

CHAPTER TEN

THE FINAL THRUST

MOBILIZATION

A Lion too Big for any Cage

(1911-1945)

There was not a single soul in the front rank of the Indian revolutionary fight whom the most efficient police force of the British Empire, in India and abroad, was unable to put into prison or detain in the lock-up even for a single day. Indeed, RASH BEHARI BOSE had the unique distinction in this respect. There were a good many who smilingly embraced death to escape arrest, but amongst the living there was seldom any who could.

From the time that Rash Behari entered the arena till death intervened, he was not only thinking but dangerously acting for freedom of the Motherland. The motto of his life was summed up in the following few words:

“Independence India must have, because her Independence is essential for the regeneration of the whole world. It is not the end in itself, but it is a means to an end and that end is destruction of Imperialism and Militarism and the creation of a better world for all to live in.”

From 1911 onwards he had worked for revolution in India and had established contact from the north-west to north-east of India, and selected his headquarters at Lahore serving as a living link between the revolutionaries of Delhi, Punjab and Bengal.

Rash Behari was held responsible for the introduction of terrorist movement from Bengal to Northern India. The object of the movement as stated by Rash Behari himself was

“to awaken the masses by the commission of outrages to the fact that they are living under a foreign rule. Then a strong desire will burst among them for open revolution.”

He always acted upto his declared policy and organised a

series of outrages sometimes exposing himself to the risk of arrest and its logical consequence.

His complicity in the outrage on December 23, 1912, on Lord Hardinge, the Viceroy and Governor-General of India, was accepted by the police as certain. He was declared an accused in the Delhi, Lahore and Benares Conspiracy Cases and heavy rewards were announced for his apprehension, alive or dead.

Though attached to the Forest Research Institute, Dehra Dun, as its Head Clerk, it was amazing that he could find so much time to devote to secret political work.

Rash Behari gathered round him a group of devoted workers like Amir Chand, Abadh Behari, Balmokand, Pingley, Basanta Kumar and a host of others who latterly either sacrificed their lives on the gallows or narrowly escaped it with transportation for life or long terms of imprisonment.

With the Bengal revolutionaries his contact was most intimate. He almost exclusively depended upon them for the supply of ready-made bombs. On his advice a few young men from Punjab and Delhi went to Bengal to learn the technique of manufacturing of bombs from the revolutionaries. While preparing men of his Party for violent actions he would not neglect propaganda through literature, leaflets, books, booklets, secret newspapers and the like. With enormous confidence in himself, he undertook the responsibility of supplying bombs and bomb-making materials when there were occasions for their need.

It was a remarkable fact that though a reward was offered for his arrest and his photograph had been widely circulated, the 'wanted man' succeeded in living in Benares during nearly the whole of 1914, without the police being aware of his presence. He took the precaution of going out chiefly at night, but in the early part of his stay, interviews were held in the daytime out of doors either in the Victoria Park or in some other garden.

A house was taken for Bose in Misri Pokhra behind the Jogeswar Press and there he lived from February to November, 1914. He was frequently visited by different members of the conspiracy including those coming from Punjab and Bengal. While engaged in examining two bomb-caps on the night of November 18, 1914, he was severely injured by explosion of one of them. He at once shifted his residence to a house in Bengali-

tola. A momentous meeting between two giants, Jatin Mukherji and Rash Behari, was held at this time. Jatin had been losing enthusiasm with the type of workers that had been coming to him for enlistment in the party. Sometimes he would feel depressed with the thought that the time for a mass action was yet to come. He had been conversing with Rash Behari when Vishnu Ganesh Pingley was allowed to enter into the room and have a share in the discussion. What Pingley said impressed Jatin so deeply that he told Rash Behari about his changed mind because there were young men like Pingley still who could be fully trusted and depended upon for serious action.

Rash Behari showed supreme courage in face of danger and his presence of mind to get out of a scrape seldom left him in times of need. In Calcutta, instead of seeking a by-lane or an obscure quarter for living in concealment, he selected a room above the Dhurrumtola Post Office, located in one of the busiest parts of the city.

He was capable of assuming a disguise in the most successful way. At Lahore, he donned in Punjabi dress and looked absolutely like a person born and brought up in Punjab. He looked like a native of any particular Province according to his choice of the dress. He had a number of *aliases* but was commonly known as "Satinder Chunder" or "Fat Babu" amongst his associates. There were very few who knew him by his correct name.

Though he had neglected his studies in school, he made up the deficiency in subsequent years by sincere application to acquisition of knowledge. Besides Bengali, his mother tongue, he could speak fluently in Hindi, Punjabi, Gujrati and English and the mastery of this art had been of a great help to him to carry on with his mission evading arrest.

The plan for a general rising fixed for February 21, 1915, had to be advanced to the 19th due to leakage of secret through spies working within the ranks. It was not possible to communicate all the centres about the change of date and the Government now forearmed, took all precautionary measures to thwart the revolt and the whole plan fizzled out. A large number of his trusted lieutenants connected with the plan were arrested at the time.

In the preliminary enquiry of the Delhi Sedition Case started on March 17, 1914, Rash Behari was charged under Secs. 120-B

and 302 I.P.C. The warrant for arrest returned unserved, as he was on leave from his office, the Forest Research Institute at Dehra Dun. The petition for declaring him as a 'proclaimed offender' was granted by the Court against him with a fresh *alias*, Benode Behari Bose. A circular containing the description of Bose was published on March 27, 1914, stating that "the man is about thirty years of age, fair complexioned and tall, has large eyes; and the third finger of one hand is stiff and scarred due to some accident."

The entire police force of India looked so small before one single man who had made them the laughing stock of the whole world. There must have been severe strictures on their inefficiency and pressure from the Indian and Home Governments to try every means to arrest the arch revolutionary. There began an all-out search to find out the enigmatic figure. The entire machinery of the Government became frantic over its failure but the net was being drawn closer around the fugitive.

It was now not safe to stay in India any longer. Rash Behari came to Chandernagore at the insistence of his friends to leave the country. A passport was secured in the assumed name of P. N. Tagore. The disguise was perfect and Rash Behari bade adieu to his native land on May 12, on board the *Shamuki Maru* sailing from the Man-of-War Jetty in Calcutta. He reached Singapore on May 22, 1915.

The activities of Rash Behari Bose in India would have been sufficient to eke out a prominent place for him in the annals of the Freedom Movement in India. But his soul could not rest in peace unless either his mission was fulfilled or the cruel hand of death had removed him from his field of activity—no matter whether it was India or a foreign land.

From Singapore he reached Tokyo in the early part of June 1915. He was impatient to help India and went to Shanghai in the middle of June 1915, with a definite plan in this regard. He had knowledge of the effort that was made to smuggle arms into India with the help of Germany and working on the trail met the Germans in Shanghai with the same objective. It was an abortive attempt, nothing coming out of the venture.

It was now necessary to acquaint the people of Japan about India's needs and to make the Japanese posted with what had been going on inside the vast sub-continent. A meeting organised

by him was held on November 27, 1915, in which he delivered a speech violently denouncing the British rule in India.

The false cloak of P. N. Tagore fell off and there was now no doubt about his identity any longer. Under pressure from the British Government Rash Behari and another Bengali were summoned to appear before the police, but they preferred to go underground. A hunt by the police was of no avail. Rash Behari was given shelter by the family of Aizo Soma with the full knowledge and help of a highly placed Japanese gentleman named Toyama who occupied an exalted place in Japanese social and political life.

An Extradition Order was passed directing him to leave Japan within five days. It became infructuous; the person affected by the Order could not be traced anywhere. A highly efficient police official was sent by the Government of India on a special mission in 1915, to ascertain the extent of seditious sentiment prevailing in the minds of the Indians in the Far East in general and of the whereabouts of Bose in particular.

The Officer submitted (*Report on the Indian Sedition in the Far East in 1917*) that Rash Behari Bose:

"has been living in concealment and that his condition of life must militate greatly against his efficiency as conspirator. Towards the latter part of July, Rash Behari disappeared completely from Tokyo, where his place of refuge had become known to the British authorities. After an exhaustive and skilfully conducted enquiry he was discovered at Okitsu, a village in the vicinity of Kastura, a town in the East Coast.

"Bose after his discovery almost immediately left for Tokyo, where he is believed to be concealed in the compound of the Lord High Chamberlain to the Emperor although it is possible that it is merely some retainer of the high official who is harbouring Bose without his master's knowledge.

