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Imperial Influence On The Postcolonial Indian Army, 1945-1973

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IMPERIAL INFLUENCE ON THE POSTCOLONIAL INDIAN ARMY, 1945-1973

A Thesis Presented

by

Robin Fitch-McCullough

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ABSTRACT

The British Indian Army, formed from the old presidency armies of the East India Company in 1895, was one of the pillars upon which Britain’s world empire rested. While much has been written on the colonial and global campaigns fought by the Indian Army as a tool of imperial power, comparatively little has been written about the transition of the army from British to Indian control after the end of the Second World War. While independence meant the transition of the force from imperial rule to that of civilian oversight by India’s new national leadership, the Dominion of India inherited thousands of former colonial soldiers, including two generations of British and Indian officers indoctrinated in military and cultural practices developed in the United Kingdom, in colonial India and across the British Empire.

The goal of this paper is to examine the legacy of the British Empire on the narrative, ethos, culture, tactics and strategies employed by the Indian Army after 1945, when the army began to transition from British to Indian rule, up to 1973 when the government of India reinstituted the imperial rank of Field Marshal. While other former imperial officers would continue to serve in the army up to the end of the 20th century, the first thirty years after independence were a formative period in the history of the Indian Army, that saw it fight four major wars and see the final departure of white British officers from its ranks. While it became during this time a truly national army, the years after independence were one in which its legacy as an arm of imperial power was debated, and eventually transformed into a key component of military identity in the post-colonial era.
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INTRODUCTION

The End of the Indian Empire

As August 14th, 1947, dawned, the final stage of the “cyclonic revolution”\(^1\) that had overcome Britain’s South Asian colonies appeared to be at hand. At the end of the First World War what was formally known as the Indian Empire had stretched from the Arab port cities of the Red Sea in the West to the mountain hamlets of the Burmese frontier in the East. After decades of imperial reform and the six tumultuous years of the Second World War, much of what had been part of the British Raj had been parceled off, forming a loose collection of protectorates and colonies where once had stood the unified might of Britain’s eastern empire. Now, as plenipotentiaries gathered in Delhi and Karachi, the largest, most populous and most prestigious portion of the global British Empire, the Indian subcontinent itself, was to be divided into the new independent dominions of India and Pakistan.

As the bureaucrats of the colonial government continued the task of tallying and dividing the assets, down to typewriters and pieces of office furniture,\(^2\) the official ceremonies began. Lord Mountbatten of Burma, great-grandson of the Queen-Empress Victoria, recent designate for the office of the Governor General of India and the last imperial viceroy, met his Pakistani soon to be counterpart on August 13\(^{\text{th}}\) in Karachi. Muhammad Ali Jinnah, leader of the Muslim League and the appointee for Governor

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General of Pakistan, hosted Mountbatten and senior military officers and attaches of the British Empire. Field Marshal Claude Auchinleck, Commander in Chief of the Indian Army and General Frank Messervy, head of India’s Northern Command - what would become the core of the new Pakistan Army – had arrived for the final lowering of the Union Flag over Karachi and the flag raising that would herald in the newly independent country of Pakistan. Though the official flag raising ceremony was to occur at Government House in Karachi, the British delegation was driven through the heart of the city, over whose streets already hung the green and white banners of the star and crescent, already raised by Jinnah’s supporters. Even on government buildings across Pakistan still ostensibly property of the British Raj, the new national colours had already taken the place of the Union Jack in honor of Jinnah’s unanimous election by the new Muslim-dominated assembly.3

The morning after a final farewell dinner, through half empty streets “festooned”4 with the symbols of the Muslim League, Mountbatten and his staff drove to the steps of the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan, where stood a guard of honor from the Royal Indian Navy and the Royal Scots Regiment, the last rearguard of the British Army that had garrisoned India for more than two hundred years. Inside, Mountbatten, dressed in the white summer uniform of a British admiral, stood in front of the throne representing the King-Emperor George VI and praised Jinnah as the personification of the “best

4 “Mountbatten’s Address at the Inauguration of Pakistan,” The Hindu, August 15th, 1947, 2.
omens for future good relations.” The resounding support given to Mountbatten and Jinnah by members of the assembly and of representatives and supporters pressed in as celebrators by the Muslim League, was not answered by the public. Leaving Karachi through streets devoid of celebrating onlookers but lined with 3,000 British and Indian sentries, Mountbatten rushed to the airfield, and the British contingent flew to New Delhi.

The “apathy” that characterized the public ceremonies in Pakistan was in sharp contrast to the momentous reception received by Lord Mountbatten in India as the nation officially transitioned from empire to independence. As morning came on the 15th, the Viceroy ceremoniously cleared his desk and Mountbatten was sworn in as Governor General, ending the imperial executive that had existed in India since the end of the Great Rebellion of 1857. Driving with official party to the Council House in Delhi, British reporters remarked that “Indians, no less than Britons, love dignified pageantry,” the pageantry of empire that British proconsuls had carefully orchestrated for more than a century in emulation of their Mughal predecessors. Near the India Gate, a crowd of more than 100,000 thronged to see Mountbatten arrive by carriage to meet Jawaharlal Nehru, who at midnight had become the first Prime Minister of the new Indian Union. Throngs of cheering citizens overwhelmed police and swarmed the delegation and as the sun fell, Mountbatten and Nehru gazed upwards along the King’s Way. Under the shadow of the India Gate, the colossal monument to the dead of the wars of 1914-1922, the Indian tricolor rose into the sky for the first time over a country that was independent from the

5 Ibid.
4.
British Empire that had been ensconced on the subcontinent for more than three centuries.

For those who witnessed it, and wrote about it, the events of August 1947 stand as a clear and decisive point of transition in the histories of modern India and of the British Empire. The symbolism surrounding the public spectacle of India’s formal transition from colony to independent state only served to amplify the historical importance of August 14th and 15th. The imperial power of the Raj, with the British Empire and the house of Windsor embodied by the noble, aristocratic and military minded Mountbatten, passed into the hands of the first generation of socialist and republican Indian nationalist leaders to rule the nation free from British influence, represented by Nehru. Nehru himself remarked on August 14th that the date was the realization of the Indian people’s “unending quest” of “striving” towards nationhood, even as the united India forged by the British imperial project was being divided. It was a joyous and dramatic sentiment shared by Indians from Calcutta to the Punjab, and in immigrant communities from Durban on the Natal Coast to San Francisco and New York in the United States.

From the perspective of imperial policy makers in London, August appeared to some as a “scuttle” - Churchill’s description of imperial Britain’s “shameful flight” from India and from imperial responsibility across the globe in the aftermath of the Second World War. To others it was the fulfillment of Britain’s idealistic goal of empire; the

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8 Trust with Destiny, quoted in Mirrorwork. Page 4.
elevation of colonial nations not only from despotism to democratic institutions but to “complete equality with the United Kingdom and other members of the British Commonwealth.”\textsuperscript{10} The diplomatic professions of friendship and cooperation made by the United Kingdom, India, Pakistan and other members of the Commonwealth during the tumult of independence could be credited by sympathetic eyewitnesses to be the product of interstate cooperation within the structure of the British Empire. Yet even for those who saw independence as an elevation of India’s status within the empire, rather than an exit from it, August 1947 firmly marked “The End of an Era,”\textsuperscript{11} for Britain and India alike.

The fate of the Indian Army and the soldiers who stood sentry at the ceremonies in Karachi and Delhi was notably ambiguous. A year before the ‘Tryst with Destiny,’ Nehru had called for the creation of a “truly national army, with a national outlook and a national purpose.”\textsuperscript{12} Echoing the sentiments of Indian officials first assembled during the Second World War to aid British and Indian officers in deciding the future of the imperial Indian Army, Nehru had expressed to Claude Auchinleck, professional head of the Indian Army, his desire to transform the professional Army into such a force. As the flag of the Indian Union was raised over the largest monument to India’s imperial service, the new country had inherited a British imperial institution lead by some of the most passionate imperial architects of the Indian Army as it had come exist by 1947. Auchinleck and the

British and Indian officers who would succeed him after independence represented and enforced continuity with the army’s imperial past, in an era marked as the most significant rupture in the decline of the British Empire in the twentieth century.

**Independence in the Historiography of Colonial India**

That August 1947 serves as a historiographic crossroads delineating between a period of foreign rule and one of modern independence has been perpetuated in the official, popular and academic historiography of modern India. Contemporary histories of modern South Asia describe the events of August 1947 in much the same way they were received at the time: as the final phase of the Raj and the opening of a new era of South Asian independence from a long entrenched and global system of European colonialism. Modern textbook histories of India, such as Thomas and Barbara Metcalf’s *A Concise History of Modern India* or John Keay’s *India: A History*,¹³ begin or are prefaced by the prehistory and ancient history of the subcontinent and end with the events of the last several decades. Throughout histories of India such as these, historians demarcate the 1930s and 1940s as a period of “triumph and transition,”¹⁴ exemplified by the final success of Indian nationalists in forcing a transition from colonial to Indian rule, rather than focusing on the continuation of centralized state power on the subcontinent. With ambiguity surrounding other events, particularly when and where Indian modernity begins and the relationship of concepts of modernity to British imperialism, 1947 is

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seemingly a far more transparent and decisive point of historical departure. As John Keay has written, “in a land better known for continuities and commas,” partition and independence have presented politicians and historians alike with a historical “punctuation” marking India’s colonial past with its modern present.

Other histories of India are even more consciously bound by independence as a historiographical marker. Recent academic histories such as Ishita Banerjee-Dube’s *History of Modern India* or Sekhar Bandyopadhyay’s *From Plassey to Partition* more explicitly tie Indian modern history with the rise and fall of British power in South Asia. In this historical narrative, the modern history of India begins with the establishment of the East India Company as one of many of indigenous and foreign polities in India and ends with the dramatic period of change encapsulated either by independence in 1947, heralding the start of a period of contemporary or postmodern Indian history. Though the adoption of a republic constitution in 1950 now overshadows Independence Day as the primary symbolic point of departure for the new Indian government from its imperial past, particularly in public ceremony, 1947 remains as a clear break from the influence of British rule.

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15 The difficulty in pinpointing other points of transition in Indian and imperial history are evident in the narrative of the rise of the United Kingdom as the dominant power on the subcontinent. The East India Company was established in 1600 and made defunct in 1874. Yet these dates alone do not indicate the importance of events such as the Battle of Plassey in 1757 or of the Government of India Act of 1858 in establishing the form that British power would take in India. The influence of long established Indian nationalists on the history of India after 1947 is not in doubt, but the particular narrative of independence that they dominated culminates in August 1947.
Given that the official and constitutional responsibility for the government of India passed so clearly in 1947, even if India retained constitutional ties with the United Kingdom and the British Empire, it is a date that acts as a more obvious demarcation from foreign rule, used in postcolonial history as another convenient historiographical marker of modernity and transition. This forms a second narrative of Indian history focused on the period after partition and independence, with India’s modern history defined by its emergence as an independent state. Wendy Singer’s textbook *Independent India, 1947-2000* briefly covers the events leading up to independence, but focuses on India as it has existed in “the contemporary world.”

Though the lines between history, political science, economics and journalism are often difficult to separate in current popular histories of modern India, Edward Luce’s *In Spite of the Gods: The Rise of Modern India* and Ramachandra Guha’s *India After Gandhi* both begin with the process of breaking with India’s imperial past. The two competing narratives of modern Indian history, alternately beginning or ending in 1947, are echoed in academic histories in topics as diverse as modern Indian art, modern science and education, Indian economics and in the “reorientation” of cultural and nationalist trends in the wider historiography of Indian history itself.

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Histories of the British Empire and of the Raj follow the same historiographic trends emphasizing the importance of 1947. The period of history defined by the British Raj had ended; that of independent South Asia, with Pakistan, India and shortly thereafter Burma and Ceylon becoming independent states, had begun. Lawrence James writes that the Raj was definitively “ended” on August 15, 1947, even if the “final form” that the Raj took after the Second World War was dramatically different that the one that had existed in the late 19th century or under the control of the East India Company.\(^26\) Popular single volume histories of the Raj, and Lawrence James’ *Raj: The Making and Unmaking of British India* and Denis Judd’s *The Lion and the Tiger: The Rise and Fall of the British Raj*\(^27\) are recent and prominent examples, emphasize 1947 as the conclusion of Britain’s imperial project in India.

This conclusion to the narrative of Britain’s colonial empire in South Asia has been linked to the final decline of the British Empire globally in the years after the Second World War. The primacy of London in South Asian affairs was no longer a reality, producing the sour or nostalgic view held by many Britons who had seen the British Empire at its greatest extent in size and influence that the events of August 1947 had ended not only British aspirations in South Asia but the United Kingdom’s “moment of greatness on the world stage.”\(^28\) Though most historians stress that the British Empire did not come to an abrupt end in 1947, there is a shared sense of rapid decline that echoes

\(^{28}\) James, *Raj*, 640.
Peter Clarke’s “traditional wisdom” on the “crucial significance of the demise of the Indian Empire” as marking the end of the British Empire.\textsuperscript{29} The essays included in Douglas Peers’ and Nandini Gooptu’s companion to the \textit{Oxford History of the British Empire}\textsuperscript{30} is an example of the academic work that has been done in the last several decades in part as a response to histories like Clarke’s \textit{Last Thousand Days of the British Empire}, focused largely on political and military events and dominated by policymakers. This includes not only the historiographical developments made since the 1960’s in relation to postmodernism, gender studies, cultural and social history, but also the increased emphasis on continuity between independent India and its imperial past. Despite this, the study of the Raj, and the empire, is largely confined to the period before 1947 when Britain’s global hegemony magnified imperial influence over policy and culture alike.

\textbf{India and Imperialism: The Historiography of Continuity and Legacy}

Indian independence did not mean that British interest or influence in South Asian affairs concluded as abruptly as the Indian Empire formally had in 1947. In John Darwin’s \textit{The Empire Project: The Rise and Fall of the British World System}, the end of British rule in India marked the United Kingdom’s turn from a world power to “a power

\textsuperscript{29} Peter Clarke, \textit{The Last Thousand Days of the British Empire: Churchill, Roosevelt and the Birth of the Pax Americana} (New York: Bloomsbury, 2008), xxv.

in the third world.”³¹ In light of the post-Second World War restructuring of global power in favor of the United States and the Soviet Union, Britain retained a deep-seated interest in maintaining influence over its remaining and former dominions, colonies and protectorates. Much of Britain’s imperial might before 1947 had rested on the resources, manpower and prestige of the Raj and without India as an active member of the empire, the attainment of imperial goals aimed at rebuilding the empire after 1945 was an increasingly difficult prospect. British attempts to retain a measure of imperial influence in India after 1947 manifested itself by the continued presence within, and influence over, the imperial civil and military institutions inherited by Nehru’s government by British officials, officers and advisers who stayed on in India. The loss of India resulted in, and was evidence of, the steady decline in world stature that Britain had enjoyed when the subcontinent was a firm part of the empire, yet the coming to power of an independent and nationalist government did not fully or suddenly sever Britain’s influence over Indian affairs and the imperial culture that had engrained itself in India after centuries of imperial rule.

Neither could India’s new leaders rightly claim to have created a new and dynamic system of government in the subcontinent. Those sympathetic with the ideals of Britain’s overseas empire could justly claim that many any of the institutions used to govern India after independence were a legacy of the benefit of imperial rule, often with the same paternalistic overtones that were expressed during the primacy of the Raj in the previous century. Niall Ferguson’s Empire credits the United Kingdom with projecting

common law, economic development and imperial unity across the globe, with the favorable view that the benefits of British colonial rule outweighed the subordination of indigenous peoples to an imperial system that rested as much on military violence as it did on civil law.\textsuperscript{32} The decline of European imperialism has produced a bevy of historiographic alternatives, though not without criticism from those practicing traditional imperial history that essentially reflects the moral justifications made for the British Empire since the early 19\textsuperscript{th} century. “At their poor best, colonial regimes are portrayed as expressions of incompetent paternalism, and at their worst as oppressive, racialist, exploitative and the source of the Third World’s present woes,” writes Lawrence James on post-colonial history. “The balance is slowly being adjusted, not least because the recent history of so many of Europe’s colonies has been a saga of a decline into tyranny, chaos and internecine war from which they seem unable to rescue themselves.”\textsuperscript{33}

Alternatively, the recognition that many of the difficulties that faced new indigenous national leaders and the former colonies they ruled stemmed from the vestiges of imperial rule has been the focal point of much historical study since the emergence of post-colonialism as an influence on history and philosophy. In postcolonial historiography, Franz Fanon’s work vividly describes the responsibility of imperialism for the political, economic, social and psychological problems faced by post-colonial states. “Colonialism and imperialism have not settled their debt to us once they have withdrawn their flag and their police force from our territories. For centuries, the


\textsuperscript{33} James, \textit{Raj}, 642.
capitalists have behaved like real war criminals in the underdeveloped world. Deportation, massacres, forced labor and slavery were the primary methods used…”

Fanon’s work and worldview has influenced at least two generations of postcolonial and nationalist writers globally, who continue to highlight the great and negative impact of colonial governments on those they ruled and their successors, and for fomenting the sectarian, economic and diplomatic crises that have plagued nations following the end of empire. Though critiques of colonialism and imperialism far predate Fanon, his work has been entwined with other postmodern and post-structural thinkers, most prominently Michel Foucault, to deeply influence how imperialism has been perceived and studied since the end of the age of European overseas empires. Edward Said’s Orientalism remains a fundamental text on the subject of post-colonial studies, deeply rooted by the authors own admission in the power and knowledge dynamic established in Foucault’s work. The two viewpoints expressed by Fanon and Said - Fanon’s focus on indigenous resistance and response to imperialism and Said’s exploration of western perception and domination of colonized lands - remain fundamental influences on the study of empire.

Historiographical writing made firmly in support or against a nation’s imperial past can whitewash the brutality and excesses of imperialism or the responsibility of post-colonial leaders over their own affairs in the aftermath of empire. Both views are definitive, moralizing and polarizing and in part have influenced the establishment of a

34 Franz Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth. Translated by Richard Philcox (New York: Grove, 1963), 57.
35 Though Foucault did not write specifically on the subject of empire, his works are considered to be a "forerunner" of post-colonial thought. See Jane Hiddleston, Understanding Postcolonialism (New York: Routledge, 2009), 76 and Edward Said Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient (London: Penguin, 1978), 22.
“third model,” emphasizing “multiple interactions.” As a historiographical trend it is less clear in its origins and is not a philosophy as well defined as imperialist or post-colonial history, but dates at least to the publication of John Robert Seeley’s *The Expansion of England* in 1883, in which he emphasized the “mutual influence of England and India.” Though a staunch imperialist, Seeley recognized that Britain’s empire was not based on a racial or moral superiority. He instead believed that the dynamism of Britain’s dominion over India stemmed from the “fusion” of civilizations and cultures. His belief in the superiority of British civilization in this dynamic has largely been discarded, but the study of empire as a process that changed and informed colonizer and colonized alike is an important alternative to the competing narratives of empire as a moral, liberalizing mission or as unjust and exploitative conquest. Though embodied in the historiography of imperial policy and politics established within the loose academic circle of the Cambridge School, and in part in conflict with the other narratives of empire, it is a wider historiographical trend. David Armitage, the late C.A. Bayly and William Roger Louis are examples of this school of thought. Its influence is evidenced by the dominant place that historians of this field have had in traditional academic centres for the study of the British Empire – chiefly at Cambridge, Oxford and

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37 Knight, *Britain in India*, 168.
Manchester - and by the study of imperial “hybrid institutions”\textsuperscript{43} that informed British and Indian conceptions of the Raj, the British Empire and the nature of the colonialism and independence in relation to the modern and postcolonial world.

After independence from empire, the inheritance and maintenance of imperial institutions formed by the synthesis of British colonialism with local experience and practice has been cited as a vital component in contributing to the power and stability of post-colonial governments.\textsuperscript{44} The common characterization of the end of the British Empire as “early and peaceful,” and a process indebted to imperial institutions, is less a reflection on the nature of British decolonization than it is on the particularly divisive and destructive wars fought by France, Portugal, Belgium and other imperial powers after 1945 in an effort to maintain imperial power.\textsuperscript{45} The perception of a quick and peaceful withdrawal from empire came only with the absence of a major colonial conflict in an effort to keep India within the British Empire and after the experience of Britain’s having fought its own comparatively successful but controversial colonial wars, the largest and costliest of which were the Mau-Mau uprising in Kenya and the Malayan Emergency.

Though these were British military victories that resulted in independence on terms favorable to the United Kingdom, they hastened the British withdrawal from empire. For governments in transition from empire to independence, they also showed


that without direct British support, the retention of imperial institutions was not a guarantor of postcolonial stability.\textsuperscript{46} Nigeria’s postcolonial system of government was founded on hybrid institutions emphasizing indirect and indigenous rule entwined with British models of law and parliamentary government. Despite a peaceful transition from British to national rule, the country quickly succumbed to tribal conflict and civil war that broke down the very institutions that the British utilized to hold their empire together.\textsuperscript{47} These are examples that only narrowly highlight the diversity of the postcolonial experiences of British colonies but it is a common legacy of imperial rule that postcolonial states have difficulty in creating or bolstering democratic institutions and systems that foster political and economic development.

Given that Indian independence preceded that of other colonies outside of the white settler dominions, Indian leaders after 1947 saw their country as a “model” for democratic and secular post-colonial states.\textsuperscript{48} This view shares something of the traditional British imperial perspective that the empire was “dismantled with little heartache.”\textsuperscript{49} In contrast to other colonies in Africa and Asia, India’s experience since independence and partition has been one of comparative stability. Despite almost perpetual political, ethnic, religious and economic unrest, India has not had to endure coups, civil war or nationwide ethnic conflict, some of the critical events that have plagued other postcolonial states.

\textsuperscript{47} Louis Henkin, \textit{The Age of Rights} (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 176-177.
\textsuperscript{49} James, \textit{Raj}, 641.
This has been credited widely to what C.A. Bayly describes broadly as India’s “ideological inheritance” of British imperial liberalism that fostered institutions of both the empire and the independent state.\textsuperscript{50} Indian and British writers have cited the leaving of a “framework” or “nucleus” of a professional bureaucracy, a strong security apparatus and a government that emulated Britain’s laws and parliamentary system as fundamental to the stability of the post-colonial state in comparison to other former colonies.\textsuperscript{51} Critics of the purported benefits imparted by imperial institutions have recognized the widespread appeal of this mode of thought in academic and popular circles, but cite that British restrictions in India on free assembly, on the freedom of the press and on leftist and nationalist organizations did little but “stultify” democratic institutions.\textsuperscript{52} That these same curtailments of democratic liberties characterized Indira Gandhi’s legal invocation of emergency powers in 1975 perhaps bear out this alternate imperial inheritance, but descriptions of the event as an “aberration,”\textsuperscript{53} or as a necessity, both emphasize “stability” as the primary factor in invoking or protecting institutions and methods that had their origins in India’s imperial past.\textsuperscript{54}

Yet the inheritance of elements of parliamentary and common law government, established security and military forces and bureaucratic personnel were hallmarks of

\textsuperscript{50} C.A. Bayly, \textit{Recovering Liberties: Indian Thought In the Age of Liberalism and Empire} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 3 and 355.
\textsuperscript{52} Sumit Ganguly, “Bangladesh and India,” in \textit{Assessing the Quality of Democracy}, eds. Larry Diamond and Leonardo Morlino (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2005), 163.
other post-colonial states, including the examples of Kenya, Malaya and Nigeria. More significantly, Pakistan, whose post-colonial relationship to imperial institutions has been greatly different than India, is like modern India a product of the demise of the Indian Empire. The Indian Empire had a legacy of imperial institutions dating back to the 18th century, where by contrast serious attempts to incorporate Africans into a sophisticated colonial government came only with the final phase of European colonialism in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Time had imparted a “deep footprint” of imperial influence on India that was not present in African colonies. By the time independence came, Indians dominated the corps of bureaucrats and officials that assured the stability necessary for effective imperial government, even if they had held little voice in the implementation of imperial policy.

During the partition of the resources and administration of the Indian Empire, India benefited from its coming to possess the majority of both the subcontinent's population and landmass, which contributed to its being assigned the greatest portion of the Raj’s capital, industry and civil apparatus, nationally and provincially. This directly contributed to the contrary military, industrial and administrative weakness that characterized Pakistan after 1947. Patterns of postcolonial development, a program that characterized Nehru’s tenure as Prime Minister, were always influenced by the legacy left by Britain, in part because of the resources and imperial infrastructure left to the new state after the end of the Indian Empire. In civil and military affairs Pakistan broke with

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its imperial past by becoming first a *de facto* religious rather than secular state. The influence of communal identity on the policy of government and a relative weakness in contrast to the Indian Union were factors that influenced Pakistan’s departure from its shared past with India. In India, as in Pakistan, “no institution has remained more ‘British’” than the army. Yet in terms of stability, though this is often the pretext for the involvement military officers in the affairs of civilian government, Pakistan’s post-colonial state has proved no more immune than Britain’s African colonies in preventing military coups.

4. The Historiography of the Indian Army: An Imperial or National Institution?

By contrast, the Indian Army has been championed, as in the records of one regimental history written more than thirty years after independence, as the “greatest resource of stability, apolitical and professional, to the new India.” It was an assessment that predated independence. “The stability of the Indian Army may perhaps be a deciding factor in the future of India,” said Field Marshall Wavell, as he handed the Viceroyalty over to Mountbatten. Political scientist Zoltan Barany’s analysis of the relationship between armed forces and democratic institutions includes a comparison of the armies of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. Though the enduring influence of British rule is evident on all three, India’s leaders more readily accepted the army as it had existed before

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60 Zoltan, *The Soldier and the Changing State*, 273-274.
1947 as “collaborationist army”61 - terminology that follows Anil Seal’s Cambridge School study of empire as an act of “collaboration.”62

Zoltan’s comparison of the Indian Army relies much on the work already done by Stephen Cohen.63 Like Zoltan, Cohen is a political scientist, concerned with the influence of the army on the modern political structure of the governments of India and Pakistan.64 Though his publications have focused on the state of the Pakistan and Indian armies after 1947 in relation to government, he has paid attention to the role played by British influences on “continuity” and “stability” within these institutions.65 In his studies of both Pakistan and India, the endurance of imperial practices, such as martial race theory and the peculiarities of the British regimental system, play an important role. More importantly, he examines the concept of an apolitical army, a British tradition that has in part endured in India while declining in Pakistan. Though he has the goal of filling in the gap he sees in “comprehensive” and “objective”66 histories of the modern Indian and Pakistani armies, Cohen consciously avoids writing conventional military histories. His major work on the Indian Army, The Indian Army: Its Contribution to the Development of a Nation, instead relates the history of the Indian Army, primarily in terms of its recruitment policy and relation to civilian leadership, to the processes of “contemporary

61 Ibid., 259-260.
63 Zoltan, The Soldier and the Changing State, 264.
65 Ibid., 38.
66 Cohen, Pakistan Army, 183.
theories of military organization and nation building” that informed the army when his study was first published in 1971.67

Steven Wilkinson’s *Army and Nation: The Military and Indian Democracy Since Independence,*68 published in 2015, represents a continuation of Cohen’s work. Wilkinson, like Cohen a political scientist, extends the period surveyed up through the end of the twentieth century, focusing as Cohen has on the topics of recruitment and civil-military relations. Where Cohen made a concerted effort to avoid the specialist terminology or statistical analysis of political science, factors for which he was both praised and criticized,69 Wilkinson bases much of his work on the accumulation of “new data.”70 Additionally, where Cohen avoided “abstract models,”71 Wilkinson relies on “theoretical insights” made by political scientists and sociologists after Cohen published his work, primarily Morris Janowitz’ and Donald Horowitz’ studies into ethnic conflict and military sociology and the relationship between these concepts and political institutions.72 As an extension of Cohen’s work, Wilkinson’s addition of these perspectives detail the concept of “coup proofing”73 as it correlates to the study of Indian civil-military relations. Though Cohen did not use this term, he was conscious of the fears held by Indian nationalists that the army could become a site for political unrest and

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69 Carolyn Elliot, review of *The Indian Army,* by Stephen P. Cohen, 703.
71 Carolyn Elliot, review of *The Indian Army,* by Stephen P. Cohen, 703.
Wilkinson devotes much of his work to the study of how Nehru and other leaders, like Krishna Menon, aimed at controlling the army. *Army and Nation* provides an overview of the Indian Army’s imperial past and covers more of the process of partition and transition than does Cohen’s 1971 work. Wilkinson’s periodization departs from Cohen by utilizing 1947 much in the same manner as historians have of the British Raj or of modern Indian, as the point of departure of India from its imperial past.

In this sense the periodization of Cohen and Wilkinson’s political studies represent continuity with the histories written on the subject of the Indian Army. British and Indian historians with military or government backgrounds began in the early 1970’s the modern study of the Indian Army as a pillar imperial and post-imperial government. Four books published in 1974 by British and Indian authors contributed to this development, making the Indian Army a separate field of study within the historiography of India. This was anteceded by Philip Mason’s *The Men Who Ruled India*, which did the same for the Indian Civil Service. 74 His second book, *A Matter of Honour: An Account of the Indian Army, Its Officers and Men*, 75 began the process of filling the “great gap” in the historiography of the Raj in which there had been little study of the Indian Army outside of campaign histories, memoirs and studies of military science. 76 Mason wrote on concepts of loyalty and honour between British officers and Indian soldiers, focusing

74 Philip Mason, *The Men Who Ruled India* (Calcutta: Rupa and Company, 1998), 1. First published under a pseudonym in two volumes in the 1960’s, Mason covers the history of the ICS in its role first as “founders” and later as “guardians” of imperial rule in India.
often on the “high drama”\textsuperscript{77} that characterized perceptions of the Indian Army in the late 19\textsuperscript{th} century. While this did much to resurrect a “romantic”\textsuperscript{78} view of the Indian Army, his study remains a standard history of the army, from the 18\textsuperscript{th} century to 1947.

T.A. Heathcote’s \textit{The Indian Army: The Garrison of British Imperial India, 1822-1922}\textsuperscript{79} “supplemented” Mason’s “more widely received” book by providing much of the details on how the Britain’s armies in South Asia were organized and structured.\textsuperscript{80} Focusing on the “classical period” of British Indian rule, Heathcote examines the change in the army from company to imperial rule, its recruiting practices – primarily the development of the theory of martial races – and, like Mason, the relationships between Indian officers and men and their British leaders.\textsuperscript{81} Though their works overlapped, Heathcote later extended his original work on the changing nature of the army in India to cover the entire period of British rule, from the establishment of the East India Company in 1600 to partition in 1947. Neither Mason nor Heathcote utilized Cohen’s earlier work on the Indian Army in their 1974 studies, but Heathcote’s \textit{The Military in British India:

The Development of British Land Forces in South Asia, 1600-1947 did, as well as providing an introduction to the “military heritage of India” that predated the arrival of the East India Company and the British Army.

Though Heathcote and Mason were seen as contributing the “two major works” on the Indian Army published in 1974, they were accompanied by the publications of two Indian authors that addressed some of the same issues. Krishna Saxena’s A History of the Departments of the Indian Army: Their Organization and Administration from 1850 to 1900, details the “radical changes in British military attitudes after the mutiny.” This related less to changing social and cultural attitudes of Britons towards India and Indians as examined in part by Mason and Heathcote, but on the long term administrative effects of transitioning the armies of the East India Company into a unified imperial army, designed to forestall the kind of mutiny that the Bengal Army suffered in 1857. Though his is not considered a foundational work in the study of the Indian Army, it is a precedent of the more specific, and often technical, histories of particular aspects of the army written since 1974.

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84 Lambrick, review of The Indian Army: The Garrison of British Imperial India, 169.
Victor Longer’s *From Red Coats to Olive Green: A History of the Indian Army, 1600-1974* is more comprehensive than Mason and Heathcote in its periodization, like Heathcote’s 1995 study beginning in 1600 with the establishment of the East India Company.\textsuperscript{88} Longer’s “well-connected story,” tracing the present Indian Army to its historical “progenitor”\textsuperscript{89} concludes with India’s war in Bangladesh in 1971, incorporating some of the work done by Stephen Cohen.\textsuperscript{90} Indian histories of the army have often been defined by the authors location in relation to Indian society and government and in this sense Longer was a departure from Indian studies of the army after independence. The opinion of many nationalists that the Indian Army was a “Mercenary Army of Indian rice-soldiers”\textsuperscript{91} intensified after the Second World War with the legacy of the Indian National Army as a “peoples army.”\textsuperscript{92} Alternatively, Indian officers writing the history of the army after 1947 described it as imbued with the “spirit of a national army,”\textsuperscript{93} but without reference to the national movement that defined the new government. This was done while promoting the “traditions”\textsuperscript{94} inherited from the British Army while at the same time emphasizing that the imperial army had been “eclipsed out of existence” in 1947.\textsuperscript{95} Longer, with more similarity to Cohen, began in the late 1960’s to articulate a unified history of the modern Indian Army that saw its history as a “rise” or “transformation” beginning with the 18\textsuperscript{th} century British Major-General Stringer

\textsuperscript{89} Longer, *Red Coats to Olive Green*, vii.  
\textsuperscript{90} Ibid., 45, 89 and 127.  
\textsuperscript{91} Lanka Sundaram, *India’s Armies and Their Costs: A Century of Unequal Imposts For An Army of Occupation and a Mercenary Army* (Bombay: Avanti Prakashan, 1946), i.  
\textsuperscript{92} Sundaram, *India’s Armies and their Costs*, 1.  
\textsuperscript{94} Singh, *History of the Indian Army*, 376.  
Lawrence as its spiritual “father.” The Indian Army went from being an army of empire to one of a “sovereign, democratic republic,” and while this more closely resembled the preexisting narrative written by Indian officers before 1974, it was a longer and more detailed history than had thus been produced in India. The acceptance of a British legacy was balanced by the prominent place that Indian soldiers and politicians held in Longer’s description of the Second World War and partition, crediting them for turning the pre-existing imperial army into an independent force.\textsuperscript{96}

These different but simultaneous studies, Cohen and Wilkinson’s political and analytical approach, the emphasis on culture and social practice by Mason, Heathcote and Saxena’s focus on organization and methods and Longer’s narrative of continuity and transformation, are historiographic trends that continue to mark the study of the Indian Army. Taken up by academic historians since 1974, Allan Jeffrey,\textsuperscript{97} David Omissi,\textsuperscript{98} Kaushik Roy,\textsuperscript{99} Daniel Marston\textsuperscript{100} and Pradeep Barua\textsuperscript{101} are examples of recent scholars conducting research on the subject. The proliferation of academic studies of the Indian Army has too been influenced by the incorporation of other historiographic trends, including gender history evidenced by Heather Street’s study of martial race policy.\textsuperscript{102}

\begin{footnotesize}
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  \item[102] Streets, \textit{Martial Races}, 2-3.
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the world or global history studied by Tarak Barkawi,\textsuperscript{103} or in the study of memory, symbols and language, such as Gajendra Singh’s \textit{The Testimonies of Indian Soldiers and the Two World Wars: Between Self and Sepoy}.\textsuperscript{104}

\section*{5. The Indian Army After 1947: Continuity and Disruption}

Overwhelmingly these studies of the imperial Indian Army follow the precedent set by Mason and Heathcote by utilizing the mid-twentieth century – 1939, 1945, 1947 or 1950 - as a demarcation between the Indian Army’s imperial past and national present. Histories of the Indian Army after independence have proliferated since 1974 as well, with Longer’s conception of a unified history having been accepted, if not repeated. Following a similar path as historians of imperial Indian Army, the Indian military writer K.C. Praval’s description of the Indian Army as a force “rendering invaluable service to the nation in the sphere of national integration, national defence and national stability”\textsuperscript{105} begins in 1947, when the Indian Army ceased to be a force for British imperial policy. An accepted sense of continuity between the independent and imperial Indian Army in military, popular and academic histories has been consistently qualified by describing the Indian Army under British rule as the “Old Indian Army,” a term that came to define the imperial Indian Army as soon as it had become the army of the new nation.\textsuperscript{106}

\textsuperscript{105} Praval, \textit{Indian Army After Independence}, 13.
Yet Britain’s “farewell to the magnificent Indian Army which has fought with us so often”\textsuperscript{107} did not end British involvement or influence on India’s Army. In the efforts made by British and Indian leaders to shape the course of Indian policy after independence, the Army played a central role, impacting issues as diverse as linguistic policy, national defense, international diplomacy, and the legacy of imperial rule itself. It was a force that since the late 18\textsuperscript{th} century had acted as Great Britain’s “imperial fire brigade,”\textsuperscript{108} responsible for projecting British power across the Indian Ocean to anywhere within reach of the troopships that carried Indian soldiers to imperial battlefields. Within India itself it stood next to monarchy and law as one of the most important pillars of imperial rule, acting as the ultimate arbiter of the Indian Empire’s foreign and domestic policy. Until 1947, the Indian Army was part of the imperial Army of India, the force created in 1903 by Herbert Kitchener from combination of the remnants of the old presidential armies of the East India Company with the body of British Army regiments posted to the subcontinent. The Indian Army, the enormous force of volunteers recruited from Britain’s South Asian colonies and allies formed its core. Divided among India, Pakistan and the United Kingdom in 1947, India gained the greatest portion of a force that had numbered 2.5 million strong at the height of the Second World War.\textsuperscript{109}

With this legacy, the Indian Army retained important ties to the United Kingdom, the British military and to its imperial past, ties that could not be speedily severed after independence. For more than two decades after 1947, British and Anglo-Indian soldiers

\textsuperscript{107} Ibid.
attached to or enrolled in the Indian Army played a substantive role as leaders and advisers, influencing its ethos, culture and doctrines. Conspicuously absent from so many of the descriptions of August 1947 as a transition from colonialism to independence are those senior British officers who had accompanied Nehru, Jinnah and Mountbatten in the formal ceremonies that ended the Indian Empire. It was many of these same British officers who had led the Indian Army during the Second World War and during the lead up to independence and partition.

After August 1947 they acted as senior leaders and advisers, commanding the army during the integration of the princely states and into the first year of peace that followed, when the Indian Army settled into its peacetime role. When Indian officers supplanted them at the most senior levels and India become a republic, Britons and Anglo-Indians who retained an imperial expatriate identity formed by the Raj still commanded training institutions, academies and formations in the field. During the same period that Victor Longer described as the “rise” of the Indian Army free from the influence of empire, officers perceived as alien and imperial played a crucial role in defining the army’s relationship with the ties that the new nation inherited.

The influence of British officers in India after independence only encouraged the retention of British and imperial systems long established within the Indian Army. Even as an institution of a government dominated by nationalists who had grown suspicious of the army in the waning years of the Raj, the Indian Army retained its imperial ethos and
culture after 1947. This was not only because of the efforts of Britons, but due to the actions and influences of Indian officers and men. Stephen Cohen asserts that the professionalism of Indian officers after 1947 was formed by the experience of serving in an increasingly national army during the Second World War. This is a common thread in subsequent histories of the Indian Army both during the Second World War and after independence.\textsuperscript{110} Yet this ignores that service in the Indian Army for Europeans and Indian officers alike had already been defined by imperial conceptions of professionalism and efficiency, imparted on two generations of Indian officers whose military careers began in the last decades of the Raj. The imperial character of the army was formed by a synthesis of British and Indian military culture, created in India in by relatively small numbers of European officers and adopted by Indian officers.

The efforts of Congress leaders before and after 1947 to influence the army were frustrated by notions of political aloofness within the officer corps itself. It was, and remains, a point of pride amongst Indian officers that after 1947 the Indian Army has been “the only apolitical army in the Third World.”\textsuperscript{111} In the context of Indian military conceptions of the “developing world,” it was a factor that made the Indian army distinctly modern, both from other countries, and from other facets of India after 1947. As the retired general Dipankar Banerjee wrote, India “has had a first world military, even as the nation has remained a part of the Third World. This is as much a matter of ethos, outlook and professionalism as it is a question of maintaining a strict attitude of


\textsuperscript{111} Praval, \textit{Indian Army After Independence}, 10.
neutrality and distance from civil political affairs."\textsuperscript{112} Though the actual political activities of the Indian Army since 1947 can dispute these claims to political impartiality, the Indian Army’s early senior officers are credited with creating the kind of military that would not involve itself in the political machinations of representative government, in stark contrast to the politically active military of Pakistan.\textsuperscript{113} The mythology and precedent of the Bengal Army of 1857 and of the Indian National Army of 1942-1945\textsuperscript{114} are an important nationalist and cultural legacy within Indian political and public consciousness, but their influence on Indian military thought is dwarfed in size and importance by the legacy of the Army of India. Within the army itself these events have been given little more than a symbolic nod, a tribute to nationalism while the role of the Indian military has been seen by it’s officer corps as the “apolitical edifice of the nation.”\textsuperscript{115}

These views mirror those that have been expressed by academics and military commentators on the subject of the British Army, with which the Indian Army was so inexorably linked for a period of more than two hundred years. Since the end of the 17th century, “compared with other armies, the British army has been largely apolitical,”


\textsuperscript{114} The destruction or disbandment of most units of the Bengal Army between 1857 and 1859 was echoed in after 1945 by the exorcism of Indian National Army veterans from military life. Celebrated publicly by politicians and honored in histories of the Indian military, they were barred from entering the Indian Army after independence.

\textsuperscript{115} Boria Majumdar and Nalin Mehta, \textit{India and the Olympics} (Oxon: Routledge, 2008), 175.
writes David Chandler, in the *Oxford History of the British Army*. As a point of pride, and often coupled with frustrations aimed at civilian leaders, it was said at the height of British power in 1901 that “according to a well-known aphorism, ‘The British Army has no politics.’” A host of events during the epoch of British imperial dominance, from the elevation of military heroes such as the Duke of Wellington to high political office, to the resistance of imperial officers like Charles Gordon to adhere to civilian policy, or the entwining of the army with Britain’s own nationalist-unionist movements, as in the Curragh Mutiny of 1914, make it clear that the British Army did possess a keen sense of its own political importance. Yet its political activities, like those of the Indian Army after 1947, have been largely contained within the confines of a democratic and ideally secular political system. Informed by a self-contained military culture, both British and Indian Army’s retain old and imperial characteristics that have insulated these institutions in part from the political and sectarian activities that have proved a destabilizing factor on colonial and non-colonial nations alike.

6. An Imperial Institution in a Postcolonial World

Before and after independence these same influences were seen by civilian leaders in India as potential political and alien threats to the new democracy. Like Cohen before him, Stephen Wilkinson and other historians who examine elements of continuity within the modern army have highlighted the importance of British methods after

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117 Anon. “Politicians in the Ranks,” *Navy and Army Illustrated* 11 (February 1901): 508
independence. For Indian nationalists, the breaking of perceived foreign and colonial practices in the Indian Army, and of British influence over the Army as an independent and nation institution, rested in part on a continuation of earlier imperial policies. Nationalization and indianization were imperial projects initiated with the erstwhile promise of replacing the largely British officer corps with Indians, and to erase the distinctions between Indian linguistic and cultural groups that characterized imperial recruitment. India after independence continued these efforts for different aims, designed at “coup proofing” the military and making it a force that would not have to act, as it had under the British, as an aid to the civil powers.

Histories of the imperial Indian Army that cover the period of partition and transition, as well as the histories of the army as it has existed after empire, have emphasized these aspects of continuity. As Stephen Cohen wrote, the development of a “compatible” relationship between the army and the government, which separated India from other post-colonial states, was a concerted effort by India’s civilian leadership. This narrative of compatibility has been marked in numerous histories by the ability of the Indian Army to endure shocks to the system of civil-military relations. The role of continuity in establishing compatibility in histories of the Indian Army and of the

independent Indian state, has been related to the role played by national leaders. The “comprehensive,” “objective,” and “well-connected” histories of the Indian Army attempted by writers like Cohen\textsuperscript{123} and by Longer\textsuperscript{124} have emphasized the relationship of the army to the civilian government, dominated by Nehru, whose leaders had “a clear idea of which elements of the ‘British tradition’ they wanted to keep and which they wanted to discard.”\textsuperscript{125}

By contrast, a similar narrative of imperial continuity has not been told from the perspective of British and Indian officers and soldiers who actively attempted to ensure that the imperial character of the Indian Army would survive the transition of India from empire to independence. Seen as the source of the professionalism and efficiency prided by the army and its civilian leaders, imperial customs and traditions were to be guarded by British and Indian officers deeply ingrained in a military culture that fused British and Indian practices brought together during the Indian Army’s existence as an imperial institution. By focusing on civil-military relations after 1947 and the role that the Indian Army has played as a national force, historians have ignored the imperial continuity that has determined how the army has functioned operationally as a warfighting institution. Additionally, this has led to the absence of a historical narrative of British and imperial influence internally on military culture and conduct, especially in all-important locus of Anglo-Indian military activity, the regiment, a site of imperial tradition and practice that more than any other institution remained isolated from the influence of civilian authority.

\textsuperscript{123} Cohen, \textit{Pakistan Army}, 183.
\textsuperscript{124} Longer, \textit{Red Coats to Olive Green}, vii.
This thesis explores the long lasting influence of the imperial British and Indian armies, and of hybrid Anglo-Indian imperial values, on the national force that came out of independence in 1947. In three defining periods, three soldiers came to embody much of the character of the army and its relationship with the legacy of British colonialism and the Indian Empire. Just as the narrative of India does not begin or end with the momentous event of independence, that of the Indian Army as it came to be in the decades that followed the end of the Raj does not begin with August 1947. The modern incarnation of the Indian Army, formed in 1903, retained ties to a colonial past that stretched back to the early decades of the eighteenth century. The process of turning the imperial Indian Army into a national army by reform, by incorporating it into the process of postcolonial state building and development, and by continued efforts to ‘indianize’ or ‘nationalize’ the composition of its personell, were fundamental in defining the army’s role in independent India. These were, however, initiatives begun well before independence and reshaped after 1947 by British and Indian officers to resist civilian efforts to reform the army into a “truly national army.”

The narrative of Imperial influence on the post-colonial Indian Army begins with the establishment of the modern Indian Army on the foundations of the East India Company armies in the early part of the twentieth century. Nationalization and Indianization, begun during the First World War, were imperial projects amplified by the experience of expansion and modernization conducted in the Second World War. From

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defeats in South East Asia and North Africa in 1941 and 1942, to victory in East Asia and
the Mediterranean in 1944 and 1945, the Second World War and its accompanying
imperial conflicts gave the modern Army and its Indian and British personnel much of
the doctrines and organization retained after 1947. The longstanding legacy and nature of
martial race recruiting, and of the British regimental tradition, was encapsulated and
preserved in this period. The war years, and the two years that followed, were the last
years of the army as an imperial force dominated by British officers, up to its division
between Britain, India and Pakistan in August 1947. It is the last years of the army under
British control that mark the boundaries of the first chapter. During this period covering
the first half of the twentieth century, the Indian leaders who would come to command
the Army after independence rose from cadets to generals under the guidance of the last
generation of British and Anglo-Indian officers to dominate the army. Reviled by
nationalists, mistrusted by officers of the British Army, Claude Auchinleck, the last
commander of the imperial Indian Army, proved to be a towering personality around
which the fate of the Indian Army during partition hinged. Auchinleck’s resistance to
political interference from either Britain or India, defined in large part by his difficult
relationship with Nehru over the fate of the unified imperial Indian Army made him on
whom more than any other lay the reasonability for creating the Indian Army as it
emerged after independence. His role in partition and the example he set which resulted
in his being forced to retire, established a model for British and Indian officers who
succeeded him.
The second chapter begins with independence, and Auchinleck’s departure, and explores the army’s role in the government’s response to the communal violence and war that was concurrent with partition. Led by a shrinking cadre of British officers and an expanding corps of rapidly promoted Indian veterans, the process of nationalization and indianization was rapidly expedited, all while the army was in the process of being divided. As an aid to the civil powers, and as a bulwark of government defense policy, the army functioned much as it had during the imperial era. For the new government led by Nehru, it was also the most powerful force for unifying the country. The process of national integration saw the Army fight major campaigns in Hyderabad and in Kashmir, conflicts that highlighted the difficulty of maintaining an influential body of British officers while proving the imperial army’s value to the new Indian state. The wars fought in Kashmir and Hyderabad are examples of the endurance of military doctrines established by Indian and British forces in colonial and world wars and imparted on the Indian Army. Kodendera Cariappa, who rose to command the Indian Army in Kashmir before becoming the first Indian Commander-in-Chief, proved to be a model for the imperial conduct of the officer corps and the commander who oversaw the army’s transition from a period of war to a period of peace. His own relationship to Nehru and to British commanders are examples of the increasing divide between civil-military leaders after independence, as well as the coming to primacy of Indian officers over the imperial intuitions of the Indian Army.

The third and final chapter examines the nature of the army in the decades
following Cariappa’s retirement in the mid-1950s, when the national role and reputation established by the army as an important force for national integration came into question. With peacetime stability following the years of campaigning that accompanied the Second World War and partition, the army focused on rebuilding and retaining much of its imperial culture and infrastructure in the system of barracks, regimental centres and military schools expanded after 1949. At the same time, nationalist politicians like Krishna Menon became ardent advocates for reforming the army from a national army in name and service, to a national army in its culture, in its relationship with Congress, and in its composition and organization. The isolation of the army from public and political life in its peacetime role in the early 1950’s was responded to by Nehru and Menon by attempting to establish strong and centralized control over military policy. Menon’s intervention in military affairs led to a division within the officer corps itself, not only over the role of the army in relation civilian defense policy but to its imperial legacy, culminating in the disastrous 1962 war with China.

The events of the aftermath; the influence of Indian relations with the Soviet Union and the United States, the reforms undertaken during this period of recovery and the role of those Britons and Anglo-Indians who remained in India, brought the imperial legacy of the army to the forefront of public discussion in a manner that had not been experienced since the late 1940s. As India reached “maturity,”127 the Indian Army became a force that was less conspicuously imperial, but more comfortable with the traditions established in the imperial past, as the end of the 1960’s heralded an era that

127 Barua, Gentlemen of the Raj, 137.
was free from the direct influence of British imperial officers who served in India after 1947. The reform of the 1960’s seemed vindicated on the battlefields of Kashmir, the Punjab and Bangladesh in 1965 and 1971.

The legacy of Sam Manekshaw, as the first commander of the army trained in India, as the architect of the Indian victory of 1971 and as a major figure in the reform of the Indian Army after 1962, sets him squarely as a major influence on the Indian Army during the period after direct British influence on the armed forces had waned. But his elevation to Field Marshal in 1973, the first officer to hold that rank in India since Auchinleck, proved that the imperial traditions and ethos of the army continued to be fundamental to defining it more than twenty years after independence. Like many early senior officers, he was a veteran of both British and Indian service and a committed apolitical officer with a marked disdain for the interference of civilians in military affairs. Manekshaw was one of the last, and certainly the most important, of the Indian officers who begun their military careers under the British Empire. He was an embodiment of the “affection for British military traditions” that pervaded Indian officers after independence\(^\text{128}\) seen at the time of his death as a “legend in uniform,” combining the “best of the British tradition that he was groomed in and the distinctively Indian ethos that he was born into.”\(^\text{129}\)


Though Manekshaw’s elevation to Field Marshal in 1973 marks the end of the
scope of this thesis, his reputation serves as an example of how the Indian Army retains
much of its imperial character, and how this imperial mindset was transmitted into the
army by officers who preceded him. Cariappa was like Manekshaw deeply influenced by
the experience of serving in the imperial British and Indian armies. The desire on the part
of the Indian National Congress to create a truly national army had to contend not only
with British interference and influence during the chaos of 1947, but with two
generations of Indian officers whose military careers were defined far more by the
culture, ethos and values of empire than those of the independence movement. Not only
did Indian officers inherit an imperial institution in the form of the army, they sought
actively to replicate British military systems within independent India, working within
the national and international programs advocated by the government dominated by
Nehru and the Indian National Congress.

Though the chapter outlines above mark the central interests of this thesis, there
are other factors that come in and out of this narrative. Nehru’s policy of nonalignment
did not preclude India seeking aid during the Cold War era from countries on either “side
of the fence.”130 Military aid in the Cold War, and India received economic and military
aid from both the USSR and the United States, often determined the fate of developing
countries economically and politically. Yet within the Indian Army itself, there was a
move to retain or replicate British patterns of armament without regard to Britain’s role in
the Cold War or its continued role as a colonial power after 1947. Additionally, in the

130 Roby Barrett, *The Greater Middle East and the Cold War: U.S. Policy Under Eisenhower and Kennedy*
background of the Cold War, as has been pointed out with pride by Indians, the Army did not become a locus for political unrest due to Soviet or Western allied interference, contrary to the experience of many postcolonial states. Socialism, a hallmark of the “national revolution” of transition and the Nehru’s state did not, as had been envisioned, “break down the barriers”\textsuperscript{131} of the imperial army. Yet as a profoundly conservative force blending British and Indian ideas, the army between 1947 and 1973 had little difficulty in supporting a socialist state that repressed separatist and communist movements that had more in common with Congress than the army did. The emergency declared by Indira Gandhi in 1975 was done without the aid that she desired from the army, which held fast to its apolitical nature, in opposing or supporting the government.\textsuperscript{132}

Additionally, though tactics and strategy are not the primary purview of this thesis, the actions of officers planning and implanting strategy can hardly be extricated from the military culture and tradition in which they existed. Cohen’s efforts not to right a military history avoids detailing the continuity of arms, equipment, organizational methods and tactics with the imperial past.\textsuperscript{133} These internal aspects of the army are fundamental in creating parts of the army’s identity, but are aspects often ignored by historians focusing solely on sociological and cultural histories. Pakistan too is not the focus of this paper, yet it is impossible to discuss the development of the Indian Army without reference to the different course taken by Pakistan whose own army originated within the Indian Army. Contrary to his more conservative colleagues who envisioned a

\textsuperscript{131} Acharya Deva, \textit{Socialism in the National Revolution} (Delhi: Padma Publications, 1946), 179.
\textsuperscript{132} S.K. Sinha, \textit{A Soldier Recalls} (New Delhi: Lancer, 1992), 247.
\textsuperscript{133} Carolyn Elliot, review of \textit{The Indian Army: It’s Contribution to the Development of Nation}, 703.
“nation of Hindus,”\textsuperscript{134} Nehru’s vision of secular government as a “divorce of state from religion” predominated in India. This was reflected in the embodiment of the army as an heir to the British Indian Army “secular ethos.” That nationalization in Pakistan accompanied a process of “Islamization,”\textsuperscript{135} bound former imperial elements of the army to tribal insurgents, INA veterans, religious fundamentalists and a military intelligence apparatus. Combined with the Pakistan Army’s inability to maintain an apolitical identity, its path was set firmly apart from the Indian Army after 1947.

