Chapter - IV

The Struggle – Imphal, Burma Campaigns & The Red Fort Trials
Chapter-IV

STRUGGLE – THE IMPHAL AND BURMA CAMPAIGNS AND
THE RED FORT TRIALS

The Imphal campaign provided to the INA a chance of liberating their country, whole to Japan it offered an opportunity to solve the China problem and achieve its goal of co-prosperity sphere. The 50,000 strong I.N.A. hence constituted in three Army Divisions was ready for action. According to Haryana state archives, Chandigarh about 926 soldiers and officers from Rohtak District and about 3777 soldiers and officers from Haryana took part in I.N.A. campaigns. Prem Chowdhury in her book, “Punjab Politics - The Role of Sir Chhotu Ram”, writing about I.N.A. give the number as 2248. Among these 3777 officers and men distinguish role was played by many of them, the significant participants being Col. Ram Sarup Yadav of Kosli, Col. Dilsukh Mann of village Mundse Rohtak who had the distinction of serving as Quarter Master General I.N.A., Major Ran Singh Ahlawat of village, Dhandhlan, Capt. Kanwal Singh of village Mandhauthi was from the Indian legion in Germany. Mehar Singh of Sisana had served as a driver of Netaji Subhas Chander Bose in Japan, Malaya and Burma.

Col. G.S. Nagar was 2 IC of the 3rd Division of the I.N.A., Capt. Kanwal Singh of Dhakla, Major Prabhu Dayal, Capt. Chander Bhan, 2nd Lt. Hari Ram, Lt. Duni Chand, Lt. Mange Ram and Capt. Bagri played an important role in Imphal and Burma campaigns.

This chapter discusses the object and feasibility of the Imphal campaign (Operation U-21), difference in perception of its feasibility and
the delay in its implementation. It also discussed the Japanese attitude and relations with I.N.A. as a regular army. The Arakan offensive was started with about 2,30,000 Japanese and 20,000 I.N.A. soldiers, whose official diary of achievements from Feb. 3, 1944 to June 27, 1944 is discussed to elucidate day to day achievement of I.N.A. Further the heroes and heroic deeds of I.N.A. are studied with special reference to participation from Haryana. The Imphal campaign turned out to be a debacle and the reasons are discussed and analysed critically in this chapter. The Burma campaign constitutes and contains the heroic events like Irrawady crossing, Meiktila and Popa engagements. The last part of the chapter deals with the Red Fort trials, the reaction of Congress change it brought in the contemporary political situation, the dilemma of the government, the statement of Bhula Bhai Desai, verdict and release of all I.N.A. prisoners.

OPERATION ‘U-21’:

In June 1942, Lt. Colonel Hayashi Akira, Staff Officer Army Headquarters, began to advocate the advantage of an offensive operation in the direction of Eastern India, for he thought that this region would become the main base for the British counter-offensive against Burma. He also emphasized the advisability of exploiting the Japanese success in the Burma operation in the spring of 1942, before the British could complete their defence preparation. The Southern Army and the Imperial Headquarters ordered the 15th Army to study the feasibility of the proposed operation. The Vice-Chief of Staff, in a wire dated 20 July 1942, asked the Chief of Staff of the Southern Army to give details of the proposed air operation against India and to suggest how to cut the air route between
India and China. Subsequently, a plan was formulated which was called Operation-21.2

Operation-21 was a very ambitious scheme, under which the Japanese Army was expected to crush the Chinese forces on the Upper Salween river and secure the south-west area of Yunnan. As regards India, the Japanese forces were to proceed as far as Tinsukia, a road and rail junction near Dibrugarh, via Hukwang Valley. AT the same time, they were to advance via Imphal to Dimarpur and intercept the retreat of the Allies from the Tinsukia area and secure Northern Assam. The Indian nationalists and the Indian National Army were to be ‘encouraged to cooperate’ with the Japanese Army,3 not only to assist in the above “plans for India” but also to achieve another objective which was “the development of Asian consciousness” and the elimination of all traces of European and American influence in East Asia. Operation-21 was to be carried out by the end of 1942 when a British counter attack in Burma was expected.4

The Mohan Singh episode had demoralize the I.N.A., it was lying in Shambles and the relations with the Japanese were at its lowest. More than the crisis in the relations between the Japanese and the Indian nationalists, it was the opposition of the Japanese staff officers which prevented its implementation. They opposed the scheme as Fujiwara writes, on the basis of operational difficulties. They argued that there were hardly any good roads in the India. Burma frontier area, and that no correct knowledge of the strength of the British Army was available; besides, the Japanese Army was still ignorant about the topography of the region. Personally Fujiwara
was opposed to the deployment of the INA till it was properly trained and equipped. Moreover “from his contacts with Indians in South East Asia he judged that Gandhi and Nehru would oppose an invasion by the Japanese.” Terauchi also recorded later on that “owing to the lack of operational strength, difficulty of supply preparedness and geographical handicap, no decision” could be taken regarding the above operation. The staff officers opposed the operation for political reasons as well: they apprehended lest the advance of Japanese forces on the Indian soil should create ill-will against Japan among the Indian masses, for the reports received from their agents had indicated that the leaders of the Indian National Congress, if not totally hostile to Japan, were definitely opposed to any foreign help for the liberation of India. Even the Indian official historian believes that “the Japanese desisted from further advance beyond Burma and in their decision were influenced by the attitude of the Indian political parties particularly the Indian national Congress which made no secret of its hostility to any foreign invader.” Moreover, Lt. Gen. Mutaguchi, Commanding Officer of the 18th Divisional and Ltd. Gen. Sahurai, Commanding Officer of the 33rd Division – both of whom were on the front line – showed great reluctance to undertake the task. Mutaguchi informed General Lido Shorjiro, Commander of the 15 Army that “the terrain in North Burma was so forbidding- endless jungles and mountains – that no large scale force could cross the mountains into Assam or be supported there. The idea that 18th Division should advance on Tinsukia through the Jikwang Valley to cut Chiang Kai-shek’s air supply route, was just not on.” Imperial General Headquarters was also
doubtful of the results of such an operation and on 23 December 1942 issued a directive suspending the movement of forces of the 15th Army. Therefore the plan was postponed to a future date, and it was decided to strengthen the defence of Burma by occupying strategic position.9

A British report admits, "had the enemy pursued her advantage in 1942 when allied parties in the East and the West reached their lowest depth the empire of Mikado might well have included the Eastern Province of India, if not the whole of the sub-continent."10 But contrary to the above assessment, the Director Military Intelligence, had reported after due analysis that "India did not enter into Japan's calculations and it is therefore not into her planning at the outbreak of hostilities." They believed that it was "the ease and rapidity of her conquest that brought her face to face with the problem of what to do with India."11 But the fact remains that India was never, considered for inclusion in the co-prosperity sphere, and the Indian National Army – which could have been deployed to take the offensive against India-was still very small and its growth had been hampered by the misunderstanding between Mohan Singh and the local Japanese representatives. The sudden halt of the Japanese forces on the eastern frontier of India lends weight to the impression that the conquest of India was not included in the Japanese plans of expansion towards the West.12 The helplessness of the British in India is described by Philip Mason, who was in the Defence Department at the time. He writes:

There was not a division in Indian fit to fight, we had an army in Africa; we had lost an army in Malaya; we had lost another in Burma. We had
nothing in India. There was no reason, he continued in his thinking we could see why the Japanese should not land troops in India – only the blind hope that they must be getting rather tired and might have bitten off all they could manage.\textsuperscript{13}

While the Japanese decision to strengthen the defences of Burma by occupying the strategic positions and to build up an extensive intelligence network, was making some progress the British were keen to map out plans for a Burma-India- offensive. Indian Army command was not sitting idle, and their strategy and aim was to reconquer Burma as early as possible and to check the Japanese advance. The Japanese forces were having reverses on several fronts and this had seriously affected the morale of the people at home.\textsuperscript{14} So Tokyo approved of the campaign as a last resort to maintain unity at home. Even Fujiwara observes that something spectacular was needed to remove the general depression in Japan and the victory in Imphal and Kohima, and the cutting of the Arakan Railway, was expected to serve this purpose. Another reason for Tojo’s consent to the campaign was his hope that Netaji’s return to India would have a great political impact on the people of India. It was also anticipated that the presence of the INA under Subhas would prevent to a great extent the alienation of Indians from the Japanese in case India was invaded. Due to political considerations involved in the Imphal campaign the question was thoroughly discussed by Kawabe and Mutaguchi, and a detailed strategy was chalked out.\textsuperscript{15} A later Japanese Government publication also admitted
that "once this Imphal campaign was planned, new political meanings came to be added to its purely military character. The strategy of the campaign formulated in 1942 was based on military factors only, but since the coming of Subhas and his insistence on the participation of the INA in any military campaign towards India lent it a different colour." Kitabe adds that another object was to raise the confidence of the leaders of the countries which constituted Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere in Japan.

The campaign provided to the INA a chance of liberating their country, while to Japan it offered an opportunity to solve the China problem and achieve its goal of co-prosperity sphere. Still the Japanese army commanders were reluctant to accept the INA as a potential army. Both Terauchi, and Kawabe, were opposed to the deployment of the INA unit on the front on the ground that it was too small. In fact they had doubts about the combat effectiveness of the INA and apprehended a hostile reaction from the Japanese officers if it was deployed on active service. They regarded the INA as valuable only for propaganda purposes. The general trend of thinking in the Japanese Military Command was any inclusion of INA apart from its political propaganda effect, as a regular fighting unit alongwith their own army was an encumbrance. Due to this trend of thinking Subhas had to fight hard for maintaining the autonomy and honour of the Indian National Army. Initially his proposal to launch the Imphal campaign as a joint venture was rejected on the ground that "Japanese military strategy and tactics were top secret", which could not be divulged to anyone. It is doubtful whether Bose’s suggestion was taken
seriously. It appears that "the Japanese High Command in Burma, alarmed by the operations of the Chindits in their first campaign had already decided that an offensive policy was preferable to strictly defensive one." This is reflected in the order issued to the 15th Army on 12th August, 1943 in which it was ordered to "advance to Imphal before enemy preparations for a counter-offensive could be completed". It was further decided that "upon the occupation of Imphal, the Provisional Government of Free India will be established there in order to accelerate the political campaign in India.

But Bose, having delineated the role of the INA, decided to come to a clear understanding with Japanese on the issues involved in the joint operation or on those which were likely to emerge during the operation. This was not an easy task. Mutaguchi had been very cordial and an understanding had actually been reached after many meetings. In these meetings, it was agreed that the Indian forces would work under Indian Commanders; that in joint operations, the senior officers, whether Indian or Japanese, would assume command; that the Japanese authorities would not have power to arrest members of the INA unless they were accused of a crime against the Japanese Army, and vice-versa.

Soon after the understanding, Hikari Kikan issued detailed instructions to the Japanese Army units explaining the position of the INA and what should be their attitude towards it. "The Indian National Army" the note clarified would "be treated as the military force of an allied nation. Since it is under the jurisdiction of the Free India Provisional Government and is cooperating with the Imperial Army against a commot
enemy. The right of command of the Indian National Army is to be respected”. With regard to the employment of INA on front-line duties, the note laid down that “the Key to the employment of the Indian National Army is to keep firm control of its highest commander, to permit him to exert command, while retaining full responsibility ourselves, and to give him a clear and concrete mission.”

This was followed by a detailed paper, which continued more elaborately the relations between the Japanese Army and the Indian National Army. In this, it was categorically stated that the INA which had been constituted by the favours of His Imperial Majesty “should be treated as the army of an ally”. The note clarified that INA was the Indian People’s own army and its purpose was the same as that of the Japanese. “Although they are fighting our common enemy with a common purpose are not by any means a “fifth column of the Japanese Army “ nor are they a “fatigue party”. They are the army of the Indian Independence League and with the dawn of the independence of India will constitute the forces of the new state”. 

Hikari Kikan was the medium though which control and cooperation of the INA was to be exercised smoothly so as to develop its capabilities to the best advantage. The note further delineated the code of conduct which was to be adopted during the joint operations by the two armies. The note asked the Japanese army to discard their feeling of superiority, and treat the INA soldiers as their brothers fighting for the common cause.

After moving to Rangoon, Subhas had been frantically trying to organize the INA for a march to Delhi. Vigorous training had been given to the soldiers in guerrilla warfare and jungle operations. After a great deal of
effort Subhas could procure adequate supply of war materials for the INA, they had to depend on the Japanese Army in the important matters of transport, arms and ammunition, supply and communication. To appease Subhas, all matters including both political and military affairs concerning the INA and the Provisional Government of India in the Burma area were placed under the direct jurisdiction of the Burma Area Army. With the Imphal operation just around the corner, Subhas had a very crucial meeting to discuss joint operations with Mutaguchi at Maymyo, where a ceremonial photograph with your excellency. What Mutaguchi had in mind when he decided upon the offensive operation was that by “destroying the British base at Imphal, he could provide a launching pad for Subhas Chandra Bose, to raise Bengal against the British. From Bengal the flames of rebellion would spread” and “India would become unstable as a base for any offensive against the Japanese in East Asia and might even win her independence”. Both Bose and Mutaguchi were very optimistic about the outcome of the campaign and the latter believed. Sincerely that the Imphal campaign would reverse the whole course of Japan’s deteriorating war situation everywhere.

Other Japanese generals were not as optimistic as Mutaguchi. For them the coming Imphal operation was a great gamble.19 Rear Admiral Chudo, for instance, regarded the campaign as “impractical and foolhardy”. Other hoped that the success of the campaign would offset the loss of face after the recent Japanese defeat at Guadalcanal, and Midway Island and that, if Subhas’s prediction of an Indian rebellion proved to be correct, it was possible that Allies would get such setback that Japan would be able
to secure the breathing space it needed so badly to reorganize its forces in order to meet the growing American threat in the Pacific.²⁰

The orders from the IGHQ which were issued on 7 January 1943 authorised that “for the defence of Burma, the Commander-in-Chief Southern Army “may occupy and secure the vital areas of the North-Eastern India, in the vicinity of Imphal, by defeating the enemy in that area at an opportune time”. Considered in the light of the above order, the Imphal campaign was not specially conceived to assist the INA to achieve their goal to independence. But as a result of this operation, it was expected that the Japanese army would be able to create a breech at one corner of the Indo-Burmese border. This was to serve as a base for Bose to launch his liberation movement. The establishment of such a base was expected to enable Subhas to achieve the goal of “Chalo Delhi”, as he was confident that the Indian masses would come out wholeheartedly in support of the liberation forces and that the ranks of the advancing INA would swell with the participation of the Indian patriots. With these expectations, the “March on to Delhi” began in the beginning of 1944. In a farewell message, Subhas reminded the INA soldiers that they had a “golden opportunity for realizing the long cherished freedom” and that they would be able to achieve that goal if they fulfilled their duty. Premier Tojo also declared that the day was not far when the Japanese would see India “as a free and independent country”. The declarations added a political dimension to what was originally a purely military proposition: the Japanese declaration offset the Allies’ propaganda that Japan was committing an act of aggression against India. There could not have been a
better start for the liberation of India by the Indian National Army with Japanese collaboration. The order of General Mutaguchi dated 18 February, 1944 to the Japanese Army were clear. It said:

India the scene of our attack is intrinsically bound up with the Great East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere and its people will lend their cooperation, so our army's discipline must be strictly observed and all orders must be obeyed. Commit no offence whatever against them. Destroy the enemy, but spare the guiltless. The Indians for years have been waiting their deliver once at our hands, so we must fulfil their expectations by the valour of our Imperial Army, by the destruction of enemy's military system and by making this campaign a notable factor in the conclusion of the war.

The main strategy of the Japanese was to push their defence line from river Chindwin to a more strategic place in the Indo-Burma frontier mountains in order to capture the Imphal and Koshima areas which were the main base of the Anglo-American forces, and to thus to forestall their design to attack and recapture Burma. In the operation, the Japanese agreed to align three Regiments of the INA with their own three divisions — the 15th, 31st and 33rd — comprising more than one lakh soldiers. Two hundred soldiers of the INA were attached with each of the advancing Japanese units. These soldiers were divided into four groups with different duties. The first group was to carry on front-line propaganda among the Indian troops; the intelligence group was to collect relevant information; the reserve group was to look after those Indians soldiers who would surrender to the INA-Japanese forces.
The 33rd Division was to strike northwards for Imphal on 8th March, with the 15th thrusting into Manipur from the Chindwin. Further north the objective of the 31st was Kohima. The I.N.A. contribution was to be two battalions of No. 1 Guerrilla Regiment and two Intelligence Unit.

It was decided in the Cabinet meetings from time to time to send INA troops to Burma, the First Division to move as early as possible. The units, which were re-formed and reorganized, started to move both from Singapore and from the mainland of Malaya. They proceeded by train; but beyond the Malayan Peninsula, part of the journey was made by train and part on foot and several troops by boat and by motor truck. The march of the Indian National Army in many routes had to be undertaken through areas severally infested with Malaria. The Headquarters of the Provisional Government or Azad Hind and of the Indian Independence League moved to Rangoon soon after Netaji returned to the Burmese capital on 7th January, 1944, with the key members of his Cabinet.

