

The Escape of Subhas Chandra Bose : Myths and Reality:

Persecuted and prosecuted by both his friends and foes, he by dint of his gifted ingenuity and intrepid resolve, forged his way out from the bog of Congress conservatism, as well as from the imperialist cage of slavery ; and flew like a freed bird to distant lands till he reached hospitable asylum near his home , from where he worked and worked ceaselessly to free his homeland from both conservatism and lethargy of his own people and from political bondage and exploitation of foreigner till fate cried halt to his successful activities¹.

These laudatory expressions about Subhas Chandra Bose² by H. Sahai illustrate the Bengal revolutionary's zeal to liberate his native land from the British Imperial control. In his struggle he had to face not only the wrath of the rulers but was also harassed by his own countrymen, including his own comrades-in-arms. But he never gave up his mission. However, a time came when he realised that he had to leave the country for the struggle of Indian independence.

The escape of Subhas Chandra Bose remained a matter of great controversy for many years. For some time, there were speculations regarding the possible routes of escape taken by Subhas Bose in leaving India. In March 1946 some details appeared in the *Hindustan Standard*, Calcutta, by a person who claimed that he directly helped Subhas to escape. Shortly after the publication of that account, Uttam Chand, who had acted as host to Bose during his stay in Kabul, wrote for *The Hindustan Times*, Delhi, giving an account of Bose's life in Kabul. However, the details of Bose's journey from Calcutta to Kabul remained a mystery for some time more. Sisir Kumar Bose, a nephew of Subhas Chandra, who accompanied Bose from his home to the railway station, published his account of the escape episode in his book, *The Great Escape* (Calcutta, 1975, rep. 1995). But a more detailed account was given by Bhagat Ram Talwar, who escorted Bose from Peshawar to Kabul. His book, *The Talwars of Pathan Land and Subhas Chandra's Great Escape* (Delhi, 1976) deals with the story of escape in a comprehensive manner, but gives only a partial account of Bose's journey from Calcutta to Peshawar and his stay in the Frontier.

In the following pages an attempt is made to retrace Bose's escape from Calcutta to Peshawar and his time in Peshawar. The story is based on the unpublished diary of Mian Akbar Shah (1899-1990), one of the most trusted comrades of Bose from the North-West Frontier Province. Akbar Shah had vast experience of the escape routes from the Frontier to Central Asia through Afghanistan. He had left the country at the beginning of 1919 for Afghanistan, like many other Indian Muslims seeking help from abroad for a *Jihad* against the British. From Afghanistan, he along with many other young radicals went to Soviet Central Asia where the Bolsheviks were understood to be favourably disposed towards all those who wanted to fight against the British. It was here that Akbar Shah became a Communist. When in 1921 the Tashkent School was closed he and several other Indians were taken to Moscow to receive further training at the University of the Toilers of the East. He remained there until 1922, when he and his fellow comrades were despatched to India via Iran to carry out revolutionary activities against the British. Unfortunately, however, he and the other revolutionaries were caught, convicted and imprisoned in the Peshawar Conspiracy Case of 1923. After release, he took an LLB at Aligarh University, started practice in Peshawar and came to the forefront of Frontier politics by joining the Khudai Khidmatgar Movement. After rendering great services in the Khudai Khidmatgar Movement, he became the General Secretary of

¹: G.C.Jain (ed.), *On To Delhi* (Delhi, 1946).pp.10-11.

