WW 2: Success of Germany's Radio Waves Propaganda Beamed at India

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Abstract

This is the third article published in Pakistan Horizon in a series of six articles on the radio waves clashes during the Second World War. In the present article I deal substantially with some tangible, crucial and specific issues and aspects that were severely confronting the British during the Second World War. These factors, in conjunction with technical advantages of Germany in radio waves transmission, as well as in the establishment of radio stations, firmly contributed towards the effectiveness of Nazi Germany's radio waves propaganda beamed to India.

Keywords: Second World War, British India, Germany, propaganda, radio waves, transmitters.

India engulfed in radio waves propaganda between Axis and Allied powers: Britain's situation in India and battlefields of Europe

In the European theatre of the Second World War, 'the Allied and Axis Powers used radio connectivity to communicate with relevant portions of the population.' This effort was reinforced via a policy and strategy 'to deny access to radio broadcasts of their enemy.'[1] Persistent radio waves propaganda was unleashed by all the big powers, each trying to undo the other. However, in this vortex of propaganda waves, the case of India, a very important, sensitive and indispensable colony of Britain, had gradually assumed extreme significance in view of severe internal disorder and external reverses of Britain and her allies.

In the context of the Second World War, as far as India is concerned, some crucial background is essential in understanding the pathetic state of affairs then confronting Britain and its colonies, and these continued to confront them for the next four to almost five years of the war. The most important was the extremely depressing situation for Britain in the battlefields of Europe where one country after another was crumbling before the armies of Nazi Germany. Moreover, in conjunction with such

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[1] Richard M. Crowell, 'Battle of the Beams,' The Corbett Centre for Maritime Policy Studies, January 2017, Kings College, University of London, p. 11.

severe survival problems, the situation and aggressive trend of constitutional, political and law and order situation in colonial India continued to aggravate, thereby making it almost impossible for the government to handle or control it effectively.

Some of the important contributing or destabilizing factors in the internal affairs of British India were the Quit India call in the background of persistent demands for self-government by the Indian National Congress. Added to this was the aggressive role of Subhas Chandra Bose, initially from Europe, and in later years from the Far East. His entering into a coalition with the Japanese and with their support, taking over the leadership of the Indian National Army (INA), was a severe challenge to the continuity of British control over India. Two other factors were the unrest in the Pakhtun tribes in the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) and the Hur insurgency in Sind. This combination of negative factors triggered off a genuine feeling of extreme apprehension in the public as well as in the government due to the massive and aggressive Japanese advance, conquering one country after another and approaching close to the borders of India. Added to this depressing situation were some indirect factors that did nothing to alleviate the apprehension or panic that was gradually engulfing the public. Military intelligence reports and military planning in India, especially for the north-western areas bordering Afghanistan and Persia, were somewhat ambiguous and aggravated the pessimism in the grey areas then existing in the minds of a very large number of people in India. However, a very important and sensitive aspect that continued to make the situation risky was the overstretched army manpower within India that could not be pulled out for dispatch to the battlefields in Europe or to North Africa where repeated reverses were experienced by Britain. This inadequacy in logistics, armaments and manpower triggered severe deadlocks and made day to day operations almost impossible.

This overtly deplorable state of affairs was naturally exploited by Nazi Germany and persistently formed the background material in their radio waves propaganda. It appears that the success of their propaganda, apart from some technical advantages in broadcasting capacity, owed much to the British and Allied powers' short comings and the aggravating problems faced by Britain in the governance of India. In view of these factors, until early 1943, Nazi Germany was definitely winning the war on the radio waves.

German conquests in Europe and advance in Russia scared Britain regarding threat to north-west India

Any account or analysis of the menacing radio waves propaganda unleashed by Nazi Germany would not be intelligible without a brief resume of the massive blitzkrieg through which German armies overran neighbouring countries, leading from one conquest to another. At the same time, it is also necessary to indicate explicitly the thoughts and feelings of British officers in the armed forces, and especially in the civil bureaucracy.

Before the actual declaration of war, Hitler, on 7 March 1937, repudiated the Locarno Treaty and occupied the Rhineland. Germany also occupied Abyssinia, and then 'Hitler decided to test the water by sanctioning a new phase of piracy on the open sea.'[2] In this scenario, for Britain, the initial, or first stage of the war in Europe from September 1939 to the beginning of April 1940, may appear to be a quiet period when compared with the later years of the war. However, it was a dangerous interlude and it signified the German might, speed and determination to overawe entire Europe.

1939 onwards: prospects of war with Germany: situation and impressions of officers in Sind

The memoirs of Roger Pearce, an officer of the Indian Civil Service (ICS) posted in Sind indicated that British officers in Sind, as of 1939, were engrossed in the possibility of war. This 'possibility was changing into probability,' and their concern was as to when would war be declared.[3] Pearce recollected that 'Germany had broken all the promises given to Chamberlain, and had reoccupied the Rhineland, absorbed Austria, and occupied all but a rump of Czechoslovakia.' Most British officers were indignant, and were 'sure there must be war,' however 'had no ideas about when,' but were ready whenever they had orders. In August 1939, when Pearce visited Hyderabad and dined at the Rajput Mess of the Rajputana Rifles, a battalion posted in the cantonment, 'all the talk was of war, and very cheerful it was.' Around the same time, Pearce realized that in Europe, 'there seemed to be an inevitable slide to war.'[4]

Due to the above tense situation, 'the whole atmosphere in Karachi had changed,' and in general, all such officers knew that the outbreak of

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[2] Sitanshu Das, *Subhas: A Political Biography* (New Delhi: Rupa and Co., 2001), p. 321.

[3] Roger Pearce, *Once a Happy Valley, Memoirs of an ICS Officer in Sindh, 1938-1948* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 35.

[4] Ibid., p. 223.

war could be any moment. Two of Pearce's friends were Henry Frost and Bob Shebbeare, the latter being 'the Governor's son-in-law who had been his Military Secretary,' and both were 'recalled to their units.' At the same time, Pearce and a colleague 'were called to Government House to learn about codes and ciphers — in strict secrecy, work for British nationals only.'[5]

From August / September 1939 onwards, Pearce and his colleagues 'became once more conscious that there was a war going on.' Their only news was 'from letters from home.' They had no radio, although they were 'so near Karachi' and they had no newspaper either. Pearce wrote that 'this was the time when Germany overran Norway, the phoney war had turned hot,' children were evacuated to a rural school.' Pearce's wife's sister went to Oxford, Pearce's sister went to Cambridge, and his brother was called up in artillery. Their parents stayed where they were. However, by comparison, they, in Sind, led a very pleasant life.[6]

Pearce tells us that when the Germans invaded France, they were 'expecting any day to hear of a landing in England.' Then 'it seemed inevitable,' nor did Pearce and his colleagues realize then 'how little resistance could have been offered.'[7] Later, the thoughts of British army and civilian officers in India like those of Pearce's British colleagues were, 'if Hitler should invade and conquer Britain,' where would this leave them?[8]

Blitzkrieg of the German army in Europe, advancing and conquering one country after another

In 1939, a police officer of the elite Indian Police (IP), Robbins, returned from leave and realized that in India 'times were changing rapidly.' The Germans 'were having a succession of military successes and in Central India, this meant more people were being sent into the internment camps.'[9] When the bombings of London began, the British officers in Sind were worried, but there was nothing that they could do about it.[10]

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[5] Ibid., pp. 76, 77.
[6] Ibid., pp. 139, 140.
[7] Ibid., p. 145.
[8] The Indo British Review, A Journal of History, 25th Anniversary Number, November 1993, Volume XIX No. 2. Published by G.T. Virghese, Madras, India. Printed by Bhattarams Reprographics (P) Ltd., Madras, India. A copy is available in file MSS. EUR. C 708., pp. 55 to 61, 'Experience in India and Pakistan,' Major Henry Lincoln with the Royal Fusiliers in India and Pakistan.
[9] Leslie Robbins, *Policing the Raj* (London: BACSA, 1985), p. 58.
[10] Roger Pearce, op. cit., p. 145.

