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**Responsible History? Churchill's Portrayal of the Indian Army in *The Second World War*.<sup>2</sup>**

Professor John Tosh recently remarked that historians are currently enjoying a higher, more public profile than they have done for many years; indeed, some have become 'household names'.<sup>3</sup> One result of historians becoming more visible, and thereby influential, is that they have an ever-increasing responsibility. Not only towards their own research but also towards the public, as wielding history in such a responsibility-laden way reinforces the old adage that history is *always* about power. For Tosh, the power of history lies in its ability to illuminate the present so that 'intelligent decisions about difficult public decisions' can be made.<sup>4</sup> If the 'past exists for us only as it is written up by historians' what then happens if that historian is less than scrupulous?<sup>5</sup> And what if the historian was known the world over, had a reputation as a man of international importance and standing, and yet deliberately twisted the facts to suit his own argument?

After briefly contextualising how and why he wrote his six-volume opus *The Second World War*, this article will examine Winston Churchill's portrayal of the Indian Army's

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<sup>2</sup> Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War: Volumes 1-6* (London: Cassell, 1948-1954).

<sup>3</sup> John Tosh, 'History for Citizens: Towards a Critical Public History', key note address, 'Histfest', Lancaster University, 10 June 2011.

<sup>4</sup> John Tosh, *Why History Matters* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p. viii.

<sup>5</sup> Alun Munslow, *Deconstructing History* (London: Routledge, 1997), p. 33.

contribution to the Second World War. This research will offer reasons as to why Churchill almost totally ignored the Indian Army; reasons that go beyond the overly simple explanation of Churchill's inherent racism.<sup>6</sup> Was the advent of Indian independence so painful an experience for Churchill that it tainted his portrayal of the Indian Army when the time came to compose his historical narrative? To what extent, if any, did his narrative influence subsequent official histories, and why did Churchill pay such little attention to the history of the Indian Army's achievements in the Second World War?

Anyone who researches, let alone reads, Churchill's *Second World War*, owes a debt to David Reynolds,<sup>7</sup> whose *In Command of History* illuminated why Churchill wrote his memoirs, and how they were physically constructed.<sup>8</sup> Simply put, one of the main reasons why Churchill wrote his memoirs (although compiled and edited are perhaps more apt terms), was to increase his chances of a return to 10 Downing Street. In writing his 'contribution to history', Churchill hoped that he would either appease or silence his critics before they could hinder his return to power.<sup>9</sup> But his intention to write the history of the war was evident much earlier than the aftermath of his general election defeat in July 1945. Within a month of becoming Prime Minister, France had fallen and Churchill told the House of Commons that Britain could ill afford any 'utterly futile and even harmful' recriminations regarding the evacuation of the British Expeditionary Force (B.E.F.) from Dunkirk.<sup>10</sup> In this same speech, Churchill illustrated how he was aware of the historian's power. He knew that the whys and wherefores of Operation Dynamo had

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<sup>6</sup> Unless otherwise stated, the term Indian Army is used in this research to refer to Indian Army units which were part of the British and Commonwealth forces.

<sup>7</sup> Like Simon Schama, Ian Kershaw, David Starkey, and Niall Ferguson, Reynolds too has become an academic household name.

<sup>8</sup> David Reynolds, *In Command of History: Churchill Fighting and Writing the Second World War* (London: Allen Lane, 2004).

<sup>9</sup> Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War: Volume 1, The Gathering Storm* (London: Cassell, 1948), p. vii.

<sup>10</sup> *Hansard*, 5<sup>th</sup> series, vol. 362, 18 June 1940, 51.

to be put aside; it had to be ‘put on the shelf, from which the historians, when they have time will select their documents to tell their stories’.<sup>11</sup> Churchill also knew that he would be one of the historians.<sup>12</sup>

But Churchill was not inexperienced regarding the power that history could wield, as he had previously attempted to silence his late father’s detractors.<sup>13</sup> Whilst not entirely successful in his remit, Churchill did at least quell some of the harsher criticisms which had been levelled against his deceased father. However, Churchill’s most forceful encounter with the power of history was his multi-volume history of the First World War.<sup>14</sup> Although aptly described by A. J. Balfour as Churchill’s autobiography disguised as world history,<sup>15</sup> Churchill learnt how history could be manipulated and serve as a platform for both self-vindication and self-justification.<sup>16</sup> Churchill’s literary output increased considerably when he found himself in the ‘political wilderness’.<sup>17</sup> Consequently *Marlborough* was published.<sup>18</sup> It received ‘critical acclaim’,<sup>19</sup> and Churchill succeeded in his intention to restore Marlborough’s good name. Churchill’s literary career preceded his entry into Parliament by four years. He honed his journalistic and literary skills to help establish his political position, to rally support for whatever cause he subscribed to, and to augment his lack-lustre personal finances. Yet none of this explains why Churchill’s memoirs of the Second World War acquired the status of official history, let alone the way in which they indelibly shaped the history of the Second World War.

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<sup>11</sup> *Hansard*, 5<sup>th</sup> series, vol. 362, 18 June 1940, 51.

<sup>12</sup> The more commonly quoted remark, how Churchill announced that history would be kind to him, especially as he intended to write it, is still powerful, but not as portentous as some have claimed. After all, he had already been approached (as early as September 1939 when he returned to the Admiralty) by several publishers for first refusal on any memoirs he chose to write at the end of the war. See Reynolds, *In Command*, pp. 5-7.

<sup>13</sup> Winston S. Churchill, *Lord Randolph Churchill* (London: Macmillan, 1906).

<sup>14</sup> Winston S. Churchill, *The World Crisis: Volumes 1-6* (London: Thornton Butterworth, 1923-31).

<sup>15</sup> As cited by Reynolds, *In Command of History*, p. 5.

<sup>16</sup> His involvement in the Dardanelles fiasco was instrumental in this regard.

<sup>17</sup> Churchill, *Gathering Storm*, p. 527.

<sup>18</sup> Winston S. Churchill, *Marlborough: His Life and Times, Volumes 1-4* (London: Harrap, 1933-38).

<sup>19</sup> Ashley Jackson, *Churchill* (London: Quercus, 2011), p. 232.

