Chapter - II
Vision and Philosophy of I.N.A.
Chapter-II
I.N.A. – Its Vision and Philosophy

The vision and struggle of I.N.A. moves around the charismatic personality of Subhas Chander Bose and other revolutionary nationalists of South-East Asia. Their patriotism, and dieing zeal for Indian’s freedom made about 50,000 prisoners of wars and civilians in South-east Asia sacrifices everything for liberating their motherland. It is almost about 60 years since Subhas died but the I.N.A. soldiers of Haryana, whom I have interviewed literally start crying on discussing the events related to I.N.A. and Subhas. For the soldiers Subhas was a super human and is immortal, for these soldiers three to four years of their life that they fought as members of Azad Hind Fauz are the most precious moments they can ever remember. Consequently it become necessary to understand the development and growth of ideas, strategies of this genius (Subhas) that constructed the vision of I.N.A. Subhas frequent imprisonment and exile to Europe made him adopt revolutionary methods, his view on labour, socialism, peasantry, secularism, international politics are discussed in short, these views were later on practically adopted and incorporated in the organization of I.N.A. The Introductory chapter discusses the formative years whereas this chapter shall discuss how these and ideas of Subhas and other nationalists got matured and helped them in constructing the vision of I.N.A. Subhas was of the view that England’s weakness is India’s strength to take advantage of the war situation, he escaped to
Germany during second world war, where he founded Indian legion and then travelled about 29,000 km. by submarine to reach South-east Asia where the existing I.N.A. was transformed into Azad Hind Fauz.

The building up of the I. N. A. or the Azad Hind Fauz is the monumental achievement of Subhas Chandra Bose and people of the I.N.A. for the liberation of their beloved mother land. A life soaked all through in the holy romance of patriotism, this adventurous spurt at once lifted them onto the lofty pedestal of national heroes. Subhas endowed with dauntless courage, lofty ideals, a clear vision, farsighted statesmanship and tremendous power of organization made the impossible possible by organizing a fully trained Indian Army to follow his leadership in launching an armed assault upon the citadel of the greatest imperialist force of the world. Though this great effort of Netaji and I.N.A. ended in a failure so far as achievement of India’s independence is concerned, the stupendous moral legacy that it bequeathed, rejuvenate the national life of India at its very source. “Bose’s suddenly amplified figure” writes Dillip Kumar Roy,” added to the romance of the Indian National Army marching singing to Delhi, galvanized a frustrated nation out of its torpor and substantially damaged the insulation of the Indian Army from the magnetic currents of popular enthusiasm for immediate independence.”

Much before Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose set in his sensational 90 days submarine voyage from Germany to Japan in pursuit of his dream-project of leading an Indian army of liberation against the mighty British, patriotic Indians in South-East Asia had already laid the edifice of the
movement to help their motherland attain freedom. Notable among these dedicated patriots were, Sri Rash Behari Bose, Baba Amar Singh, Pritam Singh and Captain Mohan Singh (Later General). In this connection the name of one sympathetic Japanese Officer Major Fujiwara must find mention because the origin of the I. N. A. also owes much to him.

In this chapter the INA – Its Vision and Philosophy, we shall be discussing and observing the crystallization of Subhas vision, his relationship with Gandhi in reference to armed struggle and I.N.A., the international power politics and need for a national army, the women’s participation in freedom struggle, the issue of communal unity and how these views were finally incorporated as the vision and philosophy in practical form in the organization and structure of I.N.A. Next we will be discussing the Japanese concept of “co-prosperity sphere”, role of the Indian revolutionaries which culminated with the help of major Fujiwara, Pritam Singh and Capt. Mohan Singh in the form of an organization i.e. I.N.A. The vision and philosophy of the South-east Asian revolutionary leaders is also taken into account.

Gandhi and Subhas – The Change in Attitude

On the issue of election to the post of Congress President in 1939 at Tripuri, Gandhi and Subhas had different views, one had to leave the centre stage, Subhas had to bear the burnt for not following the wishes of Gandhi. Subhas was forced to leave the Congress as he had different views on war situation and the federal part of the 1935 Govt. of India Act. Subhas formed his Forward Block, and started Holwell Movement for
establishing Hindu-Muslim unity. Subhas was arrested and later on was released on medical ground, he escaped to Germany via Afghanistan and later on to South-east Asia where his charismatic personality converted the I.N.A. into a fine efficient fighting force for Azad Hind Fauz.

In the following pages, we will be discussing the vision and philosophy of the persons who guided the I.N.A. among the leaders, Subhas played a prominent role. Hence we will be giving due space to his ideas and vision on war situation, his relationship with Gandhi etc.

Gandhi’s attitude towards the war and the national movement since Subhas’ departure from India. There was, a complete transformation in Gandhi’s attitude. Azad’s autobiography substantiate the position. As is well known, Maulana Sahib was the Congress president from 1940 to 1946. He had, as we all know, differences with Gandhi on the issues of war and the launching of the national movement during the pendency of the war period. But it must be conceded that he truthfully and objectively narrated them in his account As. Azad writes:

“I ..... saw that Subhas Bose’s escape to Germany had made a great impression on Gandhiji. He had not formally approved many of his actions, but now I find a change in his outlook. Many of his remarks convinced me that he admired the courage and resourcefulness Subhas Bose had displayed in making his escape from India. His admiration for Subhas Bose unconsciously coloured his view about the whole war situation.2

Even at the risk of repetition, it should be mentioned here that Gandhi developed a softness for Subhas after he left the country to launch
the struggle from outside. There can be no doubt about the fact that 'Gandhi's attitude wore a new look at that time, Gandhi told Louis Fischer on the eve of the August' 42 movement that he regarded Subhas' as a patriot.'3 He also expressed the view that he was’ not yet certain that the democracy will make better world when they defeat the Fascists. They may become very much like the Fascists themselves.' Here one finds that the two had similar of views on imperialism wearing the mask of democracy.

After the legend of the heroic exploits of the Azad Hind Fauj became widely known to the Indian public, the whole country was agog with excitement, it was swept into an outburst of unprecedented militant patriotism. The political atmosphere was suddenly changed; it was all adoration for Netaji and his I.N.A. Gandhi had the unerring instinct to gauge the mood of the people and he could well realize that the heroic image of Netaji had captured the imagination of his countrymen. To quote Gandhi: ‘The hypnotism of the Indian National Army has cast its spell upon us. Netaji’s name is one to conjure with. His patriotism is second to none (I use the present tense intentionally.) His bravery shines through all his actions.’4

Gandhi came to see the political prisoners, mainly belonging to the revolutionary left, at Dum Dum jail in December 1945. The mahatma talked to the detenues mainly about Subhas. He was ‘found to become visually emotional when he talked about Subhas.’ He said very feelingly: ‘Netaji ! What a bahadur he is ! I feel awe-struck, how could he escape
from India by throwing dust into the eyes of the Britishers? He staked everything for the freedom of the country.¹⁵

Subhas had different views on war situation, he was of the opinion that Britain’s weakness is India’s strength. His revolutionary ideas and getting of freedom through the armed strength of I.N.A. was not liked by other leaders especially Gandhi, who was a votary of non-violence. Irrespective of this Subhas did not lose reverence for Gandhi, which can be observed in his broadcast from Azad Hind Radio:

I can assure you, Mahatmaji, that I and all those who are working with me regard themselves as the servants of the Indian people. The only reward that we desire for our efforts, for our suffering and for our sacrifice is the freedom of our Motherland……

India’s last war of Independence has begun. Troops of the Azad Hind Fauj are now fighting bravely on the soil of India and in spite of all difficulties and hardships they are pushing forward, slowly but steadily. This armed struggle will go on until the last Britisher is thrown out of India and until our Tricolour National Flag proudly flies over the Viceroy’s house in New Delhi.