Stage two in this deadly war started on 9 April 1940 and from this date until the end of June 'the scenes changed with catastrophic suddenness.' Around the later date, German armies overran Norway, Denmark, Holland, Belgium and Luxembourg. At this juncture, the British armies had been 'forced to withdraw from Dunkirk and Norway, Italy had declared War, France had capitulated and Britain and the peoples of the Empire stood alone and the great peril.'[11] As of December 1941, the German army's 'blitzkrieg blazed over Europe and the dark shadow of Nazi tyranny grew and spread from the Atlantic to the Black Sea.'[12]

Last quarter of 1940 and first quarter of 1941: very rapid German advance into Russia scared the British about threat to India

That there was strong anticipation among top military officers, especially intelligence personnel, regarding the objectives of the German advance towards north-west India and that the possible route could be through Quetta is discernible from the observations of Roger Pearce on a visit via train from Larkana to Quetta. When Pearce reached Quetta, he realized that 'the town was a great military base, growing fast in the face of the threat from the west if the Germans rolled up Russia, as seemed likely.'[13]

Around the last couple of months of 1940, another ICS officer who had opted for the political service, Sir Conrad Corfield, was posted to Quetta and later wrote about this period as well as the early months of 1941. According to him,[14] the 1941 German advance into Russia was, 'so rapid that the possibility of a break-through towards India had to be considered.' He elaborated that 'if one day an invading army was to follow the route from Kandhar to Quetta, the defences of the border at Chaman must be strengthened.' Such defences were in the Quetta district and their engagement needed negotiations with the tribes. He recollected that on a visit to these expensive emplacements with the local military authorities, he 'ventured to ask whether the Germans would butt their head against these fortifications when the deserts to the south left an open route to Karachi.'[15]

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[11] *The Times of India*, 30 July 1942.

[12] *The Bombay Chronicle*, 13 January 1942, 'India and the War, Evolution of Congress Policy II,' by GNA.

[13] Roger Pearce, op. cit., p. 173.

[14] Sir Conrad Corfield, *The Princely India I Knew, From Reading To Mountbatten*. Indo-British Historical Society, Madras, 1975. See p. 116.

[15] A major and sensitive issue that intelligence agencies ignored was that water shortage would make it impossible for a large force to cross the Baluchistan area. Refer to Sir Conrad Corfield, ibid.

In London, however, the Military Operations Department in the War Office regarded the appreciation of the Joint Planners of the Indian Command as not plausible. They felt that the suggestion of a possible German attack on the North-West Frontier during 1942 was projecting 'the blackest picture,' because they were confident that in the circumstances then prevailing 'it was reasonable to assume that no land attack on India could materialise until the spring of 1943.'[16]

April/May 1942: British intelligence anticipation of Axis strategy regarding invasion of India. German aircraft may threaten Baluchistan down to Karachi. Apprehension of German plans for the Persian Gulf, Baluchistan and NWFP

In April 1942, developments in the war situation necessitated the Government of India and the GHQ, for purposes of defence, to embark at once on a large programme of aerodrome construction in the whole of India.[17] In view of the German advance, the priority areas on the north-western sector of India were Baluchistan and the NWFP.

Since the Axis forces were approaching Suez, it was apprehended that German planes might, at some stage, extend their range in order to attack British sea communications in the Persian Gulf. Some reports indicated that German aircraft may even try to transport airborne units as far as Baluchistan to capture an aerodrome there, from which, in combination with Afghan tribes, the Germans might threaten the whole area from the North-West Frontier down to Karachi. The evolving situation had been analysed by the Joint Planners of the Indian Command and discussions during these meetings suggested the possibility of combining German and Japanese thrusts to attack the British position in India.[18]

In May 1942, the Joint Planners of the Indian Command estimated that the earliest date on which such an invasion would effectively materialize could be the beginning of 1943, although the air threat could come much earlier. It was possible that the Germans might utilize two armoured and three motorized divisions and one airborne division for the tribal territory, and have the support of an air force of 400 to 500

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[16] Milan Hauner, *India in Axis Strategy - Germany, Japan and Indian Nationalists in the Second World War* (Stuttgart: Ernest Klett, 1981), p. 501.

[17] IOR/L/WS/2/51: 'Notes for India Office Part II,' p. 140 (73), Secret, No. 6843/501 (a) Government of India, War Department (Air Branch) New Delhi, 28 September 1942. To All Provincial Governments, The Honourable Agent to G.G, Resident and Chief Commissioner Baluchistan, Chief Commissioner Delhi. Subject: 'Priorities for Aerodrome Construction.'

[18] Milan Hauner, op. cit., p. 500.

aircraft.[19] In order to negate this possible German strategy towards north-western India, British counter measures comprised substantially of building new airfields in the region, for example, eleven in Baluchistan and in eastern Persia during 1941-42. However, work on static defences on the inner approaches to India through the Bolan and Khyber passes continued as before.[20] While discussing the August 1942 disturbances in India during the Quit India Movement, Sir Conrad Corfield[21] queried as to 'what would have happened to the defence of Baluchistan if these disturbances had occurred when the Germans were approaching India?'

Vulnerability of British India in WW 2: evolution of Congress demands leading to Quit India Movement

1918 to 1932: so-called non-violent campaigns under leadership of Mohandas Gandhi

In British India, there was a growing 'public disenchantment with British rule,' due mainly to the 'suppression of civil liberties, political rights, and culture as well as alienation from issues facing common Indians.' This gradually led to an upsurge in revolutionary activities which aimed at overthrowing British authority.[22]

These movements crystallized between 1918 and 1922 at a time 'when the first series of non-violent campaigns of civil disobedience were launched by the Indian National Congress under the leadership of Mohandas Gandhi, who learnt it from a Sikh named Baba Ram Singh (b.1816 – d.1885), the originator of Kuka Movement in the Punjab.' While the movement consisted of a large number of people from across India, at the forefront were Gandhi and the Congress. These movements 'ultimately shaped India's cultural, religious, and political unity.' While remaining committed to Purna Swaraj in 1930, the Congress led mass struggles between 1930 and 1932.[23]

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[19] Ibid., pp. 500, 501.

