



How Gandhi, Patel and Nehru colluded with Brits to suppress Naval Mutiny of 1946

This article has been authored by Saswati Sarkar, Shanmukh and Dikgaj.

POLITICS | Long-form | 10-08-2015

Starting February 18, 1946, a group of ratings at the Royal Indian Navy mutinied in Bombay. The mutiny soon spread to all units of the Royal Indian Navy: ships at anchor, shore establishments, ships on the high seas. The mutiny was brutally suppressed by the British with complicity of icons of India's freedom struggle: Gandhi, Patel and Nehru. The import of the mutiny may be judged from an extract of a letter written by P.V. Chuckerborty, former Chief Justice of Calcutta High Court, on March 30 1976: "*When I was acting as Governor of West Bengal in 1956, Lord Clement Attlee, who as the British Prime Minister in post war years was responsible for India's freedom, visited India and stayed in Raj Bhavan Calcutta for two days, I put it straight to him like this: 'The Quit India Movement of Gandhi practically died out long before 1947 and there was nothing in the Indian situation at that time, which made it necessary for the British to leave India in a hurry. Why then did they do so?' In reply Attlee cited several reasons, the most important of which were the INA activities of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, which weakened the very foundation of the British Empire in India, and the RIN Mutiny which made the British realise that the Indian armed forces could no longer be trusted to prop up the British. When asked about the extent to which the British decision to quit India was influenced by Mahatma Gandhi's 1942 movement, Attlee's lips widened in smile of disdain and he uttered, slowly, 'Minimal'.*" [28].

In early 1946, there were revolts all over the British Indian armed forces. While the naval revolt was the most widespread, the revolts of the army were considered particularly dangerous, since the army was the vital arm necessary to keep the Indians suppressed. Specifically mentioning the army revolts at Jabalpur, Gen. VK Singh points out in his book, *"Though the mutiny at Jubbulpore was at that time not considered as 'serious' as the naval mutiny, its repercussions were immense. The earlier revolts in the RIAF and RIN, though more widespread and larger in scale, did not really worry the British authorities, because the Indian Army, on which they depended for meeting external and internal threats, was still considered reliable, having proved its fidelity during World War II. The mutiny at Jubbulpore was the first major uprising in the Indian Army during or after the war. This set alarm bells ringing from Delhi to London, and doubts began to be expressed on the steadfastness of the Indian Army. Ultimately, it forced Britain to reach a settlement with the political parties and quit India."* pp. 139-140, [32].

This view is corroborated by Mansergh, *"It is pertinent to remember that one of the compelling reasons for the departure of the British from India was the apprehension that the loyalty of Indian armed forces was doubtful. Due to obvious reason, the staunchness of the Army was more worrisome than that of the other two Services. On 5 September 1946, in a note by the commander-in-chief on the military aspects of the plan to withdraw from India, General Auchinleck was to record, "The importance of keeping the Indian Army steady is emphasised. It is the one disciplined force in which communal interests are subordinated to duty, and on it depends the stability of the country. The steadiness of the RIN and the RIAF is of lesser import but any general disaffection in them is likely seriously to affect the reliability of the army."* pp. 642, vol 8, [11].

We will describe the role in the naval mutiny of the eminent icons of India's freedom struggle, relying on their speeches and writings, the memoir of mutineer, BC Dutt [24], and declassified British governmental documents related to the transfer of power [11]. We will also examine, briefly, the air revolt and the army mutiny at Jabalpur. Lastly, we examine the effect of the naval, army and air mutinies in the British Indian armed forces on the British decision to transfer power to Indians.

In concluding this introduction, we present the assessment of Gen. VK Singh, about the effect of the different mutinies on the freedom movement. About the cumulative effect of the different mutinies, he says, *"Had the Indian armed forces remained staunch, there is little doubt that British rule would have continued for at least another 10 to 15 years. The nationalistic feeling that had entered the heart of the Indian soldier was one of the most important factors in the British decision to grant complete independence to India, and also to advance the date from June 1948 to August 1947."* p. xiii, [32].

Section A: British Indian army – Army of occupation?

The British Indian army, after the First War of Indian Independence 1857, was kept loyal to the British using the strictest discipline. The officer cadre, which was well read and politically aware, was invariably comprised of either Europeans or loyal sections of Indians. The degree of Europeanisation of the officer cadre can be gauged by the observation of Kusum Nair, *"On the eve of the war, the Indian Army was 182,000 strong with nearly 5,000 officers, of which 400 were Indians."* p. 15, [38]

By the end of the 19th century, there were no powers in and around India that could actually threaten the safety of the British Indian possessions seriously. Russia was too far away and had been contained north of Afghanistan. Afghanistan and the tribes of the northwest India were too weak to cause serious damage. So, internal security (keeping conquered Indians down) and keeping the tribes of the northwest in check were the primary goals of the British Indian Army after 1857. As Kusum Nair puts it, *"Unlike any other Army in the world the principal task allotted to our armed forces is Internal Security. In pre-war time out of a total fighting strength of 179,000 men, 70,000 were assigned the task of looking after "rebellious natives." This number could be increased by 69,000 more if required. The latter were the 'Field Army' which during peace time could be called out to open at any time a front against the people. The different functions recognised under this head of Internal Security are: the Suppression of the revolutionary movements both violent and non-violent, organised and designed to upset the established government; the protection of railway communications in war against sabotage by ill-disposed persons; the suppression of mutiny or other forms of lawlessness arising from local or widespread grievances; and the prevention of communal disturbances of a racial, religious or political character not directed against the Government, but which Government must suppress."*

All these functions are identical to those assigned to any occupation force, and have been performed by the Army with conspicuous efficiency time out of numbers. During the Moplah rising of 1921, 6000 troops were employed. Over 47000 troops were used against the Red Shirts of NWFP and Khajuri Plain Afridis in 1930-31. Two Brigades of about 8000 men were necessary to keep terrorists of Bengal in check. During Civil Disobedience movement of 1930-31 troops were called out 118 times; 103 times in 1931-32, 39 times in 1932-33, and 25 times in 1933-34. During 1942 the Army was called out at 60 places and along with the police resorted to firing on about 538 occasions." p. 23, [38]

This view is corroborated by Gen. VK Singh, where he cites the aims of the Indian Army declared by the British War Office. The War Office, in the aims of the Indian Army, mentions, *"The duties of the army in India include the preservation of internal security in India, the covering of the lines of internal communication, and the protection of India against external attack. Though the scale of forces is not calculated to meet external attack by a great power, their duties might*

well comprise the initial resistance to such an attack pending the arrival of imperial reinforcements.” p. 35, [39], p. 163, [38].

Kusum Nair then points out the obvious problem for any Indian. The British were occupying India by force, and these men were forced to become the enforcers of the British. *"Then comes the Indian element [in British army] which may be divided into the class of officers and men. They have a most difficult role to play. They are supposed to be loyal to the crown which adorns their caps, flags, buttons and even batons. They salute the Union Jack and sing `God save the King." But even if they were injected with the essence of all the insignias of British Royalty it could not obviate the natural conflict which must arise in the mind of every conscious Indian except at the cost of his political consciousness. The result is that there are two types of Indians-the conscious who suffer untold anguish as a result of divided loyalty and the unconscious who manage to drown the loyalty in the only way possible-by becoming rank opportunists with only the self as the dominating interest of life.” p. 29, [38].*

The only way to overcome these contradictions was via the use of discipline as a factor in holding it together. Army discipline was, consequently, extremely rigid, and the soldiers were separated as much as possible from the civilians. The Indian officer was conditioned to be loyal only to the British. *"The only factor which helps these three [above and Englishmen in Indian army] types of men together is iron discipline which is enforced with the help of stringent regulations. Hence it may well be said that the emphasis on discipline of the Indian Armed forces is far beyond normal and more than that insisted upon in any other fighting service in the world. Any day if you compare an English to an Indian serviceman you will find that while the former remains a man, free in thought and action, regimented to the barest minimum necessary the latter is an automaton – a mere cog in the machinery who must never be allowed to think or act for himself. Consequently the English boy will not necessarily always be well dressed or salute smartly or even at all, or talk to his officers as submissively or with that servility which is considered as necessary in the Indian Boy. The difference is then inevitable because the Englishman belongs to the fighting forces of a free country while the Indian belongs to the occupation forces occupying India itself. The entire psychological approach in the two cases has perforce to be different.” p. 29, [38]*

It is a revealing fact that after the recent strikes in the armed forces some of the Indian Officers have been the most insistent on severe disciplinary action being taken. It was after all their negligence which caused the outbursts. The only way they can be reinstated is by punishing the culprits so that they will never again dare. The incidents also unfortunately showed up which sides the officers are and where their interests and sympathies rest. When the men and officers find themselves in opposite camps how else can they be brought together except by the iron chain of discipline? And so long as India is not free the two camps will always remain. p. 31, [38]

If the state of the officers was as described above, worse was the lot of the ordinary soldier or the sailor, which is described as follows: *"To revert to the life in forces, for the men it begins with discipline and ends with discipline which must aim at killing all initiative and free thinking for that would surely result in mutiny. To keep a man loyal in the face of most blatant racial discrimination and differentiation, to educate him to be loyal to a far off Emperor, to persuade him to open fire on his own countrymen struggling for the independence of his own country and to convince him that in the end the obligation is on him can obviously only be done by the most drastic doping of his mental activities. It is almost a feat of mesmerism.*

The first step is to maintain a wide gulf between the officers and men. Authority must inspire awe. The gulf is enforced both by tradition and by the difference in pay. In no other army of the world is the difference between the commissioned and the non-commissioned so great as in our army. The second step is to isolate the men from the civilians for whom subtle feelings of contempt are engendered. Politics or anything smelling of politics is of course taboo. Political meetings must not be attended. National leaders must not be discussed and national literature must not be read. Even nationalist newspapers are not allowed anywhere near the establishments. A regular wall is created between the soldier and his countrymen and their problems and it is hoped that this way he would be kept sufficiently loyal. p. 32, [38]

This view of the separation of the officers and men is corroborated by Dipak Das in p. xv, [32]. He writes, *"A colonial armed service built to protect British interest, RIN sought to impose on its men a sense of devotion and loyalty to the alien rulers and, immediately, to their representatives in the upper deck. The barriers around naval units were to distance them from civilians and prevent any influence from outside that could dilute their allegiance. Aboard ships, duty and space for Indian men were divided so as to suit the specific requirements of the service. Any violation of this arrangement invited punishment. Every aspect of lower-deck life was regulated by 'standing orders'. An occupant of the bottom tier of the naval hierarchy, the rating was required to abide unquestionably by the command of his superiors. The latter had to be saluted at all times and places. The rules of etiquette demanded that the rating must spring to attention whenever addressed by the officers and answer submissively any of their queries. On enlistment he was allotted an 'official number'. After that he had no other identity. His privacy and individuality were the first casualties on signing up. Everything, his body, apparel or belonging, was open to scrutiny by RO or RPO. Even while off duty or on 'liberty' the rating could not cross the boundary of his unit unless permitted to. Out on the civvy street he was under the surveillance of the naval police and liable to be punished for any 'deviant' behaviour. Routine and regimentation sought to reduce him to a cog in the wheel, an automaton with neither intelligence nor a capacity for judgement, doing only what he was programmed to. Punitive discipline, enforced with iron hand, sought to dull his mental abilities. Isolated from the people and reared on a heavy dose of training and militarization under British direction, the rating was expected to be wholly loyal to the Raj."*

Thus, the British sought to create in the Indian soldier, a totally inhuman machine that would only be loyal to them and support their atrocities. While the experiment did succeed to a limited extent, by the end of the Second World War, the evaporation of the myth of European superiority, the sweeping winds of nationalism and the deeds of the INA began to wear away at this loyalty that had been imposed from above. The Indian soldier started to become more loyal to his own country, his flesh and blood, his kith and kin, than the distant king in London and thus, the British instrument became a weapon pointed at their own hearts. The British created force of occupation had thus become a force of liberation of India, should the British prove intransigent.

Finally, we cite the letter written by Gen. Auchinleck during the INA trials, by which time, sweeping nationalism and the deeds of Subhas Chandra Bose had turned even the officers away from the British. General Auchinleck wrote: *“In this connection, it should be remembered, I think, that every Indian worthy of the name is today a “Nationalist”, though this does not mean that he is necessarily “anti British”. All the same, where India and her independence is concerned there are no pro-British Indians. Every Indian commissioned officer is a Nationalist and rightfully so, provided he hopes to attain independence for India by constitutional means.”* p. 54, [40], p. 173, [38].

