CHAPTER VII

SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE IN EAST ASIA (1943-1945)

Subhas Chandra Bose reached Tokyo on 16 May 1943. For about one month his presence in Tokyo was kept secret. From 17 May onwards, he met Japanese Army and Navy Chief of Staff, Navy Minister and Foreign Minister. Tojo was at first unwilling to grant him an interview. Bose had to wait for nearly one month, before Tojo finally agreed to see him. Tojo was in fact a hurried man in those days in the midst of an adverse war situation. The German and Italian collapse on the African front gave him a rude shock. Tojo was getting nervous to the growing disappointment and dissatisfaction among the Japanese Public.

After being persuaded by the Army Chief of staff General Sugiyama and the Foreign Minister Shigemitsu, Tojo finally decided to see Bose on 10 June, 1943. In this meeting Tojo was impressed by the dignified and sincere Indian visitor and another meeting followed four days after. In the second meeting with Tojo which was attended also by Foreign Minister Shigemitsu and the Chief of Staff, Gen. Sugiyama, Bose conveyed to them his

2. Bose, Werth & Ayer, ed., A Beacon Across Asia, p. 165. According to A.C. Bose, "the Indian demands, particularly the Bangkok resolution, the disintegration of the first I.N.A., their own defeats at Guadalcanal in the Central Pacific and doubts about his influence over Indian made Tojo, who was initially quite indifferent. Probably, for these reasons Tojo was not willing to see Bose." A.C. Bose, Japan and Indian Nationalists' Studies in History, (Delhi, no date) p. 30.
plans regarding Indian Independence movement in East Asia and a military campaign against the British in India.\(^2\)

After these meetings Japanese attitude towards Bose, and the aspirations and the movement he represented, was usually respectful and considerate. The meetings had aroused Tojo's personal interest in the Indian problem. Many factors were responsible for this change in Japanese attitude, but it is fact that it was the Bose's personality that achieved the long-awaited break through in Indo-Japanese relations.\(^2\)

Two days later on 16 June 1943, Bose was invited to visit the Diet (Japanese Parliament). In the presence of the Emperor, Tojo made a declaration about India. "Japan is firmly resolved to extend all means in order to help, to expel and eliminate from India the Anglo-Saxon influences which were the enemies of Indian people and enable India to achieve full independence in the true sense of the term.\(^3\)

On 19 June Bose held his first press conference in Japan. He said, "We should take active part in this war against our common enemy. Since the enemy fights with his sword, we too should fight with the sword. The non-violent struggle should transform itself into a violent one. Only if a large number of Indians undergo this

\(^1\) K.K. Ghosh, *The Indian National Army*, p. 142.
\(^3\) On to Delhi, speeches of Subhas Chandra Bose, (Singapore, no date), p. 11.
baptism of fire they will get the reward of freedom. We will be able to preserve our freedom only if we get it through our own sacrifice and toil". 1 Having secured the good-will of the Japanese Government, Bose put forward his plea for setting up a Provisional Government to some Japanese officials. The suggestion was accepted in principle before Bose left Tokyo and a formal reply was promised soon. 2

After arriving in Tokyo for the first time one month Bose made himself familiar with the delicate political situation in Japan. A few days before the meeting with Tojo, Rash Behari Bose visited Bose and cheerfully handed over to him the leadership of the Indian Independence movement in Far East. 3 Bose arrived Singapore on 2 July 1943 4 with Rash Behari Bose and began a continuous campaign for organising the Indian independence movement.

On 4 July Bose took over the Presidentship of the Indian Independence League from Rash Behari Bose in the presence of three thousand Indian nationals scattered all over East Asia. 5 Bose addressed the audience that "the time has come to start an armed struggle and appeal to my countrymen in the Far East, to assemble under the

common flag and prepare for the grim fight that is ahead of us..... In the history of India's struggle, August 1942 will therefore remain an unforgettable landmark, indicating the psychological transition from passive to active resistance...." "I know," he said, "that some of you doubt the sincerity of the Axis power. But are they doing India a favour? They, for their own purposes, want to destroy Britain's influence." As for sincerity, the best proof was he himself. All his life he fought the British - their prisons, their governing class, their cunning and deceit. They had failed to corrupt him how could the Japanese or the Germans succeed in a few months? He concluded his speech by enunciating, "... We have a grim fight ahead of us --- for the enemy is powerful, unscrupulous and ruthless. In the final march to freedom --- you will have to face hunger, thirst, privation, forced marches and death. Only when you pass the test, will freedom be yours. I am confident that you will do so and thereby bring freedom and prosperity to your enslaved and impoverished land."¹ At that time Bose revealed his decision to form a Provisional Government of Free India to lead the Indian National Army towards India for the liberation of the country.²

Immediately after taking over the leadership of the movement Bose began attending office regularly at the

¹. Jai Hind, The Diary of a rebel daughter of India with the Rani of Jhansi Regiment, pp. 39-40; also selected speeches of Subhas Chandra Bose, pp. 190-191.
². -ibid-
headquarters of the Indian Independence League in Singapore. He put through an intensive plan of reorganisation and expansion of the League with a view to achieving the goal of Total Mobilisation.¹

The departments that were already functioning at the headquarters were: General, Finance, Publicity and Propaganda, Intelligence, Recruitment and Training. Bose strengthened the departments and added the following new ones: (1) Health and Social Welfare; (2) Women's Affairs; (3) National Education and Culture; (4) Reconstruction; (5) Supply; (6) Overseas; and (7) Housing and Transport. Dr. Lakshmi Swaminathan, who later became Commandant of the Rani of Jhansi Regiment and a Colonel of the INA, was placed in charge of the Women’s Department.² Instructions were issued to reorganise and expand the League organisation throughout East Asia on the above lines. The result was that the total mobilisation of Indian manpower, money and material was carried out with hurricane velocity throughout Malaya and other countries.

On 9 July, Bose addressed a mass meeting in which he said that his object in leaving India was to supplement from outside the struggle going on at home. Without this supplementary help from outside, it was impossible for anybody to liberate India.³ He told them that all the

² S.A. Ayer, Unto Him A Witness (Bombay, 1951) p. 6.
³ Selected speeches of Subhas Chandra Bose, p. 196.
resources of the three million Indians in East Asia must now be mobilised. The slogan would be 'Total mobilisation for a total war'. His aim was three thousand soldiers and thirty million dollars.¹

On 5 July, Bose reviewed the Indian National Army and announced its existence to the world.² Bose in his speech said that throughout his public career he had always felt that though India is otherwise ripe for independence in every way, she has lacked one army of liberation.³ With the coming of the army into existence, the last obstacle for India to achieve her freedom was removed. Though the responsibility of the officers of every Army in this world are indeed great but for the officers of the INA were far greater.⁴ "Because, we have no tradition like that of Mukden, Port Arthur or Sedon to inspire us".⁵ He asked them to acquire the experience and achieve the success in this war which alone could build up a national tradition for their Army. "This is not only the Army", he said, "that will emancipate India from the British yoke, it is also the Army that will hereafter create further National Army of Free India. We must build up our national defence on such an unshakable

¹. Selected speeches of Subhas Chandra Bose, p. 198.
⁵. Ibid.
foundation that never again in our history shall we lose our freedom.¹

Bose gave the army its battle cry "Chalo Delhi" (on to Delhi)². He was aware of the difficult nature of the task which the army was sworn to achieve. He warned his men and officers: "For the present, I can offer you nothing except hunger, thirst, privation, forced marches and death. But if you follow me in life and in death, as I am confident you will, I shall lead you to victory and freedom. It does not matter who among us will live to see India free. It is enough that India shall be free and that we shall give our all to make her free."³

Bose's address literally overwhelmed the officers and men of the INA. There was something new in it which they never felt before.⁴ At the end of the war, the Commander in Chief of the Indian Army estimated the influence of Bose's personality in the following terms: "I am in no doubt myself that a great number of them, especially the leaders, believed that Subhas Chandra Bose was a genuine patriot and they themselves were right to follow

¹ Heralds of Freedom, p. 52.
² ibid. p. 51.
³ ibid. pp. 52-54.
⁴ According to K.K. Ghoah, "Bose's personality proved to be a decisive factor in influencing many INA officers. His authority, singleness of mind, personal enthusiasm straight and bold deductions from the study of international politics in any situation, were the attributes which were bound to attract a soldier's mind". The Indian National Army, p. 146. Also Hugh Toye, Subhas Chandra Bose, p. 81-83.
his lead. There is no doubt at all for the mass of
evidence we have that Subhas Chandra Bose acquired a
tremendous influence over them and that his personality
had been an exceedingly strong one.1 Two factors seemed
to have changed the character of the Army into a real
revolutionary force; those were Bose's success in making
an effective appeal to the patriotism of the Indian
officers and his powerful leadership and the liberty given
to the unwilling men and officers to leave the INA, if
they so desired.2

On 6 July, Tojo received a guard of honours from
the INA. On 9 July Bose and Tojo were again together and
more than 50,000 Indians, nearly all the Indians in
Singapore, gathered to express their support.