Father of our Nation! In this holy war for India’s liberation, we ask for your blessings and good wishes.⁶

Gandhi did not hesitate to call Subhas ‘Netaji.’ In his speech at a prayer meeting in New Delhi, on April 5, 1946, Gandhi admired ‘the ability, sacrifice and patriotism of the I. N. A. and Netaji Bose.’ But he made it unambiguously clear that he did not subscribe to the method they
adopted for the attainment of the freedom of the country since he was convinced that his was 'by far the superior way.' He said that they had a 'a lot to their credit of which they might well be proud.' the greatest among these was 'to gather under one banner men of all religious and races of India and to infuse into them the spirit of solidarity and oneness to the exclusion of all communal and patriarchal sentiment.' In a rather emotional tone before the I.N.A. men in Delhi cantonment, he added:

"Netaji was like a son to me. I came to know him as a Lieutenant full of promise under the Late Deshbandhu Das. His last message to the I. N. A. was that whilst on foreign soil they have fought with arms; on their return to India they would have to serve the country as soldiers of non-violence under the guidance and leadership of the Congress." 7

Gandhi was right. Subhas was like a son to him. And the son had profound respect for the man whom he called 'the father of the nation.' But this emotional attachment of Subhas towards Gandhi did not deflect him from the path that he deemed necessary for the achievement of India's freedom. And that was the path of armed struggle. 8

**International Power Politics and Vision of I.N.A.**

The growth of I.N.A. as a fighting force and the help it obtained from Germany and Japan was based on understanding of international power politics by Subhas and other revolutionary nationalists of I.N.A. Subhas frequent exile to Europe made him understand international power politics. Germany, which was emerging as a strong force and Japan which
was expanding in South-east Asia were the only countries which could support India militarily in its freedom struggle against England.\textsuperscript{9}

The role Subhas play during his exile in Europe has been aptly likened to that of 'an unofficial ambassador of India's freedom.\textsuperscript{10} His extensive travel schedule included visits to a large number of countries across the continent – Austria, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Poland, Rumania, Switzerland and Turkey – where he addressed scores of public meetings and built a chain of friendship associations. Despite indifferent health, he studied in depth the minutest political developments\textsuperscript{11} everywhere and had a personal feel of the seething unrest all over Europe. Barring his special interest in the organizational marvels he found in Italy and Germany, he developed a truly critical view of the aggressive designs of these powers against weaker nations and the policy of patent appeasement of the Anglo-French leaders towards them. In neither group could he trace an iota of enlightened self-interest, though he was particularly pleased to detect the growing weaknesses of British imperialism.

Remarkably, Bose's assessment of German leadership was completely free of any illusion. Nothing could illustrate it more clearly than the fury and anger he expressed over some of the racialist pronouncements of Hitler. In a letter to Amiya Chakravarti, he wrote:

"After a great deal of thought, I have sent a protest for the Indian newspapers (at home) and supported the proposal for halting trade
with Germany. Very soon, I will send a personal protest to the German leaders."\textsuperscript{12}

A similar attitude was expressed in respect to the Italian occupation of Abyssinia. About its lessons, Subhas wrote in the \textit{Modern Review}:

"It (the lesson) is this that in the 20\textsuperscript{th} century, a nation can hope to be free only if it is strong, from a physical and military point of view, and is able to acquire all the knowledge which modern science can impart."\textsuperscript{13}

The preceding citations are relevant to the present analysis in more than one way. First, they reveal how, intellectually and morally, Subhas could be a severe critic of whoever the Worngdoer was. Secondly, there was, therefore, no question of his developing a conniving mind-set towards the Nazi-Fascist combination. Thirdly, and this is most important, he viewed European power rivalry in terms of an unmistakable intra-imperialist feud in which British perfidy and French imbecility only served to wet the aggressive appetite of Italy and Germany. These inferences are fully corroborated by his other contemporary and later writings on world politics. In fact, just before his departure from Europe, he wrote to Dr. Thierfelder from, Badgastein:

"When I first visited Germany in 1933, I had hopes that the new German nation which had risen to consciousness of its national strength and self-respect, would instinctively feel a deep sympathy for other nations struggling in the same direction. Today I regret that I have to return that I have return to India with the conviction that the
new nationalism of Germany is not only narrow and selfish but arrogant."14

One can only recall the Tripuri address of Bose to know the kind of scenario he dreaded most in this free-for-all, namely, an unholy alliance of the imperialist powers to corner, if not crush, their common enemy, the Soviet Union.

The so-called democratic powers, France and Great Britain, have joined Italy and Germany in conspiring to eliminate Soviet Russia from European politics, for the time being. But how long will that be possible?15

Subhas understanding of the Spanish civil war was that:
"It would be puerile to think or suggest that Italy plumped for Franco because of her sympathy for the latter’s Fascist aims or her hatred for communism ..... She is pouring out her blood and money for Franco primarily for strategic reasons the same is true of Germany and whoever does not realise this understands nothing of the Spanish civil war."16

This diagnosis is thoroughly in keeping with later historical research that treats the Spanish situation as a preliminary trial of strength, or better still of political will among the contending powers. The studied disinterestedness of the British conservations and the helplessness of the French socialist only gave Subhas a foretaste of things to follow. What is noteworthy is the way he neatly separated the stark realities of power politics from mere skin-deep ideology. While for Germany and Italy,
ideology provided an excuse to pursue objective national interests, Anglo-French double-speak and passivity were ultimately detrimental to theirs.

Similarly, his penetrating analysis tears apart the social philosophy of the Nazis and indicts Germany of “dreaming dreams which can be fulfilled only through the arbitrament of war.” And beneath its ‘blunt and boden’ (blood and soil) policy lay not merely racial purification but ‘a definite commitment to emerge as the supreme continental power’ through ‘drang nach osten’ (drive to the east). How precise and prophetic was the inference that Subhas drew from all this!

Bose, could not resist the conclusion that Germany had stolen a march over the western democracies. In the wake of the Nazi anenschluss of Austria (1938) and immediately thereafter the invasion of Czechoslovakia, his reaction was:

(the) British politicians were either befooled or they deliberately lent a helping hand to German hegemony.

Subhas gradually came round to his hypothesis that the next war was going to be fought between the old and the new imperialists, and that it was imperative for India to take maximum advantage of this internecine feud. The strategy to be pursued at home could not be as militant as he wanted because of the Gandhian spell of non-violence, but in any case, mass apathy and anger had already placed the colonial government in a beleaguered position. To get hold of the British fortress, he advised a complete economic blockade and an armed uprising. In his outspoken presidential address to the third Indian Political Conference in London
(10 June, 1933) he had already provided enough ammunition for Indian revolution, much to the consternation of the British government:

“Although the British prevented his personal appearance at the London Political Conference, the electrifying effect of the speech could not be interrupted. And that fully served Bose’s purpose, which was to outdo the British at their skill in propaganda. Incidentally, he took care to mention that, “there is one other country which has learned this skill …… and that is Russia.”

Subhas, the realist had no illusions either about unarmed revolt or unaided revolution, especially when it was a matter of fighting an imperialism that could be ruthless beyond measure. His sense of history was accurate:

“I have studied very carefully the struggle for liberty that has gone on all over the world during the last 200 years but I have not as yet discovered one single instance where freedom was won without outside help of some sort.”

Careful as he was in his role as India’s ambassador abroad, he made sure in advance that military action would not stir up a wrong reaction among the sensible world opinion leaders. That is why he recorded his great satisfaction on hearing Roman Rolland say that “the struggle must go on in any case by other methods” if satyagraha failed.

It now remained for India’s moment of reckoning to arrive. That would involve, in Subhas’ calculation, intensifying the conflict between the European adversaries and aligning militarily with that side which had the
potential to pull down British hegemony in the long run. The choice was not easy. The Soviet Union, undeniably Subhas’ most preferred foreign ally, never showed much enthusiasm for him during his European exile in the thirties and certainly proved inaccessible when he, after his great escape, wanted frantically to come over to Moscow. Similarly, to Hitler’s Germany, India seemed to be a country in which the Reich had little strategic and only nominal commercial interest. A third in the list, Japan, with which Bose’s earlier attempts to establish clandestine contact were aborted by British intelligence, was destined to emerge as the last resort. Bose, of course, spared no pain to bring Hitler round to an official commitment upholding the Indian cause and helping him spearhead an armed assault against the British via West Asia and Afghanistan.  

Evidently, a person of his sensitiveness could not be a blind admirer of the Fascist leadership. Indeed, he took little time to check if Hitler’s priorities were correct enough for the cause of India’s freedom as he envisaged it. Therefore he resented Hitler’s invasion of Russia and refused to waste valuable time in the European theatre of the raging world war. Hitler’s reluctance to go the whole hog, especially his evasiveness as revealed during the Bose-Hitler face-to-face talk (27 May, 1941), only confirmed Bose’s skepticism regarding German sincerely about doing anything for India’s freedom.