The 4th Guerrilla Regiment formed out of picked men from Gandhi Brigade, Nehru Brigade and Azad Brigade was named Subhas Brigade by the Officers and other ranks. Netaji did not like this idea of christening the Brigade after him but the overwhelming demand of the INA officers and men was finally adhered to. This Brigade was ordered to move to Burma for assault under Lt. Col. (late Major General) Shah Nawaz Khan. The First Division under Lt. Col. (later Major General) M.Z.Kiani, consisting of the above three Guerrilla regiments, was ordered to proceed. The troops were given a great send-off at the Singapore railway station and grand
receptions at all other intermediate stations – Kuala Lumpur, Penang, Hedjai, Chumphon, Ye, Moulmein.

Since the movement of the Government and Army Headquarters from Rangoon, Netaji laid stress on total mobilization of men and materials and money for the successful prosecution of the War of Independence. A special committee – ‘Netaji Fund Committee’ was formed under the Chairmanship of Yellapah and Vice-Chairman M.S. Bashir. The Burmese Government under its leadership of Dr. Ba Maw, extended the fullest facilities for this work, and it is a wonder of history today how at the stirring call of Netaji, quite a many prominent individuals gave their all possessions and turned total mobilisators. ‘The most prominent single individual among these was Habib Sahib, who contributed over a crore and three lakhs of rupees in jewellery, cash and property at one time. At that time he also asked Netaji that in return for all these, which even include his cars, he wanted two things from him:

1. A pair of Khaki uniforms which he would wear henceforth;
2. Work to be given to him so that he might devote all his time to the Movement. Whole concerns... put at the disposal of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind, the most famous amongst these were the Zijawadi Estates... B. Ghose became a total mobilisator. He contributed all his material and the workshop, which were worth of a lakh rupees, and placed his services at the disposal of Netaji.... Yet another example of a magnificent donation was that of Nizami who contributed over 27 lakhs of rupees. Young and old; rich and poor, Indians of all provinces contribute
their utmost. The Burmese and the Japanese were greatly impressed by these contributions.\(^{23}\)

Three thousand soldiers of the Subhas Brigade, INA’s advance guard, were in the offensive; the Japanese strength in Burma was 2,30,000. On January 24, Netaji accepted two trial roles for it; the First Battalion of the I.N.A. was to form part of the army opposing the British West African Division in the Kaladan Valley, while the other two were to relieve the Jap-battalion in the routes over the Chin Hills.

Netaji stood face to face with his men and bade them a moving send off to the front on February 3, 1944:

“... There, there in the distance—beyond the river, beyond those jungles, beyond those hills, lies the promised land—the soil from which we sprang—the land to which we shall now return. Hark, India is calling—India’s metropolis Delhi is calling—Three hundred and eighty eight millions of our countrymen are calling. Blood is calling to blood. Get up, we have no time to lose. Take up your arms, There in front of you, is the road that our pioneers have built. We shall march along that road. We shall carve our way through the enemy’s ranks for if God wills, we shall die a martyr’s death. And in our last sleep we shall kiss the road that will bring our army to Delhi. The road to Delhi is the road to freedom,” “CHALO DELHI”.\(^{24}\)

On the eve of the movement of his army from Rangoon, Netaji warned his soldiers that where the question of India’s independence was concerned, they were to trust no one, not even the allies the Japanese, and that the surest guarantee against betrayal was their own armed might. He
said, "If ever you find the Japanese trying to establish any type of control over India, turn round and fight them as vigorously as you will fight the British."

The I.N.A. offensive in Arakan was launched on 4th February under Lt. Col. L.S. Misra. Troops of the Bahadur Group under the command of Misra, Sardar-e-jang and Major Mehar Das, Sardar-e-Jang, attacked the 7th Indian Division of the British Army in the Mayu Valley and pushed them back. The troops fought fearlessly. They tried to win over as many Indian troops as possible from the Indo-British army but their own food-shortage compelled them to release the prisoners. Ultimately the 7th Division of the British Imperial Army was completely besieged and annihilated. Buthiadong, the strong advance base of the enemy was occupied Lt. Hari Singh from Haryana won the Sher-e-Hind medal in the sector for his extraordinary gallantry—he put to death seven British soldiers single-handed.

A section of the troops of the 1st Brigade moved upto Prome from Rangoon under Major Raturi, Sardar-e-Jang. On receipt of the intelligence that the West African Division of the British Army was trying to crossover from the western bank of the Kaladan river to its east bank, Major Raturi marched forward and attacked the enemy. After a fierce hand-to-hand fight during the night, the enemy fled and while trying to recross the river, they lost a number of boats at the hand of the I.N.A. About a dozen soldiers, who were interviewed by me said that they participated in this campaign. With the arrival of the Japanese contingents, they then occupied Paletwa and, later, Daletine. And only 40 miles off from the place to the west, there lay the frontier of India—the dreamland! Mowdak, the nearest
British post. Major Raturi, almost without rest, stormed a surprise night attack forcing the enemy to flee away, leaving behind a handsome quantity of store including rations for his contingents to capture and enjoy.

Netaji called this success in the Arakan front as an 'active and important' piece of endeavour. He issued the Special Order of the Day on 9th February: “The eyes of the whole world are focused on the Arakan Front where events of far-reaching consequences are taking place to day. The glorious and brilliant actions of the brave units of Azad Hind Force, working in close concert with the forces of the Imperial Nippon Army have helped to foil all attempts by the Anglo-American forces to start a counter-offensive in this sector.....

“Our long awaited march to Delhi has begun and with grit and determination, we shall continue that march until the tri-colour National Flag that is flying over Arakan mountains is hoisted over the Viceregal lodge......... Comrades, Officers and men of India's Army of Liberation, let there be one solemn resolve in our hearts — ‘Either Liberty or Death’. And let there be but one slogan on your lips — ‘Onward to Delhi’.

The British government in India was of the view that Japanese had fifteen more than they can chew, and there was no possibility of Japanese invasion in the Indo-Burma area. The history, rather the irony of history as it stands, is like this. Sir Winston Churchill, the Prime Minister and W. Minister of Britain, with his Army Chief Ismey, communicated to General Sir William Slim, the Supreme Commander of the Eastern theatre, that there was no possibility of Japanese invasion in the Burma area through the 700-mile Anglo-American war-zone. When General Slim w
explaining this with great satisfaction before his subordinates Lt. General Mutaguchi’s order by that time, had reached General Kawabe to march forward with the I.N.A. over Kohima and Imphal, and Netaji Proclaiming, ‘Liberty or death,’ ‘Onward to Delhi,’ The British allied forces got panicky at this information, and a scuffle ensued between the British and the American commanders, Mountbatten being charged for his delay in his Burma campaign.” He flew to Delhi, London was contacted for immediate supply of Air Crafts from the main war front of China. The British authorities who sneered at the I.N.A. as the propagandists now become bewildered at the task of having to rescue, 1,50,000 troops of their allied Army besieged by the Indian National Army and the Japanese in Imphal, It is the genius of Netaji Bose – his excellent feat of political diplomacy and marvellous understanding of the international war-situation that forced both the Japanese and the Anglo-American blocks to get involved in fierce battle in the Eastern gate of India paving way for opening the road to Delhi for the liberation of India. In a word, it may be said that the Imphal campaign was the master-stroke of Netaji, and the glorious battles his I.N.A. battled upheld India’s image before the world for friends and foes alike. The valiant men of the Indian National Army turned wild with joy and jubilation when they set their feet on the sacred soil of their Motherland. They threw themselves prostrated on the ground and kissed the soil, for the liberation of which, they staked their lives. They went on shouting with joy and sang their National Anthem, they composed for Azad Hind Fauj. The ‘Bahadur Group’ passed through Tiddim and Morang, went on as far as Bishenpur. Col. S.A. Malik, the Commander of
this unit received enthusiastic welcome and support of the people of Manipur. A good number of British-Indian troops surrendered, and for the splendid job done in the area, Netaji awarded Col. Malik, the honour of *Sardar-e-Jang*.27

It is hard to assess in full, the great morale of the I.N.A. officers and men on the field of battle. Innumerable instances of bravery and heroism are there. A few of these should be related here. Heroism was displayed by Captain Rao, Lt. Mansukh Lal and Lt. Ajaib Singh, Lt. Hari Ram, Lt. Duni Chand in successfully defending their Regimental Headquarters under Col. I.G., Kiani of the Gandhi Regiment. They beat back, against heavy odds, the determined attacks of the enemy most gloriously. ‘Lt. Mankush Lal’, records Major General A.C. Chatterjee, ‘had already thirteen bullet wounds on his body when he made the brilliant final charge with his men to capture the hill position on which depended the safety of the Regimental Headquarter. In this battle, 600 men of the Azad Hind Fauz successfully battled against nearly 3,000 soldiers of the British who had superior arms and equipment.’

It is on record, that on account of the shortage of rations, the I.N.A., troops had to take to cooking grass, roots and leaves of some trees that were available. Almost all the persons who were interviewed subscribed to these types of situations and added that the charismatic personality of Subhas and their love for freedom made them to carry on their sacrifices. The Nagas and the Cacharis who hated the British and the Japanese alike gave the Azad Hind men every possible help with food despite their own scarcity.
There was complete lack of transport for rice-bags, ammunition and other materials. All these had to be carried on the back of the soldiers for 10 to 15 miles on the mountains and jungle path, which resulted—not only in the men breaking down with fatigue but a large number of them had to be withdrawn from the fighting lines. This had been disheartening. The Japanese Command had promised telephones or wireless communication facilities but they failed to supply them in many sectors. Runners had to be dispatched for 30 to 40 miles to communicate and back with urgent messages of war. Lt. Col. Fujiwara made profuse apologies for the lack of rations and absence of suitable transport and promised his utmost to remedy the situation. In spite of all these terrible adversaries in the front, the INA troops displayed exemplary heroism and an almost inexplicable spirit of nationalism with their sacrifices.

Official Diary of the Achievements of the INA in the Imphal Campaign:

Feb. 3, 1944 – Sri S.A. Ayar, publicity and propaganda Minister announced that preparations had been complete for an attack.

Feb. 4, 1944 – The INA in coordination with the Japanese Forces attacked the enemy’s forces at Buthidang and captured Taung Bazar.

Feb. 5, 1944 – Enemy’s forces retreat from Buthidang – are severally bombed. The INA and Japanese Forces advance along the Eastern Bank of Mayo river Vizigapatam bombed.

Feb. 12, 1944 – The VII and V Divisions of the 14th British Army were completely routed. The total loss of the VII division amounted to
10,000 killed or made prisoners of war. Many Indian soldiers of the British Army and came over to the Indian National Army.

Feb. 21, 1944 – The Headquarters of the Supreme Council of the Azad Hind Fauj issued its first communiqué as follow:

“Latest information received from the Arakan front reporting further successes achieved by our units, shows that the Indian National Army participating in the operations in the Akyab district are pushing into enemy positions in cooperation with the main forces of the Nippon Army.”

“Meanwhile, advance units of the Indian National Army, who in concert with the Nippon forces are now engaged in cutting off the enemy’s retreat near Nyaunggyang, have destroyed bridges in that area and have advanced into the Bawli Bazaar district where they are now operating.”

“Another unit of the Indian National Army, which has been pushing forward along the Mayu River since the commencement of operations, has succeeded in bringing over to our side an Indian unit of the British Indian Army. The number of officers and soldiers of this unit will not be disclosed for the time being.

“The same Indian National Army unit has penetrated into the Taung Bazar area, from where it is now pushing forward into the enemy’s rear and is steadily gaining the desired war result.”

The battle for Imphal, important enemy base and capital of the State of Manipur, reached its decisive stage, following the capture by Indian forces of the two vital centres, Ukhrul and Sanghak. These places formed a vital junction in the defence of Imphal and the British loss of these important centres had rendered it virtually impossible for them to hold out
at Imphal for any length of time. The frontline dispatches stated that Indian forces were within fifteen miles of Imphal.

On March 19, 1944 came the sensational and joyful news that the Indian National Army had captured Tiddum, crossed the Indo-Burma frontier and were now on the Indian soil.

March 21 – I.N.A. captured Toangzan and Hata Boko Aerodrome at Arakan Front.

March 22 – I.N.A. marches to Manipur enroute Tamu in Kaba valley.

March 23 – I.N.A. captured Viddak in Kaba valley. 1,000 enemy soldiers killed.

March 24 – I.N.A. reached Tamu-Imphal Aerodrome bombed.

March 25 – INA 30 miles off Imphal – Tiddam-Imphal road cut off – INA gaining ground at Tiddan Tamu and Imphal.

March 26 – INA Tiddam captured – 10,000 soldiers of 17th Division besieged – 15th division in Arakan Front bombed. – The battle of Imphal begins.

March 27 – 1,000 motor lorries captured in Central Sector – INA crosses Chindwan river.

March 28 - Battle for Kohima begins.

March 29 – Nikkala Aerodrome captured – Chittagong bombed.

March 30 – Sangshal captured – Ukhsal and Palel-Tamu Road cut off.

March 31 – Imphal-Kohima road cut off – 2,700 enemy soldiers killed and 760 made prisoners of war at the South Indo-Burma Front.
April 1 – fierce fighting near Imphal. INA captures a ration depot in the west of Mayo river.

April 2 – INA only seven miles off Imphal.

April 3 – Imphal-Kohima road captured.

April 4 – Mavilia, Tamu and Serikung captured. Another Cantonment 30 Kilometres off Imphal captured.

April 7 – Assam-Bengal Railway threatened – Sylcher bombed.

April 8 – Kohima Fort and a cantonment over Dimapur-Kohima road captured.

April 9 – Fierce battle around Dimarpur. Encirclement around Imphal tightens.

April 12 – Sebong, Chemol, Tinupur and Chirachenpur forts captured.

April 13 – Imphal attacked from many sides. Tishanki Cantt. on Imphal Toangyan road captured. INA reach Moreh.

April 15 – Parphema Cantt over Kohima-Dimapur road destroyed – INA 15 kilometres off Dimapur –Imphal-Hochang Road cut off- Bishanpur over Imphal-Sylcher road attacked.

April 16 – Enemy –forces in Imphal cut off. Nichu Garh situated 10 kilometres off south west of Dimapur captured.

April 17 – Hill no. 3424 around Imphal and hill NO. 3449 to the South-East of Pangang Poke captured. Mathingiang Cantt. Captured.

April 18 – Imphal attacked from all sides. INA penetrated through north fortifications of the enemy.

April 19 – Tignali captured.
April 20 - The Fourth British Army retreating. INA forces swiftly tightening the encirclement around Imphal.

April 22 - Battle for Imphal raging fiercely.

April 23 – Hill NO. 461 on Kohima sector, Palativa, Tignapur and Moirang captured.

April 24 – Imphal bombed-Hills to the south of Bishanpur captured.

April 25 – 28 – Shenom and Sebom posts captured.

April 29 – Hill no. 4080-20 kilometer south-east off Imphal captured.

April 30 – Phalong near Imphal captured. INA reaches near Kingchop.

May 1-2 – Palel attacked – A post 7 kilometres off Palel captured.

May 4 – Hill no. 3735 near Imphal captured. Langel Post 10 kilometres south-east of Palel captured. On the Boothidaung Front, the main strength of the INA units crossed the Mayu river night and immediately launched a fierce offensive completely repulsing the enemy in that sector. The enemy forces on the Maungdan front entirely isolated from the Boothidaung sector, frantically retreated to rear positions.

May 7 – Enemy fortifications south of Imphal bombed.

May 8 – Lord Mountbatton’s Headquarters announce the capture of Boothidang by INA.

May 12 - Imphal and Cox bazar heavily bombed, general attack on Mayu, Many hills in the vicinity of Boothidang captured.

May 13 - Imphal bombed. Enemy’s tanks and lorries over Kohima-Dimapur road bombed.
May 15-16 – Fierce attacks on Bishanpur.
May 17 - Hills on 55 and 74 on Mayo Front captured.
May 18 – Bishanpur bombed – The enemy defeated in Imal and Lima Kong valley to the north Imphal.
May 20 - Besiege of Imphal tightens.
May 21 - Fierce battle over Bishanpur.
May 22 – Ukhral road completely in our hands – Enemy’s position weak on Palel Front.
May 23 – 1275 enemy soldiers killed on Boothidang Front.
May 24 – Fierce fighting around Imphal – Esham captured.
May 26 – Some part of Palel Front destroyed.
May 31 – Imphal bombed – INA penetrates into south-east of Kohima.

June 1 – The monsoon rains begin.
June 3 – A village to south of Tignapur captured – Fierce battle on Kohima front.
June 4 – INA captures a cantonment to the South-west of Palel.
June 13 – The enemy’s 20th Division on Palel front forced to retreat.
June 14 – INA reaches Mythin Kanu,
June 16 - Kunjala and hill No. 4605 over Palel Front captured.
June 17 – Khangjol captured.

The monsoon deluge now flooded the communication and supply routes of the INA on the front. Since it started operations in February
1944, the Indian National Army was halted for the first time in July. Breakdown of transport and supply conditions forced it to fall back. During the five months of fierce fighting; the Indian National Army had given ample proof of their superior fighting qualities, their courage and unshakable devotion to duty. They encountered the enemy’s numerically superior and better equipped forces successfully and gave them crushing defeats on various fronts.

Heroes and Heroic Deeds of INA – With Special Reference to Participation from Haryana

According to Haryana Government state archives thousands of officers and men participated in I.N.A. campaigns. Almost persons from every regions of India participated in I.N.A. campaigns. But the number of persons from north i.e. Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan and Western part of Uttar Pradesh was greater. In the following pages we shall study some heroic deeds during this campaigns with special reference to participation from Haryana.

(1) It was a night of April 1944, when in Kaladan sector, Naik Mola Singh S/o Sh. Sadasukh, Kheri Ramgarh, Haryana unit was marching to attack a powerful centre of the enemy on a hill. During the attack, it so happened, that an enemy machine gun started firing from very close quarters.