India alternatively utilized the imperial military engine forged from the Second World War towards secular national projects: the integration of India’s princely states, the defense of the frontier, and intervention in its colonial and independent neighbors and in global peacekeeping missions. These were projects guided, though not without difficulty, by the civilian government and contrary to Nehru’s early vision of the army, the army retained its old role as an aid to the civil powers in support of the national government. Though conducted to build the strength of the post-colonial state, these missions echo those undertaken by the Indian Army itself during the epoch of the British Empire. Many of the problems that confronted British officers, such as the difficulties in maintaining class, caste or race based recruiting, of using the military to augment civil authorities, of deploying power across the great distances of the subcontinent and the Indian Ocean and of guarding long and difficult frontiers, have for decades after independence been the troubles of Indian officers in a postcolonial state. It is the long

endurance of British imperial traditions and culture within the Army itself, and the
conscious decision in the years after 1947 to retain, adapt or emulate British elements,
both from the Indian and British armies, that formed the basis for the contemporary
Indian Army that stood as both the “pillar of the Empire” and as a new “symbol of
national unity.”136

CHAPTER 1: THE IMPERIAL LEGACY: THE INDIAN ARMY TO 1945

Introduction: The Allied Counteroffensive and the Beginning of the End

As the Second World War in South Asia entered its fourth year, senior British
officers from the armed forces of the Indian Empire assembled to decide the post war fate
of the Army of India. India had, like other British colonies and dominions, had been
brought automatically into the conflict in 1939; on the eve of the Japanese entry into the
war, India had already been at war for two arduous years. In its long standing role as an
“imperial reserve,”137 British and Indian soldiers of the Indian Army had participated in
the campaigns in East Africa and the Sudan against Italy. They had been deployed in the
suppression of Arab nationalists in Iraq and Jordan, in the subsequent invasion of the
Vichy states of Syria and Lebanon, and had aided in the overthrow of the government in
Persia, and in the seesaw campaign against the German led Panzer Group Afrika in the

136 Praval, Indian Army After Independence, 600-601.
137 F.W. Perry, The Commonwealth Armies: Manpower and Organisation In Two World Wars
Western Desert of Libya and Egypt. When the Japanese invasion of Malaya and Burma came, it fell largely on the greatly expanded but untested new formations of the Indian Army.\textsuperscript{138}

The year 1944 had seen the furthest advance of the Japanese military into the United Kingdom’s Asian colonies. The fall of Singapore and the loss of Burma and Malaya had accompanied a savage war of reprisal and attrition in the jungles and towns of Southeast Asia, and a period of chaos and instability in India itself.\textsuperscript{139} Amid the turmoils of famine and the violent suppression of Indian nationalists, British forces retreating into India recovered, stabilized and counterattacked, only to be met with a Japanese invasion of India itself. By the time that the Army Reorganization Committee was assembled in November 1944, the Japanese invasion of the Brahmaputra Valley had sputtered and died “in the filthy Burma mud,”\textsuperscript{140} and the 14th Army, the largest British army in the field and made up predominantly of newly raised Indian soldiers, was waiting for the end of the seasonal monsoon rains to continue its pursuit of the Japanese.

Even with more than 4,000 miles separating the Fourteenth Army in Southeast Asia from Tokyo, and an additional 200 miles separating British forces in Central Italy from the German frontier,\textsuperscript{141} the Army Reorganization Committee was organized in 1944

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\item \textsuperscript{138} Perry, \textit{The Commonwealth Armies}, 103-4.
\item \textsuperscript{139} Christopher Bayly and Tim Harper, \textit{Forgotten Armies}: The Fall of British Asia, 1941-1945 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), 276-277.
\item \textsuperscript{141} The British 14th Army paused on the Chindwin River in Burma in late 1944, to wait out the Monsoon rains that made major offensive operations across the hilly jungle terrain nearly impossible. The army was
\end{itemize}
to determine the structure, composition and allocation of the Army of India in the aftermath of an eventual Allied victory. In addition to anticipating the eventual process of demobilization of wartime forces and determining the future defense needs of India in the postwar world, there was also the need to respond to the major trends that had begun to affect the Indian Army before the war. The Indianization of the Indian Army’s officer corps, and the influence of the national independence movement, along with the great wartime expansion of the army, had by late 1944 appeared to have permanently changed the size, composition and character of the Indian Army.

The Indian Army that emerged as a “major victor” in 1945 has been described as a “changed force, one that would not return to the pre-Second World War days and one that saw its future in a different light, due to the rise of the Indian nationalist movement.”142 Certainly the introduction of tens of thousands of Indian officers had inexorably altered the army. But with the prospect of demobilization, the leadership of the army, still dominated by British and Anglo-Indian officers, had to decide how it would return to its peacetime role. The experience of fighting the Second World War was the most important legacy after 1945, but was not the only one, and the army that fought in East Africa, the Mediterranean and the Far East between 1939 and 1945 was an imperial army. The senior Indian and British officers who had led the army in these campaigns had careers going back to the early years of the twentieth century, when

1,500 miles from Singapore. It was a further 3,000 miles by sea to the Japanese home islands. From Indian positions south of Bologna held in the Winter of 1944 and 1945 it was nearly 200 miles to the German-Austrian border in the Alps.

British imperial power was at its zenith. They inherited a British and colonial legacy that predated them but their own experience of war and reform, peace and demobilization - notably the events surrounding the First World War - were imperial legacies that continued to influence the army and its officers as its future was being decided after 1945.

The Army and Officers of the Raj

The Indian Army of 1939 had been a professional force of career soldiers, the character of which was deeply influenced by the predominating British theory of martial races, established after the failed uprisings of 1857-1859. The mutiny of so many of the Bengal Army’s Muslim and high caste Hindu troops had largely proscribed their use in the future Indian Army, established in 1908 from the former armies of the East India Company. Those troops that had remained loyal, or had been recruited “in haste” to put down the rebellion - the largest proportion of whom were from the Punjab - formed the core of the Indian Army after 1857. Before the outbreak of the First World War the army had undergone a series of major reforms aimed at modernizing the old presidential armies in their traditions, tactics and equipment, patterning a unified force on the model of the British Army.

At its core these reforms were aimed at creating an army that could act as an effective force in a major European war, rather than solely colonial conflict.

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Significantly, the post-1857 proscription was removed on modernizing the infantry weapons of the Indian Army, a policy designed to ensure that British troops maintained a technological superiority over their Indian counterparts. Additionally, many of the old East India Company titles inherited by the army were removed, granting old company regiments titles that reflected their geographic or ethnic origin. This was a policy reflective of the Childers Reforms initiated in Britain in 1881. In India, this process was longer, continuing into the 1920s by the creation of large multi-battalion regiments on the model of the British infantry.

The experience of fighting the First World War highlighted many of the real and imagined problems inherent in the Indian Army that would reappear in the Second World War. Numerous military and academic writers have praised or criticized the Indian contribution to the imperial war effort, especially during the early years of the war and in particular the controversial deployment of an Indian expeditionary force to France in 1914. George Morton-Jack’s *The Indian Army on the Western Front* emphasizes that the historiographical division in the appraisal of the Indian Army’s performance during the First World War is between imperial and modern historians and British and Indian serving officers. Geographic determinism and an apprehension towards the potential of Indian troops being a source of unrest marked imperial appraisals of the Indian Army.

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146 Mortan-Jack, *The Indian Army on the Western Front*, 302.
between 1914 and 1918. This has informed opinions of the force since, and led to a
generalized depiction of the force as one unprepared for the hardships of modern warfare.

Morton-Jack and other historians repudiate many of the claims made against the
Indian Army, especially in regards to views influenced by ideas of geographic
determinism, racism and a general disregard on the part of senior British Army officers
for their counterparts in the Indian Army, European and Indian alike. This British
evaluation remained evident throughout the intervening period between the First and the
Second World Wars. Despite these prejudices, the major post-war reform was towards
the Indianization of the officer corps. Indian soldiers had been entirely prohibited from
holding regular commissions in the Indian Army, positions held since the 18th century
entirely by white officers. After more than 300 hundred years of foreign service, these
white Indian Army officers had already become distinguishable from their British Army
counterparts. They represented a different social status, often coming from the lower
ranks of the clergy or minor business or landowning classes, or from families that had
settled as soldiers or administrators in India itself.

A disproportionate number of these men came from what has been described as
Britain’s equivalent to the “Junker” class of Prussian landowners from which German
states drew their own imperial officers. The largely Protestant aristocracy of Ireland was
disproportionately represented not only in the civil service and administration of the

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147 This follows the periodization of the army seen in T.A. Heathcote, *The Military In British India*,
148 Ibid., 2.
Indian Empire, but in the ranks of the Indian Army’s officer corps. These officers were expected to learn the language of their troops, primarily Urdu, Hindi or Gurkhali - a mixture of Hindi and Himalayan languages fused with English loanwords - and to understand the culture of the ethnic groups that made up the company or battalion to which he was posted. This extended to the sharing of meals with soldiers, close relationships with senior Indian non-commissioned officers and occasional visits to the recruiting grounds of their regiment. This did not preclude their emulation of the habits of their socially superior British Army officers, especially gardening, hunting and sports, but these British practices became imperial customs by long years of colonial service. Nor did it prohibit them from inheriting the kind of racial prejudice common amongst British imperialists at large. “Every race from the Khyber to Cape Comorin” commented the English author Alfred Ollivant in 1914, had an innate desire “to be led by in war by the white officers who can beat them man to man, with rifle, lance or sword.” Though considered by their white officers to be unquestionably brave, and to be the finest natural soldiers in the world, the Indian caste or class groups that made up the great body of Indian Army had been traditionally considered by many British and white Indian officers to be incapable of replacing white officers. “While ever ready to follow,” wrote one commentator, “the soldier of India cannot lead.”

The Indian and the Imperial Officer Corps, 1857 - 1917

These were the conditions that faced potential Indian candidates who desired to become commissioned officers on the same level as white Europeans. The Indian Army did possess an indigenous officer corps but it was one that was placed within the racial hierarchy of Britain’s colonial system. The Indian Army’s rank structure, based on that of the British Army, had besides enlisted and non-commissioned officer ranks, several senior positions that Indian soldiers could rise to, varying on the role of the particular regiment to which a soldier belonged.\footnote{154 Peter Ducker, \textit{The British Indian Army: 1860 to 1914} (Princes Risborough: Shire Books, 2003) 17-18.} Rather than junior commissioned positions for candidates who had attended university training program or a military academy, as was the case for new white officers, these were positions awarded for long and meritorious service. These placed Indian soldiers into leadership positions at the company and battalion level, assignments that might often have been filled otherwise by white officers. Despite the prestige associated with these positions, these veterans, known simply as Indian Officers, Native Officers or Viceroy’s Commissioned Officers, to distinguish them from the enlisted or noncommissioned Indians he commanded, would remain junior to white officers of any rank.\footnote{155 Julian Thompson, \textit{Forgotten Voices From Burma: The Second World War’s Forgotten Conflict} (Reading: Ebury Press, 2010), 381.} Thus, a veteran Indian Subedar Major, wearing the rank of a British Major and acting in the capacity of Regimental Sergeant Major or executive officer, would be junior to a white lieutenant who held a King’s commission and had not yet any experience of India, of his particular regiment, or of the kind of combat - conventional or irregular - that the Indian Army was expected to master.
Beginning in the 1880s, there was a push to open the officer positions held by Britons to Indians, accompanying the emergence of a wider nationalist movement led by the Indian National Congress. Educated middle class professionals, largely high caste Hindus, were the major driving force behind Congress conceptions of national self-determination, in which Indian leadership in the army was a necessity for home rule or independence. The mutiny of so many soldiers with similar backgrounds in 1857 had excluded their general inclusion into the military. British officers and administrators justified this restriction by citing the legacy of the mutiny, as well as the prevailing theory of martial races. Arming “the cunning and effeminate babu”\(^{156}\) was paradoxically seen by British officers as poor military policy, given the perceived natural weakness of middle class Bengali’s, as well as political threat to imperial rule due to their association with both the nationalist movement and the rebellion of 1857.

Indian’s associated with the native aristocracy of the Raj and the martial races, excluded from the educated middle class professions of the bureaucracy, could enter into military service in either the Indian Army or in the armies of the Princely States, but like middle-class Indians, could not hope to rise to the level of authority held by white officers.\(^{157}\) From the reform of the army in the aftermath of the rebellion of 1857, to the opening of the First World War, attempts were made by both the middle class nationalists and by martial and aristocratic groups to participate in the officer corps, or to press the

\(^{156}\) Anon to the Editor, India, 24 May 1894, in “The Scare in India,” *The Spectator* 72 (24 May 1894): 650. The authorship of this letter is not known, but the anonymous letter was certainly penned, judging by the sympathy that the author holds with those who he describes as ‘us,’ as a British officer in India.

government for reform. When accepted by the Indian Government, these reforms were often aborted, or limited in their scope. Bengali civil servants trained in medicine acted as surgeons and military clerks, and Indian officers of appropriate martial or aristocratic background were granted commissions with state troops that served alongside the Indian Army in colonial conflicts. These were effectively ceremonial or civilian appointments, with no bearing on the granting of Indians the authority to command British or Indian troops on the same level as white officers. Real reform, such as the formation of Indian military academies, cadet corps at Indian universities, or the creation of units run entirely by Indian officers were rejected by the leadership of the British and Indian armies, or by the imperial governments in London and Delhi.

The tremendous losses suffered by the British imperial armies in the First World War forced the issue of Indian commissioned officers more than the efforts of middle class reformers or aristocratic soldiers. The loss of 500 white Indian Army officers and 500 native Indian officers on the Western Front in 1914 and 1915 was exacerbated by the retention of the British Army of a further 500 Indian Army officers in Britain, to aid in the training of the new British field armies being built by Kitchener in the United Kingdom. Indian noncommissioned officers and native commissioned officers had already proven adept at leading troops in battle and in training both Indian and British

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160 Mike Chappell, *The British Army in World War One: The Western Front, 1914 to 1916* (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2003), 9. The Indian Expeditionary Force most often refers to Indian Expeditionary Force A, the force sent to join the British Expeditionary Force that formed the command for the British armies engaged on the Western Front. A total of seven expeditionary forces were sent from India to different theaters of the war, to join larger imperial expeditionary forces led by senior British Army officers.
soldiers, as evidenced by the campaigns on the North-West frontier before and during the First World War. Victoria Cross citations from the First World War bear out that in the absence of British officers, Indians in native officer positions were capable of the kind of leadership and organizational skills that had been thought to be the purview of white soldiers, not only at the level of the platoon or company, but at that of the battalion or squadron. Likewise staff positions held in the 19th century by Britons or by Indian civilians, such as quartermaster or senior surgeon, were now held by Indian officers enrolled in the army. Indians might not have had the legal authority to command Indian or British soldiers as officers who held a commission or warrant from the crown, but they had substantive authority in relation to their specializations, such as a senior surgeon having medical authority over a battalion, squadron or regiment.

Such cases brought Indian soldiers not only into positions of leadership but in contact with their peers in both imperial and allied armies. The process of Indianization referred not only to the creation of an Indian officer corps equivalent to that of Britons, but to the creation of armies and expeditionary forces that drew largely from the Indian Army and demanded the commissioning of great numbers of new officers. The 18th and 19th century campaigns in India itself were based largely on Indian manpower but these forces were dwarfed by the Indian formations assembled during the First World War. The imperial armies serving in the Mesopotamian and Sinai-Palestine campaigns became in

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162 War Office. “Jemadar Mir Dast, I.O.M.,” *The London Gazette*, June 29, 1915, London Edition, 6269. Mir Dast was awarded the Victoria Cross for his role as a platoon leader during the 2nd Battle of Ypres, where when all other British and Indian officers had been killed, he took command of the 57th Frontier Force Rifles until they were ordered to withdraw.
164 Willcocks, *With the Indians in France*, 103.
effect Indian armies led by officers of the regular British Army. This integration of Indian soldiers into commonwealth armies extended down to mixed companies of white and Indian soldiers in technical roles, much to the resistance of British Army officers, to whom Indian soldiers and officers, European and Indian alike, continually had to prove themselves. That the Indian soldier could master technical skills emphasized their military capabilities, and the wartime necessity of placing training and experience over engrained racial policy. That Indian regiments already possessed a similar regimental structure and ethos to their British Army counterparts expedited this process and eased integration and cooperation between Indian units and other imperial forces.\(^{165}\)

**Indianization and Imperial Policy**

The process of Indianization was formalized in 1917 made by Edwin Montagu, the Secretary of State for India during the First World War. Though considered by contemporary historians to be “unusual and rather unconstitutional,”\(^{166}\) Montagu pledged the governments of the United Kingdom and the Indian Empire to “the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realization of responsible government in India, as an integral part of the British Empire.”\(^{167}\) This shift

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in policy was credited in creating a “Third British Empire”\textsuperscript{168} of dominions and commonwealths, in place of the one controlled centrally from London since the late 18\textsuperscript{th} century. His emphasis on creating new institutions laid the origins of eventual British acceptance of Indian independence but it also had the important effect of granting King’s commissions, as enjoyed by white officers, to Indians. On August 25\textsuperscript{th}, 1917, following Montagu’s announcement, the first nine Indians were appointed as King’s Indian Commissioned Officers.\textsuperscript{169}

In the immediate period there was much dispute over what this change in policy really meant. The nine officers chosen were from aristocratic backgrounds and had risen through the ranks to become native Indian Officers. They had been trained as such under the Imperial Cadet Corps, a scheme envisaged by the Viceroy Curzon to train the sons of the Indian nobility to positions of military leadership. In addition, they had seen active service throughout in the First World War. Despite these qualifications, they belonged to the Imperial Service Troops, the forces contributed by the Princely States to the Indian government for use as both as auxiliaries for the regular Indian Army, and for internal use as police.\textsuperscript{170} In the debate over Indianization in the House of Lords the Under-Secretary of State for India, Lord Islington, confirmed that these were “King’s commissions conferring honorary rank in the Indian Army,” awarded to appropriately aristocratic officers “corresponding in some measure, at any rate, with the expansion of the Indian

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\textsuperscript{168} Alfred Eckhard Zimmern, \textit{The Third British Empire: Being a Series of Lectures Conducted at Columbia University} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1934), 16.
\textsuperscript{169} Sharma, 45.
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Army.” In a private meeting conducted between Montagu and the war correspondent Charles a Court Repington shortly after the pronouncement made in August 1917, Montagu admitted that it was a “political necessity” to appoint Indians as commissioned officers, given the nature of Indian service in the war and the positive effects such a move would have on the increasingly vocal and agitated home rule and nationalist movements.

Though there were at the end of the First World War both Native Indian Officers holding commissions from the Viceroy, as well as King’s Indian Commissioned Officers commissioned by the crown, neither class of Indian officer were deemed appropriate to lead Indian or British troops. There were also major disagreements between civilian and military establishments, and between the Indian and the British Army, over how, when and where Indianization would be occur. Montagu himself agreed with the body of white Indian Army officers that advocated for the training of officers in India itself, as had been done for the scions of Indian aristocrats who had been given King’s Commissions in 1917. If there was disagreement among British officers and civil servants, a major point of agreement was that this would be a slow process. The Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms of 1918 and the Government of India Act of 1919 created Indian assemblies that advocated repeatedly for Indianization, but it was not until 1920 that ten places were held at Sandhurst for Indian Officers, confirming that if Indians were to be given the same

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173 Montagu had as senior military advisor General Herbert Cox, who had attended Sandhurst and been in the British Army before being transferred to the Indian Army. A commander of Indian Army, Princely State and Australian formations, he was an advocate for the transition to Indian leadership, as had already been done for Egyptians in the British dominated Egyptian and Sudanese armies.
responsibilities as white Indian Army officers, it would be strictly under the purview of the British Army establishment.

In the personal history of one of the first non-ceremonial commissions, that of Major Ajit Rudra who attended the temporary military school at established at Indore, Rudra reveals the difficulties and strict screening process that potential Indian officers had to meet. He was the son of a prominent Bengali Christian doctor, educator and landowner and had been educated at Cambridge. At the outbreak of the First World War, Rudra joined a public school battalion as a private in the British Army, eventually serving in the regular British Army’s 2nd Battalion, Royal Fusiliers on the Western Front. Promoted to the rank of sergeant, he had been accepted to attend a wartime English cadet corps program in Britain but was removed after it was discovered he was an Indian.\textsuperscript{174} With a family and military background seen as compatible with British conceptions of an educated aristocratic officer corps, Rudra was selected after the war to attend the temporary Indian cadet school formed at Indore.

After being posted to the Northwest Frontier as a King’s Commissioned Indian Officer, his credentials as a veteran of the regular British Army and an attendee of Cambridge were influential in earning the trust of British colleagues and superiors, more so than his training and commissioning at an Indian cadet school.\textsuperscript{175} Even with these strictures, Indian officers selected to attend Indian cadet schools, or Sandhurst after 1920, were selected based on the compatibility of their background with ingrained British Army

\textsuperscript{174} Sharma, xiii.

\textsuperscript{175} Marston,\textit{ The Indian Army and the End of the Raj}, 25.
values. They were to be from loyal families, preferably of martial race class or aristocratic princely state background, and well inoculated in British culture and language. Even with an inherent British bias against Indian officers, this process ensured that King’s Commissioned Indian Officers would be modeled after British Army officers, solidified by the assignment of Indian officers to regular British Army regiments before being assigned to the Indian Army.\textsuperscript{176} Kodendera Cariappa, a fellow 1918 attendee of the Indore school with Rudra, was an exemplar of the kind of “pucca sahib” that Indians described as being more British “than the British themselves.”\textsuperscript{177} In the period of intense reform and nationalization that occurred after the Second World War, these men and men like them, would play a fundamental part in forming the independent Indian Army.

Not until 1923 was there a formal plan as to how widespread or quickly this process would occur. Field Marshal Henry Rawlinson, the British post-war commander of the Indian Army, initiated the Eight Unit Plan, in which eight junior Indian regiments - two of cavalry and six of infantry - would be converted gradually to become entirely officered by Indians. This had been in effect a much reduced form of Indianization as it had been proposed during the war. It was also influenced by the high failure rate of Indian officers given slots at Sandhurst after the First World War. The strict academic and social structure of Sandhurst was akin to the public schools and universities of Great Britain, to which many Indian soldiers were unaccustomed, exacerbated by the extended period of time away from India demanded by cadet programs in Britain. The

\textsuperscript{177} Vijay Kumar Singh, \textit{Leadership in the Indian Army: Biographies of Twelve Soldiers} (New Delhi: Sage, 2005), 21.
longstanding proscription against Indians serving as officers had also resulted in a distinction in educational programs in India modeled on institutions in the United Kingdom, in that British preparatory schools and universities had cadet programs to prepare candidates to attend military academies, while India, with no academic route into the army, had developed none of these programs.\textsuperscript{178}

\textbf{The Development of an Indian Officer Corps}

This necessitated the creation of new preparatory cadet schools in India itself to prepare candidates.\textsuperscript{179} Indian nationalists and British and Indian civil servants advocated the creation of an “Indian Sandhurst” to alleviate the problem and increase Indian officer attendance, with a joint Anglo-Indian committee led by the Indian Army General Andrew Skeen, joined by Muhammad Ali Jinnah and Jawaharlal Nehru, proposing increasing levels of attendance to Sandhurst and other military schools in the United Kingdom until a similar Indian institution could be formed. These proposals were rejected by British Army leaders commanding in India, but reforms made in London itself created a separate institution for the training of Indian officers.

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\textsuperscript{178} Barua, \textit{Gentlemen of the Raj}, 30. \\
\textsuperscript{179} Marston, \textit{The Indian Army and the End of the Raj}, 25-26. Marston’s interviews with Indian attendees at Sandhurst also cite the difficulties of travelling from India to Britain to attend the school itself.
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The Indian Military Academy Dehra Dun, established in 1932, ended the program of sending Indian soldiers to Sandhurst.\textsuperscript{180} The change in location did not substantively change the qualities of the candidates, and it was emphasized in parliamentary reviews of the school that newly commissioned Indian Army officers, both white and Indian, were to be posted with British regiments serving in India to learn from British regular officers.\textsuperscript{181} Though the limited number of Indian candidates at Dehra Dun was only 60 in 1934, British politicians believed that the number was “sufficient,”\textsuperscript{182} even if Indian officers remained grossly outnumbered by their white Indian Army counterparts. This was due to the stationing of commissioned Indian officers only to those units that had been designated to be, in time, completely Indianized. This was done to mitigate fears amongst Britons that Indian officers would, as they could now legally with the granting of royal commissions, command white soldiers and officers.

Even with a relatively small body of cadets passing through the academy at Dehra Dun each year, and the selection of a further seven regiments for Indianisation, there were more Indian officers in the Army than there were postings available for them within those units selected. In the rare cases in the 1930s where Indian officers did command white officers, such as that of Rudra who had been assigned to an Indian unit not designated for Indianization, there was neither resistance from white officers or from the martial race enlisted or noncommissioned officers, who the British believed would be


hostile to being led by educated, non-martial class officers of middle class or aristocratic background.\textsuperscript{183} The real tension within this system existed between Indian officers and white policy makers, who established Indian Commissioned Officers in place of the martial class Viceroy’s officers or noncommissioned officers at the platoon level. Though postings at the platoon level for junior officers was a common practice within the British Army, it was widely believed that this program of “platoonization” was aimed at further preventing Indians from commanding white officers. It additionally added an additional extended period of time before the newly commissioned Indian Officers from Dehru Dun or Sandhurst could be placed in staff positions, or leadership at the company, battalion, squadron or regimental level.\textsuperscript{184}

These frustrations limited the desire by middle class Indians to enter into the new cadet or commissioning programs in the interwar years. Yet British officers who commanded or served with Indian officers in the years before the Second World War recognized that this was a portent of the changes that would come both for the Indian Army and for Indian independence. “We all knew…” wrote Major General Goff Hamilton, “even in the 20’s, that independence for India could not be long delayed and it was our duty to see that our Indian successors, both in the services and the civil administration, were properly trained.”\textsuperscript{185} Other officers put the issue of race and origin more simply, emphasizing the Indian Army’s distance from politics. “If the cadets were

\textsuperscript{183} Marston, \textit{The Indian Army and the End of the Raj}, 27.  
\textsuperscript{184} Ibid., 31.  
\textsuperscript{185} Gaylor, \textit{Sons of John Company}, 29.
good enough for the King,” said one British officer, “they were good enough for the rest of the Indian Army.”

When war was declared in 1939, the Indian Army had 577 Indian officers, dwarfed by more than 4,000 white officers, a number that did not include the British officers serving in India with the British Army. “It takes a long time, I am told to make a general—as the hon. and gallant Member for West Wickham will doubtless confirm,” said William Benn in a Parliamentary debate on India’s coming role in the war, “and I am told that the real difficulty about the Indianisation of the Forces in India is that you want trained officers and it takes a long time to make them. I think Indians will agree that in the work of such men as Sir Andrew Skeen and Sir Philip Chetwode a certain effort has been made to help them along this road.” Even with the legacy of the Indian importance in the First World War, and the possibility that Indian troops would be needed in such numbers again in the face of a potential defeat by Germany, British policymakers in London were largely satisfied with the process of Indianisation as had been undertaken between 1917 and 1939.

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187 Sharma, 174.
188 Sri Nandad Prasan, *Expansion of the Armed Forces and Defense Organization, 1939-1945* (Telangana: Combined Inter-Services Historical Section India and Pakistan, 1956), 181-183. Prasan gives the number of officers in 1939 as 697 Indian officers and 3031 British Officers. This discrepancy is likely due to the similar situation that faced the British at the outbreak of the First World War, with a number of white Indian officers on leave or extended assignment, and a number of native Indian officers being assigned to support and technical positions, such as medical and clerical roles outside of the regimental system.
190 In the above debate in Parliament, Hugh O’Neill raised the important question of retaining Indian soldiers for the defense of India itself, in the event that Britain was defeated by the Germans. O’Neill and other members presumed that Indians saw their ‘association’ with Britain as the primary means of attaining constitutional reform, a foreboding remark that dismissed the possibility a major civil disobedience movement, as would be led by Gandhi, or the creation of an
Imperial Reform of the Army, 1914 - 1939

Apart from Indianization, the ceremonial and administrative structure of the Indian Army had been reformed in the 1920’s to create large battalion regiments in the manner of the British Army or of the regiments of Gurkha Rifles. Twenty regimental depots were created, maintaining the traditions and training responsibilities of a large number of battalions, altering the single battalion regiments inherited by the East India Company. In the event of war, the regimental depots could raise new battalions carrying the same regimental traditions as others already on service, though their composition and role could change depending on the needs of the military. Indian regiments, especially in the infantry, had always been closely modeled on the British system. More than any other, “the most distinguishing feature of the British Army has been its regimental system.”\footnote{Byron Farwell, Queen Victoria’s Little Wars (New York: W.W. Norton, 1972), 354.} The establishment of fixed depots in India was a step at transplanting one facet of this system, as British multi-battalion depots established in 1881 were considered where “the vital seeds of regimental history and tradition are implanted.”\footnote{Andrew Dunlop, The March of Time: Being the Reflections of a British Soldier (Salisbury: M.O. Collins, 1977), 66.} Customs that reinforced the ties of soldiers of to the monarch and the state, but also to their comrades and to the fixed social order.
For Indian Officers, this included a racial aspect that proved difficult to overcome.

“I was called a wog in my own mess,” said the Indian officer S.D. Verma. “Chaps five or ten years older than me treated me as a pariah.”¹⁹³ Racial attitudes pervaded the British Army, but in the regimental system, race was only one factor that united the officers and men of a regiment from all perceived outsiders. Since the eighteenth century, the regimental structure around which the life of white officers had revolved had reinforced a set of common imperial attitudes, values and practices, emphasizing sports, hunting, theatre, balls and other social activities that served to mark officers serving in the Indian Army as the social equivalents of British Army officers in their own turn looked down on officers and men of the Indian Army.¹⁹⁴ By the early twentieth century, long established practices had not only influenced the attitudes of officers, but all soldiers of the regiment. “Though some regiments formed close alliances,” writes Michael Barthorp, “Regulars usually had little time for other regiments, tolerated sailors but hated marines; were indifferent to civilians, unless female, and believed that foreign part won by the sword should be kept by the sword.”¹⁹⁵ If Indians accepted the role acted out by British and white Indian officers as the chief “guardians” of regimental tradition, Indian soldiers found their transition into the white dominated officer corps “amiable.”¹⁹⁶

¹⁹³ Barua, Gentlemen of the Raj, 70.
This formed a sense that the regiment was a “tribe,” “clan,” or “family,” whatever the soldiers background.\textsuperscript{197} For regiments with distinct ethnic and regional identities, such as Irish, Welsh and Scottish regiments, this was enhanced by the establishment of recruiting districts linked to regimental depots. For the Indian Army, where class and caste recruiting was based on the level of the company or battalion and not just the regiment as a whole, this same process was amplified. In October 1939, the Viceroy of India Lord Linlithgow advocated the extensive recruitment from traditional sources amongst the martial races of the Punjab. “I hope that we could, if necessary draw very heavily on the Punjab for men,” citing the difficulty of the Indian National Congress in recruiting in both the Punjab and elsewhere.\textsuperscript{198} This was also the opinion of politicians in the United Kingdom. “I would remind the House that the war effort during the last war did not depend on the politicians,” said Major General Alfred Knox. “It has been pointed out since, that of 619,000 who volunteered for active service in addition to the Regular Forces in India, no less than 350,000 came from the Province of Punjab, with only about 22,000,000 inhabitants, and not ruled by Congress at all. I could name six other Provinces now ruled by Congress which have produced about 92,000 troops. Congress does not go into the life of the Indian people to anything like the same extent that hon. Members think it does.”\textsuperscript{199}

\textsuperscript{197} Farwell, \textit{Queen Victoria’s Little Wars}, 361.
\textsuperscript{198} Kaushik Roy, \textit{The Army in British India: From Colonial Warfare to Total War} (New Delhi: Bloomsbury, 2013), 126.
This was a repetition of the policy undertaken by the United Kingdom and the Indian Government during the First World War. The pre 1914 Indian Army had consisted of 230,000 Indian soldiers, of which some 100,000 originated from the Punjab. The expansion of the wartime army after 1914 necessitated the raising of wartime regiments from non-martial class communities, but overwhelmingly the wartime battalions and the “streamlining” of the army after the war emphasized the traditional martial recruiting areas of the Punjab.\textsuperscript{200} By the end of the conflict, 500,000 Punjabi men had enlisted, nearly half of the 1.3 million soldiers and noncombatant auxiliaries entered into the military, 350,000 of which had joined as common soldiers, the number referenced by Alfred Knox in 1940.\textsuperscript{201} Punjabi Sikhs alone accounted for 150,000 soldiers, 25 percent of the entirety of the combat strength of the Indian Army.\textsuperscript{202}

The farming colonies of the Punjab, along with recruits drawn from India’s mountain frontiers and from the neighboring Kingdom of Nepal, those ethnic groups that made up the most important and numerous of the martial races, comprised 75 percent of the Indian Army.\textsuperscript{203} The intensity of recruitment from the traditional sources of the post-1857 army, the heavy losses incurred on the pre-war and war raised battalions, and the sending overseas of the great majority of the Indian Army placed incredible pressure on the Indian communities from which soldiers were drawn. The Third Afghan War of 1919, an invasion of the frontier by the Emirate of Afghanistan coupled with tribal unrest along

\textsuperscript{200} Marston, \textit{Phoenix from the Ashes}, 14-15.
the border, exacerbated tensions around home rule that was keenly felt in the Punjab as a focal point for both British military and Indian nationalist activity. Recruitment had been suspended, but after the German counteroffensive in France in the Spring of 1918, it was reinstated almost immediately to free British soldiers in the Middle East for service on the Western Front. Whereas recruitment had been based communally, the lieutenant governor, Michael O’Dwyer, expanded the Punjab recruitment system to correspond with administrative divisions. This extended the pressures on manpower from the military farming colonies to the region as a whole, already suffering from rainfall shortage and wartime inflation. The political agitation that accompanied the exhaustion of the region reached its zenith with the massacre of unarmed protesters at Amritsar by Indian troops under the command of Reginald Dyer.

Modern historians disagree on the primary source of the political unrest that led to the widespread violence that surrounded the period of the Amritsar massacre, but there was intense concern on the part of British MP’s reviewing government policy in the Punjab as to the sustainability of such intensive recruiting. “I cannot acquit the administration of Sir Michael O’Dwyer of a great deal of oppression in his recruiting operations,” argued Thomas Bennett before the parliamentary review into the actions of

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206 Nigel Collett’s *The Butcher of Amritsar* and Nick Lloyd’s *The Amritsar Massacre*, the two most recent works on the massacre have both been met with praise and criticism, aided by the fact that both authors have been critical of the other. Nick Lloyd’s focus on the role of O’Dwyer as a colonial administrator, and the role of Indian propaganda has led to him being disregarded as an imperial apologist for Dyer himself, while Collett focuses on the personal culpability of Dyer himself in enacting severe measures to curtail civil unrest. Both authors refer to the reforms of the recruiting system as an important influence on politics in the region, though Lloyd dismisses this as the primary factor.
the military in the region. “It is fair to say that when these were brought to notice
measures were taken to prevent their repetition, and it is also fair to say that one witness
before the Commission said that those who were guilty of exercising pressure in
recruiting were native officials of some standing.” Dyer himself was exonerated, and
he was welcomed by admirers in Britain as a hero; he was, however, quickly replaced
and ordered to resign his commission by his superiors in the Indian Army. For critics of
the Indian Army’s conduct, the source of much of the frustrations on the part of the
residents of the Punjab was on British recruiting policy, aided by local elites.

The initial expansion of the Indian Army between 1939 and 1942 rested on the
support of local allies, embodied in the Punjab Unionist Party. Contrary to the Indian
National Congress, which found its most important support among the urban middle
class, the Unionist Party was deeply rural. Its leaders were landowners and former
soldiers, and like the martial race composition of the Indian Army, they formed a political
coalition of Muslim, Hindu and Sikh peasants from the rural military communities of the
region and attempted to isolate these rural communities from the political agitation of the
urban centers, dominated by the Congress and the Muslim League, with which it had a
loose affiliation. As long as Britain required the cooperation of local elites to harness
the manpower reserves of the region, the Unionist Party could trade favorable political
and economic policies for landowners and peasants who formed the military and agrarian

base of the region in exchange for support for the British Empire and the Indian Army.\textsuperscript{209}

The efforts of Punjabi leaders to resist nationalist reform of recruiting policy in the 1930s ensured that the army of 1939 was of a class composition comparable to that which had existed in 1914.\textsuperscript{210}

\textbf{The Indian Army on Campaign, 1919 - 1942}

Where the majority of the Indian Army had been between 1914 and 1920 serving overseas, the interwar years saw a reorientation towards the North-West Frontier, often the first campaigns in which newly commissioned Indian officers participated in. The wartime imperial defense of the North-West Frontier was planned in part to prevent a Russian invasion of India, considered a possibility until the German invasion of the Soviet Union.\textsuperscript{211} In addition, there were nearly half a million tribesmen of military age along the Durand line, half of which were armed with modern rifles.\textsuperscript{212} The mobilization and deployment of Indian brigades between 1939 and the end of 1941 to the fronts in the Western Desert, East Africa, the Levant, Persia and Iraq echoed the demands made on


\textsuperscript{210} Marston, \textit{Phoenix from the Ashes}, 15.


\textsuperscript{212} Milan Hauner, \textit{India in Axis Strategy: Germany, Japan and Indian Nationalists in the Second World War} (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1981), 83.
both the Indian Army and Indian manpower during the First World War. In addition, Indian units garrisoned Burma, Malaya, Singapore and Hong Kong.

The reality of embarking Indian troops against a modern and mechanized enemy while simultaneously fighting a “second class”\textsuperscript{213} foe in colonial and frontier campaigns posed a series of problems which Indian Army officers, British and Indian alike, had to contend. The war in the Western Desert emphasized a war of rapid mechanized movement, to which Indian regiments within India were only partially equipped, with an emphasis on providing a modernized force to guard the frontier.\textsuperscript{214} The rapid expansion of the Indian Army after 1939 and the reorientation towards rapid desert warfare necessitated the movements of great quantities of Indian Army equipment to supply those units deployed to the Middle East and North Africa. Manpower was not yet a critical issue, but the process in 1940 and 1941 of “milking,” that is of taking veteran Indian soldiers, especially VCO’s, to form the cadre for new units training for service against the Italians or Germans, led to severe shortages of experienced personnel in units serving in India and the Far East.\textsuperscript{215}

These shortages in experience, manpower and equipment, problems that faced all Commonwealth units assigned to India or the Far East before December 1941, have been widely accepted as the primary factor for the rapid collapse of British imperial forces

\textsuperscript{213} Moreman, “From the Desert Sands,” 223-224.
\textsuperscript{214} Roy, \textit{The Army in British India}, 106.
\textsuperscript{215} Ibid.
against the Japanese invasion of Malaya and Burma.\textsuperscript{216} The yearly programmes designed to expand and modernize the Indian Army had fallen significantly short in their quotas of trained personnel and equipment, a situation that Archibald Wavell, the Commander in Chief India, warned in the Fall of 1941 could have both serious military and political consequences.\textsuperscript{217} Events in South East Asia between the end of 1941 and the Spring of 1944 seemed to bear this prediction out. The fall of Singapore and Rangoon was followed by a general retreat to the Indo-Burmese frontier. The Japanese for their part politically and militarily consolidated their positions in Burma and Malaya, taking advantage of the opposition on the part of local nationalists for British colonial rule.

The expansion of the Indian Army before the Japanese invasion rested largely, as planned, on the Punjab. In 1939, 48\% of the Army was recruited from the Punjab.\textsuperscript{218} The recruiting drives of 1939 to 1941 increased the percentages of some groups, especially those represented in Gurkha and other Himalayan rifle regiments, but maintained the same percentage from the Punjab, in large part due to the mobilization of reservists, former soldiers and pensioners and the changing of age and medical requirements. This was coupled with the preliminary raising of non-martial class regiments from the former presidencies of Bombay and Madras.\textsuperscript{219} The success of the Japanese invasion showed that recruiting, training and equipment efforts planned from London were entirely inadequate.

\begin{footnotes}
\item[219] Perry, 106.
\end{footnotes}
Though it would take until 1943, there would eventually be new commands formed and a new field army led by Indian, rather than British Army, officers. The number of infantry battalions in the Indian Army doubled between 1939 and 1941, to a level of just under 300, where it would stay for most of the war. The expansion of the army after this period, from about 500,000 to a force of 2.5 million soldiers and noncombatants, reflected not only a concern with ensuring that the traditional infantry, cavalry and mountain artillery units would be fully manned, but the opening of new specialist and technical positions to hundreds of thousands of Indian soldiers.

**Imperial Influence and the Indian National Army**

The process of Indianization, nationalization and the effects of martial race recruiting and Indian nationalism on the army were hardly understood in London under the circumstances of 1942 and 1943. “It is fortunate, indeed, that the Congress Party has no influence whatever with the martial races, on whom the defence of India apart from British Forces largely depends,” said Winston Churchill to Parliament in the fall of 1942. In India, the imperial government had to make a concerted effort to ensure that the army retained its imperial identity, confronted by political unrest domestically, and by the prospect of defeat in Malaya and Burma. The suppression of the Quit India Movement and the Indian National Congress was coupled with overtures to the Muslim League and the Unionist Party. This effectively limited the political influence that these

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220 Ibid., 105.
221 Ibid., 105 and 116.
factions could level over the military during the threat of Japanese invasion, but the creation of the Indian National Army under Japanese support was symbolic of the violent politicization that could manifest itself among Indian soldiers. The influence of British military custom in uniform prewar training institutions prohibited political discussion, a “cardinal rule” for Indian and Britons alike in the Indian Army. This did not mean that soldiers did not sympathize with Congress or see Indianisation as a limited measure use by colonial authorities as a means to control the Indian Army.\textsuperscript{223} The Japanese sponsored Indian National Army exposed how tenuous ties of martial class and apolitical professionalism could be. Drawing from surrendered Indian soldiers, Indian communities in South East Asia and militant nationalist exiles, it was a force that included representation by both nationalist middle class Indians as well as soldiers of martial race origin.

Small and ineffectual by military standards, the Indian National Army was a potent political symbol. It was championed by its political leader Subhas Chandra Bose as a first “truly national army” since the consolidation of British power in India.\textsuperscript{224} Its core of five infantry battalions were conceived to be “egalitarian and caste free,” emphasizing equality among officers and soldiers of all backgrounds and common living arrangements on the same principles.\textsuperscript{225} These precepts, and the INA leadership’s reluctance to identity with Japanese imperialism, contributed to its popularity among

\textsuperscript{223} Marston, \textit{Phoenix from the Ashes}, 26.
\textsuperscript{224} Sopana Gave, \textit{Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose: His Life and Work} (Bombay: Azad Bhandar, 1946), 323.
\textsuperscript{225} Byron Farwell, \textit{Armies of the Raj: From the Mutiny to Independence} (New York: W.W. Norton, 1989), 332-333.
Indian nationalists. Despite this, British and imperial influence was difficult to break, even within a nationalist organization. Specialist intelligence and saboteur units were organized and trained based on class and caste divisions, as were groups of soldiers within the INA whose loyalties were doubted.\textsuperscript{226} In the case of Gurkhas, Japanese agents appealed to the appearance of a common Mongolian heritage but were successful only in recruiting from the ‘lineboys’, the Indian born descendants of Nepalis posted to Indian garrisons.\textsuperscript{227} Even with nationalist sympathies and a program of political indoctrination, Japanese and INA officers and agents found that convincing POWs to break their oaths made upon enlistment into the Indian Army was the most difficult task.\textsuperscript{228}

Sympathetic studies of the INA in relation to the Indian Army credit the INA as “the flaming torch for hastening the end of alien rule in India.”\textsuperscript{229} These appreciations of the force generally cite the postwar trials as a catalyst for this feeling and rightly so given its galvanizing effects on Indian nationalism. Of the roughly 65,000 Indian prisoners taken by the Japanese during the course of the war some 20,000 joined the INA. These were drawn largely from the 40,000 Indian soldiers who surrendered during the early Malaya campaign. That of the later hundreds of thousands who served in Burma a very small proportion joined the INA is indicative of the relatively short lived effectiveness of the Japanese and Indian nationalist alliance as well as the changing nature of the Indian Army and its experiences in Burma. White and Indian Indian Army officers, especially

\textsuperscript{226} Joyce Lebra, \textit{The Indian National Army and Japan} (Singapore: Institute of South East Asian Studies, 1971), 71-72.
\textsuperscript{228} Farwell, \textit{Armies of the Raj}, 332.
those who were of senior positions, viewed the Indians serving with the Japanese as traitors, an opinion shared by British and other Commonwealth officers.\textsuperscript{230} In the post-war debate over the INA, it was a point of hostility on the part of British and Indian officers that the INA had suffered much lower casualty rates fighting in Burma than those suffered by Indian and British prisoners who had been retained by Japan during the war.\textsuperscript{231}

\textbf{The Recovery of the Imperial Indian Army: Reform and Expansion}

It was of critical importance to the expansion of the Indian Army that Archibald Wavell and Claude Auchinleck, the senior British commanders in India during the war, recognized that there was much confusion as to the motivations of the INA volunteers and that the old martial communities could no longer be counted as “conservative” elements within the Indian political community. They also recognized that the primary threat posed by the INA was one of political instability and subterfuge within India. Rather than a domestic insurrection motivated by the INA, it was the threat of the Japanese army, by the end of 1943 on the border of India itself, that constituted the most serious threat to the overthrow of the British Raj.\textsuperscript{232} The kind of war being fought in Burma after the disasters of 1941 and 1942 left few opportunities for either Japanese or Indians to take and indoctrinate prisoners. Auchinleck’s own correspondence revealed his

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{230} Wilkinson, \textit{Army and Nation}, 80.
\bibitem{232} Gajendra Singh, “Breaking the Chains With Which We are Bound:’ The Interrogation Chamber, the Indian National Army and the Negation of Military Identities,” in \textit{The Indian Army in the Two World Wars.}, ed. Kaushik Roy (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 498.
\end{thebibliography}
opinion that British or Indian troops were “fighting an enemy they knew nothing about.”

Japanese treatment of prisoners varied considerably on the Burma front, especially in regards to Indians, but it remained “unthinkable” for Commonwealth soldiers to fall into enemy hands due to the reputation for brutality earned by the Japanese. Soldiers taken prisoner after the 1941 and 1942 campaigns took great pains to escape, even if treated well during the time of their initial capture.

The stories of Japanese maltreatment of Indians who confirmed their oaths to the Indian Army, at the most extreme found in a “program of cannibalization” by Japanese officers on the Burma front and in forced labor camps, was equaled by the brutality of the fighting itself. After an agonizing retreat through Malaya and Burma in which the majority of their white officers were killed, Nepali VCOs and soldiers of the 1/3rd Gurkha Rifles swore that until the war was won they would take no prisoners. This was a common sentiment shared by other commonwealth troops. The division of Burma itself into armed camps supporting either the British or Japanese encouraged retaliation on civilians in the midst of the campaign. The split between the Burmese and Indian nationalists of the “Jifs” – the Japanese Indian Forces, the Indian Army term for the INA - and the tribal peoples of upper Burma and Assam, notably the Nagas, supporting the

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Indian Army, proved to be a protracted guerilla and sectarian conflict that the Indian Army could not extricate itself from.\footnote{Shelby Tucker, \textit{Burma: The Curse of Independence} (London: Pluto Press, 2001), 49.}

The intense violence of the conflict was in some measure a means of judging the success of the reformed Indian Army being built on the Burmo-Indian frontier. The restoration of the morale of the Indian Army rested on inflicting a battlefield defeat on the Japanese, who the growing numbers of Indian soldiers on the Burma front viewed as the greatest threat to Indian independence, given the growing sense that self-government would be assured in the event of a British victory. The political systems set up by the Japanese in conquered territories left little room for nationalism independent of Japanese imperial policy. “Wake up young men of India,” wrote a newly minted Indian officer. “Sacrifice everything for your country and save your country from the hands of the Japanese.”\footnote{Marston, \textit{Indian Army And the End of the Raj}, 111.} The demand for commissioned officers for the greatly expanded army was largely filled by British officers, but the greatest proportional increase came from the expansion of positions opened for Indians. 1,000 Indians had been commissioned by 1939; by 1945 that number had risen to 16,000. With the Indian Army officer corps rising from about 5,000 to more than 50,000 this did not represent a true nationalization or Indianization of the army,\footnote{Wilkinson, \textit{Army and Nation}, 66.} but with large numbers of Indian Army officers being seconded temporarily from the British Army itself, nearly half of the Indian Army’s
commissioned officers were Indian, albeit holding temporary wartime commissions themselves.\footnote{Scott Gilmore, \textit{A Connecticut Yankee in the 8th Gurkha Rifles: A Burma Memoir} (London: Brassey's, 1995), 50.}

The reformation and Indianization of the Indian Army in South East Asia rested largely on the roles played by Archibald Wavell and Claude Auchinleck. Both had served at one time as the senior British officer in Eastern Mediterranean, and had alternated between Middle East Command and India Command. Both had experienced battlefield success in the Middle East and had suffered defeats in North Africa at the hands of the Afrika Corps, diminishing their role as active participants in the active campaigns of the war. With the departure of Lord Linlithgow, Wavell was made Viceroy of India and Auchinleck was placed once again placed in command of all forces in India, including Burma. Though Wavell, an officer of the British Army, and Auchinleck, an Indian Army officer, differed in their appreciation of the effects of Indianization, they were resistant to influence from London. Both officers were bellicose to the interference of Churchill and staunch supporters of allowing the Indian Army and its field officers a measure of operational freedom seldom enjoyed by imperial officers.

William Slim, commander of the largely Indian Fourteenth Army, wrote after the war, “It was a good day for us when Auchinleck took command of India, our main base, recruiting area and training ground. The Fourteenth Army, from its birth to its final victory, owed much to his unselfish support and never-failing understanding. Without him and what he and the Army of India did for us we could not have existed, let alone...
conquered.” Auchinleck has become famed in the historiography of Indian nationalism and the Indian Army for stating “any Indian officer worth his salt is a Nationalist,” part of a commentary on the relationship between the Indian Army and the INA that placed blame on British troubles in India on interference from London, systematic racial discrimination and the segregation of Indians from their British counterparts. Representative of the apolitical Indian Army officer, Auchinleck made his priority the reformation of the Indian Army in such a manner that it could both defeat the Japanese and act as a stable force in the postwar world, whatever government was set up in India, as long as the nationalist sentiments of his men did not interfere with their ability to act impartially and with loyalty first to the men of the army. As Viceroy, Archibald Wavell was necessarily more concerned with politics, and balancing imperial policy dictated from London with the realities of nationalism on the ground. The wartime coalition government was hostile to any negotiations with Indian nationalists, against which Wavell resisted as far as his political power independent from London would allow. Though he disagreed with Auchinleck as to the extent that politicization of Indian soldiers was a threat to British rule and was more concerned the Indian government’s political policy, he was determined to advance the policy of “indianisation first, argue about the constitution later.”

The Recovery of the Imperial Indian Army: The Burma Campaign

The course of the Burma campaign after 1942 confirmed that the larger Indian Army, with higher proportions of Indian officers and non-martial personnel, could resist the kinds of defeats that had been inflicted upon it over the previous year. The widely condemned British Arakan offensive of late 1942 and early 1943 highlighted that deficiencies in equipment, senior leadership, military organization and jungle training still plagued the force, but for Indian and British soldiers fighting in the campaign, the aura of Japanese invincibility had been broken. The reorganization of the command structure of the entire region was coupled with the arrival of Auchinleck and Wavell, and the creation of a new South East Asia Command under Louis Mountbatten. The focus in 1943 on fixing the problems of “malaria, monsoon and morale,” and the application of new tactics locally against the Japanese further built the confidence of the military.\textsuperscript{244} C.A. Bayly has described this force as a “curious hybrid,” resulting from the synthesis of modernization and reform of the army with the “old concepts of race and izzat.”\textsuperscript{245} Standardization of equipment and divisional organization was made to reflect the reality of war in the jungle, with a focus on air support, light equipment and a reduction on the dependence of the army on roads and motor transport.\textsuperscript{246}

The effects of these changes were evident in the Japanese invasion of India made in the Spring of 1944. The newly formed British Fourteenth Army, under the command of the Indian Army officer William Slim, bore the brunt of the near three-month long attack aimed at driving through the frontier and opening up the North Indian plain to the

\textsuperscript{244} Bayly, \textit{Forgotten Armies}, 273-275.
\textsuperscript{245} Ibid., 367.
Japanese. Supported by a preliminary Japanese offensive made in February, and by the actions of the Indian National Army, the Japanese offensive was defeated in a series of major engagements in Burma and along the Indian frontier. The battle, considered one of the most important of the entire war, saw a war of attrition transform into the decisive battle that Slim had hoped for. Half of the 100,000 Japanese committed to the invasion of India became casualties, and it ended the role of the Indian National Army as an effectually force in the field. The INA, which had relied so much on the dissatisfaction of the Indian soldiers and their officers, became the target of Indian “hatred.” Unlike deserters who attempted to cross the lines and turn themselves over to British soldiers, INA soldiers encountered on the battlefield were, like the Japanese, routinely executed.

