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ARMY SERVICE AND SOCIAL MOBILITY: THE MAHARS OF THE BOMBAY PRESIDENCY, WITH COMPARISONS WITH THE BENE ISRAEL AND BLACK AMERICANS

By

ARDYTHE MAUDE ROBERTA BASHAM

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Department of History

The University of British Columbia
1956 Main Mall
Vancouver, Canada
V6T 1Y3

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ABSTRACT:

Army Service and Social Mobility:
The Mahars of the Bombay Presidency,
with Comparisons to the Bene Israel
and to Black Americans.

A number of historians have asserted that military service has been an avenue of social mobility for disadvantaged peoples in multicultural societies but few detailed investigations support this assertion. This thesis does so by describing the relationship between army service and social mobility in the case of the Mahars, an untouchable community of Western India, who are compared with the Bene Israel, an Indian Jewish community, and black Americans. The thesis describes and analyses the similarities and differences in the social status and military experiences of each community, and assesses the impact of military service on their social and economic situations.

The Mahars and the Bene Israel served in the Indian Army up to 1893, when both groups were declared ineligible for enlistment. The reasons for this, and the struggle of the Mahars to regain their military eligibility, are examined and compared with the relevant period for American blacks, the century from the United States Civil War to the beginnings of the Civil Rights movement in the 1950s. Comparative military pay and benefits, the general effects of racial and caste prejudice, the "Martial Races" theory, the relationship between military service and citizenship, and the status of soldiers in their non-military

environments are discussed at length in order to support the thesis that the Mahars benefited most from military service. They received economic benefits, educational opportunities, leadership experience, enhanced social status, and improved access to official channels. Consequently, they periodically agitated for restoration of the right to enlist, something they did not finally achieve until 1942. The Bene Israel had no racial or caste stigma to overcome, and were least affected by the loss of military employment. Accordingly, they made little effort to regain enlistment status. While American blacks derived similar benefits, these were not of crucial importance for improvement of the position of the entire black population; military service was, however, important in justifying claims to political equality.

Whites reinforced their dominance with pseudo-scientific beliefs in their innate racial superiority which they used to limit the participation of the Mahars and blacks in the military. But recognition as soldiers had symbolic as well as practical value in strengthening the claims of Mahars and blacks to equal status in other areas.

Primary sources used for the thesis include government documents from the National Archives of India, the Maharashtra State Archives, the United Services Institution of India, and the India Office Library. Regimental and other military histories, interviews, and a variety of cultural history sources, as well as the standard monographic materials, have also been used.

Professor P. Harnetty

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GLOSSARY

Balutedar: a village officer or servant receiving a share of the crop, etc. (Wilson, p. 56)

Bara khanna: "big dinner"; a large, formal meal or banquet

Batta: an extra allowance made to . . . soldiers . . . when in the field, or on other special grounds. (Hobson-Jobson, p. 72)

Bhistie: water-carrier

Chakkiliya, Chuckler: tanner or cobbler caste of South India, corresponding to Chamar or Mochi.

Chuprass: a badge-plate inscribed with the name of the office to which the bearer is attached. The chaprasi (chuprassy) is an office-messenger . . . bearing such a badge on a cloth or leather belt. (Hobson-Jobson, p. 220)

Cutcherry: an office of administration, a court-house (such as a Collector's or Magistrate's office) (Hobson-Jobson, p. 287)

Dacoit: a robber belonging to an armed gang . . . to constitute dacoity, there must be five or more in the gang. (Hobson-Jobson, p. 290)

Dipmala: a lampstand to hold several small saucer-shaped lamps (dipa)

Dooly: a covered litter or stretcher carried by 2 or 4 men

Feringee: "European," probably derived from Persian

Gurudwara: a Sikh temple

Holi: a spring fertility festival, celebrated in March in north India

Jati: subcaste; a division, usually endogamous, of a larger caste or occupational group. For example: the Mahar caste is subdivided into a large number of jatis (Mar. zata) which do not intermarry. The traditional number is twelve and a half; in fact at least fifty could be identified, though no more than a dozen would be found in any one district. (Robertson, pp. 49-50)

Jawan: literally "youth," now applied to soldiers, in the way one might refer to "our boys in uniform." I did not find any soldiers or ex-soldiers using this term for themselves, however.

Kaji: chief priest or judge (a Muslim title adopted by the Bene Israel)--Kehimkar, p. 47.

Karkun, Karkoon (Mar.): a clerk, a writer, a registrar; . . . inferior revenue officer . . . under the . . . district collector (Wilson, p. 261)

Kulkarni: village registrar and accountant, [who] keeps accounts between the cultivators and the government (Wilson, p. 300)

Lakh: one hundred thousand

Mazhbi, Muzbee: "a class of Sikhs originally of low caste," usually descendants of converts from the sweeper caste (Hobson-Jobson, p. 606)

Paraiya, Pariah: "a low caste of Hindus in Southern India . . . one of the most numerous castes . . . in the Tamil country"; loosely used as a synonym for "outcaste" or "untouchable". (Hobson-Jobson, p. 678)

Parwari: a term possibly meaning "hill men", or possibly signifying dwellers outside the village walls. Used to designate Mahars in the military.

Patil, patel: the head man of a village; formerly hereditary, often granted as a reward for service; usually with revenue, police, and judicial powers

Pundit, Pandit: a man learned in Sanskrit lore (Hobson-Jobson, p. 740)

Purdasi, pardeshi: literally "foreigner"; in the Bombay Army, a soldier from N. India. Many so-called "pardeshis" were natives of the Presidency although their family origins were in North India.

Ressaidar: a native subaltern of irregular cavalry, under the Ressaldar. (Hobson-Jobson, p. 761)

Ressaldar, Risaldar: the native officer who commands a <u>ressala</u> (troop) in . . . regiments of "Irregular Horse." (Hobson-Jobson, p. 762)

Ressaldar-Major: senior ressaldar of a cavalry regiment (equivalent to Subadar-major)

Rumal: literally a handkerchief; also applied to a cloth tying up a bundle. Papers in the Kolhapur State Archives are stored in "rumals"--a set of documents wrapped in heavy cotton cloth tied up at the top.

Rupee: basic unit of currency in India; one rupee equalled 16 annas; one anna equalled 4 pice or paisa

Ryot: "an individual occupying land as a farmer or cultivator"; a peasant farmer. (Hobson-Jobson, p. 777)

Sanad: a grant, a diploma, a charter, a patent . . . [issued] under the seal of the ruling authority. (Wilson, p. 460) Old charters were often engraved on copper plates. In modern times, the Maharajah of Kolhapur had facsimiles of important documents engraved on silver plates (letter to L. J. Mountford, 14 August 1917; Rumal #30, 1917, letter #6180-81).

Sepoy, Sipahi: Persian "soldier," generally applied to infantry privates. Soldiers today still use the term, although "jawan" is the official designation.

Sowar: an Indian cavalry trooper

Sowkar, saukar: a banker, a dealer in money and exchanges, a merchant in general (Wilson, p. 453); a moneylender

Silladari: a system of irregular cavalry in which each trooper paid for his own mount

Sheristadar, Sarishtadar, H.: a registrar, record-keeper, applied especially to the head native officer of a court of justice or collector's office. (Wilson, p. 467)

Ummedwar, Umedwar: an expectant, a candidate for employment, one who awaits a favourable answer to some representation or request (Wilson, p. 532)

Watandar: the holder of a hereditary right, property, or office, with the privileges and emoluments attached to it (Wilson, p. 557)

Zata: Marathi term for "jati"

ABBREVIATIONS

AGCT - Army General Classification Test, used by the U.S. Army to grade recruits on their overall education; often erroneously assumed to be an "intelligence" test.

G.I. Bill - The G.I. Bill of Rights is the popular name for the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, which provided special assistance for veterans of World War II (Encyclopedia Americana).

H.E.I.C. - Honourable East India Company

I.O.L. - India Office Library

I.E.S.H.R. - Indian Economic and Social History Review

M.S.A. - Maharashtra State Archives

N.A.I. - National Archives of India

N.I. - Native Infantry

U.S.I. - United Services Institution

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INTRODUCTION

The professional standing army is an important feature of every modern nation state. The provision of manpower for such an army entails certain obligations from the citizens of that state, and may often confer certain benefits on those who serve in the military. Military service may be perceived as an onerous duty to be avoided if possible, as a privilege to be fought for, or as an obligation which is not necessarily welcomed but is accepted as a necessary concomitant of citizenship. For many disadvantaged groups all three of these factors may operate. Military service is certainly onerous in many cases, particularly in wartime. It may seem especially hard to men of poor or otherwise disadvantaged classes, who may offer their services freely or be conscripted, thus bearing a share of the national defense burden, yet find that in civil life they are denied some of the privileges and benefits of citizenship for which they have fought. However, military service, particularly in modern societies, does confer certain benefits in terms of education, specialized training, sometimes preferential access to certain types of employment and education in civil life, and an increased social status. Therefore, there are numerous instances of underprivileged or depressed classes fighting very hard for the right to be admitted to the military as combatants. Most armies have accepted men and sometimes women of low class as noncombatants, menials, camp followers and in other support roles. However, it is sometimes

only with great difficulty that these people win the right to be accepted as combat troops and earn whatever status and privileges accrue thereto.

Ultimately, the right to serve in the military is (in a democratic society) indissolubly linked with the rights of full citizenship. A recent statement, written about women and the military, applies with equal force to many other minorities or depressed classes.

> And when it comes to responsibilities, none is higher - or more glamorous - than the nation's security. . . . The responsibility for the security of the country is the essence of governing and it is a responsibility from which [women] are totally excluded. [White] men will tolerate [women] in the armed forces, but not in the area that counts - combat. They can help, but they cannot share, and until they can, [women] will be . . . full citizens in name only.[1]

This describes exactly the situation of many minority groups, and explains why military service has had a significant role in their efforts to improve their status.

The object of this study is threefold. The principal concern is to examine in some detail the military history of the Mahars of western India and to ask why military service was very important to this community, what benefits they received or hoped to receive from military service, and why at certain times they were refused admission to the military. For purposes of comparison the military history of the Bene Israel, also of western India, will also be discussed. By thus comparing an Indian "untouchable" community with another Indian community which is socially "clean" but somewhat isolated by religious and cultural factors, it is possible to see how military service may be dif-

ferently perceived and have different effects based on social factors. Likewise it will be possible to note what similarities are found in both cases. Some reference will also be made to the military experiences of other low-status groups, particularly black Americans.

A comparison between the Mahars and another Indian low caste community having military experience would be useful, but was not possible for various reasons. Although other low caste Indians were recruited from time to time, no other "untouchable" community had such a long and unbroken period of military service; nor did any other delisted community, that is, one which lost its right to enlist, engage in such a long and determined effort to regain access to military service. The Bombay Army had, for instance, recruited Mangs and Ramoshis prior to 1893, but neither group appears to have made any protest against their delistment, possibly because so few were affected. Two other low caste groups with significant military experience were the Madras (Queen Victoria's Own) Sappers and Miners, recruited from native Christians and various "untouchable" and low castes, and the Mazhbi Sikhs, recruited into separate regiments between 1857 and 1932. These two groups differed from the Mahars in important ways. The Madras Sappers and Miners never changed their caste composition so low caste Madrassis never had to deal with the loss of military opportunities. There is some evidence that "men who served in Queen Victoria's Sappers and who by origin were outcastes made themselves into a new subdivision . . . calling themselves 'Quinsap' and marrying their sons only to Quinsap

girls."[2] If true, this suggests that military service, rather than elevating the status of all Paraiyas or Chakkiliyas, created a new somewhat higher caste, a phenomenon which did not occur among the Mahars. As for the Mazhbi Sikhs, insofar as military service affected them, it helped to reduce the prejudice shown towards them by other Sikhs, but this was true only for those individuals or families with military service; it was not generalized to all Mazhbis.[3] This community did not engage in any prolonged or organized agitation for re-enlistment, possibly due to reluctance to draw attention to their low status within the larger Sikh community.

Military service in most cases confers certain benefits. These include access to education which is secular and frequently practical in nature, access to government authorities, developing a tradition of military service (which is, in most cultures, rightly or wrongly considered to be of higher prestige than the tradition of menial and sometimes dirty work), access to a respectable form of employment, and a certain degree of financial security. Of secondary importance in some instances are improvements in the prospects of obtaining land, better treatment in local courts, and the unmeasurable aspect of personal satisfaction. The military experience of the Mahars and the Bene Israel will be considered in detail, using both primary and secondary sources; an overview of the military experience of black Americans, utilizing several modern studies, provides a basis for comparison.

The Mahar or other untouchable or low-caste man serving in

the nineteenth-century Bombay army occupied a position which encouraged efforts to improve his social status vis-à-vis caste Hindus; loyal service under the British justified claims to equal access to government services and employment. By late in the century, many Mahars had come to believe that service over a long period of years and in many campaigns had earned them, as a community, certain privileges and had created on the part of the government an obligation to allow them to continue in military service. The government was willing to establish special relationships with certain communities, notably the Sikhs and the Gurkhas, which had been designated "martial races" and were considered to be of extraordinary value as soldiers, but it did not concede that similar relations had been established already with the so-called "non-martial races."

The Bene Israel of western India, who were never considered "untouchable" but also have never been a particularly well-to-do community, seem to have found military service of value as individuals, but it was not as crucial to them as it was to the Mahars. They were, however, disappointed and humiliated at being refused access to the military.

The situation for American blacks is in many ways much more comparable to that of the Mahars. American blacks served in every war fought by the United States from the Revolutionary War up to the Vietnam War and continue to serve in the military in large numbers. However, for much of this time only very limited numbers of blacks were accepted as combatants; they were frequently denied access to officer training and therefore if they

served as combatants at all did so only in the ranks. Even when their role as combatants was accepted they served in segregated units until very recently. The fact that American blacks under these circumstances continued to agitate for service in the military indicates that they believed it was important to justify their claims to full citizenship by being willing to shed blood if necessary. Many blacks felt most keenly the injustice of their having been as willing as any white men to serve their nation, to risk their lives, and indeed to lose their lives, and yet in civil life still to be denied the full privileges of citizenship.

Although these groups differed in social origins and in the exact nature of their military experience, military service has been an important factor affecting their social and economic status. For the Mahars and for black Americans, the issue of equal and equitable access to military service continues to be important; to their respective governments, questions of ethnic/racial/communal balance in the armed forces continue to be important in military planning. Origins, military experience, and social impact of military service on these three groups will form the main part of this study.

Author's Note:

For the sake of simplicity and consistency, the terms "Mahar" or "Parwari" and "black American" or "black" have been used throughout for these respective groups, except in quotations from

sources which use other terms. No political implications are intended, nor does the author intend any offense to anyone who prefers another usage.

Footnotes

1. Richard Cohen, "Sharing: The Politics of the Shopping List," Ms., vol. XIII, no. 2, August 1984, p. 75.

2. Philip Mason, A Matter of Honour: An Account of the Indian Army, Its Officers and Men, (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books, 1976), pp. 147-149.

3. Indera P. Singh, "A Sikh Village," in Traditional India: Structure and Change, ed. Milton Singer (Philadelphia: The American Folklore Society, Bibliographical Series, Vol. X, 1959, pp. 276-280.

CHAPTER I

ORIGINS AND SOCIAL STATUS

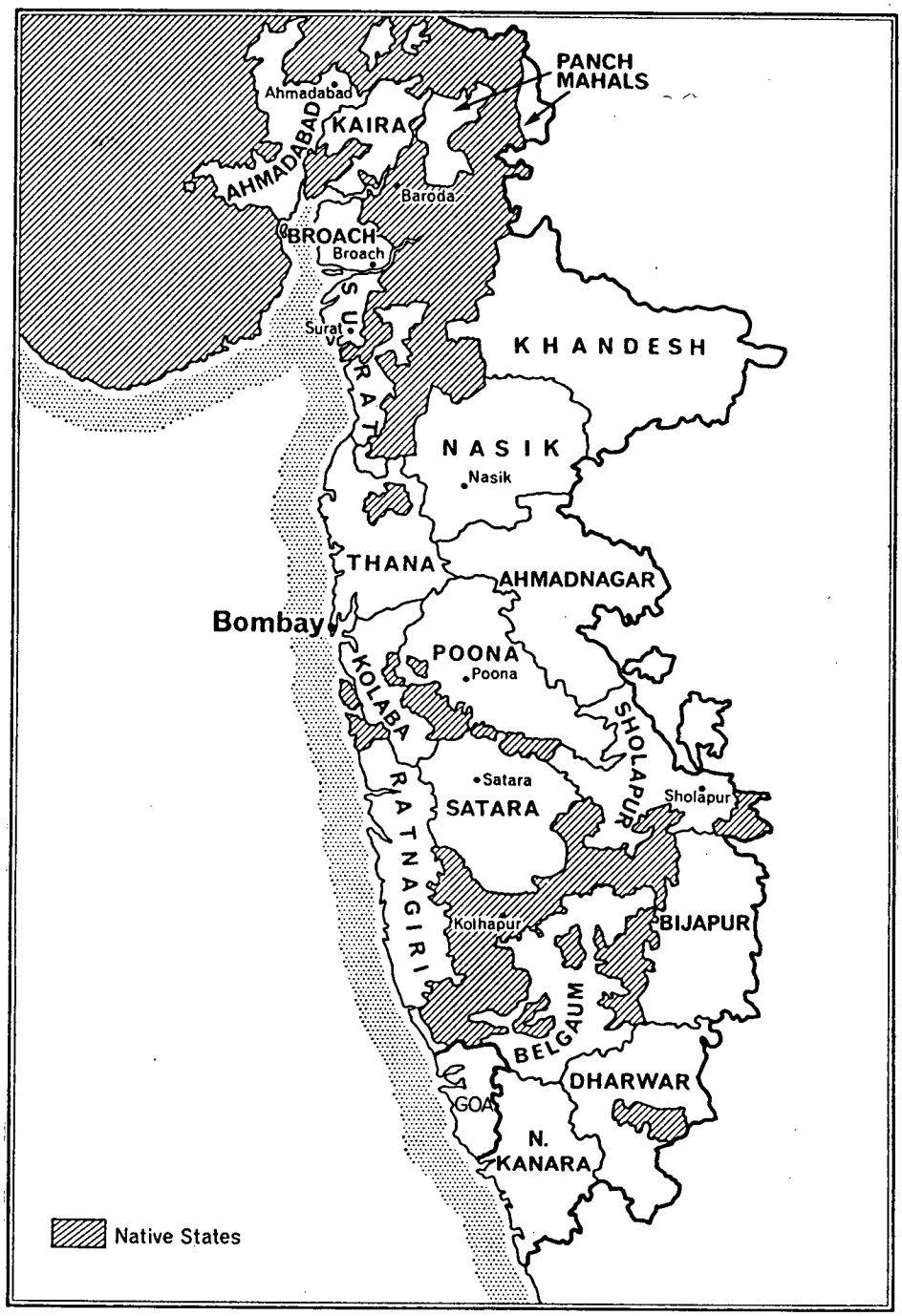
The Mahars

The Mahars, the largest untouchable caste in Maharashtra, are "said to be a composite residue of the aboriginal tribes dispossessed by the successive waves of Aryan and post-Aryan invaders."[1] They make up about nine percent of the present population of Maharashtra; estimates for the late nineteenth century vary, but fall within the range of three to five percent in the coastal areas and up to twenty percent in the inland districts of Vidarbha and Berar.[2] Estimates of the total number of Mahars in 1901 range from one million to 3 million,[3] possibly reflecting differences in the area considered (Bombay Presidency only or all Marathi-speaking areas). There seems to be general agreement that, whatever their exact numbers, they were and are the largest untouchable caste of Maharashtra, second only to the Marathas in number.

Alexander Robertson, who knew them well from many years as a missionary, found the Mahars resident as far north as the Satpura Hills, as far east as Bhandara district, and as far south as southern Ratnagiri, with the largest population around Nagpur, and observed that:

> It is literally true that there is a Mahar quarter in every village within the bounds of that territory where the Marathi language is spoken; and the Mahar is thus located not because there are menial duties to be

Map 1. Bombay Presidency (excluding Sind)



SOURCE: Anil Seal, The Emergence of Indian Nationalism. Cambridge: The University Press, 1968, p. 65.

> performed in every village, but because the very organization of the village community would be ineffective unless the duties of the Mahars were performed and unless the privileges of the Mahars were conserved.[4]

Based on population density, caste divisions, and occupational patterns, Robertson considered Nagpur to be the centre of the Mahar people, and related both the name of the city and the common Mahar affix "nak" to the Naka people, the presumed ancestors of the Mahars. An alternative derivation of "nak" may be from a tribal totem animal, the cobra or possibly elephant.[5] Other names applied to the Mahars also suggest a tradition of aboriginal ownership: bhukari, a term applied to them by the Mangs (another untouchable caste), may mean "dweller on," or "tiller of the land"; parwari, variously interpreted as "hill men" or "dwellers outside the village," may also derive from the Greek paruaroi and may refer to the right to gather grain left on the threshing floor; and dharaniche puta or "sons of the soil," a term used in the Ahmednagar district.[6] It has been argued that the name "Maharashtra" is derived from Mahar-Rashtra, or "the country of the Mahars," on the analogy of Gujarat from Gujar and Rashtra and Saurashtra or Surat, from the Sauras. An alternative etymology explains Maharashtra as Maha Rashtra or "the great country."[7]

If the Mahars were once an ethnically distinct people of non-Aryan or pre-Aryan origin, they are no longer distinguishable on the basis of physical appearance from Marathas, Kunbis, and other castes living in the same areas. The most probable explanation is the obvious one: intermarriage or cohabitation over many generations. Some Mahars in Gujarat had Rajput surnames

such as Chauhan and Solanki, possibly indicating mixed blood, while other Mahar or Dheda families were hereditary servants of landowning families and claimed to be related to them.[8] Similarly, Mahars in Berar might be addressed as "brother" by Marathas and Kunbis.[9] Many surnames are used by Mahars as well as Marathas and Kunbis, including Bhonsle, Jadhava, Gaikwad, Pawar, Shinde and Thorat; others are shared by Mahars and Brahmins.[10] Nothing to be found either in written sources or in the author's personal experience suggests that Mahars can be distinguished from Marathas or Kunbis on the basis of appearance; all tend to be described (unflatteringly) as short, dark and homely. At least one literary source indicates the ease of "passing": Kincaid's tale of a Mahar enlisting in the army as a Maratha by wearing Maratha earrings and sectmark.[11] Personal observations suggest that individual variations far outweigh any differences in complexion or features on a caste basis.

The traditional rights and duties of the Mahars as part of the village organization may well represent survivals from a time when they owned the land. The duties include acting as watchmen, gatekeepers, messengers, porters, boundary referees, and guides.[12] Their testimony was vital in boundary and revenue disputes, and as messengers they often carried large sums of money to the district treasury. Their religious duties included, in many places, lighting the first Holi fires, and guarding the shrine of the village goddess Mariai (probably a primitive place-deity). They were responsible for removing dead cattle (but not dogs or pigs) from the village, and supplying fuel for crema-

tions.[13] In return they were watandars and balutedars of the village, holding a share of the village lands and receiving various payments in kind. Payments in kind, including the carcasses of dead cattle, leftover food, and clothing from corpses taken for cremation, though certainly of value, often involved ritual degradation. From the point of view of caste Hindus, even handling, let alone eating, dead cows was and is one of the most polluting activities imaginable; this alone would justify (from the Hindu standpoint) considering the Mahars untouchable. Other duties and payments, while not degrading in this way, bound the Mahars economically to the village, while not guaranteeing an adequate livelihood. The traditional "fifty-two rights" of the Mahars (probably an idiomatic expression for a large but indeterminate number)[14] had come, by the late nineteenth century, to be regarded not as privileges, but as "chains, binding them to specific occupations, specific relations with non-Mahars, and stripping voluntariness from any act,"[15] and perpetuating their inferior status in the village community.

In brief, the Mahars in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries occupied an ambiguous position in village society: untouchable and ritually degraded, yet performing functions vital to the community; bound to the village economy, but forced to live outside its walls; popularly regarded as dirty and quarrelsome, yet proverbially faithful and trustworthy.

The Bene Israel are one of three sub-divisions of the Indian Jewish community, the other two being the Cochin Jews of Kerala and the Baghdadi Jews. The origins of the Bene Israel and

the Cochin Jews are almost equally obscure, although the Cochin Jews have a tradition that their ancestors arrived in the first century A.D. immediately after the destruction of the temple.[16] The Bene Israel believe they are descended from the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel[17] which would place their arrival in India around 700 B.C. Another and more likely tradition traces their origin to a migration of about 175 B.C.[18] The Bene Israel have also adopted as their own an origin myth which resembles that of the Chitpavan Brahmins. According to this tradition both groups descended from seven couples who were shipwrecked on the coast line near Bombay. It is unclear whether both groups adopted an origin myth from the same source or whether one group copied the other and if so which actually came first, or if in fact there may be some connection.[19] There is no doubt that the Bene Israel have been settled in India for at least sixteen centuries. Their original settlements were in the coastal districts of Kolaba and Thana.

Throughout most of what is known of their history in India the Bene Israel were a relatively poor community. They seem never to have numbered more than fifteen thousand if indeed there were ever as many as this.[20] Their most characteristic occupation was as oil pressers, and because they observed the Saturday Sabbath they were known as "Shanwar Telis," that is "Saturday oil men." Some owned land and it is said by Kehimkar that Bene Israel who farmed land would employ Marathas as labourers but not Mahars or Mangs who were considered to be "unclean."[21] Some leading Bene Israel families held positions under various native

rulers and held grants of land for service. For instance, a certain Aaron Churrikar was appointed Nayek or commander of a fleet by Khanoji Angria early in the seventeenth century. He received a grant of Inam land which was still in possession of his descendants late in the nineteenth century. The position of commander of the fleet was held by this family until about 1793.[22]

For a considerable period of time the Bene Israel were isolated from other Jewish communities and apparently lost much of their Jewish culture. However, in the eighteenth century, a Cochin Jew, David Ezekiel Rahabi, visited the Bene Israel community and taught the fundamentals of Jewish observance. He was the first of several teachers from Cochin who instructed the Bene Israel in proper religious forms. The Bene Israel have adopted many customs from their Muslim and Hindu neighbours. The name Bene Israel was probably adopted to replace the term Yehudi for Jew which was considered offensive to Muslims. Although as far as is known the Bene Israel were never persecuted in India, they would certainly have found it politic to be on good terms with their nearest neighbours and therefore to avoid customs which would be offensive. A reflection of the Hindu jati system is to be found in the division of the Bene Israel into Gora and Kala portions. The Gora or white are those who believe that they are of pure Jewish descent, whereas the Kala are the offspring of marriages between Bene Israel men and non-Jewish women. In point of fact there is little observable difference between the two communities. The differences are probably due more to tradition

than fact, and in modern times this distinction has become of less importance.[23]

The third Jewish community of any significance is that of the Baghdadi Jews. These emigrated from Iraq in the latter part of the eighteenth century and later, and tended to move into entrepreneurial areas much as the Parsis did. The best known Baghdadi family was the Sassoon family of Bombay which became extremely wealthy in the textile industry and was noted for charitable works. The Baghdadi Jews, although recognizing the Bene Israel as fellow Jews, always held themselves somewhat aloof and considered the Bene Israel to be definitely beneath them socially. The two communities have never intermarried to any extent.[24]

During the British period the Bene Israel moved in large numbers to Bombay and besides enlistment in the army, which became an important new profession for many Bene Israel, many took up skilled trades and clerical and other government positions at a low to medium level.[25] Through contact with Christian missionaries, the more prosperous Baghdadi Jews, and American and English Jews, the Bene Israel became much more conscious of their Jewish identity and of their ties with co-religionists in other countries. Overall the Bene Israel have been able to assume the status of a caste similar in social rank to the Marathas; Israel states that "in Kulaba District the Bene Israel had exactly the same status as the Muslims, and this was certainly not low."[26] They have not suffered from discrimination to any marked extent and have generally functioned quite well as a jati or sub-caste

within Hindu society, though maintaining a separate, non-Hindu cultural identity.

There is no uncertainty about the origins of black Americans, whose ancestors were brought to the Americas as slaves in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. (The international slave trade officially ended in the early nineteenth century.) They are therefore an immigrant group, racially distinct from the dominant white population. White Americans are of course also an immigrant population, and in fact many black Americans can claim a much longer "American" ancestry than many whites. However white Americans were able to preserve their languages, religions, and cultures, at least at home or in ethnic communities, while blacks were forced to abandon most of their own heritage and adapt to the European-derived culture of their masters.

Although African slaves were originally imported to do the hardest and dirtiest kinds of work, were generally denied access to education and many forms of employment, and even as freedmen were severely restricted in their activities, nevertheless they did fulfill extremely important functions in the overall economy. Not only as field workers on plantations, but as domestic servants, skilled artisans, and eventually in every occupation where they could find any kind of opening, black men and women provided much of the labour of building a new country. By the early nineteenth century, free blacks (many actually of mixed parentage) were a significant class in many states, and formed the nucleus of a "black bourgeoisie" including business people, clergy, and professional men and women: on a small scale to be

sure, but still a class with some economic and political influence.

In both absolute numbers and percentages, blacks in the United States occupy a roughly analogous position to that of the Mahars. Blacks are now estimated to make up about ten percent of the American population, and are the largest "visible minority." In 1850, the total population of the United States was over 23 million, with 3,200,000 being slaves. Ten years later the Confederate States had about 9 million people, over 3.5 million of them black, while the North had about 22 million total. The free black population can be estimated at perhaps one-half million, giving a total black population of nearly 4 million out of 31 million total. Several southern states had very large black populations; blacks were a majority in South Carolina and Mississippi, and nearly half the population of Louisiana and Alabama. Some areas of the deep South were 70-90 percent black.[27] Blacks were, therefore, very unevenly distributed, reflecting the fact that slave labour was economically most important in the cotton belt. The racial structure and distribution of the American population has changed considerably since the mid-nineteenth century, with important factors being the opening of the American West to settlement, migration from rural areas to urban-industrial centres, and large-scale European immigration.

These three groups share certain characteristics, but differ in other ways. The Mahars are an indigenous population, racially indistinguishable, filling vital ritual and social roles, but socially and economically depressed. The Bene Israel,

while not technically an indigenous group, are long-established and also not racially distinct. They have no ritually prescribed role in society, nor have they suffered from social or economic discrimination. Black Americans, as an immigrant group deliberately imported to perform menial work, are both racially distinct from the dominant culture and have been subjected to extreme discrimination.

As Table I shows, Mahars and black Americans have more factors in common than either group with the Bene Israel. The most significant difference is in racial differentiation; for black Americans, their racial identity has been an outward and immutable sign of the inferior status assigned to them. The Mahars could more readily attempt to change their status by adopting an occupation and lifestyle appropriate for a higher status.

TABLE I

DIFFERENTIATING SOCIAL FACTORS

Social factors / Group	Racially Distinct	Functionally necessary social roles	Depressed Socio-Economic Status
Mahars	No	Yes	Yes
Bene Israel	No	No	No
Black Americans	Yes	Yes	Yes

Although both communities have a tenuous military tradition extending some centuries earlier, for the Mahars and Bene

Israel, the period from 1800 to 1893 saw their highest level of participation in the military. This period was also marked by an increased professionalization and modernization of the armies of India in terms of training, equipment and organization. The loss of access to the military therefore came just when military service was becoming more attractive in terms of pay and professional status. Both communities were among the "non-martial races" removed from recruiting rolls in 1893, although not for the same reasons. The Mahars agitated long and hard for the right to enlist, whereas the Bene Israel, after an initial protest, seem to have dropped the issue of army service. With the formation of the Mahar Regiment in 1942, the Mahars finally achieved the right to serve as soldiers. Since Independence, at least in theory, enlistment is open to anyone from any community who meets required standards; caste, religion, or ethnic background are not supposed to be relevant factors.

American blacks have a somewhat similar pattern of military service. Black men, or as the term then in use was, "free men of color" served in various colonial militias prior to the American Revolution. Freed blacks and possibly some slaves fought in the American Revolution. Free blacks fought on both sides during the American Civil War. The regular standing army established by Congress in 1866 provided a limited number of all-black regiments. Between 1866 and 1914, particularly during the Indian Wars of the late 19th century, these regiments played an active and important role in American military actions. However, for many years, indeed up until the Second World War, their partici-

pation was very limited both in terms of the number who were enlisted and in terms of their access to combatant roles and to officer status. Like the Mahars, black Americans considered service in the military to be an extremely important issue for them and they fought very hard, not only to be admitted to the military, but to be admitted on equal terms and to be allowed to compete on their own merits.

These three communities, therefore, differ considerably in their numbers, origins, and social status. All three have used military service to improve or consolidate their position, either individually or collectively. In the cases of the Mahars and black Americans, military service offered a way out of a servile or depressed status. For the Bene Israel, military service offered political security rather than social advancement under native rulers, while under British rule the army was one of several new trades or professions. For blacks, the Civil War and its political aftermath marked both their emancipation and the beginning of their participation as citizens in a regular army. For the Mahars and Bene Israel, the British conquest of India offered new opportunities, with military service one of the most important. Racial prejudice set limits on black achievements in the military as in other areas, while the changing demands of imperial rule and British racial theories ultimately forced "non-martial" groups such as the Mahars and Bene Israel out of the army.

The ways in which these groups used, or attempted to use, military service, and the often conflicting attitudes of those

who set military policy towards their aspirations, form the main subject of this study.

Footnotes, Chapter I

1. Sunanda Patwardhan, Change Among Indian's Harijans: Maharashtra - A Case Study (New Delhi: Orient Longman Limited, 1973), p. 29.

2. Alexander Robertson, The Mahar Folk: A Study of Untouchables in Maharashtra (Calcutta: Y.M.C.A. Publishing House, 1938), 44-45.

3. Ibid., p. 47.

4. Ibid., p. 44.

5. Ibid., pp. 46-47, 51.

6. Ibid., p. 53; Dr. Gustav Oppert, The Original Inhabitants of India (Madras: n.p., 1893; reprint ed., New Delhi: Oriental Publishers, 1972), p. 93.

7. R. V. Russell and Hira Lal, The Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces of India, vol. IV (N.p.: Central Provinces Administration, 1916; reprint ed., Oosterhout N.B. - Netherlands: Anthropological Publications, 1969), p. 130.

8. Loc. cit.

9. Robertson, The Mahar Folk, p. 17.

10. Ibid., p. 54.

11. C. A. Kincaid, "The Outcaste's Story," The Anchorite and Other Stories (London, Bombay: Humphrey Milford at the Oxford University Press, 1922), pp. 154-55.

12. Robertson, The Mahar Folk, p. 18.

13. Ibid., pp. 20-24.

14. Ibid., p. 27.

15. Robert J. Miller, "Button, Button . . . Great Tradition, Little Tradition, Whose Tradition?", Anthropological Quarterly 39 (January 1966):32.

16. Schifra Strizower, The Children of Israel: The Bene Israel of Bombay (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1971), pp. 89-90.

17. R. A. Schermerhorn, Ethnic Plurality in India (Tucson, Arizona: University of Arizona Press, 1978), p. 240; The Gazetteer of Bombay City and Island, vol. I (Pune: The Government Photozinco Press, 1977; facsimile ed. orig. pub. Bombay: The Times Press, 1909), p. 247, n. 3.
The "Ten Lost Tribes" of the kingdom of Israel were carried into captivity by the Assyrians under Sargon II, c. 740-700 B.C.
The other tribes were the Southern kingdom of Judah.

18. Haeem Samuel Kehimkar, The History of the Bene-Israel of India (Tel Aviv: Dayag Press Ltd., 1937), p. 52.

19. Ibid., pp. 15-16.

20. Rev. J. Henry Lord, The Jews in India and the East (Kolhapur: Mission Press, 1907; reprint ed., Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, Publishers, 1976), app. I, pp. 1-2.
Gives a total of 14,889 Jews in the Bombay Presidency in 1901.

21. Ibid., p. 93.

22. Ibid., p. 79.

23. Schermerhorn, Ethnic Plurality in India, pp. 244-245; Strizower, The Children of Israel, pp. 27-28.

24. Strizower, The Children of Israel, p. 47; Schermerhorn, Ethnic Plurality in India, pp. 245-246.

25. Bombay City Gazetteer, vol. I, pp. 248-249.

26. Benjamin J. Israel, "Bene Israel Surnames and Their Village Links," in The Bene Israel of India: Some Studies (New York: Apt Books, Inc., 1984; by arrangement with Orient Longman Ltd., India), p. 123.

27. Allan Nevins and Henry Steele Commager, A Pocket History of the United States (New York: Washington Square Press, Inc., 1963), pp. 200-201, 222.

CHAPTER II

EARLY MILITARY HISTORY

All three of the communities under discussion have had a history of military service extending back more than two centuries; counting traditions and folk beliefs, a martial tradition of sorts can be traced even further. This early military history can be described as adventitious: individuals or small groups responding to an immediate need and seeking individual rewards, rather than participation in a formal, permanent military organization. There is also characteristically a one-sided relationship; minority or subordinate groups are permitted to serve in the military when, and only when, it is in the interest of the dominant group to permit this.

The Mahars

Even discounting the claim of the Somavanshi zata (the largest subdivision) of the Mahars to have fought with the Pandavas in the Mahabharata War,[1] there are a number of long standing traditions among the Mahars of military and other services performed for local rulers. Robertson mentions several copper plate Sanads said to exist confirming the existence of Inams granted to particular Mahar families or to village groups. One such, which Robertson was not able to see himself, was owned by a family near Purandhar in the Poona district. This records the grant of several villages to a Mahar of Purandhar village named Baharnak

Bangale. Baharnak's services included providing human sacrifices for the king of Bedar to facilitate the building of the fort of Purandhar, various works of construction, and also military support in putting down two revolts.[2] The families which owned these copper plates were reluctant to allow outsiders to examine them. Robertson was able to borrow and photograph one plate belonging to the Mahars of Koya near Ahmednagar, but found the language to be indecipherable. The Purandhar plate was transcribed for Robertson by a Mahar friend. The existence of these plates can fairly be assumed, but their authenticity has not been established.