Section B: Motivation for the naval mutiny

The motivation for the naval mutiny can be best understood in the words of mutineer, BC Dutt, who had participated in the second world war pp. 75-77, [24]:

One day a friend of mine, Salil Syam, returned from Malaya with strange tales of the Indian National Army. I had heard about them in Burma. I had seen some of them at Rangoon. They had handed over Rangoon to us. But they were whisked away within a few hours of our landing in Rangoon. Having been in the occupation forces in Malaya, Syam had come in direct contact with them. He had brought letters from some members of the former Azad Hind Government addressed to Jawaharlal Nehru and Sarat Chandra Bose, the elder brother of Subhas Chandra Bose. He also brought relevant literature and photographs. He did not know how to get them delivered. In the RIN it would have been considered high treason if Syam was found with the letters. I felt frightened and elated at the same time. The name of Subhas and his Azad Hind Fauj were not even mentioned in the Navy. His exploits in Singapore and Burma were just beginning to percolate into the country. The nationalist press had started printing discreet news items about them. It was all rather vague. To the post-war youth, Subhas Bose had already become a legend.

I felt I was holding a live bomb in my hand when Syam told me the contents of the packet he had smuggled into the TALWAR from across the seas. He asked for my help in reaching the letters and the literature to Sarat Bose and Nehru. I did not know how to reach the two letters

to their destinations. In those days, one did not use the Royal Mail for things like the ones, we had in our possession. Until then I knew no one connected with the nationalist movement. But I had to do the job somehow. I felt I was a small man entrusted with a big job. From an insignificant naval rating I had suddenly become an important messenger of significant tidings for my country. In the course of clandestine efforts at getting these letters and the literature to the destination, I got involved in activities which committed me to a cause officially illegal but, to a man in my state of mind, enabling. In the ensuing weeks, my way of life changed. I came in contact with the type of people we had been taught to leave severely alone. But I found myself in complete sympathy with the cause they espoused.

I was twenty-two. I had come through a war unscathed – a war fought to end Nazi domination. I had seen the British people defending their country. I had served alongside British sailors and others from the other Commonwealth countries in different theaters. They knew what they were fighting for. I began to question my whole existence. What did I fight for? Whose war did I fight? Was it for my country? I was a sailor, but in whose service? Is it enough to be competent in one's profession? In whose service have I placed my professional expertise? These questions appeared more and more crucial as the days passed. To the British authorities, we were servicemen. We were not supposed to think, but do our jobs with unquestioning devotion and loyalty. But loyalty to whom? To nationalist India we were mere mercenaries, whereas closer contact with the British servicemen had thoroughly shaken my sense of loyalty to the Raj. And the association with the men from free countries had given me a sense of identity with my own country. It was up to us, I felt, to prove that we were as much sons of the soil as nationalist Indians who were fighting for the country's independence. Without quite realizing it, I became a conspirator." pp. 75-77, [24].

It is pertinent to note that eminent historian Bipan Chandra has expressed a different view as to the genesis of the naval mutiny: "*In our view, the three upsurges were an extension of the earlier nationalist activity with which the Congress was integrally associated. It was the strong anti-imperialist sentiment fostered by the Congress through its election campaign, its advocacy of the INA cause and its highlighting of the excesses of 1942 that found expression in the three upsurges [including the naval mutiny] that took place between November 1945 and February 1946. The Home Department's provincial level enquiry into the causes of these 'disturbances' came to the conclusion that they were the outcome of the 'inflammatory atmosphere created by the intemperate speeches of the Congress leaders in the last three months [30]. The Viceroy had no doubt that the primary cause of the RIN 'mutiny' was the 'speeches of Congress leaders since September last' p. 1055, Vol. 6, [11], Chapter 36, [31]. We however accord precedence to BC Dutt's analysis of the genesis given that he was a leading participant at the scene of the mutiny and would therefore be privy to the organization of the same. Besides, the British administration was seeking to downplay the impact of the INA which sowed seeds of discord in the bulwark of the Raj, the British army, and lead to strongly anti-British spontaneous mass movements throughout the country. They would also like to apportion*

at least part of the "blame" to Congress to put it in the backfoot in ensuing negotiations that lead to the transfer of power. So, BC Dutt's conclusion ought to override that of the rulers whenever the two are at variance. Incidentally, even Bipan Chandra has acknowledged that "*The Congress did not give the call for these upsurges; in fact, no political organization did*", Chapter 36, [31].

Section C: Battle for national liberation

The mutineers were certainly aggravated by service discriminations, but national demands constituted the core of their rebellion. They referred to themselves as *Azad Hindi* or free Indians- "*I am Azad Hindi; my life is for the country*" p. 77, p. 95, [24]. On February 22, 1946, Phillip Mason, the War secretary gave a statement in the central assembly in which he sought to posit the mutiny as an attempt to secure better terms of service. But, even he had to include: "*The fourteen ratings also wished to make a protest to the Government of India regarding (1) the INA policy (2) the firing on the public at various places, and (3) the use of Indian troops in Indonesia and the Middle East.*" p. 205, [24]. When British employed Indian soldiers to fire at the naval mutineers, the latter did not want to fire back at their compatriots. The mutineers addressed the soldiers over the loud-speaker in Hindustani: "*Brothers! We are not fighting to fill our stomachs with better food and for a softer life. We are fighting for the country's freedom. You are as much sons of the soil as we are. Don't heap shame on the heads of your descendants by pointing your rifles at us.*" p. 147, [24]. BC Dutt writes: "*Almost immediately, the firing ceased. It was obvious that the Indian soldiers did not need much persuading. Their hearts were in the right place.*" pp. 147-148, [24]. At Karachi, "*The most trusted soldiers of the Indian Army, the Gorkhas, refused to fire on the Hindustan [the naval ship that put up a brave fight against the British]. In this instance again Indian soldiers had to be replaced by British Tommies.*" p. 190, [24].

We observe that it was not merely the naval ratings that rose up against the British, but also the air force and the army that revolted alongside the navy. The revolts of the air force were often in sympathy with the naval ratings and they refused to be used to crush the naval ratings, while the revolt of the army was directly inspired by the INA and probably also the naval mutiny. The sympathy for each others' demands among the services was impressive.

Nearly a month before the mutiny of the Naval Ratings occurred another revolt in the British Indian Armed forces. This was the revolt of the airmen in the Royal Indian Air Force. Beginning purely as a set of service demands, and a protest over the slow rate of demobilisation and uncertainty over the future, it soon escalated into a political demand and sympathetic reaction to the revolt of their colleagues in the navy. We narrate here the part where the revolt in the Royal Indian Air Force escalated into sympathetic strikes due to the revolt of the mutiny in the Royal Indian Navy.

On hearing of the disaffection in the Royal Indian Navy and their consequent mutiny, the airmen of the Royal Indian Air Force also went on a sympathetic strike on 19 and 20 of February, 1946. To subdue mutineers who had taken control of ships, one of the options being discussed was the use of air attacks using rocket projectiles. On learning of this measure being considered, the strikers in the Royal Indian Air Force went on a strike and consequently, the use of the RIAF personnel at Bombay against the striking mutineers became unviable for the British pp. 107, [32]. This strike from the airmen continued till the end of the naval mutiny in Bombay on February 23, 1946.

A similar situation occurred in Kohat, and is narrated by Squadron Leader Harjinder Singh. He found the strikers, with no personal demands, but only striking in sympathy with their naval colleagues. After talking with the men, he found that the disquiet was caused by the news that the air squadrons at Kohat would be used to bomb and machine gun the naval ratings that had gone on strike in Bombay. When asked for their demands, they replied that the station chief should send a message to the Commander-in-chief in Delhi that the station in Kohat refuses to cooperate in bombing their colleagues in the navy. Also, in the signal, it should be clearly mentioned that the Air Force Station Kohat sympathises with the relatives of the people who have been killed in the firing at Bombay. Harjinder Singh narrates that, to his mind, the demand made by the strikers was a very reasonable one, and when he asked the strikers if that was all they demanded, they answered in the affirmative. pp. 108, [32].

Common Indian civilians saw the Naval mutiny as a national rebellion too. Quoting BC Dutt, *"Rumours circulated in the city that the British were going to starve the ratings into submission. The reaction to the rumour was fantastic. We never dreamt of it. We thought that the country had abandoned us to the wolves. Far from it. We had frightened only the leaders into inactivity. People, by their actions, showed that they could think and act for themselves. They rushed to our rescue. From every walk of life they came and crowded the seafront around the Gateway of India, with packets of food and pails of water. The restaurant keepers were seen requesting people to carry whatever food they could to the beleaguered ratings. Even some street beggars, it was reported in the press, were seen carrying tiny food packets for the ratings. The harbor front presented a strange spectacle. The whole area was patrolled by armed Indian soldiers. British forces were kept ready at a distance. Indian soldiers with rifles slung across their backs helped to load the food packets brought by the public on boats sent from the ships in the harbor. The British officers were helpless spectators. On the Talwar, in a few hours, we received so many food parcels sent over the wall that we had enough to eat for a few days. A lot of food reached us through the main gate of TALWAR which was still guarded by Indian soldiers. There were 1500 ratings on the TALWAR."* pp. 156-157 [24]. Again, *"The people's reaction was overwhelmingly in favour of the ratings because, as a press report, quoting a common man's sentiment, put it ``our own blood and our own boys" were involved. Unlike the leaders, the people did not disown us nor did they get frightened by our actions."* p. 165, [24].

This state of affairs is confirmed by Kusum Nair: "*In the meantime Union Jack had been hauled down and the National Flag fluttered in its place. The boys were not taking food in their messes but sympathetic outsiders saw to it that the boys were well-fed. In "Talwar" a ladder had been put up against the wall and christened the Azad Hind Gate. Outside this gate a veritable bazaar sprang up selling or giving free milk and other snacks. On the roads of Bombay could be seen all the R.I.N trucks full of ratings cheering and shouting national slogans.*" p. 43, [38].

BC Dutt has written about February 22, 1946: "*people were out on the streets fighting the Tommies. Indian soldiers have been completely withdrawn by then and confined to the barracks. Battalions of Tommies with machine guns and supported by tanks patrolled the streets. The people had no firearms. In the working class areas of the city, people had dug up the roads and, from behind the improvised barricades, hurled stones. If they had any leaders, their names did not figure in the columns of the national press. No nationally known leader of any political party led them. That much was known. The British tanks could clear the streets only after hundreds had been shot down. This was the first time in the turbulent history of India's freedom movement that the rulers were forced to use tanks to battle with unarmed and leaderless people. What took place on February 22 was quite different from the usual pattern of mass upheavals in India. It was an unparalleled exhibition of spontaneous outburst of people's wrath against the rulers. The working people of Bombay went out on to the streets to fight, irrespective of caste and community. They did not use their daggers to stab each other. They faced the guns with stones and were shot down. The actual number of deaths was never disclosed. According to the newspapers the next day, over one hundred people had laid their lives and over one thousand were injured by gun shots. This was reported in Free press Journal. It was not contradicted by the authorities. After I became a news reporter, I checked on the casualty figures and found that the figures were not an exaggeration.*" p. 174, [24].

A currently declassified confidential report (numbered 58) sent by Colville Field Marshall Viscount Wavell on February 27, 1946 essentially confirms the account above: "*It was reported by the police, however, that Congress Socialists and Communists were busily stirring up trouble, ostensibly in sympathy with the mutineers, and that we might anticipate strikes and outbreaks over the week end. Late in the night on Thursday 21st trouble broke out, and rowdy sympathizers smashed windows and burnt vehicles. The police had to fire to disperse them. On Friday morning the 22nd widespread trouble broke out, ostensibly in sympathy with the R.I.N. though against the advice of both Congress and League leaders. A hartal was organized by Communists and students, and hooligan elements ready to join in whenever trouble appears combined to make a very difficult situation for the police in several quarters of the city simultaneously. Almost all the mills came out, and looting and burning was widespread. The police had to open fire, and called on the military for assistance. A battalion went to their help at about 11:30 AM, and by the evening two battalions were deployed. At a number of places, the mob offered determined resistance, erecting road blocks and covering them from nearby*

buildings; anyone who tried to clear the road block was stoned. Business in the European quarter of the city was affected, and banks were closed mid-day. The trouble moved to the congested area in the centre of the Island, and, to a lesser extent, to the mill area of the North. Curfew was imposed over a considerable area, but outbreaks of trouble took place in more than one district during the night.” p. 1082, Vol. VI, [11]. Shorn of aspersions, the report confirms extensive public support for the mutineers that workers from all mills in Mumbai fought pitched battles in their support in the streets of Bombay and that Congress and League leaders did not lead them.

Section D: Army mutiny at Jabalpur

Finally, after the Naval Mutiny had been suppressed, the embers continued to burn. One of the grouses in the Army Mutiny at Jabalpur was the fire that had been opened on the naval ratings in Bombay and Karachi. The services had shown remarkable sympathy for each other. Further, another main object of anger at the British was the treatment of the INA prisoners by the British. The spirit of Bose still stalked the British Indian armed forces.

The mutiny began in the Indian Signal Corps, posted at the Signal Training School in Jabalpur. The revolt began on 28/02/1946 and ended on 03/03/1946. Though the revolt also began over a series of service demands and end of discrimination compared to British other ranks, it is important to note two points. a) It included political demands too, right from the start, and the striking army men made an attempt to negotiate with the Congress to aid them in their demands. b) The revolt was led by better educated IORs (Indian other ranks), often those who were politically aware.