By 1945 Slim and the Fourteenth Army, now the “largest single army in the world,” with around a million men in the field, had gone over to the offensive. Though Slim considered it a field army of India, rather than of the British Army, it constituted men from Britain, East and West Africa, Australia and the United States. The vast majority were Indians, in part because of the increasing difficulty of finding replacements for the British and Gurkha battalions traditionally prized by Indian Army officers. The defeat of the Japanese invasion of India at Imphal/Kohima – a pair of siege battles in which surrounded Indian forces wore out the Japanese attack, have been regarded by Britain’s National Army Museum as the greatest battle ever fought by the British Army. It is an historical irony that these sieges were fought using largely Indian troops and Indian Army officers, white and Indian, and led by Slim, himself an Indian Army officer. Gardiner Harris, “A Largely Indian Victory in World War II, Largely Forgotten in India,” The New York Times, June 21, 2014, New York Edition, A5.

247 The defeat of the Japanese invasion of India at Imphal/Kohima – a pair of siege battles in which surrounded Indian forces wore out the Japanese attack, have been regarded by Britain’s National Army Museum as the greatest battle ever fought by the British Army. It is an historical irony that these sieges were fought using largely Indian troops and Indian Army officers, white and Indian, and led by Slim, himself an Indian Army officer. Gardiner Harris, “A Largely Indian Victory in World War II, Largely Forgotten in India,” The New York Times, June 21, 2014, New York Edition, A5.
249 Bayly, Forgotten Armies, 379.
emphasis throughout the entire campaign, and credited with the eventual British victory, was the small unit actions of sections, platoons and companies. For Indian units, these increasingly meant Indian officers, both VCO’s and KCIOS, in formal command roles.\textsuperscript{252} Command by Indians of battalions, and eventually of brigades, the largest prewar formation of the Indian Army, became a reality, albeit on a limited basis, during the war. The “All-Indian” 51\textsuperscript{st} Infantry Brigade, known as such because it did not have a supporting British or Gurkha battalion, had at one point Indian officers at all senior levels, including brigade command under Kodendera Thimayaa.\textsuperscript{253} Increasingly, Indian officers held senior positions as staff officers and commanders, and commanded European troops as well as Indian.

\textbf{Evaluating Reform and Imperial Influence in the Indian Army in the Second World War}

Post-independence Indian historians have credited this period as one where the officers of the Indian Army, British and Indian alike, “welded the Indian soldiery into one of the most awesome forces in history.”\textsuperscript{254} The battlefield success highlighted by the Indian Army’s leading role in the Burmese theatre was accompanied by its subsidiary role in the Mediterranean. In North Africa, Indian units suffered similar reversals, albeit locally, as their counterparts in Malaya, Burma and Hong Kong. Those units that were not transferred either to the Middle East or to the Burma Front, primarily based around

\begin{itemize}
  \item Jeffreys, \textit{British Army in the Far East}, 22.
  \item Singh, \textit{Leadership in the Indian Army}, 129.
  \item Singh, \textit{Tradition Never Dies}, 124.
\end{itemize}
the 4th and 10th Indian Divisions that were formed from pre-war units, gained an enviable reputation after going through a similar process of reform and modernization. After 1942 these divisions participated in the advance across North Africa and in the slow drive north through Italy, and in the suppression of Greek communists in the later stage of the war. All of these events further contributed to the building of an esprit de corps among junior Indian leadership and in the Indian Army more generally. While the end of the First World War saw a reorientation of the army towards fighting colonial and frontier wars, the end of the Second World War saw the development of an army that could fight modern and mechanized campaigns. The changes in the Indian Army between 1939 and 1945 in modernizing its tactics and equipment, in opening new positions for Indian officers and to men of non-martial class origin, and in reorganizing the organization of the forces in the field to are given credit to this rise in morale and professionalism, and to its battlefield success.255

The effects on this reorganization, or its endurance in the immediate period after the war, should not be exaggerated. Popular and academic histories of Indian independence, the Indian Army or the Second World War, both in India and the West, have suggested that the demands made on the Indian Army necessitated the lifting of all restrictions on the old martial race policy.256 Indeed, issues of reinforcement and maintenance, and the growth of other specialist arms, led to the disbanding of some of the

255 Marston, The Indian Army and the End of the Raj, 113.
newly raised martial race infantry battalions. The raising or expansion of “new class” battalions or regiments too lowered the over proportion of the post 1857 martial class soldiers in the military. The Punjab and the North West Frontier’s contribution to the army in 1939 was more than 50%; by the end of the war, it had fallen to around 25%.

This dramatic decline hides the real nature of the reforms instituted. Firstly, of the more than 2,600,000 men and women enrolled into the army, roughly 600,000 of them were noncombatants. Bengali Muslims and Hindus of any class or caste, and non-martial Hindus more generally, were pushed into supporting roles in the army, in supply, signals and administration, or in the civilian corps that aided the military. Though the sons of educated middle class professionals could enter into the new officer positions, there was a “division of people into hewers of wood and drawers of water,” an imperial influence on the policies of nationalization and Indianization kept officially secret by military leaders. The great expansion in recruitment from South India, in which the contribution to the army rose from 4,000 to nearly half a million, pushed many of these new class recruits into these supporting roles. The size of new combat regiments raised from Madras, the Carnatic and from low or untouchable classes still were dwarfed by the

257 Bose, The Magic of Indian Cricket: Cricket and Society in India, 25.
258 Marston, Phoenix from the Ashes, 240.
259 See C. Christine Fair, Fighting to the End: The Pakistan Army’s Way of War (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 62 and Wilkinson, Army and Nation, 71. The postwar study by Bisheshwar Prasad of the Indian Army’s expansion gives a total number of recruits as 2,665,314 soldiers and noncombatants, a force that was larger given that tribal irregulars recruited from Burma and Assam into the army could not be accurately counted. Christine Fair gives a number of 2,047,430 – likely the number of soldiers actually enrolled into the Indian Army, excluding the hundreds of thousands of civilian laborers, contractors and officials who served in the army in some sort of support role.
260 See above.
261 Singh, Tradition Never Dies, 120.
262 Wilkinson, Army and Nation, 74.
wartime expansion of the older regiments drawing from the martial classes that dominated the army since 1857.

In any case the ‘new classes’ selected for expansion were specifically chosen because these communities had a preexisting legacy within the Indian Army.263 “It takes more than a quarter of a century to cool the hot blood of a martial race,” wrote a British civil servant in 1906. “It has taken considerably more than a century to convert into peaceful husbandmen the once martial races of Bengal and Madras who under Clive helped us to found our Empire in the East.”264 The combat strength of the army that was not formed from the northern recruiting grounds drew in large part from those areas that had once been critical to the manpower reserves of the Indian Army, a fact not lost on British administrators in those regions that had been ignored by the military since the end of the 19th century. “Madrasis were as good, if not better, than anybody,” remarked John Hope, the wartime governor of Madras. “And they have fought, are fighting and would fight again, as well as any other people in India, or indeed in the whole world.”265 In this manner, the Indian Army, though it had changed, reflected many of the same long standing British principles and policies that had influenced it for more than two centuries. Indian Army officers, Indians and Europeans, were able to reach into the imperial past to keep perceived traditions and customs intact, while manipulating civilian policies that they publicly gave support to.

263 Ibid., 70-75. Wilkinson draws heavily on demographic data from the post-war official studies conducted by Bisheshwar Prasad for the Indian Army.
The postwar study made by the Indian military on the effects of expansion highlight this. Of the nearly three million men considered fit for military service in Madras, some 16 percent were enrolled; amongst most Muslim, Sikh and Hindu communities in the Punjab this number rose to 30 to 40 percent, and among mountain communities of the Himalayan and Afghan frontier, between 40 and 60 percent. Mazhabi Sikhs, recruited as pioneers and converted to infantry during the war, had a contribution rate of more than 100%, reflecting the enlistment of more soldiers from their community than there were available men of military age. This was represented by the experience of British military stores and recreational facilities in combat areas or overseas theatres, which saw an ever increasing demand for on the part of Indians for everything from beard oils and combs for martial class soldiers, to tobacco of all sorts for the combat forces, and a growing disdain for Bengali items considered by British military stores to be representative of Indian general needs. “Don’t let any more Bengallee gramophone records come out,” said an Indian soldier, “But heaps and heaps more of the martial languages.”\(^{266}\) By contrast, less than less than 10 percent of Bengali Muslims considered fit for duty were recruited, and just 4 percent of Bengali Hindus. South Indian untouchables or tribal peoples without a preexisting military affiliation of some sort with the old presidential regions of Bombay or Madras, were hardly represented at all.\(^{267}\)


\(^{267}\) Wilkinson, *Army and Nation*, 70.
This trend towards placing new groups of soldiers into service and support roles was extended to officers. Though the situation of Indian officers holding senior combat positions in battalions and brigades improved as the war came to a close, most senior Indian officers held positions outside of the combat arms. Medical, supply and staff jobs contained the great number of the most senior ranked Indian officers during the war.\textsuperscript{268} Within the field army itself there was little of the discrimination or hostility between Indians and Britons that had characterized the initial entry of Indians into commissioned roles in the 1930s.\textsuperscript{269} Yet it remained that there were comparatively few Indian officers who had gained experience during the war formally commanding the modernized battalions, squadrons and brigades that were the fundamental building blocks of the British and Indian divisions that had been instrumental in winning the Second World War and imparting a new spirit of success on the Indian Army.

**Planning for a Post-Colonial Army**

While this experience and spirit was being developed on the battlefields of Italy and Burma, the realization in 1944 that the war would eventually end in Allied victory began the planning for the post-war Army. The decision made by Wavell to appoint a committee headed by General Henry Willcox at the end of 1944 to determine the future of the Indian Army reflected the necessity of having to confront the reality of independence and further Indianization after the war ended, though when this would happen was unknown. Joined by Leo Amery, the Secretary of State for India and Burma,

\textsuperscript{268} Sharma, *Nationalization and the Indian Army*, 180.
\textsuperscript{269} Marston, *Indian Army and the End of the Raj*, 96.
Wavell and Auchinleck throughout the end of 1944 and into 1945 worked to plan the postwar future of the military. The failure of the Cripps’ mission of 1942 had bought time for British administrators by the crackdown on the Indian National Congress that followed but it had introduced the possibility for a divided Indian Army emerging during the war years. Calls made by nationalists for a new national army to defend India had been a critical reason that Whitehall refused to negotiate with Indian nationalists, a fear appeared to be justified by the appearance of the INA.\textsuperscript{270} This forced the Willcox Committee to confront the possibility that the Indian Army might have to be divided after the war, in the event that the Muslim League would form a separatist state in the event of Indian independence. The recognition by Amery, Wavell and Auchinleck that Indianisation as it had existed in the 1930s or in the first years of the war had not produced Indian officers with the requisite training or experience to lead higher commands than the battalion or brigade led to the increase of Indian officers being trained at the Quetta staff college for this purpose. Numbers of Indian attendees and instructors at the school rose steadily, but the first postwar course, that of the year 1947, had fewer than half of its 200 officers as Indians.\textsuperscript{271}

Despite the high positions that imperial Indian Army officers had risen during the Second World War, the influence of Britain and the British Army over Indian military affairs was indicative in the creation of the committees designed to steer the post-war Indian Army’s activities. The selection of Henry Willcox, a British Army, rather than

\textsuperscript{271} Marston, \textit{Indian Army and the End of the Raj}, 95.
Indian Army officer, raised questions from Labour MPs as to the nature of the reforms being undertaken in India. “There is considerable resentment in the Indian Army,” spoke Woodrow Wyatt, “because nearly all the high appointments in India have been given to British Service officers and not to officers in the Indian Army, either British officers in the Indian Army or even Indian officers in the Indian Army.” Of the three Indian Army officers included on the Willcox Committee, only one was an Indian.²⁷² Kodendera Cariappa, who had been among the first Indians to receive a non-ceremonial position when Indianization began in the First World War, was selected to participate on the committee. A lieutenant colonel with a wartime rank of brigadier, he was the first Indian to be made a general in the Indian Army, and had spent the war years serving in senior staff positions in the army. Additionally, he had attended staff schools in India and in Britain, and like other long serving Indian officers who had devoted their lives to the British Indian Army, was suspicious of the changes being suggested by both British policymakers and Indian nationalists.²⁷³

Concerns over losing control of the fate of the post-war Army was shared by British leaders as well, who having accepted the inevitability of independence, desired to see a balance struck between Indianization and nationalization and the collapse of the morale and efficiency restored to the Indian Army after 1944. In a speech to the House of Lords urging the release of remaining Indian National Congress members from prison, William Hare, the Under Secretary of State for India, spoke of the difficulty of creating a

national Indian Army in the postwar era. “The transfer of full responsibility for the
defence of India from the British to the Indian side depends primarily on the progressive
Indianization of the Armed Services, and this is a process that cannot be hastened beyond
a certain speed without a disastrous loss of military efficiency. We shall therefore
continue to require European officers for the Indian Services for a number of years. But
need this prevent us from saying at the earliest possible moment that the Indian Army
cannot continue, after the war, to offer a lifelong career for young Englishmen?” 274 The
recommendation made in 1945 by Willcox and the Army Reorganization Committee was
that the Indian Army should be reduced to 280,000. 275 This reduction relied on the
preliminary retention of just 450 of the 12,000 Indian officers given emergency
commissions during the war. 276 Even with a greater number of regularly commissioned
Indian officers in the army, and a more equal proportion of Indian to British officers for
the first time in its history, many thousands of British officers would have to be
retained. 277 Auchinleck held Cariappa in high regard, and gave him great weight in
representing Indian interests on the reorganization committee, but he too agreed. If the
army was to be able to fight another major war soon after independence suggested
Cariappa, half of India’s officers would necessarily be British, for a period of at least
twenty years. 278

Committee 612-638.
275 Vijay Oberai, “Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow: Trends in the Indian Army’s Force Structure
and Doctrine” in Emerging India: Security and Foreign Policy Perspectives, ed. C. Uday Bhaskar
and N.S. Sisodia (New Delhi: Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, 2005), 98.
276 Sharma, Nationalization of the Indian Army, 180 and Oberai, “Yesterday, Today and
Tomorrow,” 97.
277 Wilkinson, Army and Nation, 66.
278 Gupta, Power, Politics and the People, 246.
Nationalist Conceptions of the Army: The Legacy of the Indian National Army

This anticipated British presence, and the influence of imperial customs and traditions, especially the isolation of the military from politics, raised serious concerns for Indian nationalists expecting to take complete control of the military in the aftermath of independence. Attitudes were tempered somewhat by the Indian Army’s performance in the war, but as an “imperialist tool,” the Army was widely regarded with suspicion by the nationalists who were entering into positions of political leadership. Gandhi’s own view of the role of the Indian Army since the end of the First World War had equivocated between non-participation as part of the program of nonviolence to a belief that violence against it as an arm of the imperial government might be an inevitable part of independence, even if he was not prepared to use violence himself. When looking towards the security needs of the independent state, Gandhi saw the Indian Army as a modern, aggressive and “mercenary” force that had little place in a country that would only need to look after its own defenses, and “never be sent to cut down inoffensive Turks or Arabs in the west, or equally inoffensive Chinese or Burmese in the east.” In a meeting between Gandhi and Wavell in 1945, Gandhi expressed his concern over what he perceived as repression of politics in the Indian Army, with Indian soldiers having to sneak “like Nicodemus” to see him. Wavell responded that any army should remain outside of politics, hinting that he was not only referring to the Indian Army as it stood.

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under the British Empire but as it would when Indian independence arrived, to which Gandhi agreed.\textsuperscript{283}

The 1928 constitutional debates among nationalists had already included the admittance by Nehru that the British Indian Army had already proven an effective stabilizing force. The army was neither representative nor independent, but a separate force in the event of independence was not needed, given the perceived benefits that it had imparted on the imperial state, attributes that could be harnessed by a national government.\textsuperscript{284} Nehru, like Gandhi, found that British control over it as an institution of the Indian government, and its use as a force to protect imperial interests and power, was a problem Indian nationalists would have to confront. “India must feel that she is taking part in her own defence and in preserving her own freedom as well as helping in the struggle for freedom elsewhere,” wrote Nehru at the opening of the Second World War. “The army will have to be considered a national army and not a mercenary force owing allegiance to someone else. It is on this national basis that recruitment should take place, so that our soldiers should not merely be cannon-fodder, but fighters for their country and for freedom.”\textsuperscript{285} The recruiting expansion and reform of the Indian Army had made it at least symbolically a nationalized army, with the goal of protecting India from Japanese invasion, and made to feel a part of a multinational effort against fascism. When the


\textsuperscript{285} Jawaharlal Nehru, \textit{China, Spain and the War: Essays and Writings} (Allahabad: Kitabistan, 1940), 71.
mercenary label was placed on the Indian Army after 1944 by Indian, Indian soldiers resisted by emphasizing that they had been defending India by their service in the war.\textsuperscript{286}

The future of the Indian Army was complicated by the sudden end of the war in August 1945 and the surrender of the remaining soldiers of the Indian National Army. The organization of a defense committee for INA prisoners on the part of the Indian National Congress linked the cause of independence to that of the captured soldiers. Auchinleck opposed the trials on the grounds that it would give nationalists the platform they desired to link the fate of the Indian Army to independence, but he was overridden by officials in both Britain and India. British Army and civilian authorities cited the necessity of the imperial state having to reinforce a particular form of national identity and impose discipline on the army. The reactions of Indian Army soldiers who had served in the war bore this division out, with a marked difference in perception of the trials. Long-service career soldiers were quick to report that the sense of betrayal felt by British and Indian veterans was not universally shared by the soldiers who had enlisted during the great expansion of the war, many of whom had not had the embittering experience of fighting the INA and the Japanese in Burma.\textsuperscript{287}

Indian and British officers, whatever their sympathies, were shocked that Congress had come to the defense of the prisoners at all. The ideological and symbolic links that Subhas Chandra Bose had tried established between the INA and the INC – the

\textsuperscript{286} Marston, \textit{The Indian Army and the End of the Raj}, 111.

Nehru Brigade had been destroyed by the 5th Mahratta Light Infantry at Imphal\textsuperscript{288} – had not been reciprocated by Nehru and Congress during the war. Nehru’s claim from prison that he would go to the front to fight Bose and the INA should the Japanese invade India\textsuperscript{289} became a point of contention with Indian officers who viewed Nehru’s public defense of the INA as a betrayal of the army and an opportunistic gamble devised at polarizing the army.\textsuperscript{290} This sense of betrayal went both ways. Indian civilians, electrified by the trials and the growing reputation of Bose as an enigmatic and idealistic leader, a mythology encouraged by Gandhi after his release from prison, were horrified when Indian troops dynamited the monument erected in Singapore to the INA, a site that had become the central memorial shrine for Bose after his presumed death.\textsuperscript{291}

The events surrounding the detention and trial of INA prisoners in Delhi between the summer of 1945 and May 1946, when Auchinleck ended the trials, highlighted the isolated position of the Indian Army as the war ended. As a major political event the trials were becoming a “Pandora’s Box”\textsuperscript{292} for imperial administrators, the “slippery slope” that Auchinleck had warned of when the trials began.\textsuperscript{293} Nehru and the Indian National Congress distanced themselves from the increasing violence that accompanied demonstrations of the trials. Nehru’s own private meetings and correspondence with Auchinleck indicate that Nehru was aware that he had made the trials a divisive political

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\item \textsuperscript{288}Francis Tuker, \textit{While Memory Serves} (London: Cassell, 1950), 560.
\item \textsuperscript{289}Leonard Gordon, \textit{Brothers Against the Raj: A Biography of Indian Nationalists Sarat and Subhas Chandra Bose} (Chennai: Blatt, 2014), 551.
\item \textsuperscript{290}Marston, \textit{The Indian Army}, 129.
\item \textsuperscript{291}Sugata Bose, \textit{His Majesty’s Opponent: Subhas Chandra Bose and India’s Struggle Against Empire} (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2011), 310-312.
\item \textsuperscript{292}Lawrence James, \textit{Raj: The Making and Unmaking of British India} (New York: St.Martin’s Griffin, 1997), 591.
\item \textsuperscript{293}Gupta, \textit{Power, Politics and the People}, 248.
\end{thebibliography}
issue, trials that so many Indian veterans of Burma viewed as a purely military matter tied
the concepts of loyalty fostered in imperial service. As the soldiers of the Indian Army
were “agents of foreign authority,” Nehru wrote to Auchinleck, congress was risking to
disrupt the stability and morale of the Indian Army on which the Indian Empire rested
until independence from Britain had been secured. The memoirs of Auchinleck’s
secretary, Shahid Amid, highlight the divisive nature of these events. His perception that
Nehru was a hypocrite interested only in furthering the position of Congress, and the
behavior of his political allies within the military, chief among them Lieutenant Colonel
Kaul, stand out, as does a unique loyalty to Auchlineck characteristic of many wartime
Indian officers. 294

**Political Influence on the Army after 1945**

Though confronted with a “curious mélange of apoplectic disapprobation and
adulation” 295 from nationalists and a growing recognition that Wavell and Auchinleck
would prove unable to prevent the army’s military victory turn into a political defeat, 296
the Indian Army largely resisted the communalization and politicization of India in the
period during and after the trials. Daniel Marston’s study of the Indian Army’s
relationship to the trials goes into great detail over the ambiguity of just how deeply the
trials affected morale, discipline and politicization, but the legacy of fighting and winning
the Second World War repeatedly stands as a more prominent fixture in the minds of the

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294 Shahid Amid, *Disasterous Twilight: A Personal Account of the Partition of India* (Barnsley: Leo
Cooper, 1993), 60.
Indian soldiers embroiled in the crisis.\textsuperscript{297} The failure to bring the Indian Army into supporting the trials was accompanied by the increasing number of attacks made on Indian Army patrols at the height of the trials in 1945, declining after the provincial elections of 1946.\textsuperscript{298} Auchinleck’s open letter to the Indian Army issued on March 28, 1946 emphasized that the imperial principles that had made the army such an effective force, both during the World Wars and the colonial campaigns of Britain, had allowed it to endure the crisis of the INA trials. “The Army is the anchor of the country and its great duty is to remain disciplined, efficient and loyal to whatever government may be in power.”\textsuperscript{299}

The extent to which members of the Indian Army sympathized with the INA prisoners and the protests and military mutinies that accompanied the trials, are difficult to measure given the divisions of opinion in both Indian and British Indian Army. Important to evidence that the army was still an imperial force, there was neither the actualization of a military revolt against British rule or widespread collusion between the army and Indian nationalists to remove British power. The possibility of either event occurring was a serious influence on British policy that it limited British actions in India after 1945. Yet the core of the imperial Indian Army, its combat arms regiments, acted in a manner that reflected the culture, training and ethos imparted at the level of the regiment, sharpened by the experience of the Second World War. The suppression of mutinies in the Indian Air Force, in the support and service branches of the army, and in

\textsuperscript{297} Ibid., 139.
\textsuperscript{298} Byron Farwell, \textit{The Gurkhas} (New York: W.W. Norton, 1984), 240.
\textsuperscript{299} Ibid., 146.
the Indian Navy – in Bombay Indian soldiers put down the naval revolt by force – were carried out with the professionalism and efficiency championed by Auchinleck and other imperial military leaders, with no hint of the kind of alliance between serving soldiers and nationalists against the British, a description of the trial and the surrounding events that was, and has since, forwarded by nationalist writers.\textsuperscript{300}

Indian Army officers after 1945 showed an adeptness at limiting the political effects of these events on the Army, notwithstanding inclinations towards sympathizing with either the British, the Muslim League or the Indian National Congress. British attempts in 1946 to encourage Indian Army officers to formally impart a spirit of unbiased apoliticism in the ranks was rejected by Indian officers for its having the effect of bringing up the taboo subject of politics as an issue at all. With a growing sense of political consciousness evident on the part of Indian soldiers, officers understood that discussing the matter of politics encouraged a debate on the fate of the Indian Empire and of the Indian Army, where, despite these sympathies, there was little evidence that the political sympathies of soldiers was inhibiting them from carrying out the policy of the imperial government.\textsuperscript{301} This was further confirmed by the behavior of veteran Viceroy’s officers, who unlike their commissioned Indian and British superiors, staunchly refused to participate in officers’ discussions over the potential problem of politics, and the investigations being made into the sympathies of Indian soldiers towards the INA or Congress. Reports made to Auchinleck suggested that the perceived goals of officers and


\textsuperscript{301} Marston, \textit{Indian Army and the End of the Raj}, 148.
men within the Indian Army had shifted from supporting the policy of the imperial government to maintaining a spirit of neutrality within the army, in order to keep the army as an institution intact after independence. Apolitical behavior on the part of Indian Army officers could have the effect of limiting the authority of the government, while maintaining loyalty to the ethos of the army. Indian officers understood that the British government, as much as Congress, had used the INA trials for political ends. Feelings either of sympathy or anger directed at the government, the INA or the Congress Party took a secondary role to the belief that INA prisoners had to be punished for turning against the Indian Army itself, an originally internal military matter that had been politicized by British and Indian politicians from which the army now had to stand apart from.\footnote{Ibid., 140-141.}

\textbf{Anticipating Independence: Demobilization and Reform, 1945-1946}

Given the growing political problems that British military leaders were being drawn into, and the knowledge that the government that they served was in a state of transition, Indian officers began a more active role in planning for the eventuality of independence. Brigadier Cariappa, before embarking for Britain to attend the Imperial Defense College, had been a brigade commander on the North West Frontier, where he appealed to directly to community leaders, rather than British superiors, for aid in suppressing communal violence.\footnote{Chandra Khanduri, \textit{Field Marshal K.M. Cariappa: A Biographical Sketch} (New Delhi: Dev Publishers, 2000), 28.} Cariappa had already earned the reputation as a
sounding board for nationalist grievances, given his close relationship with senior European Indian and British Army officers and his status as the most senior Indian in the military. Cariappa’s position advocating the retention of thousands of British officers had been met with public resistance by members of Congress. Sarat Chandra Bose, brother of the deceased leader of the INA, was the most vocal opponent. “Any scheme which would have the effect of converting the British Indian Army into the National Army of India will always have my wholehearted support,” he wrote to Cariappa, but he denounced Indian appeals to retain European officers. Cariappa’s disagreement with nationalists over the retention of British officers did not inhibit him from advocating the continuation of programs of Indianization that would serve to limit British influence in the future. His tour of British, American and Canadian military schools as a member of the Army Reorganization Committee was seen as a prerequisite for creating new Indian institutions when independence came. The national elections of 1945 and the provincial elections of 1946 had confirmed that the Congress would play a major, if not dominant role, in any independent Indian state, whatever the form it took. Senior officers consciously tried to maintain open lines of communications with nationalist leaders, even if they staunchly disagreed with nationalists on the post-war and post-independence character of the Indian Army.

Cariappa’s overseas tour with the Reorganization Committee emphasized that Indian officers were keen to maintain the army as it had emerged from the Second World

War. Even as demobilized veterans in the Punjab began arming themselves, and released INA soldiers were actively sought by numerous political factions in India, 307 Cariappa repeatedly emphasized that the modernization of the Indian Army during the Second World War made it “the greatest school of adult education in the world.” The programs of sanitation, hygiene, literacy and teamwork instituted in India and the Burma front during the period of reform between 1942 and 1944 were championed by Cariappa as a major unifying force in postwar India. 308 This is born out in the experiences of Indian officers serving in the Second World War, who linked the future of a modern and independent state to the ideal of “development” as it had been constituted in the Indian Army’s wartime programs of education, literacy, technical schooling and intense military training geared towards fighting a modern war. 309 This idea was represented in Cariappa’s advocating in the postwar period for an Indian Army as “modern as any other army in the world.” 310 Cariappa’s advocacy of the Indian Army and his emphasis on the new corps of parachute and armored units formed during the war stood in stark contrast with the call Nehru had made for a politically motivated national militia as the basis for Indian defense in the post-war period, 311 but the growing sense that India’s future would be defined by modernization and development made the army as Cariappa advocated it more palatable to nationalists who still perceived solely as an army of British authority.

308 Baikhage, “India’s Army,” 3.
309 Khan, *India at War*, 226.
The reduction and reorganization of the wartime force benefited the needs of British and Indian officials who wished to see the army stay out of the political turmoil of 1945 and 1946. As the INA trials came to a close, the army had been reduced by over a million men. It was anticipated that by 1947 there would be 700,000 thousand men in the army, to be further reduced to 220,000, a smaller force than originally envisioned by the Army Reorganization Committee. The reduction of the army necessitated first the demobilization of many of the wartime raised battalions and the great service apparatus that had been built in India to support the allied armies in Asia, with Indian soldiers being released at a rate of 100,000 men a month. Wartime recruits and “surplus” men, and soldiers who had during the war completed their careers, were prioritized when releasing soldiers back into the civilian populace. Those that remained were subjected to intelligence and medical tests to ensure that the best soldiers were selected, offset by the use of a preferential system of selection by Indian and British commanders who could pick and choose among the officers who volunteered to stay in the peacetime army.

While historians have cited that the Second World War had inexorably altered the army, these factors allowed Indian and British officers to be placed in a position where they had the ability to limit the effect these changes had on the pre-war imperial army.

The return to an army consciously patterned on that which had existed in 1939 contradicted the moves suggested by Auchinleck to encourage the ending of preferential recruiting into the officer corps, but the failure to establish clear directives in retention

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312 Marston, Indian Army and the End of the Raj, 243.
313 Singh, Tradition Never Dies, 124.
314 Special Representative, “Demobilization of Indian Army,” Times of India, September 18, 1945, New Delhi, 1.
encouraged the particular biases of British and Indian officers.\textsuperscript{315} British and Indian officers and Indian VCOs continued to display a preference for selecting as juniors and peers those whom they had served with, a reflection of the traditional role of the Indian Army officer as a “specialist in – and often champions of – a particular class of troops.”\textsuperscript{316} This was also confirmed by the Army Reorganization Committee of 1944 and 1945, who agreed that though martial race policy had to be reformed, it would remain the central organizing force of the core of the Indian Army in the postwar world.\textsuperscript{317}

Those Indian units that were retained after 1945 reflect something of the ingrained nature of British organization of the Indian Army. The 4\textsuperscript{th} Indian Division, serving in Greece until 1945, was formed from prewar brigades, and the first Indian unit to embark overseas. Though it was the first division to be widely Indianized it unlike formations in the Far East retained higher proportions of old martial race battalions and British personnel.\textsuperscript{318} This pattern was repeated in the case of the 2\textsuperscript{nd} Indian Airborne Division. A war raised formation, it had its British, Indian and Gurkha parachute battalions replaced with Indian infantry battalions, 9 out of 11 of which were based in Northern India, with only the Madras Regiment representing the martial class recruiting reforms of the war.\textsuperscript{319} The 268\textsuperscript{th} Infantry Brigade, selected to participate in the occupation of Japan, was entirely reformed to represent veteran martial race battalions. The brigade and its supporting cavalry, artillery and technical troops represented Gurkhas, Marathas, Jats,

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{315} Marston, \textit{Indian Army and the End of the Raj}, 242-243.
\item \textsuperscript{316} Tarkawi, \textit{Globalization and War}, 81.
\item \textsuperscript{317} Wilkinson, \textit{Army and Nation}, 77.
\item \textsuperscript{318} Singh, \textit{Leadership in the Indian Army}, 157. See also Inter-Services Public Relations Directorate, \textit{The Tiger Triumphs: The Story of Three Great Divisions in Italy} (New Delhi: H.M. Stationary Office, 1946), 8 and 131.
\item \textsuperscript{319} Kenneth Conboy, \textit{Elite Forces of India and Pakistan} (Oxford: Osprey, 1992), 6.
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Sikhs, Rajputs and Punjabi Muslims. As its commander, Kodendera Thimayya was handpicked by Auchinleck due to his reputation as a combat brigade commander during the war. British officers in Japan noted enviously that the “wealth of old soldiers” represented by the brigade made it an adept force for peacetime occupation duties, due to the high proportion of soldiers who had not only fought in Africa, Burma and Italy but had participated in the peacetime imperial activities of the Indian Army.\textsuperscript{320}

In India, as was the case in Greece and Japan, the ability to select the most experienced and combat proven soldiers was seen as a tremendous boon. The ability of Indian soldiers to ignore political sympathies in order to suppress political unrest with force, as in the case of the Bombay mutiny, was credited to the professionalism and discipline of the military as it had existed before 1939 with the added experience of having fought as cohesive units in the Second World War. In addition, though officially discouraged in public by the efforts of Cariappa, Wavell and Auchinleck, martial class, caste or race delineations still proved a major factor in maintaining the cohesion of Indian Army regiments, especially when the communal and experiential backgrounds of those whom they had to suppress, as in the case of the Bombay mutiny and its subsequent riots, was very different.\textsuperscript{321}

\textsuperscript{321} Marston, \textit{Indian Army and the End of the Raj}, 143. See also G.M. Hiranandani, \textit{Transition to Triumph: Indian Navy, 1965-1975} (New Delhi, Lancer, 2000), xx. The background of the soldiers and sailors involved are credited with aiding the suppression of the mutiny and riots. The Maratha Light Infantry’s recruiting grounds in Maharashtra had formerly been the same as the Indian Navy at Bombay; by the end of 1945 the Navy was recruiting largely from Bengal and Madras. There was also resentment on the part of Indian soldiers who had served in Burma towards the behavior of Indian sailors who had not been in combat.
In the wake of the INA trials, the question of communalism quickly surpassed that of nationalism and politicization as the primary threat to the continued existence of the army as a disciplined force. The February 1946 riots in Calcutta surrounding the trial of Abdul Rashid took on all the characteristics of a communal conflict. A student demonstration by the Muslim League in support of Rashid, a soldier of the INA who had formerly been a member of the 14th Punjab Regiment, escalated into a riot against Calcutta’s Nepalese constabulary, and then into a prolonged period of street violence between Muslim and Hindu mobs. In turn, this was suppressed by British regulars and the 4th Gurkha Rifles, who retook the districts under the control of the mob, leaving behind streets “empty of all but soldiers, burning vehicles and the dead.”

Military Planning for Partition and Independence, 1945-1947

This early experience was to be repeated throughout the year 1946 and culminate in the period of migration and civil unrest that lasted from roughly August 1946 to the end of 1948. Responsibility for the violence, like partition itself, remains a divisive issue. The rapidity with which Congress demanded independence in midst of the anti-imperial solidarity that appeared in the months surrounding the INA trials, the inability of Wavell, Cripps and the British cabinet mission to reconcile Nehru and Jinnah in the Spring of 1946, the dedication of the Muslim League and Jinnah to a separatist state and the subsequent call for direct action in August, and the decision made by Mountbatten

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322 Farwell, Gurkhas, 240-241.
324 James, Raj, 599-600.
to hasten the proposed date of independence,\textsuperscript{325} are cited as reasons for partition and the accompanying violence. Historians of modern India have argued comprehensively that neither partition or violence was not inevitable,\textsuperscript{326} contrary to popular views in Britain in 1947 that communal violence was either an inevitable response to the divide and rule nature of British imperialism, or evidence of a “universal” hatred between the Hindu and Muslim populations of India.\textsuperscript{327}

The British acceptance of the partition of the Indian Empire or of a future Indian dominion rested in large part on post-war imperial strategy as influenced by senior civil-military advisors within the Indian government itself. Wavell’s secretive call for a study of the implications of a British withdrawal was answered by Penderel Moon and Major J.M. Short in a series of reports in late 1945 and early 1946. They emphasized that whatever Congress or the government in London desired, Pakistan was already a reality in the minds of the Muslim League’s leaders and adherents. That the League had cooperated with Britain in prosecuting the war in Asia, and Congress had not, forwarded the belief that Britain could find a post-independence security partner in Pakistan, a view exacerbated by Congress’ defense of the INA. Lastly, the most important Indian provinces in British post-war defense planning, those of the North-West, would become part of a new Muslim state. Bestriding the sea, air and land routes between the oil fields of the Middle East and Britain’s remaining colonies in East Asia, Pakistan could provide

\textsuperscript{327} Beverley Nichols, \textit{Verdict on India} (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1944), 206-207.
for the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf a barrier between the Soviet Union. “The importance of the Gulf grows greater, not less, as the need for fuel expands, the world contracts and the shadow lengthens from the north,” wrote Olaf Caroe, the last British Governor of the North-West Frontier Provinces. “Its stability can only be assured only by the closest accord between the states which surround this Muslim lake, an accord which is under-written by the great powers whose interests are engaged.” 328 Moon and Penderel made substantial efforts to try to integrate a unitary Punjab into the proposed state of Pakistan. As former soldiers and civil servants with ties to the Sikh community, they advocated a special position within the new state for Sikhs as guardians of Pakistan’s minorities, to act as a shield against the Muslim majority. Rejected by both the Sikh community and by Jinnah himself, it became clear that if there was to be partition, it would be along communal lines and divide the home of the Indian Army in the Punjab itself. 329

Wavell urged London at the end of 1946 to give a firm date for the transfer of power, proposing that it could done, and should be done, as early as March 1948. 330 This date originated from the planning done by Wavell and his staff after the reports given to him by Penderel and Moon in 1945 and planned out in the Winter and Spring of 1946. Wavell’s own appreciation of any planned British withdrawal was that it “must be treated

328 D.N. Panigrahi, India’s Partition: The Story of Imperialism in Retreat (Oxon: Routledge, 2004), 338.
330 S.M. Burke, Mainsprings of Indian and Pakistani Foreign Policies (Minneapolis: University of Milwaukee Press, 1974), 63.
largely as if it were a military plan made in time of war.” The “Breakdown Plan” based on Penderel and Moon’s appraisal, advocated an organized and militarized withdrawal of British civil and military forces into those areas represented by the Muslim League, in order to maintain British influence in Muslim areas, and to keep intact the British military forces in the subcontinent. This would necessarily mean the systematic movement of large numbers of troops and personnel from across the subcontinent into the most restive parts of Northern India, where the military could entrench itself in Muslim regions and put down the worst of the communal violence. It was also envisioned that the military would occupy the major transit hubs of Calcutta and Bombay, to facilitate the evacuation of British personnel. Wavell’s own correspondence to the British Cabinet and to the King-Emperor admitted that this would necessarily leave many minorities unprotected in the vacuum left behind by the British withdrawal and a resultant situation not unlike that which had befallen Ireland during its partition after the First World War, with civil war and ethnic and political unrest outside of the areas of British influence. Wavell’s behavior during the last months of his tenure as Viceroy - he stationed 12,000 police to guard the routes between his office and the golf club he attended - and the character of his proposal reflect a growing sense on the part of the senior civil administrators in India that the political transition had failed and that the preservation of British influence and civil and military resources had become the top priority.
The proposed militarization of the British withdrawal from India struck the Labour government led by Clement Attlee as a “military retreat,” reflective of Wavell’s mindset that India was a military and strategic issue rather than political problem. On the 4th of February, 1947, Wavell received from London the notice that he would be replaced within the month. The dismissal of Wavell and the appointment of Mountbatten was met with hostility in the House of Commons. “Surely,” said Churchill, “the right hon. Gentleman did not wake up one morning, and say, ‘Oh, let us get another Viceroy.’” Amid calls of “scuttle,” and “answer,” Attlee argued that the departure of Wavell emphasized that the responsibility for India, and its security, was now in Indian hands, even if it was still constitutionally bound to the United Kingdom. Wavell’s plan has been cited as a lost opportunity to prevent the worst of the violence, but it abandoned any attempt at a political reconciliation. Attlee’s selection of Mountbatten reflected a desire for political “finesse,” and as he described to the King, an effort to “keep the two Indian parties friendly to us.” It was also a domestic decision, reflecting the increasing unpopularity in Britain itself of maintaining British control in India in the wake of the 1945 elections.

Whether or not Mountbatten had intended to accept the partition of India before his arrival in March 1947 is unclear, but his and his staff’s commitment to a political solution that would end British rule quickly reconciled him to this arrangement, but

336 Burke, Mainsprings of Indian and Pakistani Foreign Policies, 63.
339 Burke, Mainsprings of Indian and Pakistani Foreign Policies, 64.
without the kind of withdrawal that had been proposed by Wavell. Mountbatten, who had described the partition of India as “suicide,” had by May 1947 extended partition as an official policy into “Plan Balkan,” a devolution of central authority to the provinces and states so that they might decide to stay independent rather than join the future dominions of Pakistan and India. Nehru, who had sworn that India would never be a dominion, that Pakistan would never exist and that communal strife would end with the demise of the Indian Empire, was horrified. Envisioning that India would become like the Balkans, or as he described it, “like so many little Ulsters,” Nehru accepted that the future of Indian provinces and states would be accession to either Pakistan or India, Dominions within the British Empire. The agreement by both Congress and the League to this partition on June 2nd, 1947 was followed on June 4th by the sudden announcement by Mountbatten of August 15th of that year as the date when power would formally transition from Britain to the Dominions.

Auchinleck and the End of the British Indian Army

The formal announcement of these agreements on June 3rd at the Durbar Hall by Mountbatten, and in the British Parliament by Attlee, was met with surprise and consternation by Indian and British officers at the Headquarters of the Indian Army. On the evening of June 3rd, Mountbatten met over dinner at the Viceroy’s residence with senior officers of the army, where he informed them of his intent to transfer power in 77

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342 Riddick, *History of British India*, 120.
343 Amid, *Disastrous Twilight*, 176-177.
days, by which time the Indian Army would have to be partitioned. Like those Indian and British officers who learned of partition and the fate of the military by radio the next day, it was met with “surprise” and “bemusement,” to all but the sullen Auchinleck. Auchinleck’s tenure as Commander in Chief had earned him the nearly unanimous support on the part of the men of the Indian Army. “He has grown grey in the service of India for the past 46 years,” wrote his Indian aide in September 1946. “India is his home and the 1st Punjab Regimental Centre at Jhelum is his Mecca. He is more Indian than British.”

Auchinleck had vehemently resisted the suggestions made in the winter of 1946 by British officers to begin the planning of the division of the Army. These included General Francis Tuker, commander of the troops in Calcutta during the February riots, who desired that the army should be broken down on a communal basis by the British in anticipation of partition or civil war. Auchinleck himself did not participate in the secret meetings held in Britain by the British Army and the Cabinet on the fate of the India, sending his adjutant instead. Led by Field Marshall Bernard Law Montgomery, these meetings, ending in March 1947, concluded that the division of the army was likely inevitable. As Auchinleck’s subordinate in North Africa in the Second World War, Montgomery had disdained his practice of living “rough,” close to his soldiers in the field.

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344 Ibid., 178.
345 Khan, Partition, 96.
346 Amid, Disasterous Twilight, 104.
347 Tuker, While Memory Serves, 278.
348 Marston, Indian Army and the End of the Raj, 254-255.
and without the amenities enjoyed by officers in the rear.\textsuperscript{349} Their service together in North Africa had been marked by a division of British loyalties into camps led by Montgomery and Auchinleck.\textsuperscript{350} Now as the newly appointed Chief of the Imperial General Staff in London, Montgomery pleaded with Mountbatten and Attlee to remove Auchinleck. “It seemed to me,” wrote Montgomery, “that Auchinleck was wrapped up entirely in the Indian Army and appeared to be paying little heed to the welfare of British soldiers in India.”\textsuperscript{351}

Auchinleck’s popularity among Indian men and officers made his immediate removal impossible.\textsuperscript{352} In a line of Commanders in Chief that went back to Stringer Lawrence, the 18\textsuperscript{th} century ‘Father of the Indian Army’,\textsuperscript{353} Auchinleck was undoubtedly the most popular amongst Indians. “He was the most open minded British commander in chief,” wrote an Indian officer. “He loved the Indian Army and had full sympathy for the aspirations of Indians to assume control.” In the intervening period between the end of the war and the discussions over partition, Auchinleck had barred newly commissioned British officers from being entered into the army, reserving new spots for Indians alone.\textsuperscript{354} For demobilized soldiers, he advocated employment. To accommodate both the demand for trained technical troops in the aftermath of demobilization, and the great

\textsuperscript{351} Warner, \textit{Auchinleck}, 201.
\textsuperscript{352} Marston, \textit{Indian Army and the End of the Raj}, 263.
number of “boys” who were to be found at the Indian Army’s regimental centers, he pushed a training program to enter them into the military. Indian soldiers compared him favorably to the distant and very British minded Wavell, or the deeply political Mountbatten, leading him to be described as “the embodiment of the Indian Army.”

To his credit, the Indian Army as an imperial institution survived the tumult of the 1946 and 1947. The Indian Army’s central role in restoring order and in aiding in the recovery of bodies after Direct Action Day in August 1946 contributed to its image as one of the few remaining imperial institutions left in India that acted as a unified force outside of communal violence. The Punjab Boundary Force, formed from the core of the old prewar 4th Indian Division that had fought longer than any other formation of the Indian Army, was the last unit of the old undivided army to be stood down. With the responsibility of suppressing communal violence along the Indo-Pakistan frontier, their efforts are credited with the protection of nine million refugees during the summer of 1947. The pattern of police confronting armed mobs, being overwhelmed or communally divided, and the army – chiefly the 4th Indian Division - stepping in to restore order, was repeated from 1946 through to 1947. As one Indian officer wrote the

355 Going back to the 19th century the result of stationing soldiers at permanent regimental centres was the appearance of children, who had followed their fathers into service, were the offspring of married soldiers or were the products of illicit relationships between soldiers and local women. These ‘lineboys’, or simply ‘boys’, were potentially considered, especially in the case of those regiments stationed away from their sources of recruits, like the Gurkhas, unfit by martial race policy to be enrolled in the army.
356 Amid, *Disastrous Twilight*, 40.
Indian Army stood “rock-like in a welter of communal anarchy and carried their tasks in a manner worthy of their highest traditions,” echoed in Marston’s appreciation of the last days of the British Indian Army as a “rock in an angry sea.”

The Army and Communal Violence

Even with the army maintaining high levels of discipline and morale in the two years that passed between August 1945 and August 1947, and its protection of many thousands of refugees, it bears the responsibility in large part for what, and what did not, happen. Firstly, the Indian Army experience of the Second World War, given so much credit for building it into a powerful and modern military force, produced conditions that were ideal for communal violence. Firstly, it trained and equipped more than two million men, all but 400,000 of whom who were released by 1947 back into their communities with a knowledge of arms, instilled by both British training and by the preservation of martial traditions in line with British racial policy. Incentives for soldiers during the war had included the gifting of traditional swords, weapons that featured, along with all manner of homemade and ancient weapons, in the horror of communal violence.

The turning of India into a base for the operations of William Slim’s Fourteenth Army and for the prosecution of the war in South East Asia and Southern China in

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361 Marston, *The Indian Army and the End of the Raj*, 351.
general, had seen the stockpiling of mountains of weapons. Auchinleck’s had warned in 1945 that if demobilized soldiers were armed, unemployed and politicized, that they would form, along with the released members of the INA, the basis for political and communal militias.  

This is confirmed by the use of military equipment by gangs and militia’s against refugees, police and the military, weapons that were provided to these groups by former Indian soldiers. This was coupled by a subsequent economic demobilization of men employed India’s wartime industries as well. As Yasmin Khan’s study of partition notes, the glorification of the INA and the Indian Army of the Second World War, more genuinely Indian military institutions than had existed since 1857, “helped to champion a cult of militarization among young men,” many of whom had served in the military or in wartime industries and were now facing the prospect of economic and social upheaval.

Both Steven Wilkinson and Daniel Marston largely confirm Indian and British military views that the army itself during partition did not participate in the waves of violence, or in much of the political unrest that preceded it. It should be reinforced here that this does not mean that soldiers, in individuals or groups, who were former soldiers or were outside of the control of British and Indian officers, did not partake in the riots or massacres. Armed soldiers aided in bringing food to the mutineers in Bombay, and the testimonies of refugees in 1947 frequently cite uniformed military personnel using

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368 Ibid., 26.
military equipment and vehicles as actively taking part in both random violence and in planned campaigns of ethnic cleansing. Steven Wilkinson’s study of partition violence in relation to the Indian Army indicates that the core of the Indian Army, the old prewar martial race regiments, had a substantial relationship with reducing communal violence. Even his findings, which support the testimonies of British officers, have a difficult time reconciling the actions of regiments that, though they did not participate in the violence, were unwilling to suppress violence and unrest if the perpetrators were of the same religious background as they were. The active participation of the 10\textsuperscript{th} Baluch Regiment, assigned to Pakistan, in ethnic cleansing is briefly mentioned by Wilkinson, but does not highlight the culpability of the army. That the regiment fired into crowds of Hindu refugees at the Sheikpura rail station and participated in other atrocities is a series of stories that has made its way into many Indian histories of the conflict; likewise, both Indian historians and military men have defended their own units or associated ethnic communities.

Perhaps the greatest feature of accounts of the Indian Army’s role in communal violence is the presence of ambiguity, rather than culpability. Marston’s own study of the Punjab Boundary Force defends it from these accusations, and from the accusations made

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370 Wilkinson, \textit{Army and Nation}, 83.

371 Ibid., 84.


in Indian and British newspapers that the army was not being used to end the violence. It is of interest to note that he does cite a confirmation made in a secret British memorandum that the Baloch Regiment had been involved at some level in communal violence.\textsuperscript{375} What Marston emphasizes is the role of the Indian Army as an aide to civil powers, effectively fighting a guerilla war against a variety of armed groups. The Punjab Boundary Force up to the end of August 1947 had 12 men killed and 32 wounded,\textsuperscript{376} as it prosecuted foot and mounted patrols, ambushes and riot control against armed mobs. If there was a hesitation on the part of communal sections of particular regiments and battalions, this did not prevent the force as a whole under British and Indian officers to fight mobs, militias and the communally divided police who had largely ceased to exist. If the role of the Army in the massacres is to be criticized, it should be remembered that just 9,000\textsuperscript{377} of the roughly 400,000 men of the Indian Army were committed to the Punjab, to act as both police and counterinsurgents in a population of nearly 15 million,\textsuperscript{378} where more than 300,000 armed men were in effective fighting a communal civil war against each other and against the military.\textsuperscript{379}

In part, the divisive role of the Army in suppressing communal violence should be placed on the symbol of the army itself, Claude Auchinleck. Auchinleck’s refusal to seriously consider the partition of the army likely blinded him to the realities unfolding on the ground, even if that meant he kept himself and the army distant from both

\textsuperscript{375} Marston, \textit{Indian Army and the End of the Raj}, 328.
\textsuperscript{376} Ibid., 329.
\textsuperscript{377} Ibid., 320.
\textsuperscript{378} Ibid., 312.
\textsuperscript{379} Heathcote, \textit{The Military in British India}, 252.
communalism and politicization. The organization of the Indian Army in the aftermath of the Second World War had emphasized its traditional roles as an imperial reserve for overseas service and frontier defense.\textsuperscript{380} Through all the calls made in 1946 and early 1947, he had continually resisted the partition of the Indian Army. He had begrudgingly told Mountbatten in March and April of 1947 that it would take up to ten years to plan and administer the partition; when he and his staff met with the Viceroy on June 3\textsuperscript{rd}, 1947, they had just 77 days to divide the army.

**The Partition of the Indian Army**

Partition necessarily rested on balancing the Indian Army and the new Pakistan Army and on representing the territorial and communal divisions of the two countries. A new committee, the Army Reconstruction Committee, was appointed on June 27\textsuperscript{th} to oversee the partition.\textsuperscript{381} Besides Auchinleck, Cariappa, returned from his tour of American and Commonwealth military bases, and Thimayyaa, newly returned from Japan, were appointed. In the post-colonial state, Auchinleck would act as Supreme Commander of both Pakistan and Indian forces, under the oversight of a Joint Council of governors and the future defense ministers of the new dominions, with Baldev Singh representing India and Liaquat Ali Khan for Pakistan.\textsuperscript{382} Though he held the title of Supreme Commander, Auchinleck’s position held far less of the power that he had held as commander of the unified Indian Army. After just 10 days, the partition plan, a “rough

\textsuperscript{380} Ibid., 242.
\textsuperscript{381} “Dividing India’s Armed Forces,” *The Times of India*, June 27, 1947, New Delhi, 1.
\textsuperscript{382} “Separation of India’s Armed Forces,” *The Times of India*, July 2, 1947, New Delhi, 1.
and ready division on a communal basis,” was announced. Corresponding with territory and population, India retained about two thirds of the military.\footnote{Division of Indian Armed Forces, The Times of India, July 12, 1947, New Delhi, 1.}

More dramatically, few regiments were comprised of solely Hindu, Sikh or Muslim troops, necessitating the division of the old regiments on which the ties of the army had rested. For India, this had the effect not of destroying martial class policy, but reinforcing it, as individual soldiers, platoons and companies drawn from Hindu and Sikh martial classes arrived from Pakistan and joined regiments increasingly dominated by a single class. The Jat regiment expelled more than 2,000 Muslims and received 900 Jats who had been assigned to Muslim regiments. Likewise, the Dogra Regiment received so many Dogra soldiers who had been in predominantly Muslim regiments that it raised entire new battalions of single class soldiers, where before there had been several companies of different class soldiers in each battalion. While officers had the choice of which army to belong to, just 2 percent of the senior Indian officers after independence were Muslim.\footnote{Wilkinson, Army and Nation, 82.} Despite the secular ideals of the Indian National Congress and the newly forming Union of India, Muslim officers and men, as well as many sympathetic British officers, feared to belong in an army governed by the new “Hindu Raj.”\footnote{Aqil Shah, The Army and Democracy: Military Politics in Pakistan (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 39.}

Certainly the overarching imperial military structure, the Army of India, had, even before August 15, 1947, ceased to be a functioning institution as it had throughout British rule. Though the first British troops would not leave from the Gate of India in Bombay

\footnote{“Division of Indian Armed Forces,” The Times of India, July 12, 1947, New Delhi, 1.}
until August 17th, British regiments that had been stationed in India under Auchinleck’s command were increasingly withdrawn from the role they shared with their Indian counterparts as aids to civil authority. This had been a part of Mountbatten’s program of transferring as much authority, and the problems of division, to Indian leaders as possible before partition; as the violence increased, British troops were withdrawn to their barracks to await the transfer of power and eventual evacuation from the subcontinent.  

