

**CHAPTER-III**

**IMAGES OF SUBHAS BOSE, PANDIT NEHRU AND**

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The images of other Indian national leaders like Subhas Bose, Mr Jinnah and Nehru, are drawn in conformity with the image of Gandhi. These images are projected as equally distorted ones. For instance, the image of Subhas Bose and his Indian National Army is disfigured as Scott regards this great leader as a traitor. In The Day of the Scorpion, the death of Teddie Bingham is attributed to the activities of Indian National Army founded by Subhas Chandra Bose. According to the British, the very foundation of the INA lies in the act of treachery. This is nothing but a colonizer's point of view.

Ronald Merrick describes the formation of INA in the following words. The INA members were known as Jiffs. Basically they were the Indian soldiers who were once prisoners of war of the Japanese in the Burma and Malaya. But later on they changed their attitude and formed themselves into an army. They helped the Japanese in their attempt to invade India through Imphal. Here Scott distorts the way in which INA functioned. He totally neglects its contribution to the Indian national freedom. It means that Scott considers INA from the British point of view only. Ronald Merrick calls INA members disloyal to the British. He, therefore, says:

*And officers like Teddie took it to heart. They couldn't believe Indian soldiers who'd eaten the king's salt and been proud to serve in the army generation after generation could be suborned like that, buy their way out of prison camp by turning coat, come armed hand in hand with the Japs to fight their own countrymen, fight the very officers who had trained them, cared for them and earned their respect.<sup>1</sup>*

It shows that Merrick is highly critical of the INA. Moreover he is very much disturbed because his friend Teddie was killed by the INA. Merrick, therefore, frowns at Subhas Bose and his army says:

*There'll be a day of reckoning I suppose. God knows what will happen to all those chaps. The strength of the INA is three divisions. That's a lot of officers and a lot of men. A lot of sentences of death. Too many. It won't happen. I suppose we might hang Subhas Chandra Bose, who's at the head of the whole thing.<sup>2</sup>*

As rightly pointed out by P.A. Attar, it is quite obvious that the image of Subhas Bose as a traitor is a distortion because Scott does not recognise him as an Indian national leader with a moral force.<sup>3</sup>

In the context of his colonizer's attitude, Scott depicts

the Congress-INA discord which is revealed through the relationship between Mohammed Ali Kasim, a staunch Congressman and his elder son Sayed, the member of the INA. Though the father and son had a common aim, they were never in agreement with each other. Mr Kasim does not like his son joining the Indian National Army. His staunch belief in the ideals of Congress is to be seen when he criticizes INA in the following words:

*The Indian National Army? What can that be? A handful of madmen led by that other madman, Subhas Chandra Bose, who was never any good to Congress. He always had delusions of grandeur.*<sup>4</sup>

This idea of INA was not acceptable to the Congress leaders who believed in the Parliamentary democracy. This discord points out how Indians were not in agreement with each other and hence, according to Scott, they were not considered mature enough to have a self-rule.

The distorted image of INA still continued in The Towers of Silence. Scott speaks very harshly of INA in one of the conversations between Mrs Paynton and Mrs Fosdick, the wives of British officers in India:

*If we ever do win this bloody war we might hang Bose and one or two bigwigs but the rest will just have to be cashiered or dismissed with ignominy. Only by then we'll probably be on our way out*

*in any case and the bloody Indians will have to deal with them in their own bloody way, and they'll probably bloody well make heroes out of them.*<sup>5</sup>

In these lines also Scott sticks to his stance of a colonizer.

Scott's harsh comments on Subhas Bose continue in the last novel A Division of the Spoils. In this regard he writes:

*All Pankot is patient, awaiting the regiment's return from across the black water. In Pankot they do not yet know the story of Havildar Karim Muzzafir Khan who let himself believe in the lies of Subhas Chandra Bose. But soon they will know. And they will be dumb with shame and sorrow.*<sup>6</sup>

The very word 'lies' used in case of Subhas Bose clearly shows Scott's attitude towards him. Scott criticizes Indian National Army because they joined hands with Japanese who, Scott considers, did not believe in the democracy. This view is reflected through the conversation between Sayed, MAK's son who joined the INA, and his father:

*'what is wrong with that? It's our own country'.  
'The British still happen to think that legally it is theirs. Just do not use that phrase. Rely more on what you said about the Rising Sun and*

*the Union Jack. Rely entirely on the question not of what appeared to be agreed between your Netaji and the Japanese within a framework of spurious legality, but on the underlying distrust, the fear that if and when the British were defeated, which seemed imminent, the Japanese would run riot in the country, looting and raping and enslaving, and that the best way to try to stop them doing this was unfortunately to march with them'.<sup>7</sup>*

In this way the image of Subhas Bose and his INA as depicted by Paul Scott is a total distortion of the native feeling of nationality.

