Chapter-V

The British Attitude

The British Raj was the aware of the activities of Indian revolutionaries abroad since the earliest days. Notwithstanding Japan’s sympathy for the Indian revolutionaries and its indifference to the British demand for the extradition of Rash Behari Bose and H.L. Gupta; England did not terminate its alliance with Japan in view of its global interests. England continued to cherish the hope that the later would honour provisions which included in the defence of India against any aggression. However, Government of India did not share this trust of Japanese Government. In fact it believed that the alliance had been injurious to the British reputation in Asia and served no useful purposes. It viewed the Japanese sympathy to the Indian revolutionaries as a flagrant violation of the provisions of alliance. The Government of India knew that several associations devoted to the cause of Indian independence had come into being in Japan and that the level of organizational activities for the freedom of India was higher there than that in any other Asian country. Therefore, despite the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, it concluded that Japan wanted to threaten Britain’s hegemony in Asia in order to establish its own domination in this continent.1

Despite Japan’s unfriendly act of supporting the Indian revolutionaries, it was felt both in Britain and India that so long as

1. Foreign Department, Secret (External), October 1921, Nos. 218-19.
the war (I World War) lasted, any friction with Japan would have grave consequences. Therefore, Britain instructed its Ambassador in Japan to present the British point of view regarding the Indian revolutionaries to the Japanese Foreign office in the strongest terms. The Ambassador, however, could not persuade the Japanese authorities and left Japan in complete frustration.  

After I World War, a few other factors than the Japanese open support to the Indian revolutionaries caused concern to the British in India. The Ghadar Party was revived in 1920 and the majority of its members drifted towards international communism. The alliance of the Indian revolutionaries with Moscow brought a new ideology to India and created serious problems to the British Government. Much to the embarrassment of the Government of India, the Indian revolutionaries intensified their anti-British propaganda at the Pan-Asiatic conferences held at Nagasaki and Shanghai under Japanese patronage. This conference resulted in the formation of a Pan-Asiatic Union with its headquarters at Tokyo.

During the inter war period, three main groups operated in Japan respectively under Mahender Pratap, A.M. Sahay and Rash Behari Bose. Sahay was the head of the Indian National Committee, a branch of the Indian national Congress in Japan since 1929 and published a paper Voice of India. The relation between

2. Foreign Department, External (Secret), 1921, Nos.250-251.
Sahay and Rash Behari Bose was not cordial due to some misunderstandings of Sahay about Rash Behari Bose.⁴

Despite the misunderstandings among the Indian revolutionaries, Japan kept them within its fold. That is why none of them left Japan on the eve of the II World War inspite of a warning from the British that all their subjects should leave Japan. The Japanese authorities had been successful in assuring them of their safety and freedom to carry on their political activities. A report from the British Ambassador in Tokyo says that: “The Indians were not only free to live in comfort but also to do business in the normal way”.⁵

Government also knew that some central leaders had also sympathy with the revolutionaries who were working abroad. At the Tripuri Congress, March 1939, India dissociated itself from British policy. The All-India Congress Committee resolved upon resisting the imposition of War on India, and cautioned the Provincial Governments against the acceptance of the dictatorship of the centre.⁶ Congress under S.C. Bose’s Presidentship wanted to confront with the government which involved in many troubles in Ireland, Egypt, Iraq and within and without the Empire i.e. in Germany, Italy and Japan.⁷

In these circumstances, the II World War commenced on 1 September, 1939 as Hitler invaded Poland. Zetland in the House

⁵ Foreign Department (External) File No.217-X/1942.
⁷ Selected Speeches of Subhas Chandra Bose (Publication Division, 1962), p.75.
of Lords made a statement and Linlithgow, in Delhi, announced that a grave emergency had come into existence whereby the security of India was threatened.8

On 3 September, 1939, the Viceroy unilaterally associated India with Britain’s declaration of war on Germany without bothering to consult the provincial ministries or any Indian leader with the hope that main stream of the freedom movement i.e. Congress, which was more hostile to fascism than Britain, would cooperate with the Government. However, Congress was ready to cooperate with the Government in the war provided some minimum conditions were met: a promise of post-war constituent assembly to determine the political structure of a free India, and the immediate formation of something like a genuine responsible government in the centre. But Linlithgow’s statement of 17 October, 1939 offered only ‘Dominion status’ in an indefinite and presumably distant future.9

Linlithgow’s attitude was not an aberration but part of a general British attitude of taking advantage of the war to regain for the white-dominated central government and bureaucracy had lost the ground to the Congress since 1937 or earlier. A Defence of India Ordinance restricting civil liberties came into force the day war was declared and by May 1940, the government had prepared a top-secret draft Revolutionary Movements Ordinance aimed at a crippling pre-emptive strike the Congress at the first opportunity. British Indian reactionary attitude received powerful support and

encouragement from Winston Churchill who took over as head of a national coalition in May 1940 as the German blitzkrieg smashed through the western front swept the British into the sea at Dunkirk and overran France in a matter of weeks.  

In August 1940, while the battle of Britain raged over the skies of an isolated island, Amery and even Linlithgow were ready to give some concessions to win the Indian support but their proposal were whittled down drastically by Churchill. Linlithgow’s ‘August offer’ (8 August, 1940) consequently was little more than a repetition of his 17 October, 1939 statement: Dominion status in the unspecified future, a postwar body to devise a constitution, immediate expansion of the Viceroy’s Executive to include some more Indians and a ‘War Advisory Council’. In July 1941, four Indians were included into the Viceroy’s Executive out of twelve. The charge of Defence, Finance and Home were kept in the hands of the whites. For the rest, no further initiative was taken till the disasters in South-East Asia compelled the British Government to send Cripps Mission in March-April 1942.  

The unprecedented speed with which the Japanese extended their ‘Co-prosperity Sphere’ in the Pacific Ocean and South-East Asia created great consternation amidst the Nations concerned – U.K., Holland, China and U.S.A. Both China and U.S.A. were strongly of the opinion that India was most important for the war in eastern sector. In U.K., the members of the Labour

Party, some Liberals and Conservatives, along with some of the newspapers such as the Times and the Manchester Guardian expressed their deep concern over the deteriorating situation of Allied forces. The indication was clear: there should be some offer of inducement to India to cooperate in the war efforts. India too which had so far abstained from participation was showing signs of changing its attitude. Tej Bahadur Sapru with 12 others eminent Indians (who were not attached to the Congress Party) cabled to the British Prime Minister on 2 January, 1942 to give relaxation for the development in war efforts.¹²

But Churchill was not serious either about the feelings of Indians or Allies. Referring to the Congress, he warned Amery that if any effort for bringing hostile political elements into the defence machinery, it might paralyse their action.¹³ On 21 January, 1942, the Viceroy in his dispatch to the Secretary of State for India raised the general issue of constitutional change. Secretary of State advised him to pay no heed to “left wing pressure and pressure from academic theorists or sentimentalists, reflected even in a paper so important as the Times” suggested that the government should make no move and stand firm, and indicated the general line which government should take in answering critics in Parliament.¹⁴ Attlee’s reaction to the Churchill’s attitude was, “I must confer that the general effect of the dispatch does not increase my confidence in the Viceroy’s judgment..... Linlithgow seems to

¹³. Churchill to Amery, 7 January, 1942.
me to be defeatist.... It is worth considering whether some one should not be charged with a mission to try to bring the political leaders together..... There is a lot of opinion here which we cannot ignore, which is not satisfied that there is nothing to be done but to sit tight on the declaration of August 1940.”

