

Chapter V

THE FREE INDIA CENTRE ADMINISTRATION VIS-À-VIS THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT OF AZAD HIND'S ADMINISTRATION – A COMPARATIVE ESTIMATE

A. The Background.

The most dreaded Indian revolutionary to the British Raj was Subhas Chandra Bose. His uncompromising militant struggle for freedom unnerved the British, and they marked him out as their ‘arch enemy’.¹ To restrict his movements, repeatedly the Government put him to prison – seven times in course of his twenty years’ struggle at home (1921-1941) – “on trumped up charge of his active complicity with the terrorists.”² The impact of prolonged incarceration told heavily on his health and the British government was forced to send him to Europe for medical treatment. His stay in Europe covered a period of four years (1933-36), and after a quick recovery he travelled extensively in different parts of Europe to familiarise the European countries with the Indian problem as well as to get a first hand, and direct impression and knowledge of the revolutionary or national liberal movements in those countries of which he made a detailed study. In the light of this experience he wanted to determine the future course of Indian independence movement, although frankly speaking, he did not yet foresee his future programme of the national liberation movement from European soil in 1941-43. However, his preliminary contacts with Germany and particularly Mussolini of Italy served as the background of his 1941-43 exploits in these countries. Particularly during this period Subhas Chandra came into close contact, as Lothar Frank points out,³ with a dissident group in the National Socialist Party of Germany who formed a secret organisation against the diehards of the party itself. This factor of his association with this secret organization turned out to be important in his second visit to Germany in 1941 with the purpose of organising national liberation movement in Germany for India’s independence with German and Italian collaboration. In this project he was most helped by Adam Von Trot, an active leader of the Kreisan group in Germany working for a

coup-d'etat and Hitler's assassination, Trot used his influence as Head of the India Section of the Foreign Office in Berlin for transforming this section into the special India Division Working for Subhas. It was mainly through his recommendation that later Free India Centre, which Bose wanted, was established with facilities accorded to him for raising the Indian Legion from among the Indian prisoners of war. According to Leonard Gordon "Trott became the key link for Bose to the German Foreign Office."⁴ Alexander Werth, who also played an important role, side by side Trot, to help Subhas Chandra, openly acknowledged the invaluable and indispensable assistance of Trot to Subhas, since the arrival of Bose in Germany, highlighting the intricacies and complexities of the job elaborately. He pointed out that Netaji's flight to Germany from the very beginning was a 'top secret matter' as well as a 'top level matter'. "It opened a psychological warfare against Great Britain," he observed.⁵ An effective organisation was gradually built up from within the government, starting from May, 1941, in accordance with the requirements of Netaji's fight for a free India. This apparatus had to be organised and constructed in such a way that could function perfectly independently under Netaji's or his co-workers' leadership. A fundamental decision had to be taken, if possible by the highest political circles, regarding an extensive program between a defined number of authorities, organisations and persons with the purpose of winning a maximum number of well-qualified Indian comrades from all over Germany, the neighbouring countries and from the frontiers of war, and to train them in order to form a consolidated and independent Indian organisation that could do full justice to the plans and programmes, Netaji had in mind. "It was a great luck for Netaji and his cause that ... Trot ... happened to be the head of the office in charge of all matters concerning Netaji's activities in Germany", observes Werth "a man who had the power to act politically in accordance with Netaji's way of thinking and who had the personality to be able to tie Netaji to Berlin at least for a certain time, despite Netaji's criticism of the political structure and the political leaders of Germany. ... I feel ... that without Trot, his circle of friends and his devoted working team, Netaji probably would not have remained in Berlin."⁶ Trot, with his particular talent for organising and also for camouflaging, if necessary, was able to

influence by means of the vast power extended to him, in the spring of 1941, all political authorities concerned, specially the Foreign Minister and State Secretary Kepler, and other competent authorities in such a manner that they collaborated with Netaji, and, more important, did not disturb him. The "Special India Division" was considered absolutely trustworthy. Netaji could afford to dispense with direct contacts with prominent members of the National Socialist Party.

From the report of Pietro Quaroni, dt. 2.4.41, we get an idea of Bose's programme of achieving independence with the help of Axis Powers. As the first step, he thought it would be convenient to constitute in Europe a "Government of Free India" with a name to be decided upon, and the Axis Powers should promise, recognise and guarantee the independence and integrity of India to the said government. With such promise in hand, the Government of Free India would begin a special radio Campaign of its own on two basic subjects :

- (1) The Victory of Axis is sure
- (2) There is nothing to hope for from England; in this moment of extreme danger for her, she still denies us an assurance for the status of 'Dominion' while the Axis Powers guarantee us complete freedom and independence.

