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The second front created by Subhas Chander Bose and other revolutionary nationalists in the South-East Asia in the form of 50,000 strong I.N.A. supported by about two million Indians in South-east Asia, who were ready to sacrifice everything for India’s freedom was a long drawn battle. The frequent imprisonments Subhas had to face at the hands of British Indian Government made him think that force can only be defeated by the use of force. Moreover, the constitutional concessions given after each movement were in his view devised in such a way as to create more ruptures and divisions in Indian society and polity. The nationalist view of Vivekanand and Aurbindo Ghosh, where a saviour was expected to free mother India from the chains of slavery, ignorance and darkness help in the construction of his vision of I.N.A. The vision also includes Subhas’s inclination and consent for methods other than non-violence which was demonstrated in his students’ life at Calcutta and Cambridge.

Subhas’s passion for use of force to oust the British is taken from an extract, ‘civil disobedience along is not enough to overthrow the British. As the British Government relies on the strength of bayonets We, too should use bayonets in order to defeat them decisively. As the enemy stands before us with the drawn sword, we should fight him only with the aid of the sword. Another extract stresses on the need of an army of liberation. ‘Throughout my public career, I have always felt tha
through India is otherwise ripe for independence in every way, she has lacked one thing, namely, an army of liberation.

The above quotations reflect Subhas Bose’s predilection for armed-struggle as the means to attain freedom. The period between 1941 and 1945 was the culmination of a tendency, Bose had displayed since adolescence. He, unlike other Congress leaders, rejected non-violence as a creed but regarded it as an expedient at the same time. His passion for methods other than non-violence was well demonstrated in his student life, both in Calcutta and Cambridge. The formation of a paramilitary force with Bose as the commander-in-Chief during the 1928 Congress session in Calcutta is indicative of the urge he felt of an organized volunteer corps. So, what came in the wake of the formation of the Indian National Army (INA) or Azad Hind Fauz, showed convincingly Bose’s passion for arms as a means to liberate India.

The revolutionary nationalists contributed to the national movement in two fundamental ways, one by adopting the cult of gun they awakened the manhood of Indians and spread the ideas that force can only be countered by force. The second one being that after a hot pursuit by the British Indian government most of the revolutionaries had fled to Western Europe, America and South-east Asia, where a second front was created. The efforts of this second front in South-east Asia culminated in the formation of I.N.A.

The idea of Asia for the Asians advocated by the Indian revolutionary nationalists like Tarak Nath Das and H.L. Gupta, alongwith many Japanese, began to take concrete shape after the termination of the Anglo-Japanese alliance. Tokyo became a heaven
for the Asian nationalist. With the increase of pressure from the Western powers, Japan started advocating that, “as an advanced nation of East Asia”, it should assist the progress and prosperity of countries of the region. This gave birth to the idea of establishing a co-prosperity sphere. The idea was distorted by the Western powers in the light of Japanese domination of China, for, notwithstanding the Japanese desire to oust the western powers from Asia, the general concept of Greater East Asia was one in which Japan itself stood forth as the leader.3

The revolutionary nationalists like Raja Mahender Pratap, A.M. Sahay and Rash Behari Bose followed different ideological line for liberation of India. The secret groups in Thailand, Bangkok, Malaya and Singapore under the leadership of Pritam Singh, Baba Amar Singh, Dev Nath Das, contributed to the freedom movement in general and formation of I.N.A. in particular. The Tokyo and Bangkok conferences laid down the seeds of Indian Voluntary Army which was given a concrete form with the surrender of British Indian Army to the Japanese in Singapore and Malaya. Capt. Mohan Singh with the collaboration of Maj. Fujiwara of Japan form the I.N.A. from the surrendered P.O.W.

The I.N.A. collaboration with the Axis Powers was subject to mudslinging propaganda by the allied Powers particularly Britain and America. The pro-Soviet Communist party of India which then cooperated with the British in the name of ‘People’s War’ did not hesitate to brand Bose as a ‘quisling’. Even Nehru disapproved this tactical line of Subhas and his I.N.A. in a reported speech in the middle of 1942 in Assam, he declared that while he greatly admired Subhas as a courageous Indian patriot, he would not hesitate to oppose him with all
his strength if Subhas entered Assam along with the army of Fascist Japan. But the fact remains that Subhas and his I.N.A. chose the Axis Powers as his main allies mainly for two reasons.

First, their one aim in life was how to overthrow the British Raj from the Indian soil, and to fulfil this, they worked from the age-old premise that ‘enemy’s enemy is friend’.

