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THE ANATOMY OF DISSENT IN THE MILITARY OF COLONIAL INDIA DURING THE FIRST AND SECOND WORLD WARS

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Introduction

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, after the fateful decisions taken by General Dyer in the sweltering heat of the Jallianwala Bagh in Amritsar, was in no doubt that the Indian soldier was completely shorn from the nationalist spirit enthusing his civilian counterparts, and that the only solution was for him to return to his loom;

> Many weavers of the Punjab have left their handlooms for the sword of the hireling. I consider the former to be infinitely preferable to the latter. I refuse to call the profession of the *sepoy* honourable when he has no choice as to the time when or people against whom he is called upon to use his sword. The *sepoys'* services have most often been utilized for enslaving us than protecting us…[1]

Somewhat surprisingly, where the Mahatma saw cause only for despair and the disparagement of Indian 'Other Ranks' in 1919, he came to look upon the Indian *sipahi* in a completely different light in 1945 after the revolt of the Indian National Army (INA);

> Though I can have nothing in common with any defence by force of arms, I am never blind to the valour and patriotism often displayed by persons in arms, as seems to be the case here [in the INA]. …India adores these men who are undergoing such trials. [2]

Yet what is significant about the different conclusions reached by Gandhi is that histories of the colonial Indian military have been drawn to the poles that he elucidated, so that the Indian soldier is either seen as completely loyal to the Raj or as engaging in nationalist agitation – such as that of the INA – and nothing is said of how the *sipahi* traversed the terrain between loyalty and dissent. In contrast, the object of this article is to reject uniform concepts of loyalty and disloyalty when applied to the colonial soldiery of India, and show instead that there were always degrees of submission and degrees of rebellion expressed by the rank-and-file, and that the varying degrees of both were linked, so that initial instances of insubordination shaped later mutinies. Before embarking on such a venture, however, I will first analyze the various failings that exist in scholarly approaches

[1] M.K. Gandhi; A. Kundu, *Militarism in India: The Army and Civil Society in Consensus*, (London; Taurus, 1998), p.38
[2] M.K. Gandhi to Sir E.M. Jenkins, 29 October 1945*; The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. 81, (July 17 – Oct. 31, 1945)*, (New Delhi; Publication Div., Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Govt. of India, 1980), p.438-439

to military resistance within and outwith India, and outline precisely where I depart from them.

Sam Finer, writing in response to the spate of military coups that occurred in the former colonial world and Latin America in the 1950s, was moved to comment that, instead 'of asking why the military engage in politics, we ought to ask why they ever do otherwise'[3]. In so doing, Finer sought to arrive at some universal rules regarding the involvement of soldiers in politics, and, as a consequence, contributed to a burgeoning literature written by his peers on the subject, which, although ostensibly different, largely shared a similar methodology. For example, in Huntington's *The Soldier and the State*, written before Finer's work, one can apparently 'arrive at the substance of *l'idee militaire* by defining it as a professional ethic'[4], and the extent to which soldiers conform to this professionalism determines how politically active they are. For Huntington asserts that if any army combines a specialized 'expertness' not to be found elsewhere in society, with a feeling of 'social responsibility' to the ideals of the state and a 'corporate loyalty' within the institution, then anti-governmental activity becomes impossible as that army is 'politically sterile or neutral'[5]. In seeming contrast to Huntington's argument, Finer's *The Man on Horseback* seeks to portray Huntington's approach as over-simplistic, and instead argues that the existence of a corporate 'esprit de corps' could actively lead to the involvement of various armies in politics, for it isolates soldiers from 'one's own nationals – the "civvies", "les pekins", "les bourgeois" – and so forth'[6]. Finally, something in the way of a synthesis of these two approaches is attempted by Perlmutter, who divines a category of the 'praetorian soldier' that is both 'professional' and politicized, and which can be located in the colonial world with its 'large mercenary armies' distanced from the mass of colonial civilians at the 'imperial power's periphery'[7]. Yet, despite the different emphases placed by Finer, Huntington and Perlmutter, all are united in stressing that the military is ordinarily distanced from civilian life, and that resistance accrues as a result of

[3] S.E. Finer, *The Man on Horseback: The Role of the Military in Politics*, (Harmondsworth, Middlesex; Penguin, 1976 2nd edn.), p.4
[4] S.P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts; Harvard UP, 1964), p.61
[5] S.P. Huntington; S.E. Finer, *The Man on Horseback*, p.21
[6] S.E. Finer, *The Man on Horseback*, p.21
[7] A. Perlmutter, *The Military and Politics in Modern Times: On Professionals, Praetorians, and Revolutionary Soldiers*, (New Haven; Yale UP, 1977), p.92

either falling short or going beyond this ideal, whether it is an imperfect 'professionalism', a heightened 'esprit de corps' or a 'praetorian spirit'.

Whilst such an approach may have merit in a study of military resistance in the developing world after the retreat of colonialism, however, it is problematic to implement such a schema to the subcontinent and to the colonial Indian Army. This is the case, for Finer, Huntington and Perlmutter are able to arrive at the conclusion that the army is divorced from the rest of society by focusing solely on an elite officer class, and by reducing an army world-view to that which is perceived by the small cadre of officers that commanded particular companies, battalions and regiments. It is this that leads to Huntington's assertion that the 'principal focus of civil-military relations is the relation of the officer corps to the state'[8]; Perlmutter adding that 'Military ideology is the sum of the orientations of [the] officer class'[9]; and Finer's befuddlement, in an addendum to the second edition of his work, as to how recent NCO-led coups could be at all possible[10]. Thus to adapt this thesis to a study of the Indian Army, for which numbers of Indian cadets at Sandhurst were only limited to ten in 1917 and Indians holding King's Commissions were restricted to service in one segregated 'Indianized' division in 1931, is to conclude that dissent within the military was either definitionally impossible or could only have been conducted by white, colonialist officers. Furthermore, even nineteenth century figures such as Tolstoy sought to depart from restrictive analyses of the military that viewed it only through the eyes of its officers, which would indicate that Finer, Huntington and Perlmutter's writings are part of a grand occidental tradition rather than a startling innovation;

> For us their descendents, who are not historians and who are not carried away by the process of research, and so can look at facts with common sense unobscured. …To us the willingness or unwillingness of this or that French corporal to serve a second term has as much weight as Napoleon's refusal to withdraw his troops beyond the Vistula and to restore the duchy of Oldenburg; for had the corporal refused to serve, and a second and a third and a thousand corporals and soldiers with him, Napoleon's army would have been so greatly reduced that the war could not have occurred.[11]

[8] S.P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*, p.3
[9] A. Perlmutter, *The Military and Politics in Modern Times*, p.7
[10] S.E. Finer, *The Man on Horseback*, p.228
[11] L. Tolstoy, *War and Peace*, (London; Penguin Classics, 1982 repr.), p.716

In contrast, although Marxian interpretations of army dissent have at times shared a premise with the traditionalist school that soldiers are often divorced from society, and will thus act as a bulwark against revolutionary activity, there are at least some writing within this milieu who have credited the common soldier with a political agency. For whilst both *guerilleros* and novelists alike, in the form of Ché Guevara and Gabriel García Márquez, have viewed the military as plagued by the 'shame of their rifles with fixed bayonets and the chancre of blind obedience'[12], historians such as Eric Hobsbawm have theorized that 'the rank and file of an army' could engage in politics 'if they act as civilians'[13]. In so doing, Hobsbawm coincides with the opinion of Marxists engaged in warfare on a larger scale than that which could be fought by Guevara's small revolutionary cadres, that the lower echelons of the military could correspond with revolutionary elements in civilian society. It was as such that Mao Zedong in *Basic Tactics* – which was originally a series of lectures given at a time of Japanese advances into the Chinese interior in 1938 – actively encouraged his soldiers to communally dine with their fellow Chinese of Chaing Kai-Shek's Guomindang before battle, and to 'engage in propaganda work' after they were captured, for,

> The fighting capacity of a guerrilla unit is not determined by military acts, but depends above all on political consciousness, political influence, setting in motion the broad popular masses, disintegrating the enemy army, and inducing the broad popular masses to accept our leadership.[14]

Indeed this equation whereby 'the enemy army' ranks alongside 'the broad popular masses' was reached even earlier than Mao by the mastermind of the Bolshevik victory over the Czarist forces after the October Revolution, Leon Trotsky, who not only saw his soldiers as members of the rural proletariat, but directly posited an independent consciousness among the 'armed bloc of workers and peasants' in the Red Army;

> You want the peasant, on the basis of proletarian doctrine, to be prepared at any moment to wage war on the international fronts for the cause of the working class. …But to think that an army, an armed bloc of workers and peasants, can be built on this basis – is to be doctrinaire and a political metaphysician, because the peasantry becomes imbued with the idea of the necessity of maintaining the Red Army only to the extent that it becomes

[12] G.G. Márquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*; translated by G. Rabassa, (London; Penguin Books, 1973), p.308
[13] E.J. Hobsbawm, *Revolutionaries: Contemporary Essays*, (London; Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1973), p.183
[14] Mao Tse-Tung, *Basic Tactics*; translated by S. Schram, (London; Pall Mall Press, 1967), p.130

> convinced that despite our intense efforts to preserve peace and despite our greatest concessions, the enemies continue to threaten our existence.[15]

Thus, Mao and Trotsky provide a schema in which political awareness and political activity by the rank-and-file is dependent upon the degree to which soldiers correspond and identify with other revolutionary segments of the populace.

There is a problem, however, with the Maoist and Trotskyite alternatives to a more traditionalist denial of rank-and-file agency, in that the degree to which the common soldiery can act as civilians is contingent on the extent of their submission to the tight hierarchy of the Party. It was as such that Mao Zedong, whilst acknowledging the possibility of discontent among the 'other ranks' of the Guomindang, also declared such a thing impossible in the People's Liberation Army where 'any feelings of alienation between the lower and higher ranks of officers and soldiers' had been resolved[16]. In a similar vein, Trotsky's comparison between the army rank-and-file and the Russian peasantry was part of an invocation to the proletariat and the Party to lead them as if they were rustic peasants who could only be led by a firm, guiding hand;

> In order to lift the peasantry to the level of a state and of an army, the hand of someone else over them is needed. Among the Whites it is the nobility, the landlords and the bourgeois officers …Among us the directing role is played by the officers who attract the peasantry, organize it and lead it forward.[17]

Therefore, much like the writings of a traditionalist school, to apply this Marxian methodology to the colonial Indian Army is problematic, for it delimits dissent to only a handful of cases that did involve the active co-ordination of Marxists during the two world wars, of which only in strikes by Indian merchant seamen during the Second World War was there an unalloyed link.

Yet it is upon the premises that lie behind traditionalist and Marxian writings of military resistance that the historiography of the Indian Army has relied, because of the problematic way in which dissent in the Indian military has been defined. So, for instance, Stephen Cohen and Rajit Mazumdar treat the politicization of colonial Indian *sipahis* as an aberration in cases where a civilian leadership was not present, and, the fact that such cases were more prevalent than their preferred alternative, is for them indicative

[15] L. Trotsky, *Military Writings*, (New York; Merit Publishers, 1969), p.77
[16] Mao Tse-Tung, *Basic Tactics*, p.135
[17] L. Trotsky, *Military Writings*, p.82

of the 'widespread failure of the military' to countenance 'nationalist activity'[18]. Moreover, where a particular mutiny is perceived as instigating a great 'revolution which took place in the minds of Asians'[19], as is the case with Christopher Bayly and Tim Harper's study of the Indian National Army (INA), it is done so by solely focusing on Indian members of the officer corps that 'led' the movement, rather than the passive participants in the rank-and-file because they were only '"rice soldiers", not patriotic idealists'[20]. The problem in both cases, however, and the conclusion that the rank-and-file were either passive or pre-nationalistic, stems from the privileging of violent insurrection in these studies. For histories of the Indian Army are constructed so that they either begin with the 'Mutiny' of 1857, end with the 'revolt' of the INA, or in Cohen's case do both, and this narrative focus on the overt act of revolt tends to obscure the processes that preceded it, leading to the designation of military dissent as profoundly 'pre-modern';

> The "yeast of modernity" causes archaic fears to rise; political signs and contagious portents inhabit the body of the people. Is this panic written on the *sipahis* skin, the omen that sends rumour and rebellion on their flight? Is this the narrative of hysteria?[21]

Thus the adoption of the terms established by the traditionalist and Marxian schools in the histories of dissent in the Indian military, has been in large part due to the belief that violent insurrection was the only form that dissent could take in the military.

One solution to this reductive focus on the act of revolt is to adhere to the alternative first proposed by Michael Adas and James C. Scott, in which they advised students of South East Asia to investigate,

> Avoidance protest, by which dissatisfied groups seek to attenuate their hardships and express their discontent through flight, sectarian withdrawal, or other activities that minimize challenges to or clashed with those whom they view as oppressors…[22].

