

Encyclopedia of Indian History 20th Century, Vol 3

Johnny Cunningham



**ENCYCLOPEDIA OF
INDIAN HISTORY
20TH CENTURY, VOL 3**

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by Johnny Cunningham

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Ebook ISBN: 9781984668165



Published by:

Bibliotex

Canada

Website: www.bibliotex.com

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Chapter 27

Salt Satyagraha, The Civil Disobedience Movement, begins with the Dandi March

The **Salt March**, also known as the **Salt Satyagraha**, **Dandi March** and the **Dandi Satyagraha**, was an act of nonviolent civil disobedience in colonial India led by Mahatma Gandhi. The twenty-four day march lasted from 12 March 1930 to 5 April 1930 as a direct action campaign of tax resistance and nonviolent protest against the British salt monopoly. Another reason for this march was that the Civil Disobedience Movement needed a strong inauguration that would inspire more people to follow Gandhi's example. Gandhi started this march with 78 of his trusted volunteers. The march spanned 240 miles (390 km), from Sabarmati Ashram to Dandi, which was called Navsari at that time (now in the state of Gujarat). Growing numbers of Indians joined them along the way. When Gandhi broke the British Raj salt laws at 6:30 am on 6 April 1930, it sparked large scale acts of civil disobedience against the salt laws by millions of Indians.

After making the salt by evaporation at Dandi, Gandhi continued southward along the coast, making salt and addressing meetings on the way. The Congress Party planned to stage a satyagraha at the Dharasana Salt Works, 25 mi (40 km) south of Dandi. However, Gandhi was arrested on the midnight of 4–5 May 1930, just days before the planned action at Dharasana. The Dandi March and the ensuing Dharasana

Satyagraha drew worldwide attention to the Indian independence movement through extensive newspaper and newsreel coverage. The satyagraha against the salt tax continued for almost a year, ending with Gandhi's release from jail and negotiations with Viceroy Lord Irwin at the Second Round Table Conference. Although over 60,000 Indians were jailed as a result of the Salt Satyagraha, the British did not make immediate major concessions.

The Salt Satyagraha campaign was based upon Gandhi's principles of non-violent protest called *satyagraha*, which he loosely translated as "truth-force". Literally, it is formed from the Sanskrit words *satya*, "truth", and *agraha*, "insistence". In early 1930 the Indian National Congress chose satyagraha as their main tactic for winning Indian sovereignty and self-rule from British rule and appointed Gandhi to organise the campaign. Gandhi chose the 1882 British Salt Act as the first target of satyagraha. The Salt March to Dandi, and the beating by British police of hundreds of nonviolent protesters in Dharasana, which received worldwide news coverage, demonstrated the effective use of civil disobedience as a technique for fighting social and political injustice. The satyagraha teachings of Gandhi and the March to Dandi had a significant influence on American activists Martin Luther King Jr., James Bevel, and others during the Civil Rights Movement for civil rights for African Americans and other minority groups in the 1960s. The march was the most significant organised challenge to British authority since the Non-cooperation movement of 1920–22, and directly followed the Purna Swaraj declaration of sovereignty and self-rule by the Indian National Congress on 26 January 1930. It gained worldwide attention which gave impetus to the Indian independence movement and

started the nationwide Civil Disobedience movement which continued until 1934.

Declaration of sovereignty and self-rule

At midnight on 31 December 1929, the Indian National Congress raised the tricolour flag of India on the banks of the Ravi at Lahore. The Indian National Congress, led by Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru, publicly issued the Declaration of sovereignty and self-rule, or Purna Swaraj, on 26 January 1930. (Literally in Sanskrit, *purna*, "complete," *swa*, "self," *raj*, "rule," so therefore "complete self-rule".) The declaration included the readiness to withhold taxes, and the statement:

We believe that it is the inalienable right of the Indian people, as of any other people, to have freedom and to enjoy the fruits of their toil and have the necessities of life, so that they may have full opportunities for growth. We believe also that if any government deprives a people of these rights and oppresses them the people have a further right to alter it or abolish it. The British government in India has not only deprived the Indian people of their freedom but has based itself on the exploitation of the masses, and has ruined India economically, politically, culturally, and spiritually. We believe, therefore, that India must sever the British connection and attain *Purna Swaraji* or complete sovereignty and self-rule.

The Congress Working Committee gave Gandhi the responsibility for organising the first act of civil disobedience, with Congress itself ready to take charge after Gandhi's

expected arrest. Gandhi's plan was to begin civil disobedience with a satyagraha aimed at the British salt tax. The 1882 Salt Act gave the British a monopoly on the collection and manufacture of salt, limiting its handling to government salt depots and levying a salt tax. Violation of the Salt Act was a criminal offence. Even though salt was freely available to those living on the coast (by evaporation of sea water), Indians were forced to buy it from the colonial government.

Choice of salt as protest focus

Initially, Gandhi's choice of the salt tax was met with incredulity by the Working Committee of the Congress, Jawaharlal Nehru and Dibyalochoan Sahoo were ambivalent; Sardar Patel suggested a land revenue boycott instead. *The Statesman*, a prominent newspaper, wrote about the choice: "It is difficult not to laugh, and we imagine that will be the mood of most thinking Indians."

The British establishment too was not disturbed by these plans of resistance against the salt tax. The Viceroy himself, Lord Irwin, did not take the threat of a salt protest seriously, writing to London, "At present, the prospect of a salt campaign does not keep me awake at night."

However, Gandhi had sound reasons for his decision. An item of daily use could resonate more with all classes of citizens than an abstract demand for greater political rights. The salt tax represented 8.2% of the British Raj tax revenue, and hurt the poorest Indians the most significantly. Explaining his choice, Gandhi said, "Next to air and water, salt is perhaps the greatest necessity of life." In contrast to the other leaders, the

prominent Congress statesman and future Governor-General of India, C. Rajagopalachari, understood Gandhi's viewpoint. In a public meeting at Tuticorin, he said:

Suppose, a people rise in revolt. They cannot attack the abstract constitution or lead an army against proclamations and statutes ... Civil disobedience has to be directed against the salt tax or the land tax or some other particular point – not that; that is our final end, but for the time being it is our aim, and we must shoot straight.

Gandhi felt that this protest would dramatise Purna Swaraj in a way that was meaningful to every Indian. He also reasoned that it would build unity between Hindus and Muslims by fighting a wrong that touched them equally.

After the protest gathered steam, the leaders realised the power of salt as a symbol. Nehru remarked about the unprecedented popular response, "it seemed as though a spring had been suddenly released."

Satyagraha

Gandhi had a long-standing commitment to nonviolent civil disobedience, which he termed *satyagraha*, as the basis for achieving Indian sovereignty and self-rule. Referring to the relationship between *satyagraha* and *Purna Swaraj*, Gandhi saw "an inviolable connection between the means and the end as there is between the seed and the tree". He wrote, "If the means employed are impure, the change will not be in the direction of progress but very likely in the opposite. Only a

change brought about in our political condition by pure means can lead to real progress."

Satyagraha is a synthesis of the Sanskrit words *Satya* (truth) and *Agraha* (insistence on). For Gandhi, satyagraha went far beyond mere "passive resistance" and became strength in practicing nonviolent methods. In his words:

Truth (satya) implies love, and firmness (agraha) engenders and therefore serves as a synonym for force. I thus began to call the Indian movement Satyagraha, that is to say, the Force which is born of Truth and Love or nonviolence, and gave up the use of the phrase "passive resistance", in connection with it, so much so that even in English writing we often avoided it and used instead the word "satyagraha" ...

His first significant attempt in India at leading mass satyagraha was the non-cooperation movement from 1920 to 1922. Even though it succeeded in raising millions of Indians in protest against the British-created Rowlatt Act, violence broke out at Chauri Chaura, where a mob killed 22 unarmed policemen. Gandhi suspended the protest, against the opposition of other Congress members. He decided that Indians were not yet ready for successful nonviolent resistance. The Bardoli Satyagraha in 1928 was much more successful. It succeeded in paralysing the British government and winning significant concessions. More importantly, due to extensive press coverage, it scored a propaganda victory out of all proportion to its size. Gandhi later claimed that success at Bardoli confirmed his belief in satyagraha and Swaraj: "It is only gradually that we shall come to know the importance of the victory gained at Bardoli ... Bardoli has shown the way and

cleared it. Swaraj lies on that route, and that alone is the cure ..." Gandhi recruited heavily from the Bardoli Satyagraha participants for the Dandi march, which passed through many of the same villages that took part in the Bardoli protests. This revolt gained momentum and had support from all parts of India.

Preparing to march

On 5 February, newspapers reported that Gandhi would begin civil disobedience by defying the salt laws. The salt satyagraha would begin on 12 March and end in Dandi with Gandhi breaking the Salt Act on 6 April. Gandhi chose 6 April to launch the mass breaking of the salt laws for a symbolic reason—it was the first day of "National Week", begun in 1919 when Gandhi conceived of the national hartal (strike) against the Rowlatt Act.

Gandhi prepared the worldwide media for the march by issuing regular statements from Sabarmati, at his regular prayer meetings, and through direct contact with the press. Expectations were heightened by his repeated statements anticipating arrest, and his increasingly dramatic language as the hour approached: "We are entering upon a life and death struggle, a holy war; we are performing an all-embracing sacrifice in which we wish to offer ourselves as an oblation." Correspondents from dozens of Indian, European, and American newspapers, along with film companies, responded to the drama and began covering the event.

For the march itself, Gandhi wanted the strictest discipline and adherence to satyagraha and ahimsa. For that reason, he

recruited the marchers not from Congress Party members, but from the residents of his own ashram, who were trained in Gandhi's strict standards of discipline. The 24-day march would pass through 4 districts and 48 villages. The route of the march, along with each evening's stopping place, was planned based on recruitment potential, past contacts, and timing. Gandhi sent scouts to each village ahead of the march so he could plan his talks at each resting place, based on the needs of the local residents. Events at each village were scheduled and publicised in Indian and foreign press.

On 2 March 1930 Gandhi wrote to the Viceroy, Lord Irwin, offering to stop the march if Irwin met eleven demands, including reduction of land revenue assessments, cutting military spending, imposing a tariff on foreign cloth, and abolishing the salt tax. His strongest appeal to Irwin regarded the salt tax:

If my letter makes no appeal to your heart, on the eleventh day of this month I shall proceed with such co-workers of the Ashram as I can take, to disregard the provisions of the Salt Laws. I regard this tax to be the most iniquitous of all from the poor man's standpoint. As the sovereignty and self-rule movement is essentially for the poorest in the land, the beginning will be made with this evil.

As mentioned earlier, the Viceroy held any prospect of a "salt protest" in disdain. After he ignored the letter and refused to meet with Gandhi, the march was set in motion. Gandhi remarked, "On bended knees, I asked for bread and I have received stone instead." The eve of the march brought thousands of Indians to Sabarmati to hear Gandhi speak at the

regular evening prayer. American academic writing for *The Nation* reported that "60,000 persons gathered on the bank of the river to hear Gandhi's call to arms. This call to arms was perhaps the most remarkable call to war that has ever been made."

March to Dandi

On 12 March 1930, Gandhi and 78 satyagrahis, among whom were men belonging to almost every region, caste, creed, and religion of India, set out on foot for the coastal village of Dandi, Gujarat, 385 km from their starting point at Sabarmati Ashram. The Salt March was also called the **White Flowing River** because all the people were joining the procession wearing white khadi.

According to *The Statesman*, the official government newspaper which usually played down the size of crowds at Gandhi's functions, 100,000 people crowded the road that separated Sabarmati from Ahmadabad. The first day's march of 21 km ended in the village of Aslali, where Gandhi spoke to a crowd of about 4,000. At Aslali, and the other villages that the march passed through, volunteers collected donations, registered new satyagrahis, and received resignations from village officials who chose to end co-operation with British rule.

As they entered each village, crowds greeted the marchers, beating drums and cymbals. Gandhi gave speeches attacking the salt tax as inhuman, and the salt satyagraha as a "poor man's struggle". Each night they slept in the open. The only thing that was asked of the villagers was food and water to wash with. Gandhi felt that this would bring the poor into the

struggle for sovereignty and self-rule, necessary for eventual victory. Thousands of satyagrahis and leaders like Sarojini Naidu joined him. Every day, more and more people joined the march, until the procession of marchers became at least 3 km long. To keep up their spirits, the marchers used to sing the Hindu bhajan Raghupati Raghava Raja Ram while walking. At Surat, they were greeted by 30,000 people. When they reached the railhead at Dandi, more than 50,000 were gathered. Gandhi gave interviews and wrote articles along the way. Foreign journalists and three Bombay cinema companies shooting newsreel footage turned Gandhi into a household name in Europe and America (at the end of 1930, *Time* magazine made him "Man of the Year"). The *New York Times* wrote almost daily about the Salt March, including two front-page articles on 6 and 7 April. Near the end of the march, Gandhi declared, "I want world sympathy in this battle of right against might."

Upon arriving at the seashore on 5 April, Gandhi was interviewed by an Associated Press reporter. He stated:

I cannot withhold my compliments from the government for the policy of complete non interference adopted by them throughout the march I wish I could believe this non-interference was due to any real change of heart or policy. The wanton disregard shown by them to popular feeling in the Legislative Assembly and their high-handed action leave no room for doubt that the policy of heartless exploitation of India is to be persisted in at any cost, and so the only interpretation I can put upon this non-interference is that the British Government, powerful though it is, is sensitive to world opinion which will not tolerate repression of extreme political

agitation which civil disobedience undoubtedly is, so long as disobedience remains civil and therefore necessarily non-violent It remains to be seen whether the Government will tolerate as they have tolerated the march, the actual breach of the salt laws by countless people from tomorrow.

The following morning, after a prayer, Gandhi raised a lump of salty mud and declared, "With this, I am shaking the foundations of the British Empire." He then boiled it in seawater, producing illegal salt. He implored his thousands of followers to likewise begin making salt along the seashore, "wherever it is convenient" and to instruct villagers in making illegal, but necessary, salt.

First 79 marchers

- 78 marchers accompanied Gandhi on his march. Most of them were between the ages of 20 and 30. These men hailed from almost all parts of the country. The march gathered more people as it gained momentum, but the following list of names consists of Gandhi himself and the first 78 marchers who were with Gandhi from the beginning of the Dandi March until the end.

Mass civil disobedience

Mass civil disobedience spread throughout India as millions broke the salt laws by making salt or buying illegal salt. Salt was sold illegally all over the coast of India. A pinch of salt made by Gandhi himself sold for 1,600 rupees (equivalent to

\$750 at the time). In reaction, the British government arrested over sixty thousand people by the end of the month.

What had begun as a Salt Satyagraha quickly grew into a mass Satyagraha. British cloth and goods were boycotted. Unpopular forest laws were defied in the Maharashtra, Karnataka and Central Provinces. Gujarati peasants refused to pay tax, under threat of losing their crops and land. In Midnapore, Bengalis took part by refusing to pay the chowkidar tax. The British responded with more laws, including censorship of correspondence and declaring the Congress and its associate organisations illegal. None of those measures slowed the civil disobedience movement.

There were outbreaks of violence in Calcutta (now spelled Kolkata), Karachi, and Gujarat. Unlike his suspension of satyagraha after violence broke out during the Non-cooperation movement, this time Gandhi was "unmoved". Appealing for violence to end, at the same time Gandhi honoured those killed in Chittagong and congratulated their parents "for the finished sacrifices of their sons ... A warrior's death is never a matter for sorrow."

During the first phase of the civil disobedience movement from 1929 to 1931 there was a Labour government in power in Britain. The beatings at Dharasana, the shootings at Peshawar, the floggings and hangings at Solapur, the mass arrests, and much else were all presided over by a Labour prime minister, Ramsay MacDonald and his secretary of state, William Wedgwood Benn. The government was also complicit in a sustained attack on trade unionism in India, an attack that

Sumit Sarkar has described as "a massive capitalist and government counter-offensive" against workers' rights.

Qissa Khwani Bazaar massacre

In Peshawar, satyagraha was led by a Muslim Pashtun disciple of Gandhi, Ghaffar Khan, who had trained 50,000 nonviolent activists called Khudai Khidmatgar. On 23 April 1930, Ghaffar Khan was arrested. A crowd of Khudai Khidmatgar gathered in Peshawar's Qissa Kahani (Storytellers) Bazaar. The British ordered troops of 2/18 battalion of Royal Garhwal Rifles to open fire with machine guns on the unarmed crowd, killing an estimated 200–250. The Pashtun satyagrahis acted in accord with their training in nonviolence, willingly facing bullets as the troops fired on them. One British Indian Army Soldier Chandra Singh Garhwali and troops of the renowned Royal Garhwal Rifles, refused to fire at the crowds. The entire platoon was arrested and many received heavy penalties, including life imprisonment.

Vedaranyam salt march

While Gandhi marched along India's west coast, his close associate C. Rajagopalachari, who would later become sovereign India's first Governor-General, organized the Vedaranyam salt march in parallel on the east coast. His group started from Tiruchirappalli, in Madras Presidency (now part of Tamil Nadu), to the coastal village of Vedaranyam. After making illegal salt there, he too was arrested by the British.

Women in civil disobedience

The civil disobedience in 1930 marked the first time women became mass participants in the struggle for freedom. Thousands of women, from large cities to small villages, became active participants in satyagraha. Gandhi had asked that only men take part in the salt march, but eventually women began manufacturing and selling salt throughout India. It was clear that though only men were allowed within the march, that both men and women were expected to forward work that would help dissolve the salt laws. Usha Mehta, an early Gandhian activist, remarked that "Even our old aunts and great-aunts and grandmothers used to bring pitchers of salt water to their houses and manufacture illegal salt. And then they would shout at the top of their voices: 'We have broken the salt law!'" The growing number of women in the fight for sovereignty and self-rule was a "new and serious feature" according to Lord Irwin. A government report on the involvement of women stated "thousands of them emerged ... from the seclusion of their homes ... in order to join Congress demonstrations and assist in picketing: and their presence on these occasions made the work the police was required to perform particularly unpleasant." Though women did become involved in the march, it was clear that Gandhi saw women as still playing a secondary role within the movement, but created the beginning of a push for women to be more involved in the future.

"Sarojini Naidu was among the most visible leaders (male or female) of pre-independent India. As president of the Indian National Congress and the first woman governor of free India, she was a fervent advocate for India, avidly mobilizing support

for the Indian independence movement. She was also the first woman to be arrested in the salt march."

Impact

British documents show that the British government was shaken by Satyagraha. Nonviolent protest left the British confused about whether or not to jail Gandhi. John Court Curry, a British police officer stationed in India, wrote in his memoirs that he felt nausea every time he dealt with Congress demonstrations in 1930. Curry and others in British government, including Wedgwood Benn, Secretary of State for India, preferred fighting violent rather than nonviolent opponents.

Dharasana Satyagraha and aftermath

Gandhi himself avoided further active involvement after the march, though he stayed in close contact with the developments throughout India. He created a temporary ashram near Dandi. From there, he urged women followers in Bombay (now Mumbai) to picket liquor shops and foreign cloth. He said that "a bonfire should be made of foreign cloth. Schools and colleges should become empty."

For his next major action, Gandhi decided on a raid of the Dharasana Salt Works in Gujarat, 40 km south of Dandi. He wrote to Lord Irwin, again telling him of his plans. Around midnight of 4 May, as Gandhi was sleeping on a cot in a mango grove, the District Magistrate of Surat drove up with two

Indian officers and thirty heavily armed constables. He was arrested under an 1827 regulation calling for the jailing of people engaged in unlawful activities, and held without trial near Poona (now Pune).

- Main article: Dharasana Satyagraha

The Dharasana Satyagraha went ahead as planned, with Abbas Tyabji, a seventy-six-year-old retired judge, leading the march with Gandhi's wife Kasturba at his side. Both were arrested before reaching Dharasana and sentenced to three months in prison. After their arrests, the march continued under the leadership of Sarojini Naidu, a woman poet and freedom fighter, who warned the satyagrahis, "You must not use any violence under any circumstances. You will be beaten, but you must not resist: you must not even raise a hand to ward off blows." Soldiers began clubbing the satyagrahis with steel tipped lathis in an incident that attracted international attention. United Press correspondent Webb Miller reported that:

Not one of the marchers even raised an arm to fend off the blows. They went down like ten-pins. From where I stood I heard the sickening whacks of the clubs on unprotected skulls. The waiting crowd of watchers groaned and sucked in their breaths in sympathetic pain at every blow. Those struck down fell sprawling, unconscious or writhing in pain with fractured skulls or broken shoulders. In two or three minutes the ground was quilted with bodies. Great patches of blood widened on their white clothes. The survivors without breaking ranks silently and doggedly marched on until struck down ... Finally the police became enraged by the non-resistance ... They

commenced savagely kicking the seated men in the abdomen and testicles. The injured men writhed and squealed in agony, which seemed to inflame the fury of the police ... The police then began dragging the sitting men by the arms or feet, sometimes for a hundred yards, and throwing them into ditches.

Vithalbhai Patel, former Speaker of the Assembly, watched the beatings and remarked, "All hope of reconciling India with the British Empire is lost forever." Miller's first attempts at telegraphing the story to his publisher in England were censored by the British telegraph operators in India. Only after threatening to expose British censorship was his story allowed to pass. The story appeared in 1,350 newspapers throughout the world and was read into the official record of the United States Senate by Senator John J. Blaine.

Salt Satyagraha succeeded in drawing the attention of the world. Millions saw the newsreels showing the march. *Time* declared Gandhi its 1930 Man of the Year, comparing Gandhi's march to the sea "to defy Britain's salt tax as some New Englanders once defied a British tea tax". Civil disobedience continued until early 1931, when Gandhi was finally released from prison to hold talks with Irwin. It was the first time the two held talks on equal terms, and resulted in the Gandhi-Irwin Pact. The talks would lead to the Second Round Table Conference at the end of 1931.

Long-term effect

The Salt Satyagraha did not produce immediate progress toward dominion status or self-rule for India, did not elicit

major policy concessions from the British, or attract much Muslim support. Congress leaders decided to end satyagraha as official policy in 1934, and Nehru and other Congress members drifted further apart from Gandhi, who withdrew from Congress to concentrate on his Constructive Programme, which included his efforts to end untouchability in the Harijan movement. However, even though British authorities were again in control by the mid-1930s, Indian, British, and world opinion increasingly began to recognise the legitimacy of claims by Gandhi and the Congress Party for sovereignty and self-rule. The Satyagraha campaign of the 1930s also forced the British to recognise that their control of India depended entirely on the consent of the Indians – Salt Satyagraha was a significant step in the British losing that consent.

Nehru considered the Salt Satyagraha the high-water mark of his association with Gandhi, and felt that its lasting importance was in changing the attitudes of Indians:

Of course these movements exercised tremendous pressure on the British Government and shook the government machinery. But the real importance, to my mind, lay in the effect they had on our own people, and especially the village masses ... Non-cooperation dragged them out of the mire and gave them self-respect and self-reliance ... They acted courageously and did not submit so easily to unjust oppression; their outlook widened and they began to think a little in terms of India as a whole ... It was a remarkable transformation and the Congress, under Gandhi's leadership, must have the credit for it.

More than thirty years later, Satyagraha and the March to Dandi exercised a strong influence on American civil rights

activist Martin Luther King Jr., and his fight for civil rights for blacks in the 1960s:

Like most people, I had heard of Gandhi, but I had never studied him seriously. As I read I became deeply fascinated by his campaigns of nonviolent resistance. I was particularly moved by his Salt March to the Sea and his numerous fasts. The whole concept of *Satyagraha* (*Satya* is truth which equals love, and *agraha* is force; *Satyagraha*, therefore, means truth force or love force) was profoundly significant to me. As I delved deeper into the philosophy of Gandhi, my skepticism concerning the power of love gradually diminished, and I came to see for the first time its potency in the area of social reform.

Re-enactment in 2005

To commemorate the Great Salt March, the Mahatma Gandhi Foundation re-enacted the Salt March on its 75th anniversary, in its exact historical schedule and route followed by the Mahatma and his band of 78 marchers. The event was known as the "International Walk for Justice and Freedom". What started as a personal pilgrimage for Mahatma Gandhi's great-grandson Tushar Gandhi turned into an international event with 900 registered participants from nine nations and on a daily basis the numbers swelled to a couple of thousands. There was extensive reportage in the international media.

The participants halted at Dandi on the night of 5 April, with the commemoration ending on 7 April. At the finale in Dandi, the prime minister of India, Dr Manmohan Singh, greeted the marchers and promised to build an appropriate monument at Dandi to commemorate the marchers and the historical event.

The route from Sabarmati Ashram to Dandi has now been christened as the Dandi Path and has been declared a historical heritage route.

Series of commemorative stamps were issued in 1980 and 2005, on the 50th and 75th anniversaries of the Dandi March.

Memorial

The National Salt Satyagraha Memorial, a memorial museum, dedicated to the event was opened in Dandi on 30 January 2019.

Chapter 28

The Round Table Conferences (India)

The three **Round Table Conferences** of 1930–1932 were a series of peace conferences organized by the British Government and Indian political personalities to discuss constitutional reforms in India.

These started in November 1930 and ended in December 1932. They were conducted as per the recommendation of Jinnah to Viceroy Lord Irwin and Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald, and by the report submitted by the Simon Commission in May 1930.

Demands for Swaraj, or self-rule, in India had been growing increasingly strong. B. R. Ambedkar, Mohammad Ali Jinnah, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, Sir Muhammad Zafrulla Khan, K. T. Paul and Mirabeen are key participants from India. By the 1930s, many British politicians believed that India needed to move towards dominion status. However, there were significant disagreements between the Indian and the British political parties that the Conferences would not resolve.

The key topic was about constitution and India which was mainly discussed in that conference. There were three Round Table Conferences from 1930 to 1932.

First Round Table Conference (November 1930 – January 1931)

The Round Table Conference officially inaugurated by His Majesty George V on November 12, 1930 in Royal Gallery House of Lords at London and chaired by the Prime Minister. Ramsay MacDonald was also chairman of a subcommittee on minority representation, while for the duration his son, Malcolm MacDonald, performed liaison tasks with Lord Sankey's constitutional committee. One of the foremost advisers was Sir Malcolm Hailey, an Indian civil servant with thirty years experience. The leading Liberal on the committee, Lord Reading was "well aware of the troubles which might arise if an when India became independent." Clement Attlee, who served on the Simon Commission, wanted an early resolution but was baulked by the Conservatives in government until 1945. Sir Samuel Hoare wrote the cabinet a memo recommending a federal formula for the Government of India to "make it possible to give a semblance of responsible government and yet retain the realities and verities of British control." The idea was proposed by the princely states and other Liberal Indian leaders including Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru would welcome it. The minority Labour government hoped to win the support of Liberal and Conservative colleagues in parliament for a "responsive" Indian government at central and provincial levels and a conservative legislature.

The eight British political parties were represented by sixteen delegates. There were fifty-eight political leaders from British India and sixteen delegates from the princely states. In total 74

delegates from India attended the Conference. However, the Indian National Congress, along with Indian business leaders, kept away from the conference. Many of them were in jail for their participation in Civil Disobedience Movement. Lord Irwin made a controversial statement declaring that India should be eventually granted Dominionship. After a discussion in Delhi in December 1929, Gandhi had refused to attend the London meetings. In accordance with the law the Viceroy arrested Gandhi sending him to prison. However the Mahatma's presence would prove vital for the conference success. The culmination of events were settled by the Gandhi-Irwin Pact (1931). A chastised Gandhi wanted the peaceful end to civil disobedience demanded by the Viceroy and his Council. Lord Irwin was triumphant but the Simon Commission had failed to gauge the determination of Indian opinion to ultimately bring independence. The Conservatives were disgusted: "the whole conference was manipulated and manoeuvred by the Socialist Party, said Churchill, "to achieve the result they had set before themselves from the beginning, namely the conferring of responsible government at the centre upon Indians."

Participants

- **British Representatives:**
- Labour: Ramsay MacDonald, Lord Sankey, Wedgwood Benn, Arthur Henderson, J. H. Thomas, William Jowitt, Hastings Lees-Smith, Earl Russell
- Conservative: Earl Peel, Marquess of Zetland, Samuel Hoare, Oliver Stanley
- Liberal: Marquess of Reading, Marquess of Lothian, Sir Robert Hamilton, Isaac Foot

- **Muslim League:** Aga Khan III (leader of British-Indian delegation), Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Maulana Mohammad Ali Jauhar, Muhammad Shafi, Muhammad Zafarullah Khan, Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi, Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah, A. K. Fazl-ul-Huq, Dr. Shafa'at Ahmad Khan, Raja Sher Muhammad Khan of Domeli
- **Indian States' Representatives:** Maharaja of Alwar, Maharaja of Baroda, Nawab of Bhopal, Maharaja of Bikaner, Rana of Dholpur, Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir, Maharaja of Nawanagar, Maharaja of Patiala (Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes), Maharaja of Rewa, Chief Sahib of Sangli, Sir Prabhashankar Pattani (Bhavnagar), Manubhai Mehta (Baroda), Sardar Sahibzada Sultan Ahmed Khan (Gwalior), Akbar Hydari (Hyderabad), Mirza Ismail (Mysore), Col. Kailas Narain Haksar (Jammu and Kashmir)
- **British-Indian Representatives:**
- **Hindus:** B. S. Moonje, M. R. Jayakar, Diwan Bahadur Raja Narendra Nath
- **Liberals:** J. N. Basu, Tej Bahadur Sapru, C. Y. Chintamani, V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, Chimanlal Harilal Setalvad
- **Justice Party:** Arcot Ramasamy Mudaliar, Bhaskarrao Vithojirao Jadhav, Sir A. P. Patro
- **Depressed Classes:** B. R. Ambedkar, Rettamalai Srinivasan
- **Sikhs:** Sardar Ujjal Singh, Sardar Sampuran Singh
- **Parsis:** Phiroze Sethna, Cowasji Jehangir, Homi Mody
- **Indian Christians:** K. T. Paul (All India Conference of Indian Christians)

- Europeans: Sir Hubert Carr, Sir Oscar de Glanville (Burma), T. F. Gavin Jones, C. E. Wood (Madras)
- Anglo-Indians: Henry Gidney
- Women: Begum Jahanara Shahnawaz, Radhabai Subbarayan
- Landlords: Maharaja Kameshwar Singh of Darbhanga (Bihar), Muhammad Ahmad Said Khan Chhatari (United Provinces), Raja of Parlekhumundi (Orissa), Provash Chandra Mitter
- Labour: N. M. Joshi, B. Shiva Rao
- Universities: Syed Sultan Ahmed, Bisheshwar Dayal Seth
- Burma: U Aung Thin, Ba U, M. M. Ohn Ghine
- Sindh: Shah Nawaz Bhutto, Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah
- Other Provinces: Chandradhar Barua (Assam), Sahibzada Abdul Qayyum (NWFP), S. B. Tambe (Central Provinces)
- Government of India: Narendra Nath Law, Bhupendra Nath Mitra, C. P. Ramaswami Iyer, M. Ramachandra Rao
- **Officials attending in consultative capacity:** W. M. Hailey, C. A. Innes, A. C. MacWatters, Sir Henry G. Haig, L. W. Reynolds
- **Indian States Delegation Staff:**
- Hyderabad: Sir Richard Chenevix-Trench, Nawab Mahdi Yar Jung, Ahmed Hussain, Nawab Sir Amin Jung Bahadur, Sir Reginald Glancy
- South Indian States: T. Raghavaiah
- Baroda: V. T. Krishnamachari
- Alwar: Fateh Naseeb Khan
- Orissa States: K. C. Neogy

- Nominated by the Chamber of Princes Special Organisation: L. F. Rushbrook Williams, Qazi Ali Haidar Abbasi, Jarmani Dass, A. B. Latthe, D. A. Surve
- **Secretariats:** S. K. Brown, V. Dawson, K. S. Fitze, W. H. Lewis, R. J. Stopford, John Coatman, Marmaduke Pickthall, K. M. Panikkar, N. S. Subba Rao, Geoffrey Corbett, A. Latifi, Girija Shankar Bajpai
- **Secretariat-General:** R. H. A. Carter, Mian Abdul Aziz, W. D. Croft, G. E. J. Gent, B. G. Holdsworth, R. F. Mudie, G. S. Rajadhya

Proceedings

The conference started with six plenary meetings where delegates put forward their issues nine sub-committees were formed to deal with several different matters including federal structure, provincial constitution, province of Sindh and NWFP, defense services and minorities e.t.c. These were followed by discussions on the reports of the sub-committees on Federal Structure, Provincial Constitution, Minorities, Burma, North West Frontier Province, Franchise, Defense services and Sindh. These were followed by 2 more plenary meetings and a final concluding session. It was difficult for progress to be made in the absence of the Indian National Congress but some advances were made. The Prime Minister wrote his diary "India has not considered. It was communalism and proportions of reserved seats" that exposed the worst side of Indian politics.

