

Chapter III

A. NETAJI'S STUDY OF FASCISM AND NAZISM

Regarding the controversy on Netaji's relation with Fascism and Nazism, some of his critics are branding him as a Fascist or a Nazist and others are offering arguments that he was never a Fascist nor a Nazist. The matter should be discussed with an open mind.

The critics held that Netaji's personal relation with Hitler and Mussolini was the mark of his profound admiration for Fascism and Nazism. Subhas Chandra's expectation on Mahatma's role like Hitler or Mussolini or Stalin at the Round Table Conference gave the critics a clue for their argument that Bose had an ideological bias for Fascism or Nazism. The critics also argued that Subhas Chandra Bose had gradually developed a pro-Nazi intention beneath his liberal, democratic and socialistic principles and had become a friend of Nazi sympathizers.

According to some critics, Subhas Chandra Bose held that the Axis Power's assistance for his mission was indispensable, and the Nazis also extended their immense help to him by arranging his escape to Berlin and in organizing the India's Legion in Germany. In return, Subhas Chandra Bose always remained grateful to the German Government which, as he hoped, "will bind us together for all time."

Similarly, he had a close contact with Mussolini who was persuaded by Subhas Chandra Bose to ensure a Tripartite declaration on India's independence.

Netaji had also a close contact with Japan who encouraged him in his revolutionary programme and also actively helped him in raising the I.N.A. and the Provisional Government of Azad Hind. Recognising his friendship with Germany, Italy and Japan, Subhas Chandra Bose wanted to integrate India's independence movement

into the Japanese-German-Italian united front against the common enemy for India's freedom.

To the critics from these points of view, Subhas Chandra Bose intended not to liberate the Indian people, but to substitute British rule by German rule. Mussolini's cordial reception to Subhas Chandra Bose is termed by the critics as Subhas Chandra's cordial relation with the Fascists. His relation with the Japanese was termed by the critics as a sign of treachery to India's freedom and he was termed by messenger not of freedom, but of slavery, fifth columnist...¹

Moreover, according to the critics, the character of the Provisional Government was Fascist. Alfred Tyrneur described Subhas Chandra as India's Fuhrer and Walter Leifer was of opinion that Netaji's concept of the Free India State would be a mighty military state with well-equipped Fuhrer cult. The critics held the military bias of Subhas Chandra as his Fascist attitude.

According to some critics, Netaji was a Fascist Dictator. Their arguments were that Subhas Chandra had an inherent dictatorial leaning and he was inclined to authoritarianism; even the Provisional Government of Free India and the I.N.A. were subordinated to his dictatorship. "Under Axis patronage, he behaved more and more like a dictator. The arch-rebel tolerated no rebellion against himself, no criticism, no failure to cooperate in the way he had chosen..."²

All the criticism as has been mentioned above are not sufficient to prove that Subhas Chandra Bose was a Fascist. In fact, he had no ideological bias for Fascism or Nazism. He was never an admirer of Nazi ideology. From the strategic point of view, he was full of contempt for Fascism. For his revolutionary programme, Subhas Chandra considered the military discipline of Fascism and Nazism as expedient. "Thus as a practical weapon Subhas Chandra recognized the merit of Nazism or Fascism, but as an ideology he had strong hatred for it."³ He had a deep contempt for the Nazis, because the Nazi method of political control was extremely disagreeable to him. In his political

exercise in ideological perspective, Subhas Chandra Bose was never found to be a pro-Nazi or pro-Fascist. Rather he always emphasized a total opposition to Fascism and Hitlerism. To him, Fascism was synonymous with racialism which was always in opposition to Subhas Chandra's political principles. Not only Subhas Chandra, as he himself stated, that no self-respecting Asiatic would ever bow to the arrogance of the Nazi race theory.

Netaji also considered Fascism as a symbol of imperialism. Therefore, he always opposed the designs of Japan and Italy in the East. He frequently urged the Nazi Germany to withdraw aggression on Soviet Russia and supported the cause of China against the Japanese imperialist aggression on her. "Our whole heart goes to China in her hour of trial." Imperialist expansion was never sanctioned by Subhas Chandra Bose who rightly estimated that Fascism was imperialism and imperialism was Fascism. On the basis of the policy of expansion by the British, Subhas Chandra equated the British with the Nazis. He held that the Britishers wanted India's assistance to destroy Nazism but they have been themselves indulging in super Nazism in India. By insisting on the glorification of violence and war, the Nazis were exercising irrationalism and barbarism against humanism where there was no guarantee of peace to the world or mankind.

Netaji had a personal contact with Hitler, Mussolini and Tojo, but he had an ideological detachment with their 'isms'. Because he was a firm exponent of socialism and held that socialism was the only alternative to Hitlerism. He was a firm advocate of socialist state based on the synthesis of the idea of democracy and socialism, fulfilling the requirements and tradition of the Indian society. Hence his socialism was an anti-thesis of Fascism, imperialism and Nazism. Therefore, he never subscribed to the political ideal of Hitler, Mussolini and Tojo.

With reference to his association with the Axis Powers, it must be pointed out that Netaji was in dire need of their active assistance for his revolutionary programme. The need was determined by an important factor – the British policy towards India. From

the viewpoint of nature and character of the British rule in India it must be pointed out that the British were never ready to concede even Dominion Status to India. Rather they would continue their policy of oppression for preserving power in their hands. Thus Netaji was inclined to associate with the Axis Powers with a view to bring an end to the British Raj in India for ever through his national liberation movement for India's independence to be assisted by the Axis Powers. The second factor of his attitude towards the Axis Powers was the policy of the Congress towards the British. While the British seemed not to leave India, the Congress acted on the policy of non-violence under Gandhi's leadership, which was proved to be useless in ousting the British Raj. Even after Netaji had urged the Congress to change its policy of passive resistance, the Congress was prepared not to change the policy as Subhas Chandra had expected. "Had it been possible to organize a modern army inside India and procure arms for that army inside the country no help from outside would have been necessary."⁴ But the Congress was not prepared politically, militarily and even morally to support armed revolution. As Subhas Chandra was convinced that 'to expel the mighty British from India, an armed revolution was the only way out' and as the Congress did not sanction his uncompromising militant struggle, 'the only alternative left was to organize a national revolutionary army abroad to conduct the revolution against the British.'⁵ So he associated himself with the Axis Powers.

