

THE INA'S SECRET WAR AND THE SIKHS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA DURING WORLD WAR II

Azharudin Mohamed Dali¹

Abstract

This article examines an important facet of the secret activities of the Indian National Army (INA) during the Second World War in Southeast Asia. Previous studies have largely portrayed the INA as a solid nationalist movement indistinguishable in terms of ethnicity or religion and united by a common ideology. This perception was especially promoted when Subhas Chandra Bose became leader of the movement. However, a closer examination of the development of the INA's secret service presents a distinctly different outlook to the activities and composition of the movement. There were two basic rules in the INA's secret war against the British in India: first, it followed religious lines in the recruitment of its cadres; and second, race and regional lines were emphasised by the movement's leaders. This article focuses on one of the most important groups of the INA, namely the Sikhs, whose involvement in the movement's activities offers a different image to the traditional outlook of the INA.

Introduction

The story of the Indian National Army (INA) as an army operative section or combatant unit has been dealt with extensively by several scholars such as Lebra, Ghosh, Hayashida and others.¹ There is however, a small gap in the INA historiography which has been sidelined and is almost unknown, namely the INA secret agents (INA secret army). Only a few studies have looked at the secret activities of the INA and its position as a secret war machine and our understanding of this subject is far from complete, particularly where the various groups involved in its activities are concerned. Many scholars have argued that the INA was established as an offensive army or combatant unit and collaborated with the Japanese Army. However, the INA failed in its operations against the Allies during WWII in the Burma theatre of war. At the same time, there were also studies that regarded the INA as more than a normal offensive army because it carried out various other activities such as propaganda, training cadets, taking care of Indian victims of Japanese atrocities in East Asia and in intelligence matters.²

An understanding of the INA's secret service could change well our perception of the INA as a whole. Generally, previous studies presented the INA as a consolidated organisation; a solid bloc with no religious or race differences held tightly together by a common political ideology. This perception was especially promoted when Subhas Chandra Bose became leader of the movement. Perhaps, because Bose was seen as a political leader who

¹ Dr Azharudin Mohamed Dali is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of History, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur. This article was originally presented as a paper at a workshop called 'Sikhs Multicultural Southeast Asia: Negotiating an Identity', in Singapore, 12-13 May 2008.

believed in India for the Indians, there was no differentiation on grounds of religion, class or race. Bose treated everybody as Indians and the INA as an organisation adopted this idea. As one historian commented; 'One of the fascinating aspects of Bose's appeal and leadership was that, despite his personal religiosity...he did not use religious symbols for political purposes...'³ However, the history of the development of the INA's secret service presents quite a different story as there were two basic rules in the INA's secret war against the British in India; it followed religious lines first, and race and regional lines second.

This article attempts to establish the fact that the INA secret service developed as a loose organisation whereby the members came from different regional, racial and religious backgrounds. More specifically, this article will focus on one of the most important groups of the INA namely the Sikhs. As a matter of fact, besides Sikhs⁴ and Bengalis, there were also Muslims, Tamils and Gurkhas recruited as INA secret agents.

The INA realised that India consisted of various ethnicities, castes and religions. Each region had its own identity, and different approaches were necessary to obtain the support of local the population. As the INA secret operations focused its activities in specific areas, it was considered most reliable to have the native population of each particular area conducting these activities. This was the case in INA's secret operations in Bengal, where Bengalis were specifically chosen for operations, and in the Punjab, where Sikhs played the most important roles. The religious factor was also taken into consideration. In order to attract Muslim support in the area known as 'the Muslim belt', along the North East Frontier Provinces, Muslim secret agents were sent to India to carry out the necessary secret missions.

The Beginning: From The Ghadar To The INA

Since WWI, expatriate Sikhs were actively involved in the Indian Independence movement as one of the most dedicated and determined groups in the affairs. The Sikhs also had a long tradition of anti-British agitation. It is no surprise therefore that during WWII they became the most prominent group actively engaged in the INA and Indian fifth column activities.

The Sikhs were well-known as having an ambitious and aggressive outlook and were unpredictable compared to the Tamils of South India. They were also involved in the Indian Army, police and also worked as watchmen. "*A number of North Indians, particularly Sikh, found their niches in the rank of military, police and watchmen*".⁵ During the second decade of the 20th century, the Sikhs were well-established in the Southeast Asia region. When the First World War broke out, the Indian population in Thailand had risen to nearly 2000 and most of these were Sikhs.⁶ A few dozens had also settled in both Sumatra and the Philippines. In Sumatra, they were concentrated in Deli and Medan while in the Philippines, Manila was where most of them lived and several dozen had also settled on the island of Palawan, Iloilo and Cebu.⁷ As the Sikhs in Southeast Asia were heavily involved in the Ghadar activities, the main concentrations of the Sikhs in the region such as Deli, Medan, Bangkok, Chiangmai and Manila, the main branches of the Ghadar Party, sprang to life. These branches became the life-centre to the Ghadar activities in Southeast Asia and the region was used as a base in the Ghadarwallah effort to liberate India from British rule. However, the Ghadar movement failed in its attempts to overthrow the

British rule, especially when all the ghadarwallah were arrested and jailed in Multan and Andaman detention centres including Baba Amar Singh who later became one of the most important players in the INA movement.