When the strike began on February 28, the main demands of the strikers were: a) Differences in pay between IORs & BORs. b) Poor quality of rations. c) Why was fire opened on RIN ratings? d) Why were two INA officers sentenced to seven years RI when others were merely cashiered? pp. 146, [32].

The demands led to a procession and strike and the demonstrating soldiers carried the flags of the Congress and the Muslim League. On February 28, 1946, they contacted the local Congress office and asked it to provide political guidance. The mutineers also shouted slogans of 'Jai Hind' and 'Inquilab Zindabad' during their procession. However, the local Congress sided with the British administration. Commanding officer of the regiment, Col. Boyd, tried to reason with the strikers. Ultimately, the area commandant and the Commanding officer arrested all of the strikers, to which they offered no resistance, and marched them to the Signal Training Centre Cage, where their demands were noted down.

When Col. Boyd, the commanding officer of the regiment tried to address them, some of the principal political protests and demands made were a) Protest against speeches of the commander-in-chief and Admiral Godfrey - the passage that if Indian Army soldiers are

indisciplined every force would be used against them. b) Release of all INA prisoners including Captain Rashid and Burhanuddin. c) Unnecessary to spend one crore on victory celebrations when there is food crisis in India. pp. 147, [32].

The next morning, the men refused to exit the Cage, and after repeated failed entreaties, the British Somerset regiment charged with bayonets, forcing the issue. Seventy people were injured and three were killed in the bayonet charge. The bayonet charge, however, caused mass outrage among the other men, and there was widespread disaffection in the Signals regiment and more than three hundred and fifty men came out in protest, ignoring their officers. They demanded the removal of the Somerset regiment and by the evening, the British regiment had to be removed, lest a pitched battle begin between the two sides. Over the next few days, the Indian soldiers, abandoned by the Congress and left leaderless, surrendered and the mutiny was over by 07/03/1946.

Section E: Betrayal by India's Political Leadership – the icons of the freedom movement

It is in the context of the national demands that spurred on the naval mutineers and the tremendous outpouring of public support for the mutiny that the role of national leaders need to be examined. Dutt has described what the mutineers expected from the then political leadership of the freedom movement: *"The Navy was under our control. With that, it should not be difficult to get the Army and the Air Force to fall in step with us. At that stage, of course, we were not sure about the impact of our action on the other two services. But we were absolutely certain that the British could not use them to suppress us. If a real leader of national stature appeared in our midst right then, like Subhas Bose did when the Azad Hind Fouj raised by Rashbehari Bose, and Mohan Singh was almost foundering on the rock of resistance from the loyalist section, the Army and the Air Force would not hesitate. They would raise the banner of revolt."* p. 133, [24]. Leaders of the freedom movement refused to stand with them, and cooperated with the British instead. In the words of the editor S Natarajan of the Free Press Journal, which were one of the first newspapers to cover the momentous event: *"The Naval upsurge died for want of leadership. When the ratings' representative came to realize that even in the Congress there were divided views, and they had to look to one section while ignoring another, their natural reaction had been that theirs was a useless agitation. The Congress as a whole was singularly uninterested in the rising."* pp. 6-7, [24].

The reasons for the lack of interest from the Congress (as also the Muslim league) become evident when we examine the timeline of two important events. The naval ratings mutinied on 18th February 1946, and the British announced the Cabinet mission on the next day (February 19, 1946) for formulating a plan for the transfer of power from the British government to the Indian leadership in consultation with them. The eminent historian, Ramesh Chandra Majumdar, has commented on the proximity of the two dates as *'The troubles in the navy*

began on February 18, 1946. On the very next day, Lord Pethick-Lawrence in the House of Lords and Prime Minister Attlee in the House of Commons made a simultaneous announcement that in view of the paramount importance not only to India and to the British Commonwealth, but to the peace of the world, His Majesty's Government had decided to send out to India a special mission consisting of three Cabinet members ... Whether the decision of despatching a Cabinet Mission was hastened by the revolt of the naval ratings is difficult to say. It is, however, significant, that the Mission of Sir Stafford Cripps was also announced only three days after the fall of Rangoon in Japanese hands.' pp. 727, [22].

With the announcement of the cabinet mission, much of India's political leadership started "smiling to the radiance of coming power" in the words of naval mutineer BC Dutt [24]. First, they did not want to give British any pretext for delaying the transfer of power, come what be the cost to the nation, including a partition involving lakhs of deaths, destruction of properties, dishonor of women, etc. More importantly, they were also vying for their political power in the new establishment. They knew that the British would have an influence in the choice of the premiers, through unofficial stipulations, or more effectively through the common interface of top industrialists who funded the major political parties and in turn relied on the British for machinery, technical knowhow and British controlled markets outside India eg, Britain, Hong Kong, China, East Africa (particularly jute industry and cotton mills which constituted an important venture of several who funded Congress) even beyond the nineteen forties (eg, a note prepared in 1946 under the instructions of Viceroy Wavell said that: "Britain is still the natural market from which Indian importers are likely to seek their requirements... British technical skill is also highly valued in India" p. 51, Vol. VIII, [11]). Indeed, as we would see, political leaders engaged in a competitive subjugation to British interests. Naval mutineers became mere pawns in this political game.

In fact, so desperate for British goodwill were the Indian leaders, that a quote of VP Menon, who was the Constitutional Adviser and Political Reforms Commissioner to the last three Viceroys and subsequently the right hand man of Vallabhbhai Patel (and the secretary of the ministry of states that Patel headed), is well worth reproducing here. "It was late in December 1946, or early in January 1947, that I had a lengthy discussion with Vallabhbhai Patel. A united India under the Cabinet Mission plan was, I suggested, an illusion, The three-tier constitutional set-up envisaged was unwieldy and difficult to work. I saw no future for the country under this plan. Besides, Jinnah showed no sign of resiling from his demand for a separate, independent sovereign state for the Muslims - a demand in which the League had the sympathy, if not the support, of a large section of British opinion and, what was even more important from our point of view, the sympathy of most of the British element in the Services. My personal view was that it was better that the country should be divided, rather than that it should gravitate towards Civil war. If we agreed to partition, Jinnah obviously could not ask for those portions of the Punjab, Bengal and Assam which were predominantly non-Muslim. The crucial problem was the basis on which power could be transferred. In a divided India, this could best be to two

central governments on the basis – a point on which I laid particular stress - of Dominion Status. By consenting to accept Dominion Status, the Congress would be gaining three great advantages. Firstly, it would ensure a peaceful transfer of power. Secondly, such acceptance would be warmly welcomed by Britain, and the Congress would by this single act have gained its friendship and goodwill. The third concerned the future administration of the country. The Civil Services, at the higher levels, were manned largely by Britishers, and if India insisted on independence, there was no question but that the British element had it in their power to create endless trouble at the time of the transfer of power. It might be possible to carry on the Civil Administration somehow, but certainly India could not, during the transitional period, do without some help on the defence side. The Indian Army was largely officered by Britishers, almost entirely so in the higher ranks, while the Navy and Air Force had to be built up virtually from scratch. After all, the test of sovereignty, was the power to amend one's constitution, which remained unaffected by the acceptance of Dominion Status, India could at any time, if she so desired walk out of the Commonwealth. Moreover, the Princes, with their past associations with the British Crown, would be reassured and be more willing to negotiate. I pointed out that if the transfer of power took place on the basis of Dominion Status, it would enable the Congress to have at one and the same time a strong central Government, able to withstand the centrifugal tendencies all too apparent at the moment, and to frame a truly democratic constitution unhampered by any communal considerations. Nobody could have been better aware of the situation in the country than Vallabhbhai Patel, he had already been in charge of Home portfolio for some months. Like the great statesman that he was, he assured me that if power could be transferred at once on the basis of Dominion Status, he for one would use his influence to see that the Congress accepted it." pp. 358-359, [29]. The goodwill of the British mattered to the leaders of the Indian national movement, far more than the integrity of the country, or the form of independence that came about.

As far as the British were concerned, they wanted to leave only after transferring power to friendly governments in a divided nation. Recall Menon's assertion above: "*Jinnah showed no sign of resiling from his demand for a separate, independent sovereign state for the Muslims - a demand in which the League had the sympathy, if not the support, of a large section of British opinion and, what was even more important from our point of view, the sympathy of most of the British element in the Services*" pp. 358-359, [29]. Wavell had a note prepared on the effect of the proposed transfer of power in India on the results to the British Commonwealth of the transfer of political power in India, which said that: "*in international prestige, Great Britain should on the whole gain by her transfer of power, provided that this results in an orderly and friendly India.*" p. 51, Vol. VIII, [11]. This note concluded saying that "*To sum up, it is vital to Britain that when she gives over political power in India, she may be able to hand over to a stable and friendly Government and contract with it a genuine defensive alliance. Fortunately India's interests quite obviously point the same way. If this objective is achieved, the demission of political power may bring in advantage and not loss.*" p. 52, Vol. VIII, [11], p. 235, [15]. So, they could not risk the mutiny growing into a revolution and subsequent violent

overthrow of the British, which might avert or delay transfer of power. Preponing the transfer of power would be a relatively minor cost, given the risks involved on the other side. They had thoroughly studied India's political leaders by then, and could accurately surmise that a definitive announcement on the transfer of power would stimulate a competition in cooperation. They were spot on!

At the start of the mutiny, the committee leading it contacted Mrs. Aruna Asaf Ali, a left-wing Congress leader, who was then in Bombay. p. 132, [24]. She directed them to "*see the highest Congress authority in Bombay,*" Vallabhbhai Patel. She sent a telegram to Nehru telling him that his presence was necessary in Bombay. Subsequently, "*she had more pressing business at hand which took her away from Bombay soon after.*" p. 134, [24]. Nehru took no ostensible interest in helping out the mutineers, either before or after its suppression. He arrived in Bombay only after the mutineers surrendered. BC Dutt has written about the start of the mutiny: "*At the TALWAR, a great congregation of ratings assembled. They waited and talked, talked and waited. No leader came to speak them.....The situation was ripe for the implementation of a political programme. Some twenty thousand trained youth in Bombay alone, with access to arms and ammunition of the entire Navy, were waiting for orders. The NCSC had restored discipline in the ranks. We had thought that all we had to do after the take-over of the Navy was to report to the national leaders. And we had done just that. The RIN was offered to them as the Indian ``National'' navy on a platter. The leadership would not touch it! It was shocking. We felt bewildered, dispirited and humiliated. We had captured the ships alright but where does one find a navigator? Without the navigator it was merely a question of time before we were sucked in by the whirlpool of forces that would soon start gathering momentum. The news of the national leaders' reaction was a blow much harder than what the British could deal us afterwards. After that, courage gave way to timidity and boldness to blundering.*" pp. 136-137, [24]. Then "*The rejection by the national leaders on February 19 had taken the wind out of our sails.*" p. 154, [24].

BC Dutt has elaborated on the reasons for the betrayal as follows: "*The men to whom we looked for leadership tried to ignore the uprising. They behaved as if they did not know what they were up to or what to do with us. To them we were strangers and we had nothing to contribute to the struggle for independence. Vallabhbhai Patel referred to us as a "bunch of young hotheads messing with things they had no business in" (I heard him saying that in Hindi at a public meeting at Chowpatty, Bombay, a few months before independence. By then I was a news reporter.) The leaders-Hindu, Muslim or Sikh-were already committed to the conference table. They were no longer in a position to make common cause with us against foreign rule. They could go at each others' throat but, to them, we were a lot of ``young fools" who appeared from nowhere and were expecting to be led into battle. We were mere babes in the political woods; so far as they were concerned the battle was over. At that time we were not aware that we could hardly hope to propel a revolution with the help of a leadership which believed in reform and non-violent non-co-operation. Principles apart, **the politicians of***

India at the point of time were already smiling to the radiance of coming power. And to those in power, service indiscipline is a nightmare. How in retrospect, one wishes for the knowledge that they were already committed mentally to the continuation of the very order they were non-violently resisting! The pity of it! The pity, pity of it!" pp. 134-135, [24]. Indeed, the Cabinet mission for the transfer of power from the British to Indian political leadership had just been announced.

Section E.1: The betrayal of the naval mutiny by Gandhi

Section E.1.1: Why did Gandhi oppose the naval mutiny?

