INTRODUCTION
The Indian Army seemed a splendid asset: hearts warmed at the sight of those dusky lancers, gaudy as jungle birds, who trotted beside the viceregal carriage, and at the thought of British and Indian brothers-in-arms with mule and mountain gun carrying peace up the valleys of the North-West Frontier. The squeal of the bugle, the crunch of ironshod ammunition boots on the dusty road, red coats and khaki, turban and topee, tents under a sky of brass—it was in these terms, touching the heart rather than the critical intelligence, that the British tended to see the power which they believed India gave them.


1.1. *The problem*

The academic and lay subject of the Indian army if not the Indian armed forces as a whole is known even to those who tend to frown upon *military history* as an old fashioned and outdated discipline. Generally speaking, and unlike Indian historical sociology, the study of the Indian armed forces also appears unaffected by contemporary international developments in the discipline of military history. This has happened despite the fact that a well established history of the several aspects of the Indian army in, what Heathcote appropriately calls, its "classical period" is perhaps as old as many of the more famous Indian regiments. However this dissertation is neither conceived as an over-ambitious narrative expounding an authoritative 'total' history of the colonial Indian armed forces nor as a specific monograph pouring over the details and "facts" of particular regiments or battles. Comprehensive titles can often be quite misleading.

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1 Indian regimental histories with a tidy historical focus abound and a list of these is present in Roger Perkins, *Regiments of the Empire: A Bibliography*, Devon, 1989. The following comprise a corpus of praiseworthy general accounts of the Indian army in an historical perspective. Philip
for it is indeed impossible to compose a dissertation on the history of the Indian armed forces as they stood and were moved in the first fifty years of this century without committing historiography to enormous errors of interpretation.

We continue this introduction with the assertion that regiments are no longer the centre of historiographical or even military attention in an age where the thought and practice of war is dominated and controlled by computerised warfare. In fact several authors have noticed the drawbacks of the regimental system and Barnett has even called it an outdated eighteenth century institution unsuited to conditions of modern warfare. In the view of critics the regimental system narrows the vision in an army, creates avoidable diversity and at the same time ceases to be an operational unit\(^2\). This may sound rather extreme but in the context of an increasing dichotomy between conventional and modern warfare in the 20th century characterised by the diminishing importance of the infantry it has a point which seems to have been missed by most of the writing on the Indian

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army. Here probably history is blissfully on the side of continued regimental valorisation because the regimental system of the Indian army has rarely, if ever, been seriously tested in a prolonged war after 1945. Earlier even during the Great War and more so the Second World War only major departures from the existing system of recruitment and organisation enabled India and her normally Frontier bound armed forces to participate in these wars. In contemporary modern India the regiment, viewed widely and rather anachronistically as the sacrosanct nucleus of the army, is also cultivated and sheltered by ideology and it is difficult to be openly critical of the armed forces in a republic where praising the military has become an essential ingredient of prevalent social discourse and the sentiment of nationalism. To begin with, our movement away from the regiment towards the context of the twentieth century is attentive to these broad historical factors and is sustained by the indisputable fact that in real terms the days of the romanticised Frontier, shikar, pig sticking, polo and the cavalry had come to an end much before 1914. The end of the Great War ushered the system of the Indian armed forces into an era of official and nationalist criticism a study of which reveals the most important contours of British military policy in India. Our dissertation tries to sketch these contours and examines their relation with the Indian armed forces between 1919 and 1945. Furthermore, and significantly, this is done with reference to the important indices of British colonial over-extension
evident in India between 1919 and 1945. This introduction also has a brief comment on the concept of over-extension placing our themes in perspective and a section outlining the chapters of this dissertation.

