TRANSNATIONAL SOLDIERS

FOREIGN MILITARY ENLISTMENT IN THE MODERN ERA

Edited by Nir Arielli and Bruce Collins

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Foreign Military Enlistment in the Modern Era

Edited by

Nir Arielli
Lecturer in International History, University of Leeds, UK

and

Bruce Collins
Professor of Modern History, Sheffield Hallam University, UK

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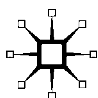

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Nir Arielli
Bruce Collins

Contributors

Editors

Nir Arielli is Lecturer in International History at the University of Leeds and a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society. His field of research is European and Middle Eastern history in the twentieth century, with a special interest in war volunteering. His publications include *Fascist Italy and the Middle East, 1933–40* (2010).

Bruce Collins is Professor of Modern History at Sheffield Hallam. He has written extensively on America in the 1850s. His current research is on aspects of British power projection overseas from the 1770s to 1902. His publications include *War and Empire: The Expansion of Britain 1790–1830* (2010).

Authors

Tomas Balkelis is ERC Research Fellow at the Centre for War Studies, University College Dublin, Ireland. He is also the author of *The Making of Modern Lithuania* (2009). His recent articles were published in the journals *Past & Present* and *Contemporary European History*. He has a particular interest in the modern history of Eastern Europe. His research fields include nationalism, forced migrations, population displacement and paramilitary violence.

Nicholas Farrelly is Research Fellow at the Australian National University's College of Asia and the Pacific. He completed his doctorate at the University of Oxford, where he was a Rhodes Scholar. For the past decade, he has been an active field researcher in Thailand and Burma. He focuses on political and ethnic conflict, especially in borderland regions. Dr Farrelly currently convenes the Australian National University's undergraduate teaching programme in peace, conflict and war studies.

Christian Koller is Senior Lecturer in Modern History at Bangor University and Adjunct Professor at the University of Zurich. His most important publications include *'Von Wilden aller Rassen niedergemetzelt': Die Diskussion um die Verwendung von Kolonialtruppen in Europa zwischen Rassismus, Kolonial- und Militärpolitik (1914–30)* (2001); *'Fremdherrschaft': Ein politischer Kampfbegriff im Zeitalter des Nationalismus* (2005); *Streikkultur: Performanzen und Diskurse des Arbeitskampfes im schweizerisch-österreichischen Vergleich (1860–1950)* (2009); *Rassismus* (2009); and (co-ed.) *Racisms made in Germany* (2011).

Daniel Krebs is Assistant Professor of Colonial and Revolutionary American and Military History at the University of Louisville, Kentucky. He earned his PhD in 2007 from Emory University and has held fellowships at the University of Pennsylvania and Brown University. His research focuses on prisoners of war, particularly common German soldiers in revolutionary hands during the American War of Independence, 1776–83. A monograph on this topic will appear in spring 2013. He has also published various book chapters and articles.

Miles Larmer is Senior Lecturer in International History at the University of Sheffield and Research Fellow in the Department of Historical and Heritage Studies at the University of Pretoria. He has written extensively on Zambia's postcolonial political history. He has edited two books and authored two more, the most recent one being *Rethinking African Politics: A History of Opposition in Zambia* (2011). He is currently writing a book-length history of the Katangese gendarmes, to be published in 2014.

Kevin Linch is Principal Teaching Fellow in History at the University of Leeds and works on the relationships between the military, culture and society in Georgian Britain. His publications include *Britain and Wellington's Army: Recruitment, Society, and Tradition 1807–15* (2011) and a forthcoming collection of essays, co-edited with Matthew McCormack, entitled *Britain's Soldiers: Rethinking War and Society, 1715–1815*.

Dónal O'Sullivan received his PhD in political science in 1995 from Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms University Bonn, Germany, and his habilitation (Dr habil) in modern history and Eastern European contemporary history in 2001 from the Catholic University of Eichstätt, Germany. He has published three monographs, the last entitled *Dealing with the Devil: Anglo-Soviet Intelligence Co-operation During World War II* (2011). He is Associate Professor of History at California State University, Northridge.

Martin Robson is Lecturer at King's College London. He is a specialist in historical maritime economic global conflict and contemporary maritime security. His historical work focuses on Britain's role as a global actor during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and it brings together diplomatic, economic and military policy. He completed his PhD in the Department of War Studies, King's College London. He is the author of *Britain, Portugal and South America in the Napoleonic Wars: Alliances and Diplomacy in Economic Maritime Conflict* (2010) and, with Professor Malyn Newitt, *Lord Beresford and British Intervention in Portugal, 1807–20* (2003).

Daniel Owen Spence is Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the University of the Free State, South Africa. He works on twentieth-century imperial

and naval history, addressing issues of identity, racial ideology, the cultural impact of war and the role of the navy in postcolonial nation-building. He obtained his PhD from Sheffield Hallam University in May 2012 with his thesis titled 'Imperialism and Identity in British Colonial Naval Culture, 1930s to Decolonisation'. He is a board member of the Center for International Maritime Security and has previously had work published in the *International Journal of Naval History*, *Global War Studies* and *Reviews in History*.

Marcella Pellegrino Sutcliffe is Research Associate at Cambridge University. Her work has focused on aspects of nineteenth-century transnationalism, including volunteering and connections between Victorian radicals and Italian democrats. She is a contributing scholar of the Garibaldi Panorama team at Brown University and is peer reviewer for the journal *Modern Italy*. Her publications include 'Mazzini's Transnational Legacy among British Co-operators (c. 1885–1949)', *Labour History Review*, December 2012; 'Marketing Garibaldi Panoramas in Britain (1860–64)', *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, Special Issue (January, 2013); and 'Negotiating the "Garibaldi Moment" in Newcastle-upon-Tyne (1854–61)', *Modern Italy*, May 2010, Volume 15, Issue 2, 129–48.

Chen Tzoref-Ashkenazi received his PhD in history from Tel Aviv University and is currently a guest researcher at the South Asia Institute of the University of Heidelberg. He is the author of *Der romantische Mythos vom Ursprung der Deutschen: Friedrich Schlegels Suche nach der indogermanischen Verbindung* (2009). His main areas of interest include early German orientalism, eighteenth-century colonial discourse in Germany and eighteenth-century travel literature on India. His book *German Soldiers in Colonial India* is scheduled for publication in 2014.

1
Introduction: Transnational Military Service since the Eighteenth Century

Nir Arielli and Bruce Collins

The nature and implications of military service have been extensively debated in recent years. While since the end of the Cold War non-state conflicts have become more prominent, the period from the French revolutionary *levée en masse* in 1793 to the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 has often been depicted as one in which the mass, largely conscripted and nationally defined army provided the model for military mobilization. Indeed, until the 1990s, the history of military mobilization was traditionally treated in a fairly linear fashion. Professional and limited in size, the armies of the *ancien régime* were essentially drawn from the two opposite ends of the social scale and often incorporated mercenaries from foreign lands or relied on additional battalions hired from other states. Conversely, twentieth-century armies were large, mostly based on systematic conscription, and rooted in ideas of the national state, in whose service citizens were obliged, or at least encouraged, to fight. The exact starting point of the transition from the former to the latter is disputed. Let us first of all examine the evolution of mass recruitment from within the territories of states. Peter the Great introduced an early form of conscription in Russia in 1705.[1] There were also eighteenth-century attempts to widen military service in Prussia. These arose from a particular conjunction of factors. A small population and a financially poor state created difficulties for an ambitious monarchy, trying to expand its territories in a region without natural frontiers and exposed to greater powers. The only way for Prussia – and for other German states that followed suit – to compete militarily was to compel military service. Conscripts were cheaper and more readily available.

The traditional military history narrative, at least as far as Europe is concerned, sees the French Revolution as an important turning point in the 'nationalization' of military service.[2] The Declaration of the Rights of Man (1789) stressed that the security of both citizens and their rights requires public military forces, established for the good of all rather than the personal advantage of the sovereign. The declaration also stipulated that a common

contribution was essential for the maintenance of these public forces. Writing a few decades later, Clausewitz remarked that in 1793 war had 'suddenly become an affair of the people', all of whom regarded themselves as citizens of the state. Whereas in the past war had been a cabinet affair, now a whole nation with its 'natural weight' came into the scale.[3] Citizens had a stake in the defence of their state with military service becoming a symbol of model citizenship. The first defenders of the revolution were volunteers, mostly of bourgeois background. When their number proved insufficient, the Republic attempted to call up the entire male population capable of bearing arms. As the social composition of the military changed, so did its image. The armed forces, composed as they were of sons, brothers and husbands, were – or were supposed to be – the subject of the population's admiration rather than fear.[4]

The explosion of ideas from the 1790s and early 1800s has prompted Russell Weigley to see in the *levée en masse* 'the first forging of the thunderbolt of a new kind of war – the total war of nations pitting against each other all their resources and passion'.[5] Similarly, for David Bell, the Republic's leaders fought 'not simply to defeat France's enemies but to destroy them and to absorb the broken pieces of their regimes into new configurations of power'. Additionally, war became a higher calling, for the extirpation of evil was a necessary preliminary to an age of international stability and peace.[6] According to Geoffrey Best, Napoleon's conquests inadvertently exported the notions of the nationalization of war and 'the militarization of national feeling' beyond the frontiers of France so that they 'burst out all over Europe in the winter of 1812–13'.[7]

However, the move to mass conscription, the strict linkage between state, nation, citizen and soldier, and the insistence on the 1790s and 1800s as a revolutionary turning point in military affairs have been called into question. For example, Deborah Avant has argued that the shift to conscript armies and the accompanying cult of the citizen-soldier flowed essentially from specific political responses to military pressures. France in 1793 and Prussia after 1806 reacted to threatened or actual defeat by embracing conscription because their political leadership was in flux and their governments desperately sought military expedients which could not be found by adherence to the military status quo. Avant concluded that 'Without the Prussian interpretation of the battles of Jena and Auerstadt as demonstrations of the superior fighting capability of citizens, the path toward small professional armies might not have been abandoned'. The success of French conscript armies in 1793–97 and of the Prussian *levée en masse* in 1813–14 vindicated the experiment and established a new military model.[8] A different line of criticism has been offered by Arthur Waldron, who concluded a volume of essays on the subject by stressing that the idea of the *levée* was more powerful than the reality. Across a wide range of examples in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the *levée* in reality was brief, partial and

contested.[9] Even during the wars of 1792–1815 the development of mass, national armies has been qualified by Ute Planert. Large armies were formed, but they were not necessarily in being for long periods. National feelings were aroused, but soldiers deserted in substantial numbers, even from the French armies. Conscription came into force, but exemptions from service were widely obtained.[10]

Recent research has, therefore, cast doubts about the linear development of conscription as a direct consequence of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars. After 1815, as militarism became unpopular, Prussia alone among the European states retained universal military service without exemption or substitution. Instead, it was the international crises and short wars of the 1850s and 1860s that ushered in a new era of powerful states and more widespread conscription. However, even this shift was not universal. Britain did not turn to conscription until 1916 and even then only temporarily. In many countries beyond Europe and North America the 'nationalization' of military service and the creation of a heroic image of the citizen-soldier did not take place before the second half of the twentieth century. In China, for instance, the negative Confucian perception of soldiery persisted until, under Mao, the old proverb 'Do not waste good iron for nails or good men for soldiers' was replaced by a new heroic victor narrative.[11]

Let us turn now to cross-border mercenary service, which was unexceptionable before the late eighteenth century. Was the 1917 *Enciclopedia universal ilustrada europeo-americana* of Madrid correct in stating that 'Since the Napoleonic Wars, the use of mercenary troops seems to have disappeared for ever'?[12]

The shift from professional armies that relied heavily on mercenaries to national armies can partially be explained through changes in the political landscape and improvements in infrastructure. The golden age of mercenary mobilization in Europe coincided with a period when continental borders were ill-defined and persistently contested. Since so much fighting occurred in central Europe, the obvious place to recruit men was from among the numerous, mostly small and weak, Germanic states and in neighbouring areas. This system became unsustainable after 1815. There were far fewer states in central Europe, while Prussia had expanded its territory and population appreciably. Consequently, the transfer market in military service contracted with the disappearance of early modern recruitment loci. Apart from the increased 'national' self-consciousness of the governments of the principal states, transport links were faster and more plentiful, making it easier for continental European governments to raise troops from within their own territories and move them swiftly to their borderlands and the seats of war. Not only did Prussian territorial expansion and military wariness make it difficult for non-German powers to recruit within the reduced number of minor German states, but better roads and the spread of railways in continental Europe made it less important to do so.

Janice Thomson argues that states played a more purposive role in eliminating mercenarism. Governments wanted to avoid being unwittingly dragged into foreign conflicts. The U.S. Neutrality Act of 1794, emulated as it was by other countries, heralded a gradual change in international norms that made states responsible for the actions of their citizens, a process which led to the placing of restrictions on foreign enlistment and recruitment. By extending their right to control citizens' actions not just within a country but also beyond their boundaries, states during the nineteenth century suppressed large-scale mercenary mobilization. Greater state authority and stronger links between citizen and state not only created the notion of the citizen-soldier but also destroyed the legality and credibility of the mercenary.[13]

However, 'non-state' mobilization did not disappear. A recent volume of essays has questioned the conventional assumption that violence in the modern era has been exercised primarily under 'public' control, emphasizing the persistence of 'private' expressions of violence by mercenaries, pirates and bandits. According to Tarak Barkawi, the nineteenth and twentieth centuries did not witness a 'world of Weberian states' with territorial monopolies on the legitimate use of force. During the Cold War, for instance, both the USA and the USSR advanced their interests by providing wide-ranging 'advice and support' for client armies and insurgents around the world. Thus, the 'coercive power of states has international and transnational dimensions which call into question the adequacy of the idea of the territorial monopolies as a way of thinking about the global organization of force and state power'.[14]

The present volume goes a step further. One of its aims is to show that the break with the early modern past was not sharp and universal. The history of military mobilization does not fit neatly into national boxes, not even in the modern era. In fact, the movement from mixed eighteenth-century armies to national armies has often been described in historically inaccurate terms. Governments and military commanders were often forced to turn to transnational recruitment as a result of severe manpower shortages. Napoleon's armies were far from homogeneous in composition. Half the army he led into Russia in 1812 consisted of Germans, Poles, Italians and many others. In the late 1810s and early 1820s thousands of Europeans fought in the armies of Simón Bolívar against the Spanish in the wars of national liberation in Latin America.[15] Soldiers from non-combatant states took part in the Greek war against the Ottoman Empire in the 1820s, the internal struggles in the Iberian Peninsula in the 1830s and the war between Uruguay and the Argentine Confederation in the 1840s.[16] Later, recruitment from among enemy prisoners of war, which the international conventions of The Hague (1907) and Geneva (1929) sought to abolish, was still practised extensively in both World Wars.[17] During World War II, the *Waffen-SS* recruited men of German extraction from outside Germany,

including Holland, Hungary and Romania, as well as non-Germans in the Baltic states, Albania, Yugoslavia and elsewhere.[18] Exiled Polish pilots took part in the defence of Britain in 1940 and deserting Japanese soldiers and officers were recruited by the Vietminh to assist in the struggle against the French Expeditionary Corps from late 1945 until the early 1950s. As with many other foreign troops since the late eighteenth century, their military contribution was down-played in post-war national histories.[19]

The ambiguities around transnational recruitment and expanded state authority were particularly marked in the mobilization of colonial peoples. When European powers expanded overseas in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries they tended to use small armies of European soldiers. Indigenous peoples often joined invading armies as allies, to secure advantages in local power struggles, but they were rarely integrated into colonizing armies. Once non-settler colonies grew in geographical extent, it became increasingly difficult to protect and extend them by using only European troops. By the 1790s, the British East India Company operated three armies in India consisting principally of 80,000 locally recruited sepoys. By the mid-1820s those numbers had grown to 230,000 sepoys.[20] In their Caribbean island colonies, the British in the 1800s created West Indian regiments of slaves and ex-slaves to meet a regional manpower crisis; these men were less prone to tropical diseases, notably yellow fever and malaria, which speedily killed European troops in the Caribbean.[21] Various kinds of indigenous recruitment flourished in the nineteenth century. It would be mistaken to dismiss such a phenomenon as a distant 'colonial' aberration. Controlling the British Empire, which in 1923 covered 23 per cent of the world's land area and which included India, the world's second most populous country, was no peripheral task. The British Army in nineteenth-century India, as has often been stressed, was the largest regular army in the world, and it consisted of volunteers who were not citizens. During World War I, that army swelled to more than two million troops, without conscription. Judging from their letters, these soldiers fought above all to gain and preserve *izzat* – their honour, standing, reputation or prestige.[22] Any notion that they were mere colonial subjects serving their sovereign authority requires at the least refinement if not reconsideration. An important source for the recruitment of Indian sepoys from the 1820s was the region of Oudh (Awadh), which did not become part of British India until 1856. During and after the Mutiny-Rebellion of 1857–59 the locus of recruitment shifted to the Punjab, which was annexed by the British only in 1849, and Nepal, which remained outside the empire and continues to furnish Gurkha volunteers for the British Army today. Similarly ambiguous patterns of military mobilization occurred elsewhere. From 1882 the British exerted considerable influence in Egypt without ever establishing sovereignty over that principality. They created the Anglo-Egyptian army of 20,000 troops by the late 1890s. This force played a critical role in the subjugation of the Sudan in 1898.[23] Yet while

it contributed significantly to the British projection of regional power, this army was neither an Egyptian national force nor a British colonial entity.

The recruitment of non-Europeans was not confined to the British. The French established a specialist colonial warfare force in their Foreign Legion, based in Algeria but deployable elsewhere in the French empire. Local people were mobilized into African and South East Asian regiments to defend the colonies that France had acquired. During World War II hundreds of thousands of North and West Africans were deployed by the French first in Italy and later in France. It is often forgotten that the two most dramatic defeats suffered by the British and French in 'colonial' warfare, in the retreat from Kabul in 1842 and at Dien Bien Phu in 1954 respectively, involved imperial armies which consisted largely of non-European troops. Other European empires were not far behind. The Dutch colonial army in Indonesia became ever more reliant on Javanese and Ambonese recruits in the nineteenth century. Its Central Directorate of Training recruited and trained 13,000 local men as late as 1946–48.[24] The Italian colonial army mobilized *askaris* in Eastern Africa and was still recruiting troops in British Aden, across the Red Sea, in 1935.[25] A year later, in the Spanish Civil War, General Francisco Franco's most fearsome troops were Moroccans. Such military hybrids, continuing well into the twentieth century, severely qualify the dominant model of a fundamental shift towards citizen armies by the late nineteenth century.

The near ubiquity of transnational service in armed conflicts of the nineteenth, twentieth and twenty-first centuries begs the question: when is transnational service transnational? The legal criterion of citizenship goes some way towards distinguishing between transnational soldiers and those serving their own state. Thus, the Irish-Americans who served in the Union or Confederate armies in the American Civil War cannot be treated as transnational soldiers, even though their national identities and loyalties may very well have been fluid.[26] On the other hand, Irishmen who were recruited in Ireland to fight in America or the British sailors who served on board the Confederate steamer *Alabama* can be categorized as transnational soldiers because they were not citizens of either of the warring entities when they enlisted. Accordingly, UN troops should be considered as international rather than transnational military personnel because they are citizen-soldiers, who officially represent sovereign states, and are deployed abroad with the authorization of their governments. However, a classification of national and transnational soldiers based solely on citizenship has its limitations. Globally, the transition from subjects to citizens has been gradual and uneven. A clear case can be made that the revolutionary rhetoric of 1793 forged a political and perhaps emotional connection, at least for a time, between the newly uplifted French citizen-soldier and the nation he was required enthusiastically and willingly to defend. But did the 40 per cent of the soldiers of the British Army in 1830 who were Irishmen share an

analogous sense of serving a nation in which they were respected citizens? Did the Slav majority of privates in the Austro-Hungarian army of the late nineteenth century regard themselves as citizen-soldiers in a force whose officer corps belonged mainly to the German minority in the empire and whose commands were in German? These subject-soldiers constituted a transitional group who were not technically mercenaries – they served their own state and they were often conscripted – but who were not citizens in the French revolutionary or modern senses of that term. Instead, they formed national minority populations within larger political entities. Hence, we are left with a complex reality where black, white and a few shades of grey co-exist.

The continued persistence of mercenarism and other forms of transnational mobilization in turn raises questions about volunteers' motivations and choices. A great deal of work has been done on the related questions of why men and women join armies and why, once they experience the realities of campaigning and fighting, they continue to serve in them. The findings on volunteering for national armies offer mixed and tentative explanations. The strongest impulse for volunteering in a national cause arises when a country is invaded or seems to be in imminent danger of invasion. For example, the threat of a French invasion of England in 1803–05 stimulated military volunteering by hundreds of thousands of men. National humiliation without any threat of invasion of the homeland also spurred volunteering, as during so-called 'Black Week' in December 1899 when the Boer republics inflicted three battlefield defeats on British forces in southern Africa. This response could be seen as a manifestation of a 'British world' view, in which attacks upon British subjects in Natal and Cape Colony were perceived as threats to British subjects anywhere. More than 100,000 men from the UK, as well as significant contingents from the Australian colonies, from New Zealand and from Canada, fought in South Africa in 1900–02 (though the volunteers from the settler colonies, another grey-zone category, were also spurred by reasons specific to their societies).[27] In August 1914 British volunteering accelerated when news from the Battle of Mons suggested that the Germans might break the French armies and open the way to an invasion of mainland Britain. Fears of encirclement and Russian aggression provided the generalized threat to which Germans responded in the crisis of that summer.[28] The sense of external threat could thus be the result of long-standing rivalries and tensions rather than the reaction to immediate or discrete events. Men who joined border protection units in eastern Prussia in the 1920s were motivated by a fear of local Polish assertiveness in a region where Poles had long been suppressed by the Germans.[29]

In fact, it is possible to offer various explanations for volunteering: a sense of patriotic duty, particularly in a crisis, and a reaction to threats from alien ethnic or national groups were often accompanied by a response to pressure

from peers or social superiors, or an acceptance of financial rewards. The above-average volunteering by British professional men in 1914–16 arose, in part, from peer pressure and the intensity of expectation that men of 'position' in society should lead by example in answering national calls to serve. For poorer men, or the unemployed, material inducements may well have been decisive.[30] A sense of adventure or a longing to get away from an inhibiting environment at home can also be cited as motivating factors. For women and religious or ethnic minorities, the hope of achieving integration, emancipation, equality and acceptance was often a central reason for volunteering.[31] Linking these varying impulses was public discourse about the reciprocal obligations of citizen to state, newly defined from the 1790s and vigorously disseminated by the late nineteenth century. Service in the military became a moral obligation, a badge of good citizenship and an attribute of fellow-feeling within both local and national communities.

Such civic idealism, or at least the sense of acceptable obligation, was less easy to sustain once citizen-soldiers became immersed in prolonged campaigning. At some point, most conscripts or volunteers encountered boredom, frustration or even disillusionment with the grand objectives or ideals which accompanied their entry into active military service. Professional self-respect, reciprocal support for fellow-soldiers in the platoon or company and possibly the regiment, and perhaps professional pride in soldiering provided the psychological glue holding individuals to their military duties. The overwhelming evidence of soldiers in action indicates that small-group identity and camaraderie rather than broad ideological commitments explains military cohesion in war.[32]

How far are these conclusions from the study of national volunteering compatible with the phenomenon of transnational volunteering? We start with the initial definitional challenge that eighteenth-century volunteering has been categorized as mercenarism, and thus linked with mere financial motivations. Yet mercenaries are usually also described as acceptably efficient troops, thus opening up the possibility that mercenarism might have been the outcome of individuals' dedication to the military life and indeed to military professionalism as much as the pursuit of income. The first section of this volume seeks to tackle these and other issues. The motivations and wartime experiences of eighteenth-century German recruits who fought in North America, India and the Dutch Empire are examined in the chapters by Daniel Krebs and Chen Tzoref Ashkenazi. The chapter by Kevin Linch assesses transnational mobilization in the British Army during the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars. Not all of the soldiers analysed in this section would have described themselves as mercenaries. In some cases they were part of an army hired out by one state to another. In the 1790s and early 1800s, foreign recruits could be motivated by counter-revolutionary ideals or anti-French sentiments and not merely by the prospect of financial gain. More broadly, the section highlights how traditional, institutionalized

early modern foreign recruitment began to change form in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century as a result of the growth of European imperialism and the advent of political nationalism.

Since the nineteenth century, transnational service has taken on a number of forms. As the volume's second section illustrates, the gradual disappearance of mercenary armies in Europe was offset by a growing reliance on colonial troops. The case study of nineteenth-century British India is analysed by Bruce Collins while Daniel Spence looks at colonial recruits in the Royal Navy during World War II and Christian Koller focuses on recruitment practices in the French Foreign Legion. These chapters combine a top-down approach, assessing the rationale, interests, anxieties and racial prejudices of military leaders commanding transnational forces, with a bottom-up approach that looks at enlistment from the perspective of transnational soldiers and sailors. In this two-way process, reflections will be offered on the impact of ideas about martial races disseminated by Victorians and their European contemporaries, and developed well into the twentieth century.

The end of multinational empires has given rise to another form of transnational mobilization. The volume's third section examines the phenomenon of military service in armies constituted or reconstituted in the wake of a colonial power's withdrawal or collapse. Tomas Balkelis traces the establishment of the Lithuanian army at the end of World War I. Here, officers who were demobilized from the imperial Russian army found themselves fighting alongside German volunteer units against the invading Red Army. Nicholas Farrelly examines the transnational military labour market in Burma and Thailand in the second half of the twentieth century while Miles Larmer shows how the changing identity of the Katangese gendarmes transcended postcolonial state borders in central Africa and their military involvement crossed the ideological boundaries of the Cold War. These case studies of cross-border military service highlight soldiers' national, factional, ethnic, financial and ideological motives for fighting. Thus the chapters represent an analytical shift from a focus on the state's service to choices as to who an individual or particular groups might serve.

The fourth section of the volume is focused on transnational soldiers who do not fall into the colonial or the borderland categories. A central theme in this section is the novel phenomenon of transnational volunteers for whom ideology was a motivating factor. Ideological volunteering can be considered specifically modern first because it was often inspired by ideologies which did not exist before the modern era such as nineteenth-century radicalism or twentieth-century communism and fascism. Second, within the nineteenth- and twentieth-century contexts of citizens' obligations, hardening interstate borders, and increasing national and international limitations on foreign enlistment, the position of individuals who chose to fight in another country without leave from their government has no parallel in early modern warfare. Martin Robson explores the actions and motivations

of British volunteers who intervened in the First Carlist War in Spain in the 1830s. The chapter by Marcella Pellegrino Sutcliffe examines the origins and experiences of English volunteers who joined Giuseppe Garibaldi in the campaigns of the Risorgimento in southern Italy. Nir Arielli assesses the push and pull factors which combined to bring men and women to join the International Brigades during the Spanish Civil War. The role of coercion and the struggle for survival in creating transnational soldiers is tackled by Dónal O'Sullivan. He examines a group of Soviet World War II POWs who were made to join the German army and, following their second capture, the Allied cause. The concluding chapter of the volume shows how, in addition to ideology, feelings of kinship, religious affinity and 'long-distance nationalism' among diaspora communities have influenced transnational volunteers. It also examines the increased presence of transnational military contractors since the end of the Cold War.

The long-term dimension of non-national participation in warfare enables us to understand the context from which contemporary transnational involvement in non-state conflicts has emerged. For instance, the desire to assist in the struggle of co-religionists, with dramatic examples from recent years, arguably preserves a form of mobilization which dates back to the Crusades, if not earlier. This critique of the state-centred approach to modern military mobilization is part of a wider deconstruction of what Andreas Wimmer and Nina Glick Schiller called 'methodological nationalism'. As they and many others in recent years have shown, the assumption that the nation-state provides the natural social and political form of the modern world resulted in a limiting of the analytical horizon and a removal of transborder connections and processes from the picture.[33] Far from exhausting all the different aspects and case studies of the multifaceted phenomenon of transnational military mobilization, the contributions in this volume, with their comparative and long durée approach, aim to provide an incentive for further research.

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Section I

Re-examining the Decline of Mercenary Armies, 1776–1815

2

Desperate for Soldiers: The Recruitment of German Prisoners of War during the American War of Independence, 1776–83

Daniel Krebs

Johann Conrad Döhla, a common soldier in the Ansbach-Bayreuth Regiment von Seybothen, was an astute observer. In a detailed journal, this veteran chronicled what happened to him and his fellow-soldiers from the Holy Roman Empire while they served as British subsidy troops during the American War of Independence.[1] Taken captive at Lord Cornwallis' surrender of Yorktown on 19 October 1781, Döhla and fellow-soldiers from four German regiments were brought to Frederick, Maryland, and stayed there in captivity until 1783.[2] About one year into their captivity, at the end of September 1782, Döhla noted a strange sight in town. Fifty German prisoners of war were led out of town after they had enlisted with revolutionary American troops. Over several weeks, American recruitment officers had come into the captives' barracks with 'music and also women'.[3] On 22 October 1782, one of Döhla's superiors, Lieutenant Johann Ernst Prechtel, reported on another transport of 20 recruits from the four captive German regiments in Frederick.[4] A few days before Christmas, on 21 December 1782, Döhla saw about 40 former Ansbach-Bayreuth soldiers who had signed up with yet another revolutionary American unit, Charles Armand Tuffin's Legion, and guarded a number of captured British soldiers, their former comrades, while marching through town.[5]

Why did American revolutionaries recruit German prisoners of war for their struggle against King George III and his armies? When the conflict between 13 English colonies in North America and the British motherland erupted in April 1775, revolutionary leaders in Congress and elsewhere wanted to fight with citizen-soldiers who rose in defence of their homes and joined militia units to push back British tyranny. In their *Declaration of Independence* on 4 July 1776, the colonies listed as one of their main grievances that George III had hired thousands of German subsidy troops, 'large Armies of foreign Mercenaries', to complete 'the works of death, desolation and

tyranny... scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized nation'.[6] If those Germans, professional soldiers from European standing armies, embodied everything the colonists believed was wrong about the British Empire, how had they become suitable recruits by 1781?

Manpower needs

The great military enthusiasm that swept through the colonial population in 1775, particularly in New England, soon subsided and the Continental Army suffered from severe manpower shortages after 1776.[7] It became clear that those revolutionary colonists who were actually willing to serve in the military were motivated less by patriotism than by other factors such as bounties, pay, food and shelter.[8] The solution was to create a European-style standing army of trained and drilled soldiers who had to serve for three years or the duration of the war.[9] Congress and the states, then, were forced to search for military wage labourers, men who were willing to serve professionally in an army.[10] But recruitment campaigns repeatedly brought fewer soldiers into the army than were needed.[11] This lack of recruits prompted both Congress and the states to look for recruits among parts of the population previously considered unreliable.[12]

In this situation, it was not surprising that the revolutionaries would eventually also turn toward enemy captives as potential recruits. This was, after all, common practice in every early modern European army.[13] In fact, Pennsylvania revolutionaries had already recruited among the very first British prisoners of war in their hands. At Fort Chambly, on 18 October 1775, and during the Siege of Fort Saint-Jean between September and 3 November 1775, revolutionary forces invading Canada under generals Montgomery and Arnold captured hundreds of British troops from the 7th (Royal Fusiliers) and 26th (Cameronian) Regiments of Foot. Congress ordered on 17 November 1775 that these prisoners of war be kept in Reading, York, Carlisle and Lancaster in Pennsylvania.[14] In January 1776, American recruiters recruited a drummer and sergeant from these prisoners.[15]

Members of Congress and General Washington strongly opposed such recruitment campaigns among captives. These revolutionary leaders believed that soldiers or prisoners who had defected from the enemy could not be trusted and were thus unfit for American military service.[16] In 1778, Congress stated explicitly, 'experience hath proved that no confidence can be placed in prisoners of war or deserters from the enemy, who inlist into the Continental Army; but many losses and great mischiefs have frequently happened by them'.[17] General Washington ordered on 5 February 1781 that revolutionary recruitment officers were not allowed 'to Inlist any Deserter from the enemy, nor any person of Disaffected or Suspicious character, with Respect of the Government of these States'.[18]

The states, however, ignored such directives. They were primarily concerned to recruit men into the army whose absence did not hurt their local community and economy. Prisoners of war were trained soldiers and their recruitment reduced the burdens placed upon the towns where prisoners were detained. But in 1778, pressured by ever-increasing manpower needs, Congress briefly allowed two independent units to recruit among captured enemies. For both units, significantly, the focus lay on German prisoners of war.

Recruitment efforts

To understand what happened that year and made Congress change its mind, albeit only temporarily, one has to go back and study the very beginning of the conflict in 1775 and 1776. The British subsidy treaties naturally concerned American revolutionaries – militarily, of course, but also politically. It did not matter for them that European states had since long used such agreements to enlarge their standing armies. Rather, because these auxiliaries were not a side to the original conflict, and did not even come from the British motherland, they embodied everything that the revolutionaries considered wrong with the military, society, and the relationship between sovereigns and subjects in the British Empire. These men, as part of a European standing army, were hated as mercenaries. The *Pennsylvania Evening Post* wrote on 30 March 1776 that the Germans were mercenaries who had ‘neither property nor families to fight for’ and who had ‘no principle, either of honour, religion, public spirit, regard for liberty, or love of country’.[19]

In the eyes of leading revolutionaries, however, German subsidy soldiers for the British were not just mercenaries but also victims of princely tyranny. As Mercy Otis Warren described it later, the Germans were both ‘barbarous strangers’, who assisted the British in their unjust attempt to subjugate the colonies, but also ‘slaves’, who suffered under European despotism just as much as the American colonists did.[20] From the start, thus, American revolutionaries remained convinced that German soldiers could easily be enticed to desert from British lines. When the first German contingents set foot on North American soil in August 1776, Congress immediately appointed a committee ‘to devise a plan for encouraging the Hessians, and other foreigners, employed by the king of Great Britain, and sent to America . . . to quit that iniquitous service’. The idea was that such troops would gladly accept ‘lands, liberty, safety and a communion of good laws, and mild government, in a country where many of their friends and relations are already happily settled’.[21]

The first test for these assumptions came on 16 October 1776, when Brigadier General Hugh Mercer staged a raid on British-occupied Staten Island and captured nine British soldiers and eight men from the

Hessen-Kassel Regiment von Trümbach. Less concerned with the British soldiers, Mercer wanted the Germans to be treated particularly well.[22] He suggested to Congress that the Hessen-Kassel soldiers be kept only for a short time as prisoners of war in Philadelphia. In the revolutionary capital, under guided supervision, the captives should learn from German immigrants about the advantages of life in North America. Enticed in this way, Mercer was certain, the prisoners would only give the 'most favourable report of this country' upon their exchange and return to British lines. These reports, he believed, would then lead other German auxiliaries to desert and weaken the British war effort.[23]

Indeed, one month after the raid on Staten Island, on 16 November 1776, following an extensive tour of Philadelphia and its surroundings under the guidance of Christopher Ludwick, a German immigrant from Hessen-Darmstadt and prominent revolutionary, the eight captured German soldiers were released.[24] The Americans also gave the men several packets of the handbills that Congress had drafted in August 1776. However, to the revolutionaries' great disappointment, neither the handbills nor the stories of these former prisoners of war in Philadelphia increased desertion rates among the German auxiliaries.[25] In fact, desertion rates among Hessen-Kassel units in 1776 remained very low. Only 66 Hessen-Kassel deserters are recorded for that year.[26] Not even one of the prisoners who had received such favourable treatment in Philadelphia deserted.[27] An anonymous Hessen-Kassel soldier explained in mid-September 1776 that he and his fellow-soldiers remained loyal because the revolutionaries around New York simply did not impress them. While British and German troops, 'were sufficiently supplied with provisions and rum, the Rebels lacked the latter as well as clothing'.[28]

When the first large group of German soldiers, about 900 Hessen-Kassel soldiers from three regiments, fell into revolutionary hands at Trenton on Christmas Day 1776, Congress and General Washington tried again to induce these British auxiliaries to desert. The commander of the Continental Army told the Pennsylvania Council of Safety on 29 December 1776, that the Hessen-Kassel prisoners from Trenton should be treated well and have 'such principles instilled into them during their Confinement' that when they return, 'they may open the Eyes of their Countrymen'.[29] The Pennsylvania Council of Safety reminded local citizens on 31 December 1776 that the German prisoners of war 'now justly excite our compassion – They have no Enmity with us'. It was 'Britain alone' that had to be fought and the Germans had arrived in North America only 'according to the arbitrary customs of the tyrannical German princes'.[30]

Such efforts by Congress and General Washington to induce German subsidy troops to desert, however, did not mean that they could also be recruited into the revolutionary military. Disrupting the British war effort through desertion was one thing, but enlisting those deserters was something entirely different. Congress and Washington only changed their opinion temporarily

in 1778 when the British prepared to leave Philadelphia, the revolutionary capital they had occupied since September 1777. A large prisoner exchange for the Trenton captives had been negotiated and the Continental Army, as well as other revolutionary forces, suffered from manpower problems.

Congress now allowed Polish Count Pulaski to raise an independent corps recruited among prisoners of war around Lancaster, Pennsylvania, where most of the Trenton captives stayed. Pulaski, similar to the Marquis de Lafayette, Friedrich Wilhelm von Steuben or Thaddeus Kosciusko, was one of many European officers and adventurers who, out of idealism or sheer need of employment, fought for the American revolutionaries between 1776 and 1783 and were courted by the Continental Congress for their military expertise. After only a few days, however, Congress withdrew its previous approval for the recruitment of prisoners of war. On 5 June 1778, Thomas McKean, for Congress, and Timothy Pickering, for the Board of War, reaffirmed in a letter to the commissary of prisoners in Lancaster, William A. Atlee, that prisoners of war could not be recruited under any circumstances. Although, McKean wrote, the revolutionaries presently had more prisoners in their hands than the British, this surplus should be used to negotiate with the British about an exchange of American citizens and office holders but not for recruitment purposes. But, just like some of the states earlier in the war, Count Pulaski in 1778 cared little about such considerations. He carried on recruiting among prisoners of war, particularly among German captives.[31]

These men were soon also targeted by two high-ranking deserters from the Hessen-Kassel troops, Ensigns Führer from the Regiment von Knyphausen and Kleinschmidt from the Regiment Rall, who offered Congress in August 1778 to raise a special corps of German soldiers among the Trenton prisoners.[32] They claimed that they were only driven by the 'zeal . . . to Shew our gratitude for the Friendship we Received of the Americans during our Imprisonment of fifteen Months'. The reason why so few German soldiers previously switched sides, these former Hessen-Kassel officers claimed, was the 'want of . . . non-commissioned officers with whom [the men] [could] speak' in their native tongue. Thus, they wanted to focus their recruitment efforts on this particular group of captives.[33]

Congress and the Board of War, as well as Washington and General von Steuben, a Prussian-born officer and the Continental Army's Inspector General, were initially intrigued by this proposal and decided on 2 September 1778 to support the plan and the creation of a new unit, to be called the German Volunteers. Lieutenant Colonel Klein, a German immigrant from Pennsylvania, was to lead the overall recruitment effort for the new unit.[34] But not as many German prisoners decided to enlist with the German Volunteers as Führer and Kleinschmidt had hoped and promised. Hence, on 20 October 1778, the Board of War asked Congress to lay aside 'the Plan for recruiting the Corps, to be called the German Volunteers'. Instead, Klein was to be transferred to General Pulaski's corps because he was a 'worthy

Man' and a 'good Officer'. Führer and Kleinschmidt, however, should be dismissed with just one-month's pay because they could not be trusted. At least partly, Congress reached this conclusion because of another German deserter, Lieutenant Juliat, who was offered a commission in Count Pulaski's corps but returned to the British lines. It was believed that Juliat had told British Major Ferguson about Pulaski's lax defences around Little Egg Harbor. Ferguson's subsequent raid caused a number of casualties. Concerned with his own reputation, Pulaski blamed the disaster entirely on Juliat, discrediting him and other potential deserters who might have wanted to join American forces.[35]

A number of reasons explain why German prisoners of war in 1778 did not defect in larger numbers. As in 1776, German captives saw first-hand that the American revolutionaries, particularly their military, continued to struggle with numerous problems. The Continental Army constantly lacked adequate pay, housing, uniforms and shelter. The Americans also continued to lose battles. In addition, defection in North America was a difficult decision for German auxiliaries of the British. Defectors across the Atlantic Ocean could hardly expect to return to their units or families easily if they ever decided to reverse their decision, as happened often among deserters in the early modern period. Moreover, if they wanted to fulfil the promise of a better life in North America, it was much less risky and more convenient to melt away into the countryside through work as prisoner-labourers. Particularly in Pennsylvania, but also in many other regions such as the Shenandoah Valley, German prisoners of war lived and worked among tens of thousands of German immigrants.[36]

Captivity for common soldiers in American hands between 1776 and 1783 most often meant labour rather than confinement. This practice had already started in 1775, when the first British troops were captured, and it soon involved local authorities, state governments and Congress in all places where British or German prisoners were kept. By the spring and summer of 1777, Americans around Lancaster routinely hired Hessen-Kassel prisoners of war from Trenton. Prisoner-labourers allowed Congress and local communities to reduce the costs of keeping enemy captives because contractors or private citizens, who employed the prisoners, had to house and supply these men. In addition, labour-shortages plagued many areas and prisoners of war helped to fill the gap.[37] This practice also greatly satisfied the captives. Labour allowed them to leave crowded quarters, eat better rations and even earn additional pay. From Lancaster in 1777, a Hessen-Kassel Private, Johannes Reuber, reported that Hessian prisoner-labourers still received 'one pound of bread and one pound of meat' in cash from the government while their employer also gave them 'food and drink'. They even earned a little cash and everything was 'all right' for this prisoner in 1777 and 1778.[38]

A decisive turn

Until 1781, this situation remained essentially unchanged. Congress and General Washington, after their temporary approval on two occasions in 1778, continued to oppose recruiting prisoners of war for the revolutionary cause; states and independent units routinely ignored such orders. Still, they had to offer ever-higher bounties to potential recruits who often had better chances at improved lives elsewhere, particularly as prisoner-labourers. In 1781, however, congressional policies did take a decisive turn, largely in response to a series of crises, caused in no small part by the great victory at Yorktown in October of that year. By 1782, German prisoners of war, but not the British, were openly recruited as soldiers for the Continental Army and new citizens for the United States.

In January 1781, the Pennsylvania line of the Continental Army mutinied. After years of suffering at the hands of a population unwilling to support their soldiers adequately with pay, uniforms, shelter and food, the revolutionary soldiers finally sought 'some modicum of financial justice'.[39] Until the end of the war in 1783, mutinies erupted repeatedly among various revolutionary troops over the conditions of their service.[40] Not surprisingly, finding new recruits for the revolutionary cause became ever more difficult. Trustworthy or not, prisoners of war were increasingly considered legitimate targets for recruitment campaigns, even by General Washington and his staff. It helped that the army since Valley Forge had become much more professional. Officers and non-commissioned officers were able to drill and discipline even the most unwilling recruits.[41]

Over the previous two years, moreover, inflation had become rampant and the continental currency was in free fall, threatening 'national bankruptcy' by 1781.[42] In response, a group of powerful revolutionaries in Congress and the army, under the leadership of Robert Morris, the new Superintendent of Finance, sought to strengthen central authority.[43] Only such power realignment, they believed, would enable Congress to reorganize finances and the army to win the war. Prisoners of war played a major role in this policy shift. The success at Yorktown on 19 October, after all, not only secured overall success for the revolutionaries in the conflict but also brought roughly 7000 British and German soldiers into revolutionary hands. At the time, the United States simply did not have the financial means to support, even just temporarily, such a large number of enemy captives. Morris and his allies somehow had to find a way to organize and pay for the prisoners' subsistence.[44] A meeting with General Washington on 5 December 1781, Morris noted, became 'a long conference relative to the safe keeping and cheap feeding of the Prisoners of War'.[45] The problem became even more pressing in early 1782 when a much-anticipated prisoner-of-war conference with the British in Elizabethtown, New Jersey, failed on 20 April. Neither side

could agree on a prisoner exchange or, at least, payments for prisoner-of-war support.[46]

In response, Morris and his collaborators – including Secretary at War Benjamin Lincoln, Secretary of Foreign Affairs Robert Livingston, Secretary of Congress Charles Thomson, General Henry Knox and Gouverneur Morris – decided in May 1782 to allow recruitment of German prisoners of war into the Continental Army. German prisoners of war who were unwilling to join the army but had some cash available could ransom themselves by paying 80 Spanish dollars, an amount considered sufficient to cover the American expenses for their subsistence in captivity. German prisoners who wanted to be liberated from captivity but were not inclined to join the revolutionary army and lacked sufficient cash could sell themselves into indentured servitude to work off the required ransom over three years. Morris, Lincoln and other revolutionary leaders in Congress believed that German prisoners who chose any of these options would become 'free Citizens of these States'.[47]

Different reasons led Morris and his collaborators to exclude British prisoners of war and focus on German soldiers. As a sub-committee in Congress stated on 15 May 1782, a considerable number of German prisoners of war:

> From a dislike to the service into which they have been involuntarily hired and from a prospect of amending their conditions, have expressed a desire of entering some of them into the military service of the U.S. and others into a reasonable period of common service, with a view of eventually becoming Citizens & Settlers within the said States.[48]

First, it becomes clear, American revolutionary leaders considered German prisoners of war, unlike British captives, less of a security risk. As auxiliaries, these men also had been less attractive to the British during previous exchange negotiations.[49] Second, Morris and other revolutionary leaders in 1782 – like Arthur Lee in 1775 or Hugh Mercer in October 1776 – believed that German soldiers would readily take any opportunity, even military service or indentured servitude, to escape from their oppressive homelands.[50] Third, while Morris' most ambitious financial plans made little progress in 1781 and 1782, he seemed to have succeeded in prisoner matters.[51] The Continental Army began recruiting German prisoners of war into their ranks by June 1782.[52] New recruits for the army came not from the states but from a continental manpower reservoir. That German prisoners of war were actually foreign to North America, paradoxically, was considered advantageous for this plan. The continental government, rather than individual states demanded and laid claim to the former enemies' allegiance. The United States had made them prisoners of war; the United States would employ them as soldiers and give them their rights as citizens.[53] If German captives did not join the Continental Army but instead paid the ransom in

cash, they would cover their own subsistence and swear the oath of allegiance to the United States. Those captives who could not pay the ransom but wanted to stay would appear in Morris' account books as indentured servants. The ransom paid for these men by their employers would constitute an independent source of income for the United States. As Morris and his collaborators hoped, former German prisoners, whether they joined the revolutionary military, paid the ransom or became indentured servants, would become national citizens, not citizens of an individual state.[54]

How did the German prisoners react to these changes and new recruitment offers? Life as a prisoner-of-war with the American revolutionaries had become difficult since 1778. Provisions, pay and housing were repeatedly lacking. Johann Döhla, for example, described the barracks in Winchester, where the Yorktown prisoners stayed until January 1782, as a collection of 'wretched and miserable huts, built of wood and glue'. For him, the barracks were only fit to serve as 'pigsties or dog kennels'.[55] Another common soldier from Ansbach-Bayreuth, Stephan Popp, reported in his journal that 46 prisoners had to live on one floor alone. Within days, so Popp recorded, vermin spread among everybody, the men 'lay too close' and infected each other with lice and other pests. Not surprisingly, numerous prisoners soon became sick.[56]

As for food, Popp wrote from Winchester that the prisoners had 'to sell everything' they owned to buy a few provisions. 'Daily,' he stressed, 'they had hunger and cold in abundance.'[57] After Yorktown, unlike earlier in the conflict, Congress had mandated that prisoners only received two-thirds of a regular ration but even these items often did not reach the men.[58] One reason for the supply problems was, according to James Wood, who was responsible for prisoners of war in Virginia and Maryland, that 'there has been no regular mode adopted for procuring Provisions'. No contracts had been negotiated for deliveries of rations and the states had 'repealed all the laws for [i]mpressing'.[59] In February 1782, at Frederick, the Ansbach-Bayreuth prisoners only received flour because their own officers bought it for them from local farmers.[60]

Thus, it is not surprising that more German prisoners than before defected in 1782 and 1783. By signing up with American units, the men tried to escape a difficult situation. Few soldiers, however, chose to become indentured servants. In September 1782, for instance, when Döhla noted a transport of 50 recruits from the captives leaving Frederick, only three fellow prisoners of war agreed to become indentured servants.[61] Such discrepancies reveal that prisoners of war, if pressed to make a choice, preferred to remain soldiers rather than become farmers, artisans or other labourers. Most of the German troops were veterans and already had seen years of military service before coming to North America. In addition, military service for the Americans still offered a chance to run away again later and rejoin old units before the end of the war.[62]

But many prisoners also rejected the American proposals and suffered in captivity rather than yield. In July 1782, for instance, prisoners of war from the Regiment von Knyphausen, captured in 1779 on two British transports and held in Philadelphia, wrote a letter to their regimental commander in New York, Colonel von Borck. They complained of their 'extreme despair' because American revolutionaries did not hold them as prisoners of war 'but as members of the Turkish nation'.[63] American emissaries repeatedly approached them with a 'barbarous proposition'. A prisoner exchange, they were told, was impossible because the British were unwilling to pay for their upkeep. The captives instead should pay 80 Spanish dollars in ransom and swear the oath of allegiance to be discharged from confinement. Those unable to pay could become servants for three years and work off the ransom or enlist. Such plans, the soldiers stressed, 'completely stunned' them. They refused to accept the terms because they had come 'into this land as free soldiers', not as servants.[64]

Other cases present a similar picture. In fact, wherever German prisoners of war were held in 1782 and 1783, they complained about the new prisoner-of-war policies and the pressure put on them. Private Bense, a captive from General Burgoyne's defeated army, reported that Americans offered 'serfdom' to prisoners in Reading over the summer of 1782. Because most German prisoners there did not agree to the proposition, they were 'treated harshly'. According to Bense, more than 300 men were brought into a jail designed for only 60. Hundreds of soldiers had to live in the open and endure rain and cold nights. These conditions, Bense stated, drove a number of his fellow captives into service with the Continental Army.[65] For him, 'this last year of captivity was the worst and most miserable'.[66]

Hard and fast numbers, offering a clear picture of how many German prisoners accepted the American offers in 1782 and 1783 do not exist. The few available figures from imprisoned units provide trends but not a full picture. For instance, 365 soldiers from the Hessen-Kassel Regiment von Bose went into captivity at Yorktown. By 28 May 1783, 104 men (28.5 per cent) had deserted from the unit.[67] Among the common soldiers were 284 captives and 91 deserters (32 per cent). However, these numbers do not indicate where, how and when the soldiers in the regiment deserted, or whether they joined American forces, lived and worked somewhere in the countryside, or only ran away temporarily. These numbers also do not distinguish between those who deserted before or after 29 April 1783, when peace was announced in Frederick and the captives prepared to march back to New York for embarkation back home to Europe. A return from the Hessen-Kassel Regiment Erbprinz, captured at Yorktown and imprisoned in Frederick, also does not allow for such distinctions but does presents similar numbers. In this regiment, 125 common soldiers (25.5 per cent) deserted after October 1781.[68]

Numbers from American sources cannot fill the gaps left by German and British records. In particular, no figures exist that prove the success or failure

of the new recruitment efforts among German prisoners in 1782 and 1783. According to the War Department, at least 295 German soldiers were discharged from captivity by paying the ransom of 80 Spanish dollars because the Superintendent of Finance reported a profit of $23,617 from January 1782 until June 1783.[69] When the Department of the Treasury in 1781 published the accounts of Robert Morris, it listed $27,873 in profit from 'the discharge of German prisoners'. This means that a maximum of 348 German soldiers might have bought their freedom between August 1782 and the end of the war, in cash or through servitude. Yet, this number does not tell us anything about military service for the American revolutionaries.[70] In any case, all these numbers are probably too low and merely reflect the fact that Americans, when hiring a German soldier, neither reported the contract nor paid the required amount to the Superintendent of Finance – something that could be done easily in a conflict where rarely enough guards for prisoners of war were available.[71]

A general return for Döhla's Ansbach-Bayreuth troops from 19 November 1783, signed by General-Adjutant von Schlammersdorf, who was also responsible for recruitment in the principality, provides an overview of the official casualty and desertion rates in a principality that sent two infantry regiments, *Jäger* (light infantry forces) and artillery to North America after 1777.[72] According to this return, 1293 Ansbach-Bayreuth soldiers left for North America in March of that year. Over the course of the war, an additional 1068 soldiers were sent across the Atlantic as reinforcements and replacements. The absolute maximum number of possible deserters among these 2361 Ansbach-Bayreuth troops until 1783 – counting deserters and missing soldiers from every unit – was 476 men (19.8 per cent). The maximum number of Ansbach-Bayreuth soldiers who might have remained behind in North America between 1777 and 1783 was 704 (29.8 per cent) – counting all soldiers who were discharged, deserted or went missing. Those were certainly high numbers but not as high as the revolutionaries had hoped. After all, the average expected desertion rate among prisoners of war in an eighteenth-century European army ranged between 18 and 20 per cent.[73]

A list of casualties among Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel troops gives a little more insight. About 5000 men from this principality served in North America between 1776 and 1783.[74] Near Bennington, on 16 August 1777, and at Saratoga, on 17 October 1777, American revolutionaries captured roughly 2000 soldiers from this principality. Among those, a total of 199 men (10 per cent) agreed to become indentured servants in the United States. Only 88 men were recorded as defectors and enrolled with American revolutionary forces (4.4 per cent).[75] Overall, while certainly a few thousand German soldiers deserted temporarily or permanently during their service for the British in North America between 1776 and 1783, only several hundred soldiers truly defected to the revolutionaries and joined the fight against their former comrades and the British crown.

Conclusion

When the American revolutionaries went to war with the British motherland in 1775, they were certain that the colonists, united as citizen-soldiers in a militia, would willingly engage and defeat the enemy. Initially, tens of thousands of men assembled to take on the crown's regulars around Boston. Yet, the *rage militaire* of 1775 and 1776 quickly subsided. For the rest of the war, the newly founded Continental Army and revolutionary state forces were hard pressed to find soldiers. The first years of the conflict also proved that militia units alone stood no chance against Great Britain's forces and their German auxiliaries from the Holy Roman Empire. A more professional army was needed and General Washington did his utmost to create such a force. After Valley Forge in the winter of 1777–78, the Continental Army became more similar to European armies by the month, complete with harsh discipline and rigorous drilling. At this point, British and German prisoners of war became perfectly legitimate targets for recruitment campaigns among some revolutionary circles and particularly in the states. After all, contemporary standing armies of the eighteenth century were international institutions, with officers, non-commissioned officers and common soldiers regularly hailing from different regions and territories. It did not matter to a prince or sovereign in Europe from where his soldiers came – as long as they fought loyally and obeyed orders. Members of Congress, however, were not yet willing to give up on their ideals. Recruitment of German prisoners into special units such as Pulaski's corps or the German Volunteers was allowed only temporarily in 1778.

By 1781, after the success at Yorktown, several crises prompted a change in congressional politics. Prisoners of war had become expensive to keep, while enlistment into the Continental Army relieved some of America's manpower problems. However, Congress and revolutionary leaders such as Robert Morris focused on German, not British prisoners of war because they were convinced that George III's subsidy troops would rather want to stay in North America than go home to their tyrannical princes who had sold them to the British in the first place. Yet, fewer Germans than expected switched sides. Men such as Döhla, Popp, Bense and many others, as it appears from available sources, thought of themselves as honourable, professional soldiers for their sovereigns and King George III. They did not see themselves as mercenaries who simply signed up with the highest bidder and switched sides as easily.

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Notes

1. Between 1776 and 1783, Great Britain contracted for about 21,000 soldiers from six principalities in the Holy Roman Empire (Hessen-Kassel, Hessen-Hanau, Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel, Ansbach-Bayreuth, Waldeck and Anhalt-Zerbst). About 37,000 German soldiers, including replacement and reinforcement transports, entered British service. These subsidy treaties had a long tradition in early modern European warfare. Peter H. Wilson, 'The German "Soldiertrade" of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries: A Reassessment', *International History Review* 18 (1996), pp. 757–92. On German subsidy troops during the American War of Independence, see Rodney Atwood, *The Hessians: Mercenaries from Hessen-Kassel in the American Revolution* (New York, 1980); Inge Auerbach, *Die Hessen in Amerika, 1776–1783* (Darmstadt und Marburg, 1996); Stephan Huck, 'Soldaten gegen Nordamerika: Lebenswelten Braunschweiger Subsidientruppen im Amerikanischen Unabhängigkeitskrieg' (Ph.D. diss., Universität Potsdam, 2009); and Erhard Städtler, *Die Ansbach-Bayreuther Truppen im Amerikanischen Unabhängigkeitskrieg, 1777–1783* (Nürnberg, 1956).
2. Johann Conrad Döhla, 'Marschroute und Beschreibung der merkwürdigsten Begebenheiten nach, in und aus Amerika von Johann Conrad Döhla in Zell, für Johann Adam Holper in Münchberg, 1811', New York Public Library (hereafter cited as NYPL), Bancroft Collection, No. 47.
3. Döhla, 'Marschroute', p. 534.
4. Johann Ernst Prechtel, 'Beschreibung derer vom 7. Mart: 1777 bis Decembr: 1783 in Nord-Amerika mitgemachten Feld-Züge', Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv, Abt. IV: Kriegsarchiv, HS 580/1, p. 585.
5. Döhla, 'Marschroute,' p. 540.
6. http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/declaration_transcript.html [accessed 16 May 2011].
7. Charles Neimeyer, *America Goes to War: A Social History of the Continental Army* (New York, 1996); James K. Martin and Mark E. Lender, *A Respectable Army: The Military Origins of the Republic, 1763–1789* (Arlington Heights, 1982); and Charles Royster, *A Revolutionary People at War: The Continental Army and American Character, 1775–1783*, Third Edition (Chapel Hill, 1986).
8. Harry M. Ward, *The War for Independence and the Transformation of American Society* (London: UCL Press, 1999), p. 100.
9. On the debate over standing armies among the revolutionaries, see Jürgen Heideking, ' "People's War Or Standing Army?" Die Debatte über Militärwesen und Krieg in den Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika im Zeitalter der Französichen Revolution', in Herfried Münkler and Johannes Kunisch (eds), *Die Wiedergeburt des Krieges aus dem Geist der Revolution: Studien zum bellizistischen Diskurs des ausgehenden 18. und beginnenden 19. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin, 1999), pp. 131–52.
10. Neimeyer, *America Goes to War*, pp. 2 and 5.
11. Martin and Lender, *A Respectable Army*, p. 69; and Fred Anderson, 'The Hinge of the Revolution: George Washington Confronts a People's Army, July 3, 1775', *Massachusetts Historical Review* 1 (1999), p. 28.
12. Neimeyer, *America Goes to War*, pp. xiv–xv, 3–5.

13. Bernhard Kroener, 'Der Soldat als Ware: Kriegsgefangenenschicksale im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert', in Patrice Veit and Heinz Duchhardt (eds), *Krieg und Frieden im Übergang vom Mittelalter zur Neuzeit: Theorie – Praxis – Bilder* (Mainz, 2000), pp. 271–94.
14. John Hancock to Walter Livingston, Dept. Commissary General, 17 November 1775, National Archives and Record Administration, Washington, DC (hereafter cited as NARA), Record Group 360: Papers of the Continental Congress (hereafter cited as PCC), Item 12A, vol. 1; and Worthington Chauncey Ford et al. (eds), *Journals of the Continental Congress, 1774–1789*, 34 vols. (Washington, DC, 1904–37) (hereafter cited as JCC), JCC, vol. 3, pp. 358–9. See also Committee of Congress to Edward Motte, Philadelphia, 4 December 1775, in Paul Hubert Smith et al. (eds), *Letters of Delegates to Congress, 1774–1789*, 25 vols. (Washington, DC, 1976–2000) (hereafter cited as LDC), vol. 2, p. 436.
15. Arthur St. Clair, Lancaster, to Congress, 27 January 1776, PCC, Item 161.
16. 'List of Resolves of Congress Regarding Prisoners of War, 1775–1780', PCC, Item 183.
17. JCC, 10:203. See also 'Resolves, September 29, 1778', PCC, Item 28.
18. 'Washington's Orders, New Windsor, December 1780–February 1781', NARA, RG 93: War Department Collection of Revolutionary War Records, Series 5: Numbered Record Books, vol. 48.
19. Quoted in Atwood, *The Hessians*, p. 31.
20. Mercy Otis Warren, *History of the Rise, Progress and Termination of the American Revolution*, reprint (Boston, 1805; reprint, New York, 1970), vol. 1, pp. 278 and 283. See also Charles W. Ingrao, ' "Barbarous Strangers": Hessian State and Society during the American Revolution', *The American Historical Review* 87, no. 4 (1982), p. 954.
21. JCC, vol. 5, pp. 640 and 654–5.
22. Hugh Mercer to John Hancock, 17 October 1776, in Peter Force (ed), *American Archives: Consisting of a Collection of Authentick Records, State Papers, Debates, and Letters and Other Notices of Publick Affairs, the Whole Forming a Documentary History of the Origin and Progress of the North American Colonies*, 9 vols. (Washington, DC, 1837–53) (hereafter cited as American Archives), Fifth Series, vol. 2, pp. 1093–94; and 'List of Prisoners taken at Richmond on Staten Island and sent to Philadelphia (no date)', PCC, Item 159. On this affair, see also Henry J. Retzer, 'Hessian Prisoners of War Taken on Staten Island in 1776', *Journal of the Johannes Schwalm Historical Association* 5, no. 3 (1995), pp. 54–5.
23. Hugh Mercer to John Hancock, 17 October 1776, American Archives, Fifth Series, vol. 2, pp. 1093–94.
24. Carl Berger, *Broadsides and Bayonets: The Propaganda War of the American Revolution* (Philadelphia, 1961), p. 106; and William W. Condit, 'Christopher Ludwick: Patriotic Gingerbread Baker', *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 81 (1957), pp. 365–90.
25. John Hancock to George Washington, 16 November 1776, American Archives, Fifth Series, vol. 3, pp. 705–06; George Washington to the Board of War, 15 November 1776, American Archives, Fifth Series, vol. 3, p. 699.
26. Auerbach, *Die Hessen in Amerika*, pp. 162, 264–70; Charles W. Ingrao, *The Hessian Mercenary State: Ideas, Institutions, and Reform Under Frederick II, 1760–1785* (Cambridge and New York, 1987), p. 158.
27. Inge Auerbach and Otto Fröhlich (eds), *Hessische Truppen im Amerikanischen Unabhängigkeitskrieg: Index nach Familiennamen*, 6 vols. (Marburg, 1972–87), vol. 2.

28. Quoted in Inge Auerbach, 'Die Hessischen Soldaten und ihr Bild von Amerika, 1776–1783', *Hessisches Jahrbuch für Landesgeschichte* 35 (1985), p. 147.
29. John C. Fitzpatrick and David M. Matteson (eds), *The Writings of George Washington From the Original Manuscript Sources, 1745–1799*, 39 vols. (Washington, DC, 1931–44), vol. 6, p. 453.
30. 'Draft of an Address of the Pennsylvania Council of Safety, Philadelphia, December 31, 1776', Pennsylvania Division of Archives and Manuscripts, Records of Pennsylvania's Revolutionary Governments, 1775–1790, David Library of the American Revolution, Washington Crossing, Pa. (hereafter cited as DLAR), Film 24.
31. Thomas McKean to William A. Atlee, 5 June 1778, Library of Congress, Washington, DC, Peter Force Collection (hereafter cited as PFC), Series 9: Misc. Manuscripts, vol. 24; and Timothy Pickering to William A. Atlee, 5 June 1778, PFC, Series 9, vol. 24; Henry Laurens to William Atlee, 29 May 1778, LDC, vol. 9, pp. 767–8; William A. Atlee to Congress, 2 June 1778, PCC, Item 78, vol. 1 (A).
32. 'Journal des Regiments von Knyphausen, 1776–1783', Landesbibliothek und Murhard'sche Bibliothek der Stadt Kassel (hereafter cited as LB Ks), 4° Ms. Hass. Nr. 163; General von Knyphausen to Frederick II, 20 April 1778 and 23 August 1778, Relationes vom Nord-Amerikanischen Krieg unter dem Kommandeur v. Knyphausen, Staatsarchiv Marburg (hereafter cited as StAM), Best. 4h, Nr. 3099, f. 257, 260–260v, 210.
33. Ensigns Führer and Kleinschmidt to Congress, 26 August 1778, PCC, Item 78.
34. 'Board of War, August 29, 1778', PCC, Item 147; Ensigns Führer and Kleinschmidt to Congress, 9 October 1778, PCC, Item 78.
35. Neimeyer, *America Goes to War*, pp. 57–8.
36. Aaron S. Fogleman, *Hopeful Journeys: German Immigration, Settlement, and Political Culture in Colonial America, 1717–1775* (Philadelphia, PA, 1996).
37. On labour-shortages in North America during the War of Independence, see Michael V. Kennedy, 'The Home Front During the War for Independence: The Effect of Labor Shortages on Commercial Production in the Mid-Atlantic', in J. R. Pole and Jack P. Greene (eds), *A Companion to the American Revolution* (Oxford, 2004), pp. 332–8.
38. Johannes Reuber, *Tagebuch des Grenadiers Johannes Reuber: Eingefügt Bericht eines Anderen über die Belagerung Gibraltars 1782 und die Eroberung von Mannheim 1795, von Reubers Hand geschrieben*, LB Ks, 8° Ms. Hass. Nr. 46/1, f. 100–1v. Lancaster is just one example for this practice. Throughout the War of Independence, German and British prisoners of war worked at all places of detention throughout the former colonies, such as Boston, MA; Reading, PA; Lebanon, PA; Easton, PA; Philadelphia, PA; Winchester, VA; and Frederick, MD.
39. Martin and Lender, *A Respectable Army*, p. 163.
40. Neimeyer, *America Goes to War*, p. xiv.
41. Wayne Bodle, *The Valley Forge Winter: Civilians and Soldiers in War* (University Park, PA, 2002).
42. E. Wayne Carp, 'The Origins of the Nationalist Movement of 1780–1783: Congressional Administration and the Continental Army', *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 107, no. 3 (1983), p. 369. See also Calvin Jillson and Rick K. Wilson, *Congressional Dynamics: Structure, Coordination, and Choice in the First American Congress, 1774–1789* (Stanford, CA, 1994), p. 111.
43. In Congress, this loosely organized group included northerners like Alexander Hamilton, James Wilson, Thomas Smith, Samuel Atlee, Joseph Montgomery, George Clymer and Richard Peters. Southern nationalists in Congress were James

Madison, Daniel Carroll or Hugh Williamson. Robert Morris was appointed as Superintendent of Finance on 20 February 1781. The Articles of Confederation, adopted in 1777, were finally ratified in 1781. Jillson and Wilson, *Congressional Dynamics*, pp. 242–5.

44. After 1778, both sides in the conflict provided provisions to prisoners of war in their hands. Before, British and American agents had been tasked with such support.
45. Diary, 5 December 1781, in James E. Ferguson et al. (eds), *The Papers of Robert Morris, 1781–1784*, 6 vols. (Pittsburgh, PA, 1973–84) (hereafter cited as Papers RM), vol. 3, pp. 332–3.
46. Joseph J. Casino, 'Elizabethtown 1782: The Prisoners-Of-War Negotiations and the Pawns of War', *New Jersey History* 102, no. 1/2 (1984), pp. 1–35.
47. Diary, 6 May 1782, Papers RM, vol. 5, pp. 116–17; Diary, 10 July 1782, Papers RM, vol. 5, p. 557; and JCC, vol. 22, pp. 274–6. For the Congressional resolve of 5 June 1782, following this report and recommendations, see JCC, vol. 22, pp. 316–17. The bounty was eight dollars and the recruits could be counted against the state quotas. All new German recruits would be under General Washington's control.
48. Report of Committee on Prisoners, 15 May 1782, PCC, Item 28.
49. Paul J. Springer, *America's Captives: Treatment of POWs From the Revolutionary War to the War on Terror* (Lawrence, KS, 2010), p. 36. See also George Washington to Moses Rawlings, 12 December 1781, in Fitzpatrick and Matteson (eds), *The Writings of George Washington*, vol. 23, pp. 383–4.
50. Marianne S. Wokeck, 'A Tide of Alien Tongues: The Flow and Ebb of German Immigration to Pennsylvania, 1683–1776' (Ph.D. diss., Temple University, 1983).
51. Jillson and Wilson, *Congressional Dynamics*, pp. 240–54 and Carp, 'The Origins of the Nationalist Movement of 1780', pp. 369, 380–9.
52. JCC, vol. 22, pp. 316–18.
53. For the European context – military service as a prerequisite for citizenship – see Ute Frevert, 'Das Jakobinische Modell: Allgemeine Wehrpflicht und Nationsbildung in Preußen-Deutschland', in Ute Frevert (ed), *Militär und Gesellschaft im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart, 1997), pp. 17–47.
54. Pre-printed discharges for German prisoners of war, discussed and authorized by James Wilson, Robert Morris and Benjamin Lincoln, stated: 'Know all men . . . that ___of ___ Regiment ___a native of Germany and late a prisoner of war to the United States of America, has signified a Desire to become a free Citizen of the said States.' Diary, 11 July 1782, Papers RM, vol. 5, pp. 562–3; 'Instructions of Robert Morris and Benjamin Lincoln on the Liberation of German Prisoners', Papers RM, vol. 5, p. 563; 'Proposals to German prisoners at Reading, July 30, 1782', DLAR, British Headquarters (Sir Guy Carleton/Lord Dorchester) Papers, 1747–83, Film 57 (hereafter cited as BHQ), No. 5159.
55. Döhla, *Marschroute*, pp. 473–5.
56. Stefan Popp, *Geschichte des Nordamerikanischen Krieges besonders was die beiden Bayreuthisch und Ansbachischen Regimenter anbelangt: Von einem bei dem Bayreuthischen Regiment von Seyboth gestandenen Soldaten aufgezeichnet, namens Stefan Popp; von 1777 bis 1783*, Private Collection Dr Robert Arnholdt, Würzburg (Germany), pp. 248–9. See also Döhla, *Marschroute*, p. 503.
57. Popp, *Geschichte des Nordamerikanischen Krieges*, pp. 231–2.
58. Döhla, *Marschroute*, p. 485.
59. James Wood to Benjamin Lincoln, 5 January 1782, PCC, Item 149, vol. I.
60. Döhla, *Marschroute*, p. 508.