Second, after his great escape, Subhas was in search of a suitable place from where he could have the best possible opportunities of working for Indian independence. Soviet Russia would have been his first and natural choice because of his ideological inclination to Socialism. But with his great vision, he could realize earlier in 1937 that after the death of Lenin and the elimination of Trotsky, Soviet Russia under the guidance of Stalin was no longer interested in stirring up revolution all over the world but only in building up Socialism within the Soviet frontiers. Nevertheless, after his great escape Subhas contacted the Soviet authorities first. As one of his eminent German associates, Alexander Werth, wrote: “Perhaps, Bose would have gone even to Moscow if the world situations were different and if the Soviet authorities had shown some eagerness to help him in his work when he contacted them in Kabul.” Hence, it was the prevailing international situation during the World War II, which compelled Subhas to seek help from the Axis Power’s. Nevertheless, as “a born leader of leaders,” Subhas knew that Indians themselves would have to fight the final battle against British imperialism and prepared his planning for revolution accordingly during 1941-43. In his congratulatory message from Berlin
to the second conference of Indian revolutionaries at Bangkok on 15 May 1942, Subhas said:

... The experience I have gained during the last eighteen months has convinced me that in our fight against British Imperialism, the Tripartite Powers are our best friends and allies outside India... But the emancipation of India must be the work primarily of Indians themselves... We, who form the vanguard of the national army, feel, however that the time will soon come when it will be necessary to take up arms in the final stage of the struggle.⁷

It is also to be noted that despite his collaboration with the Axis Powers, there are enough historical evidence which clearly reveal that Subhas and his I.N.A. never played the role of a stooge in the hands of the Axis Powers. Nor did they compromise with their self-dignity and the interests of their country. As Chattopadhyay, an eminent Communist historian, observed in a frank and forthright manner:

... It has to be admitted by communist historians that the assessment of the Indian communist movement about Subhas Chandra Bose being a kind of a quisling of the Axis Powers, was utterly wrong and has not been borne out by historical evidence in later years. Rather all evidence known to this day clearly indicates that Subhas Chandra Bose, even in very difficult and unfavourable conditions, kept intact his independent stand and refused to become a cat's paw in the hands of either Hitler or Tojo. The clearest evidence of this is his refusal to allow the Indian Legion to be used against Aung San and the AFPEL in Burma after their anti-Japanese resistance struggle started on 27 March 1945."⁸
Coupled with the Japanese interest of co-prosperity sphere, the urge to obtain freedom by the revolutionary nationalists culminated in the formation of I.N.A. (initially from P.O.W.s only). The erstwhile INA had been not only weak numerically but had also been handicapped by the suspicion of the common soldiers that Mohan Singh was incapable of handling the Japanese to the advantage of the India National Struggle. Apart from some modest psychological values, the Singh-led INA was militarily insignificant at least without complementary rising in India. Nevertheless, the Japanese hoped to capitalize on the sincerity and commitment of the rank and file core of the INA by revitalizing the organization. This lay behind the replacement of Mohan Singh by Bose whom they had been watching since his escape to Berlin. The choice of Bose by the Japanese in this regard was strategically guided in the sense that to present the INA as a real obstruction the allied war endeavours one needed someone who could unite the prisoners of war to a common cause, and given that Bose's record of public service he was found appropriately suitable for this purpose. The calculations proved worthwhile as not only the No Voluntary Grouped by Shahnawaz, G.B. Dhillon and P.K. Sehgal but the civilians too joined the INA offensive campaign in large numbers. This enormous increase (from 10000 to 43000) is illustrative of Bose's success in raising the levels of consciousness of the Indians in east Asia as well as his ability to put that consciousness into practice in the form of their participation in the INA militarily.

In South-east Asia many revolutionary nationalists have contributed to the national movement in their own ideological way. T
three different patterns being that of Raja Mahender Pratap, A.M. Sahay and Rash Behari Bose. Rash Behari Bose, an exile in Japan, had been trying to unite various Indian Associations in the British and non-British territories championing the cause of freedom since 1936-37. The formation of the Congress Party in Bangkok in 1937 was an upshot of his efforts. Only in the Bangkok Conference of June 1942 were concrete steps taken and new organization, the Indian Independence League (IIL) came into being. The conference resolved to sponsor a movement for achieving the complete independence of India through the IIL. It was also resolved that in furtherance of this objective the INA should be raised from among the Indian soldiers (Prisoners of war) and such civilians as might be recruited for that purpose. A ‘Council of Action’ under the presidency of Rash Behari Bose was also formed to speed up the formation of the INA. The Bangkok Conference therefore achieved what the earlier one in Tokyo in March, 1942 could not. In fact the Tokyo Conference failed because of the disagreement among the delegates over the acceptance of Rash Behari Bose who was seen as an imposition on the Indian Independence League by the Japanese.