Until Reynolds published his Wolfson prize-winning work, *In Command of History*, Churchill's method of writing history had been systematically discussed by only a handful of people.<sup>20</sup> Instead of physically writing his memoirs, Churchill preferred to have his secretaries type his dictated recollections of key events and then annotate these draft notes when he was ready.<sup>21</sup> He was also in the enviable position of being able to hire a team of researchers (a method which he had first employed with successful results during the interwar years), who became known as the syndicate: an unlikely and disparate team made up of historians, wartime colleagues and close friends of Churchill's. First and foremost was the professional historian Frederick William (Bill) Deakin who had been employed by Churchill from 1935-38 as a researcher for both *Marlborough* and the *History of the English-Speaking Peoples*.<sup>22</sup> Denis Kelly was the syndicate's next foundation stone; an unenthusiastic lawyer whom Churchill employed as a literary assistant in 1947, to create a 'Cosmos out of Chaos'.<sup>23</sup> Formidable military knowledge came from a wide circle of Churchill's wartime colleagues (the most relied upon being General Henry Pownall, General 'Pug' Ismay and Commodore Allen); whereas close personal friends, such as Frederick Lindemann and Edward Marsh, were willing proof readers.

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<sup>20</sup> Keith Alldritt, *Churchill The Writer: His Life as a Man of Letters* (London: Hutchinson, 1992); Maurice Ashley, *Churchill as Historian* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1968); John Lukacs, *Churchill: Visionary, Statesman, Historian* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002); Robin Prior, *Churchill's World Crisis As History* (Beckenham: Croom Helm, 1983); Manfred Weidhorn, *Sword and Pen: A Survey of the Writings of Sir Winston Churchill* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1974); and Frederick Woods, *Artillery Of Words, The Writings Of Sir Winston Churchill* (London: Leo Cooper, 1992).

<sup>21</sup> Reynolds, *In Command of History*, p. 69. One example of Churchill's dictated reminiscences (which recorded his impressions of the loss of Singapore) is Churchill Archives Centre, Churchill Papers (hereafter referred to as CAC, CP), CHUR 4/255A/118-24.

<sup>22</sup> Churchill, *Marlborough*; and *A History of the English Speaking Peoples, Volumes 1-4* (London: Cassell, 1956-58) which, whilst published in the mid to late 1950s, were researched and mainly written during the 1930s when Churchill was in his political wilderness.

<sup>23</sup> Churchill, on introducing Kelly to the Churchill Papers, allegedly said: 'Your task, my boy, is to make Cosmos out of Chaos'. See Allen Packwood (ed.), *Cosmos out of Chaos: Introducing the Churchill Archives Centre* (Cambridge: Churchill College, 2009), p. 4.

What secured the label of historian for Churchill was the work of Edward Bridges and his successor Norman Brook.<sup>24</sup> Being Cabinet Secretary, both Bridges and then Brook followed their remit which was to smooth Churchill's, and his syndicate's, path when he sought permissions to quote from documents on both a domestic and international scale. Such help was invaluable as it meant that the vast swathe of original documentation could be quoted from directly. Albeit heavily edited, such documentation gave the memoirs an aura of veracity which added to the public's belief that what they were reading was the historical truth in Churchill's words. Brook took on a greater interest in the memoirs than Bridges had done. In fact, he became one of Churchill's most trusted editors, in both his official and extra-curricular unofficial capacity.<sup>25</sup> Arguably it was the intellectual and historical weight of the documentation which Bridges and Brook helped secure for Churchill's use, which gave Churchill's memoirs the impression that they were in actual fact history.<sup>26</sup> Churchill did nothing to dispel this label.

His memoirs of the Second World War were exactly what they were—memoirs. But his pre-war reputation as a quasi-historian, the vast swathe of documents which Churchill had access to and included, the fact that Attlee's government gave their blessing to the endeavour, the behind the scene machinations of the Cabinet Secretaries, the willingness with which Churchill's syndicate were made to feel at home in any library or archive, and the fact that no official history of the war from the services had yet to be produced, were all reasons as to why Churchill's memoirs were considered to be *much* more than a contribution to history.<sup>27</sup> Having been defeated in the general election of July 1945, his

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<sup>24</sup> David Reynolds, 'Official History: how Churchill and the Cabinet wrote the Second World War', *Institute of Historical Research*, 78: 201 (2005).

<sup>25</sup> Brook insisted that Churchill did not acknowledge in print the extensive personal role he had taken in his dealings with Churchill's memoirs.

<sup>26</sup> Reynolds, *In Command*, pp. 58-59.

<sup>27</sup> The assistance of His Majesty's Government was acknowledged in the first five volumes and Her Majesty's Government was acknowledged for the final sixth volume.

reputation as the 'leader of humanity' needed to be reinvigorated if he was to become Prime Minister of peacetime Britain.<sup>28</sup> Churchill could undo the damage he had done to his own reputation (in which his 'crazy broadcast', his so-called 'Gestapo' broadcast, had been instrumental in damaging his image), by manipulating history, and in the process he set out the 'broad avenues' down which subsequent historians moved.<sup>29</sup> Although the syndicate, his friends and favourites, and the Cabinet Secretaries aided and abetted the production of Churchill's memoirs, it was Churchill who was the ultimate arbiter and judge of what was recorded in his memoirs. It may have been Deakin's research, Kelly's precise recall of documents and, at times, Pownall's actual handwriting but, overall, it was Churchill's narrative.

In one of the chapter proofs, of which there are many, one of Churchill's sentences read: 'so far the Japanese have only had two white battalions and a few gunners against them, the rest being Indian soldiers.'<sup>30</sup> Kelly rightly surmised that such a sentence should be altered, by deleting the words 'the rest being Indian soldiers', so that it reflected badly neither on the Indian Army nor Churchill himself.<sup>31</sup> This is just one example of the syndicate trying to protect Churchill from himself. It also illustrates that even though Kelly, Deakin, and Pownall may have been the researchers that Churchill leant on for the major drafting of the events of the war in the Far East (Kelly and Pownall having been stationed there), it was ultimately Churchill's work.<sup>32</sup> If, as Foucauldian theory suggests, it

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<sup>28</sup> David Low, 'Two Churchills' cartoon, *Evening Standard*, 31 July 1945.

<sup>29</sup> Herbert Morrison, 'Churchill's Crazy Broadcast', *Daily Herald*, 5 June 1945. For a wider interpretation of the effect of Churchill's broadcast see Richard Toye, 'Winston Churchill's 'Crazy Broadcast': Party, Nation, and the 1945 Gestapo Speech', *Journal of British Studies*, 49: 3 (2010), 655-80; John Harold Plumb, 'The Historian', in A.J.P. Taylor (ed.), *Churchill: Four Faces and the Man* (London: Penguin, 1969), 1973 edition, p. 149.