1.2. The background of over-extension

All studies concerned with the late colonial Indian armed forces will profit by a reference to the most crucial military aspects of British strategy and colonial history in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The most important and almost holistic by implication amongst these was the multi-dimensional crisis of the British Empire which seized the typically archaic British world of colonies during the inter-war period leaving British power at its nadir. The decline of British Imperialism cast a gloom not only over its contemporary apologists several of whom searched in vain for prescriptions to stem the rot but also the historiography documenting it. Thus after taking into account the essential ponderables of the British economy between the wars the great Marxist historian Eric Hobsbawm calls inter-war Britain a lost ship: "Never did a ship founder

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3 After the Second World War and specially during the 1970s and 80s military history has become more integral and its focus has shifted towards the broader socio-economic context of the armed forces as well as war. Arthur Marwick, War and Social Change in the Twentieth Century A Comparative study of Britain, France, Germany, Russia and the United States, London, 1974, offers a 'four-part analytical framework' for the historical sociology of war comprising a study of destruction, the test of society under war, the effects of social participation in war and the psychological ramifications of war. A re-statement of the model is found in the more recent A. Marwick (ed.), Total War and Social Change, London, 1988, esp. introduction. The Fontana 'War and Society' series creates an eclectic discipline. For a refreshing interaction of war, politics, society and economy see the following: G. Best, War and Society in Revolutionary Europe, 1770-1870, Fontana, 1982; V. G. Kiernan, European Empires from Conquest to Collapse, 1815-1960, Fontana, 1982 and Brian Bond, War and Society in Europe, 1870-1970, Fontana, 1984.
with a captain and crew more ignorant of the reasons for its misfortune or more impotent to do anything about it." Scholars position the genesis of this crisis in the nineteenth, and in British terms the Victorian, century. Let us examine some relevant aspects of it in the following paragraphs.

The dominant official British military doctrine and strategy in the nineteenth century was underpinned by a long term naval supremacy over European rivals and had evolved into fairly rigid looking principles towards the beginning of the twentieth century. After collecting and analysing sources pertinent to large areas of warfare and the general British direction of war historians given to differing pursuits have confidently, and often in agreement, asserted that between the late eighteenth and the closing decades of the nineteenth century despite the rising economic and military strength of some of her imperialist rivals Britain's naval supremacy remained largely un-challenged but for the Napoleonic interlude. A survey of global naval history in the nineteenth century also makes us hold that a widespread belief in British naval pre-eminence bordering on an apparent invincibility was also bolstered by the fact that between 1850 and the First world war major naval battles connected to the Nelson legend were not fought. In such visible military comfort much of effective British strategic thinking was not only dominated by the politically influential

Admiralty but was also naturally informed by the real and often fantastically conceptualised sea power and naval supremacy of Pax-Britannica\(^5\).

Traditional British strategy was also underlined by the peculiarities of Britain’s geographical and colonial position and domestic socio-political conditions. The expansion of franchise, a growing social aversion to conscription and the press gang and a small army set the scene in which Indian reserves, the Cardwell system\(^6\) and the navy played roles which were often exaggerated in British consciousness. The neatness of the British way was predicated upon historical factors pertinent to the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In the first instance came the assertion of naval supremacy with the threat of a successful naval blockade against a Continental challenger like France. After this came the financing and helping of coalition wars against rivals seeking to disturb

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\(^6\)The Cardwell System of the 19th century was designed to provide a permanent garrison for India which normally constituted one half of the British Regular Army. The system provided a balance between units of the British Army inside and outside Britain so that drafts to the latter could be regularly replenished and troops rotated. Over time it was found that the system worked to the benefit of overseas garrisons at the cost of the units at home. According to Bond, *British Military Policy*, p.100, by the 1920s the Cardwell System was creating and not solving more problems.
the balance of power in Europe. This usually meant a limited Wellington style continental commitment by conscripted British expeditionary forces in Europe. In the colonies usually the cost of war was thrust upon the colonial governments, resources and manpower reserves whereas the resident units of the British army formed supportive, and countering, garrisons. The success of this British imperial strategy was based on several factors such as a favourable balance of power in Europe, the industrial, commercial and naval supremacy of Britain over her major rivals, adroit diplomacy and the easy availability of colonial reserves including troops controlled and led by British officers. In the period being discussed while Britain’s continental liability remained generally small the British intervened vigorously in Asia and Africa largely with the help of overseas resources and the colonial wars probably strengthened the belief in sea power for after all the quick deployment of troops and their movement across continents was based on the British dominance of the major international sea lanes. All this was and remained for long the traditional way of British warfare.