61. Döhla, *Marschroute*, p. 533.
62. Daniel Krebs, 'Approaching the Enemy: German Captives in the American War of Independence' (Ph.D. diss., Emory University, 2007), pp. 48–72 and 104–6.
63. The reference to the 'Turkish nation' alluded to the brutality of the long wars between the Hapsburg and Holy Roman Empires with the Ottoman Empire.
64. 'Abschrift des Brief der Gefangenen aus Philadelphia, July 28, 1782', Relationes vom Nord-Amerikanischen Krieg unter dem Commandir. Gen. v. Loßberg, Best. 4h, Nr. 3102 (hereafter cited as Relationes Loßberg), f. 39–40.
65. For certificates for a number of German indentured servants from the Convention Army, see, for instance, NARA, RG 93: War Department Collection of Revolutionary War Records, Miscellaneous Numbered Records, Nos. 31716, 31731, 31734–41, 31744–48, 31751.
66. Johann Bense, *Marschroute von Braunschweig bis America*, Niedersächsisches Staatsarchiv Wolfenbüttel (hereafter cited as NdsStA Wf), VI Hs 18, Nr. 7, f. 15–6v.
67. 'Rapport des Regiment von Bose', Relationes Loßberg, f. 133–4.
68. 'Rapport Regiment Erbprinz, May 28, 1783', Relationes Loßberg, f. 135–6v.
69. Joseph Nourse, *Accounts of Receipts and Expenditures, January 1, 1782–June 30, 1783*, PCC, Item 137.
70. United States Department of the Treasury, *Statements of the Receipts and Expenditures of Public Monies, During the Administration of the Finances, by Robert Morris, Esq., late Superintendant; With Other Extracts and Accounts From the Public Records, Made Out By the Register of the Treasury*, Early American Imprints, First Series (Evans), No. 23922, p. 7. Both numbers do not give information about how many soldiers actually served as indentured servants or paid the ransom.
71. In July 1778, for instance, General Heath complained in Boston that he only had 271 guards for thousands of British and German prisoners, particularly from the Convention Army. Heath noted angrily that the enemies really guarded themselves. General Heath to the Council of the State of Massachusetts, 11 July 1778, PFC, Series 7E, Item 85: Revolutionary War Letters, Massachusetts, Series I.
72. 'Liste der im Month Martii 1777 nach America abmarchirten Hochfürstl. Brandenburgischen Trouppen, und der bis 1782 incl. nachgesandten Recrouten, ingleichen der inzwischen abgegangenen Mannschaften, dann wie solche mit den 19ten Nov: effective bestanden', New York Public Library, Bancroft Collection, Ansbach Papers, No. 75.
73. Michael Sikora, 'Das 18. Jahrhundert: Die Zeit der Deserteure', in Michael Sikora and Ulrich Bröckling (eds), *Armeen und ihre Deserteure: Vernachlässigte Kapitel einer Militärgeschichte der Neuzeit* (Göttingen, 1998), pp. 86–111. Desertion did not necessarily always result in a permanent absence from a unit. Often, soldiers ran away from captivity, came back again later or made their way to British lines.
74. Huck, 'Soldaten gegen Nordamerika', p. 1.
75. 'Namentliches Verzeichniss aller vom Herzogl. Braunschweig. Corps in America vor dem Feind gebliebenen, an Wunden oder Krankheit gestorbenen, desertirten, oder auf sonstige Art abgegangenen Officiers, Unterofficiers, Gemeine und Knechte', NdsStA Wf, 38 B Alt 260, f. 92.

3
German Auxiliary Troops in the British and Dutch East India Companies

Chen Tzoref-Ashkenazi

During the last quarter of the eighteenth century and early nineteenth century European powers hired German auxiliary troops for colonial service. The most famous case was the troops that Britain hired from six German principalities for the American War of Independence. However, they were followed by troops hired by the British and Dutch East India Companies and the Dutch government for colonial service in India, Ceylon, South Africa and Indonesia, so that we may speak of a new development in the recruitment of European soldiers for colonial service. Auxiliary troops are an interesting subject for investigation because, unlike ordinary mercenaries enlisting individually, they often had a sense of belonging to a standing army in whose traditions they took pride. This was especially true of officers, who usually were career officers, motivated by loyalty to their prince, professional ambition and the code of honour characteristic of the military class. Their service for a colonial army, especially the army of a colonial trading company, could pose complicated problems of identification and integration. This chapter concentrates on the recruitment of two Hanoverian regiments for the British East India Company (EIC) in 1781 and that of the Württemberg Cape regiment for the Dutch East India Company (VOC) in 1786. It examines the background for their recruitment, their cooperation with the hiring armies and the degree of their identification with the colonial power they served. While the Hanoverian expedition to India is almost totally forgotten,[1] the Württemberg Cape regiment is sometimes mentioned by historians, especially in Germany, as the most tragic case of German troops sold by their prince to a foreign power.[2]

German auxiliary troops served in every major European war between the Thirty Years War and the French Revolution, but until 1776 they never served in colonial wars. Auxiliary troops were hired out by a prince to another power under a subsidy treaty stipulating the number of troops, the time of service, the geographical area and the missions they could be used for, in return for certain financial and political advantages.[3] The system

enabled minor princes to keep larger standing armies than they could otherwise afford, and these armies played an important role in their efforts of state-building and maintaining their autonomy within the Holy German Empire. Standing armies, of course, did not mean that the number of troops remained constant but rather that they had a standing administrative framework.[4] Upon signing a subsidy contract princes would recruit a significant number of new soldiers, but these entered an existing army and were expected to assume its collective consciousness. Hiring states enjoyed the advantage of avoiding the need to keep a large standing army, lower recruitment costs and a solution for acute shortage in manpower. Britain and the Dutch United Provinces were among the largest receivers of auxiliary troops. The Dutch kept a large number of foreign regiments, among them five battalions from Waldeck, while Britain only recruited them in case of war.

Auxiliary troops were not ordinary mercenaries although they are often portrayed as such in historical literature. Indeed, they partly conform to the traditional definition of mercenaries, given, for example by Janice Thomson, as soldiers serving a foreign army for a financial motive. Thomson acknowledges the transnational nature of almost all eighteenth-century European armies but defines all soldiers serving a foreign army in this period, including auxiliary troops, as mercenaries.[5] The definition is problematic because it ignores the norms of the period, including the weakness of national sentiment. It is especially problematic when speaking about Germany. It would be artificial to regard a Hanoverian officer born in Saxony as a mercenary, but that officer would usually not regard service for the Dutch army as something essentially different. Sarah Percy adds two important elements to the definition of mercenaries which indicate how the use of mercenaries by states was problematic. First, and most important, mercenaries were not 'under control' since they could change employer at will. Second, and related to the first element, mercenaries were not fighting for a legitimate cause, which, she argues, was usually defined in terms of fighting either for a sovereign state or for an individual's own community. Addressing both elements was supposed to reduce the dangers to civilians that were involved with the use of mercenaries, although Percy acknowledges that there is no evidence that mercenaries were more liable to harm civilians than ordinary soldiers, especially in an ideologically charged conflict. Percy argues that efforts to bring mercenaries under control were a constant feature of European history since the late medieval period. Thus even the recruitment of Swiss mercenaries was regulated by the cantons.[6] The problem with Percy's concept of control is that it narrows the definition of mercenaries to the degree that hardly anyone can be regarded as mercenary, for those who hire mercenaries always try to control them as much as possible. The concept of fighting for a legitimate cause is highly subjective and, when defined as fighting for a sovereign state, also reduces the applicability of the term to an unacceptable degree, for it implies that anyone employed by a state cannot

count as a mercenary. Despite these difficulties, Percy's discussion points to the complexity of defining mercenaries. It also indicates that auxiliary troops in the eighteenth century, who were hired out to regular armies by their own regular armies, to which they returned at the end of the contract, were not mercenaries. On the other hand it would make sense, in the framework of Thomson's and Percy's conceptualizations, to define the armies of the East India Companies as much closer to mercenary armies because when they were recruited, financial motives weighed much more than the aristocratic ideals of duty, honour and service to a prince, that were shared by most officers of European standing armies, although notions of honour and duty were not totally absent in this case, either.

Foreign recruitment by the VOC

The East India Companies are often characterized as hybrid organizations that combined the characteristics of commercial corporations and of sovereign states, acting both as associations of traders and as extensions of national governments, and it is also debated whether they should be seen as European or Asian powers.[7] During the second half of the eighteenth century the political component gained in importance in both the British and the Dutch companies. The rise of the EIC to power in India is a familiar story, but similar developments have also been observed for the VOC. Although the Dutch company was a major political power in the East Indies since the beginning of the seventeenth century it was building up its administrative functions, especially on Java and Ceylon, during the last decades of its existence.[8] The hybridity of East India Companies also extended to their national composition. Both the British and the Dutch company relied to a very significant degree on Asian troops, either as auxiliary troops borrowed from Asian rulers or Asian soldiers in Company service.[9] But despite the reliance of the Companies, especially the EIC, on Asian troops, they regarded their European troops as the backbone of their military power. These military forces contained a large non-national European segment but were controlled by a national command.

The VOC especially had a very significant foreign European component in its military force, most of it composed of Germans. The company also recruited Asian soldiers but unlike the EIC, they were not the mainstay of its military power until the second half of the nineteenth century.[10] The share of foreign Europeans in the military of the VOC grew during the eighteenth century and reached 80 per cent around 1770.[11] At that time the company had about 10,000 soldiers out of a total personnel of 18,000 in Asia.[12] A German officer who arrived in Batavia in 1771 wrote: 'The entire garrison here, both officers and soldiers, is mostly composed of Germans and in most cases commands are also given in German.'[13] As a rule, however, the VOC preferred reserving officer posts to Dutchmen.[14] Dutch was

the normal language of command and always the language of administration, but Germans could easily learn the simple language necessary for an ordinary soldier. Many German soldiers originated from areas bordering with the Netherlands and spoke dialects having a strong affinity with Dutch. Religion was a more serious problem. Officially VOC servants were supposed to belong to the Dutch Reformed church although other Protestants were also welcome, and most of the German recruits were Lutherans. Throughout most of the two centuries of the VOC's existence (1602–1796) they suffered discrimination in practising their religion. Lutheran churches were constructed in Batavia only in 1749 and in Cape Town in 1780. Catholics were much worse off. They were not allowed to enlist, although some Catholics did join the company without acknowledging their faith. Unlike Lutherans, Catholics who joined the company knew that they would not be able to practise their religion and their number was small.[15] Only in its stations in southern India, where there were relatively large Catholic communities, did the VOC have to tolerate Catholic observance.[16]

The growing number of German soldiers reflected the increasing difficulty of the VOC to raise sufficient manpower because it became difficult to draw Dutch people to the low grades of VOC service.[17] A major reason was the devastating malaria in Batavia that began in 1733. Mortality rates among VOC employees in their first year in Batavia reached more than 50 per cent and gained Batavia the nickname the graveyard of Europeans.[18] The health hazard deterred many potential recruits, while the VOC had to raise ever larger numbers of replacements. At the same time, the VOC was trying to extend its manpower in Asia as it was becoming increasingly involved in local politics and building up colonial administration.

Not all foreign recruits of the VOC were Germans. Nicolaus de Graaf, ship surgeon on a VOC ship, described the recruits on his vessel as: 'All sorts of foreigners and displaced persons, such as Poles, Swedes, Danes, Norwegians, Jutlanders, Hamburgers, people from Bremen, Lubeck, Danzig, Konigsberg, High Germans, Easterners, Westphalians, people from Bergen, Gulick, Cleve, and further all sorts of country bumpkins with the straw still between their teeth.'[19] Most places included in this list were in north Germany, but also in Poland and especially Scandinavia, which was an important recruitment area for sailors due to the strong maritime tradition there.

German VOC military recruits were just one section of a more general flow of Germans to the United Provinces, estimated at 33,000 a year around 1750.[20] Between 1765 and 1775 51,800 foreigners, most of them German, sailed to Asia on VOC vessels,[21] implying that no more than a quarter of the Germans coming to the Netherlands in this period – if the estimated numbers of 1750 were sustained – became VOC recruits. These German immigrants were drawn to the relative prosperity of the United Provinces, where wages were almost double those in Germany.[22] Those who enlisted to

VOC service as soldiers did not necessarily have military experience. Often, the decision to join the VOC was taken before travelling to the Netherlands, usually for financial motives but the appeal of adventure and the desire to see the mysterious East also played a role for many recruits.[23]

The personnel problems of the VOC were also related to developments on the European military labour market, although the VOC usually did not operate on that market directly. Germany had been a military recruitment ground since the early sixteenth century, and the market grew substantially during the Thirty Years War. After the war, princes largely took over the military market at the expense of private military entrepreneurs but the existence of a large number of princely armies and the many wars that were fought on German soil during the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries meant that, between the wars, there was a large supply of more or less professional military manpower. The relative poverty of Germany compared with Western Europe during this period also meant that soldiers could be had either more cheaply or more easily than in Britain, France or the Netherlands. German princes objected to recruitment on their territories which was often conducted illegally but the complicated political landscape of Germany made such illegal recruitment relatively easy. Prussian recruitment agents were especially notorious for operating beyond their borders. This is a reminder that foreign recruitment in Germany did not necessarily mean that the recruiting state was not a German one, and sometimes German princes hired non-German troops.[24]

Competition for recruits intensified from the mid-1770s. The Hanoverian colonel Scheither who in 1775 tried to recruit soldiers for the British for the war in America failed because of strong competition from Prussian, Austrian and VOC recruitment agents.[25] This incident indicates that the VOC's difficulties led it into active recruitment in Germany, whereas usually candidates would go to the chambers of the company in Dutch towns.[26] Additional pressure may have been put on the market by the Austrian War of Succession (1778–79), during which both Prussia and Austria increased their armies substantially.[27]

The moment of crisis for the VOC arrived when Britain declared war on the Netherlands in 1780. The VOC's possessions were vulnerable to British attack, especially the Cape. Unlike Britain, the Dutch republic never sent its army to protect the VOC.[28] The company's representatives went to Paris to ask for French assistance. The French sent two regular regiments to the Cape, and in addition the VOC hired two other predominantly French-speaking regiments, the Waldner regiment with 600 soldiers, and the Luxembourg regiment (both named after their proprietors) with 1100 soldiers. The VOC also hired the Swiss regiment De Meuron which sailed with 1170 soldiers. In 1786 the VOC signed an additional treaty with the Duke of Württemberg who supplied some 2000 soldiers and another 1000 in later years as replacements.[29]

The Württemberg Cape regiment

The company's motivation for the contract with the duke came not only from the shortage in manpower but also from the desire to replace the French and French-speaking soldiers of the previously hired regiments with German ones, to whom the company officials were more accustomed. The Dutch commissioner Jacob De Mist summed up in 1802 the lessons from previous years: 'The protracted stay of the French fleet during the war of 1781–84, and the foreign Regiments in occupation have entirely corrupted the standard of living at the Cape, and extravagance and indulgence in an unbroken round of amusements and diversions have come to be regarded as necessities.' He concluded by recommending that, 'Cape Town should *never* again be occupied by *foreign troops* (German troops excluded). It will be the work of years to transform the citizens of Cape Town once again into Netherlanders.'[30]

Hiring the regiment De Meuron was supposed to avoid some of these cultural conflicts: the regiments proprietor and commander, Charles Daniel de Meuron, was a Protestant Swiss.[31] The contract between him and the VOC required that all soldiers must be Protestant. The officers were required to be Swiss, while among the soldiers two-thirds had to be Swiss and the rest German. In practice, however, many soldiers were Catholic and French. In 1787 the regiment had 22 French officers, whose number was later reduced. A plague that struck the regiment before sailing from France necessitated taking 380 prisoners from Parisian prisons into the regiment, which complicated troop discipline. Orders were given in Dutch and then translated into French. De Meuron himself and many of the officers were French speakers from the area of Neuchâtel. Between 1756 and 1781 De Meuron had been in Swiss regiments in French service, including the Royal Guard. At the Cape he joined the society of French officers in introducing the French lifestyle that irritated many VOC officials. While Catholic soldiers of the regiment suffered religious discrimination, the VOC's problem with the regiment had more to do with the French lifestyle that was shared by Protestant officers as well. The VOC still preferred the Swiss regiment to the French ones, so that in 1787 it was sent from the Cape to Ceylon to replace the Luxembourg regiment, that was to be dismantled, and was itself replaced on the Cape by the Württemberg regiment.

The Württemberg regiment had a more decidedly German character. The contract required that all soldiers be German.[32] As with the regiment de Meuron, the contract also required all soldiers to be Protestant, and in this case too, many soldiers were in fact Catholic. At the Cape they enjoyed the protection of the regiment commander who provided them with a hall for holding services although they did not have a minister. The officers were drawn from the ducal army of their own free will but in some cases under considerable pressure from the duke himself. Among them were six natural

sons of the duke. Soldiers were raised in Württemberg and neighbouring states. Although most of them enlisted especially for the expedition to the Cape, the recruits were not VOC servants but a Württemberg regiment. The officers especially attached great value to their belonging to the ducal army.

The enlistees knew they were going to serve in the Cape colony. They signed for five years and most expected to return at the end of the contract. Motives for enlisting were often financial but could also include a taste for adventure or curiosity or the desire to start a new life.[33] It is also possible that some considered the possibility of settling on the Cape, a colony that in the eighteenth century was already drawing many German immigrants. This appears to have been especially the case of non-military professionals. In November 1788 one of the regimental chaplains, Johann Spönlin, submitted to the Cape authority a proposal for the establishment of a secondary school of which he would be headmaster.[34] Spönlin submitted the plan just one year after arriving at the Cape, and it is possible that the chaplain, who had been a tutor before joining the regiment, conceived of the plan of settling in Cape Town before leaving Europe, although his proposal may have arisen from observing the poor state of education in the colony. Family history could also play a role. Several officers had relatives who had served East India companies successfully and could serve as a model. The brothers Karl Joseph and Philipp Jakob Gaupp may have wished to follow the steps of their father, Georg Friedrich Gaupp, who had served the EIC in India and fought with Clive. After returning to Germany Georg Gaupp became partner in a cotton factory, building on know-how he acquired in India and connections he still had there.[35] Karl von Wolzogen may have thought of his older cousin Friedrich von Wurmb who had served as a VOC official in Batavia, acquired a small fortune and became secretary of the Batavian Society of Arts and Sciences.

In 1791 the Württemberg regiment, too, was sent further east and divided into smaller units that served in isolated places. Sending the regiment to Asia was deeply resented by the troops, who were told they would only serve at the Cape, but it was sanctioned by the contract. The motivation for sending the regiment to Asia was mainly financial as part of a reorganization of the Cape finances which also included a stop to all public construction works and selling the Company slaves.[36] In Asia the regiment was decimated by disease and between 1791 and 1796 lost 961 of the 1881 who sailed from the Cape. When the contract periods of individual soldiers began expiring in 1792, and again in 1797 and 1802, most of them chose to renew the contract because the VOC did not readily supply them with the means of returning to Europe, while the contract of the regiment as a whole did not have an expiry date. In 1795–96 those serving in Ceylon were captured by the British. Most of the soldiers joined the British Army while most of the officers preferred to stay in captivity. Several officers were released in 1800. Others remained prisoners until 1805. In 1808 the regiment was officially dissolved and the

remaining soldiers, now totalling just over 200, were forced to join the Dutch army, as the VOC by now no longer existed. Only about a hundred of the Württemberg recruits returned to Germany.

Foreign recruitment by the EIC

The EIC also employed many foreign European soldiers although their proportion was not that high. From 1750 its army grew very quickly from 3000 in 1749 to 67,000 in 1778.[37] Most of that huge army was composed of sepoys but the Company also raised many European soldiers. Throughout the eighteenth century the British did not trust the sepoys and believed they should not only be commanded by European officers but also led by European infantry regiments. As a senior Company official in Madras put it in 1782, 'Veteren (sic) Sepoys are the Iron of the Army, and the Europeans the steel which gives them edge.'[38] The company also thought foreign Europeans were less reliable than British. Lord Cornwallis in 1786 reflected the low opinion of foreigners when complaining that the Company troops 'are in a very bad condition, incomplete in numbers, and many of those numbers consisting of foreigners, sailors, invalids, or men under the proper size for military services'.[39] Foreigners were regarded as especially undesirable as officers. General Stringer Lawrence, who in 1761 became commander in chief of the EIC army, warned in 1764: 'English Soldiers will not serve with Alacrity and Spirit under a Foreigner as under the Leader of their own Nation.'[40] But because the Company was not allowed to compete with royal army recruiters it often recruited on the continent.

Unlike the VOC, the EIC sent out recruiting agents to foreign countries, mostly to Protestant German states and free towns as well as in Switzerland, where there was a large supply of experienced soldiers.[41] Officers were usually recruited in Britain through the cadet system. Only occasionally was commission given to officers deserting from rival East India companies. Many of these officers were French and were viewed with great suspicion. The first instance of organized recruitment for the EIC in continental Europe was during the Carnatic wars. In 1751 the EIC signed a contract with a Swiss military enterpriser, Lukas Schaub, who agreed to recruit four companies of Swiss soldiers, who were all required to be Protestants. In 1751–54 four companies with 518 mostly Swiss and some German soldiers and officers sailed to Madras.[42] Another four Swiss companies intended for the 60th British regiment that could not complete their voyage to America due to bad weather were sold to the EIC by their proprietor, Jacques Prevost, and reached India in 1757.[43] After the Seven Years War the Company preferred British recruits, but during the first Mysore war (1767–69) again manpower needs grew. In 1768 the committee of shipping agreed to lower the minimum age of Company recruits from 17 to 14 and to permit the recruitment of Protestant Germans and Swiss.[44]

The Hanoverian regiments

The turn to Hanoverian troops resulted from the crisis caused by the second Mysore war, which was also part of the general crisis of the American war. Jeremy Black argued that Britain owed its military success in the eighteenth century to its ability to draw on quasi-official and self-supporting forces such as the North American militias and the EIC.[45] The loss of colonial troops in North America forced it to raise German troops not just for the war there but also for India. After Haidar Ali invaded the Coromandel coast, the British Crown sent Royal regiments to India but did not have sufficient numbers because of the war in America. The EIC tried to raise more troops in Europe but failed because it had to compete with German princes who needed replacements for their regiments in America and with the VOC. Thus the EIC asked for Hanoverian regiments, which the king agreed to supply as Elector of Hanover. Two new regiments of the Hanoverian army were raised with 1000 soldiers each, the officers being drawn from existing Hanoverian regiments and the soldiers recruited in Hanover and neighbouring states. Another 800 soldiers were sent in 1786. Their motives were similar to those of the Württemberg recruits, plus the additional motive that this time the regiments were explicitly recruited for war, not garrison duties, which was an important incentive especially for officers hoping for combat experience, glory and quicker promotion than they could expect at home. Some also hoped for a share in the fabulous riches of India. The regiments participated in the battle of Cuddalore in June 1783 and in several expeditions. After the war ended in 1784 they served mainly in garrison duties until 1791–92, when the survivors of battles and especially disease – amounting to less than half of the troops – were sent back to Germany. The expedition became part of a longer-standing Hanoverian-British military cooperation. Elderly officers met in India old British comrades from the Seven Years War.[46] Such encounters were more often experienced by German and British officers serving in the American War of Independence, since in 1776 veterans from the Seven Years War were six years younger than in 1782.[47] Many of the younger Hanoverian officers in India later joined the King's German Legion, where they presumably also met old comrades from India.[48]

The Hanoverian regiments in colonial service

The cooperation of these regiments with the East India Companies differed from that of ordinary auxiliary troops because in these colonial settings it was much more difficult to maintain the autonomy of the regiments. In comparison to them, the German auxiliaries in North America operated much more separately from the British forces, although they were always subject to British command. In their diaries, German officers in North America always distinguished between their own operations and regiments

and those of the British and were critical of the British conduct of the war. For example, Lieutenant Heinrich von Bardeleben often gave full details of Hessian regiments in his diary, but tended to leave British units anonymous.[49] In reporting casualties, Bardeleben always listed British and Hessians separately, without supplying a sum total for all the king's troops.[50] The Hanoverian officers in India saw themselves much more as an integral part of a large army and were rarely critical of it. In reporting on the dead and injured, the Hanoverians did not distinguish so sharply between the British and themselves, although in most cases they reported on the number of Hanoverians casualties, sometimes excluding the others.[51] Such omitting resulted from the concern of the Hanoverians for the fate of their own people without creating the impression that the Hanoverians were a distinct army as was the case with many Hessian reports. The Hanoverian Captain Hermann von Wersebe related the expedition of the south army commanded by Colonel Fullarton without emphasizing the role of Hanoverians within the troop.[52] Indeed, as in this case, Hanoverians often took part in expeditions composed of British, German and sepoy troops, and such expeditions could be commanded by Hanoverian officers, something that was rare in America. In America, the British took special measures to ensure that under no circumstances could the supreme command pass to a Hessian general. In local posts, too, British officers were sometimes promoted to ensure their seniority over German officers. As a rule, German officers did not receive major command commissions that included British troops, Lieutenant-General Wilhelm von Knyphausen being the exception.[53] In India, Colonel Reinbold commanded one of the two lines into which the army was divided in 1783, including, besides his own Hanoverian regiment, three royal and seven Company regiments.[54] An episode in which Lieutenant-Colonel Christoph August von Wangenheim led 1400 Hanoverians, Company Europeans and sepoys to suppress a mutiny of a Royal regiment showed that the Hanoverians were not perceived as alien troops in the way that various German auxiliary troops in America were.[55]

The important distinction for the Hanoverians in their letters was between European troops and sepoys, whom one Hanoverian officer called 'our black regiments'.[56] During the sea voyage to India Hanoverian officers often spoke of themselves as Germans in contrast to the British on board, although they did not have a sense of a national German identity. Once they landed in India, the emphasis was laid upon their identification as Europeans along with the British and versus the Indians. The officers also continued to define themselves as Hanoverians when referring to the military organization. They did not entirely stop referring to their cultural identity as Germans, for example by mentioning encounters with Germans in India, but their identification as Europeans became more important. While during the sea travel they compared unfamiliar natural phenomena with German ones, in India the comparison was with Europe, and while on the ships the English

language posed difficulties, in India it was Indian languages and Persian that seemed incomprehensible.[57]

Among European troops in India, the important distinction was between Royal and Company troops, with Royal officers receiving automatic seniority over Company officers.[58] The Hanoverians were classified among royal troops and received their attendant privileges. In a petition submitted to the king by 132 Company officers in 1783 against the privileges for royal officers they complained that: 'It is with the deepest anxiety and concern we observe that the officers of the German corps, in like manner with His Majesty's British officers, will not only rank with us, but command us, this will be a species of mortification which Britons have hitherto never learned to bear.'[59] On the other hand, the Hanoverians in their letters did not highlight the distinction between royal and Company officers, all of them being simply English to them.

The Württemberg regiment in colonial service

The Württemberg regiment had a more problematic relationship with the VOC which, unlike the British Royal troops in India, was not accustomed to international cooperation. The main issue was not the foreignness of the Germans but the autonomy of the regiment. In the Cape disputes revolved over the judicial autonomy of the regiment. After the regiment was sent to Asia and divided into smaller troops, the VOC attempted to assimilate it into its own military and this was fiercely opposed by the officers. But the regiment remained connected to Württemberg. Regiment commanders continuously sent reports to Stuttgart, complaining of the relationship with the VOC and asking for instructions. Promotions within the regiment also had to be officially sanctioned by the duke, although the large mortality rate and communication problems necessitated many titular promotions. The conflict with the VOC sharpened the sense of the regiment's distinction. The quartermaster of the first battalion, Captain Binder, suspected that sending the regiment to Asia was based on 'the murderous speculation that through India's man-devouring climate one can get rid of the greater part of the regiment and thus save large sums on transport, pensions, and bonuses'.[60] Lieutenant Karl von Wolzogen, not a native of Württemberg but a graduate of its military academy, proudly described how his small expedition celebrated the duke's birthday in February 1790 in the presence of Makassar kings, saying that 'probably the birthday of no German prince was ever celebrated in such an extraordinary manner in such a remote part of the world'.[61] In a letter he wrote a year later he complained of the attitude of the governor of Batavia towards his troop and said, 'We decided to give these gentlemen here a clear idea of the difference between an officer of a German prince and those officers of the Dutch company in India.'[62] This was clearly not a national difference, since in the same letter Wolzogen

tells of encounters with many German officers and civil servants of the VOC.[63] Upon his arrival on the Cape of Good Hope Wolzogen wrote that although many colonists were German, they were hardly distinguishable from the Dutch, for 'they gradually received the local manners so that they should be regarded as Dutch'.[64] Rather, these were statements of professional difference, not unlike the contempt of British Royal officers for EIC officers.

Under VOC pressure, most officers gradually left the regiment and were integrated into the colonial establishment, knowing that this would often mean never returning home. Usually they did this after realizing that the regiment was not going to return and often in conjunction to marriage to a Eurasian woman. Wolzogen left the regiment in 1796 following a quarrel with his superiors, three years after his marriage to Johanna Fredericke von Bose, a woman of German-Indonesian descent, who was born in Samarang. He became a Dutch army colonel and later civil inspector of forestry.[65] Franz Treffz remained in the regiment and continuously talked about returning to Europe, but in his case, too, marriage to the daughter of a Dutch official, probably also of Eurasian descent, played a part in keeping him in Asia. In a letter he wrote to his family in 1798 he explained his decision to return to the regiment in Batavia, after being released from British captivity in Madras, by stressing the boost his career could get from his wife's family's influence in Batavia.[66] In 1803 he was sent from Batavia to Stuttgart to receive orders for the regiment and returned to the regiment and to his family in Batavia. After the dissolution of the regiment Treffz, too, became a Dutch lieutenant colonel and commander of Batavia. Both he and Wolzogen became affluent and had no reason to leave. Wolzogen deplored in a letter to the poet Friedrich Schiller, who was his relative, the distance from European cultural centres, but acknowledged he could not achieve in Germany the affluence he enjoyed in Asia.[67] In his letters, Treffz told of other regiment officers who also established themselves comfortably in Batavia.[68] Franz Winckelmann, the last commander of the regiment, became inspector of coffee cultivation.[69]

All these officers fulfilled their tasks as colonial officials conscientiously and never criticized colonial rule. Wolzogen's reports on encounters with Indonesians indicate neither sympathy nor hostility for local people, but he accepted Dutch interpretations of conflicts uncritically.[70] Winckelmann as regiment commander in 1807 commented on the 'murderous Javanese'.[71] He took part in enhancing European control in Java as Dutch inspector in 1810.[72] The officers did not necessarily fully identify with the Company or the Dutch. Treffz was very pleased with the British occupation of Batavia in 1811–16, that was very beneficial for him financially, and was sorry to return to Dutch rule.[73] None of the Württemberg officers seems to have used the language that Friedrich von Wurmb, Wolzogen's cousin and VOC servant between 1774 and 1781, came to use before his death, speaking of the English threat to 'our possessions in India' and to 'our trade' and 'our ships' and even of 'we as good Dutch'.[74]

Statements of attachment to the prince like the ones made by Wolzogen and Treffz were often made by German officers in America too, but not by Hanoverian officers in India. While British officers, both royal and Company, often referred to the wars in India in national terms,[75] the Hanoverians did not consider themselves as standing primarily at the service of the common king, although they were the only auxiliary troop in colonial service where such declarations could strengthen the attachment to the host army rather than weaken it. Instead, they considered themselves as standing at the service of the EIC, a temporary professional attachment. Before the battle of Cuddalore, a Hanoverian officer wrote that he would not forget his duty and birth.[76] He was referring to his duty as an officer and aristocrat, not to the king. His statement, however, can be seen as a parallel to Wolzogen's pride in being an officer of a princely army, except that the Hanoverian could feel more secure in his position. This is further indication that enthusiastic statements of attachment to the prince could result from situations of conflict and insecurity that generated the need to emphasize a distinct identity. Presumably, similar declarations by German officers in America were also meant to highlight their professionalism in an environment where they were often despised as mercenaries not only by Americans but also by British officers.

Epilogue

To conclude, East India Companies hired European auxiliary troops in response to a global crisis rooted in malaria in Batavia, colonial expansion in Asia and war in America. Their choice of specific troops was determined by previous traditions of military recruitment and cooperation. This practice did not prevent tensions over troop identities, but these did not lead to any serious operational difficulties. The troops integrated, at least temporarily, into colonial military establishments, although their identification with these establishments was rarely enthusiastic and remained a professional matter.

The last case of German auxiliary troops deployed overseas did not involve an East India Company but the Dutch state. In 1803, after the VOC was dissolved and the Cape was temporarily restored to Dutch control, a German contingent was once again sent to southern Africa. This was the fifth battalion of Waldeck that was created in 1785 from veterans of the Waldeck regiment that had just returned from America. The battalion joined other Waldeck troops who were stationed in the Netherlands. In 1802 a new treaty was signed, according to which the fifth battalion was sent to South Africa, carrying 580 soldiers, some of whom had served in America. The Waldeck troops remained in the Cape Colony until the second British occupation in 1806.[77] As they returned to the Netherlands, the entire Waldeck force there was dissolved and transferred to the Dutch army. The Dutch colonial army that was created by the new Dutch kingdom kept

recruiting foreign Europeans throughout the nineteenth century but both their numbers and their proportion to the Dutch recruits were lower than in the eighteenth century. These soldiers were ordinary mercenaries rather than auxiliary troops serving in distinct units. During colonial wars the Dutch conducted extensive recruitments in foreign European countries, especially Germany, Switzerland and, after 1830, also Belgium. Frankfurt, Bremen and Hamburg were the main target areas. In the period between 1814 and 1907 40 per cent of the European recruits were non-Dutch, with the Germans representing 14 per cent. The annual average of German recruits was 242 compared with about 5000 a year in the eighteenth century.[78]

In India, the regiment de Meuron was transferred to Royal British service and took part in the fourth Mysore war, before moving on to the Mediterranean and eventually to Canada. Many German VOC servants joined the EIC after their settlements were taken by the British in 1795. After the Napoleonic wars the EIC avoided recruiting foreign Europeans and relied much more heavily on sepoys.[79] The last major British military recruitment in continental Europe was during the Crimean War (1854–56).[80] The British Army recruited a German, a Swiss and an Italian (Sardinian) legion, all together 15,000 soldiers, although the war ended before they could reach the battlefield. The Italian legion was similar to the auxiliary troops of the eighteenth century in that its recruitment was approved by the Sardinian government for political reasons, but it was recruited directly by British officers. The recruitment of the German legion was done without official consent, mostly in north German cities. After the war some of the German recruits could not return home because their enlistment in a foreign army was now regarded as a breach of law. The British War Office suggested to the EIC to take them into its service but the company refused, not knowing that within a year it would be desperate for soldiers to suppress the Mutiny. The British government then found another colonial solution and sent them as military settlers to South Africa.

Notes

1. For this expedition see Chen Tzoref-Ashkenazi, 'German Voices from British India: Officers of the Hanoverian Regiments in East India Company Service', *South Asia*, 32:2 (2009), pp. 189–211; Viktor von Diebitsch, 'Die kurhannoverschen Truppen in Ostindien 1782–92', *Hannoversche Geschichtsblätter*, 1 (1898), pp. 67–8, 74–5, 82–3, 90–2, 98–9, 106–8, 114–16, 128; Ernst Julius von dem Knesebeck, *Geschichte der Churhannoverschen Truppen in Gibraltar, Minorca und Ostindien* (Hannover, 1845), pp. 122–71.
2. Hans-Martin Mauer, 'Das württembergische Kapregiment', *Zeitschrift für Würtemmbergische Landesgeschichte*, 47 (1988), pp. 291–307; Johannes Prinz, *Das Württembergische Kapregiment 1786–1808* (Stuttgart, 1932); Peter Wilson, *War, State and Society in Württemberg 1677–1793* (Cambridge, 1995), p. 94. See also:

'Deutsche Hilfstruppen in Imperialkriegen 1776–1808', in Tanja Bührer, Christian Stachelbeck and Dierk Walter (eds), *Imperialkriege von 1500 bis heute: Strukturen, Akteure, Lernprozesse* (Paderborn, 2011), 345–61.

3. Wilson, *War, State and Society*, pp.74–96; Peter Wilson, 'The German "Soldier Trade" of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century: A Reassessment', *The International History Review*, 18:4 (1996), pp. 757–92; Fritz Redlich, *The German Military Enterpriser and His Work Force*, vol. 2 (Wiesbaden, 1965), pp. 88–98.
4. Jan Glete, *War and the State in Early Modern Europe* (London, 2002), p. 31.
5. Janice Thomson, *Mercenaries, Pirates, and Sovereigns* (Princeton, 1994), pp. 26–9.
6. Sarah Percy, *Mercenaries* (Oxford, 2007), pp. 49, 65–88.
7. Jurrien van Goor, 'A Hybrid State: The Dutch Economic and Political Network in Asia' in Claude Guillot (ed), *From the Mediterranean to the China Sea* (Wiesbaden, 1998), pp. 193–214; Thomson, *Mercenaries,* pp. 33–6; Jan Nijman, 'The VOC and the Expansion of the World System 1602–1799', *Political Geography*, 13:3 (1994), pp. 211–27; Peter J. Marshall, *The Making and Unmaking of Empires* (Oxford, 2005), pp. 207–28; Kaushik Roy, 'The Hybrid Military Establishment of the East India Company in South Asia: 1750–1849', *Journal of Global History*, 6 (2011), pp. 195–218.
8. Robert van Niel, *Java's Northeast Coast 1740–1840* (Leiden, 2005); Alicia Schrikker, *Dutch and British Colonial Intervention in Sri Lanka 1780–1815* (Leiden, 2007).
9. Femme S. Gaastra, *The Dutch East India Company* (Zutphen, 2003), p. 87.
10. Jaap de Moor, 'The recruitment of Indonesian soldiers for the Dutch colonial army 1700–1950', in David Killingray and David Omissi (eds), *Guardians of Empire* (Manchester, 1999), pp. 53–69.
11. Gaastra, *The Dutch East India Company*, p. 81.
12. Ibid., p. 87.
13. *Hannoverisches Magazin* 18 (1780), p. 170. The author was Heinrich Morgenstern, whose letters were also published posthumously as *Briefe aus Ostindien* (Basel, 1786).
14. Roelof van Gelder, *Das ostindische Abenteuer* (Hamburg, 2004), p. 44.
15. Gelder, *Das ostindische Abenteuer*, p. 55.
16. Anjana Singh, *Fort Cochin in Kerala, 1750–1830* (Leiden, 2010), p. 144.
17. Gelder, *Das ostindische Abenteuer*, p. 36.
18. Femme S. Gaastra, 'Soldiers and Merchants: Aspects of Migration from Europe to Asia in the Dutch East India Company in the eighteenth century', in Wim Klooster (ed), *Migration, Trade and Slavery in an Expanding World* (Leiden, 2009), pp. 99–119, here 100–4.
19. Quoted in Gaastra, *The Dutch East India Company*, p. 87.
20. Gelder, *Das ostindische Abenteuer*, p. 43.
21. Gaastra, *The Dutch East India Company*, p. 81.
22. Gelder, *Das ostindische Abenteuer*, p. 46. See also Jan Lucassen, 'The Netherlands, the Dutch, and Long-Distance Migration in the Late Sixteenth to Early Nineteenth Centuries', in Nicholas Canny (ed), *Europeans on the Move* (Oxford, 1994), pp. 153–91.
23. Gelder, *Das ostindische Abenteuer*, pp. 94–6.
24. Peter Wilson, *German Armies* (London, 1998), pp. 34, 234, 248. Thomson, *Mercenaries*, pp. 28–30.
25. Rodney Atwood, *The Hessians* (Cambridge, 1980), p. 10.
26. Gelder, *Das ostindische Abenteuer*, p. 102. Recruitment agents in Dutch towns, the notorious *volkhouder* or *zielverkopers* (soul-sellers), played an important role in the

system by supplying the recruits with lodging while waiting to be shipped to Asia, but these agents usually did not go out to seek recruits abroad.

27. Wilson, *German Armies*, p. 288.
28. Gaastra, *The Dutch East India Company*, p. 164.
29. The following paragraph is based on Adolphe Linder, *The Swiss Regiment Meuron at the Cape and Afterwards, 1781–1816* (Cape Town, 2000), p. 14–38.
30. Gaastra, 'Soldiers and Merchants', pp. 108–09.
31. *The Memorandum of Commissary J. A. de Mist, Containing Recommendations for the Form and Administration of Government at the Cape of Good Hope, 1802*, ed. with an English version by Kathleen M. Jeffreys and S. F. N. Gie (Cape Town, 1920), p. 201.
32. When not otherwise stated, information on the Cape regiment is drawn from Prinz, *Das Würtemmbergische Kapregiment*.
33. Mauer, 'Das würtemmbergische Kapregiment', p. 294.
34. *Memoire adressé á son Exc. Mr. le Gouverneur & au Noble Conseil Politique de la ville et du Cap de bonne Espérance par Jean Fréderic Spaenlin ce 1 Novembre 1788*, Resolutions of the Council of Policy of Cape of Good Hope, Cape Town Archives Repository, South Africa, http://databases.tanap.net/cgh/, retrieved 2 May 2011 15:59; Otto Friedrich Raum, 'Field Chaplain with the Württemberg Regiment at the Cape, 1788–1790: From the Life of Magister J. F. Spönlin', *Quarterly Bulletin of the South African Library*, 22 (1967), pp. 33–41.
35. Wilhelm Kolhaas, 'Der letzte Karlsschüler: Major Philipp Jakob Gaupp, gest. 16.8.1852', *Württemberg*, 9 (1937), pp. 112–5; Karl Herbster, 'Georg Friedrich Gaupp: Kolonialooffizier, Industrieller und Musterlandwirt 1719–1798', *Mein Heimatland: Badische Blätter für Volkskunde*, 23 (1936), pp. 76–7.
36. Raum, 'From the Life of Magister J. F. Spönlin', pp. 40–1.
37. Gerald Bryant, 'Officers of the East India Company's Army in the Days of Clive and Hastings', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 6:3 (1978), pp. 203–27, here p. 203.
38. Quoted in Gerald Bryant, 'Indigenous Mercenaries in the Service of European Imperialists: The Case of the Sepoys in the Early British Indian Army 1750–1800', *War in History*, 7:1 (2000), pp. 2–28, here p. 5, n. 7.
39. Charles Ross (ed), *Correspondence of Charles, First Marquis Cornwallis*, vol. 1 (London, 1859), p. 230.
40. Quoted in Bryant, 'Officers of the East India Company's Army', p. 206.
41. Arthur Gilbert, 'Military Recruitment and Career Advancement in the Eighteenth Century', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, 57 (1979), pp. 34–44.
42. Johann Eduard Kilchenmann, *Schweizersöldner im Dienste der Englisch-Ostindischen Kompanie um die Mitte des 18. Jahrhunderts* (Grüningen, 1911), pp. 7–10.
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44. Huw Bowen, 'The East India Company and Military Recruitment in Britain 1763–71', *Historical Research*, 59 (1986), pp. 78–90.
45. Jeremy Black, *Britain as a Military Power 1688–1815* (London, 1999), p. 8.
46. *Briefe auf einer Reise von Stade nach Madras in Ostindien und aus Ostindien geschrieben nach Stade* (Bremen, 1789), p. 208.
47. Kevin V. Wright and Robert K. Wright Jr., 'A People's Army? The Hessen-Cassel Canton Regulation of 1774', *The Hessians*, 13 (2010), pp. 9–40, here 11; Michael R. Gadue, 'Multinational Force Considerations in the Northern Campaigns of 1776–1777, as Applied to the German Auxiliaries', *The Hessians*, 13 (2010), pp. 41–56, especially pp. 42–3.

48. Compare the individual biographies of Christian Ludwig von Wangenheim, Christoph August von Wangenheim, Peter Joseph du Plat, August Honstedt, Heinrich von Hinüber, August David Martin, Carl Best and Georg Müller in Bernhard von Poten, *Die Generale der königlich Hannoverschen Armee und ihrer Stammtruppen* (Berlin,1903), pp. 243, 262, 280, 284, 289, 311, 312, 343.
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50. Bardeleben, 'Tagebuch', p. 62.
51. 'Schlacht bey Cudalore in Ostindien, im Jahre 1782', *Neues Militärisches Journal*, 3 (1790), p. 268.
52. [Hermann von Wersebe], 'Auszug aus dem Tagebuche des Hauptmanns von W. beim 15. Hannoverischen Regiment in Indien, seit dem Vorfall bei Coudlor, den 23ten Julius 1783', *Hannoverisches Magazin*, 23 (1785), pp. 177–208, 225–56.
53. Atwood, *The Hessians*, p. 145.
54. William John Wilson, *History of the Madras Army*, vol. 2 (Madras, 1882), p. 73.
55. Wilson, *History of the Madras Army*, vol. 2, p. 135.
56. 'Schreiben eines Churfürstl. Braunschweig-Lüneburg. Officiers aus Ostindien, im Lager bei Mont, acht englische Meilen von Madras, den 7ten Januar 1783', *Hannoverisches Magazin*, 22 (1784), p. 535.
57. Chen Tzoref-Ashkenazi, 'Hanoverians, Germans and Europeans: Colonial Identity in Early British India', *Central European History*, 43:3 (2010), pp. 221–38.
58. T. A. Heathcote, *The Military in British India* (Manchester, 1995), pp. 51–5; Raymond Callahan, *The East India Company and Army Reform 1783–1798* (Cambridge, MA, 1972), pp. 36–41.
59. *Proceedings Relative to the Sending of Four of His Majesty's Regiments to India* (1788), Appendix 11.
60. Quoted in Prinz, *Das württembergische Kapregiment*, p. 170.
61. Wilhelm Christian Ludwig von Wurmb (ed), *Briefe des Herrn von Wurmb und des Herrn von Wolzogen auf ihren Reisen nach Afrika und Ostindien in den Jahren 1774 bis 1792* (Gotha, 1794), p. 363.
62. *Briefe des Herrn von Wurmb*, p. 395.
63. Ibid., pp. 396–8.
64. Ibid., p. 302.
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67. Friedrich Schiller, *Schillers Werke: Nationalausgabe*, vol. 39, pt. 1, Stefan Ormanns (ed) (Weimar, 1988), pp. 131–2.
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69. Niel, *Java's Northeast Coast*, p. 200.
70. *Briefe des Herrn von Wurmb*, pp. 348–51, 412.
71. Quoted in Prinz, *Das württembergische Kapregiment*, p. 281.
72. Niel, *Java's Northeast Coast*, p. 200.
73. Treffz, *Der Verschollene*, p. 40.
74. *Briefe des Herrn von Wurmb*, pp. 243–4, 273.
75. Marshall, *The Making and Unmaking*, p. 132.
76. *Hannoverisches Magazin*, 22 (1784), p. 543.
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Hauptmanns Ludwig Alberti', *Mein Waldeck*, 114:18 (2001), pp. 1–4; Otto Münter, 'Die waldeckischen Truppen von 1681 bis 1750', *Geschichtsblätter für Waldeck*, 71 (1983), p. 206.

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4

The Politics of Foreign Recruitment in Britain during the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars

Kevin Linch

In 1815, the Duke of Wellington took command of a multinational army that comprised British, Dutch, Belgian and German troops in the culmination of the 20-year conflict with Revolutionary and Napoleonic France. Such was the contribution of non-British troops to the victory at Waterloo that a recent revisionist history of the campaign has rechristened it 'The German Victory'.[1] Alongside the regiments of the British Army present at Waterloo were units from allied nations, including Hanover, Brunswick, the new Kingdom of Holland and a separate Prussian Army. Also present within Wellington's army was the King's German Legion (KGL), a corps of Hanoverians that had been created when the electorate was overrun by the French in 1803, and there were other links between the allied troops and the British Army. The Brunswick army contained a nucleus of men from the Brunswick regiment which, like the KGL, had found its way into the pay of the British Army as a foreign regiment. As with much of the history of transnational recruitment, Britain's extensive use of foreign troops was a product of manpower demands yet they were maligned despite their significant numbers and involvement in the war.

The battle of Waterloo may be untypical of the battles of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars but Britain's use of foreign troops was not. During Britain's fight against the French in Iberia between 1808 and 1814, Wellington's army included units from the KGL and Brunswick as well as other foreign regiments such as the 5th battalion the 60th regiment, mostly consisting of Germans and trained as light infantry riflemen, and the Chasseurs Britanniques (nominally a unit of French royalists), alongside allied units from Portugal and Spain. Furthermore, across the globe Britain had a substantial foreign contingent in its army, with Swiss regiments stationed on Sicily, Greek regiments in the eastern Mediterranean, a Calabrian Free Corps comprised of refugee Italians, polyglot units of Europeans in

the Caribbean, and colonial corps, such as the Ceylon regiments, raised in recently conquered territories.[2]

Studies of these units, where they exist, tend to concentrate on them as individual regiments, examining how they were raised, their strength, uniforms, and the actions and campaigns in which they participated.[3] Typical of this is the comprehensive survey of Britain's foreign troops conducted by C. T. Atkinson and published in the *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*.[4] As such, their analysis is limited and often takes the form of a narrative history of war. In contrast to this stands Roger Buckley's study of the West India Regiments, *Slaves in Redcoats*, which thoroughly explores the political, social and cultural aspects of the recruitment of Africans into specific regiments to garrison the West Indies and the clashes that this caused with the white, slave-owning, plantation community. This work demonstrates the significant political and cultural tensions surrounding these units, and there were similar levels of political disquiet over foreign recruitment more broadly, particularly the enlistment of European troops to fight the war against Revolutionary and Napoleonic France.

Furthermore, Linda Colley and John Cookson have argued that the experience of war in this period was significant in the development of new identities for those involved, either as an emerging sense of Britishness or stronger ties to locality and the units in which men served.[5] Whichever argument one finds more convincing, it is clear that Britain's 20-year conflict with France placed increased demands on the British state and its army forcing them to seek out new means of supporting and enlarging its military forces. In doing so, this changed the political landscape of Britain.

Janice Thomson has argued that there was a shift away from mercenarism driven by the establishment and propagation of norms in state practice arising from greater definition in the relationship between the state and the citizen.[6] This model accepts the nationalist memorialization of these wars and does not distinguish between the political discourse and military reality. Britain did not stop using foreign manpower in this period; in fact enlistment from outside the British Isles expanded massively. Superficially Britain's use of foreign troops between 1793 and 1815 mirrors eighteenth-century patterns of transnational recruitment. It was not unusual for Dutch and German units to fight alongside the British Army as they did at Waterloo, and foreign troops served under many British commanders throughout the wars with France between 1688 and 1815, either as allies, hired troops or specific mercenary units.[7] A detailed analysis of the British Army's foreign troops between 1793 and 1815 betrays a fundamental shift in the composition of Britain's foreign contingent, and the political rhetoric and cultural position surrounding their use. What changed were political attitudes towards foreign recruitment, in which there was a differentiation between types of 'foreigner', and this represents a break with the eighteenth-century international military market. Such was this transformation that

following the war colonial recruitment was accepted but the enlistment of other Europeans was not, despite their significant contribution to Britain's war effort.

Britain and foreign recruitment

The recruitment of Europeans into the British Army was well established before the outbreak of war in 1793. Britain had utilized foreign troops in all its conflicts with France during the previous 100 years and this practice took three forms. There were allied troops that Britain subsidized, such as the Prussians during the Seven Years War. A second source of foreign troops were those that were hired from other states that were not directly engaged in the conflict, such as the Hessian troops employed during the American War of Independence. Finally, there were specific foreign units within the British Army itself, such as the 60th Foot or Royal Americans. The 60th was originally intended to be recruited from Germans who it was thought would be more naturally adept at fighting in the forests of North America but it actually functioned as a foreign legion unit for Britain.[8] Describing these troops as mercenaries does not do justice to the varieties of Britain's transnational recruitment, and contemporary usage, for example from Dr Johnson's dictionary, indicates that the term simply described someone for hire or who served for pay.[9] The mechanism for payment was a fundamental distinction between these different types: were they paid for by another power via a subsidiary and so not directly under British control, or paid by the British government and part of its armed forces. This chapter will focus on the latter, as it is the deliberations over using non-British men in the British Army which were the centre of the political debates. Although Britain's alliances and subsidiaries were not without controversy, this is a subject that has been examined in Sherwig's *Guineas and Gunpowder*.[10]

The use of foreign troops in these ways was not peculiar to Britain and was a feature of eighteenth-century warfare across Europe, with the Bourbon powers of France and Spain noteworthy for including Irish, Swiss and German regiments within their armed forces.[11] Britain also had particular reasons for utilizing foreign manpower, as the army had to contend with a generally hostile political culture, borne of the experience of the English Civil War and the association of standing armies with continental despotism and a threat to English liberties.[12] This political culture meant that Britain's army faced savage cutbacks in its strength during peacetime, with the consequence that at the outbreak of war Britain was usually woefully underprepared for armed conflict and needed to obtain soldiers quickly. For example, after the American War of Independence the army was cut back from 144,000 to 43,000 men.[13] Not much changed in the intervening ten years of peace and just before the outbreak of war the British Army mustered only 42,500 infantry and cavalry.[14] However, Britain was a fiscal-military

state that was particularly successful in raising money for wars. The combination of political hostility to foreign units and financial muscle meant that, unlike many continental European powers, Britain did not permanently maintain large numbers of foreign troops in its military establishment (the 60th only had two battalions during peacetime) and usually hired or raised foreign units at the opening of hostilities. No wonder that at the start of the Revolutionary Wars, when Britain's paltry army was facing a French army that was soon to reach half a million, the government under Prime Minister William Pitt hired Hanoverian and Hessian troops and announced to the House of Commons in 1793 that 'in this case, we may have occasion to employ a considerable body of other foreign troops'.[15] Britain had both a need to enlist foreigners and the means to pay for them.

In the course of the eighteenth century a European military culture of foreign recruitment had become fairly well established, either through small states hiring out their forces, of which the Hessians were perhaps the most famous and most successful, or through individuals raising units privately under a contract with a state. In Britain's case, employing troops through subsidiary treaties had become routine business for Parliament and the government, and hiring units from private contractors was also formalized. The commanding officer entered into a legal contract, known as a capitulation, between him and the state defining every aspect of administration, accountability and responsibility for the foreign unit in a series of articles. This contract covered items such as the strength of the unit, pay, conditions of service (particularly where the unit agreed to serve), the rank and precedence of the officers, how long the unit would be embodied and what happened when it was disbanded.[16]

In addition to the established system for foreign recruitment, the late eighteenth century witnessed the articulation of 'natural laws' of war, a European consensus on warfare,[17] in which rules on what states could and should not do in relation to foreign recruitment were laid out. These were not international laws and in no way binding on any states, but they did provide a cultural framework for behaviour and attempt to codify customs. The most famous, and influential, of these works was Emerich de Vattel's *Le Droit des Gens*, published in 1758, which was translated into English a year later.[18] This set out several conditions for mercenary soldiers: 'no person is to enlist soldiers in a foreign country, without the permission of the sovereign'; 'all soldiers, natives and foreign, are to take an oath to act faithfully, and not desert the service'; and those who solicit men to desert to enlist them in their army should be severely punished.[19] Needless to say such niceties were not always adhered to – as seen in Daniel Krebs' chapter, the practice of enlisting enemy deserters to bolster the ranks while on campaign was not unusual and sometimes enemy units were forcibly incorporated into victorious armies – but they did represent an aspiration of humanitarian and limited warfare.

Although Britain made extensive use of the European military-manpower market, it did not mean that the politics connected with this were straightforward. Hostility to the armed forces applied just as much, if not more so, to foreign troops in British pay, a trait that went back to Parliament denying William of Orange the right to land Dutch troops on the English mainland in the 1690s.[20] The threat to liberty and the constitution posed by a standing army were exaggerated for foreign troops because they were under the direct control of the monarch and they were usually led by foreign officers who might not have qualms when ordered to take action in Britain. The political discourse had a religious element too. The British Army was there to defend the Hanoverian, Protestant succession and foreign recruitment could not ignore this fact, such as ensuring that the Germans recruited to the 60th were all good Protestants.

A further aspect that complicated the situation was that the use of foreign troops was debated in an active public political sphere, both within Parliament and outside it. To utilize foreign troops, the government was subject to the scrutiny of Parliament, whether it was authorizing the funds to raise such units or the less direct but not less powerful influence Parliament held when treaties where discussed. This meant that when Britain entered into the French Revolutionary Wars in 1793 not only was there a need for foreign troops and precedents for how to use them, there was already a forum and a tradition of debate about them. This debate was reignited by events of the 1790s.

Britain's foreign recruitment 1793–1815: size and shape

As mentioned earlier, foreign recruitment was not new to Britain during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, but one immediate difference was its extent. Obtaining detailed statistics on the scale of foreign recruitment in the British Army is not straightforward, with considerable variation between the establishment of a unit – the strength it should have had and was paid to have – and its actual numbers. The establishment of foreign troops accounted for 26 per cent of the sums committed to maintaining the British Army in 1794, a figure that gradually declined to 12 per cent in 1796, 7 per cent in 1800 and with no separate financial account for foreign troops available in 1801 and 1802.[21] Looking at actual numbers, in 1795 the 37 French emigrant corps in British pay amounted to 14,832 infantry and 5057 cavalry, from a total of 91,082 infantry and 15,732 cavalry.[22] The size of Foreign and Provincial Corps, as the army referred to them, grew substantially during the Napoleonic Wars from 12,149 before the resumption of war in 1803, rising to 31,707 in 1806 (the KGL expanded from 1580 to 11,746 alone) and the foreign contingent in the army reached a peak in 1813 of nearly 53,000 men, accounting for 20 per cent of the army.[23] These figures include locally troops raised in the ballooning British Empire as it swept up

the last French and Dutch colonies across the globe.[24] Although not strictly 'foreign' in the sense that they were recruited from territories under British control, they certainly were not British either, for example the 1st Ceylon Regiment contained 1087 'native' men, mostly Malays.

Examining the figures for Britain in detail shows a more complicated picture of foreign recruitment. Britain's foreign troops can be categorized and so analysed by utilizing Guy Rowlands' approach from his study of foreigners in Louis XIV's army.[25] Five categories of foreign unit in the British Army can be discerned. Firstly, there were foreign levies, whereby foreigners were enlisted for service in the British Army, usually into particular corps such as the 60th Foot. Secondly, there were subsidiary troops hired from other states. Thirdly, there were renegade troops, those who joined the British Army as deserters from the enemy, or were recruited from prisoners of war. Often a surreptitious form of recruitment, towards the end of the war Britain created units specifically for these men so they can be enumerated. Fourthly, there were exiled armies, units from states that had fought the French but had been defeated and wanted to continue the fight. Such units were new to the British Army and all of the French emigrant corps mentioned above can be categorized as exiled armies and although most of them had been disbanded or become casualties by 1803 a new wave of exiled military units was provided during the Napoleonic Wars. Finally, Britain also raised colonial levies, creating and recruiting units from places that it controlled or gained in its overseas empire.

Complete figures do not exist for before 1803, and later military statistics do not always provide a comprehensive picture, particularly with regard to renegade recruitment, and there was some blurring within the categorization outlined above as, for example, when the KGL recruited deserters.[26] Broad trends can be discerned though. As shown in Table 4.1, foreign levies expanded modestly, while subsidiary troops had completely disappeared by 1803. Alongside this, exiled armies and colonial levies grew significantly, and specific renegade units were created.

The relatively modest growth of foreign levies and the complete absence of subsidiary troops were caused by the geo-political upheavals of the war. Britain continued to recruit for the 60th regiment, which eventually expanded to seven battalions, but large-scale recruitment of foreigners through enlistment in continental Europe became increasingly difficult as Europe came to be dominated by France. The recruitment of foreign levy units was very sensitive to communication and logistical issues. Enlistment usually took the form of individual officers with a small cadre of NCOs raising men through financial incentives – a bounty – and so they were reliant on a steady stream of funds from Britain. Once a unit was up to a suitable size it needed some means of getting to the fighting. During the mid-1790s, this could all conveniently be done by recruiting in Holland and north Germany close to the war zone, but when these areas came under

Table 4.1 Categorization of foreign troops in the British Army, 1803–16

Year	Foreign levy	Exiled army	Renegade units	Colonial levy	Grand total
1803	736	2471		8942	12,149
1804	406	3653		8890	129,49
1805	442	7482		13,096	21,020
1806	3624	8969		14,823	27,416
1807	4691	13,978		15,729	34,398
1808	4364	14,367		16,986	35,717
1809	3702	14,983		16,234	34,919
1810	5241	15,788	506	15,405	36,940
1811	5278	16,778		14,695	36,751
1812	5043	19,993	573	17,012	42,621
1813	6363	22,129	3430	20,321	52,243
1816	5696	12,025	3099	17,253	38,073

Note: As at 1 January, except totals for 1811–16 which are taken from November/December figures from the previous year. Figures for 1803–05 do not include the 60th Foot.
Sources: 'Returns, from the Adjutant General's Office, of the number of effective men in foreign and provincial corps, in the service of Great Britain; &c.', *House Of Commons Papers; Accounts And Papers* 1806, vol. X, p. 373; 'Return of the several foreign and colonial corps in His Majesty's service on the 1st January 1806, 1807, 1808, 1809, and 1810.' *House Of Commons Papers; Accounts And Papers* 1810, vol. XIII, p. 431; TNA, WO25/3224, Effective Strength of Foreign and Provincial Corps, 29 November 1811; WO25/3225, Effective Strength of Foreign and Provincial Corps, Adjutant General, 31 December 1812; 'Return of foreign and colonial troops in British pay, on 25th December 1815' *House Of Commons Papers; Accounts And Papers* 1816, vol. XII, p. 429.

French control the system broke down. After 1795, north Germany was effectively cut off from Britain and so recruitment shifted to Switzerland, the Baltic and the Mediterranean, areas in which Britain only had an episodic presence. As a result of communication difficulties, the number of foreign soldiers declined during the Revolutionary Wars. This progressive exclusion from continental manpower sources was replicated for subsidiary troops. Initially, Britain received traditional offers of service from German sovereigns, such as the offer of an army of 11,100 men from Cologne, Waldeck, Nassau and a bevy of other German territories in 1793.[27] By 1795 Britain was losing access to these states, as France disrupted communications between Germany and Britain, first by defeating the Dutch Republic and then signing a treaty with Prussia that established a neutral zone in north Germany. The situation got worse for Britain during the Napoleonic Wars. The smaller German states were brought completely under French control in the Confederation of the Rhine that replaced the Holy Roman Empire after the defeat of Austria in 1805 and Prussia in 1806–07. Britain faced further French pressure on neutral states, if not their hostility, and in 1808 the foreign recruiting depot at Gothenburg was closed.[28] Communications with Europe were curtailed further under the Continental Blockade, which sought to exclude British goods from Europe. Later, in 1810, the whole north German coast was

annexed to France bringing it under much tighter control. Britain could not hire troops or recruit from neutral European states because by 1808 nowhere was accessible to Britain.

These changes to the political landscape of the continent resulted in Britain recruiting exile troops for the first time, and they became a significant component in the British Army. Immediately on the outbreak of war Britain was offered the exiled military forces of Frenchmen who opposed the Revolution. Even in the very early stages of the French Revolution, many Frenchmen, usually aristocrats opposed to the Revolution, left France. This exodus became even more substantial after King Louis XVI tried to flee in 1791 and was subsequently imprisoned and tried. As a result a large French émigré population was scattered across Western Europe, including in Britain. They offered their services when war broke out between France and Austria and Prussia in 1792, and after France declared war on Britain in 1793 they turned to Britain too. This represented a tempting offer for the British government which needed the manpower; there was a group offering to raise, officer and manage these units. In some cases, French regimental commanding officers sought to transfer entire units into the British Army.[29] Moreover, utilizing French manpower in British service also denied the French these men, so that Britain gained twice over. The Secretary at War neatly summarized the benefits: 'This augmentation cannot take place in a more efficacious manner than by a Levy of French Troops, taken from the enemy itself.'[30]

Exiled armies continued to be added to the British Army throughout the war. The Hanoverian army was forcibly disbanded in 1803 when the state was overrun by the French and very quickly the British government recognized this potential source of manpower. All British ships in the area were authorized to take on board any Hanoverian soldier who wished to travel to Britain, and this was followed by a proclamation to Hanoverians about the formation of a corps for them. A depot was established at Lymington, Dorset, and officers co-ordinated the effort at ports.[31] British military expeditions to the north German coast in 1805 (to the Weser) and 1809 (Stralsund) permitted more recruiting and provided the shipping to transport these men back to Britain.[32] In some ways, the KGL echoed the émigré corps of the 1790s, as they were displaced men objecting to the political changes in their homeland joining a power that was fighting their enemy. The crucial difference was that King George III was the sovereign of Hanover and they were certainly enlisting with his permission. Naval power again proved crucial in the story of the Brunswick Legion's incorporation into the British Army. The unit was raised in 1809 for Austrian service by the deposed Duke of Brunswick (his lands had been incorporated in the Napoleonic state of Westphalia after his father sided with the Prussians in 1806), but after the Austrians' defeat the Duke decided to fight his way out to Bremen on the north German coast where he and his men were whisked away by the Royal Navy. Not long

afterwards, the men found themselves fighting in the Peninsular War and gaining quite a distinguished record.

After 1808 Britain had a source of European manpower through its campaigns in Portugal and Spain. In this conflict, which saw Poles, Germans, Dutch and Italians deployed to the region by Napoleon, Britain was able to avail itself of a new source of foreign recruits. Such enlistments could happen through a variety of means. Disaffection with a posting to Iberia and pay and conditions could lead men to desert to the British Army. The general disruption of this war, with partisan bands, deserter gangs and the like also produced a further prompt for foreigners to serve in the British Army for regular pay and some security. Additionally, Anglo-Portuguese and Spanish victories meant prisoners of war, who might be tempted to serve too.

Relying on displaced soldiers meant that it was impossible to maintain the territorial recruitment of foreign regiments, and Britain's exiled regiments came to increasingly rely on prisoners and deserters to fill their ranks. In effect the 22,129 men listed as 'exiled armies' were closer to renegade units by 1813. These ranged from individual enlistments to the wholesale seduction of a unit, such as the Swiss regiment Meuron in the pay of the Dutch and stationed in Ceylon in 1795. Such was the need that a mission was sent to northern Spain in 1810–12 to try a encourage some of the German troops serving there in the French army to join the British. This was not a huge success, despite the offer of $5 for a private and $20 for officers, but is indicative of the lengths to which Britain was prepared to go.[33]

Two features stand out in this type of foreign recruitment. Firstly, Frenchmen were not utilized extensively and were kept in distinct units when they were employed. Secondly, the army sought to maintain the separate identity of units even if the reality was very different. Baron de Roll requested that all Swiss conscript prisoners be sent to his Swiss regiment,[34] but such wishes could not be met. The Chassuers Britaniques is a good example of the changing nature of Britain's foreign units. Initially raised from disbanded émigré troops in the Russian Army and other Swiss recruits in 1801, it was supplemented with 120 Spanish prisoners of war while on Malta in 1805, and about 330 prisoner recruits after the Battle of Maida in 1806. It is no wonder that an officer described this and four other foreign regiments stationed in Sicily as 'Regiments of Strangers'. Similarly, Wellington informed the government in 1811 that the Brunswick corps was principally composed of French deserters, and so should be sent to Gibraltar.[35]

Britain did not have a generic foreign legion but a series of named regiments that reflected disputed territories across Europe, and a little wishful thinking. It is indicative of this mentality that the corps that did not mention specific places or cultural distinctions were those whose loyalty was doubted; thus the Foreign Recruits Battalion were mostly French deserters, and there were several corps stationed in the West Indies which alongside their foreign contingent included British recaptured deserters and criminals.

The Italian Legion was formed in 1813 from 1000 Italian prisoners of war, although the officers organizing the units were told 'on no account to take Neapolitans'.[36] It seems that the dreadful reputation of Neapolitan soldiers made even the British government refuse to use them.

The largest contingent of Britain's foreign units was those recruited from British colonies and paid for by the British government directly as part of the British Army. Local forces in the empire existed already but these were maintained by colonial governments or trading companies. The Revolutionary Wars saw the first colonial levies in the form of the West India regiments created in 1795. After that, this type expanded rapidly, with the establishment of units in Ceylon, the Cape of Good Hope, various Mediterranean Isles and Mauritius when they were captured and brought under British administration, and units of fencibles raised in Canada. Their key role was to take on garrison duties in these places thus releasing the line regiments of the British Army for active service. Only in a local context did these units see active service, and they were never deployed to the European mainland.

The political situation

The size of the foreign contingent was not in itself a major source of political debate but who was being enlisted certainly was, especially in the early phases of the war. This political debate arose because of the complicated international situation caused by the internal convulsions of the French Revolution. Britain's recruitment of émigré units meant that the government was in new political territory. Enacting its plan to recruit Frenchmen offered some choices for the government: either to make an arrangement through a treaty with the French regent as Britain had done in the past when it hired foreign troops; or draw up a capitulation with individuals to raise regiments. In either case before anything could be done it would require an Act of Parliament to cover the costs and to address other complicated issues. Britain's recruitment of Frenchmen went against the political and military culture of the late eighteenth century, as it enlisted Frenchmen without the consent of their sovereign. Additionally, it contravened the Test Acts that barred Catholics from public office, and ran counter to the general hostility to Catholics in the armed forces.