[20] No. 6035/1/MOI, GHQ, India, dated 8th April 1942, Paper No. 16 of 16th May 1942 titled 'Defence of North West India' and an earlier 'Plan for the Defence of the Western Sector of the North Western Frontier of India,' An overtly ambiguous aspect was ignored by Military Intelligence as to how the Germans would solve the tremendous logistic problems in bringing 'such a sophisticated military force down to the Persian Gulf and beyond.'

[21] Sir Conrad Corfield, op. cit., p. 116.

[22] *The Times of India*, 30 July 1942.

[23] www.liveindia.com

1939 onwards: war declared by the Viceroy on behalf of India

On 3 September 1939, war was declared by Lord Linlithgow, the Viceroy and Governor General of India, without consulting the Congress leadership. On this action, W. H. Pridmore, ICS, then posted in South India, observed that it was 'very sad that collaboration between the old and newly established authorities was to be dealt a fatal blow in 1939 when the Central Government declared war without the approval by democratic consultation of the Provincial governments.' The legislature upheld the Viceregal decree. In addition, it passed the Defence of India Bill with no opposition because the members of the Indian National Congress refused to attend this session. A result of the controversial decision and announcement by the Viceroy was that on 22 and 23 October 1939, the Congress leaders met at Wardah, and directed the Congress ministries to tender their resignations.[24]

March 1940: Ramgarh Session of Congress and fall of France

In the European theatre of the war, the month of March 1940 saw the fall of France.[25] In the same year, on 19 and 20 March at the annual session of the Indian National Congress at Ramgarh in district Bihar, a resolution proposed by Jawaharlal Nehru was passed to the effect that Congress could not, directly or indirectly, be party to the war effort. Also, it was agreed by an overwhelming majority that a civil disobedience campaign should be initiated at a time chosen by Gandhi, who would be in sole charge of the campaign.[26]

A more serious development, especially when Europe was facing a severe crisis was also in March 1940, at or after Ramgarh, the Bihar Congress Conference. A core group of Forward Bloc leaders approved a plan to secure foreign help for an armed uprising in the final phase of India's freedom struggle during the war.[27]

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[24] *Indo-British Review, A Journal of History*, Indo-British Historical Society, 21 Rajram Mehta Avenue (off Nelson Manickram Road), Madras – 600 029, India. Volume XXII, No. 2, 1998; 'The Indian Civil Service Survivors Remember the Raj, Part I. Magisterial Memories' by W.H. Pridmore, pp. 138 to 145; see p. 144.

[25] *The Bombay Chronicle*. 14 January 1942. 'India and the War, Evolution of Congress Policy, III.' By GNA.

[26] Martin Wynne (ed.), *On Honourable Terms: The Memoirs of Some Indian Police Officers 1915-1948* (London: British Association for Cemeteries in South Asia (BASCA), 1985), pp. 172-173. Henceforth referred to as *Memoirs*, Wynne.

[27] Sitanshu Das, op. cit., p. 353.

1939 to end June 1940: war in Europe

The war events in Europe that were gradually and steadily moving against Britain were being closely monitored by the Congress high command in India. As the position of Britain was quite fragile, perhaps it was inevitable that senior leaders in the Congress realized that this was an opportunity that must be urgently exploited to their own benefit as far as their strategy for freedom from Britain was concerned. The subsequent 'important initiative of the Congress party pertained to the Poona resolution of May 10, 1940.' If we assess the formulation of this resolution, and, 'especially, the subsequent supportive speeches and statements,' it was clear that the leadership of the Congress felt that 'Britain having suffered the successive blows that fell with stunning force from May 10, could no longer maintain its Government of India; by defect or exhaustion of war, must pass from Britain to the hands of the Congress.' The natural interpretation by the Congress high command, as well as important office bearers and those who mattered in policy decisions, was that 'the Congress must hastily prepare itself for all the functions of independence including that of defence of the country.'[28]

Next, the working committee of the Congress, met on 17 June 1940 at Wardah, where a significant development took place on 3 July 1940. The working committee met again and 'proposed a provisional National Government at the Centre.' Moreover, on 28 July, this 'proposal was confirmed by the Congress Committee meeting held at Poona.' In August, the British situation, due to developments in the war situation in Europe, further became visibly precarious. However, on 8 August 1940, the government replied to the All-India Congress (AIC) via a statement by the Viceroy which conveyed that 'a moment when the Commonwealth' was 'engaged in a struggle for existence' was 'not one in which fundamental constitutional issues,' could 'be decisively resolved.'[29]

On 16 September 1940, the AIC Bombay meeting launched a *satygraha* under Gandhi's leadership.[30] Between 21 October 1940 and December 1941, about 23,223[31] persons were sent to jail and fines to the extent of Rs. 542,775/- were imposed on satyagrahis.[32] However, on 3 December 1941, the Government of India released most of the Congress

[28] *The Times of India*, 30 July1942.
[29] Ibid.
[30] *The Bombay Chronicle,* 12 January 1942. Also see details on 'Congress and the War' in MSS EUR E 400/94.
[31] This total does not include Punjab.
[32] *The Bombay Chronicle*, op. cit. Also details on 'Congress and the War' in MSS EUR E 400/94.

prisoners, including Nehru and Azad. At this time, *The Bombay Chronicle* emphasized that 'the blitzkrieg blazed over Europe and the dark shadow of Nazi tyranny grew and spread from the Atlantic to the Black Sea.'[33]

August/September 1942: Congress felt Britain would lose the war and rejected offer of Dominion Status, leading to Quit India Movement

Around August 1942, the Congress leadership, senior as well as junior, had come to the conclusion that Britain could not win the war and rejected the British Government's offer of Dominion Status after the war. In the context of the war in Europe and the severe situation facing Britain, combined with the feeling of euphoria in the Congress, Gandhi initiated a Quit India campaign that initially disrupted communications in India, notably in Bihar. The law and order situation and violent riots were severe in central, eastern, western and southern India. However, the government tackled the crisis and gradually brought it under control. The entire top leadership of the Congress was imprisoned. At the same time, the Congress provincial governments resigned while the British appointed provincial governors who resumed the powers they had delegated to provincial legislatures under the 1935 India Act. The Muslim League, headed by Jinnah, was invited to form provincial governments in Assam, Bengal, Sind and the North-West Frontier Province.

As of January 1942, insecurity was predominant internally in India

On 21 March 1942, the local reactions to the war news in Karachi and Sind were only concerned with one thing − whether actual hostilities were likely to reach Karachi and if so, how soon, and in that event how people could save their lives and property.[34] According to confidential police reports, 'the turn of the tide of the war against the British, all left their indelible scars on the minds of the populace who valued a life of peace, and life of security.' To bolster the people's courage in the affected parts of the province, the police propagated that in the event of any attack they should go into action and, if bravery was displayed, they would be lavishly rewarded.[35]

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[33] Ibid., 'India and the War, Evolution of Congress Policy II.' By GNA, 13 January 1942.

[34] MSS. EUR. 372/5 Dow Collection, D.O. No. 114/FR, 21st March 1942, from Dow to the Viceroy, para 1.