Gandhi was wholly against the mutiny, but his opposition was not motivated by any doctrinaire rejection of violence. He had enlisted soldiers for the British during the first world war pp. 83-87, [23]. On 5-11-25, he was asked "*Were you not helping the cause of war when you, both while in Africa and here, enlisted men for field service ? How does it tally with your principle of ahimsa ?*" He responded: "*By enlisting men for ambulance work in South Africa and in England, and recruits for field service in India, I helped not the cause of war, but I helped the institution called the British Empire in whose ultimate beneficial character I then believed. My repugnance to war was as strong then as it is today; and I could not then have and would not have shouldered a rifle. But, one's life is not a single straight line; it is a bundle of duties very often conflicting. And one is called upon continually to make one's choice between one duty and another.*" pp. 174, [2]. Note that he did not regret his facilitation of violence during the first world war at any point, but justified it as means towards the noble end of helping the institution called the British empire that he then believed in. Presuming that he believed that the liberation of India was a just cause, he should have had no doctrinaire conflict with facilitating the mutiny simply because it employed violence. He continued to insist, as on January 18, 1942, "*My resistance to war does not carry me to the point of thwarting those who wish to take part in it. I reason with them. I put before them the better way and leave them to make the choice.*" pp. 151, [2].

While supporting the Khilafat agitation, Gandhi had also stated (on 1-6-1921) that he felt morally bound to help, using non-violent means, those who further a just cause even if they do not shun violence p. 151, [2]: "*I would be untrue to my faith, if I refuse to assist in a just cause any men or measures that did not entirely coincide with the principle of non-violence. I would be promoting violence, if finding the Mussalmans to be in the right, I did not assist them by means strictly non-violent against those who had treacherously plotted the destruction of the dignity of Islam. Even when both parties believe in violence, there is often such a thing as justice on one side or the other. A robbed man has justice on his side, even though he may be preparing to regain the lost property by force.*" Presuming again that he considered the cause of the independence of India as a just one he ought to have no qualms assisting in measures such as naval mutiny "*that did not entirely coincide with the principle of non-violence*", just as he was

willing to assist *the Mussalmans, by means strictly non-violent against those who had treacherously plotted the destruction of the dignity of Islam*. He could easily have provided a political cover for the mutineers, which would be strictly non-violent, like Sinn Fein did for IRA. Going by the repressive measures the British subsequently used against the mutineers, and also that the British just fought and won a bloody world war, both sides in this case believed in violence. Yet, going by the argument Gandhi invoked in support of Muslims (agitating for Khilafat), there was clearly such a thing as justice on the side of the revolutionaries as they (like the rest of their compatriots) have been robbed of their freedom, which they were preparing to regain by force. Thus, by his argument, Gandhi could legitimately consider it as a triumph of non-violence if he could win them over to Satyagraha, but he was duty-bound to assist them even if he failed in doing so, again applying his own argument.

It is worthwhile to nonetheless note that Gandhi was not in a race for the prime minister of India. His betrayal of the mutineers was not motivated towards securing this particular coveted post for himself. But he was not keen on the departure of the British either, and wanted a continuity of regimes even if they had to leave. Recall from our earlier pieces that Gandhi's stated goals vacillated between Spiritual Swaraj, which did not require the British to cede even direct authority, and Dominion Status, which would allow them to retain indirect control [16]. Ruling out the other viable explanations, the only conclusion that emerges then is that Gandhi would not countenance a violent overthrow of the British regime, not because of his doctrinaire opposition to violence, but because that would lead to a complete severance from the past.

Gandhi was "*always anxious to accommodate his opponents*" as his secretary, JB Kriplani, would write. p. 134, [5]. Invariably, such accommodation of the opponents was at the expense of the interests he was supposedly defending. Many British officials, including those at the highest level, like Viceroy Chelmsford, and Linlithgow and Director general of Intelligence, Puckle, British minister and member of Parliament, Ellen Wilkinson naturally found him as an "*asset*" p. 94, Vol. 3, p. 138, Vol. 4, [17], an *ally* p. 179 [18], "*the best policeman the British had in India*" p. 219, [1], and "*out, he might prove of great assistance to them*" p. 179 [18]).

Section E.1.2: How did Gandhi oppose the naval mutiny?

Gandhi reinforced a campaign of calumny launched by the British against the mutineers without engaging with them

Gandhi's press statement and speeches in Poona, on 23/02/1946, 26/02/1946, 03/03/1946, reveal that he failed to understand their mission and participated in a campaign of calumny against them. On February 23, 1946 he said: "*I have followed the events now happening in India with painful interest. This mutiny in the navy and what is following is not, in any sense of the term, non-violent action. Inasmuch as a single person is compelled to shout "Jai Hind" or any popular slogan, a nail is driven into the coffin of Swaraj in terms of the dumb millions of*

India. Destruction of churches and the like is not the way to Swaraj as defined by the Congress. Burning of tram-cars and other property, insulting and injuring Europeans is not non-violence of the Congress type, much less mine, if and in so far as it may be different from the Congress. Let the known and unknown leaders of this thoughtless orgy of violence know what they are doing and then follow their bend. Let it not be said that India of the Congress spoke to the world of winning Swaraj through non-violent action and belied her word in action and that too at the critical period in her life. I have deliberately used the adjective "thoughtless". For, there is such a thing as thoughtful violent action. What I see happening now is not thoughtful. If the Indian members of the Navy know and appreciate non-violence, the way of non-violent resistance can be dignified, manly and wholly effective, if it is corporate. For the individual it always is. Why should they continue to serve, if service is humiliating for them or India? Action like this I have called non-violent non-co-operation. As it is, they are setting a bad and unbecoming example for India. pp. 441-442, [6]

On February 26, 1946, he said: "It is a matter of great relief that the ratings have listened to Sardar Patel's advice to surrender. They have not surrendered their honour. So far as I can see, in resorting to mutiny they were badly advised. If it was for grievance, fancied, or real, they should have waited for the guidance and intervention of political leaders of their choice. If they mutinied for the freedom of India, they were doubly wrong. They could not do so without a 'call from a prepared revolutionary party. They were thoughtless and ignorant, if they believed that by their might they would deliver India from foreign domination. pp.4-6, [21]

On 03/03/1946, he said: "Well, they [ratings] would have gained honour and dignity, if they had manfully given up their job, and taught the citizens of Bombay the way to save honour and dignity, and they could have spared Bombay the senseless destruction of life, property and very precious food-stuffs. Surely this would have been an achievement not quite beneath notice." pp. 27-29, [21]

Gandhi had thus indicted naval mutineers of hooliganism without finding out their side of the story. He likely concluded and reinforced the same going by the British propaganda. He neither directly engaged the mutineers, nor had top Congress leaders engage them, despite the fact that he and his aides consistently engaged the British. . This is despite his earlier utterance (18-1-1942), "My resistance to war does not carry me to the point of thwarting those who wish to take part in it. I reason with them. I put before them the better way and leave them to make the choice." p. 151, [2]. When did he directly reason with the mutineers? As BC Dutt has written, "We had no way of telling Mahatmaji that RIN ratings had no means of reaching the Indian political leaders; the leaders who openly declared their intention of fighting for the country's freedom could not reach the ratings either.....Obviously **the leaders were content to believe the reports of the rulers.** In fact, we did not even get to know as to what they were saying about us. They must have known that much at least. Obviously their debates and declarations were meant for the great Indian public. Men in the armed forces had never been

part of it, anyway. "p. 216, [2]. In other words, Gandhi did not reason with the mutineers, about the better way, and knowingly so. His messages were for consumption of the public, perhaps, to discourage them from joining the mutineers. But, then as JB Kripalani has said he was "*always anxious to accommodate his opponents*" p. 134, [5].

We now argue that Gandhi indeed damned the mutineers going by British propaganda which was far from the truth. When people of Bombay came to the shores, to supply food to the mutineers, on February 21, the flag officer, Bombay, issued a press communiqué: "*Later in afternoon a batch of 12 to 15 mutineers from ships came across at Apollo Bunder, armed with rifles, raided food stores and restaurants and returned to their ships.*" p. 157, [24]. Then, again British had released an official press release at 1 pm on February 21 which said "*Men were on hunger strike; canteens in Castle Barracks and HMIS Talwar were broken into and most of the contents removed.... The guards were stoned by the ratings and the Guard Commander was injured...*" The communiqué was carried by the press on February 22. p. 150, [24]. Note that Gandhi's first statement on naval mutiny was issued in Poona on February 23, right after the above press-releases.

Regarding the February 21 press release, BC Dutt has written: "*The whole sea front from Collaba to Ballard Pier was guarded by the army with the Town Hall-situated almost midway between the two points-as their headquarters. The civil police was trying to keep the surging crowd of eager spectators away from overwhelming the soldiers. To reach any of the restaurants situated in the area from the Appollo Bunder, the ratings had to penetrate the two cordons thrown up first by the soldiers and then by the civil police. If a small batch of 12-15 ratings, armed with rifles, overcame a British battalion and the armed police, then either the ratings were supermen or British forces became paralyzed with fright at the mere sight of the ratings coming out of the boats. The British communiqué was obviously meant for international consumption and so worded that it totally suppressed the role played by the common people of Bombay. That the people identified themselves with the ratings, in spite of the apathy of the leaders, was not a thing the rulers wanted the world to know.*" pp. 157-158, [24]

Regarding the press statement that was carried on February 22, BC Dutt has written: "*The Official version was so full of holes that in their saner moments they must have regretted it. We were on hunger-strike, the communiqué stated clearly, and in the very next sentence it talked about our breaking open the canteens. The canteens were broken obviously for no purpose other than to obtain food. The canteens did not stock anything else worth looting anyway. So, why should the men on hunger strike break open the canteen but for food ? The communiqué was aimed to deceive the larger public which was not aware as to what the canteens sold to the ratings. Even if it was true that we did break open the canteens, how could the authorities have known about it on February 21? Not one of our opponents-officers, British or Indian, soldiers, British or Indian-had sought to step inside the TALWAR or the Castle Barracks since February*

19. The writer of the Press note must have been carried away by his enthusiasm to damn the ratings.

Then there was the reference to stoning. The ratings, according to the communiqué, appeared to have indulged in so much stone-throwing that the guard commander was injured. Where could the ratings have got the stones from, in the first place, even if they had preferred using stones to rifles with which they have armed themselves according to the communiqué ?

It might be natural for the Municipal authorities to leave the road building material strewn all over our roads these days in Bombay. But the Navy in those days could never be accused of such sloppiness! Stones lying scattered in and around a naval establishment was an absurdity. But if such an idiotic thought as hurling stones did possess the ratings they could not have had access to the stones anywhere but in the city which meant a sortie around the barracks. Which also meant an invitation to the lethal trigger of the guards. Could there be anything more ridiculous for trained combatants to go hunting for stones to hurl at their enemies when all the arms needed were already at their disposal? But such reflections did not strike the Press Relations Officer of the Flag Officer Commanding Bombay; so great was his desire to reduce the ratings to the level of the street hooligans of the city. The communiqué did not clarify the reasons as to why the ratings indulged in stone-throwing while they obviously were in possession of fire-arms and also as to why they had resorted to fire-arms if they were such effective stone throwers?" pp. 151-152, [24]

BC Dutt has written: "After it was all over many ugly rumours were circulated against the ratings. By then they had been effectively silenced and isolated again from the people. They could not tell the people that no officer has been manhandled, that no cash or ships' property or officers' personal belongings had been touched, that all arms and ammunition, even the empty shells, equipment and code books were found in their allotted places. The safe in Castle Barracks contained Rs. 80,000. All ships and shore establishments carried some cash and other valuable articles. After the surrender, everything was found in its place, undamaged, untouched. The remarkable restraint on the part of the ratings would not have been possible if they had gone on strike just to improve their food and service considerations. Nor is this type of restraint discernible among the rabble who indulge in stone-throwing and looting in every mass movement called 'political' action in the country. **The ratings were conscious of the role they were playing and that is why, for four days, they considered the RIN as the property of the Indian people. They would not descend to the level of street hooligans and loot national property.** The Press Information Office, run by the rulers, tried to create such an impression without saying so in exact words." p. 187, [24]. The Press Information Office clearly succeeded on the impressionable mind of the Mahatma.

Kusum Nair confirms the words of BC Dutt that the naval ratings had not looted any public property. Describing the situation after the surrender, Nair remarks, "Everything was found in

perfect order. There was Rs. 80,000 in cash in Castle Barracks alone. Not a pie was missing. Everywhere there was much which could have been damaged or destroyed. Nothing had been touched.” p. 52, [38].

Gandhi undermined the mutineers based on specious arguments

On 23/02/1946 he said: "*I have deliberately used the adjective “thoughtless”. For, there is such a thing as thoughtful violent action. What I see happening now is not thoughtful.* pp. 441-442, [6]. On February 26, 1946, he said: "*If they [ratings] mutinied for the freedom of India, they were doubly wrong. They could not do so without a call from a prepared revolutionary party.*" pp.4-6, [21]. Has he described any armed resistance against the British in India considered and thoughtful for that matter ? One wonders why the ratings could not seek to liberate India through armed resistance of their own volition and without a call from a revolutionary party? And how would such a call arrive if India did not have any revolutionary party then ? Gandhi had no mean contribution towards that vacuum. As BC Dutt has written: "*An unfaltering practitioner of non-violence, the Mahatma had tried to teach his followers the efficacy of his chosen path for decades and had seen to it that all those who did not fall in line with him were kept out of the national liberation movement” p. 138, [24].*

Could a national level revolution rooted in the mutiny have averted the genocidal partition?