The Sikhs And The INA: Bangkok Party

According to one source, 50% of the INA's manpower were made up of Sikhs.⁸ It seems that after the failure of many Sikh anti-British activities within India, and abroad, including the Ghadar operations during the 1914-1916, several hundreds Sikh revolutionaries continued their anti-British struggle in East Asia especially in Shanghai and Bangkok. Ex-Ghadarite workers such as Baba Amar⁹ and Hari Singh Rathmore were included in this category.

It was well known that the Sikhs established themselves as one of the most important military figures in the history of the British India Army. Since their first recruitment in the second quarter of the 19th century, the Sikhs dominated and become familiar features in the British Indian Army. In 1896, Captain R. W Falcon wrote a strong recommendation in recognition of the ability of Sikhs as India's finest fighting force.

Interestingly, the Sikhs' anti-British activities, including those in the INA movement during WW II, adopted the same qualities of bravery and determination. A British intelligence report in early 1940 described Sikhs who were involved in anti-British activities as "... *desperate revolutionaries...involved in terrorist campaigns and covert sedition against British rule in India*".¹⁰ Despite the fact that several Sikh parties in India whole-heartedly supported the British, several others were against the British.¹¹ During the WWI, Sikhs were involved in the Ghadar Party, of which Sikhs were in the majority, and became a major feature in the war against the British. They collaborated with the Germans in an attempt to organise a revolution within India. After the war, a new movement known as the Akali Movement¹² was started by some Sikh revolutionaries. However, although the Sikh community was much smaller than other communities, their involvement in the cause of India's independence was far greater.

Since the early stages of WWII, the Sikhs in East Asia had been actively involved in the Indo-Japanese collaboration. One fact remains clear on this subject: before Mohan Singh came into the Indo-Japanese fifth column, the activities of Indian fifth column workers were led by a Sikh party from Thailand under the headship of Pritam Singh. Together with other Sikhs such as Baba Amar Singh and Chanda Singh¹³ they formed the nucleus of the Indian Independence League.¹⁴

The Indian Independence League of India in Bangkok, under the leadership of Giani Pritam Singh, Bhagwan Singh and Baba Amar Singh established a cordial relationship with the Japanese Consulate in Bangkok. This association was also responsible for establishing Indian Independence League branches in various parts of Thailand including Pattani in the south.¹⁵ The Indian Independence League branch in Pattani had about 20 active members including Pai Shandar Singh and Chanda Singh, who also acted as Japanese agents and became the first Indo-Japanese fifth column.¹⁶ Prior to World War Two, the Sikhs in Thailand disseminated anti-British propaganda more freely and with less fear than was possible anywhere else. Among those who were involved in the anti-British and pro-Japanese propaganda in Thailand were:¹⁷

Deb Nath Das	Alam Singh	Gurdial Singh Ghatia
Chandi	Changoor Singh	Janardhan Sharma
Kapasi Badraddin Ahmad Ally	Pratap Singh	Dr. John
Swami Satyanand Puri	Baba Amar Singh	Kartas Singh @ Gurudas
Umar Shakar	Dr. Abraham	Magh Singh
Ikbal Singh Narula	Dr. Abdul Wahab Khan	Mohd Salley
Ishar Singh	Amar Singh s/o Ishar Singh	Dr. P. R. Pillai
Makidalal Ardeshir Kuvarji	Anil Das	Granti Pritam Singh
Pahari S. S	Chanda Singh	Dr. A. M. Salley
Salehbai Asada @ Abdul Rashid	Ganesa Singh	Harnam Singh @ Hind Sabak (moved to Thailand from Shanghai)

The Japanese Consulate in Thailand became the centre of propaganda as well as espionage activities. Colonel Tamura Hiroshi, a military attaché and other officials such as Colonel Oka and Major Eno were behind the Indo-Japanese fifth column activities in Thailand. The Japanese Consulate carried out extensive secret anti-British activities from Bangkok, addressing Indian troops and civilians in Malaya and Burma. To strengthen the collaboration, Major Fujiwara Iwaichi and Pritam Singh signed a memorandum on 1st December 1940. This memorandum provided guidelines for Indians in their collaboration with Japanese anti-British activities. In the words of Fujiwara, "the primary task of the F. Kikan was to assist the Indian Independence League (IIL) movement."¹⁸

Bangkok became a centre for Indo-Japanese espionage activities. From here the secret agents were sent to Malaya to start fifth column work, particularly at the Thai-Malaya border. Giani Pritam Singh worked tirelessly in Bangkok to recruit and train Indian volunteers for the fifth column activities. By 1939, forty volunteers were ready for dispatch to Malaya for propaganda and espionage work. Prior to the outbreak of war, Giania Pritam Singh, accompanied by Sudarshan Adha, Anrudh Shukal, Kartar Singh, Jhanda Singh and Chand Singh opened an Indian Independence League branch in Haadyai on the Thai-Malaya border.¹⁹ This branch became the lifeline for Indian secret agents targeting their activities at Indian troops in Malaya.