The Japanese Government patronised the conference and the anti-British tone of the resolutions was psychologically advantageous to their war efforts. The purpose of encouraging such activities was to wean Indians from their allegiance to the British. Had they been successful, this would have been, from the point of Japan, a positive contribution to the formation of Great Asia co-prosperity sphere. The above calculations certainly drove the Japanese to enlist the support of the prisoners of war. Major Fujiwara a comparatively junior staff officer, an
idealistic who fervently believed in the Greater Asia co-prosperity sphere contacted Captain Mohan Singh and Captain Mohammad Akram Khan when they surrendered on 15 December, 1941. After a prolonged discussion, Captain Mohan Singh agreed to join the Indian Independence Movement and to cooperate with the Japanese forces. The selection of Mohan Singh as the GOC of the INA created a schism among the rank and file of the prisoners of war: (a) the volunteers, who trusted the Japanese and were prepared to join the INA and (b) no volunteers who did not trust the Japanese and remained aloof to the whole INA business. Shahnawaz Khan, one of the surrendered officers and who belonged to the latter attributed the split to two reasons: (i) the selection of Captain Mohan Singh who was a junior officer, as the GOC raised the question of super session of some very senior and capable officers, and (ii) given the limitations of Captain Mohan Singh however sincere he was to the cause of the Indian Independence, there was suspicion that he would not be able to cope with the Japanese intrigue and therefore the INA would be exploited by the Japanese purely for their personal ends.

In the very beginning the INA failed to unite all the prisoners of war. Skeptical of the Japanese motive, the IIL central committee considered wise to go by verbal assurance only; the committee insisted on a formal declaration supporting Indians armed assault on the British. The Japanese never took it seriously for a formal declaration entailing the regular supply of arms and ammunition otherwise the declaration seemed pious. Moreover, the creation of Hikari Kikan, a department of liaison between the League and the Japanese government and milit
administration by the Japanese, confirmed the apprehension that the League was not independent of Japanese control. In fact, the Kikan interfered constantly in even day to day activities of the League which was strongly resented. The suspicion that the Japanese had an ulterior motive was so emphatic that Mohan Singh felt that 'it was quite clear to us now that they wanted to conquer India through Indians and by extending help and also material aid to us they were simply helping themselves.' The tension was aggravated first in the 'disagreement over the issue of sending the INA to the Burma front' and secondly as a result of arrest of Colonel N.S. Gill of the INA on suspicion of being a British spy. These two incidents caused resentment as these decisions were taken without consultation with the IIL. The final blow to the already crippled INA was given on 20 December, just within six month of its formation when Mohan Singh to dissolve the INA as soon as his arrested, the INA virtually collapsed.

The INA in its ‘first phase’ did not make much headway in so far as the Indian Independence movement was concerned. Nonetheless the British military was scared considerably of its strength and admitted that the INA- campaign was undermining the loyalty and the morale of the British Indian Army. Until it entered its second phase after the arrival of Subhas Chandra Bose in East Asia in July 1943, the INA caused alarm to the British authority, which believed that Bose’s arrival in Asia greatly increased ‘the tempo of subversive propaganda and appears to have galvanized the IIL into greater political activity’. Before his joining the IIL was only publicised in connection with Japan. Bose clearly ‘intends to raise the movement into a national campaign
for freedom supported all three Axis Powers. In all interviews and speeches, Bose reiterated his belief in an Axis victory in the imminent liberation of India with the Axis help, and in the need for an armed revolt in India to coincide with invasion from the east. In order to put forward his plans into practice, he proclaimed the formation of a provisional government in the Far East and he also tried to augment the strength of the INA. As far as the first move was concerned, it was a master stroke in the game of international politics because it enabled Bose to declare war on the enemies (24 October, 1943) and to claim an equal status for the government in the comity of the League of East Asiatic nations.

In view of the poor show of the INA under Mohan Singh, the characterisation 'disorderly crowd is understandable; but by Tojo with the passage of time, the INA or the 'second front in India's war of emancipation' as Bose preferred to call became a force of considerable strength. The British record shows that 'the total number of persons enrolled in or involved in the INA activities was approximately 43,000 of which 20,000 were members of British Indian Army' The war files reveal that in early February 1944, the British officials were so convinced of the strength of the 'Army of Liberation, led by Bose that they urgently felt the necessity of a counter propaganda' That it was not merely a collection of JIFC (Japanese Inspired Fifth Columnists) as it was officially characterised can be substantiated by the vigour and seriousness that the British government showed in order to counter the INA offensive. 'It concentrated on psychological warfare and from the
beginning of 1944 it carried out intensive campaigns through weekly leaflets and news-sheets in Japanese, Burmese and Indian languages.”