Even with the hostility to British officers and soldiers on the part of Congress publicly, Auchinleck had throughout the summer encouraged as many British officers as possible to stay with their Indian, and now Pakistani, units. When the announcement of partition had been made in June, there were still more than 8,000 British officers serving with the Indian Army. Though it was anticipated that these men would be necessary to maintain the efficiency of the army, just 2,500 remained in August, divided among the armies of Pakistan and India.

The division of the Indian Army itself was characterized by a pervading sense of sadness and tragedy, even if internally it was devoid of the violence that characterized the partition of the Indian Empire. Years later, Zulfikar Bhutto would remark that during the partition of India, the new Pakistan Army was “more concerned with the distribution of the regimental silver than the partition of the subcontinent.” Intended as a barb against the Pakistan Army, it does suggest something of the nature of partition when it reached

386 Khan, *The Great Partition*, 125.
387 Marston, *Indian Army and the End of the Raj*, 264-266.
388 Ibid., 270.
the regiments of the Indian Army. In the days leading up to partition, the fate of the old regiments to which the men owed their loyalty was in large part in question as the battalions were divided up between India and Pakistan. “On the eve of partition there were big farewell parties,” wrote one Indian officer. “We all gave tearful farewells and final hugs of affection to our brothers who were going to Pakistan. I can’t think of a single instance of bad blood between the two.”

This spirit of conciliation was aided by the fact that so many officers were still British, and that most of the army was still distant from the violence encountered by the Punjab Boundary Force in the farming communities of the Punjab. In regimental depots across India, farewell parties were undertaken, marked by heavy drinking and the singing of, in best British tradition, Auld Lang Syne. To ensure that soldiers could safely cross the new border, armed parties from the regiments of Punjab infantry were formed to escort their former comrades through the areas wracked by communal violence. With so many regimental depots lying across the borders, individuals and small and large groups had to walk, ride, drive or use trains to cross the Punjab. How many soldiers were killed crossing the border during the partition is unknown. The testimony of Francis Ingall, who transferred from the Indian Army to become the head of the Pakistan Military Academy, suggests that many small parties of British and Indian officers and their men were killed attempting to cross the Punjab during the summer and fall of 1947.

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For Gurkha soldiers more than any other, the partition came as a shock. Of all the units of the Indian Army, the Brigade of Gurkhas had remained apart from the programme of Indianization, retaining only British officers and Viceroy’s Commissioned Officers through to 1947. Even after the announcement of partition in June, Auchinleck had retained a separate control over the Gurkha regiments both in India and abroad.³⁹⁴ While Wavell had been the Viceroy, Auchinleck had written to him, and to London, to attempt to reserve the entirety of the regiments of Gurkha Rifles for use in the Far East, a measure that won the support of Lord Alanbrooke, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff.³⁹⁵ Until the gradual withdrawal of British troops from police duties in the summer of 1947, Gurkha regiments had been, along with the British regulars, central to the suppression of communal violence. Nehru had been critical of their use, associating them with the strong arm tactics of Britain in repressing nationalist politics, both in India and in former European colonies after the end of the Second World War. Nehru raised these concerns to Alanbrooke’s replacement, Field Marshal Montgomery, who promised that only a small number of the prewar battalions would be retained by Britain.³⁹⁶

Talks held in July and August 1947 between Indian and British officials with the Maharajah of Nepal confirmed that the fate of India’s Gurkha regiments had not yet been decided, but preliminarily agreed that after independence they would fall under the

³⁹⁴ "Gurkha Troops in India," The Times of India, August 5, 1947, New Delhi, 1.
³⁹⁶ Jawaharlal Nehru, Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru: June to August 1947 (New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, 1985), 302-303.
control of British commanders of the Indian Army and the new Pakistan Army. On August 8th, the talks ended and the Tripartite Agreement between India, Britain and Nepal was announced. The shock that 12 battalions would be transitioned from British to Indian control and another 8 transferred out of the Indian Army completely in just eight days was coupled with the perception of British and Nepali officials that those units retained by the Indian Army would not consent to serve under Indian officers. The long delay between the announcement of the partition of the armed forces and the Tripartite Agreement had had unforeseen effects on the morale of the Gurkha rifle regiments.

Rumors over the fate of those regiments that would be assigned to Britain; they would necessarily have to be relocated outside of India, and of the possibility that veterans who stayed in the Indian Army might be offered commissions in the same manner as Indians, only exacerbated the stunning lack of information that had been provided to Gurkha officers and their men. Reginald Savory, the Adjutant General of the Indian Army, explained that of three regiments had been selected because they already had one of their two peacetime battalions stationed in Malaya or Burma, as well as a desire to preserve regiments that could draw from both Eastern and Western Nepal on the traditional Hindu-Buddhist hill tribes that had formed the backbone of Gurkha martial race policy. In addition, the War Office in London had individually selected one regiments.

397 “Gurkha Troops in India,” The Times of India, August 5, 1947, New Delhi, 1.
398 “No Gurkha Troops for Indian Army,” The Times of India, August 8, 1947, New Delhi, 1.
regiment, the 2nd Gurkha Rifles, because of its close ties to the King’s Royal Rifle Corps, the British rifles regiment with which it had served at the siege of Delhi in 1857. 399

These factors combined to create a hostility towards the British on the part of the Gurkha Rifles that had never been experienced by the white officers who had long championed their qualities as the finest troops produced by the Indian Army. “They told me that the men were sick of the whole business,” wrote Tuker after speaking with senior Gurkha sergeants and warrant officers. “[They] considered that they had been sold by the British and were hurt and angry at the splitting up of the Gurkha Brigade as they simply did not understand it.” 400 Gurkha regiments had made their homes in India, had Nepali communities at these depots and did not know where or for what duty they would be assigned in Britain. In addition, the government of India had immediately promoted several Gurkha veterans to officer status, further enticing many men assigned to British battalions to stay in the Indian Army on the belief that the process of Indianization would be extended to them – India for its part did not commission any further Nepali soldiers. In the aftermath of the division General Tuker, who had served with Gurkhas since his inception into the Indian Army, wrote that the division of the regiments and the precipitous drop in morale was “our own British fault. We had hopelessly mismanaged the whole business.” 401

The End of the British Indian Army

400 Tuker, While Memory Serves, 639.
For the 2\textsuperscript{nd} Gurkha Rifles, stationed on the limits of the Indian Empire’s North-West Frontier, there remained only days before independence would find that regiments British and Nepali soldiers deep in a new and potentially hostile country. Like thousands of other soldiers of the old imperial army, they joined the waves of migrants and refugees crossing the collapsing Raj and began the long and treacherous journey to their new countries. The process of transferring control of the Gurkha regiments was the last major decision to be undertaken on the part of the old Indian Army before independence, but as with so many other aspects of imperial rule, it was not complete as the flags of the new dominions rose over Delhi and Karachi.

The Punjab Boundary Force, the last organized remnant of the imperial army, would endure until September, by which time the 2\textsuperscript{nd} Gurkha Rifles, now a part of the British Army, would arrive on the new Indian frontier of the Punjab, where the worst of the violence was yet to come. There were familiar faces as well but how long they would last was unknown. General Tuker, who had seen the dismantling of the army as a disaster, would remain in his position as the senior Indian Army officer of Eastern Command, alongside hundreds of other British officers. With independence, their superior, Auchinleck, became the first, last and only Supreme Commander of the Indian Army, but with the end of the imperial army, he had served his purpose. By the end of the year Mountbatten would force him back to Britain.
It was under these circumstances that the Indian Army transitioned from British to Indian rule, as the Indian Empire ceased to exist on August 15th, 1947. The honor guards of the Royal Scots Fusiliers, participating in the official ceremonies that closed down the Indian Empire, might have shared the sentiments of other British soldiers leaving India: “Memsahibs’ paradise, soldiers’ hell, India fare thee fucking well.”\(^{402}\) The Army of India was no more; its British regiments were going home, even if they left behind more than 2,000 British soldiers still attached to the Indian Army. For the Indian soldiers of the Punjab Boundary Force still watching the unfolding violence on the Radcliffe Line, or to the British and Nepali soldiers of the 2nd Gurkha Rifles, still guarding the ancient approaches from Afghanistan into the subcontinent, it can only be imagined that the symbolic transfer of power, so carefully orchestrated by Mountbatten and Nehru, was lost in the chaos and continuity of events surrounding independence. That much of the most public aspects of continuity that had been crafted in the negotiations of independence were superficial was evident: besides Auchinleck, Mountbatten, the last Viceroy, would remain the Governor General of India, a representation that to British policymakers, the new dominion still had a part to play within the British Empire.

The division of the British Army of India has often been characterized as a process of creation, the “birth pangs” of a “new army.”\(^ {403}\) Britain was not unaffected either. The inclusion of the Gurkha regiments into the British Army would have profound effects on British policy in East Asia in the decades to follow, through which the ties between the British and the Nepali soldiers it recruited would be rebuilt. In India, where

\(^{402}\) James, Raj, 597.  
\(^{403}\) Singh, Tradition Never Dies, 130.
British imperial policy was rapidly waning, the efforts of Britons to influence the new country would see the demise of British control. Pakistan, as an entirely new country, and with its ideological determination to protect its Muslim majority, was creating a genuinely new army, even if in 1947 it shared with the Union of India both the same leadership under Auchinleck and the same traditions of the old British Indian Army. Indian leaders could signal the transition from British to Indian rule as the creation of a new and national army, but in reality, they had inherited the army created by Lawrence Strin in the 18th century.

It had been expanded by the East India Company, radically reformed after the rebellions of 1857 and had been incorporated into an Army of India in 1903. had the experienced years of expansion and contraction during two world wars, only to be divided between what was left of the British Empire and the two new dominions of Pakistan and India. But India, the Union of India and the later Republic of India, had an Indian Army. Short of men and officers, led by rapidly increasing numbers of inexperienced Indians and a dwindling number of veteran Britons, and commanded by politicians who had dedicated their lives to ending British influence in the affairs of the subcontinent, the Indian Army still retained much of the imperial character that had made it such a monumental force in extending the power of the British Empire. How Indians, and Britons, would further use, influence or change this institution to create a new country was yet to be seen, as in the months after independence tribesmen from the volatile frontier of the old Indian Empire crossed the Himalayas into the Vale of
Kashmir, where the Indian Army would face its first battlefield test as an independent army.

CHAPTER 2: THE IMPERIAL ARMY IN TRANSITION, 1947-1953

Introduction: The End of the Indian Empire

On the afternoon of August 18th, 1947, just days after the government of the former Indian Empire had been handed over to the new dominions of India and Pakistan, Lord Mountbatten and Field Marshal Auchinleck arrived at the harbor of Bombay, where the troopship *Georgic* lay at anchor. Apart from a group of officers and men of the Royal Air Force there were the enlisted men of the 2/Royal Norfolk Regiment. They were the first British soldiers of the now defunct Army of India bound to leave for Britain, who marched past the Gateway of India while a band played the Victorian airs and ballads that had become symbolic of the service of British regiments in India.404 The 2nd Royal Battalion of the Sikh Regiment, forming the guard of honor, gave three cheers to their “comrades in arms” as British soldiers waved from the deck. Apart from the military detachment was the Chief Minister of Bombay B.G. Kher, and the British governor, John

Colville, who attended wearing the gold and blue uniform and feathered tricorn of a privy councilor, to the astonishment of Indian attendees. As crowds of Indians cheered ‘victory to Gandhi,’ ‘victory to Nehru,’ and the occasional ‘victory to Mountbatten,’ the former Viceroy extolled the wartime service of the Norfolk Regiment, which had fought alongside Indian troops as part of the 2nd Indian Division at Kohima. Brigadier Cariappa, who had been selected to give Nehru’s speech on the subject of their departure, was last to speak, as the last of the regiment boarded the ship.

“Few things are more significant of this change than the withdrawal of British Troops from India. Foreign armies are the most obvious symbols of foreign rule. They are essentially armies of occupation, and as such their presence must inevitably be resented. No soldier likes this business, for it is neither war nor peace, but a continuing tension and living in a hostile atmosphere. I am sure that sensitive British Officers and men must have disliked being placed in this abnormal position…as an Indian, I have long demanded the withdrawal of British Forces from India, for they were a symbol to us of much that we disliked. But I had no grievance against them as individuals, and I liked and admired many whom I came across. What we disliked was the system which inevitably brought ill-will in the main, apart from other consequences. I know the good qualities of the British soldier and I should like our own army to develop those qualities. On the occasion of the departure of the first contingent of British troops from India, I wish them Gods speed and trust that between them and the soldiers and people of India there will be

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405 “Farewell to British Troops,” The Times of India, August 18, 1947, New Delhi, 6.
goodwill and friendship which can only subsist between equals, who do not fear each other.”

It was an ending appropriate to reflect the real and symbolic changes that were overtaking India, a reminder that for all the continued imperial ceremony on the part of both Britons and Indians involved, that the power of the Indian government had truly passed into Indian hands, dominated by Nehru. Nehru’s satisfaction that British troops were leaving India after more than two centuries was representative of the longstanding sense on the part of nationalists that the Indian Army, and its attached British units, was the pillar on which so much of British power in South Asia rested upon. This power had been like India itself partitioned, but the core of the Indian Army had transferred with the other institutions of British rule to form the basis for the Union of India over which Nehru now presided.

Nehru did not leave a record of what qualities the British troops possessed that he wished would be instilled in India. His expressed desire for the newly independent Indian Army to emulate some measure of the army that which was leaving belied that his government had inherited an imperial army that shared much in common with the British Army that had until just days before shared a place within now defunct Army of India. Problems that this army had faced after 1945 - the demobilization of the wartime army, how Indianization and nationalization would continue under national rule, the retention of a large body of British and Anglo-Indian officers – these were problems that now belonged to the new Indian state. Nehru and other nationalist leaders had begun the

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formulation of a “clear idea”\textsuperscript{407} of how the Indian Army would change after independence; with independence a reality, the relationship of the army to its imperial past, which was marked by the recent events of the Second World War and partition, could be determined. The rapid and violent sequence of events that followed independence definitively altered Nehru’s plans to alter the imperial army into a national army. The use of the army as a tool for resettlement, for national integration and for national defense would characterize the years after independence, culminating in the transition of the professional leadership of the army to Indians for the first time in its history. By necessity and by design, imperial characteristics of the army remained intact, and became hallmarks of the independent officer corps. As British influence waned, due to the efforts of Indian officers and politicians alike, the imperial legacy remained intact, creating a chasm in the perceived role of the Indian Army and its imperial heritage less than a decade after independence.

**Nehru and the Imperial Inheritance**

That British and imperial influence remained intact was clearly apparent in August 1947, with white Indian Army officers like Auchinleck remaining as the professional heads of the Indian Army. While the departure of the British Army could be celebrated as part of the end of imperial rule, the past accomplishments of the British and old Indian Army stood in stark contrast to the unknown nature of what was to come. Even before the Raj had ended, the old Indian Army was eulogized, fading quickly from

the importance it had held in Britain. “I myself will say without fear of contradiction that the relations between the British officer serving in that Army and his Indian officers and his Sepoys made the finest and, in a way, the most efficient military partnership in the history of the world,” said the now aged Lord Chetwode, who had overseen the implementation of Indianization more than a decade earlier. “They [British Officers] said that that, of course, was not news to them, but they did feel disappointed and rather hurt that no one in England, the India Office, the War Office, the Houses of Parliament, or anybody else had thought fit at the conclusion of this wonderful 200 years partnership to say ‘Thank you’ from England.” With the sudden change in power in August 1947, the role of so many British officers, the shortages in trained Indian officers and men, the fate of those states ruled by Indian princes, the savage outbreak of communal violence, and the emergence of a new state; these were problems that British policy makers were quick to pass on to the new government of the Indian Union.

Jawaharlal Nehru, as Prime Minister, and Baldev Singh, as Defense Minister, had become the civilian heads of the army after independence. That they were inexperienced in military matters was a product of the racial prejudices of the British government and their particular vocations. Apart from some members of the Indian Civil Service, and those Indian princes who had acted as commanders of state troops in the wars fought by the imperial Indian Army, there were no Indians who had extensive experience as civil-military administrators. Additionally both men had been career politicians, Nehru as a senior member of the Indian National Congress and Singh as a minister representing the

Punjab and the Sikh community at varying levels. Apart from Nehru’s childhood stint as a cadet at Harrow, neither had ever been in uniform.\footnote{Michael Edwardes, \textit{Nehru: A Political Biography} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 20.} Singh had been appointed within the interim government in 1946 as a member of the Defense Council, led by General Roy Bucher, who had replaced Francis Tuker as the senior British officer in Assam and Bengal. They were joined as well by Liaqat Ali Khan, representing the interests of the Muslim League, and eventually, Pakistan. As the Indian Army demobilized after the Second World War, they had discussed the future of the military, including partition, but focused on Indianization, nationalization, the transition of British power and of soldiers welfare. Meanwhile, defense policy was still being set the by British and Indian Army officers, who represented the imperial Indian Army in negotiations between the Viceroy and the leadership of the Muslim League and the Indian National Congress.\footnote{Onkar Singh, \textit{Indian Ex-Servicemen} (Meerut: Dynamic Publications, 2005), 14.}

The 1928 “Nehru Report” made by the Indian National Congress had concurred with a simultaneous British commission that the Indian Army, as a guardian of the Indian government, and as the primary means of defending the subcontinent from foreign invasion, would necessarily prove to be one of the most important pillars of a future independent Indian state. For Congress, Indian civilian control of the Indian Army, whatever the status of Indian officers, was a defining feature of an independent India.\footnote{Brandon Marsh, \textit{Ramparts of Empire: British Imperialism and India’s Afghan Frontier} (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 173-174.} That the army of an independent India should be free from foreign influence was a defining feature of Nehru and Congress, from the 1930s and through the INA trials. Apart from the use of the Indian Army as an imperial tool to extend foreign power, the army as...
an imperial institution confronted nationalists with three problems. The first was unequal representation, in the proportion of Indian officers to white British and Anglo-Indians and in the predominance of the martial classes. Second was the army’s enormous cost, which dominated the budget of the imperial Indian government. Third was the potentiality that the army might undermine or overthrow a democratic government after independence. All three were cited as problems that any nationalist government would have to confront after independence to make the army representative of a truly unified, independent and secular nation.412

Where some envisioned the creation of an entirely new army capable of overthrowing the Indian Empire - and the formation of the INA reflected the influence of that sentiment in Congress - the Nehru report was consistent with the belief shared by members of Nehru’s new government that the imperial Indian Army would become the army of the new state. Nehru’s calls for a democratic army with a defensive role was at odds with how the Indian Army had operated since the eighteenth century. To enforce these change in role, the army’s British influence would have to be reduced, and Indian political control established, but an undeniably effective army already existed within India.413 That the new postcolonial government would adopt and reform what was seen as a preexisting British institution was made public policy in the period before independence. In the first major public military policy announcement of the interim

412 Steven Wilkinson, Army and Nation, 102.
government, Baldev Singh addressed the Indian Army specifically in a radio address in October 1946.

“We aim at building up, in a truly national way, a national army, which will be the pride of this great land of ours…India has many problems to face. We have to rid our country of poverty and unemployment; we have to increase rapidly our industry and to raise the standard of life of the masses of the country. We have to make India foremost among the nations of the world in all that makes a nation great and progressive. But all progress and stability depend ultimately on security…You distinguished yourselves in many parts of the world and have earned fame for your fighting qualities, your valour, your discipline and efficiency. What can such an army not do when it is the army of a free country, fighting to preserve its freedom?”

Singh’s address emphasized that the Indian Army was the key to both Indian security and the process of national development that would follow independence. The further Indianization of the military was not necessarily seen to be at odds with retaining numbers of British officers in advisory and technical positions, and Singh gave the white officers who had dominated the Indian Army much credit for instilling the discipline and efficiency in the institution that would be inherited by the dominion of India. Nehru and Singh appealed to the nation in the months after this address for educated Indians to apply for positions as officers in the army; Britons could stay, but they would no longer be the majority that they were in 1945 and 1946. This applied as well to the traditional

imbalance on the part of the martial races. Public appeals by Congress politicians were made to all Indians, regardless of region, class or religion, encouraging men from non-martial backgrounds to enter into the military.415

The British Officer Corps and Independence

Despite Nehru and Singh’s difficult relationship with Claude Auchinleck, in the issue of nationalization they benefitted from his having restricted new commissions to Indians alone, and by his support for the ending of martial and aristocratic class distinctions in the officer corps. The difficulty of increasing the speed with which Indianization was implemented was highlighted by the rejection rates into officer candidate programs based on the stricture of British guidelines. Though there were more than 300 slots open to the new 1946 class at the Indian Military Academy, just 126 of the more than 1,000 applicants were accepted.416 Singh’s interactions with the other major pre-independence military committee, the Army Nationalization Committee, highlighted some of the contradictions in attempting to reform the Indian Army into a national army, while also attempting to retain as much of the knowledge and skill of remaining British officers without giving up control to them. When pressed on the issue of nationalization

415 “Make Army Your Own and Send Best Young Men Into It,” The Times of India, November 23, 1947, New Delhi, 1.
416 “Government’s Objective of Efficient National Army,” The Times of India, April 9, 1946, New Delhi, 3.
by members of the Congress party, Singh asked, “did not the present Indian Army owe much to the British officers for its building up?”

The partition of the country and of the army, and the rapidity of the British withdrawal, did much to diminish both the desire of the Indian government to retain British officers, or the desire of British officers to volunteer their services to the new state. The promise made after 1946 to junior British and Anglo-Indian officers that they would be retained by a unified Indian Army after independence gave way to the belief that their role would solely be that of an aide to the civil powers in suppressing communal violence. After partition was announced, it was clear that the unified army would no longer exist, leading to a fear that the new dominion armies would become forces in service to either the Indian National Congress or the Muslim League. Increasingly, this prospect was seen as a precursor to a possible inter-dominion war, one where British officers of the old Indian Army might find themselves fighting their former comrades.

With demobilization or transfer to the British Army guaranteeing an exit from Indian service, a widespread evacuation of British officers occurred in the summer of 1947. Just weeks before independence only 2,000 British soldiers remained in the Indian Army where 8,000 had been just a year before, and many of those that remained were steadily opting out of service. Indian officials, including Nehru and Singh, suspected that the United Kingdom would retain much closer ties with Pakistan, and that British

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417 “Size of Future Indian Army,” *The Times of India*, April 1, 1947, New Delhi, 1.
officers in India would have sympathies for Pakistan after partition. This fear seemed to be justified by the disproportionate place of British civil and military officers in Pakistan, which given the comparatively small numbers of trained Muslim officers and administrators in imperial India, had inherited an understaffed military and civil apparatus. Of the more than 2,000 British officers who stayed in India in 1947, a quarter of them were attached to the Pakistan Army, forming an eighth of Pakistan’s officer corps.\textsuperscript{419} Just one in ten members of the old Indian Civil Service had been Muslims, and the allocation of 50 former British civil and military officers formed a full third of Pakistan’s civil service staff after independence. Many of these men had served in the frontier political service of the Indian Empire and had deep ties to the tribal communities to which imperial agents had been assigned for more than a century. As had been true in the past, many of these officers were effectively paramilitary officers, with ties to the army, to the civil administration, to tribal leadership and to local militias. In these cases British sympathies to Pakistan were more obvious and as communal violence did transform into an inter-dominion war in the fall of 1947, presented India with serious problems when considering the role played by its own officers.\textsuperscript{420}

\textbf{Nationalization of the Army: Nehru, Auchinleck and the Army Command}

Indian politicians’ mistrust of British officers would only be magnified in the months following independence, resulting in the removal of British officers and

bypassing or limiting of the power of those who remained. Apart from advocating a quickening of the pace of the Indianization of the officer corps, Singh and Nehru pressed for the removal of Auchinleck as head of the new dominion armies of Pakistan and India. His role as Supreme Commander, intended to last until June 1948, was to coordinate military activities between India and Pakistan as Head of the Joint Defence Council, chiefly to oversee the continuing partition of the Indian Army after August 15th, 1947, and to continue the breakdown and transfer of Britain’s military in India. Though Auchinleck’s role was seen to be one of administrative, rather than operational control, he had already been criticized by the interim governments in the lead up to independence. Jinnah, after a meeting with Field Marshal Montgomery, wrote to Mountbatten that Auchinleck no longer had the support of Muslims due to the support he gave to proposals that the independent Indian state, and the army, should remain unified.

Auchinleck was simultaneously criticized by Congress officials for allegedly supporting the interests of Pakistan over that of India. Both Singh and Nehru, after the announcement of the partition of the army, wrote to Mountbatten directly to criticize Auchinleck’s support of Pakistan. Mountbatten urged British officers to speak with Auchinleck on reducing his role in political matters, a shock to Auchinleck and those officers involved, as they had been vehemently against the army becoming involved in the politics of Congress or the Muslim League. Over the summer of 1947 Mountbatten had secretly asked William Slim, the wartime commander of the 14th Army under

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421 “Responsibilities and Tasks of Supreme Commander,” The Times of India, September 14, 1947, New Delhi, 3.
422 Marston, Indian Army and the End of the Raj, 266.
423 Ibid., 272.
Auchinleck, to replace his former superior. Slim’s refusal, and Mountbatten’s inability to find a replacement that was amenable to Nehru, Jinnah and the British government, combined to make Auchinleck’s role and that of the office of Supreme Commander, entirely untenable.\textsuperscript{424} At the end of September 1947 Mountbatten suggested to Auchinleck that he propose the abolition of the post of Supreme Commander, a thinly veiled admission on the part of the Governor General that there was no place for Auchinleck or of a unified military command structure in the subcontinent after independence.\textsuperscript{425} With the closing of the office of Supreme Commander, the obligations of many British officers in India, negotiated to endure until at least June 1948, could be terminated by December 1947.\textsuperscript{426}

The reduction of Auchinleck’s position in 1947 had been preceded with the earlier action taken by Nehru in September 1946 to reduce the role of the Commander in Chief of the Indian Army, the role held by Auchinleck until independence. Until then it had been a cabinet level position effectively holding the portfolio for Indian defense. The appointment of Baldev Singh to the position of defense minister in the interim government by Nehru established civilian authority over the military in a way that had not existed under the imperial government. After independence, Roy Lockhart, Auchinleck’s replacement as commander of the Indian Army, would ostensibly report to Singh and the Defense Ministry, rather than directly to the Prime Minister, the Governor-General or the Supreme Commander. In a symbolic reduction of the power of the officers

\textsuperscript{425} T.A. Heathcote, \textit{The British Field Marshals, 1763-1997} (London: Leo Cooper, 1999), 34.
\textsuperscript{426} “Headquarters of Supreme Commander,” \textit{The Times of India}, September 27, 1947, New Delhi, 7.
of the Army, Nehru himself established Flagstaff House, the home of the commander of
the Indian Army, as the Prime Minister’s residence.427

These moves were aimed at reducing the real and symbolic power of the British
officers commanding the Indian Army and their immediate underlings, the British and
Indian officers who were serving as local commanders and senior staff officers. Roy
Lockart had been made Commander of the Indian Army after Auchinleck’s appointment
to the position of Supreme Commander; Cariappa, promoted to Major General, was his
deputy, and the second most senior officer in the army. Thimayaa had been appointed as
the senior advisor to General Rees, commander of the 4th Infantry Division of the Punjab
Boundary Force, the last operating field force of the old Indian Army. Other Indians
began filling in the ranks of the general staff offices in place of the British, with Brigadier
General Pran Nath Thapar being appointed as head of military intelligence immediately
before independence.428 In a letter addressed to British and Indian officers on the eve of
independence, Nehru wrote “In any policy that is to be pursued, in the Army or
otherwise, the views of the Government of India and the policy they lay down must
prevail. If any person is unable to carry out this policy, he has no place in the Indian
Army, or in the Indian structure of government.”429

The Indian Army and the Refugee Crisis in the Punjab

427 “Pandit Nehru’s Party,” The Times of India, August 14, 1948, New Delhi, 6.
428 “Brigadier P.N. Thapar,” The Times of India, July 17, 1947, New Delhi, 6.
429 Steven Wilkinson, Army and Nation: The Military and Indian Democracy Since Independence
The first task given to these officers in the aftermath of independence was to use the army to assist in the unrest and dislocation that had accompanied partition. The final major meeting of the Joint Defense Council, held in Lahore on August 30th 1947 and attended by Mountbatten, Auchinleck, Nehru, Baldev Singh, Aliquat Khan, Rob Lockhart and the British commander of the Pakistan Army, Frank Messervy, ended the brief period of cooperation that existed between the armies of India and Pakistan. Effectively this had manifested itself only in the endurance of the Punjab Boundary Force, the formation that had been given responsibility for suppressing communal violence in the Punjab. With the withdrawal of British and Pakistani troops, it was transferred to India with its old title Second World War title of the 4th Infantry Division, to be commanded by Thimayaa.430

In a separate meeting with Thimayaa attended by Congress representatives from the Punjab, Nehru insisted that a forced population transfer, to be assisted by the military, was the most prudent way to protect religious minorities from the chaos of partition, a belief shared by Pakistan.431 In the days after independence, the new civilian government in Delhi had begun the organization of a relief campaign to protect minorities in the regions worst effected by communal violence. Utilizing an ad hoc formation of Congress party members, local police and civil defense volunteers aided by small bodies of paratroopers and Gurkha rifles, the operation was directed by the civilian government, bypassing the command structure of the military entirely. The inability of the new Indian government to mobilize the military for relief operations in the days after independence

430 “Abolition of Punjab Boundary Force,” The Times of India, August 30, 1947, New Delhi, 1.
was likely due to the temporary, but almost universal, collapse of government across North India, a situation that effected the army as much as it did the civilian authorities. The dissolution of the Punjab Boundary Force effectively ended the last operational command of the old Indian Army, coming at a time when military intelligence of the refugee crisis was most lacking. When Dudley Russell, the senior British officer in the Punjab, suggested that Auchinleck’s disbanding staff officers and their family’s bound for Pakistan travel by train across the border, Auchinleck berated him for his lack of knowledge of the prevailing situation on the ground, and personally flew them to Rawalpindi.\(^{432}\)

The inundation or failure of most transportation systems, lines of communications and the culpability in ethnic cleansing of political “cadres” loyal to local Congress leaders was only exacerbated by the simultaneous division of the armed forces\(^{433}\). The partition of the army led to mass movements of troops across North India to new postings and barracks, and the disintegration of authority at levels above the company or battalion, as brigades, divisions and regional commands were partitioned, and their British, Indian and Pakistani officers assigned to new posts. At the highest level, that of the staff and headquarters of the Indian Army, resources and personnel were being siphoned by those elements of the military bound either for Pakistan, to the new office of the Supreme Commander, or to the United Kingdom, to the chagrin of congress bureaucrats who later

\(^{432}\) Amid, *Disasterous Twilight*, 252.

bemoaned the destruction or carrying off of imperial records by departing British officers.\textsuperscript{434}

The gradual organization of emergency committees and the reestablishment of a controllable military hierarchy led to Nehru to call on the Indian Army to facilitate the transfer of refugees across the frontier. To this end, the Military Evacuation Organization was formed under Major General Bakshish Singh Chimni. It would take nearly two months for the organization to respond on a scale commensurate with the level of violence and dislocation, but eventually 1,200 vehicles were organized by the military to evacuate refugees. In areas where officers and government officials had been stranded, or where transiting the border was impossible, Royal Air Force transports airlifted them out, while the Indian Air Force landed emergency rations to the convoys of refugees crossing the frontier.\textsuperscript{435} To its credit, the Indian government claims that an average of more than 30,000 refugees a day were escorted out by foot, and more by train, by ground transport, and by air with the assistance of the Indian Army.\textsuperscript{436}

The Indian Army and the Implementation of State Policy

Alternatively, the resettlement efforts led by the Indian Army have been described as effectively being a state sanctioning of ethnic cleansing. Chimni and Rees, who had

\textsuperscript{435} Ibid., 158.
\textsuperscript{436} Vekateswaran, \textit{Defense Organization}, 71.
been given a temporary role as the senior military advisor on the crisis in Nehru’s cabinet, oversaw the organization of at least 500 military vehicles to participate in the evacuation, with others commandeered from civilian sources. As the primary source of both drivers and escorts for these organized convoys, the Indian Army bore the responsibility for safeguarding refugees, alternatively ensuring that local officials had the means to carry out localized pogroms. Both in their participation in the convoy system, and as escorts for the foot traffic across the border, this mixed and ambiguous record was not dissimilar to that earned during by the Indian Army during last weeks of the British Raj. Communal favoritism hampered the duties of some units, and was a nonfactor in others, while units of British officers and Himalayan soldiers earned a reputation amongst Indian and Pakistani officers alike as the most efficient and impartial soldiers involved.

As the first operation conducted by the independent Indian Army, the role of the Military Evacuation Committee largely confirmed earlier Nehru’s intuitions that the Indian Army created by the British would, given the right circumstances, act as an army of the new state. Outside of individual or small group participation, the Indian Army had distanced itself from communal violence and maintained a high degree of discipline. This is in large part due to the concepts of professionalism and efficiency developed at the regimental level. The continued peaceful partition of the British Indian Army after independence rested in large part on mixed class companies and battalions ensuring that

438 Marston, Indian Army and the End of the Raj, 340.
minority elements within a particular unit were escorted either to the frontier or to their new depots with relative safety. In what has been described as being effectively a “civil war” on the part of religious communities and the provisional leadership of Pakistan and India, the Indian Army stood apart. In addition, the Indian Army continued to function with increasing sophistication and speed after independence. In the confusion of independence, individual units in the Punjab and Bengal undertook the duty of acting, as they had under the British, as an aid to civil power, as well an aid to the infrastructure of the state by commandeering rail lines and organizing railheads for refugees, and then later in organizing the refugee convoys of military vehicles.

Even if the greatest threat to the independent Army, that of communalism, led only to the comparatively peaceful division of the Indian Army and not its disintegration, the use of the military in emergency operations after 1947 highlighted other problems. The army’s role as a neutral and apolitical force had prevented it from perpetrating communal violence, but its role in support of government policy during resettlement had directly contributed to atrocities committed by local leaders. How and where military transports were used was determined in part by the great latitude given by the Indian Army to administrators, police and politicians at the local level. Armed plain clothed officials and police forcibly resettled Muslim communities across Western and Central India, utilizing military transports, ethnic cleansing that would not have been possible without the participation of the army in supporting government policy.440

440 Khan, The Great Partition, 159.
Additionally, the organization of transport by the Indian Army for refugee relief was fraught with frustration by Lockhart and his chief of staff, Roy Bucher, due to the inability of the military to coordinate its activities with the new civilian government. For weeks after independence, government motor pools had been restricted to the Disposals Directorate, the civilian department responsible for the allocation of government stores, to the frustration of army officers attempting to organize transport. Additionally, there was little or no formal command structure in place to organize the units arriving daily from Pakistan, either from their imperial postings on the North West Frontier, or from Sikh and Hindu companies of regiments that were allocated to Pakistan.\textsuperscript{441} Orders relating to the continued division of the British Indian Army, and the organization of transportation to facilitate this process, continued to be directed by Auchinleck and the office of the Supreme Commander, even after it became clear that his career in the Indian Army, and the position that he held, would come to an end in a matter of weeks. The lack of support given by the new Indian Government to those involved in organizing the division and reconstitution of the army, and to those troops embroiled in suppressing communal violence, was cited as a major factor alienating British officers from their Indian civilian leaders. This, combined with a feeling of exhaustion and disgust over the general atmosphere of violence and division that pervaded North India, led many British officers to ask for their commissions in the Indian Army to be released by the end of the year.\textsuperscript{442}

\textsuperscript{441} “Army Commander’s Review of Punjab Situation,” \textit{The Times of India}, September 26, 1947, New Delhi, 7.

\textsuperscript{442} Marston, \textit{Indian Army and the End of the Raj}, 345.
The Reorganization of the Indian Army After Independence

This came at the very moment that the stated purpose for the retention of British officers in the independent Indian Army as organizers and administrators proved to be a boon for the Indian government. The British Indian Army’s Northern Command, covering much of Pakistan and Northern India, had been assigned to Pakistan as that country’s military headquarters. General Dudley Russell was appointed to command its new Indian equivalent, the Delhi and East Punjab Command. The memoirs of Srinivas K. Sinha, who in 1944 had entered into the Indian Army to fight in Burma, and appointed to Russell’s staff after independence, records some of the chaos that must have been replicated in dozens of headquarters and barracks across India in the weeks after August 15th.

Where it would have taken a pre-independence officer sixteen years to reach the rank of major, Sinha was promoted to that rank after just three, to his amusement. The commander of the staff was an Indian brigadier, with a mostly British staff, whose veteran Gurkha commissioned officers remained especially lukewarm to the increasing number of Indians. Sinha won their approval by both planning a reorganization of troops in the region, and by using his own connections with an Indian clerk, solving the chronic shortage of office supplies and furniture. The tight knit character of the imperial army that had proved an obstacle to the first Indian officers still existed, and Sinha overcame this much as his predecessors had, by proving to be able to work within the structure of
the imperial army.

The staff coalesced too around the character of Russell, referred to by his junior Indian and British subordinates as “Russell Pasha.” A veteran of both world wars, he had spent most of his career on the North West Frontier with the now Pakistani regiment, the Frontier Force Rifles. In his new capacity, with the help of officers like Sinha, he organized mobile columns to react to outbreaks of violence around Delhi and in the Punjab, reestablished ties with the long disorganized emergency services and took over responsibilities for the civil administration and the new and increasingly massive refugee camps.\footnote{S.K. Sinha, \textit{A Soldier Recalls} (New Delhi: Lancer Publishing, 1992), 90-93.} Five new subordinate local brigade commands were created to enforce martial law, with operations orchestrated from Russell’s mobile command center established in East Punjab onboard the ‘Viceroy Special’, the former private train of India’s British rulers.\footnote{K.C. Praval, \textit{Indian Army After Independence} (New Delhi: Lancer Publishing, 2012), 45.} Even with the imposition of Indian civilian control over the military, and the increasingly isolated position of Auchinleck, Nehru and Indian politicians still had to rely on many senior British officers.

The departure of large numbers of junior white officers, many of whom had no experience of the pre-1939 imperial Army, did not preclude the retention of their superiors, senior officers like Russell. Long serving imperial officers whose careers in the British Indian Army as counterinsurgents or as aids to the civil power – Russell himself had suppressed communal violence in Bihar after the Second World War and had served with the Indian Intelligence Bureau during the civil disobedience campaigns of the 1930s
proved to be a resource for Indian leaders. The vacancies created by the departure of so many British officers led junior Indian officers like Sinha to come into close contact with these imperial British officers in a defining moment of their career, and from whom imperial practices could be emulated. The restoration of an effective command structure under joint British and Indian leadership and distrust and disunion on the part of Indians and British leaders at the senior levels, were two simultaneous and contending trends that would continue as the army moved in the fall of 1947 from one crisis to another. The accession of princely states, especially the conflagration over the fate of Kashmir, would reorient the army away from the chaos of partition, to fighting a campaign in an effort to consolidate the territory of the Indian Empire into that of the Indian Union.

The Indian Army and the Princely States

The successful negotiation of partition by Nehru and Mountbatten in June of 1947 had rested in part on the concession made by the United Kingdom that India’s princely states would not be given independence separate from the newly established dominions. By the time of independence, more than 500 states, with a total population of more than 90 million souls covered just under half of the continent, were governed by hereditary rulers and British advisors. Functioning as British allies, the 50,000 soldiers belonging to the armies and militias of these local rulers comprised the Indian State Forces, which

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could be mobilized to support the Indian Army as Imperial State Troops.\textsuperscript{446} The Second World War had seen this force expand and deployed overseas, like the Indian Army, but without the commensurate reduction that accompanied postwar demobilization. By independence, there were more than 75,000 men who had either been raised or reverted to the control of the local rulers.\textsuperscript{447}

If British and Indian control of the army in the summer of 1947 was difficult and strained, controlling the state troops that had reverted to the command of local rulers was impossibility. As Yasmin Khan writes, the militias, war parties and gangs that perpetrated the ethnic cleansing of the Punjab worked “hand in glove” with local rulers and their local forces, which further supported irregulars by providing transportation and weapons.\textsuperscript{448} This devolution of imperial military power was not unprecedented. In 1940, state forces representing princely rulers in Baluchistan had fought over local villages, a conflict stopped only at the intercession of the British who threatened intervention by the Indian Army.\textsuperscript{449} Additionally, the armies of the princely states had their own imperial legacy. Britons and Anglo-Indians had a tradition of service in the armies of the princely states that dated back to the arrival of British soldiers in India; with the coming of independence, these military advisors, some with extensive familial ties to a legacy of

\textsuperscript{446} Stanley Reed, \textit{The Times of India Directory and Yearbook} (New Delhi: Bennett, Coleman and Company, 1938), 304. At the beginning of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century, the Indian State Forces had a strength of a little more than 20,000 men. By the eve of the Second World War, there were around 50,000 soldiers in the Indian State Forces.
\textsuperscript{448} Khan, \textit{The Great Partition}, 117.
service for a particular ruler, trained and supplied the private armies of the states in anticipation of their forced integration into a new dominion government.\textsuperscript{450}

Across the Punjab, local military forces had fought the police, or had joined the police in fighting the army. While the often ambiguous role played by the Indian Army in the violence of partition can be seen as a breakdown of central authority in certain cases, or more widely as a lack of determination to intercede in violence in the summer of 1947, state forces actively and routinely participated in orchestrated massacres along ethnic and religious lines. Defended in contemporary Sikh military literature,\textsuperscript{451} the Patiala State Forces were accused by both the Indian Army and the British Army for perpetrating some of the worst of the massacres.\textsuperscript{452}

Where government authority was weakest, violence perpetrated by local state forces crossed into neighboring regions, such as Rajasthan, where the murder or expulsion of 130,000 Muslims was aided by state forces that raided across the border into the centrally controlled United Provinces.\textsuperscript{453} With the end of the imperial government with which these states had signed subsidiary alliance treaties, these forces were nominally independent, despite the demand that they accede to one of the new

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{451} Amarinder Singh, \textit{Lest We Forget} (Patiala: The Regiment of Ludhiana Welfare Association, 1999), 416.
\bibitem{452} J.C. Kemp, \textit{The History of the Royal Scots Fusiliers, 1919-1959} (Glasgow: Robert Maclehose & Company, 1963), 383. Elements of the Royal Scots were stopped by Patiala State soldiers while escorting refugees across the Punjab. Similarly, Muslim refugee convoys were rerouted by Patiala State Forces so that they would enter into areas under their control, necessitating their escort by Indian officers. See J.S. Bawa, \textit{History of the Corps of Engineers} (New Delhi: Palit and Palit, 1980), 20-21.
\end{thebibliography}
dominions. With the reduction and division of the Indian Army, to the Indian Union these states presented a potential threat, depending on whether they sought to join India, Pakistan or attempt a military solution in an effort to maintain their independent status.

Mountbatten had cited “economic and geographic compulsions” that would largely determine to which dominion a prince would accede, though there were fears in government that local rulers would coalesce to form regional “blocs.”454 The accession of many princely states to India in the days surrounding independence ensured that there would not be a widespread movement by local rulers towards maintaining their independent status. These states included Mysore, the second most populous of the princely states.455 With the establishment of the Radcliffe Line delineating the new borders after independence, princely states had little choice but to join the government on whatever side of the border – primarily India – on which they found themselves. Where local rulers prolonged negotiations as to the nature of their accession, Congress organized campaigns of civil disobedience to enhance the negotiating platform of the Indian Union.456 Muslim leaders often fled to Pakistan; Hindu princes were appointed as regional governors. These factors encouraged a politically stable, if also disorderly and communally violent accession, in the vast majority of the states, though resistance on the part of some princes extended this process well into 1948.

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455 “Kolhapur Joins Union,” _The Times of India_, August 11, 1947, New Delhi, 9.
456 “Mysore Satyagraha Campaign,” _The Times of India_, August 21, 1947, New Delhi, 3.
While states could accede to one country or another, they remained in nominal control over their own affairs, including their state forces, until the constitutional nature of their accession was agreed upon. Where this political process broke down, and paramilitaries and state forces attempted to settle the issue of accession with a military solution, the result was armed conflict. The three military campaigns that the Indian Army participated in within the two years following independence were results of this process. Marked by the same political failure and communal violence that had characterized partition, it made the Indian Army an indispensable force for national integration, and proved to be the first major test in combat of the Indian Army after independence.

That the accession of some of the largest and most important princely states could become a major foreign policy and military problem was apparent in the weeks after independence, when the Indian Army was simultaneously embroiled in its own internal reconstitution and in reestablishing government and military control over the Punjab. In the two weeks following independence, General H.L. Scott, Chief of Staff to the Maharajah of Jammu and Kashmir, had written to the prince to report that there were growing numbers of tribal fighters crossing into Kashmir across the newly formed frontier.457 Scott, a former British soldier, and by 1947 an elderly man, had spent his life as an officer in the state forces of Kashmir, reforming them from bands of irregular

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warriors to a modern force on the pattern of the British Indian Army. Scott, joined by
the Maharajah’s Prime Minister and his court astrologer, pressed the ruler, Hari Singh, to
maintain an independent stance between the new dominions.

The strategic importance of Kashmir and its subsidiary states, not only in the local
defense of India’s frontiers, but in global geopolitics, had long been noted by British
strategists planning the defense of British Asia. “Kashmir has been called the northern
bastion of India,” wrote the British war correspondent and soldier Edward Frederick
Knight. “Gilgit can be described as her farthest outpost. And hard by Gilgit it is in that,
in an undefined way, on the high Roof of the World – what more fitting a place! – the
three great Empires of the Earth meet – Great Britain, Russia and China.” Guarded by
the Hindu Kush, the Himalayas and the Pamirs, Kashmir and its neighboring states
commanded the top of the Indus Valley, and acted as a natural frontier between the
Indian subcontinent and the incursions of Central Asia for generations of Indian rulers,
from Ashoka to the British.

British defense considerations made after the Second World War echoed the
traditional fear of Russian influence in the region, emphasizing that the Soviet Union had
to be denied direct control or influence in the region. This was evident in the partition
plan articulated by Wavell and other British officers in the winter of 1945 and 1946,

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which suggested that an independent Pakistan would be a more conciliatory partner than a congress dominated India in commonwealth defense.\textsuperscript{462} The partition of the country and of the army had only encouraged British sympathy on the part of British soldiers entering into Pakistani service, who perceived the nationalist Congress government in Delhi as attempting to force the new country into the Indian Union. “We are all Muslim now,” wrote a British battalion commander in Pakistan in a letter addressed to Auchinleck and Reginald Savory, the Indian Army’s Adjutant General.\textsuperscript{463}

These sympathies were more pronounced along the old northern frontier, where British officers took the matter of accession into their own hands. With the end of the Indian Empire, treaties that had leased northern districts of the region to British tribal agencies from the Maharajah of Kashmir had lapsed. This brought a predominately rural and Muslim population that had been accustomed to a level of autonomy supervised by British political and army officers back under the control of the Hindu controlled princely state ruled from the vale of Kashmir, as well as the transfer of local paramilitaries to Kashmiri control. The chiefs of the state of Chitral, bordering Gilgit, had through the summer of 1947 been launching raids against the Kashmiri government, drawing support from the ostensibly Kashmiri regiments of scouts, paramilitary units of light infantry formed and officered by the British, and recruited from Muslim mountain communities to police the northern frontier.


\textsuperscript{463} Marston, \textit{Indian Army and the End of the Raj}, 341-342.
They were joined by Pathan tribesman from the Khyber, who banded together into raiding parties or infiltrated into Kashmir, waiting to see if the state would accede to Pakistan or India. It was planned that chaos and communal unrest in Kashmir would necessitate a military intervention by the Muslim tribal chiefs on the grounds of restoring order, after which they would establish either a new Muslim state or accede directly to Pakistan.\(^464\) The British commander of the Gilgit Scouts, William Brown, and his assistant commander, ‘Jock’ Mathieson had been recalled by the government of Kashmir in order to counter this unrest. Marching into Kashmir in early September, with the regimental pipes and drums playing the Jacobite invasion song ‘Blue Bonnets are Over the Border,” these British officers had already come to the conclusion that Kashmir should annexed to Pakistan, whatever decision was made by the Maharajah and his advisers.\(^465\)

**Indian Defense Policy After Empire: The Indian Army and National Integration**

The senior leadership of the Indian Army had only begun to plan a coherent defense strategy for India when it was confronted by both the refugee crisis and the conflict over Kashmir. Rob Lockhart, the commander of the Indian Army, assembled his senior British and Indian officers to draft a proposal to the cabinet, asking for directions from the new government. A.A. Rudra, the Indian volunteer who had risen from private to sergeant with the British Army on the Somme in 1916, had by 1947 been promoted to the rank of brigadier general, having served as a colonel on Auchinleck’s staff during the

\(^{465}\) Ibid., 92.
Second World War, and then appointed to the General Headquarters of the Indian Army. As a senior staff officer under Lockhart, he recounted that Nehru, when presented with the army’s request for a policy directive by Lockhart, “blew his top,” throwing the general out of his office. “We don’t need a defense plan. Our policy is nonviolence. We foresee no military threats. Scrap the Army!”

What actually transpired between Lockhart and Nehru during this meeting is unknown, but the story has been repeated again and again in the histories of both the Indian Army and in the Nehruvian state. Nehru had in meetings with the English physicist and strategist Patrick Blackett agreed with his assessment that relying on the Indian Army for the defence of India was an “unrealistic” strategy in the short term, emphasizing that national development would have to precede the use of the army that they both still viewed as essentially a foreign apparatus reliant on Britain and British officers. Nehru’s first major military policy proposal after independence, and his meeting with Lockhart, was made on September 16th, 1947, advocating the further reduction of the Indian Army, from its post partition strength of more than a quarter of a million men to 150,000, with a provision that it should not exceed a strength of 175,000.

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468 Anderson, Nucleus and Nation, 206.
469 Jawaharlal Nehru, Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru: Without Special Title (New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, 1986), 485.
This proposal was made not only as tribal irregulars began crossing over the Kashmiri frontier and the Indian Army was reestablishing control over the Punjab, but as a second princely state expected to join the Indian Union, Junagadh, refused to accede to India. After August 15th Junagadh had, like Kashmir, signed a ‘standstill’ agreement with Pakistan, in which its relations with foreign states would temporarily remain as they had under British rule. Though it did not share a border with Pakistan, only an outlet into the Arabian Sea open to Karachi, the Nawab had announced that the state would accede to Pakistan, to which Pakistan agreed on September 13th. With some of the Junagadh State’s subsidiary nobles and landowners acceding to India separately, there was the possibility of a localized war between the state forces loyal to the Nawab and Pakistan, and those who were loyal to the nobles who sought to join India.\footnote{Ashok Krishna, \textit{India's Armed Forces: Fifty Years of War and Peace} (New Delhi: Lancer Publishers, 1998), 4-5.} Using Indian State Forces loyal to the princely states that had already acceded to India, the Indian Army deployed an effective military curtain around the region, established by September 17th.\footnote{“Manavadar to Join Pakistan,” \textit{The Times of India}, September 17, 1947, 7.}

With the advantage of hindsight, the response of the civil and military leadership to the accession crises of 1947 has been criticized, with divisions in opinion over where to place the blame. J.N. Dixit, who negotiated with Pakistani officials often during his career in the Indian foreign service – he would rise to the post of Foreign Secretery in 1991 – reflects a common belief on the part of Indian civil servants and congress politicians that the slow response to military actions in the princely states was due in large part to the complicity of the British officers who commanded the army. The loss of
a large portion of Kashmir to Pakistan serves as the evidence. Dixit argues that the
“instinctive reactions” of Nehru and his Home Minister, V.J. Patel, were “scuttled” by
British interference on the part of not only Lockhart, and his eventual replacement, Roy
Bucher but also to Mountbatten, who held many of the same reservations on British
participation in the military affairs of the dominions. Dixit cites Nehru’s desire to respond
militarily in December of 1947 and January 1947 as evidence of his support for an
aggressive campaign against Pakistan, an effort thwarted by Mountbatten’s insistence
that the issue be brought up the United Nations.472 As the Indian Army was already
locked in combat with both Pakistani regulars and tribal auxiliaries by this time, it is a
difficult argument to comprehend. When Junagadh State was cut off from
communications and outside transportation by the military, and it appeared that the crisis
might produce the same exodus of refugees that had appeared in the Punjab, Nehru gave
specific orders to officers in the field to “avoid trouble at any cost.”473

The other opinion, primarily that of Indian officers, is that Nehru had a complete
lack of understanding of national security, and the role of the army as the pillar of Indian
defense. Some of this criticism has been tempered by the recognition that Nehru’s real
and perceived hostility towards British officers served to alienate the Indians with whom
they had close working relationships, such as the case of Lockhart and Rudra.
Additionally, Nehru’s desire to reduce the presence of the military as an arm of
government and enter into peace negotiations with China in the years before the Chinese

473 “Postal Communication With Junagadh Cut,” The Times of India, September 29, 1947, New
Delhi, 7.
invasion of 1962, color modern interpretations of Nehru’s actions in 1947.\textsuperscript{474} Nehru, while he had difficult relations with his British commanders, and maintained a cool reservation on the role of the army after 1946, was tempered by the reputation that the Indian Army had as pillar of state and imperial power. Nehru’s agitation that Indian troops had been used to reestablish Dutch, French and British control in East Asia has been cited as a reason that he feared to use the army, in that its reputation as an imperial force would only be strengthened.\textsuperscript{475} Additionally, as Nehru feared, there was a great deal of collusion between British officers and Pakistan, as well as contact between the British commanders of the force. How much this effected operations on the ground, or the ability of Nehru to make an informed decision remains a point of contention, but it would prove to complicate the actions of the Indian Army as war with Pakistan over the fate of the Princely States became inevitable.