"Intercepted letters to Bose show conclusively that he is still in close touch with the heads of conspiracy in America such as Naren Bhattacharya, etc. and that he is still devoting himself to revolutionary work, so far the disabilities imposed by his position will permit.

"His importance has in no way depreciated, the limitation of his activity being merely an accident arising out of the popularity of his position.

"Tarak Das while in Japan, is known to have been in touch with Bose, and appears to have looked up to him as some one greater than himself. The two are said to have evolved a scheme for the sinking of ships by means of explosives to be placed on board, although so far as is known, the matter never advanced beyond the stage of pure discussion.

"During the period of his disappearance Rash Behari Bose passed under the Japanese name of Hayachi Ichiro, which, it is believed, was known to Tarak Nath Das."

Fortunately for India and India's cause of Independence, a Japanese schooner was attacked by a British ship which completely changed the attitude of Japan towards England and when the deportation order was withdrawn, Rash Behari came out of hiding in April 1916.

In two years he was married in July 1918, to Toshiko, the daughter of Aizo and Kokko Soma who had lent their protecting wings and covered him against all dangers. Bose lived in Japan just like a Japanese learning the difficult language in about four months.

The foreigner was naturalised on July 2, 1923, and became a full-fledged citizen of the Land of the Rising Sun. He lost his wife Toshiko, a friend in weal and woe, on March 3, 1925.

The loss of Toshiko was a severe shock to him but his love for the Motherland sustained him, giving him strength to go on with his mission. Rash Behari was present in person at Nagasaki Conference of the Asiatics held on August 1, 1926, where 142 people from China, India, Afghanistan, Philippines, Vietnam and Japan met (Bose, B. B.: *Karma Veer Rash Behari*, p. 199) to discuss the problems concerning Asia.

In 1937, when the Sino-Japanese War broke out, thirty Indians met in the Rainbow and the *Indian Independence League* was formed. Another Conference of All-Asian Youths (Oshawa, J. G.: *Two Great Indians in Japan*, p. 37) was held in Sankaido in Tokyo on October 28, 1937.

With a view to enlisting support for India's Independence, Bose published several books and two magazines, one in English and another in the Japanese language.

Things had been moving fast in East Asia and the climax was reached when Japan declared war on U.S.A. on December 8, 1941. Rash Behari became alert and declared the aim of his *Independence League*, as firstly, to throw away the foreign domination over India and secondly, to protect Indians in the territories occupied by Japan.

This was closely followed by the formation of the *Indian National Army* on December 11, 1941, at Kotabaru in a historic

gathering consisting of some Indian Officers working in the British Indian Army and some Indian leaders. (*Source*: Shri Debnath Das, I.N.A.).

The shrewd Japanese thought of using the Indians taken prisoner in Malaya and one of their Generals met Mohan Singh of 1/14 Punjab Regiment and took him to the Japanese Commander-in-Chief on December 17, 1941. After a prolonged discussion all Indian prisoners were placed at Singh's control to add to the number of the *Indian National Army* which would co-operate with Nippon's forces to drive away the Britishers from India.

Singapore fell to Japanese assault on February 15, 1942. On the next day in the Imperial Diet, Tojo, the Premier of Japan pledged his support to the cause of Indian Independence.

A meeting of leading Indians from different parts of Malaya was held in Singapore on March 9 and 10, 1942. A suggestion came from Bose to hold a meeting of representative Indians in Tokyo. According to Bose's suggestion the next meeting of prominent Indians of East Asia was held under his presidency for three days, from March 28 to 30, 1942. *The Indian Independence League* hitherto existing in a fluid state was formally declared to the world. It desired the members to immediately start an Independence movement amongst all classes of Indians in East Asia. It was resolved at the Conference

"that military action against India will be taken only by the Indian National Army and under the command of Indians, together with such military, naval and air co-operation and assistance as may be requested from the Japanese authorities by the Council of Action of the Indian Independence League to be formed and that the framing of the future constitution of India will be left entirely to representatives of the people of India."

At the end of the Conference it was decided to hold a bigger and more representative Conference at Bangkok sometime in June 1942, to officially inaugurate the Indian Independence movement. The Bangkok Conference was held for nine days from June 15 to 23, 1942, in the presence of 100 delegates representing Indians in Japan, Hong Kong, Manchukuo, Burma, Borneo, Java, Malaya and Thailand.

In the preamble to the resolution it was stated that the war

of Greater Asia afforded the greatest opportunity to destroy British Imperialism in Asia and to realise the goal of complete independence for India. For the achievement of this objective the Indian Independence League was formed which was to raise an Army called the *Indian National Army* from among the Indian soldiers.

A Council of Action was formed with Rash Behari as its first President with four other Members. It was resolved that

“the formation, command, control and organisation of the Indian National Army be in the hands of Indians themselves.”

The Conference desired that the Nippon Government would make a formal declaration to the effect that

“immediately on the severance of India from the British Empire, the Imperial Government of Japan shall respect the territorial integrity and recognise the full sovereignty of India free from any foreign influence, control or interference of a political, military or economic nature.”

By another resolution it requested the Japanese Government “to hand over the properties owned by the Indians...and left by them owing to the exigencies of war to the Council of Action.”

The most significant resolution was (No. 31 on the agenda) was to request “Sjt. Subhas Chandra Bose to be kind enough to come to East Asia” and appealed to the Government of Japan to make necessary arrangements for bringing Subhas Bose to East Asia.

Rash Behari communicated the purport of the resolution and extended his personal request to his would-be successor over a radio-telephone which Subhas Chandra gladly accepted.

Soon there was a very serious hitch over the acceptance of the Bangkok resolutions by the Japanese Government, and particularly over the I.N.A., its relations and status *vis-a-vis* the Japanese Imperial Army and also over its control. General Mohan Singh put up a stiff resistance to Tokyo's request to shift the I.N.A. from Malaya to Burma before all the points formulated at the Bangkok Conference had been clarified by the Japanese Government. The most that the Japanese Government was prepared to concede did not reach even the least that the Indians wanted to. On this and other issues the whole Council of Action, except Rash Behari, resigned on December 8, 1942.

Between June and December 1942, with his headquarters at Bangkok, Rash Behari toured extensively in Thailand, Malaya, Burma, Java, Sumatra and other places enlisting support for the *Indian Independence League*. He also addressed radio messages to Indians at home and appealed to leaders of all schools of thought in the country to present a united front to the enemy. He offered to the fighters on the Indian soil the services of 'the League' in every possible way within its limits.

With the sole charge of a ramshackle body anyone else than Rash Behari would have given up the game and retired. He could not let slip the opportunity that Japan's War with Britain had brought to the door of India. With unparalleled steadfastness and devotion to the cause he valiantly braved the storm and in the face of chances of being misunderstood he held the helm with unfaltering grip. On April 3, he assumed dictatorial powers to stem the tide of unrest and disintegration of the militia which he was able to do through ceaseless labour and limitless patience.

The headquarters of 'the League' was shifted from Bangkok to Singapore and grounds were prepared for receiving Subhas Chandra Bose and investing him with the sole authority and unbounded responsibility to carry on the Second War of Independence to its logical end.

In April 1943, Rash Behari left his headquarters at Singapore for Tokyo. Subhas Chandra reached Tokyo on June 13, 1943. A conference of the representatives of Indians throughout East Asia was summoned to be held in Singapore on July 4, 1943. Rash Behari accompanied by Subhas Chandra reached Singapore on July 3. ?

The old and new leaders of the Movement inspected the *Indian National Army* on the ground in front of the Singapore City Hall on July 4, 1943, before the historic Session commenced its deliberations.

The two stalwarts of the Indian Freedom Movement stood side by side before a huge gathering of Indians from all the countries of East Asia, of all ages, men and women, using different languages and belonging to diverse religious faiths.

Rash Behari in words that bubbled forth from the depth of the heart, introduced Subhas Chandra to the vast concourse of men by saying:

"Friends and Comrades-in-Arms! You might now ask me what did I do in Tokyo for your cause; what present I have brought for you. Well, I have brought for you this present (turning to Subhas)—Srijut Subhas Chandra Bose needs no introduction to you, India, or to the world. He symbolises all that is best, noblest, the most daring and the most dynamic in the youth of India.

"Indians' best is represented in him.

"Friends and Comrades-in-Arms! In your presence today I resign my office and appoint Subhas Chandra Bose as President of the Indian Independence League in East Asia."