The extent to which Japan was sincere to the cause of Indian Independence is debatable. However, Bose’s own writings and speeches indicate that Bose was quite certain about it. He argued that the promise to give complete independence to Burma and Philippines in 1943 and the transfer of Andaman and Nicobar Islands in 1944 and putting them under an Indian Governor – were illustrative, he argued, of the extent to which the Japanese were sincere to the cause of Pan-Asianism. Although Bose renamed the Islands, as Shahid (martyr) and Swaraj (Independence) respectively, and appointed Lt. Colonel Loganadhan as the first Chief commissioner, it had propaganda value only. In fact, the Japanese admiral who was the de facto ruler pointed out that in view of the strategic importance of those Islands, ‘nothing of real value would be in Loganadhan’s hand, at the most, some departments of civil administration.’ The interference was frequent and Loganadhan complained to Bose that the Japanese had made his ‘whole existence redundant’ Bose was helpless despite his earlier success in an official recognition of the INA as an equal partner.

Japanese objectives in assisting the INA were strictly limited. Japan’s major military concern was the overall strategy and prosecution of the Pacific War, in which India was a peripheral concern. INA objectives in co-operating with Japan brought the goal of independence within the realm of possibility. Alone the INA could not have harboured a realistic hope. But there could be no compromise with the struggle for independence, no wavering from the goal of Indian freedom. The bond
of a common enemy did not carry the co-operation as far as the INA hoped in the face of this disjunction in basic goals.

After the Imphal debacle, the Allies were on the offensive in the pacific and the Japanese mainland was felt threatened, so the Japanese were on the retreat. The I.N.A. wanted to fight a guerrilla warfare, but the switchover of the whole Burmese Army on the side of Allies made I.N.A. to abandon this strategy.

The Imphal and the Burma campaigns depicts the bravery and the heroic deeds of the I.N.A. Several instances with special reference to Haryana shows that in spite of scarcity of rations, transport and weaponry the I.N.A., was not lacking in revolutionary spirit. The participants were ready to sacrifice everything for India's freedom. The Japanese correspondent who was with the I.N.A. and Japanese forces in Manipur region observed that Indian soldiers were bursting out with joy when they had the first glance of the mountains and rivers of their beloved mother land. Some even got down on the knees and kissed the earth. The I.N.A. showed extraordinary bravery in the Akyab, Tidim sectors, the Palel engagement and later on in Irrawady crossing, Meiktila and Popa engagements in the Burma campaigns. Captain Bagri, Col. G.S. Nagar, Capt. Kanwal Singh, 2nd Lt. Hari Ram, Lt. Duni Chand showed extraordinary bravery in these engagements. In addition to these Naik Molar Singh, Naik Kehar Singh, S.O. Hari Singh, 2nd Lt. Ram Singh showed great valour and sacrifice during the Imphal campaign.

The Marxist historians like Sumit Sarkar and other have a tendency to denote the people of Haryana as 'martial race', further
adding that the dichotomies 'martial' and 'non-martial' were constructed by the Britishers to differentiate people who were less politically active and more active respectively. The historians suggest that the so-called 'martial race' from Haryana contributed very little to the main stream national movement. This hypothesis is nullified by my research where about 3,777 people from Haryana participated in I.N.A. campaigns, expecting no material gains in return, and many scarificed their lives in the marshy, malarial infested, Arakan and Burma region.

The thirteen months from 6 July 1944 to August 1945, of which we have a variety of accounts, Indian, Japanese and British, Subhas Bose and his I.N.A. devoted to attempts to reconcile their aims, with those of the Japanese government. There was a contradiction in Japan's decision to retreat from the Indian borders and soon thereafter Burma, and Bose's perception of revolutionary guerrilla warfare suitable for an ill-armed force like the INA. The INA would serve its purpose not by withdrawing but by remaining behind the British lines in Burma and near the Indian borders to continue its revolutionary warfare. On this issue, Bose encountered opposition from various forces. The IGHQ, after Tojo's resignation, staggered by the Japanese causalities suffered in the retreat from the Manipur front, was in no mood to examine Bose's suggestions with objectivity. As is normal in a rout, which the retreat from Manipur became, through the failure to provision the forces in the retreat, Japanese militarists began to blame Subhas Bose and his I.N.A. for the Imphal expedition, forgetting that the decision on an advance had been taken long before he met Tojo in June 1943.
Hope of a Burmese-Indian collaboration was dashed by Aung San’s sudden defection- to the British side. As late as 16 May 1945, Aung San wearing the full uniform of a Japanese major-general, went to meet Lieutenant General Sir William Slim commander of XV Corps, at Meiktila to negotiate the terms on which he would turn the Japanese trained Burma defence army against the retreating Japanese forces.