Indeed, by studying what Indian sepoys did 'between revolts'[23] one not only learns to appreciate the full spectrum of methods available to sepoys wishing to express discontent, as Adas and Scott encourage, but one can go further and begin to problematize the

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[18] S.P. Cohen, *The Indian Army*, p.99; Rajit Mazumdar goes so far as to say that Indian soldiers 'restricted nationalism', R.K. Mazumdar, *The Indian Army and the Making of Punjab*, (Delhi; Permanent Black, 2003), p.257

[19] C. Bayly and T. Harper, *Forgotten Armies: The Fall of British Asia, 1941-1945*, (London; Allen Lane, 2004), p.xxix

[20] *ibid*, p.326

[21] H.K. Bhabha, 'In a Spirit of Calm Violence'; G. Prakash (ed.), *After Colonialism: Imperial Histories and Postcolonial Displacements*, (Princeton, New Jersey; Princeton UP, 1995), p.342

[22] M. Adas, 'From Avoidance to Confrontation: Peasant Protest in Postcolonial and Colonial Southeast Asia'; *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 23, 1981, p.217

[23] J.C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*, (New Haven; Yale UP, 1985), p.27

power relations between the *sipahi* and the state. This is the case, because instances of verbal dissent, malingering or desertion do not merely reveal a binary relationship between the colonialist officer and the colonial soldier, but a tenuous discourse that was always being constrained and modified by subordinate groups in the army. Furthermore, by moving beyond Scott's conclusions that 'everyday' acts of resistance were fully autonomous from elite groupings, one can begin to appreciate how resistance in the military was conditioned by prevailing norms of deference[24], and how the incomplete nature of such resistance allowed the colonial state to respond to acts of dissent by amending its discourse on 'martial' and 'criminal' communities in India. Therefore incorporating an analysis of 'avoidance protest' into a study of resistance in the Indian Army, allows for one to comprehend the degrees of loyalty and disloyalty that existed within the colonial military establishment.

As such, this essay will start with an analysis of individual dissent committed by *sipahis* in the first months of the First and Second World Wars, instances that were the result of selective critiques of the military establishment, and were, at times, so subtle as to evade disciplinary action. After that it will proceed to an investigation of more substantive acts of insubordination that emerged later in the World Wars, which were dependent on the psychological re-appropriation of military identities from the colonial Indian state. Finally, the third and fourth chapters will chart the development of mutinies that threw *sipahis* in direct conflict with their *sahibs*, and which often involved soldiers adopting and adapting anti-colonial nationalist discourses for their own ends. Yet this article will not merely move beyond traditionalist or Marxian approach to military resistance, by focusing on 'everyday' forms of rank-and-file dissent, but will conclude with an analysis of how the colonial state conditioned itself to military resistance in the First and Second World Wars, by constantly altering its definition of what it meant to be a 'martial' and 'criminal' community in India.

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[24] A move suggested by Douglas Haynes and Gyan Prakash;
'…episodes of resistance themselves rarely mark pure forms of escape from domination; struggle is constantly being conditioned by the structures of social and political power. In sum, neither dominance nor resistance is autonomous; the two are so entangled that it becomes difficult to analyze one without discussing the other.'
D. Haynes and G. Prakash, 'Introduction: The Entanglements of Power and Resistance'; D. Haynes and G. Prakash, *Contesting Power: Resistance and Everyday Social Relations in South Asia*, (Delhi; Oxford UP, 1991), p.3

Individual dissent during the First and Second World Wars

As I have shown, much of what is written about the subject of military resistance in India has been predicated on the notion that the individual *sipahi* or *lascar* had no role to play in formulating such dissent, but that any rebelliousness was due to a 'narrative of hysteria'[25] that required no prior forethought or subjective input by him. Yet in the first weeks and months of the Indian rank-and-file's service in the two world wars the objects of soldiers' criticism, and whom they chose to criticize, reflected a greater deal of subjectivity than is acknowledged by the likes of Homi Bhabha, and, because there was such a subjective and selective critique, the extent of resistance committed took more subtle and limited forms that has been realized to date. In this section, therefore, I will proceed with an analysis of the specific reasons for the emergence of individual dissent committed by the *sipahi* against his *sahib*, before investigating the dissent that accrued, and the effectiveness of it, as Indian troops were plunged into the First and Second World Wars.

For George MacMunn, writing in 1933, it was a matter of joyous wonderment that the *sipahi* served at all for 'small guerdon and smaller pension'[26], but, although MacMunn concluded that such Indians must therefore have an innate desire to serve, the perceived breach of these terms of service, as soldiers were brought to the Front, resulted in the first expressions of discontent among individuals. This is due to the fact that it was the tangible benefits of a soldier's pay and pension that was the chief attraction of the Army for the majority of the so-called 'martial classes', especially as areas of high recruitment tended to be districts where there was rural poverty and no alternate forms of wage labour, as evidenced by the 1910 Rohtak Gazetteer,

> The bulk of the Jat recruits come from the unirrigated villages of the district, the demand for agricultural labour being too great, and its return too sure, to tempt many men from the [prosperous] canal tracts.[27]

Moreover, it was problems over these material benefits of a soldiering life that resulted in the first complaints being expressed in letters by individuals during the First World War, with reservists drafted into the 36 Jacob's Horse being irate that their pay was on par with

[25] H.K. Bhabha, 'In a Spirit of Calm Violence', p.342
[26] G. MacMunn; B. Farwell, *Armies of the Raj: From the Mutiny to Independence, 1858-1947*, (London; Viking Books, 1989), p.170
[27] *Punjab District Gazetteer, Vol. III A: Rohtak District, 1910*, (Lahore, Civil and Military Gazette Press, 1911), p.167

'*syces*' (regimental grooms) and not soldiers[28]; with other *sipahis* complaining over the lack of opportunity for promotion and a higher wage[29]; and with conclusions being reached by wounded individuals returning to the Front, despite the promises they had been given, that,

> The truth is that we are all to be killed. We are sent to Aubassi [at the Front] if we go at all, and not to any other place. We are all to be killed. Not a scrap of India is to be left.[30]

Furthermore, whilst similar laments over the breach of material conditions that Indian *sipahis* had to suffer at the Front were uttered in the Second World War, an additional concern came to be expressed over the condition of their families at home during the Bengal famine, for 'we can bear any hardship on our person, but cannot tolerate the sufferings of our families'.[31] Thus, all this amounted to feelings among certain *sipahis* that their contract of service had been reneged upon, and the fact that Indian soldiers came to be in close proximity to their British counterparts in wartime, heightened these sentiments even further;

> You know very well in what Army I am and what a huge difference there is between the Indian and the British armies. No doubt both are made up of soldiers doing the same job with the same skill and efficiency but for dissimilar rewards.[32]

Yet, although the criticism of elites in the military began to be expressed as a consequence of these grievances, the extent of the criticism, and whether it challenged or reaffirmed the vertical nature of the military, depended on whom the guilty party was deemed to have been. For the belief among *sipahis* that their terms of service had been abrogated by British officers, resulted in the majority of early letters by soldiers failing to include any positive reference towards the Britishers commanding them[33], statements that

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[28] Reservists Natha Singh, Mal Singh, Hari Singh, Fauju Khan, 35 Scinde Horse, attached 36 Jacob's Horse, France, to C.O., 35 Scinde Horse, Jabalpur, *Reports of the Censor of Indian Mails in France, 1915-1916*, Military Department Papers, OIOC, British Library, L/MIL/5/826, Part 4, p.574

[29] Harnam Singh, 35 Scinde Horse, attached 36 Jacob's Horse, France, to Jemadar Mula Singh, 35 Scinde Horse, Jabalpur, 5 May 1916, *CIM, 1915-1916*, Part 4, p.664

[30] Juvar Singh, 9 Bhopal Infantry, Hospital, New Milton-on-sea, to friend in India, 17 February 1915, *Reports of the Censor of Indian Mails in France, 1914-1915*, Military Department Papers, OIOC, British Library, L/MIL/5/825, Part 2, p.222

[31] Anon. Sikh VCO, IAMC, Palestine, Syria and Trans-Jordan Corps, to India, 28 August 1943, *Middle East Military Censorship: Fortnightly Summaries Covering Indian Troops, Sep. 1942 – April 1943*, Public and Judicial Papers, OIOC, British Library, L/PJ/12/654, File 2336/42, p.114

[32] Anon. Malayalam Christian, Indian Signal Corps, Egypt, June 1943, *Middle East Military Censorship: Fortnightly Summaries Covering Indian Troops, April 1943 – Sep. 1943*, Public and Judicial Papers, OIOC, British Library, L/PJ/12/655, File 2336/42, p.47

[33] *'Mention of British officers by name is far rarer than might have been expected. It is in point of fact very much the exception outside a few regiments…'*
E.B. Howell, Chief Censor, Report of 4 September 1915, *CIM, 1914-1915*, Part 5, p.776

'their interest in us is diminishing' where they were mentioned[34], and the use of metaphors and analogies to criticize the apparent cowardice shown by white *sahibs*;

> The black pepper is very pungent, and the red pepper is not so strong. This is a secret, but you are a wise man. Consider it with your understanding. …at this time red pepper is a little pungent, but compared to black pepper it seems like insipid green vegetables.[35]

In contrast, Indians, holding Viceregal or King's Commissions, tended to be declaimed in correspondence only as part of wider invocations for them to act in concert with the best interests of the men, and thus to become better officers for *sipahis*. It was as such that a Garhwali soldier wrote a biting critique of his VCOs in October 1915, but only because of their temerity in battle which 'give us men a bad name'[36], and a humble saddler from 4/6 Rajputana Rifles, writing from Egypt in September 1942, wrote a long petition to his Indian CO after being disciplined, in which he hoped to resolve any future discord;

> It is my desire to further the welfare of other poor people and that a closer supervision be placed on oppressors of subjects of the state. No Indian officer or clerk, etc., should be in a good position to interfere with a soldier's pay. Such evils which attack the very roots of trees should be done away with.[37]

What is of greater significance, however, is that the selective nature of the critique of officers during this individual phase of resistance, resulted in attempts to escape from or amend, rather than subvert or challenge, the deleterious effects of army life, in the discouraging of enlistment, the taking of early pensions at the Front, and the killing or wounding of individual officers.

Perhaps the most pernicious form of dissent from individuals in the First World War were the writing of letters that sought to dissuade potential recruits and serving soldiers from service abroad, which were so abundant in the first months of the Indian Corps presence in France, that E.B. Howell, the Chief Censor of Indian Mails, devolved himself of any responsibility for censoring material that contained this sentiment[38]. Indeed, part of the reason for Howell's apathy was the fact that such letters could not be completely censored despite his best intentions, for they were not merely aimed at the

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[34] Anon. Muslim Sepoy, No. 1 AOD, Egypt, to Lahore, August 1942, *MEMC, Sep. 1942 – April 1943*, p.7
[35] Bugler Mausa Ram, 107 Pioneers, Kitchener Indian Hospital, Brighton, to his brother, Naik Dabi Shahai Jat, 5th Co., 121st Pioneers, Jhansi, 2 April 1915, *CIM, 1914-1915*, Part 2, p.208
[36] Rifleman Gokul Singh Rawat, Garhwal Brigade, France, to Subedar Ram Kishan Rawat, Nader Syang, Upper Burma, 17 October 1915, *CIM, 1914-1915*, Part 7, p.1095
[37] Anon. Saddler, 4/6 Rajputana Rifles, No. 8 Reinforcement Camp, Egypt, to CO, Delhi Cant., India, August 1942, *MEMC, Sep. 1942 – April 1943*, p.41
[38] E.B. Howell, Report of 28 August 1915, *CIM, 1914-1915*, Part 5, p.740

specific acquaintances of the letter writer, but often contained postscripts encouraging the recipient to pass on the message by word of mouth, as Havildar Abdul Rahman directed on 20 May 1915;

> For God's sake don't come, don't come, don't come to War in Europe. …and tell my brother Mohammed Yakub Khan for God's sake do not enlist. If you have any relatives, my advice is don't let them enlist. It is unnecessary to write any more.[39]

In a similar fashion, injunctions were made through intermediaries to whole villages in the case of Signaller Fazl Khan, who desired to warn his fellow villagers that it would be better for them 'to beg in the village than to enter [the] military'[40]; to whole castes by Sepoy Kishan Singh, as he instructed that no Rajput 'should enter military service'[41]; and even to whole battalions;

> I have heard a second reinforcement is coming. For God's sake do not come with it. Preserve your life.[42]

Yet the fact that these exhortations were predicated on the necessity of escaping from the army during wartime, without subverting or challenging the legitimacy of the institution, resulted in the effects of this dissent being transient, and dependent on the vagaries of the agricultural situation in India. For, whilst in June 1915, during a time of relative rural prosperity in Jhelum District of the Punjab, recruits often made the decision to run away after hearing news from France[43], by March 1916 levels of recruiting in the area had reached a new peak as a result of famine;

