

CHAPTER V

WEAKENING OF THE DEFENCES

How will the creation of Pakistan affect the question of the Defence of Hindustan? The question is not a very urgent one. For, there is no reason to suppose that Pakistan will be at war with Hindustan immediately it is brought into being. Nevertheless, as the question is sure to be raised, it is better to deal with it.

The question may be considered under three heads : (1) Question of Frontiers, (2) Question of Resources and (3) Question of Armed Forces.

I

QUESTION OF FRONTIERS

It is sure to be urged by the Hindus that Pakistan leaves Hindustan without a scientific frontier. The obvious reply, of course, is that the Musalmans cannot be asked to give up their right to Pakistan, because it adversely affects the Hindus in the matter of their boundaries. But banter apart, there are really two considerations, which, if taken into account, will show that the apprehensions of the Hindus in this matter are quite uncalled for.

In the first place, can any country hope to have a frontier which may be called scientific? As Mr. Davies, the author of *North-West Frontier*, observes :

“It would be impossible to demarcate on the North-West of our Indian Empire a frontier which would satisfy ethnological, political and military requirements. To seek for a zone which traverses easily definable geographical features; which does not violate ethnic considerations by cutting through the territories of closely related tribes; and which at the same time serves as a political boundary, is utopian.”

As a matter of history, there has been no one scientific boundary for India and different persons have advocated different boundaries for India. The question of boundaries has given rise to two policies, the "Forward" Policy and the "Back to the Indus" Policy. The "Forward" Policy had a greater and a lesser intent, to use the language of Sir George Macmunn. In its greater intent, it meant active control in the affairs of Afghanistan as an *Etat Tampion* to India and the extension of Indian influence upto the Oxus. In its lesser intent, it was confined to the absorption of the tribal hills between the administered territory (i.e. the Province of N.-W.F.) and Afghanistan as defined by the Durand Line and the exercise of British control right up to that line. The greater intent of the Forward Policy, as a basis for a safe boundary for India, has long been abandoned. Consequently, there remain three possible boundary lines to choose from: (1) the Indus River, (2) the present administrative boundary of the N.-W. F. P. and (3) the Durand Line. Pakistan will no doubt bring the boundary of Hindustan Back to the Indus, indeed behind the Indus, to the Sutlej. But this "Back to the Indus" policy was not without its advocates. The greatest exponent of the Indus boundary was Lord Lawrence, who was strongly opposed to any forward move beyond the trans-Indus foot-hills. He advocated meeting any invader in the valley of the Indus. In his opinion, it would be an act of folly and weakness to give battle at any great distance from the Indus base; and the longer the distance an invading army has to march through Afghanistan and the tribal country, the more harassed it would be. Others, no doubt, have pointed out that a river is a weak line of defence. But the principal reason for not retiring to the Indus boundary seems to lie elsewhere. Mr. Davies gives the real reason when he says that the

" ' Back to Indus ' cry becomes absurd when it is examined from the point of view of the inhabitants of the modern North-West Frontier Province. Not only would withdrawal mean loss of prestige, but it would also be a gross betrayal of those peoples to whom we have extended our beneficent rule."

In fact, it is no use insisting that any particular boundary is the safest, for the simple reason that geographical conditions are not decisive in the world today and modern technique has

robbed natural frontiers of much of their former importance, even where they are mighty mountains, the broadest streams, widest seas or far stretching deserts.

In the second place, it is always possible for nations with no natural boundaries to make good this defect. Countries are not wanting which have no natural boundaries. Yet, all have made good the deficiencies of nature, by creating artificial fortifications as barriers, which can be far more impregnable than natural barriers. There is no reason to suppose that the Hindus will not be able to accomplish what other countries similarly situated have done. Given the resources, Hindus need have no fear for want of a naturally safe frontier.