In more recent times, however, there is little doubt that Mahars did serve as foot soldiers, scouts and possibly as spies for the seventeenth-century Maratha ruler Shivaji. Sarkar notes that under Shivaji forts and outposts were normally placed under three officers of equal status drawn from different castes, generally two Marathas and one Brahmin. The quartermaster was normally a Kayastha while the environs of the fort were guarded by men of Parwari and Ramushi caste. This military duty resembles the traditional duty of the Mahar as a village watchman except that in this case the Mahars (Parwaris) were being employed to guard military installations.[3] It is also very likely that they were expected to keep watch on the comings and goings of the other officers of the fort and report any suspicious behaviour directly to Shivaji or to his immediate lieutenants. Another tradition describes the services of Shivnak or Shibnak Mahar in the reign of Rajaram. This Shivnak raised a Mahar unit

and offered it in support of Rajaram (1689-1700) and later Shahu (1707-49), descendants of Shivaji. In return he was granted Kalambi village as a gift. His grandson, also Shivnak, provided military service to the Peshwa, Sawai Madhavrao. Shivnak is also credited with saving the life of Pureshwarambhau Patwardhan at the battle of Kharda in 1795. The Peshwa's Brahmin advisor, Hiroji Patankar, was said to have told other commanders who objected to Shivnak's presence in their camp that in warfare there should be no concern for caste. Shivnak's descendants still owned land in the Satara district until quite recently and quite possibly still do.[4]

Nagnak Mahar, probably a contemporary of Shivnak Mahar the elder, had been a Patil in the Satara area but had lost his rights. He took a band of Mahar soldiers and captured the fort of Vairatgadh from the Muslims, presenting it to the king who in return restored his rights as Patil.[5]

Whether or not these incidents are historically true, they are widely accepted by the Mahars as part of their tradition, and now form part of the official history of the Mahar Regiment. The Mahars can and do draw on this tradition, limited as it is, to prove that they are capable of courage, leadership, and loyalty.

Considering these stories of martial achievements along with other aspects of Mahar tradition, there is a definite impression of the Mahars as a separate group allying themselves with the ruling power of the time, whether Muslim, Maratha, or Brahmin,[6] and of a willingness to look beyond the traditional social order for ways and means to better themselves. True to

this pattern, when the British established themselves (as the Honourable East India Company) as a significant power in Western India, the Mahars willingly took service under them. The Mahars were doing the same thing other castes or communities had done in attempting to ally themselves with the currently-dominant group. In previous attempts, the low status and poverty of the Mahars had made consolidation and maintenance of their gains difficult. As they established themselves as retainers of the British, as domestic and personal servants and as soldiers, they had reason to believe that the customs (beef-eating, handling carrion, lack of ritual prohibitions) which delineated their low status as Hindus would make them especially valuable to the British. From the Mahar perspective this was a unique opportunity to prove themselves without being handicapped by their ritually-degraded status.

Mahar military service under the British began quite fortuitously in the 1740s. The East India Company organized the labourers employed on the fortifications of Bombay into regular bodies of sepoys for defense. The men ordinarily served as labourers at labourers' pay but were obliged to take up arms in case of attack and were then placed on military pay scale and under military discipline. This early quasi-military force was placed under the command of one Gumbajee Puttojee as their conductor and was divided into four companies of two hundred and sixteen men each. Each company consisted of one Subadar, four "Jumbledars," eight "Sir Naiques," four colour bearers, one trumpeter, one beldar and two hundred privates.

Documents in the Public Department Diary of 1757 list twenty-three men as captains, each shown as commanding varying numbers of men armed with various weapons: firelocks, matchlocks, long swords, sword and target, and bow and arrow.[7] It seems likely that these captains each brought a contingent of kinsmen or neighbours, engaged them all as a body and acted as an informal leader and spokesman. The fact that the men brought their own weapons suggests that they were employed on the understanding that they would take up arms if asked, and that they had some minimal degree of training, if only as hunters or village watchmen. These "captains" do not seem to correspond to the various Subadars and Jumbledars. Four of the captains, commanding sixty-two men including themselves, are listed as "Frosts," "Pharash or no caste" and appear to be Mahars. Eleven, commanding 436 men, are "Moors" (Muslims) and the remaining seven captains and 150 men are "Gentoos" (Hindus). There were only eight Christians scattered among six different captains. The four "Frost" "captains" had only men of their own "caste" while some of the "Moors" and "Gentoos" had mixed companies. Of the total of 648 men, 353 came from the "Maratta" country (presumably around Bombay) and 222 were from Surat and Gujarat. One Muslim had a contingent of 34 men from the territories of the Sidi and two had small groups from Angria territories. This assortment of castes remained characteristic of the Bombay Army until the major reorganization of 1893 to 1895.

Specific references to Mahar military service in the Bombay Army between 1757 and 1797 are few, though until the acquisition

of territories above the Western Ghats in 1802 the Bombay Army had perforce to recruit from the coastal districts around Bombay and could hardly have avoided taking Mahars in any case. At least one source gives positive evidence of Mahar service; Elphinstone (the Governor of Bombay) quoted, in correspondence with the Board of Directors, an earlier work which stated:

> . . . in the wars of Lawrence, Clive and Coote, in the Carnatic, the aborigines constituted by far the great majority of the sepoys . . . It was they (the Purwaris of the Bombay Army) who, in the siege of Mangalore [1783-84-author], together with . . . the 42nd Highlanders under Colonel Campbell, defended that fortress for six months . . .[8]

The Bombay regiment involved, the 8th Bombay Native Infantry, was designated a Grenadier regiment and awarded the battle honour "Mangalore" in official recognition of their service, and was unofficially honoured as the 3rd Battalion of the Black Watch.[9]

A number of references to Mahar service are found in the record of the 21st Regiment Bombay Native Infantry or Marine Battalion. This corps was raised in 1776-77, "for the service of the Marine"--to provide detachments for service in the ships of the Bombay Marine (later Indian Navy).[10] The Marine Battalion from a very early period enlisted a large proportion of Mahars or Parwaris. In 1776, when the corps was raised, the five hundred Sepoys were to be all "Moormen" or Muslims. However, many of the Sepoys who enlisted were in fact Parwaris and Mochis or Chamars. Some higher-caste Hindus apparently did enlist in the battalion but were considered unsuitable because they frequently objected to crossing the sea, which was a problem since the Marine Battalion so frequently served on board ship. For instance, in 1812

Ragoojee Bhonsla, Havildar, who was serving on board the Dart against pirates in the Gulf of Cutch, was ordered to be promoted to Jemadar and transferred to an infantry regiment. He was removed to the second battalion of the 7th Regiment of infantry.[11] Again in 1836 it came to the notice of government that there were about 240 men in the Marine Battalion whose caste prejudices prevented their service afloat. These men were then either transferred to other regiments, removed to the Veteran Battalion or pension list, or discharged.[12] The General Service Enlistment Act of 1856, requiring soldiers enlisting in the army to go wherever they were sent, was an attempt to forestall such problems; it was also an incidental cause of the mutiny of 1857. Whether because of this Act, or for other reasons, the Marine Battalion came to be dominated by Mahars and Muslims. By 1877 the Marine Battalion included 685 men of whom 492 were Mahars and 188 Muslims. There were also two Indo-Portuguese and three Jews or Bene Israel. As late as 1895, after Mahar recruitment had ended, there were still 185 Mahars (out of 824) in the battalion.

The Marine Battalion was often on active service when the rest of the Bombay Army was not. The Marine Battalion went through a number of changes in its classification and the duties assigned to it, as a marine battalion, as a pioneer battalion and as a regular infantry battalion, but it was always stationed in Bombay and always used to provide detachments for the Persian Gulf and for expeditions to Burma and for service on board ship. So it did see very extensive service including overseas service, much more than any other regiment of the Bombay army, particular-

ly in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Since the Marine Battalion usually supplied small detachments of sepoys under a native officer, and their duties often required a considerable degree of independent action, their chances of earning special distinction were quite high.

These factors probably account for the large number of Mahars who gained particular recognition; it is also fortunate that a brief but fact-filled history of the battalion was published at a time when memories and records were still fresh.

For instance, in 1797 the Vigilant was attacked by four Sanganian pirate vessels in the Gulf of Kutch, and drove them off after a three-hour battle. Five marines received promotions in recognition of their services on this occasion. The Havildar, Mandnack Esnack, was promoted to Jemadar. Two Naiks, Ruttonmettee Sonmettee and Nimnac Sownac were promoted to Havildar and privates Cosnack Subannac and Mandnac Caunnac were promoted to Naiks. Four of these five men were Mahars, the fifth a Mochi or Chamar.

In an unrelated incident the same year, the brig Viper was attacked by Joasmi pirates while at anchor off Bushire in the Persian Gulf. The engagement was brief but bloody, thirty-two of the detachment of sixty-five Marines being killed. All of the survivors received a gratuity of one month's pay, and two, Havildar Soubannac Wagnac and Jemadar Sheik Gunny, received a silver chain and badge worth one hundred rupees.[13] Another H.E.I.C. ship, the cruiser Sylph, fared worse in a pirate attack; all but four of the ship's crew and the entire Marine detachment

were killed in hand-to-hand combat.[14]

In February of 1809 pensions were granted to the widows of the seven men of the Marine Battalion who had been killed on board the Sylph, Lucknac Esnac Havildar, Calnac Downac Naique, and Roopnac Sonnac, Gonnak Gondnac, Balnac Jannac, Dewnac Bamnac and Bamnac Sonnac, Sepoys,[15] all identifiable as Mahars from the "nak" affixed to their names.

In September 1810 the cruiser Aurora was captured by two French frigates. The detachment of seventeen men of the Marine Battalion on board the Aurora remained faithful to their allegiance despite both persuasion and coercion applied to them to induce them to change their allegiance to France. The men involved, ten Mahars and seven Muslims, were each promoted one rank. Each was also to receive a silver badge. When one of them, Havildar Dhunnac Dadnac, died on duty in the Persian Gulf in 1820 his widow Sallee and child were granted a pension exceeding by one rupee what would ordinarily have been given, although the widow was not in this instance entitled to a pension under ordinary circumstances. It was specifically noted that this grant was made in recognition of his previous service on board the Aurora.[16]

Soldiers of the Marine Battalion on occasion served well beyond the borders of India and in an independent capacity; Subadar Balnak Tannak, a Mahar, in 1817 went to New South Wales in command of a guard over a convict draft to that colony, and his commanding officer received a letter from Governor MacQuarrie

commending the Subadar for his satisfactory conduct of this duty.[17]

An interesting although not especially important episode in the history of the Marine Battalion occurred in 1815 when the East Indiaman Nautilus encountered the American ship Peacock in the Straits of Sunda. The captain of the Peacock apparently was unaware that a peace treaty had already been signed between the two nations and fired upon the Nautilus. In the ensuing action Subadar Elinac Sonnac of the Marine Battalion was killed and several other men including the commander, Lieutenant Boyce, were killed or wounded. "This is probably the only occasion on which the Indian army has fought against Americans."[18]

Men of the Marine Battalion also served in the First Burmese War, 1824-26. Commodore John Hayes commanding the company's brig-of-war Vestal particularly commended Havildar Walnac Sumnac who had been serving in the rank of Subadar Major and Gunnac Seednac Naik who had been serving as a Jemadar. Commodore Hayes' recommendation that they be confirmed in these ranks was not accepted for administrative reasons, but both men were raised in rank one degree, the Havildar being promoted to Jemadar and the Naik to Havildar. Besides these men a total of one Jemadar and eight noncommissioned officers and six privates who can be positively identified as Mahars served in the Burmese War along with three NCOs and four privates who can be identified as Muslim. There were another ninety-one privates, at least one-half to one-third of whom were almost certainly Mahars. The general conduct of the Marine Battalion in this war was considered to be very

praiseworthy. The entire detachment were awarded medals and most of them, except for those employed on a transport ship, received an additional Batta of one-quarter rupee per day for the duration of their service. Another survivor of the Aurora, Downac Muckinnac, who had by 1826 reached the rank of Subadar, died in hospital as a result of illness contracted in Burma, and as in the earlier case of Dhamnac Havildar, his widow was granted a special pension of one rupee more than she would have received had she been entitled to pension under ordinary circumstances.[19]

Between 1838 and 1858 detachments of the Marine Battalion served in a number of campaigns including the capture of Aden in September of 1839, the defence of the Hyderabad (Sind) residency prior to the battle of Meanee, other campaigns in Sind in the early 1840s and the Opium War in China 1840-42. Several Mahar soldiers of the Marine Battalion again won specific mention for various deeds. Subadar-Major Jannac Nownac Bahadur was invested with the Order of British India (established in 1837) in October 1845. In May 1851 the company ship Falklands sank on a voyage to Karachi. A Marine private, Babnac Deepnac, who was on sentry duty over the treasure chest, stayed at his post until the ship went down under him, and then managed to save the bag of rupees. He was promoted to Naik. Marines served on the company steamers Feroze, Moozaffur, Berenice, Zenobia, and Sesostris during the Second Burmese War 1853-54 and received service medals. During the Second Sikh War some one hundred and ten men of the Marine Battalion served in the ships of the Indus Flotilla 1848-49. In March of 1857 detachments of Marines from the Feroze, Semiramis,

Assaye, Ajdaha, Victoria, Clive and Falkland served under Lieutenant-General Sir James Outram at the taking of Mohumra in Persia. Lance-Naik Babmac Sumnak was killed; Havildar Ragnak Esnak and Private Lucknak were wounded.[20]

A detachment of the Marine Battalion again won particular distinction during the Mutiny. The detachment had been stationed at Multan. The Naik and several privates had been assigned to guard the treasure chest which was in the house of the Assistant Magistrate and Port Officer Lieutenant Holt of the Indian Navy.[21] The house was attacked by a party of mutineers of the 67th and 69th Bengal Native Infantry and the Marines were able to repulse the attack. The detachment consisted of Naik Jannac Dhonnac who was promoted to Havildar, Privates Aumnac Jannac, Bicknac Sonnac, Gondnac Pitnac, Balnac Jannac, and Bicknac Coottennac all promoted to Naik, and Privates Balmater Rammater, Balnac Dhurumnac and Ramnac Babnac promoted to Lance-Naik. Havildar Jannac Dhonnac and Lance-Naik Ramnac Babnac also were awarded the Indian Order of Merit, Third Class.[22]

Men of the Marine Battalion did not always distinguish themselves. Commander M. O. Stephens, a Royal Navy officer commanding the H.E.I.C. ship Semiramis in 1852, was extremely dissatisfied with the conduct of twelve of sixteen men of the Marine Battalion recently serving under him. The sixteen men included fourteen Mahars, one Chamar, and one Anglo-Indian. Charges leveled against these men included habitual bad conduct, riotous conduct, an attempt at feigning insanity, losing parts of their uniforms, bringing false complaints and general insubordi-

nation. Commander Stephens had Private Lucknac Cannac punished with one dozen lashes with the cat for disobedience, and the other marines "misconducted themselves in a most marked and insubordinate manner by openly questioning the propriety of one of their corps being flogged."[23] Although the marines do not appear to have conducted themselves very satisfactorily, Commander Stephens was also at fault in attempting to enforce the standards of discipline customary in the British Navy upon men who, first of all, were not sailors but soldiers, and secondly were not accustomed to the brutal physical discipline then imposed in the British Navy. According to regulations issued by the Governor in Council in 1810, defining the duties of marine sepoys, corporal punishment was not permitted in the case of noncommissioned officers; privates could be punished with a "rattan." It seems probable that the marines were right in questioning the use of the cat.[24]

An interesting and somewhat unusual episode in the history of the Marine Battalion occurred in 1865 when Dr. David Livingstone received permission from the government of Bombay to enlist a number of sepoys to accompany him on his next expedition to Central Africa. Forty men of the Marine Battalion volunteered and twelve were enlisted, leaving for Zanzibar in 1866. The twelve men were Color Havildar Shaik Ahmad, Lance Naik Sheik Mullang and Privates Khoada Bux, Esmall Khan, Shaik Curreem, Shaik Khan, Shaik Purun, Pandnac Ramnac, Jaynac Gunnac, Ramnac Lucknac, Bawajnac Gunnac, and Ramnac Bhewnac. The first seven of these were Muslims, the last five Mahars. Livingstone did not

find that the sepoys served him well.[25] Livingstone considered that the sepoys were cruel to the pack animals brought with them, that they were reluctant to work but likewise reluctant to be sent home, and were generally untrustworthy. In extenuation it must be said Livingstone was then getting old and apparently ineffectual as a leader. He also clearly understood very little about the sepoys since he was not even aware that they were not all Muslim. The episode, however, does not cast much credit upon the Marine Battalion.

Mahars also served in most of the Bombay infantry regiments in the nineteenth century, but it is harder to determine the extent of their service for lack of evidence. However scattered references do exist which show Mahars serving in such campaigns as the Third Anglo-Maratha War, the Second Anglo-Sikh War, and the Second Afghan War.

For instance, during the Third Maratha War (1817-1819), two soldiers of the 1st battalion/3rd regiment, (later the Kali Panchwin or Black Fifth), Bhowani Singh and Eknath Balnak, were promoted to Havildar for their zeal and bravery during the pursuit of the defeated Peshwa Baji Rao after the battle of Kirkee.[26]

One instance of Mahar bravery, described by I. A. Ezekiel, occurred during the Second Anglo-Sikh War. Units of the Bombay Army, including a company of Sappers and Miners, took part in the attack on the Khuni Burj (Bloody Bastion) at Multan on 2 January 1849.[27] According to Ezekiel, a Mahar soldier, Mahadev Missar, captured the enemy colours and inspired his regiment to press

their attack successfully. Another Mahar soldier, Jannak Ramnak, also displayed similar valour; both received medals.[28] In a similar vein, a party of twenty-five men under a Mahar, Ramjee Sindhay, part of a regiment serving in Kathiawar in 1826, held off an attack by over four hundred enemy.[29] Although specific details of these stories could not be confirmed from original military sources, the presence of Bombay regiments during this campaign is well-documented. These and similar stories do form part of the Mahar tradition.[30]

An early official notice of the appointment of a Mahar to a military position dates from 1847. This is a certificate (given in Appendix B) of the grant of rank of Jemadar to Kamalnac Vitnac dated the first day of June 1847 and effective on January first of the same year.[31]

Two episodes from the Second Afghan War provide further examples of Mahar service. A half company of the Bombay Sappers and Miners were present at the battle of Maiwand, July 27th 1880. These men were the last to leave the line of battle, leaving behind Lieutenant T. R. Henn and fourteen Sappers dead. Of the fourteen, two, Balnak Yesnak and Chocnak, were Mahars.[32] On 12th April 1881 Sepoy Bhewnac Ramnac saved Assistant Doctor McMahon of the 61st Regiment and his servant from death by drowning. He was promoted to Naik and later awarded the bronze medal of the Royal Humane Society.[33]

The two most famous and best documented instances of Mahar military service of distinction are at the battle of Koregaon in 1818 and at Dubrai, Afghanistan 1880. The battle of Koregaon is

interesting in that it appeared at first to be a somewhat insignificant engagement, but has since come to be considered a turning point in the Third Anglo-Maratha War. The successful defense of Koregaon by a small British-led force against a large army commanded by the Peshwa Baji Rao himself was a severe blow to Maratha morale, and has been considered an important factor contributing to their ultimate defeat.

The events are simple enough. Captain F. F. Staunton, commanding about 500 men of the 2nd Battalion/1st Regiment Bombay Native Infantry (Grenadiers), about 250 Auxiliary Horse under Lieutenant Swanston and a small artillery detachment of two six-pounder guns, left Sirur about 8:30 p.m. on the 31st of December 1817, arriving at 10:00 a.m. the following morning, January 1st at the village of Koregaon near Pune. Captain Staunton received a nasty shock when he encountered the army of the Peshwa, about 20,000 cavalry and 8,000 infantry with two heavy guns, formed up on the opposite side of the Bhima River. It turned out later that the Peshwa's army was to have left Pune the day before and had they done so, or had Captain Staunton arrived an hour later, the engagement would never have taken place. Captain Staunton determined to make a stand in the village of Koregaon, which was (and still is today) fortified with mud walls, and took up position there, selecting the best situations he could for his two guns. In the meantime 3,000 of the Peshwa's Arab infantry had also occupied the village and had managed to gain control of the better position. Captain Staunton's small force was continually in battle without food or water until 9:00 p.m. when the Arabs

were finally driven out of the village. At daybreak the following day Staunton's troops took possession of the enemy post and on the evening of that same day, January 2nd, Staunton gathered together his survivors, collected his wounded and his guns, and began a retreat towards Sirur. In his report to Lieutenant Colonel Fitzsimon, Commanding at Sirur, Captain Staunton appeared under some apprehension because he had had to abandon his camp equipment and one of the gun tumbrels. He recorded heavy losses, Lieutenant Chisholm of the artillery and Assistant Surgeon Wingate of the Grenadiers having been killed and Lieutenant Patterson, also of the Grenadiers, badly wounded. Lieutenant Patterson later died. Lieutenant Connellan and Lieutenant Swanston were also wounded, fifty men of the Grenadiers and twelve men of the artillery had been killed, and a total of 113 wounded. Captain Staunton ended his report with the comment: "It is utterly impossible for me to do justice to the merits and exertions of the European officers, non-commissioned officers, and privates, that I had the honour and good fortune to command on this trying occasion."[34] This apparently insignificant battle, which as noted proved to have major consequences, became a very important feature of the regimental history of the Grenadiers. As long as the regiment existed Koregaon Night continued to be an important regimental celebration. Memorabilia of the occasion were kept in the regimental mess and survivors of the engagement were honoured at regimental dinners and other occasions.[35] Government also chose to commemorate this battle by erecting an obelisk at the site of the battle. The obelisk still stands and on its face are

recorded the names of the officers and men who died in that engagement. This includes a total of twenty-one Mahars.[36] This battle also features prominently in the Mahar regimental histories and in many accounts of the military history of the Mahars, since it is probably the one occasion on which the largest number of Mahar soldiers are known for certain to have died, and to have died in a very gallant and difficult task.

The incident at Dubrai is militarily unimportant but again has won considerable attention because of the gallantry shown by the three men involved, Major Sidney James Waudby and Privates Elahi Bux and Sonnak Tannak of the 19th Bombay Native Infantry. On 16 April 1880, these three men along with a daffadar and two sowars of the 3rd Sind Horse were defending a small outpost in Afghanistan. They came under attack by some 250 to 300 Ghazis. The Sind Horse Sowars apparently took to their heels, leaving the post to be defended by Major Waudby and the two privates. These three held off the attack as long as they could, killing or wounding some thirty of their opponents, and when their ammunition was exhausted dashed out and were killed in hand to hand combat.[37] This exploit is commemorated by a plaque presently found on the wall of the Alexandra Girls' School on Waudby Road in Bombay.[38] At this time the Indian Order of Merit was not granted posthumously, but since Elahi Bux and Sonnak Tannak were deemed to have earned the third class I.O.M., their widows were awarded the equivalent pension for a term of three years, in addition to the ordinary family pension due them.[39]

Even these sketchy records indicate that Mahar soldiers not

only served in various regiments of the Bombay Army throughout the nineteenth century, but some attained the status of native officers. On occasion Mahar soldiers displayed qualities of courage and leadership at a high level.

The Bene Israel

As mentioned previously the earliest instance of the Bene Israel serving as soldiers involves members of the Churrikar family. According to Kehimkar two members of this family served the Abyssinian ruler of Janjira. In a battle with soldiers of Kanhoji Angrey they were captured and on refusing to change allegiance were killed. Angrey apparently was so impressed by this evidence of faithfulness that he appointed two other members of the family, Samuel or Samaji and Abraham or Abaji, to command his navy. It is also thought that ancestors of several Bene Israel families were appointed as commanders of various forts, including Avchitgad fort, Sagadgud fort and others. However, as Kehimkar concedes, documentary evidence of such appointments is lacking and this, therefore, must be considered a tradition rather than a proven historical fact.[40]

The Bene Israel began to migrate to Bombay in considerable numbers after the city and island came into British possession. They had hitherto been afraid to enter Portuguese dominated territories for fear of religious persecution. The earliest record of military service of the Bene Israel under the British dates from about 1760. At or about that time, five brothers of the Divekar family enlisted and received commissions from William Hornby who was then Governor and Commander-in-Chief of his Majes-

ty's castle and island of Bombay. These brothers were Issaji Hassaji, Sillamon Hassaji, Samaji Hassaji, Ellojee Hassaji and David Hassaji. They were all apparently appointed to the rank of Jemadar and/or Subadar in the middle 1770s to the early 1780s. Samaji or Samuel served in the Second Mysore War and was taken prisoner and held for some time. Kehimkar notes the military service of a large number of other Bene Israel, giving detailed accounts of the service of thirty-two and listing over one hundred Bene Israel who became native officers.[41] This was not an exhaustive listing. Two native officers whose services should be specially noted, particularly as they are independently confirmed, are Subadar Danieljee Israel of the 16th Regiment of Native Infantry (Subadar Daniel Khurrilkar) and Subadar-Major Moosajee Israel (Moosajee Koletkar). Subadar Danieljee was commanding a platoon escorting an opium convoy from Baroda to Ahmedabad in April of 1830. The platoon repelled an attack by a party of approximately four hundred Bhils. The Subadar was publicly thanked by Colonel Kennet, resident at Baroda, and received a gold medal for his conduct.[42] In July 1857, Subadar-Major Moosajee, serving with the 27th Regiment Native Infantry in the rank of Jemadar and Native Adjutant, gave first information of a planned mutiny among some of the soldiers of his regiment.[43]

Although the Battle of Koregaon does not feature as prominently in Bene Israel tradition as it does for the Mahars, a few Bene Israel apparently served in the Bombay Grenadiers at that time. At a regimental dinner held at Baroda in 1846, Jemadar Davidji Israel Bahadur, who had just completed forty-one years'

service, was called in to return the toast offered by the Resident of Baroda to the survivors of Koregaon.[44]

A very striking feature of the Bene Israel military experience was the high proportion of Bene Israel soldiers who became native officers. In this they differ from the Mahars, who won promotions indeed, but in a proportion similar to their overall representation in the army. Not only were the Bene Israel overrepresented as native officers; they also seem to have held many relatively prestigious positions after retirement, in the police or in local administration. These differences will be further discussed in later chapters.

American Blacks

The early military history of blacks in the Americas differs from that of the Mahars and Bene Israel in important respects. Black men often, as slaves, could be compelled to serve in the military, as labourers if not as soldiers, whereas the Mahars and Bene Israel seem to have offered their service by choice. Also, while the Mahars and Bene Israel seem always to have allied themselves with the ruling power, slaves could and did revolt or flee, sometimes allying themselves with Indian tribes or attempting to form independent settlements of their own. The threat--and occasional reality--of slave revolt influenced white attitudes toward black soldiers in a way quite unparalleled in the Indian context.

The various colonial powers--France, Spain, and Britain--differed in their policies and attitudes towards blacks. Succes-

sive French and Spanish colonial administrations in Louisiana found it expedient to use slaves and free men of colour to supplement the regular troops and white militia available to them. Between 1730 and 1740 both free blacks and slaves participated in French expeditions against the Natchez and Chickasaw Indians. As McConnell states in his study:

> For the most part both the enslaved and the freed had given a good account of themselves and proved their loyalty to the French. At the same time, they had acquired valuable military and disciplinary experience. This military service provided an avenue to freedom for the enslaved. And for the free, definitely organized into a company with their own officers by the second Chickasaw war, there was the rewarding knowledge that the government also depended upon them for its defence against the common enemy.[45]

By the time Louisiana passed into Spanish hands, Spanish imperial policy included provision for militia units to be organized among the free people of colour, Negroes and Mulattoes, subdivided into pardos (lighter skinned Mulattoes) and Morenos (dark Mulattoes and Negroes). A number of free men of colour fought for Spain against Britain in 1779-81, performing creditably in their "first experience against trained European soldiers"[46] and earning commendations and promotions. Negro militiamen also took part in the Cimarron War (against runaway slaves and their hideouts) and worked with other able-bodied male citizens on the levees of the Mississippi. In 1799, in their last action under the Spanish flag, they took part in an expedition to Florida against an adventurer named Bowles.

The French and Spanish administrations left behind in New Orleans a fairly large, prosperous class of mulattoes who were European in culture, and who occupied an anomalous position in

the developing "caste" system of the American South; racially they belonged to the "slave caste," but culturally they identified with the white "ruling caste."

The British colonists were considerably more reluctant to allow free blacks to bear arms. In very early colonial history both free blacks and slaves were often included in colonial militia units simply because every available man or boy was needed. Particular misgivings were felt with regard to arming free blacks, for they were often viewed as potential leaders or instigators of slave revolts. The various colonies quite early took the step of barring blacks, both slave and free, from bearing arms. Virginia in 1639, Massachusetts in 1656, Connecticut in 1661, and soon the other colonies, all barred blacks from military service. This, however, led white colonists to feel that free blacks were being specially favoured. A new policy therefore frequently stipulated that free blacks must join the militia, but they were usually allowed only to serve as drummers, fifers and trumpeters, road or highway labourers, or guards. They were not ordinarily allowed to bear arms and serve as potential combatants. However, these policies also tended to fall by the wayside in time of war. There were a number of occasions when colonists facing Indian attacks or attacks from the French allowed slaves to bear arms and fight alongside their white masters. For instance, South Carolina in 1703 and 1715 allowed slaves to fight against Indian attack. Slaves were sometimes offered their freedom in return for military service. This ended in South Carolina in 1740 after two serious slave insurrections.

During the period of the French-Indian Wars, blacks were again permitted to serve in the military.[47]

> Many towns, unable otherwise to furnish their quotas, gladly accepted all Blacks. To slaves, the prospect of freedom, made enlistment in the Colonial forces attractive; for free Blacks, the hope of elevating their low social status was the prime inducement.[48]

These men served as soldiers, scouts, wagoners, labourers, and servants. They served in unsegregated units and received equal pay with whites. Slaves had to surrender some or all of their wages to their masters, and some were returned to slavery at the end of the war. However, many slaves did earn their freedom by serving in the armed forces.

Very early in the American Revolution black men joined the Minutemen and are known to have fought at the battles of Lexington and Concord. A black Minuteman named Salem Poor, along with at least three other black men, later joined Ethan Allen's Green Mountain Boys. Salem Poor also fought at the battle of Bunker Hill and other black men are known to have been present at that engagement. When George Washington was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the army of the Continental Congress in June of 1775, he was not pleased at finding blacks in the army under his command, and ordered recruiting officers not to enroll "any stroller, Negro or vagabond." This order was reinforced and reiterated in November of 1775: "neither Negroes, boys unable to bare Arms, nor old men unfit to endure the fatigues of the campaign, are to be inlisted."[49] This policy had to be modified very quickly, as the British enlisted blacks offering freedom to indentured servants and slaves who would take service under the British flag. There

was also the problem of finding enough whites who were willing to sign up for yet another year of fighting in the Continental army. It therefore became necessary to accept free blacks as soldiers. A number of northern states went further and actively recruited slaves, offering them freedom at the end of their service and compensation to their former owners. Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, and New Hampshire among others had companies or battalions of black men. Slaves sometimes enlisted as substitutes for white men. The state of Maryland passed legislation permitting slave enlistments. The state of Virginia in 1783 passed a law directing the emancipation of slaves who had served as soldiers, substituting for white men, during the Revolutionary War.[50] However not all masters honoured their promises and some attempted with greater or less success to re-enslave their former slaves. Not all black veterans waited to find out if they could trust the white man's promises; some took the first opportunity after the war's end to move far away from their former owners.

To sum up, the American Revolution produced an improvement in the status of blacks. Many won their freedom by serving in the armed forces on either the American or British side. Revolutionary ideology encouraged individual slaves to seek manumission, and encouraged some masters to free their slaves, several states to prohibit the slave trade, and some southern states to liberalize their manumission laws. Vermont, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts abolished slavery, and other states provided for gradual emancipation. A number of black veterans including the founder of black Masonry, Prince Hall, sail-maker and abolition-

ist James Forten of Philadelphia, and the Reverend Lemuel Haymes, a former Green Mountain Boy, became leaders of the developing free black community of the north.[51] However, the small progress achieved still left the majority of blacks in bondage, either legal or economic. In some respects the social, political, and economic conditions of black Americans deteriorated in the years following the American Revolution. Although the U.S. Constitution did not forbid the enlistment of black men, and the Militia Act of 1792 did not specifically exclude blacks (it merely required the enrollment of white males), in practice most states excluded black men from military service except in some cases as labourers and musicians.

There were several reasons for this exclusion of blacks from combat roles.[52] After 1792 the army required relatively few men and therefore had no particular need for blacks. Local militia units took on social and political overtones, and leadership in the militia was used by whites as a form of community service useful to them in political life. There was an understandable reluctance to allow blacks to participate in this type of activity. An additional factor was the slave rebellion of the 1790s in Haiti. A slave revolt under Toussaint L'Ouverture, Jean-Jacques Dessalines, and Henri Christophe achieved independence for Haiti in 1804 after defeating a large French army. This certainly contributed to white fears of armed revolt of blacks and mulattoes, particularly in the southern states where black populations were very large. In 1798 blacks were officially barred from enlistment in the Marine Corps and Navy. However,

these services frequently had trouble getting enough white seamen and continued to accept black men.

The War of 1812 once again provided some opportunities for black men to serve in the military. In Louisiana, transferred from France to the United States in 1803, a black militia unit still existed. This was formally reactivated in 1812 as the Battalion of Free Men of Color. This battalion was made up of free blacks (many of whom were actually mulattoes or quadroons of French ancestry), each of whom owned property of at least three hundred dollars in value. The battalion had some black officers, though it was commanded by whites. A second battalion was raised by Joseph Savary, a black originally from Santo Domingo. These two battalions took a leading role in the battle of New Orleans in 1814, and were commended by General Andrew Jackson for their courage and perseverance. Black men also served in the naval force in the battle of Lake Erie under Captain O. H. Perry.[53]

Between the end of the War of 1812 and the Civil War blacks were once again excluded from the regular army. However, they continued to enlist in the navy, where they served not only as cooks and stewards but also as common seamen.[54]

Blacks also played a significant role in the First and Second Seminole Wars, fighting against United States troops. The Spanish colony of Florida had for many years offered a refuge to slaves escaping from South Carolina and Georgia. Many fugitive slaves were accepted into Seminole tribes, married Indians and often became tribal leaders. The First Seminole War of 1817 to 1818 was largely a punitive expedition to destroy black slave

towns and return slaves to their owners. Florida was ceded to the United States in 1819 by Spain. Eleven years later President Andrew Jackson ordered the removal of all Indians from the southeastern states to the Arkansas territory. The attempt to implement this policy against the Seminole Indians and blacks led to the Second Seminole War from 1835 to 1842. The United States army ultimately won the war, after losing some fifteen hundred men and forty million dollars, by adopting a scorched-earth policy which effectively starved the Indians into submission. At the conclusion of the war hundreds of black Seminoles were sold into slavery. Some chose instead to flee to Northern Mexico where they waged guerilla warfare for many years against Texas planters.[55]

The experience of blacks up to this point was very similar to that of the Mahars in one respect: they were accepted into the military when extra manpower was needed, allowed even to hold positions of some responsibility, but generally not allowed much command responsibility. Given opportunity and incentive, both classes of men proved capable of courage, perseverance, and loyalty. One important difference between the two was in the attitude of the majority population.

American whites, particularly in the south, were justifiably frightened of slave revolts and therefore extremely wary of allowing black men to bear arms. Nothing in their history or traditions suggests that the Mahars ever tried armed revolt, or even contemplated such action, against Indian rulers or against

the British. Their reputation as a class was proverbially that of loyal and faithful servants.

The explanation for this difference seems obvious. The Mahars were, after all, an integral part of their society, bound by ritual and custom to their local communities, and sharing language, culture, and ancestry with their higher-caste neighbours. Though they might have resented their subservient position and retained a folk tradition of a time when they were acknowledged owners of the land, nevertheless they were part of a stable social order with enough built-in checks and balances and compensatory mechanisms to maintain social equilibrium.

None of this was true of the social order evolving in the United States through the colonial era and Revolutionary War. Through the eighteenth century many blacks, perhaps even a majority, were African-born, kidnapped and enslaved as adults, having no ties of any kind to the dominant white society, which was itself rapidly changing. There were few established social mechanisms to make the status of slavery endurable or acceptable. The ending of the African slave trade in the early nineteenth century, along with growing abolitionist sentiment and several generations of interaction between blacks and whites, tempered some of the worst excesses of plantation slavery, but could hardly make the institution itself palatable. Given all of this it would be surprising if there had <u>not</u> been slave revolts and attempts by runaway slaves to ally themselves with Indian tribes, themselves hard-pressed by expanding white settlements.

Later themes in black American history, such as the "back

to Africa" movements of Marcus Garvey and others, the founding of Liberia, and even the Black Muslim movement, reflect the ambivalence of many Americans, both black and white, over whether blacks can or should ever be truly a part of American society. By contrast, though the Mahars have tried many tactics to improve their status, the idea of separating entirely from Indian society has never been an issue. Their most dramatic step, the mass conversion to Buddhism, was a deliberate reversion to an older, non-Brahmin tradition, but still within the Indian cultural context.

The military experience of blacks in the American army is mostly closely comparable to that of the Indian soldier in general, and low-caste Indians in particular, in the late nineteenth century. Increasing professionalization of the military, changing roles of the military in maintaining and extending state power, and growing racial/caste prejudice are characteristic of both the American and Indian armies in this period, and constitute the subject of the next chapter.

Footnotes, Chapter II

1. R. V. Russell and Hira Lal, The Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces of India, vol. IV (N.p.: Central Provinces Administration, 1916; reprint ed. Oosterhout N.B. - The Netherlands: Anthropological Publications, 1969), pp. 132-133.

