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THE INDIAN ARMY BEFORE AND AFTER 1947

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BY MAJOR-GENERAL SIR DASHWOOD STRETTELL
K.C.I.E., C.B.
(Colonel of the P.A.V.O. Cavalry)

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Being the report of a meeting held on January 28, 1948. In the Chair: Lt.-General Sir Adrian Carton de Wiart, V.C., K.B.E., C.B., C.M.G.

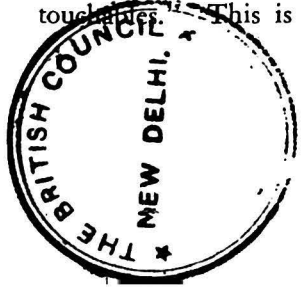
The CHAIRMAN: You all know General Sir Dashwood Strettell. No man can tell you more about India than he can. He has been there for over forty years, and has had many appointments, regimental and staff, serving first on the N.W. Frontier and then on the General Staff of both Northern and Southern Commands, so that he has seen things from different angles. His last appointment was as Director of Demobilization and Reconstruction from the autumn of 1941 for three years—a very important position in view of what has happened since. He is going to tell the story of the Indian Army, and I am sure we will all learn a great many most interesting things.

IT is with some diffidence that I address an audience so well acquainted with India on the subject I have chosen. I therefore crave your indulgence if I give a few personal details which have encouraged me in my effort. There can be few British families who have a longer connection with India since 1780 than mine. My great-grandfather was Advocate-General, Bengal, about 1815. My grandfather and father were in the Indian Army. In the nineteenth century over twenty of my near relations, uncles and cousins, served in India, mostly in the Army, but also in the Forests, etc. My brother and son served in the British Service in India. My wife was an officer in the Indian Army, and I have served in it for forty-four years, and I am still, as far as I know, Colonel of my regiment. In order to try to paint the background I will first say a few words about the main religious faiths of that army; recent tragic events must make us all realize how great a part religion, and alas fanaticism, plays in the hearts of these people. I will then describe the characteristics of the main classes from which the army was recruited. After that I will rapidly sketch the history of the Indian Army from its beginning to this day, give you an outline of the North-West Frontier policy and finally a few words on the future. You will realize that I have a great deal to get through in a short time. The three main religions are Hinduism, Islam and Sikhism. In the time at my disposal I can only attempt to give you a brief outline of the tenets of these faiths, and in doing so I must acknowledge the assistance I have got from *Martial India*, by Yeats-Brown. From this book I have borrowed extensively, and also from Sir William Slim's broadcast.

Modern Hinduism derives from the Code of Manu (A.D. 200), which divided the people into four classes, priests (Brahmins), warriors (Rajputs) and merchants (Vaisyas): all these three belonged to the master people, while the fourth class, the Sudras, were the servants. It is interesting to note that the Sudras were the original inhabitants, non-aryans, now termed the "Scheduled Classes," but generally known as the "Untouchables." This is the class whose case Mr. Gandhi for many years

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so eloquently pleaded, and whom the present Constituent Assembly has "officially" relieved of all its disabilities. From the above four classes have sprung hundreds of castes and sub-castes. Generally, the Hindu believes that every human being is subject to the law whereby the deeds of an individual shape his destiny, and the belief in re-incarnation is held by nine-tenths of the community. Thus for the Hindu there is no escape from the chain of existence, except by becoming a Great Saint. He must work out his individual salvation through a long succession of "lives" on earth. His place in the social scale, while alive, has been chosen by the Gods who govern human destiny, but his place in his next existence depends on his behaviour on earth in his present one. In this life he may rise to be a millionaire, even a Rajah, but he cannot thereby expect to sit at table with a Brahman. Hinduism does not exactly deny democracy, but removes it to another plane: it asserts that we are not equal in this world, but that we are all God's children and that we shall all have "wings"—when we deserve them. From this very sketchy and inadequate attempt to describe the Hindu religion you will recognize that it is really impossible to give a simple description of it. There are so many and varying tenets of faith which a Hindu may or may not believe and yet remain an orthodox member of the community. Almost the only thing that he *must* do is to respect the cow, which in practice means he must not eat beef. Although when a short description of its theories is attempted, the Hindu system appears nebulous, yet to the individual it is an entirely positive creed. People may tell you that it no longer influences the masses. That is not true. Outwardly it may appear to have lost its grip on the urban educated classes, but the faith of the masses is untouched and fanaticism is easily aroused. Let us turn to Islam. There is nothing complex about it. No effort of the imagination has to be made to grasp the basic idea summed up in the creed of a single sentence: "There is no God but God and Muhammad is the Prophet of God." In his life Muhammad had been shocked by the idolatry of the people of Mecca, his birthplace. In A.D. 610 he had a revelation and decided to preach to them, to wean them from idolatry and to lead them to the worship of one God. He disclaimed any divinity, and affirmed he was the medium through which God revealed His commands, just as He had done aforetime through Abraham, Moses and Jesus, all of whom Muhammad acknowledged as prophets while he claimed that he was the last of the prophets. Islam is a brotherhood, and so it is eminently, in theory, democratic. Intoxicants are forbidden and the flesh of the pig is unclean, while meat of any kind can only be eaten if the animal has been slain in a particular way. Prayers must be said five times a day. It is a militant, proselytizing religion, of which about ninety-four million believers live in the Indian peninsula. The Sikhs are a relatively small community of some seven million, who mostly live in the Southern and Eastern Punjab and contiguous Indian States. No man is a Sikh until he is baptized. Theoretically anyone can become a Sikh. Once admitted he adopts the title of "Singh" or "Lion" and maintains five distinguishing marks. He never cuts his hair, he wears an iron bracelet on his wrist, a wooden comb in his hair, a pair of short drawers and a knife called a

