



Who Got India Her Freedom?

Maj Gen (Dr) G D Bakshi SM, VSM (Retd)

BOSE OR GANDHI
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*Dedicated
To Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose
and
All Ranks past and present
of
The Indian National Army
Whose enormous sacrifices made us free.
We chose however
to carve not a line
and raise not a stone,
in their sacred memory.*

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Maj Gen (Dr) **GD Bakshi**, SM, VSM (Retd)

Key British Decision Makers 1945-47



Pethick-Lawrence
Secretary of
State for India

Lord Clement Attlee
Prime Minister



Field Marshal
Archibald Percival
Wavell Viceroy



Field Marshal
Sir Claude Auchinleck
Commander in Chief
in India

Prologue

Defining The Civilisational Context of The Debate



The Destruction of the Idea of India

A historical overview of the trajectory of the civilisational nation state of India , is very essential to put this book and its very challenging theme—of *who got India her freedom and how*—in proper perspective. *No other nation in the world has faced such a concerted assault upon its identity and sense of nationhood and self, than India.* Nation states are entities that have a temporal existence over vast stretches of space and across centuries in time. The problem with India was the comprehensive destruction it faced via a series of bloody invasions. These had originally started in the seventh century AD itself, with the invasions of the Hindu kingdoms of Afghanistan and Sindh by the Arab armies. The little-known fact of history is that, for three centuries, the Hindu Kingdoms of Kabul and Zabul had held off the Arab Invaders. In fact the all-conquering Arab Armies suffered their first major defeat in Hindu Afghanistan (and have since been talking of the unfinished *Gazwa-e-Hind*—the final battle for the conquest of India, which will happen at the end of time). The Arab invasion of Sindh was halted by the Gujjar-Pratiharas on the borders of Rajasthan, contained and prevented from advancing any further for the next two centuries.

The ramparts of India finally fell when the Afghan Hindus were converted to Islam and mounted a series of raids on North India to loot its fabulous wealth. These started in the tenth century AD as bloody raids for plunder, gold and women and once the fact of India's lack of unity, pacific nature and military weakness were thoroughly exposed, came the wars of conquest. From the thirteenth century onwards India faced a series of invasions where the marauders who came to loot and rape, stayed back to rule. *So vast was the temporal extent of India, however, that no single invader, not the Mughals nor the British could conquer it in its entirety.* Thus enclaves of the Indian culture survived and thrived in the southern parts of India for centuries even as the Northern Parts

were being overrun by the Armies of Islam. Thus even while North India fell to Afghans, Mongols, Mughals and, much later, Persian invaders, the Cholas of the South were making naval forays and spreading Indian culture and values and its arts and architecture to large parts of South East Asia.

Thus it was the sheer size and extent and the very depth of the temporal existence of the Indian civilisation in time and space, that prevented this civilisation from being wholly overrun and destroyed. It was simply its great depth in space and time that saved the Indian civilisation from being wiped out. Few historians, however, highlight the remarkable fact that for over 400 years, i.e., from the thirteenth to the seventeenth century, India was ruled by Muslim invaders. Yet over 80% of the Indian population remained Hindu. This is a stark contrast with the equally ancient and flourishing civilizations of Egypt, Mesopotamia, Central Asia and Iran which were converted en masse to Islam. There is not a trace of their original indigenous culture left today. The Parsis in India are all that remains of the flourishing Persian civilisation of Iran. How did this miracle happen? India proved to be a weak state but was a strong society. Thus once the Hindu states in India were militarily overrun, Indian society deliberately splintered itself into a plethora of Jatis, varna and caste groups which kept their flocks together by the severe threat of social boycott and excommunication. They threatened all who converted with excommunication—via stopping all ties of consanguineous eating or marriage (Roti, beti ka rishta, ties of eating together and giving daughters in marriage). These were desperate, last-ditch measures to preserve gene pool purity. Thus a plethora of castes and Gotra groups arose in India which tightly shepherded their local flocks via largely localised jat biradarries or clan groupings. The Hindu political states were destroyed by invading Muslim armies but the natives held themselves together in the face of untold persecution by banding together in Jat and Biradari clusters at the local level. This prevented comprehensive penetration of Hindu Society by the proselytising attempts of Islam. Despite conquest by military force, Islam was not able to convert the entire mass of the huge Hindu population to Islam. The sheer contrast with what happened in Egypt, Mesopotamia, Central Asia and Iran could not be more marked.

Unfortunately today the caste system is an anachronism in India. The simple fact is that India is now a full fledged state and we don't need to fall back anymore on our last line of defence—the caste and jati groups. In fact today these are hindering the formation of a strong and cohesive nation state in India. As societies industrialise and urbanise, caste becomes a meaningless

anachronism. It should have withered out completely by now but our pygmy politicians have kept it alive because they have failed to generate any other national issues except Caste and Jati-based mobilisation. This is now threatening the very unity of India and could once again imperil the existence of the nation state in India.

Britain's Psychological Enslavement

The British came to India in the sixteenth century when the Mughal Empire was in its heyday with Jehangir and Shah Jahan ruling in great opulence and splendour. The Mughal Empire was then generating some 40% of the world's GDP. The British came as petty traders to sell silver and buy back Indian spices and hand woven cloth. Then came Aurangzeb who undid the secular-liberal consensus on the basis of which Akbar had founded the Mughal Empire. He reintroduced the hated Jaziya tax and started mindless wars of conquest in South India to further expand the Mughal Empire. The temporal spread in spatial terms, was simply too much to control. The Mughal Empire suffered an economic collapse because of Aurangzeb's mindless wars. Afghanistan slipped from the grasp of the Mughal empire but what was even more telling was the massive revolts of the Hindus against the tyrannical repression of Aurangzeb. These had gravely threatened the Hindu identity per se and, faced with genocide, they revolted. These revolts were led by Shivaji Maratha in the South and the Sikhs of Guru Gobind Singh in the North. In the East an Assamese General called Lachit Burpukhan decisively checked any Mughal advance to the East and saved Assam and the North East from falling prey to the Mughals. Within one century, the mighty Mughal Empire, which once encompassed the whole of South Asia, had been torn apart. Thus it was not the British who saved the Hindus from Muslim persecution in India but rather it were the Hindu revolts that had comprehensively destroyed the Mughal empire, well before the British began their wars of conquest.

The Human Terrain in India at the Time of the British Conquest

The British studied the human terrain in India with great thoroughness. They were good anthropologists and strategists. They fully exploited the chaos caused by the destruction of the well-established Mughal empire. No single power had arisen in India which could truly as yet, step into the shoes of the Mughal empire. The Marathas had conquered large parts of Central India, the peninsular

and even Western India. The Sikhs conquered most of North-Western India up to the borders of Afghanistan and even conquered parts of Afghanistan on the Southern banks of the Indus (NWFP, and FATA). Dogra Generals of the Sikh Empire of Maharaja Ranjit Singh (Generals Gulab Singh and Zorawar Singh) conquered Ladakh, Baltistan and then invaded Tibet itself. What we were witnessing was a Hindu military renaissance.

Nativisation

Into this warring cauldron of states in India, stepped the East India Company and other European powers. In true Machiavellian style they played one power off against the other—the Marathas against the Nizam; the Sikhs against the Purbayias (Easterners) of modern-day UP, Bihar and Bengal and so on. The British success lay in nativisation. They recruited local Indian sepoy, trained them on European lines to create first-rate infantry units that could fire in disciplined rhythm that could defeat any Mughal-style cavalry charge. The British artillery was the best in South Asia then. The well-drilled British native infantry could then outfight all Mughal style cavalries in India. It was amongst the best paid and administered of the military units in India. By a combination of sheer intrigue, and Intelligence-based operations, of playing one off against the other, the British slowly but steadily captured large swathes of territory in India. The Mughal empire had been destroyed but no single Hindu state had emerged in India to form a unified political state that could now do away with the plethora of castes and communities that had been created as a last ditch line of defence to safeguard Hindu society against Muslim proselytisation—whether by force or preaching. The British played one ethnicity based state in India against the other. They fought successive wars against the Marathas, the Nizam and Tipu Sultan and then the Sikhs. They used the Poorbiyas to defeat the Sikhs and then, when the Poorbiyas revolted en masse against their British masters for their proselytising zeal, they used the Sikhs and the hill tribes against them to brutally suppress the revolt of 1857.

Post-1857 British Consolidation

Thus Sir John Seeley wrote: *“The mutiny was in great measure put down by turning the races of India against each other. So long as this can be done, the government of India from England is possible. But, if this were to change and should the population be moulded into a single nationality, we would have to leave.”* The 1857 Revolt had left the British truly shaken. *It cured them of their proselytising zeal. They realised that any attempts to convert by force or fraud threatened to unleash wars of Identity per se* in India. What really perturbed them however was the fact that all the diverse races, castes and creeds of India had united in an attempt to throw the hated British out. The British were really the non-self, that was refusing to merge into the Indian civilisation, and in fact,

the British were threatening deep-rooted Indian identities based on religion. This threat to Hindu and Muslim identities based on greased cartridges, almost blew the empire apart. *The greatest British concern after the 1857 uprising therefore was how to ensure that the disparate and fragmented Indian population remained divided and never, ever came together again to stage such a massive and widespread rebellion.* It was the very British non-self, their foreignness, and refusal to Indianise in any manner that generated large-scale opposition and rebellion. It is noteworthy that the Mughals had Indianised themselves to a large extent by adopting Indian cultural mores and even learnt to appreciate Indian classical dance and music. Dara Shikoh had the Upanishads translated into Persian and before him Akbar had tried to formulate a new synthesis of faiths in India by his Deen-e-Elahi. The very arrogant Foreignness of British rule in India, their racial claims of superiority, really helped to initiate the rise and revival of the national self in India. The whole of India had united against the very Foreignness of British rule. The Indian self had begun to crystallise only in relation to a British non-self.

The British Raj now did away with the rule of the British East India Company and the Crown in England took direct charge. Its primary problems in reasserting its rule in India was twofold:

- **Foreignness.** The primary concern was how to overcome the very foreignness of its rule which automatically presented a hostile non-self which in turn would by itself promote national unity and a crystallisation of the Indian sense of self.
- **Fracturing Sources of Indian Unity.** The second was to identify and destroy all sense of Indian unity and cultural identity. Thus Dr. Mithi Mukherjee writes: *If the British Empire had to survive in India ... it had to destroy and dismantle all sources of Indian unity and identity—cultural, political and historical; and render the very idea of India as meaningless. ... Torn by internal conflict, it was claimed that India was in desperate need of a neutral and impartial power at the helm of the state to secure justice and order (or justice as order). Given that Indian society was deeply divided into communities in conflict with each other, only an alien, foreign power could be trusted to be neutral and impartial.*”

Thus the British answer to its problems of mitigating the foreignness of its rule was not the Mughal idea of assimilation of Indian culture and ethos to blend

and not exacerbate identities that would grate, but to blend rather seamlessly. The British however devised the ideology of imperial justice. They claimed India was no nation. it was just a squabbling and vicious mosaic of multiple identities forever at war with itself. India was a land of multiple identities. After the political and military destruction of the Hindu states in India from the thirteenth century onwards, in a last ditch and desperate attempt to safeguard its identity, the Hindu states had fragmented themselves into a plethora of multiple and highly localised Jat-Biradarries of caste and sub-caste groups. This was to prevent proselytisation by Islam. When Aurangzeb threatened the residual Hindu identity by conversion by violence, there was an explosion. The Maratha and Sikh Revolts thereafter destroyed the Mughal empire. However, no one single successor state was able to crystallise in India. Had this happened, *the re-emergence of a Hindu political state would have demanded an end to the caste and Jati-based local identities that had emerged as last line of defence during Mughal rule.* That however did not happen and in the meantime the British brought the coal-based industrial revolution to India and conquered most of it. Their rather aggressive initial attempts at proselytisation backfired in the revolt of 1857. Thereafter their ardour for Christian proselytization cooled distinctly. Attempts at religious conversion were now largely confined to remote tribal areas (where they were rather successful—especially in the North East).

Exacerbating Caste Faultlines

However attempts to exploit every possible faultline in India were intensified greatly. One of the most effective faultlines they found was caste. The British went out of the way to deepen and intensify every Caste and Jati faultline in India. As Prof. Mtihi Mukherjee writes: *“The British ratified caste by means of various colonial instruments such as district manuals, Gazettes, imperial surveys and finally the Census of 1872; and made Varna, the hierarchical ordering of castes into four groups as the central idea behind classification of Indian society.”* She adds, *“The census administration was driven by the ideological need to naturalise the absence of national unity and then institutionalise it by integrating it into routine administrative decisions and policies.”*

Sir John Seeley was the author of the first caste-based census in India in 1872. He rubbed it in further by saying, “Indians do not have the capacity to develop an idea of nationality, let alone rule themselves.” He ascribed it primarily to the institution of caste. *“So long as a regime of castes persists, it is difficult to see how the sentiments of unity and solidarity can penetrate and inspire all classes of the community.”* This polarisation of caste was begun as the pursuit of social justice and was the primary colonial mechanism for splintering and dividing the Indian population, of which the Hindus then constituted well over 80%. Many reform movements in India understood this great weakness and disunity that was inherent in the Hindu caste system. Thus the Sikh Gurus in Punjab made the first attempt to downplay caste faultlines and do away with caste all together. In the bargain a new religion was created and the British tried energetically to prod the Sikhs into becoming a separate religion by way of promoting only *Kesh Dharies* and not *Nam Dharies* to be recruited for the Army. The next was Maharishi Dayananda, founder of the Arya Samaj who found caste to be fatal to Hindu unity as a people and worked energetically to homogenise Hindu society.

Religion and Community Based Electorates

The British turned the concept of divide and rule into a highly sophisticated art form. Thus, after caste, they now decided to deepen Indian religion-based faultlines by providing community-based electorates. Thus the Muslims were the first to get a separate electorate, followed by the Christians and Sikhs and then it was given to the Scheduled Castes and Tribes. The British made energetic attempts to hive off the Dalits (SC and ST) from the Hindu mainstream even as they had successfully segregated the Sikhs from the Hindu fold. At the time of 1857 the British had been alarmed by Muslim pirs and potentates who, to their minds, had tried to restore Mughal rule in India. It is true that the sepoys had forced the luckless Bahadur Shah to resume the mantle of Mughal Emperor. For a time, therefore, the Raj seemed to favour the Hindus against the Muslims but by the onset of the twentieth century, things had come full circle. Now the Hindus were most active against the British in the form of the revolutionaries and the more pacific Congress. The British now most aggressively championed every Muslim cause and manoeuvred to so deepen the Hindu-Muslim Faultline that it finally resulted in the tragic Partition of India. The British had most cleverly played upon and fanned the Muslim fears of being subsumed by a vast Hindu majority.

The Concept of Imperial Justice

This entire gamut of divide and rule policies were designed to permanently deepen and so exacerbate the faultlines in Indian Society that it would reinforce the colonial narrative of Imperial Justice. The basic tenet was an a priori acceptance that India was intrinsically such a hopelessly divided society that it needed Foreign rule to ensure even-handed justice between its perpetually warring castes, creeds, religions and language communities. Only a foreign power could provide such an impartial and fair rule by enforcing the concept of Imperial Justice. Thus the very Foreignness of the British Empire was turned into an inherent advantage and in fact, the very justification for imposing foreign rule in India. Mithi Mukherjee puts it succinctly when she writes: “Torn by internal conflict, it was claimed that *India was in desperate need of a neutral and impartial power at the helm of the state to secure justice and order (or justice as order)*. Given that Indian society was deeply divided into communities in conflict with each other, *only an alien, foreign power could be trusted to be neutral and impartial.*” Thus was the ideological basis laid for persistent foreign rule in India that lasted two centuries. The concept of Imperial Justice was specifically created to justify foreign rule in a deeply divided and fractured Indian society. Dr. Mithi Mukherjee writes, “*For India to have any order and unity, the state would have to be exterior to the civil society and nation. It was this intervention of the discourse of Imperial Justice, coupled with state’s representation of India as a deeply divided society that tried to turn the exteriority and foreign origin of the colonial state into its greatest strength, rather than a weakness.*”

What Ails Indian Nationalism Today

All the ills that plague nation state formation in India today stem from one basic foundational problem. The British were ultimately forced out of India not by Mahatma Gandhi and Nehru's non-violent freedom struggle but rather starkly by the INA that Bose had formed with Japanese help. He had mounted an invasion of India along with the Japanese armies. Tragically this invasion failed because it had been launched too late—when America had intervened on the side of the Allies and tilted the scales with its huge industrial base. Air superiority had now shifted to the allies and they used it to good effect to counter the highly successful Japanese tactics of infiltration and encirclement. Despite this it was a close fought battle in Imphal-Kohima and the Japanese almost pulled it off. The monsoons destroyed the logistical support of their offensive, forcing them into a costly and painful retreat. After the war the victorious British were in no mood to relent. They in fact decided upon the equivalent of another psychological Jallianwala Bagh by staging the trials of INA Officers at the historic Red Fort—the same iconic Fort where the last Mughal Emperor of India had been tried. *The trial was to be highly publicised to terrorise and overawe the Indian Army Personnel* so that the Ghost of Bose and his INA could be exorcised forever. Bose had been right—the Centre of Gravity of the British Raj had been the steadfast loyalty of the native Indian Sepoy to the Raj. The INA trials were staged to ensure the Sepoy remained so loyal. *It backfired very badly and had the exact opposite effect. The entire country was enraged and riots broke out in all major cities in November 1945—in the immediate aftermath of the trials.* The Colonial dispensation was shaken to the roots by the fury and intensity of these riots. What was worse was the ominous impact it had on the loyalty of the native troops. The whole country now saw the INA as true patriots and the Indian sepoys realised they had clearly been on the wrong side in the war.

The Viceroy and the Commander-in-Chief in New Delhi, Field Marshal Wavell and Auchinleck, realised the intensity of the emotions unleashed and the gravity of the situation. So did the Governors in the provinces. British troops were drained and spent. They were desperately tired after six years of war and truly homesick. They were being sent back. There were 2.5 million combat hardened Indian soldiers in India then, who were being demobilised. Should they have revolted against the empire, the handful of British troops would have been in no position to quell such an uprising. There was in fact panic in Lutyens, New Delhi and desperate contingency plans were drawn up to face such an emergency and

evacuate some 90,000 Europeans and their families. Initially the Raj Imperialists in London felt their functionaries in Delhi had lost their nerves, and they were yet in no mood to throw in the towel. Then in February 1946 came the widespread mutiny in the Royal Indian Navy. Some 20,000 sailors on 79 Ships and many shore establishments took part. This was the last straw that broke the camel's back in London. They realised with a shock that Wavell and Auchinleck were old India hands and were not being alarmist. What they had warned against had indeed come to pass. Just one day after the Naval mutiny the British leadership in London threw in the towel. Pethick-Lawrence announced that he and Stafford Cripps and A. V. Alexander would go to India for final negotiations.

That was the end of the Raj. So the historical fact is that India got its freedom not because of the long-winded and largely ineffectual Non-violent Movement but by the actual and implied violence of Bose and his INA. There lies the tragedy. *Power, however, did not go to Bose or the trenchantly anti-British INA but to the people who had virtually collaborated with the British.* While others fought and laid down their lives, these Congress leaders waited patiently on the sidelines to grab the fruits of power. This was a largely venal and self-serving elite who had not been baptised by fire or tested in an armed struggle. Forgotten in this pacific hoopla and self-congratulations were some 26,000 INA soldiers who had laid down their lives to free the country. The amazing fact is that, of the 60,000 INA, some 26,000 had laid down their lives. It was an enormous scale of suffering and sacrifice to lose 43% of the entire force. Yet The court Historians have the temerity to call the Indian Freedom Struggle an entirely Non-violent affair. However, the 14,000 or so INA Boys who were repatriated from POW Camps were not taken back into the Indian Army. In fact they were treated as traitors and denied their wartime pensions. The pity is even 70 years after Independence, they still are. They are not allowed to take part in the Republic Day parade—even as veterans. What has been rejected is the very basic Nationalist ideology of Bose and the INA.

Bose vs Nehru—Serious Ideological Differences

So is this a lament for Bose and his INA? No, it is rather a lament for the nation state in India which is still tied to the apron strings of the Raj and has adopted its narratives and kept intact its basic colonial constructs. The Indian Constitution is basically a reprint of the British India Act of 1935 and wholly retains the colonial ethos via its replacement of “Imperial Justice” by “Social Justice.” *Its*

basic premise is that India is not, and never was, a nation state before 1947. It is a mosaic of constantly warring and squabbling castes, communities and creeds. The main task of the Indian Government, à la the colonial regime, is to arbitrate between these competing castes and creeds in a just and fair manner, hence the overriding emphasis on the principle of Social Justice in the Indian Constitution. It has deftly replaced the colonial concept of Imperial Justice. The former bootlickers of the British have ensured that no attempt should ever be made to homogenise the Indian population and all the cultural differences must be maintained in their purity .The emphasis is less on unity and far more on preserving diversity. No effort has been wasted in creating a Pan-Indian Identity. The post-independence politics are purely based on the tribalism of caste Arithmetic. No post-colonial dispensation in India (not the Congress nor the BJP or any other party) has mustered the courage to go beyond caste. Caste, as a divisive factor, has only been enhanced and deepened by a host of petty and self-serving politicians who spread the ambit of affirmative action by including more and more caste groups into the ambit of reservations. Today 50% of the Indian population comes under the ambit of caste-based reservations and the clamour is only to widen it further. The Marathas, the Jats, the Gujjars are all up in arms today. The tragic fact is that the minority of “Indians “ in India is in serious decline. The idea of India is under concerted assault by the coalition of castes and creeds. A Govt led by Bose would have seriously contested this colonial narrative and made a concerted attempt to alter the very nature and ethos of the nation state in India. It would have been reinvented in a radical new form. There was a need for a basic Paradigm Shift from the colonial narrative based on an India of competing castes and creeds. Had a genuinely nationalist state taken charge in India after independence, its first priority would have been to deepen the idea of India by downplaying strongly the plethora of caste and creed identities and homogenising the state. Bose was a Realist. He wanted to obliterate all faultlines of caste and creed. He had done so in the INA by doing away with the Jati and Ethnicity based Regiments of the British Indian army and homogenised all INA units on the all-India all-class model.

Militarising the Indian State vs Demilitarisation

Secondly, the state in India had to be re-consolidated and strengthened as a means of protecting its citizens from foreign invasions and internal disorder. Bose wanted India to have an army of some 3 million men. Like Mao of China, he was a militarist. The Nehruvian state turned pacific with a vengeance. It flatly

said it needed no armed forces. This is the critical factor—*Bose wanted to Industrialise india and make it a major Military power, a significant force on the global arena. Nehru actually wanted to disband the Indian army.* There was no need for an Indian army for a pacific, non-violent country like India, he felt. The police would suffice to protect this state! Fortunately, Patel a realist, prevented Nehru from having his way. India has since had to fight five wars and still faces grave internal and external challenges. In true Gandhian fashion today, the Indian state refuses to fight Pakistan or China, even when its basic national interests are challenged. Given the tragic history of 10 centuries of invasions, this is a recipe for civilisational disaster. We lost those wars and were enslaved—precisely because of our lack of interest in matters military. We will have to revive the legacy of Bose to militarise ourselves, to defend ourselves and not subordinate the state in India to some universalist human rights principles, which the powerful states of the world (like America, China and Russia) today violate with impunity whenever it suits their core national interests. *The Indian civilisational state had been subjected to virtually 10 centuries of defeat and humiliation. Just one century of such humiliation had prompted China to Militarise and reinvent itself in a far more homogeneous and coherent form.* Today China is the second largest military and economic power in the world and well on its way to perhaps becoming the most powerful state on the planet—a Superpower in the true sense of the word. India is still mired in the colonial desideratum of divisive caste and creed loyalties that are threatening to tear apart the very fabric of its unity. The colonial destruction of the very Idea of India, remains complete and total. We have not been able to rebuild what the British had so thoroughly destroyed. *What we needed was a strong state to protect the people of India from external invasions and internal disorders.* Today we have a nation state that claims to be committed to the defence of the idea of India but has hesitated to act in a decisive manner against any of our external and internal enemies. It continues to trumpet the pacific and war-avoiding legacy of Mahatma Gandhi and not the strong Nationalism of Bose and his emphasis not on the soft power of ahimsa but on the hard power of military force. Bose was a realist. *Today we have chosen to stay mired in a dream world of non-violence and ahimsa, when the world around us grows more violent by the day. For a country that has been invaded, subjugated, destroyed, looted and raped for 10 centuries , non-violence is a manifestation of abject cowardice masquerading as high principle.* Let us not forget Mahatma Gandhi himself had decried such cowardice.

What we needed was a strong state in India that would militarise and arm itself to defend its citizens. It chose instead to defend the principles of non-violence and pacifism. A set of very hostile neighbours quickly disabused the Indian nation state of its notions of Non-violence and Ahimsa. A State that cannot defend itself, tragically dies unsung and unwept in today's Darwinian era of the strong eat the weak and devil take the hindmost. We may not militarise in the Germanic sense, but the very least we need is to defend ourselves with vigour and ensure that all such wars to defend India do not take place on Indian soil à la Panipat all over again. Take a look at J&K—that is precisely what is happening there today. We are fighting in a wholly defensive, reactive format confined entirely to Consequence-Management on our own side of the Border. Bose would have made India militarily very strong. He was the only leader of the Freedom Struggle who understood the military idiom. The other political rulers of India know very little of military matters and have not bothered to learn. They have used civil and police bureaucracies to muzzle the military in India and marginalise it from all decision making. We have repeatedly paid the price for it but we simply refuse to learn.

Doing Away with the Legacy of Caste and Creed

As I have said, the Colonial state in India started with the a priori assumption that there was no nation called India—that India had never been a nation state. How then were China and Japan characterised as nation states? They were much more homogeneous societies. India, you had to accept, was a cauldron of castes and creeds but the British construct was that it needed Foreign Rule for good governance. *If caste and creed were to be used as justifications for Foreign rule and colonisation, then the first task of any new born nation state in India was to do away with caste and creed all together.* Instead, what did the newborn state and its power grasping politicians do? *They deepened the idea of Caste as basic identity by now adding economic tags on the caste identity. Affirmative action was needed primarily for the SC and ST—especially the latter who were most deprived and backward.* A series of self-serving and petty politicians like V. P. Singh, added some 50% of the Indian population into the reserved category. This tends to drive all talent and merit-based selection criterion into the dustbin. *It has created a Communism of Caste, a stifling mediocrity that serves to drive out all our talent to Foreign lands. Even Ambedkar, the framer of our Constitution, had wanted caste-based reservations to be a temporary phenomena.* The present breed of Politicians in India, Congress or otherwise, want to freeze caste-based

reservations in perpetuity, for the next 10,000 years perhaps. One fails to understand the Leftist discourse and diatribes against Brahmins and so-called upper class elites. If Muslims ruled India from virtually the tenth century onwards, how were the Brahmins and upper-class people the real power wielders and brokers? They were the most persecuted of the lot in Muslim-ruled states and have been out of power as social groups virtually for the past 800 years. During the British rule, however, they mastered and excelled in the new system of education and in a merit-based milieu, came back to the fore. I am not at all trying to justify the caricatures of the caste system like untouchability, etc., which were abominable practices, and we have taken energetic action to eradicate them. As an independent nation state, however, *we cannot afford to emphasise caste and clan-based identities which make the society regress to tribalism*. That was a desperate, last-ditch mechanism for defence against Proselytisation by the invading Muslim Armies. They came as a defence mechanism when the Hindu states in India failed politically and militarily. They were destroyed and in no position to defend their people. So the people had to fall back on local caste and Jati clusters and Khap panchayats. The Indian nation state has now been in existence for the last 70 years. It is the duty of the nation state to protect its people and their way of life. What have we done to eradicate the sub-identities of caste and creed which now threaten the nation state and militate against a pan-Indian identity. A nation state has to homogenise to an extent and bring equality of opportunity to all its citizens. *Any sensible state will promote merit and not ensure it is driven out to other countries. That is the surest way to ensure a civilisational disaster. So far our educated elite were eagerly lapped up by other states—notably America and Europe. With protectionism on the rise this is not likely, not any longer*. We have a huge youth bulge today and an alarming shortage of jobs. In such a milieu we have unruly agitations for more and more caste-based reservations. The Jats, the Marathas, the Gujjars, the Patels etc., are all clamouring for reservations on the plea of backwardness. What kind of anomaly do we wish to create? A state based on 80 or 90 per cent reservations? What does that do to the hapless 20% that will be left out of this reservation empire? Presumably for ever. As a civilisation we have actualised Communism to its ultimate degree. We have succeeded in creating a Communism of Caste. It is a most inefficient form of Government which has been uprooted from Russia, China and all East European states. Even China has transformed its economy by liberalising trade and turning capitalist with a vengeance. Our politicians still wish to thrive on the Colonial model of

divide and rule based on vote banks and the arithmetic of caste. The sole issue in our elections is caste. *It is a pathetic failure of our colonial era elite to outgrow that system.* Nation building is not the prime concern of these political pygmies. Grabbing and retaining power by any means—fair or foul, is.