2. Alexander Robertson, The Mahar Folk: A Study of Untouchables in Maharashtra (Calcutta: Y.M.C.A. Publishing House, 1938), pp. 29-30.
   The date given to Robertson was Shake 1109 (1187 A.D.), but as he noted this must have been inaccurately transcribed. The kingdom of Bedar flourished c. 1492-1565 A.D.

3. Jadunath Sarkar, Shivaji and His Times (Delhi: Orient Longman Ltd., 1973 [first published 1919]), p. 363.

4. V. R. Shinde, Bhartiya Aspishyatecha Prashna (Nagpur: Venkatesh Shamrao Balkundi, Nav Bharat Granth Mala, 1933), pp. 169-172; K. V. Kotavale, Politics of the Dalits (Bombay: Majestic Book Stall, 1974), pp. 142-145.
   These sources were brought to my attention by Shri V. W. Moon in Bombay and Prof. M. D. Nalawade in Kolhapur, and were translated for me by Smt. Mangala Moghe and Mr. Amol Divkar.

5. Col. V. Longer, "Mahar Regimental History," chaps. I and II, p. 12, Mahar Regimental Centre, Saugor, M.P.

6. Robert J. Miller, "Button, Button . . . Great Tradition, Little Tradition, Whose Tradition?" Anthropological Quarterly 39 (January 1966):26-42.

7. M.S.A., Public Dept. Diary, 1747.

8. M.S.A., Military Compilations, vol. 716 of 1857, #389.

9. Philip Mason, A Matter of Honour: An Account of the Indian Army, Its Officers and Men (Harmonsworth, England: Penguin Books, 1976), p. 127.

10. "Record of the 21st Regiment Bombay Native Infantry or Marine Battalion" U.S.I. Journal, no. 4 (1871-2):50.

11. Lieut.-Col. W. B. P. Tugwell, History of the Bombay Pioneers (London: The Sidney Press, Limited, 1938), app. 2, pp. 372-3.

12. "Record of the 21st Regiment," p. 72; Tugwell, Bombay Pioneers, p. 33.
The argument that Marathas were unable to serve at sea due to caste prejudices seems weak, since as late as 1783 the Peshwa still commanded a significant naval force under the command of one Anundrao Dhoolap. Possibly by the nineteenth century they had developed a distaste for seafaring, or possibly this was a rationalization for other problems, such as reluctance to undertake housekeeping duties while at sea.

13. "Record of the 21st Regiment," pp. 52-53.

14. Tugwell, Bombay Pioneers, pp. 57-58.

15. "Record of the 21st Regiment," p. 55.

16. Ibid., pp. 57 and 65.

17. Ibid., pp. 63-64.

18. Tugwell, Bombay Pioneers, p. 63.

19. "Record of the 21st Regiment," pp. 73-74.

20. Tugwell, Bombay Pioneers, p. 109.

21. The Gazetteer of Bombay City And Island, vol. II (Pune: The Government Photozinco Press, 1977; facsimile ed. orig. pub. Bombay: The Times Press, 1909), pp. 284-295.
In 1830 the Indian Marine was renamed the Indian Navy; this designation was retained until 1858, when it became Her Majesty's Indian Navy. In 1863 it was again renamed the Bombay Marine, and was amalgamated with the other Indian marine establishments in 1877, under a scheme devised by Captain (later Admiral) Bythesea.

22. Tugwell, Bombay Pioneers, p. 109.

23. M.S.A., Military Compilations, vol. 488 of 1852, #197.

24. "Record of the 21st Regiment," pp. 55-56.

25. George Seaver, David Livingstone: His Life and Letters (London: Lutterworth Press, 1957), pp. 481-495.

26. Lieut.-Col. M. G. Abhyankar, Valour Enshrined: A History of the Maratha Light Infantry 1768-1947 (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1971), p. 43.

27. Lieut.-Col. E. W. C. Sandes, The Indian Sappers and Miners (Chatham: Institution of Royal Engineers, 1948), pp. 182-3.

28. I. A. Ezekiel, "Over My Dead Body . . . " Illus. Weekly of India, April 2, 1972, p. 17.

29. Ibid.

30. Ezekiel and the authors of some other popular articles on the Mahar military tradition got their information from Col. G. K. Karandikar, now retired and living in Pune. Col. Karandikar served with the Mahar Regiment from 1942 and wrote the first regimental history.

31. Regimental History of Mahar M. G. Regiment (Dehra Dun: The Army Press, 1954), app. B, p. 91.

32. Sandes, Indian Sappers and Miners, p. 280.

33. Col. R. D. Palsokar, "History of the Grenadiers," chap. 17, p. 124, Pune.

34. Lt.-Col. Valentine Blacker, Memoir of the Operations of the British Army in India during the Mahratta War of 1817, 1818, & 1819, 2 vols. (London: Block, Kingsbury, Parbury and Allen, 1821), p. 183 and app. I, p. 457.

35. Maj. J. T. Gorman, 2nd Battalion 4th Bombay Grenadiers (King Edwards's Own) formerly The 102nd King Edward's Own Grenadiers: Historical Record of the Regiment, 1796-1933 (first ed. of 1877 by Col. Stanley Edwardes; Weston-Super-Mare: Lawrence Bros., Ltd., 1933), p. 60 and app. I, p. 147.

36. The caretaker of the monument is Gulab Rao Babu Rao Jemadar, retired in 1960 from the 2nd Battalion, Maratha Light Infantry. He is the great-grandson of "Cundajee Mullojee"--Khande Rao Malatkar--who was a survivor of the battle.

Sources: Gorman, 2nd/4th Bombay Grenadiers, p. 147.
Col. R. D. Palsokar, private communication, July 17, 1980.

The following are the names of Mahar soldiers of the Grenadiers appearing on the Koregaon monument:

Killed

Naiks: Sonnac Cummulnac
Ramnac Essnac

Privates: Gondnac Cootennac
Ramnac Essnac
Bhanac Harnac
Amnac Cannac
Gunnac Balnac

Killed	Wounded
Balnac Dhondnac	
Roopnac Lucknac	Drummer Tannac Hurnac
Ettnac Dhaknac	
Robnac Ramnac	
Raznac Gunnac	
Bobnac Hubnac	
Rynac Jannac	
Sujunnac Essnac	There were six
Gunnac Dhrumnac	others wounded.
Dewnac Annac	
Gopolnac Balnac	
Hurnac Hurnac	
Jetnac Downac	
Gunnac Ducknac	

The other 28 casualties included Muslims, Chamars, and Marathas.

37. N.A.I. Foreign Department, Secret Supplementary Branch, May 1880 #176, Political Diary, Kandahar: 22-30, April 1880.

38. Ezekiel, "Over My Dead Body . . . ," p. 16.

39. Gazette of India, 18 December 1880, no. 51, Military Department, p. 697.

40. Haeem Samuel Kehimkar, The History of the Bene-Israel of India (Tel Aviv: Dayag Press Ltd., 1937), pp. 188-191.

41. Ibid., pp. 191-216.

42. Abhyankar, Valour Enshrined, p. 55.

43. Col. Malleson, ed., Kaye's and Malleson's History of the Indian Mutiny of 1857-8, vol. 5 (London: Longman's, Green and Co., 1909), p. 27.

44. Gorman, 2nd/4th Bombay Grenadiers, p. 60.

45. Roland C. McConnell, Negro Troops of Antebellum Louisiana: A History of the Battalion of Free Men of Color (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State U. Press, 1968), p. 14.
He also mentions, on page 9, one Francois Ticon "of the Senegal nation", freed for bravery in the Choctaw War.

46. Ibid., p. 42.

47. Jack D. Foner, Blacks and the Military in American History: A New Perspective (n.p., Praeger, 1974), p. 3.

48. Ibid., pp. 4-5.

49. Marvin Fletcher, The Black Soldier and Officer in the United States Army, 1891-1917 (Columbia: The U. of Missouri Press, 1974), p. 12.

50. Robert Ewell Greene, Black Defenders of America 1775-1973 (Chicago: Johnson Publishing Company Inc., 1974), p. 343.

51. Foner, Blacks and the Military, pp. 18-19.

52. Ibid., p. 21.

53. Greene, Black Defenders of America, pp. 345-6.

54. Fletcher, Black Soldier and Officer, p. 16.

55. Foner, Blacks and the Military, pp. 28-29.

CHAPTER III

PROFESSIONALISM AND PREJUDICE: MILITARY SERVICE IN THE LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY

The nature of military service changed in important ways in the late nineteenth century. More sophisticated weapons and equipment, requiring higher levels of education and more varied skills, increased the attraction of military service as a profession. The role of the military in maintaining and extending the power of the state became more explicit and formalized in this period, potentially increasing the prestige of the military profession. At the same time, increasing racial/caste prejudice (among other factors) tended to restrict access of blacks and Indians--especially low-caste Indians--to military service. In both India and the United States, the latter half of the nineteenth century can be described as a period of consolidation followed by expansion, with significant changes in military policy following changes in the political landscape.

In India, the rapid extension of British territorial control and legal and social reforms which characterized the early nineteenth century were halted by the outbreak of revolt in 1857. The aftermath of revolt saw much greater caution in meddling with Indian customs and social organization, and a military policy geared to minimizing the risks of maintaining a large mercenary army. By the early 1880s security concerns had

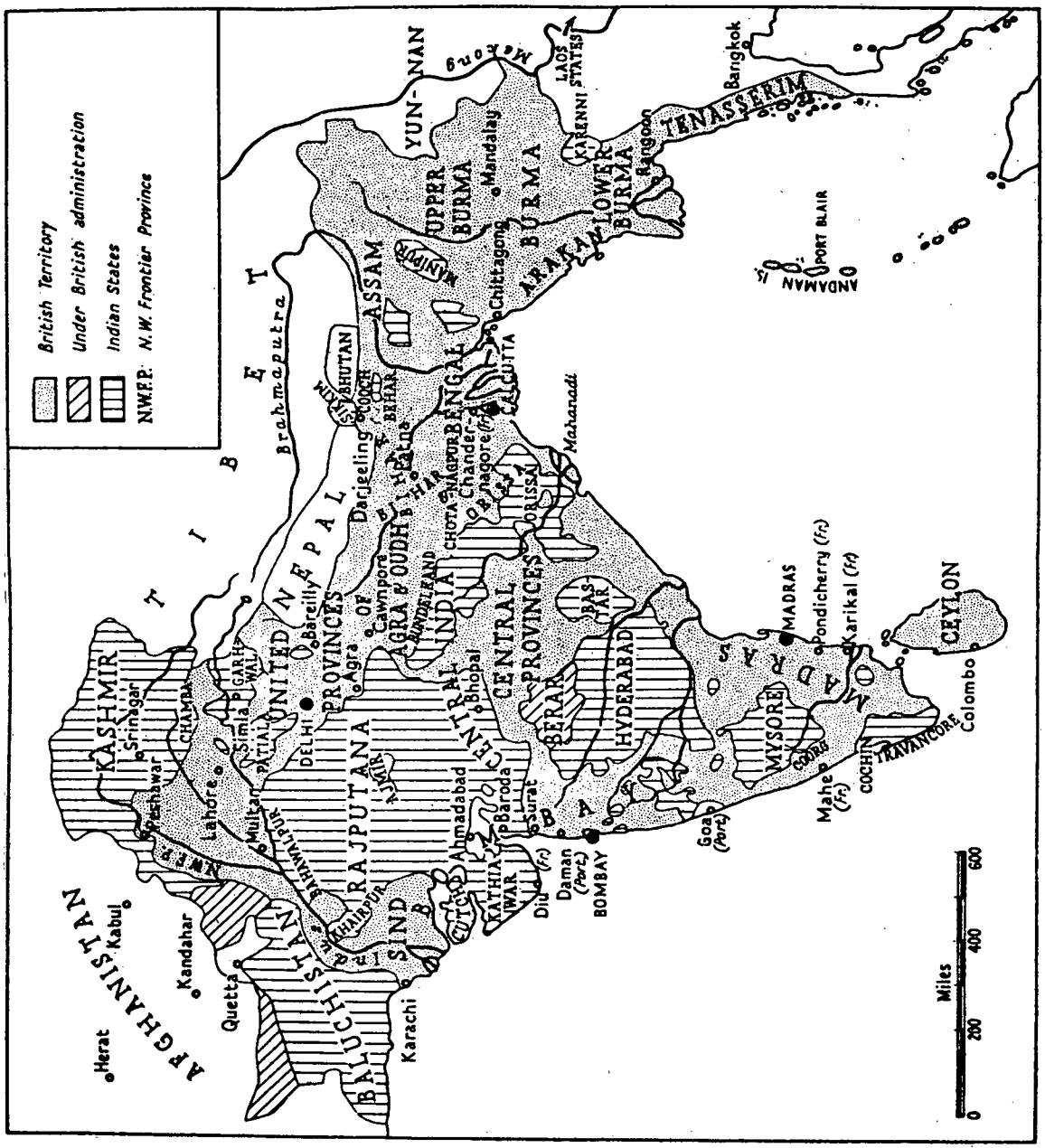
abated, and the Indian Army was perceived as a first line of defense against Russian imperial expansion in Afghanistan and as an instrument of imperial policy in Asia.[1]

After a period of rapid expansion in the early 1800s, the United States faced its greatest political crisis in the Civil War of 1861-65. The causes and consequences of this war are far too complex to be discussed, even briefly, in this context. However, from the point of view of American blacks, the most important consequence of the Civil War was the abolition of slavery. This meant--among many other things--that military policy now had to accommodate the demands of a large number of newly-freed slaves for recognition of their past services in the Union army, and of their right as citizens to share in national defense. Between 1866 and 1890 the chief role of the U.S. Army was to facilitate expansion into the West, protecting settlers and subduing the Indians. The Spanish-American War and acquisition of former Spanish territories marked a beginning of greater American involvement in international and inter-American affairs, and forced greater professionalization and better organization of the armed services.

The Indian Army

British power in India advanced from the little commercial settlements at Fort St. George in Madras and Fort William on the Hugli, and Catherine of Braganza's dowry of Bombay on the west coast of India.[2] Around these nuclei grew the cities of Madras, Calcutta, and Bombay, each the commercial and administrative centre of its respective Presidency. Under H.E.I.C. rule the

Map 2. India in the Twentieth Century



SOURCE: The Oxford History of India, 4th ed. By the late Vincent A. Smith. C.I.E.; fourth ed., edited by Percival Spear. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1981, endpaper.

Presidencies were autonomous, each Governor reporting directly to the Court of Directors in London. In theory the Governor-General of Bengal had supervisory authority over Madras and Bombay, but for practical purposes the subordination of Madras and Bombay to the Government of India, (based in Calcutta), although advanced by the Charter Act of 1853, became a reality only after the assumption of Crown rule in 1858. Improved transportation and communications via railroads, telegraph lines, and the Suez Canal (1869) made it technically feasible for the Government of India to exercise real control over its whole territory, and for the Secretary of State for India in London to stay in regular contact with Calcutta.

Each Presidency had built up its own army to meet local military needs. The Bombay Army began as no more than a small body of native militia (as descibed in Chapter II), but by 1767 the process of organizing native sepoys into regular battalions, trained and equipped along European lines, was underway along the lines pioneered by Stringer Lawrence and Robert Clive in Madras and Bengal.[3]

The Bombay Army passed through three major phases. Between 1679 and 1799, it grew steadily in size and fought thirty-six campaigns, including the 1st and 2nd Mysore Wars in the 1790s. By 1824 the Bombay Army included horse and foot artillery, an engineer and pioneer corps, five cavalry regiments, and 24 regiments of native infantry, as well as two European infantry regiments,[4] with a complete range of staff and service departments, all nominally under the orders of the Governor of Bombay.

In practice the Presidency armies were not completely segregated; recruiting patterns and garrison duties overlapped, and in wartime the Government of India could and did use all three as parts of one military organization.

As British power expanded between 1800 and 1860, the Bombay Army was engaged almost constantly in large or small campaigns including the 3rd Maratha War (the Pindari War) in 1817-1818, 1838-1843 campaigns in Sind and Afghanistan, the 2nd Sikh War, 1848-1849, and the Indian Mutiny 1857-1859. Nearly the entire Bombay Army, with the exception of a few regiments which mutinied or were considered unreliable, was engaged in suppressing the mutiny and in mopping-up operations afterwards in Central India.

Between 1860 and 1890, the Bombay Army served in only ten campaigns, and seven of these were very small, involving only one or two regiments. The campaigns in Abyssinia, 1867, the 2nd Afghan War, 1878-1880, and the Burmese War of 1885-1887 were the last three campaigns in which the old Bombay Army took a major role.[5]

By the late nineteenth century, the armies recruited and serving locally in the Madras and Bombay Presidencies had largely outlived their military usefulness. The Bengal Army had become the most important of the three, carrying the major responsibility for the security of the North West Frontier. It recruited its soldiers primarily from North and North-western India, the Gurkhas of Nepal, and from tribal Muslims (Pathans, Afridis, Baluchis) on both sides of the border. The Bombay Army, which provided garrisons for Aden and the Red Sea forts and also for

Sind, had a greater military role than the Madras Army, which was by this time almost entirely a local force, with the Madras (Queen's Own) Sappers and Miners the only regiment of the Madras Army which continued to be used on field service outside the Presidency.

After the suppression of the Indian Mutiny, the composition of the Bombay Army changed steadily in the late nineteenth century. Recruitment from the Konkan, formerly a major recruiting area, steadily declined, while recruitment of so-called "martial" races from Northwest India increased, reflecting a general shift in the locus of military power to the north and north-west, and away from the long-pacified south of India.

Table II shows the changing caste and community makeup of the Bombay Army between 1877 and 1895. The greatest change is in the Muslim component, which rises from just under one-fifth to over one-third. By contrast, the numbers of Marathas and Mahars (Parwaris) drop substantially, the latter falling from over 14% to less than half that amount. The Jews, always a small proportion, dwindled still further. The diminishing importance of the Mahars in the Bombay Army is further shown in Table III, showing the regional breakdown of the army. As late as 1877, over half of the Bombay Infantry was recruited from the Konkan (the coastal districts of Ratnagiri, Thana, and Kolaba). This was the region from which most of the Mahars, who were nearly all from Ratnagiri District, were recruited. These changes in recruiting patterns came about for several reasons, including competition from Bombay industries for manpower, administrative and organizational

changes in the army, increasing acceptance of the "martial races" theory, and growing caste prejudice (perhaps more marked among the British than among caste Hindus).

TABLE II

BREAKDOWN OF BOMBAY INFANTRY BY CASTE AND YEAR

Caste Year	1877	1880	1882	1885	1890	1893	1895
1. Muslims*	19.4%	20.5%	20.7%	21.5%	22.6%	30.5%	33.1%
2. Marathas*	39.6%	38.7%	38.8%	34.2%	32.5%	29.3%	27.9%
3. Parwaris*	14.2%	12.2%	12.1%	9.8%	8.7%	7.6%	6.6%
4. Brahmins	5.1%	4.9%	4.9%	5.0%	5.4%	4.8%	4.3%
5. Telingas	0.5%	0.4%	0.3%	0.2%	0.2%	0.1%	0.2%
6. Rajputs/ Jats/Sikhs	6.0%	6.5%	7.0%	8.7%	7.2%	6.3%	7.2%
7. Other Hindus	12.2%	13.5%	13.0%	17.6%	21.2%	19.5%	19.0%
8. Indo-Europeans	1.8%	2.0%	2.0%	1.8%	1.5%	1.2%	1.2%
9. Jews	1.3%	1.2%	1.2%	1.1%	0.8%	0.7%	0.6%

SOURCE: Summarized from I.O.L., Caste Returns of the Bombay Army.

*indicate categories showing greatest change; order otherwise as in original records.

TABLE III

BREAKDOWN OF BOMBAY INFANTRY BY REGION AND YEAR

Country Year	1877	1880	1882	1885	1890	1893	1895
1. North & N.W. India*	14.5%	15.1%	16.7%	22.0%	34.4%	42.7%	47.0%
2. Konkan*	56.3%	50.7%	48.0%	43.6%	41.8%	37.0%	31.8%
3. Deccan	12.1%	18.3%	21.4%	18.1%	12.8%	12.2%	12.3%
4. Oudh	9.6%	8.7%	7.1%	7.7%	6.6%	5.2%	6.1%
5. Central India	1.7%	0.9%	1.1%	6.2%	4.2%	2.7%	2.8%
6. Other	5.8%	6.3%	5.7%	2.4%	0.2%	0.2%	0.1%

SOURCE: Summarized from I.O.L., Caste Returns of the Bombay Army.

*indicate categories showing greatest change; order otherwise as in original records.

The Konkan, densely populated and poor, was also a major source of manpower for the growing industries of Bombay. Whether industry actually drew off so many men that the army could not fill its needs is questionable. In 1852 villagers from the Konkan complained to revenue officials that recruiting parties seldom visited them and many young men had looked in vain for opportunities to enlist.[6] At this time the Bombay cotton industry, later to become a major employer, was in its infancy; the first cotton spinning factory was not even built until 1854.[7]

As Table IV shows, between 1848 and 1852 the Bombay Army obtained nearly half its new recruits from the Konkan, going to Hindustan for less than one-third, in accordance with official recruiting policy. As the cotton industry and others grew, the need for labour also increased and doubtless did draw off some young men who might otherwise have enlisted. However, as the Bombay Army declined in both size and military importance, its need for new recruits also declined. It seems unlikely that competition from industry was the most important factor in shifting patterns of recruitment. There was an apparent circle of causation at work; decreased manpower requirements of the Bombay Army (as early as 1852) meant fewer recruiting parties; fewer opportunities to enlist impelled young men to seek other employment; when recruiting parties did show up, many potential recruits had given up waiting and migrated to Bombay in search of work, thus contributing to the impression that enough recruits could not be obtained. This question is discussed further in Chapter IV, "Costs and Benefits of Military Service."

Administrative and organizational changes were made in the Indian Army for several reasons: security concerns in the aftermath of the Mutiny, need for improved economy and efficiency, and changes in the military policy of the Government of India.

The Bengal Army was completely re-organized after the Mutiny, with an almost complete shift of recruiting to the Punjab, North-West India, and Nepal.

TABLE IV

BOMBAY ARMY RECRUITING, 1848-52

	Hindustan	Deccan	Konkan	Other	Total
1848	134	44	83	55	316
1849	119	58	240	51	468
1850	255	89	519	154	1017
1851	270	62	357	92	781
1852	171	42	337	72	622
Totals	949	295	1536	424	3204

SOURCE: M.S.A. Military Compilations, vol. 492 of 1852, #790.

Although only a few Bombay regiments had mutinied, or come close to mutiny, this army too was affected by post-Mutiny reforms. Many theories were propounded to explain why certain regiments of the Bombay Army had mutinied, or come close to mutiny, while others had not. The 27th Native Infantry, part of which had mutinied, was considered to be a provincial regiment in that almost three-quarters of its men, mostly Marathas, had been enlisted within the Bombay Presidency and were likely to be in sympathy with the "rebel" leaders. The 1st Grenadier Regiment, which remained loyal, drew slightly more than half of its soldiers from beyond the Presidency.[8] On the other hand, the ringleaders were among the Hindustani soldiers of the 27th, while a Bene Israel Havildar reported the planned mutiny. The military records also show that men of all castes and communities in the

27th Native Infantry, with the exception of the Parwaris,[9] were involved in the plot. It would seem that any simple theory relating the class composition or geographic origin of the soldiers to their tendency to mutiny or not to mutiny does not adequately account for the specific problems in the 27th Native Infantry, or the lack of problems in other regiments. What is clear from the records is that, in reorganizing the 27th Native Infantry, the Parwaris who had not mutinied lost their place in this regiment. A number of alternatives were suggested, including replacing the 27th regiment with a regiment of Bhils or other aborigines, replacing the 27th with a Baluchi regiment, or enlisting men from Gujarat or Sind. By 1877 the 27th Native Infantry was composed largely of Muslims from Bombay, Punjab and Northwest India. It would appear that the 27th had been completely disbanded, with officers and men who had remained loyal being transferred to other regiments,[10] and then re-formed with a somewhat different class composition. This closed one regiment to potential Mahar recruits. Although not intended as a penalty against the Mahars, who had done nothing to deserve any punishment, it was the first of a number of decisions which substantially reduced the opportunities available to Mahars to serve in the army.

In general, however, the concern for maintaining checks and balances between regional forces tended to preserve the Bombay Army as a separate entity well beyond its real military usefulness. With internal security largely the responsibility of the police, and responsibility for external security and imperial

military duties shifted to the nothern portion of the Bengal Army, the Bombay Army underwent major reorganizations intended to allow it to fulfill its reduced functions with greater efficiency.

By the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the maintenance of internal security was no longer a great consideration. The armed police establishment was adequate to deal with any but very large local disorders, and relatively small local garrisons permanently stationed in potential trouble spots were considered adequate to deal with or preferably avert local rebellions or dacoity. The experience of the 2nd Afghan War, 1878-80, definitely suggested that the Indian Army needed some improvements in order to meet any future threats from that quarter, such as a possible conflict with Russia in Afghanistan--a possibility which greatly worried the government of India.

Several measures undertaken to improve the efficiency of the Bombay Army undermined the position of low-caste soldiers. In 1882, one cavalry regiment and four infantry regiments were reduced, and the remaining regiments increased in size, so that the total manpower was virtually unchanged. (The Madras Army lost eight infantry regiments; the Bengal Army, three cavalry and six infantry, but actually increased its total numerical strength by 1,764.) The 6th, 11th, 15th and 18th Bombay Native Infantry were selected for reduction; a total of 2,767 men, of whom 311 or approximately 11 per cent were Mahars, were affected. Another aspect of the 1882 reforms with indirect implications for the

Bombay Army was the disbanding of low-caste regiments raised for the Bengal Army as a post-Mutiny experiment.

In July of 1882 the Commander-in-Chief in India, General Sir Donald Stewart, issued a confidential circular #3610-D to commanding officers of Bengal Infantry regiments instructing them to cease enlisting "the lowest and menial classes of Hindus," including Chamars, Banias, and "Kaiths"[11]--Kayasthas. Stewart and the Governor-General, Lord Ripon, had agreed that the experiment of enlisting low-caste Hindus had failed and wanted to eliminate them.[12] Official records do not state <u>why</u> the experiment was deemed to have failed, but dissatisfaction of commanding officers was an important factor.[13] Accurately predicting future recruiting patterns, Lord Elphinstone, Governor of Bombay, had written in 1858:

> As soon as the mistrust which recent events have excited has in some degree subsided - nay even before - commanding officers will again prefer good looking high caste recruits, to stunted Bheels, or black shabby looking Purwarries.[14]

The restriction on enlistment of low-caste men was not extended to the Bombay or Madras armies in 1882, but the fact that this proposal was made by the Commander-in-Chief and approved by the government of India indicates a very significant change in policy.

Soldiers with less than fifteen years service were transferred to other regiments; those wishing to leave the army rather than accept a transfer were eligible for gratuities, bonuses, or partial pension depending on their length of service. Soldiers having fifteen years service or longer were compulsorily retired.

Those with fourteen to twenty-five years service received the ordinary rate of pension with bonus, while those with twenty-five years of service or more received the higher rate of pension for their rank. Some attempt was made to transfer some of the men to civilian employment or to the police, or to other regiments if vacancies existed or could be made for them. The Secretary of State for India acknowledged that compulsory retirement would be a severe blow to many of these men, who had counted on serving the remainder of their active lives with their regiments, but the reduction was carried out anyway.[15] A minor concession, in the form of increased good-conduct pay for havildars and daffadars, was of no benefit to the men summarily retired.

In 1891 the government of India decided to localize two regiments of the Bombay Army in Baluchistan, selecting the 24th and 26th Bombay Infantry[16] for conversion. The reconstituted regiments were to draw their men from the Pathans and other tribes within and on the borders of the Baluchistan agency.[17] The 24th Bombay Infantry was reconstituted in June 1891, with the 26th Bombay Infantry following in November of 1892. In both cases the native officers and soldiers were disposed of under similar terms to those accorded the men of the regiments disbanded in 1882. Of the 601 men of the 26th Bombay Infantry prior to conversion, 299 were discharged with pension, 124 with gratuity, and 178 transferred to other regiments or to the reserve. Only one havildar and four privates were transferred to the newly reconstituted 26th Baluchistan Infantry. Of the regiment's twenty recruit boys, five were transferred to other regiments and

the remaining fifteen discharged without gratuity.[18] Transfer to the reserve or other regiments was permitted only to "carefully selected Sepoys belonging to classes which it is considered desirable to retain."[19] This provision does not seem to have been applied to the conversion of the 24th Infantry, or to the four regiments disbanded in 1882. This is a further indication that government was actively discouraging military service of low-caste men. Although the 27th Infantry was reconstituted as a result of its mutiny in 1857, the other regiments either disbanded or reconstituted were not selected as a disciplinary measure or because they were considered inefficient or in any way troublesome regiments. The regiments disbanded in 1882 were chosen primarily because they were the least senior of the Bombay Infantry regiments, and were all presently at posts within the Bombay Presidency. The 24th and 26th Infantry were chosen for conversion at least partly because the 25th Infantry had recently been converted to a Rifle Regiment, and government did not wish to incur additional expense to convert it again. The 21st Infantry and the 28th Infantry were both specialized battalions, (the Marine Battalion and the Pioneer Battalion) and were considered efficient in these roles. The 27th, 29th and 30th infantry were already classed as Baluchi, and it was therefore intended that regiments close to them in the army line should be converted.

By 1892, therefore, only twenty infantry regiments remained which recruited Mahars and other low-caste men. The proportion of Mahars in the infantry had declined from slightly over fourteen per cent in 1870 to about seven per cent in 1893. The army

reorganization of 1893 resulted in the dismissal of almost all of the remaining Mahar soldiers and soldiers of other classes now considered "non-martial." A few lingered in service as late as World War I, but for the most part the so-called "non-martial classes" were removed from the army in 1893, and did not permanently regain the right to enlist until the independence of India in 1947.

A major factor influencing the nature of army reorganization in this period was the increasing popularity of racial theories such as the so-called "martial races" theory, and growing caste prejudice. British prejudice against low-caste soldiers has been touched on in this chapter, and will be dealt with as it affected the Mahars specifically in the next chapter. The "martial races" theory is of sufficient importance to warrant an extended discussion, which follows here.

Racial Theories: Martial Races and the "Gurkha Syndrome"

An important trend in British rule in India in the mid-nineteenth century was social reform based on liberal and evangelical doctrines; despite their radically different origins, both were "movements of individualism" which rested on the assumption that "human nature was inherently the same in all races, and that inherited characteristics were readily alterable."[20] Social and educational reforms undertaken under liberal influence tended to promote secular (or at least non-traditional) values, and individual rights, while undermining such institutions as caste. A countervailing tendency, to pre-

serve traditional institutions for the sake of stability, was strengthened by the shock of the mutiny.

A new element in social thought was the development of a variety of scientific and pseudo-scientific theories explaining racial differences and social inequalities. Herbert Spencer's "evolutionary sociology," first expounded in the 1850s, contributed to the movement later called social Darwinism,[21] that is to say attempts to apply the principles of natural selection to social systems.

It appears likely that the "martial races" theory developed out of a basically conservative view of Indian society, influenced by popular interpretations of evolutionary theory. Less a fully-developed theory than a "catch-all phrase . . . used to justify a wide range of opinions on the inhabitants of India,"[22] its effect on recruiting policies can be attributed almost exclusively to the influence of Lord Roberts of Kandahar, Commander-in-Chief in India from 1885 to 1893.

Lord Roberts--"Bobs Bahadur" to the Indian Army--had a long and illustrious career, spanning forty-one years in India, with active service during the Mutiny, the 2nd Afghan War, and the South African War of 1881. He had served with the Bengal Army, as Commander-in-Chief of the Madras Army, and had had considerable contact with the Bombay Army. After his retirement from India he went on to serve as Commander-in-Chief during the Boer War, and remained active in military matters until his death in 1914.[23] Based on his extensive experience with all three Presidency Armies, he was completely convinced that the poor quality

of the Madras and Bombay Armies was due to the lack of military instincts in the men from whom these armies were recruited, and was equally convinced that in order to meet the Russian threat in Afghanistan only men from the "martial races" of north India should be recruited.

Roberts was neither a fool nor a knee-jerk bigot; when he went to the Madras Army as Commander-in-Chief in 1880 he knew that its reputation had suffered, and he wanted to know why. He concluded that peace, security, and prosperity had had a softening and deteriorating effect on the Madrassis, and that "the ancient military spirit had died in them as it had died in the ordinary Hindostani of Bengal and the Mahratta of Bombay."[24] He regarded the Madras Sappers and Miners as an exceptional case, and believed that the greater intelligence and better education of Madrassis qualified them as Sappers or Pioneers rather than regular infantry. He may not have wished to acknowledge that the real difference might be in the quality of British officers, although he instituted reforms to improve their morale and efficiency. Officers of the Indian Sappers and Miners were volunteers, seconded from the Royal Engineers, serving in India for a limited time to get field experience, while infantry officers served in the Madras Army, with few opportunities for field service or promotion,[25] for life, or until they could wangle a transfer elsewhere. Much the same could be said of the Bombay Army, although its prospects for active service were somewhat better.

Roberts's experience with the Bombay Army during the Second Afghan War confirmed his low opinion of its fighting qualities, although a careful examination of the disastrous battle of Maiwand suggests that Roberts saw what he expected to see, and interpreted the events of the battle according to the theory he had already formed. A detailed examination of the course of the battle of Maiwand does not support Roberts's conclusions about the Bombay Army.

On July 27th 1880, a Brigade commanded by Brigadier-General Burrows, consisting of a troop of horse artillery, six companies of the 66th Regiment of Foot (British), the 1st Bombay Native Infantry (Grenadiers), 30th Bombay Native Infantry (Jacob's Rifles), a company of Bombay Sappers and Miners, five hundred native cavalry sowars and a battery of captured Afghan smooth bore guns suffered a serious defeat at the hands of Ayub Khan. The losses included 934 killed, including six native officers of the Grenadiers, and 175 wounded and missing, out of 2,476 soldiers actually engaged; in addition 893 followers and drivers were killed and missing. Many of these were Afghans and had probably deserted. Over one thousand rifles and carbines and many swords and bayonets were also captured. Roberts, who was then commanding at Kabul, credited the debacle to the unreliability of the native troops, stating in his memoirs, "The Native portion of the brigade got out of hand, and pressed back on the few British infantry, who were unable to hold their own against the overwhelming numbers of the enemy."[26] His low opinion of Bombay troops is further illustrated by his statement regarding

the force in Baluchistan that "as belonging to the Bombay Presidency, it could not be composed of the best fighting races."[27] In a dispatch to the Adjutant-General in India dated 30th July 1880 on the organization of the Kabul to Kandahar field force, Roberts noted again, "I am sure that few Bombay regiments are able to cope with Afghans."[28] However, other factors than the racial composition of the Bombay Army were involved in the defeat at Maiwand.

First of all, Burrows' Brigade was outnumbered by approximately ten to one, and outgunned by thirty to twelve. Burrows had a very exposed position with only his cavalry regiments as reserves. The infantry had suffered a two-hour artillery bombardment at the time they finally fell into disarray. Most significantly from the point of view of the "martial races" theory, the first body of men to break and run in the face of the enemy were two companies of the 30th Bombay Native Infantry (Jacob's Rifles). This regiment was recruited very largely from North and North West India and Oudh, and was made up primarily of Muslims, Rajputs, Jats and Sikhs. It contained no low-caste soldiers at all. The Grenadiers did not break ranks until panicked by the collapse of the two companies of Jacob's Rifles. The artillerymen and the small company of Sappers were the last to leave the field, leaving fourteen Sappers and Lieutenant T. R. Henn dead on the field. The dead Sappers included two Mahars. The surviving Sappers, along with a few of the Grenadiers and the survivors of the 66th Regiment, made another stand near the village of Khig, and a final party of about twelve Sappers

eventually arrived at Kandahar, marching in formation under the command of the senior Sapper. It is extraordinary under the circumstances that this level of discipline was maintained in the face of military disaster.[29]

In spite of the long and distinguished record of the Bombay and Madras Armies, and overlooking facts such as those just cited, many, but not all, military men subscribed to some version of the "martial races" theory. One who opposed this idea was Lord Napier of Magdala, who wrote in 1871 that "the best officers and the best soldiers are formed from a pacific population by the powers of education and discipline," and suggested that suitable candidates could be found in all classes, "perhaps even among the Mahratta Brahmins."[30] Although Lord Roberts had been pressing the contrary view that the Indian army could be rendered "as perfect a fighting machine as it was possible to make it" only by substituting "men of the more warlike and hardy races" for the Hindustanis, Tamils, Telugus, "so-called Mahrattas" and other "effeminate peoples of the south" since his term as Commander-in-Chief of the Madras Army, he encountered considerable resistance, and even wrote that he was "in despair at not being able to get people to see the matter with [his] eyes."[31] General Sir George Chesney, the military member of the Viceroy's Council in the late 1880s, and Governors-General Dufferin and Lansdowne, however, <u>did</u> see with Roberts's eyes, and as previously described the role of "non-martial" races and classes was reduced steadily in this period. By the time of the army reorganization of 1891-95, the martial races theory had come to dominate recruitment policies,

and continued to do so for several decades.

As late as 1932, Lieutenant-General Sir George MacMunn could still state that, "The mass of the people of India have neither martial aptitude nor physical courage."[32] No very convincing explanation could be advanced for the presumed deterioration in martial qualities. The enervating climate of South India, the debilitating effects of tropical diseases, and degeneracy due to child marriage were all proposed, but none of these accounts for a sudden change in the physical or moral qualities of a given population. Even Lord Roberts's great personal prestige and the weight of his Field-Marshal's baton could not have won such general acceptance, had the "martial races" theory not served at least two important functions.