At the same time along with this propaganda campaign, the Government of Free India would actively promote revolution in India as its contribution to the common fight against England; for this naturally it would require help which should be given by the Axis Powers in the form of a loan which India, once free, would pay back. "Bose is of the opinion that the main obstacle to the possibilities of a revolution in India is the great fear of England, and more than the fear the belief that England with her strength and her luck will eventually overcome even this crisis. ... The basic problem, is, therefore, according to Bose, to convince the Indians with facts and with the propaganda that England can be beaten and shall be beaten.

To Subhas Chandra the most crucial matter was the Axis Powers' Declaration of Indian independence among their war aims, which "would give a locus standi to his struggle from abroad, a struggle in the name of a Free India State."⁸ Thus before such declaration he was approached by Germany to broadcast from Berlin, but he refused because, as H.N. Pandit aptly points out, "he would not agree to be a tool for use in the German propaganda machine."⁹ This declaration, Bose felt was most urgent, since "the nearer the German armies move towards India", as Hauner observes, "the more hostile will the Indian people become towards Germany, the march of the German troops towards the East will be regarded as the approach not of a friend but of an enemy."¹⁰

Pending such declaration, Bose, to prepare the ground of his future activities in Europe, submitted three memorandums to the German Foreign Office. The first Memorandum dt. 9.4.41 outlines a plan for collaboration between the Axis Powers and India, with reference to the proposal of establishment of a Free India Centre in Europe and to the request for financial and military support.

The supplementary or second memorandum dt. 3.5.41 suggests the necessity for the declaration of policy by the Axis Powers towards India and the Arab countries, indicating Bose's attempt to interlink India's struggle for freedom with that of the Arab countries against the British Raj. In this light Subhas makes the following requests to the German Government.

1. An early pronouncement be made regarding the freedom of India and the Arab countries.
2. The work of organising revolts against Great Britain in these countries be commenced as soon as possible, so that the present favourable situation in these countries may be properly utilised.
3. The Axis Powers are now to concentrate on attacking the heart of the British Empire, i.e. British rule in India.

4. To facilitate the attack on British rule in India, steps be taken to upset the present pro-British Government in Afghanistan.
5. Steps be taken to render military aid to Iraq against Great Britain, should that become necessary in future.

The third memorandum provided a detailed plan of work which is found in the Appendix. But no forthcoming or positive results followed the submission of the memorandums, the main reason being the total indifference of Hitler to the Indian cause. His attitude towards India is clearly reflected in his famous book *Mein Kampf* as well as in his second book *Hitler's Table Talk* (found in 1958 and published in 1961), both of which highlight his strong racialist bias and anti-colonial contemptuous attitude in general. He admired the way in which the British dominated and administered India and said that he "as a man of Germanic blood, would inspite of everything, rather see India under British rule. ..."¹¹ He rediculed the "fighters for Indian freedom" as "Asiatic jugglers" and he strongly carried his conviction that India should remain under the whiteman's domination. Inspite of his repeated requests Bose was not granted any interview by Hitler for long. In a secret telegram (No.458 dt. 27.5.41) Woermann was informed that a reception of Bose by Hitler was not under consideration for the time being.¹² It is very natural that, when the Head of the Government nurtured such anti-Indian attitude, the German Foreign Office would be quite cold and reluctant in their response to the demands and proposals of Subhas Chandra. Thus Woermann's memorandum dt. 12.4.41 does not favour establishment of a Free Indian Government by Bose in Berlin while Rintelen's notes with reference to this memmorandum,¹³ dt. 10.9.41, stated that a declaration regarding free India should be postponed until German operations in the East have a greater impact.¹⁴

Woermann, however, did not rule out any such declaration in future. "I told Mr. Bose", he told Subhas Chandra in their recorded conversation, in July 1941, "that we remain firm in our intention regarding a proclamation for a free India : We have, of course, to

choose a suitable time for it. Here Mr. Bose became very emphatic and asked that the Reich Foreign Minister be requested to issue this proclamation as speedily as possible.”¹⁵

Thus Subhas Chandra did not give up. He did not yield to the negative attitude of the German Government, and with the support of Trot gave continued pressure on the German Foreign Office for active help in the formation of a Free India Centre and an Indian Legion out of the Indian Prisoners of war, apart from the central point of the Axis Declaration of a Free India.

