Linlithgow that Herbert “was by no means proud of the performance.” The other alternative was that Bose had gone abroad to seek foreign help for his country’s freedom. “He would never, I think,

¹⁵ Sugata Bose, *His Majesty’s Opponent: Subhas Chandra Bose and India’s struggle against empire*, New Delhi: Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd, 2011, pp. 192-194.

Janvrin, the deputy commissioner of police of the Special Branch in Calcutta, concluded, “cease to strive his utmost to achieve what has been his life’s aim, the complete independence of India.”¹⁶ There is evidence in the form of a British Intelligence report that Gandhi told a Congress gathering in Bombay that the Forward Bloc is a tremendous organisation in India, and that Bose has risked much for India; but if he means to set up a government in India then he will have to resisted.¹⁷

In Kabul, Bose had to stay nearly two months before he could secure help from the Italian Consul. During his stay in Kabul he was immensely helped by Uttam Chand, an Indian businessman there. The delay in Kabul made Bose so desperate that he thought it is better to risk smuggling himself into the Russian border and imprisoned in Russia then rot in Kabul.¹⁸ It was only when the Soviet avenue closed that Bose turned to the prospect of seeking assistance from the Axis embassies in Kabul. Uttam Chand, who was eventually deported by the Afghan government and was imprisoned and put into solitary confinement by the British, later recalled that Bose did not view this idea with any confidence either. “For forty-five days Bose was with me and not once, during this period did I hear one good word for the Axis from his lips. He hated them as much as the British”¹⁹

Even after the Russian Ambassador in Kabul and the Russian Government refused him all help, he was not prepared to believe that he was not wanted in Russia. While reiterating his absolute preference for Russia, he blamed the organisers of his exile who had failed to provide him a person having an earlier contact with the Soviet Embassy. He consoled himself, thinking that the Russian Legation in Berlin or Rome might be able to arrange for his going to Moscow.²⁰

Bose then decided to take matters into his own hands; the only alternative left for him was an approach to the Germans. Germany had been engaged in a life and death struggle, since September 1939. But by the end of 1940, Germany had a control

¹⁶ Ibid., pp. 194-195.

¹⁷ Narendra Singh Sarila, *The Shadow of the Great Game the Untold Story of India’s Partition*, India: Harper Collins Publishers, 2009, p. 125.

¹⁸ Hari Hara Das, *Subhas Chandra Bose and the Indian National Movement*, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Private Limited, 1983, pp. 220- 221.

¹⁹ Uttam Chand, *When Bose was Ziauddin*, New Delhi: Rajkamal Publishers, 1946, p. 76.

²⁰ Hari Hara Das, *Subhas Chandra Bose and the Indian National Movement*, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Private Limited, 1983, p. 222.

over the situation and consolidated her position. The entry of Italy into the war on the side of Germany was not received with enthusiasm as the performance of Italian army was very poor and it was considered more as liability than as asset. Germany's war front had considerably expanded and with the entry of Italy in the war, there had to be a further extension of the warfront, as she was required to send some of her best troops to the North Africa and the Balkan countries.²¹ It was Germany and not the Soviet Union that was at war with Britain, and there were Indian prisoners-of-war in German and Italian custody. And the Soviet Union was having a non- aggression pact with Germany. The German minister in Kabul, Hans Pilger, cabled the German foreign minister in Berlin on 5th February: "Advised Bose urgently about the local Afghan security system after he had visited me rashly at the embassy, asked him to keep himself hidden amongst Indian friends in the bazaar and contacted the Russian Ambassador on his behalf."²² The Russian envoy had expressed a rather bizarre suspicion that there might be a British plot behind Bose's wish to travel through Russia-a plan to engender conflict between Russia and Afghanistan. Hans Pilger, German Minister in Afghanistan, therefore thought it was "indispensable to take up the matter with Moscow as a follow-up for making the journey possible."²³ He added that the Italian ambassador in Kabul had already informed Rome. On 8th February the Italian charge'd affaires in Berlin spoke to Ernst Woermann of the German Foreign Ministry offering Italy's good offices in Moscow to facilitate Bose's journey to Germany via Russia. If the German foreign minister permitted that step, Woermann wrote that the Italian ambassador "should get in touch with Count Schulenburg", the German ambassador in Moscow.²⁴

Until clearance was obtained from the highest levels in Berlin and Moscow, Bose was to stay in touch with the Germans in Kabul through Herr Thomas of the Siemens Company. Life in the *serai* was becoming increasingly hazardous for Ziauddin and Rahmat Khan. A suspicious Afghan policeman had been frequenting the inn and had to be bribed first with money and then reluctantly with Bose's gold

²¹ Ibid., p. 230.

²² Sugata Bose, *His Majesty's Opponent: Subhas Chandra Bose and India's struggle against empire*, New Delhi: Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd, 2011, p. 195.

²³ Tilak Raj Sareen, *Subhas Chandra Bose and Nazi Germany*, The University of Michigan: Mouton Pub House 1996, p. 62.

²⁴ Sugata Bose, *His Majesty's Opponent: Subhas Chandra Bose and India's struggle against empire*, New Delhi: Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd, 2011, p. 196.

wristwatch, a present from his father. The delay in getting a clear signal from Germany led Bhagat Ram in desperation to consider sending Bose across to the Soviet Union, with the aid of an absconder from Peshawar who lived near the Afghan-Soviet border.²⁵

At this juncture, a message was received from Herr Thomas of Siemens that Bose should meet the Italian ambassador, Pietro Quaroni, if he wished to take his plans forward. Bose arrived at the Italian legation on the evening of 22nd February 1941, and held discussions with Quaroni. Quaroni was deeply impressed by Bose and his plan and he spoke very highly of Bose in his letter to his Government and suggested that all help should be given to him. Reporting about Bose, the Italian Minister said; “intelligent, able, full of passion and without doubt the most realistic, may be the only realist among the Indian nationalist leaders.”²⁶ They considered alternative ways of getting out of Afghanistan. Quaroni was expecting a couple of Italian diplomatic couriers; one of them could give Bose his passport to use if the Russians agreed to provide a transit visa, or Bose might have to travel to Europe through Iran and Iraq.

On 27th February 1941, the British intercepted and decoded an Italian telegram dated 23rd February that suggested their elusive enemy might be in Kabul. On 7th March, Britain’s Special Operations Executive (hereafter ‘SOE’) informed its representatives in Istanbul and Cairo that Bose “was understood to be traveling from Afghanistan with vital information to Germany via Iran, Iraq and Turkey” and asked them “to wire what arrangements they could make for his assassination.”²⁷ But Bose did not take the Middle Eastern route. On 3rd March, Count Schulenburg, the German ambassador, cabled Berlin from Moscow: “The Commissariat for External Affairs informs that the Soviet government is ready to give Subhas Bose the visa for journey from Afghanistan to Germany through Russia. The Commissariat has been requested to instruct the Soviet Embassy in Kabul accordingly.”²⁸

²⁵ Ibid., pp. 195-196.

²⁶ Hari Hara Das, *Subhas Chandra Bose and the Indian National Movement*, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Private Limited, 1983, p. 221.

²⁷ Mahendra Gaur, *Foreign Policy 2006 Annual*, India: Gyan Publishing House, 2008, p. 510.

²⁸ Sugata Bose, *His Majesty’s Opponent: Subhas Chandra Bose and India’s struggle against empire*, New Delhi: Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd, 2011, pp.196-97.

Bose was at this time keeping himself busy writing a lengthy political tract justifying his political choices. Drawing on Hegelian dialectics, he argued that in each phase of history, there was a need for a leftist antithesis to a rightist thesis, and that the melding of the two would result in a higher synthesis. Interestingly, he suggested that Gandhi in his “Young India” phase (1920-1922) represented the leftist antithesis to the rightist thesis embodied in moderate constitutionalism. He reiterated his two criteria for “genuine leftism” in Indian politics: uncompromising anti-imperialism in the current phase, and socialist reconstruction once political independence had been won. Having abandoned his fledgling pressure group within the Congress-the Forward Bloc-to raise an army of liberation abroad, he expressed a pious hope that “history will separate the chaff from the grain-the pseudo-Leftists from the genuine Leftists’ He claimed that his Forward Bloc had “saved the Congress from stagnation and death’ helped “bring the Congress back to the path of struggle, however inadequately’ and “stimulated the intellectual and ideological progress of the Congress.” He asserted that, “in fullness of time,” it would succeed in “establishing Leftist ascendancy in the Congress so that the future progress of the latter (the Congress) may continue unhampered.” The “pseudo-Leftists,” he charged, “conveniently forget the imperialist character of Britain’s war and also the fact that the greatest revolutionary force in the world, the Soviet Union, has entered into a solemn pact with the Nazi Government.”²⁹

The Germans, Russians, and Italians had come together to clear Bose’s path out of Afghanistan, enabling him to avoid the ambush being plotted by British assassins. Around 10th March 1941, Mrs. Quaroni, the aristocratic Russian wife of the Italian ambassador, came to Uttam Chand’s shop with a message for Bose. He had to be photographed and needed a new set of clothes. His photograph would be pasted onto the passport of Orlando Mazzotta, an Italian diplomatic courier, and Ziauddin would soon have a new identity. On the night of 17th March, Bose was shifted to the home of Signor Crescini, one of the Italian diplomats. He handed over his political thesis, postdated 22nd March; a message to his countrymen from “somewhere in Europe”; and a personal letter in Bengali, to be delivered by Bhagat Ram to his brother Sarat or his nephew Sisir in Calcutta. Having acquired the passport No.

²⁹ Subhas Chandra Bose, “*Forward Bloc: Its Justification*”, *Kabul Thesis, March 1941*, in *Azad Hind, India*: NRB, pp .13- 31.

647932 dated 10th March 1941 of Orlando Mazzotta, he set off from Kabul by car before dawn, accompanied by a German engineer named Wenger and two others. He crossed the mountain passes of the Hindu Kush range and crossed the Afghan frontier at the River Oxus, before driving on to the city of Samarkand. From there, Bose and his companions travelled by train to Moscow. "Bose possessing an Italian passport under the name of Orlando Mazzotta dropped in at the embassy today:" Count Schulenburg cabled from Moscow on 31st March 1941, adding that Bose intended "to call immediately at the Foreign Office"³⁰ on his arrival in Berlin.

4.4 Bose in Germany

Bose had flown into the German capital Berlin via Moscow on 2nd April 1941. About his secret journey from Kabul there was an understanding, through their legations in Kabul, between German and Italian Governments and also the Soviet Government. A very small official circle was informed about the identity of Bose. The German foreign Office with the Information Section, added to it during the war, was assigned the task of looking after him, on his arrival in Germany. That office was directed by Dr. Adam-von-Trott assisted by Dr. Alexander Werth. Fortunately, both of those two authorities possessed certain amount of knowledge about the developments in India and also the problems of the Indian National Congress at that time and they were not Nazis.³¹ They took pains to acquire for him a rank and position befitting his personality and prestige and they tried best to guard him against unpleasant contacts with the Nazis. They temporarily established his headquarters at the Hotel Excelsior where he was lodged in the beginning. The friendly group of the officials in the German Foreign Office were aware of the fact that Hitler himself did not have any knowledge about India or the Indian people and their problems and that he looked at India through English eyes. Moreover, race and colour bias was there to make Hitler prone to the British white people as compared to the coloured race of the Indians, in spite of being at war against Britain. Dr. Adam von Trott and his colleagues who had taken charge of Bose from the beginning shouldered their responsibility which consisted of creating a field of action for him, keeping in mind

³⁰ Tilak Raj Sareen, *Subhas Chandra Bose and Nazi Germany*, The University of Michigan: Mounto Pub House 1996., P. 66.

³¹ Hari Hara Das, *Subhas Chandra Bose and the Indian National Movement*, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Private Limited, 1983, pp. 230-231.

that he did not lose his friendly attitude towards Germans. For that reason they tried to guard against his being looked after by the highest officials of the German Government as they were Nazis. The German friends of Bose in the Foreign Office succeeded in their efforts to make Bose feel that the work planned by him will be supported by the German Government after consideration and tried their best to help him in all respects.³²

It was ironic to find Bose, the man who had espoused left-wing socialist views as president of the Indian National Congress in 1938 and 1939, in wartime Berlin. But the reason lay in the prisoners-of-war camps of Germany and Italy. For two long decades, he had seen how the soldiers in Britain's Indian Army had remained untouched by anti-colonial mass movements. They gladly did the bidding of their colonial masters, working to extinguish the fires of anti-colonial revolts across the globe. The British Empire could count on Indian soldiers' loyalty to the king-emperor. Yet Bose wondered whether a larger cause -that of Indian independence- could be introduced to them as an alternative to the oath they had taken to buttress the Empire. The question had occurred to anti-colonial revolutionaries, but attempts to wean soldiers away from imperial service had achieved limited success during the First World War. The crisis of an even bigger international war provided another opportunity to do so. Once Indian soldiers began to fall into the hands of Britain's enemies, it was possible to imagine a concerted effort to turn them against their rulers. An army of liberation raised outside India could potentially serve as a catalyst for another mass movement within the country. Bose was convinced that an armed struggle in aid of the non-violent agitation at home was imperative to bring the British Raj to its knees.³³ By stepping in Berlin Bose seemed to have slapped on the Face of British.

The day Bose arrived in Berlin; Quaroni sent a favorable report to Rome on Bose's proposals about India. As a "first step," Bose wanted "to constitute in Europe a 'Government of Free India', something on the lines of the various free governments that have been constituted in London." Quaroni had asked Bose about "the

³² Lt. Manwati Arya, *Patriot The Unique Indian Leader Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose*, New Delhi: Lotus Press, 2007, pp. 131-132.

³³ Sugata Bose, *His Majesty's Opponent: Subhas Chandra Bose and India's struggle against empire*, New Delhi: Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd, 2011, pp. 198- 199.

possibilities in the field of terrorism.” According to Quaroni’s report, Bose had replied that “the terroristic organization of Bengal and other similar ones in different parts of India still exist,” and that he was “not much convinced of the usefulness of terrorism.” He was, however, prepared to consider sending instructions about “large-scale sabotage” to impede Britain’s war effort. The encounter with Bose had convinced Quaroni about the value of using the “revolution weapon” with regard to India, “the corner-stone of the British Empire.”³⁴

Just a week later, on 9th April, Bose submitted a detailed memorandum with an explanatory note to the German government, setting out the work to be done in Europe, Afghanistan, the Tribal Territory and India. He pointed out that the “overthrow of British power in India can, in its last stages, be materially assisted by Japanese policy in the Far East.” He wrote with prescience: “A defeat of the British Navy in the Far East including the smashing up of the Singapore base will automatically weaken British military strength and prestige in India.” Yet he felt that a prior agreement between the Soviet Union and Japan would both pave the way for a settlement with China and free up Japan to move confidently against the British in Southeast Asia.³⁵

At a meeting with the German foreign minister, Joachim von Ribbentrop, at the Imperial Hotel in Vienna on 29th April 1941, Bose was disappointed to hear that the German government felt it would be premature to accept his plan. He suggested that significant numbers of Indian prisoners-of-war captured in North Africa could be organized into an effective fighting force against the British. Ribbentrop responded that the time for such action had not yet come and he refused to make a public statement in support of Indian independence. When Bose probed further, saying the Indians were concerned that Britain might accept defeat in Europe but hold on to its empire in India, the German foreign minister expressed the opinion that the British, having refused Hitler’s olive branch, had doomed their empire. Asked about the Indian attitude toward Germany, Bose “wanted to admit in all frankness that feeling against National Socialists and the fascists had been rather strong in India,” because

³⁴ Sisir K Bose and Sugata Bose, ed., *Azad Hind: Writings and Speeches 1941-1943*, Netaji Collected Works. Vol 11, Calcutta: NRB and Delhi: Permanent Black, 2002, pp. 34-37.

³⁵ Sugata Bose, *His Majesty’s Opponent: Subhas Chandra Bose and India’s struggle against empire*, New Delhi: Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd, 2011, pp. 203-204.

they were seen as “striving to dominate the other races.” The Foreign Minister “interjected at this point that National Socialism merely advocated racial purity, but not its rule over other races.”³⁶ Bose’s first encounter with a senior German minister was not a happy one.

Immediately after his meeting with Ribbentrop, Bose realised that he had not sufficiently emphasised the importance of a declaration on India. He was convinced that such a declaration was indispensable in the absence of a government. Not only would it help legitimise his presence in Berlin and reassure Indian public opinion, but it would also deflect potential Congress criticism. On 3rd May Bose submitted a supplementary memorandum in which he asked the Axis powers to make a clear declaration of policy regarding the freedom of India and the Arab countries. The British Empire constitutes the greatest obstacle not only in the path of India’s Freedom but also in the path of human progress. Since the attitude of the Indian people is intensely hostile to the British in the present war, it is possible for them to materially assist in bringing about the overthrow of Great Britain. India’s cooperation could be secured by the Axis Powers if the Indian people are assured that an Axis victory will mean for them a free India. The anti-British revolt in Iraq had just occurred and he urged the Germans to support the Iraqi government. “For the success of the task of exterminating British power and influence from the countries of the near and the Middle East,” he wrote, “it is desirable that the status quo between Germany and the Soviet Union should be maintained.”³⁷

Then delineating his plans to be executed with the co-operation and help of the German Government, he states, “It will entail work in Europe, in Afghanistan, in the Independent Tribal Territory lying between Afghanistan and Indian and last but not least, in India.”³⁸ He also discussed four possible routes for opening up a channel of communication between Germany and India; of those four, he favored the one going through Russia and Afghanistan. An invasion spearheaded by an Indian legion from the traditional northwesterly direction, he believed, would greatly help India’s unarmed freedom fighters at home.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 204.

³⁷ Ibid., pp. 204 -205.

³⁸ Sisir K Bose and Sugata Bose, ed., *Azad Hind: Writings and Speeches 1941-1943*, Netaji Collected Works. Vol 11, Calcutta: NRB and Delhi: Permanent Black, 2002, pp. 38-39.

The works proposed to be done in Europe, under his own control were:

- “ 1. A free India Government in Berlin.
2. A treaty to be signed between the Axis Powers and the Free India Government providing for India’s independence in the event of an Axis victory and special facilities for the Axis Powers in India, when an independent government is set up there.
3. Legations of the Free India Government to be established in friendly countries, with the intention of convincing the Indian people that their independence has been granted by the Axis Powers and that the status of independence is being already recognized.
4. A Free India Radio Station to be set up in Germany for propaganda and for guiding the people in India to rise in revolt against the British Raj.
5. Arrangements for sending necessary requirements to India through Afghanistan to help the revolution in India.”³⁹ The Congress was not interested in this program as it would undermine the political program of the INC.

The help required by India were mentioned as follows: *Work in Afghanistan (Kabul)*: A centre in Kabul to maintain communications between Europe on one side and India on the other to be set up and also to equip that centre with means of transport and communication including special messengers. *Work in the Tribal Territory*: Indian revolutionary agents already working in the independent Tribal Territory between Afghanistan and India to be coordinated to plan an attack on British military centres on a large scale, to help the insurgent work led by the tribal leader, Fakir of Ipi, active in the North West Frontier Province area to instigate the revolt of the people in India and to send some military advisor from Europe to the Tribal Territory. Strong propaganda work, relevant printing centre and radio transmitting station with necessary equipment was to be installed in the Tribal Territory and also

³⁹ Lt. Manwati Arya, *Patriot The Unique Indian Leader Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose*, New Delhi: Lotus Press, 2007, p. 134.

agents from Tribal Territory were to be appointed for procuring military intelligence from the Frontier Province of India adjoining the Tribal Territory.⁴⁰

The work planned in the memoranda to be done in India was: Broadcasting on a large scale from stations in Europe and later from the Tribal Territory as well as in India secretly. The printing centre in the Tribal Territory was to be in charge of propaganda in India also. The members of his party Forward Bloc in India were to be instructed from the European and Tribal Territory bases to see that the Indian people refrain from giving any men, money or material to the British Government, and to instigate the Indian people to defy the civil authorities by refusing to pay taxes and also to refuse obeying orders and laws of the British Government. They were also to do secret work to induce Indian Section of the British Army to rise in revolt, organize strikes in factories producing war materials for the war efforts of Britain, carry out sabotage of strategic bridges, factories etc., to prepare for a general mass revolution by organizing revolts by civil population in different places.⁴¹

The necessary finance for all the work mentioned above was to be provided by the Axis Powers in the form of loan to the Free India government in Europe with clear understanding that it would be repaid in full when an independent Government is set up in India. Informing about the British Military strength in India, he wrote that a force of 50,000 with full modern equipment provided by the Axis Powers to fight in collaboration with the revolting Indian troops could surely vanquish the 70,000 strong British troops present in India.

He further detailed explanatory notes on the following points:

- “ 1. Lesson of the World War of 1914-18.
2. Future of the British Empire as considered by the Indians.
3. The importance of India in the British Empire.
4. Some aspects of British Diplomacy in the present war.
5. The attitude of the Indian people in the present war as compared with their attitude in the World War 1914-18.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 135.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 135.

6. The Military Position in India today.
7. The importance, for India, of Japanese foreign policy in the Far East.⁴²

Before implementing any of his plans, Bose demanded that the tripartite powers make an unambiguous and unequivocal declaration recognizing Indian independence. In the latter half of May, he wrote up a draft of such a declaration and tried his best to get the German and Italian governments to issue it publicly. The Germans and Italians gave various excuses for delaying it. One reason for this prevarication was that the tripartite powers had tacitly agreed that India was within the Russian sphere of influence, and they could not at this stage publicly repudiate that position.⁴³

Hitler approved Bose's request for declarations on India and Arab nations, realising that they would politically reinforce his directive by furthering anti-British sentiment and mobilising public opinion alongside Germany; but postponed any concrete decision in favour of it. Though the well thought-out and informative memoranda of Bose produced a far-reaching effect on the higher echelons of the German Government, it took a long time to be considered and put into action. Hitler was still debating whether to set up an Indian government but in the end instructed the Foreign Office to shelve it indefinitely and the most the Foreign Office came up with as a substitute was a 'Free India Centre' or an Indian Independence Committee'.⁴⁴ Bose, being a seriously devoted activist eager to get things done as early as possible, repeated his request to start putting his plans into action. As a result, the "Working Group, India" of the Information Department in the German Foreign Office, with the full support of the Political Department, started looking for Indian co-workers in Germany and in the neighbouring countries as well as in the Indian Prisoners of War Camps all over Europe. They also felt the necessity of recruiting German specialists on India to help the work. They could do so only if the Army Headquarters could permit and free the capable men from their military duties. Eventually, the 'Working Group, India' managed to lay the foundation of the 'Special Department, India which

⁴² Ibid., p. 136.

⁴³ Sugata Bose, *His Majesty's Opponent: Subhas Chandra Bose and India's struggle against empire*, New Delhi: Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd, 2011, pp. 204 -205.

⁴⁴ Romain Hayes, *Bose in Nazi Germany*, U.P. India: Random House Publisher India Pvt. Ltd, 2011, pp. 47-48.

ultimately took up the entire responsibility of helping Bose in realizing his objectives.⁴⁵

In April 1941, Bose asked Emilie Schenkl to come and join him in Berlin. “Please write at once to Orlando Mazzotta, Hotel Nurnberger Hof, near Anhalter Bahnhof, Berlin,” he urged. “Please give my best regards to your mother and greetings to your sister.” In a short while Emilie joined him in Berlin.⁴⁶ Bose made no public announcement of his marriage to his Austrian Secretary, Emilie. Neither did he discuss or mention his wife to any of his Indian co-revolutionaries, either in Berlin or south-east Asia. None of them could acknowledge Bose’s marriage. It must have been because Bose accurately gauged the probable negative impact of the news of his marriage to a foreign national on his Indian followers that he kept the whole thing secret.⁴⁷ Even though Bose desired to see Emilie, the personal was always subordinate to the political for him. For Indian anti-colonial activists, Berlin was not just the capital of Germany, but a strategic diasporic space they had inhabited since the Swadeshi era at the beginning of the twentieth century, in their efforts to undermine the British Raj. Bose would not hesitate to leave Berlin, however, if he could not extract the right terms for India’s independence or if circumstances changed.⁴⁸

The exigencies of the Second World War gave rise to strange alliances, none stranger than the ones that led the arch-imperialist Winston Churchill to make common cause with Josef Stalin, and the uncompromising anti-imperialist Bose to shake hands with Adolf Hitler. When Bose escaped from India, Germany and the Soviet Union still had a nonaggression pact. The internal politics of European states had little to do with international alliances. Britain and France, the countries that held sway over the two largest colonial empires, had entered the war in September 1939 in defense of Poland that had a dictatorial regime at that time. Their slogans of freedom and democracy sounded hollow to their colonial subjects. By June 1940, the German *Blitzkrieg* had overrun France. Paris had fallen to Hitler’s army, and the German

⁴⁵ Lt. Manwati Arya, *Patriot The Unique Indian Leader Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose*, New Delhi: Lotus Press, 2007, pp. 132-133.

⁴⁶ Sugata Bose, *His Majesty’s Opponent: Subhas Chandra Bose and India’s struggle against empire*, New Delhi: Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd, 2011, p. 199.

⁴⁷ Joyce Chapman Lebra, *The Indian National Army and Japan*, Singapore: ISEAS, 2008, p. 113.

⁴⁸ Sugata Bose, *His Majesty’s Opponent: Subhas Chandra Bose and India’s struggle against empire*, New Delhi: Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd, 2011, pp. 199-200.

Luftwaffe was conducting relentless bombing raids on London, the first city of the British Empire.

“When the Nazi hordes crossed the German frontier into Holland and Belgium only the other day with the cry of ‘nach Paris’ on their lips,” Bose wrote on 15th June 1940, “who could have dreamt that they would reach their objective so soon?” He went on to “make a guess” about the terms of agreement that the Soviet Union might arrange with Germany and Italy: Germany would be given a free hand on the Continent, minus the Balkans; Italy would have been preeminence in the Mediterranean region; and the Russian sphere of influence would include the Balkans and the Middle East. Though this was an accurate assessment of what the Russians and even the German military brass might find acceptable, Bose miscalculated on the predilections of the German Fuhrer. Hitler was not prepared to cede the Balkans to the Russian sphere of influence.

During the first six months of 1940 the chief of the German High Command, General Alfred Jodi, had drawn up plans for coordinated German and Soviet action in Afghanistan and India. The Germans were already funding the Faqir of Ipi and inciting his tribal followers on India’s northwest frontier to harass the British in Waziristan. When Germany, Japan and Italy signed a tripartite pact on 27th September 1940, India was deemed to be within the Russian zone of influence. The Soviet Union, however, was less interested in India and more concerned about retaining its traditional upper hand in Eastern Europe and the Balkans. Molotov may have signed the German-Soviet pact with Ribbentrop in 1939, but on a November 1940 visit to Berlin the Soviet foreign minister refused to yield on Europe. Faced with Molotov’s determined effort to undermine his designs, Hitler made up his mind to invade the Soviet Union. By contrast, Japan’s relations with Russia improved as the “strike north” group in Japanese strategic thinking lost out to the advocates of striking south against Britain in Southeast Asia and the United States in the Pacific.

By the time Bose escaped from India, in January 1941, the German war machine might have seemed unstoppable in Western Europe, but he did not know that the German-Soviet pact was nearing an end. In addition to wanting to get first-hand information on the course of the war and mobilizing Indian soldiers and civilians

abroad for a final assault on the British Raj, Bose gave another reason to his followers for coming to Germany: in the event Germany signed a separate peace with a battered but undefeated Britain, he wanted a strong Indian voice to defend India's interests at the negotiating table. Otherwise, he feared that India would become a mere pawn in the struggle between the new imperial powers and the old. "In the early part of his stay in Europe" his deputy A. C. N. Nambiar has written, "he had more fears of German victory than doubts regarding it."⁴⁹ Hitler's admiration for Britain was undiminished and he greatly preferred forging solidarity among the "Nordic races" to aligning with those he had derided as "Asiatic jugglers." Bose's single-minded absorption in the cause of India's independence led him to ignore the ghastly brutalities perpetrated by the forces of Nazism and Fascism in Europe. By going to Germany, because it happened to be at war with Britain, he ensured that his reputation would long be tarred by the blame that was due the Nazis. A pact with the devil: such was the terrible price of freedom.⁵⁰

As the work planned by Bose proceeded very slowly, he became impatient and rather agitated over the indifference, as he thought, shown by the German Government towards his memoranda and the appeal therein. So in the last week of May 1941, he decided to visit Rome to gauge the attitude of the Italian Government regarding the Indian problems, in view of his three better and more cordial meetings with Benito Mussolini during his visits in the 1930's. His plan of this journey was to spend the month of June in meeting influential people of the Italian Government in order to see if they could help in expediting the execution of his plans with German help and then spend some time at Badgastein and Vienna in Austria to mark time till something was done by his German friends in the Foreign Office at Berlin. He was accompanied by his wife Emilie Schenkl in his capacity as the personal assistant.⁵¹

On 28th May 1941, Bose and Emilie Schenkl left for a visit to Rome via France. There he met some French leaders sympathetic to the Indian national cause and contacted A.C.N. Nambiar, his journalist friend who had taken refuge in the

⁴⁹ N. G Ganpuley, *Netaji in Germany: a Little-known Chapter*, Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan 1964, A.C.N. Nambiar in "Foreword" p. vii.

⁵⁰ Sugata Bose, *His Majesty's Opponent: Subhas Chandra Bose and India's struggle against empire*, New Delhi: Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd, 2011, p. 203.

⁵¹ Lt. Manwati Arya, *Patriot The Unique Indian Leader Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose*, New Delhi: Lotus Press, 2007, pp. 137-138.

university town of Montpellier in France, after the occupation of Paris by the German Forces. Nambiar was an Indian patriot who had worked, since the First World War, with the Indian Committee with which the Indian militant nationalist exiles such as Raja Mahendra Pratap, M.N. Roy, Maulana Barkatullah, Virendra Nath Chattopadhyay and many others were associated. Bose was keen on securing the co-operation of Nambiar in his work at Berlin. He reached Rome on 14th June and received a grand reception befitting the Head of a State. Mussolini received him personally on the following day. Dr. Ernst von Woermann, the Director of the Political Department and like many others in the German Foreign Office repugnant to Nazism, had instructed the German Embassy in Rome to provide Bose with funds as much as he would need.⁵²

The Italian Foreign Minister Count Galeazzo Ciano, the son-in-law of Mussolini, did not like Bose's preference to be closer to the Germans; though Bose had only wanted to avail for his Indian Legion the benefit of superior German training, weaponry and military expertise. However, Mussolini, having met him thrice during the period of his exile in Europe in 1933-36 and being aware of his revolutionary ideas, was very warm-hearted towards him. He, being free from the sense of racial superiority that the Nazis had, admired Bose for his intelligence, wide knowledge and his magnetic personality so much as to establish a rapport with him. In contrast to him, Hitler did not receive Bose till then, precisely to avoid any definite commitment.⁵³

Bose's overall plan nevertheless suffered from lack of realism as it expected too much of the Germans. He simply assumed that they shared his preoccupation with destroying the British Empire. What he failed to realise was that they were engaged in preparing an entirely different operation in East, Code-named Barbarossa, intended in Hitler's words to 'crush Soviet Russia in a rapid campaign'. India and the British Empire were, and would remain, peripheral to strategy. Not aware of German planning, Bose naively assumed that the war would remain an Anglo-German one.⁵⁴ This was consistent with the flawed manner in which he essentially perceived things

⁵² Ibid., p. 137.

⁵³ Ibid., pp. 137-138.

⁵⁴ Romain Hayes, *Bose in Nazi Germany*, U.P. India: Random House Publisher India Pvt. Ltd, 2011, pp. 33-34.

from a purely Indian Nationalism perspective, little troubled by German interests. His theoretical formula ‘the enemy of my enemy is my friend’ was not so simple, however, when applied practically. On the positive side, the audacity of Bose’s plan ensured that it at least received attention and that something of substance might well emerge from it. It certainly forced bureaucrats at the Foreign Office to do what they had failed to do so far-namely develop a comprehensive policy on India.⁵⁵

In June 1941, long after Bose had safely reached Europe, the Special Operations Executive (SOE) in Istanbul sought confirmation of the continuing validity of the March order from London to assassinate him. In late May, Delhi had informed London that they had thought Bose “would be used for Radio Propaganda from Russia, Italy or Germany, but nothing of the sort has eventuated.” They believed, therefore, that Bose might still be in Afghanistan, and wondered “whether demand should be presented to Afghan Government to deal with him under rules of practice.”⁵⁶ It was on 13th June that SOE in Istanbul inquired whether the assassination order was still in effect. Sir Frank Nelson, the chief of SOE, was reported to be “in a minority of one at that morning’s meeting in insisting that it should be referred to the Foreign Office. He said he was sure the Secretary of State for India [L. S. Amery], who was also interested in this question, would not take kindly to Sir Hughe Knatchbull-Hugessen [the British ambassador to Turkey] objecting to Bose being liquidated on Turkish territory.” Reconfirmation of the assassination decision having been obtained, London cabled SOE in Istanbul telling their operative Gardyne de Chastelain that “the Foreign Office agreed to the liquidation of Bose being carried out on Turkish territory,” but that Gardyne de Chastelain should tell no one about this. By now, Bose was well beyond the reach of his potential assassins. Following his return from Rome and Vienna in July 1941, Bose lived with Emilie in a mansion at Sophienstrasse 7 in the Charlottenburg neighborhood of Berlin. The house had been previously occupied by the American military attaché. However, there is no reliable documentary evidence relating to this German plot.

During 1941, Bose used two channels of communication to stay in touch with family and friends in India: one went via Kabul, the other through Tokyo. On March

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 34.

⁵⁶ M. G. Lion Agrawal, *Freedom Fighters of India*, New Delhi: Isha publication, 2008, p. 254.

31, Sisir, sitting at Woodburn Park in Calcutta, had received a visitor's slip saying, "Bhagat Ram-I come from frontier." Bhagat Ram handed over letters and documents from Bose to Sarat and Sisir, and arrangements were made to send a Bengali revolutionary, Santimoy Ganguli, to Peshawar and Kabul. The Kabul conduit, however, became compromised once Bhagat Ram revealed his German and Italian contacts to the Russians in September 1941 and began to play the role of a consummate multiple agent. The German invasion of the Soviet Union transformed the war, in the eyes of many communists and their fellow travellers, from an imperialist war to a people's war. Bhagat Ram shed his old Forward Bloc connections to join a local organization known as the Kirti Kisan party and thus moved close to the communist line on the war. Much later, in November 1942, he would be arrested and immediately released by the British, on condition that he supply intelligence about Bose's movements.⁵⁷

Bose was also able to send wireless messages from Berlin to Tokyo that were delivered to his brother Sarat by diplomats of the Japanese consulate in Calcutta. Sisir would drive the Japanese consul-general, Katsuo Okazaki, to his father's garden house in Rishra. After Okazaki's departure, another officer named Ota, along with his wife, wearing an Indian sari, would come to Rishra for ostensibly social visits. While the British police in Calcutta were aware that these meetings were taking place, they could do no more than speculate on the content of the conversations. The vulnerability of the Japanese telegraphic code at the highest governmental level eventually undermined the security of the messages the Bose brothers exchanged via Tokyo. A telegram from the Japanese foreign minister in Tokyo to his ambassador in Berlin—a message containing one of Sarat's communications with Subhas, dated September 1, 1941—landed on Winston Churchill's desk on September 5. The prime minister was assured that "the Government of India were awaiting an opportunity to arrest Sarat and the prominent members of his group."⁵⁸

Toward the end of the year, Sarat Chandra Bose was able to bring about a major change in the provincial politics of Bengal. The coalition of the Krishak Praja

⁵⁷ Sugata Bose, *His Majesty's Opponent: Subhas Chandra Bose and India's struggle against empire*, New Delhi: Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd, 2011, p.211.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 212.

party and the Muslim League was replaced by a new formation headed by the Krishak Praja leader, Fazlul Huq, in alliance with Sarat's followers in the Bengal legislature. Sarat himself was slated to become the home minister, the in charge of police and law and order in Bengal. On December 11, 1941, as the new ministry of the Progressive Coalition party took office, J. V. B. Janvrin arrived at Wood-burn Park to arrest Sarat. The detainee was to be held as a prisoner in distant south India for the duration of the war. His Japanese contacts were seen to present "a very real and definite danger" to security, and Richard Tottenham of the Home Department in Delhi was clear "that it would be impossible to contemplate having Sarat Chandra Bose as a Minister." On December 10 a telegram had arrived from L. S. Amery, secretary of state for India, addressed to Viceroy Linlithgow and calling for the arrest of Sarat Bose "without delay."⁵⁹

On the wider front of his work and achievements in Germany, Bose could still get little joy and he had begun to be worried about the attention he was receiving in the British press. On 10th November 1941, Eric Conran Smith, secretary of the Home Department of the government of India had told the Indian Council of State, one of the many bodies for Indian collaborationists of the Raj, that Bose had 'gone over to the enemy' and signed a pact with the Axis designed to lead to the invasion of India. This was the start of a tremendous propaganda offensive against Bose. The British press, which had so far been speculating in which *ashram* he was and how he had escaped, now latched on to the notion of Bose 'the Quisling'- a theme song that the more propagandist and imperialist papers like the *Daily Express* and *Evening News* maintained till well into the 1960s.