Several months before the war, three Sikh escapees from jail in Hong Kong, Kartar Singh Quami, Harnam Singh Dhillon and Hari Singh were sent to Bangkok by the 21st Japanese Army stationed in Canton. The Sikhs had been confined in jail in Hong Kong on a charge of involvement in anti-British activities and instigating insubordination among Indian troops, but had managed to escape and make their way to Canton.²⁰ They wanted to go to India under cover to establish contact with their comrades and carry on their fight against the British. They wished to return to India to join the struggle for independence.²¹ Japanese intelligence helped them to reach Bangkok secretly and this marks one of the most important moments in the history of Indo-Japanese collaboration. More importantly, even before the involvement of Baba Amar Singh and the Sikh party in Bangkok in the Indo-Japanese collaboration scheme, there was another interesting occurrence involving Sikhs within the Japanese circle and relating to Usman Khan, alias Hari Singh Rathore,

alias Roda Singh who was engaged with the Japanese long before the Japanese directly involved themselves with the Sikh community in Bangkok.

The Indo-Japanese collaboration scheme entered its second phase when the Japanese through Major Fujiwara and a Sikh Captain named Mohan Singh of the 1/14 Punjab Regiment, started an intensive propaganda campaign and fifth column works among Indian POWs in Malaya.²² During Mohan Singh's tenure as INA commanding Officer, the Sikhs understandably had a special attachment to and were privileged in the organisation. Besides this, the earlier association of Rash Behari Bose with the Ghadar movement had also influenced the involvement of the Sikhs in the INA and IIL movement. "He [Rash Behari Bose] was held in special esteem by the Sikhs ... [and] he showed a marked preference for Sikhs. He established contact with Sikh organisations in Thailand and Malaya and with *granti* attached to Sikh regiment."²³ Another source states:

One former intelligence officer in the INA, Lieutenant Jacob Abraham, estimates that in the beginning [of the war], it was mostly Sikhs and Hindus who enlisted. Ishar Singh Narula, Finance Minister in the later Free India Government estimated that at least half of the early recruits to the INA were Sikhs.²⁴

This development is understandable as most of the leaders in the INA were Sikhs. Besides Mohan Singh, among the Sikh officers were Colonel Naranjan Singh Gill, Major Mahabir Singh Dhillon, Major Nripendra Singh Bhagat, Captain Gurbakh Singh Dhillon and Captain Thakar Singh. A report also states that out of 3,000 INA members in Malaya in the early part of 1942, 2,000 were Sikhs.²⁵

Hari Singh Rathmore @ Usman Khan

Hari Singh Rathmore was an ex-Ghadarite worker who played a prominent role in an Indo-German conspiracy to smuggle arms and ammunitions into India in 1915-1916, but after the war, he had taken refuge in Java²⁶ under the alias Usman Khan, to escape from the British. He converted to Islam and married a Javanese girl, and worked for a number of years with Emil Helffrich, a German entrepreneur. Emil and Theodore Hellfrich or the Hellfrich brothers had been actively involved in Indo-German affairs in Batavia since the First World War.²⁷ On the eve of WWII, he tried to establish contacts with Indian revolutionaries in East Asia. Japan knew of his involvement with anti-British activities and thanks to an initiative by the Japanese Navy, Singh was brought secretly to Shanghai in 1937. There he became involved in secret activities and worked among the Indians under Commander Hidaka of the Chinese Intelligence Section of the Japanese Navy.²⁸ One report states:

[Usman Khan of Shanghai] acts as a receiving centre for Indian subversive literature. Usman Khan is on his own admission, an important agent of the Japanese secret service and is also anxious to devise ways of smuggling Japanese arms to India for revolutionary purposes.²⁹

Singh went to Malaya, the Andamans and Burma in 1942 to start IIL branches and actively engaged in secret war activities, particularly in terms of training and propagating pro-Japanese sentiment. He became a director of an INA spy school at Thingangyun.³⁰

The colourful life of Hari Singh @ Usman Khan was disclosed by Lebra. According to Lebra, Usman Khan did not get involved in any anti-British activities in Java but participated in the Mexican Revolution. She says,

... [He] had become involved in the Mexican revolution, and escaping from Mexican officials, had made his way to Shanghai where he became leader of the independence movement there. There he came into contact with Japanese naval officers who were impressed with his talents...Osman seemed to his Japanese colleagues a giant, and stories of his prowess in felling trees with his bare hands and breaking rocks with his fist became legendry.³¹