[35] IGP Records 6-I, E. W. Martyres, Chapter III, pp. 73, 74, 'Pir's Rearrest and its Aftermath.' This is a typed book written around the early months of 1952 by Martyres, a Deputy Superintendent of Police (DySP) in the Sind Police, that

As of 25 April 1942, public morale in Karachi was low. There was a general craving for assurances that there was no danger and the press tended to emphasize any public pronouncement which expressed the view that danger did not exist or was still remote.[36]

As far as public reaction to the war news was concerned, the Viceroy's comment of 9 June 1942, on India, was that 'at all times' it was a country liable to be disturbed by rumour.' Enemy broadcasts were 'listened to and repeated from mouth to mouth.' He lamented that this had produced conditions which had given him and his government 'grave concern lest in an emergency the civil population might by its behaviour hinder the effective defence of the country.' Regarding the apprehensions of the public, the Viceroy had to admit that 'signs of fear had been evident throughout the subcontinent' and there had been 'extensive movements of population even out of cities remote from enemy action.'[37]

Subhas Chandra Bose's role in dissemination of radio waves propaganda while in Germany and Italy

On 1 February 1941, Subhas Chandra Bose, a charismatic leader of the anti-colonialist Congress party,[38] as well as a dynamic personality, who constantly propagated bold action to secure freedom from the British, arrived secretly and quietly in Afghanistan after escaping from custody in India. Once he reached Kabul, he had definite German assistance that facilitated his reaching Berlin. Outside the clutches of British India, and being an important Indian politician, it was inevitable that he would not only give his opinion on the state of affairs in India, but also express it as firmly and loudly and as he thought fit. As such, his contribution to what was then categorized as anti-British propaganda was comprehensively beamed from German and Italian radio stations as well as clandestine stations from elsewhere into the Indian subcontinent.

As far as the role of Bose is concerned, there is more than abundant material, radio broadcasts as well as matters pertaining to the creation and leadership of the Indian National Army, that originate not only from Germany and Italy, but also in the later stages from the cities and countries in the Far East that had been conquered by the Japanese. The latter are more sensational and fiery and reflect Bose's personality much

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has an overall colonial orientation on the issues and problems connected with the Hur insurgency.

[36] MSS. EUR. 372/5 Dow Collection, D.O. No. 154 / F.R. 25 April 1942, Governor to Viceroy, para 2.

[37] F 125/1, Linlithgow Collection. From the Viceroy's House, New Delhi, June 9th 1942, to His Majesty The King Emperor, p. 106.

[38] Later he was the head of the Japanese-aligned Indian National Army,

more accurately. In the context of Bose, apart from other reasons, the feeling and plans of responsible German strategists, were 'actively in support,' early in the 1941. Their strategy was to provide him with a sanctuary because he was 'a major leader of the more militant Indian nationalists and a recent escapee from imprisonment by the British.'[39]

In view of the Second World War priorities as well as strategy, and the mutual advantages not only to Germany but also for Bose, there was quite remarkable progress in the acceptability and operational utility of the latter to Nazi Germany. So much so that in the months of November and December 1941, Germany 'was providing Bose not only with sanctuary, but much more.' As stated by W. J. West, 'the Reich was substantially financing both his Berlin-based Free India Radio news service and his plan to build an *Indian Army of Liberation* in the West.' This was initiated 'by retraining Indian prisoners of war then being held in Germany and Italy.' Much later, this line of action led to these prisoners of war as well as deserters being collected together with the objective of utilizing and manipulating 'this special fighting force to liberate India from British control.'[40]

27 January 1942: Bose's projection of India under British occupation as a country on the brink of an uprising

On 27 January 1942, there was a secret meeting between Bose and Colonel Lahousen, in which Bose 'portrayed India as a country on the brink of an uprising in which the British Raj was merely awaiting a coup de grace.' This statement was not sudden or new or built up by Bose on the spur of the moment. This was his feeling as well as his impression as a senior politician, perhaps the most important politician in the then India.[41]

To destabilize British India, Germany required someone like Bose, a fiery personality full of enthusiasm and determination, to rid India of the British. As far as he was concerned, this was a golden opportunity to try out his revolutionary ideas and aggressive strategy. This mutually benefiting situation was the ideal opportunity for Bose and while in Germany, he 'initiated radio broadcasts stressing freedom for India.' His first broadcast started from the Azad Hind Radio on 28 February 1942

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[39] George Orwell [Eric Blair], *Orwell: The War Commentaries,* edited and with an introduction by W.J. West (London: Duckworth and the British Broadcasting Corporation, 1985), p. 222. A substantial part of the historical background information is detailed in the Introduction, the Appendix and the Notes which W.J. West had provided for *Orwell: The War Commentaries*.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Milan Hauner, op. cit., p. 421

and, in line with the policy and strategy of Nazi Germany, 'this speech was aired very frequently on Axis radio stations all over the world, and especially to at least a dozen Axis stations in India.'[42] The response to Bose's first broadcast was extraordinary and encouraged him to relay 'five more during the month of March alone, and the same number during April.'[43] During the early months of 1942, Bose, via his radio broadcasts, conveyed to and advised his listeners that Free India Radio was 'the voice of freedom-loving India.' He also argued that it was 'the harbinger of the revolution' that was 'fast approaching' and would 'soon strike a death blow at British power in India.'[44]

Aims, objectives and strategy of German and Italian propaganda beamed at India

There was a multi-purpose background for the onslaught of Nazi Germany's massive radio waves propaganda beamed on British India. The essence and concentration of the strategy was directly connected to or interlinked with the mobilization of the war effort in India. In fact, it was to undermine the British war effort in India. Another priority of Germany was to demoralize Indians, nationalists and communists and to negate British claims of achievements against Axis powers. Germany was also aware of the strong nationalist movement that was perpetually and energetically striving to get freedom from the British. In this context, Germany's main concentration was to encourage or exploit the militants, whether in the Congress or even outside. There was also the effort, via appropriate radio waves propaganda, to win the sympathy of the public at large in India. Occasional German broadcasts attempted to focus on aspects of racism in the Raj. In the following paragraphs we assess them one by one.

1941-1942: undermining the British war effort in India

As in the First World War, in 1939, India was a strong source of military manpower for the Allies, especially in the context of the African campaigns. At the same time, in the third and the fourth decade of the 20th century, India was in political turmoil with an explosive law and order situation that could erupt any moment. This was due to the strong nationalist movement that commanded massive public support and was spearheaded by the Congress party.

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[42] Ibid., p. 419.
[43] Ibid., p. 428
[44] From a 'Free India Radio' broadcast of 5 March 1942, quoted in George Orwell [Eric Blair], *Orwell: The War Commentaries*, p. 222.

In this destabilized amalgam, Britain and its Indian government were definitely not in a position to fight or counter a civil war in India when the battle against the Axis powers had, by then, severely damaged its combat power capacity and was exerting acute pressure on its resources. At the same time, in this grave situation, the other severely sensitive problem confronting Britain was the possibility, as well as a risk, of having its control rendered ineffective over the governance of India. The feeling in London was that, because of the nationalist movement, an independent India under the leadership of the Congress could decide to be neutral in the war. In such a scenario, the Allies would be denied access to an important source of troops.