Next, Gandhi said on February 23, 1946: "*A combination between Hindus and Muslims and others for the purpose of violent action is unholy and will lead to and probably is a preparation for mutual violence—bad for India and the world. The rulers have declared their intention to “quit” in favour of Indian rule [he is referring to the declaration of the Cabinet Mission here]. Let the action be not delayed by a moment because of the exhibition of distressful unrest [during the Naval mutiny] which has been lying hidden in the breast theirs might is unquestioned. Its use beyond the bare requirement will be unworthy and even wicked, if it is made to suppress the people or a portion of them. The people have been far too long under the foreign heel.” pp. 441-442, [6]. He expressed similar sentiments again in Poona on 26/02/1946: ``*Emphatically it betrays want of foresight to disbelieve British declarations and precipitate a quarrel in anticipation. Is the official deputation [Cabinet Mission] coming to deceive a great nation? It is neither manly nor womanly to think so. What would be lost by waiting? Let the official deputation prove for the last time that British declarations are unreliable. The nation will gain by trusting. The deceiver loses when there is correct response for the deceived. Let us face facts. The coming mission is claimed to be a friendly mission, entertaining the hope that they will discover a constitutional method of delivery. The problem is knotty, probably the knottiest that has ever confronted statesmen. It is possible that the mission will put forth an insoluble conundrum. So much the worse for them. If they are intent upon finding an honest way out of the difficulties of their own creation, I have no doubt, there**

is a way. But the nation too has to play the game. If it does, the barricade must be left aside, at least for the time being". pp.4-6, [21]

The nation did trust Gandhi, if not the British, and played his game. It was perhaps well known in the political circles around that time that the British wanted to partition India. Recalling VP Menon's account of 1946: "*Jinnah showed no sign of resiling from his demand for a separate, independent sovereign state for the Muslims - a demand in which the League had the sympathy, if not the support, of a large section of British opinion and, what was even more important from our point of view, the sympathy of most of the British element in the Services.*" pp. 358-359, [29]. What did the nation get by trusting Gandhi, but for a fractured freedom which claimed lives, honour, properties of several lakhs of Hindus in the preceding riots as also in genocide and attrition that has continued in Pakistan and Bangladesh ever since? Quoting Gandhi, "*The English have taught us that we were not a nation before and it will require centuries before we became one nation. This is without foundation. We were one nation before they came to India. One thought inspired us. Our mode of life was the same. It was because we were one nation that they were able to establish one kingdom.*" Chapter 9, p. 56, [19]. Could he deliver India from the British as the one nation that she was? BC Dutt, rightly laments that "*Unfortunately, for the country, in their efforts to avoid the shoals, the leaders plunged the country into the whirlpool of fratricidal butchery within the year. The people of India played a horrible price for their leaders' caution in the desire to be free*". p. 207, [24]. He suggested that an alternate future could have been in the offing if national leadership did not terminate them: "*In politics 'might-have-beens' have doubtful value. How our battle would have ended is a debatable matter. It is possible, however, that the national struggle for independence might have taken a direction other than that of fratricidal warfare, if we had not surrendered. The partition of the subcontinent might have been avoided. Such gigantic events might have produced leaders different from those who were responsible for the tragedy that the subcontinent experienced in the wake of the British withdrawal.*" p. 193, [24].

Dutt's conjecture was grounded on the fact that the Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs fought shoulder to shoulder during the mutiny although the relation between the Muslims and non-Muslims was at its nadir in the society outside then. He has written about the mutiny: "*Ratings from every ship and the shore establishments started marching to the Talwar. The streets of Bombay resounded to their slogans calling for national unity. 'Hindu Muslim Ek Ho' (Hindu Muslim Unity) and 'Inquilab Zindabad.*" p. 135, [24]. The editor S. Natarajan of the Free Press Journal, which was one of the first newspapers to cover the momentous event, has written: "*What was impressive among the ratings was their complete freedom from communal or sectarian prejudices and their staunch loyalty to each other. Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims refused all offer of help, which meant discriminating against or for one community. Instances were not wanting when one or the other community was compelled to give shelter to some of the boys from a different sect.*" p. 7, [24]. This fact has also been acknowledged by Kusum Nair, "*Enquiries started and officers who remained loyal during the crisis vied with each*

other in reporting and cooking evidence against the boys believed to have organised the strike. The most astonishing fact about the strike was that there was not a single black sheep from among the ratings who came from all provinces and castes and creeds and who held sympathies for different political parties. Such united and concerted action has never been seen in India even at the times of our best struggles for freedom.” p. 52, [38]. Gandhi has himself acknowledged the unity, but condemned it as a unity for violence - "A combination between Hindus and Muslims and others for the purpose of violent action is unholy and will lead to and probably is a preparation for mutual violence—bad for India and the world” in his speech quoted before. Yet, we have shown that just before the Khilafat, he believed that he would be untrue to his faith if he did not assist the Muslims only because they believed in violence. He therefore objected to Hindu-Muslim unity for violence, but supported Muslims alone even when they believed in violence.

Gandhi reduced a movement for national liberation to a struggle for service demands

In a press statement on February 23, 1946, Gandhi wondered: "*Why should they [naval ratings] continue to serve, if service is humiliating for them or India?* pp. 441-442, [6]. BC Dutt asks in his book: "*Whether the ratings were in a position to resign at all was a peripheral matter, as all other questions. He [Gandhi] did not even bother to find out if the ratings could really resign their posts.*" p. 138, [24]. Aruna Asaf Ali ``was unable to understand Gandhiji calling upon R. I. N. ratings to resign, if their condition was humiliating. If they did that, they would have to give up their only means of livelihood. Moreover, they were fighting for principles. If they resigned now, there would be hundreds in these days of unemployment to take their places who would be subject to the same discrimination and treatment and the R. I. N. ratings would not have achieved anything. It simply does not lie in the mouth of Congressmen who are themselves going to the legislatures to ask the ratings to give up their jobs. It does not help the cause of the country at all” pp. 27-29, [21] Gandhi responded in his speech in Poona on 03/03/1946: `` *India of the Congress has made little headway in the appreciation of the fight for Swaraj, if it is true that hundreds would take their places if the present ratings resigned in pursuance of their campaign against humiliation. Can we have Swaraj for the masses, if we are so degraded that hundreds of us are ready to swallow humiliation even to the extent of taking the place of humiliated fellowmen? The very thought is unworthy of Congressmen and that too at the moment when Swaraj is believed to be within sight.*” pp. 27-29, [21] But, if hundreds were not willing to join RIN despite the discriminations, how did the Indian navy grow to be the substantial force that it was during the Raj ? One wonders if he ever called upon Indians to boycott the R.I.N. and with what success?

Gandhi continued: "*It must be remembered that the R.I.N. was founded not for the benefit of the ruled. The men went with their eyes open. Discrimination stares one in the face. It cannot be avoided, if one enters the service which is frankly organized to keep India under subjection.*

One may, one ought to, try to mend the conditions. That is possible only up to a point. That cannot be achieved through mutiny. Mutiny may conceivably succeed but the success can only avail the mutineers and their kin, not the whole of India. And the lesson would be a bad inheritance. Discipline will be at least as necessary under Swaraj as it is now. India under successful mutineers would be cut up into warring factions exhausted by internecine strife.” pp. 27-29, [21] Gandhi clearly did not believe in the employees’ right to protest on job conditions, while remaining on job, which has constituted the basis of all labor movements. But, what is more pertinent is that both Gandhi and Mrs. Ali missed the significant point that the ratings were not fighting for their service demands alone, they were fighting to liberate the whole of India from occupiers, which Indian army and common civilians saw. If the naval mutiny was indeed an act of indiscipline, one wonders whether Gandhi’s non-cooperation and civil disobedience were not guilty of the same charge? He had called upon students to leave Universities, lawyers to quit courts during the non-cooperation movement of 1921 pp.312, [3], pp. 5, [4]. His close aide GD Birla wrote to Gandhi’s secretary on March 8, 1940, as follows: *“You know, I hate Civil Disobedience. In the name of non-violence it has encouraged violence. In the name of construction, it has destroyed many things. Yet it brought about a wonderful awakening in the country. But if this psychology continues, any Government, even our own, would become an impossibility.”* p. 239, [8].

Finally, Gandhi affirmed: *"Congressmen going to the legislatures for conserving the honour and liberty of the country is not the same as ratings serving for their livelihood with the possibility of being used against their own countrymen and their liberty. Congressmen who go to the legislatures are representatives elected by their voters and they go even if it is only to prevent those from going who will misrepresent the voters. Going to the legislatures may be altogether bad, but there can be no such comparison as has been just adverted to."* pp. 27-29, [21]. It however turns out that the Congressmen who went to the legislatures did work against their own countrymen and their liberty, rather than conserving their honor and liberty. Earlier, during the Bombay Trade Disputes Act passed by the Congress Ministry in 1938, the Congress ministry had acted with ruthlessness against strikers – several of those who were demonstrating in opposition to the Act were shot dead under its instructions. pp. 168, [10]. Gandhi did not however condemn or disassociate from the violence perpetrated by the state run by the party he de facto lead.

Gandhi left the mutineers to the wolves after they surrendered heeding to the advice of his lieutenant

Finally on February 26, 1946, Gandhi said in Pune: *"It is a matter of great relief that the ratings have listened to Sardar Patel’s advice to surrender.* "pp.4-6, [21] Surrender certainly did not bring any relief to the ratings, as their persecution began right after, which neither Gandhi nor Patel did anything to mitigate. In BC Dutt’s words: *"A regular man-hunt began in all the ships and establishments. Within ten hours of surrender, nearly 400 ratings were under arrest in*

and around Bombay alone. In Karachi they picked up 500 ratings on the first day after the surrender. The arrests continued quite a few days after that. Khan and Madan Singh [leaders of the mutiny] were taken away only after 48 hours. Anyone who was seen speaking to them was put under arrest. I was not touched but kept under close observation. Practically everyone who was seen in my company disappeared within 24 hours. No one ever got to know how many thousands were put behind bars or what punishment was meted out to them. Even the ratings themselves did not know one another's fate. According to my own reckoning then, more than two thousand were taken away from the ships and barracks. They were kept isolated for a few months in different detention camps, specially got ready for the purpose. Some five hundred were sentenced to prison terms. They served their terms with common criminals. They were denied even the status of political prisoners. From the jail gates they were taken to the railway stations and sent to their respective homes under police escort, deprived of all their legitimate dues and to be engulfed in oblivion. No one was allowed to remain in Bombay or Karachi. The fate of our ships was no better. The TALWAR ceased to be the Signal School and even the name was taken off the roll. The Signal School was shifted to Cochin. Castle Barracks was also dropped out of the Naval register. Later it was rechristened, ANGRE. After the partition of the subcontinent, Pakistan received the NARBADA as her share of the Navy. Like most of my comrades, I soon lost track of the HINDUSTAN and the other ships which had played a more prominent role in the uprising." pp. 186-187 [24]. So, free India did not reinstall, let alone honor, her brave sons who risked their lives and careers to liberate her.

The account of BC Dutt has also been confirmed by the account of Das, who writes, "Immediately after they surrendered, ships and establishments were combed for their leaders. Except for a honourable few the officers, both British and Indian, sought revenge and competed with one another in apprehending the 'boys' believed to have organised the strike. Even those remotely connected with them were not spared. Commander Karmarkar was said to have paraded all the ratings of Talwar, looked at the face of each one of them, picked out the ones he did not like and packed them off to Mulund. In a short space of time about four hundred ratings were removed to Muland camp in the suburbs of Bombay and quite a large number to Malir camp in Karachi for detention under military guards pending 'enquiry' and 'trial'.

The Naval Headquarters indeed lost no time in directing the officers in command of ships and establishments about how 'to deal with the persons involved in the mutiny'. Just a day after the strike ended instructions were issued to the effect: 'Apparent ringleaders' should be picked out and segregated quickly for trial by court martial or for 'summary award' of punishment. It might be difficult, the authorities anticipated, to produce evidence sufficient to secure their conviction. In such a situation, it was suggested, 'a definite order will be given in front of reliable witnesses to a picked man or picked men to perform a definite task. In the event of refusal there is an obvious case for immediate disciplinary action. If this process causes the

men to resort to violence the same principle holds good, namely, segregation and punishment of ringleaders who are likely in this event to be more radically obvious'. Thus an opportunity was to be created to punish the persons against whom evidence was insufficient. The entire process could 'be continued as necessary until the bulk of the men, that is, those who have been misled see the futility of their ways. Clearly the intention was to punish the 'ringleaders' and at the same time to terrorize the others" pp. 267-268, [32].

