

GERMANY.

103/98/2000 - EW

*Confidential*

भारत सरकार  
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

विदेश मंत्रालय  
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

S.No.

Pages (1-17) Corr.

नई दिल्ली  
NEW DELHI

Total 17

फाईल नं  
FILE NO. W1/103/98/2000 - EW

खण्ड  
VOLUME \_\_\_\_\_

टिप्पणियाँ/पत्राचार  
NOTES /CORRESPONDENCE

विषय Subject
ANITA PFAFF'S VIEWS ON SUBHASH CHANDRA'S ROSE 'S' ASHES

*Keep*  
*28/12/15*

पिछले हवाले  
Previous Reference

बाद के हवाले  
Later Reference

DECLASSIFIED



~~28/12/15~~

(अरुण कुमार चटर्जी)  
(ARUN KUMAR CHATTERJEE)  
संयुक्त सचिव (नौ. वन. अ.)  
Joint Secretary (CNV)  
विदेश मंत्रालय, नई दिल्ली  
Ministry of External Affairs  
New Delhi



①

3603 / JSCFF / 07  
25/8

3940 / E-I / 2004  
AMBASSADOR OF INDIA 8/9  
TIERGARTENSTRASSE 17  
10785 BERLIN  
TEL : (030) 2579 8213 / 2300 6897  
FAX: (030) 2300 5895  
E-Mail: ambassador@indianembassy.de

103/98/  
2000

B.M.  
26/8  
DSE

26/8 US (SG) - O.R.  
3/9

Confidential  
11<sup>th</sup> August 2004

gn Panjary

No.Berl/Pol/101/3/04

My dear Joint Secretary,

This is in continuation of my letter of even number dated 8th July 2004.

2. Mrs. Anita Pfaff, daughter of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose, called to say that she was unable to make the trip to Japan due to some organizational problems. She then asked me about GoI's thinking on bringing closure to the Netaji matter. Her family, and she herself, did not believe that Netaji was still alive. Such leads, as had become available during the last ten years or so, had brought forth no new evidence that he was alive. She recalled her meeting with the then EAM, Shri Pranab Mukherjee (now RM), in 1995 during his visit to Germany, and felt he shared this view. She was aware of the position of the Forward Bloc and some others; also that GoI had set up another Commission to review the evidence. She wondered whether the Commission had any worthwhile new information and when it would complete its work. She said that next year, the 60th anniversary of the end of War, might be a good occasion to bring this chapter to a close. Associates of Netaji were disappearing fast; those who still remain are very old. It is their wish, too, that this matter be laid to rest. One way of doing so could be by bringing back the ashes from the Renkoji Temple in Tokyo to India with appropriate solemnity and honours.

3. I would be grateful if you could let me know what response Government would wish to give to Mrs. Anita Pfaff.

Yours sincerely,

(T.C.A. Rangachari)

Shri Ashok K. Kantha,  
Joint Secretary (EA)  
Ministry of External Affairs,  
New Delhi.

Copy to:

- ✓ (i) Ms. Bhaswati Mukherjee, Joint Secretary (Europe-I), MEA, New Delhi.
- (ii) Shri M.L. Tripathi, Ambassador of India, E/I, Tokyo.

3747/EWC/2003

2

29/8

भारतीय राजदूतावास  
बर्लिन  
EMBASSY OF INDIA  
INDISCHE BOTSCHAFT  
TIERGARTENSTRASSE 17  
10785 BERLIN



TEL.: (030) 257 95-0  
FAX: (030) 257 95 102

Dr. Devyani Khobragade  
Second Secretary

Tel. No. 25795301

No. BERL/INFO/301/7/03

August 13, 2003

Dear Shambhu,

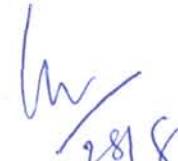
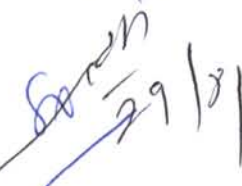
Mr. Shyam Benegal was in Berlin (from mid July to early August) in connection with the shooting of the Indian film "Netaji: the Last Hero". Shri Sunil Dutt, Hon'ble MP who was also in Berlin and Mr. Benegal were felicitated by the Ambassador at a reception-cum-press conference on August 1. Shri Benegal's film received extensive press coverage in the German media, a representative sample of which is enclosed.

This is for your information.

Yours sincerely,

  
(Dr. Devyani Khobragade)

Shri Shambhu Kumar  
Under Secretary (EWI)  
Ministry of External Affairs  
South Block  
New Delhi.