In the above context, as well as in general terms, a very important objective of Germany was to incorporate a strategy 'aimed at undermining the British war effort during 1941 and 1942,' through a 'series of propaganda talks beamed and directed at India from Berlin.' A critical asset and reality at that time was the presence and willingness of Bose to take advantage of Germany's strategic objectives and merge his own plans with theirs. For Germany this was an opportunity that the Nazi leadership 'could neither delay or afford to neglect,' hence in a few months such radio waves propaganda sessions were 'masterminded by the exiled Indian nationalist, Subhas Chandra Bose.'[45]

Nazi propaganda aimed at diluting or negating the credibility and capacity of the British Indian Army and government to defend India and other British colonies

In the years immediately prior to 1939 and onwards until 1942, there was a massive induction of soldiers in the Indian Army. Between 1939 and mid-1945, the Indian Army 'expanded from about 175,000 to more than 2 million troops, – entirely through voluntary enlistment.' At the same time, the navy and air force were also expanded, and 'the Indian officer corps grew from 600 to more than 14,000.' Local Indian manpower was 'deployed under overall British command in Africa, Italy, the Middle East, and particularly in Burma and Southeast Asia.'[46]

In view of the above, for Nazi Germany it was an appropriate strategy, though difficult and challenging, to initiate specific policies and efforts to discourage such recruitment and, in conjunction, to demoralize

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[45] Jeff Riggenbach's book review (Institute for Historical Review) of W. J. West, editor, and with an introduction by Orwell: *The War Commentaries* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986).

[46] From the internet, The Library of Congress Country Studies, *CIA World Fact Book*.

those who had already been enlisted, juniors as well as seniors. This was done by propagating disinformation against British war time policies, strategy and procedures, especially in areas or provinces which were the established recruiting grounds. Therefore, it was not surprising that 'apart from the official German foreign language broadcast on the short wave band' beamed at India, there were other similar radio waves discourses directed to British colonies, an important one being in 'Hindustani and was mainly directed to North Africa to influence Indian troops.'[47]

The period between December 1941 and January 1942 saw the fall of France to Germany. This was significantly extremely depressing for western Europe, and Germany did not miss the opportunity to massively exploit it via radio waves propaganda, a glaring setback for Britain. As expressed by Milan Hauner, 'the fall of France represented the major blow to the white man's standing in the extra-European world.' Due to these major disasters, the population of India 'which had so far been enjoying the Pax Britannica, quickly lost confidence in the British Imperial Mission.'[48]

Germany exploiting class composition within Indian Army

Apart from massive mobilization via recruitment in the army, a significant and sensitive aspect pertained to the recruitment policy that then prevailed in colonial India. The guideline and mechanics applied in the recruitment of *jawans* was via screening of caste, religion or province, and this was termed as the class composition. In a scrutiny of the lists supplied by the Government of India, 'the total number of combatants, as at 01 January 1942 had reached 690,000.' The total strength of Indian combatants, as on 1st January 1941, was under 420,000. The overtly significant aspect then was that 'Punjab contributed 48 % of the total, of which 96,000 were Muslims and 51,000 Sikhs and Nepal contributed 11 % (46,000).' These figures revealed that 'out of a total of 690,000 almost 35 % (239,000) were Muslims, 41 % (284,000) Hindus, 10 % (72,000) Sikhs, 8 % (57,000) Gurkhas and the rest (about 38,000) belonged to other classes."[49] This breakup of class composition prior to and during the war indicates why Germany's propaganda concentrated on this specific aspect pertaining to the Indian Army. There was a definite concentration of Germany's disinformation that was beamed at north-west India, especially the areas then comprising Punjab.

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[47] Milan Hauner, op. cit., p. 548.
[48] Ibid., p. 423.
[49] Ibid., pp. 466, 477. Also, IOR/L/WS/1/456, 'Indian Army class composition 1941-42.'

Also, there were other problems as far as the internal composition of the army was concerned. A crucial issue, since 1936 onwards, pertained to the locals who were earlier recruited in the Indian Army. According to Lord Clevedon, the Viceroy's thinking was that 'the most urgent problem facing India was the Indianisation of the Army and of the ICS.'[50]

1939-40: strategy to exploit militant nationalists and lure of India's natural resources

Another interconnected objective and strategy of Nazi Germany pertained exclusively to manipulate and exploit militant nationalists in India. By January 1942, several radio stations had been established to beam anti-British and pro-Indian independence propaganda and 'were not only operational, but quite active and hard hitting.' At this juncture, in the midst of the devastating war situation, a severe problem for Britain was 'the very active role of the All India Congress in pressurizing Britain to yield to their demands on constitutional issues.' This encouraged Axis powers to 'exploit the Indian situation via encouragement to the more militant nationalists.'[51]

At the same time, there was a dual benefit for Germany and Italy, in that they were aware of the fact 'that India was rich in certain natural resources of a type that were crucial to the war effort, but these were substantially lacking as far as the Axis powers were concerned.' The case of rubber is often cited in this context. Germany had an inadequate supply of rubber, therefore 'its acute shortage' convinced the Reich to 'invest vast resources in the development of synthetic substitutes.' In such a situation, the critical thinking that evolved within the German leadership was should an independent India be neutral in the war, there was a reasonable possibility that India could 'look favourably on trade with nations that had aided its quest for freedom from the British.'[52]

Demoralize Indians, nationalists and communists and negate British claims of achievements against Axis powers

It would not be surprising for a nation engulfed in war, such as Germany, to naturally incorporate a propaganda strategy that artificially elevated its own performance on the battlefield and, at the same time, downgraded or humiliated that of its enemy or protagonist. No wonder that German

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[50] John Glendevon, *The Viceroy at Bay: Lord Linlithgow in India (1936-1943*) (London: Collins, 1971), p. 45.

[51] Sitanshu Das, op. cit., p. 357.

[52] A substantial part of the historical background information, including aspects pertaining to economic advantages, is detailed in the Introduction, Appendix and Notes which W.J. West had provided for *Orwell: The War Commentaries*.

propaganda radio broadcasts were beamed at India to demoralize the Indians and negate British claims of achievements against the Axis powers.

Here, it is pertinent to mention an aspect that caused serious concern, and perhaps unnerved the Indian Army high command as well as the Viceroy and his staff. This was the frequency and intensity of the German propaganda that highlighted Allied reverses during the war as well as propaganda oriented and directed towards nationalists and communists in India against British policy, achievements, strategy and British occupation in general.[53]

Late 1930s to early years of war, Nazi strategy: efforts to gain sympathy of Indian people and expose British racism

In the late 1930s, 'as the Nazi short wave transmission intensified and diversified its broadcasts,' Zeesen's Hindustani broadcasts from this 'established and known radio station' frequently assured listeners that they, 'the German people,' had respect for Mahatma Gandhi 'just as much' as they respected Hitler. Another assertion was that Hitler had 'the same principles as Gandhi' and that 'National Socialism, too,' taught non-violence. At the same time, in Italy, the acknowledged and established short wave station at Bari 'also began broadcasting in Hindustani,' and the theme and orientation was the same.[54]

As an added counterweight, an important aspect connected with German propaganda against British policies in India finds mention in the work of Yasmin Khan. She has observed that German propaganda which was 'aimed at Indian soldiers in North Africa' concentrated on 'quite real facts of racism in the Raj.'[55]

German sponsored clandestine radio stations inside and outside India that beamed propaganda to Indian listeners

Researchers on radio broadcasting are of the view that clandestine radio stations 'first took to the air in the 1930s.' It is reported that in 1933 in Cuba, 'during strikes, riots and agitation for the overthrow of the brutal

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[53] Lt. General G.N. Molesworth, *Curfew on Olympus (*Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1965), p. 147.