To discuss the role of the INA in the proposed
Japanese campaign in Imphal, Bose called on Field Marshall
Count Terauchi, the Commander-in-Chief of the Southern
Expeditionary Forces.3 Terauchi was reluctant to have
the INA appear at all on the battle-field. He said that
the Indian troops had been demoralised by defeat in
Malaya; they would not stand up to the rigours of a
Japanese campaign and would have an irresistible compul-
sion to cross over to their old friends and easier

1. John Conell, Auchinleck: A Biography of Field
freedom (Calcutta, 1947), p. 165; also Hugh Toye,
the Springing Tiger, p. 56.
circumstances. Terauchi, therefore, proposed that the
Japanese Army would do all that was necessary to liberate
India and that the Japanese solicited was the cooperation
of Bose to enlist the good-will and cooperation of the
Indian population. He suggested that the main part of
the INA should be left in Singapore and that only espion-
age and propaganda groups should be used in the field.

Bose did not accept this proposal, he told Count
Terauchi, "Any liberation of India be secured through
Japanese sacrifices is worse than slavery" He tried
to impress upon Terauchi that the question was one of
national honour for the Indians and Indians must make
the maximum contribution of blood and sacrifices them-
selves. The purpose of the Japanese help should be mainly
to supplement the Indian military effort. Terauchi at
last agreed with Bose and it was decided that one INA
regiment would be brought up in the ensuing Imphal
campaign as a test case and if they could bear the rigours
of a Japanese campaign, the rest of the INA would be
brought into action.

Now Bose paid attention to the reorganisation of
the Army. He did this task on his return from the tour
in July-August. On 25 August, he took over the command
of the army and proclaimed this action in the first

1. Shahnawaj Khan, My memoirs of the INA and its Netaji,
p. 99 (Delhi, 1945).
2. -Ibid-
3. Shahnawaj Khan, My memoirs of the INA and its Netaji,
"Special Order of the Day" issued by him as the supreme commander. A "Supreme Headquarters" was set up with thirteen departments. The three existing Regiments were constituted the First Division with Lt. Col. M.Z. Kiani as the Divisional Commander, and the other formations remained unchanged. The First Division was hurriedly sent to north Malaya for training. The INA was handicapped by inadequate medical and transport facilities. Its artillery force was only nominal. There was no air and navy support of its own. Bose once said, "We have no modern armaments, artillery, airplanes, etc. Moreover, we are small in numbers." The unique role which Bose had assigned to the INA required that it should be a highly organised army with full confidence in its aim and leadership. When Bose assumed leadership of the INA it was ill-organised and its moral was low. Moral was far more important to the INA than to other Armies, for the INA not only had to face an enemy more numerous and better equipped than itself, but it had to win that enemy over. Bose was confident that the very appearance of the INA on the Indian frontier "will be a clarion call to the

1. On this occasion, it was considered if it was necessary for Bose to assume a military rank. The decision was against assuming any such rank. Supreme Commander of the INA was a Civil post, but from then on Bose could mostly be found in military uniform. Maj. Gen. Mohammed J. Kiani, "India's Freedom and the Great INA movement. The Oracle, Vol. VI, No. 1, January 1984, p. 116.

2. A.C. Chatterjee, India's Struggle for Freedom, pp. 93-97.

people … and to the Indian army⁴. But this was only possible if every member of it was of superb spirit, utterly confident in his power of leadership and his mission.

Bose himself took keen interest in raising the morale. He spoke ardently to the officers about the necessity of high morale and took a keen interest in every detail of the army officers. He reviewed the pay of the rank, reviewed its training at every opportunity, improved its rations and made every effort to bind the officers in true comradeship.² Lectures were arranged for the soldiers from time to time so that they could understand the significance of the purpose for which the army had been organised.³

Bose also had the intention to expand the existing strength of the Army, the immediate target was set at 50,000. He wanted to fill up major part of the target from the Indian prisoners of war and the rest of it from the civilian volunteers. The maximum strength of the INA, according to the Hiyari Kikan, must not exceed 30,000 including the new civil recruits as the Japanese were able to provide arms only for that number. The actual strength in the army was increased later and in 1945 it was not less than 45,000.⁴

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1. Selected speeches of Subhas Chandra Bose, p.
4. -ibid- p. 152.
After Bose's arrival in Singapore, the campaign for fresh enlistment from the former members of the INA and POW started. Greater emphasis was placed on the civilian recruits and the number of volunteers in training camps were set up at Singapore and different parts of Malaya. The response amongst the civilians was overwhelming. The training structure was supported on the one hand by the officers N.C.Os. training schools and on the other by the boys organisation, 'the Balak Sena'.

For giving the INA a trial role in the Imphal campaign, Bose ordered the formation of a new Gourilla Regiment. It consisted of chosen soldiers from all the three Gourilla Regiments of the No. (1) Division and Lt. Col. Shah Nawaj Khan was appointed its commander. Like the three other Regiments, the new Regiment was also armed with light arms, and had inadequate transport and medical facilities. There was hard training for the trial regiments and efforts were made to build up an excellent morale of the regiment until it began to move to Burma in November.

Though Bose appeared to be fully free from all moral inhibitions in accepting foreign aid he was too cautious to depend entirely on it. Replying to a question, if any independent status for India should be given from outside, he said "independence must not be given by anybody, but should be obtained by Indians themselves through their own struggle and sacrifice." It was too undignified to

give the Japanese assistance the entire credit of achieving India's liberty as he said to Japanese Commander Terauchi, "Any liberation of India, secured through Japanese sacrifices is worse than slavery". The most important factor, which seemed to have enabled Bose to work out a plan of campaign for India's freedom without depending wholly on the Japanese aid, was the existence of an Indian community in South-East and East Asia economically affluent and numerically strong. Moreover, an armed force of about twelve thousand was in existence when Bose took over the leadership of the movement in East Asia. Bose based his plan on these two factors - the strength (economic and numerical) of the Indian community and the army.

Bose thought that the Indian movement there needed a status of a Provisional Free Government which alone could place his relations with the Imperial Government on a satisfactory footing of legal equality. It would also silence those in India who suspected his independence and criticised him as a Japanese stooge.

Tojo, during his visit to Singapore in the first week of July, had approved the plan for a Provisional Government. It was necessary to mobilize the support

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2. K.K. Ghosh, The Indian National Army, p. 139; also Girija Mookerjee, Subhas Chandra Bose, p. 81.
of the Indian communities and the local Japanese authorities in favour of the plan. He campaigned vigorously for it and told the Indian community about the essentiality of the organization of the Provisional Government of Free India. He said with its formation the "enemy's propaganda would be completely failed" and all Indians would "offer full cooperation to us". Bose hoped that as soon as India became independent, the Provisional Government would be replaced by a new Government based on the will of Indian people.