It was clear as day, that in order to achieve our objective, the unit should invariably cheek this open fire. And this hard job necessitated a man’s sacrifice. Fortunately time selected it’s own hero.
Naik Molar Singh, determined as he was to demolish the enemy post, not caring for his own life rushed to charge the post all alone. And he went on till he had stopped the machine-gun; but his chest was, by then no less than a sieve, - every inch of it pierced by enemy-bullets. The stake of his life got his unit their objective. But he could not survive this victory.

On his expiry he was awarded the much coveted “Shahid-i-Bharat” medal by Netaji.

When Netaji was at Berlin, he organized a “Free India Legion” there in Europe. After the formation of the Indian National Army and Free India Government, this European Legion was affiliated to the INA. The contingents of INA in collaboration with the German forces, fought to their last the various battles of Europe.

We were always in touch with the valiant deeds that our courageous men displayed there. Here is one of the many incidents:-

Mohd. Rashid, a 19 years young man, was posted with an anti-tank gun on the roadside at a certain place in France. When the American Armoured cars passed by him, he at once opened fire. The enemy retaliated with thundering volleys. But despite that, he never budged an inch and rendered many enemy armoured cars unserviceable, which led the enemy to retrace their steps.

(2) On the 18th of May 1944, a unit of the INA was piqueting a hill in the central sector of the Indo-Burma frontier of those on duty, Naik Kehar Singh S/o Sh. Kali Ram V.P.O. Matan, Haryana was one. On an early morning the enemy made an unprecedented pre-planned attack on our picquet.
One of our comrades, who was working a light machine-gun against the enemy was fatally wounded by enemy fire. He signalled to comrades to come and occupy his machine-gun. But the man who was reliving him had already been shot dead by enemy fire. Naik Kehar Singh was witnessing all this from a short distance. He made a spontaneous decision.

The enemy was firing uninterruptedly. But caring not for his own safety, he rushed through the pouring bullets to occupy the machine-gun post. By the time he reached the post, the enemy had approached him to close as ten yards. With a smile, on his lips, Kehar Singh picked up machine gun and resting it against his hip opened fire on the enemy who were shooting at him with a Tommy gun.

Neglecting the enemy fire, Naik Kehar Singh went on working his own machine gun, so much so, that the enemy had to retreat. At this he took the machine gun in position and went on firing to push the enemy back into complete retreat.

This unparalleled bravery and execution of duty was honoured Netaji with the ‘Sher-i-Hind’ title.

(3) Ranjit Singh was a Havildar in No. I Bahadur Group. One day, he was ordered to go from Haka to Falam and there, propagate the cause of INA by conversion in the British Indian Army.

According to orders, he reached Falam, but the enemy had been previously informed about him and one of their commanders was already aware of that he was to do. He posted 26 English privates to go and arrest Ranjit Singh.
The patrol of 26 white men, surrounded Ranjit Singh from all the sides and bid him raise his hands. The valiant soldier of INA laughed at them with a sneer and altogether refused to raise his hands. It was a test for him—one against twenty-six. At once he set his Tommy gun and opened fire on them.

He killed most and wounded many others out of them, but the simultaneous fire from 26 guns could not let him save his own life. He died in harness, and never humiliated his conscience for a while, lest he should bring a bad name for his motherland—India. He not only die a Vailliant’s death, but also proved the cause of death for many of his country’s enemy.

Netaji, at his brave death for the cause of Freedom, bestowed upon him the honour of “Shahide Bharat” and “Tamghae Shatru Nash Class I”.

On 15th March, a unit of Nippon army was lying in ambush on the Tiddam Imphal-Road.

A convoy of some British lorries passed that way. When Japanese fired on them, then the enemy drivers leaving their lorries behind, took to their heels. S.O. Hari Singh S/o Sh. Tek Ram, Village Pinana who was with the Japanese, made a good defence line of thee lorries on the road, though the enemy was noticing all this. In addition to this S.O. Hari Singh managed to bring one full ration lorry to our side, although he was being fired on all along heavily.

In April, S.O. Hari Singh was entrusted with propaganda work in the Indian army. When he was about three hundred yards away from the enemy lines, he hoisted the Tricolour flag. Along with this, shouts of
Inquilab Zindabad – Azad Hind Zindabad and march onward to Delhi were raised and he pierced the enemy lines with great stubbornness.

As soon as he entered the enemy lines, he absorbed the Indian soldiers in a talk about the INA and gave them a delightful lecture on INA and the movement of Independence.

The soldiers there, were greatly impressed by his lecture and came to know something about INA with the result that a unit of Madras Sweepers and Miners joined us.

Afterwards, during military activity, S.O. Hari Singh was sent on a special mission along with five soldiers. But unfortunately his party was encircled by an enemy full unit. This small party of INA fought to the last with the enemy, when they had no ammunitions then, they ran away very cleverly after breaking the enemy’s lines.

In all military activities, S.O. Hari Singh’s unit did remarkable work as regards propaganda work, and patrolling of enemy lines.

Netaji awarded him “Sher-i-Hind”

In the month of May, a most important piquet of ours was on duty on a hill in the Centre Sector. 2/Lt. Ajaib Singh was its Commander and the others in the piquet were Pokermal, Prithwi Singh and Mange Ram from Haryana. One evening a Highlander regiment of the enemy attacked our piquet under the cover of fire from artillery, machine guns and mortars. The enemy was numerically ten times stronger. But this brave leader acted as if there was nothing to be afraid of. The piquet retaliated with extraordinary calmness and retaliated back. 2/Lt. Ajaib Singh went from post to post exhorting his men to muster courage. The highlanders tried to
annihilate the whole piquet, but their attempt was foiled by the strategy of S. Ajaib Singh and after a heavy loss, were forced to fall back. This courageous move of S. Ajaib Singh’s piquet saved our main force from the attack of the enemy.

2/Ltd. Ajaib Singh was honoured with the title of ‘Sardar-i-Jang’ by Netaji.

(6) It was flat stretch of land without any cover either from view or from fire, except a shallow dry pond, near which three roads of great importance met. Four miles North-West of this point was a Hill 1423 feet high, beyond which the enemy Artillery was located so as to cover the road junction and the area south of it, the occupation of which would affect the entire plan of operations.

At a key point like this, was placed a company of the Azad Hind Fauj, under the command of 2/Lt. Gian Singh Bisht trained at the Officers Training School, A.H.F. The company was only 98 strong. They had no weapons of defence or offence, apart from two A/TK mines. Their orders were to check any enemy advance at all costs.

They remained in that position for two days, but the enemy dared not advance. Then on 16th of March 1945, starting early morning, hostile Fighting Planes bombed and machine gunned their positions, until about 11 a.m. Having got rid of all the load they had, the aeroplanes went away.

Then enemy guns from behind the Hill started registering, and behind this barrage of artillery-fire advanced a column of motorized infantry consisting of 18 tanks, 11 armoured cars and 70 trucks. Half of this column made its way, straight towards the pond, where two Forward
Platoons of the Company were being thrown out of the armoured fighting vehicles, but this would not frighten our boys. They waited in their trenches for the infantry to debuss. Tanks and armoured cars like steel monsters, creating hell with their fire-power, approached so close, that they started charging on to our trenches, so as to crush and cripple our men under this heavy weight. Two mines were thrown in their way, which unluckily did not burst, but they caused monsters to stop, which having stopped, became stationary pill boxes, oozing out most inhuman forms of killing materials.

There was no communication between this post and Battalion Headquarters. When 2/Ltd. Gian Singh appreciated that their rifle-fire was no match to the enemy's mortars, machine-guns, light automatics and hand grenades, and their stay in trenches meant certain death or captivity with no loss to the enemy, he ordered "charge." Leading the assault, he shouted slogans of "Netaji Ki Jai", "Inquilab Zindabad," Azad Hindostan Zindabad," and "Chalo Delhi". All the men responded to the slogans, which echoed above the enemy fire. This was the only support, which these heroes had against the superior armament of the enemy. In the name of India and Indian Independence, they charged into the enemy trucks. The enemy immediately debussed. Hand to hand fighting ensued, which lasted for full two hours. But our heroes would not give in. Forty of them sacrificed their lives after killing more than their equal number of the enemy. About half of them were from Haryana. This came to my knowledge when I interviewed persons who had participated in I.N.A.
Just then, 2/Lt. Gian Singh called forward his 3rd. Platoon commander, 2/Lt. Ram Singh S/o Laxman Singh, Village Sunderpur, Haryana and was giving out orders, when a bullet struck on his head and he fell down, never to give out orders again. 2/Lt. Ram Singh then collected the remnants of the company and reorganized.

2/Lieut. Gian Singh Bisht used to tell his men that he would die with them; he fulfilled his promise and remained their comrade in life and death. This was a glorious deed, of which the history will remain witness as long as there is world. 2/Lt. Gian Singh and his men lived up to the ideas of our Great Leader – the Netaji – and have laid down their lives, fighting by their posts to build up a tradition for us to follow. In free India, the spirit of these heroes, who knew no defeat will be worshipped for generations to come and will inspire the future sons of India to live up to such high ideals.

(7) In the Central Sector one o four piquets was guarding our columns. In this piquet Naik Indar Singh and sepoy Diwan Singh S/o Sh.Karan Singh Vill. Khanda, Haryana were on duty at one place. They were not made out, until they came very near. Two soldiers of the enemy assaulted Diwan Singh, but the saved himself. He threw one of them down and pierced his bayonet through his body. The other soldier of the enemy wounded Diwan Singh on the right shoulder. Naik Indar Singh opened fire on the enemy with his Tommy gun. The enemy took to his heels. One of the soldiers was killed. After this Naik Indar Singh threw a Hand Grenade and another soldier of the enemy was done to death. Netaji awarded Sanad-I-Bahaduri to Naik Indar Singh and Sepoy Diwan Singh.
(8) During military work in the central sector, Naik Sultan Singh preached the British Indian Army in a very able way. But one day, he was arrested by the enemy and he was handed over to a British Indian Coy. He convinced the Indian commander of that Coy about our I.N.A. and Independence movement in such a way, that next day, when the soldiers of this unit became inclined towards I.N.A. not only Sultan Singh came our rank but he also brought four men, who were placed as guards on him. In addition to this that Coy Commander (Subedar) and his Coy men started propaganda work in British Army for the I.N.A.

In addition to above references, Haryana state archives gives the names of following officers, martyr in the field Lt. Nanak Chand (Kharkhoda) Lt. Prahlad Singh (Saria), Lt. Rati Ram (Baproda), Lt. Sohan Singh (Matan), Lt. Shiv Lal (Naya Bans), Lt. Ran Singh (Kharman), and Lt. Ranpat Singh (Sunaria). Magnificent role played by Col. G.S. Nagar 2IC of 3rd I.N.A. Division, Capt. Kanwal Singh (Dhakla) in Burma campaign at Popa. Maj. Prabhu Dayal at the Arakan front in Imphal campaign although he deserted I.N.A. later on and became a informer of the British Army. 2/Lt. Hari Ram in the battle of Meiktila, Capt. Chander Bhan and Lt. Duni Chand of Nehru Brigade of the 2nd Division showed bravery in the battle of river Irrawady. Lt. Mangu Ram of Nehru Brigade showed bravery at Meiktila and Capt. Bagri showed the greatest valour and bravery in the Popa engagements.
The Imphal Campaign - Analysis

Subhas Chander Bose, the Supreme Commander of I.N.A. was monitoring the activities of his forces which were bleeding on the battle front, along with this he wished that the Indians in India should also be acquainted with the activities of I.N.A. He also wished that when the I.N.A. crosses into Indian territory, the people of India should rise in rebellion. Subhas want to clarify his stand to the Congress leadership especially Mahatma Gandhi to achieve this he delivered many speeches from Azad Hind Radio:

On 4th July 1944, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose delivered a speech in Burma, the parallel of which can, perhaps, never be heard from the mouth of any warlord or statesman. While reminding his earlier demand of “Total Mobilization” and satisfactory response, he received thereby, he now demanded of blood. He stressed that, he had redeemed his pledge by giving a “Second Front”. But “men, money and material cannot by themselves bring victory or freedom. We must have the motive-power that will inspire us to brave deeds and heroic exploits”.

In the concluding lines of his speech Netaji said:

“We should have but one desire today – the desire to die so that Indian may live – the desire to face a martyr’s death, so that the path to freedom may be paved with the martyr’s death, so that the path of freedom may be paved with the martyr’s blood. Friends! My Comrades in the War of Liberation! To-day I demand of you Blood. It is blood alone that can avenge the blood that the enemy has split. It is blood alone can that pay the price of freedom. Give me blood and I promise you freedom.”
On his message to Gandhiji on 6th July '44, what Netaji said is an evidence of the greatness of head and heart, he possessed. He said, the Provisional Government has, as its one objective, the liberation of Indian from the British yoke, through an armed struggle. Once our enemies are expelled from India, peace and order is established, the mission of the Provisional Government will be over. The only reward that we desire for our efforts, for our suffering and for our sacrifice is the freedom of our motherland. There are many among us who would like to retire from the political field, once India is free. Nobody would be more happy than ourselves, if by any chance our countrymen at home should succeed… or if by any chance, the British Government accepts your, ‘Quit India’ Resolution and gives effect to it…… Troops of the Azad Hind Fauj are now fighting bravely on the soil of India, and in spite of all difficulty and hardship they are pushing forward slowly and steadily…

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

The allied Commanders who participated in the Imphal campaign also give the first hand information regarding the events strategies related to this campaign, which are highly objective and are critically analysed. General Sir William Slim, Commanding the 14th Army of the British regiment admitted in his memoirs that” “the Allied commanders were dreading an attack on Dimapur in Assam virtually undefended. According to him, if the Commander of the Japanese 31st. Division, had left a detachment to mask Kohima, and with the rest of his Division, thrust
violently on Dimapur, the result would have been a staggering blow to the 14th Army,” When asked to comment on Slim’s account. Lt. General Mutaguchi submitted inter alia, “My original plan submitted to the Singapore Command... was rejected. The 31st Division was specially instructed to clear Kohima of the enemy and converge on to Imphal: Well had Sato (Commanding General of the 31st Division) been a more flexible and imaginative man, he might have done what Slim dreaded, when he saw British troops stampeding in terror and panic towards Dimapur.........
We at Maymyo or Singapore simply failed to imagine that Dimapur was undefended.”

Lord Wavell, his recorder in his Diary: “........ They had cut the road from Imphal to Kohima leading to the railway at Dimapur, were threatening to break through at Kohima and cut the railway itself, and had hemmed into a narrow area around the town of Imphal the three British Indian Divisions that were originally holding this front and a fourth that was flown in as a reinforcement from Arakan. For many weeks the position was critical........”

The British position in India was really critical, and Comilla, the then Command Headquarters in the North Eastern frontier warned about the situation. Wavell, his Army Chiefs and the European officials hurried to make a plan of disciplined and orderly evacuation’ so that the blunders of Indonesia, Malaya, Singapore and Burma were not repeated. Right from Calcutta to Bombay, secret arrangements were completed for evacuating European officers and civilians and all the white military personnel. ... railway trains and transport were meticulously earmarked. Temporary
accommodation was reserved family-wise and regiment-wise in Fort William, in order to fortresses and cantonments an din major cities.... Secret orders were issued to demolish or destroy everything of military value to the enemy from the borders of Burma to Bombay, including factories, ammunition dumps and stores.........”. But in spite of the greatest secrecy of the “OPERATION ARROW” – the evacuation programme was leaked our making the people alarmed. It disclosed that, the preparation for resistance to ‘Delhi March’ was only a cover for insuring a safe and orderly evacuation by the British.”32

The officers of the Gandhi Brigade and Subhas Brigade of the INA thrust heavily. They created terror in the rank and file of the Allied Army. They besieged Imphal with 1,65,000 Anglo American troops entrapped and the Allies had now but one alternative—surrender, or fight-back to the wall provided there was Air-borne supply of rations and ammunition. Mountbatten had his Waterloo.

The rations of the armed forces of the Allies were now cut to 50% so as to defend themselves against the INA – Japanese at least for 25 days. Lt. General J. W. Stilwell, the Chief of Staff to Chiang Kai Shek, then Commander of the US-Chinese forces in India and Burma, met Mountbatten in the warfront. Mountbatten flew to Delhi, signalled London and Washington and procured 30 Dakotas from China. But, by that time, the situation was much aggravated. 1700 British troops, with Col. Wingate, killed in the air crash, had been buried in Imphal. General Slim pressed for 100 planes, and Churchill and Roosevelt had to deploy as good as 79 planes from Normandy in Italy, and place them at the disposal of
Mountbatten in Imphal. Thus, the courage, the spirit and presence of mind Mountbatten displayed in distress, saved them for two years more from the dismemberment of the Empire, his forefathers founded two centuries ago.

The INA had then no –Air-umbrella. The British Air Force, from the rear of the Indo-Japanese barricades, supplied the war-provisions of every dimension, all air-borne. During the siege of 80 days, Manipur was shut from the rest of the world. Under Air Vice-Marshal Vincent Stanley, 221 Group, R.A.F. with 19 Squadrons and with 20 U.S.A. Commando flying 758 sorties for continuous 10 days, passed the ordeal of the seize. Japan by that time lost 250 out of 300 Air crafts, their total strength in the Burma front\(^{33}\) and had nothing to give cover in Imphal.