Hitler had ordered the OKW Operation Staff on 17th February 1941, to prepare a study for advance from Afghanistan into India after the completion of BARBAROSSA.¹⁶ But since the German army seemed nowhere near achieving the destruction of the Soviet army by autumn, the project of a massive parade of strength near Afghanistan and India was whittled down to a program of hostile propaganda and disruptive acts of sabotage to make Britain aware of the danger to her empire. Here the assistance of Subhas Bose and his men in India, was considered to be useful by Hitler by October, though a declaration on Indian independence as demanded by Bose was rejected by the Dictator. Accordingly, instructions were issued by foreign Secretary Ribbentrop for examination of the propaganda values of the Indian prisoners of war.¹⁷ Thus began, the German Government’s desire for the first time in six months to associate Bose with its own actions, and a German emissary was sent to Badgastein, Bose’s health resort, where he was staying at the time, with the German Government’s request for co-operation. Bose thanked the German Government for the proposal and added that the collaboration would have to be based on a very well-defined agreement.¹⁸ His terms were as follows :

(1) For all purposes of negotiation, India should be regarded as a completely sovereign state of which he would be the representative until such time as the Indian people could finally constitute their own government on their own soil.

(2) While India was in subjugation, he (Netaji) should have facilities for a separate free establishment of his own with the status of a diplomatic representative attached to the Head of a sovereign state.

(3) For finances of such a set-up, the German Government would advance an interest free loan which would be repayable by free India, after termination of hostilities. In fact, as Alexander Werth points out, in 1944 5000,000 yen were handed over by the Japanese Government to the German Ambassador in Tokyo, in the house of Netaji to serve as the first partial repayment of the loan paid by Germany, to the Free India Centre. This amount was made up of voluntary contributions made by Indians living in East Asia.

(4) The loan so granted must be without any condition, and expenditure for the same must be subject to diplomatic immunity.

(5) Any broadcast, any publication, or any publicity to be carried on by the establishment, so contemplated, must not be subject to any German censorship, even though the same may have to be carried on from Germany or territories under her occupation.

(6) Recruitment to any Indian National Army to be raised would be made solely by Indians or representatives duly approved by the head of the State (Netaji).

(7) The Oath of allegiance by the members of the army would be to Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, who as the Head of the sovereign state of India, would also be the commander-in-chief of all Indian armed forces.

(8) Though apparent from the above, still it must be specifically agreed that the Indian forces, while operating in any joint sub-command, must not be deployed on any front other than against the British or other troops under British command subject to any unforeseen military entanglements.

(9) While the free India establishment and its forces would support all anti-British actions, it would not ipso facto consider itself at war with other allies of Great Britain.

"The Nazis were flabbergasted to see the terms. Were these the conditions of a powerless one-man state for co-operation with the Reich ? The man, they decided, must be cut to size."¹⁹

Shortly afterwards, an official communication reached Netaji to inform him that Fuehrer had approved the civil parts of his terms (points 1-5)and that decisions on the points involving military help would come in due course. Ultimately they were also approved with minor modifications to bring the terms in line with those accepted by other allies of Germany, e.g. the name of the projected Indian National Army would be called the Indian Legion cf Spanish Legion. Vyas informs us that although there was tough bargaining at the beginning, once the agreement was signed Germany honoured it in letter and spirit. Loans, technical aid, military officers to give necessary training to the soldiers of the Indian Legion came regularly.

After his meeting with the German Foreign Minister and later on with the Fuehrer on 29.5.42, Netaji was granted, as desired, absolute independence in financial matters and working procedures. In the words of Werth “absolute independence of Netaji’s activities in Germany were absolutely guaranteed in principle.”²⁰ However, Netaji’s demand for a joint declaration for a Freed India by the Axis Powers was ignored by the Chancellor. Nevertheless, it must be admitted that with the help of Trot and his circle who influenced the German Foreign Office, Netaji, barring the Declaration, was able to fulfil all his demands, and keeping his efforts open for the Declaration, now he set down to consolidate his gains and organise the administration of the Free India Centre which was ceremonially inaugurated on 2nd November 1941. Six decisions were taken at the first meeting of the Centre :

- (1) The name of the movement was to be Azad Hind or Free India.
- (2) The name of the organisation in Europe – Azad Hind Centre.
- (3) National anthem – Jana Gana Mana.
- (4) Emblem of the movement : Tricolour with a springing Tiger.
- (5) Prescribed greeting among Indians;Jai Hind.
- (6) A title for Subhas Chandra Bose – Netaji.

Gunpuley adds that in this meeting it was also declared to adopt Hindustani with the Roman script as the national language of India.²¹ From the account of Hugh Toye, we come to know that "By May 1942 the Azad Hind Centre had attained an acknowledged status in Germany." It was treated as a foreign mission, which implied for its members a higher scale of rations and exemption from some of the Aliens' Regulations. Bose himself was not stinted : the German gave him a good house, a car and special rations for entertainment purposes. His personal allowance amounted to about 800 per month, and there was a monthly grant for the Free India Centre, which rose from 1,200 in 1941, to 3,200 in 1944. All this Bose regarded as a loan, to be repaid to Germany, when India was free...²²

Detailed plan of work of Netaji regarding the Azad Hind Centre has already been referred to by us above, from which we find that the main functions of the Centre were to organise and help the cause and serve as the brain of the Indian Revolution in Germany and revolution in India and independent Tribal territory between India and Afghanistan. Thus the following plan of revolution was recommended by him for the Indian people in general as well as for the Indian National Congress.