  
28/8  
  
29/8/03  
Sh P-S  
P/S  
\*

103/98/  
2000

### Guest of the Führer

(Julian Hanich in *Tagesspiegel*, Culture rubric, 28 July 2003)

*Gandhi's opponent: The life of the Indian revolutionary Subhas Chandra Bose is filmed in Germany*

The access ways to the castle in Marquard, a village near Potsdam with 980 inhabitants are full of lorries this hot summer day. People with walkie-talkies are hurrying around and suddenly shout. "Quiet please. We are filming."

Inside the castle, Indian movie director Shyam Benegal sits on a chair glaring at a Sony screen with pictures just being filmed in another room of the castle. A blond lady with her daughter in her arms is crying. She has just learned from the radio of the death of her husband. Subhas Chandra Bose has died in a plane crash in Taiwan. Bose's wife is called Emilie Schenkl (played by the young actress Anna Prüstel). The child is their daughter Anita. Scene 195. One of the most emotional ones of the film.

#### Revolutionaries among themselves

"Netaji - The Last Hero" is to be the title of the film. A three hour epos on the last five years of Bose's adventurous life, filmed in Calcutta, Delhi, Uzbekistan, Burma and these days in and around Berlin.

It must have been a strange encounter on 29 May 1942. The man whom the Germans called their Führer, received in his head quarters, the East Prussian "Wolfsschanze", a guest, who was then called Netaji in India, which also means Führer (leader). Hitler's visitor was Subhas Chandra Bose, a tall man aged 45 with a plump face, half bald and thick glasses. He greeted the German as an "old revolutionary" and thanked him for the honour of his reception. After Bose had listened to Hitler's long explanations on the situation in the world, he came to the point. He demanded German support in the Indian uprising against the British colonial power. Moreover he asked Hitler to clarify statements on India in "Mein Kampf", which the British would misuse as propaganda. When Bose finally left, Hitler wished him success for his further plans. But the freedom fighter had not achieved anything. The Nazis were not that much interested in India.

But the strange guest had come to Germany in a dramatic manner. In November 1940 he was released from prison in Calcutta for the British authorities had become scared after one week of hunger strike. The popular Bose, originally a companion of the peacefully rebelling Mahatma Gandhi, was put under house arrest. But he managed to escape with a trick. He then started to travel around the world on a national mission. Dressed as a Muslim insurance agent, Bose travelled via Peshawar to Kabul. There he changed his cover and pretended to

be deaf and dumb. With the assistance of the Italian embassy, he managed to get a new passport. Now his name was Orlando Masotta, a diplomat by profession. He then managed to travel on mysterious ways from Kabul via Moscow to Germany where he became active quickly.

He did not achieve much in Germany except the Nazis support for a few propaganda programmes broadcast by radio for India. Hence Bose travelled aboard a German submarine from Kiel around the Cape of Good Hope in order to get to Japan. Near Madagascar he went aboard a Japanese ship. Once arrived in Japan, Bose began to gather the Indians dispersed in exile in East Asia and recruited the "Indian National Army", which he used to attack the British from the Northeast. This near incredible story could have come from an author like Eric Ambler who was at that time successful with international political thrillers. Hard to believe that this story has never been filmed so far.

S. C. Boses life is a mad chapter from the time when the British lion was still riding on top of the Indian tiger. The tiger was trying to get rid of the lion. However the lion even strengthened his grip on the tiger. To get rid of the rule of the Raj, as the lion was called in India, the jumping tiger was prepared to accept a lot even an alliance with the devil. That is why Bose, the devil of a fellow, had come to the real Adolf Hitler. His argument was that "the enemy of our enemy is our friend".

Bose became Gandhi's opponent in the fight for the Indian independence. On one side was the Mahatma, the Big Soul, who preached civil disobedience. On the other side was the Netaji who wanted to drive the British out of the country with force. Historically simplified, one could compare this with the relation between Martin Luther King and Malcolm X. And, similarly like the Black Panther hero Malcolm X, the national charismatic Bose is still a hero in his home country.

### The Indian longing

When Anita Pfaff, this is today's name of Bose's daughter from the marriage with the Austrian Emilie Schenkl, was in India two years ago, a street vendor threw himself on the ground in front of her, the daughter of the Netaji. "He was completely moved", Anita Pfaff tells us. At another occasion, an Indian World Bank diplomat approached her in order to win her for Indian politics. But different from Sonia Gandhi, the Italian daughter in law of the assassinated PM Indira, Pfaff did not follow the Indian longing and remained a professor of economics in Augsburg.