On 28 January, 1942, Amery submitted a memorandum to the War Cabinet concerning the Indian issue and expressed his whole-hearted approval of the Viceroy’s view. But the comment of Attlee on this memorandum and on the attitude of Linlithgow was devastating as the following words indicate: “I find it quite impossible to accept and act on the crude imperialism of the Viceroy not only because I think it is wrong but because I think it is fatally short-sighted and suicidal. I should certainly not be prepared to cover up this ugliness with a clock of pious sentiment about liberty and democracy.”

Attlee suggested that a person of high standing should be sent to India with wide powers to negotiate a settlement. Although Churchill was opposed to the raising of the issue of India in the Cabinet; the issue could not be smothered. The insistence of the Congress for a declaration of British aims relating to the war, the wide support which it attracted in India and abroad—including England, and the memorandum of the Indian liberals to the Prime Minister recommended immediate action i.e. conversion of the Executive Council into a truly national government; restoration of

15. Ibid., p.75. Attlee To Amery, 24 January, 1942.
popular governments in the provinces, representation of India at the Imperial War Council through chosen by the national government, and treatment of India on the same footing as the Dominions could not be easily brushed aside. The demand received impetus from the open message of Chiang Kai-Shek and his secret communications to the Prime Minister of England and the President of America.17

The attitude of the Americans, however, was decisive. They had already been displeased by Churchill’s assertion that the Atlantic Charter did not apply to India nor any political problem of India needed urgent attention. Therefore, in spite of the unwillingness of Churchill and the opposition of Amery and Linlithgow, a cabinet discussion could not be avoided, especially as Attlee—number two in the government considered it necessary.18 Amery wrote to Linlithgow about Churchill’s conversion, “Winston after making infinite difficulties for both of us..... Has now; as is his wont- seen the red light (especially the American red light) overnight.”19

Churchill was inclined to meet the situation by issuing a declaration containing the proposals of the government for the solution of the political problem. The terms of the declaration were discussed at length by Amery and Linlithgow concerning the post-war future and the interim present. On 8 March, 1942, the Viceroy gave the gravest possible warning of the harmful consequences of the declaration especially in regard to the problem of the minorities

as Linlithgow wanted to throw the responsibility on the Indian communities to settle their own internal problem without the British. On the day the War Cabinet decided that before making any declaration, Lord Cripps should visit India with authority to discuss the scheme of the declaration with the leaders of Indian opinion in order to see whether it met with the measure of acceptance vital to its success.  

The sudden change in the attitude of British authority was the result of the realization, the reception of the declaration plan was in no way more acceptable than the 8 August, 1940 announcement as rejected by the principal Indian political parties was not likely to be favourable. The Viceroy was positively opposed to it or to any political progress at all. It was, therefore, necessary to send some one to India to discuss and negotiate in order to find out how far Indians would accept the proposals. Another advantage was that a little more time would be consumed in the process between the declaration and its execution after the war as there would be a long interval.

The Viceroy was not consulted about the change when the decision was taken. Amery explained to Linlithgow that: "The pressure outside, upon Winston Churchill from Roosevelt, and upon Attlee and his own party plus the administration of Cripps to the War Cabinet, suddenly opened the sluice gates, and the thing moved with a rush. Attlee in his memorandum of

February, 1942, indicated the procedure, “To entrust some person of high standing either already in India or sent out from here with vide powers to negotiate a settlement in India.”\(^{22}\) The instructions actually issued to Cripps by the Indian Committee of the War Cabinet were as follows: “You are authorized to negotiate with the leaders of the principal sections of Indian opinion on the basis of paragraph 1(e) of the ‘Statement of Policy’ for the purpose of obtaining their immediate support for some scheme by which they can partake in an advisory or consultative manner in the counsels of their country. You may offer them, if you consider it wise or necessary, positions in the Executive Council, provided this does not embarrass the defence and good government of the country during the present critical time. In relation to this matter you will, no doubt, consult with the Viceroy and Commander-in-Chief, and will bear in mind the supreme importance of the military situation.”\(^{23}\)

The biographer of Sir Stafford Cripps, Colin Cooke, explains that “he did not go as a plenipotentiary to negotiate the terms of an agreement; he went as a British Cabinet Minister to explain and clarify the terms of a statement of policy that could not be altered.”\(^{24}\)

Apparently, it was not clear to Cripps whether he was going to negotiate with implied authority to modify the terms of the Cabinet proposals, or just to persuade the Indian leaders to accept

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The Declaration whose terms were rigid and unalterable in substance. But in his conversation with the Congress leaders, he did exceed the limits laid down in the draft declaration and the instructions. The instances were the composition and the authority of the Executive Council of the Viceroy and the provisions about the defence portfolio. Nor were the relations of Cripps with the Viceroy and the Government of India defined. Sir Stafford Cripps did not keep Linlithgow in confidence during the consultations with Indian leaders because cabinet had given him permission to 100 percent Indianisation of Executive Council, if necessary.25

The fact was that Linlithgow did not have any trust from the beginning in the success of Cripps mission. The difference between Cripps and Linlithgow was already reflected perhaps within the cabinet. Churchill and Amery agreed with Linlithgow's views and had full confidence in his judgment while Attlee and Cripps held altogether different views. Attlee had lost trust in Linlithgow26 and had condemned his views in the strongest terms. Cripps arrived at Delhi on 23 March with the draft scheme of the Government of Britain for settling the Indian political problems. In the preamble, it was announced that the object was "the creation of a new Indian Union which shall constitute a Dominion associated with the United Kingdom and the other Dominions by a common

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allegiance to the Crown but equal to them in every respect, in no way subordinate in any aspect of its domestic or external affairs.”

Immediately after landing at Delhi, Cripps plunged into the duties of his mission. In his discussion in the early stages, he learnt what were the vulnerable points in the two parts of the scheme. In fact Gandhiji who met him on 27 March told him bluntly that if his offer war no more than what was contained in the draft declaration then he need not to stay in India but better take the first plane back to England. Two important political parties i.e. the Congress and the Muslim League altogether opposed each other but the latter appeared to be satisfied with the scheme as a whole. The Congress, on the other hand, found that its demand of complete independence had not been conceded either in immediate present or in the future. Its most serious objections were: (1) to the provision for local option which implied the acceptance of Pakistanee; and (2) the selection of state representatives by the rulers with regard to the second part of the draft scheme, the question of the status of the Executive Council and especially of its defence member were subject of discussion. Only the Muslim League accepted the proposals while all other parties – the Sikhs, the Hindu Mahasabha, the Liberals, and the Indian Christians - were opposed to them.

The failure of the Cripps Mission in April 1942 made it clear that Britain was unwilling to offer an honourable settlement.

and a real constitutional advance during the War and that she was determined to continue India’s unwilling partnership in the war efforts. The empty gesture of the ‘Cripps Offer’ convinced even those Congressmen like Nehru and Gandhiji who did not want to do anything to hamper the anti-fascist war-efforts as they were playing a major role in keeping a check on those who had been spoiling for a fight since 1939. It was apparent that any further silence would be tantamount to accepting the right of the British Government to decide India’s fate without any reference to the wishes of her people. Gandhiji had been as clear as Nehru that he did not want to hamper the anti-fascist struggle, especially that of the Russian and Chinese people. But by the spring of 1942, he was becoming increasingly convinced of the inevitability of a struggle.

A fortnight after Cripps’ departure, Gandhiji drafted a resolution for the Congress Working Committee calling for Britain’s withdrawal and the adoption of non-violent, non-cooperation against any Japanese invasion. Congress edged towards quit India while Britain moved towards arming herself with special powers to meet the threat. Nehru remained opposed to the idea of a struggle right till August 1942 and gave way only at the very end.