> There is a tremendous amount of recruiting going on in this part of the country. Recruiting parties go from village to village and the reason is that the famine is driving thousands to enlist. It does not matter what the caste may be, sweepers, oilsellers, dancing girls attendants, they take them all even up to 40 years of age.[44]

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[39] Havildar Abdul Rahman, 59 Scinde Rifles, 9 Co., France, to Naik Rajwali Khan, 31 Punjabis, Fort Sandeman, India, 20 May 1915, *CIM, 1914-1915*, Part 3, p.394

[40] Signaller Fazl Khan, Lahore Division Signal Co., Kitchener Indian Hospital, Brighton, to Sepoy Abdulla Khan, 46 Punjabis, Nowshera, India, 6 June 1915, *CIM, 1914-1915*, Part 4, p.448

[41] Kishan Singh, 2 Rajputs, Kitchener Indian Hospital, Brighton, to his brother, Shalu Singh, Gurgaon District, Punjab, 28 May 1915, *CIM, 1914-1915*, Part 4, p.419

[42] Anon., Hospital in England, to battalion in India, 10 February 1915, *CIM, 1914-1915*, Part 1, p.74

[43] '*I had got eleven recruits and was to produce them at Jhelum at 6 a.m. on the 25th June at the Recruiting Officer's bungalow. On the 24th I had them all collected, when at 4 p.m. there came a telegraph addressed to Ghakkar of Khilaspur to say that Sahibzada, the son of Shakir, of Khilaspur, had been killed in action. When they heard this the heart of the recruits was shaken. At 4.30 p.m. it began to rain and a dust storm came on. I went off to bring my kit indoors and all the recruits ran away. When I came back, there was not one! I hunted high and low for them, but I could not find them.*'
Havildar Fazl Mehdi, 28 Punjabis, India, to Subedar Muhammad Nawaz Khan, 28 Punjabis, France, 28 June 1915, *CIM, 1914-1915*, Part 4, p.691

[44] Buali Hasan Khan, Jhelum, Punjab, to Rahimdad Khan, 38 Central India Horse, France, 11 March 1916, *CIM, 1915-1916*, Part 4, p.550

Therefore, although the discouraging of enlistment did have an effect in particular instances, the selective critique of the army that was employed made sure that a desire by potential recruits not to serve in France did not preclude all service in the army.

Similarly, in the first weeks and months of the North African offensive by the Eighth Army in Egypt, letters encouraging serving *sipahis* to abandon military service were common, as M.G.M. Mair, the Chief Field Censor of Indian Mails, recounted[45], but only obtained fitful results because of the incomplete critique of the army involved in such dissent. For mails of this type from India, whether sent by friends, family or fellow servicemen, tended to ask *sipahis* to apply for leave 'again and again'[46] so that they could return to India to address domestic issues, or so that they could be saved from the heaviest fighting, rather than because the Indian Army was itself seen as an innately injurious institution. It was as such that one letter from Rajpur in Punjab enjoined a *sipahi* to return home because 'your father and mother are badly in need of money and clothes'[47], and another pleaded for the recipient's return so that he might be spared from bloodshed in Egypt and so comfort his 'friends'[48], but that both agreed that 'after setting things right you can go back again'[49]. As a result, there was no dramatic increase in the numbers of soldiers actually requesting discharge or leave from the military as a response to these letters, but rather the active use of army mechanisms to petition for increases in the remittances that *sipahis* gave, and to circumvent battle by lingering in 'back areas' or quiet theatres;

> I am an M.T. driver and there is no difficulty here [in Sudan] …[even] though there is no hope of any promotion. We have heard that there is a great war on the Burma front, so therefore we are better off here…[50]

Moreover, in the few responses by soldiers who sought desperately to return home during this early period of war, the attitude was one of prevailing resignation that as mere individuals they were helpless to amend their situation;

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[45] M.G.M. Mair, Summary No. 163, 15 Dec. to 28 Dec. 1943, *Middle East Military Censorship: Fortnightly Summaries Covering Indian Troops, Nov. 1943 – March 1944*, [misfiled as 'Indian Chief Censor's Fortnightly Reports, 1943-1944'], Public and Judicial Papers, OIOC, British Library, L/PJ/12/655, File 2336/42, p.38
[46] Anon. Subedar, Chittagong, India, to Sepoy, Egypt, August 1942, *MEMC, Sep. 1942 – April 1943*, p.6
[47] Anon, Rajpur, Punjab, to Sepoy, Egypt, June 1943, *MEMC, April 1943 – Sep. 1943*, p.40
[48] Anon. Jalandhar Dist., Punjab, to Sepoy, Egypt, July 1943, *MEMC, April 1943 – Sep. 1943*, p.53
[49] Anon. Mardan Dist., India, to Sepoy, Egypt, October 1943, *MEMC, April 1943 – Sep. 1943*, p.128
[50] Anon. Sikh Driver, Motor Ambulance, Sudan, June 1943, *MEMC, April 1943 – Sep. 1943*, p.44

> I have no hope to get leave from here. When we were in India all got leave except Bengalees [sic], and here it seems from the authorities attitude that they are not ready to give leave to anybody. If they don't agree to sanction us any leave then it will be impossible to get out …However …they must leave us at the end of the war. It is the only consolation.[51]

Indeed, even in the case of physical attacks on officers, where individuals did succeed in making a difference at the Front in both world wars, soldiers discriminated between 'good' and 'bad' officers and failed to challenge the idea that the Indian Army was ordinarily a benign institution for soldiers. This was so despite the accounts of VCOs and British officers who survived such incidents of 'fragging' – as the American military in Vietnam came to call similar attacks – attributing such acts to an uncontrollable 'madness' infecting some soldiers[52], an indiscriminate 'enmity' afflicting others[53], or part of the racial profile of all Indians that led them to 'sit down and intrigue' when 'left alone' for an instant[54]. For *sipahis* themselves, whether perpetrators or sympathisers of the attacks, justified the incidents as necessary to rectify the problem of poor officership that impinged upon their loyal service to the *Sircar*, which is evident in part from the responses of *sipahis* when 'good' officers escaped harm in the cross-fire;

> [Thank God] B. Nihal Singh had a narrow escape from an 'accident' while he was walking with the Wardi Major of his regiment who was shot by an officer orderly…[55]

Moreover, a Hyderabadi Muslim during the First World War reasoned the shooting of his superior as due to his practice of promoting bad officers at the expense of others[56]; another Pathan openly declared that action had been taken against his 'Risaldar Sahib' to force an apology for his poor command of the troops[57]; and one Sikh decided that such activity may well be necessary in his battalion because his officers were actively getting in

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[51] Anon. Havildar, 'Z' Craft Operational Co., Tunisia, Tripolitania, or Cyrenacia, June 1943, *MEMC, April 1943 – Sep. 1943*, p.34

[52] Dafadar Ali Mardan, 10 Hodson's Horse, Egypt, to Risaldar Mir Khan, 10 Hodson's Horse, attached 9 Hodson's Horse, France, 20 April 1916, *CIM, 1915-1916*, Part 5, p.699

[53] Mir Sultan Ali, 29 Lancers, France, to Lance Dafadar Amir Ali, 29 Lancers, Central Provinces, India, 4 September 1916, *CIM, 1915-1916*, Part 7, p.1106

[54] 'English' Field Officer, Bhopal Sultania Infantry, Egypt, Tripolitania, or Cyrenacia, Dec. 1943, *MEMC, Nov. 1943 – March 1944*, p.32

[55] Hazara Singh, 36 Jacob's Horse, France, to Jemadar Man Singh, 36 Jacob's Horse, Ambala Cant., Punjab, India, 4 October 1916, *CIM, 1915-1916*, Part 8, p.1228

[56] Kot-Dafadar Imdad Ali, 29 Lancers, France, to Dafadar Khariat Ali, 29 Lancers, Saugor, India, 28 June 1916, *CIM, 1915-1916*, Part 5, p.837

[57] Sher Khan, Signalling Troop, 19 Lancers, Sialkot Cavalry Brigade, France, to Pensioned Dafadar Fateh Khan, Mianwali, Punjab, 5 July 1916, *CIM, 1915-1916*, Part 6, p.856

the way of his loyal 'field service'[58]. Indeed, Indian soldiers in the Second World War were so adamant that the killing and wounding of certain men was only to get 'rid of' 'cruel and unjust' officers[59], that many espoused the sentiment that the Indian Army should teach 'bad' *sahibs*, and only 'bad' *sahibs*, to expect this activity if they failed in their duties, for, 'when a man divests himself of all forms of justice then one can expect all kinds of wickedness [from us]'[60]. Therefore, just as attempts to avoid service by potential recruits and *sipahis* in the first years of the two world wars did not rely on a challenge to the Army as an institution, so it was the maintenance of a belief that the Army could still provide wholesome employment in wartime, if amended at the periphery, that informed attempts on the lives of particular officers. As a consequence, although early instances of individual dissent caused some members of the military hierarchy the odd sleepless night, it was not on its own enough to make them question the general loyalty of their Indian troops;

> …during the Italian Campaign I had good reason to remind some *sepoys* who were disgruntled and being subjected to subversive indoctrination…that they called me "Bapu"…and it was only a matter of time before I had settled what might have been an awkward situation.[61]

[58] Sowar Sher Singh, 2 Lancers or 38 Central India Horse, France, to Captain Kryer, 28 Light Cavalry, Quetta, Baluchistan, India, 14 June 1916, *CIM, 1915-1916*, Part 5, p.790
[59] Anon. Havildar, D.I.D., 9th Army, Egypt, Cyrenacia, or Tripolitania, February 1944, *MEMC, Nov. 1943 – March 1944*, p.100-101
[60] Anon. Saddler, 4/6 Rajputana Rifles, No. 8 Reinforcement Camp, Egypt, to friend in India, August 1942, *MEMC, Sep. 1942 – April 1943*, p.41
[61] H. Cubbitt-Smith, *Yadgari or Memories of the Raj*, (Saxlingham, Norfolk; Anchor Press, 1987), p.13

Collective insubordination during the two World Wars

As fighting in the two world wars intensified, however, embryonic feelings of alienation affecting the rank-and-file, which led to transient and limited individual dissent, grew into more collective and permanent insubordination among small groups of *sipahis* that did begin to trouble their *sahibs*;

> There remains no length [now] to which writers will not go to obtain a return [to India] …Commanding Officers, Deputy Commissioners and officials of every degree, even the Commander-in-Chief himself continue to receive a large number of plaints.[62]

For in the transition from individual to more collective forms of insubordination, there was no longer just a desire for individuals to amend flaws in the Army, but the psychological re-appropriation of soldiering identities by groups of *sipahis* which invested in their soldiering peers the loyalty once reserved for their officers. Thus, this section will be devoted to an investigation of the forms such corporate identities took among *sipahis*, before proceeding to an analysis of the insubordination that ensued as a result.

Following the recommendations given by the Punjab Committee to the Peel Commission in 1858, the old mixed regiments raised by the East India Company were replaced by battalions segregated on ethnic and provincial lines, in the hope that this would limit the transmission of future insubordination and reinstill a martial ardour among Indian troops[63]. Yet such was the zeal with which this was done in Punjab and in the rest of northern India, that provincial governments did not just decide whether a particular people or caste were martial or not, but distinguished the differing degrees of martialness that sub-divided certain 'races', because only a select few Indian were possessed with 'the courage that we should talk of colloquially as "guts"'[64]. As a result, by 1914 'whole companies or half-companies' of Sikhs were raised from a single *tehsil* in Amritsar district known to harbour Sandhu Jats[65] – the 'pick of the Manjha' Sikhs'[66] –

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[62] M.G.M. Mair, Summary No. 163, 15 Dec. to 28 Dec. 1943, *MEMC, Nov. 1943 – March 1944*, p.38

[63] *'To preserve the distinctiveness which is so valuable, and which, while it lasts makes the Muhomedan of one country despise, fear, or dislike the Muhomedan of another, corps should in future be provincial and adhere to geographic limits within which differences and rivalries are strongly marked. Let all races, Hindu and Muhomedan, of one province be enlisted in one regiment, and no others, and having thus created distinctive regiments, let us keep them so against the hour of need.'*
Recommendations of the Punjab Committee formed to advise the Peel Commission; Tan Tai-Yong, 'Sepoys and the Colonial State: Punjab and the Military Base of the Indian Army, 1849-1900'; P.S. Gupta and A. Deshpande (eds.), *British Raj and its Indian Armed Forces, 1857-1939*, (New Delhi; Oxford UP, 2002), p.23-24

[64] G. MacMunn, *The Martial Races of India*, (London; Sampson, Low, Marston and Co., 1932), p.2

[65] *Punjab District Gazetteers: Vol. XXA, Amritsar District, 1914*, (Lahore; Civil and Military Gazette Press, 1914), p.167

[66] A.H. Bingley, *Handbooks for the Indian Army: Sikhs*, (Simla; Government Central Printing Press, 1899), p.36

and by 1917, as many as thirteen regiments recruited exclusively from among the Muslim Tiwanas of Shahpur District[67], so that non-Tiwanas from the district had to pretend to be so in order be chosen for the Army;

> It is not unusual for members of other Thal classes to call themselves Tiwanas, and many of the men enlisted in the army as Tiwanas, do not belong to the true Tiwana clan.[68]

Furthermore, even former soldiers were subject to the colonial propagation of ethnic and regional identities by a crude policy of social engineering in Punjab, in which pensioners were only awarded land in the canal colonies if they agreed to be grouped together according to the regiments they had fought in, so that,

> [In] some particularly homogenous pensioner villages [in the Chenab colony] …the regimental eponymous hero has given his name to the estate. For instance there are villages named Fanepur (19th Lancers, Fane's Horse), Rattrayabad (45th Rattray's Sikhs), Probynabad (11th Prince of Wales' Own Lancers), Hodsonabad (9th Hodson's Horse), and Kot Brosyer (14th Sikhs).[69]

Thus, in the years preceding both world wars, the colonial state in India was keen to advance feelings of parochialism among Indian troops.

