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India's Military and its Impact on the Formation of a Nation

By Nikki Sway

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Synthesis Essay

The beginning of British rule in India can be difficult to pinpoint. The history of British influence over India began well before the British Crown took over direct control of the subcontinent. The rise of British influence and control over India was gradual, but some key moments stand out. The first British explorations into India began in the sixteenth century. The British East India Company, formally founded in 1600, participated in the spice trade for over two hundred years and came to control much of the subcontinent. British interests in the region were distinctly economic. British influence over India grew steadily from the sixteenth century and by 1757, after the Battle of Plassey, The British East India Company began to take over large pieces of Indian land. By 1818, British people controlled virtually all of what we recognize as modern India. The first Indian war of Independence began in 1857. Still, it was not until 1858 that the British Raj, a period of British rule on the Indian subcontinent lasting from 1858-1947, was established and the British Crown took over control from the British East India Company. Even then, large parts of the subcontinent were ruled independently, as they would be up until Indian Independence, particularly by the princely states.

The people of the Indian subcontinent fought for Independence from both the British East Indies Company and the British Crown. In fact, the British Crown did not take control over India until after India's first War of Independence in 1857. By 1885, the same year Europeans were splitting up Africa at the Berlin Conference, the Indian National Congress was formed. This allowed the Indian people some form self governance. The Indian National Congress played a significant role leading up to independence and continues to operate as a political party. The Civil Disobedience Movement, The Salt March, and The Quit India Movement all represent

Indian resistance to British colonial rule between the first and second world war. After World War Two, the Indian people would gain their freedom as the nation was decolonized. The Muslims of India, not wanting to find themselves in a Hindu dominant society, campaigned for the partition of the British Raj into two autonomous states. India would remain secular while Pakistan would become a Muslim state. Despite this desire for seperation, no one could have predicted the amount of death, suffering, chaos, and ongoing hostile political relationships that would result from the partition that would ensue. Nor could anyone predict that the Kashmir conflict, beginning in 1947, would continue to the present day leading to escalating tensions between India and Pakistan.

The decolonization of India marks a distinct trend in world history. World War Two has been widely accepted as the turning point that sparked decolonization across the world. Between 1945 and 1960 three dozen new states would be created in Asia and Africa. Each of these new states has its own history of decolonization, many of them filled with violence. The memories of these independence struggles are alive and well in many of these nations. The end of the British Raj, happening only two short years after the end of World War Two, was one of the first in this major transformation of the world. As such, the way histories of India's Independence are told speaks to more than just India's decolonization. Additionally, India's Independence relates particularly strongly to World War Two, as many historians have argued that India's role during the war directly sparked independence movements. Between the famines widely believed to be caused by British policy, experiences of soldiers travelling to new lands and meeting new people, and Japaenese efforts to undermine the British by spreading anti-British propaganda to the Indian people; World War Two represented a major shift in how quickly the Indian people invisioned

themselves gaining independence. By the end of World War Two, there was no doubt that India was to become an independent nation. The question was only when and how this process would begin. In order to understand the history of India's decolonization, one must explore the British and Indian roles in the war.

Historians have published studies on the role of the Indian military during World War Two as early as the 1970s. Personal memoirs, from both Indians and British nationals, were published as early as 1945. Still, the vast majority of scholarship on the topic comes from the twenty-first century. In particular, the 2010s saw a minimum of seven books published on the topic of the Indian military between World War Two and Independence. It appears that the topic of Indian military history was neglected during the postcolonial history boom which began in the late 1970s and developed throughout the 1980s[1]. While some historians writing in the 1960s and early 1970s have since been identified as writing in a postcolonial style, fundamental works such as Edward Said's Orientalism were not published until the late 1970s.[2] The modern day military disputes between India and Pakistan, with their widely publicized acts of violence, seem to have sparked a renewed interest in the topic. This is seen in the way historians use their monographs, sometimes only in conclusions, to comment on the modern day relationship between India and Pakistan even when their studies primarily deal with World War Two or Independence. This connection to the present political circumstances indicates one reason that historians are interested in Indian military history. This new wave of scholarship utilizes the vast amount of academic resources that have been available for decades. Between British, Indian, and Pakistani national archives, the high numbers of privately published memoirs, oral history records, and

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[1]Anna Green and Kathleen Troup, *The Houses of History: A Critical Reader in History and Theory, Second Edition*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), 321.
[2]Green and Troup, *The Houses of History*, 323-324.

more, all of these historians are utilizing the resources of social historians while often writing military and diplomatic histories.

Of the five monographs and one documentary that have been sampled here, there are two distinct historiographical moments. The first historiographical moment occurs in the 1970s. Just a few short decades after the end of World War Two, post-colonial history was just beginning to arise. Social history, however, was at that time in full swing.[3] Stephen Cohen's 1971 study exploring the Indian military's role in the formation of a new nation *The Indian Army: Its Contribution to the Development of a Nation* represents the first monograph published on the topic. Cohen did not believe that he was writing a traditional military history. He wrote: "This book is not a history of the Indian military, although many of its data are drawn from that history. It is a study of the development of a modern army in South Asia, and its relationship to its own political and social environment."[4] Here we see two things. Cohen did not claim to be writing a military history. He went on to assert that a traditional military history covers only "the study of warfare *per se*"[5] and that this type of history is unforgivingly narrow. Instead, Cohen was interested in the development of nationhood. The creation of the Indian and Pakistani states and how the military relates to this endeavor.

Cohen, more so than any of the historians publishing in the twenty-first century, wrote a social history. He wrote frequently on the caste system, regional differences within the nation, types of military organizations, and all of the impacts on socialization. On his very first page he

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[3] The third wave of the Annales School began in the 1970s and emphasized "conscious and unconscious mental structures and collective belief systems." Green and Troup, *The Houses of History*, 106-107.
[4] Stephen Cohen, *The Indian Army: Its Contribution to the Development of a Nation*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), 3.
[5] Cohen, *The Indian Army*, 3.

claimed: "Its [India's] people are also organized into social groups"[6] Here he was clearly defining himself within the trend of social history. What is surprising is not that a historian in the 1970s was writing social history, but rather that very few of the later monographs even acknowledge caste as a social factor within India between World War Two and Independence. Cohen stands alone in this early trend of historiography on the Indian military. While much of the scholarship coming out at this time focused exclusively on World War One, Cohen covered the history from the nineteenth century to independence. One marker of the time in which Cohen was writing was his treatment of the British and British rule throughout the monograph. While most other historians either chose not to note on the morality of British colonial control or outwardly reject the notion that it benefited India, Cohen appears to have been more pro-British than his counterparts. He frequently applauded British military tactics such as 'coup-proofing' the army by splitting up people of the same region or religion. Unfortunately, academic reviews of Cohen's work were published in the 1970s and are generally positive, but if modern historians reviewed Cohen's work they would likely take issue with some of his presentation of the topic. Edward Said's influential 1978 work *Orientalism* provides a suitable model for a critique of Cohen's work. Whether intentional or not, Cohen appears to have adopted many of the British colonial government's views on the Indian people within his work. Subtle comments on the nature of Indian people and their potential inability to lead themselves reads troubling to the modern reader. Much of this will change before the rise of the next wave of scholarship, though this would not occur for over thirty years.

[6] Cohen, *The Indian Army*, 1.

A distinct trend occurs between the years of 2014 and 2015. In these two years alone, at least five different books on the Indian military during World War Two were published. Such a high volume of publishing on a relatively niche topic is no coincidence. In fact, what appears to have sparked interest in this topic connects all the monographs and the documentary together: an interest in the modern day relationship between India and Pakistan. Even Cohen, writing in the 1970s, has an interest in the Kashmir conflict and the developing differences between India and Pakistan. India and Pakistan would go to war over Kashmir again the very year that Cohen published his book. Many of these historians, particularly Wilkinson, are interested in the question: why have India and Pakistan turned out so differently despite their shared origins as part of the British Raj? While to present one nation as superior to another- as though this is measurable- may present some bias, Wilkinson is particularly interested in seeking answers to the question of why India appears so much more stable than neighboring Pakistan. In order to understand why this would spark such a renewal of scholarship on the topic, one must understand the depths of the Indian-Pakistani conflict.

Much of the conflict between India and Pakistan surrounds the contested territory of Kashmir. The North-Western territory of Kashmir borders both India and Pakistan. Originally, the territory of Kashmir was held by two of India's princely states. This means that the British never actually ruled the territory. Instead, it was under the direct control of the 'maharaja' (local ruler or Indian prince). This would lead to much of the dispute in 1947 over who ought to rule this territory. At the time of independence, Hari Singh had control over all of Kashmir. Under the Indian Independence Act of 1947, Kashmir was to have the choice of joining either India or Pakistan. In October of 1947, with the Muslim majority population on the Western border

uprising against Singh, Pakistani troops entered the region to offer support. Singh then decided to join India, and requested assistance in maintaining his control. War began between India and Pakistan, both asserting claims to the territory. The fighting continues to this day.

In 1949, less than five years after its formation, the United Nations stepped in and both India and Pakistan signed a ceasefire agreement. The region was split and both India and Pakistan had claim to some part of Kashmir. This split would follow the 'line of control' created by the United Nations. In theory the region was meant to hold a referendum in which the fate of the region would be determined with; however, this never occurred. Tension would escalate to wars in both 1965 and 1999. By 1999, both India and Pakistan had claimed their militaries capable of using nuclear power. This brought international attention to the conflict. In addition to the official wars, there is consistent unrest with violent flare ups. It is estimated that 47,000 people have been killed over the course of these conflicts and additional thousands have gone missing; many locals believe that the Pakistani or Indian military are to blame. While both India and Pakistan have theoretically followed a ceasefire since 2003, there are at least a dozen instances of small attacks surrounding the line of control. Civilians and military forces have both been casualties.