Bose's relation to the German Reich is a strange chapter of Indo German history, which has now found its continuation under different circumstances

with the shooting for the Bose epos, which only costs four million Euro. Imagine, an Indian film crew comes to Germany for 18 production days in order to shoot parts of the story of their national hero in Berlin-Zehlendorf, Berlin-Mitte, Marquardt, Krampnitz and near Kiel! Indians who live in Berlin were hired to play the roles of Indian members of the British army who were taken as prisoners of war by the German Africa corps in World War II. The communication on the film set takes place in English, Hindi and German; a polyphonic dialogue of cultures.

An interesting scene of the film is typical for this. In that scene, Emilie Schenkl explains her husband (played by the Indian movie star Sachin Khedekar), that she considers the first names Maya, Rita and Anita for their daughter. These names are both Indian and German. The family name is also to be found in both countries until today. In the Berlin telephone directory, the entry Heinz Bose is followed by Indrani Bose.

Moreover, the shooting takes place at a time when the Indian cinema suddenly has an audience again in Europe, decades after the Oscar awarded movie director Satyajit Ray from Calcutta ("Apu's way into life") became a hero for cineastes. But different from the 1960s and 1970s this time there are not the realistic social dramas of the new Indian cinema but the very colourful and lively Bollywood melodramas like "Lagaan" or "Sometimes Happy, Sometimes Sad". Besides interest in the Indian high culture, a curiosity for popular forms is awakening. A series of new Indian movies can be watched until the end of August at Berlin's Arsenal Cinema. And the Berlin based filmmaker and author Merle Kröger has just published her crime novel "Cut", whose structure follows Bollywood movies, with Argument Publishers in Hamburg. The story deals among other with the "Indian Legion", a military unit of Indian prisoners of war, that was to fight for the Nazis against the British in Normandy. They were recruited by Subhas Chandra Bose!

After the shooting of scene 195 is finished, movie director Shyam Benegal sits at a shady beer garden table to tell of his "Last Hero". The Indian movie artist with the white beard and the floppy hat, born in 1934, is influenced by the great predecessors Ray and Mrinal Sen, who also came from Calcutta and was earlier awarded prizes at the Berlin and Cannes film festivals. At the end of the 1980s, Benegal had already filmed Nehru's history "The discovery of India" in 53 sequels for Indian Television. In the documentary "The Making of the Mahatma" (1996), he dealt with Gandhi's time South Africa. Benegal is the commercially most successful movie director of the new Indian cinema today.

In his movies he is trying to bring together the two mainstreams of the Indian cinema tradition for the creation of a *middle cinema*, a blend of social realism and Bollywood melodrama. With the new film, he wants to take a different look

on history, Benegal explains with a tender, smiling seriousness. “The British historians have treated Bose fairly bad. They only see him as a traitor who collaborated with the fascists.” Benegal has a different view. “Bose opposed colonialism with an incorruptible engagement. And he was a great romantic”.

This should be sufficient for a movie. A look into the script shows that the *Last Hero* will not do without pathos. The “Indian National Army” will rejoice in the end and India’s tricolour is flapping in the wind.

(The article is accompanied by two photographs. One from the movie with the caption: **THE DARE DEVIL AS FATHER OF A FAMILY: Subhas Chandra Bose with his little daughter Anita in a scene of Shyam Benegal’s cinema epos Netaji – The Last Hero**”. The second photograph shows Bose with Hitler. The caption is: **AN ENEMY OF MY ENEMY IS MY FRIEND: Adolf Hitler welcomes Subhas Chandra Bose at his visit to (his head quarters) Wolfsschanze in 1942.**)

## German Press Coverage (Summary) 2 – 4 August 2003

### India

#### *German Indians*

##### *Reception for Shyam Benegal*

His film shootings in Berlin are over now; the group around the Indian star film director Shyam Benegal moves on to Kiel. High time for the Indian Ambassador T.C.A. Rangachari to invite him and his crew. Friday night the Indian Ambassador desired more Indian film shootings in Germany and mentioned Switzerland, where many Bollywood films are produced, "What Switzerland offers, Germany can offer anyway", said Rangachari. Benegal (he directed, as reported, parts of his epos "Netaji" here) thanked the staff. "I was first sceptical how it works when Indians and Germans cooperate", he said. "Germans are said to be extremely efficient." After a short period he calmed down, since he noticed that "Germans can be just like Indians." How wonderful. (Der Tagesspiegel, 3 August)

##### *Indian and German history*

(Letter to the editorial in *Tagesspiegel* from Theodor Ebert, Berlin-Dahlem on the article "Beim Führer zu Gast" published in *Der Tagesspiegel* on 28 July 2003.)