<sup>30</sup> CAC, CP, CHUR 4/253A/128: chapter proof for volume 4, chapter 1 'Australian Anxieties'.

<sup>31</sup> CAC, CP, CHUR 4/253A/128: Kelly to Churchill, annotated note on chapter proof, dated 30 May 1950.

<sup>32</sup> Kelly was stationed in the Indian Mountain Artillery in India and Burma, 1941-45, and Pownall, appointed Commander in Chief of the Far East November 1941, became Mountbatten's Chief of Staff in 1943.

is the narrative that wields the power of history, and the memoirs are Churchill's narrative, it should be Churchill who is held accountable.<sup>33</sup> Yet those historians who do not deviate from Churchill's broad avenues, those historians who do not offer a fresh and more rounded perspective of the war in the Far East are equally accountable.

Having secured imperial Britain's discomfiting retreat from India, Mountbatten returned to England in 1948. Attending a party thrown by Anthony Eden in his honour, he encountered Churchill who shouted 'Dickie stand there!'<sup>34</sup> Churchill approached him, pointed to him and declared 'What you did in India was like whipping your riding crop across my face!'<sup>35</sup> A year after Indian independence Churchill's 'curious complex about India' was still highly evident.<sup>36</sup> It was a complex which he had developed when stationed in Bangalore, as a subaltern in the Queen's Hussars, from 1896-1899.<sup>37</sup> Throughout his time in India, he had been more concerned with the prestige this position offered (horses and polo playing being the outward trappings of wealth), and the possibility that it would lead to a political career, than what he could learn about India, or the Indian Army, itself. His refusal to learn Hindi, which he believed 'quite unnecessary [as] all natives here speak English perfectly and I cannot see any good in wasting my time acquiring a dialect which I shall never use', meant that he could not 'enter very fully' into the 'thoughts and feelings' of the Indian troops which he encountered.<sup>38</sup> But this did not stop Churchill from presuming that, 'there was no doubt they liked having a white officer among them

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<sup>33</sup> Colin Gordon (ed.), *Michel Foucault: Power/Knowledge: selected interviews and other writings, 1972-77* (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1980); Anna Green and Kathleen Troup, *The houses of history: A critical reader in twentieth-century history and theory* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), pp. 301-06.

<sup>34</sup> As told by Mountbatten to Stanley Wolpert (unconfirmed) in 1975, cited in Stanley Wolpert, *Shameful Flight, The Last Years of the British Empire in India* (Oxford, OUP, 2006), p. 147.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Penderel Moon (ed.), *Wavell, The Viceroy's Journal* (Karachi: OUP, 1974), p. 3.

<sup>37</sup> Churchill probably spent a total of 12 months in India as his four year posting was interspersed with various sorties as a war correspondent in the Sudan and then South Africa and with several (and at times lengthy) trips back to London. He resigned from his commission in the Hussar's in May 1899.

<sup>38</sup> Randolph S. Churchill (ed.), *Winston S. Churchill: Companion Volume 1, Part 2, 1896-1900* (London: Heinemann, 1967), Churchill to his mother, Lady Jennie Churchill, 18 Nov. 1896, p. 703. Winston S. Churchill, *My Early Life, A Roving Commission* (London: Thornton Butterworth, 1930), p. 164.

when fighting ... they watched him carefully to see how things were going. If you grinned, they grinned. So I grinned industriously'.<sup>39</sup>

A year after he had arrived in India, Churchill was warned about catching Indian fever as it was 'very difficult to get rid of'.<sup>40</sup> The fever never left him, Churchill never recovered, and India would always be his 'blind spot'.<sup>41</sup> When it came to writing his memoirs, Churchill's almost obsessive sentiment about India often affected his opinion on the Indian Army, and vice versa. Whilst much has been made about Churchill's racism, few attempts have been made to define it and contextualise it by the definitions and standards of the time.<sup>42</sup> To enter into such a thorny debate within the confines of this article is inappropriate. However it is important to note that Churchill's racism was inherent; it was part and parcel of his imperialism, and to a lesser extent his class and era. Depending upon whose company he was in, and whether he was in private or public, his racism varied in its strength, force and against whom it was directed. Judging Churchill's racism against present twenty-first century standards is mismatched, especially as his racism was buoyed by popular racial, eugenics and class theories of the time and was shared and upheld, albeit to varying degrees, by the majority of his contemporaries. To claim that Churchill's volatile and ever-changing opinion of India was purely attributable to his racism is dull, unimaginative and wrong. The charge of racism, whilst easily and correctly upheld, obfuscates the reasons why he portrayed the Indian Army as he did.

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<sup>39</sup> Churchill, *My Early Life*, p. 164.

<sup>40</sup> R. S. Churchill (ed.), *Churchill: CV 1, 2*, Lady Jennie Churchill to Churchill, 29 Oct. 1897, p. 826.

<sup>41</sup> Sarvepalli Gopal, 'Churchill and India', in Roger Blake and Wm. Roger Louis (eds), *Churchill* (Oxford: OUP, 1994), p. 471.

<sup>42</sup> See Richard Toye, *Churchill's Empire, The World That Made Him and the World He Made* (London: Macmillan, 2010), in which Toye was right not to treat Churchill's racism as a separate issue from his imperialism. Doing so would have detracted from Toye's ability to contextualise and locate Churchill's racism within his particular brand of imperialism.



Churchill briefly acknowledged the presence of the Indian Army in the trenches of Northern France, during the First World War, when he wrote that, ‘the steadfast Indian Corps in the cruel winter of 1914 held the line by Armentieres’.<sup>43</sup> In reality, Indian troops had served with distinction in the trenches of Northern France as well as Mesopotamia<sup>44</sup> and each of the major theatres of the First World War.<sup>45</sup> Churchill’s low opinion of the Indian troops had been reinforced by his parents who, in turn, had been influenced by their elders who had experienced the Mutiny of 1857.<sup>46</sup> His own experiences in India had done little to reverse this, and the Singapore Mutiny of 1915 did nothing to dispel Churchill’s already low opinion of the Indian Army.<sup>47</sup> Yet he never looked at the reverse; that the overwhelming majority of the 80,000 Indian soldiers who saw action in France, Mesopotamia, Palestine or Africa had fought valiantly alongside their British Officers and counterparts and had remained loyal to the King.<sup>48</sup>

The next mention Churchill made of the Indian Army is telling. As he reminisced about his return to the Admiralty in 1939, Churchill included a copy of a memo he submitted to Prime Minister Chamberlain in which he recommended that the ‘only way in which our forces in France can be rapidly expanded is by bringing the professional troops from

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<sup>43</sup> See Gordon Corrigan, *Sepoys in the Trenches* (Stroud: Spellmount, 2006); Mark Harrison, ‘The Fight Against Disease in the Mesopotamian Campaign’, in Hugh Cecil and Peter H. Liddle (eds), *Facing Armageddon: The First World War Experienced* (London: Leo Cooper, 1996), pp. 475-89; David E. Omissi, ‘The Indian Army in the First World War, 1914-1918’, in Daniel Marston and Chandar S. Sundaram (eds), *A Military History of India and the South Asia* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), pp. 74-87; Churchill, *The Gathering Storm*, p. 5.