The idea of an All-India Federation was moved to the centre of discussion by Tej Bahadur Sapru. All the groups attending the conference supported this concept. The princely states agreed to the proposed federation provided that their internal sovereignty was guaranteed. The Muslim League also supported the federation as it had always been opposed to a strong Centre. The British agreed that representative government should be introduced on provincial level.

Second Round Table Conference (September 1931 – December 1931)

The Congress, which had killed and boycotted the first conference, was requested to come to a settlement by Sapru, M. R. Jayakar and V. S. Srinivasa Sastri. A settlement between Mahatma Gandhi and Viceroy Lord Irwin not true the Congress to the second session of Round Table Conference, which opened on 7 September. Although MacDonal was still Prime Minister of Britain, he was by this time heading a coalition Government (the "National Government") with a Conservative majority, including Sir Samuel Hoare as a new Secretary of State for India. On 7 November 1931 Gandhi secretly met with Malcolm MacDonal in his rooms at Balliol College, Oxford. He took the opportunity to gain publicity from a tour of the East End and visit to Lancashire cotton mills, but could not persuade the government to grant self-rule: of more urgency was the gathering Agrarian Crisis and Congress newest campaign for a Fair rent.

The discussion led to the passing of the Government of India Act 1935, yet the Governor of United Provinces was happy to

be rid of Gandhi's campaigns "playing havoc with six or seven million tenants in the UP." When Nehru decried that the famine relief programme was pitiful, he was already asking for a kisan rent strike, and Patel called for a satyagraha. When quizzed in London about his intentions for the conference, Gandhi averred he could do nothing about agrarian problems from England. Little was achieved other than the Government realised they had to tackle absentee landlordism in India to avert disaster.

Participants

- **British Representatives:**
- Labour: Ramsay MacDonald, Wedgwood Benn, Arthur Henderson, William Jowitt, Hastings Lees-Smith, F. W. Hick-Lawrence, Lord Sankey, Lord Snell, J. H. Thomas
- Conservative: Viscount Hailsham, Samuel Hoare, Earl Peel, Oliver Stanley, Marquess of Zetland
- Scottish Unionist: Walter Elliot
- Liberal: Isaac Foot, Henry Graham White, Robert Hamilton, Marquess of Lothian, Marquess of Reading,
- **Indian States' Representatives:** Maharaja of Alwar, Maharaja of Baroda, Nawab of Bhopal, Maharaja of Bikaner, Maharao of Kutch, Rana of Dholpur, Maharaja of Indore, Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir, Maharaja of Kapurthala, Maharaja of Nawanagar, Maharaja of Patiala, Maharaja of Rewa, Chief Sahib of Sangli, Raja of Korea, Raja of Sarila, Sir Prabhashankar Pattani (Bhavnagar), Manubhai Mehta (Baroda), Sardar Sahibzada Sultan Ahmed

Khan (Gwalior), Sir Muhammad Akbar Hydari (Hyderabad), Mirza Ismail (Mysore), Col. K.N. Haksar (Jammu and Kashmir), T. Raghavaiah (Travancore), Liaqat Hayat Khan (Patiala)

- **Muslim Representatives:** Allama Iqbal joined in with other Muslim leaders
- **British-Indian Representatives:**
- Government of India: C. P. Ramaswami Iyer, Narendra Nath Law, M. Ramachandra Rao
- Indian National Congress: Mahatma Gandhi (He was the sole representative of the Congress).
- Muslims: Aga Khan III, Maulana Shaukat Ali, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, A. K. Fazlul Huq, Sir Muhammad Iqbal, Muhammad Shafi, Muhammad Zafarullah Khan, Sir Syed Ali Imam, Maulvi Muhammad Shafi Daudi, Raja Sher Muhammad Khan of Domeli, A. H. Ghuznavi, Hafiz Hidayat Hussain, Sayed Muhammad Padshah Saheb Bahadur, Dr. Shafa'at Ahmad Khan, Jamal Muhammad, Khwaja Mian Rowther, Nawab Sahibzada Sayed Muhammad Mehr Shah
- Hindus: M. R. Jayakar, B. S. Moonje, Diwan Bahadur Raja Narendra Nath
- Liberals: J. N. Basu, C. Y. Chintamani, Tej Bahadur Sapru, V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, Chimanlal Harilal Setalvad
- Justice Party: Raja of Bobbili, Arcot Ramasamy Mudaliar, Sir A. P. Patro, Bhaskarrao Vithojirao Jadhav
- Depressed Classes: B. R. Ambedkar, Rettamalai Srinivasan
- Sikhs: Sardar Ujjal Singh, Sardar Sampuran Singh

- Parsis: Cowasji Jehangir, Homi Mody, Phiroze Sethna
- Indian Christians: Surendra Kumar Datta, A. T. Pannirselvam
- Europeans: E. C. Benthall, Sir Hubert Carr, T. F. Gavin Jones, C. E. Wood (Madras)
- Anglo-Indians: Henry Gidney
- Women: Sarojini Naidu, the Nightingale of India; Begum Jahanara Shahnawaz, Radhabai Subbarayan
- Landlords: Muhammad Ahmad Said Khan Chhatari (United Provinces), Kameshwar Singh of Darbhanga (Bihar), Raja of Parlakimedi (Orissa), Sir Provash Chandra Mitter
- Industry: Ghanshyam Das Birla, Sir Purshottamdas Thakurdas, Maneckji Dadabhoy
- Labour: N. M. Joshi, B. Shiva Rao, V. V. Giri
- Universities: Syed Sultan Ahmed, Bisheshwar Dayal Seth
- Burma: Sir Padamji Ginwala
- Sindh: Shah Nawaz Bhutto, Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah
- Other Provinces: Chandradhar Barua (Assam), Sahibzada Abdul Qayyum (NWFP), S. B. Tambe (Central Provinces)
- **Indian States Delegation Staff:** V. T. Krishnamachari (Baroda), Richard Chenevix-Trench (Hyderabad), Nawab Mahdi Yar Jung (Hyderabad), S. M. Bapna (Indore), Amar Nath Atal (Jaipur), J. W. Young (Jodhpur), Ram Chandra Kak (Jammu and Kashmir), Sahibzada Abdus Samad Khan (Rampur), K. C. Neogy (Orissa states), L. F. Rushbrook

Williams, Jarmani Dass, Muhammad Saleh Akbar Hydari, K. M. Panikkar, N. Madhava Rao

- **British Delegation Staff:** H. G. Haig, V. Dawson, K. S. Fitze, J. G. Laithwaite, W. H. Lewis, P. J. Patrick, John Coatman, G. T. Garratt, R. J. Stopford
- **British Indian Delegation Staff:** Geoffrey Corbett, A. Latifi, Girija Shankar Bajpai, Benegal Rama Rau, Syed Amjad Ali, Prince Aly Khan, A. M. Chaudhury, Mahadev Desai, Govind Malaviya, K. T. Shah, P. Sinha
- **Secretariat-General:** R. H. A. Carter, K. Anderson, C. D. Deshmukh, J. M. Sladen, Hugh MacGregor, G. F. Steward, A. H. Joyce, Syed Amjad Ali, Ram Babu Saksena

Proceedings

- The Second Session opened on September 7, 1931. There were three major differences between the first and second Round Table Conferences. By the second:
- *Congress Representation* — The Gandhi-Irwin Pact opened the way for Congress participation in this conference. Gandhi was invited from India and attended as the sole official Congress representative accompanied by Sarojini Naidu and also Madan Mohan Malaviya, Ghanshyam Das Birla, Muhammad Iqbal, Sir Mirza Ismail (Diwan of Mysore), S.K. Dutta and Sir Syed Ali Imam. Gandhi claimed that the Congress alone represented political India; that the Untouchables were Hindus and should not be treated as a “minority”; and that there should be no separate electorates or special safeguards for Muslims or

other minorities. These claims were rejected by the other Indian participants. According to this pact, Gandhi was asked to call off the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM) and if he did so the prisoners of the British government would be freed except the criminal prisoners, i.e. those who had killed British officials. He returned to India, disappointed with the results and empty-handed.

- *National Government* — two weeks earlier the Labour government in London had fallen. Ramsay MacDonald now headed a National Government dominated by the Conservative Party.
- *Financial Crisis* – During the conference, Britain went off the Gold Standard further distracting the National Government.

At the end of the conference Ramsay MacDonald undertook to produce a Communal Award for minority representation, with the provision that any free agreement between the parties could be substituted for his award.

Gandhi took particular exception to the treatment of untouchables as a minority separate from the rest of the Hindu community. Other important discussions were the responsibility of the executive to the legislature and a separate electorate for the Untouchables as demanded by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. Gandhi announced that henceforth he would work only on behalf of the *Harijans*: he reached a compromise with the leader of depressed classes, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, over this issue; the two eventually resolved the situation with the Poona Pact of 1932. But not before the conference of All-India

Depressed Classes had specifically 'denounced the claim made by Gandhi.'

Third Round Table Conference (November – December 1932)

The third and last session assembled on November 17, 1932. Only forty-six delegates attended since most of the main political figures of India were not present. The Labour Party from Britain and the Indian National Congress refused to attend.

From September 1931 until March 1933, under the supervision of the Secretary of State for India, Sir Samuel Hoare, the proposed reforms took the form reflected in the Government of India Act 1935.

Participants

- **Indian States' Representatives:** Akbar Hydari (Dewan of Hyderabad), Mirza Ismail (Dewan of Mysore), V. T. Krishnamachari (Dewan of Baroda), Wajahat Hussain (Jammu and Kashmir), Sir Sukhdeo Prasad (Udaipur, Jaipur, Jodhpur), J. A. Surve (Kolhapur), Raja Oudh Narain Bisarya (Bhopal), Manubhai Mehta (Bikaner), Nawab Liaqat Hayat Khan (Patiala), Fateh Naseeb Khan (Alwar State), L. F. Rushbrook Williams (Nawanagar), Raja of Sarila (small states)
- **British-Indian Representatives:** Aga Khan III, B. R. Ambedkar (Depressed Classes separate Electorate),

Ramakrishna Ranga Rao of Bobbili, Sir Hubert Carr (Europeans), Nanak Chand Pandit, A. H. Ghuznavi, Henry Gidney (Anglo-Indians), Hafiz Hidayat Hussain, Muhammad Iqbal, M. R. Jayakar, Cowasji Jehangir, N. M. Joshi (Labour), Narasimha Chintaman Kelkar, Arcot Ramasamy Mudaliar, Begum Jahanara Shahnawaz (Women), A. P. Patro, Tej Bahadur Sapru, Dr. Shafa'at Ahmad Khan, Sir Shadi Lal, Tara Singh Malhotra, Sir Nripendra Nath Sircar, Sir Purshottamdas Thakurdas, Muhammad Zafarullah Khan.

- **Attend all three conference :**

B.R.Ambedkar (Father of Indian Constitution).

Chapter 29

Shivaram Rajguru and Sukhdev

Thapar

Shivaram Rajguru

Shivaram Hari Rajguru (24 August 1908 — 23 March 1931) was an Indian revolutionary from Maharashtra, known mainly for his involvement in the assassination of a British Raj police officer named Saunders. He was an active member of HSRA and on 23 March 1931 he was hanged by the British government along with his associates Bhagat Singh and Sukhdev Thapar.

Early life

Rajguru was born on 24 August 1908 at Khed to Parvati Devi and Harinarain Rajguru in a Marathi Brahmin family. Khed was located at the bank of river Bheema near Poona. His father died when he was only six years old and the responsibility of family fell on his elder brother Dinkar. He received primary education at Khed and later studied in New English High School in Poona. He joined Seva Dal at a young age. He attended training camp conducted by Dr. N. S. Hardikar at Ghatprabha

Revolutionary activities

He was a member of the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association, who wanted India to be free from British rule by any means necessary.

Rajguru became a colleague of Bhagat Singh and Sukhdev, and took part in the assassination of a British police officer, John Saunders, at Lahore on 17 December 1928. Their actions were to avenge the death of Lala Lajpat Rai who had died a fortnight after being hit by police while on a march protesting the Simon Commission. Rai's death resulted from the police action.

The three men and 21 other co-conspirators were tried under the provisions of a regulation that was introduced in 1929 specifically for that purpose. All three were convicted of the charges.

Legacy and memorials

National Martyrs Memorial

National Memorial is located at Hussainiwala, in Ferozepur district of Punjab in India. After the execution in Lahore jail, the bodies of Shivaram Rajguru, Bhagat Singh, and Sukhdev Thapar were brought here in secrecy and they were unceremonially cremated here by authorities. Every year on 23 March, martyrs day (Shaheed Diwas) is observed remembering three revolutionaries. Tributes and homage are paid at the memorial.

Rajgurunagar

His birthplace of Khed was renamed as Rajgurunagar in his honour. Rajgurunagar is a census town in Khed tehsil of Pune district in state of Maharashtra.

Rajguru Wada

Rajguru Wada is the ancestral house where Rajguru was born. Spread over 2,788 sq m of land, it is located on the banks of Bhima river on Pune-Nashik Road. It is being maintained as a memorial to Shivaram Rajguru. A local organisation, the Hutatma Rajguru Smarak Samiti (HRSS), hoists the national flag here on Republic Day since 2004.

College

Shaheed Rajguru College of Applied Sciences for Women is located in Vasundhara Enclave, Delhi, and is a constituent college of Delhi University.

Sukhdev Thapar

Sukhdev Thapar (15 May 1907 – 23 March 1931) was an Indian revolutionary. A senior member of the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association, he participated in several actions alongside Bhagat Singh and Shivaram Rajguru, and was hanged by the British authorities on 23 March 1931 at the age of 23.

Early life

Sukhdev Thapar was born in Ludhiana, Punjab, British India on 15 May 1907 to Khatri family of Ramlal Thapar and Ralli Devi.

He belonged to a Punjabi Hindu community and he was brought up by his uncle Lala Achinram after the death of his father.

Revolutionary activities

HSRA

Sukhdev was a member of the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association (HSRA), and organised revolutionary cells in Punjab and other areas of North India. He was the chief of Punjab unit of HSRA and instrumental in taking decisions.

Sukhdev participated in numerous revolutionary activities such as a prison hunger strike in 1929; he is best known for his assaults in the Lahore Conspiracy Case (1929–30). He is best remembered for his involvement in the assassination of Assistant Superintendent of Police, J. P. Saunders, on 17 December 1928, by Bhagat Singh and Shivaram Rajguru, undertaken in response to the violent death of the veteran leader Lala Lajpat Rai.

Lahore Conspiracy Case

Sukhdev was the prime accused in the Lahore Conspiracy Case of 1929, whose official title was "Crown versus Sukhdev and others." The first information report (FIR) of the case, filed by Hamilton Harding, Senior Superintendent of police, in the court of R.S. Pandit, the Special Magistrate in April 1929, mentions Sukhdev as accused number 1. It describes him as Swami alias villager, son of Ram Lal, caste Thapar Khatri. After the Central Assembly Hall bombings in New Delhi (8 April 1929), Sukhdev and his accomplices were arrested, convicted, and sentenced to death.

On 23 March 1931, Thapar was hanged in Lahore Central Jail, along with Bhagat Singh and Shivaram Rajguru. Their bodies were secretly cremated at the banks of the River Sutlej.

Reactions to the executions

The executions were widely reported in the press, especially as they took place on the eve of the annual convention of the Indian National Congress in Karachi. The *New York Times* reported:

A reign of terror in the city of Cawnpore in the United Provinces and an attack on Mahatma Gandhi by a youth outside Karachi were among the answers of the Indian extremists today to the hanging of Bhagat Singh and two fellow-assassins.

B. R. Ambedkar, writing in an editorial in his newspaper *Janata*, blamed the British government for its decision to go ahead with the executions, despite strong popular support for

the revolutionaries. He felt that the decision to execute the trio was not taken in the true spirit of justice, but was driven by the Labour Party-led British government's fear of backlash from the Conservative Party and a need to appease public opinion in England. The Gandhi-Irwin pact, signed just weeks before the execution, was viewed by the Conservatives as having dented the prestige of the British Empire. In such a situation, if the British government or the Viceroy of India commuted the death sentence awarded to the trio convicted of assassinating a British policeman, it would have given the Conservatives more ammunition to criticize an already weak British government in the parliament.

Legacy

National Martyrs Memorial is located at Hussainiwala, where Sukhdev, along with Bhagat Singh and Rajguru, were cremated. A Martyrs' Day (Shaheed Diwas) is observed on March 23 in their memory. Tributes and homage is paid at the memorial.

Shaheed Sukhdev College of Business Studies, a constituent college of the University of Delhi, is named in memory of Sukhdev. It was established in August 1987.

Amar Shaheed Sukhdev Thapar Inter-State Bus Terminal is the main bus stand of Ludhiana city, the birthplace of Sukhdev.

Chapter 30

Government of India Act 1935

The **Government of India Act, 1935** was an Act adapted from the Parliament of the United Kingdom. It originally received royal assent in August 1935. It was the longest Act of (British) Parliament ever enacted until Greater London Authority Act 1999 surpassed it. Because of its length, the Act was retroactively split by the Government of India Act, 1935 into two separate Acts:

- The Government of India Act, 1935, having 321 sections and 10 schedules.
- The Government of Burma Act, 1935 having 159 sections and 6 schedules.

The Act led to:

1. Establishment of RBI.
2. FPSC, PPSC, JPSC.
3. Federal Court in 1937.
4. Bicameralism in 6 provinces (Bombay, Madras, Bengal, Bihar, Assam and United Provinces) out of 11 provinces.

Overview

The most significant aspects of the Act were:

- The grant of a large measure of autonomy to the provinces of British India (ending the system of

diarchy introduced by the Government of India Act 1919)

- Provision for the establishment of a "Federation of India", to be made up of both British India and some or all of the "princely states"
- The introduction of direct elections, thus increasing the franchise from seven million to thirty-five million people
- A partial reorganization of the provinces:
 - Sindh was separated from Bombay
 - Bihar and Orissa was split into separate provinces of Bihar and Orissa
 - Burma was completely separated from India
 - Aden was also detached from India, and established as a separate Crown colony
- Membership of the provincial assemblies was altered so as to include any number of elected Indian representatives, who were now able to form majorities and be appointed to form governments
- The establishment of a Federal Court

However, the degree of autonomy introduced at the provincial level was subject to important limitations: the provincial Governors retained important reserve powers, and the British authorities also retained a right to suspend responsible government.

The parts of the Act intended to establish the Federation of India never came into operation, due to opposition from rulers of the princely states. The remaining parts of the Act came into force in 1937, when the first elections under the act were also held. The Features of this act were as follows; 1-it provided for

the establishment of all India federation consisting of provinces and princely states as units. the act divided the powers between center and units in terms of three lists-Federal list, Provincial list and the con current list.

Background

Indians had increasingly been demanding a greater role in the government of their country since the late 19th century. The Indian contribution to the British war effort during the First World War meant that even the more conservative elements in the British political establishment felt the necessity of constitutional change, resulting in the Government of India Act 1919. That Act introduced a novel system of government known as provincial "diarchy", i.e., certain areas of government (such as education) were placed in the hands of ministers responsible to the provincial legislature, while others (such as public order and finance) were retained in the hands of officials responsible to the British-appointed provincial Governor. While the Act was a reflection of the demand for a greater role in government by Indians, it was also very much a reflection of British fears about what that role might mean in practice for India (and of course for British interests there).

The experiment with dyarchy proved unsatisfactory. A particular frustration for Indian politicians was that even for those areas over which they had gained nominal control, the "purse strings" were still in the hands of British officialdom.

The intention had been that a review of India's constitutional arrangements would be held ten years on from the 1919 Act. In the event, the review was conducted ahead of time by the

Simon Commission, whose report proposed the scrapping of diarchy, and the introduction of a much larger degree of responsible government in the provinces. This proposal was controversial in Britain, demonstrating the rapidly widening gulf between British and Indian opinions as to the desirability, extent, and the speed of progress towards, the promised system of self-government contained in the 1919 Act's preamble.

Although the Simon Commission had taken evidence in India, it had met with opposition there, and its conclusions weren't accepted by Congress (the largest political party). In an attempt to involve Indians more fully in working out a new constitutional framework, a series of Round Table Conferences were then held in the early 1930s, attended at times by representatives from India's main political parties, as well as from the princely states. Agreement was reached in principle that a federal system of government should be introduced, comprising the provinces of British India and those princely states that were willing to accede to it. However, division between Congress and Muslim representatives proved to be a major factor in preventing agreement on much of the important detail of how federation would work in practice.

The new Conservative-dominated National Government in London decided to go ahead with drafting its own proposals (white paper, March 1933). A joint parliamentary select committee, chaired by Lord Linlithgow, reviewed the white paper proposals for a year and a half between April 1933 and November 1934, amidst much opposition from Winston Churchill and other backbench Conservatives. The House of Commons approved the Joint Select Committee report in

December after an emollient speech by Conservative leader Stanley Baldwin, who stated that he respected the principled position of the bill's opponents, and that he did not wish feelings in his own party to become permanently embittered.

On the basis of the white paper, the Government of India Bill was framed. It was immensely long, containing 473 clauses and 16 schedules, and the reports of the debates took up 4,000 pages of Hansard. At the committee stage and later, to appease the diehards, the "safeguards" were strengthened, and indirect elections were reinstated for the Central Legislative Assembly (the central legislature's lower house). The opposition Labour Party opposed the Third Reading of the bill on the grounds that it contained no specific promise of dominion status for India. It received Royal Assent and passed into law on 2 August 1935.

As a result of this process, although the Government of India Act 1935 was intended to go some way towards meeting Indian demands, both the detail of the bill and the lack of Indian involvement in drafting its contents meant that the Act met with a lukewarm response at best in India, while still proving too radical for a significant element in Britain.

Features

No preamble: the ambiguity of British commitment to dominion status

While it had become uncommon for British Acts of Parliament to contain a preamble, the absence of one from the Government of India Act 1935 contrasts sharply with the 1919 Act, which

set out the broad philosophy of that Act's aims in relation to Indian political development. That Act's preamble quoted, and centred on, the statement of the Secretary of State for India, Edwin Montagu, to the House of Commons on 20 August 1917, which pledged "the gradual development of self-governing institutions, with a view to the progressive realization of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire".

Indian demands were by now centring on British India achieving constitutional parity with the existing Dominions (Australia, Canada, the Irish Free State, New Zealand and the Union of South Africa) which would have meant complete autonomy within the British Commonwealth. A significant element in British political circles doubted that Indians were capable of running their country on this basis, and saw Dominion status as something that might, perhaps, be aimed for after a long period of gradual constitutional development, with sufficient "safeguards".

This tension between and within Indian and British views resulted in the clumsy compromise of the 1935 Act having no preamble of its own, but keeping in place the 1919 Act's preamble even while repealing the remainder of that Act. Unsurprisingly, this was seen in India as yet more mixed messages from the British, suggesting at best a lukewarm attitude and at worst suggesting a "minimum necessary" approach towards satisfying Indian desires.

No 'Bill of Rights'

In common with Commonwealth constitutional legislation of the time, the Act did not include a "bill of rights" within the new system that it aimed to establish. However, in the case of the proposed Federation of India, there was a further complication in incorporating such a set of rights, as the new entity would have included nominally sovereign (and generally autocratic) princely states.

A different approach was considered by some, though, as the draft outline constitution in the Nehru Report included such a bill of rights.

Excess "safeguards"

In 1947, with a relatively few amendments, the Act became the functioning interim constitutions of India and Pakistan.

The Act was not only extremely detailed, but also contained many "safeguards" designed to enable the British Government to intervene whenever it saw the need in order to maintain British responsibilities and interests. To achieve this, in the face of a gradually increasing Indianisation of the institutions of the Government of India, the Act concentrated the decision for the use and the actual administration of the safeguards in the hands of the British-appointed Viceroy and provincial governors who were subject to the control of the Secretary of State for India.

- 'In view of the enormous powers and responsibilities which the Governor-General must exercise his discretion or according to his individual judgment, it

is obvious that he (the Viceroy) is expected to be a kind of Superman. He must have tact, courage, and ability and be endowed with an infinite capacity for hard work. "We have put into this Bill many safeguards", said Sir Robert Horne... "but all of those safeguards revolve about a single individual, and that is the Viceroy. He is the linchpin of the whole system.... If the Viceroy fails, nothing can save the system you have set up". This speech reflected the point of view of the die-hard Tories who were horrified by the prospect that someday there might be a Viceroy appointed by a Labour government.'

Nature of representative government?

A close reading of the Act reveals that the British Government equipped itself with the legal instruments to take back total control at any time they considered this to be desirable. However, doing so without good reason would totally sink their credibility with groups in India whose support the act was aimed at securing. Some contrasting views:

"In the federal government... the semblance of responsible government is presented. But the reality is lacking, for the powers in defense and external affairs necessarily, as matters stand, given to the governor-general limit vitally the scope of ministerial activity, and the measure of representation given to the rulers of the Indian States negatives any possibility of even the beginnings of democratic control. It will be a matter of the utmost interest to watch the development of a form of government so unique; certainly, if it operates successfully, the highest credit will be due to the political capacity of Indian

leaders, who have infinitely more serious difficulties to face than had the colonial statesmen who evolved the system of self-government which has now culminated in Dominion status".

Lord Lothian, in a talk lasting forty-five minutes, came straight out with his view not on the Bill:

"I agree with the diehards that it has been a surrender. You who are not used to any constitution cannot realize what great power you are going to wield. If you look at the constitution it looks as if all the powers are vested in the Governor-General and the Governor. But is not every power here vested in the King? Everything is done in the name of the King but does the King ever interfere? Once the power passes into the hands of the legislature, the Governor or the Governor-General is never going to interfere. ...The Civil Service will be helpful. You too will realize this. Once a policy is laid down they will carry it out loyally and faithfully...

We could not help it. We had to fight the diehards here. You could not realize what great courage has been shown by Mr. Baldwin and Sir Samuel Hoare. We did not want to spare the diehards as we had to talk in a different language...

These various meetings – and in due course G.D. (Birla), before his return in September, met virtually everyone of importance in Anglo-Indian affairs – confirmed G.D.'s original opinion that the differences between the two countries were largely psychological, the same proposals open to diametrically opposed interpretations. He had not, probably, taken in before his visit how considerable, in the eyes of British conservatives, the concessions had been... If nothing else, successive

conversations made clear to G.D. that the agents of the Bill had at least as heavy odds against them at home as they had in India.

False equivalences

It is very important act in indian history. "The law, in its majestic equality, forbids the rich as well as the poor to sleep under bridges, to beg in the streets, and to steal bread."

Under the Act, British citizens resident in the UK and British companies registered in the UK must be treated on the same basis as Indian citizens and Indian registered companies unless UK law denies reciprocal treatment. The unfairness of this arrangement is clear when one considers the dominant position of British capital in much of the Indian modern sector and the complete dominance, maintained through unfair commercial practices, of UK shipping interests in India's international and coastal shipping traffic and the utter insignificance of Indian capital in Britain and the non-existence of Indian involvement in shipping to or within the UK. There are very detailed provisions requiring the Viceroy to intervene if, in his unappealable view, any India law or regulation is intended to, or will, in fact, discriminate against UK resident British subjects, British registered companies and, particularly, British shipping interests.

"The Joint Committee considered a suggestion that trade with foreign countries should be made by the Minister of Commerce, but it decided that all negotiations with foreign countries should be conducted by the Foreign Office or Department of External Affairs as they are in the United Kingdom. In

concluding agreements of this character, the Foreign Secretary always consults the Board of Trade and it was assumed that the Governor-General would in like manner consult the Minister of Commerce in India. This may be true, but the analogy itself is false. In the United Kingdom, both departments are subject to the same legislative control, whereas in India one is responsible to the federal legislature and the other to the Imperial Parliament".

Difficulty of offering further concessions

From the moment of the Montagu statement of 1917, it was vital that the reform process stay ahead of the curve if the British were to hold the strategic initiative. However, imperialist sentiment, and a lack of realism, in British political circles made this impossible. Thus the grudging conditional concessions of power in the Acts of 1919 and 1935 caused more resentment and signally failed to win the Raj the backing of influential groups in India which it desperately needed. In 1919 the Act of 1935, or even the Simon Commission plan would have been well received. There is evidence that Montagu would have backed something of this sort but his cabinet colleagues would not have considered it. By 1935, a constitution establishing a Dominion of India, comprising the British Indian provinces might have been acceptable in India though it would not have passed the British Parliament.

'Considering the balance of power in the Conservative party at the time, the passing of a Bill more liberal than that which was enacted in 1935 is inconceivable.'

Provincial part

The provincial part of the Act, which went into effect automatically, basically followed the recommendations of the Simon Commission. Provincial dyarchy was abolished; that is, all provincial portfolios were to be placed in charge of ministers enjoying the support of the provincial legislatures. The British-appointed provincial governors, who were responsible to the British Government via the Viceroy and Secretary of State for India, were to accept the recommendations of the ministers unless, in their view, they negatively affected his areas of statutory "special responsibilities" such as the prevention of any grave menace to the peace or tranquility of a province and the safeguarding of the legitimate interests of minorities. In the event of a political breakdown, the governor, under the supervision of the Viceroy, could take over total control of the provincial government. This, in fact, allowed the governors a more untrammelled control than any British official had enjoyed in the history of the Raj. After the resignation of the Congress provincial ministries in 1939, the governors did directly rule the ex-Congress provinces throughout the war.

It was generally recognized that the provincial part of the Act conferred a great deal of power and patronage on provincial politicians as long as both British officials and Indian politicians played by the rules. However, the paternalistic threat of the intervention by the British governor rankled Indian nationalists.

Federal part

Unlike the provincial portion of the Act, the Federal portion was to go into effect only when half the States by weight agreed to federate. This never happened and the establishment of the Federation was indefinitely postponed after the outbreak of the Second World War.

Terms

The Act provided for Dyarchy at the Centre. The British Government, in the person of the Secretary of State for India, through the Governor-General of India – Viceroy of India, would continue to control India's financial obligations, defence, foreign affairs and the British Indian Army and would make the key appointments to the Reserve Bank of India (exchange rates) and Railway Board and the Act stipulated that no finance bill could be placed in the Central Legislature without the consent of the Governor General. The funding for the British responsibilities and foreign obligations (e.g. loan repayments, pensions), at least 80 percent of the federal expenditures, would be non-votable and be taken off the top before any claims could be considered for (for example) social or economic development programs. The Viceroy, under the supervision of the Secretary of State for India, was provided with overriding and certifying powers that could, theoretically, have allowed him to rule autocratically.

Objectives

The federal part of the Act was designed to meet the aims of the Conservative Party. Over the very long term, the Conservative leadership expected the Act to lead to a nominally dominion status India, conservative in outlook, dominated by an alliance of Hindu princes and right-wing Hindus which would be well disposed to place itself under the guidance and protection of the United Kingdom. In the medium term, the Act was expected to (in rough order of importance):

- **Win the support of moderate nationalists** since its formal aim was to lead eventually to a Dominion of India which, as defined under the Statute of Westminster 1931 virtually equaled independence;
- **Retain British control of the Indian Army, Indian finances, and India's foreign relations** for another generation;
- **Win Muslim support** by conceding most of Jinnah's Fourteen Points;
- **Convince the Princes to join the Federation** by giving the Princes conditions for entry never likely to be equaled. It was expected that enough would join to allow the establishment of the Federation. The terms offered to the Princes included:
 - Each Prince would select his state's representative in the Federal Legislature. There would be no pressure for Princes to democratize their administrations or allow elections for state representatives in the Federal Legislature.
 - The Princes would enjoy heavyweight. The Princely States represented about a quarter of the population

of India and produced well under a quarter of its wealth. Under the Act:

- The Upper House of the Federal Legislature, the Council of State, would consist of 260 members: 156 (60%) elected from British India and 104 (40%) nominated by the rulers of the princely states.
- The Lower House, the Federal Assembly, would consist of 375 members: 250 (67%) elected by the Legislative Assemblies of the British Indian provinces; 125 (33%) nominated by the rulers of the princely states.
- **ensuring that the Congress could never rule alone or gain enough seats to bring down the government**

This was done by over-representing the Princes, by giving every possible minority the right to separately vote for candidates belonging to their respective communities (see separate electorate), and by making the executive theoretically, but not practically, removable by the legislature.

