



Missing Links between Veer Savarkar and Rash Bihari Bose: A Historical Study

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Abstract

Savarkar is an unquestionable nationalist, an ardent anti-imperialist and a fearless freedom fighter, Veer Savarkar had motivated thousands of people both before and after independence. His sacrifice for the motherland still remains in our hearts even after a long effort of destroying his image and works. They tried their best to damage his status as a freedom fighter and they spread lots of myths about him. Savarkar was overlooked in the schools, colleges and even in the university books. Other true son of Maa Bharati, Rash Bihari Bose was also ignored by them. Though these two eminent leaders played their vital roles in separate fields, they had a close connection between them and that may be due to their passion for doing something more for their motherland. The great revolutionary Veer Savarkar always became a source of encouragement to Rash Bihari Bose. This paper will be my humble attempt to find out the missing links between those greatest revolutionaries of Bharat. To find the real facts behind the myths propagated by those narrow-minded, pseudo-secular, unscrupulous and megalomaniac politicians, educationists, researchers etc.

Keywords: Veer Savarkar, Rash Bihari Bose,

“Savarkar means spunk, Savarkar means Sacrifice, Savarkar means perseverance, Savarkar means element, Savarkar means logic, Savarkar means youth, Savarkar means arrow, Savarkar means sword, Savarkar means forbearance ...” - Sri Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

Also, Savarkar means inspiration. A full package of patriotism, an unquestionable nationalist, an ardent anti-imperialist and a fearless freedom fighter. He was not only a freedom fighter but a visionary. He was the first student of Bharat to be punished during the Swadeshi Movement, the first revolutionary whose book was confiscated before it was published, and the first person in the world to get life imprisonment two times. He was the only writer who started writing poems on the wall with thorns and nails due to the dearth of pens and pencils. Hence, it is not possible to define the multidimensional role of Veer Savarkar in such few lines. His area of revolutionary works was not constrained only inside the country but it spread far beyond the border of Bharat. He had a strong belief that his motherland could only be liberated through armed struggle.

Savarkar who spent almost 28 years of his life in jail was always a danger to the British Government and was also a threat to some Congress leaders. During the period of his house arrest at Ratnagiri, Gandhi Ji meet Savarkar in March 1927. At the end of their meeting, Gandhiji said, it is clear that we disagree on some problems. But I hope you have no objection to my making experiments. Savarkar replied in a moment, You know the story of the boys and frogs. You will be making the experiment at the cost of the nation.¹ Just after a few years when the whole national movement was clustering around Gandhiji, he was requested to sign the memorandum on the release of Savarkar, Gandhi said he did not know who that Savarkar was ... Gandhi subsequently explained to the public that he thought it derogatory to approach the British Government for the release of Savarkar. Nehru went one step further. He was reported to have torn non-violently the 'Release Savarkar Memorandum' to pieces.² However, Savarkar was released unconditionally on the 10th of May 1937.

The reaction of the common Hindu people to his dramatic release was remarkable. Interestingly the reaction of Congress was notable. Rajagopalachari felt great joy at the release of a national hero, who was to him a symbol of courage, bravery and patriotism.³ But the only congressman who was not guided by any evil forces and thinking to welcome him was Subhas Chandra Bose. He in his statement said, I am extremely pleased with the release of Mr. Savarkar. He has a brilliant future. I wish he participates in National Congress and strengthens the freedom movement.⁴ But we don't find any reaction from Gandhiji.

The canny leaders in the Congress, who knew Savarkar's bravery, were sure that their sword was not powerful enough to break the spirit of Veer Savarkar. They feared his confidence, his personality, his charismatic power to attract people, and his oratory. But mostly they feared was his aggressive political ideology. They, therefore, sophisticatedly hoped that he would join the Congress or rest on his laurels.⁵

But Savarkar was thinking differently and based on his intellect, ideology and contemporary situations he rather showed his interest to join Tilak's Democratic Swaraj Party and later very shortly he joined the Hindu Mahasabha. He rejected the offer from both the Congress, given by Subhas Chandra Bose and from the Congress Socialist Party. It suffered bitter criticism. The government said, Savarkar destroyed himself. Anti-nationalists will use him as their leader.⁶ He considered that Congress has deviated from the path of independence of their motherland. It had departed from its democratic and national standpoint and became a machine to fulfil the anti-national demands of the Muslims.