The enemy sent men and materials to its defensive forces passing over our encircling armies near Imphal at great speed by air. Looking up these planes with bloodless eyes our soldiers clenched their fists in desperate hatred. In this way such places near Imphal which has no defences at all at the beginning of the war were gradually fortified by the enemy.\(^{34}\)

Even with this, Mountbatten dreaded Netaji’s charisma so much that, he placed his 3\(^{rd}\) Indian Division face to face with INA. It was Indian only in name and nomenclature. In reality, the 3\(^{rd}\) Indian Division of the British Army which had 24 Battalions in the forward area, had mostly the English, Nigerian and even Burmese soldiers, but no Indians, as Mountbatten apprehended that they would leave the British side and join the INA.\(^{35}\) When the head of the Japanese War Council announced a halt to the Imphal offensive, Netaji, notwithstanding his sympathy with this, wanted
to keep INA troops near the Indian border and announced that his forces would not withdraw further south of Mandalay. The stern reality, of course, did not sympathise with his aspirations.

The INA and the Japanese forces wanted to strangle the British offensive before it could materialize or gather adequate strength, and operations has been taken up simultaneously in both the sectors. Mountbatten, however, was not daunted and adopted a strategy which proved successful. He subsequently recorded that: “the Japanese High Command played into our hands by staging an all-out offensive. It was most fortunate that at this stage the enemy should choose to fight us on our own ground near our own bases, in the only areas where our existing lines of communication could adequately support us in a large-scale campaign, and when our air bases were sufficiently near the front to enable our supply to be undertake”. But at one stage the situation had become extremely dangerous for the British, and the INA and the Japanese Army were very near success at Imphal.36

The collapse of the operation come with the advent of the rainy season. When the orders for withdrawal were issued on 16th July, 1944, the INA reluctantly withdrew to Mandalay but decided to reorganise itself for a renewed attack in September, after the monsoon.37 In fact, the operation was halted not only because of the monsoons but also due to the deteriorating position of the Japanese forces in other theatres of war. The war situation in the Pacific had become decidedly unfavourable to Japan, and it was obliged to focus its entire attention on the defence of the homeland. After the retreat, it was no longer possible for the INA or the
Japanese forces to take up the counter-attack for two fundamental reasons: first, the British war machine at the frontier had become too powerful to be faced; and second, the Americans had entered the war in a big way and had challenged the might of Japan. With pressing problems of their own, the Japanese abandoned the campaign, and the INA hope to free India receded into the background. In the opinion of the Japanese Foreign Minister, the well-begun Imphal campaign “petered out” because it was ill devised."38

As usual, Subhas was optimistic and told Kawabe when the later discussed with him the war situation at Imphal that, “though the Japanese Army had given up the operation”, the INA would continue it. He was not willing to accept defeat and his revolutionary enthusiasm was shared by many of the INA commanders, who were ready to die in the battlefield rather than retreating. But Subhas had his own plans. His idea was not to give a crushing military defeat to the British, but to occupy some area, which, he thought, would inspire the Indians all over the country to rise against the British. But all this was dependent if Imphal had fallen into Japanese hands. The failure of the campaign gave a serious blow to the success of Subhas plan to liberate India. He reluctantly admitted that the situation was not favourable to the Axis powers, but stressed that in a war of such magnitude “no side can have uninterrupted victory.” What was required to win the war was “great tenacity and will power”. This he said, the INA had in plenty. To keep up the morale of the army, he declared in the special order of the day that “as soon as our preparations are complete, we shall launch a mighty offensive against our enemies once again”.

206
Towards the end of October 1944, he announced the formation of the War Council with eleven members, seven being from the military.

The failure of the Imphal campaign was attributed to many causes by the participants. Count Terauchi ascribes the defeat at Imphal to the Japanese lack of preparedness to make supplies to the front and “to the under-estimation of the enemy’s capacity of supply by Air.” According to others, it was dispersal rather than concentration of forces during the campaign which contributed to the failure. Giving the third reason for the Japanese defeat, a British report says that the Japanese made the “fatal mistake” of supposing that as soon as India was invaded there would be a nationalist revolution which would completely neutralize British and American military strength in India, thereby “leaving the field open for Bose’s puppet forces to fight for India”. The report goes on to say that both the Japanese and Bose were taken in by their own propaganda: “The whole abortive offensive seems to have been premised on the idea that Japanese occupation of any limb of Indian territory would be sufficient impetus for a whole scale revolution in India.” Towards the end the report adds that Subhas assured the Japanese of such a revolution and the latter believed him because of their “recollection of their successes” in French Indo-China, Thailand and Burma. The Japanese invasion of Manipur did not, however, produce the expected revolution. They had to fight a campaign for which they were not fully prepared. In consequence they were defeated.

Notwithstanding the defeat of the Japanese and the INA, the Indian Army Headquarters in a secret dispatch to London admitted that the results
of the Japanese offensive might have been disastrous if the Japanese and the INA had been able to establish "a solid foothold in the area" and finally in India; and that "the conquest of even a single Indian state by the Japanese would have widespread repercussions upon morale and politics". The dispatch, concluded that "the plain of Imphal was a prize whose capture by the Japanese might have altered the whole course of the war in Eastern and Southern Asia and influenced deeply the history of India and China.

The absolute air-control of the Allies, nearly paralysed the Japanese forces. The entire Japanese strategy and planning was foiled by the intervention of the Allied Air Force whose transport aircrafts, according to a report, of the Army Headquarters, "delivered over twenty-two thousand tons of supplies to the beleaguered garrison on the plain, flew reinforcements to the tune of well over twenty thousand men, a complete division included, (and) evacuated more than ten thousands causalities" during the Kohima siege. On the other hand the Japanese and the INA could get neither adequate supplies nor reinforcement from the rear-headquarters in Burma. As Fujiiwara, writes that:

"We failed to cut off the Wingate Airborne Davison that had been dropped in northern Burma – Supplies of manpower and ammunition from air and land were kept up at a high pitch and the British Indian 5th Division was flown to Imphal from Akyab."

The INA had to fight without air superiority and had carried with them only three weeks ration with hardly any hope of further supplies of food and ammunition. In contrast, the British Forces had been receiving
supplies when and where it wished, from the air, despite the fact that it was encircled by the Japanese forces. Despite inadequate weapons and equipment, the INA fought along with the Japanese, but it could not match the Anglo-American forces in the battlefield. Still the British conceded that "a measure of courage cannot be denied to the leaders of the INA in the frontline units, for they faced up-to-date British equipment, tanks, guns and aircrafts with rifles, bullock cart, and above all, with empty stomach." The exploits of the INA have been glorified by many of its members, but perhaps Fujiwara's assessment of the INA is the most balanced, though he admitted at the time of writing that it should not be taken as "a positive or accurate judgement". "As a revolutionary Army", he writes, "its morale was high as it was quite well organized; but the standard of its tactics, training and leadership was low" and "it lacked in particular offensive strength and tenacity." Further INA had no technological support, which forced it to go on the defensive. But he concedes that the revolutionary spirit, organization and discipline – which were generated first by Mohan Singh and nurtured by Subhas Bose, which were the very foundation of the INA – were maintained by the officers and men of the INA in the battlefield.

Perhaps the proper utilization and development of INA on account of the lack of trust and utilisation and deployment of INA on account of the lack of trust and confidence by the Japanese commanders was also responsible for the lukewarm response from the former. Kiani who fought on the front with the Japanese believes that "using the INA units badly in independent aggressive roles would, I think, had produced better
dividends. Merely protecting tanks of the Japanese formation was not a suitable role for a revolutionary army.43 The strength and weakness of the INA depended on the way it was deployed by the Japanese; in fact, in the whole Imphal Campaign the INA played a subsidiary role to the Japanese Army. The Japanese commanders were reluctant to employ INA in the front-line because of the fear of desertion. And desertions from the INA did occur. But, despite the desertions a Japanese officer, recorded that the INA soldiers were able to fight hand in hand with the Imperial Japanese Army, that the fighting spirit of the commanders was high, and that their endeavour to maintain the honour of the INA was extraordinary.

But the dilemma of the INA was that its fighting capacity, disposition and the fate were tied to the Japanese war machine; and it was entirely dependent on her for arms and equipment. The INA men were short of proper equipment, especially guns, and had no supplies to carry on fight. Besides, deployment in a piecemeal manner weakened their fighting strength. The INA was not a propaganda force but a combatant force, though it was given very few opportunities to play an offensive role. During the much distressing and difficult period of the Imphal operations about June and July 1944, the great majority of the INA answered the urgent appeals of Bose and followed the leadership of the superiors maintaining discipline and otherwise carrying out their respective duties. Even during retreat they overcame overwhelming difficulties and retreated in an extremely orderly fashion. This won for them the admiration even of the Japanese Army.44
This is further confirmed by Major Kaetsu, who in his interrogation testified that the INA soldiers “co-operated well with Japanese and their two Regiments engaged at Palel in 1944 fought well with little equipment”, he found their discipline “good beyond expectation, but as they were only equipped with rifles they were not a formidable force. The training of the rank and file was good, except that of recruits from Malaya and Burma.”

The strength of the INA lay in its devotion to the cause of India’s independence. The thoughts of winning a piece of their homeland back from the enemy was uppermost in its mind and almost all the INA soldiers went wild with joy when they crossed into India. Some even got down on the knees and kissed the earth. Two Japanese war correspondents who had accompanied the Indian forces were deeply moved when they saw the Indian soldiers bursting out with joy when they had the first glance of the mountains and rivers of their beloved motherland. The cries of Jai Hind, Jai Hind, rent the sky and reverberated in the enemy camp through dense jungles on the borderline.

**The Burma Campaign:**

Japan had believed that success in Imphal campaign would give them a relief as they were having a tough time in pacific, along with the victory would be a moral booster for the policy makers at home. The Imphal debacle made the allied forces aggressive on the other hand the Japanese and I.N.A. made a strategy to stop the allied forces on the right side of river Irrawady. So it was then planned to hold Irrawady river with two regiments of the 2nd INA Division. The going there was still tough. It was marshy all around. Earlier the Kaladan valley was almost abandoned
by the British leaving behind only a weak presence in the Mayu valley and Maungdaw a village on the sea coast. Except for only three Japanese infantry battalions, this sector was to be wholly manned by the INA. Two regiments of the 2nd Division were in Rangoon. They were expecting their heavy equipment to be there. In December itself West Africans because aggressive and were masters of the Mayu valley. Their next objective seemed to be lower Kaladan Valley. Akyab fell on 1st January 1945 and Myohaung on Kaladan river was threatened. In North-West Burma too, the British drove the Japanese right to the Irrawady river. About 75 kilometres north of Mandalay, the British forces crossed Irrawady at "Thabbeikkyin on January 14, 1945. General Slim surprised the defenders by his deceptive tactics by showing off in the north while his 14th Army concentrated in the south with a view to seizing Meiktila. On January 29, Colonel Gurbaksh Singh Dhillon was ordered to hold Nyaungu. He had a short notice but did establish himself in a sector of 12 miles. Dhillon was also surprised to learn that the enemy managed to establish a bridgehead close to his regimental area. The timely action by the INA obstructed the follow up and their landing craft was rendered useless. A little further to the north, another enemy battalion succeeded in capturing the eastern bank and it was followed by two other battalions. Dhillon had just about 1200 men with him and they were no match for the invaders. He withdrew to Kyaukpadaung on the road to Meiktila. With a view meeting the enemy halfway to Meiktila, 2nd INA Regiment under Colonel Prem K. Sahgal was sent to Mount Popa.
Actually, the campaign of Burma was of short duration, and barring what British military historians have written much later about the 14th Army’s operations in Burma, details of what happened on the other side of the firing line remain hard to find. Even twelve years later, Huge Toye who was a British Military Intelligence Officer covering the campaign in Burma wrote in his book on Netaji: “The story of the INA in the Japanese campaign in 1944 is long, intricate and closely interwoven with the actions of the Japanese regiments and divisions with which its soldiers campaigned. That story will one day be told.” Details of the INA’s fighting in Burma have been rendered even more obscure by neglect because the outcome of the campaign was never in doubt. Perhaps the only available sources are books written by Japanese authors including the one on Netaji prepared by the Japanese Foreign Ministry, diaries of military officers on the Japanese side and the firsthand accounts of the commanding officers of the INA units, notably Maj. General Shah Nawaz Khan, Col. P.K. Sahgal and Col. G.S. Dhillon. To these may be added captured military documents exhibited at the Red Fort trial at the end of the war.

Describing the disposition of troops which were to meet the British attack, Kazunori Kunizuka writes: “After defeat at Imphal the Japanese Army decided to withdraw from North Burma and to stop the enemy in the vicinity of Meiktila. The INA also mobilized the remaining forces and engaged the enemy in the vicinity of Mount Popa, west of Meiktila. The Japanese had no plan to take a determined stand at any place in the north like Mandalay. But the case of Meiktila which was about sixty miles to the...
south of Mandalay, was different. The I.N.A. planned to defend this unfortified town because of its strategic importance. It was an important railway junction as well as the meeting point of a number of roads. Besides, Meiktila was their biggest administrative centre for the management of supply and communication. Twenty miles to the west of Meiktila was Mount Popa, a table-land with an area of about 25 square miles rising steeply to a height of five thousand feet from sea level. Popa was important from the point of view of defence because it stood on an important road junction besides being a source of water supply from a number of sweet water fountains. Popa stood midway between Meiktila and the towns of Pagan and Nyaungu on the eastern bank of Irrawady where the British were planning to land after crossing the river.

By undertaking the defence of Mount Popa the INA was preparing to shield Meiktila from the enemy who were expected shortly to cross the river near Pagan and Nyaungu, twenty miles to the west of Mount Popa. Describing Netaji's object behind this disposition of troops, the Japanese Foreign Ministry's book says: "If possible, he (Bose) wanted to maintain the Indian units on the right bank of River Irrawady in order to cover the retreat of the Japanese forces. For this he wanted to proceed to the front and assume the command personally."49

The task of defending the vital sector on the river front west of Mount Popa was allotted to the Nehru Brigade commanded by Col. G.S. Dhillon whose memoirs/unpublished/provide details of the battles in this area. Although the Japanese Fifteenth Army was responsible for the overall strategy of the campaign, Dhillon was an independent commander in this
area where neither the Japanese nor the Burmese forces were present. There were, however, two junior officers, Garrison Commander, Major Ogawa and Liaison Officer Izumi, with a total of about 30 men under them. They functioned to maintain liaison between the 15th Army Command and the Nehru Brigade.

Dhillon after a short consultation with his battalion commander divided his troops, now hardly two thousand men, into three groups and posted them at Pagan, Nyaungu and a smaller force as reserve in the village or Tetthe which was made the Brigade headquarters, a little behind the towns of Pagan and Nyaungu. This done, a reconnaissance group was sent to the other bank of the river to report on the movement of the enemy, and Dhillon himself crossed side. Two lines of trenches were dug one close to the water and the other some distance away from the bank. The men hid themselves in the trench in the background area.

Pagan, which was known to have been the first object of the enemy's attention was being defended by about five hundred men of the 9th Battalion of the Nehru Brigade with Captain Chandra Bhan S/o Harman from Village Gochhi from Haryana as their commander. Ranged against him on the other bank was a vast army commanded, among others, by General Sir William Slim, Commander of the Fourteenth Army, and Lt. General Sir Frank Messervy, Commander of the 4 Corps and aided by a formidable air force consisting of six squadrons of Beaufighters and Mosquitoes and a detachment each of night-fighting Beaufighters and Spitfires as described in Lord Mountbatten's report as Supreme Commander of the South-Eastern Command.
The air force was to be used for what they called 'earthquake bombing' on the eastern bank of the Irrawady to eliminate resistance by the defenders. It was the biggest river-crossing operation in the history of the Second World War, Slim later wrote.

The first assault was expected on the night of the 13-14 February. In the evening one company of soldiers commanded by Lieutenant Duni Chand from Haryana, which had strayed away by mistake on the road to Pagan, had arrived to strengthen Chandra Bhan’s battalion. Shortly after midnight the enemy launched an assault across the river with its leading unit heading toward Duni Chand’s men who opened fire with all available weapons amidst slogans of “Chalo Delhi”, and ”Netaji Zindabad”.

The noise from the other side indicated panic. A loud voice heard shooting: “Oye Atma Singh! Come back, they are Delhi-Chalo-wallas!” The country boats used by the assault force were not easy to turn for the withdrawal. In trying to do so they exposed their sides to the defenders’ fire. “More than twenty of these boats”, writes Dhillon, “were sunk. Their casualties mounted, some due to our fire and others due to drowning and panic. The assault having failed, the enemy had to withdraw.”

The second attempt to cross the river by a bigger force was made shortly before dawn at a point opposite the town of Nyaungu, which is about five miles upstream from Pagan. Wiser after their first experience, the British India Army Command had decided not to send Indian troops to face the INA men. The assault force this time was a British regiment – the South Lancashires who used outboard motors and rubber boats. Colonel Dhillon has described the battle in the following words:
"From our side now, it was Hari Ram’s turn (7th Battalion) to receive the enemy. He and his troops, about 15 boys from Haryana were flowing with enthusiasm. Here we had the advantage of having the advancing enemy in full view when most vulnerable. To start with, contrary to strict instructions against opening fire too early, triggers were pressed when the enemy was yet beyond the range of fire. Though this early fire could cause no harm to the enemy, it did make his leading boats change their course which created disorder and confusion amongst them. Soon the machinegun belts got exhausted. By now the enemy had started aerial and artillery bombardment of our position. As our machinegun crew were recharging their belts, the enemy mistook our silence as having been caused by their artillery and air attack. They continued to advance ignoring our rifle fire.