Undaunted, he switched over to an alternative project that would let him revive his Japanese connections, following a perilous submarine voyage that finally led to his emergence as Netaji, at the head of the INA.
Indeed, his alternatives did include a circuitous attack against British India via south-east Asia. As early as the thirties, he sent an envoy, Daulat Lal-Sankarlal, to Japan for possible Soviet help via Japan, then at war with the USSR. He also thought of visiting China, but British intelligence interfered. Anyway, it was the correct prescience of a shrewd observer of world politics that made Subhas predict even at the Tripuri Congress (1939) that a war was imminent and India should be ready to make the most of the altered global environment in which imperialism would be cornered by the revisionist forces in Europe. For dictated not by ideological distinction between Fascism and Liberalism by the time-honoured dictum that one should look for one’s enemy’s enemy. The abject defeat of France only strengthened his conviction that the days of imperialism were numbered. So went his prediction:

"With every blow that she received in Europe, the imperialist might of Britain is bound to loosen the grip on India and her dependence." 

The idea of the INA was rooted in Subhas Chandra Bose’s reaction to the crippling intentness that he saw in the national movement of his time and to the immense possibilities held out by the pre-war and war time alignments in world politics. A man of decisive action, he could not approve of prevarications. He waited long enough and saw a good deal to be convinced that it was not in the nature of imperialism to give in without being overpowered. It had to be forcibly overthrown, and all that was
necessary was to strike with forces whose strongest equipment was the will to die for the motherland.

Fortunately for Subhas, an embryonic force of this kind had already started maturing under the initiative of Rash Behari Bose in the Far East. There, he did not have to raise the legions from scratch, as in Berlin or Annaburg, yet he alone could provide them the much-needed sense of direction. The first major issues of strategy he had to resolve was whether his forces should fight unaided by external agencies. This battle plan, which he had started drawing up at least a decade back was based on a military balance that would make available willing and extensive support against British imperialism. If in Germany, the response was far from encouraging, in Japan, he was able to elicit that willing cooperation, though not without straining his diplomatic acumen to the maximum.

It is not fairly well known that Japan, as an Axis power, was expected to get Subhas off Hitler’s neck but was hesitant to go the whole hog in assisting India’s liberation. For it was beyond Japan’s plan to try “full-scale invasion and occupation” of India.\[^{24}\] It was only limited and conditional support that she was prepared to offer. But Prime Minister Tojo did not know whom he was going to deal with.

At the very second meeting, Tojo turned to his Foreign Minister Momoru Shigemitsu, saying, “He is a great Indian, fully qualified to command the INA.” And in his next speech to the Diet, he announced.

“We are determined to extend every possible help to the cause of India’s independence”.

\[^{24}\]
Despite this noble gesture, Chander Bose (as he was called with respectful affection by the Japanese) would not go out of his way to accept Japanese help at the cost of the high principles he stood for. One would possibly recall at this point how critical he was of Japanese expansionism in Asia. He certainly did not approve of the Japanese occupation of Manchuria and the resultant sufferings of the Japanese occupation of people, for whom a medical mission was sent on behalf of the Congress when he was president. Of course, he did have a dispassionate understanding of what Japan was out to achieve. As he had written in the *Modern Review,* "a scientific examination of the internal economy of Japan will clearly explain ..... her (Japan’s) need for fresh territory" and "important raw materials for her industrial system". He was aware of the post-Manchuria offer of detente from the Japanese foreign minister, M. Hirota, for a broad anti-communist coalition with the Quomintang government, but was pretty sure that the Chinese masses, especially under Mao Tse Tung, would not allow any sell-out to the Japanese. In fact, he knew that "Japan never lays all her cards on the table and she proceeds with her aggression cautiously." However, he could not overlook the implications of the German-Japan anti-Comintern Pact of November, 1936 and commented;

It should be clear to any student of history that since 1931 Japan has been growing increasingly assertive, not only in the Far East but in world affairs in general. If she had not felt strong enough.... she would never have allowed the Anglo-Japanese alliance to lapse.
This new angle, together with the fact that “Japan has shattered the white man’s prestige in the far East and put all the Western imperialist powers on the defensive,” made Subhas feel the need to use this new Asian giant for purposes which would coverage with but not subserve Japanese interests. In any case, he was confident enough to make the Japanese bend to his wishes.

The rest of the story of the valiant fight of the INA is fairly well known – with Japan providing logistic and auxiliary military assistance, always careful of the strong sensitivities of Netaji Subhas, who continuously reminded his Japanese aides that the fight was for the Indians to carry on and the leadership was entirely his. What, however, needs particular probing and serious research is the impact that Netaji himself anticipated his military ventures would have on the national struggle within India. While explaining “why I left India;” he said:

“When we do so, a revolution will break out, not only among the Civil people at home but also among the Indian Army..... When the British government is thus attacked from both sides – from inside India and from outside – it will collapse”.

It did collapse. Between 1945 and 1947, tumultuous events in India rocked the British rule through and through. The navy, if not the army, did revolt. The people did burst into an unprecedented upsurge as the INA trial was going on. And the INA did reach Indian soil against unspeakable odds. Combined assault by the Anglo-American forces, aided by intelligence leak out through traitors, could not stop them. The terrible experience on the
Kohima and the Imphal front duly conveyed its message and certainly struck a terror in British defence circles. They must have come to the conclusion that ruling India by force was simply out of the question now. These are plausible hypotheses, no doubt; yet, it is necessary to validate them with strong supporting evidence collected through serious research.

**Women's Participation: The Vision of Rani Jhansi Regiment of I.N.A.**

The participation of women as a regular fighting force was the unique achievement of I.N.A., which cannot be seen in any other contemporary freedom struggle. This was created by Subhas because he believed in equal right for men and women, be it in war or in peace. This vision was developed by his association with women in different roles from his childhood till the formation of Rani Jhansi Regiment, which had its genesis in a speech which he gave in Europe about the role of women in India society.

During Congress presidency, both at Haripura and Tripuri, Subhas Chandra consistently voiced his concern for the suffering, ill-educated women of India and wanted for them equal rights and emancipation. These demands were to be incorporated in the programme of the party. He was, however, more successful in once again bringing women to the foreground at the Anti-Compromise Conference at Ramgarh, after he was forced to serve connections with the official Congress party at a stormy meeting at Calcutta. Bela Mitra, his niece, was in command of the women volunteers at Ramgarh. All women volunteers were dressed in red sari with borders of white stars, and looked smart and resplendent in the costume.
During one of his sojourns in Europe, Subhas Chandra was asked to speak on the role of women in India's struggle for freedom and trace the growth and development of women's organisations. Speaking in Vienna in 1935, Bose said that on the basis of their work and programme of action, women's movement could be divided into three categories—(a) social and educational, (b) those organising specific movements, and (c) political. Those institutions and associations which were devoting their time and energy to the social uplift of all women were mainly concentrating on (i) the education of girls and women (ii) providing vocational education and training, like nursing, to help them to become economically self-sufficient, and (iii) teaching and propagating mother and child welfare programmes, improving general health and hygiene and extending family welfare schemes. He said that these types of organisations were doing very useful and effective work in both urban and rural areas.

He referred to Sarojnalini Dutta Memorial Association set up by ICS Gurusaday Dutta as one of the institutions of repute of this kind.

In the second category were organisations which were taking up specific programme and were primarily concerned with furthering equal rights for women. He placed the All India Women's Conference and the Women's Indian Association, in this Category. The third category consisted of political groups, the largest being the women's section of the Indian National Congress. There were other political parties also in which women were activity participating side by side with men. The communist parties were leading among them. He said that more than five thousand
women were jailed during the civil disobedience movement of 1930. They were beaten up and subjected to atrocities, but they still continued to fight for India’s freedom.

Speaking at Rashtriya Stree Sabha in Bombay in 1929, Bose said that free India would have to be built by the youth of the nation and in this work, the participation of women was necessary. On March 14, 1928, he addressed a women’s meeting at Woodburn Park, Calcutta, presided over by Sarala Devi Chaudhurani, and called upon the women to boycott British goods, and strengthen the Congress programme. In the same year, speaking at a women’s rally at Kustia, he appealed to the women to develop physical strength in order to be able to endure suffering or torture that may come their way in freedom struggle. Organising women as front line fighters and equal partners in freedom struggle, however, came a few years later when Subhas Chandra Bose as Netaji, led the Indian National Army and formed the Rani of Jhansi Regiment.