Savarkar had a firm belief that Bharat can only be liberated by an armed struggle. According to him the non-violence policy adopted by the Congress under Gandhiji was a good one, but it was of no avail when it was opposed by force. Savarkar in a speech stated that whether one liked it or not, an army was necessary for protecting the country. Nations gained respect with guns, and peace could not exist without guns. He called for a rallying of international help and pro-Indian sentiment where the goal of independence had to be much more important than ideology. First, we need to be strong to be independent. It is not important whether Japan which conquers China is right or wrong. The world takes care of its own countries. You must not count

¹ Keer, *Veer Savarkar*, p. 177

² Ibid, p.221

³ Ibid, p.223

⁴ Dai AjiaShugi, March 1939 Issue,

⁵ Keer, *Veer Savarkar*, p.223

⁶ Dai AjiaShugi, April 1939 Issue,

on help from any other country.⁷ But probably the thinking of Veer Savarkar reached Japan and to the brave heart Sri Rash Behari Bose.

Rash Behari Bose, one of the greatest revolutionaries of Bharat had a strong conviction that the British Government would not yield without revolutionary action. Inspired by “Ananda Math” he joined a revolutionary group and on 23rd December 1912 he along with Awadh Bihari and Basant threw a bomb on the Viceroy Lord Hardinge at Delhi. In the incident, Lord Hardinge was seriously injured but Awadh Bihari was caught and later hanged. Rash Behari somehow managed himself, but he never gave up and when the 1st World War started, he started making connections with other revolutionaries of the world especially America, Canada, and Germany. He wanted to create the same situation of 1857 among the British Indian soldiers when the Indian soldiers revolted against the Company rulers. Lahore was selected by the revolutionaries and the date for the uprising was fixed on 21st February 1915. But somehow the plan of the uprising came to the ear of the British Government and fizzled out. Rash Behari left Calcutta on 12th May 1915 for Japan.

Rash Behari Bose founded the ‘Independence League’ in 1931 and started a new journal, ‘New Asia’. At this juncture Rash Bihari Bose probably received information about the thoughts and feelings of Veer Savarkar and as a result, Savarkar received a letter from Rash Bihari Bose which was mentioned by Sri Bal Savarkar.

It seems like a divine connection between the Savarkar and Rash Bihari Bose when both were thinking along the same line regarding the independence of their motherland. Both were thinking of an armed uprising within the British Indian Army. They not only maintaining a good relationship, but Rash Bihari Bose described Veer Savarkar as one of his elderly comrades-in-arms, and under his inspiration he founded the Japan Branch of the Hindu Mahasabha. He himself was the President of the Japan Branch. Rash Bihari Bose in course of his correspondence with Savarkar kept the later informed from time to time of the political developments in Japan and her preparations for future war against Anglo-American imperialism.⁸

Rash Bihari Bose had a strong feeling about Savarkar, and it was clearly depicted from his writings, he wrote, “If I put together views of influential persons...Savarkar...is heroism, valor, adventure, and epitome of patriotism”. To praise him is to praise the spirit of sacrifice. He is the one “who always kept the fire of India’s freedom burning; he is a patriot who risked his life for the freedom of India in the early 20th century and is a founder exponent of the doctrine of cultural independence in the current times”.⁹ After writing in detail about Savarkar’s views on Hindutva and his policy of militarization of Hindus, Rash Bihari Bose writes, “To join the Mahasabha means you gain power. Our ancestors have tried to combine us in terms of religion, culture, race, and politics for 5000 years. Sindhus are today’s nationals. We are born in this land, and we live on this land. It is not to torture ourselves. We are Indian nationals. We have same religion, race, and history. This is the symbol of India. If you agree with Savarkar, you will have political power, and he has a strong position in the Indian independence movement.”¹⁰

So, the plot of an upcoming great event started to begin. The Second World War started. Germany declared war against the Allied powers and hence what will be the policy of Bharat in this regard? Veer Savarkar’s view was completely different from the Congress. As the Congress did not decide anything at Ramgarh session (1940) about its war-policy and for six months its policy had been non-committal, as a result the British Government had been going on exploiting

⁷ Dai Ajia Shugi, April 1939 Issue, Ibid

⁸ Mukherjee, *Two Great Indian Revolutionaries*, Pp156-157

⁹ Dai Ajia Shugi, March 1939 Issue.

¹⁰ Ibid.

Bharat for war purpose.¹¹ Gandhiji said, “We do not seek our independence out of Britain’s ruin. That is not the way of non-violence.”¹²

At this juncture another brave heart of Maa Bharati, Subhas Chandra Bose was struggling due to the Congress politics, between his own thinking and Gandhian philosophy. But during the time of political turmoil (1939 – 1941) he was supported by Rash Bihari Bose and Veer Savarkar. Subhas Chandra Bose himself mentioned about the meeting with Veer Savarkar.