First in importance was the need for a loyal and politically neutral army. There was no obvious reason to doubt the reliability of the Bombay and Madras armies in their pre-1893 form; there were some grounds for concern about the future. There was a higher degree of political awareness and activity among better-educated Indians, which included various classes now arbitrarily defined as "non-martial." Many Mahars and poor Marathas (among other castes) had migrated to Bombay and Poona from the villages of the Konkan and Deccan. This raised the distinct possibility of some hundreds of the nearly eight thousand soldiers who left the army annually, going to live with their kinsmen in the growing industrial slums of Bombay. Bearing in mind that the Indian Army was a "mercenary force, serving an alien government,"[33] this was a risky situation. Since it was

not possible to avoid having a native army, it was certainly desirable to shift recruiting to distant, predominantly rural, areas, where retired soldiers would be unable (if so inclined) to cause much trouble.

It is hardly coincidental that the "martial races" now to become the backbone of the Indian Army were "geographically distinct . . . on the regional peripheries of the state," having "little access to central authority and [being] outnumbered within the . . . state system,"[34] organized along tribal or clan lines, and often ethnically or culturally distinct from the majority of the Indian population. The Sikhs met all of these criteria; so did the Gurkhas; so, to a lesser degree, did the Jats, Rajputs and other "martial races." These "martial races" were also educationally backward and are still sometimes described in folklore as somewhat dense ("Sikh jokes," on the pattern of "Newfie" or "Polish jokes," have joined traditional proverbs about thick-headed Jats, although recent events in India have rendered "Sikh jokes" distinctly unamusing). Saxena's conclusion that "educating a national army might be a compulsion, but trying to improve the education of a mercenary army could not but be suicidal"[35] may be extreme but is hardly unfounded.

In view of their later reputation, it is interesting that in 1851, when Sikhs were first enlisted in certain regiments quartered in the Punjab, they were not looked upon with much favour; special rules were instituted requiring Sikhs to keep their uncut hair and beards (the "kes") and forbidding interference with their religious practices and "social peculiarities."[36]

The Marathas, who should have qualified as a "martial race" on the basis of their history, were considered a very dubious case; they were, perhaps, too numerous and had too much political potential to be safely treated as martial. They did not fit the "Gurkha syndrome" which applied perfectly only to "an ethnic group that produced men who were both martial and loyal"[37]--such as the Sikhs and Gurkhas.

A secondary factor, though by no means a negligible one, was the wish to have the army conform to the British and Indian caste/class structure. The traditional Indian system of hereditary soldiers, rulers, merchants, artisans, sweepers, and so on, meshed very well with Victorian ideas of class structure and heredity.[38] The wish to maintain this kind of rigid division, even when Indian society was undergoing rapid change and many traditional roles were being questioned, may reflect only the conservatism common to military establishments. But there may be another reason. The officers of the Indian Army, inheritors (by training if not by blood) of an aristocratic military tradition, seem to have had a romantic yearning for the sturdy yeoman farmer-turned-soldier, idealized as the English longbowman of Agincourt and Crecy. English peasants were hard to find in the nineteenth century; the average British soldier was far more likely to come from an urban slum.[39] The Scottish Highlands, which had produced tens of thousands of soldiers for "the earliest native regiments raised by imperial Britain," had been depopulated by the Highland clearances, and by the 1850s recruiting agents heard: "You robbed us of our country and gave it to

the sheep. Therefore, since you have preferred sheep to men, let sheep defend you!"[40] Britain's own "martial race," which had contributed disproportionately to the army from 1776 to 1815, had been dispersed and demoralized, but India's martial Sikhs and Gurkhas remained. In India it was still possible to have the "right" kind of soldier: a young man from a respectable land-owning family, brave and honourable rather than educated or clever; fortuitously, such men usually proved to be of Kshatriya ancestry, or such ancestry was "discovered" after they were determined to be "fit to bear arms."[41] If British soldiers were not like this (and both Lord and Lady Roberts devoted a great deal of time and energy to improving their health and character),[42] at least Indian sepoys could be recruited from the right classes.

A corollary to the theory that only certain Indians were fit to be soldiers was that no Indian was fit to be an officer above regimental level. This was a necessary extension of the "martial races" theory; only Europeans had the qualities of leadership necessary for officers. The extent to which this conviction could be carried was demonstrated by the case of Charles Ezechiel. He was a son of Lieutenant J. A. Ezechiel of the Bombay Commissariat-Transport Department. Lieutenant Ezechiel sent Charles to be educated in England in preparation for a career in the army. Charles wrote the Sandhurst entrance examinations in 1891, and passed creditably, but was refused admission on the grounds that he was not of pure European extraction. He and his father both protested, pointing out that all

British-born or naturalized British subjects were eligible for commissions in the army, but were not able to have the decision reversed. Charles Ezechiel based his appeal on his citizenship; his father was born in England of parents who were both legally domiciled in England; his mother, who was of Indo-Portuguese background, was a naturalized British citizen. Charles was born in Poona, on what was legally "British" soil. By education and training he was British. But to the military authorities at the Horse Guards he was a "native of India," so designated on the basis of his mixed parentage alone. Lord Roberts, to whom Lieutenant Ezechiel appealed, supported this interpretation and declined to intervene.[43] Since everyone involved with this issue willingly conceded that Charles Ezechiel was fully qualified in all other respects, the principle of racial discrimination was apparently to be upheld under all circumstances.

The Indian Civil Service, while not at this time enthusiastic about recruiting Indians, did not exclude qualified candidates on the basis of race. Charles Ezechiel's older brother David had already qualified for the I.C.S. and had at least a moderately successful career.[44]

British officers commanding Indian troops generally had chosen to do so, either for family reasons (a tradition of Indian service) or because they felt their career prospects were better than in the British army. Possible racial conflicts were largely defused because social contacts outside the military setting were limited, primarily by mutual consent. Officers were expected to take a close paternal interest in their men, visit their villages

on tour, understand their customs, but not to treat them as equals. The tone of the relationship was "ma-bap"--the commanding officer was "mother and father" to his men. Whether the Indian sepoys ever resented this attitude is unknown; the impression derived from regimental histories, personal reminiscences, and the like is that the relationship was generally one of mutual respect, and that essential inequality was accepted as an immutable fact of life, at least up to the World War I period. Assuming this was the case, the relationship between British officer and Indian sepoy was doubtless much more relaxed than that between white officers and black soldiers in the American Army. Social and political inequality was accepted by both parties without question, and caste and religious restrictions kept their private lives completely separate, but in the limited area of their profession there could be respect, friendship, and even a kind of love.

There were great differences in the kinds of discipline imposed upon soldiers of different classes. The contrast was very marked between British soldiers in India, who were subject to flogging until 1878 because "it was needed to keep down drunkenness, insubordination and theft," and Indian sepoys, for whom flogging was such an extreme disgrace it was very rarely used and was actually abolished for ten years (1838-1848).[45] Why Indian sepoys were so well-behaved is uncertain, but the fear of dismissal was a powerful deterrent to serious misbehaviour. Drunkenness, a major contributor to disciplinary problems among British troops, was uncommon among Indian troops, and if they used drugs

they seem to have done so quietly. The VCOs and NCOs were expected to maintain discipline in minor matters, and were held responsible for the behaviour of the sepoys. It is likely that minor offences which might have earned a British soldier official punishment were handled by the Indian officers in an informal way, and never came to the commanding officers' attention.

An unusual instance of widespread violence in a Bombay regiment occurred during the Mohurram (28th September to 1st October) riots of 1877 in Bombay. Several men of the 17th Bombay Infantry, which was then stationed in Bombay, were involved in a fight with police and townspeople. At least one policeman was killed while in the sepoy lines. The regiment was immediately removed to Mhow where the officer commanding Mhow Division, Major-General R. R. Gillespie, inspected and reported on it. The results of his inspection include a number of comments about the preponderance of low-caste men among the native officers and NCOs of the regiment. He commented that the regiment was generally quiet and well behaved but not up to the average of Bombay regiments in appearance. The Havildars were not well instructed but seemed intelligent; some were very smart and most of good appearance and capable of making excellent NCOs. "There are too many low caste men among them, however; 10 out of 40 being Purwarees or Moochies."[46] Gillespie related the number of low-caste NCOs to the lack of discipline shown during the Mohurram riots, implying that they were unable or unwilling to maintain discipline among higher-caste sepoys. However, of the officers who were discharged for their failure to control their men during the

riots, none were of low caste; one was a Brahmin, two Marathas, one a Jat or Sikh, one Muslim and one Bene Israel. Two others were of dubious origin, but one was probably a Telinga (South Indian) and the other possibly a Maratha.[47] Three native officers were transferred into the 17th Regiment; of these one was probably a Mochi, one a Maratha, and the third a Jat or Sikh. It is difficult to see what the caste of the noncommissioned officers had to do with the riots, considering that the officers actually discharged were not in fact of low caste. It is probably more relevant that the Subadar-Major was a soldier of thirty years' service, and might simply have been promoted beyond his level of competence. The British officers who had been with the regiment at the time were also severely reprimanded for their failure to be in control of the men; the native officers were particularly held to blame for having failed to identify or turn over for punishment the sepoys involved in the rioting.[48]

The American Army to 1900

The Civil War was the first occasion for large-scale recruiting of black men into regular military units, although in the first years of the war free Northern blacks seeking to volunteer were often rejected by recruiting centers. Expressing an extreme form of a common view, "Governor David Tod of Ohio, rejecting a request to raise a Black regiment, asked: 'Do you know that this is a white man's government; that the white men are able to defend and protect it; and that to enlist a Negro soldier would be to drive every white man out of the service?'"[49] Military necessity and pressure from abolitionists combined to

make this an untenable policy. Federal forces moving into Confederate territory acquired willy-nilly the services of thousands of fugitive slaves, many able and willing to work or fight for the Union. As it became obvious that the war would be long and bloody and as white volunteers failed to provide sufficient manpower, the pressure to recruit black troops increased.

In 1862-1863, President Lincoln gradually changed his view of the war and moved closer to emancipation. Several Union military commanders had already begun to employ small units of blacks. General Hunter, in May 1862, recruited blacks from the Sea Islands into the first regiment of South Carolina Volunteers. General Lane in Kansas raised the Kansas Colored Volunteer Regiment. General B. F. Butler in Louisiana, without specific authority from the War Department, mustered in the First, Second and Third Native Guards, formed from the Native Guards of Louisiana. This regiment of eight companies had been formed by the free blacks of New Orleans under Negro officers commissioned by the Confederate governor. However, the Confederacy had never made use of the Native Guards, since there was considerable distrust of them, and there were fears that they would be infiltrated by free Negroes from the north acting as spies.[50] Their rejection by the Confederacy, to whom they had first offered their services, led the Native Guards to accept General Butler's offer to recruit them into the Union army. Late in August 1862, War Department policy officially sanctioned the recruitment of blacks. All blacks admitted into military service, with their families, were declared forever free. General Hunter's unoffi-

cial regiment formed the nucleus of the first black regiment formally mustered into federal service in January of 1863. The First South Carolina Volunteers were placed under the command of an abolitionist from Boston, Thomas Wentworth Higginson. Other black regiments raised over the course of the war included the 54th and 55th Regiments of Massachusetts Volunteers, and regiments raised in Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Illinois, Indiana, and Michigan. Most black soldiers, however, came from the South as the Union armies penetrated further into Confederate territory. Early in 1863 the Lincoln administration authorized the creation of the United States Colored Troops as part of the regular army. By the end of the Civil War, more than 180 thousand blacks were serving in USCT units, including 120 infantry regiments, 7 cavalry regiments, 12 regiments of heavy artillery, and 10 batteries of light artillery, about ten per cent of the total Union forces.[51] Black troops fought in many battles including Port Hudson, May 1863; Milliken's Bend, June 1863; Fort Wagner, June 1863; and Richmond in 1864. Although in many cases these soldiers had had very little training or experience, they generally fought very hard and with great determination. Their mortality rates were generally considerably higher than those of white troops, possibly due to poor medical care, poor equipment, and a presumed "no quarter" policy of the Confederate army when confronted with black troops.[52]

Black soldiers in the Union army suffered from discriminatory policies in a number of areas. The most serious discrimination was in the matter of pay. The original assumption had

been that the black regiments would serve as noncombatants. They were, therefore, paid as labourers and not as soldiers. White privates received $15.00 a month plus a clothing allowance of $3.50, while black soldiers were paid $10.00 a month with a $3.00 deduction for clothing. All ranks received the same pay, even Chaplains, although white Chaplains were paid $100.00 per month. Many black soldiers refused to accept any pay at all rather than accept pay as labourers. Corporal James Henry Gooding of the 54th Massachusetts regiment asked: "Now the main question is, are we soldiers, or are we labourers? We have done a soldier's duty. Why can't we have a soldier's pay?"[53] Colonel Higginson noted that one-third of the men of his regiment, the South Carolina Volunteers, refused to take the seven dollar a month pay. They said, "We're gib our sogerin' to de Guv'ment, Cunnel, . . . but we won't 'spise ourselves so much for take de seben dollar."[54] The Massachusetts regiments also refused, as a matter of principle, to accept an appropriation of money from the state legislature to make up the pay difference. Governor John A. Andrew of Massachusetts worked hard to ensure that the men of the 54th and 55th Massachusetts Regiments would receive the pay to which he believed they were entitled by law.[55] Public pressure finally forced Congress in June 1864 to grant equal pay, retroactive to January, for all black soldiers and retroactive to enlistment for blacks who were free in April of 1861. In response to this, many blacks said that they were free by God's law if not by man's. Another law in March 1865 granted full retroactive pay to all black soldiers.[56] Apart from the pay

issue, which was ultimately resolved favourably, black soldiers seemed to have consistently received inferior equipment, supplies, medical treatment, and training. Also very few were promoted to officer status. This was partly due, of course, to the fact many blacks, particularly southern blacks, were illiterate, and literacy was required even for noncommissioned officers. Colonel Higginson noted[57] that several of the NCOs of his regiment would have been eligible for commission had their literacy education been sufficient. It would seem, therefore, that had a serious effort been made to improve the literacy of some of the noncommissioned officers, more could have been done to promote them to commissioned rank.

In spite of the problems and difficulties encountered, black troops generally performed well, and produced few disciplinary problems. Sixteen black soldiers won Congressional Medals of Honor, and four blacks earned Navy medals of honor.[58] Higginson and other officers commanding black troops found that black soldiers responded very well to being treated with respect and with regard for their dignity. Unfortunately this was not always remembered.

Blacks had mixed feelings about their service in the Civil War. On one hand, they could now legitimately claim to have earned their freedom. As Corporal Thomas Long of the 1st South Carolina Regiment said with great force:

> If we hadn't become sojers all might have gone back as it was before . . . But now tings can never go back, because we have showed our energy and our courage and our naturally manhood.
>
> Anoder ting is, suppose you had kept your freedom

> widout enlisting is dis army; your chilen might have grown up free, and been well cultivated so as to be equal to any business; but it would have been always flung in dere faces - 'Your fader never fought for he own freedom' - and what could dey answer. Neber can say that to dis African race any more.[59]

Others became rapidly convinced that there was no prospect of advancement or promotion for black soldiers, and that to continue to serve in a subordinate capacity was an admission that blacks "are not fit for promotion, and . . . are satisfied to remain in a state of . . . subservincy [sic]."[60] These considerations induced Sergeant-Major Christian A. Fleetwood, a black Medal of Honor winner of the Civil War, to leave the army, believing he could do more in civilian life to further both his personal ambition and the betterment of his race.

This dilemma confronted successive generations of black Americans. As citizens, they were morally (and sometimes legally) obliged to fight for their country, and to refuse or avoid this obligation would have made it hard to justify demands for civil rights. But to serve in the subordinate positions allotted to blacks was to validate, or seem to accept, the stereotypical view of blacks as inferior and incapable of leadership or courage.

After the Civil War, there was a major reorganization of the American army. Many radical Republicans wanted a large army to aid in reconstruction policies in the South, to favour their allies among newly emancipated blacks, and to serve on the frontier. Ultimately, the greatly expanded regular army included two black cavalry regiments, the 9th and 10th, and four black infantry regiments, the 38th, 39th, 40th and 41st. In 1869, all

infantry regiments were consolidated, and the four black units became two, the 24th and 25th. These four units, a small share compared to the 180,000 USCT of the Civil War, provided the only openings for blacks in the regular army until 1944. Despite initial problems in finding officers for these regiments (many white officers did not wish to serve with them for fear their future military careers would be hampered);[61] these four regiments had a generally successful record during the period of the Indian Wars. From 1865 to 1890, the four black regiments were stationed almost entirely on the frontier, where they performed all of the duties expected of troops on the frontier, such as escorting wagon trains, building roads and telegraph lines, and keeping intruders out of the Indian Territory.[62] The 24th Infantry served in New Mexico from 1880-1898; the 25th in Texas, the Dakotas, Minnesota, and Montana from 1860-1888. The 9th and 10th Cavalry served on the frontier from their original formation until the Spanish-American War.[63]

Frontier duty was arduous, physically demanding, and dangerous; in addition to normal hazards from hostile Indians, disease, and harsh climates, black soldiers had to contend with civilian prejudice against them. This prejudice was tempered in some cases by the presence of other socially depressed groups such as Mexicans, Chinese, and Indians. Black soldiers understandably felt some resentment at spending all of their service in isolated frontier posts, whereas white troops got occasional garrison duty east of the Mississippi. In spite of such problems, the black regiments had a good record during the Indian

Wars. Thirteen black soldiers earned Medals of Honor.[64] The black regiments had very low rates of desertion, high rates of re-enlistment, and a much lower incidence of alcoholism than white soldiers.[65]

American Army detachments serving in isolated frontier posts seem to have been subjected to very harsh punishments, such as "spread-eagling" or confinement in sweat-boxes. Some of these were illegal under army regulations but were imposed by commanding officers either out of simple sadism, or because normal discipline was ineffective for some hardened offenders.[66] There was no suggestion that this was racially motivated; if anything, black soldiers may have fared better, since they were generally well-behaved and had fewer problems with alcohol. Disciplinary problems more often arose when black soldiers were stationed near white populations; conflicts often erupted, often provoked by whites. A common complaint of black soldiers was the failure of civilian or military authorities to protect their interests or even ensure a fair trial.

Prospects for promotion were dim. Although in theory and according to an Act of Congress in 1878, it was possible for men from the ranks to earn officers' commissions, very few black soldiers (and not many whites) ever obtained commissions in this way. In fact, prior to the Spanish-American War not a single black enlisted man rose from the ranks to earn a commission.[67] Between 1870 and 1889 twenty-two black youths were appointed to the United States Military Academy. However, only twelve passed the entrance examinations, and only three actually managed to

graduate. One, Henry O. Flipper, was court-martialled and dismissed from the army in 1892 (on grounds which he always maintained to be improper), one died in 1894, shortly after becoming an instructor in military science at Wilberforce University, and the third, Charles Young (graduated 1889) was still on active duty at the beginning of World War I.[68] A third possibility for promotion was to come to the army from the volunteer services. This was the route followed by Benjamin O. Davis Sr. He was a graduate of Howard University, commissioned First Lieutenant in the 8th U.S. Volunteer Infantry in 1899. Davis took his discharge and re-enlisted as a private in the 9th Cavalry, hoping to earn a commission in the regular army, which he did. He was commissioned 2nd Lieutenant in 1901 and became a General in 1940, retiring in 1948 at the rank of Brigadier-General. His case is probably unique.[69]

After 1890 many changes took place in the organization and purposes of the United States Army. With the end of the Indian Wars, military needs began to change. The two small wars which preceded the First World War, the Spanish-American War of 1898 and the Philippine Insurrection of 1899-1902, did not require much manpower. However, both resulted in the acquisition of large colonial territories which had to be garrisoned. At the same time, with the frontier finally pacified, it was necessary to post more soldiers near large centers of population. It was no longer possible to isolate black soldiers on the frontier away from major cities.

The Spanish-American War and the Philippine Insurrection were high points in the military history of black soldiers. The 10th Cavalry was commended by Colonel Theodore Roosevelt after the Battle of San Juan Hill in Cuba, July 1898. Black soldiers serving in Cuba earned five Medals of Honor and more than twenty Certificates of Merit. The 10th Cavalry also was reviewed by President McKinley, and given a special reception both in Washington and in Philadelphia.[70] But public enthusiasm for black soldiers cooled very quickly as they were demobilized and black officers of volunteer regiments were decommissioned. Black soldiers did not fail to note that, while some black soldiers were given commissions, these were in temporary volunteer regiments rather than the regular army.[71] On demobilization in 1901 none of the black volunteer officers were given regular commissions, although John R. Lynch, a paymaster and Major in the volunteers, was appointed a Captain in the paymaster department of the regular army. In 1901 two black enlisted men were granted commissions as 2nd Lieutenants. These were Benjamin O. Davis Sr., who had served as a 1st Lieutenant in the volunteers during the Spanish-American War, and John E. Green. Along with Charles Young, West Point 1889, these three men were to be the only black officers (excluding Chaplains) in the U.S. Army until World War I.[72]

Although black Americans had shared in the general enthusiasm for the Spanish-American War, there was a very mixed response among blacks to American involvement in suppressing Aguinaldo's independence movement. On one hand, as citizens

American blacks felt an obligation to support national policies; on the other hand, some felt a natural sympathy for Filipino aspirations to independence. Whatever their private reservations may have been, black soldiers of both regular and volunteer regiments fulfilled their duties honourably while serving in the Philippines.

Another consequence of these military involvements was a major revamping of the War Department. American victory over Spain had to be attributed more to Spanish weakness than to American courage. The American forces had proved ill-prepared in many areas, especially the Commissary Department, the medical branch (for each of 286 battle casualties there were 14 deaths from disease)[73] and naval gunnery. Reforms included the appointment of Elihu Root to head the War Department, creation of a permanent General Staff, an increase in army strength to 100,000, enlargement of the navy, and better professional services in both branches. These reforms did not, however, improve career prospects for black soldiers. Their access to officer training or specialized training was still very limited, no increase in their total number was made, and in 1907-8 black seamen were diverted into the messmen's branch or transferred to shore duty.[74] It can be argued that poorly-educated blacks were less able to fill the skilled positions needed in a larger and more technically advanced military, but no effort was made to find or encourage those who did have suitable skills and education.

Unlike the Indian Army, the American military never evolved a formal "martial races" theory, for two likely reasons: it was

politically impossible to remove blacks (who were citizens) entirely from the military, no matter what theories might be developed; but existing racial prejudices and stereotypes could be utilized to limit their participation and opportunities. Popular racial stereotypes portrayed the black man as childlike, carefree, irresponsible, and superstitious, possibly capable of courage if given the right leadership (only by white men, of course) but certainly not to be relied upon in crisis. It was also widely held that blacks could not endure cold, and would not be able to function effectively in many theatres of war; this belief apparently persisted although the black regiments had served for many years at frontier posts in the Dakotas, Montana, Wyoming, and other north and northwestern locations.

The treatment of the few black commissioned officers prior to World War I illustrates the great reluctance of the army to allow any black man, however qualified, command responsibilities. John Alexander (West Point 1887) was assigned to the 9th Cavalry post exchange, and was relieved of his duties in 1894, for no apparent reason.[75] Charles Young, who did see active service with the white 7th Cavalry in 1896, with a black volunteer regiment during the Spanish-American War, and with General Pershing in Mexico, was sent on a military mission to Liberia during World War I rather than allow him the field command to which his rank and service entitled him.[76] The case of Henry O. Flipper was particularly sad, if as he insisted he was not guilty of the misuse of funds for which he was court-martialled in 1881. It seems highly possible that he was railroaded, or at least that

he was punished very severely for what may have been poor judgement and inexperience. Many prominent people who knew him in his later career as a mining engineer worked to have his conviction reversed. Albert B. Fall, Secretary of the Interior, writing on his behalf to the Senate Committee on Military Affairs in 1922, had this to say, after praising Flipper's work and abilities:

> His life is a most pathetic one. By education, by experience and because of his natural high intellectual characteristics, he can find no pleasure in association with many of his own race, and because of his color he was and is precluded in this country from enjoying the society of those whom he would be mentally and otherwise best fitted to associate with. I have never known a more honorable man . . .[77]

A similar statement could have been made of Charles Ezechiel, who had also been deprived of his chosen career through race prejudice.

The difficulties experienced by these few black officers also resemble the difficulties faced by the first Indian candidates for the Indian Civil Service; it was possible but very difficult to gain admission, and Indians may have been judged more harshly than British in the same circumstances. Surendra Nath Banerjea, who passed the I.C.S. examination in 1869, was dismissed in his first year of service, on grounds that he (like Flipper) always insisted were unjust.[78] In each of these cases, outright racial prejudice or a more subtle expectation of failure not only contributed to the destruction of a chosen career, but also deprived their respective services of the talents of three capable and ambitious young men.

An extreme example of lengths to which military authorities and the government were prepared to go to spare white feelings is

found in the handling of the Brownsville incident of 1906, when 167 soldiers were dishonourably discharged from three companies of the 25th Infantry, a black regiment, without a trial or court-martial. On 13 August 1906, sixteen to twenty armed men had engaged in a shooting spree through the streets of Brownsville, killing one man and wounding another. A cursory investigation ordered by President Roosevelt suggested that men of the 25th Infantry were responsible, and since no soldiers of the 25th Infantry would admit to involvement with the shooting or identify others who were guilty, the investigators concluded that they were engaged in a conspiracy of silence. Many of the soldiers dismissed were long-service veterans with good records. A court of inquiry in 1909 found that fourteen of the soldiers were eligible for re-enlistment, but gave no reason for this decision. Eleven of these men did in fact re-enlist. Most of the men discharged were never given an opportunity to defend themselves in court, or even to appear before an inquiry. The general feeling among blacks was that the soldiers had been railroaded. White Southerners in contrast were pleased with President Roosevelt's action and felt it was both legal and just.[79]

Comparison of American and Indian Armies, c. 1865-1914

It might appear that the American Army, a volunteer citizen army serving a democratic government, could have little in common with the Indian Army, a mercenary army serving a foreign imperial power. As Roger Beaumont has observed, there was "virtually no American equivalent to the sepoy . . . (unless it was the black

'buffalo soldier')."[80] If the black regiments in the American Army are considered as a separate class (as indeed they were), many similarities can be seen. Black soldiers had approximately the same position relative to white soldiers and officers in the American Army, as Indian soldiers had to white (British) officers and troops in the military in India (including Indian Army and British troops in India). Within the Indian Army itself, the status of low-caste soldiers relative to high-caste soldiers also resembled in some respects the black/white relationship in the American Army.

The comparison is best made in the period between 1866 and 1914. In 1866 the American Army was re-organized as a relatively small standing army after the Civil War; by the same date in India the upheavals of the Indian Mutiny were past, the transfer from Company to Crown was complete, and the internal military situation was stable. In both countries the primary function of the army was to maintain internal security (especially in India), to guard and sometimes advance the frontiers, and to fight occasional small external campaigns.

As for general conditions of service, these were roughly comparable. Pay scales (although meaningful comparisons are difficult due to the many differences in social expectations, family structures, and other opportunities) seem to have been more-or-less comparable--on the low end of the range for civil employment of comparable skill, but acceptable and even attractive to men with limited options. Service for pension was about the same: thirty years in the American Army (less if disabled);

twenty-one years for half pension; thirty-two for full pension, (with provision for invalid pension) in the Indian Army. In neither case were black soldiers, or low-caste soldiers, paid at a lower level. Table V shows comparative service conditions, with blacks compared both with all Indian soldiers and with low-caste Indians as a subgroup.

The American Army spent the period 1866-1900 largely at posts on the western and southern frontiers. The black regiments were almost continuously posted west of the Mississippi; although this appeared to be discriminatory treatment to many blacks, white regiments also spent very long tours on the frontier. There was simply a long frontier with many posts to be garrisoned by a small army.

By contrast, although the Indian Army fought two major wars in Afghanistan and garrisoned the North-West Frontier, most regiments were posted on a semi-permanent basis fairly close to their recruiting grounds. Regiments sent far from home on active service were usually not expected to serve more than a few years (five seemed to be maximum) without relief. Only a few Bombay regiments (including the Baluchi regiments) spent much time on the frontier; most served at military cantonments in the Presidency.

Attitudes of officers towards their men differed in significant ways. White officers in the American Army in some instances resented being assigned to black regiments, either because they believed their chances of promotion would be reduced or because they had a low opinion of black troops. For example,

TABLE V

COMPARATIVE SERVICE CONDITIONS

AMERICAN TO INDIAN ARMIES, c. 1865 - 1914

Similarities	
Blacks	**Indians**
1. not enlisted in Artillery	1. Artillery restricted to a few Mountain Batteries
2. not eligible for promotion beyond regimental level. Although in theory (A.G.O. #93 of 1867) commission from the ranks was possible this was very rare, especially for blacks.	2. not eligible for promotion beyond regimental level
3. not allowed to command white troops	3. not allowed to command British troops
4. black troops officered by whites	4. Indian troops officered by British
5. high rate of re-enlistment compared to whites	5. many long-service soldiers
6. number of blacks in army strictly limited	6. theoretically restricted to a set ratio with British troops in India
	Low-Caste Indians
7. enlisted in support units, mess stewards in Navy, etc.; Even regular regiments sometimes performed non-combat duties	7. often enlisted as musicians and as menials, even when also accepted as combatants; employed as servants by British officers
8. Army one of the best of limited employment options	8. Army one of the best of limited employment options
Differences	
1. enlisted in Navy in very limited numbers	1. served in Indian Navy/ Bombay Marine at lower ranks from 1863 on

TABLE V--Continued

Differences	
Blacks	Indians
2. not enlisted as Marines	2. Marine Battalion in Bombay Army
3. nominally equipped and trained same as white troops; in practice may have sometimes received lower-quality equipment.	3. Indian Army given less effective weapons, poorer housing, lower level of benefits than British troops, as a matter of policy.
	Low-Caste Indians
4. 2 Black cavalry regiments	4. Not enlisted in cavalry for financial reasons rather than policy (Bombay cavalry organized on silladari system)

George Custer refused the colonelcy of a black cavalry regiment and took a lower rank to serve with a white regiment. Officers of black regiments sometimes were not accepted socially among white civilians. Other white officers adopted a paternalistic attitude. A few were able to accept blacks simply as soldiers and to treat them with the same respect, and demand from them the same performance as white soldiers.

Comparing the treatment of the native officers of the 17th Bombay Infantry with the treatment of the 25th Infantry at Brownsville, Texas some years later, the Indian soldiers on the whole got much better treatment. Seven of the officers were simply discharged on their ordinary pension, while the last was discharged with a gratuity of six months pay. This was a punishment in that some of them at least would ordinarily have expected to receive the higher rate of pension of their rank, but it

hardly seems excessive, and was much less severe than the summary discharge without pension or benefits meted out to the men of the 25th Infantry.

These are both extreme, but by no means isolated or aberrant, examples of the treatment accorded to Indian soldiers and black soldiers respectively. Apart from the abstract question of whether low-caste men were unfairly perceived as inferior soldiers, British military authorities generally treated Indian soldiers as fairly as possible, if only in the interest of keeping up recruitment and maintaining morale. In the American situation, not only was there considerable prejudice among white civilians against black soldiers, but also a tendency for military authorities to pander to white sensitivities while ignoring black soldiers' legal rights. This at least was a widely-held belief among black soldiers, and even allowing for possible bias among black historians and popular writers, it appears to have substantial justification.

Summary

The last third of the nineteenth century saw significant changes in the organization of both the Indian Army and the United States Army, and a relative decline in the opportunities available to low-caste and black soldiers respectively. This decline occurred in spite of past satisfactory service; in the case of black soldiers, the dramatic example of the USCT; in the case of the Mahars, long and loyal though less striking association with the Bombay Army.

The northward shift of recruiting in the Indian Army was probably inevitable, given military requirements. The abolition of the separate Presidency armies was long overdue by the time it actually happened in 1893. These changes alone would have largely eliminated men from southern and western India (including the Mahars) from the army, without any formal declaration of their unsuitability; with a majority of regiments stationed semi-permanently in the Punjab and North-West Frontier, few Konkanis would be likely to travel to Peshawar or Amritsar to enlist. If physical deterioration were a major problem, more stringent physical examinations could have dealt with this. Why then was it considered necessary to produce detailed lists of classes and castes no longer to be enlisted? The author suggests that the "martial races" theory satisfied other requirements than improving military efficiency, particularly maintaining a politically neutral army which conformed to British prejudices about class and caste.

Restricting recruitment of black men to only four regular regiments, and placing severe limitations on their opportunities to become officers, although justified on the grounds of inherent lack of leadership qualities, courage, endurance, and other military virtues, also served other ends. The practice of segregating black soldiers in their own units (where possible far from white populations), denying them officer training, and keeping them in the least technically-advanced branches of the army, certainly contributed to maintaining the pattern of white dominance by limiting black access to military training. As in the

Indian case, military efficiency could have been maintained by appropriate standards for physical fitness and educational attainments.

An important difference in these two situations is a direct consequence of the difference in political situations. The government of India did not have to give much weight to Indian public opinion, certainly none to the views of poor, low-caste soldiers. As will be seen later, Indian public opinion did not always agree with government recruitment policies, but with little or no representation in government, disagreement could not become effective pressure for change. American blacks, on the other hand, did have some political power and did have some constitutional rights as citizens. They could not, therefore, be completely excluded from the military, and a few even had to be allowed a chance to become officers (however grudgingly given).

Overall similarity in military service conditions for blacks and Indians (particularly low-caste Indians), as shown in Table V, extended to a considerable improvement in pay and benefits, more advanced weapons and equipment, with a parallel reduction in access for blacks and low-caste men. Benefits of military service are discussed in some detail in the next chapter. In both instances, however, a general improvement in professional standards led to fewer opportunities due overtly to the (presumed) inability of blacks or Mahars/"non-martial classes" to measure up to the new standards, but covertly to caste/class prejudices and a desire to maintain the social and political status quo.

Footnotes, Chapter III

1. R. K. Perti, South Asia: Frontier Policies, Administrative Problems and Lord Lansdowne (New Delhi: Oriental Publishers and Distributors, 1976), p. 151.

2. K. M. L. Saxena, The Military System of India, 1850-1900 (New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1974), pp. 1-2.

3. Ibid., pp. 4-5.

4. Roger Beaumont, Sword of the Raj: The British Army in India, 1747-1947 (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1977), p. 40.

5. Sir Patrick Cadell, History of the Bombay Army (London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1938), app. I, pp. 307-313.

6. M.S.A., Military Compilations, vol. 492 of 1852, #3194.

7. Bombay Industries: The Cotton Mills, ed. by S. M. Rutnagur (Bombay: The Indian Textile Journal Ltd., 1927), p. 9.
   This was owned by the Bombay Spinning and Weaving Company, founded by Mr. Cawosji Nanabhoy Daver.

8. M.S.A., Military Compilations, vol. 812 of 1858, #515, item 8892, pp. 6-8.

9. M.S.A., Military Compilations, vol. 812 of 1858, #515, item 7893, par. 5.

10. Jemadar (later Subadar-Major) Moosajee, the Native Adjutant who had given first information of the mutiny, was transferred to the 17th Native Infantry.

11. N.A.I., Military Department Proceedings, January 1894, #2282-85 B. (See also n. 30, chap. VI.)
    The Kayasthas objected to being classed as "menials," and said so in a memorial to government, but were advised that no reflection on their social status was intended, only that they were not "martial."

12. N.A.I., Military Department Proceedings, November 1882, #1702 and 1703, pars. 3-4.

13. Saxena, Military System of India, p. 100.

14. M.S.A., Military Compilations, vol. 812 of 1858, #515, pp. 441-446; Lieut. H. L. Showers, "The Meywar Bhil Corps," U.S.I. Journal, no. 84 (January 1891):87-95; A. H. A. Simcox, A Memoir of the Khandesh Bhil Corps (Bombay: Thacker & Company Limited, n.d., c. 1912).

Bhils had been recruited into irregular local corps, including the Meywar Bhil Corps (1841-1891) and the Khandesh Bhil Corps (1825-1862), the latter being converted to armed police (1862-1891) prior to absorption into the regular police forces. Sporadic attempts were made to recruit them as regular sepoys, but without much success or persistence.

15. N.A.I., Military Department Proceedings, March 1882, #1153, pp. 13-23.

16. Philip Mason, A Matter of Honour: An Account of the Indian Army, Its Officers and Men (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books, 1976), p. 347.
The term "Native" was officially dropped in 1885.

17. N.A.I., Military Department Proceedings, June 1891, #292, General Order no. 537.

18. N.A.I., Military Department Proceedings, December 1892, #1457.

19. N.A.I., Military Department Proceedings, December 1892, #1453, p. 10.

20. Thomas R. Metcalf, The Aftermath of Revolt; India, 1857-1870 (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1964), p. 8.

21. Peter Halfpenny, Positivism and Sociology: Explaining Social Life (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1982), p. 21; Robert C. Bannister, Social Darwinism: Science and Myth in Anglo-American Social Thought (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1979), p. 4.
The term "social Darwinism" was used by Richard Hofstadter in 1955, but according to Bannister first appeared on the Continent about 1880. It has been applied to a wide variety of social and political views, most having little to do with Charles Darwin.

22. Stephen P. Cohen, The Indian Army: Its Contribution to the Development of a Nation (Berkeley, Calif.: U. of California Press, 1971), p. 45.

23. H. W. C. Davis and J. R. H. Weaver, The Dictionary of National Biography, 1912-1921 (London: Oxford University Press, 1927), pp. 464-470.
Appointed colonel-in-chief of the Indian Expeditionary Force, Roberts went to France to visit and encourage the troops, but died of a chill. He was eighty-two years old and a dedicated soldier to the end.

24. Field-Marshal Lord Roberts, of Kandahar, Forty-One Years in India (New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1900), p. 499.