In addition to this direct form of conflict, there are other forms of dispute between India and Pakistan. Terrorism, violence targetted at civillains, has occured on both sides of the border. Both Hindu and Muslim terrorist groups have been identified. Violence does not occur only as an attack from one nation to the other. In 2008, Hindu Nationalists were charged with the bombing of the Muslim dominant city of Malegaon, India. All of this goes to show that the territorial dispute between India and Pakistan represents more than a fight for land or the civilians that

reside within it. India and Pakistan are both guilty of propagating a separatist rhetoric that encourages their population to see the other as an enemy. While India claims to be a secular state, there is distinct religious rhetoric used when discussing the dispute between these two nations. The election of Prime Minister Modi in 2014, widely regarded as a Hindu Nationalist, does not bode well for the future of this conflict.

This history, along with its present, may seem removed from a history of India's military under the British Raj through World War Two and Indian Independence. However, there is a reason that so many historians found themselves asking questions about the history of the military in the territories that would become modern day India and Pakistan. This conflict, with its public violence and potential to lead to nuclear war, has sparked a renewal of interest in the very same topic Cohen was writing about in 1971. Even Cohen, whose work was published so many decades before the second historiographical trend, writes directly about the Kashmir conflict in the end of his book. This is not to say that had there been no Kashmir conflict no historians would have been interested in the Indian military, but rather to say that this conflict has had distinct impacts on the way that historians have approached their work.

In order to demonstrate this, a brief look at each individual work is useful. Having begun in chronological order starting with Cohen, this method will be followed. The first monograph published has some distance from the topic of only the Indian military. First published in 2007, Yasmin Khan's *Great Partition: The Making of India and Pakistan*[7] explores the social effects partition had. Rather than focusing solely on "high politics" she instead presents the reader with

[7] Yasmin Khan, *The Great Partition: The Making of India and Pakistan*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007).

"a range of voices that demonstrate the human toll this event really had."[8] Khan is writing a cultural history, focusing more on the perspectives and beliefs of people than the social systems that influence them. Khan relies heavily on primary source work, frequently citing records of oral archives, personal letters, poems, and memoirs while still giving space to government documents, police reports, and other evidence of high politics.

Khan's central argument, one that connects directly to her book on the Indian military, surrounds the concept of inevitability. She asserts that not only was partition not inevitable, but for many it was entirely unexpected. Khan takes issue with the presentation of partition as an inevitable result of two religions in close proximity. Khan consistently points out that Hinduism and Islam are not fundamentally at odds and demonstrates the many times and spaces in which these religions have cohabitated peacefully. She rejects the notion that religion is the most salient identifier of an individual, pointing to the regional, linguistic, and class differences that are markers of difference despite shared religious identity. Finally, Khan makes the important claim that "Partition, then, is more than the sum of its considerable parts."[9] What Khan points to here is the significance of the memory, the legacy, and the continuation of what partition means to the people who lived through it or live in nations whose identity is fundamentally altered by it. Khan has been criticized for being "stronger on narrative than analysis."[10] However, this is what makes her text more readable and while she may not make as bold and consistent arguments as books geared towards a purely academic audience, she certainly makes an argument against the

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[8] Gail Minault, "The Great Partition: The Making of India and Pakistan Yasmin Khan," *The Historian* 71, no. 4 (2009): 878-9. http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=edsjsr&AN=edsjsr.24454115&site=eds-live&scope=site.
[9] Khan, *The Great Partition*, 9.
[10] Adeney, Katharine, *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)* 84, no. 2 (2008): 386-87. Accessed January 16, 2020, www.jstor.org/stable/25144785.

assumption that Hinduism and Islam are incapable of getting along and provides analysis on this throughout the monograph.

One may ask, why should a book like this be considered part of the story of India's military history? First, in 2015 Khan became the author of a second book *The Raj at War: A People's History of India's Second World War.*[11] The publication of these two books, separated by eight years, allows for an examination of Khan's perspectives on the topic over time. Second, while many of these historians are writing a history that leads up to, influences, and comments on the partition between India and Pakistan, very few of these historians give much space to what actually happens during and after partition. While it is frequently alluded to, it is assumed that the reader already has a grasp on the topic. For this reason, an examination of the books to follow would be incomplete without a deeper look at the subject so many historians are commenting on: the political disputes between modern-day India and Pakistan post-partition.

The next book published is Daniel Marston's 2014 monograph *The Indian Army and the End of the Raj*.[12] Within this book, Marston argues that the Indian military's experiences during World War Two were central to the military's post-war role and cites the Indian army as a key factor preventing total societal breakdown during partition. He demonstrates that an understanding of partition is incomplete without examining the role that British military strategy had on the Indian military after British control ceased. Marston is arguing against historians who have asserted that the military lacked professionalism and aided in the violence experienced during partition. Marston, like most of the historians writing on this topic, spends a lot of time delving into the 'martial races' concept conceived by the British. Marston explored this theory,

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[11] Yasmin Khan, *The Raj at War: A People's History of India's Second World War,* (London: Penguin Random House UK, 2015)
[12] Daniel Marston, *The Indian Army and the End of the Raj,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014)

that some groups within India are best suited for military service while others should be excluded totally, through the use of quantitative data. He utilized colonial and military records to determine what percentage of the military came from each religion, region, and 'martial races' over time. As the monograph progressed, Marston continuously pointed to moments in which soldiers within the Indian military displayed professionalism and strength despite the fact that they were often fighting for causes aligned with British rather than Indian interests. Unlike Cohen, Marston did not give the British all the praise when writing on the effectiveness of the Indian Military. Cohen had moments in which his commentary on the effectiveness of the military suggests that it was due only to the British military organization and training. Martson, on the other hand, commends individual soldiers for their autonomous decision making while also recognizing the value of good military training. Marston, more so than Cohen, also acknowledged the fact that the military's dedication to the so-called 'martial races' hindered their ability to increase recruitment during wartime. While both acknowledge this problem, Marston explores how little training many new recruits were given before being thrown into battle and how this affected their morale and performance.

Martson dedicates chapter three to the INA trials. Members of the INA, a group of Indian soldiers who had been captured by the Japanese in Malaya and ultimately aligned themselves with the Japanese against the British, were put on trial after the end of World War Two. Marston argues that the public INA trials held after the end of World War Two created a national cause that the Independence Movement utilized. Marston's fourth chapter covers something only briefly mentioned or entirely omitted by the other historians: the Indian army's role in maintaining colonial control in French Indo-China and the Dutch East Indies after the end of

World War Two. Marston demonstrates how this assignment presented many challenges for the soldiers of the Indian Army. First, and most obvious, this was a physically difficult task. Units were frequently disconnected from means of communication and had to use their own decision making power. Second, this caused a moral dilemma. Indian soldiers, themselves colonial subjects of the British, were aiding in the colonial control of other Asian nations. For some soldiers, this sparked feelings of disloyalty or traitorship. However, Marston also ensures that the reader is aware that the Indian army freed thousands of POWs and civilians. Following Marston's central theme, the Indian soldiers show strength, professionalism, and effectiveness throughout the chapter.

Overall, Marston's book offers a critique of those who believed that the Indian army was unsuited for traditional warfare.[13] He presents the Indian army as effective in both war and in the public chaos of Partition. Marston acknowledges Indian army soldiers' role in the violence of Partition, but shows that those most likely to participate in violence were those released from army service shortly after the war and were disgruntled with their loss of a stable, good paying job. One of Marston's great strengths is highlighting the grey in a field that so easily falls into black and white. Utilizing British archives, military records, many oral interview transcripts, and statistics Marston delves deeply into primary source work. While his history is distinctly military focused, he examines the social repercussions of military service and deciates just as much space to the experiences of everyday soldier as the military leaders. Marston combines quantitative approaches with social and cultural sensibilities.[14] Marston uses data to

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[13] Mukerjee, Madhusree, "In Service to the Empire," *World War II* 30, no. 5 (January 2016): 72–73. http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=111081579&site=eds-live&scope=site.

[14] Within quantitative history, one must still make a decision as to how one should interpret the data. For this reason, a historian is rarely just doing quantitative history and generally has other historiographical slants. Green and Troup, *The Houses of History*, 165.

explore the way that the Indian army was changing over time, from recruitment practices to organization, while using social and cultural analysis to unpack the significance of these changes to those being impacted by them.

The two final books presented here were both published in 2015. Yasmin Khan's *The Raj at War: A People's History of India's Second World War* will be presented first, as the author has already been introduced. One notable thing about Khan's second work on the topic is its mode of publication. This monograph, with the very same chapter structure and contents within, was published by two separate publishing agencies under two separate names during the same year. The title *The Raj at War: A People's History of India's Second World War* was published by Penguin Random House UK while the title *India at War: The Subcontinent and the Second World War* was published by Oxford University Press. Having gotten both books mistakenly thinking they were different, it was quite a shock to discover that the two were word-for-word identical recreations of the other. The first title, as well as the publisher associated, appear to be marketed towards the general public. The words 'people's history' indicate to the reader that a social or cultural history will be taking place and these types of histories are generally seen as more accessible to the everyday reader. The cover of this version is colorful with artwork of two female soldiers adorning the cover. Despite the fact that women do not feature prominently within the book, especially not within military service, the cover is enticing and again looks accessible. The second title is, forgive my potential bias, not as intriguing. The Subcontinent and the Second World War is far more vague and the reader is given no indication of what type of history this may be, only its topic. The cover of this book features an image rather than artistic depiction of soldiers, and this cover features men rather than women. The text on the cover is

noticeably smaller and appears to be geared more towards an academic than general population audience. A digression, but still an interesting aspect of the choices historians make when publishing a monograph. While the focus of analysis has been primarily on the content and historiography of the authors, choices such as which publisher to choose and how to market the book speak volumes as to what the author feels their book is trying to achieve. Historians like Marston are publishing distinctly academic monographs that one would never find in a traditional bookstore. Khan, on the other hand, appears to see her work as suitable for both the general population and the academic world. Having read both, these authors seem to possess a keen awareness of the audience of their monographs.

