CHAPTER THREE
CRISIS IN THE I.N.A.

Within a few months of its formation, the I.N.A. succumbed to a crisis. In December 1942 the Indian leaders, civilian and of the I.N.A., had decided not to send the I.N.A. troops to the Burma front as desired by the Japanese liaison agency. With the taking of this decision, the relation between the Japanese army and the Indians seemed to have reached the breaking point. Moreover, in the same month the I.N.A. was dissolved by an order of Mohan Singh but the Indian leaders were not unanimous on this act.

The two events, namely, the discontinuation of cooperation with the Japanese army and the dissolution of the I.N.A., can not be explained by any single reason. There were different reasons and different issues were involved. In this chapter, at first efforts will be made to describe and analyse the unsettled issues between the Indian leaders and the Japanese army, which ultimately threatened to terminate their cooperation in the first part of December 1942. The latter part of the chapter will be devoted in analysing the important issue which divided the Indian leaders and ultimately led the General Commanding Officer (G.C.O.) of the I.N.A. to dissolve the army.

1. The split between the Japanese and the Indian leaders in East Asia

Although during the Malayan campaign and immediately after the fall of Singapore, the Japanese army had shown sympathy
specially for the Indian soldiers and civilians in East Asia, a number of incidents which took place since then, had damaged the understanding between Japanese army and the Indian leaders. By the end of November 1942, both Mohan Singh and the civilian leaders had decided to proceed no further with the Japanese army until the latter fulfilled their demands. At first the reasons for which Mohan Singh turned away from the Japanese army will be discussed.

The reasons of Mohan Singh's disagreement with the Japanese army

Ever since he agreed to work with Major Fujiwara during the Malayan campaign, Mohan Singh ardently cooperated with the Japanese 25th Army. His personal trust in Major Fujiwara and his eagerness to create a goodwill in the 25th Army for his task had made him so co-operating. But there was some basic difference between Mohan Singh's desires and the intentions of the 25th Army regarding the I.N.A. It has already been mentioned that Lt. Gen. Suzuki, the Chief of Staff of the 25th Army, had refused to recognize a small force of Indian P.O.Ws. as an independent army. (1) How and where Mohan Singh's forces of Indian P.O.Ws. would fit into 25th Army's plan had become clear during the Malayan campaign. Front line propaganda among the British Indian troops, and employment of armed parties attached to the different Japanese units were the two jobs which the 25th Army was interested in assigning to the Indian P.O.Ws. The Malayan

(1) See, Chapter Two.
campaign being over, the tasks of reconstruction and defence of Singapore assumed a special importance for the 25th Army. And these had to be carried out, keeping in Singapore the minimum Japanese forces. So, to the Headquarters of the 25th Army a plan to raise an armed force from the Indian P.O.Ws. to meet an emergency, if it took place after a part of the Japanese forces had been withdrawn to more active role in other fronts, appeared favourable. Moreover, in view of the labour requirements of their vast new airfield programme and other reconstruction works the large number of Indian P.O.Ws. could be of much use. (2) These intentions of the 25th Army became evident in the earlier part of 1942.

Indian guards and anti-aircraft gunners borrowed by the Japanese army. Soon after the fall of Singapore, the Japanese liaison agency, Fujiwara Kikan was asked by the 25th Army Headquarters to requisition the service of a party of Indian P.O.Ws. to release the Japanese guards at the British camp at Changi in Singapore. (3) At the same time, requests were put forward to provide for 900 Indian anti-aircraft gunners, who would receive a special training from the Japanese, to meet any enemy air raid, and also a number of labour parties to be sent to Thailand and Borneo. (4) The task of guarding the British and


(3) Shah Nawaz Khan, My Memories of I.N.A. and Its Netaji (Delhi, 1946) 44-5.

(4) Ibid., 42, 45-6.
the Australian P.O.Ws. at Changi camp was not liked by the
Indian P.O.Ws. (5) To do fatigue work for the Japanese army
was hated by them. In spite of all this, due to Fujiwara's
insistence, Mohan Singh had fulfilled all the demands of the
25th Army.

The problem of control over all Indian P.O.Ws. In April
1942, Major Fujiwara was replaced by Col. Iwakuro as the chief
of the Japanese liaison agency. (6) Since then two major pro­
blems, namely, the control of the Indian P.O.Ws. by Mohan Singh
and the expansion of I.N.A., had come up. The good understand­
ing which existed between Fujiwara and Mohan Singh could not be
maintained after Iwakuro took over. Although it is difficult to
say that the mere presence of Major Fujiwara at the top of the
liaison agency would have solved the problems which turned
Mohan Singh away from the 25th Army in the latter part of 1942,
it can be surely said that there were no chances of compromise
when Mohan Singh had to deal with a personality like
Iwakuro's. (7)

(5) Ibid.

(6) Discussion with Gen. Iwakuro in October 1963 at
Tokyo.

(7) Col. Iwakuro, with a brilliant army record appeared
to lack friendliness of Major Fujiwara's character. An ambi­
tious officer, sure to flourish in the army career, Col. Iwakuro
was thorough in his job but unaware of the virtues of compromise.

The lack of good understanding between Mohan Singh and
Col. Iwakuro was sure to influence the events in the latter
part of 1942. As it has been already pointed out in the preceed-
chapter, Iwakuro virtually enjoyed a broad authority and the
decisions taken by Japanese on the questions of Indian P.O.Ws.
since his appointment, were formulated by him and endorsed by
the headquarters of the 25th Army.
Mohan Singh was all along claiming complete control over the Indian P.O.Ws. It was an original condition of Mohan Singh's co-operation with Major Fujiwara and the commander of the 25th Army was said to have accepted it. (8) When Major Fujiwara handed over the Indian P.O.Ws. to Mohan Singh, the latter understood that all the Indian P.O.Ws. — those who would join the national army and those who would keep out of it — would remain under his control. In all the three conferences which were held at Singapore, Tokyo and Bangkok during 1942, the Japanese authorities were requested to hand over to Mohan Singh all such Indian P.O.Ws. which were under their direct control. (9) The Japanese, however, really meant something different from what Mohan Singh understood from their pledges regarding the control over the Indian P.O.Ws. Later, in December 1942, Major Fujiwara said that the non-volunteers would continue to remain as P.O.Ws. under the Japanese control. (10) Earlier, in April (1942), he had suggested in a meeting with the Indian leaders that the strength of the I.N.A. would not exceed, in all,

(8) See Chapter Two.

(9) Proceedings of the conferences at Singapore and at Tokyo in March-April 1942, K.S. Giani, Indian Independence Movement in East Asia (Lahore, 1947) 40, 49.

The book is divided into two parts. All references in this chapter are from part one of the book. The Resolutions adopted at the Bangkok Conference, June 1942, I.N.A. History Committee files, All-India I.N.A. Relief and Enquiry Committee, New Delhi.

(10) Report of the meeting on 7 December 1942 attended by Col. Iwakuro, Major Fujiwara, Rash Behari Bose and N. Raghavan, See Sapan, Pseudonym, Nathul Subhas Chandra Bose: His Life and Work (Bombay, 1946) 205.
2500 men and officers. The rest would be split up into different groups and assigned garrison work, labour, technical training, etc. and attached to the Japanese army. (11)

The liaison agency took over the control of non-volunteer P.O.Ws. and the surplus I.N.A. volunteers. With the formation of the Iwakuro Kikan, the Japanese attitude towards the question of the control of the Indian P.O.Ws. did not change. Col. Iwakuro, as he told the writer, personally considered the handing over of Indian P.O.Ws. to Mohan Singh at Farrar Park as nothing but a gesture of the 25th Army to win them (the Indian P.O.Ws.) over. (12) Col. Iwakuro's programme at first, as it has been pointed out in the preceding chapter, had little room for an active role for the I.N.A. Moreover, Col. Iwakuro doubted if Mohan Singh, who had been a Major in the British army, could command more than a Division of soldiers. (13) In their campaign towards north-east India in the late 1942 or early 1943, the Japanese did not require a large I.N.A. as there was no plan to assign it (the I.N.A.) an active role. (14) For all these reasons, Col. Iwakuro had no desire to expand the I.N.A. As a result, the Indian P.O.Ws., who remained under the


(12) Discussion with Gen. Iwakuro in October 1963 at Tokyo.