25. Mason, A Matter of Honour, pp. 345-46.

26. Roberts, Forty-One Years in India, p. 470.

27. Ibid., p. 471.

28. Ibid., p. 472.

29. Archibald Forbes, The Afghan Wars, 1839-42 and 1878-80 (London: Seeley & Co., Limited, 1892), pp. 292-302; Lieut.-Col. E. W. C. Sandes, The Indian Sappers and Miners (Chatham: Institution of Royal Engineers, 1948), pp. 279-280; T. A. Heathcote, The Indian Army: The Garrison of British Imperial India, 1822-1922, Historic Armies and Navies Series (Newton Abbot, London, Vancouver: David & Charles, 1974), p. 88.

30. Quoted in Saxena, Military System of India, pp. 264-265.

31. Roberts, Forty-One Years in India, pp. 531-532.

32. From The Martial Races of India, quoted in Mason, A Matter of Honour, pp. 348-9.

33. N.A.I., Military Department Proceedings, August 1885, #135, app. C, p. 259.
"Proposal of Army Commission regarding creation of an army reserve."

34. Cynthia H. Enloe, Ethnic Soldiers: State Security in Divided Societies (Athens: The U. of Georgia Press, 1980), pp. 26-28.

35. Saxena, Military System of India, p. 245.

36. N.A.I., Military Department Proceedings, November 1882, #1704, letter from Maj.-Gen. Sir G. R. Greaves, Adjutant-General in India; Circular no. 457, dated Simla, 12 March 1851, from Lt.-Col. H. T. Tucker, Adjutant-General of the army.

37. Enloe, Ethnic Soldiers, p. 27.

38. "God bless the Squire and his relations,
And keep us in our proper stations."
Said, tongue-in-cheek, by an obscure Victorian Englishman, H. D. Packer (born 1898); (the author's father). Probably a misquotation of Charles Dickens, The Chimes:
O let us love our occupations,
Bless the squire and his relations,
Live upon our daily rations,
And always know our proper stations.
Oxford Dictionary of Quotations, 3rd ed. (Oxford University Press, 1979), p. 176.

39. The Duke of Wellington, before Waterloo, described his infantry as "the scum of the earth, enlisted for drink."

40. John Prebble, The Highland Clearances (London: Secker and Warburg, 1963), pp. 316-322.

41. Cohen, The Indian Army, pp. 48-49.

42. Mason, A Matter of Honour, p. 348; Saxena, Military System of India, p. 195; Roberts, Forty-One Years, pp. 514-520.

43. N.A.I., Military Department Proceedings, May 1893, #2319-2320.

44. Philip Woodruff [Philip Mason], The Men Who Ruled India, vol. II: The Guardians (London: Jonathan Cape, 1963), pp. 184-185.
David Ezechiel is mentioned as acting District Magistrate, Noakhali District, Bengal.

45. Mason, A Matter of Honour, pp. 202-203.

46. N.A.I., Military Department Proceedings, June 1888, #3317.

47. They were:
Subadar-Major Babaji Mania, Subadars Ram Chandar Powar, Punjab Singh, Jaganath Pande, Krishnaji Kadam, Jemadars Sankappa and Shaik Suliman, and Jemadar Isaac Musaji.

48. N.A.I., Military Department Proceedings, June 1888, #3317.

49. Jack D. Foner, Blacks and the Military in American History: A New Perspective (N.p.: Praeger, 1974), p. 32.

50. Robert Ewell Greene, Black Defenders of America 1775-1973 (Chicago: Johnson Publishing Company Inc., 1974), pp. 355-356.

51. Marvin Fletcher, The Black Soldier and Officer in the United States Army, 1891-1917 (Columbia: The U. of Missouri Press, 1974), p. 18.

52. Binkin et al., Blacks and the Military (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1982), p. 15, n. 11.

53. Foner, Blacks and the Military, p. 42.

54. Thomas Wentworth Higginson, Army Life in a Black Regiment (Boston: Beacon Press, 1962; orig. pub. 1869), p. 242.
The soldiers also sang the following ditty,
"Ten dollar a month!
Tree ob dat for clothin'!
Go to Washington

Fight for Linkum's darter!"
"Lincoln's daughter" being Liberty.

55. Greene, Black Defenders of America, p. 347.

56. Foner, Blacks and the Military, p. 43.

57. Higginson, Army Life in a Black Regiment, p. 26.

58. Master Sgt. Irvin H. Lee, Negro Medal of Honor Men (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1967), pp. 127-129.

59. Quoted in Foner, Blacks and the Military, p. 51.

60. Sgt.-Major C. A. Fleetwood to James Hall, 8 June 1865, quoted in Greene, Black Defenders of America, p. 351.

61. W. Sherman Savage, Blacks in the West, contributions in Afro-American and African Studies, no. 23 (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1976), p. 51.

62. Ibid., p. 51.

63. Ibid., pp. 54-62.

64. Lee, Negro Medal of Honor, p. 128.

65. Don Rickey, Jr., Forty Miles a Day on Beans and Hay: The Enlisted Soldier Fighting the Indian Wars (Norman: U. of Oklahoma Press, 1963), p. 159; Foner, Blacks and the Military, chap. 4; Fletcher, Black Soldiers and Officers, introduction; Savage, Blacks in the West, chap. 3.
In the 1880s almost 41 out of 1000 soldiers were hospitalized for alcoholism; this included only the most severe cases, men suffering from delirium tremens. In the four black regiments only 5 1/2 cases per 1000 were reported.

66. Rickey, Forty Miles a Day, passim.
"Spread-eagling" involved staking a man out in the sun, lying flat on his back with his arms and legs tied to stakes, for a period of several hours.

67. Foner, Blacks and the Military, p. 64.

68. Greene, Black Defenders of America, pp. 360-363; Savage, Blacks in the West, pp. 52-53.

69. Foner, Blacks and the Military, p. 93; Greene, Black Defenders of America, pp. 189-90.

70. Fletcher, Black Soldier and Officer, pp. 45-46.

71. Foner, Blacks and the Military, p. 91.

72. Ibid., pp. 85, 93-94.
John R. Lynch was a prominent black Republican from Mississippi whose appointment was a piece of political patronage.

73. Samuel Eliot Morison, Henry Steele Commager, and William E. Leuchtenburg, A Concise History of the American Republic (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), pp. 487-88.

74. Foner, Blacks and the Military, pp. 104-106.

75. Savage, Blacks in the West, p. 52.

76. Ibid., p. 53.

77. Greene, Black Defenders of America, p. 361.

78. Woodruff, The Men Who Ruled India, pp. 169-171.

79. Foner, Blacks and the Military, pp. 95-103; Fletcher, The Black Soldier and Officer, pp. 119-152.
In 1971 a black Congressman from California, Augustus F. Hawkins (D.), succeeded in having a bill passed to declare all of the discharges honourable. The last survivor, Dorsie Willis, was awarded a pension of $25,000.

80. Beaumont, Sword of the Raj, p. IX.

CHAPTER IV

COSTS AND BENEFITS OF MILITARY SERVICE

The costs of military service are readily apparent. They include, particularly in wartime, the risk of death or disability, restrictions on personal liberty, acceptance of military discipline, frequent enforced separation from family and home, and foregone opportunities for civilian employment. Benefits include pay and pensions, access to education and/or specialized training, preferential access to employment, enhanced social status, and personal satisfaction.

For American blacks there was an additional factor: the belief that fighting for freedom in the Civil War had guaranteed that black men could never again be denied their freedom or have it cast into their faces that freedom had been given to them and not won. Corporal Thomas Long, quoted earlier, made this point on the basis of his personal service with the 1st South Carolina Regiment; Ulysses Lee confirmed the importance of military service prior to World War I, stating that:

> [The Army] was one of the few national endeavors in which Negroes had had a relatively secure position and which, at least in time of war, could lead to national recognition of their worth as citizens and their potential as partners in a common undertaking.[1]

Similarly the Mahars could claim that service in the army had removed untouchability and given them equal status in society. As the Indian newspaper Rashtra Vir put it,

> Army enlistment is the birthright of every community and like education removes untouchability and gives equality of status to the Mahars.[2]

These benefits are difficult to measure in objective terms, so it is important to note the specific, measurable, objective benefits of military service.

The Indian Army

As a professional standing army, the Indian Army (specifically the three Presidency armies of which it was composed) offered regular pay, some long-term security in the form of pensions and civil employment, and a degree of professional training. In this it differed from most of the armies of Indian or Moghul rulers, which were often paid irregularly or not at all, and counted on plunder to make up shortages. Service in the Indian Army opened up the prospect of the military as a profession for ordinary men, not an aristocratic blood sport.

Pay and pension benefits for Indian soldiers of the nineteenth century were rather low, but not insignificant. In 1881 the pay of an Indian soldier ranged from 7 rupees per month for a private to 100 rupees per month for a Subadar first class. Staff allowances for noncommissioned officers and VCOs ranged from 2 rupees per month for a Colour Havildar to 25 rupees per month for the Subadar-Major of a regiment. Good-conduct pay was introduced in 1837, and by 1886 amounted to 1, 2, or 3 rupees per month after three, six and ten years' service respectively. In 1876 a grant of 30 rupees was given on enlistment for purchase of clothing, with 4 rupees "half-mounting," or kit money annually for upkeep, raised to 5 rupees in 1886.[3]

By comparison, in 1875 wages in the Bombay cotton mills, which attracted a large proportion of their workers from the same districts of the Konkan, Kolaba and Ratnagiri, as the army did, ranged from 5 to 6 rupees per month for boys, 7 to 8 rupees per month for coolies and certain semi-skilled workers, to as high as 50 rupees per month for mechanics.[4] The pay scale for soldiers was therefore roughly comparable to that of cotton mill workers. Soldiers were provided with housing, medical care, and part of their clothing and food expenses, while mill hands had to provide all of these for themselves. In addition, mill work was physically arduous and frequently unhealthy. On the other hand, mill hands could usually obtain leave on a rather generous basis, and were free to leave their employment whenever they chose, while soldiers were not. Soldiers did get long furloughs, and after 1885 were given free railway passes to go home,[5] but only fifteen per cent of the men of a regiment were usually allowed furlough in a given year.

The Governor-General, Lord Dufferin, writing in 1885 to the Secretary of State for India, Lord Randolph Churchill, expressed the view (apparently accepted by the Commander-in-Chief, Sir Donald Stewart) that the sepoy's pay was no longer competitive with civilian wages, or even with non-combatant rates of pay, and that a regular and adequate supply of new recruits could therefore not be counted upon.[6] Although improvements in pay and emoluments were made in accordance with Dufferin's recommendations, the Mahabaleshwar Committee, meeting several years later to discuss the reorganization of the Bombay Army, reiterated the

complaint that army pay was insufficient to attract the "best material."[7] Army pay was adequate to attract low-caste men, who might not have access to better-paying civilian jobs anyway, and for whom the higher status of military service was an important consideration.

Morris D. Morris' analysis of wages and the supply of labour in the Bombay cotton mills shows that wages rose very slowly in the period 1875-1906, although the rate of employment rose very sharply, indicating the availability of enough surplus labour to keep wages low. It would appear that any manpower shortages encountered by the military were not absolute, but relative to the supply of men of higher-caste, landowning families who were preferred as soldiers.[8] Morris also observed that in 1872 and 1881 untouchables formed a much smaller proportion of the mill labour force than of the population of Bombay, and as late as 1921 they were still not over-represented.[9] There is some evidence that untouchables were discriminated against by some mill-owners, and were largely excluded from the highest-paid jobs in the weaving sheds, although there is "the possibility that the exclusion of untouchables was not entirely a caste phenomenon but was also a device to preserve the monopoly of particularly advantageous but very limited economic opportunities against newcomers."[10]

A form of monetary reward for a small number of soldiers was the medal for gallantry for long service and good conduct. The Order of British India was introduced in 1837 for long, faithful and honourable service, and was given only to native

officers. The first class, awarded to Subadars and above, included a stipend of two rupees per day and the title of "Sirdar Bahadur." The second class Order of British India, available to Indian commissioned officers of all grades, had a stipend of one rupee per day and the title of "Bahadur." The Indian Order of Merit, the equivalent for Indians of the Victoria Cross, conferred for conspicuous gallantry in the face of the enemy, was awarded in three classes: one act of bravery merited a third-class Order of Merit, a second earned the second-class, and a third elevated the holder to a first-class Order of Merit. The monthly allowance increased accordingly, from one-third of the basic pay and pension of rank to double pay or pension for a first class Order of Merit.[11] In 1888, in commemoration of Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee (1887) long service and good conduct medals were introduced for noncommissioned officers and other ranks. There were three different types of award. Each cavalry and infantry regiment in the three Presidency Armies was allowed two medals for meritorious conduct, with an annuity of 25 rupees, for Daffadars and Havildars. After the initial grants were made, new medals could be awarded only when a previous holder died or was promoted or reduced in rank. Each regiment was allowed annually two medals, inscribed "for long service and good conduct" and with a gratuity of 25 rupees each, to be granted to rank and file only. A further long-service and good conduct medal without gratuity was allowed in each regiment per year. The annuities payable in the first instance were continued after discharge in addition to pension.[12]

In the period 1865-1885, approximately 122 native officers of the Bombay Army (retired or still serving) held the Order of British India. This number included one Mahar, one Mochi, and nineteen Bene Israel. In 1890, the seventy-six members of the order included five Bene Israel and two Mahars; by 1895 there were six Bene Israel, but only one Mahar (the other having presumably died.)[13] Table VI, a partial listing of medals awarded between 1890 and 1900, shows Mahars getting approximately one-fifth of them, about three times as many as their proportion in the army would suggest. This might be accounted for partly by the fact that they were being compulsorily retired at a higher-than-normal rate at this time, and few of the soldiers recruited in their place would have qualified for long-service medals. The official records do indicate that at least a few Mahars (and more than a few Bene Israel, considering their small total numbers) were able to earn the highest honours available to Indian soldiers.

The system of pensions, first introduced in 1796, was intended to reward long and faithful service; a sepoy served forty years for full pension, but might be invalided out on half-pension after fifteen years.[14] The system of pensions and other awards granted on objective criteria, rather than on an ad hoc basis or by the whim of a commanding officer, was an important part of the professionalization and modernization which distinguished the British Indian Army from its predecessors. The pension system was reformed several times, and in 1895, when most low-caste soldiers had already left the service, the lower rate

TABLE VI

MEDALS ISSUED TO BOMBAY ARMY, 1890-1900

Date Awarded		Mahars	Bene Israel	Total
Feb. and Sept. 1890	Meritorious Service with Annuity	1	1	9
	Long Service & Good Conduct with Gratuity	27	2	122
	Long Service & Good Conduct without Gratuity	3	-	24
June 1893	Merit. Svce. with Annuity	3	-	8
	L.S. & G.C. with Gratuity	10	-	56
	L.S. & G.C. without Gratuity	5	-	18
April 1894	L.S. & G.C. with Gratuity	11	1	55
	L.S. & G.C. without Gratuity	3	-	21
April 1895	L.S. & G.C. with Gratuity	7	1	54
	L.S. & G.C. without Gratuity	2	-	18
April 1896	Merit. Svce. with Annuity	1	-	10
	L.S. & G.C. with Gratuity	14	1	49
	L.S. & G.C. without Gratuity	4	-	22
May 1900	Merit. Svce. with Annuity	2	-	8
	L.S. & G.C. with Gratuity	7	-	53
	L.S. & G.C. without Gratuity	2	-	20

SOURCE: Gazette of India, Military Rewards Lists

of pension was granted after 21, and the higher (full) pension after 32 years' service. Men invalided out with less than 21 years' service received extra gratuities.[15] The basic pension was approximately one half the pay earned at the time of retirement. About 1860, according to military records, men enlisted at somewhere between 18 and 22 years of age, served approximately 24 years on the average until they received pensions, were pensioned off in their middle to late 40s, and collected a pension for approximately 12 years.[16] The average amount of that pension was perhaps 5 or 6 rupees per month. In 1879, for example, there were 7,009 pensioners living in Ratnagiri district, collecting pensions totalling 454,520 rupees. This translates to 65 rupees per year on the average. At the same time 5,599 men from Ratnagiri district were on active service in the army, collecting pay of approximately 580,000 rupees per year, for an average of 103 rupees per year, or about 8 1/2 rupees per month.[17] Approximately 16 per cent of the pensioners and 18 per cent of the soldiers on active service were Mahars. Since the Mahars were somewhat underrepresented at the higher ranks, it is probably reasonable to suppose that they collected about 14 to 15 per cent of the total pensions. This would mean a total of about 68,000 rupees per year was being paid to the Mahar community of Ratnagiri district in the form of military pensions, and about 87,000 rupees per year in pay. Some portion of military pay probably found its way back to families still resident in Ratnagiri, but there is no way of knowing how much this might have been. This is not in absolute terms a huge sum of money, particularly when

divided over a large number of families, but it was important for a depressed community whose traditional recompense for service was in kind, particularly in a district which was poor, densely populated, and in which cash income was rather low. The impact of this sizable inflow of cash to the Mahar community of Ratnagiri on the traditional social order must have been significant, since it allowed for a degree of independence from the village authorities and from the dominant land-owning castes. The fact that, as will be seen later, Mahar pensioners were able to defy village officials on the issue of schooling, suggests the importance of this degree of economic independence.

Normally pensions were paid only to soldiers, and when the soldier died after retirement his pension also died. However pensions were payable to families under certain circumstances. If a soldier died of wounds, or of disease considered to be caused by his military service, his family might be eligible for a family pension. If the man was considered to have contributed to his own death by intemperate habits, such as excessive drinking or use of drugs, his death would not be considered service-related, and his family would probably not get any pension. Soldiers were also required to name their heirs, and it appears that many did not update this provision in their records. A young man enlisting would be likely to name his father or mother as his heir; if he had a son, the son would most likely be his heir; however, soldiers did not always change these provisions to reflect change in circumstances. There are a number of instances of a widow, daughter, or mother of a deceased soldier petitioning

to be named as heir, the nominated heir having predeceased the soldier, but such requests were seldom granted. The position of government was clearly that a pension was in no sense deferred income, but was a benefit earned by long and faithful service. This benefit was earned by the soldier himself, and was therefore available to his family only in the case of his death directly due to his military employment. For example in 1889, a Mahar, Jannac Bulnac, Bugler, of the 5th Bombay Infantry, died of remittent fever in upper Burma. His nominated heir and son had apparently died. An application to transfer his family pension from the nominated heir to his daughter was refused.[18] In February of the same year Kasee, widow of the late private Rughnac Downac of the 19th Bombay Infantry, applied for a pension after her husband's death. He had died a month after transfer to the pension establishment, but again a family pension was refused.[19] On the other hand the records for January 1883 show two instances of family pensions granted to mothers of deceased sepoys. Goonee, mother of the late Ittnac Gondnac, Tent Lascar, 16th Native Infantry, received a family pension of 2 rupees 6 annas a month, as a special case. Suggoomee, mother of late Sepoy Jannac Goonac, 21st Regiment Bombay Native Infantry, who died of fever contracted on foreign service at Muscat, was granted an extraordinary family pension of 2 rupees 12 annas for life or until remarriage.[20] The records note that such cases were rare and each should be considered on its own merits, but did not specify why these pensions were granted while most were refused. Very likely the deceased sons were the only adult males in their

families, thus leaving their widowed mothers entirely without support. (Since the pensions were granted for life or until remarriage, the women were presumably widows.) In another case, Sunttu, the widow of Subadar-Major Luximonmetter Mhadmetter, who died in the hospital at Quetta of dysentery five days after transfer to the pension establishment, was granted a family pension due to the very short interval between his retirement and death, and the fact that he was already suffering from a service-related illness of which he died, at the time of his transfer to pension.[21]

A retired soldier had to stay out of trouble with the law, or risk losing his pension. A case in point is that of pensioned Sepoy Bhiknak Gopnak, a Mahar of the 21st Regiment Bombay Infantry, who was granted a pension of R. 4 per mensem c. 15 May 1889. He was convicted in June 1894 of "causing hurt resulting in the death of one Malloo Govind" and was sentenced by the Bombay High Court to rigorous imprisonment for 12 months and a 200 rupee fine or 3 more months imprisonment in default of fine; he served 15 months and was released August 24th, 1895. The question was whether he was to be readmitted to the pension establishment and at the original pension or a reduced rate? The sepoy was in fact granted a restoration of his full pension after release from prison, but it is interesting that there was no obligation on government to continue the pension while he was in jail.[22] There were also cases of Afridi pensioners, who on retirement had gone back to families across the Indian border to live in tribal territory, being warned that they would lose their pensions if

they continued drilling their tribesmen in military tactics which presumably would be used against the British.[23] A military pension was, after all, a reward for long and faithful service; a continuation of good faith was expected as a condition of receipt of pension.

In establishing a system of military pensions, a form of security virtually unknown in other forms of employment, the government sought both to make military service attractive and to encourage men to think of the army as a life-time career. Long-service soldiers were the backbone of a trained and disciplined army, and the long-service system minimized the number of ex-soldiers mixed into the general population. It was also useful as a means to secure the long-term loyalty of men to whom no patriotic appeals could be made; they were, after all, serving a government which they had not chosen and which had no obvious claim on their loyalty. As the Superintendent of Pensions for Madras expressed it;

> In formulating a system for paying Native military pensioners, the question as to whether, after a native soldier has served his time with the colours, the State has any further interest in that man beyond the consideration of paying him the stipend he has earned with the least possible trouble and expense, is one surely worthy of consideration. . . . I would further submit that there is direct and practical advantage to the State in looking after the welfare of some 90,000 men who are scattered throughout the towns and villages of India, and the picture of whose contentment and general state of well-being in their declining years should materially assist recruiting, by offering palpable evidence to the native mind of the fostering care of the British Raj for all who have served her faithfully.[24]

The prospect of earning a pension after twenty to forty years may not have been a factor to most young men enlisting in

the army, but it was doubtless a consideration in keeping them there after a few years' service. Even the very small pension of four rupees or so earned by a private or musician was, in an underdeveloped economy where cash incomes were generally very low, not to be scorned. Added to any income from other employment, land, or village service, four rupees a month might make the difference between bare existence and modest security.

A reserve system was another means used by government to provide additional security for former soldiers and to increase military efficiency at low cost. The earliest type of military reserve was the Native Veteran Battalion, consisting of sepoys who were still capable of light duty, but not entitled to full pension.[25] From 1818 until its abolition in the late 1850s, the Veteran Battalion was stationed at Dapoli, the main military station in Ratnagiri District. This body of men performed a useful service during the Indian Mutiny of 1857, when the Veteran Battalion and military pensioners called back from retirement performed various guard duties throughout the Konkan, such as acting as treasury guards. This freed troops fit for active service for field service, leaving garrison and guard duties to older or partially disabled men. The Veteran Battalion also provided a sort of halfway house for soldiers who were not eligible for pension, nor able to stand up to the rigors of normal military campaigning, but fit enough for light duties. Given the location of the Veteran Battalion, and the proportion of Mahars in the Bombay Army, it seems likely that this corps included Mahar veterans.

The regular army reserve, formed in 1885 in the Bengal Army and extended in 1887 to the Madras and Bombay Armies,[26] offered a possible form of security for former soldiers. However, reserve service was not very popular. The system of regimental rather than territorial reserves, chosen for security reasons, was not attractive, since it required reservists to leave their homes and return to their regiments (from which they were in effect on long furlough) once every year or two.[27] This was likely to interfere with regular employment or agricultural work, as well as domestic arrangements. While some Mahars may well have served as reservists, it seems unlikely that very many did.

A third measure employed by government to provide security to former soldiers, and also to ensure the loyalty of the army, was the establishment of various schemes to employ military pensioners in government positions. Probably preference had always been given, in an informal and unorganized way, to retired soldiers and reservists for employment in government offices and in a private capacity with British-owned firms. However, it was only in the mid-1880s that a formal structure for encouraging the employment of pensioners and reservists in civil capacities, and making their names, addresses, and other data available to potential employers, was adopted. By then, military pay and pensions no longer compared very favourably with pay for civilian jobs and retired soldiers no longer had the privileges in civil life that they had once been able to claim. Under the H.E.I.C. rule, sepoys had had special consideration and privileges in law courts; these had disappeared with the annexation of Oudh and the

transfer of political power to the Crown.[28] As British rule was consolidated, the special relationship of the sepoy with the ruling class became less special; other Indians found niches in the administration and developed ways and means to improve their status. Preferential access to government employment, therefore, would be a compensation for the reduced privileges of military pensioners in other respects.

At least three methods were used to assist military pensioners in finding civil employment. These were: advertisements in the government Civil and Military Gazette; employment references to civil and military authorities; and a system of employment agencies operated in conjunction with, and by the same personnel as, the military pension system. The first of these methods, although simple and inexpensive to use, was probably not very effective, since hiring for many lower-level jobs was in the hands of Indian subordinate officials, who had to be persuaded to hire outside their own circle of relations and needy dependents, a point noted by the Superintendent of Military Pensions in Madras, Lieutenant-Colonel Leigh-Hunt.[29] The second, although again simple and inexpensive, probably was very erratic in its usefulness. Some civil and military authorities would take much more interest than others in the welfare of military pensioners residing in their jurisdictions, so whether or not a pensioner desiring employment would be able to get assistance would depend very much on the interest and capabilities of the civil authorities to whom he might apply. The third and most successful was the method introduced in Madras presidency by Sir Frederick

Roberts (later Lord Roberts of Kandahar).

Roberts's scheme was introduced in the Madras presidency in late 1885, and depended for its success upon the system of payment of military pensions existing in that presidency. The plan was limited to assisting military pensioners to obtain employment with railways. This scheme was reasonably successful; four years after it began, of 22,035 pensioners in the Madras presidency 3,455, or almost 16 per cent, were employed. Of these, 592 were employed on railways in various capacities. Although at an initial disadvantage because of their lack of influence with the local railway subordinates, once hired the pensioners gave satisfactory service. Only a few were dismissed for negligence, incapacity, or other good cause. Their past military training had accustomed them to discipline, they were generally older and more settled in life, and their pensions were a surety for their good behaviour.

A nominal roll of pensioners employed in civil capacities (not all by railways) in Madras suggests that pensioners of Indo-European background received the most benefit, as Table VII shows.

It is likely, although not directly related to the subject of this study, that the adoption of this scheme to employ military pensioners in civil capacities, particularly the railways, was an important factor in what came to be an Anglo-Indian domination of railway work.

TABLE VII

SALARY RANGE OF MADRAS PENSIONERS IN CIVIL EMPLOYMENT

	Salary in Rupees per Month					
	100 +	75-100	50-75	25-50	20-25	20 -
Total Number	7	5	24	44	37	120
Number having European names	6	5	19	30	28	no names given

SOURCE: N.A.I., Military Department Proceedings, May 1889, #704, pp. 73-78.

A special Indian Army Circular of 1890 set out detailed regulations and procedures to encourage the employment of pensioners by government departments and officials and private employers. This circular was applicable only to the Bengal Army, although it was circulated in the Bombay and Madras presidencies for the benefit of the men serving in those armies who had been recruited from the territory of the Bengal Army.[30]

These rules were intended by government to make military service attractive to men of the most desirable military classes, specifically men from North India and presumably also Nepal. The fact that these provisions to assist pensioners in obtaining employment did not extend to men recruited in Madras and Bombay presidencies indicates that it was not really considered desirable to encourage them to enlist. In any case, three years after the issuing of this circular, with the extensive reorganization of the Indian Army in 1893, many so-called "non-martial" classes were no longer recruited at all. The potential benefit to pen-

sioners of preference for government and private employment, therefore, was significant primarily for men of martial classes. Men of low castes residing in the Bombay and Madras presidencies, including the Mahars and possibly including the Bene Israel, derived relatively little benefit. There is some evidence that Mahars and other low-caste men were employed in such works as government munitions plants and ordnance works.[31] Some Mahar pensioners, or their wives or widows, seem to have found work as domestic servants with British families.[32]

Overall government policy as stated at the Delhi Divisional Conference of 1888 clearly favoured the pensioner or reservist of respectable agricultural background.

> A pensioner with RS. 9 per mensem and a chuprass, would be much more important than when confounded among the rustics of his village and living on his pension of RS. 4 per mensem. A reservist with a policeman's baton would be a very different person to a reservist driving a plow.
>
> On the other hand, the advantage to the district service is patent. A soldier is a man who has received an education, not in books perhaps but in something better. He has seen the world. He has acquired self-respect and the habit of prompt obedience. Not only will he be more efficient as peon or constable than the ordinary run of men employed as such, but he will enjoy more consideration and, with his pension or reserve pay, will be better off; will have more to lose; and will on all these accounts behave much better. No doubt the Ummedwar will find employment restricted, but the Ummedwar is not generally a representative agriculturist, but an undesirable person from the purlieu of some town, or the hanger on of some official. It will be well to dispense, as far as possible, with this class.[33]

Another possibility for rewarding excellent service existed in the form of grants of land to retired soldiers, a policy adopted by the Government of India in 1888.[34] Many recommendations had been received by the Government of India from retired native officers of the Bombay Army for grants of land. These

were all forwarded by their commanding officers, and many of these men were highly commended for long and faithful service. However government did not intend to make such grants a matter of course but "in recognition of exceptional and distinguished service, and to men of good family, by whom such grants could be appropriately held."[35] These grants were also meant to apply only to native officers of the Bengal Army and Punjab Frontier Force. It was recognized that this principle should be applicable to all the Indian armies, but very few such grants were available to officers of the Bombay Army. In fact no more than one or two a year were given. The obvious reason for this was that government did not have much land available in the Bombay presidency to give away. In Punjab, however, land in the newly opened canal colonies was available for grants to military pensioners. This land, being in effect new land from the agricultural standpoint, was not already held and cultivated by anyone and was therefore available for disposition by government. Very few men of the Bombay Army stood to benefit from this system of land grants, and of those few none were likely to be Mahars. This provision also was intended to make military service attractive to men of landed, respectable, classes considered politically reliable and considered to be "martial," therefore eliminating much of the Bombay Army from serious consideration.

With regard to the Bombay Army, at least one attempt was made to establish agricultural colonies of retired soldiers on wasteland. In 1852 the survey commissioner for Ratnagiri suggested that some of the surplus population of the collectorate

might be resettled in deserted villages in Khandesh, which was still suffering the aftereffects of the Pindari Wars.[36] In the early 1860s this suggestion was adopted and a colony for military pensioners was established at Challisgaum in Khandesh. Relatively little information was available on the ultimate fate of this colony; however, at least initially some Mahar soldiers did participate in this scheme. Of twelve men who left the colony in 1862-63, three were Mahars: a bugler, Bujnac Sudnac, private Mannac Sumnac, and private Sumnac Esnac. These men and four others who left the colony were described as idle.[37]

Lieutenant Birdwood, on special duty with responsibility for the colonization scheme, reported initial success. By December 1863, a total of 297 people, including pensioners, their servants, and their families, had settled in seven villages in the area of Challisgaum. They had brought a total of 482 1/2 acres under cultivation. A further 1,318 acres was partly cleared and partly wasteland. The villagers already living in the area welcomed the presence of military pensioners as a protection against outlaws and bandits. Some of them returned to deserted lands and brought them back into cultivation due to this sense of greater security. The villagers were also willing to assist the pensioners in establishing themselves as farmers. Lieutenant Birdwood had established a weekly market at the village of Tumboola, as a convenience not only to the pensioners but also to other villagers in the area. He made a personal visit to the pension stations of the southern Konkan in March of 1863, and persuaded another twenty men to join the colony.[38] A small

increase of population was therefore occurring, even allowing for men who left due to dissatisfaction or inability to work. After this one report, however, it is not clear what ultimately became of the Khandesh settlements. Kehimkar mentioned knowing five or six Bene Israel families who had settled in Khandesh, but had left and returned to Bombay or Poona.[39] It is impossible to say how many pensioners settled permanently in Khandesh, or how many may have belonged to the Mahar or Bene Israel communities. This colonization scheme held promise and would no doubt have been of considerable benefit to men from the densely-populated Konkan. However, the author was unable to discover whether it became a permanent success or not.

To sum up the practical benefits of military service, these were primarily in the form of pay and pension. The possibilities of employment in civilian life, or obtaining grants of land, while real, were primarily a factor for men from Northern India, that is, Punjab and Hindustan. Relatively few men from the Bombay presidency seem to have received benefits in either of these areas.

A minor benefit available to small numbers of soldiers was the possibility of enlisting their sons as recruit boys or pension boys, an option exercised by at least some Mahars, as the story of Tannak (cited later) indicates. Through most of the nineteenth century, native infantry regiments carried on their rolls twenty-four boys, who were paid at half the rate of sepoys, attended the regimental school, and performed duties as messengers and orderlies. Upon reaching the age of eighteen, they were

generally enlisted in the regiment as regular soldiers, if they were found suitable. Recruit and pension boys often became regimental clerks. First preference was given to the sons of soldiers or pensioners, and particularly to surviving sons of men who had died on service. There were exceptions, however, as noted in a letter from the commanding officer of the 17th Bombay Infantry to the Assistant Adjutant-General, Bombay District.[40] Colonel Newport, the officer commanding the 17th Bombay Infantry, requested permission to enroll as a recruit boy one Ramchander Sinde, son of Narayen Itte, tent lascar. The regiment was at that time short of six recruit boys, and no suitable candidates were available among the sons of men serving in the regiment. The boy in question was a Konkani Maratha, described by Colonel Newport as "very intelligent and likely to make a good writer." Permission was granted as a special case.

For the regiment, this system offered the opportunity to train young men for clerical and administrative duties from an early age, and to teach them military discipline. From the point of view of the soldier, the prospect of being able to enlist his son provided an opportunity to, so to speak, apprentice him in the family business. This was likely to be particularly appealing to men, such as Mahars and other low-caste soldiers, who did not have significant property outside of the army, and who therefore wished to substitute military service for economic security elsewhere. There is not enough information available to make any positive statements, but biographical data on a few Indian officers suggests that service as a recruit boy may have been an

advantage in promotion. In addition, for a family whose only economic asset was the earnings of the head of the household as a soldier, a son's pay of 3 rupees 8 annas per month as a recruit boy was a significant addition to the family income. The same advantage, of course, would be true of pension boys--that is, the sons of military pensioners enlisted in (usually) their fathers' former regiments.

During his period of military service, a sepoy was likely to acquire various skills, not all of which could be readily applied to civilian life. A type of skill which would probably have been of some advantage to most retired soldiers was experience in construction techniques. It was the practice in the Bombay Army to have sepoys build their own lines, using a standard plan provided by the army quartermaster-general's office, local materials, and sepoy labor. Rules laid down in 1864 provided that when new lines were constructed, hutting allowances were to be given at the rate of ninety rupees for each native commissioned officer and fifteen rupees for other ranks. Native officers were provided with separate small houses having a total area of 35 by 35 feet including verandas, noncommissioned officers had about half this space, married privates' quarters were 11 1/2 feet by 17 feet approximately, and unmarried privates had 10 1/2 foot by 17 foot quarters, shared by two men. Accommodations were meant to be similar to ordinary Indian homes, but with extra consideration to questions of sanitation. Artisans were employed to train the sepoys in the various skills required to build the huts. The skills required included brick making, tile

making, lime burning, carpentering, and quarrying. In 1882 the use of concrete to construct military lines was introduced on an experimental basis.[41] It is hardly likely that the average eighteen-year-old enlisting with an infantry regiment considered the prospect of acquiring house-building skills as a major reason for choosing military service, but he was likely to acquire such skills in the course of his military service. Since many Mahars and other Indians of low caste worked as construction labourers, and some Mahars worked as labour contractors on a fairly large scale, any formal training or experience in this line would doubtless have been useful to them. Even apart from considerations of employment, many observers commented that the houses of military pensioners were generally better constructed and maintained than those of their neighbours. It is reasonable to think that men who had learned to build and repair their own housing in the army would continue to do so once they had retired to their native villages.

The total impact of military employment, pension income, and the training and skills acquired in military service on the village economy was probably quite considerable. It is not easy to find specific evidence of the effects of military recruitment on village life; however, an interesting example is found in Arthur Crawford's Reminiscences of an Indian Official. Crawford describes in the second and third chapters of his book what he calls "The Great Military Pension Frauds." This was a system of fraud which lasted for several years in the southern Konkan. The fraud was uncovered about 1860 by an assistant collector (identi-

fied by Crawford as Colt, which was not his real name), who had an unusual knowledge of the Marathi vernacular. He was thus able to carry out his own investigation, independent of his Sheristadar and karkoons.

The pension fraud was centered on the cantonment of Dapoli. This town was the headquarters of the pension pay department for Ratnagiri district and had a large military pensioners' colony. The military pension paymaster lived at Dapoli, and visited other towns in the district quarterly to pay pensions. At the time of the fraud the same officer had been paymaster for nearly twenty years. Colt's suspicions were aroused first by an anonymous petition received saying that a pension for a Jemadar who had died seven years earlier was still being drawn by the village headman.[42] An investigation carried out over a period of two years revealed a very large scheme of fraud, involving the sowkars, the clerks of the pension pay office, and several dummies who impersonated the pensioners. Colt was assisted in his investigations by two unlikely people: a retired European Conductor of the Ordnance department, and a Parsi shopkeeper. The conductor, Daniel Monk, had settled in a small village near Dapoli and was held in high esteem by his Indian neighbours. The shopkeeper had come to know of the fraud primarily because many of his customers among military pensioners had been unable to pay their accounts with him.