Khan's *The Raj at War* follows similar historiographical themes as those seen in her first monograph *The Great Partition*. As noted above, the phrase 'a people's history' already indicates that Khan is doing a history focused around the experiences of the masses rather than the elite. In Khan's case, she is writing a cultural history. Again, this is cultural rather than social as she more frequently highlights the voices of individuals rather than noting the social groups to which they belong. Khan very rarely acknowledges caste, as few other than Cohen do. It is possible that these historians are opting not to write about caste within India as it has already been written about in depth or over emphasized in previous works, though no historian states this directly. One reviewer has argued that Khan is writing from a subaltern studies perspective, highlighting history from below and exploring issues relating to postcolonial South Asia.[15] Like Marston, Khan argues that World War Two, and particularly the experiences of soldiers and civilians during the war, made Indian Independence inevitable. While in her monograph on

[15] Masani, Zareer, "The Raj at War," *History Today* 65, no. 9 (September 2015): 64. http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=30h&AN=108945502&site=eds-live&scope=site.

partition she argues that partition was not inevitable, here she argues that by the end of World War Two independence was considered inevitable by both the British and the Indians.

Whereas Marston sees World War Two as leading to independence because of the experiences of soldiers and the increase of confidence in the soldier population, Khan takes a more broad approach. For Khan, the general chaos of World War Two including famine, increase in interracial sex, increases in prostitution and veneral disease "all lead to a sense in India of a world gone awry, and was fodder for those propagandists who wanted to demonize the imperialists."[16] Beyond just these factors internal to India, Britain facing off against other world powers and not always winning added to a sense of questioning why Britain should be seen as having superiority and control over India. If one were to bring Khan and Marston's perspectives together in one cohesive argument, a persuasive and nuanced argument could be made for the many reasons World War Two influenced independence. Again, one must not forget that the entire world viewed World War Two as a cause for colonial and imperial ruled nations to be given independence, not just India.

One of Khan's greatest strengths, which comes across in both of her monographs presented here, is her ability to weave together stories that are seemingly unrelated in an eloquent way. She brings up things no other historians mention, such as the experiences of black GIs being discriminated against within India, the experience of losing faith in the war cause, and the experiences of British soldiers arriving in India for the first time. Her ability to weave these narratives together, always highlighting the perspective of who is being written about, without it feeling frivolous is a skill. It is choices like these that make her book more accessible to the

[16] Yasmin Khan, *The Raj at War: A People's History of India's Second World War,* (London: Penguin Random House UK, 2015), 244.

average reader. Still, one reviewer has criticized her reliance on English-language sources which, assumably inadvertently, neglects the poorest voices from within India.[17] Why Khan chose not to work with Hindi or any other language sources is unknown, but to deny the contributions of this book for this one flaw would certainly be a misstep.

The final monograph on this topic, also published in 2015, is Steven Wilkinson's *Army and Nation: The Military and Indian Democracy Since Independence*. Based on the title alone, it is clear that Wilkinson is more interested in India's military post-independence than before. Therefore this book focuses less on India's role during World War Two and more on Partition and its aftermath. One thing that Wilkinson is doing that none of the other historians are doing is asking a question that broadly relates to the nature of decolonization. The central focus of his monograph is: Why was India's military, which was not representative of the population of the nation, able to maintain peace and democracy post-independence? Here India is being contrasted with not only neighboring Pakistan, which Wilkinson does not see as such a success story, but also with other post-colonial nations. Many post-colonial nations find themselves in a situation in which their former colonial rulers set up militaries or other forms of government bureaucracies that disproportionately represents one region, linguistic group, religion, or other form of social group. As independence is gained, these new nations are faced with either restructuring their recruitment to represent the population or maintaining peace while keeping often minority ruled armies and governments. Wilkinson argues that India, of the nations presented with this circumstance, is a success story and seeks to understand what circumstances allowed India to have such success.

[17] Mukerjee, Madhusree, "In Service to the Empire," *World War II* 30, no. 5 (January 2016): 72–73.

His answer to this question is three-fold and brings us closer to Cohen than any other historian. First, he argues that India 'inherited' a better military structure than Pakistan did. As Pakistan was an entirely new nation whereas India was already established, when the military was split between India and Pakistan, India maintained the military structure it already had whereas Pakistan was inheriting soldiers but less of an established military structure. Second, India (again as a pre-established concept) had a history of political institutionalism that Pakistan lacked. India's inheritance of the Indian National Congress, with its long history and widespread support across the nation regardless of ethnic divisions would play a significant role in India's later military success. It is notable that the Indian National Congress continues to operate as a political party today. Third, Wilkinson points to the coup-proofing that was established by the British during the British Raj. Like Cohen, Wilkinson feels that this British structure had a significant impact on the success of the military. However, Wilkinson goes beyond Cohen by pointing to the fact that this coup-proofing was established not only by the British but also by the Indian National Congress in the first decade after Independence. This 'coup-proofing' is essentially just structuring the army in a way in which ethnic groups are all (or almost all) represented at the top of the military. Additionally, much time is spent ensuring that those promoted are decided strategically and that attention to the career paths of top generals were focused on after their retirement. Disgruntled former top generals pose a serious threat when it comes to potential coups. Wilkinson, more so than any other historian mentioned here, poses a clear question and provides a clear three pronged answer to said question. Published by Harvard University Press, it is no surprise that this book is up there as the most distinctly academic along with Marston.

Wilkinson is writing from the military history tradition more so than of the other monographs presented here. If Cohen believes that a traditional military history covers only "the study of warfare *per se*"[18] he would likely find this book to be that of traditional military history. Cohen goes beyond the study of warfare, but not far beyond military structure. Wilkinson is not only doing a military history, but also a quantitative history.[19] Flipping through the monograph, one finds dozens of data tables, charts, maps, and other forms of representing data visually. Wilkinson uses recruitment data from the Indian military both before and after independence to track changes in the army's makeup. Using this data, Wilkinson shows that the Indian Army post-Independence is still over representative of the 'martial races' identified by the British while other regions and groups are underrepresented. Beginning with Cohen and ending with Wilkinson feels almost like a full-circle. Despite the fact that Cohen is doing social history and Wilkinson quantitative and military history, they seem to share a lot in perspectives and Wilkinson cites Cohen a total of eleven times throughout the two hundred page monograph.

Finally, a new means of addressing these topics is worth exploring. Director Nisha Pahuja's 2012 documentary *The World Before Her* ties together seemingly unrelated historical works. The film switches between two narratives. The first covers the contestants of the Miss India beauty pageant of 2011. The second follows young girls aged 15-25 being trained by Durga Vahini which is the women's group within the Hindu Nationalist group of Vishva Hindu Parishad. The creation of this film was the first time that a foreign filmmaker was allowed to film within the training camps of the largest Hindu Nationalist organization in India. Jumping from one extreme to the next, this film attempts to demonstrate the lack of options that women in India

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[18] Cohen, T*he Indian Army*, 3.
[19] Quantitative history is the study of history through the use of data analysis. Green and Troup, *The Houses of History*, 165.

have by demonstrating that these women are joining their diametrically opposed groups for strikingly similar reasons. Additionally, there is a relationship between these two groups within the movie. Beauty pageants, with their Western beauty standards and bikini contests, are seen by many Indians- and particularly these militant Hindu groups- as being against Hindu and Indian values. Mass protests against the 1996 Miss World Competition, which was held in India, have continued to impact the culture surrounding beauty pageants in India. In the film we see the bikini contest being held in private and not aired on television due to the fear of retaliation against the contest.

This division between Hindu nationalists and more Westernized women is presented not only through beauty pageants, but also through the widespread violence against women in India. Viral film taken on civilian cell phones shows women being beaten by large crowds of men for offenses such as being out with a man who is neither in their family nor a husband, being in a bar, and drinking. The year that the film was released coincides with the widely publicized and protested 2012 gang rape and murder of Jyoti Singh, who became known as 'Nirbhaya' meaning the fearless one in Hindi. These events of violence against women, done in the name of Hinduism, are contrasted with the Miss India contestants who are themselves Hindu and fundamentally disagree with the claim that what they are doing goes against their religion. In one scene a charismatic contestant Ruhi Singh states in an angered yet comedic tone: 'Nowhere in Hinduism does it say what a woman can wear. Nowhere."[20]

This is contrasted with scenes of girls as young as fifteen being trained to fight, chanting threats to Pakistan, and being trained in the use of guns. In one scene often cited by reviewers as

[20] *The World Before Her*, Directed by Nisha Pahuja, (West Hollywood: Storyline Entertainment, 2012).

standing out a member of Durga Vahini, Prachi Trivedi, stares into the camera and says "I hate Gandhi" and goes on to explain that while Gandhi taught non-violence independence was not achieved in this way. The film, while never overtly taking sides with one group or the other and effectively demonstrating why the women on both sides of the spectrum believe what they do, still shows footage of Hindu nationalist killings and bombings in 1999 and 2008. The director was clear in her intention not to allow this film to support the Hindu Nationalist movement. The film, released in the United States and Canada in 2012 was not released until 2014 in India. Coincidentally, this was the same year that Hindu Nationalist Modi was elected as Prime Minister of India.

One reviewer has criticized the film as presenting these two groups as "diametrically opposed to one another."[21] What is less difficult to accept than the presentation of these groups in opposition, for me, is the presentation of these two groups as the only paths for women. The women in both groups discuss how their only options as women in India are to get married, have children, and live under the control of their husbands. Despite the fact that this is what she preaches as the duty of women at the camps, protagonist Prachi Trivedi discusses how she does not want a husband and her desire to work for 'the movement' rather than becoming a wife. Her father, present in these interview scenes, makes it clear that this is not only not an option but not her choice to make. What is troubling about this movie is that it lacks representation of this norm. No married women are featured in the film, at least not with speaking roles, unless they are the mothers of the girls being interviewed. To those uninformed or easily swayed, it may

[21] Simon Chambers and Alpa Shah, *Pacific Affairs* 87, no. 3 (2014): 662-64. Accessed January 16, 2020. www.jstor.org/stable/43590989.

appear that the only options for Indians are to be completely Westernized or Hindu Nationalists. This is, of course, is not the case.

The point of including this documentary as part of an analysis on historians writing on the Indian military across time is that it clearly demonstrates why historians have this renewed interest in the topic in the first place. The rise of Hindu Nationalism since the 1990s, the increasing tensions between India and Pakistan over Kashmir, and the schism between traditionalism and modernization are all contributing factors to these historians writing books on this topic. While some are more direct, such as Cohen, others include subtle references to these conflicts such as Pahuja's choice to slip the Kashmir conflict into a larger story of Hindu nationalism rather than addressing it independently. These decisions of course have political ramifications. Regardless of how openly these historians comment on current events, every single monograph analyzed here comments on the nature of the relationship between India and Pakistan be it published in 1971 or 2015.