The "Führer" Bose was no hero

The report of a German on the shootings for the Indian film "Netaji – The Last Hero", which is to describe the life of Subhas Chandra Bose had to be more critical. Bose had lived in Germany for two years. He could have known which criminals he was collaborating with. This "Führer" is no exemplary hero. In 1997 I visited a photo exhibition in the New Delhi National Gandhi Museum on the 100<sup>th</sup> birthday of Bose. There, his collaboration with the Nazis was hushed up. The photograph printed in the *Tagesspiegel* with the handshake of both "Führers" at the Wolfsschanze on 29 May 1942 was not shown in New Delhi, but only one photograph without any caption, on which a German visitor could recognise Bose with some officers of the Wehrmacht. When such a thing was possible in the Gandhi Museum, one can expect far worse things from a film that has to make money in India. Bose compiled an Indian legion of 4,000 men and declared war on Britain on 28 February 1942 via German radio. (Der Tagesspiegel, 3 August)

##### *Deaths in Pakistan and India*

45 people died in North West Pakistan during an explosion of an explosives deposit. A fire broke out and had caused the catastrophe. A gas explosion in West Indian Surat caused the death of 18 people. (SZ, TAZ, FTD, ND)

##### *Obituaries*

*Rajendra Singh, Hindu nationalist, born in Bulandshahar in 1922, died on 14 July 2003 in the Kaushik Ashram near Poona*



## **Bollywood follows „Netaji“ footsteps**

*(Jochen Reinert and Stefan Mentschel in Neues Deutschland, The Third Page, 06 August 2003)*

*Shyam Benegal is filming in Berlin and Kiel scenes of his film on India's liberation hero Bose*

*The successful Indian movie director Shyam Benegal with a big Indo German team has shot over the last weeks in Berlin and surroundings various scenes for his movie "Netaji – The last Hero" about the long disputed freedom fighter Subhas Chandra Bose. The shooting of the last German scenes takes place in Kiel today.*

A young couple is walking along a shady forest path. The birds are chirping happily. A squirrel is jumping in the undergrowth. The light of the afternoon sun is refracted in the treetops. "Cut" it suddenly sounds in the forest. "We shoot it again." Busy people with Walkie Talkies and pincushions are rushing to the couple; the "animal renter" catches his squirrel. Last movement here and there – "Quiet!" the clapperboard comes down and Sachin Khedekar alias Subhas Chandra Bose and his partner Anna Prüstel (as Bose's wife Emilie Schenkl) are again walking slowly through the park of the castle of the small place called Marquardt near Potsdam.

The director seems to be content. And while Khedekar and Prüstel are having a break the reputed Indian moviemaker Shyam Benegal watches once more the squirrel scene on the monitor. Benegal – known in Europe above all by his Gandhi film "The making of the Mahatma" is presently working on an movie on the Indian national hero Subhas Chandra Bose.

## **Something unusual from Mumbai's dream factory**

"Netaji - The Last Hero" is a rather unusual film from the studios of Bollywood as the movie city Bombay (now Mumbai) is frequently called in allusion to the Californian film dorado. Bollywood's trademarks are trivial love and adventure stories with lots of music and dance. The Benegal movie promises something else. The film on the last years of Bose's life shall take more than three hours on the cinema screens – years, in which the companion of Gandhi and Nehru, who is called Netaji (leader), became a mythical figure in India.

The film story begins in Bose's home town Calcutta in January 1941, the very same day when the freedom fighter who was jailed by the British not less than 12 times between 1922 and 1940, managed with the assistance of his nephew to escape to Afghanistan from where he goes via Moscow to his Berlin exile, as script author Atul Tiwari reports. In the view of Bose, who was President of the Congress party in 1938 and 1939, Gandhi's and Nehru's course of non-violence

towards the colonial masters was too soft. He wanted to liberate India as quick as possible from the yoke. Tiwari, a close friend of the East German and India engaged theatre director Fritz Bennewitz, has studied an endless number of books, articles, letters and files in order to find out the details of Bose's last years. The intention finally is to shoot all scenes at original places what the makers have so far succeeded with except a few places like Kabul and the Pakistani Peshawar.