Apart from British obduracy, there were other factors that made a struggle both inevitable and necessary. Popular discontent, rising prices and war time shortages was gradually mounting. Highhanded government actions such as commandeering of boats in Bengal and Orissa to prevent their being used by the Japanese had led to considerable anger among the people. The popular

willingness to give expression to this discontent was enhanced by the growing feeling of an imminent British collapse. The news of Allied reverses and British withdrawals from South-East Asia and Burma and the trains bringing wounded soldiers from the Assam-Burma border conformed this feeling. Combined with this was the impact of the manner of the British evacuation from Malaya and Burma. It was common knowledge that the British had evacuated the white residents and generally left the subject people to their fate. Letters from Indians in South-East Asia to their relatives in India were full of graphic accounts of British betrayal and their being left at the mercy of the dreaded Japanese.\(^{30}\)

In order to build up their capacity to resist Japanese aggression, it was necessary to draw them out of this demoralized state of mind and convince them of their own power. Gandhiji, as always, was particularly clear on this aspect. The popular faith in the stability of British rule had reached such a low that there was a run on the banks and people withdraw deposits from post-office saving accounts and started hoarding gold, silver and coins. So convinced was Gandhiji that the time was now ripe for struggle that he told to Louis Fischer in an interview in the beginning of June 1942: “I have become impatient.... I may not be able to convince the Congress.... I will go ahead nevertheless and address myself directly to the people”\(^{31}\).

Although the Congress had refused to help in the war efforts, other parties were cooperating like the Muslim League. The

\(^{30}\) Bipan Chandra; *op.cit.*, p.458.
\(^{31}\) Ibid., p.459.
unwillingness of the Congress, therefore, enhanced the need for befriending the Muslims. Jinnah took the fullest advantage of the situation. The more the government depended upon the Muslims to counteract the Congress, the greater the inclination of the government was to concede the Muslim demands. The enhancement of importance of Jinnah was imminent not only in the estimation of his coreligionists who were traditionally worshippers of power and of leaders who enjoyed the favour of government but also among the Congressmen who were anxious to win the cooperation of influential sections of the people for the cause of freedom.32

The colonial Indian rulers were very apprehensive about the credibility of Congress and its leaders like Gandhi and Nehru. They were of the opinion that Gandhi and the Congress had sympathy with Japan which is clear from the letter of Sir Maurice Hallett, Governor of the United Province, in which he said, "the Mahatma was in favour of making terms with Japan and it must not be held that attitude was solely due to the fear that the British Empire could not withstand the Japanese advance. Now the war situation is far better but the Mahatma is obsessed with hatred of what is called 'British Imperialism', and it seems very rash to assume that as a result of the improved war situation, he will drop his idea of making terms with Japan, an Asiatic Power. Mahatma's followers will follow his views and we must not for a moment anticipate a split in Congress. Any relaxation of our action against

Congress would probably facilitate the political campaign of the Japanese and would make our talk more difficult."

The connection between the Congress and the revolutionary groups was historical. The Bengal Volunteer Group, originally a section which broke away from the Sri Sangha, was in charge of the Bengal volunteers organized under the Congress by Subhash Bose at the end of 1928 in pursuance of the decision of the Indian National Congress whose annual session had been held at Calcutta. The policy of the Sri Sangha had originally been to complete extensive underground organization before attempting any rising and one of the factors which led to the secession of the Bengal Volunteer Group was the impatience as these members were anxious for an immediate programme of violence. Government saw the roots of resurgence of violence during Second World War back to 1929 when government released practically all those who had been locked up since 1925. The connection of revolutionaries with the Congress party was apparent as confirmed by the British rulers when the Congress opposition in Bengal demanded the release of all detenues in 1937.

With the fall of Singapore and subsequent surrender of British Indian Army, British Government tried to search out reasons behind the surrender. They were already apprehensive of conspiracy by the Congress and Indian revolutionary groups in

34. A letter from R.G. Casey, Governor of Bengal to Lord Wavell dated 22 June, 1944, Wavell’s Collections, Roll No.5, pp.224-225.
India and abroad because there were some reports conveyed to the Secretary of State concerning the disloyalty of certain elements among the prisoners of war in the hands of the Japanese. Certain disquieting incidents had occurring from time to time in Arakan and elsewhere. There was also the idea under circulation at the highest level which underlined the demand for reduction in the size of Indian Army, owing to its big size and expansion. It was now composed to a large extent of those men who belonged to the classes previously untried as soldiers were unreliable and unsuitable. It is true that in order to admit of the very great expansion in the Indian Army which had taken place since 1940, a large number of men belonging to classes not previously recruited or recruited to a limited extent only, in combatant units, had been listed in the Army.35

Up to the I World War, only martial classes were recruited in the Indian Army but after that government changed her policy and started to enlist the non-martial classes because martial classes were unable to provide the required numbers. In fact, the recruitment of the older classes was pushed to such lengths that the recruits now coming forward from these were often of poor quality. It is true to say that it was preferable to secure good specimens of the new classes which could be obtained in satisfactory numbers, than ‘to rely on poor specimens of the old classes’.36

36. Ibid., p.255.
Politically and economically, government was contemplating to oust Bengali, Tamils or Brahmins from the army. Strategically, it was considered necessary to retain these classes in the army. The greatest obstacle to turning this newly recruited material into efficient and reliable soldiers lied not in the nature and characteristics of the men themselves but in the difficulty of providing Viceroy’s commissioned officers (V.C.Os) and non-commissioned officers (N.C.Os) of their own kind to lead them. Lacking as they did previous military traditions and associations, this was inevitable. This disadvantage was being overcome by the appointment of experienced leaders of other classes and by special training measures designed to produce leaders belonging to the new or “expanded” classes.37

Up to the last of 1942, the Britishers and Allied forces were facing very complex situation but after two effective defeats of Germany in U.S.S.R., the only task was to remove the menace of Japanese completely. India was vital base for this maneuver of Allied Forces. According to Secretary of State, “As a result of discussion in Washington between President Roosevelt and Prime Minister of Britain, plans have been laid for liberation of occupied territories in the far-east and freeing China and complete removal of any further threat of Japanese aggression against India itself. The successful strategy of the U.Ns in the far-east depends upon maintenance of India as a vital supply base upon mobilization of all

37. Ibid., p.256.
her resources. India is in fact the arsenal of the East and life-line of China.\(^3\)

On the matter of political security and aspiration of Indians, Linlithgow complained to the Secretary of State that in any case they had never been thanked by Indian political classes for action intended to give India "a status to that of the other dominions."\(^3\) The political future of India was, however, a post-war concern. But what government had to face was the living present. Even before the Cripps Mission had arrived, Linlithgow was consulting Amery about the Indian situation. In the given situation where the events like the Japanese aggression, Indian Army surrender, traitors within the army, non-cooperation from the Indian political classes were emerging aspects of propaganda which could be used to neutralize the sympathies of sections of people in India and abroad who favoured the cause of democracy and freedom for India. Government was very oppressive and restrictive towards the newspapers which were in favour of freedom but was cooperative with the loyal press.\(^4\)

While the repression was in full swing, India was writhing under the agony of a pitiless bipartite struggle and the World War was taking a new shape. Between August 1942 and May 1944, the War had definitely turned the corner. The Russians had begun rolling back the German hordes. One of the German

\(^{38}\) Secretary of State To Viceroy, Linlithgow Collections, Roll No.25, p.169, 18 June, 1943.

\(^{39}\) Viceroy to Secretary of State dated 08 October, 1943, Linlithgow Collections, Roll No.25, pp.426-27.