"Meanwhile the darkness of the dawn was gone. The sun had flooded the waters of Irrawady with its golden rays. The British assaulting troop had advanced within five hundred yards from our trenches when our machineguns with fully charged belts sprang back into action. The assaulting troops got mown down like grass before a lawn-mower. Their fate was worse than that of the 89th Brigade at Pagan. Hundreds were killed or drowned, and even their Corps Commander Lt. General Masservy had to swim back to the other shore for life, discarding in the process all his clothes except the underpants. We estimated that they had suffered more than four hundred casualties. South Lancashire as a regiment had been put out of action. |Having failed, the enemy had no other choice but to retreat under a barrage of fire by the artillery and the air force."

52
As the tide was turning against I.N.A. Netaji wished to be on the battle front to boost the morale of his troops. Netaji left Rangoon on 18th Feb. 1945, for inspecting the situation by himself in the forward area. His actions on this occasion as an army leader shows up his real character in good light, which requires intense study both in its subjective and objective aspects. Subhas expressed his ideas:

"....I have been reading the history of the independence of Ireland since we left yesterday. Though all the determined fighters of that freedom struggle were killed, their spirit continued to live seventy or eighty years............. I am greatly inspired by that example. If the present situation continues it is difficult for Burma also to foresee its future. Therefore, here at this place I shall fight leading in the Ist Division and die. Being sure that the spirit of independence will live among Indians I shall wage the last decisive battle here....."53

The Japanese Commanding General and Major General Kiani were of the opinion that the situation in respect of both time and place must be quite different. But Netaji’s resolution was very firm – for the strength of spirit perhaps transcended the boundary of the ordinary sense of life and death and he had attained supreme realization. He would not listen to anything that might be perilous. In the conference that followed for several days, he took an oath from Major General Kiani that that the latter would defend the front allotted to him until death and only then return to Rangoon. Netaji had gone on inspecting troops throughout the day without any rest. He himself would personally go and order for the change or repairing of the defective parts of the vehicles, in which members of the
women regiment had moved. He joined his troops and walked for day
together, sometimes to come out and offer his own food to the Japanese
soldiers. This was entirely an unknown and unthought of experience for th
Japanese officers to observe the Supreme Commander in this form of
action.

Elated and renewed confidence, Netaji inspected the veterans of th
Imphal campaign, at Pyinmana, and pressed on the Meiktila with Majc
General Shah Nawaz Khan. It has been seen that the reorganized 15
Division of the Japanese Army was ordered to oppose the British along
with Irrawady river, and now Netaji, with all enthusiasm, offered his Fir:
Division of the INA for support of the 15\textsuperscript{th} Division. A Meiktila, th
Japanese were all in confusion. The British forces, the IV Corpso c
Mountbatten began landing at Akyab, Burma. This place had a soci-
significance for Netaji, for his original plan was to launch his militar
assault from Akyab via Chittagong.

Now the British advance was sharp. Shah Nawaz discovered the
capture of Lt. Hari Ram to the British Army. Netaji at once dispatche
Shah Nawaz with a communique to Major G.S. Dhillon: “I have heard wit
grief, pain and shame of the treachery shown by Lieutenant Hari Ram an
others. I hope that the men of the 4\textsuperscript{th} Regiment will wash away the blot o
the INA with their blood’. These, in real measure, had been the grievances
the pains the crucial circumstances that burnt the heart of the great leader.
This seemed to him the real defeat. Still, it is evident how closely he ha
under control of his authority, against those deserters. He wrote to
Military Police Officer of the INA in Mandalay:
"According to my information the men who recently deserted from Mandalay.... Are still in Mandalay area. These men must be arrested and sent down to Rangoon under escort. If you can not arrest them, they must be shot at sight.......  

The five officers, who are referred to in the above communiqué as deserters, were Major Riaz, Major Madan, Major Dey, Major Sarwar and Lt. Mohd. Bakhsh. In addition to these the following officers also deserted on different occasions in the Imphal Front and later in the Central Burma Front:

1. Major Mahabir Singh Dhillon who escaped to Indian from INA of General Mohan Singh. 
4. Major Grewal of First Division Headquarter. 
5. Lt. Khazin Shah 
7. Lt. Ganga Singh 
8. 2nd Lt. Chain Singh 
9. 2nd Lt. Balwant Singh 
10. Sub-Officer Barfi Ram. 
11. Sub-officer Abdul Hakim. 
12. Havildar Baldev Singh etc. 

To further intensify the campaign against treachery and cowardice, a Traitor Day was observed and a drama entitled "Traitor" was played in all
the Military and Training camps at Rangoon. The civilians were not allowed to see this play. Effigies of the traitors were burnt. A couplet composed at the time, was on the lips of every member of the Balak Saina in Rangoon:

Dey ko logao dande, Sarwar ka sar ura do
Maro Riaz Todi, zinda Madan Jala do.

Col. P.K. Sahgal traces the cause of treachery to a lack of faith in final victory. Most people had begun to believe that Anglo-Americans, Superior in numbers and armaments, were going to win the war and it was futile to carry on the struggle,” He points out that none of the officers, who went over had even shown cowardice and right up to the time they went over, they fought most courageously. They attacked the enemy much superior in numbers and armaments, and not a single soldier ever wavered.

Col. Sahgal’s statement on how he had tackled the problem. He wrote later: “At this critical juncture in the history of our Army I decided that only such persons who truly believed in the sanctity of our cause and who had absolute faith in our final victory should participate in the campaign. I made up my mind that I would let go all those who lacked faith in our ultimate victory or who did not have the courage to fight under such adverse circumstances. Therefore, I made an offer to all those under my command who wished to leave us and go over to the enemy, that they could do so openly after leaving their arms behind and giving us an assurance that they would not betray our secrets to the enemy. To those who were physically unfit or frightened. I promised safe conduct back to
Rangoon. Some officers and men took advantage of this offer and returned to Rangoon.\textsuperscript{59} With such sacrifices indeed the army maintained the moral purity of its mission. In Rangoon and at other INA training centres, the role of traitors and deserters was denounced by lectures and also by staging plays on the theme.

Let us give some space to the battles of Meiktila and Popa and observe some heroic engagement with special reference to Haryana.

As enemy reinforcement continued to arrive in unending waves across the Irrawady, the INA guerrillas gradually began to withdraw towards Mount Popa. Also, Colonel Sahgal who had sallied fourth from there with his Second Infantry Regiment to attack the positions held by the enemy in the north and west, received under on 4\textsuperscript{th} April to return to Popa.

The tactics of the British Indian forces seemed to be to avoid capturing Mount Popa at great cost to themselves and instead to envelop the INA troops there in a vast encircling movement to cut them off completely from the rest of the country. Often the routes for their withdrawal had already been blocked by the enemy, so that Divisional Commander Shah Nawaz Khan himself over to the west bank of Irrawady to evade encirclement, and returned later by another route.

With the talk of total Japanese withdrawal from Burma in the air, most of the INA troops left Popa on 12 April at night. They divided themselves into a number of columns to take different routes for their withdrawal. One of these under Lieutenant Kanwal Singh of village Dhakla from Haryana was trapped by an enemy force of tanks and infantrymen
whose commander sent a letter to Kanwal Singh demanding his surrender. A reply sent to the British commander said: "Gentleman, so long as we have any ammunition left there is no reason for us to accept your demand." After some more righting, Kanwal Singh and his men surrendered.

More important events were to happen around 29 April after the Japanese Commander-in-Chief in Burma had decided on his final withdrawal. One of the retreating INA columns was a battalion led by Captain Bagri from Haryana who along with his men decided absolutely never to think of surrendering. The battalion was then resting on a Richfield near a small village when the sudden appearance of a force of tanks and armoured cars surrounding the village was reported.

There is no time for Bagri's men even to dig defensive trenches. Nor did their rifle shots have any effect on the enemy's armour. Then with slogans 'Netaji Zindabad' and "Bharat Mataki Jai" the men attacked the tanks with bottles filled with petrol. They set ablaze one tank and an armoured car. There were heavy causalities. Captain Bagri commanders and their men stood petrified at the sight of machines destroying human beings who attacked these with their bare hands. One recalls Victor Huge who, while describing the valour of Marshal Ney at the last stage of the Battle of Waterloo, exclaimed "come and see how a Marshal of France dies on the Battlefield." The men of the INA who fell on the rice field near a Burmese village were neither marshals nor decorated war heroes, and no one called the world to see how they died. Indian history has not recorded the name of Captain Bagri or any of his comrades.
Netaji, the Supreme Commander of the Army and Head of the Azad Hind Government resolved to go to Mount Popa, the bleeding front. It was crystal clear to him, that the Japanese Army would not hold Burma long. He disregarded the danger involved and his only wish was to die fighting the British. He had promised, he would lead the INA to victory or death. If legend of heroism and determination, and his countrymen would be inspired to raise the banner of revolution again in the sacred soil of India. Lives are an inconsiderable price to pay a dazzling shining tradition. In small hours of the moonlit night of February 26, 1945, the Supreme Commander was found arguing with his officers on the line of his reporting to the forwarding front, and only at a little distance, the horizon in the west was being discerned, at intervals, against the flash of gunfire and bombardment. Major General Shah Nawaz, who was present at the spot, lost his patience gave vent to his anxieties: ‘You are proposing to risk your life just to show your personal courage; but this is selfishness and you have no right to do it; your life is not your own, it is a precious trust for India, held in our keeping; we are responsible. But Netaji was determined. Though in a mild tone, he remarked, “you have no need to worry, England has not made a bomb that can kill me.”

“Netaji Week” was celebrated. On 8th July 45. Subhas Chandra Bose laid the foundation stone for a Memorial to the heroes who had lost their lives in the Battle of Freedom at the water front at Connaught Drive. He addressed a large gathering comprising Azad Hind Fauj (Indian National Army) volunteers of Rani Jhansi Regiment, the Balak Sena Unit, high ranking Japanese officers, high officials of the Azad Hindi Government,
community leaders and leading members of the Indian public. Wreaths were placed on the memorial by various organizations. The opening ceremony of this Memorial took place in the end of August 1945. Maj. Gen. M.Z. Kiani, who was the highest officer of the INA present in Singapore organized a rally for the opening ceremony. Indian public and officers and personnel of the INA attended the parade.56

On August 11, 1945 when Netaji was at the Seramban guesthouse, he learnt that Russia had declared war on Japan. The message came through telephone (there being no wireless set) followed by another call from Maj. Gen. Kiani pleading him to come to Singapore. He followed the news of Russian advance into Manchuria. “Where the Japanese will make a stand”, he wondered. Was this another turning point or a pointer to push him closer to the Soviet sanctuary. At about 2 a.m. on August 13, two of his advisers (Dr. Lakshmmayya and Ganapathy) stormed into the house and barged into Netaji’s bedroom. There was no one else in the room. Ayer was asked to shut the doors and windows. ‘Well, what is the news you have brought?’ Netaji asked Lakahmayya rather casually. Lakshmayya pulled his chair to Netaji, leaned forward and whispered; “Sir, I am sorry to say that Japan has surrendered!” What followed is being put in the words of S.A. Ayer, an eye-witness:

I instinctively turned in Netaji’s direction. I wanted to see how he took it. For a moment my head was in a whirl. A multitude of thoughts bewildered me. I said to myself: “So this is the crash... the terrible crash of every thing that this great man has built up in the last twenty four months! Is it the end of everything? Is it the end of all his efforts? Is it the end of
everything that he has lived for? Is it complete, utter pitch darkness? Is it going to swallow him up, or is he going to fight, his way out of this as usual and then march to the next battlefield? Will he admit defeat or will he laugh at this latest and stunning blow and go on with the fight for India’s freedom?”

My soul was in anguish... and I thought that hours had passed. Netaji heard the news and after one characteristic “Um.” He was deep in thought for a fleeting second. The next second he was absolutely his normal self. He first broke into a smile, and almost his first words were “So, that is that. Now, what next?

It was the soldier speaking. He was already thinking of the next move and the next battle. He was not going to be beaten. Japan’s surrender was not India’s surrender. Japan’s surrender was not the surrender of the Liberation Forces fighting for India’s freedom. He would not admit defeat. The INA would not admit defeat. He laughed away the catastrophe. He was bubbling with scintillating humour. He cracked jokes and laughed like a child. It was the supreme moment of his life. He was not going to be crushed by the disaster. He was once again on top of an extremely difficult situation. He cracked a few jokes with us and we all laughed. Then, with a mischievous twinkle in his eye he said: “Well, don’t you see we are the only people who have not surrendered?” And joined the laugh that followed.”

Major General Loganadhan was to preside over the INA surrender in Rangoon. Netaji, while leaving Rangoon in the company of three Major Generals and prominent members of his Government said in the Special
Order he addressed to the members of the INA, 'go down as heroes, go down upholding the highest code of honour and discipline............. I have the fullest confidence that the spirit can never be crashed. For the sake of India's Freedom, I beseech you to keep up that spirit, I beseech you to hold your heads erect, and wait for that Blessed Day....... I do not leave Burma of my own free will. I would have preferred to stay on here and share with you the sorrow of temporary defeat. But on the pressing advice of my ministers and high-ranking officers, I have to leave Burma in order to continue the struggle for India's liberation........... I have always said, that the darkest hour precedes the dawn. We are now passing through the darkest hour: therefore, the dawn is not far off. INDIA SHALL BE FREE.58

In his last message to the Officers and men of the Azad Hind Fauj, Netaji said: "Friends! In our struggle for the freedom of our motherland, a crisis which had never been dreamt of has befallen us.......... But I would say that it is only a temporary failure. No failure and no defeat can wipe out your earlier solid achievements.......... Many of your comrades have laid down their lives on the battlefield and have become immortal martyrs of Azad Hind. This great sacrifice can never go waste.59

"........Now in this moment of temporary defeat, it is your duty to maintain your faith firm and determination strong........ Friends! I am conscious of the fact that, at this critical time, the 38 crores of people living in our motherland are looking towards us, the soldiers of the Indian liberation army. Be, therefore, true to India.60 Let not your faith in India's destiny be shaken. There are many roads to Delhi. And Delhi is still our
goal......... There is no power on earth which can keep India in bondage. India will certainly be free and, that too, soon, Jai Hind.\footnote{61}

About 26 thousand heroes of Indian National Army laid down their lives and with them, 65 thousand Japanese and 60 thousand British-American and British-Indian officers and men.\footnote{62} Though on the surface, the INA with Netaji as their Supreme Commander, lost its battle on the Mountains and Jungles of Manipur and Burma, they won it by winning India itself. They galvanized the entire body politic of the Indian Sub-continent when they appeared as Prisoners of War in their martial uniform of Azad Hind Fauj.

The sword unsheathed, which could not defeat the enemy in the battlefield, had but penetrated hard into 'the battlements of the Red Fort' in a magnificent process of history. "Just as the British had not feared Gandhi,' writes British writer Michael Edwards, 'the reducer of violence, they no longer feared Nehru, who was rapidly assuming the lineaments of civilized statesmanship....... The British, however, still feared Subhas Bose, or rather, the violence he represented........... And his suddenly amplified figure overawed the conferences that were to lead to independence."\footnote{63} Four hundred million souls rose in revolt, the Royal Indian Navy and the Land Forces mutinied, the Air wing got prepared in support of the INA and the Police, the students, the labourers – the political affiliations almost forgotten-became violent against the British authorities during the INA Court Martial in Delhi. It shook the Imperial Power with a high degree of tremor, which England, despite their victory in the Second World War, could not withstand. The succeeding part of this thesis will
exhibit, why and how England lost India – her ‘Brightest Jewel’, and left
the shore within a year’s time.

The Red Fort Trials:

The Government of British India with Lord Wavell, its Viceroy, in
collaboration with the War department constituted the Court Martial – a
military trial court in November 1945 - in the Red Fort, the palace of the
Mughal Emperors. About twenty five thousand INA soldiers were
repatriated from Rangoon to Delhi. The Officers and men of Indian Army,
Navy and Air Force, who had been sent to take these INA men as
prisoners, came in contact with the INA lasting for more than six months.
There was observe the widespread fraternization between the INA and the
British Indian Army. It appears like a Re-union of relatives, as it were
separated since 1941, and it resulted in political and national
consciousness which the armed forces in the Indo-British Army had never
experienced before. The INA and it glorious activities which hitherto
remained as a ‘Military Secret’, were now exploded, and the whole socio-
political atmosphere of the Indian Sub-continent became surcharged with
a conflagration of national fervour. It almost surpassed all other previous
events such as the great Revolt of 1857, Partition of Bengal 1905, or the
Quit India Movement of 1942. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, a member of the
Defence Committee for INA said: “....It would be a very grave mistake
leading to far-reaching consequences if they are treated just as ordinary
rebels. The punishment given to them would in effect be a punishment to
all India and all Indians..” He wrote afterwards, “The trial dramatized... the
old contest; England versus India. It became in reality not merely a
question of law… but rather a trial of strength between the will of the Indian people and the will of those who held power in India.”