1. Boycott of British goods.
2. Boycott of Britishers and pro-Britishers.
3. Holding of public meetings and demonstrations inspite of prohibition.
4. Secret bulletins and secret radio stations.
5. March to government office houses and demand their departure from India
6. Organise processions to occupy government offices to hamper administration.
7. Police and prison officials oppressing the people to be punished.
8. Street barricades against police attack.
9. Burn down government offices and factories working for war ends.
10. Interrupt postal, telegraphic and telephonic communications.
11. Interrupt rail, tran and bus services.
12. Destroy police stations, railway stations and jails in isolated places.

For the Congress he prescribed the following plan of action.

1. Non-payment of taxes to obstruct revenue.
2. Stay-in-strike or go-slow among workers to impede production.
3. Organise Secret guerilla bands by students to destroy British relics, monuments etc.
4. Underground work by women, especially girls.
5. Government officers, instead of resigning, should sabotage by eliciting secret information or by inefficient working.
6. Servants should create troubles for their masters by demanding higher salary and better conditions etc.²³

Another important function of the Centre was to guide the branches of the Free India Centre proposed to be set up in different countries of the world. Although this plan of expansion of overseas branch outside Europe did not materialise; the centre had established its branches in Rome, Paris, Brussels, Vienna and Prague. This helped to sustain and strengthen the Azad Hind movement in Europe, and "this lent a European character to this F.I.A. plan in Germany."²⁴

After the establishment of the Azad Hind Centre, Netaji set a quick pace to his work of organising the services on the civilian side of the government. The work allotted to this wing comprised radio services, publications including bringing out a journal, public relation and economic planning. In fact, Netaji, in his detailed plan of work submitted to the German government dated 20.5.41, mentioned above, already emphasised on some of these aspects viz. "to direct world propaganda (including radio, press etc. against British imperialism from the Indian standpoint, to conduct an official organ of the Free Indian Centre (at first a weekly journal) ... for distribution in different countries of the world."²⁵

The Azad Hind Radio began its programme of broadcasting to the Indian people from February 1942 when Netaji in his first address to his countrymen asked them to carry on the fight against British imperialism and assured them of Axis help in this mission.²⁶

From Gunpuley, we come to know that Netaji was in tears of joy as he made this maiden speech towards his countrymen.²⁷ In another address from the Azad Hind Radio on 17.6.42 Netaji justified foreign help for achieving India's independence. "We can expect help or assistance only from those who are our friends and allies. In the present case those who are trying to overthrow the British empire are working for our liberation and are our friend and allies ... apart from the theoretical position, personal experience as well as the interview with Herr Hitler and Signor Mussolini have convinced me that in the struggle against British imperialism, the Tripartite powers are our best friends and allies, outside India."

It is true, that here Netaji exaggerated the hopeful picture, since Hitler's attitude did not inspire in him much confidence, although Mussolini was sincerely sympathetic to the Indian cause, but he was projecting this image for two-fold purposes – to impress upon the German Government about his faith in them and more important, to rouse and inspire from abroad the Indian people to launch an uncompromising, national militant struggle for freedom against the British Raj from within. Thus in another broadcast on 31.8.42 he invoked his countrymen "to muster all your strength and courage in this fateful hour, sisters and brothers, be brave and continue the struggle, for freedom is at hand. Let your slogans be 'Now or Never' – 'Victory or Death'."

Thus the Azad Hind Radio played a vital role in Netaji's struggle for freedom in Europe. According to Nambiar the main task of the Free India Centre was to make radio transmissions.²⁸ The prospect of Azad Hind Radio becoming a valuable aid to India's freedom struggle caught the imagination of the German Government and its transmission time was raised to three hours. Alexander Werth informs us that the programmes were transmitted in several languages ---- English, Hindusthani, Bengali, Persian, Tamil, Telugu and Pushtu and the texts of the transmissions were not even censored.

Another significant development was that the Azad Hind Centre brought out in March, 1942, a monthly journal under the name of Azad Hind in Hindusthani language and in Roman script. Soon it had a circulation of 5000 copies in Germany. The Free India

centre was the executive centre for editing all radio broadcasts, caring for all Indian communities in Germany, including Austria, supervision of Indian National centres in France and Italy, organising cultural and educational training courses for its staff and maintenance of planning committee to study the social and economical problems of free India. It also arranged social and political meetings and served as co-ordinator and forum for the manifold relations with other diplomatic missions. Thus the Centre performed multifarious functions.