\(^{40}\) Tarachand, op.cit., pp.359-60; Various Home Pol(I) Files i.e. 37/9/41, 37/30/41, 37/78/40, 37/86/40, in N.A.I., New Delhi
Armies surrendered at Stalingrad by the end of January 1943 and the Russians began the offensive which ultimately drove the enemy out of Russia. In the September 1943, the Allied Army landed in Italy and in May 1944 advanced northwards clearing the German troops from the country. The tide of War had definitely begun to flow in the Allies’ favour. But the British rulers in India were very anxious about the character of Quit India Movement in which they saw the conspiracy of having the sympathy with Indian National Army and Japanese forces which had reached the eastern front of India. According to Amery, the then Secretary of State, it was “a carefully planned scheme of attack not only upon the daily life but indeed on the safety of India. It mainly concentrated on the vital strategic area lying between Eastern India now exposed to Japanese attack and the main body of India as well as the area which would most prejudice the carrying of local from the mines to the munitions factories of India.41

When the war situation started improving in the favour of Allied Forces, the British rulers in India had the intention of taking punitive steps against not only to those who were taking active part in the freedom movement abroad but against the Congress, Forward Block and Revolutionaries also. Viceroy in his letter of 7 May, 1943, to the Provincial Governors raised the issue of taking drastic action against those who had helped Japanese cause in the Second World War. The Governor of the United Provinces, Sir Maurice Hallett, in a letter to Viceroy Lord Linlithgow, advised

that, "It would be even greater if we had not taken successful action against Gandhi and the Congress Party, for it is very clear that the Mahatma was in favour of making terms with Japan and it must not be held that attitude was solely due to the fear that the British Empire could not withstand the Japanese advance. Now the war situation is far better, but the Mahatma is obsessed with hatred of what is called "British Imperialism", and it seems very rash to assume that as a result of the improved war situation, he will drop his idea of making terms with Japan, an Asiatic Power....... Any relaxation of our action against Congress would probably facilitate the political campaign of the Japanese and would make our task more difficult."42

Before the actions to be taken against those Indian soldiers who deserted to Japanese side, it was suggested by Mauric Hallett that they should go into depth of why did the Indian soldier desert or why having deserted or having been captured, did he became a member of a 'contact party'.43 Because "from the military point of view, the I.N.A. was more of a liability than an asset to the Japanese very few of those who enlisted did any serious fighting, and practically none fought well. Many took the first opportunity to desert back to our lines. Nor did the propaganda squads who tried to induce desertion from our side by shouting across the lines to their former comrades have any effect."44

44. Wavell to Private Secretary to King-Empror, 31 October, 1945, *Wavell's Collections*, Roll No.1, p.90.
Hallett accepted the loss in spirit and loyalty in these words, “though it is probable that as a result of the rapid expansion of the army, and the consequent employment of young officers with little or no knowledge of the country or its language, and also because of the concentration on purely military training, the new Indian regiments do not have the same ‘esprit de corps’ and loyalty that was so characteristic of the Indian army in the old days…….

Again, take the case of the prisoner of war, who has been captured through no fault of his own, he sees that the Japanese murder many of the prisoners; he naturally wishes to save his life and so he joins a ‘contact party’. He is thus in my view more sinned against than sinning.”

On the matter of confiscating the property of those individuals known to be helping the enemy, there was broad consensus among the governmental circle that property might be confiscated but it should not be used too freely because for the sake of perfectly loyal family.

Hallett attitude was to some extent different from other high officials as he explicitly wrote: “Though possibly new of confiscation might create alarm and despondency in the ranks of the I.N.A., I think it is much more likely that they would create alarm and despondency in our recruiting areas and would do more harm than good. For this reason I feel doubtful whether stoppage of family allotment is desirable; it would of course follow automatically after the guilt of the soldier has been definitely

45. Linlithgow Collections, Roll No.111, p.86.
established at a court martial and should not be done in the case of soldiers merely believed or suspected to be traitors.”

The confiscation of property was not possible because the immovable property was not in the sole ownership of the accused and the confiscation might have led to considerable hardship to other members of the traitors’ family who were quite innocent. But the Governor of Central Provinces and Berar, Sir Henry Twynam has different opinion about confiscation as he told Linlithgow “I am doubtful whether the news of confiscations would produce much effect in the ranks of the I.N.A. A confirmed traitor would think that such confiscation would be made good by the Japanese….. I am inclined to think that the mere blacklisting of traitors with an intimation that they would be dealt with as traitors, if ever they fell into our hands, would be just as effective as an announcement of the confiscation of their usually exiguous and jointly held landed property while it would be less open to the objections.”

Mostly Governors were in favour of death penalty against those soldiers who took active part in I.N.A. and committed atrocities against those captured prisoners of war who were reluctant to join Japanese sponsored JIFs. Because it was after all practically the same as waging war against the king. Some Governors like Maurice Hallett of United Province were against

46. The same view was shared by the Governors of Punjab and Bihar in their letters dated 20 May and 15 May, 1943 respectively, Linlithgow Collections, Roll No.111

the publicity outside for sentences of punishment on soldiers convicted of traitorous conduct because up to that time the heroic activities of I.N.A. had created considerable sympathy not only at the grass-root level but among the nationalist press and political parties.

The Governor of Punjab who was in favour of extreme penalty observed, “As regards the penalty for tempering with the loyalty of members of the services, I think that the maximum penalty should be death.... I doubt whether this is practicable, but the wide publication of instances in which the extreme penalty has been exacted should produce a salutary effect. The question of setting up a special Tribunal for the disposal of such cases seems to be worth considering in order to ensure that there is no undue leniency. I also concur in the proposal that publicity should be given outside the services, in recruiting areas particularly and in India generally, to punishments inflicted on members of the services convicted of traitorous conduct.”

The Governor of Punjab favoured an intensified campaign on the part of the National War Front and any other suitable agencies against the Japanese and any who supported them. In the Punjab province, the public seemed to be becoming more and more complacent and they require to be woken up. He thought that there would be a considerable advantage to be gained from giving as wide publication as possible to instances of Japanese brutality to Indians, both soldiers and civilians, and of the
Japanese desecration of places of worship and their other insults to religion.\(^{48}\)

Although the government had no faith in Indian press and political parties but had full faith in Indian public. It was famine of Bengal in 1943 that changed the calculation. The war problem was affected by the famine in Bengal. The war scare was compelling thousands to leave Calcutta. The people naturally blamed the government for their miserable plight. The result was the growth of anti-British feeling, increasing sympathy for the Japanese, unrest and consequent lawlessness. The Congress leaders were well informed about both the unprepared ness of the government for war and the ill-will arising amongst the Indian people against the colonial rulers. They were in close contacts with the American representatives in India regarding defence matters and also were in the direct and intimate contact with the masses.\(^{49}\)

In this way, Britishers were on the path of victory on war front but were going to be defeated in India on the ruling front which is being manifested in a letter to Churchill by Wavell on 24 October, 1944, in which he pointed out that it would be impossible to hold India by force after the war due to the world opinion and attitude of the army etc.\(^{50}\) Despite Wavell’s fears, the initial steps he was asked to take by the Attlee ministry were by no means very radical. The announcement of new elections in the coming winter of 1945 was inevitable once the war had ended. Simultaneously, a

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49. Tarachand, \textit{op.cit.}, Vol.IV, pp.413-14, Sumit Sarkar, \textit{op.cit.}, pp.405-08.
new problem for the government was coming after the surrender of Japanese and I.N.A. According to the military sources, I.N.A. was never a cause of real trouble or annoyance to the rulers; the formidable trouble rulers faced was how to tackle the problem of recovered prisoners of war and those who surrendered after the fall of Axis powers. The returned prisoners of war explained to the British authority about the atrocities meted out by Japanese and I.N.A. military leadership. Therefore, War Department in consultation with Home and Finance Departments decided to define the members of I.N.A. and 950 Regiment (J.I.Fs and H.I.Fs) in following categories.