[54] H. L. Childs and J. B. Whitton, *Propaganda by Short Wave* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1942), pp. 23, 24. Zeesen is a town in Germany and this short wave transmitting station had a 70 meter high mast and was constructed in 1931.

[55] Yasmin Khan, *India at War: The Subcontinent and the Second World War* (Oxford University Press, 2015).

Machado government, a clandestine station sponsored by a student revolutionary group began broadcasting anti-Machado propaganda and calling on the army to revolt.' Despite the fact that many days later when police raided a suspected location in nearby Matranzas and 'seized the transmitter, as well as a cache of arms, other clandestine stations soon replaced it.'[56]

Clandestine broadcasting in Europe began in the Second World War with the Allied and Axis nations directing broadcasts towards each other. The longest running clandestine station started in 1941. If we assess the existence of German clandestine radio stations from January 1942 onwards, it will be clear that apart from the official German language broadcast on the short wave, that included Hindustani also, 'there was a plethora of so-called secret broadcast stations.'[57]

13 September 1931 to 1932: clandestine or gray stations detected in India

1932, almost seven years prior to the start of the Second World War, as far as India was concerned, a 'gray' radio station was discovered outside Delhi, operated by the Congress. This station was 'transmitting anti-British propaganda to a series of portable sub-stations kept ready to be shifted in case of a raid by the authorities.' The situation vis-a-vis such clandestine stations was complex. Apart from this, on several occasions, 'selected Indians also initiated broadcasts from America.' In view of the situation prevailing in India at that time, it was not surprising that Gandhi had made a broadcast on 13 September 1931. Sometime later, 'a number of Indian exiles supported by American sympathisers had made broadcasts from a "gray" station from the west coast of the US.'[58]

1942: Azad Hind or Free India clandestine radio station and others

By the first few weeks of 1942, there existed several radio stations beaming anti-British and anti- Indian propaganda. In January 1942, *Azad Hind* or Free India, a 'gray' station, also known as Concordia H, began broadcasting from Berlin in eight Indian dialects. As far as German priorities were concerned, Azad Hind Radio was the main propaganda station for India set up by the exiled Subhas Chandra Bose. Later, Bose also gave anti-British talks in Germany and the German plan was that Bose's Indian legion would lead the German advance through

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[56] Lawrence C. Soley and John S. Nicholls, *Clandestine Radio Broadcasting: A Study of Revolutionary and Counterrevolutionary Electronic Communication* (New York: Praeger, 1987), p. 164.

[57] Milan Hauner, op. cit., p. 548.

[58] W. J. West, *Truth Betrayed* (London: Duckworth, 1987), p. 108.

Asia Minor and Afghanistan and into northern India.[59] Bose's provisional Indian government in Berlin also had two other radio stations, namely 'National Congress Radio,' and 'Free Moslem Radio.' In addition, there was an Italian sponsored Indian station known as 'Radio Himalaya' run by the exiled Indian Muslim, Iqbal Shedai. Apart from these stations, there was a German station manned by Indians called 'The Brothers.'[60]

During these months and years, along with other anti-British propaganda, 'the speeches of Hitler, Goebbels and other Axis leaders could be heard in India on world-wide link-ups, and were often referred to in the Indian press.' However, after the outbreak of the 'Quit India' rebellion, two more secret stations were added. These were the Azad Muslim Radio or Concordia M, and the National Congress Radio or Concordia C.[61]

Frequency and intensity of Nazi propaganda beamed at India

By December 1939, according to L General Noble Molesworth (then a Major General), the senior-most commander of the divisions deployed in north-west India, the German radio from Berlin was quite active with broadcasts in English and Urdu beamed towards India with Indian announcers and commentators.[62] In India, since the early days of the war and throughout, what worried and perhaps unnerved the Army high command as well as the Viceroy and his staff was the frequency and intensity of Axis propaganda in connection with the Allied reverses during the war.[63]

In the last days of February 1942, Indian propaganda activities organized by Germany 'appeared to have reached their climax.' From this date onwards, irrespective of German victories, the emerging situation was that 'this quantum of intensity was never to be equalled for the rest of the War.'[64]

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[59] Anthony Rhodes, *Propaganda* (Syracuse, New Jersey: Wellfleet Press, 1987).
[60] Sitanshu Das, op. cit., p. 152.
[61] Milan Hauner, op. cit., p. 548.
[62] Lt. General G.N. Molesworth, op. cit., p. 147.
[63] IOR/L/PJ/7/4736, 'Pir of Pagaro – Transfer of Political Detenus Etc., from India to Detention Overseas with Particular Reference to the Pir,' p. 251, *The Times*, 3rd June 1942. Terrorist Band in Sind, Crimes of the Hurs, Military Steps To Secure Order.
[64] Milan Hauner, op. cit., p. 430.

End 1942 to early 1943: direct German threat from the West had vanished but no reduction in Axis propaganda on India

The eagerness or over-indulgence of German policy and tactics in the usage of radio waves propaganda, especially that was beamed at India, finds strength in the last few months of 1942 and very early 1943. The continued intensity and frequency of relaying propaganda as well as reliance via radio waves continued, despite the glaring situation in the battlefields as far as Germany was concerned. Around this period, it became clear that 'the German threat to north-western India had lost its strength and clout after 1942. In fact, at the end of 1942, German military threats to the British Indian empire arising either in German-occupied Soviet Central Asia or from the Near East 'had all but vanished.'[65] Despite this, the odd situation was that 'the Germans, even in 1943, when the prospects of a decisive military breakthrough seemed to have receded far beyond the horizon, were still keen to incite unrest in India.' In fact, by then the Japanese had 'taken over the conduct of Axis Indian propaganda,' yet, 'there did not appear to be any reduction in the activities of the Special Indian Bureau and the Free India Centre in Berlin.'[66] Whether justified or not, the continued German concentration on radio waves propaganda indicated their hope that irrespective of the battle front situation, propaganda was still required and its frequency and intensity were crucial factors. As suggested by Milan Hauner, perhaps they believed in 'the tiny sparks of hope that at least some revolutionary potential in India could be kept alive through German propaganda and intelligence activities.'[67]

Background and reasons for effectiveness of German radio propaganda machinery, beaming system, policy and strategy

As compared to the Allies, a very significant aspect was that Germany had realized relatively early that radio could, quite effectively, facilitate the dissemination of propaganda as well as of neutral or factual news. The obvious advantage was that propaganda beamed towards the enemy had a far greater impact than the difficult exercise of air dropping printed material from aircrafts. It was not surprising then that in the next two months after the declaration of war, German radio was fully involved in churning out propaganda and that too, 11 hours a day. More important,