Yet as the *sipahis'* service at the fronts of both world wars went on longer than expected, and the extraordinary conditions of wartime began to be felt, these ethnic and geographically homogeneous military identities began to compete for the loyalty soldiers once reserved for their officers. At times this resulted in only a handful of Indian troops recognizing a commonality of interests, as was the case with some Anglo-Indians burdened by the colour of their skin in a British dominated workshop company;

> I hope Tuts takes my advice and keeps away from all Englishmen. They are no good. I am telling you, for I live with them, eat, do duties with and sleep in the same room, and all I say is keep away from them for they are poison.[70]

In other cases, such as that with Sikhs, collective identities were more widespread and found expression among groups within this so-called 'martial class', with letters recounting how Majha Sikhs from central Punjab felt 'it seriously' because those of the

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[67] *Punjab District Gazetteers: Vol. XXXA, Shahpur District, 1917*, (Lahore; Superintendent, Government Printing, Punjab, 1918), p.304
[68] *ibid*, p.93
[69] *Gazetteer of the Chenab Colony, Vol. 31A, 1904*, (Lahore; Civil and Military Gazette Press, 1904), p.50
[70] Anon. Anglo-Indian Sepoy, 7 W/Shop Coy., 7 B.O.W., M.B.M. Forces, Egypt, to Rawalpindi, Punjab, September 1942, *MEMC, Sep. 1942 – April 1943*, p.40

Malwa area 'always favour its own persons'[71]. Finally, the emergence of this sentiment could even cut across regimental divisions, as was the case with certain Punjabi Hindu Jats in France;

> In this country, in every regiment, the Jats have more men serving than any other clan, yet our men have to serve intermingled with the men of other clans and experience great hardship therefrom [sic.]…a fact which is corroborated by the *Sirdars* of other Regiments whom I have met. …[In] fact our brothers whom you recruited, have to remove the horse dung in other squadrons and we have to listen tamely to their abuse.[72]

What is evident, therefore, is that the very divisions implemented by the Indian Army to buttress the colonial state engendered closer liaisons between some Anglo-Indians, certain Sikhs, and groups of Hindu Jats, and it was these 'particular' identities that elsewhere over-rode a rank-and-file loyalty to its officers.

This is apparent in the First World War through acts of self-mutilation, which operated through the complicity and active encouragement of collective groups of soldiers. For, as fighting intensified in France, what was initially a practice frowned upon by groups of Indian soldiers[73], became an activity that was exclusive to corporate bodies of *sipahis*;

> What, are you still breathing the air of France? …Tell me, what have you yet done in the battlefield? …Do you think of coming back or have you forgotten all about it? …I have written many letters before. Read them carefully and have them read out to everyone. Be ashamed and open your eyes![74]

It was as such that numerous VCOs recounted in 1916 that the practice of feigning illness seemed to be restricted only to particular 'clans' of Rajputs or 'tribes' of Punjabi Muslims in the same regiment[75], such as the Tiwanas of the 28 Punjabis at Colombo who all became 'sick' upon learning that they were to embark for Europe, but only 'for five

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[71] Anon. Sikh Sepoy, Hodson's Horse, 8 Indian Division, Central Mediterranean Force, to India, February 1944, *MEMC, Nov. 1943 – March 1944*, p.84

[72] Jemadar Gobind Singh, 20 Deccan Horse, France, to Har Gobind Rohhah, Punjab, India, 31 January 1917, *Reports of the Censor of Indian Mails in France, 1917*, OIOC, British Library, L/MIL/5/827, Part 1, p.33

[73] '*…if I occasionally lie down as being indisposed, the dressers come and sit near me, and those of my own lot accuse me of trying to get away and desert them, and weep. What am I to do? …I tried to get ill, but what am I to do. …[They will let] no illness come to me.*' Havildar Sayid Rasul, 88 Carnatic Infantry, Indian Hospital Ship "Glengorm Castle", to Havildar Sayid Hussein, 88 Carnatic Infantry, Poona, India, 3 April 1916, *CIM 1915-1916*, Part 4, p.537

[74] Katoch Ragbir Singh, Tahsil Palompra, Kangra District, Punjab, to Sardar Singh, Lady Hardinge Hospital, Bournemouth, May 1915, *CIM, 1914-1915*, Part 3, p.392

[75] Hamidullah Khan, Inderkot, Meerut, UP, to Kot Dafadar Mahomed Wazir Khan, 18 Lancers, France, 17 June 1916, *CIM 1915-1916*, Part 6, p.882

months'[76]. In addition it was groups of *sipahis* who enjoined their families to send packages of the toxic 'bhailawa' seed to the Front, in a desire for an intoxicant that would 'make the doctors declare' soldiers 'unfit for service'[77], which was apparent among several Dogras in July 1915[78], even more Garhwalis in September[79], and finally among Pathans of the 9 Hodson's Horse[80],

> …because…[we are] tied up in the Sircar's string and moreover cannot go outside and get the sort of medicine that …[we] should like.[81]

Moreover, not only did acts of self-mutilation become a group activity, but an activity that purposely subverted the writ of officers who fought to punish incidents of self-harm;

> Sikander Shah…told me that a man of the 57th came and our people asked how Inzar Gul was. He replied that Inzar Gul himself had hit his own hand. Then the Doctor caused him to be arrested, saying "You have caused your own injury". There was another sepoy with him who said "I saw him hit", i.e. he gave evidence in his favour. …When I rejoin I will make enquiry before the Colonel to find out about that sepoy and discover who it was that delivered me from the Doctor.[82]

Hence, whilst corporate identities restrained the practice of self-mutilation at the beginning of the First World War, it was these identities that shaped the feigning of illness later in the conflict.

For the majority of Pathans in the First World War, however, desertion was the means by which a collective psychological rejection of the military was expressed. For, despite the assertions made by David Omissi that individual Pathans chose to desert because is was easy to evade colonial authorities in the lawless Hindu Kush[83], letters exchanged between soldiers show that desertion operated among corporate groups and as a conversation between France and India. It was in this manner that, shortly after a group of *sipahis* from the 40 Pathans crossed over to the German lines in February 1915, a flurry

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[76] Anon., 28 Punjabis, Colombo, to friend, 58th Rifles, France, 10 February 1915, *CIM, 1914-1915*, Part 1, p.121
[77] Kot Dafadar Talib Mahomed Khan, 34 Poona Horse, France, to Reservist Kharim Khan, 1 Lancers, Risalpur, NWFP, India, 9 November 1916, *CIM 1915-1916*, Part 8, p.1354
[78] Sepoy Diwana, 37 Dogras, Kitchener Indian Hospital, Brighton, to Sepoy Randatta, 37 Dogras, attached 40 Dogras, Marseille, 17 July 1915, *CIM, 1914-1915*, Part 4, p.599; Ward Orderly Duan Singh, 2 Division, Kitchener Indian Hospital, to Bir Bel, "F" Co., 37 Dogras, Kohat, India, 25 July 1915, *CIM, 1914-1915*, Part 4, p.631
[79] Man Singh Rawat, Indian Military Depot, Milford, to Partab Singh Dharampur, Ringwari, Garhwal, Sept. 1915, *CIM, 1914-1915*, Part 6, p.920; Mansingh Rawat, 1/39 Garhwalis, to India, 22 Sept. 1915, *CIM, 1914-1915*, Part 6, p.963
[80] Niamat Ullah, 9 Hodson's Horse, France, to Farrier Ali Mahomed Khan, 10 Lancers, Loralei, Baluchistan, 9 July 1916, *CIM 1915-1916*, Part 6, p.892
[81] Mansingh Rawat, 1/39 Garhwalis, to India, 22 Sept. 1915, *CIM, 1914-1915*, Part 6, p.963
[82] Anon., 58 Rifles, Hospital in England, to friend, 58 Rifles, France, (not dated), *CIM, 1914-1915*, Part 1, p.128
[83] D. Omissi, *The Sepoy and the Raj: The Indian Army, 1860-1940*, (London; Macmillan, 1994), p.121

of letters were exchanged by *sipahis* in France to those in India that appeared to relay messages from the deserters, saying 'We are now under the German King. You can please yourselves. We are all well and happy'[84]. This correspondence in turn inspired letters by *sipahis* in India claiming to have spoken to those who deserted[85], or being adamant that they were from 'our regiment' and '25 [of us] have deserted to the Germans'[86]. More importantly still, the transmission of this rumour, and the co-option of it by different companies and battalions, resulted in a wave of desertions in India, to the extent that 25 Malikdin Khel and other frontiersmen of the 55 Rifles at Thal deserted in July 1915[87], 168 men of G and H Companies of the 28 Punjabis at Bannu deserted by June[88], and a mutiny at Kohat occurred that was justified by referring to the deserters in France[89];

> Everyone says that four German ministers have come to Kabul and the Sultan Sahib [of Turkey], and with them is an army of 12000 men. …These four ministers have come and with them are four Afridis who deserted from the 58th Rifles [in France]. The remaining Afridis [who deserted] are with the army at Teheran.[90]

Furthermore, in all these cases of desertion, the actions of Pathans were committed in wilful disregard of the wishes of commanding officers or the punishments that they may have enforced, as the Risaldar Major of the 17 Cavalry learnt to his dismay;

> I got a letter from the Major Sahib in Africa saying "Tell the Afridis not to resign for their people out here are doing excellent work, and after the war their claims will be recognised." But alas! Daim Khan and the others would not listen and off they went.[91]

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[84] Anon. Afridi Pathan, France, to father in Peshawar, India, 26 February 1915, *CIM, 1914-1915*, Part 1, p.104

[85] *'I am very pleased with Baghi Shah [a deserter]. I send Baghi Shah, lance dafadar, as many greetings as there are trees on the hills of Wano.'*
Sowar Mir Akbar Khan, Sialkot Cavalry Brigade, France, to Sowar Mehli Shah, c/o Sowar Rahim Khan, Wano, Waziristan, India, 21 May 1916, *CIM, 1915-1916*, Part 5, p.687

[86] Mir Badshah, 38 Rifles, Ferozepur, India, to sepoy in 37 Rifles, 32 April 1915 [sic], *CIM, 1914-1915*, Part 3, p.365

[87] Said Shah, 55 Rifles, Thall, India, to his brother, Wazir Khan, 57 Rifles, France, 23 March 1915, *CIM, 1914-1915*, Part 3, p.291; Havildar Said Badshah, 55 Rifles, Thall, India, to Sepoy Sahib Shah, 57 Rifles, April 1915, *CIM, 1914-1915*, Part 3, p.323; Gulab Din, 55 Rifles, Thall, India, to Torai Khan, 57 Rifles, France, 3 July 1914, *CIM, 1914-1915*, Part 4, 617

[88] Havildar Husain Gul, 26 Punjabis, Bannu, India, to Havildar Mir Akbar, 40 Pathans, France, May 1915, *CIM, 1914-1915*, Part 4, p.466; Letter 3, Pay Havildar Mir Dast, 28 Punjabis, Bannu, India, to Subedar Arala Khan, 57 Rifles, France, 11 June 1915, *CIM, 1914-1915*, Part 4, p.545-546

[89] *'A draft has gone …to reinforce the 57th Afridis [but] there were [only] two of our tribe [who went]. The rest refused. Now a draft is going from us to the 58th. The Sahibs said to our Afridi double-company "go to the war". We Afridis answered "We are not going to France, we enlisted for this country."'*
Khan Mast, 55 Rifles, Kohat, India, to Shah Mir, 40th Pathans, France, 21 May 1915, *CIM, 1914-1915*, Part 4, p.494

[90] Signaller Sar Mir, Kyber Rifles, Ladi Kotal, India, to Sepoy Kuchai, 27 Punjabis, France, 7 November 1915, *CIM, 1914-1915*, Part 8, 1338

[91] Abdul Hakim, 17 Cavalry, Allahabad, to Risaldar Rahmet Sher Khan, 17 Cavalry, attached 19 Lancers, France, 25 May 1916, *CIM, 1915-1916*, Part 5, p.800

Therefore, a dialogue inciting desertion took place, with each wave of letters not only strengthening a collective bond among Pathans, but doing so at the expense of their loyalty to their officers.