Section E.2: The betrayal of the military mutineers by Gandhi's closest lieutenants (Patel, Nehru)

We now discuss the role of Vallabhbhai Patel, Jawaharlal Nehru and Maulana Azad in suppressing the naval mutiny in cahoots with the British. It is worthwhile to recall that the Cabinet Mission had been announced a day after the start of the mutiny, and these leaders would not do anything to upset the apple cart of the transfer of power to them. If a revolution took shape, it was unclear who would be in power subsequently. Besides, during February 1946, prime ministerial selection for India was wide open – it was understood that the Congress President for the year of 1947 would serve as India's first prime minister. Azad was the existing Congress President in 1946 and could be "re-elected" or rather "re-selected" by Gandhi (no longer a member of the INC) as had become the practice since the ouster of Bose. Nehru and Patel were two major potential subsequent presidential and thereby prime ministerial aspirants. Support or obstruction by the British had the potential to tilt the race in favour of or against any candidate. The leaders therefore had every incentive to engage in competitive loyalty to the British through effective repression of the naval mutiny. Nehru and Azad had already entered the good books of the British by offering their steadfast support for the Raj during the second world war, even by resisting the Quit India movement up to the point they possibly could. Nehru already had been earmarked for special attention by the Mounbattens during Nehru's visit to Singapore on a fact-finding mission to look into the circumstances of the surrendered INA personnel p. 323, [41]. Patel, on the other hand, had sided with Gandhi in his espousal of the movement during 1942. In an earlier part [37], we have shown that Gandhi's call was motivated by his conviction at that point that British was losing the second world war. Patel very likely shared the belief too. A note entitled "Congress and Big Business" by the Intelligence Bureau, Government of India, Home Department, dated 28th February 1944, states that in November 1942, two Gujarati merchants told a secret agent that *"the Congress leaders, particularly Vallabhbhai Patel, had impressed upon them that a Japanese invasion was a certainty."* p. 771, Vol. IV, [11]. Regardless of his motivation for supporting the Quit India agitation, Patel would not have scored highly with the British for backing the corresponding resolution in the CWC. Perhaps for making amends, or perhaps because he controlled the Congress machinery in the Bombay Presidency, Vallabhbhai Patel played the most important role in suppressing the naval mutiny in collusion with the British; though the mutineers were betrayed by Nehru and Azad too.

Section E.2.1: The betrayal of the naval mutineers by Vallabhbhai Patel

Gandhi left Vallabhbhai Patel to handle the naval mutiny p. 138, [24]. We already know that Vallabhbhai Patel referred to the naval mutineers as a "*bunch of young hotheads messing with things they had no business in*" p. 134, [24]. On February 22, the left parties had given a call for a general strike. On behalf of the Congress, Patel issued the following statement: "*The unfortunate clash between the Naval ratings and the British Naval and Military Police has resulted in creating an atmosphere of tension in the city. The tension has been further accentuated today when reports of pitched battles between the Naval ratings and the British Naval and Military Police were spread throughout the city. The immediate cause of the firing is not known; nor is it possible to ascertain the actual loss of life which, it feared, may be very large. Without knowing all the facts, it is not possible to say whether all this regrettable loss could not have been avoided. The Congress was making all possible efforts to bring about a peaceful settlement of the long-standing, legitimate grievances of the Naval ratings. Until yesterday, there was good hope for restoring harmony and goodwill between them. Who was responsible for the unfortunate turn of events which led to these disastrous consequences and what was the actual provocation which led to them is not known, but this is not an opportune moment to assess the relative responsibilities or to apportion blame between the parties concerned.*

The primary and immediate duty of every responsible man is to see that peace is restored between the parties as also to see that the city is not plunged into trouble and its peaceful atmosphere disturbed. Every effort should be made to prevent panic and to control the unruly elements which always are on the lookout to take advantage of such a situation. The best thing for the people to do is to go about their normal business as usual.

There should be no attempts to call for a hartal or stoppage of mills or closing of schools and colleges. Such a thing is not likely to help the unfortunate Naval ratings in their efforts to get redress of their legitimate grievances or in their great difficulty in which they find themselves. All possible efforts are being made by the Congress to help them out of their difficulty and to see that their genuine grievances are immediately redressed. The Congress has a big party in the Central Assembly and is doing its best to help them. I would therefore earnestly appeal to them to be patient and peaceful." pp. 167-168, [24].

Gandhi fully approved of the actions of Patel during the Naval Mutiny per the following telegram sent on February 23, 1946: *Bhai Vallabhbhai, I can understand the ordeal you are going through. To what a pass have things come!* pp. 442, [6].

The fallacies in Vallabhbhai Patel's statement have been best analyzed by BC Dutt: *Vallabhbhai Patel, strong man of the Congress, famous for his forthright manner and practical outlook, left no room for doubt. The Congressman had only recently emerged from*

jail to find the chances of a negotiated settlement with the British brighter than ever before.....Vallabhbhai Patel's statement was a classic example of neutrality in a conflict. To him the upheaval was ``unfortunate" and the ratings were in ``difficulties." He ignored its significance altogether and toned down the intensity of the episode. He also made no reference to the political content of the ratings' demands. He described the massed British troops as military police and thereby tried to minimise the magnitude of the event. The difference between a policeman and a soldier was not unknown to him. According to him, the ratings had certain grievances and those concerned food and service conditions. Therefore his job was to persuade the authorities to be reasonable about those demands. As for the people, they should not get embroiled in the family dispute in the Navy but go about their ``business as usual." For once, the people ignored Sardar Patel. They made it clear by their involvement that it was very much their quarrel and their business....Characteristically, the then British-owned Times of India which, as a matter of practice, took little notice of the national leaders' statements, printed Vallabhbhai's in full. " pp. 168-169, [24].

On February 22, 1946, Vallabhbhai Patel called upon the naval ratings to surrender: ``In the present unfortunate circumstances that have developed, the advice of the Congress to the RIN ratings is to lay down arms and go through the formality of surrender, which has been asked for. The Congress will do its level best to see that there is no victimisation and the legitimate demands of the Naval ratings are accepted as soon as possible. There is considerable tension all over the city and there has been heavy loss of life and property. There is also considerable strain both on the Naval ratings as well as on the authorities. While fully appreciating their spirit and courage and also having full sympathy in their present difficulties, the best advice that the Congress can give them in the present circumstances is to end the tension immediately. The advice is in the interest of all concerned." pp. 177-178, [24]. Patel is again observing neutrality during the crisis, empathizing with both the Naval ratings and the authorities, and blaming both for the heavy loss of life and property in Mumbai. There was no recognition of the fact that the mutineers were India's own and the authorities were foreign. Biswanath Bose, a participant in the Naval Mutiny has written, `We were puzzled and shaken to hear that Sardar Patel had advised our men to `surrender our arms unconditionally', and `in doing so, no drastic action would be taken by the Government or Naval Authorities' pp. 62, [20].

On February 23, 1946, the mutineers surrendered with the last word to their people: ``The Naval Central Strike Committee wishes to inform the people of India and particularly the people of Bombay that it has decided to call off the strike. It has come to this decision after discussions with Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, who has assured them that the Congress would see that there was absolutely no victimisation of any of the strikers and that their just demands would be taken up with authorities. Confident that the Congress would stand by them and sure of the support of the Muslim League after the sympathetic statement of Jinnah, the Committee decided to call off the strike.A last word to our people: Our strike has been a historic event in the life of our nation. For the first time the blood of the men in the services and the people

flowed together in a common cause. We in the services will never forget this. We also knew that you, our brothers and sisters, will not forget. Long live our great people. Jai Hind. " p. 185, [24].

We have already seen how the ratings were arrested after a massive manhunt post their surrender – neither Patel nor any other leader of Congress was seen to intercede on their behalf. A (currently declassified) confidential report (no. 58) shows J. Colville reporting to Field Marshall Viscount Wavell on 27 February 1946: *“Since dictating this I have seen S. K. Patil, who asked for an interview to convey a message from Vallabhbhai Patel. This was to express a hope that there would be no victimization following the R.I.N. mutiny, and that leniency would be observed....Vallabhbhai admitted that indiscipline must be punished, but he hoped not heavily, and hinted that the main punishment should be immediate discharge. I told Patil that this was not a matter in which I could in any way intervene, as it was entirely for the Commander-in-Chief, and that I could not accept the view that no victimization meant no punishment for any one. On this he appeared to agree with me, and went on to talk of other things.”* p. 1084, Vol. VI, [11]. In other words, after inducing the ratings to surrender by assuring them that they would not be victimised, he did not press the British authorities to not penalize them, quite similar to how Gandhi did not insist that Irwin commute the death sentence of Bhagat Singh and his colleagues (at least they did not surrender on Gandhi’s assurance). The ratings were on their own, thrown to the wolves.

Section E.2.2: Competitive collusion with the British by Patel, Nehru, Azad and utilisation of entire Congress machinery to suppress the military mutineers

In a public gathering addressed by both Patel and Nehru at Chowpati in Bombay on February 27, 1946, Nehru denounced the Naval Central Strike Committee. pp. 260, [33]. He said *“In the recent RIN strike, the brave youths did commit a mistake. But we have to forgive them and do all in our power to prevent any victimisation. In a certain section of the press it was said that Sardar Patel had guaranteed that there would not be any victimisation; and that Maulana Azad had also given a similar guarantee. Neither the Sardar nor the Maulana are in a position to give any guarantee in the present state of our slavery. It is the government alone which can do so. The authorities must hold an open enquiry into the cases of all R.I.N. boys, not only from Bombay but from all over India. They must be given full opportunities to defend themselves on the lines as was done in the case of the officers of the Indian National Army.”* pp. 215-216, [24]. Shorn of the political verbiage, this amounts to Congress washing its hands off the naval mutiny, which its actions revealed too. In the words of BC Dutt, *“In his [Nehru's] characteristic way he said that the ratings were both wrong and right”* p. 213, [24].

Nehru gave his public statement on the naval mutiny after the surrender. He admitted to the press on February 27, 1946, *"that there is going to be a great deal of victimisation, in every*

sense of the word, not only victimization but a measure of terrorization", pp. 268, [33]. But he proposed to do nothing concrete about it, nor did he care to do so after he became the PM.

In his public speech to the same gathering (at Chowpati, as previously referred to), Patel too conveniently forgot his promise to protect the naval ratings and blandly announced that the British military police seeking to punish the ringleaders was legally sound. Under the service rules, a strike or for that matter, any collective disobedience was mutiny and a punishable offence. The authorities were well within their rights to enforce discipline in the ranks of the service. pp. 267, [33].

Colville has thus reported about this meeting in the above mentioned (currently declassified) confidential note to Wavell: *"As you have no doubt seen, Nehru and Vallabhbhai Patel held a meeting yesterday at Chaupatty. Before doing so they asked if permission could be given, as we had imposed a ban on meetings, and indicated that their main purpose was to decry violence and to rebuke those elements who had caused the disturbances. I considered it advisable to allow this meeting to be held, and you will have seen the report in the papers. While some things were said which will not make our task easier, in the main both the speakers, particularly Patel, stressed the folly of disorder and violence. The meeting was large and orderly, and I am clear that it would not have been wise to ban it."* p. 1083, Vol. VI, [11]. Regarding this public meeting, the Home Secretary of Bombay had informed the Home Secretary in New Delhi: *"There was a decided difference between the two, Patel being markedly unsympathetic to the mutiny and strongly condemnatory of the violence of the mob, while Nehru was much more sympathetic towards the mutineers and mainly concerned to deprecate the violence as bad tactics....against the "superior violence" of the armed forces."* ([26], cited in p. 356, [9]). Patel clearly assumed the lead role in suppressing the mutiny, but, and regardless of the difference in tones of the two, neither supported the mutineers.

It is also pertinent to note that, on the naval mutiny of 1946, Patel had written to Nehru on February 22, 1946 that *"We shall have to tackle this problem of growing violence, otherwise, our game is about to be lost"* (available in Nehru papers, New Delhi), and to Gandhi on February 24, 1946, that: *"We are done for, finished, if we don't stand up to this."* p. 356, [9], p. 309, [25]. During this period, the trio had substantially differed on various issues. They however agreed to the dot on opposing an armed insurrection against the British.

A young member of the Congress Socialist group MR Masani had described the ugly truth of the developments as follows: *"We are told that the situation is in control and that the prestige has been preserved no doubt – with the co-operation of men like Sardar Patel in Bombay and Mr. Gazdar in Karachi. It has been preserved because the national leaders of all parties are prepared in the interests of this country to endorse the call of the authorities. I wonder whether this kind of victory is worth having. The ratings who surrendered in the interests of their country were the moral victors of the struggle."* p. 208, [24].

Years later BC Dutt would lament: *"Strangely, though one of those unsettling turn-about in history, for the very first time the reactions of the leaders of the people and the foreign rulers were identical. Predictably, the two sets spoke in different languages. Even more predictably, they meant the same thing. Their parallel motives leading on to a single conclusion was thus: It was not an extension of the resistance movement. It must not be treated as such; from the moment the ratings established direct contact with the leaders, the ratings were advised not to mix up `political demands along with service demands"; to `remain calm" and to formulate to the Naval authorities their service demands. Political innocents that we were, the significance of that advice was lost on us. We received more or less similar advice from every leader or political party we contacted through the elected Negotiating Committee. The leaders' attitude and reaction suited the rulers admirably and there was not much difficulty in the handling of the situation the way they liked thereafter. Finally it boiled down to the fact that where the RIN mutiny was concerned, the rulers and the leaders of the ruled were no longer adversaries, but allies."* pp. 201-202, [24].