It was in the second half of the nineteenth century that weaknesses in this otherwise formidable looking military arrangement began to surface. Writers contend that the British preference for appeasement, especially after the Crimean war, reflected these weaknesses in the imperial chain of assets. At least one influential author maintains that the official British tradition of appeasement can be traced back to the 1860s. Accurately stated the policy of appeasement meant
the settling of "international (or, for that matter, domestic) quarrels by admitting and satisfying grievances through rational negotiation and compromise, thereby avoiding the resort to an armed conflict which would be expensive, bloody, and possibly very dangerous"."7

Given the changing nature of the British state in the nineteenth century this may well have been true. But appeasement, a maligned word in British history, stayed with Britain till 1939 and can be interpreted as being symptomatic of the deeper undercurrents of the changing British military position between 1850 and 1950. British policy emanated from a context in which war increasingly appeared unprofitable. Over a century Britain had become the centre of world commerce and her most important stakes lay in trade with exports from the Empire playing a crucial role in the metropolitan balance of payments. Major confrontations and long wars tended to harm this political economy enmeshed in a complicated imperial-colonial grid and investing heavily in trade, insurance and shipping. This was the predicament of Empire which in combination with factors of domestic history such as rising social welfare and a public opinion against war created the context in which the 'guns vs butter' debates of the twentieth century took place. Writers like Hobsbawm, Barnett, Gamble and Kennedy have shown with impressive credibility how and why in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century the gradual relative decline of British industry set in. Indeed even before

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7 Kennedy, *Strategy and Diplomacy*, op.cit., p.16.
the "Victorian economy of Britain crashed in ruins between the two world wars". The process of leasing out defence to Japan in the East and the United States in the West had begun. Gamble blames a "fundamental loss of will in British ruling circles" for the inability of the British to resolve their strategic dilemma at the beginning of this century. The outcome of the Great War proved that Britain was no longer a dominant world power and signalled the rise of the United States.

We have examined the notion of sea power elsewhere but since the notion of the expeditionary force was intimately linked with the concept of sea power a resume is called forth here. By 1815 the British had created a vast overseas empire based on naval and industrial supremacy but the global implications of a really effective naval power had been realised by British statesmen during the second half of the eighteenth century. Though the 'command of the sea' began to be understood in this period the transition from the obsolete Fighting Instructions of 1691 to Kempenfelt and Howe's revised Fighting Instructions of 1781-82 occurred slowly and we have no evidence to suggest that colonial naval forces

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8 Industry and Empire, p.207.
9 Gamble, Britain in Decline, pp.58-9.
like the Bombay Marine used these instructions\textsuperscript{11}. However it is clear that despite the varying nature of warfare preceding the industrial revolution in the eighteenth century official British policy began to consciously aspire for some degree of consistency as far as supremacy on sea was concerned. Retrospectively speaking the concept of sea power belonged to the century in which British financial and trading interests began to promote the conviction, which later on became a naval orthodoxy, that "maritime commerce and naval power were indissoluble".\textsuperscript{12} In the late eighteenth and most of the nineteenth century the Royal Navy reigned supreme on the seas while the British oceanic hegemony was helped by the conquest of almost all the important ports in Asia and Africa. Seemingly this instilled tremendous overconfidence in the British officialdom and the rather cavalier East India Squadron of the Royal Navy kept in India was a token of this feeling. Ironically in the long run this unprecedented success finally added to the undoing of British security and for much of British thinking and history this hegemony bred an illusion of permanence. Though a prosperous Victorian Britain sheltered behind a formidable navy appeared safe chinks were beginning to appear in her armour. While several historians have identified the weaknesses creeping upon the Empire in the late nineteenth century Graham has

\textsuperscript{11} D.B.Horn and Mary Ransome, \textit{English Historical Documents 1714-1783}, vol x, London, 1957, pp.579-80, 605-08: In the 18th century the English learnt a lot from the mobile French fleets and what Eldin said in his Essay on Naval Tactics, 1782, was true of the era: "To be completely victorious cannot always be in our power; but, to be constantly baffled, and repeatedly denied the satisfaction of retaliation, almost on every occasion, is not only shameful, but, in truth, has been the cause of all our late misfortunes".