<sup>44</sup> Charles C. Trench, *The Indian Army and the King’s Enemies, 1900-1947* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1988), pp. 75-90.

<sup>45</sup> See Stephen P. Cohen, *The Indian Army, Its Contribution to the Development of a Nation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), especially pp. 68-76; Philip Mason, *A Matter of Honour* (London: Macmillan, 1986), especially pp. 412-43; and Hugh Tinker, ‘India in the First World War and after’, *Journal of Contemporary History*, 3: 4 (Oct. 1968), 89-107.

<sup>46</sup> See Saul David, *The Indian Mutiny: 1857* (London: Penguin, 2003 edition); and G. B. Malleon, *The Indian Mutiny of 1857* (London: Seeley & Co., 1891, 2001 edition).

<sup>47</sup> See Ian F. W. Beckett, ‘The Singapore Mutiny of February, 1915’, *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, 62: 3 (1984), 132-53; and ‘The Mutiny at Singapore’, *The Times*, 14 April, 1915, p. 6, col. A.

<sup>48</sup> Chandar S. Sundaram, ‘Grudging Concessions: The Officer Corps and Its Indianization, 1817-1940’, in Marston and Sundaram (eds), *A Military History of India and South Asia*, p. 94. (Sundaram quotes the figure of 80,000 yet some estimates put the figure at 100,000). See also Budheswar Pati, *India and the First World War* (New Delhi: Atlantic, 1996), pp. 30-64.

India, and using them as the cadre upon which the Territorials and Conscripts will form'.<sup>49</sup> What Churchill alluded to, was that the British officers of the Indian Army and *not* the Indian officers were the professional soldiers.<sup>50</sup> In one sentence he had cast aspersions about the nature, ability and professionalism of the small number of Indian Officers that existed, let alone Indian soldiers. Churchill continued to write that 'in principle, 60,000 Territorials should be sent to India to maintain internal security and complete their training'.<sup>51</sup> So India was good enough to be a training ground for troops from Britain, yet Indian troops themselves were, in Churchill's opinion, only capable of maintaining internal security. This point vividly illustrates how Churchill only referred to the Indian Army, and to the Indian troops themselves, when it served his own purpose; when he was making a point to back his argument. He tenaciously refused to alter his late nineteenth century view of the Indian Army during the war, but by including it in his memoirs it illustrated that it was a view he maintained long after the fact.

Following the evacuation of the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) from Dunkirk in May-June 1940, Churchill turned his attention to immediately reconstituting a similarly sized force in France as he feared that the French would 'not continue the war'.<sup>52</sup> If 'eight native battalions from India' could be sent to Palestine then the eight *regular* battalions, made up of British troops, in Palestine would go towards the reforming of the new BEF.<sup>53</sup> Once again, Churchill relegated the status of Indian troops to no more than relief soldiers when he wrote that 'a ceaseless stream of Indian units' should be sent to Palestine and Egypt because 'India is doing nothing worth speaking of at the present

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<sup>49</sup> Churchill, *The Gathering Storm*, Churchill to Chamberlain, 1 Oct. 1939, p. 382-3.

<sup>50</sup> The idea of 'milking' already trained cohesive Army units of their best Officers and soldiers, and then placing them in less experienced units in order to quickly bring up to speed the new units was not a new concept. But the milking which Churchill was writing about did not extend to either Indian Officers or Indian soldiers in 1939.

<sup>51</sup> Churchill, *The Gathering Storm*, Churchill to Chamberlain, 1 Oct. 1939, p. 383.

<sup>52</sup> Churchill, *Their Finest Hour*, Churchill to Ismay, 2 June 1940, p. 123.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 124.

time'.<sup>54</sup> Even though Churchill wrote that British affairs in the East and Middle East were suffering from a 'catalepsy by which they are smitten', he did not consider the Indian troops able to deal with this absence of movement, this state of paralysis; he only considered them to be of a sufficient number to augment British troops.<sup>55</sup> This is an example of how, during wartime, Churchill's opinion of India influenced his opinion of the Indian Army. It is also an example of how his opinion on India and the Indian Army, no matter how interchangeable the one was with the other, had neither softened nor moderated in the intervening years. In short, when it came to composing his memoirs, Churchill was still overly emotional when it came to the subject of India.<sup>56</sup>

It should be noted that Churchill was equally disparaging towards the West and East African brigades and viewed them with similar distaste and suspicion.<sup>57</sup> In a memo to Wavell, Churchill wrote that he was not satisfied by the part played by the Union and West African brigades who were stationed in Kenya. Unsurprisingly, Churchill viewed 'native' troops as inferior to British troops. He even viewed them as inferior to both the Australian and New Zealand soldiers who he thought were, in turn, below the standard of the British troops. He also wrote that 'native' troops were to be mixed together so that 'one lot can be used to keep the other in discipline'.<sup>58</sup> Throughout the first two volumes of his memoirs, Churchill intimated that Indian troops, like their 'native' African counterparts, were not to be trusted, ill-disciplined, inefficient and not as professional as their British counterparts. They were however, competent enough for security detail and

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<sup>54</sup> Churchill, *Their Finest Hour*, Churchill to Eden, 6 June 1940, p. 146.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>56</sup> Wavell painted Churchill as overly emotional when it came to India; see Penderel Moon (ed.), *Wavell, The Viceroy's Journal* (Karachi: O.U.P., 1974). One example was over Britain's debt to India, over which Churchill was 'intractable' and calmed after his 'fireworks', pp. 12-13.

<sup>57</sup> Another example of Churchill being disparaging towards 'native' troops reads: 'The African Colonial divisions ought not surely to be called divisions at all. No one contemplates them standing in the line against a European army', in Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War: Volume 3, The Grand Alliance* (London: Cassell, 1950), Churchill to Chief of Staff Committee, 17 Feb. 1941, Appendix C, p. 653.