\textbf{Intervention in Kashmir: Planning and Implementation}

Throughout October, as the situation in Kashmir continued to deteriorate, Lockhart had been in contact with General Gracey, the deputy commander of the Pakistan Army, sharing concerns over the actions of tribal irregulars in Kashmir. On October 24\textsuperscript{th}, due to the reports given to him by British officers in the field, Gracey called Lockhart and informed him that large bodies of Pathan tribal warriors and military

\textsuperscript{475} Anderson, \textit{Nucleus and Nation}, 206.
material, supported by the Pakistan Army, had crossed into Kashmir. Similar reports were made through British channels in the lead up to war; British intelligence officers reported to George Cunningham, the British governor of the North West Frontier Province, that thousands of Pathan tribesmen were moving north-east towards Kashmir aided by the army. Cunningham in turn shared this with Auchinleck, who, in the difficult position as the supreme commander of both armies, hinted to Lockhart that there was a major movement of troops across the frontier in Pakistan.477

While it is unclear to what extent Lockhart shared the reports he received in the in the late summer and fall of 1947 to other members of the government or military in the lead up to the war, after receiving Gracey’s call of the 24th, Lockhart did not retain this information. At an emergency meeting of the Defense Council comprised of Nehru, Mountbatten and senior British and Indian officers from all the services, Lockhart read the intelligence he had received from Gracey. The response of the Indian Army in the aftermath of this meeting was swift. Directed by the government on the morning of the 25th to prepare an intervention in Kashmir, Indian officers had by that evening met with the senior officers of the Kashmir State Forces at the capital of Srinagar, quickly being enveloped by irregular forces from Pakistan. The following day these officers had returned to India and elements of the Sikh Regiment were placed on alert to fly into Srinagar. On the same day the Maharajah wrote to Mountbatten formally asking for military aid and accepting an accession to India, a treaty that Mountbatten signed that

evening. At sunrise on the 27th, Indian Air Force transports crossed the frontier, carrying three companies of the 1st Battalion of the Sikh Regiment.

The capture of the Srinagar airport enabled the arrival of the rest of the battalion, and beginning on October 29th, of the 161st Infantry Brigade consisting of three additional three battalions with artillery support. This established a firm air bridge between Srinagar and the temporary cantonments established for the army around Delhi. In the crucial period where the three companies of Sikhs secured the airfield, aided by a troop of cavalry loyal to the Maharajah, this vanguard fought a series of small unit actions around the capital, where their battalion commander, Colonel Rai, was shot and killed. In the first landing of these troops, just 100 men were landed, with only 800 meters separating the airfield from the insurgents. In the days to follow, elements of the same force would patrol out as far as 21 kilometers, made mobile by the confiscation of civilian vehicles. The stunning success of the initial force from 1/Sikhs, fewer than 400 men, in part is reflected by the failure of 9,000 State Troops to adequately confront the 10,000 or more raiders – the term used by the Indian Army to describe the irregular forces from Pakistan – that were estimated to be operating in Kashmir at any time. With 60,000 demobilized soldiers in the region of Poonch alone, and thousands more available from local militias, INA veterans, and volunteers from the Pakistan Army, there was a

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ready reserve of manpower to support the raiding columns that had crossed into Kashmir.483

The air landings at Srinagar on the 27th of October had led Jinnah to call for General Gracey, acting as the commander in the absence of Frank Messervy, to mobilize two brigades of the Pakistan Army to intervene.484 Gracey refused, citing that if the regular forces were deployed in the field against the Indian Army, it would have ammunition for only several hours of sustained fighting.485 He was supported by Auchinleck, who in one of his final acts as Supreme Commander, flew to Lahore to meet with Gracey and Jinnah. Auchinleck informed Jinnah of his support for the British commander, but also of the legality of the accession of Kashmir to India by the treaty negotiations that had created Pakistan.

Additionally, he warned that if Pakistan deployed its army, which had a far larger proportion of British officers in company and field officer positions, all British officers in Pakistan, including Gracey, would be ordered to ‘stand down’, leaving the military of Pakistan leaderless and without the military staff necessary to run a war.486 Mountbatten and Auchinleck had received orders from London in July of 1947 that in the event of war between Pakistan and India, all British soldiers in the subcontinent would be ordered to withdraw their services, to prevent Britons serving in the Indian military from fighting

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484 T.O. Smith, Vietnam and the Unraveling of Empire: General Gracey in Asia (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 111
486 Warner, Auchinleck, 225.
those serving with Pakistan. This order, referenced by Auchinleck in his meeting with Gracey and Jinnah, had been secretly given to British commanders as well.\textsuperscript{487} In nationalist histories of the Kashmir conflict this order has been seen as giving an advantage to Pakistan, as it was only used to prevent British officers from entering Kashmir. This allowed British officers to continue to serve in the Pakistan Army after October 1947, while it provided material and manpower support to irregulars and removed British officers from the Indian forces deployed as regular soldiers within Kashmir.\textsuperscript{488}

Lockhart took this policy to mean that British officers could provide support and aid to the Indian government as Indian Army officers, as long as they were not deployed into the field.\textsuperscript{489} Dudley Russell’s East Punjab and Delhi Command was tasked with planning the Indian intervention in October, including the initial air landings at Srinagar. This position was eventually transformed into a more expansive Western Command, to orchestrate the entire war effort. Russell’s orders given to his field commanders in December of 1947 focused on pushing west towards Kashmir’s border with the Pakistani provinces of West Punjab and the Northwest Frontier, rather than into the northern areas lost early in the war to tribal irregulars, a strategy that was carried out throughout the entire war.\textsuperscript{490} Lockhart, for initiating the planning of an Indian military campaign in Kashmir before the final decision had been made, and Russell, as the commander of the

\textsuperscript{489} Marston, \textit{The Indian Army and the End of the Raj}, 347.
\textsuperscript{490} Rao, \textit{Prepare or Perish}, 54.
staff planning the campaign and of the forces that were sent to Kashmir, have been credited with the Indian Army’s ability to quickly respond after Nehru’s final decision was made to intervene.491

Both men also had the advantage of having a professional Indian staff to aid in the planning, chief among them Russell’s subordinate, S.K. Sinha, who undertook numerous missions to Kashmir at the behest of British officers barred from entering the region, and Sam Manekshaw, a prewar officer and winner of the military cross in Burma. Assigned with his wartime regiment to Pakistan, he opted for India and was drawn to the staff of the Indian Army’s planning department.492 Manekshaw was among the Indian officers flown to Kashmir the day before the Indian intervention, learning there that among those already dead was the British officer with which he had trained with in the Royal Scots Fusiliers, killed with his family by tribesmen.493 Sinha and Manekshaw were among numerous Indian officers of middle rank that had served in British Indian Army who would, in part because of the combined crises of partition and Kashmir, rise quickly to senior positions in the Indian Army in the decades to follow.

Lockhart and Russell were not so lucky. Nehru’s discovery that Lockhart had not divulged his conversations with British officers in Pakistan prior to October 24th resulted in Lockhart resigning from his post, to be replaced by Roy Bucher, the army

chief of staff, who had carefully managed to maintain good relations with Nehru and other senior politicians. The ignominious private nature of his departure was concealed by two days of public spectacle, marked by dinners with Nehru and senior military officers, and his being waved off from the New Delhi train station by large crowds and an honor guard of two infantry battalions.\footnote{Lockhart formally left his command on January 1\textsuperscript{st}, 1948, officially over reasons of poor health.} Russell too was replaced. After making an extensive tour of the Kashmir battlefields in violation of the stand down order, he was confronted by Lockhart and Mountbatten. Criticized for his leading role in the prosecution of the war, an embarrassment to public sentiments of British neutrality, he resigned, though he was retained by the Indian Army as an adviser.\footnote{Russell too was replaced. After making an extensive tour of the Kashmir battlefields in violation of the stand down order, he was confronted by Lockhart and Mountbatten. Criticized for his leading role in the prosecution of the war, an embarrassment to public sentiments of British neutrality, he resigned, though he was retained by the Indian Army as an adviser.} By the end of 1947, the most senior British officers in post-partition India – Auchinleck, Lockhart and Russell, had been removed. Auchinleck for his part refused Mountbatten’s offer of a peerage – Bernard Montgomery had discouraged Mountbatten from even offering one - believing that it only served to justify the partition of India and of the Indian Army. He would be known occasionally as Auchinleck of Egypt or as Auchinleck of India, like other controversial imperial figures such as Lawrence or Gordon, whose only titles came from their tragic association with the lands in which they had served as army officers. His departure was marked only by a review of a small guard of Royal Scots Fusiliers stationed outside his home in Delhi.\footnote{A tribute in the \textit{Times of India}.}
India, placed on the sixth page between ads for textiles, stock prices and classifieds, served as a farewell to his 45 years in India:498

“His deep-seated affection for the Indian soldier was almost tangible and was consequently reciprocated most of all by the rank and file. He never cared for his desk, as perspiring staff officers were often made uncomfortably aware, and on every occasion available to him – and at times which probably should not have been – he was out and about travelling by air, sea and land among his troops. No Commander-in-Chief ever maintained such close and constant contact with the units of so vast a command. To this untiring energy in personal encouragement and inspections was due the efficiency in training and high morale which carried the greatest Indian armed forces in history to unrivalled victory.”

Kashmir and Hyderabad: Political Intervention, Stalemate and Overextension

Bucher’s appointment to command the Indian Army brought it under the control of yet another British officer, but while Nehru had notoriously difficult relations with the previous commanders, Lockhart and Auchinleck, Bucher and Nehru had developed an amicable relationship. This is in part credited to Bucher’s abilities as an “operative” who recognized the importance of politics on the decision making of senior military and civilian leaders.499 The two men had also worked together when Bucher had been placed in charge of Eastern Command, where Nehru accompanied him on a multi-day air tour of

499 Bajwa, Jammu and Kashmir War, 192.
the region in the summer of 1947. Flying over scenes of some of the worst communal violence, Nehru’s insistence on landing the plane as close to rioting mobs as possible earned the respect of the British general.\textsuperscript{500} It had been announced by Baldev Singh upon Bucher’s promotion that he would act as the army commander until April of 1948, at which time an Indian commander in chief would replace him.\textsuperscript{501}

Cariappa was widely seen as the inevitable choice for this position, though it was not announced until December of 1948, and would not become effective until January 15\textsuperscript{th}, 1949.\textsuperscript{502} His central role as an Indian representative to numerous military committees between 1945 and 1947, and his leadership roles as a brigade commander on the North West Frontier and then as head of Eastern Command, and his education in both British and Indian military schools had served to groom him as the commander designate. With the forced transfer of Russell to army headquarters and out of Western Command, Cariappa was moved there, taking over the role as the commander of the Indian campaign in Kashmir in January 1948.\textsuperscript{503} Kalwant Singh, the commander of the ad hoc Jammu and Kashmir Division assembled in the Vale of Kashmir, had been ordered by Russell to focus on pushing back the irregular fighters back into Pakistan, relieving besieged towns and garrisons in the south and west.\textsuperscript{504} Cariappa’s arrival in Kashmir coincided with the onset of deep winter and major tribal attacks, preventing major offensive operations until

\textsuperscript{500} Nisid Hajari, \textit{Midnight’s Furies: The Deadly Legacy of India’s Partition} (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2015), 61.
\textsuperscript{501} “Indian C-in-C from April 1948,” \textit{The Times of India}, December 23, 1947, New Delhi, 1.
\textsuperscript{502} “General Cariappa Appointed as Commander in Chief,” \textit{The Times of India}, December 5, 1948, New Delhi, 1.
spring, but much of the course of the war correlates with Russell’s plan. Cariappa’s own plans for a major attack into western Kashmir in the spring and summer of 1947 was inhibited by Nehru’s order of July 1947 that ordered a complete halt to ongoing offensive operations, in light of his negotiations towards a ceasefire in the United Nations. This decision has been seen as an example of Nehru’s “novice” approach to warfare, but it reflects his earlier decision made after the landings at Srinagar to approach the situation diplomatically, as he limited military operations to Kashmir, rather than use the forces concentrated in the Punjab for an attack across the border towards Rawalpindi or Lahore.

The outrage on the part of the army – Thimayaa, now serving as a division commander, suggested to Cariappa that all senior officers offer their resignations – was channeled by Cariappa through Bucher. Bucher, who has been lambasted in many histories of the Indian Army for his apprehensions over offensive action in Kashmir, and for supporting British interests over those of the Indian Army, proved to be a funnel for directing the concerns of the Army to Nehru. He had already pressed Nehru on

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505 Praval, *Indian Army After Independence*, 81-84.
507 Khanduri, *Field Marshal Cariappa*, 184.
509 See C. Dasgupta, *War and Diplomacy in Kashmir, 1947-1948* (New Delhi: Sage India, 2002), 137 and Khanduri, *Field Marshall Cariappa*, 173. Kahnduri’s assertion that Cariappa was “fighting two enemies - army headquarters headed by Roy Bucher and the Pakistani army headed by Messervy,” a partial quote from Sinha’s autobiography, has been repeated by Dasgupta and has been quoted in numerous articles and books, with some writers citing this as a direct quote from Cariappa himself. Khanduri writes that Bucher and other British officers, such as Russell, “baulked at having to take orders from the once brown natives turned rulers,” while also writing “the fact is that British officers served India with zeal and devotion even after independence” (404).
Cariappa’s desire to expand the Indian commitment in Kashmir, and in a meeting on July 10th, Nehru and Bucher agreed that counteroffensives could be launched wherever tribal forces continued to advance.\textsuperscript{510} Under Bucher’s supervision, the Indian Army deployment in Kashmir rose from 49 infantry battalions to 66 from the end of summer to the beginning of winter. The “cautious” approach to military matters by the government was publicly criticized by Thimayya, but Bucher’s assessment was adopted by Nehru, again, an action that has earned him the enmity of many historians. Asked by Nehru to compile a report in October on the military situation, Bucher’s report cited that a major offensive coinciding with the onset of winter would necessarily be difficult due to poor weather, logistical problems and that it might provoke a formal entry into the war by Pakistan. Additionally, Cariappa’s request for three further divisions to support operations in Kashmir would draw forces away from the Punjab, where most soldiers not committed to internal security operations elsewhere in India were stationed, to prevent a possible Pakistani advance in the region.\textsuperscript{511}

The academic assessment of Bucher as a cautious planner and a natural pessimist\textsuperscript{512} can be seen in his relations with Cariappa, Thimayya and Nehru, but the accuracy of his appraisal reflected many of the problems that faced the Indian Army as it existed a year after independence. As demonstrated by the actions of November and December 1947, winter had proven a greater limitation on Indian forces than it had on tribal irregulars that were less dependent on motor transport and air support. Indian units

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\textsuperscript{510} Khanduri, \textit{Field Marshall Cariappa}, 185.
\textsuperscript{511} Kennedy, \textit{International Ambitions}, 193.
\textsuperscript{512} Ibid.
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fighting at high altitudes, which counted for the great majority of forces that were deployed outside the vale, suffered three cold weather casualties to every soldier killed or wounded in combat.\textsuperscript{513} The Kashmir state forces that had remained loyal to the maharajah were recognized as the only forces India could count as having any meaningful experience in cold weather operations.\textsuperscript{514}

Notoriously unreliable without the support of units of the regular army, this experience counted for little if dispersed in winter conditions, as they were when confronted by the paramilitary scout units led by the British Major Brown. During Brown’s participation in the overthrow of the Kashmiri government in Gilgit-Baltistan in November of 1947, it could be counted on that “starvation and exposure” would kill those Indian troops who attempted to retreat in disorder. Brown, recalled to Peshawar before 1948, urged the Pakistani officers who replaced him to attack in the winter to take advantage this fact. Though they did not, the subsequent invasion of Ladakh by scout units through the spring and summer of 1948 proved to be the most rapid advance of the war, seizing most of Ladkah as far east as the city of Leh, and south to the Zoji La pass leading into the Vale of Kashmir.\textsuperscript{515} By contrast, Indian attempts to force the pass beginning in August were marked by repeated failure. Thimayya’s widely celebrated – Major Brown describes it as historic\textsuperscript{516} - final, and successful, attack on the pass

\textsuperscript{513} Praval, \textit{Indian Army Since Independence}, 108.
\textsuperscript{515} Brown, \textit{Gilgit Rebellion}, 190-191.
\textsuperscript{516} Ibid.
beginning on November 1st resulted in the loss of 40 men killed, 80 wounded and more than 350 cold weather casualties.\textsuperscript{517}

Elevated casualty rates due to the fighting at high altitudes compounded the strain on available forces for operations in Kashmir, or anywhere else in India. With at least 49 infantry battalions assigned to operations in Kashmir,\textsuperscript{518} and another 19 assigned to Hyderabad,\textsuperscript{519} more than 70 percent of the Indian Army’s post-partition infantry strength\textsuperscript{520} was engaged in active military operations by the middle of September 1948. This did not include the units of cavalry, engineers, artillery, armoured troops and other supporting elements of the Army that were also engaged. The Pakistan Army by comparison, though it contributed substantial support in the form of leadership, intelligence, organization and arms to the groups of fighters in Kashmir, had until the late summer of 1948 not yet deployed any of its regular military formations against India, with only an estimated 5 percent of irregular and tribal fighters confronted in Kashmir being drawn from actively serving soldiers in the Pakistan Army.\textsuperscript{521}

The pattern of Kashmiri operations to draw in increasing numbers of soldiers was reflected in the Indian Army’s actions in other princely states. After the beginning of the war in Kashmir the earlier accession crisis in the princely state of Junagadh, which had been contained by state troops and the police, was responded to by the deployment of a

\textsuperscript{517} Rao, \textit{Prepare or Perish}, 63.
\textsuperscript{518} Praval, \textit{Indian Army Since Independence}, 108.
\textsuperscript{520} Rudra Chaudhuri, “Arms and Assistance in South Asia, 1953-1965” in 230.
\textsuperscript{521} Navnita Chadha Behera, \textit{Demystifying Kashmir}, 74.
regular infantry brigade.⁵²² The insistence of V.J. Patel to create a separate Indian Army command that brought loyal state troops under its control, titled the Kathiawar Defense Force, “steadied” the region, which capitulated on November ⁹ᵗʰ, 1947 after Indian troops crossed the border forcing the Nawab to flee to Pakistan.⁵²³

A larger and more time consuming parallel existed with the refusal of the Nizam of Hyderabad, ruler of the largest and most populous of the princely state, to accede to India. Authorized by the British to have a state force strength of 7,000 men, the Nizam’s army had expanded after Indian independence to a force of 22,393 trained soldiers, with a reserve of more than 11,000 trainees and armed paramilitaries, supported by an unknown but larger number of religious militiamen known as the Razkar.⁵²⁴ The withdrawal of Indian forces from Hyderabad in the winter of 1947 and 1948 in lieu of negotiations then ongoing as to its accession to India⁵²⁵ saw widespread communal violence similar to that which had overcome the Punjab the previous summer, while the Nizam placed the armed forces on alert for a potential Indian invasion.⁵²⁶ Mountbatten’s own attempts to come to a political agreement before his departure from India in June 1948 saw only an extended period of equivocating by the Hyderabad government – Nehru promised that only if there was sufficient evidence of communal violence would a military operation be

⁵²² Praval, Indian Army Since Independence, 50.
⁵²⁶ Bawa, The Last Nizam, 274.
Hyderabad was given an ultimatum on September 13th by V.P. Menon, demanding that the Nizam allow Indian troops to enter the state as they were recognized by the Indian government as the only means to “restore law and order.” The Indian invasion, Operation Polo, was officially described as a police action began the same day, having already been planned by Eric Goddard, the British general in charge of Southern Command, with operational control given to General Shri Rajendrasinhji. Though the military phase ending with the overthrow of the Nizam lasted just 100 hours, it had taken a large portion of the Army to conduct the attack, forces that had been on standby or in blockading positions around Hyderabad since Goddard had finished his planning in late February of that year.

With these considerations, Bucher’s October recommendation to Nehru advocating a cautious approach was formally accepted on November 11th, 1948 when Nehru and the Defense Council limited their goals to the ground operations that had already been underway, primarily those by Cariappa and Thimayaa to extend the Indian perimeter around the Valley of Kashmir and continue the efforts to push enemy forces out of Ladakh. The attacks made by Thimayaa had already faced serious problems with the weather, and by the time that the ceasefire came into effect, operations in Kashmir had become largely impossible, with most Indian units withdrawing due to the high rates

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of casualties inflicted by the weather.\textsuperscript{531} The signing of the ceasefire agreement by General Gracey representing Pakistan and General Bucher representing India was effective on January 1\textsuperscript{st}, 1949, the last time British officers would represent both the countries that had once formed the Indian Empire.\textsuperscript{532}

**Bucher and the Indian Army: The End of British Control**

It had been reported in October, and then withdrawn, that Bucher’s comments on the nature of pace of Indianization would result in the appointment of an Indian commander-in-chief,\textsuperscript{533} but it was not made official that Cariappa would become the first Indian head of the army until December, to be effective fifteen days after the signing of the ceasefire agreement.\textsuperscript{534} How and why Bucher was replaced is a matter of some speculation. After the conclusion of the intervention in Hyderabad, the United Kingdom’s Secretary for Commonwealth Relations, Philip Noel-Baker, had been asked in Parliament how long the Indian government was intending to retain Bucher as Commander in Chief. His written response was that Bucher was serving a one year term effective from January 1\textsuperscript{st}, 1948, with a three month notice of termination and the ability to be retained as an advisor.\textsuperscript{535} Bucher indeed served out role as head of the army for the year, plus fifteen days, and three months later, he left Bombay.\textsuperscript{536} This is in keeping the report in the

\textsuperscript{531} Bloeria. *The Battles of Zojila*, 186.


\textsuperscript{533} “Nationalisation of India’s Army,” *The Times of India*, October 29, 1947, New Delhi, 1.


\textsuperscript{536} “Gen. Sir R. Bucher’s Departure: Touching Farewell in Bombay,” *The Times of India*, April 8, 1948, New Delhi, 3.
British parliament, reports in the press, and indeed was longer than had been expected by a strict reading of the earlier notification by Auchinleck and the Defense Minister that indianization would be complete by the spring of 1948.

Despite the warm farewell he was given in the press by Cariappa and other Indian officers and officials, Bucher’s reputation as a political manipulator taints much of what has been written on him since his departure from India. A.A. Rudra, who after Lockhart’s departure felt that he had been passed over by Bucher in favor of other Indian officers, indicated that Lockhart and he suspected Bucher of acting as a source of information to Nehru. This was the issue surrounding Lockhart’s resignation, that he had not divulged reports coming from British officers in Pakistan in the fall of 1947 that a major infiltration of tribal irregulars was being supported by Pakistan. This information was by Lockhart and Rudra considered to be little more than a rumor, before Gracey’s giving of the intelligence report to Lockhart, passed on by Lockhart to the Defense Council, was made on October 24th.537

It has also been speculated that Bucher resigned, or was asked to resign, during the meeting of the cabinet held the night before Operation Polo commenced. This story invariably has him meeting with the Defense Council and insisting that the operation be called off with the threat that he would resign. Patel has supposed to have to have said “‘you may resign General, but the police action will start tomorrow,’” before ordering the

Defense Minister, Baldev Singh, to issue orders for the army to attack.\textsuperscript{538} Other historians have written of his waking up of Patel the same night, urging a postponement of an attack for fear of reprisals by the Pakistan Air Force on Indian cities; Patel is said to have reminded Bucher that London had withstood air attacks in two world wars.\textsuperscript{539} The way these stories are repeated in many histories of the Kashmir War, or of the military, or in biographies of the personalities involved, usually involves the complicity of Bucher in trying to tie the hands of Nehru or Cariappa, or of both them trying to limit Indian Army offensives in Kashmir, or in Bucher acting solely in the British interest, in part by funneling information to Pakistan by way of Gracey. Alternatively, Bucher has been accused of supporting the Hyderabad operations, and for playing up the levels of communal violence there, as a means of drawing away troops from Kashmir, so that India could not gain a decisive victory.\textsuperscript{540}

Bucher did have severe reservations in early 1948 about launching an operation in Hyderabad while the army was simultaneously engaged in Kashmir. In the preparatory phase that turned General Goddard’s initial plan into an operational one, General Chauduri, commanding India’s 1\textsuperscript{st} Armoured Division, suggested in the spring that four months of further planning and preparation would allow a successful invasion that would respond to the problems laid out by Bucher, coinciding with the launching of Operation

\textsuperscript{538} Praval, \textit{Indian Army After Independence}, 135.
\textsuperscript{539} S.C. Das, \textit{The Biography of Bharat Kesri Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee: With Modern Implications} (New Delhi: Abhinav, 2000), 128.
Polo in mid-September.\(^{541}\) “Politically, I consider the Socialists, Communists and Right Wing Congress have put the Govt. of India 'in a Jam' by accusing them of weakness,” he wrote to Rajendrasinhji.\(^{542}\) This official history puts the final decision to invade on September 10\(^{th}\), after which operational control was passed to the Army.\(^{543}\) His part in the operation, whatever his own reservations, confirmed his frequent communications with Gracey, who pleaded with Bucher not to launch the operation in the days before it commenced.\(^{544}\)

Bucher’s communications with Gracey did not result in the end of his command as they had for Lockhart, and serve as an indicator of the precipitous decline in relations that occurred throughout the year 1948. “For god’s sake, think again,” Gracey wrote to Bucher, before Operation Polo, warning of the repercussions. Bucher wrote back that as Gracey had not informed him of the extent of Pakistan’s involvement, which by summer did include both regular troops and some of their British officers, that he had no comment as to any potential policy of the Pakistan government.\(^{545}\) The deterioration of his own relationship with Gracey, and the growing sense on the part of the Indian Army as to the extent of formal Pakistani involvement in the conflict, radically shifted his idea of how the war could be fought. With the introduction of Pakistani regular soldiers, Bucher considered a major armored offensive south from Kashmir into the western Punjab.

Without available troops this plan did not come to fruition, but it highlights that the same

\(^{542}\) Prasad, *Operation Polo*, 32.
\(^{543}\) Ibid., 43.
limitations that frustrated his subordinates did the same to him.\textsuperscript{546} Writing to his daughter after the introduction of Pakistani units, Bucher wrote that “but for the advent of Indian troops, no one in the valley would have been spared,”\textsuperscript{547} a moral justification that complicates the picture of Bucher as a political meddler whose only aim was the maintenance of British influence in the subcontinent at the expense of Indian independence.

The association of Bucher to an effort to derail the military operations either in Kashmir or Hyderabad frequently demonstrates a disregard for, or misrepresentation of, facts and events, and an explicit favoritism for the actions of Indian generals like Cariappa and Thimayaa, such as the work of retired Lieutenant General K.K. Khanna.\textsuperscript{548} Brij Mohan Kaul, another retired general and a political associate of Nehru, argued that while India was fighting a “life or death” war, Gracey and Bucher were fighting as friendly associates, in order to preserve British influence, and prevent an inter-dominion war.\textsuperscript{549} It should be noted here that even critics of Bucher, such as Kuldip Singh Bajwa, have noted that Indian and Pakistani officers, including Cariappa, travelled back and forth from Lahore and Delhi to social functions out of “good-will.”\textsuperscript{550} The release in 2002 of

\textsuperscript{548} Khanna, \textit{Art of Generalship}, 135. Khanna blasts the leadership and “negligible” combat experience of Lockhart and Bucher. Lockhart had won the Military Cross in Mesopotamia with the Indian Army in the First World War and had served as the commander of Southern Command before becoming head of the Army. Bucher won the military cross fighting in Afghanistan in 1920 and also served as a regional commander before becoming head of the army. See Janet Podell, \textit{Annual Obituary, 1981} (London: Thomson Gale, 1982), 592 and Bureau of Public Information, “General Roy Bucher’s Long Service in Indian Army,” in \textit{India Information} 23 (July 1949), 145.
\textsuperscript{550} Kuldip Singh Bajwa, \textit{The Dynamics of Soldiering} (New Delhi: Har-Anand, 2004), 214.
Chandrashekhar Dasgupta’s frequently cited *War and Diplomacy in Kashmir, 1947-1949* coincided with numerous articles and reviews referring to the event as “Albion’s Perfidy”\(^{551}\) – or alternately as “Nehru’s Folly”\(^{552}\) - which has subsequently colored many accounts of the conflict, citing a determined British effort to limit the war, with Nehru being encouraged to limit military action by Bucher. Those views that combine this sentiment with a censure of Nehru, and a defense of Patel, has been presented largely by authors who are members or supporters of the conservative Hindu Indian People’s Party – the BJP - and the associated National Volunteers Organization – the RSS.\(^{553}\) Views expressed in the RSS publication *The Organiser* since the mid 1990’s have criticized Nehru and British officers, while praising the “independent actions” of Patel and Cariappa.\(^{554}\) This has also been expressed in the magazine *BJP Today*,\(^{555}\) in a biography of the founder of the BJP’s predecessor party, Shyama Prasad Mukherjee,\(^{556}\) and in the writings of BJP leader Lal Krishna Advani.\(^{557}\) The divisive response to popular articles on the subject, particularly those written by Advani, have not yet led to a wide reappraisal of what has been considered to be fact in many biographies and histories.


\(^{553}\) The Bharatiya Janata Party and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh.


\(^{556}\) Das, *The Biography of Bharat Kesri*, 128.

\(^{557}\) Lal Krishna Advani, *My Take* (New Delhi: Prabhat Prakashan, 2014), 287 and 303. Advani has pressed the issue several times in articles and blog contributions, which he includes in his book. In part his writing is based off of that of M.K.K. Nayar, whose memoirs were recently released in English, and have been criticized widely for including both historical inaccuracies as to the events he claims he witnessed, and to the accuracy of how he depicts his own career.
This in part reflects the frustration of Indian officers serving in Kashmir who did believe that they were being held back, if not by Bucher and Nehru personally, then at least generally by Army Headquarters at Delhi. “It became a joke amongst us,” wrote Sinha, assigned to Cariappa’s staff in the summer of 1947, “that our Command Headquarters was fighting two wars, one in Kashmir against the Pakistani’s and the other at Delhi against Army Headquarters!” Sinha wrote after his retirement from the army that learned that Cariappa deliberately withheld his plans for major operations from Army Headquarters, due to the professed belief that Bucher wanted to discredit Cariappa, in order to hold onto his command. That there were disagreements between Cariappa and Bucher is clear but it is unclear what information was held back, if any. Rajendra Nath, former Commandant of the Indian Military Academy claims Cariappa disclosed during a private meeting that he planned operations without the consent of Bucher out of fears of interference due to proscriptions on “offensive action.” The operations launched by Cariappa throughout the year largely reflected the stratagem used by Russell to relieve isolated and besieged garrisons – localized operations that still could be undertaken within the operational boundaries set up by Nehru and Bucher in July of 1948 – does not adequately justify the claim made that Cariappa presented Bucher with a “fait accompli.” Bucher appears to have maintained frequent contact with division commanders throughout the conflict and was privy to Operation Bison, which broke the stalemate in the Zojila Pass in November. Bucher’s order to Cariappa that the operation

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558 Sinha, *A Soldier Recalls*, 120.
559 Ibid.
561 Khanduri, *Field Marshal Cariappa*, 173.
should only be undertaken only if he could be sure of its successful outcome has been criticized or mocked as an example of his weak leadership, and the strength of Cariappa’s, but the warning came after repeated failed attempts to force the pass using frontal attacks by infantry.\textsuperscript{562}

Bucher’s poor reputation in part stemmed from his reputation as a British, rather than Indian officer. This has to do with his loyalty, and his affiliation after 1947 with the British Army rather than the Indian Army, despite his senior position. Sinha noted that Bucher’s insistence in calling the Indian Army “your army” when speaking to Indian soldiers stood in stark contrast to other British officers, like Russell, who considered the Indian Army after independence to still be “our army” and India to be “our country.”\textsuperscript{563} It is unclear if Bucher harbored the same prejudices towards race or religion that British officers serving in India had held for more than two centuries, as he has been accused of, but S.D. Varma, assigned with Indian and British officers at the new Defense Services College, wrote that he consciously worked as efficiently as possible so as not give Bucher the “satisfaction of saying ‘give a bloody wog a job to do and he is bound to fuck it up.’”\textsuperscript{564} Bucher’s emphasis on “smartness and the efficiency” was noted by Sukhwant Singh during his time in Delhi.\textsuperscript{565} This trait has been cited as a major reason for his slow and deliberate actions in Kashmir, to the chagrin of those commanding officers urging offensive action. This emphasis, combined with his inability to monitor the situation in

\textsuperscript{562} Ibid., 204.
\textsuperscript{563} Sinha, A Soldier Recalls, 100.
Kashmir personally per the stand down order, placed a significant strain on those commanders in the field, chiefly Cariappa and Thimayaa, who wished for the autonomy they believed would have turned the ceasefire into a decisive Indian victory.566

The Independent Indian Army on Campaign: The Lessons of Kashmir

The castigation made in the decades after the war that interference from Bucher, as well as from Delhi and London, limited the advance of the Indian Army in 1947 and 1948 masked the very real problems that faced the Indian Army during and after the conflict. This was also true of the sudden end of the war and in the replacement of Bucher by Cariappa on January 15th, 1949, fifteen days after the ceasefire. Many of these problems were those that had been assessed by Bucher himself in his report to Nehru made in November that hastened the ceasefire. First, the Indian Army had been spread thin by the combined operations of Kashmir, Hyderabad and internal security and refugee resettlement. The end of the short military conflict in Hyderabad did not end military commitments there, as it necessitated the installation of a military government and a military security force, formed around General Choudhury and the 1st Armoured Division.567 Army commitment in Kashmir rose after the conclusion of Operation Polo to somewhere near 75% of the combat strength of the army,568 though the successes of operations in November 1948 give credit to the repeated claims made by Cariappa and

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566 Pradeep Barua, The State at War in South Asia (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005), 162.
567 “Citizenship Ideals: Army’s Example,” The Times of India, October 12, 1948, New Delhi, 1.
568 Kennedy, International Ambitions, 193.
Thimayya that if the government gave them more troops, they could pursue a course of action other than maintaining the stalemate.

Bucher’s prediction that winter would be a serious deterrent to Indian operations did not prove to be as serious a limitation as he had warned, but the success of operations like Bison came at the price of thousands of casualties caused by extreme cold, rather than by enemy fire. Casualties on the part of Pakistani soldiers and tribal warriors to altitude and cold were similar, but in Ladakh and other areas where the units of British organized frontier scouts were operating, some of the most dramatic advances of the war were made. The forcing of the Zoljila pass by the Indian Army required large numbers of infantry, artillery and armored vehicles, and the engineers and supply system to support them through severe cold and deep snow.\textsuperscript{569} By contrast, small units of irregular soldiers recruited in Ladakh by the Indian Army were able to conduct similar operations as those conducted by Pakistani scouts. The Nubra Guards, formed from Kashmir’s Tibetan communities, served as a local militia, unlike the more regularly organized and equipped Pakistani scouts, but served the same purpose of providing a force that was capable of operating in high altitude environments. With the end of the war the unit was maintained but there was no effort to organize it into a regular force within the army structure.\textsuperscript{570}

Indian adaptation to winter warfare had been an ad hoc affair, with success owed largely to determination and endurance on the individual level and by the abilities of small unit leaders.

Despite Cariappa’s criticism that a “lack of initiative” on the part of junior officers resulted in the loss of ground after Pakistan’s intervention in the summer of 1948, the war, fought over mountain tops and in isolated villages was from late 1947 a conflict fought in large part by small units and junior leaders, rather than by commanders, like Cariappa, organizing major offensives.\textsuperscript{571} The most dramatic actions of the war involved, like the initial Srinagar operation, the insertion of small groups of soldiers by air or by mule, to isolated positions that were threatened to be overrun. The relief of Leh, the capital of Ladakh, was done by airlifting a single company of the 2/4th Gurkha Rifles which proved critical to stemming the enemy advance in that sector.\textsuperscript{572} This example, and that of dozens of other small actions that were conducted in the west and south of the Valley of Kashmir, highlight the skill of juniors officers and NCO’s, and of the actions of particularly enigmatic and experienced leaders, like Thimayaa.

\textbf{The Army on Campaign in 1947 and 1948: The Imperial Legacy}

The nature of the fighting also demonstrated the utilization of lessons learned and adapted from the Indian Army’s recent experience as an arm of British policy. The ability of the Indian Army in conjunction with the Indian Air Force to quickly plan and conduct the airlifting of soldiers into Srinagar in 1947 was met with shock by Pakistan, convincing General Gracey that only premeditation could have resulted in such a quick

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\item\textsuperscript{571} Khanduri, \textit{Field Marshall Cariappa}, 189.
\item\textsuperscript{572} Amarinder Singh, \textit{Lest We Forget} (Patiala: The Regiment of Ludhiana Welfare Association, 1999), 89.
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and successful operation. It is a credit to the Indian Army that the retention of this ability to ferry troops via air came after the dissolution of India’s airborne forces after the Second World War, and the partition of the Army in 1947. While India’s two dedicated airborne brigades were utilized first in refugee resettlement, and then as conventional infantry in Kashmir itself, the Indian Army could still call on other units to undertake airlift operations due to the experience garnered by the Indian Army in the Second World War.\footnote{Kenneth Conboy, \textit{Elite Forces of India and Pakistan} (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 1992), 5-7.}

Though V.P. Menon celebrated the Srinagar airlift by claiming that such an operation had never been conducted “in the history of warfare,”\footnote{M.K. Akbar, \textit{Kashmir, Behind the Vale} (New York: Viking, 1991), 114.} the Indian Army had been involved in such operations throughout the Second World War. 2/4\textsuperscript{th} Gurkhas, who were so instrumental in defending Ladakh, had been airlifted to seize the oilfields of Mosul and Kirkuk during the German sponsored coup in Iraq 1941, functioning as part of the first strategic airlift conducted by the British military in the Second World War.\footnote{Robert Lyman, \textit{Iraq 1941: The Battles for Basra, Habban\textregistered, Fallujah and Baghdad} (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2005), 29 and 86.} The success of the largely Indian 14\textsuperscript{th} Army in the Burma campaign of 1944 rested in large part on the use of aircraft working in close cooperation with the army; to airlift troops, to evacuate casualties, to ferry or drop supplies and to provide close air support.\footnote{Jonathan M. House, \textit{Towards Combined Arms Warfare: A Survey of 20\textsuperscript{th} Century Tactics, Doctrine and Organization} (Fort Leavenworth: Combat Studies Institute, 1984), 135.} In the war in Kashmir, these were all factors that played an important role to Indian Army successes, especially in the defense of isolated outposts, garrisons and towns.
The army also drew on its own historic tradition of fighting tribal communities on the North-West Frontier, utilizing lessons that had been incorporated into army doctrine in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Operational experience on the frontier had been gained by Indian officers, including Cariappa, as recent as the summer and fall of 1947, and there remained the legacy of a major campaign conducted in Waziristan on the eve of the Second World War. The use of isolated sangars, temporary elevated fighting positions constructed chiefly of stone, was a hallmark of British campaigns on the frontier, and that of the Indian Army in Kashmir. Indian soldiers saw that these positions proved to be increasingly vulnerable to modern weapons but that they allowed small bodies of Indian troops to hold back larger groups of tribal fighters.

The use of sangars and other defensive works in mountainous terrain provided an advantage to Pakistani soldiers and irregulars as well, but they lacked the coordination and superiority in numbers held by the Indian Army in artillery and air support. Tactical air support of ground operations and the screening of Indian defensive positions with artillery, gave a decided advantage to the Indian Army, even after the introduction of Pakistani regular forces. In attacks against enemy defenses, the heavy concentration of artillery fire on isolated enemy positions in support of the attacking infantry was cited as critical factor by the Indian Army after the war. The defeats suffered in 1948 by the Indian Army when attempting to force the Zojila Pass were in November overcome by

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the combination of sustained air attack and artillery bombardment. This was followed by
the introduction of tanks assisted by engineers and supported by infantry – a combination
that General Thimayya, who led the assault, had witnessed in the reduction of Japanese
defenses in the rugged terrain of Burma in 1944.\(^{580}\) This kind of temporary combined
arms coordination had been used by British imperial armies in numerous colonial
campaigns, notably in the organization of military columns to conduct operations along
the North-West Frontier,\(^{581}\) or as rapid reaction forces, such as the motorized flying
columns used by the British and Indian armies in the Middle East during the Second
World War.\(^{582}\) This coordination was also evident in Operation Polo, fought by specially
organized columns - named in the British manner after their commanding officers - of
infantry, artillery, armored vehicles and engineers.\(^{583}\)

The substantial involvement of irregular combatants with internal support in both
Hyderabad and Kashmir ensured that these conflicts would in part be a counterinsurgency
campaign conducted by the army. Communal violence, cited as a reason for Indian
intervention in both regions, also influenced the actions of the army, much as it had in the
summer and fall of 1947. Gracey, in a report made to the government of Pakistan in the
spring of 1948, wrote that a major Indian attack was "followed by a reign of terror which
included burning villages, massacre of civilian population and other atrocities. Four
thousand men are reported to have been victimized in this manner, and great panic and

\(^{581}\) Herman Gaston De Watteville, Waziristan, 1919-1920 (London: Constable and Co., 1925),
225. This particular example included scouts, light infantry and pioneers, supported by artillery
and machine guns. Increasingly after the First World War these would be coupled with armored
vehicles, and supported by aircraft.
\(^{582}\) Lyman, Iraq 1941, 34.
\(^{583}\) Prasad, Operation Polo, 55.
confusion prevails in this area.”584 Accusations of massacre and counter massacre have been made before, during and after the war, with soldiers of the communally divided Kashmir State Forces playing a central role; Hindu and Sikh soldiers involved in ethnic cleansing in the south, and Muslim soldiers participating with Pakistani scout units in the killing of civilians and prisoners of war in the North.585 Testimonies compiled by the government of Pakistan in 1948 imply that the Indian Army was involved in these atrocities, but frequently single out the role of state troops.586

The descriptions made by refugees of gangs of uniformed men and civilians armed with rifles, swords and spears are familiar to those made in the summer of 1947, when state troops were deeply involved with violence in the Punjab. After independence, state troops in India did not immediately come under control of the army and units that had been linked to massacres in the Punjab were sent as aid by the Maharajah of Patiala to Kashmir.587 In the lead up Operation Polo, state troops were used by the Indian Army to form part of the cordon around Hyderabad. These operations continued after the end of the 100 hours of ground combat, with violence on a genocidal scale – unconfirmed by the Indian government until the recent opening of a classified report compiled in the aftermath. The death of at least 40,000 Muslims, a “conservative estimate,” was due in part to the Indian Army’s unwillingness to intervene in communal reprisals, in disarming

Muslim civilians and militias while leaving Hindu’s armed or in the active participation of individuals or small groups of soldiers in encouraging Hindu mobs.\textsuperscript{588}

Praised for the speed of its success, the Indian Army in the aftermath of Hyderabad’s surrender also conducted massive sweeps with police, paramilitaries and state forces, imprisoning more than 17,000 men. The men were overwhelmingly Muslims, arrested under the pretext of belonging to or being associated with religious militias, or known or suspected communists of any religion. Additionally, land and cattle were repossessed and redistributed. While the Indian Army’s role in these types of actions again may not be known, the region was placed under a military governor.\textsuperscript{589} The use of the Indian Army as a counterinsurgency force in 1947 and 1948, albeit unofficially and in a supporting role to that of the army as a conventional force, would set a precedent for independent India in following imperial strategies.

It was a new experience for those junior Indian Officers whose only service up to that point had been in the Second World War or as an aide to civil power after 1945, but it was not a new practice for the army as an institution. The parallels of Kashmir and Hyderabad to operations undertaken by the Indian Army in the colonial period, and by the British Army in its own counterinsurgency operations across the globe before and after 1947, are striking. The killing or disbursement of military age males in retaliation for attacks on the government, the burning of villages supporting enemy fighters, the

\textsuperscript{588} Taylor C. Sherman, \textit{Muslim Belonging In Secular India} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 26-27.
\textsuperscript{589} Sherman, \textit{Muslim Belonging In Secular}, 26-27.
destruction or carrying off of livestock and foodstuff from hostile communities and the holding of hostages to prevent ambushes, were tactics developed in colonial campaigns that compare to the actions that the Indian Army has been accused of in Hyderabad and Kashmir. These tactics, the reliance on Gurkha infantry to undertake many of them, and the union of military and civil authority in areas under military control - and the support of conventional and counterinsurgency operations with the use of air power - have their precedents in the body of knowledge gleaned from colonial warfare that was developed by the British and Indian Armies up the beginning of the Second World War.590

When considering the wider trends of the armies of the British Commonwealth – the Commonwealth of Nations after 1949 – these similarities are more striking, particularly when considering Pakistan. The retention by the Pakistan Army of regimental identities and cultures established under British rule, even among irregulars, mirrored that of India, symbolically exemplified in 1947 by Major Brown’s Pathan bagpipers marching into Gilgit. Where Pakistan differed greatly from Britain or India was that its military became “unique in its heavy reliance”591 on tribal irregulars, religiously motivated foreign fighters and paramilitary forces as a cornerstone of security planning. This, evolving into a Pakistani military doctrine of advocating or supporting “people’s war,

guerilla war or Jihad,” began in 1947, predating the formal constitutional adoption of Islam as a pillar of that state.

Even with the religious sympathy or acrimony displayed by Hindu and Sikh soldiers in the Punjab, Kashmir or Hyderabad, the Indian Army remained, like the government, officially secular and dedicated to formal institutions. For the army this emphasized continuity with methods established in the Second World War and earlier traditions, apart from the aforementioned comparisons between the Indian Army as it existed before and after August 1947. The description of the British Army after 1945 that is included in *The Oxford History of the British Army* emphasizes the experience garnered in the Mediterranean Theatre, an operation influenced by the experience of Indian campaigns. Britain, New Zealand, Australia and Canada utilized weapons, equipment and methods developed during the Second World War, and the close cooperation between engineers, infantry, armor, artillery and air support that characterized the Commonwealth experience in Malaya and Korea, descriptions that could be used almost interchangeably for Indian military methods used in Kashmir.

**Cariappa: Indian Command of the Army**

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The implementation of the ceasefire, and the replacement of Bucher with Cariappa 15 days later, coincided with the withdrawal of most Indian units from Kashmir in December 1948 and January 1949 due to the severe weather. The rapid succession of events from the middle of 1947 to the beginning of 1949 left little time for serious reflection on the problems that had faced the Army during the military operations conducted in the year and a half that had followed independence. The Indian Army’s success in deterring Pakistan from taking over Kashmir completely despite serious issues involving manpower, the role of British officers, weather, terrain and communal neutrality, turned these potential problems into ancillary qualities of the post ceasefire promotion of the army. “I hope this will be the beginning of the end of the 14th months of magnificent fighting put up under most trying conditions and very heavy odds in carrying out the sacred duty given to you by our Government,” wrote Cariappa in an address to the Indian Army the day after the ceasefire.595

Neither the lack of critical reflection on the army’s recent role or the continuity displayed with the Indian Army’s imperial past limited the dramatic changes brought by Indianization. The adoption of this imperial initiative by nationalists and the changing opinions of British officers in India - and the limitations placed on them by London and Delhi – had seen the number of British Army officers in India decline to just 260 by the fall of 1948. Besides Bucher as head of the army, only two other British officers remained in senior command positions by the end of 1948, as commanders of the forces

around Bombay and Calcutta. In the Indian Army this had resulted in the rapid promotion of Indian officers to replace Britons in nearly all ranks and positions. The eagerness with which Indian officers took to these new roles and the belief that Indianization was necessary to make a truly independent army did not limit Indian officers appreciation of the important role of their British counterparts. European officers in Indian and British service had been the “architects of the modern Indian Army,” said one Indian officer in a farewell party held for departing British soldiers.

With the appointment of Cariappa as commander of the Indian Army the process of Indianization reached the highest point of the army. Whatever his private misgivings about the role and nature of British officers given his difficult relationship with Bucher, Cariappa publicly shared the same sentiments for Bucher as other Indian officers had for other Britons. “In bidding farewell,” toasted Cariappa at a farewell dinner, “I on behalf of myself and the officers of our army thank him and his predecessors for having taught us all at various times our work, which has enabled us to take the place of Britons in our army in the manner we have done in the short time our country has been free.”

Apart from his importance in discussions over the future of the Indian Army after the Second World War, and his role as the operational commander in Kashmir, the very fact that he was an Indian made a tremendous impact on those who served under him.

596 “Lieutenant General Bucher to Vacate Post By the End of the Year,” The Times of India, October 28, 1948, New Delhi, 7.
597 “British Officer’s in Indian Army: Farewell in Poona,” The Times of India, December 19, 1947, New Delhi, 7.
598 “Farewell Party to General Bucher,” The Times of India, January 16, 1949, New Delhi, 9.
“Wherever he went, there was no doubt that he was the Jangi Lat,” said Manekshaw, who served under Cariappa at the army headquarters. “When he walked down the corridor, the whole world knew that there was the Army Chief walking down...He gave us all dignity by the way he carried himself.”599 As the senior Indian officer for many years, and the first Indian to formally command a battalion and a brigade, his career had been followed and championed by junior Indian officers who saw him as the embodiment of the process of Indianization, or as the “father of the modern Indian army.”600 Cariappa and other senior Indian officers may have yielded this professional acknowledgement to their British predecessors, but he deftly credited the nationalist movement for the promotion of Indian officers.

“The appointment assumed today is the result of the sacrifices made by our leaders, led by our great Mahatma,” he wrote in a letter issued to every soldier in the army upon on his promotion. To further assuage political rulers in Delhi, he publicly emphasized the subsidiary nature of the army to both the government and to the people of India. “As soldiers of free India we are the custodians of the property of our taxpayers. By this I mean the Army belongs to our people, and so it is our duty to do everything we can to give our people loyal service at all times and to ensure that we provide a measure of safety and security to our motherland, so that our Government can proceed with the foremost task of raising the standard of living of the man in the street and of making our country strong and prosperous to enable her to take her place as an equal amongst the big

599 Praval, Indian Army After Independence, 81.
600 Sinha, A Soldier Recalls, 112 and 304.
nations of the world." Cariappa’s elevation to commander rested in part on his careful negotiation of India’s politics, meeting with Nehru and Gandhi only at the end of the Second World War when it became clear that a congress dominated India would emerge after independence. “We are servants of the people and our duty is to help our government carry out their policy at this critical period in India’s history,” Cariappa had said in early 1948 to a group of officers in Jammu.

Cariappa: The Legacy of the Imperial Army

The personality and character of Cariappa himself embodied much of the hybrid character of the Indian Army as an imperial institution modeled in part on the British Army, and shaped by Indian realities and British conceptions of India and the role of British officers in it. A distinctive culture and mindset had been engrained in Indian commissioned officers by their initial training in British dominated imperial cadet and officer programs, their entrance into major British military institutions like Sandhurst and by their service with units of both the British Army and the imperial Indian Army. Cariappa’s popularity among the public and many of his soldiers due to his prominent role in indianization and in the war in Kashmir was in part marred by his reputation as a “brown sahib.” Cariappa’s own support for the wider trend of Indian independence and his frustrated relationship with British superiors like Bucher did little to inhibit his own pride in a sense of “Britishness,” which he cultivated in his personality, language and

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601 “Service of India First,” The Times of India, January 15, 1949, New Delhi, 7.
603 “General Cariappa’s Advice,” The Times of India, January 28, 1948, New Delhi, 4.
604 V.K. Singh, Leadership in the Indian Army, 43.
habits. While his British predecessors spoke fluent Hindustani, Cariappa spoke little, to the irreverence of his admirers and the derision of his critics. “To the best of my knowledge the only Indian around whom a veritable corpus of linguistic gaffes has grown up is retired Field Marshal K.M. Cariappa,” wrote the Indian author and statesman Khushwant Singh. “Though a Coorgi, I doubt if he can speak Coorgee or any other Indian language.” This reflected Cariappa’s own belief that English, the language used between members of the officer corps, white and Indian, was compatible in independent India with what he saw as the “proud and preeminent position that English language occupies in the world today as the language of international thought, art and science.”

His cultivation of a “Sandhurst accent” was so prominent that when speaking Hindustani during a tour in Kashmir, a soldier apologized, saying that he couldn’t understand English.