The monographs and film presented here have all followed a loose topic: India and Pakistan. While some historians wrote about the creation of these two independent nations, some wrote about their history under the British Raj, others wrote about the modern disputes between these nations despite their shared origins. Within this shared topic, several themes stand out. Religion, what is widely cited as the rift between these two nations, comes across in all monographs and films. For those writing on the Indian military during World War Two, Cohen, Khan, and Marston, the problem of the 'martial races' is consistently present. For Wilkinson, this concept continues to reverberate despite India's gaining independence. Despite all these shared topics and themes, these historians each provide a distinct perspective within their work. While

they may not say so directly, they are also in conversation with one another. Khan cites Marston. Marston cites Khan and Cohen. Wilkinson cites Cohen and Marston. Additionally, many of them are working with similar primary source documents. While the individual letters they choose from everyday civilians may differ, there is overlap in more official forms of documentation.

Having read all five monographs and watched the documentary, it is clear that the efficacy and professionalism of the Indian army during World War Two and leading up to Independence cannot be denied. Nor can one deny the profound impact of experiencing World War Two had on the road to Independence. Despite all their differences as historians, these two claims were upheld within all of the monographs. Pahuja's documentary, while not dealing with the military directly, speaks to the modern day relationship between India and Pakistan and the internal conflicts within India. The violence and politics of othering shown through Pahuja's film demonstrates one reason why understanding India and Pakistan's shared yet distinct military histories is important. At the moment of this writing, the people of India's Kashmir are under lockdown and intermittently barred from internet and phone service. This is more than an issue of two nations feuding, but concerns a real threat to the lives of the people of Kashmir. This conflict and the escalating tensions between India and Pakistan over the last three decades certainly pushes historians into this topic. This is a potentially dangerous motivator for writing about the topic of Indian military history. While some historians like Khan make an active effort to remind the reader that this history was not inevitable, other historians such as Wilkinson center their work around the knowledge of what is happening in the present. The desire to use knowledge about the present to inform both the questions and answers historians presents a historiographical challenge. As John Tosh has pointed to,

> "The problem with seeking the historical antecedents of some characteristically 'modern' feature is that the outcomes can so easily seem to be pre-determined instead of being the result of complex historical processes."[22]

This oversimplification of the past into something predetermined, or inevitable, comes across in some of the monographs presented here. Cohen, for example, slips into moments in which he presents the divide between India and Pakistan as a natural outcome of the division between Islam and Hinduism as though this was pre-determined. Wilkinson, with his central question tracking the differences between the modern day Indian and Pakistani militaries, at times presents the developing differences as inevitable or pre-determined. Amongst the historians presented here, Khan is the only one who actively argues that Partition was not inevitable. The impact that current events have on historical questioning is in some ways inevitable. One cannot blame historians for being interested in the questions of their day. Still, an awareness of this potential pitfall is needed if historians want to best respect the 'complex historical process' rather than allow their presentism to present the world as predestined.

Despite the fact that the monographs presented here represent nearly fifty years worth of scholarly work on the subject, there is still more to be explored. The depths of sources available combined with the countless historical approaches that could be applied to them present the inevitability of more historians writing monographs on these topics. The questions that will be asked will certainly be impacted by the ongoing development of historiography. What they will take from the historians presented here, and what they will reject, is still to come.

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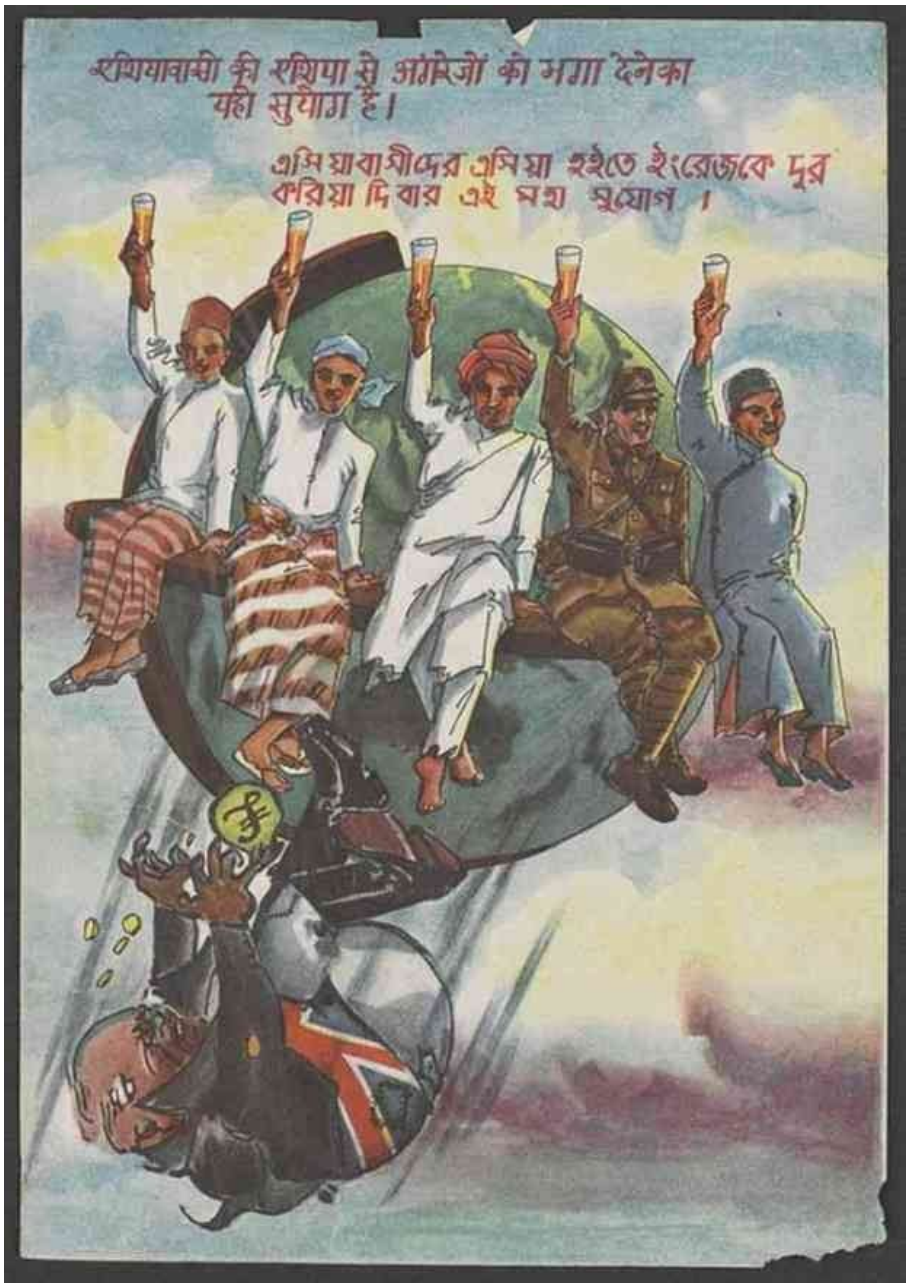
[22] John Tosh, *The Pursuit of History: Aims, Methods, and New Directions in the Study of History*, (London: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2015), 162.

Document 1: Japanese Wartime Propaganda Poster

During World War Two, the Japanese created propaganda intended to influence the Indian public against their British colonial rulers. Meant to reinforce desires for Indian independence, Japanese propaganda represented Japan as a better ally for South Asians than the British. This image features five Asian men, including a Japanese man and Indian men, raising a toast over a falling British man. The text reads: "This is an apt occasion to drive out the English from Asia" [23]



[23] Aanchal Malhotra, "How Japan Carpet Bombed India with Posters Against Britain During World War ll," Quartz India, April 19, 2019, https://qz.com/india/1599799/japans-world-war-ii-poster-propaganda-against-britain-in-india/.

Document 2: Branson Letters

In 1943, the midst of World War Two, the Bengal region of Eastern India was struck by a deadly famine. Out of a population of 60 million, 2-3 million people died of starvation and diseases increased by malnutrition. The 1943 Bengal Famine has been widely debated. Some historians have argued that it was a man-made famine. Rather than being caused by natural conditions (such as drought) it has been asserted that this famine was caused by British wartime policy decisions such as destroying rice rather than letting it fall into Japanese hands. Clive Branson, the author of these letters, was a British Sergeant stationed in Western India at the time of this writing.

August 20, 1943. *Ahmednagar*.

The *Times of India* reports that on August 18th 129 people were picked up in Calcutta off the streets in a state of collapse due to starvation, and the next day the number picked up was 192, making 445 in four days.
People's Food Committees and unofficial Relief Committees are still on the increase…
One important fact to be noted- train-loads of grain are being taken to Bengal, but are obviously not reaching the people who need it.

August 28, 1943. *Ahmednagar*.

In my last letter I gave you some of the details of the famine in Calcutta. The number of starving people picked up in the streets were August 21, 46; August 25, 43. But be clear on the fact that Bengal, *as a whole*, is like this.

Recently, in Delhi, a Government spokesman in a food debate gave a long list of how every effort made to get food to the people of Bengal (import, transport, purchases, anti-hoarding, etc.) had been openly opposed, hindered, ignored by the *local officials*. Now the Mayor of Calcutta is reported to have sent a telegram to Churchill: "We appeal to you in the name of the starving humanity to arrange for the immediate shipments of food-grains from America, Australia, and other countries." But the fact is that there is enough food in India now. Appeals of this kind by the Mayor are only the cover- as is the excuse that the army is eating everything to incise the people against the army- the cloak to hide the hoarders, the big grain merchants, the landlords and the bureaucrats *who have engineered the famine*- as the bridges of the Marne were left for the German army.[24]

[24] Clive Branson, *British Soldier in India, the Letters of Clive Branson* (New York: International Publishers, 1945), 90-92.