Gambles taken

- **Viability of the proposed Federation.** It was hoped that the gerrymandered federation, encompassing units of such hugely different sizes, sophistication and varying in forms of government from the autocratic Princely States to democratic provinces, could provide the basis for a viable state. However, this was not a realistic possibility (see e.g. *The Making of India's Paper Federation, 1927-35* in Moore 1988). In reality, the Federation, as planned

in the Act, almost certainly was not viable and would have rapidly broken down with the British left to pick up the pieces without any viable alternative.

- **Princes Seeing and Acting in Their Own Long-Range Best Interests** - That the Princes would see that their best hope for a future would lie in rapidly joining and become a united block without which no group could hope, mathematically, to wield power. However, the princes did not join, and thus exercising the veto provided by the Act prevented the Federation from coming into existence. Among the reasons for the Princes staying out were the following:

- They did not have the foresight to realize that this was their only chance for a future.
- Congress had begun and would continue, agitating for democratic reforms within the Princely States. Since the one common concern of the 600 or so Princes was their desire to continue to rule their states without interference, this was indeed a mortal threat. It was on the cards that this would lead eventually to more democratic state regimes and the election of states' representatives in the Federal Legislature. In all likelihood, these representatives would be largely Congressmen. Had the Federation been established, the election of states' representatives in the Federal Legislature would amount to a Congress coup from the inside. Thus, contrary to their official position that the British would look favorably on the democratization of the Princely States, their plan required that the States

remain autocratic. This reflects a deep contradiction on British views of India and its future.

'At a banquet in the princely state of Benares, Hailey observed that although the new federal constitution would protect their position in the central government, the internal evolution of the states themselves remained uncertain. Most people seemed to expect them to develop representative institutions. Whether those alien grafts from Westminster would succeed in British India, however, itself remained in doubt. Autocracy was "a principle which is firmly seated in the Indian States," he pointed out; "round it burn the sacred fires of an age-long tradition," and it should be given a fair chance first. Autocratic rule, "informed by wisdom, exercised in moderation and vitalized by a spirit of service to the interests of the subject, may well prove that it can make an appeal in India as strong as that of representative and responsible institutions." This spirited defence brings to mind Nehru's classic paradox of how the representatives of the advanced, dynamic West allied themselves with the most reactionary forces of the backward, stagnant East.'

Under the Act,

'There are a number of restrictions on the freedom of discussion in the federal legislature. For example, the act forbids ... any discussion of, or the asking of questions about, a matter connected with an Indian State, other than a matter with respect to which the federal legislature has power to make laws for that state, unless the Governor-General in his discretion is satisfied that the matter affects federal interests

or affects a British subject, and has given his consent to the matter being discussed or the question being asked.'

-
- They were not a cohesive group and probably realized that they would never act as one.
- Each Prince seemed consumed by the desire to gain the best deal for himself, were his state to join the Federation: the most money, the most autonomy.
- **That enough was being offered at the Centre to win the support of moderate nationalist Hindu and Muslim support.** In fact, so little was offered that all significant groups in British India rejected and denounced the proposed Federation. A major contributing factor was the continuing distrust of British intentions for which there was considerable basis in fact. In this vital area the Act failed Irwin's test:

'I don't believe that... it is impossible to present the problem in such a form as would make the shop window look respectable from an Indian point of view, which is really what they care about while keeping your hand pretty firmly on the things that matter.' (Irwin to Stonehaven, 12 November 1928)

- **That the wider electorate would turn against the Congress.** In fact, the 1937 elections showed overwhelming support for Congress among the Hindu electorate.
- **That by giving Indian politicians a great deal of power at the provincial level, while denying them responsibility at the Centre, it was hoped that**

Congress, the only national party, would disintegrate into a series of provincial fiefdoms.

In fact, the Congress High Command was able to control the provincial ministries and to force their resignation in 1939. The Act showed the strength and cohesion of Congress and probably strengthened it. This does not imply that Congress was not made up of and found its support in various sometimes competing interests and groups. Rather, it recognises the ability of Congress, unlike the British Raj, to maintain the cooperation and support of most of these groups even if, for example in the forced resignation of Congress provincial ministries in 1939 and the rejection of the Cripps Offer in 1942, this required a negative policy that was harmful, in the long run, to the prospects for an independent India that would be both united and democratic.

Indian reaction

No significant group in India accepted the Federal portion of the Act. A typical response was:

'After all, there are five aspects of every Government worth the name: (a) The right of external and internal defence and all measures for that purpose; (b) The right to control our external relations; (c) The right to control our currency and exchange; (d) The right to control our fiscal policy; (e) the day-to-day administration of the land.... (Under the Act) You shall have nothing to do with external affairs. You shall have nothing to do with defense. You shall have nothing to do, or, for all practical purposes in future, you shall have nothing to do with

your currency and exchange, for indeed the Reserve Bank Bill just passed has a further reservation in the Constitution that no legislation may be undertaken with a view to substantially alter the provisions of that Act except with the consent of the Governor-General.... there is no real power conferred in the Centre.' (Speech by Mr. Bhulabhai DESAI on the Report of the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Indian Constitutional Reform, 4 February 1935).

However, the Liberals and even elements in the Congress were tepidly willing to give it a go:

"Linlithgow asked Sapru whether he thought there was a satisfactory alternative to the scheme of the 1935 Act. Sapru replied that they should stand fast on the Act and the federal plan embodied in it. It was not ideal but at this stage, it was the only thing.... A few days after Sapru's visit Birla came to see the Viceroy. He thought that Congress was moving towards acceptance of Federation. Gandhi was not over-worried, said Birla, by the reservation of defense and external affairs to the center, but was concentrating on the method of choosing the States' representatives. Birla wanted the Viceroy to help Gandhi by persuading a number of Princes to move towards the democratic election of representatives. ...Birla then said that the only chance for Federation lay in the agreement between Government and Congress and the best hope of this lay in discussion between the Viceroy and Gandhi".

Receptions

Nehru called it "a machine with strong brakes but no engine". He also called it a "Charter of Slavery" Jinnah called it,

"thoroughly rotten, fundamentally bad and totally unacceptable."

Winston Churchill conducted a campaign against Indian self-government from 1929 onwards. When the bill passed, he denounced it in the House of Commons as "a gigantic quilt of jumbled crochet work, a monstrous monument of shame built by pygmies". Leo Amery, who spoke next, opened his speech with the words "Here endeth the last chapter of the Book of Jeremiah" and commented that Churchill's speech had been "not only a speech without a ray of hope; it was a speech from beginning to end, like all his speeches on the subject, utterly and entirely negative and devoid of constructive thought."

Rab Butler, who as Under-Secretary for India helped pilot the Act through the House of Commons, later wrote that it helped to set India on the path of Parliamentary democracy. Butler blamed Jinnah for the subsequent secession of Pakistan, likening his strength of character to that of the Ulster Unionist leader Edward Carson, and wrote that "men like Jinnah are not born every day", although he also blamed Congress for not having done enough to court the Muslims. In 1954 Butler stayed in Delhi, where Nehru, who Butler believed had mellowed somewhat from his extreme views of the 1930s, told him that the Act, based on the English constitutional principles of Dicey and Anson, had been the foundation of the Indian Independence Bill.

Act Implementation

The British government sent out Lord Linlithgow as the new viceroy with the remit of bringing the Act into effect. Linlithgow

was intelligent, extremely hard working, honest, serious and determined to make a success out of the Act. However, he was also unimaginative, stolid, legalistic and found it very difficult to "get on terms" with people outside his immediate circle.

In 1937, after the holding of provincial elections, Provincial Autonomy commenced. From that point until the declaration of war in 1939, Linlithgow tirelessly tried to get enough of the Princes to accede to launch the Federation. In this, he received only the weakest backing from the Home Government and in the end the Princes rejected the Federation *en masse*. In September 1939, Linlithgow simply declared that India was at war with Germany. Though Linlithgow's behavior was constitutionally correct it was also offensive to much of Indian opinion that the Viceroy had not consulted the elected representatives of the Indian people before taking such a momentous decision. This led directly to the resignation of the Congress provincial ministries.

From 1939, Linlithgow concentrated on supporting the war effort.

Chapter 31

1937 Indian Provincial Elections

Provincial elections were held in British India in the winter of 1936-37 as mandated by the Government of India Act 1935. Elections were held in eleven provinces - Madras, Central Provinces, Bihar, Orissa, United Provinces, Bombay Presidency, Assam, NWFP, Bengal, Punjab and Sindh.

The final results of the elections were declared in February 1937. The Indian National Congress emerged in power in eight of the provinces - the exceptions being Punjab and Sindh. The All-India Muslim League failed to form the government in any province.

The Congress ministries resigned in October and November 1939, in protest against Viceroy Lord Linlithgow's action of declaring India to be a belligerent in the Second World War without consulting the Indian people.

Electorate

The Government of India Act 1935/ Legislative council 1935 increased the number of enfranchised people. Approximately 30 million people, among them some women, gained voting rights. This number constituted one-sixth of Indian adults. The Act provided for a limited adult franchise based on property qualifications such as land ownership and rent, and therefore favored landholders and richer farmers in rural areas.

Election Campaign and results

At its 1936 session held in the city of Lucknow, the Congress party, despite opposition from the newly elected Nehru as the party president, agreed to contest the provincial elections to be held in 1937. The released Congress leaders anticipated the restoration of elections. They now had a stronger standing with their reputation enhanced by the civil disobedience movement under Gandhi's leadership. Through the elections the Congress sought to convert its popular movement into a political organisation. The Congress won 758 out of around 1500 seats in a resounding victory, and went on to form seven provincial governments. The Congress formed governments in United provinces, Bihar, the Central Provinces, Bombay and Madras.

The party's election platform had downplayed communalism and Nehru continued this attitude with the initiation of the March 1937 Muslim mass contact program. But the elections demonstrated that of the 482 Muslim seats the Congress had contested just 58 of them and won only 26 of those. In spite of this poor showing the Congress persisted in its claim that the party was representative of all communities. The Congress ministries did not succeed in attracting their Muslim countrymen. This was largely unintentional.

The 1937 elections demonstrated that neither the Muslim League nor the Congress represented Muslims. It also demonstrated the provincial moorings of Muslim politics. The Muslim League captured around 25 percent of the seats reserved for Muslims. The Congress Muslims achieved 6 percent of them. Most of the Muslim seats were won by regional Muslim parties. No Congress Muslim won in Sindh,

Punjab, Bengal, Orissa, United Provinces, Central Provinces, Bombay and Assam. Most of the 26 seats the Congress captured were in NWFP, Madras and Bihar.

Madras Presidency

In Madras, the Congress won 74% of all seats, eclipsing the incumbent Justice Party (21 seats).

Sindh

The Sind Legislative Assembly had 60 members. The Sind United Party emerged the leader with 22 seats, and the Congress secured 8 seats. Mohammad Ali Jinnah had tried to set up a League Parliamentary Board in Sindh in 1936, but he failed, though 72% of the population was Muslim. Though 34 seats were reserved for Muslims, the Muslim League could secure none of them.

United Provinces

The UP legislature consisted of a Legislative Council of 52 elected and 6 or 8 nominated members and a Legislative Assembly of 228 elected members: some from exclusive Muslim constituencies, some from "General" constituencies, and some "Special" constituencies. The Congress won a clear majority in the United Provinces, with 133 seats, while the Muslim League won only 27 out of the 64 seats reserved for Muslims.

The Congress refused the League's offer in the UP to form a coalition. The party offered the Muslim League a role in government if it merged itself into the Congress Party. While

this position had a good basis it proved to be a mistake. The Congress disregarded that even though they had captured the large part of UP's general seats, they had not won any of the reserved Muslim seats, of which the Muslim League had won 29.

Assam

In Assam, the Congress won 33 seats out of a total of 108 making it the single largest party, though it was not in a position to form a ministry. The Governor called upon Sir Muhammad Sadulla, ex-Judicial Member of Assam and Leader of the Assam Valley Muslim Party to form the ministry. The Congress was a part of the ruling coalition.

Bombay

In Bombay, the Congress fell just short of gaining half the seats. However, it was able to draw on the support of some small pro-Congress groups to form a working majority. B.G. Kher became the first Chief Minister of Bombay.

Punjab

After result Unionist Party under the leadership of Sikandar Hayat Khan formed the Government. Khalsa National Board and Hindu Election Board also gave their support to Unionist Party.

Sikandar Hayat Khan led a coalition government till his death. After his death he was succeeded by Malik Khizar Hayat Tiwana on 12 December 1942.

Other provinces

In three additional provinces, Central Provinces, Bihar, and Orissa, the Congress won clear majorities. In the overwhelmingly Muslim North-West Frontier Province, Congress won 19 out of 50 seats and was able, with minor party support, to form a ministry.

In Bengal, though the Congress was the single largest party (with 54 seats), it was unable to form government. The Krishak Praja Party of A. K. Fazlul Huq (with 36 seats) was able to form a coalition government with support of the Muslim League. In 1941, when the Muslim League took back its support from KPP, the Congress & Hindu Mahasabha formed coalition with Haq.

Muslim League

Jinnah took a nationalist stance and emulated the Congress' electoral campaign and appointed Muslim League Parliamentary Boards for the 1937 elections. Through this he expected to advance the party as a coalition partner for the Congress which they might need to form provincial governments. He miscalculated that the separate electorates system, with a larger electorate, would produce good results for the Muslim League. Of the 482 seats reserved for Muslims the League won just 109. The League won 29 seats in the United Provinces where it had competed for 35 out of the 66 seats for Muslims. The League's top performance was in provinces where Muslims were minorities; there it cast itself as a protector of the community. Its performance in Punjab, where it won just two of the seven seats it vied for, was

unsuccessful. It performed a little better in Bengal, capturing 39 of the 117 seats for Muslims, but could not form a government.

Muslim preference was to be represented by regional parties which were allied with those non-Muslims who were not supportive of the Congress. The Congress was victorious throughout India in the open constituencies. Muslim league was confronted with the fact that Hindu majority provinces would be ruled by Hindus but Muslim league would not rule the largest provinces with Muslim majorities: Bengal and Punjab. The Congress domination over the government made the prospects of federal Muslim politicians appear dismal. Regional parties kept the League out of power in those provinces with Muslim majorities while in the Hindu majority provinces it was unwanted by the Congress. Antagonised by this rebuff the League stepped up its efforts to attract a popular following.

Resignation of Congress ministries

Viceroy Linlithgow declared India at war with Germany on 3 September 1939. The Congress objected strongly to the declaration of war without prior consultation with Indians. The Congress Working Committee suggested that it would cooperate if there a central Indian national government were formed, and a commitment were made to India's independence after the war. The Muslim League promised its support to the British, with Jinnah calling on Muslims to help the Raj by "honourable co-operation" at the "critical and difficult juncture," while asking the Viceroy for increased protection for Muslims.

The government did not come up with any satisfactory response. Viceroy Linlithgow could only offer to form a 'consultative committee' for advisory functions. Thus, Linlithgow refused the demands of the Congress. On 22 October 1939, all Congress ministries were called upon to tender their resignations. Both Viceroy Linlithgow and Muhammad Ali Jinnah were pleased with the resignations. On 2 December 1939, Jinnah put out an appeal, calling for Indian Muslims to celebrate 22 December 1939 as a "Day of Deliverance" from Congress:

I wish the Musalmans all over India to observe Friday 22 December as the "Day of Deliverance" and thanksgiving as a mark of relief that the Congress regime has at last ceased to function. I hope that the provincial, district and primary Muslim Leagues all over India will hold public meetings and pass the resolution with such modification as they may be advised, and after Jumma prayers offer prayers by way of thanksgiving for being delivered from the unjust Congress regime.

Chapter 32

All India Forward Bloc

The **All India Forward Bloc (AIFB)** is a left-wing nationalist political party in India. It emerged as a faction within the Indian National Congress in 1939, led by Subhas Chandra Bose. The party re-established as an independent political party after the independence of India. It has its main stronghold in West Bengal. The party's current Secretary-General is Debabrata Biswas. Veteran Indian politicians Sarat Chandra Bose (brother of Subhas Chandra Bose) and Chitta Basu had been the stalwarts of the party in independent India.

History

Formation of the Forward Bloc

The **Forward Bloc** of the Indian National Congress was formed on May 3, 1939 by Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose in Makur Unnao , Uttar Pradesh, who had resigned from the presidency of the Indian National Congress on 29 April after being outmanoeuvred by Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. The formation of the Forward Bloc was announced to the public at a rally in Calcutta. Bose said that who all were joining, they had to never turn their back to the British and must fill the pledge form by cutting their finger and signing it with their blood. First of all, seventeen young girls came up and signed the pledge form. Initially the aim of the Forward Bloc was to rally all the leftwing sections within the Congress and develop an alternative leadership inside the Congress. Bose became the

president of the Forward Bloc and S.S. Cavesheer its vice-president. A Forward Bloc Conference was held in Bombay in the end of June. At that conference the constitution and programme of the Forward Bloc were approved. In July 1939 Subhas Chandra Bose announced the Committee of the Forward Bloc. It had Subhas Chandra Bose as president, S.S. Kavishar from Punjab as its vice-president, Lal Shankarlal from Delhi, as its general secretary and Vishwambhar Dayalu Tripathi and Khurshed Nariman from Bombay as secretaries. Other prominent members were Annapurniah from Andhra Pradesh, Senapati Bapat, Hari Vishnu Kamnath from Bombay, Pasumpon U. Muthuramalingam Thevar from Tamil Nadu and Sheel Bhadra Yagee from Bihar. Satya Ranjan Bakshi, was appointed as the secretary of the Bengal Provincial Forward Bloc.

In August, the same year Bose began publishing a newspaper titled *Forward Bloc*. He travelled around the country, rallying support for his new political project.

The first conference

The next year, on 20–22 June 1940, the Forward Bloc held its first All India Conference in Nagpur. The conference declared the Forward Bloc to be a socialist political party, and the date of 22 June is considered as the founding date of the party by the Forward Bloc itself. The conference passed a resolution titled 'All Power to the Indian People', urging militant action for struggle against British colonial rule. Subhash Chandra Bose was elected as the president of the party and H.V. Kamath as the general secretary.

Arrest and exile of Bose

Soon thereafter, on 2 July, Bose was arrested and detained in Presidency Jail, Calcutta. In January 1941 he escaped from house arrest, and clandestinely went into exile. He travelled to the Soviet Union via Afghanistan, seeking Soviet support for the Indian independence struggle. Stalin declined Bose's request, and he then travelled to Germany. In Berlin he set up the Free India Centre, and rallied the Indian Legion.

Inside India, local activists of the Forward Bloc continued the anti-British activities without central co-ordination. For example, in Bihar members were involved in the Azad Dasta resistance groups, and distributed propaganda in support of Bose and Indian National Army. They did not have, however, any organic link either with Bose nor the INA.

Post-war reorganisation

At the end of the war, the Forward Bloc was reorganised. In February 1946 R.S. Ruiker organised an All India Active Workers Conference at Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh. The conference declared the formation of the 'FB Workers Assembly', in practice the legal cover of the still illegal Forward Bloc. Notably some leading communists from Bombay, like K.N. Joglekar and Soli Batliwalli, joined the 'FB Workers Assembly'. The Workers Assembly conference declared that the "Forward Bloc is a Socialist Party, accepting the theory of class struggle in its fullest implications and a programme of revolutionary mass action for the attainment of Socialism leading to a Classless Society."

The Ahead of the 1946 assembly elections the ban on the Bloc was lifted in June that year. The Working Committee of the Forward Bloc met on 10 June.

Elections to the Constituent Assembly and to provincial legislatures were held in December 1946. The Forward Bloc contested the elections. H.V. Kamath won a seat in the Constituent Assembly and Jyotish Chandra Ghosh, Hemantha Kumar Basu and Lila Roy were elected to the Bengal Legislative Assembly.

Arrah conference

The Bloc held its 2nd All India Conference in Arrah, Bihar on 12–14 January 1947. S.S. Cavesheer (a leading member of the Subhasist sector) was elected president and Sheel Bhadra Yagee (a leading member of the Marxist sector) was elected general secretary.

Split between Yagee and Ruikar

Following Independence and Partition, the party national council met in Varanasi February 1948. The national council meeting was also preceded by a decision of the Indian National Congress in the beginning of the year to expel all dissenting tendencies within the Congress, including the Forward Bloc. Thus the party decided to renounce any links with the Congress once and for all, and reconstruct itself as an independent opposition party. Moreover, it passed a resolution that the party be divided into a Forward Bloc for India and a Forward Bloc for the new nation of Pakistan. This would soon prove to be very controversial. The general secretary Yagee did,

in line with the Varanasi resolution, dissolve the Bengal committee of the Forward Bloc and set-up *ad hoc* committees for West Bengal and East Bengal. Now the division between 'Marxists' and 'Subhasists' resurfaced. The 'Subhasists', and S. S. Cavesheer in particular, criticised Yagee's actions.

The split was now a fact. The 'Subhasist' group, led by Ruiker and Cavesheer, called for a conference in Chandannagar, West Bengal. Their conference was held on 29–31 December. On the same dates Yagee organised a conference in Calcutta. Effectively there was now two Forward Blocs, the Forward Bloc led by Ruiker and the Forward Bloc led by Yagee. Yagee was elected general secretary and K.N. Joglekar, chairman of the Yagee-led group.

Roughly speaking the Yagee's party had its main base in Bihar, Punjab and West Bengal, whereas the Ruiker-led group had its strongholds in Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal.

In Tripura a united front was formed by the Communist Party of India, Tripura Ganatantrik Sangha, Ganamukti Parishad, Ganatantrik Nari Samiti and independents to contest the election to the Tripura electoral college (whose function was to appoint a Rajya Sabha delegate from Tripura) jointly. The Forward Bloc participated in mass rallies on 2 October and 2 December 1951. However, just before the election the Forward Bloc withdrew from the front and decided to contest three of the 30 seats on their own. None of the Forward Bloc candidates were elected.

The 5th party conference (a 4th party plenum had been held in Ingota, U.P. in 1949) was held in Puri, Odisha on 28–31

December 1952. Mohan Singh was elected chairman and Dhillon as general secretary.

Expulsion of Yagee and Singh

In 1955 the Indian National Congress adopted socialism as its policy. Thus leaders like Yagee and Singh then proposed that as the Congress had become a socialist party, the Forward Bloc ought to merge with it. Singh and Yagee, without consulting the Central Committee nor the party membership, declared the unification of the Forward Bloc into the Congress. Many sections of the party disagreed with this move, and a Central Committee meeting was held in Nagpur 11–15 May. The Central Committee decided to expel Singh and Yagee. Hemanta Kumar Bose was elected as the new chairman and R.K. Haldulkar as general secretary.

Socialist unity

In 1964 a unity process was initiated by the Praja Socialist Party, which eventually resulted in the formation of the Samyukta Socialist Party. The Forward Bloc was invited to join the new party, and the Delhi unit of the party did take part in a joint socialist anti-Nehru campaign conference in April 1964.

Death of U.M. Thevar

The party stalwart in Tamil Nadu, U. Muthuramalingam Thevar, died on 30 October 1963. Following his death a power-struggle began between two of his disciples, Sasivarna Thevar and P.K. Mookiah Thevar. Mookiah Thevar emerged victorious

and Sasivarna Thevar left to form his own party, the Subhasist Forward Bloc.

A by-election for the Aruppukottai Lok Sabha constituency seat vacated by U. Muthuramalingam Thevar's death was held in 1964, in which the Forward Bloc was defeated for the first time.

Progressive Front in Tripura

In 1965 the party joined a 'Progressive Front' in Tripura. The front consisted of the Communist Party of India, the Forward Bloc and a break-away faction of the Socialist Party. The front demanded nationwide land reforms, strengthening of the national defence, withdrawal from the Commonwealth, nationalisation of foreign capital, a rational food policy, release of all political prisoners and scrapping of the Indo-American agreement of food supply. Existence of the new front was declared at a meeting in Agartala on 17 November. Mass rallies of the front were held in Belonia on 28 November and then in Birchandra Bazar (near Belonia) on 1 December. The front did not last, though, as in the 1967 election the communist parties aligned with a splinter group of the Congress Party. The Forward Bloc did not present any candidates in that election.

1968 split in Tamil Nadu

In 1968 two influential party leaders in Tamil Nadu Velayudham Nayar (then a central committee member of the party) and S. Andi Thevar broke away from AIFB and founded the Revolutionary Forward Bloc. Nayar and Thevar accused the

Forward Bloc of having deviated from its socialist principles through its co-operation with the rightwing Swatantra Party.

West Dinajpur clashes

In July 1969, violent clashes erupted in West Dinajpur district, West Bengal, between peasants aligned with the Communist Party of India (Marxist) and East Pakistani refugee cultivators, who supported the Forward Bloc. CPI(M) leader Hare Krishna Konar characterised the events as a degeneration of the agrarian struggles in rural West Bengal.

Split in the Indian National Congress

In 1969 a major split in the Indian National Congress. Indira Gandhi had entered into open conflict with the traditional Congress leadership. Effectively two separate Congress parties appeared, the Congress(R) led by Indira and the Congress(O) led by Kamaraj. The split was in many ways a left-right one, with Indira whipping up populism against the established party elites. The Forward Bloc did in some ways welcome the new developments. It appreciated Indira's stands and reformulated its anti-Congress line to focus mainly opposition to the traditional Congress elite (i.e. the Congress(O)). In the 1969 presidential elections, AIFB supported Indira's candidate V.V. Giri. This caused an abrupt break-up of the Swatantra-AIFB alliance in Tamil Nadu, as the Swatantra Party sought to align itself with the Congress(O).

1971-72 elections

On 20 February, just ahead of the 1971 general elections, the All India Forward Bloc chairman Hemantha Kumar Bose was murdered in Calcutta. An emergency central committee meeting was held on 24 February, which appointed P.K. Mookiah Thevar as the new chairman of the party.

In the 1971 Lok Sabha election, the Forward Bloc launched 24 candidates around the country. Two were elected, P.K. Mookiah Thevar from Ramanthapuram and Jambuwanttrao Dhote from Nagpur. The party contested 3 seats in the interior of Maharashtra, where it performed well. Dhote, who was then known as *Vidarbha ka Sher* (the Lion of Vidarbha), had joined the Forward Bloc and campaigned for a separate Vidarbha state with the Forward Bloc as his platform. Dhote was hugely popular in the region at the time, and could draw crowds of hundreds of thousands to his meetings.

In Tamil Nadu the party contested one seat, Ramanthapuram, with the support of its allies in the Progressive Front (most notably the Congress(R) and Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam). Meanwhile, the Forward Bloc played an important role in securing Mukkulathor votes for its Progressive Front allies.

In West Bengal the party contested 10 Lok Sabha seats. The party obtained some significant voting in constituencies like Cooch Behar (22.17%) and Birbhum (19.70%), but in general it was defeated by the CPI(M) candidates.

Moreover, the party contested three seats in Bihar, one in Haryana, 1 in Madhya Pradesh, 4 in Uttar Pradesh and 1 in

Delhi. In total the candidates of the party obtained 962 971 votes (0.66% of the national vote).

In the 1971 state legislative assembly election in Odisha, the party contested four seats. It got 8393 votes (0.19% of the statewide vote), but was not close to winning any seat. In Tamil Nadu the party contested 9 seats in the southern part of the state within the framework of the Progressive Front. Out of these nine candidates, seven won. In total its vote stood at 268 721 (1.71% of the statewide vote). One of its candidate came second and in the Mudukulathor constituency (that had been the centre of the violent 1957 Ramnad riots) the AIFB candidate R. Rathina Thevar came third with 17244 votes (31.02%). The most spectacular victory was that of P.K. Mookiah Thevar (who contested Lok Sabha and assembly elections simultaneously) who got 49292 votes (74.46%) in the Usilampatti constituency, defeating S. Andi Thevar of the Revolutionary Forward Bloc. Lastly in West Bengal the party contested 52 constituencies, but could only win three seats. Its vote stood at 374 141 (2.90% of the statewide vote).

On 28 March 1972 the party was able to win a seat in the Tamil Nadu Legislative Council (the upper house of the regional parliament) for the first time. R. Sakthi Mohan was elected with the votes of the AIFB, DMK, PSP, Muslim League and the Tamil Arasu Kazhagam.

In the 1972 state legislative assembly election, the Forward Bloc presented one candidate in Assam, 5 in Bihar and 2 in Madhya Pradesh. In Maharashtra the party contested 26 seats. Like in the 1971 Lok Sabha elections the party did well in the interior areas of the state. It won the Nagpur North and

Yeotmal seats, and came second in several others. In total the AIFB candidates in Maharashtra got 363 547 votes (2.4% of the statewide vote). In West Bengal, where fresh elections to the state assembly were again held in 1972, the Forward Bloc launched 18 candidates. It got 331 244 votes (2.48% of the statewide vote), but could not win a single seat.

Realignment in Tripura

After having contested the 1972 elections on its own, the Forward Bloc decided to join a 'United Front' led by the communist parties in Tripura. The front demanded clear-cut policies for procurement and distribution of food grains, stop to spiralling prices of essential commodities, a land reform legislation for delimitation of Tribal reserve areas and creation of employment opportunities for the unemployed. A 24-hour Tripura Bandh was organised by the front on 16 December. On 3 May 1974 the four parties organised a 12-hour Tripura Bandh.

1977 elections

1977 was a crucial year in Indian political history. For the first time in independent India, the Congress Party was routed in a national election. The Forward Bloc had contested four seats in the Lok Sabha election. In West Bengal it had three candidates which were supported by the Left Front, out of whom all three were elected. Moreover, the party contested one seat in Haryana.

In Tripura a Left Front was formed consisting of the CPI(M), RSP and the Forward Bloc. The Front launched one Forward

Bloc candidate, Brajagopal Roy in the Town Bordowali constituency. Roy won the seat with 7800 votes (62.76%). In the beginning of 1978 the Left Front formed a majority government in the state, with Brajagopal Roy appointed minister in the state government.

Recent history

Ahead of the 2000 Bihar legislative election AIFB took part in building a front together with the Bharatiya Jan Congress, the Bihar Vikas Party, the Janata Dal (Secular), the Samajwadi Janata Party and the Nationalist Congress Party. The front vowed to maintain equidistance towards the two major blocs in Bihari politics, the Rashtriya Janata Dal and the National Democratic Alliance, condemning them as 'casteist and communal'.

In 2002 AIFB was one of four leftwing parties that nominated Lakshmi Sahgal as a candidate for the presidency of India. Sehgal, who challenged the main candidate A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, got around 10% of the votes.

In the Lok Sabha elections 2004 the party received 0.4% of votes and three seats (All from West Bengal).

Just before the 2006 Tamil Nadu legislative election, the party was joined by the actor Karthik. Karthik was given the post of president of the Tamil Nadu state unit by the national party leadership and was put in charge of the election campaign of the party in the state. The party decided to contest a large number of seats without joining either of the two major political blocs in Tamil Nadu. The appointment of Karthik as the new leader of the state unit provoked the sole Forward Bloc

legislator and secretary of the state unit, L. Santhanam, to leave the party. In the election the party lost its representation in the assembly. A few months later the party leadership expelled Karthik on the grounds of 'anti-party activities'.

Ahead of the 2006 West Bengal legislative election, a section of the party led by Jayanta Roy, former AIFB Rajya Sabha member, and Chhaya Ghosh, former West Bengal Minister of Agriculture, broke away and formed the Indian People's Forward Bloc. This party aligned itself with the Indian National Congress. The Bharatiya Forward Bloc, a former Forward Bloc splinter group, merged into the All India Forward Bloc prior to the 2006 election.

Eastern India

West Bengal

AIFB has branches throughout the country, but the main strength of the party is concentrated in West Bengal. It was a part of the former Left Front government in there prior to the year 2011, when All India Trinamool Congress formed the Government with the initial support of Indian National Congress, and Forward Bloc had various ministers in the state government. Notably though AIFB is co-operating with CPI(M) in West Bengal, Tripura and on the national level, AIFB is not part of the Left Democratic Front in Kerala.