It is not surprising then that the debates over the Emigrant Corps Bill, as it became known, were substantial. A young George Canning, future prime minster and golden boy of the emerging Tory party, called it: 'It is the best subject that has occurred this Session.'[37] The debate over the bill came to a crescendo in a lengthy sitting of the Commons that included four speeches over two hours. Despite attendance in the house being low (explained by the opposition deliberately staying away hoping that the quorum of 40 MPs would not be met) the debate outlined two main lines of argument against foreign recruitment. The first was largely traditional, and centred on the

fears of giving the government unlimited powers to raise troops without the authority of Parliament and that these forces could be employed to the detriment of liberty in Britain.[38] Such was the support for this sentiment that the final Act of Parliament included stipulations that no more than 5000 men from emigrant corps could be on the mainland of the United Kingdom at any one time and that they could not go further than five miles from the coast.[39]

Fox, leader of the opposition in the House of Commons, went much further and focused on the nature of the war if it were to be fought by using Frenchmen against their fellow countrymen. Fox argued that utilizing Frenchmen demonstrated that Britain was engaged in a war to change the government of France and restore the monarchy and the aristocracy, something that had not been openly debated. Consequently, Fox thought, by endeavouring to change the French government and utilizing its people to do this, the war would be longer and bloodier than it needed to be, and peace much harder to attain.[40]

Despite the protestations against the bill, the practical manpower demands won out and Britain set about recruiting émigré units, although Fox's prediction was remarkably accurate. The unit-based histories focusing on campaigning and the detail of the material culture of these units are instructive. For one, many of the émigré units adopted the white cockade of Royalist France in their uniforms. This immediately made them traitors to the French revolutionaries, whose declaration of 'La Patrie en Danger' included an article where anyone caught in France not wearing the revolutionary cockade would be put on trial and if found guilty sentenced to death. This was no hollow statement. When Britain sent several thousand émigré troops to Quiberon in Brittany during 1795 in support of the Vendee rebellion, this disastrous expedition ended with the death of around 5000 men. A further 6000 were captured, of which 751 were shot after trials. What was left of the émigré units were reorganized and utilized in Britain's campaigns outside Europe, in most cases in the West Indies, although this was not the last time Britain deployed exiled armies back to their home country. It is testament to the experience of utilizing these troops that the Treaty of Amiens (1802) specified that Britain and France should not 'give any succour or protection, directly or indirectly, to those who wish to injure any of them'.[41] At the resumption of the war in 1803, William Pitt received a very stern warning from a concerned member of the public that émigré troops must not be used again.

Although a second foreign recruitment act was passed in 1804 with very little debate, it did not mean that the politics of foreign recruitment had been settled.[42] Although the scale of foreign recruitment into Britain's armed forces was significant, the foreign contingent also had an impact on Britons even when they were never exposed to them. In part, this can be attributed to the political hostility to keeping foreign troops in Britain, which resulted in particular areas noticing them more than others. The Isle of Wight was an

extreme example, as it effectively became the depot for foreign troops during the period. In an attitude that perhaps summed up the feelings of many Britons towards foreign troops, it was reported in 1794, when barracks for 700 to house the emigrant corps were being built, that 'it is hoped that the Government will not think of defending the Island wholly with Soldiers of that description, unfortunate as they may have been, and therefore deserving protection, or however loyal and attached to the cause of Great Britain they may ultimately prove to be'.[43]

Such fears over the numbers of foreign troops within Britain came to a head in the later stages of the Napoleonic Wars, as the opposition within Parliament and radical critics challenged the government about its use of foreigners in the British Army. It was sparked by the suppression of a mutiny of the Ely Local Militia by the KGL in 1809. This immediately attracted the attention of the political radical Cobbett who censured the government in his *Weekly Political Register*,[44] and earned him a trial for seditious libel. In the Commons, the political outcry forced the government into publishing annual returns of the number of foreigners within British regiments stationed in Britain, an indication of how foreign troops were still viewed with suspicion as a tool of executive despotism.

At the same time, Parliament turned its eye onto the practice of enlisting renegade soldiers. Although prevalent throughout the eighteenth century, contemporary military theory, questions about soldier loyalty, and moral unease produced significant disquiet about the subject. For example, General Tarleton stated to the Commons in 1809 that 'it was an established maxim in all French books upon military affairs, never to enlist into the army prisoners of war, the subjects of a hostile state' and in the debates that followed the government was continually censured. Samuel Whitbread, one of the opposition's most powerful orators, criticized the government for the practice of enlisting French prisoners of war 'men who, whatever might have been their principles, would not fail to profess any opinion or feeling that would procure for them not only liberation from imprisonment, but bounty, pay, and clothing in the British service'.[45]

Furthermore the contribution that foreign troops made to Britain's war effort was marginalized by the discourse about the successes of the British Army. Parliament played a key role in setting an increasingly nationalist tone to victory celebrations, a process that had been going on throughout the 1700s but reached rhetorical heights during Britain's string of victories in the Napoleonic Wars, starting with the Battle of Maida in 1806. Heralded as a triumph of British soldiers, it ignored the contribution played by the small, but important numbers of foreign units at the battle. Lord Grenville's motion in the Lord for official thanks was typical:

> The case before them was most distinguishable for its display of heroic valour, and as tending to illustrate the position, that wherever the British troops had been equal in point of numbers to their adversaries, or even

> where they were not greatly inferior, that native and characteristic valour for which they were so eminently distinguished, failed not to display itself, and to secure the palm of victory. In this view, he knew not where, in all the military annals of this country, to look for a more signal or brilliant example than that which gave rise to his present observations.[46]

Such speeches championed Britain's soldiers, and latterly their allies,[47] and reinforced well-established prejudices against foreign troops in the British Army: they could not be trusted and were inferior to British soldiers.

This viewpoint became so well established that even the KGL were condemned, despite being probably the best of Britain's foreign troops and having an allegiance to George III as Elector of Hanover. In 1812, letters appeared in newspapers on 'mercenary' foreigners, to which one officer of the KGL felt compelled to reply, affirming the KGL's 'ardent attachment to the House of Hanover' and show how, as George III was their sovereign too, they were not mercenaries.[48] Moreover, the official thanks from the Horse Guards given to the KGL in the same year, in which KGL officers were given permanent rank in the British Army, immediately provoked the opposition into reproaching the government for an 'infraction of the law of the land'.[49]

The reservations over the reliability and effectiveness of foreigners were also applied to Britain's colonial troops. Although not exclusively framed in racial terms, there was a sense that men raised in Britain's colonies could only function within the army in particular circumstances. The 1806 Vellore mutiny in India confirmed to some that sepoy units needed to be treated differently and could not be completely trusted on their own. Particular prejudice was reserved for the Ceylon regiments, whom Windham supposed were armed 'with bows and arrows'.[50] Equally, the black West India regiments were regarded with some trepidation, although valued for the fact that they reduced the demand for white troops for garrisons in the West Indies and performed well in the capture of French islands in the Caribbean. These units raised fears about increasing the black population in the West Indies; as one MP put it: '[I] recommended caution in the employment of black troops. If they revolted in the large islands and joined the disaffected, in Jamaica for instance, we might find it difficult to conquer them. Buonaparté had conquered Europe, but could not conquer St. Domingo.'[51]

In response to challenges to its foreign recruitment policy the government justified the breaking of military norms of foreign recruitment on the grounds of the cataclysmic nature of the wars. This view was summarized in a speech by Palmerston, given in 1812 at the crucial phase of the Napoleonic War:

> [there] existed no war like the present, in which we saw Buonaparté sending Spaniards into the north, Germans into Spain, and Poles to

> preserve the tranquillity of Italy. Was there, then, any serious ground of apprehension for the liberties of the country, when we knew that the number of foreigners in our service was limited by law to the number of 16,000, and that of those the far larger proportion was employed abroad?[52]

It was the very nature and extent of the war against Revolutionary and Napoleonic France that justified the enlistment of European foreigners in such ways. Throughout the eighteenth century the British Army's foreign corps had principally been foreign levies and subsidiary troops but this changed during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars. The pre-revolutionary systems and norms of foreign recruitment broke down and were replaced with new arrangements. Furthermore, Britain's successes outside Europe presented new populations to draw upon in its quest for military manpower.

These new arrangements for Britain's use of European foreigners during its war with Revolutionary and Napoleonic France were indicative of a lessening of the limits of war, which although perhaps might not have been 'total' showed how war was becoming more aggressive and bloody. This focused on the question of the legitimacy of the governments around Europe that were being recast by France, in part ideological in that it was counter-revolutionary but also opportunist as men were willing to serve and transfer their allegiance. A letter offering to raise a foreign unit in 1794 summarized this change in attitude which led to foreign recruitment on such a large scale in Britain, describing the French Revolutionaries as the 'usurpers of Europe'.[53]

The politics and legacy of Britain's recruitment of foreigners between 1793 and 1815 has similarities with other modern episodes of transnational enlistment. The need for soldiers drove the British government to reshape its enlistment of foreigners and justify its actions, but this did not necessarily command widespread approval. Non-British soldiers were branded mercenaries despite a multiplicity of reasons for their presence, and they were expunged from the history of the British Army, echoing the post-war nationalist myth-making that occurred across Europe. Such was the strength of this belief that, 100 years later, an historical textbook could confidently title itself *How England saved Europe*.[54] This rhetoric developed during the long and hard-fought conflict between 1793 and 1815 and meant that the enlistment of European troops, either levies, exile armies or renegade troops was unacceptable politically. This left colonial troops as Britain's foreign contingent and given the fact that they remained largely static, commanded by British officers, stationed alongside some British troops, and operated out of sight of Parliament and the British people, they became an accepted but disregarded part of Britain's military establishment.

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Section II

Colonial Military Mobilization

5
The Military Marketplace in India, 1850–60

Bruce Collins

The challenge of the Mutiny-Rebellion, 1857

The recent historiography of the British militarization of India has taken various forms. One debate concerns the introduction into the sub-continent of European military technology, training, tactics and organization. A review of these impacts has been provided by Kaushik Roy, who emphasizes the way in which what he calls a military synthesis of Western and customary practices progressed at different paces among the indigenous rulers' diverse armies. Roy, however, devotes little attention to recruitment and especially to the ways in which the British in particular dealt with local leaders who commanded military levies. In contrast, Randolph Cooper argues that the decisive development which explains British military success in the early nineteenth century was the East India Company's ability to dominate the regional military labour market. In an extension of the idea of the military-fiscal state developed by John Brewer, Cooper stresses that the British had the sheer financial muscle not only to pay their own forces well, but also to buy off subordinate rulers and their levies, particularly of light cavalry, who served their opponents. The Company, readily able to borrow on a sufficient scale to make that happen, dominated the military labour market and thus ensured Britain's military security in the sub-continent.[1]

Despite this apparently easy financial superiority – and historians, as with Paul Kennedy, tend to treat the transition from money to power as a relatively easy and direct one[2] – contemporaries were deeply concerned about the role of 'native' troops in the Indian army. By the 1840s there were already concerns about the long-term loyalty of the sepoys. Increasing public debate, spread in the expanding Indian press, as well as in British newspapers, which gave more coverage to India from the 1820s, concerned the martial characteristics of different ethnic groups in the sub-continent. Rajputs came top of the hierarchy, while Sikhs were described as being less intellectually gifted but making excellent soldiers; Muslims came to be regarded as dangerously fanatical.[3] In 1844, the Governor-General, Lieutenant-General Sir

Henry Hardinge, reflected to his step-son back home on the centrality of the Indian army to British rule. Under foreign officers, it 'consents to co-erce [sic] their own countrymen, merely for the sake of pay & pension – *mesmerized* as it were by a handful of its off[icer]s exhibiting in the working of the system the greatest phenomenon that the world has ever witnessed'. Securing the sepoy army's loyalty was fundamental for, 'in this vast empire, let your political economists say what they will, our power rest[s] exclusively on the fidelity of this native army . . . '.[4]

The classic explanations of this phenomenon emphasized passive and proactive pulls. Most recruitment for the largest of the three presidency armies, that of Bengal, came from southern Awadh, the eastern area of the north-west provinces and west Bihar, with few coming from east of Bihar. The mainstay of the army were middling-class farming people, probably from families whose income and status had declined since the late eighteenth century as a result of population growth and turnover in land ownership. Because the process of recruitment simply continued traditional methods and because 30–40 per cent of sepoys across India served for 10–17 years, thereby helping to stabilize numbers, the British kept no systematic records of the annual intake or of the procedures adopted. They depended upon sepoys to attract men from their own families and villages. Particular inducements were the regularity of pay and, new to India, the provision of pensions after 15 years' service, as well as familial and community links to military service. The sepoys were not mercenaries, but men of relatively good social position ready to serve under British officers who provided, at least in theory and official rhetoric, that charismatic leadership and sense of martial hierarchy with which 'Asiatics' could identify. A new leadership cadre thus tapped into a pre-existing and powerful set of behavioural and cultural norms in north-western India.[5]

Doubts were periodically expressed about this model and they were vindicated by the Mutiny-Rebellion of 1857. By May–June, the majority of sepoy regiments in the largest of the three presidencies' armies, Bengal's, had mutinied and been disbanded, or had removed their British officers and quit their garrison towns or taken them over. Many regiments, especially from the large garrison at Meerut, marched upon the old Mughal capital of Delhi and proclaimed the re-instatement to active authority of the Mughal emperor who resided in internal exile there.

This mutiny, strengthened by the insurgency of some localities and local rulers, raised an immediate and acute dilemma. A large contingent of the Bengal army and a very large proportion of the European troops in the Bengal army were stationed in the Punjab and not in the region swept by mutiny and subsequent rebellion. The British had intervened in the Punjab in 1846–48 and then annexed the former Sikh kingdom after the war of 1848–49. In May 1857, the British stationed 36,000 Hindustani troops, 13,000 Punjabis and 10,000 Europeans – a substantial portion of the army

of Bengal, and particularly its elite units – in the Punjab. The first challenge posed by the mutiny in the Bengal presidency army to British rule in the Punjab was the extent to which the British could rely on the loyalty of sepoys stationed there. The British decided from May to disarm many battalions and execute individuals or small groups of sepoys. But the second challenge was assessing the dangers of transferring troops from the Punjab to Delhi in order to contain and then overthrow the mutineers in one of their main strongholds and in a city with high symbolic and political value. There was an especially pressing need to transfer European troops from the Punjab to Delhi because reinforcements from Britain would not arrive in India until later in the year. The shift of European troops out of the Punjab meant that by September 1857 only 3600 Europeans remained there, while the total British force in the province had been slashed from 59,000 men to 35,000 troops. Worse, this reduced aggregate total included 13,000 disarmed sepoys. The decision to deplete the Punjab of troops was fiercely contested by some leading members of the British administration in the annexed territory, the argument being finally resolved by the insistence of the Governor-General, Lord Canning, that the possible loss of the Punjab was worth the risk if Delhi were to be besieged and then retaken by the British. The removal of so many troops from the Punjab, and the fact that over a third of the remaining soldiers had been disarmed lest they might mutiny, created a pressing internal security problem. The British also needed to protect the Grand Trunk Road, running from the Punjab through the whole length of north-central India, from mutineers and rebels alike.

To meet these needs, the British decided to recruit Punjabis in large, but rigorously defined, numbers. At the beginning of the uprising, the 13,000 Punjabi troops were widely distributed in 15 cavalry and infantry regiments and a corps of guides at Peshawar, on the Afghan frontier.[6] John Lawrence, the chief commissioner for the Punjab, planned in late June to raise a further 37,000 troops, replacing sepoys in existing regiments, adding 70 new companies, or 8050 men, to existing regiments, and assigning 6440 of these men to five new Punjabi and two new Sikh regiments. Of the 6288 new cavalry to be raised, over half were incorporated into existing regiments and 3000 were irregular levies. He was reluctant, however, at the end of June to recruit to his target numbers until more British troops had arrived from Britain to counterbalance the sudden and large surge in Punjabi recruitment. In the interior, in order to protect the supply route from Kurmaul to Delhi, Lawrence accepted troops supplied by Gulab Singh, the maharajah of Kashmir and Jummu, despite his reluctance to do so because of the latter's untrustworthiness as an ally.[7] One method of binding Gulab Singh, who ruled about three million people, to the alliance was by insisting that, when he later in the year sought to deposit large sums of money in the East India Company's territories, he should do so by purchasing government securities rather than by other means.[8]

Table 5.1 Examples of leaders' contributions of troops

Source	Number of men	Tasks
Raja of Jind	800	Immediate duties around Delhi
Maharaja of Putiala	5000	Secure 120 miles of Grand Trunk Road and guard two key stations
Raja of Nabha	800	Garrison Ludhiana and for escort duties
Raja of Kapurthala	2000	Policing the Jullundur Doab
Maharaja Gulab Singh	2000	For the siege of Delhi
Raja of Khylore and chief of Sirmoor	1000	Replace the mutinied garrison at Simla
80 minor leaders	1200	General law-and-order purposes

To mobilize troops to replace mutinous sepoys and redeployed European battalions, John Lawrence initially contacted leaders in the autonomous dependent territories outside the Punjab who, on information supplied by a Sikh aide, had fought against the British in 1846–48 and had suffered accordingly. All responded by supplying the manpower requested by the Chief Commissioner, adding units which were not part of the extra recruitment into the East India Company's Bengal army. The table indicates the extent of this contribution from leaders east of the Sutlej river (Table 5.1).

In addition, tribal chiefs on the borderlands with Afghanistan provided small contingents to help guard the frontier.[9] At least two of the ruling houses which contributed liberally in 1857 – Jind and Putiala – had been loyal to the British in 1848–49, as a result of which they had gained additional territory. On the other hand, many leaders in what became the dependency territories in 1849 (the Cis-Sutlej, Trans-Sutlej, and Hill Territories) suffered confiscations and even removal and being pensioned off. The ruling family of Nabha in 1849 lost one-quarter of their territory, but by 1857 had learned the lesson that disloyalty was expensive.[10] Following the uprising of 1857–59, the raja of Jind, for example, secured further territorial concessions, including 13 villages in Kularan.[11]

The British recruited large numbers directly into their own army, though there were doubts about the reliability of warrior groups among the dispersed tribes of the hill country once they were deployed beyond their natural terrain. More manageable was the embodiment of police forces into regiments, for support or light duties or garrison service which released more experienced units for front-line fighting at Delhi. By May 1858, an estimated 70,000 extra men had been raised for the army and militarized police. This total may not seem large from a Punjabi population of 13 million. But it compares well with the 200,000 sepoys present for duty in the whole of India when the Mutiny-Rebellion erupted. Moreover, Lawrence deliberately limited the number of troops locally raised to the amount of force which he

needed at any precise time. An over-dependence on Punjabi levies would in Lawrence's view encourage Sikh self-confidence and separatism. Although the despatch of Punjabi recruits to Delhi and its neighbourhood removed them from their homelands, their loyalty was contingent upon the success of siege operations at Delhi. If the British failed to take Delhi reasonably quickly, or suffered repeated rebuffs during the siege, then Sikh disaffection might follow. Lawrence therefore persistently pressed for British reinforcements to act as a constraint upon the indigenous forces raised in order to hold the province.

Official concern over the dangers of mobilizing Punjabi troops was grounded in the experience of the 1840s. In the mid-1840s, the Sikh army had a reputation for plundering both the borderlands where it operated and within the Punjab itself. Worse in British eyes were the ways it became organized from 1841 following the death of the great ruler, Ranjit Singh. A system of delegates chosen from the troops in each regiment meant that issues of pay and conditions and then military dispositions were discussed by councils of these panchayats and the government, which was seen as an agent of the population. The army thus became an active participate in the intense dynastic succession disputes and factional politics of the Punjab in the aftermath of Ranjit's death. Given such politicization, Hardinge as Governor-General worried about the model which the Sikh army of the mid-1840s offered to the sepoys: 'The greatest anxiety is the possible infection of mil[itar]y democracy in our army. All democracies are vile but mil[itar]y democracy the worst.'[12] One of the central arguments in favour of direct British annexation in 1849 was, according to the Governor-General, Lord Dalhousie, in April 1849, that

> ...it would be folly now to expect that we can ever have, either in the feelings or in the reason of the Sikh nation, any security whatever against the perpetual recurrence from year to year of...acts of turbulence and aggression.

The only way to make the Sikhs submissive was to annex the Punjab, disarm them thoroughly, and govern them 'with justice, vigour and determination'.[13]

Concerns about the Punjab's relations with the British persisted. Joseph Thackwell, son of an 'Indian' general of the same name, insisted that the expansion of British territory in India intensified the dangers threatening British rule because the British ruled 'millions of warlike people'. The government in the Punjab was torn between two countervailing forces when it raised two regiments of Sikhs in Lahore and Ferozepur to despatch to the provinces. On the one side, 'the Government could not probably find better employment for the turbulent, self-willed race whom they had subdued. To raise new regiments was the only remedy'. On the other hand, there was

the danger of rebellion: 'The discontent of the Sikh will be communicated to the Hindoo; and if a formidable insurrection should ever take place in India, . . . it will be mainly attributable to the element of disaffection now blended with the subject mass.' The danger was that the widespread discontent evinced in 1849 by the sepoys in the Punjab, over the withdrawal of special allowances, might be turned by the Sikhs into direct action. 'That the Sikhs will ever love our rule, or lose that patriotic spirit which now consumes them, is most improbable.' In such circumstances, and unless railways were widely available in India to speed troop movements, even a substantial army of 50 British regular battalions would merely 'maintain' the British position in the face of a 'well-organized insurrection'.[14]

Despite this underlying distrust or hostility, the recruitment of volunteers was facilitated by three techniques. First, British officials seized the initiative as soon as news of the Meerut mutiny reached the Punjab; by immediately disbanding sepoy battalions where they could do so, they asserted their governing prerogatives and upheld their prestige.[15] From this position of strength, second, they required local rulers to meet their demands for troops and police, especially to safeguard communications. The language used in reporting interactions between officials and rulers indicated that requests were mingled with directives in setting out British needs for military service. Thus, in the Cis-Sutlej division, jagirdars or semi-feudal local chiefs, who in 1849 had had their service requirements commuted into taxes of one-eighth of their income, were relieved of the tax but received 'a general summons demanding their assistance' in providing men for irregular forces to be placed under the command of district officers. Various rajas were summoned or directed to levy detachments of troops.[16] Third, officials pressed wealthy Punjabis to lend the government money by subscribing to a fund open for one year, thereby binding the landed and urban elites yet more firmly into British rule. Rich bankers in particular were told that reluctance to lend 'would lose the confidence and good-will of the local authorities'. Some £420,000 was secured in this way.[17]

Punjabi mobilization

Having stressed how wary the British were in recruiting Punjabis in large numbers, one should turn to the soldiers' motives for joining. Given the context of caution, distrust and eager anticipation of external developments, why did so many Punjabis join the British effort to crush the sepoy Mutiny-Rebellion?

The explanations advanced by N. M. Khilnani in 1972 ranged widely. Punjabis resented Hindustani troops as occupiers and Delhi had long been regarded as an inimical power; the Punjab itself had been purged of disaffected leaders and completely pacified; a 'new landed aristocracy' had emerged under British rule and this group had no desire to disrupt

the prevalent order, especially as they had enjoyed a sequence of excellent harvests; finally, 'there was a general feeling among all classes that no force in India could ultimately prevail against the English organisation and resources'.[18] David Omissi noted that the Punjabis had no desire to see the revival of the Mughal empire, had enjoyed a moderate revenue assessment after 1852, and saw opportunities both for looting and for reviving Sikh identity.[19] This emphasis on long-term hostility towards Hindustanis and reconciliation to British rule since 1849 is undermined, however, in Khilnani's account by his insistence that the British recapture of Delhi by late September was crucial in preventing a rising in the Punjab: 'The very allegiance of the Sikh and other Punjabee [sic] troops hung largely on its prompt recapture.' Tensions rose in the Punjab by July and by mid-September reached threatening heights in the region from the Indus to the Sutlej: 'There was not the slightest doubt that had the Moghul [sic] capital not fallen by the end of September, the land of the five rivers too would have been swept into the vortex of rebellion.'[20] The argument looks less like a claim for long-term enmity against Hindustanis and allegiance to the British than a suggestion that Punjabis backed the British in May–June because they thought the British would win and began to re-consider their options by September when the British appeared to be struggling to regain Delhi. The commitment to fighting across national identities looks less clear-cut than it was initially described.

Underlying economic motives may have spurred volunteering. There were poor harvests in 1856–57 and the summer of 1857 was probably the low point in the economic cycle. Good harvests in 1857–58 had not yet materialized. There was a heavy incidence of debt, with the number of civil cases for debt doubling to 62,000 in the mutiny year. The nub of the problem consisted of debts owed to local bankers by farmers and others. When and where local violence erupted in 1857 in the Punjab, an immediate target consisted of the account books kept by local bankers. While the British administration of the Punjab reported no crisis once the financial year had run its course by May 1858, the receipts from the land tax were the same as those of the previous year – a poor one for agriculture – so that there was likely to have been a tight economic situation facing farmers at the beginning of the fiscal year 1857–58.[21] The financial rewards of serving the British were both specific and speculative. While rates of pay were transparent, there were supplementary performance incentives. Any Punjabi capturing a fugitive sepoy secured not only a reward of 50 rupees but also kept whatever the prisoner possessed at the time of capture. These rewards led to the formation of local posses in various regions.[22] More speculative rewards flowed from the prospect of participating in the siege, seizure and subsequent plunder of Delhi, a magnet for Sikh intervention for generations. In reality, there may have been an element of false promise in such expectations because only part of the Punjab forces raised fought at Delhi itself. Of the total Punjabi

force of 58,815 in May 1858, about 12,000 were deployed in Hindustan, Awadh and elsewhere beyond the Punjab. On the other hand, many units were stationed along the Grand Trunk Road and in strategic localities near to it.[23] There were ample opportunities for collateral plundering. If the British alluded little to this latter, they certainly played up the general impact of the fiscal stimulus given the Punjab by wartime expenditure, remittances of pay and prize-money. As of May 1858, the provincial administration reported that: 'There is at this moment more wealth diffused among the people than at any period since annexation.'[24]

There were three kinds of explanation given by British officials for the participation of Punjabi peoples in the suppression of mutineers in the Punjab and in Hindustan.[25] The first might be termed instinctive explanations. Much attention was frequently given to the tribal nature and traditions of minority peoples, a cast of mind which underpinned the 'classification' of martial races. In official British analyses, the Sikhs in particular – but other minority groups as well – were depicted as 'stalwart and sturdy people'[26] and warlike by nature. Opportunities for military service were thus described as facilitating the expression of their instinctive behaviour. In stressing how rigorously they had to calibrate Panjabi recruitment, British officials implied that it was easy to tap into Punjabis' natural warlike proclivities. In recent historiography, 'martial race' explanations have tended to be dismissed as a throwback to Victorian stereotyping. Yet the Victorians used such models in a serious effort to describe different types of prevalent social and cultural order. Thus Herbert Spencer distinguished between industrious and warlike societies as a means of capturing the predominant ethos of different kinds of society. In our own historiography, reified ideas of masculinity have been introduced into the expanding field of gender history. It does not seem excessively traditionalist to suggest that some cultural traditions and mythologies have promoted military participation more explicitly than have others, and that the usable past available to Sikhs gave them a distinctly militaristic set of aspirations. More explicitly, they also invoked a generational element in explaining the power of instinctive militarism. Crushed by the British in 1846 and 1848, Sikh warriors had been stripped of opportunities to express some prominently developed cultural attributes. It seems, from limited evidence, that the British in 1847 found it extremely difficult to disarm the population. From what later became the Lahore Division, they reported little progress in collecting 30,000 stand of arms from the Manjha District, with a sirdar responding that many men had gone to the British Provinces to find military employment there, while others went to Jammu.[27] This was significant as Manjha was later described as 'the original and peculiar Territory of the Sikhs'.[28] Elsewhere the British recognized that pacification was difficult. In 1849, successful efforts had been made 'to keep in subjection the turbulent province of Bunnoo', which was significant because it 'supplied the best materials of which the Sikh army was composed', notable for

discipline and courage.[29] It is possible that the organization of forces within the province in the 1850s helped sustain the martial spirit. The number of British officers in the Punjab Irregular Force was lower than the desired ratio; although it was suggested that other British officers were informally attached to the irregulars, these battalions were very efficient without a large formal British officer corps. Another contributor to the maintenance of a military culture may have been the formation in the newly occupied Punjab of a large militarized police force, distinctive from most civil police in British India in the 1850s.[30]

In 1857–58, former soldiers of the 1840s and younger men who had pursued careers in the irregulars and police in the 1850s could re-affirm their martial identity. Directing martial energies against the Hindu sepoys was especially attractive because the sepoys stationed in the Punjab since 1848 had not been the principal instruments by which the Sikhs had been defeated in the late 1840s. British units had borne the brunt of the fighting in those battles, while the sepoys, having ridden on the backs of British martial prowess, later, allegedly, lorded it over their old and now-defeated rivals. The Sikh generation of 1846–48 had 'tribal' motives in seeking to reaffirm their traditional martial values and restore the age-old pecking order among the martial races.

A second set of British explanations emphasized particular incentives flowing from 'tribal' instincts. The revenge theme was pushed farther back in time by attributing one reason for the willingness to enlist to the desire to avenge an ancient wrong whereby Hindus had murdered a leading Sikh guru at Delhi. A more compelling and material traditional incentive was plundering Delhi, the historic target of marauding invaders. When Punjab units were despatched down the Grand Trunk Road, 'The march to Delhi was, indeed, a popular expedition.'[31] One senior official noted the eagerness of Punjabi soldiers to march upon Delhi; Sikhs in particular seemed to abhor 'the very name of the place', their animosity against the sepoys being 'very remarkable'.[32]

Such reactions flowed from Punjabi resentments at being displaced from positions of authority. In 1856 a long article in the *Calcutta Review* argued that the British had transformed society in the Punjab since the dramatic confrontations of the 1840s:

> . . . every native knows and recollects full well that a revolution has come home to his very door. The taking of Mooltan, the conquest of Lahore, these are the dates most frequently in their mouths, dates which they cannot mention without a consciousness of a new epoch. . . . they remember, for this man was a Captain of horse, and is now a soldier in the ranks; that other was a large landed proprietor, and is now glad to skulk in obscurity to hide the poverty which he is ashamed to show, and which his small pension from Government is utterly inadequate to remove; that man who

> brings his humble suit be [= to] an uncovenanted extra assistant was the friend and Councillor of Maharajah Runjeet Sing [sic] . . . [33]

The conclusion was realistic if sobering:

> . . . till the picturesque ruins of destroyed society are quite rooted up, and our machine of Government can roll on its course with a monotonous strength which is no longer ruthless – till then it is impossible for a thoughtful Englishman to live in the Punjab without some occasional feeling, if we do not say of compunction, at least of compassion. . . . his praises of an annexation policy will be tempered by an admission that it is a painful thing to be in at the death of an old nationality.[34]

Robert Montgomery, Judicial Secretary of the Government of the Punjab, noted in 1857 that Hindustanis had obtained nearly all the influential posts open to non-Europeans within the Punjab administration. He claimed that, although he had urged that Punjabis be hired, British officers preferred to appoint men ready for the jobs available rather than Punjabi trainees who 'have little chance against the smooth tongue and practical knowledge of the Hindoostanis'.[35] Here, then, was another reason for Punjabi disaffection against Hindustanis.

Active service enabled Punjabis to work off their resentments but also to regain military employment. Troops enlisted were able to send pay back home, while regularity of payment afforded a customary attraction for serving the British. Once pay flowed into households in the Punjab, a virtuous cycle was established, since general wartime spending by the British stimulated the Punjab economy, adding to the recent experience of relative prosperity. In British eyes, the process of recruiting soldiers did not tap into poverty, but rather added material incentives to strong cultural motivations for going to war.

The third set of explanations concerned political factors broadly conceived. As a negative point, there was no rebel or sepoy leadership to woo the Punjabis into insurrection. The former dynasty had collapsed in a bloodbath of plot, counter-plot, coups and assassinations in the 1840s, with its survivors going into well-cosseted exile. The army itself had instituted a system of rule by councils of delegate soldiers which undermined generals' authority and created deep factionalism. There was no current, single fountainhead of prestige or leadership available to the Punjabis.[36] When Lawrence approached local leaders for troops, he met a quick and positive response informed by a political calculation that British rule was unlikely to be overthrown. Only the agonized prolongation of the siege of Delhi threatened to raise doubts about the sustainability of British rule.[37] Once that was resolved, the only remaining impediment to British success was the delayed arrival of troops from Britain.

The likelihood of British success was sustained by the sheer vigour of British actions within the Punjab to break the mutiny. The majority of sepoy units were disarmed, step by step. Soldiers fleeing from parades in which they were to be stripped of their arms were chased down and killed. Overall, down to May 1858, according to official reports, some 2384 men were executed for threatening the public peace or for mutiny; the latter category, dealt with by military tribunals, included only 714 men, or under one-third of the total. Additionally, some 2972 men were imprisoned or flogged, over 90 per cent of them by order of the civil authorities.[38] This vigorous repression provoked at least some unease at home. When the Deputy Commissioner of Amritsar reported how 150 sepoys of the 26th Native Infantry battalion had been killed by local police, while 45 died in prison overnight and 237 were executed on 30–31 July at Ajnala, one official complained:

> Anything more disgusting and horrible than the satisfaction with which this man gloats over the bloody scenes in which he took part, it is impossible to conceive. To call such ghoul-like revelling in blood by the sacred name of justice is blasphemy, and our astonishment that any civilised man – much more an Englishman – could so delight in human suffering, is only less in degree than the wonder we feel at his having the shameless folly to confess it.[39]

Yet that brutal reminder of the hazards of resisting British rule was important because at no time did British officials in the Punjab fully believe that they controlled the fate of the province. They repeatedly stressed how the levels of local recruitment were calibrated to immediate needs. Lawrence and his subordinates lived with the recurrent anxiety that the more powerful the Sikhs felt themselves to be the more they would pose an additional threat to British rule. Lieutenant-Colonel S. A. Abbott, Deputy Commissioner, Hosheyarpur, argued in October 1857 against removing Hindustanis from administrative posts:

> . . . independent of their greater efficiency a liberal proportion of foreigners is desirable. I have been now some 15 years in these States and know of no more intriguing character than a Punjabee. The time will come . . . that we shall regret the rejection of the Poorbeea. [Easterner][40]

While congratulating themselves on their successful mobilization of the local population, officials also stressed how far security ultimately rested on British troops. As *The Times* concluded in October:

> Not even Sir JOHN LAWRENCE, with all his ability, not even the Sikhs, with all their good affection, could have preserved the country from anarchy and ravage except for the presence of a respectable British force.[41]

The mobilization of martial peoples was thus riddled with contradictions. Punjabis may have been motivated by specific impulses which fostered their sense of *izzat*, a combination of 'personal, familial, caste, religious and generational honour' which has been described as a vital motivation for military service in the sub-continent,[42] and the quest for revenge against the Hindustani sepoys. But the British recognized that unless they recaptured Delhi fairly quickly, they were likely to face defection among their new recruits. Having no option but to use the local population, they desperately worked to maintain a wide ethnic/religious mix among those embodied. They feared the possible consequences of the Punjabis' willingness to serve while insisting that the men they mobilized were not the equals of European soldiers in military competence or commitment.

Recruitment and rewards

Two developments following the Mutiny-Rebellion revealed at least some elements in British thinking about the mobilization of indigenous forces in India. Those developments were an extensive review of the organization of the army in India and the recognition of services rendered, in this case by Punjabis, during the crisis of 1857–59.

A major official review of the structure and organization of the army in India naturally followed the Mutiny-Rebellion and the replacement of the East India Company's rule with direct crown sovereignty. The review and subsequent changes in the army in India focused on the size and distribution of the forces to be maintained in the sub-continent and the expansion in the number and proportion of those forces to be drawn from Britain. The new army would remain overwhelmingly sepoy in composition, but far more British troops would be stationed in India, and they would form a higher proportion of the whole than was the case before 1857. In terms of volunteering, two things stand out in this discussion. First, there seemed to be no concern, at least in public discussion, about the willingness of Indian subjects to volunteer for the army, even after the traumas of 1857–58. The impulse to serve simply merited no public re-assessment in British official circles. But, second, there was explicit and extended debate over the desirable ethnic composition of the army. It was desirable that there should be rivalry, even perhaps antagonism, among different groups of sepoys. Part of that would be regional. It was desirable, in British eyes, that men from the Deccan, be they Hindu or Muslim or from a particular ethnic/social group, should feel distinctive from those from Hindustan, be they from Oude, Central India or the Punjab. While there was a shift in recruiting away from the Brahmin castes and from Oudh/Awadh, there were also arguments in favour of rooting sepoy units within their localities. Although the British had begun by the 1850s to despatch sepoy forces to more geographically distant theatres of war – as into Afghanistan in 1839–42 – it was also claimed that such

service was unpopular. 'The dread of and dislike to [sic] protracted and distant removal from the neighbourhood of their homes, is believed by many to have been one, and not the least, amongst the causes of the recent mutiny.' The native soldier, it was claimed, 'has a strong and ineradicable dislike to protracted service at any long distance from his home and family'.[43] One suggestion was that battalion headquarters might be created, with housing for the sepoys' families and with battalions spending about one-quarter of their time at the headquarters bases.[44]

At the unit level, there was interest in forming battalions in different ways, by recruiting to some battalions wholly from one location and one ethnic group and by creating others from companies ethnically homogenous in themselves but combined with companies of different ethnic origins into composite battalions. One recommendation was that 24 of the 50 battalions assigned to the old Bengal presidency in the new army should be ethnically homogenous, with eight being recruited wholly from each of Sikhs, Muslims and Hindus. But there was variety within these broad groupings. The eight Sikh battalions might include two Sunni and two Shia battalions drawn from peoples west of the Indus River. There was a strong sense also that Punjabis might serve in specialist arms. Of the 18 proposed irregular cavalry battalions for the old Bengal presidency, five were specifically Sikh, but others were raised in the Punjab. The Punjab also contributed significantly to the artillery.[45] Among the distinctively ethnic issues raised in the review was the need to end toleration of religious practices which interfered with military duty, such as, for example, religious observances around the preparation and eating of food. This clear rejection of any sense that sepoy grievances over greased cartridges – the trigger for the mutiny in the first place – had been legitimate was reinforced by a recommendation to strengthen the disciplinary authority of commanding officers, with less reference to courts martial. The maintenance of a reasonable number of British officers in each battalion, thereby containing the influence of native junior officers, was explicitly recommended to stiffen racial differentiation.[46]

The second development from the Mutiny-Rebellion involved the distribution of rewards. The evidence from individual cases put forward from late 1858 for government rewards demonstrates how important the restitution of position and privileges was as a motive inspiring Punjabis to contribute to the British war effort. One former subedar in Ranjet Singh's army had a long history of cooperating with the British. He had belonged in 1838 to a unit which assisted the British expedition to Kabul. Bearing 'several honorable scars', he had supported the 3rd Irregular Cavalry in 1849 when the cantonment of Jhelum was established. Higher up the social scale, Daargah Pershad, who, together with members of his family, 'held offices of considerable trust and importance under the former Govt' [sic], was recommended an increased pension for securing intelligence on the state of sepoys' feelings

early in the rising. Again, one among many leaders in villages along the Jhelum River was singled out for an award for his services under fire in preventing mutinous sepoys from escaping into Gujerat across the Jhelum. Higher still, Raja Sultan Khan of the Gujerat district throughout the crisis helped in various ways: he kept British officials 'informed of the state of the Public mind'; he curbed the activities of organized and potentially disruptive local groups; he helped hold key passes in order to curtail sepoys' movements; he provided 85 soldiers for the British and, when the British call for police met an initially tepid response, he also supplied 53 well-trained men. A similar mix of intelligence reporting, countering local disturbances and supplying men for the police force distinguished sirdar Zuhherdost Khan. He had long complained of the removal of his revenue rights in 1849. Officials in 1858 recommended that his land-revenue rights be reinstated and that he be granted a life pension with a half-pension to his son or heir.[47]

Rewards varied greatly in size, but demonstrated the range of services rendered. The widow of a member of the 9th Police Battalion received a small pension of five rupees a month after her husband died far from home, in Delhi.[48] Parwaresh Ali received a village in Gurgaon District for services rendered, while the commandants and adjutants of the seven Punjab Police battalions secured pensions for their work in April 1858 to October 1859.[49] In another set of recommendations from the commanding officer of the 2nd Punjab Cavalry, one risaldar was restored to his original rights on the village of Kunyala and another was given back for himself and his male issue 'in perpetuity' a financial levy on his share of a specified jagir. Another more complex case of restitution involved the compilation of a document of 48 very closely written pages, including a family tree providing information over six generations, to substantiate the case for the award of pensions to the family of the late nawab of Thujjur, as a reward for loyal services.[50] Running through the official procedures spelling out in detail the legal nature of awards of pensions, land grants and land-revenue rights was an underlying sense that men of whatever rank volunteered in order to regain positions or privileges once possessed or to re-establish a social order which the British had substantially disrupted or constrained in 1849.

Transnational volunteering and the Punjab

The mobilization of Punjabis in 1857 illuminated many aspects of transnational volunteering. Although the British ruled the Punjab from 1849, they certainly regarded its people as belonging to a separate 'nationality'. Precise ethnic and religious differences were difficult to delineate. The majority of the population of the Punjab was Muslim. Only a small proportion were Sikhs; in the one division where returns were made, the heavily

populated Lahore division, there were only 181,000 Sikhs among 3,459,000 people, and that division contained the heartland of Sikhism. There was a view that the Sikhs were declining in numbers and might merge into the Hindu population with which they had close religious affinities. In recruiting soldiers, the British designated units separately as Punjabi or Sikh. Many volunteers were raised from among the Punjab's 12,718,000 people. But many came from the approximately 6,750,000 people living in the political dependencies, the largest of which, with three million inhabitants, were Maharajah Gulab Singh's territories of Kashmir and Jummu.[51] Many troops from territories which were dependencies, but not colonies, of Britain, were not volunteers. They were tribal or semi-feudal levies. Their rulers offered them for service in order to gain political advantages rather than as mercenaries. Within the Punjab there were similar ways in which soldiers were supplied to the British by local worthies, rather in the manner of mobilization in Britain by local landowners. But mobilization of this kind may have been consensual rather than coercive, since local leaders found men willing to join the battalions being formed. Individuals were also ready to volunteer, to provide information, and to assist British forces.

The motives behind volunteering were a mix of material, cultural, psychological and positional factors. The British recognized that the calculation of advantage would play a part. An assistant to the Resident at Lahore noted of the Sikhs in June 1848 that 'no one need hope to retain their services or good works one day longer than they think it politic to accord them'. It was frustrating that 'they are so little to be depended upon' because 'they are such excellent soldiers'.[52] The lure of pay and the possibility of pensions were obvious attractions, while higher status leaders had their eyes on regaining a variety of semi-feudal land revenue rights. But there were also cultural factors. There was a long heritage of Sikh militarism whereby the state and the sense of Sikh identity were intricately linked with the army and the use of military power to expand the Sikh domain. In justifying the retention of 20,000 Punjabis in irregular corps in 1849, Dalhousie as Governor-General argued that he did not wish to give the Sikh population the impression that they were a 'prescribed race', or to add those men to the 60,000 Punjabis who had fought at the last battle of the war of 1848–49 and who were now 'scattered throughout the country, not likely to return readily to peacable [sic] pursuits, and prepared for any opportunity of violence'.[53] If we mean by militarism the extent to which the state is influenced by or dominated by military concerns,[54] then the Sikh court was highly militaristic with the army being a potent player within the regime. There was also the long-standing cultural differentiation of the Punjab from Hindustan and the tradition of deep raiding from Afghanistan and from the Punjab into Hindustan, with Delhi being a particular target for plundering expeditions. Calling for men to march upon the Mughal capital resonated with at least one major military tradition in the Punjab.

That military tradition also melded with psychological drives among Punjabi men. War and political turbulence had been commonplace from the late 1830s to 1849, while parts of the Punjab and much of the dependencies' territories were essential frontier societies. As a contributor to the *Calcutta Review* observed in 1856, 'There are districts in the Punjab, where men go with their life in their hand; where a revolver is as natural a part of a man's toilette as a pocket handkerchief....'[55] Martial attributes were in part associated with lifestyle. Although one strand of martial race theorizing emphasized the centrality of Aryan racial origins, much writing on the subject tended to identify martial virtues with the sort of life lived by frontier peoples, characterized by tough, outdoor environments in which men developed interdependency and comradeship.[56] It seems reasonable, therefore, to stress the ways in which politically unstable and economically less well-developed regions give greater weight than do other socioeconomic structures to military values and organizations. Over half the population of the Punjab and the dependent territories lived in villages with less than 1000 people. There were 26,210 villages with an average population of 440. Local communities had to learn to defend themselves against invaders, aggressive local rulers, rogue elements of the Sikh army, and low-level banditry.[57] Thuggee and dacoity still posed challenges in the Punjab in 1856–57, with many miscreants reportedly taking refuge in Kashmir and among independent chiefs on the border.[58] The value of martial skills was further enhanced in a country where 55 per cent of the population was male, the result of greater attention being paid to the care of male babies and possibly at least some female infanticide.[59] Among the ruling elites the ability to provide men for military service deeply affected their status as landowners. As Eric Stokes and Thomas Metcalf have emphasized, rural elites sought, if they could afford to do so, to maximize the number of their followers rather than production from their lands, thereby maintaining traditional courtly values.[60] How far one should see collective participation in the British Army of Bengal as simply a semi-feudal duty or as an act fulfilling reciprocal obligations between followers and leaders who shared 'martial' values is impossible to say. It can, however, be stressed that there seemed to be no lack of willing soldiers, that the Punjabi recruits fought effectively and that future recruitment by the British tapped into the Punjab. But what strikes the reader of much of the British official comments on the willingness of Punjabis to participate in defending British India was the British emphasis on the theme of restitution. Punjabis came forward to suppress an historic foe in Hindustan. They partially regained positions in the army from which they had been removed in 1849. Rajas and local leaders clawed back privileges and revenue rights which they had lost in the 1840s. Allying with the British in 1857 was thus a calculated effort to join the winning side when the British confronted an internal threat from Hindustanis who had long been at odds with the Sikhs.

Notes

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6. *The East-India Register and Army List, for 1857* (London, 1857), pp. 185–7.
7. John Lawrence to Commander-in-Chief, 29 June 1857; A. Brandreth to Anderson, 30 June 1857, British Library India Office Records [IOR], L/PS/5/512.
8. Political Department of Court of Directors to Governor General, 30 December 1857, IOR, L/PS/6/436.
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11. IOR, L/PS/6/472, Coll 24/26; K. Singh, *A History of the Sikhs* (New Delhi, 2004), vol. 2, p. 111.
12. Singh, *The Letters of the First Viscount Hardinge*, pp. 56, 59, 75, 77–8, 94.
13. Governor-General to Court of Directors, 7 April 1849 (letter 2 of that date), IOR, L/PS/5/14.
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16. *Mutiny Records: Reports* (Lahore, 1911), part I, pp. 4, 8, 27–8, 178.
17. Ibid., pp. 18–19; part II, pp. 343–4.
18. Khilnani, *British Power*, pp. 223–5.
19. David Omissi, *The Sepoy and the Raj: The Indian Army, 1860–1940* (Basingstoke, 1994), p. 6.
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21. 'General Report', pp. 7, 15, 25.
22. Ibid., p. 13.
23. Ibid., p. 35.
24. Ibid., p. 44.
25. There is no historical assessment of the process and nature of recruitment. Extremely brief references to the raising of troops within the Punjab focus on Punjabis' resentment against 'Purbiyas' or easterners, the lure of plunder, and rewards made to princes. Sir John Kaye, *History of the Indian Mutiny* ed. Colonel G. B. Malleson, 6 vols (London, 1892 edn), vol. II, p. 355; Surendra Nath Sen, *Eighteen Fifty-Seven* (New Delhi, 1957), p. 334; Penderel Moon, *The British Conquest and Dominion of India* (London, 1990), p. 698; T. A. Heathcote, *The Military in British India* (Manchester, 1995), p. 93. The main preoccupation of accounts

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27. A. Raynor and H.R. Golding (eds), *Political Diaries of the Agent to the Governor-General, North-West Frontier and Resident at Lahore*, vol. III of *Punjab Government Records: Lahore Political 1847–1849* (Allahabad, 1909), pp. 149, 153.
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31. 'General Report', p. 43.
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33. 'Life in the Punjab', *Calcutta Review*, 26:52 (June 1856), p. 454.
34. *Calcutta Review*, 26:52, p. 455.
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37. 'General Report', p. 44.
38. Ibid., p. 9.
39. *The Critic*, 17:422 (7 August 1858), p. 455. Extracts giving an account of the pursuit of mutineers from the 26 Native Infantry, involving the execution and death through exhaustion and suffocation of 282 of them, are provided in the review of Frederick Cooper's book on the crisis. Forty Sikhs were used as the firing squad. The events are described in Sen, *Eighteen Fifty-Seven*, pp. 341–2.
40. *Mutiny Records: Reports*, 2 parts (Lahore, 1911), part I, p. 203.
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43. *Calcutta Review*, 33:65, pp. 220–1.
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45. Ibid., pp. 234–8.
46. Ibid., pp. 239–40, 245.
47. IOR, L/PS/6/496, Coll 82/13.
48. IOR, L/PS/6/496, Coll 82/20.
49. IOR, L/PS/6/472, Coll 24/13, 24/20.
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57. *Selections from the Records*, pp. 20–1.
58. Governor General to Court of Directors, 8 January 1857, IOR, L/PS/6/79.
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6
Recruitment Policies and Recruitment Experiences in the French Foreign Legion

Christian Koller

Perceptions of the French Foreign Legion have always been ambivalent. The Legion's image as an alleged reservoir of criminals and runaways from all over Europe has been countered by notions of romantic legionnaires such as fostered in P. C. Wren's novel *Beau Geste* (1924)[1] or in Edith Piaf's song 'Mon Légionnaire' (1936). Although an anachronism in the age of national armies largely based on compulsory military service, the French Foreign Legion has served as a model for the Spanish Foreign Legion, founded in 1920, and in Britain voices demanding the institution of a permanent British Foreign Legion emulating the French model would sporadically emerge in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.[2] Many stories, rumours and myths were related to Foreign Legion recruitment, including issues such as recruitment of criminals, underage or famous runaways as well as alcoholization and abduction of young men by secret recruitment agents. In the run-up to World War I, such notions were so widespread in Germany that Social Democratic MP Hermann Wendel would sneer in a 1914 Reichstag debate about a disease called 'Legionitis, whose symptoms include discovering mysterious recruitment agents all over Germany'.[3]

This chapter focuses on the recruitment of the 'old' Foreign Legion between 1831 and 1962. The first part will provide a short overview of the Foreign Legion's history and its main places and fields of deployment. In a second part I shall analyse changing French recruitment policies regarding the Legion's size and composition. While officially the Legion did not know any discrimination regarding nationality, 'race' or religion, different periods saw different restrictions, for instance, concerning Germans, Jews and non-Europeans. The Legion's social composition, often described as a collection of runaways, outlaws and adventurers profiting from the possibility to change one's identity through the principle of 'anonymat', but actually mainly consisting of unemployed and poor from all over Europe, will be explored as well. The third part will check these structural findings against individual recruitment experiences. By analysing autobiographical writing

of former legionnaires from Germany, Switzerland, Austria and Britain, motivations, the experience of actually signing a five-year contract and socialization in a culturally, socially and nationally heterogeneous corps will be considered.

The 'Old' Foreign Legion, 1831–1962

The foundation of a mercenary army on 10 March 1831, after the 1830 July revolution, was down to several factors. First France had witnessed an influx of refugees from all over Europe after many 1830 rebellions had been quelled. The new French government considered these people as potentially dangerous, however it did not want to jeopardize its liberal image by expatriating refugees and chose instead to get rid of them by sending them abroad as members of the French army. The same was true for former members of the royal Swiss Guard (disbanded on 14 August 1830) and the Hohenlohe Regiment (founded on 6 September 1815, disbanded on 5 January 1831).[4] Furthermore, the new government needed soldiers for the Algerian expedition inherited from its predecessor.

After the conquest of Algeria, completed by the late 1840s, the Algerian city of Sidi Bel-Abbès became the Foreign Legion's home base with basic training of recruits mainly taking place in several Algerian regions. Nevertheless, deployment of the Foreign Legion, which was part of France's colonial *Armée d'Afrique*, would not be limited to colonial warfare; they fought also in several European conflicts, including the Carlist War in Spain (1835–39), the Crimean War (1854–56), the Italian War of Independence (1859), the Franco-Prussian War (1870–71) and the two World Wars. The Foreign Legion's main task, however, was to serve French imperialism with deployment in colonial conquests and counter-insurgency in North and West Africa, Mexico, Indochina, Madagascar and the Middle East.

After World War II the Foreign Legion was an instrument of vain attempts to restore France's position as a great power and to preserve her colonial empire threatened by various independence movements. Legionnaires subsequently had to fight in the Indochina War, the Suez conflict and the Algerian War. Participation of Foreign Legion units in an attempted coup d'état in Algiers against peace negotiations between De Gaulle's government and the Algerian 'Front de Libération Nationale' in 1961 and the loss of the Legion's home base one year later threatened to call the Foreign Legion's very existence into question. Eventually the unit underwent a substantial transformation in the late 1960s, mutating into an elite corps for out-of-area operations and other special tasks with a new home base at Aubagne in Southern France.

Recruitment policies

The recruitment policies of the Foreign Legion changed several times, both regarding the numbers and the nationalities recruited. The basic recruitment

arrangements however hardly changed between 1831 and the end of the Algerian War in 1962. According to the Legion's 1831 basic statute, eligible applicants had to be between 18 and 40 years old, at least 1.55 metres high and of good health. Contracts were limited to three or five years, renewable to up to 15 years. Only in 1864 initial contracts were standardized at five years.[5] Another characteristic of recruitment arrangements was the so-called 'anonymat', the possibility to enter under fake identity. During the nineteenth century the principle that applicants unable or unwilling to produce evidence of their identity could join the Foreign Legion nevertheless developed as a customary law. Only in 1911 was it explicitly codified.[6]

While quantitative statements are difficult to make because of a lack of reliable figures (partially due to 'anonymat'), some tendencies can nevertheless be reconstructed. The Legion's size has varied considerably in the course of its existence. In the decades after its foundation it comprised about 7000 men. After the Franco-Prussian War this figure decreased to 3000 only to soar again in the period of accelerated imperialist expansion of the 1880s and 1890s, eventually reaching about 13,000 soldiers. During the first year of World War I the Foreign Legion would grow even more and muster about 22,000 members by the summer of 1915. By the end of the war this figure had decreased again to about 12,000, however during the interwar years, with huge numbers of Germans and exiled Russian 'Whites' enlisting, the Legion would grow once again and muster 33,000 soldiers by 1932. The largest contingent ever, including 49,000 men, existed in the run-up to the German attack on France in 1940. After the end of the Algerian War of Independence, which also largely marked the end of French colonialism, the Foreign Legion was radically downsized to become a 7500-men elite force with considerably raised entry requirements.

Regarding legionnaires' nationalities, an overall clear German dominance is obvious. Roughly one-third of the about half a million legionnaires serving between 1831 and 1962 were Germans with three periods even showing an absolute majority of German legionnaires, namely the two decades after the 1870–71 Franco-Prussian War, the mid-1920s and the climax of the Indochina War in 1953–54.[7] Intensive recruitment of Germans provoked harsh protest and several anti-Legion propaganda campaigns in Germany, especially in the last five years preceding World War I[8] and in the Weimar Republic, when French recruitment in the Rhenish zone of occupation and even on unoccupied German soil became a permanent topic in the German media as well as in parliamentary debates.[9] At the behest of the French government, recruitment of Germans for the Foreign Legion had explicitly been exempted from a general prohibition for Germans to enter foreign military service in the Treaty of Versailles.[10] After World War II, with France once again recruiting in their now considerably larger zone of occupation, official German reactions were much more moderate than they had been in the 1910s and 1920s, due to the beginning of German-French cooperation and European integration in the early Cold War period. Nevertheless, the

Socialist Youth fought a regular propaganda war against French military authorities in the early 1950s.[11]

Also Switzerland, which had traditionally supplied a large proportion of mercenaries to the crown of early modern France, was home country to many legionnaires, with between 30,000 and 40,000 Swiss having served in the Foreign Legion since 1831. Re-recruitment of former members of the disbanded royal Swiss Guard, who became unemployed after the July revolution had, as already mentioned, been one of the motivations of the Foreign Legion's foundation.[12] Activities to prevent Swiss nationals from joining the Foreign Legion were widespread. An 1859 prohibition to enter foreign military service was tightened in the 1927 military penal code,[13] and the government several times unsuccessfully urged French authorities to stop recruitment of Swiss nationals.[14] And as in Germany, dozens of leaflets, brochures and other publications warning against joining the Foreign Legion would appear between the 1880s and the 1960s.[15]

Much larger countries such as Italy and Spain, but also Belgium, supplied similar numbers of legionnaires as Switzerland. The number of British soldiers in the pre-1962 Foreign Legion, on the other hand, was always small, never exceeding 1 per cent of the Legion's total staff.[16] Only during the first years of Thatcher's government with quickly rising unemployment, did it soar to 5 per cent.[17] The principle of anonymous recruitment also enabled a large number of Frenchmen to enlist into the Legion, most of them with a false Swiss, Belgian or Canadian identity. The Legion's officer corps from the second half of the nineteenth century onwards consisted almost completely of Frenchmen.

Despite the official policy to welcome men of every nationality, religion or 'race', several restrictions were imposed on recruitment policies at several periods, some of them specifically discriminating against designated national, ethnic, religious or political groups. Unlike the French recruitment of Africans and Asians, these restrictions were hardly due to stereotypes as to the fighting capabilities of soldiers from different nations (similar to the British 'martial races' theories),[18] but were rather driven by political and ideological considerations.

In the founding years, the Foreign Legion was organized into 'national battalions' with three battalions consisting of Germans and Swiss and one each of Belgians and Dutchmen, Spaniards, Italians and Poles. This system was replaced by a policy of 'amalgamation' as early as 1835 with the target proportion becoming a third German-speakers, a third Romance-language speakers and the remaining third legionnaires from the rest of Europe.[19] After the Franco-Prussian War and the loss of Alsace-Lorraine, recruitment policies underwent another change. Until 1880 only applicants from Alsace, Lorraine and Switzerland were eligible. By the end of the 1870s, the Foreign Legion had virtually become an army-in-exile of Alsace-Lorraine, with about one-half of the legionnaires originating from this region.[20] This policy was

abandoned again after the escalation of imperial expansion demanded much larger recruitment figures from 1880 onwards.

Several times specifically designated groups were recruited only reluctantly if not excluded altogether. In 1926, after the proportion of Germans in the Legion had risen to no less than 55 per cent, restrictions regarding Germans were put into effect with physical entry standards for Germans becoming higher than for other nationalities. In 1927, French occupation authorities in the Rhineland completely discontinued recruitment there. Furthermore, bounties were doubled to attract more applicants from other countries.[21] During World War II another, though not officially admitted, restriction was imposed on recruitment. In 1939–40 a large number of volunteers wishing to enlist to the Foreign Legion were Jewish refugees from Central and Eastern Europe. However, traditional anti-Semitism among French settlers and officers in North Africa manifested itself in a secret order from the general staff for North Africa in February 1940, urging recruitment officers to reject Jewish applicants under various pretences.[22]

At the end of World War II, many members of the Red Army, most of them officers, tried unsuccessfully to enlist into the Legion.[23] In the early Cold War period, with the Legion mainly fighting in Indochina, communists were another group excluded. Henry Ainley, who had volunteered in 1950, described in 1955 that during the recruitment procedure, security officers were busy 'weeding out such undesirables as murderers, major criminals, hopeless perverts and, above all, communists. For the latter to infiltrate into the Legion was virtually impossible'.[24] Applicants from outside Europe or North America were generally not welcome to the Foreign Legion till the mid-1960s,[25] yet a few of them nevertheless managed to enlist.[26] In the second phase of the Indochina War from 1950 on the French units underwent a process of 'jaunissement' ('yellowing') and Indochinese volunteers were also incorporated into Foreign Legion units, although they were not allowed to wear the traditional 'képi blanc', getting white berets instead.[27]

The Franco-Prussian and World Wars created special situations, which also impacted on the Foreign Legion's recruitment policy. Foreigners who desired to fight for France were formally incorporated into the Foreign Legion although they did not follow the classical career path with basic training in Algeria and deployment in the colonial sphere, but overwhelmingly fought on European battlefields. Furthermore, their contracts were not limited to five years, but for the duration of the war ('engagés volontaires pour la durée de la guerre'), and they were allowed to opt out if their unit was to be deployed against their countries of origin.

In 1870 about 3600 volunteers of this type were recruited. Between summer 1914 and summer 1915 the number of legionnaires almost doubled to reach 22,000. Altogether about 43,000 foreigners volunteered to fight for France during World War I, of which 14,000 were from neutral Switzerland alone.[28] However many of these 'idealist' wartime volunteers were not happy

at all to be incorporated into the infamous mercenary unit and conflicts between them and 'classical' legionnaires shipped in from North Africa soon emerged. From mid-1915 wartime volunteers were given the opportunity to fight in other French units, and many volunteers decided to do so or even joined their own country's army if the latter had meanwhile entered the war at France's side.[29]

The numbers of volunteers would be even greater at the beginning of World War II. In 1939–40 about 80,000 men, many of them motivated by antifascism, from more than 50 different countries requested to join the French army.[30] They included refugees who had been persecuted in the fascist countries for political or 'racial' reasons as well as Spanish republicans who had had to flee to France at the end of the Spanish Civil War. In the run-up to the German attack on France, the Foreign Legion mustered 49,000 soldiers, its largest contingent ever, yet France's quick surrender would create a complex constellation in the following years as some Foreign Legion units fought against each other on behalf of the Vichy regime and De Gaulle's Free French movement respectively.

The Foreign Legion's social composition has hardly been analysed systematically. Unlike nationality, social background has never been subject to specific recruitment targets, nor restrictions, *au contraire*, the 'anonymat' explicitly aimed at bypassing applicants' social background. The possibility to enlist under fake identity created the Foreign Legion's fame of being a collection of criminals and runaways, but also adventurers and romantics. In reality, however, the overwhelming majority of applicants used to be motivated by poverty and unemployment. Douglas Porch has correctly argued that the history of the Foreign Legion is 'also a history of a portion of the European working class in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, one which a Marxist historian might claim had slipped through the fingers of the "capitalist revolution" '.[31]

In 1913, a Swiss Protestant pastor who had worked at the Legion's headquarters in Sidi-Bel-Abbès between 1894 and 1898 stated that legionnaires included 'many unemployed, but also just curious and hardly experienced lads'.[32] Likewise, a British author writing in 1947, who had served in the Legion around 1930, estimated that 'sixty per cent of the men in the Legion have joined because they could not get work at home; thirty per cent for the multitude of reasons and sins that produced the Gentleman-Ranker of pre-1914 days, and the remaining ten per cent have joined in search of adventure or for the love of soldiering'.[33] Another British author who had joined the Legion upon the outbreak of World War II stated: 'Contrary to popular suspicion, not all or even most recruits to the Legion are criminals on the run. When I was in the Legion most of the regulars had joined because they wanted food and shelter and security [...].'[34] The same was stressed by a former British legionnaire who had served in the Legion from 1938 to 1943: 'I soon found out that the prevalent excuses for joining the Legion were:

first, poverty; second, women; third, drink; fourth, politics; fifth, the love of adventure; and a long way behind, a criminal record.'[35] Investigations by Swiss authorities in the 1950s unveiled an above average representation of men without vocational education, unemployed, orphans, institutionalized children, and children of divorced parents, while university students and peasants were under-represented. About half of the Swiss legionnaires were allegedly trying to escape penal procedures, while 35 per cent had joined the Legion for family, job or 'sentimental' reasons and 15 per cent were longing for adventures.[36] The preliminary findings of an ongoing research project on the social profile of Swiss post-World War II legionnaires have also identified the bottom end of lower classes and especially institutionalized children as the Legion's main reservoir of recruitment.[37]

Unemployment, poverty, lacking family bonding and miserable career perspectives were often coupled with a longing for the exotic. The latter was flagrantly instrumentalized by French recruitment officers with posters advertising for the Foreign Legion displaying palm trees and jungle landscapes[38] and hardly differing from posters advertising for romantic Foreign Legion movies becoming popular in the interwar period. But also press coverage sometimes unintentionally boosted recruitment. No less than 55 out of 203 former legionnaires interviewed by the police of North Rhine-Westphalia in 1956 stated that they had been motivated to join the Foreign Legion by photo stories in German illustrated magazines.[39]

Runaways with a bourgeois or even aristocratic background were rare exceptions, though some spectacular cases would become internationally known. German legionnaire Albrecht Nordmann, who had joined in 1897 and died from typhus one year later, turned out to be Prince Albert Friedrich von Hohenzollern, a cousin of Emperor William II,[40] and from 1944 to 1948 Guiseppe Bottai, former minister of education of the Mussolini regime, served in the Legion under a fake name as well. A number of prominent foreigners have accepted senior Foreign Legion positions under their true identity. They included: Alexandre Florian Joseph, Count of Colonna-Walewski (1810–68), extramarital son of Napoleon I; former Swiss minister of defence Ulrich Ochsenbein (1811–90); Petar I Karađorđević (1844–1921), future king of Serbia and Yugoslavia; Danish Prince Aage Christian Alexander Robert, Count of Rosenborg (1887–1940);[41] Louis II Grimaldi (1870–1949), future Prince of Monaco; and crown prince Bao Long of Vietnam (1936–2007).

Another characteristic of the Legion's structural composition was the fact that many newly recruited legionnaires used to be quite young. While according to the Legion's basic statute applicants had to be between 18 and 40 years old, underage recruitment was a constant issue. This was mainly due to two factors, namely the 'anonymat', which allowed underage applicants to misreport their year of birth (done, for instance, by 16-year-old Ernst Jünger in 1911[42]), and differing legal ages of majority in different countries. Of 2870 German legionnaires recruited between 1 April and 30 September

1950, 23 per cent were younger than 21 years, then the legal age of majority in Germany. Out of 4809 legionnaires of all nationalities recruited during the first ten months of 1953 some 43 per cent were 21 years old or younger.[43] Foreign governments, newspapers and human rights organizations protested against underage recruitment already before World War II.[44] The French press would campaign against these practices as well from about 1954 onwards.[45]

A recruitment limitation seemingly obvious in the times of the 'old' Foreign Legion was the exclusion of women. Although there were some notable exceptions such as the Russian all-female 'Battalions of Death' in 1917[46] or the left-wing 'milicias' in the early stages of the Spanish Civil War, nineteenth- and twentieth-century European armies were generally characterized by a huge gender gap, excluding women either completely or at least from combat positions.[47] While this was common policy for national armies based on compulsory service not imposed on women, mercenary units such as the Foreign Legion, fostering an accentuated macho culture, adopted similar policies. The Legion only admitted women as prostitutes on a similar contract basis as legionnaires into the so-called 'BMC' (an abbreviation which could mean 'Bordel Militaire Contrôlé' as well as 'Bordel Mobile de Campagne').[48] The number of women joining disguised as men is unknown though likely to be negligible. In 1908 a twin brother and sister were found to have served together in the Foreign Legion for six months with the boy attending medical checks twice.[49] The only female to serve officially with the Foreign Legion was Englishwoman Susan Travers (1909–2003) who joined De Gaulle's Free French forces as a driver in 1941 and became an official member of the Foreign Legion in 1945 with subsequent posting to Vietnam during the Indochina War.[50]

Recruitment experiences

Many former legionnaires have described experiences of going through the recruitment procedure and being socialized into a completely new sphere in their memoirs. These texts, although sometimes distorted by propagandistic bias or the need to make money through a sensationalist account, permit analysis of whether different persons experienced their transformation from civilian to legionnaire differently and whether recruitment and initiation procedures underwent any notable changes between the 1830s and the 1960s. The Legion's structure constituted a European space of experience: legionnaires were expected to forget their origins and, according to the motto 'Legio Patria Nostra', to develop a new focus in the identity bolstered by an emphasis on the Legion's alleged traditions. This did not mean, however, that legionnaires were expected to become French. Teaching the French language, for instance, was never a priority in the Legion's basic training.[51] At the same time, the Foreign Legion was also an extra-European space of experience with its home base located in Algeria and its main fields

of deployment being the French colonies. Thus entering the Foreign Legion was inevitably a crucial biographical caesura for every new member and the difference to civilian life was even bigger than with national armies.

The process of leaving home, travelling to a recruitment office, signing a contract, undergoing several initial procedures, most of them humiliating, being shipped to Algeria for basic training and eventually being incorporated in a regular Legion unit can be described as a 'rite de passage', which included both formal elements staged by the French army and informal elements of joining a 'Maennerbund'. It is therefore not by chance that former legionnaire Jean Trüb, with hindsight, equated newly entered recruits to 'novices in the dark Middle Ages'[52] and Adrian Liddell Hart characterized his initial days in the Legion as 'a twilight zone filled with question marks' and as a 'limbo'.[53] Social anthropologists Arnold van Gennep and Victor Turner have identified three distinct phases of such processes, first the phase of separation from the old, second the phase of liminality, in which the ambiguous ritual subject paces a cultural sphere distinct from both the old and the new, and eventually the phase of incorporation into a new mode of existence.[54] This concept provides a useful tool for analysing former legionnaires' writing about their recruitment experience. Most memoirs discuss all of the three phases although in differing chronological and geographical order of their central elements such as contract signing, registration, getting the uniform, physical and psychological humiliations, and passage to North Africa.