1. **BLACKS**: Officers or men are classified ‘Black’ if it considered that they should be brought to trial for a criminal offence or if their release would be dangerous.

2. **GREYS**: Those who have been members of an enemy organisation and subjected to enemy propaganda and have been affected thereby, but are not considered to be fundamentally and incurably disloyal.

3. **WHITES**: Those whose loyalty was beyond doubt.51

To execute this task in the terms of government policy and required solution of the problem, Commander-in-Chief formed three agencies i.e. F.I.U., F.I.C. & C.S.D.I.C. Theoretically, the main task of Forward Interrogation Unit (F.I.U.) was to interrogate and classify the recovered prisoners of war but it had to make the

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51. Governor-General (War Department) to Secretary of State Telegram dated 11 August, 1945; *Home Poll(I)*, File No.39/84/45.
arrangement for the dispatch to India of suspects required for
detailed interrogation also. It gave home to suspects who, for one
reason or another, were unable to return to their homes. The notes
prepared by these units were expected to be useful to the
commanders in future operations. They were compiled from
experiences gained in the second Burma campaign during which
this unit served first in the field with 33 Indian Corps from
Dimapur to RGN, and then in the city or RGN under Twelfth
Army. The range of interrogation was comprehensive. It covered
the changing situations of the JIFs (Japanese Inspired Fifth
Columnists) offensive, the intelligence network of the Chindwin,
the KT ramifications of the larger towns of upper and central
Burma, the operations of 2 I.N.A. Div. at Popa and to the South,
and eventually the investigation of the 5,000 JIFs who surrendered
in RGN, and of the local Japanese espionage system in that city.
But F.I.U. was not generally competent to undertake detailed
interrogation and this was the job of CSDIC (I) at Delhi.52 It was
the task of an F.I.U. to interrogate all suspects of any nationality
other than Japanese. They were asked to return to their depots as
purporting to be prisoners of war but after due interrogation, and to
record informations from persons, something was to be done in
such cases.

All the units were required to collect the informations
whether they were on enemy side or became puppets (of I.N.A., or
Local Forces) and also to observe their dispositions, intentions and

52. Notes on the working of A forward Interrogation Unit During Second Burma
movements, morale, local inhabitant's attitude to enemy and ourselves and the activities of local spies and spy organisations, 'Patriotic Forces' and 'Infiltration Parties'. Translation and circulation of documents relating to enemy propaganda leaflets, posters and circulars were required to be sent by F.I.U. immediately to main forward Interrogation Centre (F.I.C.) for forwarding to General Headquarters where they would be collated. The war diaries of the I.N.A., however, should be digested by the F.I.U. in order that future arrivals incriminated therein could be confronted with their activities. Incriminating papers which related to locals should be sent to the Police of the district in which the man lived or his crime was committed. Lastly, the suspects/escapees who returned to their own homes in India were required to be interrogated about their past history, activities during occupation, connection with revolutionary organisations etc.\textsuperscript{53}

The government was very cautious with respect to the security classification and treatment of J.I.Fs, I.N.A., I.I.L. and the agents of spy schools run by Indians in South-East Asia. The method of interrogation to be chosen varied greatly with the psychology of the subject under interrogation and following approach was adopted:-

(a) Hard-core defiant JIFs were given judicious threats but no rough-handling or physical violence was to be permitted.

\textsuperscript{53} Ibid., pp.5-7.
Those obsessed with fear of punishment were required to be instilled with confidence by cajolery and assurances of lenient treatment if he speaks the truth.

Of poor intelligence and memory required many aids to memory, such as the drawing of attention to important events, places, persons or reasons of year.

Evasive and cunning type who had something to conceal and was unwilling to give a straight answer was required to go through oblique approach and production of known facts on his case so that the suspect realized that his cunning was of no avail.

The importance was also given to the informers, for they had valuable information of local conditions and happenings. Care was taken to preserve the anonymity of the informer, both for his own safety and to ensure the continuance of the flow of information.⁵⁴

It was necessary to make a division between the interrogations of Indian JIFs and indigenous people to the country being occupied. It was the job of the Commanding Officer to coordinate operational and security intelligence by circulating points of interests brought out by one branch to the other branch. There was a broad approach of dealing with the after war situation by the military department. They defined the following definitions

of classifications of Burma/Indians residing in Burma and India as: 55

1. Burman civilians (including Indians domiciled in Burma & Burmans) were defined as non-suspects who had no information worth recording were classified as unimportant civilian white.

2. Burman civilians (including Indians domiciled in Burma & Burmans) whose loyalty was not in question were classified as White.

3. Burmans civilians (including Indians domiciled in Burma & Burmans) whose loyalty was likely to be affected to a small degree and who were likely to create possible danger to security if allowed complete freedom were classified as Grey.

4. Burman civilians, (including Indians domiciled in Burma & Burmans) who were otherwise ‘White’ but became ‘Black’ because they were captured in the course of operations and had obtained thereby such a knowledge of British dispositions that the return to their villages could not, for the time being, be permitted were classified as ‘Operational Blacks’.

5. Burman civilians, (including Indians domiciled in Burma & Burmans) who were dangerous to security to a degree

which could only be dealt with by detention or who
should be brought to trial for a criminal offence were
classified as 'Blacks'.

6. The same definitions and classifications were applied to
Indians who were residing in India.

7. Mily Indians and Burmans whose loyalty and morale not
or no longer affected by the Japanese were classified as
'White'.

8. Mily Indians and Burmans who were subjected to I.N.A.
and I.I.L. propaganda and whose loyalty and morale had
been affected thereby but were not considered
fundamentally disloyal were classified as 'Grey'.

9. Mily Indians and Burmans in respect of whom there
appeared to be a reasonable chance that they might
ultimately become fit to return to their units though after
a period of rehabilitation considerably longer than that
applied to a 'Grey' were classified as 'Dark Grey: Retention'.

10. Mily Indians and Burmans whom it was considered
undesirable to return to mily duty, and were likely to be
discharged from the Army either with or without a period
of rehabilitation, but who were not a direct danger to
security, i.e. persons whose conduct while P/W had
shown them greatly lacking in soldierly qualities were
classified as 'Dark Grey: Removal'.
11. Mily Indians and Burmans who were considered dangerous to security to a degree which could only be dealt with by detention or who should be brought to trial for a criminal offence and additionally whose morale was permanently affected and who were considered fundamentally disloyal were classified as ‘Blacks’.

The above classifications were applied equally to Indian Commissioned Officers (I.C.Os.) but they would be confirmed by General Headquarter(I). An F.I.U. was not empowered to make a final decision in any higher classification than ‘White’. It might only recommend to the confirming authorities noted below:

1. The confirming authority of the category of suspects/escapees – Eastern Command.

2. Confirming authority of locally domiciled of non-Indian were Dy. Chief of Police. The authority was given to F.I.U.s to dispatch Indian Army Greys and Whites direct to their depots without waiting for the confirmation of Eastern Command.56

After classification by F.I.U.s. in the forward areas, army peoples war escapees/stragglers (Whites & Greys) were sent to their depots but Dark Greys (Retention), Dark Grey (Removal), operational Blacks and Blacks were sent to either main Forward Interrogation Centre or C.S.D.I.C(I) Red Fort, Delhi. JIFs of Indian Domiciled whether Whites or the Greys were freed but Dark Greys

56. Ibid., p.22-23
(Retention & Removal), Operation Blacks, and Blacks were sent either to main F.I.C. or to C.S.D.I.C.(I) Red Fort, Delhi.57

To put to the trial of 'traitors', they were divided into two groups for the sake of easy and practical trial while the 'civilian traitors' were handed over to a Civil Affairs Officer who had the powers of a Special Judge for trial under the Burma Special Judges Act; and military personnel were by the commander as follows:

A. The members of the Indian and Burma Army were trialed by the Summary General Court Martial (S.G.C.M.) under Indian Army Act/Burma Army Act convened by any Commander having power to convene a court martial.