\textsuperscript{12} Graham, \textit{The Politics of Naval Supremacy}, p.18.
substantiated a trend of military economies, matching the history of appeasement, stretching from the 1830s to the twentieth century. The naval superiority of Britain in this period was itself partially responsible for generating these economies and retarding the growth of military science in Britain:

Exchequer on broad naval strategy tended to be considerable, if not paramount. Admiralty Lords during the latter half of the nineteenth century tended to accept the Foreign Office aphorism - let satisfied dogs sleep. Bases, like overseas squadrons, were therefore at the mercy of Treasury hatchmen. While Singapore and Bombay could flourish as great commercial entrepots on the main lines of traffic, in an age of comparative peace strictly naval installations like Simonstown or Trincomalee had become anomalies. Indeed the popular absorption of Free Trade principles seemed to have had a soporific effect on military thinking. Englishmen, in the opinion of Admiral Owen, were becoming careless of strategic values. Britain's supremacy at sea was indisputable; India was safe; Simonstown could be left to the care of the Colonial Office, and Trincomalee to the encroaching jungle.

Between the Crimean and the Great War technological developments began to transform the meaning of strategy and sea power. The military importance of railways grew and trains afforded generals a continental command over land off-setting sea power. Mobility over land, first due to trains and then by the motorisation of entire infantry divisions allowed for rapid movement and timely concentration of fighting formations to repulse any invasion mounted from the sea. In general and military technology, staff training and strategy the Germans

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13 *The politics of Naval Supremacy*, pp.57-8.
registered an impressive advance. While the road to Dunkirk was being laid
generals like Moltke felt justifiably confident of dealing with any serious landing
within twenty four hours. This seriously exposed the limitations of the
'expeditionary force' concept and sketched the backdrop of the awesome
demonstration of land power witnessed in France during the summer of 1940.
While land power was demonstrated in the wars of German unification, in the
twentieth century air power, specially after the Great War, quickly became a
substantial chapter of national strategic thinking in Europe.

Our effort is not designed to suggest that Britain and Britons did not
respond to these changes but often responses were late and between 1870 and
1939 time and resources for the British empire ran out. The Great War exposed
the economic limitations of an unevenly developed colonial empire and the
military and strategic drawbacks of an over-dependence on sea power. Signifi-
cantly the War also demonstrated the hiatus between Britain's strategic interests
and her economic and ideological capacity to attain them. Above all modern
warfare, which also meant that carrier based fleets had to develop in relation and
tandem with land and air power, required the support of a vigorous, versatile
and innovative industry. Large areas of the British empire including India were
industrially primitive and in exclusive military terms had become liabilities by the
turn of the century. In the century of total war this meant weakness not strength.
Even in terms of thought the British lagged behind. While the Afghan experience
and the Boer Wars of the late nineteenth century taught important lessons to those willing to learn, by and large throughout the 1920s official strategic doctrine in Britain remained distinctly negative. The British and by implication Imperial defence effort in this period was governed by the Ten Year Rule\textsuperscript{14} and the 'peace hypothesis' and this combined with persistent economic problems caused an irreparably far reaching military decline. The Two Power standard for the Royal Navy, originally adopted by Salisbury's cabinet in 1889, had already been subjected to several modifications before the Great War. Finally the war imposed burdens heavy enough for Britain to abandon the Two Power standard in favour of a One Power standard\textsuperscript{15} in 1920. But naval decline was only the symptom of the general malaise setting in and during the 1920s and 30s the British position on the major international issues clearly stated that "there was still a wide gap between a statement of principles and an acceptance of the implications of those principles in practice"\textsuperscript{16}. The Admiralty often grumbled against the official line of retreat for obvious reasons but large scale naval expenditure, as in the case of the colonial services, was hard to come by in the troubled 1930s. In this context what Brian Bond writes about the British Army in his exceedingly well researched

\textsuperscript{14} A rule adopted by the Imperial policy makers in 1923 according to which defence preparation was to be planned on the assumption that there would be no major military conflict in the ten years following the year in which decisions were taken.

\textsuperscript{15} The Two Power standard had meant that the Royal Navy be as strong as the two largest navies below it. The One Power standard implied parity with only the next best navy in the world.

