

A Descriptive study on the world war and freedom struggle of India



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Abstract

The current study examines the diasporic networks of Indian revolutionaries that were forming on the cusp of the First World War from a worldwide viewpoint. It focuses in especially on the three major hubs of its operations, namely London, New York, and Tokyo. The three cities that acted as the institutional umbrella organizations for the revolutionary plans are the focus of the story. Finally, a short outline and analysis of the political alliances formed and ideological resources used in these three contexts are provided. The case study emphasizes two points: first, it is crucial to broaden historical analysis beyond India's borders in order to fully understand the emergence of Indian nationalism during this first peak in globalization; and second, the existence of the sophisticated transnational anti-imperial propaganda networks that are the subject of this study casts doubt on the First World War's purported watershed status as the event that irrevocably changed the imperial world. It is said that 1905 was at least as significant in this sense.

Keywords: world War, Indian Nationalism, diasporic dimensions

Introduction

This second part of a two-part series on India's involvement in the First and Second World Wars is now available. In the first part, we mentioned how the continuing remembrance of the First World War's centenary sparked attention around the globe, including in India. Indian historians have created fresh works in an effort to explain the conflict to later generations of Indians, who often had little knowledge of "the fight to end all wars." In especially in India, the contribution of India to World War I has received little attention. This is primarily due to the traumatic effects of colonialism on the Indian people.

The Second World War is comparable in this regard. Indians now see these two battles quite differently than do Americans. For us, the closest thing to a "just conflict" was World War II. It was only a struggle between right and wrong. The axis nations engaged in harshness and blatant aggression, whereas the allies stood for all that was just and noble. In many respects, World War II was a struggle for civilization for Americans.

World War II was not an easy time for Indians. This is so because during the war, India remained a British colony. The British authorities anticipated that Indians would eagerly join the conflict. Similar to what it had done during the start of World War I, the colonial authority promised Indian assistance for the war effort without addressing its colonial people.

But after 1918, India has seen significant development. In the 1920s and 1930s, a significant nationalist movement arose. The Indian National Congress (INC) was transformed by Mahatma Gandhi into a widespread movement from an exclusive parlour party. The peasant masses of India, who had been left out of the nationalist discussion, were become active participants. Indians of all socioeconomic groups resented British control, and a strong desire for independence developed that had not been there before World War I.

With the exception of a few radical thinkers, the concept of Indian independence was unimaginable during World War I. The end of British control in India was becoming more apparent by 1939. By the end of the conflict, the Indian populace had come to the conclusion that Britain would have to leave. The INC represented India's nationalist ideals and was the biggest party there. The INC's top leaders first believed that Britain would agree to an Indian takeover of power in return for Indian support of the war effort.

The British colonial authorities, however, stuck to its outdated practises. The Viceroy and the Indian Civil Service, among other British officials, continued to believe that India was not yet ready for self-rule. They kept pushing back Indian independence because they believed it would take a very long time to happen. The

more overtly imperialistic group, led by Winston Churchill, who would become prime minister, continued to entertain the idea that Britain might dominate India eternally.

The Indian nationalist leadership proposed a date that would be assured for Indian independence as soon as the axis was defeated, but the British rejected it. The Indian populace was exposed to the British's views. They believed that Indians would put winning first and put aside nationalist aspirations for the time being. Conflict and resentment were the results of this intractable division. That would taint Indian perceptions of the time of the conflict.

Our two volumes examine the war years from many angles. Srinath Raghavan's book *India's War* examines India's involvement in World War II from a political, economic, and military standpoint. By studying the first-person narratives of Indians who lived through this time in history, Yasmin Khan's *India at War* humanises the conflict. Khan fills in the historical record by describing the experiences of India's civilian people, even though he spends a good amount of time retelling the experiences of Indian troops and sailors. The two books work best together. You will obtain a comprehensive view if you read them in order.

Both publications place emphasis on the fact that Britain unlawfully exacted a high price from India. Long utilised in colonial battles throughout the British Empire, the Indian Army's main priority in 1939 was putting down tribal uprisings in Northwestern India. The Indian army had 194,373 soldiers when World War II began in October 1939. The Army's total size at the conclusion of the conflict was 2,065,554. 1 During the battle, the Indian Army would lose 89,000 soldiers.

The Army has been drawing recruits from a collection of "martial races" based in Punjab, Rajasthan, and the Himalayan area for nearly a century. The British Army has seen many generations of young men from the same families enlist. Indian enlisted soldiers (sepoys), who were mostly uneducated and recruited from villages, were raised with a generational allegiance to the Army, the Empire, and the King. This small pool of potential recruits was swiftly depleted by the Army's fast development, prompting the British to look far outside of India. The lowest socioeconomic classes, the untouchables (now known as dalits), and tribals were among the "non-martial" groups that the Army allowed as recruits. These groups included those in Bihar, South India, and other places. Most of these new recruits, who had little to no devotion to the British Empire, joined the Army to escape poverty.