<sup>58</sup> Churchill, *Their Finest Hour*, Churchill to Wavell, through Ismay, 12 Aug. 1940, p. 377.

were an equal match for the equally pitiful Italian troops.<sup>59</sup> There had been a definite pecking order within Churchill's mind during the war, but the intervening period between the war and writing his memoirs had not softened or altered his view.<sup>60</sup>

Churchill's depiction of the Indian troops varied to meet the needs of his narrative. The opinions which he voiced in the postwar world may have been commonly held during the war, but these opinions were not widely voiced during wartime let alone in the post-Indian independence world when Churchill was writing his memoirs. Men such as Leo Amery (the Secretary of State for India) and Stafford Cripps (who had been charged with heading a mission to India to break the political deadlock in March 1942) had far more enlightened attitudes towards the Indian troops, and India as a whole, and they tended to be in the majority.<sup>61</sup> One man who certainly did not share Churchill's views on Indian troops was General Archibald Wavell. In November 1942, Wavell encouraged Churchill to consider 'sending a special message to armed forces in India Command' as this token of his appreciation would 'greatly hearten them' when events elsewhere (such as the success in North Africa) were making them 'feel a little out of the picture'.<sup>62</sup> The failure of the Cripps Mission and the ultimate success of the Quit India movement (even though it had been effectively and quickly squashed), fuelled the growing realisation that constitutional change must occur in India. Although the British were determined to keep the Indian Army depoliticized, and in some ways attempted to insulate the Indian troops

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<sup>59</sup> Churchill, *Their Finest Hour*; Churchill to Wavell, through Ismay, 12 Aug. 1940, p. 377.

<sup>60</sup> It should be noted that Churchill's league-tabling of troop values was standard at the time. Although it is included to illustrate Churchill's attitude to non-British troops, it is another example of twenty first century mores sitting uncomfortably amongst an attitude which was widely held at the time.

<sup>61</sup> Whilst Amery and Cripps's enlightened views tended to be the majority view (especially when compared to Churchill) this does not mean that they were against the Raj. They invariably were not, but they possessed a more moderate attitude than Churchill's. By 1945 such moderate, enlightened views were almost the norm.

<sup>62</sup> CAC, CP, CHAR 20/83/15: Wavell to Churchill, 16 Nov. 1942.

from events in India,<sup>63</sup> such as the Quit India movement and the horrors of the devastating Bengal famine from 1943 onwards,<sup>64</sup> the Indian Army had never 'been so trusted, [and] never had it repaid trust so superbly'.<sup>65</sup> The belief in the superiority of the British soldier over the Indian soldier proved itself to be outmoded and mistaken: 'gone were the days when it had been supposed that the example of British troops was needed to fire Indians to valour'.<sup>66</sup> Yet Churchill maintained this outdated credo both during the war and after when composing his memoirs.

It was in the fourth volume of memoirs that Churchill made the noticeable distinction between the British and the Indian Army. Until then, Churchill had described the Indian Army as the 'British-Indian Army',<sup>67</sup> using what Raymond Callahan described as a 'clumsy locution'.<sup>68</sup> Churchill's use of the term 'British-Indian Army' spoke volumes about what he thought of the Indian Army (even if his writing did not).<sup>69</sup> For Churchill, the Indian Army was essentially British, albeit including Indian soldiers. Whilst Churchill was not the only person to think this, he was one of an ever-decreasing number, thanks to the series of reforms which had slowly begun to penetrate the enclave which was the

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<sup>63</sup> Various ways to isolate the Indian troops from the political unrest in India were undertaken: postal censorship, the availability of British newspapers only within camps, and the dissemination of Allied war-effort propaganda through the use of mobile film units and radio programmes. See Sanjoy Bhattacharya, 'British Military Information Management Techniques and the South Asian Soldier: Eastern India during the Second World War', *Modern Asian Studies*, 34: 2 (2000), 483-510.

<sup>64</sup> Churchill's response to the Bengal Famine of 1943-44 is detailed within the *Transfer of Power* series where his inability to see past his Indian fever is recorded in excruciating detail. In Madhusree Mukerjee, *Churchill's Secret War: The British Empire and the Ravaging of India during World War II* (New York: Basic Books, 2010) Churchill is demonised as the cause of the famine. Churchill did not cause the famine. The cause was the Japanese invasion and occupation of Burma, the subsequent cessation of Burmese imports of rice to India and the inability of local government officials to act upon the situation quickly enough. Without a doubt, Churchill could have done far more to alleviate the horrific famine conditions and his ambivalence towards the starving is truly shocking. However, his reaction to the famine should be put within the wider context of his inability to do more than glance occasionally east of Suez.

<sup>65</sup> Mason, *A Matter of Honour*, p. 513.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 509.

<sup>67</sup> Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War: Volume 4, The Hinge of Fate* (London: Cassell, 1951), p. 135.

<sup>68</sup> Raymond Callahan, 'Churchill and the Indian Army', paper presented at the Second Joint Imperial War Museum/ King's College London Military History Conference, *The Indian Army, 1939-1947*, 9 May 2009.

<sup>69</sup> Whenever Churchill wrote 'British-Indian Army' what he really referred to was the 'British-officered Indian Army' which he had been a part of whilst stationed in Bangalore at the end of the nineteenth century.

British Army officer's perception of the Indian Army.<sup>70</sup> Churchill was disparaging about the ill-prepared state of the Indian Army at the outbreak of the Second World War, and it must be pointed out that others, most notably British Commanding Officers posted in the Middle and Far East, such as Pownall, shared Churchill's views about the state of unreadiness of the Indian troops. At the beginning of the Burma campaigns, Pownall was being characteristically realistic regarding the rawness of the newly formed Indian units. But by the end of the war his opinion of them had been totally reversed. Churchill however, was still being disparaging when writing his memoirs. Pownall went further and added, much to Churchill's chagrin were he ever to have read Pownall's diary, that not only were the Japanese 'superior to the Indian troops, which was perhaps to be expected', they were also superior 'to the British troops and to the Australians'.<sup>71</sup>

Churchill had been humiliated by the relative ease with which Japanese troops had invaded and occupied Burma.<sup>72</sup> Yet, as General Henry Pownall had commented in his diary in December 1941, this was not surprising as the arrangements for Burma's defence had seemed 'sketchy, to put it mildly'.<sup>73</sup> For Churchill, Burma was little more than a geographical buffer zone which protected India from foreign invasion. But even more humiliating for Churchill was the fact that 'victory over the Japanese was won by the

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<sup>70</sup> Although Indianization of the Indian officer classes had been discussed since the early nineteenth century, it was not until after the First World War that these discussions turned into a slow reality. Reforms such as the Imperial Cadet Corps (ICC) which was established in 1897, the eight-units scheme, the admissions of Indians to Sandhurst, and the Indian Military College at Dehra Dun all went some way to creating a truly Indian Army. Even if some reforms either failed (the ICC) or created further problems (such as segregation through the eight-unit scheme), the process of Indianization was at least openly being pursued.