Burma was celebrating the attainment of her independence in Japanese co-prosperity sphere on 1 August 1943 and Bose was invited to attend the ceremony. His meeting with Ba Maw, Burma's Chief of State, was specially significant as it not only improved the status of the Indians in Burma but enlisted the full cooperation of the new Burmese Government to the movement for Indian independence. This was evident from a declaration issued by the Government of Burma immediately after Bose's departure from Rangoon. Later, in a party arranged by the Rangoon Committee of the Indian Independence League to felicitate Burma's independence Dr. Ba Maw said

1. K.K. Ghosh, The Indian National Army, p. 144
2. Joyce Lebra, The Jungle Alliance, p. 128
"When the Indian National Army starts its march towards Delhi, the Burma Army will extend its utmost cooperation."²

Bose also met Prime Minister of Thailand Pibulsonggram who gave his consent to the Indian National Army passing through Thailand to Burma.³ Bose said in a press interview that by the experience gained during the recent trip he had been greatly impressed by the eagerness of all Indians abroad who were very anxious to establish a Provisional Government. "I have personally interviewed Prime Minister of Thailand and the Head of State of Burma. They have both promised to give me all-out support in the attainment of Indian independence".³

PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT OF FREE INDIA:
THE ARZI HAKUMAT-E-AZAD HIND.

When Bose was satisfied that the preparation for reforming the Indian National Army had been started and that Indians in East Asia were making a splendid response to his call for total mobilisation, he took the next step of establishing the first Provisional Government of free India outside in India.⁴ On 9 October 1943 the Mission Conference of the Imperial Government decided

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that Japan would recognise the Provisional Government of India which would be set up by Bose.\(^1\) It was on 21 October 1943 that the establishment of the Provisional Government of Free India with headquarters at Singapore was formally announced.\(^2\)

The structure of the Provisional Government was very simple. It consisted of five Ministers with Bose as the "Head of State, Prime Minister and Ministers for War and Foreign Affairs". There were also eight military representatives and eight Civilian advisers representing the League Territorial Committees.\(^3\) The proclamation of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind said that it would be the task of the Provisional Government to launch and to conduct the struggle that would bring about the destruction of British and its allies from the soil of India. It will then be the task of the Provisional Government to bring about the establishment of a permanent

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2. Joyce Lebra, Jungle Alliance, p. 128.
national government of Azad Hind constituted in accordance with the will of the Indian people in enjoying their confidence. After the British and their allies are overthrown and until a permanent National Government of Azad Hind is set up on Indian soil, the Provisional Government will administer the affairs of the country in trust for the Indian people. The Provisional Government is entitled to and hereby claims their allegiance of every Indian.

Then Bose took the oath "In the name of God, I take this oath that to liberate India and the thirty-eight crores of my countrymen, I, Subhas Chandra Bose, will continue the sacred war of freedom till the last breath of my life... I shall remain always a servant of India and to look after the welfare of thirty-eight crores of Indian brothers and sisters shall be my highest duty." The following night the Provisional Government of Azad Hind declared war on Britain and America. A few hours later he addressed a rally of Indians, civilians and soldiers, and took a pledge from them that they would give up their all in waging war on Anglo-Americans for the liberation of India. The Japanese government's official recognition of Provisional Government came two days later on 23 October. At the same time


3. Bose said "When I say 'war' I mean a war that can only end in the freedom of India" M Sivaram the road to Delhi p.157.

the Imperial Government declared, it would give, "the
utmost help for the achievement of the objectives of
Provisional Government". In a few days nine world
powers - Japan, Germany, Italy, Croatia, Burma, Thai-
land, Nationalist China, the Philippines and Manchuria -
accorded their recognition to the Provisional Government
of Azad Hind. Eamon de Valera, President of the Irish
Free State sent his personal congratulations to Bose.
For the great majority of Indians, Bose and his govern-
ment were the only points of assurance in the uncertain
world. This would be acknowledged even by the British.
Within days of Japan's surrender a secret memo of the
British Government declared "Bose's influence over the
I.N.A. is very considerable... It affects all races,
castes and communities almost equally strongly. They
regard him with deep admiration, respect and confidence
as a sincere patriot, as an able leader without peer
among the overseas Indian community, as the organiser
of India's first National Army, as the protector of his
countrymen under Japanese occupation and as one who
successfully dealt with the Japanese and was accorded
by them greater respect and power than most other leaders
in the same position".

1. Joyce Lebra, Chandra Bose to Nihon (Tokyo, 1968)p.129
2. A.C. Chatterjee, India's struggle for Freedom, p. 136
3. -ibid- p. 137.
4. Sir H.F. Mudie, Home Minister to Sir Evan Jenkins,
Private Secretary to the Viceroy 23.8.45, Nicholas
Mansergh, ed., The transfer of power, Document no.
THE RANI OF JHANSI REGIMENT:

In his speech of 9 July 1943 at a mass rally in Singapore, Bose said that the army of liberation would be incomplete unless women also came forward and volunteered to join the fighting ranks. It was his desire to raise a women's regiment called the Rani of Jhansi Regiment after the valiant Rani Lakshmi Bai who died fighting the British in 1857. Despite strong Japanese resistance because of their social and other prejudices against females, Bose succeeded in raising a Women Battalion. Since the creation of Women's Department in the Indian Independence League, the response from the Women's section of the Indian community to the call for taking active role in the movement was encouraging. By October, there were offers for enlistment for active service from about one hundred fifty women in Singapore.

On 22 October which was the birth anniversary of the Rani of Jhansi, Bose formally opened the training camp for the regiment. The primary duty of the regiment was to nurse the wounded Indian National Army troops in forward areas. A course covering four months' training for nursing was drawn up, for the recruits, as it

4. -ibid-, p. 51.
continued to receive military training. Bose said to them "It is not important how many guns you can carry or how many shots you can fire. It is the spiritual force which will be generated by your heroic example that is important" ... Your energetic activities will not only inspire our countrymen living in Malaya East Asia but also those living within our country. I have no doubt that the all Indians, on hearing about your efforts and your preparations for the fight will be greatly inspired".

Relations between the Provisional Government of Azad Hind and the Imperial Government were also gradually put on a plane of equality. The Provisional Government's assertion of authority over the property of the Indians was supported by the Japanese. The greatest problems which the Provisional Government faced was the financial problem. Bose realised that he could not do without Japanese finance, and often said that all help offered must be accepted for India's sake. But there was a strong feeling among his followers that Japanese money must not imply Japanese dictation. It was decided that Japanese would bear the expenditure on the former Indian prisoners joining the Indian National Army. Bose

1. Selected speeches of Subhas Chandra Bose, p. 201.
2. A.C. Bose, Japan and Indian Nationalists, Studies in History, p. 32.
3. Hugh Tuge, Subhas Chandra Bose, p. 95.
planned to pay for all the civilian activities of the League, including the recruitment and the training of civilians for the Indian National Army.¹

The Indian Independence League's earnings were not satisfactory. Its only source of income was donation from the Indians. The poorer and the middle class sections of the Indian community had been very enthusiastic.² But the rich Indians, particularly Indians had been indifferent. Bose had heard that some of the rich Indians of Malaya were murmuring that he was harassing them, and that they were thinking of changing their nationalities or of avoiding payment of some other means.³ On 25 October Bose warned the Indian merchants in Malaya that "everybody, who refuses to help our cause, is our enemy because we are engaged in a life and death struggle today."⁴ In his threat, he thought to bear the full authority derived from his newly assumed status as the Head of a Government.⁵

I stand here today representing the Provisional Government of Azad Hind which has absolute rights over your lives and prosperities ... I have said that we have to get Indian independence by all means and at any cost and that we have to carry out all mobilisation voluntarily if possible, by compulsion, if necessary.⁶