In publicly accepting the heavy responsibility Subhas Chandra in a suitable speech expressed his deep reverence for Rash Behari and recounted his services to the Motherland. He concluded by saying:

"His marvellous achievements at the risk of his life during the last War for liberation of India are not only fresh in our memories but are also in the records of the British Imperialism."

Rash Behari was not allowed to retire but was selected by the new President as the Chief Adviser to the Provisional Government of Azad Hind.

Continuous hard labour in the most difficult and uncertain conditions, suffering as had he been from diabetes and bereavement from the death of his dear wife and lately of his son, Mashohide, the Great Hero of hundred fights who never faltered or taken rest for decades at a stretch, fell ill in January 1945, and had to be removed to hospital for treatment.

During his illness His Majesty the Emperor of Japan decorated him with the Second Order of Merit of the Rising Sun with Double Rays. To the last moment of his life his predominant thought was the emancipation of his Motherland. Quietly, the one time President of the Hindu Mahasabha in Japan, slipped into the other world on January 21, 1945, with a heart yearning for visiting the soil of his birth, the playground of his younger days and the battlefield of his manhood.

He expressed the essence of the philosophy of his struggle on April 25, 1942, when he said:

"I was a fighter,
One Fight more;
The last and
The best."

Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, Head of the State, Provisional Government of Azad Hind, paid glowing tribute to Rash Behari Bose, the Supreme Adviser to the Provisional Government of Azad Hind, which ran:

"The sad demise of Sri Rash Behari Bose is a personal loss to me and to my co-workers, besides being a serious loss to the cause of India's Independence. The late Rash Behari was not only a born revolutionary but also a great man. When I was in my teens I used to thrill at hearing about the daring exploits of Rash Behari in his anti-British revolutionary activities in India. Now, thirty years later when I came into close personal contact with him in East Asia, I was deeply impressed by his burning ardour and unbounded optimism. Neither his advancing age nor his failing health blunted the edge of his fighting spirit.

"India cannot be sufficiently grateful to the late Sri Rash Behari for the yeoman service he rendered to the cause of India's Freedom during his sojourn for Nippon a generation ago. It will be remembered that when Dr. Rabindranath Tagore returned to India after a visit to Nippon, he paid a glowing tribute to the selfless services that Rash Behari Bose was rendering to the cause of India's Liberation. The goodwill, sympathy and friendship for India that he built up in Nippon bore fruit when the Greater East Asia War broke out, and the Government and the people of Nippon pledged all-out aid in India's fight for Freedom.

"The late Rash Behari has been rightly described as the Father of the Indian Independence Movement in East Asia since the outbreak of the Greater East Asia War; and it may be truly said of him that he lived and died for India's Freedom. Among his most outstanding services to the cause of his Motherland will be counted the leading part he played at the Bangkok Conference and the establishment of Indian Independence Leagues throughout East Asia with Headquarters at Bangkok.

"But for his illness in recent months he would have taken a much more active part in the Provisional Government of Azad Hind. I vividly recall the moving scene at his sick bed when I visited him more than once when I was recently in Tokyo. Optimism was writ large on his face, and he was not in the least depressed over our failure to take Imphal in the first assault. He thought only of India and India's Freedom till the last moments of his life.

"Rash Behari Bose is dead, but his indomitable spirit will live in our hearts for ever and will inspire us to carry on our fight until the last Britisher is driven out of India, and until India achieves complete Independence—The Dream of his Life."

On January 25, 1945, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose issued instructions to the Indian Independence League branches throughout East Asia to hold mass meeting of Indians on January 29,

1945, the day of the Funeral Ceremony of Rash Behari Bose to be held in Tokyo.

A Special Meeting of the Council of Ministers and Advisers of the Provisional Government was held at the Office of the Provisional Government Headquarters on January 25, at 6-30 p.m. His Excellency Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose presided.

The Council unanimously passed the following resolution on the death of Sri Bose, the entire Council standing and observing one-minute silence:

"This meeting of the Council of Ministers and Advisers of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind records its profound grief at the sad and untimely demise of Sri Rash Behari Bose, . . . and further places on record its sense of appreciation of the manifold outstanding services rendered by him to the cause of Independence throughout his life. As the only fitting tribute to the beloved memory of the late Sri Bose this Council reiterates once again his resolve to carry on the fight for India's Independence with unrelenting vigour until complete independence is achieved, and the life-mission of Sri Rash Behari Bose is thereby fulfilled."

The Council then resolved unanimously to create a new Order to be known as the *Order of Tamgha-E-Azad Hind* and to award the first decoration of the First Class of that Order posthumously to the late Sri Bose in grateful recognition of his sacrifices in the cause of India's Independence.

The Council also decided to award a Medal, to be known as the Rash Behari Bose Medal, to the successful Indian Cadet in the Military Academy in Tokyo.

This is what a handful of Indians beset with danger all around did with limitations patent to their very existence for the Great Fighter for India's freedom; but what about his countrymen of the mainland and the Sovereign State of India built on the ashes of Rash Behari Bose and the patriots who had immolated themselves at the Altar of the Motherland?

Victims of Air-Crash

(1942)

Four prominent members, viz., SATYANANDA PURI and PRITAM SINGH of Bangkok, and AKRAM and NILKANTHA IYER of Malaya of the *Indian Independence League* started on March 13, 1942, from Singapore to attend the Indian Independence Conference held at Tokyo. The plane failed to reach destination and the wreckage was discovered on April 1, 1942. A full military funeral was accorded to the victims of the War of Independence on April 5, 1942.

They Return to Die

(1942-1943)

The *Indian Independence League* took a very bold step in sending their own men to the interior of the Motherland to work up from within a revolt and to transmit news to the League 'outside'.

They were fourteen in number divided into four groups, two to reach by land and two by sea to get into India.

One batch of five landed in Calicut and was composed of M. A. KADIR, S. A. ANANDAN and three others. The second batch of another five men including SATYEN BARDHAN reached Kathiawad Coast.

They came by submarine and were transferred to a rubber boat five miles off from the land. Fighting against waves it took them 21 hours to reach the shore of India. Satyen had a transmitter with him, in the operation of which he had been known to be an adept.

On landing, before they could find a safe hideout they were noticed by the men on the shore and looked upon with suspicion. The police was informed. They were arrested and taken into custody within a few hours of their landing.

Of the two groups that started by land, the first batch numbering four reached Chittagong on October 26, 1942. The second, composed of six soldiers of which FOUZA SINGH was one, came

by Assam. The news of the arrival was communicated to the police headquarters by spies and informers stationed in those areas and their arrest was now only a matter of days.

Those arrested on the east and west coast of India were kept in the Madras Fort and the prisoners from Chittagong and Assam were removed to the same Fort in due course.

The accused were placed on trial for waging war against the King, acting as enemy agents under the Indian Penal Code and the War Emergency Ordinance on March 8, 1943. Judgment was delivered on April 1.

ABDUL KADIR of Travancore, S. A. ANANDAN, SATYEN BARDHAN of Bengal, FOUZA SINGH of Punjab and another were sentenced to death. The fifth man escaped death on the strength of a successful appeal.

The four comrades, soldiers of the *Indian National Army*, were executed in the Madras Penitentiary on September 10, 1943.

Almost the whole night previous to the execution the prison reverberated with the song, *Bande Mataram*. With great courage each of them ascended the steps to the gallows while shouting *Bande Mataram* to the last breath. ABDUL KADIR shouted *Subhas Babu ki jai ! Down with the British Government ! Victory to India !*

The wind carried the message to every corner of India and it did not take long before India achieved independence on the ashes of these martyrs.

From the meagre information that is now available most of these men had been earning their livelihood in different parts of East Asia with their own labour. When call for enlistment came they offered their services as 'Volunteers'.

Satyen Bardhan had been working in the Post and Telegraph Department in Malaya when it was overrun by the Japanese. He found himself stranded at Sebambom for some time. At the first opportunity he joined the *Indian Independence League* and was sent to Penang to receive training connected with the war. He had Kadir and Fouza Singh as co-trainees in the Institute. With the formation of the *Azad Hind Fauj* Satyen joined it. He was given a special training in radio transmission by both Indian and Japanese experts besides training in fighting, etc.

Satyen Bardhan in his last letter to his brother and (maternal) uncle, a co-accused in the case wrote :

"I have got nothing to say or to write to you I feel so happy and proud that God has ordained me to sacrifice my life at the Altar of my Motherland Opportunity, if ever, comes handy, please try to take revenge (on our enemy). The sacrifice of life (for the cause of freedom) is nothing new to the Bengalis.