It was Major General Aung San’s decision to join the British rather than the Japanese refusal to support Subhas’s plan of guerrilla warfare that finally forced him to leave Burmese territory. (Subhas left Moulmein probably on 6 May 1945, arriving in Bangkok on 13 May 1945).

The retreat ordered by the IGHQ on 5 July 1944 from the Indo-Burma frontiers to the decision forced on Bose to lead the INA out of Burma to Bangkok in May 1945- one receives no clear answer to the query why it was impossible for elements of the INA to cross into India as guerrilla bands. Subhas was convinced of the efficacy of this form of warfare in the altered situation, seeing the imminence of Japan’s defeat. Elements of the INA had been trained with considerable effort to function as guerrilla bands within India. Yet, when the time came to conduct this form of warfare, the INA guerrilla bands withdrew like the other retreating regular INA formations and stragglers.34

Aung San’s decision singly could not have stopped INA guerrillas from infiltrating to India. There must have been other reasons why the plan could not be carried.35 Much of Bose’s valuable time during the critical period was spent on ensuring the safe return of the enlisted women of the Rani of Jhansi battalion which had been moved to forward
positions. Ba Maw's account of Bose's plan for the future is corroborated by Dr Lakshmi Sahgal, who was then a member of the Azad Hind cabinet. In her account of this period, when Japan, unable to spare air power for the Burma front, decided to withdraw from Burma, Sahgal explained why Subhas's plan of continued INA resistance, with Burmese territory as the base, had to be abandoned. "Later, except for Dr Ba Maw and his personal staff, the entire Burmese government and army went over to the British."

The I.N.A. has been given different epithets, the British and American media called I.N.A. as a "propaganda army", "fifth columnist" or "JIFS", whereas Maj. Fujiwara called it as a revolutionary army. Now was the INA then a puppet or a genuine revolutionary army? The question has several dimensions. Was the INA an independent army in Japanese intent, in international law, and in INA aspiration?

Japanese intent was itself a variable. Policy was formulated and implemented at several different levels, and at each level it was transformed by the biases, experiences, personalities and predilections of the men in charge. There was also a chronological evolution in Indian policy throughout the war. Japanese attitudes were affected at any given moment by the course of the war and the dictates of military necessity.

From the standpoint of international law too the answer in ambivalent. During the court martial of INA officers in Delhi after the war, counsel for the defence argued that the INA was an independent army representing an independent government, that the officers were therefore immune from charges of treason. Japanese witness called by the defence supported the case for the independent status of the INA,
there is no body of evidence on Japanese policy as an occupying power, since a part from the case of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands there was no military administration over formulation and execution of occupation policies than, for examples, in the Philippines and Indonesia.

Is the conclusions then that the INA was a genuine revolutionary army? The answer hinges partly on the subjective aims emotions of officers and men of the INA. No one can dispute the character of Bose as a revolutionary in every sense of the word. Even Gandhi and Nehru, who had broken with Bose over the use of violence against the British, conceded during the INA trails that Bose was a true patriot. For Indian opinion there was no real onus of reason or taint of collaboration as in the Philippine case. The INA had fought the British for Indian freedom; that their allies were Japanese was incidental.

Mohan Singh, co-founder with Fujiwara of the INA, was a revolutionary of a different order. Before Fujiwara's eyes Mohan Singh became transformed into a revolutionary, unwilling to compromise with the Japanese when other Indians advised caution and moderation. He went to prison rather than compromise with his convictions.

Most of the INA officers, including Mohan Singh, felt a conflict of loyalty when first conformed with the prospect of fighting Britain for independence, in co-operation with the Japanese. These officers were all professional soldiers, many of them from families with traditions of long and loyal service to the British-Indian Army. Training and experience could not be disavowed overnight. Once they resolved their personal conflicts, however, they fought doggedly for Indian independence, refusing in many cases to retreat when ordered to do so. At the opposite
and of the spectrum there was also professionalism and even opportunism among some of the officers and men. The material inducements to volunteer for the INA were attractive, irresistible for many.

