

Role of Subhas Chander Bose in Indian Freedom

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ABSTRACT

The contribution of Subhas Chandra Bose is no less. He has been denied his rightful place in the annals of Indian history. Subhash Chandra Bose was one of India's greatest freedom fighter. He revived the Indian National Army, popularly known as 'Azad Hind Fauj' in 1943 which was initially formed in 1942 by Rash Behari Bose. He provided an influential leadership and kept the spirit of nationalism burning during the slack period of national movement in India. In this paper we will studied about role of Netaji in National Movement. Netaji was a patriot to the last drop of his blood. In his passionate love for the motherland, he was prepared to do anything for the sake of liberating his country. Subhash Chandra Bose is a legendary figure in Indian history. His contribution to the freedom struggle made him a brave hero of India. While his memory is still held in high esteem in India, in the West Bose is much less revered, largely because of his wartime collaboration with the Axis powers. Both before and during the Second World War, Bose worked tirelessly to secure German and Japanese support in freeing his beloved homeland of foreign rule. During the final two years of the war, Bose with considerable Japanese backing- led the forces of the Indian National Army into battle against the British.

1. Introduction

Subhas Chandra Bose was born on 23rd Jan, 1897 in Cuttack, Orissa, India. His father, Janaki Nath Bose had migrated to Cuttack to work as a barrister. His mother's name was Prohabati. From his childhood he was a bright student and was a topper in the matriculation examination from the whole of Kolkata province. Subhash Chandra Bose was a very intelligent and sincere student but never had much interest in sports. He was admitted to the Protestant European School, like his brothers and sisters, in January 1902. He continued his studies at this school which was run by the Baptist Mission up to 1909 and then shifted to the Ravenshaw Collegiate School. The day Subhas was admitted to this school, Beni Madhab Das, the headmaster, understood how brilliant and scintillating his genius was. After securing the second position in the matriculation examination in 1913, he got admitted to the Presidency College where he studied briefly He graduated from the Scottish Church College in Kolkata with a First Class degree in Philosophy. While studying in Presidency College Calcutta, he organized an attack on the British Principal, Mr F.E. Oaten. As a result, he was expelled from the college. The principal had made derogatory remarks about the Indians in his lecture. This showed Subhash's love for his motherland. Influenced by the teachings of Swami Vivekananda, he was known for his patriotic zeal as a student. He also adored Vivekananda as his spiritual Guru. He went to England to fulfil his parents' desire to appear in the Indian Civil Services. Bose was placed fourth with highest marks in English. However, Subhas Chandra Bose was deeply disturbed by the JallianwallaBagh massacre, and left his Civil Services apprenticeship midway to return to India in 1921. But his urge for participating in the freedom movement was intense that in April 1921. Soon, he left home to become an active member of India's independence movement. He, later joined the Indian National Congress, and also elected as the president of the party. After returning to India Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose came under the influence of Mahatma Gandhi and joined the

Indian National Congress. On Gandhiji's instructions, he started working under Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das, whom he later acknowledged his political guru. Soon he showed his leadership mettle and gained his way up in the Congress' hierarchy. In 1928 the Motilal Nehru Committee appointed by the Congress declared in favour of Domination Status, but Subhas Chandra Bose along with Jawaharlal Nehru opposed it, and both asserted that they would be satisfied with nothing short of complete independence for India.

2. Recognized Leadership

Bose, a patriot of almost fanatical zeal, first joined the Indian National Movement in 1921, working under C.R. Das, whom he idolized. He was jailed for six months in 1921-1922 because of his political activities. Immediately upon his release, the 25 year old Bose organized (and presided over) the All-Bengal Young Men's Conference. As a result of his remarkable leadership abilities and ambition, he advanced quickly through nationalist ranks. He was soon elected General Secretary of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee (BPCC). In 1924, at the age of 27, Bose was elected the Chief Executive officer of the Calcutta Municipal Corporation, which effectively put him in charge of the second largest city in the British empire. As a result of his close ties with nationalist terrorists, in late 1924 he was detained by British authorities and held, without trial for three years in prison. In 1928, the 31-year old Bose was elected president of the BPCC, and at the Calcutta meeting of the Congress party held in December, he came to national prominence by pressing (unsuccessfully) for the adoption by his provincial committee of an independent resolution. By 1930 Bose had formulated the broad strategy that he believed India must follow to throw off the yoke of British imperialism and assume its rightful place as a leader in Asia. During his years in Mandalay prison and another short term of imprisonment in Alipore jail in 1930, he read many works on political theory namely on Fascism. Until his death 15 years later, Bose would continue publicly to praise certain aspects of fascism and

express his hope for a synthesis of that ideology and socialism. His detailed comments on the matter in his book „The Indian Struggle 1920-1934“ which was published in 1935, accurately represent the views he held, throughout most of his career.