The favourable ground that was provided by the international situation was that England was the enemy of the Axis Powers. His basic principle in foreign policy was 'enemy's enemy is my friend.' Hence was convinced that the Axis Powers would be a reliable force to extend practical help in the armed struggle for India's emancipation. In his personal contacts with Herr Hitler and Signor Mussolini, Netaji was convinced that they were sympathetic to India's cause of freedom from the British clutches. Tojo in his parliamentary speech made a historic announcement that Japan would help India to expel and eliminate the Anglo-Saxon influence and enable India to achieve full independence

in the true sense of the term. "Thus Netaji's association with the Tripartite Powers was not a product of any pre-conceived pro-Fascist bias on his part, it was a matter of indispensable necessity, a question of expediency, strategy or a wise policy."⁶ National revolution and his country's freedom were the sole objectives behind his association with the Axis Powers. Hence Netaji's belief in Fascism and Nazism was totally military and tactical in character, not ideological. His approach to the international armed powers was so pragmatic that when he failed in Germany, he hurried up to Japan, because his prime concern was with India and India alone and his sole purpose abroad was to bring about the speedy emancipation of his country.

Thus only for strategic and military interest, Subhas Chandra Bose was inclined to associate with the Axis Powers and with their active cooperation his uncompromising military struggle was provided a new turn. In Europe, he raised Free India Centre and the Indian Legion and in South-East Asia, the Provisional Government of Free India, while totally remodelling and nationalizing the Indian National Army (I.N.A.). It is interesting to note that Subhas Chandra never allowed the Axis Powers to interfere in his I.N.A. movement. He always maintained freedom of action and was never prepared to follow the Fascist or Nazis' dictates. The whole I.N.A. plans were implemented on his own initiatives. He gave instructions to the I.N.A. soldiers of the Imphal campaign to fight the Japanese as vigorously as they would fight the British, if the Japanese would try to establish any type of control over India. Thus the I.N.A. and the Provisional Government was in no way under the Fascist control or influence. It had no Japanese character, it was totally Indian in concept, with the aim to bring about a speedy emancipation of India by the Indians themselves.

With regard to the criticism of Subhas Chandra that he was a Fascist dictator, it may be pointed out that Subhas Chandra envisaged the necessity of an authoritarian state or a dictatorship in Free India for post-independence reconstruction and to face any

problem that might threaten the new state of Free India. In fact, the allegation about his dictatorship emerged from his idea of a strong centralized Government with dictatorial powers. But it was only for a very temporary and short period to conduct a militant and ruthless struggle against the British before freedom because a militant party was necessary for attaining freedom and a strong hand was necessary for completing reconstruction of India after freedom. Yet his critics alleged that he was in favour of a dictatorial regime permanently.

His study of Fascism and Nazism made up his mind as inclined towards benevolent dictatorship or authoritarianism on ground of expediency. He was rather so benevolent that he expected the Congress to take over power, assume responsibility of administration, put through its programme of reconstruction and even this an authoritarian state would work as an organ or as a servant of the masses.

Subhas Chandra Bose always proved his enlightened leadership in the platform of the Provisional Government of Free India and the I.N.A. If he would have been a Fascist dictator, as some critics held, it would not have been possible for him to organize such a strong militant struggle abroad. His close associates abroad, S.A.Ayer, N.G.Gunpuley, Lakshmi Sehgal, A.C.Chatterjee, his I.N.A. colleagues attest to his democratic leadership and receptiveness. Behind every major decision by the I.N.A. Government, there was a Cabinet decision first and then Subhas Chandra had used discretion on behalf of the I.N.A. Government. In taking any plan, Subhas Chandra always tried to convince the I.N.A. men and never worked out it arbitrarily. So the criticism on him that he was a dictator or Fascist dictator can easily be ruled out.

Subhas Chandra's concept of militarism was associated with Fascism by some critics. As against these critics, it can be pointed out that militarism was, to Subhas Chandra, an indispensable necessity and an effective means for winning political power from the grip of the British. He rightly believed that a nation without having strong

military strength would not be able to preserve independence. His militarism was not an arbitrary rule, but an academic conviction that India must emancipate herself from the British and build up the nation by its military potentiality. His belief on militarism emerged from the idea that "Freedom is never given. It is taken."⁷ Netaji was convinced that a militant nationalist party would be certainly successful in launching a militant revolution against the British Raj in India. Therefore he raised the I.N.A. revolution, a complete military effort of the Indians, by the Indians and for the Indians to liberate India from the yoke of the British.

Netaji was fully aware of Fascism and Nazism as political ideologies and never accepted it as a principle of his mission. He was rightly convinced that as an ideology, Fascism or Nazism were always anti-thesis to democracy, socialism and constitutionalism. But the reasons behind his only softness towards the Fascism or Nazism was for its military character and strict discipline which were considered to be essential for his uncompromising militant struggle.

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B. NETAJI'S STRUGGLE AGAINST THE BRITISH FROM ABROAD : EUROPE-GERMANY, ITALY, FRANCE, 1941-1943.

A question may certainly come to our mind that why Subhas Chandra Bose had to seek help from abroad for his country's freedom in spite of a strong movement being led by the Indian National Congress. What may have been behind his decision to leave his mother country for her liberation? For the background of the answer of this question we must remember the past few days after the Presidential election of the Congress at Tripuri.

The said election of the Indian National Congress brought a surprising result to the rightist group of the Congress as Subhas Chandra Bose, in spite of a stiff opposition of the Mahatma and his supporters won the election by getting 1,580 votes to 1,375. Gandhi expressed his reaction by saying that Bose's victory had meant Gandhi's defeat. Such type of reaction Gandhi had, gave hints of what was to come.

On the other hand, Bose remained conciliatory towards Gandhi to a great extent throughout the next few months after the election. His aim and object to try and win the confidence of the Mahatma got no rest.

But Gandhi never trusted him. On February 22, 1939, as dictated by Gandhi, all the Working Committee members including leftist Jawaharlal Nehru except the Boses (Sarat Chandra and Subhas Chandra) resigned leaving the Congress in the hands of the newly elected President. It was done by Gandhi and his followers with a view to leaving Subhas Chandra Bose in an awkward position and makes him helpless. There was no doubt that Gandhi wanted to take revenge on Subhas Chandra who had defeated Gandhi's candidate in the Presidential election.