¹ Hugh Toye, Subhas Chandra Bose, p. 95.
² Selected speeches of Subhas Chandra Bose, p. 223.
³ Hugh Toye, Subhas Chandra Bose, p. 95.
⁵ Hugh Toye, Subhas Chandra Bose, p. 95.
⁶ East Asia (Lahore, 1947) pp. 97-102. Also Hugh Toye, Subhas Chandra Bose p. 97.
This threatended measure changed the attitude of the Indian merchants and the immediate response was promising. Soon the new government began printing its currency notes and in March 1944 an Indian National Bank too was established.\(^1\) Imperial Government even accepted Bose's rejection of the suggestion that a Japanese general should be the head of the Indo-Japanese war cooperation commission.\(^2\)

Soon after the establishment of the Provisional Government of Free India and its declaration of war on the Allies, Bose left Singapore on 25 October for Tokyo. He was invited to attend the Greater East Asia Conference which was to held on 5 and 6 November. Bose attended the Conference as an observer and not as a delegate because he could not commit India to a part in the co-prosperity sphere.\(^3\) His participation in the Conference in a personal capacity and his address to the delegates had earned warm appreciation and moral support from all East Asian delegates for his efforts for India's independence.\(^4\) Bose had a discussion with Toyo on 1 November 1943 and an important decision was taken regarding the question of the transfer of the islands of Andaman and Nicobar to the Provisional Government.\(^5\) It was necessary for his

\(^1\) Shivaram, The Road to Delhi, pp. 168-169.
\(^2\) A.C. Bose, Japan and Indian Nationalists, p. 32.
\(^3\) Hugh Toye, The Springing Tiger, p. 98, also A.C. Chatterjee, India's struggle for freedom, p.150.
\(^5\) -ibid- p. 99.
government to have a foothold over the Indian territory. In the Great East Asia Conference on 6 November, Toyo declared that the Japanese had decided to hand over the Andamans and Nicobar islands to the Provisional Government in the near future.1

These islands were important naval out-posts for the Japanese. So long as the Pacific war continued, it was in their own military interest that the actual control over the islands must remain with the Japanese Navy. On 10 November, in a Conference between Imperial General Headquarters and the Japanese Government, it was decided that the transfer of these islands would be decided separately. But to honour Bose’s wishes it was suggested that the Provisional Government’s staff would allowed to stay in the area. It would be also allowed to make propaganda use of the point that transfer had already taken place.2 Bose bypassed the caution of the Naval Department. He immediately renamed the Andaman and Nicobar as ‘Shahid’ and ‘Swaraj’ respectively. On 29 December Bose visited the Andaman and appointed Lt. Col. A.D. Logansdhan as Chief Commissioner of these territories.3

Bose discussed with the Chief of Staff, Sugiyama and it was agreed that in the Imphal campaign the I.N.A.

1. A.C. Chatterjee, India's Struggle for Freedom, p.151.
would rank as an allied army under Japanese command. Sugiyama gave his consent to the raising of the second I.N.A. Division, to the planning of the third and to the training of cadets for the I.N.A. in Japan. It was already decided that Japanese would remain financially responsible for the ex-prisoners of war in the I.N.A. and Bose would find the money to pay his civilian recruits. Equipments would come from the captured British stocks.

It is an accepted British myth that in 1944 the Japanese launched an invasion to conquer India. During the war, British intelligence reported that the Japanese were planning a full scale invasion of India. But the Japanese had no such ambitions. The decision to launch an offensive in Burma was not finally taken by the Japanese until January 1944. In February 1943 Allies power had launched two limited campaigns towards Akyab and northern Burma. It was also decided to recover Arakan and Myitkyina, and make an advance to the Chindwin during 1944. Burma was considered as a most important region for the defence of the whole of the Japanese co-prosperity sphere. The fear of an Allied counter-attack and the danger involved in a possible failure to hold on to Burma

2. -ibid-
3. Joyce C. Lebra, Jungle Alliance pp. 64-67. According to Joyce C. Lebra, "Japan at no time planned a major invasion of India or the incorporation of India into the Greater East Asia co-prosperity sphere (contrary to the suspicions of Indians in the independence movement). ibid p. 64.
drove the Japanese army to decide a plan of offensive campaign in Burma in 1944 to safeguard the western border of the co-prosperity sphere. ¹

The plan of the Imphal campaign, in the initial stage of its development, was a pure military one. The plan had developed during the period from July 1943 to January 1944 when the Indian freedom movement in East Asia was gaining momentum. The Japanese plan gave the I.N.A. an opportunity to enter India. Bose had persuaded the Japanese army authorities to permit one I.N.A. Brigade to take part in the Imphal campaign. Consequently when the plan of the Imphal campaign reached the final stage, the importance of the political factor was not neglected by the army authorities.

On 7 January 1944 Bose shifted the headquarter of the Provisional Government, Indian Independence League and the INA Supreme Command to Rangoon. On the same day Imperial General Headquarters issued the formal orders to capture strategic areas near Imphal and in northeastern India, for the defence of Burma. ² Initially, there was a divergence of opinion between Bose and Lt. Gen. Kawabe on the nature of the role that the I.N.A. would play in the Imphal campaign. There was to be an espionage and propaganda group with each Japanese division. Kawabe wanted Subhas Brigade to be similarly splited

². Joyce C. Lebra, Jungle Alliance, p. 149.
and attached to larger Japanese formations. 1 But Bose was firm, he told Kawabe that the "first drop of blood to be shed on Indian soil should be that of a member of the I.N.A." 2 Eventually Kawabe agreed that the Subhas Brigade would not be split into units smaller than Battalions. Later the three Battalions were given specific tasks; the first was to form part of the Japanese force operating against the 81st British West-African Division in the Kaladan valley, the others too were to guard the routes over the Chin Hills. 3

The Japanese military operations towards India in 1944 consisted of two campaigns in two different sectors, the one in Arakan, was the holding operation and the second, launched a month later in the Imphal-Kohima area, was the main campaign. The offensive in Arakan, launched on 4 February, quickly cut off the 7th British India Division in the Mayu valley. Among the reason for success was the 'reconnaissance and subversion of an Indian outpost position by Major L.S. Misra, the I.N.A. Commander in Arakan'. 4 The main Japanese operation, directed against the Imphal and Kohima was to be carried out by the three Japanese Divisions. Two INA Battalions

4. -ibid- p. 106
and two Bahadur units were to join the Japanese forces from the beginning of the campaign, two other Brigades of the no. 1 INA Division reinforced them in April and May.

When Japanese troops and INA captured Kohima early on 6 April, many began to expect Imphal to fall within few days. Togo, issued a statement and made it clear that "whatever area the INA liberated, should be placed under the Administrative control of the Provisional Government of Free India". On behalf of the Provisional Government of Free India, Bose urged upon the Indian people to give its full support, block the US-British war efforts by restoring to sabotage and co-operate in bringing about the success of the freedom as early as possible. On 16 March Bose appointed Lt. Col. A.C. Chatterjee as 'Chief Administrator of Occupied Territories' and a party of civilian administrators, trained also in military discipline called the Azad Hind Dal' was organized.

The Japanese and INA, siege of Imphal and Kohima from April to July 1944 ended in their disastrous defeat. On 8 July 1944 Tojo ordered the retreat. The failure of the Imphal campaign removed the chances of success for Bose's plan of liberating India. He has pinned his hope to an anti-British revolt in India with the appearance of the liberation army on India's eastern border.

4. For the detail of Imphal campaign see, K.K. Ghosh, The Indian National Army, pp. 175-188 also Hugh Toje, pp. 108-134, also Bose, Werth & Ayer, A Beacon Across Asia, pp. 196-204.
The total INA involvement in the Imphal operations was never more than 8000 men. About one-fourth of the biggest Japanese division and half of the smallest. The INA's role could hardly be a decisive factor in a wide front where Japanese divisions proved inadequate. In late June Lt. Gen. Kawabe told Bose of the decision to withdraw Japanese and INA forces from Burma. But Bose, who was still confident, asserted that "we will not repent even if the advance of our revolutionary army to attain independence is completely defeated. Increase in casualties, cessation of supplies and famine are not reason enough to stop marching. Even if the whole army becomes only spirit, we will not stop advancing towards our homeland."¹

In his public announcement Bose still kept up a defiant front. He issued special order of day in which he said that Imphal defeat was a tactical retreat, the INA had defeated the enemy in 'every battle' and only unexpected heavy rain had washed away the chances of certain success in Imphal. He said that as soon as all their preparations were complete they would launch a mighty offensive against their enemies, once again. With the superior fighting qualities, dauntless courage and devotion to duty of their officers and men, victory would surely be theirs.² By refusing to acknowledge that Imphal was a disaster, did Bose at that time, as his critics alleged, lost touch with reality?