II

QUESTION OF RESOURCES

More important than the question of a scientific frontier, is the question of resources. If resources are ample for the necessary equipment, then it is always possible to overcome the difficulties created by an unscientific or a weak frontier. We must, therefore, consider the comparative resources of Pakistan and Hindustan. The following figures are intended to convey an idea of their comparative resources :—

Resources of Pakistan

Provinces	Area	Population	Revenues*
			Rs.
N.-W.F.P . .	13,518	2,425,003	1,90,11,842
Punjab . .	91,919	23,551,210	12,53,87,730
Sind . .	46,378	3,887,070	9,56,76,269
Baluchistan . .	54,228	420,648	. .
Bengal . .	82,955	50,000,000	36,55,62,485
Total . .	288,998	80,283,931	60,56,38,326

*Revenues include revenue raised both by Provincial Government in the Provinces from provincial sources and by the Central Government from Central revenues.

Resources of Hindustan

Provinces	Area	Population	Revenues*
			Rs.
Ajmer-Merwara	2,711	560,292	21,00,000
Assam . .	55,014	8,622,251	4,46,04,441
Bihar . .	69,348	32,371,434	6,78,21,588
Bombay . .	77,271	18,000,000	34,98,03,800
C. P. & Berar . .	99,957	15,507,723	4,58,83,962
Coorg . .	1,593	163,327	11,00,000
Delhi . .	573	636,246	70,00,000
Madras . .	142,277	46,000,000	25,66,71,265
Orissa . .	32,695	8,043,681	87,67,269
U.P. . .	206,248	48,408,763	16,85,52,881
Total . .	607,657	178,513,919	96,24,05,206

These are gross figures. They are subject to certain additions and deductions. Revenues derived by the Central Government from Railways, Currency and Post and Telegraphs are not included in these figures, as it is not possible to ascertain how much is raised from each Province. When it is done, certain additions will have to be made to the figures under revenue. There can be no doubt that the share from these heads of revenue that will come to Hindustan, will be much larger than the share that will go to Pakistan. Just as additions will have to be made to these figures, so also deductions will have to be made from them. Most of these deductions will, of course, fall to the lot of Pakistan. As will be shown later, some portion of the Punjab will have to be excluded from the scheme of Western Pakistan. Similarly, some portion of Bengal will have to be excluded from the proposed Eastern Pakistan, although a district from Assam will have to be added to it. According to me, fifteen districts will have to be excluded from Bengal and thirteen districts shall have to be excluded from the Punjab. Sufficient data are not available to enable any one to give an exact idea of what would be the reduction in the area,

* Revenues include revenue raised both by Provincial Government in the Provinces from provincial sources and by the Central Government from Central revenues.

population and revenue, that would result from the exclusion of these districts. One may, however, hazard the guess that so far as the Punjab and Bengal are concerned, their revenues would be halved. What is lost by Pakistan by this exclusion, will of course be gained by Hindustan. To put it in concrete terms, while the revenues of Western and Eastern Pakistan will be 60 crores *minus* 24 crores, *i.e.*, 36 crores, the revenues of Hindustan will be about 96 crores *plus* 24 crores, *i.e.*, 120 crores.

The study of these figures, in the light of the observations I have made, will show that the resources of Hindustan are far greater than the resources of Pakistan, whether one considers the question in terms of area, population or revenue. There need, therefore, be no apprehension on the score of resources. For, the creation of Pakistan will not leave Hindustan in a weakened condition.

III

QUESTION OF ARMED FORCES

The defence of a country does not depend so much upon its scientific frontier as it does upon its resources. But more than resources does it depend upon the fighting forces available to it.

What are the fighting forces available to Pakistan and to Hindustan?

The Simon Commission pointed out, as a special feature of the Indian Defence Problem, that there were special areas which alone offered recruits to the Indian Army and that there were other areas which offered none or if at all, very few. The facts revealed in the following table, taken from the Report of the Commission, undoubtedly will come as a most disagreeable surprise to many Indians, who think and care about the defence of India :

	Areas of Recruitment	Number of Recruits drawn
1	N.-W. Frontier Province	.. 5,600
2	Kashmir	.. 6,500
3	Punjab	.. 86,000
4	Baluchistan	.. 300
5	Nepal	.. 19,000
6	United Provinces	.. 16,500
7	Rajputana	.. 7,000
8	Central India	.. 200
9	Bombay	.. 7,000
10	Central Provinces	.. 100
11	Bihar & Orissa	.. 300
12	Bengal	.. Nil
13	Assam	.. Nil
14	Burma	.. 3,000
15	Hyderabad	.. 700
16	Mysore	.. 100
17	Madras	.. 4,000
18	Miscellaneous	.. 1,900
	Total	... 158,200