Remarks on the phase of separation in many memoirs include some hints as to the motivation for joining the Foreign Legion. Some writers explicitly mentioned unemployment as the foremost cause.[55] However, not all of them had travelled to France for the purpose of enlisting. In the early 1920s unemployed Swiss national Paul Strupler had actually intended to find employment in Mulhouse, however, after three days of unsuccessful searching, he ran out of money and headed to the next recruitment office.[56] Pretty much the same would happen to Gordon Ritchie six decades later on. The unemployed Welshman, 'disenchanted with the Britain of Thatcher', departed to France to go grape-picking, however by the time he arrived the season was nearly over. 'There was a poster in the train station [...]. It said, "Join the French Foreign Legion". And I thought, well, I've got nothing better to do, let's give it a go.'[57] German Franz Glienke, legionnaire in the 1920s and later a communist, also claimed to have joined the Foreign Legion for material reasons, after being served a decent meal at the recruitment office: '[The worker] is forced to earn his bread all over the world. [...] Therefore we couldn't be criticised for valuing a warm lunch considerably higher than a nation that lets a poor devil starve. Ubi bene ibi patria.'[58]

Other writers would stress other factors such as the attraction of the exotic. Swiss national Adolf Hunziker together with a friend had made a trip to Belfort, where they noticed large colourful posters advertising for the colonial army at the barracks' door: 'Names such as: Troupes coloniales,

Chasseurs d'Afrique, Spahis Algériens, Légion Etrangère, Sénégal, Tonkin, Madagascar aroused our spirit of adventure and soon we decided to sell ourselves to a foreign country.'[59] Heinrich Spinner, a Swiss legionnaire serving in the 1860s, mentioned as his motives exoticism, belief in a destiny as well as 'a certain fatality for which it is impossible to me to provide a proper explanation'.[60] In the same vein Englishman Anthony Delmayne, who enlisted during World War II, stated: 'To an impressionable youth the Legion promised glamour and adventure [...].'[61]

On balance, evidence from memoirs confirms that volunteering for the Foreign Legion was mainly driven by a combination of personal problems, mostly unemployment or lack of prospects, and by an attraction to the exotic. Only very few writers claimed to have entered the Foreign Legion as a result of illegitimate means employed by recruitment agents. Albert Rothen, who had gone from Switzerland to France in search of employment in the late 1920s, was allegedly 'abducted' to the Foreign Legion.[62] And Stefan Küttel, later to become a Social Democratic politician in Switzerland, claimed to have been got intoxicated by recruitment agents in the 1950s at a fair in Basle near the French border and then enticed to a recruitment office where he would sign a contract said to be only provisional.[63]

The phase of liminality started at the recruitment office.[64] Many writers recalled the crucial moment of signing, and their emotions linked to it, in great detail years or even decades later. Heinrich Spinner, writing more than three decades after the event, stated: 'I was aware that this was a crucial step [...]. I felt as if I would consign my soul to the evil ... With a shaky hand I took the pen – It was as if I would plunge it into my lifeblood –; a shadow like a ghost stroke my eyes ... Yes! I overcame the feeling of regret and in a jiffy my name was in that fatal book! [...] With this one signature I had, alas, sold my liberty [...] !'[65]

Despite the general notion that French recruitment agents used nearly every means to boost recruitment numbers, at least two writers who had enlisted before World War I report that before their signature they were advised by French officials to think about it once again.[66] Quite the same was sketched in Simon Murray's diary entry about his enlistment in 1960.[67] When Henry Ainley volunteered in 1950, the recruitment adjutant warned him 'that I was about to go into something which would undoubtedly surprise me but added that everybody in the Legion, himself included, had been through it and that if I took it all in good part life wouldn't be too bad'.[68]

Some writers had to overcome a spirit of indecision before they signed. Erwin Zwicky, for instance, unemployed Swiss citizen who had grown up in Germany and joined the Foreign Legion in the 1930s, counted his body warmer's buttons: 'Shall I or shall I rather not? Unfortunately one button was lacking, and so I stayed.'[69] Others recalled an inner voice urging them in vain not to sign.[70] Many writers felt remorse immediately after having signed. Some of them after just a couple of minutes admitted to themselves

or to their comrades that they had just made the biggest mistake of their life.[71] Steffan Küttel mentions that after completion of entry procedures he balanced his life so far in a 'psychic inventory' which looked quite grim and recalled everything he had left behind: 'The reproachful face of my father, a puzzled, desperate mother, disappointed siblings, the youngest sister of less than four years with big, wondering eyes.' On the brink of emotional collapse he became angry with himself, yet temporarily overcame this situation by the will to keep his word and to survive.[72] Other writers only regretted their signature some days later, after having arrived at Marseille and realizing fully what they had done.[73]

Identity change during the phase of liminality was twofold. On the one hand, according to the principle of 'anonymat' applicants could get a new name and a new CV, something some of them experienced as liberating. Karel Lutz, a Swiss army captain and failed businessman who had just faced bankruptcy for the second time, recalled his feeling at the moment of his entry into the Legion in the 1960s: 'New name, new shirt. [...] 39 years old, heavily bent spine, yet I was myself and I was free. And my own master.'[74] On the other hand, the transformation from civilian to mercenary seemed to some writers to have happened in just a couple of minutes after their signature:

> Within a few minutes they transformed myself from a free being into a soldier, that means into an automatic machine without conscience, toy of the hierarchy and contradictory orders. Deep in myself, like a stifled flame, I feel my personality dying. It still exists, like a pale dotard, because I still have my name; however soon, it will die completely, because in military registers I won't be but one anonymous of many, but an enrolment number of which they want to ignore whether the name is real or fake, whether the nationality is exact or fictitious.[75]

After signing their five-year contracts and transport to the barracks (usually at Marseille) recruits were subject to several procedures completing their separation from civilian life. Similar to degradation ceremonies as described by sociologist and pioneer of ethnomethodology Harold Garfinkel, that seek to sustainably downgrade an individual's social identity through verbal and non-verbal acts,[76] future legionnaires were to be instilled with a new identity. However, unlike with Garfinkel's degradation ceremonies, the purpose of these practices was to make clear to the humiliated themselves their new, inferior status through a combination of individual and collective, physical and psychological harassments, rather than to degrade them before the community. While such practices aiming at transforming men into soldiers are common in most armies and especially elite troops, the Foreign Legion also applied them in order to level legionnaires' national, cultural and social differences.

Many former legionnaires would describe these practices, which do not seem to have changed much between 1831 and 1962, in much detail, which proves the lasting impression made on them. They included the loss of all private possessions once recruits had got their uniforms. Legionnaires were required to sell or destroy all their civilian clothes[77] and stripped of all their private possessions such as photographs, letters, watches, rings and penknives. This procedure, remembered by a writer as a 'regular plundering',[78] either took place in France or in Algeria. It went together with a change of recruits' physical appearance. They were shorn and, at least in the second half of the period considered, photographed. These pictures were to be used for wanted posters, thus stigmatizing recruits as potential deserters and criminals in advance. According to Franz Glienke, this procedure produced 'a special image with everybody whose individuality had been demonstrated by hair and beard style just some minutes ago now looking pretty much the same'.[79] Oxford graduate Philip Rosenthal, who as a German Jew had enlisted upon the outbreak of World War II and would later on become an entrepreneur and Social Democratic politician, remarked that shearing people's hair was 'one of their most efficient means to break individuality; without hair one looses self-confidence as if being completely stripped of one's clothing'.[80]

Still in France recruits were also subject to different practices of bullying to make it clear that they were now living in a completely different environment. In the 1920s, recruits were forced to jog without shoes on the ramparts in December snow.[81] Meals were used to bully recruits as well. Several former legionnaires writing between the 1840s and the 1950s recalled that groups of recruits had to eat from the same dish without cutlery.[82]

Many legionnaires would experience the passage from France to Algeria as the decisive act of liminality. Carl Orphal from Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, writing in 1846, described this event as emotionally painful:

> I longed for the moment when the mainland was no longer visible, but nevertheless my heart was attached to Europe's coastline as long as I could see it, feeling painfully the loss of my fatherland [...], for I thought of the manifold advantages of beautiful Europe compared to hot, uncivilised Africa, and how meagre hopes were for a German to become happy in French military service. Although Africa and Europe are only separated by a span of sea, I felt, when land had eventually become completely invisible, as if thousands of miles would separate me from the continent that includes my fatherland and as if I would be separated from both of them forever.[83]

Nine decades later, Franz Glienke, who compared the legion's ship to a prisoners' galley, even stated that the disappearance of Europe was at the same time the disappearance of 'the last strap linking us to the world, to life'.[84]

Several legionnaires mention having reviewed their whole life so far, thereby approximating the liminality period to a near-death experience. While Paul Virès had had this experience already on the train to Marseille,[85] several others recalled a life review during the passage to Algeria. Heinrich Spinner recalled this event as the end of his youth:

> Leaving the old continent and accessing a new one I also left a whole stage of life behind me. My youth alighted from the remote dark of past [...] ; – then the schooldays, oh! 'Youth is nice, it will never return!' a simple folksong states so correctly. Then the period of apprenticeship followed... a period of examinations! .... And now a staggering... a toddling in the dark... a fighting and wrestling with the powers of destiny! .... And what would the future bestow?[86]

Stefan Küttel's life review nine decades later was even more similar to a near-death experience:

> [...] during the night I settled down on a middle deck lounger that had accidentally become vacant and frantically, however unsuccessfully tried to escape thoughts re-emerging afresh. Dreamless sleep would have been a welcome solution now. Instead my whole past started to pass me like in a movie. My birth and native place, a peaceful village at a superb lake was tangibly close to me, however not for long, because the vanishing picture became smaller and smaller. A little, palish girl suddenly stood directly in front of me. Again these helpless and asking eyes: my little sister, for whom I would have given everything at any time. Like as to separate me from her definitely this vision also came to nothing.[87]

The liminal phase of the enlistment procedure thus turns out to be a crucial biographical caesura, including complex emotional and psychological processes and changing legionnaires' identity not just on paper through a fake name, but also psychologically and physically. These processes were partly steered by Foreign Legion officials, but their individual impact seems to have gone beyond intended effects in many cases. Arrival in Algeria would then end the phase of liminality with military training in North Africa being the incorporation phase, completing the transformation from civilian to legionnaire.

Conclusion

On balance, recruitment policies and recruitment experiences of the French Foreign Legion did not change much between 1831 and 1962 despite several discontinuities regarding the unit's size and national composition. For most of the Legion's history men overwhelmingly enlisted for reasons of poverty,

unemployment, personal problems and the lack of prospects. Their reward, apart from free board, lodging and a modest salary, consisted in dubious experiences of the 'exotic' in Africa and Asia after having gone through a process of identity change. Permission to reside in France (and eventually obtain French citizenship) was for a long time only granted after many years of service to those who had obtained a 'certificat de bonne conduite' upon their demobilization. The possibility to become French 'par le sang versée' was included in French citizenship legislation as late as in 1999. Volunteers joining the Foreign Legion for political and ideological reasons were largely restricted to the two World Wars. With the exception of these short periods the 'old' French Foreign Legion was a classical mercenary troop in an age of national armies.

Notes

1. Percival Christopher Wren, *Beau Geste* (London, 1924).
2. See *The Times*, 13 May 1856; 19 June 1856; 22 September 1857; 18 July 1939; 17 May 1940; 21 May 1940; 21 June 1940; 13 July 1940; 6 March 1946; 17 August 1946; 11 March 1949; 21 May 1950; 25 August 1950; 9 March 1951; 12 November 1955; 17 January 1964.
3. *Verhandlungen des Reichstags: XIII. Legislaturperiode, I. Session*, vol. 295 (Berlin, 1914), p. 8843. My translation.
4. Douglas Porch, *The French Foreign Legion: A complete history* (New York and London, 1991), pp. 1–11; Jérôme Bodin, *Les Suisses au service de la France: De Louis XI à la Légion étrangère* (Paris, 1988), pp. 295–328; Eckard Michels, *Deutsche in der Fremdenlegion: Mythen und Realitäten 1870–1965* (Paderborn, 1999), pp. 19–20; Evelyne Maradan and Alain-Jacques Czouz-Tornare, 'Du service du roi au service de France: Le licenciement des troupes suisses capitulées et la création des légions étrangères' in *L'influence de la Révolution française sur les armées en France, en Europe et dans le monde*, vol. 1 (Vincennes, 1991), pp. 83–104.
5. Michels, *Deutsche*, pp. 20–1.
6. Ibid., p. 21.
7. Ibid., p. 11 and pp. 331–2.
8. See Marielouise Christadler, 'Schreckensbild und Vorbild: Die Fremdenlegion in der deutschen Literatur und Propaganda vor 1914', in Helga Abret and Michel Grunewald (eds), *Visions allemandes de la France (1871–1914)* (Bern etc., 1994), pp. 63–77; Michels, *Deutsche*, pp. 46–64.
9. See, for instance: *Vossische Zeitung*, 29 May 1919; 7 January 1920; 24 April 1920; 9 November 1920; 19 January 1921; 8 May 1921; 10 August 1921; 9 December 1926; 23 February 1927; 2 March 1927; 8 March 1927; 3 July 1928; 20 December 1928; 10 April 1929; 5 June 1930; *Verhandlungen des Reichstags: I. Wahlperiode 1920*, vol. 345 (Berlin, 1921), p. 1052; ibid., vol. 354, pp. 6739 and 7045; ibid., vol. 357, p. 8964; ibid., vol. 363, pp. 231 and 289; ibid. vol. 365, pp. 757–8 and 1132; ibid., vol. 372, pp. 3381 and 4107; ibid., vol. 375, pp. 5181 and 5626; *Verhandlungen des Reichstags: III. Wahlperiode 1924*, vol. 388 (Berlin, 1926), p. 4600; ibid., vol. 389, p. 6441; ibid., vol. 392, pp. 9994, 9996, 10001 and 11011; ibid., vol. 393, p. 10081; ibid., vol. 394, p. 12490; ibid., vol. 404, p. 1414; ibid., vol. 412, pp. 112–3; *Verhandlungen des Reichstags: IV. Wahlperiode 1928*, vol. 425 (Berlin,

1929), pp. 2783–4 and 2787; ibid., vol. 428, pp. 5502 and 5744; *Verhandlungen des Reichstags: V. Wahlperiode 1930*, vol. 445 (Berlin, 1931), p. 1125.

10. *Der Vertrag von Versailles: Der Friedensvertrag zwischen Deutschland und den alliierten und assoziierten Mächten nebst dem Schlussprotokoll und der Vereinbarung betr. die militärische Besetzung der Rheinlande.* ed. Auswärtiges Amt. 2nd ed. (Berlin, 1924), art. 179, p. 3.
11. Michels, *Deutsche*, pp. 233–41.
12. Alfred Mahrer, 'Fremdenlegion', in *Historisches Lexikon der Schweiz* [electronic publication], version of 18 July 2003; Porch, *Foreign Legion*, pp. 1–11; Bodin, *Suisses*, pp. 295–328; Maradan and Czouz-Tornare, 'Du service du roi'.
13. See Georg A. Bislin, *Der unerlaubte Eintritt in fremden Militärdienst als Schwächung der Wehrkraft* (Affoltern am Albis, 1938); Eduard Schrämli, *Unerlaubter Eintritt in fremden Militärdienst und Werbung für fremden Militärdienst nach schweizer. Recht* (Zurich, 1941); Beat Fenner, *Der Tatbestand des Eintritts in fremden Militärdienst* (Zurich, 1973).
14. See, for instance: Schweizerisches Bundesarchiv, E 2200.41(-)-/37/B/9, Légation de Suisse en France: Situation des ressortissants suisses enrôlés dans la Légion étrangère, 26 February 1951; E 2200.41(-)-/39/37, Légation de Suisse an Ministère des Affaires étrangères, 6 January 1954; 2300(-)1000/716/353, Ambassade de Suisse en France: Entretien avec le Général de Gaulle, 24 October 1958; E 2001(E)1976/17/435, Notiz für die Herren Bundesräte: Fremdenlegion, 25 September 1961, as well as *Manchester Guardian*, 15 January 1929; *Vossische Zeitung*, 15 January 1929.
15. See Schweizerisches Bundesarchiv, J II.188, Komitee gegen den Eintritt junger Schweizer in die Fremdenlegion, 1959–1988; Stefan Egli, *Propaganda gegen die französische Fremdenlegion in der Schweiz in den 1950er und 1960er Jahren unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des Komitees gegen den Eintritt junger Schweizer in die Fremdenlegion* (Unpublished paper, University of Zurich, 2005); Christian Koller, '(Post)koloniale Söldner: Schweizer Fremdenlegionäre in den französischen Kolonien und ihre Erinnerungsschriften', in Patricia Purtschert et al. (eds), *Postkoloniale Schweiz: Formen und Folgen eines Kolonialismus ohne Kolonien* (Bielefeld, 2012), pp. 289–314.
16. Michels, *Deutsche*, p. 15.
17. *The Times*, 10 March 1981. See also the *Observer*, 16 March 2003.
18. See, for instance: Richard S. Fogarty, *Race and War in France: Colonial Subjects in the French Army, 1914–1918* (Baltimore, 2008), pp. 15–54.
19. Michels, *Deutsche*, pp. 23–7; John Laffin, *The French Foreign Legion* (London, 1974), pp. 51–2.
20. Michels, *Deutsche*, pp. 36–7.
21. Ibid., pp. 98–103.
22. Ibid., pp. 119–24; Zosa Szajkowski, *Jews and the French Foreign Legion* (New York, 1975).
23. TNA, FO 371/55523, Political Division, Central Commission for Germany (British Element) to C. F. A. Warner, Foreign Office, 21 December 1945.
24. Henry Ainley, *In Order to Die: With the French Foreign Legion in Indochina* (London, 1955), p. 14.
25. Michels, *Deutsche*, pp. 26–7.
26. See, for instance: Adrian Liddell Hart, *Strange Company* (London, 1953), p. 37; Colin John, *Nothing to Lose* (London, 1956), p. 161; TNA, CO 733/127/14, Repatriation of deserters of the French Foreign Legion in Syria, held in custody in Palestine, 1926.

27. See Paul Simonin, *Les bérets blancs de la Légion en Indochine* (Paris, 2002).
28. *Journal de Genève*, 28 April 1921; Mahrer, 'Fremdenlegion'; Ferdinand Kugler, *Erlebnisse eines Schweizers in den Dardellen und an der französischen Front* (Zurich, 1916); Louis Ernest Augustin, *Sur le front français 1917–1918* (Lausanne, 1934); Blaise Cendrars, *La Main coupée* (Paris, 1946).
29. See Pierre Dufour, *La légion en 14–18* (Paris, 2003); Martin Windrow, *French Foreign Legion, 1914–1945* (Oxford, 1999); Porch, *Foreign Legion*, pp. 334–81; Laffin, *Foreign Legion*, pp. 85–95; Pierre Montagnon, *La Légion étrangère: De 1831 à nos jours* (Paris, 1999), pp. 155–80; Michels, *Deutsche*, pp. 72–3.
30. Pierre Dufour, *La Légion Etrangère: 1939–1945* (Bayeux, 2000); Windrow, *Foreign Legion*; Porch, *Foreign Legion,* pp. 441–64; Laffin, *Foreign Legion*, pp. 118–25; Michels, *Deutsche*, pp. 113–15; Montagnon, *La Légion étrangère*, pp. 211–306. See, for instance: Claude Vernier, 'Les tribulations d'un comédien', in Gilbert Badia et al (eds), *Exilés en France: Souvenirs d'antifascistes allemands émigrés (1933–1945)* (Paris, 1982), pp. 23–65; Ernst Heidelberger, 'Une vie en tranches', in Gilbert Badia et al (eds), *Exilés en France: Souvenirs d'antifascistes allemands émigrés (1933–1945)* (Paris, 1982), pp. 190–213; Plinio Bedolla, *Souvenirs d'un légionnaire tessinois rescapé de guerre: 1939–1945* (Bellinzona, 1947); Anthony Delmayne, *Sahara Desert Escape* (London, 1958).
31. Porch, *Foreign Legion*, p. xiii.
32. Eduard Blocher, 'Von der französischen Fremdenlegion', *Wissen und Leben* 13 (1913/14), pp. 327–44, here 339. My translation.
33. Brian Stuart, *Far to Go* (London, 1947), p. 20.
34. Delmayne, *Sahara Desert Escape*, p. 93.
35. Alfred Perrot-White, *French Legionnaire* (London, 1953), p. 41.
36. Hans Rudolf Kurz, 'Entstehung und Stärke der französischen Fremdenlegion und ihre Bedeutung für die Schweiz', *Der Sektionschef* 4 (1956), pp. 39–41.
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7

'They Had the Sea in Their Blood': Caymanian Naval Volunteers in the Second World War

Daniel Owen Spence

The Second World War for Britain was both a global and an imperial struggle.[1] It involved huge numbers of colonial soldiers, sailors and aviators who, it can often be forgotten, fought not as conscripts but as volunteers. Drawn from all corners of the Empire, these men were driven by a wide range of motives to sign up and fight for an imperial 'mother country' they had never seen, thousands of miles away from their homes and families. Nor did they fight in isolation; the transnational nature of the conflict meant they were not only exposed to foreign countries and cultures for the first time, but also other peoples who they fought both with and against.

Though significant work has been done on the wartime experience of transnational African army recruits,[2] large areas of colonial volunteerism, both geographically and strategically, remain historiographically neglected. One example is colonial naval volunteerism. Fifteen different naval forces from Britain's colonial dependencies (not including the Dominions and India) comprising around 8000 men fought for the British Empire during the Second World War.[3] Their main role was to relieve Royal Navy regulars from performing local patrols, minesweeping and harbour defence, so they could be redeployed to more pressing operational theatres.[4] The sole colonial naval force in the Caribbean was the Trinidad Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve (TRNVR). Trinidad's significance lay in it being Britain's largest oil-producing colony, with the Admiralty considering that 'there is no doubt that in war the safeguarding of oil supplies from Trinidad is one of the greatest importance'.[5] Established in the first month of the Second World War with an initial complement of 19 officers and 110 ratings, the TRNVR grew to a fighting strength of 75 officers and 1215 men by April 1945.[6] From February 1942 it was subjected to an intensive U-boat campaign in the Caribbean, as documented by Gaylord Kelshall.[7] With force expansion, however, came a perceived 'problem getting enough Trinidadian volunteers to join, as most Trinidadians do not like the sea'.[8] They were also drawn to higher paid construction work on the new American bases established there

following the 1941 Destroyers-for-Bases agreement, and colonial officials feared the threat that labour 'agitators' on the island posed to their authority following the Butler riots of 1937.[9] Recruitment was consequently diversified by incorporating volunteers from the British West Indian territories of Guyana, Barbados, Grenada, St. Vincent, Antigua, Montserrat, St. Kitts, St. Lucia, and Dominica. Special maritime value was attached, however, to those men hailing from the Cayman Islands.

Out of a Caymanian population of just over 6500, around 800 served in the British Merchant Navy[10] with another 201 in the TRNVR. This number – two-thirds of the adult males on the island – constitutes the highest contribution per capita of any Allied country during the Second World War.[11] The obvious explanation for the level and nature of this participation was that an intrinsic connection to the sea permeated every facet of Caymanian society. Whereas other West Indian islanders 'remained tied to the land even in postslavery times and ... viewed their coastlines as boundaries or barriers', the Caymans' lack of terrestrial resources meant that they always 'depended on the sea as a resource and an avenue for survival'.[12] The local economy was dominated by turtling, rope-making and boatbuilding, and many of its early settlers were British mariners wrecked on the islands.[13] These maritime traditions were passed down through generations, and it was considered that in Cayman, 'every able-bodied man is, or has been, a seafarer'.[14] As soon as they could walk, boys would start sailing model boats, and 'by the time they are in their teens [they could] handle the local cat boats, craft about 20 feet long, pointed at each end and built of island timber'.[15] The 1934 census recorded 50 per cent of the islands' manpower between 18 and 60 years of age as being engaged in the seafaring industry,[16] and the biggest event of the year was the annual sailing regatta.

Motivations

Typically, both group and personal motivations inspired volunteering, but imperial patriotism was a very powerful driving force for Caymanians. This was exhibited on the eve of the Second World War, when 'large numbers of [Caymanian] people of all classes of the community anxious to serve their KING and COUNTRY in the present crisis' stepped forward, despite there being 'no plans for recruiting nor any need for such generously afforded services' at that time.[17] This zeal had not diminished by the time the TRNVR began recruiting there in 1941, as one volunteer later recounted:

> The old and young alike from Cayman offered their services to go and fight for their mother country, including myself ... I was a young boy, still in my teens, proud to go and fight for my country.[18]

To Caymanians, despite never having seen it themselves, Britain represented 'my country', so that her conflict was consequently their own. Part of

this bond was forged by a shared belief in the 'call of the sea', an innate characteristic of maritime peoples, which determined that Caymanians would naturally seek out a life on the waves. As put by one volunteer, T. Ewart Ebanks, 'most of the young people, then, all they had in their life . . . on their mind, is to go to sea'.[19]

Peer pressure and lack of domestic employment opportunity drove some to sign up, with Roosevelt Rankine saying, 'I thought everybody else could go and I could do the same too . . . Twenty-four and no special job, I just wanted to get off the island.'[20] The relatively poor state of the local economy acted as a key motivator for many:

> It came up that we had want [sic] people to go to Trinidad in the Navy . . . So I say that's a good chance . . . time for me, now, to make some money . . . a dollar a day . . . $30 to the month.[21]

Although those who chose to join the Merchant Navy could earn higher wages, some volunteers saw greater prestige and significance in service in the Royal Navy, an attraction which overrode the desire for pure monetary gain:

> Sometimes I felt I would rather have been in the Merchant Marine, the Merchant Navy, but I guess that was because you would make more money . . . but it wasn't altogether that . . . in the Navy you know you had the feeling you was doing a more important job.[22]

As with martial race theory, anthropological studies were also used to set apart Caymanians from other West Indians in a number of physical and moral respects, which made them more appealing to prospective naval recruiters:

> The average Caymanian is probably of better physique, is healthier, and has a better intelligence than the average American or the inhabitants of any other island in the West Indies and the countries bordering the Caribbean. This is attributable primarily to his energetic life. Other factors are his higher moral standards and the absence on the island of the usual tropical diseases.[23]

The reference to the Caymanians' 'energetic life' is particularly illuminating since the British typically depicted those native to tropical climates as lethargic. Caymanians were considered 'hard-working',[24] and 'honest',[25] on account of their religiosity, and therefore complemented the Admiralty's desire that 'special consideration should be given to providing men who can stand a tropical climate, and who can be relied on to work without constant supervision'.[26] Possessing 'but little feeblemindedness', the 'average Caymanian possesses an unusually good intellect',[27] seen as connected

to skin colour. Significantly, the majority of the population of the Caymans were white or mixed race, with a comparatively small ex-slave population:

> Most of the people are hardy and healthy, tall, and wiry, like their seafaring forefathers from the east coasts of England and Scotland . . . The proportion of whites and mixed to blacks is considerably higher than in most of the other islands of the West Indies. Roughly, whites and mixed form about 40 per cent each, blacks 20 per cent.[28]

Caymanians possessed a hereditary link back to Britain, a connection visibly reinforced by their lighter physical complexion compared with that of other West Indians. Seen as 'noticeably fair', and possessing even 'strong traces of Scandinavian origin',[29] the connection drawn between fairer skin colour and naval aptitude echoes nineteenth-century martial race theory's preoccupation with Aryanism. Certain Indian groups were said to have retained 'old Aryan stock' passed down from the fair-skinned peoples of central Asia who conquered northern India in ancient times. It was assumed that the descendants of those Aryan invaders, most notably Punjabis and Dogras, thus inherited their 'superior military capabilities'.[30] In a similar manner, seafaring ability was believed here to have been passed down from Britain to Cayman.

Among the Caymanian sailors, any racial delineation was overridden by a collective self-assurance in their own maritime abilities. This underpinned their shared sense of Caymanian identity, and bound them together as a distinct ethnic group judged primarily on their professional qualities, not their skin colour; as one recruit, James Robinson, put it: 'The Cayman Islands seamen was recommended as the best seamen in the world . . . it was no difference between white and black.'[31]

Although within a colonial naval force such as the TRNVR, Caymanians garnered more respect than their West Indian colonial colleagues, they were still viewed as inferior to regular British sailors. Harry McCoy served aboard HMS *Nigeria* for a time as the sole Caymanian in a Royal Navy crew of over 700. There he had to overcome a degree of discrimination, though he did not consider it racial in nature:

> There was, has always been, you know, a little bit of prejudice among English people and up to this day they always saw themselves superior to the Colonials . . . of whatever colour . . . you had to accept that, you see. But after you worked along with them and they saw that you were equal to them in every respect . . . I had no problems.[32]

Whereas Harry McCoy was able to work to overcome any negative preconceptions and prove himself before judging eyes, others were not given that same opportunity within the TRNVR. Preference for Caymanians acted to

disbar other ethnic groups from certain assignments and occupations within the force. Individuals came to be judged not on their own merit but by their ethnicity, and the relative maritime skill supposedly attributed to that. In one instance, TRNVR personnel were assigned to relieve the British crew of HMS *Corsair*. All were Caymanian with the exception of one Barbadian, prompting the Captain to summarily 'send him back' having specifically requested an 'all Cayman crew'.[33] Such prejudices led to Caymanians gaining a monopoly in the seamen branches, where their seafaring skills could be put to most effective use:

> Most of those boats you could look for the majority of the seamen, the deck men, would be Caymanians . . . The vast majority of the deck department would be Caymanians, a few in the engine room, few in the galley or the steward department, but the actual working sailors the most was Caymanians.[34]

One branch's overwhelming dependence on a single ethnic group created logistical problems when it came to managing leave, causing homesickness, discontent and disillusionment among the men:

> Every time, one of us mentioned the word vacation, the answer was that we could not be spared since ninety-six per cent of the warships were manned by Cayman Naval Seamen . . . at the time it appeared as if we had become the forgotten men of the Navy.[35]

It took an impromptu inspection by the local admiral for this to be addressed, and all the Caymanian volunteers were subsequently sent home on leave in three staggered batches, but this was the only time most got to return to the Caymans in over four years in the TRNVR.[36]

On one ship, preconceptions about the Caymanian seamen led to the group as a whole receiving preferential treatment:

> All the deck crew were Caymanians . . . The captain was so pleased with our performance that . . . he called us all up, all the Caymanians . . . and rated us Able-bodied Seamen from the day we had in our required time . . . that's the only time I have heard about it being done.[37]

Individual merit, normally the key factor in determining promotion, was here subsumed by group identity. This may have been fostered by the fact that up to 68 of the recruits shared the same characteristically Caymanian surname:

> 'STEP FORWARD Ebanks,' yelled the drill instructor, irate at a mistake by one of his squad of recruits. His temper rose when the whole squad stepped forward.

> 'I only said for Ebanks to step forward, not everyone,' he shouted.
> 'We're all Ebanks,' came the chorus from the men in reply.[38]

As a consequence, the group was further de-individualized by British officers, who from then on referred to each Ebanks as a number, 'starting with 1 and ending with 68'.[39]

Ethnic categorization inevitably fostered stereotypes, even though it may have been a seemingly positive one of Caymanian maritime aptitude. Conversely though, this led to negative stereotypes being developed of other groups within the force, fostering divisions. W. Hewitt Rivers describes his impression of the unprofessional attitudes of the Trinidadian servicemen he served alongside:

> We used to have Trinidadians and different people mixed up in the watchman job . . . every Trinidadian you had they didn't stay in the job very long. They went off and go home . . . they would catch them up and throw them in jail for going away . . . sometimes I had to stay on duty for nine days by myself.[40]

Discontent and protest

Caymanians had more negative impressions of Trinidad, conveyed in letters home:

> It was an anxious [time], we were all upset . . . my brother was upset, he wanted to come home, but they wouldn't . . . he wasn't allowed to come home, you know, he had to stay there. And every letter that we got from him was a crying time, because he was very upset about being there . . . He wanted to go, but after a lot of them got up there, they found things that they didn't like, you know.[41]

Norman Rudolph McLoughlin was another who volunteered under an apparent misconception cultivated by the colonial authorities:

> The first group left for Trinidad in early May and arrived there within eight to ten days. Promising reports were sent back that made the rest of us very eager to join them. I regret to say that after I arrived in Trinidad, I discovered some of those promising reports to be false, and why they were sent back to Cayman was never explained to me.[42]

Upon their arrival at the TRNVR base in Staubles Bay, the Caymanians were faced with a foreign environment, poor facilities, professional neglect, and lack of proper uniform and medical care, causing many to fall ill; yet for some, such as McLoughlin, this failed to diminish his imperial patriotic determination to fight:

> It was a 'real dump and mud hole'. When it rained, the mud slid down from the hills, coming right across the highway on to the base and out to sea. It was common to be walking through six to eight inches of mud and water over most of the base . . . We were still wearing our own clothes, shoes, and socks, which were wet most of the time. As a result of this exposure, most of us came down with an awful flu or even pneumonia and lay sick in our bunks for days. The medical service was terrible, consisting of one old doctor from St. Lucia. He did not appear to be qualified to take care of the situation, nor did he care a damn about us . . . I felt so proud to fight for my King and Country, that come hell or high tide, I was determined to stick it out.[43]

The health of the Caymanians was not helped by the standard of food they received, another cause for discontent. Here, cultural insularity meant that they were unfamiliar with foreign tastes and cooking methods they encountered in the multicultural force, with consequences physically, economically and for morale:

> The food was awful and poorly cooked by the Trinidadian cooks. They either could not cook our Caymanian type of food or were simply poor cooks. There was plenty of food, but it was badly prepared and most of us could not eat it . . . [I] ate very little of the food prepared in the galley, and started buying biscuits, chocolates, soft drinks, etc. from the canteen. Of course, having very little money to spare, many nights I found myself going hungry.[44]

Such complaints did not garner popular sympathy, however, and served to ostracize the Caymanians from the local populace. The successful German U-boat campaign waged in the Caribbean from February 1942 took its toll on island shipping, causing extreme food shortages among civilians.[45] As those responsible for the safety of the convoys, naval personnel became obvious targets for civilian blame, especially as from the outside they appeared to be sheltered from civilians' sufferings.[46]

Local resentment towards the sailors meant that 'in going ashore you had to go in gangs, we wasn't allowed to go alone, because some time you'd meet some of them that want to fight you'.[47] With very little crime back home, the deeply religious Caymanians were shocked by the vice they witnessed on Trinidad:

> Trinidad was a wicked place, a lot of killing and shooting of people and the like used to go on . . . when you go to dance in the night, you coming back home, you can run over, you can walk over several dead man on the road.[48]

For some of the volunteers thrust into these transnational encounters, local abuse, ignorance and prejudice overrode their initial motivations for enlisting, spurring them to try to leave the force and return to the Cayman Islands:

> After I stop the turtle business, I went to the war . . . and stayed there four years and six months . . . More went, but they got 'fraid and come back home . . . It was bad business; it was mean set-up . . . the people there in Trinidad thought that we had come from nowhere.[49]

Being transnational volunteers, however, they were stranded on an island thousands of miles away from their home, without the means themselves to return, and completely dependent upon the will of the British authorities whom many saw as accountable for their sufferings. Those men unable to cope faked illness in the hope they would be sent back, as Rankine testifies: 'so many performed, 'formed like they were sick . . . and let them send them home'.[50] Rivers also witnessed this charade, but a stronger sense of patriotic duty drove him to stay:

> The impression that I had first, it was so cold that I wouldn't want to relive that again . . . the majority of boys that came back from Cayman, they just played sick and they didn't want to stay there . . . but I decided that if I was able to do something for . . . I would have to say for my country, I would stay, and I stayed all the time. It was four years and eight months that I was there.[51]

Civilian violence and hostility was not restricted to Trinidad, but was encountered during port visits to other islands too, such as in Kingston, Jamaica, otherwise known as the 'mother colony' of the Cayman Islands dependency. Despite this status, local economic problems meant that Jamaicans simmered with resentment over the relatively 'high' naval wages their 'junior' colonials were perceived as receiving:

> It was rugged then. Went shore there and they pelt the boys with bricks and all those kind of things . . . you know seaman meets it hard most of them places . . . any part you go to, they feel that the seaman has plenty of money.[52]

Such wartime military-civil tensions might have fostered a greater sense of in-group unity and *esprit de corps* among the multicultural TRNVR members, with the civilian population defined as its out-group.[53] The reason it did not in this context perhaps is because naval service identity was competing with a much stronger in-group identity, that of ethnicity, which united Trinidadians within the force and the island more broadly and overlapped military-civil boundaries. Ethnic identity superseded service

unity in this instance. Thus transnational identities were both strengthened and challenged by wartime service. The issue of food continued to act as a source of contention and division within the TRNVR, evincing itself when roles were inverted, with Caymanians taking on the cooking duties and Trinidadians the disgruntled consumers. In its most extreme case, this resulted in violent abuse. Lloyd Seymore was in the camp cooking breakfast when a Trinidadian rating asked him for fish. After being told fish was not on the menu, the Trinidadian disappeared and came back with a wooden 'beladen pin', which he 'muntled' Seymore over the head with.[54] After a month in hospital, Seymore was discharged, only to be re-admitted after experiencing haemorrhaging though the nose. He was put in the condemned ward, number 11, where he developed a big abscess in his nostrils and was not cleaned or fed.[55] It took the intervention of Petty Officer McLoughlin, one of the senior Caymanians, before Seymore was moved, received food and began to make a recovery, finally being honourably discharged from the force. Not all the Caymanians were as 'lucky' as Seymore, however:

> We learned that one of our Cayman boys had died . . . Before we could get over the shock of Johnson's death, we were told that another person had passed away a few weeks before . . . By now, I had become very angry and had changed from the young, quiet, loyal man who had left Grand Cayman on the 29th of July, and had turned into a hardened, tough man who was ready to join the others in protest . . . regardless of the consequences.[56]

Within an hour the men had fallen in on the quarter deck and demanded to see Commander Wilkinson, the base Commanding Officer, from whom they requested their discharge from the TRNVR, and made the following demands:

1. Better medical service.
2. Replace the cots in the barracks with proper double bunk beds.
3. Pitch the base to prevent any mud holes or water from settling.
4. Improve the cooking system in the galley.
5. Change the behaviour of The First Lieutenant towards us which included screaming and threatening us and passing sarcastic remarks.[57]

Of these, item 1 'was the principal reason why we were so angry and disappointed in the Navy. We felt that our two country service men died from the lack of proper medical aid'. Again, the in-group pull of ethnicity proved stronger than the service. This was an exclusively Caymanian protest, with the other islanders within the TRNVR not participating, despite the general nature of some of the grievances. Although discontent ran deep and stretched back to their initial arrival, it took strength in numbers later on and the death of two of their own, to galvanize the Caymanian men into

action, and overcome the social pressure of the larger Trinidadian group who occupied a dominant position within the force because of their local status:

> When the second and third batches of volunteers [from Cayman] arrived on the base, there already were quite a number of Trinidadians and even some from the other islands in addition to the first batch from The Cayman Islands. They [the first batch] all must have been scared to fight for better conditions on the base. I can understand their reluctance in protesting, since they might have been outnumbered by Trinidadians, and those from the other islands who appeared not to worry about anything; perhaps they might have been accustomed to that way of life.[58]

Despite this external expression of Caymanian solidarity, members found themselves internally conflicted between their personal desires and the pressure of group allegiance. It also raised questions regarding the attitudes of the British authorities:

> I endured a restless night dreaming about the Navy and what the future held in store for me. Although I was still standing firm with the others about going home, I honestly did not want to. I was hoping that most of them would change their minds providing that the Commander would make good on his promises . . . there was one important question that was never asked: 'is it true the British treated us so subordinately because they were still practising their colonial prejudice against all of us? If not, why did two of our men have to die before we were treated better?'[59]

In a matter of days, most of the complaints were being taken care of, and the situation on the base began to improve slowly. Yet, it could not displace the negative impression that had been conveyed of the British:

> I had spoken to an Irishman in the Navy who told me not to expect too much improvement on the base. Because we were all colonials, The British seemed to believe that we were inferior to them. He went on to say that even though he was an Irishman, he was not treated any better, and would have never volunteered to join were it not for the fact that he was about to be drafted anyway and did not want to end up in the army.[60]

Anti-imperial sentiment was fermented here by the transnational encounters that war facilitated, and colonial volunteers like Clive Glidden were no longer prepared to submit unquestioningly to their imperial 'masters':

> The Commander, he says, 'You know what you call a forced man?' I say, 'No, I don't think I do.' He says, 'Well, in the old days, you were told what to do.' I say, 'I think those days are past.' So he never gave me no hard time.[61]

The war had prompted a growing realization among Caymanians that 'the British needed us more than we needed them'.[62]

Whereas Harry McCoy had experienced a degree of colonial prejudice while serving aboard HMS *Nigeria*, it was in isolation. The deaths of Uline Eden and Seaman Johnson brought home that sense of inferiority to the rest of the group, an act of paternal betrayal they would not forget:

> Those two naval men died in vain. I am still so bitter against the British naval authorities over their deaths. When we joined the Navy in July, 1941, we discovered that the medical standard for colonials was inferior compared the standard of medical care for the British naval men. For instance, we, the colonials, were given one old local doctor to take care of us, while the British naval men at Royal Navy Camp had excellent qualified doctors to take care of them.[63]

In the end, as 'most of our demands had been met, we were satisfied to stay. A small rebellious group held out however, and were eventually sent back home.'[64] Even though it was felt that the 'Mother Country' had broken her commitment to them, the majority of Caymanians refused to break theirs, remaining loyal and continuing to fight for Britain until the end of the war:

> There is no question in my mind that we were *The Forgotten Men of the Navy*. Speaking for myself, I am proud that I volunteered to go and fight for my Country, and if I were young enough and my services were required, I would not hesitate to do so again.[65]

This imperial patriotism was preserved by the British by appealing directly to the Caymanians' sense of maritime worth, integral to conceptions of their self-identity:

> Although we, the Cayman naval men, at times might have been mistreated or had to do more than our fair share, in the end, the top military brass bestowed a lot of praise on us and openly admitted that we were the cream of the naval crop.[66]

Rather than feeling aggrieved at Caymanians having had to 'do more than our fair share', this was turned into a badge of honour to reflect their indispensability. In this way, the British were able to preserve Caymanian loyalty by fostering their sense of cultural pride and seafaring superiority over the other West Indian sailors in the TRNVR:

> We had good reputation up there, and the Commander . . . when we were coming home, he gived [sic] a speech, he say . . . 'Unna Caymanians was the pride of the Navy.'[67]

Historical memory and identity

Several oral historical accounts express similar assertions that Caymanians represented the 'best seamen in the world', yet T. Ewart Ebanks, for one, admits 'I don't know how they knew it'.[68] Though naval service helped them gain post-war employment with international shipping companies, the islands' comparative isolation from the rest of the world provided limited opportunity to draw such conclusions beforehand. As a Caymanian cultural identifier, it has gained retrospective significance in emphasizing the islands' wartime contribution, a historical distortion which has become engrained through collective memory. Though Caymanian maritime heritage is indisputable, the conception of them as the 'best seamen in the world' was one which was initially cultivated by colonial authorities to serve imperial and naval ends.

Allen Wolsey Cardinall, Commissioner of the Cayman Islands from 1934–41, was said to have drawn British attention to the colony's seamen as potential recruits for the navy.[69] Described as an 'efficient District Commissioner', who 'takes a great interest in the Native customs and habits', he implemented several measures to improve the social and economic condition of 'the islands that time forgot'.[70] Many of these drew on Cayman's maritime strengths, with consequences for future naval recruitment. In January 1935, Cardinall founded the first annual Cayman Islands sailing Regatta, which drew participants from across the Caribbean and the United States. He hoped to foster a greater sense of Caymanian unity by 'bringing the islands and islanders together in friendly competition'.[71] This coincided with the opening of the George Town radio station on 23 November 1935, where messages were exchanged with Australia, Ceylon, South Africa, Canada, the Falkland Islands, as well as Britain and most of the other West Indian colonies,[72] instilling Caymanians with a greater sense of belonging to the imperial family. This world-view ingrained in the younger members of the population held sway a few years later when, with a greater appreciation of the global nature of the conflict, volunteering to serve in the TRNVR offered the rare chance to escape the quiet life of the islands and seek adventure overseas:

> I don't think anyone really got scared. In fact I know I was glad of it. As a youngster you know. I thought you know, that it was an opportunity to get out and get in some action, and see the world, and I think that this was the feeling of the young people.[73]

Each regatta would be honoured by a visiting Royal Navy warship, with two sailors from the vessel accompanying each schooner participating in the race, 'largely to put a bit of prestige into the regatta's sporting affairs'.[74] The Admiralty was drawn by the recruitment possibilities

such association offered, considering that 'as a potential source of seamen for the Auxiliary Patrol Service, these ready made sailors seem to justify every encouragement'.[75] Subsequent visits reaffirmed the opinion that 'the Cayman Islanders . . . would make fine material on which to draw in time of war, in the same way as the Newfoundland fishermen were in the last war'.[76] The Admiralty acted on this by loaning a cup for the race winners, as 'the presentation of such a prize would stimulate interest in the Royal Navy that might be invaluable in the event of hostilities'.[77] Such efforts succeeded in raising enthusiasm for the Royal Navy on Cayman, and sentimental ties were formed between local inhabitants and visiting warships. One example was the cruiser, HMS *Orion*, which earned local affection for her role in retrieving the popular Caymanian schooner *Goldfield* after a storm in September 1937,[78] and was later involved in the hunt for the German pocket-battleship *Graf Spee*:

> This created much interest in Cayman . . . . Caymanians enjoyed listening to the battle in South America, not only because of knowing the *Orion* when she attended Cayman's 1938 regatta but also because we had great faith in the mother country's naval fleet, the most formidable in the world.[79]

Such visits helped inculcate Caymanians with a belief in British power, both imperial and naval, a greater sense of patriotic pride, and heightened the prestige of the Royal Navy, all of which increased the appeal of naval service when the opportunity to volunteer presented itself:

> It had been grounded in us that, you know, 'Britannia ruled the waves', and 'Britons never shall be slaves'. Well this extended all over the Empire; you know we just felt that Britain was invincible.[80]

One way this patriotic belief in Britain and the Royal Navy had been 'grounded' in young Caymanians was through the 'Trafalgar Day' school essay competition, instigated by Cardinall in 1935. Echoing Harry McCoy's reference to 'Rule Britannia', Linda Borden eulogized that 'when we study the lives of such men as Lord Nelson, we are proud to know that we form a part of the British Empire, and with the spirit of Nelson we can truly sing: "Britons never shall be slaves" '. In his essay entitled 'Supremacy of the Seas', Glendower McLoughlin expressed that 'we should all aspire to have the same feeling towards our Country as Nelson had, and have as our watchword Nelson's great and noble words "England expects every man to do his duty" '. 'Today Trafalgar seems to say we are a unit of the greatest nation on Earth, therefore we should make ourselves worthy of the greatest and best', so argued David McLaughlin. Another, Cecil Wood, wrote that '[Nelson] has left us his mantle of inspiration which is inspiring thousands of youths of

the British Empire today'.[81] That 'mantle' would then be carried by those Caymanians in the TRNVR.

To organize the regatta, Cardinall created the Cayman Islands Yacht and Sailing Club (CIYSC), whose members numbered 134 by 1937. The Commissioner also helped form two troops of Sea Scouts in George Town and West Bay, which in 1937 totalled 82 boys, with another 59 more in two cub packs.[82] These organizations provided a valuable potential pool of organized and disciplined recruits for the TRNVR come wartime,[83] such as Harry McCoy:

> I was there [in the Home Guard] for nineteen months ... the day I took off my uniform, I left to join the Navy ... that had been my life's ambition as a boy ... I was a Sea Scout, and being a Caymanian, I already had the salt water in my blood ... so I volunteered when the opportunity came.[84]

When Royal Navy warships would visit the islands during the regatta, the Sea Scouts would be invited aboard them, thus exposing them first-hand to British naval culture. Together they helped lay vital foundations for post-war employment in an environment which traditionally provided limited education and opportunity:

> Between [the Sea Scouts] and the TRNVR, turned out some of our best sailors, best seamen. Well, some of them that weren't Scouts had the sea in their blood anyway ... with the limited education, basic education, that they had ... the experience of those four years in Trinidad among those who were there, and went to sea afterwards, was amazing.[85]

Here the colonial authorities emphasized their own active role in the 'production' of Caymanian seamen, accrediting their measures as having 'turned out' some of the best. Furthermore, though 'some ... had the sea in their blood anyway', it was clearly not universal, and even those who did required colonial assistance to develop their skills so as to make a positive contribution to Cayman society. Paternal British leadership was thus highlighted as a key actor in this discourse of development, carrying on the tradition of the imperial civilizing mission. Again, though Caymanians may have been viewed and treated in a more positive manner than other West Indians, they were still considered an imperial infant to Britain, requiring the motherland's guidance in order to grow and develop.

Caymanian society was highly religious, dominated by the Presbyterian Church, and the intrinsic connection drawn between religious and maritime tradition on the islands is engrained in Cayman's motto taken from Psalm 24: 'He hath founded it upon the seas.'[86] Just as the paternalism of the civilizing mission prevailed, so religion continued to act as its conduit. The colonial authorities were conscious of the powerful influence that religion

had over the local population. When they put out the call to arms, they did so in the setting of the Presbyterian Church, thus instilling their message with a religious symbolism that subconsciously appealed to potential recruits through that sacred setting, and framing the struggle against Hitler as a holy and righteous war in which God was on Britain's side:

> It was difficult to leave home, but I had a mind to serve because as Commissioner Cardinall said in his speech at the Presbyterian Church in George Town, war was like a dark cloud hanging over the world and Hitler had to be stopped. I wanted to play my part too.[87]

Nazi racism was thus framed as being anti-Christian, and acted as a moral inducement to serve as well as a legitimizing contrast to Britain's 'tolerant' authority:

> Intolerant authority is the essence of Nazism and has provided the most dangerous menace to Christianity and civilisation that the World has yet seen . . . the British, as a race, the most tolerant of men. Not only do we believe in toleration for ourselves but also for others. We are prepared to fight for that and, in fact, it is that for which we are fighting.[88]

This verged on crusading zealotry, with the prospect of killing another human being excused on account of the fact that 'they were fighting an enemy, an infidel, who didn't share the same beliefs that they shared, that didn't share the same notion of God that they had'. They saw it as their 'religious duty, as well as a civil, civic, and national duty' to 'volunteer to fight, and if necessary, to make the ultimate sacrifice, to lose their lives themselves, or in the process, to kill the persons who they deemed their enemy'.[89] Several church services were held for the islands' volunteers, both before and after their departure, which itself helped to unite the islands. Even in the Caymans, where racial divisions were less stark, 'in the "old days" the "coloured people" sat on one side of the church', yet 'this was changed during the war years when many Caymanian men travelled to serve in the TRNVR'.[90] This helped strengthen Caymanian group identity beyond race, with all islanders uniting in prayer for the safe return of their men. Each batch of recruits that set sail for Trinidad did so under the charge of Reverend George Hicks, a veteran from the First World War and the Presbyterian Minister for Grand Cayman,[91] as if shepherded into battle under the Lord's divine protection. In the words of Bertram Ebanks: 'I have taken Christ as my shield and defender so I've nothing to dread, and I'm willing to do anything I can to help bring an end to this great conflict.'[92]

Conclusion

Prior to the Second World War, Caymanians were not conscious of their relative professional standing, it was a perception they had acquired by the

time they returned to the Cayman Islands at the end of the war. A confident belief that they were the 'best seamen in the world' has since become a central facet of Caymanian identity, key to the islands' post-war economic growth, and consequently is a source of cultural pride which has been elevated through historical memory to become engrained in the nation's folklore.

This is not to say that the Caymanian 'call of the sea' was purely a colonial construction. As with martial race theory, this identity is anchored in a degree of empirical reality, but over time it became culturally and ideologically layered. The natural environment of the Cayman Islands, its resources, its settlers and the local economy that developed from these, meant that nautical skills and traditions inevitably evolved among its people. Certainly seafaring ability made them attractive as recruits for the Navy, but it did not in itself differentiate them from many other peoples who hailed from nautical backgrounds. It was during Commissioner Cardinall's tenure that Caymanian maritime heritage was institutionalized in the spirit of social and economic development through 'invented traditions'[93] such as the regatta, but with an ulterior aim of fostering imperial spirit and a belief in British naval invincibility that aided volunteerism during war. Yet, Cardinall was also a man preoccupied with his own legacy and establishing a place for himself in the history of Cayman, avowing that 'when I leave you will remember me always'.[94] This he achieved by eulogizing Caymanian maritime aptitude to the Navy and cultivating a collective pride in this identity, so that he remains lauded in the popular memory of the Islands' naval

Race was a key factor in the Navy's initial preference for Caymanians, being lighter in complexion compared with other West Indians. The influence of martial race theory evinced itself in this link with 'Aryanism', and the use of anthropology to legitimize racial discrimination and preferential selection within the force, based on pseudo-scientific deductions regarding intelligence and fitness. Transnational encounters with the British and other West Indians strengthened Caymanian identity, though at the expense of force cohesion, and left them isolated when problems arose. Though Caymanians considered themselves victims of colonial as opposed to racial prejudice, this imperial subordination within the chain of command prompted protest, and for some eroded their original motivations to fight. To help preserve patriotic loyalty for the majority to continue fighting, British officers thus appealed to Caymanian ethnic pride by lauding their maritime worth, and instilling the belief that they were 'the best seamen in the world'.

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20. CINA, interview with Roosevelt Rankine (2), conducted by Heather McLoughlin, 15 January 1991, transcript p. 2, 5.
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22. CINA, interview with Carley Ebanks, conducted by Liz Scholefield, 31 May 1996, transcript p. 18.
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Section III

After Empire: Flows of Military Talent

8

From Imperial Soldiers to National Guardians: German and Lithuanian Volunteers after the Great War, 1918–19

Tomas Balkelis

The Great War and the Russian revolution brought about a total collapse and disintegration of three European empires (Romanov, Habsburg, Ottoman) and the replacement of a fourth dynastical empire, Germany, with a parliamentary democracy. As their government structures were dismantled and armies demobilized, most of the newly formed nation-states that emerged in the vast post-imperial *shatterzone* stretching from the Elbe River to the Black Sea entered into new military conflicts. During 1918–20, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Russia, Poland, Ukraine, Hungary and Romania plunged into a series of new post-imperial wars. These conflicts have been variously described, depending on one's perspective, as 'civil wars', 'freedom fights' or 'liberation struggles'. Until today they are largely perceived and commemorated in national contexts. Yet it is long overdue to examine them as a single all-European phenomenon.[1]

As thousands of ex-imperial Romanov and Habsburg war veterans tried to return to their homelands, they found themselves remobilized into various national, revolutionary or counter-revolutionary armies. Needless to say, not all the veterans were remobilized. Yet a rapid transition from the Great War to the post-war conflicts was greatly facilitated by the availability of high numbers of demobilized ex-soldiers in 1918.

This transformation of imperial armies into post-war conflict troops needs to be analysed in a transnational context. What were the dynamics of these remobilizations? How did imperial troops turn into national or (counter) revolutionary soldiers? The connection between the incomplete demobilization and subsequent remobilization needs to be examined on both a comparative international and regional level. What is clear, though, is that in the East-European borderland, the Great War and the Russian revolution set the stage for a series of new military conflicts.

Historians of the newly formed nation-states often look at the emergence of their post-World War I armies as part of a nation-state building process.[2] Their 'heroic military deeds' were firmly inscribed in national mythologies, educational systems and collective memories. Some of these highly nationalized narratives often obscure the origins and complexity of the formation of these new armies that often emerged from the shambles of the old. Most commonly, the heroic myths portray them as predominantly volunteer-based, often ignoring that most of these forces were also conscripted. Their rapid professionalization is frequently overemphasized, while their paramilitary nature is barely discussed.

This chapter seeks to explore the role of two groups of volunteers in the early stage of the post-war conflict that took place in Lithuania. Lithuania has been selected as a typical post-World War I *shatterzone* where the imperial collapse had profound consequences for nation-building, transnational movements and political alignments. I will focus on the Lithuanian troops and so-called Saxon volunteers who fought in Lithuania in 1919. I will explore the origins of these military formations, the role of ex-imperial veterans and volunteers in their ranks, their motivations to fight and their mutual relationship. The last aspect is significant since both became military allies in their struggle against the invading Red Army in Lithuania in 1919. Since both heavily relied on ex-Russian and German World War I veterans, the former enemies had to adjust to the new military setting where their survival often depended on each other.

The Russian revolution and the origins of the Lithuanian national units

In Russia the process of demobilizing a vast imperial army was followed by a series of new mobilizations at the end of World War I. It was unsuccessful because it occurred in the conditions of the ensuing war, amid class and national revolutions. The imperial break-up fuelled instant (re)mobilizations of various parts of the forcefully demobilized Tsarist army. These new (re)mobilizations were essential for the continuation of war in different post-imperial spaces that became zones of violent contest. As a result, there was an intense and large-scale transfer of the military personnel from the imperial army to newly created national and (counter) revolutionary armies. A great number of former non-Russian soldiers and officers of the Tsarist army switched their political loyalties to new national, revolutionary or counter-revolutionary troops. For many this was not only an expression of their newly shaped political aspirations and identities, but also an opportunity for new military careers and social advancement.

Yet the seeds of *nationalization* of the non-Russian imperial troops were sown well before the complete disintegration of the Tsar's army in early 1918. This process flowed from the beginnings of ethnic minority units

formed in Tsarist Russia. Following the Russian military reform of 1874 the populations of outlying (mostly non-Russian) parts of the empire were deemed unfit for military service.[3] The second Russian military reform bill was agreed in 1912, but its recommendation to draft non-Russians in great numbers came into effect only during World War I due to the increased demand for soldiers. Thus the first ethnic unit, a Polish detachment of 400 men, was established as early as October 1914.[4] The large-scale formation of non-Russian units started only from August 1915 when eight separate Latvian riflemen regiments were formed to stem the German advancement on the northern front.[5]

This so-called 'ethnic mobilization' was particularly boosted by the February revolution of 1917. The Russian centre-left parties that came into power were profound believers in the importance of civic nationalism. Meanwhile, the public pressure to expand this policy was enormous as the popularity of ethnic units rose sharply. Soon Armenians, Georgians, Ukrainians, Poles, Lithuanians and many others were mobilized into separate regiments to bolster the flagging war effort of Russia.[6]

Overall, more than 64,000 Lithuanians were drafted into the Russian army during the Great War.[7] Of those about 11,000 were killed in action and 15,000 went into German captivity. By 1917 only about 30,000 Lithuanians were still in the service of the imperial army. Of those about 3000 were formed into separate ethnic Lithuanian units.[8] The first of these units was a 700 strong regiment formed as part of the Polish corps in Western Ukraine in the summer of 1917.[9] In total, by the end of the war there were six separate Lithuanian regiments in Smolensk, Rovno, Siberia, Estonia and elsewhere including the largest Lithuanian battalion of 800 in Vitebsk. It is important to note that almost all of these units were formed on the initiative of Lithuanian officers.

As a rule, non-Russian military personnel occupied only low-ranking positions (mostly NCOs) within the imperial units except in those organized along ethnic lines. Thus among Lithuanian officers there was only one Tsarist general, Silvestras Žukauskas, who had to convert from Catholicism into Lutheranism to achieve his high military rank.[10] Only after 1905 were non-Russians allowed into Russian military schools, but they were never eligible for military academies that produced high-ranking officers.

The organizational collapse of the Russian army started with the infamous 'Order Nr.1' in March 1917. This decree authorized an election in all military units of committees formed from the lower ranks. As a result of this policy, most of non-Russian military personnel started organizing their committees along ethnic or class lines. One of the first organized cells of about 30 Lithuanian officers came into being in Riga in the early spring of 1917. They even published their own newspaper *Laisvas žodis* (*Free Speech*). Similar cells soon sprung up among other front-line units in Ukraine, Romania and the South Caucasus.[11] In June 1917 they all came together to establish the *Union*

of Lithuanian Soldiers in St. Petersburg. The event was attended by 78 officers and received some press coverage. The union called for 'free and democratic Lithuania'. Yet it split on the issue of whether its independence should be within or outside a new democratic Russia.[12] The union also could not agree on whether Lithuanians should start forming their separate military units. These divisions led to the final split at its second meeting in January 1918. By February Bolshevik Lithuanian soldiers took control, shutting down their pro-independence opponents and calling 'all Lithuanian soldiers to join the Red Army'.[13]

A similar shift to *nationalization* (and *revolutionization*) occurred in the political views of other non-Russian soldiers and officers. The most notorious case is that of the mentioned Latvian riflemen who split into national and socialist units, the latter serving as the Praetorian vanguard of the Bolsheviks and a nucleus of the newly created Red Army.[14] Meanwhile, the nationalist riflemen formed a basis of the Latvian national army that successfully fought Bolsheviks, Whites and Germans.

As a result of the rising tension, all non-Russian soldiers became the target of intense nationalist and Bolshevik propaganda as they tried to decide what to do next after their demobilization from the Russian army in early 1918. In November 1917, Nikolai Krylenko, newly appointed Commander in Chief of the Russian army, gave permission to form a separate Lithuanian battalion in Smolensk with the hope that it could be transferred into the Red Guard. Local Bolshevik commissars tried to persuade Lithuanians by praising the fighting spirit and historical legacy of Lithuanian soldiers. Yet the officers refused to enlist their soldiers into the newly created Red troops. After a long series of meetings, about a third, nevertheless, joined the Reds.[15] This led to the ultimate suspension of food provisions, disarmament and disbandment of the whole battalion.[16]

A similar fate awaited a Lithuanian battalion in Vitebsk. It became involved in a conflict with local Bolsheviks who tried to requisition the property of a local church. Having fired some shots, the Lithuanians dispersed a Bolshevik requisition commission. This only led to a speedy demobilization of the battalion.[17] Only a minority of its soldiers joined the Bolsheviks. The majority collectively tried to return to German-occupied Lithuania but were captured by the Germans and placed in a POW camp in Dvinsk.

There were some attempts to evacuate whole Lithuanian units with their arms and regimental structures intact. The Lithuanian battalion in Rovno received German permission to return to Lithuania with arms and ammunition, but could not do so due to its early disarmament by the Ukrainian government.[18] Meanwhile, the whole Lithuanian cavalry squadron in Valka (Estonia) preferred to negotiate their capitulation to Germans rather than surrender to the Reds. Yet the entire squadron was disarmed and sent into captivity to Germany.[19]

Meanwhile the demobilization of the Russian imperial army gained momentum with the Decree of 23 November 1917 that started gradual reduction of the numerical strength of the army.[20] On 15 January 1918 Lenin officially established the Red Guard, a prototype of the Red Army. Yet an early call for volunteers turned out to be almost a complete disaster: after two months of recruitment only 150,000 enrolled.[21] The ranks of the Red Guard swelled rapidly only after a decision to draft certain age groups of population in May and June 1918. Yet this was achieved by a combination of agitation and coercion which were deemed necessary to combat mass evasion among the peasantry.[22] By February 1920 the Red Army already had more than 2.8 million soldiers.[23] This was achieved by a series of military drafts that replaced the earlier policy of relying on volunteers. The early development of the Red Army is also incomprehensible without the Bolshevik mobilization of so-called 'military specialists', that is, officers of the ex-Tsarist army, on 29 July 1918. In total, throughout the period of the Civil War, ex-Tsarist troops comprised about 48,000 officers, 10,300 administrators and 214,000 NCOs.[24]

For Lithuanian soldiers this breakdown of the imperial army posed the challenge of making one of three choices. Many and, particularly, officers were reluctant to join the Reds. Those who did were largely either rank-and-file believers in the Bolshevik cause or desperate to find means of survival in the conditions of post-war economic collapse and hunger. The Bolsheviks managed to recruit several units among the Lithuanians including a squadron in Ekaterinoslav and a partisan unit in Omsk. About 2000 Lithuanian soldiers were deployed into the 5th Vilnius regiment in Belarus that became part of the West Soviet Army. According to one estimate, in total, about 4000 Lithuanians served in the Red Army between 1919 and 1920.[25]

There were also those who had strong Lithuanian connections but due to their political or cultural views preferred to join the Polish, not Lithuanian, army. During the Polish-Soviet War of 1919–21 the Polish army had more than 90 generals who served in the former Russian and Austro-Hungarian armies. Of those, nine generals including Josef Pilsudski himself were originally from the Lithuanian-Polish borderland, claimed by the Lithuanian state. Yet all of them joined the Polish army as well as a hundred other officers who were born in Eastern Lithuania.[26] This reflected their reluctance to accept the nascent Lithuanian national identity, defined primarily in ethnic and linguistic terms, rather than common historical ties with Poland.

Meanwhile, great numbers of ethnic Lithuanian soldiers and low-rank officers individually or in small groups tried to return to Lithuania after the treaty of Brest-Litovsk in March 1918. The mass return of war refugees from the Russian interior to the Baltics and Poland facilitated their repatriation, but also provided an opportunity to increase their national awareness and patriotism. Various ethnic refugee relief societies such as the *Lithuanian War*

Relief Committee campaigned among the civilian refugees and ex-soldiers calling for their return to independent Lithuania.[27] The newly formed Lithuanian government sent its official envoy to Kiev to recruit General Žukauskas as the head of the nascent Lithuanian army.[28]

The formation of the Lithuanian army: from volunteers to conscripts

Between August 1915 and November 1918 Lithuania experienced German occupation with its harsh policies of military requisitions and economic exploitation. The emergence of independent Lithuania in 1918 was largely a result of the military collapse of both Russia and Germany and the successful diplomatic efforts of the Lithuanian *Taryba* [Council] that emerged with German blessing in September 1917. In November 1918 Lithuania did not have any state structures except its cabinet. From its first days the fate of independent Lithuania seemed precarious. Its survival was threatened, first, by the invasion of the Red Army in January 1919 and the subsequent occupation of more than half of the country, then by an advance into North Lithuania of the German-Russian troops of General Pavel Bermondt-Avalov in September 1919, and finally, the Polish-Lithuanian war that ended with the loss of Vilnius in October 1920.[29]

Moreover, initially Lithuania greatly depended on the military and economic support of Germany. As Western powers still hoped that the Bolsheviks could be defeated and Russia should remain indivisible, Germany was the first to recognize Lithuania on 23 March 1918. Soviet Russia recognized it only in July 1920. Full Western diplomatic recognition came as late as 1922 when the USA gave *de jure* acknowledgement, and Lithuania was able to join the League of Nations.

Although the *Taryba* played with the idea of forming its own military force as early as December 1917, its initial vision was not of an independent army but of a security force to fight widespread debauchery and banditry in the countryside.[30] Banditry became widespread due to high numbers of Russian escapees from German POW camps and forced labourers who hid from German round-ups. When Lithuanian officer of the Tsar's army Kazys Škirpa submitted a proposal to petition the Germans for the creation of an armed Lithuanian force in April, the *Taryba* rejected it.[31] This did not stop the *Taryba* from drawing a list of those Lithuanian officers who would be willing to fight for a future army. By October 1918 more than 40 agreed to enlist.[32] In any case, the German occupation authorities showed no interest in the idea of the Lithuanian force before the defeat of Germany in November 1918. The gradual withdrawal of Germans from Russia enforced by the Armistice of Compiègne of 11 November 1918 and the subsequent advance of the Red troops immediately raised the question of which power is going to control Lithuania.

The position of the *Taryba* was also complicated by the wavering of the first Lithuanian Prime Minister Augustinas Voldemaras. In early November he insisted that Lithuania should pursue a policy of neutrality towards its neighbours and, therefore, did not need an army, only a small militia.[33] Yet his views were dismissed by the majority of *Taryba* who realized they have to urgently form their troops in order to survive in the post-war political cauldron.

Another obstacle in forming an army was the poor choice of a chief commander. General Žukauskas was not able to arrive in Vilnius on time. Meanwhile, the newly appointed ex-Tsarist general Konstantin Kondratovich turned out to be openly pro-White Russian and had to be removed.[34] His appointment testified to the *Taryba's* desperation in relying on any professional cadres, not only ethnic Lithuanians, willing to fight on its side. 'We could not find good organizers [for the army] among Lithuanian officers', Voldemaras replied to his critics when accused of attracting military personnel who did not know any Lithuanian and had little sympathy for independent Lithuania.[35]

The issue of language was directly related to the profusion of the ex-imperial military staff in the early Lithuanian force. Initially most of the commands were still given in the Russian language. However, soon a group of young ethnic Lithuanian officers demanded the use of the Lithuanian language among the volunteers. New military commands and terms had to be rapidly translated and disseminated among the troops.[36] In one case a dozen of Lithuanian officers even decided to Lithuanize their last names.[37] Yet the army's *Lithuanization* process dragged well into the early 1920s.

In early October 1918 the *Taryba* had only 11 unarmed volunteers, dressed up as civilians to avoid German arrest. Their first arms were illegally purchased from demoralized German soldiers. Yet their numbers gradually increased to 150 by mid-November due to the arrival of more Lithuanian officers from Russia.[38] Some of them were solicited even through local press ads that promised a good pay.[39] In this early force, officers outnumbered soldiers almost by half.[40] On 1 January 1919 there were 82 ex-Tsarist officers in the army.[41] The organizational core of the army was made up mostly from NCOs led by Captain V. Grigaliūnas-Glovackis. Most officers still wore their Tsarist uniforms without any insignias, and their internal ranks were abolished to prevent Bolshevik anti-officer propaganda among the troops.[42]

A new powerful impulse for (re)mobilization of Lithuanian soldiers was given by the formation of the second Lithuanian cabinet of Mykolas Šleževičius in December 1918. The first step of the new government was to issue a call for volunteers into the newly formed Lithuanian army on 29 December 1918.[43] The appeal was printed in four different languages (Lithuanian, Polish, Belorussian and Yiddish) and distributed across the country. The volunteers were promised a monthly salary of 100 marks and material care for their families. The call received a considerable response among peasants

who, beside ex-war veterans, came to form the second largest group of volunteers. As a result of this call, by mid-January 1919 the army enlisted 3000 soldiers.[44]

However, the new force faced several challenges. First, there was a shortage of officers capable of leading large military units. This forced the government to mobilize all officers and ex-military staff in Lithuania on 15 January 1919.[45] Yet the officer draft produced only 400, instead of the expected 1000.[46] On 25 January, to offset this lack of high-ranking military personnel, the government established its military academy in Kaunas.