B. Army British subject domiciled in India i.e. an Indian civilian in Burma were to be trialed either by a Special Judge under the Burma Special Judges Act or by a superior Military Court convened under ordinance 37.

C. Burman civilians and any other civilian including 'B' above were to be tried by a Special Judge under the Burma Special Judges Act as above in 'B'.58

The policy for dealing with these men was as follows:

a) Not to punish all men to avoid a legacy of bitterness and hatred.

57. Ibid., p.23.
b) The object is to bring to justice those who have taken an active and deliberate part in hostile action against us.

c) 'The main categories of traitors' who were to bring to trial were:

i. The ring leaders in Japanese-sponsored organisations, especially those who have used their rank or position to influence others e.g. commissioned officers of the Indian or Burma Armies.

ii. Those using arms against us e.g. JIFs who have actually fired on our troops.

iii. Those guilty of atrocities on our prisoners.

iv. Those who have been active in betraying soldiers or loyal civilians to the Japanese.

v. Those who have given intentionally false information to our troops or led them into ambushes.

vi. Such cases will be dealt with promptly in the forward area. Sentences of death when duly confirmed will be carried out in the field. There will be no public executions.59

The evidence for trial was available against about 2000 but there were considerable practical difficulties in carrying out trial by court-martial of so many men. Therefore, out of these 2000,

59. Ibid., pp.236-37.
1400, along with other 5600 'Blacks' against whom sufficient evidences for trial did not exist, were dismissed from the Army and detained under Ordinance-IV of 1944 as a danger to security. Punishment for the offences for which 'Blacks' were to be tried was either death or transportation for life, and in the event of conviction, it was obligatory on court to award one of these punishments. It was, however, open to the confirming officer to commute either of these sentences to a period of imprisonment.60

In order to ensure the same standards apply in every case and in order to limit the number of executions, it was proposed that death sentence should only be confirmed in the categories of such cases specified below:

a) Any person actively instrumental in causing the death of any British or Allied subject, whether in or out of battle.

b) Any person responsible the brutal treatment of any British or Allied subject.

c) Any person taking a responsible part in the capture or handing over to the enemy of any British or Allied subject.

d) The senior officer V.C.O. (Viceroy’s Commissioned Officer) or I.O.R. (Indian Officer Regiment) or any party of over ten in number which deserted to the enemy and joined the I.N.A.

60. Governor-General (War Department) to Secretary of State dated 11 August, 1945. Wavell's Collections, Roll No.8. 10RL/PO/10/25, p.308.
e) Any person who accepted an appointment as a member of Bose’s Government.

f) Any officer of rank of substantive Major and above in the Indian Army who joined the I.N.A. and took a prominent and active part in furthering opposition to the Allied war effort.

g) Any person who held the rank of colonel and above in the I.N.A. and took a prominent and active part in furthering opposition to the Allied War effort.

h) Officers and V.C.Os. who were Fujiwara Volunteers.61

There was another category of Indian ex-prisoners of war who were recovered from various parts of Europe but were classified by the British Government as H.I.Fs. According to the governmental sources, “As regard the H.I.Fs. trial will be a practical impossibility except in the case of the 130 Blacks (or at any rate a large proportion of them) against whom C.S.D.I.C. have strong documentary or other evidence. Some are still openly mutinous! Generally speaking, the witnesses for and against the thousand odd Greys are scattered all over Europe and many of these witnesses are, of course, Germans.”62

Government had calculated and examined the feeling of army personnel who remained loyal to Britishers and political parties and common men. Therefore Governor-General (War

61. Ibid., p.309.
62. Personal Secretary to the Viceroy to Personal Secretary to the Secretary of State dated 30 August, 1945, Wavell’s Collections.
Department) wrote to Secretary of State on 5 September, 1945, that, "certain senior K.C.I.Os. (King Commissioned Indian Officers) were, however, concerned in raising the organisation of I.N.A. and are awaiting trial by court-martial. Although the number of K.C.I.Os. involved is small, it would be most unfair if they were to escape forfeiture of pay imposed upon I.C.Os., V.C.Os. and I.O.Rs. who must have been very considerably influenced by the action of such senior K.C.I.Os."\(^{63}\)

About the treatment of civilians, Viceroy wrote to the Secretary of State, "In the light of policy adopted towards I.N.A. and its result, Home, War and External Affairs Departments now consider that difficulties of successful trial in India of civilian collaborators would be so great and arouse so much opposition, and that nearly all persons concerned as so comparatively unimportant that it would be better to leave them where they are."\(^{64}\)

It clearly indicates that the government was bowing down to the popular feelings and it was possibility that death sentences might be carried out in approximately 50 cases. In the remaining cases, the sentences would be commuted to varying periods of imprisonment. Probably, the reason behind this leniency in the attitude of British rulers was Congress involvement in a movement all over the country in the support of I.N.A. personnel and Subhash Bose. Viceroy Lord Wavell wrote to the Secretary of State that, "Congress leaders had realized that those who joined the I.N.A. were far from innocent; that Nehru’s speeches and statement on the

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subject always included a qualifying phrase or sentence to this effect, e.g. “Whatever errors and mistakes they had committed” whether “misguided men” etc. they must be set free.65

On 11 August, 1945, government issued a proposed draft press communique as, “The Government of India have decided to treat with mercy and generosity the rank and file of those soldiers who yielded to pressure and who were so misguided as to join the forces raised by the enemy. But they will allow the law to take its (own) course and will try by court-martial the leaders and those who were guilty of particular heinous crimes.”

The Indian Government firmly believed that the offence of going ‘over to the enemy’ and fighting against his former comrades was the most serious that a soldier could commit. It was punishable with death by the laws of almost all countries, and those who had committed this offence and been recaptured could claim no rights as belligerents or prisoners of war. The Government of India felt, however, that allowance must be made for the circumstances in which the rank and file found themselves placed after their capture in Malaya and Burma. From that date they were in no position to learn the truth of the progress of the war or to hear any news but false and propagandist Japanese reports. Some of them were misled by this propaganda or gave way to pressure or the desire for better treatment and joined the enemy with no motives beyond an immediate improvement in their living conditions. Those men, therefore, who seemed to have been merely

65. Ibid., p.379.
misguided and they were the great majority, would be treated with clemency. The Governor-General’s attitude in this matter was clear: “There can, of course, be no question of retaining in the Indian Army anyone... Men of this category will, therefore, be discharged,..... but there are some who were so imbued with enemy propaganda that their immediate release would be a danger to their security in India. These men will be dismissed from the Army and kept in detention until they can safely be released.”

The intention behind this communique was to pacify the press, public and Congress before the commencement of trial in November 1945. On 5 October, 1945, Lord Pethick-Lawrence wrote to Viceroy that if death sentences were to be executed only on those members of the I.N.A. who had been directly responsible for the death and possibly the torture of a fellow Indian. They should take the wind out of Congress criticism. But Wavell wrote that, “I am not at all sure about this” because “the Congress leaders evidently intend to use the story of Subhash Chandra Bose’s Provisional Indian Government and of the I.N.A. for all they are worth. They have appointed an Influential Defence Committee, of which Nehru is a member, and leading Indian Counsels were being briefed for the defence of the accused.”