The Simon Commission found that this state of affairs was natural to India, and in support of it, cited the following figures of recruitment from the different Provinces of India during the Great War especially because “it cannot be suggested that any discouragement was offered to recruitment in any area ” :

Province	Combatant Recruits Enlisted	Non-combatant Recruits Enlisted	Total
Madras	51,223	41,117	92,340
Bombay	41,272	30,211	71,483
Bengal	7,117	51,935	59,052
United Provinces	163,578	117,565	281,143
Punjab	349,688	97,288	446,976
North-West Frontier	32,181	13,050	45,231
Baluchistan	1,761	327	2,088
Burma	14,094	4,579	18,673
Bihar & Orissa	8,576	32,976	41,552
Central Provinces	5,376	9,631	15,007
Assam	942	14,182	15,124
Ajmer-Merwara	7,341	1,632	8,973
Nepal	58,904	..	58,904
Total	742,053	414,493	1,156,546

These data reveal in a striking manner that the fighting forces available for the defence of India mostly come from areas which are to be included in Pakistan. From this it may be argued, that without Pakistan, Hindustan cannot defend itself.

The facts brought out by the Simon Commission are, of course, beyond question. But they cannot be made the basis of a conclusion, such as is suggested by the Simon Commission, namely, that only Pakistan can produce soldiers and that Hindustan cannot. That such a conclusion is quite untenable will be seen from the following considerations.

In the first place, what is regarded by the Simon Commission as something peculiar to India is not quite so peculiar. What appears to be peculiar is not due to any inherent defect in the people. The peculiarity arises because of the policy of recruitment followed by the British Government for years past. The official explanation of this predominance in the Indian Army of the men of the North-West is that they belong to the Martial Classes. But Mr. Chaudhari* has demonstrated, by unimpeachable data, that this explanation is far from being true. He has shown that the predominance in the Army of the men of the North-West took place : as early as the Mutiny of 1857, some 20 years before the theory of Martial and Non-martial Classes was projected in an indistinct form for the first time in 1879 by the Special Army Committee† appointed in that year, and that their predominance had nothing to do with their alleged fighting qualities but was due to the fact, that they helped the British to suppress the Mutiny in which the Bengal Army was so completely involved. To quote Mr. Chaudhari:

“The pre-Mutiny army of Bengal was essentially a Brahmin and Kshatriya army of the Ganges basin. All the three Presidency Armies of those days, as we have stated in the first part of this article, were in a sense quite representative of the military potentialities of the areas to which they belonged, though, none of them could, strictly speaking, be correctly described as national armies of the provinces concerned,

* See his series of articles on “The Martial Races of India” published in the *Modern Review* for July 1930, September 1930, January 1931 and February 1931.

† The Questionnaire circulated by the Committee included the following question:—

“If an efficient and available reserve of the Indian Army be considered necessary for the safety of the Empire, should it not be recruited and maintained from those parts of the country which give us best soldiers, rather than amongst the weakest and least warlike races of India ?”.....

as there was no attempt to draw upon any but the traditional martial elements of the population. But they all got their recruits mainly from their natural areas of recruitment, *viz.*, the Madras Army from the Tamil and Telugu countries, the Bombay Army from Western India, and the Bengal Army from Bihar and U. P. and to a very limited extent from Bengal. There was no official restriction on the enrolment of men of any particular tribe or caste or region, provided they were otherwise eligible. Leaving aside for the moment the practice of the Bombay and the Madras Armies, the only exception to this general rule in the Bengal Army was that which applied to the Punjabis and Sikhs, who, inspite of their magnificent military traditions, were not given a fair representation in the Army of Northern India. Their recruitment, on the contrary, was placed under severe restrictions by an order of the Government, which laid down that 'the number of Punjabis in a regiment is never to exceed 200, nor are more than 100 of them to be Sikhs'. It was only the revolt of the Hindustani regiments of the Bengal Army that gave an opportunity to the Punjabis to rehabilitate themselves in the eyes of the British authorities. Till then, they remained suspect and under a ban, and the Bengal Army on the eve of the Mutiny was mainly recruited from Oudh, North and South Bihar, especially the latter, principally Shahabad and Bhojpur, the Doab of the Ganges and Jumna and Rohilkhund. The soldiers recruited from these areas were mostly high-caste men, Brahmins of all denominations, Kshatriyas, Rajputs and Ahirs. The average proportion in which these classes were enrolled in a regiment was: (1) Brahmin 7/24, (2) Rajputs 1/4, (3) Inferior Hindus 1/6, (4) Musalmans 1/6, (5) Punjabis 1/8.