The *Daily Mail*, with a photograph of Bose under the caption 'Indian turns traitor', announced. 'Indian Quisling No 1 flees to Hitler'. The *Daily Express* carried a photograph of Bose in a long overcoat and Gandhi cap talking to a German guard at a Berlin zoo in 1934, and the heading: 'Indian leader plans invasion 5th Column'; while for *the Empire News* it was 'Chandra Bose Haw-Haw'. 'Suhhas Chandra Bose, India's Quisling No. 1, is to become the Indian 'Lord Haw-Haw' broadcasting from

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 212.

Berlin.⁶⁰ Its amazingly ignorant correspondent informed readers that Bose had been deposed as Congress president in 1940 because Gandhi had discovered he was a German agent, been kept under house arrest, escaped (by dressing in women's clothes; with the help of Axis agent) and finally arrived in Berlin via Afghanistan, Syria and Rome. For Bose this was a cruel moment. He could do nothing about these lies, for he was still incognito.

In the meantime, the German invasion on Soviet Russia made Bose much agitated and disappointed with Germany; and he did not join any Nazi condemnation of the Soviet Union which was ever more popular and a source of inspiration among the Indian intelligentsia. So, on his return to Berlin from Rome on 14th July, he held discussions with Dr. Ernst Woermann, the Secretary of State in the German Foreign Office, and frankly told him about the adverse Indian reaction to the German invasion of the Soviet Union. He suggested that a declaration supporting the cause of India's independence be made urgently to offset that adverse reaction. At first even Mussolini, as one of the members of the Axis Powers, did not support Bose's demand in the matter; but he changed his stance after Bose's visit in June 1941. Convinced by the arguments and persuasions made by Bose, he later telegraphed the German Government that "they proceed at once with the declaration".⁶¹

Though he sought help and cooperation of foreign powers for ousting the British Imperialists from India, he never bowed down before them but held his head high as equals. Bose had made it very clear that Germany would have to provide him the necessary finances in the form of loan to the Free India Provisional Government established in Germany, to be paid off in full when India would be free and set up its Independent Government in India. Being conscientiously scrupulous in money matters, Bose fell ill at ease because the financing of his work was done not by Indians. This feeling of uneasiness always gnawed him. Later in 1944, as the Head of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind in Burma, Bose remitted 5 million yen (equivalent to 200,000 Reich Marks) through the German Ambassador in Tokyo, with the full knowledge of the Japanese Government, as the first of four instalments

⁶⁰ Mihir Bose, *The Lost Hero a Biography of Subhas Bose*, London: Quartet Books Limited, 1982, p. 188.

⁶¹ Lt. Manwati Arya, *Patriot The Unique Indian Leader Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose*, New Delhi: Lotus Press, 2007, p. 138.

towards the repayment of the loan from the German Government to the Free India Centre in Germany.⁶² He impressed the Axis Powers and convinced them that it was in their interest to support the Indian cause.

On the demand of Bose for setting up an Indian Government in Exile, as Poles and others had done in London, Dr. Woermann, the Secretary of State in the German Foreign Office, remained non-committal as it required decision and provision by the Axis Powers of Germany and Italy. When he returned after his visit to Rome on 14th July 1941, he found good progress in the work towards the fulfilment of his programmes in Berlin. A properly organized office was already set up for him by his German friends in the Foreign Office.

On 16th October von Ribbentrop himself revived the idea of using Indian POWs for ‘broadcasting purposes in case of a possible advance into the Caucasus, into Iran, etc.’ He wanted everything to be ‘fully ready for action in about two months’. And money was no problem. As the Foreign Office note concluded, ‘In so far as funds were needed for this he was willing to make them available’. Von Ribbentrop’s views were meant for Hitler, who ‘unambiguously’ recommended the setting-up of an Indian Legion. But again the Italians intervened. A summit conference between the Free India Centre and the Italian Ufficio India in Berlin in December 1941 had agreed that work on the formation of the Indian Legion should start immediately; an infantry battalion was to be raised and all training was to take place under German command. But the Italians were tardy in releasing the Indian POWs to the Germans and despite Hitler, the German high command, continued to treat the whole exercise as an experiment.⁶³

Besides, the Germans had a lot to learn about Indian soldiers and the conditioning they had received under centuries of British rule. In Annaburg there were complaints about food and the disregard of caste habits. Later, German investigators researching the attitudes of Indian POWs in north Africa discovered that the British policy of isolating them from politics had worked wonderfully well: the soldiers were

⁶² Ibid., p. 139.

⁶³ Mihir Bose, *The Lost Hero a Biography of Subhas Bose*, London: Quartet Books Limited, 1982, p. 186.

indeed, as their British masters wanted, completely non-political: more interested in the Vedas than political literature. Asked why they were fighting Germany, they replied it was because 'the present lord of India' wished it; they had joined the army to avoid hunger. It was only the swastika on the investigator's uniform that brought any response: it was, after all, a famous and ancient Hindu religious symbol. Worse, though the Germans had separated the Indians from their British officers they had not segregated the men from the NCOs (non-commissioned officers), who had a long history of active collaboration with the British.

So when Bose visited the Annaburg camp in December 1941, he was met with hostility and anger. Carefully coached by the collaborationist NCOs, the men refused to listen to him. But Bose was persistent and the next day, in personal interviews, some of the anger melted. The men were curious about ranks, pay, loss of British benefits, new laurels from the Germans etc. To all this, Bose's reply was the same; that this is for India, this is not a mercenary army like the British Army and that they are fighting for a cause. But, as ever, he was a good listener, and many went away convinced of his sincerity and his cause. On his return to Berlin Bose decided to separate the NCOs from the men and sent two of his trusted workers, N.G. Swami and Abid Hasan, to the camps. The process began slowly, in December 1941 and January 1942, with the NCOs among the prisoners doing their best to prevent the ordinary soldiers from enlisting in the legion. The call of patriotic duty met with obstacles: the soldiers had taken an earlier oath to serve their British masters and they were concerned about the well-being of their families in India. It required all of Bose's powers of persuasion to create the nucleus of India's army of liberation.⁶⁴ The fact that the Indian civilian population in Europe was quite small also made it difficult to bridge the gap between anti-colonial politics and the military mentality. For recruitment various methods were used. It was found that the most effective were the traditional ones: more money, more food, Red Cross parcels and access to women. In the end only 4,000 of the 15,000 POWs joined the Legion, only a handful of whom were officers.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Sugata Bose, *His Majesty's Opponent: Subhas Chandra Bose and India's struggle against empire*, New Delhi: Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd, 2011, p. 210.

⁶⁵ Mihir Bose, *The Lost Hero a Biography of Subhas Bose*, London: Quartet Books Limited, 1982, p.187.

4.5 The Free India Centre in Germany

Soon he met with Wilhelm Kepler, the secretary of State in the Foreign Office. Kepler had been able to get due sanction of finances needed for organizing and maintaining the Free Indian Centre as desired by Bose since a long time.⁶⁶ On 30th October 1941, the Free India Centre -Zentralstelle Freie Indien -was opened at 10 Lichtensteinallce in the Tiergarten district of central Berlin, and three days later Bose formally opened it with a short but characteristic speech. The first meeting of the Free India Centre held on 2nd November 1941, officially delineated the objectives and functional framework of the Centre, which was virtually the Free India Government in Exile in the process of developing in due course of time. The work of Bose started in full force as all the necessary requirements were met by the German Government through the Foreign Office and the friendly officials who were entrusted with the responsibilities of helping in Indian cause. Bose had other motives too for establishing an Indian government in Berlin. Where Bose was deficient was in his failure to reveal with whom he intended to constitute such a government. The few available Indians – mostly stranded journalists and university students in German-occupied Europe-lacked the necessary political legitimacy with which to establish a credible government. Apart from making Indian independence a reality in the sphere of international politics, it would be one significant step on the road to independence without waiting for British approval. He thought a government would also provide an alternative to what he perceived as the politically stagnant Gandhi dominated Congress and a new pivot around which to mobilise Indian public opinion. German recognition also implied recognition of future independent Indian state. This was of critical importance at a time when Germany seemed destined to win the war.⁶⁷

The Free India Centre started functioning with the full status of a diplomatic mission. The next important work on which the Free India Centre set its heart, after it attempted to straighten out the many issues with German authorities, was to develop and expand daily radio broadcasts to India. The Special India Division of the German Foreign Office provided the necessary technical facilities for organisation of the

⁶⁶ Lt. Manwati Arya, *Patriot The Unique Indian Leader Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose*, New Delhi: Lotus Press, 2007, pp. 138-140.

⁶⁷ Romain Hayes, *Bose in Nazi Germany*, U.P. India: Random House Publisher India Pvt. Ltd, 2011, p .31.

radio-broadcast programmes. With the only exception of the technicians, the broadcasting programme of the Azad Hind Radio was completely manned by Indians. The political talks were prepared by Indians under the guidance of Bose and were exclusively on Indian subjects. The programme was transmitted on a “special independent wave length and was on no account to be mixed up with any German broadcasting programme.”⁶⁸ The increased tempo of the war in the Far East intensified the programmes of the Azad Hind Radio. In the beginning, the programme led the German authorities to give three hours of time to the Free India Centre on the transmission line for its Indian programme. The German representative in Kabul reported that the broadcasts from the Azad Hind Radio were very popular in India and they were eagerly listened to by the people of all shades of political opinion.

Bose had an interview with the German Foreign Minister Herr Joachim von Ribbentrop on 29th November 1941. Thanking him for the help extended so far, he expressed his keen desire to speed up the training of the Indian prisoners of war for the Indian Legion. The response of this meeting was prompt, positive and encouraging as the German Government agreed to treat Bose as the representative of Free India and the talks with him as binding. He expressed his desire of meeting Herr Hitler to Ribbentrop, but it took some time for it to materialise.

The circle of Indians Bose gathered around him interacted with the special India division of the German Foreign Office headed by the Oxford-educated Adam von Trott and his deputy, Alexander Werth. A Rhodes Scholar at Oxford, the aristocratic Trott was a skilled international lawyer and had travelled widely in China, Britain, and the United States. After the outbreak of the war, he had been assigned to the Foreign Office desk dealing with the United States, Britain, and the British Empire. He used this position as a cover for his anti-Nazi activities, and was later executed for his part in Claus von Stauffenberg’s failed plot, in July 1944, to assassinate Hitler. As a result of his political opposition, Werth had already suffered imprisonment at the hands of the Nazis in 1934 and subsequently went to Britain, where he was called to the bar at the Middle Temple. He was permitted to return to Germany in 1939, on condition that he joins the army; he was recruited in 1940 by the

⁶⁸ Hari Hara Das, *Subhas Chandra Bose and the Indian National Movement*, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Private Limited, 1983, p. 247.

Foreign Office because of his knowledge of the Anglo- Saxon world. These diplomats shielded the Indians, many of whom had left-leaning political beliefs, from what might have been rougher encounters with the Nazi party hierarchy. Werth believed that without Trott and his devoted team of workers at the Foreign Office, Bose would “probably not have remained in Berlin.” From the spring of 1941 onward, they met often with Bose. They “felt the strength of his will power, the honesty of his intentions and inexorability of his personal dedication to India’s cause”⁶⁹

In the beginning the number of the Indian co-workers in the Free India Centre was thirty five and they were mostly students. The number of members of the center gradually increased. In one of his trips to Rome, Paris and Prague for collecting co-workers and sympathizers, Bose contacted A.C.N. Nambiar, who had been working as a journalist in Europe for 18 years and was at the time living in the ‘unoccupied zone’ of France. Nambiar agreed to work for the Azad Hind Government or the Provisional Government of Free India in Europe. Among the Indians who joined Bose in Germany in his work to emancipate India from British control, N.G. Ganpuley is a noteworthy person. He contacted Bose immediately after his arrival in Germany and helped him in organising the Free India Centre-the Provisional Government of Free India in Europe. Ganpuley was a former member of the Congress in Bombay and had spent a considerable part of his life in Germany. Both Nambiar and Ganpuley were well acquainted with German life.⁷⁰

Ganpuley was sent frequently by Bose to Indian prisoners of war camps for persuading them to join the Legion and was connected with the formation, administration and the welfare of the members of the Legion.⁷¹ Besides Nambiar and Ganpuley there were other prominent Indians like Dr. G.K. Mookerjee and M.R. Vyas who became Bose’s closest friends and assisted him in all matters concerning broadcasting activities. In 1942 Bose appointed Nambiar as his deputy and successor. He remained in charge of all activities of the Indian Freedom Movement in Germany after Bose left for South East Asia. In this connection the names of Habibur Rahman

⁶⁹ Sugata Bose, *His Majesty’s Opponent: Subhas Chandra Bose and India’s struggle against empire*, New Delhi: Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd, 2011, p. 208.

⁷⁰ Girija K Mookerjee, *History of Indian National Congress 1832-1947*, Delhi: Meenakshi Prakashan, 1974, ‘G. Mookerjee,s letter dated june 28, 1957’, Appendix. pp. 188-189.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, appendix. p. 190.

and N. G. Swamy also deserve to be mentioned. Both of them rendered remarkable service in organising and training the Legionaries.⁷²

The two civilian recruiters who were sent by Bose to Annaburg Camp in 1941, N. G. Swami and Abid Hasan, had volunteered to join the military wing of the movement. Swami became the leading figure among ninety young men who received sophisticated training as members of an elite commando force at Meseritz, near Hamburg. The commander in charge of the training camp was a very capable German officer named Walter Harbich. Indian members of this unit wore a German-style uniform with a silk emblem—the Indian national tricolor with a springing tiger in the center—stitched on their left sleeve. While most wore a German field cap or helmet as headgear, Sikh soldiers wore green cloth turbans and Sikh officers were distinguished by turbans made of light-blue silk. A veteran of First World War, Harbich had the political sophistication to implement Bose’s ideas about mingling members of the different religious and linguistic communities, instead of keeping them separate, as the British had done. Bose wanted Indians to be united in the smallest tactical unit, regardless of their religious affiliation. “Contrary to the original doubts,” Harbich reported, “the result was surprisingly good.” According to a British intelligence officer who later interrogated the Meseritz recruits, “Morale, discipline and Indo-German relations were excellent” and “the German officer’s first-rate.”⁷³ Hasan’s primary role was to make the initial overtures to Indian prisoners-of-war being held since early 1941 in a camp at Annaberg, near Dresden, before Bose himself came to persuade them to switch their allegiance to the cause of free India. The actual recruitment had to await the transfer of the majority of the prisoners taken in North Africa, who were being held in Italy and a formal decision by the German war office to permit the raising of an Indian legion. Once this permission came, toward the end of 1941, a second and larger training camp was established at Frankenberg, later moved to Konigsbruck, in Saxony. The Legion at Frankenberg was under the Reserve Forces

⁷² Hari Hara Das, *Subhas Chandra Bose and the Indian National Movement*, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Private Limited, 1983, p. 243.

⁷³ Hugh Toye, *Subhas Chandra Bose: The Springing Tiger*, Mumbai: Jaico Publishing House, 2007, pp. 71-72.

headed by General Fromm, who, like Trott, would later be executed for his involvement in the July 1944 plot to assassinate Hitler.⁷⁴

In July 1942, when the supply of recruits from Annaberg had come to an end, the Germans began to threaten that the Indian Legion would be disbanded if it could not quickly be brought to battalion strength. This made it urgent to obtain many hundreds of volunteers from the new prisoners in North Africa and Bose worried the Italians until large contingents were arriving regularly in Germany. His propagandists would greet the new drafts- or even go to the Italian frontier to meet them- and prepare them for their first meeting with him. For he was quite tireless in this matter and at the height of his eloquence: “I know what you have suffered: I know how shattered you feel by the defeat of your British leaders. But to one who has seen as much of the world as I have, this defeat is not surprising: the British were lions, they are no longer; they deserve no longer your allegiance or your fear: The English are like the dead snake which people are afraid of even after its death. There is no doubt that the British have lost this battle. The problem is how to take charge of our country. When the Englishmen are about to leave there is no point in begging independence or getting it as present from other nations because such independence cannot last long.... We are young and we have a sense of self-respect. We shall take freedom by the strength of our arms. Freedom is never given. It is taken. Thank God, the nations fighting Britain are ready to help us. They know that Free India will contribute to the prosperity of the world. Consequently they are ready to help us sincerely. Now it rests with you to shoulder this noble task and bring it to perfection, or spend your life in imprisonment...”⁷⁵ Observers have told of the enthusiastic response of the prisoners whose mind still bore the mark of recent calamity- quite.

The Free India Centre organised the activities of Indians who devoted themselves to work for the emancipation of India and Bose was the undisputed supreme leader who decided what kind of work was to be done and assigned work to different persons according to his judgment. There were no regular meetings and

⁷⁴ Sugata Bose, *His Majesty's Opponent: Subhas Chandra Bose and India's struggle against empire*, New Delhi: Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd, 2011, pp. 209-210.

⁷⁵ Hugh Toye, *Subhas Chandra Bose: The Springing Tiger*, Mumbai: Jaico Publishing House, 2007, p. 73.

discussion nor were there elected office-bearers.⁷⁶ “Everyone was on a footing of equality in regard to money he got for living, irrespective of the kind of work he did. As the risk involved was the same for all of us, Subhas did not want to create a hierarchy...”⁷⁷ The Free India Centre resolved to address Bose as ‘Netaji’ which combined both a sense of affection and respect for the national hero. Since that day Bose has come to be known as ‘Netaji’-the beloved leader. This was in keeping with the Indian tradition of expressing regard for the elders and for the national heroes. The Indian people had given such appellations like ‘Mahatma’, ‘Pandit’, ‘Sardar’ and ‘Maulana’ to other national leaders too.⁷⁸

Bose succeeded in convincing his German as well as Indian co-workers about the great importance of his work and was able to get their willing support and cooperation. Bose’s indomitable personality inspired them all with a “sense of mission, common objectives and mutual co-operation.”⁷⁹ He was the driving spirit and the symbol of inspiration for all. “He showed his remarkable capacity of keeping thread of all the activities of his political, military and technical co-workers in his hands so that the over-all control of the whole organisation remained with him.”⁸⁰

The Free India Centre established a Planning Commission and took up the work of planning for the social and economical reorganization of India after she became independent. The Centre also participated in social and political functions of international significance and maintained contact with foreign Legations, which were sympathetic to the Indian cause. The Congress tricolour with the outline of the Springing Tiger embossed on it was accepted as the insignia of the Azad Hind Movement. The image of a springing tiger, reminiscent of the eighteenth-century anti-British warrior Tipu Sultan of Mysore, replaced the *charkha* (“spinning wheel”) in the middle, though Bose would revert to the Gandhian symbol in Southeast Asia. After

⁷⁶ Hari Hara Das, *Subhas Chandra Bose and the Indian National Movement*, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Private Limited, 1983, p. 243.

⁷⁷ Alexander Werth, ed., *A Beacon Across Asia: A Biography of Subhas Chandra Bose*, Hyderabad: Orient Blackswan, 1996, p. 127.

⁷⁸ Hari Hara Das, *Subhas Chandra Bose and the Indian National Movement*, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Private Limited, 1983, p. 244.

⁷⁹ Alexander Werth, ed., *A Beacon Across Asia: A biography of Subhas Chandra Bose*, Hyderabad: Orient Blackswan, 1996, p. 127.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p.129.

independence, both the *charkha* and the tiger would give way to the Asokan *chakra* (“wheel”), evocative of the ancient Maurya Empire.⁸¹

Rabindranath Tagore’s song-“Jana Gana Mana Adhinayak Jaya He,” seeking divine benediction for India-was adopted by Bose as the national anthem; this choice would be ratified by the Indian government after independence was achieved in 1947. Bose had played a key role in resolving the controversy surrounding the other song, “Bande Mataram,” in 1937- he had opted not to use it, since he was keen to win Muslim support. He was open to accepting Muhammad Iqbal’s song “Sare Jahan se achha Hindustan Hamara”-proclaiming the excellence of India compared to the whole world-as the national anthem, but in the end the collective decision was in favor of Tagore.⁸²

For the first time in modern Indian History, a common and universal Indian form of greeting, ‘Jai Hind’, was introduced. It may be mentioned here that when India became free, Nehru as the Prime Minister, adopted Jai Hind as the national form of greeting.”⁸³ Bose aimed at bringing unity in diversity and reminding the Indians about his great objective of Free India by the introduction of this common national greeting. “It has come to stay as a national greeting irrespective of caste, creed or religion.”⁸⁴ India needed a symbol of unity that would forge a sense of oneness amongst the people who had much diversity on the basis of language, religion, culture and ethnic origin.⁸⁵ Jai Hind (Victory to India) as a national symbol embodied “a feeling of oneness, a feeling of belonging to one national family... All earlier forms of greeting were limited and helped to nurture only a group feeling which did not bring us any nearer as nationals of a single country.”⁸⁶ The decisions regarding the national

⁸¹ Sugata Bose, *His Majesty’s Opponent: Subhas Chandra Bose and India’s struggle against empire*, New Delhi: Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd, 2011, p. 210. see also An interview with Abid Hassan who accompanied Bose during the journey by the submarine. *Mainstream* July 26. 1997. p. 17.

⁸² Sugata Bose, *His Majesty’s Opponent: Subhas Chandra Bose and India’s struggle against empire*, New Delhi: Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd, 2011, p. 211. see also An interview with Abid Hassan who accompanied Bose during the journey by the submarine. *Mainstream* July 26. 1997. p. 17.

⁸³ N. G Ganpuley, *Netaji in Germany: a Little-known Chapter*, Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1964, p.42.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 42 .

An interview with Abid Hassan who accompanied Bose during the journey by the submarine. *Mainstream* July 26. p. 17.

⁸⁶ Alexander Werth and Walter Harbich, *An Eye-witness Account of Indian Freedom Struggle in Europe during World War II*, Calcutta: NRB, 1970, p. 125.

anthem and greeting were examples of Bose's well-honed political intuition, and would be among his lasting legacies to independent India.

Bose wanted to introduce 'Hindustani written in Roman Script' as the official language of India for making it easy to understand for the people of different provinces and for foreigners. It is a great tribute to Bose and the small group of freedom fighters in Germany that India has adopted 'Jana Gana Mana' as the national anthem of independent India and Hindustani in the Devanagari script has been accepted as the Official language. The Free India Centre functioned but with some difficulties from the day of its inception due to the fact that the question of liberation of India which was Bose's main concern "did not evoke the right sort of echo or sympathy from amongst the higher officials and leaders of the Third Reich."⁸⁷

Meanwhile, Japan's entry into the Second World War on 7th December 1941, and the rapid advance of Japanese troops across Southeast Asia against the Western Colonial powers opened up new strategic possibilities for Bose. The fall of Singapore on 15th February 1942 provided the occasion for Bose to discard his identity as Orlando Mazzotta: he made his first open broadcast to India on 19th February 1942. More than a year after his dramatic escape from India, his countrymen heard his voice: "This is Subhas Chandra Bose speaking to you over the Azad Hind Free India Radio... The fall of Singapore" he declared, "means the collapse of the British Empire, the end of the iniquitous regime which it has symbolized and the dawn of a new era in Indian history. Through India's liberation will Asia and the world move forward towards the larger goal of human emancipation."⁸⁸

The broadcasts on Azad Hind Radio usually began with the stirring English lines, "To arms, to arms, / The Heavens ring, / With the clarion call, /To Freedom's fray"; and ended with "Our cause is just!" When Japanese forces took Rangoon from the British, Bose hailed the prospect of Burmese freedom. He derided the propaganda of the British viceroy Archibald Wavell: that India was under threat of enemy attack and that its frontiers, therefore, were at Suez and Hong Kong, which had to be

⁸⁷ Alexander Werth, ed., *A Beacon Across Asia: A biography of Subhas Chandra Bose*, Hyderabad: Orient Blackswan, 1996, p. 105.

⁸⁸ Sisir K Bose and Sugata Bose, ed., *Azad Hind: Writings and Speeches 1941-1943*, Netaji Collected Works. Vol 11, Calcutta: NRB and Delhi: Permanent Black, 2002, p. 5.

defended with Indian troops. India, Bose pointed out, had “no imaginary Wavellian frontiers,” only “a national geographical boundary determined by Providence and nature.”⁸⁹ The British were now trying to bring “the war into India”, after having brought “India into the war” in September 1939.⁹⁰

Having shed his Italian disguise, Bose was ready to take full advantage of the military and psychological repercussions of the fall of Singapore. On 26th February 1942, he submitted an ambitious eleven-point plan to the tripartite powers. He had made his first broadcast on 19th February from Berlin, but that was not where he wanted to be. He wanted to go to Rangoon-the capital of Burma, soon to be freed by the Japanese-and make it the base for Indian nationalist propaganda and the springboard for Indian nationalist action. His friends in the German Foreign Office supported his efforts and a declaration in support of Indian freedom seemed on the anvil. The draft declaration produced by the German Foreign Office on 22nd February contained everything Bose could have asked for:

“Germany, Italy and Japan are convinced that the Indian nation will break the political and economic bonds of British Imperialism and then as master of its own fate will carry out a sweeping transformation of its national life for the lasting benefit of its own people and as contribution to the welfare and the peace of the world. It is no concern of the Tripartite Powers what form the Indian people, after their liberation, will in future give to their interior political organization. It is a matter to be decided upon by the Indian people themselves and their leaders what constitution is the most suitable for their country and how it is to be put into practice. The Tripartite Powers are concerned to end-on a basis of social justice-the misery and poverty of the Indian people, and to see the exploited masses assisted to a proper standard of living as well as to employment and prosperity.”⁹¹

The lack of trust and coordination between Japan and Germany ensured that the moment was lost. The presence of someone of Bose’s stature on its soil gave Germany a lever not just in relation to Britain, but also in its negotiations with Japan.

⁸⁹ Sugata Bose, *His Majesty’s Opponent: Subhas Chandra Bose and India’s struggle against empire*, New Delhi: Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd, 2011, p. 213.

⁹⁰ Sisir K Bose and Sugata Bose, ed., *Azad Hind: Writings and Speeches 1941-1943*, Netaji Collected Works. Vol 11, Calcutta: NRB and Delhi: Permanent Black, 2002, p. 72.

⁹¹ Sisir Kumar Bose, ed., *Netaji and India’s Freedom*. “Draft declaration on India.” Calcutta: NRB, 1975, pp. 306-309.

The Japanese had launched their war without caring to inform either enemies or their allies, and did not intend to follow German directives in matters to do with Asia. Japan wanted Germany to give up its obsession with the Soviet Union and instead concentrate its military might on the British in the Suez. The naval commands of both Japan and Germany wished to establish a link across the Indian Ocean. If this could be done, “the war would be practically won and the British Empire would be finished.”⁹² This breakthrough, according to the naval strategists, had to “occur soon in order to bring the war to a speedy and happy conclusion.”⁹³ The Japanese even advocated a separate peace between Germany and the Soviet Union, to facilitate Germany’s ability to focus on the Mediterranean and link up with the Japanese in the Indian Ocean. Hitler, however, would not entertain the possibility of a truce on the Eastern Front and was determined to wrestle once more with the Soviet Union during the summer. With Germany and Japan out of sync, Ribbentrop turned down Bose’s request that he be permitted to travel to Asia. Bitter at being let down yet again, Bose left Berlin in a huff for Badgastein. When the Germans sent an emissary to persuade him to return, Bose denounced their lack of seriousness about Indian independence and suggested that he and the Indian cause were being used as a bargaining chip for a possible German compromise with the British.

In India, Gandhi now shared Bose’s perspective on the war that the Viceroy was trying to bring the war into India. Though Bose had failed to persuade Gandhi to issue an ultimatum to the British in 1939, the British debacle at the hands of the Japanese in Southeast Asia emboldened Gandhi to prepare for a final showdown with the British Raj. Gandhi believed that India could be spared the devastation of war if the British left India. He was confident of his ability to negotiate with the Japanese who would have no reason to enter India if it was rid of the British presence. He regarded the “ordered anarchy” represented by the British Raj to be worse than “real anarchy.” In the spring of 1942, the apostle of nonviolence was even “prepared to take the risk of violence” to end “the great calamity of slavery.”⁹⁴

⁹² Sugata Bose, *His Majesty’s Opponent: Subhas Chandra Bose and India’s struggle against empire*, New Delhi: Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd, 2011, p. 215.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 216.

⁹⁴ Sugata Bose, *His Majesty’s Opponent: Subhas Chandra Bose and India’s struggle against empire*, New Delhi: Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd, 2011, p. 213.

From October 1941, the Japanese ambassador in Berlin, Lieutenant General Oshima Hiroshi, and the military attache, Colonel Yamamoto Bin, had been holding meetings with Bose. The Japanese military victories in Southeast Asia, Bose's activities abroad, and Gandhi's increasingly militant mood combined to cause great nervousness among British war leaders. Winston Churchill came under pressure from the U.S. president, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and from his own Labour party colleagues in the British government to do something to conciliate Indian nationalist opinion. Stafford Cripps had returned from a successful stint as British ambassador to Moscow and had joined the cabinet a few days after the fall of Singapore. The British viceroy in India, Lord Linlithgow, was a hard-liner opposed to any concessions to Indian demands. In late January he had reported the existence of "a large and dangerous 5th column in Bengal, Assam, Bihar and Orissa," and said he regarded the "potential of pro-enemy sympathy and activity in Eastern India" to be "enormous."⁹⁵ "Sarat Bose has been a lesson," the viceroy told L. S. Amery, the secretary of state for India.⁹⁶ "India and Burma," Linlithgow wrote in prose that would have made Macaulay proud, "have no natural association with the empire, from which they are alien by race, history and religion, and for which as such neither of them have any natural affection, and both are in the empire because they are conquered countries, which have been brought there by force, kept there by our controls, and which hitherto it has suited to remain under our protection."⁹⁷ After the British surrendered at Singapore and fled from Rangoon, Linlithgow's candid observations sounded more like stubbornness in London. With utmost reluctance, the British prime minister agreed to send Cripps on a mission to India, hoping both that it would placate his ally across the Atlantic and that it would fail.

An Indian compromise with the British Raj, however, was something that Bose was not prepared to allow without having his say on the matter. He came back to Berlin to wage a propaganda battle against the Cripps mission. On 24th March 1942, British news agencies reported that Bose had been killed in an air crash on his way to attend an important conference in Tokyo. Having heard the news of his own death on

⁹⁵ G.S Chhabra, *Advance Study in the History of Modern India (1920-1947)*. Vol 3, New Delhi: lotus Press, 2005, p. 135.

⁹⁶ Mihir Bose, *Raj, Secrets, Revolution: A Life of Subhas Chandra Bose*, England: Grice Chapman Publishing, 2004, p.216.

⁹⁷ Anthony Read and David Fisher, *The Proudest Day: India's Long Road to Independence*, London: Jonathan Cape, 1997, p. 311.

the BBC News, Bose was very concerned about what effect it would have on his old and ailing mother. Before Bose could contradict the false news by making a statement on Azad Hind Radio, Gandhi sent a condolence message to Prabhavati: “The whole nation mourns with you the death of your brave son. I share your sorrow to the full. May God give you courage to bear this unexpected loss.”⁹⁸ But Prabhavati suspected that the news of her son’s death was not true. Bose himself made a radio broadcast on 25th March: “My death is perhaps an instance of wishful thinking.”⁹⁹ He could imagine that the British government would like to see him dead, since they were trying to win India over for “the purpose of their imperialistic war.”

He warned the Indian people to be wary of Britain’s divisive policies—the sort that had been deployed with such damaging effect in Ireland and Palestine. Gandhi wired Prabhavati again, expressing his joy and relief. The reaction in India to the fabricated news had only confirmed Bose’s high standing among his people, at a time when the British were eager to brand him a quisling. In a series of broadcasts in late March and early April 1942, Bose criticized Stafford Cripps for donning the imperialist mantle and urged the Indian people and leaders to contemptuously reject the offer of dominion status after the end of the war. Bose went on the radio on the 11th March to attack the British policy of deception and warn the Indian people:

“A victory of the British Empire means a perpetuation of slavish status of the Indian people. The emancipation of India is possible only through a complete collapse of Britain. Therefore, those Indians who are working for the British are working against the interests of their country. In other words, they are traitors. Indian patriots will fight not only against the British but also against their henchmen. Everyone can easily realise how stupid it is to believe in compromise with the country which is bound to disappear from the surface of the earth someday. The British Prime Minister Churchill promised, in his recent speech before the Parliament, to give India the status of a Dominion as soon as possible after the war is over. Acting on his instructions, Cripps is in India to unify all the different ways of thinking among the Indian people and figure out how best to appease them politically. But it is a delusion to think India still wants the status of a Dominion and that there is any Indian who believes in what

⁹⁸ Sugata Bose, *His Majesty’s Opponent: Subhas Chandra Bose and India’s struggle against empire*, New Delhi: Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd, 2011, p. 216.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 216.

Britain has promised. Indians know full well that the existing division among Indians themselves has resulted from the machinations of the British and that as long as they remain in India, they will continue to pursue their policy of 'divide and rule'. Churchill will soon realize that it is no longer possible to keep Indians on their side by a piece of bread they are going to throw to the Indian people. The British Empire is going the way of those many empires which have long since been ruined. From the ashes of Britain will emerge a unified India."¹⁰⁰

Bose need not have worried. Gandhi was not prepared to accept anything less than full independence. Nehru and Azad may have been open to a compromise, if the defense portfolio in the central government could be handed over to the Congress. But Cripps had nothing to offer in the here-and-now: he could only hold out promises for the future. Linlithgow worked closely with Churchill and Amery to make certain that Cripps did not concede anything of substance. Abul Kalam Azad found that "Subhas Bose's escape to Germany had made a great impression on Gandhiji." "He had not formerly approved many of Bose's actions," Azad explained, "but now I found a change in his outlook. Many of his remarks convinced me that he admired the courage and resourcefulness Subhas Bose had displayed in making his escape from India. His admiration for Subhas Bose unconsciously colored his view about the whole war situation."¹⁰¹

While deriding the Cripps offer, Bose had welcomed the assurances of Japanese premier Hideki Tojo, who promised "India for the Indians." On 11th April 1942, as the Cripps mission teetered on the verge of failure, the Japanese sent a draft declaration to Germany and Italy, advocating freedom for the Indians and Arabs. The German Foreign Office deemed the draft "too journalistic," but produced an amended draft of its own. On 16th April, Ribbentrop presented it to Hitler and urged that it be accepted. The German foreign minister suggested that "peace-favoring circles in Britain" would welcome such a move. Hitler did not take the bait and rejected the declaration the following day. He saw no reason to accept the declaration just when the Japanese sought it. He was wary-and not a little envious-of Japan's spectacular successes against the European colonial powers in Asia. Italy was more inclined to go

¹⁰⁰ Tatsuo Hayashid, *Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose: His Great Struggle and Martyrdom*, trans. Biswanath Chatterjee, Calcutta: Allied Publisher, 1970, pp. 8-10.

¹⁰¹ Abul kalam Azad, *India Wins Freedom*, Hyderabad: Orient Longman, 1988, p. 40.

along with the Japanese; but at a meeting on 29th April at Klessheim Castle, near Salzburg, Hitler persuaded Mussolini not to issue the declaration. Only when the world was collapsing around him, in the spring of 1945, did Hitler regret his decision not to back the struggle of the colonized peoples of Asia and the Arab world.¹⁰²

The tenacity of Bose now came into play. He thought he could get Italy on his side. On 19th April, the renowned Italian journalist Luigi Barzini had published an interview with him in *Il Popolo d'Italia*, describing him as “a Buddha, vivacious and dynamic, though peaceful in his speeches and gestures.” Bose had spoken “with devotion and admiration of the Mahatma” and his “composure and self-control” Barzini interpreted as “a sign of Asian nobility.”¹⁰³ On 5th May, putting all his persuasive powers to the test, Bose went to Rome to meet Mussolini in an attempt to get the Salzburg decisions reversed. Galeazzo Ciano, Italy’s foreign minister and Mussolini’s son-in-law, recorded what transpired in his diary: “I go with Bose to the Duce. A long conference without any new developments, except the fact that Mussolini allowed himself to be persuaded by the arguments produced by Bose to obtain a tripartite declaration in favor of Indian independence. He has telegraphed the Germans, proposing-contrary to the Salzburg decisions-proceeding at once with the declaration. I feel that Hitler will not agree to it very willingly.”¹⁰⁴ Ciano was right and Hitler turned down Mussolini’s proposal.

While seeking the tripartite powers’ endorsement of Indian independence, Bose was keen to distance himself from the ideologies of their totalitarian regimes. In a candid broadcast on 1st May 1942, he made it clear that he was “not an apologist of the Tripartite Powers” and did not see it as his task “to defend what they have done or may do in future.”¹⁰⁵ He rebutted “Britain’s paid propagandists,” and justified his own wartime strategy in the quest of India’s liberation in these terms: “I need no credentials when I speak to my own people. My whole life, which has been one long, consistent and continuous record of uncompromising struggle against British

¹⁰² Sugata Bose, *His Majesty’s Opponent: Subhas Chandra Bose and India’s struggle against empire*, New Delhi: Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd, 2011, p. 218.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 218.