Original places means that the Indian film crew could not miss out Berlin, where Bose, from mid 1941 to the beginning of 1943 and with the support of Nazi Germany, prepared an attack on the "British crown jewel". After 18 shooting days the Indo German crew could celebrate the successful completion of shooting in the former capital of the Reich last weekend in the Berlin Tagore Centre – only a few meters away from the Lichtensteinallee where Bose's "Free India Centre" was once located.

Director Shyam Benegal praises on this evening in the presence of the big film and Indian community the "valuable experience of cooperation with German colleagues". For nearly three weeks, they have worked together besides Marquardt castle also in the Palais am Festungsgraben, in Charlottenburg and Dahlem.

Already as a child Benegal had admired "Bose's charismatic figure" he explains the motivation for his big film project to the newspaper Neues Deutschland. And not the least because of his uncle who served in Bose's famous Indian National Army. Moreover with the Gandhi film and his 53 sequels long TV series on Nehru's "Discovery of India", he had already chosen the liberation fight of his country as a subject.

Benegal was also interested in the controversial sides of Bose's figure, his pact with the devil, the axis powers, and the British assessment, which sees him as a traitor and collaborator. The shadow of this verdict is cast on Bose until today, but not on the freedom heroes Aung San (Burma) and Sukarno (Indonesia), who also collaborated with the Japanese. Bose went to Berlin, Benegal interprets the motives of his hero, because of his hope he could form an exile government at the place of the enemy of his enemy in order to get into the position of negotiating on the faith of his country at the same eye level. Moreover he wanted to recruit armed forces, which were to go to India via the Soviet Union. "This was not unthinkable because finally the Ribbentrop Molotow pact was still in force at that time", Benegal says.

### **Bose and one of the conspirators of the 20th July**

However Bose could only partly achieve his goals as the meeting with Nazi leader Hitler on 29 May 1942 in the Wolfsschanze showed in a spectacular manner. Who could know this better than Udo Schenk who acted as Hitler, however not in Mazovia, but in the town hall of Charlottenburg. The former actor of the Maxim Gorki Theatre in Berlin tells us light heartedly: In the relatively long three minute sequence, which at its start imitates an original photograph, the self confident Bose presents both his wish for a declaration in which the Nazi leadership guarantees independence for a future India and his criticism of Hitler's disparaging statements on the Indians in the Nazi bible "Mein Kampf". Hitler is irritated, he wants to get rid of the awkward Asian Aryan as soon as possible. Hence Udo Schenk alias Hitler indicates to his visitor Sachin Khedekar alias Bose he may better orientate himself towards Japan, which was finally geographically located nearer to India. "And in front of a globe I hand over to Bose a submarine model as a clear hint", demonstrates Schenk who soon is to play the "biggest leader of all times" also in Jo Baier's new Stauffenberg movie.

Sachin Khedekar who acts as Bose with great compassion and believes that the shooting of the scene with his colleague Schenk was done very well, is also present this evening. In contrast to Christian Oscar Spitzel, the actor playing Dr. Adam von Trott zu Solz, who as head of the special India desk in the Ribbentrop ministry, is supposed to "advise" Bose. "Von Trott zu Solz, as you know he was one of the conspirators of the 20 July 1944, he naturally could not be missed out in our film", director Benegal stresses. And script author Tiwari, who is also well informed about this man of the 20 July, sees him rather as Bose's supporter than an executor of Hitler's policy.

In Kiel, where the last sequences of the movie on German soil are filmed today, Bose goes aboard a German submarine at the beginning of 1943, which brings him to the Indian ocean. Near Madagascar he is taken over by the Japanese. Bose puts together an Indian National Army operating from Singapore using money from non-resident Indians. This army fighting at the side of Japan, manages to advance to East India, but is beaten in the end. The film scene 195 shows how Bose's wife Emilie receives notice about the death of her husband, who lost his life on 18 August 1945 in a plane crash in Taiwan.

The last few film scenes, reports Benegal, show the direct effect of the militant freedom movement of Netaji, shaking the whole of India. When some of his officers in the Delhi Red Fort are sentenced to death by the British in a show-case trial, such a storm of unrest breaks out that the colonial power has to set them free. A short time later the Indian soldiers in the British Fleet in the Indian Ocean rise up in revolt, the "crown jewel" breaks apart, on 15 August 1947 Nehru proclaims India's independence on the battlements of the Red Fort.