"To this army, the area which now-a-days furnishes the greatest number of soldiers—the Punjab, Nepal, N.-W. F. Province, the hill tracts of Kumaon and Garhwal, Rajputana,—furnished very few recruits or none at all. There was practical exclusion in it of all the famous fighting castes of India,—Sikhs, Gurkhas, Punjabi Musalmans, Dogras, Jats, Pathans, Garhwalis, Rajputana Rajputs, Kumaonis, Gujars, all the tribes and sects, in fact, which are looked upon today as a tower of strength of the Indian Army. A single year and a single rebellion was, however, to change all this. The Mutiny, which broke out in 1857, blew up the old Bengal Army and brought into existence a Punjabized and barbarized army, resembling the Indian Army of today in broad lines and general proportions of its composition.

"The gaps created by the revolt of the Hindustani regiments (of the Bengal Army) were at once filled up by Sikhs and other Punjabis, and hillmen eager for revenge and for the loot of the cities of Hindustan. They had all been conquered and subjugated by the British with the help of the Hindustani soldiers, and in their ignorance, they regarded the Hindustanis, rather the handful of British, as their

real enemies. This enmity was magnificently exploited by the British authorities in suppressing the Mutiny. When the news of the enlistment of Gurkhas reached Lord Dalhousie in England he expressed great satisfaction and wrote to a friend: 'Against the Oudh Sepoys they may confidently be expected to fight like devils'. And after the Mutiny, General Mansfield, the Chief of the Staff of the Indian Army, wrote about the Sikhs: 'It was not because they loved us, but because they hated Hindustan and hated the Bengal Army that the Sikhs had flocked to our standard instead of seeking the opportunity to strike again for their freedom. They wanted to revenge themselves and to gain riches by the plunder of Hindustani cities. They were not attracted by mere daily pay, it was rather the prospect of wholesale plunder and stamping on the heads of their enemies. In short, we turned to profit the *esprit de corps* of the old Khalsa Army of Ranjit Singh, in the manner which for a time would most effectually bind the Sikhs to us as long as the active service against their old enemies may last'.

"The relations thus established were in fact, to last much longer. The services rendered by the Sikhs and Gurkhas during the Mutiny were not forgotten and henceforward the Punjab and Nepal had the place of honour in the Indian Army."

That Mr. Chaudhari is right when he says that it was the Mutiny of 1857 which was the real cause of the preponderance in the Indian Army of the men of the North-West is beyond the possibility of doubt. Equally incontrovertible is the view of Mr. Chaudhari that this preponderance of the men of the North-West is not due to their native superiority in fighting qualities, as the same is amply borne out by the figures which he has collected, showing the changes in the composition of the Indian Infantry before and after the Mutiny.

CHANGES IN THE COMPOSITION OF THE INDIAN INFANTRY

Percentage of men from different Parts

Year	North-west India		North-East India U. P., Bihar	South India	Burma
	Punjab, N.-W. F, Kashmir	Nepal, Garhwal, Kumaon			
1856	Less than 10	Negligible	Not less than 90	. .	Nil
1858	47	6	47	. .	"
1883	48	17	35	. .	"
1893	53	24	23	. .	"
1905	47	15	22	16	"
1919	46	14.8	25.5	12	1.7
1930	58.5	22	11.0	5.5	3

These figures show that in 1856, one year before the Mutiny, the men from the North-West were a negligible factor in the Indian Army. But in 1858, one year after the Mutiny, they had acquired a dominant position which has never received a setback.