Yours fortune-favoured

KANU.

APPENDIX

Copy of Abdul Kadir's letter to his father :

Madras Prison, 9th September, 1943

Revered Abbajan,

. This is for the last time that I am writing to you. In various ways we are confronted from time to time with situations and events that are exceedingly painful and heart-rending (killing). We should remember that Khodataala (God) creates such situations to test our hearts. In the march of life we are faced very frequently with sorrow, poverty, despair, frustration and even danger to our very existence. In such circumstances it does not behove us to fret and foam (to protest) against them or to put blame against any agency. On the other hand we should accept those calamities as the blessings of the Almighty Allah. Our duty is to submit ourselves unquestioningly to His Grace and with an unfaltering mind to welcome them; and regard them without demur as part of our existence. The Sacred Koran also teaches us the same lesson. Very frequently when we are faced temporarily with such perplexities, Allah endows us with such strength to our mind that we can overcome them with courage and comparative ease.

He never puts us in such a position which are beyond our limit of endurance, because He is so kind and there is no end to His kindness to us.

Dear Father, I claim myself to be very thankful because Allah has endowed me with such a mind which feels never convulsed and is always calm. When we are faced with the sorest trial of life it is unbecoming of us to raise a faint tone of protest or to harbour the least ill-feeling against His dispensation. It is the supreme moment of my life when I am to submit ungrudgingly to the will of God and to sacrifice my life at His altar. Every moment my mind is surcharged with heavenly strength, unalloyed joy and unprecedented quietitude.

I am perfectly certain that this letter will add a good deal to your fund of sorrow already large.When I realise that your eyes have shed an unceasing flow of tears for me, I lose control over myself. Perhaps you cherished an idea that after I had reached Malaya I would forget my youthful delinquencies; may be, I would be of some help to you. What can I do for you in the present circumstances? You enquire of God, pray at His feet and you would get the answer.

Like all other creatures man has to die within a limited period of time. But there is one great difference. During the course of existence man puts a meaning, a mission, to his life and thereby raises himself to a higher plane than his fellow creatures. Instances are not rare when he firmly grasps those ideals and marches towards his goal even challenging death. With absolute selflessness and implicit faith in the ideal he gets himself prepared for any exigency. He who knows the reality of existence never cares for this ephemeral body.

The judgment in our case was delivered on April 1, last. I was awarded five years' imprisonment under Section 121 I.P.C. and a sentence of death under the Emergency Laws.

Tomorrow before 2 a.m. flame of this lamp of life will go out for ever. This hand will no longer hold the pen for writing.

On the 7th of the Sacred month of Ramjan in the early hours between 5 and 6 the life will see its end.

Revolt in the Army

(1943)

It is a pity that so little is known of a band of rebels who had worked within the Army itself in their own way to advance the cause of Indian Independence. In fact, spirit of resistance or defections within the ranks made a foreign Government feel that it was no longer possible to rule over a vast country by the White paid servants alone without the help of loyal Indians, the native of the soil.

The secret military intelligence brought the report to the authorities that a section of the *4th Madras Coastal Defence Battery* had been contemplating sabotage, incendiarism wherever possible, tampering with the loyalty of the forces by trying to cause desertions and encouraging tensions and rivalries amongst soldiers housed in army barracks.

The military police arrested about a dozen 'rebels' on April 18, 1943, on charges of acting against the Government and obstructing and or adversely affecting the war efforts.

A Court-Martial was held on July 6 and August 5, 1943, in the St. Andrews Church, Bangalore, where all the accused were convicted and nine Bengali young soldiers, *viz.*,

- (i) MANKUMAR BASU THAKUR, aged 21 years,
- (ii) NANDA KUMAR DEY (25),
- (iii) DURGADAS RAY CHAUDHURI (25),
- (iv) NIRANJAN BARUA (23),
- (v) CHITTA RANJAN MUKHERJI (24),
- (vi) PHANI BHUSAN CHAKRABARTI (23),
- (vii) SUNIL KUMAR MUKHERJI (22),
- (viii) KALIPADA AICHI (23), and
- (ix) NIRENDRA MOHAN MUKHERJI (21)

were condemned to death.

Two were sentenced to transportation for life and one to seven years' rigorous imprisonment.

The nine condemned prisoners were about to be executed in Mysore. But due to the fact that the trial had been held by a

British Court-Martial, the Mysore Government objected to the execution within the State territory.

As killing could be done at any other place with as much ease and with the same effect, the British Government removed the prisoners to the Madras Penitentiary where four (or six) other condemned prisoners had been hanged about a month before.

Remarkable courage was shown by the youngmen who were led in batch of two's from their respective cells. All of them gave full-throated shouts of *Bande Mataram*, embraced each other with hearty smiles and gave up their lives on September 27, 1943, on the gallows like the heroes on the battlefields.

On the high Seas

(1945)

Of the few able Lieutenants of Rash Behari Bose, D. S. DESHPANDE had been the ablest enjoying Bose's implicit faith. Deshpande reached Japan in 1930, and within a short time came in contact with his leader. He showed particular interest in the affairs of the Indian students visiting Japan for whom Bose had been trying to find accommodation and other facilities during their residence in the country of their sojourn.

While Bose was busy organising the *Indian National Army* and had to visit South-East Asia for the purpose, Deshpande accompanied Bose on almost every occasion. In one of his itineraries Deshpande while returning to Japan in April 1945, his ship was torpedoed and sunk by the Americans and a valuable life was lost on the high seas. (Source: Ram Singh Rawal in *The Hindusthan Standard*, Special Number).

THE SALLY

Pilgrim Destined for Battlefield

(1914-1945)

Though a brilliant student of his *alma mater*, Subhas seldom showed that robustness in his early life that marked his youth and the latter part of his eventful career. He showed his bias towards a spiritual life from his youth which had drawn him away in April 1914, from the cosy corner of a well-to-do family home. When budding into youth, he prepared himself for a life of great hardship in strange surroundings amongst people who were completely unknown and without any chance of regular food and shelter. His search for a 'Guru' proved abortive and he came back home in a chastened mood.

He did well in his Matriculation and I. A. Examinations and when in the Third Year Class of the Presidency College, Calcutta, an incident of great importance in his life in the shape of assault of an English Professor on February 15, 1916, happened in unusual circumstances. It was the racial arrogance of his European classmates of the Protestant School at Cuttack in his younger days in an aggravated form. Subhas was accused of complicity in the whole affair and as he would neither admit his guilt nor give out the names of the students responsible for the incident, he was rusticated from the College for two years.

The incident deserves special mention as it proved to be a turning point in his career. In later years in the Presidential address at a Students' Conference delivered on December 1, 1929, he made the following significant remarks :

"I still remember very clearly the day when my Principal summoned me to his presence and announced his order of suspension and his words are still ringing in my ears 'You are the most troublesome man in the College'. That was indeed a red-letter day for me—in many respects a turning-point in my life when I had a taste of the joy derived from suffering for a cause—a joy, in comparison with which, the other joys of life pale and fade into insignificance. It was also the first occasion in my life when my theoretical morality and theoretical patriotism were put to a test and a very strong test—and when I came out of the ordeal unscathed, my future career had been chalked out once for all."

He was party to the assault because, as he would say, to the western people 'physical force alone makes an appeal'. It was a time when "Indians began to hit back and when they did so, the effect was immediate and remarkable."

In 1917, Subhas joined the Calcutta University Training Corps. His idea in enlisting himself in the Corps was that in the moral and intellectual sphere, in the domain of philosophy and culture, and almost everywhere else, excepting physical strength, Indians were in no way inferior to the British people. He could not let pass the opportunity of getting some sort of military training with fire-arms which, excepting a very few, was a banned article to the Indians.

He enjoyed a rough life in camp more than a quiet situation when they had almost nothing to do. He would call it monotonous. He liked the incident at the Belghurria Camp, when the wind was high, there was torrential rain flooding the tents; and the very next morning target shooting started. There was 'continual firing' up to 4-30 p.m. and he felt happy that it gave howsoever faint an idea of field service. Hard work such as fixing the tent, constructing lavatories, carrying water from distant places, and above all, the 'night operations' and 'acting the sentry' for the whole night made his life 'sweet'. The experience of the camp life was extremely 'pleasing' to him and he was of the opinion that there was no doubt that whatever little could be learnt in connection with the training must have done some good to each and every one of the party. In fact, he was extremely proud, as he wrote on April 30, 1918, of the performance of the ordinary Bengali boys when in a shooting competition they proved superior to their British instructors.