The answer to the original question is therefore equivocal, from both the Japanese and Indian viewpoints. For many staff officers in IGHQ, particularly in the Operations Bureau, and for some staff officers in field, the INA was a puppet army to be used for propaganda functions according to Japanese requirements. For others, at the top, like Sugiyama and Arisue, the INA was a revolutionary army so far as the Indians were concerned, but it had to be subordinated to Japanese military and political objectives. For still others, mostly young idealists in the field like Fujiwara, the INA was a genuine revolutionary army which should receive real and sympathetic support from Japan.

The British propagandists were never tired repeating that Subhas was a mere tool in the hands of the Japanese for an invasion on Indian and that if they won, they would take the place of the British as Indian's rules. But the Japanese policy towards Indian show that this accusation was nothing but an utterly baseless war propaganda. The Japanese repeatedly clarified that they had no intention to subjugate Indian. They had achieved supremacy in East Asia by the beginning of 1942, and if they so wanted they could have given a blow to the British power in Indian. Even the British secret report recorded that "had the enemy pursued her advantage in 1942 when Allied positions in the East and West had reached their lowest depth, the empire of Mikado might well have included the Eastern Provinces of Indian, if not the whole of
Indian”. If the Japanese did not attack India after the fall of Burma in 1942 when they were at the height of their power in east Asia, it was unlikely that they would have done so when their war fortunes were declining. In fact, the Japanese had no intention to invade India; they merely wanted to encourage the Indians to oust the British. The Imphal campaign was started not to capture India, but to strengthen the defence-line in Burma and to help the INA in its war of liberation against the British. Japan at no time planned an invasion of India or her incorporation into the Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere as was the case with other countries in South East Asia. Her main desire was to see India free from British domination. There is no basis in believing that if Japan had won, it would have made India a part of her empire. In such an eventuality, as Subhas explained, the INA “would have decidedly changed their targets” and “rained their bullets on those who tried to snatch their independence”. There is a ring of sincerity and truth in what Subhas told a colleague, “Can anybody think that we are shedding the blood of our dear Indian soldiers on the battlefield of Imphal simply to bring Japan into India”? The myth of Japanese grabbing of India was propagated by the British to malign Japan and INA to gain the support of the Indian Political parties for winning the war. This is clearly evident from the report of the Director Military Intelligence who wrote after assessing the public sentiments about Japanese aggression that “to a large extent, the public opinion is not hostile to Japanese. They are more anti-British than anti-Japanese and consider if Japanese win the war and come to India, Indian national aspiration will benefit rather than suffer”. This nature of pro-Japanese feelings was hardly conducive to the British
raj and the report warned that “to cope with the situation one must acknowledge freely that the pro-Japanese feelings do exist and exist to a great extent. It is up to us to combat this dangerously prevalent pro Japanese sentiment by an intensive and sustained propaganda campaign.” Throughout the war, the British anti-Japanese propaganda in India and South East Asia proved to be very effective, but its effect became negative with the termination of the war.

Subhas fought with all his might against the British with Japanese help. As Fujiwara says, his earnest and precise mind, his vigorous actions, his initiative and his love for the masses irrespective of the classes, won him the respect— which was later transformed into reverence— of all those who came in contact with him. Such a man could not be befooled by the Japanese. He resisted relentlessly the unjust policy of the Japanese liaison agency and the head of the Hikar Kikai, Lt. Gen. Isoda was constrained to report to the IGHQ that Subhas on a number of occasions was “temperamental and non-cooperative”. But this did not diminish the importance of Subhas, in the eyes of the Japanese. Notwithstanding the British propaganda that Subhas and the INA were puppets of the Japanese, the British C-in-C reported in a secret despatch to the Secretary of State that Subhas could not “be dismissed as mere loquacious tool of the Japanese; that his influence on the civilian Indians in India and abroad if not on the soldiers of the Indian army, was a factor to be reckoned with; that he was one of the most colourful of Indian seditionist leaders; and that his personality was capable of infecting others with his own enthusiasm.” But during the war, the British propaganda succeeded in distorting the image of Subh
and INA not only amongst the Indian public but also amongst the Japanese. The Communist Party of India denounced him as henchman of Japanese Imperialism”. But despite his alliance with the Axis, Gandhi still considered him as “a patriot of patriots”, though slightly “misguided”.