The days following the resignation of the Gandhians were full of discomfort to Subhas Chandra Bose. The behaviour of Gandhi and his supporters clearly proved that Gandhians were prepared not to cooperate with Subhas Chandra Bose. Not only Gandhi,

some of the so-called Leftists including Jawaharlal Nehru bowed down before the Rightists and avoided Subhas Chandra Bose. They were Leftists in speech, but in practice their leftism leaned towards Gandhi. They feared Gandhi and never pointed out his wrongs despite they saw those. Thus it may rightly be said that their blindness and fear of Gandhi sometimes made the movement inactive.

The attitude of the Rightist leader towards the Tripuri Congress taught Subhas Chandra Bose that the platform of the Congress was not ripe for him to run his uncompromising struggle against the British Raj. He was so frustrated by the political experiences that continuation of Gandhi's hostility to his Presidentship and the absence of a concerted and united left-wing strategy in India disillusioned him and made him to think of a new policy of direct action to overthrow the Raj. Therefore, he decided to try to find allies outside to help him fight the Raj.

Moreover, it is to be recalled that in 1933, Subhas Chandra reached Berlin and stayed in Europe upto 1936. During his stay in Berlin, Subhas Chandra Bose had come to an important decision in his life, which got reflection in the statement made by a joint venture of Subhas Chandra Bose and Vithalbai Patel. In the statement, they declared that Gandhi's leadership in the Indian struggle for freedom had completely failed and that the country must look for a new leadership and adopt a new method to reach her goal. Since the Indian National Congress could not be openly persuaded to adopt violent methods and since the Rightist leaders were found to avoid Subhas Chandra Bose, he came to a strong decision to leave India for Europe with a view to organizing an armed national liberation force against the British Raj from abroad. He heartily believed that a major international crisis could weaken Britain and her Empire. Such a crisis was the Second World War in which England involved herself. Subhas Chandra pleaded for cooperating with the enemies of Britain in order to weaken her. To him the enemies of Britain might certainly be the friends of India. Thus he was anxious to see the defeat of Britain.

Meanwhile he was under self-imposed seclusion in a room of his house on the Elgin Road, Calcutta. On January 16, 1941, he met his family members at the ritualistic

dinner. At late night he was dressed like an upcountry Muslim and escaped from not only his house, but also from his motherland.

Being experienced a hazardous and adventurous journey, Subhas Chandra Bose in the name of Mahammad Ziauddin with the active help of Bhagat Ram Talwar, the then member of the Kirti Kishan Party and the Forward Bloc of the North East Frontier Provinces reached Kabul on January 27, 1941. Subhas Chandra had to stay in Kabul for about forty-six days from January 31 to March 17, 1941 for making further arrangement for his escape from Kabul to Berlin.

On February 5, 1941, the Deputy Foreign Minister of the Third Reich, Dr. Woermann received in Berlin a coded message from the German Embassy in Kabul. It was said in the message that three days earlier the Indian patriot Subhas Chandra Bose had walked unannounced into the Embassy and asked for help in going to Germany. He needed protection in the German Legation and also help in reaching his destination. The Embassy had advised Subhas Chandra to hide himself for the time being among Indians in the city.

The utmost efforts of Subhas Chandra Bose and Bhagat Ram Talwar finally made the three governments of the USSR, Germany and Italy to agree that Subhas Chandra would travel across Russia on Italian diplomatic passport to Berlin. He left Kabul on March 18, 1941 and landed in Berlin on April 2, 1941.

In this way he escaped to Germany — the Great Escape of history.

Immediately after his arrival in Berlin, he came into contact with a group of men who were sincere and sympathetic and who possessed a certain amount of knowledge about the developments in India and the various problems which faced the Indian National Congress at that time. He met the Under Secretary of Political Affairs, Dr. Ernest Woermann at the Foreign Office. Subhas Chandra briefed him his future plan for India's freedom and sought active cooperation of the German government for (1) formation of a Provisional Free India Government, (2) a radio propaganda campaign

aiming at the creation of a revolt in India and (3) an invasion by the Axis Powers in India to drive the British out of the country.¹

Within a week of his arrival in Berlin, Subhas Chandra prepared and submitted on April 9, 1941 to the German government a five thousand word Memorandum embodying a statement about his future programme in Germany, his relation with the German government and the fields in which they could collaborate with each other.

In order to establish full cooperation between the Axis Powers and India for the achievement of the common objectives of defeating Great Britain, the following plan was proposed by him. It would entail work in Europe, in Afghanistan, in the Independent Tribal Territory lying between Afghanistan and India and last but not least in India.

Regarding the works in Europe, the following plans and programmes were to be pursued ---

- (1) A 'Free Indian Government' should be set up in Europe and preferably in Berlin.
- (2) A treaty should be entered into between the Axis Powers and the free Indian Government for India's independence and special facilities for the Axis Powers in India after her independence.
- (3) Legations of the Free Indian Government should be established in friendly countries wherever possible.
- (4) Propaganda, particularly through the radio, should then be started, calling upon the Indian people to assert their independence and to rise in revolt against the British authorities. Broadcasting will be done in the name of the Free Indian Radio station.
- (5) Arrangements should be made to send necessary help to India through Afghanistan for helping revolution.

The following works were to be done in Afghanistan :

- (1) A center will have to be established in Kabul for maintaining communications between Europe on the one hand and India on the other. The existing legations may be so enlarged as to be able to undertake this work or new committees may be set up specially for this purpose.
- (2) The center should have necessary equipments, like carts, lorries, special messengers etc., for maintaining communications between Europe and India.

In his memorandum, he also adopted some important programmes to work in the Tribal Territory.

(1) The efforts of the agents who were already working in the independent Tribal Territory lying between Afghanistan and India should have to be coordinated and an attack on British military centres would have to be planned on a large scale.

(2) Some military advisers from Europe would have to be sent to the Tribal Territory.

(3) A strong propaganda center would have to be installed in the Tribal Territory and necessary printing equipment would have to be arranged for

(4) A radio transmitting station would have to be set up in the Tribal Territory.

(5) Agents from the Tribal Territory would have to be appointed for procuring military intelligence from the Frontier Province of India, i.e. the province adjoining the Tribal Territory.

In view of his works in India, the following plans were to be followed ---

(1) Broadcasting for India would have to be done on a large scale. It would have to be done first from stations in Europe, and later on, from stations in the Tribal Territory as well.

(2) The printing center in the Tribal Territory would also be in charge of propaganda in India.

(3) Our agents and members of our party in different provinces in India would be instructed to give the maximum trouble possible to the British authorities in India. Their work would consist of :

(a) Interior propaganda calling upon the Indian people not to give one soldier or rupee to the British Government.