Interestingly, this story could be linked to another story involving another leader, M. N. Roy or Narendranath Bhattacharya, a communist leader during the 1940s. During the First World War, he participated in secret missions to collect a consignment of arms intended for India. Even though there is insufficient evidence to show that they actually worked together, perhaps both Roy and Usman were involved in this mission. The mission failed, and Roy had travelled to California and from then to Mexico. In 1919, Roy was responsible for founding the Communist Party in Mexico before he left for the Soviet Union.³² It is obvious that both were involved in the Indo-German collaboration during the First World War, and if Lebra is correct they were together in Mexico before Roy left for Moscow and Usman for Java or Shanghai.³³

It is also interesting to note that besides North America and Southeast Asia, the Ghadar Party also used South America as a base for their activities and this emerged after the San Francisco Conspiracy Trial. The San Francisco Conspiracy Case, April 1917, was a watershed in the Indian revolutionary movement in the United States. It was a mortal blow to the Ghadar Party. After this, the Ghadar Party seemed to carry on its activities from South America, especially from Panama and Mexico City. Ujda Singh was head of the Ghadar department in Mexico City. At the end of May 1917, he sent an agent to the Dutch East Indies to learn Indian plans and to review the old Ghadar Party activities including the Andaman scheme. Besides Ujda Singh, there were several Indians operating in Mexico City. Based on this, it is clear that there was some connection between Mexico City and the Dutch East Indies and perhaps one of the agents sent to this region was Usman Khan before he settled and married a local girl.

Hari Singh became one of the important figures in the pro-Japanese campaign in Andaman. He was specifically brought to Andaman to expand the INA-Japanese collaboration scheme to the Indian community. An announcement in the Andaman Shimbun of the period reads:

A public meeting of the Independence League of India was held in the Association Hall on Sunday the 7th June at 4 p.m. People started to come from 3 p.m. and by 4 p.m., the fixed time for the meeting, the hall was overcrowded... the meeting was called to hear from Mr. Osman, the representative of the Independence League of India, Shanghai, the decision arrived at the conference held in Tokyo...A good number of people present agreed to form a National Army and a sum of more than Rs. 4,000 was contributed on the spot.³⁴

The Indo-Japanese collaboration scheme entered its second phase when the Japanese, through Major Fujiwara and a Sikh Captain named Mohan Singh of the 1/14 Punjab regiment, started an intensive propaganda campaign and fifth column works among Indian POWs in Malaya.³⁵ During Mohan Singh's tenure as the INA Commanding Officer, the Sikhs understandably had a special attachment to in the organization and felt privileged. Besides this, the earlier association of Rash Behari Bose with the Ghadar movement also influenced the involvement of the Sikhs in the INA and IIL movement.

This development is understandable as most of the leaders in the INA were Sikhs. Besides Mohan Singh, among the other Sikh officers were Colonel Naranjan Singh Gill, Major Mahabir Singh Dhillon, Major Nripendra Singh Bhagat, Captain Gurbaksh Singh Dhillon and Captain Thakar Singh. A report states that of 3,000 INA members in Malaya in the early part of 1942, 2,000 were Sikhs.³⁶ Another important evidence to show that the Sikhs were involved in the secret war against the British was the Ram Sarup Party.

Ram Sarup's Party

The substantial involvement of the Sikhs in secret missions could be seen as early as 1942 in Ram Sarup's party sent to Burma. Ram Sarup's party was formed in early 1942 when Mohan Singh realised that the situation in Burma involved Indian communities living there. He knew that in a short time Burma could fall into Japanese hands. He also thought that there would be substantial numbers of Indian POWs in Burma, and suggested to Fujiwara that these Indians should be handed over to the INA. Fujiwara agreed that a party of Indian agents should be sent to Burma to look after the Indian POWs, while at the same time disseminating anti-British propaganda among the Indian troops.

Ram Sarup was chosen to be the leader of the party. This party formed the core for Indian fifth column work against British Indian forces on the Indo-Burma frontier. Fifty-six men were selected for the mission and they moved to Bangkok in February and then to Rangoon. Ram Sarup started to send out contact parties almost immediately and the earliest report of the group's activities was on 16 March 1942.³⁷

Ram Sarup's party seemed to have been successful in their fifth column work, as evidence shows that men from this party returned to Rangoon after succeeding in their contact work among Indian troops on the Indo-Burma frontier. According to a report received by British Intelligence the success of this original contact party began during the first Burma campaign at Prome.³⁸

The Sikhs were drawn from pre-war Indianised units – the 3rd Cavalry, 5/2 Punjab Regiment, 1/14 Punjab Regiment and 4/19 Hyderabad Regiment. They made up nearly 40% of Ram Sarup's party. At this stage, the INA's secret agents and propagandists were POW. As the Sikhs residents in East and Southeast Asia were already involved in a long struggle with the British, they easily became involved with the movement. Throughout the war, Ram Sarup became an important figure in the secret work on the Indo-Burma frontier, and he continued to recruit Indian agents to infiltrate India. He was also responsible for making arrangements for new agents coming from Malaya on their way to India. Below is a list of the original members of Ram Sarup's Party.