While in the fifth year Experimental Psychology Class of the University, he was asked to prepare himself for the next I.C.S. Examination for which only nine months were left. He started for England on September 11, 1919, and passed the Examination occupying a very high place. During the same period he secured a Honours Degree in Philosophy from the Cambridge University. He declined to accept an offer in the Indian Civil Service and returned to India on July 16, 1921.

With the arrival in India he at once got into the vortex of Indian political life and became the first lieutenant of Chitta

Ranjan Das. He became the Captain of the National Volunteer Corps in addition to his other responsible positions in the Congress.

He was very keen on studying the birth, growth and violent demonstrations of the revolutionary movement, the upsurge of which had made its influence felt on the Government. Within a few days after reaching Calcutta, he went straight to his native village, Kodalia, 24-Parganas, to meet some veterans of the Indo-German Conspiracy and actors in the great drama of revolutionary action. He kept a constant though secret touch with his friends of the village and gradually with the wider circle of Bengal revolutionaries that had been able to create a terror in the hearts of the British Officials in India.

Congress movement found him arrested on December 10, 1921, and he was sentenced to a term of imprisonment for six months.

The revolutionaries all over Northern India put themselves in a state of suspended animation watching the progress and sphere of influence of the Non-Co-Operation Movement under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. When it began to lose its momentum, the secret organisations started marshalling their forces particularly in Bengal, and Subhas was arrested, on suspicion of complicity, on October 25, 1924, together with hundreds of the front rank leaders of the coming movement. After detention for three months in the Bengal jails he was removed to Mandalay Jail on January 25, 1926.

Then started the epic hunger-strike by the prisoners in the Burma jails for establishment of their rights of religious observances including Durga Puja inside the prison walls.

The health of Subhas and some of his co-prisoners suffered terribly and on grounds of health, Subhas was released on May 16, 1927. He was then elected President of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee.

Subhas was able to recoup his health to a degree and he presided over conferences, political, youth, student, etc., in various parts of India with undiminished vigour upholding the cause of national freedom with a call to his countrymen to get themselves ready for any emergency.

The plenary session of the Indian National Congress was to be held in Calcutta in 1928, and a perfectly disciplined unit of

volunteers was organised to take charge of the various sections of the Congress activities related to the open Session and Subhas Chandra was placed at its head as the General Officer Commanding of the Volunteer Force.

Some men with great foresight declared that it was "a promise of the future". The *Welfare*, a Calcutta periodical, gave its impression on the Presidential procession of 1928, in the following prophetic language:

" . . . Before the daybreak the footpaths along the route were lined with a patient crowd, every inch of the terraces, verandahs, balconies and windows were taken up by eager faces."

There they had gathered to welcome the President of the Congress no doubt, but

"certainly they were gathered to welcome a greater thing of higher import and nobler national significance—the birth among a non-martial race of a deep desire for martial honours. Indeed, a new day was dawning for Bengal, a new tradition was sought to be created;—and the wave of hope and enthusiasm swept back the *pardah* just as in olden days it would sweep back the cold cruel veil when the conquering heroes marched back in triumph at the head of victorious forces, and balconies and casements opened wide to rain down love and admiration to shower flowers and good wishes. So they rained, so they showered, so they beamed forth joy and hope on the proud head of the General Officer Commanding as he stood valiantly in his commanding pose on the motor car, the conquering hero of the morning who had conquered a people's apathy and timidity to the sound of drums and trumpets. No, not an eye could ignore him, not a camera could miss him. He stood masterly as a Commander as the car crawled on, his sweeping hand only directing at times like a General signalling an army to action. . . . He looked every inch a General—the air of self-consciousness, the silent look of self-assurance, and the apparent self-satisfaction of a hero were there unmistakably stamped on his face and figure It was a sight—No! It was a Vision! A promise of the Future."

When the Congress Session was over Subhas was elected the General Secretary of the Indian National Congress. Reckless of his own comforts and the sufferings of a prison life, Subhas was convicted and awarded nine months' r.i., in January 1930, for leading a procession in August 1929. He was released on September 23.

On several occasions Subhas was arrested and thrown into prison, with or without trial. In between these interregnums he

was twice elected President of the Indian National Congress in 1938 and 1939.

Confinement in jail militated against his very freedom-loving mind and he was laid up with serious illnesses at least on two occasions.

For expert medical treatment he was sent to Europe for the first time on February 23, 1933. Due to his father's serious illness he rushed to India to meet him in his deathbed, reaching Karachi on December 3, 1934, just a day after his father's demise. He violated the terms and conditions of his stay and was put under arrest again to be sent to Europe on November 18, 1937, by air.

During his forced exile he studied the European diplomatic situation very closely. He visited several States and met some of the topmost political leaders of the respective countries. His knowledge of men and things stood him in good stead. Using it in India's interests, he always tried to warn his countrymen about the weal or woe that might be caused to India by changes in the political chess board of Europe.

His last imprisonment in India happened on July 2, 1940. In two letters which he called his 'political testament' to the Government of Bengal he gave an outline of his future programme which included a threat of resorting to hunger-strike unto death. He was released from jail on December 5, 1940, and removed to his residence at Elgin Road, Calcutta.

Subhas kept himself strictly confined within his room, gradually refusing to see anybody including his nearest relations. Food was given outside a screen wherefrom he would take the plate at his convenience and put it at the same place when finished.

One or two persons who were privileged to see him during this period wondered at the beard that he had grown round his hitherto clean-shaven face, looking rather thin, with one copy each of the *Gita* and *Chandi* on his either side. He would reply, if enquired, that due to his aunt's death, he was in a state of mourning and would not as a devout Hindu, shave. With a friend, called to his presence from time to time, after nightfall, he used to discuss matters of grave import, details of a plan of work to be carried on in his absence.

It was something remarkable that he could establish contact through only a few friends, not more than two or at best, three,

with men who would receive him in the North-Western Frontier and escort him to Afghanistan. Due to his delay in departure from Calcutta by two months, the arrangement for getting him out of Kabul and reach him to the Russian territory lapsed by default.

It was almost a leap in the dark. In the off chance of smuggling out of India and reaching Moscow through Peshawar and Kabul, Subhas Chandra left his Calcutta residence in the early hours of January 17, 1941.

What happened after Subhas left his Elgin Road residence has been stated by Dr. Asoke Nath Bose, his nephew, as follows:

"On the 17th January, 1941, at about 6 o'clock in the morning as my wife and I were preparing to sit down for breakfast (at Bararee, Dhanbad), we found my brother Dr. Sisir Bose, driving into the bungalow in one of my father's cars. He told me that he brought Netaji in disguise out of Calcutta. They had left Calcutta shortly after midnight and driven along the Grand Trunk Road all through the night. Nearing my bungalow he had put down Netaji from the car about a mile away so as to allay suspicion on the part of my servants that my brother had anything to do with the latter.

"After a few minutes of the arrival of my brother, a strange visitor was announced. He was dressed as a Pathan nobleman from top to toe. What with his dress, *fez*, and beard which he had grown during the last few months, the disguise was so perfect that it was next to impossible for anybody to recognise Netaji in the Pathan. He rested for the day at my bungalow. To allay suspicion, he was put up in the guest room, and to all outward appearances, treated as a stranger, all conversation between us being carried on in English.

"In the evening he apparently took leave of us and left the bungalow on foot ostensibly to catch a taxi at the nearest stand. The three of us, my brother, my wife and myself, then set out in the car after half-an-hour's interval and picked him up on the way. We drove along the Grand Trunk Road towards Gomoh. Near about Gomoh, we stopped on the lonely roadside for an hour or so—as the train was not due to arrive in Gomoh before midnight—for a quiet homely chat. . . . He told us that he was bound for Peshawar *en route* to Kabul, Moscow, and eventually, Berlin, and said that if the fact of his escape could be kept secret for another eight or nine days, he would be out of reach of the British. He told us further that the aftermath of his escape might be grave particularly to the members of the family and asked us to face the consequences with courage and fortitude if it came to that. The plan of his escape was not known in its entirety to any of us except two persons, viz., my father and mother. . . . I had no idea of his destination previously and also as to how and when he would arrive at my place.