¹⁰⁴ Galeazzo Ciano and Malcolm Muggeridge, ed., *Ciano’s Diary, 1939-43*, London: William Heinemann, 1947, p. 465.

¹⁰⁵ Sugata Bose, *His Majesty’s Opponent: Subhas Chandra Bose and India’s struggle against empire*, New Delhi: Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd, 2011, pp. 218-219.

Imperialism, is the best guarantee of my bona fides. If the Britishers who are the past masters in the art of diplomacy and political seduction, have in spite of their best efforts failed to tempt, corrupt or mislead me, no other power on earth can do so. All my life I have been a servant of India and till the last hours of my life I shall remain one. My allegiance and my loyalty has ever been and will ever be to India and India alone, no matter in which part of the world I may live at any given time.”¹⁰⁶

He had no doubt about where he should be at that particular moment in world history. “Now the time has come,” he wrote to Ribbentrop on 22nd May 1942, “when the final effort should be made for achieving India’s political emancipation. For this purpose, it is absolutely essential that I should be in the East. Only when I am there, shall I be able to direct the revolution along the right channels.”¹⁰⁷

4.6 Bose Meets Hitler

On 29th May 1942, Bose found himself face to face with Hitler. The official record filed by Paul Schmidt, Hitler’s interpreter, gave the date of the meeting as 27th May and the venue as the “Führer’s Headquarters.” But it is clear from other sources—including the supreme command of the Wehrmacht, the Führer’s diary, and the report of the German News Bureau (DNB)—that Bose’s one and only encounter with Hitler took place in Berlin on 29th May at the Reich Chancellery.¹⁰⁸ According to Schmidt’s detailed account of the conversation, Bose raised the issue of his “journey to East Asia,” “motivated by the desire to find a point as close to India as possible, from where the Indian revolution could be directed.” Fortunately, Hitler agreed with this proposal and promised logistical support for Bose to travel by submarine from Europe to Asia. Hitler warned Bose against taking the risk of a journey by air, which might entail a forced landing in British territory—he, was “too important a personality to let his life be endangered by such an experiment.” Either he could travel in a Japanese submarine, or the Hitler would “place a German submarine at his disposal, which would take him to Bangkok.” Later in the conversation, Bose brought up the matter of Hitler’s anti-Indian racist remarks in *Mein Kampf* and sought a clarifying statement

¹⁰⁶ Sisir K Bose and Sugata Bose, ed., *Azad Hind: Writings and Speeches 1941-1943*, Netaji Collected Works. Vol 11, Calcutta: NRB and Delhi: Permanent Black, 2002, pp. 94-99.

¹⁰⁷ Sugata Bose, *His Majesty’s Opponent: Subhas Chandra Bose and India’s struggle against empire*, New Delhi: Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd, 2011, p. 219.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p.219.

for the Indian nation. Hitler evaded the question, saying that he had not wanted “passive resistance for the Reich of the Indian pattern.” Bose was lucky not to have the offer of the submarine withdrawn.¹⁰⁹

A German declaration supporting Indian independence still eluded Bose. Hitler launched into a long monologue on the virtues of political and military realism. He gave the example of Egypt, where Erwin Rommel had launched an offensive the day before. If his general achieved only limited success, a declaration supporting Egyptian independence would be premature. A decisive defeat inflicted on the British forces, on the other hand, would be the occasion for Hitler to goad the Egyptians to throw off the British yoke. India, Hitler pointed out, was “endlessly far” from Germany. Japan, by contrast, “had practically advanced to the borders of India.” Revealing the yawning communications gap between the Axis powers, Hitler confessed that “Japan’s aim was not known to him.” He did not know whether Japan’s priority was “to relieve their flanks from being threatened by Chiang-Kai-Shek or to seek a rapprochement with him” or “to turn to Australia or India.” Britain’s military defeats in Asia “would possibly lead to the collapse of the British Empire.” In the prevailing war situation, “Bose should negotiate with the Japanese, not only for influencing events in his motherland, but also for restraining the Japanese themselves from committing psychological mistakes by appropriate advice.” Withholding a clear declaration in support of Indian independence, Hitler instead “extended his best wishes to Bose for the success of his journey and plans.”¹¹⁰

In spite of his imminent departure, Bose carried on with his work. On 11th June, he outlined a plan to open a branch of the Free India Centre in Paris¹¹¹. Ever since arriving in Berlin, Nambiar and Mookerjee had been pushing for such a branch, aware that there was much scope for anti-British propaganda in France. In July, Emilie found it necessary to leave Germany, as she was to bear Bose a child by September. On 21st July, Goebbels received Bose. The discussion revolved primarily around politics and propaganda. Goebbels thought highly of Bose, confiding to an

¹⁰⁹ Sisir Kumar Bose, ed., *Netaji and India’s Freedom*. (“bose-hitler interview,” english translation of Paul Schmidt’s account in GFO archives :) Calcutta: NRB, 1975, pp. 310-315.

¹¹⁰ Sugata Bose, *His Majesty’s Opponent: Subhas Chandra Bose and India’s struggle against empire*, New Delhi: Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd, 2011, p. 220.

¹¹¹ Romain Hayes, *Bose in Nazi Germany*, U.P. India: Random House Publisher India Pvt. Ltd, 2011, p. 117.

aide after he left that ‘the right ‘man’ was ‘being used in the right way’¹¹². He issued instructions so that ‘careful attention should continue to be paid to the Indian question’ while warning that ‘no mention should be made of actions in India until these are in fact imminent’. Goebbels wanted to ensure as much credibility as possible when it came to India. The central theme of German propaganda was straightforward: ‘we want to make India free’¹¹³. It was a message that was to be repeated endlessly so that Germany would be associated with freedom in the minds of Indians.

Meanwhile in India, on 6th July 1942, the Congress Working Committee meeting was held at Wardha and after nine days deliberations passed the famous “Quit India” resolution on 14th July. It was demanded that “Britain’s rule in India must end immediately and in case this demand was rejected, the Congress was authorised to start “a mass struggle on non-violent lines on the widest possible scale.” The fundamental differences between Bose and Gandhi had now disappeared. Bose had requested Gandhi to give an ultimatum to the British to leave India, failing which the Congress should start a mass movement. Gandhi’s refusal forced Bose to leave India to organise an armed revolt against Britain from abroad. In 1942 the Congress, under the leadership of Gandhi was speaking the same language which was continuously repeated by Bose. He expressed his satisfaction on this resolution: “There is no doubt that the Congress resolution came nearest in expressing the wish of the vast majority of the Indian people. It also brought the Congress fundamentally near the stand always taken by the writer, namely, that the destruction of British power in India was the sine qua non for the solution of all India’s problems, and that the Indian people would have to fight for the achievement of this goal.”¹¹⁴

The Quit India Movement of 1942 was a victory for the principles which Bose had been strongly advocating since the Calcutta Session of the Congress in December 1928. Gandhi interpreted the Congress resolution as “open rebellion,” and his decision to give an ultimatum to the British marked a radical departure from the earlier stands taken by him. The Quit India Movement, though suppressed ultimately, shook the foundations of the British Raj as nothing had done before and for the first

¹¹² Ibid., p. 126.

¹¹³ Ibid., p. 127.

¹¹⁴ Sisir K Bose and Sugata Bose, ed., *The Indian Struggle, 1920-1942 Subhas Chandra Bose. Netaji Collected work volume II*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997, p. 350.

time Gandhi subordinated both non-violence and Hindu-Muslim unity to independence: “I, therefore, want freedom immediately, this very night, before dawn, if it can be had...The mantra is ‘do or die’. We shall either free India or die in the attempt; we shall not live to see the perpetration of our slavery.”¹¹⁵

The earlier Congress movements were restricted to activities like *hartal*, processions, picketing, boycotts and refusal to pay taxes and courting arrest as a result of these activities. But the Quit India Movement was wider in scope and was not confined to jail-going. Gandhi with a view of making the movement “as short and swift as possible,” declared that, “it will include all that a mass movement can include.” In fact Gandhi wanted the Movement to be a full-fledged open rebellion and people were “to work openly and to receive bullets on our chest, without taking to heels.”¹¹⁶

The Quit India Movement was a vindication of the stand of Bose as Gandhi gave the ultimatum to the British to leave India “with bag and baggage.” Gandhi had refused earlier in 1939 to issue any ultimatum to the British Government as he considered it inopportune and morally unjustifiable. But in 1942, by asking the British to clear out immediately, Gandhi arrived at the same position, which Bose had taken in 1939 and due to which he was forced to resign. It is not true as contended by A.K. Majumdar that Gandhi changed his stand being influenced by the feeling that the Japanese might soon succeed in driving out the British from India. As the mass-man Gandhi understood the psychology of the Indians far better than any other leader and he knew it for certain that it was not possible to check a mass movement in 1942. The Quit India Movement was the logical development of the Indian struggle for freedom. Gandhi would have lost his claim to mass-leadership had he failed to come forward to guide the movement.

The Quit India Movement of 1942 marked the climax of the freedom struggle and was the last and final mass movement for a total and complete emancipation of India. Bose had always urged for a synchronisation of the freedom struggle fought within India and from abroad by Indians with the help of friendly countries. The

¹¹⁵ *Harijan*, July 1942

¹¹⁶ Hari Hara Das, *Subhas Chandra Bose and the Indian National Movement*, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Private Limited, 1983, pp. 252-253.

movement provided the needed opportunity to Bose to speak out his plans and to recommend his programme of action. The propaganda campaign was intensified. He asked the people not to be carried away by ideological consideration and to fight an uncompromising war. The radio broadcasts were done in such a way as to give an impression to the Indian people that they were done from a secret place somewhere in India or near India¹¹⁷. This impression made the programme more effective.

In his radio broadcasts Bose appealed to the Indian people “to continue and intensify the fight for freedom in the face of the increasingly repressive measures of the British.”¹¹⁸ In accordance with his ideological conviction he recommended a programme of action to be put into operation in India to give the mass movement new dimensions of operational strategy and effectiveness to bring the administrative machinery to a standstill.

Bose described the Quit India Movement as a non-violent guerilla war-fare and instructed the people to employ the tactics of dispersal. “In accordance with the principles of guerilla war, we should also be as mobile as possible and should move continuously from place to place. The authorities should never be able to predict where our activities will emerge next...The object of this non-violent guerilla campaign should be a two-fold one; firstly, to destroy war production in India, and secondly, to paralyse the British administration in the country. Keeping these objects in view, every section of the community should participate in the struggle.”¹¹⁹

Bose issued detailed instructions for specific sections of people who were directly connected with the freedom struggle, as well as the general public. He asked Indians to “follow the broadcasts of Colonel Britton beamed by the B.B.C. to occupied Europe for sabotaging the German war efforts and to use the same tactics for sabotaging British war efforts in India.”¹²⁰

¹¹⁷ Ibid., p. 253.

¹¹⁸ Subhas Chandra Bose, *Selected Speeches of Subhas Chandra Bose*, India: publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Govt. of India, 1962, p. 150.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., pp. 150-152.

¹²⁰ Hari Hara Das, *Subhas Chandra Bose and the Indian National Movement*, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Private Limited, 1983, p. 254.

During the Quit India Movement another radio station was started with the name of 'National Congress Radio' to give expression to the militant point of view of the Indian National Congress. Then a third Radio station 'as started with the title Azad Muslim Radio, when new tensions developed between Hindus and Muslims, towards the end of 1942, due to the activities of the Muslim League. The Free India Centre received reports from Kabul that the Azad Hind Radio and the National Congress Radio were widely listened to by the people in India and the instructions of Bose as regard to the methods of the non-violent guerrilla warfare had great impact on the conduct of the movement. From the official accounts of the Government and the non-official version as given in the official history of the Congress, it is evident that there was a wide-spread revolutionary upsurge of the people in the whole country which was an act of manifest violence.

Bose's broadcasts had greatly influenced the public Opinion in India which not only resulted in the rejection of the Cripps' Mission but also the violent upheaval during the Quit India Movement. "The culminating effect of our political propaganda was achieved when after the rejection of Cripps' recommendations; revolutionary disturbances broke out in India. When eventually the 'Quit India' campaign was launched and the British-Indian Government was forced to suppress and cancel any kind of news the transmissions of the secret stations filled in the breach."¹²¹

The effectiveness of Bose's propaganda caused deep concern for the British administration in India. This has also been corroborated by Goebbels. "It is being heard more widely" Goebbels noted in his diary, "than I at first thought possible. All the better that we have not yet revealed where he is. This makes his propaganda all the more effective." Goebbels expressed great satisfaction on the effectiveness of Bose's propaganda, and observed: "Bose's propaganda, conducted and guided from here, is gradually getting on the nerves of the British. In their broadcasts they blame me, especially, for Bose's activity."¹²²

¹²¹ Alexander Werth and Walter Harbich, *An Eye-witness Account of Indian Freedom Struggle in Europe during World War II*, Calcutta: NRB, 1970, p. 30. see also, Hari Hara Das, *Subhas Chandra Bose and the Indian National Movement*, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Private Limited, 1983, pp. 254-255.

¹²² N. G Ganpuley, *Netaji in Germany: a Little-known Chapter*, Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1964, p. 64.

Meanwhile in Germany, Bose waited for eight months before his passage to Japan could be arranged. No land route was open to him and at first he thought that the Italians might be able to send him by air. When this project was abandoned he turned to the Japanese. A blockade-running vessel involved too great a risk of capture: a journey by submarine was the only alternative. This he undertook as soon as the necessary naval arrangement could be made. His Japanese friend, Colonel Yamamoto, who would have been the one to make them, went home through Turkey and Russia in November 1942.

While he waited Bose passed on to Nambiar his policy and instructions. There were for new branches of Free India Center, for broadcasting, for Indians to study German police methods and for the training of Indian seaman and airmen. As for the Legion, it must be used actively as soon as possible, the German officers and N.C.O.'s must be quickly replaced by Indians, and there must be no communalism. Legionaries were to be trained on all the most modern German equipment, including heavy artillery and tanks: Bose would send further instructions as opportunity offered.

Christmas 1942 was spent with his wife and infant daughter in Vienna. Then, after a visit to Paris in January, Bose heard that his departure was imminent. On 26th January 1943 'Independence Day' was observed in Berlin with great party where six hundred guests drank Bose's health. Two days later he made his speech to the Legion on 'Legion Day'. To help conceal his departure he had recorded two speeches for broadcasting after he was left, and he referred frequently in conversation to the approaching need for long visits to the Russian Front. He hoped at first to take both Hassan and Swami with him but there was no room and only Hassan accompanied him on board. Bose and Abid Hassan left Kiel in a German U-boat on 8th February 1943.¹²³

¹²³ Hugh Toye, *Subhas Chandra Bose: The Springing Tiger*, Mumbai: Jaico Publishing House, 2007, pp.76-79.

CHAPTER V

Bose's Armed Struggle in Southeast Asia and the INA Trials

This chapter discusses the years 1943-1946 in the context of the activities of Bose. The chapter also analyses the unique place of Bose amongst Indian revolutionaries and the characteristics that set him apart from his fellow revolutionaries and which allowed him to single-handedly create a "Free India" movement in Occupied Europe and Southeast Asia. The reshaping of Indian National Army by Bose and the internal dynamics and limitations of the movements that Bose headed with Japanese collaboration is also discussed. This chapter critically examines the role of Bose in taking over the Andaman Nicobar Islands and the level of success of his visit to Andaman as the head of Andaman & Nicobar Islands. The specifics of Bose's strategies for alliances, armed struggle and revolting against the British are critically analysed. The chapter also looks at how the Indian National Congress viewed the policies and action of Bose and the Free India struggle during the war and how it utilized the countrywide unrest in favour of Bose during the INA Officers Trial of 1945 for their own ends. The chapter also looks at how the British viewed Bose during this period, the precautions they took against the Indian National Army and the impact of the INA Officers Trial of 1945.

5.1 Bose's U-Boat Journey

On 8th February 1943, Bose left Berlin by train for Kiel accompanied by Abid Hassan. From there they boarded German submarine U-190. Bose's journey was kept top secret and except Werth, Keppler, Nambiar and the military people concerned, nobody else knew about his departure from Germany. Bose's journey by U-190 was first ever human transportation of that kind. It had space enough for a bed alone and the entire crew, the doctors and Bose with Abid Hassan had to manage with it. There was not even enough elbow room that everyone felt cramped. It was like solitary confinement and Bose was losing weight. The submarine was filled with the smell of diesel and even the food smelled of diesel. Another problem faced by Bose during his journey by submarine was regarding food. Only beef or ham was available as food.

There was a bag of rice and some lentils with which kichree was made by Abid Hassan for a change. The most remarkable event in the journey was the meeting of the German and Japanese submarines in the Indian Ocean, some 400 miles (600 km) off the coast of Madagascar after 77 days.¹

On 26th April 1943, the Japanese submarine I-29, commanded by Captain Mesao Teraoka arrived in the Mozambique Channel, near neutral Portuguese territory. Six days earlier it had left Penang amidst tight security and ostensibly on a routine mission hunting enemy ships. In fact locals - many of them Indians- had been intrigued to see Teraoka, a submarine flotilla commander, take charge of the boat and were convinced something was afoot when they learnt that the ship's cooks had been busy buying spices for Indian curries. Long before the I-29 arrived in Portuguese waters, rumours had circulated throughout Penang that the man they had long heard about was about to arrive. Fortunately for Bose, these rumours did not reach the British. It was only when the ship reached its destination that Captain Teraoka told his crew that their mission was to fetch Bose.²

The I-29 had arrived in the Mozambique Channel some ten hours ahead of schedule and it was only on the evening of the 26th April that the Japanese sighted the U- Boat. In the enveloping darkness, transfer was impossible and with both submarines required to maintain strict radio silence there could not even be any conversation or exchange of views. Sunrise on the 27th brought fresh problems: the seas were now so rough that the two boats could not even get near one another. All they could do was circling each other and waiting for the weather to get better. In the evening, as the sun was about to set, the Japanese officers saw two men jump overboard from the German vessel and swim towards them. Quickly hauled on board by the Japanese, they turned out to be a German officer and signals man. The reason for their daredevilry was quickly made clear. The U-boat was low on fuel and could not carry on any longer.³

¹ An interview with Abid Hassan who accompanied Bose during the journey by the submarine. *Mainstream* July 26, 1997. pp.15-23.

² Mihir Bose, *The Lost Hero a Biography of Subhas Bose*, London: Quartet Books Limited, 1982, p.206.

³ *Ibid.*, pp.206-207.

As day dawned on the 28th the sea was still rough, but it was decided that the exchange must take place. The two Germans, on a rubber raft, dragged a strong Manila hemp rope back to their boat. Bose and Hasan boarded the raft, clung to the rope and were literally hauled into the I-29. The submarine started its return voyage the mortality rate on German U-boat was more than eighty percent and the risk had been immense. The German officers and crew had been friendly with Bose throughout the arduous journey, in the most cramped conditions. Yet on boarding the Japanese submarine I-29, Bose and Hassan felt something akin to a home coming.⁴

The flotilla commander, Masao Teraoka, vacated his cabin for Bose. Bose could not have timed his arrival better. The captain of the submarine, Juichi Izu, organised a party on 29th April as the Japanese celebrated the emperor's birthday and for the successful transfer of Bose. Bose and Hassan felt they had come back to an Asian nation. The transition from the unpalatable German diet was a great relief, but Bose was not yet used to four meals a day. When the Japanese kept insisting, he asked, 'do we have to eat again, captain Teraoka?'⁵ with a smile as he was overwhelmed with their hospitality.

The Japanese submarine I-29 passed to the South of India on its way to Southeast Asia outside the British patrolling radius. It picked up a radio message from Penang instructing a detour to Sabang, on the northern Sumatra coast. On 6th May 1943, the I-29 was safely docked in the harbour at Sabang. Before disembarking, Bose posed for a photograph with the entire crew of the I-29. He autographed this picture with a heartfelt message: "It was great pleasure to sail aboard this submarine. I believe this will mark a milestone in our fight for victory and peace."⁶ Bose's friend Colonel Yamamoto whom he had met earlier in Germany was already there to greet him at the pier in Sabang.

⁴ Sugata Bose, *His Majesty's Opponent: Subhas Chandra Bose and India's struggle against empire*, New Delhi: Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd, 2011, pp. 235-236.

⁵ Mihir Bose, *The Lost Hero a Biography of Subhas Bose*, London: Quartet Books Limited, 1982, p.207.

⁶ Sugata Bose, *His Majesty's Opponent: Subhas Chandra Bose and India's struggle against empire*, New Delhi: Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd, 2011, p.236.

5.2 Bose in Japan

After his arrival in Sabang, Japanese officials were most concerned that he should rest and recuperate before making plans and Bose replied that he had had all the rest he needed. Bose boarded a small Japanese combat aircraft on his way to Tokyo. The aircraft made stops in Penang, Saigon, Manila, Taipei and Hamamatsu. His journey to Tokyo took five days and eventually he arrived at the Japanese capital in mid-May.

The Japanese had decided to treat Bose with great honour. One the way to Tokyo, as they reached Formosa, the Japanese military unrolled the red carpet, obviously because Tojo had sent instructions that Bose should be received with great honour so as to put him in a good mood. The top military brass came to honour him and they did this in the Japanese way. Bose was informed that the Japanese would receive him with the Japanese protocol and not the international protocol and that this was a special honour reserved for him. Bose was now familiar with Yamamoto and the military attaché and did not know how the civilians would deal with him. Bose was invited to a banquet. Some senior military officers came with swords hanging at their sides and bowed before him. Bose was about to do the same in response but he was instructed that he would bend only half an inch or so. This was the Japanese way of honouring royal guests. The reception given to Bose at Tokyo was overwhelming. The honour given to him had never been extended to any foreigner.⁷ But for all their hospitality, the Japanese still did not know what to do with Bose and feared that their deteriorating war position would not permit them to accept the idea that Bose had long advocated: a march on India. Bose himself was soon to become aware that everything was not right in the Co-Prosperity Sphere.

Arrangements were made for Bose to stay at the Imperial Hotel where he checked in under the assumed Japanese name 'Matsuda'. Bose was happy that very soon Indian can once again hear his familiar voice: "this is Subhas Chandra Bose

⁷ An interview with Abid Hassan who accompanied Bose during the journey by the submarine. *Mainstream* July 26, 1997, p. 21.

speaking to his countrymen in East Asia.”⁸ In the warfront Japan was clearly on the run: Guadalcanal was lost, and she had no answer to American submarines. German defeats in Stalingrad and Africa had turned the tide against the Axis. Bose had arrived at the wrong time and Tojo, struggling with his problems, could see no good reason why he should receive Bose and kept him waiting for three weeks.

He relented on 10th June 1943. Not knowing what to expect, Bose began the meeting quietly, but soon he launched into passionate argument for liberating India. Tojo was so taken by this that all his doubts seemed to vanish and he requested a second, more detailed meeting. This took place four days later, with Tojo flanked by his Foreign Minister, Shigemitsu Mamoru and his Chief of Staff, General Sugiyama. When Tojo had finished trying to present the satisfactory face of Japan’s strategy, Bose asked, “Have you, sir, considered the question of sending the Japanese Army into India for the liberation campaign if it is deemed necessary?”⁹ Bose had raised the same question with Sugiyama earlier, suggesting a march to Chittagong, but for Tojo this was a revolutionary proposal. His response was evasive. But after Bose had left, he is said to have turned to Shigemitsu and declared, ‘He is a great Indian, fully qualified to command the I.N.A.’¹⁰ [Indian National Army]. Shigemitsu had already come to that conclusion and with Rash Behari Bose having already met Bose and confirmed that he was waiting for his younger namesake to take over, the problems were finally cleared.

5.3 Earlier Developments in Japan Regarding Indian Independence

The origins of the idea of raising an armed force that would fight its way into India to bring down the Raj goes back to World War I, when the Ghadar Party and the nascent embryo of the Indian Independence League formulated plans to initiate rebellion in the British Indian Army from Punjab to Hong Kong with German Support. This plan failed after the information was leaked to British Intelligence.

⁸ Sugata Bose, *His Majesty’s Opponent: Subhas Chandra Bose and India’s struggle against empire*, New Delhi: Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd, 2011, p.237.

⁹ Mihir Bose, *The Lost Hero a Biography of Subhas Bose*, London: Quartet Books Limited, 1982, P.208.

¹⁰ Mihir Bose, *Raj, Secrets, Revolution: A Life of Subhas Chandra Bose*, England: Grice Chapman Publishing, 2004, p.246.

Before the outbreak of the East Asia war, there were many Indian societies in South East Asia “with different appellations”,¹¹ working for the cause of Indian independence. In this connection the name of Rash Behari Bose, deserves to be mentioned. He had escaped to Japan after throwing a bomb at Lord Hardinge, the Viceroy and Governor General of India in 1912, when the viceregal procession was passing through Chandni Chowk, Old Delhi.

Even after escaping to Japan he did not rest and the liberation of India from the yoke of British control became his sole mission in life.¹² With this purpose Rash Behari Bose founded the Indian Independence League in 1924 with Tokyo as its headquarters and branches spreading out in other neighboring states.¹³ Through the IIL, he explained the political conditions of India to the people of South East Asia and emphasised “the supreme importance of Indian Independence as a factor of Greater Asian freedom and unity.”¹⁴ It is due to the sustained efforts of Rash Behari Bose, that the people of East Asia were roused from their slumber and they began to “look upon the political emancipation of India as a stepping stone to Greater Asia liberation from bondage, and...became sympathisers with the Indian cause in large number.”¹⁵ Another significant contribution of Rash Behari Bose was the promotion of Indo-Japanese cooperation, goodwill and understanding. Thus Rash Behari Bose had done ample spade-work in Japan for the Indian Freedom Movement before the arrival of Subhas Bose in South East Asia.

Rash Behari’s efforts received great impetus as similar movements were started in Singapore, Kuala Lumpur and Bangkok by Indian leaders. An underground organization headed by Amar Singh and assisted by Pritam Singh was operating from Bangkok which was also known as the Indian Independence League. “The I.I.L. was a secret society devoted to the cause of emancipation and independence of India. They had their like-minded comrades scattered in Hong Kong, Shanghai, Tokyo and

¹¹ Uma Mukherjee, *Two Great Indian Revolutionaries: Rash Behari Bose & Jyotindra Nath Mukherjee*, India: Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1966, p.146.

¹² *Ibid.*, p.146.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p.147.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.147.

¹⁵ Hari Hara Das, *Subhas Chandra Bose and the Indian National Movement*, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Private Limited, 1983, p. 267.

Berlin.”¹⁶ Amar Singh and Pritam Singh maintained close contact with Tamura, the Japanese Arms Attaché in Bangkok and because of this association with them the Japanese were able to get secret information about conditions inside India as well as military intelligence about Malaya. The Japanese side was given to understand that the IIL was well organised and was prepared to resort to force if necessary.

Though Pritam Singh sought Japanese assistance to fight against the British, he held very strong views regarding the independence of action of the IIL and like Subhas Bose he believed that India must fight for her independence not under the control by any foreign country: “The leaders of the Indian National Congress don’t welcome any outside assistance for the independence movement with open arms, as they fear that ‘after the wolf driven out by the front gate may come a tiger from the back gate.’ India is fighting only for complete independence, free from control by any foreign country. When we need outside help, we have to bear in mind that should we give any impression that we were used as political pawns, our passionate movement would lose the support of the entire people of India. In point of fact, however, we are so powerless that we need outside help to accomplish our purpose. Therein lies our headache.”¹⁷

Thus it is evident from the above statement that Pritam Singh’s ideals harmonised with that of Subhas Bose. In order to make his position and that of the IIL clear and well established in the context of his collaboration with the Japanese, a note was exchanged between Pritam Singh and Tamura, just before the outbreak of the East Asia War. This note is historically important as it asserted the need of Indian independence for peace in the region and also delineated the codes by which Japanese army and the IIL were to co-operate and further set the basis for the later collaboration between Bose and Japan.¹⁸

Major Fujiwara Iwaichi, who was in charge of the Japanese army in Bangkok and maintained liaison with Chinese, Malays and the Indian independence movement,

¹⁶ Ibid., p.267.

¹⁷ Alexander Werth, ed., *A Beacon Across Asia: A Biography of Subhas Chandra Bose*, Hyderabad: Orient Blackswan, 1996, p. 152.

¹⁸ Ibid., p.152.

had met Pritam Singh earlier along with Tamura. Fujiwara was overcome by the Sikh's idealism, sincerity and enthusiasm for Indian liberation from British rule. Fujiwara offered, "I have come to help you realize your lofty ideal and I look forward to co-operating. I have confidence that Indian independence will be achieved through devotion and friendship."¹⁹ When he next met Pritam Singh, he was informed that there were two Indian organizations in Bangkok: the Indian Independence League composed mostly of Sikhs and an Indo-Thai cultural organization centering on a swami and a man named Das. Fujiwara felt a premonition about the apparent antagonism between the two organizations and inquired about the possibility of reconciliation.

Fujiwara decided Pritam Singh's faction was the group he must work with more closely. Pritam Singh's organization already had men scattered through South Thailand and north-east Malayan coastal cities, whereas the Swami-Das group was an organization of intellectuals interested primarily in things cultural. The Sikh and his cohorts were already distributing propaganda leaflets among Indian officers and men in the British-Indian Army in the border states of Malaya. According to Pritam Singh, Indian soldiers in the British-Indian Army nurtured anti-British feelings. These men were fertile ground for Pritam Singh's propaganda. Fujiwara was excited by Pritam Singh's ideas but had to avoid giving him any hint of Japan's military plans.²⁰ Pritam Singh suggested anti-British broadcasts beamed to India from Tokyo. The audience would be limitless: not only soldiers in the Army but all of India. Pritam Singh already had contact by telegraph with Indians in Shanghai and Tokyo. With Japanese help the whole movement could be unified. Fujiwara transmitted a report of his meetings through Tamura to Imperial General Headquarters.²¹

Fujiwara and Pritam Singh continued their secret meetings. In mid- October 1941, came the news of the fall of the Konoe Cabinet and the formation of the Tojo Cabinet. The Hull-Nomura peace negotiations in Washington were deadlocked. Uneasiness spread through Bangkok. Japanese plans for the occupation of Thailand and the capture of Malaya and Singapore were laid. But intelligence reports told of

¹⁹ Joyce Chapman Lebra, *The Indian National Army and Japan*, Singapore: ISEAS, 2008, p.4.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p.5.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

Singapore's defenses being strengthened. Fujiwara had to conceal information of Japanese preparations but at the same time give Pritam Singh some inkling of what Fujiwara hoped the Indian group would do when war broke out. It was a delicate position. Headquarters did not anticipate co-operation from the Indian soldiers or Pritam Singh's group. Fujiwara and Pritam Singh concocted their own plan: as soon as war erupted they would dash behind enemy lines to reach Indian soldiers in the British-Indian Army. The propaganda activities of Pritam Singh's Indian Independence League would be expanded in the British-Indian Army and among Indian civilians as well.²²

Japan declared war on Britain and United States on 8th December 1941, All the Armed Forces of Japan received telegrams from the Imperial General Headquarters (IGHQ) to swing into action. The Indian Independence Volunteer Army marched side by side with the Japanese Army and won many victories and converts from the British ranks. Among such converts, worthy of special mention is the name of Capt. Mohan Singh, "who subsequently was to go down in history as the founder of the Indian National Army."²³

In 1941 Mohan Singh was a captain, aged thirty-three, second in command of a battalion of the 15th Brigade, 1/14 Punjab Regiment of the British-Indian Army. In Thailand Mohan Singh's battalion was detailed to stop the Japanese at the border near Jitra. The Japanese advance took Mohan Singh and his battalion by surprise. On 11th December Japanese reconnaissance planes pinpointed the British-Indian position. The Japanese immediately opened mortar fire on the road. Mohan Singh's battalion withdrew along both sides of the road. Later with the surrender accomplished and order maintained, Fujiwara and Pritam Singh began discussions with Mohan Singh. Fujiwara explained the aims of the Japanese Army in aiding Indian independence and his own personal views on achieving independence. He was convinced independence would come only from a struggle of the Indian people themselves. The Pacific War was a chance for the Indians to rise and win freedom with Japanese help. Fujiwara pointed out Japan and India had several things in common:

²² Ibid., pp.10-15.

²³ Hugh Toye, *Subhas Chandra Bose: The Springing Tiger*, Mumbai: Jaico Publishing House, 2007, p.3.

- “ 1. a common enemy;
2. historical ties, for India was the home of the Buddhist faith;
3. geographic and ethnic ties: and
4. Common indignation at India’s subjugated position.”²⁴

Mohan Singh expressed his own and India’s indignation toward Britain. He told Fujiwara he agreed that Indian freedom depended on the Indian people. Mohan Singh was impressed but not completely convinced by Fujiwara’s words. Indians should be suspicious of Japanese help because of Japanese actions in Korea, Manchuria and China. Mohan Singh thought that Indian independence would never succeed without the support of the INC. He explained to Fujiwara the effectiveness of the nonviolent posture of Gandhi and of Congress within the Indian political context. Fujiwara pointed out that the Congress Party would have to recognise Pritam Singh’s League and its role in the struggle.²⁵

Fujiwara and Mohan Singh were each impressed by the sincerity and devotion of the other. Mohan Singh told Fujiwara about the Indian revolutionary leader and former Congress president Bose, who was in exile in Berlin. If Bose were brought to the East all Indians in Asia would rise against the British. Fujiwara was impressed by the character of Bose as every Indian he talked with seemed to worship Bose. Fujiwara reported this observation to IGHQ again and again, hoping the Japanese Government might approach Berlin to bring Bose to Asia. The commanders operating in East Asia had kept the Imperial General Headquarters informed about the significant role of the Indians: “The grand design of establishing a new order in the greater East Asia will be accomplished only with the cooperation of 350 million people of India. We have first to get rid of the British influence. However, there is a limit to our ability to carry on the war. We cannot go on fighting a winning war forever. Burma is as far as we can get. In any event, we can’t expect to advance far enough to reach India. Even if we could go far enough to reach India in pursuit of British troops the Indian people would turn against us. From this, it follows that the best way would be to help the Indian people win their independence and freedom by

²⁴ Joyce Chapman Lebra, *The Indian National Army and Japan*, Singapore: ISEAS, 2008, pp.16-20.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 20-21.

themselves... To develop this guiding principle on a global basis, it is essential to keeping close touch with Subhas Chandra Bose in Berlin so that we can move in from both the East and the West. The East front, however, is more important and consequently we had better invite Subhas Chandra Bose to move to East Asia”²⁶ But the matter was out of Fujiwara’s hands and there might be opposition to the idea in Tokyo. Mohan Singh knew that many Japanese felt that Congress leaders were anti-Japanese. Meanwhile Fujiwara urged Mohan Singh and Pritam Singh to work to develop the movement among Indians in Asia.²⁷

After long discussions with Fujiwara, Mohan Singh’s determination to fight for the liberation of his country had crystallized; but he asked Fujiwara for a clear-cut assurance that Japan had no designs on India. Fujiwara tried in the strongest possible terms to assure Mohan Singh. Finally Fujiwara decided to arrange a meeting of Mohan Singh and Pritam Singh with Lieutenant-General Yamashita, commander of the 25th Army in the hope that Yamashita could perhaps convince the Indian leaders of Japan’s sincerity. On 20th December 1941, Fujiwara and the two Indians met Yamashita. Pointing to his operations map he explained the progress of operations and stated that he was prepared to give unconditional aid to the Indian independence movement through Major Fujiwara. Fujiwara hoped the interview had had its effect. But for Mohan Singh there were still three matters to be confirmed through discussions with his officers before he could commit himself working with Fujiwara and the Japanese:

- “ 1. Japanese sincerity in offering aid,
2. Support of India, including the Congress Party, for the idea of co-operation with the Japanese, and
3. The solid agreement of Indian officers and men.”²⁸

After discussing for several days with his officers, Mohan Singh decided in favour of fighting together with the Japanese. He credited Fujiwara with the deep mutual trust

²⁶ Hari Hara Das, *Subhas Chandra Bose and the Indian National Movement*, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Private Limited, 1983, p. 270.

²⁷ Joyce Chapman Lebra, *The Indian National Army and Japan*, Singapore: ISEAS, 2008, p. 22.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 22-23

and confidence that had been generated. Fujiwara's sincerity, persuasiveness and lack of artifice impressed Mohan Singh.²⁹

5.3.1 The Formation of INA

Capt. Mohan Singh on the New Year Eve of 1941, presented a proposal to Fujiwara with six points:

- “1. the Indians would organise an Indian people's army;
2. the Japanese Army would give it whole-hearted aid;
3. the Indian army and ILL would co-operate for the time being;
4. the Japanese Army would recognize Mohan Singh as leader of the Indian captives;
5. the Japanese Army would treat Indian captives as friends and liberate those who wished to join the Indian army;
6. The Indian army would be recognised as a friendly allied army by the Japanese Army.”³⁰

Fujiwara and Mohan Singh chose the name Indian National Army for the new revolutionary army. Like Pritam Singh, Mohan Singh also avoided the use of the name “Indian Volunteer Army” and called it the “Indian National Army” instead, as he believed that a “Revolutionary Army” would never be able to accomplish its purpose without the support of the people. They discussed the relationship between the IIL and the INA. Mohan Singh wanted a stronger man than Pritam Singh to lead the political arm of the struggle. Pritam Singh's passive attitude made Mohan Singh seriously doubt the sincerity of his Sikh colleague. Pritam Singh's quiet, religious nature was indeed unlike Mohan Singh's ebullience and verve.

