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Bose, Azad Hind Fauz and the legacy

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Introduction

Subhas Bose was a highly influential figure in India and throughout Asia. He was vocal about representing all of India, not just Bengal, when he addressed foreign audiences. (Dasgupta, 2021). Subhas Chandra Bose was a great leader who opposed Gandhi's policy of non-violence and wanted national emancipation. He is remembered for his wartime alliances, foreign help and strong military powers, leaving behind a legacy that still holds a significant place in history. Bose has emphasized that "History did not furnish a single instance where freedom had been won without help of some sort from abroad" (Sareen, 2004, p.72-73). He was willing to go to any lengths for his country, even going abroad to seek help from the Axis powers. Netaji's legacy is one of courage, sacrifice and patriotism. This chapter focusses on the legacy of Netaji concerning Azad Hind Fauz.

The context

He started his political journey in Indian National Congress but had problems within the party on the leadership issue. It was very clear from his split from Congress party (1938-1939) that his imagination and actual path of achieving independence from the British would be through actual arms struggle in the battlefield. The relationship of Communist Party of India (as history suggests) with Mr Subhas Chandra Bose and his party was not very cordial either.
After his split from INC, he raised the first Indian National Army (INA) which was later called as Azad Hind Fauj in 1943 and started an armed coup and inspired thousands of Indian youths to join the struggle for independence from the British colonial rule. Subhas Chandra Bose continues to be a symbol of assertive nationalism. Subhas Chandra Bose asked for the people's blessings and good wishes in his radio broadcast for India's liberation, showing that he and Gandhi, despite their differences in approach, both respected each other and wanted a secular, free India free from British control (Dutta 2020).

Journey of Forming Azad Hind Fauz

Rash Behari Bose, an Indian revolutionary who had escaped from India

and had been living in Japan for many years, set up the Indian Independence league (ILL) with the support of Indians living in the countries of southeast Asia. When Japan defeated the British armies and occupied almost all the countries of south-East Asia, the league formed the Indian National Army from among the Indian prisoners of war with the aim of liberating India from the British rule. General Mohan Singh, who had been an officer in the British Indian army, played an important role in organizing this army. In the meantime, Subhas Chandra was held under house arrest by the British because of how he had been opposing their rule. However, he left the country secretly in 1941. The authorities did not come to know for many days that he was not in his Barrack (the house in which he was being guarded). He traveled by foot, car and train and resurfaced in Kabul (now in Afghanistan), only to disappear once again.

In November 1941, his broadcast from German radio sent shock waves among the British and electrified the Indian masses who realized that their leader was working on a master plan to free their motherland. It also gave fresh confidence to the revolutionaries in India who were challenging the British in many ways. He visited Japan in 1943 where the royal administration said yes to his appeal for help. It was here that he rebuilds the Indian National Army (Azad Hind Fauj) to make it an effective instrument for the freedom of India. The Azad Hind Fauj comprised of about 45,000 soldiers, among who were Indian prisoners of war as well as Indians who were settled in various countries of south-east Asia.

It was also in October 1943 that he formed a provisional government, one that had been recognised by the Axis Powers during the Second World War. In December 1943, INA freed the Andaman and Nicobar Islands from the British and were renamed as Swaraj and Shaheed islands. Subhas Chandra Bose formed the Subhas Brigade, Azad Brigade and Gandhi Brigade in order to free India from the Eastern front. INA marched through Burma and occupied Coxtown on the Indian Border, and declared 'Delhi Chalo' (Let's march to Delhi) as the war cry. Shah Nawaz Khan reported that the soldiers were so ecstatic to be on Indian soil, they kissed the ground in passionate reverence. Azad Hind Fauj's attempt to liberate India was unsuccessful. Subhas Chandra Bose then attempted to flee and renew his struggle, but his plane crashed in Taiwan and he suffered third-degree burns, going into a coma from which he never recovered (Nag 2016).

Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose's death in a plane crash in Taiwan has been widely accepted, although his body was never recovered. Several official reports, such as the Figgess Report (1946), Shah Nawaz Committee (1956) and Khosla Commission (1970), have concluded that Bose died in the plane crash. However, the findings of the Justice Mukherjee Commission in 2006 were rejected by the government of India, claiming that Bose did not die in a plane crash and the ashes at Renkoji Temple were not his. (Gordon 2015,166)

His Contribution and Legacies

Subhas Chandra Bose was one of India's greatest freedom fighter. As far as the history of India's independence struggle against the British is concerned Subhas Chandra Bose will always remain a key figure. Bose decided to chart his own path towards India's independence in spite of knowing how hard it was going to be. He revived the Indian National Army, popularly known as 'Azad Hind Fauj' in 1943 which was initially formed in 1942 by Rash Behari Bose. The assault by the INA, no matter how short-lived it was, was an important factor that eventually contributed to the British decision to stop their operations and shift back to their own land. This, in the end, did pave the way for India's independence. Subhas Chandra Bose said to the Army, "We have a grim fight ahead us for the enemy is powerful, unscrupulous and ruthless. In this final march to freedom, you will have to face hunger, privation, forced marches and death. Only when you pass this test will freedom be yours." INA carried out many fights and struggles to bring about freedom in the Indian domain. All these were only possible because of the highly intelligence of Subhas Chandra Bose (Banerjee 2018, p. 139) He espoused concrete economic planning and showed the way himself. It also needs to be remembered that it was he who encouraged Indian women to play an important role in the activities for the freedom of India. A women's regiment of Azad Hind Fauj was formed, which was under the command of Captain Lakshmi Swaminathan. It was called the Rani Jhansi regiment. The Azad Hind Fauj became the symbol of unity and heroism to the people of India. Bose motivated the troops with his fiery speeches. His famous quote is "Give me blood, and I shall give you freedom!" (Gordon, 1990, p. 263).

Subhas was a great adventurer as well. His military exploits, unmatched patriotism and exemplary bravery have made him a role model for the young men and women of India. He still lives within our hearts and minds and works as a leading light and source of inspiration (Bose S. C, 1949).

He played a crucial role in freeing the country from the clutches of 200 years of British rule in his own inimitable way, much like the other leading lights of the day such as Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru. He was sent to prison eleven times during 1920-1941. Till the last day of his life as an active freedom fighter, he kept the spirit of fighting the British – even at the time of his death he was planning to migrate to Russia and find a new way to combat the British – and it is this persistence and patriotic fervour that needs to be respected more than anything else. To commemorate his contribution to India's struggle for independence, every year on 23rd January, Subhas Chandra Bose's birthday is celebrated across various parts of the country. Sengupta has reported the key highlight of Vivekanada's influence "He writes to his mother, Prabhabati Bose when he himself was an adolescent and his reading of Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo opened up new windows of longing to contribute to the cause of his country" (Sengupta 2012 p. 198-199). Bakshi has rightly noted the words of Hideki Tojo that "If India abandons her traditions and history and forgets her

mission under the spell of Britain's power and propaganda and continues to follow her, then I shall feel sorry for the Indian people for wasting this God sent opportunity." (Bakshi 2016, p.234). Thus in short the entire life of Netaji is the learning for the contemporary generation.

Conclusion

Subhas Chandra Bose is remembered as a hero of the Indian freedom struggle, and his legacy is especially immortalized in the context of the Azad Hind Fauz. Bose was a major leader of this movement, which sought to gain independence from British rule through armed struggle. He was known for his uncompromising stance against the British and his unshakeable belief that freedom could only be achieved through a militant struggle. Bose was the first to form a militant organization to fight British rule in India, and the Azad Hind Fauz was the result of this endeavor. It was an army of Indian soldiers, which was trained, equipped and led by Bose himself. The Fauz was composed of Indians from all walks of life, and it inspired a sense of national pride and unity among them. The Fauz managed to capture several Indian territories from the British, and it also played a major role in the Indian National Army's (INA) campaign in Burma. The Azad Hind Fauz was ultimately disbanded in 1945 due to lack of resources, but Bose's legacy remained. He is remembered as a leader who was willing to fight for India's freedom with all his might, and as a symbol of Indian nationalism and patriotism. His words and actions were seen as a source of inspiration for generations of Indians to come, and the Azad Hind Fauz is still remembered and respected today. Bose's legacy is especially remembered in the context of the INA, which was formed in the wake of the Fauz's disbandment.

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