The military administration also began taking decisive steps for the organisation of the Indian Legion. This was delayed apparently for thrashing out the question of naming this army. While Netaji wanted it to be named Indian National Army, the German Government did not allow the status of an entirely independent army, and this military unit was called the Indian Legion. There were at that time about 10,000 Indian prisoners of war in the nearly Annaberg camp and other centres. After permission was duly obtained from the foreign office and the military authorities, Netaji paid a number of visits to these camps to talk to the POWs. While at the outset, there was hesitation among many of them in joining the Legion, Netaji's unremitting efforts and persuasion, as Girija Mukherjee who accompanied Netaji sometimes in these visits, observed, resulted in large numbers among them joining the Legion.

Capt. Walter Harbich together with his two civilian assistants, N.G.Swami and Abid Hassan, as well as numerous platoons consisting of well-trained Indian soldiers holding different ranks, constituted the framework for a future Indian Legion. All former Indian POWs received an exceptionally good training. They were specialised in intelligence services, radio transmission and sabotage services; separate courses were held for mountain troops and parachute troops. According to Werth "the morale, discipline of the troops as well as the personal relationship between officers and soldiers were excellent". Netaji himself visited the training camps to convince himself of the progress his men were making. The Legion soon reached the strength of one regiment.

Walter Harbich while enunciating the principles for acceptance of Indian army volunteers, points out that recruitment of the Indian volunteers took place through the Free India Centre in Berlin directed by Netaji on the principle of voluntary application from among the Indian intellectuals living at that time in different European states and from among the Indian POWs, and the recruitment was to be made in such a way that these units represented a picture of the multi-national Indian state. "His Excellency's (Netaji) goal was to paralyse the century-old antagonisms rooted in the Indian nationalities, religions and castes and to unite the members of both these units in one great common aim – that of liberating and making India an independent state in the family of nations", observes Harbich, "It is surprising how it was possible to lead Indian soldiers far on this way of thinking in a comparatively short space of time."²⁹ This national character of the Legion was echoed by the voice of its soldiers — 'Everything is Jai Hind here.' Leonard Gordon, while writing a biography of Netaji was impressed by this secular character of the Legion.³⁰

Side by side the vigorous military training, Netaji arranged for entertainments for the soldiers by organising fellowship evenings where they took part in different performances like music, songs, theatre, sketches etc. Whenever possible Netaji attended the functions along with some of his colleagues.

Although Germany did not agree to have the Legion as an Indian National Army, to Netaji it was nothing less than that in its objective, character, spirit and ideals. Its main objective was to arouse the Indians to launch an uncompromising militant national freedom struggle at home to be supplemented by this national liberation force under Netaji's leadership from abroad. According to Gunpuley, "these were the men who embodied the great national idea of an armed struggle for India's freedom."³¹ The nationalist and patriotic character of the Legion was focussed in a note sent to the German Government by Netaji regarding the position and the role of Indian Legion in Europe.³² In the following extract from this note we thus find that to Netaji "the aim of the Indian Legion should be to reach India by land or by sea. It will be most appreciable, if the Legion from the West could come

to India. It is to be synchronised with the Japanese offensive in East India." According to Netaji this joint offensive from abroad against the British would galvanize the Indian people to launch a militant revolt against the Raj from within. In the abovementioned note Netaji also enjoined that with the furtherance of training and the promotion of Indians to higher ranks, corresponding number of German training staff should be withdrawn, so that as far as possible, the Legion is comprised of Indians and is led by Indians. The military command of the Legion should remain in constant close touch with Free India Centre. It will be appreciated, if changes in the task of the Legion are effected with prior consultation with Free India Centre.

This projected Netaji's objective of giving the Legion an exclusively Indian and independent character, and it was further confirmed by the Oath of loyalty taken by the Legion soldiers, as Herbich points out, to be taken in the name of Netaji in his capacity as the representative of Free India of the future whereby he became the highest authority for Indian soldiers in Germany; an addition merely mentioned the necessary influence of the German High command whose name was mentioned in the Oath side by side that of Netaji.³³ Harbich paid a great homage to Netaji as a great Indian patriot who, deserved the main credit for the Indian Freedom movement in Germany in his time.³⁴