“Kirpan.” Until the nineteen-twenties this knife was only a dagger, or even a token, but since then it has become a real sword. Guru, or teacher, Nanak founded the Sikh religion about A.D. 1500 as a reformed sect of the Hindu religion, as a revolt against the caste system, idolatry and the excessive power of the Brahman priesthood. Nine Gurus followed Nanak, and the last, Govind Singh (1675-1706), formed his followers into a religious and militant fraternity known as the Khalsa, principally as a revolt against the tyranny of the Moguls. No Sikh will smoke, even the smell of a cigarette is disagreeable to him, but they are permitted liquor. Originally these tenets were probably laid down to distinguish the Sikh from the Moslem, who does exactly the reverse.

I will now try and describe shortly the characteristics of the more important classes enlisted in the army. Let us start with the Sikhs. In peacetime their fine physique, their athletic prowess, their cleanliness and smart turnout, all attract the British, but they are not easy to command as they revel in intrigue and require a very firm hand. But in war, put them in a hot corner and they live up to their title of “Lion.” In a hospital a Sikh will moan dreadfully over a trifling wound, but in a fight he will go on till his last breath with his battle cry of “Khalsaji Ke jai” as he falls. In modern war he is potentially good material as he has a decided mechanical turn of mind. In a higher sphere the Sikh is a good organizer. Yeats-Brown writes that he has met only two races who equally enjoy fighting, the Sikh and the Gurkha. With that I will turn to the Rajput, who is a high-class Hindu with a military tradition dating back to the dawn of history. The pure-bred Rajput lives in and around the deserts of Rajputana, where he was driven by the Moslem invaders, and he is, for a Hindu, singularly free from caste prejudices, having married Rajput women for centuries. A large branch of this class live in the United Provinces, where they have married frequently with local women. Though a Rajput is so high caste that he raises the woman he marries to his own level, such marriages have had their effect, and the Oudh Rajput is generally darker in colour than his brother from Rajputana and very much more hidebound by caste prejudices. The Dogras are Rajputs who were driven into the valleys and hills of the Himalayas just as their brothers were into the deserts of Rajputana. The Dogras are perhaps the most charming of all Indian soldiers. They might be described as perfect gentlemen. They are easy to deal with, take well to discipline, have little tendency to intrigue, are smart, industrious and excessively clean. They are modest, quiet and unassuming, so much so that they might disappoint a newcomer searching for good material for recruitment, but in war they display unflinching courage and that grand attribute that they are at their best when things are going wrong. Despite their high birth they are rather given to caste prejudice. Garwhalis have racial affinities with their neighbours the Gurkhas, as well as with the Aryan races. They are a hill people, taller than the average Gurkha, but tough and keen on soldiering, smart in turnout and have proved good soldiers. They are rather priest-ridden. Mahrattas come from the Western Ghats of Bombay. They are descendants of the race which ruled half India, and their Princes still rule some of the most important states of Central India. They are sturdy, self-reliant, democratic

and not overburdened with caste prejudice. For some reason, possibly because they were "Down-country," the Mahratta regiments were not looked on by British officers to be as popular to serve in as some others. They have lacked propaganda and advertisement, but they are still as magnificent fighting men as they have proved themselves ever since the days of their hero Sivaji, 1627-80. I remember General Wauchope telling me that an exploit of one of the Mahratta battalions in repelling a Turkish attack north of Tekrit in Mesopotamia in 1918 was one of the finest efforts he had seen in war. The Gurkha is a peasant from the mountains of Nepal, an independent Hindu kingdom of 5½ million inhabitants in the Eastern Himalayas. At the end of the eighteenth century the Gurkhas extended their territory west and into the "Doon." They then clashed with the British and were defeated in 1816 after fierce fighting. In peacetime twenty thousand Gurkhas were enlisted in the Indian Army, but during the late war some hundred thousand were enlisted, and in addition several battalions of their own troops served under us in India. Since 1816 Nepal has been a most trusted ally, coming to our assistance in time of trouble. The name of Gurkha is world famous. One of their regiments, the 5th Royal Gurkhas F.F., earned more Victoria Crosses in the late war than any other regiment in any of our armies. They are tough, brave to a fault, bloodthirsty experts in jungle and mountain warfare, not very intelligent, but very smart in turnout. They are most suited to plain infantry work or parachute duties, but are unlikely to make exceptional mechanized troops. Owing to the policy of their rulers, they are very priest-ridden and subject to caste rules. They like their rum.