²: Subhas Chandra Bose, born at Cuttack (Orissa-India) 23 January.1897; father Jankinath Bose prominent Bengali lawyer; edu, Cuttack, Presidency College, Calcutta and Scottish Church College, Calcutta; for ICS to England in 1919; joined but resigned the post; in 1921 came back and joined Indian National Congress; remained in mainstream of national politics; in 1938 became president of INC at Haripura; in 1939 re-elected president of the INC at Tripura; differences emerged with Gandhi and other Right Wingers in the Congress; resigned the presidentship; 3 May 1939 formed the Forward Bloc within INC; August 1939 suspended from Congress for three years; arrested for the 11th time on 2 July 1940; released on 5 December 1940; escaped via Peshawar to Kabul, Moscow and finally to Germany; 4 July 1943 took leadership of the Indian National Army; died in an air crash on 18 August 1945. For more details see, Leonard A. Gordon, *Brothers Against the Raj* (New York, 1990); Subhas C. Bose, *The Indian Struggle 1920-1942* (Calcutta, 1964), and Sisir K. Bose, *The Great Escape* (Calcutta, 1975 and 1995).

the Provincial Forward Bloc within the Indian National Congress and played a key role in Bose's escape from India to Afghanistan.

In the first week of September 1939 when World War II broke out, and Britain asked her dominions to join the cause. The Dominion Parliaments met and decided to endorse the declaration of war as a mark of popular consent. In the case of India, however, the British ignored the public opinion and Lord Linlithgow, the Viceroy, declared that India too was at war with Germany³. Bose decided to take advantage of the situation in order to oust the British from India. His long experience in public service, had taught him that it was almost impossible to organise an armed resistance in the country without some help from abroad⁴. He was convinced of three things: First, that Britain would lose the war and that Empire would break up; second, the British would not easily handover power to the Indian people and the latter would have to fight for their freedom; and, third, India would win her independence only if she collaborated with the powers who were fighting Britain⁵. Bose concluded that the Axis Powers — particularly Japan — would be eager to see a free India. And, therefore, they would be ready to render assistance to the Indians should they desire it⁶. To him a Britain at war would mean a vulnerable Britain; and thus more amenable to pressure⁷. He considered the war, therefore, a 'God-sent opportunity for achieving not Dominion Status or Colonial Self-Government but full and complete independence...'⁸. Bose wrote to Gandhi:

If I had the slightest hope that without action from abroad we could win freedom, I would never have left India during a crisis. If I had any hope that within our lifetime we could get another chance — another golden opportunity — for winning freedom, as during the present war, I doubt if I would have set out from home. But I was convinced of two things: firstly, that such a golden opportunity would not come within another century — and secondly, that without action from abroad, we would not be able to win freedom merely through our own efforts at home⁹.

He knew that it was only during the war that he would have an opportunity to meet the enemies of Britain and use them to gain independence. He therefore decided to leave the country to establish direct contacts with the Axis Powers. He was aware of all the risks and dangers involved in it. 'By going abroad on a perilous quest, I was risking — not only my life and my whole future career — but what was more the future of my party' and that 'having been in prison eleven times, it was much easier and much safer for me to continue there, but I felt that the cause of India's independence demanded a journey abroad, regardless of the risk that it involved'¹⁰.

In the summer of 1940, while the Germans were pressing the Allies hard on the western fronts of Norway, Holland and France, Bose started a Satyagraha movement for the demolition of the Holwell Monument, erected to honour the British dead in the Black Hole tragedy in the mid-eighteenth century. He declared 3 July 1940 as the 'Nawab Sirajuddaula Day', in honour of the last independent Muslim ruler of Bengal. The Holwell Monument was not merely an unwarranted strain on the memory of Nawab, it was an attempt to remind the Indians of the treachery of British against an indigenous ruler and thus to inculcate in them a spirit of defiance¹¹. In official circles the agitation, however, was considered as only 'one phase of the consistent endeavours of Subhas Bose and the Forward Bloc to find some plank' on

³: N N Mitra (ed), *The Indian Annual Register July-December 1939* (Calcutta nd.), p. 21.

⁴: Subhas Chandra Bose, *India Calling* (Lahore, 1946), pp. 48-49.

⁵: S C Bose, *Indian Struggle* as quoted in Gordon, *Brothers Against the Raj*, p.416.

⁶: *ibid.*

⁷: M Bose, *The Lost Hero* (New York, 1982),p.138.

⁸: S C Bose, *India Calling*, p. 59.

⁹: S C Bose, *Blood Bath* (Lahore, 1947),p. 44.