Document 3: Bristow Memoir

Written by R.C.B. Bristow, a Brigadier in the Indian Army, this memoir published in 1974 covers his experiences as a soldier in India during World War Two. This passage covers the Japanese invasion of Burma and Malaya (modern day Myanmar and Malaysia) just east of India. The "Quit India" movement, mentioned by Bristow, was a movement started in Bombay during World War Two that demanded an end to British colonial rule of India. The passage mentions the Dogras. They are an ethno-linguistic group that live along the Indian and Pakistani border in Punjab. The British viewed the Dogras as a 'martial class' and therefore supposedly superior soldiers to other Indian ethnic and language groups.

Nineteen hundred and forty-two was a critical year in India. Until then the war had been remote, but the entry of Japan and the rapid loss of Malaya and Burma had brought the conflict very close. Taking advantage of our failures the Congress Party under Mr. Gandhi and Mr. Nehru launched their so called non-violent 'Quit India' campaign, resulting in riots, murder, and sabatoge of communications in strategic areas.

Emotionally the situation placed Indian troops at home under greater strain than those in the field, but they never wavered. The decisive factor was the trust that existed between British officers and Indian soldiers. The latter believed that the safety of India depended on remaining loyal to their officers and their regiment, and that the future of their country should be settled after the defeat of the common enemy. Despite the loss of three Dogra battalions in Malaya and Burma, no martial class remained more loyal than the Dogras, and I heard no word of criticism or defeatism, but only of determination to win the war.[25]

[25] R.C.B. Bristow, *Memories of the British Raj: A Soldier in India* (London: Johnson, 1974), 125.

Document 4: 'Quit India' Resolution

In the midst of World War Two, after a failed British attempt to get all Indians on board with the war effort, the Indian National Congress started an anti-British campaign known as the 'Quit India' movement. Originally written by Mahatma Gandhi and later amended by Muslim leader Jawaharlal, this resolution was passed by the Indian National Congress in 1942. Shortly after, all Congress leaders were imprisoned by British authorities.

The Gandhi Draft Was Presented to the Committee on April 27, 1942

Whereas the British War Cabinet proposals by Sir Stafford Cripps have shown up British imperialism in its nakedness as never before, the All-India Congress Committee has come to the following conclusions:

The committee is of the opinion that Britain is incapable of defending India. It is natural that whatever she does is for her own defense. There is the eternal conflict between Indian and British interest. It follows that their notions of defense would also differ.

The British Government has no trust in India's political parties. The Indian Army has been maintained up till now mainly to hold India in subjugation. It has been completely segregated from the general population, who can in no sense regard it as their own. This policy of mistrust still continues, and is the reason why national defense is not entrusted to India's elected representatives.

Japan's quarrel is not with India. She is warring against the British Empire. India's participation in the war has not been with the consent of the representatives of the Indian people. It was purely a British act. If India were freed, her first step would probably be to negotiate with Japan.

The Congress is of the opinion that if the British withdrew from India, India would be able to defend herself in the event of the Japanese, or any aggressor, attacking India.

The committee is, therefore, of the opinion that the British should withdraw from India. The plea that they should remain in India for the protection of the Indian princes is wholly untenable. It is an additional proof of their determination to maintain their hold over India. The princes need have no fear from an unarmed India.[26]

[26] "A History of India," Resources, Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, accessed January 10, 2020, http://cw.routledge.com/textbooks/9780415485432/31.asp.

Document 5: Indian Ministry of Information Report

As India gained Independence from the British, the former colonial nation was splitting into what would become modern day India and Pakistan. They were divided along religious lines, with Pakistan a Muslim nation and India a Hindu nation. This change required civilians to move to the side of the forming border representing their religious identity. The following report was created by the Indian Ministry of Information on November 2nd, 1947 and tracks the movement of civilians by religion.

… Three non-Muslim refugee trains with 13,000 persons from Pakistan reached Amritsar on October 31. On the same day four refugee specials carrying 15,500 Muslim refugees passed through Amritsar and two specials with 10,000 Muslims arrived at Forozepore from Ludhiana enroute to Pakistan.

There were foot movements of Muslim refugees on October 31. 50,000 Muslims left Amritsar from for Wagah. 25,000 Muslims reached Amritsar from Jandiala and 20,000 Muslims arrived at Kartarpur from Beas. 40,000 Muslims moved to Kartarpur from Beas.

In Ferozepore district, 200 Muslim refugees and five abducted girls were recovered from various pockets and sent over to Pakistan on October 28.

Six hundred non-Muslim converts and abducted men, women and children were moved in motor lorries to Lahore. Seventy-two Muslims, including five abducted girls, were cleared from Patti, Adampur, Pamunwala, Durepala and Sanawala and moved to Pakistan…

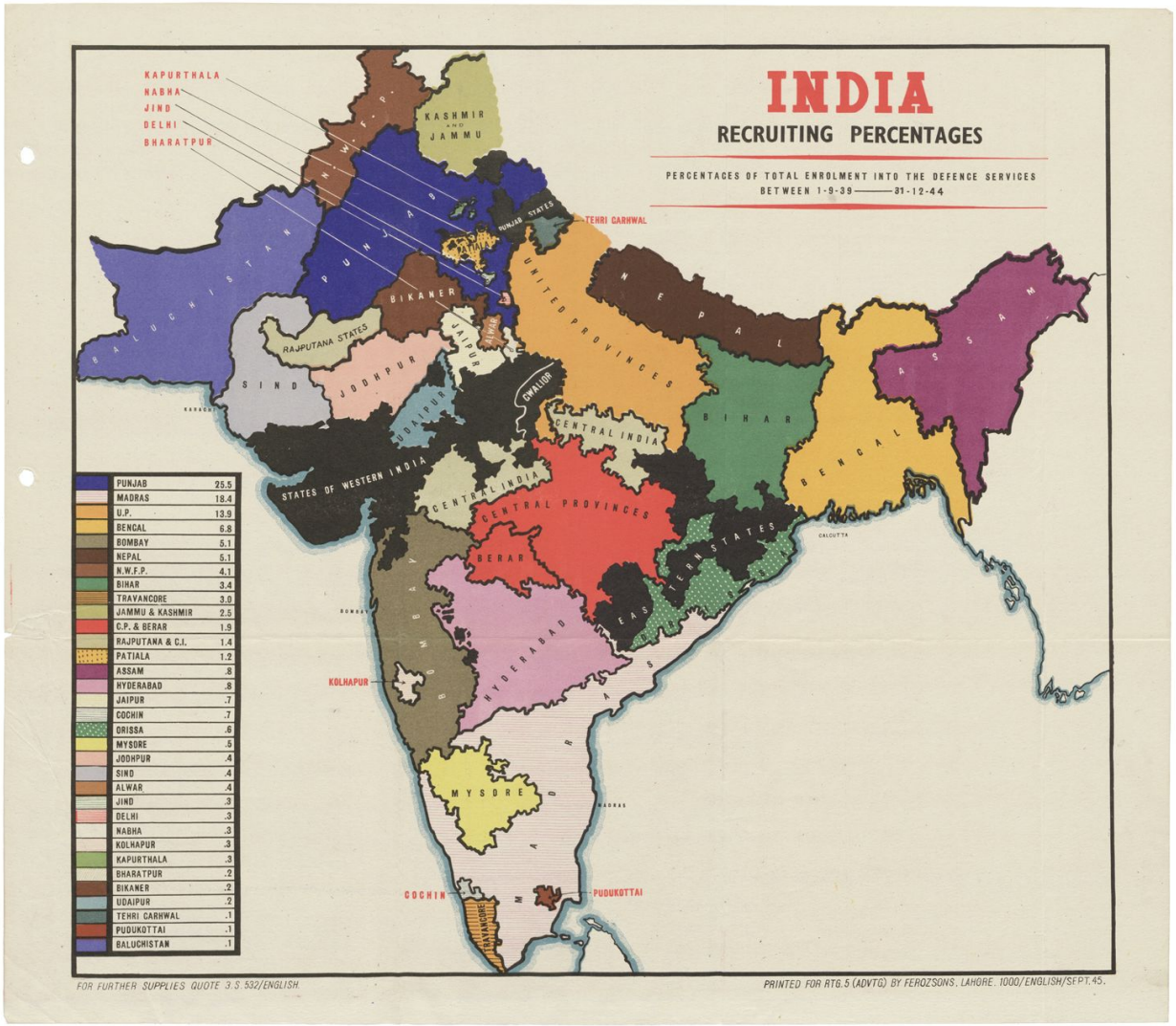
At Ravi Bridge, 4 miles South-east of Narowal 17 non-Muslim women with children were recovered by Pakistan troops and handed over to Indian troops.

Families of Royal Indian Navy and Army personnel were moved to India from Sargodha, Multan, Sianvali and Phillawan in Pakistan.[27]

[27] "Movement of Refugees," The Road to Partition 1939-1947, UK National Archives, accessed January 10, 2020, https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/resources/the-road-to-partition/movement-refugees/.

Document 6: Indian Army Recruiting Percentages

Throughout World War Two the British increased recruitment to the Indian Army. This increase in recruitment has been claimed to represent less of a reliance on the so-called 'martial races' and an opening up of army recruitments to all regions, religions, and races. This map represents the recruitment of soldiers from Indian Provinces between 1939-1944 and shows the percentage of the Indian Army coming from each respective province.[28]



[28] "Indian Army Recruitment 1939-1944," The Road to Partition 1939-1947, UK National Archives, accessed January 17, 2020, https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/resources/the-road-to-partition/indian-army-recruitment-1939-1944/.

Document 7: U.S. Reaction to U.K. Withdrawal

These American newspaper articles cover the announcement of Britain's decision to pull out of India in February 1947. This decision was heavily influenced by Indian Independence movements during World War Two by the Indian National Congress and Gandhi. Writing from America, these journalists comment on the worldwide significance of Indian Independence. Attlee was Britain's Prime Minister from 1945-1951. Nehru, a member of the Indian National Congress, would become India's first Prime Minister from 1947-1964.

The NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE said:

"Attlee's announcement that the British were determined to withdraw from India whether or not a new constitution could be agreed upon by the Indians, is a truly momentous event. It marks a breach with the older world that is more striking than anything that has occurred since World War One revolutionised Europe. A new nation, whose potentialities can only be guessed at, is rising in Asia–in a plastic Asia that may yet, in sure hands, be shaped into a mould for the future of the world.