Sikhs	16
Dogras	9
Muslims (excluding Pathans)	9
Gurkhas	6
Jats	5
Kumoanis	5
Pathans	2
Ahirs	1
Total	56

Source: WO 208/819B, India to HQ Eastern Army, 9 February 1943

Ram Sarup's party seem to have been successful in their fifth column work, as evidence shows that men from this party returned to Rangoon after succeeding in their contact work among Indian troops on the Indo-Burma frontier.

Americk Singh Gill

There was also a case of a Sikh agent on a deep penetration mission to India. Americk Singh Gill was sent to India by submarine under orders to carry out a secret mission there. He was a member of the Konark group, which consisted of four Indian spies led by Dr. Pabitra Mohan Roy. Americk Singh Gill's case is one of the most intriguing and daring INA spy-stories of WWII. He was also known as Aladin, who started his adventurous mission into India from Penang. Americk Singh Gill was born 11 January 1919 in Malaya.

From the beginning of the war, Americk had been openly pro-Japanese and had held the opinion that only the Japanese could help lead India to freedom. "...India will never be free without the help of Japan...we'll train every single Indian outside India...and organize an Indian National Army so that at the right moment with the help of Japan we can come to the assistance of our brave fighters inside India and achieve our independence".³⁹

Americk Singh Gill was a member of the four-strong Kornak spy party led by Dr. Pabitra Mohan Roy with Tuhin Mukherjee and Mohinder Singh. They embarked for India from the Penang submarine base in December 1944. According to Pabitra Mohan Roy, they left before dawn because "some Indians boarding a Japanese submarine might arouse suspicious speculations, especially among possible enemy agents".⁴⁰ The submarine travelled along the Sumatran coast before entering the Indian Ocean and heading towards Port Blair, Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Although these islands were under the control of the Provisional Government of India, the British secret service was operating effectively there and several ships bringing supplies, troops and weapons for the INA had been sunk within the sight of Port Blair. The British agents were well established amongst the harbor workers and had a powerful transmitting set by which to furnish information to Allied Headquarters in Trincomalee, Madras and Calcutta.⁴¹

The party landed safely and started work. Tuhin Mukherjee set out for Bhubaneswar while Mohinder, Dr. Pabitra and Americk Singh made their way to Calcutta.⁴² The main objective of the group was to organise a spy ring to collect military intelligence in India and a plan was to send a wireless transmission in two months to Burma.⁴³ For their operations, they took on aliases. Americk Singh was known as Hans Raj or Amar Nath, while Pabitra Mohan Roy called himself Harimohan Choudhuri and pretended to be a landowner from a small village in Mymensingh in Bengal.⁴⁴ The party worked relentlessly until they were arrested in Calcutta in April 1945 and tried under the Enemy Agents Ordinance. They were sentenced to death in Alipore jail⁴⁵ on 30 June 1945, but their sentences were commuted to life on 4 November 1945. In the same month, Americk escaped in transit from Alipore jail to Dhaka jail.

At the station [Seldah station]...the soldier guarding me was holding my hands, which were handcuffed. For a moment his grip loosened and, as if providence had given me the signals and strength, I rushed into the crowd. I ran with my hands tucked into my shirt to hide my handcuffs...[The British had offered] a reward of Rs10,000 for any information, which would lead to my arrest...⁴⁶

Another secret agent who was involved in the INA's spy intrigue was Ram Saroop Singh. After Japan successfully occupied Malaya, Ram Saroop Singh, a Sikh resident in Johore State of Southern Malaya went to Kuala Lumpur to do voluntary work within the Sikh community. Soon afterwards, he joined the spy school at Penang, and was sent to Burma and then to India by submarine in September 1944 together with several other agents.⁴⁷

At the same time, there was also a case of a Sikh agent on a deep penetration mission to India. Tara Singh arrived in India on the 14th November 1943, but was captured by the British authorities. According to his testimony, he was sent to India by Subhas Chandra Bose with the main task of distributing the news that the Japanese would attack India on 8 December 1943. Tara Singh had said that he was with Bose when they met the Japanese in Rangoon to discuss the decision to march to India at the end of September. Tara Singh was also needed to bring about the complete cooperation of all revolutionary groups in India.⁴⁸ It seems that Tara Singh was responsible for conveying the message to Indian collaborators inside India about the intentions of the INA and the Japanese regarding India.

Conclusion

This article has established that various Sikh personalities participated in the INA's secret service. They infiltrated Indian territories in order to conduct a secret war against British rule in India. The Sikhs were regarded as the most active, particularly in the first half of the INA's history. The Sikhs' determination and sacrifice in the movement may have caused serious harm to Indian security for at least two reasons: First, most of the Sikhs were POWs and familiar with military tactics and weapons which could be used against the British Indian Army during the engagement; and second, they were dedicated and determined anti-British workers, and this must have benefited the INA-Japanese secret operations.