"As the time of arrival of the (Delhi-Kalka Mail) train was drawing near, we started for the station and on arrival there quickly put him down and drove half-a-mile or so away from the station and waited for another half-an-hour after the departure of the train. Having satisfied ourselves that he had boarded the train safely, we then drove back to Dhanbad."

In an uneventful journey Bose reached Peshawar where he was received by a sympathetic and helpful friend waiting there by previous arrangement.

Subhas and his friend had to pass two days in Peshawar wherefrom they started for Kabul. They crossed the Indian frontier and with great difficulty negotiated the Kabul river in an improvised boat composed of large inflated water-bags, *mashaqs* as they are called, held together by a fishing net. Because of ignorance of the local dialect Subhas was to act as one who was both deaf and dumb.

It was easier, though very hard, to get into Afghan territory than to reach Kabul. It was evening and no bus would stop to pick him up at such an odd out-of-the-way place. Subhas and his comrade nearly lost all hopes of securing any conveyance whatsoever, at least for the night. The alternative was to wait for a frozen death in a terribly cold night with snow falling around without break.

At long last a fully loaded open truck responded to their request and they had to scramble up on the top of the luggages and occupy a perilous perch exposed not only to the chilly wind and descending snow but also to overhanging branches of roadside trees that might sweep the passengers off their seats. Passing through untold hardships the passengers at last reached Kabul after sunset.

As events sometimes happen that are termed 'miracles', a warm home was found for the two fugitives where Subhas had to stay for about 43 days with all the chances of discovery and arrest being constantly present.

Serious efforts were made to establish contact with the Russian Legation in Kabul without any result. The Italian Ambassador's Office responded more favourably, though slowly, and after many days of nerve-racking waiting, Subhas left Kabul on March 18, reaching the border of the Russian territory at night.

On March 20, 1941, Subhas left for Moscow where he met

the German Ambassador whose profound knowledge of Asian affairs greatly impressed Subhas Chandra. The arch fugitive reached Berlin on March 28, 1941.

Subhas was warmly received by the Axis Powers as Hitler had already decided upon attacking Russia and the question of India had been engaging a good deal of his attention.

The first proposal of the runaway from India was to start anti-British propaganda over the Berlin radio. The next was to engage himself to the recruitment of supporters and selection of men for anti-British work from amongst the prisoners of war.

A considerable number of men were willing to join Bose's Indian Legion under German leadership and underwent a thorough course of military training. Subhas took a keen interest in such matters. Some selected individuals were especially trained in Intelligence Service with a view to combating British propaganda in India. They were to be transported by air to counteract Indian war efforts of the British in selected localities and, if possible, to organise local revolt. The attitude of Germany relating to India was not clearly defined and there were mental reservations on both sides. But his attempt to form an Indian Legion was given every encouragement by Germany and the bulk of Indian war prisoners were brought from different centres to Annaburg Camp, near Dresden.

As days passed on it became quite clear that Subhas was not going to do anything exclusively to help Germany but was trying to reap the most out of German collaboration in Indian interests.

He showed a rare foresight as to the outcome of the German War. In 1942, long before Germany had shown any signs of weakness, he said to one of the foremost German Naval Officers, Admiral Canaris, that

"You know as well as I do that Germany cannot win this war. But this time victorious Britain will lose India. Even then the British will not be able to break their promise to give up their dominion over India, a promise made of their own free will in 1940." (Leverkuehn, P.: *German Military Intelligence*, 1954, p. 188).

He proposed to raise three infantry battalions from suitable Indians who would work in collaboration with Germany and with the advance of German troops towards Afghanistan, a large section of the Indian troops would be able to penetrate into the North-

West Frontier Province and join hands with the malcontents working inside the Indian territory.

Subhas worked hard and through personal contact with some of those who counted amongst the prisoners he was able to form the nucleus of his *Indian Independence League* and establish a "Free India Centre". With willing co-operation of a devoted band of colleagues he at once took up his plan of work seriously the foremost being a series of broadcasts on the Azad Hind Radio from December 1941.

It did not take a long time for the world to know that the prey of the British falcon had managed to escape to Germany where he was mostly known by the assumed Italian name of Signor Orlando Mazzotta. Amongst his Indian friends, old and new, *Jai Hind* substituted other forms of greetings. It is a fact that these two words wielded an influence on Indian minds next to *Bande Mataram*, the *mantram* of the warriors of India, both non-violent and violent. In the circle of his comrades, he was affectionately called "Netaji", the beloved leader, the name by which he was subsequently known.

To the accusation of being used as a stooge to the Axis Powers Subhas Chandra Bose gave a bold reply on April 20, 1942, saying that he needed no credentials when he spoke to his own countrymen for the simple reason that

"my whole life is one long persistent, uncompromising struggle against British Imperialism" which "is the best guarantee of my *bona fides* All my life I have been the servant of India. Until the last hour of my life I shall remain one. My allegiance and loyalty have ever been and will ever be to India alone, no matter in which part of the world I may live."

Within a short period Bose came to realise that there was not much to be gained by his stay in Germany particularly when Japan had been scoring resounding victories in East Asia. He became anxious to shift his venue of activity and was looking forward for an opportunity to gain his objective. A call came from Rash Behari Bose from the Far East to take charge of the *Indian National Army* already brought there into being.

The call was irresistible. The German Government was approached for providing Subhas Chandra with a U-boat for the journey. With a trusted lieutenant Netaji took a plunge into the deep sea at Kiel on February 8, 1943. The travel was not only

long but fraught with constant danger of the boat being intercepted by the enemy vessels reconnoitring all around.

The submarine reached a place near Madagascar on April 28, and the passengers with the help of a rubber boat, got into a Japanese submarine that had been waiting there by arrangement. The risky journey ended when the boat reached Penang on June 2, wherefrom he flew to Tokyo on June 13, 1943.

With Tojo the understanding about India was complete and the Japanese Premier reaffirmed Nippon's pledge on June 16, 1943, of rendering unconditional help to the Indians struggling for freedom. He at once set to work and he broadcasted for the first time in Japan on June 21, 1943. On July 2, he found Subhas in Singapore and at a Conference of East Asian delegates held on July 4, 1943, Subhas accepted the Presidentship of 'the League' from Rash Behari Bose. The Japanese Premier was prompt in congratulating the League on its choice and Subhas over his election.

The formation of the *Azad Hind Fauj* was publicly announced on July 5, with a remarkable oration addressed to the soldiers of the Army of Liberation.

It was the proudest day of his life, said Netaji, for by the Grace of Providence he was spared the unique honour of announcing to the whole world that India's Army of Liberation has come into being. In ringing words, reminiscent of 'Orders of the Day' of Napoleon Bonaparte, Netaji said

"Comrades! My soldiers! Let your battle-cry be '*Chalo Delhi*'. How many of us will individually survive this war of freedom, I do not know. But I do know this, that we shall ultimately win and our task will not end until our surviving heroes hold the victory parade on another graveyard of the British Empire—the Lal Killa of ancient Delhi.

"I assure you that I shall be with you in darkness and in sunshine, in sorrow and in joy, in suffering and in victory. For the present, I can offer you nothing except hunger, thirst, suffering, forced marches and death. It does not matter who among us will live to see India free. It is enough that India shall be free and that we shall give our all to make her free.

"Get up, we have no time to lose. Take up your arms. There, in front of you is the road that our pioneers have built. We shall march along that road. We shall carve our way through enemy's ranks, or if God wills, we shall die a martyr's death.

"And in our last sleep we shall kiss the road that will bring our Army to Delhi. The road to Delhi is the road to Freedom. *Chalo Delhi.*"

In declaring a state of 'total mobilisation' on July 9, 1943, Netaji gave his reasons for leaving India which "was to supplement from outside the struggle going on at home." His idea was that when a fighting force powerful enough to attack the British army in India had been organised "a revolution will break out, not only among the civil population at home, but also among the Indian Army." When the British Government was thus attacked from both sides—from inside India and from outside—it would collapse, and the Indian people would then regain their liberty. "Friends, let the slogan of the three million Indians in East Asia be:

"Total Mobilisation for a Total War."

"Give me total mobilisation in East Asia and I promise you a second front—a real second front for the Indian struggle."

Prophetic words were these, inasmuch as the strike in subsequent days in the Royal Indian Navy at Bombay irresistibly proved that the structure of the British Indian Empire had been shaken to its very foundation.