In 1943, Bose arrived in the Far East after about a couple of years’ stay in Germany, to take over the leadership of the Indian Independence League from Rash Behari Bose. He brought about a total change in the entire set-up. In place of hesitation and delay, he brought forthrightness and clear directions in organising the movement and introducing many new features, one of which was the formation of the women’s battalion. It was generally accepted that during war, the duty of women was to nurse the wounded and in other ways to give support and succour to the men who did
the fighting. But Subhas firmly believed in the equal right of men and
women, be it in war or peace, and followed it to the word.

In India, in the Congress and outside, Subhas Chandra had
consistently tried to bring in women as equals within the movement. He did
not succeed in this effort because of various constraints. At last, he got his
chance in the INA. Netaji wanted that there should be a women’s regiment
which would fight alongside with men. But to organise it was not an easy
task. Fortunately, he was able to have a remarkable woman by his side in
Dr. Laxmi Swaminathan, the daughter of veteran South Indian Congress
leader Ammu Swaminathan. Born in 1914 in Madras, Laxmi was practising
medicine in Singapore when the war broke out. She had close connection
with the Indian Independence League. On July 12, 1943, Laxmi had a long
discussion with Netaji and agreed to take up the responsibility. Soon 1000
volunteers were recruited and the training camp was started. Not all of
them could however qualify for or were fit enough to finish the soldier’s
training. Those falling in this category were moved to the nursing section
and other support services. Others had to undergo full-fledged and rigorous
military training. Laxmi was given the rank of Captain. Later she was
promoted to be a Colonel. She was also made a Minister, in charge of
Women’s Affairs, in the Provisional Government of Azad Hind,
proclaimed on October 21, 1943.

John Thivy writes that Netaji’s plan to form the women’s regiment
was a part of his call for total mobilisation of human resources, both men
and women, for the task of fighting for India’s freedom. The response
from women was unprecedented. Those who could not qualify themselves for military training, gave their money and jewellary for the cause and helped the medical and nursing staff in preparation of food, making of bandages etc. many volunteered to become teachers in the Azad Schools.

A women’s camp was started on October 23, 1943, at Singapore, with more following in Malaya and Burma. The military part of the training consisted of drill, weapon training, map reading, war tactics and subjects of general knowledge and interest, like Indian history and constitution. There was practical training to use rifles, bayonets, sub-machine guns, revolvers, grenades, swords and daggers. The women wore typical soldier’s uniforms and had to observe strict military discipline. They had to undergo route marches, sometimes even upto 40 miles a day. At the beginning of the day, they had to take an oath to serve the country and Netaji loyally, like other INA soldiers.

After the reverses suffered by the INA in the battlefield in the North-East of India in the beginning of 1945, Netaji issued orders, before leaving the battlefield himself, to disband the Rani of Jhansi Regiment. But he did so only after he personally supervised the safe return of the girls to Burma and Singapore.

I.N.A. and Communal Unity:

Bose’s views with regard to communal unity and his insistence on complete separation of religion from politics founded its fullest expression in the I.N.A. The I.N.A. was absolutely from any form of communal feeling. It epitomized complete divorce of religion from nationalism. The
views on Hindu-Muslim unity and communal harmony were considered a necessary ingredient for national struggle and latter on the same were incorporated in the Constitution of Independent India. In the following pages, we will discuss the growth of Subhas vision in relation to communal harmony which was developed vide his association with C.R. Das, and which got finally culminated in his vision of India National Army.

Subhas Chandra Bose was one of those few nationalist leaders who were really secular in their outlook and spirit in the sense that they honestly endeavoured to establish communal unity. In this respect, he followed in the footsteps of his mentor and imbedded his spirit. Subhas Chandra considered religion to be strictly a matter of private faith and divorced it completely from nationalism.

Chitta Ranjan Das, the doyen of nationalist politics in Bengal in the first half of the twenties, was a devout Hindu and Vaishnav in matters of private faith. In the public sphere of nationalist politics, he was an avowed believer in Hindu-Muslim unity, for the realization of which he was prepared to go to any extent. This endeared him to the Muslims of Bengal. As a strong defender of Hindu-Muslim unity, Das had long thought that the Muslim support was crucial for the national movement to achieve any tangible success. He believed that as the Muslims constituted a majority of the population in Bengal, and about twenty percent of India’s population, the nationalists could not and should not ignore such a substantial segment of the Indian community.
Disturbed by communal riots in Bengal and other places in India, and being convinced of the practical necessity of Muslim support if the Swarajists were to succeed in blocking governmental actions, Das worked out a provisional agreement with several Muslim leaders in Bengal in 1923, which subsequently came to be known as the Bengal Pact. Das agreed that the Muslims who had so far lagged far behind in government employment, would get 60 percent of all new appointments in political arenas where the Swarajists were voted to power. This would continue until the Muslims could secure positions commensurate with their share of the population.

When the Bengal Pact was passed, Subhas Chandra Bose was the Secretary of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee (BPCC), and the Pact was published with his signature. As a true disciple of Das, Bose started to tread the path of his mentor. He imbibed the spirit of the Bengal Pact, and as the Chief Executive Officer of the Calcutta Corporation, he moved immediately to give a very high percentage of its new and replacement positions to Muslims where qualified persons from this community were available. As a result, Bose naturally invited the wrath of the reactionary Hindu members of the Calcutta Corporation. In the face of this challenge, Bose replied with guts:

I entirely repudiate the suggestion that the appointments have been made in utter disregard of the best interests of the Corporation. I am fully conscious of the responsibility that rests on me. I have no Hindu-Muslims pact before me but I have certainly taken cognisance
of what I consider to be the just claims of the Mohammedans, and in future propose to do so.\textsuperscript{31}

Amplifying his views in this respect still further, Bose commented: I am further of the opinion that claims of the different sections of the people have got to be considered in making appointments. I do not think I shall be wrong if I say that in the past Hindus have enjoyed what may be regarded as a sort of monopoly in the matters of appointments ...... The new Corporation, standing ... for a new epoch – has got to respond to he spirit of the times... though it is sure to give rise to a certain amount of heart burning in the ranks of the Hindu candidates.\textsuperscript{32}

For this action, Bose was abused in a number of nationalist newspapers. His defence undoubtedly came from Das, and even Gandhi came to his defence in the \textit{Young India} of July 31, 1924. The criticisms, however, left Subhas unruffled, and he stuck to his guns. He fully realised that the Congress (including the Swarajists) had to reach out to ever wider groups and transcend communal lines sympathetically and generously in order to uphold its claim to be the real spokesman for the whole of India.

Bose continued his journey along the path of communal unity. He considered Chitta Ranjan Das to be the symbol of Hindu-Muslim unity, and he always vowed to follow in his footprints. The sudden and the untimely demise of Das came as a great shock to him. He paid his highest tribute to his mentor in the letter written to Hemendra Nath Dasgupta from
the Mandalay Jail on February 20, 1926, in which he laid stress on Das' attempts to ensure lasting Hindu-Muslim unity. In the letter Bose wrote:

"I do not think that among the Hindu leaders of India, Islam had a greater friend than in the Deshbandhu .... Hinduism was extremely dear to his heart; he could even lay down his life for his religion, but at the same time he was absolutely free from dogmatism of any kind. That explains how it was possible for him to love Islam."

Bose’s cravings for communal unity and his insistence on the separation of religion from nationalist politics found expression in his various speeches, articles, letters and other writings. Relevant excerpts from at least some of them will help to get closely acquainted with his views on this subject.