As far as the image of Nehru is concerned, Scott draws it on two levels. Sometimes Nehru is considered a more sensible man than Gandhi because he was educated in the West and had a rational point of view. But when he is totally nationalist in outlook he is harshly criticized. As seen earlier Miss Edwina Crane removes the picture of Gandhi from the walls of her study as she holds him responsible for the civil violence in the country. After that she transfers her faith to Mr Nehru because she thinks that 'he obviously understood the different degrees of tyranny men could exercise and, if there had to be a preference, probably preferred to live a while longer with imperial degree in order not only to avoid submitting to but to resist the totalitarian'.<sup>8</sup> In these lines Nehru's strong nationalism is denied by the writer. This view is further noticed in Miss Crane's comparison of Gandhi with Nehru.

She thinks, 'if Congress had not resigned from the provincial ministries in 1939 in a fit of pique because the Viceroy without going through the motions of consulting them had declared war in the name of the King-Emperor on India's behalf, and if Mr Gandhi had not had a brain-storm and seized the moment of Britain's greatest misfortune to press home his demands for political freedom, if things had been left to Mr Nehru who obviously found Gandhi an embarrassment and to Mr Rajagopalachari (who had headed the provincial ministry in Madras and had wanted to arm and train the entire nation to fight the Japanese) then at this moment, Miss Crane believed, in an Indian cabinet would have been in control in Delhi, Lord Linlithgow would have been Governor-General of a virtually independent dominion and all the things that she had hoped and prayed for to happen in India would have happened, and the war would be under process of firm and thoughtful prosecution'.<sup>9</sup>

Whenever Scott compares Gandhi with Nehru he prefers Nehru to Gandhi. Scott does not believe in the abilities of the Congress and Gandhi, probably with the exception of Nehru. This is reflected in Mr Perron's talk with Mr Purvis, a member of an economic advisory mission to the government of India. We learn about this in the following account given by Mr Purvis:

*The place is still feudal, Perron. And so far as I can see the only man of influence who's worried about that is whatever the chap's name*

is, Nehru, but he is a Brahmin aristocrat and can hardly speak any language but English, and against him you have to set the Mahatma and his bloody spinning wheel. Spinning wheel! In 1945. For God's sake, what's the man at? In the past twenty-five years he's done as much to keep the country stuck in the mud with his village-industry fixation as the whole bloody raj put together.<sup>10</sup>

Nehru's image is considered superior to that of Gandhi because Scott considers Nehru as a secular person. For example, Lady Chatterjee, an anglicised Indian woman, recounts Nehru's achievement after Independence. She does not consider Gandhi as a great leader because he was a saint. This view is to be noted in the following analysis given by Lady Chatterjee:

*You could say that the same thing had happened to Mr Nehru for whom I have always had a fondness because he has omitted to be a saint. I still have a fondness for him because the only thing about him currently discussed with any sort of lively passion is the question of who is to succeed him. I suppose we are still waiting for the Mahatma because the previous one disappointed and surprised us by becoming a saint and martyr in the western sense when that silly boy shot him. I'm sure there's a lesson in that for us. If the old man were alive today I believe he'd dot us all one on the head with his spinning-wheel and point*



*out that if we go on as we are we shall end up believing in saints the way you English do and so lose the chance of ever having once again in our public life.*<sup>11</sup>

However, Scott is not happy with the post-Independent personality of Nehru when Scott describes him as, 'a megalomaniac who had already outlived his usefulness by 1948 but gone on living disastrously in the past and dragging India back to conditions worse than in the days of British because he knew nothing of world economic structure and pressure'.<sup>12</sup> This image of Nehru is a distorted one because Scott does not consider Nehru's contribution to India as a free country.