Secondly, even this small force could not be properly equipped. Hundreds of volunteers remained on registration lists only, until they were able to receive arms. Many tried to purchase their personal arms on the black market. The problem of provisions was partly solved by Germany's loan of three million marks given to Lithuania on 3 January 1919.[47] Overall, the rapid Bolshevik advance reversed the German policy of ignoring the Lithuanian troops and prompted Germany to provide full military and financial support on 24 December 1918.[48]

Thirdly, the number of volunteers was simply insufficient in the light of the advance of the Red Army which took Vilnius on 5 January 1919. As a result, the whole Lithuanian cabinet had to escape to Kaunas. The critical situation helped to drop the idea of the volunteer army and to call a first military draft of all Lithuanian males born in 1897 and 1898 on 13 February 1919.[49] The draft though produced a mixed result: of 17,400 called to the service only 6800 were enlisted and 4800 did not show up at all.[50] In some south-eastern districts the evasion rate reached more than 50 per cent.[51] This showed that local peasants were hesitant to join the new army in light of the rapidly changing political and military situation.

Yet, by May 1919, the Lithuanian army, expanded with its newly trained conscripts to more than 10,000, was able to take the strategic town of Panevėžys in North Lithuania. A critical move that strengthened the morale of the Lithuanian troops was the government's decision of 20 June 1919 to promise land to all its soldiers.[52] In contrast to the Bolsheviks, who tried to nationalize the land, this policy became a powerful draw to the mass of peasants. This was reflected in the growing flow of peasant conscripts into the army: of 34,000 called during the second draft of 15 October 1919 more than 13,000 were enlisted.[53]

If the morale of the peasant draftees depended on the military performance of the Lithuanian army, the strength of the national and local authorities and promises of land, the volunteers did not lack patriotism and civic courage. This is reflected in their numerous memoirs published during the interwar years.[54] Another dominant motive to join the army was material deprivation. Among the volunteers many were landless for whom military service could offer shelter, food and a salary of 100 marks. In addition, their families also received 50 marks a month.[55]

A sense of the civic duty was a motive among some of the Jewish soldiers too. Private Icik Shneider (born 1890) became a volunteer against the will of his Jewish father, a veteran of World War I. In his memoir he wrote: 'I have joined the army strictly by my own volition . . . My father told me about the horrors of a soldier's life but this did not stop me . . . '. Before joining he also visited his friend, a Lithuanian farmer, whose two sons were already in the army. This visit only confirmed his decision to fight on the Lithuanian side.[56] Overall, almost 3000 Jews served in the Lithuanian army between 1918 and 1923. Of those, 60 were killed and more than 20 were decorated.[57] This reflected the inclusive nature of Lithuanian nationalism during the early interwar period.

The German troops in Lithuania

By late December 1919 it became clear for the Lithuanian government that the Red Army could not be stopped without the aid of an outside military power. In February the newly born and still poorly equipped Lithuanian troops could not master more than 4500 battle-ready troops.[58] They faced an invading Red Army force of roughly 20,000 whose core was made up of two divisions and the so-called 5th Vilnius regiment that included a large number of Lithuanian Bolsheviks.[59] Initially, the Reds were quite successful in recruiting hundreds of local peasants in the occupied parts of the country. Promises of regular pay, land and the effects of pre-existing class tensions seemed to be among the key motives for joining. In North Lithuania more than 1000 Red Lithuanian partisans led by Feliksas Baltušis-Žemaitis were incorporated directly into the Red Army.[60]

Paradoxically, the only military force capable of stabilizing the front remained the German army, or to be more precise, what remained of it after the hasty withdrawal from Ober Ost since November 1918.[61] In the eyes of the Lithuanian government and the Entente only Germans could stem the Bolshevik advance. This was officially enforced by Article 12 of the Compiègne armistice that made sure German forces should be evacuated from the East only 'as the Allies shall think the moment suitable'.[62]

Yet the German 10th and 8th armies stationed in Lithuania and Latvia could not provide efficient resistance to the Reds due to the removal of the best German divisions to the Western front in mid-1918. Another, even more dangerous weakness, was the rapidly falling morale among German troops. Germany's defeat in the Great War and the gradual demobilization of its soldiers who were desperate to find a way home, combined with the spread of Bolshevik propaganda, served as powerful disintegrating factors within the army.

By the end of 1918 the loyalty of the German troops in Lithuania was claimed by at least three conflicting parties: the German high command, soldier councils, and the Spartakists, bolshevized German soldiers.[63] The last

group published their newspaper *Der Rote Soldat*, staged numerous demonstrations and tried to take over soldier councils. Their main demands were the cessation of all military hostilities, the removal of all officers and the immediate evacuation of all German troops to their homeland.

The local Bolsheviks conducted vigorous propaganda among the German troops calling for their support to 'the struggle of local working classes'. In December 1918 a Polish diplomat witnessed fraternization of German troops and Bolsheviks on the streets of Vilnius.[64] There were several instances when revolutionized German soldiers sold army equipment to Bolsheviks.[65] Yet the Bolshevik Germans were not able to take control of the Central Soldier Council based in Kaunas which commanded the loyalty of most German troops and called them 'to continue their duty in the East'.[66] On 22 December 1918 Chief of the 10th army General Erich von Falkenhayn reported to his superiors in Berlin that due to his army's falling morale, it is not able to defend Vilnius against the Reds 'until the army is reinforced with new units capable of fighting'.[67]

The almost complete collapse of the fighting spirit among the German troops stood behind Berlin's decision to rapidly form volunteer units that could replace the disintegrating army in the East.[68] In early December 1918 the German high command in Grodno issued a call for volunteers into special volunteer corps.[69] Meanwhile, in January the German Recruitment Office for the Baltic Lands (*Anwerbestelle Baltenland*) in Berlin, after the endorsement of the defence minister Gustav Noske, started registering volunteers, so called Freikorps, for the anti-Bolshevik military campaign in the Baltics.[70]

The campaign targeted, first of all, officers and NCOs of the Kaiser's army who found themselves jobless after the war. In a 'Call for the Volunteers to the 10th Army' they were addressed as follows:

> Comrades! Those who are unable to adjust to the transition from the military service to civilian life; those who still want to see foreign countries; those who see their future in them, they all must join the volunteers of the 10th army![71]

Yet it also attracted those young Germans who had no experience in fighting and who were frustrated with Germany's defeat and the lack of economic opportunities at home. As numerous recruitment offices opened in Berlin and other cities, Freikorps were promised 30 marks daily paid by the German government for a three-month contract. In Latvia they were also promised local citizenship and settlement, while in Lithuania they were allowed to sell their war booty to the government.[72] The prospect of settling on the Baltic land became a powerful impulse for thousands of volunteers who saw the region as the space of unlimited colonial opportunities.[73] Many sought

to escape their painful transition into civilian life by unleashing their anti-Bolshevik and colonial ambitions in the East.

The Lithuanian government actively lobbied Germany to get rid of unreliable German troops stationed in Lithuania. As the German volunteers were hurriedly assembled and shipped to the Baltics, those German units that became infected with revolutionary ideas were dismantled and sent back home.[74] By the end of January 1919 the remnants of the 10th army had been replaced with three regiments and a separate battalion that included more than 4000 volunteers led by General Walter von Eberhardt.[75] The majority of them were recruited from Dresden and Leipzig, where the 10th army opened its recruitment offices, and, therefore, acquired the name of the Saxon battalions.[76]

However, the first contingent of Saxon volunteers who arrived to Kaunas in early January turned out to be highly unreliable and had to be shipped back.[77] Later shipments included more reliable troops. The Saxon volunteers showed their motivation to fight by stopping the Bolshevik advance on Kaunas and cracking down on local Soviets in Kaunas and other Lithuanian towns. They were the bulwark that protected Lithuania when the military situation became critical in the battles near Jieznas, Alytus and Kaišiadorys in February–March 1919. Their resilience inspired both the fledging Lithuanian troops that joined the action only in early February and the local population who learned that the Bolsheviks could be defeated after all.[78] Remarkably, their military role is barely mentioned in contemporary Lithuanian accounts of the war.

The mercenary nature of the German troops showed itself in their unwillingness to fight outside their contractual obligations as occurred in several cases. In the midst of the battle of Jieznas, for instance, a German volunteer unit refused to participate in the offensive before their contracts were renewed.[79] The Germans also refused to join the disastrous Lithuanian-led offensive to recapture Vilnius in early April 1919.[80] In this they followed their directions from Berlin which stipulated their defensive mission to hold a demarcation line against the advancing Bolsheviks. The German troops in Lithuania kept their separate command structure from the Lithuanian army. All German units were led by German officers. Although the overall military command was in the hands of the head of the Lithuanian army, his power was exercised through his staff adviser general Schroeder, responsible for co-ordinating the common Lithuanian-German military actions.[81]

The German units supported the Lithuanian army until 3 June 1919 when they were taken out of the action. The successful Lithuanian offensive that continued throughout the summer until the expulsion of the Bolsheviks in August 1919 made the presence of the German volunteers redundant. Yet their complete removal from Lithuania and other Baltic states was a result of the conflict that arose between Germany and, on the other side, the Entente

and Latvia. The conflict flared after German troops replaced the Latvian government of Karlis Ulmanis with a German puppet regime of Andrievs Niedra in April and captured Riga on 22 May 1919. The military defeat inflicted on the Germans by the combined Estonian and Latvian troops in Wenden on 22 June and the diplomatic pressure of the Entente that threatened economic blockade on Germany led to the removal of all German forces from the Baltics by December 1919. The Saxon volunteers left Lithuania in mid July: the majority were evacuated to Prussia; others joined the remaining Freikorp units in Latvia.

The mutual relationship: from military allies to foes

In his memoir German captain Ralph von Heygendorff describes the arrival and deployment of the Saxon volunteers in Lithuania in the winter of 1919 as a challenge to German officers. Many Saxons volunteered simply because they were jobless. They were heavily influenced by Bolshevik ideas, despised their officers and trusted mostly their soldier councils. Their low morale was reflected in their conviction that as volunteers they needed no proper training. Upon their arrival they sold army materiel on the black market, 'from the early morning [they] spent their time in the stuffy pubs of Kaunas, played cards and chased women'.[82] The situation improved after the arrival of more motivated Saxons and the beginning of fighting that sifted out the unwilling. A decision to forcefully disperse the German Soldier Council in Kaunas in March 1919 also helped to instil discipline among the German volunteers.

Paradoxically, the morale of the volunteers was also strengthened by the arrival of two military missions of the Entente to Kaunas in March 1919. One of their key aims was to stop the German influence in Lithuania. From now on German soldiers were required to salute their former enemies, British and French officers, as well as official flags of the Entente displayed in the city centre. This led to an improvised German volunteer parade in full military gear in front of Metropolis Hotel where the Entente missions were stationed.[83]

In the winter months the Lithuanians, particularly the higher officer corps, were friendly with and grateful to the Germans for their military support. This was reflected in a warm relationship that developed between the head of the Lithuanian army general Žukauskas and his staff adviser general Schroeder responsible for co-ordinating the common Lithuanian-German military actions. To the dismay of French delegates, German officers were also invited and warmly applauded in an inauguration ceremony of the Lithuanian Military Academy in Kaunas in late May 1919.[84] This attitude reflected the political and military situation in which Lithuania found itself in early 1919 as the German units became an expedient military ally in stopping the advance of the Reds.

Yet it seems the lower the military rank of Lithuanian officers the less trust they had towards the German troops. In Alytus Germans allowed a Lithuanian unit to be stationed in their former military barracks. The Lithuanian commander urged his soldiers to take example of the Germans in taking care of their barracks.[85] This only raised tensions among junior officers who saw Germans not as a model but as intruders feeding off the local population. When a Lithuanian patrol arrested marauding German soldiers in Alytus in February 1919, this led to mutual threats, intimidation and, finally, the intervention of high-ranking officers on both sides.[86]

It seems that the arrival of the Entente missions also helped to change the view of Lithuanian officers towards Germans. On 16 March 1919 a group of junior Lithuanian officers ripped apart German newspapers in the face of Germans showing their contempt and arrogance. Meanwhile, Lithuanian soldiers stood guard in front of ministry buildings that displayed the flags of the Entente. This produced a German backlash that led to the stealing and destruction of the flags.[87] Another critical event that worsened the German-Lithuanian relationship was an incident where a German soldier shot a Lithuanian volunteer who stood guard at the Entente mission on 18 March 1919. His funeral turned into a mass anti-German rally in Kaunas.[88]

The tense German-Lithuanian relationship reached its low point by the end of June 1919. This was directly related to the collapse of the German morale after the announcement of the terms of the Versailles treaty on 28 June. Angered by the news, the Saxon troops unleashed their despair on the civilian population of Lithuania. Unlicensed requisitions, robberies and arbitrary arrests of local civilians, state officials and soldiers increased in significant numbers.[89] The final straw that forced the Lithuanian government to demand a complete removal of the Freikorps was a series of incidents in Šauliai, Šakiai and Lamoka (Biržai district) in late June where marauding Germans killed more than a dozen Lithuanian soldiers and civilians.[90] In response the government newspaper *Lietuva* wrote: 'at the moment we are left with only one thing to desire - that Germans get out from Lithuania as soon as possible, since they can make the population even angrier'.[91] The final blow to the German reputation was struck by the events in North Lithuania where the Russian-German troops of Bermondt-Avalov started pillaging after their defeat by the Latvian army in November 1919. This prompted a military response from local partisan bands and the Lithuanian troops that captured the key strategic town of Radviliškis on 22 November 1919 and dispersed the army of Bermondt-Avalov.

By November 1919 the popular perception of Germans became extremely negative in Lithuania. The continuous pillaging triggered an armed resistance movement among peasants in North Lithuania and completely destroyed the image of German volunteers as valuable military allies. The long-term presence of German units as occupiers during the Great War also helped to strengthen this negative stereotype. Thus Lithuanians were

more than happy to see the Freikorps leave after the Entente negotiated their withdrawal in December 1919.[92] 'Finally, the Germans are leaving Lithuania,' exclaimed the daily *Lithuania* and made a parallel between them and medieval Teutonic knights: '[their] memory has been transformed into angry ghosts'.[93]

Conclusions

The majority of junior ex-Tsarist officers of Lithuanian origin had remarkable military careers in independent Lithuania. They rose from minor regimental into high-ranking positions within the army. As the new military elite, they quickly gained a status of heroes within a local national mythology and exerted a considerable pressure on interwar Lithuanian politics. They also provided leadership to various interwar paramilitary organizations such as *Šauliai* (The Lithuanian Riflemen's Union, 1919) and the proto-fascist *Geležinis vilkas* (The Iron Wolf, 1924). Quite a few ex-volunteers joined in the right-wing anti-government putsch in 1926 that established an authoritarian regime under Antanas Smetona. Similarly some of the German Freikorps that fought alongside Lithuanians in 1919 made their military careers in Nazi Germany as, for instance, General Walter von Eberhardt (1887–1945) who was promoted to one of the SA leaders in 1942. In both cases their rise into positions of power is incomprehensible without the understanding of their early military experiences during the Great War and the post-war period.

World War I and the Russian revolution were two critical factors that prompted the *nationalization* and *revolutionalization* of ethnic Lithuanian troops who served in the Tsar's army. The dynamic opposition of these two processes was instrumental for the formation of the nucleus of the Lithuanian army in late 1918. In the initial period (November 1918–February 1919) the army was largely made up of volunteers and junior ex-Tsarist officers of Lithuanian origin who were deeply anti-Bolshevik. The failure of their peaceful demobilization after the Great War contributed to their subsequent remobilization in the post-World War I period. As the ex-Tsarist Lithuanian officers and soldiers weighed their choices after the war, either joining the new Lithuanian army or the Bolsheviks, they had to make their personal political commitments. Patriotism was important among other motives that prompted their choice, but the attraction of revolutionary ideas or prospects of new military careers and personal security were also powerful factors.

Yet the idea of waging a war of volunteers in Lithuania was quickly replaced by the need to form a conscript-based army. This was inevitable in the face of the rapidly expanding warfare after 1918 and a critical political situation in which the new Lithuanian state found itself due to the advance of the Red Army into the West. The shift from enlisting volunteers to full-scale drafting of recruits also occurred in Russia, Poland, Finland,

Latvia, Estonia and other zones of the post-war conflict. This shift perhaps testifies that the new ideological conflicts could not be sustained solely by volunteer armies and had to resort to the traditional method of drafting new soldiers. This also clearly modifies the myth of volunteers as the primary defenders of new independent nation-states in the region. Yet the shift from volunteering to conscription barely diminished the role of various paramilitary formations including civil guard and youth movements that took roots in the immediate post-war years and continued to flourish throughout the interwar period.

The German army was also heavily affected both by the outcome of the Great War and the Russian revolution. In the Baltic region its almost complete disintegration in late 1918 led to the replacement of regular units with volunteers. Their arrival was critical in stopping the Bolshevik advance into the Baltics, but also created a security problem for the Lithuanian and Latvian governments. Disheartened by Germany's defeat in the Great War, weak economic prospects in post-war Germany and driven by their deep anti-Bolshevism, colonial desires and the need to reconstitute the fallen military prestige of Germany, the Freikorps turned out to be valuable military allies for the Baltic governments and hated foreign mercenaries for the local populations. Their unruly, adventurous nature, brutality, harsh treatment of civilians and, finally, their military defeat by the Baltic armies contributed to their controversial legacy. Their relationship with the Lithuanians went from an expedient military alliance and mutual suspicion to open hatred as their failure to achieve their military and political ambitions became evident.

There is little doubt that in the post-World War I period various volunteer troops played a significant part in the course of the subsequent military conflict, constitution of new political entities and the formation of new identities in Europe. For Lithuanians the post-World War I episode of volunteering became a constitutive factor in building their nation-state. The military exploits of the Lithuanian volunteers swiftly entered a canon of national mythology of the interwar state, even if the volunteer troops were quickly replaced by regular conscripts. Today the Lithuanian volunteers are commemorated in the War Museum of the Grand Vytautas in Kaunas and their names can be found in history textbooks. The legacy of German Freikorps was extolled during the Nazi period in Germany and was happily invoked by the Nazis during Hitler's invasion of the East in 1939. Today it remains a largely forgotten page in Germany's history that warns about the dubious legacy of military volunteerism in the modern world.

Notes

1. A new comparative approach to various post-World War I European conflicts was recently proposed by: Robert Gerwarth, 'The Central European Counter-Revolution: Paramilitary Violence in Germany, Austria and Hungary

after the Great War' *Past & Present*, 200 (2008), pp. 175–209. See also: Alexander V. Prusin, *The Lands Between: Conflict in the East European Borderlands, 1870–1992* (Oxford, 2010), particularly chapter 3.

2. In the case of Lithuania, some typical works in this category are: Kazys Ališauskas, *Kovos dėl Lietuvos nepriklausomybės, 1918–1920* (Chicago,1972); Jonas Aničas, *Generolas Silvestras Žukauskas, 1861–1937* (Vilnius, 2006); Vytautas Lesčius, *Lietuvos kariuomenė nepriklausomybės kovose, 1918–1920* (Vilnius, 2004).
3. Juliette Cadiot, 'Russian Army, Non-Russians, Non-Slavs, Non-Orthodox: The Risky Construction of a Multiethnic Army. Russia, USSR' *Journal of Power Institutions in Post-Soviet Societies*, 10 (2009), p. 2.
4. Joshua A. Sanborn, *Drafting the Russian Nation: Military Conscription, Total War, and Mass Politics, 1905–1925* (DeKalb, IL, 2003), p. 75.
5. Geoffrey Swain, 'The Disillusioning of the Revolution's Praetorian Guard: The Latvian Riflemen, Summer-Autumn, 1918' *Europe-Asia Studies*, 51, no. 4 (June 1999), p. 671.
6. Sanborn, *Drafting*, p. 80.
7. Vytautas Lesčius, *Lietuvos kariuomenė, 1918–1920* (Vilnius, 1998), p. 19.
8. Petras Ruseckas (ed), *Savanorių žygiai*, vol. 1 (Vilnius, 1991), p. 6.
9. Ališauskas, *Kovos*, pp. 18, 23.
10. Aničas, *Generolas Silvestras Žukauskas*.
11. Lesčius, *Lietuvos kariuomenė*, p. 20.
12. Ališauskas, *Kovos*, pp. 16–17.
13. *Kareivis socialistas*, no. 1 (16 February 1918), p. 1.
14. Swain, 'The Disillusioning of the Revolution's Praetorian Guard'.
15. Aldona Gaigalaitė, 'Lietuvos kariuomenės karininkai 1918–1940 metais', *Mokslas ir gyvenimas*, no. 9 (2002), p. 137.
16. B., 'Smolensko lietuvių batalione', *Karys*, no. 47 (1923), pp. 519–20.
17. Ališauskas, *Kovos*, p. 26.
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31. Kazys Škirpa, 'Kariuomenės kūrimo pirmos pastangos ir pirmos kliūtys' *Mūsų žinynas*, vol. 11–12 (1938), pp. 719–21.
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51. 'Žinios apie pašauktus, priimtus, paliuosuotus ir nestojusius kariuomenėn naujokus, gimusius 1897–1898 m.' in LCVA, F. 929, Ap. 5, B. 3, p. 123.
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72. Čepėnas, *Naujujų laikų*, p. 345.
73. Sammartino, *The Impossible Border*, p. 45.
74. LCVA, F. 58, Ap. 4, B. 136, p. 48.
75. Lesčius. *Lietuvos kariuomenė nepriklausomybės kovose*, p. 40; Jakštas, 'Saksų savanorių dalys', p. 186.
76. The choice of the Saxons may be also explained by the fact that the remnants of the 10th army based in Lithuania and Belarus included several detachments of Saxons.
77. Jakštas, 'Saksų savanorių dalys', p. 186.
78. Lesčius, *Lietuvos kariuomenė nepriklausomybės kovose*, p. 42.
79. Jakštas, 'Saksų savanorių dalys', p. 188.
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9

Transnational Flows of Military Talent: The Contrasting Experiences of Burma and Thailand since the 1940s

Nicholas Farrelly

> *Some visitors don't give a damn whose side they're on, as long as it's lucrative and exciting. These hills are a demi-paradise for 'soldiers of fortune'. There's something for everyone: war, women and wildlife, drugs and danger unlimited.*[1]

Foreign fighters after the Japanese war

Parts of mainland South East Asia claim the tragic distinction of hosting the world's longest running civil wars. Some of these wars began in the 1940s; fighters from World War II enjoyed no respite as they were quickly drawn into the local conflagrations that followed the global war. While combat, support, training and supply have remained largely the preserve of South East Asians there have been foreigners, like the 'visitors' introduced above, who have sought to make their own contributions. Across decades, transnational flows of foreign military talent have remained integral to the landscape of security, resistance and conflict in this region. Whether 'government advisors', 'mercenaries', 'adventurers' or 'loons' they have become enmeshed in wars of ambush and attrition where any front lines are obscured by a sometimes impenetrable mix of history, ethnicity, geography and culture. Understanding the experiences of foreign fighters requires attention to the long-term social, political and economic characteristics of the region. To explain transnational flows of military talent in mainland South East Asia this chapter explores the situation in two adjacent countries, Burma[2] and Thailand, and argues that they present contrasting yet mutually reinforcing histories of foreign entanglements. The focus here is the ethnic minority forces, former colonial officers, Chinese militias,

government advisors and 'adventurers' who have helped shape South East Asia's long wars.

The conditions for these foreign involvements developed around World War II. The war itself introduced uncertainties for South East Asians as many of their leaders made accommodations with the Japanese invasion in the hope that liberation from European colonizers would bring a new era of independence. While the Japanese were driven from the region by the combined might of the Allied counter-attack in 1944 and 1945, the war heralded the beginning of the end for colonial dominance. After decades of strong European influence, and often-outright subjugation, the post-war years brought opportunities for independent and optimistic governments to form. Two of the South East Asian countries that emerged from the war with reason for optimism were Thailand and Burma. In 1948 Burma became independent from Britain, and Thailand, which was never formally colonized by any European power, set out in the post-war period under the youthful stewardship of Rama IX, King Bhumibol Adulyadej. In both countries the legacies of colonial control, Japanese occupation and brutal war continued to reverberate in political, economic and social spheres.

Scholarly assessments of this period tend to focus on the transformation of South East Asia's postcolonial societies. As British, French and Dutch bureaucracies abandoned their colonial outposts in South East Asia a new optimism for the politics of the region emerged. That optimism did not, however, last long. Everywhere there were struggles between central governments and resistance movements – usually from the peripheries of the newly independent nation-states – motivated by ethnic or ideological commitments. Resistance to the new governments of mainland South East Asia became widespread and throughout the 1950s and 1960s waves of discontent with postcolonial elites saw fresh conflicts emerge. From northern Burma to southern Thailand, and all across French Indochina, this was a period of significant and persistent disquiet. Cold War rivalries were eventually welded to many of these struggles and superpower proxy warfare, while never the only dynamic, became an increasingly important mechanism for generating, and sustaining, the region's civil wars. Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos top the list of countries where international interference combined with local grievances to stoke long-term civil conflicts, although Burma and Thailand were also exposed to similar transnational influences.

In all of these wars there were foreign fighters who joined the battles with and against the local resistance movements. Overall, the conflict that has drawn the most consistent interest from foreign fighters is the war between the ethnic minority Karen National Defence Organisation (KNDO)/Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) and a series of Burmese central governments (1948–present).[3] According to Falla, '[t]he Karen themselves . . . are no strangers to the idea of mercenaries' because in previous periods of history they 'were recruited (when not conscripted) by Siam against Pagan

[the old Burmese kingdom], and *vice versa*'.[4] The Karen war has generally been confined to the eastern portion of Burma where the rebels – enjoying relatively simple resupply and reinforcement from the Thai side of the border – have fought the Burmese army to a long-term stalemate. The persistence of this conflict is partly explained by the support that the KNLA has been able to draw from foreign sources, most notably elements of the Thai security services.[5] But the KNLA has also been among the most successful South East Asian armies in terms of its ability to develop links with foreign military talent from further afield. Other ethnic armies in eastern and northern Burma have also benefited from their links to foreign military talent and later in this chapter I describe the conditions that have led to this situation.

It is a situation that contrasts, quite starkly, with the Thai experience of post-World War II flows of transnational military talent. While Burma has seen most foreign fighters joining ethno-nationalist, anti-government causes, the Thai authorities have been more successful at harnessing foreign talent for government purposes. This is a process that began as soon as World War II ended and the Japanese troops sailed home. In Thailand they were replaced by a muscular United States military, intelligence and political posture designed to guarantee Thailand's stability, often under military dictatorship, for the decades to come. American advisors, trainers, strategists and political operatives became crucial players in the regional security landscape, with Thailand as their long-term base. Their legacy is partly captured by the many Thai organizations, often of an explicitly security orientation, that were established with their advice. Thailand's Border Patrol Police, many components of the Thai Army, Navy and Air Force, not to mention a plethora of paramilitary and civilian security organizations, were initially funded, supplied and trained by American government personnel.

The adjacent histories of foreign fighters and advisors in Thailand and Burma suggest an intriguing comparison of transnational flows of military talent. In Burma it has been a largely haphazard, informal and 'illegal' transfer of talent that has seen generations of adventurous, even foolhardy, fighters join the various anti-government resistance movements, especially the ethnic minority armies. Some have paid a very high price for their audacious involvement in Burma's long wars and there is a short list of known foreign casualties, some of whom have even been condemned in Burma's government-run media. Thailand presents a very different picture because its relationship with foreign military talent has been almost entirely official, highly regulated and subject to formal government agreements that are predicated on transfers of symbolic and material support. These two patterns for incorporating foreign soldiers into South East Asian conflicts demonstrate how adjacent systems of postcolonial politics can provide contradictory, yet mutually reinforcing, insights about transnational military involvement.

Flows of talent from the beginning

Historical legacies are crucial to how we understand transnational flows of military talent in South East Asia. Well before European empire-builders arrived in the region there were traditions of military service for hire. This flowed in all directions. From the fourteenth century onwards, Muslim and Portuguese mercenaries were active in the region, especially in Thailand and Burma, but elsewhere too.[6] Nicholas Tarling provides an important summary of the contributions that 'Asian mercenaries' made to the security of various Dutch 'outposts' in the region.[7] And local fighters also sold their services when there was demand. Kachins from northern Burma hired themselves out to rival princes and to Burmese kings.[8] The nature of warfare in South East Asia – with its shifting, highly fluid loyalties and relations – ensured that able fighting men were often called upon for paid service. This was especially the case for those ethnic groups that lived in the highlands and were only subject to sporadic political or economic control.[9] Such ethnic groups also tended to occupy those areas closest to neighbouring government systems and could thus be deployed in the region's regular 'cross-border' wars.

Then, during the colonial period, recruits from mainland South East Asia were, to varying extents, integrated into European military forces. At a time when colonial armies often relied on troops from one colony to help maintain security in other parts of an empire, and when colonial forces were often stretched to their limits, there was always much to be gained from an open approach to recruitment. In the case of Burma particular ethnic groups became widely identified with British colonial forces, and recruitment from among ethnically Karen, Chin and Kachin groups was common.[10] Serving under the overall authority of British officers, these troops contributed to campaigns across the world. As Edmund Leach notes, 'Kachins were recruited in large numbers for military and police service [and] the economic rewards of these military mercenaries [were] always . . . important'.[11] During World War I, as an example, Kachin troops fought in Mesopotamia and elsewhere in the European theatre, as part of British contingents.

During these years, Karen, Chin and Kachin soldiers – who made up more than 80 per cent of the strength of the armed forces of Burma in 1931 – offered clear advantages for the British.[12] First, they came from relatively remote areas of the country and were not part of the ethnic Burmese-dominated political system which the British worked to replace. They were thus considered more loyal to British colonial authority and proved themselves effective in the internal security tasks which helped to maintain British rule. Second, due to their close contacts with Europeans, and their history of relative flexibility when it came to political and social commitments, many among the Karen, Chin and Kachin elites became Christian. Again, this helped to reinforce a perception that these groups were more attuned to British sensibilities and to the needs of the British Empire

more generally. This Christianization and perceived affinity for British ambitions generated alarm among ethnic Burmese nationalists. These nationalists were, however, even more concerned about the political and security implications of troops from outside Burma who were brought in from elsewhere in the British Empire. In her history of Burma's armed forces Mary Callahan notes that '[a]lthough various factions of the [Burmese] nationalist movement competed with each other for popular support and disagreed over a number of contentious issues, all were united in their opposition to the occupation of Burmese territory by foreign "mercenary" (i.e., Indian) troops'.[13] Towards the end of the colonial period transnational flows of military talent thus catalysed political and social disagreement in many directions. For the Burmese nationalists it did not help that Kachin, Chin and Karen troops, and also the Indians, could use their access to military training and other education to help better the prospects of their ethnic groups in local society.[14]

It was in World War II that the Allied forces in the China-Burma-India theatre made most use of local South East Asian fighters. These fighters were, in some cases, organized into ferocious anti-Japanese guerrilla units. Again, it was those ethnic minority groups that had been most consistently Christianized during colonial encounters that formed the core. The Karen, from eastern Burma, Chin, from western Burma, and Kachin, from northern Burma, were among the groups that played major roles in the war against the Japanese. It is intriguing that these are ethnic groups that have continued to enjoy reputations as 'martial races'. By way of contrast, according to Chao Tzang Yanghwe:

> [i]t is surprising how the Shan gained the reputation among Westerners and others as an unmartial race. Throughout history, they fought the Chinese, Burmese, Mon, fellow Tai/Thai (more than others) . . . the Karen National Defence Organization (KNDO), PVO (Burmese leftists), White flag communists, and KMT stragglers. In the Vietnam war, Shan mercenaries fought the Pathet Lao and North Vietnamese Army (NVA) units in northern Laos. In the 1970s, they fought the communists in Thailand as part of the Chinese Irregular Force. At present in Shan State, close to 5,000 Shan are serving with the CPB [Communist Party of Burma].[15]

Indeed, as other chapters in this volume have shown, the very notion of 'martial' and 'non-martial races' is one that the British assiduously cultivated in their effort to 'divide and rule'. Burma's ethnic politics were made manageable by the affinities between British colonial officers and those ethnic groups they considered most faithful to imperial goals. The heroics of troops from these ethnic groups are still widely remembered inside Burma and many publications, often in ethnic vernaculars, have been produced to commemorate their colonial service.[16]

However, their contributions proved a complication in the period leading up to independence when their ethnic leaders were forced to negotiate with the Burmese politicians who had, for much of World War II, sided with the Japanese. Burma's champion of national independence, General Aung San, was relatively adept at drawing the various ethnic groups into a union. However, after his assassination in 1947 the ethnic Burmese leadership began to struggle in its efforts to cooperate with the ethnic minority leaders. Ethnic-based animosities lingered from World War II, and before. In general terms the Japanese invasion had received more support among the predominately Buddhist, ethnic Burmese population. They had spearheaded the anti-British resistance and initially saw, in the Japanese, the prospect of prompt liberation from European rule. One cause for friction was that so many of the ethnically Burmese leaders had fought, initially at least, alongside the Japanese Army while the majority of ethnic minority leaders had remained allied to the British. A deeply divided society was the outcome.

Opposing the Burmese majority were those ethnic groups who had converted to Christianity, who had often fought alongside British troops during the colonial period, and then during World War II, and who had become increasingly wary of ethnic Burmese chauvinism. As a result, almost immediately after independence from Britain in 1948 the country was again at war. This time the tensions that carried over to the postcolonial period were even more serious than those that had shaped earlier struggles. Ethnic secessionist movements, but also communist insurgency, began to rage around the country. What is most notable about this period is that 'Kachin regiments still form[ed] the backbone of the Burma Army and the Kachin state [was] heavily subsidised from the Burma Central Government as a reward for their services'.[17] The Burmese government eventually made ethnicity a core component of every government policy.

Ethnicity thus became the fundamental line of friction. Kachin, Karen and Chin, among others, were soon fighting their decades-long struggles against the Burmese government. And it was during the early period of these new conflicts that the first European fighters joined the resistance forces. In the case of the Karen it was a small number of former British officers, upset by what they saw as the betrayal of loyal servants of the British empire, who sought to strengthen the Karen cause. Falla attributes to them 'altruistic reasons':

> [a]t the end of the war, certain officers . . . felt deeply ashamed and angry at what they and the Karen agreed was a betrayal by the British government. Retired officers attempted to assist . . . . The Karen believed that these individually loyal friends represented the spearhead of massive foreign support, but it failed to materialise.[18]

Details on exactly what contributions were made, and by whom, are patchy. Nonetheless there is evidence that among small numbers of British officers the call to assist their former Karen subordinates was strong. From the perspective of the predominately Burmese central government British meddling in the country's domestic security affairs so soon after independence was considered an egregious violation of their postcolonial status. Denunciations quickly followed. Importantly, the British government apparently sought to distance itself from the activities of individual British officers. There is no indication that the British government itself actively sought to fracture the postcolonial Union of Burma.

During the 1950s there were, however, other foreign fighters on Burmese soil who received formal backing from foreign governments. The Chinese Brigades that fought, predominately in the Shan State, are a good example. With the defeat of Kuomintang forces in south-western China, and the declaration of the People's Republic of China in 1949, nationalist Chinese continued to hope that they would prevail against the communists. According to Sturgeon, '[i]n China, they had been the national army. In Burma, they had become mercenary troops financed by Taiwan, Thailand, and the CIA [Central Intelligence Agency]. In Thailand, they became armed interlopers . . . '.[19] These discontinuities defined the Chinese fighters, who numbered in the many thousands and guaranteed their loyalty to anybody who could fund and arm them.

The United States government, and later the Thai authorities, recognized the benefit of having these motivated and battled-hardened troops on their side. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s they were used in a range of anti-communist battles across South East Asia. Eventually many, often working alongside American Central Intelligence Agency advisors, were tasked by the Thai authorities with protecting the northern frontier against unwanted incursions. In this sense their experiences echoed those of the Katangese gendarmes discussed in this volume by Miles Larmer. In the Thai case, after countless anti-communist campaigns the remnants of these forces were allowed to settle in Thailand's northernmost provinces. Notoriety for their commercial success in the regional and international narcotics trade is now one of the legacies of this history. There are particular areas of northernmost Thailand, especially around Doi Mae Salong in Chiang Rai province, where the descendents of these former Chinese fighters now live. Their continued residence in Thailand is an example of the historical depth to transnational flows of military talent in mainland South East Asia.

Transnational talents: postcolonial wars

After World War II, as the messy implications of decolonization reverberated around the region, a new generation of conflicts saw local troops who were formerly part of colonial armies fighting both with and against

mainland South East Asia's postcolonial governments. Their resentments against central government authority motivated thousands to take up arms in rebellion. This situation was starkest in Burma where ideological and ethnic fault lines came to dominate local politics. Geographical and national borders helped to reinforce the strong social distinctions that many people felt. Then, from extreme positions on the political spectrum, and often partly motivated by prevailing ethnic resentments, fighters took on the central government and the injustices, both historical and contemporary, that it came to represent. By the early 1960s ethnic and communist insurgencies were active in almost all parts of the country, with local combat forces mobilized by this set of interlocking religious, economic and ethnic factors. Such factors led anti-government armies in eastern and northern Burma to receive advice, training and, in some cases, direct combat support from foreign volunteers, particularly from the West. Under these conditions, diverse flows of military talent to (and from) Burma helped to shape a regionally distinctive military labour market which was partly defined by the ideological commitments and adventurous volunteerism of foreign fighters.

Unlike many other armies that have sometimes embraced foreigners, economic incentives have never been an overriding factor for those who joined Burma's civil wars. First of all, the ethnic armies rebelling against the government have rarely enjoyed the financial wherewithal to pay anything like internationally competitive rates for foreign military talent. Indeed the vast majority of foreign fighters in Burma have been volunteers. Some of their expenses may have been covered, and a few probably even received modest stipends, but there is no sense in which their contribution to rebel causes had a strong commercial basis. According to Richard Ehrlich (1989), '[t]he Western combat veterans [in Burma] are attracted by a combination of macho adventure, ideological anti-communist commitment, and deep personal friendships among the guerrillas. Some amateur mercenaries naively hope to make money, but are quickly disappointed because South East Asia's broke guerrillas don't have much in the way of cash to give'.[20]

Instead, foreigners who have joined in the fight for Burma's rebel causes are largely motivated by some medley of adventurist glamour, yearnings for recognized combat experience and a commitment to helping the oppressed. It is likely that the basic motivation to take on a challenge, in a remote and largely ignored corner of the world, is what inspires most of the foreigners who have sought to fight in Burma. From the 1960s to the 1980s another part of the appeal, especially among right-wing European veterans, was to undermine a socialist government. Some of the Frenchmen who fought there have been labelled 'Frogs of War' with the implication that they were French Nazis.[21] Their right-wing credentials could be bolstered, some suggest, by serving alongside the 'anti-communists' of South East Asia's long wars. With the advice of 'some buddies who were mercenaries in Burma', a serving French Foreign Legion soldier, Dominique Vanderberg, describes

getting involved with the KNLA and learning 'a style of fighting called *bando*, which has stick fighting and *gurkha* knife fighting'.[22] It is French mercenaries such as these who figure most prominently in descriptions of foreign fighters in these conflicts. Falla, as another example, provides an intriguing anecdote, about a 'French mercenary' named 'Marcel' who is married to a Karen girl.[23]

The French fighters were also sometimes identified in Burma's government-run media. A publication titled *The conspiracy of treasonous minions within the Myanmar Naing-Ngan [nation] and traitorous cohorts abroad*, has a picture of the body of Phillippe Courreges Clereq: 'A French national who is known to have fallen on the side of KNU [Karen National Union] insurgents in a clash with Tatmadaw columns at the Mela camp of the KNU on 4-10-85. In the centre may be seen his passport and on the right some documents were captured.'[24] Other French fighters who have reportedly died while serving with the Karen are Guillaume Oillic (1990) and Olivier Thiriat (1989); an Australian named Martin Donnelly was also killed in 1985.[25] In the same Burmese government publication there is a photograph which claims to show 'a foreign mercenary instructing KNU insurgents in the use of a 2.75 rocket launcher'.[26] In one picture, a Caucasian man in dark glasses holds a rocket. He is wearing a Karen shirt, as is his young son standing next to him. The caption for another picture reads 'Saw Wilson Khin, head of Signals of KNU 1st Division together with foreigners'.[27] Indeed, the Burmese government appears to have had only a partial appreciation of the work of foreigners who have fought with the Karen.

Arguably the most complete account of a foreigner fighting in Burma is by 'Dangerous' David Everett. His book, *Shadow Warrior*, accounts for how he went from Australia's elite Special Air Service Regiment to fighting alongside Karen troops in eastern Burma. Compared with most who have reflected on the involvement of foreign military talent in Burma, Everett has direct experience of local conditions and complexities. His stints volunteering with the KNLA were largely motivated by adventurism and by commitment to the Karen cause. He even went so far as to commit armed robberies back in Australia in an unsuccessful effort to generate funds for the KNLA struggle.[28]

In the twenty-first century there have been a range of other fighters who have decided to assist with fighting in Burma, particularly on the side of the Karen and Karenni. In the public domain much of the discussion about these contributions centres on Thomas Bleming, from Wyoming in the United States. Bleming is a Vietnam War veteran who was previously heavily enmeshed in murky activities in Central America. He came to prominence in January 2008 when he began commenting on the Internet site, *New Mandala*, about his active support for the KNLA. Bleming wrote a self-published book, *War in Karen Country*, about his short-term stint with them.[29] Many criticized Bleming's naiveté and his lack of awareness about the character of ethnic conflict in Burma. Some pointed out that Bleming

never went into combat with the KNLA and, as a man in his sixties, they queried whether he was, indeed, a burden on his Karen hosts. Later, he was disowned by his KNLA 'host', Colonel Nerdah Mya.[30] Bleming can be seen as emblematic of the trend towards 'war tourism' that now inspires many foreigners who want to get close to Burma's wars.

But not all foreign volunteers are so easily dismissed. Today, one of the most important foreign-inspired and supported military involvements in Burma is the Free Burma Rangers. Often secretive, but still prepared to offer some public perspective on their work, this is a group that runs armed cross-border humanitarian missions to assist internally displaced persons in eastern Burma. It has helped with evacuations and works closely with Karen and other rebel groups that continue to operate against government forces along the Burma-Thailand border. Notwithstanding these kinds of activities, most foreign involvement in this region is unarmed. Battalions of journalists, backed up by brigades of aid workers, and countless divisions of travellers surge throughout the region seeking adventure, culture and love. The very small numbers of foreign fighters who have been attracted to these wars are a tiny minority by comparison.

So while the vast majority of fighting was always done by local fighters, French, British, American, Australian and Japanese all played some role during the years when the rebel movements inside Burma were encouraged by the level of international support that they were receiving. While there are indications that, at least for a time, rebel movements welcomed these fighters warmly, and hoped they could prove instrumental in battlefield victories, the welcome began to fade when some of the complications of incorporating foreign talent became clear. For Burma's ethno-nationalist movements the presence of large numbers of foreign fighters even generated a perception that they could weaken the potency of their cause.[31] This helps to explain why most of Burma's ethnic armies no longer actively solicit foreign military talent.

Thailand's official contrast

The flows of military talent in mainland South East Asia may be further illustrated with reference to Thailand whose governments have long benefited from state-sanctioned transfers of military knowledge and experience from the United States, and other Western allies. In the case of Thailand it is not individual volunteerism or ideological commitment that helped to shape the flow of military expertise. Thailand has, instead, benefited from a deep and formal relationship with Western military forces, especially from the United States.

This relationship with American power goes back more than 100 years but the two countries 'maintained cordially distant relations until World War II'.[32] After World War II the United States sought to more consistently

influence Thai security policy.[33] Its influence came in many forms – direct materiel supply and logistical support, and training and technology transfers, and so on – and was justified in US government eyes by the fundamental strategic importance of Thailand's stability. This relationship grew from the 1940s and by the 1960s Thailand was a crucial site for the forward deployment, resupply and recreation of American service personnel fighting in Vietnam and Laos.[34] Thailand, at this time, was considered vulnerable to communist designs and so there were consistent efforts to bolster the status of the Thai military, monarchy and wider political establishment.

Support came in many forms but arguably the most interesting aspects of the relationship centred on the role of American advisors who worked alongside newly established Thai security forces. These advisors, drawn from the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), and then from the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), were eventually joined by Special Forces, Drug Enforcement Agency and other government personnel to help build up Thailand's expertise in dealing with the myriad security challenges that it faced. The CIA has diligently worked to shape Thailand's security architecture and to contribute to a political environment that remains conducive to America's regional interests. While many elements of this security relationship remain closely guarded it is in the histories of Thai policing, military and paramilitary groups that the clearest flows of foreign military talent are found.

One example is the Border Patrol Police (BPP). It was established in 1953 by the Thai government in conjunction with a small number of OSS veterans, by then formally part of the CIA, who were given considerable autonomy to help advise on Thailand's security. The Border Patrol Police, from this initial phase, were entrusted with royal protection duties and with safeguarding the territorial integrity of the kingdom. In this sense, the two most sensitive security tasks in Thailand were under the direct stewardship of a small number of American advisors. They helped establish elite sub-units within the Border Patrol Police, most notably the Police Aerial Reinforcement Unit, which were designed to provide special operations support to the wider range of BPP combat, surveillance and protection activities. BPP troops were used in American operations in Laos and elsewhere in Indochina, and thus the relationship between the American and Thai groups became even more deeply entrenched.

Thai military forces were, more generally, also significant players in the Vietnam War. Almost 40,000 Thai soldiers were deployed there from 1965 to 1972 and during those years they served in many support and combat capacities. For many years the contribution of these Thai fighters has been dismissed as 'mercenary' by those who are uncomfortable with such strong support for what has been considered an American war of aggression. Indeed it became common to refer to them as 'CIA-hired Thai mercenary forces'.[35] Moreover, 'U.S. payments to the Thai government led the Thai press to label the arrangement as mercenary'.[36] A recent monograph on Thai

soldiers in Vietnam by Robert Ruth, titled *In Buddha's Company*, provides a different analysis and one that dwells on the experiences of rank-and-file troops.[37] Thai troops did not imagine their deployments as mercenary in nature and, instead, learned to invoke the tropes at the heart of justifying national defence: nation, religion, king. Most Thais were not even aware of these foreign deployments 'which had been kept from them in Siam itself by the dictatorship's rigid censorship'.[38]

Since World War II the experience of collaboration between Thai and American military forces, especially when it saw them fighting common enemies outside Thailand's borders, adds a further level of complexity to flows of transnational military talent in South East Asia. Arrangements for drawing foreigners into other people's wars are not simply defined by the ad hoc volunteerism that tends to be associated with such transfers of military talent. Instead, Thailand has become integral to a set of relationships that now see its armed forces intimately linked with the long-term advising, supply and support role offered by foreign forces. In this chapter the links to the United States, which are the most important, have been emphasized. However it is important to bear in mind that other governments, notably Britain and Australia, have also sought to generate long-term security partnerships with Thailand with their own transfers of personnel.[39]

Conclusions

Since the end of World War II, both Thailand and Burma have continued to experience regular periods of widespread civil conflict, especially in ethnic minority areas. Today there are active civil wars in parts of both countries. In southern Thailand, more than 5000 people have been killed since the re-ignition, in 2001, of that region's long war. It is a war where ethnic fault lines remain potent markers of social division. In 2011 there was also a resumption of heavy fighting in parts of eastern and northern Burma, and since June 2011 there has been a significant escalation of hostilities in the northernmost Kachin State. That renewed civil war comes after a long ceasefire (1994–2011) which many had anticipated would lead to a permanent peace agreement. And, in all of these cases, foreign support is relevant. The contrasting flows of transnational military talent that have shaped conflict in Thailand and Burma offer cause for reflection on the problematic roles played by foreign fighters in mainland South East Asia's many long wars.

While none of these contemporary wars are being determined by the contributions of foreign fighters alone, the long history of complex international entanglements suggest that the involvement of informal volunteers and mercenaries, not to mention government-endorsed advisors and support staff, needs to be clarified in detail. The contrasting experiences of Thailand and Burma demonstrate that no single pattern for the region has emerged. Nonetheless foreign military talent is one component of these long

wars and the provision of sophisticated materiel or training is still considered desirable by many fighting forces, both government and non-government, in mainland South East Asia.

Finally, while it is clear that flows of transnational military talent continue it is also true that foreign fighters are, in terms of numbers, now probably much rarer than in decades past. Of course, in the shadows there are still those outsiders who hope to contribute, in direct ways, to the outcomes of the region's civil wars. This is a pattern that shows no sign of further diminution as conditions for official American support in Thailand and for more informal assistance to ethnic resistance movements in Burma remain constant. Ethnic fault lines, individual adventurism, national interest and historical loyalties are fundamental components of most of these stories. Over the past seven decades the particulars of the conflicts may change, but the motivations for foreign involvement have, in a peculiar way, tended to remain much the same.

Notes

1. Jonathan Falla, *True Love and Bartholomew: Rebels on the Burmese Border* (Cambridge, 1991), p. 289.
2. Scholars of Burma habitually explain their approach to naming the country. The largely historical nature of the discussion in this chapter simplifies matters and so references to the Myanmar government are only relevant to the period after 1989.
3. At the time of finalizing this chapter there was a tentative ceasefire between the Karen National Union and the Burmese government.
4. Falla, *True Love*, p. 289.
5. Desmond Ball and Nicholas Farrelly, 'Eastern Burma: Long Wars Without Exhaustion', in Edward Aspinall and Robin Jeffrey (eds), *Diminishing Conflicts in Asia and the Pacific* (London, 2012) [forthcoming].
6. John F. Cady, *Southeast Asia: Its Historical Development* (New York, 1964), p. 190; Christopher Duffy, *Siege Warfare: The Fortress in the Early Modern World, 1494–1660* (London, 1979), p. 230; Victor B. Lieberman, 'Europeans, Trade, and the Unification of Burma, c. 1540–1620', *Oriens Extremus*, 27 (1980), p. 207.
7. Nicholas Tarling, *The Cambridge History of Southeast Asia. Volume One, Part Two, From C.1500–C.1800* (Cambridge, 1999), p. 20; and see also Warren I. Cohen, *East Asia at the Centre: Four Thousand Years of Engagement With the World* (New York, 2000), p. 208.
8. Edmund Leach, *Political Systems of Highland Burma* (London 1954), p. 186.
9. For many pertinent details on such groups, see James C. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia* (New Haven, CT, 2009).
10. At the same time as Karen, Chin and Kachin were being recruited to join colonial military and police forces, the internal security of Burma was often left in the hands of colonial troops from India. Their presence in the country led to antagonism and was one of the core grievances of many Burmese nationalists.
11. Leach, *Political Systems*, p. 186.
12. Mary Patricia Callahan, *Making Enemies: War and State Building in Burma* (Ithaca, NY, 2004), p. 36.

13. Ibid., p. 35.
14. Their resentments became particularly important in later years when postcolonial Burmese nationalists expelled large numbers of Indians who had settled in the country with British support.
15. Chao Tzang Yanghwe, *The Shan of Burma: Memoirs of a Shan Exile* (Singapore, 1987), p. 91, fn 22.
16. See Ian Fellowes-Gordon, *Amiable Assassins: The Story of the Kachin Guerrillas of North Burma* (London, 1957); Lance Q. Zedric and Michael F. Dilley, *Elite Warriors: 300 Years of America's Best Fighting Troops* (Ventura, 1996), p. 146; Myihtoi Gam Awng, *Myihtoi Naw A Ahtik Labau (The Biography of Subedar Major Myihtoi Naw)* (Myitkyina, 2000), pp. 41–3; Hpauwung Tang Gun and Chyauchyi Naw Ja, *Hkringhtwang Share Shagan, Jiwoi Prat Ban (Heritage Warriors from the Ancestor's Era, Volume 1)* (Myitkyina, 2003), p. 3.
17. Leach, *Political Systems*, p. 186.
18. Falla, *True Love*, pp. 289–90.
19. Janet C. Sturgeon, 'Border Practices, Boundaries, and the Control of Resource Access: A Case from China, Thailand and Burma', *Development and Change*, 35, 3 (2004), p. 470.
20. Richard S. Ehrlich, 'Western Mercenaries Teach Guerrillas in Burma How to Kill', *Asia Correspondent* (1989). Available from http://www.oocities.org/asia_correspondent/burma89mercenaries.html.
21. Jim Morris, 'Preface', in Rob Krott (ed), *Save the Last Bullet for Yourself: A Soldier of Fortune in the Balkans and Somalia* (Havertown, PA, 2008), p. xi.
22. Stephen Quadros, 'Confessions of a Warrior: A Martial Artist's Real-Life Adventures Have Taken Him From the French Foreign Legion to the Burmese Jungles to Hollywood Film Studios', *Black Belt* (2002), p. 70.
23. Falla, *True Love*, p. 262.
24. Union of Myanmar – Ministry of Information, *The Conspiracy of Treasonous Minions within the Myanmar Naing-Ngan [Nation] and Traitorous Cohorts Abroad* (Rangoon, 1989), p. 303.
25. For details on these deaths, and for related matters, see Nicholas Farrelly, 'Volunteering to Fight in Burma', *New Mandala: New Perspectives on Mainland Southeast Asia* (30 January 2007). Available from: http://asiapacific.anu.edu.au/newmandala/2007/01/30/volunteering-to-fight-in-burma/.
26. Myanmar, *The Conspiracy*, p. 262.
27. Ibid., p. 263.
28. David Everett with Kingsley Flett, *Shadow Warrior* (Camberwell, 2008).
29. Thomas James Bleming, *War in Karen Country: Armed Struggle for a Free and Independent Karen State in Southeast Asia* (Bloomington, IN, 2007).
30. Brian McCartan, 'A Military "Walter Mitty" in Myanmar's Jungles', *Asia Times* (2 April 2011).
31. This is a perception that I have heard during my field research around Burma's ethnic conflicts. It is difficult to judge how prevalent such views may be but it is precisely such sentiments which likely help explain the cautious approach to welcoming foreign fighters.
32. William H. Mott, *United States Military Assistance: An Empirical Perspective* (Westport, CT, 2002), p. 235.
33. See Daniel Fineman, *A Special Relationship: The United States and Military Government in Thailand, 1947–1958* (Honolulu, HI, 1997); Mott, *United States Military*, pp. 235–45.

34. For an important account of this policy, see Amos A. Jordan, *Foreign Aid and the Defense of Southeast Asia* (New York, 1962).
35. Jim Glassman, *Thailand at the Margins: Internationalization of the State and the Transformation of Labour* (Oxford, 2004), p. 68.
36. Janice E. Thomson, *Mercenaries, Pirates, And Sovereigns*: *State-Building And Extraterritorial Violence In Early Modern Europe* (Princeton, NJ, 1996), p. 94.
37. Robert Ruth, *In Buddha's Company: Thai Soldiers in the Vietnam War* (Honolulu, HI, 2011).
38. Benedict Anderson, Richard O'Gorman and Ruchira Mendiones, *In the Mirror: Literature and Politics in Siam in the American Era* (Ithaca, NY, 1985), p. 31.
39. Australian army officers have trained extensively with their Thai counterparts, with some graduating from the Royal Thai Army Command and Staff College. Since the 1960s Thai officer cadets have been sent to the Royal Military College, Duntroon. Crown Prince Vajiralongkorn is the most prominent Thai attendee of that institution. British forces have enjoyed similarly close working relationships over the years, with regular traffic between British commissioning institutions and their Thai equivalents.

10

Of Local Identities and Transnational Conflict: The Katangese Gendarmes and Central-Southern Africa's Forty-Years War, 1960–99

Miles Larmer

Southern and central Africa has experienced a series of interrelated military, political and social conflicts since the early 1960s. The limited authority of nation-states and the importance of transnational forces are recognized as important factors in studies of the Congo wars of the late 1990s and early 2000s; in contrast, earlier conflicts were commonly interpreted as wars of national liberation – disregarding the extent to which the 'nations' being liberated were themselves the recent and problematic creations of the colonialists against whom those wars were ostensibly being fought. Contested visions of the meaning of national independence contributed significantly to the continuation of conflict well after the achievement of formal self-rule.

Analysts have also explained conflicts in terms of local 'tribalism' or global factors – the machinations of the Cold War, or the fuelling of conflict by international demands for minerals.[1] All these factors – local, national and transnational – are undoubtedly relevant to the broader causes of conflict in the region and to the particular example of the Katangese gendarmes – but explaining why military conflict has remained such an enduring reality requires investigation of the specific interaction between these different causes. If we understand that African states are themselves recent creations, that their meaning is mutable and contested, and that other forms of community (cultural, social and economic) may provide fertile bases for alternative political imaginaries, we may more effectively reach new historical understandings of movements and conflicts which are simultaneously local, national and transnational.

The Katangese gendarmes, known at times as the *fieis*, later as the *Tigres*, and also as the National Front for the Liberation of the Congo (FLNC), are one of the least studied military and political movements in postcolonial Africa. The neglect of this important politico-military force, as well as the various names by which it was known, reflects the fact that the gendarmes

acted and defined themselves across boundaries which commonly frame our understanding of African history: across the ideological boundaries of the Cold War, which provided an important framework for their activities; across the fragile borders of postcolonial states – Congo/Zaire, Angola and Zambia; and across conventional definitions of what 'war', 'conflict' or a 'military force' consists.

The gendarmes, first mobilized as the armed forces of the Katangese secession from Congo in the early 1960s, were accordingly characterized as the brutal agents of neo-colonialism and the puppets of the Belgian military.[2] From 1967 to 1974, they fought alongside Portuguese colonial forces against Angolan nationalist groups, reinforcing their reputation as reactionary guns for hire. It was however during this period that the FLNC asserted a political programme, opposed to the centralized autocratic power structure of President Mobutu's Zaire. In its most dramatic change of identity, the FLNC then allied with the Marxist *Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola* (MPLA) and, fighting alongside Cuban forces armed with Soviet weaponry, helped bring it to power as the Angolan government. The FLNC subsequently launched the two Shaba rebellions of 1977 and 1978, which severely destabilized the Mobutu dictatorship and which were only defeated by western military intervention. Portrayed in western media as communist-inspired attacks threatening strategic mineral interests, the Shaba rebellions destabilized Zaire but also led to a break between the FLNC and the MPLA. Subsequently, the gendarmes and their political leaders, shorn of a base from which to conduct their war against the Zairian state, lost their organizational and ideological moorings. Some became part of the Angolan armed forces, while others returned to Zaire and some even became part of its national army. In 1997 however, following the launch of the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo (AFDL)'s war to oust Mobutu from power, some former gendarmes played an important role in overthrowing Mobutu and placing Laurent Kabila in power.

The capacity of the gendarmes to 'change sides' within an ideologically constructed Cold War framework has led to their characterization as essentially apolitical. It is argued here that it is more helpful to explore the movement's own understanding of its political allegiances. This requires an interrogation of the nature of the postcolonial Congolese state and the identity of the 'indigenous' Katangese ethnic groups that fuelled the secession and which supplied recruits to the Katangese gendarmes. In particular, the Lunda polity, the historical territory of which was divided by the artificial colonial/postcolonial borders of Angola, Zambia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, replenished the Katangese army-in-exile, enabling FLNC fighters to maintain a sense of belonging in the transnational Lunda community. The chapter explores the history of the gendarmes as they moved across borders, made new alliances and adopted new names, modes of operation and political identities. All the while, they clung to the idea

of liberating their homeland from what they regarded as foreign rule, while the world changed around them. Having analysed key periods of activity and initiatives by and involving the gendarmes, the chapter concludes by exploring the gendarmes' own motivations, and how these can provide insight into the events and ideas which lay behind the conflicts in which they participated.

Explaining the Katangese secession

Led by Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba, Congo declared independence from Belgium on 30 June 1960. On 11 July, the southern province of Katanga declared itself independent from Congo. The Congo, first as royal posession and then as colonial state, was (like most colonies) an artificial territory that drew together disparate kingdoms and polities. The subsequent lack of Congo-wide infrastructure, Belgium's relative neglect of social development and the lack of meaningful political reform (including an outright ban on political parties until the late 1950s), contributed to a weak proto-national identity.[3] This was exemplified by the fact that most political parties founded in the brief period of pre-independence reform sought to mobilize political support in self-consciously ethnic ways. As anti-colonial discontent rose, and as Belgium was forced to belatedly but urgently consider the prospect of Congolese self-government, its early steps in this direction raised both expectation and anxiety among the country's African societies.

Katanga had always led an autonomous existence – it was governed independently of the Congo until 1933 and economically integrated into the mineral-rich southern Africa regional economy.[4] European settlers and southern Katanga's ethnic and educated elites feared that this autonomy would be destroyed by a more centralized independent state, controlled from the distant Congolese capital Leopoldville (later Kinshasa). In 1957, this fear was realized with the election of Katangese mayors, most of whom were Kasai Baluba, the largest ethnic group among immigrant mine and industrial workers in southern Katanga. The perceived danger of Kasaian electoral domination of 'indigenous' southern Katangese ethnic groups (e.g. Lunda, Batabwa, Bayeke and Tshokwe), coupled with the likelihood that such political representatives would tie Katanga closely into a centralized Congolese state, led in 1958 to the formation of the autochthon *Groupement des associations de l'empire lunda* (Gassomel). Gassomel looked back nostalgically to the once powerful Lunda Kingdom, whose ruler, the Mwaant Yav, had controlled a swathe of central Africa in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and whose descendants still commanded chiefly loyalties in north-east Angola and north-west Northern Rhodesia (later Zambia). Gassomel leader Moïse Tshombe, Lunda aristocrat and mission-educated son of a businessman, symbolized the alliance between educated elites and chiefly authorities that dominated indigenous Katangese political life. Alliances were formed with

similar elites in other 'indigenous' ethnic groups, including some Katangese Baluba. Together, these established the *Confédération des Associations Tribales du Katanga* (Conakat) as a political party in October 1958. Conakat, explicitly opposed to 'immigration' into Katanga, allied with the white settler *Union Katangaise* and sought with them the greatest possible autonomy for Katanga. Jason Sendwe's Balubakat party meanwhile emerged as representative of Katangese Baluba interests. In Congolese independence negotiations, Conakat sought (along with ethno-regionalist parties from elsewhere in Congo), a federal constitution. The limited provincial autonomy granted in the law that paved the way for Congolese independence did not satisfy those who sought both to retain Katangese control over mining revenue and to restrict the influence of migrants. In elections held in May 1960, Conakat won 32 per cent of the vote in Katanga and 25 of 60 seats in the provincial assembly, making it the largest party.[5] As Congolese independence approached, there was much speculation that Conakat would declare a pre-emptive secession.

The immediate instability of independent Congo provided the excuse for the opportunistic declaration of an independent Katanga. The birth pangs of the new Congolese national army led indirectly to the creation of an alternative Katangese 'national' army. The Belgian commander of the armed forces, the *Force Publique* (FP), refused to reform the FP from its racially segregated colonial form, thus contributing to a mutiny which spread to the Katangese capital Elisabethville on 9–10 July. The mutiny sparked attacks on some Europeans that led thousands of others to seek refuge in neighbouring Northern Rhodesia. Given the tiny number of skilled Congolese and the consequent dependence of both government and business on Europeans, particularly in the strategic mining industry, the Belgian government, settler representatives and Conakat depicted the unrest as communist sabotage and a justification for intervention. Some senior Belgian military and political figures indicated their support for Katangese secession. Conakat, having formed a provincial government, declared:

> Throughout the Congo and particularly in Katanga and in Leopoldville province, we see a tactic of disorganization and terror at work, a tactic which we have seen in . . . countries now under Communist dictatorship . . . Under these circumstances, and before the dangers we would bring down upon us by prolonging our submission to the arbitrary will and Communistic intentions of the central government, the Katangese government has decided to proclaim the independence of Katanga.
>
> THIS INDEPENDENCE IS TOTAL. However, [. . .] the Katangan government, to which Belgium has just granted the assistance of its own troops to protect human life, calls upon Belgium to join with Katanga in close economic community. Katanga calls upon Belgium to continue

> its technical, financial, and military support. It calls upon her to assist in re-establishing order and public safety.[6]

Congolese Prime Minister Lumumba, breaking diplomatic relations with Belgium, gave a green light to efforts by the new Chief of Staff of the renamed Congolese National Army (ANC), Colonel Joseph Mobutu, to forcibly end the secession. He, however, recognized that external force would be needed. Lumumba called upon the United Nations (UN) to bring a rapid and forcible end to the secession. The UN recognized Congolese unity and called for the withdrawal of Belgian forces from Katanga; 8400 UN troops (many from Asian and African nations) were in Congo by late July.[7] However, the UN Security Council, while resolving that '...the entry of the United Nations Force into the province of Katanga is necessary...', simultaneously affirmed that '...the United Nations Force in the Congo will not be a party to or in any way intervene in or be used to influence the outcome of any internal conflict ...'.[8] UN Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld became convinced that UN entry into Katanga would involve confrontation with the recently mobilized armed forces of Katanga (see below), and would therefore breach the Security Council resolution. A frustrated Lumumba now sought logistical and military support from the Eastern Bloc. This would lead to Lumumba's conflict with President Kasavubu, his removal from office in September 1960 and ultimately to his murder in January 1961 at the hands of Belgian soldiers and Katangese leaders, with US support.[9]

Arming the secession

The UN's fateful decision involved a successful bluff on the part of the Katangese state, given the barely trained army that it was still bringing into existence.[10] Although hundreds of Belgian officers rallied to support the state, bringing significant materiel with them, Katanga urgently needed an indigenous armed force to mobilize against its enemies. After the intervention of some Belgian officers, former FP troops based at Elisabethville's Camp Massart were disarmed and only those of Katangese origin or residency (approximately 350 in number) were retained. Additional volunteers came from southern Katangese communities, mobilized by Katangese political leaders and chiefly authorities. These were supplemented by an autonomous force of Baluba warriors under Kasongo Nyembo (the Baluba chief who supported Katangese secession); 2000 Bazela in the region of Pweto; Bayeke tribesmen recruited around Bunkeya; and a group of white volunteer colonialists.[11] The result was a new 'national' army for a state that was still in the making.

Major Guy Weber, military advisor to Katangese president Tshombe, appointed Major Jean-Marie Crèvecoeur on 13 July as commander of what would come to be the Katangese 'army'. The reorganization of the Katangese

troops was carried out with the support of former FP officers and the Belgian Technical Mission (BTM) that was vital to the day-to-day administration of Katanga. Libois stresses the importance of establishing a substantial indigenous military, stating that: 'During the entire month of August, a veritable race against the clock took place with the objective, for Tshombe and his advisers, of building a more or less efficient Katangan gendarmery before the eventual withdrawal of the Belgian troops.'[12] So as not to unduly provoke the Leopoldville government, the term 'gendarmerie' was applied to what was a purely military force. In November 1960 they were officially renamed the '*Forces Katangaises*', but the name 'gendarmerie' was commonly used.

A first contingent of 1500 men was established, composed solely of men born in Katanga or who had resided in Katanga for more than ten years.[13] By late November, its strength had reached around 7000 men. During this period, the gendarmerie was, despite still being trained, already on the front line. In an echo of Katanga's secession from Congo, the northern part of Katanga, populated mainly by rural Baluba hostile to the secession, rebelled against Tshombe's Conakat government, with the declaration of a Lualaba province in October.[14] Thus, the first task of the new gendarmerie was to mobilize against this rebellion, which threatened to cut vital lines of communication.

The discipline and organization of most units consequently left much to be desired. Commandant Weber complained that '...the gendarmerie was not being commanded and as a result lacked discipline and morale'.[15] Personal conflicts arose between Katangese and Belgian political and military commanders, while many senior Belgian officers preferred to remain in Elisabethville, further reducing the effectiveness of front-line troops. Colonel Vandewalle, one of their Belgian commanders, later recalled the brutal tactics used by the gendarmes against the armed youths of Baluba:

> On their side, the forces of order met with many losses, especially amongst their number exposed to the greatest risks made by the insufficient hardening of their troops. For our part, [...] warriors in the trained supplementary units inevitably [...] resorted to certain methods of customary warfare, with burning of huts and pillage.[16]

Young suggests these terror tactics did not reflect inexperience but were in fact entirely intentional: 'The "pacification" efforts periodically conducted by the... Katanga gendarmes in Balubakat areas of North Katanga were often little more than terrorization carried out by indiscriminate reprisals against whole regions.'[17] This behaviour did not however particularly distinguish the gendarmerie from the other Congolese military forces of this period, including the ANC.

Negotiations led to an agreement in October 1960, which enabled UN forces to police some of the most violently contested areas of northern

Katanga as neutral zones. This bought time for the gendarmes to reorganize (while doing exactly the same for Balubakat forces). During this period, Col Vandewalle completed the reorganization of the Katangese army. By mid-1961, the Katangese force amounted to 600 Europeans and 10,000 African troops. In March 1961, military operations rapidly reduced Balubakat-held territory; Baluba forces only retained the town of Kabalo because of the protection of UN forces. In July, the UN reported that Katangese forces totalled 13,000, with most of these based in northern Katanga: 1400 in Manono, 535 in each of Albertville and Kongolo, with only 270 men in Kolwezi and 135 in Jadotville.[18] Tens of thousands of fearful Baluba residents of southern Katangese towns subsequently flooded into a new UN refugee camp in Elisabethville when it opened in September 1961. The gendarmerie was by this time capable of defending its positions, but was never able to end Baluba opposition, a stalemate that continued until the end of the secession.