(b) Propaganda calling upon the civilian population to defy the civil authorities by refusing to pay taxes, refusing to obey the orders and the laws of the British Government etc..

(c) Secret work among the Indian section of the Army in order to induce them to rise in revolt.

(d) Organizing strikes in factories which work for helping Great Britain in her war efforts.

(e) Carrying out sabotage of strategic railway bridges, factories etc. (Necessary material for this work would have to be sent to India)

(f) Organizing revolts among the civil population in the different parts of the country as a stepping stone to a general mass revolution.

Regarding the question of finances, necessary finances for the above work would have to be provided by the Axis Powers. This will be in the form of a loan to the Free Indian Government established in Europe. At the end of the war, when an independent Government was set up in India, the loan would be repaid in full.

With reference to the military aid for smashing British power in India, Subhas Chandra Bose stated in the explanatory note attached to the memorandum that the British Government had a maximum force of 70,000 British troops and auxiliaries on those loyalty they can depend. Consequently, when the Indian troops began to revolt, the British would find it difficult to hold India with British troops alone. At that juncture, if a small force of 50,000 soldiers with full modern equipment comes to the aid of India, then

the British can be wiped out of India completely. The Axis powers should consider this important question also.

There is also an Explanatory Note in Memorandum which is on (i) Lesson of the World War of 1914-18, (ii) Future of the British Empire as considered by us, (iii) The importance of India in the British Empire, (iv) Some aspects of British diplomacy in the present war, (v) The attitude of the Indian people in the present was as compared with their attitude in the world war of 1914-18, (vi) The military position in India today, (vii) The importance of India for Japanese foreign policy in the Far East.

Subhas Chandra laid greatest emphasis on the German policy of defeating Britain for destroying the British Empire. In his Explanatory Note, Subhas provided some important information which were considered as the most profitable for the Germans as war strategy.

The most important item in Subhas Chandra's Plan for cooperation was his proposal to set up in Europe a Free Indian Government. The main expectation of Subhas Chandra was that either the Axis Powers would lead an invasion of Indian territory on the frontier against Britain or if they failed to do so, they would help him form and train a force of Indian soldiers for this purpose. His enterprise showed it clearly that the main objective of Subhas Chandra was to make the Indians themselves fight for India's freedom with arms against the British. So he undertook an effort to organize an army in Europe which, he believed, would advance towards the Indian frontier and which would encourage the Indian masses to rise against the Raj.

With reference to the Memorandum of Subhas Chandra Dr. Woermann sent certain comments to the Foreign Minister on April 2, 1942. He wrote that it was doubtful whether the moment had arrived for announcing the liberation of India from English rule as a war aim in an official form. Secondly, the establishment of a free Indian Government in Berlin under Bose's leadership would hardly be any political advantage for Germany. Thirdly, Subhas Chandra should be promised generous financial support.

Fourthly, the discussion regarding the German military expedition to India should be postponed.

To fulfill his plans for active and armed resistance, Subhas Chandra's first and foremost goal in Germany was to earn Hitler's active support to the cause of Indian Independence. He believed that the Axis Powers would cooperate with him and that the Congress would accept the gains to be made by him.

Therefore, he repeatedly emphasized on issuing a declaration by the Axis Powers for a Free India. On April 29, 1941, Subhas Chandra Bose met the German Foreign Minister Joachim Von Ribbentrop and tried to persuade him that Germany should issue a declaration for Indian Independence to win over the heart of the Indian masses and if it was done, it would expedite the victory of the Axis Powers. Ribbentrop said that he had his sympathy with the Indian people, but the Reich Government would not make a hasty declaration on India. The German Foreign Minister agreed to give him facility for the propaganda work and the formation of the Indian Voluntary Army.

Meanwhile Hitler's decision to attack Russia came as a thunderstone to Subhas Chandra Bose. To him only expectation in Europe rested on the existence of the Russo-German Non-aggression Pact. He rightly believed that if Germany attacked Russia that would be the end of India's hopes. Therefore, trying to influence the German High Command, he drafted "A Supplementary Memorandum" in continuation of his previous memorandum and submitted it to the Foreign Office on May 3, 1941.

Subhas Chandra requested Germany that an early pronouncement be made regarding the freedom of India and of the Arab countries; that the work of organizing revolts against Great Britain in these countries be commenced as soon as possible; that the Axis Powers do now concentrate on attacking the heart of the British Empire, that is British rule in India; that in order to facilitate the attack on British rule in India, steps be taken to upset the present pro-British Government in Afghanistan; that steps be taken to render military aid to Iraq against Great Britain should become necessary in future.

In his memorandum, Subhas Chandra suggested the German Government not to come into conflict with Turkey or the Soviet Union, because she would probably lose the sympathy of the Oriental countries.

Subhas Chandra has become extremely agitated over the indifference and reserve shown by the German Government towards the two memorandums, he had submitted. Keeping the Russo-German Non-Aggression Pact in tact was the main forces of the Supplementary Memorandum.

Surprisingly Adolf Hitler was contemplating of complying with Bose's request of a German Declaration for Free India with a view to threaten the British. On account of this sudden change, Dr. Woermann, on May 10, 1941 sent a secret letter to the Departmental heads to attend a meeting in order to discuss the declaration over Free India. Such a step made by the German Government gave an impression that Subhas Chandra Bose had been able to convince the German Government. He was again received by the Foreign Minister, Ribbentrop. Perhaps as a result of the discussion of the Departmental heads, it was to prepare a draft. Subhas Chandra wrote for the German Foreign Office a draft of declaration on May 19, 1941. The draft entitled "Declaration of Free India" a result of the consistent effort of Subhas Chandra Bose. The draft ultimately did not get Hitler's approval. He was so enthusiastic that he sent a message to his comrades in India on May 20, 1941. In his message, he said :

"Big events will happen soon in the sphere of international politics which will help the overthrow of British Imperialism. Time is therefore ripe for widespread propaganda and activity against Britain throughout the world and particularly in Oriental countries. To this work Indians can contribute much but they must speak and act in the name of Free India. I am expecting from the Axis Powers within a fortnight an open

declaration regarding Indian Independence. Immediately after this declaration I intend starting propaganda and activity, including radio propaganda, in the name of Free India Movement. I expect Axis declaration to say that the constitution of the Free Indian state will be decided by the Indian people themselves. My propaganda also will avoid party questions and take the help of all friendly powers. In my opinion the good results that will follow from my open propaganda in India will far outweigh the bad results, if any.”²

On the same day (May 20, 1941), Subhas Chandra Bose submitted to the German Foreign Office a detailed plan of work for the formation of the Free India Centre in Berlin and suggested the programme of creating revolts against Britain in India and other countries. Regarding declaration on Indian Independence, Subhas Chandra said,

“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.” He also said that the Free India Centre would serve as the brain of the Indian Centre in different countries; direct world propaganda (including radio, press etc.) against British Imperialism from the Indian standpoint, conduct an official organ of the Free India Centre in German, Italian, French and Spanish for distribution in different countries of the world; organize and send practical help to India for the revolution; organize Free India Legion for fighting against England on the side of the Axis Powers and conduct propaganda amongst the Indian troops fighting for England in different war fronts to influence them to leave the British service.