(13) Ibid.

(14) Discussed in Chapter Three.
direct control of the Japanese army at the time when the liaison agency was re-organized by Col. Iwakuro, were not handed over by the latter to Mohan Singh. Moreover, in October 1942, Col. Iwakuro set-up a department in the liaison agency which took over from Mohan Singh the control of not only all Indian P.O.Ws. who had refused to join the I.N.A., but all the surplus I.N.A. volunteers who were waiting to be absorbed in the I.N.A. in future. (15)

Mohan Singh's reaction to the measures taken by the Japanese army. To Mohan Singh this measure appeared as more than mere failure on the part of the Japanese army to implement their pledge. The taking over of the surplus volunteers and the non-cooperating P.O.Ws. by the new Japanese department seemed to remove the possibility of expansion of his army. Having raised the First Division of the I.N.A. in September 1942, he was soon asking for the consent of the Southern Army to permit him to raise the Second Division from his surplus volunteers and the facilities to train up the civilians who had offered their service. His ultimate aim, was an army of at least two hundred thousand men. Raising a big army would not have been impossible as there were large number of surplus volunteers and his recruitment officers in Malaya had been overwhelmed with civilian offers of service. (16)

(15) Khan, n. 3, 70.

(16) Discussing the "plan which did not materialise" in 1942, Mohan Singh wrote: "Forces to liberate India should consist purely of Indians. I wanted to raise and train a
In September (1942), Mohan Singh had succeeded in raising the First I.N.A. Division. But the manner in which the First Division had been armed left much to be said. (17) Soon after, he had agreed with the Iwakuro Kikan to move a part of the division to Burma. Mohan Singh had given his consent to this troop movement not only because it could place a part of his Army nearer to the Indian frontier, but he hoped that the movement of a part of the I.N.A. from Singapore would give him a patriotic force of 200,000 to 500,000 strongly united, well disciplined and completely independent." Typescript copy of the statement issued by Mohan Singh in August 1945 before surrendering to the Allied forces in Sumatra, I.N.A. History Committee's files, All-India I.N.A. Relief and Enquiry Committee, Delhi. See also Toye, n. 2, 10.

(17) An account of the armaments supplied to the First Division of I.N.A. by the Japanese, prepared with the help of the I.N.A. officers gave the details of armaments. It notes: 
(a) Rifles were old and rusty and had no oil bottles or pull throughs for cleaning purposes. (b) Light Machine Guns had no spare parts of any type and fewer were ever in working order. In one unit there were as many as three different types of Light Machine Guns, Lewis guns, Bren guns and Dutch L.M.Gs. These needed different types of ammunition and after the initial issue of ammunition which was enough to last one hour's pitched battle there was no hope of receiving any more. (c) Medium Machine Guns had no spare parts.... While away from the front line in Singapore the custody of the ammunition was with the Japanese. (d) Mortars and Heavy Artillery had no optical and scientific instruments, such as range finders and clinometers. The guns...were never brought out of Singapore in spite of the fact that the I.N.A. possessed excellent gunners which had proved themselves much superior to the Japanese in the Malaya campaign. (e) Armoured Fighting vehicles...Bren Gun Carrier and armoured cars. These were useful only for photographic propaganda...the most that they ever accomplished was to take part in ceremonial parades, and even then some broke down...." Typescript copy of the history of Indian Independence Movement and I.N.A. in the Far East, I.N.A. Defence Committee's files, All-India I.N.A. Relief and Enquiry Committee, Delhi.
chance to raise new units from the surplus volunteers. (18) But the removal of a good number of Indian P.O.W.s. from his control in October (1942) was an eyeopener to him. How was he going to have freedom for India with one division of troops, once beaten and poorly armed?

Mohan Singh's reaction was bound to be sharp also for some other reasons. He was not happy about treatment that the Indian P.O.W.s. had received from the Japanese army. There was suspicion among the Indian P.O.W.s. even at the outset about the proposal to impart special training to anti-aircraft gunners, as these were ex-gunners of Hongkong and Singapore Royal Artillery with experience. (19) But Mohan Singh had, as it has been pointed out, agreed to lend them temporarily. These men were segregated from the Indian camps, given Japanese army uniform, and placed under the direct command of the Japanese officers. Some of them were sent to the Celebes. (20) Mohan Singh, having received reports about this, wished to meet these gunners but he was not permitted to meet the gunners. The 1,000 Indian P.O.W.s. whom he had sent to Thailand for doing fatigue duties for the Japanese were splitted into small groups and put under direct command of the Japanese officers. (21)

(18) This decision must have been taken by Mohan Singh sometime between September and October 1942. Shah Nawaz Khan wrote that an advance party had left for Burma in October to receive the main body there. The decision, therefore, dated before October 1942. Khan, n. 3, 66.

(19) Khan, n. 3, 46.

(20) Ibid. See also the typescript note received by the I.N.A. History Committee from Col. W.S. Gill, I.N.A. History Committee files, All-India I.N.A. Relief and Enquiry Committee, Delhi. Hereinafter referred to as Gill's note.

(21) Khan, n. 3, 46.
The question of the despatch of I.N.A. troops to Burma referred to the Council of Action. In November (1942) when the arrival of the Japanese troop ships in Singapore called for the implementation of the agreed troop movement, Mohan Singh had received more unfavourable reports about the Japanese army's treatment to the Indian troops to create deep suspicion in him. About the same time Lt. Col. N.S. Gill, who was in charge of I.N.A. in Burma, had hurried back to Singapore with the reports on an unfortunate incident which took place in Burma over the issue of evacuee Indian property. (22) He also reported to Mohan Singh that I.N.A.'s advance party in Burma had received the same treatment from the Japanese Army as had the Indian anti-aircraft gunners. Col. Gill had also gathered from his conversation with the Japanese Staff Officers in Burma that they intended to use the I.N.A. in a similar way when it would arrive in Burma. (23)

These reports created great misgivings in Mohan Singh's

(22) The problem which was created over the evacuee Indian property in Burma will be discussed later in this chapter.

(23) Khan, n. 3, 66. The Japanese Army in Burma and Singapore had failed to create trust in the mind of the I.N.A. leaders. The complaint against them was that they were fond of creating groups and deal with them. Mr. Gill told the writer that in Burma he had found many groups doing the same work which the Japanese had asked him to do. Discussion with Mr. N.S. Gill in July 1963 at Bangkok.

In Singapore, in order to win the support of the Muslim P.O.Ws. among the Indians, the Japanese, quite ignorantly, backed a group which was creating a rift among the Indian P.O.Ws. on communal lines. This is revealed from the writing of the chief of this group, Col. M.K. Durrani. See M.K. Durrani, The Sixth Column (London, 1955) 62-92.
mind about the sincerity of the Japanese army. It would be too big a risk for him to implement the agreement on the movement of troops until the liaison agency made clear the position of the Japanese Government regarding India. Accordingly, he "asked Iwakuro Kikan that before contemplating any further move the matter should be referred to the Council of Action." (24)

The prospect of getting the consent of the Council of Action, when the question of implementing the agreement on troop movement would be referred to it, was not at all bright. Iwakuro Kikan possibly knew that and during the time which preceded the meeting of the Council of Action on 4 December, Col. Iwakuro brought utmost pressure on Mohan Singh so that the latter might carry out the move at his own initiative. (25) But Col. Iwakuro's efforts did not succeed. The question of the movement of the I.E.A. troops to Burma was referred to the Council of Action in December 1942 and the President of

(24) Mohan Singh's reply to Major Ogawa. Minutes of the meeting on 2 December 1942 attended by Gen. Mohan Singh and Major Ogawa. See Gran, n. 9, 110.