\textsuperscript{16} Norman Gibbs, 'British Strategic Doctrine 1918-1939', in Howard (ed), \textit{The theory and practice of war}, op.cit.
book on British military policy was probably true of the whole British empire between the wars: "Although the Army's character between the wars was greatly influenced by external circumstances such as political indifference and lack of money for new weapons and equipment, nevertheless it seems reasonable to maintain that the Service remained primarily responsible for its own style of life and morals. Like most armies at most times it was conservative but with a strong element of the reactionary apparent in its deep rooted reluctance to adapt to both technological developments and changes in the society in which it lived. The Army's profound attachment to horses, for example, though admirable in terms of sentiment, was professionally costly in a world increasingly dominated by the petrol engine."17

In the 1930s Britain tried to tackle the emerging realities of international rearmament by falling back on treaties aimed at limiting the arms race and gaining time. But diplomacy was no substitute for economic and military power, the 19th century could not be repeated and the situation had become alarming enough for the Chiefs of Staff to note with concern in their annual review for 1937 that the British Empire was threatened at both ends by strong military powers and "only very great military and financial strength could give the Empire security."18 However despite warnings, which had been coming since the begin-

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ning of the century, policy changes occurred very slowly. In 1932 the Ten Year Rule was revoked and when the Nazis came to power in Germany Britain's "rather palsied military stance was the result of thirteen years of untroubled international security and the imperatives of budget balancing to maintain economic stability". In British history the 1920s and 30s were marked by pacifism and a "draconian disarmament" which existed at the expense of the armed services. In July 1935 a Defence Policy and Requirements Committee was appointed to suggest a rearmament programme but effective and real arming began only after the war broke out. Imbalances in granting funds and pursuing aims between the services remained important for there simply wasn't enough for everyone. For instance between 1934 and 1939 the R.A.F. was preferred over other services in resource allocation in a move to counter the highly over-rated bombing range of the Luftwaffe. While strategically the balance swung round to air power within the Empire the importance of the island metropolis was clear and "when financial restrictions later became unavoidable, expansion for overseas commitments was sacrificed in the interests of the metropolitan force".

To sum up the 1930s in British imperial history we must look at the works of Barnett, Bond, Gibbs and Shay. Barnett has evocatively described the 1930s as

19 Shay, British Rearmament, op.cit., p.19.
20 Brian Bond, British Military Policy, p.27.
an "era of covenants without swords" for Britain while Bond calls the inter-war years a "period of contraction, fragmentation, and uncertainty". Gibbs goes far enough to blame the entire British nation for the decisive failures of the 1930s:

"The British people as a whole failed before 1939 to understand the implications for their national strategy of those changes in the world balance of power which had been developing over the past two generations." In 1939 the immediate future of the colonial armed forces was indeed bleak due to the "bankruptcy of the whole defence effort", of Britain:

The financial restraints limited the level of expenditure on arms, while the organisational restraints, which prohibited intervention in the private sector of the economy, limited the Government's ability to increase arms production, and made it virtually impossible to insure that the resources available for defence were put to optimal use.

It was this Victorian decline spread over almost a century and the experience of the Great War which laid down the historical context of the British military policy followed in India during the years between the two world wars.

1.3. The chapters

The British and Indian perspectives on reform of the armed forces, the

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prevalence of retrenchment in the inter-war period, the questions of Indianisation and modernisation, the stasis and then change in recruitment due to the demands of war and finally the grim realities of demobilisation are those salient features of the history of the Indian armed forces between 1919 and 1945 with which this dissertation is concerned. The first three chapters of this thesis analyse the policy and process of reform, retrenchment, Indianisation and modernisation affecting the Indian armed forces in detail. Chapter four scrutinises the intricacies of military recruitment in India with a specific focus on recruitment during the Second World War and the change it brought about in the Indian services. Chapters five and six study the history of demobilisation of the Indian armed forces firstly after the Great War and secondly after the Second World War respectively. Finally chapter seven places the themes of British policy studied in this dissertation in the perspective of over-extension and decolonization.