The INA prisoners of war in the British hands had been found technically guilty of wagging war against the King Emperor of England. By ‘International and military law’, wrote Philip Mason, the Joint Secretary of War Department of India, ‘they could have been tried by court – martial for mutiny and desertion and shot on the spot… All were guilty of an offence legally punishable by death, but of course there could be no a question of executing twenty-five thousand men…” Mr. Mason continued, ‘the policy was right; the public handling – as it turned out – was seriously wrong… the policy was announced to the Press – I drafted the communiqué myself and it met at first with gratified approval, even from the Congress leaders… But within a few weeks this was changed. In a wave of nationalist emotion the INA were acclaimed heroes who had fought for the freedom of India.64

The War Secretary’s assertion, as claimed above, is not all that can be accepted. Mr. Bhulabhai Desai, the leader of the Defence Committee fought the case with the armaments of the International Law, Indian Penal Code. Army Act and INA Act. The provisions of the Azad Hind Government and its status as provided in its constitution by Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, had been of great significance which now bore fruits. The British authorities could not find it easy to shoot the INA prisoners of War at the spot also on grounds of stern retaliation as announced by Netaji on 30th May 1945:
"... Vindictive and brutal treatment is being meted out to officers and men of the Azad Hind Fauj who have been captured by the Anglo-Americans in Burma. It may be that the British think that we are not in position to retaliate, and that they can, therefore do what they like with our officers and men. But I would like to warn the British Authorities that this is not the case... before we are forced to think of retaliatory measures there carry on a raging and tearing campaign inside India. I am absolutely sure that the British Authorities will be brought to their senses... members of the Azad Hind Fauj are honest patriots and revolutionaries fighting for the freedom of their Motherland. They are, therefore, entitled to decent treatment during captivity, in accordance with international usage and convention. Consequently, I appeal to my countrymen at home to take up the cause of their own prisoners of war... compel the British Authorities to divulge correct information about the fate of these prisoners of war, so that the world may judge how far the British themselves observe the rules and canons of international warfare..."65

The Red Fort in Delhi was chosen as the base of the seat of judgement because “in the slogans of the INA, the Fort had been the spot where the tricolour of the new India was to be planted. The choice of the scene was taken as a deliberate taunt,” writes Mr. Philip Mason, the war Secretary to India, “an insolent and provocative act of triumph over vanquished... This was the error of judgement.”66

It was in August 1945, that the whisper went round that 20,000 soldiers of the INA were imprisoned in Delhi Red Fort, and the six of them had already been executed. The news first saw the light of day on 4
August in Birbal's column "Attitude and Latitude". No comment on the news was allowed, and even politicians like Pandit Nehru kept strictly off it lest "any mention of it should have been misunderstood". Nehru's first statement was on the 20th August to the effect that "... Now a very large number of officers and soldiers of the Indian National Army, as it is called, are prisoners and some of them at least have been executed. At anytime it would have been wrong to treat them too harshly but at this time when it is said big changes are impending in India, it would be a very grave mistake leading to far reaching consequences if they were treated just as ordinary rebels..." — This statement took the censors three days to pass and simultaneously, an official note appeared to say that.

"The Government of India are at present considering very carefully the treatment to be given to Indian soldiers who joined the enemy, ... and it is hoped to make a comprehensive announcement in the near future setting out the policy that has been adopted." Instantly, the INA became the open subject, the subject of the day and it turned the tide into a tornado for the British rulers in India. The Government declared, "......... They (INA) will be allowed to choose counsel to represent them." On the 22nd September Defence Committee to take necessary steps for the defence of the officers men and women of the INA or of like forces who might be brought up for trial.

The Congress leaders, who feared and some even disliked Subhas Chandra Bose, were not at first interested to use and utilise these prisoners as their favourable means of propaganda. These gallant soldiers had fought and died in the actual war in their attempt to free India under their mighty
leader Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose whereas the Congress leaders had merely passed their days in the safe prisons. So, when the British Government in India decided to Court Martial the INA officers for waging war against the King, the decision at first received the support of the Congress till it realised that the Court Martial at the Red Fort could be made a focus of popular indignation although they carried with them in secret very shrewd and unbecoming designs about and against the INA as revealed only after three decades, which is as follows:

TRANSFER OF POWER, Vol. VI p.387-88, ‘SECRET’

"Captain Hari Badhwar, 3 Cav, Returned P.W. informed me (Brigadier T.W. Boyce), ‘that on 18th October, 1945 he had a 3½ hours conversation with ASAF ALI member of the Congress Working Committee who stated:

(a) ... NEHRU’S speeches and statements on the subject always included a qualifying phrase or sentence to this effect, e.g. “Whatever errors and mistakes they had committed…” and “misguided men”, etc.

(b) Before committing themselves to public statements Congress leaders had however asked him (ASAF ALI) to tour the country and find out public feeling. He had done so, from South to North and found as he moved North, opinion stronger and stronger that INA must not be punished for their actions, but should be released. This inflamed feeling forced Congress to take the line it did.

(c) “... However, if Congress was in power it would have no hesitation in removing all INA from the services and even in putting some
of them on trial and when they eventually did assume power they would certainly remove any remaining.

(d) "...That if Govt. now postponed trials Congress would be prepared to put leaders on trial when in power.

3. Hari Badhwar then asked ASAF ALI if, now that Congress knew the true facts,... that they could well withdraw as they were not in a position to know these facts earlier. To this ASAF ALI admitted that they dare not take this line as they would lose much ground in the country (Comment, ... In other words, the present policy is one of political expediency which is, I think, well known).

T.W.BOYCE
Brigadier, D D M I (S)
22nd October, 1945.

On behalf of the INA Defence Committee, Mr. Bhulabhai J. Desai and Mr. M. Asaf Ali made a representation to Field Marshal Viscount Wavell, the Viceroy of India, on 15th October, 1945, for Government’s consideration. This Committee consisted of the following members.

2. Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru, Member, Congress Working Committee, Barrister At-Law.
3. Shri Bhulabhai Desai, Advocate,
5. Shri Raghunandan Saran
6. Rai Bahadur Badri Das, Advocate,
7. M. Asaf Ali, Esq. Member, Congress Working Committee,
In their memorandum, Mr. Desai and Mr. Asaf Ali, stated “at present three officers, namely Shah Nawaz Khan, Sahgal and Dhillon have been formally charged with the offence of waging war against the King and other offences arising out of their activities as officers of the INA on active service. The 5th November 1945, has been fixed for their trial before a Court Martial. These officers have formally entrusted their defence before the Court Martial to the above mentioned Defence Committee.

‘According to press reports trials of other officers and men for similar or cognate offences are likely to follow in the near future. These trials raise questions of such grave public importance that the Committee considers it imperatively necessary to address your Government on the matter at once.”

In is clause No. 7 of the memorandum the representatives said, ... a Provisional Government of Free India is reported to have been eventually set up, and a well organized, well trained and well disciplined Indian National Army operated under its control. According to accounts available this government was not a mere puppet Government under Japanese control, but was an independent, Government with a definite international status.’

They referred, “We do not propose to enter here into any discussion about the legal status of the Officers for men of the INA and it would also be inappropriate to discuss here the question whether they can be said to be guilty of any offence. The only question at this stage is whether it would
not be contrary to public interest to bring them to trial and assuming that is not so, when and by whom such a decision should be taken."

It was emphasized in its clause No. 10, that, ‘these men of the IN are virtually being charged with having endeavoured to enter India with armed force to liberate it from British domination. That alleged offen primarily concerns the Indian people, and the more so as the Briti government have publicly announced that Indian people so desire. Judging by the trend of public opinion in the country, this Committee urg that this matter of the trial of the INA should not be pursued any further’

Concluding the representation, the two members of the Defen Committee requested that ‘the matter of the trials of the INA by coun Martial be abandoned, or that in any event no proceedings before a Court-Martial be commenced until after the formation of the Intern Government at centre and the functioning of Provisional Governments completion of the ensuing election and all necessary directions may given to the authorities concerned.

Sd/- Bhulabhai Des
M. Asaf Aliu

The Congress, the Communists and the Muslim League leaders including Nehru, Jinnah, Firoz Khan Noon had been on their tour throughout India to mobilise their strength in the ensuing general elections of the Central and the Provincial Assemblies. They attempted enlist popular interest in, and sympathy for the INA. The British authorit apprehended, the first trials by Court Martial, which were to begin shortly, would cause considerable excitement. Lord Wavell, in his priva
and secrete communique from his Viceroy's Camp at Rowalpindi wrote to Lord Pethick-Lawrence on 16th October, 1945:

"...I have asked the Commander-in-Chief whether he thinks that anything can be done to counter the flood of inaccurate nationalist propaganda about the INA. There was very little genuine patriotism in the business. I recognize that it may be difficult now to get the truth... I certainly do not contemplate any official statement - since the trials are imminent and we do not wish to give the impression that we are trying to prejudice them. The Congress have no inhibitions of this kind... their assertions are that in the circumstances to "wage war against the king" was a patriotic act, and that if the officers of what was in their view a regular organised force, had in the course of their duty, to inflict punishments, including capital punishment, on the men under their command they had the legal right to do so and are not guilty of any offence."

In respect of the 'Indian Military Offenders' it stated as follows:

1. The main organization composed of Indian personnel which collaborated with Japanese or German forces are,

   (a) Indian National Army (I.N.A. or J.I.F.S.) These are estimated to amount to 20,000 men of the Indian Army, as well as 23,000 civilians (of whom 20,000 were resident ex-India)

   (b) 950 Regt. (HIFS) (Hitler's Indian Foreign Legion) of these men some 23,00 are now in India. The former compose the forces who, under the leadership of Subhas Chandra Bose, formed part of the Japanese Army. The latter correspondingly formed part of the German Army.
By International and military law, the captured INA prisoners could have been tried by court-marital for mutiny and desertion and shot on the spot. But the matter was surcharged with political implications, and they were sent to India as Prisoners of War. The vast mass of Indian people at this stage did not have any knowledge of the existence of the INA. But when the war with Japan suddenly terminated, the problem could not be suppressed or postponed any longer; the Indian public had to be told and the Government had to decide what was to be done with them. To the British, all the twenty five thousand men were guilty of an offence legally punishable by death – but of course there could be no question or sense of executing twenty five thousand men.

Under the circumstances the INA men were divided into the following categories:

(a) Whites – Those whose loyalty is beyond question. They are treated as any other recovered P.O.W. and will continue to serve in the Army. They had joined the INA with the intention of deserting from it, and be restored to their former privileges.

(b) ‘Greys-Those whose loyalty was weak and who are not fundamentally and incurably disloyal. These are discharged as “services no longer required”. They will forfeit pay for period spent as P.O.W. .. they will not be given a war gratuity but as an act of grace, will be given leave with 42 days prior to discharge...

(c) Blacks - Those who "had conduct merits trial for a criminal offence or those whose release would be dangerous’. They were those who had been well aware of what they were doing.
'Blackest – Those who “had previously been in positions of trust and responsibility and those who had tortured flogged or killed their comrades, either to make them join the INA or after they joined it, punish them for attempted desertion. It was also decided that, for the few of the blackest, the law should take its course…’

The Government in Delhi, with Lord Wavell as its Viceroy, had a testing time in India during the period under study. The left-wing extremists in Congress had been threatening to launch a fresh ‘Quit India’ movement, the tone of the Nationalist Press more virulent. The Government “faced with the issue of another violent suppression of Congress, with weaker and rather demoralized forces perhaps, it their intimidation of officials and police continues unchecked and they succeed in dividing the I.N.A. (British Indian Army) over the I. N. A. trials, or of capitulation to them. “The first trials aroused great excitement. Some of the Congress leaders started thinking of employing I.N.A. officers and men as the spearhead of revolution. The Trial became a source of great anxiety to the Government of India."

Lord Wavell records in his Diary on November 3, 1945, “… Our propaganda and publicity over the I. N. A. was fatally slow and ineffective, and that we have given Congress a weapon which they have been not slow to use, and very unscrupulously, On the 5th of November, the day of the opening of the Court Martial of the I. N. A., the Viceroy sent a note of warning to His Majesty’s Government in London in the following form: “We are now faced in India with a situation of great difficulty and danger, in which I require support and guidance from His Majesty’s Government
... In order to make sure that there was no misunderstanding, I saw Nehru on 3rd November, and pointed out to him the danger of the course he and other leaders were advocating. He made it clear that he thought violence inevitable... I believe that the Congress are counting on the I. N. A. as the spearhead of their revolt; they would suborn the Indian Army if they could and they hope that their threats will impair the loyalty and efficiency of the police ... I must accordingly, with the utmost gravity, warn H. M. G. to be prepared for a serious attempt by the Congress, probably next Spring, but quite possibly earlier, to subvert by force the present administration in India ...”70

The Court-Martial of the I. N. A. constituted with Advocate General Sir N. P. Engineer and Lt. Col. P. Walsh, Military prosecutor. Besides, Major General A. B. Blaxland, Brg. A. G. H. Bourke, Brigadier Herk, Col. C. R. Scott and others had been included in conducting the Court. Sir N. P. Engineer, the Advocate General of the Government of British India, in his opening address said in the prosecution against the I. N. A. officers :

“The charges against are under Section 41 of the Indian Army Act. All of them are charged with” waging war against H. M. King Emperor of India contrary to Section 121 of the I. P. C. (Charge 1).

“Lt. Dhillon is charged with the murders of Hari Singh, Dulichand, Daryao Singh and Dharam Singh on March 6, 1945, contrary to section 302 I. P. C. (Charges 2, 4, 6 and 8).

“Captain Sahgal is charged with abetting the said murders contrary to Section 109 and 302, I. P. C. (Charges 3, 5, 7, and 9).
"Captain Shah Nawaz Khan is charged with abetting the murder of Mohd. Husain on March 29, 1945, contrary to Section 109 and 302, I. P. C. (Charge 10).

"The accused are all Indian Commissioned Officers and as such they are subject to the Indian Army Act... I will first deal with the charge of 'waging War against the King-Emperor.

"Section 41 of the I.A.A. (Indian Army Act) provides that every person subject to the Act who either within British India or at any place beyond British India commits any civil offence shall be deemed to be guilty of an offence against military law...

The British Prosecutor traced the history of the I.N.A. was a forced one, and the alternative to joining the I.N.A. was starvation and torture. The Advocate General stressed that the accused gave directions and orders for fighting against H.M.'s forces and themselves actually fought against them. Then the gave the story of I.N.A. in action, quoting extensively from the diaries of the accused and documents bearing their signatures Next, he dealt with the charges of murder and abetment of murder. "It is submitted", he concluded, "that the aforesaid acts of the accused amounted to murder and abetment of murder. If the accused seek to rely upon any general or special exception or upon any proviso in the Indian Penal Code, the burden of proving the existence of circumstances bringing the case within such exception as proviso is under Section 105 of the Indian Evidence Act upon the accused and the court shall presume the absence of such circumstances... joining with rebels in an act of rebellion or with enemies in acts of hostility makes a man traitor...
"It is submitted that the accused cannot in law seek to justify what they did as having been done under the authority of the Indian National Army Act. No authority purporting to be given under that Act can be recognized by this court or indeed by any tribunal or authority purporting to be established by it are without sanction...."71

All the three I.N.A. Officers Lt. Dhillon, Captain Sahgal and Captain Shah Nawaz Khan emphatically answered- "not guilty," to all the charges. Lieutenant D.C. Nag, a former officer of the I.N.A. was produced as the first prosecution witness. He deposed that he was the author of the I.N.A. Act which governed the activities of the Azad Hind Fauz. The examination of Lt. Nag was concluded on 6th November, 1945 and the court adjourned for a fortnight allowing the I.N.A. Defence Counsel to prepare the case.

The trial of the batch of Officers, a Hindu, a Muslim, and a Sikh, opened on November 5, 1945, was the signal for widespread demonstrations which in Calcutta led to serious rioting. Over thirty people were killed, several hundred injured, and a large number of cars and police vehicles destroyed and damaged.72 A senior Indian Officer of the I.N.A. defence on November 15 when the trial was going on for 10 days. He sent a note on this subject to Field Marshal Auchhinleck, the C- in – C, which is as bellows:

'He mentioned that the I.N.A. trials have given them the best weapon they ever had for their propaganda and that if any of these are executed, it will only make them greatest martyrs Indian has ever had, and he continued that as things are going now it may lead to armed revolution. ... One of the party asked how there can be an armed revolution when there are not arms.
He replied there are people who are always willing to supply them.... During the conversation he said the formation of the I.N.A. and their work have proved to thee country that the Indians can train and command the Army, because according to him 300 personnel of I.N.A. trained some, 1,200 Officers who in turn trained an army of 60,000 in short time which fought and nearly succeeded in capturing Kohima.”

The trial was attacked by the Congress as an act of savage oppression and the handling of the whole matter by British was condemned. Nehru expressed in unqualified terms that those who had enrolled in the I.N.A. had done so because of their passionate desire to serve the cause of India’s freedom; also that if owing to some technical interpretation of military law, they received sever sentences, it would be a tragedy for India.” The Government of India desired, by court martiaing the soldiers of the I.N.A. to reinforce the morale of the British Indian Army but it only created unease. They felt ashamed at the fact that “they themselves had supported the British. If Subhas and his men had been on the right side- and all India now confirmed that they were- then Indians in the Indian Army must have been on the wrong side. It slowly dawned up on the Government of India, that the backbone of British rule, the Indian Army, might now no longer be trustworthy’ writes the British author Michael Edwards.

The most illuminating exhibition of the repercussion of the I.N.A. trial, may perhaps, be had from the correspondence of Sir George Cunningham, the then Governor of the North West Frontier Province. It is irresistible to produce the letter and its reply.
Dear Lord Wavell,

I am going somewhat outside my proper sphere in writing to Your Excellency about the I. N. A. trial, but the matter is one on which India have been trying to gauge opinion ... and come to a definite conclusion. It is that the C-in-C, should at once announce that, as Indian opinion is opposed to the trial of these persons, he wipes the whole thing out and takes no further proceedings against any one ... No one can do it but the C-in-C, of his own volition and on his own responsibility. Done by anyone else, even by the King, it will not have the same effect ... Some Indian Officers and soldiers, whose relations or close friends have suffered under the I. N. A. leaders, are no doubt thirsting for their blood. But Indian are certain that they are comparatively few.