The Free India Centre would have branches in Tokyo, Kobe (or Osaka), China, Saigon, Bangkok, Nepal, Kabul, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Turkey, Arabia, Egypt, French Africa, Rome, Paris, Spain, Portugal, Ireland, Brazil, Argentina, Mexico, North America etc. The main functions of these branches would be open propaganda on behalf of Free India, open propaganda against British Imperialism, intelligent and careful propaganda against American support to British Imperialism, special propaganda in the entire Orient against

British Imperialism, subtle propaganda in favour of the Axis Power, and active help to the Indian revolution wherever and whenever possible

But the Government of Germany under the leadership of Adolf Hitler frequently changed its attitude and thus Subhas Chandra was informed that Ribbentrop had decided to postpone the declaration for a short while. Bose's optimism and faith in Germany was shaken.

The sudden decision to delay the Declaration made Subhas Chandra frustrated. In the meantime he received an invitation from the Italian Government where he helped to be received by Mussolini. In the last week of May, 1941, he had become extremely agitated over the indifference and reserve shown by Germany towards the two memoranda he had submitted. He had almost received the conclusion that further stay in Germany was a mere waste of time. He reached Rome on May 29, 1941.

The trip to Rome certainly aimed at getting assistance from Mussolini in obtaining the declaration of a Free India and other items he sought from the Germans. Thus he went to Rome near the end of May and met Count Ciano, the Foreign Minister of Italy on June 6, 1941 when he expressed that he would like the Axis to issue a public declaration on the independence of India.

In this connection it may be recalled that during his stay in Europe for about three years from 1933 to 1936, Subhas Chandra visited Italy for many times and had become friendly with Mussolini who was sympathetic to the Indian cause. After his visit to Italy in 1933, the Italian Government had called for a student convention in December, 1933. It is also generally and rightly believed that Subhas Chandra was attracted to Italy, because her Government had come out openly in support of India's struggle for independence. It also appeared that Subhas Chandra was deeply impressed by Signor Mussolini and even hoped to have assistance from him in the cause of Indian independence. Subhas Chandra Bose and Mussolini had met twice in 1934 and again in

1935. The latter suggested Subhas Chandra to prepare a detailed plan of action and then work for its realization.

It was because of such a close relation with Mussolini, Subhas Chandra again intended to visit Rome. This time he did not meet Mussolini, but Count Ciano, Subhas Chandra set forth his proposals for Axis cooperation with the Indian Nationalist movement, but Ciano was not impressed, which is evident from an entry of his diary. It reads :

“I received Bose, head of the Indian insurgent movement. He would like the Axis to make a declaration on the independence of India, but in Berlin his proposals have been received with a great deal of reserve, nor must we be compromised, especially because the value of this upstart is not clear.”³

Subhas Chandra Bose was totally disappointed in Rome. Firstly, the Italian Government was not willing to pursue Bose's demand that the Axis Powers issue a declaration on Indian independence. Secondly, the Duce himself did not greet Subhas Chandra. Possibly, he wanted to avoid differences with Berlin. During his stay in Rome, he was more disheartened when he had come to know that the German troops were marching towards the Soviet Union. He immediately expressed his reaction in a letter from Rome to Dr. Woermann in Berlin on July 5, 1941

“The talk(with Ciano) was not encouraging for me and soon after that, the war in the East broke out.... The public reaction in my country to the new situation in the East is unfavourable towards your Government.”

Subhas Chandra Bose was the enemy of the British Raj and its friends. He therefore, expected attack on England and her allies, not on any other country. As Soviet Russia was friendly to India, Subhas Chandra never expected Russia to be invaded by Germany. Therefore, the outbreak of the war between Russia and Germany shocked him profoundly. He warned Dr. Woermann in a letter on July 5, 1941 from Rome that the

Russo-German war was a tragic war which would make the Indians to feel definitely that Germany was the aggressor and she would be another dangerous imperialist power for India.

After coming back to Berlin, Subhas Chandra met Woermann on July 17, 1941 and informed him again that in the Russo-German war, the sympathies of the Indian people were very clearly with Russia because it was believed in India that the Soviet Union was an anti-imperialist power and would therefore be India's ally against England. He also said that the Russo-German Non-Aggression Pact of 1939 was an event of the highest significance for India. In the meeting, Woermann told Subhas Chandra that the Germans remained firm in their intention regarding proclamation for a Free India, but they would have of course to choose a suitable time for it. A memorandum on this discussion was sent by Woerman to the Reich Foreign Minister.⁴

But the German Government seemed not to abstain from the war with Russia and not to issue a declaration of Indian Independence. He rightly felt that the threat caused by the approaching German armies might easily be presented to the Indian public through British propaganda as an attempt to substitute German occupation of India and not as an attempt to liberate India. Subhas Chandra was also anxious and also irritated by the attitude of the German Government, which delayed the Indian Declaration, once already promised. Being desperate with the German Government, he wrote a letter to Ribbentrop on August 15, 1941 and the letter reached the Foreign Minister on August 18, 1941, in which he warned that the nearer the German armies move towards India, 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.

Coming back from Rome to Berlin, Subhas Chandra invited Mahammad Iqbal Shedai, an Indian who had kept his links with the pan-Islamic movements and was in favour of independence of Muslim countries. On June 1, 1941, Shedai had a meeting

with Subhas Chandra and the latter asked Shedai for his cooperation in the struggle for freedom against British Imperialism. Shedai not only refused to cooperate Subhas Chandra, but also informed the Italian Government that he was not apt for any kind of revolutionary work. Subhas Chandra tried again and again to work unitedly with Shedai and for this purpose had meetings with Shedai on June 3 and June 10, 1941. But Shedai was totally unprepared to support Subhas Chandra.

