

The Search for Netaji: New Findings*

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The most enduring controversy is the mystery surrounding Netaji's alleged death in a plane crash in August 1945 in Formosa. This has remained a controversy as many believe that Netaji escaped to Manchuria to reach out to the Russians.

Dr Purabi Roy's book deals with this highly sensitive question from the view of a researcher. She has compiled all the available documents made public by archives of different states, mainly Germany, the UK and Russia. Many of these discoveries were due to her own efforts. We can call them as "New Findings."

The Shah Nawaz Committee in 1956 and the Khosla Commission in 1974 held the view that Netaji died in the plane crash as alleged. The Mukherjee Commission in 2005 came to the conclusion that Netaji did not die in the plane crash. The Government of India did not agree with the report of the Mukherjee Commission without giving reasons for rejection.

Will the Netaji mystery be unveiled in future? The author rightly believes that it would depend on "the strong will, resolute determination and sincere initiative on the parts of the governments of the people of both India and Russia."

The reasons for holding such a view can be explained in terms of hundreds and thousands of documents that have come to light, especially after disintegration of the Soviet Union. Much is hidden in the archives of the Russian Federation. In August 1946, in the midst of a strong belief that Netaji had managed to escape to Russia, Nehru reportedly requested V Sayadiyants, a Soviet agent living in Bombay, to deliver his letter personally to Stalin. That letter is yet to surface from the hidden chambers of the

***The Search For Netaji : New Findings** by Dr Purabi Roy (Kolkatta, Purple Peacock Books & Arts Private Limited, 2012), pp..288, Rs.450, ISBN 978-81-88908-13-4.

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Journal of the United Service Institution of India, Vol. CXLI, No. 588, April-June 2012.

Russian archives. The contents of the letter would remain a matter of interest for historians.

Netaji's pro-Russian views for liberation of India from the British Raj was evident before the outbreak of World War II. He could foresee the Cold War situation after the end of World War II. He also foresaw clearly the defeat of Japan; and much before that, he attempted to reach out to the Russian leadership. All these have been brilliantly brought out by Dr Purabi Roy. The British Intelligence reported to Russian Intelligence during the War that Subhas was a British agent just to prevent Subhas Chandra Bose from reaching Russia. This was the work of the Dirty Tricks department of the British Intelligence. These comments are mine and not of Dr Roy.

Dr Roy has brought out all the available material without interpreting any of them. She has been able to compile all the documents for future researchers to work on Netaji and Indo-USSR relations.

Only after the collapse of the Communist rule in Russia, the Russian scholars started to work on 'Netaji, India's Independence Struggle'. The most important person who could have assisted the Mukherjee Commission was A Kolesnikov, a former Army officer of the Soviet Union. He had told some Forward Block leaders that Netaji's Provisional Government of Free India got recognition from the USSR, Subhas Bose had reached Russia at the end of World War II and he had seen a file where Bose was the subject discussed between Stalin, Molotov, Vischenkit and Malik. When the Mukherjee Commission reached Moscow, he remained "untraceable". He had reportedly got a job in the foreign office and posted abroad. Here is an example of Government of India's lack of interest to persuade the Government of Russian Federation to produce this witness.

The book is a store house of information for all the future researchers to unfold the truth behind Netaji mystery.