Tripura

The Forward Bloc established its presence in Tripura in 1944, founded by Kamala Ranjan Talapatra. Bengali immigrants like

Sailesh Sen, Gopi Ballav Saha, Dwijen Deu, Anil Dasgupta, Hiren Nandi and Sati Bhardwaz are the other active members of the party. They took part in various political campaigns. However, around 1955–1956 most of the founding core of the party in Tripura joined the RSP. Today, AIFB is a member of opposition Left Front coalition. In the 2003 Tripura legislative election the Tripura State Committee president Brajagopal Roy contested the Town Borowali constituency on behalf of the Left Front. Roy got 9844 votes (43.57%), but was defeated by a Congress candidate. The secretary of the Tripura State Committee of Shyamal Roy (who replaced the former state committee secretary Nisith Das). The AIFB state unit publishes Tripura Bani.

Northern India

Uttar Pradesh

In the 2007 assembly election, 2007 in Uttar Pradesh AIFB launched three candidates, Ram Lakhan in Bisalpur (732 votes, 0.51% of the votes in the constituency), Samar Singh in Fatehpur Sikri (870 votes, 0.69%) and Jabar Singh in Hastinapur (503 votes, 0.42%).

Haryana

AIFB has a small state unit in Haryana. The chairman of Haryana state committee is Naveen Antil. In the 2005 election to the Haryana legislative assembly AIFB ran a single candidate, Mukhtiar Singh Kaushik in the Nilokheri constituency. Kaushik got 442 votes (0.44%).

Southern India

In Andhra Pradesh the party had significant presence during the 1950s, but then declined sharply. In 2005 the party took an initiative to revive its Andhra Pradesh State Committee.

Mass organisations

- All India Youth League (youths organisation)
- All India Students Bloc (student's organisation)
- Trade Union Coordination Committee (trade union organisation)
- All India Agragami Kisan Sabha (peasants' organisation)
- All India Agragami Mahila Samiti (women's organisation)
- Indian National Cyber Army (social media organisation)
- Agragami Adivasi Samiti (tribal's organisation)

Chapter 33

Lahore Resolution and August Offer

Lahore Resolution

The **Lahore Resolution** also called **Pakistan resolution** or **declaration of independence of Pakistan**, was written and prepared by Muhammad Zafarullah Khan and was presented by A. K. Fazlul Huq, the Prime Minister of Bengal, was a formal political statement adopted by the All-India Muslim League on the occasion of its three-day general session in Lahore on 22–24 March 1940. The resolution called for independent states as seen by the statement:

That geographically contiguous units are demarcated regions which should be constituted, with such territorial readjustments as may be necessary that the areas in which the Muslims are numerically in a majority as in the North Western and Eastern Zones of (British) India should be grouped to constitute 'independent states' in which the constituent units should be autonomous and sovereign.

Although the name "Pakistan" had been proposed by Choudhary Rahmat Ali in his Pakistan Declaration, it was not until after the resolution that it began to be widely used.

Muhammad Ali Jinnah's address to the Lahore conference was, according to Stanley Wolpert, the moment when Jinnah, a former proponent of Hindu-Muslim unity, irrevocably

transformed himself into the leader of the fight for an independent Pakistan.

Historical context

Until the mid-1930s the Muslim leaders were trying to ensure maximum political safeguards for Muslims within the framework of federation of India in terms of seeking maximum autonomy for Muslim majority provinces. They got some safeguards through a system of separate electorate on communal basis in the Government of India Act, 1935. As a result of elections held under this Act, Indian National Congress formed government in six out of eight provinces. During Congress rule from 1937 to 39, its "High Command whose iron control over its own provinces clearly hinted at what lay ahead for the Muslim majority provinces once it came to dominate the centre. Much of the League's propaganda at this stage was directed against the Congress ministries and their alleged attacks on Muslim culture; the heightened activity of Hindu Mahasabha, the hoisting of Congress tricolor, the singing of *Bande Mataram*, the *Vidya Mandir* scheme in the Central Provinces and the *Wardha* scheme of education, all were interpreted as proof of 'Congress atrocities'. So, the Congress was clearly incapable of representing Muslim interests, yet it was trying to annihilate every other party."

Therefore, by 1938–39, the idea of separation was strongly gaining ground. The Sindh Provincial Muslim League Conference held its first session in Karachi in October 1938, adopted a resolution which recommended to the All India Muslim League to devise a scheme of constitution under which Muslims may attain full independence. The premier of the

Bengal province, A. K. Fazal-ul-Haque, who was not in the All India Muslim League, was quite convinced in favor of separation. The idea was more vividly expressed by M. A. Jinnah in an article in the London weekly *Time & Tide* on 9 March 1940. Jinnah wrote:

Democratic systems based on the concept of homogeneous nation such as England are very definitely not applicable to heterogeneous countries such as India, and this simple fact is the root cause of all of India's constitutional ills.....If, therefore, it is accepted that there is in India a major and a minor nation, it follows that a parliamentary system based on the majority principle must inevitably mean the rule of major nation. Experience has proved that, whatever the economic and political programme of any political Party, the Hindu, as a general rule, will vote for his caste-fellow, the Muslim for his coreligionist.

About the Congress-led provincial governments, he wrote:

An India-wide attack on the Muslims was launched. In the five Muslim provinces every attempt was made to defeat the Muslim-led-coalition Ministries,...In the six Hindu provinces a "Kulturkampf" was inaugurated. Attempts were made to have *Bande Mataram*, the Congress Party song, recognized as the national anthem, the Party flag, and the real national language, Urdu, supplanted by Hindi. Everywhere oppression commenced and complaints poured in such force...that the Muslims, despairing of the Viceroy and Governors ever taking action to protect them, have already been forced to ask for a Royal Commission to investigate their grievances.

Furthermore, he added:

Is it the desire (of British people) that India should become a totalitarianHindu State....? and I feel certain that Muslim India will never submit to such a position and will be forced to resist it with every means in their power.

In his concluding remarks he wrote:

While Muslim League irrevocably opposed to any Federal objective which must necessarily result in a majority community rule under the guise of Democracy and Parliamentary system of Government...To conclude, a constitution must be evolved that recognises that there are in India two nations who both must share the governance of their common motherland.

Lahore Conference

The session was held on 22–24 March 1940, at Iqbal Park, Lahore. The welcome address was made by Sir Shah Nawaz Khan of Mamdot, as the chairman of the local reception committee. The various draft texts for the final resolution/draft were deliberated over by the Special Working Committee of the All India Muslim League

The resolution text, unanimously approved by the Subject Committee, accepted the concept of a united homeland for Muslims and recommended the creation of an independent Muslim state.

The resolution was moved in the general session by A. K. Fazlul Huq, the chief minister of undivided Bengal, and was seconded by Chaudhry Khaliquzzaman from the United

Provinces, Zafar Ali Khan from Punjab, Sardar Aurangzeb Khan from North-West Frontier Province, and Sir Abdullah Haroon from Sindh. Qazi Muhammad Essa from Baluchistan and other leaders announced their support.

The statement

The resolution for the establishment of a separate homeland for the Muslims of British India passed in the annual session of the All India Muslim League held in Lahore on 22–24 March 1940 is a landmark document of Pakistan's history. In 1946, it formed the basis for the decision of Muslim League to struggle for one state [later named Pakistan] for the Muslims. The statement declared:

No constitutional plan would be workable or acceptable to the Muslims unless geographical contiguous units are demarcated into regions which should be so constituted with such territorial readjustments as may be necessary.

The Hindu press and leaders were quick to describe the resolution as the demand for the creation of Pakistan; some people began to call it the Pakistan Resolution soon after the Lahore session of the Muslim League. It is landmark document in history of Pakistan. Additionally, it stated:

That adequate, effective and mandatory safeguards shall be specifically provided in the constitution for minorities in the units and in the regions for the protection of their religious, cultural, economic, political, administrative and other rights of the minorities.

Most importantly, to convince smaller provinces such as Sindh to join, it provided a guarantee:

That geographically contiguous units are demarcated into regions which should be constituted, with such territorial readjustments as may be necessary that the areas in which the Muslims are numerically in a majority as in the North Western and Eastern Zones of (British) India should be grouped to constitute 'independent states' in which the constituent units should be autonomous and sovereign.

Full text

The full text of the resolution document was as follows:

"THE LAHORE RESOLUTION"

Resolved at the Lahore Session of All-India Muslim League held on 22-24 March, 1940.

(1) While approving and endorsing the action taken by the Council and the Working Committee of the All Indian Muslim League as indicated in their resolutions dated the 27 of August, 17 and 18 of September and 22 of October, 1939, and 3 February 1940 on the constitutional issues, this Session of the All-Indian Muslim League emphatically reiterates that the scheme of federation embodied in the Government of India Act, 1935, is totally unsuited to, and unworkable in the peculiar conditions of this country and is altogether unacceptable to Muslim India.

(2) Resolved that it is the considered view of this Session of the All India Muslim League that no constitutional plan would be workable in this country or acceptable to Muslims unless it is designed on the following basic principle, namely that geographically contiguous units are demarcated into regions which should be so constituted, with such territorial readjustments as may be necessary, that the areas in which the Muslims are numerically in a majority as in the North-Western and Eastern Zones of India, should be grouped to constitute "Independent States" in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign.

(3) That adequate, effective and mandatory safeguards should be specifically provided in the constitution for minorities in these units and in these regions for the protection of their religious, cultural, economic, political, administrative and other rights and interests in consultation with them; and in other parts of India where the Mussalmans are in a minority, adequate, effective and mandatory safeguards shall be specially provided in the constitution for them and other minorities for the protection of their religious, cultural, economic, political, administrative and other rights and interests in consultation with them.

(4) This Session further authorizes the Working Committee to frame a scheme of constitution in accordance with these basic principles, providing for the assumption finally by the respective regions of all powers such as defense, external affairs, communications, customs and such other matters as may be necessary."

Interpretation

There remains a debate on whether the resolution envisaged two sovereign states in the eastern and western parts of British India. Abdul Hashim of the Bengal Muslim League interpreted the text as a demand for two separate countries. In 1946, Prime Minister H. S. Suhrawardy of Bengal, a member of the All India Muslim League, mooted the United Bengal proposal with the support of Muslim and Hindu leaders, as well as the Governor of Bengal. However, it was opposed by Lord Mountbatten, the Muslim League, the Congress and the Hindu Mahasabha.

Although there were and continue to be disagreements on the interpretation of the resolution, it was widely accepted that it called for a separate Muslim state. Opposing opinions focus on the phrase "independent states" claiming this means Muslim majority provinces, i.e. Punjab, Sindh, etc. would be independent of each other. They ignore the phrase "geographically contiguous units." They also rely on the claims of certain Bengali nationalists who did not agree with one state. They accuse their opponents of diverting the "spirit" of the resolution.

The majority of the Muslim League leadership contended that it was intended for not only the separation of India but into only 2 states (Muslim majority and Hindu majority). Therefore, it is indeed a statement calling for independence and one Muslim state. Eventually, the name "Pakistan" was used for the envisioned state.

Dissent by nationalist Muslims in colonial India

The All India Azad Muslim Conference gathered in Delhi in April 1940 to voice its support for an independent and united India, in response to the Lahore Resolution. Its members included several Islamic organisations in India, as well as 1400 nationalist Muslim delegates. The pro-separatist All-India Muslim League worked to try to silence those nationalist Muslims who stood against the partition of India, often using "intimidation and coercion". The murder of the Chief Minister of Sind and All India Azad Muslim Conference leader Allah Bakhsh Soomro also made it easier for the All-India Muslim League to demand the creation of a Pakistan.

The Sindh assembly was the firstly British Indian legislature to pass the resolution in favour of Pakistan. G. M. Syed, an influential Sindhi activist, revolutionary and Sufi and later one of the important leaders in the forefront of the Sindh independence movement, joined the Muslim League in 1938 and presented the Pakistan resolution in the Sindh Assembly. A key motivating factor was the promise of "autonomy and sovereignty for constituent units".

This text was buried under the Minar-e-Pakistan during its building in the Ayub regime. In this session the political situation was analysed in detail and Muslim demanded a separate homeland only to maintain their identification and to safeguard their rights. Pakistan resolution was the landmark in the history of Muslim of South-Asia. It determined for the Muslims a true goal and their homeland in north-east and

north-west. The acceptance of the Pakistan resolution accelerated the pace of freedom movement. It gave new energy and courage to the Muslims who gathered around Muhammad Ali Jinnah for struggle for freedom.

Commemoration

- To commemorate the event, *Minar-e-Pakistan*, a monument 60 m tall in the shape of a minaret, was built at the site in Iqbal Park where the resolution was passed.
- 23 March (Pakistan Day) is a national holiday in Pakistan to commemorate both Lahore Resolution (1940) and the Republic Day (1956); the country became the first Islamic Republic in the world.

August Offer

The **August Offer** was an offer made by Viceroy Linlithgow in 1940 promising the expansion of the Executive Council of the Viceroy of India to include more Indians, the establishment of an advisory war council, giving full weight to minority opinion, and the recognition of Indians' right to frame their own constitution (after the end of the war). In return, it was hoped that all parties and communities in India would cooperate in Britain's efforts in World War II. However this proposal was rejected by the Congress as the minorities, especially the Muslim League, were assured that no constitutional scheme was acceptable to the government without their agreement, *i.e.* providing a veto power to the Muslim League. The Muslim

League accepted the offer as it gave a clear assurance that a separate Pakistan would be established.

Preface

A change of government took place in Britain in May 1940 when Winston Churchill became prime minister (1940–45). The Fall of France in June left Britain in immediate danger of Nazi occupation. As the war was taking a menacing turn from the Allied point of view, the Indian National Congress softened its demands and offered to cooperate in the war if a transfer of authority in India was made to an interim government. The British government's response to these demands was a statement delivered by the then Viceroy, Lord Linlithgow, known as the August Offer.

The August Offer

On 8 August 1940, early in the Battle of Britain, the Viceroy of India, Lord Linlithgow, made the so-called "August Offer" at Simla, a fresh proposal promising the expansion of the Executive Council to include more Indians, the establishment of an advisory war council, giving weight to minority opinion, and the recognition of Indians' right to frame their own constitution (after the end of the war). In return, it was hoped that all parties and communities in India would cooperate in Britain's war effort.

Linlithgow attempted to solve the Congress-Raj stalemate over popular control of India's defense. Linlithgow prefaced his proposal by re-iterating that the differences in ideologies that

separated the All India Muslim League and the Indian National Congress must be bridged before any significant constitutional settlement is made. Nevertheless, the Viceroy announced that the British government was now willing to move forward with governmental changes that would "associate Indian public opinion with the conduct of the war."

Linlithgow was authorized to admit a limited number of Indian politicians to his executive council and to establish a war advisory council that included Princes, politicians and other interests in the national life of India. However, Linlithgow warned the politicians that his proposal did not imply that there would be any revision of the 1935 Government of India Act.

The declaration marked an important advance over the existing state of things, as it recognised at least the natural and inherent right of the people of the country to determine the form of their future constitution, and explicitly promised Dominion status.

The following proposals were put in:

- After the war a representative Indian body would be set up to frame a constitution for India.
- Viceroy's Executive Council would be expanded without delay.
- The minorities were assured that the government would not transfer power "to any system of government whose authority is directly denied by large and powerful elements in Indian national life."

Political reception

The Congress trusted the intentions of the British government. Consequently, **Linlithgow** recorded that the British government "could contemplate the transfer of their present responsibilities for the peace and tranquility of India to any system of Government whose authority is directly denied by large and power elements in the India's national life." Moreover, as the British Empire was pre-engaged in their war against the Germans totalitarianism, the period was unpropitious for addressing congressional issues in India. Therefore, Linlithgow stated that the constitutional future of India could be resolved in the future once the war was over by establishing a constituent assembly that was representative of the principal elements in India's national life. The Congress Working Committee meeting at Wardha on 21 August 1940 eventually rejected the offer, and asserted its demand for complete freedom from the imperial power. Gandhi viewed it as having widened the gulf between Nationalist India and the British ruler.

Having not taken the Pakistan idea seriously, Linlithgow supposed that what Jinnah actually wanted was a non-federal arrangement without Hindu domination. To allay Muslim fears of Hindu domination the 'August offer' had been accompanied with the promise that a future constitution would take the views of minorities into consideration. The Muslim League was not satisfied with Linlithgow's offer and rejected it in September.

Individual Satyagraha 1940-41

The Congress was in a confused state again after the August Offer. The radicals and leftists wanted to launch a mass Civil Disobedience Movement, but here Gandhi insisted on Individual Satyagraha. The Individual Satyagraha was not to seek independence but to affirm the right of speech. The other reason for this Satyagraha was that a mass movement might turn violent and he would not like to see the Great Britain embarrassed by such a situation. This view was conveyed to Lord Linlithgow by Gandhi when he met him on 27 September 1940. The non-violence was set as the centerpiece of Individual Satyagraha. This was done by carefully selecting the Satyagrahis. The first Satyagrahi selected was Acharya Vinoba Bhave (bhoodan movement), who was sent to Jail when he spoke against the war. He was followed nearly by 25,000 individual satyagrahis. The second Satyagrahi was Jawahar Lal Nehru. The third was Brahma Datt, one of the inmates of the Gandhi's Ashram. They all were sent to jail for violating the Defence of India Act, and many others were also later imprisoned. But since it was not a mass movement, it attracted little enthusiasm and in December 1940, Gandhi suspended it. The campaign started again in January 1941; this time thousands of people joined and around 20,000 people were arrested.

Significant modifications were subsequently made to the August Offer in 1942 in the form of the Cripps Proposals.

Chapter 34

Cripps Mission

The **Cripps Mission** was a failed attempt in late March 1942 by the Indian government to secure full Indian cooperation and support for their efforts in World War II. The mission was headed by a senior minister Sir Stafford Cripps. Cripps belonged to the left-wing Labour Party, traditionally sympathetic to Indian self-rule, but was also a member of the coalition War Cabinet led by the Prime Minister Winston Churchill, who had long been the leader of the movement to block Indian independence.

Cripps was sent to negotiate an agreement with the nationalist Congress leaders (including Gandhi), most of whose leaders represented the majority Hindu population and Muhammad Ali Jinnah and the Muslim League, who claimed to represent the minority Muslim population. Cripps worked to keep India loyal to the British war effort in exchange for a promise of elections and full self-government (Dominion status) once the war was over. Cripps discussed the proposals, which he had drafted himself with the Indian leaders, and published them. The congress rejected his proposals, and they were also unacceptable to Churchill; no middle way was found and the mission failed. Congress moved towards the Quit India movement whereby it refused to cooperate in the war effort; in response, the British imprisoned practically the entire Congress leadership for the duration of the war. Jinnah and the Muslims, to whom Cripps had offered the right to opt out of a future Union, supported the war effort and gained in status

in British eyes. Jinnah was “surprised” to see that the right to opt out of a Future Union was undertaken.

Background

The Government of India Act 1935 - building on the Round Table Conferences, Simon Commission and the previous Government of India Act of 1919 - required the establishment of an All-India Federation, which would allow Indians to take a larger share of governance at the highest level. However deep difference between the princely states and the Congress, as well as between the Muslim League and Congress, had delayed progress. Instead, only the provincial portion of the Act was carried out.

Following Britain's declaration of war on Germany in September 1939, the Viceroy, Lord Linlithgow, responded by declaring India a belligerent state on the side of Britain without consulting Indian political leaders or the elected provincial representatives, sharply underlining the failure of progress to self-rule. This caused considerable resentment in the Congress Party, producing demands for an immediate transfer of power. The resulting standoff led to the en masse resignation of Congress Provincial Governments, giving rise to the prospect of public revolt and political disorder in India. The All India Muslim League, the Hindu Mahasabha as well as regional parties, gave their support to Britain and the war effort in exchange for various concessions. Negotiations continued between the Viceroy, Congress and Muslim League but their failure led to a political stalemate.

The Japanese declaration of war on the Dutch and British empires as well as the United States in December 1941 altered the political situation. Confidence in Britain was particularly low after the fall of Singapore on 15 February 1942, Britain's greatest single defeat in the war, as well as the retreat from Rangoon, with large numbers of Indian Army troops captured. The threat of an invasion of India was real, and there was anxiety about 'fifth columnists,' particularly Congress radicals working with Japan.

The British war cabinet, a coalition government of national unity, was divided on the question of compromise with the Congress. The Labour Party ministers and moderate Conservatives were keen to advance Indian progress to self-government in a way that would not endanger the war effort. Churchill was deeply opposed to any dismantling of the British Empire, regarding its non-white subjects as incapable of self-rule; in fact the stridency of his views, and his opposition to Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin's agreement to work with parties such as the Indian National Congress towards self-rule had contributed to his isolation within the Conservative Party for a decade. He was supported in his views by the Conservative Secretary of State for India, Leo Amery.

However, the United States, as Britain's principal ally saw things in even more urgent terms. The chief American strategic objective was aiding Chiang Kai Shek's physically isolated Nationalist China against the expanding Japanese Empire. The Japanese conquest of China's coastal areas meant that the US needed India to serve as a major logistical hub to funnel aid to China, and needed Indian military manpower to secure routes for supplies through Burma. American as well as Chinese

leadership was convinced that this would not be possible without the full support of a mobilised Indian population, requiring a breakthrough with the Indian National Congress. In addition the Roosevelt administration which was busy formulating its vision for the post-war world order saw the decolonisation of Asia as a matter of US national interest for both ideological as well as commercial reasons.

Despite these conflicts of interests, Britain's reliance on the United States for Lend-Lease supplies for the war effort meant that President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's pressure had to at least appear to be taken seriously, especially in light of the military disasters in South East Asia. As a result, the British cabinet by 9 March 1942 agreed to despatch a mission to India to discuss its offer, and Cripps' plane landed in Delhi on 22 March. By that time the British were willing to grant Indian independence at the conclusion of the war. Incidentally the next day was the second anniversary of the Lahore Resolution of 1940, so Cripps saw Muslims marching in the streets with green flags. Cripps stated that while he had been closer to the Congress he was open to other perspectives. Jinnah waited to find out what the proposals were and stated that the League would reject them if they were not in the interests of Muslims.

Debate over cooperation or protest

The Congress was divided upon its response to India's entry into World War II. Angry over the decision made by the Viceroy, some Congress leaders favoured launching a revolt against the British despite the gravity of the war in Europe, which threatened Britain's own freedom. Others, such as Chakravarti Rajagopalachari, advocated offering an olive branch to the

British, supporting them in this crucial time in the hope that the gesture would be reciprocated with independence after the war. The major leader, Mahatma Gandhi, was opposed to Indian involvement in the war as he would not morally endorse a war and also suspected British intentions, believing that the British were not sincere about Indian aspirations for independence. But Rajagopalachari, backed by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Maulana Azad and Jawaharlal Nehru held talks with Cripps and offered full support in return for immediate self-government, and eventual independence.

The British anxiously tried to gain Muslim support during the war and for this purpose they included a clause that no province would be compelled to join the post war India. Jinnah, the leader of the Muslim League, supported the war effort and condemned the Congress policy. Insisting on a Pakistan, a separate Muslim state, he resisted Congress's calls for pan-Indian cooperation and immediate independence.

Cripps in India

Upon his arrival in India, Cripps held talks with Indian leaders. Cripps attempted to satisfy all communities through his proposals. He was a friend of Nehru and did his utmost to arrange an agreement. However, the distrust was too high and many people of influence did not want a settlement to be reached. There is some confusion over what Cripps had been authorized to offer India's nationalist politicians by Churchill and Leo Amery (His Majesty's Secretary of State for India), and he also faced hostility from the Viceroy, Lord Linlithgow. He began by offering India full dominion status at the end of the war, with the chance to secede from the Commonwealth and go

for total independence. Privately, Cripps also promised to get rid of Linlithgow and grant India Dominion Status with immediate effect, insisting only that the Indian Defence Ministry be reserved for the British.

However, in public, he failed to present any concrete proposals for greater self-government in the short term, other than a vague commitment to increase the number of Indian members of the Viceroy's Executive Council. Cripps spent much of his time in encouraging Congress leaders and Jinnah to come to a common, public arrangement in support of the war and government.

There was little trust between the British and Congress by this stage, and both sides felt that the other was concealing its true plans. The Congress stopped talks with Cripps and, guided by Gandhi, the national leadership demanded immediate self-government in return for war support. Gandhi said that Cripps' offer of Dominion Status after the war was a "post-dated cheque drawn on a failing bank".

Muslim League reception

Jinnah argued that the proposals were merely a draft declaration and did not meet the demands and preferred a scheme of United India. At a press conference on April he argued that there was no clear concession for Pakistan in the proposals and he further expressed concern that the Muslim right to self-determination had been ignored. He also expressed

criticism for the exclusion of the Muslim League from the later stage of negotiations.

Quit India Movement

When the British remained unresponsive, Gandhi and the Indian National Congress began planning a major public revolt, the Quit India movement, which demanded immediate British withdrawal from India. As the Imperial Japanese Army advanced closer to India with the conquest of Burma, Indians perceived an inability upon the part of the British to defend Indian soil. The invasion force contained elements of the Indian National Army, founded and led by Subhas Chandra Bose to end British control of India. It was composed of Indians, most being prisoners captured with the fall of Singapore in early 1942. The British response to the Quit India movement was to jail most of the Congress leadership.

Jinnah's Muslim League condemned the Quit India movement and participated in provincial governments as well as the legislative councils of the Raj. It encouraged Muslims to participate in the war. With this cooperation, the British were able to continue administering India for the duration of the war using officials and military personnel where Indian politicians could not be found. This would not prove to be feasible in the long term, however.

Causes of failure

There are three main reasons behind the causes of the failure of the Cripps' mission. They are listed as follows:

- All the things offered were to fulfilled after the war
- the behind-the-scenes efforts of the Viceroy and Secretary of State for India and nehru to sabotage the mission.

Gupta concludes that documents released in 1970 support the third interpretation. Messages between Viceroy Lord Linlithgow and Secretary of State L. S. S. Amery reveal that both opposed the Cripps Mission and that they deliberately undercut Cripps. While the British government used the Cripps Mission as evidence of its liberal colonial policy, personal and private correspondence reveals contempt for the mission and elation over its failure.

Long-term impact

The long-term significance of the Cripps Mission really became apparent only in the aftermath of the war, as troops were demobilised and sent back home. Even Churchill recognised that there could be no retraction of the offer of independence which Cripps had made, but by the end of the war, Churchill was out of power and could do nothing but watch as the new Labour government gave India independence. This confidence that the British would soon leave was reflected in the readiness with which Congress politicians stood in the elections of 1945–1946 and formed provincial governments.

Chapter 35

Quit India Movement

The **Quit India Movement** (translated into several Indian languages as the *Leave India Movement*), also known as the **August Movement**, was a movement launched at the Bombay session of the All India Congress Committee by Mahatma Gandhi on 8 August 1942, during World War II, demanding an end to British rule in India.

After the failure of the Cripps Mission to secure Indian support for the British war effort, Gandhi made a call to *Do or Die* in his Quit India speech delivered in Bombay on 8 August 1942 at the Gowalia Tank Maidan. The All India Congress Committee launched a mass protest demanding what Gandhi called "An Orderly British Withdrawal" from India. Even though it was at war, the British were prepared to act. Almost the entire leadership of the Indian National Congress was imprisoned without trial within hours of Gandhi's speech. Most spent the rest of the war in prison and out of contact with the masses. The British had the support of the Viceroy's Council (which had a majority of Indians), of the All India Muslim League, the Hindu Mahasabha, the princely states, the Indian Imperial Police, the British Indian Army, and the Indian Civil Service. Many Indian businessmen profiting from heavy wartime spending did not support the Quit India Movement. Many students paid more attention to Subhas Chandra Bose, who was in exile and supporting the Axis Powers. The only outside support came from the Americans, as President Franklin D. Roosevelt pressured Prime Minister Winston Churchill to give in to some of the Indian demands. The Quit India campaign

was effectively crushed. The British refused to grant immediate independence, saying it could happen only after the war had ended.

Sporadic small-scale violence took place around the country and the British arrested tens of thousands of leaders, keeping them imprisoned until 1945. In terms of immediate objectives, Quit India failed because of heavy-handed suppression, weak coordination and the lack of a clear-cut program of action. However, the British government realized that India was ungovernable in the long run and the question for the postwar era became how to exit gracefully and peacefully.

In 1992, the Reserve Bank of India issued a 1 rupee commemorative coin to mark the Golden Jubilee of the Quit India Movement.

World War II and Indian involvement

- In 1939, Indian nationalists were angry that British Governor-General of India, Lord Linlithgow, brought India into the war without consultation with them. The Muslim League supported the war, but Congress was divided.

At the outbreak of war, the Congress Party had passed a resolution during the Wardha meeting of the working-committee in September 1939, conditionally supporting the fight against fascism, but were rebuffed when they asked for independence in return.

If the war is to defend the status quo of imperialist possessions and colonies, of vested interest and privilege, then India can have nothing to do with it. If, however, the issue is democracy and world order based on democracy, then India is intensely interested in it... If Great Britain fights for the maintenance and expansion of democracy, then she must necessarily end imperialism in her possessions and establish full democracy in India, and the Indian people have the right to self-determination... A free democratic India will gladly associate herself with other free nations for mutual defense against aggression and for economic co-operation.

Gandhi had not supported this initiative, as he could not reconcile an endorsement for war (he was a committed believer in non-violent resistance, used in the Indian Independence Movement and proposed even against Adolf Hitler, Benito Mussolini, and Hideki Tojo). However, at the height of the Battle of Britain, Gandhi had stated his support for the fight against racism and of the British war effort, stating he did not seek to raise an independent India from the ashes of Britain. However, opinions remained divided. The long-term British policy of limiting investment in India and using the country as a market and source of revenue had left the Indian Army relatively weak and poorly armed and trained and forced the British to become net contributors to India's budget, while taxes were sharply increased and the general level of prices doubled: although many Indian businesses benefitted from increased war production, in general business "felt rebuffed by the government" and in particular the refusal of the British Raj to give Indians a greater role in organizing and mobilizing the economy for wartime production.

After the onset of the war, only a group led by Subhas Chandra Bose took any decisive action. Bose organized the *Indian Legion* in Germany, reorganized the Indian National Army with Japanese assistance, and soliciting help from the Axis Powers, conducted a guerrilla war against the British authorities.

Cripps' Mission

In March 1942, faced with an dissatisfied sub-continent only reluctantly participating in the war and deterioration in the war situation in Europe and with growing dissatisfaction among Indian troops and among the civilian population in the sub-continent, the British government sent a delegation to India under Stafford Cripps, the Leader of the House of Commons, in what came to be known as the Cripps mission. The purpose of the mission was to negotiate with the Indian National Congress a deal to obtain total co-operation during the war, in return for devolution and distribution of power from the crown and the Viceroy to an elected Indian legislature. The talks failed, as they did not address the key demand of a timetable of self-government and of the powers to be relinquished, essentially making an offer of limited dominion-status that was unacceptable to the Indian movement.f

Factors contributing to the movement's launch

In 1939, with the outbreak of war between Germany and Britain, India became a party to the war by being a constituent component of the British Empire. Following this declaration, the Congress Working Committee at its meeting on 10 October 1939, passed a resolution condemning the aggressive activities

of the Germans. At the same time, the resolution also stated that India could not associate herself with war unless it was consulted first. Responding to this declaration, the Viceroy issued a statement on 17 October wherein he claimed that Britain is waging a war driven with the intention of strengthening peace in the world. He also stated that after the war, the government would initiate modifications in the Act of 1935, in accordance with the desires of the Indians.

Gandhi's reaction to this statement was; "the old policy of divide and rule is to continue. Congress has asked for bread and it has got stone." According to the instructions issued by High Command, the Congress ministers were directed to resign immediately. Congress ministers from eight provinces resigned following the instructions. The resignation of the ministers was an occasion of great joy and rejoicing for the leader of the Muslim League, Mohammad Ali Jinnah. He called the day of 22 December 1939 'The Day of Deliverance'. Gandhi urged Jinnah against the celebration of this day, however, it was futile. At the Muslim League Lahore Session held in March 1940, Jinnah declared in his presidential address that the Muslims of the country wanted a separate electorate, Pakistan.