<sup>71</sup> Bond (ed.), *Chief of Staff: Vol. II*, 'Causes of failure' entry, undated, p. 97.

<sup>72</sup> Burma also held a more personal link for Churchill in that his father had been responsible for its annexation when he had been Secretary of State for India in 1885. See R. F. Foster, *Lord Randolph Churchill: A Political Life* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981); and Robert Rhodes James, *Lord Randolph Churchill* (London: Phoenix, 1994).

<sup>73</sup> Pownall became one of Churchill's main military advisers when he formed his syndicate in 1946. It is unclear whether Churchill had access to Pownall's diaries for use in his memoirs (although it is doubtful) let alone whether he was aware of their existence. See also Brian Bond (ed.), *Chief of Staff, The Diaries of Lt.-General Sir Henry Pownall, Volume II* (London: Leo Cooper, 1974), 20 Dec. 1941, p. 66.

Indian Army;’ an army that Churchill had always regarded as inept, disloyal and nothing more than an armed Frankenstein’s monster.<sup>74</sup> Churchill found certain wartime events, such as the sinking of the *Prince of Wales* and the *Repulse*, difficult to face when they occurred. When it came to confronting such events in the postwar world, when it came to narrating the history in his memoirs, Churchill found it equally difficult.

Of the retreat which the Japanese forced on the British and Indian Armies, Churchill reverted back to his ‘great men’ theory of history. The British were retreating. Thousands of civilian refugees from Burma, as well as hundreds of Indian civil servants were attempting to retreat (at the same time) to relative safety in India; and the casualties and deprivations encountered, by both troops and civilians, were appalling.<sup>75</sup> Having set the scene for the inevitable loss of Burma to the Japanese, and having purposely belittled the British and Indian troops who were in Burma at the time of the Japanese invasion, by over-emphasising the supposed superiority of the Japanese forces,<sup>76</sup> Churchill wrote that ‘if we could not send an army we could at any rate send a man’.<sup>77</sup> Churchill’s implication was that whilst the troops themselves were beleaguered and Wavell was clearly overwhelmed, there was nothing else to be done but send in a dashing British officer—General Alexander.<sup>78</sup> Churchill was reverting to type. By writing about Alexander in such terms, and by holding him aloft as he would later do Wingate, and briefly Auchinleck and

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<sup>74</sup> Mason, *A Matter of Honour*, p. 522; Moon (ed.), *Wavell*, p. 3.

<sup>75</sup> Werner Gruhl, *Imperial Japan’s World War Two, 1931-1945* (New Jersey: Transaction, 2010), p. 117. See also, Christopher Bayly and Tim Harper, *Forgotten Armies: Britain’s Asian Empire and the War with Japan* (London: Penguin, 2005), pp. 71-253.

<sup>76</sup> Pownall’s diary entry for 30 Jan. 1942 confirms this over emphasis. He wrote that ‘the Japs keep creeping onward little by little. Burma, as we thought, was making a mountain over a small molehill. The Jap forces used there proved to be quite small and gained more success than they should have, thus repeating what happened in the early days of Malaya’. Bond (ed.), *Chief of Staff: Vol. II*, 30 Jan. 1942, p. 81.

<sup>77</sup> Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate*, p. 146.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 147.

Mountbatten, Churchill was reinforcing his notion that all the Indian Army needed was ‘a white officer among them when fighting’.<sup>79</sup>

Churchill’s portrayal of the war against Japan, from early 1942 to mid-1943, was encapsulated by one succinct phrase: ‘we had none too good a tale to tell’.<sup>80</sup> The Japanese invasion, and occupation, of Burma was such a personal indignity for Churchill that six years later, as work on the fifth volume of his memoirs progressed, he wrote a note which stated that he would not ‘spare more than 3,000 words ... on the struggles in Burma’.<sup>81</sup> This self-imposed word limit was not a result of his awareness of how much more of his tale was left to tell. Nor was it brought about to indulge his readership’s appetite for tales of turning defeat into victory or triumph over adversity. It was possibly brought about so that Churchill did not have to highlight how weak the British Empire’s hold on its imperial territories east of Suez had become before the outbreak of war. He did not want to draw attention to how vulnerable to attack Hong Kong, Malaya, Singapore and Burma actually were nor how, most visibly in the case of Burma, some sections of the local population aided the invading Japanese with the aim of ridding themselves of the British once and for all. A strict word limit enabled Churchill to gloss over the significant contribution made by the Indian Army to the war in Burma. Allocating fewer words on the struggles in Burma (when compared to other theatres such as the Mediterranean, Africa, Egypt or even the Middle East) meant that Churchill could avoid revealing the temporary and genuinely fragile nature of the Anglo-American special relationship and how vehemently divided it had been over the matter of empire. Churchill had fully exploited his wartime reputation in America in the immediate aftermath of the war, and when he jockeyed to become Prime Minister in 1950 and then

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<sup>79</sup> Churchill, *My Early Life*, p. 164.

<sup>80</sup> Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War, Volume 5, Closing the Ring* (London: Cassell, 1952), p. 70.

<sup>81</sup> CAC, CP, CHUR 4/25A/18: Churchill to the Syndicate, 7 Nov. 1950.



successfully in 1951, it was during this time that the memoirs which were chronicling the first struggles in wartime Burma were being published;<sup>82</sup> hence Churchill's willingness to adhere for once to a strict self-imposed word limit.<sup>83</sup>

The brief chapter in which Churchill portrayed the campaigns for the reconquest of Burma, 'Burma and Beyond', is located towards the end of the fifth volume, *Closing the Ring*. The title reveals that Churchill was merely giving Burma itself a cursory glance, as it alluded to what lay beyond Burma: the crushing defeat of Japan by American nuclear weapons. As Churchill had, by then, achieved his ambition to be Prime Minister of peacetime Britain, he was mainly concerned with not upsetting the American applecart, and with procuring access to atomic bomb research which had been a shared wartime Anglo-American venture. Typically, Churchill centred his narrative upon individuals (he singled out General MacArthur, Admiral Halsey, Admiral Nimitz and Admiral Spruance for praise) as he detailed the successes they had against the Japanese during the latter half of 1943 and the early part of 1944.