The INA was not only about Subhas Chandra Bose as this article had revealed, but also involved other parts of the organisation such as the propaganda sections and secret

activities. This article had revealed several unknown or long-forgotten personalities in the INA history such as Americk Singh Gill and Hari Singh Rathmore @ Usman Khan. It is also interesting to note that several Indians especially the Sikhs had already collaborated in secret activities against the British and were working with the Japanese long before the Subhas Chandra Bose came to the Far East. The most famous was the 'Sikh Party' from Bangkok, led by Gian Pritam Singh and Baba Amar Singh. They were actively involved in disseminating anti-British propoganda, particularly to Indian troops stationed in Malaya.

The INA crisis in December 1942 created a stalemate among the supporters of the Indian Independence Movement, and was a particular blow to the Sikhs, who considered themselves the most vital element in the Indo-Japanese collaboration. The removal of Mohan Singh shattered their hopes. This idea was supported by Sikh historian, Khushwant Singh who claims that after the INA's internal crisis at the end of 1942, and the end of Mohan Singh's tenure, Sikh enthusiasm for the INA decreased.⁴⁹ However, looking deeper into this subject, evidence shows that this claim is unfounded, as the Sikhs continued to play a significant role in the INA movement, particularly in offensive operations until 1945.

To sum up, this article has shown that the secret war for India was very much a part of the INA movement. Its plots were focused mainly on using Indian secret agents for espionage and to spread anti-British propoganda within India. These selected agents would establish contact with local Indians and then set up secret networks against the British in India. The agents were selected from various Indian ethnic groups as the most practical solution available at the time, as the Japanese did not have any of their own agents inside India to link India with the Japanese-occupied territories. Without much difficulty, the INA and IIL were able to recruit agents from various groups of people especially the Sikhs. Until the end of the war, they continued to play a significant role in the INA's secret war for India.

References

Bhargava, Motilal 1986, *INA Tokyo Cadets*, Reliance Pub. House, New Delhi.

Bhargava, Motilal and Gill, Americk Singh 1988, *Indian National Army Secret Service*, Reliance Pub. House, New Delhi.

Bose, AC 1971, *Indian Revolutionaries Abroad, 1905-1922*, Bhatia Bhavan, Patna.

Das, SA and Subbaiah, KB 1946, *Chalo Delhi! An Historical Account of the Indian Independence Movement in East Asia*, New Delhi.

Gawankar, Rohini 2003, *The Women's Regiment and Capt. Lakshmi of INA*, Devika Publications, New Delhi.

Ghosh, KK 1969, *The Indian National Army: Second Front of the Indian Independence Movement*, Meenakshi Prakashan, Meerut.

- Goodman, Grant K, 'Forgotten Soldiers: Indian Students in Japan in World War II', *Japan Forum*, Vol. 7, No 2, Autumn 1995.
- Hayashida, Tatsuo, 1970, *Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose: The Great Struggle and Martyrdom*, (Tra. Biswanath Chatterjee), Allied Publishers, Bombay.
- Hauner, Milan 1981, *India in Axis Strategy: Germany, Japan and Indian Nationalist in the Second World War*, Klette-Cotta, Stuttgart.
- Lebra, Joyce C 1971, *Jungle Alliance*, Donald Moore for Asia Pacific Press, Singapore.
- _____ 1977, *Japanese-trained Armies in Southeast Asia: Independence and Volunteer Forces in World War II*, Heinemann Educational Books, Hong Kong.
- Leifer, Walter 1971, *India and the Germans. 500 Years of Indo-German Contacts*; Shankuntala Publishing House, Bombay.
- Mahajani, Usha 1960, *The Role of Indian Minorities in Burma and Malaya*, Vora, KK, Bombay.
- Mathur, LP 1985, *Kala Pani: History of Andaman and Nicobar Islands with a study of India's Freedom Struggle*, Eastern Book Corp., New Delhi.
- Sandhu, KS 1993, "The Coming of the Indians to Malaysia", in Sandhu, KS and Mani, A (eds.), *Indian Communities in Southeast Asia*, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore.
- Singh, Gurmukh 2003, *The Rise of Sikhs Abroad*, Rupa and Co., New Delhi.
- Singh, Khuswant 2004, *A History of the Sikhs*, Vol. II, Oxford University Press, Delhi (2nd Edition).
- Singh, Mehervar, 'Sikhism in Singapore', *The Sikh Review*, Vol. XIV, No 158, October 1966,
- Singh, Patwan 1999, *The Sikhs*, John Murray, London.
- Sundaram, Chandar, 'Soldier Disaffection and the Creation of the Indian National Army', *Indo-British Review, A Journal of History*, Vol. XVIII, No 1, 1990.