Following the international outcry at the murder of Lumumba, a stronger UN Security Council Resolution, endorsed by the Congolese government in April 1961, empowered UN forces to detain and expel Belgian officers and advisors, whose role was seen as central to the effectiveness of Katangese military forces. UN forces advanced to take key positions in northern Katanga, and by August 338 'mercenaries' and 443 Belgian 'political advisors' had been detained and expelled.[19] It was widely believed that these actions would result in the effective collapse of both the Katangese economy and military. Belgian officers were first supplemented and then replaced by mercenaries, mainly from western Europe, Rhodesia and South Africa. Notorious mercenaries such as Bob Denard and Jean Schramme briefly aided the Katangese military cause, but simultaneously undermined Katanga's claim to be an independent state with its own armed forces. However, it is important not to overestimate their influence: in practice, the command of the gendarmerie passed into Katangese hands, while mercenary groups operated with significant autonomy, largely separate at this stage from the bulk of the Katangese armed forces.

The departure of most Belgian officers did not however lead to Katanga's military collapse, and only partly because some Belgian officers were able to re-enter Katanga under different guise. Discipline was maintained, as well as a military efficiency in countering UN attacks. Katangese armed forces were officially under the command of Lt-General Masuku Muké, formerly of the Elisabethville military police. The Katangese state's propaganda operations inaccurately emphasized the entirely indigenous nature of the armed forces.[20] The partly transnational Katangese army had, by this time, come to resemble a more wholly national force, albeit a 'nation' that lacked any international recognition.

As of July 1961, the UN had 6415 UN troops based in Katanga, with nearly half of these in Elisabethville itself; this number rose rapidly, reaching 12,793 in November.[21] Once UN forces resumed action against Katanga in

'Operation Morthor' in September, the gendarmerie provided unexpectedly strong resistance. Although the UN prematurely announced the end of the secession after seizing some key installations in Elisabethville, Tshombe was able to escape to Northern Rhodesia, and Irish UN forces suffered a humiliating defeat in Jadotville. UN Secretary General Hammarskjöld's attempt to negotiate personally with Tshombe led to the former's death in a plane crash. The UN was subsequently forced to hand back some installations to Katangese forces. After a further UN resolution was passed, a new military operation in December 1961, leading to significant casualties on both sides, gave the UN control of strategic positions in Elisabethville. Tshombe nevertheless succeeded in delaying the end of the secession for another year through drawn-out negotiations with the Congolese central government.

A key issue in these negotiations was the incorporation of the gendarmerie into the ANC. As part of his efforts to defend Katangese autonomy in an envisaged federal Congo, Tshombe strenuously resisted the full transfer of the gendarmes into the Congolese armed forces until a new federal constitution was in place. By this time, Katanga had lost any meaningful support from Belgium, which pressurized Tshombe to negotiate a peaceful end to the secession. The ANC made steady advances into northern Katanga during 1962, and Tshombe privately expressed concern over a breakdown of discipline among his armed forces.[22] His concern was shared by the US Consul in Elisabethville, who urged that '. . . every reasonable step should be taken to prevent the gendarmerie from becoming a lawless and undisciplined military organization'.[23] Following a final breakdown in talks, the UN took control of southern Katanga's mining towns in December 1962, with Tshombe declaring an end to the secession in mid-January 1963.

After the secession, 1963–67

The warnings of the US Consul were not effectively heeded. Proposals to integrate the Katangese gendarmerie proceeded slowly, and only 2000–3000 gendarmes became part of the ANC at this time.[24] As UN forces were taking control of Katanga, more than half of the remaining 10,000 were already moving into north-east Angola. Tshombe had arranged the transfer of the gendarmes (with some of the mercenaries) to Portuguese-controlled Angolan territory, itself populated in part by Lunda speakers. British officials in Elisabethville observed with dismay the ease with which demobilized gendarmes slipped across the border into Northern Rhodesia and, from there, into Angola. They, along with the Congolese government and UN officials, appealed to British colonial authorities to arrest armed gendarmes.[25] However, the Governor of Northern Rhodesia, Evelyn Hone, stressed the difficulties in policing this remote border area, where 'many of the tribesmen are in sympathy with Tshombe due to strong tribal affiliations. We certainly do not want them to become directly involved in the Congo/Tshombe

dispute . . . In any case . . . The large majority of them are unarmed . . . '.[26] This capacity of the gendarmes to melt into the ethnically identical civilian populations of these border areas enabled them, on a number of occasions to evade both their enemies and the effective control of their ostensible patrons.

Camps were established near the towns of Luso and Cazombo, where escaping gendarmes regrouped.[27] Portugal had previously provided logistical support and arms for the secessionist state. However, Portuguese officials were worried that the presence of an armed camp might be a potential source of destabilization within Angola, and that harbouring the gendarmes would further increase international criticism of Portugal's colonial policy. This was partly disguised by presenting the camps as a humanitarian operation; Portuguese colonial intelligence constantly referred to Katangese 'refugees' in correspondence about the gendarmes and mercenaries.[28] No clear differentiation was made between civilian refugees and military units in their midst, an ambiguity which has resonances with more recent periods of Congolese conflict.[29]

The western powers' fear of the potentially destabilizing effect of the gendarmes was suddenly reversed in July 1964. The Stanleyville-based 'people's republic' of Christophe Gbenye's *Conseil National de Libération* (CNL) presented a new challenge to the Leopoldville government's authority. Tshombe, invited to return from exile as Congolese prime minister, arranged the return of the gendarmes and the mercenaries from Angola. They played a significant role in the defeat of the leftist rebels, ultimately achieved with the entry of Belgian paratroopers, supported by the USA, into Stanleyville in November 1964.

Tshombe fled to Spain following Mobutu's coup of November 1965, but retained links to the Katangese political leadership in Brussels and elsewhere. The ex-gendarmes formally became part of the ANC, but never accepted the writ of the central government and remained sympathetic to the now extinguished Katangese national project. Mobutu's centralization of all provincial political authority in June 1967, giving him the power to rule by decree, prompted a mutiny of the gendarmes and their white officers; mercenary commander Jean Schramme eventually led 2000 gendarmes out of eastern Congo and into Rwanda. At this time, Tshombe was abducted by Algerian forces and detained in Algeria, leaving the gendarmes without political or military leadership and arguably reducing them for the first time to the status of mercenary fighters, selling their military services for shelter and security.

The Portuguese alliance, 1967–74

Ultimately, most of the gendarmes found their way back into Angola; in November 1967, small groups of Katangese entered Angola, mainly at the

tri-frontier with Congo and Zambia. They were regrouped in camps in the Cazombo and Caianda areas of north-eastern Angola, around important diamond fields. The violent suppression of Katangese political identity by Mobutu at this time made it possible for the Portuguese authorities to present the gendarmes as refugees.

The various anti-colonial liberation wars stretched Portugal's financial and demographic limits and necessitated the recruitment of various African forces to supplement the Portuguese army. Most famous were the *Flechas*, the 'bushmen' who provided tracking skills and used bows and arrows in their skirmishes with African nationalist forces.[30] For their part, the ex-gendarmes were used as an auxiliary force in Portugal's war against Angolan nationalists infiltrating the territory from Zambia and Congo/Zaire; their effectiveness in this regard led them to be nicknamed the *fieis*, the faithful or reliable ones.

For the Katangese, combating the *Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola* (FNLA), the Mobutu-sponsored Angolan organization operating out of Congo, made this an extension of their war against the Congolese state. From 1968, the Portuguese army cooperated with the gendarmes in carrying out sabotage attacks inside Congo; 1600 ex-gendarmes disrupted the activities of the FNLA in Kasai East and Katanga. These operations were supported by Lunda royalty, with the Mwaant Yav requesting arms and his brother, Thomas Tshombe, seeking further mercenary-led training for the *fieis* under Portuguese auspices, as well as replenishing their ranks with new recruits sent across the border. Simultaneously, members of the Tshombe family (some in exile in Europe) developed plans to retake power in Katanga and/or Congo, utilizing the former gendarmes. The proximity of the Lunda population to the Angolan border, and the cross-border ties of prominent Lunda families, helps explain their disproportionate representation in the *fieis*, the composition of which was constantly evolving from that of the original Katangese state army.

From 1969, the *fieis*' military operations formed part of Portugal's Eastern Military Zone, while their political operations were co-ordinated with the secret police, the *Polícia Internacional e de Defesa do Estado* (PIDE). Under the guise of this cooperation, Portugal was initially willing to offer limited support for the Katangese national project during this period. This however masked substantive differences between the Portuguese and Katangese. The former sought to disrupt Congolese support for Angolan liberation movements, with the military support of the *fieis*; the overthrow of Mobutu, or the 'liberation' of Katanga, was beyond either their capacity or intentions. The Katangese sought a rapid return, to take the fight to the Congolese state; like other exiled liberation movements of very different political hue, such as the Zimbabwean or South African movements then based in Zambia and Tanzania, the period of exile was conceived of in months or years, rather than decades. The capacity of the ex-gendarmes to pursue their own aims was heavily circumscribed by their dependence on

their Portuguese patrons, who paid their wages and provided housing and logistical support.

Following the demands of the Lunda royal establishment, the Portuguese agreed in April 1969 to provide a substantially increased level of military training; Katangese troops were now paid a formal salary and in some cases were allowed to bring family members to reside with them.[31] Support was also provided in establishing a more permanent political body, presented as a 'government in exile'. However, this was a decidedly Faustian pact – the price of increased effectiveness was closer integration into Portugal's colonial armed forces and, initially at least, a reduced capacity for autonomy.

In June 1969, Nathanaël Mbumba, a recently arrived former Sergeant in the Congolese police, was appointed as Chief of Staff of the gendarmes. Mbumba emerged as a key political figure who partly reduced the gendarmes' political marginalization, in the wake of Moïse Tshombe's death in Algerian detention. This ended notions of reviving the Katangese secession and accelerated the search for a new political direction, independent of the former Conakat leadership (many of whom had now settled their differences with Mobutu-dominated Congo/Zaire). Mbumba wrote detailed entreaties to Portuguese officials, seeking a greater role in the struggle against the FNLA. He highlighted the threat posed by Chinese assistance to Mobutu and the FNLA, but also the potential weaknesses of the Mobutu regime and its vulnerabilities in Katanga.[32] Under Mbumba's leadership, the ex-gendarmes, seeking to transform themselves into a legitimate political force, rechristened themselves the National Front for the Liberation of Congo, or FLNC. They significantly reduced their dependence on the Mwaant Yav, a position held by successive members of the Tshombe family during this period. Despite Mbumba's organizational skills and extremely autocratic leadership, the FLNC, because of its ultimately dependent position on the Portuguese military, struggled to establish a coherent independent political strategy. It was undoubtedly a partly mercenary force, albeit one which sought to overcome that circumstance.

1974–75: the war of Angolan independence

The Portuguese revolution of 1974, and the decolonization of Portugal's African territories which followed, inevitably transformed the position of the ex-gendarmes. It was initially proposed that the Katangese would, along with other Portuguese loyalist forces, be transferred to South African bases in South West Africa.[33] However, under the influence of the leftist Portuguese governor, Admiral António Rosa Coutinho, it was agreed that the ex-gendarmes would transfer their affiliation to the MPLA.[34] Meetings took place with MPLA leader Agostinho Neto in Tanzania; Neto's MPLA had lost most of its troops due to splits within the movement, and the gendarmes provided him with a ready-made army of 5500 to match its nationalist rivals,

the FNLA and UNITA.[35] While this allegiance with the MPLA involved an apparent ideological *volte-face*, it enabled the ex-gendarmes to continue their war against Mobutu and the central Zairian state. It was based on an explicit *quid pro quo* – after the MPLA came to power, the FLNC would use Angolan territory as a base for attacks on Zaire, with the aim of 'liberating' Katanga. The former gendarmes acquired another name, reflecting their new political affiliation: the *Tropas de Infanteria e Guerrilla Revolucionaria*, or *Tigres*.[36]

From July 1975 onwards, the well-trained and experienced Katangese forces played an important role in the war of Angolan independence; they fought UNITA forces at Lucasse and took Luena from the FNLA.[37] UNITA leader Jonas Savimbi stated that: 'The MPLA is no problem to us ... They run away ... [but the Katangese] ... are very strong and they don't run away.'[38] The *Tigres* provided vital ground troops in operations led by Cuban forces, ultimately in the war's strategically decisive battle of Quifangondo in November 1975. A high price was paid by the ex-gendarmes; Kennes cites a 71 per cent attrition rate, with only 1600 soldiers surviving.[39]

Following the MPLA's victory, the FLNC was mobilized in battles against South African-backed UNITA forces, in the diamond mining areas of northeast Angola. Its political leadership now developed links with left-wing Congolese exiles based in Brussels. Increasingly, its attention turned back to its unfinished war for Katanga. In 1976, the FLNC recruited a new group of young men from border areas of Zaire, in preparation for a new offensive against Mobutu.[40] With a more autonomous status within the postcolonial Angolan armed forces, the FLNC now pursued its aim to re-establish some version of the state of which it had once been the national army.

1977–78: the Shaba wars

In March 1977, the FLNC launched an invasion of Katanga (now known as Shaba Province, its name having been changed by Mobutu). Two thousand men crossed from Angola into Zaire at Dilolo on bicycles. Despite their small numbers, they repelled Congolese armed forces and captured the town of Mutshatsha, approaching to within 30 kilometres of the strategic mining town of Kolwezi. President Mobutu accused Angola, together with Cuba and the Soviet Union, of attempting to overthrow him. The invasion was similarly portrayed in western media as forming a broader part of the communist offensive within Southern Africa. The FLNC's spokesmen in Paris played up to such discourses in condemning Mobutu's 'neocolonialist tyranny'.[41] However, US President Carter, having criticized arms sales to Zaire in his election campaign, was initially unwilling to frame the conflict in Cold War terms.[42] 1500 Moroccan troops were nevertheless brought in to assist Mobutu via a French airlift. With this help, the invasion was stopped and then repelled, with the last Katangese returning to Angola towards the end of May. In the wake of the invasion, reprisal attacks were carried out by the Zairian army

against Lunda politicians and civilians, leading an additional 200,000 to seek refuge in Angola and providing a new and unintentional replenishing of the FLNC's ranks.[43]

In May 1978, a second and far more substantial invasion was launched. On this occasion, the ex-gendarmes first advanced into north-west Zambia, returning through the same territory that had been traversed in 1963 on their way to Angola. Once again, its capacity to blend in with the civilian population increased its effectiveness as a military force. The FLNC had strengthened its forces as a result of Shaba I: it now boasted 5000 troops.[44] Three-quarters of these troops entered Zaire and most headed straight for Kolwezi, where its surprise attack on 13 May captured the city in a few hours.

The resultant loss of control of Zaire's mining industry capital imperilled Mobutu's primary source of foreign exchange earnings and western interests in the country. Mobutu again sought to portray the invasion as a local battle in the wider Cold War and called for western intervention, but there was still unease in western capitals about publicly interfering in African affairs. Western governments therefore sought to portray western intervention as essentially humanitarian, involving a 'rescue operation' for western civilians.[45] Before international forces could be mobilized, however, President Mobutu ordered an early attack by the Zairian army, a disastrous operation which left most of the Zairian paratroopers involved either dead, injured or captured. Attacks were then carried out on European civilians; these were publicly blamed on FLNC forces, but Kennes' recent research suggests that Zairian government forces may have been to blame.[46]

A few days later, French Foreign Legion paratroopers were dropped on Kolwezi. Belgian paratroopers also took part in the operation, including some veterans of the Stanleyville operations of 1964, where they had fought with the gendarmes who were now their enemy. These western forces quickly drove the FLNC forces out of Kolwezi.

International reaction was markedly different this time around. Cuban President Fidel Castro not only denied his country's involvement, but insisted that he had sought to prevent the Katangese action. US President Carter indeed castigated the Soviet Union for its continued '... interference in the internal affairs of African nations', via its Cuban ally.[47] Castro was probably telling the truth – although Cuba had armed the FLNC, both she and Angola were unhappy about its autonomous actions, which destabilized the Cold War in Africa. Nevertheless, the second Shaba invasion, along with the Ogaden conflict of the same period, contributed to shifting the USA towards a stronger stance against the Soviet and Cuban presence in Africa.

Following the invasion, FLNC forces withdrew to Angola, having dealt a considerable blow to the Zairian economy; the Kolwezi occupation had driven up the world price of cobalt by 24 per cent and forced western donors to inject an additional US$100m to prevent the collapse of Zaire's economy.

Mobutu, who promised to clean up corruption, was forced to call parliamentary elections and to release some political prisoners. Ultimately however, both invasions, in demonstrating the weakness of Mobutu's authority, forced the west to provide significant military and financial aid; their strategy of defending western mining interests via the Kinshasa regime left them with little choice but to prop up their ailing strongman.

Both superpowers, keen to avoid being drawn into a wider regional conflict, leant heavily on their client states. Mobutu and Neto agreed to terminate support to groups hostile to each other's regimes. With the withdrawal of Angolan patronage, the FLNC was finished as a coherent political force and its leadership was expelled from Angola.[48]A large number of the FLNC fighters were however integrated into the Angolan armed forces, apparently as a distinct unit of special forces.[49] Divorced from its political leadership and problematically 'nationalized' within the Angolan army, the former Katangese army seemed to have lost its final opportunity to return 'home'.

After Shaba

For the next two decades, various Congolese political leaders and movements, many in exile in Brussels or Paris and lacking any organized popular or military organization, sought to deploy elements of FLNC forces in support of various anti-Mobutu projects. These commonly foundered on the well-founded suspicion among FLNC leaders that their own political aims would be marginalized in such movements.

One former FLNC leader, Deogratias Symba, identified a new venue for operations against the Zairian state. During Shaba II, Zambia had proven itself to be an effective launching pad, and Symba now made links with a group seeking to remove Zambian President Kenneth Kaunda from power. Symba mobilized a couple of hundred ex-gendarmes in support of a coup attempt; once Kaunda had been removed, it was envisaged, the new government would allow the Katangese to launch further attacks against Zaire. Once again, their ethno-linguistic identity enabled them to reside in Lunda-speaking areas of north-west Zambia, in advance of the operation. However, this adventurist project was pre-empted, days before its planned implementation in October 1980, by Zambian security forces. Symba and three other Katangese were tried and convicted for treason alongside their Zambian collaborators. Sentenced to death in 1983, Symba served seven more years before being pardoned in 1990.[50]

For nearly 20 years, many former FLNC recruits remained part of the Angolan armed forces. They participated in operations against UNITA, particularly in the strategic diamond mining areas close to the Zairian border. One might have expected that two decades since Shaba II, and more than three decades since some of their number first left Katanga,

their desire to return would be diminished. However, in early 1997, as the Rwandese-backed AFDL forces of Laurent Kabila mobilized for their invasion of Zaire, Angolan soldiers were also mobilized, flown to Kigali and integrated into the invasion force – and a major part of these forces was composed of former gendarmes. Katangese political leaders agreed with Laurent Kabila, himself of Katangese origin, that, once he was in power, Katanga would be granted substantial autonomy and the possibility of full self-determination. The gendarmes helped capture Lubumbashi (formerly Elisabethville) in April 1997. Following Kabila's successful entry into Kinshasa in May, some ex-gendarmes were reintegrated into the reconstituted Congolese army; others returned to Angola. The evolution of what had once been the Katangese 'national' army had taken it across national borders, into the problematic service of colonial and postcolonial military forces, and now part of it had returned 'home', apparently to serve Katanga within a reconstituted Congolese nation-state.

The happy ending this suggests, the long-sought liberation of Katanga, was however once again a mirage. Although the province reverted to its former name and was granted limited autonomy, Katanga did not achieve meaningful self-determination. For the individual gendarmes, their honourable retirement from the Congolese armed forces brought a paltry pension payment in the form of a bicycle.

Conclusion

The long story of the Katangese gendarmes illustrates important historical questions that surround our understanding of conflict in central and southern Africa. It is widely acknowledged that the specific conflicts which took place during this period were shaped by a combination of ideological, geopolitical, national and local-ethnic factors. However, such conflicts still tend to be considered as either civil wars *within* the borders of fixed nation-states, or international conflicts *between* such states, the meaning of which is taken for granted. This is despite the fact that the borders of these states were fixed arbitrarily by Europeans and cut through pre-existing African polities which, notwithstanding the reassertion of colonial borders by independent postcolonial states, retain significant social, cultural and political saliency for many members of those communities; for example the Lunda in Angola, Zambia and the Congo.

An adequate explanation of the conflicts of this period also requires an understanding of the motivations of more fluid political and military groupings such as the Katangese gendarmes. The gendarmes transgressed not only geographical boundaries but also ideological ones. While ideological considerations were certainly important to many of the actors, the particular meaning associated with them needs to be interrogated and not taken for granted. The gendarmes' capacity to shift, in contemporaneous imaginings,

from the mercenary-led forces of the 'neo-colonial' Katangese state of the early 1960s, to the Cuban-backed Marxist '*Tigres*' of the late 1970s, invites a closer interrogation of such a framework of analysis. The examination of a movement such as the gendarmes may assist in reconsidering the meaning of Cold War categories and the extent to which superpower interests aided or hampered the African movements which allied with them during this period.

The gendarmes also transgressed the boundaries between an armed force, a political body, a body of refugees and even a social movement. Although it looked a lot like an army, its relatively fluid membership, its embedded position among 'civilian' communities, and its capacity to present itself at times as a 'Katangese' force and at others as a 'Congolese' movement invites a reconsideration of the standard categorizations of displaced communities, which may have relevance to more recent groupings in the complex conflicts over local and national identity, inclusion and exclusion which have wracked Congo since the mid-1990s.

Finally, it is suggested that, to understand such conflicts, it is necessary to uncover their meaning to those involved, understanding that this may vary for particular individuals and in different times and spaces. It should be clear that existing portrayals of the gendarmes simply as a mercenary force are thoroughly inadequate. As a group they evade classical military categorization, serving at different times as soldiers in a national army, insurgents, colonial auxiliary troops and so on. The young men, recruited mainly autochthon Katangese communities to form the ground forces of the Katangese army were not, it appears, primarily motivated by material reward, and nor were they ever simply the passive servants of other people's military causes.

Instead, the evidence suggests that most germane to their activities were the gendarmes' persistent aspirations to a form of self-determination, conceived of in terms of overlapping identities as 'Lunda', Katangese and (at times) Congolese. In the interviews with former gendarmes, their continued affiliation to 'Katanga' is striking.[51] Although Katanga was an artificial state when its independence from Congo was declared in July 1960, it had arguably as much relevance to its subjects as the new Congolese nation-state. If the patriotic affiliation of Africans to their relatively artificial postcolonial states can be explained by the utilization of the invention of tradition, the self-conscious creation of the trappings of national identity, then Katanga, with its brief history as an independent state, had just this type of identity – a government, an anthem, a flag and, of course, an army. Similarly, it is not surprising that the extinguishing of that identity by external agencies, perceived as repressive and corrupt, might fuel a sense of patriotic grievance. The unaccountable nature of the highly centralized Mobutu-dominated Zairian state, its dependence on continued assistance from external agencies whose main interest was the extraction of Katanga's valuable minerals, and

the consequent experience of long-term exile, could likewise be expected to reinforce the continued aspiration to the reclaiming of a statehood which, in its brief period of existence, was associated with relative prosperity and a sense of collective self-realization, at least among the 'indigenous' communities which politically dominated the Katangese state.

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Notes

1. For the latter, see Peter Eichsteadt, *Consuming the Congo: War and Conflict Minerals in the World's Deadliest Place* (Chicago, IL, 2011).
2. See, for example, the characterization of Katangese officers in Conor Cruise O'Brien, *To Katanga and Back*: *A UN Case History* (New York, 1962), pp. 222–5.
3. Crawford Young, *Politics in the Congo: Decolonization and Independence*, (Princeton, NJ, 1965), pp. 273–9.
4. René Lemarchand, *Political Awakening in the Belgian Congo* (Berkeley, CA, 1964), pp. 233–5.
5. Jules Gerard-Libois, *Katanga Secession* (Madison, WI: 1966), p. 63.
6. Proclamation of Independence of Katanga, 11 July 1960, Appendix II of Libois, *Katanga Secession*, p. 328.
7. Catherine Hoskyns, *The Congo Since Independence, January 1960 – December 1961* (Oxford, 1965), pp. 158–9.
8. Resolution adopted in 886th Session of UN Security Council, 9 August 1960, Appendix II, Libois, *Katanga Secession*, p. 330.
9. Ludo de Witte, *The Assassination of Lumumba* (London, 2001).
10. Hoskyns, *Congo Since Independence*, p. 163.
11. Kennes, 'Fin du cycle post-colonial au Katanga', p. 418.
12. Libois, *Katanga Secession*, p. 114.
13. Ibid.; *Moniteur Katangais*, n° 2, 15 août 1960, pp. 21–3, cited in Kennes, 'Fin du cycle post-colonial au Katanga', p. 416.
14. Young, *Politics in the Congo*, p. 542.
15. Frédéric Vandewalle, 'A propos de la gendarmerie katangaise', *Bulletin trimestriel du CRAOCA*, 1 (Brussels, 1987), pp. 65–92, p. 66.
16. Vandewalle, 'A propos de la gendarmerie katangaise', p. 73.
17. Young, *Politics in the* Congo, p. 335.
18. US State Dept (USSD) archives, RG59, E3111 (Bureau of African Affairs), Box 7, unnumbered file '1960 UN Military Troops and Support', Robert Eisenberg to

G. Mennen Williams, 15 September 1961, memorandum, 'Military Situation in Katanga'.
19. Young, *Politics in the Congo*, p. 340.
20. It should be noted that Katanga was hardly unique in its use of European officers in its early stages of 'independence'. Many African states did so, for example Ghana; indeed, the commander of the Ghanaian contingent of the UN forces in Congo was British. The ANC itself was utilizing Belgian military advisors by the end of 1960.
21. USSD RG59, E3111, Box 8 Unnumbered, 'Briefing Papers', 'UN Forces in the Congo as of 28 November 1961', 12 December 1961.
22. USSD, RG59, E3111 (Bureau of African Affairs), Box 6, File 1.C./1.1 Correspondence with Consulate, American Consul to Elisabethville Lewis Hoffacker to Robert Eisenberg, Deputy Director Bureau of Central African Affairs, 18 April 1962.
23. USSD, RG59, E3111 (Bureau of African Affairs), Box 6, File 1.C./1.1 Correspondence with Consulate, Charles S. Whitehouse to Lewis Hoffacker, 8 May 1962.
24. Young, *Politics in the Congo*, p. 458.
25. For example, The National Archives (TNA), London, FO 371/167303, 'Congo: Activities of Mercenaries and Ex-Gendarmes'; Elizabethville Consulate to FO, 29 November 1963, 'Katanga Gendarmes'.
26. TNA, FO 371/167303, 'Congo: Activities of Mercenaries and Ex-Gendarmes'; Evelyn Hone to S.P. Whitley, Central African Office, 21 November 1963, 'Katanga'.
27. Daniel Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention* (Jefferson, NC, 1963), pp. 45–6.
28. See for example IANTT PIDE Del A, L, No. 14, UI 8979, 'Instrucoes sobre refugiados catangueses'.
29. Among other examples, the violent dispersal of Hutu refugee camps, populated both by civilians and members of the *Interahamwe*, by Rwandan forces in late 1996: see Turner, *Congo Wars*, pp. 156–7.
30. Tobias Drehsen, 'The Militarization of the San in Southern Angola', paper presented to the African Studies Association of the UK, Oxford, September 2010.
31. IANTT PIDE UI 7477, GAB-2, 'Informaçao 11/69', 12 June 1969.
32. See for example documents in IANTT PIDE/DGS SC CI(2) UI 7494 Processo No. 7477, Pasta 1: 'Commando das Operacoes Especiais (COE), Frente de Libertacao Nacional Congaleza'.
33. Interview, Deogratias Symba, Kitwe, 1 June 2008.
34. Interview, Antonio Coutinho, Lisbon, 15 July 2008.
35. Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, p. 120.
36. Gerard Prunier, *Africa's World War: Congo, the Rwandan Genocide, and the Making of a Continental Catastrophe* (Oxford, 2009), p. 404.
37. Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, p. 188.
38. Quoted in John Stockwell, *In Search of Enemies: A CIA Story* (New York and London, 1978); cited in Spikes, pp. 203–4.
39. Kennes, 'Fin du cycle post-colonial au Katanga', p. 471.
40. Thomas Odom, *Shaba II: The French and Belgian Intervention in Zaire in 1978* (Fort Leavenworth, KS, 1993), p. 13.
41. 'Things are looking bad for Mobutu', *Time Magazine*, 11 April 1977.
42. 'A little help from his friends', *Time Magazine*, 25 April 1977.
43. Odom, *Shaba II*, p. 19.
44. Odom, *Shaba II*, p. 20.

45. See, for example, TNA, FCO/99/162, 'Cuba/Zaire Shaba Invasion, 1978', FCO to Missions, Guidance 73, 22 May 1978.
46. Kennes, 'Fin du cycle post-colonial au Katanga', p. 493.
47. 'Countering the communists', *Time Magazine*, 5 June 1978.
48. Interview, Deogratias Symba, Kitwe, 1 June 2008.
49. A. Leao & M. Rupiya, 'A Military History of the Angolan Armed Forces from the 1960s Onwards – As Told by Former Combatants', in M. Rupiya (ed), *Evolutions and Revolutions: A Contemporary History of Militaries in Southern Africa* (Pretoria, 2005), pp. 7–41.
50. For a more detailed account of this operation, see Miles Larmer, *Rethinking African Politics: A History of Opposition in Zambia* (Farnham, 2011), pp. 173–82.
51. For example, interview with Celestine Mweu, Lubumbashi, 6 June 2008.

Section IV

Ideology, Adventure, Coercion

11

'Strangers, Mercenaries, Heretics, Scoffers, Polluters': Volunteering for the British Auxiliary Legion in Spain, 1835

Martin Robson

Visitors to the town of San Sebastián, located on Spain's Biscay coastline about 20 kilometres from the border with France, might be surprised to find an English cemetery on Castle Hill. This is not for soldiers under the Duke of Wellington who laid siege to and stormed the town in 1813 or for members of the British battalion who fought farther south in 1936–39. The graves are those of British nationals who served in the British Auxiliary Legion (BAL), a British volunteer force which arrived in Spain in the late summer and autumn of 1835.[1] The reason why around 10,000 British nationals volunteered in the summer of 1835 to serve for the Queen of Spain is the subject of this chapter.

The BAL was not an 'official' British military formation, but was instead a separate 'unofficial' volunteer force in the pay of the Spanish crown.[2] The Legion was recruited in haste and speedily dispatched to Spain where it was thrown into combat prematurely. Ensign Townley's (2nd Regiment, BAL) journal entries for July and August 1835 paint a chaotic picture. He describes attempts, in 'very hot and oppressive' conditions, to implement basic drill, not only among the men but also for the officers who 'drilled by themselves' and were clearly learning on the job. Quarrelling and duelling were prevalent among the officers and the men, paid their £2 bounty, were prone to ill-discipline, drunkenness and using mutinous language, one miscreant receiving 300 lashes for the latter offence. There were attempts to prevent desertion but some troops absconded; the body of one deserter was found with part of his face eaten off. The 2nd Regiment began firing training with blank cartridges on 24 August[3] yet was thrown into action only six days later.[4] Official and detailed record keeping was not, therefore, high on the list of officer priorities, as Staff-Surgeon Rutherford Alcock noted of the recruits, 'No registers having been kept of the whole force showing the age of each individual.'[5]

The BAL, however, gave birth to a substantial body of contemporary literature, not just personal diaries like Townley's, but a range of published memoirs and diaries, mainly from officers, but including some voices from the rank and file. Therefore we know more about why officers volunteered, because they tell us, and why *they* think the rank and file volunteered. It is this body of work that underpins Brett's commendable modern narrative[6] but that does not explore in depth the specific question of the *motivation* for volunteering. The men of the Legion were labelled 'mercenaries' or 'condottieri' by some of their own countrymen yet many of those who served considered themselves as 'volunteers' fighting for a cause (as well as being paid for it). Terminology is, and was in 1835, important, as it has connotations regarding the status of troops as well as important questions of responsibility and accountability. While pay seems an obvious motivating factor, and the actions of some clearly do seem mercenary, there was, at least for officers, the prospect of promotion, something which was either unaffordable or hard to come by for many serving in a peacetime army. The decision to serve for a foreign power has also been assessed as a mix of individualism, idealism, ideology and again, while some of this holds true for the Legion, it was a far more complex dynamic.[7]

The first Carlist War (1833–39)

The background to the recruitment of the BAL was the complex succession wars that broke out in Portugal and Spain during the late 1820s and early 1830s, the origins of which can be traced back to the Napoleonic Wars.[8] Yet, the question of who would succeed to the thrones of Portugal and Spain also included an ideological dimension. The death of Ferdinand VII of Spain on 29 September 1833 sparked a succession crisis which had been brewing for the best part of two decades. Apart from confusion over whether Salic law (no female succession) applied to the Spanish throne, the years between 1814 and 1833 had seen liberal reformers pitched in an escalatory conflict against those who favoured ultra-absolutist monarchy. The former congregated around Ferdinand's wife, Queen Cristina, and their daughter Isabella, while the latter chiefly congregated around Ferdinand's brother, Don Carlos. Ferdinand's death sparked a number of Carlist risings which were met with violent repression. But the risings gathered pace, especially in the Basque region, leading to open and brutal armed conflict; from the outset both sides routinely executed prisoners. With Queen Cristina's army unable to suppress the rebellion, during early 1834 Britain and France grew increasingly concerned at the growing threat to the cause of Spanish liberalism.[9]

The British response

In Britain Lord Palmerston, the incumbent Whig Foreign Secretary, was convinced Iberian matters could be resolved without the need for foreign

troops.[10] Instead diplomacy, backed up by the supply of arms to the Queen's forces and a Royal Navy squadron to cooperate with the Cristinos, would be sufficient and politically acceptable. The response was the Quadruple Alliance of 22 April 1834, whereby Britain, France, Spain and Portugal all committed to removing the threat from Don Carlos. Adding another level of intrigue to the unfolding drama, Britain conspired with Don Carlos to aid his flight from exile in Portugal to England, where it was hoped that with a suitable pension from the Spanish government he might reside and give up his claim to the throne. This attempt to buy him off failed spectacularly and he left London on 1 July 1834 headed for Spain. In December 1834 the Whigs were replaced by a short-lived Tory ministry with the Duke of Wellington at the Foreign Office. Like his predecessor, Wellington sent arms to the liberals and, in response to the increasing brutality of the civil war, dispatched Lord Eliot and Colonel Gurwood to implore the protagonists to conduct themselves in a more civilized manner;[11] the resulting Eliot Convention did have some initial impact, at least in the Basque area.[12]

Between April and June 1835 the Carlists enjoyed military success. With the Tories out again on 8 April 1835, Palmerston returned to the Foreign Office. He remained unwilling to interfere directly in the internal affairs of Spain yet Sir George Villiers, the British Minister in Madrid, informed him that the Spanish government would very soon ask for foreign military assistance to put down the Carlist insurrection. Villiers was convinced there was no other way to uphold the cause of liberalism in Spain. He also expressed concern that the French would intervene to shape Spanish affairs to suit their policy, and in this case Britain must intervene to safeguard not only her own but also Spanish interests.[13] On 10 June General Alava, the Spanish Ambassador in London, asked the British government for permission to raise a force of 10,000 volunteers.[14]

Suspension of the Foreign Enlistment Act

Such a scheme would be illegal under the terms of the 1819 Foreign Enlistment Act. The Act, which forbade British nationals from entering military service with another power, had originally been introduced to dissuade British nationals from fighting for those provinces in South and Latin America struggling for independence from Spain. The Act had been the subject of debate in the Commons during 1833 and, responding to charges that men who served foreign powers were mercenaries or buccaneers, the radical MP Lieutenant Colonel De Lacy Evans retorted that the current situation was entirely different, as individuals wishing to serve for a foreign power were not hiring themselves to the highest bidder as condottieri of old might do. Evans argued that the Act prevented British Army officers gaining important and practical experience of warfare abroad, a process which would increase the efficiency of the regular British Army, and pointed out that naval officers had been allowed to serve in South America and Portugal.[15]

The Act had been debated again in April 1834[16] but it was not until 10 June 1835 that a King's Order in Council temporarily suspended the Act for a two-year period specifically for those wishing to 'engage in the military and naval service of Her Majesty Isabella the Second, Queen of Spain', thereby paving the way for the establishment of the BAL.[17] There were still dissenting voices. In the Lords on 12 June Viscount Strangford raised the issue of what would happen to the widows and orphans of British nationals who might be killed or wounded in the service of Spain. Melbourne responded for the government stating that British subjects entering the Legion 'must look to the Government they were about to serve, and not to the Government of this country, for any provision which was to be made hereafter, and take all the chances of the service which they entered with their eyes open; they could have no claim on his Majesty's Government'.[18] Three days later Londonderry asked two very pertinent questions in the Lords: whether the Order in Council had been a spontaneous act by the British government or if it originated from an appeal by the Spanish government, and secondly if the Eliot Convention would apply to the treatment of British nationals. Melbourne responded that the Order had been implemented due to a specific request from the Spanish Ambassador, but followed this up by stating:

> It was fully understood that the spirit of that convention would regulate the whole of the war, and that the individuals . . . who were now permitted to enlist in the service of the Queen of Spain, would of course be included in any protection it might be able to afford.[19]

On 24 June discussion moved to the Commons. While there was little disagreement regarding the supply of arms to Madrid and sending a British naval force to assist the Spanish government, Viscount Mahon, former Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in the Tory ministry, argued that the Spanish court were using the civil war as an opportunity to abolish the ancient privileges of the Basque Provinces by burning villages, massacring prisoners and laying waste areas of northern Spain. This was not a particularly liberal policy for it was the duty of government 'to set an example of moderation and justice'. With the war taking on such a barbarous character, he did not think it wise to support Spanish policy 'at the expense of British blood'. If, however, the Queen were to be protected, surely it would be more 'straightforward and manly' to send out 'a body of the King's troops under the King's Commission' rather than the 'discreditable' measure of 'mercenary bands'.[20]

On 20 June Don Carlos issued the Durango Decree stating that the Eliot Convention would not apply to foreign troops[21] and with the benefit of hindsight the decree made Melbourne's comments look a little ill judged, a point recognized by Villiers who argued Melbourne 'had no authority to assert it'.[22] Evans would later state that he thought the decree was specifically

designed to dissuade British nationals from enlisting in the Legion yet it did not.[23] The reasoning was that the suspension of the Enlistment Act through the Order in Council might have led men to assume that when enlisting 'under the banner of liberty' that they were '*serving the cause of their own Government*' with the logical outcome that they would fall under the protection of their government.[24] Writing his memoirs in 1840, De Lacy Evans would remark that the King's Order in Council expressed a desire from His Majesty that British subjects 'should embark in the enterprise'; thereby the whole process seemed to give official sanction to the Legion.[25]

Terms of service

The BAL would comprise an all-arms force of infantry, cavalry and artillery along with supporting services, such as medical staff and commissariat; in total around 10,000 men and organized thus:

Cavalry	1st Lancers, Reynha Ysabel (English)
	2nd Lancers, Queen's Own Irish (Irish)
Infantry	1st English
	2nd English
	3rd Westminster Grenadiers (English)
	4th Queen's Own Fusiliers (English)
	5th Scotch
	6th Scotch Grenadiers
	7th Irish Light Infantry
	8th Highlanders (Scottish)
	9th Irish
	10th Munster Light Infantry
	Rifles (English)
Artillery	English, plus, from 1836, British Royal Artillery personnel

The 'official' conditions under which British subjects would serve were outlined in a memorandum from Alava dated 22 June 1835. Enlistment would be for one or two years, as might be preferred by the individual (this was to create serious problems in Spain when those who had signed up for one year wanted to leave the Legion). Pay at each rank would be the same as in the British Army with recruits receiving a £2 bounty upon enlistment. NCOs and privates would receive a bonus payment at the end of their service, of two, four or six months' pay to be determined by their commanding officers according to their conduct, while officers would receive a payment of one half of the time served upon conclusion of their service. The bonus payment would be forfeited if the individual resigned or was dismissed from the Legion unless caused by wounds or disease. Individuals whose services were

no longer required by the Spanish government would be entitled to compensation for time served. For those who would be wounded or invalided, and the widows of those killed, there would be a pension corresponding to their respective rank, according to British practice. Discipline would be along British Military lines, civil discipline would be under Spanish law.[26]

Officer motivation

Officers volunteering for the BAL would receive the same pay at each rank as in the British Army, though the Legion did offer a bonus payment for one half of the time served. Although Regular Army officers received additional payments, length of service payments or by holding certain positions which granted extra pay, they were still 'abysmally paid' earning less than half the salary of equivalent grade War Office clerks.[27] To contextualize this, Evans as a half-pay lieutenant-colonel was paid half of his £365 per annum by the British Army. In the Spanish service, as commander of the Legion, he was promised an astonishing salary of £5,000 per annum by the Spanish government. Although Evans, who had married a wealthy widow, was more financially secure than many who joined, he had pursued expensive political activities. There was also the hope that a quick and effective burst of active military service for the liberal cause might allow him to get back to politics quickly – with, of course, his reputation and bank balance enhanced.[28]

There would have been some financial motivation for officers on half pay to earn full pay but many of the Legion's officers were gentlemen of means and the attraction of pay must have been less a factor than promotion and adventure. According to Robert Henderson, Colonel Kinloch and the field officers of the Reynha Ysabel Lancers were all 'wealthy men' and 'of noble and distinguished families' with the captains from 'the Royal or Company's service'. All were gentlemen in the prime of manhood, and all up to their work.[29]

A crucial task for Evans was to recruit officers to the Legion, for with them in place they could in turn recruit the men who would fill the rank and file: privates and NCOs. Evans initially looked to the British Army, hoping that out of its 13,000–14,000 Regular Army officers around 500 would be tempted by the thought of active service after 20 years of peace. Here he came up against political opposition for, as he later wrote, 'an opinion gained circulation that certain high military personages were decidedly adverse to the measure'. This included 'the three great military influences of our own country, (the King, the Duke of Wellington, the Commander in Chief)'. Hill, the Commander-in-Chief, vetoed leave of absence for officers on half pay and Wellington was extremely sceptical about the Legion. Evans believed that the King had given his support through the Order in Council of 10 June and then withheld his full support for the Legion after the Durango Decree.[30]

All this deterred regular officers from enlisting in the Legion, with only ten from the Regular Army signing up, and of them only one remained with it for the duration of the two-year term of enlistment. Evans was also disappointed with recruitment from the pool of officers from the unattached, retired or East India Company lists. He managed to secure six from the latter who were on leave (but could only serve for the duration of that leave), including his brother Lieutenant Colonel Richard Lacy Evans. He also asked his friends who were sympathetic to the liberal cause in Spain; these included Lieutenant Colonel Charles Chichester ('half pay, unattached').[31]

Some with previous military experience like Edward Costello, a highly literate former sergeant in the 1st battalion, 95th Rifles, who had seen service in Portugal, Spain and at Waterloo, were aware of the formation of the Legion and applied directly to Evans for service. Costello was commissioned as a Lieutenant in the 7th Light Infantry, BAL. A further 40 or so officers were promoted, like Costello, from sergeant to commissioned officer. Such men would bring relevant military experience, and though Costello was in his late forties his experience of light infantry warfare in the intended area of operations was much needed. Within days of arriving in Spain, due to a major resigning his commission, the recently commissioned Lieutenant Costello found himself promoted again, this time to captain.[32]

In fact, not all who applied to join the Legion as officers were successful. Henderson, whose father had died heavily in debt and had to make his own way in life, had served in Portugal and had returned to England after that conflict 'in better case than I left it'. With money in his pocket and recent military experience to boot his application for service was initially turned down. Undeterred he was recommended to Colonel Considine, the BAL's Military Secretary, by General Bacon, with whom he had served in Portugal. In turn Considine recommend him to Colonel Kinloch, late the 2nd Life Guards, who was raising the 1st Regiment, Reynha Ysabel Lancers, but Kinloch had filled all the commissions in the regiment. One of the interesting features of the Legion was the number of young gentlemen who accompanied it to Spain as private volunteers. Henderson remarked that 'and so great was the desire of young men even of family and fortune to see active service, that many were willing to mount and equip themselves as volunteers, doing the duty of private soldiers until vacancies should occur for promotion in their own or other corps'. Henderson did just that, receiving permission to join the Reynha Ysabel Lancers as a 'gentleman cadet' as long as he could furnish his own horses and appointments. He proceeded to the headquarters of the Regiment at Kingston-on-Thames where he found ten other 'Gentlemen cadets' all keen to fill any vacancies that might arise.[33]

There were others like Henderson who did have relevant and recent military experience campaigning in South America, Portugal or Greece, and, with some justification, might be labelled as 'mercenary' in outlook. Their influence was a mixed blessing for although Evans obtained around

40 officers from their ranks, they outnumbered the regular officers and those that Evans had obtained through personal connections.[34] Some disliked these 'Pedroite' officers intensely; Costello thought them 'self-taught heroes were brought up in neither military nor civil life, but had passed a little Quixotic tour under Don Pedro . . . every regiment of the Legion, like my own, was full of Pedroites'.[35] One of the 'Pedroite' officers was Charles Shaw who had served in Portugal for 18 months before joining the BAL and heading to Scotland to recruit a brigade. He was disappointed to find that, unlike those on half pay at home, officers enlisting from the Portuguese service would not receive a promotion upon joining the Legion. He also questioned what military experience 'the young gentlemen of the British service who have had such glorious opportunities of studying their profession in the garrisons of England!' could bring to the BAL when set against those, like himself, with four years of active service in Portugal. He also thought the best officers in the British Army would not wish to compromise their careers by going against the wishes of Wellington and Hill.[36]

Shaw predicted there would be friction between the different officers: 'I am a half-pay lieutenant in the British service: and only think of the disgrace it is to a British major or captain who never saw a shot fired, and who purchased his promotions, to be commanded by a subaltern.'[37] He also suspected many officers had not really thought it all through:

> . . . the Spanish Auxiliary half-pay officers were led from this open support of Government [drawing British half pay while in Spanish service] to expect that this service would be as the British service, and I at once saw that there would be much disappointment, and that the Auxiliary officers might forget they were Spanish officers.[38]

In his experience of recruiting those regiments that would make up the Scotch Brigade, Shaw concluded that with regard to the officers 'money is the *primum mobile* of many'. With his keen eye and experience of the conflict in Portugal, Shaw was convinced that once the Legion commenced military operations in Spain there would be many resignations for 'none of them, from the senior to the junior, has the most distant idea of what they are to suffer'.[39] In a postscript in the published version of his letter to Evans of 10 August 1835 he noted that, between the date of that letter and 1 January 1837, 5 Brigadier Generals, 7 Colonels, 14 Lieutenant-Colonels, 18 Majors, 65 Captains, 55 Lieutenants, 43 Ensigns, 1 Staff Surgeon, 14 Assistant Surgeons and 5 Paymasters had resigned their commissions, in total 227 officers. Shaw himself resigned his commission in the autumn of 1836, though he thought that many officers remaining with the BAL at that date

could not afford to resign, being owed six months' pay and the promised service bounty.[40]

While Henderson's later recollection that the senior officers and field officers were drawn from the British service or the East India Company[41] and with the above categories providing around 100 officers, in practice Evans had to utilize many officers who had little experience of active service in order to fill the remaining 400 or so officer appointments in the Legion. He would later lament, an assertion seemingly backed up by some of the evidence from Townley and others, that the greater part of his officers had 'never before been in any military occupation'.[42] The acute need to enlist officers is perhaps one reason why Henderson noted a lack of 'any competitive examination as to qualification or capacity'.[43]

The key for these officers was that initial appointment to the BAL ensured promotion in the Spanish service to at least the next rank for officers from the British or Indian service. *The Times* of 30 July 1835 listed 54 officers from the British Army or the East India Company who had enlisted into the Legion. Only four captains and one lieutenant held the same initial rank in the Legion that they held in their previous employment; all the other officers were promoted by at least one rank. Some of the promotions were quite spectacular, starting with the commander, Evans himself, who went from Lieutenant Colonel to Lieutenant General – a three-rank promotion. His brother Richard and Charles Chichester were both promoted from Lieutenant Colonel to Brigadier General. Other notables included Captain Tupper ('half pay, 23rd Fusiliers') and Lieutenant O'Connell ('73rd Regiment') who were both promoted to Lieutenant Colonel. Shaw, who was still a lieutenant ('half pay, 52nd Regiment') in the British Army, ranked as a colonel in the Portuguese service and was granted that rank in the BAL. This he found disappointing as he had hoped to be promoted to Brigadier but as a 'Pedroite' he was not to be promoted upon enlisting in the BAL (though he did eventually achieve the rank of Brigadier).[44]

While the majority of commissions in the regular British Army were by purchase, there were other ways for officers to gain promotion and the most common was to fill vacancies left by officers killed in action. But that required the British Army to see active service, not a particularly common prospect in the 1820s and 1830s before the period of sustained imperial expansion. In peacetime many officers who were on the half-pay list were on the first step to retirement; others were content to remain there while awaiting the opportunity for active service. Appointment to the BAL offered the opportunity for active service and promotion as well as pay. As Spiers has concluded, unless officers had private means they could not support themselves on half pay.[45] Captain Richardson of the 2nd Regiment, BAL, recalled a dinner with the 1st Regiment on 9 August 1835 ('a sight to call up Tory spleen') and noted they had been called a set of 'mercenary adventurers'

in the Commons 'quite forgetting that having barred the door of promotion to us in our own service, we were naturally eager to seek it in some other'.[46]

Augustus Losack was one who felt aggrieved by the promotion opportunities offered by the Regular Army. An Ensign in the 83rd Foot in 1815, he had been placed on half pay in 1819[47] and was still in that rank and on half pay in 1835.[48] Writing in September 1835 while at Plymouth, Losack explained how disillusionment with the lack of progress in a military career caused him to sail for Mexico in 1832 where he had set up in business as a merchant, with some success. He returned to England in January 1834 but found his desired lifestyle beyond his means and leapt at the opportunity to join the BAL. On 4 July 1835 he was enlisted as captain in the 4th Queen's Fusiliers at the remarkable pay of 15s 1d per day – even more remarkable he received six months' pay in advance. 'To suppose that we can continue to be paid at this enormous rate, can only be in the hallucinations of the credulous', he lamented. Estimating that his horse, mule and outfit alone cost him £150, while spending more than a guinea a day on 'dinner and picnics and champagne breakfasts', he found his expenses rapidly increasing and his pay would only cover his costs. Losack felt aggrieved not to be promoted to a majority and was detained in England while other officers went out to Spain. Sent to the West Country in July 1835 to recruit a company of men, he selected Exeter but 'a damn bad place it was for men'. Within a month the regiment had dispatched a major with 11 other officers and 170 men to Santander. Three weeks later Losack was still at Plymouth having recruited another 130 men, of them none 'were in the first brush'. Losack joined the BAL at Bilboa in October 1835 and was eventually promoted to major on Evans' Quartermaster General's Staff. Losack was then promoted to brevet Lieutenant Colonel and was decorated for his bravery. Despite this, like many, he found the campaign in Spain not quite to his taste and was back in England in July 1836 having resigned his commission.[49]

Promotion in the Royal Artillery during this period was notoriously slow.[50] John Humfrey joined the Royal Artillery as a Gentleman Cadet in 1815 and was promoted 2nd Lieutenant in 1822, before transferring to the infantry in 1829 as Lieutenant in the 56th West Essex Regiment. In 1830 he was on half pay, but in 1834 became Lieutenant in the 88th Regiment. And there he might have remained but for his joining the artillery in the BAL in 1835 with immediate promotion to Captain, which was followed by promotion to major the same year and transfer to the engineers. In just a few months Humfrey had gone from a lieutenant in the Regular Army to a Major in the BAL – moreover, in 1838 when writing his account of the campaign he had attained the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.[51] Yet, Evans had a particular problem attracting artillery officers to the Legion. Brett points to the exception granted to Captain J. N. Colquhoun, RA, to allow him to be placed on half

pay to serve in the Legion. In fact Palmerston had persuaded the Ordnance Board to place both Colquhoun and Major Reid of the Engineers on temporary half pay (there being no half pay list for their branches) thereby allowing them to join the BAL. Palmerston was also asked by Colquhoun to lobby the King to allow non-commissioned officers to be discharged in order to serve, but the King, 'worked upon by his Tory advisors' and regretting signing the Order in Council, had refused. In fact, Palmerston's irregular arrangement with the Ordnance Board had ignored royal protocols and upset the King, who then refused to grant permission to allow Reid and Colquhoun to serve in the BAL. If they did, and Reid was already in Spain, they would not be allowed to resume their careers in the British service and must continue forever on half pay. The King did not relent until 4 November thereby allowing Reid to remain in Spain and Colquhoun to join Evans.[52]

Despite Shaw's comment regarding pay, with terms and conditions of service identical to the Regular Army and the inevitable expenditure that ate into pay, it was promotion upon joining the BAL and the opportunity of further promotion once on campaign which seems to have acted as a driver for many officers. For those unsuccessful in finding a commission, it was the dangers of active service that Henderson and other 'gentleman volunteers' like him recognized as providing opportunities for promotion.[53] This is linked to another officer motivation recognized by Costello, something they could not achieve back home: 'fame and respectability'.[54] The attraction of following in the very footsteps of the British Army under Wellington might have also been a factor, especially among those volunteering as 'Gentlemen Cadets'. The first four volumes of William Napier's magisterial multi-volume history of Wellington's operations in the Peninsula had been published between 1828 and 1834 bringing those glorious campaigns back into the public psyche.[55] Moreover, the recent experience of British officers serving successfully in the Portuguese conflict had 'created quite a furore on the part of the adventurous youth of England to see service in the Peninsula'. Henderson also states that the suspension of the Enlistment Act gave the appearance of official sanction to the BAL and 'had the effect of causing many promising young men to join'.[56] Somerville recalls Ensign Bezant of the 9th Regiment who went to Spain 'full of that enthusiasm that made other young men, like himself, prefer an active military profession abroad to a nominal one at home'. The 18-year-old Ensign Chadwicke, a former Royal Navy midshipman, now of the 3rd Westminster Grenadiers, had been 'nursing a darling ambition, which not finding scope enough in the now peaceful Navy, led him to join the Spanish expedition, in which was his elder brother'. Ensign Chadwicke was mortally wounded on 5 May 1836.[57] Charles Shaw's prediction of July 1835 that 'This trip of pleasure to Spain will astonish some of the gentlemen' would prove very accurate for many.[58]

Rank and file

Rank and file in the Legion would, like the officers, be paid at the same rate as British Regulars, with a bounty of £2. Usually this money did not last long, Townley noted how on 23 July 1835 each of the recruits was paid their bounty as they boarded the *Royal Tar* steamer. Next day the entrepreneurial steward of the vessel took it upon himself to sell drink to these men, resulting in some drunkenness. On 27 July 1835 guards were stationed to prevent the steward continuing his lucrative business, but once the men were ashore they were 'free with their newly acquired wealth'.[59] With their bounty quickly disposed of the men of the Legion would have to rely on their pay. Regular Army basic pay was 1s a day for infantry and 1s 3d for cavalry (with 1d a day for beer). Soldiers were subject to numerous deductions to their pay, on occasion leaving them with as little as 1d a day in real terms. Extra duties and responsibilities could enhance levels of pay. Yet, rank and file were poorly, though regularly, paid when compared with average civilian wages which in 1847 were 8s 5d per week in the south of England, 9s 6d in southern Scotland and 11s 6d in northern England. Certainly for those men in declining industries or already unemployed or perhaps of dubious character the Legion offered the chance for pay and, perhaps, a degree of short-term adventure.[60]

In reality the motivation for volunteering was, as Costello noted, 'as varied as their professions and characters'. While some, including his Irish kinsmen, enlisted to fight, some 'went also to see the world, as they termed it'. Costello himself could not see why there had been opposition to British subjects 'earning an honest livelihood', by serving in the Legion, 'nor why if he prefers being knocked on the head in serving a Foreign Power, he should be termed a mercenary and a murderer'. 'A motley group I enlisted', he recalled:

> ...from the sons of peers, down even to dustmen, including doctors, lawyers, parson's clerks, and all the trades necessary to form a national hive of cunning, craft and industry. I had an honourable for a sergeant (the Hon. A. Curzon), a doctor for a corporal (A.M. Hart), the former of whom was afterwards appointed Lieutenant.[61]

Vigorous recruitment was undertaken in a number of urban areas, with particular emphasis on London, Manchester and Liverpool in England, Dublin and Cork in Ireland and Glasgow in Scotland; in fact the very same traditional areas for recruiting for the Regular Army.[62] Inevitably, according to Alexander Somerville, the Regular Army, the Indian Army and the Legion all drew their recruits from that 'particular portion of society from which armies are generally made up'. Reacting to charges 'that it was composed of the scum of society; if so' he argued, 'the British Army is the same'.[63] The men enlisting in the BAL – 3200 from England, 2800 from Ireland and 1800

from Scotland[64] – roughly reflect the make-up of the Regular Army in 1830, which was composed of 43.7 per cent English and Welshmen, 42.2 per cent Irishman and 13.6 per cent recruited from Scotland.[65]

Given the diverse nature of the Legion it was not surprising that Staff-Surgeon Rutherford Alcock found the quality of recruits varied greatly. By far the worst men were the English, 'a bad class as to physical capacity' Alcock thought; 'a great number of them were sickly Londoners, or men recruited from Liverpool and Bristol, accustomed to the enervating life of a large city, and exposed to a total change of climate, food and mode of life'. The best physical and moral specimens were the Irish. Though many had been recruited from the cities of Dublin and Cork, like the majority of the 7000–8000 men in Spain by late October 1835 who had enlisted in urban areas, they were not necessarily urbanites themselves. Alcock noted that the majority of the Irish were hardy agricultural souls. Somerville also claimed that most of the Legion's recruits were agricultural labourers. It is possible that these men had been pulled from rural areas towards the towns, perhaps in search of employment, and ended up enlisting in the Legion.[66]

Some recruits had military experience. Costello relates a story of a bugler major called M'Kay who had served the whole of the Peninsular War and had been a former corporal in Costello's battalion. M'Kay was shot and killed at Andoun, for which Costello felt some responsibility: 'Poor Fellow! It was through my persuasion that he joined the Legion, he being at the time a Chelsea Pensioner.'[67] The NCOs recruited into the Reyna Isabel Lancers had only minimal experience but were eager to learn. The suspension of the Enlistment Act, however, seemingly allowed BAL regiments to purchase NCOs and privates who decided to volunteer from the Regular Army. As we have seen, Colonel Kinloch and his field officers were 'wealthy men' and bought in a solid body of experienced men to help train the raw civilian recruits. Henderson also states that a number of rank and file were, upon reaching 15 years of service in regular Light Dragoon regiments, discharged at their request and then enlisted in the Reynha Ysabel Lancers. Once in Spain these men were exchanged for raw recruits in the cavalry regiments thereby increasing the effectiveness of that arm. Henderson also mentions that: 'A great number of Poles and Germans also joined us – capital ready-made soldiers' – but frustratingly provides no further details.[68] A corporal who Shaw found plundering a house produced a piece of parchment when Shaw he ordered him flogged, to his surprise it turned out to be 'his commission as Lieutenant in the British Navy, of eight years standing'.[69] Some men who enlisted were career deserters, motivated by bounty money. Upon reaching the *Swiftsure* hulk at Portsmouth (used to prevent recruits from absconding) one recruit found 'the rakings of the jails of the three kingdoms' along with 'not a few deserters from the army'.[70] Richardson mentions a sergeant named Prenderville who was a habitual deserter who had left one regiment only two days before joining one of the BALs cavalry regiments at

Portsmouth. Prenderville, along with two comrades, later deserted from the BAL to join the Carlists, who were offering a bounty of 25 dollars to tempt men like him to change sides.[71]

A large number of rank and file seem to have been recruited straight from civilian life with no previous military experience and who might not have been tempted to join the Regular Army. Again, the terms and conditions might have been a factor because service in the Legion was for a term of one or two years, unlike permanent enlistment in the British Army where from 1829 enlistment was for unlimited service.[72] Of the 800 men who enlisted in Somerville's 8th Regiment only 130 had served in the militia or British regulars while another 20 were deserters. Of the rest, nearly 100 had run their own business and failed, 20 were pensioners while 90 were professional criminals; there were 90 runaway apprentices and 120 men left their wives at home (the majority having recently quarrelled with them) while 20 had been disappointed in love. 'Very few entered the legion from a mere love of soldiering', he thought; instead many acted on impulse while drunk. Some managed to escape, or were taken by sheriffs and bailiffs, from the ship before it left Greenock Quay.[73] Richardson recalls meeting a private of the 3rd Regiment, 'I never saw a more perfect looking ruffian'; the man was a carpenter by trade and his comrade was a bricklayer.[74] The anonymous author of a memoir was a tailor, and met another of that trade 'a young man of respectable connections who had of late ... been "rather wild" ', in the recruiting station, the Ship public house. His own motivation for enlisting was the 'well-known liberality of the Colonel' as well as the £2 bounty.[75] Somerville mentions an ex-ship owner called William Douglass who had fallen on hard times, 'shame and beggary caused him to go to Spain' and also a former hawker of coals from Edinburgh.[76]

Of the 1800 Scots no more than 150 were from the Highlands; instead they were mainly recruited from the textile manufacturing towns, specifically in and around Glasgow, and particularly handloom weavers. As Alcock dryly noted the 'change of existence from a weaver to a soldier on active service is as violent as can be conceived'.[77] The Glasgow weavers are an interesting case. The cotton industry was undergoing a marked change with the move from handlooms to industrialized factory processes. In 1830 there were around 240,000 handloom weavers in the UK; by 1835 this number had fallen to 188,000.[78] A number of petitions were sent to the government from the handloom weavers in the 1830s and the Report of a Select Committee from 1834 paints a depressing picture of the economic situation of many. Those examined from Glasgow said that there was full employment but the large numbers of workers meant that all were very poor. The average day was claimed to be 13 hours, with 6s 5d being earned for a six-day week, from which a frame rent of 1s 5d was deducted.[79] Such was the 'force of circumstances' Somerville argued, rather than necessarily 'their moral character' which led many of them to enlist.[80] This economic driver is also mentioned

by Shaw who noted that in August 1835 a group of men recruited from Glasgow and shipped to Spain were 'happy and contented, and leaving a great part of their money with their relations'. As noted, many believed they were enlisting with the option of serving only one year and that there would be little fighting, perhaps making the conscious decision that a year's regular pay plus bounty was a more attractive prospect than a weaver's wages. Moreover, the extant economic conditions also created a sense of urban and agricultural violent radicalization, and what better way to get rid of local troublemakers than to pack them off to Spain with the BAL. Writing in 1836 Shaw recalled the farewell comments of a Glasgow banker who had thanked him the previous year for taking so many 'blackguards away'.[81]

Ideology

With an ideological object inspiring the formation of the Legion, it was unsurprising that there was an ideological aspect to its recruitment, at least among some of its high-profile members. Alava had specifically asked for Evans to command it. It was a controversial request for by the time of the Carlist War, Evans was probably more famous for his radical views and dislike of Tory 'establishment' politics, in particular the political views of the Duke of Wellington, than his military career. Evans had stood for a radical manifesto in 1830 when elected MP for Rye before securing his current Westminster seat in 1833.[82] This ideological debate may in part explain some of the opposition to his appointment, as well as questions as to whether he should resign his seat before taking up his appointment. There were also perhaps more justifiable concerns about his rank, with Lord Mahon musing whether 'a half-pay Lieutenant Colonel' possessed the military rank, experience and authority to command a force of 10,000 men.[83] Although the Tories were 'furious' at the selection of Evans he possessed the full support of Palmerston[84] who had, despite disagreeing with Evans on a 'variety of points', recommended him to King William IV.[85] Apart from Evans' experience of campaigning in the area of intended operations, he possessed the correct political views. Somerville stated that Evans was fighting for liberal ideas – for 'the good of mankind'. This was in stark contrast to the cause Wellington had fought for in 1808–15 'to rivet more firmly the already galling chains of physical and intellectual slavery'.[86] Evans had advocated British intervention in Portugal in 1833 and intervention to help the Spanish achieve some of the liberties enjoyed in Britain. He opposed Carlist despotism and the inquisition.[87]

This was essential for Palmerston who declared to Villiers: 'It is only men of ardent minds who are fit for difficult enterprizes.' If Alava had desired a commander 'either favourable to Carlos or lukewarm in the cause of the Queen, the whole thing must have failed'.[88] It was, Palmerston informed William IV, 'essential that the officers who may be employed on the present

occasion, should be men of Liberal opinions' less they fall foul of suspicion by the Court of Madrid regarding their commitment to the anti-Carlist cause. For in that case 'distrust and dissension would inevitably lead to failure'.[89] Instead the cause of liberalism would infuse the Legion, from its political inception, down through its strategic purpose to its operational and tactical conduct and effectiveness. There was, however, a problem with this as recognized by Henderson. In the Portuguese conflict British subjects had fought against oppression yet the object of the BAL was to assist the Court of Madrid in suppressing the Basque people, who were fighting to retain their ancient privileges. In Portugal there had been support from the local populace, whereas in Spain the BAL suffered the 'bitterest and most deadly animosity'.[90]

With, perhaps, an eye on self-justification, Shaw wrote in April 1836 that he resented being called a mercenary, instead he felt keenly committed to 'the extension of liberal principles'. He was, he argued, 'fighting for a principle; although I assure you, if I did not feel for the cause, I am certain I could not serve with zeal'. He also believed that many officers of the Legion were 'instead of being, as they ought to be, "Liberty Men", they are in politics quite on the other side'. Here he mirrored Palmerston's concerns, since for those who were not committed to the cause of liberty were, Shaw thought, 'not embarked heart and soul in the affair'.[91]

Conclusion

As the author of several illuminating sources regarding the Legion, it is fitting to conclude with Somerville's own motivation for volunteering. He did not, like some of his fellow-soldiers, express much of a desire to fight for the Spanish 'liberal cause', and pay and promotion do not seem to have figured in his decision-making. Instead he was interested in the free passage to Spain which would allow him to travel and to write a book about his experiences. Overall he thought that:

> ... the general impression sought to be made upon me and others, was, that there would be very little fighting: that we should probably be only a few months there; and that the most that would be required of us would be, to show in formidable numbers for Isabella and the constitution; upon which, the Carlists and absolutism would at once shrink to nothing before us.[92]

The belief in an easy victory was prevalent at the highest levels, and Somerville's words suggest that there was a view that the impact of Legion would be more diplomatic and political than military. This seems plausible since Palmerston responded to Alava's request when he had previously ruled out British military intervention (regular and indirect) while he and Villiers

were concerned about the wider implications for the Quadruple Alliance if France intervened but Britain did not or vice versa.[93]

Palmerston was convinced that the Legion would 'turn the fate of the war' for the Cristino cause and that the 10,000 men of the Legion would be 'worth forty thousand fighting men to the Queen'.[94] But he misjudged the potential effectiveness of the Legion and this was down to the problems of attracting and retaining effective officers and the quality of the rank and file. A Medical Board assembled at Bilbao found that around one-eighth of the Legion was unfit for service and should never have been accepted into service. Of those the board classed as fit for service only two-thirds would have been accepted into the Regular Army. If an average of 7500 men is taken for the Legion, removing the 1000 unfit for duty, and then another third as too old or too young, the Legion could probably only put somewhere in the region of 4000–4500 men into the field truly fit for active service, a problem that was later admitted by Evans himself.[95] Finally, there was a failure to understand the character of the war. As Villiers recognized in February 1836, it was a horrible war. With atrocities on both sides and the Carlists refusal to enter into a 'fair' fight, instead using guerrilla tactics of ambush and dispersal in the rugged terrain of northern Spain, the war was deeply unpleasant for the Legion. As Villiers declared 'it is a miserable mess and the English name has sadly lost its prestigo'.[96]

The Legion was disbanded on 10 June 1837. Many of the Legion fought and died in Spain in foreign service for a foreign cause. For the many who survived the ordeal, whatever their motivation for volunteering, the fight for recognition, pay, pensions and compensation was, sadly, only just beginning.[97]

Acknowledgement

Dr Martin Robson is a Lecturer at King's College London, Defence Studies Department at the Joint Services Command and Staff College, Defence Academy of the UK. The analysis, opinions and conclusions expressed or implied in this work are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the views of the JSCSC, the UK MoD or any other government agency. The quote in the title of this chapter is from: Anon., 'Evenings at Sea,' *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, vol. 48, July–December 1840 (Edinburgh, 1840), p. 42.

Notes

1. Edward Brett, *The British Auxiliary Legion in the First Carlist War in Spain, 1835–1838: A Forgotten Army* (Dublin, 2005), p. 161.
2. Official record keeping and archiving of material was not as thorough as for regular British expeditions. There is, however, a wealth of untapped material in the National Archives, National Army Museum and other UK local archives as well as

the archives in Spain but an exhaustive search has been beyond the scope of this chapter.