3. Program Outlined

During his political career, India's liberation from British rule remained Bose's foremost political goal. As he explained in his most important work, the Indian Struggle, the political party he envisioned "will stand for the complete political and economic liberation of the Indian people". He struggled throughout his life for the independence of India, in his own way. Along with his abiding love for his country, Bose held an equally passionate hatred of the imperial power that ruled it: Great Britain. Bose envisaged that the „the complete political and economic liberation of the Indian people“ would inevitably require the use of force. Although he occasionally claimed to „detest“ violence and criticized isolated acts of terrorism (which he considered ineffective and counterproductive) he was never really committed to Gandhi's policy of nonviolence. He regarded the Gandhi supported civil disobedience campaign as an effective means of paralyzing the administration, but regarded it as inadequate unless accompanied by a movement aimed at total revolution and prepared, if necessary, to use violence. Bose was able to give much grander expression to his „militarism“ when, in 1930, he volunteered to form a guard of honour during the ceremonial functions at the Calcutta session of the Congress Party. Such guards of honour were not uncommon, but the one Bose formed and commanded was unlike anything previously seen. More than 2,000 volunteers were given military training and organized into battalions. About half wore uniforms, which specially designed steel chain epaulettes for the officers, Bose in full dress uniform even carried a Field Marshal's baton when he reviewed his "troops".

The Indian National Army: A high point in Bose's „military career“ came in July 1943 in Singapore. At a mass meeting there on July 4, Rash Behari Bose handed over to him the leadership of the Indian Independence League. The next day, Subhash Bose reviewed for the first time the soldiers of the Indian National Army (INA) which then comprised of 13,000 men. In his address to the troops, which is a good example of his speaking style, he cited George Washington and Giuseppe Garibaldi as examples of men who led armies that won independence for their respective countries. This "Free India Army" (Azad Hind Fauj) would not only emancipate India from the British yoke," he told the soldiers but would, under his command, become the standing national army of the liberated nation.

4. Subhash Chandra Bose With Congress

After returning to India Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose came under the influence of Mahatma Gandhi and joined the Indian National Congress. On Gandhiji's instructions, he started working under Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das, whom he later acknowledged his political guru. During his service with the Indian National Congress, he was greatly influenced by Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Sri Aurobindo. He therefore returned to Kolkata to work under Chittaranjan Das, the Bengali freedom fighter and co-founder of the Swaraj Party. He did not agree with Gandhiji's methods of achieving Independence through non-violence. He believed that the only way of achieving

Independence was by shedding blood. Subhas Chandra Bose was jailed during Civil Disobedience movement in 1930. He was released in 1931 after Gandhi-Irwin pact was signed. He protested against the Gandhi-Irwin pact and opposed the suspension of Civil Disobedience movement specially when Bhagat Singh and his associates were hanged. Subash Chandra Bose was soon arrested again under the infamous Bengal Regulation. After a year he was released on medical grounds and was banished from India to Europe. However both Jawahar and Subash pushed through the Karachi resolution of 1931, which besides endorsing the Gandhi-Irwin pact included the principle of fundamental rights and national economic programme. Economic plannings, land reforms, basic education, and basic civil liberties were to be the frame work of future congress programme. The Indian Struggle, 1920–1934 and pleaded India's cause with European leaders. He returned from Europe in 1936, was again taken into custody, and was released after a year. In 1938 he was elected president of the Indian National Congress and formed a national planning committee, which formulated a policy of broad industrialization. On 22 June 1939 Bose organised the All India Forward Bloc a faction within the Indian National Congress, aimed at consolidating the political left, but its main strength was in his home state, Bengal. U Muthuramalingam Thevar, who was a staunch supporter of Bose from the beginning, joined the Forward Bloc. When Bose visited Madurai on 6 September, Thevar organised a massive rally as his reception. When Subash Chandra Bose was heading to Madurai, on an invitation of Muthuramalinga Thevar to amass support for the Forward Bloc, he passed through Madras and spent three days at Gandhi Peak.