As the tide of British conquest flowed north the enlistment of Madrassis became less and less. Owing to the lack of opportunity for fighting, due to the localization in Presidency armies, British officers became loth to serve in Madras units, and, when posted to them, the keenest at once applied for transfer to more fortunate units. The exception to this was the Madras sappers and miners, who served everywhere, and were always looked on as a first-class unit. The material in Madras, however, is as excellent as it was in the days of Clive, when the Madrassi helped to lay the foundations of the Indian Empire. It was Sir Arthur Wellesley who wrote: "I cannot write in too strong praise of the conduct of the troops. The Sepoys astonished me. They have manifested bravery and discipline in action, which are the characteristic qualities of the best soldiers." And he was no mean judge. In the late war the prejudice against the Madrassi was, despite some of our individual efforts, a long time in being overcome, and, when the man-power question necessitated their enlistment, great difficulties regarding language were experienced, as the Madrassi does not understand Urdu, the *lingua franca* of the Indian Army. However, large numbers of them were eventually enlisted and proved themselves worthy of their forbears. A magnificent example of this was given by a Madrassi battery fighting in the Middle East at Bir Hakim, where, though overrun several times, they helped to knock out fifty-seven German tanks, and their major, a Madrassi, a few days later took some mechanized vehicles and, penetrating the German lines, recaptured and withdrew one of his abandoned guns! The Jats are Hindus who come from Rohtak, the area

north of Delhi, and the United Provinces east of Delhi. They are the stock from which the Sikhs came. They are quiet, unassuming men of exceptional physique and good courage. From the Lucknow area come the Hindustani Pathans, who still keep touch with their connections in the north, and if they go through Kohat Pass are even now welcomed as relations. From Rohtak come the Hindustani Muhammadans, descendants of the invaders, and the Rangars, converted Hindus, while from the south come the Deccani Muhammadans. All these classes made good cavalymen in the days of horses, but have never done so well in the infantry, while the Deccani was always difficult to enlist, as he hates serving far from home even in peacetime. We now come to the Punjabi Muhammadan who has been described as the backbone of the Indian Army. They certainly have always recruited well both in peace and war, and head the list both numerically and proportionately. There are many branches of this class, living as they do all over the Punjab, differing in appearance, speech and even in origin, as each tribe roughly represents a separate wave of invasion. They have, however, in common, Islam, also an intense love of their land and stubborn courage. As a rule they are very good looking, proud, inclined to be lazy and not keen on education, religious and liable to be aroused fanatically in times of communal trouble. The Pathan, who lives on the North-West Frontier, is always a Moslem, and although slack in religious practice he is very much under the influence of his priests, or mullahs, and, when roused, is very fanatical. Many are light in colour and European in cast of countenance. Still more are Semitic like the Arab. They are tall, very strong physically, full of adventure, intelligent and have a strong sense of humour. They are experts in raids, guerilla tactics and mountain warfare. As soldiers they lack discipline, which is due to their intense democratic ideas fostered by their tribal customs. Outside the Army they have a blood feud complex, but this is in abeyance while serving. They are always inclined to be treacherous. They are wanderers by nature and go all over the world, have a distinct commercial bent and are good mechanical engineers.

I have tried to tell you about the main classes from which the Indian Army was formed, and you will realize that their very diversity entailed enormous difficulties in recruiting, organizing and maintaining. Race, religion and language introduce complications in administrative problems. Take rations for instance. Some eat wheat, some rice. Some are strict vegetarians, some are meat eaters, and, of the latter, pork to the Muslims and beef to the Hindus are defilement; while for certain classes the animal must be killed in a certain way. You will probably ask which class made the best soldiers. I would answer this question with the words of Sir William Slim: "It is a mistake to ask any officer of the Indian Army which of the many races makes the best soldier. He will invariably reply that, while other classes no doubt have their points for loyalty, discipline, attractiveness and all-round merit, the particular men he happens to command are indubitably superior to any other! Not only will he say it but he will believe it." Civilians, too, think their own province superior to all others. Before going any further I would like to mention a body of troops which did not belong to the Indian Army, but which existed, called

the State Forces. These were paid, equipped and enlisted by the various Indian Princes. They varied in efficiency, and their general training was supervised by a General and staff of British officers and advisers. Certain categories, earmarked for Imperial service, had special allowances from the Indian Government, and were placed at the disposal of that Government in time of war. The remainder were more like armed police. By the end of the war some 250,000 subjects of Indian States were under arms. Sixteen battalions served abroad besides several transport, signal and technical units.