Economic Criterion for Affirmative Action

This is the era of Information Technology. Today India has created a miracle with the Aadhaar Card. Let us not use it merely for the state to spy on its citizens and create an Orwellian society. Aadhaar cards are better used to target subsidies to weaker sections of society. *Now with the bulk of the population on the Aadhaar card map, is it not time to switch to an Economic criterion based system of affirmative action? The state should target such economic affirmative action to those who are genuinely economically deprived—those who are genuinely below the poverty line. It should be the state's prime endeavour to bring up these genuinely economically deprived Indians—regardless of caste, creed, gender, religion or language. They are Poor Indians and must be correctly identified via the agency of Aadhaar cards and helped in a targeted fashion. This will automatically help the SC and ST category the most. They are genuinely poor and deserve help.* It will weed out of this pernicious Affirmative Action regime, all those who claim it on the sole basis of caste and creed and manufactured narratives of historical deprivation and marginalisation.

That is why the debate about Nation state formation in post-colonial India is so very important. How actually did we become free? What were the true origins and causative factors for a post-colonial state to emerge in India? The question of who got us our freedom and how would determine the kind of state we have become and lay down our future trajectories of change or of freezing the status quo in perpetuity. The main contention of this book is that, in actual fact, it was Bose and his INA that truly drove out the British in 1947. Left to non-violence alone, freedom would have come to us in India somewhere in the 1980s or 1990s, just as it had come to South Africa only in April 1994 because it had relied on non-violence alone. The tragedy was that Bose and his INA did not take charge of a free India. They liberated it but were edged out by a self-serving Congress elite that were quite wedded to the colonial past. The British actually handed over power to an Anglophile band of quislings and collaborators of the Raj who loyally continued to keep India mired in its colonial past. They started with the a priori British assumption that India was not a nation but a competing cauldron of Castes and Creeds. The Government of India's sole function was to adjudicate between these caste and community groupings in a just and fair manner. Hence the Indian Constitution's emphasis on Social Justice, in place of the Colonial concept of Imperial Justice.

The post-Colonial state in India needed to be militarily strong if it was to outgrow its pacific acceptance and tolerance of abject defeat and foreign rule of centuries. It had to homogenise its society and downplay identities based on caste and creed and emphasise a new pan-India identity. *What the post-colonial state in India needed was a Paradigm shift. What it got instead, was a new elite who kept it wedded to the narratives of the empire.* Between pre-and post-colonial India there was very little difference in basic ideology—Social Justice had replaced Imperial Justice and India is still a competing and squabbling cauldron of caste and creed. All elections are simply based on the arithmetic of caste. That is why who freed India and why is a seminal and vital debate that will define the basics of our Nationhood.

In the end, I would like to acknowledge my gratitude to two Intellectuals who have provided the Inspiration for large parts of this Book. Dr Kalyan Kumar Dey, whose excellent Monograph (*Netaji Subhash: the True Liberator of India*) has put together all the relevant documentary evidence from the British Transfer of Power archives to prove beyond any reasonable doubt that it was the INA of Bose that actually forced the British to leave. I am most grateful to him, for his permission to quote chapter and verse from his excellent study. The other is Dr. Mithi Mukherjee, of the University of Colorado, whose excellent book, *India in the Shadow of Empire* is perhaps one of the best and most insightful accounts of India's Freedom Struggle available today. It provides an alternative historical narrative of the British Empire in India. I have learnt a great deal from the pioneering works of these two very eminent scholars. This book then seeks to turn the searchlight on our recent past and gain new insights about who we are, how we came into being as a nation state and, most important, where are we headed? In the end, where we are going depends a lot on where we came from.

Why Now? Why this book now, is a simple and logical question. 21 Oct 2018, is the 75th Anniversary of the formation of the Hukumat Azad Hind Govt in exile by Netaji Subhas Bose in Singapore (1943). This was recognised by 12 countries, including the then Soviet Union. Netaji then was the first head of State and Commander in Chief of a Free Indian Govt in exile. Mahatma Gandhi's 150th Birth Anniversary falls on 02 October 2019. It is a most appropriate moment for reflecting upon our recent history and the role of these two great personages in making India free.

1

Who Got Us Our Freedom?



This book is an attempt to rescue the history of our Freedom Struggle from some highly motivated colonial and post-colonial myth making that is patently false and tendentious and that seeks to glorify the “benign” nature of colonial rule in India and keep us forever in its psychological thrall. Most educated Indians tend to view it as an era of emancipation of sorts in our history that served to unite a disparate and ever squabbling people into a cohesive and governable nation state. This was the colonial narrative that had so patently and successfully been imposed on our people. Unfortunately it is still believed by a bulk of our educated population. As long as we do not cast away these psychological crutches, we shall never actualise our full potential as a great civilisational state that is heir to 8,000 years of a glorious history.

This book therefore begins with a seminal and straightforward question—Who really got us our freedom? Was it the INA of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose and his most credible threat of armed violence or was it Mahatma Gandhi and his methodology of Ahimsa, Non-violence and the mystical mumbo-jumbo of Satyagraha and soul force. What made us free—the Soft power of ahimsa or the Hard power of the INA?

These seminal questions therefore deal primarily with the issue of how India got its freedom. Was it because of the soft power of Ahimsa , non-violence and Satyagraha? Or was the use of force, the hard power employed by Netaji and his INA, instrumental in forcing the Britons to leave? *These are seminal issues about the very how and why of nation state formation in India.* Today, they deserve to be debated and discussed in detail. Where our nation state is headed depends a great deal on where we came from—how we came into being—what were the perspectives that shaped our outlook and institutions then? The simple fact is that *there has been an orchestrated attempt, to falsify our recent history and impart to it a pernicious spin. The entire role of Netaji Subhash Bose and*

his INA has been more or less effaced from our history books which have been turned into hagiographies for a dynastic leadership. India is a democracy where we have seen the phenomenon of court historians deliberately distorting history. Bipin Chandra's book on India's Freedom Struggle is a magnum opus that runs into over 600 pages. It devotes just one page and a half to Netaji and the INA. That is simply a quantitative indication of the level and extent of the deliberate distortions in emphasis that are being injected into our post-colonial narratives.

The sad fact is that the empire, even as it was forced to pack its bags and leave, methodically handed over the reins of power to a set of anglophile elite, who were handpicked to keep us in everlasting thrall and beholden to the empire, a part of the British Commonwealth (a useless anachronism in this day and age) and to begin with just a Dominion of the empire and not really an independent nation state. Pakistan, the other dominion carved out of India, had the decency to select one of its own—Mohammad Ali Jinnah as its first Governor General. We indulgently and affectionately appointed Lord Mountbatten—the last British Viceroy as our First Governor General, so overwhelming was the affection of our political elite—especially Nehru—for the British Raj. The pity is that the British had created a set of brown-skinned Englishmen who were cast in their own image and steeped in Macaulay's Colonial education and mindset. These brown-skinned elite would strive very hard to see that we remained loyal to the tenets of the Raj. Britain had conquered India with an army of brown-skinned native sepoys. Its psychological sway and dominance would be perpetuated post-independence by another army of brown-skinned anglophiles and intellectuals who would describe themselves as leftist-liberal intellectuals. These are the new set of native sepoys that carry the burden of empire and ensure that we do not deviate from the history and grand narratives that the British masters had written down for us.

Imperial Justice to Social Justice

How strong and pernicious was the influence of the Raj is borne out by the fact that the entire Constitution of India was more or less a faithful reprint of the British India Act of 1935. Thus the very preamble of the Indian Constitution begins with Social Justice. Why this primacy to social justice? Why not to the principles of Liberty, Fraternity and Equality? Why Social Justice? Because this helped us to deftly replace the Colonial concept of “Imperial Justice,” with “Social Justice.” This entailed that the new rulers of independent India would forever have to be psychologically extrinsic to the native Indian milieu. Nehru was precisely such a brown-skinned Englishman—he was therefore supposedly beyond the thrall of the plethora of Indian religions, castes and creeds and races and languages. He was not really a Hindu. He was an agnostic. Because of being so very British in orientation, he was above and beyond the morass that was India and could dispense Social Justice between the various castes and creeds without fear or favour. Social Justice had deftly replaced Imperial Justice as the cornerstone of the constitution of the New Republic that had so deeply internalised the colonial narrative. Nehru had been handpicked by the Raj, which presumably impelled Gandhi to anoint him as the first Prime Minister of India over the administratively far more competent Sardar Patel, who was the choice of the Congress Party per se.

Only the Nehru-Gandhi family was thereafter decreed fit to rule this chaotic mass of disparate people because the Nehru-Gandhi clan were so very British and so “propah!” They alone could dispense social justice instead of the imperial justice that the empire had ruthlessly enforced over the warring, squabbling castes and creeds of India. Thus the very foundation of this Republic was kept confined within the imperial constructs of the Raj. This *Weltanschauung* sadly reflects in the very Preamble of our constitution.

The British left but they left behind a set of WOGs (Western Oriented Gentlemen) who would forever be beholden to the Raj. These wogs would remain sadly oblivious to the delicious irony that wogs was also the second half of a British term called *Golli-wog*—a black Doll that was used as a racial term of contempt for the natives who put on airs of being British style gentlemen.

The British left behind a Civil bureaucracy and above all an Intelligence Bureau, many of whose servants retained a residual loyalty to the Raj. The Indian IB had detailed dossiers on many of the political leaders of the new

dispensation. So they retained an inordinate amount of influence over the new dispensation. The first head of the IB (B. N. Mullick) became an Edgar Hoover of sorts. He remained the head of the IB for almost 13 years. The Mi-5 left a Liaison Office in New Delhi. Amazingly the Indian IB continued to report to the MI5 in London about the movements of Netaji's kin till almost the end of the decade of the 1960s. Was this with the knowledge and approval of Nehru? Did he know what was going on behind his back, or was it with his express knowledge and approval? These are seminal questions that must be asked and investigated. We must get our own history right. We must outgrow the shackles of psychological slavery and begin to think for ourselves as Indians.

The British left but they left behind a set of lackeys that have kept the nation psychologically enslaved and bound down by the Grand Narratives handed down to us by the empire.

This book therefore begins with a set of seminal and straightforward questions. Who really got us our Azadi? Who really made us free? Was it the INA of Bose and their threat of and actual use of armed violence, or was it the soft power of Mahatma Gandhi's Satyagraha and non-violence which really got us our freedom?

There is that popular lyric that sums it all up so neatly. It is part of the hagiography that has been so assiduously built around the legacy of the Nehru-Gandhi dynasty. It says:

“De di hame azaadi bina kharag bina dhaal
Sabarmati ke sant tune kar diya kamaal.”

This translates into:

“O saint of Sabarmati You wrought a miracle
You gave us our freedom sans sword and shield.”

This lyric is an unabashed insult to the 26,000 martyrs of the INA. The INA had an overall strength of some 60,000. Of these, as per the official INA history, some 26,000 laid down their lives. This amounts to 43% of the Force that was martyred. It is an awe-inspiring scale of casualties and sacrifice and it is an unmitigated insult to all those martyrs to call the Indian Freedom Struggle as entirely peaceful and non-violent. It is a disgraceful lie and patent untruth and you cannot attribute it to a saint who made a fetish of always speaking the truth. A nation that has *Satyamev Jayate* (Truth Alone Triumphs) as its motto cannot subscribe to such a narrative that is at such sharp variance with ground realities

and the truth. Why did the Nehru regime spend so much time and energy in crafting a pacific narrative for India? It seemingly harkened back to the times of the Buddha and Ashoka to lay exaggerated claims to a legacy of pacifism and non-violence. Nehru tried to paint himself as another Gautam Buddha come to rid the world of its scourge of war and violence. Why this exaggerated emphasis on a legacy of pacifism that was at obvious variance with much of our historical experience. India's main epics —the Ramayana and the Mahabharata—are all about war and righteous war or just war. India was first unified by military force by the Mauryan Empire of Chandragupta who was guided by the hard realism and realpolitik of Kautilya. This happened in India's period of the warring states when 16 Major States (Maha Janapdas) were constantly at war with one another for supremacy. This was just like in China of the period of warring kingdoms, when 6 major states were at constant war with one another. India's historical strategic culture had emerged in that period of war and violence in the form of Kautilya's Artha Shastra. It was hardly pacific in orientation and urged the ruler to be vijayadishu—a conquerer (who would constantly expand the size and power of his kingdom). Indian pacifism of the later Ashokan period, in fact, cost it dearly as from the tenth century onwards India succumbed to a series of invasions from West Asia and Central Asia which led to a horrific bloodbath amounting to genocide. India was subjugated for 800 years thereafter by foreigners. India had a dire need to militarise and defend itself—not preach non-violence to a very violent world.

The reasons for this policy option were more rooted in Nehru's quest for political legitimacy which was badly threatened by Bose and the violence of the INA which had in reality freed India. The convoluted narrative of an entirely peaceful and non-violent freedom struggle was a deliberately manufactured myth. The British spread it to paint a shining sunset picture of their 200 years of rapacious colonial rule, which they now tried to present in very benevolent and liberal colours. The Nehruvian dispensation did it to present themselves as the true liberators of India who had won her Independence without firing a shot. Twenty-six thousand INA soldiers had been martyred in the Indian struggle for Freedom yet Nehru had the nerve to call it an entirely peaceful struggle. He was fighting with the Ghost of Bose and his INA. But a deeper look suggests something far more serious afoot.

Pacification of Military Cultures

After the Second World War, the Allies made a major effort to pacify the highly militaristic races of Germany and Japan. They had exhibited amazing fighting spirits and intense nationalism. The Americans imposed a pacific culture and constitution on both Germany and Japan. Today these countries are major economic powers, but they remained thoroughly demilitarised and defanged. Not so well known is the fact that another country that the British virtually demilitarised and defanged was India. They simply imposed upon it a Pacific Political leadership with a very exaggerated notion of the efficacy of soft power of Ahimsa (non-violence) as opposed to hard power. The deliberate British design was to leave but instal a pacific Indian leadership that believed in the soft power of Buddhism more than in the hard power of a credible military. The vast military potential of India had become evident to the whole world during World War I and II. India had generated massive armies of 1.3 million and 2.5 million respectively in these two wars. By the time the British left they had reduced the Indian Army from 2.5 million to a pathetic 350,000 which they then divided between the two warring Dominions. How dangerous this was has now been proved by the four wars India had to fight after independence. India's actual security needs have necessitated a new army of 1.3 million men.

Fortunately India was set free from this pacific outlook. The Nehruvian dispensation led India to a disastrous military defeat in the 1962 war with China. This traumatic defeat cured India emphatically of the Nehruvian disease of pacifism. The decade from 1960 to 1970 was the decade of militarisation for India. Just on the heels of the Chinese attack, the Pakistan military decided to inflict a coup de grace on a floundering pacific state. The rump state of Pakistan was one-fifth the size of India. However it had no baggage of abject pacifism. The Americans gifted it huge amounts of cutting edge military equipment and very soon its Army took charge by imposing Martial Law in Pakistan.

As India began to rearm and expand its armed forces in the wake of the 1962 disaster, the self-styled Field Marshal Ayub Khan of Pakistan sensed his last chance to kick in this tottering republic and seize Kashmir. He even dreamt of driving his Patton tanks into New Delhi. A thoroughly chastised Indian political establishment now listened attentively to the advice of its professional military chief. Pakistan's desperate gamble to grab Kashmir by force backfired badly. It led to an escalatory spiral that saw India launch two Corps-sized

counteroffensives across the International Border (IB) directed at the key Pakistani cities of Lahore and Sialkot. Pakistan was forced to recoil from Chhamb and fight desperately to save its own existence.

This war was more or less a draw. It was Pakistan's last chance to exploit India's pacifism and defeat India militarily. India's defence modernisation was now put in top gear and by 1971 this process had reached its peak with very generous support from the erstwhile Soviet Union. Resultantly, when Pakistan once again provoked India by pushing out 10 million refugees into India after a general crackdown in East Pakistan, India reacted in a ruthless manner. It launched a massive tri-services campaign to liberate Bangladesh and resettle the refugees. In fourteen action packed days, India won a decisive military victory. It broke Pakistan into two, marched on an enemy capital and enforced regime change. It resulted in the largest mass surrender of forces post the Second World War. Some 93,000 Pakistani troops surrendered in Dacca. India had shaken off the slough of pacifism and won one of its greatest military victories in its entire civilisational history.

This is how a set of wars that were forced upon India impelled it to jettison the post-colonial legacy of pacifism. The fiction created by the empire had sustained this legacy of pacifism. It tried desperately to hide the true causes that had actually compelled the British to leave and tried to sustain the fiction of a non-violent struggle. No one is questioning here the transparent sincerity and dedication of Mahatma Gandhi and what he was able to achieve in terms of making the Indian independence movement a mass-based struggle. He was a saintly figure and truly believed in the need for Ahimsa. No one can ever doubt his transparent sincerity. No less a personage than Subhash Bose himself called Gandhi the "Father of the Nation."

It was just that the Empire found Gandhi's philosophy of pacifism most convenient. Without Gandhi actually knowing it, the British subtly helped to propel him to the forefront of India's Public Awareness. The empire was happy that the Indian struggle for independence was being kept peaceful and non-violent by Gandhi who truly abhorred violence. It is just that the highly manipulative colonial administration subtly tried to prevent a violent overthrow of the Empire in India by directing all protests into non-violent channels that would make it wholly manageable. It painted the Raj in liberal and angelic colours, enabling them to deal with the non-violent agitation with ease. The Raj found non-violence entirely manageable and hence they tacitly encouraged it.

They built up the Gandhi persona into a larger than life figure in South Asia

also for the consumption of other colonies in Asia and Africa. They tacitly encouraged his pacific philosophy and ensured it put a lid on all violent protests and wars. Sadly, the strategists of the Raj subtly used and exploited the Gandhian philosophy. This form of protest was entirely manageable and they could have sustained themselves in the face of such protests for decades. Had it been left entirely to the non-violent protests and civil disobedience of Gandhi and Nehru, the Raj would have continued and gone on well into the 1980s and perhaps even beyond. This is not a speculation or conjecture. The peaceful Gandhian-style agitation of Nelson Mandela delayed the South African independence till April 1994—almost towards the end of the twentieth century. It was only the very real threat of armed violence and a military threat to the empire that forced the British to pack up their bags and quit India in 1947 itself.

Bose had most astutely understood that the centre of gravity of the Raj was the loyalty of sepoys of the British Indian Army to the colonial regime. *The British success lay in nativisation.* They had used an Army of natives (trained on European lines) to subjugate their own people. When this loyalty unravelled, the British had no option but to leave. *It was Bose therefore who catalysed an early exit of the Raj and dealt it an effective body blow that precipitated its hasty withdrawal.*

The enormous tragedy of it all is that even as the Raj was forced to recede, it broke up India into the antagonistic dominions of India and Pakistan. Even more it left behind a dispensation in New Delhi that was entirely anglophile in outlook and orientation and had in fact collaborated with the Raj in its last days.

Gandhi had surprised the British by launching the Quit India Movement in 1942. He had done it against the advice of Nehru and Azad and, in fact, against the opinion of the entire Congress Working Committee (CWC). The British were fighting a war and were in no mood to indulge the “naked Indian Fakir.” They mustered up some five divisions worth of white troops and crushed the Quit India Movement with ridiculous ease. Wartime censorship helped them to banish Gandhi and his freedom struggle from the newspaper headlines. Deprived of the oxygen of publicity, the Quit India Movement collapsed like a pack of cards. Virtually the entire Congress leadership was jailed. When Gandhi went on his customary fast, Churchill decreed that he should be allowed to die unsung. The British now began to rely far more on the highly manipulable Nehru than on Gandhi. Gandhi was finally released in 1944. He was truly broken in spirit. In his press statements he admitted as much.

The Push to Pacifism

I would, however, like to dwell a bit more on the issue of how Britain deliberately pushed the newborn state of India towards Pacifism by imposing on it a leadership that laid exaggerated claims upon a legacy of Non-Violence. Was there a deliberate strategic design to prevent the emergence of a new centre of power in Asia? At the end of World War II India had fielded the largest all-volunteer army in the history of the world. At 2.5 million men what was significant was that this Army had been recruited without any conscription (unlike in Europe, America and the USSR). This army had proved to be professionally robust and reliable. By 1943, British senior commanders had clearly started indicating their preference for Indian divisions and units over British military units that were showing clear signs of war-weariness and fatigue. Indian troops were hardy and Spartan, needed much less logistical support and were tenacious in combat. On both sides in Burma, it was primarily Indian troops who had performed very well in actual combat. *The British were rather keen to disarm India before they went away. They slashed the Indian Army by 85% to leave a rump force.* They left behind a pacific regime that abhorred violence and hated the Armed Forces with a venom and virulence that was surprising. Just like Japan had been pacified and turned into a toothless state after the Second World War. It was forced to adopt pacifism as state policy so that it would never threaten the USA or Europe again; similarly India was defanged before the British left. They demobilised the 2.5 million strong Indian Army into a rump force of some 350,000 men that was then divided between India and Pakistan. Like Mao, Bose had wanted to have an INA that would be 3 million strong and a power to reckon with in Asia and the world. It is noteworthy that the PLA of China had actually reached a peak strength of a staggering 4.2 million men (after the Korean War). Post-World War II the USA had taken care to demilitarise Japan and impose a pacific constitution on it to ensure it would never be a threat again to the USA. The British did better, they simply disbanded India's massive and combat hardened army of 2.5 million men after the War and left behind a set of rulers who had made a fetish out of pacifism (to try and gain legitimacy vis-à-vis Bose, a leader who had fought for India's freedom by violent means and was the key catalyst for their decision to quit India.) To overcome his legacy of violence, they had gone overboard in trying to promote pacifism. Pandit Nehru hated the military and had in fact told the First British Chief of Independent India's Army, that he did not need armed force in India—

the police forces would suffice! The look of shock and incredulity on the British General Sir Roy Bucher's face should have been preserved for posterity.

Very fortunately for India, the trauma of partition and the large-scale riots that followed, the Pakistani invasion of J&K and the need to liberate Hyderabad, underlined the inescapable need for military force in a Westphalian state system. Sardar Patel was a strong nationalist leader and a clear-headed realist who understood the need for the use of force in the affairs of state. It was Patel who undid the unholy mosaic of princely states left behind by the British and made India a viable territorial entity in the Westphalian sense. Unfortunately for India, Patel died much too soon after independence.

Post-Patel, the Indian Nation state under Nehru turned with a redoubled vigour to establish a manufactured National Narrative of itself as an exceptional state based not on hard power but a soft power narrative of Ahimsa, moral force and persuasion as opposed to military coercion, compellence and actual use of hard power. India was now part of the Westphalian system of nation states premised upon hard power. India's contrived narrative however said it was a state with a huge difference. It was formed on the basis of soft power of Satyagraha which had driven out the British. Unfortunately, this was not based on empirical historical facts. The British had left because of the military and hard power challenge of the INA and its ability to instigate armed rebellion amongst 2.5 million trained men of the demobilised British Indian Army. If these had rebelled in mass, the battle-weary British were simply in no state to deal with such a massive armed revolt in India. *The Ghost of the INA was capable of initiating precisely such an armed rebellion. That is what made the British quit.* They felt they were perfectly capable of dealing with the non-violent movement. It was only the possibility of large-scale violence by 2.5 million demobilised soldiers that impelled the British not to get bogged down in a military morass and cut their costs and leave, when they did. Let us now analyse this issue in a sequential manner.

2

An Overview of The Freedom Struggle



If the British Empire had to survive in India... it had to destroy and dismantle all sources of Indian unity and identity – cultural, political and historical; and render the very idea of India as meaningless. ... Torn by internal conflict, it was claimed that India was in desperate need of a neutral and impartial power at the helm of the state to secure justice and order (or justice as order). Given that Indian society was deeply divided into communities in conflict with each other, only an alien, foreign power could be trusted to be neutral and impartial.

— Dr Mithi Mukherjee

India in the Shadows of Empire: A Legal and Political History

The mutiny was in great measure put down by turning the races of India against each other. So long as this can be done, the government of India from England is possible. But, if this were to change and should the population be moulded into a single nationality, we would have to leave.”

— Sir John Seeley

India has been unified only thrice in its history of over five millenniums. These were the unifications effected by the three great empires in history—the Mauryan Empire, the Mughal Empire and, finally, the British Empire. The present Indian Republic is the successor entity of the British Empire. The reputed German historians, Hermann Kulke and Dietmar Rothermund, have cited the non-revolutionary and smooth transfer of power as enabling the Indian Republic to continue seamlessly, with the institutions fashioned by the British Empire like the Armed Forces, the civil bureaucracy and the police and intelligence services.

The somewhat disconcerting historical fact, however, is that the British did not grant independence to India in 1947. They carried out a *transfer of power* to an Anglophile coterie of lawyers in the Indian National Congress led by Nehru. For the first three years India remained a Dominion of the Empire and became a Republic only in 1950. In hindsight, we can see that its autonomy and autarchy remained subject to *subtle controls and constraints created by an Intelligence service and civil bureaucracy that surprisingly retained elements of loyalty to the Raj which had given them their privileged positions*. Dr. Mithi Mukherjee of the University of Colorado has, in her very original and path-breaking book, *India in the Shadows of Empire: A Legal and Political History (1774-1950)* thrown new light on the Indian Freedom Struggle. Her book links the colonial and post-colonial periods of Indian History into a seamless narrative, and thereby provides a radically new overview on the emergence of India as a modern nation state. To understand the current Indian politics, therefore, we must understand our recent history.

The 1857 Uprising

Aurangzeb had destroyed the secular consensus on which Akbar had built and then taken the Mughal Empire to such great heights. Akbar had monetised the economy on the silver standard and rationalised the taxation regime. He had established matrimonial alliances with the Rajput Princes and co-opted some of them as generals in the Mughal Army. Aurangzeb, however, reintroduced the hated Jazia tax and intensified persecution of the Hindus and Sikhs. He completely unravelled the secular consensus put in place by Akbar (who had called India his Homeland). This led to the revolts of the Sikhs, the Marathas and the Ahoms in Assam. These revolts had torn apart the Mughal Empire, well before the British established their sway. Into this vacuum, the British East India Company stepped in innocuously. It recruited Indian sepoys, drilled them on European lines and soon created a cost-effective Infantry-based Army that helped it conquer virtually the whole of India, starting from the three coastal bridgeheads of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras. The East India Company was a commercial and mercantile enterprise and intent not upon good governance but the systematic loot of the colonised land and its people. It was also characterised by racial arrogance and deeply ingrained white supremacy attitudes. They destroyed the local crafts and industry to push their mass manufactured products. They cut off the hands of the weavers who used to weave the very fine Muslin cloth of Dacca. Later they forced the locals to cultivate opium for sale to China.