(25) Between 1 and 3 December (1942) four rounds of discussion had taken place between the members of the Iwakuro Kikan and Mohan Singh. Col. Iwakuro skilfully used personal influence and threat to bring round Mohan Singh. On the night between 1-2 December, Lt. Kunizuka, a member of the liaison agency, who as an interpreter to Mohan Singh had been very helpful since the days of Malayan campaign, had been sent to cajole him. Major Ogawa's discussion on the night of 2 December contained a clear threat. The same night Col. Iwakuro tried with his promise of special help. As nothing availed, on 3 December Major Fujiwara was brought down, in vain, to win over his old friend.

For the minutes of the four meetings which took place between 1-4 December 1942 and were attended by Mohan Singh and the Japanese officers see ibid., 107-17.
Council decided against the despatch of I.N.A. troops to Burma. Why did the Iwakuro Kikan fail to secure the support of the Council of Action?

The causes responsible for turning the civilian leaders away from the Japanese army

It seems that there were some genuine reasons for which the development of good understanding between the civilian Indian leaders in East Asia and the Japanese liaison agency was difficult. The lack of any real interest of the Imperial General Headquarters (I.G.H.Q.) in Indian freedom was an important reason. It has been already pointed out in the preceding chapter that during 1942 the I.G.H.Q. kept their hands clean off Indian affairs and it was the Iwakuro Kikan which was entrusted with the task of maintaining the 'show' of a movement among the Indians in East Asia.

The failure of the attempts to secure a declaration from the Government of Japan. On the other hand, as it has been already mentioned, most of the Indian leaders had doubts about the Japanese intention regarding India. (26) They had also the fear that the invasion of India by the Japanese army was imminent. At the Tokyo and the Bangkok Conferences they had requested the Japanese Government to make an authoritative declaration clarifying their (the Japanese) policy towards India in general, and certain specific questions in particular. (27)

(26) See Chapter Three.
(27)
During the five months between June to November 1942, the Council of Action made repeated efforts to secure a declaration on India from the Government of Japan. (28) As the desired declaration did not come, the earlier doubts of the Indian leaders about Japanese sincerity turned into deep suspicion.

(28) On 22 June 1942, the President of the Council of Action addressed a letter to Col. Iwakuro, presumably mentioning the demands put forward by the Indian leaders at Bangkok Conference. He requested Col. Iwakuro to pass on the Bangkok resolutions to the Imperial Government. The letter, which was received from Iwakuro on 10 July 1942, referred to the "repeated statements made by Premier Tojo and also his recent message of felicitation to the Bangkok Conference in regard to the request dated on June the 22nd 1942 from the Indian Independence League to the Imperial Japanese Government...." The letter made it clear that liaison agency had not sent the League's letter dated 22 June to the Imperial Government. Col. Iwakuro's answer did not satisfy the Council of Action and on 22 July "a copy of the Bangkok Resolutions has been forwarded to the Imperial Government" and as more than a month rolled on without any reply from Tokyo, Rash Behari Bose addressed another letter to Iwakuro. He mentioned in his letter that when the letter of 22 June was forwarded to liaison agency, the League was "already in possession of the declarations made by His Excellency Premier General Tojo and our intention was to have further clarification of the position of the Imperial Government on specific matters raised in the Resolutions." It was also pointed out that Col. Iwakuro's "communication does not, (a) specifically reply to the requests contained in our letter dated 22 June 1942, and (b) does not specifically clarify the attitude of the Imperial Government on the various points raised in the said letter and in the resolutions of the Bangkok Conference." On getting this letter, Iwakuro advised the Council of Action that it was not proper for the League to submit such a strong memorandum to the Japanese Government and that it was likely to be interpreted as an ultimatum. On this the Council decided on 5 September 1942 to withdraw the memorandum and Gen. Iwakuro undertook to get an early reply from the Japanese Government.


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The insistence of the Indian leaders for an official clarification made Iwakuro's position very difficult. The Japanese Government, at the instance of Major Fujiwara, had sought for a tripartite Axis declaration on Indian Independence before the Bangkok Conference took place. (29) But the Japanese move failed. Mussolini was favourable. Hitler considered the occasion too early as his army was still far off from the Indian frontier. (30) Although there is evidence to believe that Iwakuro kept his Government abreast of the demands of the Indian leaders, he, however, felt it needless to forward the text of their letters to Tokyo. (31) Iwakuro's unwillingness to pass on their letters to the Imperial Government irritated the Indian leaders, but it is doubtful, however, if Tokyo

Mr. Menon, later in a meeting with the Japanese officials, pointed out that the Council of Action had decided to withdraw its letter of 5 September 1942 to Col. Iwakuro. The minutes of the joint conference of the Council of Action and the Iwakuro Kikan on 1 December 1942, see Giani, n. 9, 101.

(29) Toye, n. 2, 7.

(30) Tokyo's proposal for a declaration of India's independence came at the same time when Subhas Chandra Bose was vigorously campaigning for it. Subhas Chandra Bose, who was in Germany, made a determined effort to convince Hitler and Mussolini. The two dictators considered Japan's proposal when they met at Obersalzburg on 29 April 1942. The decision was against any such declaration at that time. Bose met Mussolini and persuaded him to revise his decision in favour of a tripartite declaration of Indian Independence. Mussolini "telegraphed the Germans proposing — contrary to the Salzburg decisions — proceeding at once with the declaration," wrote Ciano in his diary. Bose met Hitler but the latter was still sceptical about the real effects of the declaration at that time. The proposal for a Provisional Government of Free India suggested by Mussolini was given a cold shoulder by the German Government. See Malcolm Muggeridge, ed., Ciano's Diary 1939-43 (London, 1950) 465; Louis P. Lochner, ed. and translated by The Goebbels's Diary (London, 1948) 157.

(31) Discussion with Gen. Iwakuro in October 1943 at Tokyo.
would have had to offer them, at that time, anything else than
mere promise of assistance to carry on the movement. (32)

Incidents of interference by the Japanese in the Indian
affairs. If the negative attitude of the Japanese Government
created suspicion among the Indian leaders, the tactlessness
and inco-ordination in the lower levels of the Japanese army
provoked widespread hostility. On a number of occasions, the
junior officers of the Japanese army gave an account of extreme
naivete in dealing with Indian affairs.

The Japanese had agreed to give the Council of Action a

(32) About the attitude of Imperial Government towards
the Bangkok Resolutions an official Japanese source wrote that
a note containing the Bangkok Resolutions was sent by the liai-
son agency to Tokyo for comments from the Japanese Government
and Army Headquarters. The Army Headquarters regarded some of
these plans as too adventurous and stated in an abstract way
that Japan would commit herself only to the extent of giving
such aid as might be necessary for the attainment of indepen-
dence.

Unpublished English translation of Subhas Chandra Bose
and Japan (Tokyo, 1956) 78-82. The writer came to know it
from Gen. S. Kawabe that the book was compiled by Gen. Kawabe
from the available official Japanese materials. The book was
published by the Foreign Affairs Ministry of the Government of
Japan.

Discussing the attitude of the Imperial General Headquar-
ters towards India in 1942, Elsbree wrote: "Since there was
division in the high command over the position of India and
since the Japanese were busy elsewhere at this time, temporiz-
ing indecision rather than Machiavellian duplicity would be a
better explanation of their policy. They were prepared to
make use of an Indian National Movement but still were not
sure to what ends it should be put."