In his Presidential address at the Maharashtra Provincial Conference that was held at Poona on May 3, 1928, Subhas Chandra Bose commented:

"While I do not condemn any patch-up work that may be necessary for healing communal sores, I would urge the necessity of discovering a deeper remedy for our communal troubles. It is necessary for the different religious groups to be acquainted with the traditions, ideals and history of one another, because cultural intimacy will pave the way towards communal peace and harmony. I venture to think that the fundamental basis of political unity between different communities lies in cultural rapprochement. As things stands today, the different communities lies in cultural
rapprochement. As things stands today, the different communities inhabiting India are too exclusive.35

In his statement to the press on the prevailing situation in Bengal on November 18, 1937, Bose observed:

"Today, certain sections of the Bengali Community are permeated with the spirit of communalism. Out of this poisonous atmosphere the Congress alone can rescue our people, for the Congress is the only national organization in this land... I appeal to all those Muslims and members of the Scheduled Castes who have so far held aloof from the Congress to join the Congress fold. It is for them to capture the Congress and make it their own organization. If they do so we shall be content to be back-benchers."36

As a result of his passionate urge for communal unity, Subhas Chandra Bose remained outside the orbit of the Hindu Bhadralok communal discourse. In his autobiographical sketch, An Indian Pilgrim, written in Austria in 1937, Bose refused to submit to the communal periodization of Indian history and challenged the very notion of a 'Muslim period' of the same.37 He represented the Battle of Plassey as an instance of Hindu-Muslim co-operation against the common enemy and referred to different significant events in Indian history to show how it had been full of instances of Hindu-Muslim unity. Bose wrote in An Indian Pilgrim:

*History will bear me out when I say that it is a misnomer to talk of Muslim rule when describing the political order in India prior to the advent of the British.* Whether we talk of the Moghul Emperors at
Delhi, or of the Muslim Kings of Bengal, we shall find that in either case the administration was run by Hindus and Muslims together, many of the prominent Cabinet Ministers and Generals being Hindus. Further, the consolidation of the Moghul Empire in India was effected with the help of Hindu Commanders-in-Chief of Nawab Sirajudola, whom the British fought at Plassey in 1757 and defeated, was a Hindu, and the rebellion of 1857 against the British, in which Hindus and Muslims were found side by side, was fought under the flag of a Muslims, Bahadur Shah. (Emphasis mine).

In his Presidential address at the 51st session of the Indian National Congress, held at Haripura on February 19, 1938, Subhas Chandra Bose dwelt at length on the problem of the minorities, reiterated the Congress pledge for the protection of all the rights of the minorities, and categorically stated that ‘The state shall observe neutrality in regard to all religions’ and ‘there should be no interference in matter of conscience, religion, or culture, and a minority is entitled to keep its personal law without any change in this respect being imposed by the majority.’

The expulsion of the entire Bose group from the ‘official’ Bengal Congress in August, 1939, meant that the secular and progressive elements within the Hindu leadership of Bengal were driven out of the party, which came increasingly to be identified with dominant Hindu interests.

As the growing distance between the Indian National Congress and the All India Muslim League overcast Bengal’s politics, Subhas Bose, at this critical juncture attempted to renew the line of C. R. Das. In April,
1940, Bose arranged an agreement between the Calcutta Congress which was under his influence and control, and the Calcutta Muslim League. This alliance contested the general election of the Calcutta Corporation and earned a decisive victory in that election. For the post of the Mayor, Bose himself proposed the name of Abdur Rahman Siddiqui of the Muslim League, who became the Mayor with the active support of Bose. It was also decided that three out of five aldermen would be from the Muslim League.40

The dream of an Indian federation on the line proposed by Chitta Ranjan Das was still being cherished by Bose and accordingly he tried to convince Mohammad Ali Jinnah and Jawaharlal Nehru of his plan. But his sincere endeavour ultimately ended in failure. Thus, after being convinced that the Hindus and the Muslims could not be united on the basis of the Lahore Resolution, he attempted to achieve his goal at the Bengal provincial level in his own way.41 In his private conversation with Abul Mansur Ahmad, Subhas Bose passionately stated that as he always championed the cause of Hindu-Muslim unity from the core of his heart, without which independence of India would not be possible, he had entered into this alliance with the Muslim League at the provincial level because he could not find any other way to reach the Muslim masses.42

Subhas Bose’s own reading of the Indian history, which went directly against its Hindu communal misinterpretation by a major section of the Hindu Bhadralok community, promoted him, in July 1940, to take up the demand for the removal of the Holwell Monument in Calcutta, a
memorial to the British victims of Nawab Siraj-ud-daulah’s alleged cruelty in the so-called infamous ‘Black Hole’ tragedy. Bose characterized Siraj-ud-daulah, the last independent ruler of pre-British Bengal, as a national hero and as the symbol of Bengali Nationalism, and gave the call for a struggle to demolish the Holwell Monument in Calcutta. He regarded this monument as an ‘unwarranted stain on the memory of the Nawab’ and the ‘symbol of our slavery and humiliation.’ The movement started from July 1, 1940, and ‘Siraj Day’ was observed on July 3. Subhas Bose was arrested under the Defence of India Act on July 2, 1940, for his participation in his movement. The mass movement for the removal of the Holwell Monument continued even after his arrest and rose to quite a high pitch, as a result of which the then Prime Minister of Bengal, A K Fazl-ul-Huq, was compelled to give the assurance that the Monument would be removed. This movement succeeded in achieving Hindu-Muslim unity, for which the credit would undoubtedly go to Bose.43

Bose’s views with regard to communal unity and his insistence on a complete separation of religion from nationalist politics found their fullest expression in the Indian National Army (INA) formed by him. The INA was absolutely free from any form of communal feeling. It could really transcend all communal barriers. Bose abolished all religious and caste distinctions in the INA. INA also epitomized complete divorce of religion from nationalism. Bose was very keen and meticulous in this respect.

In the writings of Major-General Shahnawaz Khan and Major Abid Hasan of the INA, two very close lieutenants and faithful followers of
Subhas Chandra Bose, we find and elaborate discussion of the completely non-communal and secular character of the INA and Bose's very careful and sincere endeavour to maintain it. Major-General Shahnawaz Khan wrote in this context:

For him (Subhas Chandra Bose), there were no religious or provincial differences. He refused to recognize these. He looked at everyone - Hindu, Muslim and Sikh-without distinction and his spirit animated his men. In the I.N.A., there was no communal feeling of any sort inspite of the fact that every man had full liberty to practise his religion in any way he liked. He made his soldiers realize that they were the sons of the same motherland, and, as such, there could be no differences between them. We were all completely united and it was realized by us that the communal differences in our country were the creation of an alien power. The success of this can be gauged from the fact that the most ardent supporters and admirers of Netaji were to be found among Muslims. Netaji respected every man for what he was worth and not for his religion or the province he came from.

.... It is on account of these facts that we of the Azad Hind Fauj refuse to believe that it is not possible for all Indians to unite and live together like brothers and sisters and work for the creation of a great, free and united India.44

In his article, Major Abid Hasan has given us an elaborate and graphic account of how Subhas Bose completely separated religion from
nationalism and the struggle against British imperialism in his INA. Abid Hasan wrote in this context:

Netaji divorced religion completely from nationalism. Although a deeply religious man himself, he would not permit public display of any religious practice. Religious devotion thus became the individual concern of each person or, if practised in a group, then restricted to the congregational centres set apart for this purpose. There was to be no intermingling of any other sentiments with Netaji’s political ideology.

Japan’s Co-prosperity sphere and Indian Revolutionaries in South-East Asia

The outbreak of war in Europe opened new avenues for India’s struggle for freedom. While the Indian political leaders were still debating whether or not an international crisis should be exploited for gaining independence, the Indian nationalists abroad considered it as an excellent opportunity to gain freedom with the help of Axis powers. Indian Independence League of Japan and other organizations became more articulate and outspoken about the British presence in India. They passed a resolution requesting the Indian National Congress to establish a national independent government in India in place of present alien Government. At the same time, they started negotiations with Germany and Japan for enlisting their help for weakening the British hold over India.

Fortunately, their efforts were reinforced by the flight of Subhas Chandra Bose, an eminent leader of the Indian National Congress, to
Germany to secure is help for the liberation of India. The Indian nationalists in other places in South-East Asia, who had been carrying on their anti-British activities secretly in Shanghai, Canton, Hong Kong and Bangkok, also came out in the open and started looking for allies to overthrow the British in India. They belonged to the old Ghadar Party who were in the eyes of the Government of India “fugitive from British Justice” and “all were given over to sedition and traitorous activities”. Their efforts resulted, however, in putting the Indian Independence Movement on a firm footing in South-East Asia, when they came in contact with Japanese intelligence agencies in China and Bangkok.