Notes

- ¹ See Joyce C. Lebra., *Jungle Alliance*, Singapore: Donald Moore for Asia Pacific Press, 1971; S. A. Das and K. B. Subbaiah, *Chalo Delhi! An Historical Account of the Indian Independence Movement in East Asia* (1946); K. K. Ghosh, *The Indian National Army: Second Front of the Indian Independence Movement*, Meerut: Meenakshi Prakashan, 1969; Tatsuo Hayashida, *Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose: The Great Struggle and Martyrdom*, (Tra. Biswanath Chatterjee), Bombay: Allied Publishers, 1970; and Milan Hauner, *India in Axis Strategy: Germany, Japan and Indian Nationalist in the Second World War*, Stuttgart: Klette-Cotta, 1981.

- ² See for example works on women's involvement in the war, in Rohini Gawankar, *The Women's Regiment and Capt. Lakshmi of INA*, New Delhi: Devika Publications, 2003; Motilal Bhargava, *INA Tokyo Cadets*, New Delhi: Reliance Pub. House, 1986, and Grant K. Goodman, 'Forgotten Soldiers: Indian Students in Japan in World War II', *Japan Forum*, Vol. 7, No 2, Autumn 1995.
- ³ See Joyce C. Lebra, *Japanese-trained Armies in Southeast Asia: Independence and Volunteer Forces in World War II*, Hong Kong: Heinemann Educational Books, 1977, p. 173.
- ⁴ The word Sikhism is derived from 'Shishya' which means disciple. Accordingly, the followers of the Guru Nanak, the first guru were called Sikhs and as the creed spread this appellation became the descriptive title of the whole people. See WO 208/771, *Handbooks for the Indian Army: Sikhs*, 1940, p. 6.
- ⁵ K. S. Sandhu, "The Coming of the Indians to Malaysia", in K. S. Sandhu and A. Mani (eds.), *Indian Communities in Southeast Asia*, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1993, p. 154.
- ⁶ A. C. Bose, *Indian Revolutionaries Abroad, 1905-1922*, Patna: Bhatia Bhavan, 1971, p. 71.
- ⁷ FO 115/1908, J. B. Rentier, British Consulate-General, Manila, to Viceroy, 11 Nov. 1915.
- ⁸ See Mehervar Singh, 'Sikhism in Singapore', *The Sikh Review*, Vol. XIV, No 158, October 1966, p. 29. But according to Patwan Singh the number should be 60% or 12,000 from the total numbers 20,000. See Patwan Singh, *The Sikhs*, London: John Murray, 1999, p. 254. See also footnote 8 in Khuswant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs*, Vol. II, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2004, (2nd Edition), p. 245.
- ⁹ He was responsible in acquiring 100,000 rifles from Germany to send to India during the First World War. See Office of Strategic Service Research and Analysis Branch, R & A No 1595, 8 Sept. 1944 in Motilal Bhargava, *Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose in Southeast Asia*, p. 209.
- ¹⁰ See L/WS/44, A Note on the Sikhs and L/WS/1/303, Survey of the Sikh Situation Affecting the Army.
- ¹¹ See Christine Effenberg, *The Political Status of the Sikhs during the Indian National Movement, 1935-1947*, Delhi: Archives Pub. Ltd, 1989, p. 110.
- ¹² The Akali Movement was also known as Gurdwara Reform Movement or Gurdwara Agitation, the Sikhs' long-drawn campaign for the liberation of their gurdwara or holy shrines began in 1920. The word Akali derives from the word Akal meaning timeless or immortal. See Mohinder Singh, *The Akali Movement*, Delhi: Macmillan, 1978.
- ¹³ Chanda Singh was a prosperous rubber planter resident at Yala, Southern Thailand. He was directly involved in the infiltration of Sikh agents into Malaya in April 1941, but they were apprehended and sentenced to ten years rigorous imprisonment by the Supreme Court of Kota Bharu, and sent to Singapore goal. They were later released by the Japanese Army. See Khuswant Singh, 'Sikhs and the Indian National Army' in *The Missionary*, Vol. 4, No 14, March 1963, p. 26.
- ¹⁴ Report by Office of Strategic Services (OSS), Indian minorities in South and East Asia, 8 Sept. 1944 in T. R. Sareen, *Indian National Army: A Documentary Study*, Vol. III, p. 206.
- ¹⁵ Usha Mahajani, *The Role of Indian Minorities in Burma and Malaya*, Bombay: K. K. Vora, 1960, pp. 141-42.