Willard H. Elsbree, Japan's Role in South East Asian
Nationalist Movements 1940-5 (Massachusetts, 1953) 34.
free hand to control the broadcasting programmes of the Indian Independence League at all the broadcasting stations under their control. Later, they acted without the knowledge and against the decisions of the member of the Council of Action who was in charge of broadcasting, Mr. K.P.K. Menon, in such matters as appointments of the staff and broadcasting. (33)

In November 1942 another incident took place in the Swaraj Institute of Penang. The institute had been started to impart training in national service and sabotage work to the Indian civilians. (34) One night early in November (1942), some Japanese officers of the local Special Service School picked up some students of the institute and, without bringing it to the notice of Raghavan or the League, sent them to India for fifth columnist activities. (35)

The Japanese Special Service School did not at first concede that they had anything to do with this matter. Raghavan's threat to close the institute made the special service school admit that the boys had been taken away by them. Raghavan


(34) The Swaraj Institute was established by Mr. N. Raghavan in Penang. There were two other institutes for the same purpose. The Penang High School was converted to a Special Service School and run by the Iwakuro Kikan independently. The Sandicraft School was started and run by H.K. Durrani. Unlike the two other schools which were functioning for the same purpose, Mr. Raghavan's institute was running independently and his school's training was "based on political and cultural foundation, the syllabus having been prescribed by him." See Durrani, n. 23, 122-3; Khan, n. 3, 68.

(35) Khan, Ibid.
was exasperated and he closed the institute in protest. Japanese Military Police kept him under house arrest for some time on the charge that his action was an insult to their Emperor.

The problem over the evacuee Indian property in Burma. The Burma branch of the Inakuro Kikan had also some troubles with the local Indian Independence League. The Japanese 25th Army had previously expressed its intention not to treat the Indians as enemy nationals. In view of this friendly attitude of the Japanese army and for the need of the League for fund to finance its activities, League's control over the Indian evacuee property in Burma was considered desirable. The Bangkok Conference had asked the Japanese Government that the property of the absentee Indians in Burma (those who had left for India in the great exodus of 1942) should be entrusted with the League as a source of the latter's income. (36) The Japanese Commander-in-Chief in Burma, Gen. Iida, who was the chief of Japanese military administration in Burma, was more concerned with the question of Burmese independence. On Indian independence he was said to be cold. (37) The Political Department of the Military Administration of Burma prepared a scheme for the management of Indian ownerless property in Burma with the help of the League, as the department was too short of hands. (38)

(36) See Chapter Three.

(37) Discussion with Col. Kitabe, ex-chief of the Burma branch of Inakuro Kikan in October 1963 at Kyoto, Japan.

(38) It was later revealed by the chief of the First Section of the Political Department, Mr. Yutani, in the conversation which took place on 12 October 1942. Minutes of the

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This plan was not acceptable to the League because according to this plan, the League was not to get the income from the ownerless property. The League put forward suggestions of some "modifications" to the Japanese plan. In view of the unwillingness of the military administration of Burma, there was no possibility of League's suggestions being accepted as the Iwakuro Kikan was not able to influence Gen. Iida's headquarters. (39) In the meeting that took place on 12 October 1942 among the representatives of the Burma branch of the League, Lt. Col. Kitabe, the chief of Iwakuro Kikan in Burma, Capt. Truchimochi, a member of the Iwakuro Kikan in Burma and Mr. Yutani, the Chief of the First Section of the Political Department of Burma military administration, Yutani expressed the inability to deviate from the original scheme of his department. (40) He urged that the Burma League should accept the Japanese scheme as it was.

Acceptance of the scheme, it was pointed out by a meeting on 12 October 1942 attended by the members of the Iwakuro Kikan in Burma, the Chief of the First Section of the Political Department of Burma Military Administration and the member of Indian Independence League, Burma. See Giani, n. 9, 97.

(39) Col. Kitabe told the writer that in 1942 Gen. Iida's Headquarters not only disliked any support to be extended by the local Iwakuro Kikan to the Indian independence movement but was also opposed to the functioning of the Iwakuro Kikan in Burma. The Iwakuro Kikan was completely subordinated to the Japanese Military Administration of Burma.


(40) Minutes of discussion among the members of the Iwakuro Kikan in Burma, Mr. Yutani and the members of the Indian Independence League in Burma on 12 October 1942. Giani, n. 9, 97.
representative of the League, would bring down the "prestige" of the League in the Indian community. Mr. Yutani retorted to it:

Prestige - what prestige? Notion of prestige is a false one. The prestige of Indians becomes secondary to the execution of the order of the Commander-in-Chief. Any one living in Burma must obey the order of the Commander-in-Chief for the duration of the war. The Indian Independence League also cannot be exempted. . . .

We do not want you to be puppets. But if we do, what is the harm in being puppets? Why is puppet bad? (41)

The Council of Action made a fresh attempt to secure a declaration from the Japanese Government. The above incidents undermined the spirit of co-operation of the Indian leaders. More particularly, no other incident than the trouble over the evacuee Indian property in Burma had a more decisive effect in hardening the attitude of the Indian leaders, particularly, that of Mohan Singh. When the tactless comments of the Japanese officer were received in Singapore, Indian leaders felt convinced that there should not be any more delay in securing the declaration from the Japanese Government. They were already agitated over the issue of troop movement to Burma. They had withdrawn their letter of 5 September (1942) on Iwakuro's assurance of an early reply from Tokyo. They had received no reply till the time a copy of the minutes of the meeting of 12 October (1942) in Burma reached Singapore. On 29 November (1942), the President of the Council of Action informed the

(41) Ibid.
liaison agency about "the imperative necessity of receiving a form assurance from the Imperial Government." He also men tioned that "we have had in past few months certain reasons for anxieties" and urged the Iwakuro Kikan to pass on a new memorandum, which was submitted, to the Imperial Government.

The memorandum of 29 November 1942 to the Government of Japan mentioned: "We have now reached a stage at which we feel that before we take any further forward move, it is necessary to clear matters, to understand our position perfectly...." The memorandum made four specific points. (i) The Government of Japan should clarify their attitude towards the resolutions of the Bangkok Conference. (ii) The Council of Action should be recognized as the "Supreme Executive of the Indian Independence Movement in East Asia." (iii) A "full, formal and solemn declaration" should be made by the Government of Japan regarding their intentions to recognize the absolute independence of India. And (iv) the formation and existence of the Indian National Army should be "formally and publicly recognized." (42)

On receipt of this memorandum Iwakuro was worried and sought for a joint conference of the members of the Iwakuro Kikan and the Council of Action. In the meeting which took place on 1 December (1942), Mr. Menon, a member of the Council of Action, strongly pointed out the difficulties which the Council of Action was facing due to non-recognition of I.N.A. and the

(42) From Rash Behari Bose to Col. K. Iwakuro, 29 November 1942; From Rash Behari Bose to the Imperial Government of Japan, 29 November 1942, see Soman, n. 10, 191-5.
lack of any declaration from the Imperial Government. (43)

Iwakuro's replies revealed that he was viewing the I.N.A. primarily as a propaganda instrument. "The reason for not announcing the existence of the I.N.A.", he told in the meeting, "is that...if the I.N.A. is to be used for military purposes in India it is better to keep it secret. ...The decision is to announce the existence of the I.N.A. when military operations start." A declaration of Indian Independence should be made only when its political effects would be calculated to be the greatest. Col. Iwakuro said: "unless a declaration coincides with some great happening in the future, it would have no political significance...." He would ask Tojo Government to make a declaration "on such an important occasion". (44)

The Council of Action decided against the movement of I.N.A. troops to Burma. After the joint conference between the Iwakuro Kikan and the Council of Action on 1 December 1942, there was hardly any basis left for the Council to co-operate with the liaison organization on the question of sending I.N.A. troops to Burma. When Council of Action met on 4 December 1942, the President expressed the decision that "no troop movement should take place now" and the all other members supported the decision. (45)

(43) Minutes of the joint conference of the Iwakuro Kikan and the Council of Action on 1 December 1942, see Giani, n. 9, 101-2.

(44) Ibid., 104.

(45) Minutes of the meeting of the Council of Action on 4 December 1942, Ibid., 117.
2. **Disagreement among the Indian leaders**

The unanimity which emerged on 4 December 1942 in the Council of Action was only on the question of troop movement. It was the last occasion when the Council of Action stood in a body on an issue vis-a-vis the Japanese Army. Another issue was slowly developing among the Indian leaders and it was much debated inside and outside the Council of Action during December 1942. Who will have the final say on the army matters - the Council of Action or the G.O.C.? The unity of the Indian leaders was to founder mainly on this issue and this led to a new crisis.