The thing is daily becoming more and more purely Indian versus British ... Indian think that every day that passes now brings over more and more well-disposed Indians into the anti British camp and, whatever the outcome of the trial may be, this anti-British bias will persist in each man's I. N. A. mind. The only way of stopping the rot is by a clean cut, as I have said; and at once ... I feel terribly for Your Excellency and for Claude A, i this. It is the most difficult problem to tackle that I have ever known in India. ...."

Yours Sincerely
G. Cunningham
Lord Wavell, alike Cunningham gauged the degree of devastation that was to come out of the INA trial. He replied in the following manner:

The Viceroy’s House
New Delhi

November 30th, 1945

My Dear Cunningham,

Many thanks for your letter No. 271 of 27th November about the I.N.A. trials... I was glad to have your view. It is about as difficult a case as one could want. But we have, after considering all opinions in the last few days, decided on a policy, and a communiqué will be issued. No future trials will take place except where there are allegations of gross brutality against the accused... We shall no doubt continue to suffer from distorted publicity, but I think in the long run it will be recognized that we have given the accused a fair trial.... I do appreciate it, but I think the policy on which we have decided is the right one.

Yours sincere,

Wavell

The ideology, vision and objective of the soldiers of the I.N.A. from Haryana or from any part of the country is summarise in the statements given by Capt. Sehgal, Lt. Dhillon and Shah Nawaj Khan. Captain Sahgal stated the circumstances that compelled him to join the INA. He referred to the meeting held at the Farrar Park in Singapore on 17th February 1942, and said how Lt. Col. Hunt as the British representative, handed over the
Indian officers and men to the Japanese like a flock of sheep. "This", Captain Sahgal went on, "came as a great blow to us all. We felt that the British Government had on its own cut off all the bonds that bound us to the British Crown and relieved us of all obligation to it...

Captain Sahgal claimed, he was entitled to all the privileges of prisoner of war. While surrendering on April 18, 1945, he sent a note to the Commander of the British forces at Popa hills, he had said quite plainly that they were ready to surrender only as Prisoners of War, and the receipt of the note was admitted by the Headquarters, Bahadurgarh area in their letter dated 12.10.45. "Had we been told," Sehgal deposed, "that surrender on the terms offered by us was not acceptable to the British Commander, we were determined to fight on and were in a position to do so because, we nearly 600 strong, fully armed and equipped and each one of us was prepared to shed the last drop of his blood for the sake of his country."

Lt. G. S. Dhillon spoke last and recalled that in the Crestwood Hall in the Indian Military Academy at Dehra Dun were engraved the words: "The honour, welfare and safety of your country comes first, always and every time. The comfort, safety and welfare of the men you command comes next. Your own safety and comfort comes last, always and every time.” It was with this motto in front of him that he served his country as an officer in the Indian Army.

Dhillon: “I got to realise the full significance of the havoc done to my unfortunate country by one and a half century of British rule. While the British, I thought to myself, had exploited all over material resources for their own benefit and had freely drawn upon our manpower to fight their
own imperialist wars, they had not only done nothing to prepare us for the defence of our motherland in case of need, but had in order to keep us in bondage for all time to come completely emasculated us.

"In the Indian National Army proposed to be organised by Mohan Singh, I saw a new hope for India ... Mother India seemed to be calling me and I decided to respond to her call and threw in my lot with Mohan Singh." Lt. Dhillon explained how in the second I. N. A. under Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose he continued in the service, and that to his knowledge no coercion or force was employed to induce any prisoner of war to join the I. N. A. "In fact the use of force or coercion for such purpose was wholly unnecessary, because we always had a very large number of surplus volunteers whom we were unable to put under training for want of equipment." He declared that "The evidence given by some prosecution witnesses that the prisoners of war were sent to the concentration camp ... to coerce them into volunteering is absolutely false .... On the contrary, persons confined in the detention camp were not accepted as volunteers even if they offered to do so, because detention in that camp for any period indicated some defect of character and was a disqualification for membership of the I.N.A."

Lt. Dhillon went on explaining before the Court Martial how he and the men under his command suffered in their heroic fight for India: 'Many a time I had to go without water for 20 to 30 hours and without food for two or three days. If as a Brigade Commander I had to undergo these hardships, my men who have suffered much more and yet they accompanied me. No men who had joined under duress or coercion could
have done so.” He also disclosed that he committed 4 men to trial on charges of desertion and attempting to communicate with the enemy. “It is, however, quite untrue”, he stressed, “that those men were shot at my instance or under my orders. On the day … they are said to have been shot I was confined to bed and unable to move. In fact the sentences of death passed on these men were subsequently remitted by the Divisional Commander and they were never executed. Whatever I did, I did as the member of a regularly organised force, fighting under the Provisional Government of Free India and am, therefore, not liable to be charged with or tried under the Indian Army Act and the Criminal Law of India for any offence on account of any done by me in the discharge of my duties as a member of such a force”.

Lt. Dhillon’s deposition was further strengthened by his statement that, in the point of law, his trial by court martial was illegal. He emphasised that he joined the I. N. A. with the best and purest motives. The I. N. A. was able to protect life, property and honour of the Indians residing in the Far East. He successfully persuaded the Japanese to refrain from bombing civilians in India. He also pointed out, how in the Far East the Indians showed their appreciation of the services rendered to them by the I. N. A. by way of contributing crores of rupees to the funds of the Provisional Government of Free India being actuated by the Most patriotic motives.

A reference may be made here to a letter of Field Marshal Auchinleck, the C-in-C, to Lord Wavell, Viceroy, on 26th November 1945. The anxiety of the British authority that of the highest military authority in
India can be measured with regard to the image of the I. N. A. that more than two millions of the Indian troops in the Army cherished in their hearts. The Commander in Chief writes: "I know from my long experience of Indian troops how hard it is even for the best and most sympathetic British Officer to gauge the inner feelings of the Indian soldier, and history supports me in this view. I do not think any senior British Officer today know what is the real feeling among the Indian ranks regarding the 'I. N. A.' I myself feel, from my own instinct largely, but also from the information I have had from various sources, that there is a growing feeling of sympathy for the I. N. A."

Every day, every time eyes could see only the surging crowds—students, police men, workers, peasants, politicians irrespective of their creed and castes, and their vastness increasing outside the walls of the Red Fort. The Press publications in almost all the languages in India spread the news of the I. N. A. and Netaji—their exploits with the speed of wild fire from the area of New Delhi to the remotest corner of the Indian subcontinent. Besides a large section of the politically conscious masses of people with their different party organs, a considerable size of those of the armed forces especially the sailors of the Royal Indian Navy of Bombay and Karachi raised funds from their humble pay and dispatched in secret to the I. N. A. Defence Fund. Delhi, Calcutta, Bombay, Karachi—all were found groaning as if seething before a thunderous outburst. Police and military barracks too were not left out in this total national upsurge. The British rulers in India were on the brink of a volcano! In this context, the
situation as then reported in secret by the police authorities in Calcutta is imperative for our study.

The relevant extracts “

HOME DEPTT. POLL. FILE NO. 21/16/46 POLL(1)

Subject: In connection with the Indian National Army trials.

“SECRET ... The normal life of the city is at a standstill. At Howrah, the employees of a number of Jute mills have come out on strike and the coolies to be sitting on the East Indian Railway line ... students are playing a prominent part in the demonstrations ... some Muslim students have joined in the demonstration and there is now a move afoot to get the Muslim community as a whole to join it. Communists have joined in the demonstrations, which are being supported by large sections of labour ... direct outcome of unrestrained propaganda in the Press and at public meetings in favour of the Indian National Army.

“2. POLICE ... Inspectors with considerable service were complaining bitterly ... they stated that even Police Sgts, wore excuses to avoid going out; not because they had ‘wind up’ but because they were ‘browned off’ at being expected to quell disturbances by having to remain on the defensive and acting as Aunt Sally’s for the mob and being unable owing to their orders to go for the mob. ... One Inspector stated that they were instructed to hold the crowd, and if the crowd started to move towards them, they were to retire and form a cordon further back. If police action is not backed up from above, the next outbreak will find little police forces available.
"3. CIVILIAN .... There is no doubt at all that there is a feeling of great perturbation among the European Community. There is a growing feeling that authority in India as represented by the existing Govt. is steadily losing its grip and that if steps are not taken NOW to assert that authority, a situation will arise by which Govt. will cease to be able to exercise any authority at all.

"V. MOTIVE BEHIND THE DISTURBANCE – The demonstrations began in support of the I. N. A. ... The temper of the mobs was highly dangerous, and the whole disturbance was worse than in 1942. The implications of this are considerable.

"2. Seen in retrospect" the results of these three days of agitation especially as it was not sponsored by Congress, bodes ill for the future ... There are indications that many Indians, who ordinarily do not engage in politics and many of those who have relations in the Indian Army, have been captivated by the glamour and ideals of the I. N. A., I. N. A. slogans such as “Jai Hind” and “Azad Hind” are now being introduced for greetings ...

"3. There is a general feeling of pessimism in European circles ... Doubts have been expressed that the loyalty of the Indian Army, if called upon to quell disturbances as they may have to be, may have been affected by this insidious I. N. A. propaganda ... that H. M.’s Government and the Government of India do not know their own minds as to how they will deal with the immediate future of the Indian political problem. They feel matters are just drifting for the worse.
“4. There is a general desire that an unequivocal statement should be given by H. M.’s Government that Government should either be determined to maintain Law and Order in a firm manner until such time as they are prepared to hand the country over to Indians, or that they should decide to name a date in the near future for the handing over and clear out of the country altogether.

Sd. Central Intelligence Officer
Calcutta
The 28th November, 1945”

The Director of Intelligence Bureau, Home department of the Government of India reported to India Office in London:

‘At most of the 160 political meetings held in the Central Provinces during the first half of October demands were made for the abandonment of action against the I. N. A. Besides Congress, other political parties followed the Congress’s lead, some of them with marked determination and this can be said of the Sikhs in the Central Punjab rural recruiting area is great and daily meetings are being held by them at which demands on behalf of the I. N. A. are voiced. The Hindu Mahasabha lacks the rural influence of the Sikhs but their observance of an I. N. A. Day, and their strongly worded appeals have had effect. The Muslim League with Mohammed Ali Jinnah was in the forum with others.

A striking feature is as “The Transfer of Power’ very truthfully recorded, : “the sympathy for I. N. A. is not the monopoly of those who are ordinarily against Government. It is equally clear that this particular brand of sympathy cuts across communal barriers ... In many cases officers of
the i. N. A. belong to influential families and this creates much local interest. If the families concerned happen to have traditions of loyalty, which is usually the case, the interests shown is intensified and also the ill effects that attend it ... evidence of some rather surprising approaches bring made to Congress for assistance and the fact of ex-judges of the High Courts and gentlemen with titles joining openly in the defence of cases in which wartime treason in the charge is not negligible ...”76

The Press reports that the Military clerical staff, men of the Royal Indian Navy and of the Royal Indian Air force were giving donations to the I. N. A. defence funds, alarmed the British Government both in India and United Kingdom. The speeches of Ballav Bhai Patel and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru pointed out that what the Government ought to do with the I. N. A. was to make it the nucleus of the new Indian Army as they were the soldiers of independence. The authorities were confirmed about the dangerous possibilities of fearful agitation and the great threat to the security of the British Indian Army.

In this highly explosive situation over which the Government of the then India was then sitting, General Auchinleck, the C-in-C made his TOP SECRET AND PERSONAL correspondence to the Viceroy, on 24 the November 1945, which is as follows:

“... As decision to execute any of the accused in the present trial might result in unrest on a scale more serious than in 1921 and 1942. The Punjab, who were the spokesman in this manner, and who are of course the Province most deeply affected, suggested at first that while the present trials should be carried through, it should be decided now that there should
be no further trails, except for murder and atrocities, and that any sentences of death which are passed by the Court should be commuted. The charges of waging war against the King-Emperor should be dropped future trials ...

"I have discussed the whole question with my civil and military advisers whose views differ widely. One point of view is that no further trials should take place except in cases of brutality which can not be defended by the practices and laws of any civilised people ... others of my advisers feel that this would amount to recognising the belligerent status of the I. N. A. ... they argue that the inclusion of the charge of waging war in cases of brutality would be no more than a gesture .... We should have admitted that a mistake had been made in bringing to trial the first three officers, in whose cases (with one doubtful exception) it could be argued that the acts with which they are charged were committed in execution of what the accused believed to be their duty, once the premise is granted that they genuinely considered they were justified in joining the I. N. A. and that it was a belligerent army.

"My decision would be published with a brief statement to the effect that the trials had been held to vindicate the legal principle, but that since it had been decided that the accused were endeavouring to carry out what they conceived mistakenly to be their duty, it had been decided to reduce the sentence ... I should therefore be glad to know whether Your Excellency approves of my taking this line..."

Yours Sincerely

C. J. AUCHINLECK
The helplessness of the Government of India and their military authorities were getting exposed to such an extent that they had to make every attempt to get Britain and America to give publicity to the I. N. A. trials with reference to 'feature the atrocities committed by the I. N. A. on their own countrymen, and to publicise the leniency and generosity shown by Government towards I. N. A. in spite of the fact that its members broke their oath of allegiance and waged war against Allied arms.' It was further emphasised that, "Publicity should also be given in India, and if possible in the U. S. A. to the courage and steadfastness of those who refused to join the I. N. A." The defence of the I. N. A. concentrated not entirely on the "patriotism" of Netaji Bose and the I. N. A. but also on intricate questions of Law and International Law. Press followed its lead. The result was that a thoroughly dangerous and explosive situation worked up.

Now the second phase of the proceedings of the I. N. A. Court Martial within the Red Fort itself, resumed. On 8th September 1945, the first witness to give evidence on behalf of the I. N. A. Defence was Mr. Subro Ohta of Japanese Foreign Office. His documents in the Court exhibited how Japan recognised the provisional Government of Free India in October, 1943, and Mr. Matsuo Moto, the Japanese-Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, deposed that the I. N. A. functioned as an independent Army. On 10th December, Major General Kata Kura, Chief of Staff of Japanese General Headquarters, and Mr. Teruro Hachiya, Japanese Ambassador to the Provisional Government of the Azad Hind, explained the role of the I. N. A.
On December 11th, Mr. S. A. Ayer, a Minister of the Azad Hind Government gave evidence about the activities of his Government and its relations with Japan, while Lt. Col. A. D. Loganathan, one of the Cabinet Ministers and Chief Commissioner of Andaman-Nicobar Islands. Mr. Dina Nath one of the Directors of the Azad Hind Bank apprised the court of the activities of the Bank. On 13th December, Mr. B. N. Nandu, Officer of the Commonwealth relations department of the Azad Hind gave evidence relating to the number of Indians in South East Asia. Next came Lt. Col E. K. Square, A. A. G. Headquarters, Jumna Area who was examined and the last Defence witness for I. N. A. was Captain R. M. Arshad whose evidence covered various events and incidents connecting with the I. N. A including surrender at Rangoon. The Court then adjourned till 16th December 1945.

In an atmosphere tense with great expectations, within and outside the Court of the Red Fort, Mr. Bhulabhai Desai, the Chief Defence Counsel rose to deliver his concluding address on 17th December, 1945. It lasted for ten hours. The great lawyer said:

'Substantially there is really one charge before the Court, because it so far as the charge of murder and abetment of number is concerned it is part of the first charge. I say so, for the reason that it would be quite possible in the case of charge of waging war against the King to be able to charge every single act of firing a shot, which would, I think be 'reductio ad absurdum.' Mr. Desai said "... there was no foundations in fact, for it except to the extent that in reference to the four persons who are alleged to have been shot, there is on record evidence that they were tried and
sentence was passed ... it will be my duty to submit that on the evidence the court is bound to come to the conclusion, that though sentence was passed in one case, and not at all in the other, neither of the sentence was actually carried out ... Generally a Court Martial decides cases of individual offences I venture to say-and the evidence supports it that this is not a case of three individuals waging war against the King ... those three men charged before you are part of an organised army, who waged war against the King, according to the Prosecution.

"What is on trial before the Court now is the right to wage war with immunity, on the part of a subject race for their liberation. I shall be able to cite accepted authorities on International Law, that a nation or a part of a nation, does reach a stage, where it is entitled to wage war for its liberation." Mr. Desai continued, "The first conclusion of fact, which I ask this Court to accept is that the Provisional Government of Free India was formally established and proclaimed."

... Evidence is quite clear, in Malaya alone 2,30,000 persons had taken the written Oath of Allegiance to the Provisional Government ... The next fact which, I submit is established before the Court is that this Provisional Government was recognised by the Axis Powers. The Recognition is only proof, and no more than that, that which the Government recognised had the right to declare war for the purpose for which it intended to fight, and the Government having the right to declare war, its armies are subject to its orders ... The recognition is proof of statehood."
The next important point, Mr. Desai submitted, that had been established before the Court to the effect that the Azad Hind Government had an Army, its own distinctive badges and emblems and functioned under regularly appointed officers. "I am obliged to the prosecution," the defence Counsel argued, "for saving the necessity of proving this proposition. They put in documents after documents to show that the I. N. A. was properly organised and that it was regulated by an I. N. A. Act." The Counsel emphasised that the I. N. A. was formed with two purposes: the liberation of India and the protection of lives, honour and property of the people residing in East Asia at that time. It was also established that the Government of Japan ceded to the new India State the Islands of Andaman and Nicobar; that the Provisional Government acquired a territory of Ziwadi, about 50 square miles in area with a population of some 15,000 and that the Government functioned for four to six months, the Manipu and Vishenpur area covering some 1,500 square miles.