"The British might easily have lingered on in India, playing off Hindu against Moslem, prince against peasant, presiding over a tense and costly stalemate in the interests of imperial prestige. By refusing this role—despite the temptations which it must have offered to a government under great pressure from within and without the country–Attlee and his colleagues have been statesmanlike. And the British people discarding the trappings of imperialism–which would have seemed shabby in the cold , cruel light of this post-war dawn–have taken on a new dignity and a new moral strength, which multiplies the respect they have won by courage in the war and patience under the privations of peace."

THE NEW YORK TIMES said:

"Every passing day should now crowd the opposing Indian leaders closer to some compromise. It may be that the Moslems themselves can modify (Moslem leader) Jinnah's recalcitrant attitude. There are signs that some of them are trying to do so. A position which is still politically expedient now may become untenable a year from now. Nehru may be shrewd enough to increase his inducements for Moslem collaboration. It is certain India cannot build her independence on a deadlock. Independence with no ability to control it and no power to maintain it promises only catastrophe"[29]

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[29] "U.S. Reaction to U.K. Withdrawal," The Road to Partition 1939-1947, UK National Archives, accessed January 17, 2020, https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/resources/the-road-to-partition/us-reaction-uk-withdrawal/.

Document 8: Risks of Partition

Written on February 19th, 1947 by British Secretary of State this letter was sent to the British ambassador in Washington D.C. In the letter, he describes the potential for a partition between India and Pakistan and comments on the British political position. Partition would become an increasingly violent and caused the mass migration of millions of people. To this day, some people remain stateless. The British have been blamed for not aiding in the organization of partition and instead withdrawing too quickly.

(7) We, therefore, think that Statement provides the best prospect of being able to hand over functions of existing Central Government to a single Government having support of both major parties. But if, when date for withdrawal is reached, this is not possible we shall hand over to whatever constituted authorities seem most representative of different of the country when the time comes. Paragraph 10 of the Statement is designed to avoid, on the one hand, commitment to create Pakistan (which will encourage League to be obstructive), and on the other, any indication that we should, whatever happens, hand over to one authority only (which would encourage Congress Party to be uncompromising).

(8) We realize, of course, that we are running the risk that no settlement will be arrived at and that no settlement will be arrived at and that as date for our withdrawal draws near communal situation will deteriorate seriously. But this is just as likely to happen if we make no Statement because both sides will hope that we shall assist them against the other. We believe, therefore, that the right course is for us to be definite as to our intentions.

(9) It may be felt that a definite partition of India before our departure would, if there is no agreement, be preferable, in the last resort, to withdrawal in any way we propose. Cogent reasons were given in opening paragraphs of Cabinet's Mission Statement of 16th May against any form of Pakistan because the area claimed by the Muslim League would contain far too great a minority of non-Muslim population while a smaller area having a substantial Muslim majority could not be capable economically of survival as an independent state. Partition would be violently resented by a large part of the Indian population including substantial elements in the area affected. The equitable demarcation of the areas to be separated would be a matter of extreme difficulty but it is not totally excluded by paragraph 10 of the statement if it is found inevitable at a later stage.[30]

[30] "Risks of Partition," The Road to Partition 1939-1947, UK National Archives, accessed January 17, 2020, https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/resources/the-road-to-partition/risks-partition/.

Document 9: India-Pakistan Relations

Written by India's High Commissioner in London on October 20th, 1947, this report describes the state of Indian and Pakistani relations only a few months after the Indian Independence Act was signed on August 15th. The mass migration of refugees across the border, particularly in the North-Western Punjabi region, is noted as a significant destabilizing factor. Despite the fact that the British no longer controlled the area, there was an interest in maintaining stability in the region for economic and political gains.

13. In fact the General situation will continue, to remain in "negative control" until the psychological position improves and confidence is restored. A number of tendencies are still preventing this. The vast movement of refugees in both directions in the Punjab (conservative estimates put the figure up to date at 4 million) and the lesser movements elsewhere cause a general feeling of instability. The long range exchange of arguments between the Deputy Prime Minister (India) and the Prime Minister, Pakistan, which continued during the week, regarding the migration of populations only aggravate this. In addition, "the constant demands of the leaders of the majority' communities" as H.S. Suhrawaddy recently said "for reiterated and fulsome expressions of loyalty to the state by the minorities are fast assuming the proportions of sadism".

These demands are not infrequently but also illogically followed by remarks of the kind recently made by the President of the U.P. Congress Committee that he knew the Muslim leaguers had always tried to "betray the country and therefore they would now be given their proper place. Again the bitter attitude of refugees is a constant hindrance to better relations between the communities. In Delhi for example where, as Gandhi recently said "there was no love lost between the Hindus and Muslims whose hearts were still estranged" the well-to-do Sikh and Hindu refugees from the West Punjab who have had to abandon their business and property are vehement in their criticisms of the weak attitude adopted by the Nehru Government and demand that the wealthy Muslims of Delhi should as a corollary be sent to Pakistan. Added to this are the continued harassments to the minorities in both Dominions by petty officialdom and the undeniable feeling of the general public in many affected areas that they do not want to see minorities back again in their midst. Until all these tendencies can "be counteracted there can "be no real restoration of confidence. And until this does take place there can be no return to normal conditions of life.[31]

[31] "India-Pakistan Relations," The Road to Partition 1939-1947, UK National Archives, accessed January 17, 2020, https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/resources/the-road-to-partition/india-pakistan-relations/

Document 10: Gandhi on Non-Violence

Written on November 8th, 1920 by Mahatma Gandhi, this statement often referred to as "The Doctrine of the Sword," describes Gandhi's views on non-violence. Gandhi was born in Western India in 1869 and raised Hindu. He would go on to study law in London, fight for Civil Rights in South Africa, and join the Indian National Congress as a key player in the Indian Independence Movement. While Gandhi is most well known for his dedication to non-violence, this piece offers a more nuanced representation of his beliefs. Having been written in 1920, this piece represents his earlier views.

I do believe that, where there is only a choice between cowardice and violence, I would advise violence. Thus when my eldest son asked me what he should have done, had he been present when I was almost fatally assaulted in 1908, whether he should have run away and seen me killed or whether he should have used his physical force which he could and wanted to use, and defended me, I told him that it was his duty to defend me even by using violence.

But I believe that non-violence is infinitely superior to violence, forgiveness is more manly than punishment….

I am not a visionary. I claim to be a practical idealist. The religion of non- violence is not meant merely for the Rishis and saints. It is meant for the common people as well. Non-violence is the law of our species as violence is the law of the brute. The spirit lies dormant in the brute, and he knows no law but that of physical might. The dignity of man requires obedience to a higher law — to the strength of the spirit….

I am not pleading for India to practise nonviolence because she is weak. I want her to practise nonviolence being conscious of her strength and power. No training in arms is required for realization of her strength. We seem to need it, because we seem to think that we are but a lump of flesh. I want India to recognize that she has a soul that cannot perish, and that can rise triumphant above every physical weakness and defy the physical combination of a whole world. [32]

[32] M.K. Gandhi, *My Non-Violence*, (Ahmedabad, India: Navajivan Publishing House,) 5-7. https://www.mkgandhi.org/ebks/my_nonviolence.pdf.

Textbook Critique

Having explored the way that historians and filmmakers have approached this topic, a sampling of an American High School textbook provides an alternative view. The topics covered in this monograph are found in three sections of the textbook. First, a section titled "Nationalism in India and Southwest Asia" explores the early nationalist movements in India, centering mostly around Gandhi and the Indian National Congress. Still, there are problematic statements. The sentence "until World War One the vast majority of Indians had little interest in nationalism"[33] completely ignores the 1857 uprising against British control. Still, the textbook acknowledges that Indian soldiers coming home from fighting a war for the British felt disgruntled when they were continuously treated like second class citizens and this impacted their desire for independence. India and Indians are mentioned primarily in the section on World War One, while World War two has almost no mentions of India/Indians.

The next chapter that relates to this topic is titled "Hitler's Lightning War." This title could be criticized for its lack of clarity as this is the beginning of the chapters on World War Two. India is first mentioned in a section detailing Japan's attacks in Asia and Japan's plan to take over India from the British. This is the only mention of India relating to World War Two. There is no mention of Indian soldiers' role during the war. This is an obvious sin of omission. India can be seen through the lines, such as in a chart showing deaths for the British Empire/Commonwealth, but one has no way of knowing which percentage come from the UK

[33] Roger B. Beck, Linda Black, Larry Krieger, Phillip Chiviges Naylor, and Dahia Ibo Shabaka, *Holt McDougal Modern World History: Patterns of Interaction*, (Orlando, FL: Holt McDougal/Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2012), 453. https://my.hrw.com/SocialStudies/ss_2010/downloads/htmlfiles/content/Modern_World_History_Unit_4.pdf.

and which come from British colonies.[34] As a textbook published in America, even though the topic is global history, the chapters slant significantly to focus on American involvement in the war. In a British history, with its past colonial ties, perhaps the Indians would play a more prominent role.

The next section of the textbook which deals with the topic explored within the monographs is the chapter "The Colonies Become New Nations 1945-Present." Here, we get five pages dedicated solely to India and Pakistan gaining independence. First, some positive contributions of the textbook should be acknowledged. The chapter almost immediately acknowledges that Indians had desired independence since the earliest British rule, though this is somewhat contradictory to the statement made in the World War One section. The textbook chapter also acknowledges the Kashmir conflict and its ongoing nature. This is a positive contribution, but the framing of this conflict pits Islam and Hinduism as the cause for the conflict rather than the lack of clarity with which the British left the region .

There are more problems with this textbook. Just as historians like Khan have argued against, this textbook presents the partition between India and Pakistan and the violence of said partition as an issue between Islam and Hinduism. In particular, Muslims are presented as the major cause of partition as it was stated that they were unwilling to be part of a Hindu dominant state. The British, the former colonial rulers who left the nation without clear borders and partition plans, is not blamed for the outcome of partition. Instead, the blame is placed on the everyday citizen. Additionally, newspaper excerpts found in the textbook from a New York

[34] Beck, *Modern World History*, 524. https://my.hrw.com/SocialStudies/ss_2010/downloads/htmlfiles/content/Modern_World_History_Unit_4.pdf.