Again acknowledging great assistance from *Martial India*, I must now tell you a little history. With the death of Akbar the Great in 1605 the Mogul Empire commenced to decline. Corruption among officials increased, and the civil administration fell into such confusion that trade could only be carried on under escort. Akbar's great-grandson, Aurangzeb, a bigot and a usurper, became involved in civil war, and when he died in 1707 it was evident that there could not be trade in India without backing by troops, and also that the successor to the Mogul Empire might be anyone who could raise disciplined troops and pay them. In the midst of the anarchy of warring rulers and warrior bands the Honourable East India Company's Service was compelled to undertake responsibilities and military operations on a large scale, and this process was hastened by the French effort to drive out their European rivals. The Indian Army had its origin in typical British improvisation, made to meet local and temporary requirements. Technically, the beginning was the armed guards for the factories and officials, but the Army's real ancestors are the sepoys of South India, who fought under Clive and Wellesley, drawn from races who had, in turn, been conquerors of Hindustan, who had fought each other and the British, and who finally served as volunteers under the British. The first British unit to land in India, the 1st Dorsets, whose motto is *Primus in Indus*, did so in 1754, but at that time British soldiers could ill be spared from Europe, and the experiment of raising native units and training them on European lines was begun by both the English and the French. Clive was actually the first to raise a regular battalion, and it is interesting to note that it was commanded and officered by Indians, but had some British officers and N.C.O.s as advisory staff—in some ways similar to those who, until lately, carried out those duties in Indian State Forces. In time the British replaced the Indians as officers, and the status and prospects of the Indians were thereby much reduced. As a result of all this, during the next century, there were in India three types of units: the King's Regiments, H.E.I.C.S. European Regiments and H.E.I.C.S. Indian units. In 1757 Clive, at Plassey, was outnumbered by more than fifteen to one. The success of his daring attack proved what is a commonplace now, that Indian troops led by officers they trust can hold their own with anyone. By this victory Clive laid the foundation of the British Empire in India, but for fifty years, officering native armies, the French stirred up trouble, and thereby hastened the pace at which British power was forced to advance across the Peninsula. It was Lord Wellesley who first adopted a definite forward policy, and he broke Tipoo Sahib, the Moslem ruler of Mysore, and the great Mahratta Con-

federacy of Central India. The implication of this policy, which finally could have no boundary but the Himalayas and the sea, was very unpopular with the cautious Board of Directors in London and even with the Cabinet. After Wellesley's retirement definite efforts were made to call a halt, but inexorable facts made them of no avail. In connection with this gradual absorption of the Indian Peninsula the following tale may interest you. On the North-West Frontier there is a distinguished local religious ruler called the Wali of Swat. I was talking to him one day, and asked him how it was that every year he managed to absorb a new bit of territory under his sway. His reply was: "Sahib, you know that despite the fact I cannot read, I am a student of history, and I am told that two hundred years ago a people landed in India and captured Madras, and, using local troops, then proceeded to capture Bengal, and then Central India, and so on till they have taken all India. They were the British, and I am humbly following their excellent example." Between 1790 and 1857 the Indian Army extinguished French influence, defeated Tipoo in Mysore, took the Carnatic, entered Nepal (1816), broke the strength of the Mahrattas, twice invaded Burma (1824), and Afghanistan (1840), twice fought the Sikhs (1846), and fought in Sind and Gwalior. Such a catalogue of conquest entailed a great increase in territory under control. In all this fighting the Indian troops were invariably three times the strength of the British. Indeed, at the time of the Mutiny there were 39,000 British troops as against 311,000 Indian, of which 137,000 were in Bengal. What is often forgotten, by British and Indian alike, is that peace in India was imposed by the Indian Army. The British never conquered India themselves: they could not have done so. They conquered it by and with its inhabitants. The direction was British, but the nerves and muscles of the arm of the law were largely Indian. In 1857 came the Mutiny. There had been an accumulation of small grievances over a long period. The Army in the past had had plenty of opportunities for promotion and loot, but now that peace had come these had ended, and it looked as if the money-lender, backed by the law, would be able to extort his interest. The foreigners might attempt to impose their creed while, as mentioned before, the power and prestige of the Indian officers had decreased. In addition, there was general discontent in the Ganges basin, where the deposition of the King of Oudh had alarmed every landlord and disturbed the peasants, while soothsayers had predicted the end of British rule after a century. The actual spark which set fire to the outbreak was the affair of the greased cartridge, the drill of which entailed biting the base, which was greased with a fat containing animal products. I have no time to go through the details of the fighting, which was severe and gave opportunities for many brave acts. There are, however, several facts in connection with the Mutiny and results which are interesting. Many Indians, from Rajah to peasant, stood by the British, and there were countless individual cases where British were succoured and shielded at great personal risk. Madras and Bombay stood firm, as did Afghanistan, Nepal, the Nizam and Patiala. The Indian troops, who fought bravely for us, were mainly composed of those raised in the north, and many of them from the lately conquered Punjab, together with our own faithful allies the Gurkhas.