As per invitation of Subhas Chandra, Shadai reached Berlin for talks concerning the coordination and possibility of bringing the Axis Powers to Indian side. But Shadai had a poor opinion of Subhas and was not willing to co-operate with him, rather he turned out to be his dangerous rival in course of time. However, there came a change in the attitude of both the Italians and German Governments who were now not willing to abandon Subhas, for they believed that he had necessary status within Indian Nationalist Movement.

Then being anxious to know about the latest developments of political and revolutionary works in India, Subhas Chandra Bose wrote to Rahmat Khan alias Bhagat Ram Talwar requesting him to supply information regarding work in India.

Though the German Government repeatedly refused to declare Indian Independence, it agreed to establish Free India Centre in Berlin. It was also agreed that Subhas Chandra would have facilities with the status of a diplomatic representative like a head of a sovereign state; that the German Government would provide financial help to Subhas Chandra without interest which would be repayable by Free India; that the German Government would never interfere on any broadcasts, any publications and any publicity by the Free Indian Centre; that Subhas Chandra Bose would utilize full authority in recruiting to the Indian military force; that the members of the Indian Army would remain responsible to Subhas Chandra Bose as the Head of the sovereign state of India and also as the commander-in-chief of all Indian armed forces.

The Free India Centre or the Azad Hind Centre was ceremonially inaugurated on November 2, 1941. Six decisions were made at the first meeting of the Centre. Those were (1) the name of the movement was to be the Azad Hind or Free India; (2) the name of the organization 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.

A considerable number of Indian students and other Indian residents of Nazi dominated Europe joined the Free India Centre. Mention may be made of N.G. Swami, an active leader of Indian student association in Europe, M.R. Vyas, a student of language work in Germany; Abid Hasan, an engineering student at Berlin Technical College; N.G. Gunpuley, an Indian traveler in Germany since 1920 who had considerable experiences in German economic field; Habibur Rahman, a Delhi Muslim who was a writer in the German Government; A.C.N. Nambiar, a veteran journalist. These Indians extensively helped Subhas Chandra Bose in operating freely and confidently in German diplomacy and military. Some important German citizens holding high posts who had a close contact with Subhas Chandra were G. Wirsing, Walter Harbich and Lothar Frank. The first began to tutor Subhas in German, the second helped Indians for military service and the third who was an eminent socialist provided information regarding the real cause of Germany's war with Britain.

On November 29, 1941 in conversation with Herr Von Ribbentrop, Subhas Chandra came to know that Germany had explicitly rejected the idea of a declaration on India until she held a firm basis in the Near East.

For propaganda work, Azad Hind Radio service was launched by the cost of the German Government which approved broadcasts in Bengali, Persian, Tamil, Telegu, Gujrati, Pushtu and English. Then the National Congress Radio and Azad Muslim Radio services were launched under the leadership of Subhas Chandra in Berlin with a view to operating propaganda activities.

Another important task of the Free India Centre was to start the Indian Legion with a view to fighting for the freedom of India. A meeting was held between Ribbentrop and Netaji on November 29, 1941 which gave him a green signal for the formation of the Indian Legion. On December 8, 1941, in a meeting in Berlin between Subhas Chandra, Iqbal Shedai and other German Officials, the final shape of the Indian Legion was agreed to an effect. With necessary agreement, it was made that the Indian Legion would be under the control of the German Forces, but it would be commanded by Subhas Chandra Bose who recruited the Indian prisoners of war in Germany and Italy. Facilities were provided for training of the Indian Legion by Germany. Negotiations were started for the transfer of Indian POWs from Italy to Germany.

The first batch of the Indian Legion completed its training at the Frankenburg camp on December 26, 1941. A military honour was conferred on Subhas Chandra Bose in the autumn of 1942, by the Indian Legion of about 3000 men. In presence of Col. Satoshi Yamamoto, the Military Attache of the Japanese Embassy in Berlin and Netaji, the Indian Legionaries took oath as soldiers of Free India led by Lt. General Krappe. The soldiers touched their officer's sword as they spoke the German words : "I swear God this holy oath, that I will obey the leader of German state and people, Adolf Hitler, as commander of the German Armed Forces, in the fight for freedom of India, in which fight the leader is Subhas Chandra Bose, and that as a brave soldier, I am willing to lay down my life for this oath."⁵

During 1942, another two training camps were established, where in addition to ordinary weapons and riding training, special training of intelligence services, radio transmission and sabotage were given.

Subhas Chandra addressed the soldiers, "your names will be written in golden letters in the history of Free India : every martyr in this holy war will have a monument there."⁶

Through the formation of the Indian Legion, his dream of a military wing of the Indian National Movement came into being. Netaji infused militant nationalism among the Legionaries and also among the freedom loving Indians in Germany and in Europe. Throughout his life it was his ambition to equip an army that would capture freedom from the enemy. He always stressed on his belief that the British would never leave India unless they were driven out by force. He simply encouraged the soldiers of the Indian Legion to use their skills to fight for making India free and to march to India as motherland's liberators. Netaji made the Indian Legion a common platform for all the Indian soldiers like Garhwallis, Dogras, Rajputs, Sikhs, Muslims etc. They greeted each other by saying Jai Hind.

All these were done well, but the main goals of Subhas Chandra i.e. the declaration of Germany on Indian Independence and the advance of the Axis Powers towards the Indian Ocean were still to be fulfilled. In the meantime, on December 18, 1941, Herr Thomas, German Ambassador in Thailand to Foreign Ministry reported on the activities of Indian nationalists in Thailand and other parts of South-East Asia and their wishes to have Subhas Chandra Bose as their leader.

It is to be noted that by December 1941, Subhas went to Paris to meet Indians living in France. Therefore, disappointed with the Germans, Subhas Chandra began to approach the Japanese through the Japanese High Commissioner in Berlin. The Japanese High Commissioner General Oshima urged Hitler during his meetings on December 13, 1941 and January 3, 1942 to coordinate the German and Japanese military operations against the British in the Indian Ocean area. But Hitler refused any effective assistance to the freedom movement in India. Thus the initiatives made by General Oshima brought no fruitful result at that time. On January 9, 1942, Subhas Chandra wrote from Berlin to A.C.N. Nambiar requesting him to bring other Indians in France for doing work in Berlin at the Free India Centre. Nambiar was then living in Prague where he formed Indo-Czechoslovak society. After the war he was in Paris.