## Delhi forgave him the pact with the devil

“After so many years we have enough distance to get away from the black and white pictures also in the case of Bose”, believes Benegal. By now even the official India has forgiven Bose his pact with the devil: On the occasion of his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday in 1997 100,000 youngsters marched into the Delhi Nehru Stadium wearing uniforms of the old National Army. But the shadow cast on Bose by the British has not yet fully disappeared.

Netaji – the last hero. In India he is honoured not only because of his struggle against colonial rule. In his units, the traditional separation into religious groups and castes was abolished, still a revolutionary project for India today. He countered the discrimination against women by symbolically putting up women’s battalions. His ideas of a planned economy were later taken up by Nehru. And last but not least there is his integrity: He did not allow the Nazis to buy him with money and transferred from Tokyo, sponsored by non-resident Indians, a larger part of the one million Reichsmarks he had received in Berlin.

The premiere of “Netaji - The Last Hero” is planned for the 107<sup>th</sup> birthday of Bose on 23 January next year. But a lot remains to be done by then. There are another 68 days of film shooting, most of them in Myanmar (Burma), where Bose experienced dramatic days heading the National Army and a provisional Indian government.

Philipp von Becker of the German production company IPS, Benegal’s partner enterprise, cannot exactly say when the film will possibly come to the German cinemas. A film with such an interesting content, the IPS man believes, will not be missed here – “even more since right now the Indian cinema is booming in Germany”. The optimum forum would be the Berlin Film Festival in February. “But this leaves a rather short period.”

(The article is accompanied by three photographs, one shows a scene from the movie with the caption: Anna Prüstel as Emilie Schenkl and Sachin Khedekar as Bose in a family scene with their daughter Anita. The other two photographs were taken at last Friday’s reception for the film crew on the premises of the Indian Embassy in Berlin. The captions are:

Director Benegal (right) welcomes the star guest of the evening in the Tagore Centre – Sunil Dutt, Member of the Indian Lower House and hero of innumerable Bollywood movies

and:

Udo Schenk, the actor playing Hitler, in conversation with Sachin Khedekar)

### ***A mission in vain***

*The Indian independence fighter Subhas Chandra Bose was seeking a pact with the Nazis in the 1940s. The film director Shyam Benegal is now shooting a film about him at the historic places in Berlin*

*(Jan Kuhlmann, die tageszeitung, 12 August 2003)*

A villa in Berlin-Dahlem. The dining hall has been used to depict a conference room of the Foreign Office of 1941: The actor Bernd Uwe Reppenhagen, dressed as the Foreign Minister of the Reich, Joachim von Ribbentrop, gets close to the conference table, where the Indian delegation around the Indian politician Subhas Chandra Bose (Sachin Shrikant Khedekar) waits for him. "Heil Hitler", he shouts and moves up his right arm. "Vande Mataram", shouts Rajit Kewal Kapur, who is to act as Bose's young assistant and also swings his arm in a clumsy imitation of the Hitler greeting. Slightly amused the blond politician asks, "What does this mean?" The Indian answers, "Long live the mother country!"

"The Nazis have glorified a single person, Bose and his followers however the entire country", says Atul Tiwari, one of the script writers of the film "Netaji – The lost hero" about the Indian national hero Subhas Chandra Bose. This scene is to make clear: Even if Bose came to Germany in 1941 in order to seek help from both the governments of the Third Reich and fascist Italy for the struggle against the foreign rule of the British, he did not want to be linked with the Nazi ideology.

"Netaji – The lost hero" is the new project of the successful Indian film director Shyam Benegal. In July he stayed in Berlin for his work. Bose is the third politician of the independence struggle Benegal is dealing with. In a TV series he processed the life of Jawaharlal Nehru ("Bharat Ek Khoj"); later he shot a feature film on Mahatma Gandhi's political apprenticeship in South Africa ("Making of the Mahatma").

The biography of Bose is just the right one for an adventure story: the escape from British imprisonment in Calcutta touring half the world to Berlin, the meeting with Adolf Hitler, the journey in a submarine from Kiel to South East Asia. Very surprisingly Bose appeared in February 1941 in the German mission in Kabul. The Reich's Foreign Minister invited him to Berlin in the hope to have a willing propaganda figure. But Bose did not just allow himself to be misused. Until spring 1942 he refused to act in public, because Hitler did not want to recognise the independence of India. The offer to have an own short-wave radio station "Free India" and to supply his countrymen with political evaluations in the languages of the country, was gladly accepted by him. The Germans also fulfilled his wish for armed forces. Bose became commander of an Indian legion with the strength of a regiment, equipped with weapons of the Wehrmacht. He was aware that he had been supported by a criminal regime. He agreed to any means in the fight against the British colonial power.