The first press conference was held at the Singapore Cricket Club or the Koukan Club on July 10, 1943, where he stated that the time had come for the East Asian Indians to take up arms and strike a blow to England in concert with the warriors of Nippon for the freedom of India. To this end he had accepted the leadership of the *Indian Independence League* in East Asia and the command of the *Indian National Army*.

Further in order to put the relationship with Japan on a footing of equality he intended to establish very soon a Provisional Government of Free India.

The Japanese press correspondents were also told about the formation of a Lady's Brigade as part of the Army. The world came to know on July 12, 1943, that women were going to form a section in the *Indian National Army*, the *Azad Hind Fouj*, and to play there the same role as men—rather a unique event in the history of armies of the Asiatics.

Matters now began to move with kaleidoscopic rapidity. Burma was declared independent on August 1, the *Indian National Army* was put on a modern military footing and to facilitate work, Subhas Chandra took direct command of the Army

on August 25, 1943. The momentous event was relayed to the world over the radio. While announcing his assumption of the charge of *Sipah-Salar*, Supreme Commander, Netaji made a speech in all respects worthy both of the occasion and of the leader. Said he:

"In the interests of the Indian Independence Movement and of the Azad Hind Fauj I have taken over the direct command of our Army from this day.

"This is for me a matter of joy and pride—because for an Indian, there can be no greater honour than to be a Commander of India's Army of Liberation. But I am conscious of the magnitude of the task that I have undertaken and I feel weighed down with a sense of responsibility.

"I am determined to discharge my duties in such a manner that the interests of these thirty-eight crores may be safe in my hands, and that every single Indian will have reason to put complete trust in me."

In explaining the immediate aim of the *Azad Hind Fauj*, Netaji said:

"We must weld ourselves into an army that will have one goal—namely, the Freedom of India;—and one will, namely, to do or die in the cause of India's Freedom. When we stand, the *Azad Hind Fauj* has to be like a wall of granite; when we march, the *Azad Hind Fauj* has to be like a steam-roller."

While principally bestowed over the Army, other matters of vital importance did not escape Netaji's attention. The *Indian Independence League* had grown in dimension and men, money and materials had been flowing in. Numerous scattered training camps in Burma and Malaya came into existence where volunteers received their baptism of fire and emerged as fine and disciplined soldiers of freedom.

In the language of Shri Debnath Das, "The re-organisation of the Headquarters of the *Independence League* was effected by departmentalising the different activities of the League. Thus the General Secretariat, and separate Department each for Finance, Accounts and Audit, Recruitment and Training, Supplies, Women, Housing and Transport, Health and Social Welfare, Education and Culture, Territorial Branches and Overseas were created. Likewise the Indian National Army was reconstituted on war footing in strength and mobility. The total resources, men and material, were mobilised: thus ushering in the historic moments for establishing the *Provisional Government of*

Azad Hind with Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose as the Head of the State in a Cabinet of Ministers and advisers."

The *Azad Hind* (Provisional though) *Government* was formed on October 21, 1943. The event together with the names of Members of the Cabinet were announced with due solemnity at a meeting of Indian representatives all over East Asia at Sathay Cinema Buildings in Singapore.

A Proclamation was issued under the signature of Subhas Chandra Bose, as Head of the State, Prime Minister and Minister for War, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Supreme Commander of the Indian National Army on the occasion. After tracing the history of the Freedom Movement in India since British occupation, he said, it was incumbent upon Indians now to establish outside India a Provisional Government and "launch the last struggle under the aegis of Government" as this could not be done due to all the leaders being inside the jail. It concluded with a stirring appeal to the people in and outside India to rally round "in the name of GOD, in the name of by-gone generations who have welded the Indian people into one nation, and in the name of the dead heroes who have bequeathed to us a tradition of heroism and self-sacrifice" the banner of the Provisional Government and "strike for India's freedom." The time was ripe and could not brook any further delay.

Japan extended its recognition of the newly formed *Azad Hind Government* of India on October 23; the Provisional Government decided in a Cabinet meeting on the same day and War was declared on the United Kingdom and the United States of America at 12-15 a.m. on October 24, 1943.

Gradually Burma on October 24, Croatia on 27, Germany on 29, Chinese National Government on November 1, Manchukuo on the same day, Italy on 9, Thailand on 19, extended their recognition to *Azad Hind Government*.

The Greater East Asiatic Nations' Assembly opened its Session in Tokyo on November 5, 1943. Premier Tojo declared in the Assembly on November 7, Japan's decision to hand over the Andaman and Nicobar Islands to the Indians. After prolonged discussion about the future course of action Netaji left Tokyo on November 18, 1943, returning to Singapore on November 25.

Netaji visited the Andamans on December 29, 1943, where he was received by the Japanese Admiral at Port Blair and conferred with the C-in-C of the Japanese forces on the next day.

He then went round the historic Cellular Jail—the Bastille of India—when the wailing walls told him in silent voice the woes of the flesh of the prisoners under torture and the cool courage and undaunted spirit that braved the fury of the authorities like the ancient rocks lashed by the wind and the waves through ages.

On the next day the 30th, the National Flag was hoisted by Netaji on the liberated Indian soil, an act first of its kind in the history of British rule in India. All the formalities of regaining lost territory from the enemy were gone through. The National Anthem sung in chorus by almost whole of the assemblage heightened the solemnity of the occasion.

During the course of the day the National Flag was placed on the top of the British Chief Commissioner's residence in Ross Island. Netaji expressed the hope, amply fulfilled, that some day the same Flag would be waving on the Viceregal Lodge in New Delhi.

In a press interview in the first quarter of 1944, Netaji put great stress on the significance of regaining the Andamans by the Indians. Said he:

“By the acquisition of this territory, the Provisional Government has now become a national entity in fact as well as in name. The liberation of the Andamans has symbolic significance because the Andamans was always used by the British as a prison for political prisoners. . . . Like the Bastille in Paris, which was liberated first in the French Revolution, setting free political prisoners, the Andamans where our patriots suffered is the first to be liberated in India's fight for Independence. Part by part, Indian territory will be liberated but it is always the first plot of land that holds the most significance.”

The Andamans was renamed as *Shaheed* in memory of the Martyrs and the Nicobars as *Swaraj*.

For the sake of convenience the headquarters of the Provisional *Government of Azad Hind* was moved to Burma on January 7, 1944, with the principal Members of the Cabinet. The I. N. A. started its attack in the mountain regions of Arakan near the Indo-Burma border on February 4, 1944. Taung Bazar was

occupied on the same day; Saetabin in the Kaladan Sector on March 1, Kaladan itself on March 5. Fort White was reduced on March 8 and Lanacot on 12. The view of Indian soil was now in front of the conquering heroes from the Kennedy Peak which was occupied on March 18, 1944, and on the next day the Indian National Flag was planted on the Indian territory still in occupation of the British under the guise of the Government of India.

The administration of the Andamans and Nicobars was formally handed over to the Azad Hind Government on February 17, 1944.

Extensive thrusts were made inside India without break. Taungzan was occupied on March 20 and Ukrul on 21. Tiddim and Molon came under the conquering steps of the I. N. A. on March 22; Sangkak on 24, and Mores on 31. The progress was maintained also in April when Tammu and Kbau on the 1st and Hengtan on the 5th of April fell into their hands. Kohima had to surrender after stiff fighting on April 6. It was now easy to take Kangratonggi on 7, Moirang on 18, Paletwa and Teng-naupal on the 20th. The second arm of the *Indian National Army* crossed the Indo-Burma border from the South on the memorable day of May 7, 1944.

The official policy of Japan was made known by Tojo in the Japanese Diet on March 22, 1944, that

"it is natural that all areas over which Indian National Army marches within India must be placed completely under the administration of the Provisional Government."

Indians were asked over the radio on April 4, 1944, to render all help to the *Azad Hind Government* :

"the only lawful Government of India" which has "only one mission to fulfil. That mission is to expel the Anglo-American armies from the sacred soil of India by armed force and then to bring about the establishment of permanent National Government of Azad India, in accordance with the will of the Indian people."

Reminding his audience on July 4, 1944, that he had redeemed his pledge for the "Second Front" he now wanted them "to gird up their loins for the task that now lies ahead."

Continued he :

"We should have but one desire today—the desire to die so that India

may live—the desire to face a martyr's death, so that the path of freedom may be paved with the martyr's blood.

"Friends! My comrades in the War of Liberation! Today I demand of you one thing, above all. I demand of you blood. It is blood alone that can avenge the blood that the enemy has spilt. It is blood alone that can pay the price of freedom. Give me blood and I promise you Freedom."