Again Mohan Singh raised the name of Bose and asked that the Japanese Government bring him East. Mohan Singh agreed to co-operate with Pritam Singh on a temporary basis. Units of the INA would infiltrate the lines of the British Indian Army as Pritam Singh's group was already doing. Mohan Singh insisted that the INA

²⁹ Ibid., p. 23.

³⁰ Ibid., pp. 23-24.

would fight only on the Indo-Burmese border, not elsewhere in Asia. He requested the same training and equipment that the Japanese Army got and the status of an allied army for INA if they were to fight together. Fujiwara gave Mohan Singh his personal consent but said recognising the INA as an allied army might create technical difficulties for the Japanese. The INA was a small, new revolutionary force starting with a handful of men. Lieutenant-General Yamashita and his chief of staff both approved Mohan Singh's proposal but with the reservation Fujiwara had already made about the allied status of the INA.³¹

By this time Fujiwara moved his headquarters to Ipoh in Malaya as the British Army fell back before the Japanese advance everywhere in Malaya. Headquarters in a school building were shared with the IIL, INA, YMA (Young Malays Association) and now the Sumatra Youth League as well. IIL propaganda units had already gone to the front with members of the F Kikan (Fujiwara's staff co-operating with IIL). As soon as headquarters opened and flags were hung, Indian citizens of Ipoh began assembling. Word of Japanese help for Indians had spread throughout Malaya.³²

Meanwhile the I.N.A. gained more popularity and attracted a large number of Indian prisoners of war to join it. On 17th February 1942, as many as forty-five thousand Indian prisoners of war assembled for a meeting and after speeches made by Pritam Singh and Mohan Singh respectively, their "excitement had reached the climax. They all vowed to cast in their lot with their leaders."³³ The contention that the success of the INA in recruiting a vast number of Indian prisoners of war depended on 'force and misguiding propaganda'³⁴ miserably fails to take note of the patriotic feelings of an Army when its nationalist sentiments are roused under proper leadership and the hope of liberation of their Motherland. Though some cases of forced conversion cannot be ruled out, the fact that some thirty-five thousand POWs did not join the INA is sufficient evidence that a great majority of those POWs who joined the INA were fervent nationalists and certainly it was not a fact that they,

³¹ Ibid., pp. 24-25.

³² Ibid., p. 25.

³³ Hugh Toye, *Subhas Chandra Bose: The Springing Tiger*, Mumbai: Jaico Publishing House, 2007, p. 7.

³⁴ Ibid., Philip mason foreword, p. xi.

“were puzzled, misinformed, misled, and on the whole believed the course they took was the most honourable open to them.”³⁵

The IIL organised a conference in Tokyo in March 1942 under the chairmanship of Rash Behari Bose to discuss plans for the liberation of their motherland.³⁶ This meeting was attended by representatives of the Indians from all over East Asia and great importance was attached to this meeting. But this conference revealed that there was serious divergence of opinion between the Indians hailing from the Southern regions and those residing in Japan. The Indians in Japan were accused of being puppets of Japan. The Indians in Japan, on the other hand, thought that those who came from the Southern region had long since lost their revolutionary character as once they pledged their allegiance to Britain. The Indian freedom movement in South East Asia was considerably affected by these divergences and the situation was further worsened after the death of Pritam Singh in an plane accident and the departure of Major Fujiwara, “who was looked upon as the ‘foster father’ of the Indian National Army.”³⁷ He was succeeded by Col. Hideo Iwakuro in March 1942.

In accordance with the resolution adopted in Tokyo a meeting of the Indians of South East Asia was held at Bangkok on 15th May 1942. Rash Behari Bose was elected as President and a sixty point proposal was adopted for presentation to the Japanese Government. “It was unanimously decided that the object of the movement was the attainment of the complete and immediate Independence of India, free from any foreign control, domination or interference of whatsoever nature.”³⁸ Japan was not pleased with the proceedings of the Bangkok Conference and the demand for a categorical reply to the sixty point proposal embarrassed the IGHQ and other Japanese authorities. Premier Tajo and other Government leaders were dissatisfied with these developments, “because they had intentions of imposing some restrictions

³⁵ Hari Hara Das, *Subhas Chandra Bose and the Indian National Movement*, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Private Limited, 1983, p.271.

³⁶ Hugh Toye, *Subhas Chandra Bose: The Springing Tiger*, Mumbai: Jaico Publishing House, 2007, p. 7.

³⁷ Alexander Werth, ed., *A Beacon Across Asia: A Biography of Subhas Chandra Bose*, Hyderabad: Orient Blackswan, 1996, p.155.

³⁸ Tatsuo Hayashid, *Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose: His Great Struggle and Martyrdom*, trans. Biswanath Chatterjee, Calcutta: Allied Publisher, 1970, p. 22.

upon the Indian Movement all along.”³⁹ The Japanese Government therefore gave a vague reply to the sixty point proposal of the Council of Action, greatly appreciating the sincerity of the Indians in their fight for independence and offering utmost cooperation with them. This led the Council, to look upon the Japanese Government with great suspicion ⁴⁰ as “it was the council’s intention to take nothing less.” ⁴¹

The Bangkok Conference revealed the breach not only among the Indians residing in Japan and those hailing from other parts of East Asia but also the breach developing in the Indo-Japanese unity. Rash Behari Bose was suspected of being a puppet of the Japanese, who were trying to exploit the Indian people for their own interest. British propaganda was also partly responsible for promoting disunity among the Indians and their suspicion of the Japanese motives.⁴² This resulted in a revolt led by Capt. Mohan Singh at the end of November 1942, as he genuinely suspected the Japanese motives. The collision between the League and the Japanese authorities had started in Burma regarding the management, according to the resolutions of the Bangkok Conference, of the property left by the Indians who fled the country. The Japanese confiscated such property as the property of enemy allies and the office-bearers of the League were bluntly told that the Bangkok resolutions were never accepted by Japan. When the League members protested saying that they could not be mere puppets of Japan, the Japanese Army officers replied: “Absentee property according to international law is enemy property. You must acknowledge the generosity of the Japanese in entrusting you with the management of absentee property at all.... As for Indian prestige, that is secondary to the execution of the Commander-in-Chief’s orders....Puppets? What is the harm in being puppets?... You should be proud to be the puppets of the Japanese.”⁴³

Another factor that contributed to the breach between the League and the Japanese authorities was General Mohan Singh’s desire to effect a rapid expansion of

³⁹ Ibid., P.22.

⁴⁰ Hugh Toye, *Subhas Chandra Bose: The Springing Tiger*, Mumbai: Jaico Publishing House, 2007, p. 7.

⁴¹ Tatsuo Hayashid, *Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose: His Great Struggle and Martyrdom*, trans. Biswanath Chatterjee, Calcutta: Allied Publisher, 1970, p.23.

⁴² Hugh Toye, *Subhas Chandra Bose: The Springing Tiger*, Mumbai: Jaico Publishing House, 2007, p.11.

⁴³ Ibid., p.11.

the INA. As many as forty thousand men had signed a pledge to serve the Indian National Army by the end of August, 1942. A Combat Division of over sixteen thousand officers and men was ready by the middle of September and Mohan Singh had the object of raising an army of two hundred and fifty thousand from the POW's and the civilians. Far from being satisfied with the rapid expansion of the INA, the Japanese were positively opposed to this as this posed not only organisational problems but also severe problems in collecting labour gangs, essential for Japanese war preparations.

Matters became worse when the Japanese demand to send nine hundred men of the INA to Burma was turned down by General Mohan Singh who made it clear that there could be no movement of Indian troops until there was a clarification of Japan's intentions towards India. He told the Japanese that if they tried to replace the British in India, India would fight them: she did not want the sort of bogus independence given to Manchuria. The League's memorandum to Col. Iwakuro demanding clarification of the Japanese stand towards India amid the arrest of Colonel N.S. Gill, the Commander of the INA in Burma on a trumped-up charge, resulted in a revolt by General Mohan Singh. He resigned from the Council of Action along with two other members and on 21st December 1942 and ordered the disbanding of the INA. There was an open conflict between Rash Behari Bose and Mohan Singh, as the former wanted to have the control of both the League and the INA in his own hands. On 29th December 1942, Mohan Singh was called to the office of Col. Iwakuro and was forced to accept some conditions which he valiantly refused. He was dismissed by Rash Behari who was present in Iwakuro's office and was arrested. Lt. Col. Bhonsle was appointed in his place as the Commander of the INA and the League and the INA were reorganised. It was, therefore, the same INA which entered a new phase of development.⁴⁴

Before Mohan Singh was actually arrested he took several steps in anticipation of his arrest. He held a secret meeting with the officers to discuss the dissolution of the INA in case of his arrest. He also left sealed instructions for the burning of all INA

⁴⁴ Ibid., p.12.

records at the time of dissolution.⁴⁵ Rash Behari Bose was anxious to avoid a confrontation and he tried to improve matters through negotiation. He was not a soldier like Mohan Singh who lacked the duplicity, tact and diplomacy necessary for a politician. He was a seasoned politician and did not want to spoil the rousing spirit of the Indian freedom movement in East Asia by embittering the relations between the IIL and the Japanese Government as it was impossible to think of the war of liberation without the support of Japan. Japan was also equally interested to maintain cordial relations with the IIL and the INA after the unfortunate incident and they decided to be extremely tactful in dealing with Rash Behari Bose.⁴⁶ The revolt of the INA was due to the lack of adequate understanding between the Indians and the Japanese concerned.

Things were set right when Major Fujiwara the former Director of the “F Kikan” was placed on the staff of the Southern Army Command. There was a noticeable change in the Japanese policy towards the Indian Freedom Movement in East Asia. In 1943, the self-asserting and suspicious Col. Iwakuro was transferred and was succeeded by Col. Satoshi Yamamoto who was formerly a Military Attache to the Japanese Embassy in Berlin and had intimate personal relation with Subhas Bose. He took all steps to expedite the arrival of Bose in Japan from Berlin.

Meanwhile in Germany, Bose had already been in contact with Rash Behari Bose and his group through the Japanese Embassy in Berlin and Rome; and had received an invitation from them to come to East Asia as soon as possible and assume the leadership of India’s freedom movement. Besides this unofficial invitation the Japanese Government had also extended an official invitation to come to East Asia. Moreover, he had been able to feel the pulse of Japanese bureaucracy regarding the matter of Indian independence through Dwijendranath Bose who was in touch with the Japanese consul in Calcutta. Thus Bose was confident of the Japanese support and with that help he thought he would be able to persuade all Indians in East Asia to unite for fighting India’s battle for freedom. Bose requested Oshima, the Japanese Ambassador in Berlin to enlist the help of the Japanese Government in implementing

⁴⁵ Joyce Chapman Lebra, *The Indian National Army and Japan*, Singapore: ISEAS, 2008, p. 97.

⁴⁶ Tatsuo Hayashid, *Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose: His Great Struggle and Martyrdom*, trans. Biswanath Chatterjee, Calcutta: Allied Publisher, 1970, p.23.

his plan. In the beginning Tokyo did not take much interest in such a project, but subsequently it became more enthusiastic about the matter. In January 1943, Hitler approved the Japanese request to send Bose to Japan. Bose told Shun Higuchi, the then Military Attache to the Japanese Embassy in Berlin that he wanted a more vigorous and active development of India's freedom movement. Bose expected that the journey to East Asia would be safe; but in case anything happened to him, he instructed Higuchi to see that Nambiar and Rash Behari Bose work in close touch with each other. Bose also expressed that he desired to take with him the Indian soldiers recruited in Germany.⁴⁷

5.4 Bose Takes Over the INA

It may be mentioned that like his earlier experience in Germany, Bose's experience in Japan in the initial stages were not very pleasant. Bose knew there were many problems awaiting solution in the Far East. Though he knew something, he was not aware of the events that took place during his journey in 1942. He knew that a force of sixteen thousand men had been raised; but it seemed that he leader had lost patience just when he might, by perseverance, have obtained all he asked. Perhaps the trouble had been short-sighted political leadership.⁴⁸ Before he took charge of the Presidentship of the League, Bose met the Japanese Army Chief of Staff, the Minister of the Navy, the Chief of Naval Operations and Foreign Minister Shigemitsu. These meetings were successful and he could impress them considerably. But Japanese Premier Tojo refused an interview with Bose on the pretext of pressure of work. "Some Japanese sources suggest that India did not figure very prominently on Tojo's list of priorities at this time."⁴⁹ The fact was that Tojo was himself prejudiced against the Indian Freedom Movement after the developments of the Bangkok meeting and the Mohan Singh incident. In holding such a view Tojo was influenced by officers in the Army who had definite hostility towards the Indian Independence Movement in East Asia.

⁴⁷ Hari Hara Das, *Subhas Chandra Bose and the Indian National Movement*, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Private Limited, 1983, pp.264 -265.

⁴⁸ Hugh Toye, *Subhas Chandra Bose: The Springing Tiger*, Mumbai: Jaico Publishing House, 2007, p.80.

⁴⁹ Sugata Bose, *His Majesty's Opponent: Subhas Chandra Bose and India's struggle against empire*, New Delhi: Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd, 2011, p. 240.

Bose understood that Tojo's position-as the first among equals- was quite different from the European dictators. While Hitler and Mussolini had frequent contact with each other, Tojo had never met either of them in person. Before meeting with Tojo, Bose wanted to create a lobby in support of Indian Independence among the political and the military elite in Tokyo. He took enough efforts to educate the top military commanders of Japan about India and its freedom struggle.⁵⁰

Finally on June 10, 1943 the meeting took place between Bose and Tojo: "Once Tojo met Bose his prejudice was completely dispelled ... with his appearance and manners Bose cut an imposing figure. The sincerity and intelligence he displayed in spelling out his opinion struck a responsive chord. Tojo was very deeply impressed by Bose's personality, and underwent a complete change of heart about India and the Indian people as a whole."⁵¹ The single-minded devotion of Bose to the cause of Indian Freedom and his preparedness to sacrifice everything for that cause had its unavoidable impact on everybody. His leadership and the dignified way in which he conducted himself changed the attitude of the local inhabitants in the Far East about the Indians in general. Bose also knew that the Japanese had a poor opinion of the Indians in general and the INA in particular. This consciousness made him determined to impress everybody by his flawless manners and the righteousness of the cause to which he was devoted.

Bose's impact was so great that even the cynical Tojo could not remain uninfluenced by him. After their first meeting he offered to meet Bose again on 14th June for the second time. During the discussion Tojo was frank and he told Bose: "whether India was invaded or not, she would come under Japanese control on the defeat of the British. But Japan had no demands to make on her beyond the necessities of war and intended her to be independent. Any action Indians could take themselves would be helped and appreciated by Japan; such action was in their own interests. Bose was encouraged in his project of provisional Government which would take control of

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 240.

⁵¹ Hari Hara Das, *Subhas Chandra Bose and the Indian National Movement*, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Private Limited, 1983, p.275.

Indian Territory as the Japanese forces moved on.”⁵² He then heard Tojo make a declaration about India in the Diet: “Japan is firmly resolved to extend all means in order to help to expel and eliminate from India the Anglo-Saxon influence which are the enemy of Indian People, and enable India to achieve full independence in the true sense of the term.”⁵³

Bose, visiting Japan for first time, liked what he saw of these disarming people and was impressed by their vigour and discipline. Within a few days he had heard all that Rash Behari Bose could tell him of the League and the INA and discussed Japanese policy towards them with the war department. He studied the Japanese relation with the governments of Manchukuo and Nanking-China and their arrangements to grant ‘independence’ to Burma and the Philippine Islands. After trying to understand the Japanese mind, Bose thought it is no longer necessary for him to remain in disguise and on 19th June 1943, he had a press conference and followed it with two broadcasts to publicize further his presence in the Far East. Through these broadcasts he appealed once more to the people who doubted the merits of Axis powers: “If India did not trust the Axis, let it trust him: for ‘if the wily cunning and resourceful British politicians have failed to cajole and corrupt me, nobody else can do so.’ Let there be no more thought of compromise in England: it was economically impossible for her to give up India and madness on India’s part to expect it. But the three Axis powers had mortally wounded her and India was grateful for this and for offers of direct assistance. Indian liberty must however, be won with Indian blood. Only so would Indian strength suffice to preserve it.”⁵⁴

Bose saw his purpose of escape from India is being materialized, as by now he knew the international situation. The Axis powers, particularly Japan, were ready to help India; all Indians in Axis-controlled countries were organized as one, to bring assistance to those at home. Now India should do her part: “Civil disobedience must develop into armed struggle. And only when the Indian people receive the baptism of fire on a large scale will they qualify for their freedom...India shall be free- and

⁵² Hugh Toye, *Subhas Chandra Bose: The Springing Tiger*, Mumbai: Jaico Publishing House, 2007, p.81.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 81-82.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 82.

before long. And a free India will throw open the prison gates so that her worthy sons may step out of the darkness of the prison cells into the light of freedom, joy and self-fulfillment.”⁵⁵

There was the necessity of a dynamic leader, a man of commanding personality and indomitable will, energy and political ability, to lead the Indian Freedom Movement in East Asia. When the arrival of Bose was finalised, the Japanese wanted to know the reaction of Rash Behari Bose. There were doubts whether he would agree to turn the leadership over to S C Bose. But when Col. Iwakuro broke this news to Rash Behari Bose, he replied: “That is a good idea. He is a born leader. I will be glad to turn the leadership over to Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose. Our ultimate goal is to win our independence. Since I have done my bit, I would like Mr. Chandra Bose to take over. He is young and bouncy.”⁵⁶

Bose had heard about Rash Behari from V.D. Savarkar, when on 22nd June 1940, he had come to Savarkar to seek his advice on the vexed question of Hindu-Muslim unity. Rash Behari had correspondence with Savarkar and kept him informed about the political developments in Japan and the possibility of Japan joining the World War II, against Anglo-American imperialism.⁵⁷ It seems that Savarkar had advised Bose to go to Germany and organise an Army from among the Indian Prisoners of War and then come to Japan with German help where he could join hands with Rash Behari Bose.⁵⁸

Bose left for Singapore from Tokyo with Rash Behari and Abid Hassan. He had persuaded Tokyo to replace Iwakuro with men of his choice; Yamamoto, as the head of Hikari Kikan, Japan’s liaison agency. His radio speeches had already created an atmosphere of eager anticipation among Indians in Southeast Asia. He reached Singapore on 2nd July 1943. He was given a tumultuous welcome and was received by the top military commanders J.K. Bhonsle and Mohammad Zaman Kiani at the

⁵⁵ Ibid., pp. 82-83.

⁵⁶ Uma Mukherjee, *Two Great Indian Revolutionaries: Rash Behari Bose & Jyotindra Nath Mukherjee*, India: Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1966, pp.158-159.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p.159.

⁵⁸ Tatsuo Hayashid, *Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose: His Great Struggle and Martyrdom*, trans. Biswanath Chatterjee, Calcutta: Allied Publisher, 1970, p.23.

airport, and the Indian National Army gave him a guard of honor. Everywhere he went, Indians garlanded him with flowers and shouted greetings. Rash Behari introduced Bose to leaders of the IIL and officers of INA. Both of them tried to allay the doubts of some of their fellow revolutionaries regarding Japanese motive towards India. Bose remarked “we shall have to be awake and alive, on our guard, not only against the enemy British imperialism, against imperialistically inclined Japanese bureaucrats, among the Indians in our rank.”⁵⁹ On 4th July 1943, representatives of the Indian Independence League assembled at the Cathya Theater to witness Bose’s acceptance of the leadership of the movement from Rash Behari Bose. Rash Behari formally handed over Bose the leadership of IIL and I.N.A. describing Bose as symbolizing all that is “best, noblest, the most daring and the most dynamic in the youth of India,”⁶⁰

Bose addressed the gathering, reviewed the political crises in India and the war situation in Europe and Asia, expressing his confidence in Axis victory. He announced his plan to organize a provisional Government of Free India. “It will be the task of this Provisional Government to lead the Indian Revolution to successful conclusion... the Provisional Government will have to prepare the Indian people, inside and outside India, for an armed struggle which will be the culmination of all our national efforts since 1883.”⁶¹

Bose concluded his speech with a flourish of Bengali oratory: “we have a grim fight ahead of us... In this final march to freedom, you will have to face danger, thirst, privation, forced marches- and death. Only when you pass this test will freedom be yours.”⁶²

The next day, 5th July 1943, at 10:30 in the morning, Bose came in military uniform to address Indian army of liberation. Twelve thousand soldiers had gathered in front of Singapore’s municipal building. He insisted that this army had been formed and would go into battle entirely under Indian leadership. He named the army as Azad

⁵⁹ Joyce Chapman Lebra, *The Indian National Army and Japan*, Singapore: ISEAS, 2008, p. 119.

⁶⁰ Sugata Bose, *His Majesty’s Opponent: Subhas Chandra Bose and India’s struggle against empire*, New Delhi: Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd, 2011, p.244.

⁶¹ Joyce Chapman Lebra, *The Indian National Army and Japan*, Singapore: ISEAS, 2008, p.119.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p.120.

Hind Fauj (“Free India Army”) and their battle cry: “Chalo Delhi!” (“Onward to Delhi”). “For an enslaved people,” he said with emotion, “there can be no greater pride, no higher honour, than to be the first soldier in the army of liberation.” He promised his troops that he would be with them “in darkness and sunshine, in sorrow and in joy, in suffering and in victory.” The soldiers responded with shouts of “Inquilab Zindabad!” (Long live Revolution) and cries of victory to Gandhi and Bose. “For the present,” Bose warned them, “I can offer you nothing except hunger, thirst, privation, forced marches and death. But if you follow me in life and in death- as I am confident you will – I shall lead you to victory and freedom.”⁶³

The same day, Premier Tojo on a visit from Manila, arrived in Singapore. On 6th July I.N.A. held another parade which was witnessed by Tojo and listened to Bose’s call to revolution. His presence at Bose’s side seemed proof again of Japan’s good faith. The parade was followed by the address of Tojo assuring that Japan had no territorial, military or economic ambitions in India and that India would achieve independence from foreign domination and that Japan would extend all-out aid for Indian liberation.⁶⁴

The news of the existence of Azad Hind Fauj was announced all over the East Asia. In months that followed, Bose impressed massive audience of soldiers and civilians with his speeches in Hindi and elicited an overwhelming positive response to his call for men and materiel for the final struggle against the British Raj. As the majority of Indian immigrants in Southeast Asia were from southern India, his speeches were translated into Tamil. On 9th July, there was another mass rally in Singapore, attended by Indians together with some Malays and Chinese. Bose recounted his earlier action on behalf of Indian Freedom. He addressed a crowd of more than sixty thousand civilians in Singapore; “Indians outside India, particularly Indians in East Asia are going to organise a fighting force which will be powerful enough to attack the British army of occupation in India. When we do so, a revolution will break out, not only among the civilian population at home, but also among the Indian Army, which is now standing under the British flag. From inside India and

⁶³ Sugata Bose, *His Majesty’s Opponent: Subhas Chandra Bose and India’s struggle against empire*, New Delhi: Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd, 2011, p.245.

⁶⁴ Joyce Chapman Lebra, *The Indian National Army and Japan*, Singapore: ISEAS, 2008, p.120.

from outside, it will collapse and the Indian people will then regain their liberty.”⁶⁵ Bose’s belief that the INA would spark a revolution within India came to be shared by officers and men of the INA. Bose called for a total mobilisation of Indian manpower and financial resources in East Asia. He wanted three hundred thousand men under arms.

5.4.1 Rani Jhansi Regiment

Bose asked for a unit of Indian women to be raised and named it as Rani of Jhansi Regiment after the leading figure of the mutiny of 1857 who led her troops against the British. Women volunteered immediately and women training camps were opened under the command of Captain Lakshmi Swaminadhan, a doctor from Madras (present day Chennai). The women were provided with uniforms and military training to fight for Indian freedom. The Japanese were astonished at the idea of a women’s regiment and at first refused to supply ammunition for their training. The opposition was based on the traditional position of women in Japan. Women had no position in Japanese military tradition. The head of the Indian Independence League’s branch in Singapore, Attavar Yellappa, overcame the Japanese objection and found barracks and equipment for the women. Bose personally took great care in the selection of the trainers for the women recruits, out of the Non-Commissioned Officers from the INA veterans who were categorically advised to strictly avoid inadvertent use of rough and vulgar language while training. On 12th July 1943, Captain Lakshmi Swaminadhan arranged to have a Women’s Guard of Honour for Bose with a small squad of about twenty women dressed in blue-bordered white saris.

Soon the Rani Jhansi Regiment was trained in simple Hindi in Roman script and they were promoted to the ranks according to their abilities. The regiment was taught map reading, coding and decoding of secret messages, reconnoitring, necessary first aid to injuries and other related subjects with stress on maintaining strict discipline. As most of them lived away from India, they were taught some common aspects of India’s history and geography.

⁶⁵ Sugata Bose, *His Majesty’s Opponent: Subhas Chandra Bose and India’s struggle against empire*, New Delhi: Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd, 2011, pp. 245-246.

At the advance camps of Rangoon and Maymyo, they did more practice of route marches with haversacks on their backs, carrying their arms and ammunitions and other field equipment. In the hilly forest areas of Maymyo, they had training in jungle warfare, camouflaging, ambushing, mock-fighting, digging of trenches and guerrilla warfare. A good number of recruits from Rani Jhansi regiment took nursing training from Captain Lakshmi. Every one of them had to have the knowledge of using small arms, military equipments, military rules and information.⁶⁶ A few notable soldiers of this regiment were Lt. Col. Lakshmi Sahgal, Puan Sri Janaki Thevar Nahappan, Protima Sen Anjali, Punnuswami Muniammah Rangaswamy, Lt. Manwati Arya, Stella, Josephine, Bhagyalakshmi Davies, Anjali Suppiah, and S. Dhannalakshmi. Stella and Josephine were killed in the Malaysian front by British soldiers.

There was a large-scale reshuffling and expansion of departments at the IIL Headquarters, in preparation of organising the provisional Government. New departments were created: reconstruction department to administer freed territory, intelligence department, planning department and department of women's organisations. The Publicity department under S.A Ayer was renamed the Department of Publicity and Propaganda. Lieutenant Colonel A.C Chatterji was appointed as the first secretary-general of League Headquarters. Bose discussed the functions of various departments in personal conversations with the new department heads and members. In this course of discussion Bose suggested that neither Gandhi nor Nehru would fight the British that both of them were working for some sort compromise and that compromise was not his way of gaining freedom.⁶⁷

Bose had underestimated the difficulties in raising the money needed to finance the I.N.A. and the provisional government. He did get contributions from the Indian community, often more enthusiastically from the poorer and middle class sections than from the rich.⁶⁸ After taking charge of IIL and INA, from July to September 1943, Bose visited various South-east Asian countries galvanising support

⁶⁶ Lt. Manwati Arya, *Patriot The Unique Indian Leader Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose*, New Delhi: Lotus Press, 2007, p. 169 -173.

⁶⁷ Joyce Chapman Lebra, *The Indian National Army and Japan*, Singapore: ISEAS, 2008, p. 121

⁶⁸ Leonard A Gordon, *Brother Against the Raj: A Biography of Indian Nationalists Sarat and Subhas Chandra Bose*, New Delhi: Rupa & co, 2005, p. 499.

for his cause among Indian expatriates. He quickly grasped that Malaya, Thailand and Burma would be the most important countries for his goal. Malaya had nearly a million Indians- some wealthy financiers and bankers, as well as larger numbers of poor migrant labourers. The latter, in particular, had their first taste of human dignity and feeling of equal citizenship by joining the Azad Hind movement. Thailand, with its nominally neutral but effectively pro-Japanese government headed by Phibul Songkhram, supplied the crucial connection between Malaya and Burma. It too had an Indian immigrant community of about sixty thousand, Bose realised Burma would be the springboard for the march into India. There had been a large number of Indians, well-settled in Burma. But they were disliked by many Burmese who felt that Indian businessman and professionals were holding positions which should be filled by Burmese.

The Japanese conquest of Burma in co-operation with some Burmese nationalists followed the British debacle in Malaya and Singapore in the first half of 1942. Aung San and Ba Maw and other Burmese nationalists had reached out to the Japanese as Bose had to the Germans and other enemies of the British Empire. The Japanese, particularly Colonel Keiji Suzuki, who played the Fujiwara role in the Burmese drama, helped create the Burmese Independence Army. This force went out of control during and immediately after the Japanese conquest and was disbanded. In its place the Japanese later set up a civil administration, which Ba Maw agreed to head, and the Burma Defence Army.⁶⁹

Ba Maw and many other Burmese nationalists began their cooperation with Japanese holding great expectations. But Ba Maw describes the fate of the Burmese and other Asian people under Japanese occupation as follows: “As for the Japanese militarists, few people were mentally so race-bound....and in consequence so totally incapable either of understanding others or of making themselves understood by others For them there was only one way to do a thing, the Japanese way.... Only one destiny To become so many Manchukuos or Koreas tied forever to Japan.

⁶⁹Ibid., pp. 499-500.

These racial impositions....made any real understanding between the Japanese militarists and the peoples of our region virtually impossible.”⁷⁰

Before becoming aware of the hard realities of the Japanese drive to use and humiliate other Asians, Ba Maw had headed the ‘trust Japan’ program. As a concession to Burmese nationalist objections to their harsh rule, the Japanese agreed to grant ‘Independence’ to Burma on 1st August 1943. A Burmese constitution and native structure was elaborated, but the Japanese army remained and relations between the Japanese and the Burmese were often harsh and unpleasant. Ba Maw became the head of this new government which contained authoritarian elements, but was established in the name of the people. He invited Bose who was in Singapore to be a honoured guest for the celebration of Burmese independence. Ba Maw had met Bose in Singapore on 6th July and was impressed by his personality. On 1st August, Bose made a moving speech on the occasion of Burma’s freedom: “From 1925 to 1927, I used to gaze from the verandah of my cell in Mandalay prison on the palace of the last independent King of Burma and I used to wonder when Burma would be free once again. Today Burma is an independent country.”⁷¹ He concluded his speech saying “Just as the peacock emblem now flies over Government House in Rangoon- so will the tricolour soon fly over the Red Fortress of Delhi.”⁷² He reached Burma at the end of September for further celebrations. Bose addressed the people and the Indian expatriates for next two days with rousing speeches.

Bose assumed command of the Azad Hind Fauj in August. Though he became supreme commander of INA, he did not take any military rank. He gave up the civilian dress he preferred to be in military uniform. After the crisis of late 1942, there was a drastic fall of number in the INA. Bose and his staff officers discussed with Colonel Yamamoto and other Japanese officers the role of INA in the pending campaign on the Indian border. It was decided by all the officers in view of the small size of the I.N.A. that the troops should be trained and used in guerrilla warfare. They

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 500.

⁷¹ Sisir K Bose and Sugata Bose, ed., *Chalo Delhi: Writings and Speeches, 1943-1945*. Netaji collected Works Volume 12, Calcutta: NRB, 2007, pp. 70-76.

⁷² Hugh Toye, *Subhas Chandra Bose: The Springing Tiger*, Mumbai: Jaico Publishing House, 2007, p. 90.

would be lightly equipped for mobility and for penetrating enemy lines and would have to live off the country in which they were operating.

As decided, the INA units were given guerrilla training including musketry and bayonet practice by the Japanese officers. Bose met with Field –Marshal Count Terauchi, the commander of the Southern Army, when the reorganisation of INA was over by August. Terauchi explained Bose that Japanese forces were preparing a campaign into India. The burden of the battle would be borne by the Japanese army, and India would be freed of British domination and handed over to the Indians as an independent territory. What the Japanese wanted of Bose was personal co-operation. The conversation clearly pointed to propaganda as the primary purpose of Japan’s co-operation with the INA. Bose did not accept the role of INA as explained by Terauchi. Bose made it clear to Terauchi that the only role acceptable to the INA in Indian campaign would be spearheading the advance. Indian freedom had to be won by Indians. Freedom secured through Japanese sacrifices would be worse than slavery. He told “The first drop of blood shed on Indian soil must be that of a soldier of the INA.”⁷³

On 9th October 1943, in a Liaison Conference it was decided that Bose should establish the FIPG (Free India Provisional Government) and it would be recognised by the Japanese government. On 21st October 1943, Bose proclaimed the formation of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind in Cathay cinema building in Singapore. Indians from all parts of Southeast Asia assembled there. Bose announced the formation of the government and the composition of its first cabinet. “It will be the task of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind to launch and conduct the struggle that will bring about the expulsion of the British and their allies from the soil of India. It will then be the task of the Provisional Government to bring about the establishment of a permanent National Government of Azad Hind constituted in accordance with the will of Indian people and enjoying their confidence,”⁷⁴ and he told “the provincial Government is entitled to, and hereby claims, the allegiance of every Indian. It guarantees religious liberty as well as equal rights and equal opportunities to all its

⁷³ Joyce Chapman Lebra, *The Indian National Army and Japan*, Singapore: ISEAS, 2008, p.123.

⁷⁴ Sisir K Bose and Sugata Bose, ed., *The essential writings of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, Netaji Collected Works*. Vol.9. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998, p.298.

citizens.”⁷⁵ When Bose had read the independence proclamation, he took an oath of allegiance to India as the Head of the state and Minister for War and Foreign Affairs, and as the Supreme Commander of the INA. Each member of the newly formed cabinet took the oath to liberate India. The FIPG was recognised by the Japanese government by 23rd October 1943. Japan’s recognition of the FIPG was immediately followed by eight other governments: Germany, Italy, Croatia, Manchukuo, Nanking, the Philippines, Thailand and Burma.

By midnight of 23rd October 1943, the FIPG declared war on the United States and Britain. Bose, as chief of State and commander of the INA, ordered the INA to initiate the attack. Bose proclaimed the declaration of war to a rally of fifty thousand Indians. He told them: “I want you to demonstrate to the world that you are resolved as one man to follow up this declaration with action that will show to the world that you mean bloody war when you declare war—so when I say ‘war’ I mean WAR- war to the finish- a war that can only end in the Freedom of India.”⁷⁶ At a cabinet meeting A.D Loganathan asked “why drag in America, sir” as Indians had no quarrel with United States. Bose replied that the presence of American forces on Indian soil was “grim reality” that would make INA’s task of defeating the British “double difficult.”⁷⁷ The United States should have put pressure on Britain to accede to India’s demand for independence immediately. Since the INA would have to fight against British and American troops on Indian soil, he wanted to include the United States in his government’s declaration of war. If Bose had not taken this step, his appeals to the American public the following year to support the cause of India’s freedom might have carried more weight.

Bose achieved remarkable success in forging a spirit of unity and solidarity among different religious communities and linguistic groups. He did so without asking his followers to give up their own ethnic affiliation. Bridging the disparities of class posed a somewhat greater challenge. Poorer Indians initially responded to Bose’s call with greater enthusiasm. He could barely conceal his exasperation with the

⁷⁵ Joyce Chapman Lebra, *The Indian National Army and Japan*, Singapore: ISEAS, 2008, p.129.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 130.

⁷⁷ Sugata Bose, *His Majesty’s Opponent: Subhas Chandra Bose and India’s struggle against empire*, New Delhi: Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd, 2011, p. 258.

stinginess of a few of the richer Indians, though there were also stunning instances in which millionaires chose to become fakirs. “When the INA is getting trained either to march to victory or to spill its last drop of blood on the way,” he said to the Chettiars (the leading Tamil community of financiers) and other merchants on 25th October 1943, “the rich people are asking me whether total mobilisation means 10 percent or 5 percent. I would like to ask these people who are speaking of percentage whether we can tell our soldiers to fight and spill only 10 percent of their blood and save the rest.”⁷⁸ Bose turned out to be a very successful fundraiser, ensuring receipts of nearly two million dollars a month by the close of 1943. The Chettiars from Tamil Nadu were among the big contributors to the coffers of the Azad Hind government.

Bose met Mohan Singh by December 1943 and expressed gratitude for his efforts and appreciated the problems he encountered in dealing with the Japanese. Mohan Singh in reply to Bose’s written questions told him that Nehru was Mohan Singh’s hero and he could not change his ideals overnight. In the course of a four-hour conversation Bose told him, “There is a group outside who is discontent with your leadership. The moment you come out there will be trouble. It is in the interest of the movement that you remain here longer.”⁷⁹ Mohan Singh who had serious doubt about the Japanese policy questioned Bose about his faith in Japanese Military victory and successful campaign to India’s border. Bose replied “My name carries enough weight. When I land in Bengal everyone will revolt. Wavell’s whole army will join me.”⁸⁰ Mohan Singh was not fully convinced by Bose’s thought. Bose left Mohan Singh in a somewhat altered mood. Bose do not want to put any pressure to Japanese for the release of Mohan Singh. Bose understood that Mohan Singh is unwilling to accept a position under Bhonsle, and he secured the transfer of Mohan Singh to better quarters in a comfortable bungalow where he can spend the duration of the war.

5.5 South East Asian Conference

On 5th and 6th November 1943, South East Asian Conference, with the representatives of Burma, Malaya, Netherland East Indies (now Indonesia),

⁷⁸ Ibid., pp. 255-256.