The suppression ended the fiction of the Mogul rule and consolidated British power. But the most important result of the Mutiny was a drastic change in the social relation between Indians and British. In the early part of the nineteenth century the recollection of the chaos which had preceded British rule was still fresh. The British were not numerous enough to form a purely British society, while the six months' sea voyage tended to make India a second home to the British; indeed, intermarriage with upper-class Indians was fairly common. Most of you who have read Kincaid's *British Social Life in India* will realize what friendly social terms existed between the two races prior to 1857. After the Mutiny the British withdrew into their shell. Moslems were particularly shunned as being representative of the Mogul Empire, the restoration of which had been one of the main aims of the Mutiny, and from that time grew up the social estrangement between the British and Indians which lasted until late years, and which was the cause of many unpleasant incidents in private and public life, and of social exclusion which embittered Indian feelings so much in the last fifty years. On November 1, 1858, was issued Queen Victoria's proclamation, when the British Government assumed charge from the out-of-date H.E.I.C.S., and which placed Indians on an equality with British subjects, but for many years this was more in theory than in practice. The Commission which sat on the Army recommended that, for security's sake, trained Indian troops should not exceed the British troops in India by more than three to one, and Indian artillery was limited to mountain and light units. This proportion was roughly kept in all military stations till after the Great War. There were many changes in the Army as the result of the Mutiny. The European regiments were transferred to the British Army, and many of the Indian units, especially in Bengal, were disbanded and replaced by units recruited from the more recently acquired Punjab and Frontier. The drift of recruitment to the North-West continued until the bulk of the Army was drawn from that area. This tendency was due firstly, to the distrust of the classes which had been mixed up in the Mutiny; secondly, to the confidence in those which had stood by us; and, thirdly, to the organization in Presidency Armies, which were reluctant to serve outside their own area except for actual field service. All this tended to make a distinction, cultivated by many, of the term "Martial Classes," and in time these came, in the minds of most, to be limited to the classes in the north. It was strange how this distinction arose as, after all, we had conquered India in the first instance mainly by the help of units raised in the south. At all times the Madras sappers and miners were universally acknowledged to be a first-class unit, while the Mahratta infantry proved in the first Great War that these men still retained the fighting instinct which had, at one time, made them rulers of all Central India. Practical experience in the late war has quite exploded the myth that Northern India had the *monopoly* of martial races. The result of the Presidency Army organization did, however, have a distinct effect on the efficiency of their units. The lure of the Frontier and possibilities of active service there led to the keenest British officers applying, on joining, for direct appointment to Punjab units, while those who failed to get these applied for appointment to the famous Punjab

Frontier Force, or to Gurkha battalions, the appointment to which lay in the personal hands of the Commander-in-Chief in India. By the end of the last century this had become most marked. Another legacy of the Mutiny was the tendency for units to be given a mixed constitution. Such units were normally organized in separate companies and squadrons of Hindus and Moslems, with the idea that they would be less susceptible to religious prejudice and intolerance, while such an organization would tend to security against seditious tendencies. There have, however, in addition to the block of Gurkha battalions, always been certain units composed of one class, almost invariably Hindu. Although there had been for some time a Commander-in-Chief in India, it was not until 1895 that the Presidency Armies were amalgamated into the Indian Army, and the Presidency nomenclature was changed to that of "Command" instead of Army. Despite the improvement in organization, location of units was still based on schemes necessitated by the claims of "internal security." Units were located in station commands, sometimes in single unit stations, and in the event of expeditions units were hurriedly collected from all over the country into brigades, and then commanders and staffs nominated for the occasion. A bad result of this system was that only the Punjab and Frontier units had war experience in their normal duties. When Lord Kitchener came out as Chief in 1900, with a mandate to reorganize the Indian Army, he saw the weakness of this lack of war organization and at once, and at considerable expense, he carried out a large scheme of reorganization into brigades and mobile divisions composed roughly of one-third British and two-thirds Indian troops. It was thanks to him that in 1914 India was able to send divisions to France, without whose help we could with difficulty have held the line at the beginning of the war; while without Indian troops we could not have carried out our campaigns in Asia and Africa at all. After the first Great War there were the usual economies in the Army and several units were disbanded—*e.g.*, the Indian Cavalry reduced from forty-one regiments, raised on the silladar or yeomanry system, to twenty-one regular regiments. Between the two wars there was a considerable increase in efficiency: the human material was, as before, excellent. The sepoy was generally of the yeoman farmer class owning and, when not soldiering, working his own land, while the profession was followed from father to son. It was at last recognized by the authorities, what had long been recognized by regimental commanders, that education was vital to the modern soldier. This had been adopted, with some reluctance, by A.H.Q., as they were nervous lest education might lead the soldier to become politically minded. Regimental education, previously financed entirely from unit funds, was now assisted by Government, enabling considerable improvement not only to help the men themselves to qualify for promotion, but children's schools in unit lines were encouraged. An Indian Wing of the Army School of Education came into being so as to train instructors for units. The fund raised in commemoration of the Silver Jubilee was utilized to start three K.G.R.I.M. schools at Jhelum, Jullundur and Ajmere for soldiers' sons, where they were educated very cheaply or, in the case of sons of men killed on service, for nothing. The boys were nominated by units with a view to