Furthermore, the rate of mobilisation swiftly outran the Indian Army's capacity to organise and equip the additional units. At the start of the conflict, the British Army was unable to repel Axis assaults and faced loss everywhere. As a result, the British swiftly sent Indian soldiers to several battles around the Empire. Indian soldiers were sent to Iraq, Persia, the Middle East, West Africa, and North Africa to combat Italian and later German forces and to stop a pro-German military clique from seizing control in Iraq. The Indian troops in the European theatre of the war had early challenges and losses but eventually became effective and battle-hardened. They would contribute to the defeat of Rommel's Afrika Korps and the retaking of Sicily, Italy, and North Africa.

The Indian experience in Southeast Asia, on the other hand, would be disastrous. In a series of engagements in Malaya, Singapore, and Burma, the Japanese swiftly routed significant numbers of Indian soldiers. The Japanese accepted tens of thousands of Indian soldiers as prisoners, and the beleaguered British forces fled in a horrifying manner across Burma to safety in India. Nobody in India could have predicted that Japanese soldiers would be stationed along the Indian border at the beginning of the war. The failure in Asia, according to the writers, was largely the result of ineffective British leadership, a lack of a plan, inadequate logistics and equipment, and British underestimate of Japanese military might. The Indian armies in Asia were characterised by a pervasive feeling of betrayal. For what reason the Indian troops were fighting was unclear. Many Indians first believed that the Japanese were fellow Asians and not adversaries of India. Indians were swiftly disabused of these beliefs by the violence and hostility of the Japanese. In order to prepare for an attack to defeat the Japanese and reclaim lost territory, the allies invested years in developing Indian military capacity inside India. Political stalemate between the INC and the British colonial authorities culminated in the 1942 "Quit India" agitation. The British were given an ultimatum by the INC: either grant independence or prepare for a peaceful resistance effort. The INC leadership was taken into captivity by the British and spent the remainder of the war there, putting an end to the Quit India campaign. The younger generation in India became more resistant to British authority as a result of being persuaded that Britain's time had come. Radical nationalist groups actively resisted, committing several acts of sabotage. Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the leader of the Muslim League, regarded this as a tremendous opportunity. The League sought to fill the void created by the "non-cooperating" INC and decided to work with the British and support their war objectives. The partitioning of British India into the present states of India and Pakistan resulted from this sowing of future divisions.

Subhas Chandra Bose, an Indian nationalist, supported the Axis and urged for an armed uprising in India. He hoped that Japan would liberate India from British tyranny and that the allies would lose the war. He created the Indian National Army, or INA, which eventually had 46,000 soldiers. Bose thought that the INA would lead a Japanese invasion of India, sparking a popular uprising there. This group was staffed by expatriate Indians residing all across the area as well as disgruntled Indian POWs who were kidnapped in SE Asia. The Japanese very grudgingly consented to let the INA take part in the Imphal Offensive into India from Burma in 1944 because they never thought it had any real military worth. An Indian Army that had been revitalised and rebuilt responded to the Japanese attack. It ended up being a disastrous loss for both Japan and the INA, and it marked the beginning of the end for Japanese aspirations in SE Asia. The Indian people had come to understand that India was no longer under danger and that the Allies would win World War II by this point. The Indian uprising crumbled as the end drew near, and Indian forces rejected the INA and actively took part in the allied reconquest of Asia. Indians experienced significant anguish during World War II as a result of the widespread economic upheaval it brought about at all tiers of Indian society. The allies used India as a massive supply hub. India served as the base for hundreds of thousands of allied soldiers from a range of nations, including the British Empire, the UK, the United States, and China. India was used as a logistical base for the supply of Chinese nationalist troops as well as the war effort in the Middle East and Asia. India was one of the world's poorest nations at the time. India has suffered greatly under colonial control for over 200 years. Ninety percent of the populace was trapped in abject poverty. India had a 12.5% literacy rate and a 26-year life expectancy before the start of World War II.

Conclusion

The purpose of this paper is twofold. First, it has made an effort to shed light on a sometimes overlooked aspect of the Indian independence fight during the decade just before the start of International War I by examining its global dimensions, or, as the prevailing phrase had it, "the world forces" that influenced it. This project placed a special emphasis on the network-building techniques used by the small elite of diasporic radical Indians.

It has been shown how they created an effective and closely connected anti-imperial network spanning three continents in a matter of years. The original core group in London, led by Shyamji Krishnavarma, the "godfather" of radical diaspora nationalism, successfully disseminated its political propaganda (centred on its journal *The Indian Sociologist*) throughout the world. They did this by skillfully utilising the most recent technology in communication, travel, and mass media. Through the establishment of Indian revolutionary

cells throughout North America and East Asia, the organisation also succeeded in expanding its influence. As we've seen, it's noteworthy that "India Houses" were established in New York and Tokyo since it demonstrates how the approaches and institutional arrangements used in London served as the model for initiatives of a similar kind throughout the globe. Indian revolutionaries made no effort to organise the people in any of the three host societies or the Indian labour diaspora groups. They believed that a small, intelligent, and (as paradoxical as it may sound) "transnational-nationalist" revolutionary elite would be sufficient to bring about political change through the formation of tactical alliances, concerted lobbying, and ideological appropriation from other anti-imperialist organisations. Looking more closely at the actual contents and implications of these ideological loans from diverse groups that are often not addressed within the framework of Indian nationalism might be a fruitful study for the future. They could only be sketched out very briefly in this study due to space limitations.

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