His home life was marked by the cultivation of an extensive library and the habit of giving guests a newspaper, a matchbook, a candle and shoe polish after they had signed a visitor book to enter his home. Cariappa’s fondness for scotch whiskey and soda was matched by his anger at servants and subordinate officers who overserved alcohol, to the surprise of those who hosted him in their homes and offices. At meals he insisted on formal attire, even when dining alone. “Strict disciplinarian,” he was known for

605 Khanduri, Field Marshal K.M. Cariappa, 53.
607 I.M. Muthanna, General Cariappa: The First Indian Commander in Chief (Mysore: Usha Press, 1964), 76.
609 Onkar Singh, Indian Ex-Servicemen, 5.
610 Wilkinson, Army and Nation, 94.
emphasizing “spit and polish,” enforcing strict standards of dress and manners in Army Headquarters after his appointment as Commander in Chief. His reputation as a good natured martinet extended into the field, where he chided General Thimayaa for smoking in a government vehicle during an operation in Kashmir, pulling the vehicle to allow his subordinate to smoke.

He did not excuse himself from this code of discipline, to the extent that he earned a reputation for calmness under fire as a general. His refusal to remove command markings from his personal vehicle in Kashmir attracted sniper fire to the horror of his staff officers, to whom he remarked that his experience as an imperial officer on the North-West Frontier had given him a healthy respect for genuine tribal marksmen. Cariappa’s personal eccentricities earned the respect of much of the army, but they reflected qualities that he tried to impart on other officers, emphasizing the Indian Army’s longstanding ethos of discipline, efficiency and personal courage. In part this meant the emulation of those he saw as “good British officers,” with the understanding that an officer necessarily required the character of a gentleman. “The code of conduct for an officer is to keep a stiff upper lip, even when he feels that he has been wronged,” wrote Sinha on Cariappa. In relation to politics, Cariappa put it more bluntly when he

611 Menekkar, Sheer Anecdote, 137.
612 Khanduri, Field Marshall K.M. Cariappa, 179.
613 V.K. Singh, Leadership in the Indian Army, 37.
insisted that officers “simply minded their own business and let the seniors and politicians handle the problems.”

Cariappa and the Officer Corps: Politics and the Army

Cariappa’s relationship with the government and Nehru in particular would be strained by his dual character as a symbol of national progress within the armed forces and by his commitment to preserving the imperial character of the army. The subordination of the army to the policy of the postcolonial civilian government was formalized with the adoption of the 1950 constitution, which formally placed the military under the civilian authority of the offices of the president and the prime minister. Additionally, India’s transition from dominion to republic removed the positions of power, real and symbolically, held by the crown and by the governor general. For all the claims on the part of British officers of the importance of the military remaining apolitical, the head of the imperial army had held a tremendous amount of political influence in his role as Commander-in-Chief, India, with power over not only the army but the armed forces of India as a whole. This centralized military authority had already been reduced by the transition of that imperial role into the dominion office of Supreme Commander in 1947, a position with no operational control, and the devolution of the head of the army as commander of that force alone, under the control of the purview of the Defense Minister.

This in part represented the influence on India’s constitution of other Commonwealth countries, like the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand, as well as that of former dominions that had transitioned from empire to republic, specifically Ireland. The divestiture of military power to civilian authorities in these examples, with the most influential and long standing tradition being that of the United Kingdom, represented the legal basis of long standing and idealized roles for the army. Constitutionally, these had been established in Britain at the end of the 17th century out of the real fear that the army had, and could again, act as the driving force behind domestic politics. The 17th and 18th century formation of the modern British Army – coinciding with the creation of the antecedents of the Indian Army - dictated that even under the authority of the British crown it owed its existence to elected bodies, and would act to support the government as an aid to civil power, to act as a national defense and as an arm of civilian foreign policy and to remain, ideally, firmly outside the realm of politics.618 The precedents of establishing boundaries for the army’s role in relation to government policy and politics, and for a political mistrust of the military, had been influential on the Indian Army and colonial government, and again on the Indian government and army after independence.

Publically, the Indian political opinion of the army was that it had performed, as Baldev Singh said, “loyally, magnificently and effectively” in the period between partition and the end of the fighting in Kashmir. This praise extended also to Cariappa in

his role as the first Indian commander. “The house will be glad to know,” Singh spoke, “that General Cariappa has made a good start.” Privately there was serious concern over the political role of the military. Before the Second World War, the apolitical - essentially meaning non-nationalist - character of the Indian Army had proven a boon to imperial governments, to the chagrin of the nationalist movement. The Congress policy forwarded by Nehru in the 1930s that the Indian Army would only have to be reformed, rather than entirely reconstituted into a national force, did limit concerns that the officer corps might be the originators of a coup after independence. In part this reflected the manner in which Indian officers had been cultivated by the British, recruited from loyal families of aristocratic or martial class backgrounds, with attention paid to their cultural and social compatibility with the British officer corps. It was these officers, like Cariappa and Thimayaa, that rose to senior positions after independence.

The possibility of a military coup, perhaps influenced by the British, seemed to be confirmed by the assassination of the Burmese nationalist and communist Aung San in 1947, in which British officers were implicated. The departure of potentially hostile British and Muslim officers after independence, or the absence of serious right wing Hindu agitation after the assassination of Gandhi, did little to reduce the threat seen by Congress politicians in the “Rangoon precedent.” Cariappa, despite his own approbations of apolitical conduct and the praise heaped on him in the press, had already

619 “India’s Armed Forces Have Served Her Loyally and Well,” The Times of India, March 8, 1949, New Delhi, 9.
620 Wilkinson, Army and Nation, 96.
621 Ibid., 94.
622 Hajari, Midnights Furies, 150.
623 Ibid., 95 and 150.
earned a reputation for interference in public affairs by both British officers and Indian politicians. His predecessors had learned that as Britons they had no special place in India outside of their role as military leaders and advisors.

Cariappa in both his status as an Indian national and as a symbol of nationalization and indianization, was not bound by the “pliable and eager” behavior that Bucher developed to prevent him from sharing the fate of Auchinleck, Lockhart and Russell. Cariappa was believed to be in contact with other senior officers discussing the possibility of a coup, reports that reached Nehru by way of Indian intelligence services. These concerns were also expressed to Nehru by British agents and officers. Ascertaining their veracity was made difficult by the nationalist belief that Britons during the period surrounding independence sought to distance the civilian government from the military for their own aims, reflected in the active roles played by British intelligence and military services in colonial and postcolonial conflicts after 1945. In turn, Nehru continued to depend for years after independence on Britons like Mountbatten and Patrick Blackett for military advice, including the vetting of senior commanders, as in the case of Thimayaa. With the assassination of Gandhi in 1948 and the death of Patel in 1950, Blackett recognized that Nehru was confronting, largely alone, a series of “chilling and dramatic closing and opening of possibilities” in which the future of the Indian

625 Ibid., 102.
defense establishment was a key component.\textsuperscript{630} That elements of the former Indian Army were capable of serious political unrest was evident in the Rawalpindi Conspiracy of 1951, in which the first attempt was made by the Pakistan Army to overthrow the civilian government.\textsuperscript{631} This had followed the implementation of military governorships in Pakistan, inculcating officers there to the idea of military rule.\textsuperscript{632} Military governorships in India had been limited to General Chaudhuri’s governorship of Hyderabad after independence, but his close relationship to Cariappa, and Cariappa’s well known desire for a governorship in the Punjab after his retirement, only exacerbated fears of military influence on politics.

Indian government efforts to “coup proof” in part manifested itself by the constitutional constraints placed on the position of the commander of the Indian Army. Constitutional solutions to domestic and political problems after 1950, such as the federalized structure of the state itself, were undertaken with a view to prevent the kind of unrest in which the army might be tempted to, as in Pakistan, “save the country from the politicians.”\textsuperscript{633} Additionally, after Cariappa’s appointment to lead the army and the end of the fighting in Kashmir, renewed efforts were made to address the longstanding grievance that the composition of the army was not representative, a factor seen by Congress officials since the 1930s as a constraint on the ability of the army to be truly

\textsuperscript{632} Wilkinson, \textit{Army and Nation}, 117.
\textsuperscript{633} Ibid., 120.
Government policy independent of the army, in establishing a separate defense college in Maharashtra and in selecting non-Punjabi’s for senior positions in the army, reflected this desire for national representation.

The Indian Army and Reform after 1948: Imperial and British Influences

Political interference of this kind was met with the frustration of senior military academics at Dehra Dun and officers from the Punjab who constituted more than 50 percent of the officer corps. Publicly, Cariappa devoted considerable attention after 1949 to addressing the role of the army as an apolitical and nationally representative force. Emphasizing the traditional roles of the army as an aide to civil power and as a deterrent against foreign aggression, Cariappa spoke of the desire to end the “horrible and nauseating” practice of martial races recruiting. “Anyone physically fit, morally correct and of a certain intellectual standard should have a place in the army,” said Cariappa in an informal press conference in Calcutta. This talk preceded a tour of the country by Cariappa, championing the end of martial race policy and the apolitical nature of the military. “We are not serving any political party,” said Cariappa to the press at Lucknow, heralding the end of the “mercenary” army of the Indian Empire. “We are serving the government of the Army. The Army must not meddle with discordant elements in the country.”

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634 Ibid., 96.  
635 Ibid., 108.  
636 “No Martial Provinces,” The Times of India, March 9, 1949, New Delhi, 7.  
637 “No Provincialism in Indian Army: General Cariappa’s Appeal,” The Times of India, April 4, 1949, New Delhi, 7.
during the Second World War, were recruited to represent those classes that had long been kept separate of the army. Bengali companies of infantry were formed and incorporated into new or reestablished regiments, such as the resurrected Second World War Parachute Regiment. His “publicity masterstroke” was the creation of a new large multi-battalion regiment, the Brigade of the Guards, to be recruited from all classes and hold the position of the senior regiment in the army over those class regiments that had an order of precedence dating back to the 18th century.638

While the purpose of the Guards Brigade was to give it “the privilege of inaugurating ‘the all class mixed system,’”639 this, and other initiatives, showed a continued determination by Indian officers to emulate both British Army and imperial Indian traditions. Gurkha regiments, considered “the gold standard of Indian soldiering,” still retained the mercenary characterization despite independence, and had filled the role of an elite infantry force and a ceremonial guard such as had existed in British regiments such as the Grenadier, Scots, Welsh, Irish and Coldstream Guards.640 It was recognized that the new Guards Brigade would fill this role, and to be “modeled on the renowned Brigade of Guards of the British Army.”641 The core of this force, despite the appeals to representational recruitment, was formed from single class martial regiments with a long history of service dating back to the 18th century. Cariappa’s own interest in the creation of such a force had stemmed from his time serving with British guards regiments early in

639 “Guards Brigade for Indian Army,” *The Times of India*, April 27, 1949, New Delhi, 7.
641 Ibid.
his career and it was a proposal that had been predated Churchill, who had called for new Indian Guards regiments to be raised and incorporated into Britain’s Household Brigade. Other units, such as those recruited from Bengal, were so small in number as to be dwarfed by the companies and battalions recruited from martial races, despite their prominent place in public discourse on martial race policy. 642

Outside of the public eye, there was little intention of senior Indian Officers to implement representative recruiting, despite Cariappa’s own claims. “It is laudable,” wrote Thimayaa to Menon, “that a break has been called to be made to the present class composition: however, care should be taken to see that the new proposed arrangement should under no circumstances impair the fighting qualities and cohesiveness of units based on intimate sense of kinship and traditions.” 643 This ran contrary not only to army orders dating from 1949 to abolish recruiting based on caste, religion or geographic origin but also to the constitutional protections for representation influenced by the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes policy. 644 Calls made by Nehru and other Congress officials for the creation of a politically minded national militia to be joined with the Indian Army to act as a “voice in the moulding of the affairs of the nation” 645 was similarly recast by army officers. Rather than act as a national defense and a forum

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642 Wilkinson, 113-114.
643 Ibid., 115.
644 Ibid., 114.
for national education, early post-independence organizations like the Kashmir National Militia had been used explicitly to bolster the Indian Army in combat operations.\footnote{“Militiamen Sent to Fight Raiders,” The Times of India, May 19, 1948, New Delhi, 9.}

Earlier attempts to create a national militia during the First World War had been carefully tied to the “novelty”\footnote{“An Indian Territorial Army,” The Times of India, June 13, 1916, New Delhi, 6.} of establishing a “territorial” force in the manner of the United Kingdom, which had created a territorial army to act as a reserve for the British Army. This reserve, formed from the Auxiliary Force recruited from Europeans in India and disbanded in 1947,\footnote{“A Proud Record,” The Times of India, October 23, 1947, New Delhi, 6.} and the small Indian recruited Territorial Force, was expanded into the Territorial Army in 1949. With a planned strength of 130,000 men, it was to be a force, like its British counterpart, comprised of units of all types, and led by veterans of the Indian Army.\footnote{“Territorial Army for India,” The Times of India, August 18, 1949, New Delhi, 1.} The creation of a national youth organization along military lines shared the same fate, with the creation of the National Cadet Corps under the purview of the Defense Ministry closely tied to the establishment of the Territorial Army.\footnote{“Cadet Corps For India,” The Times of India, March 14, 1948, New Delhi, 1.}

These initiatives were essentially government policies altered by compromise with the military, or coopted entirely by Indian officers deeply influenced by British Army and imperial Indian precedents. These efforts, and the great difference between public and private opinions on the part of officers, were consciously patterned “using all the methods that had been developed by the colonial state over the previous decades,
especially those used to blunt political criticism."\textsuperscript{651} The resistance of the army to political initiatives and interference was matched by the privately held contempt of politicians. Nehru and others regarded senior officers as “shallow, westernized and British-aping products of the raj, who had taken little interest and no part in the freedom movement.”\textsuperscript{652} Under these circumstances, it was inevitable that there would be major disagreements that could not be met by compromise or cooption. Cariappa had by the end of 1947 already run afoul of Gandhi by rejecting nonviolence in Kashmir; Gandhi chided him that the Indian National Army in Burma had been more representative of India’s character than the Indian Army inherited from the Indian Empire.\textsuperscript{653}

Nehru, who had so passionately defended INA personnel in 1945 and 1946 advocated their reintegration into the army up through Cariappa’s term as commander. Cariappa, who had acted as an court officer in the INA trials resisted. “We appreciate their part but by forsaking their oath of allegiance they had breached the ethics of a soldier,” Cariappa wrote to Nehru. “By including them back the very fibre of Army’s discipline will be disintegrated.”\textsuperscript{654} As a brigadier, he had been more clear: rehabilitating INA soldiers would mean “the end of the Indian Army.”\textsuperscript{655} Such was Cariappa’s resistance that he threatened resignation, rather than see INA soldiers incorporated into the army.\textsuperscript{656} His reaction was representative, wrote Nehru’s secretary, of the

\textsuperscript{651} Wilkinson, Army and Nation, 112.
\textsuperscript{652} Palit, War in High Himalaya, 21.
\textsuperscript{654} Wilkinson, Army and Nation, 134.
\textsuperscript{656} Singh, Leadership in the Indian Army, 40.
“unsympathetic and uncompromisingly hostile” attitudes of conservative Indian officers. Their defiance led Nehru to abandon the issue.\(^{657}\)

**Conclusion: Establishing Patterns of Civil-Military Relations**

Cariappa and senior officers established the precedent that Indian officers could determine how, when or if government policies relating to the internal operations of the army would be implemented. However frustrating the actions of senior officers were, the civilian government still retained more power over the army, than the army did on the new government or the nation as a whole. In domestic and foreign policy, where Nehru’s control was firmly established after 1949, the army’s influence precipitously waned. For every step that military officers took to resist civilian interference in army affairs that they perceived to be entirely under their jurisdiction, their influence on civilians in national and international issues was diminished. Within a year after the adoption of the new constitution, military advice had ceased to be headed by Nehru and the cabinet.

The Chinese invasion of Tibet in 1950 was accompanied by major movements of communist troops along India’s north-eastern borders, a region whose military importance had declined to inconsequentiality after the end of the campaign there in the Second World War. In a meeting with Cariappa over China, Nehru in anger slammed his fists on his desk, making it clear that the general had stepped out of the narrow confines that the army had been relegated to. “It is not the business of the Commander-in-Chief to

tell the Prime Minister who is going to attack us where…You mind only Kashmir and Pakistan.” In a few years, Nehru would sign a treaty of friendship with India’s northern neighbor. After the meeting, Cariappa recalled the advice of a British officer that he had served with in Iraq nearly in the aftermath of the First World War. “Do not familiarize with politicians: do not trust them. They have no place for you. They only have room for their own self-interest.”

The army had proved its necessity to the state between 1947 and 1949, but the pillars of Nehru’s administration, national development and international cooperation, left little place for an Indian Army that was still reflective of its imperial past. With victory in Kashmir and Hyderabad, and the expansion of the police forces in India to reduce government reliance on the army, it no longer held the same place of primacy that it had under the Indian Empire, or in the months that followed August 1947. The army’s role in national integration had defined the power of the new government; but with peace and stability, and major diplomatic and development initiatives led by Nehru, the old criticism that the Indian Army was a drain on the nation came to the forefront of government policy relating to the army.

Cariappa retired from the army exactly four years after his appointment, returning to his home in the hill station of Mercara. His expectation that he would be offered a governorship in Assam or the Punjab, a view shared by friends in the military and government, did not materialize, instead being offered the position as India’s

658 Khanduri, *Field Marshal KM Cariappa*, 278.
commissioner to Australia and New Zealand. In his letter of offer, Nehru wrote “there could be no permanent retirement for a person like you who is fit and able to do good work. You promised to make yourself available whenever the State might require it of you.”\(^659\) Nehru’s praise for Cariappa concealed the fact that from Australia, Cariappa would not present the same threat of military rule or obstacle to military reform that he had as commander of the army.\(^660\) Cariappa’s replacement, K.S. Rajendrasinhji, would be the last officer to hold the title of Commander-in-Chief. H.M. Patel, a senior advisor to V.J. Patel and Menon, urged that the positions of commander-in-chief, embodied in the office of the President after 1950, be abolished within the military.

Where the Indian Army and its senior officers had been the dominant force in Indian military and foreign policy since the days of Stringer Lawrence, the army commander would now be titled Chief of Army Staff, within a joint service committee dominated not by the military but by the Ministry of Defense. For the Air Force and the Navy, still commanded by British officers, this policy would extend as well. As Cariappa boarded the steamer *Strathnaver*\(^661\) bound for Australia on July 19\(^{th}\), 1953, M.K. Vellodi announced this change of policy to the service heads. The resistance of remaining British officers, who still commanded the Air Force and the Indian Navy, could only temporarily hold this change, would take place two years later. Many of Cariappa’s successors, seen to be too imperial, too conservative, too outspoken or too resistant to the government,

\(^659\) Khanduri, *Field Marshal KM Cariappa*, 300-301.
\(^661\) “General Cariappa Given Warm Sendoff,” *The Times of India*, July 19, 1953, New Delhi, 2.
would share Cariappa’s seeming fate of exile in the years to come. Others, like Brij Mohan Kaul, found that their alignment with Congress would prove to be decisive in elevating them above their peers. The spirit of antipathy, suspicion, division and interference sown between civilian and military leaders before and after independence would continue after Cariappa’s departure. This division would lead to disaster in the Himalaya’s in 1962, and the renewed specter of military rule as Nehru’s life came to an end. Out of the period of chaos and reform, the army’s prominent place in Indian national consciousness would be restored on battlefields in Bangladesh, Kashmir and West Pakistan, owing its success to officers who carried on much of the imperial legacy of the Indian Army.

CHAPTER 3: THE INDIAN ARMY AFTER EMPIRE, 1953 - 1973

Introduction: The Army After Cariappa

Those in the Indian government who believed that Cariappa’s sojourn to Australia would limit his public profile were sorely disappointed. His reputation as an “embodiment of independent India” and as a model imperial officer proceeded him, earning Cariappa the nickname “Dear Carry” among the Australian socialites with whom he associated. Cariappa’s wide coverage in the press, and his popularity amongst Australians, stemmed from his close relationship with the Australian Army and the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. Outside of his official role as High Commissioner, his participation in the creation of the exclusive and aristocratic Commonwealth Club for Australia in Canberra further established his public persona. His active criticism of ‘White Australia,’ an immigration policy that served to “sap the postwar relationship of goodwill,” served only to strain ties between Australia and India, and furthered Cariappa’s reputation for talking to the press and acting on his own initiative.

Though the reputation that he earned in Australia as a publicity figure would only be enhanced after his return to India in 1956, Cariappa’s impending departure in 1953 from the position of commander-in-chief heralded the end of the sterling reputation that

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664 Khanduri, Field Marshal KM Cariappa: Life and Times, 309-310.
he had enjoined in the Indian press. His highly visible public persona as commander and his inability or unwillingness to implement substantive reform on the army, no longer could be reconciled with the reality that after 14 months of armed conflict, and a further three years under his guidance, the army was beginning to appear as an anachronism. As an army that owed its efficacious reputation as a modern force by its conduct on the battlefield, and still marred by its use as a tool of empire, it was an institution that did not fit easily into the new India, focused on development and international peace, that was being imagined in Delhi. “According to General Cariappa, if anyone is a hundred percent nationalist and patriot it is the fighting soldier,” wrote an editorial in the *Times of India*. “But the Genera’s idea of the patriot appears to be old-fashioned and obsolete. The present-day double-distilled patriot is an altogether different being. What is a fighting man after all? He does his duty, fights and dies for his country and then descends into an unremembered grave - unwept, unhonoured and unsung.” Certainly this had been the case for the Indian soldiers whose graves Cariappa had uncovered in Australian cemeteries in New Guinea, or of the tens of thousands of men of the British Indian Army who lay anonymously somewhere in the jungles of South-East Asia or on Mediterranean and Middle Eastern hillsides. “That is not the popular concept of a real patriot…How can a man be said to have a country when he has no right to a square inch of it?”

This divide over the public opinion of the army was an extension of the divisions that had appeared first between British officers and Nehru’s government. The end of British control over the command of the army did not end this division; Cariappa, who

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had resisted British control while emulating imperial practices proved to be just as intractable as his British predecessors in resisting government policy. Perceived by the army to be civilian interference on the internal affairs of the army, reforms aimed at altering the imperial nature of the military were resisted by Indian officers much as had been done by Britons. By the end of Cariappa’s tenure as commander, this gulf had become one that affected the ability of the army to inform government policy. After the end of the war in Kashmir, the Indian Army settled into a peacetime role in which the retrenchment of imperial culture was a prominent feature of army life.

This isolation of the army resulted in a civilian backlash over the army’s imperial nature. True political interference in the army’s affairs led by Krishna Menon culminated in dividing the officer corps based on politics and imperial identity. The conflict between politicians and officers over control of the army resulted in its defeat in 1962. In the aftermath the army underwent a period of expansion and reform in which the morale, professionalism and efficiency of the army was resurrected as it had been during the Second World War. The death of Nehru, the rise of senior officers who had not been trained in Britain and an unprecedented program of modernization, gave the appearance to the Indian public that the Indian Army had become a modern institution, a sentiment justified by battlefield victories in 1965 and 1971. The straining or breaking of ties to the United Kingdom, to the British Army and to the few remaining British and Anglo-Indian officers of the army, gave it new aspects as a national army.
Yet the Indian Army’s retention of an imperial a mindset that was not lost on those who viewed the army coolly from the outside, an imperial remnant whose leaders bore “British derived values,” described by the Indian novelist Manohar Malgonkar as “a sense of duty combined with the limited vision which is almost the hallmark of the military mind.” Malgonkar’s descriptions of Indian officers trying “to think out what a British officer would do in his place” and of the institution of the regiment as “neatly tied up bundles of faintly musty customs” are cutting. His own prejudices – a disdain for civilians and politicians, and an belief that professionalism overcomes patriotism – highlight his experience as both an aristocrat and an officer in the Indian Army. To Indians and to foreign observers the Indian officer and the army that he served in was “more British than the British themselves.” For the Britons who witnessed the final years of the empire and looked on Indian independence as the watershed event in their own imperial decline, it was a reaction of surprise and shock. “Almost the only Englishmen left in the world today are Indians,” wrote the author Malcom Muggeridge. “Where is regimental silver polished as assiduously as in Indian Army messes?” The elevation of Sam Manekshaw to the position of Field Marshal in 1973 made it clear that the army’s culture and attitudes were still fundamentally informed by its imperial legacy, more than 25 years after independence, making him the most influential Indian commander since Cariappa.

**The Chief of Army Staff: The Post Army Commander After Cariappa**

667 Borner, *Fact in Fiction*, 47.
668 Ibid., 48.
In 1953, Cariappa’s successor, General Maharaja Sri Rajendrasinhji Jadeja, marked his appointment to the head of the army by recognizing the difficulties faced by an army deeply influenced by traditional imperial values that was now faced with new budgetary and cultural problems in a postcolonial and modern world. “I am more than fortunate to have under my command an army, renowned for its courage, loyalty, good behavior and adaptability, both in war and peace. On many occasions in the past, these attributes have enabled us to overcome the difficulties encountered. This must not allow us to become complacent and there is much hard work in front of us.”

Rajendrasinhji’s tenure as commander, like his successors, was marked by the primacy of development and international relations, initiatives championed by Nehru and the cabinet, which increasingly limited the influence of the army and its commanders. The 1955 reduction of Rajendrasinhji from Commander-in-Chief to Chief of Army Staff only confirmed the subordinate relationship of the army that had been formalized with the adoption of the 1950 constitution. The creation of the office of President of India formally placed the military under civilian authority, replacing the old imperial positions of command embodied in Commander-in-Chief, India and the Viceroyship. This change to a committee and council based defense structure echoed that created in Great Britain, with the chiefs of staff committees under the purview of the Defense Ministry, with the ceremonial position of commander in chief held by the monarch.

672 “General Rajendrasinhji Assumes Command,” The Times of India, January 16, 1953, New Delhi, 7.
In India as in Britain, real power over policy continued to be held by the office of Prime Minister. With Cariappa’s departure, Nehru’s control over the armed forces only solidified. Unlike in Britain, where there existed a single military head of the defense staff, there was no such senior position in India, making the relationship between civilian and military leaders that much more complicated. Rajendrasinhji had himself already played a role in resisting political interference in 1948 when he had been offered the position of head of the army. Nehru had, like other senior Britons and Indians in both military and government, believed that Cariappa lacked the “stability” of character necessary for senior command. These were qualities that Rajendrasinhji and Nathu Singh, another senior Indian commander, were seen to have. Offered the position of Commander-in-Chief in 1949, Rajendrasinhji refused, citing the seniority of Cariappa and his “deserving” of command based on his previous appointments. Nathu Singh had likewise been considered for the role and refused for the same reasons. “Bold and outspoken,” Nathu Singh had like Cariappa been vocal in his desire for a civil governorship after his retirement, and had expected to become head of the army, either after Cariappa or Rajendrasinhji, on the basis of his seniority. Nehru refused overtures to make him a governor, or to extend his commission in the army, effectively forcing him to retire along with Cariappa.

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The practice of forcing senior officers out of the army had stemmed from changes in government policy made in 1950. This limited their tenure as commanders to three to four years, to be extended by order of civilian leaders. If they did not extend their commissions, they had no choice but to face retirement. In part, this depended on government oversight of graded military career evaluations. Fixation by the government on elements of these reports was used to prevent certain officers from being considered for promotion. This practice only encouraged officers to close ranks, leading to career reports that were specially reworded to overcome the pitfalls of civilian review, as Rajendrasinhji did for Nathu Singh at the end of his career. For Nathu Singh, the damage had already been done, as his hostility to government policy relating to the armed forces had already become well known. Rajendrasinhji alternatively was granted an extension to his commission, to allow him to become the army chief.677 Nathu Singh’s missteps made Rajendrasinhji the only effective choice after Cariappa’s departure, but he had, like Bucher, a preexisting working relationship with Nehru before his appointment. As commander of the Delhi cantonment in August 1947 he had worked with Nehru and Mountbatten in organizing the public events surrounding independence.678 As the overall regional commander of Operation Polo, he had been singled out by Nehru and Baldev Singh for the rapid success enjoyed by the army in Hyderabad.679

677 Ibid., 79.
678 Sinha, A Soldier Recalls, 89.
679 “Brilliant Success of Operations,” The Times of India, September 18, 1948, New Delhi, 1.
Foreign policy pertaining to India’s relations with Pakistan and the princely states and with Britain and the Commonwealth of Nations, dominated government activity from 1947 to 1949.

Nehru had used these crises to define India’s role in the world at large and in the new United Nations. The army had played a central role in backing up independent Indian policy on the subcontinent. With the end of the war in Kashmir, domestic development overtook foreign policy as the driving force behind the policy initiatives of Nehru’s India. In the economic realm, Nehru’s call for a “nation building” program was characterized by “self-sufficiency” in industry and agriculture. Cariappa shared similar views in government meetings, emphasizing that industrial development, scientific advancement and national education were necessary to meet the goal of making India’s defense establishment self-sufficient. With his appointment to the head of the army, Rajendrasinhji again voiced support on behalf of the Army for the program of development that had been outlined by Nehru before and after independence. Whatever the private reservations of officers as to how Nehruvian development would affect the army, the strains of civil and military relations after 1947 had highlighted the importance of officers giving civilian leaders public support for their initiatives. This served not only to confirm their apolitical values but also to display the support necessary to prevent political interference in the careers of army officers.

The Army and National Development in Nehru’s India

681 “Military Training for Indian Youth,” The Times of India, December 23, 1948, New Delhi, 7.
Where the army’s own needs could be associated with wider programs of national development, results could be dramatic. A 65 mile paved road and bridge system linking the Eastern Punjab to Jammu had been estimated by government authorities to take up to three years to reach completion. Begun in the spring of 1948, the project was completed in three months in a joint program conducted by the Indian Army and the civilian Central Public Works Department. Officially built as a response to the chaos and difficulties presented by the refugee crisis of 1947, civilian leaders envisioned that the new road would provide “new ties with people” between Kashmir and India. For the Indian defense establishment, such major infrastructure projects provided benefits for both military commanders marshalling forces on the ground in Kashmir and for those involved in the planning of India’s frontier defenses. Infrastructure projects such as the new Jammu road, completed in July of 1948, proved critical to the transit of Indian troops and vehicles to the frontlines.682 Considering the importance of artillery and armor to the final Indian offensives in Kashmir at the end of 1948, infrastructure projects in the post-independence era were as important to the Indian Army after 1947 as they had been to the imperial army that drove the building of rail and telegraph projects in the British era.

Other hybrid military-public works projects were more explicitly influenced by the political influence and developmental ideals of Nehru and Congress. Like the building of state transportation infrastructure to facilitate military mobilization, military housing projects alleviated an urgent need of the army after 1947. British military cantonments in India had been a hallmark of imperial rule, and they acted as the center of

682 “Indo-Kashmir Road Link,” The Times of India, July 8, 1948, New Delhi, 7.
regimental culture and training. Such was the extent of imperial military infrastructure that Indian National Army officers had believed that India would only have to occupy the barracks left behind by the British in the event of an Axis victory, promising the best British barracks to their men in Burma and Malaya.\textsuperscript{683}

The building of cantonments after the departure of the British Army was necessitated by the events set in motion by the partition of the Indian Empire. The partition of the army left many regiments allocated to India that had been long stationed in the Punjab or on the North West Frontier without barracks in India.\textsuperscript{684} Additionally, tens of thousands of refugees had been assigned to barracks and cantonments as emergency housing since 1947,\textsuperscript{685} leaving army units that had been assigned to operations in Hyderabad, Kashmir and the Punjab without housing for more than a year after partition. The evacuation of military families from Dogra, Sikh and Gurkha military settlements and barracks communities in the Punjab made this shortfall more acute; building programs for the military actively sought to reunite soldiers with families who could be counted amongst the hundreds of thousands of refugees that had arrived across the Radcliffe line between 1947 and 1948.\textsuperscript{686}

Brij Mohan Kaul, a political favorite of Nehru closely associated with Congress, was promoted to an important career advancing infantry brigade command in the Punjab

\textsuperscript{684} Praval, \textit{Indian Army After Independence}, 19.
\textsuperscript{685} “Refugees From West Punjab Pouring Into Delhi: Barracks Turned Into Camps For Accommodation,” \textit{The Times of India}, September 8, 1947, New Delhi, 9.
\textsuperscript{686} “Indian Troops Return to Secunderabad Barracks,” \textit{The Times of India}, October 3, 1948, New Delhi, 1.
after being exempted from combat service in Kashmir. Kaul’s founding of a model military colony based on the concepts of “self-help and self-sufficiency” emphasized hygiene, education, recreation and family life. This creation of an “India of our dreams on a miniature scale” was credited to the ideals of Gandhi, but how it was described owed more to the developmental mindset and political influence of Nehru. Nicknamed “‘Jawanabad,’” the town’s mission was a continual effort of “striving to portray the shape of things to come.” Though the program included building projects and education on the model of Gandhi’s goal of self suffiency, evidenced by the building of gardens and the teaching of traditional crafts, the creation of a “modern” community on the basis of “lean resources” reflected more of Nehruvian development than the kind of ideal rural communities envisioned in the decades before independence.

Civilian development and army policy could be mutually beneficial, as in the building of transportation infrastructure and new barracks complexes but the system of setting up separate military colonies for soldiers and families mirrored the British imperial tradition of isolating troops, Indian and British, from much of the Indian populace. The cantonment set up by Kaul as a model for India in miniature was unique, in that it served less than 200 soldiers and their families, but it was not unusual in that the amenities and programs provided did not reflect the condition of the vast majority of Indian civilians, living a subsistence life in rural hamlets or in urban slums. The lifestyle of commissioned and noncommissioned officers, common soldiers and their families had not under British

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rule reflected Indian civilian life, a pattern that continued after the institution of development programs linked to the army after 1947.

The building of new barracks blocks, small military farms and spacious homes saw the introduction of telephones and televisions in the Indian military home itself. That these amenities were provided in Kaul’s model cantonment to common soldiers was unusual, but the proliferation of modern amenities in homes and in public facilities across barrack communities was not. New military constructions included the building of new military theatres and cinemas, recreation centres, hospitals and schools. Education of military families, run often by missionaries as they had under the British Raj, used English. English and the standardized form of Hindustani used in the imperial army, the working languages of the army before and after 1947, dominated large military bases. Punjabi, the language of so many of the martial classes, was widely heard in smaller posts. In home and at mess, the availability of meat and eggs, prepared in English or continental styles and enjoined with traditional Indian dishes, separated the diets and dining customs of soldiers from their civilian counterparts. For the jawan, or common soldier, this was a great departure from the subsistence life of the farmer, craftsman or herder that predominated martial classes, a division that was even more pronounced when contrasted to the Indian population at large.

The conscious decision undertaken by the British Army at the close of the First World War to draw newly commissioned Indian officers from families and class groups
already seen to be literate in British imperial customs made these cultural practices a less dramatic change for members of the officer corps. The separation of military communities served to isolate culture and custom from India at large, and preserve imperial customs, so that even after 1947, values and practices seen to be distinctly British or imperial were transmitted to Indian officers who had not served in the imperial Indian Army. The practice of transferring officers from one station to another throughout their military careers encouraged a standardization of customs, courtesies and culture across India. Just as it had for the officers of the British Indian Army, this served to create a common military culture that was prevalent on the part of middle class officers.689 The description of the life of white officers and families in the imperial era as one of “limited social connections and strictly observed codes of behavior”690 applied equally to the Indian officer corps after independence. This was especially true after the conclusion of the crises of 1947 through 1949 ushered in an era of stability for the army, and strict discipline was enforced on soldiers serving in the army command in Delhi by deeply traditional officers like Cariappa.

Evaluating Imperial and National Symbols: The Transition to Republic

Civilian influence over the culture of the army came with the subordination of the army to the policy of an independent postcolonial government. This was formalized with the adoption of the 1950 constitution, which formally placed the military under civilian authority. In addition to the establishment of a civilian hierarchy, the transition of India into a republic necessitated a departure from the symbols that tied the Indian Army to the British Empire and the House of Windsor. These changes were not immediate. The King’s Colours, the regimental banners bearing the Union Jack and the crown of the monarchy, were phased out throughout the year following the transition from Dominion to Republic. To strains of *God Save the King*, the final imperial regimental colours were laid up in an elaborate ceremony at chapel of the Indian Military Academy at the end of 1950.

The longstanding tradition of the British Army in holding the regimental colours as the embodiment of an individual unit’s history, experience and loyalty extended until the end of the 19th century to its being the focal point of cohesion on the battlefield. This had extended equally to the Indian Army, going so far as to be carried into combat and fought over by regiments on both sides of the rebellions of 1857, alternatively as symbols of loyalty, resistance and of regimental unity. The phasing out and replacement of imperial colours with republican ones was an act that Baldev Singh

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regarded as signaling the “end of a chapter” for the Indian Army. British medals for service or gallantry had begun to be replaced during the war in Kashmir, with unique Indian medals created to correspond with those that had been awarded in the colonial era by the British and Indian Armies. The Victoria Cross, the highest medal for gallantry across the Commonwealth, was replaced by the Param Vir Chakra, but it retained unique maroon ribbon of the Victoria Cross and the qualification that it be awarded for the “most conspicuous bravery or some daring or pre-eminent act of valour or self-sacrifice.”

At the unit level, royal titles and associations with members of the British royal family, were dropped. Likewise, the distinguishing term Indian used by the imperial Indian Army in unit titles to distinguish them from their British Army counterparts were dropped. Thus, old regiments and corps such as the Royal Regiment of Indian Artillery became simply the Regiment of Artillery. Symbol on colours and insignia such as the crown representing the monarchy, or ornate ciphers linking a regiment to a particular member of the royal family, were dropped across the army. They were replaced in favour of the Lions of Ashoka, the symbol of the new Indian state. Additionally, some battle honours that had been emblazoned on regimental colours and unit paraphernalia were considered “repugnant,” owing to the role the Indian Army had played in the building of the British empire. Honours earned by regiments in the conquest of India by the East

694 “King's Colours Laid Up by the Indian Army,” The Times of India, November 24, 1950, New Delhi, 5.
695 “Lieutenant General Bucher to Vacate Post By the End of This Year,” The Times of India, New Delhi, 7.
696 John Clarke, Gallantry Medals and Decorations of the World (Barnsley: Leo Cooper, 2001), 83 and 124.
India Company were discarded, along with many of those that were associated with imperial campaigns in India and other colonies that were associated with the suppression of nationalist movements or in the conquest of indigenous peoples. Notably, this included battles fought in both India and Pakistan, as well in those countries that India aligned itself with in the 1950s, chiefly Nasser’s Egypt and communist China. In the establishment of a historical precedent for the army, the campaigns fought during the First and Second World Wars were left intact. For regiments accustomed to celebrating their own history on certain days associated with imperial campaigns, such as the anniversary of the relief of Delhi in 1857, new traditions were established to reflect less divisive associations, such as the date of raising of a particular regiment, or that of the particularly famous or infamous battles of the First and Second World Wars.

Real and symbolic changes in the Indian Army’s customs, awards, traditions, training and housing between 1947 and 1950 hid the retention of much of its imperial legacy. Celebrations of the newly established national public holidays of Republic Day and Independence Day held a prominent place in both the consciousness of the new country and in the ceremonial role of the army as a pillar of the Indian state. The large and organized displays of ceremony and tradition that the army participated in reflected its former role in major imperial events that had the same purpose, such as imperial durbar or victory parades associated with the end of the Second World War. The Indian Army’s particular role in these public ceremonies shared similarities with that of their

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imperial forebears, and of the British Army, such as the practice of trooping the regimental colours before the monarch, or in the Indian case, the president of the republic.

As the commander in chief, the President took on the ceremonial role that had been carried out by the monarch, the governor-general or the viceroy. More than independence day, the anniversary of India’s adoption of its republican constitution became the prime means of celebrating the new Indian state. The “colour and pageantry” of Republic Day, celebrating the “soul of our soil,” was a celebration of Indian folk music and dance,700 but the final spectacle of the event was the British tradition of beating retreat by the massed bands, pipes and drums of the Indian Army, playing both Indian songs and songs brought to India by imperial service.701 The influence of imperial music on the Indian Army included the “old Irish air” made popular in American service as Marching Through Georgia, and played by British regiments on campaign in India in the late 19th century.702 The dropping of battle honours from Indian campaigns - and with the Indian political association with other postcolonial states like Egypt or Burma some other dubious campaigns – did not extend to Indian participation in the First or Second World Wars or in imperial campaigns in Afghanistan, the North-West Frontier, China, East Africa or the Indian Ocean.703 The process of reforming the numbered single battalion Indian regiments into large multi-battalion, unnumbered but geographically or

703 Singh, Battle Honours of the Indian Army 297.
ethnically associated regiments on the pattern of the British Army was finalized in the years after the Second World War. Where numbering schemes were retained, as in the already large regiments of Gurkha rifles, the retention of titles that indicated a particular form of service with India, reflected their imperial past. Renamed from Gurkha to Gorkha Rifles in 1950 and dropping their royal associations, Gurkha units retained the numbering scheme created by British officers in the early 20th century when the Gurkha regiments were dissociated with the old East India Company presidential armies. Numbering gaps in the lists of Gorkha regiments represented those units that were now serving in the British, rather than Indian Army. Distinguishing features of imperial service, such as a historical attachment to old Frontier Force units, continued to be reflected in regimental titles.  

The Army Regimental Centre after 1949

Changes in the structure and composition of Indian Army regiments, their adoption of new symbols and traditions, and the building of new barracks complexes did little to reduce the importance that the regiment had as a focal point of creating a separate identity for officers and men inducted into the army. Garrison settlements, military towns and regimental hill stations had been a hallmark of British rule since the 19th century. Long periods of service by a particular regiment at the same garrison established associations between a regiments and particular locality, such as the long association of some Gurkha regiments with posts on the North-West frontier, or of technical troops with

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centers of military education or supply. Given the disparate nature of Indian Army assignments; they could be short, or last as long as several decades, it was not unusual for these ties to be informal in nature.

The development of a unified doctrine of linking a particular cantonment town with an individual regiment and its subsidiary battalions was formalized during the reformation of the Indian Army during the Second World War. Regimental depots supporting a number of battalions became officially standardized as *regimental centres*. The longstanding role of the British or Indian regimental depot provided a centralized point for recruits and basic training, and provided a place to instill and enshrine regimental customs and traditions. As a regimental centre, a depot was given a formal link to a home station, commanded by a colonel who oversaw the activities of the supporting regimental staff. Additionally, these regimental centres gradually became the source for advanced training, from jungle to mountain warfare. This process was guided in large part by senior Indian Army generals like Francis Tuker and Frank Messervy, who would continue to play a role in the India and Pakistan after 1947.\(^{705}\) The building of new military posts after 1947 was a continuation of this process, in part due to the loss of regimental centres and depots closed in the aftermath of the Second World War, or that had been allocated to Pakistan after partition.

\(^{705}\) Alan Jeffrey's, "The Officer Corps and the Training of The Indian Army with Special Reference to Lieutenant General Francis Tuker," in *The Indian Army in the Two World Wars.*, ed. Kaushik Roy (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 294.
In the imperial era, military cantonments had separated white officers not only from the Indian public and the machinations of the civil service and the administration of government, but also from interference from British regular army officers. Though dominated by British customs, habits and traditions, the hybrid Anglo-Indian imperial culture developed by officers assigned to the Indian Army could be fostered within these centres, even as they transferred from British to Indian control. Within the regimental depot or centre itself, the heart of a unit's tradition was the regimental mess. Within the post-independence army, the officer corps at the regimental level remained the “proudest guardians of imperial tradition,” with the regimental mess acting as a “bastion of British ritual.”

Apart from introducing newly commissioned Indian officers to the imperial middle class values and customs that had been adopted by their preceding British and Indian officers, the regimental mess acted to indoctrinate the officers coming from cadet schools and academies to particular regimental traditions and taboos. As it had been in the imperial era, the mess became a “tangible focus for the loyalties and esprit de corps of the officers,” fostering a personal and professional identity with a particular regiment that would endure throughout a military career, beyond the time an officer spent at that unit. Each individual battalion would have its own “field service mess” often carrying traditions of antecedent regiments that had been absorbed into the large multi-

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707 Zareer Masani, Indian Tales from the Raj (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 133.
battalion regiments. Social and ceremonial activities at the battalion level were almost universally subsidiary to the regimental mess and the regimental centre.

A contemporary guide to the British Army may serve as an appropriate description of Centralized training and traditions tied not only the old formations of the East India Company together within the regular army, but also the training companies and battalions at the regimental centre and those Territorial Army units being formed as the Indian Army’s reserve. Loyalty to custom and tradition bound the thousands of soldiers who might belong to a certain regiment, but at the lowest level, the practice of socializing officers in the regimental centre and the regimental mess served the very real purpose of instilling bonds that would make “fifteen or twenty brother officers, aged fifty to eighteen, fight together,” and maintaining that bond through the years of peace that were only infrequently punctuated by armed conflict.710

In addition to serving as the locus of regimental socialization into Indian Army life, the mess and the regimental centre was where the ancillary activities of the regiment were organized. Regimental Trusts, where funds raised by officers and men were used to support a variety of activities, was in part the benchmark used to judge the health of regimental life. Trusts financed the writing of unit histories and the maintenance of regimental museums and memorials, both to individual officers or to the regiment as a whole. Larger monuments, museums or memorials raised by separate army wide or

710 Masani, Indian Tales from the Raj, 133.
nationally raised funds drew heavily on the allocation of regimental monies to charities and fundraisers.

The chaos of the Second World War and partition divided the officers of the regimental mess, and the associated funds, silver and trophies, along sectarian and national lines, with British, Pakistani and Indian officers competing to retain the resources of imperial regiments. Apart from the division of some regiments between Pakistan and India, the separation of the mess was exacerbated in part because of the longstanding ties between regiments of the Indian Army with those in Britain, which retained similar institutions. Such was the obsession with regimental trusts and silver in Pakistan during partition that army officers were disparagingly regarded by civilians as placing the interests of the regimental not only before that of the new nation, but of the subcontinent itself as a whole.712

Imperial Traditions in Independent India

These hybrid Anglo-Indian imperial practices did not extend only to the officer corps, but to the new recruits brought into the army. The most prevalent symbol of the Indian Army, the dark green tropical duty uniform worn by officers and men in the decades after independence, led to the appellation by Cariappa of the Indian soldier as

“the man in the olive green uniform.” Shortened to “the olive-greens” to describe the army as a whole, the nickname itself stemmed from the imperial service of the Indian Army. The selection of a new Indian service uniform to replace the khaki drill and battledress of the British Army was a move made by Auchinleck after the Second World War. Olive drill and bush uniforms based on the Indian experience in Burma, consciously paired by the imperial commitee with both British and Indian headaddresses to accommodate the class and caste makeup of the army, became a hallmark of the force.

It particularly distinguished them from the British and American supplied Pakistani army, who retained both traditional clothing and the yellow-khaki corduroy and cotton uniforms of the prewar and war era. Growing uniformity in the Indian Army’s manner of dress did not translate into creating a class or caste system of uniforms. Imperial introductions, such as the Gorkha regiments’ Kilmarnock Bonnet or slouch hat, or the adoption by airborne forces of the British paratroopers maroon berets, are examples of the types of distinguishing features that marked a soldier to what regiment he belonged. Distinguishing features of regimental uniforms could also indicate the class or caste he had been recruited from, such as the adoption of Gurkha uniforms by regiments associated with mountainous or east Asian tribal peoples such as those soldiers recruited

713 “True Nationalist in India: Only the Soldier,” The Times of India, January 5, 1953, New Delhi, 3.
715 “Postwar Uniforms Designed: Exhibition in Delhi,” The Times of India, November 28, 1945, New Delhi, 10.
716 See Ian Sumner, The Indian Army, 1914-1947. Time-Life photographs of assemblies of the Pakistani Army in 1947 highlight the disparity in uniform types, a situation that improved with time but began to mark visually a distinction between the Pakistani and Indian Army's, both of which relied heavily on imperial stores.
from Assam or Gharwal, or the types of turbans adopted by North Indian regiments with a distinct and traditional class identity, most prominently the regiments of Sikh infantry.

The discipline and uniformity of conduct and dress enforced upon individuals and small groups in the mess and canteen were extrapolated into activities at the regimental centre and to how the army presented itself to the public. The careful orchestration of large public displays by massed battalions and bands such as those that characterized the events of Republic Day, necessitated moving the same standards of discipline and attention to detail from the mess to the parade ground. As General D.K. Palit wrote, what British soldiers frustratingly called the “bullshit” of soldiering - the “polished buttons and the crease down the middle of the trouser” – was part of “peculiarly British system” that translated discipline and cohesion in the mess and on the parade ground to success in training and on the battlefield.717

The development of a routine of physical and skill based recreation to measure some of these attributes had passed from the British Army to the imperial Indian Army by early 20th century, with British concepts of “sportsmanship” instilled by officers who acted as coaches, trainers and team members. Informal alliances and rivalries between certain types of regiments, such as the friendly competition enjoyed by Scots and Gurkhas, ensured that in an era of segregated sports that the popularity of particularly British and imperial practices was not a completely top down structured activity. Segregated competition in formal events endured until the First World War, with the

717 Masani, 133.
exception that white officers in Indian regiments necessarily played alongside their men to instill teamwork and serve as an example to their men. This pattern of using sports to bring officers and men together in physical activity was mirrored by the proliferation of teams associated with the regimental centre, and the central role sports had in regimental training.

The early introduction to the important role of sports was heralded by the ability of the imperial regimental centre system to support the training of up to 7,000 new recruits in “boys companies.” Comprised of volunteers under the age 17, character training, primary education and ability at sports was their introduction to army life, before being posted to a serving battalion. For soldiers who had passed out of recruit training, teams organized at the regimental served to represent not a single battalion, but represented the skill, training, physical fitness and sportsmanship of the regiment as a whole. This was not only against rival teams from other regiments in the traditional inter-regimental rivalry, but against teams organized by the air and sea services, and by professional and amateur civilian clubs as well. With the continued domination of martial class recruiting and units, these competitions took on a wider regional or ethnic pride of place as well. “The Madrassis won on the strength of their defenders shoulders,” wrote on article on the 1958 competition for the Durand Cup, held at the Madras Regimental Centre in Wellington. “The Gallant Gorkhas did most of the attacking during the

719 “Indian Army Centres: 7,000 Boys Trained at a Time,” The Times of India, May 11, 1945, New Delhi, 3.
Football had been adopted from Scottish regiments, and like boxing and cricket, became staples of life within the regiment, building *esprit de corps* and a sense of camaraderie that could be directly contrasted to the successes and failures of rival regiments.

**Socialization and Imperial Values**

The links between regimental training, physical activity and socialization were more prominent for the officer corps, who like their imperial forebears were expected to maintain a certain standard of life. Within both the imperial Indian and British armies, polo retained its traditional appeal as a prime pastime to train soldiers, even after it was recognized that the era of mounted cavalry playing a decisive role in military operations had faded into history. The ability to handle a horse translated into the ability to manage a “mechanized mount.” The revival of polo in India after its decline in popularity following independence was in part due to the support given to riding clubs and associations from army units and organizations, such as the National Defense Academy. Apart from demonstrations and training, ponies provided by the Indian Army’s mounted detachments proved critical to supporting the sport among both amateurs and professional players.

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720 "Thangaraj is Star of Madras Regimental Centre’s Fine Victory," *The Times of India*, November 30, 1948, New Delhi, 10.
722 Hotspur, “Polo to be Revived in Bombay,” *The Times of India*, November 21, 1957, New Delhi, 10.
723 “Indian Polo Side to Play in English Tournament,” *The Times of India*, January 4th, 1947, New Delhi, 9.
The proliferation of both firearms and all-terrain vehicles between the Second World War and independence ushered in a new era of widespread legal and illicit hunting, overturning both the traditional supremacy over the sport enjoyed by Indian nobility and British officials, as well as the proscriptions on hunting made by the imperial government before the outbreak of the war. The end of elaborate and ceremonial big-game hunting in the manner practiced by British officials and officers and Indian nobility for more than two centuries coincided with the last years of the raj, and the initial efforts of hunters and foresters like Jim Corbett. Unlike polo it was a practice that did not enjoy a widespread resurrection among middle class and aristocratic Indians, but hunting remained closely tied to the recreational activities of officers. At regimental centres, hunting punctuated the life of regimental staff, who shot deer, antelope and game birds. When asked by the British Army in 1954 to provide two tiger skins for his old regiment, the Highland Light Infantry, General Thimayaa happily obliged, to the shock of his friend and biographer, Humphrey Evans, who knew that the General had developed a distaste for hunting. “‘Pride of regiment is such that the Major General of the regiment [the Highland Light Infantry] could make the request without embarrassment,’” said Thimayaa, with the assumption that he, then a full general, “‘would be honored.”’

725 Mahesh Rangarajan, India’s Wildlife History: An Introduction (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 2001), 70.
he is right,’’ he said. ‘‘I’m not only honored, but delighted. And that’s what bothers me. I can’t think of one reason why I should be.’’