Before the events which took place since 4 December (1942) are discussed, it would be better to explain how a rift had developed within the Council of Action, as it would help to explain those events.

**Growth of the independent I.N.A.-Command**

The measures towards the formation of the I.N.A. had been taken rapidly under the auspices of its founder-G.O.C. Ever since Mohan Singh had agreed to work with the *Fujiwara Kikan* during the Malayan campaign, most of the Indian P.O.Ws. had been handed over to him as they were captured by the Japanese Army. Mohan Singh had lost no time in reorganizing the P.O.Ws., subject them to discipline, educate them in Indian problems and introduce a system of training. (46) As Singapore fell to the

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(46) See Chapter Two.
Japanese, Mohan Singh had set up his headquarters which were responsible for the administration and finance of the P.O.Ws. (47)

As there was no effective political organization to which the G.O.C. would be responsible, much freedom of action was left to him. One notable feature of authority which the G.O.C.'s position had come to assume was its independence to deal with the Japanese army directly. One of the conditions on which Mohan Singh had agreed to co-operate with the Fujiwara Kikan, as it has been pointed out, was that the army matters should not be subject to the League's control. (48) All decisions regarding cooperation with the Japanese army had been taken by him, whether advised by his subordinates or not. The decisions of sending armed P.O.W. parties with the Japanese Army in the Burma and the Singapore campaigns, helping the Japanese army with guards, the anti-aircraft gunners and labour parties, and refusal to take part in the attack of Sumatra had been his.

In the early part of the Indian independence movement in East Asia, the civilian leaders did not interfere with the army affairs and left them to Mohan Singh. In the selection of army's representatives to the Singapore Conference, the Tokyo Conference and the Council of Action, the G.O.C. was given a free hand. (49) In the Bangkok Conference Mohan Singh succeeded in keeping the senior-most Indian officer, Col. N.S. Gill, whom he might have

(47) See Chapter Three.
(48) See Chapter Two.
(49) Khan, n. 3, 48-50.
considered as his rival, out of the Council of Action. (50) Moreover, he succeeded, contrary to the initial opposition from the President of the Council of Action and from the senior Indian officer, in combining in himself the position of the G.O.C. of the I.N.A. and the portfolio of the "General Staff." (51) After the Bangkok Conference, he (Mohan Singh)

(50) Col. N.S. Gill, who was the senior most combatant officer among the Indians at the time of the surrender of Singapore, later told the writer that he (Col. Gill) was not included in the Council of Action by Mohan Singh who, at the last moment, chose Lt. Col. Gillani. Col. Gill told the writer that one of its reasons might be that Mohan Singh had come to know of Col. Gill’s popularity among the Indian P.O.W.s. in Burma. Mohan Singh might have thought that Gill’s election to the Council of Action would constitute a challenge to his (Mohan Singh’s) position in future. Discussion with Mr. N.S. Gill in June 1963 at New Delhi.

(51) In the meeting of the Council of Action on 24 June 1942, Mr. Raghavan proposed that Mohan Singh should be appointed the G.O.C. of the I.N.A. On the next day, 25 June 1942, the President of the Council of Action submitted his proposal for the distribution of the portfolios. He suggested that the Military Department should be put in charge of Gillani. Regarding General Staff, the President suggested that “this portfolio be not allotted to anybody at present.” In the same meeting Gillani proposed the name of Mohan Singh for the General Staff. The President objected to this proposal and said that “the General Staff is always independent of the G.O.C.” After some discussion, however, Mohan Singh was given the portfolio of General Staff. Minutes of the meetings of the Council of Action on 24 and 25 June 1942 at Bangkok, I.I.L. Papers.

Capt. S.M. Hussain, who was a staff officer of the Indian P.O.W.s. headquarters headed by Col. N.S. Gill, later pointed out that Gill also did not like that Mohan Singh should monopolise all authority over the I.N.A. affairs. Capt. Hussain said that during the Bangkok Conference, “the rift between Mohan Singh and Gill became wider. So much so that Gill suggested separations of duties: i.e., either, as G.O.C. of the I.N.A. Mohan Singh should remain in the Council of Action and pass subordinate command of the troops to Gill, or vice versa. Gill’s idea was that Mohan Singh would not be able to handle both charges at the same time. But Mohan Singh did not care and managed to keep Gill out of either job.” The statement of Capt. S.M. Hussain to the Defence Counsel of the first I.N.A. court-martial, All-India I.N.A. Relief and Enquiry Committee, New Delhi.
received the personal pledge of co-operation from the senior officer. (52) All this made the position of the G.O.C. not only secure but powerful enough to act independently. Although the Bangkok Conference had decided that the League would have complete control over the I.N.A., the G.O.C. continued to act independently after the conference.

In September 1942, the G.O.C. proceeded straight with the measures to raise the I.N.A. He decided that the pledge of loyalty to be taken by the volunteers to the first I.N.A. should be to him personally. (53) He had also agreed with the liaison group to send a part of the army to Burma at the end of 1942 and the agreement had been partially implemented. In doing all this, he hardly ascertained the wishes of civilian Indian leaders.

League's weakness helped the growth of the independent I.N.A. command. The growth of the Indian Independence League was slow and protracted. When the Pacific War started there was no civil

(52) Col. Gill wrote that in August 1942, Mohan Singh and himself had taken a secret oath at the Sikh Gurudwara in Singapore. It was agreed that Mohan Singh would receive loyal support of Col. Gill in the formation of the I.N.A. Mohan Singh promised to be guided by Col. Gill if there would be any doubt in the sincerity of the Japanese. Gill's note, n. 20.

(53) The pledge which the volunteers to the I.N.A. had to take in 1942 read: "I will be an unconditional volunteer for the Indian National Army under General Mohan Singh, which will fight for the liberation of India."

organization representing the Indian community of East Asia to be put soon in operation. To set up a civil organization, democratic and representative in nature, took a long time. It was about six months after the declaration of the Pacific War, that a draft constitution could be formulated and agreed upon by the representatives of the whole Indian community in East Asia. There was no delay in putting the new machinery set up by the Bangkok Conference (the Council of Action) into operation. (54) But it was not possible to put the League on a solid basis so that it might appear like a Provisional Government in view of the non-recognition by the Imperial Nippon Government. Throughout its short career of six months the Council of Action functioned as an unrecognized body. These factors, which kept the League a weak body, indirectly helped in the growth of an independent army command in 1942.

The adverse reaction of the civilian leaders to the independence of army command

Although their position did not allow them to interfere with the army affairs, the prominent civilian leaders of the movement did not like the G.O.C.'s freedom of action. Indian leaders from Malaya and Singapore threatened to withdraw from the Bangkok Conference as a protest against the bloc voting of the army by which the G.O.C. played an important role in the

(54) See Chapter Three.
deliberations of the Bangkok Conference. (55) They (the Indian leaders of Malaya and Singapore) were opposed to formally raising the I.N.A. before the League was recognized by the Imperial Government. They did not like the pledge of personal loyalty introduced in the I.N.A. (56) Their opinion about Mohan Singh was bound to be prejudiced by the reports of cruelty and forced recruitment in the Army. (57) They also claimed to have received

(55) Mr. S.C. Goho, a leader of the Indian community of Singapore and a delegate to the Bangkok Conference, later wrote that among the delegates, "there were about 30 Indian military men who followed a system of bloc voting and were prepared to obey the wishes of Capt. Mohan Singh. He had 30 military votes to control in any case. Most of the non-military people were men of straw. Capt. Mohan Singh was prepared to pass all kinds of resolutions, realizing that Mr. Raghavan with his party was standing in his way, he joined forces with those men of straw. ...The Malayan delegates, at one stage, threatened to withdraw from the movement on account of this bloc voting of the military." Typescript note received by the I.N.A. History Committee from Mr. S.C. Goho, I.N.A. History Committee files, All-India I.N.A. Relief and Enquiry Committee, New Delhi. Hereinafter referred to as Goho's note.