Cumulatively, these actions spread great resentment and outrage which finally resulted in the great mutiny of 1857 amongst the sepoy ranks of East India Company's Presidency armies. The spark was provided by the proselytisation efforts and the introduction of greased cartridges said to be dipped in the fat of cows and pigs. This spark soon mutated into a major popular uprising all over North India. Over a period of time, some 80,000 Indian soldiers rebelled. Had they all rebelled together, or had they had competent leadership, the British Empire in India would have come to a swift and inglorious end. The British, however, quelled this uprising with brutal force, but it shook them to their roots. The British subsequently declared the Poorabiya (Eastern) troops of UP, Bihar and Bengal, with the help of which they had conquered the bulk of India, as non-martial and stopped their recruitment into the British Indian Army. The entire recruiting bias was shifted to the Punjab—to the Sikh and Punjabi Musalman troops who had largely remained loyal to the Raj. Also, a large number of Gurkha and hill troops regiments, like Kumaonis, Garhwalis and Dogras were now recruited to keep the people of the Indo-Gangetic plains under check. The new Indian army was raised on segmented ethnic lines to ensure that they would never subscribe to the idea of India. Their primary attempt thereafter was to sanitise their British Indian Army and ensure that it remained loyal to the Raj. That is why its entire recruitment focus was diverted to the Punjab and the Hill tribes (Gurkhas, Garhwalis, Kumaonis). The heavy emphasis on a Regimental System of motivation served the colonial design of accentuating local, ethnic and linguistic identities and preventing the crystallisation of a “Pan-Indian” identity that the nationalists were so desperately trying to forge. The only flaw in this thesis was that in times of war and rapid expansion (as in the two wars) this narrow manpower base of the martial classes completely broke down and had to be supplemented by recruiting thousands of soldiers from clans and castes declared non-martial by the British. Thus, in these wars the British were forced to recruit the Mazhbi Sikhs, Mahars and Biharis, *etc.*

Post 1857: British Divide & Rule Policies

This massive uprising eroded the carefully maintained façade that the Company ruled on behalf of the weak Mughal Emperor. Dr. Mithi Mukherjee writes in *India in the Shadows of Empire*, “the revolt underlined that significant parts of the Indian population, though seemingly hostile to one another, were capable of uniting against colonial rule. Force by itself would not suffice to maintain the empire. *If the British Empire had to survive in India, it had to find a way to*

overcome its foreignness as a source of provocation for future uprisings. It had, even more importantly, to destroy and dismantle all sources of Indian unity and identity—cultural, political and historical; and render the very idea of India as meaningless.” She continues, “Torn by internal conflict, it was claimed that *India was in desperate need of a neutral and impartial power at the helm of the state to secure justice and order (or justice as order).* Given that Indian society was deeply divided into communities in conflict with each other, *only an alien, foreign power could be trusted to be neutral and impartial.*” Thus was laid the ideological basis for persistent foreign rule in India that lasted two centuries. The concept of Imperial Justice was specifically created to justify foreign rule in a deeply divided and fractured Indian society. Dr. Mithi Mukherjee writes, “*For India to have any order and unity, the state would have to be exterior to the civil society and nation.* It was this intervention of the discourse of Imperial Justice, coupled with state’s representation of India as a deeply divided society that tried to turn the exteriority and foreign origin of the colonial state into its greatest strength, rather than a weakness.”

Thus came into being the *British imperial discourse of justice as equity.* Only a foreign and extrinsic power could deal impartially with the many warring sections of a deeply divided Indian society. Hence foreign rule was needed simply because Indian polity was so deeply fractured and incapable of governing itself. Only an external power could have enforced justice between communities.

Splintering India: The Colonial Construction of Caste

The primary aim of colonial rule therefore was to deeply fracture the Indian polity, and exploit every cultural, religious, ethnic and linguistic faultline in its society. One such colonial tool was the accentuation of caste in Indian society. *This was done by the British through the mechanism of Caste-based Census of the Indian population.* Mukherjee writes, “The British ratified caste by means of various colonial instruments such as district manuals, Gazettes, imperial surveys and finally the Census of 1872; and made *Varna*, the hierarchical ordering of castes into four groups as the central idea behind classification of Indian society.” She adds, “*The census administration was driven by the ideological need to naturalise the absence of national unity and then institutionalise it by integrating it into routine administrative decisions and policies.*”

Sir John Seeley, the author of the first census wrote, “The mutiny was in great measure put down by *turning the races of India against each other.* So

long as this can be done, the government of India from England is possible. But, if this were to change and *should the population be moulded into a single nationality, we would have to leave.*” Risley rubbed it in further by saying, “Indians do not have the capacity to develop an idea of nationality, let alone rule themselves.” He ascribed it primarily to the institution of caste. “*So long as a regime of castes persists, it is difficult to see how the sentiments of unity and solidarity can penetrate and inspire all classes of the community.*”

This polarisation of caste was begun as the pursuit of social justice and was the primary colonial mechanism for splintering and dividing the Indian population, of which the Hindus then constituted some 80%.

Community based Electorates

Subsequently the colonial administration tried to deepen these social cleavages and faultlines, by instituting separate electorates based upon religion and caste. Thus the Muslims were the first to get a separate electorate, and then the Christians, the Sikhs and also the Subaltern Castes (Dalits). Risley was a great proponent of separate electorates based upon religion and caste to thoroughly divide the Indian population.

As a counterpoise the primary effort of the subsequent nationalist movement in India was to craft a pan-Indian identity, beyond the pale of religion, community, language and caste. This sense of unity was strengthened by the mass mobilisation of Gandhi's freedom movement and persisted for a time even in the initial Nehruvian phase. The great pity is that, post-independence, *politics in India sought to revive the divisions and faultlines of caste and creed as a primary mechanism for mobilising voters. To secure narrow vote banks, based on promises of affirmative action for select caste groups, the Indian elections were turned into a referendum of segmented mobilisations based on caste. This segmented mobilisation created a virtual "communism of caste" that militated against merit and equity, and deeply splintered the Indian psyche once more in the post-colonial period.*

The Freedom Movement

The surprising fact about the freedom movement in India was that its leadership was predominantly composed of lawyers. They strongly supported the British colonial concept of imperial justice as equity. *They did not consider freedom a right but a privilege that the British imperial monarch would gift to her subjects. Such an attitude stems from the a priori acceptance that Indian society was hopelessly divided and at war with itself. As such, the ends of justice demanded that an extrinsic power enforce justice in an impartial and detached manner. India had to be ruled from without. Foreign rule was the only antidote to India's innate divisions and fragmentations.* Their mode of seeking "Home Rule" from the British was entirely premised upon pleading and petitioning the imperial monarch for justice against the colonial administration. The Freedom Movement was begun by this Anglophile club of Indian lawyers, petitioning and pleading the monarch as a small group of educated elite, on behalf of the subject Indian people. Their goal was home rule and they could never envision the idea of complete freedom.

Thus the Congress had been formed in 1885 by Allan Octavian Hume, an Englishman, and W. C. Bonnerjee, its first President, as a kind of an effete debating society where the natives would be taught the fundamentals of a guided democracy of sorts. Legally they drew inspiration from the trial of Warren Hastings when the crown in England had interceded on behalf of her subjects to deal with an errant administration in India. So all appeals of this effete Club of rich Indian Lawyers were addressed to her Royal Majesty the Queen against the local administration and its perceived misrule. There was no question of asking for freedom or ever questioning the power of the British monarch. The furthest they would go is Home Rule. They would thus address petitions to her royal highness, beseeching her benevolence to set right the wrongs perpetuated by her local, mindless minions. These petitions were couched in such slavish and ingratiating language that it would make the skin of any self-respecting people crawl. That was all these effete debating societies could do. The lawyers as a class dominated this system and set themselves up as the elite who would plead with the king emperor to seek favours for the Indian people. That was all that the early Congress was all about.

The British success *in completely splintering the Indian population was evident during the years of the First World War, when there was no rebellion in*

India even as the bulk of the British Indian Army was deployed overseas. British Intelligence (the highly professional, IB) had thoroughly penetrated the Ghadar Movement of revolutionaries based in Canada and USA and foiled all their ambitious plots to stir an uprising in India during the war. A branch of the Ghadarites had planned to march on India via the East (as the INA would do during the Second World War). India had contributed some 1.3 million Indian soldiers and 146 million pounds to the war effort. Some 72,000 Indian soldiers laid down their lives and 11 received the Victoria Cross—the highest gallantry award in the empire.

Service in such large Armies has a homogenising impact and it somehow revived the moribund idea of India. These troops served overseas as part of the British Indian Army. They were organised in Indian divisions as corporate entities. They fought as equals and were lionised in Europe. They heard the slogans of liberty, fraternity and equality, and saw their colonial masters in dire straits in the trenches of France and Flanders. They fought and prevailed against the European soldiers (Germans, Austrians and Turks). It was a transformative experience for some 1.3 million troops from the Punjab and Northern parts of India. The least they expected from the British at the end of this war was gratitude and perhaps some form of home rule. The response was one of callous racism. In 1919, what they got was the massacre of Jallianwala Bagh.

The Second Strand of the Freedom Struggle: Gandhian Non-Violence

Jallianwala Bagh forms a major watershed in the Indian Freedom Struggle. It was Gandhi who plugged into the deep sense of outrage amongst the Indian people. He took charge of the Congress and turned it into a genuine instrument of mass-based but passive resistance. He mobilised the rural masses of India and banned practising lawyers from joining the non-cooperation movement launched in 1920. He broke free from the lawyers' discourse of pleading and petitioning the imperial monarch for home rule. He asked for genuine freedom or *Poorna Swarajya*. He turned the non-cooperation movement into a mass-based mobilisation that went out of the towns, reached out to and mobilised the Indian peasantry. This really electrified the nation. As in Mao's China, the nationalist movement was now based not on the industrial proletariat in the cities and towns but upon the peasants in the countryside. Gandhi sought to subsume religious differences by espousing the Muslim causes of the Khilafat, *etc.* However, he kept the movement strictly non-violent and propagated a renunciative form of freedom—so much more in tune with the traditional Indian concepts of *Moksha*

and *Nirvana*, that went beyond identity per se into the amorphous universality of the Brahman, as it were. This mass mobilisation was highly successful in reaching out to the Indian masses and deepening the idea of India. Gandhi, however, kept insisting that the movement be kept non-violent. It appears that the British Administration felt, at a point of time, that this non-violent resistance would not pose a decisive threat to British rule in India. They could, they felt, have easily contained this non-violent movement and, therefore, they even tacitly encouraged it, by permitting it to gain a high media profile amongst the print and radio mediums of that period. They were understandably keen that the struggle for Indian independence should not turn violent and grim. The year 1857 was their enduring civilisational nightmare and they did not want any replay or repetition. It is now evident, from hindsight, that the British tacitly encouraged this non-violent, persuasive form of protest because they were convinced that it was not going to basically endanger their colonial rule. The extensive press coverage given to Mahatma Gandhi and his non-violent freedom movement based on peaceful demonstrations, fasts and *dharnas*, was designed to release the pent up energy of popular dissatisfaction with colonial rule but at the same time, prevent it from turning very violent. That violence would have endangered the colonial dispensation. *Non-violence did not, and hence it was tolerated.* It only served to establish the liberal credentials of British rule, its levels of enlightenment and actually reinforced its legitimacy to rule a very heterogeneous population where the natives, they averred, were not capable of ruling themselves.

So even while the Congress tom-tommed its nationalist credentials and abhorrence of colonial rule, they openly admired the British system and were in turn seen by the colonial masters as “Brown Sahibs” and closet Anglophiles in a nationalist disguise—*who were very convenient tools for the perpetuation of the Raj.* In the racial terms of that era, they were WOGs (an acronym for Western Oriented Gentlemen). In actual fact, however, as stated, wogs was the second half of “Golliwogs,” a pejorative racial term of abuse which meant a Black Doll. These non-violent protests, therefore, acted as a safety valve for the popular sentiments and prevented the outbreak of large-scale violence in India.

The Third Strand of the Freedom Struggle: Violence of Bose and His Indian National Army (INA)

The third strand in the Indian movement for independence was led by Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose and his INA and the earlier revolutionaries like Bhagat

Singh, Chandrashekhar Azad, Rajguru, *etc.* Bose was convinced that non-violence was completely within the tolerance thresholds of the Empire. He very correctly identified the loyalty of Indian sepoy as the Key Centre of Gravity of the Colonial Empire. The only Indian in the National Congress who could really challenge the overriding authority of the Mahatma was Subhash Chandra Bose. He was a realist. *He clearly foresaw that non-violence was absolutely within the tolerance thresholds of the colonial regime. This could mount media and psychological pressure but never of an order which would really compel the British to leave.* After the First World War, the demobilised 1.3 million strong body of the native Indian soldiers of the British Indian Army had really spread the ideas of nationalism in India, especially into the villages and countryside from which the peasant soldiers came. *Gandhiji had harvested this into a mass movement but carefully directed it into non-violent channels that would not strain the tolerance thresholds of the Empire, and only add to its feel-good factor of being a liberal regime, open to public pressure and persuasion—but only up to a point.* That point stopped well short of complete independence for India.

World War II had started in 1939. This time India had contributed a staggering 2.5 million men—the largest all-volunteer Army in the history of the world—an Army raised without conscription. Unwittingly, it was this that really deepened the idea of India. Once again large corporate bodies of Indian soldiers fought overseas as Indian divisions, thus unwittingly strengthening the idea of India as a pan-Indian identity beyond the narrow confines of caste and creed. The steady Indianisation of the officers' corps deepened this idea of India even further, and also sharpened the bitterness against racism in the ranks of the Army and its officers' messes and clubs. Gymkhana and other upper crust clubs in India in those days had boards at the entrance which proclaimed, "Indians and dogs not allowed." It was this racism that would cost the British their empire.

Bose differed radically from Gandhi. For him, the war presented a golden opportunity to reach out to the enemies of Britain, to Germany and Japan, and seek their help to free India. Gandhi opposed this realist mode of thought. Bose was completely marginalised in the Congress. Gandhi ensured that he did not become President of the Congress for a second term. Single-handedly, however, Bose escaped to Germany and there raised the Indische Legion (Indian Legion)—a brigade size force formed from the Indian prisoners of war. He was dismayed however by Hitler's racism. Meanwhile, the Japanese had gained spectacular success in the Asia-Pacific theatre. They had raised an Indian

National Army from the prisoners of war they held. They were having problems managing it and they asked the Germans for Bose. The Germans took 13 long months to transfer him.

Finally, Bose undertook a perilous voyage by Sea in a German U-boat. Off the course of Madagascar, Bose transferred to a Japanese submarine and reached Japan. He deeply impressed Prime Minister Tojo and the top Japanese leadership with his transparent sincerity. He established the Provisional Government of Azad Hind and declared War on Britain. He expanded the INA to a respectable size of 1,500 officers and 60,000 men, and organised them in three divisions. Some 26,000 of these perished in the battles of Imphal and Kohima and the subsequent retreat through Burma. The INA lost the battles but won the War for Independence. After the war, in a misplaced gesture of triumphalism, the British put on trial 9 INA officers at the iconic Red Fort of Delhi. The intent was to rub salt into the Indian wounds. It enraged the people of India. Worse, it triggered widespread mutinies in the Royal Indian Navy, the Royal Indian Air Force and many units of the British Indian Army. The British were truly shaken to their core. Some 2.5 million men of the British Indian Army were then being demobilised post World War II, and they were angry and enraged. The British saw the writing on the wall. Their white troops were tired, war-weary and homesick. They had no stomach for taking on some 2.5 million armed men of the Indian Army or large parts thereof. They decided to quit with grace and left within two years after the end of World War II. The sun had finally set on the British Empire.

Thus, what had brought about the end of the empire really were the INA and the Indian Armed Forces. The First War of Independence had been waged by the Indian soldiers of the Presidency armies in 1857. The British had gone all out to fragment Indian society thereafter. It was the mass mobilisations of World War I and World War II that coincidentally reinforced the idea of India through the mammoth British Indian Armed Forces that were raised to fight overseas wars as an organisational entity that was Indian in essence. The Indian Army numbered 1.3 million in the First World War and a staggering 2.5 million in the Second World War. It is my contention that these mammoth, pan-Indian organisations revived the historical idea of India and, unwittingly, nurtured the trampled Indian identity. The first step towards nation building is to raise strong national armed forces to protect that state and give it the monopoly of violence.

The British unwittingly prompted the impulse towards nationalism by raising these huge National Armed Forces as corporate entities with a life and sub-

culture of their own. It was these armed forces in the end that offered violent resistance to the colonial rule and forced the British to leave. The INA played a pivotal role and was instrumental in getting India her freedom. The sacrifice of 26,000 men (or even less, but a significant number) cannot be termed as a non-violent struggle. The very example of these men, who fought as Indians to free India, resuscitated the dying idea of India, and virtually caused a second revolt in the Indian Armed Forces. It was this impending second revolt that caused the Empire to unravel. Bose and his INA had managed to shake the loyalty of the Indian soldiers towards the Raj and this was a major feat. The central idea of the Bose thesis was to subvert and transform the organisational culture of these vast all-volunteer Armed Forces that the British had raised in India, and turn the primary instruments of British subjugation and control against them.

The wily British had seen the writing on the wall. They left, but before that, they cleverly “transferred power” to the Anglophile coterie of lawyers in the Nehru-led Congress. These lawyers soon marginalised Gandhi and buried Bose. They revived the discourse of imperial justice by adopting the British India Act of 1935 virtually as our Constitution and enshrined *justice* as the most important ideal of the Constitution. Mukherjee says, “*these lawyers made justice the basic foundation of the Indian Constitution*. The other instrument of Imperial Justice—the Imperial Monarch—soon manifested itself in the dynastic leadership of the Congress, now represented by the Nehru-Gandhi family, which continued to be a powerful force in Indian politics till 2014, when it was decimated in the recent parliamentary elections, Mukherjee writes:

Once, the British had left, the Congress by sheer force of the habit of the discourse of imperial justice as equity, slowly had begun to elevate one of their own, Jawaharlal Nehru, to occupy the imperial position of monarch as imperial judge. Parliament (largely the Congress), now configured itself as a court of equity centred on Nehru as the new monarch. The emergence of the Nehru-Gandhi dynasty was a derivative of the British discourse of justice as equity. Nehru, the agnostic, was the secular monarch of this state, yet stood aloof and apart, as its new, extrinsic monarch to give justice to its perpetually warring communities and castes.

The Nehruvian Narrative of State

From the point of view of national security, Nehru now crafted a deliberate Narrative of State for India. To downplay the violent resistance of INA and the revolt of the Indian Armed Forces that had finally secured independence, Nehru propagated the patent falsehood that India had secured her independence entirely by non-violent means and methods. As such, force, he felt, had no role to play whatsoever in the birth and establishment of the Indian Republic. Nehru claimed that among the entire comity of Westphalian nation states (based on the sole monopoly of violence), India was an exceptional state—as it was not based on hard power—but the soft power of *Ahimsa*, *Satyagraha*, *Non-violence*, etc. This was patently incorrect as it refused to factor in the pivotal role of the INA and the subsequent mutinies it had instigated. Nevertheless, in his bid to marginalise Bose, Nehru strenuously built up this narrative of state and went to inordinate lengths to ingrain it in the national psyche. In keeping with the Indian states allegedly pacific origins, he claimed that India did not need Armed Forces, that only police forces would suffice. He refused to rehabilitate the INA personnel and denied them their wartime pensions.

Nehruvian Paradox

Nehru thus created a paradox. All Westphalian nation states are based on a monopoly of hard power. Disputes between nations are still resolved by the use of force. As a lawyer, Nehru now elevated the imperial concept of justice and ascribed its preservation to the newly formed United Nations Organisation (UNO), and felt that it would need lawyers like him to plead and petition the new Global Body of supranational justice. Armed Forces had no role whatsoever. It was only the Realists like Patel who prevented him from damaging and disbanding these inherited institutions. In any case, India had to threaten the use of force to make the princely states accede to the Union of India, and make India a cohesive and contiguous state and not a quilt patchwork of local fiefdoms. Patel threatened to march in the Indian Army into any princely state that refused to accede to India. The princes saw the writing on the wall and caved in tamely. It was Patel's assertive use of the instruments of military force that really served to unify India and make it a cohesive and governable entity.

The Post-Independence Narrative

The immediate challenges to India came in J&K and Hyderabad and in both Patel marched in the Army despite Nehru's reservations and Hamlet-like indecision. Nehru subsequently tried to assert himself and took the case of Kashmir to the UNO. It was a disastrous decision and India is still paying for that folly. Patel unfortunately died early and Nehru soon had his way. *Nehru arrogated to himself the role of peacemaker of the planet. This construct was initially fashionable in a war-weary world, and for a time allowed India to punch much above her weight in the various world fora. Neutrality was elevated to the level of dogma—in terms of Non-Alignment. India sent peacekeeping missions to all conflict spots of the world. India adopted a highly preachy and moralist tone in its international discourse as it touted the values of Ahimsa and Satyagraha to an increasingly violent world. Nehru ensconced himself as the new global messiah of peace and non-violence.* The whole of Bollywood was now pressed into service for an information warfare offensive of impressive proportions. Film after film being churned out of Bollywood extolled India as a kind of a haven of universal peace and harmony, designed to bring peace and solicitude to a warring world. Nehru was built up as a great world statesman preaching peace to a constantly warring world.

In 1956, the military coup happened in Pakistan. This made Nehru paranoid. He now completely marginalised the military and used the bureaucracy and Intelligence services to cut it to size. Its Generals were pushed down in the order of precedence and marginalised from all decision-making process. Nehru treated the military contemptuously, as the last outpost of the Raj, and tried to tame it by eroding its professionalism and promoting sycophants and relations to key positions. Worst of all, he completely starved it of resources. India reduced its defence expenditure to just around one per cent of its GDP. This soft power mindset led to the disaster of 1962, when China taught India a humiliating lesson in realpolitik. Nehru turned hysterical and sought western military intervention. It was only a tactical defeat but *the spectacle of collapse in the soft state was most unedifying and disgraceful. Nehru, with his inordinate emphasis on soft power, had created a very weak state, incapable of defending itself or using military force to effect critical outcomes in terms of national security.* Such weakness could imperil its independent existence. *It was a state that deliberately chose not to think in strategical or National security terms.* The initial defence of the India-China border was assigned to the Police forces and the attempt was to *build the Police as some sort of counterpoise to the untrustworthy military.*

The Onset of Realism

The 1962 debacle did occasion a significant course correction in India. Nehru died heartbroken but his successors had learnt a bitter lesson in realism. The Indian Armed Forces were rapidly expanded and modernised. The 1965 War caught them half-way in their modernisation process. However, it did give them very valuable hands-on professional experience. Russia stepped in, in a major way thereafter, to subsidise the Indian military build-up. They provided India the cutting-edge military technology of that era. By 1971, India had arrived as a strong regional power. It broke Pakistan into two and formed a new nation state with the force of arms. The Bangladesh war was a decisive tri-service blitzkrieg that saw a march on an enemy capital, mass surrender of armies (93,000 prisoners of war) and enforced regime change. For the first time after the Second World War, a new nation had been created by the force of arms. By 1974 Indira Gandhi had tested a nuclear weapon. India had arrived on the world stage as a major military power.

The first oil shock of 1973, however, had derailed the Indian political economy and eroded Indira Gandhi's political legitimacy. A Gandhian mass movement was unleashed against her by Jayaprakash Narayan (JP). *Dr Mukherjee says that the Congress's attempt to make an imperial monarch out of its leadership, in the form of Nehru-Gandhi dynasty, was now countered by the second strain of the Freedom Movement—Gandhian mass mobilisation.* In the face of this mass movement led by a Gandhian, Jayaprakash Narayan, Indira Gandhi panicked. Goaded by her inordinately ambitious younger son, Sanjay, she imposed the highly unpopular national emergency. This saw the rout of Smt. Indira Gandhi in the 1977 parliamentary elections. However, the neo-Gandhian dispensation that followed was a weak and motley coalition that unravelled within two years.

Indira Gandhi returned to power and, with Soviet assistance, greatly strengthened the Indian Armed Forces. She was an ardent nationalist and had used Pakistan as the *hostile other* to generate a nationalist consolidation. The Western powers felt threatened by her muscular nationalism. The Afghan War had started and Pakistan had become a key frontline state for the CIA's jihad against the Soviet Army. The Sikh terrorist movement for Khalistan was instigated in the Punjab, to keep India preoccupied and enable Pakistan's army to focus on Afghanistan. All the communities that had been given separate

electorates by the British, to give salience to their separate identities, were fully exploited in the post-colonial phase by the foreign intelligence organisations to instigate insurgencies/local rebellions in India. Indira Gandhi was a charismatic and nationalist leader who was making India a strong regional power with growing ambitions. The West was distinctly unhappy with her muscular brand of nationalism. They were alarmed over the ruthless way in which she had broken Pakistan into two and then exploded a peaceful nuclear device. It is no secret that in the 1980s Indira Gandhi was spoiling for a fight with Pakistan to pay it back for instigating terror in the Punjab.

Indira Gandhi was assassinated on October 31, 1984. Her tech-savvy elder son, Rajiv Gandhi, took over with a massive sympathy mandate, but soon frittered it away in pandering to all manner of pressure groups. The Nehru-Gandhi dynasty as an imperial-monarchical surrogacy institution was fast losing steam. Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated on May 22, 1992 and India now stepped into an era of weak and unstable coalition governments based on the fractured mandates of identity politics.

The Bharatiya Janata party now started a Hindu majoritarian mobilisation with the Ayodhya Ram Temple movement. To counter it, the then Prime Minister, V. P. Singh, took a leaf straight out of the colonial armoury of divisive instruments. He dusted out caste to deeply fracture and splinter the Hindu community and prevent its consolidation as a vote bank. *He justified it as the sole way to promote justice between castes and creeds and thereby secure secularism.* The social justice card of the colonial era was now taken out by the political leadership of post-colonial India, and a second fracturing programme to splinter the pan-Indian identity was now unleashed after 1857, this time by the *Indians themselves*. The entire state machinery was pressed in to sharpen caste identities and *promise indiscriminate affirmative action on the basis of caste and creed markers. Economic price tags were now put on identity markers now by the device of reservation.* In a bizarre move, 50% of the Indian population was brought into the ambit of caste-based reservations. The entire nationalist project of the freedom struggle, to carve out a pan-Indian identity beyond caste and creed, was thus virtually destroyed.

Identity Politics

What followed thereafter was an era of most petty and divisive, identity-based politics based on caste-mobilisation of a degree that would have left the British colonial regime envious. India outdid her former colonial masters in fracturing and splintering itself and descending into the tribalism of caste. Romila Thapar, a prime courtier of the Nehru-Gandhi dynasty, emerged as the chief theoretician of this new ideology of social justice and equity based on the politics of caste. This Queen of caste proclaimed that there was no religion like Hinduism, only a conglomeration of *jatis* and castes. To prevent a consolidation of the majority of Indian population, the colonial card of caste had been invoked with a splintering intent that was odious and surprising in the lengths to which its proponents might have gone.

The second Oil Shock of 1990 meanwhile completely derailed the Indian economy. The then Prime Minister, P.V. Narsimha Rao, was now forced to rapidly liberalise the Indian economy and dismantle the license-permit Raj to enable the private sector in India to take its economy to the next level. This unleashed the entrepreneurial energies of India's corporate sector. This was also the stage in which the Ayodhya Ram temple agitation peaked. It was the BJP's counter to the bid to fracture the Hindu vote along the faultlines of caste and somehow consolidate a majoritarian vote bank to counter the use of the minorities as a captive vote bank.