Traditional imperial pastimes associated with the Indian Army, cricket, game-hunting and polo chief amongst them, demanded the investment of some combination of time, space and money on both the officer and the regiment to which he belonged. The expense demanded from officers to maintain a middle-class imperial lifestyle proved to be as much a burden on Indian officers as it had been on the minor landowners and sons of country gentlemen who had been sent out to India for generations from the Britain and Ireland. While the regimental centre and its associated funds and organizations could provide the Indian officer with much of the support he needed, the development of separate military clubs mirroring those frequented by officers and civil servants in the imperial era were created to provide a further site for both socialization and support. While ostensibly created as a reaction to the financial inability of Indian officers to frequent the long established private clubs in the civilian sphere, military clubs too demanded a membership fee. In the case of the Rajendrasinhji Institute established by General Rajendrasinhji before his promotion to head of the army, membership was mandatory for all officers serving in Southern India. While securing the financial health of the club, such demands ensured that, like the institution of the regimental mess and its associated funds and trusts, that the army would dominate the social life of both military and civil officers serving in the defense forces. In exchange, the infrastructure to support that life was provided by the club, and like the mess itself on a grand scale, clubs such as

the Institute became a preserve of the type of conservatism and gentlemanly culture that characterized British imperial culture in the army.\textsuperscript{728}

**The Training of Indian Soldiers: British and Imperial Methods After 1947**

The familial relationship with an officer and his regiment in the imperial and post-independence army is exemplified by Auchinleck’s attachment to the Punjab Regiment, Cariappa’s ties to the Rajput Regiment and Manekshaw’s longstanding relationship with the Gurkha’s. Regimental “homes” endured throughout an officer’s career, but promotion and transfer ultimately ensured that an officer’s ties to his old regimental centre would become more ceremonial, such as Thimayaa’s attachment to his former Scottish regiment. The impermanence of an officers serving relationship with a regiment limited the effect he could have in preserving those particular regimental customs, especially over the NCOs and jawans that he had direct contact with as a junior officer. The decision to retain the imperial position of Viceroy’s Commissioned Officer for senior enlisted soldiers was seen as a critical means of ensuring that continuity at the level of the battalion and regiment could be kept. Renamed as Junior Commissioned Officers, the position retained the commission granted directly by the President based on merit or seniority, just as the position had been made under the Viceroyship before the commissioning of Indian officers.

\textsuperscript{728} Victor Longer, “Nowhere Else Is So Much Given For So Little,” *The Times of India*, February 22 1953, New Delhi, 12.
While there had been NCO positions in the Indian Army that reflected the roles played by Sergeant Majors in British service, the continued use of JCO’s reflected the British practice of promoting veteran soldiers from the status of non-commissioned officers to warrant officers, existing between the officer corps and the common soldiers. “He has, usually sixteen years or more of service; he has even more knowledge of the ways of the regiment than the commanding officer himself and his place is with the headquarters staff, while his duties lie in the supervision and control of the non-commissioned officers and their messes and training,” wrote the British author E.C. Vivian. The longstanding British concept of a “stereotype” Sergeant Major was of a career soldier, “ramrod straight,” and conscious that “at stake” in his duties as a trainer of men and an exemplar of military discipline what was nothing less than “the reputation of the regiment.” In the 1950s and 1960s, the British sergeant major was also an archetypical guardian of conservative and imperial values against counter-culture at home and anticolonial nationalism abroad. This was a role presented popularly to both the army and to the British public in an era of imperial decline, enshrined in film with roles such as Richard Attenborough’s performance as Sergeant Major Lauderdale in Guns at Batasi.

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For Indian officers who had been trained and entered into the army before independence, the British sergeant-major was a prominent feature of army life. After being commissioned into the army, future General S.K. Sinha recalled as a lieutenant how he was stopped by a British veteran who saluted his new rank. “Sir,” he chided Sinha, “I taught you drill for nine months and I think you can do much better than return the salute in such a sloppy manner. It took me 20 years to earn this badge on my wrist and it is not like one of those lemon drops that you have got after nine months. You go back ten paces and I will also go back ten paces. I will salute you again as I pass you and this time you must return my salute smartly.”

The gradual passing of these long serving British soldiers at training sites and regimental centres in India after 1947, and enlisted personnel seconded from the British Army served longer than British officers, came with their replacement by havildars major serving in the ranks and subedar-majors at the Junior Officer level being granted the same authority that had been held by British sergeants major. The subedar-major was a major fixture in the training of officers and men alike; subalterns and cadets organized into 14 man sections were certain to attract the gaze of veteran trainers of both British and Indian service assigned to root out and fix the “problem” of turning civilians into military leaders. The induction of new recruits into the army Junior Commissioned Officers and NCOs was done at a larger scale, with serving battalions and troops sending personnel to staff training companies at the regimental centre. The assignment of a training company for each battalion, in a

centralized location where basic training could be conducted, ensured that training was uniform while simultaneously reinforcing particular regimental customs.734

British Army programs of training in the Victorian era depended largely on the system of regimental depots in Britain, which, until the Boer War, might provide only a few weeks of drill, with much of the soldiers' time dominated by menial work and the maintenance of army facilities.735 Improvements made after 1900, such as the development of a program of marksmanship,736 did little to alleviate the problems inherent in creating effective soldiers in the space of a few weeks at a local depot or training center.737 By the middle of the Second World War, the British Army had standardized an induction and training system that established a preliminary 16 to 18 week course for infantry soldiers, with all soldiers receiving at least 8 weeks of training. These were conducted at army wide training and induction centres, from which soldiers would be sent out either to conduct specialist training or join the battalions in the field.738 Postwar British training abandoned the centralized training sites for a regimental system more closely modelling the regimental centre in India, but a 10 weeks basic training program followed by 6 weeks of infantry training remained the standard in the national

734 Ahmad, Living Up to Heritage, 2-3.
735 Byron Farwell, Mr.Kipling's Army: All the Queen's Men New York: W.W. Norton, 1981), 151-152.
736 Farwell, Mr.Kipling's Army, 152. The great improvements made between 1898 and 1914 in marksmanship by units stationed in Britain proved devastating to massed German infantry in 1914, with the effect of disregarding the important role of modern infantry weapons, chief among them the machine gun, until after 1916.
service era. Defended by politicians, it was seen as completely “inadequate” program for preparing soldiers for combat in Malaysia, Kenya or other colonial conflicts, with British veterans in Parliament demanding seven or eight months of training. In other countries where the military was closely modeled on that of the British, such as Rhodesia, the balancing of demands on national service conscripts and the realities of preparing men adequately for combat saw a similar confrontation; in Rhodesia, training and conscription modeled on the British Army saw recruit training rise from 19 weeks, close to that of Great Britain, to 32 weeks, the number believed to be necessary to prepare soldiers for active service.

Indian regiments had before the Second World War already developed a standard program of three months training for recruits at their regimental depots, but given the failure of both British and Indian forces in South East Asia in 1941 and 1942, this was expanded. The same reforms championed by Auchinleck that created the regimental centre system expanded basic training for Indian infantry to eight months, to be followed by further months of specialized training in jungle, mountain or airborne operations. Central to this was the weapons training, discipline and “indoctrination into regimental traditions.” British Army formations in South Asia in the Second World War had benefitted from these training programs as much as the Indian forces had, but after

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741 Marston, Phoenix From the Ashes, 96.
independence, the length and content of these imperial programs remained intact under Indian control.

For the average recruit, drawn from the martial classes and assigned to one of the old imperial infantry regiments, this meant 32 weeks of training at the regimental centre, organized into four distinct training divisions dominated by the regimental subedar-major and the officer and noncommissioned cadre of the regimental staff. Beginning with six weeks of basic drill and physical training, soldiers conducted a further 8 weeks of drill training during which they trained with non-firing drill purpose training rifles. Only after 14 weeks were soldiers issued with weapons, by which time they had mastered drill and ceremony. Two courses lasting 18 weeks followed, focused on transitioning soldiers from the parade ground to the field, emphasizing marksmanship, bayonet training, field craft and small unit tactics. The long training period acclimatized soldiers to life within the regiment, with men divided between the officers mess, the common soldiers canteen, and the clubs and settlements of the senior NCOs and JCOs.

In contrast to the British national service conscripts hastily trained and pushed out to their regiments, Indian recruits could begin to immediately enjoy the amenities afforded to them at the regimental centre, in a program that was marked as “orderly,” rather than “hectic.” While this might include the modern amenities such as the cinema, or traditional activities, such as dancing troupes, army life was punctuated largely by drill and meals. Dietary customs divided the more deeply British influenced officers from

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742 Ahmad, *Living Up to Heritage*, 2-3
their men, and the habit of veteran NCOs and JCO’s to adopt a markedly north Indian diet, but the abundance of simple staples, chiefly legumes, onions and potatoes, clearly marked the diet of the soldier from the Indian public. In turn this was supplemented by drawing pay from soldiers to allow for some variety, and the habit of marking the beginning and end of training events with the drinking of tea, under the purview of the subedars.743

The price for extended training and a soldier’s introduction into a regimental community marked in large part by fraternal socialization, modern education, lengthy training, and comparative abundance, was the complete devotion of the soldier to the regiment, and to the army as a whole. Conscription in the United Kingdom after 1945 demanded up to two years of service, after which a soldier was released to the reserves or territorial army. For the Indian soldier, the enlistment was for seventeen years,744 as it had been in both the British and Indian armies of the imperial era a term of “short service,” that could barely be distinguished from the 19th century British and East India Company practice of literally signing men into the army for life.745 24 years of service completed a private soldiers enlistment; veterans could serve for almost four decades.746 It was expected too that officers serve for several decades, but as in the case of those considered for the command of the army, the end of their careers could be dictated by political interference once they reached the flag officer ranks.

743 Ibid., 3-5.
745 Farwell, Mr.Kipling’s Army, 81.
746 Johnson, Preparing and Training, 184.
The Structure of the Independent Army: Formations and Institutions

While a soldier or officer’s attachment to a regimental centre would define much of his military career, the great majority of troops served either in the field battalions or troops, in technical positions at military schools and training sites, or in the various army headquarters. Apart from Cariappa’s reintroduction of strict codes of discipline in the Army Headquarters in Delhi, the formations of the Indian Army that could be assembled to form field armies too reflected the kind of imperial identities that were fostered at regimental centres. For one, India retained much of the larger force structure inherited from the British Empire. Much as the British practice in the 19th century had been to assemble available forces into ad hoc formations for a particular campaign, the Indian Army shifted troops to regional commands as needed. The formation of standing divisions and brigades largely was a product of the reforms made after the Boer War, echoed in India with the creation of standing administrative and tactical formations that replaced the old presidency armies.747

Named regional formations in India were replaced by numbered brigades, divisions, field forces and corps during the Second World War. Though many of these formations were disbanded after the Second World War, Indian divisions, brigades and corps formed the basis of the Indian field army that retained the various regional commands as the highest commands, second only to the army headquarters itself. Only

747 Farwell, Mr. Kipling’s Army, 21.
three of the old imperial Indian divisions had been transferred to India after 1947. The necessity to maintain a larger standing army than had originally been envisioned, and the requirements of creating brigade and division headquarters to control forces on active duty in Kashmir and Hyderabad, saw the resurrection of many wartime formations. Though identity in these divisions was not as strong as that of a soldier to his regiment, there was made a “clear lineal claim” on the part of divisions to an imperial identity stemming from the formation of many Indian divisions during the Second World War. Division names, battle honours and identifying symbols were patterned on those old imperial formations. The 4th Division continued to use its famed Red Eagle insignia; the 17th Division, formed more than a decade after independence, resurrected the black cat emblem it had used in Burma between 1941 and 1947.748

Apart from imperial symbols tying the division to its imperial past, divisions could, like the regimental centre, serve as a place to showcase past glories associated with the empire. The 4th Indian Division, renamed the 4th Infantry Division after independence, was the only field formation that had existed before the Second World War that survived the partition of the army in 1947. Evidence of its long service was the continued use into the 1960s of German vehicles. Captured by Gurkha soldiers in Tunisia in 1943, the German Colonel-General Von Arnim’s personal command vehicle had been adopted by the 4th Division as its own headquarters.749 This trend of adopting or maintaining imperial symbols went as far as the headquarters of the army itself, which utilized the British

749 Bruce Riedel, JFK’s Forgotten Crisis: Tibet, the CIA and the Sino-Indian War (Washington: Brooking’s Institute Press, 2015), 81.
Army’s service flag as its own, altered like regimental symbols to reflect India’s status as a republic.\textsuperscript{750}

The resurrection or maintenance of imperial identities was not only a matter of maintaining pride in the regiment and the in the army, but of the continued process of entering Indians into those positions that had been so long held by white soldiers, often from the British, rather than the Indian army. Cariappa appealed to students at Aligarh Muslim University to join the army, emphasizing the army’s need for the technical expertise vacated by the absence of British troops.\textsuperscript{751} Emphasizing specialized training could, like the building of roads or barracks, be closely linked to the process of national development, or of the continued process of nationalization. Even with the departure of many thousands of British officers who had served as officers in the combat arms regiments or in the staff and command positions of the army, Britons continued to dominate the training and technical formations of the army. In a period of reform and rebuilding as that which followed partition and war in 1949, British soldiers serving as trainers had a disproportionate amount of influence over the army, even as Britons were replaced as the senior officers of the force.

Brigadier C.H.I. ‘Bo’ Akehurst, who spent much of his career in the Sikh Pioneers,\textsuperscript{752} commanded the Indian Army’s Signal Corps Training Centre, in effect the

\textsuperscript{750} Uma Prasad Thapliyal, \textit{The Dhvaja, Standards and Flags of India} (New Delhi: R. Publishing Corps, 1938), 116.
\textsuperscript{751} “General Cariappa Visits Aligarh ‘Varsity,’ \textit{The Times of India}, October 22, 1949, New Delhi, 5.
\textsuperscript{752} George Fletcher MacMunn, \textit{The History of the Sikh Pioneers: 23\textsuperscript{rd}, 32\textsuperscript{nd} and 34\textsuperscript{th}} (London: S. Low and Marston, 1936), 525.
Signal Corp’s regimental centre, from 1947 to his departure in 1954. Credited with creating a modern communications system for the Indian Army, he was joined by ‘Wilky’ Wilkinson. A veteran cavalryman associated with the prestigious 2nd Lancers, a regiment that still bore the title of Gardner’s Horse after its British founder, Wilkinson served as both the Director of Military Training for the army as a whole. Additionally, he remained a senior advisor to the Armoured Corps that carried on the traditions of those regiments that had been converted from cavalry to tanks, a role in which his zeal for hard training was matched only by his efforts aimed at preserving private imperial clubs in Delhi for military use.

Perhaps most influential on reinforcing imperial values on the Indian officer corps after they left the ranks of their first regiment was the establishment of the Defense Services Staff College. With partition, the Indian Army’s senior military academy at Quetta had passed to Pakistan, and a new one was built at Wellington. With a small corps of British and Indian staff officers, General Walter ‘Joe’ Letaigne established the school consciously free from the “‘interference’” of Army Headquarters or politicians in Delhi. Letaigne, whose Anglo-Irish familial ties to colonial service was typical of the kind of officers who had once been prolific in Indian military affairs, had served since 1918 with the Indian Army. His affable personality and popularity amongst the men he led belied his reputation as a ferocious infantry leader, earned first in the rearguard

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754 “General Wilkinson Dead,” The Times of India, March 27, 1954, New Delhi, 7.
756 Ibid.
757 Richard Doherty, Ireland’s General’s in the Second World War (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2004), 204-205.
actions fought by his Gurkha battalion during the Malaya disaster in 1941 and 1942, and then as Orde Wingate’s heir as commander of the Chindits in South East Asia.\textsuperscript{758} After Indian independence, Wilkinson, who directed the overall training requirements of the army, and Letaigne, who directed them for officers training at Wellington, were in a unique position to control the training and culture of officers for years after 1947. Though Letaigne died in 1955, his “baby had grown into a man of the world.” Like the regimental centres around India, the school at Wellington, influenced in part by the continued presence of British planters served, as a model of a “social environment” that was, in the words of one of Letaigne’s officers, “very pucca and English.” Apart from serving as a model of a “professional military institute,” it hosted the imperial activities of British and Indian officers, from hunting and horse racing on the school’s grounds, to formal dinners hosted by officer’s wives. Domesticity was consciously abandoned at the regimental centre, and reintroduced at Wellington for senior officers in training in the form of social functions involving the family, with “each hostess vying to display” the silver and crystal that marked the proper home of an imperial officer.\textsuperscript{759}

**Internal Evaluations and Comparisons: The British Model After Empire**

The strict maintenance of the regimental centre as the heart of the army, the continued presence of British officers and deeply imperial social functions at the most influential levels, and the rebuilding of the structure of the army on the model of the army


of the Second World War, were all specific factors that made the Indian Army of the 1950s appear much as it had in the decades prior to independence, and in its preparations for combat. This was justified by military leaders by citing that all the services “badly needed a period of stability to enable them to be reorganized, trained and reoriented to make them effective instruments of national policy.” It was a sentiment shared by Indian and British officers who served in India during the 1940s, who cited the “overwhelming desire for a period of stability, to take stock of it all.” With the dramatic downsizing of the army after 1945, partition and independence in 1947, two large military operations in 1948 and the transition to peace and republic in 1949 and 1950, this was not unwarranted, but like the justifications used after independence to maintain the imperial style of class composition, could be used to serve army interests.

Internally, the debate within the army was dominated by what imperial influences to retain and which ones needed reform, and what contemporary models, besides that of Britain, the Indian Army could look to on the world stage. Ironically, discussions between officers over imperial influence on the Indian Army after 1947 were conducted largely in the Journal of the United Service Institution, modeled after the military journal founded in Britain by the Duke of Wellington. While so many of the “British derived traditions and values” were themselves a product of Indian influence on the British Army, there was an overwhelming consensus in the army that found these influences “not only

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acceptable, but worthwhile preserving.” Apart from British and imperial methods and culture, there was the real dependence on the army on “British weapons, drill manuals, unit tables of organization and British style uniforms.” In part, this was a point of pride, with standards of Indian modernization measured next to the traditions held by the army. “We can rest assured, however that the weapons which are in use today are all well tried veterans of World War II,” wrote an article in 1952. “Though we might not be able to keep up with the latest developments, we certainly don’t allow ourselves to get too far behind the times.” The retention of old models did not prevent the army from looking at contemporary issues, such as by the continued modeling of new elements of the army on that of Great Britain’s own activities, such as the modelling of parachute and guards units in the post-independence Indian Army on British Army regiments. The following of NATO rifle trials in the early 1950s highlighted Indian interest in British standards, in which a new semi-automatic British developed rifle was hoped to supplant the bolt action Lee-Enfield rifle that had been issued to British and Indian soldiers for more than half a century.

The adoption in 1956 by the British Army of a Belgian assault rifle chambered in a standardized NATO round, rather than the “old favourite” used by the Lee Enfield did not meet with either disinterest in India, or with hostility, but rather an acceptance that the British standard would be adopted by India as well, once

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762 Klaus Borner, “Fact in Fiction: The Indian Army in the Novels of Manohar Malgonkar,” in *Imagination and the Creative Impulse in the New Literatures in English*, edited by Maria Terese Bindella and G. Davis (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1993), 45.
stocks of imperial arms had been depleted.\textsuperscript{767} Likewise, the Anglo-Indian imperial culture of the officer corps that so frustrated attempts at reform aided in limiting the prospect of a military intervention into public life. As D.K. Palit wrote, “we are more apolitical than the British. The British armed forces have not always been apolitical: they killed their king.”\textsuperscript{768}

Any advantage to the government that might have stemmed from the army’s hold on traditional ethos and doctrines did little in the 1950s to limit the increasing isolation of the army from public life and political policy.\textsuperscript{769} After proving itself as a vital component to national integration after 1947, the division between the army and the rest of the Indian nation lead to a “sharp erosion in the status of the army,” a process the beginnings of which coincided with the end of the war in Kashmir and the conclusion of Cariappa’s tenure as army commander.\textsuperscript{770} That the traditional mode of life in the army remained in a world apart from the nation in the Nehruvian era was evident in the place that the army had in the public and popular eye. The success of the Indian National Army in creating a niche in the public imagination only exacerbated this divide; for all the protestations of necessity on the part of Indian Army leaders, the retention of imperial practices was a conscious and divisive decision that in part rejected not only the militancy of the I.N.A., but the platform of political and popular nationalism as it had been presented since the

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\item[767] “Lok Sabha Questions: RS 49.45 Crore Foreign Aid to India, Authorization for Projects” The Times of India, April 1, 1956, New Delhi, 10.
\item[768] Masani, Indian Tales from the Raj, 134.
\item[769] Wilkinson, Army and Nation, ??
\item[770] Khanduri, Cariappa: Life and Times, 368.
\end{footnotes}
transition of the Home Rule movement into one of anti-colonial independence.\textsuperscript{771} The failure of the I.N.A. to defeat the British Empire on the battlefield did little to reduce the feeling that Britons serving in India were not the “heaven-born” masters they had appeared to be.\textsuperscript{772} The history of the British Army, and by association the imperial Indian Army, was one of victory punctuated by “most glorious defeats.”\textsuperscript{773} Even with such an absolute and affirmative historical mindset, the disaster in Malaya at the hands of the Japanese and their allies, described by one modern scholar as the most symbolic and influential overthrow of imperial power since Alexander conquered Persia,\textsuperscript{774} could not be considered among the disastrous battles that held, and continues to hold, such a prominent place in the annals of the British military history. Yet this was the model that the Indian Army clung to after 1947, it’s British and Indian officers staunchly resisting efforts to associate it with the policies of the nationalist politicians who took the place of the commanders, governors and viceroys who had ruled over the Indian Empire.

**Controlling the Army After Cariappa: The Army, The Government and the Budget**

The type of strict hierarchical structure and imperial tradition embodied in the Indian Army’s regimental mess, down to the polishing of the regimental silver, was reflective of some of the most divisive and discriminatory practices of the colonial era. “With the weight of such historical evidence against them,” wrote an editorial in the

\textsuperscript{771} Borner, *Fact in Fiction*, 45.
\textsuperscript{774} Bayly, *Forgotten Armies*, xxix.
Times of India, “surely our gallant Indian army has better and more honorable traditions to commemorate,” a reprobation of the “blatant imperialism” celebrated by the army.\footnote{Letters: Army Traditions, The Times of India, September 4, 1960, New Delhi, 8.} In part, it was an avowed Indian rejection of these principles that separated India not only from its imperial past, but from the actions of its neighbors. The Punjabi and Pathan dominated officer and political class resembled a vestige of “western colonialism,” ruling over the Bengali majority from the comfort of clubs in Dacca and Karachi that had once been characterized as the “preserve of Europeans.”\footnote{A Visit to East Pakistan: Western Colonialism, The Times of India, October 31, 1956, New Delhi, 8.} If it was to be true that the Indian public, like Nehru, “spontaneously sympathizes with all freedom movements against colonialism, in Asia and Africa,”\footnote{U.S. Arms to Pakistan: An Irrational Policy, The Times of India, March 11, 1954, New Delhi, 6.} the Indian Army’s ties to Britain and to its imperial past reflected poorly on a country that distinguished itself from Pakistan, whose relations to Great Britain and the United States defined its place in the world.

The divide over the role of the Indian Army in postcolonial Indian society, and its ties to the old regime of imperial rule, manifested itself critically in the breakdown of a working relationship between the army and its civilian leaders in the 1950s. In formulating a unified postcolonial policy on national security, an army that retained the old Sandhurst credence that “more than one battle has been won on the parade ground”\footnote{Edmond Walker, Military Elements: Notes From Lectures Addressed to the Gentleman Cadets (York Town: W. Webb, 1868), 34.} was completely at odds with a government in which “national development and nationalist security converged around the state as the pre-eminent ideologies of
modernization.” The focal point of these divisions was often the passing of the national budget, which placed strict limits on the activities of political and military leaders alike. The enormous cost to the Indian taxpayer of maintaining the army, more than half of India’s budget on independence, had been one of the major features of the nationalist movement in the 1930s and 1940s. Planned reductions in the budget of the army made in 1946, from 2 billion to 1 billion rupees in the years following independence, did not fully materialize, being reduced by only 25 percent by 1949. Hampered by the budgetary pressures made on the Indian state after 1947, the financial situation of the army was further strained after the end of the war in Kashmir made the issue of national defense less of a priority. The decision made in the Indian Army to retain large quantities of British equipment, regardless of any interest on the part of politicians or military leaders to replace arms and equipment by British or other means, reveals that any effort made within the military to modernize the Indian Army was necessarily limited by the finances of the state and the priority of the army in national affairs.

This budgetary limitation also limited the activities of reformers. Critically to calls made for national representation within the army, this meant that the promised reforms to class composition could not be undertaken by financing the widespread recruiting of new non-martial recruits. With a defense establishment already set above what had been expected in 1946 or 1947, this ensured that the desire of senior officers to retain a traditional class composition was met. Between 1948 and 1961 the core of the

Indian Army, the roughly 150 infantry battalions largely tied to colonial regiments, retained the martial composition that had been a hallmark of imperial rule. The unforeseen and dramatic retention of so many Nepalese soldiers only exacerbated the budgetary and class composition problems of the army; for years after independence, one in five infantry soldiers were recruited from Nepal or from Nepalese communities across the subcontinent. The greatest portion of the remainder were still, as it was across the army, dominated by men recruited from the Punjab. Competing with the necessity of maintaining the size of the army at around 450,000 men, as it had been on the eve of partition, budgetary restrictions limited any effort by politicians to restructure the army. Caught between retaining the army as it existed, and the financial burden of formulating a real program of reform, there was little chance of effecting the substantive ethnic change on the army promised by civilian leaders.

The problem and expense of incorporating the large numbers of Nepalese soldiers into the army proved, like other matters relating to the budget, to be in part a solution to the political frustrations stemming from the inability of civilian leaders to effect substantive change or control on the army. Budget problems could constrict attempts at reform, but by controlling the army’s money, political influence tightened the army’s activities, against which officers could only “cry halt to the sad decline of the army.” While the Indian Army was still considered a potentially dangerous threat to civilian control, government officials could justify some costs, such as the treating of Gorkha

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781 Ibid., 133.
782 Ibid., 111.
783 Khanduri, *Cariappa: Life and Times*, 368.
regiments in part as the Raj had with Gurkha and British units. Though expensive and unrepresentative, Gorkha regiments acted as an “outside balance” to offset problems that might stem from within the army itself.\textsuperscript{784} Alternatively, if the government could not change the ethnic character of the army, by cutting funding to the army it could prohibit in some manner the entry of those social elements that proved to be an obstacle to civilian policy. As the conservatism and aristocratic backgrounds of key senior officers inhibited substantive support for reform, the government could limit the appeal of the service by making it less of an attractive financial prospect, as it did when it reduced the salaries of officers entering into the army in the 1950s, a policy that extended pay reductions to those all officers who had entered into the service after 1934. For those who fell outside of this limit, like Cariappa and his immediate successors, government still retained control over the tenure of senior generals and their activities in retirement. As with all soldiers, budgetary restrictions influenced including the availability of government positions in the aftermath of a military career, or the duration and quality of the army pension. This limited their possible role as either a potential threat to government in a coup, or as unwelcome distractions to government policy.\textsuperscript{785}

The divisiveness of government budget policy on military affairs was exacerbated by the very public and political manner in which it was debated, and the association of political factions with various military policies for political benefit. The “heroic” debates in the Indian parliament over the budget in 1952 included fierce criticism by constitutional framers and parliamentarians B.R. Ambedkar and H.N. Kunzru. Their

\textsuperscript{784} Wilkinson, \textit{Army and Nation}, 110.  
\textsuperscript{785} Ibid., 104.
concerns over the enormous expense of the army revealed a grudging acceptance that India was reliant on foreign countries for military advice and arms, but was critical of the Army’s funding of whom they considered “second or third rate” British officers in the army, and the armed forces continued reliance on the United Kingdom for military hardware. The general opposition to the conduct of the military by Nehru’s government found specific form in the debates over alleged turpitude concerning the military, such as the “Sealand Scandal” over the purchase of British aircraft by the Indian Navy, or the investigations into the army’s procurement of hand grenades from French and Belgian sources.

Opponents of Nehru’s government, within Congress and without, further politicized the issue of defense policy and funds by defending the “magnificent” traditions of the services and supporting policy that consciously isolated the military from the ruling government. By 1953 this included public support by members of the opposition to the informal proposal made to move the Army Headquarters from Delhi to Lucknow, allegedly over the army’s “disgust” with political interference. The debate over reform or support for the army in national defense discussions invariably transformed the army’s resources into sweeteners for some parliamentary representatives, who advocated defense positions that benefited their constituencies. When pressing parliament on the necessity of a “very strong army in the context of the international

situation,” one Congress minister concluded by presenting the solution of raising of a new regiment from his constituency.\textsuperscript{790} Such proposals were not limited to the Indian Parliament. For a generation of nationalist politicians who confirmed that nationalization and development was part of “protecting social interest,”\textsuperscript{791} the championing of Indian Army ethos by private enterprise in India only further exacerbated tensions.\textsuperscript{792} The “boon” of military spending galvanized the political activity of private industry, which by the late 1950s had become deeply entangled in clashes over how state monies were being spent.\textsuperscript{793}

**The Role of the Army After Kashmir, 1949-1957**

Increasing division and apprehension in public and political life over the state of the army after 1948 dictated how the force was utilized by the government, a fundamental shift begun after the conclusion of the war in Kashmir. Where the army had “paved the way for national integration”\textsuperscript{794} in the princely states – and by 1954 the quasi-independent princely state forces had been absorbed into the martial regiments of the army, carrying with them their own imperial traditions\textsuperscript{795} - the role of the army as a tool

\textsuperscript{790} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{792} “Weeks Diary: Bombay House Leads,” *The Times of India*, August 5, 1956, New Delhi, 11.

\textsuperscript{793} Ayesha Jalal, *Democracy and Authoritarianism in South Asia: A Comparative and Political Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 44.


\textsuperscript{795} “Horse Cavalry to Stay: State Regiments Merged,” *The Times of India*, March 22, 1954, New Delhi, 3.
of national policy on the subcontinent largely ceased. Indian support to the United Nations forces in Korea in 1950 set a precedent of the force being regarded for its “quiet capacity” in peacekeeping operations.\(^{796}\) That, as Stephen Cohen writes, its performance was “professional and measured,”\(^{797}\) was echoed by the description of their force in Korea, which expanded from a small airborne medical detachment to a force responsible for repatriating prisoners of war, led by General Thimayaa. General Shoosmith, the British deputy commander regarded them for their “conduct and efficiency” while their North Korean opponents regarded them not only as “good soldiers” but as “good gentlemen.”\(^{798}\)

It was a far cry from the reputation earned by the army by internal opponents to the independent Indian state, earned by their service as an arm of the Indian Empire. “Why wait,” Gandhi had told Naga separatists in 1947, “I declared myself independent long ago.” Because the “Army would take over and start shooting” was the reply.\(^{799}\) The overwhelming power of the Indian Army was again felt during the pacification of communist insurgents in Hyderabad after Operation Polo between 1949 and 1951, with the army acting as it had in the imperial era as an aid to civil power.\(^{800}\) The example of Korea temporarily ended this pattern, with peacekeeping abroad becoming the “primary mission” of the Indian Army in the 1950s, with extended missions in Indo-China, Egypt


and the Congo.\textsuperscript{801} While Indian Army missions acted in maintaining India’s status as a non-aligned state publically deferent to the United Nations, peacekeeping could play a similar role as the foreign service, as a place to send senior command officers, exemplified by Thimayaa’s being sent to act as commander of UN forces in Cyprus following Nehru’s death.\textsuperscript{802}

Coinciding with this new mission was the end of the central role played by the Indian Army in national integration. In reforming the structure of Indian republic itself, Nehru’s accession between 1952 and 1956 to a federal state structure and linguistic provinces acted as a means of limiting regional fissures from playing out on the national stage; with Congress already organized at a regional level, this did not necessitate a loss of political control by Nehru and the ruling government. Additionally, a federal structure limited the possibility that the army could establish firm control over the country in the event of a coup, with control partially decentralized from Delhi.\textsuperscript{803} A political solution that did not rest on the shoulders of the Indian Army did not necessitate a loss of the monopoly of violence enjoyed by the state, or by the dominant forces in Indian politics.

Expansion of the size and responsibilities of Indian police forces and paramilitaries had accompanied independence. Like the Army, police forces retained imperial practices, but the colonial emphasis on police providing the ruling government

\textsuperscript{801} Cohen, \textit{Arming Without Aiming}, 3.
\textsuperscript{802} Wilkinson, \textit{Army and Nation}, 106.
\textsuperscript{803} Ibid., 119-120.
with an “agency of coercion and intelligence” served Nehru and government ministers, where the army’s adherence to the concept of apolitical service to the state only frustrated attempts to use it as a tool of policy implementation. In the integration of the Portuguese outposts of Dadra and Nagar Haveli in 1954, the role that the Indian Army had undertaken in princely states in 1947 and 1948 was replaced by political and paramilitary “volunteers.” Supported by Congress, the R.S.S. and local police from Maharashtra, this force drove out the Portuguese colonial presence. While militarily a limited action with few casualties, the government actively disavowed any role by the Indian Army, championing it as an internal liberation inspired by the precedent set by Congress in British India.

Krishna Menon and the Building of a Postcolonial National Army

Indian officers “bemoaning the shabby treatment” of the Indian Army by politicians in the mid-1950s saw the division of army from the national interest as an extension of the spirit of antipathy that had characterized dominant political opinion of the army since 1947. The death of S.V. Patel in 1950 and Baldev Singh’s move out of the Nehru ministry in 1952, neither of whom had easy relationships with the army, had

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806 Purushottam Shripad Lele, Dadra and Nagar Haveli: Past and Present (Goa: Usha P. Lele, 1987), 26 and 51-52.
808 Jalal, Democracy and Authoritarianism in South Asia, 43.
further consolidated political power around the persona of Nehru. The real and perceived downgrading of the Indian Army in relation to the national budget and to its role within India itself was a temporary situation, but the restoration of some of the army’s fortunes came as a “mixed bag,” with the dramatic and influential appointment of V.K. Krishna Menon as Defense Minister. The resurrection of the use of the Indian Army as a potent force for national policy and in the broad increase of defense expenditure coincided with his appointment in 1957, but came at the price of unprecedented attempts to assert political control over the armed forces.

The “conventional narrative” of Menon’s tenure as Defense Minister between 1957 and 1962 is one of politicized civilian interference in the affairs of the military, ultimately leading to the defeat of the Indian Army on the Himalayan frontier in 1962. The politicization of the officer corps and Menon’s own interest in controlling the tactical and strategic conduct of the army are blamed for the outcome of the Sino-Indian War, an event that serves as a conclusion to the period of decline experienced by the Indian Army. His own role as Defense Minister notwithstanding, Menon’s controversial and highly public personality and attitudes made, and continue to make him, a prominent target when assigning responsibility for the decline of the military, and for the defeat of the army in 1962 especially.

810 Jalal, Democracy and Authoritarianism in South Asia, 44.
This period marked a high point of frustration by conservative and avowedly apolitical elements of the army, but the problems cited by senior officers like Thimayya relating to Menon were a product not only of Menon’s own actions, but had been building throughout the 1950s. Accusations of political interference in the promotion of officers predated Menon, the defense ministry having by 1952 already confirmed a policy of promotion by “merit,” rather than by seniority, as had been so often the case in the imperial army.\footnote{Cut in Defense Forces Not Possible, “The Times of India, May 29, 1952, New Delhi, 1.} The promotion of Rajendrasinhji to Chief of Army Staff after Cariappa, and the appointment of his successor, General Shrinagesh, had already been tainted by political interference, with the departure of Nathu Singh. While the policy of promoting by merit was avowed to be for the purposes of maintaining the efficiency and proficiency of the army’s leadership, it was a tool used by the government to limit the influence of officers at all levels. After Cariappa, the tenure of army commanders was notoriously short, dropping from the four years mandated to two years.\footnote{V.K. Singh, Leadership in the Indian Army, 111.} This same policy was felt in the lower ranks of the officer corps, where civilian restrictions on the promotion of Punjabi officers, more representative of the army as a whole, were aimed at preventing them from wielding an undue amount of power over the army.\footnote{Wilkinson, Army and Nation, 109.} Similarly, civilian leaders, including Nehru himself in 1948, had already been accused by military officers of interfering in the operational control of the army, to the detriment of battlefield success. The contemporary characterization of Menon’s tenure as the “first major civil-military clash in independent India”\footnote{Harsh V. Pant, Contemporary Debates in Indian Foreign and Security Policy: India Negotiates Its Rise in the International System (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 70.} ignores the divisive character of the civilian and...
military leaders, British and Indian alike, who had already set a pattern of difficult relations.

These precedents did not make Menon’s tenure any less dramatic or influential, nor did it limit his own attempts to mark his posting as Defense Minister as a distinct break from India’s imperial past. “The first time that the Indian Army went out,” Menon said on his appointment, “was to Korea to establish peace.” For Menon, the Indian Army’s service in United Nations peacekeeping missions marked the beginning of the history of the army, as a military force of a “truly Gandhian country.” Menon’s appeals to concepts of glory and honour emphasizing India’s avowed defensive principles were markedly different from “the kind of glory that certain army’s would claim by either killing or looting,” a veiled nod to the contempt he had for the army’s imperial past. Menon’s public comments supporting the traditions of the army, stating with approval that it was “perhaps less colourful” than it had been in its imperial past, hid a serious disdain for the army as it existed at the end of the 1950s.

To the chagrin of army chiefs, Menon described it as “parade ground army,” unfit for the central role that the army in Indian power projection that had characterized its existence in the imperial era. Menon’s efforts to reform and exert control over the military came with the assertion of the Defense Ministry’s role over the budget, by

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816 “Indian Army’s Performance: Defence Minister’s Tribute,” The Times of India, April 22, 1957, New Delhi, 7.
817 “Army Not For Aggression: Minister on Need for Discipline,” The Times of India, January 15, 1958, New Delhi, 7.
818 Jalal, Democracy and Authoritarianism, 44.
resurrecting the active role of the army as a force aimed at national integration and
domestic security, and by attempts to place malleable officers in high positions within the
army. In the first case, defense spending was markedly increased. Though it was a
divisive factor in public debate, the “great secrecy” carried out by Menon in
implementing reforms in assured that the ministry retained a high level of control over
new expenditures and the information given to the parliament and to the public. This did
not necessarily provide the army with the means to resurrect its stature or effect a
program of modernization. Reforms conducted in the “the context of modern science and
technology” focused on major projects relating to national development, such as Indian
research into atomic power, the implementation of an indigenous program aimed at the
construction of jet engines and modern fighter aircraft. Menon’s claims that India had
entered “the missile age” closely linked national development with military
development, but effects on the Indian Army were limited, as Menon cited that training
was seen to be adequate, and obsolete equipment was the natural product of a tight
budget. In the case of military stockpiles of equipment dating to the imperial era, the
supply reserve of the army, any move towards modernization was met by a
disproportionate downgrading of these stocks, hampering the Indian Army’s ability to
replace equipment or arm the reserves.

Menon and the Role of the Army after 1957

819 Ibid.
820 “Early Self-Sufficiency in Defence Equipment,” The Times of India, April 17, 1958, New Delhi, 9.
821 “Indian Army Now Engaged in Missile Production,” The Times of India, April 26, 1961, 1.
822 “Early Self-Sufficiency in Defence Equipment,” The Times of India, April 17, 1958, New Delhi, 9.
The slow or inconsequential upgrading of the army in light of increased defense expenditures did not limit Menon’s reintroduction of the army as an active tool of government policy. Menon’s repeated claim that the army was a “defence force and will never be used for aggression”\textsuperscript{823} stood in stark contrast to the buildup of Indian forces around Goa in 1961. Menon, after his appointment to the Ministry of Defense, had already established that Goa was “the last remnant of imperialism in Asia.”\textsuperscript{824} Indian intervention in Hyderabad and Kashmir had been characterized as acts of national integration, in support of the legal power of the Indian government inherited from Great Britain and in the protection of Indian refugees. Menon’s own introduction of Indian troops to aid civil authorities in suppressing a Naga insurrection in India’s North-East echoed some of this precedent. It was a process that begun a reintroduction of the army as a force critical to domestic policy, but it still played a subsidiary role to the efforts of diplomats, civil servants and police.\textsuperscript{825}

The overwhelming force used by the Indian military in the war in Goa begun on December 18, 1961 mirrored that used in Operation Polo. Like Operation Polo, General Chauduri, who had led the 1\textsuperscript{st} Armoured Division into Hyderabad was the commander, but rather than a police action, the invasion was characterized as a “war of liberation.”\textsuperscript{826}

\textsuperscript{823} “Army Not For Aggression: Minister on Need for Discipline,” \textit{The Times of India}, January 15, 1958, New Delhi, 7.
\textsuperscript{824} “Portuguese Colonialism in Goa Exposed: Mr. Menon’s Address to UN Assembly,” \textit{The Times of India}, October 10, 1957, New Delhi, 9.
\textsuperscript{825} Marcus Franke, \textit{War and Nationalism in South Asia: The Indian State and the Nagas} (London: Routledge, 2010), 76-77.
\textsuperscript{826} Joseph Obieta, \textit{The International Status of the Suez Canal} (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1970), 119-120.
A common perception in India and abroad that Goa and other Portuguese enclaves were an “irritant,” doing to India “no harm except perhaps to her pride,” had little of the kind of domestic and international legal authority championed by the Indian government during the use of the Indian Army in earlier interventions in Hyderabad or Kashmir. While Nehru had been advocating for a diplomatic solution, Menon had already become convinced that “the die is cast,” determined to attempt a military solution. In the aftermath, the intervention proved enormously popular in India, but Menon’s prominent role led to Nehru having to defend the government and the congress party publically against charges that Menon had taken control over the military affairs of the state. “We the Congress Party are responsible,” Nehru said. It was “utterly irresponsible” to charge Menon with orchestrating the event.

Hostility on the part of Indian ministers towards Menon, and the appearance of political infighting within the ruling government between factions tied to either him or Nehru had by the end of the 1950s deeply embroiled the officer corps of the Indian Army. The promotion of General Thimayaa to the post of Army Chief of Staff in 1957 came weeks after Menon’s appointment. Thimayaa had already earned a reputation for being able to work with senior politicians like Nehru, despite frustrations felt during the Kashmir campaign. In addition to his role as a commander in Kashmir, he had served as a commandant of the Indian Military Academy, had been selected as a brigade commander and staff officer under Auchinleck, had graduated from Sandhurst, and was one of the

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few Indian officers to have led large formations in combat during the Second World War. While his promotion seemed to validate the civilian policy of promoting senior officers on merit, it was tainted the dismissal of two more senior candidates for the post of army chief, who unlike Thimayaa, were Sikh’s associated with the martial communities of the Punjab. Thimaayya’s appointment furthermore was marked by breaking with the traditional imperial ceremony associated with such a new posting. General Shrinagesh, his predecessor, had already left India for the United Kingdom. With neither a formal change of command ceremony or a guard of honour, Thimayya was instead called to an informal meeting with Menon, before attending a small private ceremony where he was given command of the army.

Thimayya’s public activities advocating “scientific and technical study” for cadets, his tours of Indian peacekeeping missions followed the pattern of public support of the government by senior officers. Menon’s own program of “self-sufficiency” was linked controversially to the arrival of new equipment and advisors from the Soviet Union. Thimayya’s tour of the Soviet Union in 1957 to inspect the modernization of the Soviet Army further linked the Indian Army to government policy. Public alignment of the avowed interests of the government and the Indian Army was temporary

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830 “New Army Chief Takes Over: 4 Year Term for General Thimayya,” *The Times of India*, May 9, 1957, New Delhi, 1.
833 “Indian Army Now Engaged in Missile Production,” *The Times of India*, April 26, 1961, New Delhi, 1.
834 “General Thimayya To Visit Russia: 10 Day Stay,” *The Times of India*, July 8, 1957, New Delhi, 1.
or hid the real sentiments behind government actions. The ties between the United States and Great Britain in the 1958 coup in Pakistan concerned Indian leaders worried about India’s own ties with Britain, leading to the opening of closer ties to the Soviet Union.\(^{835}\)

Ephemerality also marked the assurance that Thimayya or other officers would be able to operate without political interference. Sam Manekshaw, who returned to India after attending the Imperial Defense College in London some months after Thimayya’s appointment, was approached by Menon to discuss the possibility of removing him, less than a year into his tenure as commander. “Stop your British way of thinking,” Menon told Manekshaw. “I can get rid of Thimayya if I want.” Manekshaw’s staunch refusal to even discuss his opinion of Thimayya echoed the sentiments of other officers who resented political interference.\(^{836}\) Menon’s acerbic attitude and disregard for military protocol, evidenced by his casual disregard for Thimayya in front of Manekshaw or in his treatment of Thimayya during his appointment, became a well-known facet of meetings between Menon and the service chiefs. By the summer of 1959, the service chiefs believed that Menon’s control over defense policy was such that their own concerns, particularly over India’s relations with China, were being strictly filtered to Nehru through Menon. Thimayya’s personal appeal to Nehru on behalf of the service chiefs was met with approbation by Menon. In response, Thimayya resigned. Though his resignation was not accepted by Nehru, who convinced him to stay on as Chief of Army Staff, the


\(^{836}\) Singh, Leadership in the Indian Army, 198.
failure of his attempt to make a personal appeal severely limited his influence over the army and military policy.\textsuperscript{837}

**Politcization of the Officer Corps**

For Menon, “political orientation” was a critical influence on the formulation of defense policy, as well as a means of ensuring political control over the army.\textsuperscript{838} The creation of “cliques” in the army were cited by opposition members as a threat not only to the morale of the army, but to national defense more widely. Against these charges, Menon resisted, throwing them back at his accusers.\textsuperscript{839} The decision made by some officers in both the military and the civil service to supply information to the opposition that could be used to damage Menon politically indicates that responsibility for politicization was not only a product of active interference by Menon in the affairs of the army, and that army appeals to apolitical conduct had its limits.\textsuperscript{840} The intransigence of the officer corps could be overcome by the promotion of officers who were more closely connected to Menon and to the ruling government. After Thimayya’s retirement, Brij Mohan Kaul, who had retained close ties to Nehru and Menon for most of his military career, was given the position of Chief of General Staff, the second most senior position in Delhi, an effectively the second in command of the army after the Chief of the Army Staff. Thimayya’s failure to impress any influence over Nehru and Menon had further

\textsuperscript{837} Praval, *Indian Army After Independence*, 248.


\textsuperscript{839} “Krishna Menon Repudiates Charges,” *The Times of India*, April 13, 1961, New Delhi, 6.

lowered the importance of an already “emasculated”\textsuperscript{841} army command and Thimayya’s was replaced by the acquiescent General Pran Nath Thapar. With Kaul’s appointment to the General Staff, he effectively became the most powerful officer in the army, over Thapar and other more senior officers.\textsuperscript{842}

Kaul was reviled by many in the army, both for the fact that he had spent much of his career in the relative safety of the derided Army Service Corps without seeing active service and for the perception that political favours had carried him throughout his career, especially in his appointment to brigade and division commands.\textsuperscript{843} The promotion of Kaul sunk the army into the same divisive spirit that had characterized civil-military relations since the 1950s and that had dominated the defense establishment since the start of Menon’s tenure. This split the officer corps into two factions, one aligned to Kaul and Menon, and the other “entirely antagonistic” to them.\textsuperscript{844} Criticism of civilian and political influence over the army could be directed at Kaul, but aside from political opponents within the parliament, there were few effectual opponents within the army that had the kind of influence held by Menon and Kaul. Kaul’s, who had graduated from Sandhurst, developed a reputation as a vocal nationalist by had working in support of Congress during the Second World War, and in the Red Fort trials of I.N.A. prisoners, and it was reflected in his mistrust of consciously imperial officers. “Some of our senior officers were in the habit of making tendentious and indiscreet remarks against our national

\textsuperscript{841} Pradeep Barua, \textit{The State At War in South Asia} (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005), 171.
\textsuperscript{842} Singh, \textit{Leadership in the Indian Army}, 197.
\textsuperscript{843} Barua, \textit{The State At War in South Asia}, 170.
leaders and extolled the erstwhile British rulers of India,” he wrote. “I came to know of specific cases…I accordingly brought them to the notice of my Army chief, General P.N. Thapar, in writing, who put this up to the notice of Defense Minister Menon.” The matter having been brought to Menon, it was passed back down the military hierarchy to initiate a trial, to be led by the General Staff Branch under the supervision of Kaul, rather than by the normal procedure of the assigning oversight to the adjutant general.845

Sam Manekshaw, who had made enemies of Menon by his refusal to disassociate himself from Thimayya, was well known as the type of imperial officer so antithetical to Kaul. Manekshaw came, like other early senior Indian officers, from a privileged and aristocratic family, rather than from a traditional martial background. After graduating from the Indian Military Academy in its opening class in 1934, he served with the Royal Scots and the Frontier Force Regiment, on the north-west frontier and in Malaya and Burma.846 His wounding at the Battle of the Sittang Bridge in 1942 was considered fatal and began something of the mystique that surrounded his military career. At a military hospital, when told that the officer before him was already dead, General David Cowan awarded him with the Military Cross, under the stipulation that he had to live, as the award could not be given posthumously. It was the only time he had gone into combat, but after during after the Second World War he served in many postings alongside his contemporary Kaul, who considered him a rival.847 By the 1960s, he had already earned a reputation among his rivals and critics as a “staunch supporter of the British raj,”

845 Stephen Peter Rosen, Societies and Military Power, 228.
because of his lack of nationalist credentials, his manner of adopting consciously British and imperial customs and his known distaste for politicians generally.\textsuperscript{848} “He had the habit of speaking out of turn and making disparaging remarks about the heroes of Indian history,” wrote General J.F.R. Jacob, who served on his staff at Wellington in 1961. “He did little to hide his fondness for all things western.”\textsuperscript{849}

These qualities made him the target of Kaul and Menon, who brought Manekshaw before a military court in 1961. The initial cause came during his posting as commander of the staff college at Wellington in May 1961, the first Indian to command the institution.\textsuperscript{850} Finding a collection of old portraits in a military storehouse, Manekshaw took them and decorated his office. Learning that the senior officer of the India’s premier military school had festooned his office with portraits of Clive, Warren Hastings and Field Marshals Kitchener and Birdwood, he was promptly charged. The hanging of imperial portraits earned him the charge of disloyalty, and were joined by charges of misconduct based on his failure to discipline a particularly imperial minded subordinate and for allegedly referring to an instructor’s wife as a “maid servant.”\textsuperscript{851} He was brought before a military board to answer these charges and to the general accusation that he had been publicically critical of Menon and Kaul.\textsuperscript{852} Given the bizarre nature of some of the charges, and Manekshaw’s own eccentricities, the hearings backfired. Led by two Lieutenant Generals, the inquiry found the entire proceeding a waste of time and

\textsuperscript{848} Rosen, \textit{Societies and Military Power}, 228.  
\textsuperscript{849} Jacob, \textit{An Odyssey in War and Peace}, 48.  
\textsuperscript{850} “Army Promotions,” \textit{The Times of India}, May 13, 1961, New Delhi, 8.  
\textsuperscript{851} Singh, \textit{Leadership in the Indian Army}, 197.  
\textsuperscript{852} Barua, \textit{The State at War}, 170.
resources, and the final report given to the government recommended that officers who had brought allegations against Manekshaw should be disciplined themselves.\textsuperscript{853} It was revealed during the inquiry that the Intelligence Bureau had been ordered to monitor Manekshaw, but when called to testify the Intelligence Director refused, effectively reducing the evidence of the most serious charges, that of disloyalty, to rumor and hearsay.\textsuperscript{854}

The Indian Defeat of 1962

The influence over personnel transfers and promotions held by Menon and Kaul meant that though Manekshaw was released from the threat of having formal charges brought against him in a military or public court, his military career was over. After only a month of service as commandant of the school in Wellington he had been recalled to face these charges,\textsuperscript{855} with little prospect that he would be able to play an active role in military or public life. As he recalled in later years, “the Chinese came to my rescue.”\textsuperscript{856} The breakdown of Sino-Indian relations at the end of the 1950s ended the short period of détente that had accompanied the Panscheel Treaty of 1954. The introduction of a “forward policy” of enforcing the McMahon Line that had delineated the Indian Empire from China and Tibet accompanied a gradual buildup of Indian military outposts along the northern frontier. In response, Chinese forces began assembling large quantities of

\textsuperscript{853} Singh, \textit{Leadership in the Indian Army}, 198.
\textsuperscript{855} “Three Area Commanders: Army Postings,” \textit{The Times of India}, June 1, 1961, New Delhi, 7.
\textsuperscript{856} Ashok Mehta, “Gentlemen, There’ll Be No More Retreat,” \textit{Outlook}, July 14, 2008, 64.
men and military stores and fortifying strategic positions claimed by both countries, using mountain roads constructed by thousands of Tibetan laborers.\textsuperscript{857}

Early in 1962, with the possibility of war considered a real possibility by political and military leaders alike, Nehru lambasted critics of Congress’s foreign and military policy as “reactionaries, moneybags, newspapers and communists” who were attempting to “drag India into the Cold War.”\textsuperscript{858} Nehru’s avowed “goal of socialism”\textsuperscript{859} for India did little to soften the aggressive appearance of India in China’s foreign policy. Indian overtures to the Soviet Union after the Sino-Soviet split, the reinforcement of India’s claims to its imperial borders, and the acceptance of Tibet’s government in exile led by the Dalai Lama were seen as “interference in China’s internal affairs,” leading Zhou En Lai to question in the Chinese state press whether India was siding with “reactionary rebels or progressive China.”\textsuperscript{860} Though local commanders argued up the chain of command that Indian preparations might not prevent a Chinese breakthrough, Indian forces began in the middle of 1962 probing the border to effect the government policy of testing Chinese resolve and to gauge Soviet and American support.\textsuperscript{861}

The subsequent invasion begun October 20th by 80,000 Chinese troops through Ladakh and the North East Frontier Agency, with the limited aim of “teaching India a lesson,” was a short but vicious war. Fought at high altitude by the Indian Army, it faced

\textsuperscript{857} Barua, \textit{The State at War}, 171.
\textsuperscript{858} “Efforts To Drag India Into the Cold War: Nehru Lashes Out at Menon’s Opponents,” \textit{The Times of India}, February 21, 1962, New Delhi, 8.
\textsuperscript{859} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{861} George Patterson, \textit{Peking Versus Delhi} (New York: F.A. Praeger, 1963), 279.
the brunt of this attack alone and outnumbered, without the support it had until then enjoyed from the air force, the navy and the police and paramilitary powers of the Indian state. Brij Mohan Kaul had on the eve of the invasion been specially selected to lead the IV Corps of the Indian Army, responsible for army operations along the McMahon line. Nehru had instructed Kaul after his appointment in Delhi to finally push the Chinese “back into Tibet.” With most of the field formations of the Indian Army arrayed along the border with Pakistan in Punjab or in Kashmir, the two brigades of the 4th Infantry Division that comprised Kaul’s command were largely overrun.