enlistment in the unit in the case of those who did not attain the standard set for commissions. The Indianization of the Army was made an accepted policy—*i.e.*, the replacement gradually of the British officers by specially trained Indians. Before this a few Indians had qualified at Sandhurst, but this was only possible for those with means, and to enable the scheme to come to fruition the Indian Military Academy was opened at Dehra Dun. Originally the Indianization of only eight units was authorized, the idea presumably being to test the method out. In a few years it was obvious to most of us that the "Eight Unit" scheme was out of date, and at a big Committee held in Simla a few months before the beginning of the late war, I pressed strongly for a large increase in the scope of the scheme. The Army upper hierarchy did not view my action with great favour. However, when war broke out the matter settled itself. It would have been better if it had been settled several years previously, and then we should have avoided the serious shortage of regimental officers of medium service which I shall allude to later. By the middle thirties many British officers began to press for mechanization of the Indian Army. There was, of course, considerable controversy over this. The old-fashioned officers shook their heads and said that the Indian soldier would never be a satisfactory mechanical soldier, much less would he be able to maintain his machines satisfactorily. However, many of us, especially in the Cavalry, utilized our regimental funds to get men trained for what, to us, was obviously their future rôle. In 1937 the Chatfield Commission investigated the whole question, and made definite recommendations for mechanizing the Army, much of the cost of equipment to be borne by the British Government. However, war broke out before any of the programme had been put into effect, so that with the exception of one or two armoured car units the Indian Army entered the Great War with only a small amount of mechanized transport. With this great exception the Army was trained to a higher grade than it had ever been before. By 1945 the fighting troops and services of India numbered nearly $2\frac{1}{4}$ millions, and it must be remembered they were all volunteers, the greatest volunteer army in history, while to equip it had strained the resources of the whole Empire. One remarkable corps which was raised, about which little has been said in England, was the W.A.C.(I.). In 1942 the shortage of clerks had risen to 18,000, and as my own Directorate of Demobilization and Reconstruction was in its infancy, I was asked to organize a Women's Auxiliary Corps and control it for the first six months. After considerable trouble in the legal aspect I got it launched in April, 1942, and was told by senior Finance and Civil officials that in any case it would be a flop, and that I would not get five hundred in all, and no Indians. In five months' time I had raised nearly two thousand, including two hundred Indians! and it eventually reached over ten thousand. It carried out exactly similar duties to those carried out by the A.T.S. in the British Army.

The scale of production in material and equipment made in India, and supplied to the Forces there and abroad, has never been fully recognized by those who live outside India. Compared with the paucity of means at the outset of the struggle the output was colossal. It

was not only in numbers or equipment that the Indian Army was great, but in achievement also—and it was there when especially needed. Indian formations were the spearhead of Wavell's victories in the Western Desert. They were the majority in Eritrea and Abyssinia in 1941. In the same year they played a leading part in Iraq, Syria and Persia in a campaign to secure strategic security in the Middle East and to quell German-inspired risings and even invasions. Little has been told of this, but it had a very vital influence on the general strategy of the war. In our fighting retreat in Burma Indian troops fought magnificently, four divisions fought in North Africa and Italy, and General Slim has paid tribute to the gallantry of the Indian and Gurkha troops which preponderated in the successful advance of the Fourteenth Army. It was in the Burma campaign that the idea that Indians could not maintain mechanized vehicles received its quietus. The armoured units entered the campaign with already worn-out vehicles, took them over the stupendous country in all kinds of weather, and then went on to Malaya and Java. To give you an idea of the variety of theatres in which this army fought I will quote the "Odyssey" of my own regiment, the P.A.V.O. Cavalry F.F. They fought under Wavell, and earned fame in breaking out at Mekili, when surrounded, with the rest of their brigade. Still part of a motor brigade, they were overrun at Bir Hakim, where they helped to knock out fifty-seven tanks. They fought back to Alamein in Auchinleck's retreat. They returned to India and were converted into an armoured regiment, and took part in the whole of the advance in Burma. They were again converted, into tanks, landed in Malaya with the rest of our forces, and finally went to Java.