¹ Joyce C. Lebra, Jungle Alliance, p. 190.
Shortly after the end of the war, after praising many of Bose's qualities, wrote that "the standard of his operational tactics was, it must be said with regret, low. He was inclined to be unrealistic. For instance, without being familiar with the actual fighting power of the INA, he was always demanding it to be employed in a separate and decisive operation on the Imphal front and, in July 1944, when the tide of battle had turned and the Japanese Army had retreated, he urged that although the Japanese might retreat, the INA should continue to confront the Allies until their aim was attained. He was temperamental and had strong likes and dislikes... It cannot be said he possessed much magnanimity or very much tolerance for the opinion of others.

Till the moment of Japan's surrender, Bose never, at least publicly, renounced his faith in a Japanese victory. But the reasons Bose gave for the defeat, failure to take Imphal before the monsoons began, and lack of air support, have been confirmed in the historical perspective. It should be noted that the military victory was only part of the immense psychological and political victory he was seeking. Bose thought that the success at Imphal would have meant that for the first time, Indians would have seen England defeated on the soil of their motherland. And even the official British history of the war against Japan conceded that Imphal's fall might have led to 'a revolt in Bengal and Bihar against British rule in India which might well have been on a far greater scale than the riots of 1942'.

Bose came to realise the wider pattern of the Imphal disaster in September when he inspected the wounded soldiers who had been returning from the front. His Commanders spoke with bitterness about the inability of the Japanese to keep the INA supplied with minimum war materials and ration. Bose realised the danger of wholly depending on the Japanese for supplies. He doubled himself with the dispatch of supplies and medical help to the retreating INA.

Prime Minister Tojo resigned and was replaced by Kaiso. Bose immediately sent a telegram promising full cooperation in the war effort. On 9 October 1944 Kaiso invited Bose to Tokyo for exchanging views on the matters of mutual interest. The negotiations continued for a few weeks and a number of agreements were reached.

His most important achievement during this visit to Tokyo was to negotiate a loan agreement with the Japanese. Whatever monetary help the Japanese gave the Indians would be repaid when India was free, none of it should in any way hamper the independence of free India. The Japanese were impressed by Bose's attitude on this point. Before his visit he had been told of Japanese Government's plans to honour him with the Order of the Rising Sun. To the surprise of the Japanese, Bose declined the offer by saying, "I should like to accept it only after we have emancipated India".

Bose returned to Rangoon at the end of November 1944 and found that the situation had more deteriorated. The British forces began landing at Akyab in Burma on 31 Dec.

Previously, Bose's original plan was to begin his march into India from Kyab via Chittagong. When the reorganised 15th Division of the Japanese army was ordered to oppose the British along the Irrawaddy river, Bose offered reorganised first brigade of INA for the support of the 15th. Soon he learned that the INA along with Japanese 15th were falling back under the powerful push of the enemy. Bose left Rangoon to join the INA troops on the front.¹

Upon his return to Rangoon Bose heard that a group of INA troops had surrendered to the British. He issued a proclamation, telling the whole INA that any deserters should be shot.² This prevented more defections but not tactical retreat. Some units fought bravely with British but nothing could stop British advance and the position was worsened by the decision of the one division of Burmese Army led by the Defence Minister Aung San, to revolt against the Japanese.³ On 20 April 1945 Japanese Commander-in-chief Kimura advised Bose to withdraw from Rangoon along with his troops to Thailand. But Bose wanted to stay on on Rangoon and fight to the last. Hours of discussions followed in which his cabinet also insisted for withdrawal. Bose finally consented Kimura's proposal on condition that the women soldiers of the INA were first evacuated by train. He personally saw the women off at the Rangoon station.

² Lt. Col. Sahgal wrote a 'special note' regarding Desertion on 6-4-45, Motiram, ed., *Two Historic Trial*, p. 347.
He installed Maj. Gen. Loganadhan as his deputy in charge of the INA in Rangoon and left on 24 April with a few members of his Cabinet, senior officers, about fifty league workers and other members of INA. On reaching Bangkok on 15 May, Bose came to know of Germany’s capitulation to the Allies on 7 May 1945.

After some days Bose left Bangkok for Singapore. He now concentrated his efforts on a fierce radio propaganda campaign against the initiative taken by the Congress in India to reach an understanding with the Muslim League. In June 1945 most of the leading leaders of the Congress, such as Nehru and Azad, were released. Viceroy, Lord Wavell invited Indian political parties to a Conference in Simla to make a settlement. The conference held between June and July 1945, was not successful, it only proved that Jinnah’s Muslim League now enjoyed a veto over any peaceful settlement of the Indian problem.

In his speeches, since 1941, Bose consistently argued that a country could win independence only by force of arms and compromise with Muslim League would only strengthen this party and help the British to divide and ruin India. His speeches also reveal an acute international sense. He was convinced that Labour Party would emerge stronger after the 1945 elections and might even win (at that time few in the British Labour movement could imagine of this). Within few

2. See selected speeches of Subhas Chandra Bose, pp. 251-261.
weeks of Germany's fall Bose had begun to sketch out the political map of post-war Europe, "I firmly adhere to what I have consistently said in the past — namely, that the collapse of Germany will be the signal for the outbreak of actual conflict between the Soviets and the Anglo-Americans. The whole world knows that the war aims of Soviet Union are different from those of Anglo-Americans. The Soviet Government knows that the defeat of Germany has been due first and foremost to the heroism, tenacity and sacrifice of the people and armed forces of the Soviet Union. Consequently, the Soviet Government, being conscious of its own strength, will never give into the Anglo-American powers the post-war reconstruction of Europe ... Neither Britain nor the United States of America, who are capitalist imperialist countries, can produce a plan of social reconstruction which will be acceptable to the nations of Europe ... The whole world, and above all, Europe will therefore follow with breathless anxiety the moves of the Soviet Union in the days to come".

It is not surprising that Bose became increasingly convinced that Russia could only be his only possible ally in the fight against Britain. He was thinking to move to north China or Manchuria and from there to contact Russians. On 10 August 1945, Bose heard that the Soviet Union had declared war on Japan. Its forces at once invaded Manchuria and northern Japanese islands. Two days later Bose learned that Japan had already radioed its readiness to surrender. In the next two days, he discharged civilian employees of his government, disbanded INA troops in and around Singapore and paid them off.

1. Selected speeches of Subhas Chandra Bose, pp. 249-250.
Bose was under pressure from his cabinet colleagues not to surrender in Singapore. Bose himself had thought of seeking refuge in the Russian territory and resume the struggle from there. On 16 August, he was on his way to Saigon via Bangkok. In Bangkok, he met the Japanese General Isoda and Nakaya, the Japanese Minister-designate to the Provisional Government. Isoda later told a Government of India Commission enquiring into Bose's death that "it was finally at this meeting that Bose decided to go Russia via Manchuria and the Japanese Government promised him to help". The INA Deputy Chief of Staff, Habib-ur-Rahman, who was also present, maintained that Bose wanted to go to Tokyo to consult the Japanese about the surrender formalities, but there is also corroborati-
Government of India confirms the news of his death. Here the story given by the survivors and accepted by the Japanese Government is follows.

Their plane reached Tourane, a Japanese airport midway between Saigon and Hanoi, the same evening. The passengers rested there for the night, took off the next morning on 18th, and landed at Taipeih (Formosa) in the afternoon. After a very brief halt, the plane took off again, but a few minutes later it crashed on the outskirts of the aerodrome. Both Bose and Habib were injured but the former very seriously. Bose received extensive burns on the body and collapsed soon after he got down. Bose and Habib were immediately taken to the local Japanese military hospital.

