

The Indian National Army 1942

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Abstract-The Indian National Army (INA) was a military force formed by Indian nationalists during World War II with the objective of freeing India from British colonial rule. The INA was established in 1942 by Subhas Chandra Bose, who sought the support of Axis powers such as Germany and Japan to fight against the British. The INA primarily consisted of Indian soldiers captured by the Japanese during their conquest of Southeast Asia and Indian expatriates in Southeast Asia. They fought alongside the Japanese against the British in Burma and India but were unsuccessful in their goal. After Japan's surrender, many INA soldiers were captured and faced trial for treason and mutiny. However, their actions and sacrifice played a significant role in India's struggle for independence, and they are remembered as heroes in India today.

Index Terms - British colonial rule, Indian nationalists, Axis powers, Conquest, Primarily

INTRODUCTION

The Indian National Army (INA) was a military force that operated during World War II in Southeast Asia, with the aim of liberating India from British colonial rule. The INA was formed in 1942 by Indian nationalist leader Subhas Chandra Bose, who had sought help from Axis powers Germany, Japan, and Italy in the fight against the British. The INA consisted of Indian soldiers and officers who had been captured by the Japanese army in the early years of the war. Bose, who was a strong advocate of Indian independence, worked to build the INA into a formidable fighting force, with the ultimate goal of invading India from the east. The INA saw action in Burma, where it fought alongside Japanese troops against British and Commonwealth forces. The INA also conducted a failed invasion of India in 1944, which resulted in the capture of many INA soldiers and officers. Despite its limited success, the INA played an important role in the Indian independence movement by raising awareness about the cause of Indian independence and demonstrating that Indians were capable of fighting for their own freedom. The INA also had a significant impact on the Indian military, as many of its former soldiers and officers went on to serve in the Indian Army after India gained independence in 1947. The Indian National Army (INA), also known as the Azad Hind Fauj, was an armed force formed by Indian nationalists during World War II with the goal of overthrowing British colonial rule in India.

The INA was founded in 1942 by Subhas Chandra Bose, a prominent Indian nationalist leader who had escaped from British custody and sought the support of the Axis powers (Germany, Japan, and Italy) to fight against the British. Bose traveled to Germany and Japan to seek their support, and in 1943, the INA was established with the help of the Japanese. The INA consisted primarily of Indian soldiers captured by the Japanese during their conquest of Southeast Asia, as well as Indian expatriates in Southeast Asia. The INA fought alongside the Japanese against the British in Burma and India, but was ultimately unsuccessful in its goal of liberating India from British colonial rule. After Japan's surrender in 1945, many INA soldiers were captured and faced trial for treason and mutiny. However, their actions and sacrifice played a significant role in India's struggle for independence, and they are remembered as heroes in India today.

During the Second World War, Japan and Germany raised several auxiliary armies in South East Asia and Europe. One such Japanese sponsored army was the Indian National Army (INA). The historiography of the Second World War gives marginal importance to the INA because of its low combat effectiveness. Neither the mainstream historiography of modern India nor the literature on decolonization did attach much importance to the INA. In contrast, a minority group (mostly ex-INA personnel, including some historians) overemphasizes the INA's contribution to India's struggle for independence. However, it would be interesting to analyse how the Japanese and some Indian nationalist leaders attempted to structure an army out of the British controlled Sepoy Army. Much light could be thrown on this complex interaction by studying the managerial format of the INA. Moreover, the INA also influenced the genesis of post-1947 Indian Army. This article places the INA as an institution at the centre stage. It tries to figure out who joined the INA and why and the nature of interaction between the human materials of the INA and its command structure.