Dowager Empress

Sonia Gandhi, the Italian widow of Rajiv Gandhi, was now cast into the role of the new Dowager Empress of India. The justice as equity discourse of the colonial era was revived with a new fervour. Only a white-skinned foreigner could be impartial and neutral in the squabbles between India's multiplicity of castes and creeds. Sonia was now elevated to the status of the new queen empress of the Congress, and thereby of India per se. Congress won the elections and Manmohan Singh was made the figurehead Prime Minister to administer the state on Sonia's behalf. Sonia, as the president of the Congress, was the real monarch and thus a diarchy form of government with dual power centres came into being in New Delhi. Sonia's National Advisory Council (NAC) of Leftist-Liberal intellectuals goaded her to policies that would keep the bulk of Indians hopelessly poor and dependent solely on the doles and freebies tossed by the new Empress of India. India had revived the colonial discourse with a new vehemence that was astonishing. How could a free nation regress so thoroughly to the colonial modes of governance? This unleashed a tyranny of short-term agendas, based on buying captive vote-banks through freebies, doles and targeted affirmative action based on caste/identity markers. Accentuating these tendencies were Sonia's possible subterranean support to agendas of proselytisation aimed at converting large segments of the neglected tribal populations, who were consciously prevented from modernising and entering the national mainstream. This spate of freebies coupled with the Oil Shock of 2013 derailed the Indian economy once again, for the third time in succession, much on the lines that a profligate welfare state had derailed the Greek economy.

The two competing ideologies in India were the discourse of social justice as equity with a foreign national as Queen Empress or Monarch—the impartial outsider, ensuring justice and equity between the perpetually warring castes and creeds; and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), on the other hand, which was attempting a national consolidation based upon consolidating the 80% majority of Hindus. The social justice discourse was doing its bit to splinter the Hindu vote into a multiplicity of caste segments and thereby marginalise the majority community of the country entirely by reducing it to competing and hostile caste alignments. Pushed beyond a point, this marginalisation alarmed and angered the Hindu majority. From around 2008-13, the Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh (RSS) and its affiliate organisations attempted to create a right wing consolidation—a revival of nationalism as it were. The image of Bharat Mata

seated on a lion now began to emerge in most street corners of mofussil towns of North India. The build-up to 2014 had begun. A hard right Hindu Government finally emerged from these elections with an overwhelming majority in parliament.

Three Strands of the Freedom Struggle

To understand India's present, therefore, and to determine where the nation state is headed, *it is highly essential for us to deconstruct our recent history. We must understand the seamlessness of connectivity in our pre-and post-colonial narratives that emerge from the way India was colonised and then how precisely it got its freedom.* We need to understand the three distinct strands that emerged in the course of our freedom struggle. These are:

- The discourse of imperial justice as equity, practised by the Anglophile lawyers who remained craven subjects of the empire. Their method was to plead and petition the monarch for Home Rule.
- The discourse of renunciative politics as practised by Mahatma Gandhi through a mass mobilisation of the rural folk. This strand of mass-mobilisation movements re-emerged post-Emergency as the JP Movement, and later the Anna Hazare Movement against corruption in 2012-13.
- The third strand was that of violent Armed Resistance. It had first broken out amongst the British Indian Armed Forces in 1857, and then in the form of the revolutionaries like Bhagat Singh, Chandra Shekhar Azad and Rash Bihari Bose finally culminated in the form of the INA from 1942 to 1945. It culminated in the subsequent mutinies it inspired in the British Indian Armed Forces in 1946. The year 1857 had come very close to overthrowing the British. The INA, however, actually got us our freedom by inspiring physical mutinies in the Royal Indian Navy, the British Indian Army and the Royal Indian Air Force in the immediate wake of World War II. That is the historical truth about India's freedom.

Patterns of the Past

These, then, are the *patterns that tie our pre-colonial history with the post-colonial developments. Modern Indian History also clearly highlights the coincidence of oil price shocks with deep-seated dislocations of the Indian political economy. Three oil shocks have triggered three major political crises in India in 1973-75, 1990 and 2014.* Dislocation of the political economy delegitimises the ruling elite and in the Indian case, dislocated the imperial justice discourse through the medium of Gandhian mass mobilisation in movements like the one triggered by JP in 1977 and Anna Hazare in 2013-14. It is important for us to recognise that the Colonial empire did not grant India independence. They “transferred power” to a coterie of Anglophile lawyers who continued with the ideology of imperial justice as equity by enshrining Justice as the cornerstone virtually of the Indian Constitution. The Indian Constitution was largely a codification of the British India Act of 1935. Its cornerstone remained the fact that India was such a heterogeneous mixture of warring castes and creeds that some external agency was needed to ensure justice and equity between its feuding communities. This role was performed by the British Queen Empress in the Colonial period. It was taken over by the Nehru-Gandhi dynasty in the post-colonial period. Whenever oil shocks destabilised the Indian political economy, the Ruling Nehru Gandhi dynasty was overthrown with the help of Gandhian style mass movements like the ones led by JP in the 1970s and by Anna Hazare in 2013-14, as also the RSS inspired upsurge of Right Wing Nationalism that culminated in the Modi victory of 2014. Those are the patterns that emerge from an analysis of our recent pre-and post-colonial history.

3

The Abject Failure of the Quit India Movement of
Mahatma Gandhi



Null Hypothesis

Having taken an overview of the entire freedom struggle let us now revert to the question which we had posed at the outset of this book. Who really was instrumental in getting India its Freedom—Bose or Mahatma Gandhi? If we have to proceed empirically, it would be essential to employ a null hypothesis. To settle the question of who got us our freedom it would be essential to first examine the final push of the Congress towards freedom that took place in the Form of the Quit India Movement in 1942. This was the final and allegedly decisive phase of the peaceful freedom struggle of Gandhi. So, did it succeed? It would be essential to examine how it fared for that alone can help us to settle this historical debate in a logical fashion. The simple fact is that though it was Mahatma Gandhi who had initially forced Bose out of the National Congress and virtually forced him to leave India, towards the mid-point of the Second World War, both men had developed a sneaking admiration for one another. Bose had called Gandhi the Father of the Nation because of his undisputed role in graduating the freedom struggle in India from the old-style effete debating clubs of the original Congress to a mass-based grass-roots movement that Gandhi had spread to the villages. He had involved the Indian peasantry to make it a genuine grass-roots movement with mass participation. After Bose had left India, Gandhi openly admired his courage, will power and tenacity of purpose. As time went on, he increasingly began to veer towards Bose's view that the British would not leave unless they were really forced to go. The tragic experience of World War I clearly indicated how ungrateful they could be after the war was won. Even Gandhi realised, as time went on, that World War II presented a rare and unique opportunity for India to make an all-out attempt to win her freedom. This presented a narrow window of time in which to act and this would last only as long as the war lasted.

Polarisation in the Congress

We now see a distinct and disturbing polarisation within the Congress. Even as Mahatma Gandhi veered around to Bose's view of a now or never chance to win freedom, Nehru was increasingly inclined to go along with the British. In fact, he went so far as to proclaim that if Bose was to come to India with the Japanese invading armies he would personally go forward to fight him. This was noted by the astute British and after the Quit India Movement they began an all-out attempt to completely marginalise Gandhi and rely more and more on Nehru. By the time of independence, the marginalisation of the Mahatma was sadly total and complete. Let us therefore take a more detailed look at the Quit India Movement of 1942 for it was truly the last charge of the Congress, and it would be necessary to evaluate its outcome and results.

Quit India Movement: August 1942

To placate the Americans who were pressurising Britain to make up with the Congress, Churchill had sent the Cripps Mission in early April 1942 with a virtual plan for the partition of India. This was rejected by the Congress. Secretary of State L. S. Amery felt that Nehru and Azad would break with Gandhi and help the British in their war against Japan, despite the Congress's rejection of the Cripps proposals in April 1942. In fact, Nehru had told a meeting at Guwahati on April 24, 1942 that he would "fight Mr. Subhash Bose and his party along with Japan, if he comes to India." Azad was noticing a clear hardening of Mahatma Gandhi's position and how he was veering around completely to Netaji's point of view on how India should fight for its freedom.

Gandhi now openly admired Bose's courage in escaping to Germany. Gandhi felt the time had come to "Do or Die." Despite reservations expressed by Nehru, Azad and others, he insisted on launching the Quit India Movement. In fact, Gandhiji's draft resolution sent to the Congress Working Committee had demanded immediate cessation of British Rule in India. This was precisely the position that Bose had urged him to take in his last meeting in the Wardha session in 1940. Miffed by Gandhi's new found truculence, the British had apparently been working on Nehru. Amery, the British Secretary of State had in fact said, "*There is reasonable hope that the Congress led by Nehru will at any rate try to help in its own curious fashion in opposing Japanese aggression*" (Sitanshu Das, p. 520). Nehru and Azad however initially quailed at such a level

of collaboration. They were still in awe of Gandhiji and finally they went along with him to launch the Quit India Movement in August 1942. Clearly Nehru was in no position then to strike out on his own and defy Gandhiji at this juncture.

The August 4, 1942 the Congress Working Committee (CWC) Resolution was forced to take a hardline position. It asked for immediate cessation of British Rule in India. Churchill was furious. As Bose had noted, restlessness was spreading in India. The CWC could not have continued with the policy of drift after the British War Cabinet refused to improve upon the Cripps proposal which the Congress had rejected. So, the Quit India Movement was launched. Gandhi was arrested and his last message was, “We get our Freedom or we Die (*Karo ya Maro*).”

Churchill was livid. He was always full of venom against the “beastly Indians and their beastly religion.” He told the British Cabinet, “We must not sell India to the Hindu priesthood and the Congress caucus.” Churchill in fact was ready to lose India temporarily to the Axis invaders rather than concede dominion status to “non-white” India. It is noteworthy that Nehru, Azad, Rajagopalachari, Sarojini Naidu, Syed Muhammad and Asif Ali—all members of the CWC had expressed reservations about the Quit India Resolution. Because of Mahatma Gandhi’s prestige and stature, however, they were forced to go along. The British displayed no qualms or reservations, however, in crushing this movement as brutally as they could. Gandhiji’s fasts were now of no avail. Churchill hated him anyway and was not bothered if he passed away in prison.

Military Reaction to Quit India Movement

In August 1942, to suppress the Quit India Movement of Mahatma Gandhi, the British used a total of eight Brigades with some fifty-seven and a half battalions for a period of 6 to 8 weeks. These were all-white troops of British or allied extraction. Viceroy Linlithgow reported to Churchill that “*this was the most serious rebellion since 1857, the gravity of which we have so far concealed from the world due to reasons of military security.*” To aid this revolt, Bose had sent gold, US dollars, radio sets and arms to India. Talwar and his gang of traitors, however, left most of these at the Soviet Embassy in Kabul. This was not given to the associates of Bose and the money was divided between Talwar and the Kirti/CPI workers (Sitanshu Das). The Quit India Movement thus entirely petered out. All the Congress leadership was clapped in jail and draconian wartime censorship ensured that the Freedom Movement was completely

deprived of the oxygen of media publicity. Within two months, it was all over for the Quit India Movement of the Congress, bar the shouting. The British had been brutal and ruthless and the Non-Violent Movement collapsed entirely in the face of such draconian and repressive measures. In the face of a brutal and determined military power non-violence had unfortunately failed entirely for it is primarily directed at a status quo regime with some humanist and liberal values. As an American military writer put it recently, faced with a Stalinist kind of ruthless repression, “Gandhi dies” before a firing squad or in a brutal Gulag.

So, does the Gandhian form of mass mobilisation and non-violent protest lack efficacy? The simple fact is that in the post-war period Gandhian methods were followed by Martin Luther King in the United States itself with considerable success. The counterpoint is that the USA is a liberal democracy. Would this have worked in Stalin’s Soviet Union or Hitler’s Germany? Such mass mobilisations and non-violent protests however were repeated later in Eastern Europe via a series of Spring revolutions. Then we had the coloured revolutions in Europe and Central Asia and elsewhere, and then of course came the Arab Spring. In all these cases the ruling regimes were relatively not as tyrannical and ruthless and a collapse of the political economies of these countries had weakened the ruling dispensations and had led to widespread disaffection and unrest. and not just the masses but the police, military and other security agencies as well, were fairly demoralised. In recent times, Information Technology has facilitated mass mobilisation at a hitherto unprecedented pace. Internet and text messages can generate huge “Flash mobs” in a matter of days and hours. But how lasting are these effects? The Arab Spring in Egypt has since been reversed and the Army is back in charge. The jury however is still out on this larger issue. The historical fact is all African nations that adopted the non-violent methods for their Freedom Struggle only got their liberation from 1960-1970 onwards and even later. Nelson Mandela’s South Africa finally got its freedom only as late as April 1994. *Had Bose not acted as he did, even India would have gotten its independence some 30-40 years after it finally did secure it in 1947 by the threat of military violence.*

Let us now however go back to the era of World War II to see how events panned out then. Let us not forget that in Churchill’s time , India was faced with a rather ruthless regime that was at war, and had not batted an eyelid as 3 million Indians died of starvation, even as it destroyed all boats and country craft in the riverine terrain of what is now Bangladesh to prevent a Japanese invasion via the sea. It had also used some eight brigades of white troops to brutally suppress

Mahatma Gandhi's Quit India movement. This was not a dispensation that would understand the language of Non-violence.

The Gandhi who came out of prison in 1944 seemed to be a broken man. Largely broken in health and spirit. He had undertaken fasts in prison and Churchill had menacingly said let him die. With wartime censorship in place they were confident they could handle the civil unrest that would follow Gandhi's death. They had after all just used the 57 white battalions to very good effect to crush whatever unrest that had followed. There was no second-tier Congress leadership that could guide a mass scale civilian unrest. Bose was making his broadcasts from Tokyo to guide the Indian people on the techniques of sabotage and subversion but his clandestine radio broadcasts had been banned and were not readily available to the mass of the Indian public. Sadly, all of Bose's attempts to smuggle in weapons and explosives and gold, etc., had been betrayed by double agents like Talwar. The Quit India movement had largely petered out.

However, even then, had the Japanese attacked in the summer of 1942 or even after the monsoons or even in 1943, they would have cut through like a knife through butter. The bulk of the British and white troops were involved in internal security duties inside India. Japan still had the edge in air power and naval power. By 1944 the tide had turned decisively with US intervention. The British had rebuilt a massive new Indian army. US support had given them air and naval superiority. By 1944 when the Japanese-INA offensive was launched it was a tragic case of too little too late. Despite the odds the Japanese almost pulled it off and the battles of Imphal-Kohima were the hardest fought battles of the British empire. By the monsoon of 1944, however, the danger was past. The Japanese logistical system collapsed in the monsoons and soon they and the INA were in a miserable retreat. The only thing that saved them from annihilation was just the formidable reputation of the Japanese Army. The British now felt confident that they could now release the incarcerated Congress leadership.

Statements of Mahatma Gandhi after His Release

Dr Kalyan Kumar De in his inimitable book, *Netaji Subhash: Liberator of Indian Subcontinent* has carried out invaluable research into the British Transfer of Power archives. He has uncovered a veritable treasure trove of excellent historical documents that clearly highlight with the help of authentic documentary evidence, that it was not the non-violent struggle of the Congress

but the INA trials which had unleashed a wave of violence all over India and shaken the loyalty of the British Indian armed forces to the Raj that forced the British to panic and leave. As confirmatory evidence for the Failure of the Quit India movement, he has cited the statements of Mahatma Gandhi immediately after his release from jail in 1944. He repeatedly cites instances of Mahatma Gandhi saying that he had no more legal authority to carry on with the Quit India Movement and could not ask anyone to continue with the non-cooperation movement. In other words, the Quit India Movement was all over. This was the most tacit admission of defeat from the top leader of the Quit India Movement himself and is the final epitaph about the sad but abject failure of this non-violent movement. In the face of ruthless military action it just petered out and collapsed. The power of state coercion prevailed and the non-violent movement collapsed altogether. The first-hand statements of Mahatma Gandhi clearly highlight this caving in and collapse of the Quit India Movement. I will now cite the specific statements of Mahatma Gandhi quoted by Kalyan De. He has taken these excerpts from the Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi.

Speech to Congressmen at Poona June 29, 1944

Gandhiji said: “today I do not meet you in any representative capacity. In terms of Satyagraha, the moment I was imprisoned I ceased to wield the authority reposed in me by Congress and if I am now out of prison, it is not because of my strength or yours but because of my illness... This fortuitous release does not restore to me the authority that lapsed with my imprisonment.”

Interview with Stuart Gelder July 4, 1944 (*Bombay Chronicle*, July 13, 1944)

When Stuart asked him, “supposing you saw the Viceroy what would you say to him?” Gandhi replied, “I would tell him that I sought the interview *with a view to helping and not hindering the Allied war effort*. But I can do nothing without seeing the members of the Working Committee for I believe that my authority under the August resolution ended with my imprisonment. It was not revived by my release.” Further he said in the interview, “history does not repeat itself. The conditions of 1942 do not exist today. The world has moved on during the last two years. The whole situation has to be renewed *de novo*. The point, therefore, for me to discuss with the Working Committee is to know how they react to the knowledge that I gained since my release.” It is noteworthy that in 1942 when the bulk of the CWC had opposed the launch of the Quit India Movement,

Gandhiji had overridden their objections. Such was his prestige then that none could stand against him or question his authority then. These statements therefore mark a sad contrast.

Interview to Press, Panchgani, July 13, 1944

“What no one can do in the name of the Congress is mass civil disobedience, which was never started and which, as I have said, I cannot at the present moment, even in my personal capacity, start.” This is a clear acknowledgement of defeat. Gandhi was most unwilling to ask for a resumption of the civil disobedience movement and after his release from jail strenuously denied any plans to relaunch it. He offered complex legal sounding arguments as to how he had, by virtue of his arrest, lost all authority and would have to have the views of the CWC before he could do or say anything at all. The Quit India Movement was largely over.

Talk to Bombay Congress Leaders, Panchgani, July 29-30, 1944

Gandhiji said, “9 August is a great day and it is the duty of all to observe it. But the part of the resolution which speaks of mass civil disobedience cannot be brought into force because the authority to put it in force vested solely in me. Today I see no possibility of mass civil disobedience either according to that authority or according to circumstances.” This sadly is an admission of abject defeat. It was all over as far as the Quit India Movement was concerned and the do or die phase was all but finished.

Statement to the Press, Sevagram, August 5, 1944

Gandhiji said, “Many Congressmen asked me how to celebrate 9 August. That date was a turning point in India’s fight for freedom. I had wanted to spend that date in peaceful introspection and to inaugurate negotiations for a peaceful settlement. But the Government or fate willed it otherwise. The Government went mad and so did some people. Sabotage and the like were resorted to and many things were done in the Congress name or in my name. I am aware that I do not represent the Congress mind always. Many Congressmen repudiate my Non-violence. The CWC is the only body which can legitimately and truly represent Congress.”

Considering that the whole Working Committee in 1942 had serious reservations about launching the Quit India Movement and Gandhiji alone had

brushed aside their objections and pushed the resolution through, it was a sad climb down. The British had broken his spirit in prison and possibly turned around many of the other Congress leaders then in incarceration. The entire Quit India Movement—the grand finale as it were of the non-violent struggle—had fizzled out without a whimper. If there is any doubt whatsoever of abject defeat it should be cleared by the last part of the statement of Mahatma Gandhi in 1944:

“The second thing that I should like done on the forthcoming 9th of August is for those who have gone underground to discover themselves. They can do so by informing the authorities of their movements and whereabouts or by simply and naturally doing their work in the open without any attempt to evade or elude the police. To go underground is to elude the police.” This proclaims the end of all resistance to the British Colonial power and coming out of hiding and virtually surrendering to the Police. These slew of statements concede complete defeat and failure of the Brave Quit India Movement that has been tom-tommed as the last decisive charge of the non-violent brigade that really pushed out the British. All these statements do not suggest any victory.

They are sadly admissions of total failure and an abject sense of loss and control.

4

The Clement Attlee-Chakrabarty Dialogue



Identifying Key Decision Makers

In our efforts to resolve this historical debate about the reality of the formation of a post-colonial state in India, we will have to identify the key decision makers who shaped the British decision to quit India finally. Who were these key decision makers and what finally impelled them to make the choices that they did? What was weighing most upon their minds? Was it the cumulative pressure generated by decades of a pacific and non-violent Civil Disobedience Movement in India and the cumulative weight of the long and tortuous negotiations process? That is what Bipin Chandra and other court historians would have us believe. Or was it plain and simple the threat of a major military revolt instigated by the mass emotions aroused by the trial of INA officers? What finally worked? Hard power, the threat of a military revolt, or the soft power of non-violence and persuasion? It is vital to draw up this list of key British decision makers and then dispassionately examine their views and the actions taken by them at that time. The key British decision makers can be listed as under:

- Lord Clement Attlee, Prime Minister of Great Britain from August 1945 to 1950. Along with him were Lord Pethick-Lawrence (Secretary of State for India and Burma) and Sir Stafford Cripps (President of the Board of Trade) in London.
- The Viceroy of India, Field Marshal Viscount Lord Wavell (at the time of the INA trials and Naval mutiny)
- The last Viceroy of India, Lord Louis Mountbatten (however, the decision to free India had been taken by the time he was appointed. It was his task to implement that decision and actualise time frames).
- Commander-in-Chief India, General (later, Field Marshal) Claude Auchinleck and his superiors in the Imperial General Staff in London. Communications between them would provide the vital input about the military impact of the INA and subsequent mutinies in the Royal Indian Navy, Air Force and some units of the British Indian Army. This would be the most critical and decisive input.
- The British Governors of the Indian Provinces and their reports to the Viceroy on the internal situation in the wake of the INA trials also provide clear insights in to the decision-making process and the ground situation in various states in the wake of the INA trials and the naval mutiny.
- Another valuable source of information are the reports of the Intelligence

Bureau whose primary task was to monitor the internal security situation and threats thereto.

The key and pivotal decision maker, however, remains the British Prime Minister of that era, Lord Clement Attlee. Even the then British Monarch King George was bound to act on his advice. It is here that we have a very interesting input about what Attlee said and felt about the grant of Independence to India and precisely how it came about. Before we get on to that it would be useful to recapitulate in some detail the final events that led to the decision to Free India and Transfer Power.

The Final March of Events

On July 26, 1945, in a significant paradox, as it were, Churchill, the celebrated British war leader, lost the elections at the peak of his fame and power. He had successfully led the British in a six-year-long war. Just when the final triumph came, a war-weary population showed him the door. The British people were physically, emotionally and psychologically drained by that war. As a consequence, they showed their most celebrated and charismatic war leader, Winston Churchill, the door. On July 26, Churchill, conceding defeat in the general elections, advised the King to ask Attlee to form a Government. Early in August 1945, Clement Attlee had taken charge.

The worst person in the Attlee Cabinet, Nehru felt, was Sir Stafford Cripps. Early in 1942, Cripps had brought Indians an offer (the famous Cripps Offer) of Dominion Status at the end of the war and participation in an All-India Government meanwhile. *Subsequent negotiations had failed over defence. The British had insisted that defence remains their responsibility. Cripps had publicly blamed the Congress Party for this failure.*

Now the same Cripps was in Attlee's Cabinet. When Attlee had been officiating PM in the wartime coalition government for a while, he had on August 9, 1942, approved the arrests and proscription of the Congress Party. Thereafter Attlee's remarks had dwelt less on the necessity of bringing independence to the subcontinent than on the difficulty of doing so (Peter W. Fay, *The Forgotten Army*, p. 430). Nehru therefore was most suspicious and sceptical of Attlee. Early indications after the formation of the new Labour Government were not encouraging. In his address to Parliament, George V had promised "to press on with the "development of My Colonial Empire and the welfare of its people." That was the tone and tenor of the Attlee Government when it took charge in 1945. The Labour Party did not have a clear mandate for decisive change. Though the general elections had given it a majority of almost 150 seats in the House of Commons, at the polls it had received only 2 million more votes than the Conservatives. Attlee had won primarily on the basis of his domestic programme. In the realm of Colonial and Foreign Policy, Labour would be more conservative than the Conservatives themselves.

I am recounting this specifically, *to fault the thesis of the Court Historians, that because of the continual non-violent struggle of the Congress over the past several decades, a kind of momentum towards freedom had been built up and*

what was germane or critical, was simply the process of negotiations, which Gandhi and Nehru seemed to lead. This is very far from the truth. The Congress Party's last charge, the Quit India Movement of 1942, had unfortunately petered out completely. The British had totally weathered this storm and they felt they were on top of the situation. They were absolutely in no mood to make any concessions/compromises about India's freedom.

On August 13, 1945, Japan had surrendered. The provincial governments declared two to three days of holiday. The most joyous, however, were the Americans and British servicemen, eager to go home. War weariness was the primary sentiment. On August 23, 1945, the Domei News Agency of Japan announced the death of Bose in an air crash. Picked up instantly, it had created a stir right across the subcontinent. Schools closed, markets shut; in Bombay, the cotton mills stopped working; in Ahmedabad, there was a general "Hartal," writes Fay.

Attlee, meanwhile, had selected Pethick-Lawrence as his Secretary of State for India. He was old, amiable and did not rub Indians the wrong way. Lord Wavell was immensely relieved. With the surrender of Japan, normal political life in the subcontinent could not be postponed indefinitely. The sudden surrender of Japan forced the issue by depriving Delhi of the postponement rationale. Hence on August 21, 1945, Wavell had given notice for the Central and Provincial elections, the first since 1937. On August 22, the Congress Party's proscription was ended, to enable it to participate in these elections. The party was in disarray, as it had to now collect its workers and reopen its offices. As I have cited, its top leadership had emerged from prison, virtually broken in spirit and with all fight seemingly knocked out of them. It needed an issue to galvanise itself and the Indian masses. Luckily for the Congress, the ghost of Bose seemed to rekindle the freedom struggle with a major bang. The issue was provided by Bose and his INA. It put life back into a virtually moribund Congress. It was the ghost of Bose who rejuvenated the Congress and the Freedom Struggle. R. F. Mudie, the Home Member of Viceroy's Executive Council had written about Bose, "The Bengali's influence over the INA was substantial. It affects all races, castes and communities. Men admired him for organising India's First 'National Army' and for so conducting himself and that the Japanese were forced to treat Indians as allies. In the eyes of many, he stood on a level with Gandhi."

Nehru had initially opposed the launch of the 1942 Quit India Movement (as had most CWC members). They had virtually been bulldozed by Gandhi into

launching this crusade. *The simple fact is that by then the views of Bose and Gandhi had begun to coincide markedly. Gandhi realised, in retrospect, that Bose had been absolutely right. This was India's last and desperate chance to attain freedom. It was now or never. It was "Do or Die."* The Congress Party had thereafter launched its final non-violent crusade. The British had used unabashed violence to crush this popular uprising. To avoid any chances of peaceful agitations, they had used five divisions or *some 57 Battalions of white troops*. That had crushed the Quit India Movement. This last charge had left the Mahatma psychologically exhausted and spent. He almost died in prison. This was perhaps when the British worked on Nehru in prison. When they released him, they were sure he was going to be reasonable. After all, he had initially opposed the launch of the Quit India Movement during the war and he had threatened to march against Bose if he invaded India along with the Japanese. He was perhaps the most anglicised of all Indian leaders.

Out of jail, Nehru and *the Congress were soon pushed by the rising tide of anger and angst over the death of Netaji and the trials of the INA. A storm was rising all over India and the Congress leaders including Nehru were simply lifted by this rising tide of resentment and anger.* The return of the INA prisoners had started in July 1945 itself. After the war ended, this process was speeded up. The British were making a serious mistake. In hindsight, they may have decided to leave them in Burma and Malaya. But they brought them back in shiploads to Chittagong and Calcutta. From here they were sent to camps in Jhingugacha and Nilganj (near Calcutta), to Kirkee (outside Pune) and Bahadurgarh (close to Delhi), to Attock and Multan in the Punjab (now in Pakistan). At Bahadurgarh, the men of the Indische Legion were brought in. "Blacks" and those required to depose against them were concentrated in the Red Fort in Delhi.

By early September 1945, some 7,000 INA men had reached India. By early November, this had risen to 12,000. Some 3,000 had been allowed to rejoin their families. By December 1945, releases were averaging more than 600 a week. The INA men were getting reinjected into the national bloodstream. Stories of their glorious struggles were now proliferating all across the land, along with much embellishment. The INA POW cages were arousing public curiosity and anger. "These thousands, spreading all over the country," said Nehru to Krishna Menon, "will make a difference, perhaps a great difference, for they are hard as nails and very anti-British." Events were building up for a repeat of 1857.