Indeed, top Congress leaders were in touch with the British authorities throughout the mutiny. Dutt has reported that *"war secretary Mason was in constant touch with Congress President Maulana Azad and others."* p. 164, p. 170, [24]. We also know the following from a report that Colville had sent to Viceroy Wavell, *"The Congress leaders, had decried any share in the mutiny, and had advised people to preserve order. I received a message from Vallabhbhai Patel to this effect on Thursday [21 February], together with an offer to do anything which he could to prevent bloodshed. Mrs. Aruna Asaf Ali had been attempting to fish in troubled waters, but had received no encouragement from Vallabhbhai Patel. An order had been served on her debarring her from taking part in public meetings. He went on to say that Nehru had come to Bombay on the invitation of the more fiery members of Congress, and against the advice of Vallabhbhai Patel. He had, however, been restrained from inflaming, the situation, as on arriving here he had been impressed by the necessity for curbing the wild outburst of violence which had taken place. Now that the city was quiet again, there were many elements who were anxious to exploit the R.I.N. case, and represent the ring-leaders as martyrs. On Friday morning the 22nd widespread trouble broke out, ostensibly in sympathy with the R.I.N. though against the advice of both Congress and League leaders."* p. 1081, Vol VI, [11], p. 300, [7].

Colville had reported: *"on this day [February 22] I received calls from Mr. Chundrigar, Provincial head of the Muslim League, and SK Patil, Secretary of the Bombay Provincial Congress Committee, both of whom assured me of their anxiety to allay the disturbances, and offering the help of volunteers to assist the police. I saw several of these volunteers on the following day, and they did useful though limited work. It is not possible for them to deal with wild mobs who will only respond to force, but they can have a calming effect when the worst of the trouble has begun to die down. I also had the call from the Mayor who summoned his Peace Committee. This committee was formed by him some months ago during the communal riots,*

and is representative of various sections of the community. Though not very influential, it can make a useful gesture.” p. 1082, Vol VI, [11], p. 300, [7]. Also, *“It is clear to me that the local Congress leaders here are distinctly anxious about the position, and are convinced that the Communists are intent on working up a state of chaos. Whatever Congress plans may be for concerted movement later, I believe they do not want trouble just now, and feel that they are in danger of losing grip on their Left Wing.”* p. 1082, Vol VI, [11]. Thus, Azad and Patel had been in touch with high ranking British authorities, had gagged their colleague, Mrs. Ali who was sympathetic to the mutineers, and Congress had sent volunteers to quell the mutiny, working shoulder to shoulder with the British.

Also, note that Colville’s confidential report informs us that Patel had sent an emissary to the British to communicate that it was he who had helped the British quell the mutiny, and had prevented Nehru from aggravating the same: *“He went on to say that Nehru had come to Bombay on the invitation of the more fiery members of Congress, and against the advice of Vallabhbhai Patel. He had, however, been restrained from inflaming, the situation, as on arriving here, he had been impressed by the necessity for curbing the wild outburst of violence which had taken place.”* p. 1081, Vol VI, [11]. Patel’s own letter to Gandhi on 24-2-1946 confirms the same: *“She [Aruna Asaf Ali] wired Jawahar. She has a newspaper (Free Press Journal) write that Jawahar was the only leader capable of handling the situation. The reason was that she could not get my support. Jawahar sent me a wire saying that if necessary he would leave important work and come. I replied that he need not. Even so he comes tomorrow. A telegram from him says that though he has received my wire he is coming because he would feel uneasy if he did not. Let him. But it is very wrong that he comes in response to her wire.”* p. 356, [9], pp. 308-309, [25]. Thus, Patel is confirming Colville’s report up to the point that Aruna Ali *“received no encouragement from him”* and *“Nehru had come to Bombay on the invitation of the more fiery members of Congress [Aruna Asaf Ali], and against Patel’s advice.”* It is of course another matter that Nehru may not have assisted the mutineers because he was equally anxious to collude with the rulers; clearly he was willingly to arrive earlier and eventually when he did, he did precious little to assist the mutineers. But the question that remains is: *“whether claiming credit for collusion against the revolutionaries a regular practice of the iron man, or was it the nadir to which he stooped in a desperate bid for prime ministership?”* Either way, Nehru beat him to the post.

Over the barely cold corpses of the dead naval ratings and the working class of Bombay, Patel would be found playing party politics alongside Nehru and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. The letter, from Patel to Gandhi on 24/02/1946, quoted below gives an insight into the attitude of the Congress leaders towards the fate of the naval ratings.

Revered Bapu,

Sushila gave your letter to me.

Aruna has thrown a spark and is fanning the flames. About two hundred and fifty people have succumbed to the bullets. Over a thousand men have been wounded. The police felt helpless, so it was replaced by a heavy military force. She gave an unbecoming retort even to your small statement of yesterday. The Press has released only a small part of it. The Free Press is on their side. Achyut and his men are putting her in the vanguard. She sent a telegram to Jawaharlal and gave out to the Press that, under the circumstances, he was the only leader who could lead them. This she did as she could not find my support. Jawahar wired to me asking if his presence would be necessary, and in that case, he would come setting aside all his preoccupations. I advised him not to come. Yet he is reaching here. He has wired back to me that he was feeling out of sorts and he would come. He will come here tomorrow at 3PM. Well, let him. But the fact that he comes here on account of Aruna's telegram is sorrowful indeed. This way, she is encouraged, and if we would not resist their rashness, things will go from bad to worse. Shops in the city have been looted, pedestrians have been ransacked, some public buildings have been set on fire, and some railway quarters, even a train, has been burnt. If under such circumstances, they had to call the military, futile it would be to lay blame on them. The atmosphere has much pacified today and peace may be restored tomorrow. But it is unlikely that the military would be called off soon. There is so much poison in the air. The Englishman and his style of dress have fallen to utter disapprobation. It is tragic that they have made ample use of the student community.

All this coincided with a general strike in the Navy and Air Force. They cannot any longer brook inferior treatment to themselves as compared to their English counterparts. Nor can they tolerate insult and humiliation at the hands of their officers. All this has added to the racial bitterness. The upsurge of consciousness among Asiatics may also have prompted it, albeit indirectly.

Ours is a difficult task. These people do not any longer pay heed to your advice. They respect you only as a saint. But indeed they look upon us as worn out leaders, and think it is enough to lend their ears to what we say. But they decry us publicly that ours is a way that has proved its inefficiency and impracticability. How we have to handle this situation is worth considering.

I am finding it hard to carry on with Maulana. He is behaving like a despot. I will speak it all to you when we meet. I have asked him to relieve me (from the CWC and the EB). But he will not agree. But there is no other course open to me unless matters are well cleared up.

As maybe seen from the above letter, Patel's letter contains not a single word about the fates of the naval ratings. He is only concerned with law and order and party politics. Nor did Patel's disdain for the well-being of the people to whom he had just promised that there would be no victimisation if they surrendered, end there. The naval ratings of Vishakhapatnam, hearing the call given by their colleagues in Bombay, had gone on a sympathetic strike, and consequently, action was being taken against them in the wake of the suppression of the naval mutiny. When

Konda Venkatappayya, a freedom fighter from Andhra, sought to raise the issue of their being victimisation, Patel explicitly refused to help, saying, *“We cannot object to enforcement of discipline in the defence forces.”* pp. 167, [35]. SK Patil, a Congress leader from Bombay told the Governor of Bombay Presidency that *“Patel felt that indiscipline must be punished.”* pp.256, [33], [36]

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, in a meeting with Lord Wavell, agreed with him on the need to preserve discipline among the service personnel. pp. 256, [33].

While Patel, Azad and other Congress leaders were offering empty assurances to the naval ratings that there would be no victimisation or vindictive action against them, Philip Mason, the War Secretary, intervening in a debate in the Central Assembly, declared, *“I shall give no assurance that there will be no punishment. Government should reserve to itself, the right to punish the persons who led the young and excitable ratings to rebel.”* pp.254, [33]. Not only did this speech elicit no condemnation or distress among the Congressmen, they were even approving of his sentiments so much that the War Secretary felt compelled to thank them, saying, *“It is quite clear that all sections of the House are at one on this question, and do wish to preserve the discipline of the armed forces.”* pp.1423, [36].

Other leaders literally celebrated with the oppressors of the naval ratings. KM Munshi and his wife, and Mirchandani, among other important Congress leaders of Bombay, were found at a cocktail party on board the HMS Glasgow to celebrate the victory over the mutiny on 01/03/1946. pp. 269, [33].

Congress betrayal of the Army mutiny at Jabalpur

The reaction of the Congress leaders to the Army Mutiny at Jabalpur was equally contemptuous. Local Congress leaders visited the strikers, and tried to persuade the striking soldiers to submit peacefully to the British and give up their resistance. The striking soldiers were also shown a letter by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the then Congress president, asking them to resume work. pp. 294, [33]. Jawaharlal Nehru also made an almost dismissive reference to the Jabalpur Mutiny, *“...the men ... have remained completely peaceful...The demands were for better treatment in regard to rations, amenities etc, and equality of treatment between Indian and British soldiers. There were also some political demands... Such demands should not normally be made on the basis of a strike... We have seen recently strikes by American and British servicemen.”* pp. 404, [34].

Section F: How free India relegated the military mutineers to oblivion

The state that followed post independence remained a continuity of the colonial regime – so it looked upon those that resisted its precursor as her enemies rather than her liberators. It did everything possible to relegate the revolutionaries to oblivion. In fact, by the night of August 14,

1947, when Jawaharlal Nehru was delivering his acclaimed tryst with the destiny speech, the ratings of the Royal Indian Naval mutiny had already *“become an inconvenient national memory.”* p. 199, [24]. First, India’s first deputy prime minister, her very own iron man, Vallabhbhai Patel treated the newspaper that publicised the naval mutiny with an iron fist. In the foreword to BC Dutt’s memoir of the naval mutiny, S. Natarajan, the editor of the Free Press Journal, which had extensively covered the Naval mutiny has written: *“But a more serious consequence to the Free Press Institution was earning Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel’s wrath. Sadanand only let me know of this months later when I parted from him. The Sardar had expressed his displeasure at the editorial policy of the Free Press Journal and indicated that in Sadanand’s place he would have sacked the editor. Sadanand had said something about editors being hard to get and that I was the editor. But the Sardar was not mollified. As a result the world news service Sadanand was planning and for which he had been promised facilities and funds in India and the necessary equipment in America fell through, leaving the burden of the preliminary expenses on Sadanand”* pp. 9-10, [24]. We had seen that on 24-2-1946 Patel had alluded in a letter to Gandhi to the Free Press Journal with some displeasure: *“She [Aruna Asaf Ali] has a newspaper (Free Press Journal) write that Jawahar was the only leader capable of handling the situation.”* p. 356, [9], pp. 308-309, [25].

On 11th February, 1949, Major General of Staff, P. K. Khanduri, issued an order recommending that photos of Bose not be displayed at prominent places in Canteens, Quarter guards or Recreation rooms. Such an order would not be issued without the knowledge of the defense minister. Indian navy did not do much to honor the naval mutiny either. The ships that the mutineers used were gradually banished: *“The TALWAR ceased to be the Signal School and even the name was taken off the roll. The Signal School was shifted to Cochin. Castle Barracks was also dropped out of the Naval register. Later it was rechristened, ANGRE. After the partition of the subcontinent, Pakistan received the NARBADA as her share of the Navy. Like most of my comrades, I soon lost track of the HINDUSTAN and the other ships which had played a more prominent role in the uprising.”* pp. 186-187 [24]. One wonders if Bose had to be banished from the memory of the Indian military because the naval mutineers drew their inspiration from him. Be that as it may, in the regime of the first Information and broadcasting minister, Patel, circulars were sent to All India Radio banning any broadcast related to Bose in January, 1949. The circular created a great commotion in the Calcutta station of the All India radio. Despite a vociferous public demanded for broadcast of a special program on the birthday of Subhas Bose, on January 23, 1949, no programme was broadcast honouring him in the morning or evening; only ten minutes were spared in the afternoon to broadcast the music of the Azad Hind Fauj p. 181, [12].