- ¹⁶ L/PJ/12/509, "Survey No 18 of 1942, 9 May 1942. See also Roger Beaumont, *The Hidden Truth: A Tribute to the Indian Independence Movement in Thailand*, Atlanta: Monerva Press, 1999, p. 142.
- ¹⁷ L/PJ/509, Survey No 18 of 1942, 9 May 1942.
- ¹⁸ Motilal Bhargava and Americk Singh Gill, *Indian National Army Secret Service*, New Delhi: Reliance Pub. House, 1988, p. 10.
- ¹⁹ WO 208/804A, General Headquarters, India to Headquarters of North-Western Army, 'A General Survey of the IIL and the INA', 30 March 1943. See also L/WS/1/1576, British Analysis on the Activities of INA, 6 Nov. 1942.
- ²⁰ Chandar S. Sundaram, 'Soldier Disaffection and the Creation of the Indian National Army', *Indo-British Review, A Journal of History*, Vol. XVIII, No 1, 1990, p. 159.
- ²¹ Usha Mahajani, *The Role of Indian Minorities in Burma and Malaya*, pp. 141-42.
- ²² See WO 208/833, 'S' Section CSDIC (I), Report No. 1007 on Capt Mohan Singh, p. 17-18. The content of this document can also be found in WO 325/51.
- ²³ Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs*, Vol. II., New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2004 (2nd Edition), p. 244.
- ²⁴ Gerard H. Corr, *The War of the Springing Tiger*, p. 119.
- ²⁵ L/WS/1/1433, WIS, No 53, 6 November 1942.
- ²⁶ At least one reference mentions that Baba Hari Singh, a passenger of Komagata Maru, was actually living in exile in Sumatra. See L. P. Mathur, *Kala Pani: History of Andaman and Nicobar Islands with a study of India's Freedom Struggle*, Delhi: Eastern Book Corp., 1985, p. 248.
- ²⁷ See Thomas G. Fraser, "Germany and Indian Revolution, 1914-1918", *Journal of Contemporary History*, No. 12, 1977, p.2 60; Don Dignan, *The Indian Revolutionary Problem and British Diplomacy, 1914-1919*, New Delhi: Allied Pub., 1983 and Horst Erdmann Verlang (ed.), *Southeast Asia and the Germans*, Augsburg: Internationale Kulturausausch, 1977.
- ²⁸ See WO 203/808, Military Intelligence on Hikari Kikan, 2 Jan. 1946.
- ²⁹ See L/PJ/12/641, Summary of statement of Hind Sabak, alias Hind Sewak, alias Barkat Ali, alias Tara Singh of Amritsar District, 11 Oct. 1941.
- ³⁰ See L/WS/1/1433, WIS, No 86, 25 June 1943. See also T. R. Sareen, *Indian National Army. A Documentary Study*, Vol. I, p. 69. According to one report, Usman Khan was at Bandung, Java in November 1945. If this report is accurate, he managed to escape from Burma during the Allied re-occupation by early 1945. See T. R. Sareen, *Indian National Army. A Documentary Study*, Vol. 5, 'CSDIC Report INA Paper, Interrogation Report of Anand Mohan Sahay', p. 397.
- ³¹ Joyce C. Lebra, Jungle Alliance. *Japan and the Indian National Army*, p. 72.
- ³² Walter Leifer, *India and the Germans. 500 Years of Indo-German Contacts*, Bombay: Shankuntala Publishing House, 1971, p. 289.
- ³³ See also Gerard H. Corr, *The War of the Springing Tiger*, p. 130.
- ³⁴ See Jayant Dasgupta, *Japanese in Andaman & Nicobar Islands: Red Sun Over Black Water*, New Delhi: Manas Publications, 2003, p. 63.
- ³⁵ WO 208/833, 'S' Section CSDIC (I), Report No 1007 on Capt Mohan Singh, p. 17-18. The content of this document can also be found in WO 325/51.
- ³⁶ L/WS/1/1433, WIS, No 53, 6 Nov. 1942.
- ³⁷ WO 208/819B, GHQ, India to HQ Eastern Army, 9 Feb. 1943.
- ³⁸ L/WS/1/1576, British assessment of the INA, 17 April 1943.

- ³⁹ See Singa. *The Lion of Malaya*, Kuala Lumpur: Printcraft, n.d., p. 11.
- ⁴⁰ Netajeer Secret Service by Dr. Pabitra Mohan Roy in Partha Sarathi Gupta (ed.), *Towards Freedom, Documents on the Movement for Independence in India 1943-1944*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997, Part III, p. 2794.
- ⁴¹ Ibid., p. 2795.
- ⁴² Motilal Bhargava and Americk Singh Gill, *Indian National Army Secret Service*, p. 112.
- ⁴³ WO 208/803, Top Secret, JIF Landing by Submarine.
- ⁴⁴ Netajeer Secret Service by Dr. Pabitra Mohan Roy in Partha Sarathi Gupta (ed.), *Towards Freedom, Documents on the Movement for Independence in India 1943-1944*, p. 2796.
- ⁴⁵ Gurmukh Singh, *The Rise of Sikhs Abroad*, Delhi: Rupa and Co., 2003, p. 209.
- ⁴⁶ Americk Singh Gill, 'Espionage and Intelligence Training in the INA', in *Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose-A Malaysian Perspective*, Kuala Lumpur: Netaji Centre, 1992, p. 87.
- ⁴⁷ See Bhargava Moti lal and Americk Singh Gill, *Indian National Army Secret Service*, p. 112.
- ⁴⁸ HW 12/294, German Legation, Kabul to Minister for Foreign Affairs, Berlin, 18 Nov. 1943.
- ⁴⁹ Khuswant Singh, *History of the Sikh, Vol. II*, p. 247.