Bose felt that he was not likely to survive and a few minutes before his death, he said, "Habib, my end is coming very soon. I have fought all my life for my country's freedom. I am dying for my country's freedom. Go and tell my countrymen to continue the fight for India's freedom. India will be free, and before long." These were his last words. The cremation of Bose's remains took place in Taipeih on 20 August and his ashes were flown on 5 September to Japan. They are still kept at the Senkoji Buddhist temple in Tokyo.

1. For this see, Shah Nawaz Khan, Netaji Inquiry Committee Report (New Delhi, 1956) G.D. Bose, Last days of Netaji, (New Delhi, 1974).

2. For the official Japanese version of all these events see, Bisir K. Bose, ed., Netaji and India's Freedom, p.415, also Tetsuo Hayashi, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose: His Great Struggle and Martyrdom, pp.140-144, 150-153 also, Bose Sarkar & Ayer, A Tetsuo across Tait, pp. 222-223. Habib-ur-Rahman narrated the whole story of Bose's death to S.A. Ayer about a month later in Tokyo, see, S.A. Ayer, Unto Him a Witness, p. 114. This account differs somewhat from what Habib later told Hayashi and various government commissions and enquiry teams.
On 24 August, the day the Japanese Government announced the death of Bose, Wavell recorded in his diary: "I wonder if the Japanese announcement of Subhas Chandra Bose's death in an air-crash is just true. I suspect it very much, it is just what would be given out if he meant to go underground.\(^1\) He asked his Home member Sir H.F. Mudie to prepare a note for the trial of Bose.\(^2\) Mudie could find nothing even in the extended definition of 'war criminal' that could be said to include Bose. His advisors were deeply worried about the consequences of a trial and the Home Department note he sent to Wavell acknowledged the difficulties of handling Bose.\(^3\)

British interrogation of the I.N.A. and the other Indians in East Asia had established that, contrary to their own propaganda, Bose was regarded not as a puppet of the Japanese but as a great hero, "Bose's influence over the I.N.A. soldiers and civilians is very considerable... They regard him with deep admiration, respect and confidence..."

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as a sincere patriot ... as one who successfully dealt with Japanese ..." Then there was his undoubted prestige and status in India, particularly in Bengal, where he 'ranks little, if anything, below Gandhi as an all India figure'.

After listing the various measures that could be taken to deal with Bose, the report went on to discuss their drawbacks. Public pressure would not allow him to be hanged in India; trial in Burma, Singapore or elsewhere would create just as many problems. A quick military execution was a solution but that could hardly be defended, and imprisoning him would only lead to agitation for his release. The report concluded "in many ways the easiest course would be to leave him where he is and not ask for his release. He might, of course, in certain circumstances welcomed by the Russians. This course would raise fewest immediate political difficulties, but the security authorities consider that in certain circumstances his presence in Russia would be so dangerous as to rule it out altogether."

The cabinet of Lord Attlee, in its meeting of 25 October 1945, accepted the suggestion.

After several investigations, the British Government had concluded by March 1946 that Bose might still be

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2. -ibid- p. 139.

3. -ibid- p. 140.
alive; but there was not much else they could do about it.¹

**Impact of the I.N.A. Trial on Indian Politics**

The second world war officially ended on 14 August 1945, with Japan's unconditional surrender to the allied powers. The repatriation of the Indian soldiers who joined the I.N.A. started in May 1945 and continued till the first quarter of 1946. Senior British Army Commanders were convinced that the I.N.A. soldiers were "traitors" and their officers a "rabble" and that if the integrity and the discipline of the British Indian Army were to be maintained, they should be severely punished. They suggested 'military treatment' of all the I.N.A. personnel.² But the higher authorities of the New Delhi were not entirely convinced that this was the right policy, in any case it was not possible to execute 25,000 men secretly. Although some of the I.N.A. prisoners who were captured during the Imphal campaign were at once court martialed and punished, the Government of India formulated a definite policy for the I.N.A. Prisoners.³

The I.N.A. prisoners were classified into 'whites' those who had joined the I.N.A. with the intention of

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rejoining the British; 'grays' those who had been misled by Bose and the Japanese; and 'blacks' those who had 'consciously' joined the INA. The whites were to be restored to their former positions, the grays were to be tried, dismissed and released, only the blacks were to be tried, dismissed and punished.¹

The Commander-in-Chief Claud Auchinleck decided that the trial should be held in public so that fact revealed by the trial would horrify Indian Public opinion. The first INA court-martial opened at the Red Fort in Delhi on 5 November 1945 and continued till 31 December 1945. Three I.N.A. officers from the category of 'Black' were chosen for the first INA Court-martial. Maj. Gen. Shahnawaz Khan, Lt. Col. C.S. Chillon and Lt. Col. P.K. Sahgal were accused of waging war against the King, of murder and abetment to murder.²

The court found all the three accused guilty of waging war against the King while Shahnawaz Khan was convicted also on the charge of abetment to murder. The Commander-in-Chief confirmed the sentence of cashiering, forfeiture of pay and allowance of the accused person as recommended by the court-martial but remitted the heavier part of the punishment.³

In the emergence of a nationalist front against the Government's INA Policy, the Congress had an important


3. -ibid- p. 303.
role to play. The I.N.A.'s attempt to achieve India's independence by force was at variance with the policy of peaceful and non-violent struggle adopted by Congress to win India's freedom. Then, why did Congress support the I.N.A.? During the war British Government's attempt to reach a settlement on the question of India's freedom had failed. The failure of these efforts had created considerable disappointment in India. The coming of Labour Party to power in July 1945, was hailed in India and there were fresh hopes for India's independence.¹

But these hopes proved to be short-lived. The new Labour Government's proposal for solving the question of India's freedom which was announced by the Viceroy on 19 September 1945² was similar to the Cripps proposal of 1942 and rejected by the Congress party³. The general elections were going to be held at the end of 1945 and beginning of 1946 and it was felt necessary that the congress must "keep the struggle alive among the people"⁴. The congress wanted a nationalist issue or a new revolutionary slogan (like that of Quit India in 1942) which would help to mobilize the nationalist opinion before the elections. In the middle of 1945, when the Congress leaders were

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2. For the full text see, Indian Annual Register, 1945, 11, pp. 148-149.
3. For the text of the Congress resolution on British Proposal, see - ibid- p. 93.
4. Abul Kalam Azad, India Wins Freedom, p. 120.
released from prison, the political atmosphere of the country was dull. It appeared that by taking up the cause of I.N.A. officers the Congress would get an opportunity to organize an all-India nationalist front against the British Government. The I.N.A. symbolised a revolution against alien rule. The formation of a national army in East Asia to win freedom for the country, its (I.N.A.'s) uncompromising attitude towards the Japanese to keep its dignity and the tragic military campaign for the freedom of the motherland, were bound to create an emotional impact on India. The Congress correctly estimated that it could revive the revolutionary favour in the country by defending the I.N.A. officers. Most of the leaders of the Indian independence movement in East Asia and the senior most I.N.A. officers welcomes the sympathetic attitude of the I.N.A. 1

At the A.I.C.C. meeting in September 1945, in a resolution the Congress expressed its concern over the fate of the I.N.A. prisoners and stated, "The A.I.C.C. is, however, strongly of opinion that for other additional reasons of far-reaching consequences and in view of the termination of the war, it would be a tragedy if these officers, men and women, were punished for the offence of having laboured ... for the freedom of India ...

1. S.A. Ayer, who was the Minister for the Publicity in the Provisional Govt. of Azad Hind writes that he and other I.N.A. officers were "thrilled" to know that the Congress had decided to defend the I.N.A. officers, S.A. Ayer, Unto him a witness, pp. 119-20.
Any punishment to these officers will not only be unjustified but will cause sorrow in innumerable homes and to the Indian people as a whole, and will widen the gulf between India and England. The A.I.C.C. therefore earnestly trusts that these officers and men and women of this army will be released. In a speech at that meeting Nehru warned the British Government that any vindictive punishment to the I.N.A. prisoners would create "tremendous discontent among the people of India and "repercussion in the British Indian Army too". The A.I.C.C. appointed a Defence Committee for the legal defence of the I.N.A. officers.