In contrast, Indian troops in North Africa during the Second World War did not express a 'particular' solidarity with one another in cases of self-mutilation or desertion, but in the collective fabrication of circumstances with which to obtain a return to India. For by the end of 1942, as *sipahis'* time in the deserts of Egypt had worn on whilst accounts of hardship in India had grown ever more bleak, not only did many soldiers begin to agree that all they 'want is leave'[92], but some in the 4/11 Sikhs were granted extraordinary dispensation to return home because 'our house has fallen in', 'one of my [father's] legs is fractured' and 'mother has turned blind'[93]. Yet, what seemed to the military authorities to be genuine concerns caused by unforeseen circumstances, revealed itself to be the work of soldiers' ingenuity as the same formula for securing leave came to be used by other *sipahis* throughout 1943. It was in this manner that, at the beginning of the year, one soldier recounted how he had been told of 'a really good excuse' that originated 'from one of my friends' in another regiment[94]; by April, the 'excuse' had been used by another *sipahi* as he sheepishly informed his father that he had been portrayed as 'a blind old man' who was 'unable to pay his land revenue of fifty *bighas*'[95]; and by the end of 1943, so common had this deception become, that men of the 5/5 Maratha Light Infantry had each submitted '10/12 applications' of this type[96]. Indeed, it was perhaps because the original formula had become so popular, that many *sipahis* began to amend the 'excuse' in their petitions, so that some would add that they were also recently married[97], others that they had documentary proof of their parents' illness[98], and yet

[92] Anon. Sepoy, Artillery Bn., Forward Area, Egypt, to India, 16 May 1943, *MEMC, April 1943 – Sep. 1943*, p.18
[93] Anon. Havildar, 4/11 Sikhs, Egypt, to father, Kaim Karan Dist., Punjab, 1 August 1942, *MEMC, Sep. 1942 – April 1943*, p.6
[94] Anon. Sepoy, Back Areas, Egypt, to India, November 1942, *MEMC, Sep. 1942 – April 1943*, p.92
[95] Anon. Lance Naik, Palestine, Syria and Trans-Jordan Corps, to father in India, April 1943, *MEMC, April 1943 – Sep. 1943*, p.10
[96] Anon. Naik, 5/5 Royal Maratha Light Infantry, Palestine, Syria and Trans-Jordan Corps, to India, 5 September 1943, *MEMC, April 1943 – Sep. 1943*, p.114
[97] '*The official letter about my marriage, sent by you has not arrived here so far, and I will know about it as soon as it reaches here …this is the only means of getting leave from here.*'
Anon. Sepoy, Pioneer Regiment, Egypt, to India, 9 September 1943, *MEMC, April 1943 – Sep. 1943*, p.112
[98] *'In my opinion you should apply to my C.O. for my leave through the C.O., I.G.S.C. Depot Aurangabad, attaching a certificate of your illness. …Get this petition recommended by the Magistrate of the High Court.'*
Anon. Sepoy, Egypt, to India, undated, *MEMC, April 1943 – Sep. 1943*, p.112

more would combine all these elements as they enjoined their supposedly ill relatives to petition on their behalf;

> I reported the illness of my father to my Coy. Commander. I also added that I was poor, while all my older brothers were well-off and wanted to confiscate all my heritage after my father's death and that I had a wife …You will please get an application sent by father to our C.O. saying that he is an old man, dead nearly and requests the C.O. to send me back very soon.[99]

Moreover, although the true object of all these applications was rarely in doubt by British junior officers, who saw their men go on leave but never return, they found themselves helpless to refuse their applications because of the mood that united those under their command;

> I have sent off a bunch of lads on leave again lately [but] none of the former lot I sent off have come back. …[Yet if I refuse] it breeds discontent, [and] one gets very tired of making excuses and holding out false promises.[100]

Thus, among *sipahis* the transmission and motivation of the securing of leave on false grounds, alongside acts of desertion and self-mutilation, relied on a level of corporatism that was originally engendered by the Indian military hierarchy, but which in wartime provided a psychological alternative to straightforward loyalty to one's officers.

[99] Indian Sapper, Madras Sappers and Miners, Palestine, Syria, Trans-Jordan or Lebanon, to India, *MEMC, Sep. 1942 – April 1943*, p.44

[100] British Commanding Officer or an Indian Pioneer Company, 8 Indian Division, Central Mediterranean Force, Italy, to Britain, February 1944, *MEMC, Nov. 1943 – March 1944*, p.81

'Show the frenzy of Islam in the fight, Oh Musalmans!'[101]: Mutiny during the First World War

During the First World War, however, there was a third phase of resistance that went beyond an individual seeking to amend flaws in the Army, or collective groups re-appropriating military identities, but which instead made use of discourses challenging the legitimacy of the colonial state that were offered by Ghadr activists and pan-Islamists. Yet the extent of *sipahis'* acceptance of these radical alternatives to the ideologies propagated by the military establishment was never total, and never led to the full acceptance of the ontology of revolt proposed by Ghadrite and pan-Islamist *agents-provocateurs*. For as I will show, there was no simple adoption of all the segments of a revolutionary credo by soldiers before 1918, but rather the assimilation of certain parts of Ghadrite and pan-Islamist propaganda into pre-existing identities, so that *sipahis* were willing to mutiny for these causes only under certain conditions.

The memoranda written by members of the Government of India in the months preceding the First World War, reveals that many in the colonial bureaucracy anticipated the circulation of seditious sentiment among Indian troops, and, as it turned out, the authors of these memos were not to be disappointed. It was as such that official unease expressed with Ghadr propaganda in 1913, as the first editions of Har Dayal's *Hindustan Ghadr* were published, was realised by January 1914 when twenty-three parcels containing the fiery newspaper and hand-written letters were confiscated from sepoys in Bombay[102];

> All [soldiers] were invited to help in teaching this poor people to rise against the tyrant Government. He called it the British Vampire not the British Empire. In ten years revolution would be brought about by actual warfare.[103]

In a similar vein, a desire by Sir Arthur Hutzel to shield Indian Muslims from Turkey's entry into the war in January 1915[104], displayed some measure of foresight, as shortly

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[101] 'Hamid', Inderkot, Meerut, UP, to Kot Dafadar Mir Wazar Khan, 18 Lancers, France, 18 May 1916, *CIM 1915-1916*, Part 5, p.765-766

[102] Isemonger and Slattery, 'Ghadr Conspiracy Report', 1922; N. Singh and K. Singh, *Struggle for Free Hindustan: Ghadr Movement, Vol. 1, 1905-1916*, (New Delhi; Atlantic Publishers, 1986), p.32

[103] Summary of speech given by Har Dayal at the Finnish Socialist Hall, Astoria, Oregon, USA, on 4 June 1914, also reproduced in the first editions of Hindustan Ghadr; *ibid*, p.29

[104] *'It is felt to be most important that at this juncture discussion of the future of the Kaliphate should be avoided altogether in the public Press of this Country. Suggestions as to the deposition of the Sultan of Turkey from the spiritual headship of the Mahommedan world…[will] furnish an easy weapon which the latter [Indian Muslims] are not slow to turn against the former [colonial authorities].'*
A. Hutzel, 2 January 1915, *The War: Sensitiveness of Muhammadan Opinion; Censorship Arrangements*, File 4669/1914, Political and Secret Files, 1912-1930; Vol. 85, OIOC, British Library, L/PS/11/85

afterwards *sipahis* began to react angrily to newspaper cuttings sent to them[105], and to poetic injunctions not to fight against their fellow Muslims;

> Show the frenzy of Islam in the fight, Oh Musalmans!
> Otherwise the honour of your race will depart, Oh guardians of that honour!
> Remember the race from which you sprang, Show the might of your country!
> Your country is oppressed with troubles, recollect the obligation of your duty.
> The Prophet has bequeathed to you his humanity and generosity
> You are the living monuments of the sense of honour of the Arabs![106]

Thus, official warnings over the transmission of anti-colonial propaganda proved well-founded, as Ghadrite and Khilafatist messages were transmitted through printed matter and through personal letters.

Yet, although the fact that such literature found its way into the hands of *sipahis* shows that the Army was infiltrated to some degree by anti-colonial *agents provacateurs*, the transmission of a radical message through the rank-and-file relied on pre-existing networks among soldiers and the subtle alteration of this message by each interlocutor. For pan-regimental feelings that one shared a common Sikh or Muslim identity with others were present in the Army before the workings of an external ideology, as I showed in the last section, and it was through an appeal to these identities that Ghadrite and pan-Islamist propaganda relied. It was in this manner that the intellectualized Anarchism of leading Ghadrites that often attacked the superstition of popular religion[107], was disseminated by former soldiers to serving Sikh servicemen by harking back to the very religion others were keen to decry;

> The Sikh community has fallen and can do nothing, for the community whose sacred places are taken [away] from it is worthless. The greatest Sikh temple is at Amritsar, and has been taken by the English. Before that the Khalsa College at which the sons of all

[105] Extracts ranged from an interview with the Sultan of Turkey in the 'Daily Mail', to the condemnation of the Allied attack on Turkey in the 'Constantinople Monday'; M. Islam, 31-34 Marine Parade, Brighton, to Hagiz Abdul Karim Esq., Hide Merchant, Delhi, 9 April 1915, *CIM, 1914-1915*, Part 2, p.231

[106] 'Hamid', Inderkot, Meerut, UP, to Kot Dafadar Mir Wazar Khan, 18 Lancers, France, 18 May 1916, *CIM 1915-1916*, Part 5, p.765-766

[107] *'Social organisation should not be based upon religion. …Religious discussions cannot remove famine, plague, ignorance, falsehood, greed, envy, fear, slavery and disease from our country. …Owing to our ignorance we shut our eyes to the actual and immediate needs of the country and indulge in abstruse [sic. obtuse] philosophical or religious discussions, which instead of doing any good to us are actually bringing down our ruin'.*
Lala Har Dayal, 'Nia Zamana' ('New Era'); Isemonger and Slattery, 'Ghadr Conspiracy Report', p.43-44

> Sikhs were reading, was taken away. It is written that it is far better for the community that loses its sacred places to die. …The only remedy, is [for] …the troops to mutiny.[108]

Indeed, even when the message was delivered unabridged, it could be interpreted in different ways that were shaped by *sipahis'* prior understanding of the issue, as was the case with the apocryphal language used to convey pan-Islamist messages;

> Habibullah then told Battya Sahib this parcel of lies …[that] Ahmed Yar Khan read out an address in which he stated that for a Mahomedan to fight against a Turk would be the mark of an infidel, and that all those killed in fighting against the Turks would not go to Paradise. This was all false, for the lecture was really to the effect that the Mahomedans who drink wine and committed fornication and did other things forbidden by Islam, would die the death of unbelievers.[109]

As a result, not only was there a different understanding of Ghadrite and Khilafatist propaganda by soldiers, but only the partial co-option of these revolutionary messages in the mutinies that soldiers were willing to commit.