It will thus be seen that the distinction between Martial and Non-martial Classes, which was put forth for the first time in 1879, as a matter of principle, which was later on insisted upon as a matter of serious consideration by Lord Roberts* and which was subsequently recognised by Lord Kitchener as a principle governing recruitment to the Indian Army, had nothing to do with the origin of this preponderance of the men of the North-West in the Indian Army. No doubt, the accident that the people from North-West India had the good luck of being declared by the Government as belonging to the Martial Class, while most of the classes coming from the rest of India had the ill-luck of being declared Non-martial Classes had important consequences. Being regularly employed in the Army, the people of North-West India came to look upon service in the Army as an occupation with a security and a career which was denied to men from the rest of India. The large number of recruits drawn from North-West India, therefore, indicates nothing more than this—namely, owing to the policy of the British Government, service in the Army has become their occupation and if people in other parts of India do not readily come forth to enlist in the Army, the reason is that Government did not employ them in the Army. People follow their ancestral occupations whether they like it or not. When a people do not take to a new occupation it does not necessarily mean that they are not fit for it. It only means that it is not their ancestral occupation.

This division between Martial and Non-martial Classes is, of course, a purely arbitrary and artificial distinction. It is as foolish as the Hindu theory of caste, making birth instead of worth, the basis for recognition. At one time, the Government insisted that the distinction they had adopted was a real distinction and that

* In his *Forty-One Years* he wrote : “ Each cold season, I made long tours in order to acquaint myself with the needs and capabilities of the men of the Madras Army. I tried hard to discover in them those fighting qualities which had distinguished their forefathers during the wars of the last and the beginning of the present century... And I was forced to the conclusion that the ancient military spirit had died in them, as it had died in the ordinary Hindustani of Bengal and the Mahratta of Bombay, and that they could no longer with safety be pitted against warlike races, or employed outside the limit of Southern India.”

in terms of fighting qualities, it meant so much fighting value. In fact, this was their justification for recruiting more men from the North-West of India. That this distinction has nothing to do with any difference in fighting qualities has now been admitted. Sir Phillip Chetwode,* late Commander-in-Chief of India, broadcasting from London on the constitution of the Indian Army, took pains to explain that the recruitment of a larger proportion of it from the Punjab, did not mean that the people of the Peninsula were without martial qualities. Sir Phillip Chetwode explained that the reason why men of the North were largely recruited for the Indian Army was chiefly climatic, as the men from the South cannot stand the extremes of heat and cold of North India. No race can be permanently without martial spirit. Martial spirit is not a matter of native instinct. It is a matter of training and anybody can be trained to it.

But apart from this, there is enough fighting material in Hindustan, besides what might be produced by special training. There are the Sikhs, about whose fighting qualities nothing need be said. There are the Rajputs who are even now included in the category of Martial Classes. In addition to these, there are the Mahrattas who proved their calibre as a fighting race during the last European War. Even the people of the Madras Presidency can be depended upon for military purposes. Speaking of the Madrasis as soldiers, General Sir Frederick P. Haines, at one time Commander-in-Chief in India, observed :

“It has been customary to declare that the Madras Army is composed of men physically inferior to those of the Bengal Army, and if stature alone be taken into consideration, this is true. It is also said that by the force of circumstances the martial feeling and the characteristics necessary to the real soldier are no longer to be found in its ranks. I feel bound to reject the above assertions and others which ascribe comparative inefficiency to Madras troops. It is true that in recent years they have seen but little service ; for, with the exception of the sappers, they have been specially excluded from all participation in work in the field. I cannot admit for one moment that anything has occurred to disclose the fact that the Madras Sepoy is inferior as a fighting man. The facts of history warrant us in assuming the contrary. In drill training and discipline, the Madras

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Sepoy is inferior to none; while in point of health, as exhibited by returns, he compares favourably with his neighbours. This has been manifested by the sappers and their followers in the Khyber; and the sappers are of the same race as the Sepoys.”

Hindustan need, therefore, have no apprehension regarding the supply of an adequate fighting force from among its own people. The separation of Pakistan cannot weaken her in that respect.