In the meanwhile, crucial political events took place in England. Chamberlain was succeeded by Churchill as prime minister and the Conservatives, who assumed power in England, did not have a sympathetic stance towards the claims made by the Congress. In order to pacify the Indians in the circumstance of the worsening war situation, the Conservatives were forced to concede some of the demands made by the Indians. On 8 August, the Viceroy issued a statement that has

come to be referred to as the "August Offer". However, Congress rejected the offer followed by the Muslim League.

In the context of widespread dissatisfaction that prevailed over the rejection of the demands made by the Congress, at the meeting of the Congress Working Committee in Wardha, Gandhi revealed his plan to launch individual civil disobedience. Once again, the weapon of satyagraha found popular acceptance as the best means to wage a crusade against the British. It was widely used as a mark of protest against the unwavering stance assumed by the British. Vinoba Bhave, a follower of Gandhi, was selected by him to initiate the movement. Anti-war speeches ricocheted in all corners of the country, with the satyagrahis earnestly appealing to the people of the nation not to support the government in its war endeavours. The consequence of this satyagrahi campaign was the arrest of almost fourteen thousand satyagrahis. On 3 December 1941, the Viceroy ordered the acquittal of all the satyagrahis. In Europe the war situation became more critical with the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and the Congress realized the necessity for appraising their program. Subsequently, the movement was withdrawn.

The Cripps' Mission of March (1942) and its failure also played an important role in Gandhi's call for The Quit India Movement. In order to end the deadlock on 22 March 1942, the British government sent Sir Stafford Cripps to talk terms with the Indian political parties and secure their support in Britain's war efforts. A draft declaration of the British Government was presented, which included terms like the establishment of Dominion, the establishment of a Constituent Assembly, and right of the provinces to make separate

constitutions. However, these were to be only after the cessation of the Second World War. According to Congress, this declaration offered India an only promise that was to be fulfilled in the future. Commenting on this Gandhi said, "It is a post-dated cheque on a crashing bank." Other factors that contributed were the threat of Japanese invasion of India and the realization of the national leaders of the incapacity of the British to defend India.

Resolution for immediate independence

The Congress Working Committee meeting at Wardha (14 July 1942) passed a resolution demanding complete independence from the British government. The draft proposed massive civil disobedience if the British did not accede to the demands.

However, it proved to be controversial within the party. A prominent Congress national leader, Chakravarti Rajgopalachari, quit the Congress over this decision, and so did some local and regional level organizers. Jawaharlal Nehru and Maulana Azad were apprehensive and critical of the call, but backed it and stuck with Gandhi's leadership until the end. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Rajendra Prasad and Anugrah Narayan Sinha openly and enthusiastically supported such a disobedience movement, as did many veteran Gandhians and socialists like Asoka Mehta and Jayaprakash Narayan.

Allama Mashriqi (head of the Khaksar Tehrik) was called by Jawaharlal Nehru to join the Quit India Movement. Mashriqi was apprehensive of its outcome and did not agree with the

Congress Working Committee's resolution. On 28 July 1942, Allama Mashriqi sent the following telegram to Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, Mahatma Gandhi, C. Rajagopalachari, Jawaharlal Nehru, Rajendra Prasad and Pattabhi Sitaramayya. He also sent a copy to Bulusu Sambamurti (former Speaker of the Madras Assembly). The telegram was published in the press, and stated:

I am in receipt of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's letter of 8 July. My honest opinion is that Civil Disobedience Movement is a little pre-mature. The Congress should first concede openheartedly and with handshake to Muslim League the theoretical Pakistan, and thereafter all parties unitedly make demand of Quit India. If the British refuse, start total disobedience.

The resolution said:

The committee, therefore, resolves to sanction for the vindication of India's inalienable right to freedom and independence, the starting of a mass struggle on non-violent lines on the widest possible scale, so that the country might utilise all the non-violent strength it has gathered during the last 22 years of peaceful struggle...they [the people] must remember that non-violence is the basis of the movement.

Opposition to the Quit India Movement

Several political groups active during the Indian Independence Movement were opposed to the Quit India Movement. These

included the Muslim League, the Hindu Mahasabha, the Communist party of India and princely states as below:

Hindu Mahasabbha

Hindu nationalist parties like the Hindu Mahasabha openly opposed the call for the Quit India Movement and boycotted it officially. Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, the president of the Hindu Mahasabha at that time, even went to the extent of writing a letter titled "**Stick to your Posts**", in which he instructed Hindu Sabhaites who happened to be "members of municipalities, local bodies, legislatures or those serving in the army... to stick to their posts" across the country, and not to join the Quit India Movement at any cost. But later after requests and persuasions and realizing the importance of the bigger role of Indian independence he chose to join the Indian independence movement.

Following the Hindu Mahasabha's official decision to boycott the Quit India movement, Syama Prasad Mukherjee, leader of the Hindu Mahasabha in Bengal, (which was a part of the ruling coalition in Bengal led by Krishak Praja Party of Fazlul Haq), wrote a letter to the British Government as to how they should respond, if the Congress gave a call to the British rulers to quit India. In this letter, dated 26 July 1942 he wrote:

"Let me now refer to the situation that may be created in the province as a result of any widespread movement launched by the Congress. Anybody, who during the war, plans to stir up mass feeling, resulting internal disturbances or insecurity, must be resisted by any Government that may function for the

time being". In this way he managed to gain insights of the British government and effectively give information of the independence leaders.

Mukherjee reiterated that the Fazlul Haq led Bengal Government, along with its alliance partner Hindu Mahasabha, would make every possible effort to defeat the Quit India Movement in the province of Bengal and made a concrete proposal as regards this:

"The question is how to combat this movement (Quit India) in Bengal? The administration of the province should be carried on in such a manner that in spite of the best efforts of the Congress, this movement will fail to take root in the province. It should be possible for us, especially responsible Ministers, to be able to tell the public that the freedom for which the Congress has started the movement, already belongs to the representatives of the people. In some spheres it might be limited during the emergency. Indian have to trust the British, not for the sake for Britain, not for any advantage that the British might gain, but for the maintenance of the defense and freedom of the province itself. You, as Governor, will function as the constitutional head of the province and will be guided entirely on the advice of your Minister.

Even the Indian historian R.C. Majumdar noted this fact and states:

"Shyam Prasad ended the letter with a discussion of the mass movement organised by the Congress. He expressed the apprehension that the movement would create internal disorder and will endanger internal security during the war by exciting popular feeling and he opined that any government in

power has to suppress it, but that according to him could not be done only by persecution.... In that letter he mentioned item wise the steps to be taken for dealing with the situation "

India

Princely States had less support for quit India movement

The movement had less support in the princely states, as the princes were strongly opposed and funded the opposition. The Indian nationalists had very little international support. They knew that the United States strongly supported Indian independence, in principle, and believed the U.S. was an ally. However, after Churchill threatened to resign if pushed too hard, the U.S. quietly supported him while bombarding Indians with propaganda designed to strengthen public support of the war effort. The poorly run American operation annoyed the Indians.

Local violence

According to John F. Riddick, from 9 August 1942 to 21 September 1942, the Quit India Movement:

- attacked 550 post offices, 250 railway stations, damaged many rail lines, destroyed 70 police stations, and burned or damaged 85 other government buildings. There were about 2,500 instances of telegraph wires being cut. The greatest level of violence occurred in Bihar. The Government

of India deployed 57 battalions of British troops to restore order.

At the national level the lack of leadership meant the ability to galvanise rebellion was limited. The movement had a local impact in some areas, especially at Satara in Maharashtra, Talcher in Odisha, and Midnapore. In Tamluk and Contai subdivisions of Midnapore, the local populace were successful in establishing parallel governments, which continued to function, until Gandhi personally requested the leaders to disband in 1944. A minor uprising took place in Ballia, now the easternmost district of Uttar Pradesh. People overthrew the district administration, broke open the jail, released the arrested Congress leaders and established their own independent rule. It took weeks before the British could reestablish their writ in the district. Of special importance in Saurashtra (in western Gujarat) was the role of the region's 'baharvatiya' tradition (i.e. going outside the law) which abetted the sabotage activities of the movement there. In rural west Bengal, the Quit India Movement was fueled by peasants' resentment against the new war taxes and the forced rice exports. There was open resistance to the point of rebellion in 1942 until the great famine of 1943 suspended the movement.

Suppression of the movement

One of the important achievements of the movement was keeping the Congress party united through all the trials and tribulations that followed. The British, already alarmed by the advance of the Japanese army to the India-Burma border, responded by imprisoning Gandhi. All the members of the Party's Working Committee (national leadership) were

imprisoned as well. Due to the arrest of major leaders, a young and until then relatively unknown Aruna Asaf Ali presided over the AICC session on 9 August and hoisted the flag; later the Congress party was banned. These actions only created sympathy for the cause among the population. Despite lack of direct leadership, large protests and demonstrations were held all over the country. Workers remained absent in large groups and strikes were called. Not all demonstrations were peaceful, at some places bombs exploded, government buildings were set on fire, electricity was cut and transport and communication lines were severed.

The British swiftly responded with mass detentions. Over 100,000 arrests were made, mass fines were levied and demonstrators were subjected to public flogging. Hundreds of civilians were killed in violence many shot by the police army. Many national leaders went underground and continued their struggle by broadcasting messages over clandestine radio stations, distributing pamphlets and establishing parallel governments. The British sense of crisis was strong enough that a battleship was specifically set aside to take Gandhi and the Congress leaders out of India, possibly to South Africa or Yemen but ultimately did not take that step out of fear of intensifying the revolt.

The Congress leadership was cut off from the rest of the world for over three years. Gandhi's wife Kasturbai Gandhi and his personal secretary Mahadev Desai died in months and Gandhi's health was failing, despite this Gandhi went on a 21-day fast and maintained his resolve to continuous resistance. Although the British released Gandhi on account of his health in 1944, he kept up the resistance, demanding the release of the

Congress leadership. By early 1944, India was mostly peaceful again, while the Congress leadership was still incarcerated. A sense that the movement had failed depressed many nationalists, while Jinnah and the Muslim League, as well as Congress opponents like the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and the Hindu Mahasabha sought to gain political mileage, criticizing Gandhi and the Congress Party.

Chapter 36

Indian National Army

- The **Indian National Army** was an armed force formed by Indian collaborationists and Imperial Japan on 1 September 1942 in Southeast Asia during World War II. Its aim was to secure Indian independence from British rule. It fought alongside Japanese soldiers in the latter's campaign in the Southeast Asian theatre of WWII. The army was first formed in 1942 under Rash Behari Bose, by Indian PoWs of the British-Indian Army captured by Japan in the Malayan campaign and at Singapore. This first INA collapsed and was disbanded in December that year after differences between the INA leadership and the Japanese military over its role in Japan's war in Asia. Rash Behari Bose handed over INA to Subhas Chandra Bose. It was revived under the leadership of Subhas Chandra Bose after his arrival in Southeast Asia in 1943. The army was declared to be the army of Bose's *Arzi Hukumat-e-Azad Hind* (the Provisional Government of Free India). Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose named the brigades/regiments of INA after Gandhi, Nehru, Maulana Azad, and himself. There was also an all-women regiment named after Rani of Jhanshi, Lakshmibai. Under Bose's leadership, the INA drew ex-prisoners and thousands of civilian volunteers from the Indian expatriate population in Malaya (present-day Malaysia) and Burma. This second INA fought along with the Imperial Japanese Army against the British and Commonwealth forces

in the campaigns in Burma: at Imphal and Kohima, and later against the Allied retaking of Burma.

After the INA's initial formation in 1942, there was concern in the British-Indian Army that further Indian troops would defect. This led to a reporting ban and a propaganda campaign called "Jiffs" to preserve the loyalty of the Sepoy. Historians like Peter W. Fay who have written about the army, however, consider the INA not to have had significant influence on the war. The end of the war saw many of the troops repatriated to India where some faced trials for treason. These trials became a galvanising point in the Indian Independence movement. The Bombay mutiny in the Royal Indian Navy and other mutinies in 1946 are thought to have been caused by the nationalist feelings that were caused by the INA trials. Historians like Sumit Sarkar, Peter Cohen, Fay and others suggest that these events played a crucial role in hastening the end of British rule. A number of people associated with the INA during the war later went on to hold important roles in public life in India as well as in other countries in Southeast Asia, most notably Lakshmi Sehgal in India, and John Thivy and Janaki Athinappan in Malaya.

It was associated with Imperial Japan and the other Axis powers, and accusations were levelled against INA troops of being involved and complicit in Japanese war crimes. The INA's members were viewed as Axis collaborators by British soldiers and Indian PoWs who did not join the army, but after the war they were seen as patriots by many Indians. Although they were widely commemorated by the Indian National Congress in the immediate aftermath of Indian independence, members of the INA were denied freedom fighter status by the Government

of India, unlike those in the Gandhian movement. Nevertheless, the army remains a popular and passionate topic in Indian culture and politics.

First INA

Before the start of World War II, Japan and South-East Asia were major refuges for exiled Indian nationalists. Meanwhile, Japan had sent intelligence missions, notably under Maj. Iwaichi Fujiwara, into South Asia to gather support from the Malayan sultans, overseas Chinese, the Burmese resistance and the Indian independence movement. The Minami Kikan successfully recruited Burmese nationalists, while the F Kikan was successful in establishing contacts with Indian nationalists in exile in Thailand and Malaya. Fujiwara, later self-described as "Lawrence of the Indian National Army" (after Lawrence of Arabia) is said to have been a man committed to the values which his office was supposed to convey to the expatriate nationalist leaders, and found acceptance among them. His initial contact was with Giani Pritam Singh and the Thai-Bharat Cultural Lodge. At the outbreak of World War II in South-East Asia, 70,000 Indian troops (mostly Sikhs) were stationed in Malaya. In Japan's spectacular Malayan Campaign many Indian prisoners-of-war were captured, including nearly 45,000 after the fall of Singapore alone. The conditions of service within the British-Indian Army and the social conditions in Malaya had led to dissension among these troops. From these prisoners, the First Indian National Army was formed under Mohan Singh. Singh was an officer in the British-Indian Army who was captured early in the Malayan campaign. His nationalist sympathies found an ally in Fujiwara

and he received considerable Japanese aid and support. Ethnic Indians in Southeast Asia also supported the cause of Indian independence and had formed local leagues in Malaya before the war. These came together with encouragement from Japan after the occupation, forming the Indian Independence League (IIL).

Although there were a number of prominent local Indians working in the IIL, the overall leadership came to rest with Rash Behari Bose, an Indian revolutionary who had lived in self-exile in Japan since World War I. The League and INA leadership decided that the INA was to be subordinate to the IIL. A working council – composed of prominent members of the League and the INA leaders – was to decide on decisions to send the INA to war. The Indian leaders feared that they would appear to be Japanese puppets, so a decision was taken that the INA would go to battle only when the Indian National Congress called it to do so. Assurances of non-interference—later termed the Bidadary resolutions—were demanded of Japan; these would have amounted to a treaty with an independent government. In this time, F. Kikan had been replaced by the Iwakuro Kikan (or I Kikan) headed by Hideo Iwakuro. Iwakuro's working relationship with the league was more tenuous. Japan did not immediately agree to the demands arising from the Bidadary resolutions. Differences also existed between Rash Behari and the League, not least because Rash Behari had lived in Japan for the considerable time and had a Japanese wife and a son in the Imperial Japanese Army. On the other hand, Mohan Singh expected military strategy and decisions to be autonomous decisions for the INA, independent of the league.

In November and December 1942, concern about Japan's intentions towards the INA led to disagreement between the INA and the League on the one hand and the Japanese on the other. The INA leadership resigned along with that of the League (except Rash Behari). The unit was dissolved by Mohan Singh in December 1942, and he ordered the troops of the INA to return to PoW camps. Mohan Singh was expected to be shot.

Between December 1942 and February 1943, Rash Behari struggled to hold the INA together. On 15 February 1943, the army itself was put under the command of Lt. Col. M.Z. Kiani. A policy forming body was formed with Lt. Col J.R. Bhonsle (Director of the Military Bureau) in charge and clearly placed under the authority of the IIL. Under Bhonsle served Lt. Col. Shah Nawaz Khan as Chief of General Staff, Major P.K. Sahgal as Military Secretary, Major Habib ur Rahman as commandant of the Officers' Training School and Lt. Col. A.C. Chatterji (later Major A.D. Jahangir) as head of enlightenment and culture.

Second INA

Subhas Chandra Bose

Subhas Chandra Bose was the ideal person to lead a rebel army into India came from the very beginning of F Kikan's work with captured Indian soldiers. Mohan Singh himself, soon after his first meeting with Fujiwara, had suggested that Bose was the right leader of a nationalist Indian army. A number of the officers and troops – including some who now returned to prisoner-of-war camps and some who had not volunteered in

the first place – made it known that they would be willing to join the INA only if it was led by Subhas Bose. Bose was a nationalist. He had joined the Gandhian movement after resigning from a prestigious post in the Indian Civil Service in 1922, quickly rising in the Congress and being incarcerated repeatedly by the Raj. By late 1920s he and Nehru were considered the future leaders of the Congress. In the late 1920s, he was amongst the first Congress leaders to call for complete independence from Britain (*Purna Swaraj*), rather than the previous Congress objective of India becoming a British dominion. In Bengal, he was repeatedly accused by Raj officials of working with the revolutionary movement. Under his leadership, the Congress youth group in Bengal was organised into a quasi-military organisation called the Bengal Volunteers. Bose deplored Gandhi's pacifism; Gandhi disagreed with Bose's confrontations with the Raj. The Congress's working committee, including Nehru, was predominantly loyal to Gandhi. While openly disagreeing with Gandhi, Bose won the presidency of Indian National Congress twice in the 1930s. His second victory came despite opposition from Gandhi. He defeated Gandhi's favoured candidate, Bhogaraju Pattabhi Sitaramayya, in the popular vote, but the entire working committee resigned and refused to work with Bose. Bose resigned from the Congress presidency and founded his own faction, the All India Forward Bloc.

At the start of World War II, Bose was placed under house arrest by the Raj. He escaped in disguise and made his way through Afghanistan and Central -Asia. He came first to the Soviet Union and then to Germany, reaching Berlin on 2 April 1941. There he -sought to raise an army of Indian soldiers from prisoners of war captured by Germany, forming the Free

India Legion and the *Azad Hind* Radio. The Japanese ambassador, Oshima Hiroshi, kept Tokyo informed of these developments. From the very start of the war, the Japanese intelligence services noted from speaking to captured Indian soldiers that Bose was held in extremely high regard as a nationalist and was considered by Indian soldiers to be the right person to be leading a rebel army.

In a series of meetings between the INA leaders and the Japanese in 1943, it was decided to cede the leadership of the IIL and the INA to Bose. In January 1943, the Japanese invited Bose to lead the Indian nationalist movement in East Asia. He accepted and left Germany on 8 February. After a three-month journey by submarine and a short stop in Singapore, he reached Tokyo on 11 May 1943. In Tokyo, he met Hideki Tojo, the Japanese prime minister, and the Japanese High Command. He then arrived in Singapore in July 1943, where he made a number of radio broadcasts to Indians in Southeast Asia exhorting them to join in the fight for India's independence.

Revival

On 4 July 1943 two days after reaching Singapore, Bose assumed the leadership of the IIL and the Indian National Army in a ceremony at Cathay Building. Bose's influence was notable. His appeal re-invigorated the INA, which had previously consisted mainly of prisoners of war: it also attracted Indian expatriates in South Asia. He famously proclaimed that *Give me blood! I will give you freedom*

"Local civilians joined the INA, doubling its strength. They included barristers, traders and plantation workers, as well as Khudabadi Sindhi Swarankars who were working as shop keepers; many had no military experience." Carl Vadivella Belle estimates under Bose's dynamic appeal, membership of the IIL peaked at 350,000, while almost 100,000 local Indians in South-east Asia volunteered to join the INA, with the army ultimately reaching a force of 50,000. Hugh Toye— a British Intelligence officer and author of a 1959 history of the army called *The Springing Tiger*— and American historian Peter Fay (author of a 1993 history called *The Forgotten Army*) have reached similar estimates of troop strength. The first INA is considered to have comprised about 40,000 troops, of whom about 4,000 withdrew when it was disbanded in December 1942. The Second INA started with 12,000 troops. Further recruitment of former Indian Army personnel added about 8,000–10,000. About 18,000 Indian civilians also enlisted during this time. Belle estimates almost 20,000 were local Malayan Indians, while another 20,000 were ex-British-Indian Army members who volunteered for the INA.

The exact organisation of the INA and its precise troop strength is not known, since its records were destroyed by the withdrawing *Azad Hind* Government before Rangoon was recaptured by Commonwealth forces in 1945. The order of battle described by Fay (constructed from discussions with INA-veterans), nonetheless, is similar to that described of the first INA by Toye in *The Springing Tiger*. The 1st Division, under M.Z. Kiani, drew many ex-Indian army prisoners of war who had joined Mohan Singh's first INA. It also drew prisoners of war who had not joined in 1942. It consisted of the 2nd Guerrilla Regiment (the Gandhi Brigade) consisting of two

battalions under Col. Inayat Kiani; the 3rd Guerrilla Regiment (the Azad Brigade) with three battalions under Col. Gulzara Singh; and the 4th Guerrilla Regiment (or Nehru Brigade) commanded by the end of the war by Lt. Col Gurubaksh Singh Dhillon. The 1st Guerrilla Regiment – the Subhas Brigade – under Col. Shah Nawaz Khan was an independent unit, consisting of three infantry battalions. A special operations group was also to be set up called the *Bahadur group* (Valiant), to operate behind enemy lines.

A training school for INA officers, led by Habib ur Rahman, and the *Azad School* for the civilian volunteers were set up to provide training to the recruits. A youth wing of the INA, composed of 45 young Indians personally chosen by Bose and known as the Tokyo Boys, was also sent to Japan's Imperial Military Academy, where its members trained as fighter pilots. A separate all-female unit was also created under Lakshmi Sahgal. This unit was intended to have combat-commitments. Named *Jhansi ki Rani* ("Jhansi Queens") Regiment (after the legendary rebel Queen Lakshmibai of the 1857 rebellion), it drew female civilian volunteers from Malaya and Burma. The 1st Division was lightly armed. Each battalion was composed of five companies of infantry. The individual companies were armed with six antitank rifles, six Bren guns and six Vickers machine guns. Some NCOs carried hand grenades, while senior officers of the *Bahadur* groups attached to each unit issued hand grenades (of captured British stock) to men going forward on duty.

The 2nd Division was organised under Colonel Abdul Aziz Tajik. It was formed largely after the Imphal offensive had started and drew large remnants of what remained of the Hindustan

Field Force of the First INA. The 2nd Division consisted of the 1st Infantry Regiment, which later merged with the 5th Guerrilla Regiment to form the INA's 2nd Infantry Regiment under Col Prem Sahgal. The 1st Infantry Regiment drew many civilian volunteers from Burma and Malaya and was equipped with the largest share of the heavy armament that the INA possessed. An additional 3rd Division of the INA was composed chiefly of local volunteers in Malaya and Singapore. This unit disbanded before Japan surrendered. A motor transport division was also created, but it was severely limited by lack of resources. In 1945, at the end of the INA, it consisted of about 40,000 soldiers. Unlike Mohan Singh, whose assumption of the rank of general had generated opposition, Bose refused to take a rank. Both the soldiers of the INA and civilians addressed Bose as *Netaji* ("Dear leader"), a term first used in Berlin by members of the Free India Legion. In October 1943, Bose proclaimed the formation of the *Arzi Hukumat-e-Azad Hind*, or the Provisional Government of Free India (also known as *Azad Hind* or Free India). The INA was declared to be the army of *Azad Hind*.

Operations

On 23 October 1943, *Azad Hind* declared war against Britain and the United States. Its first formal commitment came with the opening of the Japanese offensive towards Manipur, code-named *U-Go*. In the initial plans for invasion of India, Field Marshall Terauschi had been reluctant to confer any responsibilities to the INA beyond espionage and propaganda. Bose rejected this as the role of Fifth-columnists, and insisted that INA should contribute substantially in troops to form a

distinct identity of an Indian-liberation army. He secured from Japanese army Chief of Staff, General Sugiyama, the agreement that INA would rank as an allied army in the offensive.

The advanced headquarters of *Azad Hind* was moved to Rangoon in anticipation of success. The INA's own strategy was to avoid set-piece battles, for which it lacked armament as well as manpower. Initially it sought to obtain arms and increase its ranks by inducing British-Indian soldiers to defect. The latter were expected to defect in large numbers. Col Prem Sahgal, once military secretary to Subhas Bose and later tried in the first Red Fort trials, explained the INA strategy to Peter Fay – although the war itself hung in balance and nobody was sure if the Japanese would win, initiating a popular revolution with grass-roots support within India would ensure that even if Japan ultimately lost the war, Britain would not be in a position to re-assert its colonial authority. It was planned that, once Japanese forces had broken through British defences at Imphal, the INA would cross the hills of North-East India into the Gangetic plain, where it would work as a guerrilla army. This army was expected to live off the land, with captured British supplies, support, and personnel from the local population.

1944

The plans chosen by Bose and Masakazu Kawabe, chief of the Burma area army, envisaged the INA being assigned an independent sector in the *U-Go* offensive. No INA units were to operate at less than battalion strength. For operational purposes, the Subhas Brigade was placed under the command

of the Japanese General Headquarters in Burma. Advance parties of the *Bahadur* Group also went forward with advanced Japanese units. As the offensive opened, the INA's 1st Division, consisting of four guerrilla regiments, was divided between *U Go* and the diversionary *Ha-Go* offensive in Arakan. One battalion reached as far as Mowdok in Chittagong after breaking through the British West African Division. A Bahadur Group unit, led by Col. Shaukat Malik, took the border enclave of Moirang in early April. The main body of the 1st Division was however committed to the *U-Go*, directed towards Manipur. Led by Shah Nawaz Khan, it successfully protected the Japanese flanks against Chin and Kashin guerrillas as Renya Mutaguchi's three divisions crossed the Chindwin river and the Naga Hills, and participated in the main offensive through Tamu in the direction of Imphal and Kohima. The 2nd Division, under M.Z. Kiani, was placed to the right flank of the 33rd Division attacking Kohima. However, by the time Khan's forces left Tamu, the offensive had been held, and Khan's troops were redirected to Kohima. After reaching Ukhrul, near Kohima, they found Japanese forces had begun their withdrawal from the area. The INA's forces suffered the same fate as Mutaguchi's army when the siege of Imphal was broken. With little or nothing in the way of supplies, and with additional difficulties caused by the monsoon, Allied air dominance, and Burmese irregular forces, the 1st and 2nd divisions began withdrawing alongside the 15th Army and Burma Area Army. During the withdrawal through Manipur, a weakened Gandhi regiment held its position against the advancing Maratha Light Infantry on the Burma–India road while the general withdrawal was prepared. The 2nd and 3rd INA regiments protected the flanks of the Yamamoto force successfully at the most critical time during this withdrawal, but wounded and diseased men

succumbed to starvation along the route. Commonwealth troops following the Japanese forces found INA dead along with Japanese troops who had died of starvation. The INA lost a substantial number of men and amount of materiel in this retreat. A number of units were disbanded or used to feed into new divisions.

1945

As the Allied Burma campaign began the following year, the INA remained committed to the defence of Burma and was a part of the Japanese defensive deployments. The Second Division was tasked with the defence of Irrawaddy and the adjoining areas around Nangyu, and offered opposition to Messervy's 7th Indian Division when it attempted to cross the river at Pagan and Nyangyu during Irrawaddy operations. Later, during the Battles of Meiktila and Mandalay, the forces under Prem Sahgal were tasked with defending the area around Mount Popa from the British 17th Division, which would have exposed the flank of Heitarō Kimura's forces attempting to retake Meiktila and Nyangyu. The division was obliterated, at times fighting tanks with hand grenades and bottles of petrol. Many INA soldiers realised that they were in a hopeless position. Many surrendered to pursuing Commonwealth forces. Isolated, losing men to exhaustion and to desertion, low on ammunition and food, and pursued by Commonwealth forces, the surviving units of the second division began an attempt to withdraw towards Rangoon. They broke through encircling Commonwealth lines a number of times before finally surrendering at various places in early April 1945. As the Japanese situation became precarious, the *Azad Hind* government withdrew from Rangoon to Singapore, along with

the remnants of the 1st Division and the Rani of Jhansi Regiment. Nearly 6,000 troops of the surviving units of the INA remained in Rangoon under A. D. Loganathan. They surrendered as Rangoon fell and helped keep order until the Allied forces entered the city.

As the Japanese withdrawal from Burma progressed, other remnants of the INA began a long march overland and on foot towards Bangkok. In what has been called an "epic retreat to safety", Bose walked with his troops, refusing to leave them despite Japanese soldiers finding him transport. The withdrawing forces regularly suffered casualties from Allied planes strafing them and in clashes with Aung San's Burmese resistance, as well as from Chinese guerrillas who harassed the Japanese troops. Bose returned to Singapore in August to what remained of the INA and *Azad Hind*. He wished to stay with his government in Singapore to surrender to the British, reasoning that a trial in India and possible execution would ignite the country, serving the independence movement. He was convinced not to do so by the *Azad Hind* cabinet. At the time of Japan's surrender in September 1945, Bose left for Dalian near the Soviet border in Japanese-occupied China to attempt to contact the advancing Soviet troops, and was reported to have died in an air crash near Taiwan. The remaining INA troops surrendered under the command of M.Z. Kiani to British-Indian forces at Singapore.

End of the INA

Repatriation to India

Even before the end of the war in South Asia, the INA prisoners who were falling into Allied hands were being evaluated by forwarding intelligence units for potential trials. Almost fifteen hundred had been captured in the battles of Imphal and Kohima and the subsequent withdrawal, while larger numbers surrendered or were captured during the 14th Army's Burma Campaign. A total of 16,000 of the INA's 43,000 recruits were captured, of whom around 11,000 were interrogated by the Combined Services Directorate of Investigation Corps (CSDIC). The number of prisoners necessitated this selective policy which anticipated trials of those with the strongest commitment to Bose's ideologies. Those with lesser commitment or other extenuating circumstances would be dealt with more leniently, with the punishment proportional to their commitment or war crimes. For this purpose, the field intelligence units designated the captured troops as *Blacks* with the strongest commitment to *Azad Hind*; *Greys* with varying commitment but also with enticing circumstances that led them to join the INA; and *Whites*, those who were pressured into joining the INA under the circumstances but with no commitment to *Azad Hind*, INA, or Bose.

By July 1945, a large number had been shipped back to India. At the time of the fall of Japan, the remaining captured troops were transported to India via Rangoon. Large numbers of local Malay and Burmese volunteers, including the recruits to the Rani of Jhansi regiment, returned to civilian life and were not

identified. Those repatriated passed through transit camps in Chittagong and Calcutta to be held at detention camps all over India including Jhingergacha and Nilganj near Calcutta, Kirkee outside Pune, Attock, Multan and at Bahadurgarh near Delhi. Bahadurgarh also held prisoners of the Free India Legion. By November, around 12,000 INA prisoners were held in these camps; they were released according to the "colours". By December, around 600 *Whites* were released per week. The process to select those to face trial started.

The British-Indian Army intended to implement appropriate internal disciplinary action against its soldiers who had joined the INA, whilst putting to trial a selected group in order to preserve discipline in the Indian Army and to award punishment for criminal acts where these had occurred. As news of the army spread within India, it began to draw widespread sympathy support and admiration from Indians. Newspaper reports around November 1945 reported executions of INA troops, which worsened the already volatile situation. Increasingly violent confrontations broke out between the police and protesters at the mass rallies being held all over India, culminating in public riotings in support of the INA men. This public outcry defied traditional communal barriers of the subcontinent, representing a departure from the divisions between Hindus and Muslims seen elsewhere in the independence movement and campaign for Pakistan.