One more important Indian national leader, Barrister Jinnah, is presented as a selfish, separatist force who then had the vision of a separate Muslim state. However it is said that the masses never wanted a separate state and the Muslims did not follow Mr Jinnah. This becomes clear when he talks about the Hindu and <sup>the</sup> Muslim communities in the following words:

*(they) do not hanker after the democratic millenium promised by Gandhi on the one hand or the theistic paradise-state on earth envisaged by Mr Jinnah on the other.*<sup>13</sup>

What Scott says about Jinnah is not at all true because he had

a considerable number of the Muslim followers and he did get a separate state for Muslim. Scott all the time criticizes Jinnah and his Muslim League for their separatist tendencies. In this context, Scott all the time highlights the severity of the partition. For instance, how the problem of the division of India was severe is to be noted in the letter sent by MAK's daughter during the turbulence:

*Tomorrow we are having a party to listen to Wavell on the radio which I expect will be the usual guff, everyone knows he is going to announce the elections. Guzzu says he has no alternative but that the results will surprise him and force him to recognize the reality of the problem that divide the country.<sup>14</sup>*

Scott holds Jinnah responsible for instigating the Indian Muslims and going against the leadership of Gandhi. This disbelief is to be found in words of the Sayed, MAK's son who had turned a Leaguist. He says:

*They will hand us over to Gandhi and Nehru and Patel - and then where will you be, father? How can you trust Congress as a whole? How can you imagine that just because you've been useful to them in the past you - a Muslim - will be allowed to remain useful when they have power? They will squeeze you out at the first convenient opportunity. Congress is a Hindu party whatever they pretend. They will exploit us as badly as*

the British have done, probably worse. There's only one answer and that is to seize what we can for ourselves and run things our own way from there.<sup>15</sup>

This rift is pointed out by Scott in order to establish his view point that the Indians were not fit for a self-rule. This view is further illustrated in the following cartoon which symbolizes the Hindu-Muslim rift:

*'This cartoon, unpublished and dated 20 September, 1945, was captioned 'Box-Wallah', and portrayed Wavell in the garb of an itinerant Indian merchant and purveyor of ladies 'dress materials, squatting on his hunkers on the verandah of a European bungalow, recommending his wares to a gathering of memsahibs who bore remarkable resemblances to Bapu, Nehru, Patel, Tara Singh, Maulana Azad and Mohammed Ali Jinnah. Jinnah was sitting somewhat apart from 'her' colleagues, consulting a glossy magazine marked 'The Pakistan Ladies' Home Journal'; but none of them was responding to the pleas of the box-wallah or to the sight of the avalanche of silks and woollens he was flinging hopefully in all directions (lengths marked: 'New Executive Council - Indian Patterns', Central Assembly Dress Lengths (for Cold Weather Wear)', Constituent Assembly Fashion Designs, For All Seasons'; 'Provincial Election Lengths: Graded Prices'; 'Dominion Status Fabrics (slightly Soiled)').<sup>16</sup>*

This cartoon symbolically explains how Jinnah was interested in

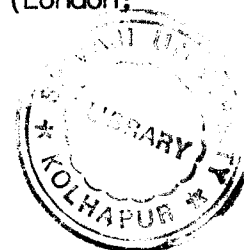
getting a separate state and how he remained detached from the other leaders of the Congress. It also explains though the British were interested in introducing certain ideas for the benefit of the Indians they were neglected by the Indians. The clothes in the cartoon are silky and woollen which indicate high quality, means, according to Scott, the British ideas were essentially good but since the Indians didn't accept them they were at loss.

How the Muslim League and the Congress were very much after taking over from the British is reflected from one more symbolic cartoon depicted by Scott. The cartoon, dated June 29 1946, showed the Cabinet Mission returning disconsolately to London, climbing aboard a plane labelled imperial 'shuttle service'. The Secretary of State was carrying the Imperial Crown and Cripps was surreptitiously handing him back a large diamond and saying, 'You'd better stick it back in, already'.<sup>17</sup> In this cartoon, the cartoonist made three British ministers look like three shady Jews from Amsterdam, and Nehru, Jinnah and Tara Singh look like three equally shady Arab merchants who had come to wave them off but were eying each other suspiciously, wondering if the jewel from the crown had been secretly handed over to whichever one of them had offered the highest number of piasters. Here the Imperial Crown is the British Empire and the jewel from the crown is India herself. The selfish motives of the Muslim League and the Congress are symbolically dealt with in the present cartoon.

In this way the images of Subhas Bose, Nehru and Jinnah are projected as distorted images because the great work done by these leaders for the sake of their nation is totally neglected by the writer. Therefore, it can safely be said that Scott looks towards the Indian national leaders from a British point of view which is quite biased.

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- 8 Paul Scott, The Raj Quartet: The Jewel in the Crown, (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1976), p. 23.



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- 14       Ibid., p. 397.
- 15       Ibid., p. 432.
- 16       Ibid., p. 457.
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