5. Subhash Chandra Bose Vs. Congress

In 1928, during the Guwahati Session of the Congress, a difference in the opinion between the old and new members surfaced. The young leaders, as against the traditional leadership, wanted a "complete self-rule and without any compromise". The senior leaders were in favor of the "dominion status for India within the British rule". Congress party had undertaken a mission of opposing his every thought, insulting him and to stifle his highflying ambitions. In this manoeuvre of congress many a time he felt suffocated. Once there was a picture of 'Subhash Chandra Bose against entire congress party'. It was first election of congress that time. Usually closer aide of Mahatma Gandhi used to get elected; but this time Subhash Chandra Bose got elected with higher votes. This insulted Gandhi group, which led to their less interest of thinking towards parties campaign for independence. he resigned from congress Presidentship and formed his Forward Block in 1940 due to differences with Gandhiji. British had held him under house arrest in Calcutta due to his activities. But in 1941 he secretly left India. He approached Russia and Germany for help in India's freedom. He provided leadership to the Indian National Army after he went to Japan in 1943.

INA (Indian National Army)

The Indian National Army (INA) was the brainchild of Japanese Major (and post-war Lieutenant-General) Iwaichi Fujiwara, head the Japanese intelligence unit Fujiwara Kikan and had its origins, first in the meetings between Fujiwara and

the president of the Bangkok chapter of the Indian Independence League, Pritam Singh Dhillon, and then, through Pritam Singh's network, in the recruitment by Fujiwara of a captured British Indian army captain, Mohan Singh on the western Malayan peninsula in December 1941; Fujiwara's mission was "to raise an army which would fight alongside the Japanese army." After the initial proposal by Fujiwara the Indian National Army was formed as a result of discussion between Fujiwara and Mohan Singh in the second half of December 1941, and the name chosen jointly by them in the first week of January 1942. In Singapore Netaji met Rash Behari Bose who had been waiting for the so-long craved 'Destiny of India' by forming the Indian Independence League. Through his intrinsic diplomatic acumen Netaji could arrive at an agreement with the Japanese Government to build up the format of his wherewithal. The INA leaders in the first instance were convicted but their sentences were soon remitted and ultimately they were set free. However some INA officers were not released for which there was a public resentment. Demonstrations were organized in different parts of the country. Sarat Chandra Bose, the brother of Subhash Chandra mobilized the public sentiment in support of the INA and made elaborate arrangements for the celebration of the anniversary of the foundation of the Azad Hind Government on 21st October, 1943. Bose proclaimed the establishment of a provisional independent Indian government, and his so-called Indian National Army (Azad Hind Fauj), alongside Japanese troops, advanced to Rangoon (Yangôn) and thence overland into India, reaching Indian soil on March 18, 1944, and moving into Kohima and the plains of Imphal. In a stubborn battle, the mixed Indian and Japanese forces, lacking Japanese air support, were defeated and forced to retreat; the Indian National Army nevertheless for some time succeeded in maintaining its identity as a liberation army, based in Burma and then Indochina.

6. Determined Leadership

Bose clearly admired strong, vigorous, military type leaders and in „The Indian Struggle“ he listed several whom he particularly respected. These included Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin and even a former British Governor of Bengal, Sir Stanley Jackson. Bose admired Gandhi for many things, not least his ability to “exploit the mass psychology of the people, just as Lenin did the same thing in Russia, Mussolini in Italy and Hitler in Germany”. Bose’s militarism, ambition and leadership traits do not necessarily indicate (contrary to popular opinion) that he was a leader in the fascist mold. In this regard, it is worth noting that during his many years as heads of various councils, committees and offices, and during 15- month tenure as President of the Indian National Congress (February 1938 to May 1939), Bose never acted in an undemocratic manner, nor did he claim powers or responsibilities to which he was not constitutionally or customarily entitled. Bose clearly anticipated that the British would be driven out of India in an armed struggle (under his leadership), and that a social and political revolution would begin the moment the Indian people saw British rule under attack in India itself. This revolution, he believed would bring an end to the old caste system and traditional social hierarchy, which would be replaced by an egalitarian, casteless and classless society based on socialist models. This explains what Bose meant in the „The Indian

Struggle“ when he wrote of the need for a strong, single-party government, “ bound together by military discipline” with dictatorial powers for some years to come, in order to put India on her feet. Only a strong government, strict discipline, and dictatorial rule would, according to Bose, prevent the anticipated revolution from falling into chaos and anarchy. He rejected Communism (at least as it was practiced in the Soviet Union) principally because of its internationalism, and because he believed that the theoretical ideal found in the writings of Marx could not be applied without notification, to India. He was opposed to liberalism believing that greater emphasis should be placed on social goals than on the needs or desires of individuals.