The Government was apprehensive that during the trial, the Congress would try to defend the I.N.A. by comparing Bose’s Government to the Governments of the occupied European

66. Governor-General (War Department) to Secretary-of-State Telegram dated 11 August, 1945, Wavell’s Collections.
67. Viceroy to Secretary-of-State dated 22 October, 1945, Wavell’s Collections.
countries in the United Kingdom during the War, and I.N.A. to de Gaulles Free French. Wavell had large misconceptions about the intention of Congress. According to his letter to Secretary of State for India: “The interest of the Congress leaders in the I.N.A. seems to be connected with a general interest in the armed forces which was evident even at the Simla conference. This effort of Congress to suborn the Army is likely to have the most dangerous development of the near future...... Nehru’s interest in the I.N.A. is almost certainly connected with some idea of this kind. He has just spent a day or two in Delhi and interviewed the three I.N.A. officers who are to be tried first.”

Both the Congress and the League welcomed the opportunity to prove their influence on their electorates in the coming elections and justify their claim. Government was in dilemma over the attitude to be taken in the changed situation. On the suggestion of the Secretary of State about the meeting of Viceroy with Mahatma Gandhi to reduce tension, Viceroy wrote: “Perhaps your most important suggestion was that I should see Gandhi. The difficulty is that even if this did good with the Congress, it would immediately do corresponding harm with the Muslims and tend to redouble their suspicions. Also Gandhi and Congress would at once try to make a bargain and would use my approach as propaganda.”

68. Wavell's Collections, Roll No.8, p.286.
69. Ibid., p.287.
70. Viceroy to Secretary-of-State dated 27 November, 1945, Wavell's Collections.
But before the voting started an event occurred which was not without significance for the elections: This was the trial of some I.N.A. officers who had fallen into the hands of the British when the Japanese were forced out of Burma. The charges against them were that, "they had waged war against the King-Emperor" and they were guilty of gross brutality in the "method employed to induce their fellow prisoners to join them." A military tribunal was set up and the public trial was held in the famous Red Fort at Delhi in November 1945. The Congress decided to defend them and a number of eminent lawyers offered their services; perhaps after evaluating the intentions of Indian public. Congress had asked Aruna Asaf Ali to tour the country and find out public feelings. He had done so, from south to north, as he moved north, opinions became stronger and stronger that the I.N.A. must not be punished for their actions, but should be released. This inflamed the feelings of countrymen which forced the Congress to take definite line of action in this regard.

The inflamed feelings of common public and reactionary attitude of the government can be ascertained from a communiqué by the Viceroy to the Secretary of State, 27 November, 1945, as, "The need for a firm attitude about violence had been brought home to me by a recent intelligence report I have received. The following are some extracts from a single day’s report: “In the course of a meeting held at Nagpur, R.S. Ruikar threatened the British Government that if mercy was not shown to the I.N.A.

72. Viceroy to Secretary-of-State dated 23 October, 1945, *Wavell’s Collections*. 
personnel, Indians would not spare 'their last drop of blood in saving their lives' and asked the people to hold themselves in readiness for a movement 'more powerful and mightier than that of 1942. In the Central Province, the President of the Mahakoshal Provincial Congress Committee stated privately that the movement which Congress now visualized, unless Gandhi gave a clear-cut directive to the country, would not only be of a violent character but would be reinforced by the cooperation of released elements trained in guerilla warfare; he declared another movement inevitable.'

The trial created great excitement as the name of Subhash Chandra Bose was associated with the I.N.A. and he had become the hero of India for his exploits in the cause of the nation. Demonstrations were held in many towns, funds were collected and the Congress leaders stumped the country with fiery speeches applauding Bose's Army and its valorous deeds. They denounced the British not only for their continuous oppression of India but also for riveting the yoke of France and Holland over the South-Eastern lands of Asia. In the words of Lord Wavell, "The I.N.A. trials have been embarrassing, but I think the use of Indian troops in Java and French-Indo-China is more damaging in the long run because the case against it is, from the Indian point of view, almost a cast-iron one, and there is little need to twist the arguments in order to make it look wrong."
The I.N.A. trials were in progress in the months of November and December 1945 and it was becoming more and more clear as Wavell went on to say that the distorted publicity which had attended them was doing a very great deal of harm to government and constitutes a threat to the morale of the Indian Army. All parties had taken the same line though Congress was more vociferous than the others. This calculation was factual because one hundred and sixty political meetings were held in the Central Provinces and Berar alone in the first fortnight of October 1945 where the demand for clemency for I.N.A. prisoners was raised. I.N.A. day was observed on 12 November and I.N.A. week from 5 to 11 November 1945. While 50,000 people would turn out for the larger meetings, the largest meeting was the one held at Deshpriya Park, Calcutta, organised by the I.N.A. Relief Committee. It was addressed by Sarat Bose, Nehru and Patel. Estimates of attendance ranged from two to three lakhs but to Nehru’s estimation, it was five to seven lakhs.

Another significant feature of the I.N.A. campaign was its wide geographical reach and the participation of diverse social groups and political parties. This had two aspects—one was the generally extensive nature of the agitation, the other was the spread of pro-I.N.A. sentiment to social groups hitherto outside the nationalist pale. Francis Mudie conceded in his letter to E.M. Jankins: “One of the most difficult questions that will confront Home Department in the near future is the treatment of Bose.

76. Wavell’s Collections, Roll No.8, p.339.
77. Bipanchandra, op.cit., p.476.
Bose's influence over the I.N.A. is very considerable. It extends to the great bulk of the 12000 I.N.A. soldiers and civilians, already in our hands and 15000 is to be recovered. It affects all races, castes and communities, almost equally strong.\textsuperscript{78} 

'Anxious enquiries' and 'profuse sympathies' were forthcoming from the remotest villages and from all men, 'irrespective of caste, colour and creed.' Nehru confirmed the same that never before in Indian history had such unified sentiments and feelings been manifested by various divergent sections of the Indian population as it had been done with regard to the question of the Indian National Army.\textsuperscript{79}

The growing nationalist sentiment that reached a crescendo around the I.N.A. trials developed into violent confrontations with authority in the winter of 1945-46. There were three upsurges- one on 21 November, 1945 in Calcutta over the I.N.A. trials; the second on 11 February, 1946 in Calcutta to protests against the seven year sentence given to an I.N.A. officer, Rashid Ali; and the third in Bombay on 18 February, 1946 when the ratings of the Royal Indian Navy (RIN) went on strike. The upsurges followed a fairly similar pattern in initial stages when a group defied authority. As in the words of Lord Wavell, "The last three months have been anxious and depressing. They have been marked by continuous and unbridled abuse of the government, of the British, of officials and police, in practical speeches, in practically the whole of the press, and in the Assembly; by serious \textsuperscript{78} Wavell's collections, Roll No.9, p.273. \textsuperscript{79} Nehru, Selected Works, Vol.14, pp.279-80.
rioting in Bombay, by a mutiny in the R.I.N., much indiscipline in the R.I.A.F., some unrest in the Indian Army.”

The second stage began on 11 February, 1946 when Muslim League students led the procession which was joined by the Congress and Communist students’ organisations resulting into the arrests of some of them at Dharamatola street, Calcutta. Spontaneously the students tied together the Congress, League, and Red Flags as symbol of all in anti-imperialist unity. After the first round of police firing which killed two students (a Hindu and a Muslim), trouble spread all over the city. A Communist led general strike paralyzed industrial Calcutta on 12 February, and a massive rally on the same day at Wellington Square was addressed by the League leader Suhrawardy, Satis Dasgupta, a Congressman and the Communist Somnath Lahiri.

Government was blaming the Indian National Congress leadership especially Nehru for insurgency in Calcutta. According to Wavell, “The troubles which I feared might be brought about by the intemperate speeches of Nehru and other Congress leaders, with their indiscriminate championship of the I.N.A. and glorification of the ‘Martyrs’ of August 1942, duly occurred in Calcutta in the last week of November, ……It began with a student procession in favour of the I.N.A. which defied police orders.”