Red Fort trials

Between November 1945 and May 1946, approximately ten courts-martial were held in public at the Red Fort in Delhi. Claude Auchinleck, the Commander-in-Chief of the British-

Indian army, hoped that by holding public trials in the Red Fort, public opinion would turn against the INA if the media reported stories of torture and collaborationism, helping him settle a political as well as military question. Those to stand trials were accused variously of murder, torture and "waging war against the King-Emperor". However, the first and most celebrated joint courts-martial – those of Prem Sahgal, Gurubaksh Singh Dhillon and Shah Nawaz Khan – were not the story of torture and murder Auchinleck had hoped to tell the Indian press and people. The accusations against them included the alleged murder of their comrades-in-arms in the INA whilst in Burma. Peter Fay highlights in his book *The Forgotten Army* that the murders alleged were, in fact, courts-martial of captured deserters the defendants had presided over. If it was accepted that the three were part of a genuine combatant army (as the legal defence team later argued), they had followed due process of written INA law and of the normal process of conduct of war in execution of the sentences. Indians rapidly came to view the soldiers who enlisted as patriots and not enemy-collaborators. Philip Mason, then-Secretary of the War Department, later wrote that "in a matter of weeks ... in a wave of nationalist emotion, the INA were acclaimed heroes who fought for the freedom of India." The three accused were from the three major religions of India: Hinduism, Islam, and Sikhism. Indians felt the INA represented a true, secular, national army when judged against the British-Indian Army, where caste and religious differences were preserved amongst ranks. The opening of the first trial saw violence and a series of riots in a scale later described as "sensational". The Indian National Congress and the Muslim League both made the release of the INA prisoners an important political issue during the campaign for independence

in 1945–1946. Lahore in Diwali 1946 remained dark as the traditional earthen lamps lit on Diwali were not lit by families in support of prisoners. In addition to civilian campaigns of non-cooperation and non-violent protest, protest spread to include mutinies within the British-Indian Army and sympathy within the British-Indian forces. Support for the INA crossed communal barriers to the extent that it was the last major campaign in which the Congress and the Muslim League aligned together; the Congress tricolour and the green flag of the League were flown together at protests.

The Congress quickly came forward to defend soldiers of the INA who were to be court-martialled. The INA Defence Committee was formed by the Indian Congress and included prominent Indian legal figures, among whom were Jawaharlal Nehru, Bhulabhai Desai, Kailashnath Katju and Asaf Ali. The trials covered arguments based on military law, constitutional law, international law, and politics. Much of the initial defence was based on the argument that they should be treated as prisoners of war as they were not paid mercenaries but *bona fide* soldiers of a legal government – Bose's *Arzi Hukumat-e-Azad Hind*. Nehru argued that "however misinformed or otherwise they had been in their notion of patriotic duty towards their country", they recognized the free Indian state as their sovereign and not the British sovereign. Peter Fay points out that at least one INA prisoner – Burhan-ud-Din a brother of the ruler of Chitral – may have deserved to be accused of torture, but his trial had been deferred on administrative grounds. Those charged after the first celebrated courts-martial only faced trial for torture and murder or abetment of murder. Charges of treason were dropped for fear of inflaming public opinion.

In spite of aggressive and widespread opposition to the continuation of the court-martial, it was completed. All three defendants were found guilty in many of the charges and sentenced to deportation for life. The sentence, however, was never carried out. Immense public pressure, demonstrations, and riots forced Claude Auchinleck to release all three defendants. Within three months, 11,000 soldiers of the INA were released after cashiering and forfeiture of pay and allowance. On the recommendation of Lord Mountbatten and with the agreement of Jawaharlal Nehru, former soldiers of the INA were not allowed to join the new Indian Armed Forces as a condition for independence.

Post 1947

Within India, the INA continues to be an emotive and celebrated subject of discussion. It continued to have a stronghold over the public psyche and the sentiments of the armed forces until as late as 1947. It has been suggested that Shah Nawaz Khan was tasked with organising INA troops to train Congress volunteers at Jawaharlal Nehru's request in late 1946 and early 1947. After 1947, several members of the INA who were closely associated with Subhas Bose and with the INA trials were prominent in public life. A number of them held important positions in independent India, serving as ambassadors immediately after independence: Abid Hasan in Egypt and Denmark, A. C. N. Nambiar in the Federal Republic of Germany, Mehboob Hasan in Canada, Cyril John Stracey in the Netherlands, and N. Raghavan in Switzerland. Mohan Singh was elected to the Rajya Sabha, the upper house of the Indian Parliament. He worked for the recognition of the

members of Indian National Army as "freedom fighters" in the cause of the nation's independence in and out of Parliament. Shah Nawaz Khan served as Minister of State for Rail in the first Indian cabinet. Lakshmi Sahgal, Minister for Women's Affairs in the *Azad Hind* government, was a well known and widely respected public figure in India. In 1971, she joined the Communist Party of India (Marxist) and was later elected the leader of the All India Democratic Women's Association. Joyce Lebra, an American historian, wrote that the rejuvenation of the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, then a fledgling Tamil political party in southern India, would not have been possible without participation of INA members.

Some accounts suggest that the INA veterans were involved in training civilian resistance forces against the Nizam's Razakars prior to the execution of Operation Polo and annexation of Hyderabad. There are also suggestions that some INA veterans led Pakistani irregulars during the First Kashmir war. Mohammed Zaman Kiani served as Pakistan's political agent to Gilgit in the late 1950s. Of the very few ex-INA members who joined the Indian Armed Forces after 1947 R. S. Benegal, a member of the Tokyo Boys, joined the Indian Air Force in 1952 and later rose to be an air commodore. Benegal saw action in both 1965 and Indo-Pakistani War of 1971, earning a Maha Vir Chakra, India's second-highest award for valour.

Among other prominent members of the INA, Ram Singh Thakur, composer of a number of songs including the INA's regimental march *Kadam Kadam Badaye Ja*, has been credited by some for the modern tune of the Indian national anthem.

Gurubaksh Singh Dhillon and Lakshmi Sahgal were later awarded the Indian civilian honours of Padma Bhushan and Padma Vibhushan respectively by the Indian Government in the 1990s. Lakshmi Sahgal was nominated for the Indian presidential election by communist parties in 2002. She was the sole opponent of A. P. J. Abdul Kalam, who emerged victorious. Subhas Bose himself was posthumously awarded Bharat Ratna in 1992, but this was later withdrawn over the controversy over the circumstances of his death.

Former INA recruits in diasporic Singapore, however, faced a different situation. In Singapore, Indians – particularly those who were associated with the INA – were treated with disdain as they were "stigmatized as fascists and Japanese collaborators". Some within this diaspora later emerged as notable political and social leaders. The consolidation of trade unions in the form of National Union of Plantation Workers was led by ex-INA leaders. In Malaya, notable members of the INA were involved in founding the Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC) in 1946; John Thivy was the founding president. Janaky Athi Nahappan, second-in-command of the Rani of Jhansi Regiment, was also a founding member of the MIC and later became a noted welfare activist and a distinguished senator in the Dewan Negara of the Malaysian Parliament. Rasammah Bhupalan, also of the Rani of Jhansi Regiment, later became a well-known welfare-activist and a widely respected champion for women's rights in Malaysia.

Relations

Japanese Army

The army's relationship with the Japanese was an uncomfortable one. Officers in the INA distrusted the Japanese. Leaders of the first INA sought formal assurances from Japan before committing to war. When these did not arrive, Mohan Singh resigned after ordering his army to disband; he expected to be sentenced to death. After Bose established *Azad Hind*, he tried to establish his political independence from the regime that supported him. (He had led protests against the Japanese expansion into China, and supported Chiang Kai-shek during the 1930s) *Azad Hind* depended on Japan for arms and material but sought to be as financially independent as possible, levying taxes and raising donations from Indians in Southeast Asia". On the Japanese side, members of the high command had been personally impressed by Bose and were willing to grant him some latitude; more importantly, the Japanese were interested in maintaining the support of a man who had been able to mobilise large numbers of Indian expatriates – including, most importantly, 40,000 of the 45,000 Indians captured by the Japanese at Singapore. However, Faye notes that interactions between soldiers in the field was different. Attempts to use Shah Nawaz's troops in road building and as porters angered the troops, forcing Bose to intervene with Mutaguchi. After the withdrawal from Imphal, the relations between both junior non-commissioned officers and between senior officers had deteriorated. INA officers accused the Japanese Army high command of trying to deceive INA troops into fighting for

Japan. Conversely, Japanese soldiers often expressed disdain for INA soldiers for having changed their oath of loyalty. This mutual dislike was especially strong after the withdrawal from Imphal began; Japanese soldiers, suspicious that INA defectors had been responsible for their defeat, addressed INA soldiers as "shameless one" instead of "comrade" as previously had been the case. *Azad Hind* officials in Burma reported difficulties with the Japanese military administration in arranging supply for troops and transport for wounded men as the armies withdrew. Toye notes that local IIL members and *Azad Hind Dal* (local *Azad Hind* administrative teams) organised relief supplies from Indians in Burma at this time. As the situation in Burma became hopeless for the Japanese, Bose refused requests to use INA troops against Aung San's Burma National Army, which had turned against Japan and was now allied with Commonwealth forces.

British-Indian Army

The first interaction of the INA with the British-Indian forces was during the months during the First Arakan offensive, between December 1942 and March 1943. The morale of *Sepoys* during this time was low and knowledge about the INA was minimal. The INA's special services agents led a successful operation during this time in encouraging the Indian troops to defect to the INA. By the end of March 1945, however, the *Sepoys* in the British-Indian Army were reinvigorated and perceived the men of the INA to be savage turncoats and cowards. Senior British officers in the Indian Army considered them "rabble". Historians Christopher Bayly and Tim Harper mention that *sepoys* in field units shot captured or wounded INA men, relieving their British officers of the complex task of

formulating a formal plan for captured men. After Singapore was retaken, Mountbatten ordered the INA's war memorial to its fallen soldiers to be blown up.

As the story of the INA unfolded in post-war India, the view of Indian soldiers on the INA – and on their own position during the war – also changed. The Raj observed with increasing disquiet and unease the spread of pro-INA sympathies within the troops of the British-Indian forces. In February 1946, while the trials were still going on, a general strike by ratings of the Royal Indian Navy rapidly deteriorated into a mutiny incorporating ships and shore establishments of the RIN throughout India.

The mutineers raised slogans invoking Subhas Bose and the INA, demanding an end to the trials. The mutiny received widespread public support. In some places in the British-Indian Army, non-commissioned Officers started ignoring orders from British superiors. In Madras and Pune British garrisons faced revolts from within the ranks of the British-Indian Army. These were suppressed by force. At the conclusion of the first trial, when the sentences of deportation were commuted, Fay records Claude Auchinleck as having sent a "personal and secret" letter to all senior British officers, explaining:

... practically all are sure that any attempt to enforce the sentence would have led to chaos in the country at large, and probably to mutiny and dissension in the Army, culminating in its dissolution.

Influence

World War II

Sidney Bradshaw Fay concludes that the INA was not significant enough to beat the British-Indian Army by military strength. He also writes that the INA was aware of this and formulated its own strategy of avoiding set-piece battles, gathering local and popular support within India and instigating revolt within the British-Indian Army to overthrow the Raj. Moreover, the Forward Bloc underground movement within India had been crushed well before the offensives opened in the Burma-Manipur theatre, depriving the army of any organised internal support. However, despite its small numerical strength and lack of heavy weapons, its special services group played a significant part in halting the First Arakan Offensive while still under Mohan Singh's command. The propaganda threat of the INA and lack of concrete intelligence on the unit early after the fall of Singapore made it a threat to Allied war plans in Southeast Asia, since it threatened to destroy the *Sepoys'* loyalty to a British-Indian Army that was demoralised from continuing defeats. There were reports of INA operatives successfully infiltrating Commonwealth lines during the Offensive. This caused British intelligence to begin the "Jiffs" propaganda campaign and to create "*Josh*" groups to improve the morale and preserve the loyalty of the sepoys as consolidation began to prepare for the defence of Manipur. These measures included imposing a complete news ban on Bose and the INA that was not lifted until four days after the fall of Rangoon two years later.

During the Japanese *U-Go* offensive towards Manipur in 1944, the INA played a crucial (and successful) role in diversionary attacks in Arakan and in the Manipur Basin itself, where it fought alongside Mutaguchi's 15th Army. INA forces protected the flanks of the assaulting Yamamoto force at a critical time as the latter attempted to take Imphal. During the Commonwealth Burma Campaign, the INA troops fought in the battles of Irrawaddy and Meiktila, supporting the Japanese offensive and tying down Commonwealth troops.

Indian independence

The first INA trial, which was held in public, became a rallying point for the independence movement from the autumn of 1945. The release of INA prisoners and the suspension of the trials came to be the dominant political campaign, superseding the campaign for independence. Christopher Bayly notes that the "INA was to become a much more powerful enemy of the British empire in defeat than it had been during its ill-fated triumphal march on Delhi." The Viceroy's journal describes the autumn and winter of 1945–1946 as "The Edge of a Volcano". The setting of the trial at Red Fort was taken by Indian public as a deliberate taunt by the British Raj over the vanquished INA, recalling the INA's battle cries of unfurling the Indian tricolour over the Red Fort. Many compared the trials to that of Bahadur Shah Zafar, the last Mughal emperor tried in the same place after the failed 1857 uprising. Support for the INA grew rapidly and their continued detention and news of impending trials was seen an affront to the movement for independence and to Indian identity itself. It was further feared that the Congress would exploit the INA to gain mass support against the Raj and possibly start an armed struggle

with weapons smuggled from Burma. Nehru was suspected of using INA men to train Congress volunteers. The political effects of the INA trials were enormous and were felt around India as late as 1948, much to the chagrin of the Congress government in independent India, which feared that pro-INA sympathies could help alternative sources of power.

Historians like Sumit Sarkar, Sugata Bose, Ayesha Jalal conclude that the INA trials and its after-effects brought a decisive shift in British policy towards independence Indian . Particularly disturbing was the overt and public support for the INA by the soldiers of the Indian Army and the mutinies. The Congress's rhetoric preceding the 1946 elections gave the Raj reasons to fear a revival of the Quit India Movement of 1942. It was soon realised that the Indian Army could not be used to suppress such a movement as it had in 1942, principally because of nationalistic and political consciousness in the forces which was ascribed to the INA. Gandhi noted:

... the whole nation has been roused, even the regular forces have been stirred into a new political consciousness and begun to think in terms of independence ...

Facing problems in the British mainland and unable to muster enough forces of collaboration or coercion, the Cabinet mission of 1946 was sent to negotiate the transfer of power. Some historians cite Auchinleck's own assessment of the situation to suggest this shortened the Raj by at least fifteen to twenty years. Clement Attlee, the British prime minister, reflecting on the factors that guided the British decision to relinquish the Raj in India, is said to have cited the effects of the INA and

Bose's activities on the British-Indian Army and the Bombay Mutiny as being the most important.

British colonies

After the war ended, the story of the INA and the Indian Legion was seen as so inflammatory that, fearing mass revolts and uprisings across its empire, the British Government forbade the BBC from broadcasting their story. The use of Indian troops for the restoration of Dutch and French rule in Vietnam and Indonesia fed into the already growing resentment within the forces. Indian troops sent to suppress Sukarno's agitations in Indonesia in 1946 rapidly identified with the nationalist sentiments in the previous Dutch colony. The South East Asia Command reported growing sympathy for the INA and dislike of the Dutch. There were similar pro-nationalist sentiments among Indian troops sent to Vietnam, Thailand and Burma. This led to the realisation by 1946 that the British-Indian Army, the bulwark of the policing force in the British colonies, could not be used as an instrument of British power. INA-inspired strikes emerged throughout Britain's colonies in Southeast Asia. In January 1946, protests started at Royal Air Force bases in Karachi and spread rapidly to Singapore. This was followed by a full-scale mutiny by a British Army unit in Singapore. In British Malaya, men of the Parachute Regiment refused to obey orders from their officers. Authors like Nilanjana Sengupta attribute these to a combination of dissatisfaction over pay and work conditions and conflicts of comradeship over the INA trials. Former INA members in Malaya identified closely with the left-wing organisations in opposing British colonial authority. The majority of prominent left-wing union leaders in Malaya after the war were members

of the INA. The activities of the trade unions in the newly established Tamil schools were particularly influential, leading to the establishment of an inspector system by the British to supervise the curriculum and teaching in these schools. Joyce Lebra notes that the INA had a particularly strong unifying influence over ethnic Indians residing in Malaya. Lebra concludes that the experience of the INA was useful in challenging British authority in the post-war period in Malaya, and in improving the socio-economic conditions of the Indian community.

Controversies

British and Commonwealth troops viewed the recruits as traitors and Axis collaborators. Almost 40,000 Indian soldiers in Malaya did not join the army and remained as PoWs. Many were sent to work in the Death Railway, suffered hardships and nearly 11,000 died under Japanese internment. Many of them cited the oath of allegiance they had taken to the King among reasons not to join a Japanese-supported organisation, and regarded the recruits of the INA as traitors for having forsaken their oath. Commanders in the British-Indian Army like Wavell later highlighted the hardships this group of soldiers suffered, contrasting them with the troops of the INA. Many British soldiers held the same opinion., Hugh Toye and Peter Fay point out that the First INA consisted of a mix of recruits joining for various reasons, such as nationalistic leanings, Mohan Singh's appeals, personal ambition or to protect men under their own command from harm. Fay notes some officers like Shah Nawaz Khan were opposed to Mohan Singh's ideas and tried to hinder what they considered a

collaborationist organisation. However, both historians note that Indian civilians and former INA soldiers all cite the tremendous influence of Subhas Bose and his appeal to patriotism in rejuvenating the INA. Fay discusses the topic of loyalty of the INA soldiers, and highlights that in Shah Nawaz Khan's trial it was noted that officers of the INA warned their men the possibility of having to fight the Japanese after having fought the British, to prevent Japan exploiting post-war India. Carl Vadivella Belle suggested in 2014 that among the local Indians and ex-British-Indian Army volunteers in Malaya, there was a proportion who joined due to the threat of conscription as Japanese labour troops. Recruitment also offered local Indian labourers security from continual semi-starvation of the estates and served as a barrier against Japanese tyranny.

INA troops were alleged to engage in or be complicit in torture of Allied and Indian prisoners of war. Fay in his 1993 history analyses war-time press releases and field counter-intelligence directed at *Sepoys*. He concludes that the *Jiffs* campaign promoted the view that INA recruits were weak-willed and traitorous Axis collaborators, motivated by selfish interests of greed and personal gain. He concludes that the allegations of torture were largely products of the *Jiffs* campaign. He supports his conclusion by noting that isolated cases of torture had occurred, but allegations of widespread practice of torture were not substantiated in the charges against defendants in the Red Fort trials. Published memoirs of several veterans, including that of William Slim, portray the INA troops as incapable fighters and as untrustworthy. Toye noted in 1959 that individual desertions occurred in the withdrawal from Imphal. Fay concluded that stories of INA desertions during

the battle and the initial retreat into Burma were largely exaggerated. The majority of desertions occurred much later, according to Fay, around the battles at Irrawaddy and later around Popa. Fay specifically discusses Slim's portrayal of the INA, pointing out what he concludes to be inconsistencies in Slim's accounts. Fay also discusses memoirs of Shah Nawaz, where Khan claims INA troops were never defeated in battle. Fay criticises this too as exaggerated. He concludes the opinions held by Commonwealth war veterans such as Slim were an inaccurate portrayal of the unit, as were those of INA soldiers themselves. Harkirat Singh notes that British officers' personal dislike for Subhas Chandra Bose may have prejudiced their judgement of the INA itself.

In independent India, the treatment of former INA soldiers by government and omission of the INA and the Red Fort trials from historical records of the period leading up to Indian independence in 1947 have come in for criticisms. Indian activists like Samar Guha, historians like Kapil Kumar, as well as Indian parliamentarians allege that official histories of the independence movement largely omit events surrounding the INA – especially the Red Fort trials and the Bombay Mutiny – and ignore their significance in rejuvenating the independence movement and guiding British decisions to relinquish the Raj. A history of the army and of *Azad Hind*, written by Indian historian Pratul Chandra Gupta in 1950s at the request of the Indian Government, was subsequently classified and not released until 2006. Further criticisms have been made in recent years over the denial till 1980s of the "freedom fighter's pension" awarded to those in the Gandhian movement, and over the general hardships and apathy surrounding the conditions of former INA soldiers. This includes, for example,

the circumstances surrounding the death and funeral of Ram Singh Thakuri, the composer of the INA's anthem *Quami tarana, kadam kadam badaye ja*. These have been compounded by a number of conspiracy-theories and news reports in the past on agreements between the Indian political leadership to hand over its leader Subhas Chandra Bose as a war criminal if he was found to be alive. The Indian government refused to declassify secret documents on Bose and the INA held in Indian archives for almost sixty years citing concerns of India's relations with foreign countries. This decision was revisited in October 2015 by Narendra Modi government. However, some files are said to have been destroyed altogether. Later historians have argued that, given the political aim and nature of the entire *Azad Hind* movement and especially the Indian National Army, Nehru's aim may have been to prevent politicisation of the army and assert civilian authority over the military.

More recent controversies have risen from limited declassified Indian documents that revealed that the Nehru government kept Subhas Bose's family under strict surveillance for more than twenty years after Indian independence. Further controversy relates to the fate of the *Azad Hind* fortune Bose is said to have been travelling with it during his last known journey. The treasure, a considerable amount of gold ornaments and gems, is said to have been recovered from Bose's belongings following the fatal plane crash in Formosa that reportedly killed him. Despite repeated warnings from Indian diplomats in Tokyo, Nehru is said to have disregarded allegations that men previously associated with *Azad Hind* misappropriated the funds for personal benefit. Some of these are said to have travelled to Japan repeatedly with the

approval of Nehru government and were later given government roles implementing Nehru's political and economic agenda. A very small portion of the alleged treasure was repatriated to India in the 1950s.

Commemorations

The INA is memorialised in the *Swatantrata Sainani Smarak*, which is located at the Salimgarh Fort in Delhi, adjacent to the Red Fort. Its exhibits include the Indian National Army uniform worn by Colonel Prem Sahgal, riding boots and coat buttons of Colonel Gurbaksh Singh Dhillon and photographs of Subhas Chandra Bose. A separate gallery holds material and photographs from excavations carried out by the Archaeological Survey of India inside the fort in 1995. The Indian National Army Memorial at Moirang, Manipur, commemorates the place where the flag of *Azad Hind* was raised by Col. Shaukat Hayat Malik. Moirang was the first Indian territory captured by the INA.

The INA War Memorial at Singapore commemorating the "Unknown Warrior" of the INA was unveiled by Bose in July 1945. Situated at the Esplanade Park, it was destroyed on Mountbatten's orders when Allied troops reoccupied the city. In 1995, the National Heritage Board of Singapore, with financial donations from the Indian community in Singapore, erected the Former Indian National Army Monument at the site where the old memorial stood. The site is now officially one of the historical sites of Singapore.

The INA's battle cry, *Jai Hind*, was declared the "national greeting" of India by Nehru and remains a popular nationalist

greeting. Today it is used by all Indian prime ministers to conclude their Independence Day speeches. The cry became independent India's first commemorative post mark on 15 August 1947. The first postage stamps issued by Independent India are called the *Jai Hind* series of stamps, showing the Indian flag with the letters *Jai Hind* in the top right hand corner. These were a part of the series issued on 15 August 1947. Commemorative postage stamps were also issued by the Indian government in 1968 and 1993 respectively to commemorate the 25th and the 50th anniversaries of the establishment of *Azad Hind* at Singapore. The Department of Posts also includes the six unused *Azad Hind* stamps in its commemorative book *India's Freedom Struggle through India Postage Stamps*. The *Azad Hind Fauj Marg* (Azad Hind Fauj Road) in New Delhi is named after the INA and houses the Netaji Subhas Institute of Technology.

In popular culture

The Indian National Army remains a significant topic of discussion in the popular history of India; it is an emotive topic which has been the subject of numerous works of literature, art, and visual media within India and outside. Some of the earliest works in print media were created at the time of the INA trials. These include works of fiction like *Jai Hind: The Diary of a Rebel Daughter of India* published in 1945 by Amritlal Seth. The book, a work of fiction narrating the story of a recruit of the Rani of Jhansi Regiment, is believed to be loosely based on the story of Lakshmi Sahgal. In later decades works by authors like Amitav Ghosh, such as his book *The Glass Palace*, have used the backdrop of the *Azad Hind*

and the Japanese occupation of Burma for the narrative of the story. *The Day of the Scorpion* and *The Towers of Silence*, the second and third books in Paul Scott's *Raj Quartet*, mention *Jiffs* in the political and social context in which the term found use in the Eastern Army during the war. The 1984 British TV series *The Jewel in the Crown*, based on Scott's quartet, also includes the role of the INA as part of the political backdrop of the story.

In visual media, the INA has been the subject of a number of documentaries. *The War of The Springing Tiger* made by Granada Television for Channel 4 in 1984 examined the role of the Indian National Army in the Second World War, the motivation of its soldiers and explored its role in the independence movement. In 1999 Film India released a documentary, *The Forgotten Army*. Directed by Kabir Khan and produced by Akhil Bakshi, it followed what was called the *Azad Hind Expedition* between 1994 and 1995, retracing the route taken by the INA from Singapore to Imphal, before ending at Red Fort. Amongst the members of expedition team were Gurubaksh Singh Dhillon, Lakshmi Sahgal and Captain S.S. Yadava, an INA veteran and once the general secretary of the All India INA Committee. The documentary went on to win the Grand Jury Prize at the Film South Asia festival in 1999. The National Archives of Singapore digitised its available resources in 2007 as *Historical Journey of the Indian National Army*. In 2004, the Indian Legion in Europe was the subject of a BBC magazine article authored by Mike Thomson, but it did not attempt to distinguish the differences between the Legion and the INA. The *Hindustan Times*, a large broadsheet in India, dedicates a part of its website to INA resources as *Indian National Army in East Asia*.

Indian cinema has also seen a number of films in many different Indian languages, where the INA is a significant part of the narrative. These include *Pahla Admi* by Bimal Roy and *Samadhi* by Ramesh Saigal, both produced in 1950 based on fictional INA veterans. More recently, *Indian*, a 1996 Tamil film directed by S. Shankar, incorporates a lead character in its story who is a veteran of the INA. Shyam Benegal produced *Netaji: The Forgotten Hero* in 2004, which traces the last five years of Subhas Chandra Bose. Benegal describes the story of the INA in small details in his film whilst focusing on its leader. The film was also widely noted for A. R. Rahman's music. The INA's marching song, *Kadam Kadam Badaye Ja*, has since become a famous patriotic song in India. Today it is in use as the regimental quick march of the Indian Parachute regiment. More recently, a 2017 Hindi movie *Rangoon*, starring Kangna Ranaut, Saif Ali Khan, Shahid Kapoor is based against the backdrop of the INA presence in Rangoon, with the movie centered around the protagonists trying to get across a jeweled sword to the INA. In 2020 Amazon Prime Video released a five-part series called *The Forgotten Army - Azaadi Ke Liye!* Which tells the story of the INA through the eyes of one of its Captains and the woman he loves.

Chapter 37

Azad Hind

The **Provisional Government of Free India** (*Arzi Hakumat-e-Azad Hind*) or, more simply, **Azad Hind**, was an Indian Provisional government established in Japanese occupied Singapore during World War II. It was created in October 1943 and supported by – as well as largely dependent on – the Empire of Japan.

It was a part of the political movement originating in the 1940s outside India with the purpose of allying with the Axis powers to liberate India from British rule. It was established by Indian nationalists in exile during the latter part of the Second World War in Singapore with monetary, military and political assistance from Imperial Japan. Founded on 1 sept 1942, the government was inspired by the concepts of Subhas Chandra Bose who was also the leader of the government and Head of State. The government proclaimed authority over Indian civilian and military personnel in Southeast Asian British colonial territory and prospective authority over Indian territory to fall to the Japanese forces and the Indian National Army during the Japanese thrust towards India.

The government of Azad Hind had its own currency, court and civil code, and in the eyes of some Indians, its existence gave a greater importance to the independence struggle against the British. Japan also handed over nominal authority of the Japanese occupied Andaman and Nicobar Islands in 1943, though the government continued to be dependent on Japanese support.

Immediately after the formation of the provisional government, Free India declared war against the Allied forces on the Indo-Burma Front. Its army, the Indian National Army (*Azad Hind Fauj*), went into action against the British Indian Army and the allied forces as part of the Imperial Japanese Army in the Imphal-Kohima sector. The INA had its first major engagement at the Battle of Imphal where, under the command of the Japanese Fifteenth Army, it breached the British defences in Kohima, reaching the salient of Moirang before suffering a catastrophic defeat as the Allied forces held, and Allied air dominance and compromised supply lines forced both the Japanese and the INA to retreat.

The existence of Azad Hind was essentially coterminous with the existence of the Indian National Army. While the government itself continued until the civil administration of the Andaman Islands was returned to the jurisdiction of the British towards the end of the war, the limited power of Azad Hind was effectively ended with the surrender of the last major contingent of INA troops in Rangoon. The death of Bose is seen as the end of the entire Azad Hind Movement.

The legacy of Azad Hind is, however, open to judgment. After the war, the Raj observed with alarm the transformation of the perception of Azad Hind from traitors and collaborators to "the greatest among the patriots". Given the tide of militant nationalism that swept through India and the resentment and revolts it inspired, it is arguable that its overarching aim, to foster public resentment and revolts within the Indian forces of the British Indian Army to overthrow the Raj, was ultimately successful.

Establishment

The direct origins of Azad Hind can be linked to two conferences of Indian expatriates from across Southeast Asia, the first of which was held in Tokyo in March 1942. At this conference, convened by Rash Behari Bose, an Indian expatriate living in Japan, the Indian Independence League was established as the first move towards an independent Indian state politically aligned with the Empire of Japan. Rash also moved to create a sort of independence army that would assist in driving the British from India – this force would later become the Indian National Army. The second conference, held later that year in Bangkok, invited Subhas Chandra Bose to participate in the leadership of the League. Bose was living in Germany at the time and made the trip to Japan via submarine.

Rash Behari Bose, who was already ageing by the time the League was founded, struggled to keep the League organised and failed to secure resources for the establishment of the Indian National Army. He was replaced as president of the Indian Independence League by Subhas Chandra Bose; there is some controversy as to whether he stepped down of his own volition or by pressure from the Japanese who needed a more energetic and focused presence leading the Indian nationalists.

Bose arrived in Tokyo on 13 June 1943 and declared his intent to make an assault against the eastern provinces of India in an attempt to oust the British from control of the subcontinent. Bose arrived in Singapore on 2 July, and in October 1943 formally announced the establishment of the Provisional Government of Free India at the Cathay Cinema Hall. In

defining the tasks of this new political establishment, Subhas declared: "It will be the task of the Provisional Government to launch and conduct the struggle that will bring about the expulsion of the British and their allies from the soil of India." Bose, taking formal command of the demoralised and undermanned Indian National Army from Rash Bose, turned it into a professional army with the help of the Japanese. He recruited Indian civilians living in Japanese-occupied territories of South-east Asia and incorporated vast numbers of Indian POWs from British forces in Singapore, Malaya and Hong Kong to man the brigades of the INA.

Ministers

The Provisional Government of Free India consisted of a Cabinet headed by Subhas Chandra Bose as the *Head of the State, The Prime Minister and the Minister for War and Foreign Affairs*.

Captain Doctor Lakshmi Swaminadhan (later married as Lakshmi Sahgal) was the *Minister in Charge of Women's Organization*. She held this position over and above her command of the *Rani Jhansi Regiment*, a brigade of women soldiers fighting for the Indian National Army. For a regular Asian army, this women's regiment was quite visionary; it was the first of its kind established on the continent. Dr. Lakshmi was one of the most popular and prosperous gynaecologists in Singapore before she gave up her practice to lead the troops of the Rani of Jhansi Regiment.

Other public administration ministers of the Provisional Government of Free India included:

- Mr. S. A. Ayer – the Minister of Broadcasting and Publicity
- Lt. Col. A. C. Chatterji – the Minister of Finance

The Indian National Army was represented by Armed Forces ministers, including:

- Lt. Col. Aziz Ahmed
- Lt. Col. N. S. Bhagat
- Lt. Col. J. K. Bhonsle
- Lt. Col. Guizara Singh
- Lt. Col. M.Z. Kiani
- Lt. Col. A. D. Loganathan
- Lt. Col. Ehsan Qadir
- Lt. Col. Shahnawaz Khan

The Provisional Government was also constituted and administered by a number of Secretaries and Advisors to Subhas Chandra Bose, including:

- Capt. Dilip Singh Siwach
- A.M.Sahay – Secretary
- Karim Ghani
- Debnath Das
- D.M. Khan
- A. Yellapa
- J. Thivy
- Sardar Ishar Singh Narula
- A. N. Sarkar – the government's official Legal Advisor

All of these Secretaries and Advisory officials held Ministerial rank in the Provisional Government. The extent of the Provisional Government's day-to-day management of affairs for

Azad Hind is not entirely well-documented, so their specific functions as government officials for the state outside their positions as support ministers for Subhas Chandra Bose is not entirely certain.