The story of the modern Indian armed forces dates back to the nineteenth century when the Indian sub-continent was systematically disarmed in the British quest for a monopoly of state power and Indians were divided and classified into the martial and non-martial races. The three Presidency armies established in the eighteenth century experienced changes over the nineteenth century but the greatest transformation occurred in the Bengal army which after the Mutiny, and following the Peel and later the Eden recommendations, was re-organised with
a new emphasis on 'divide and rule' in the British interest. In 1895 the Presidency armies were integrated into a single army under a unified command. The Indian Army was later formally reorganised into the nine divisional commands and its regiments were re-numbered under the leadership of Lord Kitchener who was the Commander in Chief in India between 1902 and 1909. In the late nineteenth and the early twentieth century the ideological orthodoxy of the martial races reigned supreme over the official military mind and the young British subaltern alike while recruitment languished among the so called non martial peoples of India. The Great War led to some changes but while Cohen's favourable account of the Indian army has shown these to be temporary Bond is totally dismissive of them. The continuity of nineteenth century thought and practice in the army is also substantiated in other sympathetic works by V. Longer, P. Mason and B. Farwell (1974, 1974 & 1989) cited earlier. However the trend of appreciative history writing continues and is reflected in the fact that Cohen's view has not been tempered even after the Sri Lanka blunder in the revised 1990


version of the much read *The Indian Army*. In sum general histories praise the army agreeing at the same time with the question of the nineteenth century policy and discourse feeding into the twentieth in the Indian army whereas regimental histories very predictably look for continuity in socio-geographical recruitment, tradition and valour\(^\text{27}\).

From the viewpoint of this thesis it is important to note that India assumed a new geo-political significance for the British empire in the inter-war period and perceptive British officials appreciated this fact. Indian troops and agricultural supplies were also evaluated as useful war potential probably more seriously by the old fashioned despite 'Tory' assertions to the contrary\(^\text{28}\). International factors like the consolidation of the USSR in the 1920s and the growing Axis threat of the 1930s also made India militarily more important to Britain's strategic posture in the East albeit the latter was rarely reflected in the policy decisions affecting the Indian services. The domain and expansion of modern Indian military history must be placed in this context and the discipline will profit by concentrating on

\(^{27}\) Adulation of the Indian Army sometimes assumes amusing proportions. For instance S.D.Pradhan, 'Indian Army and the First World War', in DeWitt C. Ellinwood & S.D. Pradhan (eds), *India and World War I*, New Delhi, 1978, p.65 fails to note the temporary nature of change in the Army during the Great War and consequently claims that by 1939 it, "had become capable of fighting against European armies without the assistance of any of the services of the British Army"!

\(^{28}\) Marwick, *War and Social Change*, p.6, identifies four main categories of "serious historical writing" on the effects of war i.e. tory, liberal, economic and sociological although strict divisions like these cannot, in our view, be made. For example Barnett, *The Collapse of British Power*, passim, evinces a low opinion of Indian resources in the late colonial period.
the fact that even the official appreciation of India's changed position in the Empire after the Great War did not bring about large increases or modernisation in the Indian armed forces. This is documented in chapter three of this thesis. In sum the chapter argues that the specificities of the Indian military establishment became an index of arrested development in the 1930s.\textsuperscript{29}

The account of the official appreciation of military reform in India in the 1920s is narrated in chapter one of this thesis. The reform scheme contemplated after 1918 was predicated largely upon the experience of the Great War and the changing international position of the British Empire after it. Significantly the opening chapter also demonstrates why and how the economic limitations of the Raj put paid to large scale military reform in India in the 1920s. We also contend that before reform could be put into practice London and Delhi had to arrive at a politically difficult and militarily acceptable agreement with regard to some crucial reform related issues. In short the chapter looks at the mentality and limitations of reform and the economic and political factors to which it conformed in the disturbed and troubled 1920s. The official statement of reform was enshrined in the sweeping though historiographically under-examined Esher Committee Report a brief resume of which is given below. It must be added here that the pattern of post-war reform and retrenchment in India followed the

process initiated in England where, after the mutinies arising out of demobilisation, in 1919 a Committee on the Organisation of the After War Army under the Chairmanship of Lt. Gen. Sir Alexander Hamilton-Gordon was set up. Later in 1921-22 drastic reductions were recommended by the Report of the Committee on National Expenditure better known as the Geddes Report or Geddes Axe after Sir. Eric Geddes, Chairman of the said committee.