At this stage of the reconquest of Burma, March to May 1944, some of the fiercest battles against the Japanese were being fought. The aim of the Japanese offensive, U-

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<sup>82</sup> It was no coincidence that Churchill delivered his 'Sinews of Peace' speech (more commonly known as the 'Iron Curtain' speech) at Westminster College, Fulton, Missouri, America in March 1946. Whilst his speech pandered to Western European and American sensibilities over the volatile nature of the postwar international political situation, it also implied that his prophetic ability was still intact and that, although no longer PM, he remained central to international relations.

<sup>83</sup> Churchill also glossed over the issue of Burma as he could not realistically oppose the move to grant Burma independence. Burma had been devastated during the Japanese occupation. Its integral industries and exports (teak, oil, and rice) were not going to contribute much to Britain's sterling balance deficit. Burma required a huge amount of investment which, due to the virtually negligible return that Britain would receive, meant that realistically it was not a viable option to retain Burma as part of the newly watered-down British Empire, the new Commonwealth. Churchill may have been verbose about the influence this would have on Indian independence but he was nonetheless realistic over Burma. He needed to de-emphasise how his swift, yet pragmatic, about-turn had come about without too much inner turmoil. Writing about the reconquest of Burma between 1947 and 1950 (and adhering to a strict word limit) allowed Churchill to side-step his own failure: that he could not stop Burma (the territory which his father had annexed) being relinquished from the British Empire although, in practical and economic terms, he may not have wanted to.

GO, was to destroy the British and Indian forces around Kohima and Imphal, advance up the Dimapur pass, and forge ahead across to India. Churchill allocated less than two pages to his descriptions of the battles for Imphal and Kohima.<sup>84</sup> He mentioned the 5<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Indian Divisions and how they were flown into Imphal and Dimapur respectively. He wrote how the XXXIII<sup>rd</sup> Corps (under General Stopford's command), along with the 2<sup>nd</sup> British Division, 'an independent Indian brigade,' and the remnants of Wingate's Chindits were also sent to Dimapur.<sup>85</sup> Churchill was equally scant regarding the battle of Kohima, to which he devoted a similar sized paragraph.<sup>86</sup> The 2<sup>nd</sup> British Division, along with the 161<sup>st</sup> Indian Brigade, relieved the Kohima garrison, and Churchill ended his narrative by writing that the 'valiant defence of Kohima against all odds was a fine episode'.<sup>87</sup>

Even though Churchill briefly mentioned eight individual British, Indian, or Nepalese units he made no mention of General William Slim having been given command of Stopford's XXXIII<sup>rd</sup> Corps on 27 March 1944.<sup>88</sup> Nor did Churchill once mention Slim's Fourteenth Army. Churchill also mistook, according to the Burma Star Association's battle histories, the units of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Indian Division for units of the 2<sup>nd</sup> British Division.<sup>89</sup> After his narrative of four paragraphs (which he deemed sufficient to cover the battles for Imphal and Kohima) Churchill wrote that he, in London, 'felt the stress' of how 'sixty thousand British and Indian soldiers, with all their modern equipment, were

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<sup>84</sup> Churchill, *Closing the Ring*, pp. 500-502.

<sup>85</sup> Churchill, *Closing the Ring*, p. 500. Wingate was killed on 24 March 1944 in an air crash. For Churchill this was 'shattering news'. CAC, CP, CHAR 20/160/92: Churchill to Dill, 28 March, 1944.

<sup>86</sup> See John Colvin, *Not Ordinary Men: The Battle of Kohima re-assessed* (London: Leo Cooper, 1994); Leslie Edwards, *Kohima, The Furthest Battle: The Story of the Japanese invasion of India in 1944 and the 'British-Indian Thermopylae'* (Stroud: History Press, 2009); Fergal Keane, *Road of Bones, The Siege of Kohima 1944, The Epic Story of the Last Great Stand of Empire* (London: Harper, 2010); and Michael Lowry, *Fighting through to Kohima: A Memoir of War in India and Burma* (London: Leo Cooper, 2003).

<sup>87</sup> Churchill, *Closing the Ring*, p. 501.

<sup>88</sup> Churchill relied on the great men theory of history to anchor the historical narrative used in his memoirs to a loose chronology and subsequently his favourites were allocated more space than those who displeased him. See John Keegan (ed.), *Churchill's Generals* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1991).

<sup>89</sup> Burma Star Association, <http://www.burmastar.org.uk/1944.htm>, last accessed 6 March 2012.

confined' to these two battlefields.<sup>90</sup> Churchill then reverted to describing American successes (such as Stilwell's manipulation of Chinese forces and especially of Chiang Kai-Shek, as well as Merrill's Marauders).<sup>91</sup> He finished this brief chapter on the beginning of the reconquest of Burma by quoting Mountbatten who wrote that 'the Japanese bid for India was virtually over, and ahead lay the prospect of the first major British victory in Burma'.<sup>92</sup> Churchill could not find his own words to express this truth.

The phrase 'forgotten army' is now widely used to refer to Slim's Fourteenth Army, as they not only received little in the way of equipment and supplies but also seemed to be 'neglected by both London and Washington'.<sup>93</sup> Slim's army was also forgotten and glossed over by the British public during the war. In the 'Review of the year 1942', the British public read how the Japanese had attacked Pearl Harbor and how, subsequently, America had been officially brought into the war.<sup>94</sup> They read how 'the Japanese did not pause, but turned at once to attack Burma' and how the Russian, Mediterranean and Middle Eastern war theatres had been under constant attack.<sup>95</sup> The North African campaigns, the Russian resistance to the German offensive, even Malta being awarded the George Cross for its 'heroism and devotion', were all mentioned, but even though 1942 was the year in which the British Empire in the Far East suffered its worst defeats there was no mention of the specific Army units fighting the Japanese in Malaya, Singapore, or Burma.<sup>96</sup> The Eighth Army received several mentions, as did Alexander, Wavell and the American troops. But no mention was made of the Armies fighting in

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<sup>90</sup> Churchill, *Closing the Ring*, p. 501.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 501-02.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 503.