¹⁰: S C Bose, *India Calling*, p.47.

¹¹: S C Bose, *Crossroads* (Calcutta, 1981), p.344.

which civil disobedience against the Government could be started¹², and to the great astonishment of the Governor, with the support and assistance of the Muslims. On the afternoon of 2 July, the day before the proposed Satyagraha, Bose was arrested under Section 129 of the Defence of India Rules 'to forestall breach of peace' in Calcutta, where he had declared to lead the procession to get rid of the Holwell Monument. He was taken to the Presidency Jail, Calcutta¹³. It was probably a deliberate move on his part to court arrest as most of his Forward Bloc friends including Sardar Sardul Singh Caveeshar, Satya Ranjan Bakhshi and N N Chakravarty were already in jail and he wanted the seclusion of his jail to consult them. They all concurred in Bose's plan to leave India. But Bose was held in the Presidency Jail for an indefinite period. The authorities were in no mood to release Bose during the war period. It was decided that he should be prosecuted in a Special Magistrate Court, in connection with two of his 'actionable speeches'¹⁴. The Advocate General assured the Government of every chance of success against Bose. They were determined to keep Bose under detention in any way and 'if the unexpected happens and Subhas Bose is acquitted', remarked the Governor of Bengal, 'he should be detained under Rule 26 of the Defence of India Rule'¹⁵. Bose got wind of the Government intentions so he started devising ways for getting out of the jail.

Bose took nearly four months to give a practical shape to his plan. On 29 November 1940, he went on a hunger strike. He would drink only water with a little salt and not allow himself to be force-fed by the prison authorities. He knew that a fast unto death would not bring his release, but he warned the authorities that if they resorted to force he would commit suicide. He created an impression in Government circles that he was going to die as a martyr. He wrote to the Governor of Bengal

What great solace can there be than the feeling that one has lived and died for a principle? What higher satisfaction can a man possess than the knowledge that his spirit will beget kindred spirits to carry on his unfinished task? What better rewards can a soul desire than the certainty that his message will be wafted over hills and dales and over the board plains to every corner of his land across the seas to distant lands? What higher communication can life attain than peaceful self immolation at the alter of one's cause? This is the technique of the soul. The individual must die, so that the nation may live. Today I must die so that India may live and win freedom and glory¹⁶.

As a result of the hunger strike, Bose's health deteriorated. He lost 24 pounds in weight during detention¹⁷. The Superintendent of Jail informed the higher authorities about the worsening condition of Bose's health and of the seriousness of the situation¹⁸. The Government would ill-afford a country wide discontent resulting from his death. They were left with no other option but to release Bose. Therefore, on 5 December 1940, the detention order was lifted and he was unconditionally released. He was brought to his Elgin Road residence in Calcutta and kept under police surveillance around the clock. It was a cat-and-mouse policy, the moment Bose recovered, he was to be re-arrested¹⁹. On 9 December 1940, Bose sent a letter to the Chief Minister of Bengal asking about the withdrawal of the two cases against him and the withdrawal of the order under Section 26 of the Defence of India Rules. The letter was discussed in

¹²: Bengal Governor Report: 4 July 1940. p.115. R/3/1/13 India Office Record Library, London (henceforth as IOLR).

¹³: Gordon, *Brothers Against the Raj*, p.420.

¹⁴: Bengal Governor Report: 22 August 1940, R/3/1/13, IOLR, pp.150-151.

¹⁵: *ibid.* 10 September 1940, R/3/1/13, IOLR, p. 157.

¹⁶: Edmund Muller, Arun Bhattacharjee, *Subhas Chandra Bose and Indian Freedom Struggle* (Delhi, 1985).p.37.

¹⁷: Bengal Governor Report: 20 September 1940, R/3/1/13, IOLR, p. 167.

¹⁸: *ibid.* 7 December 1940, R/3/1/13, IOLR, p. 203.