There were three Indian organizations in Japan working under Raja Mahendra Pratap, A.M. Sahay and Rash Behari Bose, respectively. Each one followed a different ideological line for the liberation of India. Sahay had been the head of the National Committee of the Indian National Congress branch in Japan since 1929 and had carried on propaganda through a pro-Congress paper, *The Voice of India*. He was more active than others and had managed to establish a network of Indo-Japan Associations at many places. It was because of his propaganda that the younger generation, particularly university students and members of various Buddhist Associations, had started taking keen interest in India. Sahay’s main aim was to counter the misleading propaganda of the British and to find out ways and means to supplement India’s struggle from abroad by peaceful means, if possible. He had his links in Shanghai and Bangkok also.
On the other hand, Rash Behari Bose had his supporters in the Japanese official circles. Sahay considered Rash Behari Bose as ill-informed about the situation in India, for the latter had been “completely cut off from the Indian scene” for a long time and had no idea of the great mass upheaval in India under Gandhi’s leadership. According to him, Bose had dined and moved among the feudal Japanese politicians who saved him from British agents and was largely influenced by the feudal politics of the Black Dragon Society. Sahay further writes that due to his Japanese connections, Bose was trusted more by the Japanese than by the Indians. Sahay’s opinion apart, Rash Behari Bose had earned great respect of the Japanese and had been carrying on his anti-British activities through his organization, *The Indian Independence League* for the past twenty five years. The League followed the policy of enlisting foreign help for the overthrow of the British in India by violent means. On account of his past record as a revolutionary and his sustained efforts for India’s freedom, Bose was much respected by the Japanese. Raja Mahendra Pratap was an old revolutionary who had collaborated with the German Government during the First World War. After the failure of the schemes for fomenting revolution in India, he had tried to get foreign help from Russia, Afghanistan, China and even Japan in the post-War period for India’s liberation. But on the eve of the war, he along with Kesho Ram Sabarwal and others, had started suspecting the Japanese military authorities. They were under the impression that Japan had agreed to place India within the
Russian sphere of influence. As such, they argued there was no need to seek help from Japan.

But despite the differences the different groups, each in its own way was trying to mould the Japanese thinking in favour of India. On the other hand, the British Embassy was not idle. The assistant Military Attaché at the British Embassy, Major Himmat Singh, did his utmost to neutralize their anti-British propaganda and to prejudice the Japanese against them by describing them as "self-styled leaders who were not only misleading the Japanese but were also lowering the dignity of Japan in the eyes of others". The British ambassador had admitted in his reports that the anti-British propaganda conducted by them attracted "considerable attention" and their continued presence in Japan was "definitely detrimental to British interests". The British Embassy was fully aware that the nationalist opinion in India was quite critical about Japanese aggressive designs in China and the Indian National Congress had declared its solidarity with the Chinese. They, therefore, suggested to the Government of India 'to start a strong and systematic anti-Japanese movement and propaganda in India which should in appearance be a public movement but quietly sponsored by the Government". They further proposed that in order to exploit the Indian nationalist anti-Japanese feelings in connection with the China affairs, it was leaders to continue denouncing Japan and her aggression in China and the Far East". How far the Government of India was successful in these efforts, it is difficult to say, but the anti-Japanese stand of the
Indian National Congress did have some effect on the Japanese thinking towards India after the first World War. On account of the encouraging Japanese attitude, all three groups called special meetings protesting against the Government of India's declaration of war. Raja Mahendra Pratap was keen on joining hands with the Germans and Italians, but both Rash Behari Bose and A.M. Sahay were against it. Bose suggested that they should seek help only from Japan. Mahendra Pratap's suggestion for raising an Indian volunteer corps in the East to fight the British on the same lines as De-Gaullist troops was also dismissed as impracticable. Indians in Japan carried on their activities on two fronts i.e. the open activities and underground activities. The open activities consisted of anti-British propaganda and pro-German and pro-Japanese bias with regular publications of hostile articles. Underground activities, the British Embassy suspected, were directed to give an "impression to the Japanese that India was in revolt and was trying to get free from the yoke of the British rule". Moreover, the Indian nationalities, the Embassy added in its report, were secretly trying to get free from the yoke of the British activities, A.M. Sahay should be removed from Japan by arresting him in Shanghai, where he was going quite frequently after outbreak of the war. Sahay, in the estimate of the British, was the most active pro-Japanese Indian in the Far East. It was through him, the report recorded, that the Japanese were building up an Indian Intelligence organization working all the way from Japan of India. Sahay had agents in India, Shanghai and Bangkok. The British had suspected that the anti-
British movement in Japan had always had the full support and guidance of the Japanese Government, but it came into the open after the outbreak of war of Greater East Asia.\(^49\) But in spite of their best efforts, they could not influence the Japanese against Indian nationalists. They were equally perturbed when Japan replaced its earlier policy of “Asia for the Asians” on the eve of the Second World War by that of establishing the “Greater East Asia or Co-prosperity sphere” or the “New Order in East Asia”. The Japanese concept of new order in Asia was immediately distorted by the British and was described as “the great East Asia Misery Sphere”. The Japanese, on the other hand, began to propagate openly that they wanted to free the Asians from the yoke of the white races, to eliminate the European hegemony, and to bring these nations together under their own leadership. Their contention was that Asia belonged to the Asiatic peoples who were “groaning under injustice” and that the emancipation of these peoples was essential for the establishment of a new order in Asia and “lasting peace in the East.”\(^50\) India was not formally included in the co-prosperity sphere, but the Japanese were keen to get the liberation of India from the British. The Japanese League for the Emancipation of South Eastern Asiatic Nations founded in January 1941 under the Presidentship of Kanzo Adochi, advocated India to be freed along with Malaya, Burma and the Philippines. The Government of India, however, believed firmly that Japan had the intention of including India in the Co-prosperity Sphere, which in their analysis meant that India was expected to come under the economic dominance of Japan.”\(^51\) This theme was to remain the dominant feature of
British propaganda against Japan throughout the War. Surprisingly, the Indian leaders were not fully convinced by the British propaganda but at times, they took critical stand towards Japanese aggressive policy in China.

For making the concept of co-prosperity sphere a reality, the Japanese were keen of enlist the support of all the anti-British groups in East Asia. Even before the war Japanese military and naval intelligence agencies had been trying to contact the anti-British groups in South-East Asia. The Indian community in East Asia was quite strong numerically and economically, and the Japanese were particularly interested in forging links with it, so that its dormant anti-British sentiments could be activized. They went about their job in a very secret manner. The Japanese intelligence established links with the Indian groups working in Shanghai, Siam, Burma and Singapore. The most fruitful link was with Baba Hari Singh alias Osman Khan an old Ghadrite, who had collaborated with the Germans schemes. Emil Hellfrich, a German agent, had saved him from the British and had given him shelter in his estate in Indonesia. Though still wanted by the British for his revolutionary record, he was able to avoid arrest. Around 1933, he came under the protection of Japanese naval authorities which brought him to Shanghai where he joined other Indian revolutionaries. Hari Singh was attached to Commander Hidaka of the China Intelligence Section of the Japanese Navy. He along with his comrades assisted the Japanese intelligence in their onslaught on the Chinese and it was through them that the Japanese subsequently established a secret liaison with the Indians in Siam. It is now established on the basis of British records that
besides encouraging Indians in Japan in their anti-British activities the Japanese were also collecting information about The Indians soldiers posted in the Far East. They were even trying to create anti-British feelings in them through the members of the Ghadar party. For example, in the words of Major Himmat Singh, who was military attaché at the British Embassy in Tokyo, the Japanese in Canton were engaged in efforts to suborn the Indian troops in Hong Kong in 1941. As a matter of fact, under inducement of the Japanese and members of the Ghadar Party a number of soldiers had deserted from the Sikh Garrison Battery. Some of the members of the Ghadar party who were responsible for this were imprisoned. It was through the Japanese efforts that Baba Hari Singh managed to engineer the escape of these Ghadrites. Under protection of the Japanese naval authorities, Hari Singh could send two of these men, Kartar Singh Quami and Harnam Singh Dhillon in 1941 to his old compatriots in Bangkok, asking them to get in touch with the local Japanese representatives. They reached Kobe with the assistance of a Japanese Intelligence Staff Officer, Col. Nabuhara, who also gave them a letter of introduction to Col. Tamura, Military Attaché at the Japanese Embassy in Bangkok. At Kobe they were helped by Major Fujiwara, Iwaichi, who was to subsequently play a predominant role in the Indian Liberation movement in East Asia.

