During the Second World War the second largest rebellion of personnel in British Imperial military history occurred with the formation of the INA\(^1\) from among the 50,000 jawans captured during the Japanese offensive through Malaya.\(^2\) The history of the INA is well known: from its pronouncement and the gleeful throwing of caps and turbans in the air at the fall of Singapore on 17 February 1942;\(^3\) to its role in the thwarted Japanese invasion of India in March 1944; to the death of Subhas Chandra Bose in August 1945. It has been recounted in the memoirs of Japanese officers,\(^4\) influential INA personnel,\(^5\) and the sanitized narratives of British intelligence officers.\(^6\) The histories they have written will not be reproduced here. What will be discussed

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\(^1\) Strictly speaking the term INA ought to only be used for the first phase of its existence between 1941 and 1942, since it was reformed and renamed the Azad Hind Fauj after Subhas Chandra Bose arrived in Singapore in 1943. For the purposes of this article, however, I have used the terms INA or Azad Hind Fauj interchangeably.

\(^2\) It is unclear quite how many joined the INA. The final tally reached by (British) military intelligence was 23,266. That does not include the number of men who may have joined the INA and left again without British knowledge, or those that evaded capture altogether. Indian National Army, 28 January 1947; Indian National Army and Free Burma Army, vol. 3, War Staff Papers, Asia and Africa Collection, L/WS/1/1578, IOR, BL.


\(^4\) For instance, Fujiwara Iwaichi, F. Kikan: Japanese Army Intelligence Operations in Southeast Asia during World War II; tr. by Akashi Yoji, (Hong Kong: 1983).


\(^6\) Hugh Toye, Subhash Chandra Bose: The Springing Tiger (Bombay: 1959).
is the memorialization of the INA in the testimony of the jawans involved both during and immediately after the Second World War.

In the summer of 1945, a small group of captured INA personnel found themselves imprisoned in the depths of the Red Fort in Delhi. Each man was taken away, one after another, by a bespectacled ‘Mr. Bannerjee’, interrogated over their defections from the British-Indian Army, and accused of ‘Waging War Against the King’ in the tropical forests of Burma and Malaya. The interrogations did not go well. Major-General Arcot Doraisamy Loganathan, the highest ranking member of the group, refused to accept that he and his men had committed a crime, and began to use the space of the interrogation room to interrogate the interrogators:

He has originated at CSDIC(I) the new term “BIFF” [British Influenced Indian Forces], which he has used objectionably on more than one occasion as an opprobrious designation of Indian officers working here. He has at the same time attempted to cross-examine such officers on their motives in remaining loyal and has given them subversive advice. On these occasions he has demonstrated an attitude to Indian members of the (British) Indian Army even more hostile than his attitude to the British.8

Loganathan and his fellow officers were not alone in their expressions of hostility. Of the 23,266 military personnel of the INA who were captured and then grilled by British Military Intelligence up to 28 January 1947, only 3,880 men were deemed to be unconditionally loyal to the Crown.9 But, this was not because the majority of soldiers had suddenly become ‘Nationalistically minded’, as British Officers sifting through their interrogations assumed.10 In the interrogation room, the jawans occupied a space in which they could reason, conceive and speak of

7 ‘Mr Banerjee’ was how Gurbaksh Singh Dhillon’s interrogator introduced himself when he was interned alongside Loganathan in the Red Fort. Dhillon, From My Bones, 403.
8 Interrogation of Lieutenant-Colonel/Major-General Arcot Doraisamy Logananadan [sic.]; CSDIC (India), No.2 Section Information Reports [hereafter CSDIC(I) Reports]; INA Papers, NAI, New Delhi, 379/INA; Parts 17–22. Italics mine.
9 Indian National Army, 28 January 1947; Indian National Army and Free Burma Army, vol. 3.
10 Claude Auchinleck, C-in-CI, Typewritten minute marked ‘Strictly Personal and Secret’ from General Auchinleck, concerning the effect on the Indian Army as a whole of the first trial of members of the Indian National Army, 12 February 1946; Major-General Thomas Wynford Rees Papers, Asia and Africa Collection, MSS EUR/ F274/95, BL.