The British authorities were forced to concede after the war that "Bose’s influence over the INA was very considerable. They regarded him with deep admiration, respect and confidence as a sincere patriot, as an able leader without peer amongst the overseas community, as the protector of his countrymen under Japanese occupation and as one who successfully dealt with the Japanese and was accorded by then greater respect and power than most other leaders in the same position." The above assessment definitely goes to prove that the earlier estimate of Bose by them as a puppet was mere propaganda. The British thinking about INA also underwent a change after the war. They still considered it as a Japanese sponsored army, but conceded that “the membership of his army” made a deep impression on almost all who joined it, whether they were prisoners of war or ordinary civilians”. It was further reluctantly admitted that “even those INA members whose low morale has led to voluntary surrender”, or who realized that they “have backed the wrong horse, and whose suspicion of Japan have been crystallized by events, in many cases still preserve intact their belief in Bose’s integrity and ideals”, and they are proud of INA itself, of Bose’s Provisional Government and of their effort to free India.”

What the I.N.A. could not achieve in victory, it achieved in defeat. The Red Ford trials had galvanized the whole nation, the British
Indian army could also remain insulated and were developing and urge for freedom consequently wishing that India should be free. A group of Indian soldiers of the British Indian army who had in 1944 fought the INA on the Manipur borders with Burma came from a nearby camp to meet Gandhi at the nature cure clinic at Uruli Kannchan, near Pune.

"We are soldiers, but we are soldiers of Indian freedom", they said, to Gandhi. ‘I am glad to hear that’, replied Gandhiji, ‘so far you have been instrumental in the suppression of Indian freedom. Have you heard of Jalliawalla Bagh?

‘Oh yes, but those days are gone’…

‘I know’, replied Gandhiji, ‘there is a new ferment and a new awakening among all the ranks today. The credit for his change is due to Netaji Bose. I disapproved (of) his method, but he has rendered signal service to India by giving the Indian soldiers a new vision' and a new ideal.'

"after some more conversation as the soldiers took leave of Gandhiji, they asked ‘May we shout slogans?’

‘Well you may’, replied Gandhiji and they all but brought the rafters of Gandhiji’s little room down by their repeated shouts of Jai Hind Netaji Ki Jai!” These were from soldiers who probably had been sent by their masters to fight against Bose’s INA barely a year earlier!41

In their memoirs most of the participants who scarified everything for the sake of India’s freedom felt cheated because India got independence which was barely two years after the trials. Most of them were not taken into army. In Haryana majority of the soldiers were very little educated and men thrown out from the Indian army by
contemporary Congress leadership, they turned to agriculture, which was the only alternative occupation for them.

The INA leadership has not survived as a cohesive political-military elite, and Bose did not return to become India’s man on horseback, as his counterparts elsewhere in Southeast Asia did. The man on horseback-German or otherwise inspired-has not found a real place in the post-war Indian politque. For a variety of historical, sociological psychological, and cultural reasons he does not conform to the political ambient of independent India.

Something else has happened to the INA officer corps. Both professional military men and civilians in the INA and FIPG have been politicised and bureaucratised through their experience. Not allowed to return to the military careers from which they were purged, some of them turned individually to politics.

The aura surrounding INA could not be annulled but it resembles much a halo around a fallen angel. The INA soldiers were not reinstated in Indian Army as ‘they had owed their allegiance to the Japanese (and not to our dear white master – the British’). In contrast, those who went to Pakistan were absorbed in equivalent ranks. Taya Jenkin in Reportin India stated: “Sardar Patel, India’s first Home Minister, explained to me in 1959 that he had been very careful indeed not to reinstate any of the officers who had gone over to Subhas Bose’s INA. He also saw to it that they did not thrive in politics. In Pakistan, by contrast, no such stigma was attached to the INA officers and I was later to meet some very high ranking officers who had been in INA. Much worse can happen when a circular No. S155211.1, Head quarter Bombay sub-area, Kolath
Bombay-6 dated II February 1949; sub: Photos, read – "It is recommended that photos of Netaji Subhas Chandra be not displayed at prominent places in the unit line, canteens, quarter-guards or recreation-rooms. P.N.K.V.L. signed by Major General staff P.N. Khanduri." was the authority apprehensive of Netaji’s being alive and any reinstatement or glorification would only lead to formation of a dense fifth column within the armed forces which might revolt in case ‘the dead man reappears’? Nehru had already been warned by Lord Mountbatten in March 1946 at Singapore that glorifying Netaji would cost him dearly and a reappearance of Subhas would mean his political death.