The Congress began glorifying the motive of the I.N.A. One of its circular said that "in all freedom fights the world over, patriots have sought outside help to free their country from foreign rule ... As long as foreign rule lasts in India, patriots in desperation will be obliged to seek foreign yoke. To call such "undoubted patriots' as the enemy of the country, was morally and politically unjustified. Viceroy Swell thought that the Congress was making great play in support of the I.N.A. demanding their release and sometimes lauding them as heroes. Commenting on the Congress Policy to defend the

1. Indian Annual Register, 1943, II, p. 92.
2. ibid-
3. The Committee consisted of Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Bhulebhai Desai, Dr. K.M. Katju, Jawaharlal Nehru, Raghunandan Saran and Asaf Ali.
4. For the text of the Circular of the General Secretary to All Provincial Congress Committees, see ibid pp. 105-106.
I.N.A. officers, Wavell wrote that "I think this may recoil on the head of Congress, if they go too far".1

Besides the Congress most of other political parties in the country also came out in support of the I.N.A.2 The socialist leaders, some of them were doing anti-British activities in underground during the war, had no objection to approve of the method using the enemy's difficulty for their country's advantage. Jayaprakash Narayana defended the acceptance of foreign military aid by Bose for India's freedom.3 The Muslim League at first remained aloof from expressing the support to I.N.A. But the fact that half of the officers, brought under trial were Muslims made it difficult for the Muslim League to remain aloof. In a statement to the Press, Jinnah, the President of the Muslim League, pleaded that the I.N.A. prisoners should be dealt with leniency. The Akali Dal and Hindu Mahasabha also urged the Indian

2. Wavell, wrote to Patrick Lawrence, "The Congress have, however, given the lead to the political parties and not only the Muslim League but Punjab Unionists have felt it necessary to put in a good word for the I.N.A" Wavel to Lord Patrick Lawrence, 9 October 1945, Masseur, ed., The Transfer of Power, Vol. VI, Document No. 135, p. 322.
Government not to publish the I.N.A. prisoners. Only the Communist Party of India, completely opposed to Bose and his army. The alliance of the Soviet Union with the Allies against the Axis powers explains the C.P.I.'s disapproval of Bose's effort for winning freedom with the Axis help. A Communist writer said that Bose's propaganda of liberating India could have no effect in free India but "in relation to an India held subject, it had certain measure of inevitable effect." Thus, he recognized the enormous impact of the I.N.A. upon India.

Before the court-martial of the I.N.A. officers started, all the major political forces of the country, except the communists supported them against the government's policy. The press censorship was removed in September 1945 and now the nationalist press highlighted the activities of the I.N.A. and its leader Subhas Chandra Bose. The reports about the organization of the I.N.A., the pledge of the soldiers of the I.N.A. and its part in the Imphal campaign were published. A large numbers of the speeches and 'Order of the Day' of Bose were reproduced.


2. The communists called Bose a 'fascist tool' and applied other stock of accusations. Their attacks upon Bose were later returned against them by such opponents as the 'Society for Defence of Freedom in Asia' which has reprinted communist wartime attacks on Bose. See Sitaram Goel, Netaji and CPI (Calcutta, 1955).

Indian Press reported that the INA's acknowledged aim was the achievement of India's independence and there was no possibility of India's domination by the Japanese Army. A wave of admiration for the I.N.A. and its leader Bose was the sweeping the length and breadth of the country. In their joy and admiration, people forget that the I.N.A. was a vanquished force and that its soldiers were detained in India not even as prisoners of war. Overnight, Jai Hind became the national salutation.

The government which had tried its best during the war to portray Bose as Cuiising and his INA men as mercenaries and traitors was startled by this popular action. Expressing his views, the Viceroy wrote, "the attempts by the politicians to enlist popular interest in, and sympathy for the I.N.A. are fully maintained, and the first trial by Court martial ... will cause considerable excitement". He had asked Commander-in-Chief, whether anything "can be done to counter the flood of inaccurate nationalist propaganda about the I.N.A."¹.

The Red Fort was selected as the venue for the trial. The authorities might have thought that it would help to attract minimum public attention to the trial. The Red Fort did strike public imagination but not in the way the authorities had hoped or expected. Its selection was bound

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to hurt the pride of the Indians. It also liked the I.N.A.'s efforts with the famous revolt which took place against the British in 1857. The Red Fort had also been hailed as the goal in the INA battle cry. The selection of a Hindu, a Muslim and a Sikh officer for a joint trial must have been partly influenced by communal considerations. But the people took a common interest in the trial.

By the time the general court-martial began its proceedings on 5 November, the three I.N.A. officers had become in Nehru's words "symbol of India's fighting for independence... The trial dramatised the old contest England versus India... It was the trial of strength between the will of the Indian people, and the will of those who held power in India". The defence was led by Shulehbai Desai.

The commencement of the trial brought protests from different parts of the country. Even before it had commenced, INA days had been organised in various parts of the country. The day the proceedings got under way the police had to open fire on a protesting crowd at Madura in south India. Then, as the trial proceeded the Red Fort itself was besieged, more than a hundred were killed or injured by police firing. Between 21 and 26 November the serious rioting broke out in

1. Forward by Jawaharlal Nehru, Notirem, ed., Two Historic Trials in Red Fort.

Calcutta. In a rare gesture of communal amity, Hindus and Muslims, their trucks were flying both Congress and Muslim League flags — jointly took over the city. There were attacks on the American troops and military establishments.¹

The violence soon spread in Patna, Allahabad and Banaras and eventually places as far apart as Karachi and Bombay were affected.

Before the trials, the Indian Army assumed that as the trials would bring out stories of brutalities committed against Indian soldiers by the accused, the Indian public would react sharply against the I.N.A. and would recognize the justice of the government's policy. But the trial produced opposite result. Even as the trial was proceeding, Commander-in-Chief Claude Auchinleck wrote to the Viceroy expressing his doubts, "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 knows what is the real feeling among the Indian ranks regarding the 'INA'. 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 INA and an increasing tendency to disregard the brutalities committed by some of its

¹. In Calcutta, 188 U.S. and British military and police were wounded and one killed. Some 49 military vehicles were destroyed and 97 damaged and about 200 military personnel injured, 32 Indians lost their lives and 200 were wounded. Keesing's Contemporary Archives, 1945–48 p. 7823.
members as well as the forswearing by all of them of
their original allegiance. It is impossible to apply
our standards of ethics to the problem or to shape our
policy as we would, had the INA been of our own race". 1

Gen. Auchinleck set up a special organisation
in his military headquarters 'to find out the real feel-
ings of Indian ranks on the subject'. He also decided
that 20 more INA personnel would be tried on the major
charge of waging war against the King and that only those
who had committed 'acts of gross brutality' would be
brought before the courts - at most between twenty and
fifty men. Later Philip Mason, Joint Secretary in the
war Department of the Government of India, stated that
'the I.N.A.'s patriotic motive would be taken at its face
value and its members would be treated as though prisoners
of war. 2

On 31 December 1945, a week before the trial
finished, the Viceroy empowered Gen. Auchinleck to commute
sentences of death and transportation of life. 3 When Gen.
Auchinleck came to confirm the sentences of the three INA
officers, he only agreed to the verdict of cashiering and
forfeiture of on their pay and allowances and the three
were set free. The Commander-in-Chief's communiqué of

1. Gen. Auchinleck to Viceroy, 26-11-1945, in K.K. Ghosh,
The Indian National Army, Appendix III, pp. 319-320.
3. -ibid- p. 7822.
3 January 1946 made this decision public. It stated that in taking such a decision "the prevailing circumstances have been taken into account by the confirming officer". The release of Shah Nawaz, Sahgal and "hillon was hailed with joy and acclamation throughout the country. They were welcomed like the heroes of a conquering Army. The people knew that it was not British mercy that made them release but the pressure of Indian public opinion and the growing political consciousness in the regular Indian Army which refused to consider the INA men as traitors.