The fraud would not have been possible had the system of payment and identification been carried out as it was supposed to be. Each pensioner, whether retired soldier, widow, or other

heir, was given a descriptive roll containing a very detailed physical description. This was to be presented to the pension paymaster whenever payment was due. The paymaster was to compare the roll with his register of pensioners, and then to compare the person presenting himself for receipt of pension with the descriptive roll. Pension rolls were not to be transferred, sold, or mortgaged. The roll of a deceased pensioner should have been returned to the pension pay office with a report of the death. However, over the course of time, the practice of comparing each pensioner with his descriptive roll fell into disuse. Rules notwithstanding, many pensioners did in fact pledge their pension rolls with moneylenders for cash advances. The moneylender would then return the roll only long enough for the pensioner to draw his pension, and would then claim most of the pension payment and the roll. Many moneylenders carried their extortions a step further, and rather than returning the pension rolls at all, they paid dummy pensioners to present the pension rolls, collect the pension, and return everything to the moneylender. This scheme required both the connivance of the clerks of the pay office, and the negligence of the pension paymaster in failing to compare descriptive rolls with the person presenting them. Several dummies were employed in the fraud to collect pensions. Some of them were real military pensioners, merely supplementing their pensions with illegal employment. One, however, was an unusual and interesting man by the name of Tannak (a pseudonym). Tannak was the son of a Subadar-Major who had fought at the battle of Koregaum in 1818, and had settled at Dapoli with

a special pension. He built a stone house in the Mahar quarter and bought the occupancy right of a few acres of land. He brought up his son for the army, enlisting him as a recruit boy, but Tannak was lamed in an accident at the age of sixteen and was unable to enlist. Tannak eventually mortgaged his lands and took employment with a local moneylender as process server and in other capacities. Crawford describes Tannak as fine looking with a certain military smartness, unusually intelligent, and a natural actor.[43] Due to his military background, he was able to pass himself off as a pensioner with no difficulty. He was rather proud that he had been able to impersonate pensioners of high rank, and had drawn the pension and special allowance of Subadar-Major Sirdar Bahadur Ramnak for four years. Tannak had his own sense of honour; he tried to get better terms for the pensioners involved in the fraud and had threatened to withdraw his services if they were not given enough money from their pensions to carry on to the next quarter date. He had therefore a good deal of influence in his own neighbourhood. Upon being caught red-handed with descriptive rolls and money in his hands, he co-operated with Colt in the investigation and trials that followed.

The existence of this scheme illustrates several important points. First, the amount of money flowing into Dapoli in military pensions was obviously substantial. Crawford noted that even in the 1890s the pension pay department paid out some six lakhs of rupees per annum, and in the 1860s returned nearly the entire land revenue of Ratnagiri in the form of pension payments.[44] Individual pensioners either had, or at any rate

should have had, based on the willingness of the Parsi shopkeeper to extend credit to them, enough disposable income to buy European style luxuries such as brandy and tobacco. The total amount of pension income was enough to justify the Sowkars' considerable expense in bribes and payments to their dummies. The specific case of Tannak is interesting also. It would seem from his family background that his father's military pension and savings were enough to enable him to improve his social standing substantially; however, to maintain this improved status depended on continued military employment. When his son was unable to enlist due to his physical disability, he was also unable to maintain the higher status which his father had achieved. He had obviously acquired sufficient skills in his service as a recruit boy, and some education acquired in the regimental school, to come up with another scheme to improve himself. Certainly the army never intended that military experience and/or education should contribute to the ability to run a con-game, but Tannak used his advantages as best he could. The fact that he is described as trying to get better terms for the pensioners whom he was helping to defraud suggests that he felt some continuing sympathy with them, though whether as fellow caste-men, fellow villagers, or former soldiers of the regiment which he had hoped to join is not clear. Tannak, incidentally, lived to a ripe old age and improved his latter years as a police informer.[45]

Access to education in army schools may have been the single greatest benefit available to low-caste men of the Bombay Army. Contrary to some recent sources,[46] education was not

compulsory for either soldiers or their dependents under the East India Company, and there is no evidence that it was made so in the Indian Army at least up to 1866. Education was, however, available; it was relatively cheap; it was encouraged; and no man or boy was refused admission on the basis of his caste. Attendance was voluntary, except for recruit boys who were required to attend, but was encouraged and considered to be a factor for promotion of enlisted men and NCOs. The cost was nominal, even considering the low pay of sepoys: two annas per month for privates, four for NCOs.[47] Moreover, during the latter half of the nineteenth century there was a steady improvement in the quality of instruction provided and in its scope. Given that even primary education was by no means universally available, and even missionary schools did not always admit untouchable children, the existence of the regimental schools offered a chance unlikely to be available elsewhere to acquire at least elementary learning.

Up to 1853, instruction in regimental schools was under the supervision of the Interpreter of the Regiment, and the direct control of the Commanding Officer. The teachers were for the most part Maratha Pundits, hired locally or through the assistance of the Native Education Society or the Elphinstone Institute. The Pundit was assisted by a Havildar who instructed in Hindustani, and a sepoy assistant. The Havildar and the sepoy assistant were paid 5 and 3 rupees per month respectively, while the Pundit got 15 rupees plus fees paid by soldiers and their children. The Pundits, however, as they were not enlisted men, did not qualify for pensions or promotions, and received no

housing allowances or field batta. The extra payments from soldiers totalled between 15 rupees per month (1st Lancers) to 33 rupees 8 annas per month (9th Regiment Native Infantry). A Pundit therefore could expect from 30 to 45 rupees per month with no extra allowances or security, and would be expected to follow the regiment on field or active service and submit to some aspects of military discipline.[48]

A disadvantage of this system of instruction, from the point of view of low-caste soldiers, was that the Brahmin Pundits might object to teaching them. This did sometimes occur. After the introduction of the system of trained soldier-teachers, one commanding officer commented that the Pundit had "evinced a reluctance to teach the inferior, and would not allow them to sit . . . with the higher caste," and another stated that the number of sepoys attending school had doubled, and the number of boys trebled, and they learned much more, since the introduction of the new system.[49]

The texts used were supplied by the Elphinstone Institution, and although the degree of attainment was described as being "purely elementary," the subjects covered included algebra, arithmetic including fractions, geography, history (English and Indian), grammar, and a variety of morally edifying works. The sepoy or boy who completed the entire course would have attained not only functional literacy in Marathi (Devanagri script), but also a sound background of practical knowledge.

It is likely that this rather informal system had ceased to be adequate by about 1850, for in 1855[50] an extensive correspon-

dence indicates that neither the needs of the army nor the aspirations of the sepoys were being satisfied by the existing system of regimental schools. The Commander of the Forces believed that better qualified Pundits should be engaged, and that instruction in English should be provided, in order to train soldiers as clerks and pay orderlies. He also noted that there was a strong interest among the soldiers and recruit boys in learning English, and that they would go to considerable trouble themselves to do so. Accordingly the Military Department requested a "detailed scheme for improving the Vernacular Schools attached to Native Regiments" from the Director of Public Instruction, Mr. C. J. Erskine. This resulted in an inquiry into the existing state of the regimental schools. It showed that Marathi schools existed in all regiments of the Bombay Army (thirty infantry regiments, the Sappers and Miners, and several cavalry and artillery units), and Hindustani schools in all except three (the 2nd Grenadiers, 4th Rifles, and 19th Regiment Native Infantry), which did not have enough Hindustani-speaking sepoys to warrant separate instruction. Four regiments (Sappers and Miners, 3rd Battalion Artillery, 5th and 21st Regiments Native Infantry) had English schools supported entirely by the officers of those regiments. Since Marathi was the predominant language of the Bombay Army, and the attendance at the Hindustani schools was much smaller than at the Marathi schools, the Director of Public Instruction made recommendations primarily for the improvement of the Marathi schools.

These recommendations, which were generally adopted, indicated a basic change of official policy. The regimental schools were now to be organized along the same lines as in European regiments. Schoolmasters should be enlisted men under military discipline and hold noncommissioned rank. Like all enlisted men, they would receive allowances, field batta, and pensions of their rank. The military authorities would collect and account for all fees. Promotion and higher pay for schoolmasters would reflect the attainments and success of the school. Pupils wishing to study English required a more generous complement of soldier-assistants. The Director of Public Instruction also offered to have his department's Inspectors visit the regimental schools, if requested. Most important was the recommendation that a class for native schoolmasters be added to the Military Normal School at Poona, to which initially one or two promising men or boys might be sent from each regiment.

In 1857-58, the year of the Indian Mutiny, the first Indian soldiers were trained as schoolmasters at Poona, despite some difficulties caused by "the disturbed state of the country."[51] During 1858, sixty-seven soldiers from native regiments attended the Normal School. None can be positively identified as Mahars, although some may have been; three were definitely Bene Israel. Five came from cavalry regiments, five from the artillery, and five from the 29th and 30th (Baluchi) Regiments. For this group no further data were collected. A total of eleven were discharged from the school and sent back to their regiments as incompetent to become teachers; this number included one of the

cavalry sowars and three artillerymen.[52] Out of fifty-two men from infantry regiments who attended the first class at the Native Normal School, and for whom further information was available, at least seventeen became VCOs, including two of the eleven "incompetents". It is quite possible that this figure should be larger, since the earliest date for which the names of native officers are available is 1877, and some men may have gained promotion and retired or left the army prior to that date. Of the seventeen officers, one was a Telinga, two Bene Israel, one probably Hindustani, two Sikhs or Rajputs, four Muslims, and seven Marathas. (One of the "incompetents" was a Muslim, the other Maratha.) It is true that the men selected to attend the Normal School were considered to be promising--i.e. intelligent and willing to learn--but this is still a very high rate of promotion, considering that only approximately two per cent of the men in the Bombay Army held VCO rank at any one time. The seventeen men are listed in Table VIII, showing their regiments and highest rank achieved.

The sample is too small to permit much generalization, but it does not appear that these men were promoted either more rapidly or more slowly than average. It seems clear, however, that attendance at the Normal School significantly increased the likelihood of being promoted to the commissioned ranks, whether or not the speed of promotion was affected.

The Native Normal School at Poona performed its function satisfactorily for over thirty years. It provided not only schoolmasters for regimental schools, but also regimental clerks

TABLE VIII

FINAL MILITARY RANKS OF

NATIVE NORMAL SCHOOL ATTENDEES, 1858

Name	Caste	Regiment	Highest Rank	Year Attained
Sewchyn Sing	Sikh/Rajput	Sappers & Miners	Jemadar	1879
Rajah Lingoo	Telinga	Sappers & Miners	Jemadar	1869
Bhewa Pallow	Maratha	1st Bombay Native Infantry	Subadar	1878
Shaik Mugdoom	Muslim	5th " " "	Subadar-Major	1883
Ramjee Nimbalker	Maratha	6th " " "	Subadar	1878
Shaikh Ibram	Muslim	9th " " "	Jemadar	1886
Shallom Moses	Bene Israel	10th " " "	Jemadar	1876
Kessur Poorie	Hindustani?	11th " " "	Subadar	1878
Ramjee Jadow	Maratha	13th " " "	Jemadar	1878
Essoo Sawunth	Maratha	14th " " "	Subadar	1883
Shaikh Mahomed	Muslim	16th " " "	Subadar	1878
Babajee Powar	Maratha	17th " " "	Subadar	1871
Nagapah	Maratha	18th " " "	Subadar	1874
Khoosial Sing	Sikh/Rajput	18th " " "	Subadar	1878
Shaik Hoosen	Muslim	22nd " " "	Subadar	1877
Ellezerjee Israel	Bene Israel	24th " " "	Jemadar	1878
Radha Kisson	Maratha	28th " " "	Subadar	before 1877

SOURCE: M.S.A., Military Compilations, vol. 771 of 1858, #461, Bombay Army Lists, 1877-1883.

and writers, who were generally preferred to civilian clerks, particularly when regiments were sent on field service. In 1888 the Government of India contemplated closing the Normal School at Poona as an economy measure. (The Normal School at Bangalore, which had served the same functions for the Madras Army, was already closed.) However, the Bombay Army made a very strong argument for the retention of the Normal School. The Adjutant-General of the Bombay Army argued that to abolish the Normal School and reintroduce Brahmin teachers "who are not amenable to discipline, who will have no prospect of increase of salary or pension, and who have no interests of any description in the service, can only be regarded as retrogression."[53] To buttress his case, he noted that of the schoolmasters trained in the Normal School, twenty-seven had become Native Commissioned Officers and others had been appointed to various staff appointments such as Havildar-Major, and Quartermaster Havildar. This success rate, along with the fact that civilian teachers would cost more than soldier schoolmasters, no doubt explains why the Normal School was retained. We can be absolutely certain of only one Mahar soldier who graduted from the Normal School. This was Subadar-Major Ramji Sakhpal, who served as an army schoolmaster at Mhow, an important station for the Bombay Army, for many years prior to his retirement. The Subadar-Major was the father of B. R. Ambedkar. If the army system of education had produced no effects for the Mahars other than to provide an appropriate environment for Ambedkar's early life (since his father took a very strong interest in encouraging his sons' education) this in

itself would be a significant impact on the Mahar community. It is reasonable to suppose, however, that at least a few other Mahar soldiers did attend the Normal School and either directly or indirectly benefitted through better chances of promotion and staff appointments within their regiments. After his retirement, Subadar-Major Ramji appears to have been one of the retired Native officers involved in a dispute with the Municipal authorities at Dapoli regarding the admission of Mahar and Chamar boys to the Municipal School, as discussed in more detail later in this chapter, and documented in Appendix E.

In any case, regardless of how many Mahar soldiers may or may not have served as schoolmasters in regimental schools, the fact that regimental schoolmasters were trained in an army school, subject to military discipline, and drawn from various castes and communities, must have been beneficial as far as the education of low-caste boys and men was concerned. A Brahmin teacher, who was a civilian and therefore not under military discipline, would have been able to indulge any caste prejudices he might have had in the conduct of the regimental school. Even if he could not specifically forbid untouchable boys or men to attend the school, he could certainly make the school environment unpleasant enough to discourage them, or to interfere with their ability to learn. This situation would be very unlikely to arise where the schoolmasters were soldiers themselves, who lived, trained, and in many cases had grown up with the other men of their regiment. Their loyalties were likely to be with the regiment itself, and whatever caste prejudices they may have

harboured were likely to be secondary to what was considered to be the good of the regiment. For this reason alone, the existence of regimental schools was certainly of value to Mahars serving in the army. It was one opportunity, perhaps the only opportunity available, to obtain an education little affected by the prevailing caste prejudices which certainly had an impact on education in civil life.

The regimental schools were an important factor in the growing professionalism of the Bombay Army. Given an ordinary show of interest on the part of commanding officers, soldiers not only attended school themselves, recognizing that their prospects of promotion and regimental employment would be greatly enhanced, but also enrolled their children, in the expectation that their sons would follow them into the regiment (for instance, Tannak and his father the Subadar-Major). A secular, practical education was calculated to produce a strong sense of common identity and a strong bond with the regiment, its European officers, and the British government, superseding caste or village ties. As Sir Robert Napier found, many native officers would declare,

> I was born in the Regiment, as was my father before me. I have no other home. I was educated in the Regimental school.[54]

The Bombay Army also made a small but important contribution to female education in the Bombay Presidency. At least three regimental girls' schools were mentioned in a report by the American Missionary Society in 1829. It is also possible that Gangabai, the first native woman employed as a schoolteacher in Maharashtra, may have learned to read in a regimental school.[55]

The first formal indication of the existence of a Regimental Girls School is found in military records of 1861. In June of that year Lieutenant-Colonel Stewart of the 25th Regiment Native Light Infantry employed a pundit and a schoolmistress to teach girls. The schoolmistress was described as "a respectable native woman fully competent to instruct in reading and writing both in the Balbodh and Modee characters and possessing some knowledge of arithmetic." It would be very interesting to know where the 25th Native Infantry found its schoolmistress, and where she had acquired her education. She was apparently a Hindu woman; she was attending a mission school to improve her qualifications; since she lived in the regimental lines, we may surmise that she was the wife, daughter, or sister of a soldier. Further than that is impossible to say. Finding qualified women to teach in girls' schools was always a problem, as so few native women either were educated, or if educated were free to work outside of their homes.

Six months after the institution of this school, thirty-seven girls attended. Five were daughters of men of the 26th Regiment and three of the Sappers and Miners, both units being stationed with the 25th. Lieutenant-Colonel Stewart was sufficiently encouraged by this interest to apply to government for financial support (which was granted) of fifteen rupees per month for the girls' school. Two years later, and under a different commanding officer, the Regimental School was still thriving. The same schoolmistress was still employed, receiving a salary of nine rupees per mensem. One of the sepoy school assistants

attended the school for an hour daily to teach arithmetic. Another woman was employed experimentally to teach sewing.[56] This school had very modest goals of teaching the girls to read, write and do simple arithmetic. At that time there were a total of 178 girls living at the Regimental Headquarters at Sholapur. Of these, 104 were 5 years of age and younger, and 37, including 17 girls 6 - 13, were Muslim, leaving 57 potential students. Twenty-six girls actually attended school, as shown in Table IX. There was obviously a significant interest among soldiers in having their daughters educated at least to this elementary level. The Christian and Bene Israel soldiers were most likely to send their daughters to school. The Maratha and Parwari girls attended at approximately the same rate, about one in three, suggesting that, given equal opportunity, Mahars responded as positively as higher-caste parents to educating their daughters.

TABLE IX

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE OF REGIMENTAL GIRLS

OF THE 25TH NATIVE INFANTRY, SHOLAPUR, 1863

	Christians	Bene Israel	Maratha	Parwari	Pardeshi (Rajput)	Total
Total girls 6-13 years	5	5	23	21	3	57
Number attending school	4	5	8	8	1	26

SOURCE: M.S.A., Military Compilations, vol. 949 of 1862, #452, p. 153.

The loss to the Mahar community of this educational option with the loss of their right of enlistment was therefore a real blow, not merely the loss of a theoretical benefit which few actually received.

An interesting minor point is that of thirteen Rajput girls, ten were under five years of age; there were two seven-year-olds and one eight-year-old, with only the eight-year-old in school. In no other caste were there so few school-age girls; this would suggest that the Rajput girls were being married at very young ages, while Maratha, Parwari and Muslim girls were still living at home up to ten or twelve years of age. The total numbers are quite small, so not too much can be made of this. However, the Parwari families appeared to resemble the Marathas in this respect, tending if anything to keep their daughters longer before getting them married. The age and caste distribution of the girls attending this school is shown in Table X.

For the Bene Israel, education in regimental schools was of far less importance. Bene Israel soldiers did use the regimental schools for their children, and some became army schoolmasters. However, unlike the Mahars, the Bene Israel were not deprived of other educational opportunities. Although, unlike Jews elsewhere, the Bene Israel had forgotten most of their intellectual history, as they migrated into Bombay they came into contact with various missionary societies which established schools in Bombay and Kolaba Districts. Many Bene Israel became well enough educated to hold skilled professional and technical positions. The Reverend Dr. John Wilson was especially influential, opening

TABLE X

AGE AND CASTE DISTRIBUTION OF

REGIMENTAL GIRLS OF THE 25TH NATIVE INFANTRY, SHOLAPUR, 1863

Ages (Years)	Castes						
	Christians	Bene Israel	Muslim	Rajput	Maratha	Parwari	Totals
Under 5	2	3	20	10	44	25	104
" 6	-	-	3	-	3	3	9
" 7	1	-	5	2	6	2	16
" 8	1	3	2	1	4	2	13
" 9	1	-	1	-	2	5	9
" 10	1	1	5	-	4	3	14
" 11	-	1	-	-	2	3	6
" 12	1	-	1	-	1	2	5
" 13	1	-	-	-	1	1	3
Totals	8	8	37	13	67	46	179

SOURCE: M.S.A., Military Compilations, vol. 949 of 1862, #452, p. 153.

several schools from 1837 onwards.[57] Several of his pupils became hospital assistants, schoolmasters, clerks and office assistants. At least three enlisted in the army and attained high rank. Others studied with the Chief Engineer of Bombay, Colonel George Jervis, and obtained employment as draftsmen and surveyors with the Department of Public Works and the Corps of Guides.[58] Many Bene Israel served as regimental writers, VCOs and NCOs, and held regimental staff appointments. Their success in the army was largely due to education obtained elsewhere, particularly English education acquired in mission schools. Kehimkar deplored the educational backwardness of his communi-

ty,[59] but he was lamenting the few college graduates, taking primary education for granted--a very different situation to that of the Mahars.

The American Army

Many black Americans believed that military service over a period of 150 years had resulted in an increase in civil and political rights, and in improved economic circumstances. In 1918 W. E. B. Du Bois wrote in The Crisis, the newspaper of the NAACP:

> 5,000 Negroes fought in the Revolution; the result was the emancipation of slaves in the North and abolition of the African slave trade. At least 3,000 Negro soldiers and sailors fought in the War of 1812; the result was the enfranchisement of the Negro in many Northern states and the beginning of a strong movement for general emancipation. 200,000 Negroes enlisted in the Civil War, and the result was the emancipation of four million slaves, and the enfranchisement of the black man. Some 10,000 Negroes fought in the Spanish-American War, and in the twenty years ensuing since that war, despite many setbacks, we have doubled or quadrupled our accumulated wealth.[60]

It could equally be argued--and Du Bois was responding to some who did argue--that after so many years and so many wars black Americans still did not have the same rights as white Americans. The position of blacks had definitely improved since the American Revolution; the question was to what extent their service in the military had contributed to this improvement? W. E. B. Du Bois may have committed the logical fallacy of post hoc ergo propter hoc,[61] but this does not mean that there was no relationship at all. Military service did provide some important benefits for black Americans, as it did for the Mahars of India.

The primary benefit, and the one probably having the most immediate effect on an individual's choice of the military, was pay. This was only thirteen dollars a month after the army reorganization of 1866, but since the only alternative for many newly-freed slaves was poorly-paid farm work, for many black men this was relatively attractive.[62] A bonus of three dollars a month for re-enlistment within thirty days of discharge, and another dollar per month for each additional five-year enlistment, would boost the basic pay of a twenty-year veteran to eighteen dollars. During the late nineteenth century, most American soldiers took their discharge after a single five-year enlistment. The four black regiments, however, always had high rates of re-enlistment, reflecting a relative lack of civilian opportunities for black men,[63] and the fact that army service had a higher status than most other work available to black men.

Unlike the Indian Army, the American Army did not make a great effort to secure more long-service soldiers. In the American case, there was not the same concern about large numbers of ex-soldiers mingling with the civilian population; they were all citizens of the same state and there was no reason to insulate the army from the civilian population. The high re-enlistment rates of black soldiers, while not a result of official policy, had one result that must have pleased any white men who would have preferred fewer blacks in the army: the low turnover further restricted access to the military by limiting new recruitment. American soldiers became eligible for pension after thirty years, or less if disabled due to service-related injury or illness.

In theory, under "the soldier's Magna Carta,"[64] a general order of 1867 allowing enlisted men to qualify for commissions, it was possible to rise from the ranks to commissioned officer status. In practice very few regular soldiers ever obtained commissions, and still fewer blacks. Benjamin O. Davis Sr., cited earlier, was probably the only black soldier in this period to do so. Even the few black West Pointers of the nineteenth century found their careers blocked by the insistence that black soldiers must have white officers, but black officers could not command white troops. For most black soldiers, the best they could hope for was promotion to noncommissioned rank in the 9th or 10th Cavalry or the 24th or 25th Infantry. The fact that, as previously discussed, even a few men persisted and were able to get through West Point or achieve officer status by other means, is a testament to the value they placed on military careers.

It is unlikely that black men enlisted in the army for the specific purpose of obtaining an education, but for some this was a significant benefit of military service. As early as the Civil War, attempts were made to provide elementary education in the black regiments organized by the Union Army. James Peet, Chaplain of the 50th U.S. Colored Infantry, wrote in 1865 that in the previous year a regimental school had operated under a great variety of discouraging circumstances, but with considerable success. He stated that soldiers averaged not more than two hours out of the week actually in the presence of the teacher, but soldiers carried their books with them and studied in every spare moment, with help from more advanced comrades. The sol-

diers wanted very much to learn to read and write, and worked very hard at it. He said that of 646 in the regiment, 97 had learned to write and 35 to read since enlistment. Most of the others had attained some knowledge, and would no doubt continue to improve.[65] Higginson also said that "their love of the spelling book is perfectly inexhaustible,-they stumbling on by themselves, or the blind leading the blind, with the same pathetic patience which they carry into everything. The chaplain is getting up a school house, where he will soon teach them as regularly as he can."[66] It would seem that black soldiers were very anxious to take advantage of whatever educational opportunities were available to them. Higginson's regiment was recruited largely from the Sea Islands of South Carolina, a very isolated area, and his men were perhaps unrepresentative; he had none of the "worst reprobates of Northern cities," whom Colonel Hallowell of the 54th Massachusetts said he had in his regiment.[67] Regiments raised in the North from free blacks may have had more "reprobates," but also had more literate men, for instance Christian A. Fleetwood of the 4th U.S. Colored Troops.[68]

The post-Civil War army required school facilities for enlisted men at all permanent army posts; through the 1860s and 1870s this was usually the responsibility of the chaplain. At Fort Laramie, Wyoming, for instance, the chaplain kept a school for the children of the post and in the winter also held a night school for enlisted men who wished to attend.[69] The War Department, concerned with the high illiteracy rates of black soldiers, made a special effort to provide elementary education for them.

The Brevet Major General of the Department of Texas believed that blacks would be better citizens as well as better soldiers if they were better educated. The act of July 28, 1869, which consolidated the original six black regiments into four, also provided for a chaplain for each regiment to be responsible for religious affairs and to provide elementary education.[70]

The chaplains were appointed by the President, and at first were all white. Not until 1886 was a black chaplain, Allen Allensworth, a self-educated Baptist minister and former slave, appointed to the 24th Infantry. Reverend Allensworth had the support of Senator Joseph Brown of Georgia and several ministers and leading citizens from Kentucky and Cincinnati.[71] The reluctance to appoint black chaplains was probably due to the fact that chaplains were commissioned officers, though not in the line of command; it is hard to imagine that at least four qualified black chaplains could not have been found.

A revision of the army regulations in 1881 improved the opportunities for education. Officers were expected to encourage school attendance and to provide facilities, although attendance was always voluntary. Instruction was provided by an officer or a qualified enlisted man. The curriculum included basic reading, writing, arithmetic and a little geography and history. Since many of the rank and file (both white and black) were illiterate when they enlisted, this was a valuable opportunity for those who wanted to take advantage of it. More advanced and specialized instruction was available to men seeking NCO rank. In addition, post libraries and reading rooms were available at all of the

larger western posts. The army did not, apparently, find any need to provide special training for army schoolmasters.

Black soldiers showed a continuing interest in education beyond the elementary level offered by regimental schools. Lincoln Institute, later Lincoln University, in Missouri was established with funds given by the enlisted men of regiments of the United States Colored Troops after the Civil War. Wilberforce College, Xenia, Ohio was the only Negro college prior to the Spanish-American War to have a department of military training to which army instructors were detailed. At least three of the oldest Negro colleges--Howard (1867), Fisk (1867), and Hampton--were founded by Union Generals.[72]

The importance of regimental schools in improving the educational status of blacks must not be exaggerated. First of all, only a few thousand men at a time were enlisted and able to take advantage of regimental schools, and many of them were long-service veterans who had long since exhausted the educational opportunities available to them. Second, there <u>were</u> other opportunities for blacks to attend school--considerably more opportunities than Mahars or other untouchables had. Even before the Civil War, abolitionist and freedmen's associations offered schooling. Some slave children learned reading and writing along with their owners' children; Allen Allensworth, mentioned previously, learned his letters by playing school with his master's young son. After the Civil War and emancipation, blacks had to be accommodated in state public school system in some way, even if the facilities offered were restricted or inferior in quality.

However, with access to schooling sometimes difficult, and with a high level of adult illiteracy, the availability of even minimal education through regimental schools must be considered a benefit, however limited.

Service in the army, particularly on the western frontier, offered discharged soldiers many opportunities to take part in the expanding economy of the west. Many discharged soldiers homesteaded, took jobs in the mines, on the railroad, and in other occupations.[73] Some of these were definitely black men. George Ford enlisted in the 10th Cavalry in 1867 at the age of nineteen. After two enlistments, in 1878 he was appointed superintendent of the Negro section of Chattanooga National Cemetery. He served as supervisor of several national cemeteries until retirement in 1930, with a leave of absence in 1898 to serve as a Major in the 23rd Kansas Volunteers. 25th Infantry Sergeant Samuel Harris, leaving the army in 1890, worked on ranches in the Dakota Territory.[74] Of course many blacks as well as whites migrated west without any previous military connection; blacks were anxious to leave the south, where jobs were scarce and the prospect of getting any land very slim, and try their luck homesteading.[75] Soldiers had a small advantage in being able to count their service in the Union army towards the residence requirement for homesteading.[76] Ex-soldiers of both races did settle in significant numbers in the west, as Rickey found based on "inquiries into the antecedents of 20th century citizens of communities in the vicinity of abandoned army posts."[77]

To sum up, it would seem that regular, honourable employ-

ment was the major factor in the enlistment of blacks in the army, and their high rate of re-enlistment. Because there were only four regular regiments of black soldiers, the total opportunities were very limited, and the impact from an economic standpoint on the total black community was probably slight. Socially and culturally, black ex-soldiers seemed to have been very prominent in their communities and had positions of respect and honour.[78] Some black men, probably a high percentage of those serving in the army, were able to obtain at least an elementary education. Both directly and indirectly, the army contributed to the development of institutions of higher learning for black people. In the years prior to World War I, the army does not appear to have made any specific efforts to assist ex-soldiers in establishing themselves in businesses or in furthering their education, although ex-soldiers did get a special concession under the Homestead Act. However, in the expanding economy of the frontier, many ex-soldiers were able to take advantage of opportunities of which they may have learned due to their military service.

The critical importance of military service was less in direct material benefits received, than in validating black claims to equal status. As Lee comments in his official study of Negro troops, "Participation of Negroes in past wars was one of the richest veins of material that could be worked by the supporters of Negro rights and opportunities."[79] It was important to blacks to maintain their role in the military, and equally important to whites who wanted to uphold racial inequality to

limit that role as much as possible. This produced an inevitable conflict, foreshadowed in the little wars of the late nineteenth century.

Social Status and Military Service

The effect of military service on social status differed for the three communities under consideration. There are also differences depending on whether changes in social status are permanent or temporary, whether they are only internal to the given community, or apply also to its status in relation to higher status groups, and what other routes to social advancement exist.

The impact of military service on social status appears to be least significant in the case of the Bene Israel. The Bene Israel did not have a background of discrimination to overcome, and perhaps for this reason their social status as a community does not appear to have been dramatically affected either by their military service, or by the deprivation of the opportunity for military service. It is true that a number of Bene Israel officers used their military careers as stepping-stones to careers in the police or to official positions. Subadar Abraham David Churrikar served with the 3rd Regiment Bombay Native Light Infantry from the 1840s until 1855. After leaving the army, he was appointed Native Commandant of the Ahmednagar Police [on April 1st 1855]. His career in the police was successful enough to produce an appointment as Assistant Superintendent of Police at Poona in 1863. At the time of his death in 1867, at the early age of forty-five, he was Chairman of the Poona Municipality.

Benjamin Israel's grandfather, Ezekiel, enlisted in 1837 in the 4th Rifles under the name of Bapuji Israel; he reached the rank of Subedar, but had to retire in 1859 "on account of the loss of all his teeth."[80] He was able to serve for several years with the police in Ahmednagar District, where his sons were educated. Subadar-Major Moses Bapuji Mullekar, Sirdar Bahadur, of the 12th Regiment Native Infantry, was appointed a Justice of the Peace on his retirement from the army about 1880.[81] Military service was definitely an advantage to a man who wanted to make a second career in the police. "Headquarters sub-inspectors are nearly always officers who have served in a Native regiment, and have qualified for their first military pension."[82] Bene Israel soldiers apparently took full advantage of any educational opportunities that came their way in the army, including sending their sons and daughters to regimental schools. However, their high rate of promotion was due largely to the fact that many were already literate, and often spoke English as well as Marathi before enlisting. An interesting example is the career of Robenji Isaji Nawgaonkar. He was born in Bombay in the 1830s, and was the son of a building contractor. Robenji learned to read and write both Marathi and English as a boy. He enlisted in the army, as a grown man with a family of his own, primarily to escape from his tyrannical father. He worked as a clerk in the regimental office, and spent all of his spare time composing and singing Lavnis, a form of Marathi folk poetry. He appears to have been the exception among Bene Israel soldiers in that he really did not take his profession very seriously.[83]

The Bene Israel did not depend upon military service as their sole avenue to relatively better paying and more prestigious employment. The Bene Israel community benefitted from missionary activities by the American Missionary Society, teachers from the Cochin Jewish community, and several schools established by Dr. Wilson in Bombay in the 1830s.[84] The particular value of the mission schools was that they offered instruction in English. A number of young men of the Bene Israel community parlayed their knowledge of English into relatively skilled employment in various branches of government service, including the commissariat department, and employment as draftsmen, surveyors, and builders. Others were employed as hospital assistants in the Government Medical Service, and in the subordinate hospital establishments of Indian regiments. Kehimkar collected observations by a number of military officers on the qualities of Bene Israel soldiers. While in some instances individual Bene Israel soldiers and officers were mentioned for gallantry and strictly military attainments, the most characteristic comment is that Bene Israel were more intelligent and better educated than most other men in the army, held a large number of clerical and staff appointments in their regiments, and were very quick and willing to learn. General Montgomery, who had served with the 14th Regiment Bombay Native Infantry, stated, "I believe that of late days fewer of the Bene Israel entered the military service, their intelligence commanding more agreeable employment in civil life."[85] It is significant that when in 1899 government offered, in response to a Bene Israel petition for

reinstatement on the recruiting rolls, to form a class company of Bene Israel, this offer was met with very little enthusiasm.[86] The reason for rejection of a class company was that, in a class company, very few Bene Israel could expect to be promoted to be officers. Their interest was less in being soldiers than in being officers; as a modern-day Bene Israel said,

> Bene Israel in the army were like cork in water--they simply had to come to the top; there was no help. And so there would have had to be a regiment solely of officers for Bene Israel would not be content to remain privates.[87]

The relationship between military service and social status, in the case of the Bene Israel, may be summed up by saying that the Bene Israel for the most part acquired their education and knowledge of English outside the army, and used qualifications already existing to further their military careers. Loss of access to the army did not, therefore, deprive them of educational opportunities, or of opportunities for respectable and relatively well-paying employment in other branches of government service. Also, since the Bene Israel were never a particularly depressed group, nor were they ever subjected to social discrimination, military service does not appear in and of itself to have changed their social status in any particular way. They certainly regretted the loss of a particular career path, but they did not suffer unduly as a community because of this loss.

The case of the Mahars is much different. Mahars who enlisted in the army plainly did expect to improve their social status, and to some extent they were able to achieve this. With-

in the closed circle of the regiment, caste prejudice was, if not actually absent, at least officially discouraged. According to army regulations no distinction was made between soldiers on the basis of their caste or community. All served together, performed the same duties, and had the same prospects of promotion. It was a proud boast of the Bombay Army that "the Brahmin . . . stands shoulder to shoulder . . . [and] sleeps in the same tent with his Purwaree fellow soldier."[88] Mahar officers were able to command men of other castes apparently without difficulty. B. R. Ambedkar, as a boy growing up in a pensioners' colony at Dapoli and later in the military quarters at Satara, seemingly was unaware that his family was untouchable. The young Bhim made this discovery when he was already in high school, when he and his brother had to travel outside military circles to meet their father.[89] It is possible that caste prejudice in the army, where it existed, emanated from Brahmins and other caste Hindus employed as clerks rather than from fellow soldiers. John Malcolm, a soldier-diplomat with many years' service in India including the governorship of Bombay 1827-30, recorded the following conversation:

> 'These cowardly fellows of Brahmans,' said an able and old Konkanese Subhedar I was conversing with on this point, 'who would not look at me, and would degrade a brave man of my caste (a Purwaree) by refusing to let him stand sentry over the treasury, if in a cutcherry would cringe and help the collector to his shoe if it fell off, and would consider themselves the more honoured the nearer he sat to them, and yet I believe,' said the old man laughing, 'you Feringees are, according to their belief, as unclean and impure as we Purwarees.'[90]

As nearly as can be deduced from rather limited information, it would seem that while actually in the army, or after

retired or taking other employment, while in contact with British employers and officials, the Mahar soldier was not treated in any way differently from a soldier of higher caste. Once retired and living in his native village, a Mahar soldier, although he might have a relatively high status among the Mahar community and even among caste Hindus, would nevertheless once again have to accept his untouchable status. The dissonance thus created between status earned by military service and ascribed status appears to have been very painful in some instances. The shock experienced by the young B. R. Ambedkar on discovering what his family's untouchable status really meant in terms of the treatment they could expect in the outside world has already been noted. C. A. Kincaid, in "The Outcaste's Story," describes how a former Mahar soldier who had become a devotee of the God at Pandharpur had taken up his residence outside of the town. When asked why he did not live in the town, since Mahars were allowed to go as far as the outer gate of Shri Krishna's temple, he replied:

> I have served, Sahib, in the war as a Sepoy of the Maharana and I could not bear to be turned back at the temple gate by some Brahman priest so I came to Chokhamela's dipmala and what better place could I choose. From here I can see the spire of Shri Krishna's temple. It was here that Shri Krishna comforted Chokhamela and dined with him after the Brahmans had driven him out of Pandarpur.[91]

In the story "The Vampire's Treasure" in the same collection, Kincaid describes the murder of the little daughter of a retired Mahar Subadar. When the parents discovered the loss of their child,

> . . . they searched for her all round the house in vain, then they roused the whole Mhar quarter; at last the Subhedar went to the patil and complained. The patil

> joined in the search for some time, then he sent a runner to Wai, the nearest police station. . . .
>
> The sub-inspector on receipt of the report telegraphed to his superior, the superintendent, and rode at once the six miles to D-.[92]

One may well wonder if an ordinary Mahar, who was not a retired Subadar, would have received such immediate attention from the police or indeed from the village patil.