As it affects the past, present and future, I must touch on the problem of the North-West Frontier. From Chitral in the north to Baluchistan in the south lies an area inhabited by tribesmen. In Baluchistan, owing to a system of tribal chieftains, but also because here the Afghan and Indian administrative borders coincide, control is not difficult. Similarly, in the extreme north are three Indian States, Chitral, Dir and Swat, ruled by Indian princelets who have fair control. South of these states—north and south of the Kabul river—and as far as Baluchistan, is a large area, between the Afghan frontier and the Indian administrative border, called the "tribal area," where our suzerainty was acknowledged and treaties governing relations existed, and as long as they behaved themselves with regard to our administered territory the tribes governed themselves. The Sikh policy was to maintain troops along the border and punish raid by counter raid. This came to be called the "close border" policy. When we took over in 1846 we followed the same policy, and the famous Punjab Frontier Force was raised and held the border, with the exception of Peshawar, where special arrangements were made in view of the Afghan threat and the necessity of guarding the Khyber in strength. Lord Curzon, who separated the Frontier Provinces from the Punjab Government, initiated a policy of tribal militia corps with British officers, the idea being to utilize the fighting instincts of the tribesmen and give them employment in controlling the area. After the first Great War considerable risings took place in Waziristan, and when these had been quashed the policy was adopted of locating regular garrisons in a few strategically placed canton-

ments in that area, and connecting these with good modern roads, while the tribesmen were enlisted in irregular corps under the Political Department. It cannot truthfully be said that any policy has been completely successful. From 1846 till now have been sporadic raiding and numerous expeditions. The whole problem is economic. Sufficient crops cannot be grown in the area to support, even in a small degree, the tribal people. Their whole history has been to exist by raiding into the fertile plains, by kidnapping fat Hindu merchants for purposes of ransom, or by levying toll on the large caravans which go through the various passes into India. Some means must be found to provide the people with food and the men with employment. We have attempted these jobs, indirectly, by contracts for roads, etc., in the area, and, directly, in subsidies to the various sections of the tribes, and by enlistment of some hundreds of scouts. No system of "Danegelt" is ever really satisfactory, there is always a demand for increases; but what is the solution? The tribes are definitely a potentially dangerous threat. They can muster some 500,000 fighting men with nearly as many rifles. They are adepts at raiding and guerilla warfare; they are brave, physically fit and treacherous; while their miserable villages are of no strategic importance to a punitive force. Military operations as carried out by us, especially of late years, have been hampered by the growing realization that these men are our fellow-subjects, and that punishment should be leniently carried out—an impossible military task. My own view has always been that we should, at all costs, have largely extended our road system so as to enable, if necessary, rapid penetration by troops while, at the same time, we should have endeavoured to develop the country—in fact, to carry out the policy which brought the Highlands into order. It would have cost money, but it would have been worth it. Since August, 1947, the tribes come under the Pakistan Government, and, on the grounds of expense and religious feeling, it was inconceivable to my mind that that Government would continue to maintain troops in the area. Indeed, we have already heard that they have withdrawn troops and handed over control to local levies. This, in fact, means a reversion to the "close border" policy, and the consequent difficulties arising from raids. That difficulty must arise as, whether the hillmen have a few rich Hindu money-lenders as an attraction, or whether they are wholly Moslem, the tribes must raid in order to live; while it is more than doubtful if Pakistan can buy any respite by paying subsidies from her bankrupt till. The incursion of tribesmen into Kashmir shows unpleasant possibilities for the future. The future looks pretty grim. Economically there seems to be little prospect of a solution, while militarily a more ruthless use of the air than we could authorize might have temporary results, but that is not a pleasant thought.

With the political situation so confused it requires some boldness to predict the future; however, I will try and suggest to you some of the problems confronting Pakistan or India, or both. As I told you, the outbreak of the world war caught India in a difficult situation as regards officering her units with her own nationals. Those officers who had been trained at Sandhurst were few in numbers, but by the end of the war a few had risen to the rank of brigadier and several had held headquarter

staff appointments with success. The Indian Military Academy cadets were, as I have explained, a drop in the ocean to supply officers and to replace casualties, and suitable candidates for the enlarged academy were difficult to find. The gaps were, to a large extent, filled temporarily by gentlemen of the British mercantile community. By the end of the war many of these emergency Indian officers had done good work, but by the nature of things they are very young and have little experience of administration or peacetime training of men, which latter you will realize is no easy job, even for a man who has led troops in war. In both armies of the new Dominions, there are only a few Indians fit for the higher positions, but that is a difficulty that time will overcome. What is serious, very serious, as General Slim pointed out, is the shortage of the officers of middle service, say from ten to twenty years, to replace the ordinary British regimental officer—that is to say in general, men who, though unlikely, most of them, to rise to the highest positions, are an essential part of any army; officers imbued with a high spirit of duty who will, as the old regimental officer did, identify themselves with their men and, what is more important, always think of their men first; officers who are happy in carrying out their duty and who do not look on their profession *only* as one in which they will gain big monetary rewards. To my mind this is the greatest military problem of both Dominions—*i.e.*, to get the type in sufficient quantity. No army by itself can produce them. They can, as Sir William Slim says, only come from a high standard of integrity and ability in the general life of their country. The division of the old army into two parts, a necessity due to political changes, has caused many headaches. The original idea to divide up the ordnance factories has, fortunately, been abandoned and the factories stay in India, who provides funds for Pakistan to erect her own; but in the meantime Pakistan is entirely dependent on India for ordnance stores, ammunition, guns, etc. Nearly all administrative and technical units were mixed in composition, and will require practically to be reconstructed. The provision of fighting units for Pakistan has been very difficult: there were no wholly Moslem units, so in order to give Pakistan her share of one third to one quarter of the Army it meant breaking up the units with mixed composition. It is obvious this will cause unsettled conditions in these units for some time. This breaking with the past has been a sad affair to the British officers concerned, steeped as they were in great traditions. I am not so sure that the Indian officers in these units feel this so much. Few of them have served long in the units. New transfers, due to partition, have little interest in unit tradition; while there is a tendency to desire rather to create new traditions than to dwell on the past, wrapped up as it is so much with British rule. Nationally, and in the long run, these may be correct, but it is unfortunate for the present. India, which has many "one class" units, does not suffer so much in this way in the transition stage as Pakistan does.