Mr. Desai put forward the modern ethics of International Law all over the world and said ... this is not politics, it is law – any war made for the purpose of liberating oneself from foreign yoke is completely justifiable. .... It is unnecessary in order to constitute a war that both parties should be acknowledged as independent nations or sovereign states ... a war may certainly exist between a state and its suzerain as in the Boer War (Wheaton’s International Law)."

With powerful eloquence, he called upon the Judges of the British Court Martial to treat the case of I. N. A. Officers on the same line of action – no question of prejudice or prestige involved. In marvellou
vocabulary, Mr. Desai urged "Please remember that you are here as Judges. You are not politicians, I agree, and I do not want you to be such. If you find that there was a "de facto" political organisation sufficient in character and sufficient in resources to declare war as an organised army, your verdict must be in favour of these men – no more and no less than the verdict on your own men, for killing others, of which act you are justly proud." The judgement of Chief Justice Fuller of the United States of America, was quoted in which the Chief Justice pronounced: "... if the party seeking to dislodge the existing Government succeeds and the independence of the Government it has set up is recognised, the acts of such Government from the commencement of its existence are regarded as those of an independent nation. If the political revolt fails of success, still if actual war has been waged, acts of legitimate warfare cannot be made the basis of individual liability."

The most important fact of the Singapore surrender was that as soon as Lt. Col Hunt, the British Commander officially handed over the Indian soldiers of his army to Major Fujiwara, the allegiance of the Indians to the Indian Army terminated. Captain Arshad, the defence witness made the emphatic statement when he submitted: "We believed that the only allegiance of the Indians to the Indian Army terminated. Captain Arshad, the defence witness made the emphatic statement when he submitted: "We believed that the only allegiance which was left was allegiance could not be raised at all because once the prosecution divided the king from the country, "without selling your own soul, how can you ever say that you are fighting to liberate your own country, there is some other allegiance which
prevents you from doing so? The prosecution witnesses have from beginning to end — will or unwilling, volunteer or non-volunteer-admitted that the object of the I. N. A. was to fight for the liberation of India.”

In the red Fort, the Chief Defence Counsel of the I. N. A. resumed his closing address on December 18, 1945. He read out the classic document of the American Declaration of Independence of 1776. He apprised the Court Martial that in the conflict between allegiance to the king and allegiance to the country, men of honour the American fighters chose their own country rather than the imposed allegiance of the alien king of England. He commented, “if this illustration of the case of a country which saved the world in the last war, and did so much in the case of civilisation is not going to be respected I submit that justice would be completely denied .. of what happened at Farrar Park (Surrender of the British to the Japanese in Singapore) and the actual state of events in India, it was perfectly legitimate, and indeed legitimised by the course of history, for the members of the I. N. A. to do what the American colonies did in 1776 “. Mr. Desai quoted statements made by the prosecution witnesses, that, the Officers of the Indian National Army were all Indian and that the troops took their orders from Indian Officers and not from the Japanese. It had been testified that those formed the I. N. A. ‘bona fide’ were prepared to fight anyone who came in the way, even the Japanese. With regard to contrasting comforts available in the I. N. A. with those available in the I. N. A. with those available as Prisoners of War under the Japanese, the Defence stressed upon the fact that all that men in I. N. A. got by way of
rations were rice, oil and a small quantity of sugar, and the prosecution
could not suggest that this was a luxury which attracted men to the I. N. A.

With reference to the evidence of torture and atrocities, the accused,
it was argued, were not charged with having committed any torture on any
prisoner of war. During the cross-examination, the prosecution witnesses
had failed to substantiate it. In reality, the prosecution which was alleged
was but punishment given for disobedience of orders or acts of indiscipline
and never in order to compel men to join the I. N. A.

The I. N. A. trial lasted until December 31, and very word of it was
propagated throughout India. The defence was bold and a great challenge
to the legality of the trial with intricate appeals to historical precedents of
England and America and of International Law. Thirty witnesses for the
prosecution and twelve for the defence had been produced. One hundred
and twenty exhibits were on evidence and the published reports ran to three
hundred and eighty seven closely printed pages. From the very start the
attention of the entire nation was focussed on the Red Fort, the vast masses
of India passed through an emotional uproar. “The honour and the law of
the Indian National Army are on trial before this court, and the right to
wage war with immunity on the part of a subject race for their liberation” –
was put up by the Chief Counsel of I. N. A. Defence, Mr. Bhulabhai Desai.
Apart from the vibrant situation in the Indian sub-continent, there was
strong feeling on this subject in Britain itself.78

On the 3rd January, 1946, the Court Martial announced the verdict:
“Capt. Shah Nawaz Khan Capt. Sehgal, Lt. Dhillon have stood the trial ...
The findings of the Court are that all three are guilty of the charge of
abetment of murder. Lt. Dhillon is acquitted of the charge of murder and Capt. Sahgal of the charge of abetment of murder.” The sentence of the Court on all three accused was transportation for life, cashiering and forfeiture of arrears of pay and allowances.

The Commander-in-Chief, Field-Marshal Sir Claude Auchinleck had not failed to read the writing on the wall, and remitted the sentences of transportation, but perhaps for the prestige of law-the British law-confirmed the other penalties. Since the principle had to be upheld for the sake of the stability of all lawful Governments, ‘since it is in all circumstances a most serious crime for an officer or soldier to throw off his allegiance and wage war against the state’-Shah Nawaz, Sahgal and Dhillon had been discharged and their pay and allowances forfeited!

The Indian National Congress was triumphant, they resorted to agitation for the quick release of the mean of the I.N.A. whose cases had not yet been disposed of, and pressurized the Government to complete the repatriation of those still detained abroad. Gandhiji met and conferred frequently with the I.N.A. personnel confined in the Red Fort. The Government hurried through and the returned I.N.A. Prisoners of War were all sent back to their respective native palaces. There were a few more courts martial to be cleared up by May, 1946, of those concerned with the atrocities at the Bidadari Concentration Camp of Lt. Col. Burhanuddin, Col. Rashid Ali and some others of Netaji’s Secret Service men who escaped by submarines from Penang and Singapore to India but captured in connection with their activities for I.N.A. Thus, the backbone of the British Empire-The Indian Army, could no longer be trusted and, “The Ghost of
abetment of murder. Lt. Dhillon is acquitted of the charge of murder and Capt. Sahgal of the charge of abetment of murder.” The sentence of the Court on all three accused was transportation for life, cashiering and forfeiture of arrears of pay and allowances.

The Commander-in-Chief, Field-Marshall Sir Claude Auchinleck had not failed to read the writing on the wall, and remitted the sentences of transportation, but perhaps for the prestige of law—the British law—confirmed the other penalties. Since the principle had to be upheld for the sake of the stability of all lawful Governments, ‘since it is in all circumstances a most serious crime for an officer or soldier to throw off his allegiance and wage war against the state’—Shah Nawaz, Sahgal and Dhillon had been discharged and their pay and allowances forfeited.

The Indian National Congress was triumphant, they resorted to agitation for the quick release of the mean of the I.N.A. whose cases had not yet been disposed of, and pressurized the Government to complete the repatriation of those still detained abroad. Gandhiji met and conferred frequently with the I.N.A. personnel confined in the Red Fort. The Government hurried through and the returned I.N.A. Prisoners of War were all sent back to their respective native palaces. There were a few more courts martial to be cleared up by May, 1946, of those concerned with the atrocities at the Bidadari Concentration Camp of Lt. Col. Burhanuddin, Col. Rashid Ali and some others of Netaji’s Secret Service men who escaped by submarines from Penang and Singapore to India but captured in connection with their activities for I.N.A. Thus, the backbone of the British Empire—the Indian Army, could no longer be
trusted and, "The Ghost of Subhas Bose", observes the British auth-
Michael Edwards, "like Hamlet’s father, walked the battlements of tl
Red Fort. and his suddenly amplified figure over-awed the conference
that were to lead to independence.”

The year 1946, opened with the widespread strikes amongst tl
Royal Air Force, whose men virtually refused to sink the ships
Bombay harbour when RIN rating had revolted against the raj. Thou-
by the end of February, 1946, the situation had been brought und-
control by the British soldiers, the report of the RIN mutiny, howev-
hinted that they were no “longer willing to serve in India” and there w
a strong desire amongst them “to get home quickly and in feeling tl
the overseas tour should be reduced”. Under the circumstances, t
British raj had to rely on Indian soldiers who were equally, if not, mo
were tired to serving them any more. There is no doubt that the revolt
the RIN ratings in various ports of the country had effected the mor:
of the armed forces every-where. Commenting on the indiscipline a
strikes in the army and Air Force, the Chief of General Staff v
informed by the G.O.C. Eastern command that the widespr
disturbances were meant to persuade the Indian troops, that their fut
lay in throwing their lot with the congress, which was apparently
ruler of India, rather than with the British. The authorities w
naturally alarmed when Lt. General Tuker informed them that the “Il
affair—was threatening to tumble down the whole edifice of the Ind
Army”. There was no doubt that great “harm had been done to
morale and discipline of the army” as Wavell told Azad. The Direc
Military Intelligence further confirmed that “the loyalty of the Indian army to its duty is not to be depended upon” in future.81

The RIN revolt, besides creating disturbance among the Naval forces at Karachi and Bombay, had caused dissatisfaction among the lower formations of various overseas commands of the Royal Air Force and had introduced the word “strike” for the first time in the history of the services. The report of the RIN mutiny admitted that the political campaign for freedom had reached “a Crescendo” and the INA affair was violently exploited to excite the Indians still serving in the army. The heroic deeds of the INA, revealed the report had heightened the political consciousness and the solidarity of the armed forces. The report concluded “the mutiny in its seriousness was unparalleled in the history of the services. Within a few days it spread to almost all the establishments and was participated in by men of all the communities, Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and Christians”.82 “The Way”, the report added “the public and the press in India have lionised the INA is said to have confirmed his conception of legality. A number of them have begun to doubt the wisdom of continuing in service with future so uncertain.” Perhaps Nehru’s assessment of the position was even more realistic than the British Intelligence, when he said in Bombay after the RIN mutiny that:

It has demonstrated how the mind of the Indian Army is working. It has also sown that the iron wall which the British created between the Indian Army and the Indian people has collapsed, and that they have become sensitive to political and economic exploitation of the British.
Nehru even believed and went to the extent of saying that the INA officers were not released owing to demonstration in India, but because the Indian Army had demanded their release.\textsuperscript{83} It appears that INA, though defeated in the battlefield, was able to achieve some measure of victory both inside and outside India. Its activities fired in South-East Asia, immigrate Indian and wrought a tremendous psychological revolution in their minds. Down to the humblest labourer writes S. Nagarajan, they felt confident of themselves and proud of being Indian. While in India, it gave a new turn to the national movement. Its own glory was short-lived, but it hastened the process of the liquidation of the British Empire. After Independence, the INA heroes became, what Ganpullay calls, “back numbers” for the only fault of having agreed to fight for the freedom of their motherland.\textsuperscript{84} They drifted into different fields and could not become a part of the Indian Army for the defence of the country – the role which Subhas had envisaged for them. Wavell noted this change after he had a talk with Pandit Nehru in May 1946 and wrote to the Secretary of State for India: “I think, from what he said, that Congress has begun to realise that INA is not entirely a creditable asset”. In order to make the erstwhile INA soldiers less effective, Nehru suggested to the Viceroy that some employment opportunities should be provided to “keep them out of the hands of the more extreme elements”. However, they were not to be taken back in the army for Auchinleck warned that, “It after the formation of the National Government, the political parties sought to reinstate INA personnel in the Army, that would have a serious effect on the Army morale and he himself would resign rather than agree to it”. Wavell conveyed these sentiments of the
C-in-C to Nehru, who was still toying with the idea of employing the INA personnel, and made it very clear that there was no question of reinstatement of the INA in the Army so long as the British power remained. Even the question of their utilisation in the Police was categorically rejected by Wavell. Nehru yielded to the above threats. Even Philip Mason confirms that the Congress forgot the INA as quickly as they conveniently could. Mason had a strong impression that the Congress High Command were as much perturbed as the British were about the public excitement about the INA. But by ignoring the INA after gaining their political goal, the Indian National Congress did a great harm to the future developments in the country. It is argued that INA had sufficiently proved the British wrong “who maintained that India was not really a nation, and the Indians could not work together”. The INA was a truly non-communal, united nationalist movement, which instead of being utilized by the Congress, was sacrificed to satisfy the whims of the British. Bose had viewed the INA in highly political terms and they were to play an equally important role in the national life of the country. Bose’s death left the INA leaderless and it faded away as an organized force because many of its important members were sent abroad as ambassadors or given highly paid civilian duties. But on the other hand, it is not certain whether the communal unity forged by Bose in the INA outside India, could be maintained inside, where hostile forces were working for a long-time for the partition of the country. The Indian Political leaders wanted to have the taste of power, even if the unity of the country was to be sacrificed. Nehru did adopt the slogan coined by Bose of “Jai Hind”, when he uttered it at the swearing in
ceremony on 2 September 1946 of the Interim Government much to the annoyance of the Viceroy, but other ideas which inspired the INA were soon obliterated from the public mind by projecting the freedom struggle as the legacy of Gandhi's creed of non-violence in the post-independence period.
REFERENCES

1. S.E.A.T.I.C. Bulletin No. 240. This bulletin contains the essays by Major Fujiwara, which he wrote in 1946 during his confinement at Singapore and have been used in this and the subsequent chapter. These writings contain his impression of the INA and Bose which he changed subsequently.


3. F. No. 601/7775/H.

4. Ibid.


6. F. No. 601/7716/H.S.


18. W.O. 208/804, Public record Office. See Appendix.
21. F. No. 601/7781/H.
25. *There was hurling of words by signal urgent to Chief of Staff in Washington London- 'Meanwhile Mount was busy with own plan- An offensive into Burma of long penetration, US Military authorities viewed with pain, Mount's failure to open Burma campaign'*. 

Sanasam Gourhari Singh:
*Manipur And World War II, (Composed in verse) Vol-II-p.87*

26. *Load Wavell writes in his Diary, dt. 16.1.44 : “M. B. (Mountbatten) tells following story. A propagandist of S. C. Bose’s Army on the Arakan Front, shouted across the lines : ‘We shall be on Delhi ten days.’ A sepoy recently returned front leave’, shouted back’ Not on these ruddy railways you won’t” .... Wavell the Viceroy’s Journal : p – 49.*

27. *On 14th. April, 1944, Col. S.A. Malik, (Colonel Shaukat Hayat Malik, formerly of the Bahawalpur State Force) the I.N.A. Commander, Bahadur group’ hoisted the Tricolour national Flag of India at the historic Moirang Kangla near Imphal on the liberated area of*
Manipur, on behalf of the Provisional Government of Free India. (In this place, the I.N.A. Martyrs Memorial Complex is being created now a days.)


II. Edward Behr- a Foreign Correspondent's Life Behind the Lines: pp.25,27.


33. "For the first time in the annals of history a whole division-horse, food and guns, had been moved by air all of big dimensions. 1,65,000 was the ration strength of IV corps. Bigger than peace time British Army's force, 55,000 of these were non combatant strength. They had all to be evacuated at length Only air transport was the main lifeline."-S. Gourhari Singh: Manipur and World War II : (In verse) p-95...


35. Debesh Das I.C.S. : An article in Bengali 'NETAJI RANA-NITI SESH PARYANTA JITECHHE' (Netaji's War Strength Finally Victorious).

37. F. No. 601/9763/H. For more details about the war in this area, see *The Siege- A Story from Koshima* by Arthur Campbell (Great Britain, 1956).


39. F. No. 601/7716/H.

40. F. No. 355/I.N.A.

41. F. Kikan, pp. 258-259.


45. F. No. 601/7273/H.


47. Hugh Toye; Op cit. P.134.


50. SEAc Report, pp. 126-27.

51. Manuscript of Col. G. S. Dhillon’s Memoirs

52. Colonel Dhillon’s Manuscript, p. 113.


55. *Venez Voir comment meurt un Marechal da France sur le champ de bataille-Les Miserables, Tom*
56. File No. 164/INA NAI
57. Unto Him a Witness pp. 51-52.
58. Special Message on leaving Burma dt. 24.3.45
60. S. A. Ayer – Unto Him A Witness ........p-69
63. Michael Edward’s The Last Years of British India : pp. 92-93.
64. Philip Mason’s FOREWORD in the Springing Tiger by Hugh Toye : pp VIII-IX
66. Philip Mason – ‘Foreword’ – pp X-XI in The Springing Tiger’ by the Hugh Toye (Philip Mason I.C.S. Joint Secretary, Govt. of India, War Deptt.)
69. Philip Mason’s Foreword in the book. ‘The Springing Tiger’.
71. General Court Martial Red Fort Delhi : Public Relations Directorate GHQ War Department, Government of India, 1946.

74. Foreword written by Nehru to 'My Memories of the I.N.A. and its Netaji,' by Shah Nawaz


77. Ibid - P 533-34.


80. Ministry of Defence, F. No. 621/H.

81. War Office No. 208/761 A.

82. Ibid.