The violence that broke out all over India in the wake of the INA trials was simply unprecedented. In Delhi, in Calcutta, in Mumbai and Karachi the crowds

poured out into the streets. Over a lakh of people surged out in Calcutta. Police firing simply failed to stop them. The crowds would stop for a few seconds then simply surge forward again. In all his years the Mahatma had never been able to mobilise such large-scale and extremely agitated mobs. The very scale of the rioting left the British dazed and petrified. The most worrisome was the sullen and ominous mood in the Indian military units. The British were terrified of the storm that was building up in South Asia. Was it heading for another 1857 style mutiny? If so, where were the white British troops to quell such an uprising? At the very least it needed five British Divisions. But most of them had been sent back to England for demobilisation. The American and British troops were homesick and simply war weary. They were in no mood to attempt a second reconquest of India, this time in the face of 25 lakh combat hardened Indian soldiers who had done so well in the war and were right then being demobilised.

Unprecedentedly, the INA trials were very public, to strike terror into the hearts of the armed forces. Due to the sympathy toward Netaji and the INA in general, there was an instant and large outpouring of passion and patriotism in Indians. It was almost like an explosion. These stories were being shared via wireless sets and through media in general on the ships, where the sailors who were discriminated against got inspired to revolt. The British claimed that the causes for the subsequent Naval mutiny were entirely local and Hygiene factors based, i.e., the bad quality of food, the thinness of the dal and bad accommodation, etc. That however was just the tip of the iceberg of anger and humiliation at racial slurs that had accumulated over the years. Just as the greased cartridges were not the actual but merely the precipitating causes of the 1857 uprising, food, etc., seemed to be the triggering cause of the 1946 revolt. But it had been brewing for long and could be clearly traced back to the intense resentment born of the INA trials.

Royal Indian Navy Revolt

The INA trials had inflamed the Indian soldiers, sailors and airmen of the British Indian Armed Forces. The first to revolt were the sailors of the Royal Indian Navy. It was a massive and widespread rebellion. At its peak some 20,000 sailors on 78 ships and 20 shore establishments had revolted. They had pulled down the Union Jack and hoisted in its stead, the tri-colour Congress Flag. They had refused to obey their British officers, chased them out and manhandled them. They had marched through the streets of Mumbai and Karachi with portraits of Netaji, shouting the INA slogans of “Jai Hind” and “Chalo Dilli.” The revolt had occurred first in the Royal Indian Navy, an All India, All-Class Service. It spread next to the Royal Indian Air Force (also all-Indian, all-class based). Mostly it was the signallers who could communicate with diverse units, who spearheaded this agitation. They had spread on wireless the news of the INA trials and generally coordinated the revolt. The British were petrified. This was the spectre that had been haunting them so far, of a dam about to burst.

Auchinleck now warned his Army commanders that they could no longer rely on the soldiers of the Indian Army. He warned the Government in London to hastily announce a date for the British departure. Both the soldiers, Wavell and Auchinleck, were now crystal clear, it was all over for the Raj. The sheet anchor for its continuance, its very centre of gravity, was the loyalty of the Indian sepoy to the Raj. With this in serious doubt, they were clear that it was curtains for the empire. Did they want to go with grace or did they want a very messy and bloody exit? For this time the Congress leaders had been able to bail the British out. They had talked the naval mutineers into surrendering. The key question was, for how long?

Royal Indian Air Force Revolt

Just twelve days before the Indian Naval Mutiny (which started on February 18, 1946), 600 members, including officers of the Royal Indian Air Force (RIAF) camp situated close by on Bombay's Marine Drive, had gone on a hunger strike as a protest against a racial insult by the Camp Commander. The revolt in the Navy soon spread to the ranks of the Royal Indian Air Force. Indian airmen at many airbases went on strike. They too refused to obey their British officers and shouted pro-INA slogans in Karachi and other cities.

Jabalpur Army Mutiny

The last straw that broke the camel's back however was the spread of this armed revolt finally to the Indian Army, the real source of the strength of the Raj in India. On the quiet morning of February 26, 1946, as an aftermath of the naval mutiny, some 120 army men of the "J" company of the Signals Training Centre (STC), Jabalpur, defied their British superiors and broke free from their barracks. Part of a radio-signalling unit, they were sick and tired of the racist abuse heaped on them by their paranoid British counterparts. There was complete commotion for some days.

Meanwhile Lord Pethick-Lawrence made a momentous declaration in the House of Lords on February 19, 1946 (just a day after the start of the naval mutiny) in which he announced the decision of the British government to send a special mission, consisting of himself, Sir Stafford Cripps and A. V. Alexander to resolve the constitutional deadlock in India. This was the beginning of the end, the first nail in the coffin of the empire. Meanwhile British General Staff had begun serious planning to cope with wider mutinies and unrest in the army. Some of the declassified documents of the British Indian Army of that period make chilling reading. Sample these:

If, however, the Indian Armed Forces did not remain loyal ... we would be faced with the necessity of providing five British divisions for India, with the consequent abandonment of commitments in other areas hitherto regarded as inescapable, serious effects on our import and export programmes and worldwide repercussions on the release scheme. The only alternative to this would be ignominious withdrawal from the whole of India. Five British divisions incidentally were just not available. Most divisions were being hurriedly shipped back home because the soldiers were desperately homesick.

The Report by the Chiefs of Staff is an important document that brings to light several important points connected with India's independence. It clearly brings out the fact that the British Government was seriously considering the option of creating Pakistan in June 1946, not because of the lack of agreement with the political parties—this was still being negotiated by the Cabinet Mission—but due to the threat of disaffection in the Indian armed forces. At a point in time it was being considered that all British forces and families would first concentrate in Pakistan and then be shipped/flown out. This option was ruled out

only because it did not serve British strategic interests. *The disparity in the outlook of British officials in London and Delhi is also clearly visible; for the former, Britain's long-term strategic interest dictated continuation of British rule, while those closer to the scene of action, such as Wavell and Auchinleck, realised that it was time to go. Had the Indian armed forces remained loyal or had there been enough British divisions to keep them in check, the British would never have left India.*

Early in September 1946 the Viceroy forwarded to London a plan for phased withdrawal from India, which was a revised version of the Breakdown Plan of the Cabinet Mission. This had been rejected by the British Government as it did not help British strategic interests. Wavell could see that the situation was steadily deteriorating, and unless a clear policy was announced, India could slide into anarchy. After consulting the Governors and the C-in-C, he estimated that the British could hold on for not more than 18 months. *The Secretary of State, Lord Pethick-Lawrence, did not agree with Wavell's appreciation. He felt that it was still possible to hold on to India, and proposed further European recruitment to augment British troops in India.* By this time, serious communal riots had broken out in East Bengal and in the Punjab, resulting in sizeable casualties among Hindus as well as Muslims. A new Interim Government headed by Jawaharlal Nehru had been installed at Delhi, with Sardar Baldev Singh as the Defence member. In a letter dated September 12 to Auchinleck, who had recently been appointed a Field Marshal, Nehru discussed the withdrawal of British forces from India; pulling out Indian troops from the Netherlands East Indies and Iraq; and the future of the Indian Army. In a broadcast to the Armed Forces on October 9, Baldev Singh announced the setting up of a committee to accelerate the pace of nationalisation. In view of these developments, Pethick-Lawrence's proposal to raise additional European troops for India appeared surreal.

Refusing to take no for an answer, *Wavell sent a strongly worded note to the Secretary of State on October 23*, in which he reiterated his demand for a firm declaration of the policy of the British Government. His plan, he wrote, was based on two main assumptions:

- The object was to transfer power to India without undue delay and with the minimum of disorder and bloodshed; to secure the interests of the Minorities and to provide for the safety of the 90,000 Europeans in India;
- *The power of the British Government in India was weakening daily, and*

could not be sustained beyond 18 months. Using exceptionally strong language, Wavell made it clear that as the man on the spot, it was his responsibility to advise the Government of the action to be taken to achieve these objects. "If HMG consider that my advice shows lack of balance and judgment, or that I have lost my nerve, it is of course their duty to inform me of this and to replace me," he wrote. "But they take a very grave responsibility upon themselves if they simply neglect my advice." Wavell ended by emphasising that they "must have an emergency plan in readiness; and if it is agreed that we cannot hope to control events for longer than 18 months from now, we shall have to make up our minds and make a definite pronouncement at least in the first half of 1947. While I agree that we should not leave India till we have exhausted every possible means of securing a constitutional settlement, we can make no contribution to a settlement once we have lost all power of control."

In December 1946 the British Government invited Nehru, Baldev Singh, Jinnah and Liaquat Ali Khan to London for discussions, along with the Viceroy. During his visit, Wavell again pressed for adoption of the Breakdown Plan, urging the Government to announce that they would withdraw all control from India by March 1948. *Some Cabinet Ministers such as Bevin and Alexander, who were imperialists at heart, balked at the prospect of a stark announcement of the ending of the British Raj.* Prime Minister Attlee also felt strongly that the British should not relinquish control until at least a constitutional settlement had been reached. Since the chances of reaching an amicable settlement appeared dismal, Attlee's views seemed illusory. After a series of meetings, the *India and Burma Committee decided to recommend that March 32, 1948 should be announced as the date by which the British would hand over power in India.* Wavell pressed for a firm announcement in this regard by the British Government. Attlee replied to Wavell on December 21, 1946, giving the impression that his proposal had been by and large accepted.

Though the freedom movement had developed considerable momentum by the time the war ended, the assumption that it would have achieved independence on its own would be erroneous. With the vast resources at their disposal, it would not have been difficult for the British authorities in India to muzzle the movement, as they had done in 1930 and 1942. The only reason for them not being able to resort to such measures after 1945 was the uncertain dependability of the Army. Had the Indian soldier remained staunch, or

adequate British forces been available, it is most unlikely that freedom would have come in 1947. If nothing else, it would have been delayed by 10 to 15 years.

The redoubtable Lt Gen Sinha, was one of the first Indian officers to be posted at the most prestigious Military Operations (MO) Directorate in Delhi in 1947. This was hitherto manned only by British officers. The outgoing British officer he was taking charge from handed over the keys of the Top Secret documents to him and left in a great hurry, as it were. Therein Gen Sinha saw two Top Secret files meant for British officers only. One was a Contingency Plan to fly in British troops to deal with any mutiny in the Indian armed Forces. This called for flying in some five British divisions to quell such an uprising. The problem really was where were these five divisions? I had learnt this first-hand from Gen Sinha himself, a few months before he passed away.

Operation Gondola

The second was Op Gondola—a plan to evacuate British civil and military personnel from India in the event of a major armed uprising. This gives the clearest insight into the state of mind of the British and the real reason why they left in such a tearing hurry in 1947.

Partition

Lord Louis Mountbatten had taken over from Field Marshal Wavell as India's last Viceroy and later its first Governor General. He had, rather arbitrarily and whimsically, advanced the date of British withdrawal from India from the earlier target date of June 1948 to August 15, 1947 simply because that happened to be the anniversary of his South East Asia Command's Victory over Japan. This led to the holocaust of partition in which over 2 million Indians and Pakistanis were killed and some 14.5 million were uprooted and displaced. It saw the most massive mass migrations in human history. Perhaps the real underlying intention was to seed such chaos that the newly formed Dominions would beg to be reincorporated back into the empire.

The Attlee Testimony

Ranjan Bhora in his eminently researched paper in the Historical Journal of India writes:“Ramesh Chandra Majumdar, the eminent Indian historian who passed away recently, and who by virtue of his challenges to several historical myths can rightly be called the Dean of new historians in India, observed in his book, *Three Phases of India’s Struggle for Freedom*:

“There is, however, no basis for the claim that the Civil Disobedience Movement directly led to independence. The campaigns of Gandhi ... came to an ignoble end about fourteen years before India achieved independence ... During the First World War the Indian revolutionaries sought to take advantage of German help in the shape of war materials to free the country by armed revolt. But the attempt did not succeed. During the Second World War, Subhas Bose followed the same method and created the INA. In spite of brilliant planning and initial success, the violent campaigns of Subhas Bose failed ... *The Battles for India’s freedom were also being fought against Britain, though indirectly, by Hitler in Europe and Japan in Asia. None of these scored direct success, but few would deny that it was the cumulative effect of all the three that brought freedom to India. In particular, the revelations made by the INA trial, and the reaction it produced in India, made it quite plain to the British, already exhausted by the war, that they could no longer depend upon the loyalty of the sepoys for maintaining their authority in India. This had probably the greatest influence upon their final decision to quit India.*”

Bhora continues: “apart from revisionist historians, it was none other than Lord Clement Attlee himself, the British Prime Minister responsible for conceding independence to India, who gave a shattering blow to the myth sought to be perpetuated by court historians, that Gandhi and his movement had led the country to freedom. Chief Justice P.B. Chakraborty of Calcutta High Court, who had also served as the acting Governor of West Bengal in India, disclosed the following in a letter addressed to the publisher of Dr. R.C. Majumdar’s book, *A History of Bengal*. The Chief Justice wrote:

“You have fulfilled a noble task by persuading Dr. Majumdar to write this history of Bengal and publishing it ... In the preface of the book Dr. Majumdar has written that he could not accept the thesis that Indian independence was brought about solely, or predominantly by the non-violent civil disobedience movement of Gandhi.

“When I was the acting Governor, Lord Attlee, who had given us independence by withdrawing the British rule from India, spent two days in the Governor’s palace at Calcutta during his tour of India. At that time I had a prolonged discussion with him regarding the

real factors that had led the British to quit India. My direct question to him was that since Gandhi's 'Quit India' movement had tapered off quite some time ago and in 1947 no such new compelling situation had arisen that would necessitate a hasty British departure, why did they have to leave?

"In his reply Attlee cited several reasons, the principal among them being the erosion of loyalty to the British Crown among the Indian Army and Navy personnel as a result of the military activities of Netaji. Toward the end of our discussion I asked Attlee what was the extent of Gandhi's influence upon the British decision to quit India. Hearing this question, Attlee's lips became twisted in a sarcastic smile as he slowly chewed out the word, 'm-i-n-i-m-a-l!'" [46]

Bhora concludes: "When the new version of the history of the Twentieth Century India, and especially the episode of the country's unique struggle for independence comes to be written, it will no doubt single out but one person who made the most significant and outstanding contribution among all his compatriots toward the emancipation of his motherland from the shackles of an alien bondage. During World War II this man strode across two continents like a colossus, and the footsteps of his army of liberation reverberated through the forests and plains of Europe and the jungles and mountains of Asia. His armed assaults shook the very foundations of the British Empire.

His name was Subhas Chandra Bose."

This assesment is echoed by Dr Balashib Ambedkar, the framer of India's Constitution and its first Law Minister. Babasaheb would not have been surprised with Sir Attlee's admission, for he had foreseen it. He told the BBC in 1955 that from his "own analysis" he had concluded that "two things led the Labour party to take this decision" [to free India]. Ambedkar continued: "The national army that was raised by Subhas Chandra Bose. The British had been ruling the country in the firm belief that whatever may happen in the country or whatever the politicians do, they will never be able to change the loyalty of soldiers. That was one prop on which they were carrying on the administration. And that was completely dashed to pieces. They found that soldiers could be seduced to form a party—a battalion to blow off the British."

Bohra writes: *"This 'unimpeachable' truth will come as a shock to most Indians brought up to believe that the Congress movement driven by the 'spiritual force' of Mahatma Gandhi forced the British to leave India. But both the evidence and the logic of history are against this beautiful but childish fantasy; it was the fear of mutiny by the Indian armed forces—and not any*

‘spiritual force’—that forced the issue of freedom. The British saw that the sooner they left India the better for themselves, for, at the end of the war, India had some three million men under arms.”

Majumdar had reached the same conclusion years ago.

Reports of the Provincial Governors



Introduction

The third set of critical decision makers in India were the British Governors of the various provinces. In this chapter we examine a set of Reports from the Governors to the Viceroy about the situation in their own respective provinces just before and after the INA trials in November-December 1945. These reports are noteworthy for their tone of genuine alarm and apprehension. No doubt these ground reports deeply influenced the Viceroy's perception of the situation and reinforced his own sense of great unease—which had finally impelled him to virtually give an ultimatum to London to make a substantive announcement about Independence. In the absence of such a commitment, he was very clear that time was running out for the British empire in India. It could at best hold on for another 18 months (till June 1948). After that the Raj could well lose the power to influence events on the ground in India. It was better to depart with grace than get involved in a running battle. Thus:

Sir Twynam—Governor, Central Provinces—warned in end November 1945: “ I do feel *uneasiness as to the attitude Indian troops might adopt if called upon to fire on mobs*. He compares the situation to the days of the mutiny and recollects how units which were thought to be perfectly loyal suddenly decided to throw their lot with the mutineers. He lists out the total number of British officials that he had to cover an area of 100,000 sq miles in the face of 18 million hostile Indians and finds them woefully inadequate.

Sir G. Cunnigham, Governor, NWFP: recommended around the same time that, “The Commander-in-Chief should immediately call off the trials as the thing is becoming more and more Indians versus the British. He commiserates: “*I feel terribly for your Excellency and for Claude A (Commander-in-Chief) in this. It is the most difficult problem to tackle that I have ever known in India. The*

best thing to do ... is to cut our losses.”

Sir A. Hope, Governor Madras: Stated in December 1945: *“We have put ourselves in an impossible situation ... a tremendous attempt has been made to make national heroes of the INA and the attempt has had considerable success among a large and emotionally unstable section of the public. If the accused are executed or given long terms of imprisonment, there is the danger of a popular outburst. The cardinal error was made by bringing these men to India and not dealing with the leaders in summary courts martial on the spot. He talks of widespread feelings of fear amongst Europeans in Ooty who are fearing serious disturbances, mutiny, etc.*

Mr. Casey, Governor, Bengal: He described in January 1946 the impact of the serious disturbances in Calcutta from November 21-23, 1945. He stated: *“31 were killed and 179 wounded. The forces actually employed were always hopelessly outnumbered and often in a very tight corner in the face of an unusually determined and fanatical mob. The most disturbing feature of these riots he pointed out was that: The crowds when fired on generally stood their ground or at most receded just a little, to return again to the attack.*

Sir B. Glancy, Governor, Punjab: Wrote in January 1946: The conclusion of the INA trial and the arrival of these three “heroes” in Lahore gave rise to a continual orgy of extravagant welcomes, speeches and entertainments. *One disturbing feature is the attendance of Indian army personnel in uniform at meetings held in honour of the accused.*

Below I am adducing the full text of these letters from the Governors of the provinces to the Viceroy. They provide excellent documentary evidence of the overwhelming psychological impact of the INA trials and their violent aftermath on the minds of the British administration in India. Truly this is convincing and clinching evidence to settle this historical dispute on the nature and scale of psychological impact that decisively shaped British decision making before the grant of independence.

SOME GOVERNOR’S REPORT ON I.N.A. TRIALS

The reports are given here as they appeared in “Transfer of Power,” Volume 6, pages 542, 546, 631, 724, 807.

**I. SIR H. TWYNAM (CENTRAL PROVINCES AND BERAR)
TO FIELD MARSHAL VISCOUNT
WAVELL (EXTRACT)**

GOVERNOR'S CAMP, CENTRAL
PROVINCES AND BERAR

SECRET

26 NOVEMBER 1945

Ruikar has been very prominent at meetings and has declared if any I.N.A. men are executed 20 patriots will arise and that the atrocities committed by the British surpassed the horrors of the Belsen Concentration Camp. I am having his speech examined with a view to a possible prosecution under the ordinary law. At Jubbulpore when a speaker said that the I.N.A. was the army of Congress and asked who would join, all raised their hands.

From the same source it is reported that Congress is jubilant at the by folly Government in trying the I.N.A. men at Delhi. Congressmen consider that this has given them a chance to win the support of the Indian Army. I am bound to say that *I do feel some uneasiness as to the attitude which Indian troops may adopt if called upon to fire on mobs. The disposition towards a sudden change of attitude in a tense political atmosphere is present now, I think, as it was in the days of the mutiny.* I have recently been reading some of the original reports printed in select State documents and extremely interesting they are.

It is extraordinary how Units which were thought to be perfectly loyal suddenly decided to throw in their lot with the mutineers.

I do not for one moment suggest that there is any widespread disposition on these lines but a slight uneasiness remains in my mind when I envisage the possibility of the Province being completely denuded of British troops.

My Special Branch officer reports that his impression is that sympathy for the I.N.A. varies inversely according to the degree of close association with the war; the closer the association the less the sympathy. He also reports that so far our

Police force are apparently not interested.

2. A former Congress Minister in this Province, one D. K. Mehta, claims that Congress has many adherents among Government officials probably exists. The effect, of course, of the recent campaign is most marked on our European Government servants and many of them are undoubtedly unsettled. At present, in this Province, I have 3 European Commissioners, 5 Deputy Commissioners, no Sessions Judges, no Assistant Commissioners and 7 District Superintendents of Police.

Altogether I have available 17 European I.C.S. officers, including 3 Judicial officers, and 19 European members of the Indian Police.

These figures exclude people serving in the Government of India but include people on leave.

This handful of Europeans has to deal with a population of 18 or more millions over an area of 100,000 square miles. It will be readily appreciated how difficult it will be for the administration if the present "hymn of hate" leads to the retirement of any substantial proportion of this handful of officers. Possibly the efforts of the Provincial Governors and others to secure a more moderate atmosphere may be reinforced when the Secretary of State makes his expected statement in Parliament.

II. SIR G. CUNNINGHAM (NORTH-WEST FRONTIER PROVINCE) TO FIELD MARSHAL VISCOUNT WAVELL

WAVELL PAPERS. OFFICIAL CORRESPONDENCE:
INDIA, JANUARY-DECEMBER 1945, Pages 383-84

PESHAWAR, 27 NOVEMBER 1945

SECRET

Dear Lord Wavell,

I am going somewhat outside my proper sphere in writing to Your Excellency about the I.N.A. trial, but the matter is one on which I have been trying to gauge opinion of all sorts and I have now come to a definite conclusion. It is that *the C.-in-C. should at once announce that, as Indian opinion is opposed to the trial of these persons, he wipes the whole thing out and takes no further proceedings against anyone.* No one can do it but the C.-in-C., of his own volition and on his own responsibility. Done by anyone else, even by the King, it will not have the same effect—particularly on the Army. Some Army Officers of great experience with whom I have discussed the matter—Dick O’ Connor was one—have said that leniency at this stage would have a disastrous effect on the Army. I do not believe that is true.

Some Indian officers and soldiers, whose relations or close friends have suffered under the I.N.A. leaders, are no doubt thirsting for their blood.

But I am certain that they are comparatively few and that their resentment at any clemency shown now would not affect Army discipline as a whole.

Most Indian soldiers who have said to me “Hang the lot” have, in my opinion, said so because they thought it was what I wanted to hear; and this applies to comment by Indians on most occasions.

The thing is daily becoming more and more purely Indian versus British, and less and less ill-disposed Indians versus British-cum-well-disposed Indians.

I think that every day that passes now brings over more and more well-disposed Indians into the anti-British camp and, whatever the outcome of the trial may be, this anti-British bias will persist in each man’s mind.

The only way of stopping the rot is by a clean cut, as I have said, and at once.

I dislike saying this intensely. It is tantamount to surrendering to threats, and no reasonable man doubts for a moment that the worst of the I.N.A. leaders ought to have been shot out of hand.

Congressmen—Dr. Khan Sahib among them—have said to me, “If only they had

been shot in Rangoon or Singapore, everyone would have been pleased.”

But that feeling has gone and cannot now be revived.

I feel terribly for Your Excellency and for Claude A. in this.

It is the most difficult problem to tackle that I have ever known in India. But I am certain, from what I have heard from a very wide variety of people here, British and Indian, that the best thing to do is to cut our losses.

Yours sincerely, G. CUNNINGHAM

III. SIR A. HOPE (MADRAS) TO FIELD MARSHAL VISCOUNT WAVELL (EXTRACT)

GUINDY, 10 DECEMBER 1945 SECRET

2. Closely linked with the election campaign has been the question of the I.N.A. trials. After the trouble in Madura, where the police opened fire, I thought it wise to ban all meetings and processions held primarily in sympathy with the I.N.A. prisoners; but, naturally, they were bound to find their way into general election speeches.

Intelligent opinion here is bewildered or jubilant, according to the political outlook of the person concerned. The general view is that we have handed first-rate election propaganda to the parties at large and that the Congress are making the most of it—in spite of their statements to the contrary—as a focal point of expressing nationalist feeling against the British.

Secondly, it is considered that *we have put ourselves in an impossible situation; thanks to Nehru & Co., whose example is being followed down here, a tremendous attempt has been made to make national heroes of the I.N.A. and the attempt has had considerable success among a large and emotionally unstable section of the public.*

If the accused are executed or given long terms of imprisonment, there is the danger of a popular outburst; if, on the other hand, they are pardoned we shall be letting down our loyal men, with the result that they may well feel that loyalty does not pay. People here do not see what the solution can be, and they consider that the cardinal error was made by bringing these men to India and not dealing with the leaders in summary courts martial on the spot.

Europeans, particularly in Ootacamund, are getting very jumpy indeed and I hear about people who had intended staying on for a year or so more wanting to get passages earlier for fear of serious disturbances, mutiny, etc.

This sounds unjustifiably alarmist, but it is quite a widespread feeling.

IV. MR. CASEY (BENGAL) TO FIELD MARSHAL

VISCOUNT WAVELL

CALCUTTA, 2 JANUARY 1946

Disturbances in Calcutta & Howrah, 21st to 23rd November 1945

My dear Lord Wavell

I have already forwarded to you with my telegram No.413 of the 28th November the text of a factual statement about these disturbances which was subsequently issued to the Press for publication on the 30th November.

(For convenience of reference I enclose a copy).

The Commissioner of Police has now completed the prescribed inquiries into the fourteen separate incidents in which firing was resorted to by the Calcutta Police and I have also just seen his report on the disturbances as a whole. In the light of these there is little to say by way of modification of that contemporary statement which, I believe, still gives a reliable picture of the course of events both in

Calcutta and in Howrah. So far as Howrah is concerned I have nothing to add, and the following observations primarily concern Calcutta.

2. It is now clear that the initial clash with the Police, in Dharamtala Street on the afternoon of the 21st November, while it was deliberately sought by the students concerned was not the result of a widespread conspiracy to plunge Calcutta into anarchy.

The student organisation which sponsored the meeting and procession had been warned on both 20th and 21st November that entry into the prohibited area would not be permitted. The procession was a deliberate act of defiance of authority by students, primarily those associated with Subhas Bose's Forward Block, worked up to a state bordering on hysteria by previous propaganda in favour of the I.N.A.

3. It is not clear that the student element in the original procession was the first in the crowd to have recourse to brickbats but it is clear that, in the trial of patience between themselves and the police, the students' patience ran out first and they precipitated the riot by trying to force the cordon and attacking the police.

When defiance had led to bloodshed it was not difficult for the students, in the prevailing exacerbation of public feeling, to bring about widespread disturbances. Once rioting had commenced, students took their full share in it.

4. The two incidents, of 21st and 22nd November, in Dharamtala were primarily student processions; though naturally a considerable accretion of hangers-on, supporters and hooligans joined in when trouble began. The students also were the principal agency by which the stoppage of all means of transport was enforced next day though in this they were speedily assisted by other elements, including a number of Sikh taxi drivers, the trams were taken off the streets by the active intervention of the communist-controlled tramway men's Union.

Interference with transport was at first mainly by persuasion, though backed, of course, by threat of force. As the day proceeded, interference became steadily more violent in character. The students must bear their share of the blame for this but the actual violence was probably perpetrated more often by Sikhs, "upcountry" mechanics and the hooligan element generally. This is particularly

true of the area most affected, Bhowanipore, in South Calcutta. The mobs in North Calcutta contained a higher proportion of students and bhadralog and were definitely less dangerous, less expert and apparently less determined than those in South Calcutta where (including the two Dharamtala incidents) thirteen of the fourteen shooting incidents occurred.