The focus is on the social base of the INA and its managerial infrastructure. Recruitment techniques and disciplinary mechanism of the INA are highlighted. Instead of focussing merely on Subhas Chandra Bose, the functions of the middle and low ranking officers are emphasized. The INA utilized the social and cultural ethos of pre-colonial India and also the organizing principles of the Western armies. This blend of pre-British Indian martial traditions with the institutions of professional militaries of the West, in the context of alliance with the Axis powers, had its own contradictions. Though this contradiction made the INA an ineffective combat organization, it had a multiplier effect on the process of erosion of the Raj's legitimacy. The strength of this essay lies in utilizing untapped sources like The Oracle, Fauji Akhbar, the INA files in the National Archives and oral interview transcripts of the leading figures. In the course of the Second World War, Japan and Germany raised several auxiliary armies in South-East Asia and Europe. One such Japanese sponsored army was the Azad Hind Fauj or the Indian National Army (hereafter INA). Field-Marshal Slim categorizes the INA as Japanese inspired Fifth Columnists or JIFS. The historiography of the Second World War gives marginal importance to the INA probably because of its low combat effectiveness. Neither the mainstream historiography of modern India nor the literature on decolonization did attach much importance to the INA. In contrast, a minority group (mostly ex-INA personnel including some historians) whom I classify as the INA loyalists overemphasizes the INA's contribution to India's struggle for independence. There have been some academic studies of the INA. Joyce C. Lebra has studied the Japanese inputs behind the INA. And Peter Ward Fay narrates the history of the INA through the eyes of two chief protagonists, Prem and Lakshmi Sahgal. Stephen Cohen rightly asserts

that the main challenge posed by the INA was not its size but its purpose and ideology.' It would be interesting to analyse how the Japanese and some Indian nationalist leaders attempted to structure an army that was different from the Sepoy Army (or the British-Indian Army). Much light could be thrown on this complex issue by studying the managerial format of the INA. Moreover, the INA also indirectly influenced India's independence and the genesis of post-1947 Indian Army. The objective is to analyse the INA's organizational structure and the inner workings of its bureaucracy. This article tries to figure out who joined the INA and why and the nature of interaction between the human materials of the INA and its command structure. The focus is on the social base of the INA and its managerial infrastructure. Recruitment techniques and disciplinary mechanism of the INA are highlighted. It will bring to light the fact that despite the claims of the Subhas Chandra Bose (hereafter referred to as Bose to differentiate him from Rash Behari Bose) loyalists, Bose's authority over the INA came under threat. Instead of focussing merely on Bose," the functions of the middle and low ranking officers are emphasized. The strength of this article lies in utilizing untapped sources like The Oracle, Fauji Akhbar, the INA files in the National Archives and oral interviews of the leading figures. This article argues that under Bose's leadership an attempt was made to create an army distinct from the Sepoy Army. Some credit is due to Mohan Singh and his associates who founded the INA. This was known as the First INA. However, Bose and his followers thoroughly reorganized it, which came to be known as the Second INA. The Second INA utilized the social and cultural ethos of precolonial India and also the organizing principles of the Western armies. This blend of pre-British Indian martial traditions with the institutions of professional militaries of the West, in the context of alliance with the Axis powers, had its own contradictions. Though this contradiction made the INA an ineffective combat organization, the Azad Hind Fauj had a multiplier effect on the process of erosion of the Raj's legitimacy

CONCLUSION

The Indian National Army (INA) was a significant movement in India's struggle for independence from British colonial rule. Led by Subhas Chandra Bose, the INA fought alongside the Japanese against the British in Burma and India, but ultimately failed to achieve its goal. Despite this, the INA and its soldiers made a significant sacrifice for India's independence, and their actions inspired many Indians to continue the struggle for freedom. Today, the INA is remembered as a symbol of India's fight for independence and its soldiers are revered as heroes in India's history. The INA remains an important chapter in India's struggle for independence, demonstrating the power of nationalistic fervor and the human spirit to fight for freedom. The Indian National Army was a bold and significant attempt by Indian nationalists to fight for the freedom of their country from British colonial rule. Despite facing many challenges and setbacks, the INA demonstrated immense courage and dedication in their fight for independence, and their actions inspired many others in India's struggle for freedom. Though they ultimately failed in their objective, the INA and its soldiers are remembered as heroes who made great sacrifices for their country's freedom. The legacy of the INA continues to inspire and motivate people in India and around the world to fight for justice and freedom.

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