This was certainly the case with the dissent that took place among Sikh *sipahis* between November 1914 and March 1915, because whilst educated Ghadrites may have sought to turn any instances of insubordination into a wider pan-Indian revolt that would lead to the spiritual and moral upliftment of all oppressed peoples[110], those Sikh soldiers that were mobilized by the movement came to hold different goals. This is evident from the testimony of Sunder Singh, 'an old cavalry man', during the Supplementary Lahore Conspiracy Case[111], for he claimed to have joined an insurgent attack on the Ferozepur armoury because of his anger at the demolition of part of the Rikabganj Gurdwara in New Delhi in 1913, the police firings at Budge Budge in November 1914, and his loftier desire to revive the ailing Sikh *Panth*;

> A Sikh was hailed as a patriot by the Motherland and as a hero by the world abroad. But Oh-shame! Now Sikh has become a nickname for tiller at home; a synonym for labourer or Kooli [sic.] in the coasts of both the Pacific and Atlantic. …Therefore, Awake, Oh

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[108] Anon. Sikh, California, USA, to Sepoy, 82 Punjabis, Nowshera, NWFP; Isemonger and Slattery, 'Ghadr Conspiracy Report', p.36-37

[109] Abdul Alim, Signal Troop, Sialkot Cavalry Brigade, France, to Risaldar Farzand Ali Khan, 6 Cavalry Depot, Sialkot, Punjab, (not dated), *CIM, 1915-1916*, Part 5, p.716

[110] *'As Krishna said to Arjun in the Gita: "Come to me and I will absolve you from your sins", so the Ghadr party says in these hard times: "Oh sons of India…come to me, serve me, listen to my teaching…light up my country with my flame. I am the goddess who protects weak persons, brings together those who have long been separated, effaces injustice, removes famine and plague…and makes a waste country a happy place. My followers will grant the boon of faith, knowledge and happiness to Bharat. Come to me.'*
Lala Har Dayal, 'Nia Zamana' ('New Era'); Isemonger and Slattery, 'Ghadr Conspiracy Report', p.45-46

[111] *ibid*, p.124

> Khalsa, Arise, Oh Khalsa, and never again shall we be fallen. Liberate BHARAT MATA from the clutches of MALECH FARENGIS.
>
> SAT SRI AKAL.[112]

Moreover, it was this divergence in ideology between *sepoys* and the Ghadr Party that resulted in *sowars* of the 23 Cavalry being quite willing to cut telegraph wires, create 'chlorate of potash' bombs, and to plan for the assassination of their officers in November 1914[113], but to be unwilling to mutiny before there was evidence of insurrection in the Sikh villages of Punjab. In fact, because such a religious uprising never took place, when Ghadr agents, in the form of Nawab Khan and Kartar Singh Sarabha, made contact with the regiment again in January 1915, they were told in no uncertain terms, that,

> Your lack of organization and method have succeeded in disgusting the rank-and-file. They have grown tired of remaining idle and have returned to their homes.[114]

Instead it was only in the aftermath of the First World War, and in the blue *pagris* and *cholas* of the Akali Dal, that Sikh soldiers were willing to leave their 'homes' again. For in the Akali agitation for the control of Sikh gurdwaras, not only did military pensioners and discharged soldiers form over a third of the Akali *jathas* in Ludhiana district, one in seven of those from Jullunder and one in ten of all Akalis in Amritsar[115], but former soldiers completed the fusion between Ghadrite radicalism and Sikhism in the armed creed of the Babbar Akalis;

> …the land of five rivers is replete with Sikh Gurdwaras so that it is practically a vast Sikh Gurdwara. So long as the Punjab does not come under the political control of the Sikhs, neither the Sikh community can be relieved of the anxiety about its religion nor can peace be maintained in this country.[116]

Therefore, the integration of a Ghadrite message with Sikhism, resulted in Sikh soldiers being willing to undertake mutiny only when it was Sikhism that was endangered.

Whilst there were no revolutionaries visiting regimental lines during the inculcation of pan-Islamist sentiment, the result of Khilafatist propaganda was nonetheless similar to that of the Ghadr movement. In contrast to the work done by the

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[112] 'Khalsa Pamphlet', posted at Highgate, London, 17 September 1910 to 21 October 1910; N. Singh and K. Singh, *Struggle for Free Hindustan*, p.317-318

[113] Isemonger and Slattery, 'Ghadr Conspiracy Report', p.100-103, and 154

[114] Lance-Dafadar Lachman Singh to Nawab Khan and Kartar Singh Sarabha; *ibid*, p.105

[115] 240 discharged soldiers and military pensioners out a total of 672 known Akalis in Ludhiana, 148 out of 916 in Jullunder, 152 out of 1,363 in Amritsar; R.K. Mazumdar, *The Indian Army and the Making of Punjab*, p.229

[116] 'Babbar Sher', Amritsar, 30 September 1923; 'Extract from the weekly report of the Director, Intelligence Bureau, Home Dept., Govt. of India, 17 October 1923'; *Sikh Activities in India, 1923*, Public and Judicial Papers, OIOC, British Library, IOR/L/PJ/12/170, p.4

Ghadr Party, it was through one particular chain letter by Sheikh Ahmad Khadin of Medina that seditious material reached soldiers[117], for only this missive seemed to catch the attention of Muslim soldiers throughout the First World War as it continued to move 'from strength to strength among the people'[118];

> I Sheikh Ahmad of Medina saw in a dream the Prophet reading the Koran. He said to me "Sheikh Ahmad I am weary beyond all measure of their sins. Between two Fridays 9 *lakhs* of people died, of whom only 70,000 were in the true faith and the rest were *Kafirs*. God Almighty sent the angels to me with the following message "Mahomet look at the condition of your followers. …They devote themselves to theft and backbiting, fornication, false evidence, eating swine's flesh, and misappropriation of other's property. …They are too much devoted to the world." …Whoever will copy this message and circulate it from city to city and read it out to others the Prophet will stand by him in the Last Day, and who does not do this will be his enemy and he will do nothing to save him.[119]

Yet it is significant that this letter was given the title 'snowball' by colonial authorities[120], for not only did it come to infiltrate numerous regiments containing Muslim *sipahis*, but each time it was reproduced and circulated another layer of interpretation was added to the missive. Thus the original warning that Muslims were losing their faith because of 'devotion to the world' was initially translated by *sipahis* as an injunction to rigidly maintain their fast of Ramzan[121], then for troops to refrain from 'fornication' with French girls (and the occasional French boy)[122], and only later did some soldiers begin to see it as a condemnation of war against their co-religionists. Moreover, even in the case of the 15

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[117] The injunction made by Ahmad Khadin was actually made once in 1915 and then again in 1916, but the same text was used in both versions.

[118] Havildar Umr-al-Din Khan, France, to Subedar Niamat Ullah Khan, 1 Sappers and Miners, Co. 4, France, 23 August 1915, *CIM, 1914-1915*, Part 5, p.745

[119] Sheikh Ahmad Khadin, '786. Order of Mustapha'; Gasthip Khan, France, to Pir Sahib Akbar Khan Badshah, Jhelum, Punjab, 4 July 1916, *CIM, 1915-1916*, Part 6, p.858-859

[120] E.B. Howell, Chief Censor, 23 August 1915, *CIM, 1914-1915*, Part 5, p.745

[121] *'In bygone years I have never kept the fast but now by God's grace I will it this year fully, prayers and all if it is possible'*
Dilaza Khan, 18 Lancers, France, to Abbas Khan, Campbellpur, Punjab, 4 April 1916, *CIM, 1915-1916*, Part 6, 868;
'The life which we are now leading is one which God would not inflict even on a dog…[but] perhaps by the grace of God we may gain heaven by reason of our self-denial in having kept the fast.'
Niamat Ullah, 9 Hodson's Horse, 17 Lancers, attached 18 Lancers, France, to Kot Dafadar Sher Bahadur Khan, 17 Cavalry, Allahabad, UP, 25 July 1916, *CIM, 1915-1916*, Part 6, 968

[122] *'For sleeping in the houses of this country, on a French bed and under French blankets and for serving French women no doubt this is the time of our lives.'*
Risaldar Said Shamshad Ali, 3 Skinner's Horse, France, to Jemadar Mir Musar Ahmed, 5 Cavalry, Rawalpindi, Punjab, 23 September 1915, *CIM, 1914-1915*, Part 6, p.969;
'During the tea there was a loud conversation going on, and such irregularities and unlawful practices that are beyond belief. From first to last there was not a word to remind one of the Solemn Kerbala and not a word of the story of the Prophet and the holy Imam';
Zabru Shah, 6 Cavalry, France, to Jemadar Shirin Khan, Remount Depot, Rouen, France, 11 November 1916, *CIM, 1915-1916*, Part 9, 1414

Lancers, where the war against the *Khalifa* on the sacred soil of Arabia was seen as 'contrary to our law' and 429 *sowars* 'laid a Koran on their head' and took 'an oath not to fight against [fellow] Mahomedans'[123], the soldiers involved later claimed that their actions merely equated to 'disobedience to unjust orders' and not a challenge to colonial rule[124]. In fact the men of the 15 Lancers were so adamant that they had shown no real disloyalty, that many of those who served their sentence were willing to take up arms again for their *Badshah*, George V, for he 'has been very gracious to us'[125]. Hence, in much the same manner as with the Ghadrite message, pan-Islamism was integrated into pre-existing discourses by *sipahis* rather than resulting in a paradigmatic shift among them.

Furthermore, as a result of there being only a partial acceptance of non-military discourses in the First World War, in the single case of a mutiny being successful at Singapore in February 1915, during which the mutineers succeeded in taking control of the entire colony for 'four whole hours'[126], there was an active refusal by *sipahis* to adhere to the programmes devised by Ghadrite and pan-Islamist agents. This is despite the conclusions reached by the Governor of Singapore, who stated that the scale of the mutiny was directly due to the total indoctrination of Indian soldiers by Muslim 'medicants' and Ghadrite 'extremists' 'preaching an extreme doctrine of religious hate'[127]. For in cases in which there was an established link between Ghadrite agents and Indian soldiers in Malaya[128], such as with the Sikhs of the Malay States Guides, the majority of the *sipahis* refused to join the mutiny after being assured that they would not be forced into overseas service against their will[129]. Moreover, among the Muslim Ranghars of the 5 Light Infantry who did seize their arms and erect barricades on the streets, only a handful entertained the proposal of some civilians that the city should be held for the forces of the

[123] Ashrafali Khan, 6 Cavalry, Sialkot, Punjab, to Dafadar Fateh Mahomed Khan, Signalling Instructor, 6 Cavalry, France, 24 March 1916, *CIM, 1915-1916*, Part 4, 582-583
[124] Sowar Din Mahomed, 15 Lancers, Bushir Prison, to Sarakaru Khan, 9 Hodson's Horse, France, 6 June 1916, *CIM, 1915-1916*, Part 6, 878
[125] Safdar Ali Khan, 15 Lancers, attached 27 Lancers, Sangor, UP, India, to Jalib Hussain Khan, 18 Lancers, France, 19 July 1917; D. Omissi, *The Sepoy and the Raj*, p.147
[126] Govt. of Singapore Memorandum; R.W.E. Harper and H. Miller, *Singapore Mutiny*, (Singapore; Oxford UP, 1984), p.vi
[127] Governor of Singapore's annual report of 1915; *ibid*, p.11
[128] Memo. By M.C. Seton, Secretary in the Judicial and Public Dept., India Office, Whitehall, to Mr Wheeler, Secretary to the Govt. of India, 9 September 1915; N. Singh and K. Singh, *Struggle for Free Hindustan*, p.273
[129] I. Singh, *History of the Malay States Guides, 1873-1919*, (Penang, Malaysia; Cathay Printers, 1965), chapter 5

Turkish Sultan[130], for most of the soldiers justified their actions because they were overworked and underpaid and not because of loyalty to the Khalifa;

> Why should we fight for England and be killed in Europe when we are paid half a coolie's wage and our wives and children are left to starve on two or three rupees a month?[131]

Therefore, during the First World War, *sipahis* did not wholly embrace anti-colonial alternatives to military discourses, even during the act of mutiny, which allowed for the Duke of Connaught to talk of a loyal tradition in the Army that would last into perpetuity as he laid the foundation stone of the India Gate in 1921;

> In the hour of crowding memories, let us…recapture once again that thrill which passed through us all when we heard in those far off days of 1914 that the Indian troops had landed at Marseilles. …Their tradition lives, the Army goes on fortified by their example, to face whatever threat the future may hold.[132]

[130] This was a plan devised by a merchant, Kasim Ismail Mansur, and a local imam, Nur Alam Shah; R.W.E. Harper and H. Miller, *Singapore Mutiny*, p.8

[131] Testimony of a Medical Officer describing what he overheard men from the 5 Light discussing in January 1915; *ibid*, p.35

[132] Duke of Connaught, 10 February 1921; *India's Contribution to the Great War*, (Calcutta; Superintendent Government Printing, India, 1923), p.263

'Tum mujhe khoon do, main tumhain azadi dunga'[133]: Revolt during the Second World War

In the Second World War, however, the Indian rank-and-file proved so willing to adhere to the programmes of revolt devised by those working for India's liberation, that it became commonplace for colonial officials to compare the mood among 'Indian troops' in 1945 to how 'it was in the days of the Mutiny'[134]. Yet this was not wholly due to the development of a nationalist consciousness among *sipahis*, that saw them finally adopt the ontological formulations of another 'world-view', but a change on the part of anti-colonial groups that saw them amend their own aims in order to embrace the aspirations of the sepoys they had suborned. For although, in the Second World War, there continued to be a fusion of revolutionary propaganda with pre-existing identities by *sipahis*, there was a greater willingness by revolutionary nationalists in the Communist Party of India (CPI), the Ghadr Party and in the Indian National Army (INA), to adapt their goals accordingly, so that soldiers were more willing to follow their lead into anti-colonial revolts.