When he escaped to Germany, Bose could not yet know that the legion had been blocked in its passage to India by the German attack on the Soviet Union. He had expected a Eurasian anti-British power block. "Bose's strategic view was correct, but things developed in a different direction", says Benegal. For the film director Netaji remains a hero, even if a tragic one.

Despite Bose's close contacts with the national socialists, Benegal is convinced that Bose was no Nazi and no collaborator. This evaluation seems understandable if one knows that Bose spent most of his stay in Germany with useless and frustrating negotiations about arranging cooperation. The political convictions of Bose and the Nazis were too different. Only when the Japanese marched towards Birma and uprisings began in India, Bose appeared for some weeks in the German war propaganda with the hope of being able to influence developments in his home country. At the same time he already prepared his departure. In February 1943 he got on a submarine, which took him to South East Asia and where he put up the Indian National Army with the help of the Japanese and led it to India.

Bose's biography is still a political issue in India. The filmmakers evaded the death of the hero. Many Indians do not want to believe that Bose died in a plane crash in 1945 in Taiwan. They also skipped Bose's meeting with Benito Mussolini. "This would have led away from the central contents of the film", says Benegal. The audience will thus not understand how brilliantly Bose knew to play both dictators off against each other. When he was not successful with the Germans, he tried his luck with the Italians. Mussolini, different from the Führer, was quite aware that it was only a question of time until the Subcontinent would gain its independence. For this reason he was seeking the closeness of Indian leaders. Not only Bose, but also Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore were his guests.

There is a reason that Bose's life will be used for a film so late while Gandhi and Nehru were used for quite a number of film portraits. In the post-war period the Congress Party claimed to be the ones to have led India to independence, at that time headed by Nehru's descendants Indira and Rajiv Gandhi. Bose, however, had left Congress, because he considered Gandhi's policy of non-violence to be inefficient. "We now sail in different boats", said Mahatma then. Today the Indian government does not shy back from appreciating Bose's share in the independence struggle. When Benegal will shoot the scenes of the battle of Bose's troops against the British, the Indian army will lend him 500 soldiers for supernumeraries. The film is to be shown in India in January next year.



5-1471/EW/00  
23/11

8217/11 (EW) 100  
23/11

13727/FS/1000  
23/10 (14)

AMBASSADOR OF INDIA  
POHLSTRASSE 20  
10785 BERLIN  
TEL.: (030) 2300 5892/ 2579 8213  
FAX: (030) 2300 5895  
E-Mail: indembassy@amb.b.shuttle.de

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

No. Berl/Amb/00-87(C)

12 October, 2000

Dear Lalit

You will recall that during my brief visit to Delhi last month I had given you a brief account of my conversation with Prof. Anita Pfaff, daughter of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose.

She had met me, at her request, at the Embassy Residence on 22 September. I conveyed to her that our Prime Minister had, during his transit visit in Frankfurt earlier that month, asked me to convey his good wishes to her. She expressed her gratitude for PM's kind sentiments. Thereafter she made the following points:

MOS (AP)  
may pl  
see for  
comments  
before this  
is submitted  
to EAM.

- (i) She was concerned at the delays, on one ground or the other, in bringing back her father's ashes to India from Japan, "while his surviving associates and close relatives continued to dwindle in number".
- (ii) She appreciated that the present political situation in West Bengal "made rational decisions more difficult than usual" and that the new Commission was looking into various matters.
- (iii) In the present circumstances, she was concerned at claims made by so-called scholars like Smt. Purabi Roy about the existence of archival materials in Russia which sought to create new doubts.

Healy  
23/10

MOS (AP)  
In view of  
New Commission  
still continuing  
their enquiry,  
Prof. Anita could  
refer this to  
Majha Monojit Mukherjee  
She is heading this  
new Commission.

(iv) In the light of the above, she wondered whether the Government could take the initiative of asking a small group of independent scholars, without any ideological bias, to study all Soviet archival materials related to all aspects of Indo-Soviet contacts up to the end of the Second World War, including but certainly not restricted to INA activities. In response to certain clarifications given by me, she said that she had seen the Notes Verbale of the Russian Government, but felt that such a study could silence totally unnecessary speculation by prejudiced persons.