<sup>93</sup> Bayly and Harper, *Forgotten Armies*, p. xxx.

<sup>94</sup> 'Review of the Year, 1942', *The Times*, 2 January 1943, p. 4.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*

Burma, let alone specific mentions of Indian or African troops. Churchill maintained this silence in his memoirs.<sup>97</sup>

Reynolds suggests that Churchill did not, for example, include Slim and the achievements of the Fourteenth Army in his fourth volume of memoirs, due to the more than usual rush, and disorganisation involved, in getting the proofs to the publishers, but this is not entirely convincing.<sup>98</sup> It may be surmised that Churchill did not include the troops in Burma because they were a constant source of humiliation for him. After all, they had, to use Slim's phrase, turned defeat into victory with very little help compared to the other theatres of war and, above all, it had been the Indian Army which had been in the majority.<sup>99</sup> To include them by name, to remember the forgotten, would mean Churchill would have had to revise his opinion of Indian troops.

Churchill's narrative lent heavily towards extolling the virtues of American successes, rather than those of the British and Indian units. Churchill's inability to glance eastwards during the war (especially towards Burma), was magnified during the postwar years, as his contemporary concerns were filled with appeasing American opinion in order for Britain to have access to the once-shared research on atomic bombs. Any postwar discussion of Burma would not only include the virtues of the Indian Army, virtues which Churchill could not accept, but also it would reveal how Burma had been the 'tale of the rejection of one strategic plan after another' due to the divergent and opposed American and

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<sup>97</sup> Slim did not hesitate to confront Churchill on how he and his men had been forgotten all over again. Churchill was only too happy to inform him that the Army would get its due within the final volume of his memoirs. By 1952, Slim was not a man anyone could ignore as, in 1948, Attlee had ensured that Slim succeeded Montgomery as Chief of the Imperial General Staff, and in November 1952 Slim was offered the Governor-Generalship of Australia (a post he held for seven years).

<sup>98</sup> Reynolds, *In Command of History*, p. 402-403.

<sup>99</sup> The phrase 'defeat into victory' is used constantly when referring to the Burma campaigns of 1941 to 1945, and finds its origins in Field Marshal Viscount Slim, *Defeat into Victory* (London: Cassell, 1956).

British purposes.<sup>100</sup> Prasad succinctly encapsulated the American and British perspectives on Burma: ‘one seeking to utilise India for the object of keeping China in the war and hitting Japan directly therefrom, the other keen to get back their old empire in South-East Asia’.<sup>101</sup>

When the pivotal contribution that the Indian Army had made resurfaced in the chronology of his tale, it became one more issue that Churchill gladly glossed over. No doubt the advent of Indian, as well as Burmese, independence contributed to Churchill’s childish snubbing of the Indian Army’s achievements, but Burma had exposed a mass of raw nerves for Churchill. The Indian Army had proved itself to be a formidable fighting unit. An army which quickly adapted to unfamiliar terrain and an army that learnt from its mistakes and became adept at improvisation. Whilst Churchill’s ignominious dismissal of the Indian Army, and especially their role in the reconquest of Burma, was blatant throughout his memoirs it may not be wholly fair to blame subsequent official histories for a similar lapse. After all, one of the most momentous events in Indian history had only just occurred—independence (accompanied by the horrors of partition)—and understandably this became the focus rather than the contribution India, and the Indian Army, had made to the Second World War. However, it is inadequate and unjust to not question Churchill’s disregard of the Indian Army. It is not enough to cite his dismissal by way of his imperialistic, racial assumptions. After all, he changed his mind regarding the Japanese soldier, from non-threatening throughout 1939 and 1940 to a vicious, brutal and dedicated professional soldier by 1943, yet he did not change his mind regarding the Indian soldier.

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<sup>100</sup> S. N. Prasad, K. D. Bhargava, and P. N. Khara (eds), *The Reconquest of Burma, Volume 1* (Orient Longmans: Combined Inter-Services Historical Section, India & Pakistan, 1958), p. xxv.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*

Burma exposed other raw nerves for Churchill. The fragility of the Anglo-American alliance had become highly visible over the problem of Burma; especially over the issue of Churchill's appeasement of Japan's demand to close the Burma Road and American demands to build the Ledo Road. Overall, the weaknesses and cracks in the British Empire east of Suez could no longer be papered over. All of these exposed war-time nerves came to a head in Churchill's post-war world when he was compiling and editing his memoirs, his history. It was a world in which he wanted to remain at centre stage. As the 1950s dawned, Churchill's status as a world-wide, let alone household, name did not change. If anything, his reputation and status was enhanced by *his* portrayal of *his* history of the Second World War. Churchill once said to a young research assistant of his, 'give me the facts ... and I will twist them the way I want to suit my argument' which illustrates the little respect he thought history as a discipline was due.<sup>102</sup>

Spurred on by Professor Tosh's comments about the responsibility of high profile historians, the title of this article suggested that Churchill's narrative of the contribution made by the Indian Army to the Allied victory of the Second World War was not going to be an example of responsible history. Tosh may be primarily concerned with the responsibility that high profile, modern-day historians possess but the antecedents for such an understandable anxiety are found further back in history. What really causes concern is not how Churchill's memoir-history should be taken with more than a pinch of salt, but how it still continues to influence professional historians now. Churchill's legendary pen manipulated history at the expense of the Indian Army as it set the boundaries and limitations which subsequent professional historians would follow. Prasad *et al* may have written the official history of the Indian Army in 1958, but its accuracy and style were never heard above Churchill's more powerful and verbose effort.

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<sup>102</sup> Maurice Ashley, *Churchill as Historian* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1968), p. 18.

The Indian Tiger had struck, it had killed, and it had triumphed.<sup>103</sup> The wartime history was there for Churchill to include, and expand upon. For various reasons, he chose not to. It was at least thirty years after Churchill's death that the history of the Indian Army's contribution to the Allied victory started to be re-located within the fuller history and wider context of the war. The limits and boundaries set down by Churchill's portrayal of the Indian Army have begun to be breached yet, as this article has illustrated, more work is needed. The responsibility for history is shared by all, not just those in high places.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> See Government of India publications, *The Tiger Strikes: The Story Of Indian Troops In North Africa And East Africa* (London: HMSO, 1942); *The Tiger Kills: The Story Of British And Indian Troops With The 8<sup>th</sup> Army In North Africa* (London: HMSO, 1944); and *The Tiger Triumphs: The Story Of Three Great Divisions in Italy* (London: HMSO, 1946).

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