On January 15, 1942 Herr Thomas reported the Foreign Ministry from Bangkok that the Indians in South-East Asia had desired to have Subhas Chandra for taking command of the movement.

After having prepared the Indian Legion, Subhas Chandra Bose and the Indian community in Berlin celebrated Indian Independence Day on January 26, 1942. The Ceremonial Day was joined by businessmen, journalists, government officials, top military officers and diplomats from other countries.

On January 28, 1942, Subhas had a meeting with Yamamoto, Japanese Military Attache at the Japanese Embassy in Berlin. He stressed on the need of a declaration regarding Indian Independence. If it was done, the Japanese attack on the British in India would get support of the Indians. Yamamoto promised Subhas to forward a memorandum on this subject to the Japanese Government.

Despite the reluctance of Germany to recognize publicly the independence of India, Subhas Chandra Bose was, with full seriousness engaged himself in propaganda activities through radio transmission. In his first broadcast to the world over the Azad Hind Radio on February 19, 1941, after the fall of Singapore to Japan, Subhas Chandra said, "This is Subhas Chandra Bose speaking to you over the Azad Hind Radio The fall of Singapore means the collapse of the British Empire, the end of the iniquitous regime which it has symbolized and the dawn of a new era in Indian history British Imperialism has in modern history been the most diabolical enemy of freedom and the most formidable obstacle to progress And the enemies of British Imperialism are the natural allies of India.... Standing at one crossroad of world history, I solemnly declare on behalf of all freedom-loving Indians in India and abroad that we shall continue to fight British Imperialism till India is once again the mistress of her destiny. During this struggle and in the reconstruction that will follow, we shall heartily cooperate with all those who will help us in overthrowing the common enemy." He clearly made his views that the hour of India's salvation was at hand.⁷

It was pleasant to see that the continuous efforts of Subhas Chandra Bose resulted in the preparation of a new draft of the German declaration on Free India on March 3, 1942. The Propagation Ministry of Germany had decided to publish the declaration most prominently in the German press and to begin their official fight on behalf of India. But this declaration also did not come out of the official file.

On March 11, Herr Thomas from Bangkok forwarded the requests of the Indians living in Thailand to the Foreign Ministry of Germany to send Subhas Chandra to Japan to take command of the Indian Independence Movement in East Asia.

On March 13, 1942, in a radio broadcast from Berlin, Subhas Chandra Bose pointed out the deceit and hypocrisy of the Offer of Cripps Mission. Sir Stafford Cripps had offered, on the one hand, a promise of Dominion Status for the future and on the other hand, he demanded immediate cooperation in Britain's war effort. In his speech, he again reminded that India had but one enemy — Britain — the enemy that had robbed her freedom, exploited her for more than hundred years and sat on the chest of Mother India and drunk her life-blood.

In the meantime, from the month of March, 1942, the Azad Hind Centre brought out a monthly journal named Azad Hind in the Hindustani language in Roman script and soon it had a circulation of five thousands in Germany.

On April 29, 1942, due to relentless efforts of Subhas Chandra Bose, it was made possible that Hitler and Mussolini met each other in a meeting near Salzburg. They discussed the question of a public declaration on Indian Independence and came to the conclusion that such a declaration was not necessary as the time was not right for immediate action.⁸ The result of the discussion caused a disillusionment to Subhas Chandra Bose.

The German Government's reluctance to issue a joint declaration in favour of India's freedom and to lead an Axis force against the British made Subhas Chandra to

lose all his interests for working in Europe. Meanwhile, the situation became fruitful for Indian movement for freedom in South-East Asia where Japan was in complete occupation. The Japanese were helping the Indian nationalists in the formation of the Indian National Army and also they expressed their willingness to welcome Subhas to Japan for leading the Indian National Movement. In April, 1942, after the Tokyo and Bangkok Conferences, the Japanese decided to invite Subhas Chandra to Japan to ascertain his usefulness. For long before, Subhas Chandra had considered his stay in Europe as a mere waste of time and therefore, he, after receiving this invitation, became anxious to go to South-East Asia.

On May 9, 1942, Subhas Chandra made his last effort by writing to Ribbentrop asking him to go with clear policy regarding India's cause. On account of Subhas Chandra's anxiety, Ribbentrop presented a memorandum to Hitler on May 14, 1942, but Hitler turned his deaf ears in spite of the efforts made by Mussolini, Ribbentrop and Subhas Chandra. Therefore, he came to his final decision not to waste time any longer in Germany and to leave for Japan. On May 22, 1942, he wrote again to Ribbentrop that the conditions in India became ripe for an all out revolution against the British Raj and that his presence in the East had become absolutely essential. He also wrote to Ribbentrop to facilitate his travel to Asia so that he could perform his duty as the leader of the national revolution in East Asia.

On May 23, 1942, he in his meeting with Dr. Woermann expressed his desire to go to East Asia. On May 27, 1942, Ribbentrop, the Foreign Minister of Germany in his meeting with Subhas Chandra Bose gave assurance that Germany was willing to make a submarine available to him which would take him direct to Rangoon. Ribbentrop further clarified that both Hitler and he himself regarded Subhas Chandra "as the prominent and only true national leader of India" and appreciated his desire to be closer now to his people in India, because according to him and Hitler, neither Gandhi with his passive resistance nor Nehru with his Bolshevist train of thought could attain India's freedom.

He also informed Subhas Chandra that for those reasons, Germany and Italy were willing to do everything possible to facilitate her arrival at East Asia.

In the month of May, 1942, Subhas Chandra Bose made a visit to Rome and had an interview with Mussolini. In the fruitful discussion, Mussolini expressed his readiness to Subhas Chandra to accord recognition to the movement for Indian Independence. Mussolini suggested to him to form a Provisional Government of Free India either in Rome or in Berlin. Subhas Chandra successfully convinced Mussolini about the need of a declaration in favour of the independence of India.

Count Ciano recorded in his diary on May 5, 1942, "I go with Bose to the Duce. A long conference without any new developments except the fact that Mussolini allowed himself to be persuaded by the arguments advanced by Bose to obtain a tripartite declaration in favour of Indian Independence."⁹ But due to the stern opposition of Hitler, Mussolini also avoided the matter. There was no doubt that Subhas Chandra Bose had received a warm response in Italy which he never found in Germany. But because of Mussolini's dependence on Hitler not much could be achieved.