FS  
Rana  
24/10/00

Discuss with EAM ..... 21-  
This will be kept  
under cabinet  
level.  
J.P. (EW)  
23/10/00

A  
ad m  
24/10  
copy 2  
Pl-keep  
carefully.  
SC  
24/10  
Sofia

When I mentioned this to my successor in Moscow, Ambassador Lambah, he felt that it may not pose a problem to constitute a joint Indo-German group of scholars, including some scholars of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences, to conduct such a study on the basis of Soviet archival materials.

However, since the credibility of the study would depend substantially on public perceptions about full access to all archival materials, the full consent and cooperation of the Russian Government would be required. If such a request is made, it would have to be carefully worded so as not to cast doubt on the formal responses given earlier by the Russian Government. Whether such an independent initiative would be advisable while the Commission is conducting its work is another aspect to be considered.

I would be grateful if the request made by Netaji's daughter could be looked into and I could be advised on how I should respond to her. She has reminded me about this matter the day before yesterday, saying that the recent death of Dr. Sisir Kumar Bose (who had concurred with her views on the return of Netaji's ashes) had been a major negative development.

*With best wishes*

Yours sincerely,



(R. Sen)

Shri Lalit Mansingh,  
Foreign Secretary,  
Ministry of External Affairs,  
New Delhi.





(16) 13724/F3/2000  
22/10  
AMBASSADOR OF INDIA  
POHLSTRASSE 20  
10785 BERLIN  
TEL.: (030) 2300 5892/ 2579 8213  
FAX: (030) 2300 5895  
E-Mail: indembassy@amb.b.shuttle.de

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

No. Berl/Amb/00-87(C)

12 October, 2000

Dear Lalit

You will recall that during my brief visit to Delhi last month I had given you a brief account of my conversation with Prof. Anita Pfaff, daughter of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose.

She had met me, at her request, at the Embassy Residence on 22 September. I conveyed to her that our Prime Minister had, during his transit visit in Frankfurt earlier that month, asked me to convey his good wishes to her. She expressed her gratitude for PM's kind sentiments. Thereafter she made the following points:

MOS (AP)  
may pl  
see for  
comments  
before this  
is submitted  
to EAM.

- (i) She was concerned at the delays, on one ground or the other, in bringing back her father's ashes to India from Japan, "while his surviving associates and close relatives continued to dwindle in number".
- (ii) She appreciated that the present political situation in West Bengal "made rational decisions more difficult than usual" and that the new Commission was looking into various matters.
- (iii) In the present circumstances, she was concerned at claims made by so-called scholars like Smt. Purabi Roy about the existence of archival materials in Russia which sought to create new doubts.

Healy  
23/10

- (iv) In the light of the above, she wondered whether the Government could take the initiative of asking a small group of independent scholars, without any ideological bias, to study all Soviet archival materials related to all aspects of Indo-Soviet contacts up to the end of the Second World War, including but certainly not restricted to INA activities. In response to certain clarifications given by me, she said that she had seen the Notes Verbale of the Russian Government, but felt that such a study could silence totally unnecessary speculation by prejudiced persons.

MOS (AP)  
In view of  
New Commission  
still continuing  
their enquiry,  
Prof. Anita could  
refer this to  
Majha Monojit Dasgupta  
She is heading this  
new Commission.

F/S  
Manoj  
22/10/2000

F/S would like  
to discuss it  
27/10  
sep. 27/10  
28/10/2000  
28/10/2000

A

When I mentioned this to my successor in Moscow, Ambassador Lambah, he felt that it may not pose a problem to constitute a joint Indo-German group of scholars, including some scholars of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences, to conduct such a study on the basis of Soviet archival materials.

However, since the credibility of the study would depend substantially on public perceptions about full access to all archival materials, the full consent and cooperation of the Russian Government would be required. If such a request is made, it would have to be carefully worded so as not to cast doubt on the formal responses given earlier by the Russian Government. Whether such an independent initiative would be advisable while the Commission is conducting its work is another aspect to be considered.

I would be grateful if the request made by Netaji's daughter could be looked into and I could be advised on how I should respond to her. She has reminded me about this matter the day before yesterday, saying that the recent death of Dr. Sisir Kumar Bose (who had concurred with her views on the return of Netaji's ashes) had been a major negative development.

*With best wishes*

Yours sincerely,

*Ramen Sen*  
(R. Sen)

Shri Lalit Mansingh,  
Foreign Secretary,  
Ministry of External Affairs,  
New Delhi.