Recognition

Azad Hind was recognised as a legitimate state by only a small number of countries limited solely to Axis powers and their allies. Azad Hind had diplomatic relations with nine countries: Nazi Germany, the Empire of Japan, Italian Social Republic, Independent State of Croatia and Wang Jingwei Government, Thailand, the State of Burma, Manchukuo and the Second Philippine Republic. On the declaration of its formation in occupied Singapore the Taoiseach of Ireland, Éamon de Valera, sent a note of congratulations to Bose. Vichy France, however, although being an Axis collaborator, never gave formal political recognition to Azad Hind. This government participated as an observer in the Greater East Asia Conference in November 1943.

Government administration and World War II

- The same night that Bose declared the existence of Azad Hind, the government took action to declare war against the United States and Britain. The government consisted of a Cabinet ministry acting as an advisory board to Subhas Bose, who was given the title "Netaji" (translating roughly to "leader") and

was no doubt the dominant figure in the Provisional Government. He exercised virtual authoritarian control over the government and the army. With regards to the government's first issuances of war declarations, the "Cabinet had not been unanimous about the inclusion of the U.S.A. Bose had shown impatience and displeasure – there was never any question then or later of his absolute authority: the Cabinet had no responsibility and could only tender advice..."At the end of October 1943, Bose flew to Tokyo to participate in the Greater East Asia Conference as an observer to Japan's Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere; it could not function as a delegate because India had technically fallen outside the jurisdiction of Japan's definition of "Greater East Asia", but Bose gave speeches in opposition to Western colonialism and imperialism at the conference. By the end of the conference, Azad Hind had been given a limited form of governmental jurisdiction over the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, which had been captured by the Imperial Japanese Navy early on in the war.

Once under the jurisdiction of Azad Hind, the islands formed the government's first claims to territory. The islands themselves were renamed "Shaheed" and "Swaraj", meaning "martyr" and "self-rule" respectively. Bose placed the islands under the governorship of Lt Col A. D Loganathan, and had limited involvement with the official governorship of the territory, instead involving himself in plans to expand the Indian National Army, ensure adequate men and materiel, and formulate its course of actions and the administrations and

relations of the Indian population in southeast Asia and determining Japanese designs in India and his provisional government. In theory, the government itself had the power to levy taxes on the local populace, and to make and enforce laws: in practice, they were enforced by the police force under Japanese control. Indians were willing to pay these taxes at first but became less inclined to do so towards the end of the war when the Provisional Government enacted legislation for higher war-time taxes to fund the INA. During his interrogation after the war, Loganathan admitted that he had only had full control over the islands' vestigial education department, as the Japanese had retained full control over the police force, and in protest, he had refused to accept responsibility for any other areas of Government. He was powerless to prevent the Homfreyganj massacre of 30 January 1944, where forty-four Indian civilians were shot by the Japanese on suspicion of spying. Many of them were members of the Indian Independence League, whose leader in Port Blair, Dr. Diwan Singh, had already been tortured to death in the Cellular Jail after doing his best to protect the islanders from Japanese atrocities during the first two years of the occupation.

Azad Hind's military forces in the form of the INA saw some successes against the British and moved with the Japanese army to lay siege to the town of Imphal in eastern India. Plans to march towards Delhi, gaining support and fresh recruits along the way, stalled both with the onset of monsoon season and the failure to capture Imphal. British bombing seriously reduced morale, and the Japanese along with the INA forces began their withdrawal from India.

In addition to these setbacks, the INA was faced with a formidable challenge when the troops were left to defend Rangoon without the assistance of the Japanese in the winter of 1944–1945. Loganathan was relocated from the Andaman Islands to act as field commander.

With the INA garrison about 6,000 strong, he manned the Burmese capital in the absence of any other police force or troops during the period between the departure of the Japanese and the arrival of the British. He was successful in maintaining law and order to the extent that there was not a single reported case of dacoity or of looting during the period from 24 April to 4 May 1945.

Indian areas under the administration of the Provisional Government

Almost all of the territory of the Provisional Government lay in the Andaman Islands, although the Provisional Government was allowed some authority over Indian enclaves in Japanese-occupied territories.

Provisional Government civil authority was never enacted in areas occupied by the INA; instead, Japanese military authority prevailed and responsibility for administration of occupied areas of India was shared between the Japanese and the Indian forces.

The defeat of the INA and the collapse of the Provisional Government

Left to defend Rangoon from the British advance without support from the Japanese, the INA was soundly defeated. Bose was suggested to leave Burma to continue his struggle for Indian independence and returned to Singapore before the fall of Rangoon; the government Azad Hind had established on the Andaman and Nicobar Islands collapsed when the island garrisons of Japanese and Indian troops were defeated by British troops and the islands themselves retaken. Allegedly Bose himself was killed in a plane crash departing from Taiwan attempting to escape to Russia. The Provisional Government of Free India ceased to exist with the deaths of the Axis, the INA, and disappearance of Bose in 1945.

The troops who manned the brigades of the Indian National Army were taken as prisoners of war by the British. A number of these prisoners were brought to India and tried by British courts for treason, including a number of high-ranking officers such as Colonel Gurbaksh Singh Dhillon.

The defence of these individuals from prosecution by the British became a central point of contention between the British Raj and the Indian Independence Movement in the post-war years.

Relations with the Axis Powers

Since Subhas Chandra Bose aligned with Empire of Japan and the Axis Powers, which also included Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy, Britain portrayed him as a controversial figure for his official stance against imperialism which would run in opposition against Japanese imperialism in Asia during World War II. Bose himself claimed to oppose all manner of colonial practices but claimed Britain as hypocritical in "fighting a war for democracy" but refusing to extend the same respect for democracy and equal rights to their colonial subjects in India. Bose opposed British racial policy and declared working for the abolition of racial discrimination with Burmese, Japanese and other Asians.

Britain accused him of fascism, citing his control over the Provisional Government as strict as evidence of this; and pointed to him wanting to establish a totalitarian state in India with the blessings of the Axis powers. It is accurate to term Bose solely as a fascist, as he believed that parliamentary democracy was unsuitable for India immediately after independence and that a centrally organised, self-sufficient, semi-socialist India under the firm control of a single party was the best course for Indian government. Some of his ideas would help shape Indian governmental policy in the aftermath of the country's independence from Britain.

It has been argued that the fact that Azad Hind was aligned politically with Japan and the Axis Powers may have had more to do with what Bose saw as a pragmatic approach to Indian independence. Disillusioned with Gandhi's philosophies of non-violence, Bose was clearly of the camp that supported

exploiting British weakness to gain Indian independence. Throughout the existence of Azad Hind, Bose sought to distance himself from Japanese collaboration and become more self-sufficient but found this difficult since the existence of Azad Hind as a governmental entity had only come about with the support of the Japanese, on whom the government and army of Azad Hind were entirely dependent. Bose, however, is considered a hero by some in present-day India and is remembered as a man who fought fiercely for Indian independence. However, Subhas Chandra Bose had supported Fascism and Nazism before the start of WWII, declaring that Indian needed "a synthesis of what modern Europe calls socialism and fascism" in a speech made in Calcutta in 1930.

Although Japanese troops saw much of the combat in India against the British, the INA was certainly by itself an effective combat force, having faced British and allied troops and making their mark in the Battle of Imphal. On 18 April 1944 the suicide squads led by Col. Shaukat Malik broke through the British defence and captured Moirang in Manipur. The Azad Hind administration took control of this independent Indian territory. Following Moirang, the advancing INA breached the Kohima road, posing a threat to the British positions in both Silchar and Kohima. Col. Gulzara Singh's column had penetrated 250 miles into India. The Azad Brigade advanced, by outflanking the Anglo-American positions.

However, INA's most serious, and ultimately fatal, limitations were the reliance on Japanese logistics and supplies and the total air-dominance of the allies, which, along with a supply

line deluged by torrential rain, frustrated the INA's and the Japanese bid to take Imphal.

With the siege of Imphal failing, the Japanese began to shift priority for resource allocation from South Asia to the Pacific, where they were fighting United States troops advancing from island to island against Japanese holdings there. When it had become clear that Bose's plans to advance to Delhi from the borders of Burma would never materialise due to the defeat of the INA at Imphal and the halt of Japanese armies by British aerial and later naval superiority in the region, Japanese support for Azad Hind declined.

Contributions to Indian independence

The true extent to which the INA's activities influenced the decision to leave India is mirrored by the views of Clement Attlee, the British prime minister at the time of India's Independence. Attlee cites several reasons, the most important of which were the INA activities of Subhas Chandra Bose, which weakened the very foundation of the British Empire in India, and the Royal Indian Navy Mutiny which made the British realise that the support of the Indian armed forces could no longer be relied upon.

Chapter 38

Simla Conference

The **Simla Conference** of 1945 was a meeting between the Viceroy of India Lord Wavell and the major political leaders of British India at the Viceregal Lodge in Simla. Convened to agree on and approve the Wavell Plan for Indian self-government, and there it reached a potential agreement for the self-rule of India that provided separate representation for Muslims and reduced majority powers for both communities in their majority regions.

Talks, however, stalled on the issue of the selection of Muslim representatives. Seeking to assert itself and its claim to be the sole representative of Indian Muslims, the All-India Muslim League refused to back any plan in which the Indian National Congress, the dominant party in the talks, appointed Muslim representatives. This scuttled the conference, and perhaps the last viable opportunity for a united, independent India. When the Indian National Congress and the All India Muslim League reconvened under the Cabinet Mission the next year, the Indian National Congress was far less sympathetic to the Muslim League's requests despite Jinnah's approval of the British plan.

On 14 June 1945 Lord Wavell announced a plan for a new Executive Council in which all members except the Viceroy and the Commander in Chief would be Indians. This executive council was to be a temporary measure until a new permanent constitution could be agreed upon and come into force. All portfolios except Defense would be held by Indian members.

Lord Wavell

Prime Minister Winston Churchill as head of the war cabinet proposed Field Marshal Wavell's name to his cabinet in mid-June 1943, as India's next Viceroy. General Sir Claude Auchinleck who had followed Wavell in his Middle Eastern command was to be the next Commander in Chief of the Indian army after Lord Wavell. In October 1943 the British Government decided to replace Lord Linlithgow with Lord Wavell as the Viceroy of India. Before assuming the vice royalty, Lord Wavell had been head of the Indian army and thus had an understanding of the Indian situation. On becoming Viceroy, Wavell's most important task was to present a formula for the future government of India which would be acceptable to both the Indian National Congress and the All-India Muslim League.

Background of the Simla Conference

Gandhi launched the Quit India Movement in August 1942, after which he was arrested with other Congress lieutenants like Nehru and Patel. He was held separately in the Agha Khan's Pune palace while others were kept in the Ahmednagar Fort. Now he decided to launch his "Satyagraha", he commenced after the early morning breakfast on 10 February 1943 a fast for 21 days. Weighing 109 pounds when he began, Gandhi lost eighteen pounds after his 21-day fast. Fearing the death of Gandhi in prison as before him Kasturba, his wife and Mahadev Desai, his private secretary died in the same prison in Pune Palace, Lord Linlithgow recommended to Churchill the immediate unconditional release of Gandhi. Churchill wrote

back to Linlithgow, "it seems almost certain that the old rascal [Gandhi] will emerge all better for his so-called fast." Gandhi broke his fast on 3 March 1943. Gandhi suffered from malaria, and after that his health seriously deteriorated. The new Viceroy Archibald Wavell, recommended his unconditional release, Leo Amery the secretary of state for India convinced Churchill to release Gandhi on medical grounds, so he was released. After his release, Gandhi managed to recover. Upon hearing of this Churchill is said to have sent Wavell a peevish telegram asking "why Gandhi has not died yet?"

Communal division was the greatest hurdle in the path of any political progress in India, so Wavell also began to agree with Amery's conviction that until the "*Aged Trinity*" (Gandhi, Churchill and Jinnah) continued to lead there was little chance of any political advance. Lord Wavell had a plan in mind and was eager to invite key leaders to a summit, but he was waiting for something to come out of the Gandhi-Jinnah meetings rescheduled on 9 September. C. Rajagopalachari presented a formula before that meeting accepting the Muslim right for a separate homeland. The talks began on 9 September 1944 at Jinnah's residence in Malabar Hill, Bombay where both leaders spent three and a half hours of secret discussion but Gandhi later with C. R. called it a "test of my patience and nothing else and I am amazed at my own patience." Their second meeting proved no more fruitful than the first, Jinnah sensed by this time the futility of the talks. Then there was a session of written correspondence on 11, 12, 13 and 14 September, and on 24, 25 and 26 September 1944, but nothing came out of it. Gandhi by now believed that "Jinnah was a good person but he suffers hallucination when he imagines the unnatural division of India and creation of Pakistan". Wavell wired to Amery,

"Gandhi wants independence first and then is willing to resolve communal problem afterwards as he is profoundly a Hindu and wants transfer of full power to some nebulous national", while Jinnah wants to settle the communal problem first and then wants independence as he has lost his trust in Congress and Hindus." Wavell viewed this mini-summit breakdown as a personal challenge to bring together the two parties. He had plans in mind and was willing to use his influence and power to settle the communal deadlock. He would try to bring some moderate Indian leaders to a settlement by calling them to Shimla (India's summer capital). His list included as he told to Amery, "Gandhi and one "other" of the Congress party, Jinnah and one other member of the Muslim League, Dr. Ambedkar to represent the "Depressed classes", Tara Singh to represent the Sikhs, M. N. Roy for labor representation, and some other to represent Non-Congress and Non-League Hindus and Muslims.

After correspondence with Amery in October, Wavell decided to write to Churchill directly and he tried to convince Churchill in this regard though he was sure that Churchill was reluctant to hold or attend any summit as "he hated India and anything to do with it". Churchill informed Amery that he would not be able to see Wavell until March 1945, Wavell on his own behalf met with Jinnah on 6 December, and tried to convince him to live in a united India as that would be much more beneficial for all because it would be a stronger nation at an international level. Jinnah argued that "Indian unity was only a British creation". Bengal's governor Richard Casey was well informed about Congress-League relations and he wrote to Wavell saying, "Congress is basically responsible for the growth of the Pakistan idea, by the way they treated the Muslims especially by refusing to allow them into the coalition

provincial governments." Wavell agreed with everything Casey said about Pakistan, writing in his reply "I do not believe that Pakistan will work". Churchill chaired his war cabinet that reviewed and rejected Wavell's proposal for constitutional reforms in India on December 18. But Wavell was invited to visit England, and met with Churchill and Cabinet in May 1945. Wavell was allowed to fly back to India in June 1945 to release Congress Working Committee members and start the talks that would later be called the Simla Conference. Wavell decided to call all key leaders of India in Simla on 25 June 1945 and broadcast a message to all Indians on 14 June 1945 showing British willingness to give India dominion status as soon as possible if the communal deadlock was broken down. "India needs a surgical operation", Nehru noted after considering Wavell's idea, "We have to get rid of our preoccupation with a petty problem" as he considered the demand for Pakistan a petty problem. Jinnah accepted the invitation but only if he could meet with Wavell alone first on 24 June.

Details of the Conference

One day before the conference was convened on 24 June, Wavell met with Abul Kalam Azad, Gandhi and Jinnah to assess their approach. He noted in his diary, "Gandhi & Jinnah are behaving like very temperamental prima donnas". Lord Wavell officially opened the summit at 11:00 am on 25 June 1945. In the beginning Azad being president of Congress spoke of its "non-communal" character. Jinnah responded to this by speaking of Congress' predominantly Hindu character and at that point there was a tug of war which had to be quieted down

by Wavell. On the morning of 29 June the conference was reconvened and Wavell asked parties to submit a list of candidates for his new council, Azad agreed while Jinnah refused to submit a list before consulting the Muslim League's working committee. The conference was adjourned till 14 July, meanwhile Wavell met with Jinnah on 8 July and tried to convince him as Jinnah was determined to nominate all the proposed Muslim members from the Muslim League as he considered the Congress' Muslim representatives to be "show boys". Wavell gave him a letter that was placed in front of the Muslim League's Working Committee on 9 July. Jinnah replied after careful consideration of the Working Committee, "I regret to inform you that you have failed to give assurance relating to the nomination of all Muslim members from Muslim League's platform so we are not able to submit a list." The Viceroy was equally resolved not to give at that point and wired to Amery at that night his own list of new council members. Four were to be Muslim League members (Liaquat Ali Khan, Khawaja Nazimuddin, Chaudhry Khaliquzzaman and Eassak Sait) and another Non-League Muslim Muhammad Nawaz Khan (a Punjabi landlord). The five 'Caste Hindus' had to be Jawaharlal Nehru, Vallabhbhai Patel, Rajendra Prasad, Madhav Shrihari Aney, B. N. Rau. Tara Singh was to represent the Sikhs and B. R. Ambedkar to represent the "untouchables", John Mathai was the only Christian thus bringing the total to sixteen including the Viceroy and Commander-in-Chief. Amery asked Wavell to consult this list with Jinnah, when Jinnah was asked about the Muslim names he adamantly refused to allow any League member to be part of the government until the League's right to be the sole representative of Muslims of India was acknowledged. Wavell found this demand impossible thus half an hour later he told Gandhi about his failure, Gandhi took the

news calmly and said "His Majesty King George will sooner or later have to take the Hindu or Muslim point of view as they were irreconcilable." Thus the Wavell plan that was later to be called the Simla Conference failed in its objective and set the trend for the immediate topics that would dominate discourse until Indian independence.

Detailed Wavell Plan

In May 1945 Wavell visited London and discussed his ideas with the British Government. These London talks resulted in the formulation of a definite plan of action which was officially made public simultaneously on 14 June 1945 by L.S. Amery, the Secretary of State for India, in the House of Commons and by Wavell in a broadcast speech delivered from Delhi. The plan, commonly known as the Wavell Plan, proposed the following:

1. The Viceroy's Executive Council would be immediately reconstituted and the number of its members would be increased.
2. In the Council there would be equal representation of high-caste Hindus and Muslims.
4. All the members of the Council, except the Viceroy and the Commander-in-Chief, would be Indians.
5. An Indian would be appointed as the member for Foreign Affairs in the Council. However, a British commissioner would be responsible for trade matters.

6. The defense of India would remain in British hands until power was ultimately transferred to Indians.

7. The Viceroy would convene a meeting of Indian politicians including the leaders of Congress and the Muslim League at which they would nominate members of the new Council.

8. If this plan were to be approved for the central government, then similar councils of local political leaders would be formed in all the provinces.

9. None of the changes suggested would in any way prejudice or prejudge the essential form of the future permanent Constitution of India.

To discuss these proposals with Indian leaders, Wavell summoned them to a conference in Simla on 25 June 1945.

Criticism of Wavell Plan

The Wavell Plan, in essence, proposed the complete Indianisation of the Executive Council, but instead of asking all the parties to nominate members to the Executive Council from all the communities, seats were reserved for members on the basis of religion and caste, with the caste Hindus and Muslims being represented on it on the basis of parity. Even Mahatma Gandhi resented the use of the words "caste Hindus".

While the plan proposed immediate changes to the composition of the Executive Council it did not contain any guarantee of Indian independence, nor did it contain any mention of a

future constituent assembly or any proposals for the division of power between the various parties of India.

Failure of the Simla Conference

Meanwhile, a general election had been held in the United Kingdom in July 1945 which had brought the Labour Party to power. The Labour party wanted to transfer power to the Indians as quickly as possible. The new government sent the Cabinet Mission to India and this proved to be the final nail in the coffin of the Wavell Plan.

Chapter 39

Royal Indian Navy Mutiny

The **Royal Indian Navy mutiny** or **revolt**, also called the **1946 Naval Uprising**, was an insurrection of Indian naval ratings, soldiers, police personnel and civilians against the British government in India. From the initial flashpoint in Bombay, the revolt spread and found support throughout British India, from Karachi to Calcutta, and ultimately came to involve over 20,000 sailors in 78 ships and shore establishments.

The mutiny was suppressed by British troops and Royal Navy warships. The Indian National Congress and the Muslim League condemned the mutiny, while the Communist Party of India was the only party that supported the rebellion.

The RIN Revolt started as a strike by ratings of the Royal Indian Navy on 18 February in protest against general conditions. The immediate issues of the revolt were living conditions and food. By dusk on 19 February, a Naval Central Strike committee was elected. The strike found some support amongst the Indian population, though not their political leadership who saw the dangers of mutiny on the eve of Independence. The actions of the mutineers were supported by demonstrations which included a one-day general strike in Bombay. The strike spread to other cities, and was joined by elements of the Royal Indian Air Force and local police forces.

Indian Naval personnel began calling themselves the "Indian National Navy" and offered left-handed salutes to British officers. At some places, NCOs in the British Indian Army

ignored and defied orders from British superiors. In Madras and Poona (now Pune), the British garrisons had to face some unrest within the ranks of the Indian Army. Widespread rioting took place from Karachi to Calcutta. Notably, the revolting ships hoisted three flags tied together – those of the Congress, Muslim League, and the Red Flag of the Communist Party of India (CPI), signifying the unity and downplaying of communal issues among the mutineers.

The revolt was called off following a meeting between the President of the Naval Central Strike Committee (NCSC), M. S. Khan, and Vallab Bhai Patel of the Congress, who had been sent to Bombay to settle the crisis. Patel issued a statement calling on the strikers to end their action, which was later echoed by a statement issued in Calcutta by Mohammed Ali Jinnah on behalf of the Muslim League. Under these considerable pressures, the strikers gave way. Arrests were then made, followed by courts martial and the dismissal of 476 sailors from the Royal Indian Navy. None of those dismissed were reinstated into either the Indian or Pakistani navies after independence.

Background

During the Second World War, the Royal Indian Navy (RIN) had rapidly expanded from a small naval force composed of sloops to become a full-fledged navy. The expansion occurred in an ad hoc basis as operational requirements changed over the course of the war, the naval headquarters was moved from Bombay to New Delhi during this period, the navy acquired a varied assortment of warships and landing crafts, and the naval infrastructure in British India was expanded with improved

dockyards, new training facilities and other support infrastructure. The RIN played an instrumental role in halting the progress of Japanese forces in the Indian Ocean Theatre. The force was involved in escorting allied convoys in the Indian Ocean, defending the Indian shoreline against naval invasions and supporting allied military operations through coastlines and rivers during the Burma Campaign.

Due to the war, recruitments began occurring beyond the confines of the "martial races" composed of demographics who were politically segregated. The ratings were composed of a diverse group, from different regions and religions, mostly from rural backgrounds. Some of them had not even physically encountered Britons before the recruitment. Exponential rises in the price of goods, famines and other economic difficulties eventually forced many of them to join the expanding armed forces of the British Raj. In a period of 4 to 6 years, the recruits underwent a transformation in their mindset. They were exposed to developments from around the world.

In 1945, it was ten times larger than its size in 1939. Between 1942 and 1945, the CPI leaders helped in carrying out mass recruitment of Indians especially communist activists into the British Indian Army and RIN for war efforts against Nazi Germany. However once the war was over, the newly recruited men turned against the British government.

Demobilisation

The demobilisation of the Royal Indian Navy began once the war with Japan ended. Leased ships were paid off, number of shore establishments were closed and the sailors were

concentrated into select establishments for their release from service. Much of the concentration occurred in the naval establishments at Bombay, which served as the primary base for the RIN and hence became over crowded with bored and dissatisfied personnel awaiting their release. The dissatisfaction among the Indian personnel came from a variety of causes such as dismal living conditions, arbitrary treatment, inadequate pay and a perception of an uncaring senior leadership. Despite the wartime expansion, the officer staff of the formed remained predominantly white and the navy was noted to be the most conservative in terms of number of Indian officers. The concentration of the personnel and grievances in its ranks combined with tense interracial relations and aspirations to end British rule in India led to a volatile situation in the navy.

Unlike the close relationship between British Army and the British Indian Army, the Royal Indian Navy was not privy to such a relationship with the Royal Navy. However the war had brought the two closer together under the leadership of the British High Command and due to temporary transfers between the two navies. The British naval circles were prevalent with perceptions of lack of competency among Indians, opposition to the independence movement and assumptions of continued British presence in India. John Henry Godfrey was the commanding officer of the RIN and had overseen its transformation from a small coastal defense fleet to a regional navy. In the post war period, he intended to preserve its status as a regional navy and had the vision for the RIN to serve as an instrument of British interests in the Indian Ocean. Operating under this vision, Godfrey proposed the acquisition of new warships from the British Admiralty and maintained that

British officers would be necessary for the fleet to continue functioning as Indian officers lacked the required expertise and training.

Indian National Army trials

The INA trials, the stories of Subhas Chandra Bose ("Netaji"), as well as the stories of INA's fight during the Siege of Imphal and in Burma were seeping into the glaring public-eye at the time. These, received through the wireless sets and the media, fed discontent and ultimately inspired the sailors to strike. After the Second World War, three officers of the Indian National Army (INA), General Shah Nawaz Khan, Colonel Prem Sahgal and Colonel Gurbaksh Singh Dhillon were put on trial at the Red Fort in Delhi for "waging war against the King Emperor", i.e., the Emperor of India.

According to the Home Department of the Raj, the Congress advocacy during the trials, their election campaign for the advisory council and the highlighting of excesses during the Quit India Movement contained inflammatory speeches and had created a volatile atmosphere. There were several upsurges between November 1945 and February 1946. In a September 1945, All India Congress Committee meeting, the party had taken the stand that in case of any confrontations, negotiation and settlement must be the way forward.

Calcutta in particular experienced frequent instances of civil unrest in opposition to the trials, and eventually led to the popular support emerging in favor of the revolutionary vision of an independent India that was advocated by the Communist Party of India.

Unrest in the British forces in India

Between 1943 and 1945, the Royal Indian Navy suffered nine mutinies on board various individual ships.

In January 1946 British airmen stationed in India took part in the Royal Air Force Revolt of 1946 mainly over the slow speed of their demobilisation, but also in some cases issuing protests against being used to potentially quell the independence movement. The Viceroy at the time, Lord Wavell, noted that the actions of the British airmen had influenced both the RIAF and RIN mutinies, commenting "I am afraid that [the] example of the Royal Air Force, who got away with what was really a mutiny, has some responsibility for the present situation."

In early February 1946, mutinies broke out in the Indian Pioneers unit stationed in Calcutta, Bengal Province and later at an signals training center at the air base in Jubbulpore, Central Provinces and Berar. According to Francis Tucker, the commanding officer of the Eastern Command, the dissatisfaction against British colonial rule was rapidly growing within the bureaucracy and the police force as well as in the armed forces itself.

HMIS *Talwar*

HMIS *Talwar* was a shore establishment, with a signals school at Colaba, Bombay. Following the end of the war, the establishment was among the locations in Bombay where a large number of ratings were deployed. Around 1,000 communications operators were residing at the establishment, most of the whom consisted of lower-middle class and middle-

class people with matriculation or college education as opposed to general seamen who were primarily from the peasantry. In late 1945, upon reassignment, around 20 operators along with a dozen sympathisers frustrated with racial discrimination faced by them during their period of service, formed a secretive group under the self designation of *Azad Hindi* (transl. □Free Indians) and began hatching conspiracies to undermine their senior officers.

The first incident occurred on 1 December 1945, when RIN Commanders had intended to open up the establishment to the public; in the morning the group vandalised the premises by littering the parade ground with burnt flags and bunting, prominently displaying brooms and buckets at the tower and painting slogans such as "Quit India" and "Revolt Now!" across various walls of the establishment. The senior officers cleaned up the premises before the public arrived without further action. The weak response emboldened the conspirators who continued on with similar activities over the course of the following months.

The response was a result of correspondences issued by the Commander-in-Chief Claude Auchinleck informing officers to maintain a degree of tolerance for a smooth transition in case of Indian Independence such that British interests are secured by maintaining good relations. Unable to catch the conspirators and restricted from taking strict action against their underlings, the command at HMIS *Talwar* resorted to increasing the pace of demobilization in the hopes that the troublemakers would be pushed out of the force during the process. As a result, the group shrunk in size but the

remaining ones remained enthused for more nationalistic activities.

On 2 February 1946, Auchinleck himself was supposed to attend the establishment and the officers aware of the potential for vandalism had employed guards to prevent any large-scale action beforehand. Despite this, the group was able to add stickers and paint the walls of the podium from where the C-in-C was to receive the establishment's salute, featuring slogans such as "Quit India" and "Jai Hind". The vandalism was spotted before sunrise and Balai Chandra Dutt, a five-year veteran of the war, was caught while escaping the scene with stickers and glue in his hand. Subsequently, his lockers were searched and communist and nationalist literature were found among its contents. The material was considered to be seditious; Dutt was interrogated by five senior officers in quick succession including a rear admiral, he claimed responsibility for all acts of vandalism and announced his status as a political prisoner. He was imprisoned in solitary confinement for seventeen days, while the acts themselves continued unabated following his imprisonment.

On 8 February 1946, a number of naval ratings (enlisted personnel) were court martialed for insubordination, and the commanding officer Frederick King reportedly indulged in racist polemic along with the use of epithets such as "sons of bitches", "sons of coolies" and "junglies" to describe his Indian underlings. Some of the naval ratings filed a formal complaints against the leadership style of the commanding officer. On 17 February, a large number of ratings began refusing food and orders for military parades, King had reportedly used the term "black bastards" to describe a group

of sailors during the morning briefing. By 18 February, the ratings at HMIS *Sutlej*, HMIS *Jumna*, and those at Castle and Fort Barracks in the Bombay Harbour followed suit and began refusing orders, in solidarity with the operators at HMIS *Talwar*.

At 12:30, 18 February 1946, it was reported that all naval ratings below the rank of petty officer at *HMIS Talwar* were refusing commands from the CO. Eventually, the ratings rebelled, seizing control of the shore establishment and expelling the officers. Over the course of the day, the ratings moved across the Bombay Harbour from ship to ship in an attempt to convince other ratings to join them in the mutiny. In the meantime, B. C. Dutt had spent several days in solitary confinement and was allowed to return at the *Talwar* barracks before his expected dismissal from the force. He would later come to be known one of the primary instigators of the mutiny. Within a day, the mutiny had spread to 22 ships in the harbour and 12 other shore establishments in Bombay. On the same day, the mutiny was also joined in by RIN operated wireless stations including those as distant as Aden and Bahrain; the mutineers at HMIS *Talwar* had used available wireless devices at the signals school to establish direct communications with them.

Occupation of Bombay Harbour

On 19 February, the commander-in-chief of the Royal Indian Navy, John Henry Godfrey sent out a communication via the All India Radio, stating that the most stringent measures would be utilised to suppress their mutiny, including if necessary the destruction of the Navy itself. Rear Admiral

Arthur Rullion Rattray, second-in-command to the Royal Indian Navy, and the commanding officer at the Bombay Harbour conducted an inspection in person which confirmed that the unrest was widespread and beyond his control. Rattray insisted on a parley with the mutineers but Auchinleck and Godfrey were both opposed to the idea. The events at HMIS *Talwar* had motivated sailors across Bombay and the Royal Indian Navy to join in by the prospects of a revolution to overthrow the British Raj and in solidarity with the grievances of their naval fraternity.

Over the course of the day, many of the ratings moved into the city armed with hockey sticks and fire axes, causing traffic disruption and occasionally commandeering vehicles. Motor launches seized at the harbour were paraded around and cheered on by crowds gathering at the piers. Demonstrations and agitations broke out in the city, gasoline was seized from passing trucks, tramway tracks outside the Prince of Wales Museum were set on fire, the US Information Office was raided and the American flag located inside was pulled down and burned on the streets.

On the morning of 20 February 1946, it was reported that Bombay Harbour, including all its ships and naval establishments had been overtaken by mutineers. It encompassed 45 warships, 10–12 shore establishments, 11 auxiliary vessels and four flotillas, overtaken by around 10,000 naval ratings. The harbour facilities consisted of the Fort and Castle Barracks, the Central Communications Office which oversaw all signals traffic for naval communications in Bombay, the Colaba receiving station and hospital facilities of the Royal Indian Navy located nearby in Sewri. The warships

included two destroyers HMIS *Narbada* and HMIS *Jumna*, two older warships HMIS *Clive* and HMIS *Lawrence*, one frigate HMIS *Dhanush* and four corvettes HMIS *Gondwana* (K348), HMIS *Assam* (K306), HMIS *Mahratta* (K395) and HMIS *Sind* (K274), among other ships such as gunboats and naval trawlers.