Some Mahar soldiers may have been able to acquire land as a result of their military service; none of the annual grants to deserving native officers seem to have gone to Mahars, but retired officers might, as Tannak's father did, lease some land. Some Mahars probably were among those who settled in Khandesh. Any such gains were likely to be transitory, as in Tannak's family, unless the family continued to send at least one member to the army, or could otherwise earn some cash income. There was probably no real expectation of getting land in most cases. The soldier-anchorite of Kincaid's story, who was described as a great-grandson of a veteran of Koregaon, knew that military service was no way to get rich. A recruiting officer told him he would be able to buy a hundred acres and two hundred bullocks, but, the anchorite said, "my great grandfather had come by no such riches when he served the Sarkar."[93] Real Mahar soldiers were doubtless at least as practical as Kincaid's fictional character.

Possibly the most significant change in the social status of Mahars due to their military service lay in their demand for education, and their ability to make their demands effective. As previously discussed, a number of Mahars were able to achieve at

least an elementary level of education while serving in the army, and were able to send their sons and daughters to regimental schools. Through the 1880s and 1890s the native newspapers published many accounts of Mahars being denied access to municipal schools. Of special significance was the dispute which occurred in Dapoli,[94] beginning July 1892 between the Mahars and Chamars of Dapoli and the municipal officials. John Nugent, Revenue Commissioner of the Southern Division, visited Dapoli in February 1894 and met a deputation of

> . . . retired Native commissioned and noncommissioned officers of the Mahar and Chambar castes, eminently respectable, well conducted and in some instances well to do men, whose sole sin, and that an unavoidable and hereditary one, is that they are low caste . . .[95]

who complained that their sons were being denied a proper education. They had already applied to the Collector and the Assistant Collector, but had not been satisfied. The school board's offer to establish an inferior separate school for the low-caste boys had been refused, on the reasonable grounds that it was "certain to handicap the education of their sons as compared with the education of the children of higher castes."[96] The school board refused to make any other arrangement. Nugent insisted that low-caste boys must be admitted to the municipal school, and allowed to sit in the same classrooms, maintaining that it was sufficient if they sat on separate benches. The mission school in Dapoli, conducted by Reverend Mr. Gadney, Principal, already admitted low-caste boys into the high school. This had been done at the instance of pensioned Subadars and Subadars-Major, who wished to have their sons taught in the

mission school.[97]

This entire dispute, dragging on as it did from July 1892 to November 1894, is significant in several ways. The retired officers were able to get the attention and action of fairly highly-placed government officials, although they encountered a great deal of resistance from lower level officials who were mostly caste Hindus. They persisted for over two years, despite pressure from caste Hindus in their community. Most importantly, the low-caste parents explicitly and deliberately rejected anything amounting to "separate but equal" instruction for their sons. They were very clear on the importance of having their sons educated with boys of higher caste, not necessarily having actual physical contact with them, but in the same classrooms, by the same teachers, and with the same physical facilities available to them. They were seeking not just education for their sons, although this was obviously important, but also an improvement in their social status. The fact that many of these parents were retired officers, and therefore could legitimately make a claim on the attention to government officials, indicates the value of military service in this respect. On this issue the Mahars came into conflict not only with caste Hindus, but also with the local educational authorities. The Mahars wanted their sons educated on equal terms with other boys; caste Hindus often objected to having them taught in the schoolroom, although they were permitted to sit on the school verandah; the educational authorities were reluctant to force the admission of Mahars into the schoolroom, as if this were done many caste Hindu parents

would withdraw their sons from the school entirely. This dispute was finally resolved by the admission of the Mahar and Chamar boys into the schoolroom, merely having them sit on benches a few feet from the other boys.[98]

A few years earlier, a protest from Reverend R. Winsor of Sirur against the closing of the American mission school for Mahars at Ranjangaon Ganpaticha by the village Patel, elicited the comment from a British official that, "I have never met with a more mendacious and unreliable set of men than the Christian Mahars,"[99] and the advice from another that Reverend Winsor should "forbid your teacher from interfering in any way between the Patel and his subordinates, the Mahars."[100] The school closing must be understood as one aspect of a long-standing disagreement between the Mahars and the Patel. This in itself was a result of the "social revolution . . . in the movement of the Mahars and low castes from status to contract,"[101] freeing them to sell their labour on the open market, a change resisted by many village officers. The Ranjangaon school was finally re-opened and the Patel dismissed, after William Lee-Warner, then Collector of Poona, and Arthur Crawford, Commissioner, Central Division, followed up the complaint.[102]

These two cases demonstrate an important effect of military service on the socio-political status of Mahars. The Mahars of Ranjangaon, as village servants nominally under control of the Patel, were able to get action on their complaint <u>only</u> because Reverend Winsor persisted in writing on their behalf, and because Lee-Warner and Crawford were sympathetic to them. The position

of many British officials, typified by the remarks of Messrs. Snow and East, (footnotes 99 and 100) was that government should not interfere, or encourage others to interfere, with the relations between village officials and village servants. As village servants, the Mahars could expect little help in any action to change the status quo. The Mahar and Chamar petitioners of Dapoli had broken out of the role of village servants, and as military pensioners had established a relationship with the municipal and higher government authorities independent of the traditional village structure. They could demand and get support from higher authorities to enforce their rights as ratepayers--rights which the Mahars of Ranjangaon did not have. It is a reasonable surmise that the Dapoli pensioners were less easily intimidated than the Mahars of Ranjangaon; at any rate the Dapoli group carried on its campaign independently and without the assistance of any intercessor like Reverend Winsor. The fact that the Dapoli pensioners had a source of cash income which was not controlled by village authorities certainly contributed to their independent stance.

If Mahar soldiers encountered dissonance between the status they had earned in the military and the status to which they returned in their native villages, this phenomenon was even more pronounced in the case of black Americans. Black soldiers and retired soldiers seem to have had high status in their own communities and among other blacks.

> Until World War II there were few Negro communities that did not have several honoured men of the Grand Army of the Republic who could be pointed to with pride. Retired

> infantry and cavalry sergeants from the Regular Army were often leading spirits in Negro community life.[103]

After particular gallantry shown by the 9th and 10th Cavalry during the Spanish-American War, many black homes displayed a picture of the two units charging up San Juan Hill in Cuba.[104] In spite of the many disadvantages and limitations on military service for blacks, military service was still one of the better occupations available to black men through the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and as such black soldiers were respected members of their own communities. White Americans had very different reactions. There was a very common perception among whites, particularly, but not exclusively, among Southern whites, that black soldiers were drunken, disorderly, and at any moment likely to run amok and assault white women. Colonel Chambers McKibin, investigating trouble between the 25th Infantry and local police in El Paso in February 1900, noted that:

> There is unquestionably a very strong prejudice throughout all of the old slave states against Colored Troops. . . . It is not because the Colored soldier is disorderly-for as a rule, they behave better than White soldiers . . . but because they are soldiers.[105]

As late as the Second World War, black soldiers reported being spat upon by white women for daring to be seen in public in uniform. Many more instances could be cited, but the point is obvious. Many white Americans perceived blacks who appeared in anything other than a servile position as threatening; a black man, armed, disciplined, and in uniform, was a special challenge to common white stereotypes of blacks as inherently inferior.

We can therefore conclude that military service improved the status of blacks in their own communities, but did not im-

prove their status with relation to whites. In some ways, in fact, black soldiers had more problems with whites, because they were less willing than civilians to accept a subordinate position.

Mahar soldiers were able to establish a link with the most powerful institution in India--the British Raj--and in some instances to use that link to bypass local authorities. Military service was also a way to sever the ties of village customary law which maintained the inferior status of the Mahars. Other forms of employment could take the Mahar out of the village, but none offered the alternative higher status afforded by military service, and few offered long-term financial security in the form of pensions.

In contrast, the black American soldier had to return to a community where white prejudices were still dominant. State and local laws and customs in racial matters were generally upheld by military authorities. The American Army was part of a social order which tolerated and even institutionalized racial discrimination. Military service did not provide an alternate to traditional patterns of authority; rather, the military maintained those same patterns. A dissonance was created for black men between their legitimate rights as citizens, earned by their willingness to defend their country, and that country's persistent refusal to honour or even recognize those rights.

It may be concluded that military service offered similar benefits to low-caste Indian soldiers and to American black soldiers--chiefly modest financial security to long-service

soldiers, some small advantages in obtaining land and civil employment, and improved access to education. The effect of these benefits on the community as a whole, rather than on individuals, was quite different.

The Mahars, as a menial class in a relatively static and tradition-bound society, had limited opportunities to improve their status either individually or as a group. If they maintained their traditional roles as village servants, they also retained their inferior social and ritual status. If they abandoned their traditional social roles, their poverty and limited education provided little basis for anything better. Although individual Mahars could and did find employment in new areas, such as mills, factories, and railways, and some prospered as labour contractors or moneylenders, these occupations did not change their social status. Military service did offer at least the possibility of enhanced social standing, as a profession followed by caste Hindus and with strong institutional links with the British authorities.

Access to education through regimental schools was of great importance to the Mahars primarily because so few other schools were open to them, and those that were often imposed restrictions that interfered with untouchable boys' ability to benefit from instruction.

Military service also created a class of potential community leaders--the retired native officers who settled in military pensioners' colonies or returned to their native villages. Heavy recruitment of Mahars from Ratnagiri district meant that this

district had a large concentration of retired soldiers, but ex-soldiers also settled near other military cantonments at Poona, Satara, Ahmednagar[106] (and possibly others).

Loss of enlistment in the army, therefore, deprived the Mahars as a group of significant financial and educational benefits, and blocked a possible avenue to improved social status.

Black Americans, as members of an expanding and rapidly changing society, had a much greater range of opportunities open to them. They could "go west" and homestead, or move from rural south to industrial north. By the turn of the century American blacks were, as a class, well-to-do enough to support a full range of businesses and professions, including newspapers, universities, and churches. New Orleans had all-black religious orders, dating from the French colonial period. Many large cities in the south had sizable black middle-class neighbourhoods, and there were wealthy black families such as the Fortens of Philadelphia. Without in any way minimizing the social, economic and political inequities confronting the majority of black Americans (many of whom still lived in extreme poverty), it must be conceded that they had a rather larger share of a much bigger pie than did the Mahars. The economic and educational benefits of military service, while useful to individuals, were therefore not as critically important to blacks as they were to the Mahars.

Military service had, however, a considerable symbolic importance overshadowing its importance in economic terms. It was important for blacks to be able to say that they, or their

forebears, had fought for their freedom, and had not merely been given it as a favour. It was important that black men could be the equal of white men in courage, if given the chance. Retired soldiers--the sergeants and NCOs of the 9th and 10th Cavalry and 24th and 25th Infantry, and before them the veterans of the USCT--could serve as community leaders. How important this role was would depend on other sources of leadership--clergymen, businessmen, teachers--but it should not be dismissed. Ultimately the greatest importance of military service was simply that it was one of the duties and privileges of citizenship, and blacks as citizens shared in it to the degree allowed to them. Some were willing to go to great lengths and demonstrate remarkable tenacity to exercise their full rights and duties: Colonel Charles Young, who rode his old cavalry mount from Xenia, Ohio to Washington to protest his retirement on medical grounds; Benjamin O. Davis Sr., who worked his way up from the ranks to retire as a Brigadier-General; and his son, Benjamin O. Davis Jr., who endured four years of segregation and harassment at West Point to graduate in 1936, the first black in forty-seven years to do so.[107]

Between 1865-1900, the military experience of blacks and Mahars was comparable in many ways, although the impact of that experience differed: specific and material benefits for the Mahars, more diffuse and symbolic influence for blacks.

After the late 1890s the military experience of the two groups diverged sharply. Although blacks suffered a relative decline in opportunities within the armed forces, they were never

excluded completely; their efforts between 1900-1952 focussed on being accepted as combat troops, getting access to officer and technical training, getting equitable treatment in the armed forces, and ultimately ending racial segregation in the armed forces. The Mahars were preoccupied with having their right to re-enlist as soldiers restored to them; the question of access to officer training did not even arise. Delistment in 1893 had been a severe blow to them as a community, not only threatening their economic status, but also (in their view) giving official sanction to caste Hindu discrimination against them. The next chapter will deal with the Mahars' attempts to recover their actual and perceived losses.

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95. J. Nugent, Revenue Commissioner, S.D. to William Lee-Warner, Secretary to Government, Educational Department, July 1894, M.S.A. Educational Department #63 of 1895; see also App. F, part 2.

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Lee-Warner's remark in report #3875, cited in 98 above, that "the opponents of education and of the equal rights of men are at present active" earned an unofficial rebuke from T. D. Mackenzie, Secretary to Government, based on the Hon. Mr. Rickey's statement that "the theory of equal rights of men in India as elsewhere would produce infinite mischief," in a minute 28 July 1887.

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CHAPTER V

FIGHTING FOR THE RIGHT TO FIGHT: THE INDIAN ARMY, 1893-1942; THE AMERICAN ARMY, 1918-1945

Organizational changes in the Bombay Army had, by the 1890s, already substantially reduced the number of Mahar soldiers. Further army reorganization between 1891 and 1895 resulted in the abolition of the Presidency armies in favour of one army divided into the Bombay, Madras, Bengal, and Punjab Commands, each under a Lieutenant-General, but under the Commander-in-Chief in India. The general-mixture regiments of the old Madras and Bombay Armies were completely reorganized as class-company or class regiments, with various castes and communities now defined as "non-martial" completely eliminated, or enlisted only as bandsmen and clerks. At the same time pay and benefits were substantially improved.[1] In effect, just when the army became a better-paid, presumably more efficient and professional body, many Indians were deprived of the opportunity to serve except in designated non-combatant roles.

The Mahabaleshwar Committee and Army Reorganization

British military policies in India, as actually carried out, involved a number of conflicting interests and philosophical viewpoints.

The basis for the reorganization of the Bombay Army was a

memorandum sent from the Government of India to the Government of Bombay in October 1891, reflecting many of Commander-in-Chief Lord Roberts' views.[2] The measures outlined in the memorandum were, in turn, developed from the proposals submitted in 1885 by the Governor-General in Council to the Secretary of State for India. Two members of the Council, Sir Auckland Colvin and Mr. C. P. Ilbert, while agreeing with the proposed organizational changes, disapproved of increasing the strength of the Indian Army to deal with "that unknown quantity, the assumed military possibilities of the Russians in Central Asia and Afghanistan."[3] They argued that to engage in such an "arms race" would create a serious drain on Indian revenues, thus imposing on India the costs of maintaining imperial security which should rightly be borne by England.

The interests considered in policy-making included those of the government of Bombay, which wished to preserve as much as possible of its own prerogatives; the government of India, which had an understandable desire to create an orderly administrative structure out of the congeries of separate commands and services; and the government of England, which had to balance domestic, Indian and imperial concerns. The government of India and H.M. Secretary of State for India often did not see India's interests in the same way, and within each there was a considerable range of political opinion, from the restraint urged by Colvin and Ilbert to the "forward policy" favoured by Roberts. Among these complex and often conflicting interests, the consequences of changing policies for Indian soldiers, particularly those from

socially and politically insignificant communities, were of small consequence. Although a few officers and officials from Bombay spoke in support of the rejected low-caste soldiers, military policies for the most part disregarded protests.

Sir George Greaves, Commander-in-Chief of the Bombay Army, appointed a committee[4] (hereafter referred to as the Mahabaleshwar Committee) to study and report on the reorganization scheme as set out in the memorandum. There was no question but that the Bombay Army would be reorganized along the general lines set out in the memorandum; the committee was primarily to consider specific details, and report on how the reorganization could best be carried out. The committee was also to report on the current establishment of the Bombay Army.

The Government of India conceded that the Bombay Army was superior to the Madras Army, and also that:

> The drill, training and discipline of the Bombay Army have always been of a high order, . . . It fails only in the quality of its material. . . . It is the earnest wish of the government of India to see Bombay troops take the place to which their invariable loyalty, good conduct, and former excellent services entitle them.[5]

The proposed measures to improve the quality of soldiers in the Bombay Army, briefly summarized, were to eliminate low-caste men entirely, to restrict the enlistment of Jews and Christians to the positions of writers and bandsmen, and to recruit only Marathas from the hill country, reducing the required standard of height from 5 feet 6 inches to 5 feet 4 1/2 inches to allow small but otherwise qualified men to be enlisted. Bombay regiments were to be completely reorganized either on a class company or class regiment basis, with a greater proportion of men from North

India. An analysis of the caste return of the Bombay Army, appended to the memorandum,[6] reveal that 1,873 or ten per cent of the total of the Bombay Infantry were Parwaris, Mangs, and Ramusis, who were described respectively as "very low caste men, if not sweepers . . . a very low caste, perhaps outcasts . . . professional thieves . . . fitted for police [!] rather than for regular soldiers."[7] The Parwaris and Mangs were said to be in no way regarded as fighting men. The Marathas, making up thirty-six per cent of the total, fared no better in the opinion of government. Many of the Marathas were from the Konkan and it was felt that the hot, damp, steamy climate of the Konkan did not produce good soldiers. It did, however, produce political and social reformers, from the moderate M. G. Ranade to the radical B. G. Tilak, and the committee may have felt that the district as a whole was politically unreliable. No such suspicions were put on record, so this is only a surmise. Further, the so-called Marathas included many non-fighting groups, such as Kunbis. The thrust of these criticisms appears to be that the Marathas currently enlisted in the Bombay Army were not really fighting Marathas, but an inferior sort of Maratha of poor physical makeup and lacking in military instincts.[8] A further, relatively minor point was the recommendation that the enlistment of line boys and recruit boys should be strictly limited, on the theory that:

> Boys who have grown up in the family lines do not as a rule make desirable recruits. They grow up, like London street boys, very sharp, but deficient in manly and moral qualities. . . . Men who wish their sons to enter the service should be warned to send them away to their villages at as early an age as possible.[9]

Several assumptions are implicit in the measures recom-

mended for the reorganization of the Bombay Army. First is the assumption that the Bombay Army, as it existed prior to reorganization, was not good enough to take the field against a European enemy. Second was the assumption that this poor quality was due not to poor training, discipline, or unwillingness on the part of the soldiers, but rather to the inherent inferiority of the men of whom the Bombay Army was composed. This inferiority was ascribed variously to the unhealthy climate of Southern India, to an hereditary lack of military instinct, and to the levelling effect of the "general mixture" system of enlisting men of all castes and communities together in one regiment. Certain other factors which were not seriously considered include possible low calibre of the British officers attached to Bombay regiments, lack of field service, and the effect on soldiers' morale of their officers' assuming they were inferior, and expecting only inferior performance from them. The report of the committee must therefore be studied with a view to what its deliberations reveal, not only about the actual reorganization of the Bombay Army, but also about the assumptions underlying the reorganization, and about factors that the committee may never have considered.

The Mahabaleshwar Committee requested opinions from the officers commanding Bombay Army regiments and from the general officers commanding in various military districts. These comments, and the recommendations of the committee itself, tell a great deal about the reasoning behind the reorganization of the Bombay Army and the decisions regarding which castes and communi-

ties were suitable soldiering material.

Considering the prejudice against low-caste men as soldiers, it is significant that the commanding officers of three regiments wrote in defence of the Parwari soldier. The commanding officer of the 2nd Grenadiers said that "the Parwari is of far better fighting material than the Deccani Mussulman,"[10] and suggested that the Marine Battalion might be made a class regiment of Parwaris. The commanding officer of the 9th Bombay Infantry thought that a regiment of Parwaris, especially from the Deccan, would "give a very good account of itself."[11] The commanding officer of the 19th Bombay Infantry stated that: "They are possessed of as much soldierly quality as many castes of whom much higher opinions are entertained."[12]

Every regiment required musicians, clerks, and artificers for specialized duties, and most commanding officers suggested recruiting a limited number of low-caste men and/or line boys for these duties. Five commanding officers (1st, 8th, 9th, 10th and 17th Bombay Infantry) specifically mentioned Parwaris as regimental writers. This is particularly interesting as an indication that Parwaris had taken advantage of military schools to acquire a vocational advantage. It is not surprising to find Parwaris as bandsmen;[13] it <u>is</u> surprising, and indicative of the definite improvement in their status, to find them mentioned this often in a "white collar" job within the regiment.

Commanding officers, while generally agreeing that certain classes or castes were better qualified to be soldiers than others, vary considerably in their opinion on specific castes.

As already noted several commanding officers spoke favourably of the Parwari soldier. Others spoke in the defence of the Konkani Maratha, saying that they had found this class of men, if carefully recruited, to be quite satisfactory. Several made the point that it was always difficult to get enough clerks, and if they were not allowed to recruit line boys they would have trouble filling their requirements. They also pointed out that if writers were not allowed any promotion, it would be even more difficult to get qualified men. This consideration would apply particularly to the Bene Israel, who were over-represented both as native officers and as writers, and were generally among the best-educated men in any regiment.

The proposed reorganization would have allowed Parwaris, Mochis, Christians, and Jews to enlist only as bandsmen or writers. Several commanding officers suggested having one mixed company of these castes. The prospects of promotion would have been very poor, if indeed any promotion to the commissioned ranks were permitted. It seems likely that this consideration soured the Bene Israel on military service. Given their overall social status, they would not likely have appreciated being classed with untouchables; and given their previous very high rate of promotion (see Table XII) to the commissioned ranks, the prospect of serving only as clerks cannot have been very appealing.

The restriction of the enlistment of line boys to a maximum of five per cent of the strength of the regiment, in addition to the problems cited by commanding officers in obtaining writers, would have worked to the disadvantage of the poorest soldiers,

including the majority of low-caste soldiers. These men were most likely to keep their families with them in the regimental lines simply because neither they nor their extended families had property in the village to which the families could be sent. Soldiers from relatively well-to-do landowning families were much more likely to leave their wives at home with their parents or brothers, and simply visit on leave. Poor men did not have this option.[14] It is not clear if the objection to enlisting line boys was based on anything other than a preference, common to many armies, for recruits from rural or small town backgrounds, on the theory that they are likely to be healthier and not contaminated with urban vices. There was the valid consideration that a man who had grown up in his regimental lines might find it difficult to impose discipline on men who had been playmates as children, or older men who had known him as a boy.

The assumption that the Indian Army (specifically the Bombay and Madras Armies) was not good enough to face a European opponent was not based on direct experience, since at this time the Indian Army had not been called upon to do so. This conclusion about the inferiority of the Indian Army was based on the unquestioned assumption that all "Eastern" or "Oriental" armies were inherently less effective than all European armies, although a properly selected "Eastern" army with European officers might be almost as good as an all-European army. The poor showing of some units of the Bombay Army in the Second Afghan War, and some units of the Madras Army in the Third Burma War of 1887-1889[15] reinforced this belief, although as discussed earlier (Chapter

III, "Martial Races") there were factors involved besides the presumed inferiority of the Indian troops. Sir George Greaves, who as Adjutant-General in India had gone over "the whole of the correspondence connected with the battle of Maiwand, and . . . [had been] satisfied that the result was not unfavourable to the Bombay Army,"[16] made a point of having his dissent recorded in the correspondence accompanying the Mahabaleshwar Committee's report, but was unable to alter the position of the government of India, articulated by Lord Roberts, which was that the Bombay Army was not good enough to defeat the Afghans and therefore certainly could not be sent against the Russians--a questionable conclusion in the light of later events but perhaps not unreasonable at the time.

The argument that the climate of the Konkan was unsuitable to produce good soldiers can safely be dismissed. Konkanis had been enlisted in the Bombay Army for approximately a century at this time, and had been found satisfactory. In the early nineteenth century the Mahar Sepoys of the Bombay Army were able to endure the rigours of difficult marches with low rations and a great deal of disease as well as, or better than, men of higher castes or men coming from different climates.[17] It can fairly be assumed that neither the climate nor the inhabitants of the Konkan had changed dramatically in the course of seventy-five years, so this argument seems to have no validity at all.

The difficulty of ascertaining whether particular men or classes of men possessed military instinct was apparent to the Mahabaleshwar Committee.

> It must be very difficult to discriminate between those men who take service for the love of fighting and those who enlist merely as a means of obtaining a livelihood; but the necessity of enlisting only men of the former class, if possible, is fully admitted.[18]

In fact such a distinction was probably not merely difficult but impossible to make. First, every soldier in any of the Presidency armies enlisted to obtain a livelihood, whether or not this was his only motivation for enlisting. The committee conceded this point in observing that army pay was insufficient to attract the better recruits, presumably those with the greatest degree of martial instincts. The committee members also apparently overlooked the possibility that men from classes not traditionally martial might have developed, or be in the process of developing, a military tradition of their own. An example was Subadar Luxumonmetter Mhadmetter, 24th Native Infantry, who died in the military hospital at Quetta in February 1887. The Subadar had been a recruit boy, suggesting that his father was also a soldier. His brother Chim Mehter was a military pensioner. Subadar Luxumonmetter had exemplary service throughout the Abyssinian campaign and the 2nd Afghan campaign.[19] This family (Chamars, considered a "non-martial" class) had at least three men of two generations who had been career soldiers. Pensioned Subadar Succojee Israel of the 8th Regiment Native Infantry wrote to the Commander-in-Chief of the Bombay Army in 1880, asking to be allowed to rejoin his regiment as it proceeded to Afghanistan on active service, "as he was still a strong man being only 50 years old."[20] The military tradition in Dr. Ambedkar's family has already been noted; his father, both grandfathers, and six mater-

nal uncles (the Murbadkars) were all native officers.[21] These examples of men from three "non-martial" communities suggest that, if they lacked military "instinct," they certainly possessed something in the nature of a commitment to military service above and beyond what would be expected from men to whom it was no more than a livelihood. This commitment could surely have been fostered and developed into a military tradition, much as the military tradition of the Sikhs had been developed and fostered at least partially by the British.

Many military authorities believed that the general mixture system of enlisting men of all castes and communities together had a levelling effect, tending to erase social and other distinctions between different classes of men. In this respect the perceived interests of the army ran directly contrary to the interests of low-caste soldiers. Security was always an important consideration, particularly with the example of the Mutiny still a vivid memory. There was a distinct advantage in maintaining the separate identities of various classes and castes, so that Sikh soldiers could be counted upon to fire on mutinous Hindustanis or Pathans, and Gurkhas on anybody else. In a general mixture regiment "esprit de corps would overpower any antipathy of race or religion . . . the angles would have been rubbed off."[22] There was no suggestion anywhere in military proceedings that there was concern that Parwaris and other low-caste men would combine with higher-caste soldiers in possible mutiny; the low-caste soldiers suffered from a policy which was intended to insure against disloyalty among the higher castes.

The levelling effect so deplored from the military standpoint had allowed low-caste men to achieve a higher social status, as suggested by the fact that many of them served as regimental clerks and as native officers.

A direct assessment of the calibre of British officers attached to the Bombay Army is difficult to make, since the Government of India was reluctant to criticize them openly. The statement that the Government of India would "promise the Bombay Army a defined share in the defence of the Empire, as soon as it has shown itself worthy of the honour,"[23] taken by the Government of Bombay as an oblique criticism, provoked an immediate reaction from Sir George Greaves and the Governor of Bombay.[24] The Government of India hastily agreed to remove the offending phrases, and emphasized that "worthy of the honour" referred only to the "material" (hence by implication not to the officers) of the Bombay Army.[25] Disclaimers aside, there must have been some doubts about the officers of the Bombay Army. Given the limited prospects of active field service in the Bombay Army, it is not unreasonable to imagine that the most ambitious officers would attempt to be transferred, either to the frontier regiments of the Bombay Army, to the Bengal Army where active service was far more likely, or to civil duties. One of the attractions of the proposed class system to Bombay officers was the promise of more active duty, based on the assumed greater effectiveness of class regiments for posting to the Northwest Frontier.[26]

One possible difficulty with British officers serving in Bombay regiments seems to be that many of them did not speak

Marathi. For example, in the 1st Regiment Bombay Infantry only the commanding officer spoke Marathi; in the 25th Regiment, the two lieutenants recommended for recruiting duty could not speak Marathi. Since in 1890 well over half of the men serving in these two regiments were recruited either from the Konkan or the Deccan, and therefore almost certainly were native Marathi speakers, it is rather surprising that many of their officers did not speak this language. It is difficult to know how widespread this phenomenon may have been; it does seem that knowledge of Hindustani was much more common, since it was more generally useful in military service. This may have contributed to the Bombay Army's perpetual recruiting difficulties. Recruiting parties seemed to have greater success if accompanied by a British officer, but only if he could talk directly to potential recruits and their families. The VCOs were likely to be bilingual (or, in the polyglot Bombay Army, trilingual), but the Marathi-speaking soldiers must surely have felt that their officers took relatively less interest in them than in the Hindustani speakers. The attitude of officers toward the men enlisted in their regiments would clearly be an important factor in regimental morale. In theory, officers were supposed to know the customs and habits of their men, know something about their native villages, and--above all--believe in them as soldiers. The language barrier militated against the first two points. As for the third point, the officer commanding the Bombay Sappers and Miners considered the Telugus and Parwaris "although undesirable as fighting men, must remain admissible for enlistment in the Sappers and Miners."[27]

The commanding officer of the 28th Bombay Pioneers, on the other hand, considered that Parwaris, Jews, men from Oudh and "miscellaneous" were "absolutely useless" as pioneers.[28] This officer had a strong personal preference for Pathans as pioneers. It is hard not to suppose that the prejudices and preferences of these two officers affected their expectations of their men, and probably the soldiers' performance of their duties, the duties of Sappers and Miners and Pioneers being fairly similar overall.

Military authorities were willing to concede that differences between, for instance, Marathas and Kunbis were purely social, that people of these two castes sometimes intermarried, and that a rich Kunbi was considered equal to a poor Maratha. Nevertheless, they persisted in dividing up Marathas and Kunbis into "martial" and "non-martial" classes depending on their presumed ethnic origins (Marathas with some Rajput ancestry being considered more warlike than Marathas without), their social status based on whether or not they had surnames, and even their place of residence. Having decided that neither Konkani nor Deccani Marathas were good fighting men, the military authorities believed that the true descendants of Shivaji's soldiers were the Mawali Marathas. These were the Marathas living in the hill country of the Ghats, between the Konkan and the Deccan, and they were held to be the best prospect for true fighting soldierly Marathas. This conclusion was reached even though relatively few men from this particular class had been enlisted and it was not known if enough of them would come forward to fill up the re-

quired vacancies for Marathas prescribed in the new army organization.[29]

An issue which seems largely invented by British officers themselves was the presumed inability of low-caste men to exercise authority over high-caste men, just as American military authorities decided that black men could not exercise authority over white men. Armies and military men do tend to conservative thinking, so it is not surprising that in both cases officers of the ruling caste should prefer to replicate in the army the tried-and-true, and predictable, patterns of authority and subordination found in civilian society. In the case of the Bombay Army especially, the idea that Marathas (for instance) resented serving with (or, worse, under) Mahars, Native Christians, Bhandaris, Kolis, and other low-castes seems to emanate from British sources. The introduction of class companies and class regiments fostered such feelings; nothing suggests that pressure from Maratha soldiers was even a factor in the introduction of the class-company system in the first place.

Caste resentments did and still do exist, but the common ones seem to have been Mahar versus Brahmin or Brahmin versus Maratha. Conflicts between Mahars and Marathas or Kunbis, based on attempts by the former to abandon their roles as balutedars, seem unrelated to army service. Disputes over school attendance (as in the Ranjangaon case) and accusations of cattle-poisoning seem symptomatic, rather than causative, of troubles in the relations between village officers and village servants. Even in the Dapoli school dispute, the only relevance military service

had was to make the Mahar pensioners more aware and assertive of their rights.

Actual soldierly abilities as demonstrated in years of service were really not the major consideration in army reorganization. Some of the factors being considered were security, logistic convenience (it was simpler to provide working facilities and rations for men of one caste than for men of many castes serving together) and the convenience of enlisting men as much as possible in areas not too far distant from the major anticipated battlegrounds of the future. The classes selected as martial classes were also those who had little or no political influence, were for the most part rural rather than urban, and were generally very poorly educated. In the case of the Marathas, selecting one segment of the Maratha community to be favoured above the others would have had the effect to some extent of dividing the Marathas among themselves, whereas social and economic factors tended to assimilate the Marathas and Kunbis into one large social class. Military policy required an army that was not only efficient and capable of meeting a European enemy, but also as distinct as possible from the civilian population which it might be called upon to suppress. It was also an army carefully divided against itself along ethnic and religious lines, to prevent a repetition of the large scale mutiny of 1857. These measures were largely successful, but at a cost borne largely by low-caste men who lost an important opportunity for security and social advancement.

An alternative explanation for the decreased efficiency of

the Bombay Army (accepting that this was a fact) is that the Bombay Army was suffering the effects of too little active service and a slow turnover of personnel. This would produce few vacancies, contributing to recruiting difficulties, as discussed earlier (Chapter III, part 2). Native officers would be promoted to their level of incompetence, as seniority became a major criterion for promotion, contrary to practice in the Bombay Army in its more active days. With infrequent active service to challenge officers or men, inefficient or overage soldiers could coast along until they died, retired--or proved inadequate in a crisis. This may well have been the misfortune of the native officers of the 17th Native Infantry. A similar problem developed in the black regiments of the American Army between the World Wars, although there was never any difficulty getting recruits. On the other hand, black men did not have to wait for a recruiting party; if they wanted to enlist badly enough to find out where a vacancy might exist, they could go and apply in person.

This explanation is based on promotion data derived from the Army Lists, and shown in Tables XI and XII. Table XI, showing the number of years required for promotion to VCO rank, indicates that the average native officer was promoted with glacial slowness and sureness. There was considerable variation, although no systematic differences, as might have been expected, between different castes. The average soldier could expect to serve about eighteen years before reaching the rank of jemadar, another five to become subadar, and seven or eight to become a

TABLE XI

LENGTH OF SERVICE IN YEARS FOR PROMOTION TO COMMISSIONED RANKS, BOMBAY INFANTRY

			Jemadar			Subadar			Subadar-Major		
Caste	Sample	Total	Longest	Shortest	Average	Longest	Shortest	Average	Longest	Shortest	Average
Marathas	74	362	25 1/2	6 1/2	16 1/2	10	1 1/2 (43 only)	5	10	1 1/2 (10 only)	6 1/4
Muslims	71	286	28 1/2	2	17 1/2	13	1 (47 only)	5 1/2	16 1/2	6 1/2 (9 only)	10
Sikhs, Rajputs	31	121	30	9	20	2 1/2	1 1/2 (22 only)	5 1/2	12	5 1/2 (5 only)	9
Brahmins	76	76	29	10	17 1/2	9 1/2	1 (45 only)	4 3/4	11 1/2	5 1/2 (7 only)	9 1/2
Parwaris (Mahars)	67	67	29 1/2	9	18 1/2	9	1 (37 only)	5	7 1/2	3 (4 only)	5
Bene Israel	66	66	31 1/2	8	20 1/2	8	2 (53 only)	4 1/2	24	6 1/2 (14 only)	13
Mochis (Chamars)	31	31	24 1/2	11	18	9 1/2	3 (19 only)	5	6 1/2	(1 only)	
Christians	22	22	29 1/2	3 1/2	18	9	2 (18 only)	4 1/2	10	6 (4 only)	8
Telingas	20	20	25 1/2	12 1/2	18 1/2	8 1/2	2 (11 only)	4 1/2	16	3 (4 only)	7 1/2

SOURCE: Bombay Army Lists, 1877-1895

A sample of 458 Native Officers out of 1058 whose caste could be identified (out of 1,250 altogether) was used.

TABLE XII

RATES OF PROMOTION TO COMMISSIONED AND NON-COMMISSIONED RANKS, BOMBAY INFANTRY

CASTE	1877		1880		1885		1890		1893	
	% VCO	% NCO	% VCO	% NCO	% VCO	% NCO	% VCO	% NCO	% VCO	% NCO
* Marathas	1.4	8.5	1.9	8.3	1.5	7.1	1.7	9.2	1.8	9.1
* Muslims	3.4	14.0	2.8	12.9	2.6	11.0	2.3	10.4	2.2	9.2
* Sikhs/Rajputs	2.5	14.5	2.7	17.5	2.8	12.6	2.8	10.5	1.9	11.9
Brahmins	3.8	16.2	2.4	15.1	1.7	12.9	1.9	11.9	2.7	13.3
* Parwaris	1.0	7.4	1.3	8.7	1.1	9.2	1.4	9.6	1.0	9.9
Bene Israel	14.3	22.2	12.7	21.7	9.0	29.9	11.5	36.2	12.0	34.5
Christians	6.9	21.6	2.0	28.3	2.4	10.0	2.6	14.0	2.1	14.8
Telingas	6.1	28.6	5.5	29.7	13.5	27.0	5.6	27.8	---	11.1
* All Other Hindus	1.9	11.9	1.9	11.2	1.5	8.0	1.2	7.9	1.3	8.7

SOURCE: I.O.L., Caste Returns 1877-1893

Castes marked * are numerically most important; totals of other castes 10% or less of infantry.

subadar-major, with just enough time to serve to qualify for his pension of rank. The selection process operated at the NCO level; many regimental staff appointments (see Appendix C) requiring specific skills were held by NCOs. Once having broken into the commissioned ranks, the VCO could count on being promoted steadily as his seniors died or retired. He had only to be patient and avoid any bad-conduct marks. This was almost universally the pattern of promotion in individual regiments from 1877-1900; except when a major reorganization took place, or a regiment actually went to war (as at Maiwand), the VCOs moved slowly up the ranks; very rarely was the senior jemadar not promoted to subadar, or the senior subadar to subadar-major, when a vacancy occurred.

Table XII shows the comparative rates of promotion of various castes. Here there are noticeable differences between castes, especially at the VCO level, with the Parwaris having the lowest percentage of the five leading groups. (The Bene Israel percentages were very high, but their actual numbers very small.) However, comparing NCO percentages, the Parwaris actually did somewhat better than the Marathas, and improved over time. This was an illusory gain, as their total representation in the army was declining over the same period (see Table II), but does suggest that on merit alone they did as well as the higher-caste Marathas.