In the ultimate analysis, INA played a dual role, of helping the liberation movement in India on the one hand and on the other it gave a new mission to the thousands of Indians in East Asia. The movement brought about a social revolution which did away with all differences of case, colour or creed. No doubt, the INA failed to achieve its goals; but even in its defeat and the subsequent prosecution of its officers, it became as Nehru puts it a “symbol of India fighting for independence”. The very idea of an Indian army founded and commanded by an Indian of unquestionable patriotism was enough to evoke enthusiasm and applause from an unarmed people long used to watching the display of British military might. Earlier, the conviction of Indian revolutionaries in the various conspiracy cases did not evoke any response form the public, but after the war time had changed and the British had lost their credibility. That is why they even came forward to support the INA soldiers on trial. Therefore, as soon as the trials opened the whole country was indignant and accepted it as a challenge to its honour. The
trials had become, writes Philip Mason "a symbol of India':
determination to manage her own affairs. Its outcome were seen as a
defeat for Britain and convinced India that independence was at last really in sight."

Though 1946 and 1947, as Indian leaders bartered with the British and among themselves to produce a divided India, they appeared to be constantly looking over their shoulders to reassure themselves that Bose's and the I.N.A.‘s ghost was not like Hamlet’s father, turning into flesh and blood. The year of struggle had wearied them, they did not have the stomach for another fight and they were relieved to get what crumbs they could from the imperial table. When the Congress finally accepted the partition plan Nehru had only this consolation to offer for the sudden abandonment of a lifetime’s principles:

But of one thing I am convinced, that ultimately there will be united and strong India. We have often to go through the valley of the shadow before we reach the sunlit mountain-tops.

It was poor comfort for the holocaust that partition produced, and even today, for many Indians, particularly men from the I.N.A., who had a different vision of independent India, who now are crippled old men feel disenchanted by the present political system and for them the sun’s mountain-tops are still obscured by the shadows.
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1. India Office Records (hereafter IOR), London R/3/2/21 : A report by the Deputy Commissioner of Police, Special Branch, Calcutta, February 2, 1941.


6. As Subhas was once described by India’s another great revolutionary freedom fighter, Rash Behari Bose.


8. Gautam Chattopadhyay “Subhas Chandra, Indian Leftist Movement and the Communist Party”, in Muchkund Dubey (ed.) *op. cit.*, p. 87. This observation of Chattopadhyay is based on Documents at G.D.R. Archives at Potsdam and other research papers.

9. IOR/L/WS/1/1577 : Formation of the III.

10. *Ibid.*.


12. Sivaram ex-minister in the Provisional Government of Free India, describes Rashbehari Bose as follows: ‘Can you imagine the
impossible combination of Al Capone, Saint Aurobindo, Prince Konoye and your favourite uncle? That's Rashbehari Bose for you”.

13. Jojo, the Japanese Premier spoke to the 79th Diet about the aims and objectives of the already established ‘Greater East Asia Co-prosperity sphere’. Tojo on the Greater East Asia Co-prosperity sphere in Japan’s Greater East Asia Coprosperity sphere in World War-II (Compilation of documents) edited and introduced by J. C. Lebra, Kuala Lumpur, Oxford University Press, 1975, p. 79.

14. IOR L/WS/2/45 : A brief chronological Account of the INA, Monograph 2 (Personalities of the First INA).


18. IOR L/WS/1/1579 : Hindustan Times, November 6, 1945 : How INA was born.


20. IOR L/WS/i/1579 : ‘How INA was born’.


22. IOR L/WS/1/1576 : Subversive activities directed against the Indian Army : Note, general Staff Branch, New Delhi, 18 March, 1943. ‘A double attack is being made on the morale and loyalty of the Indian troop : one directed from without India by the Japanese, assisted by the
renegade Indians and the offer directed from within by Congress and Congress-inspired organizations'.

23. These expressions are used to avoid the controversy over the characterization of the INA in its first (June 1942-December, 1942) and the second stages (June 1943-August, 1945). For instance, Shahnawaz Khan characterized the INA under Bose’s command as the second-one, while Mohan Singh questioned the above on the ground that ‘the same military personnel continued in the so-called first and the second INAs’. Mohan Singh: *Leaves from My Diary*, Lahore, 1946, p. 17.

Since there was a continuity between the ‘first’ and ‘second’ in terms of personnel and ideology, it sounds reasonable to separate the former the latter in terms of phases.


25. Bose’s broadcast from Tokyo: *To the German and Italian People*, June 23, 1943, in SS, p. 177.


29. IOR L/WS/1/1576: Telegram from Fiji to the Secretary of State London, February 29, 1944.

30. IOR L/WS/1/1576: Telegram from Fiji to the Secretary of State London, February 29, 1944.

32. Time for Armed Struggle: Bose’s Address to the IIL, July 4, 1943, in SS, p. 191.


37. F. No. 601/7775/H.


39. F. 601/7775/H.

40. India Collection, F. No. R/3/1/330, I.O.L.