⁷⁹ Joyce Chapman Lebra, *The Indian National Army and Japan*, Singapore: ISEAS, 2008, p.124.

⁸⁰ Ibid., p.124.

Philippines and occupied China, was convened at Tokyo. As Bose represented no Indian territory, he refused to take part in the conference as a representative of India, but on the insistence of the Japanese government, he took part as an observer. In this conference, Tojo, to show his goodwill towards Bose and the cause of Indian Independence, decided that the territory of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, being a part of the Indian sub-continent, will be placed under him. This was done to give Bose the status of the Head of an Indian province so that he could be treated as other Heads of Governments in South East Asia. History shall record that a trick more sinister than this was never played by any nation. Events that followed in the Andamans after this declaration by the Japanese Government showed, in the course of time, that their declaration was a mere mockery. It is asserted that these Islands were never handed over either to Bose or on his behalf to his appointed Chief Commissioner Col. Loganathan who actually went there later with his staff to take over the charge of the Islands,⁸¹ on account of the superiority the islands gave them in the Bay of Bengal and access to the entire coast of India at this stage of the war. And later, after their reverses in Burma, it would have been too late anyway. From the point of Bose launching an attack on British India, these islands were of no consequence. So the only importance that this seat of his government had for him was a symbolic one and probably he knew it. For him, the centre of action was in Burma.⁸²

The South East Asian Conference was held at the Capitol Building, Tokyo in a rage of publicity and opened a new chapter in History of East Asia. At a rally held at the Hibiya Park on 8th November, Bose delivered a speech to the Japanese people in India. He pointed out that “as a result of the enemy’s propaganda, there are some misconceptions even among our friends and sympathizers....The Indian people had no experience of unity and they always fought among themselves. During their 100 years of fighting against Britain, the Indians never united to make common cause against Britain. It was unfortunate that India had no outstanding leader. Therefore, Indians need most a strong leadership that will keep them under discipline, a nation with vision and confidence never perishes. As long as a country has a living tradition

⁸¹ Rama Krishna, *The Andaman Islands Under Japanese Occupation – 1942 to 1945* (Unpublished), p. 59.

⁸² Jayant Dasgupta, *Japan in Andaman & Nicobar Islands Red Sun over Black Water*, New Delhi: Manas Publication, 2002, p. 78.

no other country can destroy it.... British propaganda makes use of religious differences. It attempts to set the Muslim against the Hindu to divide us...the British discovered rather recently that they could possibly exploit the scheduled caste people. As the British admitted, however, they failed in this attempt, as they had failed in the case of religion.... They attempted to divide India into four or five states to make it easier for them to rule.”⁸³

After the South East Asian Conference, Bose was invited by the Chinese delegate Oseiei to visit Nanking. Like many others Oseiei was favourably impressed by Bose. By 17th November, Bose took a flight from Tokyo to Nanking where he was received with great honour. The real purpose of Bose’s visit to Nanking was to have an opportunity to convey his belief and conviction to Chungking Government and Chinese people. On 20th November, he made a radio broadcast in Nanking in which he talked about the Sino-Japanese relation. After two days, by 23rd November, he made another broadcast from Nanking in which he made one protest against the military action China had taken on Burma-India border and also to take it to task for depending solely upon the United States and Britain.

From Nanking he made his next visit to Shanghai for meeting with the Indian residents there. He found in Shanghai a large number of Indian residents anxious to join the INA, but unfortunately they could not join the INA for lack of transportation facilities from there to Singapore. From Shanghai he left for Manila where he tried to raise some funds instead of soldiers. Bose arrived back in Singapore after an interval of four weeks.

5.6 Bose’s Visit to Andaman

The Andaman Islands lie 950 kilo meters away from the mouth of the river Hooghly and are at a distance of 194 kilo meters from Cape Negrais in Burma. The Andaman group of islands is 353 kilo meters in length; its extreme width, however is nowhere more than 52 kilo meters.⁸⁴ The Japanese navy occupied the islands by 23rd

⁸³ Tatsuo Hayashid, *Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose: His Great Struggle and Martyrdom*, trans. Biswanath Chatterjee, Calcutta: Allied Publisher, 1970, pp. 71-72.

⁸⁴ N. Iqbal Singh, *The Andaman Story*, Delhi: vikas pub house, 1978, p. 9.

March 1942. Bose visited the Islands on 29th December 1943 in Japanese Air Force Aircraft and was received at the airport by Ishikawa, the Admiral in charge of the islands. The spy case known locally as the second spy case was in full swing at that time and unheard of tortures were perpetrated within the four walls of the Cellular Jail. Outside it, considerable panic prevailed. As Bose's visit could not be put off and as the country could not be brought hurriedly to normal, precautions, by various ingenious methods, were taken to obliterate the abnormality prevailing in the Islands and keep Bose in the dark about the Japanese torture of Indians. No member of the public was given a chance to speak to him freely. Some Japanese official was always present to report the conversation that took place between him and a few Indians the Japanese allowed him to meet.

On Bose's arrival at the aerodrome, a select band of officials were made to stand in two rows at the aerodrome. This was the party which had ostensibly gone to welcome Bose. They were all picked up overnight as the news of Bose's arrival was kept off from the public on account of the war exigencies. He met them without speaking to any one of them as though he was inspecting a guard of honour. He, with his staff, after landing, was carried to the erstwhile Government House at Ross Island. The road from the aerodrome to Aberdeen Jetty, from which a crossing by boat is made to reach Ross Island, was ordered to be lined up by men, women and children. Of this order Bose was unaware. If he thought that this entire crowd had come to pay him homage, no one dared dispel the wrong impression. The Japanese were mortally afraid of the leakage of the news of the torture that they were perpetrating there.⁸⁵

It must be mentioned here that, when Ross Island was the capital of the Andaman, the Government House, the Central Hospital with the office of the Senior Medical Officer, the Central Supply Stores with the Office of the Supply Officer, the Secretariat and the Cantonment with one company of English soldiers were located there. On account of all those activities, there was regular service of steam launches between it and Aberdeen which connected the mainland. At the time of the general evacuation, everything was shifted to Aberdeen for fear of naval bombardment by the

⁸⁵ Tatsuo Hayashid, *Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose: His Great Struggle and Martyrdom*, trans. Biswanath Chatterjee, Calcutta: Allied Publisher, 1970, p.102.

enemy. Consequently the launches plying between Ross and Aberdeen stopped. The Japanese did not resume this service because the island was barren when they came, neither did they populate it. Therefore the object of the Japanese, as it was apparent, was not actually to honour Bose by giving him the use of the derelict Government House, but to segregate him and isolate him on the unpopulated surface of this island. All this was done in the garb of security measures. There was no one on this island to give him news about the conditions prevailing in the Andamans. Their objective to keep Bose marooned, so to say, for so long as he was here, was achieved. Bose, being a casual visitor who saw the islands for the first time and who was quite unaware of the facts of torture and maltreatment meted out to Indians on ground of espionage, took everything here as normal and never suspected that the Japanese officials would deliberately hoodwink him. He was very cautiously taken out of Ross Island on two occasions, once, on a prearranged tour of outlying villages after visiting the Jail and the second time, ceremoniously to a crowded meeting at the only maidan of Port Blair.

He was taken to a certain village with a number of army and naval officers surrounding him. When the news reached villages that Bose was coming to them, the general feeling was that they would get a chance to speak to him face to face and tell him or his staff about some of their sufferings; but to the disappointment of all, surrounded as he was, that chance never came. At places he was made to meet some villagers in a crowd. Things were so arranged that he heard no one from the crowd but spoke himself to the crowd. The moment the Japanese thought that someone would stand up to talk to him; the meeting abruptly came to a close without anyone realizing what the next move was. All vehicles of transport being under Japanese control, no Indian could accompany him. In other words, he spoke to public, but actually he spoke to no one in particular nor did he hear anyone.⁸⁶

A public meeting was arranged on the only maidan of Port Blair on 30th December 1943, in which a large number of people were ordered to attend. Bose came from Ross and reached the maidan in a ceremonial procession made up of

⁸⁶ Rama Krishna, *The Andaman Islands Under Japanese Occupation – 1942 to 1945* (Unpublished) pp. 60- 61.

Japanese officers in a number of cars. As usual no Indians from the Andamans were included in this procession. On arrival, he went up the rostrum and unfurled the Indian National flag, the first one to be hoisted on an Indian territory and renamed the islands as *Shahid* (Martyr) and *Swaraj* (Independence). The Chairman of the Andaman branch of the Indian Independence League, Mr Rama Krishna, gave a welcome address and presented a purse for the INA, after which Bose addressed the gathering. Without meeting any of the residents, he was again very ceremoniously driven back to Ross.⁸⁷

A visit to the jail was the itinerary of Bose. He was to go there on a morning. Now at the time of the visit of Bose, there were barely a score of actually imprisoned persons in the Jail. But the so-called second Spy case being on, there were more than a hundred persons undergoing tortures and interrogations daily. Bose was shown a score of persons who were actual prisoners and were at various jobs such as cleaning the garden, planting vegetables, sweeping the compound and cooking for the prisoners and such other routine jail work. He was taken to one or two wings to show him that there were hardly any prisoners to fill such a large jail and that for that reason it was practically empty. No Indians from the administration were allowed to accompany him on this occasion also. He never saw the wing in which tortured people were. It appears that Bose was totally taken in by the Japanese who covered his eyes with wool very successfully.

If he had seen persons whose skins were missing from thighs, scrotum, abdomen and chest and could not wear any apparel; a few who had no flesh on their breeches; a few who had no skin on parts of their bodies, the result of burns by petrol; a few who could not walk straight, the result of constant kneeling on sticks; a few who had deep knife cuts all over the fleshy parts of their bodies on which salt had been sprinkled; and questioned them about their predicament, things could have been different. He was taken to the jail deliberately, so that later, when news reached him by some chance from some source at his headquarters at Singapore, he might be perplexed and even say that he had seen nothing wrong there when he had actually visited it. That was the ulterior motive of the Japanese in showing him the jail. After

⁸⁷ Ibid., p.62.

visiting the jail Bose told: “For Indians the return of the Andamans represents the first territory to be liberated from British yoke...The liberation of the Andamans has symbolic significance because the Andamans was always used by British as a prison for political prisoners. Most of the political prisoners sentenced to penal servitude for conspiracies to overthrow the British Government, and there have been hundreds of them, were locked up in this Island...Like the Bastille in Paris which was liberated first in the French Revolution setting free political prisoners, the Andamans where our patriots suffered, is the first to be liberated in the India’s fight for Independence...”⁸⁸

As Bose was to leave and as he had no chance to meet any of the members of the public, although he saw them everywhere, the Chairman of the Andaman branch of the Indian Independence League, Rama Krishna, suggested to him whether it would be possible for him to visit the headquarters of the League, and meet the Working Committee before he took off for Singapore. Bose readily accepted the invitation. But this was an unexpected event in the cut and dried programme of the Japanese. His aide informed the Admiral about this development. The Admiral met the Japanese Civil Officers immediately to discuss the eventualities. As all vehicles were in the charge of the Japanese, Bose had to inform them of his movement.⁸⁹ The Japanese were visibly perturbed at the turn of the event. They were perplexed momentarily but their ingenuity gave birth to a novel procedure to frustrate the disclosure of the facts.

What was actually contemplated in inviting Bose to the headquarters was that he and his staff might find an opportunity to mix with a few persons other than the heads of departments who he had already seen twice at the two dinner parties. The idea was that he might get a clue to the true position and suffering and panic of the populace there. The Japanese had forestalled this and filled the hall and its precinct with men, women and children overnight and the noise of weeping children and conversing men and women drowned the two speeches that were delivered. The numbers of Japanese officers that accompanied Bose was exceptionally large. When the Chairman, Rama Krishna, arrived there to arrange for Bose’s reception and

⁸⁸ Priten Roy and Swapnesh Choudhury, *The lost horizon: a tale of Ross: the deserted island's citadel*, New Delhi: Farsight Publishers & Distributors, 2002, p.91.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

ordered these people out, he was politely told by an Inspector of Police on duty that those people had gathered there by the order of the Japanese. When a few members of the League and practically all the members of the working committee arrived a little earlier than 8 a.m. they found that the hall was filled up to capacity and that they could not themselves enter the hall. There was utter confusion in the hall. Bose arrived at the appointed time, with an unusual retinue of Japanese naval and army officers. Members of the league were lost in the crowd. With great difficulty, a way was found for him and others to enter the hall. He saw the crowd but actually he met no one. This procedure gave no chance to Bose to speak to anyone individually. Outwardly the Japanese demonstrated by their action that the large crowd was attracted there by his name and popularity. The Chairman asked him to take over the administration as soon as possible and Bose immediately agreed to this. Bose left the islands at the early hours of 1st January 1944. Speaking on his Andaman visit a few days later at the headquarters of the Azad Hind Government, Bose observed: "During the visit, I and the members of my party had the unique experience of our lives when we stood on the soil of free India for the first time. It was an unforgettable event for us to see our Tricolour National Flag fluttering in the air over the former British Chief Commissioner's residence on Ross Island...And we wondered all the time how the wheels of history were now moving in India's favour..."⁹⁰ A month after his departure, the much dreaded Spy Case came to an end. Thirty three persons were shot dead and the like number were given long terms of imprisonment. This took place before the arrival of Col. Loganathan and his staff in February 1944.

With the closure of the so-called Second Spy Case, people on the Islands thought, that their misery had come to an end. Bose's visit to the Islands gave people certain amount of consolation. They considered that there was someone who would extend his protective hand in their hour of adversity. Soon after his departure came the Chief Commissioner and his staff from Singapore. People were now doubly assured by the progress of events, and felt certain that the administration having come to the hands of Indians, conditions would improve and the reign of cruelty and terror would

⁹⁰ Ibid., p.92.

cease.⁹¹ Although Col. Loganathan, the Chief Commissioner, appointed by the Provisional Government of India established at Singapore, arrived in Port Blair in the beginning of 1944, up to the middle of the year there were no changes in the administration. The Chief Commissioner made several attempts to elicit information about his position and that of his staff, but no clarification was ever made. However, the Japanese never gave over the charge of the islands to Col. Loganathan and his coming here was a mere farce, as there was no record of any Commission of inquiry.⁹² There was something else that, in all probability, was a direct consequence of Bose's visit to Port Blair. This was a Proclamation issued by Bose as Supreme Commander of the Azad Hind Fauj, in March, 1944, classifying the duties of the Japanese forces and the Azad Hind Fauj on entering India. Actually, more than the soldiers it was meant for the civilian population of India who are the addressee. Bose exhorts them to go about their daily work without fear. The only people who, at that point in time, could qualify as the intended recipients of this proclamation were the people of the Andamans. "If any person fails to understand the intentions of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind and the Indian National Army, or of our Ally, the Nippon Army, and dares to commit such acts as are itemised hereunder which would hamper the sacred task of emancipating India, he shall be executed or severely punished in accordance with the Criminal law of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind and Indian National Army or with the martial Law of the Nippon Army, the application of which has been agreed upon between the two allied armies, namely the Indian national Army and its ally, the Imperial Nipponese Army."⁹³

Punishable Acts:

- “ 1. Rebellious acts against the Provisional Government of Azad Hind or the Indian National Army, or ours ally, the Nipponese Army.
2. Acts of spying.

⁹¹ B. B Lall, *A Regime of Fears and Tears: History of The Japanese Occupation of The Andaman Islands*, New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1998, pp.102-105.

⁹² Ibid., pp.66-68.

⁹³ Jayant Dasgupta, *japan in Andaman & Nicobar Islands Red Sun over Black Water*, New Delhi: Manas Publication, 2002, pp.79-80.

3. Acts of stealing and taking by force, damaging and destroying war materials which are in the possession of the Provisional Government or belong to our Ally, the Nippon Army.
4. Acts of damaging or destroying valuable material resource controlled or utilised by the Provisional Government of Azad Hind or the Nippon Army under previous arrangement with the Provisional Government.
5. Acts of destroying various installations or equipments for traffic, communication, broadcasting etc.
6. Violent acts against, intimidation of, killing or wounding of, or doing other harmful acts to those who belong to the provisional Government of Azad hind and the Indian Army or our ally, the Nippon Army.
7. Acts of spreading enemy propaganda or wild and false rumours, and other acts of disturbing and misleading the minds of inhabitants.
8. Acts of disturbing the money circulation and economic organisation or of obstructing the production and free interchange of commodities.
9. Any act other than those contained in the above items, that benefits the enemy or is harmful to peace and order, and the well-being of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind and the Indian National Army or our ally, the Nippon Army.
10. Acts of attempting, instigating and abetting those acts contained in the above items.”⁹⁴

The trial and punishment of such criminals will entirely be the discretion of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind except when crimes committed are of such a nature as must be dealt with the Nippon Army as agreed upon between the two Allied Armies.

This proclamation and its various items are essential in understanding the situation under review. The essence of Bose’s personality was a curious mixture of idealism (which many have perceived as misplaced) and pragmatism. Perhaps it was his pragmatic side which chose to ignore acts of highhandedness on the part of his ally, the Nippon Army, in the interest of larger picture. Perhaps he was convinced by

⁹⁴ Shiri Ram Bakshi, *Subhas Chandra Bose, Founder of INA. Indian Freedom Fighters*. Vols 18, New Delhi: Anmol Publications, 1991, pp. 294-296.

the Japanese that these cases of espionage were real, as they frequently are under conditions of occupation. There is certainly reason to believe, in light of above proclamation, that he was aware that all Indians were not necessarily anti British and that his ally, the Nippon Army, would not be welcomed by all and sundry on Indian soil.

There was a second proclamation issued by Bose, this time as Head of State, on 4th April 1944, which reiterates all that was stated in the first one and the tone is just severe and business like. And the suggestion that he believed that people in the Japanese conquered areas might want to work against their interests, is unmistakable, as the paragraph below will show. “The Provisional Government guarantees the safety of life and property of the Indian population in the liberated areas, but will inflict severe punishment on those who carry on any activities, overt or covert, which might be of help to our Anglo-American enemies or their allies, or might disturb the work of reconstruction to be started by the Provisional Government.”⁹⁵ Whatever may have been the compulsions, he did not want anything to come in the way of his alliance with Nippon. Also quite clear in both these Proclamations, by the Supreme Commander and the Head of State respectively, is the allusion to the affairs in the Andamans.

Before the close of 1943, secret agents sent by Bose had already reached Calcutta. Soon after his arrival in Singapore, he had felt the need for a wireless link with Bengal. The spies that the Japanese had sent into India had not been very successful. Bose tried to assert control over intelligence operations based in Penang and Rangoon, and put N. G. Swami in charge of what came to be called the Azad Scholl. In March, four well-trained intelligence operatives- Bhagwan Lu, Harbans Lal, Kanwal Singh, and Kartar Singh- had accompanied Swami on the journey from Europe to Asia on the blockade runner S.S. Osorno. On 8th December, Bose, Swami and Hasan put these four together with another four trained in Penang and dispatched this group of eight under the leadership of S. N. Chopra toward India on board a Japanese submarine. The group landed with weapons, money and sophisticated

⁹⁵ Jayant Dasgupta, *japan in Andaman & Nicobar Islands Red Sun over Black Water*, New Delhi: Manas Publication, 2002, p. 82.

wireless equipment on the Kathiawar coast of Gujarat on the night of 22nd or 23rd December 1943. They had been instructed to split into four pairs and head toward Bengal, the North-West Frontier, the United Provinces in northern India and Bombay. They were captured the very next day, and Bose espionage network folded.

In January 1944, radio contact was successfully established between partisans in Calcutta and Bose in Burma. One of the earliest messages transmitted did not contain any valuable military intelligence. It conveyed the news of Prabhavati's death. "You look tired," Debnath Das said to Bose that evening. "No, I am not tired," Bose replied. "I heard today that I have lost my mother."⁹⁶

5.7 The Free India Provisional Government Moves to Burma

In December Bose moved FIPG Headquarters and the INA from Singapore to Rangoon. The second division was being organized and trained. On 7th January 1944 the Hikari Kikan also moved to Rangoon. Bose had always planned to use Burma as a springboard to attack the enemy in India. After moving to Burma, Bose declared independence in August. In the meantime, the Japanese Army was regrouping itself to make preparations against a possible counter-attack on the part of the British-Chinese forces. In Burma Colonel Yamamoto was replaced as head of the Kikan by Lieutenant-General Isoda Sabur. Several things prompted the replacement of Yamamoto by Isoda and Yamamoto's relegation to a secondary position in the Kikan. Bose wanted INA strength increased to three divisions; to which Yamamoto strongly resisted. Second, the offensive into India was pending and it would be logical to have a higher-ranking officer as chief of the Hikari Kikan. Furthermore, Isoda was as benign a general as anyone could ask for and he would be able to placate Bose, even though Japan could not always agree to Bose's insistent demands. The only person unhappy with the new arrangement was Yamamoto, whose relations with Bose continued to deteriorate.⁹⁷

⁹⁶ Sugata Bose, *His Majesty's Opponent: Subhas Chandra Bose and India's struggle against empire*, New Delhi: Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd, 2011, p. 266.

⁹⁷ Joyce Chapman Lebra, *The Indian National Army and Japan*, Singapore: ISEAS, 2008, p.136.

The orders of the reorganized Hikari Kikan were virtually the same as for its predecessor. The Kikan was to maintain liaison during the forthcoming campaign between the Southern Army and the newly created (BAA) Burma Area Army under it, and the 15th Army below the BAA on the one hand and the INA and FIPG on the other. The Kikan would deal with the old IIL too. Problems of liaison were compounded as preparations for the campaign progressed. Special sections were added to the Kikan to handle administrative, medical and weapons supply problems with the INA. Fujiwara had established the first contacts with the Indian POWs, helped strengthen the IIL and ushered the INA into being. Under Iwakuro, the Kikan had been mainly a political and propaganda organ. Under Yamamoto, most of the political appointments of the Iwakuro Kikan were replaced by military men and the Kikan took on an increasingly military character. Now under Isoda the Kikan was called on to function as a military liaison unit during the Imphal campaign.⁹⁸

Isoda was immediately plunged into problems of maintaining liaison and co-operation between the BAA-15th Army Headquarters and the INA in the midst of the campaign. Liaison requirements were much more urgent than they had been under Isoda's predecessors. Issues arose at all levels of co-operation, from chiefs of staff to the fighting man in the jungles around Imphal. Isoda was at Bose's side during meetings with General Mutaguchi, commander of the 15th Army to which INA units were attached, meetings with General Kawabe, commander of the BAA, and meetings with Field-marshal Terauchi of the Southern Army. Isoda watched as agreements were concluded regarding administration of captured territory which was to be handed over to the INA and for the operation of the INA First Division under command of the 15th Army and ultimately under the BAA. The agreements were sanctioned in each case by the 15th Army command, the BAA command, and IGHQ in Tokyo. At the outset of the Imphal campaign in January, relations between Bose and the Japanese commanders appeared to Isoda to be good. Optimistic pronouncements about the liberation of India were issued by Bose and Tojo at the start of the campaign.

Meanwhile, there was increasing indication of the enemy's counter-attack. 10th March was set as the target date for the army command to swing into action. The

⁹⁸ Ibid., pp.135-136.

Japanese had to prepare ground for the FIPG and INA to move into Burma and they had to obtain concurrence of the Burmese before they could let the Indians move in. As the strategic plans of the Japanese army to launch the operations progressed, it became urgently necessary to work out the plans for Indo-Japanese collaboration. In the view of the fact that feelings in India were anti-British but not yet pro-Japanese enough to allow the Japanese army moving in, the Japanese made it a principle to stick to their basic policy of helping India to achieve her independence. The strategic aims of the Japanese and the Indians were quite different. Japan saw the invasion as a pre-emptive strike to forestall British attempts to re-conquer Burma. The INA, on the other hand, saw its role as that of a catalyst for a civilian uprising against British rule. The capture of Imphal and Kohima would open the way for its advance into the rest of Assam and Bengal, where heroes' welcome awaited them. All that was required for "ultimate success," Bose said on 8th January 1944, was that "action within the country must synchronize with the action from without."⁹⁹

Bose met Gen. Kawabe, commander of the BAA. And Gen. Kawabe promised Bose to extend every possible co-operation and assistance to India for achieving her freedom. In explaining his ideas and plans to Gen. Kawabe, Bose reiterated his belief that he should take up arms now to fight the British taking advantage of present war and join hands with any country which would regard Britain and the United States as common enemies. He declared:

- “ 1. The Indian National Army should be the spearhead of the whole advance into India. The first drop of blood to be shed on Indian soil should be that of the member of the Indian National Army.
2. In view of the fact that the present war will be prolonged, I want to improve the quality and quantity of the Indian National Army.
3. Since the existing situation is working to the disadvantage of the Axis Powers, the Indian public are in two minds as to which side to support. They are susceptible to a compromise with the British. There is an urgent need to take a

⁹⁹ Sugata Bose, *His Majesty's Opponent: Subhas Chandra Bose and India's struggle against empire*, New Delhi: Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd, 2011, p. 266.

decisive action. Should this action be delayed, the Indian public might be won over to the enemy side.

4. One way to prevent this from happening is to set up the provisional Army moving into India; then the evidence of our political capability will win radical elements over to our side. Then support will increase at a snow-balling pace if they learn that we have Japan behind us.”¹⁰⁰

In the month of January 1944, Bose was gathering civilian recruits in Burma for the INA and raising resources from wealthy Indians for his war chest. Many Bengali women joined the Rani of Jhansi Regiment in Burma. Lakshmi Swaminathan had come to Burma with several hundred soldiers of her women’s regiment, leaving M. Satyavati Thevar in charge of the rear headquarters in Singapore. Men from the Tamil and Telugu speaking communities in Burma swelled the ranks of the INA. The civilian response at Bose’s public rallies in Burma was as enthusiastic as it had been in Malaya.¹⁰¹

Two issues precipitated conferences in March 1944 between Bose and Kikan officials. Each series of conferences lasted at least three days with threats and counter-threats. Each series ended finally in Bose winning his point when the Kikan reluctantly conceded. One issue was the establishment of a National Bank. Bose had already been assured of necessary capital and of objections. The second issue was over the appointment of a Japanese military officer as chairman of the proposed Indo-Japanese War Co-operation Council to function on Indian soil after the entry of the INA and Japan into India. Bose refused to consider the Japanese suggestion. Whenever Kikan officials hinted that high-ranking officials in Tokyo would be upset at Bose’s stand, Bose threatened to cable Tojo or Sugiyama himself. This was an effective counter-threat which Bose used on more than one occasion in dealing with the Hikari Kikan.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ Tatsuo Hayashid, *Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose: His Great Struggle and Martyrdom*, trans. Biswanath Chatterjee, Calcutta: Allied Publisher, 1970, p. 80.

¹⁰¹ Sugata Bose, *His Majesty’s Opponent: Subhas Chandra Bose and India’s struggle against empire*, New Delhi: Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd, 2011, p. 267.

¹⁰² Joyce Chapman Lebra, *The Indian National Army and Japan*, Singapore: ISEAS, 2008, p.138.

5.8 The Imphal Campaign

By 18th March 1944, the INA was moved towards Imphal and Kohima, the north-eastern part of India, with “Chalo Delhi” on their lips, crossing the Indo-Burman frontier and carried the armed struggle onto Indian soil. By this time in Tokyo, Tojo declared in the Imperial Diet on 22nd March: “What-ever area the India National Army liberated should be placed under the administrative control of the FIPG. It is the aim of Japan to crush the enemy and help to place India under the complete control of Indian people. Wherever the INA goes, the Indian people will welcome it with open arms. With their patriotism aroused, one area after another will be liberated, ending up with the achievement of independence of whole of India.”¹⁰³ Bose issued a call to the Indian people to co-operate with the invaders and prepared a proclamation as Supreme Commander and as Head of State. On 24th March, with General Kawabe, Bose attended a full conference between the Provisional Government and the Japanese Army on the problems of the occupation. Bose had not agreed to the Japanese Chairman and hence the problem remained unsettled.

While the Imphal offensive was in progress, relations between the Japanese and INA fighting men deteriorated. Under battle conditions in the midst of monsoon jungle, with no supplies, tempers were short. Each side accused men from the other side of arrogance. Protocol regarding saluting was the immediate cause of numerous incidents. Isoda and his Kikan staff were called on to assuage the wounded pride of the Indians. From the INA standpoint, Japanese-INA cooperation was a relationship between equals. The INA had been recognised as an allied army before the fighting began and the INA was the army of a government now legally recognized in international law. From the Japanese standpoint, however, and especially in the eyes of some fighting men, prejudice remained because the INA was composed largely of POWs. Surrender had no legitimate place in Japan’s long military tradition and ideal. The INA therefore suffered from a taint of disloyalty from the Japanese viewpoint. Furthermore, to many Japanese who dealt with the INA on an operational level, it seemed that INA demands often far exceeded reason and reality. When Japanese

¹⁰³ Hayashid, Tatsuo. *Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose: His great struggle and martyrdom* (Biswanath Chatterjee, Trans.). Calcutta: Allied Publisher. (Original work published 1970). P. 87.

supply officers were pressed to extend one day's rations to three days, Indian fighting men were likely to insist on their right to consume the rations in one day. Japanese often felt Indians were prone to insist on rights when the business of fighting was more pressing. Furthermore, the Japanese who dealt with Indians on a day-to-day basis did not always understand Japan's India policy.

From the standpoint of the INA, the campaign was an all-out struggle to the finish for Indian liberation; while for Japan, Imphal was a limited holding operation defending Burma while the higher priority campaigns in the Pacific were being fought. The Pacific theatre had first claims on Japan's fast-diminishing supplies. Just as there were no limits to the INA objective, Indian demands for material support were insatiable. No degree of assistance the Japanese could give would satisfy Indian requirements. And the Japanese capacity for response was decreasing rapidly. The gap would never be closed. Despite General Isoda's gentle nature, Bose grew increasingly insistent and could not be placated.

Indian leaders felt the difference among Japanese in the degree of understanding shown toward the independence movement. S.A. Ayer, Minister of Publicity and Propaganda in the FIPG, classified the liaison officers into three types:

- “
1. The “Manchurians” –“the arrogant, obstinate type who had reduced the people of Manchuria to virtual serfdom. They did not see much point in Japan offering all-out aid to Bose except on condition of something concrete in return - say, at least a promise of military, economic or political concessions to be given to Japan in Free India. They suffered from a fit of racial superiority”,
 2. “the true sincere but rather impotent group of juniors who went out of their way to help us, to encourage us, and to apologize for the shot-sighted attitude” of the first group, and
 3. “the colourless group which fully endorsed Tokyo policy, but would only pray and hope that the INA would somehow win India's independence, even in spite of the ‘Manchurian’ group”. Further, Ayer charged the Manchurians

“tried hard to pick puppets from among insignificant Indians and also to play off one man against another”.”¹⁰⁴

On 5th April 1944 Bose announced the formation of the National bank of Azad Hind. After two days on 7th April with Imphal Campaign being fairly launched, Bose moved a small headquarters north, from Rangoon to Maymyo near Mandalay. The Japanese General Mutaguchi had his base there. Bose urged Mutaguchi to avoid the cutting of Imphal-Kohima road and to leave a route open for the British to retreat. He reckoned that once the British were forced back from Imphal, the plains of Assam and Bengal would be open to his army. According to his plan the next line of defence for the British will be the chhota Nagpur plateau, after his triumphant entry into Calcutta by the autumn of 1944. The fall of Imphal was expected in three weeks, the consequence of which might well be “a revolt in Bengal and Bihar against British rule in India on a far large scale.”¹⁰⁵ His expectation was that this would be the climax of his whole life: “the work would be endless, the strain greater than the greatest he had known. It was good therefore to escape for a time from the surging militancy of torrid Rangoon, into coolness and peace.”¹⁰⁶ On 8th April, the Japanese Imperial General Headquarters made the following announcement concerning the military development in Burma:

- “ 1. Our crack troops, fighting side by side with the INA, captured Kohima early on 6th April.
2. Our attack on the enemy’s airborne troops in the Kata area is moving along smoothly.”¹⁰⁷

Mutaguchi did not find it necessary to follow Bose’s preferred strategy; he closed the Imphal-Kohima road, denying the British any chance of escape toward the railhead of Dimapur and the route to Ledo. Bose decided to make a virtue out of necessity and persuaded himself that a large number of British Indian troops and war

¹⁰⁴ Lebra, Joyce, Chapman. (2008). *The Indian National Army and Japan*. Singapore: ISEAS. p.139.

¹⁰⁵ Sugata Bose, *His Majesty’s Opponent: Subhas Chandra Bose and India’s struggle against empire*, New Delhi: Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd, 2011, p. 273.

¹⁰⁶ Hugh Toye, *Subhas Chandra Bose: The Springing Tiger*, Mumbai: Jaico Publishing House, 2007, p.109.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p.109.

materiel captured in Imphal would strengthen his leverage with the Japanese. Soon it was understood that the 2nd and 3rd INA regiments would have to face the enemy before it entered Imphal. Bose was happy about it, realising that it would increase his stake in Japanese victory. On 25th April just before the Japanese Army Headquarters moved to the front, Gen. Mutaguchi realised his wrong move. Colonel M.Z.Kiani, the INA Divisional Commander, sent information that whole of his Division was now going into action and that the first regiment should join him. On the other side, from Chin Hills, where Shah Nawaz Khan was commanding two battalions, were complaints about the poor condition of his battalions as there was much malaria and poor supply of food and other resources. Shah Nawaz Khan was convinced that the Japanese were deliberately short-changing the INA. He wrote later:

“The Japanese could, if they wanted to, help us in this respect, but they did not do so and I am of the opinion that they did it deliberately. They had seen the spirit and determination of our men and had realized that they would stand no nonsense from the Japanese. The actual fact was, as Field marshal Terauchi had told Netaji long before in Singapore, the Japanese did not want large formations of INA to come to the front and now that they were there the Japanese wished to break their spirit and health by putting impossible obstacles in their way. All that they wanted to do was to break the morale of the INA and tell Netaji that his army could not face the rigours of hard campaign... the Japanese were putting us through a terrible test indeed.”¹⁰⁸

Shah Nawaz Khan always had deep mistrust of the Japanese and he was not completely fair in his thinking as there were many Japanese who also died due to lack of supplies of medicine food and air cover. Bose took the matter to Mutaguchi, who confessed that lack of supplies and transport difficulties were affecting his whole force and he promised to let the regiment join Kiani on the main Imphal front as soon as possible.¹⁰⁹ Meanwhile the monsoon had started and Bose shifted back to Rangoon from Maymyo where he was not able to get proper news of the front. Bose heard from both M.Z Kiani and Shah Nawaz Khan about the supply shortage and transportation bottlenecks in the front. He set up a supply board in Rangoon and instructed

¹⁰⁸ Joyce Chapman Lebra, *The Indian National Army and Japan*, Singapore: ISEAS, 2008, p.177.

¹⁰⁹ Hugh Toye, *Subhas Chandra Bose: The Springing Tiger*, Mumbai: Jaico Publishing House, 2007, pp.11-112.

Alagappan, the supply minister, to buy local produce in Mandalay to provide for the INA. Bose made a visit to the headquarters in Singapore and collected some fund and asked the second division to be ready to move to the front in July or August. He also made a visit to third division which was in Johore.¹¹⁰

Till 6th May, the Imphal campaign was going positively but somewhat slower than was anticipated. A statement was issued by Bose about the progress of the year. He affirmed that the achievements were far more than he had expected and told that there could be no relaxation, the fight must go on, reinforcement and supplies must be sent in the front and that total mobilisation must be hastened. Some problems now required more attention, like the creation of the revolution in India, propaganda to the Indian Army and administrative backing for the INA. The administrative task, in particular, was developing. The anniversary of INA was also marked by carefully worded broadcasting on the war situation and the situation in India. The Allied invasion of Europe happened by this time, which did not disturb Bose any more than American success in the Pacific. The march to Delhi might take two more years, but he had no doubt 'that we shall be able to liberate India' provided that there were no compromise between Gandhi and the British, which would make his task more difficult. He scorned the two agents of Allied propaganda, the 'Bluff and Bluster Corporation' (BBC) and the 'Anti-India Radio' (AIR), and refuted arguments and statements which they had made about him. Their propaganda was false; he had redeemed all he had promised. He had the strength and organisation to accomplish it, strength which came, not from superior allowance and equipment, but faith and sacrifice, heroism and fortitude. When India would be free, "All those who are now in the service of the British government and are efficient in their work will be taken over by the new Government... provided they were not pro-British at heart, and ... had not gone out of their way to harm the independence movement."¹¹¹

Soldiers of the Indian Army would be received on the same terms and their Indian Army service would be allowed to count for their INA pensions. The British

¹¹⁰ Sugata Bose, *His Majesty's Opponent: Subhas Chandra Bose and India's struggle against empire*, New Delhi: Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd, 2011, p.278.