¹⁹: *ibid.* 5 December 1940, R/3/1/13, IOLR, p. 200.

the Cabinet Meeting of 11 December and he was informed that the Government did not intend the withdrawal of any of the above cases.²⁰

After his release Bose remained busy receiving relatives, colleagues and friends. He took this opportunity to re-establish contacts with his old Frontier comrades. He sent a word to Mian Akbar Shah, General Secretary, Forward Bloc in the Frontier Province, to come and see him. Akbar Shah lost no time in reaching Calcutta. Bose revealed his plan to Akbar Shah : that he intended visiting the Soviet Union²¹. Akbar Shah himself offered to take him to Kabul and beyond to the Soviet Union where he had received political training²². 16 January 1941 was fixed as the date of his leaving Calcutta. Bose called his nephew Sisir Kumar Bose, introduced him to Akbar Shah and instructed him to accompany the latter to the hotel where he was staying and then take him to the railway station. Both went to the Mohammanan departmental store of Wachal Molla's on Dharamtala Street to buy some clothes for Bose, necessary for his disguise. Two sets of Pashtoon dress were selected by Akbar Shah, a bedding roll, a black cap and sandals. Two copies of the Holy Quran and a few medicines were also purchased. These things were put in a small trunk which carried a name painted on it:

Mohammad Zia ud Din, Travelling Inspector The Empire of India Life Insurance Company Ltd.
Permanent Address: Civil Lines, Jubbulpore²³.

After his return from Calcutta, Akbar Shah contacted his most trusted comrades, Mian Mohammad Shah, an activist of Forward Bloc from Pabbi, Nowshera and Bhagat Ram. He briefed them about the whole matter. It was agreed that they would receive Bose on 16 January 1941 at the Peshawar Cantonment railway station. In view of the importance of Bose's mission, it was decided that he would not be sent alone or entrusted to an ordinary agent. It was, therefore, agreed that one of themselves would accompany him. As Akbar Shah was a well-known person, he could not undertake the journey himself. Therefore, Bhagat Ram²⁴, who had experience of that kind of work, was chosen to accompany Bose to a safer destination²⁵. But as planned, Bose did not turn up on 16 January. So it was considered proper that Akbar Shah should visit the railway station for some days.

At his end in Calcutta, Bose pretentiously went into seclusion. He explained to his cook the manner of serving food from outside and removing used utensils and crockery the next day. He would not be seeing anybody or even talking on telephone with any body²⁶. Apart from Sisir Kumar, he included few near relatives in his escape plan. They were his niece Ila, two other nephews Aurobindo and Diwijen Bose, his

²⁰: *ibid.* 11 December 1940, R/3/1/13, IOLR, pp. 208-209.

²¹: Mian Akbar Shah, *Autobiography* (Unpublished), p. 7.

²²: *ibid.* For details of Mian Akbar Shah's journey and his political training in the Soviet Union see Akbar Shah, *Da Azadi Talash* (Pashto), (Peshawar, nd). tr and ed. by S W A Shah as *Azadi Ki Talash* (Urdu), (Islamabad, 1989).

²³: These details are taken from Sisir Kumar Bose, *The Great Escape* (Calcutta, 1995), pp. 23-26.

²⁴: Bhagat Ram's father Gurudasmal, a wealthy zamindar of Ghalla Dher (Mardan) became prominent by helping the police in restoring the law and order in the area. For his services, he was issued licences for keeping fire-arms. His eldest son Jamuna Das, entered politics, joined Congress and became an MLA on the Congress ticket. Hari Kishan, second of the nine sons of Gurudasmal joined the Naujawan Bharat Sabha. On 23 December 1930, at the convocation of Punjab University, Lahore, he fired on Sir Geoffery de Montmorency, the Governor of Punjab, who escaped death. However, the firing resulted in the killing of Chanan Singh, a sub inspector of the police on spot and injuring Budh Singh, a CID inspector and Miss Dermitt of the Lady Hardinge Women's College, Lahore. Hari Kishan was arrested, tried and sentenced to death. On 10 June 1931 Hari Kishan was hanged in Mianwali Jail, Punjab. The third son, Bhagat Ram started his political career by joining the Khudai Khidmatgar movement, and became prominent in escorting Bose from Peshawar to Kabul. The remaining six brothers, before partition had confined themselves to getting education. Interview Ishar Das Talwar, 24 January 1995, Delhi.