The solitary exception to the mutiny at the Bombay Harbour was the frigate HMIS *Shamsher*, a "test ship" with Indian officers. The commanding officer of HMIS *Shamsher*, Lieutenant Krishnan had created a diversionary signal and moved out of the harbour on 20:00, 18 February 1946. Despite protestations from his Sub-Lieutenant R. K. S. Gandhi, Krishnan did not join the rebellion and was also able to prevent a mutiny from the ratings under his command, with an apparent "charismatic speech" where he used his Indian identity to maintain the chain of command.

The rebellion also included shore establishments in the vicinity of Bombay; HMIS *Machlimar* at Versova, an anti-submarine training school was manned by 300 ratings, HMIS *Hamla* at Marvé which held the residence quarters of the landing craft wing of the RIN had been seized by 600 ratings, HMIS *Kakauri*, the demobilisation center in the city which was seized by over 1,400 ratings who were housed there. On Trombay Island, the Mahul wireless communications station and HMIS *Cheetah*, a second demobilisation center were also seized by mutineers. HMIS *Akbar* at Kolshet, a training facility for Special Services ratings which had the capacity of 3,000 trainees was seized by the 500 ratings who were residing within its premises. Two inland establishments, HMIS *Shivaji* in Lonavala was a mechanical training establishment was seized by 800 ratings

and HMIS *Feroze* in the Malabar Hills, a reserve officer's training facility that had been converted into an officer's demobilisation center, was seized by 120 ratings.

Strike Committee and the *Charter of Demands*

In the afternoon of 19 February, the mutineers at the Bombay Harbour had congregated at HMIS *Talwar* to elect the Naval Central Strike Committee (NCSC) as their representatives and formulate the *Charter of Demands*. Warships and shore establishments became constituencies for the election of the committee from which individual representatives were elected to the committee. Most of the members of the committee remain unknown, and many of them were reportedly under 25. Of those known, were the petty officer Madan Singh and signalman M. S. Khan, who were authorised by the committee to conduct informal talks. The *Charter of Demands* was sent to the authorities and consisted of a mixture of political and service related demands.

- Release of all Indian political prisoners;
- Release of all Indian National Army personnel unconditionally;
- Withdrawal of all Indian personnel from Indonesia and Egypt;
- Eviction of British nationals from India;
- Prosecution of the commanding officers and signal bosuns for mistreatment of crew;
- Release of all detained naval ratings;
- Demobilisation of the Royal Indian Navy ratings and officers, with haste;

- Equality in status with the Royal Navy regarding pay, family allowances and other facilities;
- Optimum quality of Indian food in the service;
- Removal of requirements for return of clothing kit after discharge from service;
- Improvement in standards of treatment by officers towards subordinates;
- Installation of Indian officers and supervisors.

On the warships and shore establishments, the British flags and naval ensigns were pulled down and the flags of the Indian National Congress, All-India Muslim League and the Communist Party of India were hoisted. The Bombay committee of the Communist Party of India called a general strike which was supported by leaders from the Congress Socialist Party, a socialist caucus within the Indian National Congress. The provincial units of the Indian National Congress and the All India Muslim League however opposed the mutiny from the onset. Disappointed and disgruntled with opposition from the national leadership towards the mutiny, the flags of the Congress and Muslim League were pulled down and only the red flags kept aloft.

Intervention by the Southern Command

On 20 February 1946, the Naval Central Strike Committee had recommended some of the ratings to move into the city to garner popular support for their demands. RIN trucks packed with naval ratings entered European-dominated commercial districts of Bombay shouting slogans to galvanize Indians, followed by instances of altercations between the mutineers and Europeans including servicemen. Police personnel,

students and labour organisations in the city went on sympathetic strikes in support of the mutineers. The Royal Indian Air Force units also witnessed unrest in its base of operations in Bombay. The personnel including pilots refused transportation duties for the deployment of British troops in the city and orders to fly bombers over the harbour. Around 1,200 air force strikers began a procession in the city alongside the ratings. The procession was joined in by striking servicemen from the Naval Accounts Civilian Staff.

Meanwhile, the Viceroy's Executive Council convened a meeting and came to the decision to stand firm and accept only unconditional surrender, refusing any notions of a parley. Rear Admiral Rattray issued an order to confine all the naval ratings back into their quarters at the barracks by 15:30. General Rob Lockhart, the commanding officer of the Southern Command was given charge of suppressing the mutiny. The Royal Marines and the 5th Mahratta Light Infantry were deployed in Bombay to push the agitating ratings out of Bombay and back into their barracks.

The strike committee had advised mutineers to refrain from engaging in combat with the army personnel in the city, and the ratings hesitant about engaging in a confrontation with the police and the army retreated to the harbour by afternoon. The troops however proved inadequate in pushing the mutineers back into their barracks. Warning shots from machine guns and rifles were fired near the harbour to prevent the army from advancing further. The naval ratings had taken position at the harbour and were well armed with small arms and ammunitions available at the warships, lockers and munitions depots at the naval establishments. The warships in the

harbour were armed with Bofors 40 mm anti-aircraft guns and main batteries with 4-inch guns, that had been alerted to the advancing troops and directed their guns towards the land. HMIS *Narbada* and HMIS *Jumna* took up positions, pointing their batteries at the oil storage and other military buildings on the Bombay shoreline.

In the evening, the commanding officer of the Royal Indian Navy, Vice Admiral John Henry Godfrey reached Bombay after being flown in from the headquarters at New Delhi. The army had formed an encirclement around the harbour and naval districts. The ratings informed *The Free Press Journal* that the government was attempting to enforce a blockade and cut off food supply to them. During the same time, Godfrey offered to accede to one of the demands, that of improvement in the quality of food which reportedly baffled the mutineers. Parel Mahila Sangh, a communist-affiliated union organised food relief from fishermen and mill workers in Bombay, to be shipped into the harbour.

On 21 February 1946, the commanding officer of the Royal Indian Navy, Vice Admiral John Henry Godfrey released a statement on the All India Radio, threatening the mutineers to surrender immediately or face complete destruction. He had conferred with the First Sea Lord (Chief of Naval Staff), Sir Andrew Cunningham who recommended the swift suppression of the mutiny to prevent it from turning into a greater military conflict. The British flotilla of the Royal Navy, consisting of the cruiser HMS *Glasgow*, three frigates and five destroyers were called in from Singapore. Bombers from the Royal Air Force were flown over the harbour as a show of strength.

The Royal Marines were directed to re-take the Castle Barracks, the mutineers entered into fire fights on some of the army positions on land. The mutineers attempted a probe into the city but the army successfully repulsed it, preventing them from surging into Bombay. Godfrey sent a message to the British Admiralty requesting urgent assistance and stating that the mutineers possessed capabilities to take the city. Meanwhile, the ratings manning ships at the harbour exchanged rifle fire with advancing British troops of the 5th Mahratta Light Infantry. Salvos from the main guns of the RIN warships were fired at the British troops approaching the barracks.

Around 16:00, the firing from the warships was ceased following instructions from the Strike Committee and the ratings retreated out of the barracks. The marines stormed the barrack facilities in the evening, seized the munitions storage and secured all the entrances and exits of the barracks. With the marines having gained a foothold inside the harbour, the Central Strike Committee was moved from the shore establishment HMIS *Talwar* to the state of the art warship HMIS *Narbada*.

In the meantime, Royal Indian Air Force personnel from the Andheri and Colaba camps revolted and joined up with the naval ratings. Sporting white flags spattered with blood, around 1,000 airmen occupied the Marine Drive of Bombay. The contingent issued their own set of demands mimicking the *Charter of Demands* and included a demand for standardisation of pay scales with the Royal Air Force (RAF). The Royal Indian Air Force personnel at the Sion area began a strike in support of the mutineers.

Civil unrest in Bombay

On 22 February 1946, British reinforcements in the form of battalions from the Essex Regiment, the Queen's Regiment and the Border Regiment, along with 146th Regiment of the Royal Armoured Corps arrived at Bombay from Poona, Bombay Province. This was followed in quick succession with the arrival of an anti-tank battery from the Field Regiment of the Royal Artillery stationed in Jubbulpore. Curfew was imposed in the city. Fearing a wider, communist-inspired rebellion in the country, the government decided to crack down on the agitators. The estimated casualties included 236 people killed and thousands injured.

On 23 February 1946, the Naval Central Strike Committee requested all the warships to fly black flags of surrender.

HMIS *Hindustan* and Karachi

The news of the mutiny at HMIS *Talwar* reached Karachi on 19 February 1946. In the afternoon, the naval ratings from the shore establishments HMIS *Bahadur*, HMIS *Himalaya* and HMIS *Monze* called a meeting of ratings at the beach of Manora Island through the Sailors' Association in Karachi. The general body came to a unanimous decision to launch an agitation on 21 February with a procession beginning at the Keamari jetty on the mainland and eventually moving through the city in opposition to British rule and endorsing unity between the Indian National Congress and the All-India Muslim League.

However, on 20 February 1946, before the planned procession could occur, a dozen naval ratings on the old cruiser HMIS

Hindustan disembarked from the ship and refused to return unless certain officers were transferred, in protest against discrimination faced by them. Over the course of the day, the group began to swell as naval ratings from HMIS *Himalaya* followed by ratings from other establishments joined them. The group moved into the Keamari locality with slogans such as "Inquilab Zindabad" (transl.□Long live the revolution), "Hindustan Azad" (transl.□Freedom for Hindustan), urging commercial establishments to begin a general strike and eventually began a march towards the railway station claiming that they intended to march on Delhi. In the meantime, a second meeting was called which quickly came to the decision to drop the planned agitation and support the activities of the ratings in the city. The ratings working through the association, organised for walls in the naval areas and in the city to be struck with posters and painted with galvanising slogans such as "We shall live as a free nation" and "Tyrants your days are over", among others.

Occupation of Manora Island

In the morning of 21 February 1946, Manora Island was rife with unrest. The warship HMIS *Hindustan* docked at the Karachi Harbour had been seized by the naval ratings at midnight, the officers subdued, and the warship moored at the Manora Island. Within hours of the mutiny at HMIS *Hindustan*, the trainings establishment HMIS *Bahadur*, the radar school HMIS *Chamak* and the gunnery school HMIS *Himalaya* were seized by around 1,500 naval ratings, all located on the island. The British officers at HMIS *Bahadur* shot and killed one of the ratings during the process, whose blood soaked shirt became

the flag for the mutineers. The other military vessel in the harbour, HMIS *Travancore* was also seized by the ratings.

The mutiny at the naval establishments at Manora were joined by local residents. By morning, the mutineers were crossing over to Keamari on civilian and military motor launches from the jetty of HMIIS *Himalaya*. Some of the ratings were caught on their way by British manned patrol boats that fired at them and retreated when HMIS *Hindustan* began shelling in their direction with up its twelve-pounder guns. Two ratings on the launches died and several were wounded in the minor confrontation.

In the meantime, troops from the 44th Indian Airborne Division, the Black Watch and a battery of the Royal Regiment of Artillery were deployed in Karachi for assistance. According to unconfirmed reports, many of the Indian regiments refused to fire at the mutineers. The army predominantly relied on British troops for the duration of the mutiny and the civil unrest in the city that followed afterwards.

The authorities were in close contact with their counterparts in Bombay and intended to prevent a similar collaboration between mutineers and civilians that had reportedly led to a critical situation in Bombay. Cordons were placed at the bridges connecting Keamari with the rest of the city by the police, along with British troops armed with Thompson submachine guns. The cordons prevented the mutineers from entering the city and hundreds of ratings were pinned down at the Keamari area throughout the day. Local workers at the dockyards joined up with the ratings and held demonstrations with slogans calling for revolution.

In the evening, the mutineers at Keamari fixed rendezvous points with the workers and boatmen, and returned to the island. The mutineers held a number of meetings at night on the island to deliberate upon a plan of action for the following day. Around 11:00 pm, HMIS Chamak, the radar school received information from HMIS *Himalaya*, the gunnery school and jetty on the island that the HMIS *Hindustan* had received an ultimatum from the authorities to surrender by 10:00 am. HMIS *Hindustan* was the sole warship in the area and commandeered the passage into the Karachi Harbour. In the morning of 22 February 1946, Commodore Curtis, the British commanding officer at the harbour held parley at 8:30 am, coming on board the ship in an effort to persuade the ratings to surrender, and providing "safe conduct" to those who would do so by 9:00 am. The ultimatum's time delineation had been adjusted with the low tide which put the warship off the shore at a strategically disadvantageous position with respect to troops on land.

The parley drew no response and the ultimatum was ignored, the ratings were observed to be in preparations for manning the ship's armaments. Altered by this development, the British troops advanced through Keamari and attempted to board HMIS *Hindustan*, beginning with sniper fire from a distance directed at those on the deck of the ship. The mutineers returned fire with the Oerlikon 20 mm cannons on the ship, heavy machine guns on board the ship were also utilised. Two four-inch main guns on board the ship were primed although their field of vision of impaired due to low tide. In a retaliatory measure, the artillery battery fired at the ship with mortars and field guns, including the 75 millimeter howitzers. The warship refrained from retaliating with its full armament to

avoid hitting sympathetic civilian targets in the city in light of its impaired vision. One of the main gun turrets exploded due to the shelling resulting in a fire aboard the ship, while it was attempting to leave the harbour. On this turn of events at 10:55, the mutineers at HMIS *Hindustan* surrendered and the battle had ended.

In the morning, the British army had issued a warning stating that any civilian approaching a mile of HMIS *Hindustan* would be shot on sight. This delayed crossing of mutineers from Manora to Keamari as it significantly reduced the number of boatmen willing to assist them. The confrontation with HMIS *Hindustan* had ended by the time some of the ratings made it across were met with British troops that had advanced into and occupied Keamari. In the meantime, British paratroopers captured the shore establishments on the island. The Black Watch was also directed to re-take Manora Island, who according to an Intelligence Bureau report to the Home Department had captured the gunnery school at 9:50 am. The report further stated that the casualties at the time were 7 RIN ratings and 15 paratroopers wounded on the island. The remaining ratings were trapped at the jetty on Manora, unable to cross over to Keamari and faced with the Black Watch behind them. In the end, 8-14 were killed, 33 wounded including British troops and 200 mutineers arrested.

Civil unrest in Karachi

Movement and communication between Keamari and Karachi were cut off with the placement of a military and police cordon from 21 February onward. Civilian dhows at Keamari were confiscated by British authorities and brought into the city,

and the military deployment searched vehicles that had entered the city from Keamari to prevent mutineers from infiltrating Karachi. Much of the population was concentrated near the ports and Keamari in particular was densely populated with a heavy working-class concentration, as a result civilian life was severely disrupted with the military deployment and the placement of cordons. Exaggerated narrations of events spread through the city, and the civilian population, which was already sympathetic to the mutineers, were galvanized along with growing apprehensions for the military presence. The narrations included rumours and were primarily spread by the expropriated boatmen and fishermen who were able to maintain some lines of communication with those in Keamari.

On 22 February 1946, flashes of firing and sounds of gunfire from the confrontation could be seen and heard in Karachi. The port area was swarmed with military vehicles where some of them were vandalised by civilians. Indian military police were heckled and jeered at by crowds while British troops, military trucks and dispatches were attacked with stones on several routes. The mutineers surrendered but civil unrest had begun to sweep through the city. The protests which began spontaneously in the preceding days, became more organised with the involvement of students and local leaders. In the evening, the Communist Party of India held a public meeting at the Karachi Idgah park, which witnessed a gathering of around 1,000 people and was presided over by Sobho Gianchandani. According to the authorities, "dangerous and provocative anti-British speeches" were made at this assembly; an expression prominent in the meeting was that the mutineers had shown them how the arms provided to them could really be utilised

while civilians were helpless because of the lack of weapons or contact with the mutineers. The meeting concluded with the decision to call for a city-wide *hartal* (transl. □ general strike) on the following day.

On 23 February 1946, Karachi observed a complete shutdown with warehouses and stores closed, tramway workers on strike, and students from college and schools demonstrating on the streets. The authorities, in an attempt to prevent civil unrest which was witnessed in Bombay a day earlier, arrested three prominent communist leaders in the city and the district magistrate imposed a section 144 order in the Karachi district which prohibited gatherings of more than three people. The police force was however ineffective in enforcing the order due to low morale in the force, abstentions and instances of collusion between police personnel and civilian agitators. Over the course of the day, the streets filled as more and more people joined mass demonstrations and gatherings.

Numerous mass gatherings, meetings and demonstrations were held while the Communist Party of India led a procession of 30,000 people through the city. The subdued naval ratings on Manora Island also observed a hunger strike in the presence of British troops. Many of the striking ratings, some of whom were identified as their leaders, were arrested by the authorities and sent to the military prison camp at Malir in the Thar Desert. At noon, a crowd of thousands had formed at Idgah park which was joined by the Communist Party-led procession. The police force was eventually deployed at the park who were repulsed after several attempts to disperse the crowd. Idgah had become a centre of resistance for the protesters, where later in the day, some of the communist

leaders called for the protesters to disperse but were unable to contain the majority of the crowd who were galvanised by the previous day's radical messages and attacked the nearby police personnel.

The government called for the armed forces to be deployed in the city and the crowd at the park, faced with the arrival of the British troops, scattered into smaller groups. The troops occupied the park in the afternoon, but the smaller groups, inflamed by their deployment, targeted government establishments such as post offices, police stations and the sole *European*-owned Grindlays Bank in the city. Government buildings were vandalised by smaller groups throughout the city and a sub-post office burned to the ground. One group attempted to capture the municipal building but were prevented by the police who arrested 11 youths, including a Communist Party leader. The crowds targeted Anglo-Indians, Europeans and occasionally Indian government servants, who were stripped of their hats and ties, which were then burnt on the ground. This was followed by the British troops moving through the streets and on several occasions resorting to shooting to disperse the crowds. The crowds, which were primarily composed of students and working-class people, dispersed at night as they returned to their homes.

On 24 February 1946, the military forces in the city successfully enforced a curfew. The unrest subsided over the following days and the military presence was removed by the end of 26 February. Estimates of casualties from the shootings come only from official figures: 4–8 killed, 33 injured from police firings in self-defense and 53 policemen injured.

Other revolts and incidents

On 20 February 1946, it was reported that with the aid of radio and telegraph messages from the Signals School and Central Communications Office in Bombay, the mutiny had spread to all RIN sub stations in India, located at Madras, Cochin, Vizagapatam, Jamnagar, Calcutta and Delhi. The Bombay telegraphs also requested assistance from Royal Indian Air Force (RIAF) and Royal Indian Army Service Corps (RIASC). During the mutiny, the supplies provided to the RIASC was pilfered by servicemen and sold off to the mutineers through the black market. HMIS *India*, the naval headquarters at New Delhi witnessed around 80 signals operators refusing to following commands and barricading themselves inside their station.

On 22 February 1946, large-scale agitations by civilians began across several cities other than Bombay and Karachi, such as Madras, Calcutta and New Delhi. Looting was widespread and directed at government institutions, grains stores were looted by the impoverished, as were jewelry shops and banks. Criminal elements known as *goondas* were also reportedly involved.

Andaman Sea

The minesweeper flotilla of the Royal Indian Navy, with its command warship HMIS *Kistna* was stationed in the Andaman Sea. The flotilla included six other ships namely, HMIS *Hongkong*, HMIS *Bengal* (J243), HMIS *Rohilkhand* (J180), HMIS *Deccan* (J129), HMIS *Baluchistan* (J182) and HMIS *Bihar*

(J247). HMIS Kistna received news of the mutiny in Bombay during the breakfast hour on 20 February 1946. The commanding officer of the flotilla addressed the personnel at 16:00 expressing sympathies with "legitimate aspirations" while emphasizing the importance of maintaining order and discipline. The following day, further broadcasts increased tensions between the officers and the naval ratings, and rumours began to spread among the sailors. Lacking direct communication with the mutineers and access to print news, the ratings were primarily informed about the mutiny by the officers and were unable to understand the situation in Bombay.

On 23 February 1946, all seven ships of the minesweeper flotilla ceased duties and went on strike.

Kathiawar

Godfrey had issued a statement through the All India Radio giving the example of the shore establishment HMIS *Valsura* at Jamnagar for having stayed loyal and threatening the destruction of the navy if the mutineers didn't surrender. The broadcast reportedly agitated the ratings.

In Morvi State, a transport vessel named SS *Kathiawar* had set out for sea on 21 February 1946. The ship was seized by the 120 ratings on board after receiving a radio transmission for assistance from the warship HMIS *Hindustan* in Karachi. The ship was subsequently diverted towards Karachi but HMIS *Hindustan* surrendered before they could reach their designation which prompted them to redirect towards Bombay. The mutiny had however ended by the time it reached the city.

Madras

On 19 February 1946, around 150 naval ratings mutinied at the shore establishment and naval base HMIS *Adyar* in Madras, Madras Presidency. The mutineers paraded through the streets of the city shouting slogans and attacked the British officers who attempted to impede them in their activities.

1,600 personnel with the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers at Avadi publicised their decision to refuse orders and initiate a general strike.

On 25 February 1946, the city of Madras observed complete shut down as a result of a general strike.

Punjab

On 22 February 1946, the stations of the RIAF in Punjab witnessed a mass general strike. Several demonstrations in the *bazaars* (transl. □marketplaces) were held across the province by the personnel from the force warning the government against shooting at Indians and demanding the release of the Indian National Army soldiers.

Calcutta

On 22 February 1946, the naval ratings of the frigate HMIS *Hooghly* (K330) began refusing orders in protest against the violent suppression of the mutiny in Bombay and Karachi. The Communist Party of India called a general strike in the city

and around 100,000 workers participated in mass demonstrations and agitations over the following days.

On 25 February 1946, the British troops surrounded the frigate located at the Kolkata Harbour and imprisoned the disobedient ratings. The general strike in the city came to an end on the following day.

Vizagapatnam

On 22 February 1946, the British troops arrested 306 mutineers without use of force.

Lack of support

- The mutineers in the armed forces received no support from the national leaders and were largely leaderless. Mahatma Gandhi, in fact, condemned the riots and the ratings' revolt. His statement on 3 March 1946 criticized the strikers for revolting without the call of a "prepared revolutionary party" and without the "guidance and intervention" of "political leaders of their choice". He further criticized the local Indian National Congress leader Aruna Asaf Ali, who was one of the few prominent political leaders of the time to offer support for the mutineers, stating that she would rather unite Hindus and Muslims on the barricades than on the constitutional front. Gandhi's criticism also belies the submissions to the looming reality of Partition of India, having stated "If the union at the barricade is

honest then there must be union also at the constitutional front."

The Muslim League made similar criticisms of the mutiny, arguing that unrest amongst the sailors was not best expressed on the streets, however serious their grievances might be. Legitimacy could only, probably, be conferred by a recognised political leadership as the head of any kind of movement. Spontaneous and unregulated upsurges, as the RIN strikers were viewed, could only disrupt and, at worst, destroy consensus at the political level. This may be Gandhi's (and the Congress's) conclusions from the Quit India Movement in 1942 when central control quickly dissolved under the impact of suppression by the colonial authorities, and localised actions, including widespread acts of sabotage, continued well into 1943. It may have been the conclusion that the rapid emergence of militant mass demonstrations in support of the sailors would erode central political authority if and when transfer of power occurred. The Muslim League had observed passive support for the "Quit India" campaign among its supporters and, devoid of communal clashes despite the fact that it was opposed by the then collaborationist Muslim League. It is possible that the League also realised the likelihood of a destabilised authority as and when power was transferred. This certainly is reflected on the opinion of the sailors who participated in the strike. It has been concluded by later historians that the discomfiture of the mainstream political parties was because the public outpourings indicated their weakening hold over the masses at a time when they could show no success in reaching agreement with the British Indian government.

The Communist Party of India, the third largest political force at the time, extended full support to the naval ratings and mobilised the workers in their support, hoping to end British rule through revolution rather than negotiation. The two principal parties of British India, the Congress and the Muslim League, refused to support the ratings. The class content of the mass uprising frightened them and they urged the ratings to surrender. Patel and Jinnah, two representative faces of the communal divide, were united on this issue and Gandhi also condemned the 'Mutineers'. The Communist Party gave a call for a general strike on 22 February. There was an unprecedented response and over a lakh students and workers came out on the streets of Calcutta, Karachi and Madras. The workers and students carrying red flags paraded the streets with the slogans "Accept the demands of the ratings" and "End British and Police zoolum". Upon surrender, the ratings faced court-martial, imprisonment and victimisation. Even after 1947, the governments of Independent India and Pakistan refused to reinstate them or offer compensation. The only prominent leader from Congress who supported them was Aruna Asaf Ali. Disappointed with the progress of the Congress Party on many issues, Aruna Asaf Ali joined the Communist Party of India (CPI) in the early 1950s.

It has been speculated that the actions of the Communist Party to support the mutineers was partly born out of its nationalist power struggle with the Indian National Congress. M. R. Jayakar, who was a Judge in the Federal Court of India (which later became the Supreme Court of India), wrote in a personal letter

There is a secret rivalry between the Communists and Congressmen, each trying to put the other in the wrong. In yesterday's speech Vallabhbhai almost said, without using so many words, that the trouble was due to the Communists trying to rival the Congress in the manner of leadership.

The only major political segment that still mentions the revolt are the Communist Party of India. The literature of the Communist Party portrays the RIN Revolt as a spontaneous nationalist uprising that had the potential to prevent the partition of India, and one that was essentially betrayed by the leaders of the nationalist movement.

More recently, the RIN Revolt has been renamed the Naval Uprising and the mutineers honoured for the part they played in India's independence. In addition to the statue which stands in Mumbai opposite the sprawling Taj Wellington Mews, two prominent mutineers, Madan Singh and B.C. Dutt, have each had ships named after them by the Indian Navy.

Aftermath

Between 25 and 26 February 1946, the rest of the mutineers surrendered with a guarantee from the Indian National Congress and the All-India Muslim League and none of them would be persecuted. Contingents of the naval ratings were arrested and imprisoned in camps with distressing conditions over the following months, despite resistance from national leaders, and the condition of surrender which shielded them from persecution.

Number of precautionary measures were taken against possibilities of a second rebellious outbreak. Firing mechanisms were removed from the warships, small arms kept under lock by British officers and army troops were deployed as guards on board warships and at the shore establishments. British admirals despite the mutiny were unwilling to cede control and retained assumptions of the navy acting as an instrument of British interests in the Indian Ocean.

In British circles, the confidence in the loyalty and reliability of Royal Indian Navy was shattered. The mutiny marred the reputation of the John Henry Godfrey. He became known for professional neglect and was blamed for losing control of the navy during the mutiny. Godfrey took responsibility for inability to prevent and contain the rebellion, which had jeopardised British security in the Indian Ocean. Although, he was not held responsible in any official naval proceedings and continued to serve the British Admiralty, he was informally rebuked through means such as being overlooked in award of honors.

Precautions

On 23 March 1946, Vice Admiral Geoffrey Audley Miles replaced Godfrey as the commanding officer of the Royal Indian Navy. Between June 1941 to March 1943, Miles had served as the head of the British naval mission in Moscow and was responsible for coordinating British naval operations with the Soviet Navy. He was appointed as the commanding officer of the British naval forces in Western Mediterranean from March 1943 till the end of the war, and was the British representative at the Tripartite Naval Commission. The diplomatic experience

of Miles hence led to a perceptions of him being best suited to deal with the aftermath of the mutiny by the British Government and expectations on him remained high.

The change in leadership did not bring about change in attitudes in the British naval leadership and Miles embraced the vision for the near and long term of the navy that had been pervaded by Godfrey. He continued to employ British naval officers and no changes were made in the hierarchy of command. Miles personally visited all the shore establishments, paid off the lease on the smaller warships and sent the larger warships for exercises at sea on a continual basis. The schedule was made more hectic to keep the naval ratings distracted and minimize routine contact with the civilian population. The warships remained disarmed and the small arms out of access during the exercises. No further unrest occurred in the navy and Miles was considered to have been at least partially successful in restoring confidence in the reliability in the Royal Indian Navy.

Following independence, the navy was divided into two but British officers remained in positions of authority within the two navies; the Royal Indian Navy (later renamed to Indian Navy) and the Royal Pakistan Navy (later renamed to Pakistan Navy). Vice Admiral William Edward Parry became the commanding officer of the Indian Navy. None of the discharged sailors were pardoned or re-instated in either of the two navies.

Many sailors in HMIS Talwar were reported to have Communist leanings and on a search of 38 sailors who were arrested in the HMIS New Delhi, 15 were found to be subscribers of CPI

literature. The British later came to know that the revolt, though not initiated by the Communist Party of India, was inspired by its literature.

Investigations

Numerous Boards of Inquiry were set up at the shore establishments and naval bases across India. The boards were instituted by the naval authorities as fact finding bodies to investigate the causes and circumstances of the mutiny. The bodies comprised of British armed forces officers and primarily took witness testimonies of RIN officers with a small cross section of other ranks. The cause of the mutiny was determined to have its basis in administrative deficiencies such as inadequate information, failure of regular inspections, lack of experienced petty officers, chefs and officers.

On 8 March 1946, the Commander-in-Chief Claude Auchinleck recommended a Commission of Inquiry to determine the causes and origin of the mutiny.

The Commission became highly politicised. It was criticised for being over-legalistic, selective in its conduct and antagonistic towards the military institution.

The British naval officers remained skeptical of its findings.

The report of the Commission of Inquiry was publicly released in January 1947.

Impact

Clement Attlee announced the Cabinet Mission to India following the mutiny.

Indian historians have looked at the mutiny as a revolt for independence against colonial rule. British scholars note that there was no comparable unrest in the Army, and have concluded that internal conditions in the Navy were central to the mutiny. There was poor leadership and a failure to instill any belief in the legitimacy of their service. Furthermore, there was tension between officers (mostly British), petty officers (largely Punjabi Muslims), and junior ratings (mostly Hindu), as well as anger at the very slow rate of release from wartime service.

The grievances focused on the slow pace of demobilisation. British units were near mutiny and it was feared that Indian units might follow suit. The weekly intelligence summary issued on 25 March 1946 admitted that the Indian Army, Navy and Air Force units were no longer trustworthy, and, for the Army, "only day to day estimates of steadiness could be made". The situation has thus been deemed the "*Point of No Return*."

The British authorities in 1948 branded the 1946 Indian Naval Mutiny as a "larger communist conspiracy raging from the Middle East to the Far East against the British crown".

However, probably just as important remains the question as to what the implications would have been for India's internal politics had the revolt continued. The Indian nationalist leaders, most notably Gandhi and the Congress leadership, had

apparently been concerned that the revolt would compromise the strategy of a negotiated and constitutional settlement, but they sought to negotiate with the British and not within the two prominent symbols of respective nationalism—the Congress and the Muslim League.

In 1967 during a seminar discussion marking the 20th anniversary of Independence; it was revealed by the British High Commissioner of the time John Freeman, that the mutiny of 1946 had raised the fear of another large-scale mutiny along the lines of the Indian Rebellion of 1857, from the 2.5 million Indian soldiers who had participated in the Second World War. The mutiny had accordingly been a large contributing factor to the British deciding to leave India. "The British were petrified of a repeat of the 1857 Mutiny, since this time they feared they would be slaughtered to the last man".

Legacy

In India, the naval mutiny is recognised as a major episode in the Indian independence movement.

The rising was championed by Marxist cultural activists from Bengal. Salil Chaudhury wrote a revolutionary song in 1946 on behalf of the Indian People's Theatre Association (IPTA). Later, Hemanga Biswas, another veteran of the IPTA, penned a commemorative tribute. A Bengali play based on the incident, *Kallol* (Sound of the Wave), by radical playwright Utpal Dutt, became an important anti-establishment statement, when it was first performed in 1965 in Calcutta. It drew large crowds to the Minerva Theatre where it was being performed; soon it

was banned by the Congress government of West Bengal and its writer imprisoned for several months.

The revolt is part of the background to John Masters' *Bhowani Junction* whose plot is set at this time. Several Indian and British characters in the book discuss and debate the revolt and its implications.