3. See Lancashire Record Office, DDTY 2/5/1, Charles Townley, *Rough Notes by a Rough Fellow, the Journal of the Carlist War in Spain experiences of Cpt. Charles Townley in Northern Spain with the British Auxiliary Legion*, entries for 27 July 1835, 31 July 1835, 1 August 1835, 24 August 1835.
4. Brett, *British Auxiliary Legion*, p. 54.
5. Rutherford Alcock, *Notes on the Medical History and Statistics of the British Legion of Spain* (London, 1838), pp. 6–7.
6. Brett, *British Auxiliary Legion*, though not without its faults, is the most accessible modern source for the history of the Legion.
7. Christine Krüger & Sonja Levsen, 'Volunteers, War, and the Nation Since the French Revolution', in C. G. Krüger and S. Levesen (eds), *War Volunteering in Modern Times: From the French Revolution to the Second World War* (Basingstoke, 2011), pp. 8–9.
8. For an accessible overview see Brett, *British Auxiliary Legion*, chapters 1 and 2.
9. George De Lacy Evans, *Memoranda on the Contest in Spain* (London, 1840) p. 6, noted that between 1823 and 1830 the Spanish army declined in numbers to around 45,000 men.
10. Palmerston to Villiers, 22.4.1834, Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts, *Prime Ministers' Papers Series: Palmerston, I: Private Correspondence with Sir George Villiers (afterwards fourth Earl of Clarendon) as Minister to Spain 1833–1837* (HMSO, 1985) (hereafter *Palmerston I*), pp. 131–2.
11. 'Affairs of Spain, Orders in Council', HC Deb (3rd series), 24 June 1835, vol. 28, pp. 1134–7.
12. Brett, *British Auxiliary Legion*, pp. 22–4.
13. Palmerston to Villiers, 22.5.1835, Villiers to Palmerston, 12 May 1835 and 20 May 1835, *Palmerston I*, pp. 239–45.
14. Brett, *British Auxiliary Legion*, pp. 25–6.
15. 'Foreign Enlistment Act', HC Deb (3rd series), 6 August 1833, vol. 20, pp. 381–9.
16. 'Foreign Enlistment Act', HC Deb (3rd series), 24 April 1834, vol. 22, pp. 1368–71.
17. 'At the Court at St. James's, the 10th day of June, 1835, present, The King's Most Excellent Majesty in Council', reproduced in Alexander Somerville, *History of The British Legion and War in Spain* (London, 1839) pp. 672–3.
18. 'Spanish Auxiliaries', HL Deb (3rd series), 12 June 1835, vol. 28, p. 716.
19. 'Spain-Order in Council', HL Deb (3rd series), 15 June 1835, vol. 28, pp. 779–81.
20. 'Affairs of Spain, Orders in Council', HC Deb (3rd series), 24 June 1835, vol. 28, pp. 1136–7.
21. Brett, *British Auxiliary Legion*, pp. 22–4.
22. Villiers to Granville, 13.7.1835, *Palmerston I*, pp. 266–7.
23. Evans, *Memoranda*, p. 27.
24. John Hambly Humfrey, *A Concise Review of the Campaigns of the British Legion in Spain* (London, 1838), pp. 12–13.
25. Evans, *Memoranda*, p. 23.
26. The document is reproduced in Somerville, *History of The British Legion*, pp. 674–5.
27. Edward Spiers, *The Army and Society* (London, 1980), p. 14.
28. Edward Spiers, *Radical General: Sir George de Lacy Evans, 1787–1870* (Manchester, 1983), pp. 64–5. While both Spiers and the 'List of Officers' in *The Times* of 30 July 1835 list Evans as 'unattached' the British Army list for 1835 details him as 'Half-pay 5th West India Regt', TNA WO 65/98, p. 25.

29. Robert Henderson, *The Soldier of Three Queens: A Narrative of Personal Adventure* (London, 1866), pp. 196–8.
30. Brett, *British Auxiliary Legion*, p. 28; Spiers, *Radical General*, p. 68; Evans, *Memoranda*, pp. 25–6, 133.
31. Spiers, *Radical General*, p. 68; Evans, *Memoranda*, pp. 25–6.
32. Edward Costello, *The Adventures of a Soldier; or, Memoirs of Edward Costello* (London, 1841) pp. 320–2, 328.
33. Henderson, *Soldier of Three Queens*, p. viii (for his return from Portugal) and pp. 191–5.
34. Spiers, *Radical General*, p. 68; Evans, *Memoranda*, pp. 25–6.
35. Costello, *Adventures of a Soldier*, p. 327. 'Pedroite' refers to those officers who served in the forces of Dom Pedro during the Portuguese Civil Wars, 1828–34.
36. Charles Shaw to Major Bruce Mitchell, 15 July 1835, Charles Shaw, *Personal Memoirs and Correspondence of Colonel Charles Shaw* (London, 1837), vol. 2, pp. 404–10.
37. Shaw to Patrick Shaw, September 1835, Shaw, *Personal Memoirs*, vol. 2, pp. 425–8.
38. Shaw to James Shaw, 1 April 1836, Shaw, *Personal Memoirs*, vol. 2, pp. 520–2.
39. Shaw to Major Bruce Mitchell, 15 July 1835, Shaw, *Personal Memoirs*, vol. 2, pp. 404–10.
40. Shaw to Evans, 10 August 1835; Shaw to George Shaw, 21 August 1836, Shaw, *Personal Memoirs*, vol. 2, pp. 416–19, 624–26.
41. Henderson, *Soldier of Three Queens*, p. 190.
42. Spiers, *Radical General*, p. 68; Evans, *Memoranda*, pp. 25–6.
43. Henderson, *Soldier of Three Queens*, p. 191.
44. *The Times*, 30 July 1835, p. 7, col A. The list is also accessible as a TNA 'Your Archives' memorandum dated 1993, though some wag has added a 'H Flashman, Rugby Volunteers' to the end of the list! See http://yourarchives.nationalarchives.gov.uk/index.php?title=British_Foreign_Legion_in_Spain,_1835.
45. Spiers, *Army and Society*, pp. 12–15.
46. John Richardson, *Movements of the British Legion* (London, 1837), pp. 10–11.
47. *A List of the Officers of the Army and of the Corps of Royal Marines By Great Britain* (War Office, 1821), p. 588.
48. TNA WO 65/98, p. 456.
49. Losack to Monsieur de Boinville, 19 September 1835, 26 May 1836 and 29 July 1836, National Army Museum, Accession number 1969-08-10.
50. Richard Holmes, *Redcoat: The British Soldier in the Age of Horse and Musket* (London, 2002), p. 176.
51. 'Record of service of Lt Col John Hambly Humfrey, KSF, Royal Staff Corps, Royal Artillery and British Legion in Spain, 1800–1838'; National Army Museum, Accession no. 1990-08-108. Humphrey, *A Concise Review*.
52. Brett, *British Auxiliary Legion*, p. 29; Palmerston to Villiers, 23 October 1835, 4 November 1835, *Palmerston I*, pp. 311–14, 321.
53. Henderson, *Soldier of Three Queens*, pp. 196–8.
54. Costello, *Adventures of a Soldier*, p. iii.
55. William F. P. Napier, *History of the War in the Peninsula and in the South of France From the year 1807 to the Year 1814* (London, 1828–40).
56. Henderson, *Soldier of Three Queens*, pp. 191–2.
57. Somerville, *History of The British Legion*, pp. 345, 366.
58. Shaw to Thomas G Shaw, 31 July 1835, Shaw, *Personal Memoirs*, vol. 2, pp. 410–13.

59. Lancashire Record Office, DDTY 2/5/1, Townley, *Rough Notes by a Rough Fellow*, entries for 23 July 1835, 24 July 1835, 27 July 1835.
60. Spiers, *Army and Society*, pp. 52–3. The 1847 figure is a useful comparison, especially if the Indices of Average Wages is factored in which shows a slight drop in average wages from 1831 to 1845, Brian R. Mitchell, *British Historical Statistics* (Cambridge, 1988), p. 25.
61. Costello, *Adventures of a Soldier*, pp. iii, 320, 323.
62. Henderson, *Soldier of Three Queens*, p. 190; Spiers, *Army and Society*, pp. 40–8.
63. Somerville, *History of The British Legion*, pp. 5–6.
64. Alcock, *Notes on the Medical History*, pp. 4–5, 8.
65. Spiers, *Army and Society*, p. 50.
66. Alcock, *Notes on the Medical History*, pp. 4–5, 8; Somerville, *History of The British Legion*, p. 6.
67. Costello, *Adventures of a Soldier*, pp. 364–5.
68. Henderson, *Soldier of Three Queens*, pp. 196–9, pp. 205–6 for the distribution of the experienced soldiers from the Dragoons.
69. Shaw, *Personal Memoirs*, vol. 2, p. 455.
70. Anon., 'Autobiography of a Soldier: Two Years in the Anglo-Spanish Legion', *The British Army and Navy Review*, vol. 4 (London, 1866) pp. 274–5.
71. Richardson, *Movements of the British Legion*, p. 14. Prenderville was later reported killed in action against the BAL.
72. Spiers, *Army and Society*, pp. 52–3.
73. Alexander Somerville, *A Narrative of the British Auxiliary Legion: With Incidents, Anecdotes, and Sketches of All Parties Connected With the War in Spain, From a Journal of Personal Observation* (Glasgow, 1838) pp. 3–4.
74. Richardson, *Movements of the British Legion*, pp. 290–1.
75. Anon., 'Autobiography of a Soldier', pp. 274–5.
76. Somerville, *History of The British Legion*, pp. 308, 551.
77. Alcock, *Notes on the Medical History*, pp. 4–5, 8; Somerville, *History of The British Legion*, p. 6.
78. Mitchell, *British Historical Statistics*, p. 376.
79. John Maxwell, *British Parliamentary Papers: Report from Select Committee on Hand-loom Weavers' Petitions, With the Minutes of Evidence and Index Also Analysis of the Evidence Taken Before the Select Committee on Hand-loom Weavers' Petitions (1834–1835)* (Shannon, 1968), pp. 41–60, 72–84.
80. Somerville, *History of The British Legion*, p. 6.
81. Shaw to Evans, 10 August 1835; Shaw to James Shaw, 1 April 1836, Shaw, *Personal Memoirs*, vol. 2, pp. 416–9, 534.
82. Details relating to Evans background comes from Spiers, *Radical General*, chapters 1 and 3.
83. 'Affairs of Spain, Orders in Council', HC Deb (3rd series), 24 June 1835, vol. 28, pp. 1138–40.
84. Palmerston to Villiers, 16 June 1835, *Palmerston I*, pp. 256–7.
85. Palmerston to King William IV, 12 June 1835, Charles Webster, *The Foreign Policy of Palmerston, 1830–1841* (London, 1969), vol. 2, pp. 809–10.
86. Somerville, *History of the British Legion*, p. 498.
87. Spiers, *Radical General*, pp. 64–5. Evans would later write in the preface to his 1840 *Memoranda* (pp. iv–v) that the eventual success of the Cristinos was 'a triumph of enlightened views and generous feelings over a Rebellion, having for its object Despotism and the Inquisition'.

88. Palmerston to Villiers, 16 June 1835, *Palmerston I*, p. 257.
89. Palmerston to King William IV, 12 June 1835, Webster, *Palmerston*, vol. 2, pp. 809–10. Palmerston was also sensitive to the religious aspect of the Spanish people hoping that 'Catholics of the South of Ireland should be induced to volunteer'.
90. Henderson, *Soldier of Three Queens*, p. 193.
91. Shaw to James Shaw, 1 April 1836, Shaw, *Personal Memoirs*, vol. 2, p. 524.
92. Alexander Somerville, *The Autobiography of a Working Man* (London, 1848), p. 429.
93. Villiers to Palmerston, 7 June 1835, Palmerston to Villiers, 16 June 1835, *Palmerston I*, pp. 250–1, 256.
94. Palmerston to Villiers, 9 July 1835, 28 July 1835, *Palmerston I*, p. 263–5, 270.
95. Alcock, *Notes on the Medical History,* pp. 5–7; Evans, *Memoranda*, p. 123.
96. Villiers to Palmerston, 27 February 1836, *Palmerston I*, pp. 381–3.
97. See Brett, *British Auxiliary Legion*, Chapter 20.

12
British Red Shirts: A History of the Garibaldi Volunteers (1860)

Marcella Pellegrino Sutcliffe

If the recent reassessment of the 'nation bearing arms' has found new vigour within Alberto Banti's inward-looking nationalistic discourse of the 'nation of the Risorgimento', other studies have looked beyond national boundaries.[1] As Gilles Pécout has recently affirmed, 'In Europe's long nineteenth century, no cause was more international than that of nation', and, indeed, 'armed volunteers were one of the clearest demonstrations of the essentially transnational character of the Risorgimento'.[2] Opening the narrative beyond the national means investigating the motivations of the volunteers who risked dying not 'for one's country' but for someone else's. In fact, it may be argued that the concept of transnational sacrifice undermines the potency of the nationalistic discourse.

In light of the renewed interest in the Garibaldian volunteers' movement, this chapter re-examines the role played by the 800-strong 'British Legion' and, more generally, by the numerous volunteers who crossed the Channel to help Garibaldi liberate the south of Italy in 1860.[3] The aim is to assess what drove these volunteers to embrace sacrifice and risk their lives in pursuit of the unification of Italy. In challenging the traditional, overwhelmingly disparaging historiography, which has relegated the British contribution to little more than a mercenary exploit, new questions on the emotions which drove the volunteers are posed: were volunteers fired by the rhetoric of international brotherhood or was their resolve rooted in civic pride, duty to their own country and allegiance to the values of freedom which Britain stood for? Were British volunteers who put their lives at risk for the cause of Italy animated by the same desire to affirm the 'nation' which drove local Garibaldians to fight? And is transnational sacrifice evidence of a common ideal which drove foreign volunteers to at least *conceive* that they might die for Italy and partake vicariously in the epic of the Risorgimento?

The negative reputation that the British Legion, acquired already in contemporary newspaper accounts, largely created the basis for a historiography overwhelmingly defined by the blunders of the expedition.[4] Significantly, John Pemble, who dedicated a study to the 'Mediterranean passion', made

no effort to analyse the emotions of the British volunteers, affirming that 'most of these were hard-drinking roughs from the slums of London and Glasgow'.[5] Clearly, Pemble was relying on G. M. Trevelyan's famous definition: the volunteers were 'roughs from London and Glasgow'.[6] On closer scrutiny, however, Trevelyan's damning verdict appears to have been more nuanced: beyond the notorious 'roughs' he also acknowledged the existence of an 'other half' within the British Legion, defined as 'old soldiers, volunteers and general enthusiasts', who 'could not, by their own better conduct, save the Legion from acquiring a name for disorder'. The 'other half', according to some primary sources analysed, may well have been the silent majority which did not make the headlines.[7]

Spring 1860: radical volunteers

The early volunteers participated in the Italian venture animated by internationalist principles, feeling part of a transnational community where British workers – in the spirit of 'brotherhood' – would help Italian workers achieve Italy's freedom. Internationalist volunteering had had illustrious precedents. In 1821 the first wave of philhellenism, a romantic movement, had famously witnessed Byron's ultimate sacrifice for the sake of the liberation of Greece, a gesture which had affirmed political friendship across national boundaries.[8] A similarly passionate concern for the fate of the Italian people would inspire early British volunteers to follow Garibaldi. The Italian General's name, already familiar to some due to his exploits in the revolutionary movements in South America, had risen to even greater popularity since British newspapers had reported on his heroic defence of the Roman Republic in 1849.

As Margot Finn has shown, following the Chartist demise, in 1848, British radicalism had found a new focus in foreign causes.[9] Republicans' spirits were lifted in 1849 at the news that Pius IX had fled from Rome and a republican government had been established. Giuseppe Mazzini – one of many European exiles in London – had been called to head the Roman Republic.[10] Following the establishment of the new government, a constitution had been penned for the citizens of the new Republic, affirming the Romans' civil and political rights. However, republican hopes were soon dashed. The five months devoted to building the Republic in Rome had been marred by repeated military attacks by French troops. Despite a crushing defeat, republicans across the world were inspired by the brave defence of the city: the names of Mazzini and Garibaldi, the strenuous defenders of the short-lived Roman Republic, had then clearly risen to international fame.[11]

Ten years later, in 1859, Garibaldi was once again engaged in leading volunteers to fight against the Austrian occupier in northern Italy. By now the 'Italian Question' had attracted the attention of the British government and the support of large sections of the British public: significantly, a spate of

popular biographies on the Italian General had been published in London.[12] Among those fighting in the Alps side by side with Garibaldi was one of the early foreign volunteers, Colonel John Peard, of Irish Protestant descent, who then became known as 'Garibaldi's Englishman'. A few months later Peard would also be among the 33 British volunteers who participated in the famous expedition of the 'Thousand', from Genoa to Sicily in May 1860. Later that year he would be put in charge of the 'British Legion'.

In leading the May expedition Garibaldi aimed to secure the liberation of the south and the unification of Italy. Garibaldi's political views had shifted away from Mazzini's republican convictions, which had inspired the Roman Republic, gradually coming to welcome the idea of a constitutional monarchy which would ensure Italy's independence. The differences which had ensued between Mazzini and Garibaldi were however publicly down-played as the expedition set sail.

Unaware of the rift, British volunteers who set off to join Garibaldi's expedition were fired up by internationalist ideals.[13] The working-class 'generous fellows' who reached Sicily independently had been 'profoundly shaken' by the news of Garibaldi's expedition in May, responding to the appeals made by the 'London Trades Council', which organized a demonstration at St. Martin's Hall.[14] Radical volunteers converged from beyond the strict confines of the capital: not only had the *Jersey Independent,* edited by Chartist journalist Julian Harney, gathered support on the island, but the links which Harney fostered with the republicans in the north-east ensured that the early volunteers also included radical workers from Newcastle.[15]

The early volunteers would gain a level of prestige denied to the later members of the so-called 'British Legion', which set off for Italy in early autumn. A hierarchy of honour, measured on when the volunteers had joined the fight, was a recognized demarcation within the Garibaldians at large. Significantly, in the aftermath of Garibaldi's victory against the Bourbons, the recently published Mazzinian newspaper, *Il Popolo d'Italia*, reported that medals had been distributed only to those who had taken part in the original spring expedition to Sicily.[16] Garibaldi's own loyalty towards the early volunteers was patent.[17] Writing to the radical Scot, John McAdam, the General affirmed that only those whose names had been noted in the first appeal to the people in May 1860 would receive from Naples approximately 100 portraits of himself.[18]

The separation between the early volunteers and the later members of the British Legion was clearly defined by the arrival of the latter, who did not reach Italy until 15 October, able to take part only in the last battle of Capua (19 October 1860).[19] Admittedly, the two groups did have some common traits: all the volunteers were fighting in someone else's war, in defiance of British laws which banned British subjects from serving in a foreign country. Moreover, not being drawn from the army, all British 'red shirts' belonged to the 'amateur', 'citizen-soldier' typology, with the possible exception of a

handful of mercenaries and adventurers.[20] From an ideological standpoint, however, the two groups differed.

The early spring volunteers, who followed Garibaldi from Milazzo to Capua, were radicals, moved by internationalist rhetoric.[21] Although many had set off independently, others were loosely organized by a fervent republican Mazzinian, Hugh Forbes. Having defended the Roman Republic in 1849 and campaigned for support for Italy's republican cause in Britain and America, Forbes had attempted to form a British Legion to buttress the revolutionary Sicilians' final resistance against the Bourbon forces, as early as 1848 – yet his attempt had failed.[22] In May 1860 Forbes finally succeeded in organizing a foreign legion, which would include 'Hungarians, Swiss, Germans, French English and also Italians', insisting, however, that the legion's departure from England would produce 'certain political significance which would be very useful', as the presence of some Englishmen would yield 'its own good in more than one way'.[23] The suggestion was that the international community of volunteers would benefit from the presence of British soldiers. Transnational volunteers, imagined in hierarchical terms, were viewed as reflecting their national 'character': the 'English', in Forbes's arguable view, were expected to distinguish themselves. While organizing the British contribution Forbes exchanged secret correspondence with Garibaldi, making use of the radical editor G. W. M. Reynolds's address. Reynolds's implication leaves no doubt as to Forbes's political inclinations at the time of the early volunteers' recruitment. Indeed, *Reynolds's Newspaper* would remain for many decades republican and, indeed Mazzinian, both in tone and in style.[24]

The British Legion organizers: diverging intentions and convictions

While the early British volunteers inconspicuously trickled to Sicily, joining other foreign volunteers within the 'Esercito meridionale', the national identity of the later volunteers was potently underlined by the British Legion's flag, especially designed by William Linton for their expedition.[25] Having a banner as a unifying symbol was, however, no guarantee for communality of intents: Mazzinians such as George Holyoake, Durrell Hodge, William Linton, Joseph Cowen, John McAdam and William De Rohan, animated by republican beliefs, had joined forces with moderate sympathizers of Garibaldi for the sake of forming a Central Committee of the Garibaldi Fund: as Finn accurately put it, 'disparate conceptions of Italian unity required radicals to suppress or sublimate their partisan patriotisms'.[26] Modest working-class subscriptions were now dwarfed by the contributions of London liberal magnates.[27]

The various sources of material support enjoyed by Garibaldi's expedition to Sicily provide the most convincing evidence of the transnational nature

of this defining episode of the Risorgimento. A donation of 100 revolvers and carbines was sent by the American manufacturer and freemason, Samuel Colt; more weapons would subsequently be commissioned from him by Garibaldi. In London, weapons worth £400 were purchased by the Committee. The Jersey-born, naturalized American Mazzinian, William De Rohan, who masterminded the expedition of the 'British Legion', allegedly financed the purchase of three steamers – renamed the *Washington,* the *Oregon* and the *Franklin* – which carried Garibaldi's main reinforcements.[28] De Rohan also added to these the *Emperor*, which the Committee placed at his disposal. Many more offers of help came to the London Committee from British benefactors. Mr Isaac Campbell of Jermyn Street provided the uniforms, of which 250 were paid for by the Committee while the rest was covered by the funds raised.[29]

To the puzzled consternation of all radical observers, Britain's official policy towards Italy's unification had patently moved towards the tacit acceptance of the inevitable collapse of the old regime, and conservative institutions were increasingly showing their support for Garibaldi. Nevertheless, republican supporters were quietly at work within the London Committee in the hope of establishing a republic in Italy. The substantial contribution of £1000 made by the wealthy republican Durrell Hodge, heartened William Linton, the Mazzinian Secretary of the Central Committee, who greeted the donation with 'the heartiest thanks and gratitude'. McAdam had also written to Garibaldi 'delicately' hinting that British friends 'expected his cooperation with Mazzini':[30] among increasingly faltering loyalties, McAdam desperately looked for reliable allies like Holyoake, whom he considered a '*true* friend of Italy' [original emphasis].[31]

As one of the organizers of the British Legion, Holyoake echoed McAdam's concerns. When writing for the *Daily News* under the pseudonym Landor Praed, Holyoake stressed that the organizing Committee consisted 'of a few friends of Garibaldi only' but 'chiefly of attached friends of Mazzini'.[32] Responding to De Rohan's suggestion, Holyoake had masterminded the idea of organizing the British Legion. Even before the proposal was muted in London at the St. James Volunteers Service Club in August 1860, Holyoake had travelled to Newcastle to select 'an armour for De Rohan' and to meet John Baxter Langley, editor of Joseph Cowen's radical paper, the *Newcastle Daily Chronicle,* which would publish an announcement calling for volunteers.[33] Cowen's paper indeed published a leading article on 13 August entitled *Who will fight for Garibaldi?* where the 'gallant part played by the small band of Englishmen who fought with Garibaldi at Melazzo' [22 July 1860] was remarked upon and the General's desire to have around him more 'steady, practical Englishmen' was aired.[34] By September Cowen had sent a letter to Garibaldi expressing the 'people' of England's wholehearted support for the expedition: 'all classes of men' were included, a sign that the resonance of the 'Garibaldi moment' had reached well beyond the erstwhile

radical colours of the support granted by the Tyneside workers to the Italian revolutionary.[35]

Those who resented the departure of the expedition were indeed a small conservative minority. While they vociferously expressed their disapproval by drawing attention to the violation of the Foreign Enlistment Act – applying for a warrant against the publisher of the *Newcastle Daily Chronicle* for calling for volunteers – they were unable to stop the British Garibaldians.[36] This was a sign that the expedition had the tacit approval of the establishment as it increasingly appeared to be defined not by its republicanism and radicalism but by the liberal values associated with England. Indeed, it was becoming apparent that the republican element within the second wave of volunteers was not as powerful as the radical organizers within the Central Committee would have wished.[37]

The British Legion volunteers: the emotion of a *Grand Tour* destination

Following the explicit call for volunteers published in the *Newcastle Daily Chronicle*, other appeals published chose carefully guarded words when making similar announcements, thus circumventing the accusation of violating the Foreign Enlistment Act. The Central Committee consequently announced:

> A select party of English excursionists intends to visit South Italy. As the country is somewhat unsettled, the excursionists will be furnished with means of self-defense, and with a view of recognising each other, will be attired in a picturesque and uniform costume. General Garibaldi has liberally granted the excursionists a free passage to Sicily and Italy, and they will be supplied with refreshments and attire suitable for the climate.[38]

The use of the term 'excursionists', instead of 'volunteers', was not only within the law, it was also romantically suggestive. Combined with an increasingly depoliticized image of Garibaldi, the announcement appealed to the educated classes for whom 'the names of places in the South acted like an incantation on the emotions', and to the middle classes for whom Italy was at the same time 'foreign *and* familiar'.[39] This was reflected in the commentary published by the *London Review*: 'This is the time for tourists. [...] and a chosen handful have lately elected to visit Mount Etna and Garibaldi. [...] These last have the best of it: with their rifles on their shoulders [...] They may see Vesuvius too, before they have done with the excursion.'[40]

The fascination of northern travellers with volcanoes, and with Etna in particular, a literary *topos* of the time, added a further dimension to the exoticism of the 'excursion'.[41] In fact, the attraction of the destination of the

'excursionists' was regularly underlined according to the familiar rhetoric of *Grand Tour* travels. The *Birmingham Daily Post* cajoled its readers by affirming: 'Not less than 600 men leave England to pay their respects to Garibaldi, and to enjoy the romantic scenery of that country, which has been briefly described as "the land of love and sunny skies".'[42]

Even Palmerston was supposed to have reservations at the idea of the government interfering with a group of Englishmen en route 'to visit Etna'.[43] Among some members of the establishment the 'excursion' had the further appeal of providing the opportunity for the Protestant creed to be spread to a Catholic country: one of the British Legion Garibaldians was no other than the son of Lord Shaftesbury, the evangelical leader of Exeter Hall. On the whole, however, the upper classes were scantly represented. In the light of the typically English attraction for the 'romance of Italy', the enrolment of 800 men to form Garibaldi's British Legion had mostly appealed to the liberal middle classes and the skilled workers, whose support for Italy shifted from the public sphere to the private sphere, from the financial gesture of subscribing to the *Garibaldi Fund* to the personal commitment to fight, shed one's blood and potentially sacrifice one's life for the love of another country.

The British Legion and the volunteer force

The response to the appeal overwhelmed the organizing Committee.[44] It was decided 'after much trouble and anxiety' to contain the number of applicants by 'preventing a very large number of enthusiastic but misguided young men from leaving good situations, wives, widowed mothers and families who were dependent on them for support'.[45] The Committee also requested that those who joined should be members of a local Rifle Volunteer regiment, an assurance of some experience of drilling and military discipline.[46]

Not all of the keen and mostly young enthusiasts therefore made it to Italy. As many were left behind, the recruitment of the British Legion volunteers from the ranks of the Volunteer Force crucially qualified the catchment of the recruits. Modelled on the British Volunteer Movement which had arisen during the time of the Napoleonic threat between 1794 and 1814, the later branch of the Volunteer Force had been formed in 1859, in response to the mounting panic surrounding the resurgence of the possibility of a French invasion.[47] The Volunteer Force, which had found a substantial following throughout the country, was the 'military expression of self-help', associated with 'the right of the people to bear arms'.[48] The idea of a 'people's militia' appealed to radicals in general as it seemed to provide an alternative to the traditional role of the army, led by the aristocracy, which was associated with 'old corruption'. Moreover, the idea of the 'armed citizen' found its ideological justification in the intellectual edifice of respected radicals such

as Adam Ferguson, who equated bearing arms with good citizenship and solid foundations for civil society.

One of the traits which defined the armed nation was the ability to cross class boundaries.[49] While the majority of the volunteers were skilled workers and artisans, they were clearly identifiable for their respectability. The local organization of battalions, weekly discipline of drills and the fostering of group identity, expressed through expensive uniforms, which pandered to the 'dandyism' of the volunteers, was thought to ease social tensions and foster a strong sense of civic pride, particularly in the provinces, which best expressed the desire for associational activity in the urban environment.[50] Men familiar with the ideology of 'self-improvement', and in the habit of congregating to 'learn' in the local mechanics' institute, now also 'trained' with the Volunteer Force, which fostered social cross-membership and responded to the artisans' middle-class desire to matter in the public sphere. As the Working Men's College in London showed, the same institution could adapt from one role to the other: learning poetry was now replaced by learning military songs, as the composition of 'Invicta' for the 19th Middlesex Battalion of the College, chanting '*Our Rifles are Ready! Hurrah!*', suggested.[51]

The social heterogeneity of the British Legion was compensated for by the unifying traits of a common inspiration and the shared emotions awoken by the desire to participate in the epic of the Italian nation and adhere to the transnational community of Garibaldian volunteers. These British men saw in Garibaldi the liberator of nations; in following Garibaldi they were fighting for liberty – a transnational principle which also resided deeply within British values. On one side therefore, the idea of the Italian nation inspired a sense of 'profound emotional legitimacy', as defined by Benedict Anderson, which appears to have influenced Britain's transnational volunteers; on the other side, defending Italy's right for freedom went hand in hand with patriotic feelings, religious beliefs and local civic pride.[52] Indeed, as Garibaldi's enterprise opened up the *Mezzogiorno* to the British, local pride, patriotism and transnational solidarity dovetailed. British volunteers found the space for confrontation and a measure of their local value outside the confines of their nation – in Italy, where the 'otherness' of a foreign country was not always sufficient to erase the parochialism of their pride in the local battalion.[53]

In heavily drawing upon the recently formed Volunteer Force, the British Legion would also inadvertently inherit many of its problems, inefficiencies and shortcomings. Soldiers were mostly selected from different civic units to form a battalion; yet the problems which were found within the unit of one town were mirrored in those of another. Indeed, the numerous acts of indiscipline which would plague the British Legion were ascribable to the lack of responsible officers, a weakness which ran through the Volunteer Force as a whole.[54] The Force had struggled from the outset to recruit officers, who,

according to Cunningham, were often of low social status and did not possess either 'the military qualities' or 'the disciplinary power' to act according to their rank.[55]

Volunteer towns

Recent scholarship, in qualifying the collective identity of volunteering, identified some locations in Italy as veritable 'volunteer towns' ('*cittá volontarie*').[56] While the definition was applied to describe the popular participation of towns in the *Risorgimento* revolutionary events of 1848–49, the term has some resonance, in the context of the Garibaldi expedition of 1860, in the level of participation that some British towns granted to the departing local volunteers in pursuit of the liberation of Italy. Out of a total of 12 battalions, the Birmingham battalion and the Liverpool battalion (which also included some Manchester men), were, as in the case of the Scots' battalion, clearly distinguishable from the others, made up mainly of Londoners or being of 'mixed' composition.[57] Unfortunately the muster roll of the British Legion does not provide an accurate geographical distribution of the 'mixed composition' battalions: the many names of those who signed up to fight do not necessarily coincide with those who departed. Moreover, many men who set off were not recorded.[58] Yet the formation of at least some civic battalions suggests that some towns were conspicuously represented.

A core of three towns – Newcastle, Liverpool and Birmingham – displayed a level of civic participation in the Garibaldi expedition which could indeed ascribe them to being regarded as veritable English 'volunteer towns'. In Liverpool and Manchester, where the first companies of the Volunteer Force had been formed, the corps remained a 'preserve of the middle classes', while 'in Northern England the greater part of the corps was composed of artisans'.[59] The Newcastle volunteers – while not as conspicuous due to the lack of a free passage to London, accorded to the Liverpool and Birmingham men – were nevertheless numerically well represented.[60]

As it transpires from the accounts published in local papers, the so-called 'Liverpool Garibaldians', 'Birmingham Garibaldians' or 'Newcastle Garibaldians' seemed to vie to uphold the civic pride of their own against the misconduct of those around them. The description of the departure of the Liverpool contingent eloquently conveys the pride which moved provincial volunteers as they set off. Forty-seven Liverpool men boarded the train to London, with an extra 30 having proceeded to the capital independently.[61] Private Lester of the 9th Company of the British Legion, testified to the participation of the town in the 'hubbub at Lime Street':[62]

> I shall not forget the kind of farewell accorded to the people of Liverpool. We were followed to the train by thousands, who formed their way into the station, and lined the tunnel leading to Edgehill [...] While listening

> and returning the cheers with which we were greeted, I, and am sure all there, determined that, come what would, our Liverpool friends should have no occasion to blush for us and that we would [...] do our duty, which is in this case our pleasure.[63]

Similar self-satisfied comments could be read in Newcastle where the *Daily Chronicle* commented that 'none of the dissoluteness and inebriation common and pardonable in ordinary recruits was seen among the volunteers. [...] all were respectable in conduct – and their bearing was that of young soldiers of freedom'.[64] As the volunteers left familiar shores their language however spoke of national pride rather than internationalist brotherhood: 'We sighted Old England for the last time, got the fifes and drums on the Quarter deck, played *God Save the Queen* and several other arias, and finished up with three hearty cheers for Old England.'[65] Significantly, it was 'England', rather than Italy, which was cheered. Yet, the presence of the volunteers on a ship destined to Italy suggests that civic virtue could be read both as love of country and love of common liberty. In Maurizio Viroli's words, the love of the common liberty of a particular people need not be exclusive: 'love of the common liberty of one's people easily extends beyond national boundaries and translates into solidarity'.[66]

On board De Rohan's *Emperor* gathered, among numerous other provincial volunteers, the Birmingham men, a remarkable cross-section of society: artisans and skilled workers intermingled with the occasional 'gentleman', the odd surgeon, a solicitor, a clerk, but also joiners, saddlers, founders, carriage makers, jewellers, bricklayers, corkbutlers, swordbutlers, dressmakers, smiths, iron moulders, grocers, drapers, casters and printers, all of whom had enrolled at the *Coach and Horses* in Birmingham.[67] The 'orderly habits' of the Birmingham Company were pointedly remarked upon by a proud member who commented: 'I have not yet heard any irregularity on the part of any Birmingham man.'[68] The recruits were Birmingham Rifle Volunteers and the 'success or failure' of the latter were often 'seen as a commentary [...] on the community as a whole'.[69]

In the midst of an expedition for continental freedom, which set sail in the name of English honour, parochial attitudes and local identity were often aired, becoming more apparent as the differences among the volunteers and the dubious credentials of some emerged. On 3 December 1860 the *Newcastle Daily Chronicle* reported: 'The force consisted of two broadly distinct elements – the Volunteers of conviction and enthusiasm, who may be estimated about one half of the force and the military adventurer, loose fish, riff-raff, tag-tag and bob-tail, who flock to scenes of disturbances.' The combined news of the riotous unruly volunteers and the realization that bad organization, mismanagement and corruption among the officers were rife, conspired against the reputation of the idealist volunteers, whose letters

often register concern to clear their own names, that of their battalion and, sometimes, that of the Legion as a whole.[70]

Hopes and disappointments

Discordant emotions were felt by many British volunteers, as an unpleasant sense that their efforts had not been adequately appreciated by the Italians gradually seeped in. A letter to the Editor of the *Birmingham Daily Post*, in appealing to hold a banquet for the return of the local volunteers, stated on 4 January 1861:

> I wish to advocate through the medium of your columns the cause of the Garibaldi volunteers who went to Italy from this town and district. Badly as they have been treated by a people who are perhaps scarce worth fighting for, as Englishmen I think it is incumbent for us to recognise their services to the great cause of national freedom.[71]

Hurt pride was mixed with shame.[72] British volunteers had experienced both emotions; some of them felt unappreciated, others, who had been exposed to disciplinary procedures felt violated. From a Neapolitan prison a Glasgow volunteer wrote to Garibaldi: 'I left England 5 months ago to join your army as a man of character and honour and now my name is disgraced, having been for the first time in my life in a Neapolitan prison and having been defamed by Alberto Mario and his wife.'[73]

Although the experience of this Glaswegian volunteer was the exception, the British Legion's morale was low on its return. As sporadic episodes of indiscipline had been widely reported in Britain, discrediting the name of many, a negative press plagued the expedition. Colonel Peard ashamedly confessed to Garibaldi that many officers had been 'undisciplined and seditious'.[74] De Rohan felt a victim of calumnies and pleaded with Garibaldi to protect him against 'l'infamie des hommes les plus infames'.[75] It would appear that a number of volunteers, whether simple soldiers of captains, felt that their pride and honour had been trampled on. The language of shame resonated at the end of the campaign, leaving a sour taste at the outcome of the expedition. The experience of the British Legion had mixed joys and sorrows, hopes and disappointment, wonder and fear as many volunteers encountered the Italians for the first time and came to terms with their own emotions. Paradoxically, it was easier to share in a transnational 'emotional community' for those who had imagined it, but had stayed at home, than for those who had made the journey.[76]

Countess Maria Martini della Torre, who had nursed the British soldiers at the battle of Milazzo, had witnessed not only the sufferings of the wounded, but the back-stabbings, the improprieties and betrayals which had taken place in the midst of the campaign. As the British Legion prepared to leave

Salerno on 18 December 1860 she felt the emotions shared by the departing volunteers and commented:

> I have come here expressly to take leave of you; to tell you the feelings of sympathy I have for England and her noble sons. That feeling has been shown you on your arrival at Naples, and also here. Why the jealousy – the envy – that has tried to destroy the spirit of union which is the most important thing in your regiment? When I think of the ambition and wickedness of few that has been the cause of the ruin of many, my heart beats with indignation. When you have returned to your homes you will at the fireside sometimes speak of the campaign of what you did, of what you have suffered: may you always remember that the Italians are the greatest friends of the Englishmen; that you have a common tie, having fought together in the cause of liberty.[77]

In bidding farewell the Countess also announced that she had started a subscription for the 'purpose of erecting a suitable monument' to the departed comrades: ten had been killed.[78] However, the monument of the British Legion was never to be erected. 'Studying the *absence* of monuments', according to Donald Horne, 'can be as significant as studying what is celebrated.'[79] Undoubtedly, as the British Legion sailed back towards the Channel, the emotions of shame had overshadowed those of pride, and, for many, if not for all, forgetting may have been a better option than remembering.

In Lieu **of conclusions: Holyoake's last word**

The British Legion cost the Sardinian government 14,000 pounds – the total repayment of the cumulative expenses incurred by Garibaldi's agents during the expedition. The London Committee, which had altogether spent 3000 pounds, was at pains to justify all the expenses incurred, a cause of some embarrassment; yet both the Committee and the agents – Agostino Bertani and William Ashurst – had worked hard to ensure that subscriptions in Britain would cover at least some of the costs: Ashurst alone claimed to have collected more than 5000 pounds, intended to 'arm and accoutre the British Legion'.[80] At the same time committed Mazzinians, such as Forbes and De Rohan were frustrated by the lack of recognition for their efforts by the Italian government. For years De Rohan appealed to the American ambassador in Italy, George Perkins Marsh, to obtain the compensation that he felt was due to him. He never obtained it.[81] However Holyoake was unrepentant, judging that no 'true Garibaldian' regretted the Legion going to Naples and 'every wise Garibaldian' could foresee the day when the British Legion would be needed again.[82] His thoughts clearly went to the yet unredeemed Venice and Rome.

The problem for Holyoake consisted not so much in the amount that had been spent but in the results that had been achieved. Among the volunteers, English Mazzinians had fought hard. As Holyoake recalled, 'The flag of the *Washington* would have been lost had it not been taken possession of by De Rohan. The last flag carried by the Mazzinians, which was shot through, would have been lost also had not Mr. J. D. Hodge sought for it before it was too late.'[83] However the ideals for which English Mazzinians had gone out to fight appeared somewhat betrayed. Holyoake's frustrations were vented in no uncertain terms in the *Daily News*, on 17 December 1860.

> Is it possible that Sir Henry Hoare himself can be unaware of the acts of noble abnegation performed by Mazzini in waving his long-cherished views, and loyally supporting those of his illustrious friend Garibaldi? For two years Mazzini has suppressed in Italy the very cry for a republic, and has accepted the programme of Garibaldi and avowedly promoted it. It is no secret to the world that Mazzini's influence supplied the men and Bertani's skill organised those expeditions which tracked with their blood the pathway which Garibaldi took to his miraculous victories. Italy and Victor Emmanuel owe as much to the genius and generosity of Mazzini as to the invincible sword of Garibaldi [...] If Mazzini chooses to render this immense cooperation and Garibaldi chooses to accept it, and Victor Emanuel chooses to profit by it, the quarrel is clearly not with the London Committee [...] Indeed, I believe four-fifths of all the British-Garibaldi funds have been collected and subscribed by personal friends of Mazzini, unhesitantly placed at the disposal of Garibaldi and every pound appropriated [...] to the establishment of an Italian Kingdom, and Italian unity, under the constitutional sceptre of Victor Emanuel.

Indeed, as the frustration vented in this passage shows, those British radicals who, fired by the rhetoric of international brotherhood, had enrolled as Garibaldians to see their republican ideal realized, felt betrayed: while they had fought in the name of republicanism they had become instrumental in establishing yet another monarchic nation in Europe. The burning disappointment which some of them felt, however, was a measure of the idealism which had originally drawn them to embrace sacrifice beyond the paradigm of nation.

Notes

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2. Gilles Pécout, 'International Volunteers and the Risorgimento', *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, XIV (2009), pp. 413–14.

3. Eva Cecchinato, *Camicie rosse: I garibaldini dall'Unitá alla Grande Guerra* (Rome-Bari, 2007); Maurizio Degli Innocenti, *Garibaldi e l'Ottocento: nazione, popolo, volontariato, associazione* (Manduria, 2008).
4. Lucy Riall, *Garibaldi: Invention of a Hero* (New Haven and London, 2007), p. 301.
5. John Pemble, *The Mediterranean Passion: Victorians and Edwardians in the South* (Oxford, 1987), p. 11.
6. G. M. Trevelyan, *Garibaldi and the Making of Italy* (London, 1911), p. 260.
7. The *Newcastle Daily Chronicle*, 21 November 1860, rated the troublemakers as a minority.
8. For a revisionist reading of the long legacy of 'Philhellenism' in the nineteenth century see Gilles Pécout, 'Philhellenism in Italy: Political Friendship and the Italian Volunteers in the Mediterranean in the Nineteenth Century', *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, 9, no. 4 (2004), pp. 405–27.
9. Margot Finn, *After Chartism* (Cambridge, 1993).
10. Maurizio Isabella, 'Italian Exiles and British Politics Before and After 1848', in S. Freitag (ed), *Exiles From European Revolutions – Refugees in Mid-Victorian England* (New York and Oxford, 2003); Maurizio Isabella, *Risorgimento in Exile*: *Italian Émigrés and the Liberal International in the Post-Napoleonic Era* (Oxford, 2009).
11. For a recent overview on the Roman Republic, see Maurizio Ridolfi (ed), *Almanacco della Repubblica: Storia d'Italia attraverso le tradizioni, le istituzioni e le simbologie repubblicane* (Milan, 2003), pp. 84–96.
12. Jasper Ridley, *Garibaldi* (London, 2001), p. 410.
13. Leo Valiani, 'Interventi: Atti del XIII Congresso Storico Toscano', *Rassegna Storica Toscana*, IV (1960), pp. 227–8.
14. *Manchester Times*, 18 August 1860; Valiani, 'Interventi', p. 227. On George Howell, see: F. M. Leventhal, *Respectable Radical: George Howell and Victorian Working Class Politics* (London, 1971); 'Italy for the Italians: Garibaldi', 22 May 1860, Holyoake Collection (hereafter HC), Bishopsgate Institute, London (hereafter BI), 2/10, 'Engagement Diary', 1860.
15. *Jersey Independent*, 9, 13, 15, 30 June 1860; *Newcastle Daily Chronicle*, 18 January 1861. Also F. G. Black and R. M. Black (eds), *The Harney Papers* (Assen, 1969) p. 17, fn. 1.
16. *Il Popolo d'Italia*, 28 October 1860. On Mazzini's newspapers, see Leona Ravenna, *Il Giornalismo Mazziniano* (Florence, 1939).
17. *Il Popolo d'Italia*, 14 January 1861.
18. G. Garibaldi to J. McAdam, 6 February 1861, 'Caprera', in Massimo De Leonardis (ed), *Epistolario di Garibaldi* (Cittá di Castello, letter 1952), vol. V., p. 34.
19. Reference to the first encounter of the 'British Brigade' before Capua appears in the *Newcastle Daily Chronicle*, 'Reported Death of Alberto Mario', 31 October 1860 and 'Mr Alfred Gorringe', 2 November 1860.
20. On the idea of the 'citizen-soldier', see Austin Gee, *The British Volunteer Movement 1794–1814* (Oxford, 2003), pp. 188 and 203.
21. W. B. Brooke, *Out with Garibaldi or From Melazzo to Capua* (London, 1861), p. 12.
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27. Ibid., p. 207.
28. F. B. Smith, *Radical Artisan: W. J. Linton 1812–97* (Manchester, 1973), p. 137.
29. HC, BI, Committee Meeting, 11, 12 September 1860.
30. Cowen Papers (hereafter CP), Tyne and Wear Archives, Newcastle-upon-Tyne (hereafter TWAS), C1519 J. McAdam to Richard Bagnall Reed, 1 September 1860.
31. Holyoake Papers, Co-operative Archives, Manchester, M3: 28; doc. 1220, J. McAdam to G. J. Holyoake, 28 May 1860.
32. 'Letter to the Editor', *Daily News*, 15 October 1860.
33. HC, BI 'Minutes of the Central Committee', 27, 30 August and 3, 6, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 September 1860. HC, BI, Diaries (1845–60), June, July 1860.
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37. CP, TWAS, C1519, McAdam to Reed, 10 September 1860; CP, TWAS, C1531 McAdam to Reed, 10 September 1860.
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45. HC, BI, Glasgow *Herald*, 20 September 1860. See also 'Committee minutes', 10 September 1860.
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55. Cunningham, *The Volunteer Force,* p. 62.
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63. 'The Garibaldi Excursionists', *Daily Times*, Liverpool, 27 September 1860.
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81. On William De Rohan, see Lucia Ducci (ed), *L'Unitá debole: Lettere dell'Ambasciatore Americano George P. Marsh sull'Italia unita* (Milan, 2009), p. 45, fn, 129; D. Lowenthal, *George Perkins Marsh: Versatile Vermonter* (New York, 1958), pp. 326–7; Fondo Curatulo, MRM, bundle 397, Forbes 'Nomina e Dimissione del Colonnello Forbes e documenti riguardanti l'intendenza'.
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83. George Jacob Holyoake, *Bygones Worth Remembering*, vol. I, (London, 1905), p. 235. Both flags, symbols of hope for Italy's republic, would come into Holyoake's possession. In these flags Holyoake's coffin would be draped, according to his wishes, on his death, in 1906. See Pia Onnis, 'Battaglie democratiche e Risorgimento in un carteggio inedito di Giuseppe Mazzini e George Jacob Holyoake', *Rassegna Storica del Risorgimento*, XXII (1935), p. 918.

13

Getting There: Enlistment Considerations and the Recruitment Networks of the International Brigades during the Spanish Civil War

Nir Arielli

The motivations of the tens of thousands of foreign volunteers who fought in the Spanish Civil War, on both sides, have been debated since the 1930s.[1] Ideological considerations have received particular attention from both historians and literary writers. The protagonist of Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, Robert Jordan, 'fought now in this war because it had started in a country that he loved and he believed in the Republic and that if it were destroyed life would be unbearable for all those people who believed in it'.[2] Most volunteers, however, had never been to Spain before the war. They saw the conflict in broader European terms, rather than in Spanish terms, and placed it within the political frameworks of their own home contexts.[3] Richard Baxell found that many British volunteers who joined the International Brigades had bitter experiences of fighting against Oswald Mosley's fascists. He argues that they had realized that 'direct action' against Mosley and his supporters was an effective strategy which could and should be emulated to stop Franco.[4] Many of the German volunteers had formerly been imprisoned by the Nazi regime and were expelled or fled from their country prior to going to Spain. The war was an opportunity to fight back, as it were, with guns in their hands. In the words of Josie McLellan, 'The civil war was both a displaced fight against Hitler and a chance to strike a blow against international fascism.'[5] Statistics from various countries have shown that a very large portion – in some cases well over half – of the volunteers in the International Brigades were either communists or sympathetic to the Communist Party.[6]

Yet this in itself does not account for the willingness of tens of thousands of men and women to go abroad to fight. After all, there were plenty of ardent antifascists in the world in the late 1930s, but not all of them went to

fight for the Spanish Republic. When assessing his reasons for going to Spain, Esmond Romilly, Winston Churchill's socialist nephew, commented: 'However strongly I sympathised with the cause of the Spanish people, no doubt if my circumstances in London had been completely satisfactory, I should have gone no further than sympathy.' To this he added, 'I am assuming it will be taken for granted that everybody who joined the International Brigades had "political motives"; but these were not the only reason they joined.'[7]

Social pressures at home – push factors – also played an important role in prompting individuals to volunteer. The lingering effects of the Depression meant that a sizeable number of those who eventually volunteered were either unemployed or worked in temporary low-paid jobs. Among the American Lincoln Brigade volunteers almost half of those who provided background information on themselves had no occupation.[8] Moreover, Peter Carroll who studied the familial backgrounds of American volunteers found that many came from broken homes. Because of divorce or the death of a parent (as a result of the epidemic of 1918–19, for instance) many of the young men who went to Spain had spent a portion of their childhoods in foster homes and orphanages. He argues that such individuals 'may have formed psychological patterns – anger or aggression or outrage at injustice – that made them likely candidates for a volunteer army'.[9] For political émigrés from countries with authoritarian regimes, who found refuge in France and Czechoslovakia, the opportunity to go to Spain was a way of escaping the loneliness and boredom of exile.[10] Michael Jackson has gone as far as arguing that 'the volunteers were marginal men produced by economic and political upheavals of the time'.[11]

And then there was the allure of adventure, which played no small part, especially for the young and the unmarried. Among the volunteers from the United States the median age was 27–28 and only 15.2 per cent of the total had ever been married.[12] Robert Rosenstone and others have shown how the desire of some to volunteer influenced others who joined out of friendship. Moreover, many were moved by the aspiration to test themselves and affirm their masculinity. Vincent Brome quoted a volunteer who went to Spain, 'To make a man of myself.'[13] The mixture of motivations is perhaps best described in the words of the Jewish-Polish volunteer Aleksnader Szurek, who was a Communist Party member and an émigré in France at the time: 'I considered it my duty to be the first to volunteer. [...] What influenced our decision was my revolutionary romanticism and my yearning for freedom, sacrifice, and adventure and to be a part of imagined, unknown barricades.'[14]

This chapter seeks, first, to highlight a largely overlooked push factor that was relevant in countries where communist activity was prohibited: state pressure coupled with societal hostility. Such reasons for wanting to leave the home-state are not all that common in veterans' post-war memoirs and interviews. As most people tend to represent their actions and decisions in a favourable light, circumstantial compulsion did not always fit

into the narratives that were relayed several years after the event. However, an examination of the socio-political context from which the volunteers emerged reveals factors and forces which could not have been ignored when the decision to volunteer was taken. The relatively understudied examples of Yugoslavia and Palestine illustrate how societal push factors created an atmosphere that encouraged young communists to leave. Yet having found the will to volunteer is only half of the story. For all but the foreign volunteers who came from southern France, the journey to Spain was long and, in some cases, costly. Furthermore, from February 1937 onwards, the movement of volunteers across the border between France and Spain was banned. Motivation, whether ideological or otherwise, was not enough to circumvent such restrictions and bring the foreigners to the warzone. The chapter will therefore analyse the journey to Spain in order to shed light on the formal and informal recruitment and transport networks that served the International Brigades. It argues that, for the foreign volunteers of the International Brigades to take part in the Spanish Civil War, three factors need to be in place. First, they had to want to be there. Second, their personal circumstances had to either allow them or push them to go to Spain. Third, in order for them to reach the warzone, the assistance of other individuals and organizations was almost always necessary. Such an approach inevitably deconstructs the romantic view of self-determined young men (and women, in smaller numbers), who moved around Europe at will that sometimes emerges from the literature on the Spanish Civil War. Far from detracting from the sacrifices made by the volunteers, the chapter seeks to highlight the importance of domestic considerations and networks of assistance in creating transnational war volunteers.

From antifascists at home to soldiers abroad

The Communist Party of Yugoslavia (CPY) was banned in 1921, shortly after its formation. It was the subject of unrelenting police persecution until the murder of King Aleksandar I in 1934. Under the regency of Prince Paul which followed, the level of state harassment decreased but party members were still subjected to frequent arrests and long prison sentences. Party membership in the mid-1930s was in the hundreds and most of the senior leadership resided abroad. The Secretary of the party until 1937, Milan Gorkić, had been in the country only for short periods after 1918 and never lived in Yugoslavia after the party became illegal. The party's Central Committee conducted its work from Vienna until 1936 and from Paris thereafter. There were also a number of party members who worked or studied in Moscow. Future party leader Josip Broz (Tito), for instance, arrived in Moscow after being released from a six-year gaol sentence in Yugoslavia in 1934. However, the USSR was hardly a safe haven. During the Stalinist purges more than a hundred CPY members (including some of the founders of the party)

were either executed or sent to prison camps, most of them never to return. To make matters worse, the party suffered from internal tensions and sectarianism. The Slovene branch of the party, for instance, had no confidence in the Central Committee. According to Phyllis Auty, when Tito tried to rebuild the party and initiate new policies in the late 1930s, 'he had to start a grass-roots reorganization and found at first that he had to work almost single-handed'.[15]

Following the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War, *Proleter*, a CPY organ, argued that conditions in Yugoslavia were similar to those in Spain. Both countries had remnants of feudalism, a multinational state with oppressed nations, a powerful military clique and reactionary elements in society, including the Catholic clergy, which relied on support from Hitler's Germany and Mussolini's Italy.[16] The party's attempts to dispatch volunteers to fight in Spain brought about more pressure from state authorities. In August 1936 the central government in Belgrade instructed the police in Sarajevo to take action to halt all solidarity activities in support of Republican Spain in order to preserve Yugoslav neutrality. In autumn 1936 the party's secret cell in Belgrade was infiltrated and as a result many members were sent to prison. In late 1936 and early 1937 suspected recruiters and volunteers in Croatia and Bosnia were monitored. On 10 March 1937 the Yugoslav interior ministry published a decree banning not only the departure of volunteers but also any action in favour of the Spanish Republic. Those who were arrested for organizing solidarity activities were imprisoned and those who left in order to volunteer had their citizenship taken away from them. However, the secret police noted that despite the attempts to prevent volunteers from leaving, people still went.[17] It is, of course, quite possible that, instead of deterring would-be volunteers, state pressure and the desire to get away from it actually provided further incentive for those wanting to go to Spain.

Similar and perhaps even more acute push factors were at work in Palestine. The Palestine Communist Party (PCP) was outlawed by the British mandate authorities at about the same time as the Yugoslav party. Hence the activities of the PCP had to be carried out in secret. Membership in the 1920s and 1930s was restricted to a few hundred at any given time and was overwhelmingly Jewish despite pressure from the Comintern to 'nativize' and recruit from among the Arab population. Party members were subject to frequent arrests. Even more disturbing for the party cadre was the British authorities' practice of deporting individuals convicted of communist activity back to their native country whenever these persons did not possess Palestinian citizenship. Several hundred were deported in this way over the years. The circumstances of the PCP were made worse by the hostility of the Zionist establishment in Palestine. The party's propaganda was adamantly anti-Zionist. It called for an end to Jewish immigration to Palestine and supported the Soviet project of establishing an autonomous Jewish region

in Birobidzhan which competed with Zionism. As a consequence, Zionist trade unions had PCP members blacklisted and the latter struggled to find jobs. Moreover, Zionist organizations were likely to pass information on PCP members to the British police. By the time the Spanish Civil War broke out there was also an internal crisis within the PCP, owing to the position the party's Central Committee had adopted towards the Arab Revolt (1936–39). In response to the Comintern's Popular Front policy, the Central Committee aligned itself with the Arab nationalist leadership, seeing it as the leading anti-imperialist force in the country. When the Central Committee called upon Jewish members to play an active part in the revolt several members, especially in the party's branch in Tel Aviv, objected. Some left the party while others were expelled. Going to Spain gave disgruntled PCP members an honourable way out without abandoning the communist cause. More than 90 per cent of the volunteers who came from Palestine were former or current party members. The war against fascism provided an opportunity to get away from police harassment, arrests and the constant threat of deportation as well poverty, societal hostility and, in some cases, ideological disagreements regarding the Arab Revolt.[18]

The motivations of the volunteers were therefore complex and influenced by a combination of push and pull factors. A further issue worth examining is how the willingness of these individuals to fight and risk their lives was translated into actual military manpower. It is perhaps worth noting that the initiative to recruit foreigners to fight did not emanate from the beleaguered Republican government in Madrid. At the beginning of the war, during the summer of 1936, there was a spontaneous movement of individual volunteers, who made their way into Spain by themselves or in groups. These were mainly Frenchmen, Belgians and émigrés from Germany, Italy and Eastern Europe who lived in those two countries. Carlo Rosselli recruited Italian exiles – *Giustizia e Libertà* members as well as socialists and anarchists – to form a column of 130 men and women in the early months of the conflict.[19] Some of the first volunteers were already in Spain when the war broke out, having come for the People's Olympiad in Barcelona, a Leftist alternative to the Olympic Games hosted by the Nazi regime in Berlin. These included the Swiss-German journalist Clara Thalmann and the British sculptress Felicia Browne, who was killed at the front on 25 August.[20] The Cambridge poet John Cornford, who was also in Spain that summer, decided to enlist 'quite spontaneously'.[21]

The Soviet Union's initial response to the plight of the Spanish Republic was sympathetic but cautious. The Kremlin had little interest in the Iberian Peninsula and Stalin was initially reluctant to intervene. The Comintern, on the other hand, had begun discussing ways of assisting the Spanish government soon after the war began in July. Eventually, in September, Stalin decided to allow the Comintern to recruit international volunteers for Spain. At the same time he also sanctioned 'Operation X' which saw the shipment

of arms and the dispatch of Soviet military advisors to the government in Madrid. Various explanations have been put forward to account for this decision: Stalin sought to bring the Spanish Republic into the Soviet orbit and to dispose of communist émigrés living in the Soviet Union, the NKVD wanted to have greater control over the flow of volunteers, Russian generals wished to obtain some military lessons from the conflict, and so on. Whatever the reason, on 18 September 1936, after Stalin opted for intervention, the Comintern instructed communist parties around the world to recruit volunteers with military experience from among the workers of all countries in view of sending them to Spain.[22] Following negotiations with the Spanish Republican government, the base at Albacete was opened on 14 October, under the direction of the French communists André Marty and Vital Gayman and the Italian communist Luigi Longo. Thus began the story of the International Brigades.[23]

The commanders of the International Brigades were in most cases active Red Army officers, who were themselves former transnational volunteers in the Russian Civil War. Approximately 18,000 'internationals' – either foreign communists or First World War POWs, mainly from the Austro-Hungarian army – joined the Red Army after the October Revolution, formed various international units, and fought in the Russian Civil War.[24] Some of those who remained in the Soviet Union and rose through the ranks were to play a prominent role in Spain. For instance, General Emilio Kléber was born in Bukovina under the name Moshe Manfred Stern. A First World War POW, he became a Red Army staff officer and had served in the military section of the Comintern. In Spain Kléber commanded the 11th International Brigade and was hailed as the 'Savior of Madrid' after the fierce battle of November 1936.[25] General Luckácz – the writer Mate Zalka – was an ex-Hungarian POW who joined the Red Army and led the 12th International Brigade in Spain.[26] Another former Hungarian POW was General Gall – that is Janos Galicz – who became the commander of the 15th Brigade.[27] Even Josip Broz Tito, who screened and channelled well over 1000 Yugoslav volunteers for Spain from a Comintern office in Paris, was a former First World War POW who joined the Red Army after the Revolution and applied for membership of the Communist Party in the spring of 1918.[28] General Walter – Karol Swierczewski – who at first commanded the 14th (later 35th) International Brigade was not a former First World War POW, though he did volunteer to join the Red Army after the Bolshevik Revolution.[29]

The Red Army officers mentioned above were not chosen because of their experience as international volunteers, but rather because they were born outside the Soviet Union proper, and so would not compromise the government in Moscow or expose it to charges of participation in the actual fighting. Some of these men, like Kléber for instance, were given elaborate cover biographies to present them as genuine volunteers, and these were even published in the press.[30] The Comintern component in the

International Brigades comprised of the elite of the officers and commissars, but it may have numbered no more than 2000–3000 at any given time, perhaps 5000 in total.[31]

After the formation of the International Brigades, the spontaneity of the first months of the war was replaced by an organized network of recruitment and transport. A person living in Western Europe or North America who wanted to volunteer could easily find out where to go and who to approach in order to enlist. Moreover, volunteers were actively recruited through political rallies and workers' unions. In December 1936 the possibility of enlisting a French syndicate of steelworkers en masse and creating a distinct 'column' was discussed but eventually abandoned.[32] The Leftist press in the West covered the Spanish Civil War extensively and encouraged individuals to volunteer, either overtly or inadvertently. Communist Party papers were particularly active. The *Daily Worker* in both the United States and Britain raised funds which helped finance the transportation of volunteers who could not pay their way. The recruitment of volunteers was also carried out by front organizations such as the American Society for Technical Aid for Spain.[33]

Some recruits underwent an initial screening at the country of origin. This was carried out by Communist Party officials such as 'Robbie' (R. W. Robson) who interviewed would-be volunteers, initially at an office in King Street in London and moving to the less conspicuous Lichfield Street in 1937. The interviewers checked the volunteers' political reliability to weed out undesirables. However, criteria were quite loose. Abiding to the Popular Front policy, and hoping to meet the high quotas set by the Comintern for each national party, recruiters took also non-communists, and even people who were not previously politically active. They also asked about military experience. During the first few months, when candidates were plentiful, British volunteers with no military experience were turned down, though as the months went by and the ranks needed filling recruiters became less picky.[34] While this sort of recruitment activity could be carried out in Britain, Ireland, France and the United States with only a limited degree of secrecy, it had no parallel in places like Eastern Europe or Palestine where communism was outlawed. Hence there was an additional process of screening in France, which usually included not only an interview for political purposes but also a medical examination. However, veterans have testified that this was quite lenient and let through a good number of people who were not perfectly fit.[35]

The biggest obstacle was how to get the volunteers from their country of origin to Spain. At the beginning it was still possible for volunteers to cross the border between France and Spain by bus.[36] However, on 20 November 1936 the French National Assembly announced the closure of the border with Spain and on 21 February 1937 the international Non-Intervention Committee ban on foreign volunteers went into effect.[37] This made transportation a far more complicated affair and getting the volunteers from

their home-states to Spain became a highly complex task which required the assistance of intermediaries. The journey of the volunteers can be broken down into two stages: getting to France, and from France to Spain. For those coming from nearby countries with democratic regimes the first stage was relatively straightforward. Volunteers from Britain, for instance, were told to purchase weekend return tickets from Victoria station to Paris which did not require passports. Each group that made the journey was usually assigned a nominal leader. The French police occasionally detained volunteers on their way, sometimes acting on information obtained by British plain-clothes policemen at Victoria, at the port of embarkation or on the Channel ferries. Some volunteers were even sent back.[38] But the majority got through without too much difficulty and those who were caught were usually able to try again. The Foreign Enlistment Act of 1870, the only legislation in place to prevent Britons from enlisting for service abroad, was 'thought to be such a brittle reed, [that] the authorities for the most part had to rely on intimidation and persuasion rather than legal coercion when talking to suspected volunteers'.[39]

However, from Eastern Europe, the Balkans and Palestine the journey was much more complicated. Both volunteers and organizers resorted to various strategies to get visas for France. Some enrolled in the Sorbonne or other academic institutions while others went under the pretext of visiting the World Exhibition in Paris.[40] Many potential volunteers did not have passports, and had to cross a number of borders illegally in what one historian has described as an 'underground-railway system'.[41] In some cases, communist parties or committees for aid to Spain provided the volunteers with names of contacts to facilitate their journey. Rachel Szwarcman, a young Polish nurse from Bialystok, was given contacts that enabled her to cross illegally from Poland to Czechoslovakia, then to Austria and then to Switzerland, where a local communist family took her in. She was later re-united with members of this family in Spain.[42] A group of Yugoslav communists managed to produce dozens of forged passports which enabled volunteers to get French visas, allowing a number of them to reach France and later Spain. However, when party members from Belgrade were arrested their forged passports fell to the hands of the police.[43] The Yugoslav Communist Party also tried to ship volunteers from Herzegovina, Montenegro and Dalmatia by boat directly to Spain, though this operation was also uncovered by the police and hundreds of potential volunteers were arrested.[44] There was an important informal element to the networks that existed across Europe. Yugoslav volunteers who were stranded in Austria with no money to pay the smuggler that was to take them across the Swiss border, appealed to a local workers' union and were able to receive the necessary funds, though the latter were not given specific instructions to do so from above.[45]

Reaching France, then, was the objective of volunteers from other countries. From there they could rely on the networks which were established by

the French Communist Party and other supporters of the Spanish Republican cause. Paris was the hub of the Comintern's international network. Owing to its long border with Spain and to the relatively favourable approach of the Blum government, the French Communist Party played a leading organizational role in transporting the volunteers.[46] To improve the handling of the flow of thousands of multinational and multilingual volunteers, the French demanded that national communist parties appoint 'responsibles' to 'handle their contingent in the Paris organisation'. The journalist and author Charlotte Haldane was one of these. She processed approximately 150 British volunteers between March and May 1937. Like the American 'responsible', she had funds at her disposal from those collected at home. Her German and Italian counterparts, however, did not and were dependent on the French Communist Party to subsidize them. Put up in cheap hotels in Paris, the volunteers often received vouchers which they could use at specific workers' diners. They were also often told about the importance of maintaining a low profile and avoiding going to brothels, which seemed to be a recurring problem. At a certain stage in 1937 Comintern officials decided to take away the volunteers' passports and any money they were carrying to prevent them from behaving ostentatiously and attracting too much attention. Instead, they were given some pocket money for the duration of their stay in Paris.[47]

Once a sufficiently large group assembled, it was usually sent south by train, with each cohort again having an appointed leader. The destination was often Perpignan or other towns close to the Spanish border. There were a number of groups that were put on a boat and sent by sea.[48] In September 1936 Esmond Romilly boarded the *Mar Caspio* which took hundreds of volunteers from Marseilles to Valencia, where they were greeted by cheering crowds.[49] However, the majority of volunteers had to cross the Pyrenees on foot. This part of the voyage must have made quite an impression on the volunteers, as it appears in so many of the post-war memoirs and interviews. A lot of them recalled that they were given special light shoes before starting the climb, so they would not make too much noise, and that they arrived to the top of the mountain just as the sun was rising.[50]

A further illustration of how important the networks of the Comintern were is provided by the difficulties of those who tried to make part or the entire journey to Spain on their own. The story of Robert Doyle from Ireland provides an illuminating example. He was rejected by the party in Dublin because he was too young and decided to make his own way, going first to London where he worked for a few months. Once he saved enough money he proceeded to Jersey, where he again worked for a while so he could travel to France. He was stranded in Marseilles for a month. Unable to speak French and having no money, he ended up sleeping on a bench and had to ask for food from British seamen. Eventually, in early 1937, he snuck onto a ship to Spain but was caught after four hours. Later he was somehow able to get work at a shipping company, and travelled back and forth from Britain to

Nationalist Spain. Finally, in August 1937, he went to the Communist Party HQ in London and using the organized channels he got through.[51]

Another example is provided by Kosta Nađ, a Yugoslav volunteer. Before leaving, he was told to report to an office in Vienna but he could not find anyone there and decided to make his own way to Switzerland. He was arrested by the Austrian police and spent ten days in jail until he decided to go on a hunger strike. Eventually he was released on the understanding that he would leave Austria. He was caught four times trying to cross the Swiss border in late 1936 until he resorted to asking the Austrian guards for advice. On the fifth try he managed to creep onto a train, together with another Yugoslav. They jumped from the train after crossing the border, the endeavour leaving him slightly injured. They made their way through Switzerland, walking for seven nights. Running out of money as they drew nearer to the French border, they walked into the Communist Party building in Basel where they rested for six days. From there onwards Nađ's path was much smoother. A passage to France was arranged for them, and they also received a few hundred francs and a train ticket to Paris.[52]

Both stories not only highlight the difficulties of travelling on one's own but also give credence to the importance of the volunteers' personal motivation to reach Spain. The less motivated, and there were many examples, gave up on the way.[53] According to post-war Yugoslav estimates, only a quarter of those who tried to reach Spain actually made it.[54] The push factors discussed earlier had to be supplemented by strong pull factors – a desire to reach Spain and some means of getting there.

Needless to say, many volunteers were able to reach the Iberian Peninsula without the assistance of the Comintern. As many as 5000 individuals made their own way to Spain and carried arms for the Republic outside the ranks of the International Brigades, mainly in Catalonia.[55] One of them was the writer George Orwell. Unable to obtain assistance from Harry Pollitt, secretary of the British Communist Party, Orwell went to Spain under the auspices of the Independent Labour Party and joined a POUM unit.[56] That said, the voyage of non-affiliated individuals became much more difficult once the Non-Intervention Committee's ban on foreign volunteers came into effect. Hence, those travelling with the assistance of the French Communist Party, which hired guides and bribed border guards, stood a much better chance of reaching Spain.