The Army in India Committee Report (1920), also known as the Esher Committee Report (ECR), in some ways can be regarded as the reference charter of reform-related British military policy in India after the Great War. The Esher recommendations were spread over nine parts with two separate minutes by its Indian members Sir. Krishna Gupta and Sir. Umar Hayat Khan. While part I of the report contained the basic principles of the recommendations the subsequent parts dealt with other important matters and administrative details. The drawbacks of the Esher Report are explored in some detail in chapter one of our dissertation but to begin with we must state that the Esher Committee had avoided framing its recommendations in a spirit which was inconsistent with the gradual approach of India towards Dominion Status. On the other hand it was

30 Bond, British Military Policy, pp.20-21, tells us that protest and mutinies arose in the British Army soon after the War. There was a full fledged mutiny at Calais [27-31 Jan., 1919]. Remedial measures including the peaceful dissolution of the armies of war were swiftly taken by Churchill who became Secretary of State for War & Air in Jan. 1919. The situation had become very serious as morale and discipline plunged due to the combination of natural though "unrealistic" expectations of many soldiers, the proliferation of Communist propaganda and the threat of large scale strikes by the working classes.
also clear to the Committee that it had to proceed on the basis of existing institutions and conditions in India in 1919-20 and this deference for tradition bred some internal contradiction in the Esher recommendations. On the whole in pursuit of a "sound Imperial military system" the Esher Committee made three crucial recommendations. Firstly the Committee advocated greater control of the Government of India (GOI) over Indian military affairs. Secondly it wanted the GOI to be given a voice in questions of Imperial defence. Thirdly, and probably to balance the preceding suggestion, it wanted the Imperial General Staff through its Chief to exercise "a considerable influence" on the military policy of the GOI. It goes without saying that the third recommendation, which seemed to replace the India Office by the Imperial General Staff in policy reckoning, became the most controversial in India after the submission of the Esher Report. Beside this and among other things the Esher Committee made important recommendations regarding other aspects of military organisation in India such as the setting up of an advisory Military Council, the importance of decentralising the command system, the general improvement in service conditions, the setting up of a 'Kitchener College' to encourage the Indian Viceroy's Commissioned Officers (VCO), the instituting of an Indian Sandhurst and the further development of the Royal Indian Marine.

Chapter one shows why the Esher recommendations, with their limitations, were largely wasted in the 1920s. Furthermore other developments in the first half
of the twentieth century proved that the intellectual and material world of the nineteenth century which corsetted the Indian services was totally incompatible with the demands of modern warfare. This happened because the modernisation of the existing military establishment between the wars was related at least to the successful social reform, if not a complete transformation, of the armed forces. At the heart of this was the question of Indianisation on which the Raj and its discourse were besieged by the Indian nationalists soon after the Great War. Since the Esher recommendations did not incorporate a clear and firm committment to Indianisation and the attitude of the authorities inclined towards a betrayal of the war-time promises made to Indians the nationalists launched a spirited campaign to achieve an accelerated Indianisation of the Indian army in the 1920s. Consequently during the spectacular Indianisation debate of the 1920s the nationalists not only threw the Raj on to the political defensive but in the process also developed a lasting critique of its highly partisan recruitment policy. In practical terms for the Indian armed forces it must be pointed out that insufficient Indianisation between the wars and the growing reluctance on part of the young Britons to join the Indian army, or for that matter the British army, created a severe shortage of officers in the Indian army on the eve of the Second World War. Chapter two comprising an intensified examination of the British policy of Indianisation and the Indian respone to it studies all this while advancing the theme of reform into the 1930s.
While chapter one and two delve into the social reform of the Indian armed forces and the British policy followed towards it in the 1920s and 30s chapter three contains a study of the modernisation of the Indian services in the inter-war years. In doing so it brings British military policy face to face with over-extension in India in the inter-war period. It critically comments upon a variety of policy matters related to the much needed refurbishing of the Indian services. Among other things the chapter studies the economic climate underpinning policy and processes in the 1920s and 30s. Chapter three also incorporates a study of the modernisation related Chatfield recommendations which immediately preceded the Second World War. On the whole the chapter suggests that some factors aborting the reform drives of the 1920s were also simultaneously active in stalling modernisation. The chapter has collectively described these factors as the legacy of the 1920s.