Times article from 1998 read: "[There is] fear that a remote but savage ethnic..."[35] This use of problematic language without critique is troubling. Teaching students that using words such as 'savage' to describe history is an inexcusable message. This very news article essentially suggests that India and Pakistan "must learn to talk to each other" as though this is an easy solution to decades of conflict.[36]

Ultimately the problem with this textbook chapter-- the problem with most textbook chapters-- is its length. Covering five pages, the vast majority of which is images and maps, not much depth can be achieved. Even the images and maps appear to be thrown in for visual effect rather than actually intended for detailed analysis and discovery. For example, a map of India and Pakistan encourages students to locate "which Muslim country, divided into two states, nordered India on the east and the west?"[37] Rather than asking students to think deeply about how this geographical divide would make governance difficult students are only asked to identify nations clearly marked on a map by both name and religious makeup. The Indian military and the way it had to be split between India and Pakistan is not mentioned. Efforts to stop partition violence by police and military personnel are not mentioned. The many acts of Muslims and Hindus protecting each other from violence is completely unmentioned. Instead, students are presented with a black and white view that all Muslims hated all Hindus and that all Hindus, aside from Gandhi, hated all Muslims. This is obviously problematic and propagates the

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[35] Beck, *Modern World History*, 567.
https://my.hrw.com/SocialStudies/ss_2010/downloads/htmlfiles/content/Modern_World_History_Unit_5.pdf
[36] Beck, *Modern World History*, 567.
https://my.hrw.com/SocialStudies/ss_2010/downloads/htmlfiles/content/Modern_World_History_Unit_5.pdf
[37] Beck, *Modern World History*, 564.
https://my.hrw.com/SocialStudies/ss_2010/downloads/htmlfiles/content/Modern_World_History_Unit_5.pdf

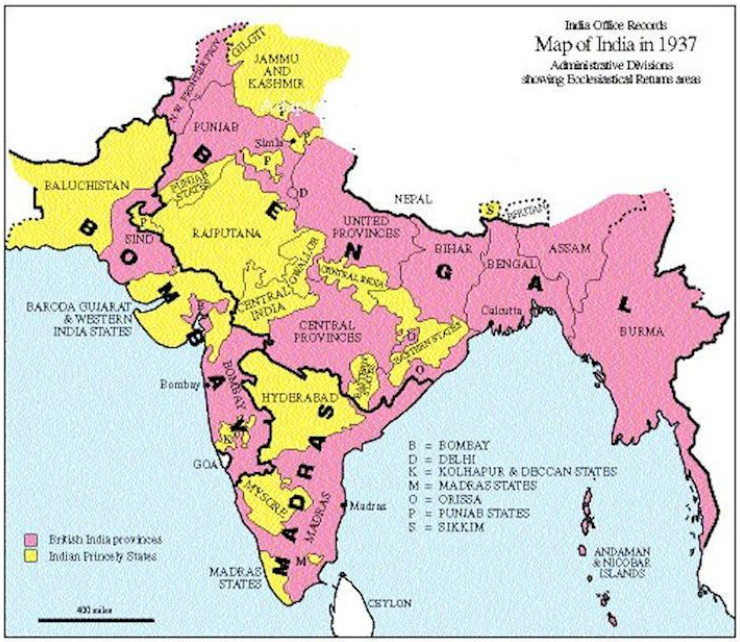
“Clash of Civilizations” mentality on the world and religion. This framing takes away the humanity of those who actually experienced partition.

This textbook represents exactly what Khan tries to fight in her *The Great Partition*. She argues vehemently that partition was in no way inevitable and for many civilians, both Hindu and Muslim, the notion of parition -- let alone the violence that followed --was entirely unexpected. The reading of these textbook chapters only goes to show the need for historians to write about these topics. Having sampled the way that India is presented between World War Two and Independence, a potential correction of what a textbook on this topic could achieve will follow.

New Textbook Offering

The British Raj

The history of British influence in India begins before the British Crown took over control of the Indian subcontinent. The British East Indies Company, a private company formed in 1600, travelled between India and Britain purchasing spices, silk, indigo, tea and other items only available on the Asian market but in high demand in England. The British East Indies Company did not only trade with the people of India, but took over large sections of Indian land. After the first Indian War of Independence in 1857, over two hundred and fifty years after the British East Indies Company was formed, the British Crown took over control of India. This is what would become known as the British Raj, which was formally founded in 1858. While it is widely believed that Britain ruled all of modern day India, there were some exceptions. The biggest exception were places called the princely states. These states had autonomy from Britain, meaning they ruled their own territory and were not controlled by the British. The map[38] to the left shows that huge sections of modern day India fell into the category of princely states. The areas in pink represent the British while the yellow areas represent the princely states. As you can see, the over 500 princely states made up a lot of territory. These areas would remain independent up



[38] "Princely States," Military, Global Security, Accessed January 19 2020, https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/india/princely-states.htm.

until India gained its independence in 1947.

First Indian War of Independence, 1857-1858

Indians have resisted British rule since before the British Raj formally began. Indian soldiers were known as sepoys and are shown in the image to the bottom left.[39] In 1857, a sepoy in the Bengal Native Infantry (BNI) named Mangal Pandey shot at British luttenint Baught, but

hit his horse instead. Pandey then attacked Baught with a sword. This act started what would be known as the First War of Independence and inspired uprisings against the British around India, particularly within armies. This is why the First Indian War of Independence is sometimes referred to as the Sepoy Rebellion. Frustrated with British economic control over the region as well as the rapid increase in Christian missionaries trying to convert Hindus, the final straw came when new gun technology required soldiers to bite off the end of cartridges that were rumored to be greased with pig and cow lard. The eating of pigs goes against Muslim religious practices and the killing and eating of cows goes against Hindu beliefs. Indians were already concerned with the rapid pace of Westernization on the continent and this was the last straw. Sepoys and civilians alike took up arms against the

[39] "Indian Troops During the Indian Mutiny," Indian Mutiny in Indian History, Encyclopedia Britannica, https://www.britannica.com/event/Indian-Mutiny.

British. The rebellion was widespread, but ultimately unsuccessful. The British Crown took direct control over India in 1848 immediately after the end of the First War of Independence.

Civil Disobedience Movement

In the 1930s, Mahatma Gandhi emerged as the leader of a second wave of Indian Independence Movements. Born and raised as a Hindu in Western India, Gandhi spent time studying law in London before moving to South Africa to represent an Indian merchant in a lawsuit. He spent 21 years in South Africa, during which time he developed the political views for which he would become famous. In 1915, Gandhi moved back to India and became a member of the Indian National Congress. Formed in 1885, the Indian National Congress was a means of giving Indians some control over their governance while the British still maintained ultimate control. In 1920 Gandhi took over leadership of the Indian National Congress and began increasing his demands to the British. In the 1930s, he led the Civil Disobedience Movement.

Centered around Gandhi's ideals of non-violence, the Civil Disobedience Movement included the Salt March, in which he protested the British monopoly over salt. Britain's Salt Act of 1882 prohibited Indians from selling salt. This forced the Indian people to buy salt directly from the British who both charged high prices and added a hefty tax. This made salt, an essential food product, very expensive. Walking a 241 mile journey from Gandhi's ashram at Sabarmati, near

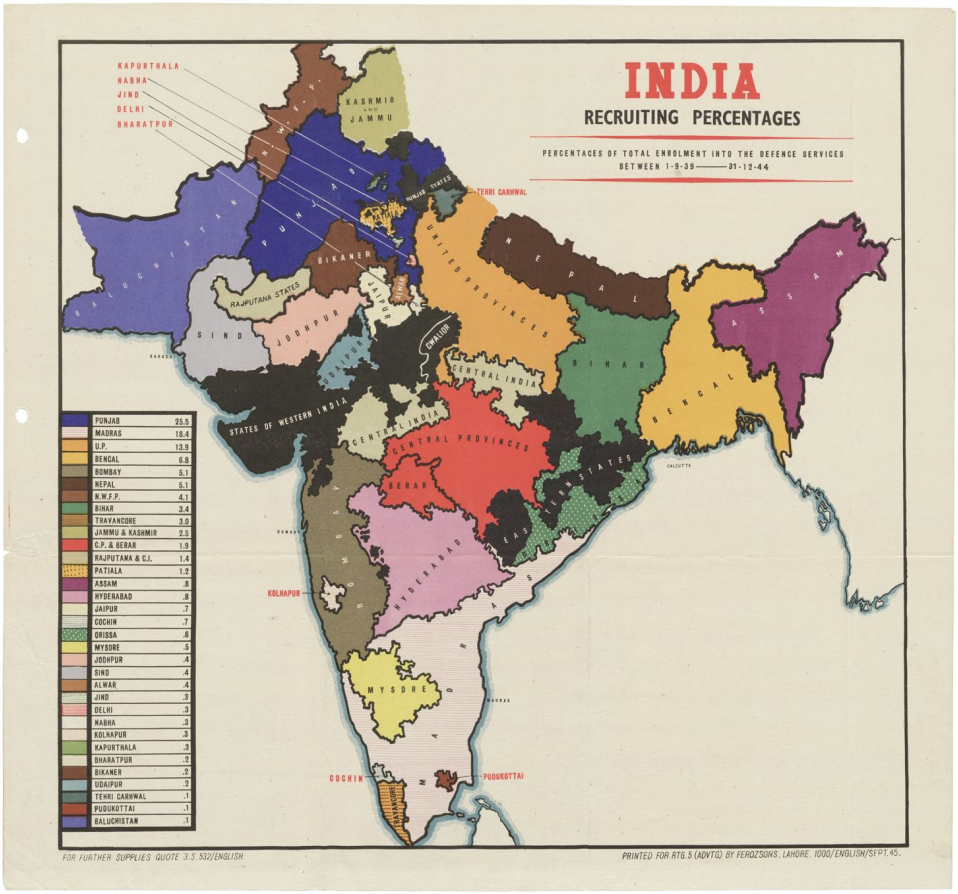
the Northwestern city of Ahmedabad to the sea, Gandhi originally started with 78 followers but this grew to tens of thousands by the end of the journey. After arriving at the sea, members of the march found chunks of natural sea salt. Upon picking them up, they had broken British law. The image to the left shows Gandhi walking during the 1930 salt march.[40] Next to him is Sarojini Naidu, an Indian political activist. This protest gained Gandhi world wide recognition and support for the Indian Independence Movement. He and 60,000 others were arrested in the following year for similar protests.