Towards a comparative understanding of transnational volunteers

Aside from a few very exceptional cases, the foreign fighters who took up arms for the Spanish Republic assumed their role voluntarily.[57] Hence a personal motivation to be there was an important prerequisite. This is best illustrated by one example of a person who could have joined the

struggle but did not. Before commencing his studies at Cambridge the young Eric Hobsbawm was in France and, in the summer of 1936, travelled to the Pyrenees. For reasons he found difficult to explain in retrospect, he crossed the border into Spain near Puigcerda where he saw trucks on the main square, taking volunteers to the front. Despite his sympathy with the Spanish Republic and his curiosity to see 'what a revolution was like' he did not feel the urge to board one of the trucks.[58] In addition to the willingness to fight, individuals had to be able to travel to Spain. Shmuel Shtemler from Palestine decided to volunteer. His partner Tova Sliozberg longed to join him but her family objected vehemently, pointing out that her mother was ill and that she was the only person capable of taking care of her. Ultimately she did not go. Her circumstances were such that she could not simply leave.[59] Personal will, the right sort of circumstances at home and the assistance of other people and organizations were all necessary to bring a potential recruit to Spain.

The reliance on elaborate and secretive recruitment and transport networks distinguishes foreign volunteers from other transnational soldiers. Colonial soldiers could normally enlist at official recruitment offices. Their transportation to the battle zone would usually not require crossing borders illegally or having to melt into the civilian population. Jackson argued that the Comintern's facilitation of transportation 'tells us how and not why they went. At most, the organizational efforts of communism harnessed forces it did not generate.'[60] While this may be true, without the networks established by the Comintern and other sympathizers many a volunteer would not have been able to reach Spain, especially those of humble means and those travelling from distant countries. The International Brigades, with approximately 80 per cent of its members coming from a working-class background, would have been a smaller force without these networks.[61]

The examination of the International Brigades in the Spanish Civil War raises two conclusions which are also applicable in other cases of transnational volunteers. First, ideological motivations were undoubtedly important but these are insufficient in explaining how and why people travelled abroad to fight. An adventurous spirit and the contribution of push factors must also be considered. Second, the foreign fighters in the Spanish Civil War, much like their counterparts in later conflicts, were confronted with much more rigid state borders than their nineteenth-century predecessors. They also had to contend with the much more prevalent use of passports and the possibility these provided to limit movement. The expansion of restrictions on foreign enlistment imposed by individual states and by interstate cooperation has forced transnational volunteers and their recruiters to establish elaborate and secretive recruitment and transport networks. Similar networks have helped to process and funnel volunteers also in other conflicts such as the international volunteers who went to Israel in 1948 or those who travelled to Afghanistan since the 1980s. Although the

mobilizing ideologies varied drastically, some interesting structural similarities can be discerned. British volunteers for Israel in 1948, for instance, had to be recruited and sent out of the country in secret to elude the authorities. They travelled to Paris where they met would-be volunteers from other countries. From there they were sent to a camp near Marseilles in southern France and eventually put on boats that took them to Israel in defiance of restrictions imposed by the UN.[62] Since the 1930s many groups around the world have claimed to be following in the footsteps of the International Brigades.[63] In terms of the factors that need to be in place for an individual from one country to clandestinely join a military force in another, the Spanish Civil War provided, and continues to provide, lessons that are relevant for successive generations of transnational war volunteers and for those who study them.

Notes

1. Historians disagree on the exact number of foreign volunteers who fought in the Spanish Civil War. The International Brigades are believed to have included between 32,000 and 35,000 troops and the overall number of foreigners on the Republican side is estimated at 40,000. A further 2000 foreign volunteers joined the ranks of the Nationalists.
2. Ernest Hemingway, *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (London, 2004), p. 170.
3. This holds true not only for members of the International Brigades but also for the foreign volunteers who joined the Nationalist side: Judith Keene, 'Fighting for God, for Franco and (most of all) for Themselves: Right-Wing Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War', in Christine G. Krüger and Sonja Levsen, *War Volunteering in Modern Times: From the French Revolution to the Second World War* (Basingstoke, 2011), p. 218.
4. Richard Baxell, *British Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War* (London and New York, 2004), pp. 31–3.
5. Josie McLellan, ' "I Wanted To Be a Little Lenin": Ideology and the German International Brigade Volunteers', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 41, no. 2 (2006), p. 291.
6. See, for example: McLellan, 'I Wanted To Be', p. 292; Baxell, *British Volunteers*, p. 14; Peter N. Carroll, *The Odyssey of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade* (Stanford, 1994), p. 16; Vjeran Pavlaković, 'Twilight of the Revolutionaries: "Naši Španci" and the End of Yugoslavia', *Europe-Asia Studies*, 62, no. 7 (2010), p. 1178.
7. Esmond Romilly, *Boadilla* (London, 1971), p. 22.
8. Michael W. Jackson, *Fallen Sparrows: The International Brigades in the Spanish Civil War* (Philadelphia, 1994), p. 47.
9. Carroll, *The Odyssey*, p. 17.
10. McLellan, 'I Wanted To Be', p. 293.
11. Jackson, *Fallen Sparrows*, p. 5.
12. Carroll, *The Odyssey*, p. 16; Jackson, *Fallen Sparrows*, p. 82.
13. Robert A. Rosenstone, 'The Men of the Abraham Lincoln Battalion', *The Journal of American History*, 54, no. 2. (1967), p. 337; Vincent Brome, *The International Brigades – Spain 1936–1939* (London, 1965), p. 34. See also: McLellan, 'I Wanted To Be', p. 295.

14. Aleksander Szurek, *The Shattered Dream* (New York, 1989), p. 85.
15. Phyllis Auty, 'Popular Front in the Balkans: 1. Yugoslavia', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 5, no. 3 (1970), p. 59. See also: Aleksa Djilas, *The Contested Country: Yugoslav Unity and Communist Revolution 1919–1953* (Cambridge, Mass., 1996), pp. 89–92.
16. Vlajko Begović, 'KPJ i rat španiji 1936–1939', in Čedo Kapor (ed), *Španija 1936–1939* (Belgrade, 1971), pp. 21–2.
17. Archive of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kraljevska Banska Uprava Drinske Banovine, Pov., D.Z.; Enver Redžić (ed), *Jugosloveni u španij* (Sarajevo, 1959), p. 108; Begović, 'KPJ i rat španiji', pp. 27–8.
18. Nir Arielli, 'Induced to Volunteer? The Predicament of Jewish Communists in Palestine and the Spanish Civil War', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 46, no. 4 (2011), pp. 854–70.
19. Stanislao G. Pugliese, 'Death in Exile: The Assassination of Carlo Rosselli', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 32, no. 3 (1997), pp. 307–8.
20. Víctor Alba and Stephen Schwartz, *Spanish Marxism vs. Soviet Communism* (New Brunswick, 1988), pp. 124, 296–7; Michael Alpert, *A New International History of the Spanish Civil War* (Basingstoke, 2004), p. 51.
21. Eric Hobsbawm, *Interesting Times* (London: 2002), p. 341.
22. Daniel Kowalsky, 'The Soviet Union and the International Brigades, 1936–1939', *Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, 19 (2006), pp. 681–704; Niccolò Capponi, *I legionari rossi* (Rome, 2000), pp. 52, 63; Hugh Thomas, *The Spanish Civil War* (Harmondsworth, 1965), p. 380; Alpert, *A New International History*, pp. 51–2.
23. Rémi Skoutelsky, 'L'engagement des volontaires français en Espagne républicaine', *Le Mouvement Social*, 181 (1997), p. 8.
24. Reinhard Nachtigal, 'The Repatriation and Reception of Returning Prisoners of War, 1918–22', *Immigrants & Minorities*, 26, no. 1 (2008), p. 167; Josh Erickson, 'The Origins of the Red Army', in Richard Pipes (ed), *Revolutionary Russia* (Cambridge, MA, 1968), pp. 229, 251–53.
25. Ronald Radosh, Mary R. Habeck and G. Sevostianov (eds), *Spain Betrayed* (New Haven and London, 2001), p. 104; Stanley Payne, *The Spanish Civil War, the Soviet Union, and Communism* (New Haven and London, 2004), p. 165; R. Dan Richardson, 'The Defense of Madrid: Mysterious Generals, Red Front Fighters, and the International Brigades', *Military Affairs*, 43, no. 4 (1979), p. 181. Kléber was later executed as part of Stalin's purges.
26. Radosh et al., *Spain Betrayed*, p. 104; Brome, *The International Brigades*, p. 83.
27. Payne, *The Spanish Civil War*, p. 165; Richardson, 'The Defense of Madrid', p. 183.
28. Stevan K. Pavlowitch, *Tito: Yugoslavia's Great Dictator – a Reassessment* (London, 2006), pp. 13, 22.
29. Len Crome, 'Walter (1897–1947): A Soldier in Spain', *History Workshop*, 9 (1980), pp. 116–28.
30. Radosh et al., *Spain Betrayed*, p. 104; Thomas, *The Spanish Civil War*, p. 386.
31. Jackson, *Fallen Sparrows*, p. 40.
32. Skoutelsky, 'L'engagement des volontaires', p. 9.
33. R. Dan Richardson, *Comintern Army* (Lexington, 1982), pp. 32–4.
34. See, for example: Imperial War Museum (IWM), interview with Harold Fraser, oral history recording no. 795, recorded in 1982; interview with Patrick Carry, reel 1, oral history recording no. 799, recorded in 1976; S. P. Mackenzie, 'The Foreign Enlistment Act and the Spanish Civil War, 1936–1939', *Twentieth Century British History*, 10, no. 1 (1999), pp. 59–62.

35. See, for example: Szurek, *The Shattered Dream*, p. 75.
36. IWM, interview with George Leeson, oral history recording no. 803, recorded in 1976.
37. Skoutelsky, 'L'engagement des volontaires', p. 10.
38. IWM, interview with Robert Doyle, oral history recording no. 806, recorded in 1976.
39. Mackenzie, 'The Foreign Enlistment Act', p. 62.
40. Redžić, *Jugosloveni u španij*, p. 107; the author's interview with Shmuel Segal, 7 July 2009.
41. Richardson, *Comintern Army*, p. 36.
42. Szurek, *The Shattered Dream*, p. 87.
43. Redžić, *Jugosloveni u španij*, p. 117.
44. Milovan Djilas, *Memoir of a Revolutionary* (New York, 1973), p. 266.
45. Redžić, *Jugosloveni u španij*, pp. 217–18.
46. Richardson, *Comintern Army*, p. 31.
47. Charlotte Haldane, *Truth Will Out* (London, 1949), pp. 110–22.
48. Capponi, *I legionari rossi*, p. 72.
49. Romilly, *Boadilla*, pp. 17–31.
50. See, for example: Redžić, *Jugosloveni u španij*, pp. 190, 222–3; IWM, interview with Robert Doyle, oral history recording no. 806, recorded in 1976.
51. IWM, interview with Robert Doyle, oral history recording no. 806, recorded in 1976.
52. Redžić, *Jugosloveni u španij*, pp. 185–9.
53. See, for example: IWM, interview with Patrick Carry oral history recording no. 799, recorded in 1976.
54. Pavlaković, 'Twilight of the Revolutionaries', p. 1177; Redžić, *Jugosloveni u španij*, p. 209.
55. Jackson, *Fallen Sparrows*, p. 39; Thomas, *The Spanish Civil War*, p. 796; Alba and Schwartz, *Spanish Marxism*, pp. 154, 280–99.
56. George Orwell, *Homage to Catalonia* (London, 1989), p. vi.
57. In rare instances, Communist Party members were ordered by their superiors to go to Spain as a disciplinary measure, to atone for their wrongdoings or to prove their loyalty. See: Richardson, *Comintern Army*, p. 35.
58. Hobsbawm, *Interesting Times*, pp. 339–42.
59. Eran Torbiner (2006), documentary film, *Madrid before Hanita*.
60. Jackson, *Fallen Sparrows*, p. 40.
61. Thomas, *The Spanish Civil War*, p. 441.
62. The author's interviews with Zeev Feliswasser, 20 December 2010, Avi Grant, 21 December 2010 and Menachem Silberstein, 5 January 2011.
63. See, for instance: Marc Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad: Terror Networks in the Twenty-First Century* (Philadelphia, 2008), pp. 8, 40.

14

Fighting in Three Uniforms: Soviet POWs in World War Two

Dónal O'Sullivan

The fate of Soviet POWs represents a complex challenge for the historian: few studies devote space and time to discuss their treatment. Soviet military doctrine ordered soldiers to fight to the death, and the USSR did not recognize the Geneva Convention. Indeed, the Soviet government regarded POWs as traitors, and punished their relatives at home by reducing their food rations. Consequently, Soviet historians largely ignored the terrible ordeal of POWs in German captivity. Soviet post-war narratives concentrated on a few individuals who managed to escape and join the partisans. Textbooks heaped particular scorn on POWs who fought on the German side in the anti-Soviet Vlassov movement. There was another reason to ignore the fate of POWs. After 1945, the glorious victory in the 'Great Patriotic War' replaced the October Revolution as the new founding myth of the USSR, with the 'unity of party and people' emerging as the focal point. The mere existence of POWs and their service in enemy uniform challenged this narrative.

The War Office in London estimated that by April 1944, the German Army employed around 400,000 'Russian' POWs. In addition, about 1,450,000 slave labourers from the USSR had been pressed into working in the Reich. But when Allied forces landed in France, British estimates ranged even higher: to more than a million POWs in the German Army and 4.5 to 5 million slave labourers.[1] These estimates were based on interrogations of POWs. British, American and Canadian troops captured hundreds of former Red Army soldiers and confined them to makeshift camps in Normandy before transporting them to Britain.

Allied headquarters worried about the Soviet POWs under German command. Would they be able to slow down the advance of their armies? The troops also presented an enticing opportunity. Could some of the Soviet POWs be recruited for commando missions to convince their former comrades to lay down their arms? Some might even be sent to Germany proper to contact slave labourers and persuade them to sabotage the German war economy. The sabotage wing of British Intelligence, the Special Operations Executive (SOE) designed a scheme called 'Mamba' to employ some of

the former Red Army soldiers. SOE selected approximately 40 POWs for 'Mamba'.

Who were these POWs, and what were their motives? Unlike most of the other cases examined in this volume, the transnational military service of these Soviet soldiers was neither intentional nor voluntary; their trajectories were dependent to a large extent on chance. Recently released SOE records preserve the untold story of the Mamba group which was kept secret throughout the Cold War. The personnel files give us an intriguing look at the wartime experience of the Soviet soldier, providing clues about social status, education and outlook on life. It is the remarkable story of soldiers who – during the course of the war – fought in three different uniforms and were captured twice, surviving two entirely different POW experiences.[2]

The genesis of Mamba

From the beginning, the Mamba scheme was the brainchild of the SOE officer Major Leopold 'Len' Manderstam. He had been born in Russia and had even served in the Red Army. He was familiar with the harsh discipline in the Red Army, and he was impressed by the terrible ordeal the soldiers suffered during their captivity in German hands. Manderstam was aware that the Soviet government had not signed the Geneva Convention. Worse, Stalin's Military Order No. 270, issued on 16 August 1941, equated surrender with treason. A Soviet soldier had to fight until his death. To discourage soldiers from laying down their guns, the government announced that family members of Soviet POWs were to be deprived of state assistance. The ridiculous nature of this order was apparent at the front. Hundreds of thousands Soviet soldiers found themselves encircled and outgunned. According to recent estimates, from June to December 1941 the Wehrmacht took approximately three million Red Army soldiers captive.[3]

Influenced by the Nazi policy classifying Slavs as subhuman, many German generals considered care for the POWs a waste of resources.[4] Forced to march for miles or transported in open freight cars, hundreds of thousands perished on the way to the camps behind the front lines. Even the capture of his own son Yakov did not move Stalin to change his attitude. Rejecting Hitler's offer to exchange Yakov against Field-Marshal Paulus, Stalin allegedly remarked: 'I will not trade a Marshal against a Lieutenant.'[5]

But over time, with the tide of the war turning, the Nazi war machine recognized the need for additional manpower. Eventually, Hitler allowed the establishment of the so-called Russian Liberation Army (ROA) under General Andrei Vlassov in 1944. According to the Soviet prisoners interviewed by Len Manderstam, the Germans asked the POWs to 'volunteer' for the Vlassov Army. Nobody stepped forward. The Germans then asked every tenth man to step forward and executed the men. After that, Manderstam noted, it 'was hardly surprising most of the survivors put on German uniforms'.[6] However,

the Nazi leadership did not trust Slavs, even if they wore German uniforms. Hitler felt he could not rely on them to fight on the Eastern front and ordered them transferred to western and southern Europe, thereby freeing up 'Aryans' to fight the USSR.[7] This is how the 'Russians' ended up fighting the Resistance in France.

British intelligence officers sensed an opportunity to wrest these troops away from Berlin's command. To entice them to surrender, Major Manderstam suggested asking for a promise of pardon from Moscow. His boss, Colonel Seddon, was sceptical, indicating a high level of distrust towards the wartime ally. Even informing Moscow of the existence of these troops might only whet the NKVD's appetite to infiltrate more of their agents into western Europe.[8] But as reports of 'Russians' harassing the Resistance multiplied, Seddon changed his mind. Now, he concluded, it would be 'wrong to ignore them'.[9] Because of general Soviet disinterest in the fate of their POWs, SOE presumed that the Soviet government had no particular interest in the fate of these men as well. Seddon formally notified SOE's Liaison officer George Hill in Moscow on 12 April 1944 to request information on NKVD plans concerning the Soviet POWs.

Preparations for the operation began while waiting for an answer from Moscow. In May, Manderstam proposed using airdrops to deliver certificates offering 'sympathetic consideration' in cases where a POW could prove he had killed a German soldier or a Nazi party member. While this was ruled out as being 'impractical', Manderstam's second proposal was adopted: creating a fictional Soviet anti-German movement.[10] On 17 May, this operation received the code name 'Mamba'.

A number of 'false' parachute operations would create the perception of a large underground network assisting the Allies, provoking the Germans into investigating their Russian subordinates. Leaflets, fake couriers and wireless sets dispatched to areas with heavy Russian troop concentration should fall into the hands of the Gestapo. Hopefully, Gestapo investigations would divert attention from true resistance operations. Such a deception scheme was relatively cheap and therefore attractive. By now, 'Mamba' had become the umbrella term for all operations concerning the 'Russians'. The specific deception scheme received the designation 'Restinga'. Another plan with the designation 'Cafeka' attempted to induce Soviet nationals under German command to surrender to the Allied Forces and promised them 'sympathetic treatment'. SOE planned to infiltrate agents to contact those units that were reported to be 'pro-Soviet' and only serving the Germans 'under duress'.

SOE's Moscow Mission chief George Hill was sceptical. He feared that as soon as the Soviets figured out how keen SOE was on the scheme, they would be 'cautious'.[11] Indeed, the NKVD asked questions before giving a clear answer. Liaison officer Andrei Graur did not want to commit himself either way and asked for more information about the Vlassov troops. In his

telegrams to London, George Hill warned of ‘serious consequences’ if SOE did not come clean with all the operational details at this point.[12]

Consequently, Manderstam disclosed the facts at SOE’s disposal: the total ‘renegade Soviet forces’ in occupied western Europe amounted to about 230,000 men. Soviet nationals in German service had been reported all over France. The troops were engaged in anti-aircraft reconnaissance, combating resistance groups, SS duties, and the *Organisation Todt*. Apparently, they had fought well against French partisans and the Germans were sure of their ‘Russian troops’ as they feared being handed over to the Soviet government in the event of an Allied victory.[13]

Without any clear answer from Moscow, SOE went ahead, assuming that Moscow did not ‘attach any political or military significance’ to the units.[14] For the ‘Cafeka’ operation, SOE printed certificates in Russian, French and English. Any ‘Russian POW’ complying with these instructions would be well treated if he surrendered. The British fully intended that some of these papers would fall into the hands of the German authorities and sow doubt about their ‘Russians’.

Six weeks after being notified of the British plans, NKVD liaison officer Colonel Ivan Chichaev protested against the use of Soviet POWs. On 27 May 1944 he conveyed to Manderstam his ‘astonishment’ that such a scheme would be put forward without Soviet knowledge and consent.[15] But it seems that Stalin needed more time to make up his mind, because simultaneously, Moscow NKVD representatives told the British that they considered going to France with the Allied invasion troops to supervise the operation from France.[16] Increasing distrust of the Soviets and the fear of military setbacks during the upcoming invasion dominated internal British discussions. At the beginning of June, SOE carried out the first mission, dropping forged documents without informing the Soviets.

The situation changed rapidly after D-Day, when a large number of ‘Russians’ fell into Allied hands and were brought to camps in Britain.[17] By the middle of June, with Moscow still reserving judgement about the scheme, Manderstam had visited a camp in France and interviewed about 20 prisoners.[18] They had belonged to the 441st and 642nd *Ostbattalion* and had been captured near Bayeux and Caen. About 200 ‘Russians’ were kept in ‘Camp 21’.

In his first report, Manderstam stressed that although the Germans had pressed most of them into service, they might fight well and should not be discounted as a serious military factor. The German propaganda, reinforced by the Soviet attitude, left no doubt that in the event of a German collapse they would be dealt with ‘mercilessly’ by the USSR authorities. Manderstam reminded his superiors that about a year before, Soviet Ambassador to London Ivan Maisky had shown indifference towards the fate of Soviet POWs in Germany. Manderstam felt that it was possible to induce some of the Russian troops to surrender or even fight against the Germans.[19]

Most of the soldiers would require little or no training as they had been in partisan or parachute units. Both former POWs and deportees employed in the German war economy might be induced to go slow or sabotage production. SOE boss Sir Colin Gubbins called this an 'excellent report' and proposed going ahead with the plan. Russian units in France were an 'excellent target for SOE subversive action'.[20]

However, the British War Cabinet decided soon after, on 17 July 1944, to return all Soviet POWs to the Soviet Union.[21] SOE boss Lord Selborne protested in writing on 21 July to Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden, using a draft from Manderstam. In his letter Selborne used a combination of strategic and practical as well as humanitarian concerns. A repatriation would 'play right into the hands' of German propaganda and would make it impossible to induce the Soviet POWs to lay down their arms. The idea of sending thousands of men back to their deaths 'must be repellent to every Englishman'.[22] When Eden declined, Selborne tried again, urging him to at least inform the Soviet government about the Russians fighting the Resistance and ask them to issue a statement that those who surrendered would receive lenient treatment.[23] Christopher Murphy has argued that the context of utilizing the POWs was lost in Bethell's and Tolstoy's condemnation of Eden. Far from having a humanitarian goal, Manderstam and Selborne, he alleged, were more concerned in securing support for their scheme. Murphy quoted Selborne's comments that France might be persuaded to provide asylum or offer the POWs the possibility of enrolling in the Foreign Legion, or giving them refuge in Madagascar or another unpopulated French colony.[24] However, the use of these arguments did not diminish Selborne's and Manderstam's concern about the future of the POWs. Rather, it reflected their assessment of Eden's mindset and contributed to building a convincing case for not adopting any policy before victory had been assured. In the end, Eden wrote to Churchill, defending his decision and highlighting that the 'Russians' had been captured serving in German formations. 'We cannot afford to be sentimental about this.'[25] Of course, the final responsibility rested with the prime minister.

Profiles of accidental transnational soldiers

While these political debates went on, SOE officers began to select POWs for the proposed scheme. On 17–18 July, SOE officers visited Camp No. 8 at Otley, Leeds. The camp held 384 Russian POWs 'of a fairly low type mentally'. Seventeen of them were selected as potential agents, none of them as 'leaders' but as possible group members. Few of them made the final cut. From the outset, SOE feared there might be some German 'plants' among the POWs. For example, one of the camp interpreters appeared 'suspiciously bi-lingual' and SOE considered him to be a German spy. Overall, the prisoners 'evinced uneasiness' when asked how they allowed themselves

to be captured by the Germans. All of them stated they had been forced to join the Germans by hunger and 'several cases of cannibalism' in the POW camps. German propaganda had told them they would be hanged immediately should they fall into the hands of Stalin's Allies. Some of them believed Stalin was actually 'running' the policy of the Western Allies. They recounted Nazi atrocities and convinced SOE that they 'hated the Germans'. SOE officers felt these sentiments to be 'undoubtedly sincere'. But the POWs were also very suspicious of anyone in British uniform speaking Russian, suspecting a Soviet government representative.

The POWs felt extremely grateful for the humane treatment in British camps. They had no illusions about the severity of the treatment in case of repatriation and were 'extremely terrified'. The former NKVD officer Alexander Glushko stated he also was afraid, yet he added he had no reason to expect to be shot without trial and he knew 'how to explain things'. Officers concluded his NKVD background made him feel somewhat safer than the others.[26] By the end of July, seven POWs had been sent to a SOE training school (STS XIX) to undergo weapons training: Lt. Alexandre Dokumov, Sergt. Sergei Valiulin, Capt. Konstantin Filkevich, Lt (Q) Alexander Gluschko, S/Sergt Dimitri Tereshchenko, 2/Lt. Abdugali Schderbekow, S/Sergt. Boba Sadikoff (Soviet Army ranks). Afterwards, they went to parachute training at Manchester airport.

The first qualitative assessment took place at STS XIX (Ardley, Stevenage, Hertfordshire). SOE's officer in charge was Lt. L. Kratzoff who spoke Russian. His first impression in August was positive. Many of the recruits seemed suited for the operation. However, as time went by, Kratzoff's attitude changed. The more he observed the former Red Army soldiers, the less enthusiastic he became. By September, he narrowed down the number of suitable agents more and more. This was not altogether surprising. The soldiers had been under extremely harsh discipline in Stalinist Russia and experienced near starvation in Hitler's Germany. Now they were suddenly treated as human beings, well fed, well clothed, and even paid for their participation in training exercises. The penalties for missing training were – from the Soviet viewpoint – laughable. British officers were at pains to find ways to discipline some of the more notorious stragglers.[27] Moreover, previous tightly controlled tensions now came to the surface between the POWs. The POWs themselves represented a fair slice of Soviet society in terms of social and educational background and ethnicity. The documents offer a valuable insight into the experience of the common Red Army soldier. We also get a sense about the first British encounter with Red Army soldiers, a mix of wonder, frustration and sympathy.

The best 'all-round' soldier was 36-year-old Ukrainian Alexander Glushko, possibly the only former NKVD officer taken prisoner by the British during the war. On his POW index card, he openly listed as occupation: 'Supervisor, concentration camp'. He turned out to have been 'a lieutenant on the

"Q" [quartermaster] side of the NKVD', in charge of supplies at a GULag concentration camp. Originally from Rostov, he was married and had four daughters. Glushko had been a Lieutenant in the Red Army paratroopers before his capture near Smolensk in July 1942. He had served the Germans as a Sergeant and was again captured, this time by the Allies, at Teigny, France on 9 June 1944. When he first arrived in Britain, the 5′7″ man only weighed 146 lbs. Within a few weeks, he had gained 14 pounds. Kratzoff wrote that Glushko was a 'strong character which has been helpless of expression under the Stalin regime. Intelligent and cognizant of what goes on around him, feels extremely bitter about the Stalin government', in particular about not recognizing the POWs. He claimed to have worked for the NKVD for the last ten years prior to the war. He had parachuted behind the German lines in May 1942 and had been captured some four weeks later. He was 'prepared to do anything' against the Germans. Glushko was 'strenuously trying to live up to his reputation as a 'bright boy'. He had leadership qualities and gave orders clearly and concisely but he also displayed an irksome 'know-all attitude' and was 'clever but not educated'. Kratzoff noted: 'His knowledge has been acquired the hard way by the sweat of his brow, and at his own expense.'

Like several other POWs, Glushko experienced mixed emotions during his training period. He firmly declared he never intended to return to the USSR. The Soviet government was a 'rotten set-up'. He stated that 'if he is to be shot, he prefers it to be done by the British and not by the Russians'. At the same time, Glushko hated the Germans and spoke 'with tears in his eyes of the atrocities and bestialities which he witnessed personally'. He proposed to earn the right to live in England after the war by fighting the Germans. The British officers were clearly impressed with his insider's knowledge of the NKVD and his firm conviction that the POWs were going to be shot on return to the USSR.

Lieutenant Gennady Smirnov from Rzhev, 25 years old, was described as 'happy go lucky and lazy by nature'. Nonetheless, he was seen as a potential leader.[28] Smirnov, a 'textile technician', had a 'neat and tidy mind' and was 'keen and intelligent'. One of the most educated of the group, he had served in the Soviet artillery and was captured by the Germans in Viazma in October 1941. From January 1943, Smirnov served in German uniform as a sapper until his capture in July 1944 near Coutances, France. Kratzoff felt that Smirnov would be a good agent because he had 'a clear way of thinking, clear speech, and could command'. He was not too assertive, but was deemed very reliable. He was made leader of a training group and received favourable reports, 'liked by the others and generally showing promise'. Smirnov held back during discussions but was deemed 'anti-Stalin'. His training report noted his above-average skill in handling weapons and explosives.

The 29-year-old Ukrainian Dimitri Tereshchenko from Omsk had been captured by the Germans in October 1941 but managed to escape after

12 hours and joined a partisan group. Captured again in 1943, he eventually served as Junior Officer in the German infantry in France. According to his file, Tereshchenko was 'very slow mentally'. He told the British that his family (he had five brothers and five sisters) had suffered terribly during the collectivization and he did not want to return to the USSR. His father had been forced to abandon his own farm and join the collective farm. 'Five years after he had lost his home, he had occasion to pass the spot the farm once stood and saw only grass.' He was married and had a son and a daughter whom he hoped to get out of the USSR with the help of the British government. His hatred of the Germans was 'of the silent steady kind, very intense and very real'. Over the course of the training his enthusiasm for going on a secret mission diminished. Kratzoff called him 'easy-going', often playing the buffoon, although he was judged to be an able agent. 'He works quite hard when he knows what he has to do, but gives up easily when a bit confused, with the "Oh hell" attitude.' Kratzoff recommended to use Tereshchenko together with proven leaders and worried that he might be inclined to abandon a mission in the field in order to survive in hiding. Kratzoff feared he might just say 'to hell with it' and abandon everything.

37-year-old Evgeny Petrov, an electrician from Moscow, was a 'good type, reliable, serious minded, [a] hard worker, [a] and pleasant personality, a bit nervous'. Kratzoff thought he was 'one of the most trustworthy' of the group. Petrov was one of the few men who showed a positive learning curve during the lectures on sabotage. He 'has worked very hard, ad his efforts have rewarded him with a fairly good knowledge of the work'.

The British also selected men with special knowledge such as wireless operations or medicine. 32-year-old Ivan Safonov, a medical student from Voronezh, was among them. However, Kratzoff wrote: '[A]fter saving lives, [Safonov is] now finally getting down to the job of killing Germans, making good progress.' But he was 'mentally not suited to cold blooded killing', being 'much more useful with a pen and paper than with a Sten [gun]'. Safonov was judged to be far too good-natured to be sent on a dangerous mission. He apparently had difficulties hitting a target 'with any weapon'. His training report, however, notes that he achieved high marks in explosives and demolitions training. Safonov's medical experience (three years of study at Leningrad Medical Institute) made him popular with fellow-soldiers. Like Tereshchenko, Safonov, who was married and had a daughter, had actually been captured twice by the Germans, managing to escape the first time and joining a partisan group for six months until he was captured again in June 1942. After a while in a POW camp, he served in a German medical unit until he was taken prisoner by the Allies in June 1944.

One of the group members, Alexei Babich, 'developed and blossomed incredibly'. The initially abrupt man now displayed a sense of humour and self-confidence. Kratzoff considered him 'a rough diamond that needs polishing'. Babich had made friends and opened up after some initial reserve. He

was disciplined and had shown a positive outlook, inspiring a sense that he would be a success in any mission entrusted to him by the British. Kratzoff felt Babich would be 'an extremely nasty person to be up against'. Killing Germans would 'give him more kick out of life than almost anything else'.

The highest-ranking Soviet officer of the group was Yakov Vorobev, a 34-year-old Ukrainian from the Dnepropetrovsk region who had been a Senior Lieutenant and assistant to a Division Commander before being captured very early on in July 1941. The Germans kept him in a camp until August 1943 and he later served as a labourer in a field kitchen in France. He reported his civilian occupation as 'specialist in the artificial insemination of farm animals'.

There were also several Georgians in the group. 21-year-old Nikolai M'Gebrshvili, born in Gori, had already been captured in August 1941 near Vyborg after being wounded in combat. Like Vorobev, he had been in German captivity for a long time. Kratzoff considered him one of the few to show progress during training. A 'born acrobat', he was a 'good type, intelligent, active in mind and body', but took care not to engage in any political discussions.

Lt. Kratzoff described 34-year-old Shalva M'Balardashvili as a 'tubby curly-haired little Georgian' who 'looks and acts like a Jewish second hand clothes vendor, trying to sell something to an unwilling customer'. He had been a decorative artist with the Tbilisi theatre before the war. This POW had a 'volatile temperament, not a bad type, a shrewd brain'. Kratzoff felt he could never be a leader but could be selling the idea to his men, as he was 'willing, keen, not afraid'. Balardashvili often would offer his own suggestions and opinions during lectures, to the dismay of the British instructors. Kratzoff reported that he had a tendency to 'be a bit busybody and to teach others and poke his nose in at awkward times'. He would talk freely about his artistic work but would be more reserved voicing political opinions. Still, Kratzoff thought there was 'no love lost between himself and Stalin'.

31-year-old Sergei Tiekhov, an ethnic Ossetian from Ordzhonikidze, was married and had one son. The building engineer was well educated and quite experienced, having worked as Building Inspector for hospitals in Moscow and, from 1939 on, as Chief Road Engineer of Dagestan. The Red Army Captain had commanded a sapper battalion before his capture in July 1942. A year later, he had joined the 'Hiwi' (*Hilfswillige*, i.e. Nazi local support troops) and served in Austria, France and Poland. In August 1944, he was captured by Canadian troops 80 km from Paris. During the SOE training, Tiekhov appeared light-hearted and humorous at first until he 'figured out that enthusiasm and interest were liabilities'. Subsequently, he played dumb and claimed he was just a simple engineer and needed to be excused. SOE officers did not recommend him for a mission.

For the British officers, the most 'exotic' POWs were from Central Asia. Kratzoff regarded the 24-year-old Tajik Bobo Sadikov ('A.3') to be a

'good-natured, simple-minded' soldier and called him affectionately 'poor little Bobo'. Sadikov's knowledge of Russian was limited, and therefore he was 'wandering about among a labyrinth of unintelligible gibberish, spouted at him by the instructors and interpreter. 90 percent of what is said simply fails to register'. Sadikov, a peasant from the collective farm 'Karl Marx' in the Leninabad region, only had two years of elementary school and two months of military training. He had been captured in March 1942 near Kharkov. The Germans forced him to serve in a Labour battalion. The Tajik was considered to be politically naïve, believing nearly everything he was told. However, Kratzoff thought he might be useful for a mission because he was not a coward. He noted Sadikov's 'homicidal tendencies' and his 'desire to throw grenades'. Sadikov claimed to have stolen rifles from the Germans in Poland and to have handed them over to Partisan detachments at night. But his fellows POWs were sceptical of his 'bloodcurdling' tales. In training, he displayed aptitude at handling explosives and was 'a fairly good shot'. Made a group leader during an exercise which featured the derailment of a train, he 'did very well and the scheme was a success'. His fellow 'students' would often make fun of the 'childish' and somewhat naïve Sadikov.

The 26-year-old Kazakh Abdugali Shidiribegov from Karaganda tried 'hard' but did not have 'the mental equipment'. However, he possessed 'native cunning', a customary British description for Central Asian POWs. In his civilian life an 'Inspector produce sales', Shidiribegov was married and had one daughter. He had served in the Red Army as Lieutenant and had been captured at Smolensk in July 1942. From December 1943, he served as junior officer in the German Infantry until he was captured in Normandy. Kratzoff noted Shidiribegov's growing self-confidence but remarked he was 'completely selfish', and 'everything centres on his own well-being'. Shidiribegov was an excellent shot and was specially praised for his ability to place and connect explosive charges. The British officers felt that out of all nationalities, the Soviet Central Asian POWs were 'the most difficult to assess as regards reliability'. During the training parachute jumps, he performed well, leading Kratzoff to suggest using him together with Sadikov for a mission.

Although the War Cabinet had already decided on repatriation, 'Mamba' training continued into September 1944. Kratzoff reported that although the POWs might not be perfect, they still could be used for a mission. Five men (Niesterov, Sergiyenko, Sadikov, Shidiribegov, Bikuyev) had been disciplined for infringements such as being late on parade, and he thought it had a profound effect on them. He repeatedly warned all 'students' that if they did not 'pull their socks up' they would 'quickly find themselves back from whence they came' [the regular POW camp]. News from the front had a big impact on morale. Kratzoff concluded that when they first arrived, they had no idea of the progress of the war and felt it would go on indefinitely. Now, with an end in sight, some tried to fail deliberately in order to be sent back to

the regular POW camp instead of being sent to fight in France and possibly get killed in the last few days of the war.

Two weeks later, on 27 September 1944, Kratzoff compiled a new report. The 'worst offenders' had promised to mend their ways. But some were 'beyond hope' and had slipped back into 'laziness, indiscipline, argumentativeness, thick headedness'. Certainly, the punishment of suspending pay was hardly an impressive disciplinary instrument for soldiers who had served in the Red Army, survived a German POW camp and the Nazi army. One of them, Ivan Niesterov, pretended to have a slight scratch on his leg to avoid participating in training exercises. Confronted by the officers, he openly challenged the British to just stop his pay for good. Niesterov, a 23-year-old electrician with only four years of elementary schooling from the Krasnodar region, had been captured at Stalingrad and carried bullet and knife scars from combat wounds. At the beginning, Kratzoff was impressed by his intense hatred of the Nazis. 'He is attentive during training, never asks silly questions, and appears to be making good progress.' In his first report, Kratzoff mentioned that he would want to observe Niesterov a little longer 'as regards his loyalty and reliability'. British officers had no idea how to handle the recalcitrant 'students'. If they sent them back to the POW camp, they might talk about their special training. Should they return to the USSR, the NKVD would surely be informed about 'Mamba'. Faced with difficult choices, Kratzoff reminded his superiors that these men had 'already lost everything and don't particularly care what happens next'. He tried to divide up the group into the 'worst' and the 'better suited'.

Among the 'students' receiving below average marks was 22-year-old Vsevolod Raube from Bobruisk, who was considered the 'bad boy of the party'. Raube had trained at the Naval Academy in Leningrad and claimed to be a pilot. He had been captured in the Caucasus in 1942 and had been a German POW until March 1943. He had been recruited into the Vlassov ROA and served in Belgium, Poland and southern France. Raube's father Ivan had been arrested by the NKVD in 1937 and his son had received no news of him since. In SOE training, he displayed above-average intelligence but little initiative. Handicapped by sore feet during training, he showed good map reading and sketching abilities but was not interested in tactics as he was 'inclined to think that General Raube knows best'. The final training report from October 1944 was scathing: 'It is difficult to see how he could be anything but an embarrassment if entrusted with a normal operational role. Content with being an armchair critic he lacks the guts necessary for serious work.'

Eventually, Kratzoff selected four soldiers for intensive training. These soldiers were Vassili Sergiyenko, Ivan Savin (both radio operators), Viktor Kozlov and Daniel Mackiewicz. He sent Sergiyenko and Savin to Station XIX in Stevenage. Kozlov and Mackiewicz trained at Station 40 (Howbury Hall) where agents learned how to operate radio beacons. They also learnt to

use direction-finding equipment to assist airdrops, for example the S-Phone which enabled communication between the pilot and the reception committee on the ground. Some students also trained at STS 3 (Stodham Park, Liss, Hampshire), specializing in the use of enemy weapons.

22-year-old Vassili Sergiyenko was of Ukrainian origin. He had joined the Red Army in May 1940, and served as lieutenant in the signal corps. The Germans captured him in July 1942 at Demidov, and he later served in the German Army from December 1943 as corporal in Artillery. In July 1944, the Americans captured him at Granville, France. Initially, Kratzoff was sceptical. Sergiyenko was 'not to be trusted' and if 'sent on ops he is likely to find a safe spot and stay there for good!' He was 'liable to let his new air of freedom run away with him', and 'he is too young and emotionally not suited' as a leader. Sergiyenko had 'a good deal of brain', but was 'not very enthusiastic', leading the British officer to characterize him as the 'slipping kind' whose main concern was to stay in Britain until the war was over. However, SOE eventually selected him for the first mission because he was a capable radio operator and knew Morse code.

Another prisoner to receive training on British wireless sets was 39-year-old Ivan Savin who was born in Tambov. From 1937, he served in the Red Army signal corps until the Germans captured him in August 1942. He later served as an unarmed private in a supply column in the German Army. In August 1944, he was captured by Allied troops. SOE chose him because it needed skilled radio operators. From 14 September, he received 3 shillings per day.

From training to disappearance

Plans to continue with Mamba in France were overtaken by the Allied military advance. On 29 August 1944, the French General Staff (EMFFI) noted that the territory intended for the operation was currently being liberated.[29] SOE then hoped to use the selected troops for work among the Soviet slave labourers in Germany. However, on 14 September, two Soviet officers visited the Kempton Park POW camp. In a speech to the Soviet POWs, they declared that the Soviet government had made arrangements for repatriation. Indeed, the very same day the selected agents signed a declaration that they voluntarily cooperated with British authorities to undertake special operations against the common enemy. They were assured that the Soviet government would be informed. But soon the NKVD lodged a formal complaint against training Soviet POWs for a mission in France. Heated discussions followed between NKVD liaison officer Colonel Chichaev and Major Manderstam. In October, Chichaev explicitly asked to meet the four POWs selected for 'Mamba' work. Chichaev argued that the NKVD was concerned with the welfare of the POWs, which prompted an angry reply from Manderstam: 'This is an entirely new aspect, that the NKVD has become a welfare institution.'[30]

In mid-October, SOE decided that 'Mamba' should continue even without Soviet consent. Should Chichaev try to stall, they would take silence as an expression of consent. After a period of seven days, the operation should go forward. But, again, the NKVD intervened. On 16 October, Chichaev advised Manderstam to 'forget' about the 'Russians' in Germany. The sooner SOE 'forgot' the Soviet nationals, 'the better it will be for our future relations'.[31] The Foreign Office then abandoned the scheme, overruling SOE. On 20 October, Manderstam informed the POWs of the Soviet veto.[32] The wireless operators Savin and Sergiyenko expressed great apprehension. All attempts to calm them down failed. Savin responded:

> We will naturally go, if you insist, but with regard to the Soviet assurances, I know their value. I remember when 32,000 Russian prisoners-of-war were exchanged against Finns during the Russian-Finnish campaign. All of them were shot by a machine-gun company, which in their turn were liquidated by the NKVD.

When Manderstam expressed his disbelief, Savin added: 'It is very simple. That is how it is done by us.' Sergiyenko had also heard of this massacre. 'Once they get us back to Russia, they will settle their score with us.' Manderstam left them both 'in a very depressed state of mind'. Next, he talked to the physics teacher Mackiewicz, who displayed a 'rabid pro-Soviet' attitude. Manderstam suspected him of having been in touch with the NKVD. Mackiewicz was the only POW who took the news 'very cheerfully' and voiced understanding for the Soviet decision. Manderstam asked him what would happen to Kozlov, who had been a major in the German Army and who had expressed somewhat anti-Soviet views. Mackiewicz answered that Kozlov would be liquidated. When Manderstam asked whether this would happen right away, Mackiewicz replied:

> Oh no. We don't do it that way. He will probably be given a fortnight's leave; then a note will be taken of the persons with whom he associates during that leave. On his return to his unit he will disappear and the people with whom he associated will also disappear.

Manderstam asked if that was not a bit harsh. Mackiewicz said: 'Not in the least. It is just realism. The end justifies the means, and a little more of that in this country would do a lot of good to your war effort.' Not surprisingly, Kozlov 'took the news rather badly' and turned pale, stating: 'Well, it cannot be helped. I suppose, just as well to die in one's own country.' Manderstam considered Kozlov 'a soldier of the best type and an extremely cultured and charming man'.

The news of repatriation produced consternation everywhere. At first, the POWs were excited and cheerful, as they expected to be told of the upcoming

start of operations. But then Manderstam informed them that the operation would have to be abandoned. He added that the USSR had requested their repatriation and the British government had agreed. They were going to be returned to the regular POW camp the same afternoon. His statement 'produced great gloom and consternation'.[33] Lt. Sheridan reported:

> Eleven students asked to appeal to a higher authority . . . Every one of the 11 stated that he did not wish to return to Russia and that he knew on returning he would be shot. Only two adopted the fatalistic view that it was useless to argue and that they would return and face whatever was in store for them . . . The tenor of their appeals was that they would certainly be shot, that their wives and families would be killed, imprisoned or sent to Siberia, that the Soviet recognizes no prisoners and would try them as traitors, that the fact that they had offered to co-operate with the British would not avail them anything and might be a handicap in that Britain and the Soviets might not always be Allies . . . [When Manderstam tried to argue that there was no harm in helping an ally] 'You may think so,' some of them said, 'but we know Russia, we know NKVD, and we know it is not so . . . Two men made most earnest appeals to be shot here in England so that their families might not suffer. Two of them said that they would run away or kill themselves before reaching Soviet territory.

Although he did not understand Russian, Sheridan found the individual interviews 'most distressing'. '[T]heir twitching faces, their quivering lips and the sweat pouring down their faces even in a cold room were evidence of the strong emotion under which they were labouring.' Before they boarded the omnibus, they 'shook hands with every member of the staff, not only instructors, but orderlies, cooks and others'. Sheridan added: '[P]ractically all of them . . . stood up and made a short speech of thanks for the kindness and good treatment they had received.' In Kempton Park, the men were handed over to POW authorities. Two of them later attempted to commit suicide.[34] Upon reading Sheridan's report, SOE Vice-Chief Harry Sporborg remarked: 'I fear there is nothing we can do.'

However, when Chichaev at an unspecified date came to pick up the entire group, he came too late. Overnight, British officers had opened the gates and let the 'Mamba' soldiers escape. Manderstam recalled: 'Nothing gave me greater pleasure during the war than the disappearance of my forty Russian parachutists.' Chichaev was furious and protested to Gubbins. Gubbins stayed firm and asked the NKVD man for evidence that British officers had engineered the 'escape'. Apparently, Chichaev 'accepted the episode as just another nuance in the fortunes of war' and stayed on cordial terms with Manderstam afterwards.[35] According to Manderstam, Chichaev even casually invited him to defect, offering him a full general's rank.

What truly happened to the 'Mamba' group is unclear. However, it seems rather unlikely that a group of forty Red Army soldiers with little language skills stayed in Britain without some form of official assistance. In one case, we have some indication that other services were interested in a 'Mamba' group member. In October, when confronted with the decision to repatriate the prisoners, one of them – Vladimir Dubrovski – refused to return, offering information to the British and asking for a chance to prove his use by going back to any place in Germany or German occupied territory. When Dubrovski announced he would rather commit suicide than be repatriated, SOE transferred him to a different training station to arrange an interview with MI6. It seems quite possible that other branches of British intelligence recruited members of the 'Mamba' group. However, there is no conclusive evidence in the recently declassified SOE files.

Conclusion

The 'Mamba' operation provides some clues for the growing distrust among the Allies and the deterioration of the 'Grand Alliance'. Stalin feared British-trained Soviet saboteurs as he prepared for the post-war period and preferred vetoing the project rather than assisting in the advance of Allied troops on the Western Front. Global politics aside, the SOE documents represent a fascinating glimpse into the attitudes of rank-and-file Red Army troops, particularly since their wartime experience of captivity and combat remained unique. Instead of the schematic warrior images disseminated by official propaganda on all sides, the soldiers' files reflect a more human way of dealing with war and captivity. They were willing to do their part to defeat the enemy, yet displayed little eagerness for martyrdom. Indeed, their critical attitudes towards both the Soviet regime and the Nazi system suggest a deep-felt urge to simply survive, regardless of the circumstances. We even find little indication that the soldiers felt a strong bond among themselves, a sense of *esprit de corps*. Indeed, once discipline relaxed upon arrival on British soil, individualism broke out. In the absence of coercive measures practised by the Red Army or the *Ostbattalion*, the soldiers tested how far they could go without being punished. One soldier compared conditions in Britain to a health resort.

In a sense, the decent treatment in the British camp acted like a catalyst to re-awaken human emotions and hopes in the POWs. Openly reflecting on their families' suffering during Stalin's terror, they explained how their loyalty to the Soviet state had decreased since the beginning of the war. Thoroughly disillusioned with the Soviet system, they could not envision a return to the homeland that threatened them with severe punishment. Yet, they remained products of the system, deeply shaped by the norms and expectations of the party state. Regardless of their ethnic origin, they were Soviet through education and socialization. But few of the soldiers displayed any

ideological fervour based on Communist ideals. On the contrary, once freed from Soviet supervision, they asserted their individual character, loosening the bond of camaraderie.

How can we explain the apparent lack of communal spirit? Because their own government considered them 'traitors', the Soviet POWs lived on borrowed time from the day of their capture. Unlike POWs from other countries, for them a return home meant imprisonment and possibly execution. In addition, their experience in totalitarian armies led them to behave 'like a blade of grass' and bend until the steamroller had passed. The documents show that privates were accustomed to fear, not trust as their main motivation. There seems to have been no comparable level of trust between privates and senior officers reported from Allied POW camps. This lessened their eagerness to form a strong bond among each other. Although attached to their homeland, they knew the motherland had abandoned them and feared retribution upon return. It would have been interesting to see how many of them would have fulfilled their mission had Operation 'Mamba' gone forward. Certainly, there is little evidence that political ideals mattered much for these hardened soldiers. It is interesting to note that most soldiers seemed relatively immune to Soviet indoctrination, especially those whose families had suffered in the collectivization and the purges. Some soldiers' behaviour could have come straight out of the pages of Jaroslav Hašek's *The Good Soldier Shvejk* or Vladimir Voinovich's *Ivan Chonkin*.

Notes

1. The National Archives, London (TNA), HS 4/339 7 September 1944. After the invasion of Normandy in June 1944, Allied troops suddenly encountered Russians, Ukrainians, Georgians and other members of Soviet nationalities fighting in German uniforms. Few studies have mentioned these soldiers.
2. Some methodological difficulties should be mentioned with regard to the SOE files. These were compiled by Russian-speaking British officers, and therefore reflect a filtered view. The POWs themselves, long accustomed to regular questioning from authorities in the USSR and Nazi Germany, may have tailored their answers to what their captors wanted to hear. In addition, there may be additional files in Russian military archives on these individuals that were unavailable for this research.
3. Timothy Snyder, *Bloodlands: Europe between Hitler and Stalin* (New York, 2010), p. 176.
4. See: Dieter Pohl, *Die Herrschaft der Wehrmacht. Deutsche Militärbesatzung und einheimische Bevölkerung in der Sowjetunion 1941–44* (Oldenbourg, 2008); Alexander Dallin, *German Rule in Russia: A Study of Occupation Politics* (London, 2007).
5. In 1968, *Time Magazine* reported on German POW administration files outlining the fate of Yakov who was shot in a concentration camp. *Time Magazine*, 1 March 1968.
6. Leopold H. Manderstam (with Roy Heron), *From the Red Army to SOE* (London, 1985), p. 139. See also Christopher J. Murphy, 'SOE and Repatriation', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 36, 2 (2001), pp. 309–323. An early SOE report stated:

'To start with, the prisoners were usually huddled together in a camp behind barbed wire, some of them after many days of marching or train journeys, without food or water ... Beating up and shooting at random was obviously part of the carefully premeditated treatment. After a few months in these hideous places, the morale was obviously completely broken and the camps depleted by executions, starvations, illness, etc. The P/Ws quoted cases where they were actually given no food or water for eighteen to twenty-one days. Cannibalism was not uncommon.' TNA, HS 4/354, June 1944 report, p. 3. D/P to A.D.

7. Richard Overy, *Russia's War* (London, 1998), pp. 130–31.
8. TNA, HS 4/330. 9 February 1944. It is indicative that by this time, the infiltration of Soviet agents had become a cause of concern to SOE.
9. TNA, HS 4/330, 24 March 1944.
10. Murphy, 'SOE and Repatriation', p. 312; TNA, HS 4/330.
11. TNA, HS 7/278, p. 103.
12. TNA, HS 7/278, p. 106.
13. TNA, HS 7/278, p. 107. Telegram to Hill in Moscow, 23 May 1944.
14. TNA, HS 7/278, p. 107.
15. TNA, HS 7/278, p. 104.
16. TNA, HS 7/278, p. 108. 29 May 1944.
17. By July, more than 1600 former Soviet troops were in Allied hands. TNA, HS 4/339.
18. TNA, HS 7/278, p. 108.
19. TNA, HS 7/278, p. 110.
20. TNA, HS 4/354. 28 June 1944. During the meeting discussing Manderstam's report, the point was raised that the 'Russians' should be asked to either renounce their prisoners or issue an amnesty.
21. See: Nicholas Bethell, *The Last Secret* (London, 1974), p. 7.
22. TNA, HS 4/339. 21 July 1944. This letter is discussed in depth by Bethell and also in: Nikolay Tolstoy, *Victims of Yalta* (London, 1978).
23. TNA, HS 4/339. 18 August 1944.
24. Murphy, 'SOE and Repatriation', p. 317.
25. TNA, HS 4/354; Murphy, 'SOE and Repatriation', p. 318.
26. TNA, HS 4/339.
27. TNA, HS 4/354. June 1944 report, p. 10. Zakharov stated: 'It is hardly believable that we prisoners are treated so well ... Do you know, sir, that we are fed even better than in the German Army where we were supposed to have been fully fledged soldiers. We were even given mattresses and there is no beating up ... No, this is not a P/W camp – it is a health resort.'
28. TNA, HS 4/389, 4 November 1944.
29. TNA, HS 4/354.
30. TNA, HS 4/339, 9 October 1944.
31. Murphy, 'SOE and Repatriation', p. 321.
32. TNA, HS 4/339, 21 October 1944.
33. TNA, HS 4/354.
34. Manderstam, *From the Red Army to SOE*, p. 150.
35. Manderstam, *From the Red Army to SOE*, p. 151.

15

Conclusions: Jihadists, Diasporas and Professional Contractors – The Resurgence of Non-state Recruitment since the 1980s

Nir Arielli and Bruce Collins

The studies in this book, taken from a wide variety of locations and contexts across 200 years, have demonstrated the significance as well as the sometimes elusive nature of transnational military service. Even major state-on-state wars from the 1790s to the 1940s, when national armies and enforced conscription became pervasive, witnessed considerable transnational mobilization. More localized conflicts, and particularly civil wars, aroused transnational involvement, stimulated by a range of motives, the mix of which differed over time and by conflict. The history of transnational mobilization, raising as it does questions about national identity, about groups' and individuals' commitment to states and to ideological or religious causes, and about attitudes towards military service, allows us to begin assessing the long-term development of trends in warfare which have, at times, been described as emerging since the end of the Cold War. This book reminds us that fighting in the classic age of national armies was often conditioned by cross-cutting transnational loyalties or attachments, and demonstrates that the new ways of war described by Mary Kaldor, Martin Shaw and Peter Singer have deep historical roots.[1]

The experience of armed conflict over the last two decades has given considerable weight to arguments that, militarily, transnationalism is an increasingly important phenomenon. The end of the Cold War, which saw countries aligned on both sides of the ideological struggle prepared for major state-on-state conflict, has led to four kinds of transnational military engagement: wars of intervention which do not involve a state defending its national territory; the mobilization of insurgents internationally in reaction to armed interventions; the role of diasporas in supporting transnational causes; and the increased use of security and military contractors, especially in counter-insurgency campaigns.

The first and most ambiguous kind of transnational intervention has its modern roots in Cold War confrontations at the periphery of the geo-political struggle between the Communist powers and the NATO states. There have been and continue to be wars which occur in areas that are not vital to the intervening power's national security or interests. The most glaring case during the Cold War was America's despatch of a large army to Vietnam in 1965–72. American forces were initially sent to secure time for the South Vietnamese government to stabilize the political situation and build an effective army. US interests in this narrow coastal belt of South East Asia were of an extremely generalized geo-political kind and the crisis in 1965 fell far short of a national emergency. Although the government of South Vietnam did not pay the Americans for their military involvement, and although most American soldiers were drafted and did not volunteer for overseas service, the war had many characteristics which might be associated with eighteenth-century alliance warfare, wherein states hired out forces to allies or powers with which they sought good relations. So, too, the American-led coalition which fought the first Gulf War in 1991 took on a military task loosely related to the combatants' specific national interests and unrelated to any threat against the combatants' national territory. In legal terms, the liberation of Kuwait could have been undertaken by India or Brazil or Indonesia if those states had evinced the political will or acquired the military capability of doing so. In strategic terms, Saudi Arabia had a far more compelling interest in leading the counter-attack upon Iraq than did the USA. As it was, the coalition was paid by non-participating powers, notably Japan and Germany, as well as Kuwait, for large proportions of the costs of the war. The Americans' use of force since 1991 has not been consistent but there has been a strong element of using force on behalf of others, or in the advancement of generalized causes, whose analogues in the eighteenth century would now be categorized as mercenarism.

Recent interventions unrelated to the defence of clear and immediate threats to national interests have been conducted, by 'Western' governments at least, with great concern for their own armies' level of casualties. Lacking the legitimacy of defending the national homeland, these interventions have been seen by Martin Shaw as exercises in risk-avoidance. From this underlying emphasis upon risk-aversion, Shaw has described modern wars as being fought with limited official regard for indigenous civilian casualties. The allied intervention in Iraq from 2003 resulted in relatively low allied military casualties compared with the number of Iraqi civilians killed or wounded. While there was no intention to kill civilians, violence involving civilians proved less a matter of concern than minimizing military casualties suffered by the intervening powers.[2] Yet high 'collateral' civilian casualties have led to increased mobilization of civilians both within and, more relevant to our purposes, far beyond populations suffering from foreign interventions.

This in turn leads us to a second prevalent form of contemporary transnational mobilization. David Kilcullen has analysed the process by which civilians are motivated to join insurgencies in reaction to the casualties inflicted by interventionist forces upon ethnic, national, ideological or religious groups with whom they identify. These 'accidental guerrillas' are stimulated to join insurgencies by the counter-insurgency tactics of organized armies.[3] This process applies as much to co-religionists or those sharing a powerful ideological commitment beyond national borders as to fellow-nationals who are provoked by official mistreatment of insurgents. Identification of this sort builds upon universalist principles that extend ideas of a citizen's obligation to defend the nation, of which he or she is a member, to ideas of fighting in defence of those sharing some significant belief.

While there are a number of examples in the modern era of individuals and groups who volunteered to fight abroad on behalf of their co-religionists – for instance the Russian volunteers who travelled to the Balkans in 1876 to 'serve the faith, humanity, and our brothers', as Tolstoy[4] put it, in the struggle against the Ottomans, or the Irish Catholics who went briefly to Spain in 1936–37 to fight against the Socialist Republic – the phenomenon has expanded considerably in the late Cold War and its aftermath. Since the 1980s, conflicts that took place on what Samuel Huntington described as the fault lines of the 'clash of civilizations',[5] and pitted predominantly Muslim countries against a non-Muslim enemy, have mobilized thousands of transnational volunteers. Thomas Hegghammer explains the sharp rise in the number of foreign fighters from the 1980s onwards through the emergence of a new ideological movement, a sub-current of more peaceful forms of pan-Islamism. Here, Abdallah Azzam, the Palestinian-born cleric and father of the 'Afghan Arabs', played a key role. He not only established an office in Pakistan that funnelled volunteers from the Arab world into Afghanistan to fight alongside the mujahideen against Soviet forces; Azzam also set the juridical foundations of the movement by reinterpreting the classical medieval concept of jihad, and by declaring that the defence of the Muslim *umma* (nation) against foreign aggressors is the duty of every believer. The strength of the 'Afghan Arabs' probably never much exceeded 4000 but their long-term impact has been greater than their number might suggest. The founders of al-Qaida came from among their ranks as did a number of foreign fighters who later fought, and recruited others to fight, in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Chechnya, Tajikistan and other hotspots of the 1990s.[6]

However, religious beliefs or feelings of solidarity towards oppressed co-religionists do not account for war volunteering on their own. Millions of people may feel angry because they share the religious beliefs of the population of another country which has been invaded, but very few decide to leave their home-states to take up arms. So what distinguishes the volunteers? Marc Sageman, who has analysed the social origins of

international jihadists since the 1980s, has found that they came from a variety of backgrounds. Those of them who fought against the Soviets in Afghanistan generally came from higher socio-economic groups (upper and middle class) when compared with later waves of volunteers. About two-thirds came from religious families. More than 60 per cent of them were university graduates, mainly in technical studies – engineering, medicine, architecture (i.e. not religious studies). The next wave of volunteers, in the 1990s, came mainly from the middle class. It included individuals who, motivated by the suffering of Muslims in Bosnia, Chechnya and Kashmir, went on to insert themselves in those conflicts. Approximately one-third of this wave came from religious families. The third wave, according to Sageman, began after the allied invasion of Iraq in 2003 and individuals from the West – either the second generation of Muslim immigrants, or infant immigrants themselves – formed part of it. They tended to have middle or lower social class roots. Only a very small minority came from religious families. He argues that they 'were not intellectuals or ideologues, much less religious scholars. It is not about how they think, but how they feel.'[7] The volunteers usually arrived in the warzone in groups after already undergoing a joint process of radicalization in the countries from which they came. Interestingly, the individuals in all three waves were either alienated by or hostile to the regimes they left behind them, be it in Europe or the Middle East. Clearly here, as in many examples discussed in this volume, push factors also influenced the initial decision to volunteer.

Another factor in empathy-driven transnational volunteering is the geographical divergence of outsiders and their readiness to identify with the cause they support. The *locus classicus* of anti-colonial uprisings since World War I has been the remote countryside, as demonstrated by the Chinese Communists' long march from the 1930s, the initial revolt in the Kabylia mountains in Algeria in 1954–55, or the upsurge of violence in the Mekong Delta in South Vietnam. These risings may have expanded into urban terror campaigns, and indeed proclaimed and activated some form of *levée en masse*, but in practice they started in the countryside and were long sustained by their bases and support. Mary Kaldor and David Kilcullen have argued that new forms of mobilization have developed since the late twentieth century. Insurgencies might initially be organized in remote locations, but can readily be expanded into urban centres and across state borders through their use of social networks and the internet to reach geographically far-flung sympathizers and potential supporters. The capability to stimulate humanitarian concern for oppressed groups or populations, and to create or tap into internet audiences, as well as to exploit immediate worldwide television coverage of politically motivated confrontations virtually anywhere in the world, have created what is described as a new potential for transnational mobilization in national conflicts.[8]

An obvious response by historians is to assess whether the speed and ease of transnational mobilization is quite as new as recent studies have suggested. There were plentiful examples of earlier revolutions centred on urban revolts, from Paris in 1789 to 1795, to the European revolutions of 1830 and 1848, and to St Petersburg in 1905 and 1917 where mobilization was relatively rapid; and much nineteenth-century revolutionary activity involved transnational participation. Moreover, the spread of revolutionary action in 1848, while not quite as rapid as the imitative street demonstrations which swept the Arab world in February–March 2011, demonstrated how newspapers and pamphlets, when disseminated with the aid of railways, could connect mid-nineteenth-century activists as effectively as, if more slowly than, twenty-first century communications do. It should therefore come as no surprise that during the tumultuous events of 1848–49 we find the Russian revolutionary Mikhail Bakunin on the barricades of Dresden. The notion that there are causes and confrontations which require transnational responses and actions was as much a part of nineteenth-century political consciousness as it is of our own. Even the age of increasing nationalism and state-organized military power witnessed frequent transnational volunteering.

The third topic worth exploring is whether the nature of diasporas has increased the likelihood of and drive for transnational military action. We have already noted in the introduction how British white-settler colonies in 1899–1900 viewed the Boer attack on Natal and the Cape Colony as in some ways affecting their own futures. The white dominions also responded positively in 1914–18 to the call for troops to fight in Europe. In fact, a continuum can be discerned when it comes to the military involvement of diaspora communities, motivated at least partially by feelings of kinship and long-distance nationalism. In 1948–49 more than 3000 mainly secular Jews from the United States, Canada, South Africa, Britain and elsewhere volunteered to fight for the newly established State of Israel in its first state-on-state war with the neighbouring Arab countries. During the Yugoslav Wars of the 1990s, Croatian émigrés and their descendants came from as far as Australia to fight for Croatian independence. The war between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh inspired Armenians living in the diaspora to take part in the conflict. For some diaspora volunteers military service paved the way for migration. For instance, a percentage of the Jewish volunteers who went to Israel in the late 1940s remained in the country or returned to live in it in the years that followed their demobilization. Transnational military service, as the examples of eighteenth-century German troops who settled in North America and South Africa already illustrated, can open up new possibilities for migration.

A fourth element of transnational military service which has increased substantially since the end of the Cold War is the role played by private security and military contractors. This process began in the 1970s

but has developed significantly as a result of the American-led invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq. Private security companies provide a range of specialized services, including logistical support (the preparation and delivery of food, laundry, and base maintenance), operational support (military interrogation, support of weapons systems), security for military and political assets (including installations, individuals and convoys) and military advice for and training of local forces.[9] The bulk of workers are unarmed and recruited locally. For 2008, it has been estimated that 265,000 people were employed by Western contractors in Iraq and Afghanistan, with 55 per cent of them being Iraqis. Among the 6000–7000 who were armed, the majority were assigned to base or camp security duties.[10] The personnel for military duties undertaken by such contractors are often recruited from among ex-servicemen and women in the United States, Canada, and Britain. The loyalty of those employed in the private military industry is, contractually, to their employers and not necessarily to the national interests of their home-states. The proliferation of transnational mercenarism of this kind has resulted from various developments, including the increased complexity of armed forces and the accompanying increased size and logistical requirements of military bases, the decrease in the size of Western armies and budgetary pressures on defence costs among Western governments. The need – exacerbated by the ending of conscription – to provide service labour from beyond the armed forces, and from among people paid far less than Western military personnel, has also contributed to this trend. By relinquishing tasks over which the state's armed forces had a Weberian monopoly in the heyday of national military service, a growing opportunity for commercial entrepreneurship has emerged. However, far from being a complete novelty, as Peter Singer suggests,[11] present military 'outsourcing' is highly reminiscent of the eighteenth-century practice of hiring German auxiliary troops.

Indeed, recent conflicts have offered even more glaring examples of the persistence of mercenarism. Executive Outcomes, a private military company which was created by former South African Defence Forces officer Eeben Barlow, appeared in 1993 and soon became involved in fighting against UNITA in Angola and later also in Sierra Leone.[12] Troops which remained loyal to Colonel Gaddafi in Libya in March 2011 have been identified, in some cases, as mercenaries from Mali and other counties. According to media reports emanating from forces fighting against Gaddafi in Libya and against Bashar al-Assad in Syria, foreign-recruited troops were given the task of shooting soldiers in the national army who refused to fight.

The period since the end of the Cold War has certainly seen a sharp rise in the employment of professional military contractors and in instances of cross-border volunteering. These, however, constitute a resurgence rather than a novelty. Indeed, transnational mobilization has shown itself to be an agile phenomenon, taking on different forms and persisting despite

the changes in international circumstances. Recent studies have shown that the important changes which occurred in the 1790s and 1800s were not as sweeping and comprehensive as the traditional military history model suggests.[13] The studies in this volume have gone one step further by showing that, despite the nationalization of military service and the reliance of states on conscription and patriotic volunteering, nineteenth and twentieth-century governments and military leaders sought, or were compelled by manpower shortages to turn to, transnational recruitment time and time again. Likewise the willingness of individuals to commit to cross-border military service has endured despite modern citizenship becoming almost universal. Far from disappearing with the advent of the nation-state, transnational military service persevered throughout the last 200 years and could possibly become more prevalent in the twenty-first century.

Notes

1. Mary Kaldor, *New and Old Wars: Organized Violence in a Global Age* (Cambridge, 1999); Martin Shaw, *The New Western Way of War: Risk-transfer War and its Crisis in Iraq* (Cambridge, 2005); Peter W. Singer, *Corporate Warriors: The Rise of the Privatized Military Industry* (Ithaca and London, 2008).
2. Shaw, *The New Western Way of War*, pp. 94–5.
3. David Kilcullen, *The Accidental Guerrilla: Fighting Small Wars in the Midst of a Big One* (London, 2009), pp. 28–38, 126–8.
4. Leo Tolstoy, *Anna Karenina* (Ware, 1999), p. 762.
5. Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations* (London, 2002), pp. 207–18.
6. Thomas Hegghammer, 'The rise of Muslim foreign fighters', *International Security*, 35, no. 3 (2010), pp. 53–94. For more on the role of foreign volunteers in Bosnia-Herzegovina, see: Evan Kohlmann, *Al-Qaida's Jihad in Europe: The Afghan-Bosnian Network* (Oxford and New York, 2004).
7. Marc Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad: Terror Networks in the Twenty-First Century* (Philadelphia, 2008), p. 157.
8. Kaldor, *New and Old Wars*, pp. 69–76, 91–6; Kilcullen, *The Accidental Guerrilla*, pp. 12–16, 258–60.
9. Sarah Percy, *Mercenaries: The History of a Norm in International Relations* (Oxford, 2007), pp. 225–6.
10. Deane-Peter Baker, *Just Warriors, Inc.: The Ethics of Privatized Force* (London, 2011), pp. 1–2.
11. Singer, *Corporate Warriors*, pp. 7–8.
12. Percy, *Mercenaries*, pp. 209–11.
13. See, for example, Roger Chickering and Stig Förster (eds), *War in an Age of Revolution, 1775–1815* (Cambridge, 2010).

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