In the meantime, the hope of fighting the British Raj in India by the Indian Legion ended in smoke. Step by step, the soldiers were shifted from Frunkenburg to Koenningsbrueck and from this place they were again shifted to Holland for training in coastal defence. Then they were shifted to France and when the allied forces landed in France, the Indian soldiers were asked to evacuate the country. But on their way to Switzerland, they were encountered by the American and French forces. Some of them were shot dead and others were taken into prisons.

Thus the Indian Legion lost even an opportunity to fight for freedom of India. In this way Netaji's preparation for armed struggle in Europe for attaining India's freedom did not succeed for lack of German co-operation. Prior to his departure from Germany as well as from Europe, he had a face to face meeting with the German Fuhrer, Adolf Hitler

on May 27, 1942.

This long awaited meeting was the first and only meeting between Subhas Chandra Bose and Adolf Hitler. Accompanied by the Federal Foreign Minister, Herr Von Ribbentrop, Keppeler, Secretary of State and Ambassador Hewel, Subhas Chandra greeted Hitler as an 'old revolutionary' and sought advice from him. Hitler lectured the Indian revolutionary on various issues and finally expressed his unwillingness to issue any declaration on Indian Independence. With utmost effort, Subhas Chandra tried his best to convince Adolf Hitler and asked him about his offensive remarks on India in his Mein Kampf. But Subhas Chandra understood well that Adolf Hitler was unwilling to declare Independence of India.

Subhas Chandra Bose submitted a memorandum to the German Government on June 11, 1942 emphasising the importance of propaganda work in France – preferably in Paris. He proposed the starting of a propaganda centre in Paris. The centre would distribute anti-British materials published in Berlin; publish anti-British articles in the French press; influence both the French and Indians in Paris against the British Imperialism.

On June 12, 1942 the Foreign Minister, Ribbentrop sent a message to the Bangkok Conference and assured German help to the Indians in their fight against Britain. On June 17, 1942, Subhas Chandra in a broadcast on the Azad Hind Radio, justified foreign help for achieving India's Independence. On July 15, 1942 Thomas reported again informing the Foreign Ministry about the desire of Indian nationalists to have Subhas in South East Asia urgently. On August 3, 1942, in a broadcast from Berlin, Subhas Chandra Bose explained the task for the Indian people to overthrow the British. He also said that "India is now in a state of rebellion ... In this fight with British Imperialism, India does not stand alone. All the powers of the world that are now fighting Britain, are arrayed on the side of India." He suggested the Indians to develop

struggle gradually and expand it all over the country from by stages, to destroy the British war production in India and to paralyze the British administration in India.

Since the very beginning of his arrival in Berlin, the first and foremost task of Subhas Chandra Bose was to get a declaration of the Axis Powers under the leadership of Germany on Indian Independence. He believed that such a declaration would mean the recognition of Free India by the Axis Powers. Secondly, such a declaration would encourage the freedom-loving Indians in and around the world to proceed for overwhelming the British Raj in India. But on contrary to his belief and expectation, Adolf Hitler had already attained a notion which was favourable to India. "India otherwise meant little to him. He put Indians way down on his racial scale and believed they deserved to be ruled by others."¹⁰

It was the fact that Hitler liked to see the non-Christian country like India under the domination of a Christian country like Great Britain. He also believed that the loss of India by the British would be a misfortune for the rest of the Christians of the world including Germany. Hitler's mind was decisively influenced by the Nazi racial dogma more than any pragmatic political considerations. Hitler always identified himself with the Whiteman's lot and also was willing to cooperate with them. Due to Hitler's racial reservation, England was still his love. Therefore, he was never prepared to support India in her struggle for freedom from the Whitemen.

There was no doubt that all the necessary facilities had been provided to Subhas Chandra Bose in Berlin by the German Foreign Office for organizing a militant struggle against the British Raj. Financial, material and intellectual assistances were actively extended to him to form the Free India Centre and the Indian Legion. It also acknowledged Subhas Chandra's political importance and his first class intellectual qualities. Initially the German officials had their reserve against Subhas Chandra Bose. But immediately after their close contact with him, they abandoned their reserve and

intended to cooperate him in his mission. Thus a considerable number of the German high officials, diplomats and politicians reserved their great sympathy to Subhas Chandra's noble cause of a Free India.

In Germany, almost everything seemed to be favourable to Subhas Chandra's effort for independence of India. But he was considerably unhappy to see the attitude of the German government – that was its repeated reluctance to issue a declaration on India's Independence. Since the very beginning of his arrival in Berlin, in spite of such attitude of the German government, Subhas Chandra Bose was so optimistic that he hoped that the Axis Powers would issue a Declaration on Free India. Not only he hoped, he also prepared a programme for the Axis-aided India to carry out in Europe, in Afghanistan, and within India itself to be handled from Europe. Dealing with his enthusiasm, the German Foreign Office moved to create a special Bureau for India which was attached to the Information Department of the Foreign Office with a view to dealing India's affairs and links to Subhas Chandra Bose.

In spite of those facilities provided by the German Foreign Office to him, it was clearly seen that Germany was neither prepared to invade the British Raj in India nor willing to announce the Independence of India as a war aim. It became doubtful whether the moment would arrive for doing this in the official form. It was believed by most of the German officials that the active support to Subhas Chandra would not carry on any direct political benefit to Germany.

But the repeated refusals of the German government under the instructions of Hitler brought Subhas Chandra Bose to realize for once again that staying in Germany or in Europe had proved to be unnecessary. He firmly decided to leave Germany as soon as possible. Meanwhile the anti-British feelings in India so obsessed the Indians that it was too culminate in the Quit India movement. But Berlin could not adequately assess this situation in India. When India became hot, Subhas Chandra was in no way prepared to

waste time in Europe. He became anxious to make him closer to his people and became impatient at the repeated postponements of his journey to Asia.

“Viewed from the standpoint of a common world strategy, it would appear that the importance of India in the common struggle against the Anglo-American powers has increased considerably. My presence in the Far East at this juncture has, in consequence, become more imperatively necessary than before. I could do much more for my country, if I could be somewhere near India. I could then help India to play a role in this war which would be of importance not only to India herself, but also to the common struggle against the common foe It is naturally a disappointment for me that at the eleventh hour my journey to the Far East had to be abandoned And the sooner I could travel, the better it would be for India and for the common cause.”¹¹

At last reaching an agreement with the German government and the Japanese Embassy in Berlin for their help, Subhas Chandra Bose gave his last send-off to Europe on February 8, 1943.

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