(56) Discussion with Mr. N. Raghavan in April 1964 at New Delhi.

(57) Mr. S.C. Goho, in his note to the I.N.A. History Committee, wrote: "It came to the knowledge of the members of the Council of Action with whom I was in close contact that Capt. Mohan Singh contrary to the constitution had adopted methods which were severely criticised by the other members of the Council of Action and he was seriously reprimanded by Mr. Raghavan and Mr. Menon. Shortly, they are as follows:

(1) He had been forcing the prisoners of war to join the Indian National Army....

(2) He inflicted extremely cruel punishment on those who were not willing.

(3) He introduced concentration camps for the unwilling members.

(4) He had ordered flogging and starvation.

(Contd. on next page)
secret report that the G.O.C. had secretly approached the liaison agency with the proposal to do away with the League and to allow him to raise a huge army to be used in the invasion of India. (58) It is difficult to know if all these charges were true. It seems certain, however, that the direct negotiations with the liaison agency carried on by the G.O.C., to the exclusion of the civilian leaders, had fatally undermined their trust in him (the G.O.C.).

(5) By his order, men have been court-martialed and sentenced to death. When a copy of the evidence for confirmation of death sentence was sent to Mr. Raghavan for his approval, it was found that there was not a tittle of evidence against these men and after great pressure was brought by him on the President they were set free.

(6) Unknown to other members of the Council of Action, Mr. Mohan Singh had removed to Burma 400 men of the Intelligence Department of the Army under his command. He gave an explanation that they were sent for some reconstruction work. But my own view is that members of the Intelligence Service are not generally experts in hut building.

(7) Again, unknown to other members of the Council of Action, he had arranged to send a battalion of about 800 soldiers to Burma. He was definitely dealing secretly with the Japanese Military. All these informations came to the ears of Mr. Raghavan who severely reprimanded him...." Goho's note, n. 55.

Mr. N. Raghavan told the writer that in 1942 he (Raghavan) had heard of the confinement in camps of army personnel who had objected to the taking of the pledge because of its being a personal pledge to the G.O.C. Raghavan personally visited one such camp. Discussion with Mr. N. Raghavan in April 1964 at New Delhi.

(58) "We have received," wrote Mr. S.C. Goho, "secret information that Mohan Singh had...secretly communicated to the Japanese Government through their Liaison Department his willingness to help them in every possible way in their attempt to invade India provided that the Japanese dissolved the Indian Independence League and allow Mohan Singh to raise an Army of about 200,000 men and made him the Commander of that Army. This information I received from an unimpeachable source and unless I misunderstood my friend who gave me this information its truthfulness cannot be questioned."

(Contd. on next page)
It would be evident from the above discussion that during 1942 the civilian Indian leaders were not happy about the G.O.C.'s freedom of action. The question of troop movement made the G.O.C.'s freedom of action an open issue.

When the question of troop movement was brought to the Council of Action, Mohan Singh's action of by-passing the Council in the matter of deployment of I.N.A. troops was criticised. (59) The Council faced a difficult position. To implement the G.O.C.'s agreement with the Iwakuro Kikan, for which the Council had not been consulted, at a time when the Japanese Government had not clarified their policy regarding India, would be running too great a risk. One member of the Council, Mr. Raghavan, tendered his resignation in protest of the situation created by the G.O.C.'s independent dealings with the Iwakuro Kikan. The letter which he addressed on 4 December 1942 to the President of the Council of Action offering his resignation, traced the origin of the difficulties facing the Council. He wrote:

It pains me to state that the unhappy position which we found ourselves in for last two days has been to a certain extent our own making, in that we were powerless to prevent mistaken steps in our army. The first mistake that the Army Command committed was to have agreed to organize the Army and in fact organized the Army, without sanction from or discussion.

I realize the gravity of this statement that I am making and the serious consequence to Mohan Singh. But I would not have made it, firstly, had I not believed it and secondly, because our whole course of action had to be changed." Goho's note, n. 55.

(59) Khan, n. 3, 67.
with the Council of Action, by direct negotiation with the Iwakuro Kikan and before any reply to the Bangkok Resolutions was received from the Japanese Government. The second mistake that the Army committed was to have arranged or agreed to the transport of troops into Burma without the prior sanction or knowledge of the Council of Action and, again, before a reply to the Bangkok Resolution was obtained. (60)

The G.O.C. proposed to call off movement

Mohan Singh's repeated discussion with the Japanese officers between 1 and 3 December (1942) had convinced him that they (the Japanese officers) had nothing new to say so far as the declaration of the Japanese Government was concerned. He, therefore, wanted that the movement should be immediately called off. This implied the dissolution of the I.N.A.

In the situation existing in December 1942, this course of action got support from various civil and military leaders for different reasons. Mohan Singh could count on the support of the other representative of the I.N.A. to the Council, Lt. Col. Gilani. Col. Gill who had definite mental reservations about the I.N.A., had come back to Singapore in November (1942). During his short stay in Burma, Col. Gill became convinced that cooperation with the Japanese army for the interests of India was impossible. His influence over Mohan Singh's opinion was bound to be very strong as the G.O.C. had promised to depend on Gill's

(60) From N. Raghavan to Rash Behari Bose, 4 December 1942, I.I.L. Papers.
counsel to deal with the Japanese. (61) Mr. Menon, a member of the Council of Action who was already bitter about the Japanese, strongly supported Gill. (62) The strained relations between the Japanese and Mohan Singh, offered an opportunity to the group of officers, who had at first opposed the formation of the I.N.A. but later join it to function mainly as a resistance group within the I.N.A. They brought pressure on Mohan Singh to dissolve the army. One officer of this group, Shah Nawaz Khan wrote:

I, as well as the other members of my bloc, who had never any faith in the Japanese, considered this an ideal opportunity for ending all co-operation with the Japanese. We started an intensive propaganda campaign against the I.N.A. and advised Mohan Singh to dissolve the I.N.A. (63)

Lack of unanimity on the G.O.C.'s proposal. There was, however, no agreement among all civilian leaders on the point whether the immediate discontinuation of the movement would be

(61) Col. Gill wrote in his note to the I.N.A. History Committee: "In Rangoon Japs. wanted me to get information of military value from India.... The Japanese behaviour towards Indians became worst. I got so fed up, and when several efforts at contacting Singapore failed, I even thought of getting away to India." Col. Gill also wrote that in Burma "when I found the Japanese method of doing things, I revolted and eventually returned to Singapore to take part in the crisis."

Col. Gill wrote that he "played a major role in the I.N.A. crisis" and "had I believed in the Japanese the crisis may not have taken place." [Sic.] Gill's note, 20.

(62) Discussion with Mr. N.S. Gill in June 1963 at New Delhi.

(63) Khan, n. 3, 70.
for the best interest of the Indian community. The chairmen of the Malaya and the Singapore League were opposed to any decision of winding up the movement. They thought that if there was suspicion about the Japanese intention, how would it help if the Indian leaders resigned from the membership of the Council of Action? If the Japanese really meant evil, relinquishment of their offices by the Indian leaders would give the Japanese a chance to fill in those posts with those whom they could mould well. There was already indication of this. The Japanese had started to win over some Indians with money. "The Japanese money," wrote the President of the Singapore branch of the Indian Independence League, "was flowing and there were quite a number of men who were prepared to do anything for them. If we had all resigned, the Japanese would have taken complete control and many bad elements would have got into and controlled the organization." (64) Moreover, the Malaya League had confined itself mainly to the activities related to relief work for the Indian community and had done no work of political nature from the time it was inaugurated at the Bangkok Conference. The winding up of the movement would mean calling off those relief works. (65)

(64) Goho’s note, n. 55.

Mr. Raghavan, the Chairman of the Malayan Branch of the Indian Independence League, was in agreement with this view. Although he offered his resignation, he differed from the G.C.C. and the two other members of the Council who favoured the dis-continuation of the movement.