¹¹¹ Hugh Toye, *Subhas Chandra Bose: The Springing Tiger*, Mumbai: Jaico Publishing House, 2007, p.118.

should now accept the 'Quit India' resolution and give effect to it and 'I guarantee that no single Japanese soldier will set foot on Indian soil'. Yet: "The British who spilt the blood of innocent freedom-loving Indians and torture them inhumanly... must pay for their crimes. We Indians do not hate the enemy enough. If you want your countrymen to rise to heights of superhuman courage and heroism- you must teach them- not only to love their country-but also to hate their enemy."¹¹²

By June 1944, two hundred thirty thousand Indians took written oaths of allegiance to the government in Malaya alone. These oaths were produced after the war during the Red Fort trial as legal evidence that the war had been waged by a duly constituted government. On 6th July, Bose gave a detailed justification of his course of action during the Second World War to Gandhi who was recently released from jail with broken health. He told Gandhi that he found nothing wrong in seeking help in the form of loans from abroad if the almighty British Empire could go around with a begging bowl for foreign help. As one who had stood resolutely for national self-respect and honour all his life, he would be the last person to succumb to any foreign power. Whatever he had done was "for enhancing India's prestige before the world and for advancing the cause of India's freedom."¹¹³ Once India became free, the mission of the provisional government he had set up would be over. The Indian people would then choose their form of government and decide who should be in charge of that government. He and his co-workers regarded themselves as servants of the Indian people. Freedom of their motherland was the only reward they sought in the return for their suffering and sacrifice. "There are many among us who would like to retire from the political field, once India is free. The remainder will be content to take up any position in Free India, however humble it may be. The spirit that animates all of us today is that it is more honourable to be even a sweeper in Free India than to have the highest position under British rule."¹¹⁴

The monsoon altered the entire topography on the Indo-Burma border. The muddy terrain made the situation worst for the Army to perform to the best of their

¹¹² Ibid., p.118.

¹¹³ Sugata Bose, *His Majesty's Opponent: Subhas Chandra Bose and India's struggle against empire*, New Delhi: Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd, pp.278-279.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., pp.278-279.

ability. On 10th July the Japanese informed Bose that their military position had become untenable and they had no option but to order a withdrawal from Imphal. The Japanese had taken an enormous risk in deciding to travel light with limited supplies across long distance, over difficult and treacherous terrain. The Japanese counted on capturing “Churchill rations” in Imphal and Kohima, as the supply links connecting Rangoon and Mandalay with the front line were tenuous. The British Army was more in number and with all escape routes blocked, the British fought with their back to the wall in Imphal. The Americans organised a continuous airlift of supplies into Imphal throughout the siege, which lasted three and half months.¹¹⁵

The adverse turn in the operation worried the Japanese Army commander. He did everything possible to turn the tide, but it now appeared that the Indo-Japanese joint operation was doomed to fail. As a follow-up in the development of his strategic operation, Bose was planning to reorganise the functions of the Provisional Government. The idea was to divide the area of his activities into three parts. The first was East Asia, which he would continue to use as his political and military base. The second part was the liberated territories, where every effort had to be made to expand civil administration and start reconstruction programmes. The third part was the areas still under enemy occupation and earmarked for liberation by INA. The 15th Army was forced to give up completely its original operation plans knowing the situation. On 3rd July, a telegram was sent from the Southern Army Headquarters to Gen. Kawabe instructing him to fall back on Manipur and hold the line there. On 5th July the Regional Army issued orders for cancelling the Imphal Operations. This put an end to the long-cherished dream of Bose to move on to Delhi. Some soldiers of the INA of Kiani Division surrendered to the enemy at the base of Chamol. The Nagas, the major tribal community around Kohima were helpful to the INA troops lead by Shah Nawaz Khan. The Manipuri around Imphal also supported the INA and a few joined the INA and went back to Burma with the troops.¹¹⁶ Japan’s decision to suspend the Imphal campaign was made public on 26th July, the day Tojo resigned as prime minister. On 21st August 1944, Bose publicly acknowledged the failure of the Imphal offensive in a radio address from Rangoon he blamed the early monsoon,

¹¹⁵ Ibid., pp.275-276.

¹¹⁶ Tatsuo Hayashid, *Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose: His Great Struggle and Martyrdom*, trans. Biswanath Chatterjee, Calcutta: Allied Publisher, 1970, pp.89-90.

which compounded defects in transport and supply. The troops made their way back to Yeu and Mandaly by September. Women of the Rani Jhansi Regiment who were trained in nursing took care of the sick and wounded veterans of the battle. Bose was deeply affected by the suffering of his soldiers. He met all the officers in person and embraced them for their brave deeds.

5.8.1 Back to Burma

The full account of the dead and missing could not be compiled until the regiments were back to the stations in September and October. INA witnessed a heavy loss of men. The division had started out for Imphal with six thousand and only two thousand six hundred returned, with broken health. During the campaign, seven hundred and fifteen men deserted, about four hundred were killed in battle, about eight hundred surrendered and about fifteen hundred died of disease and starvation.¹¹⁷

Arriving in Rangoon following INA and Japanese withdrawal from the Imphal front, Bose thanked Japanese authorities for their help, without which the transfer of the Provisional Government from Shonan to Burma would have been quite impossible. At the same time, Bose was of course dissatisfied with the handling of the military situation at Imphal. If the INA had been built up to full strength of three divisions and used as regular fighting units rather than in guerrilla operations and for intelligence, he felt the outcome might have been different. He decided that these problems would have to be remedied.

Even the sympathetic Fujiwara, who spent the campaign as General Mutaguchi's liaison officer with the Japanese force of which the INA Division was a part, was disappointed. 'As a revolutionary Army,' he says, 'its morale was high and it was quite well organised; but the standard of its tactics, training and leadership was low.... It lacked, in particular; offensive strength and tenacity.'¹¹⁸ Apart from this they lacked equipments also in the front. INA had no wireless sets, telephones, transport and weapons heavier than light machine guns. The INA soldiers were in old British

¹¹⁷ Hugh Toye, *Subhas Chandra Bose: The Springing Tiger*, Mumbai: Jaico Publishing House, 2007, p.126.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p.127.

Khaki uniforms in which they were easily distinguishable from the Japanese and British-Indians; they were quite conspicuous in the jungle.¹¹⁹

Bose was unhappy about having to deal with Hikari Kikan rather than directly with the BAA and the Japanese Government. He regarded the liaison agency as an unnecessary hindrance and cause of misunderstanding. Furthermore, he felt that Japan's strategy had been at fault. Japan and the INA should have made an immediate attack on Chittagong. This would have sparked the anti-British revolution in Bengal which would have spread rapidly all over India. Bose did not want the INA soldiers to be subject to Japanese military jurisdiction even though they were fighting under Japanese commanders. A compromise was arranged whereby Japanese military jurisdiction and discipline will prevail in cases of emergency only.

Bose complained bitterly about the Kikan in a letter to Foreign Minister Shigemitsu. In it he asked for the elimination of the Kikan and for a Japanese diplomat accredited to the FIPG. His letter concluded with the threat that, unless he received a favourable reply, he would resign from leadership of the FIPG and INA and lead a suicide squad into India. This proved to be a successful stratagem. Another problem was the transfer of captured territory to FIPG Commissioner A. C. Chatterji. Agreement provided for the transfer of captured territory to the FIPG, but the territory would be in Burma, and Premier Ba Maw objected. This created problems for the Hikari Kikan in dealing with the Burmese Government. There was behind the immediate dispute accumulated hostility of the Burmese toward Indians, who were often successful businessmen in Burma.¹²⁰

Toward the end of October, Bose left Singapore for Tokyo. On 1st November, as the head of the Provisional Government, he met with Tojo. He expressed displeasure with the attitude of the liaison agency Hikari Kikan, and of Japanese military officers in Southeast Asia. He wanted to deploy the entire first division of the INA in the Indian offensive and to train two further divisions in Malaya. He demanded full control of intelligence operatives to be sent to India. He sought

¹¹⁹ Ibid., p.127.

¹²⁰ Joyce Chapman Lebra, *The Indian National Army and Japan*, Singapore: ISEAS, 2008, pp.139 - 140.

acknowledgment of his government's right to issue currency and exercise jurisdiction over abandoned Indian property all over Southeast Asia. Tojo yielded on the political and economic questions and promised to discuss the military matters with his commander.¹²¹

According to a secret British Intelligence survey dated 2nd October 1944, there were about twelve thousand INA troops in Burma in March 1944, of whom about four thousand were in the forward areas. Another seven thousand were believed to be on the way from Malaya to Burma and the third division was under training in Malaya. In Manipur the INA suffered heavy losses, and "this shock, coupled with disease and hard living conditions, soon began to tell": "Several gave themselves up, including a few INA officers of some importance, and still greater numbers were captured. Nevertheless, as in the case of Arakan, there was no question of mass desertion: some 700 of the INA have come into our hands since the end of February 1944, and the rest have retired with the Japanese forces." In September 1944, the numbers of INA troops in Burma were "still very considerable," and reinforcement from Malaya since March may have raised the total to "something in the neighbourhood of 20,000." "If for no other reason," the report stated, "the numbers involved alone would make the INA a major security problem." Desertions from the INA were not only very limited in number; "going over" was a two-way street. More than a hundred Indian soldiers on the British side had crossed over to the INA in the early weeks of fighting in Arakan, and were welcomed by Bose as "our new comrades" in Rangoon. If the early success had been sustained and if the INA had reached the plains of Assam, "defections by Slim's sepoy might have grown from a trickle to a flood and destroy the 14th Army-as Bose was convinced they could." Shah Nawaz Khan may have been too harsh in saying that the Japanese had let them down badly and that but for "their betrayal of the INA, the history of the Imphal Campaign may have been different one." Yet even the British assessment in September 1944 suggested that it was "the Japanese Army which failed the INA," and the failure of the Japanese to attain their objectives prevented the INA from "being used in the role for which it was designed."¹²²

¹²¹ Sugata Bose, *His Majesty's Opponent: Subhas Chandra Bose and India's struggle against empire*, New Delhi: Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd, 2011, pp. 259-260.

¹²² *Ibid.*, pp. 282-283.

5.8.2 Again at The Mission

Despite the failure of Imphal Campaign, Bose still maintained his fighting spirit. He wanted India to be freed from the British at any cost. On the occasion of the opening of the first Diet session under the Koiso cabinet, Bose sent a message to Premier Koiso expressing his unyielding determination. "I hereby declare that we will fight side by side with Japanese and other friendly powers until we win independence by crushing our common enemy."

In the middle of October, Bose was invited by the new Japanese Prime Minister, General Kuniaki Koiso, for a conference in Rangoon where he met with his top military commanders and discussed INA's future course of action. On 21st October, Bose expressed the hope of taking Imphal and Chittagong in a new offensive. Bose made a visit to Tokyo accompanied by Chatterji, Lieutenant Colonel Kiani and Major Habibur Rahman by 31st October. Bose stayed there for ten days in preparation for a new Indian offensive. He made an announcement over radio on 8th November, "I have come to Tokyo to see General Koiso and other Japanese Ministers personally, as I want greater collaboration of military officials... the battle for Chittagong and Imphal will be much more than a local battle, it will be in essence and in substance the battle of India. In other words, the future fate of India will be decided in the hills and in the jungles which bar the way to Chittagong and Imphal"¹²³

Prime Minister Koiso gave a state dinner in the honour of Bose and reaffirmed Japan's pledge to aid the cause of Indian independence. He also renewed Tojo's earlier promise that Japan sought no territorial, economic or military gains in India. Koiso told him that Japan was repaying an ancient cultural debt to India. During his stay there, there was a mass meeting at Hibiya hall under the auspices of Japan-India Society at which Bose addressed a mixed Indian-Japanese audience. There were negotiations with Army Chief of Staff Umezu Yoshijiro, Army Minister Sugiyama, Navy Minister Yonai Mitsumasa and Naval Chief of Staff Oikawa Koshiro. Present at most of the meetings were Isoda, General Arisue- chief of Second Bureau IGHQ- and Lieutenant General Sato Kenryo- Chief of the Military Affairs Bureau of the general

¹²³ Joyce Chapman Lebra, *The Indian National Army and Japan*, Singapore: ISEAS, 2008, p.142.

Staff. Bose made his demands during the negotiations: an expansion in the size of the INA by at least fifty Thousand and an ambassador accredited to the FIPG, a loan agreement, better weapons including tanks, planes and guns to supplement captured British stores, distribution of propaganda literature written by himself, and transfer of all Indian POW's to the INA.¹²⁴

Bose found the Japanese authorities in Tokyo sympathetic and became convinced that INA difficulties in the field were not their making. It was racial and military arrogance at lower levels that had been the cause and he might have dealt with it if, like Ba Maw, he had access to Tokyo through a Japanese ambassador. Therefore, in addition to his proposal on INA supplies and fire support in battle, he asked for the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and the provisional Government. Japanese agreement to this was announced on November 26th; the Ambassador, a diplomat named Hachiya, was nominated at the end of December. The Japanese also accepted that the function of the Hikari Kikan should be reduced to simple military liaison. Political matters would be the concern of the Japanese ambassador to the Provisional Government and military orders would come directly from the Japanese military commanders. From this stemmed other agreements: the INA would not be subject to the Japanese military code of law, but to its own, even in respect of offences against the Japanese Army. Bose's army now numbered about thirty three thousand; around sixteen thousand nine hundred in Burma, thirteen thousand and seven fifty in Malaya and two thousand staffing the recruit training camps, whose capacity was fifteen thousand. The Japanese accordingly agreed to strengths of thirty five thousand under arms, for whom they would pay and fifteen thousand in training, for whom Bose would continue to provide.

The supply system was to be considerably changed. Hitherto all supplies had come from the Japanese; although the INA had under taken distribution. The agreement reached was that in future only the staple rations-rice, sugar, dhal-were to come from Japanese while Bose's supply organisation would have provide the meat, fish and vegetables. For this the Japanese undertook to pay him ten million rupees per month from March 1945. So rapidly was the value of the Japanese rupee falling in the

¹²⁴ Ibid., p.143.

frontier areas of Burma, the exchange rate with Indian rupees was already twenty to one, that even this vast subsidy had to be doubled by the time the first payment was due.¹²⁵

During his stay in Tokyo, he met the Indian students in Tokyo and gave a speech at Tokyo University where he boosted the morale of Indians by talking about his new approaches with Japan. To the U.S.A. he addressed a serious defence of himself and of the new Asian nationalism that was being fostered by Japan. “We are making for ourselves with Japanese help,” he said, “what you failed to help us achieve before the war; real national independence. Burma and Malaya does not want the British back, China does not want Chiang Kai Shek and the Philippines do not want you... I want to tell my American friends that Asia is now surging with revolutionary fervour from one end to the other... we are men as much as you are. We want our freedom and we shall have it by any means. You had an opportunity of helping us but you did not do so. Now Japan is offering us help and we have reason to trust her sincerity. That is why we have plunged into the struggle alongside of her. It is not Japan that we are helping by waging war on you and on our mortal enemy-England. We are helping ourselves- we are helping Asia...”¹²⁶

Bose had a final wish before he left Tokyo. He wanted to have a meeting with the Soviet Ambassador Malik. As Bose desperately wanted to resume his failed mission, though he continued to hope that Britain’s Maginot Line in Imphal could be breached with the second attempt, talks with Japanese, along with the American bombs being dropped on Tokyo, have convinced him that he should not expect any further help from Japan. He wrote to him, but Malik refused to see him. But Bose’s idea of securing Soviet aid persisted and motivated his last act at the close of the war. Early in July, Col. Yamamoto of the Hikari Kikan suggested to Bose that now the Imphal Campaign was doomed to failure and hence he should switch his plan for possible attack from the northwest. Bose replied that he would proceed with the idea if he could get the concurrence of the Japanese Government.

¹²⁵ Hugh Toye, *Subhas Chandra Bose: The Springing Tiger*, Mumbai: Jaico Publishing House, 2007, pp.128 -129.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, p.130.

Bose, having done every possible arrangement he could have done for the second attack, returned from Tokyo by 29th November towards south Asia. He stopped in Shanghai, Taihoku, Saigon and Singapore to meet the INA and IIL branch heads and Japanese authorities. In Saigon he talked with Terauchi about his Tokyo discussion. He reached Rangoon by the end of the year. A week of storms delayed Bose's arrival in Malaya until 14th December. One of the first he met in Singapore was his Chief Commissioner in the Andamans, Col. Loganathan who had returned for consultation, bitterly disappointed at the failure of his administration. The only department taken over was that of Education; the Japanese had prevented or hindered all other work and had continued their harsh oppression of the islanders. The worst feature of this had been their atrocities towards the islanders in the name of the so called spy case. Fifty-five Indians had been executed and thirty- three been imprisoned as British spies up to September 1944 and in October two hundred were brought under arrest and investigation. Savage torture and blackmail supported this rule of terror, of which the educated were the main victims. There were some cases of mass killing also near Havelock Island. The chief Commissioner had been quite unable to stop it, though his personal influence may have been felt in a few individual cases. Whatever might be said in Tokyo, the local Japanese would not part with their authority. Bose, who intended to appoint a new Chief Commissioner, changed his mind. The Andamans were too exposed for the new strategic situation; the provisional Government might have to write off its commitment and turn to what was more worth saving.¹²⁷ Bose as the head of the Government of Andaman may be held responsible for some, if not all of those unhappy events.

By the time he finally reached Rangoon, the war situation had become even worse. The sky was dominated by the enemy air force and the ground by enemy tanks. An increasing number of British battleships began to be seen throughout the Bay of Bengal which seemed to be a prelude to the landing operation of British troops. This made the chances of transporting artillery and AFV battalions to the front impossible for the Japanese. In Malaya, the INA had to take up defensive positions in the areas it happened to occupy. Meanwhile, Major-General Yamamoto was transferred elsewhere. It came as a big blow to Bose. After Bose returned to East Asia,

¹²⁷ Ibid., p.132.

Yamamoto, in his capacity as the director of Hikari Kikan, was a great relief to Bose.¹²⁸

On 31st December, the British force landed at Akyab. Ironically it was the Akyab-Chittagong route that Bose had always wished to use to march towards Delhi. Even though he changed his strategic plans several times according to the changing situations, he had always kept Akyab in view as a key strategic spot for his operation plans. On 23rd January, Bose turned forty eight and his birthday was observed. Indian residents in Rangoon held a meeting in celebration of his birthday and donated gold and other jewels one and a half times his weight. By this, more than twenty million dollars was raised for the INA.¹²⁹

Meanwhile, there was also some careful planning of intelligence activities. Bose devised with N.G. Swami an elaborate plan to send agents with wireless sets behind the enemy lines. A special group was also trained to interrupt the American pipeline north of Burma. The Nehru Brigade of the INA's first division, which had been unscathed in Imphal, was to be joined by two more regiments of the second division that had arrived from Malaya. Gurbaks Singh Dhillon was assigned with the responsibility of obstructing the advancing British forces at the Irrawady River and Prem Kumar Sahgal was sent to the front at Mount Popa; Mehboob Ahmed who had distinguish himself in the Haka-Falam sector, took his place at Bose's side. The war situation was getting deteriorated day by day for the INA. On 12th January, the British Army 25th division, supported by heavy bombardment from the sea and the air, started landing on the Miebong peninsula. As Japanese troops advanced for counterattack, the British Army 26th division landed on the Ramley Island on 26th January. This sparked off the full- scale landing operations of British Army.¹³⁰

¹²⁸ Tatsuo Hayashid, *Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose: His Great Struggle and Martyrdom*, trans. Biswanath Chatterjee, Calcutta: Allied Publisher, 1970, p.100

¹²⁹ Tatsuo Hayashid, *Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose: His Great Struggle and Martyrdom*, trans. Biswanath Chatterjee, Calcutta: Allied Publisher, 1970, p.100. see also Sugata Bose, *His Majesty's Opponent: Subhas Chandra Bose and India's struggle against empire*, New Delhi: Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd, 2011, p.287.

¹³⁰ Tatsuo Hayashid, *Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose: His Great Struggle and Martyrdom*, trans. Biswanath Chatterjee, Calcutta: Allied Publisher, 1970, p.100. see also Sugata Bose, *His Majesty's Opponent: Subhas Chandra Bose and India's struggle against empire*, New Delhi: Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd, 2011, pp.208-209.

The Japanese 15th army began to attack the British army crossing the Irrawady River. On 29th January, Major G.S. Dhillon received orders to move to battlefront in Nyaungu. He reached four days later in the front when a group of British army thrust to Meiktilaa crossed the river just to the north of his regimental area. The Japanese were not much worried about the Nyaungu. They knew the British army had been moving towards it; but thought that it was only of brigade strength and probably heading for Yenangyaung. Dhillon was only told to send covering troops across the river and to co-operate with the Japanese company on his right. But the number of his regiment was just twelve thousand men which was not enough for covering twelve miles of river bank. He posted one of his battalion at Nyaungu, another at Pagan and the other with his headquarters nearby. By 9th February a small British troop was seen on the eastern bank.¹³¹

The 7th division of Indo-British army started crossing the Irrawady by 14th February. By early morning a British infantry company crossed about a mile in northeast of Nyaungu and establish itself, but the embarkation of the rest of that battalion was delayed and its assault craft did not begin to approach the eastern bank until well after daybreak. Medium machine-guns on the extreme right of the INA battalion at Nyaungu and in the Japanese company position opened up at about 06.10 AM. Many of the British boats were soon out of control and drifting downstream past the INA trenches for which they made perfect targets. There was much casualty, although some of the craft returned to western bank and many men escaped by swimming. But the set-back was incidental, a second British battalion crossed without loss later in the morning further upstream and by the end of the day two more battalions were safely ashore. About hundred survivors of the INA at Nyangu surrendered.¹³²

The initial crossing failed at Pagan also and the British soldiers attempted it a second time. They saw a boat with a white flag put out from the Japanese bank. There were two INA emissaries in it and they said that the Japanese had left Pagan and that the INA there wished to surrender. One hundred and forty of INA soldiers

¹³¹ Hugh Toye, *Subhas Chandra Bose: The Springing Tiger*, Mumbai: Jaico Publishing House, 2007, p.136

¹³² *Ibid.*, p.137.

surrendered and the new crossing was unopposed. Dhillon rallied what was left of his regiment on 16th February. The Indo-British Army had established itself in Nyaungu and Pagan and he could only withdraw with the survivors to the new INA division area at Kyaukpadaung, thirty five miles to the south-east, on the road to Meiktila.¹³³

Japanese troops started moving towards north from Yenangyaung to defend the way to Meiktila and destroy their enemy in its weak and difficult moment of river crossing. The 2nd INA regiment was arriving under Lieutenant-Colonel Prem Sahgal. On 13th February P.K.Sahgal left Rangoon and moved towards north; by 17th February he managed to occupy defensive position on western slope of Mount Popa, a steep, isolated 5,000-foot mountain eight miles in north-east of Kyaukpadaung. The Japanese were here to hold the area strongly and entrusted the task to their 72nd Independent mixed Brigade at Yenangyaung. P.K.Sahgal met the commander of the Japanese army and assured the Japanese artillery and supplies. Bose arrived in Meiktila on 21st February while the British were reported to be advancing from Nyaungu. The situation on the front appeared confused. Shah Nawaz and Mehboob Ahmed proceeded to Mount Popa, for discovering the development and to gather information about the British.¹³⁴

Shah Nawaz and Mehboob reached Mount Popa by 22nd February. They found Sahgal well in control of the Headquarters of the 2nd Division and that Dhillon had managed to gather along only four hundred out of twelve hundred men. Shah Nawaz and Mehboob Ahmed returned to Meiktila on 25th February to report to Bose the information on the situation at Mount Popa. Considering the danger in the way they requested Bose not to head towards Mount Popa. But Bose was so determined to risk the journey to Mount Popa, as he understood that Burma was out of Japanese control and his only wish was to die fighting British. On 26th February the news reached that British has reached Mahlaing-ten miles north of Meiktila - and that they had blocked the roads between Meiktila and Mandalay and the connecting road of Meiktila and Kyaukpadaung. Without any way out Bose was virtually trapped in Meiktila.

¹³³ Ibid., p.137.

¹³⁴ Sugata Bose, *His Majesty's Opponent: Subhas Chandra Bose and India's struggle against empire*, New Delhi: Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd, 2011, p. 289.

Bose decided that he would get away to the south, toward Pyinmina, if it was possible. Shah Nawaz, Bose's doctor named Raju and a Japanese officer accompanied him. Shah Nawaz described the episode: "When we entered the car and started off, (at about 9 AM) Netaji was sitting with a loaded Tommy gun in his lap. Raju (Bose's doctor) had two hand grenades ready. The Japanese officer was holding another Tommy gun and I had a loaded Bren.... We all ready to open fire simultaneously. The Japanese officer stood on the foot-board of the car to be on the lookout for enemy aircraft."¹³⁵

During the first twenty miles of the journey there was no incident. As their car reached the village of Yindaw, the British aircraft loaded with machine guns started firing at the village. The village seemed to have been explored by the British spies. The planes were using ten-inch armour-piercing cartridge meant for destroying heavy tank and railway engines. It seems that by this time they were even looking for Bose. To escape from the firing they had to take shelter in a jungle in the outskirts of Yindaw till the dusk. Finally, Bose reached Pyinmina on 27th February.¹³⁶

Reaching Pyinmina, Bose formed a new fighting brigade from the remaining men of first division and named it "X regiment". He asked Thakur Singh to take the charge of this regiment and to take defensive positions at Yezin. The rest of the division was given under the command of Muhammad Arshad. The remaining two thousand and five hundred sick soldiers were sent to a rear post at Zeyawaddy ten miles away from the main front and instructed them to surrender if the British Army succeeded in breaking through the X regiment. Shah Nawaz was posted at Pyinmina to defend against British onslaught there and to fight his last battle there, to the last man and the last round. Till March 1945, the Burma front remained static throughout.¹³⁷

On 2nd March 1945, Bose was shattered by the news which came from the headquarters at Rangoon. Five officers from his second division posted at Mount

¹³⁵ Hugh Toye, *Subhas Chandra Bose: The Springing Tiger*, Mumbai: Jaico Publishing House, 2007, p.141.

¹³⁶ Sugata Bose, *His Majesty's Opponent: Subhas Chandra Bose and India's struggle against empire*, New Delhi: Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd, 2011, p. 290.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 190.

Popa had deserted their posts. Surrender leaflets signed by them had been dropped on INA positions and further mass desertions seemed certain. “He spared himself no pang: the blame was his: his men could refuse him nothing: such a disaster could never have happened had he been to Mount Popa himself. It had been a sure instinct that had impelled him and he had allowed himself to be diverted by the fears of others. There had been no danger, he knew that now; it had been weakness to listen to those so reasonable arguments and to be disillusioned so easily”.¹³⁸ On 7th March Shah Nawaz left for Mount Popa with the best and most reliable staff and officers. March 1945 brought further complication in the war being fought in Burma. The war situation became worse when one of the Japanese divisions was pulled back from the Burmese front in order to fight in Philippines. At this point it was decided to bring the Burmese National Defence Army (BNA) under the leadership of Aung San into action for the first time since it was formed. The BNA was trained for a year by the Japanese. On 15th March a parade was held in Rangoon in commemoration of their first participation in the war. Aung San turned against the Japanese and offered his assistance to the British, as the circumstances in the war have changed. The arrogance of the Japanese had not endeared them to the Burmese. But the Indians on Burmese soil were still staunch patriots and would not switch sides: their objective was to drive out the British from India. The Indians now reached an understanding with the Burmese not to fight against each other.¹³⁹ The reason behind the backfire in the case of BNA was the ill-treatment of the Burmese by the Japanese. Japan occupied Indochina and forced an uneasy collaboration on Thailand, and administered Malaya and Singapore in an atrocious manner. Japan ill-treated Burmese after conquering there country and after having done everything to alienate them, they trained the BNA and equipped it with modern weapons. The BNA did not miss the opportunity to use it against them.

By this time Bose became sensitive about the loyalty of INA. This could be perceived in the two special orders from him on 13th March regarding desertions. He

¹³⁸ Hugh Toye, *Subhas Chandra Bose: The Springing Tiger*, Mumbai: Jaico Publishing House, 2007, p.142.

¹³⁹ Sugata Bose, *His Majesty's Opponent: Subhas Chandra Bose and India's struggle against empire*, New Delhi: Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd, 2011, p.290. see also Tatsuo Hayashid, *Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose: His Great Struggle and Martyrdom*, trans. Biswanath Chatterjee, Calcutta: Allied Publisher, 1970, p.103.

had already authorised the death penalty for desertion and had ordered the INA police to list ‘undesirable officers’ who might still have escaped suspicion. Now he announced the observance of a ‘Traitors’ Day’ on which the INA units would compete in publicly dishonouring the deserters, and brought in a measure which had been in his mind for a long time: “Every member of the INA -officer, NCO or sepoy- will in future be entitled to arrest any other member of the INA, no matter what his rank may be, if he behaves in a cowardly manner, or to shoot him if he acts in treacherous manner.”¹⁴⁰

In March the INA operated under increasing difficulties as the supplies were running low. There was no wireless communication. Soldiers were sent into battle with no communications, with little transport, with few support weapons and far too little ammunition. They were left without boots and clothed in rags. There were several small actions by the INA during March, as Japanese attempts against the British bridgeheads were launched and thwarted. On 10th April, the INA hospital at Kyaukpadaung was blown up by British bombardment; eighty were killed and another thirty were injured badly. On 15th March, Dhillon’s regiment suffered heavy casualties in actions near Taungzing. On 20th April, the battalion of Sahgal’s regiment lead by Captain Bagri perished about twenty miles south of Taundwingyi, as they could not face the enemy tanks and armoured vehicles with their rifles and hand grenades. Late in March, one of Dhillon’s battalion commanders deserted. The rest decided that they will sacrifice their lives to maintain the honour of the INA. In Mount Popa the remaining army was hunted down by rapid air attacks and in response Sahgal was doing his best to produce counter-attack, but the platoons could not face the heavy air attack. Virtually, the whole of Sahgal’s 1st battalion including the Commander, all company commanders and about three hundred men had deserted. Knowing that the remaining could not face another attack, he withdrew them. Eventually on 29th April 1945, Sahgal became POW near Allanmyo; Shah Nawaz

¹⁴⁰ Hugh Toye, *Subhas Chandra Bose: The Springing Tiger*, Mumbai: Jaico Publishing House, 2007, p.142.

Khan and Gurbaksh Singh Dhillon were captured on 18th May near Pegu and with this the war of 2nd INA division came to an end.¹⁴¹

Captain Izumi, a Japanese officer of the 4th Guerrilla regiment, reported to his superiors on April 8th that:

“The commanding officers who have been favoured with Chandra Bose’s personal confidence, and assisted by letters and interviews with him, are devoted to upholding the honour of the INA, and full of enthusiasm for the war. However this is not the case with those of battalion and company commander’s rank ...

The Regimental Commander and his subordinates Recognise the power of the Imperial Army in its night fighting, its vicious pincer movements, and its close combat fighting. Their demands for material assistance, guns, planes, etc., are exorbitant as one might expect from their past record, and they are suited neither to the rough life of the trenchers nor to the violence of a night operation.

Generally speaking, they are unsuited to defensive warfare, and though they take the offensive on their front, they worry so intensely about the general war situation, that it is no exaggeration to say that a gallant and dashing attack by the INA is only a beautiful dream. However, there are some units of the INA that have lived up to the very highest standards of conduct in battle.”¹⁴²

Learning that the war in Burma was over, Bose sent some of his best troops to Moulmein on the way to Thailand and Malaya. Considering the war in Southeast Asia was still to be fought, one regiment of five thousand soldiers was left back in Rangoon under the command of A.D. Loganathan along with the able assistance of Mehboob Ahmed and R.M. Arshad. They were instructed to negotiate their surrender as POWs in case of emergency. Bose sent the Rani of Jhansi regiment with some other civilians to Malaya by Japanese trucks. Bose left from Rangoon with his ministers A.C. Chatterji and S.A. Ayer, his top military commanders M.Z. Kiani and J.K. Bhonsle, his Intelligence chief N.G.Swami, the head of the Hikari Kikan Lieutenant General Isoda Saburo and the ambassador Teruo Hachiya. Loganathan

¹⁴¹ Sugata Bose, *His Majesty’s Opponent: Subhas Chandra Bose and India’s struggle against empire*, New Delhi: Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd, 2011, pp.290-291. See also Hugh Toye, *Subhas Chandra Bose: The Springing Tiger*, Mumbai: Jaico Publishing House, 2007, pp.142-145.

¹⁴² Hugh Toye, *Subhas Chandra Bose: The Springing Tiger*, Mumbai: Jaico Publishing House, 2007, p.145.

surrendered with his men to 26th British Indian division on 4th May 1945. So the Indian independence movement peacefully ended in Burma. Seven hundred and fifty soldiers were taken to India for investigation by the month of May. Later they were followed by many thousands more from Rangoon and then from Malaya and Bangkok.

On 26th April the Rani of Jhansi Regiment crossed the Sittang river assisted by Swami and Shaukat Malik. Bose did not cross the river as he wanted to make sure that his entire entourage was safely on the other side of the river. Two of the trucks had been destroyed by air attack amidst the process. Bose and his column covered the last ten miles of the Sittang River on their foot; one young officer named Nazir Ahamed who was walking next to Bose was killed by machine gun fire from the air. On reaching Moulmein on 3rd May, the Rani of Jhansi Regiment was sent in a train to Bangkok under the charge of A.C.Chatterji and Shaukat Malik. The train could move only at night and had to be kept under camouflage colours on siding during daytime. Bose, after being assured of the safety of his Imphal veterans, resumed his journey by road toward Bangkok. He reached the Siam's capital on 15th May and reassembled his cabinet from Burma.¹⁴³

Understanding the war situation, Bose saw the immediate danger approaching towards Malaya and decided to withdraw the 3rd INA division from there and join them in Siam where the others from Burma have gathered. Bose still had a hope that the Japanese could recover, but knew that Japan would not be in a position to help him or his men if the Allied powers succeeded in beating Japanese resistance. In that case Russia was his only hope.

On 21st May, Bose addressed the public of Thailand. He gave the example of Turkey and Ireland in urging the Indians to fight for freedom. "It may be that we shall no go to Delhi via Imphal," he told those he had roused to unprecedented patriotic fervour with his slogan "Chalo Delhi!" "But the roads to Delhi are many," he assured them, "like the roads to Rome. And along one of these many roads we shall travel and

¹⁴³ Sugata Bose, *His Majesty's Opponent: Subhas Chandra Bose and India's struggle against empire*, New Delhi: Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd, 2011, p. 293

ultimately reach our destination, the metropolis of India.”¹⁴⁴ The address also contained a hidden appeal to Moscow; the conflict between the Russians and the West, he said, had already begun at San Francisco:

“The time is not far off when our enemies will realise that though they have succeeded in over throwing Germany, they have indirectly helped to bring into the arena of European politics another power-Soviet Russia-that may prove to be a greater menace to British and American imperialism than Germany was. The Provisional Government of Free India will continue to follow international development with the closest interest, and endeavour to take the fullest advantage of them. The fundamental principle of our foreign policy has been and will be –Britain’s enemy is India’s friend.”¹⁴⁵

5.8.3 Defeat in Burma

Bose realised that he needed help from outside to run the show. He realised the basic enmity of Russia towards the west and saw its influence rising in Eastern Asia. It might even be possible for him to preserve the FIPG in Moscow. But the Japanese were not in favour of Russian influence in Co-prosperity Sphere and had never entertained him to access the Russians in Tokyo. The growing danger of war with them was not likely to make the Japanese any less sensitive and he must be very careful of his approach now. Referring therefore to the inner ring of Japanese defence, Bose proposed in June that he be allowed to set up a ‘safe deposit’ government with in it, in Manchuria. If they allowed this, then Bose thought, it would be possible for him to continue his activity to the perimeter of Japanese resistance and then to escape to Russian territory if he had not been able to arrange something better. But unfortunately the Japanese refused the proposal of Bose.¹⁴⁶

In Bangkok, after assembling his troops, Bose found that he is running out of finance. The league funds in Siam had already been partly used for the supply purchases for Burma. Raghavan, his finance minister was called from Singapore. He

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., p.294.

¹⁴⁵ Hugh Toye, *Subhas Chandra Bose: The Springing Tiger*, Mumbai: Jaico Publishing House, 2007, p.155.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., p.155.

came with possible resources from Singapore and Ayer managed to get a loan from Thai government. Chatterji went to Saigon, and Sahay to Hanoi, to raise funds from the Indian Communities there. Bose went to Malaya after having an understanding with the Thai government and meeting with the INA's gunners in Thailand. The 3rd Guerrilla division was based in various parts of the peninsula, as the heavy-gun and tank battalions of the first division were not been taken to Burma.