The Simon Commission drew attention to three features of the Indian Army, which struck them as being special and peculiar to India. It pointed out that the duty of the Army in India was two-fold; firstly, to prevent the independent tribes on the Indian side of the Afghan frontier from raiding the peaceful inhabitants of the plains below. Secondly, to protect India against invasion by countries lying behind and beyond this belt of unorganized territories. The Commission took note of the fact that from 1850 to 1922, there were 72 expeditions against the independent tribes, an average of one a year, and also of the fact that in the countries behind and beyond this belt of unorganized territory, lies the direction from which, throughout the ages, the danger to India's territorial integrity has come. This quarter is occupied by “States which according to the Commission are not members of the League of Nations” and is, therefore, a greater danger to India now than before. The Commission insisted on emphasizing that these two facts constituted a peculiar feature of the problem of military defence in India and so far as the urgency and extent of the problem is concerned, they are “without parallel elsewhere in the Empire, and constituted a difficulty in developing self-government which never arose in any comparable degree in the case of the self-governing Dominions”.

As a second unique feature of the Indian Army, the Commission observed :

“The Army in India is not only provided and organized to ensure against external dangers of a wholly exceptional character: it is also distributed and habitually used throughout India for the purpose of maintaining or restoring internal peace. In all countries the military is not normally employed in this way, and certainly is not

organized for this purpose. But the case of India is entirely different. Troops are employed many times a year to prevent internal disorder and, if necessary, to quell it. Police forces, admirably organized as they are, cannot be expected in all cases to cope with the sudden and violent outburst of a mob driven frantic by religious frenzy. It is, therefore, well understood in India both by the police and by the military—and, what is even more to the point, by the public at large—that the soldiers may have to be sent for... This use of the Army for the purpose of maintaining or restoring internal order was increasing rather than diminishing, and that on these occasions the practically universal request was for British troops. The proportion of the British to Indian troops allotted to this duty has in fact risen in the last quarter of a century. The reason, of course, is that the British soldier is a neutral, and is under no suspicion of favouring Hindus against Mahomedans or Mahomedans against Hindus Inasmuch as the vast majority of the disturbances which call for the intervention of the military have a communal or religious complexion, it is natural and inevitable that the intervention which is most likely to be authoritative should be that which has no bias, real or suspected, to either side. It is a striking fact in this connection that, while in regular units of the Army in India as a whole British soldiers are in a minority of about 1 to 2 1/2, in the troops allotted for internal security the preponderance is reversed, and for this purpose a majority of British troops is employed—in the troops ear-marked for internal security the proportion is about eight British to seven Indian soldiers.”

Commenting upon this feature of the Indian Army the Commission said :

“When, therefore, one contemplates a future for India in which, in place of the existing Army organization, the country is defended and pacified by exclusively Indian units, just as Canada relies on Canadian troops and Ireland on Irish troops, it is essential to realize and bear in mind the dimensions and character of the Indian problem of internal order and the part which the British soldier at present plays (to the general satisfaction of the country-side) in supporting peaceful government.”

The third unique feature of the Indian Army, which was pointed out by the Simon Commission, is the preponderance in it of the men from the North-West. The origin of this preponderance and the reasons underlying the official explanation given therefor have already been examined.

But, there is one more special feature of the Indian Army to which the Commission made no reference at all. The commission either ignored it or was not aware of it. It is such an important feature that it overshadows all the three features to which the Commission refers, in its importance and in its social and political consequences.

It is a feature which, if widely known, will set many people to think furiously. It is sure to raise questions which may prove insoluble and which may easily block the path of India's political progress—questions of far greater importance and complexity than those relating to Indianization of the Army.

This neglected feature relates to the communal composition of the Indian Army. Mr. Chaudhari has collected the relevant data in his articles, already referred to, which throws a flood of light on this aspect of the Indian Army. The following table shows the proportion of soldiers serving in the Indian Infantry, according to the area and the community from which they are drawn :