The state that originated from the transfer of power in 1947 did not reinstate soldiers from Indian National Army led by Subhas Bose and ratings who participated in that naval mutiny. This is despite the fact that the British decision to leave India in a hurry was primarily due *“to the INA activities of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, which weakened the very foundation of the*

British Empire in India, and the RIN Mutiny which made the British realise that the Indian armed forces could no longer be trusted to prop up the British" (as per Lord Clement Attlee, the British Prime Minister, who officiated over the transfer of power) [28]. But then the soldiers and ratings who rebelled against the British could clearly not be accommodated in a military in which British officers served as the heads of the three defense services (right after the transfer of power). Claude Auchinleck, the former commander-in-chief, became the supreme commander of the armed forces of both India and Pakistan for some time. A large number of British military officers continued in service responding to the appeals of the governments that received power. And, the Indian government released several Gurkha regiments and battalions to serve the British and allowed the British to recruit Gurkha soldiers on Indian soil. pp. 382-383, [7], pp. 721, pp. 724-725 Vol. XI, p. 569, Vol. XII, [11].

The soldiers and ratings involved in the Air Revolt, Naval Mutiny and Jabalpur Mutinies of 1946 have never been classified as 'freedom fighters' either by the Indian government, and consequently, those who took part in this mutiny have never received any recognition for their role in the freedom movement and have languished, mostly forgotten, except by a few who know their sordid fate.

The sordid saga of betrayal of the armed forces mutinies would however neither be the first nor the last time where political leaders of India would unite with foreign powers against their own. It is just yet another statistic for the same. We now know that the free Indian state eavesdropped on the families of freedom fighting martyrs, like Subhas Bose, and shared the information with Great Britain [13] [14]. In 1999, the nation was shocked to hear that a 23 year old officer of the Indian Army, Captain Saurabh Kalia and his patrolling team of 5 soldiers were captured from within Indian territory and tortured to death purportedly by the Pakistani army. His ear drums were pierced with hot iron rods, eyes punctured and genitals cut off during the torture. The Indian state, regardless of the regimes which have changed several times since (from a NDA government led by Vajpayee to a UPA government led by Manmohan Singh back to a NDA government led by Modi), has not sought retribution on their behalf. But, then a state that has been founded by Gandhi, Nehru and Patel in continuity with the preceding British regime, that which purposely sent her revolutionary freedom fighters to oblivion, is unlikely to either. Our fundamentals did not change, after all.

Subhas Bose had perhaps foreseen the nature that free India would assume under the Congress High Command and the Gandhian hierarchy. On 31.10.1940, he wrote to his brother, Sarat Bose, from Presidency jail, that: "*If power goes into the hands of such mean, vindictive and unscrupulous persons [Congress High Command] when Swaraj is won, what will happen to the country?*" p. 160, [27]. On 24.10.1940, he had wondered in a letter to his brother: "*which is a greater menace to India's political future-the British bureaucracy or the Gandhian hierarchy?*" p. 159, [27]. If his views of free India would have been known today, it may well

have concurred with BC Dutt's, (twenty-four years after the mutiny, on January 30, 1970): "the *Free India we dreamt of is not the one we are living in today.*" p. 223, [24].

Section G: Naval mutiny - the tragedy of continuity of Gandhian betrayals of genuine grassroots mass movements

There is often a question raised by those who take umbrage at what they perceive as damage from exposure of documentary trail to the image of their icons Gandhi, Nehru and Patel, derisively framed and delivered : "If the majority of Indian masses were really so driven by militant, violent revolutionary fervour, and the Gandhians did not represent the masses, why did these alternative mass-movements fail to dominate and lead the nationalist struggle and how did the Gandhians who allegedly lacked mass support still managed to win power?"

It is a striking feature of the Gandhian phase of the nationalist struggle that, right from the beginning the Gandhian transition, the INC rode on misappropriation of popular grievances in the form of mass movements or resistance movements at the grassroots level against various institutions of the colonial state. The mass movements can be distinguished by their inevitable concreteness of issues, grievances and their clear identification of the target as colonial institutions themselves regardless of the ethnicity or nationality of those who ran or staffed those institutions. For the common people, native Indians who helped perpetrate an exploitative or unjust colonial institution were indistinguishable in their heinousness from the "white" British who led such institutions. The peasant movement in Champaran was one such, where there was already a mass movement ongoing against the British due to the exploitation of the indigo growers p. 300, [22] A similar method was used in the agrarian revolts in Avadh a bit later [40]. Gandhians however make it a point to protect the Indians who were institutionally collaborating with the British and sought to divert the anger and political hostility of the masses towards the Indian collaborators in the name of "nationalism" [40].

Thus both in the widespread early peasant movements of UP and Bihar, as well as in the last phase naval uprising, Gandhians proceeded in three clear steps:

1. They consistently sought, with their greater access to print media, to reduce or represent the ongoing mass movements which were for most parts spontaneous or organized by popular grassroots figures independent of the Congress organizational hierarchy - as subsidiary or subservient to or where convenient – inspired by Gandhi. The amount of publicity, something remarked by RC Majumdar, p. 300, [22] that the Champaran indigo farmer struggle got is astonishing, considering that many similar movements were buried by the press, both Indian and Western. Additionally, the Government's mildness in treating Gandhi (who was legally in the wrong) is also astonishing, as is their generous treatment of Gandhi after the agitation. p. 300, [22]. Further most parts of the concrete issues and political programmes of the movements were obfuscated, especially where they clashed with the interests of the sections that were most

likely generators of political funding – big landlords, big-businesses who in turn were dependent on aspects of the colonial state. This has been detailed at length in [40], in the matter of the treatment of Baba Ramachandra. In the initial phase, when the Congress had not yet fully managed to impose its control on these movements they would pretend to be sympathetic and supportive and appear to make common cause with the mass movements to create the false impression that they would genuinely pursue the goals of the movements.

2. The second phase would be mounted to subvert and if possible delegitimize the leadership that had been thrown up democratically or popularly from “below” through these movements. Peasant leaders in the Avadh revolt were handed over to the British, as detailed in [40]. If any showed talents for organizing independent of the personal submission model developed in the 1920's INC, they would either be sought to be politically bought over by cooption into formal semblance of political recognition by ornamental posts and if this failed would be sought to be delivered over to the British to remove from the political scene. This is seen again iconically with peasant leaders like Baba Ramachandra [40] and Naval uprising leaders in 46-47. While the peasant movement being in the early phase of Gandhian establishment in Indian politics led to more elaborate pretensions of attempted cooption and the betrayal was covered with greater finesse, by the time of the Naval uprising, the Gandhians felt so completely in unrivalled control of the nationalist spectrum that they could be more casual and callous about it. While in 1920's Gandhians needed to both finish off the leadership of spontaneous mass movements as potential threats to the personal control they sought but yet needed the numbers of these mass movements behind their own more abstract and esoteric agenda- by the mid-40's Gandhians felt it was no longer necessary to obtain the masses behind the movements for their own agenda. Sacrificing the naval mutineers after deceptively inducing them to surrender was no longer a tactic that would raise feelings of guilt or fall from the much touted Gandhian morality.

3. Thus we arrive at a possible tantalizing clue to one of the major factors behind the failure of Indian mass movements to dominate the nationalist discourse vis-a-vis Gandhians. In each case, from the peasant movements to the naval uprising, the masses generally were guided by a moral code of conduct rooted in folk or practised Hinduism and syncretic religious values overlapping with non-Hindu communities that put faith in the “given word”, in “elders”, in inherent “goodness” of humanity, disparaged or abhorred cynical distrust of other humans. In other words, most of the time the Indian masses were guided by their simple yet sincere interpretations of “dharma” and modeled their leaders as themselves. Thus they could be repeatedly deceived and manipulated or exploited by a leadership that cynically used such “dharmik” values opportunistically and contextually and often pre-empting any corrective action that the masses could take. Gandhians won therefore by using “dharma” without being confined or restrained by it, while the masses failed to do so. The added tactical flexibility helped Gandhians to set themselves up as the sole representatives of nationalism while the more sincere following of “dharma” restricted and fatally constricted the revolutionary mass movements.

References:

- [1] S. C. Bose, The Indian Struggle (1920-1942)
- [2] Nirmal Kumar Bose, Selections From Gandhi, Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad, April, 1957
- [3] Complete Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Speech at Students Meeting Ahmedabad, 29/09/1920, <http://www.gandhiserve.org/cwmg/VOLo21.PDF>
- [4] ibid, Non-Cooperation, Article in Navjivan, 04/07/1920, <http://www.gandhiserve.org/cwmg/VOLo21.PDF>
- [5] JB Kripalani , Gandhi His Life and Thought
- [6] Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Gandhi's statement to the Press, 23/02/1946, Poona, <http://www.gandhiserve.org/cwmg/VOLo89.PDF>
- [7] Suniti Ghosh, The Tragic Partition of Bengal
- [8] G D Birla, In the Shadow of the Mahatma
- [9] Rajmohan Gandhi Patel – A Life
- [10] Claude Markovits, “Indian Business and Nationalist Politics 1931:1939”, Cambridge University Press.
- [11] N. Mansergh (editor-in-chief), Constitutional relations Between British and India: The Transfer of Power 1942-47, in 12 volumes, London 1971-1983
- [12] Kanailal Basu, Netaji Rediscovered
- [13] IB snooped upon key Bose family members, <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/bose-netaji-family-members-snoop-jawaharlal-nehru/1/429401.html>
- [14] Why Did The Government Spy On Netaji’s Kin For More Than Two Decades?, <https://swarajyamag.com/politics/why-did-the-government-spy-on-netajis-kin-for-more-than-two-decades/>
- [15] Suniti Kumar Ghosh, “The Indian Big Bourgeoisie – Its genesis, Growth and Character”

- [16] Saswati Sarkar, Shanmukh, Dikgaj, “Netaji’s Modernism Versus Gandhi’s Spiritual Swaraj”, <https://www.dailyo.in/politics/mahatma-gandhi-subhas-chandra-bose-socialism-british-raj-independence-nehru/story/1/4164.html>
- [17] G D Birla, “Bapu – A unique association”
- [18] Judith M. Brown, “Gandhi’s rise to power – Indian Politics 1915-1922”
- [19] M.K. Gandhi, Hind Swaraj, Hindu Dharma, Ahmedabad 1950, online version, <http://www.gandhiserve.org/cwmg/VOL010.PDF>
- [20] Biswanath Bose, “RIN Mutiny, 1946: Reference and Guide for All”
- [21] Collected Works of Gandhi, Statements to the Press, Poona, 26/02/1946 and 03/03/1946, <http://www.gandhiserve.org/cwmg/VOL090.PDF>
- [22] Ramesh Chandra Majumdar, “History and Culture of the Indian people – Vol. XI - The Struggle For Freedom”
- [23] Collected works of Mahatma Gandhi, Gandhi’s appeal in a speech in Nadiad, 22/06/1918, <http://www.gandhiserve.org/cwmg/VOL017.PDF>
- [24] B. C. Dutt, Mutiny of the Innocents, Sindhu Publications Pvt Ltd, Bombay-1, 1971
- [25] G. M. Nandurkar, ed, Bapu, Sardar and Mahadevbhai, Sardar Patel Centenary volumes (5 vols), Ahmedabad, 1974-8, Sardar’s letters, (Post centenary series), 3 Vols, Ahmedabad, 1980-3
- [26] File 18/2/46, Home Pol., National Archives, New Delhi
- [27] Subhas Chandra Bose, The Alternative Leadership, Speeches, Articles, Statements and Letters, June 1939-1941, Collected Works of Netaji, Vol. 10
- [28] <http://www.tribuneindia.com/2006/20060212/spectrum/main2.htm>
- [29] VP Menon, “Transfer of Power”
- [30] Government of India, Home Political Department, File No. 5/8/46, national Archives of India
- [31] Bipan Chandra, India’s Struggle for Independence

- [32] Maj. Gen. V K Singh, “Contribution of the Armed Forces to the Freedom Movement of India”
- [33] Dipak Kumar Das, “Revisiting Talwar”, 1993.
- [34] Lt. Gen. S. F. Menezes, “Fidelity and Honour”, 1993
- [35] G.M. Nandurkar, “Sardar's Letters – Mostly Unknown”
- [35] Letter from Colville to Wavell, 27/02/1946.
- [36] Legislative Assembly Debates, Vol. 2, No. 8.
- [37] Saswati Sarkar, Shanmukh and Dikgaj, “Mahatma Gandhi’s War on Indian Revolutionaries”, 31/07/2015
- [38] Kusum Nair, “The Army of Occupation”, 1946
- [39] Bisheshwar Prasad, (ed.), “Official History of the Indian Armed Forces in the Second World War 1939-45 – India and the War”, (New Delhi, 1966),
- [40] Kapil Kumar, “Peasants' Perception of Gandhi and His Programme: Oudh, 1920-1922”, Social Scientist, Vol. 11, No. 2 (Feb., 1983), pp. 16-30
- [41] Sankar Ghose, “Jawaharlal Nehru: A Biography”

[#British Raj](#), [#Naval Mutiny](#), [#Sardar Patel](#), [#Jawaharlal Nehru](#)

Online opinion, analysis and blog platform from the India Today Group.

URL of this article:

<https://www.dailyo.in/politics/how-gandhi-patel-and-nehru-colluded-with-the-british-to-suppress-the-naval-mutiny-of-1946/story/1/5567.html>

@ Copyright 2020-2021 India Today Group.