Sri Bal Savarkar, Private Secretary to Veer Savarkar in 1954 opined that, “a private and personal meeting between Netaji Subhas Babu and Savarkarji at Savarkar Sadan, Bombay, that a definite suggestion was made to Subhas Babu by Savarkarji that he should try to leave India and undertake the risk of going over to Germany to organise the Indian forces there fallen in German hands as captives and then with the German help should proceed to Japan to join hands with Sri Rash Behari Bose. To impress this point Savarkarji showed to Subhas Babu a letter from Sri Bose to Savarkarji written just on the eve of Japanese declaration of war.¹³

In the Veer Savarkar’s Best Speeches About Abhinav Bharat (original in Marathi) it was also stated that, “It was on that occasion that Savarkar advised Subhas Chandra to leave the country and go to Europe to organise the Indian forces fallen at the hands of Germany and Italy, and as soon as Japan declared war, to attack British India from the Bay of Bengal or through Burma and declare the independence of Hindustan.”¹⁴

On the other hand, Rash Bihari Bose also sent a similar call to Subhas Chandra Bose during the period through his letter sent to other friends and colleagues in Bharat. Sri Jatindra Lochan Mitra a member of the revolutionary party and a colleague of Hari Kumar Chakravarty etc., has stated that in 1937-38 J. C. Das, Managing Director to the Ballygunge Central Bank, returned from Japan to India with a letter from Rash Behari Bose in which he had urged upon the Indian revolutionaries to send an important leader to Japan, preferably Subhas Chandra Bose. The letter, written in Bengali, also contained the following words: “Now or never, nor for ever”. Another letter received by Sris Chandra Ghose of Chandernagore also contained a similar suggestion with reference to Subhas Chandra Bose.¹⁵

So the above information at least gives us some idea that the period was not as simple as it was depicted in our history books. Something very special was going on during that period and our brave hearts were trying their best to liberate their motherland. Hence, just about a month later Subhas left India, Savarkar sent a message to the organisers of the All-India Subhas day, (23rd February 1941) expressing anxiety for his safety and stated, “May the gratitude, sympathy and good wishes of the nation be the source of never-failing solace and inspiration to him wherever he happens to be.”¹⁶

Now as Rash Behari Bose and Netaji both were inspired by Veer Savarkar it was natural that Indian National Army will automatically be motivated by their “spiritual father”¹⁷. There is no evidence regarding the direct support of Veer Savarkar with the INA but of course, there are lots of testimonies which prove that INA was motivated and indirectly supported by Veer Savarkar. Savarkar’s biographer Dhananjay Keer categorically mentioned in his book that the leaders of the INA were grateful to Savarkar. He said, “The leader and founder of the INA both addressed

¹¹ Bose, *The Indian Struggle, Part II (1935-72)*, p. 24

¹² Ibid. p. 26

¹³ Mukherjee, *Two Great Indian Revolutionaries*, p.159

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid. pp. 160-161

¹⁶ Ghose, *Bose The Untold Story of An Inconvenient Nationalist*, p. 476

¹⁷ Keer, *Veer Savarkar*, p.350

special messages to Savarkar on the Radio. In his message, Netaji Bose said on June 25, 1944, at night on Singapore Radio: *When due to misguided political shims and lack of vision almost all the leaders of the Congress party are decrying all the soldiers in the Indian Army as mercenaries, it is heartening to know that Veer Savarkar is fearlessly exhorting the youth of India to enlist in the Armed Forces. These enlisted youth themselves provide us with trained men from which we draw the soldiers of our Indian National Army.*¹⁸

Rash Bihari Bose also praised Savarkar in a Radio talk. He said, “In saluting you I have the joy of doing my duty towards one of my elderly comrades-in-arms. In saluting you, I am saluting the symbol of sacrifice itself.”¹⁹

Hence, from the above arguments, it was almost clear that Veer Savarkar had motivated and inspired thousands of people both before and after independence. His sacrifice for the motherland remains in our hearts even after a long effort of destroying his image and works. They tried their best to besmirch his status as a freedom fighter, as a true lover of the motherland and they spread lots of myths about him. Savarkar was overlooked in the schools, colleges and even in the university books. Other true son of Maa Bharati, Rash Bihari was also ignored by them. Though these three great sons of Maa Bharati played their vital roles in separate fields, they had a close connection between them and that may be due to their passion for doing something more for their motherland, their sacrificial attitude, their thoughts to liberate their motherland from the colonial rule with the help of armed struggle.

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¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Keer, *Veer Savarkar*, p.350