Thus Netaji, at this stage, had implemented his preliminary goal in Germany, namely the establishment of the Free India Centre, the Azad Hind Radio and the Indian Legion. There was still left to be attained the most vital point – an official joint declaration by the Axis Powers for India and a guarantee of India's independence after the war. Mussolini was the first to give his consent to such a guarantee. Ciano informs us that "Mussolini allowed himself to be persuaded by arguments produced by Bose to obtain a tripartite declaration in favour of Indian Independence."³⁵ There followed immediately the Japanese proposal for a tripartite declaration on India "The only one who delayed the formulation of such a guarantee", observes Werth,³⁶ "was the German Chancellor who revealed a reserve on the plea that such a declaration would be of small practical significance until the situation would

justify such a decision, and Gobbel recorded such German reaction on 11.5.43.³⁷ Netaji had now exhausted every opportunity to accomplish his mission in Europe, but it is only for the opposition of Hitler that he failed to succeed in attaining the culmination of his work in Germany. He was now convinced that the scope for the continuation of his work now lay in Asia rather than in Europe, so he left the charge of the Free India Centre and the Indian Legion to Nambiar and with the help of Trot he left Germany for Japan in a submarine risking his precious life for the sake of freedom of his beloved motherland.

Netaji's departure from Europe did not mean the closure of this Chapter of the national liberation movement in Europe under his leadership. Simply the European front was extended to East Asia -- to the I.N.A. movement under his leadership. Leaving Nambiar in charge of the European front, Netaji arranged to have a close link between these two fronts and Nambiar was instructed accordingly. In fact, in the Azad Hind Government established by him in East Asia, Nambiar was made a Minister in charge of the Free India Centre and the Indian Legion in Berlin, and the Indian Legion was declared by Netaji to be a part and parcel of the I.N.A.

The breakthrough and beginning of his work in Japan did not take so long time as it took in Germany, although the Japanese delayed his arrival in Japan as far as possible and tried to keep him inactive for sometime even after his arrival in Japan in May 1943. The First I.N.A. of Mohan Singh and Rashbehari Bose, was used by the Japanese only as a propaganda unit of the Japanese army for which a weak leader was essential. But Netaji's credentials were all known to the Japanese and they fully know him as a strong and independent minded man, who would upset their plans and calculations, if he took the command of the I.N.A. Hence their policy of evasion which was maintained even in avoiding an early interview with Prime Minister Tojo. The first meeting with Tojo, held within about a month of his arrival, did not produce any result, but the second meeting following shortly, produced a miracle releasing the most important result of enlisting the Prime Minister's wholehearted support for Netaji's programme, as he was very much

impressed with Netaji. "He is a great Indian, fully qualified to command the I.N.A.", Tojo told Shigemitsu.³⁸ This changed attitude of Tojo towards Netaji was also confirmed by Gainensho.³⁹ Both Saito and Hayashida described Netaji as a "great personality with magnetic and almost hypnotic charm"⁴⁰, which won over Tojo's support to him.

Tojo was so fascinated with this magnetic personality that he not only fully accepted Netaji as the undisputed leader of the I.N.A. movement, but also gave him absolutely free hand in all matters administrative, financial, even military, as we have seen above in Chapter 2. Thus we find that Tojo gave Netaji a free hand in collecting funds from the Indian residents of South East Asia and utilising it for the cause of the I.N.A. movement exclusively. Tojo also unhesitatingly endorsed Netaji's proposal of an Indo-Japanese Loan Agreement in 1944. Throughout the negotiations of the latter Netaji insisted on obtaining loans without any strings attached and assuring repayment. Netaji maintained that India was not Japan's client but only a temporarily weak co-equal government and army. This independent assertive stand was accepted by Tojo and Japan implemented this agreement by providing a loan of one hundred million yen to the provisional Government of Azad Hind. In military policy matters also Tojo accepted the independent stand of Netaji and there was, as Joyce Lebra notes it, the personal influence of Netaji on the formulation of Japanese policy and strategy towards the I.N.A. There were several instances where it is demonstrable that without Netaji and his powerful charismatic impact, Japan would have followed other courses in dealing with the I.N.A. or with the question of policy towards India in general.⁴¹

Thus we find that the very nature of Netaji's contact with Germany was totally different from that with Japan - Hitler's indifference in sharp contrast with Tojo's willing co-operation. This accounts for the failure of his plan of revolution in Germany and the success of the I.N.A. movement in East Asia.

It is in the same light that we may explain the limitations of his administrative and military programmes in his national liberation movement in Europe. Thus there were

restraints on the operation of his Free India Centre and Indian Legion in Europe since he did not enjoy absolute control over them depending for everything on the all German Government and particularly Hitler because of whose unsympathetic attitude he could not go far. In fact, but for the invaluable assistance of Trot and co-operation of Alexander Werth, it would not have been possible for him to attain even whatever measure of progress he made in Berlin.