5. Both in North and South Calcutta a feature of the disturbances comparatively new to Bengal was that *the crowds when fired on largely stood their ground or at most only receded a little, to return again to the attack*. This is partly because firing was carried out mainly with revolvers and in self-defence, by small groups of sergeants detached from support or operating for the extrication of wounded persons (often military personnel hauled off lorries) or to extinguish burning vehicles. There was comparatively little firing to disperse the crowds finally. The armed forces were not called upon to open fire for this purpose. The comparatively sudden collapse of the disturbances, though apparently capable of bearing a somewhat sinister implication, seems in fact attributable not to unified planning and control of the whole movement but to the interaction of a number of factors. Chief among these was the fact that the disorders, coming at the moment they did, suited the book of none of the main political parties.

Some Congress leaders from the first tried to restrain the violence of the student element, without initial success. Throughout the forenoon and early afternoon of the 23rd, Congress and some Communist propaganda cars toured the affected areas dissuading the students from further participation. At the same time resolute action by the police in clearing roadblocks on the morning of the 23rd, the warning in the Press the same morning that adequate steps had been taken to protect military vehicles and property and a broadcast I gave that night (in which I made it plain that we should not shrink from utilising the armed forces in support of the civil power) all had their part in bringing about the sudden collapse of the trouble and the speedy return to normal conditions.

6. So far as casualties and damage are concerned the figures given in the Statement already published may be taken as substantially correct, as will appear from the revised statement enclosed. On the side of the rioters, hospital records show that *31 were killed* (all by gunshot): of those 27 are definitely attributable to police firing: the remainder may have been caused by military personnel on vehicles who, it is known, had, on occasion, to shoot their way out of

roadblocks.

179 members of the public were treated in hospital for injuries caused by gunshot wounds, lathi blows or brickbats.

Both on the side of the forces of law and order and on the side of the rioters there were doubtless many minor injuries which did not come to notice.

7. The result of the Commissioner's inquiries has been, in all cases but one, explicitly to exonerate the police from blame as regards opening fire and the quantum of firing that took place. In almost every case firing was resorted to in defence of life or of Government property. In the one case in which the Commissioner's finding is less definite as to the control of the firing and its quantum, the evidence is being reviewed by my Chief Secretary. The Commissioner's report indicates very clearly that *a very grave degree of disorder prevailed, especially in South Calcutta, for thirty-six hours on the 22nd and 23rd November* and while there may be reason to doubt (and this is a matter we are inquiring into) whether all the forces at the disposal of the C.P. were adequately utilised, there can be no doubt that the *forces actually employed were always hopelessly outnumbered, and often in a very tight corner in the face of an unusually determined and fanatical mob.*

8. We have tried to draw for ourselves the necessary lessons from the events of these three hectic days. I think the first lesson is that, though the disturbances were not planned, at all events on the scale on which they took place, *there is a spirit of lawlessness abroad which, as in 1942, can, on a slight and sudden cause, be worked up with remarkable speed to produce, over a very wide area simultaneously, manifestations paralysing to the life of the community.* It is clear also that with every one of these outbreaks, *the technique of the mob is improving*; this was noticeable also in the methods of temporary sabotage indulged in by the water-works staff in the unconnected but simultaneous Corporation employees' strike.

This is a feature that may be expected to be even more marked in future disturbances, with the return to India of persons trained in sabotage, like the members of the I.N.A.

9. As I have already indicated, we are looking into the question whether the

present system of employing sergeants as a striking force and keeping the Armed Police in reserve is that best calculated to produce satisfactory results.

10. Another lesson is that our Police transport was found to be in bad shape. We are replacing a considerable number of vehicles.

11. Of one thing we are all convinced—inter-communication between Police forces, police stations and outposts and police headquarters must be greatly improved, preferably by wireless. This applies both to Calcutta and to the Province as a whole, and we are in course of making the necessary improvements and innovations in our communications.

12. So far as the mofussil is concerned, air transport may well exercise a determining force in nipping trouble in the bud. Thanks to the war, we already have a number of good aerodromes: we are examining urgently the provision of further airstrips to permit of quick reinforcement of our police in any district of the Province.

A problem to be faced will be that of keeping these landing grounds clear of deliberate obstruction when they are needed.

13. I am sending copies of this letter to the Governors of Bihar, Orissa and Assam.

I am, yours sincerely, R. G CASEY

**V. SIR B. GLANCY (PUNJAB) TO FIELD MARSHAL
VISCOUNT WAVELL (EXTRACT)**

16 JANUARY 1946

SECRET

Relations between the different communities are getting more and more strained. The Deputy Commissioner of Ambala writes that “increasing reports of a deterioration in the communal situation, consequent on the poisonous propaganda of political parties, especially of the Muslim League, are being

received from rural areas.

One very objectionable type of propaganda indulged in by the Muslim League is to threaten Muslim voters with excommunication including a refusal to allow their dead to be buried in Muslim graveyards and to debar them from joining in mass Muslim prayers in the event of their voting against the League.” Much the same thing is happening in Lahore and other places.

Cries of “Jai Hind” are greeted with shouts of “Pakistan.” *The conclusion of the first I.N.A. trial and the arrival of the three “heroes” in Lahore gave rise to a continual orgy of extravagant welcomes, speeches and entertainments. The Congress Press has been full of jubilations. One disturbing feature is the attendance of Indian Army personnel in uniform at meetings held in honour of the I.N.A. accused.*

A prominent Hindu, who is in close touch with the defence counsel, tells me that the most which they expected by way of commutation was that the sentence would be reduced to five years’ imprisonment; I do not know to what extent this is true.

Intelligence Bureau's Report on INA Trials



The 1857 mutiny had thoroughly shaken the British empire in India. They were terrified of the spectre of such large-scale violence re-emerging in India. They strove their utmost thereafter to prevent the various castes, creeds and ethnicities of India from coming together again to stage another revolt. They sought to exploit every faultline in India whether of caste, creed or religion and language.

In 1887, Maj Gen Charles MacGregor was appointed QMG and head of Intelligence Department of the British Indian Army at Simla. Its task largely was to monitor the Russian troop deployments in Afghanistan. On December 23, 1887 the Intelligence Bureau (IB) was formed in India by the British Secretary of State. By the turn of the century the British were getting thoroughly alarmed with the rise of violent Indian revolutionary activities. In 1909, Indian Political Intelligence Office was established in London to counter the threat of Indian revolutionaries. The Indian Intelligence Bureau had in the meantime become one of the most efficient and effective Counter-Intelligence organisations in the world. It was successfully able to penetrate most of the Ghadr revolutionary cells being set up by Indian revolutionaries in the USA and England. All the revolutionary Indian plans to foment trouble in India during the First World War were ruthlessly foiled. There was no uprising whatsoever in India—even as 1.3 million Indian soldiers were sent to the various battlefields of the world. It was the result of a massive effort to divide and rule India and play off the various caste, creed, religious, ethnic and language groups against one another. India was kept thoroughly divided and Revolutionary groups kept under very effective watch and surveillance to ensure that India remained absolutely quiet and trouble free during the first Great War.

The success must be attributed to the Indian Intelligence Bureau which had become the most effective instruments of the Raj. In British Military intelligence circles there was a great deal of respect for the “India-wallahs.” Even more than

the British Indian Army perhaps, the IB was the primary instrument to keep India under subjugation. The success of the IB in keeping India trouble free during the Great War made the British thoroughly arrogant and somewhat complacent. The Indians expected the British to be grateful after the War and perhaps grant Home Rule to India. What the Indians got instead was the racial arrogance of Jallianwala Bagh massacre in Punjab—the heartland from where the bulk of the Indian army was recruited. This generated a great wave of anger and indignation in India. It brought Mahatma Gandhi to the fore of the Indian independence movement. He changed the Congress party from an effete debating society of rich Indian lawyers to a mass-based, grass-roots movement that spread from the towns to the rural countryside. He started civil disobedience and escalated demands for home rule to *Poorna Svarajya*—or total independence. However his was a non-violent and peaceful movement. British political strategists and the Intelligence Bureau now felt that this non-violent movement was entirely manageable and the best bet for preventing the outbreak of large-scale violence as had happened in the Mutiny of 1857 (First War of Independence). So they tacitly encouraged Mahatma Gandhi and his brand of Non-violence over the violence of the revolutionaries.

By 1920 this had started to rise again. In 1921, The Indian Political Intelligence (IPI) was established as a state-run surveillance and monitoring agency. It was run jointly by the India Office and the Govt. of India. It reported jointly to the Secretary of Public and Judicial Department of the India Office and the Intelligence Bureau in India. All the attempts of Indian Revolutionaries to get arms support from Germany and Europe were foiled by the double agents of the IB in India. It was only the Japanese spree of conquest in South East Asia that shook the Raj and gave rise to a far more effective INA which now actualised the revolutionaries dreams and World War I era plans of invading India from the East. Bose was able to raise a 60,000-strong INA with the help of the Japanese Army and join their invasion of India in 1944.

The IB was at the forefront of the British campaign to destroy and subvert the INA. The IB thus was the most effective instrument of the Raj in suppressing all movements for Indian independence. Hence it is vital to see the IB report about the impact of the INA trials. This report from Director, Intelligence Bureau is most informative and telling as far as the impact of the INA is concerned. Even its measured and clinical tone gives a clear indication of the levels of disquiet. This report dated November 20, 1945 states inter alia that, “*Sardar Patel wanted the INA to be the nucleus of the new Indian Army.*” (It was

Nehru who later, on Mountbatten's advice and pressure, refused to take the INA men back into the Indian Army and treated them as traitors. He stopped their pensions.) The report clearly highlights that *“the public feeling in India is one of sympathy and support for the INA. This sympathy is not confined to the towns but spreads to villages and across communities. It warns that this is likely to intensify. It warns clearly of the development of the agitation in dangerous directions and above all highlights that the threat to the security of the Indian Army is one which it would be unwise to Ignore.”*

The Director, Intelligence Bureau's Report of November 20, 1945 is reproduced below in full.

What is cause for considerable disquiet is the role of the Indian Intelligence Bureau immediately after the grant of independence. This organisation soon displaced the army and began to play a pivotal role in India's security decision making. Over time it completely marginalised the Armed Forces from any role in national security decision making. Worse, some of its senior officials seemed to retain a residual loyalty to the Raj. Institutional mechanisms were established to maintain links with the British MI5 via a liason office in New Delhi. Amazingly the IB continued to report to London about the activities of the relatives of Bose and ex-INA personnel till late into the 1960s. This raises some serious questions about the residual loyalties of some of the senior IB Officers and bureaucrats of that era. Tragically in more ways than one, it was not so much the Indian Army that was the last bastion of the Raj but sections of its highly competent and effective IB that retained residual loyalties to the Raj. The Intelligence agencies seem to have freed themselves of these colonial apron strings only by the decade of 1970 when India truly asserted its independence and autonomy and acted aggressively to shape outcomes in South Asia. In this the newly created R&AW under R. N. Kao played a stellar role. Let us now analyse the report of the Director, Intelligence Bureau in India dated November 20, 1945 that analyses the impact of the INA trials on the internal security scenario in India.

Intelligence Bureau's (Government of India, Home Department) Report on I.N.A. Trials

The report is given here as it appeared in “Transfer of Power,” Volume 6, page 512.

Government of India, Home Department to the Secretary, Political Department,
India office

New Delhi, 20th November 1945

Sir,

I am directed to forward for information a copy of a note prepared by the
Director, Intelligence Bureau, on the I.N.A. situation.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

F.G. Cracknell,

Deputy Secretary to the Govt of India

Enclosure

Secret

Intelligence Bureau

Home Department

The situation in respect of the Indian National Army is one which warrants disquiet. There has seldom been a matter which has attracted so much Indian public interest and, it is safe to say, sympathy.

Public feeling is based on political, racial, and sentimental considerations and has been influenced in a very great extent by the Press and platform writings and speeches of political leaders and organisations. The general Nationalist Press is completely in accord with political outcry and the effect the publications in question have is undoubted, for many of them are most popular and widely read even in rural areas. *The general line of the nationalist case is that the men of the I.N. A. were actuated by patriotic motives and the demand is made that none shall be punished. If there is punishment the result attending it will be racial bitterness which will last down through the ages.* The combined emphasis of current propaganda is on the treason aspect of the cases and other crimes are ignored. The way of propagandists is made easier because they have no counteracting propaganda with which to contend, and it is difficult to conceive now that counter effort could be effective in circumstances in which the country's ear has largely been captured. Congress has led this outcry since its commencement and continues to do so.

Whatever the motives of Congress may be, there is no doubt of the vast importance which is given to the subject in Congress's estimation and there is nothing to suggest that Congress might minimise its efforts or be delivered in any degree from the course it has adopted without complete Governmental acceptance of the demands put forward.

On the contrary there is every indication that Congress will use all the means available to it to create a still greater countrywide demand and inflame public opinion and that it will contribute it will continue to pursue this line determinedly throughout the election period and beyond and until events have exhausted their course. The fact that election propaganda is now in progress provides a convenient platform and growing audiences.

At most of the 160 political meetings held in the Central province during the first

half of October demands were made for the abandonment of action against I.N.A. Similar demands were made at many meetings in other provinces. The number of meetings being held all over the country is now increasing.

Other political parties have followed Congress's lead some of them with marked determination and this can be said of *the Sikhs and the Hindu Mahasabha*. The influence of the Sikhs on the Central Punjab rural recruiting areas is great and daily meetings are being held by them at which demands on behalf of the I.N.A. are voiced. The Hindu Mahasabha lacks the rural influence of the Sikhs but their observance of an I.N.A. Day and their strongly worded appeals have had effect.

The Muslim League is in the forum with others but in the case of this organisation there is some reason to believe that as a party it is moved by considerations of expediency. However, the trial of Muslims may make their effect increasingly felt on the Muslim public and League alike.

Reports recently received have stated that growing enthusiasm is obvious at the meetings held in connection with I.N.A. Weeks and I.N.A.

Days and that this is not only true of the towns but also of the villages. It was recently said about politicians active in their election campaigns that they had to speak of the I.N.A. in appreciative terms to interest their audiences. This was attributed partly to a wave of anti-British feeling which is now being deliberately fostered, partly to a genuine sympathy for the I.N.A. and partly to the fact that Army men on leave from Assam and Burma had not troubled enough to make their feelings known.

The source from which this information came also mentioned that there was surprise that speakers were being permitted so much licence by Government and that has been followed by the feelings that tongues could now wag with impunity.

That so much can be said without retribution has had a bad effect on those who might otherwise have supported the Government openly but now feel that silence is their best policy.

One thing seems clear and that is that sympathy for the I.N.A. is not the monopoly of those who are ordinarily against Government.

It is equally clear that this particular brand of sympathy cuts across communal barriers. This is explained to some extent by the fact that the thousands in the

I.N.A. have many thousand relations who are anxious about their fate. There is, therefore, support for the political bodies who are helping the I.N.A. and a growing general bitterness. In many cases officers of the I.N.A. belong to influential families and this creates much local interest. If the families concerned do have traditions of loyalty, which is usually the case, the interest shown is intensified and also the ill-effects that attend it.

There is already evidence of some rather surprising approaches being made to Congress for assistance and the fact of ex-judge of the High Courts and gentlemen with titles joining openly in the defence of cases in which wartime treason is the charge is not negligible.

In reports received any public appreciation of Government's need to act and punish is hardly ever seen.

So far the campaign in favour of the I.N.A. has not resulted in any overt action against the Indian Army men or Europeans. In respect of the former there has been no hint of social boycott or anything of the of the kind and it may be that nothing of that character is intended.

The appearance of threatening posters, however, does not make the position in respect of Europeans as satisfactory as could be wished. Some respect for anonymous warning of this character has resulted from experience gained in earlier terrorist movements in India. Recently posters have appeared in Lahore and Calcutta and in the latter place were particularly objectionable. At this stage, however, it is unnecessary to take the matter of the posters too seriously.

Mention has already been made in this note of an opinion expressed that heretofore Army men on leave have not really made their views known with as much force as they could have used.

There have been numerous reports from Army sources that Army personnel and particularly returned prisoners of war feel very bitterly about the attitude the country and its politicians have adopted and that their animosity towards the I.N.A. is deep-seated. Intelligence so far received does not show that the influence of returned prisoners of war may not have returned in sufficient numbers yet to make their presence felt. In this connexion, however, it seems desirable to remember that serving men have also relation in the I.N.A. which

may affect them in some degree.

At the same time, with “Blacks” and “Greys” being enlarged in large numbers they are not going to have the village field all to themselves. Indeed the former will have the advantage in some respects for many of *them will remain in their villages permanently and not temporarily as is the case with serving personnel. Meanwhile, there have been one or two newspaper reports of military clerical staff and men of the R. I. A. F. giving donations to defence funds.* On the whole, the speeches of nationalist leaders on the subject of the I.N.A. give the impression that careful thought has been given to wording and if they have any plans involving I.N.A., men in future they have avoided publicising them which is but prudent.

However, it is interesting in this connexion to note that in certain of his speeches in Bombay, *Patel has declared that what Government ought to do the I.N.A is to make it the nucleus of the new Indian Army,* which may be an indication of the lines on which his mind is travelling.

At the same time, Nehru, who has publicly referred to I.N.A. personnel as instructors in volunteer bodies. A more definite indication of a move in an unwarranted direction is contained in a recent report which alleges *that a Sabha is being formed in the north of India with the object of making contact with released I.N.A. officers and men in order to enrol them as members and educate and train them in the expectation that they will be of use to Congress in its day-to-day activities and in the time of emergency.* Even if the information is correct it may be that the inspiration to act on these lines is local in character. It is clear, however, that dangerous possibilities exist which merit very careful attention.

In summing up there seems justifications for attempting that:

(1) *The public feeling which exists is one of sympathy for the I.N.A. and genuine disapproval of its conduct is lacking.*

(2) *The measure of sympathy is substantial and is not confined to towns or to any particular community, and that day by day it is being whipped up by the speeches of the nationalist leaders and the writings of the nationalist Press. This*

is likely to continue and intensify.

(3) In the absence of counter propaganda the nationalist campaign is having matters its own way, and that counter propaganda would be of doubtful value at this stage.

(4) *The possibility of the development of the agitation in dangerous directions exists in a degree which demands constant watchfulness, and*

(5) *The threat to the security of the Indian Army is one which it would be unwise to ignore.*

A Summation: Rectifying History



The purpose of this book was to examine precisely how the post-colonial regime emerged in India. A deliberate narrative has been woven around our freedom struggle to carefully censor out any role of violence in what is deliberately packaged and sold as a unique, one of its kind, freedom struggle based on non-violence, ahimsa and the psychological pressure methodology advocated by Mahatma Gandhi. He had begun this mode of civil disobedience and mass protest in South Africa. It was later followed there by Nelson Mandela. We forget to notice one sad fact. Despite following Gandhis non-violent struggle methods, South Africa became free only in April 1994—almost towards the close of the twentieth century. Had India stuck to non-violence alone, there is a good chance that we would have received our freedom around the same time, if at all.

The simple fact I have tried to establish in this book is that the final charge of Mahtma Gandhi's non-violent movement had failed dismally in 1942 and after that the Congress was largely a spent force. The new Labour Government in London was as determined as the Conservatives not to grant independence to India. Lord Clement Attlee, in fact had jailed the entire Congress leadership in 1942. So what changed so suddenly? How and why did India, and other Asian states, obtain their freedom from 1947 onwards? The answer is simple. The British empire in Asia was fatally wounded by its violent military struggle with Nazi Germany and Japan. It was particularly the war with Japan in South East Asia that had really uprooted the Empire as it suffered humiliating defeats in one country after another. In virtually under a year, the British empire had been rolled out of Malaya, Singapore and Burma. The military defeat of the White colonial power at the hands of an Asian military, broke that myth of military invincibility of the empire and the white races. The surrendering British officers simply abandoned their men to the Japanese. Major Fujiwara, the Japanese

Lawrence of Arabia as it were, helped raise the first INA from Indian prisoners of war with the help of Manmohan Singh.

Meanwhile in India, Subhash Bose had clearly seen that World War II provided a golden , once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for India to gain its freedom. There is a lot of moralising that he took the help of the genocidal Nazi power in Germany and Imperial Japan. The simple fact is that he was being an absolute realist who realised the truth of the Kautilyan dictum—an enemy's enemy is my friend. He realised that it was futile to expect British gratitude by assisting their war effort. At the end of World War I, the British attitude was one of crude racial superiority. The Indians were then expecting gratitude for their services during the War, where some 80,000 Indians had laid down their lives. What they got instead was a massacre. It had resulted in the Jallianwala Bagh massacre in the prime recruiting area of the British Indian Army that had contributed so much in that war. Indian expectations of gratitude after the Second World War were as misplaced. In fact, Churchill was on record to state that any assurances given to the Indians during the Second World War need not be honoured after it was over.

Bose had correctly identified the loyalty of the native Indian sepoy to the Raj as its real centre of gravity. If this could be shaken, the Raj would not last a day. *The British colonial enterprise had succeeded so brilliantly in India as a result of the success of their Nativisation drive.* They were able to raise a vast army of local native sepoys, trained on modern European lines and led by British officers. It was with these native Indian army of sepoys that they had conquered and ruled India for over two hundred years. At any given time in India, the British white troops hardly numbered more than 40,000. The Indian sepoys were 150,000 in number before the war. In World War I the British Indian Army was rapidly expanded to 1.3 million. In World War II it was raised to an all-time record level of 2.5 million men—the largest all-volunteer army in the history of the world. The British, however, could rule only as long as the native sepoys remained loyal to the Raj. Bose had clearly understood this. In Germany he had raised the Indische Legion from the Indian prisoners of war. As the tide of war turned he realised that he had been stuck in the wrong theatre. The Japanese now began to ask for Bose as British efforts at subversion had caused problems in the first INA.

Bose was now sent by submarine to South East Asia. It was the only case of submarine to submarine transfer in the Second World War. Bose now took charge of the INA and expanded it to three divisions worth—some 60,000 men.

He established a Free India Government-in-exile in Singapore in October 1943. It was recognised by 11 countries—including the Soviet Union. He declared war on the British and Americans. He joined the Japanese invasion of India in 1944. Unfortunately, by then the tide of the war had turned fully with the entry of America on the side of the Allies. It was too little, too late. Had the same attack come in 1942, or even 1943, it would have gone like a knife through butter. Bose was certain that the moment the news of the INA on Indian soil reached the Indian people, it would galvanise them magically and cause an uprising. Unfortunately, the British wartime censorship kept the INA one of the best secrets of the war. After the war the British acted with typical racial arrogance. In a very foolish gesture of triumphalism designed to overawe the natives, they carried out highly publicised trials of three INA officers at the iconic Red Fort in New Delhi. The news of the INA now tumbled out of the wartime closet. As Bose had predicted so accurately, it galvanised the nation, and caused a nationwide uprising. The very knowledge of the INA—an army of dedicated Indians fighting and dying to free India—was enough to put the towns and countryside on fire. The very racial arrogance of this gesture inflamed the people of India. It hit at the very centre of gravity of the Raj and forever changed the loyalty of the Indian soldier. The British were exhausted and war-weary after six years of bloodletting. Their armies were desperately homesick and war-weary and in no mood now to fight 2.5 million Indian soldiers who had done so well on the various battlefields of the Second World War.

Wavell and Auchinleck realised that the loyalty of the Indian sepoy to the Raj was now a major question mark. It was all over for the Raj. They rightly advised London that the British should cut their losses and leave with grace. This was not accepted initially by the imperialists in London. However, by February 1946 mutinies had actually broken out in the Royal Indian Navy and some units of the army. The Raj in London now saw the dire warnings of their Viceroy and Commander-in-Chief in India coming true and actualising before their very eyes. They threw in the towel and decided to quit. Mountbatten was sent in to oversee the process of extrication and the winding up of the empire. So, in the end, it was old-fashioned violence, and the threat of it on an even greater scale, that resulted in a withdrawal of British power from South Asia. Despite whatever romantic illusions that have been created by court historians, non-violence and soft power had little to contribute to nation-state formation in post-colonial India.

Summary of Findings

In this book, we have examined this hypothesis in a very logical and academically rigorous format. We first identified the key decision makers of the British Empire. We then examined the voluminous details available in the now declassified Transfer of Power archives in London. The entire documentary trail of evidence has been very well preserved for posterity. A clinical and empirical examination of the voluminous documentary evidence clearly highlights the failure of the non-violent movement and the overwhelming impact of the INA trials and subsequent mutinies on the British decision to quit. Without the INA trials and the subsequent large-scale violence and actual mutinies, there was simply no question of the British leaving when they did. As stated, we identified the key British decision makers as:

- Prime Minister Lord Clement Attlee who was then also the Defence Minister. He was the critical and overall the key decision maker. So far there was only a second or third-hand report of what he had said in private to Justice P. B. Chakraborty, the acting Governor of West Bengal in 1956. Now we have examined a whole body of his correspondence during that critical period, which has been duly preserved in the Transfer of Power archives in London. We now have clear primary evidence and an authentic paper trail that unravels the entire mystery and lays bare the essentials of the British process of decision making. This is solid documentary evidence that needs now to be meticulously analysed. This clinching evidence leaves no scope for doubt at all and conclusively establishes my thesis that it was primarily the INA trials that precipitated the British withdrawal.
- Other two key decision makers in London were Secretary of State for India and Burma Lord Pethick-Lawrence and to a lesser extent Lord G. H. Hall, Secretary of State for Colonies. *The Secretary of State, Lord Pethick-Lawrence, did not initially agree with Wavell's appreciation. He felt that it was still possible to hold on to India, and proposed further European recruitment to augment British troops in India.* His gratuitous advice was, however, rapidly overtaken by events.
- The key Decision makers in India were of course the two highly experienced India hands—Lord Wavell the Viceroy and Fd Mshl Claude Auchinleck, the Commander-in-Chief. Their written reports and above all the clinical military Appreciation of the Situation by Auchinleck in end

November 1945, provide clinching and overriding documentary evidence of the massive psychological impact of the INA trials on the final British decision to quit. Their written reports constitute the most clinching proof of the overwhelming impact of the INA on the British decision to Quit.

- The reports of the Governors of the Provinces provide clinching evidence of the overwhelming impact of these INA trials in the various parts of India. All the Governors were unanimous that the impact cut across caste and community lines, across urban and rural terrains and was all-India in character and impact. They have all echoed that the reliability of Indian troops to act against their own people, was now a serious question mark. Casey of Bengal graphically described how mobs in Calcutta were not deterred by small arms fire but when fired upon, just wavered a bit and then moved on to resume the attack.
- Lastly we have the clinical and objective report of the Director of Intelligence (IB) in the wake of the INA trials. In a measured and understated tone, it sets out clearly that the post INA trials situation had created a serious internal security problem and highlights that its impact on the Indian Army simply could not be ignored. The INA was growing more popular by the day and any action against them would lead to serious consequences. Indian serving soldiers in uniform were attending meetings to felicitate the returning INA soldiers who were now being universally treated as national heroes.
- To this exhaustive list we need to add the Military Intelligence reports of the Army. These were personally seen by Lt Gen S. N. Sinha, who was the first Indian Officer to be posted to the Military Operations Directorate in 1947. This was, till then, the exclusive preserve of white British officers only. The Director, Military Intelligence had clearly concluded in 1945 that Indian troops could no longer be relied upon to act against their own countrymen. Gen Sinha had also seen the Contingency plans for flying and shipping in five divisions worth of White troops in case of large-scale mutinies and Op Gandola, the plan to evacuate all white military and civilian personnel and their families in case of a general uprising. These are all indicative of a general air of alarm and panic and foreboding about what was to come. These clearly highlight the massive and decisive psychological impact of the INA and Bose on the British decision makers.

The Role of Mahatma Gandhi

What then was the role of Mahatma Gandhi in the British decision to quit India? Much depends upon how this question is framed. Justice P. B. Chakraborty had framed this question in rather straightforward terms to Lord Clement Attlee in 1956. He had contextualised it in terms of the abject failure of the Quit India Movement in 1942. Why then did the British have to leave in such a tearing hurry in 1947? Attlee had answered truthfully that it was the violence generated by the INA trials as also the impact it had on the loyalty of the native Indian troops, and the mutinies in the Royal Indian Navy, etc., which forced the British to leave. As a legal luminary, the Chief Justice persisted and asked another blunt question—what, then, was Mahatma Gandhi's non-violent movement's role in the British decision to quit. Attlee's cryptic and sarcastic response is now famous all over the social media—he said Attlee's face twisted in a sarcastic smile as he spelt out the word “minimal.”