80. Lord Wavell to Personal Secretary to King-Emperor dated 22 March, 1946 Wavell’s Collections, Roll No.1, pp.109-12.
82. Wavell to His Majesty the King-Emperor, Wavell’s Collection,Roll No.1, pp.100-101, dated 31 December, 1945.
Jinnah was also in search of bargaining the critical situation in favour of Muslim League. The sentence of Abdul Rashid was the good chance for this purpose. During his meeting with Viceroy on 12 March, 1946, Jinnah considered the trial of Abdul Rashid as if against the Muslim League. He then went on to a considerable length with the legal arguments that he had advanced to the Viceroy before about Shah Nawaz having been let off murder while Abdul Rashid received a heavy sentence for grievous hurt. He, however, asked whether it was not possible to make a clean sweep of the whole of the I.N.A. cases which were causing such a sore in their relations.83 Against this argument, the Viceroy told Jinnah that both he and the Commander-in-Chief thought over the matter carefully and appreciated the possible political advantages to be gained by stopping all the trials against this. Both of them arrived at the consensus that they had to consider (a) the effect on the men who had stood loyal, (b) the fact that some really sadistic criminals would go free, and (c) the argument which would certainly be used by a great many people that violent agitation had had its effect and that, therefore, this was the way of resisting any measure of the government that was not popular.84

During the same meeting Viceroy was of the opinion that the government had made serious mistakes in handling the I.N.A. question, especially in the selection of cases to be tried first, because during the first trial government could not muster

83. Wavell’s Collections, Roll No.4, p.107.
84. Ibid., p.107.
sufficient evidence in the sport of punishment given to the accused. In the words of Viceroy, “One trouble is that the evidence against the accused in the present trial, at any rate on the first few days, has not been such as to horrify the normal Indian in any way. The Congress cry has been that these men only loved their country too well.” It would have been much better if they had brought on first the trials in which the accused were “alleged to be guilty of the grossest brutality to other Indians. But even when evidence of brutality comes out, as it has done lately, the Nationalist papers hide it unobtrusively on a back page and headline some sentence or phrase favourable to their thesis.”

In the absence of appropriate evidence, British rulers tried to set liability of those who were not directly involved in the execution of any type of such act which might be considered against empire. During the proceedings of trial, prosecutors tried to use such Acts of Indian Penal Code as might be useful to involve those who were not directly involved in the commitment of atrocities. During the trial, Advocate-General pleaded before the court-martial, “When a criminal act is done by several persons, in furtherance of the common intention of all, each of such persons is liable for that act in the same manner as if it were done by him alone.” He further pleaded that, “It is obvious that the firing of hundreds of rounds either directly at or into an area occupied by a number of men must be with the knowledge that such firing is

85. Viceroy to The Secretary-of-State for India dated November 27, 1945; Wavell’s collections, Roll No.8, 10R L/PO/70/22, p.339.
86. I.N.A. Collections, File No.492, p.359.
likely to cause death even if there were no actual intention of causing death."\(^{87}\)

In this way, the trials without solid proofs roused the feelings of the people against the government and they rallied around the Congress banner enthusiastically. The effects of the trials were discussed by the Commander-in-Chief and G.H.Q. and adopted revised strategy in which government decided its effect, to proceed only, a part from the present trial, with cases in which there were allegations of brutality, and also decided to make intentions clear by putting out a communiqué.

The elections were becoming the deciding factors in the attitudes of both the government and Indian political parties. The common situation of whole country was continuously going out of the British control. The matter of treatment to Bose and his close associates was most embarrassing for the government. In a letter to Francis Mudie, E.M.Jenkins advised that, "in particular he is not at all sure that Bose and his immediate associates should be returned for trial. It might be better to have them dealt with as war criminals outside India."\(^{88}\)

Taking into consideration the Bose’s influence over Indian politics in general and Bengal in particular, Mudie found the following possibilities relating to the treatment of Bose in case he is captured alive:

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(a) to bring him back to India and try him either for waging war or under the enemy agents ordinance;

(b) to have him tried by a court in Burma or Malaya for waging war against the King in that country;

(c) to have him tried by a military court outside India;

(d) to intern him in India;

(e) to intern him in some other British possession e.g. Schelles Islands;

(f) to leave him where he is and do not ask for his surrender.\textsuperscript{89}

But there were minimum possibilities of trying Bose either in India or Burma as well. Government was much feared of the great excitement and patriotic feelings of the whole country in support of Netaji and his I.N.A. In the matter of trial in Burma, Mudie told frankly to E.M. Jenkins, "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 agitations 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

\textsuperscript{89} Ibid., p.274. Mudie to E.M. Jenkins dated 23 August, 1945.
execution. But in that case we would be accused of judicial murder. It would be said and truly said that we had kept the proceedings secret to prevent his friends and supporters from doing all they could to save his life. Also, what reason could be given for trying Bose outside India when the leaders of the I.N.A. are to be tried openly in India. The long term political consequences of this course might be very serious. He might, of course, in certain circumstances be welcomed by the Russians.\textsuperscript{90}

The response of the armed forces, especially Royal Indian Navy, was unexpectedly sympathetic, belying the Wavell's perception, "As I told you in my last letter, the prisoners of war who stood firm – the great majority – feel very bitterly about (to call I.N.A. soldiers patriots and hero) this; and I entirely sympathise with them."\textsuperscript{91} Royal Indian Air Force men in Kohat attended Shah Nawaz's meetings and army men in U.P. and Punjab attended I.N.A. meetings, often in Uniform. RIAF men in Calcutta, Kohat, Allahabad, Bamrauli and Kanpur contributed money for the I.N.A. defence, as did other service personnel in U.P. Apart from this instance of overt support, a growing feeling of sympathy for the I.N.A. pervaded the Indian Army, according to Commander-in-Chief. He concluded that the "general opinion in the Army is in favour of leniency and recommended to Whitehall that leniency be shown by the government.\textsuperscript{92}

\textsuperscript{90} Ibid., pp.274-75.
\textsuperscript{91} Wavell's Collections, Roll No.8, IOR L/PO/10/22, p.261.
\textsuperscript{92} Commander-in-Chief to Viceroy 24 and 26 November, 1945. Quoted in Bipan Chandra's India's Freedom Struggle for Independence, New Delhi, p.478.
In the last, it can be said that the attitude of the British Government to deal with the I.N.A. was started in October 1942 when the reports of beatings, tortures, loss of limbs and even death in one or two cases, being taken by volunteer members of I.N.A., were reported in the British prisoners of war camp Changi. According to the governmental circle, the I.N.A. was not, as the Congress tried to make out, the creation of Subhash Chandra Bose; nor was it formed of patriots determined to free India but was due to the efforts of a Japanese officers who managed to suborn a few Indian officers and men before the Malayan campaign. Moreover, Britishers entitled them (I.N.A. men) as Japanese inspired fifth column (JIFs). They also saw in it a conspiracy of Mahatma Gandhi and his Congress behind I.N.A. movement when some central leaders tried to defend I.N.A. personnel during their trial. Innumerable meetings were organised by several national organisations and their counterparts all over India on the issue of I.N.A. personnel, Bose and their heroic activities which created a considerable amount of excitement among the Indians. The Congress leaders like Nehru, Bhulabhai Desai, Asaf Ali etc. came out to defend the cases of I.N.A. personnel when their trials began at Lal Quila, Delhi. Besides, the revolt in the Royal Indian Navy etc. created quite unfavourable situation for the colonial government in India which, consequently, decided to leave India in order to escape from another big movement which could paralyse the whole system of their government in India.