Certainly, some of the success of revolutionary movements in suborning Indian troops after 1939, was due to a failure of the colonial Indian state to adequately consider the threat posed to the loyalty of the Indian Army by groups that advocated military insurrection. For there was a colonialist inflation of the threat posed by the Indian left, so that when 72 copies of the CPI publication, *Ailan-i-Jang*, were found in the regimental lines of the 19 Lancers in Lahore during October 1939, it was regarded as a sign that the long-feared Bolshevik *putsch* was imminent[135]. This in turn led to an open letter from the Ghadr Party, that was circulated among troops in 1940, being seen as further evidence that a vast network of fifth columnists 'carrying on the most intense anti-British propaganda and directing special attention to seduction of Indian troops' was in existence in India[136]. Yet because of the ensuing expenditure of resources to track every suspected agent of the CPI and Ghadr, there was little awareness of the existence of the Japanese *F Kikan*, and its desire to 'infiltrate into the enemy lines…and to make friends from amongst

[133] 'Give me your blood, and I shall give you freedom'; S.C. Bose; G.S. Dhillon, *From My Bones: Memoirs of Col. Gubaksh Singh Dhillon of the Indian National Army*, (New Delhi; Aryan Books, 1999), p.502
[134] Sir Henry Twynam, Governor of the Central Provinces, to Viceroy Wavell, November 1945; P.W. Fay, *The Forgotten Army: India's Armed Struggle for Independence, 1942-1945*, (Ann Arbor, Michigan; Michigan UP, 1993), p.489
[135] 'Communism in India – a survey of recent developments', 31 October 1939; *Communist Activities in India, February 1938 – June 1945*, OIOC, British Library, IOR/L/PJ/12/431, File 1999/30, p.56-57
[136] 'Hindustan Ghadr, February 1940'; *Reports, Summaries and Translations of Hindustan Ghadr, 1937 – 1944*, Public and Judicial Papers, OIOC, British Library, IOR/L/PJ/12/758, File 495/24, p.295

the Indian troops'[137], before the mass defection of Indian *sipahis* to the INA at Singapore in 1942. Thus there was clearly an inadequate understanding of the organizations that sought to win the loyalty of the Indian soldiery by the colonial bureaucracy.

Yet any success of the CPI, Ghadr Party and INA did not just come from the colonialist inability to combat these groups, but the means with which they were able to make their message attractive to the Indian soldiery. For, as early as 1932, the CPI were not only keen to see the Indian Army rebel in concert 'with the toiling masses of the country against British rule', but concluded that to achieve this end it was necessary to mobilize 'the soldiers' by using 'concrete examples drawn from their daily lives'[138]. This in turn led to CPI propaganda during the Second World War incorporating the perceived goals of *sipahis*, by declaring that only under a Communist Raj would soldiers receive an equitable allotment of land[139] and gain 'anti-corruption welfare officers' that would summarily discharge any officer if 'more than 10 members of any unit make any complaint about corruption'[140]. Similarly Ghadr activists, in their open letter of 1940, proceeded to explain to Indian troops that they were 'eating the salt of India, not that of the Farangis'[141], by highlighting inequities in pay and promotion that only insurrection could address;

> Dear brothers, you get much less pay than the English soldiers. …To-day in India the biggest positions are filled by Farangis and they have the biggest salaries. [But] After securing Indian Independence you will have those big positions and salaries. The wealth which goes from India as loot will not go. The material lot of all your Indian brothers will be improved.[142]

Finally, it was through examples of Indian soldiers being left behind by their officers in the face of Japanese advances in Malaya, and through opportunities for *sipahis* to redress

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[137] Fujiwara Iwaichi, *F Kikan: Japanese Army Intelligence Operations in Southeast Asia during World War II*; translated by Akashi Yoji, (Hong Kong; Heinemann, 1983), p.40

[138] 'Joint Platform of Action of the Communist Party of India'; J. Basu, S. Dasgupta, B. Bhattacharya, A. Biswas, and S.S. Bose (eds.), *Documents of the Communist Movement in India, Vol. III, 1929-1938*, (Calcutta; National Book Agency, 1997), p.90

[139] Communist Members of the AICC, 'We Warn Poona Session of AICC', published by the Central Committee of the CPI, March 1940; J. Basu, S. Dasgupta, B. Bhattacharya, A. Biswas, and S.S. Bose (eds.), *Documents of the Communist Movement in India, Vol. IV, 1939-1943*, (Calcutta; National Book Agency, 1997), p.152

[140] 'Towards a People's Navy: Memorandum of the Communist Party of India to the RIN Enquiry Commission'; J. Basu, S. Dasgupta, B. Bhattacharya, A. Biswas, and S.S. Bose (eds.), *Documents of the Communist Movement in India, Vol. V, 1944-1948*, (Calcutta; National Book Agency, 1997), p.249

[141] 'Hindustan Ghadr, February 1940'; p.249

[142] *ibid*

this injustice by dominating the officer corps of the INA, that the *F Kikan* and Indian Independence League impressed captured soldiers to take up arms against the British Raj;

> One day, when a sentry was approached by his former Commanding Officer, the sentry promptly told him to keep away by the movement of his hand, but what the sentry actually said all the while was: "Come on, come on." Not understanding what to do, the Colonel hesitatingly approached closer and closer. When he came within reach, the sentry gave him a slap, shouting at him in Punjabi: "I am saying come on, come on and yet you are drawing closer and closer." Afterwards when I told the sentry the meaning of 'come', the sentry replied, "Sir! I have heard the white people calling like that to their dogs. So I also treated him only as a dog!"[143]

Therefore, the CPI, Ghadr Party and INA all sought to integrate solutions that would address the immediate concerns of *sipahis* into their programmes for revolt, and the success of each movement in suborning soldiers came to depend on how consistent these organizations were in adhering to this task.

With regards to the Communist infiltration of the military in the Second World War, a series of mutinies perpetrated by Indian seamen reveals how Communist agents were able to appeal to soldiers by assimilating their pre-existing demands, but also cause disillusionment when different tactics were implemented. For, following the British declaration of war in September 1939 and the subjection of civilian vessels and Indian crewmen to military articles, many *lascars* began to appeal for higher rates of pay to compensate 'for the extra risk that war entailed'[144]. It was as such that the crew of the 'Clan Alpine' successfully agitated for a fifty percent increase in pay when berthed at Cape Town on 11 September 1939, the crew of the 'City of Manchester' won a twenty-five percent war bonus at Colombo, and those aboard the 'Somali' were promised a similar increase in Bombay[145]. Yet, when the crews of all three ships reached West India Dock, in the East End of London, all the *lascars* abandoned their previous settlements and agitated for one hundred percent increases in pay and war bonuses of ten pounds, because of the influence of Surat Ali, Tahsil Miah, and other Indian Communists in London;

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[143] G.S. Dhillon, *From My Bones: Memoirs of Col. Gurbaksh Singh Dhillon of the Indian National Army*, (New Delhi; Aryan Books, 1999), p.123

[144] Inspector S.W. Davison, Police Office, West India Dock, to Chief Police Office, 28 October 1939; *Indian Seamen: Reports on Unrest, Welfare, and Union Activities, November 1939 – January 1945*, Public and Judicial Papers, OIOC, British Library, IOR/L/PJ/12/630, File 1373/39, p.3

[145] *Indian Seamen*, p.2, 22, 28

> …more than 600 Indian sailors have lost their lives for nothing in this war. …On account of the dearness of all commodities they cannot live on their pay, so Indian sailors…[should consider] how to secure a promise of a further increase. If they join us all wages can be raised and all hardships can be overcome.[146]

Moreover, even as shipping companies were forced to concede to *lascars'* demands at the West India Dock in October 1939, so many other seamen elsewhere began to take strike action, that the CPI saw this as the first sign of a revolt 'by all Indian seamen against their shipowners'[147]. Yet, ultimately what prevented such an occurrence was the withdrawal of Communist support for striking seamen, in March 1940, when local activists were threatened with lengthy terms of imprisonment, and when they instead came to support a twenty-five percent increase in wages advocated by the British Government[148]. This in turn caused both anger at the time, as many *lascars* refused to return to work unless their full demands were met, and led to many of their compatriots adopting a more circumspect position when it came to the CPI later in the war;

> Men of the army do not figure in their order of things. This, however, does not mean that we should quarrel amongst ourselves. [The] Question is of leadership. We feel that we should be the leaders of the movement. …[So] Let us co-operate as separate organizations.[149]

Thus a movement developed in which Communists were able to win over *lascars* to their cause by promising to address the grievances that Indian seamen held, but ultimately alienated the same seamen when they reneged on this promise.

In contrast, the efforts made by the Ghadr Party to address *sipahis*' concerns led to an enthusiastic response by certain Sikh soldiers and little in the way of disillusionment, but there was yet a failure to develop this situation because of the numerical weakness of the Ghadrites. Certainly one would not gain this impression from the circulation of Ghadrite manifestos and open letters among Indian troops that took place after 1938, nor from the quick response to the first utterances of discontent among Sikh artillerymen in December 1940 at Hong Kong, when an 'open letter' was sent to the regiment shortly after they were ordered to carry steel helmets;

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[146] Pamphlet by Surat Ali, February 1940; *ibid*, p.86
[147] CPGB Statement, 'Indian Seamen and the War', 25 November 1939; *ibid*, p.36
[148] *Indian Seamen*, p.38
[149] Sepoy functionary in the Indian Soldiers League, to Major Jaipal Singh; J. Singh, *In the Battle for Liberation*, (New Delhi; National Book Centre, 1990), p.46

> The legitimate doubts were fanned…by Ghadrites into a fanatical mutinous demonstration. They agreed that Sikhs would not have to carry helmets as ornaments and that the order was the thin edge of the wedge which would soon lead to instructions to wear "topees" [hats]. [So] With characteristic "Jathebandi" the Sikh Artillerymen joined together to disobey these orders.[150]

For, in the mutiny that emerged among the men of the Hong Kong and Singapore Royal Artillery, Sikh soldiers ignored the assurances given them by religious leaders at local *gurdwaras* that wearing helmets would be acceptable for Sikhs, by recounting Ghadrite propaganda and asserting that more than just religion was at stake;

> …there was talk…amongst the mutineers of staging a violent mutiny in the belief that the first shot would rouse the rest to join them in sympathy, and that Japanese assistance would be forthcoming on their side.[151]

Yet any possibility of an armed revolt emerging out of this situation was prevented by the inability of the Ghadr organization to actively finance the mutineers, or send representatives to liaise with them, so that, when the regiment did indeed rebel and accept Japanese assistance, it was in the ranks of the INA and not Ghadr[152]. Therefore, just as inconsistency in the position of Communist agents prevented the emergence of further action among seamen, so the inadequate organization of the Ghadr Party limited the mutiny that emerged among Sikh artillerymen.

Indeed it was only the INA, and its associated institutions within the *Arzi Hukumat-e-Azad Hind* (Provisional Government of Free India), that possessed the ability to consistently amend its organization to accord with *sipahis'* wishes, and had the means to produce anti-colonial revolts from among the troops it suborned. For the majority of the soldiers that joined the INA before and after the fall of Singapore did not enlist because they were 'bribed and threatened' as colonialists hoped[153], or because they shared the politics of radicals within the Indian Independence League, but because the INA was able

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[150] Major Kilroy, 'Disaffection Among Sikh Artillerymen, and the Local Indian Community in Hong Kong', 1941; *Unrest Among Sikhs in Hong Kong, October 1940 – October 1941*, Public and Judicial Papers, OIOC, British Library, IOR/L/PJ/12/641, File 2213/40, p.60

[151] *ibid*, p.59

[152] According to S/Sgt. Sheridan, RASC, who escaped from Hong Kong on 4 June 1942; *Indian Prisoners of War held by Japanese, September – December 1942*, Public and Judicial Papers, OIOC, British Library, IOR/L/PJ/12/641, File 2213/40, p.13

[153] India Office response to American intelligence regarding the defection of Indian POWs, *ibid*, p.4;
'No food was given to them for days – and such food as was given them was extremely bad. No medical aid was given at all. They were made to lie down on the ground and [were] beaten with a stick about five feet long and two inches thick.'
Sir N.S. Engineer, Advocate-General of India, and Chief Council for the Crown at the INA trials; P.W. Fay, *The Forgotten Army*, (Ann Arbor, Michigan; Michigan UP, 1993), p.101

to co-opt groups among *sipahis* that had their own histories of dissent, as British intelligence reports of 1942 admitted;

> The idea of a National Army has great attraction for the rank and file. If one thinks "From where do our recruits come?" it will be found that they are the same material and come from the same places where the Congress [and others] made frantic efforts to win over 'the rural population of India'. These seemingly inarticulate millions have in fact been made politically conscious to an appreciable degree. …Hence this lurking danger, this already prepared foundation for [the] INA, is always there.[154]

As such, it was men previously radicalized by the CPI and Ghadr, such as the Ahirs and Jats of 4/19 Hyderabadis, and in the artillery regiments at Hong Kong, that were among the first to volunteer for the INA 'almost to a man'[155]. Moreover, after these men were recruited into the rebel army, not only were they placed in segregated companies that mirrored the organization of their old colonial units[156], but many of them were successfully sent to make contact and suborn *sipahis* still loyal to the Raj who belonged to their old units or came from the same locality in India. Thus there were occasions when 'escapees' from the Japanese infiltrated their former units in order to suborn their comrades, such as among the Jats of the 3/1 Punjabis in July 1942[157], from among non-Nepalese Gurkhas in August 1942[158], and among the Rajput of the Gwalior Lancers in March 1944[159], because there was a recognition that the words of a fellow *sipahi* would be more influential than the written word of a pamphlet;

> They have British officers but are ignorant of 'Nationalism' and Revolution. They take [a] very long time to understand political matters. Besides the question of bread always haunts them. But…It has often been noted that our pamphlets and preachings do not carry as much weight with them as the talks of their fellow soldiers. We have therefore

[154] 'Provisional Instructions for the Staffs of Forward Interrogation Centres', 15 December 1942; *Indian National Army and Free Burma Army, Vol. 1*, War Staff Papers, OIOC, British Library, L/WS/1/1576, p. 196
[155] G.D. Anderson, CSDIC (I), *A Brief Chronological and Factual Account of the INA*, War Staff Papers, OIOC, British Library, L/WS/2/45, p.13
[156] *'Their background and previous experience was such that however patriotic they were, it was very difficult for them to be free from linguistic, religious and caste prejudices.'*
K.A.K. Menon, *From the Diary of a Freedom Fighter*, (Madras; Kavungal Anat, 1989), p.100
[157] 'Extract from Security History of "X" Battalion'; GHQ India, 'Subversive Activities Directed Against the Military'; *Indian National Army and Free Burma Army, Vol. 1*, p.170
[158] 'Extract from Most Secret Survey No. 15 of Activities of Germans, Italians and Japanese in India', 17 April 1943; *ibid*, p.158
[159] G.D. Anderson, *Brief Chronological and Factual Account of the INA*, p.19

> tried to win over Jemadars, Havildars and Naiks in every Regiment. They can easily influence soldiers to their point of view.[160]

Therefore, not only did the INA accommodate pre-existing identities among *sipahis*, but it actively utilized them to gain new recruits.