In sharp contrast with this picture, with the whole hearted co-operation of Prime Minister Tojo, Netaji worked independently and effectively as the Head of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind and the Commander of the I.N.A. to proceed step by step to the successful consummation of his I.N.A. mission. The very titles of the administrative and military units of his revolutionary movement in Germany on the one hand and Japan on the other clearly bring out the difference in the nature of his control and operation. Thus in Germany he had to be satisfied with a makeshift arrangement of an administrative centre, the India Centre of merely a local character – no fullfledged government, in contrast with the fullfledged Provisional Government of Azad Hind in Japan of international character sanctioned by reognition of eight states. Again, regarding the Indian army, in Germany it was simply a Legion and it could not be called an Indian National Army because of the prohibition of the German Government, while in Japan we find the memorable exploits of the Indian National Army. Regarding the Indian Legion Netaji had no absolute control over it demanding no absolute obedience from the Indian POWs as it is clear from the Oath of the soldiers who professed loyalty first to Herr Hitler and then to Netaji – "I swear by God this holy Oath, that I will obey the leader of the German State and people, Adolf, Hitler as the commander of the German Armed Forces, in the fight for freedom for India, in which fight our leader is Subhas Chandra Bose" Moreover, we find an abortive attempt by Netaji to extend the Indian Revolution in Germany to different parts of Europe, but except Italy it did not mature effectively. In contrast with this we find the successful extension of the I.N.A. movement by Netaji to large parts of East Asia from Japan, covering most of the South & Asian countries particularly Burma, Singapur and Malaya on whose invaluable co-opera-

restraints on the operation of his Free India Centre and Indian Legion in Europe since he did not enjoy absolute control over them depending for everything on the all German Government and particularly Hitler because of whose unsympathetic attitude he could not go far. In fact, but for the invaluable assistance of Trot and co-operation of Alexander Werth, it would not have been possible for him to attain even whatever measure of progress he made in Berlin.

In sharp contrast with this picture, with the whole hearted co-operation of Prime Minister Tojo, Netaji worked independently and effectively as the Head of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind and the Commander of the I.N.A. to proceed step by step to the successful consummation of his I.N.A. mission. The very titles of the administrative and military units of his revolutionary movement in Germany on the one hand and Japan on the other clearly bring out the difference in the nature of his control and operation. Thus in Germany he had to be satisfied with a makeshift arrangement of an administrative centre, the India Centre of merely a local character – no fullfledged government, in contrast with the fullfledged Provisional Government of Azad Hind in Japan of international character sanctioned by recognition of eight states. Again, regarding the Indian army, in Germany it was simply a Legion and it could not be called an Indian National Army because of the prohibition of the German Government, while in Japan we find the memorable exploits of the Indian National Army. Regarding the Indian Legion Netaji had no absolute control over it demanding no absolute obedience from the Indian POWs as it is clear from the Oath of the soldiers who professed loyalty first to Herr Hitler and then to Netaji – "I swear by God this holy Oath, that I will obey the leader of the German State and people, Adolf, Hitler as the commander of the German Armed Forces, in the fight for freedom for India, in which fight our leader is Subhas Chandra Bose" Moreover, we find an abortive attempt by Netaji to extend the Indian Revolution in Germany to different parts of Europe, but except Italy it did not mature effectively. In contrast with this we find the successful extension of the I.N.A. movement by Netaji to large parts of East Asia from Japan, covering most of the South East Asian countries particularly Burma, Singapur and Malaya on whose invaluable co-operation

the success of the I.N.A. movement was largely determined. Against this background, Netaji's movement in Germany failed but his I.N.A. movement ultimately succeeded since the impact of the I.N.A. trial compelled the British to leave India and transfer power to her.

In conclusion, some common features may be noted – in fact they have already been highlighted above in different preceding chapters – regarding the objectives, concept and character of these two : the German experiment and the East Asiatic experiment – success or failure does not count here.

Thus, we have seen that the objective and character of both the movements abroad were intensely and exclusively patriotic and nationalist : the two-fold aims being India's independence and independence of the movement : no compromise on these main issues. Both of them were in letter and spirit an extension of the Indian freedom struggle at home : a complement and supplement from abroad. No rival or alternative movements but parts and parcel of the Indian national movement. Administrative and military experiments in both these cases: and their projections – the Free India Centre, the Indian Legion, the Provisional Government of Azad Hind and the Indian National Army were all inspired and characterised by the lofty ideals of patriotism, nationalism, religious toleration and democracy. They were nationalistic, democratic and secular in character. The only reason for this is that the fountain of all ideas and ideals of these movements was one man – Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, one of the greatest patriots of the world.