It is an emphatic and clear-cut response. The only problem is the secondary/tertiary nature of this evidence. Justice Chakraborty told this to R. C. Majumdar the historian, about what Attlee had said to him. As such the absolute veracity of this statement could be questioned by sceptical scholars, though both interlocutors were men of unimpeachable integrity. This, however, could never amount to be the sole evidence to settle such a vital debate about the historic origins of the post-colonial state in India.

That is why in this book trouble has been taken to examine a whole body of documentary evidence contained in the declassified Transfer of Power Archives. There is a wealth of material there, first-hand evidence that is clinching and incontrovertible and which settles this debate conclusively, once and for all.

However, in the interests of objectivity and fair play we may have to reframe the original question. *What was Mahatma Gandhi's role in the Freedom Struggle of India?* (This is different from questions about final outcome.) Here we can truthfully answer—a great deal. He was a saintly figure who metamorphosed the Congress from an effete debating club of rich lawyers petitioning the Queen on behalf of her uneducated Indian subjects, against the minions who ran her empire. Gandhi came at a critical turning point in the Freedom Struggle—the massacre of Jallianwala Bagh in (1919).

The British racial arrogance was at its peak then. The highly efficient Intelligence Bureau had foiled each and every violent revolutionary plot to

overthrow the empire. India had been kept peaceful and incident free during the war even as 1.3 million troops had been sent out to fight the war in Europe, Middle East and Africa. There had been a fear that if the Indian army was taken out in substantial numbers, it could result in large-scale violence erupting in India. Nothing of that sort happened. Indian society had been most thoroughly divided on caste and creed lines and the very idea of India had been destroyed. There was therefore no need for the British to show any gratitude to the natives for their support during the war. The natives had no bloody choice and if they had any notions of a non-white people getting Dominion status, that would be ruthlessly extinguished.

Gandhi came upon the scene at this critical juncture. He studied the Indian situation and transformed the elitist Congress into a mass-based organisation that reached out to the grass-roots level in the villages of India where 70% of the Indian population lived. This mass mobilisation was a massive and impressive exercise that revived the idea of a grass-roots India that lived largely in her villages that were poor and impoverished. Gandhi realised that the Indians were in no position then to offer armed resistance. *So he made a virtue out of necessity and chose non-violence, non-cooperation and civil disobedience as his methods. He gave the largely Urban Indian freedom movement a rural and egalitarian bias.* Gandhi's movement attracted many brilliant and sincere Indians of that era—like Nehru, Azad, Patel and Bose. Unfortunately, even this non-violent struggle was carried out in fits and starts. Gandhi was very careful not to cross the British tolerance thresholds and he personally intervened to prevent this movement from turning violent. That was the failing of this mass movement. It could never generate cumulative pressure of an order that would force the Raj to capitulate.

British Manipulation of the Gandhian Movement

The pity is that the British strategists soon realised the non-decisive and the largely ineffectual nature of this non-violent movement. It could be disconcerting and disruptive but could never generate the sustained level of pressure that could unravel the empire. On the contrary it prevented the outbreak of large-scale violence. Gandhi himself would ensure that as he was genuinely wedded to non-violence. The British now very cleverly manipulated this mass movement by actually giving an inordinate media build-up to Mahatma Gandhi and his unique but ineffectual movement. This was a threat they could handle and as such they hugely preferred it over violent revolutionary movements

which posed a very real danger to the Raj. *Ahinsa* kept the masses timid and non-violent. In that condition the Raj could deal with such a movement for decades, if not a century or more. In actual practice Nelson Mandela carried out precisely such a peaceful mass movement in South Africa. It took that country till April 1994 to get their freedom. In actual fact, the non-violent example actually delayed the onset of freedom in the European colonies in Africa.

It was Bose who saw this with astonishing clarity. The effete non-violent movement could continue forever without achieving any concrete results. It could sputter on ineffectually for decades. *The British success in India was one of Nativisation. They had used an Indian army of natives to establish and maintain their empire in India. The key centre of gravity of the empire was the loyalty of the native sepoy to the Raj.* If this was subverted, the Raj would come to an immediate and inglorious end. Gandhi initially had Bose hounded out of the Congress for his rebellion. But Bose was right. The most opportune time for launching a violent liberation movement was the war itself. Britain now had powerful enemies prepared to help such a violent movement to emerge in India. The Japanese had given this serious thought and ultimately helped to create the INA. Just two years after driving Bose out, Gandhi veered very close to the views of Bose, especially as to timings. The saint could still not bring himself around to endorse his violent methods. Gandhi forced the Congress to launch the final Quit India Movement even while the war was on. Loyalists of the empire like Nehru and Azad differed with Gandhi but were overruled. The non-violent movement was snuffed out by the British who mobilised 57 white battalions to do this. The Congress leadership was rounded up and jailed and blanked out entirely from the print and radio media of that era using draconian wartime censorship of the news. In terms of timing, had the Japanese Army and the INA attacked then (in 1942-43) they would have made mincemeat of the empire in India.

For once the traditionally bold Japanese military hierarchy had lost its nerve and dithered fatally. When they did get down to attacking India in 1944, it was a classic case of too little, too late. The miracle is that despite the odds they almost pulled it off. The battles of Imphal-Kohima were one of the most bitterly fought battles of that war. But in the end it culminated in a major defeat and misery for the combined Japanese-INA forces. As we have seen, precisely as Bose had predicted, the INA lost the battles but won the war for Indian independence. We have seen in detail just how. The outcome of the Indian war for independence, Bose had said, would be independent of the outcome of the Second World War.

That was precisely how it came about. Bose thus proved to be one of the great strategic thinkers and practitioners of that era. His insight was remarkable for its penetration into the essence of the problem and his analysis always proved to be objective and firmly rooted in reality. The solutions he advocated delivered concrete results.

Both Bose and Gandhi were highly charismatic leaders with a deep insight into the Indian psyche. *Gandhi was a great organiser who created an egalitarian, rural, mass-based movement for freedom in India. However in terms of achieving outcomes, this movement failed to deliver till Bose intervened and redirected it into the classical violent channels.* The modern nation state is premised upon the monopoly of violence and Bose created the instrumentalities for a violent overthrow of the empire in the form of the INA. Its use by itself galvanised India and awoke its dormant sense of self. It was Bose and his violent methods that ultimately liberated India in 1947 itself—just two years after the Second World War which the British had finally won. The war left Britain exhausted and spent and drained of the will to maintain its empire, especially in the face of massive armed rebellion. Bose's stellar contribution was to make that threat become very real and credible. The INA trials shook the empire in India. The mutinies that followed in February 1946 sounded the death knell of that empire. In the end, the same Armies that had subjugated the Indian people, helped to get them their freedom. Let us not forget it was the Indian army that had revolted in 1857 as also in 1946 (Royal Indian Navy). The pity was that the British succeeded in transferring power to their handpicked set of AngloPhile brown sahibs who remained beholden to the Raj for a good half century after the British had left.

The Nehruvian Narrative

The Congress party had elected Sardar Patel as the first Prime Minister of free India. However in a surprising act of wilfulness, Gandhi ensured that the mantle was given to Nehru—an avowed Anglophile who was so very close to Mountbatten and his wife. Nehru clearly had a problem of political legitimacy. The voting had gone in Sardar Patel's favour. But even more than Patel, Nehru was wrestling with the Ghost of Bose. The whole nation knew that India had finally won its freedom only because of Bose and the INA, 26,000 of whom had laid down their lives. Such a scale of casualties hardly justified the fiction of an entirely non-violent movement for freedom. Both the departing British empire and the new Nehruvian dispensation, now worked energetically to craft a brand new narrative—India had won its freedom solely and only due to the non-violent Freedom Movement of the Nehru-Gandhi dispensation. Force or violence had simply no role to play in getting India her freedom. *The British empire also tottommed the fiction of a non-violent struggle so that the remaining colonies in Africa would emulate this brilliant new model. As a sad outcome, the freedom of the African colonies was inordinately delayed by a couple of decades.* The British Raj now acquired a new-found halo of liberalism and benevolence that masked its true exploitative and rapacious character.

Hence Nehru's political legitimacy stemmed from the fiction of this non-violent struggle. To support this fictional narrative, Nehru now put on the airs of a great Pacifist who abhorred war and violence and did not even want India to have an Army. He only needed the Police! Fortunately for India, the far more realistic Sardar Patel prevented Nehru from actualising his pacifist fancies. The tragedy was he passed away too soon. A whole host of court historians, like Bipin Chandra and the rest, were drafted to dismiss the role of Bose and his INA and claim all credit for India's freedom solely via the agency of a unique and one of its kind freedom struggle that was absolutely non-violent in character. The real leadership of this, one-of-a-kind freedom struggle, of course had come from Gandhi and Nehru alone and hence this family was now destined to rule India forever.

The sum and substance of this new narrative spelt out by Bipin Chandra and the Court Historians is as follows: *that because of the continual non-violent struggle of the Congress over the past several decades, a kind of momentum towards freedom had been built up and what was germane or critical, was*

simply the process of negotiations, which Gandhi and Nehru seemed to lead. So Bose and the INA had nothing to do with India getting her Freedom. it was a failed non-event, not even a footnote in the real Freedom Struggle led by Gandhi and Nehru that was entirely peaceful.

This thesis merits a specific examination and refutation. I would list the following points against it:

- The non-violent Freedom struggle had proceeded in fits and starts. Its peaks or spurts came in 1930 and 1942 with large gaps of inactivity in-between. Hence no sustained momentum was generated as alleged.
- The final, culmination point of this movement came in August 1942 when the British mobilised some 57 battalions of White troops to crush it decisively. The entire Congress leadership was jailed and nothing was heard thereafter of them till 1944 when the Japanese invasion had been repelled and they could be safely released.
- When Gandhi emerged from prison in 1944 he was largely a spent force and a man broken in health and spirit. He presented many legalistic arguments then to state that he was no longer in charge of the Congress and could take no decisions. He said he had no authority to start the civil disobedience movement and would support the war effort. He in fact asked his followers who had gone underground to come out of hiding. This was a sad admission of defeat and total capitulation.
- Churchill lost the elections immediately after the war. The Labour Government however had no intentions of giving up the empire. Lord Clement Attlee, the new Prime Minister had been officiating as PM for a while in 1942 in the wartime Coalition Government, and had given orders for the vicious crackdown on the Quit India Movement and proscribing of the Congress and jailing of its entire top leadership. He was no bleeding-heart liberal, as far as the empire was concerned.
- Thus all the so-called “momentum towards Freedom” had clearly and completely petered out by the end of the War. The court historians are being less than objective and honest when they talk of the inexorable momentum built up by the long-winded non-violent movement.
- However, things changed suddenly and abruptly due to the INA trials which galvanised the whole of India. Serious disturbances broke out in the wake of these trials in November-December 1945. These greatly alarmed the British military and political leadership in India. Both Wavell and

Auchinleck, seasoned India hands, realised the gravity of the change that had taken place. The Indian troops could no longer be counted upon to defend the tottering Raj. In their absence, the Raj just did not have adequate British troops to hold on to even the main towns and cities of India and the airports from which they could be flown out in an emergency of a widespread revolt. They asked that a clear-cut decision to Quit India be formulated and made known to all. In simple terms they asked the Raj to Quit with grace as it was now all over. Nativisation had now failed.

- The simple fact is that the imperialists in London initially did not agree with this apparently defeatist argument. The non-violent movement had put no such pressure on New Delhi or London. Even large-scale violent protests by the civilian population in the wake of the INA trials failed to move them sufficiently. Lord Pethick-Lawrence disagreed with Wavell and Auchinleck and asked for enrolment of European troops to hang on to India. It was a civilian's pipe dream and the soldiers rightly scoffed at it. How long would it take London to recruit and train this brand new army of European mercenaries to fight the beastly natives? From where in Europe would this Army of mercenaries be recruited? Who would pay for them? The whole of Europe was devastated by the war and sick and tired of fighting then. The British troops themselves were drained and exhausted after six years of war and in no mood or shape to re-conquer India in the face of dogged resistance by the 2.5 million demobilised Indian soldiers. So the arguments of sustained pressure built up by the non-violent movement are simply and purely untenable. Here was a Raj that was unwilling to capitulate even in the wake of widespread violence in India.
- The final tipping point in London came with the Naval Mutiny of February 1946. It clearly highlighted to London that their Generals on the ground in India were not imagining things and conjuring up horror scenarios that were unrealistic or alarmist. They were now struck by the cold water of harsh reality and they finally caved in. The Raj threw in the towel only after the naval mutiny.
- The great pity is that the Congress jumped in to douse the flames of this Naval mutiny. They were the self-styled great negotiators who felt that they had finally worn the British Raj down by their sheer oratory and negotiating skills! With all the details of the decision-making process in New Delhi and London from 1945 to 1947 now available, we can treat these self-serving estimates and highly exaggerated and insufficiently contextual claims with

the contempt they deserve.

- The very sad part is how a set of self-serving court historians have blithely ignored a vast body of documentary evidence available in the Transfer of Power archives and how they have been allowed to go unchallenged so far. In this book we have presented that whole body of empirical and irrefutable evidence that was available all along. We have not just quoted selectively but reproduced the entire letters and correspondence for perusal and analysis. It is time now to rescue our history as a nation state from a self-seeking bunch of sycophants and shameless spin-doctors still faithfully serving the Raj and its successor dynasty.
- The arguments in this book are not emotive but empirical and based on primary and most authentic sources from the British archives. These have not just been cited but reproduced in their entirety. We have cited the correspondence and estimates of the key British decision makers of that era themselves to unravel the details of the process of decision making that led to India becoming free. The role of Bose and INA stands out as clear as daylight through this entire set of correspondence.

Epilogue: Nation State and Nationalism in India



I had stated at the outset of this book, that few nations in history have had their sense of self and identity as a civilisational nation state so comprehensively destroyed as India's was. Over two centuries, the British Colonial state undertook a highly effective campaign to exploit every faultline in India's body politic—to divide and rule, to abjectly divide India on the basis of caste and creed, religion, race and language. As Dr. Mithi Mukherjee writes: *“If the British Empire had to survive in India ... it had to destroy and dismantle all sources of Indian unity and identity—cultural, political and historical; and render the very idea of India as meaningless. ... Torn by internal conflict, it was claimed that India was in desperate need of a neutral and impartial power at the helm of the state to secure justice and order (or justice as order). Given that Indian society was deeply divided into communities in conflict with each other, only an alien, foreign power could be trusted to be neutral and impartial.”*

What was worse was a concerted campaign to psychologically destroy the very idea of India and impose in the minds of the subject races a congenital sense of inferiority of civilisational values and culture. Everything Indian was now deemed as lowly and inferior by the victims of this concerted psychological warfare campaign, to make the natives feel low down and inferior. The victims of this mass programming of subject minds led them to deeply ingrain these colonial narratives. In fact Macaulay was recruited by the British to destroy the native Brahmanical based system of education and replace it with a Colonial model which would churn out loyal and devoted clerks, scribes and coolies for the empire. Everything *desi* or native was automatically deemed to be inferior to what industrialised Great Britain had to offer. This encompassed all fields—whether cultural, political and historical, or even in the realm of arts and crafts. India had no tradition of high art—Indians were just craftsmen who blindly followed archaic traditions and formulae by rote and could produce nothing

creative or original. It was a civilisational assault of a scope and scale that has never been seen before. It virtually succeeded in destroying the very Indian identity and sense of self so very comprehensively that even 70 years after independence, Indians remain in thrall of those pernicious colonial narratives that are repeated by those brown sahib historians.

Thus Max Mueller was employed by the East India company to write the history of India for the natives and feed them a very deliberate set of Colonial narratives. The Aryan invasion theory was propagated by him—to justify the imposition of foreign rule in India. The Aryans themselves were invaders and foreigners in this land. How could they grudge the British the same privilege of invading and conquering India? They foisted racial constructs on Indian history by creating the myth of the White Aryan and Black Dravidian races—a North-South racial divide that is totally illusory and not borne out by empirical gene-mapping studies. North and South of the Vindhyas Indians share the same set of genes. The attack has been on the very idea of India. Ask most educated Indians today, and they will forcefully assert that there was no nation called India before 1947. Nationhood was a gift bestowed upon us by the British empire. In all history there was never an entity called an Indian nation, not even a civilisational state. The trenchant hold of colonialism and its narratives of inferiority of Indian culture is borne out by the fact that almost every Indian village today has an English-medium school where natives learn the English language to feel emancipated. The most trenchant colonial narrative that has been ingrained in the Indian mind is that India was never a nation state. Nation hood was imposed from outside by the empire. Thus India became a nation state only in 1947. It was never one earlier. It is this myth that we need to question in an empirical fashion. Hence it becomes essential to understand first what precisely is a nation and how does it become a nation state. That is the core myth of the colonial period that still has a trenchant hold upon the Indian imagination. The British claimed India was never a nation or even a civilizational state. It was a competing cauldron of castes and creeds forever at war amongst themselves. It needed an external agency to rule and provide justice and order to the competing castes and creeds.

In recent times, the leftist intellectuals have come up with bizarre notions about the very concept of nation state and nationalism. A nation state, as per them, is merely a collection of nationalities who are free to come and go as they please (as crowds move into and out of a railway platform). What then about the notions of territoriality and nativity that are central to the concept of a nation

state? People are born into a nation state by virtue of the fact that they were born on its territory. Territory is sacred and nations fight wars to defend their boundaries. I am a citizen because I am born to parents who were in turn citizens of India—the aspect of nativity comes to the fore. Today the very concept of nation and nation state are being deliberately redefined to weaken large states like India. Hence, at the end of this book, it would be most essential to take a look at these very notions of nation state and nationalism as they relate specifically to India. Bose was an ardent nationalist and helped to crystallise the very idea of a strong nation state in India beyond the divisions of caste, creed and language. Today India is in dire need to revive its fading nationalism and inculcate the burning patriotism of Bose and his INA, into its citizens. The British colonial regime had propagated the belief that India was never a nation. This now needs to be analysed and refuted in detail.

Nationalism

There is a need to clearly understand what nationalism means and what it implies. Key to the existence of nation states are racial memories that are shared amongst the people who constitute that state. Thus, *every nation has its own understanding of its distinctive past that is conveyed through stories, myths and history. These stories and myths may not be historically accurate. The key however is the trenchant strength of these shared beliefs.* So, whether historically accurate or otherwise, these memories contribute to the understanding of the present. It is this continuity of the narratives between the past and present that provides the nation state its key characteristic—temporal depth and persistence over time.

Nation

With this as a backdrop, let us now try to define what we mean by the term, nation? Steven Grosby, Professor at Clemson University, states, “*The nation is a territorial community of nativity. One is born into a nation. The nation is one among a number of forms of kinship (e.g., family, tribe, city, state or various ethnic groups). It differs because of the greater extent of its territory but also because of its relatively uniform culture that provides stability and a continuation—over time.*”

Nations have their own understandings of their distinctive past. This is *what separates “us” from “them” or from a hostile and threatening “non-self,” the “other.” This shared past is conveyed through stories, myths and history. In India we have the national epic of the Mahabharata—which tells the story of a country called Bharat and the wars that it fought over the idea of political legitimacy and political systems. While most Indian kingdoms were monarchies, there were also Republics in that ancient era. Above all was the concept of the Chakravartin ruler who, like the Chinese Emperor, loosely ruled “all under heaven” and provided legitimacy to the notion of a nation called Bharat.*

The Japanese nation state, for example, traces its descent to the myth of the worship of the Sun Goddess, Amaterasu, whose temple is at Ise. The Japanese Emperor is said to have descended from the Sun Goddess and sired the Japanese race. The historical accuracy of this myth or otherwise is not germane to the issue. What is far more germane is the tenacity and strength of the shared belief over space and time.

Zionism, the Jewish national movement, had as its goal the creation of a Jewish national state in Palestine, the ancient homeland of the Jews. Though Zionism originated in the nineteenth century, it got an impetus with the Balfour Declaration in 1919 and the unimaginable horrors that were visited upon the Jewish people in Europe during the Nazi reign which finally resulted in the creation of the state of Israel by the United Nations in 1948. This Jewish state represents a continuation of the ancient attachment of the Jews and of the Jewish religion to the historical region of Palestine.

Nations are thus formed around shared, self-designating beliefs that have such a structure. These self-designating and shared beliefs are called collective self-consciousness or a distinctive culture and tradition. This culture serves to distinguish it from all the rest.

Nations formed around these shared beliefs are not merely about a distinctive but a spatially shared past. There is a spatial focus to the relation between the individuals who constitute a nation. The idea of the nation is linked to a given geographic space or expanse of territory.

Territorial Instinct

At the basis of the nation state, howsoever anachronistic it may sound, is the animal instinct for territory. Even animals mark out their territory by scent markers of droppings and urination. All animals need a particular geographic space to live and feed/forage and express themselves. The bigger the animal the more space it needs to express and sustain itself. This territory instinct is at the basis of the animals' "Fight-Flight" response. Near the periphery of its territorial space, an animal will flee. At its core or its centre, it will fight to its death. The animal kingdom therefore is deeply programmed genetically to think in terms of ownership of geographical space or territory. That is the basis of the territorial instinct that mankind seems to have inherited in the course of its evolutionary descent. It is a primal instinct and a very powerful one at that. It is the core of the present-day concept of nationalism and nation states.

The term nation, therefore, refers both to the land and its people. They are unified by the notion of territory and birth. The citizens of the nation and their ancestors were all born into this Homeland. The nation therefore is a social relation with both temporal depth and bounded territory.

*The national consciousness is sustained by rituals, symbols (flags, emblems, anthems) and a shared history. Parents transfer to their offspring not only physical genes, but also cultural memes—the cultural inheritances from a distant past—their language, customs, religion, etc., of the larger group. Birth within its territory confers citizenship. It is recognised as the primary criterion for the membership of the nation. The nation *comingles two lines of descent—descent in the territory of the nation (the Homeland concept) and genetic descent from parents who are members of the nation.* The focus of the nation is territorial descent. Patriotism is a consequence of the preoccupation with the continuation of the self, both in its biological and cultural components. *The love that one has for the nation is designated by this term "patriotism."* It is an incredibly powerful emotion for it has its roots in the deep-seated territorial instinct that can lead a person to fight to his or her death in the protection of the space identified as an extension of the self. It has led to amazing deeds of self-sacrificial altruism as also brutal massacres. Patriotism leads one to transcend the narrow ego and identify with *the far larger cultural construct of the nation that extends not only through space but also through time.* One is now identifying the self with a far larger entity that transcends the self and changes*

the very mode of self-centred behaviour devoted to purely preserving the organism. This self-transcendence and identification can reach extreme levels.

Ernest Renan, the French scholar, asks in his essay "What is a nation?" and answers, "It is a coming together over time of previously distinct populations that have much in common. It implies a bounded, territorial community of customs and laws." The term nation implies a continuation over time of a relatively uniform territorial culture. A nation needs the following:

Extensive territory a

A self-designating Name

A centre (a National Capital Region) with national institutions, e.g., monuments, temples, a Parliament, a Supreme Court, a National Army, *etc.*

A history that asserts and expresses its temporal continuity

Relatively uniform culture—often based on a common language, religion and law

Each of these characteristics, however, is rarely found to be absolute or complete.

The Nation State

The nation now seeks to express itself through a nation state out of a dire necessity to protect and preserve the lives of its members. The nation, through its representatives and institutions, can act to secure its protection and preservation in the world. To do this, nations invent trans-individual traditions. They build monuments, mausoleums, museums and temples. They hold celebratory mass rituals, pageants and parades. The reaffirmation of traditions and its transmission from one generation to the next necessarily involves modification to the tradition. Nevertheless, there has to be a core of continuity that imparts temporal depth to the idea of the nation state. Legal developments support the establishment of a territorial relation of the nation and this must invariably include the formation of a National Army.

A nation therefore is defined as a relatively extensive territorial relation of nativity. The purpose of the state is – as a territorially extensive yet bounded social-relation for the generation, transmission and sustenance of life. *When it becomes a nation state, it is also a structure for the protection of life. The modern nation state that emerged after the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 is characterised by a total monopolisation of violence* within its territory. It is characterised by a triangular relationship between the state, its uniformed Armed and Police Forces (that have the sole right to bear and use arms) and a wholly disarmed population. All modern nation states must thoroughly disarm their population to enforce a monopoly of violence. This is a primal condition for the coming into being of a nation state.

Britain for example has *an Armed Forces Covenant that sets out the relationship between the nation, the government and the armed forces. It recognises that the whole nation has a moral obligation to members of the armed forces and their families, and it establishes how they should expect to be treated.*

The covenant's two principles are that:

- the armed forces community should not face disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public and commercial services
- *special consideration is appropriate in some cases, especially for those who have given most, such as the injured and the bereaved.*

The primary characteristic of a nation state is its complete monopoly on

violence. It has to disarm all its people and retain the capability for violence solely for the members of its uniformed Armed forces and police forces who alone are permitted to bear arms—for the protection of the state and its people. Nation states like Pakistan, on the other hand, that indiscriminately weaponise their societies could unravel as a direct consequence of the negation of this vital principle of nation state formation. The problem in post colonial India was the insistence of its elite that India as a nation had been formed by the tools of soft power. As such it had no need to monopolise violence. It did not need any armed forces! It did not believe in violence!

Thus the Nehruvian construct of nation hood flew strongly in the face of the Westphalian model of nation states that has been in vogue since 1648 (The Treaty of Westphalia). Sardar Patel prevented Nehru from disarming the new born nationstate. Tragically he died soon after India became a Republic.

Fortunately the very real threat from Pakistan and the humiliating defeat of 1962 by the Chinese forced India to rearm and expand its military forces. A nation states prime duty is to defend itself and its people. If a nation state disarms itself – it will cease to be a nation. That precisely has been the very bane of India historically. A refusal to pay attention to its military. This has led to successive defeats and enslavement. In such a scenario Gandhian Non-violence can prove to be extremely dangerous.

Homeland

Given its vast cultural diversity and heterogeneity, what suits India best is the *construct of the nation as Homeland, and by extension the Fatherland/Motherland. It is homeland or territory into which each of us is born*—whether Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Christian, or belonging to any faith or belonging to no faith at all, is not germane to the concept of nationalism. *Birth in a territory, to parents who were born here, qualifies one for the citizenship or belonging to a Homeland. The image of the territory becomes a conceptual point of reference in the trans-individual meaning of relations within the nation. This image is not only spatially expansive but is also temporally deep.* The territorially extensive homeland of the nation is viewed as a home. It too is a structure of anxiety reducing—familiarity.

Thus a part of the self has been put into the spatial structures (the familial home or one's national homeland). These are perceived to be locational frameworks for the very generation and transmission of life. For the family, the primary focus is the parents but for the nation it is the territory. Spatial attachment to the family home can be quite pronounced, especially when a family has lived in the same home for generations and when one's parents are buried/cremated in the immediate area of the home. In the latter case, a part of oneself, those who imparted life to you, has literally been put into the inanimate land. This deeply strengthens the territorial instinct and enhances the cultural significance of the spatial territory of the nation to its citizens. Most patriotic poems and ditties cite the “ashes of the fathers and the temples of the Gods” as an object of reverence. The Japanese worship the ancestors and by extension, the land they peopled. The land is deemed an extension of the self and is life giving and sustaining. *Not only does the Homeland sustain physical life and nature, it also sustains the cultural memes and habits of nurture and ensures their transmission and continuation over time.*

Is India a Nation?

This brings us to the seminal question—is India a nation? There is a view that there was really no historical nation like India and it is only the British who forged its diverse and squabbling populations into a Nation State that emerged only in 1947. This is one of the most trenchant colonial narratives handed down to us, and even 70 years later we have not been able to grow out of this thesis

and mindset. The need for foreign rule was justified on the sole basis of India being a combustible mix of so many races, religions, ethnicities, castes, creeds and languages. The tame acceptance of foreign rule stemmed from an a priori acceptance of the deeply fractured and divided nature of the Indian polity. The British had, over two centuries, succeeded in destroying the very Idea of India itself.