Discussion with Mr. N. Raghavan in April 1964 at New Delhi.

(65) Goho’s note, ibid.
Attempts to strengthen the League by restraining the G.O.C.'s authority. Thus, some civilian leaders of Malaya and Singapore were not only in favour of carrying on the movement, but they were opposed to any measure which might weaken the League. The position of the League would be further strengthened if the I.N.A. could be brought under its control. The President of the Council of Action desired League's direct control over the I.N.A. On 4 December, a bid was made to that effect. On that day, Mr. Raghavan could persuade the Council of Action that, so far as the deployment of the troops was concerned, the Council was the final authority and the G.O.C. should ask the Japanese to deal with the Council on this matter. The minutes of the meeting read:

Raghavan says President should write to G.O.C. that he has decided that there should be no movement of troops (I.N.A.) without Council's sanction or approval. G.O.C. should refer to Iwakuro Kikan or Japanese authorities to deal with the Council of Action on question of movement of troops. Council agrees with this suggestion.

It was also decided at this meeting that "all questions of administration, finance, etc., regarding the I.N.A. must go first to the President and be dealt with by the Council of Action and that letter to that effect be sent by the President to Colonel Iwakuro." (66)

The decisions of 4 December had threatened to rob the G.O.C. of the independence of the army command with which his position was associated. This stiffened the G.O.C.'s attitude and hastened a showdown among the members of the Council of Action.

(66) Minutes of the proceedings of the Council of Action's meeting on 4 December 1942, see Gianj, n. 9, 117-8.
On 5 December (1942) Mohan Singh, Menon and Gilani placed a set of demands to the Council of Action with an ultimatum that if the Council failed to get their immediate acceptance by the Japanese they (the three members of the Council of Action) would resign. These demands were:

(1) A written assurance that Col. Iwakuro will forward the letter of 29 November 1942 to the Imperial Government; (2) An assurance that a reply will be given on or before 1 January 1943. The Council to meet in the last week of December 1942, to consider the situation; (3) No major action would be taken regarding the I.N.A. Routine work of the movement to be carried on in the mean time; (4) Advance party in Burma should be informed that no further action should be taken until further orders from the G.O.C. (67)

The possibility of a deadlock created by the new demands of the G.O.C. and others

The new demands did not indicate any real difference between Mohan Singh, Gilani and Menon on the one hand and the two other members of the Council on the other. The Council of Action had already asked the Iwakuro Kikan to send the memorandum of 29 November (1942) to the Japanese Government. The Council had also decided against the movement of troops. But the new demands insisted on having a written undertaking from Col. Iwakuro that he would send the memorandum of 29 November (1942) to Tokyo. (68) Moreover, the three members of the Council demanded that the Iwakuro Kikan should secure the declaration from the Japanese

(67) Minutes of the meeting of the Council of Action on 5 December 1942, Ibid., 112-9.

(68) Emphasis added.
Government not before the end of January 1943 as they (the three members) had given their consent on 4 December (69) but before the end of December 1941. The insistence of the three members of the Council on two points which were relatively less important showed that their attempt to bring about a showdown with liaison agency was deliberate. Col. Gill's statement to the Defence Counsel of the first I.N.A. court-martial supported this argument. He said: "We had made the position for Japs. not to accept it. The position was: Now or Never - No delay." (70)

The last-minute bid of the President of the Council to avoid an impasse also failed. The President suggested that he "would deal with higher authorities" and would go to Tokyo to

(69) Minutes of the meeting of the Council of Action on 4 December 1942, see Giani, n. 9, 117-8.


Messrs. Raghavan and Rash Behari Bose later pointed out that their disagreement with Mohan Singh, Menon, Gillani and Gill was not on any substantial issue. Later, Mr. Raghavan, in a meeting with Col. Iwakuro, said that "the only difference between Mohan Singh and some of us is not in the substance of the demands but in the insistence of the acceptance of these demands immediately. We are all one as regards clarification of issues and safeguarding the interests of India."

Minutes of the meeting on 7 December 1942 attended Rash Behari Bose, N. Raghavan, Fujiwara and Iwakuro, see Sopan, n. 10, 208.

Rash Behari Bose, in a radio broadcast addressed to the Indians in East Asia said: "very recently my colleague felt that some further clarification of our position was necessary for us to work for the movement. With that view, I was in complete accord. Where some of us differed was contented that without such clarification—and that forthwith—the movement could not and ought not to proceed. Thus arose a deadlock."

get clarification. (71) Col. Gill, who was participating in the deliberations of the meeting with permission, was opposed to it and he was supported by Mr. Menon. Mohan Singh accepted the view of Col. Gill and Mr. Menon. (72)

Measures agreed upon to bring the G.O.C. under control. At the end of the meeting of the Council of Action on 5 December it was clear that the efforts to remove the possibility of the resignation by the three members of the Council had failed. It created a danger of imminent crisis in the movement for Indian independence. A deadlock was bound to be created in the Council as the rejection of the G.O.C.'s demands by the Iwakuro Kikan was certain. (73) The ultimatum and the refusal to go to Tokyo to secure clarification had convinced the President of the necessity to bring the situation under his control. During the time which followed the meeting of the Council of Action on 5 December (1942) some important decisions were taken by the

(71) Minutes of the meeting of the Council of Action on 5 December 1942, see Giani, n. 9, 118.

(72) Discussion with Mr. N.S. Gill in June 1963 at New Delhi. See also Rash Behari Bose to Mohan Singh, 9 December 1942, Giani, n. 9, 125.

(73) During the meeting of the Council of Action on 5 December 1942, before placing the new set of demands, Menon and Mohan Singh had enquired if Col. Iwakuro would send the memorandum of 29 November (1942) to Tokyo and if Col. Iwakuro was ready to state it in writing. The President, who had met Col. Iwakuro on the previous day, said: "Col. Iwakuro did not say he would forward the letter to Tokyo but said that he would explore all avenues to satisfy the Council of Action."

Minutes of the meeting of the Council of Action on 5 December 1942, see Giani, n. 9, 118.
President in collaboration with the Iwakuro Kikan.

A meeting took place on 7 December (1942) attended by the President of the Council, Mr. Raghavan, Col. Iwakuro, Major Fujiwara. The meeting was important as it reflected the repercussion of the ultimatum served on 5 December and it suggested the future course of events.

Col. Iwakuro, in this meeting, suggested that the change in Mohan Singh's attitude might be because "he and others are subjected to the influence of pro-British and fifth column elements who want to wreck the movement." (74) It also showed the working of the Japanese mind. They were thinking to bring the charge of espionage, to remove those whom they considered responsible for the impasse.

Some measures were suggested by Mr. N. Raghavan in this meeting to save the movement. The measures suggested included: (a) a "satisfactory answer to the demand put forward" by the Council of Action should be given by the Japanese; (b) the League's "direct control over the army" should be made effective and (c) in case the Council of Action broke up as a result of resignation of the members, the President would "take control and run the movement pending another conference at which a new Council of Action may be elected." (75) At the end of the

(74) Major Fujiwara expressed his view in this meeting about the G.C.C.'s change of position. He said: "I do not believe he is bad or wishes to wreck the movement. He must be having bad advice or influence. There must be fifth columnist at work." Minutes of the meeting on 7 December 1942 attended by Col. Iwakuro, Major Fujiwara, President of the Council of Action and Mr. Raghavan, see Sopan, n. 10, 206-10.

(75) Ibid., 212.
Conference, the President had expressed his desire to adjourn
the meeting of the Council called for 8 December to 9 December
"to have further discussions" with the liaison agency. (76)

Before 9 December 1942 the President of the Council of
Action and Col. Iwakuro together adopted three important
decisions. (i) The I.N.A. should be disarmed and its G.O.C.
removed from his command. (ii) The present Council of Action
would be dissolved. (iii) Col. Gill and Gen. Mohan Singh would
be kept under arrest till the situation could be brought under
control. These terms were referred to the Headquarters of the
Southern Army which endorsed the plan and later helped to carry
it out. (77) Only a part of the agreement was given effect at
first.