²⁵: Mian Akbar Shah, 'Netaji's Escape — An Untold Chapter', *The Oracle*, vol. VI, January 1984, pp. 18-19; Bhagat Ram, 'My Fifty Days With Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose', S K Bose ed., *Netaji and India's Freedom*, p.159.

²⁶: Sisir K Bose, *The Flaming Blood Forever Unsheathed* (Calcutta, 1986),p. 96.

elder brother Sarat Chandra Bose and his wife Bivabati. As planned, on 16 January 1941, Bose accompanied by Sisir Bose went to Berari by car. After resting for a short while in the residence of Asoke Bose, elder brother of Sisir Kumar, they went to Gomoh railway station where on 17 January Bose boarded the Delhi-Kalka Mail for onward journey to Delhi²⁷. At Delhi, Bose took the Frontier Mail for Peshawar. Unfortunately there is no record of the details of the journey from Delhi to Peshawar but apparently it went as planned without any apparent hitch. Meanwhile, in Peshawar, Akbar Shah and his comrades had been waiting for Bose's arrival. It was a long wait for them though he was late by only two days. It was on 19 January that Bose arrived. He was dressed as a North Indian Mussulman, a travelling insurance agent. Akbar Shah boarded the same train at the city station to check the arrival of Bose. They looked at each other but did not talk. Bose called for a porter at the cantonment station, sat in a Tonga and directed the tongawala to Deans Hotel. Akbar Shah followed him in another tonga. The *tongawala* was surprised as to why a good Muslim should go to the hotel of the *Kafirs* (infidels), where he would not be able to get *Pak* (pure) water for his prayers. He was told that as there was no reasonable Muslim hotel in the city, the Deans was the only choice. The *tongawala* took them to the Taj Mahal Hotel. At the hotel they were informed that there was no room available. The *tongawala* got angry and his loud protest brought some of the guests out to see what was happening. The manager, seeing an honourable Muslim in distress immediately arranged a room for him²⁸. Bose thus spent his first night in the Taj Mahal Hotel. Then next day he was shifted to Abad Khan's two-room rented flat in Bajauri Gate, Peshawar City. The property was owned by Khan Bahadur Mian Feroz Shah, one of the staunch supporters of the British imperialism in that part of South Asia. Abad Khan, a resident of Pir Pia (Nowshera), was a close friend of Akbar Shah who frequently visited Afghanistan in connection with his transport business²⁹. Interestingly, some writers including M Bose have misunderstood the position of Abad Khan and the part played by him. He considered Abad Khan a very important person and relates how Mian Mohammad Shah gave the idea of informing Dr. Khan Sahib, elder brother of Abdul Ghaffar Khan and the former Congress premier of the Frontier Province, of Bose's presence in Peshawar and that he was snubbed by Abad Khan³⁰. Let me make it clear that Akbar Shah was the main character in Bose's escape and all the remaining ones like Bhagat Ram, Mian Mohammad Shah and Abad Khan were merely carrying out his directions. They briefed Bose about *Pashtunwali* (the Pashtoon code of life), the tribal ways and their customs, rigours of climate and other essentials. He was informed of unfamiliar food, unclean water, difficult terrain and the hazards of the journey. Bose was trained to look and behave like a Pashtoon.

After consultations, it was decided that he would continue to use his newly acquired name of Zia ud Din. But while Bose did not know Pashto, he was asked to pose as a deaf and dumb person. Bhagat Ram, his contact, assumed the name of Rahmat Khan. He was dressed in a Pashtoon dress i.e. *malatia shalwar kamiz*, leather jacket, *khaki kulla*, *lungi* and a Peshawari *chappal* alongwith a Kabuli blanket.