Changes in the Communal Composition of the Indian Army

Area and Communities	Percentage in 1914	Percentage in 1918	Percentage in 1919	Percentage in 1930
I. The Punjab, N.-W. F. P. and Kashmir	47	46.5	46	58.5
(1) Sikhs	19.2	17.4	15.4	13.58
(2) Punjabi Musalmans	11.1	11.3	12.4	22.6
(3) Pathans	6.2	5.42	4.54	6.35
II. Nepal, Kumaon, Garhwal	15	18.9	14.9	22.0
(1) Gurkhas	13.1	16.6	12.2	16.4
III. Upper India	22	22.7	25.5	11.0
(1) U. P. Rajputs	6.4	6.8	7.7	2.55
(2) Hindustani Musalmans	4.1	3.42	4.45	Nil
(3) Brahmins	1.8	1.86	2.5	Nil
IV. South India	16	11.9	12	5.5
(1) Mahrattas	4.9	3.85	3.7	5.33
(2) Madrasi Musalmans	3.5	2.71	2.13	Nil
(3) Tamils	2.5	2.0	1.67	Nil
V. Burma				
(1) Burmans	Nil	Negligible	1.7	3.0

This table brings out in an unmistakable manner the profound changes which have been going on in the communal composition of the Indian Army particularly after 1919. They are (1) a phenomenal rise in the strength of the Punjabi Musalman and the Pathan, (2) a substantial reduction in the position of Sikhs from first to third, (3) the degradation of the Rajputs to the fourth place, and (4) the shutting out of the U. P. Brahmins, the Madrasi Musalmans, and the Tamilians, both Brahmins and Non-Brahmins.

A further analysis of the figures for 1930, which discloses the communal composition of the Indian Infantry and Indian Cavalry, has been made by Mr. Chaudhari in the following table.*

Communal Composition of the Indian Army in 1930

Class	Areas	Percentage in Infantry		Percentage in Cavalry
		Excluding Gurkhas	Including Gurkhas	
1. Punjabi Musalman	Punjab	27	22.6	14.28
2. Gurkhas	Nepal	...	16.4	...
3. Sikhs	Punjab	16.24	13.58	23.81
4. Dogras	North Punjab and Kashmir	11.4	9.54	9.53
5. Jats	Rajputana, U. P., Punjab	9.5	7.94	19.06
6. Pathans	N.-W. F. Province	7.57	6.35	4.76
7. Mahrattas	Konkan	6.34	5.33	...
8. Garhwalis	Garhwal	4.53	3.63	...
9. U. P. Rajputs	U. P.	3.04	2.54	...
10. Rajputana Rajputs	Rajputana	2.8	2.35	...
11. Kumaonis	Kumaon	2.44	2.05	...
12. Gujars	N. E. Rajputana	1.52	1.28	...
13. Punjabi Hindus	Punjab	1.52	1.28	...
14. Ahirs	Do.	1.22	1.024	...
15. Musalmans, Rajputs, Ranghars.	Neighbourhood of Delhi	1.22	1.024	7.14
16. Kaimkhanis	Rajputana	...	...	4.76
17. Kachins	Burma	1.22	1.024	...
18. Chins	Do.	1.22	1.024	...
19. Karens	Do.	1.22	1.024	...
20. Dekhani Musalmans	Deccan	...	...	4.76
21. Hindustani Musalmans	U. P.	...	...	2.38

*This table shows the percentage of men of each eligible class in the Indian Infantry (82 active and 18 training battalions), the Indian Cavalry (21 regiments), and the 20 battalions of the Gurkha Infantry. This table does not include the Indian personnel of (a) the 19 batteries of Indian Mountain Artillery, and (b) 3 regiments of Sappers and Miners, (c) the Indian Signal Corps, and (d) the Corps of Indian Pioneers, all of which are composed of different proportions of the Punjabi Musalmans, Sikhs, Pathans, Hindustani Hindus and Musalmans, Madrasis of all classes and Hazra Afghans, either in class units or class companies. Except that some units in these arms of the service are composed of the Madrasis and Hazras, now enrolled in other units of the Indian Army, the class composition of these units does not materially alter the proportion of the classes as given in the table. This table does not also include the Indian personnel attached to the British Infantry and Artillery units.

Reducing these figures in terms of communities, we get the following percentage as it stood in 1930 :—

Communities	Percentage in Infantry		Percentage in Cavalry
	Including Gurkhas	Excluding Gurkhas	
1. Hindus and Sikhs ..	60.55	50.554	61.92
2. Gurkhas	...	16.4	...
3. Muhammadans ..	35.79	29.974	30.08
4. Burmans	3.66	3.072	...