Chinese policy prohibited an expansive and prolonged military campaign against India, but the short and violent war lost in the Himalayas shocked both the military and civil establishment of India. Krishna Menon, who immediately became the focus of political and public anger over the success of the Chinese attack, had already resigned at the end of October. On November 19th, after a month of fighting, Delhi was presented with, as U.S. ambassador John Kenneth Galbraith wrote, “the day of ultimate panic.” The loss of major towns across the north-east, threateneing a Chinese advance into the North-Indian plain, were joined by rumours that Kaul had been captured by the Chinese. He had not, having ordered a 160 mile retreat down the Brahmaputra river; his capture, as

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President Radhakrishnan commented was “unfortunately, untrue.” Thapar, whose short term as Army commander was characterized as being an “errand boy” for his subordinate Kaul, resigned the same day. It was accepted by Nehru, who proposed that Kaul, whose exact location and activities could not be ascertained, become the commander. Radhakrishnan put forward the name of Chauduri, the General who had led the 1st Armoured Division in Hyderabad, and had overseen the invasion of Goa.

Nehru accepted, and Chauduri ordered Kaul replaced. Sam Manekshaw, still waiting for a formal “no case” determination to be made over the inquiry initiated by Menon and Kaul in 1961, was selected to command the IV Corps engaged with the Chinese in the North East. When formally appointed to the command and promoted to the rank of Lieutenant General, Manekshaw remarked to Nehru, “I have been waiting 18 months.” Manekshaw’s appointment coincided with the Chinese decision to first halt their advance, and then withdraw behind the McMahon Line, prohibiting him from actively participating in the fighting of the campaign, but his presence was immediately felt. Assembling Kaul’s former staff, Manekshaw quipped, “Gentlemen, I have arrived. There will be no more withdrawals.” For a force that had grown accustomed to conducting a fighting retreat for more than a month with only limited guidance, his eccentric bravado initiated a dramatic reversal of the decline in morale amongst the

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867 Margolis, *War At the Top of the World*, 229.
869 Praagh, *Greater Game*, 284.
870 284-285.
873 Ashok Mehta, “Gentlemen, There’ll Be No More Retreat,” *Outlook*, July 14, 2008, 64.
Indian soldiers on the frontier. “Thank god,” remarked one officer, “there is somebody giving orders.” It was also the event that propelled Manekshaw into the national spotlight. “He has a distinguished fighting record and is reputed to be an authority on modern strategy and tactics,” wrote an article announcing his replacement of Kaul, who to the public had been obscurely “reassigned.” Manekshaw’s meteoric rise from obscurity and political disfavor to high command was confirmed a year later, when it was announced that he was being considered to succeed Chauduri as Army Commander at the conclusion of his term.

Defeat and Recover in 1962: Responsibility

Ultimately, Manekshaw would have to wait not only for Chauduri to complete his four year term, but also the three year term of Kumaramangalam, the last of the old imperial King’s Commissioned Officers trained at Sandhurst to hold the position of Army chief. The intervening period between the end of the war with China and Manekshaw’s appointment in 1969 was dominated by an ongoing debate over the responsibility for the disastrous war with China and what reforms would be necessary to prevent a like event from occurring again. Beyond discussions over the size, structure, equipment and ethos of the army, the mid 1960s witnessed a reevaluation of the army’s role in public life and

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874 Ibid.
875 Sam Manekshaw Named NEFA Corps Commander, The Times of India, November 30, 1962, New Delhi, 1.
in relation to the state, coinciding with the end of the last remaining vestiges of direct influence from Britain.

In the immediate aftermath of the war, Kaul and Menon bore the brunt of the blame for the Indian defeat, and by association, Nehru and the government. The failure to pass a no-confidence vote against Nehru in the aftermath of the war did little to stem the tide of criticism. “I am ashamed to hear what they say,” Menon said to Nehru. “Our people say the British were better.”877 With reviews of the war conducted by the government and by the military, Menon was singled out for his interference in the affairs of the army before 1962. “The government, and particularly the former Defense Minister Mr. V.K. Menon, have to bear a great responsibility for the debacle that defaced the fine record of the Indian Army,” said one independent member of parliament. “It was not the army that sustained reverses in NEFA. It is the reverses of a certain foreign policy which we have followed and the failure of the whole defense policy.”878 It was a vitriolic reaction shared by the public. Arriving by car to address students in Kanpur, Menon was met with a hail of bricks and debris, hurled by riotous protesters.879

Menon and Kaul attempted to defend themselves in writing, with Menon publishing *India and the Chinese Invasion* just months after the conclusion of the war. Menon had just weeks after the Chinese withdrawal began a public defense of his policy.

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These speeches, forming the basis of his book, was regarded as “an affront to the political intelligence of the Indian people.” Kaul’s own memoir, *The Untold Story*, was published years later in 1967. In part is was an answer to the confusion stemming from the events of October and November 1963. The years afterwards was spent answering what he regarded as “malicious gossip,” including accusations that he had not accurately briefed Nehru and Menon, that he had used illness as a pretext for his failure in command on the frontier, and allegations that he had been forced to resign under pressure made not only in India, but by Field Marshal Richard Hull, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff and the professional head of the British Army.

The secrecy surrounding Government investigations left few other alternatives for exploring the large issues of blame and responsibility. The official report was jointly issued as the Henderson-Brooks-Baghat Report, but it was Lieutenant General Henderson-Brooks who led the investigation. “Cheerful and easy going,” Henderson-Brooks was counted amongst the Indian officers who had been sent to Sandhurst after the First World War, but he was a “special case,” being one of the white “domiciled Europeans” who held senior positions in the army. Formally enrolled as members of the Indian Army, rather than as officers seconded from Britain, white Anglo-Indians in numerous battalion, regimental and brigade commands represented families with deep

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882 Palit, *War in High Himalaya*, 388.
ties to India’s imperial past and to India’s most elite and traditional regiments. These senior positions were often in field commands or technical roles, away from the eyes of the government and public. Because of a reputation as being “as English as his hyphenated surname,” Henderson-Brooks was kept out of the “mainstream” of the army. While his selection to head the inquiry was evidence of the neutral role he played away from the political machinations of army command, it was pointed out by Indian officers that Anglo-Indians had “lost interest” in the affairs of the army, making his selection appear to be a way to ensure that any investigation would not be overly deliberate or critical.

In large part, his findings are still not known. Though the Anglo-Australian journalist Neville Maxwell, who wrote the first major study of the Sino-Indian war in 1970, released leaked elements of the report in 2014, he himself has said that it is a report that “will never be released.” Reputed to leave senior officials and officers like Nehru and Thapar blameless, the reports alluded importance to national security means it remains buried in classified archives in Delhi. Without a full official report, the vacuum was filled not only by Menon and Kaul and their detractors in public and in the press, but in the memoirs and histories of those who participated in the conflict. Writing by political officials and military officers in the aftermath of the war was characteristic of attempts to assign or shift blame. Himalayan Blunder, published in 1968 by John Dalvi, a brigade

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884 Palit, War in High Himalaya, 388.
commander who had been captured by the Chinese, was the first major work to firmly blame Nehru for the disaster. Though in part a defense of Dalvi’s own conduct and a personal memoir, it was banned by the government; even after Nehru’s death, the public perception of the Prime Minister was closely guarded by Congress.  

The Public Role of the Army After Nehru

The “shock” to Nehru that accompanied the war with China in 1962 has been credited with hastening his death and began a “battle for succession” within government that lasted until 1969. Nehru’s death in 1964 came as the Indian Army was still recovering from the Sino-Indian War and the reappraisal of the army’s difficult relationship with government was necessarily complicated by his death. This was not limited to the debate over responsibility or blame, but a transformation of the structure of the army. The aftermath of the war with China began the process of reforming the army, both as an operational force in the field and with relation to its role with government, as evidenced by the appointment of Chauduri to the post of army commander, and Manekshaw’s promotion to lead the Indian Army’s IV Corps. It was a pattern of reform and revitalization that lasted for most of the 1960’s, punctuated first by Nehru’s succession, and then by a second short but violent war on India’s frontier, in 1965 with Pakistan.

888 Cohen, Arming Without Aiming, 8.
The breakdown of relations between the army and the government before 1962 had brought the possibility of a military coup again to the forefront of the imaginations of senior Indian politicians.\textsuperscript{889} In the event of some cataclysmic threat to the Union of India, such as was presented by the possibility of a Chinese advance across the North Indian plain, or the death of Nehru, members of the Congress Party firmly believed that India would willing to, as Ashok Mehta articulated, “rally around a military government to preserve its national existence,” a view shared by foreign observers in Britain and the United States.\textsuperscript{890} Menon’s tenure as Defence Minister had been marked by the threat that if Menon gained control over the army, he would affect a coups, a possibility that seemed very real after the orchestration of the invasion of Goa.\textsuperscript{891} While the army appeared to have been stabilized and depoliticized but the removal of Menon, and of officers like Kaul who had been closely linked politically to Menon and militarily to the 1962 defeat, Nehru’s final years and his death resurrected the spectre of a military coup that would be launched independent of the political influence asserted over the army by Menon. The long string of coups and countercoups, from Pakistan to France and from Sri Lanka to Egypt, served as both a warning and as an example. Indian appreciation of “the Nasser Way” balanced Egypt’s particular “ideological predilections” with Nasser’s having appeared to have achieved the promises made by a post-colonial and nationalist

\textsuperscript{891} McGarr, \textit{Cold War in South Asia}, 143.
revolution, promises that Nehru had not completely achieved during his long tenure as Prime Minister.  

When General Chauduri invested Delhi with 6,000 troops after Nehru’s death, a coup appeared to be at hand. On the day of Nehru’s funeral, soldiers were found to have been stationed in front of government buildings and along major roads. Within the cabinet, it was expected that in the wake of Nehru’s death, the military would install an “interregnum” caretaker government, as the army had done to justify military rule in Pakistan. “I only wanted to Mr. Nehru’s funeral to be conducted in the most dignified manner,” Chauduri wrote afterwards, remarking on the panic felt by civilian leaders during the events surrounding the funeral. When Chauduri came down with heatstroke during the ceremonies, a marked relaxation among politicians in Delhi was felt, but it was only when the army left the city after Nehru’s funeral concluded, it was clear that the coup would not materialize.

The army’s prominent role in Nehru’s funeral – he was carried to his funeral pyre on an artillery carriage and “consigned to the flames” to strains of the Rajputana Rifles sounding Last Post was followed by the “decisive”, if short, rule of Lal Bahadur Shashtri. Shashtri’s premiership, which lasted only 19 months, saw a dramatic reversal

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895 “Sorrowing Nation Bids Farewell to Shashtri,” The Times of India, January 13, 1966, New Delhi, 1.
896 Praagh, The Greater Game,
in the fortunes of the army, embodied in his slogan of “Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan;” *Victory to the Soldier, Victory to the Farmer.* Contrary to Menon and Kaul’s derision of the imperial practices of the army and its officer corps, a revitalization of the national image of the army was not contrary to its imperial heritage. While Menon had championed the army’s role as peacekeepers and its identity as a national army, Shashtri defended the army’s retention of its imperial identity built on its wartime experience.

“The NEFA set-back,” Shashtri had said in 1963, “was not a defeat for the Indian Army which had won many laurels on so many war fronts.” *The martial traditions of the people,” wrote the Indian journalist B.K. Vaidya, “have found new expression in the situation created by the Chinese invasion.” Volunteers from a martial class community in Maharashtra included veterans of colonial campaigns and both world wars. “What do you think of this tradition,” Vaidya asked an 85-year-old veteran. “It is simple. We are born to fight.”

Such martial sentiments, and the blaming of Menon and Kaul for the 1962 disaster, did not alter the fact that the Indian Army had been woefully unprepared to face the experiential, logistical and numerical strength brought by the Chinese in the Himalayas. The individual Indian soldier, led by veteran JCOs and senior and junior NCOs, were remarked by the Chinese to have the desire to “fight to the bitter end,” with Indian soldiers found in the aftermath of the war frozen place at their posts with weapons.

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in hand, killed by the Chinese or by the savage weather of the high mountains. Much as in Kashmir, when Indian forces were dug in on mountain outposts with machine gun and mortar support, they proved to be intractable foes.⁹⁰⁰ Cases of Indian resistance are more remarkable for the loss of experience in mountain fighting and logistical support, two hallmarks of the Indian Army’s success in Kashmir. The flying in of Indian reinforcements to the northern borders echoed of the successful and audacious operations conducted in Kashmir in 1947 and 1948, but the lack of clothing and equipment appropriate for combat in high altitude decisively hampered Indian forces in the north-east. By contrast, soldiers along the smaller Kashmir front were far more successful in limiting Chinese advances, precisely because they had those advantages.⁹⁰¹ Additionally, as Manekshaw had found on his arrival in the North-East in 1962, the actions of the officer corps left much to be desired, being described as “mediocre to incompetent, with a very few brave and largely posthumous exceptions.”⁹⁰²

Recovery and Expansion

Though its contents are not fully known, the issuing of the Henderson-Brooks report to the government and the military is credited for the “triple process of reorganization, reorientation and expansion of the Indian Army” to meet these problems.⁹⁰³ Reorganization had begun with the assignment of new officers during and

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immediately after the war but the establishment of an entirely new system of army divisions acted as the primary means of reform and expansion. Specialist infantry divisions, distinguished by their chief mode of transport, being animal or motor transport, and trained to operate in rough terrain, had characterized the Indian Army’s structure in Burma in the Second World War, a specialization lost after independence.\textsuperscript{904} The Indian 4\textsuperscript{th} Division, against which the Chinese attack was felt most severely, had a distinguished service record but it was a prewar formation that spent the entirety of its time in the Mediterranean, and like other divisions assigned to India after 1947, was not restructured after independence to reflect the experience of fighting in South Asia. The expansion and reorientation of the force structure of the Indian Army from a force of nine divisions to twenty-one was due in large part to the formation of a large number of mountain divisions within the Indian Army after 1962.\textsuperscript{905} These formations were characterized their focus on training for combat in rough terrain and being prioritized to be issued with modern weapons, chiefly the self-loading rifle adopted by the British Army in the 1950s to replace the Lee-Enfield, and the introduction of the modern 81mm mortar developed jointly by Canada and Britain.\textsuperscript{906}

The lack of experience and equipment that characterized the Indian Army’s performance was closely entwined with the army’s intelligence failures. At the level of international relations and operational strategy, this was a criticism that was placed on Nehru, Menon and Kaul, with the severe and recurring comparison of these leaders with

\textsuperscript{904} Marston, \textit{Phoenix from the Ashes}, 103.
\textsuperscript{905} Wilkinson, \textit{Army and Nation}, 129.
\textsuperscript{906} Praval, \textit{Indian Army After Independence}, 363.
Stalin and the Soviet Union’s intelligence failure on the eve of Germany’s invasion in 1941. How this failure was expressed on the ground, by repeated Chinese ambushes, ruses, infiltrations and distractions – often by Chinese irregular forces disguised as Tibetan refugees - was a problem that the Indian Army had developed a solution for in Kashmir and lost. Tribal paramilitaries from Ladakh had proved to be critical in stemming the advance of the Pakistani regiments of tribal scouts, but did not form a formal part of the Indian Army in the aftermath of that war. After 1962, tribal paramilitaries on the northern frontiers began to formally be brought into the army as light infantry modelled after the imperial regiments of Scouts transferred to Pakistan, with the Ladakh Scouts becoming the first regiment to be raised independently of units – which included the post-1947 Parachute and Guards regiments - that had longstanding ties to the imperial Indian Army.

The raising and training of new regimental corps and divisions, and the widespread incompetence demonstrated by the officer corps, saw a like expansion in the system of training given in specialist schools. Of all of Menon’s criticisms of the army, his treatment of the force as suited only for the ‘parade ground’ was probably the most prescient. The establishment or expansion of new facilities focused on training soldiers in mountain warfare, counterinsurgency, jungle warfare, and advanced infantry skills. Most of these schools had been established under British rule, but found inadequate for the size and scope of the new training establishment. Training focused on providing courses for

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908 Both the Parachute Regiment and Brigade of Guards were formed from a nucleus of regular infantry battalions. By contrast, the Ladakh Scouts had its origins in the ‘Nubra Guards,’ raised to defend Ladkahi and Tibetan communities in Kashmir.
officers, JCOs and NCOs, who could then return to their units. To accommodate an expanded officer corps, a new program of officer candidacy was developed at a new military academy, the Officers Training Academy at Chennai. Mirroring the British wartime practice of granting “emergency commissions” to British and Indian officers, the program was transitioned into the “short service commission,” like the British practice of the 19th century. This had the effective of not only providing a substantial number of new officers to the ranks of the expanded army, but of making the military a more attractive career possibility for officers who did not want to commit to a lifetime commission.909

The army, with a strength of 458,000 men in the fall and winter of 1962, was expanded in the months after the war with China by an initial addition of 200,000 officers and men. More dramatically this was accompanied by the raising of defense spending from 2.81 billion rupees for 1962 to 8.67 billion in 1963. The simultaneous expansion of the army and the budget was a characteristic of the reform and restructuring of the army in the 1960s,910 but the amount of influence drawn from internal or external sources during this period is a disputed subject. The characterization of the Indian Army being modernized and expanded after 1962 by cooperation with the Soviet Union was a trend that would grow after 1965, when the United Kingdom and the United States placed an arms embargo on both India and Pakistan.911 Alternatively Nehru’s appeals in 1962 to the

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911 P.R. Chari, “Indo-Soviet Military Cooperation,” in *Asian Survey* 19., no. 3 (March 1979), 230 and
West for arms against Red China, to which the US and the UK acquiesced, belies the period of the 1960s as one of “national achievement.”

Under the guidance of the Indian Army, the development of an “indigenous” means of arms production allowed the perpetuation of imperial modes without having to rely on Britain or the Commonwealth. For officers, engineers and politicians eager to supply the army with a modern “Indian made” rifle, the development of the “Ishapore Rifle” in 1963 at the Ishapore Rifle Factory was a symbolic step in national defense and national development. While India could produce these arms free from foreign control from sources in London or Belgium, it represented a continuation of the practice of Indian arms factories producing imperial weapons for the Indian Army, a practice going back at Ishapore into the 18th century. Indian modernization was external and internal, but the continued production of arms adopted by Britain in the middle of the 20th century, highlights the imperial influence on the selection of arms and armaments.

Likewise, the expansion of the Indian Army and its training establishment continued to reflect long established imperial practices. A call made in November 1962 by Menon’s replacement, Y.B. Chavan, for recruiting from provinces based on population, rather than martial communities, echoed the calls made by nationalists before and after independence. The more than doubling of the number of infantry and armored battalions in the army, from less than 150 to more than 300 saw the

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913 Ibid.
914 Pradhan, *Debacle to Revival*, 101-103.
development, as it had in the Second World War, of increased recruiting from “new” or “other classes,” chiefly from Gujarat, Bengal and Orissa. Likewise, just as it had been in earlier periods of reform and expansion, the great majority of new units were raised by bringing in great numbers of soldiers from traditional martial communities. In many cases, class and caste based battalions that had been raised in the First and Second World Wars from martial communities were reestablished, bringing “ready-made” ties to an imperial past, such as class association, particular battle honours and distinguishing social practices and unit symbols.\textsuperscript{916} By the end of the decade, when the program initiated in 1962 and 1963 had met its goal, the army stood at a standing strength of nearly a million men.

**Testing Reform: The Indian Army’s Victory of 1965**

The testing of this military buildup, and the final factor of reform, the operational relationship between the army and the government, came in 1965. The impact of India’s defeat in 1962 convinced elements in Pakistan that the Indian Army and its command was in a critically weakened state,\textsuperscript{917} and that with Nehru’s death, a diplomatic solution to Kashmir and other border disputes, chiefly over control of the Indus river, was untenable.\textsuperscript{918} While the immediate cause of war in the fall of 1965 were sporadic clashes in the salt marshes of the Southern Indus, and the infiltration of soldiers and tribal

\textsuperscript{916} Ibid., 132-133.
\textsuperscript{917} Neil Padukone, *Beyond South Asia: India’s Strategic Evolution and the Reintegration of the Subcontinent* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2014), 28.
fighters into Kashmir from Pakistan, the rapid Indian military buildup after 1962 likely led Pakistani leaders to believe that a forceful solution would have to be attempted before the Indian Army had reconstituted itself completely. “The large expansion of the Indian Army,” said Ayub Khan, “is aimed at subjugating its small neighboring countries, especially Pakistan.”

The early phases of combat initiated in Kashmir in August 1965 reflected much of the pattern of fighting in Kashmir from 1947; Pakistani paramilitaries and regulars were successful in infiltrating and seizing positions along the border, the Indian Army met with the most success in seizing northern mountain passes by a combination of prolonged artillery bombardment. Response to Indian successes in penetrating north into Gilgit-Baltisan was a large attack through the Punjab by dense concentrations of Pakistani troops and armor, a setback that saw the war degrade into a stalemate. By the end of September, both sides had acceded to a United Nations ceasefire, confirmed in Tashkent in January, 1966.

In its duration, in its territorial outcome, and in its loss of human life, the wars that India fought in 1962 and 1965 were superficially similar. Both conflicts, begun in ambiguous circumstances in the high mountains, concluded in roughly the space of a month. There were limited territorial gains; the return to a status quo ante bellum, negotiated in 1965 by the Soviet Union and given up by the Chinese withdrawal in 1962,

ensured that. In Kashmir and the Punjab, as on the North East Frontier, India lost roughly 3,000 men.\textsuperscript{922} Perhaps because of the experience of defeat and political unrest in 1962, and Pakistan’s call for “victory or disaster,”\textsuperscript{923} the indecisive stalemate was lauded as an Indian military and political coup.\textsuperscript{924} “The chosen representatives of the 470 million people of India are on their way home to celebrate Vijaya Dasami, Victory of Good over Evil,” reported \textit{the Times of India}. “The Army and Air Chiefs did well to explain that the aim of the Indian forces was not to annex territory but only to cripple the enemy’s war machine so that he may not suffer the periodic itch to run amock.”\textsuperscript{925} China’s support of Pakistan, and their chastisement of India over the Tashkent Agreement that ended the war, further contributed to the sense in India that the 1962 war had been avenged. Indian perceptions that the philosophies of China and Pakistan were unified behind the principles of “war is inevitable” and “there cannot be peaceful coexistence” saw the enshrinement of “peaceful coexistence, friendship and the non-use of force” written into the Tashkent Agreement as a triumph.\textsuperscript{926}

It had to the government, and to the public, come as a validation of the reforms made after 1962, and a triumph of India’s attempts to make for itself a foreign and military policy that emphasized independence, from the influence of the Cold War and from India’s imperial past. “Engaged as we are in a struggle for survival, aid from any

\textsuperscript{923} “The Die is Cast, Says Bhutto,” \textit{The Times of India}, September 16, 1965, New Delhi, 8.
\textsuperscript{926} Chachko, \textit{Indian Foreign Policy}, 110.
quarter is welcome, but we must be prepared today and at all times to stand on our own feet and to bear the entire burden ourselves,” said Indira Gandhi, serving as Minister of Information. “The India of Shashtri may well be one of attainment of maturity. Our house is being built not on the shifting sands of expediency but on the firm concrete of solidarity. We have emerged from this crisis stronger and more mature. Let us press this advantage.”

Shashtri would not live to see it, dying in Tashkent the day after the treaty was signed.

The subsequent election of Indira Gandhi accompanied the departure of General Chaudhuri. Chaudhuri had been the first officer since Cariappa to complete a full term as army commander, and like his predecessor, he was sent abroad, this time to Canada. To officers who had served with him over the last four years, it came as a surprise, and stung of him being sent, like Cariappa, into exile. “What are you worrying about?” a fellow officer asked him. “You can stay here as long as you like. You have done an excellent job.”

Chaudhuri, despite criticism leveled from officers in the army that he had limited Indian gains by preventing a general advance, was credited for consolidating India’s position at the cessation of hostilities. Measures of success or failure notwithstanding, Chaudhuri had initiated a precedent of enforcing military control over operational affairs. At the outbreak of the war, he had asked Shastri for control free of political interference,

927 “Days Ahead May be Full of Danger,” The Times of India, September 27, 1965, New Delhi, 1.
and was granted it. How far this extended is a matter of debate. In the early days of the war, Chaudhri had impressed the “political need” for offensive action in Kashmir, to the resistance of division and corps commanders. The strategic seizure Haji Pur Pass in Pakistan by the Parachute Regiment, one of the “spectacular successes of the war,” came only after repeated and costly attacks allegedly driven by the pressures placed on the Army Chief by the Defense Ministry.

His replacement, General Kumaramangalam, would continue the process of reform and revitalization. Continuation of the policies initiated under Chaudhuri again were justified, when in 1967 the Indian Army beat of local attempts by Chinese forces to overrun border outposts in the north. Quiet reform, and local military success, was the hallmark of the commander who would prove to be the last officer trained at Sandhurst to command the Indian Army. With an eye towards his replacement by the first officer trained in India to take command, Sam Manekshaw, Kumaramangalam’s tenure as army commander, like Shashtri’s rule as premier and the war with Pakistan in 1965, was seemingly the end of an era and the birth of a new and truly modern Indian Army. Symbolically, the war fought in 1965 was the last one dominated by the use of British armaments in the field. Indira Gandhi’s derision of Pakistan’s leaders as the “stooges of Britain” was evidence of the colossal divide that had emerged between Britain and India, which translated into the end of the relationship the two countries had maintained in maintaining the common war material of the Commonwealth. Perceived British

932 “India Will Not Beg For Arms Abroad: Country is Self-Reliant,” The Times of India, September 29, 1965, New Delhi, 9.
support for Pakistan had accompanied an arms embargo on India, crucially of engines and spare parts bound for India’s tank plants, leading to “public outcry” against Britain and the Commonwealth. By the end of the decade, war machines bought or licensed from the Soviet Union had supplanted British equipment utilized since the end of the Second World War, and credited with giving India victory in the massed tank battles that characterized much of the 1965 war. “Though Indians in New Delhi are talking of quitting the Commonwealth because they feel Britain favoured Pakistan in the brief undeclared war that ended yesterday,” wrote an article on the halting of the Pakistani invasion of the Punjab, “Indian Army tankmen can say nothing too good about their British Centurions – older, slower and less sophisticated tanks – than Pakistan’s American Pattons.”

It was also the last war in which disproportionate numbers of British and Anglo-Indian soldiers participated in. Since 1954, politicians had advocated that “alien pockets” were to be pushed out of the armed forces. On August 24th 1957, the process of “indianisation,” begun in the early years of the century, was announced in parliament to have been completed, with the departure of the last British Army officers, attached to the independent Indian Army since 1947, to be followed by that of the Navy at the end of the year. British advisers continued to have a place in India throughout the 1960s, in

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933 “Britain May Lift Arms Embargo,” The Times of India, September 24, 1965, New Delhi, 1.
934 “Story Of Our Victory Over Pindi’s Crack First Armoured Division,” The Times of India, September 27, 1965, New Delhi, 6.
935 “Bold Defense Policy is Need of the Hour,” The Times of India, March 26, 1954, New Delhi, 5.
936 “Indianisation of Forces,” The Times of India, August 24, 1957, New Delhi, 9.
technical and scientific roles especially, but the United Kingdom’s “obsession with Kashmir” was seen as a primary reason for limiting British involvement on the scale that had been characteristic of the Indian Army since 1947. By the end of the decade, the advice proffered by the British Army, which itself had moved away from its own imperial past, chided the imperial traditions of the army. James Lunt, on a tour of the Himalayas, asked his Indian colleagues, “is the Indian Army too firmly rooted to the military organization it inherited from the British?”

It was clear that Britons, Anglo-Indians and domiciled Europeans, who made up perhaps only 3 percent of the officers of the army, were a class of people on the wane. “They do not breed them nowadays it seems – the type of English officer who flourished in the Indian Army,” wrote an Indian editorial in 1967. “He usually ends up being an authority on something or other and an uninterested generation realizes he existed only because of a long obituary in the London Times.” Their names could be found in Indian newspapers as well. Terry Nolan, a battalion commander with the Maratha Light Infantry, was reported killed in action in October 1965. He had died a month earlier, killed by Pakistani shellfire. Others were luckier, though their conduct was seen as a tribute to a bygone era. Desmond Hayde, born to an Irish family with a long history of

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937 “British Aid Assured For Building Submarine For Indian Navy,” The Times of India, November 21, 1964, 1.
940 “Sunday Soliloquies,” The Times of India, May 7, 1967, New Delhi, 8.
service in India, had led the Jat Regiment in the fiercest combat of the war, leading Shashtri to announce his slogan of Jai Jawan. “He was a maverick,” said an Indian colleague. “One of those old style army officers who was in a different league.” He stayed in India, retiring to the Himalayas, but most left. General Henderson-Brooks and Terry Nolan’s widow and sons joined a wide emigration of Anglo-Indian soldiers to Australia, creating a distinct Indian military community in the 1960s and 1970s. “Britishers we are,” said Frank Anthony, leader of the Anglo-Indian community. “Britishers we remain.” It was not a sentiment shared by all who left, who saw themselves, regardless of being white or Eurasian – and many could not tell the difference – who thought of India as home, but found themselves singing “God Save the Queen” or “Waltzing Matilda.”

Sam Manekshaw and the Rise of the Indian Army

Real and perceived transitions away from British and imperial modes were not dissimilar to Indira Gandhi’s description of India as one of maturity. For the Indian Army after 1965, the Indian Army was seen to have become, in its arms, its composition and its training, and in the place it held in the national consciousness, the “national army” that had been sought since the 1930s. “Battle inoculation” in 1965 proved it could stand and at least hold its own against an opponent, without suffering the kind of defeat inflicted in

944 James Jupp, The Australian People, 436.
945 “The Anglo-Indian’s Dilemma,” The Times of India, November 2, 1969, New Delhi, 17.
946 Joyce Westrip and Peggy Holroyde, Colonial Cousins: A Surprising History of Connections Between India and Australia (Kent Town: Wakefield Press, 2010), 393-394.
1962, or with the command of British officers, as it had been in 1947. Unlike Menon’s appeal to the Indian Army’s present, commentators could see the imperial past as part of the “rise of the Indian Army” into the national force it had become by the end of the 1960s.947

In this light Sam Manekshaw’s promotion to Army Chief of Staff marked a turning point. “With his retirement ends an era in its cheered history,” wrote The Times of India on Kumaramangalam’s departure.948 Kumaramangalam was the last of the King’s Commissioned Officers who had been trained at Sandhurst, not only to command the army, but in the army altogether. Manekshaw by contrast was the “first Indian” to be the commander, the first officer who had not been trained in Great Britain.949 His promotion also served to complete the process of rehabilitation of officers who had been so divided in the late 1950s and the early 1960s.950 “I have today assumed the appointment of Chief of Army Staff,” Manekshaw said. “I know you will all make every endeavor to enhance the good name of the Indian Army and ensure that it is, and always will be, a first class fighting force.”951

The initial public perceptions of Manekshaw highlighted his role as a member of a new generation of Indian officers who had been brought up in India, and though this had been under the purview of the imperial Indian Army, it was viewed as a victory of

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948 “Manekshaw: Next Army Chief,” The Times of India, March 21, 1969, New Delhi, 1.
949 “Lieutenant General Manekshaw May Become Army Commander,” The Times of India, November 28, 1963, New Delhi, 1.
950 “Lal Will Be Next Chief of Air Staff,” The Times of India, April 3, 1969, New Delhi, 1.
951 “Manekshaw Takes Over as Army Chief,” The Times of India, June 9, 1969, New Delhi, 3.
the vestiges of colonial rule. “The idea that Indian Commissioned Officers were somehow not quite of the same caliber as King’s Commissioned Officers is among the many innocent myths that have been encouraged or have otherwise gained currency in this country,” commented an article on his eventual promotion to Army chief. “The rise of the Indian Commissioned Officer to top command levels signifies a transition of military leadership to a younger generation.”

His initial attempts at reform suggested that India would become a more national army.

As Army chief, Manekshaw advocated training reforms that emphasized combat training for all soldiers. Support units of cooks and drivers, drawn largely from those non-martial castes incorporated into the army, had received little real training, and had often faced Chinese infiltrators unarmed during the Chinese breakthrough in 1962. His proposal was met with resistance by officers who believed that martial caste soldiers fought, and non-martial soldiers served. “Little does Sam know,” said General Bewoor, “that brooms cannot be replaced by rifles.”

Like officers who preceded him, and spurred by own experience with politicization in 1962, Manekshaw been repulsed by the “sacking” of junior leaders in the 1965 who had suffered battlefield defeats, while politicians and senior officers had remained unscathed by government review and in the public eye. Manekshaw was among a number of Indian officers who viewed the war

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953 Rosen, Societies and Military Power, 224.
954 Shubhi Sood, Leadership: Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw (Delhi: SDS Publishers, 2006), 129.
that had been fought in 1965 as a stalemate, whose lessons had been clouded by “propaganda media” extolling the recovery of the Indian Army after 1962.955

These apparent attributes as a pragmatic reformer representative of a new generation of Indian officers was superseded by Manekshaw’s reputation in the last decades of his life as a “legend in uniform,”956 stemming from his leadership of the Indian Army during the December 1971 war against Pakistan. In a fourteen day “blitzkrieg,” the Indian Army overran Bangladesh, while defending against a Pakistan Army counteroffensive in the west, before turning over to the offensive in the west.957 Compared to the war that had been fought in 1965, it truly was a victory. It was also perceived as a war of liberation in which the destructive power of the Indian Army was balanced by the treatment it metted out to civilians and enemies alike, a war in which ending the “useless shedding of innocent blood” was seen as the primary reason the war was fought.958

Critical study of the conflict emphasizes that the successful outcome of the war can be attributed to many factors. The failure of West Pakistan to integrate East Pakistan before 1971, the atrocities committed by the Pakistan Army, the role of Bangladeshi insurgents, Soviet aide to India, the failure of the United States to intervene on Pakistan’s behalf, and Manekshaw’s development of a concept of mobile warfare in the years before

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955 Rosen, Societies and Military Power, 22.
nuclear weapons in South Asia made such a victory almost an impossibility to repeat, have all been cited as factors that aligned in 1971 to provide the Indian Army with the opportunity to win a major victory. That this has led to the question, “can the Indian Army only succeed when everything goes right,” has rarely been echoed in histories of the independent Indian Army, which credit Manekshaw with providing the Indian Army its “first decisive” victory.

The victory elevated Manekshaw to the status of a national hero in the months after the victory, and he became the first Indian Army commander asked to stay on longer than his original commitment. Though this was only an extension of his three year term to a fourth year, it was an unprecedented move on the part of Indian leaders who had long held fears about the possibility of popular leaders overthrowing the civilian government. The conception of the war as a liberation was in part due to the role Manekshaw played in personally overseeing the institution of courts martial against Indian soldiers, while extolling to Indian soldiers on maintaining good behavior for the honor of the army. “When you see a begum, put your hands in your pockets and think of Sam,” he told soldiers in Bangladesh. It was comments such as this that built around him a public persona that endeared him to both his soldiers and to the Indian public. In recognition of his popularity, as much as his role in winning the 1971 war, he was promoted to the rank of Field Marshal on January 1st, 1973. What this meant for India

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960 Singh, Leadership in the Indian Army, 183.
961 “Manekshaw to Continue,” The Times of India, April 2, 1972, Bombay, 1.
was unclear, with concerns that Manekshaw was being given “perks” as a political favor.\textsuperscript{963} He had been accused twice of plotting a coup since the end of the 1965 war, and in 1970, the outspoken Cariappa had raised the specter of military rule but advocating for “presidents rule” in order to prevent the country from coming under a military administration.\textsuperscript{964}

Manekshaw retired just fifteen days later, on Army Day, January 15\textsuperscript{th}, 1973. For a general whose 1971 victory was contrasted in the Indian press by the actions of Pakistani generals seen to justify the defeat behind a screen of “pseudo-Sandhurst bluster,”\textsuperscript{965} Manekshaw’s retirement served as an important symbol of the Indian Army’s imperial past. He was the first Field Marshal that India produced, a conscious decision made to elevate him to the rank held by the senior officers of all those armies that had taken on the traditions of the British Army. “This is the first time that in the history of independent India that anyone has been promoted to this exalted position,” wrote The Times of India. “However, before 1947, the British Army was commanded by a British Field Marshal. General Manekshaw will hold the position for life. This is in keeping with the British tradition.”\textsuperscript{966} It was the same justification used by the government of Indira Gandhi, which had skewered British traditions in 1965, to answer critics of the move. “We have followed the British pattern,” announced the government.\textsuperscript{967} Manekshaw’s promotion was a marker that India was different than other developing nations, whose

\textsuperscript{963} “Manekshaw Not Offered Perks,” \textit{The Times of India}, September 8, 1973, Bombay, 7.
\textsuperscript{964} “Cariappa Calls for Presidents Rule,” \textit{The Times of India}, May 17, 1970, Bombay 1.
\textsuperscript{965} Dilip Mukerjee, “Twelve Days To Dacca,” \textit{The Times of India}, December 18, 1971, Bombay, 1.
\textsuperscript{966} “Manekshaw Promoted to Field Marshal,” \textit{The Times of India}, January 1, 1973, Bombay, 1.
\textsuperscript{967} “Manekshaw Not Offered Perks,” \textit{The Times of India}, September 8, 1973, Bombay, 7.
dictators and potentates had elevated themselves to positions of this rank, while Sam Manekshaw was promoted in the British model for battlefield victory, and subsequently retired by the civilian authorities he served.968

**Conclusion: Manekshaw and the History of the Indian Army**

Manekshaw’s own adherence to imperial principles were clouded by the initial manner in which he was appraised by his comrades, the government, and the Indian press. His advocacy for reform hid a deep mistrust of civilian influence and a faith in the army as an imperial institution. “This Defense Minister is mad,” Manekshaw said to an aide, after Jagjivjan Ram, Indira Gandhi’s Defense Minister, proposed reforming the army’s marital race recruiting policy.969 Much as British and Indian officers had before, Manekshaw utilized government policy to cover the implementing of imperial practices. When the Naga Regiment was formed in 1970, Manekshaw, a former Gorkha officer, established its battalions with every Naga recruit being balanced out by Nepalis, Kumaonis and Garhwalis.970 Manekshaw’s celebration of martial race traditions was perhaps more influential than any policy he implemented, but exhortations that he made famous, such as “anyone who says he doesn’t know fear is either lying or a Gorkha,”971 was an imperial sentiment that was met with praise. “In the nations with martial

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969 Wilkinson, *Army and Nation*, 137.
970 Ibid., 142.
traditions,” said the Anglo-Indian C.L. Proudfoot favorably, “the appointment of a Field Marshal is a gesture of appreciation of a victorious campaign.”  

More influentially, Manekshaw created a model for civil-military relations that adhered to a rigid concept of an apolitical army. Manekshaw said later in life when asked by Indira Gandhi if he intended to overthrow the government he responded by saying “you kiss your own sweetheart and I’ll kiss mine. I don’t interfere politically as long as nobody interferes with me in the army.” When told later by Indira Gandhi that the army couldn’t execute a coup, he responded in jest by saying “Why madam, do you think we are so incompetent?” While the stories relating to the good natured ease of their relationship, even when discussing the possibility of a coup, has largely been a product of the mythologizing of Manekshaw – in large part by Manekshaw’s own retelling of events since 1973 – they succeeded in bridging the gap in civil-military relations that had not been fixed by the perceived Indian victory in 1965.

More than any other factor, the establishment of boundaries of responsibility on the eve of the 1971 war has been credited by journalists and historians as the reason for the Indian Army’s success. Gandhi believed that the “political and economic cost” of allowing the war of independence in Bangladesh continue, with its concurrent genocide by the Pakistan Army, outweighed that of the price of a military intervention, ordering

973 “Indira Feared I’d Stage a Coup,” The Times of India, August 2, 1999, Bombay, 1.
974 “Unjust to Uniform,” The Times of India, August 28, 1999, Bombay, 12.
Manekshaw to prepare the army to invade. In the context of the 1971 war, Manekshaw demanded a “Clausewitzian bargain” that fostered in that moment the apolitical ideal that British and Indian soldiers had paid tribute to in their own descriptions of the British military heritage. Gandhi and the government gave the Indian Army its goals, and Manekshaw was left with the freedom to prosecute the war when and how he wanted without political interference.

Those who served with Manekshaw said he was lucky, while he gave the credit to his soldiers. Manekshaw gave himself only in the sly comment that if he had opted for Pakistan in 1947, the war would have been different. It might have been true. With differing amounts of success, the Indian Army had since 1947 adhered to the imperial strategy laid out by “British mentors,” emphasizing tenacity in the defense, followed by a cautious attack. It was a process repeated in Burma in 1944, in Kashmir and Hyderabad in 1947 and 1948, in part on the Chinese frontier in 1962, and repeated again in the Punjab and Kashmir in 1965. Manekshaw demanded the time and freedom to plan such a campaign, and when civil and military policy did not interfere, but still aimed for the fulfillment of the same goals, the result was an overwhelming victory. Others looked back further into the army’s imperial past. When marking the 60th anniversary of the Indian Military Academy that produced the “legendary Manekshaw,” the “golden words”

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977 Ibid.
of the imperial Indian Army were repeated: “The safety, honour and welfare of your
country comes first, always and everytime. The honour, welfare and comfort of the men
you command comes next, your own ease, comfort and safety comes last always and
everytime.” A combination of traditions, customs, ethos, values and strategies had
been inherited from the legacy of empire since 1947; Manekshaw, more than any other
general, saw that the British and imperial influences imparted on the army, its officers
and men were compatible with the identity of the army as a victorious, modern and
national force.

981 Dinesh Kumar, Making Soldiers For the Nation, The Times of India, September 23, 1992,
Bombay, 13.
Conclusion: The Imperial Legacy of the Modern Indian Army

The Indian Army that paraded before Manekshaw as he stepped down from the role of Chief of Army Staff appeared much different than that which advanced through Delhi in the Victory Parade of 1946. Soviet manufactured armored transports, French guided missiles and Indian copies of Russian tanks\footnote{Manekshaw Proud of Army Career,} took the place of the British and American equipment that had carried the Indian Army across North Africa and South East Asia in the Second World War. Yet other aspects; horsemen and camelry, bagpipes and massed bands, would have been familiar to British and Indian soldiers of the previous century.

Sam Manekshaw’s retirement in 1973 did not end the reappraisal of the modern Indian Army in relation to its imperial past. Manekshaw, unlike the officers who preceded him who had been sent out to Commonwealth as diplomats entered the corporate world, after rejecting an offer to become India’s High Commissioner to the United Kingdom\footnote{Bhaskar, Uday. “A Legend in Uniform.” Frontline. July 19, 2008, 3.}. While Manekshaw retired amidst an overwhelming show of support for the Indian Army, and a renewed interest in the imperial legacy of the armed forces, there were voices of dissent. As “India's President V.V. Giri ceremoniously handed Manekshaw an ornate silver-tipped baton” it appeared that “it may take a long time before the ghost of Colonel Blimp is driven entirely from the country.”\footnote{Briton Hadden, “India,” Time, January 11, 1973, 101.} It had

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\footnotetext[1]{Manekshaw Proud of Army Career,} The Times of India, January 16, 1973, Bombay, 10.  
\footnotetext[3]{Briton Hadden, “India,” Time, January 11, 1973, 101.}
already been anticipated that 1948 was the year that, “a stranger and unwanted in his own country,” “Colonel Blimp Goes Home.”¹⁹⁸⁵ Yet his ‘ghost’ remained a prominent feature in the narrative of the Indian Army between 1945 and the Indian Army’s first decisive battlefield victory.

Criticms in India continue to be made at the aspects of the army that appear most imperial and alien, but it is not a new thread in the historiography of the Indian Army. Modern Indian criticism of the “’Brahmanism’ of the officer class,” enshrined in imperial tradition, British social custom and the strict hierarchy embodied in the regiment,⁹⁸⁶ echoes the concerns made by a century earlier by British authors who decried the devolution of their fellow Britons into “a state of semi-Brahmanism and barbarity” by adopting the imperial customs of the Indian Army.⁹⁸⁷ Likewise, the voices of British and Indian observers who decried the end of the traditions and ethos of the Indian Army while looking back to its perceived former glories, often overlook the long endurance of traditions that are fundamental to the creation of institutions that link tradition with not only their professionalism, efficiency and honour, but to their very survival. Manekshaw, several years before his death at age 94, wondered in an interview “what has happened to this brightest jewel in the British crown.”⁹⁸⁸ His was not a new sentiment. Reginald Savory wrote to Field Marshal Auchinleck in 1947 on the fate of “the poor old Indian

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¹⁹⁸⁵ “Colonel Blimp Goes Home,” The Times of India, November 7, 1948, Bombay, 8.
¹⁹⁸⁶ Kunju, Indian Army, 48.
¹⁹⁸⁸ “Manekshaw’s Advice,” The Times of India, October 28, 1995, Bombay, 1.
Eighty years before, the “gentlemen of the old Indian Army” that was destroyed by the events of 1857 and 1858 decried their treatment by Parliament. But the imperial influence, despite criticism, despite cries of its decline, has survived. Manekshaw was joined by Cariappa in 1986, when the first Indian commander was retroactively promoted to the rank of Field Marshal. His promotion, done to honor his role as the “first and only commander-in-chief of free India’s army” – he was the only commander in chief after the transition to republic – was met with a caution. “Is the honor done to ‘Kipper,’ as Field Marshal Cariappa is affectionately called, a stray incident, or a harbinger of a happy new trend towards paying due respect to distinguished after they have ceased to hold high office or wield influence in public life? It is difficult to say.” It was not difficult to say for Manekshaw.

Manekshaw had been promoted while chief of the army, and unlike Cariappa, whose “utterly eccentric dabbling” had seen the avowed apolitical officer try to influence politics through editorials, travelling, diplomatic positions and a failed campaign to enter the Indian parliament, Manekshaw had not yet started his post-military career. Uncharacteristically for an Indian Army officer, Manekshaw’s stature in public life did not diminish with his passing into civilian life, where he consciously avoided political entanglements. Eccentric as well, Manekshaw overshadowed Cariappa and helped articulate a narrative of the Indian Army that was in tune with the imperial past. Like other Indian officers, including Cariappa, Manekshaw built a legacy in part by his own

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990 “Letters to the Editor – The Englishman,” *The Times of India*, September 27, 1861, Bombay, 2.
behavior in emulation of the Indian Army officers of the imperial era that had preceded him, though he had the advantage of an unprecedented military victory. This victory, and perhaps too his lucky streak, separated even his nicknames from “Kipper” Cariappa – given the nickname when a fellow officer’s wife found his name difficult to pronounce.\textsuperscript{992} Sam Manekshaw, affectionately called the jawan by adoring soldiers and Mr. Mackintosh by the Scots he served with on the North-West Frontier before the Second World War, was given the title ‘Sam Bahadur’ by his men.\textsuperscript{993} It was a title that Britons and Indians, for better or worse, could look back into the imperial past and associate with Field Marshal Frederick ‘Bob Bahadur’ Roberts,\textsuperscript{994} who preceded Manekshaw’s command by less than a century.

Manekshaw’s popularity was aided by his ability to stay above politics, not only in creating a working relationship with Indira Gandhi during the war with Pakistan in 1971, but in the years that followed. As “the army’s most distinguished soldier” it would fall to him to be the chief pallbearer in 1984, when Indira Gandhi was assassinated by her Sikh bodyguards.\textsuperscript{995} The storming of the Golden Temple proved to be the costliest engagement fought by the Indian Army between 1971 and 1984, and though Manekshaw was not the cause, he, like other officers who have forwarded imperial policies, must bear the responsibilities for creating a distinctive military culture in India. Sikh militancy after 1984 was shaped by the Indian Army that formed martial identities, created distinctive regimental communities and imparted the skills and equipment to undertake warfare. It

\textsuperscript{992} Praval, The Indian Army After Independence, 128.
\textsuperscript{994} “A Times of India Notebook,” The Times of India, January 4, 1973, Bombay, 8.
\textsuperscript{995} “Tearful,” The Times of India, November 4, 1984, Bombay, 1.
was the army that in turn had to suppress it. As Indian officers discovered in 1984, just as Britons had in 1857, the army could prove to be a double-edged sword.\footnote{996 Wilkinson, \textit{Army and Nation}, 151.}

But the Indian Army’s role as partition and independence have faded into the distant past, the war in Kargil in 1999, in the storming of the Golden Temple in 1994, in remaining aloof during the emergency declared by Indira Gandhi after 1975, in confronting insurgencies against Communists and ethnic separatists since the end of the 1960s; all of these events, and the Indian Army’s conduct in them, have been informed by the external and internal debate over the relationship of the Indian Army to its imperial heritage. Just as historians of the Indian Empire and the independent Indian State have written about partition and the violence that accompanied it, the legacy of the Indian Army was not inevitable. It was formed by external pressures in the late 19\textsuperscript{th} and early 20\textsuperscript{th} centuries, by the efforts of British Army officers and imperial administrators to turn the armies of the East India Company into a unified Indian force, a force that nationalists expected Indians to be able to partake in and eventual lead.

This was realized as the imperial Indian Army came out of the Second World War, on which the same external forces, of British and Indian political influence, was exerted. That this was the army that would become that of the independent Indian state required the efforts of British imperialists and Indian nationalists, to negotiate a compromise that kept the army intact while ensuring that it was no longer an army for imperial domination. Even after independence, when the role of the army as a pillar of a
new dominion, and then as a republic, was confirmed, these same forces changed and altered it. Throughout the entire period, the most important influence was that of the officers and soldiers of the army itself, who altered and adopted British, Indian and imperial practices as they saw fit to make a modern army that incorporated the imperial legacy in which the first two generations of independent Indian Army officers had been brought up in.

The “glorious traditions of the army”\(^{997}\) is a term that has repeatedly been used in Indian histories of the Indian Army, and it was the history and its traditions of the army that was often at stake during the mid-twentieth century debates over the lasting legacy of British imperial rule on India’s military affairs. In so many of the histories of the army, in and outside of India, often a partial story is told. The story of the Indian Army is told from the perspective of Britons or Indians alone, demarcating the separation of India in 1947 with its imperial past. But during the middle of the twentieth century, when the Indian Army became the army of the independent state, these two narratives were woven together. Yet this is rarely how the story of the Indian Army has been told, outside of the stories passed down in the regimental mess or in the halls of formerly imperial military institutions in India and in Britain. This debate continues, in the historiography of the Indian Empire, of the old imperial Indian Army, of the Indian Union and of the modern Indian Army since 1947.

\(^{997}\) Kunju, *The Indian Army*, 53.
Stephen Cohen’s historiographical study that there have “no objective histories of the Indian military since independence”\textsuperscript{998} has not been altered, as the greatest divide in the study of the Indian Army remains the utilization of independence as a demarcation between what is seen as two distinct periods of Indian Army history. It endures to the present day, as Manekshaw’s own legacy and imperial conduct has been examined. Just as his promotion to Chief of Staff was seen as a transition point from the army’s imperial past, his death was marked by his retention of characteristics associated with stereotypical imperial mannerisms, imperial influences that his appointment to command in 1969 had been seen as a departure from. Since his death he has been remarked for his “blimpish” manner,\textsuperscript{999} and his “clipped accent,”\textsuperscript{1000} a legacy of the reputation he earned as an imperial, western or British officer when Manekshaw commanded the Defence Services Staff College.

This characterization endured to the end of his life, but it was only as he made an enemy of Brij Mohan Kaul that these imperial descriptions were utilized, rather than as he is so commonly described, like Cariappa and other imperial officers, as an eccentric or a singular personality. Alternatively, when he has been championed by Indian politicians, he is linked not to the legacy of the Indian Army, but to conspicuously Indian nationalist heroes. This is a reflection on the incomplete nature of the study and discussion on the Indian Army’s imperial legacy, but it is a legacy that within the army is more accepted than outside, just as it was during the decades when the character of the independent

Indian Army was being formed. Auchinleck, an obstacle to Indian nationalists, and an alien entity to Indian historians, retained a special place in the minds of Indian officers who served with him. He retains a place in the minds of some Indian officers, where in the headquarters of the army his desk remains as a point of pride.\textsuperscript{1001} Why this should be so is indicative of the long lasting influence that imperial officers have had on shaping the identity of Indian soldiers, but his influence, and the influence of his Indian successors, such as Cariappa and Manekshaw, is a narrative of discontinuity in the historiography of the Indian Army. The history of the Indian Army as it came to exist after independence begins not in 1947 but by the concerted efforts made by British and Indian officers to take the imperial practices and culture and ensure that they would remain lasting influences on the independent Indian Army.

\textsuperscript{1001} Marston, \textit{The Indian Army and the End of the Raj}, 348.
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