Chapter four on recruitment scrutinises the theory and practice of military recruitment followed by the British upto 1939 in India and evaluates the experience of the Great War before moving on to observe some changes in British policy and the armed forces during, and due to, the Second War. The chapter also explores the 'martial races' theory in detail and, on the basis of interpreting the caste handbooks of the Indian Army, suggests that despite the experiences of the Great War recruitment theory and practice in India remained unchanged till 1939. Also included in the chapter is a study of the propaganda, political dynamics and the socio-economic context of wartime recruitment. Chapter four contends that
the pressure of mass recruitment swept away the martial races concept in practice and brought into the Indian armed forces new recruits with new expectations which were certainly not easy to satisfy after 1945.

Chapter five and six peruse demobilisation, the final policy theme of our dissertation which first appeared on the official agenda after the conclusion of the Great War. Chapter five highlights the process of demobilisation which followed the Great War. It also emphasises the debate between the Home and Finance Departments of the Government of India with regard to the matter of adequately rewarding the soldiers returning from the War. The chapter brings up the question of discontent in the Indian army as a result of the inadequate demobilisation programme followed in the 1920s. In studying demobilisation in the 1920s the chapter also underlines the economic limitations of the process and the influence of Nationalist propaganda on disaffected soldiers. After comparing the demobilisation process of the 1920s with demobilisation in the late 1940s the chapter asserts that the British were alarmed at the widespread discontent which had emerged in the Indian Army towards the end of the Great War as a large number of returning soldiers increasingly felt betrayed by the British.

Chapter six studies the demobilisation process following the Second World War. It must be noted that the process of only partially successful demobilisation during the late stages of the war and the immediate post-war era was overshadowed first by the omnipotent economic question and later by the Indian
National Army (INA) issue which was in turn characterised by widespread nationalist protest. In the upshot the armies of War in India were demobilised haphazardly in an atmosphere inconducive to Indian expectations which, like those of the British Army after the Great War, had risen to unprecedented heights in 1945. This fuelled discontent on a large scale. The case of services like the Royal Indian Navy (RIN) which has been examined in great detail in another part of this M.Phil/Ph.D. programme and the Royal Indian Air Force (RIAF) and the sympathy the INA commanded in the Indian army in general proved how the failure of demobilisation combined with a multitude of service grievances and racial discrimination in the Indian services to create a very dangerous situation for the Raj in India even as the Transfer of Power and Partition were progressing. In the ultimate analysis demobilisation was yet another field related to the Indian armed forces in which British failures were apparent. The rather unsuccessful demobilisation and resettlement of the armies of war in 1945-46 in India only lent an air of credibility to the predictions of farsighted officers like Cariappa:

When the war is over; when we have settled with the Axis Powers once and for all, and have put them in their proper places, this vastly expanded Indian Army will have to be brought down to a reasonable size compatible with the requirements of defence. There will therefore be thousands of men, who are not professional soldiers, being demobilised. On demobilisation it is not within the practical ability of ANY Government in this world to provide suitable jobs to every one of these demobilised soldiers immediately. There will be the inevitable ‘disease’ of unemployment with its attendant discontent. This will indeed be a very serious problem to the authorities concerned later UNLESS everyone concerned gets
down to tackling the problem seriously NOW. [Emphasis as in original]31

Chapter six investigates how and why the British policy of demobilisation and resettlement failed after the Second World War. It also emphasises the fact that the volunteers of 1939-45 were different men compared to the enlisted peasants of 1914-18. But even if all the recruits participating in the Second World War had been peasants it is doubtful whether the fast disintegrating Raj could have satisfied their land hunger in 1945. The failure of demobilisation, like the drawbacks of Indianization and modernisation demonstrated the inability of the Raj to properly manage one of the most important Indian military matters in the 1940s. Soon after the Second World War military factors in combination with the political scenario of 1945-46 led to an erosion of British hegemony in the Indian services. This aspect of Indian history is touched upon in the conclusion of this dissertation [Chapter seven]. Chapter seven also ties up the leading issues of British military policy with decolonization and over-extension to finally present the themes of this dissertation in a better theoretical perspective.