After careful planning they decided upon the following route:

from Peshawar to Jamrud, they were to go through the Khajuri Maidan British Military Camp; from there they would pass through the Afridi and Shinwari tribal area into Afghan territory. That would take them to Gardhi on the Kabul-Peshawar road, Bhatti Kot, Jalalabad, Adda Sharif, back to Jalalabad and then to Kabul³¹. It was an unfrequented and difficult track but, at the same time, it was the shortest route and used by various revolutionaries in the past.

The departure was fixed for 22 January 1941 and while there was no time for 'dress rehearsal' they could not afford any lapses. On the appointed day, Bose and Bhagat Ram escorted by Abad Khan and an Afridi guide left Peshawar. Abad Khan carried them upto the Khajuri Maidan British Military Camp, fifteen kilometres from Peshawar. Bhagat Ram, Bose and their guide got off the car inside Shinwari territory. The guard on duty took them to be ordinary pilgrims visiting a holy shrine there. According to their instructions, the car waited for sufficient time until they had gone deep into the tribal area. After walking

²⁷: S K Bose, 'The Great Escape', S K Bose ed. *Netaji and India's Freedom* (Calcutta, 1975), pp.130-142.

²⁸: Akbar Shah, *Autobiography*, p.16.

²⁹: Interview, Mian Akbar Shah, Badrashi (Nowshera), 8 September 1984.

³⁰: M Bose, *The Lost Hero*, p.152

³¹: Bhagat Ram Talwar, *The Talwars of Pathan Land and Subhas Chandra's Great Escape* (Delhi, 1976), p. 64.

for some time, Bose felt down tired. They sat down for a brief respite. Bhagat Ram informed Bose that they were beyond British jurisdiction. Bose felt relaxed breathing the air of an independent territory, where he could not be touched by the heavy hand of the British Raj. The night was spent in Pishkan Maina, a village in the Shinwari territory. The next morning, 24 January 1941, they crossed the border into Afghanistan and reached Jalalabad the same evening. The next day (25 January) they went to Adda Sharif and from there to Lalman to meet Haji Mohammad Amin, the famous revolutionary. Bhagat Ram introduced Bose as one of his comrades but did not reveal his identity. He discussed further details of their onward journey in order to 'send the comrade to Soviet Union'. Haji Amin briefed them about their journey and advised them to avoid suspicion by not travelling by bus. He considered a journey by truck safer than any other mode. From Haji's abode they came back to Jalalabad and then started for Kabul. On 27 January 1941 they were safely in the Afghan capital. It was there that they heard in the news bulletin of the disappearance of Subhas Chandra Bose³².

It was exactly ten days after Bose had left Calcutta that the fact of his disappearance became known. *Anand Bazar Patrika* came out with this caption:

"What Has Happened to S. Subhas Ch. Bose?"

"Unexpected Exit from Home:

"Great anxiety prevails amongst the relatives and friends of S. Subhas Bose since yesterday afternoon when it was noticed that he was not in his room where he was confined since his release from jail in the first week of December last. It is generally known that from the last few days he was observing strict silence and had not been seeing anybody not even the members of his family but has been spending his time in religious practices.

Anxiety is all the more acute on account of his present state of health³³.

The disappearance of Bose created a stir and sensation in the country. Lord Linlithgow, the Viceroy, immediately wired the Governor of Bengal for confirmation and further information³⁴. The Governor confirmed the news of Bose's disappearance and his ignorance of Bose's whereabouts. To him the disappearance of Bose was no cause of worry: 'If he has left British India, he will be unable to return, if in British India, his arrest is only a question of time'³⁵. The police and the CID launched a massive hunt for him. It was rumoured that he had renounced the world and has become a *Sadhu*. For some time the police chased every suspicion-looking *Sadhu*. No *Sadhu* was safe in Benaras, Allahabad, Madras, the Himalayas and even in Pondichery. They searched for Subhas but all in vain³⁶. In order to deceive the police and the CID, the family members joined in the search for Bose and sent necessary messages enquiring if he had been seen anywhere. Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore and Rajendra Prasad wired their concern at his disappearance. Sarat Bose pretended that nothing was known and told them that 'we as much in dark as public about Subhas' whereabouts and intention and even exact time of leaving'³⁷. There were some reports that he had escaped to Japan on a boat leaving for Hong Kong; some were of the view that he had simply absconded, in order to avoid the charges against him, but the investigations found that they had no basis³⁸.

