

The Role of Azad Hind Revolution In the Freedom Struggle of India

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21st October, 1943 is a great historic day, that recalls the gallant heritage of the Azad Hind Revolution. It was on this great day when Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose formed the Provisional Government of Free India at Singapore, took oath, as its First President and made historic proclamation of Indian Independence. On this day, again, he assumed the supreme command of the revolutionary Army of the Azad Hind Fauj and declared war of Independence against the Anglo-American powers.

After three-month's death-defying submarine dash from Germany to Singapore, Netaji got only a few months time for total mobilisation of the man— power and the material resources of the Indian in the South East Asia. In a meteoric speed, he organised a full fledged revolutionary Government and his Army of Liberation, trained and equipped exclusively by the Indians. His magnetic personality and burning patriotism galvanised the entire Indian people to a crusading spirit for liberation of their motherland.

Then came the gloriest day, in February 1944, the final moment for his Liberation Army to march 'Ownard to Delhi'. After invoking the blessing of Mahatma Gandhi to whom he paid the highest tribute as the Father of Nation, Netaji charged his revolutionary army to 'take up arms against the enemy' and 'carve their ways through enemy's ranks' with the resolve "Either Liberty or Death". He promised, his comrades in-arms, in words of a revolutionary

pilgrim "for the present I can offer you nothing except hunger, thirst, privation, forced march and death. But if you follow me in the life and death, I shall lead you to victory and freedom".

Yes, the Azad Hind Fauj fulfilled the historic, with their blood, entrusted to them by their leader. The Liberation Army crossed the border of Chittagong and forced their way deep into the territories of Nagaland and Manipur. They kept Imphal encircled for about three months and raised the first banner of Indian freedom at Moirang In Manipur.

Unfortunately, the Azad Hind Fauj had to fall back for circumstances beyond their control. However, before they left the sacred soil of their motherland, they left behind a soul-string saga of suffering, sacrifice, heroism and martyrdom, that ultimately inspired the Indian people to victory and freedom.

Netaji refused to accept the defeat of Japan as the defeat for the Azad Hind Revolution. In his last broadcast, before he plunged again into unknown, he urged his countrymen not to be cowed down by the British victory, but to continue their uncompromising struggle for freedom. In his prophetic message, he assured his compatriots in India and South East Asia as he told, "A post-war revolution will break out inside India soon after the war and India shall be free before long"/

Netaji's prediction proved absolutely correct. The Indian people did not know much about the liberation expedition launched by the

Azad Hind Fauz in 1944 as it was blacked out by the British Government and their Indian henchmen. But as soon as the Indian people came to know about the revolutionary exploits of Netaji and his Revolutionary Army, during the Red Fort Trial of its officers legends of Netaji and INA electrified them and their patriotic mood suddenly shot up like a volcanic eruption. Waves of mass upsurge with thundering cries of "Jai Hind" and "Netaji Zindabad" swept the country from one corner to the other. In this last phase of our freedom struggle, the Indian people, to use the word of Gandhiji were 'hypnotised' by the legends of Netaji and his INA.

Nay, much more significant events overtook the Indian political scene. The legends of Netaji's and INA roused the British-Indian Army from the slumber of their traditional loyalty to the British rulers and their emotion was fired by a newly awakened spirit of patriotism. For the first time, after the formation of INA, the British-Indian Army started joining hands with the freedom fighters. The ratings of the Royal Indian Navy revolted at Karachi, Bombay, Madras, Calcutta and other Naval Harbours. The officers of the Royal Indian Airforce came out in the streets of Calcutta, Jabalpure and Delhi to join anti-British demonstrations. The Army staged series of strikes in a number of Barracks. It appeared that the threatening shadow of 1857 rebellion was fast spreading all over India.

The C-in-C of the Indian Army, General Auchinleck, in a bid to fathom the depth of the identification of the Indian Army, with the rebellious emotion of the common people, quickly arranged a secret opinion poll among the 7000 Indian Army officers. The result of

this secret poll completely stunned the British C-in-C, when he found that 95 percent of the Indian officers refused to brand the accused INA. Officers as either betrayers or deserters, on the contrary they hailed them as patriots. The C-in-C missed no time to inform the British Prime Minister, Mr. Atlee and the Governor General, Lord Wavell, as he wrote "the INA affairs would lead the country to chaos and probably to mutiny and dissension in the Army, culminating in its dissolution". The tocsin was thus, finally sounded and the British Government made the decision to finally withdraw from India and without and delay.

Mahatma Gandhi awakened the Indian people to peacefully rebel against the authority of the alien rule and stormed its citadel again and again by means of non-violent mass action of boundless dimension. But the imperialist power survived each storm by ultimately hinging on the pivot of the loyalty of the Indian army to the British Crown. Netaji and INA by their revolutionary exploits and gallant legends did the last act.— they metamorphically changed the traditional loyalty of the Indian Army from the British Crown to the Indian people and thus removed the last hurdle that stood in the way to achieve our freedom. This is, in quintessence, the historic contribution of Netaji and the Azad Hind Revolution to the achievement of our national freedom.

The Azad Hind Revolution, under the magnetic leadership of Netaji, made another unique contribution to our freedom movement,— it succeeded to achieve emotional integration of all Indians that was not known before. The people from all communities and from all regions, from Peshwar to Dacca, indistinguishably unified themselves under the

banner of the revolutionary Government of Netaji. Along with their other compatriots of prepartition India the brave sons of the lands, now called Pakistan also played a glorious role in this Last war of Independence.

The Pathan General, M.Z. Kiani was in the highest rank in the INA, only second to Netaji, during Imphal expedition. The Pindi-born Colonel Shah Nawaz Khan had the glory to command the first INA Division. Colonel Burhanuddin was in charge of Bahadur Group, the guerilla wing of the INA Colonel Kiani made daring records in leading the Subhas Brigade. Colonel Ehsan Quadir was incharge of Transport of the Liberation Army and Colonel Shaukatullah, Malik controlled I.N.A. intelligence. It was Col. Shaukatullah who earned the highest honour by raising the first flag of Indian freedom at Moirang. It was again a Punjabi Pathan Lt. Nazir Ahmed, who sacrificed his life to save the life of his beloved leader, Netaji. The last word about Netaji mystery can also be said by a Pakistani citizen, Colonel Habibur Rehman, Besides these and other prominent leaders who were born in the land, now called Pakistan, thousands of Pathan, Punjabi, Baluchi and Sindhi Fauj of the INA fought shoulder to shoulder and died hand in hand with their Indian and Bengali brothers-

in-arms and created an immortal saga of martyrdom of 26,000 INA men for the cause of freedom of their motherland.

The Azad Hind Revolution defied, denied and refuted, with the blood of countless martyrs the two nation theory of the communalists. Its heritage of emotional synthesis of all communities, their comradely harmony and non-communal nationalism still shine above the tragic episode of hatred of the past two decades that bedeviled the relations of the people of India and Pakistan.

The Azad Hind Revolution largely inspired the liberation struggle of Bangladesh. After this historic event, a new search for revaluation of the relations among the people of the subcontinent have started again. The common glory by the people of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh still remained as a perennial source of friendship and amity that can inspire us to revive our fraternal relations and assure a common destiny of peace, understanding and co-prosperity for the entire people of our subcontinent.

On this great day, we pay our homage to Netaji and the martyrs and valiant fighters of the Azad Hind Revolution whose sacred heritage belong to all, to India, to Pakistan and to Bangladesh alike and for the whole world.

Jai Hind, Netaji Jindabad!

A Radio talk by Prof. Samar Guha
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