Meanwhile in India, the then British Viceroy Archibald Wavell called for a conference in Simla to discuss the political progress after the war. The discussion in Simla was ruled out due to the disagreement of Mohammad Ali Jinnah's Muslim League and the INC. Bose again felt that it would be against the interest of India to go for a negotiation with Britain. There were so many new factors to be considered: the growth of nationalism in South-East Asia and the disappearance of European prestige, Burma's taste of freedom, the renewed sympathy of America with Indian aspirations. These would force the British to reconsider their position and the reconsideration would be done not by the Imperialist Churchill administration, but by the Labour Government which would surely replace it in July; by Cripps, Attlee, Bevin, the men he had met in 1938. A renewal of the Indian struggle now would turn the scale. Bose prepared a series of broadcasts and as the Bangkok Radio was not in working condition, went to Singapore and made a series of broadcasts from Singapore in June-urging the INC not to compromise with Britain at any cost.¹⁴⁷

On 8th July 1945 in Singapore, Bose laid the foundation stone for the memorial of the martyrs of the INA who scarified their lives for the cause of Indian freedom. Still having a strong belief that he had enough time, at least one year, to resume his action, he travelled north to Seremban and Kuala Lumpur by the end of July. But unfortunately the atom bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki on 6th and 9th August brought the war in East Asia to an unexpected end. On 10th August in Kuala Lumpur, Bose was informed by Inayat Kiani that Russia had declared war against Japan and the most unfortunate news came to him by 13th August that the Japanese were about to surrender.¹⁴⁸ Bose was worried about so many things, thinking about

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., p.157.

¹⁴⁸ Sugata Bose, *His Majesty's Opponent: Subhas Chandra Bose and India's struggle against empire*, New Delhi: Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd, 2011, p.297.

the future of his fight and his further moves. Bose then decided to leave for Singapore and made arrangements for Raghavan and Swami from Penang and John Thivy from Ipoh to meet him in Singapore. He reached Singapore by the evening of 13th August and called for an emergency conference with his civil and military chiefs. Arrangements were made to distribute sufficient money to INA soldiers and civilians associated with FIPG which would take care of them for at least another six months. Bose received the formal notice from Hachiya that it was decided in the cabinet meeting that Japan is surrendering: “The INA would be surrendered as it stood -there could be no disagreement about that- and all records would be destroyed.”¹⁴⁹ It was a difficult situation for everyone as nobody could imagine what Bose should do next. Even Bose was unable to reach a decision. He was not ready to stay back and face surrender like and with the rest. Bose was worried about the five hundred women of the Rani of Jhansi Regiment camp in Singapore and the forty five cadets he had sent to Tokyo for training in the army and air force. He arranged to send the women of the Rani of Jhansi Regiment safely to their homes. Bose enquired to Colonel Cyril John Stracey, an Anglo-Indian Officer of the INA who had arrived on 15th August 1945 to Singapore, whether he could raise the INA memorial on the sea face of Singapore before the British arrived there. Bose got a positive reply as he had expected.¹⁵⁰

The following afternoon brought the official announcement on radio of Japan’s surrender. Bose, with great disappointment, issued his last order of the day and a special message to Indians in East Asia. “The roads to Delhi are many,” he told his soldiers, “and Delhi still remains our goal. The sacrifices of your immortal comrades and yourselves will certainly achieve their fulfilment.”¹⁵¹ And to the Indian civilians who had responded with outstanding enthusiasm to his call for total mobilisation, he had this to say:

“Sister and Brothers, a glorious chapter in the history of India’s Struggle for freedom has just come to a close and in that chapter, the sons and daughters of India in East Asia will have an undying place.

¹⁴⁹ Hugh Toye, *Subhas Chandra Bose: The Springing Tiger*, Mumbai: Jaico Publishing House, 2007, p.164.

¹⁵⁰ Sugata Bose, *His Majesty’s Opponent: Subhas Chandra Bose and India’s struggle against empire*, New Delhi: Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd, 2011, p. 299.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 300.

You set a shining example of patriotism and self-sacrifice by pouring out men, money and material into the struggle for India's independence. I shall never forget the spontaneity and enthusiasm with which you responded to my call for 'Total Mobilization.' You sent an unending stream of your sons and daughters to the camps to be trained as soldiers of the Azad Hind Fauj and of the Rani of Jhansi Regiment. Money and material you poured lavishly into the war chest of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind. In short, you did your duty as true sons and daughters of India. I regret more than you do that your sufferings and sacrifice have not borne immediate fruit. But they have not gone in vain, because they have ensured the emancipation of our motherland and will serve as an undying inspiration to Indians all over the world. Posterity will bless your name, and will talk with pride about your offerings at the altar of India's freedom and about your positive achievement as well."¹⁵²

At 10_{pm} the following night, Bose called for a meeting of his cabinet and in the meeting it was decided that he should get out of Singapore. "The final decision", according to Ayer, "was out of Malaya definitely, to some Russian territory certainly, to Russia itself if possible." Bose conceded that it would be an "adventure into the unknown"¹⁵³ On 16th August, Bose sent a message to the Japanese; "Along with the trusted persons of my cabinet I would like to go to the Soviet Union. If it is necessary I shall enter the Soviet Union alone. In that case I request the Japanese Government to allow any of my cabinet members to take charge."¹⁵⁴ One important Japanese source indicates that the Japanese agreed to help Bose reach Manchuria and to make contact with the advancing Soviet army.

5.9 Bose's Last Journey and Death

According to Bose's request, the Southern army headquarters brought the matter to IGHQ. The instruction from IGHQ was not in favour of Bose's idea: "Mr. Bose should know better than to write off Japan and go over to Russia after having

¹⁵² Ibid., p.300.

¹⁵³ Ibid., p.301.

¹⁵⁴ Leonard A Gordon, *Brother Against the Raj: A Biography of Indian Nationalists Sarat and Subhas Chandra Bose*, New Delhi: Rupa & co, 2005, p. 538.

received whole-hearted assistance and co-operation from Japan.”¹⁵⁵ But Bose was successful in convincing Field-Marshal Terauchi about his idea of seeking help from Russia. Terauchi, at his own risk, decided to help Bose and arranged a special aeroplane to Saigon, Manchuria, to fly to Dairen first via Taihoku. His idea was to reach Manchuria and surrender to Russian Army and then to decide how best he could achieve his ultimate objective. Bose was to take his flight from Saigon. On 17th August 1945, with his team Bose left from Bangkok airport to Saigon where a single seat on a twin engine Japanese bomber (model 97-2-Sally) was waiting for Bose and ready to leave Saigon. Then the question arose whether Bose should go alone. It might seem that he was running away from being captured by the British. Even though his plan was to take all his cabinet with him; considering the situation and arrangement made for him, he enquired whether one more seat could be provided. The arrangement was made for one more seat and Bose decided that Habib-ur-Rahman would accompany him. Bose took leave from all those who were gathered there saying ‘Jai Hind’ and ‘I will see you later’¹⁵⁶. The plane took off at 5.15pm, reached Tourane by evening, resumed again next day and reached Taihoku in Formosa on 18th August for refuelling at about 2.30p.m. Resuming the flight again, the plane lost a part of its port propeller and was in fire the next moment. The plane crashed in Taihoku, on its way to Dairen, resulting in fatal burns on Bose’s face and eventually leading to his death on 18th August 1945 in the Nanmon Army Hospital, Taihoku. The following were his last words to Habib-ur-Rahman: “I do not think I will survive this accident. When you go back to the country, tell my countrymen that I have fought for freedom to the last. And nobody could now keep our country in bondage, they should continue the struggle. India will be free before long.”¹⁵⁷

On 19th August the IGHQ sent a telegram to the Formosan Headquarters saying that his body should be sent to Tokyo by plane. The first telegram was followed by another telegram asking not to send the body to Tokyo but to cremate it

¹⁵⁵ Tatsuo Hayashid, *Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose: His Great Struggle and Martyrdom*, trans. Biswanath Chatterjee, Calcutta: Allied Publisher, 1970, p.107.

¹⁵⁶ Hugh Toye, *Subhas Chandra Bose: The Springing Tiger*, Mumbai: Jaico Publishing House, 2007, p.166.

¹⁵⁷ Tatsuo Hayashid, *Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose: His Great Struggle and Martyrdom*, trans. Biswanath Chatterjee, Calcutta: Allied Publisher, 1970, p.143.

in Taihoku.¹⁵⁸ No reason was given for this change of orders. On 20th August, the body was cremated in the Presence of Col. Habib-ur-Rahman, Major Nagatomo from the Formosan Army Command Headquarters, Mr Juchi Nakamura (Interpreter), a Buddhist priest and the manager of the crematorium.

After five days of Bose's death, on 23rd August, the Domei agency of Japan broadcast the news of his death. After hearing the news of Bose's death, Gandhi wrote: "Subhas Bose has died well. He was undoubtedly a patriot, though misguided."¹⁵⁹ On 15th February 1946 Gandhi gave one of his fullest evaluations of Bose and the INA in an article where he skilfully selected what he wanted: 'communal and class unity, self-sacrifice and discipline.' He also said that Shah Nawaz had declared that Bose's last wish were for the INA to return India, retain their discipline and patriotism, but act non-violent and help the Congress. This suited Gandhi perfectly. Gandhi had assimilated the INA troops into his non-violent army. He had given due recognition to Bose, but discarded his use of violent means.¹⁶⁰

News of Bose's death reassured the British military services to some extent, according to a secret report:

"The Japanese report of Bose's death is also a matter of considerable importance not only in the political arena but also to those concerned with security: the continued existence of Netaji would undoubtedly maintain the fervour of the many, military and civilian, who came under what was almost a spell. Bose's established death would solve the difficult problem of dealing with him but his patriotism and activities are likely to hold an important place in the nationalist mind."¹⁶¹

5.10 INA Trials

Meanwhile there had been deliberations on the part of the British on the course of action to be taken against their enemies and prisoners of war, which included Bose

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., p.118.

¹⁵⁹ Leonard A Gordon, *Brother Against the Raj: A Biography of Indian Nationalists Sarat and Subhas Chandra Bose*, New Delhi: Rupa & co, 2005, p.551.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., p.552.

¹⁶¹ Document no 109. 'Note by Military intelligence, L/W/S/1/1506: f 44, secret no. 10005/3/GSI(b), dated 14th September 1945, in Nicholas Mansergh, editor in chief, *The Transfer of Power 1942 -1947: Volume VI*, London: Her Majesty's Stationery office, 1967, p. 262.

and the INA. At the end of the war, the members of the INA, the PGFI and the IIL were brought back to India. The British began to consider what action it would take on the matter of Bose and the INA. As the rightful government of India, as the British saw itself, it moved towards the position that it would publicly try and punish those who had waged war against the King-Emperor and were furthermore 'traitors' to India for fighting along with her enemies. However, as more and more information came back both to the British officials and to Indians at the end of the news-blackout that had been practiced by the British for the duration of the war, the situation became more complex.

Bose undoubtedly had many enemies amongst the officials of the British and Whitehall, who would have liked nothing better than to see him, if he were alive, and his entire organization tried and severely punished for their crimes against the Raj. The British seemed to have some information that Bose was not dead as popularly conceived and that he was in hiding somewhere, possibly in Russia. Yet there were many considerations to be made before a trial could even be attempted, as Sir R.F. Mudie explained to Sir Evan Meredith Jenkins, the Home Member on the viceroy's council in August 1945 in a top secret document: "I have examined your suggestion that Bose be treated as a 'war criminal'. He clearly is not one in the ordinary sense of the word. Nor does he appear to come within the extended definition which has now been adopted by the United Nations."¹⁶²

Another problem was that the British Empire was tackling the issue of those who fought alongside the Japanese on a case-by-case basis across South and Southeast Asia. In Burma they were not taking action against the leader of the Burma National Army which had defected back to the British side in March 1945, to be humane to them and not doing this to Bose could again create political headaches in India. Singapore and Malaya seemed quite enough at the time; but the former had been the epicentre of the Indian nationalist movement and a trial there could be equally problematic. Mudie summarized the possibilities as follows:

¹⁶² Amalendu Guha, *Netaji Subhas Ideology and Doctrine*, Kolkata: institute for Alternative Development Research, 2003, p.75.

- “ 1. Bring him back to India and try him either for waging war or under the enemy agents ordinance.
2. Have him tried by a court in Burma or Malaya for waging war against the king in that country.
3. Leave him to be tried by a military court outside India.
4. Intern him in India.
5. Intern him in some other British possession. e.g. Seychelles Islands
6. Leave him where he is and don't ask for his surrender.
7. I do not think that there is much chance of Bose being hanged if he were tried in India. The pressure for his release would be too great; and also his trial would result in great publicity for his doings, motives, etc.
8. It is extremely unlikely that the Government of Burma, which is engaged in appeasing the Burma National Army, would agree to try Bose and even more unlikely that if they did, they would hang him. The Government of Malaya might possibly have no such scruples and we might get a hanging if His Majesty's Government agreed to ignore agitation in India and Parliament however strong.
- But a trial in Singapore would cause almost as much agitation in this country as a trial here, unless it was held in camera and no news released till after his execution. But in that case we would be accused of judicial murder.
9. In many ways the easiest course would be to leave him where he is and not ask for his release. He might, of course, in certain circumstances, be welcomed by the Russians. This course would raise fewest immediate political difficulties, but the security authorities consider that in certain circumstances his presence in Russia would be so dangerous to rule it out altogether.
10. The choice seems to be between deporting and interning Bose outside India or trying him in India and commuting the death sentence. The two might be combined and Bose deported (or “transported”) after conviction.”¹⁶³

According to affidavit submitted by Sham Lal, steno of Asaf Ali: On 27th December 1945, Nehru sent a letter to Clement Attlee to inform him that Bose has been given shelter by Stalin and that he should take up the matter with Stalin:

¹⁶³ Ibid., pp.76-77.

“Mr. Clement Attlee,
Prime Minister of Britain,
10, Downing Street, London

Dear Mr. Attlee.

I have come to know from a reliable source that Subhas Chandra Bose, your war criminal has been allowed to enter Russian territory by Stalin. This is a clear treachery and betrayal of faith by the Russians. As Russia has been an ally of the British-Americans, it should not have been done. Please take note of it and do what you consider proper and fit.

Yours sincerely,

Jawaharlal Nehru”¹⁶⁴

Nehru had foreseen that the only possible political threat to him would be Bose, if he was alive and came back to India. Nehru had said in 1943 that he would personally go to the front and fight Bose and Japanese if they invaded India. Nehru during his rule always favoured Russia by taking their side at every possible turn. This course of Indian foreign policy, culminated in the Indo-Soviet friendship, was later completed by his daughter Indira Gandhi who continued the secret arrangement as she was also afraid of the possibility of Bose’s return; in that case he will be made prime minister.¹⁶⁵ In 1971 Indira Gandhi ratified International War Criminal Treaty with retrospective effect for 30 years (1945-75) to preclude any possible appearance of Bose in public.

It was finally decided by the upper echelons of the British to give the green light to the INA Officers Trial and it was set for early November 1945. In the first instance when the men and women of the INA were brought back for trial along with the soldiers of the Indian Legion in Europe, news began to spread across the country of their deeds on the borders of India and abroad, as Michael Edwardes observed,

¹⁶⁴ Amalendu Guha, *Netaji Subhas Ideology and Doctrine*, Kolkata: institute for Alternative Development Research, 2003, P.viii.

¹⁶⁵ Leonard A Gordon, *Brother Against the Raj: A Biography of Indian Nationalists Sarat and Subhas Chandra Bose*, New Delhi: Rupa & co, 2005, p.608.

“The death of Bose was now public knowledge and he had acquired a halo of martyrdom and apotheosis.”¹⁶⁶

During this time, British India was administered through the Defense of India Act of 1939. General Wavell was promoted to the Rank of Field Marshal and then was appointed as Viceroy of India in 1943, as the Supreme Head of the Civil Administration. On the other hand, Vice-Admiral Lord Mountbatten -the Supreme Commander of Allied Forces for India, South East and Far East Asian countries- was the Defecto-Adviser to the British Indian Government and Philip Mason was the War Secretary of the Government of British India. He was one of the pivotal-planner and executor of all affairs of the War basing India. His role was of course behind the screen and afar from public eye. About the Azad Hind Fauj Mason concluded: “In military law, they thus committed the offences of mutiny, desertion and waging war against the King.”¹⁶⁷

Therefore, the charges against the INA personnel were so grave that the only punishment that could be inflicted was to be shot on the spot. A majority of the INA personnel were from British Indian Defence Service and according to penal law mutiny, desertion and waging war against the master was the most dangerously serious act for military personnel. Here again, consideration has to be given to the position of the instigator who organized them, who influenced them to raise arms and fight against the master. The position of Bose, thus, was quite precarious that one could refer to the comment made by Lord Zetland, the Secretary of State for India, on 2nd December 1936 as was reported in the Times: “Bose is a man who, while of great ability had always directed his ability to destructive purposes.”¹⁶⁸

Lord Zetland’s opinion was an exemplary comment because such a comment was never uttered about any other nationalist leader of India; reason behind that could be that all nationalist leaders except Bose were co-operative and actively assisted the British Rulers to such extent that the Rulers determined the theme of Struggle for

¹⁶⁶ Michael Edwardes, *The Last Years of British India*, London: Cassell, 1963, p.92.

¹⁶⁷ Usha Ranjan Bhattacharjee, *Netaji was Murdered in Red Fort*, Calcutta: International Books, 1990, p.110.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p.110.

Independence. Therefore, Bose was identified singly and treated as Enemy. Lord Zetland's opinion further corroborates the notion of Philip Mason too, in mid-1945. But the process was changed due to changed political situation in the country to cause a smoke screen to confuse the public eye; they adopted a process of appreciation and using glamorous adjectives. Mason said:

“One must respect such a man as Subhas Chandra Bose, who resigned from Indian Civil Service because he sincerely believed it is his duty to India, that respect can hardly be extended to all who changes sides in adversity and who a second time choose the more comfortable path. ...But it would be wrong to imply that opportunism was the sole motive. The story of Mohan Singh provides one example of an officer who made his choice from a genuine conviction and was prepared to suffer for his belief. And personality of Bose must have been overriding factor with many.”¹⁶⁹

Regarding the fate of INA soldiers, the British authorities were in a spot of bother and had to take a decision soon after the end of the war. Mason said:

“The Japanese overreached themselves and were defeated in long stubborn battle for Imphal. General Slim's victorious army poured southward thorough Burma, and the INA disillusioned, defeated, starving and in rags crawled in to surrender, by two's and three's, by platoons, by battalions. By international and military law, they could have been tried by court martial for mutiny and desertion and shot on the spot. But clearly the problem was a big one with political implications; it was not faced at that time as there was too much to do and they were sent back to India as though they had been prisoners of War. The Indian Public at this stage did not know of their existence. But when the war with Japan suddenly ended, the problem could be postponed no longer; the public had to be told about the INA and the Government had to decide what was to be done with them.”¹⁷⁰

Mason's analytical comment made the position of Bose and INA after the war clear. The proposed decision was that: “All were guilty of an offence legally punishable by death, but of course there could be no question of executing twenty five

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., p.111.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., p.111.

thousand men. It would have been cruel, apolitical and unjust.”¹⁷¹ So the British decided to try and convict some of the officers of the INA. The first and main trial was conducted by the military court in the Red Fort on 5th November 1945. It was initially recommended that the trials be held in some isolated place where it would not attract public attention. But General Auchinleck was sure that the charges against the defendants would shock public opinion and gave orders for the trials to be conducted in a public and accessible place. The Red Fort was chosen because a limited number of spectators and the Press could witness the proceedings. The British made it easier for all Indians to identify with the defendants by choosing to try together a Muslim, Captain Shah Nawaz Khan, a Hindu, Captain Prem Kumar Sahgal, and a Sikh, Lieutenant G.S. Dhillon. Distinguished lawyers and noted nationalists with legal credentials rushed to join the defense team. As the trial went forward, Nehru went on to extol the patriotism of the INA soldiers. Nehru in his remark also touched on one of the crucial issues involved in the INA trial and its impact: “the problem of the loyalty of the Indian army to the British. The British rulers had decided to try the INA officers to show that disloyalty to one’s oath to the King-Emperor would be punished. They expected that Indian troops and the Indian public would see the point. What they did not foresee was the powerful political impact that the story of the INA would have on a nation primed for independence after the war. After all, this war, like the First World War, had been fought by the British and their allies in the name of democracy and self-determination.”¹⁷² Even though Congress party supported the INA it was against the exploitation of Indian resources for European imperialist countries which is formulated as a national policy. India’s defence in this regard was considered as simple and weak by the then Viceroy Linlithgow and he expected that India would join hands with British against the Axis.¹⁷³

It is clear that the British viewed the INA movements as treacherous. Two charges- “waging war against the King, and murder and abetment of murder”¹⁷⁴- were brought forward by the prosecution. Lieutenant Gurbaksh Singh Dhillon was charged

¹⁷¹ Ibid., p.111.

¹⁷² Leonard A Gordon, *Brother Against the Raj: A Biography of Indian Nationalists Sarat and Subhas Chandra Bose*, New Delhi: Rupa & co, 2005, pp.552-553.

¹⁷³ William F. Kuracina, ‘Sentiments and Patriotism: The Indian National Army, General Elections and the Congress’s Appropriation of the INA Legacy’, *Modern Asian Studies* 44,4 (2010). p. 833.

¹⁷⁴ Joyce Chapman Lebra, *The Indian National Army and Japan*, Singapore: ISEAS, 2008, p.202.

with the murder of four people; Captain P.K. Sahgal was charged with abetment of murder of the same four; and Captain Shah Nawaz Khan was charged with treason/waging war against the King.¹⁷⁵

“The accused No.IC 58 Capt. Shah Nawaz Khan, 1/14th Punjab Regiment; No IC 226 Capt., P.K Sahgal, 2/10th Baluch Regiment, and No, IC 336 Lt. Gubakhsh Sing Dhillon, 1/14th Punjab Regiment, all attached C.S.D.I.C. Delhi, Indian Commissioned Officers, are charged with committing a civil offence, that is to say, waging war against the King contrary to section 121, Indian Penal Code, in that they together at Singapore, in Malaya, at Rangoon in the vicinity of Popa, in the vicinity of Kyaukpadaung, and elsewhere in Burma, between the month of September 1942 and the 26th day of April 1945 did wage war against His Majesty the King-Emperor of India.”¹⁷⁶

The prosecution called thirty witnesses and the defiance called twelve. The trial continued until 31st December. The defence challenged the validity of the trial and the jurisdiction of the tribunal. The defence argued that the acts for which the defendants were being court-martialled were acts committed as members of the army of the Provisional Government of Free India and that the INA and FIPG were independent and not under control of the Japanese. Hence the defendants could not be tried under the Indian Army Act and Criminal Law of India for their individual actions.

The defence counsel also contended that the INA was acting independently and that it was not a puppet army of the Japanese. Evidence of the recognition of the FIPG by Japan, of Japan’s transfer of the Andaman and Nicobar islands to the FIPG, and of the dispatching of Mr Hachiya as Japanese Minister to the FIPG was produced. Defence counsel also cited the agreement between the FIPG and Japanese military authorities to turn over captured Indian territory to the FIPG. The FIPG actually administered the region of Zeawaddy in Burma and part of Manipur state in India, according to evidence introduced by the defence. These actions were presented as

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., p.203.

¹⁷⁶ Moti Ram ed., *Two Historic Trials in Red Fort: an Authentic Account of the Trial by a General Court Martial of Captain Shah Nawaz Khan, Captain P. K. Sahgal and Lt. G. S. Dhillon; and The Trial by a European Military Commission of Emperor Bahadur Shah*, New Delhi: Moti Ram, 1946, pp.2-3.

evidence that Japan recognized the independent existence of the FIPG and its army, the INA.

The defence also argued that the FIPG was a functioning government and that it was entitled by international law to wage war for the purpose of liberating India. “What is on trial before the Court is the right to wage war with immunity on the part of a subject race for their liberation.”¹⁷⁷ The defence sought to uphold this right by citing precedents in international law and by examining witnesses who testified to the independent action of the INA and FIPG. The defence counsel maintained that the ratio of INA to Japanese troops was irrelevant to the question of the independence of the INA. S.A. Ayer testified that the Japanese had attempted to appoint a Japanese chairman for the War Co-operation Council and that Bose had successfully resisted this demand. Ayer also testified that INA broadcasts were made independently and not under any Japanese control or coercion.¹⁷⁸

Shah Nawaz in a preliminary statement to counsel stated that Colonel Iwakuro had agreed that no coercion would be used in INA’s administration and that Indians would be able to continue in the INA or leave on their own choice. This supported another contention of the defence that Indian POWs were not forced into enlisting in the INA, contrary to the suggestions of the prosecution. Shah Nawaz had also told the men under his command, on the eve of battle in the Imphal campaign, that the INA was in no way subservient to Japan and “If and when India is made free and the Japanese who are now helping us try to subdue us, we shall fight them.”¹⁷⁹ Captain P.K. Sahgal, in an interview with J.P. Chander, also reiterated the independence of the INA. “When we started the INA movement we firmly believed that if the Japanese withdrew their support or did not agree to our terms, we should be in a position to attain enough strength to follow our course of action independently, and, if need be, to oppose them... we were determined not to be dictated by any outsider.”¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁷ Lebra, Joyce, Chapman. (2008). *The Indian National Army and Japan*. Singapore: ISEAS, p.203

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., P.204.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., p.204.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., p.204.

Some Indian statements, however, contradicted the defence case about the independence of the INA. Lieutenant Gurbaksh Singh Dhillon, in a preliminary statement to counsel, stated, “I was a Japanese tool which I hated to be ... receiving orders from a Jap liaison officer with whom I was always at logger heads.”¹⁸¹ Lieutenant Dhillon, at one point, had ordered the officers and men under him to have no direct dealings with the Hikari Kikan or with any Japanese officer, and to report to headquarters in case they were approached by Japanese.

The defence counsel called five Japanese witnesses. These were men who had been involved with the Indian independence movement and particularly with the INA. Japanese witnesses summoned for the defence were: Ota Saburo of the Gaimusho, Matsumoto Shun’ichi - Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sawada Renzo - Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs and ex-Ambassador to Burma, Hachiya Teruo- Japanese Minister to the FIPG and Lieutenant-General Katakura Tadasu of the Burma Area Army. The Japanese delegation which left Tokyo on 10th December 1945 was faced with a dilemma regarding the posture they should adopt in the court martial of the three INA officers. The INA had actually been fighting under Japanese command at Imphal; but Bose had always claimed that the INA had been an independent army and the defence was now maintaining that version. The Japanese delegation opted to testify according to the wishes of the defendants. Japanese witnesses had no desire to see the Indians with whom they had cooperated convicted of treason against their British colonial master.

Ota Saburo of the Gaimusho introduced documentary evidence that Japan recognized the free and independent status of the FIPG. Matsumoto, who was Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs and chief of the Treaty Bureau during the war, testified in court that the Japanese Government had helped Bose and the INA for two reasons: to promote Japan’s own war aims and also to help India achieve independence, which was one of Japan’s war aims. Regarding the meaning of independence, Matsumoto testified that though Japanese troops were present in Manchukuo, Nanking and the Philippines, the Japanese Government recognized those governments as independent. Lieutenant-General Katakura testified that the “INA were allotted a separate

¹⁸¹ Ibid., p.204.

operational role in the battle of Imphal under the control of the Japanese. When there were no operations in progress, the INA and the Japanese were independent. When an operation was in progress they came under the command of the Japanese higher command.”¹⁸² He testified that captured territory was to be turned over to the Provisional Government of Azad Hind, under an agreement signed by Terauchi and Bose. Further supporting the independent status of the INA, Katakura testified that the Japanese Army never used the INA soldiers as labourers. The testimony of Japanese witnesses in court amounted to six pages in all. The Japanese testimony and role during the war were reported favourably in the Indian Press.

In mid-October 1945, Fujiwara was summoned as a witness in Delhi. The summons had come from Allied Army Headquarters in Southeast Asia. Ex-Premier Tojo, Foreign Minister Shigemitsu, Navy Minister Shimada, Southern Army commander Marshal Terauchi and Burma Area Army commander General Kawabe were also summoned. But these men, all suspected as class A war criminals, were detained in Tokyo. On reaching India, Fujiwara found that the court martial was a gross British miscalculation. Fujiwara watched as Gandhi and Nehru took advantage of the blunder to mobilize anti-British opinion. It was as if Congress had laid a snare and the British had been caught. Newspapers and Protest demonstrations were held in Delhi, Calcutta, Lahore and Madras as the trial began. The court martial in effect was finally trying the British for their actions in controlling Indian for the past two hundred year. Fujiwara was anxious to testify in Delhi on behalf of his INA and *F Kikan* comrades. He attested that his Indian friends had risen to fight for Indian independence and not as Japanese puppets. He also read of his own role in the Farrer Park transfer of the British-Indian prisoners at Singapore. The whole history of Bose and the INA unfolded daily in the Press during the trial.

After the defense and prosecution summed up, the court convicted the accused and sentenced them to transportation for life imprisonment. But now, Auchinleck had to pay some attention to the vehement support and demonstrations for the accused in the public arena. He reflected on the matter and then made his decision, taking military and political consideration into account. If he had the three officers

¹⁸² Ibid., p.206.

transported for life, the demonstrations and negative publicity would continue. His conclusions read in part:

“As regards confirmation of the sentence for ‘waging war’, I hold that it is our abject to dispose of this most difficult problem of how to deal with the so-called ‘INA’, in such a way as to leave the least amount of bitterness and racial feeling in the minds of the peoples of India and Britain...and at the same time to establish in law that those who joined the ‘INA’ committed a crime against the State.... It is of no use trying to judge these unfortunate people by the standards which we apply to British officers and men captured by the enemy... a great number of them... believe that Subhas Chandra Bose was a genuine patriot... Bose acquired a tremendous influence over them... the accused might have acted in good faith, forsaking their original allegiance. It is quite obvious that this is the general opinion held in India, not only by the public, but...by the quite a considerable part of the Indian Army as well. ”¹⁸³

Since he said that he did not want to make them Martyrs and have the ‘political campaign of bitterness and racial antipathy’¹⁸⁴ continue, he decided to commute the sentence of all three to ‘one of cashiering and forfeiture of pay and allowance’.¹⁸⁵ With this Lieutenant Gurbaksh Singh Dhillon, Captain P.K. Sahgal and Captain Shah Nawaz Khan were dismissed from the Army and released. They have been lionized ever since as the three heroes of the INA and the Red Fort trial.

Though the first trial concluded at the close of 1945, the trials of other INA defendants continued into early 1946. On 24th April 1946, Nehru issued a statement to the British conveying his disagreement with further trials on the matter; and the British closed the INA trials and released all the defendants.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸³ Leonard A Gordon, *Brother Against the Raj: A Biography of Indian Nationalists Sarat and Subhas Chandra Bose*, New Delhi: Rupa & co, 2005, pp.554-555.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., p.555.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., p.555.

¹⁸⁶ Joyce Chapman Lebra, *The Indian National Army and Japan*, Singapore: ISEAS, 2008, p. 209.

CHAPTER VI

Conclusion

In the history of Indian independence movement, the two most widely known figures are Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru. Subhas Chandra Bose is comparatively less familiar, a man of comparable stature who admired Gandhi but despaired at his aims and methods, and became a bitter rival of Nehru. Bose played a very active and prominent role in India's political life during most of the 1930s, and from Southeast Asian countries in early 1940s. He was twice elected President of the Indian National Congress (1938 and 1939), the country's most important political force that fought for freedom from the British rule.

In the galaxy of the Indian freedom fighters, Bose was like a shooting star that was so bright for a while but soon faded out of the scenario. The thesis outlines how Bose collaborated with the Axis powers during the Second World War and worked tirelessly to secure German and Japanese support in freeing his homeland from the foreign rule. During the final two years of the war, Bose -with considerable Japanese backing- led the forces of the Indian National Army into battle against the British. Japan surrendered after the US bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and with the surrender of Japan in the Second World War; the scope of INA was significantly reduced that was followed by the unfortunate plane crash in Taipei. A look at his eventful life makes it clear that no other anti-British personality managed to achieve the level of alarm that Bose had imposed on the British. From 1921 to 1945, Bose's life was an uncompromising struggle against the British rule in India. He began his career as a freedom fighter by dishonouring the British by resigning from the elite and prestigious British Indian Civil Service in 1921. He was the first Indian to do so for the cause of Indian freedom.

Chapter two, *Ideology and Political Vision of Subhas Chandra Bose in Early Life*, discusses the political vision of Bose, which he nurtured and evolved over a considerable amount of time in India and abroad. It discusses briefly the childhood of Bose and his education by means of schools and Gurus. It also delineates the growth of his dynamic personality through events and episodes from his life; the

transformation of a reserved, serious boy who was an avid reader into an introspective youth who searched for spiritual ideals and turned his mind on ideas of religious truth, self-control and psychic harmony. Bose was born during the period when India, particularly Bengal, was going through a dynamic transition. Old ideas and institutions were coming under the challenge of the new liberal rational tradition. The era of political moderation was facing the challenge of a group of firebrand nationalists during the formative years of Bose. Militant nationalism was on the ascendancy and the atmosphere was clouded with ideas of reform movements and political agitation. The liberal idea that the British rule was for the benefit of Indian people was fast losing its currency and the era of 'petition and prayers' was nearing its end. All these were most prominently felt in Bengal and this played a significant role in moulding his political outlook.

During his school days, the then Headmaster of Ravenshaw Collegiate School, Beni Madhav Das inspired the idealist in Bose and sowed the seeds of revolution in him by supporting his anti-British sentiments. During his college days he was fascinated by the sadhus and pilgrims around the place and was attracted by Yoga and mysticism. Later he was influenced much by the teachings of Vivekananda and Ramakrishna Paramahansa. The gist of Viveknanda's teachings was "Atmano Mokshatham Jagadhitaycha (Strike for your own Salvation and for the good of humanity)."¹ This helped him in being resolute in the goal of his life.

Bose believed that the British rule was responsible for the miserable condition of India and that the British are to be driven out of the country to regain the past glory of India. The mystic in Bose offered him both the mental strength and moral certitude in the pursuit of his life's sole mission: the liberation of India from British domination. After his graduation from India, he left for England in order to join the Indian Civil Service according to his father's wishes. During his stay in England he realised the shortcomings in INC. Despite the luxurious career at hand, he made up his mind to join the INC and make a difference there and serve his country.

¹ Hari Hara Das, *Subhas Chandra Bose and the Indian National Movement*, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Private Limited, 1983, p. 217.

As discussed in the third chapter, *Subhas Chandra Bose and the Indian National Congress*, there were a number of differences between Bose and other mainstream INC leaders such as Gandhi, Nehru and Vallabhbhai Patel. It is worth noting that as far as academic and career background went, Bose differed greatly from the aforementioned major Indian leaders of his time. Bose had studied philosophy and was about to enter a career in civil service when he joined the Indian freedom struggle whereas Gandhi, Patel and Nehru were lawyers. At a time in the 1920s when Indian mainstream anti-colonial nationalist politics and politicians were strictly operating on the Gandhian policy of strict non-violence and civil disobedience and a gradualist policy for the departure of the British rule, Bose stood alone for a radical policy to oust them from the Indian subcontinent. By 1934, the British had already classified Bose as ‘the implacable foe of British rule in India’.

As early as in 1937, Bose advocated officially for complete independence of India in the Madras session of the INC when the official resolution supported only the Dominion Status. In the 1930s he became fascinated with authoritarianism of the Italian model and sought to amalgamate it with Soviet-style Communism in what he himself called a ‘synthesis’ and apply it to the Indian subcontinent in the post-British phase as the framework for a new Indian state. Bose admired the founder of modern Turkey, Kamal Ataturk, whom he considered to be one of the greatest creative statesmen of this century and whom he tried to emulate in several ways.

In 1931 he opposed the Gandhi-Irwin Pact and in 1939, at the Tripuri Congress, he called for issuing an ultimatum to the British to grant India Independence. Gandhi and the other mainstream leaders opposed it. This illustrates the complexities and conflicts of an anti-imperialist Third World nationalist struggle to frame a militantly revolutionary response to colonial imperialism. The contradictions could not have been more apparent: The scion of an upper-middle class family, educated at Cambridge University and trained for entry into the prestigious and elite British Indian Civil Service, Bose rejected the British, Britain's Westminster-style democracy, sought to overthrow the British Empire in the subcontinent by violent means, radically overhaul what he considered were out-dated and decaying Indian institutions and usher in a new post-colonial society along nationalist and socialist lines.

The Congress and the British were alarmed by Bose's fast-growing youth following as he became the idol of Indian youth and emerged as their natural leader in the comparatively short span of his political career, because of his extreme radical views and the uncompromising stance towards British. He presided over a number of youth organisations and tried to make the students and youth conscious of the great responsibility they have to shoulder in the building of a new India. "They have been inspired by the vision of a better world and under that inspiration have endeavoured to reconstruct society."²

Nehru and Bose joined the INC almost together with similar lines of thought, but Nehru was won over by Gandhi to his side by tact and temptation in due course of time. However, Bose remained firm on his radical ideals and principles while Nehru found that supporting Gandhi was more beneficial in building up his career in Indian politics rather than being with Bose as Bose's radical ideas were not supported by the mainstream leaders of INC. In 1938 Bose was elected as Congress president. During his tenure as Congress president, Bose reinforced the opposition of the Congress to Britain and its administration. Against the wishes of Gandhi, he started a nation-wide propaganda for mass struggle against the imperialist rule. This annoyed Gandhi and when Bose contested for a second term in order to give perfect shape to his programme of action, he found it difficult as Gandhi and his supporters opposed it. Gandhi gambled by nominating Pattabhi Sitaramayya against him and was alarmed and shocked by the defeat of his candidate. This made Gandhi to thwart Bose in every possible way and Bose ultimately found it impossible to function as Congress President. He tried his best to preserve the unity in Congress but failed and tendered his resignation as the president. He then formed the Forward Bloc within the Congress and through the Forward Bloc he attempted to realise his dream of consolidating the leftist forces within the Congress, which did not succeed as he had hoped for.