[65] Sitanshu Das, op. cit., p. 551.
[66] Milan Hauner, op. cit., pp. 523, 524.
[67] Milan Hauner, op. cit., p. 524. Also, IOR lL/P&S/ 12/1572, 'Afghanistan: Political Review for 1943, 1944, 1945.'

some of these programmes were in English. The German technique was either 'to diffuse or negate pro-British sentiment.'[68]

In the context of production and usage of radios, a fact that very clearly indicated the lead of Germany over all countries in Europe, especially when war started, was that 'over 70% of German households had radios.' Also, what enhanced and strengthened the position of Germany in this crucial field was that 'this number grew steadily throughout the War.' In 1939, as compared with 1932, the increase was three times and it was the highest percentage in any country of the world. Another contributing factor was the role of Goebbels himself. Having clearly and strategically realized 'the significance of radio in churning out German propaganda,' he 'sanctioned millions of cheap radio sets to be sold to German citizens at subsidized rates.'[69]

However, Goebbels realized that other countries, especially the United Kingdom, were also gradually accelerating efforts at beaming propaganda at German cities. Therefore, he issued strict instructions that 'radios be built with limited reception distances to prevent the populace from listening to radio programs from outside the country.' As a consequence, 'the Nazis set up factories to build cheap radios like the 'people's receiver' (volksempfänger) which cost only 35 RM.' Managers these radio production factories ensured that 'the new radios had a limited range so that they would only pick up the German stations that the Nazis controlled.' German broadcasting was supervised very closely and directed at public places. In addition, loudspeakers were put up in factories, cafes, offices, restaurants, even in the streets.[70]

Technical and operational advantages of German broadcasts that made German propaganda more effective than admitted by British or Indian governments

Before and during the war, Germany 'had advantages technically in their central position and transmitters acquired in occupied countries.' In some other aspects too, Germany had more achievements, especially scientific and technological, as compared to the other powers in this specific field. As mentioned earlier, by concentrating on building transmitters, even prior to the start of the Berlin Olympic Games of 1936, 'Germany added eight transmitters to its shortwave station at Zeesen, converting it into

[68] Richard M. Crowell, op. cit., p. 11.
[69] Ibid., pp. 11, 12.
[70] Ibid., p. 11.

the largest propaganda machine in the world.'[71] In addition, even after the games were over, the German propaganda ministry did not stay idle and these transmitters were churning out propaganda 'in German and other languages to reach Germans' in South Africa, South America, the US and elsewhere. Also, positive efforts were made 'to convince the rest of the world of German greatness and aspirations.'[72]

The German high command had a strong belief in radio waves propaganda and this was discernible in other crucial situations as well. The dedication of the German Propaganda Ministry was indicative in their reliance on radio waves propaganda.This stance was substantiated by the argument that words 'may achieve what bullets do not accomplish, because words do not kill.'[73]

Another reason why Germany was far ahead of the Allies in the radio waves propaganda war was that at the beginning, as well as during the Second World War, radio waves propaganda was used in Germany in conjunction with printed material and 'German psychological warfare personnel were also preparing propaganda leaflets targeting troops fighting in Europe.'[74]

In his detailed analysis of the situation, policy and strategy of the Axis powers on India, Hauner disclosed that 'the official historiographer of the BBC' admitted that 'Axis radio propaganda remained a serious challenge within India and that in the autumn of 1942 it was not the British who were winning the radio war.' The BBC and British government had to 'admit that the Axis radio stations were pumping a tremendous amount of stuff into India.'[75] This is also supported by Yasmin Khan who observed that 'German propaganda aimed at Indian soldiers (in North Africa) and German broadcasts were rather more effective than the usual histories indicate, and Japanese propaganda also more adroit.'[76]

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[71] C. Saerchinger, 'Radio as a Political Instrument,' *Foreign Affairs*, 16 January 1938, p. 255.
[72] Thomas Grandin, *The Political Use of the Radio* (New York: Arno Press, 1971), p. 49.
[73] Richard M. Crowell, op. cit., p. 11. Also stated by Ernst Kris and Hans Spier, *Nazi Radio Propaganda (*New York: Norton & Co, Inc., 2016), pp. 19-21.
[74] S.G.M. Herbert A, Friedman (Rtd.), *Axis and Allied Propaganda to Indian Troops, www.psywarrior.com/AxisPropIndia.html.*
[75] Milan Hauner, op. cit., p. 549.
[76] Yasmin Khan, op. cit., p. 245.

Miscellaneous factors indirectly supporting Axis radio propaganda

German radio waves propaganda became more effective, indirectly, to the policy, orientation and inclination of newspaper owners based in India. In those days when the public was absolutely thirsty for information or news pertaining to the battlefields, the role of newspapers in moulding public opinion was crucial. Take the situation in the province of Sind. Was German or Japanese propaganda impacting the Sind government machinery or officers, either collectively or individually? Unfortunately, the ground situation was not encouraging at all. One important reason for the gloomy outlook in Sind was largely the reaction of the local press. There was no English owned or edited paper, and the two leading dailies were both owned by Madrasis who were 'in close touch with and influenced by the state of apprehension' that then existed in Madras. The *Sind Observer* was heavily defeatist. Although its Hindu owners were not Congressmen, the editor held strong Congress views and went his own way. Nichaldas Vazirani, a Congress sympathizer, was a director in the newspaper.[77] At times a similar situation existed in other provinces of British India where the Congress or its outlook dominated.

Another indirect reason was the mutual suspicion between the British administrators and their local subordinates, especially the Hindus or Congress sympathizers. This led to unreliability and often to a deadlock in communications which led to sorts of rumours. F.S. Sellek, an officer of the Indian Post and Telegraph Department and Civil Aviation Department from 1916-1947, was transferred to Karachi in May 1926 when the government initiated an airship service between England, Cairo and Karachi.[78] Sellek disclosed that during the Second World War, 'all equipment was being manned by service personnel, British and American servicemen, who would demand repatriation as soon as the war ended.' He continually pointed this out, 'but no attempt was made to train and recruit Indians to operate and maintain the equipment which would be required for civil purposes as soon as hostilities ceased.'[79]

In retrospect, Sellek felt 'that the lack of action was justifiable' because 'propaganda had definitely undermined the loyalty of the Indian staff and rising hostility' from some of his Indian colleagues, and the general 'Quit India' attitude of the mass of the Indian population. This

[77] MSS. EUR. 372/5 Dow Collection. D.O. No. 154 / F.R. 25 April 1942, Governor to Viceroy, para 3.
[78] F. S. Sellek, Sellek Papers, Centre for South Asian Studies, University of Cambridge, Chapter VII, p. 18.
[79] Ibid., p. 30.

'made life and touring a terrible strain.' Also, this led to a deadlock in the normal exchange of conversation between a senior and a junior colleague through which confidence in each other could have been built and issues or news reports could have been discussed and assessed leading to clarity in facts and figures pertaining to developments in the war.

Was German propaganda accessible in India to the interested public?