The secret group in Thailand consisted of the former members of the Ghadar Party and those who were sympathetic to its revolutionary ideology. They were organized by Pritam Singh, who had come from India secretly. At first he became a member of the branch of the Indian National
Congress formed by Ram Pande in 1936. But immediately after the war, Pritam Singh formed another party, the Independence League of India, subsequently known as the Indian Independence League (IIL). Another prominent organization in Thailand was the Thai-Bharat Cultural Lodge; also established in November 1940 by Swami Satyanand Puri when Deb Nath Das whom A.M. Sahay had sent from Japan, visited Bangkok as a representative of the Indo-Japanese Associations. This organization was purely cultural and even received the support of the Thai Government. The British Legation was slightly suspicious of this organization as it had been formed after outing the Indian Association of Thailand, which had worked more or less under their orders and supervision. Naturally it was regarded by the British Legation, as "a strange move" which deserved "careful watching". The British Legation could not do much save for getting the expulsion of Deb Nath Das from Thailand. Due to British influence, the Indian groups had to manage their activities before the war in such a way that even the British could not detect in them any agitational or conspiratorial tendencies. They looked at these organizations as largely innocuous and apolitical. For instance, a British report says: "The pre-war Indian Community in Bangkok comprising mainly of petty traders, dependent on the support of the British Legation and Consulates in the furtherance of their business interests, were not generally speaking politically motivated. The Indian Association of Thailand, a body functioning under the aegis of H.M. Legation for common social and commercial interests, but excluding matters relating to religion or politics,
whose chief office-bearers were some of the senior members of the business community had been in existence since 1928."55

The British authorities were fully aware of the activities of Rash Behari Bose and A.M. Sahay and other Indians in Japan, but they were largely in the dark about Indians in Thailand and other neighbouring countries, and admitted later that their knowledge of the directions of Japan behind all these seditious activities was "regrettably far from satisfactory.

After the outbreak of the Second World War, the Indian Independence League (IIL) under Pritam Singh and Baba Amar Singh became active with Japanese backing. Baba Amar Singh, an old Ghadrite who was convicted in the Ghadar Conspiracy during the First World War, had gone back to India after his release form the Mandalay Jail in 1937. In India he had tried to contact the prominent leaders, but only Subhas Chandra Bose, whom he had slightly known in the Mandalay Jail, sympathized with his thinking and encouraged him. Amar Singh was firmly convinced that the emancipation of India was possible only with the help of some external power. Finding the Indian scene not congenial to his way of thinking, he went secretly back to Siam in 1940 to work with his old comrades, and immediately after his arrival established contact with them in Shanghai, Hong Kong and Burma. His imprisonment had not dampened his patriotic zeal, but rather had strengthened his implacable hatred for the British. The Government of India regarded him as "one of the most important members of the conspiracy who worked in every way to subvert the government", and in view of his record as a politically
dangerous revolutionary, it decided to secure his deportation from Thailand. But due to war and the changed political situation, the Thai Government was reluctant to oblige its ally this time. In Bangkok, he was closely associated with Pritam Singh and both of them were instrumental in formalizing relations with the Japanese military authorities.\textsuperscript{56}

Pritam Singh belonged to a noble family of Lyallpur and had come to Bangkok as a priest of a Sikh temple. Though deeply religious in temperament, he was influenced by the political developments in the country. His patriotic feelings were aroused by his association with the old Ghadrites in Thailand. In the garb of the priest, he had been building up the IIL to fight for the emancipation of the country. The League had gained confidence after coming in contact with Col. Tamura. With his backing, a small but active organization was started by Pritam Singh known as the Azad Hind Sangh or Azad Bharat Sabha. Its objectives as suspected by the British were to maintain close collaboration with the Japanese and to supply them with trustworthy volunteers for subversive role on Malaya and Burma fronts. Sangh was also expected to carry on broadcasting to stir up anti-British feelings amongst the Indians.

**Fujiwara and the Birth of I.N.A.:**

The mission comprising Fujiwara, Capt. Tsuchimochi, Lt. Yamaguchi, Lt. Nakamyya and 2\textsuperscript{nd} Lt. Segawa, was briefed by the Chief of the General Staff, General Sugiyama: it was to collaborate with the Indian nationalists and establish propaganda centres for promoting goodwill and cooperation between the local population and the Japanese army in
cooperation between the local population and the Japanese army in the event of war.

Fujiwara was overawed by the nature of his assignment, but what disappointed him personally was the absence of a definite policy to back up the doctrine of co-prosperity sphere, especially with regard to India. But he interpreted that Imperial Headquarters wanted him: "to cultivate the ground for India's independence" and Japan-India cooperation in order to realize ideals of a new order in Greater East Asia, while counting at first on the *Kosaku* (Intelligence operation) in Malaya.\(^{57}\)

Naturally under this impression, he played a very crucial role in the early negotiations with the Indian nationalists in Thailand. As a Staff Officer, he fully utilized his position and even went beyond his original instructions to establish an alliance with the Indians. The growth mutual goodwill between the Indians in South-East Asia and the Japanese was due to his personal interest rather than to any official mandate. Fujiwara discovered soon after taking up his assignment that there was an extraordinary lack of knowledge and understanding about the Indian affairs not only among the Japanese leaders but also among the officers of the Japanese Army. The situation was so delicate that an unsympathetic and arrogant Japanese military officer might have wrecked the movement for Indian independence instead of giving it a helping hand. Fujiwara rose to the occasion and handled the situation tactfully. Even the British found him to be very capable and clever staff officer with plenty of initiative. He understood his role, formed his own judgement after a few secret meetings
with the Indian nationalists, and drew his own conclusions. He could also judge that the majority of the Indians were not in favour of Japanese colonial policy in Korea and Taiwan. They were even quite outspoken about the Japanese aggressive policy in China. Despite these sentiments of the Indians Fujiwara proceeded to perform his duty, which was to win the loyalty of the Indians in East Asia to Japanese war aims. He lost no time to understand that the Indians nationalists in Thailand, though very zealous fighters for India’s freedom, were not yet properly organized. Their different groups were not on good terms with one another because of ideological differences. Besides, they were cut off from the main political developments in India. The Indian Independence League, for instance, did not have any liaison with the Indian National Congress, tough it spoke highly of Subhas Chandra Bose and its leader, Amar Singh, talked of his acquaintance with Bose when both of them were in the Mandalay Jail. So, before Fujiwara started negotiations with the Indian Nationalists, he had already grasped the salient features of the situation he was in.58

In the early meetings three topics were mainly discussed by Fujiwara with Pritam Singh and his comrades in Bangkok – the emphasis being on the relations between India and Japan. Pritam Singh wanted the India should enjoy an equal status with Japan and should not be placed on the same level as Manchuria or Korea; the Indians should be allowed to raise and organize their own army of volunteers; and a representative Indian who could unite and lead all the classes of Indians in East Asia should be invited. The name of S.C. Bose, who had escaped to Berlin, was suggested.
Fujiwara also got the impression that Pritam Singh and his colleagues had no faith in the Gandhian doctrine of non-violence, for they asserted that Indian independence could be won by force of arms only. Both Pritam Singh and Amar Singh told Fujiwara that “the Indian National Congress is committed to non-violence under the leadership of Gandhi. But independence cannot be won by this alone. Subhas Chandra Bose from Berlin has given the call for armed struggle. We support Bose. Independence cannot be won without the baptism of blood:. They also make it appear that Indians were not in a position to realize their dream of independence by their strength alone. They were keen to seek help from those foreign powers.”59 Fujiwara agreed with their viewpoint and explained that he would not have come to Bangkok to negotiate with them had Japan thought of utilizing “your movement as a stepping stone for overseas adventure”. “India and Japan”, Fujiwara explained, “have common interest in driving away England from orient”. It appears that idealism dominated their thinking when both agreed that Japanese –Indian co-operation ought to be built upon freedom from exploitation and oppression and that it “must transcend mutual hostility by respecting each other’s traditional culture and political aspirations.”60

Fujiwara was highly impressed by the potential value of Pritam Singh’s group for Japan. In his reports to Tokyo Fujiwara outlined two objectives which could be achieved by collaborating with IIL: First, with IIL help it was not difficult to infiltrate agents into the enemy lines and to win friends from amongst British Indian troops once war broke out and,
secondly, to organize Indians in Malaya and expand IIL activities. For the time being, he informed, Japan had only IIL to rely upon for liberating India from the British rule. But he was sure that war would produce some more venues for achieving their end. He suggested that after the war, all possible help should be given to IIL, for infiltrating behind the enemy lines and making a direct appeal to the Indian soldiers. He was confident that this would result in large scale defection. The defected soldiers would be indoctrinated and formed into a voluntary Indian Army as dreamt by Pritam Singh. Simultaneously, the members of IIL and Fujiwara organization would explain the real intention of the Japanese army to the Indian residing in the area and mobilize them under the banner of IIL. In this way, Fujiwara hoped that it would be possible to reach the Indians living behind enemy lines.

