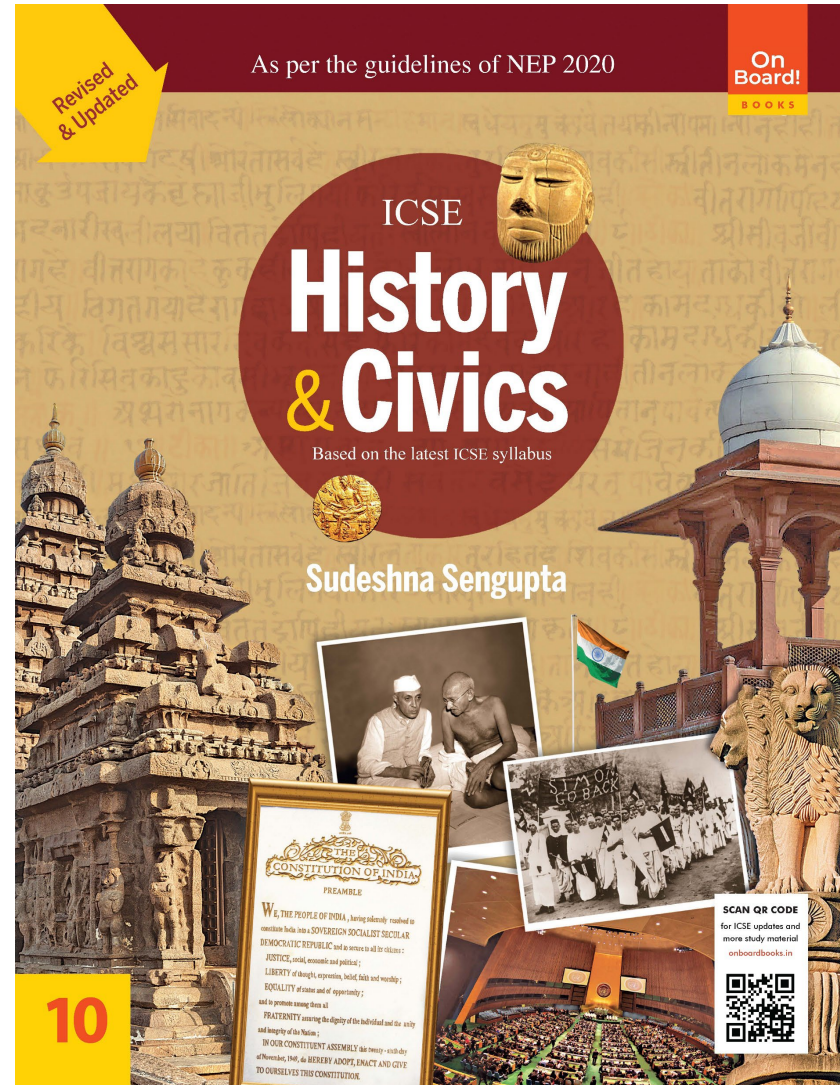


On Board!

B O O K S

ICSE History and Civics 10



Section B: History

Chapter 8 Subhas Chandra Bose and the Indian National Army

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Chapter 8 Subhas Chandra Bose and the Indian National Army

WHO WERE THE RADICALS?

Subhas Chandra Bose was deeply influenced by the intellectual and cultural climate of Bengal. He was a brilliant student. He passed the Civil Service Examination in England in 1920 but realized that it was not possible to serve the British government and my country at the same time. So, he resigned from the service in May 1921 and returned home to take part in the struggle for India's freedom.

As a Congress leader

On returning to India, Subhas joined the Indian National Congress and was active in its youth wing. During the Non-cooperation Movement, an all-India protest was observed to oppose Prince of Wales' visit to the country. The credit for the hartal that was observed in Calcutta must be given to Subhas. He was also imprisoned during the Non-cooperation Movement. Between numerous spells in prison, Subhas played a major role in the student, youth and labour movements. When the Civil Disobedience Movement was launched, Subhas was in prison.

During the mid-1930s, Subhas was exiled from India by the British. He took advantage of this to become 'the unofficial ambassador of India's freedom in Europe'. There, he met European leaders and thinkers and championed the cause of India's independence.

Differences with Gandhi

Subhas Bose was unanimously elected the President of the Congress – a clear indication of the growing influence of socialism. It was at this session that the differences between Subhas and Gandhi surfaced over their attitude towards Britain. Subhas was against the British government's plan to drag India into the Second World War. He was also in favour of taking advantage of the political instability of war-time. He passed gave the British six months to hand India over to the Indians, failing which there would be a revolt.

Gandhi did not believe in taking such an uncompromising stand against Britain. Further, Subhas did not endorse Gandhi's non-violence tactics to secure freedom. Rather, what he wanted was a violent resistance. This also increased the tension between the two.

Formation of the Forward Bloc

Subhas Chandra Bose now organized a new party known as the Forward Bloc. He described the genesis of his party in these words, 'India's primary political need in 1939 was an organized and disciplined left wing party in the Congress.'

Objectives

The objectives of the Forward Bloc were:

- the immediate liberation of India from the British.
- establishing socialism in the country and abolishing the zamindari system.
- aiming at reorganizing agriculture and industry along socialist lines.
- encouraging youth to join the party and fight against imperialism.

The growing popularity of Bose alerted the British government. He was arrested and later released and remained under strict police surveillance.