7. Mass Mobilization

Bose was nonetheless, a consistent advocate of total mobilization, the mustering of national resources on a scale normally associated with military –like action. Realizing that manpower was easily India’s greatest resource (and arguably the only one available to the independence movement), he proclaimed that all Indians male and female, urban and rural, rich and poor-should actively participate in the fight for freedom. From his earliest days in politics to his death in 1945, he sought to rouse the great Indian masses, and involve them directly in the political struggle. Their support for representatives at the provincial or national levels was not enough they must themselves rise up and win independence. During the 1930’s however, his political position was never strong enough to call for other resources than manpower, nor was India-under British control-able to offer other resources. Additionally, total mobilization during peacetime, without an impending war or revolution in the awareness of the masses, had never been achieved (not even by the Nazis) and arguably never could be achieved. Bose, an astute man, no doubt realized this. With the formation of provincial government of Azad Hind, he was at last in a position to appeal directly for total mobilization to the mass of Indians-at least in Southeast Asia, and less directly to those in India itself. Along with his call for mass mobilization, he demanded that all, available resources be provided for the cause of freedom. Of course, Bose demanded not only the total mobilization of Indian resources in south Asia, but of Indian resources everywhere. He called for mass mobilization not only in support of his army, but also for his dynamic new government, the various branches of which required financing and manpower.

8. Commitment To Youth

Bose was also deeply committed to the youth movement, a devotion that featured prominently in his political ideology. Convinced that young people were by nature idealistic, restless and open to new ideas-such his own radical and militant outlook- Bose accordingly devoted a great deal of time and effort to the new Youth Leagues that were formed in a number of provinces during the 1920’s. Throughout his career he presided over far more youth conferences than any other all – India political figure, and his speeches to younger people he steadfastly urged a spirit of activism that contrasted sharply with the passivism preached by Gandhi and many of the older politician’s. One of the most hopeful signs of the time, he claimed at the 1928 Maharashtra Provincial Conference, “ is awakening among the youth of the country.” Bose believed that

India's liberation would be achieved only through the efforts and sacrifices of the militant, revolutionary and politically conscious younger generation.

9. Bose's Unique Political Ideology

While Bose political ideology can reasonably be described as essentially fascist, two qualifying points need to be made here. First he was ardent patriot and nationalist, Bose's nationalism was cultural, not racialist. Second, his radical political ideology was shaped by a consuming frustration with the unsuccessful efforts of others to gain independence for India. While he was ambitious, and clearly enjoyed devotion to his followers, his obsession was not adulation or power, but rather freedom for his beloved Motherland- a goal for which he was willing to suffer and sacrifice, even at the cost of his life. Bose was favourably impressed with the discipline and organizational strength of fascism and socialism. During his stay in Europe during the 1930s, he was deeply moved by the dynamism of the two major "fascist" powers, Italy and Germany. After observing these regimes first-hand, he developed a political ideology of his own that, he was convinced, could bring about the liberation of India and the total reconstruction of Indian society along vaguely authoritarian-socialist lines. Bose's lack of success in his lifelong effort to liberate India from alien rule was certainly not due to any lack of effort. From 1921, when he became the Indian to resign formally from the Indian Civil Service, until his death in 1945 as leader of an Indian government in exile, Subhash Chandra Bose struggled ceaselessly to achieve freedom and prosperity for his beloved homeland.

10. Conclusion

Bose advocated complete freedom for India at the earliest, whereas the Congress Committee wanted it in phases, through

a Dominion status. Bose was elected president of the Indian National Congress for two consecutive terms, but had to resign from the post following ideological conflicts with Mahatma Gandhi and after openly attacking the Congress's foreign and internal policies. Bose believed that Mahatma Gandhi's tactics of non-violence would never be sufficient to secure India's independence, and advocated violent resistance. He established a separate political party, the All India Forward Bloc and continued to call for the full and immediate independence of India from British rule. He was imprisoned by British authorities eleven times. His famous motto was "Give me blood and I will give you freedom". His stance did not change with the outbreak of the Second World War, which he saw as an opportunity to take advantage of British weakness. At the outset of the war, he left India, travelling to the Soviet Union, Germany and Japan, seeking an alliance with the aim of attacking the British in India. With Japanese assistance, he reorganized and later led the Indian National Army, formed from Indian prisoners-of-war and plantation workers from British Malaya, Singapore, and other parts of Southeast Asia, against British forces. With Japanese monetary, political, diplomatic and military assistance, he formed the Azad Hind Government in exile, regrouped and led the Indian National Army in battle against the allies at Imphal and in Burma. His political views and the alliances he made with Nazi and other militarist regimes at war with Britain have been the cause of arguments among historians and politicians, with some accusing him of fascist sympathies, while others in India have been more sympathetic towards the inculcation of realpolitik as a manifesto that guided his social and political choices. He is presumed to have died on 18 August 1945 in a plane crash over Taiwan. However, contradictory evidence exists regarding his death in the accident.

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