The political reverses suffered by Bose like the expulsion from the Congress or the failure to rally the Forward Bloc under one banner did not dampen his spirit to fight against the British. Bose urged the people of India to launch an all-out offensive against Britain when he saw that the outbreak of Second World War was the best

² Subhas Chandra Bose, *Selected Speeches of Subhas Chandra Bose*, India: publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Govt. of India, 1962, p.46.

opportunity to set India free from the British. As Britain was locked in a battle of life and death with the Axis powers, he believed that Britain's adversity was India's opportunity. He failed to get any cooperation from Gandhi and Nehru as they still counted on the good sense of the British.

This proves that Bose was the one who had a definite vision about the war scenario and an understanding of the International situation as Michael Edwards Observes:

“Other Congress leaders had no such clear-cut vision of the future. Gandhi and Nehru had to take advantage of Britain's troubles. Gandhiji's sympathies were with Britain and France ‘from a purely humanitarian stand point’. Nehru with his touching faith in democracy, not practised by the British in India, was an opponent of fascism”.³ Bose continued his movement and met Jinnah and Savarkar for their support, which did not help him much as he was imprisoned soon. He set his mind to continue his fight for the country from outside the country as he found that it was not possible to achieve his goal of liberating the country in his own way by being in the INC due to ideological and radical differences with dominant leaders; and there was no possibility of organising a modern army inside India to start an armed revolution against the British.

Chapter four, *Subhas Chandra Bose and his Strategies for Armed Struggle*, discusses his decision to go to occupied Europe in March 1941 which turned out to be a critical strategic error as he was far away from South Asia during the Quit India struggle and when the Imperial Japanese armies were on the Indo-Burma border. Though he broadcast inspiring messages to Indians from Europe and Asia, having an Indian leader of Bose's stature to co-ordinate anti-British activities in India would have been invaluable. Instead of going to Germany, he would have gone to Russia had he received a favourable response from the Russian Embassy in Afghanistan. Bose's theory of collaboration with Axis Power was ‘my enemy's enemy is my friend’. He wanted to utilise the enmity of the Axis powers towards England to India's advantage. He was least bothered about the internal policy of Germany, Italy or Japan. He strongly criticised the Superior race theory of the fascists and did not subscribe to their stress on war and violence for imperialistic expansion. This portrays

³ Michael Edwards, *The Last Years of British India*, London: Cassell, 1963, pp. 67-68.

his resolute stance as well as the manipulative powers. Historians have often depicted Bose's German adventure as a complete failure. The present work maintains that Bose's stay in Germany served both Bose and Hitler as Bose was allowed to conduct himself in Germany as a significant foreign leader and organise propaganda and the Indian Legion. While Bose failed in getting a public announcement from Hitler regarding his sympathy for India's cause, he used his stay there to further the cause of Indian freedom and rally around him a dedicated group that staunchly believed in his cause. Moreover, Bose's presence in Germany kept the Allied camp in the constant fear of the possibility of an Axis assisted attack on India with Bose's collaboration.

Chapter five, *Bose's Armed Struggle in Southeast Asia and the INA Trials*, discusses the days in Japan after failing to achieve desired support from Germany for liberating India. With the assistance of Japan he revamped the INA and trained them for the war of liberation of India. INA consisted of around 85,000 regular soldiers, including a separate women's army unit named after Rani Lakshmi Bai. Bose called on both men and women for supporting the cause of their homeland unlike the German National Socialists and the Italian Fascists who stressed on the masculine in almost all spheres of political and military activity. Bose believed in gender equality and asked women to be prepared to fight for their nation's liberation. Throughout the 1920s and 1930s he had campaigned in India to give more participation for women in the liberation of the nation.⁴ In 1943 when he called on women to serve as soldiers in the Indian National Army, it was a most radical view.

On their way to India, some of Bose's troops, along with the Burmese National Army led by Ba Maw and Aung San, assisted the Japanese in their victory over the British in the battles of Arakan and Meiktila. Andaman and Nicobar Islands in the Bay of Bengal, a part of the British Indian Empire which had come under Japanese occupation was officially handed over to Bose in 1943 by the then Japanese Prime Minister Tojo. Bose made a visit to the Islands, by the end of 1943, where he hoisted the Indian tricolour flag. This was the first instance of tricolour being hoisted in an independent Indian territory. But unfortunately, he was hoodwinked by the Japanese officers in Andaman. Bose totally failed in liberating the people of the

⁴ Leonard A Gordon, *Brother Against the Raj: A Biography of Indian Nationalists Sarat and Subhas Chandra Bose*, New Delhi: Rupa & co, p. 238.

Islands as his total concentration was on the mission to Delhi. Even after the handover of the islands, the people were victims of Japanese atrocities under fabricated charges of being spies.

The British documents of 1942 pertaining to Bose, discussed in the chapter, clearly show that the British knew about Bose's presence in Asia to co-ordinate anti-British activities in the midst of the Quit India Movement. During the Imphal campaign, the towns of Kohima and Imphal were placed under siege by divisions of the Japanese, Burmese and the Gandhi and Nehru Brigades of the INA. When the Japanese were defeated at the battles of Kohima and Imphal, the FIPG's aim of establishing a base in mainland India was lost forever. The INA was forced to pull back, along with the defeated Japanese Army. Japan's surrender after the dropping of atom bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki also led to the eventual surrender of INA.

Even while he was clearly constrained by the position he found himself in, he boldly maintained his own independence, as seen in his open condemnation of the German invasion of the Soviet Union while being in Germany. In Southeast Asia also he maintained an equally independent position irrespective of the pressures from the Japanese authorities. Once he had formulated his theory of armed struggle Bose was, at the very least, consistent. Unlike the INC leadership of Gandhi, Nehru and others who had to conduct deep soul-searching before even beginning any movement and often lost control of these movements, Bose never had any hesitation or wavering about how to achieve liberation.

Bose was also quite clear that it was only a liberation consecrated by armed struggle and blood that would be worth having and that the independence gained through non-violent agitation, civil disobedience and compromise would be tainted and hollow. In June 1943, Bose reiterated this point yet again, in a statement to the press: "It is our duty to pay for liberty with our own blood. The freedom that we shall win, through our sacrifice and exertions, we shall be able to preserve with our own strength."⁵ Bose was also prescient about the pitfalls of compromise. As a student and admirer of the Irish struggle for freedom during 1919-1921, he had seen what could

⁵ "Statement to the Press, 20 June, 1943," in R.I. Paul, editor, *India Calling*, Lahore, India: Dewan Publishing.

happen at the negotiating table and he wanted to avoid allowing the British to dictate the terms on which it would depart from the subcontinent. Bose understood from the partition of Ireland in 1922 that unless there was a completely successful and violent expulsion of the British from India it would have led to the partition of the country based on communal lines. Bose's followers in Southeast Asia, such as Swaminathan who was the commander of the Rani of Jhansi Regiment and had the opportunity of knowing Bose's plans as late as 1944-1945 were convinced that he would have taken a stand against partition.⁶

When asked by Leonard Mosley as to why the INC accepted partition, Nehru, representative of the INC leadership, replied: "The truth is that we were tired men, and we were getting on in years too. Few of us could stand the prospect of going to prison again-and if we had stood out for a united India as we wished it, prison obviously awaited us."⁷ This can be contrasted with Bose's indefatigable will even in the face of overwhelming adversity in the dying days of the war in Southeast Asia. Ba Maw, the embattled head of the Free Burma State of 1943-1945, recalled an instance of Bose's unshakeable determination when they had been together for the last time during April 1945, when British and Allied forces were on the road to retaking Burma:

"And so we come to the final tragedy which began in April 1945. Everything was giving way around us and the British forces had broken through in Burma. I remember vividly my last meeting with Netaji [Subhas Chandra Bose] before we retreated with the Japanese forces in Rangoon to Moulmein hundreds of miles away. We had previously planned to continue the fight together even if the British recaptured Burma, but that had to be abandoned when the Burmese Army started a resistance against the Japanese. It was a very dark hour for both of us. Netaji was deprived of his base of operations in Burma; in fact he was deprived of so much that he had to think of starting all over again almost from the first bricks somewhere else. I asked Netaji what he intended to do next. "Why," he replied calmly lighting a cigarette, "start again and go on fighting when ready. What else can we do?"⁸

⁶ Lakshmi Sahgal, *A Revolutionary Life: Memoirs of a Political Activist*, New Delhi, India: Publishers Kali for Women, 1998, 1997, p.154.

⁷ Leonard Mosley, *The Last Days of the British Raj*, New York: Harcourt & Brace, 1963, pp. 247-248.

⁸ Ba Maw, "The Great Dreamer," *The Oracle*, Volume II, No.1, January, 1980, pp. 12-13.

His presence and his reputation as a genuine friend of the minorities would have undoubtedly lent itself to stabilizing the situation, at least in his home state of Bengal where his standing was unquestioned and which was one of the provinces which were partitioned. Unlike the “tired” Nehru, Bose (from all the evidence it seems fair to conclude) would definitely have fought vigorously to prevent the partition.⁹ Bose did not return and he was also the only prominent figure either Indian or British who was not tainted with the blood of over a million civilians who perished during the partition of 1947.

Another significant contribution of Bose’s activities of armed resistance through INA was the sowing of doubts in British minds as to their faith in Indian soldiers, the last resort for British in the event of any upheaval. This was later substantiated during the INA trials when the British Indian army and navy, along with the nation stood, for the release of INA soldiers. However, it was an opponent of Bose, Clement Attlee who made the most interesting assessment of Bose's role in the devolution of British power from the Indian subcontinent over which he himself had presided. In 1956 Clement Attlee in a private conversation with the acting governor of the state of West Bengal, Pani Bhusan Chakraborti, mentioned the reasons for the British leaving India when the Gandhian movement had failed and the Axis powers had been defeated. Attlee said that there were a number of reasons, one of which was the undermining of the loyalty of the Indian land and naval forces of the British Indian Armed Forces by the efforts of Bose, making a continued British presence in India impossible without bringing in more British troops which was almost impossible considering the British financial and global considerations in the post-war scenario.¹⁰

Moreover, the INC leadership, which had opposed Bose all the time, got into the act during INA trials and Congressmen such as Nehru, Asaf Ali, and Bhulabhai Desai had themselves appointed to the defense committee of INA. They found it an opportune moment to gain approval from the Indian mass that had been invigorated

⁹ Lakshmi Sahgal, *A Revolutionary life: memoirs of a political activist*, New Delhi, India: Publishers Kali for Women, 1997, p. 154.

¹⁰ H.N. Pandit, 1993 *The Last Days of Netaji*, New Delhi: Kalpana Publishing Press, 1993, pp. 86-87.

by the legends of Bose and the INA, and at the same time put pressure on the British.¹¹

Bose's lack of success in his life-long effort to liberate India from foreign rule was certainly not due to any lack of effort. From 1921, when he became the first Indian to resign formally from the Indian Civil Service, until his death in 1945 as a leader of an Indian government in exile, Bose struggled ceaselessly towards the goal of freedom and prosperity for his beloved homeland. Bose clearly anticipated that the British would be driven out of India in an armed struggle¹² and that a social and political revolution would begin the moment the Indian people saw British rule under attack in India itself.¹³ This revolution, he believed, would bring an end to the old caste system and traditional social hierarchy, which would be replaced by an egalitarian, casteless and classless society based on socialist models. He also believed that this process would require very careful guidance, with a firm hand, to prevent anarchy and chaos;¹⁴ and it could be his rootedness in the idea of a firm hand to guide the nation that made his detractors think of him as a Fascist or a dictatorial person. Bose clearly anticipated that authoritarian rule would not last beyond the period when social reconstruction was completed and law and order were established - when India was "on its feet," as he often wrote. Bose aimed for nothing less than the formation of "a new India and a happy India on the basis of the eternal principles of liberty, democracy and socialism."¹⁵

During his lifetime, Bose was frequently denounced as a fascist or even a Nazi, particularly in the wake of the radical and revolutionary views he expressed in radio addresses broadcast to India from National Socialist Germany and later from quasi-fascist Japan. For example, *The Statesman*, a highly influential Calcutta periodical, wrote in November 1941: "Mr. Bose's views are those of the Nazis, and he

¹¹ William F. Kuracina, 'Sentiments and Patriotism: The Indian National Army, General Elections and the Congress's Appropriation of the INA Legacy, *Modern Asian Studies* 44,4 (2010). pp. 851-856.

¹² Bose's speech to the Indian Independence League Conference in Singapore, July 4, 1943, *Selected Speeches of Subhas Chandra Bose*, pp. 183-185.

¹³ Bose's speech at a mass meeting in Singapore, July 9, 1943, *Selected Speeches of Subhas Chandra Bose*, pp. 185-188.

¹⁴ Presidential address at All-India Forward Bloc Conference, June 18, 1940, *Selected Speeches of Subhas Chandra Bose*, pp. 118- 126.

¹⁵ Presidential address to the All-India Forward Bloc Conference, Nagpur, June 18, 1940, *Selected Speeches of Subhas Chandra Bose*, p. 124.

makes no secret of it,”¹⁶ while the BBC, Britain's worldwide radio voice, frequently accused him of Fascism and Nazism. To be fair to Bose, it should be noted that the world scenario during the Second World War was an opportune moment and demanded firm action from those fighting for Indian freedom and Bose was doing all that was in his power to secure his goal of national liberation. The accusations of being a Fascist or a Nazi were not significant for him as he steadfastly adhered to his chosen path towards his goal.

Throughout his political career, India's liberation from British rule remained Bose's foremost political goal; indeed, it was a lifelong obsession. As he explained in his most important work, *The Indian Struggle*, the political party he envisioned “will stand for the complete political and economic liberation of the Indian people.”¹⁷ Speaking of Bose a few days after his death in August 1945, Jawaharlal Nehru said: “In the struggle for the cause of India's independence he has given his life and has escaped all those troubles which brave soldiers like him have to face in the end. He was not only brave but had deep love for freedom. He believed, rightly or wrongly, that whatever he did was for the independence of India...Although I personally did not agree with him in many respects, and he left us and formed the Forward Bloc, nobody can doubt his sincerity. He struggled throughout his life for the independence of India, in his own way.”¹⁸

It is said that History is written by the winners and in spite of his devout patriotism and the life sacrificed for the cause of Indian freedom, Bose's name is tainted by his association with the Axis powers. Chandana Mozumdar writes about Bose:

“His personality is reminiscent of the mythical hero Karna in the Hindu epic Mahabharata, who despite all his bravery, virtue and generosity chose to fight on the side of evil in the war of righteousness, because of a misguided sense of loyalty, and anger at being rejected because of his illegitimacy. At the end of the war Karna lay

¹⁶ *The Statesman* (Calcutta), Nov. 19, 1941. Quoted in: L.A. Gordon, *Brothers Against the Raj*: (1990), p. 454.

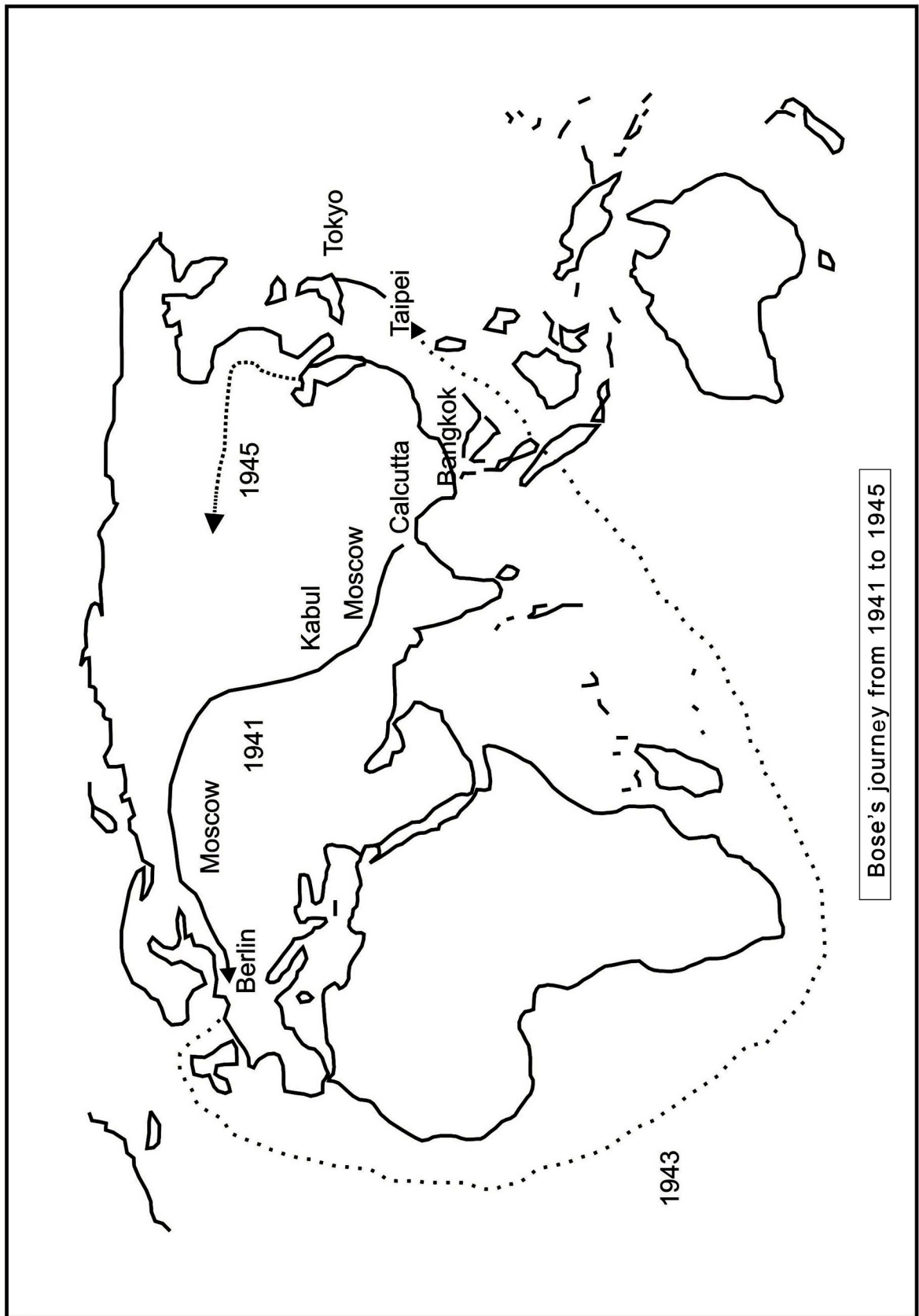
¹⁷ Sisir K Bose and Sugata Bose, ed., *The Indian Struggle, 1920-1942 Subhas Chandra Bose*. Netaji Collected work volume II, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997, p. 349.

¹⁸ Nehru's statement in *The Hindu*, January 17, 1946, in *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, p. 371.

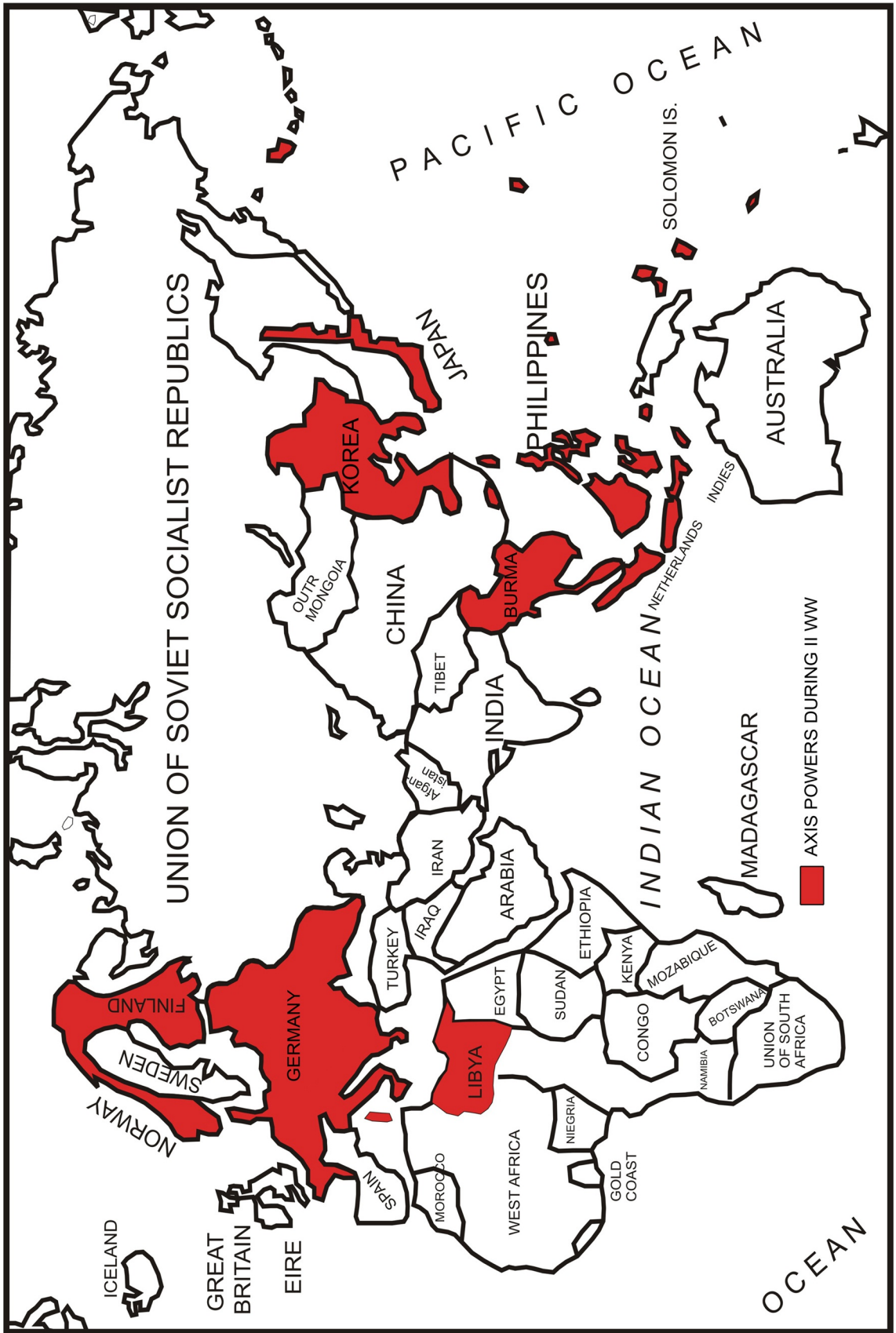
unrecognized among the thousands of dead bodies and even his mother could not accept him.”¹⁹

Bose might have failed in achieving his goal during his lifetime; but that should not deprive him of the credit of being an able leader and administrator as he had proved to be during his lifetime. His campaigns against the British could not be deemed ineffective as it influenced decisions on Indian freedom, as mentioned earlier in the words of Clement Attlee, even after his death.

¹⁹ Chandana Mozumdar *Swastika and Tiranga: Subhas Bose and Indian Nationalism's Connection With the Third Reich*, Diss. Auburn University Alabama March 19, 1999, pp. 381-382.



Bose's journey from 1941 to 1945





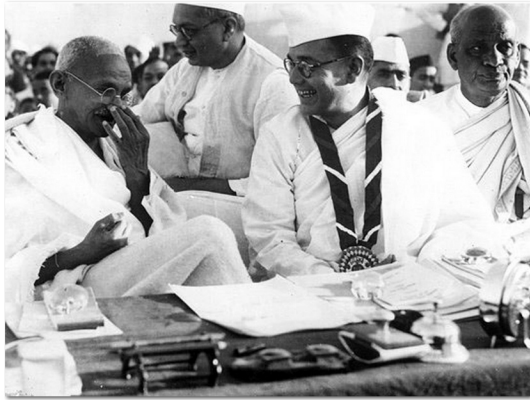


Fig. 01 Bose with Gandhi and Patel in 1938



Fig. 02 Bose arriving for the All India Congress Committee meeting in 1939



Fig. 03 Bose with Nehru and Patel



Fig. 04 Bose with Rabindranath Tagore



Fig. 05 Bose with German soldiers

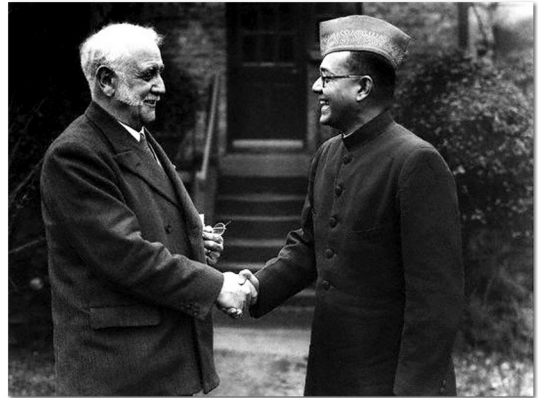


Fig. 06 Bose with German officer George Lansbury



Fig. 07 Bose with Hitler

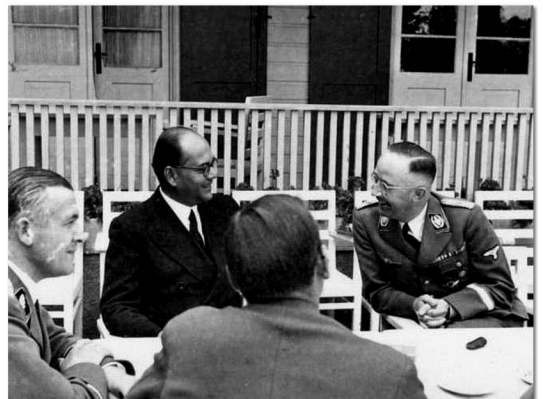


Fig. 08 Bose with Himmler in Germany



Fig. 09 Bose in Germany



Fig. 10 Bose with Musenberg, Captain of the U-180 submarine



Fig. 11 Bose with the crew of the Japanese submarine



Fig. 12 Bose delivering a speech in Tokyo



Fig. 13 Bose reviewing INA troops in Singapore after formally taking command



Fig. 14 Bose inspecting his Army



Fig. 15 Greater East Asia Conference in November 1943. Participants (from Left) Ba Maw, Zhang Jinghui, Wang Jingwei, Hideki Tojo, Wan Waithayakon, José P. Laurel, S.C Bose

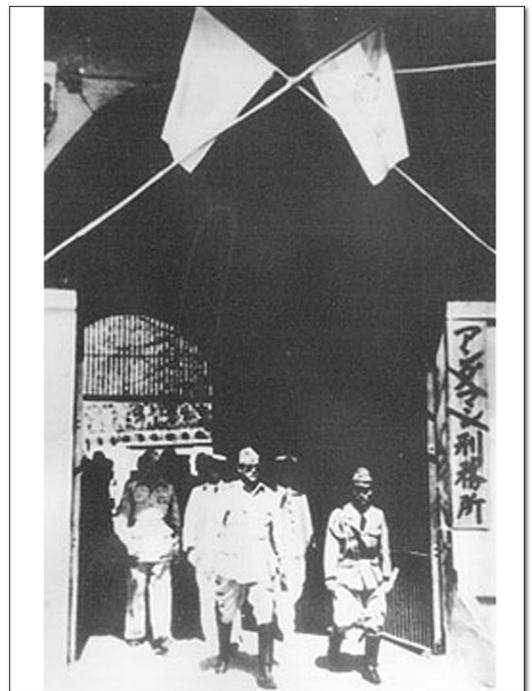


Fig. 16 Bose with the Japanese in Andaman Nicobar Island



Fig. 17 Bose Inspecting INA

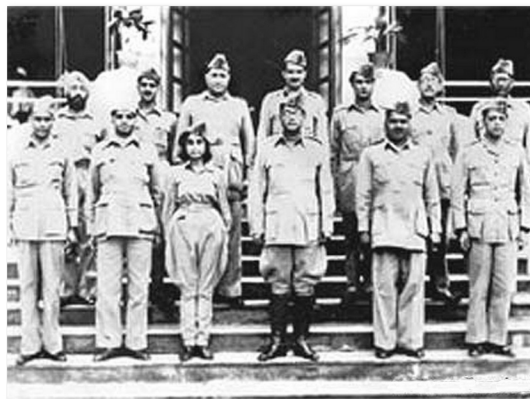


Fig. 18 Bose with INA soldiers



Fig. 19 Major Fujiwara Iwaichi of F Kikan greets Captain Giani Pritam Singh of the INA, 1942 April

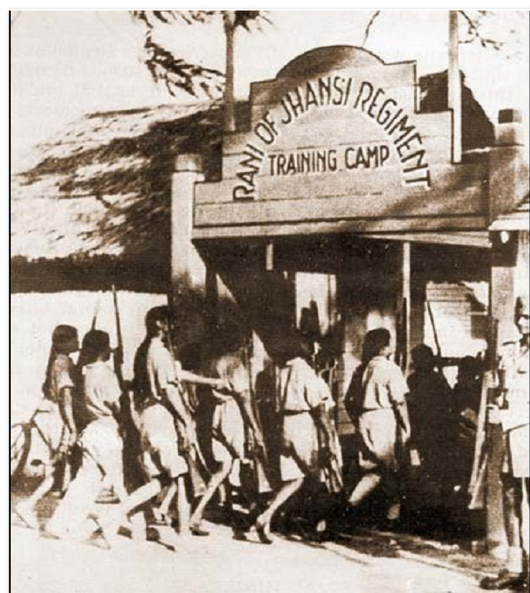


Fig. 20 Training camp of Jhansi Rani Regiment



Fig. 21 Bose Meets Japanese Prime Minister Hideki Tojo in Tokyo



Fig. 22 Bose paying homage at INA War Memorial, Singapore on 8 July 1945



Fig. 23 Troops of the INA who surrendered at Mount Popa



Fig. 24 Bose seen in his last available Photo

Thursday, April 9, 1936. THE AMRITA BAZAR PATRIKA. 9

S.J. SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE ARRESTED

S.J. BOSE'S ARREST

Will Congress Change Its Programme?

ANXIOUS ENQUIRIES IN CONGRESS CIRCLES

How They View The News Of The Arrest

... (text continues) ...

TAKEN TO THE ARTHUR ROAD PRISON

CALCUTTA, April 8.

Information has been received by the 'Associated Press' that Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose was arrested on landing in Bombay this morning and lodged in the Arthur Road lock up.

Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose was arrested on landing in Bombay under Regulation 111 of 1919 from the launch the Alexander Dock, whence he was removed to the Arthur Road Lockup by midday.

... (text continues) ...


FAREWELL SPEECH

Lord Willingdon Addresses Assembly For The Last Time

"ACHIEVEMENTS" OF HIS REGIME

Vindication Of Policy Pursued During The Period Of His Viceroyalty

... (text continues) ...



How He Was Arrested

... (text continues) ...

The Amrita Bazar Patrika of 9th April 1936. Courtesy: National Library Kolkata.

Special Edition

The Syonan Sinbun

Office 140/146 Cecil Street, Syonan. Telephone No. 5471.

NO. 277 SUNDAY, OCTOBER 24, 1943. SYONAN. FIVE CENTS

Provisional Azad Hind Government Declares War On Britain And U.S.A.

NIPPON THANKED FOR FULL CO-OPERATION AND ASSISTANCE

THE PROVISIONAL Government of Azad Hind declared war on Britain and the United States early this morning according to a communique from the headquarters of the Provisional Government released today at noon.

The full text of the communique reads as follows: The second meeting of the Council of Ministers of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind was held from midnight (Oct. 23 Oct. 24) at the official residence of Subhas Chandra Bose.

Advisers also attended the meeting. The political, economic and military situation in India was again discussed and the following decisions were arrived at unanimously.

The Provisional Government of Azad Hind declared war on Britain and the United States of America.

The Provisional Government of Azad Hind placed on record its deep appreciation of the message conveying the news of the recognition by the Imperial Government of Nippon of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind.

The Provisional Government of Azad Hind expressed its grateful thanks to the Imperial Government of Nippon for

IMPERIAL FORCES IN NAMPO WILL GIVE ALL-OUT SUPPORT TO I.N.A.

THE IMPERIAL Forces in the South have no hesitation to support with all means at our disposal our young comrades, the Indian National Army," declared Lieut. Col. Nakajima, Chief of the Press Section of the Imperial Forces in Nampo, in a statement issued at 10 o'clock this morning in connection with the declaration of war on Britain and the United States by the Provisional Government of Azad Hind.

The Imperial Forces in the South, in accordance with the wishes of opinion of all Indians and their determination to fight the war alongside their young comrades, the I.N.A., until final victory.

The statement reads: "It is a matter for congratulation that Subhas Chandra Bose has declared to the world that the Provisional Government of Azad Hind has been established as for almost a century India has been invaded and deprived of its independence. This time a Provisional Government has been established by the Indians themselves."

It is needless to say that for almost two years since the outbreak of this war, the Imperial Government of Nippon has been supporting the Indian National Army with all-out support.

It is gratefully noted that the Provisional Government of Azad Hind has been recognized



Front page of The Syonan Sinbun of 24th October 1943. Courtesy: National Library Kolkata.

16. Market Street,
Calcutta.
12.4.21.

The Right Hon. E. S. Montague M.P.,
Secretary of State for India.

2701

Sir,

I desire to have my name removed from the list of probationers in the Indian Civil Service.

I may state in this connection that I was selected as a result of an Open Competitive examination held in Calcutta, 1920.

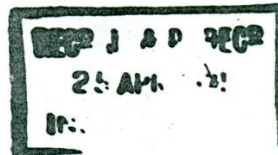
I have received an allowance of £100 (one hundred pounds only) up till now. I shall remit the amount to the India Office as soon as my resignation is accepted.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

-Subhas Chandra Bose.



My dear Mrs.Vetter,

Through our common friends I have kept myself informed about you. Owing to the conditions under which I have been living here, it was not possible at first to get into touch with you. Afterwards, I heard of the terrible bereavement which overtook you. As there was a possibility of my going to Vienna, I decided not to write to you but to meet you personally when I was there. Unfortunately, when I arrived there, you were away. As I do not know if I shall be coming to Vienna in the near future, I am writing this letter. First of all, let me convey my sincerest condolence to you on your saddest bereavement. Since I had the privilege of knowing President Vetter so intimately and since I respected and admired him so much, I can appreciate the loss that you have suffered. In these hard times, may God give you strength to put up with all the trials that you are having to face.

There is much that I would like to talk to you about, if I could meet you. For that purpose a letter is not a suitable medium. Please let me know your present address, as well as your future movements so that I may look out for the possibility of meeting you personally.

Before I conclude, I should like to thank you once again from the bottom of my heart for all the kindness I have received at your hands in the past.

Assuring you of my deepest esteem,

I am, yours ever sincerely,

Subhas Chandra Bose

P.S. Please address me on the cover as O. MAZZOTTA.

1943

SPECIAL ORDER OF THE DAY

by

**THE SUPREME COMMANDER,
AZAD HIND FAUJ.**

**TO OFFICERS & MEN OF THE AZAD HIND FAUJ,
COMRADES,**

All sorts of wild rumours are now afloat in Sycnan and other places, one of them being that hostilities have ceased. Most of these rumours are either false or highly exaggerated. Till this moment, fighting is going on on all fronts, and I say this, not only on the basis of reports from friendly sources, but also of reports given out by the enemy radio. If there is any change in the war situation, I shall be the first to inform you. Therefore, I want all of you to remain perfectly calm and unperturbed and carry on your duties in a normal way. Above all, do not allow yourselves to be influenced in any manner by wild bazar rumours. We have to face any situation that may arise, like the brave soldiers fighting for the freedom of their Motherland.

JAI HIND

Subhas Chandra Bose

SUPREME COMMANDER,

AZAD HIND FAUJ.

Sycnan, 14th August, 1945.

1500 hours

The Last order of Bose as Suprem Commander of Azad Hind Fauj on 14th August, 1945.
Courtesy: National Library Kolkata.

Glossary

Ahimsa	Nonviolence
Ashram	Place of religious retreat
Azad Hind	Free India
Brahmin	A person belonging to the highest Hindu caste
Darshan	Sight of a person or place that bestows a blessing upon the viewer
Dhal	A dish made with lentils (or other pulses)
Dhoti	Loincloth, usually voluminous, worn by men
Fauj	Army
Guru	Holy man, teacher
Hartal	Stoppage of all activity, usually to exert pressure
Jawan	Common Soldier
Khichree	Is a South Asian preparation made from rice and lentils (dal).
Lathi	Metal-tipped stave used by police
Maidan	A grassy open space for sports and recreation
Netaji	Leader
Puja	Worship
Purnaswaraj	Complete Independence
Raj	Kingdom, Rule, Sovereignty
Sari	Is a strip of unstitched cloth, worn by females
Sathyagraha	Truth Force
Sepoy	The old term for a Common Indian Soldier, replaced now by Jawan
Sijda	Worship, The Adoration of Muslims (also told as SAJDA)
Swaraj	Self-rule

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Harijan (AIC)

Jugantar (Calcutta)

Partidin (Calcutta)

The Statesman (Calcutta)

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