Appendix

Detailed plan of work submitted by Bose to the German Foreign Office. Outlines the formation of the Free India Centre in Berlin; suggests the Programme of creating revolts against Britain in India and other countries.¹

20 May, 1941

I. Declaration regarding Indian Independence

This will be an historic event in world-politics. It will be appreciated most of all in Oriental countries. As a challenge to British Imperialism, it will be morally invincible.

II. Opening of a Free India Centre in Berlin

The idea of forming an Indian committee in Berlin does not appeal to me because such a Committee will be a democratic body and from the practical point of view it will be unworkable.

The functions of the Free Indian Centre will be as follows :

- (1) To serve as the brain of the Indian revolution.
- (2) To guide the branches of the Free Indian Centre in different countries.
- (3) To direct world-propaganda (including radio, press, etc.) against British Imperialism from the Indian standpoint.
- (4) To conduct an official organ of the Free Indian Centre (at first a weekly journal) in German, Italian, French and Spanish for distribution in different countries of the world.
- (5) To organise and send practical help to India for the revolution (details given below).

(6) To organise Free Indian Legion (composed of Indians who volunteer) for fighting against England on the side of the Axis Powers.

(7) To conduct propaganda amongst the Indian troops fighting for England in the different war fronts.

III. Branches of the Free Indian Centre

Branches of the Free Indian Centre will be started in about 20 countries in Shanghai : Tokyo, Kobe (or Osaka), China, Saigon, Bangkok, Nepal, Kabul, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Turkey, Arabia, Egypt, French, Africa, Rome, Paris, Spain, Portugal, Ireland, Brazil, Argentine, Mexico, North America etc.

Some of these centres may have to be secret for the present.

The functions of these branches will be :

- (1) Open propaganda on behalf of Free India.
- (2) Open propaganda against British Imperialism.
- (3) Intelligent and careful propaganda against American support to British Imperialism.
- (4) Special propaganda in the entire Orient against British Imperialism.
- (5) Subtle propaganda in favour of the Axis Powers.
- (6) Actively helping the Indian revolution wherever and whenever possible.

IV. Organising a big campaign in the independent Tribal Territory(between Afghanistan and India)

V. Organising the revolution in India.

For IV and V the following detailed work will be necessary :

- (1) Sending military advisers to the Tribal Territory.
- (2) Building an aerodrome in the Tribal Territory.
- (3) Sending portable radio-transmitters for the Tribal Territory and for India.
- (4) Sending small printing machinery for the Tribal Territory and for India.
- (5) Sending materials for the sabotage work in India.
- (6) Sending necessary arms (and later on aeroplanes) for the Tribal Territory and for India.
- (7) Establishing a military training centre in the Tribal Territory for training Indian Officers.
- (8) Sending necessary literature for the propaganda in the Tribal Territory and in India.
- (9) Propaganda among the Indian war-prisoners — orally and with printed matter.
- (10) Organising a Free Indian Legion to fight against Britain. At a later stage, this legion may be sent to fight in India.
- (11) Preparing from now to send a military force to India in future.

VI. Organising revolts against Britain in other oriental countries

This work can of course be undertaken directly by the German Government and the Army high Command. But the Free India Centre in Berlin and its branches outside Germany can also help in this work.

VII. Some important items

(1) Special Officers

The Foreign Office should depute some special officers to collaborate with the Free Indian Centre in the above work. It will be a whole-time job for them.

(2) Radio propaganda

The radio propaganda from Berlin will be in several languages and will be in the name of the Free India Radio Station. A special station may have to be set apart for this purpose. The radio propaganda will have four distinct aims.

- (a) Fo · India, the object will be to work up a revolution.
- (b) Fo · other oriental countries, the object will be to inspire revolts against Britain in Egypt, Palestine, other Arab countries etc.
- (c) Fo · America, the object will be to attack the argument that Britain and America are really fighting for democracy.
- (d) Fo · other countries the object will be to explain what a curse British Imperialism has been to other countries.

(3) Finance

The question of how to send financial help to different countries and in which form will have to be carefully considered and arranged for. In the case of India, the question of printing rupee notes should be considered in this connection.

(4) Afghanistan

The German Government will have to carefully consider their attitude towards the present Afghan Government. The present Afghan Government can give much secret and indirect help to us in our work. But if they refuse to help and try to obstruct, then what should be done ?

(5) *Russia*

The attitude of Soviet Russia is very important for the above work for India's independence. A German-Soviet agreement on the question of India would be exceedingly desirable. If such an agreement take place, then we may be able to send men and materials through Russia to Afghanistan and India.

(6) *Iran*

If Russian help is not available, then we must think of proceeding to India via Iraq, Iran and Afghanistan. In that event we must think of Iran and how we can secure indirect help from her.

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