As a result of this integration of rank-and-file identities within the INA, so attractive did its doctrine become to *sipahis*, that the soldiers involved in the rebel army professed a loyalty to the INA that outlasted its demise at the end of the Second World War. For it was only after the Nehru Brigade had bravely, but unsuccessfully, tried to check the British advance to Rangoon in April 1945 that the INA suffered its first large scale desertions, and even then many soldiers clung to their INA uniforms as they sought to evade capture by their former *sahibs*;

> He saw in this bombed out place a couple of thousand people, some of my Rani of Jhansi girls were there. The men in their old tattered uniforms were there too. But there was nothing tattered in the way they stood to attention when I raised the flag. At the beginning of the meeting was sung *Sukh Sukh Chain* and *Netaji Zindabad* and *Jai Hind* and *Chalo Delhi*. Then I spoke. Five or six others made fiery speeches to…[161]

Moreover, the Intelligence Bureau in India concluded that up to five thousand of these INA soldiers had arrived back in India undetected by 20 November 1945[162], and many of them were being enrolled in organizations throughout India 'in the expectation that they will be of use in the time of emergency'[163]. These organizations ranged from Congress Volunteer Corps in Bengal, Bihar and Assam, established by ex-INA men to offer military training to civilians[164], to the more mundane use of INA men as guests at Congress and Muslim League functions. Yet, of more significance for the future of the colonial state in India were the 'unprecedented' *hartals* organized by INA men in the 'martial' tracts of Lahore, Lyallpur and Rawalpindi districts of Punjab on 5 November 1945, the day that the INA trials of Gurbaksh Singh Dhillon, Prem Sahgal, and Shah

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[160] Anon.; GHQ India, 'Subversive Activities Directed Against the Military'*; Indian National Army and Free Burma Army, Vol. 1*, p. 169
[161] Capt. Lakshmi Swaminathan; P.W. Fay, *The Forgotten Army*, p.407
[162] 'Note by Director, Intelligence Bureau (Home Dept.), on INA situation, 20 November 1945'; *DIB Reports and Proposals on the Treatment of Members of the Indian National Army, October – December 1945*, p.14
[163] *ibid*, p.7
[164] F. Tuker, former GOC Eastern Command, 'While Memory Serves'; *INA*, Indian Police Collection, OIOC, British Library, MSS Eur F 161/162, p.7

Nawaz Khan began[165]. For the slogan *'Azad Fauj Chhor Do, Lal Kila Tor Do!'* (Let the Free Army go, Let the Red Fort be destroyed!) resonated so strongly among those who were still in the Indian Army, that it convinced many within the colonial establishment that the days of the loyal 'native' sepoy were finally at an end;

> Even in our little [military] station there was a series of incidents, which were multiplied a thousand times all over the country. Bricks were thrown at Europeans in the dark, windows were smashed, women's handbags were snatched and thrown away, and most of these acts went unpunished. In the military hospital which belonged to our transit camp an English nurse had her face slapped [by an Indian soldier]…in full view of an Indian ward – and the authorities dared do nothing. Any spark, it was thought, might start a conflagration.[166]

Thus it was only the INA, rather than the CPI or Ghadr Party, that was able to permanently distend its programme of revolt to accommodate the interests of *sipahis*, and, as a consequence, it was only the INA that was able to force a total schism between the *sipahi* and the colonial Indian state.

[165] Hindustan Times, Nov. 6 1945; *Indian National Army and Free Burma Army: Press Cuttings and Debates*, War Staff Papers, OIOC, British Library, L/WS/1/1579, p.84
[166] Enid Candlin, describing life in the Bombay Presidency in 1945; P.W. Fay, *The Forgotten Army*, p.489

Conclusion: The response of the Raj to rank-and-file resistance

In this essay I have charted the process by which individual dissent by members of the Indian rank-and-file progressed into collective mutiny, that *sipahis'* own concerns provided the motivation behind each stage of the process, and that these concerns influenced what form the ensuing insubordination took. For, as I explained in the first section of this essay, perceptions that their terms of service had been abrogated resulted in individual *sipahis* selectively attacking their officers, without engaging in an institutional critique of the colonial Indian Army. Furthermore, the analysis of collective insubordination in the second section demonstrated that soldiers re-appropriated the martial race narratives of the colonial Indian state, in an effort to substitute the vertical loyalty that the army demanded with a horizontal loyalty towards their peers. Finally, the third and fourth sections of this essay demonstrated that there was never a total acceptance of anti-colonial discourses by *sipahis* in the two world wars, but the assimilation of elements of these ideologies into pre-existing corporate identities, and the most successful revolts occurred where anti-colonial nationalists accepted this hybridization. Yet at no stage have I charted how the military establishment in India responded to the acts of resistance committed by the soldiery under their command, and this I shall do, not by recalling the disciplinary action that was taken, but the subtle alterations that were made in the colonial discourse of the 'martial race'.

A definition of what separated 'martial' communities in India from the majority of Indians, was first deemed necessary by Frederick Roberts, the Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army in the 1890s, to correct the 'erroneous belief that one Native was as good as another for purposes of war'[167], but the original distinction that he made between 'martial' and 'non-martial' peoples came to be blurred in the closing years of British dominion in India. No more was this fall from grace apparent than among the Sikh Jats of Punjab, who were credited in the late nineteenth century with a natural aptitude for

[167] F. Roberts, *Forty-One Years in India: From Subaltern to Commander-in-Chief, Vols. I*, (London; Richard Bentley & Son, 1897), p.441

army life because of an honourable 'stolidity'[168], that stood in complete contrast with the devious practices used by the 'criminal' and 'effeminate' peoples of India;

> [They] meet power with cunning and force with fraud. …Inured to hardship, adept at every artifice, trained from infancy, they carry on a guerrilla war that defies an army…they can move rapidly from point to point…[and] usually find some easy going officials, who will turn a kind eye to them.[169]

Yet, following the involvement of Sikh *sipahis* in the Ghadr and Akali movements, the stereotype of the soldierly Sikh was amended so that he was credited with an 'excitability' and irrationality that had once been the sole preserve of Indian 'undesirables';

> With the high-spirited and adventurous Sikhs the interval between thought and action is short. If captured by inflammatory appeals, they are prone to act with all possible celerity and in a fashion dangerous to the whole fabric of order.[170]

Indeed so advanced did this 'excitability' become that by the end of the Second World War, and with the high incidence of Sikhs in the uniform of the INA, attempts were made to limit the recruitment of Sikhs, for,

> [they] are mercenary in a lower sense; they are in it for what they can get out and are not actuated, at any rate when they join, by devotion to a distant throne or any sentiment of loyalty towards "the colours" or by any instinctive "esprit de corps".[171]

Thus the discursive terminology used to describe the Sikh soldier was altered as a response to dissent committed by him, so that he became 'excitable' where once he was seen as 'stolid', 'given to intrigue'[172] where once he was innocently naïve, and seen as 'dangerous to the whole fabric of order'[173] where once he was seen as the bulwark of it.

In contrast, just as certain groups recruited into the military lost their soldiering qualities during the two World Wars, so groups previously denigrated as 'criminal' or

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[168] *'In the infantry he is the bravest and sturdiest of soldiers. It is part of his creed never to turn his back on the enemy; he has a high opinion of his own military worth; he is stubborn and earnest in action; and while lacking the élan and dash of the Pathan, is more faithful, more trustworthy, and far less liable to panic.'*
A.H. Bingley, *Handbooks for the Indian Army: Sikhs*, p.94
'His manners do not bear the imprint of generations of wild freedom which marks the races of our frontier mountains. But he is more honest, more industrious, and no less manly than they. Sturdy independence indeed and patient vigorous labour are his strongest characteristics.'
D. Ibbetson, *'Panjab Castes': Being a reprint of the chapter on 'The Races, Castes and Tribes of the People' in the Report on the Census of the Punjab published in 1883 by the late Sir Denzil Ibbetson, K.C.S.I.*, (Lahore, Superintendent Government Printing, Punjab, 1916), p.102

[169] F.S.G Booth Tucker, 'The Salvation Army and the Indian Criminal'; *Summaries of Articles on Criminal Tribes and the Hereditary Criminal*, Indian Police Collection, OIOC, British Library, MSS Eur F 161/158, p.8-9

[170] East India Sedition Committee, 1918, *Report of Committee appointed to investigate Revolutionary Conspiracies in India*, (London; HM Stationary Office, 1918), p.68

[171] 'Subversive Attempts on the Loyalty of the Indian Army', 3 April 1943; *Indian Army Morale and Possible Reduction, 1943-1945*, War Staff Papers, OIOC, British Library, L/WS/1/707, p. 379

[172] F. Yeats-Brown, *Martial India*, (London; Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1945), p.31

[173] *Report of Committee appointed to investigate Revolutionary Conspiracies in India*, p.68

'effeminate' took their place by being ascribed with a martial bearing. It was to prove that this metamorphosis had occurred that was the reason for a confidential note written by Claude Auchinleck to the Secretary of State for India in August 1943, shortly after Auchinleck had assumed the mantle of Commander-in-Chief in India. For in the note Auchinleck declared that the recruitment of 200,000 'Madrassis' was preferable over the further recruitment of groups already in the army because the former were the 'first' of the truly 'martial classes'[174], that the recruitment of 37,000 'Oudh Brahmins' was justified because they had 'eschewed their caste prejudices' and were now of 'good physique' like the Sikhs of old[175], and even the enlistment of Dalits and Adivasis was to be praised because 'it is preferable to secure good specimens of the new classes…than to rely on poor specimens of the old classes'[176]. In fact so trusted was the new soldiery of India by the colonial state, that directives issued in 1946 stated that any future 'emergency' would be met by expanding 'militia units' raised from peoples outwith the peacetime army[177], because the old 'martial classes' have 'no real loyalty or patriotism towards Britain as Britain, not as we understand loyalty'[178]. Unfortunately for the colonial state in India, and as this essay would lead one to surmise, these newly martialized classes proved barely more acquiescent after the Second World War than their predecessors had been during it;

> Down with the hated foreign ruler! The day of our independence is very near. If they don't give us the sweet fruit of freedom dangled before us, we shall snatch it from their grasp! [179]

[174] C.J. Auchinleck, 'A Note on the Size and Composition of the Indian Army, August 1943'; *Indian Army Morale and Possible Reduction*, p.414
[175] *ibid*
[176] *ibid*, p.415
[177] *Plan 288: War Organization – Army in India*, War Staff Papers, OIOC, British Library, L/WS/1/1068, p.20-21
[178] C.J. Auchinleck, *Typewritten minute marked "Strictly Personal and Secret" from General Auchinleck, concerning the effect on the Indian Army as a whole of the first trial of members of the Indian National Army*, Major-General Thomas Wynford Rees Papers, OIOC, British Library, MSS Eur/F274/95, p.3
[179] Naval rating at Flora Fountain, Bombay, 19 February 1946; P.S. Gourgey, The Indian Naval Revolt of 1946; (Hyderabad; Orient Longman, 1996), p.12

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