The Martial Races

Indian soldiers were recruited to both World War One and World War Two as colonial soldiers under the British. India is one of the world's largest countries and has a diverse population. There are people of many different religions, primarily Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, and Budhists. After the 1857 uprising against the British, the British adopted a theory of 'martial races.' The concept of 'martial races' meant that the British believed some groups within India were good at fighting and should be part of the military and other groups were not good at fighting and should not be part of the military. The British believed that regardless of what training soldiers received some were naturally going to be better soldiers. This belief was based on racial theories popular at that time that are now recognized as incorrect. The British government classified each group of people within India as either 'martial' or 'non-martial.' Additionally, this classification of people was meant to represent British perceptions of various groups' loyalty to the British. 'Martial' groups had to be trusted not to fight against the British as they had done in 1857. People of higher caste, those who had the most money and prestige in

[40] "Salt March," Indian History, Encyclopedia Britannica, https://www.britannica.com/event/Salt-March.

Indian society, were deemed ‘non-marital’ and barred from military service. These higher-caste groups are the very same groups responsible for the 1857 uprising. In both World War One and World War Two Britain found itself in need of more soldiers, and they were forced to recruit from ‘non-martial’ groups. Between the wars, these “non-martial” people were relieved from military duty, but once the world wars started the British quickly abandoned this theory in the pursuit of more soldiers. The map[41] above shows which regions of India provided the most soldiers. The area with the highest recruitment is represented on the top of the key while the areas with the highest recruitment are shown on the bottom of the key. The Northwestern region in dark blue is the Punjab region, which made up 25.5% of the army, representing the highest rates of recruitment. The neighboring region of Baluchistan, shown in a lighter blue, has only a .1% recruitment rate.



[41] “Indian Army Recruitment 1939-1944,” The Road to Partition 1939-1947, UK National Archives, accessed January 17, 2020, https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/resources/the-road-to-partition/indian-army-recruitment-1939-1944/.

This shows how varied the recruitment was from one region to the next. This was due mostly to the British theory of 'martial races.'

India and World War Two

During World War Two, Indian soldiers were sent out to fight for the British while British soldiers were sent to India to protect it from invasion by the Japanese. Two and a half million Indian soldiers left India to fight for the British in Northern Africa, Europe, and South Asia. Indian soldiers were also used after the end of the war when the Japanese surrendered the British colonies of Singapore and Hong Kong. Over 85,000 Indian soldiers died during World War Two while fighting for the interests of their colonial rulers. Following the theory of 'martial races,' some groups in India were hit particularly hard, suffering more casualties than other groups. Muslims made up 40 percent of the Indian Army forces, vastly overrepresenting their percentage of the population. During World War Two, Gandhi and the Indian National Congress led another anti-British movement called the Quit India Movement. The Indian National Congress refused to comply with the British in their war efforts until they were granted independence. The members of the Indian National Congress, along with thousands of their supporters, were arrested and the leaders spent the rest of the war in jail.

During the war, the British had concerns that Japan was trying to take over control of India. Japan spread anti-British and anti-colonial propaganda to the Indian people in an attempt to sway the population against the British. The British, so fearful that the Japanese might take India, were found to have destroyed rice and other key supplies needed in India so it would not fall into Japanese hands. The Bengal Famine, which lasted from 1940-1943, was caused in part by this practice. Other causes included the Japanese invasion of Burma which blocked supply

routes. Still, it was widely believed that government mismanagement led to the deadly Bengal

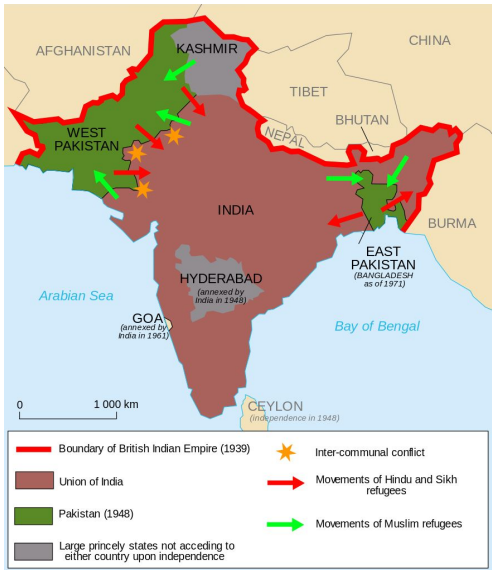
Famine. This famine is estimated to have killed 2-3 million people and is widely believed to have been caused by British wartime policies by the Indian people. The image[42] to the left shows a family of starving Indians in the Bengal region. There are many images like this, and images far worse than this, of the Bengal Famine. The Eastern region of Bengal can be seen on the map[43] below. Shown in green on the left side of the image, Bengal is now split between the modern day nations of India and Bangladesh. Regardless of whether one lived in this region, stories of the famine spread across

the nation. These stories of dying families made British competency look very low. This famine along with the imprisonment of those involved in the Quit India Movement presented a major shift in the mentality of the population. Independence was no longer just a desire, but an inevitable outcome by the end of the war.

[42] "Churchill's Policies Contributed to 1943 Bengal Famine- Study," India, *The Guardian,* https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/mar/29/winston-churchill-policies-contributed-to-1943-bengal-famine-study.
[43] "Bengal Famine," WorldPress, Accessed January 24th 2020, https://navrangindia.wordpress.com/2015/09/06/bengal-famine-of-1943-churchill-masterminded-the-holocaust/.

Independence and Partition

India gained independence after the Parliament of the United Kingdom passed the Indian Independence Act of 1947. This act allowed for an Indian government to be formed which would take over control of the entire territory, including most of the princely states. The Indian Independence Act also allowed for the partition of the British Raj into two new nations: India and Pakistan. Pakistan, making up modern day Pakistan and Bangladesh, was originally one nation split into East and West and divided by India, as can be seen on the map[44] to the left.



Pakistan was to become a Muslim state whereas India was to become a secular state, meaning it had no official religious affilitation. This split prompted the movement of fourteen million people from one side of the border to the other. Muslims from all around India packed up their things and began the journey to Pakistan. Hindus in Pakistan left on a journey to India. This is represented by the arrows on the map. Green represents the movement of Muslims and red the movement of Hindus. Those with the financial means took packed trains, pictured above[45], while millions of others walked.

Groups of refugees as large as ten thousand walked sometimes stretching miles in length.

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[44] "The Partition of India," Brilliant Maps, January 12 2016, https://brilliantmaps.com/first-pakistan/.
[45] "70 Years Later, Survivors of 1947 Riots Remember The Horrors of Partition," Asia and Pacific, Washington Post, August 14th 2017, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia-pacific/70-years-later-survivors-recall-the-horrors-of-india-pakistan-partition/2017/08/14/3b8c58e4-7de9-11e7-9026-4a0a64977c92_story.html.

This movement alone provided an incredibly difficult situation for these new nations. Where would these millions of refugees be housed? What work would they do when they arrived? How would they adjust to a new country they found themselves in which was often in completely foreign climates and run in unspoken languages. Adding to this, violence between Hindus and Muslims sparked on both sides of the border. Muslims killed Hindus on their way to India and Hindus killed Muslims on their way to Pakistan. Trains full of refugees were burned. It is estimated that anywhere from one to two million people died during partition. This history of violence continues to impact the national identities of both nations to this day. Still, even within this history of civilian violence and othering, people on both sides of the border helped protect each other regardless of religion. Countless stories can be found in which Muslims saved Hindus and Hindus saved Muslims. While the violence of partition must be acknowledged and remembered if we want to avoid such horrible human acts in the future, it is important to remember that not all people participated in this violence.

The Kashmir Conflict

Starting in 1947 there were disputes between India and Pakistan over who would rule the North-Western princely states of Jammu and Kashmir. As princely states, these areas were never ruled by the British and instead ruled by a 'maharaja' or Indian Prince. By 1947, the princely states of Jammu and Kashmir had been combined and were under the rule of Maharaja Hari Singh. Singh was a Hindu, but ruled over a majority Muslim population. This led both India, (mostly Hindu) and Pakistan (mostly Muslim) to feel they had rightful control over the region. The region was supposed to have a vote over which nation they would join, but this never happened. After Muslims on the Western border started an uprising against Singh in 1947,

Pakistani troops entered the region to offer support. Singh, upon this realization, requested support from India in maintaining his control. To this day, India and Pakistan continue to fight over the territory. India and Pakistan have gone to war over Kashmir three times. Once in 1947, again in 1965, and again in 1999. In 1949, the UN created the 'line of control' which gave India two-thirds of the land and Pakistan one-third. China also retains a small portion of the land on the Chinese border. The map[46] below shows the entire region outlined in red and the different nations the territory is controlled by in colors. Green represents Pakistan, Orange represents India, and brown represents China. The Kashmir war of 1999 received much international attention, as both Pakistan and India had claimed nuclear power by this time. A ceasefire agreement was signed in 2003, but since then numerous small attacks have been carried out on both sides of the border leading to deaths of civilians and soldiers. In August of 2019, the Indian controlled region was put under lockdown and has since had internet and phone service intermittently shut off. Currently, the Kashmir conflict represents the largest dispute between neighboring India and Pakistan and

[46] "Kashmir Conflict is Not Just a Dispute Between India and Pakistan," Conflict and Justice, Public Radio International, March 5th 2019, https://www.pri.org/stories/2019-03-05/kashmir-conflict-not-just-border-dispute-between-india-and-pakistan.

shows no signs of resolution. Hope for a resolution rests on the ability for these feuding nations to come to an agreement on how Kashmir can finally find peace.

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