Subhas Bose left the house in disguise and took a detour to Germany. He followed the maxim, 'enemy's enemy is friend.' He knew that to achieve independence, Indians had to rely upon outsiders for help. He also realized that an independent nation necessitated the creation of a national army to secure its sovereignty. Thus, as the Second World War raged on, Subhas approached Hitler, an arch-enemy of Britain, for help. His further activities in Germany stopped when he heard of Japan's phenomenal success against Britain. Subhas Bose instinctively felt that the Far East would provide a more advantageous base for fight against the British. Subhas Chandra Bose thus left for Japan.

The Indian National Army

The Indian Independence League The Indian Independence League was formed with the objective to mobilize the Indians living in the Far East to work for the country's independence.

The Tokyo Conference It was held between 28 and 30 March 1942 at Tokyo to persuade the Japanese authorities to support the cause of Indian freedom struggle abroad. It passed a resolution to form an Indian National Army to liberate India. It stressed on strengthening the Indian Independence League.

The Bangkok Conference A conference in Bangkok was held in 1942. Many noteworthy resolutions were passed, some of which were as follows:

- Indian National Army to be formed comprising Indians troops and civilians of East Asia.
- The Indian Independence League would make all arrangements for the supply of men, money and materials required by the Indian National Army.
- This army would be commanded entirely by the Indian officers and would fight for the freedom of India.
- A Council of Action would be formed to guide the entire independence movement.

The Indian National Army and Subhas

Volunteers from among 40,000 Indian prisoners of war were inducted in the Indian National Army (INA) or the Azad Hind Fauj. Arrangements were made for the intensive training of these men. Physical training, mental training was also imparted. Subhas Chandra Bose announced his determination to launch an armed fight against the British from outside India. Subhas became the President of the Indian Independence League and the Supreme Commander of the INA. He was hailed as 'Netaji', the supreme leader, a title that was associated with his name since then. He reorganized the INA and raised three more brigades. Subhas announced his plan of setting up a Provisional Government of Free India and to lead the INA towards India. He gave the famous war cry, 'Delhi Chalo' (march to Delhi) and 'Total Mobilization'. He gave a clarion call to the soldiers, 'Give me blood and I shall give you freedom'.

Contribution of INA to the National Struggle and its fate

The INA, along with the Japanese army, overran many territories in South-East Asia. By March 1944, they had reached the very frontier of India. But Japanese reverses in the Second World War weakened the position of the Azad Hind Fauj. The INA had no other option but to surrender to the British troops. The INA men were taken prisoners and the Indian Independence movement in South-East Asia came to an end. Netaji left Burma in the hope of renewing the fight. He arrived in a twin-engined Japanese bomber with a single companion at Taipei, but what happened after that is uncertain.

Impact of the INA struggle

The INA occupies a place of honour in the annals of India's freedom movement. The heroism of the soldiers proved that the British could not rely upon the Indians to control the country. The Congress decided to take up the case of INA soldiers. Jawaharlal Nehru, Asaf Ali, Bhulabhai Desai and Tej Bahadur Sapru fought the case on behalf of them. Though they were held guilty, the government bowed to public pressure and set them free.

The INA uprisings inspired the naval revolts in parts of India. These revolts shook the very foundation of the British Empire. The sacrifice by the soldiers of the INA and their leader Netaji did not go in vain.

To Remember

Early life of Subhas – Born in 1897, Bose studied in Calcutta, passed ICS examination from England, joined the freedom struggle.

As a Congress Leader – Appointed as principal of National College, led hartal against Prince of Wales' visit, arrested and sentenced to rigorous imprisonment, made the demand for complete independence, a prominent youth leader.

Differences with Gandhi – In the Haripura session Subhas was elected the President, difference with Gandhi in their outlook towards the British, in the Tripuri session Gandhi had his own candidate, Subhas won again but resigned in order to avoid confrontation with Gandhi.

Formation of the Forward Bloc – Subhas formed a new party, it aimed at liberation of the country, abolition of the zamindari system, reorganization of agriculture and industry, Subhas was arrested, was released when on hunger strike, was kept under house arrest, he escaped in disguise through Afghanistan, reached Berlin and then went to Far East.

Formation of the Indian National Army – The Indian Independence League: Indian soldiers set free, organized themselves to secure liberation of India, serve the interests of overseas Indians, Rash Behari Bose gave shape to the organization, The Bangkok Conference: Held in 1942, Subhas invited to Singapore to form the Indian National Army, Captain Mohan Singh was appointed the commander.

The Indian National Army and Subhas – Captain Mohan Singh commanded the INA or the Azad Hind Fauj, intensive physical and mental training, Subhas reached Singapore after an adventurous journey on 2 July 1943, hailed as the Supreme Commander of the INA and President of the Independence League, planned to set up Provisional Government of Free India, gave the famous cry of Delhi Chalo, declared war on Britain and USA, Andaman and Nicobar handed over to the INA.

Fate of the INA – The army reached Kohima and Imphal, the tricolour flown for the first time, early monsoons led Japanese troops to withdraw, Netaji forced to leave Bangkok, died in a plane crash.

Impact of the INA Struggle – Trial of INA officers attracted sympathy, Nehru, Tej Bahadur Sapru fought their case, inspired the naval revolts in Bombay, similar revolts in other cities.

Thank You