Meanwhile in Kabul, Bose and Bhagat Ram stayed in a *Serai*. They started roaming about the Russian Embassy to negotiate Bose's escape to Russia. They kept themselves in disguise because the Afghan Government was under the influence of the British and they were afraid that the Afghans might hand them over to the Indian Government. For the next one and a half month, they kept on moving to various

³²: *ibid.* pp. 66-82.

³³: *Anand Bazar Patrika*, Calcutta, 27 January 1941, as quoted in S K Bose, Birandra Nath Sinha (eds.), *Netaji* (Calcutta, 1979), p. 123.

³⁴: Governor General to Governor of Bengal: 28 January 1941, R/3/1/14, IOLR, p. 8.

³⁵: Secretary to Governor of Bengal to Private Secretary to Viceroy, 28 January 1941, R/3/1/14, IOLR, p. 7.

³⁶: M Bose, *The Lost Hero*, p.155.

³⁷: Muller, Bhattacharjee, *Subhas Bose and Indian Freedom Struggle*, p.39.

³⁸: Bengal Governor Report: 6 February 1941, R/3/1/14, IOLR, p. 11.

places to avoid detection³⁹. They also tried to contact the legations of Germany, Italy and Japan. As a result there was a flurry of activity and messages between these Embassies and their governments but without any positive results⁴⁰. Eventually the Italians succeeded in arranging Bose's safe exit from Afghanistan. On 18 March 1941 Bose left Kabul for the Soviet Union by car, with a passport with the forged Sicilian name of Orlando Mazotta. First they went to Samarkand, from where they travelled by train to Moscow and then flew into Germany on the 28 March, reaching Berlin on 3 April 1941⁴¹.

In Germany, Bose established contacts with the German authorities. He met Hitler and discussed in detail their future course of action. With the support of Germany, Italy and Japan he established the Indian National Army and took over as its Commander-in-Chief. His main assignment was to start operations against the Allied Powers. But eventually the course of war turned against the desires and wishes of the Indian freedom fighters as the ambitions of Japan and Germany were not realised. After the defeat of the Axis Powers, Subhas Chandra Bose decided to escape to Manchuria on 18 August 1945. But while doing so he died in an air crash. The following passage from Bhagat Ram is a befitting conclusion to the story of Bose's escape:

I thought within myself that after all this great man from Bengal suffered all the hardships with me in this trip without a murmur — the terrain, the language, the custom and the way of life of this country were entirely alien to him. A man used to good and clean living has had to live in shacks and had to go without food ever so often. His burning patriotism alone sustained him in the plunge that he had taken risking his whole life and career and leaving everything behind⁴².

³⁹: Full details of the time spent in Kabul can be seen in Bhagat Ram, *The Talwars of Pathan Land and Subhas Chandra's Great Escape*, pp.85-120 and Uttam Chand's, *When Bose Was Ziauddin* (Delhi, 1946) and Abdul Majid Qureshi, 'Siyasatdan Ka Farar' *Urdu Digest*, January 1980, Lahore.

⁴⁰: H N Pandit, *Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose: From Kabul to the Battle of Imphal* (Delhi, 1988), p. 1.

⁴¹: Riemund Schnabel, *Tiger and Schakal Deutsche Indien Politik 1941-43. Ein Dokumentarbericht, (Tiger and Jackal German Indian Politics 1941-43 A Documentary Report)*, (Wien, 1968), pp. 50-58.

⁴²: Bhagat Ram, 'My Fifty Days With Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose', S K Bose (edt.), *Netaji and India's Freedom*, p.180.