In India, this remarkable continuity over time, however, spans over five millennia. Eight millenniums if we go by the latest carbon dating of Rakhig and Aarhana It has survived repeated invasions and colonial campaigns to stamp out the very idea of India. The very concerted colonial campaign to eradicate the pan-Indian identity, failed to prevent the re-emergence of the nation state in India. India, as a state, however, is yet to recover fully from the terribly divisive strategies inflicted upon it during the two centuries long colonial era. A large number of educated Indians still subscribe to the colonial hypothesis that India was never a nation state. They aver that only the British Empire had welded the warring castes and clans into a governable entity. This is testimony to the very successful British colonial establishments attempt to destroy the very idea of India and to reduce it to a welter of castes, creeds, tribes and linguistic communities.

*This colonial construct needs to be contested strongly. The idea of the nation, actually, has deep roots in India. The Indian civilisation is the oldest living civilisation on the face of this earth. The threads of continuity can be traced back to the seals of the Indus valley civilisation that depict a proto Shiva in a Yogic posture of meditation. Surrounded by animals, he can be recognised as the Pashupatinath—the Lord of animals, or the Shiva of today, who is considered the archetypal Yogi. There are the ancient Vedas, thousands of exquisite hymns that were memorised and passed on orally from generation to generation for over a thousand years. It was the most incredible feat of the preservation of collective memories in any culture. The last of the Vedas, the Atharva Veda, clearly speaks of the *Rashtra* or nation. There are, in addition, the epics of Ramayana and Mahabharata, that still exercise a powerful hold upon the collective imagination of the Indian people. These epics describe and demarcate the geographic and cultural space of the Indian subcontinent. They have a self-designating name for this nation. It was called “Bharat,” a name that has come down to us even today. Till this day, this self-designating name is used in all important Hindu rituals. *Jambu Dweepe Bharat Khande* is an incantation that situates the performer of the Hindu rituals in the world island of *Jambu Dweep**

(Asia) and the territory of a nation called *Bharat*.

The problem in the Indian context is, that this civilisational and cultural unity has very rarely been transformed into political unification. In these 5000 years, the entire territory of India was unified only thrice for three episodes that roughly lasted some two centuries each. These were the unifications effected by the South Asian empires of the Mauryas, the Mughals and the British. The present Indian Republic is the successor entity of the British Empire, albeit a partitioned (trifurcated) successor. There were problems with the long interludes of break-up and disarray that came in-between the unifications of the empires. Despite this, the idea of India (*Bharat*) and the Indic civilisation however have been an undeniable historical fact. The temporal continuity of the idea of India is spatial as well as over long periods of time stretching into aeons. There is a stream of cultural continuity over space and time that is remarkable for its extent and duration. India is a civilisational state, even like China.

The Mahabharata talks of warriors from Assam and Nagaland (Gatokkatch is a Naga warrior and Bhagadatta is a king of Assam who is the best Elephant warrior in the whole country), as also from Afghanistan (Gandhara), Mathura, Maghada, Kuru, Panchala, Kamboj and Vanga desha (present-day Bengal) and many other provinces of present-day India. Thus Kautilya, a Brahmin scholar reputedly from South India (Kerala), was the National Security Advisor of Chandragupta Maurya, the first emperor, who founded the Mauryan Empire from Pataliputra in East India. The Adi Shankaracharya best highlighted this cultural unity in the seventh century AD, when he constructed four monasteries in the four remote corners of India (in all four cardinal directions). Interestingly, to highlight the unity of the idea of India, he appointed abbots to these monasteries from diametrically opposite areas/regions of India. Thus an abbot from North India presided over the monastery in South India (Kanchipuram), and one from the West in the East coast monastery at Puri. Similarly, the abbot at the Badrinath Dham in the North is always chosen from South India. The Adi Shankaracharya himself came from the deep South, from the state of Kerala. These were deliberate attempts to highlight the deep cultural unity of the Indic civilisation and its remarkable continuity over space and time.

India has been a cultural melting pot, a land of synthesis. Countless races and tribes have poured from all over Asia into its fertile plains. Whatever their origins, they came to this vast homeland in wave after wave, and settled down here. India became their “Homeland” and it is the concept of this Homeland that makes India a nation, despite its bewildering diversity of languages, races,

religions and tribes. The common pool of memories is spatially shared across the cultural and temporal extent of the Indian subcontinent. What defines the Indic civilisation is its wonderful assimilative ability to synthesise diverse strands into a culture of unity that still manages to preserve the diversity.

There was, however, one significant departure from this homeland tradition. The British Empire was run by a European race that refused to settle down in India permanently and become a part of this Homeland. To overcome the foreignness and exteriority of their rule, they propagated an insidious ideology that sought to destroy the very idea of India. They claimed that India had never been a nation and that its badly divided people were so much at war with one another that only a Foreign power could be impartial and objective and provide Imperial justice and fair play to its warring populations. For two centuries, the British Empire expended its tremendous energies in creating and widening major faultlines in the Indian body politik. They justified foreign rule in India on the premise that India was never a nation but a huge cauldron of disparate races, castes and ethnicities, forever at war with one another. Such a heterogeneous population was incapable of ruling itself. One or two pernicious practices in some sections of society like child marriage, sati, etc., and territorial spats between competing fiefdoms were highlighted to justify this theory that only an external power could provide imperial justice to the warring religions, castes and tribes of India. Only external rule could be impartial and objective and hence just. Thus was propagated a concept of Imperial Justice as the cornerstone of the colonial empire that was inherently extrinsic, extractive and hugely exploitative. Over a period of almost two centuries, the victims of this colonial narrative completely and thoroughly internalised this pernicious discourse of inferiority and divisiveness. India, a prosperous land of contented people and plentitude, was now plagued by famines. Its self-sufficient political economy was wilfully destroyed by the colonisers by plunder, efficient extraction of loot and dumping of its own industrialised goods in these captive markets.

No other nation state in recent history has ever been subjected to two centuries of such a concerted cultural assault, designed to destroy its self-consciousness of itself as a nation. No other nation state has ever been subject to such a concerted assault upon the very fundamental idea of its being and had the considerable energies of an empire expended primarily to divide and splinter its population along the faultlines of religion, caste, tribe and language. The colonial administration did everything in its power to divide and fracture the population; encourage competing groups to fight for British patronage, humiliate

the natives and instil in them a deep feeling of inferiority about their own heritage and culture. The British attempt was to effectively destroy the very idea of India and make sure that after the great uprising of 1857, its diverse populations would never again unite to threaten the colonial hold of the British Empire. Despite all their efforts to prevent it, however, this is precisely what happened in the end.

There were three distinct strands in the freedom struggle of India. The Anglophile Indian elite had begun the freedom struggle in a very effete way by appealing to Imperial Justice—pleading and putting up petitions and memoranda to the Queen Empress for a measure of autonomy or home rule. They considered themselves as loyal subjects of the Empire and petitioned the queen against their local colonial rulers. Even this request for Home Rule or Dominion status was turned down on racist grounds. India participated enthusiastically in the First World War, in the fond hope of earning British gratitude. What it got instead was the racist massacre of Jallianwala Bagh in Amritsar. This, just a year after the war, in which 1.3 million Indians had participated and some 72,000 had laid down their lives. This was a critical turning point in India's Freedom Struggle.

Mahatma Gandhi appeared on the scene at this stage and carried out a mass mobilisation of the Indian peasantry. *This was a movement of non-cooperation with the British rulers. How could they rule the people of India without their consent? He asked the people of India to boycott British goods. This mass mobilisation shook the British. Gandhi however kept it non-violent, and the British soon found non-violence to be entirely within their tolerance thresholds.* In fact, they even tacitly encouraged this strain of the freedom struggle. While practising democracy at home, they could not allow themselves to be seen as not encouraging it in their colonies.

The third strand of this struggle was the violence of the Revolutionaries like Bhagat Singh and Chandra Shekhar Azad. This worried the British and they were ruthless in its suppression. What finally led to the eclipse of the British Empire in India, however, was the violence of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose and his Indian National Army (INA). Though it lost the battles of Imphal and Kohima, it won the War for India's Independence by instigating massive armed rebellion in the Indian Armed Forces. The military men of the INA and the regular armed forces were however rapidly marginalised, by a set of collaborators and closet Anglophiles, *as was Mahatma Gandhi.*

A benign movement led by Anglophile lawyers, most of whom had studied law in Britain, took charge in New Delhi. They modelled the Indian Constitution

on the British India Act of 1935 and made social Justice the foremost principle enshrined in the Indian Constitution. It was a thinly disguised idea grafted from the concept of Imperial Justice as the cornerstone of the empire. The amazing fact however is that even after two centuries of abject racial humiliation and a most concerted attempt by the British Empire to stamp out the very idea of India—it resurfaced strongly in the Freedom Struggle, and by 1947, India was once again a free nation state. Strong nationalist leaders like Sardar Patel moved decisively to force the Indian princely states to merge with India and thus create a coherent and contiguous, territorial nation state.

Proto-Nations and Modern Nations

As highlighted earlier, *the case of India as a nation is unique. No other nation has been subjected to such a sustained cultural assault to destroy its identity. This colonial assault was all-pervasive. It used the tools of governance by way of census exercises to highlight caste differences; it created separate electorates for religious groups and then created the scheduled castes and tribes.* It also included the very system of education that was moulded to shape the attitudes of the Indian subjects as also in art and culture to highlight the so-called congenital inferiority of the Indic civilisation, and its constantly warring conglomerate of castes and creeds. Pavan K. Varma writes in “Becoming Indian: the Unfinished Revolution of Culture & Identity,” “*Colonialism was such a deeply dislocating event because its critique was internalised by its victims ... In such a process, ... an entire culture attempts to reinterpret itself in terms that will somehow win the dominant outsiders’ (colonisers’) approval. They finally end up as caricatures, divorced from their own cultural milieu and perpetually alone—in spite of their best efforts at emulation (of their colonisers).*”

British educationists like Macaulay had ensured that the *colonisation of the Indian mind* was so thorough and complete that over seven decades after independence, the dominant colonial narrative of imperial justice and induced civilisational inferiority, still haunts the Indian narrative. Under the cloak of left-wing liberalism, the entire intellectual discourse in India is still premised around the colonial anchor of Imperial Justice. It refuses to see India as a nation state and continues to emphasise the disruptive discourse of caste and creed to divide and fragment the pan-Indian identity. This is a crass attempt to perpetuate the colonial legacy of divide and rule. Its central construct is that Indian society is deeply divided and fractured.

The British were finally forced to leave because escalating revolts in the British Indian Armed Forces made it impossible for them to continue to govern India. They left finally, but the colonial narrative that they left behind, continues to dominate in various ways the intellectual landscape in India to this day.

Nations and Proto-Nations

There is a school of thought which feels that the proto-nations of history—even historic nations like China and Japan—were not nation states in the real sense of the term. Nation states, they aver, could only come into being with the major advances in communications brought about by printed books, newspapers and periodicals and then the radio and TV mediums along with the telephone; and now the mobile, Internet and the dark-net. These communication media resulted in the creation of literate populations and thereby stabilised previously oral cultures and their languages through the print media. They also served to disseminate that language throughout the nation's territory. Thus, these new communication media promoted the national culture and consolidated territorially bounded linguistic communities. All these factors have contributed to the definition of the self in the collective conscious of the nation. It is this that leads so many scholars to conclude that nation states are a historically recent phenomenon and the proto-nations of the past were never really true nation states.

That is why most intellectuals in India are convinced that the nation state in India emerged only after 1947 and that the Proto-nations of the past formed by the Mauryan and Mughal empires (that unified the territory, enabled a common legal system, created a central army and monetised the Indian economy on the silver standard) were never really nation states in the true sense of the word. As such they fully subscribe to the colonial discourse of the empire, which maintained that India was never a nation and in fact, its population was so divided and fractured that it could never govern itself but needed to be governed by an external foreign power to ensure justice and equity to its constantly warring population segments, divided so thoroughly by caste and creed.

Pre-Modern Nations

The current narrative then is that *pre-modern nations that lacked these multiple media for national consolidation, were really not nations in the true sense of the word. Pre-Modern nations were created by myths—myths like the Sun Goddess*

myth of Japan and the Mahabharata of India. These myths contributed to the formation of the image of a bounded, territorial relation of temporal duration. These formative myths, which are really beliefs with no empirical foundation, accomplish this unification by formulating connections between historically actual societies to a perceived order of the universe (through the act of Gods), e.g., formation of the Japanese nation by the Sun Goddess through the agency of the Emperor. By this process, *the historical uniqueness of the territorial community is justified. Thus, the historian Delmar Brown observes that in the process of the formation of nations, we see the device of making myths more historical and making actual events more mythical.* It is through its history—broadly understood here, to also include the formative myths, that as such blur the distinction between fact and meaningful fancy—that a nation uses to understand itself and in so doing, constitutes itself.

The culture of these pre-modern societies was fragmented both vertically and horizontally. Vertically, differences existed between the educated elite (who knew Sanskrit in the Indian context) and the illiterate peasants who were far more attached to their separate localities. Thus, ancient societies exhibited sharp cultural and political distinction between the ruling centre and the host of culturally isolated localities. This is *what impels modern scholars to question how pre-modern states could become national communities. These need the unifying agencies of the modern means of communications, public education, a uniform territory and pervasive laws and democratic citizenship.* A lot of emphasis is based on the last-named factor. In fact, the democratic concept of citizenship has contributed massively to the establishment of nation states. Democracy promotes a belief in the equality of the members of a nation, thereby contributing in a significant way to the sense of nation as a community. What then really welds a modern nation together are three critical factors:

Democratic Conception of Citizenship

Extensive market for manufactured goods and services

Advances in Communications

Without these modern prerequisites, nation state formation is impossible, aver the scholars. Hence India was never a nation state before 1947.

This view is now being challenged by a more nuanced and accurate appraisal of pre-modern societies. The spread of major world religions in antiquity like Buddhism, Christianity and later Islam calls into question the supposed cultural isolation of populations that were largely illiterate. In fact, thousands of years ago, the simple tenets of Shamanism had propagated to all continents of the world—from Asia to Africa, the Americas and Australia, in societies that were wholly illiterate. There was an amazing degree of commonality between the shamanic theory and practices in the diverse continents of the world. The magnificent spread of Buddhism across the whole of Asia by a saffron clad army of Indian monks is yet another feat of communication that would be difficult to replicate even in today's era of the Internet and satellite communications.

In fact, the spread of world religions in antiquity, indicates that extensive relations throughout vast populations and across great distances can indeed be formed even in the absence of mass-produced books, newspapers, railways and markets for industrial goods. Moreover, a study of history highlights that law codes were found throughout antiquity and the Middle ages—as well as conceptions of territories with fairly well defined boundaries.

To sum up this discussion, therefore, ancient or modern, the *following characteristics are needed for the formation of a nation state:*

A self-designating name

A written history

A degree of cultural uniformity, often as a result of and sustained by religion

Legal Codes

An authoritative centre

The conception of a bounded territory

On each of these criteria, ancient India qualifies as a nation. Its self-designating name was Bharat and later Hindustan (from the Arabic for Hindu based on Sindhu—the cradle river of the Indian civilisation). It had an extensive oral and written history in the form of the Vedas, the Puranas and the national epics of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, which still exercise such an extensive hold upon the popular imagination. Iqbal wrote, “*Hai Ram ke wajood par Hindustan ko Naaz*” (India is proud of the legacy of Rama). The Hindu religion provides a great modicum of cultural uniformity. Beyond that (and often because of the mystical nature of Hinduism per se), we see an astonishing culture of tolerance and cross-cultural synthesis. Hinduism recognised the difference between men and outlined different paths to union with the transcendent reality, by way of Bhakti—Yoga, Gyan Yoga, Karma Yoga and Raj Yogas designed to suit very different psychological temperaments. This Vedic stanza sums up this integrative tendency, “*ekam sad, vipra bahuda vadanti—* That truth is one, the wise call him by many names.” All the multifarious paths that are, ultimately lead to the same, self-transcendent reality. Hinduism, unlike sematic religions of the desert, has what Rajiv Malhotra calls “an open architecture”.

Coming to the legal codes and their widespread applicability, the codes of Manu date back to the Vedas. The Arthashastra codifies the laws that governed the Mauryan Empire. The Mughals had elaborate codes for jurisprudence and the delivery of justice. The authoritative power centre in India has oscillated between Pataliputra and Delhi, and the conception of a bounded territory goes back to Jambu Dweepe-Bharat Khande—the Sanskrit incantation about territorial designation that is chanted before performing every Hindu ritual even today. Quite incidentally, the Atharva Veda talks of Rashtra or nation.

Thus India was not entirely a colonial construct. It was certainly not a gift of the British Empire. Nor was democracy a British transplant in Indian soil. There were clan republics in India in the times of Mahabharata and the Buddha. The Indian empire of the Mauryas spread the Indian ideology of Buddhism to every corner of Asia. India is a significant historical entity deeply entrenched in the collective conscious of the Indic civilisation of South Asia. It faced the challenge of Muslim invasions—largely by absorbing and synthesising the Muslim

population in its melting pot. The most significant challenge, however, was now from the British Empire, which consciously sought to destroy the very idea of India and mounted the most vicious challenge by systematically fracturing its population along caste and creed faultlines. The parting gift of the empire was the partition of India by carving out the Muslim homeland of Pakistan. Pakistan today has broken up and India now has the second largest Muslim population in the whole world—ingested relatively peacefully into its fabric. The British had tried to destroy the idea of India but they failed.

Today, the idea of India has resurrected itself. Wars with China and Pakistan (the hostile other) have deepened the idea of India by projecting it against a hostile non-self—the other. The problem in India is that petty politicians had revived the colonial project of fracturing the Indian polity again on caste and creed lines for purely personal gain. That is why the revival of right-wing nationalism in 2014 has been such a significant historical phenomenon but one that sadly seems to be losing its initial momentum.

Failure to Militarise

The legacy of the non-violent Gandhian struggle led to the coming to power of a very pacific elite who professed to abhor the use of violence. India is a country that has been invaded, looted, raped and conquered for over eight centuries. It needed to militarise and protect itself from grave external threats and internal challenges. A series of foreign invasions and attacks forced India to militarise – expand and modernise its military and for a time (in the Shastri and Indira Gandhi eras) and even with Rajiv Gandhianism was quietly given the go by. The First NDA government of Atal Bihari Vajpayee made India a nuclear power and was quick to employ fairly massive military force in Kargil and Op Parakram. The second NDA regime of Modi was perceived as hard right. It was expected to put major emphasis upon strengthening and enhancing the role of the military in its dealings with external and internal challenges. To the nations intense surprise it has sought to revive the legacy of Mahatma Gandhi – even as it talks of Sardar Patel and his real politik. However Nuclear deterrence in South Asia, unfortunately, seems to have convinced it that, use of large scale military force is no longer possible. The use of tactical scale surgical strikes of limited violence and depths seems to be the preferred option and that too very sparingly . There is surprising emphasis being given to the Gandhian ideology of non-violence. There has been an apparent marginalisation of the military and far greater emphasis on the Police and Intelligence operations. The new found notion seems to be convinced that this is all that is needed to defend India. Large scale use of military force has apparently been ruled out. One hopes this is a temporary phase stemming from India's greatly delayed military modernisation. What is causing concern however is a refusal to use more than token military force in J&K and the insurgents in the North East on the plea of preserving human rights. There is major emphasis on peace building through political initiatives which are inordinately stretched out and have emboldened hostile elements. Indian force usage in CI/CT operations has been confined to small arms along. This is in sharp contrast to what the USA, Russia, China, Pakistan, Myanmar and Sri Lanka have done. They have used major military force to crush armed rebellions. India has been constraining use of military force and adopting an overly pacific stance that is actually hampering peace building in the troubled state. Less Mizoram and Punjab, no other insurgency has been decisively quelled. The simple question is, a nation that has been invaded and conquered for 800 years needs to protect itself. That is the very purpose of the

nation state. Gandhian ideology seriously weakens the resolve to use force to protect its citizens from external and internal threats. That is why the ideology of Bose and the INA will have to prevail over the pacific ideology of Gandhian non violence. That had, unfortunately failed to get us our freedom. Revival of this Gandhian anachronism today, could endanger the survival of the Indian Republic. We must heed the lessons of our history and devise the means to protect ourselves. Other democracies like USA and even Great Britain put very heavy emphasis on military power to protect the nation state. 70 per cent of American Presidents have been military men. The military has great influence in National Security policy formulation in the USA and UK. India's pacific culture provides a stark contrast where the Indian military is sadly marginalised. India as a nation state has to come to terms with the notions of violence and use of Force to protect the Westphalian nation state. Voluntarily disarming the state or refusing to use the force available can endanger the very survival of the state in India.

Appendix



THE BRITISH COMMAND AND CONTROL STRUCTURE LONDON AND INDIA (1945-1947) INDIA OFFICE: LONDON

Secretary of State: Lord Pethick-Lawrence (cr. Baron 16 August 1945)
Permanent Under-Secretary: Sir David Monteth

Parliamentary Under-Secretary: Mr Arthur Henderson Deputy Under-Secretaries: Sir William Croft (from 2 January 1946 on his return from the Treasury) Assistant Under-Secretaries: Mr P.J. Patrick

Mr G. J. Baxter

Private Secretary to Secretary of State: Mr F. F. Turnbull (until 13 February 1946 when appointed Secretary to the Cabinet Mission) Mr M. J. Clauson (from 14 February 1946)

INDIA

Viceroy, Governor-General and Crown Representative: Field Marshal Viscount Wavell (Sir John Colville acted from 25 August 15 September 1945 during Lord Wavell's absence in London) Private Secretary to the Viceroy: Sir Evan Jenkins Mr G. E. B. Abell (from 16 November 1945) Reforms Commissioner: Mr V. P. Menon.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Commander-in Chief: General Sir Claude Auchinleck Home: Sir Francis Mudie, I.C.S. Sir John Thorne, I.C.S. (from 15 October 1945) Finance: Sir Archibald Rowlands

War Transport: Sir Edward Benthall (Sir Arthur Griffin acting 9 August–9 October 1945) Posts and Air: Sir Mahomed Usman

Education, Health and Lands: Sir Jogendra Singh Commerce, and Industries and Civil Supplies: Sir M. Azizul Haque Food: Sir J. P. Srivastava

Labour: Dr B. R. Ambedkar

Law: Sir Asoka Kumar Roy

Commonwealth Relations: Dr N. B. Khare

Information and Broadcasting:

Sir Sultan Ahmed (until 31 October 1945) Sir Akbar Hydari, I.C.S. (acting from 31 October 1945) Supply: Sir Ramaswami

Defence: Mudaliar (Mr A. A. Waugh, I.C.S. acting From 17 November 1945) Sir Firoz Khan Noon (until 15 September 1945 after which portfolio was held in abeyance) Planning and Development: Sir Ardeshir Dalal (until 28 January 1946; Sir Akbar Hydari acting thereafter)

GOVERNORS OF PROVINCES

Madras: The Hon. Sir Arthur Hope (Sir Henry Knight, I.C.S. acting from 26 February 1946) **Bombay:** Sir John Colville (Sir C.H. Bristow, I.C.S. acting 25 August-14 September 1945) **Bengal:** Captain Rt. Hon. R. G. Casey (Sir Henry Twynam, I.C.S. acting 13 September-11 October 1945) Sir Frederick Burrows (from 19 February 1946) **United Provinces:** Sir Maurice Hallett, I.C.S. Sir Francis Wylie, I.C.S. (from 7 December 1945) Punjab: Sir Bertrand Glancy, I.C.S

Central Provinces and Berar: Sir Henry Twynam, I.C.S. (Mr F. C. Bourne, I.C.S. acting until 11 October 1945) **Assam:** Sir Andrew Clow, I.C.S.

Bihar: Sir Thomas Rutherford, I.C.S.

North-West Frontier Province: Sir George Cunningham, I.C.S., Sir Olaf Caroe, I.C.S. (from 3 March 1946) **Orissa:** Sir Hawthorne Lewis.

Sind: Sir Hugh Dow Sir Francis Mudie (from 15 January 1946)

PRIME MINISTERS OF PROVINCES

Punjab: Malik Khizar Hyat

Khan Tiwana

Assam: Sir Muhammad Sa'adulla

Mr Gopinath Bardoloi (from 11 February 1946)

North-West Frontier Province: Dr Khan Sahib Sind Sir Ghulam Hussain
Hidayatullah

The remaining Provinces were administered by their Governors under Section 93 of the Government of India Act 1935

PRINCIPAL HOLDERS OF OFFICE

UNITED KINGDOM CABINET

Announced 28 July and 4 August 1945 (Members of the India and Burma Committee are italicised) Prime Minister and First Lord of

the Treasury, Minister of Defence: Mr Clement Attlee Lord President of the Council and Leader of the House of Commons: Mr Herbert Morrison Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs: Mr Ernest Bevin Lord Privy Seal: Mr Arthur Greenwood.

Chancellor of the Exchequer: Mr Hugh Dalton

President of the Board of Trade: Sir Stafford Cripps Lord Chancellor: Lord Jowitt

First Lord of the Admiralty: Mr A. V. Alexander Secretary of State for the Home: Mr James Chuter Department Secretary of State for India and for Burma: Lord Pethick-Lawrence (cr. Baron by Letters Patent dated 16 August 1945) Secretary of State for the Colonies: Mr G. H. Hall Secretary of State for War: Mr J. J. Lawson

Secretary of State for Air: Viscount Stansgate Secretary of State for Scotland: Mr J. Westwood Minister of Fuel and Power: Mr E. Shinwell

Minister of Education: Miss Ellen Wilkinson

Minister of Health: Mr Aneurin Bevan

Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries: Mr T. Williams **OTHER MINISTERS MENTIONED IN THIS VOLUME**

Minister of Food: Sir Ben Smith

Postmaster-General: Earl of Listowel

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Maj Gen (Dr.) G D Bakshi SM, VSM (Retd.) is a very well-known TV Commentator and India's leading Military Analyst. He is a prolific writer on matters military with over 30 books to his name.

This book seeks to answer a seminal question about nation-state formation in Post-colonial India, "Who got us our Freedom and how?" Was it due to the violence of Bose and his INA or was it due to the peaceful and non-violent agitation of Mahatma Gandhi? Where we are going depends a lot on where we come from. The author has painstakingly analysed the documents now available in the British Transfer of Power Archives. He has methodically identified the key British decision makers in London and New Delhi in the critical period from 1945-1947, and examined their letters and reports about the INA trials and their violent aftermath (November-December 1946) and then the mutiny in the Royal Indian Navy (February 1946). Relevant letters from the *Viceroy* and military appreciation of the situation by Fd Nishi Auchinleck, alongwith reports from the Governors of the various provinces, as also the report of the Director IB, have been reproduced in the original alongwith Letters from the Prime minister Lord Clement Attlee and Secretary of state for India, Petтик Lawrence. The documentary paper trail

is chillingly clear. The British were shaken by the wide spread violence in support of the INA and the serious question mark it raised about the continued loyalty of some 2.5 million Indian soldiers then being demobilised after the war. There were less than 40,000 British troops in India then. They were war weary and home-sick. How could they have celled a revolt by 2.5 million combat hardened Indian Soldiers?

It was this stark maths that forced the British to leave when they did. Nelson Mandela in South Africa, continued with the non-violent methods of the Mahatma. Unfortunately South Africa got its freedom only in April 1994. The unfortunate fact is that the British left but handed over power to an anglophile elite that faithfully carried on with the narratives and constructs of the Raj. This narrative strongly coloured nation-state formation in India for it started with the a priori British assumption that India never was a nation-state - just a warring cauldron of castes and creeds. Caste today is solely the basis of all politics in Independent India. They wiped out all mention of Bose and his INA, and pacified the state in a manner that would ensure that India never became a major military power. Did the British deliberately induce the legacy of pacifism to ensure that like post-war Germany and Japan, India would never become a formidable military power? Did India become a nation only in 1947?