By 1940, many villages in northern India had community radio sets with loudspeakers. Around these the locals would gather in the evenings to hear special Indian programmes put out by All India Radio.[80]

In Sind, one sensitive communication by Inspector Samuel Ghani of the CID, frankly highlighted and pertained to the German wireless propaganda beamed at India. He stated specifically that somehow the German wireless propaganda found its way to villages in upper Sind, and it was believed by those listening to the radio. Equally, if not more significant, was the fact that, at the same time, British wireless news did not reach such villages and if it did, the people seemed 'to treat it with scorn.'[81]

Next, this report gave the important and sensitive information, frequently reported by the CID, that Pir Pagaro had got his own electric plant in the Keti and also owned a radio set that, according to Samuel Ghani, was the only set in the entire Pir jo Goth area. As per this CID report, the Pir and his men listened to the German wireless propaganda in Hindustani. He concluded with the assertion that, as far as he was able to discover, this was the main source through which German news was spread to the villages.[82]

As compared to Sind, it can be assumed that in central, south, east and western India, where the Congress was very strong, the number of radio sets available and the curiosity or enthusiasm of the locals to hear enemy broadcasts was significantly higher. Specifically, we can depend on Hauner's account that 'as far as the number of Indian listeners to these Axis stations was concerned, this may never be established.'

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[80] Lt. General G.N. Molesworth, op cit., p. 147.

[81] Hyderabad CID Office Files (Secret), covering reports from 21 Nov 1936 to 25/26 June 1940, Office of S.B. Hyderabad, Sindh (old office of AIGP CID), Hurs Pir Pagaro of Kingri 1936 (276 – Part I – Comp C, Volume I), Camp Pir jo Goth, dated 23 June 1940. Subject, Pir Pagaro, from Samuel Ghani, SIP, Sind CID Sukkur to District SP Sukkur and SP Sind CID, Karachi, pp. 238, 239, 240.

[82] Ibid.

However, 'some authors claimed that it was about 200,000 during the disturbances.'[83]

Did the war situation in conjunction with Nazi propaganda trigger panic and did the government realize it?

On 1st June 1940, the Government of India 'prohibited the public dissemination of enemy broadcasts by holders of commercial receivers licences.' [84] This was an overt indicator that the government was reacting to avert further apprehension or panic that may engulf the public. The monthly summary of Nawabshah district, dated 22 June 1940, stated that the district remained quiet, but there were panic rumours due to radio reports, especially among the *banya* class, the rich and resourceful Hindu traders, money lenders and businessmen. The rumours had been 'both financial and concerned with internal security.' One cause was putting into operation of the Railway Security Scheme that had not been understood by the public, and had triggered 'many wild speculations.' As far as financial panic was concerned, this 'was due to the uneasiness of the market at European news.'[85]

By April 1941, while the German Army was rapidly gaining ground, an element of demoralization crept into western Europe as well as within the colonial administrators and policymakers of India. Moreover, Axis propaganda was, at the same time, taking its toll psychologically. No wonder then that the main worry was about radio broadcasts. In this atmosphere of uncertainty and pessimism, on 11 April 1941, a talk by J. Hennessy, Principal Information Officer to the Government of India, was broadcast from Delhi and relayed by Calcutta. The subject of the talk was, 'Has Hitler a Secret Wireless Transmitter in India?' [86] This was an

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[83] Milan Hauner, op. cit., p. 548.

[84] P & J 4772/40. Govt. of India, Dept. of Communications, No. K 425, dated Simla, 26 Aug 1940. From S.N. Roy, Secretary to the Govt. of India. To His Majesty's Under Secretary of State for India, P & J Dept. India Office, London. Subject: Report on the Development of Broadcasting in India. See item 5, Miscellaneous, Sub item © at p. 344.

[85] Hyderabad CID Office Files, Office of S.B. Hyderabad, Sindh (Old Office of AIGP CID), op. cit. Monthly Summary of Nawabshah District, 22 June 1940, p. 236.

[86] IOR/L/P&J/8/117. 'Broadcasting in India, Govt of India Reports on Development of.' See pp. 233, 234, Govt. of India Dept. of Communications No. K 425 dated Simla, 16 July 1941. From the Right Honourable Mr. S.N. Roy, CSI, CIE, ICS, Secretary to the Government of India. To His Majesty's Under Secretary of State for India, Public and Judicial Dept., India Office, London. Subject: Report on the Development of Broadcasting in India (Item 2 Programmes, Sub Item (b) Important Talks.

overt indicator of a major concern for the policy and decision makers in colonial India.

Other reasons aggravating pessimism: too many troops bogged down on internal security duties within India

1942: Wavell apprehensive due to weak Indus defences, battalions required to be sent to north-east India and internal security problems

During the crucial months of the war, especially in early 1942, there existed many severe complications which made Wavell 'intensely apprehensive about the weakening of Indus Defences on the north-west frontier and of internal security, as more battalions were being sent to north-east India.' The main fear was that, 'if there was an internal upheaval or deterioration in the situation in the Middle East, this could bring German troops into Afghanistan.' In such a calamity, the enigma was that 'there were only very inadequate forces to cater for such an emergency.' As the Commander-in-Chief, Wavell felt that there was a definite risk even under existing conditions.[87]

Early 1942: one British and six Indian divisions available for the defence of India and Ceylon; acute demoralization in public

In early 1942, it was surprising that only one British and six Indian divisions were available to defend the whole of India and Ceylon. This did not include 'some fairly depleted forces' in the North-West Frontier (NWFP) that were reserved for internal security. Considering the then ongoing situation in the NWFP and Sind, 'these could not be withdrawn in an emergency.' Moreover, the India battalions were 'not equipped as per requirements and training was not adequate.'[88]

30 June 1942: too many troops were bogged down in controlling Hurs, hence air action against Hurs via machine gunning was allowed.

P.S.A. Berridge, in his book, *Couplings Up the Khyber*, stated that the necessity of protecting passengers and goods had engaged a considerable number of troops against the Hurs. At the same time, from 30 June 1942 air action by machine gunning was authorized so that these troops could be extricated and used elsewhere on the battle fronts in the hope of quick results.[89]

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[87] Milan Hauner, op. cit., p. 445.
[88] Ibid., p. 444.
[89] P.S.A. Berridge, *Couplings Up the Khyber: The Story of the North Western Railways* (London: David And Charles, 1969).

Hauner has also pointed out that troops on a large scale were deployed inside India to suppress the Congress rebellion. Not counting the police, 'eight military brigades, with fifty-seven and a half battalions of infantry, that is, about 35,000 men, were engaged full time on the internal security duty and they would not have been able had Japan attacked India.'[90] In August 1942, William Phillips, personal representtative of President Roosevelt in India, informed the US president that if Japan had been in a position to invade India at this moment, then even on a limited scale as it had attempted earlier in April, there was every reason to believe that the story of Malaysia and Burma would have been repeated.[91]

Such was the state of affairs that continuously impinged upon British initiatives and the internal situation in India persistently negated any futuristic or comprehensive plans to effectively counter Nazi Germany's propaganda. And this situation continued with an aggravated impact from 1939 until around the end of 1943.

[90] Milan Hauner, op. cit., p. 550.

[91] Sitanshu Das, op. cit., pp. 342, 343. Also M.S. Venkataramani, *Quit India and the American Response to the 1942 Struggle* (Delhi: Vikas, 1979), pp. 304 -307.