The arrest of Col. Gill. On the 8th morning the Japanese
Military Police informed the G.O.C. of their alleged charges of
espionage against Col. Gill and took him under their custody. (78)

(76) Ibid.

(77) M. Iwakuro, "Rash Behari Basur Punya Samritir Swarane;"
Swastika, n. 53, 2.

The article is in Bengali. It was translated into English
by Jatindra Nath Bandhopadhyaya. The title of the article, in
English, is: In memory of Rash Behari Bose.

The present writer, in his discussion with Gen. Iwakuro in
October 1963 at Tokyo, got the points of the agreement corrobo-
rated.

(78) In November 1942, Major Raghuvir Dhillon who was
working under Col. Gill in Burma went over to the British and
Col. Gill was suspected by the Japanese for having steered
Dhillon's plot. But the important reason of his arrest seemed to
the belief that he was mainly responsible for the crisis. Col.
As the President informed the G.O.C. on the same day that the demands put forward by him (the G.O.C.) and two other members of the Council were not acceptable to the Ivyakuro Kikan, the three members tendered their resignation from the Council on the same evening. (79) This was accepted by the President on 9 December 1942. (80) Mr. Raghavan’s resignation was also accepted on the same day. (81)

President took-over full authority of the Council of Action. While accepting the resignation of the four members, the President was determined to carry on the movement. In a radio broadcast on 10 December to the "Indian Patriots in East Asia" he declared that he had taken over "all powers and duties of the Council of Action." He also pointed out: "while on the one hand I shall be carrying on our work, I shall, on the other hand, also spare no pains to negotiate and secure for the movement every facility and support for which my colleagues and I have all the while been asking.... In the meanwhile, the work

Gill’s return to Singapore in November 1942 was not welcomed by the Ivyakuro Kikan. Col. Gill, before his arrest, was repeatedly threatened by the members of the Ivyakuro Kikan and he was asked to co-operate. See Gill’s note, n. 20.

That the charge of espionage against Col. Gill need not be true was evident from the decision taken by Col. Ivyakuro and the President to keep Col. Gill under arrest till conditions become normal. It was not at all difficult for the Japanese Army to court-martial him after his arrest if there were any evidence against him.


(81) From Rash Behari Bose to N. Raghavan, 9 December

(Cont’d. on next page)
The conflict for the control over the I.N.A.

As the difference between the G.O.C. and the President had become very prominent, the former had unleashed a propaganda campaign in the army to get its united support for his course of action. The existence of a section which did not like the G.O.C.'s course of action made the propaganda all the more necessary. (83) There were attempts to spread bitterness against Mr. N. Raghavan and the President in the ranks of the army. (84)

1942, I.I.L. Papers. Mr. Raghavan had regretted his inability to comply with the President's request to withdraw his letter of resignation submitted on 4 December 1942.

(82) The radio broadcast by Rash Behari Bose on 10 December 1942, see Sopan, n. 10, 221.

(83) The existence of some officers in the I.N.A. who could not agree with course of action taken by the G.O.C. is clear from the latter's address to the officers on 9 December 1942. He said in course of this address: "I shall be failing in my duty, if I do not point out that a wavering element has been discovered." The G.O.C.'s address to the officers of the I.N.A. on 9 December 1942, see Giani, n. 9, 127.

(84) The G.O.C., in his speech on 9 December, had spoken of the "so-called leaders," who "just to save their skins, are prepared to sell the 400 millions in India. They love to go about in big cars, attending tea parties and such like things. Can you expect anything noble and honourable from them?" He expressed his bitterness about Raghavan. He said: "We three, Menon, Giani and I are one but Mr. Raghavan is of different mentality and outlook. He wants to act like a theatre-man hero and is nothing more or less." The G.O.C.'s address to the officers of the I.N.A. on 9 December 1942, ibid., 125-6.

The fact that Rash Behari Bose was working together with the Wasedo Kikan appeared to be a sufficient reason to suspect him. This feeling was worked up by the malicious propaganda. "Some of the I.N.A. soldiers tried to fling mud at Rash Behari Bose by spreading all sorts of unfounded rumours about him," wrote an I.N.A. officer. K.R. Palta, My Adventures with the I.N.A. (Lahore, 1943) 45.
Being aware of this, the President made an attempt to contact some senior officers of the army, apart from the G.O.C. and Lt. Col. Gilani. (85) This attempt to contact the I.N.A. officers was considered as an encroachment on the G.O.C.'s supreme control over the army and it brought to the surface an open conflict between the President and the G.O.C. over the control of the army.

Mohan Singh's arguments. With their resignation from the Council of Action, Mohan Singh and the two other members had indicated that they had severed their "connection with this Movement" in East Asia for India's independence. (86) Mohan Singh considered that the Council of Action was dissolved and the G.O.C. free from its control. Mohan Singh, therefore, refused to send up the I.N.A. officers, as desired by the President. He wrote to Rash Behari Bose: "There is no Council of Action existing now and you have no authority to act in the manner that you have done." (87) In another letter to Rash Behari Bose, he pointed out "a few facts concerning the Indian National Army" which clearly revealed how Mohan Singh was viewing his position as the G.O.C. after his resignation from the Council of Action. He wrote:

(85) In his letter to the G.O.C., Rash Behari Bose asked the G.O.C. to send twenty four I.N.A. officers (whose names were mentioned in the letter) to meet him (the President) on 12 December 1942. From Rash Behari Bose to Mohan Singh, 11 December 1942, I.I.L. Papers.


(i) The members of the Indian National Army are pledged to me and me alone by name.

(ii) This army will only be a part of any movement if it is convinced that the movement is conducted in the interests of India. (88)

The President dismissed the G.O.C. from the army command. By breaking away from the Indian movement in East Asia and by claiming the loyalty of the I.N.A. personally to himself, Mohan Singh had sought to create a position for him which, in the eyes of the President and the Iwakuro Kikan, was untenable. On 29 December 1942, the G.O.C. was called on telephone to the office of the Iwakuro Kikan at Singapore. As the G.O.C. arrived there, he was given certain conditions and he could continue in his office only by accepting those conditions. (89) When the G.O.C. refused to abide those conditions, he was shown another letter signed by the President dismissing him from his command.

Rash Behari Bose's letter brought four changes against the G.O.C. (i) The latter had disobeyed the President's direction to send up certain I.N.A. officers to meet the President. (ii) The G.O.C. was attempting to create "a private and personal army" of the I.N.A. (iii) The G.O.C. having cut himself off the Indian independence movement in East Asia could no longer command the army which belonged to the movement. And (iv) the G.O.C. had "wilfully and maliciously attempted to spread discontent and disaffection amongst the members of the Army of the Indian


(89) Giani, n. 9, 133. These conditions are not known.
Independence Movement of East Asia." (90) Immediately after his removal from the I.N.A. command, Mohan Singh was taken into custody by the Japanese Military Police.

The G.O.C.'s order for the dissolution of the I.N.A. The G.O.C. was not unprepared for this step either. Although stubbornly upholding his independence of action, he had called "a private meeting of his senior officers to get down to brass tacks of dissolution" of the army about one week before his arrest. (91) After this meeting, a sealed order of the G.O.C. was circulated among the I.N.A. unit commanders. The order read:

The Indian National Army will be dissolved shortly.... A confirmatory order will be sent out as soon as arrangement with the Nipponese are complete. In the event of my being separated from you before such an order is issued the dissolution will take place automatically and immediately. Also at the same time the resignation of all the members of the I.N.A. and their release from all obligations and undertakings to me and the I.N.A. will be taken for granted. (92)

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(91) Palta, n. 83, 48-9.
(92) Warning Order: Discontinuation of the I.N.A., see Giani, n. 9, 132-3. The Order was signed by Mohan Singh on 21 December 1942.