Nehru wrote that "it was the will of the Indian people that triumphed in the end. Therein lies its significance, therein lies the promise of future". India's moral victory in the I.N.A. trial created a deep consciousness in the people. For a time INA seemed to have become India.

Even Gandhi also referred Bose, in his weekly Harijan, as 'Netaji' and conceded that 'the hypnotism of the INA has cast its spell upon us. Netaji's name is one to conjure with. His patriotism is second to none (I use the present tense intentionally) His bravery shines through all his actions'.

On 4 February 1946, an officer of the INA Captain Abdur Rashid was sentenced to seven years' imprisonment by a court martial. The Muslim League called for a 'Kashid

1. Motiram, ed., Two Historic Trials in Red Fort.
2. Forward by Jawaharlal Nehru, Motiram, ed., Two Historic Trials, p. iii.
Day and for four days between 11 and 14 February, the streets of Calcutta, Bombay and Delhi witnessed unique political demonstrations in which Hindus and Muslims forgot their differences and came together to fight the INA battles. Four days of strict martial law were required to bring Calcutta back to normal situation, by then nearly fifty were dead and over five hundred injured.¹

Eleven thousand INA prisoners had been released by February 1946, after the interrogation by the Indian Army Headquarters. With their return to their own villages, the stories of the adventurous endeavour for the country's freedom by India's own revolutionary army and the formation of the provisional Government and its leader 'Netaji' reached every corner of India. The nationalist Press also gave coverage to the all proceedings of the court. Unprecedented popular enthusiasm was created in the country. Bose and his INA were riding on the crest of this wave². Some of the congress leaders were also surprised by the actual nature of the impact of INA issue.

With the approach of the INA trial the pro-IN A sentiment of the Indian sectors of the armed forces and its dislike for the Government's policy towards the INA began to get expression. In January, some 5,200 Royal

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². According to Pattabhisiteramayya, "for a moment, the INA officers overshadowed the names of national leaders. It looked as though the INA itself eclipsed the Indian National Congress and the exploits of war and violence abroad threw into obscurity the victories of the non-violence at home" History of the Indian National Congress, Vol. II, p. 784.
Indian Air Force personnel had gone on strike to protest over their conditions and as an expression of sympathy for the INA cause. But the most dangerous explosion was to take place in the Royal Indian Navy. On 18 February a revolt began on HMS Talwar, a training ship of the Indian Navy. On 20, virtually the whole of the Royal Indian Navy was in open rebellion; seventy-eight ships in the various parts in India—Bombay, Karachi, Madras, Vizagapatnam, Calcutta, Cochin and even in the Andamans—and nearly all the shore establishments in the country joined the mutiny. Only ten ships and two shore establishments of the Royal Indian Navy remained unaffected. Other units of the armed forces were quickly affected. Between 22 and 25 February the R.I.A.F. in Bombay and Madras were on strike and on the 27th Indian soldiers in Jabalpur followed. In Bombay and Karachi, ratings were able to generate mass support. There was exchange of firing between the ratings and the military. The Communists and the Congress Left had called for sympathy strikes and over 600,000 workers from the textile mills of Bombay had responded. For almost three days they had fought, unequal battles with British troops in the streets and lanes of Bombay. In the end 270 had died and 1,300 had been injured. 

1. For the details of R.I.N. Military see Government of India, Home Political, file no. 5/14/46 also file no. 21/8/46 also file no. 30/6/46 see also S.C. Dutt; Military of Innocents, Bombay, 1971.
The revolutionary condition in the country created by the INA trial contributed largely to the naval mutiny. The demands of the ratings for immediate redress, also included the release of the INA Prisoners and the abandonment of the impending trials. They had even renamed the navy as the Indian National Navy. The congress leaders were frightened by the prospect of leading a revolution. They condemned the civilian disturbances of February 1946 and withdrew its support from the mutiny of the RIN ratings.

The revolutionary situations created by the INA issue swept the country and penetrated the armed forces. The outbreak of violence in India during the last weeks of November 1945 gave a shock to the British Government. On 4 December 1945 Herbert Morrison announced in the House of Commons that a ten-member parliamentary delegation would visit India to study the situation. The five week visit took place in January and February 1946 and by the end of it nearly all the visiting MPs were convinced that India was in a dangerous state. The February disturbances convinced the Britain's Prime Minister Attlee that India could be held by force of arms for a few years more.

3. The President of the Congress Abul Kalam Azad said to the Bombay Provincial Congress 'the steps taken by naval officers were wrong and they should go back to work'. He gave the same instructions to Mrs. Aruna Asaf Ali who tried to secure the support of the Congress for the ratings. Abul Kalam Azad, India Wins Freedom, p. 131. Patel condemned the mass demonstration in Bombay during the civil disorder as 'unjustifiable'. Nehru also deplored it. Indian Annual Register, 1946, I, pp. 124, 314, 317.
It appeared to be a difficult task to maintain in a vast country like India with an army about whose absolute loyalty there was some doubt. The British Government announced in February 1946 that a Cabinet Mission of three ministers would visit India. It was to help the Viceroy to bring into existence a constituent assembly and an interim government. The Mission was not carrying to India any definite proposal on which it might seek an agreement of the Indian leaders. Its main purpose was to help the Indian leaders to reach an agreement. On 15 March 1946, four days before the Cabinet Mission was to leave for India, in an important debate on India, Prime Minister Attlee's statement disclosed the factor which had influenced the Labour Government in sending the mission to India. "I find from our friends in the House who had been out to India and returned, from letters received from Indians and from Englishmen in India of all points of view, complete agreement on the fact that India is in a state of great tension and this is indeed a critical moment. At the present moment the idea of nationalism is running very fast in India ... and today I think that the national idea has spread right through not the least perhaps among some of those soldiers who had rendered such wonderful service in the war. I would like today, therefore, not to stress so much the differences between the Indians, but let us all realise that whatever the difficulties and division may be there is this underlying demand among all the Indian people".  

of the British policy towards India was to grant her the right of self-determination. The Cabinet, in fact, in its purpose. It was Attlee's speech in the House of Commons on 20 February 1947, when he pledged the British Government to transfer power to Indian hands by a date not later than June 1948 that finally led to the emergence of the two nations of India and Pakistan.

It has no doubt that there were other weighty considerations that prompted Britain to depart from India on 14 August 1947. But this is the fact that the British rule was not based on the consent of the governed but on the strength of the Armed Forces. The INA trials were instrumental in helping the transformation of the Indian armed forces during 1945-46 from a mercenary to a national force. The British realised that the army could no longer be treated as a mercenary force and that they no longer could stay in India on the strength of the Indian army. They, therefore, decided to go from India when the going was good.

Bose, in his last Order of the Day issued on 15 August 1945 as supreme commander of the INA said, "The roads to Delhi are many and Delhi still remains our goal. The sacrifices of your immortal comrades and of yourselves will certainly achieve their fulfilment. There is no power on earth that can keep India enslaved. India shall be free and before long". The INA reached Delhi though not in the manner envisaged by Bose. But its trial as vanquished had proved that Bose's belief in a revolutionary

1. K.C. Majumdar, Struggle, p. 757.
consciousness was grounded in a deeper understanding of the Indian people.¹

¹ According to Michael Edwards, "only one outstanding person took a different and violent path, and in a sense, India owes more to him than to any other man—even though he seemed to be a failure." The last years of British India, p. 45. According to Dilip Kumar "Joy, "Bose's suddenly amplified figure added to the romance of the I.N.A. marching singing to Delhi, galvanised a frustrated nation out of its torpor and substantially damaged the insulation of the Indian army from the magnetic currents of popular enthusiasm for immediate independence, Netaji the Man, p. 200."