These figures show the communal composition of the Indian Army. The Musalmans according to Mr. Chaudhari formed 36% of the Indian Infantry and 30% of the Indian Cavalry.

These figures relate to the year 1930. We must now find out what changes have taken place since then in this proportion.

It is one of the most intriguing things in the Military history of India that no information is available on this point after 1930. It is impossible to know what the proportion of the Muslims in the Indian Army at present is. There is no Government publication from which such information can be gathered. In the past, there was no dearth of publications giving this information. It is very suprising that they should have now disappeared, or if they do appear, that they should cease to contain this information. Not only is there no Government publication containing information on this point, but Government has refused to give any information on the point when asked by members of the Central Legislative Assembly. The following questions and answers taken from the proceedings of the Central Legislative Assembly show how Government has been strenuously combating every attempt to obtain information on the point :

There was an interpellation on 15th September 1938, when the following questions were asked and replies as stated below were given :—

*Arrangements for the Defence of India**

* Legislative Assembly Debates, 1938 Vol. VI, page 2462.

Q. 1360: *Mr. Badri Dutt Pande* (on behalf of Mr. Amarendra Nath Chattopadhyaya).

(a)	x	x	x	x
(b)	x	x	x	x
(c)	x	x	x	x

- (d) How many Indians have been recruited during 1937 and 1938 as soldiers and officers during 1937-38 for the Infantry and Cavalry respectively? Amongst the soldiers and officers recruited, how many are Punjabi Sikhs, Pathans, Garhwalis, Mahrattas, Madrasis, Biharis, Bengalis and Hindustanis of the United Provinces and Gurkhas ?
- (e) If none but the Punjabi Sikhs, Pathans and Garhwalis have been recruited, is it in contemplation of the Honourable Member to recruit from all the Provinces for the defence of India and give them proper military training ?
- (f) Will the Defence Secretary be pleased to state if Provincial Governments will be asked to raise Provincial Regiments, trained and fully mechanised, for the defence of India? If not, what is his plan of raising an efficient army for the defence of India ?

Mr. C.M.G. Ogilvie :

- (a) The Honourable Member will appreciate that it is not in the public interest to disclose the details of such arrangements.
- (b) 5 cadets and 33 Indian apprentices were recruited for the Indian Air Force during 1937-38.
- (c) During 1937-38, 5 Indians have already been recruited to commissioned ranks in the Royal Indian Navy, 4 will be taken by competitive examination in October 1938, and 3 more by special examination of "Dufferin" cadets only. During the same period, 314 Indians were recruited to different non-commissioned categories in the Royal Indian Navy.

- (d) During the year ending the 31st March 1938, 54 Indians were commissioned as Indian Commissioned Officers. They are now attached to British units for training, and it is not yet possible to say what proportion will be posted to infantry and cavalry, respectively. During the same period, 961 Indian soldiers were recruited for cavalry, and 7,970 for infantry. Their details by classes are not available at Army Headquarters and to call for them from the recruiting officers all over India would not justify the expenditure of time and labour involved.
- (e) No.
- (f) The reply to the first portion is in the negative. The reply to the second portion is that India already possesses an efficient army and so far as finances permit, every effort is made to keep it up-to-date in all respects.

Mr. S. Satyamurti : With reference to the answers to clauses (d) and (e) of the question taken together, may I know whether the attention of Government has been drawn to statements made by many public men that the bulk of the army is from the Punjab and from one community? Have Government considered those facts and will Government also consider the desirability of making the army truly national by extending recruitment to all provinces and communities, so as to avoid the danger present in all countries of a military dictatorship seizing political power?

Mr. C. M. G. Ogilvie : I am not sure how that arises from this question, but I am prepared to say that provincial boundaries do not enter into Government's calculations at all. The best soldiers are chosen to provide the best army for India and not for any province, and in this matter national considerations must come above provincial considerations. Where the bulk of best military material is found, there we will go to get it, and not elsewhere.

Mr. S. Satyamurti : May I know whether the bulk of the army is from the Punjab and whether the Government have forgotten the experience of the brave exploits of men from my province not very long ago in the Indian Army, and may I know if Madras is practically kept out and many other provinces are kept out of the army altogether?