Let us now look at the larger military picture. India has a fairly simple problem. The problem of internal security, as we know it, should no longer exist, and it is hoped that any situation will be dealt with by the police. It is hoped that it will not be necessary to provide frontier protection against Pakistan, though this may have to be done temporarily. In-

vasion from the north is covered by Pakistan; invasion from the sea is unlikely for some time. Consequently the Indian Army can be limited to such highly trained brigades and divisions as are considered necessary to back up her Government's foreign policy or deal with the unlikely case of invasion from overseas. In the division she has got more than twice the strength of Pakistan in Troops, Navy and Air Force. Pakistan, on the other hand, has a more difficult situation to face. There is always a possible threat of "major" invasion from the north. There is always a definite problem on the North-West Frontier which, say what the



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Moslem League can, must necessitate a grouping of sufficient troops to deal with raids. At present she will have to furnish troops on the inter-Dominion Frontier. She has no factories for guns, ammunition, etc., until she has built them, which will take time, and has no surplus stores to replace or maintain herself, which renders her tanks and aeroplanes pretty unserviceable. In East Bengal she has a large population, many of whom showed misdirected courage in seditious enterprises in the past, but from whom no troops have been enlisted for a hundred years, and it is unlikely she could raise and train troops from there to be efficient for

many years. Her officer problem is even worse than that of India, as Moslems generally are less well educated than the others. It is true that Pakistan possesses in the north, generally, the most physically strong peoples from which to recruit, and for the moment proportionately the larger reserve of demobilized men. It must be remembered, however, that in modern war physical development of the individual is not so necessary in a mechanized army as in the one which marched on its feet. A good, well-educated city man, who has his heart in the right place, is as efficient in an aeroplane or armoured vehicle as a larger man of ruder muscle, and he might be easier to fit in; while technicians are more easily obtained from cities than from the pure agriculturists. For these reasons the more highly industrialized India has perhaps more scope for enlistment in a modern army than the less educated, less industrialized Pakistan. I have, as far as possible, kept off politics, but I must end on that note. From every point of view, except a purely communal one, the division into two Dominions was tragic. It was forced on the British Government by the uncompromising attitude of Mr. Jinnah. It necessitated the division of the Punjab, which we all feared would mean the terrific communal tragedy that has taken place. A United India, based on the modified Cabinet Mission plan, would have given security for minorities, kept Bengal and the Punjab undivided, saved duplication of administration, and simplified provision for defence of all kinds. Alas, it was not to be! Massacre has been the result, and, what is perhaps worse, the rousing of a bitterness between the two Dominions which will take years to assuage; and as long as such bitterness exists and division is maintained, the way of an "aggressor" is simplified.

The CHAIRMAN : I have one question myself. What is the arrangement about the Gurkhas?

LECTURER : Under the new arrangements eight battalions, the 2nd, 6th, 7th and 10th regiments, are going to be placed under the British Army, and the remainder are going to India. Previously the rule had been laid down that no Indian should command Gurkhas, but that has been waived now and the Gurkha battalions will be commanded by Indians. I am not certain how it will work. One extraordinary thing is that the 5th Royal Gurkhas have not been taken into the British Army. It was the only Royal Regiment, and had more V.C.s than any other. I should have thought it would have been posted to the British Army, but other reasons prevailed to prevent this being done. These Gurkha battalions will be located in Malaya. I have not heard anything, one way or another, as to how they will feel about it, but I should doubt whether the Gurkha is keen to go to Malaya. In peacetime he lived in India. If he had family troubles—this was the usual reason for asking and granting leave—he could hop off home. But if it is a question of going to the Commanding Officer and getting a passage to Madras or Calcutta so as to attend the funeral of his father, you can imagine that sometimes he will not have much chance of getting leave. So I am not sure the Gurkha will be any too keen on going to this show. I don't think I have anything more to say.

The meeting then closed with a vote of thanks to the lecturer.