Baba Amar Singh ad a strong desire to raise an Indian Independence Army; he too valued the collaboration of Indian nationalists with the Japanese, for the latter could help him actualise his dream of an army by handling over the Indian prisoners of war to him. And the circumstances for such a collaboration were more favourable now that they were during the First World War. Fujiwara appreciated the sentiments of Amar Singh in whose "stern looks and solemn face" he could read inviolable and sincere feelings and indomitable spirit. Though quite old, Amar Singh, in his opinion, had lost none of his ordour "to stand as the vanguard of his country's freedom struggle." Fujiwara, however, was slightly doubtful about the capacity of the old man to lead the movement of such a great
magnitude. But as the war was approaching, it was necessary for him to come to an understanding with them. The Indian Independence League appeared to him to be more important for collaboration than the Thai-Bharat Cultural Lodge which was an organization of intellectuals interested primarily in things cultural.” At the same time, Col. Tamura had also decided to cooperate with Giani Pritam, and his group and told Swami Satyananda Puri and Deb Nath Das to make up their differences with Pritam Singh as the Japanese did not intend to give support to any one Indian faction at the expense of the other.

The agreement was signed for the mutual benefit of the two parties and aimed at “the establishment of peace in Greater East Asia by cooperation between Indian and Japanese” Under the agreement, the Japanese pledged to give all possible help to the Indian nationalists in their struggle for the independence and assured the latter that they had no political, economic, cultural or religious ambitions in India; besides, they promised that the Japanese Army would honour the lives, property and freedom of Indians in the region. In turn, the Indian Independence League agreed that its members would advance with the Japanese Army into Southern Thailand and later into Malaya, where they would arouse anti-British feelings though their propaganda; besides, they would promote cooperation between the Indian residents and the Japanese Army in the zones of military operation. In other words, the IIL was to make the military operations quite smooth for the Japanese in Malaya. Under the agreement, the Japanese Army was obliged to demonstrate its support to
the cause of Indian Independence by adopting a friendly attitude towards the Indians in the areas it occupied and by giving friendly treatment to the Indian prisoners of war.

An important clause included in the agreement on the insistence of Sardar Pritam Singh related to the formation of an Indian voluntary army which would fight for Indian Independence. This army was to be formed from amongst the expected prisoners of war of the British Indian Army and the local Indian civilians. A friendly treatment was to be meted out to the Indian soldiers after their surrender by the Japanese Army to facilitate the formation of such an army. The details regarding this and their handling over were to be discussed by the local Japanese Army Headquarters with the IIL; other problems were to be solved as and when they arouse. The above clause carried within it the seeds of an Indian national army Pritam Singh’s intention to raise an Indian voluntary army derived from his apprehension that the advance of the Japanese Army into India would not be relished by the Indians; in that case an Indian Army should be available to fight the British. Besides, he wanted the Indians to play an active role in India’s liberation. Both Amar Singh and Pritam Singh even at such early stage wanted S.C. Bose to take over command of the movement. They were assured help by Japanese military authorities for contacting Bose in Berlin. The agreement was quite bold in its objectives and designs, and its practical implications were forgotten because of the trust which Fujiwara and Pritam Singh had created in each other. Copies of the agreement were sent to the Imperial Headquarters and Headquarters of 25
Army. Tokyo received the agreement, though not without certain reservations. As a Japanese writer, Hayashida says, it approved of the agreement but interpreted the role of the proposed Indian voluntary army as one of the support to the Japanese action in East Asia, and not as one of the liberating India from the British rule with Japanese support. Tamura-Amar Singh agreement was not a private understanding as Nagasaki has stated, but was received though with reservations by the Japanese military authorities in the region. There was nothing irregular about the proposal for the formation of the Indian voluntary army. In fact the Indian nationalists abroad had been striving towards their end for a long time. They had tried to form an Indian voluntary Army in Turkey during the First World War from amongst the P.O.W.'s. It was the concept of the Indians to achieve the status of an allied army for the Indian voluntary Army which was to cause much misunderstanding in the future. Conceding that neither Tamura for Fujiwara had any official mandate to enter into any such agreement, but working within the framework of their specified duties, they had realized that the cooperation of the Indians in South-East Asia for the successful achievement of Japanese war aims was not possible without such an understanding.

A theoretical suggestions had been included to please IIL for military gains. As a matter of fact, at this stage, the Japanese high command had no definite plan to include India in the co-prosperity sphere but it was definitely contemplated to make India an independent country. For this purpose the Indians in East Asia were to be assisted to carry on
their anti-British movement under Japanese patronage. For their collaboration in the Japanese help. With this appreciation of each other’s viewpoint, the two parties embarked on their respective duties on the eve of the Pacific War. Pritam Singh, Amar Singh and other members of the Indian Independence League could now think of realizing their dream of overthrowing the British by an armed revolution. With the willing cooperation of the Japanese, there was no apparent reason why it could not be done.
REFERENCES


8. In his famous Tokyo speech (1944) Subhas declared: 'We do not believe that India can achieve freedom without the use of arms.' See Fundamental Questions of Indian Revolution op. cit., p.77.


10. Editor’s Introduction, in Netaji Collected Works, Vol. 8, p. XV.

11. Anyone who goes through his commentary titled The Austrian Riddle (Modern Review Calcutta, April, 1934) (rep NCW Vol. 8, pp. 267-282) will be fascinated by the interface between the Socialists.
Na/is. The fence-sitters and traitors that marked most sensitive spots in Europe of that time.


15. Tripuri Address in *Crossroads*, p. 109, *op. cit*.

16. One of these was his fearless Berlin broadcast of 20 April, 1942 “Britain's paid propagandists have been calling me an enemy agent. I need no credentials when I speak to my own people .. My allegiance and loyalty have been and will ever be to India alone no matter in which part of the world I may live” *India Colling*, p.49.


19. *NCW* Vol. 8, p. 251. The address was read in absentia as Bose was denied a visa to come to UK from Europe.

21. For details of Bose’s dialogue with various German officials, the confabulators within the German Foreign Ministry and Secret series, the Bose-Mussolini-Hitler personal interviews, see Mihir Bose *The Lost Hero* op. cit. pp. 184-199. Also Documents of German Foreign Policy D/XII and XIII, HMSO, London, Alexandry Werth, Netaji in German.


32. The Amrita Bazar Patrika, July 17, 1924 quoted in Gordon, Brothers, p. 11., 1924.


37. The Message of Bengal,' From Presidential address at the Rangpur Political Conference, March 30, 1929, in *Selected Speeches*, p.46.


42. Abul Mansur Ahmad, *op. cit.*, 194-203; Gautam Chattopadhyay, *o. cit. pp. 169-70; Soumitra De, op. cit, pp. 220-221.

43. Abul Mansur Ahmad, *op. cit.* pp. 194-195


48. Foreign Department F.No. 766-x/1941. Major Himmat Singh belonged to the princely family of Jamnagar, was an Assistant
Military Attache at the British Embassy in Tokyo and had employed agents for keeping a watch on the activities of the Indian Revolutionary Nationalists.

49. Foreign Department, F.No. 313-x/1942.

50. General Staff Branch Memorandum of Japanese Aims in the Co-prosperity Sphere. Foreign Department, F.No. 454-x/1941.

51. Foreign Department F.No. 766-x/1941.


54. F.No. 295-x/I.N.A.

55. F.O.

56. Foreign Department F.No. 766-x/1941.


58. Foreign Department F.No. 766-x/1941.


61. Ibid.
63. F.Kikan, p. 38.
64. S.E.A.T.I.C. Bulletin No. 234. No authentic copy of this agreement could be traced in the records available in India or U.K. Various Writers, including Fujiwara, have mentioned this agreement. Fujiwara’s version of the agreement as given in his book F. Kikan is different from the one he gave at the time of his interrogation by the British. In his interrogation report, he clearly mentioned that it was under instructions from Col. Tamura that he had drafted the agreement while in his memoirs, he gives us to understand that it was on his initiative that he had drawn up the agreement, See. F. Kikan, p. 44.