A serious set-back now loomed large before the I.N.A. The monsoon in all its fury came over the ill-equipped and ill-sheltered soldiers. To add to the difficulties, the supply of the sinews of war to the forward bases suffered terribly due to lack of foresight, miserable arrangement and difficulty of the jungle terrain. There was general withdrawal of *Indian National Army* and Nippon forces from the Indo-Burma front on July 22, 1944.

After enumerating the reasons for the debacle, Netaji addressed his army on August 14, 1944, to take a lesson from the failure. He said:

"In the middle of March this year, advance units of the Azad Hind Fauj . . . crossed the Indo-Burma border and the fight for India's liberation thereupon commenced on Indian soil.

* * *

"all preparations had been completed and the stage had been set for the final assault on Imphal, when torrential rains overtook us and to carry Imphal by assault was rendered a tactical impossibility . . .

* * *

"May the souls of the heroes, who have fallen in the campaign, inspire us to nobler deeds of heroism and bravery in the next phase of India's liberation."

Faced with the debacle a War Council was formed on October 19, 1944. Netaji visited Tokyo on October 29, as a result of which diplomatic relations were established with Japan on November 26, 1944. It was accepted that the I.N.A. would not be subjected to the Japanese Military Code of Law and be free to act under strict I.N.A. discipline and punishment.

Last Phase

On the New Year's Day, 1945, Netaji addressed his comrades of the *Azad Hind Fauj* and after reminding them of their past achievements gave them a new slogan for the year in the following words:

"Comrades! Our immortal heroes have paid for India's liberty with their blood. We are proud of them. But we too must be ready for that supreme sacrifice. The *Azad Hind Fauj* can justify its name and fulfil its task—only if it is ready to fight and die to the last man. We have to give our blood and take the blood of our enemies. Therefore, your slogan, your battle cry for the year 1945, be . . . 'Blood, blood, blood!'"

Netaji returned to Malaya on December 14, and rushed to Burma on January 12, 1945. He left Rangoon for the front on February 18, 1945. There was nothing now that could stave off the tide of disaster that had been coming down like a cataract on the I. N. A.

The news received on February 25, 1945, was simply alarming. There had been serious reverses almost on all fronts. When Netaji was prevented by his Generals from exposing himself to great personal risks he exclaimed that "England has not made a bomb that can kill me."

It was now time to bid adieu to his fighting units which he did on April 24, 1945, leaving a message coming out from the bottom of the heart:

"Brave Officers and Men of the Azad Hind Fauj,

It is with a heavy heart that I am leaving Burma—the scene of the many heroic battles that you have fought since February 1944, and are still fighting.

Comrades! At this critical hour I have only one word of command to give you, and that is that if you have to go down temporarily, then go down as heroes go down upholding the highest code of honour and discipline. The future generations of Indians who will be born, not as slaves but as free men, because of your colossal sacrifice will bless your names and proudly proclaim to the world that you, their forbears, fought and lost the battle of Manipur, Assam and Burma, but through temporary failure you paved the way to ultimate success and glory.

So far as I am concerned, I shall steadfastly adhere to the pledge that I took on the 21st October, 1943, to do all in my power to serve the interests of thirty-eight crores of my countrymen and fight for their liberation. I appeal to you, in conclusion, to cherish the same optimism as myself and to believe like myself that the darkest hour always precedes the dawn. India shall be free—and before long.

Inquilab Zindabad! Jai Hind!"

Now everything seemed to be lost. The decision taken on February 27, 1945, to defend Pyinmana to the last did not materialise—the news of Japanese reverses pouring in from all

sectors. The last remnant of the fighting I. N. A. forces surrendered on May 13, 1945, at Pegu.

On the counsel of his advisers Netaji left Rangoon on April 24, and at the end of the week on May 3, 1945, Rangoon surrendered to the enemies.

His close association with Japan was assailed in India by a section of the people with whom the words of the propagandists of U.K. were sacrosanct. On June 25, 1945, he proclaimed to the world:

"I am not ashamed of taking the help of Nippon . . . on the basis Nippon recognised India's complete independence" and granted "formal recognition to the Provisional Government of the Azad Hind of Free India"

In explaining the constitution, status and character of the Indian National Army, Netaji continued:

"Nippon has given us the arms with which to organise an army, which is Indian from top to bottom. This army, the Azad Hind Fauj, has been trained by Indian instructors, using Indian language. This army carries India's National Flag and its slogans are India's National slogans. This army has its own Indian Officers and its own Officers' Training Schools, run entirely by Indians. And, in the field of battle, the army fights under its own Indian Commanders, some of whom have now reached the rank of General. If one talks of a puppet army, then it is the British Indian Army that should be called a puppet army, because it is fighting Britain's Imperialist War under British Officers."

Comparing with a parallel situation, Netaji justified his stand by saying:

"I am not ashamed to take the help of Nippon. I shall go further and say that if the once mighty British Empire can go round the world with the begging bowl and can go down on its knees in order to obtain help from the United States of America, there is no reason why we an enslaved and disarmed nation should not take help from our friends."

Asserted Netaji boldly that his action enjoys the stamp of approval of history. He would have been very glad if he could do without foreign help.

"But I have yet to find one single instance in modern history where an enslaved nation has achieved its liberation without foreign help of some sort. And for enslaved India, it is much more honourable to join hands with enemies of the British Empire than to curry favour with British leaders of political parties."

Netaji had limitless confidence in himself and retorted to his

calumniators, that he was wide awake to the accusations of double dealing by the Japanese. He had already thought out a protective armour and offered it to his comrades. Said he:

"Do you believe that I have brains enough not to be fooled by them? Then trust my word when I assure you that I am sure the Japs cannot double-cross us. They can only do that if we fail in raising a proper army of Indians to fight for our freedom. We shall have to be awake and alive, on our guard,—not only against the enemy, British Imperialism, against the imperialistically inclined Japanese bureaucrats, but also against Indians, in our ranks. With discipline, we must be ready for every sacrifice. Let each man be ready for work. Work—work—and work—that is your and my burden."

Netaji's next step was to reach Siam. He and his small retinue had to pass through indescribable privations and perils from enemy bombing. Through personal care and sharing the pains and sorrows of his fleeing comrades he assuaged the sting of their trouble to a large extent. The care that he used to bestow, denying himself any special privilege, on his humblest volunteer and co-worker in his younger days did not leave him and was seen at its best during the march at the sorest hour of travail. No work was too low for him and he would most gladly put a hand to the spoke of the wheel that had become bogged in slothful mire. If any medicine, which was rare at the time, which he and an unknown soldier needed at one and the same time, it must go to the relief of the latter. His comrades felt the joy of his companionship in the midst of utter miseries, despair and gloom.

By way of Moulmein Road, Netaji reached Bangkok on May 15. After having laid the foundation stone of the Memorial to the dead Martyrs at Singapore on July 8, he proceeded to Malaya coming back to Singapore on August 13, 1945.

The rest of the story of his life was as given out by the Government has not been universally accepted. It relates that on August 17, Netaji started in a plane from Bangkok and reached Touraine in French Cambodia the same evening. The next day he reached Taihoku in Formosa at about 2 p.m. In half-an-hour he emplaned for a destination of which nobody had any the least knowledge. The direction to the pilot, if there had been any, has not been disclosed. Before it had reached any great

height, the plane, a bomber, caught fire and crashed.. Nefaji was badly burnt. Over and above, he sustained serious injury in his head. He was removed to the nearby Japanese Military Hospital where he expired between 8 and 9 p.m. of the 18th of August 1945.

The contrary view is that he could have no idea of going to Formosa as he never had any occasion to go to the place in mind for help, shelter or anything else of the kind. It was part of an arrangement with the consent of Netaji to give a wrong version to the world about himself. He is still in hiding, and for reasons known only to himself.

If he is alive and free there is no power on earth that can keep him concealed or prevent him from coming out for the betterment of his countrymen. If he is in prison and prevented from doing anything for the outside world which is badly in need of his guidance, then the position is worse than death to him. Or, if he has been lured by his 'first love', the 'call of the Himalayas' and has decided to have nothing to do with the mundane world, then for the purpose of the common Indian mass struck down by the affliction of a raging tempest of unprincipled administration, NETAJI, the Idol of the Nation, is for all practical purposes, lost. It is not a matter of any moment to them whether he is living or dead.