Although both government and the Mahabaleshwar Committee were aware that limited active service made the Bombay Army relatively unattractive to British officers with ambitions, no-

one apparently extended this reasoning to explain the presumed poor quality of the Indian soldiers. In any case it seemed more efficient to change recruiting patterns than to rotate Bombay troops to the frontier on a regular enough basis to give them and their officers adequate field experience. The decision to remove "non-martial" classes was carried out, and by 1895 Parwaris, Bene Israel, Christians, and the other classes now delisted not only were no longer recruited; most had been discharged or urged to take early pensions. The Mahabaleshwar Committee, in recognition that the Parwaris had in the past "done excellent service for Government," recommended a special corps "extra to the existing establishment" to consist of Parwaris and to relieve the regular infantry of extra guard duties.[30] This territorial battalion was expected to absorb most of the 1,640 Parwaris left in the Bombay Army.[31]

This provision of a territorial battalion did not appear adequate compensation for the loss of any other military prospects. The Mahar community began agitation for reinstatement in 1896, and persevered until 1942.

The Petitions

Several of the castes and communities delisted in 1893 protested to government. The Kayastha Literary and National Association of Ajmere protested against their exclusion as a "menial class"; the official explanation offered was that this was not a reflection on their social standing but indicated only that they were not a military class.[32] The Bhandaris, a low-status Maratha caste, petitioned in 1896,[33] and the Bene Israel in 1899

through two different organizations, the Bene Israel Benevolent Society and the Anglo-Jewish Association.[34] The Bene Israel were offered, but refused, two class companies of their own, because the chances of promotion would be slight. None of the other petitions received any more encouraging response, and these three apparently abandoned any further efforts.

The first petition on behalf of the Mahars (included as Appendix F, part 1) was submitted to government 11 April 1895 by the Anarya Doshpariharak Mandali, an organization of Parwaris of the Konkan and Deccan. The petition was first presented to the Viceroy, was returned for resubmission through proper channels, and circulated through the Bombay government, the Adjutant-General in India, and the Commander-in-Chief in India.[35] The government of Bombay recommended that at least some Mahars should be allowed to enlist in some infantry regiments, because the loss of military employment was a substantial hardship to them.[36]

The exact origins of this petition are obscure. According to government records, it was submitted by one Shibram Gobind Waiker. This is almost certainly an error for Gopal Baba Walangkar (Gopalnak Viththalnak Walangkar), who was a follower and friend of Mahatma Phule[37] and himself a retired soldier from Ratnagiri district. The petition was originally written in Marathi, and a copy of it was found by Dr. Ambedkar among his father's papers. He believed that his father had obtained the assistance of Justice M. G. Ranade in preparing the petition.[38] It seems improbable that Ranade, himself a Chitpavan Brahmin, would have written some of the highly critical comments about

Brahmins and other high-caste Hindus, in particular the claim that the "Chitpavan Brahmins of Konkan came from the Jewish race . . . [who] married the native low caste women." However, given his strong interest in social reform, he might well have contributed some of the arguments against religious excesses and prejudice, and for government's obligation to "employ in civil, military and police Deptt. (sic) . . . these faithful and honest persons."[39] A similar petition was apparently made "on behalf of persons of the Mhar and cognate castes in Satara" to the government of Bombay;[40] perhaps Ranade assisted in the drafting of a single petition which was then copied by two or more groups. The petition emphasized past loyal service of the Mahars, criticized the religious bigotry and past treachery of high-caste Hindus, and asked government to employ the Mahars in civil, military and police departments, in accordance with the Royal Proclamation of 1859. It may well be, as discussed earlier, that any caste bias reflected in the decision to remove Mahars from the army was British, not Hindu. However, the Mahar petitioners did not see the situation this way. They believed (a belief still held in the Mahar community) that high-caste Hindus had deliberately misrepresented and misinterpreted Mahar history in order to make the Mahars seem debased and unworthy. The Mahar petitioners were of course not aware of the debates over recruitment policy or the acceptance of Lord Roberts' views on martial races. Although the government of India took the petition seriously enough to request information about the Koregaon monument from the government of Bombay (presumably to verify the petitioners' claims), the peti-

tion was not successful. In October 1896, eighteen months after its initial submission, the government of India was "unable to rescind the orders which have been issued regarding the castes to be admitted to the Bombay Army."[41]

Walangkar and other members of the Anarya Doshpariharak Mandali also wrote several letters to the newspaper Dinbandhu, in 1894 and 1895, pleading their case for enlistment in the army.

The second petition was prepared by the conference of the Deccan Mahars, with Gangaram Krishnajee, Subadar Bahadur, President, and Shivram Janba Kamble, Secretary. This petition was presented to government on at least three occasions, to Lord Lamington, Governor of Bombay, in 1904, once again in 1906 to the Viceroy, Lord Curzon, and in November 1910 to the Earl of Crewe, Secretary of State for India, London.[42] The petition was signed by 1,588 memorialists, most of them from the Poona district but some from Konkan and other districts. The signatories included forty-two military pensioners. The 1910 version of the petition (given in Appendix F, part 2), considerably expanded from the earlier petition, includes a list of over one hundred Mahar noncommissioned officers, at least half of them verifiable from army lists, and quotes a number of newspaper articles favouring their viewpoint.

One of the signatories to the petition was retired Subadar Ramjee Malojee, living in Satara district. This man was almost certainly the father of Dr. Ambedkar, who was retired about that time and did live in Satara at one point. Pensioned Subadar Jaynak Harnak, living in Ratnagiri district, had also previously

signed the Dapoli school petition (see Appendix E).

There are several interesting points about this petition. Several of the signatories had also written letters to newspapers or had signed at least one other petition, suggesting a long-term commitment and willingness to agitate for change. Published newspaper reports suggest considerable sympathy for the Mahar cause, not only from newspapers such as Dnyanoday, which was published by the American Mission, but also from the Times of India. Several important officials and former officials of the Bombay Government were cited in support of Mahar efforts to improve themselves: Sir John Muir-Mackenzie and R. A. Lamb, former members of the Executive Council, and Sir George Clarke, Governor of Bombay were quoted at length.[43]

The petitioners asked to be admitted to the "lowest grades of the Public Service, in the ranks of Police Sepoys and of soldiers," and referred to "the justice of our claims to enjoy equal rights of citizenship."[44] The authors of this petition had abandoned religious arguments and complaints about prejudice on the part of caste Hindus, and rested their case primarily on British concepts of justice and equal rights, and on the rights of Mahars to "participate in the new privileges which have been granted by our illustrious Emperor and King . . . in accordance with the declarations of our late Empress, Queen Victoria the Good, in the celebrated Proclamation of 1858,"[45] the same proclamation which had formed the basis for demands that Indians be eligible for civil service positions and for officer training in the army.

The petitioners pointed out, correctly, that it was not reasonable to admit Maratha Kunbis (cultivators) into the army, but reject Maratha Mahars (petty peasants), who were (although this is not stated in the petition) physically and culturally virtually indistinguishable from them. It is also interesting that the Mahars were attempting to identify themselves as part of the Maratha caste-cluster, and emphasized their occupation as workers on the land rather than as village servants.

The authors of the petition must have been well-read (astonishingly so for men of depressed-class background), judging from their inclusion of references to the abolition of Negro slavery, the granting of full citizenship to the outcastes of Japan, and the inclusion in the British House of Commons of "representatives of the lower strata of English society, the workingmen, who, only a quarter of a century ago, were regarded as but Mahars and Paryas."[46] Their faith in the power of legislative fiat to change social and cultural patterns of prejudice was unrealistic, but the comparisons between the Mahar situation and those of the Eta of Japan and other oppressed classes were pertinent.

The arguments included in this petition follow two separate and contradictory lines, both expressed in the following quotation:

> We have long submitted to the Jagannath of caste . . . But we can now no longer submit to the tyranny. We must emancipate our manhood. We may be poor, feeble, ignorant but we are still human beings . . . we seek our inalienable rights as British subjects . . .[47]

On one hand, they cited examples of their helplessness and

poverty and appealed to British justice and generosity to rescue them from oppression; on the other, they offered examples of able Mahars who had attained distinction in the army, in the Indian Christian church, and in other areas, and asked for civil and political rights. Perhaps the petitioners could not decide whether appeals to charity or to justice would be more effective, and decided to include both.

After this long and varied exposition, the favours actually solicited from government were simple enough: to be re-employed in the Indian Army as soldiers, even in separate companies or regiments, and to be employed in the Police Force. Opportunities still available, to serve as bandsmen and in other non-combatant roles, or in territorial battalions, were not sufficient; they wanted equal opportunity and believed they were entitled to it.

The responses of the government of Bombay and the government of India to this petition in its various forms were disappointing. Responding to the 1904 petition, Lord Lamington was sympathetic but offered little practical help. The statement that the small proportion of Mahars in the police could not be materially increased due to "the objections of the other members of the Police Force to associate with them . . . and caste prejudices [which] render it difficult to place them in authority over men of other castes,"[48] alluded to bitterly in paragraph ten of the 1910 petition, reflects the reluctance of government to become involved directly in promoting social change. The later versions submitted to the government of India and the Secretary of State in London were no more successful. A policy adopted for

military reasons was not to be changed to further social justice, which was not considered to be a direct responsibility of government.

The exigencies of World War I compelled serious attention to the demands of the Mahars and other non-martial groups for re-admission to military service. Military necessity achieved, at least temporarily, what appeals for justice and civil rights had failed to do.

World War I and the 111th Mahars

The enormous demands placed on the Indian Army by World War I led to increased recruiting among all communities. By the end of the war, nearly 1.5 million men had enlisted, with almost 1 million serving overseas as combatants and non-combatants. Indian troops served in most theatres of war, including France, the Middle East, Africa, and China.[49] Eventually various groups previously considered unsuitable for the army had to be admitted to regular service. This category included the Mahars. Apart from pressure from the Mahar community itself, the Maharajah of Kolhapur spoke out very strongly in favour of allowing Mahars to enlist. He wanted to enlist Mahars and Mangs in his own Kolhapur state forces, but was not permitted to do so; his forces were subject to the same recruitment restrictions as the Indian Army.[50] The Maharajah was motivated partly by anti-Brahmin sentiment in favouring various low castes, but also by genuine concern for the welfare of all his subjects. He was also an enthusiastic supporter of the war effort, and offered a variety of inducements to encourage enlistment of Kolhapuris of all

castes.[51] He declared proudly in 1917 that, "Our rate of recruiting exceeds even that of the Punjab. . . . Our special recruiters have become quite experts in securing recruits of different classes and communities . . . Mangs, Mahars, . . . "[52]

Mahars were accepted all during the war for such non-combatant roles as mule drivers, supply and transport, labour corps, as officers' servants, and other such support roles. In 1917 the 88th Carnatics and 63rd Palamcottas were opened to Mahar recruiting.[53] A special company of 228 Mahars was to be attached to each of these regiments, stationed respectively at St. Thomas Mount in Madras and Secunderabad. In spite of the distance and language problems, recruiting for these two companies was fairly successful, 412 recruits coming forward by April of 1917. Government therefore sanctioned in June 1917 the formation of a Mahar battalion, the 111th Mahars.

Those instrumental in the formation of the Mahar battalion included L. J. Mountford, Commissioner Central Division, P. R. Cadell, Commissioner Southern Division and Rao Bahadur R. G. Naik.

A meeting was held in the town hall of Bombay, 8th July 1917, presided over by Cadell, and attended by hundreds of Mahars. A resolution passed at this time recorded "their genuine feelings of gratitude to His Majesty's government for having extended to the people of these communities the privilege of enlistment in the army."[54]

By the time the new battalion was recruited up to full strength, the war was nearly over. Recruiting had gone rather

slowly, since most of the best Mahar recruits had already gone into labour battalions or territorial battalions. Most of the eleven hundred men recruited came from the Konkan, where military tradition was strong. Not all Indians were as enthusiastic about the war effort. One study of a Deccan village found:

> The population in 1917 would have been considerably less than we found it had it not been for the war. This had drawn a good many back to the village, on account of the fear lest, in Bombay or Poona, they should be recruited as soldiers.[55]

There was also some difficulty providing officers for the new battalion. British officers were borrowed from existing regiments or from the reserves. Of the first group of native officers appointed, three had been brought out of retirement; two of them were still serving with the regiment in 1922. Most of the other native officers were drawn from Maratha regiments, but a few Mahars were included, at least one from the quartermasters' branch.[56] There were of course at this time very few Mahars in the army at all, and even fewer who had any experience at even the lowest commissioned ranks.

The Mahar Battalion did not see any active service, but it was posted for several months to the North-West Frontier as part of the Zhob force in 1920. The battalion performed its duties well, and was commended by the officer commanding at Zhob. The battalion was then posted to Aden, where it was amalgamated with the 71st Punjabis, a battalion composed of Punjabi Christians. This was a makeshift arrangement, unsatisfactory to both battalions, as they had no common language, religion, or customs. The amalgamation also required a new regimental depot, so the amal-

gamated regiment was moved from Belgaum to Ferozepur.[57]

A Mahar soldier, Shankar Khagdu Savant, who served in the Mahar Battalion in World War I, had service medals for Iraq and Baghdad, indicating overseas service. It is possible he served with a Mahar unit attached to one of the Madras regiments; he was illiterate and did not keep any written record of his service.[58]

Several prominent Mahars who had been active in the recruiting for the 111th Mahars sent a memorial (see Appendix F, part 3) to the Governor of Bombay, protesting the reduction of the 111th Mahars and their amalgamation with the 71st Punjabis. The memorial was forwarded by P. R. Cadell and endorsed by L. J. Mountford, both of whom had taken an active interest in Mahar recruitment.

Although the Government of India was sympathetic to the representations made in this memorial, the Commander-in-Chief, Lord Rawlinson, was anxious with good reason to reduce the military budget. Part of the post-war reorganization of the Indian Army involved linking several regiments to provide support for each other. This created a problem for the Mahar Battalion, since its natural partners would have been the various Maratha regiments, and these wanted nothing to do with the Mahars, suggesting that British emphasis on class and caste distinctions in the army had widened existing social divisions. This was at least partly intentional; the levelling effect of the old mixed regiments had been noted and while from the standpoint of social justice this was desirable, it was politically dangerous. The Mahar Battalion, like the Punjabi Christians, was therefore an

oddity--an orphaned single-battalion regiment, which was socially unacceptable to other Indian regiments. The battalion had had such a short existence it had not accumulated any battle honours or combat experience which would justify its retention. The reduction of the Mahar Battalion was almost inevitable, and did in fact take place in 1922, to the great disappointment of the Mahars who had worked hard to have it established in the first place, and now saw their opportunity taken away again.

The battalion also suffered from the same recruiting problem that had plagued the old Bombay Army. The number of places available for Mahars was extremely limited. Many promising young men would find other employment rather than wait around for the possibility of a recruiting party. When a recruiting party did appear, often it would find few or no suitable recruits, all the able-bodied young men having gone off to work in factories and textile mills.

Dr. Ambedkar and Others: Support for Mahar Enlistment

The Mahars were not alone in their efforts to gain, or to regain, access to military service. In 1833 Raja Rammohan Roy appealed for Indianization of the British-Indian army. He was speaking of allowing Indians access to commissioned ranks, a view held by a few liberal English officers.[59] The Indian National Congress resolved in 1887 that "the military service in its higher grades should be . . . opened to the natives of this country."[60] The Bankipore Session of Congress in 1913 also criticized discriminatory recruiting practices.[61] Although not

specifically directed towards Mahars, these resolutions indicated support for a democratic, all-class and all-India recruiting system, rather than one based on "martial classes"; in effect, a national army for the barely-conceived nation of India, rather than an imperial army serving the King-Emperor.

The strongest advocate of the Mahars' right to serve in the military was Dr. B. R. Ambedkar. He appeared before the Southborough committee on the franchise on 27th January 1919. Arguing for widening the franchise for untouchables, and guaranteeing them a certain number of seats on the Bombay Legislative Council, Dr. Ambedkar referred to their past military service and to their removal from the army, which he ascribed to the "theological bias" of the Marathas which "prevented them from serving under low caste officers."[62] Dr. Ambedkar also pointed out a fundamental problem with a segregated system of education or any other service.

> Following the division of schools it has divided its teaching staff into untouchables and touchables. As the untouchable teachers are short of the demand, some of the untouchable schools are manned by teachers from the touchable class. The heart killing fun of it is that if there is a higher grade open in untouchable school service, as there is bound to be because of the few untouchable trained teachers, a touchable teacher can be thrust into the grade. But if a higher grade is open in the touchable school service, no untouchable teacher can be thrust into that grade. He must wait till a vacancy occurs in the untouchable service![63]

A similar problem existed in the segregated American Army.

Early in 1927 there was a large Depressed Classes meeting at the Koregaon War Memorial. Dr. Ambedkar, addressing the meeting, stated that "hundreds of fighters from their community had fought on the side of the Britishers who ungratefully later

dubbed them a nonmilitary community."[64] The petitions of 1896-1910 had emphasized the loyal service offered by the Mahars to the British, but by the 1920s, with the independence movement gathering strength, this was no longer acceptable. Offering a more politically acceptable interpretation, Ambedkar explained that their fighting for the British was not a matter of pride but was a last resort for people having no other means of livelihood. He asked his people to agitate against the policy of martial races. Dr. Ambedkar reiterated this point at a meeting of the Kolaba District Depressed Classes held in March of 1927.

> The military offered us unique opportunities of raising our standard of life and proving our merit and intellect, courage and brilliance as army officers. In those days untouchables could also be head masters of military schools and compulsory primary education in the military camps was very effective and wholesome. It is nothing less than a betrayal and a treachery on the part of the British to have closed the doors of the army to the untouchables who had helped them establish the Indian empire while their home government was at grips with the French during the Napoleonic War.[65]

Urging the untouchables to pursue self-help, self-respect, and self-knowledge, he advised them to refuse to eat carrion or left-over food, to abandon their position as Watandars, and to agitate for re-entry into the army, navy and police. Ambedkar's plea for admission to the army was supported by Veer D. Savarkar, a prominent and vocal right wing Hindu, who believed untouchability to be a distortion of true Hinduism.[66]

The Mahar arguments for re-enlistment had evolved from an emotional rejection of caste Hindu prejudice, through appeals to British justice, to a partial identification with Indian nationalism.

World War II and the Mahar Regiment

The enormous manpower demands of World War II once again forced the opening of recruitment to all classes and communities, for a total of 2.5 million men by the end of the war. Indian troops served in Europe, North Africa, the Middle East, and the Far East, and contributed five divisions to the South East Asia Command under Lord Mountbatten.[67] The weakness of the "martial race" system became apparent; there was no nucleus of NCOs, VCOs, or training staff for many of the newly-recruited classes. This was also a problem for the black component of the segregated American Army, but the Indian Army added linguistic, religious, and dietary differences to the race difference, posing great practical problems for rapid expansion.

Dr. Ambedkar continued to press for Mahar recruitment, meeting with the Governor of Bombay in 1941 and urging the formation of a regular Mahar Battalion.[68] With his appointment to the Defence Advisory Committee of the Viceroy's Executive Council, July 1941, he was able to persuade government to raise a Mahar Battalion. A battalion was authorized, September 1941, and several Mahars, including Ambedkar's lieutenant Jadhav (also known as Madakebuva) were appointed recruiting officers.

At a meeting of the All India Depressed Classes Conference at Nagpur, July 1942, Ambedkar "exhorted the Mahar youth to fight for the just cause and make sacrifices willingly."[69] He made a similar appeal to a meeting in Bombay, stating that although government had denied representation to the Depressed Classes in the executive council, he still felt that the Mahars and other

untouchables should support government, since if the Nazis overran the country there would not be a council left to fight over.[70]

By the time the Mahar regiment was authorized, several thousand Mahars had enrolled in labour and logistical units, the Territorial Army Battalion of the Maratha Light Infantry, and two troops raised in 1940 and attached to ambulance units.

Many of the young men who joined this new regiment did so because of Dr. Ambedkar's appeal to them. A number of retired Mahar soldiers interviewed by the author, or responding to questionnaires, stated that they had enlisted either because of Dr. Ambedkar's appeal, or "for service"--this expression signifying that they simply wanted employment.[71]

The Mahar Regiment differed from the ill-fated 111th Mahars of World War I in one important respect: out of forty-four 2nd lieutenants assigned to the new regiment, nine were Indians. Several of them later attained high rank; one, K. V. Krishna Rao being in 1980 Colonel of the Mahar Regiment and also Lieutenant-General and Vice Chief of the army staff. B. N. Mittra authored the 2nd edition of the Regimental History. Ganesh Krishna Karandikar had attained the rank of Colonel.

The Mahar Regiment did not see overseas service in World War II, having been raised late in the war. However a strong commitment had been made by the government, represented by the Secretary of the Defence Department, Sir Chandulal Trivedi, that there was not and would not be any discrimination against scheduled classes if they possessed the requisite educational and

physical qualifications.[72] Mahar agitation, coupled with their willingness to support the war effort (when the Indian National Congress did not), had not only earned them a regiment of their own, but had also won a commitment to allow all scheduled castes to serve in the army of what would soon be an independent state. Without disparaging Ambedkar's motives in urging his community to support government even without political representation, his strategy certainly paid off in long-range benefits.

By the end of World War II, the Mahars had, after more than fifty years, achieved the right to re-enlist as soldiers. They had achieved this by continued public lobbying and by demonstrating their willingness to put aside short-term political grievances to pursue long-term interests. The issue of military service had been an important rallying point for the Mahars, and constant reiteration of their military exploits had helped to create communal identity and to foster communal pride.

The Mahars had benefitted from external forces, including support from highly-placed officials in the Bombay government, Hindu reform movements and the Indian nationalist movement (both, for different reasons, deploring caste excesses), and the demonstrated unworkability of the "martial races" recruiting system applied to a modern army. Nevertheless their success in regaining access to military service, and having their own regiment bearing their caste name, would not have come about without their organized effort.

Military service had been a significant factor for the Mahars in two respects. Education and skills acquired through

military service created a class of community leaders, and the wish to retain the social and economic benefits derived from military service was a powerful incentive to organize behind these leaders and work for a common goal. A high level of organization and political activity in the Mahar community by the 1940s was therefore at least in part a consequence of their military past.

While the Mahars were working for re-admission to the military and recognition of their military past, American blacks were engaged in a similar struggle for equal access to the military. Although black Americans were seeking somewhat higher goals, they encountered similar obstacles to their aspirations.

Black Americans in Two World Wars

In the first half of the twentieth century, while the Mahars were working for (and finally achieving) the right merely to enlist as soldiers, American blacks were struggling for equal treatment and recognition. Particular issues were the right to serve in combat units, access to officer training, and the right to serve in all branches of the military. As was true for the Mahars, blacks got more opportunities during major wars, when the military needed more manpower than white Americans could, or would, easily supply. Black soldiers, also like the Mahars, tended to be "last hired, first fired," and were able to hold onto some of their wartime gains only when they had gathered enough political strength and support from other segments of American society to force changes in military policy.

Black soldiers, unlike the Mahars, faced an additional problem: reluctance on the part of military authorities to allow them a fair chance to prove themselves, even when they were enlisted for combat, amounting in many instances to deliberate sabotage of black troops and undermining of black officers. British officers of the Indian Army, while not necessarily enthusiastic about being posted to a Madrassi or other "non-martial" unit, usually at least tried to make the best soldiers they could out of their men, and were sometimes pleasantly surprised at the results. This apparent difference in attitude (not universally true in any case) may be accounted for by the fact that the British officer had nothing to lose, and much to gain professionally, by turning unpromising recruits into creditable soldiers. The white officer assigned to black troops might feel he had no reason to upset the racial status quo, and ran little professional risk if his men turned out poorly because they were not expected to do well anyway.

Two all-black divisions actually served overseas in World War I, with highly variable combat records. The 92nd Division, commanded by Major General Charles C. Ballou, was generally regarded as unsatisfactory in the field, although General Ballou believed that it had been poorly officered, and had not had a fair chance to prove itself in combat.

> The 92nd . . . was made the dumping ground for discards, both white and black. Some of the latter . . . had been eliminated as inefficient, from the so-called 93rd Division . . . [there was] too much eagerness to get the negroes out while their credit was bad, as many preferred it should remain.[73]

The 93rd Division, which was not a true division but four infantry regiments without artillery or support units, consisted of three former National Guard units and one of draftees. The 369th was the 15th New York National Guard, raised, trained and commanded by Colonel William Hayward; the 370th, the 8th Illinois National Guard, had all Negro officers; the 371st was made up of Southern draftees with all-white officers; and the 372nd was a National Guard unit from New England, Ohio, Maryland and the District of Columbia.[74] It was attached to the French Army and served under French command, in Champagne, the Vosges, and the Oise-Aisne offensive. Three regiments, including the 369th, received unit Croix de Guerre. One company of the 4th Regiment, and the 1st battalion of the 367th Infantry, 92nd Division also received unit awards. The 369th also received 171 individual citations. The 370th and 371st Regiments earned 191 Croix de Guerre and 43 Distinguished Service Crosses. The 369th Regiment spent 191 days on the Western Front, longer than any other American regiment. In that period it did not surrender a foot of ground or have a single prisoner taken.[75]

The World War I experience can be interpreted in two ways. The prevailing military view (though it was not universally held) was that blacks had been tried in combat and found wanting; that they were "hopelessly inferior . . . if you need combat soldiers . . . don't put your time upon Negroes";[76] and that few if any Negro officers were competent. Some recognized that educational deficiencies and inadequate training contributed to the poor showing of black officers, but the general opinion was that

blacks were inherently inferior and few if any would be effective as officers. If blacks had to be used in combat they must have white officers to provide leadership.

Black Americans believed that the army had not given black soldiers or officers a chance to do well, and had not given them credit for what they did achieve. There was a widespread conviction that "Negroes had volunteered their best college-trained youths for officer training," and their services and abilities had been thwarted by "hostile forces within the Army."[77]

Clearly, the army could have made more effective use of its black personnel. As an institution which was part of a racially-prejudiced society the army reflected the relationships found in civilian life: whites holding positions requiring responsibility, leadership, and specialized skills, blacks doing menial, supportive, unskilled work. This arrangement offered little to the small but growing class of educated, upwardly-mobile blacks, who feared that any future wars would see black participation even further restricted.

The National Defence Act of June 1920 retained the four black army regiments, but barred blacks from all specialized branches of the military, the Air Corps, the Marine Corps, and most positions in the Navy and Coast Guard. Opportunities for blacks to be promoted were strictly limited. The total size of the Army was reduced several times between 1922 and 1931, with the black regiments absorbing a proportionate share of the reductions without any corresponding increase of vacancies in the expanding Air Corps. This policy was ostensibly one of "equal

treatment" of black and white soldiers, but actually operated in favour of whites. The extreme restrictions on size, number, and types of black units, coupled with the high enlistment rates still characteristic of black regiments, meant few new recruits could be accommodated. This led to a gradual aging of the black units, while their dispersal in small detachments at scattered posts made effective training difficult. It appeared to many blacks that their small share in the army was in danger of withering away. Similar problems afflicted the black National Guard units and provisions for reserve training.

The emphasis on units and numbers to the exclusion of any plans for improved training, leadership and utilization techniques was to have a serious effect on the capacity of the armed forces to use black personnel effectively in World War II.

On the eve of World War II the American Army was still unprepared to admit blacks in all branches and in due proportion to their population. Although mobilization policies of 1937-1940 called for a ratio of nine to ten per cent blacks, with the ratio of combat troops to service troops the same as for whites, published mobilization plans showed less than six per cent blacks, with by far the largest proportion assigned to the Infantry, the Engineers, and the Quartermaster Corps. The lack of agreement between divisions of the War Department, staff agencies, and the chiefs of various arms and services, and lack of explanation of War Department policy, made implementation of mobilization plans difficult.[78]

In any case, since the nucleus around which to mobilize a

wartime complement of black personnel consisted of four regular regiments (mostly consisting of long-service veterans without field experience or up-to-date training), five black regular army officers, and 353 black officers in the reserve[79], it is difficult to see how any plan calling for massive mobilization with any equitable representation in different branches could possibly have been carried out. The British had faced the same problem in trying to expand an Indian army composed of class regiments, with artificial restrictions on the number of Indians accepted for officer training, both in World War I and World War II, but apparently American military policy-makers drew no helpful inferences from this. The Selective Service and Training Act, signed by President Roosevelt on September 16th 1940, provided for the registration of all men between twenty-one and thirty-five years of age and for the induction of 800,000 draftees. This law included a provision that "there shall be no discrimination against any person on account of race or color." Other provisions, however, allowed for segregation within the Armed Forces, and for "unlimited discretion by the military and naval authorities in who was acceptable to them for training and service."[80]

By the end of the war, the War Department had bowed to pressure from black community leaders and organizations sufficiently to establish black units in all branches of the services and to admit blacks to officers candidate school, but maintained segregation and continued to place white officers over black units. This policy resulted in what Cohen has called an approach to the extreme of "perfect representativeness of a segregated

society,"[81] with a complete range of identical functions performed in segregated units.

Blacks in the armed forces could be represented by a bottom-heavy pyramid, with large numbers of men serving in vital but unglamorous services such as quartermaster and combat engineer battalions, labour battalions, and Navy Construction Battalions (Seabees). The 93rd Division, nominally a combat division, spent most of the last two years of the war in the Pacific theatre employed in security, labour, training, cleaning out Japanese stragglers, and other duties which were "essential, but not those an infantry division was normally expected to perform."[82]

The 92nd Division, which served under Major-General Edward M. Almond in Italy, had a poor combat reputation. The Division was plagued by poor organization, poor communications, and poor morale. The reasons for its problems were complex, and the belief among many of its officers and enlisted men that the army was deliberately trying to discredit them, while sincere, was probably unjustified. Specific problems included a very high proportion of men with Class IV and V AGCT scores, inadequate training, unsatisfactory promotion policies for black officers, and racial bias at command level. Basically, the commanders of the Division had little faith "in the ability and determination of subordinates and enlisted men" and the enlisted men did not trust their leaders.[83]

At the top of the pyramid were a relatively small number of black combat units which had well-earned reputations for effec-

tive field service. One example was the 99th Pursuit Squadron, the first black Air Unit in the United States Armed Forces,[84] commanded by Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., the first black to be accepted in the Army Air Corps. The 99th Pursuit Squadron was later part of the 332nd Fighter Group, called by its men the "Spookwaffe." This unit developed a very high degree of esprit de corps which survived many years after the war.[85]

Another was the 761st Tank Battalion, which served under General George Patton, and met his criteria for units under his command; former soldiers of the 761st remembered Patton saying: "I don't care what color you are as long as you go up there and kill those Kraut sons of bitches."[86] Tankers and artillerymen of various units who had served under General Patton generally appreciated both his willingness to treat them exactly like any other soldiers, and his reputation for leading from the front.

Black soldiers even had their own news coverage; a new feature of the black military experience in World War II was the fact that it was covered in depth by black war correspondents. A total of twenty-seven war correspondents worked for three different papers and two pools. (The papers were the Baltimore Afro-American, Norfolk Journal and Guide, and Pittsburgh Courier; the press pools were the Associated Negro Press and the Negro Publishers' Association.) Ten correspondents covered North Africa and Italy, where the 92nd Infantry Division and 332nd Fighter Squadron were based. The others followed black troops through various war theaters. Their coverage of the black war effort was valuable both for black soldiers and for their families at home,

who would otherwise seldom have known what their men were doing. "They (black war correspondents) did the tough, thankless job of writing about support troops who were doing tough, thankless jobs."[87]

The policy of segregating black troops under all circumstances finally broke down under its own weight. Such institutions as segregated blood banks, completely separate officers' messes, completely separate training facilities at all levels, and separate hospitals and nursing staff were simply too expensive and too inefficient to continue. By the last months of the war, it had become necessary to integrate small numbers of black soldiers into white combat units at the front. Much to the astonishment of military authorities who had always insisted that segregation was necessary for military efficiency, these integrated units actually functioned better and with less racial prejudice than segregated units.

The American solution to a racially-mixed army--complete segregation--had finally proven unworkable under the conditions of modern warfare. The Indian Army's policy of recruitment by martial races and service in caste-based units had also proven incapable of meeting the needs of a twentieth-century army. Both armies had to make major changes in the way they recruited and used men of different caste or racial backgrounds. In principle these changes were made once and for all before the end of the 1940s. In practice, old traditions and remaining social inequities continue to influence the roles and status of black and low-caste soldiers. The experience of black American soldiers has

diverged very markedly from that of Mahar and other low-caste Indian soldiers, reflecting profound differences in American and Indian society. An overview of military service today is the subject of Chapter VI.

Footnotes, Chapter V

1. K. M. L. Saxena, The Military System of India, 1850-1900 (New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1974), p. 85; V. Longer, Red Coats to Olive Green: A History of the Indian Army 1600-1974 (Bombay: Allied Publishers Private Limited, 1974), pp. 130-133.
   Lord Kitchener, on being appointed Commander-in-Chief in 1902, asked to have the Indian Army explained to him. On hearing Sir William Birdwood's explanation, Kitchener said,
   "I see. You really have no Indian Army with esprit de corps as such. You have a number of small armies . . . each probably thinking itself superior to the rest."
   Quoted in Philip Mason, A Matter of Honour: An Account of the Indian Army, Its Officers and Men (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books, 1976), p. 375.

2. N.A.I., Military Department Proceedings, November 1891, #57, item 3034-B, Government of India Military Department to Secretary to the Government of Bombay, Military Department, pp. 23-36.

3. N.A.I., Military Department Proceedings, August 1885, #2329 to Rt. Hon. Lord Randolph Churchill, Secretary for India; minute from Sir A. Colvin and Mr. C. P. Ilbert, p. 393.

4. N.A.I., Military Department Proceedings, December 1893, #1387.
   The committee consisted of Brigadier-General J. Gatacre, Commanding Nagpur District; Colonel A. Currie, Commanding Poona House, and Lieutenant-Colonel W. C. Black, Commanding 1st Grenadiers.
   It met at Mahabaleshwar on 9 May 1892, and submitted its report on 9 June 1892.

5. N.A.I., November 1891, Memorandum, p. 23.

6. Ibid., p. 35.

7. Ibid., p. 25.

8. Ibid., p. 26.

9. Ibid., p. 31.

10. N.A.I., December 1893, Mahabaleshwar Committee Report, app. p. 325.

11. Ibid., p. 329.

12. Ibid., p. 335.

13. Many caste Hindus would not handle musical instruments, especially drums (because of the leather drumheads). Caste returns show some Marathas as bandsmen; these may have been Marathas of relatively low status; or even Mahars or other low-caste men who had passed as Marathas by military definition.

14. T. A. Heathcote, The Indian Army: The Garrison of British Imperial India, 1822-1922, Historic Armies and Navies Series (Newton Abbot, London, Vancouver: David & Charles, 1974), p. 113.
The Madras and Bombay Armies, which had always recruited many men from poor, non-land-owning classes, allowed families to live in the regimental lines. This was not the usual practice in the Bengal Army.

15. Ibid., p. 88.

16. N.A.I., Military Department Proceedings, December 1893, #1387, p. 269.

17. John Malcolm, writing to the Secretary of the Board of Directors in 1816, quoted by Col. V. Longer, "Mahar Regimental History," chaps. I and II, p. 28, Mahar Regimental Centre, Saugor, M.P.

18. N.A.I., December 1893, Mahabaleshwar Committee Report, p. 278.

19. I.O.L., Government of India, Department of Finance & Commerce, #312 of 1887.

20. Haeem Samuel Kehimkar, The History of the Bene-Israel of India (Tel Aviv: Dayag Press Ltd., 1937), p. 210.

21. Dhananjay Keer, Dr. Ambedkar, Life and Mission, 3rd ed. (Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1971), pp. 8-9.

22. N.A.I., November 1891, Memorandum, p. 25.

23. Ibid., p. 30.

24. N.A.I., Military Department Proceedings, August 1892, #146-9, pp. 9 and 11.

25. Ibid., p. 13.

26. N.A.I., November 1891, Memorandum, p. 30.

27. N.A.I., December 1893, Mahabaleshwar Committee Report, p. 323.

28. Ibid., p. 339.

29. Ibid., p. 291.

30. N.A.I., December 1893, Mahabaleshwar Committee Report, p. 313.

31. Sir Patrick Cadell, History of the Bombay Army (London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1938), p. 15.

32. N.A.I., Military Department Proceedings, January 1894, #2282-5 B.

33. A Short Record of Bombay Recruiting, 1914-1919, vol. II, p. 27.

34. N.A.I., Military Department Proceedings, October 1899, #881-88 B; N.A.I., Military Department Proceedings, January 1899, #2285-87 B.
Unfortunately the "B" proceedings do not include the text of these petitions.
Haeem Samuel Kehimkar, founder of the Bene-Israel Benevolent Association and associated with the Anglo-Jewish Association of London, was most likely involved in these petitions.

35. N.A.I., Military Department Proceedings, October 1896, #1411-23 B.

36. M.S.A., Government of Bombay, General Department, #4904, 4 November 1896.

37. Keer, Dr. Ambedkar, p. 4.

38. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar: Writings and Speeches, vol. I. Education Department, Government of Maharashtra, 1979. "Ranade, Gandhi and Jinnah," p. 211.

39. Walangkar Petition, App. F, part 1, para. 5.

40. M.S.A., Government of Bombay, General Department, #4904, 4 November 1896.

41. M.S.A., Government of Bombay, General Department, vol. 87 of 1904, #4904. Letter from Sec'y Gov't India, Mil. Dept.

42. M.S.A., Government of Bombay, General Department, vol. 87 of 1904, #804, and vol. 98 of 1906, #804.
Dr. Ambedkar Collection, University of Bombay, printed copy of petition dated November 1910, addressed to The Right Honourable The Earl of Crewe, Secretary of State for India, London.

43. Crewe Petition, App. F, part 2, paras. 6, 7, 14.

44. Ibid., App. F, part 2, paras. 1 and 4.

45. Ibid., App. F, part 2, para. 1.

46. Ibid., App. F, part 2, para. 5.

47. Ibid., App. F, part 2, para. 11.

48. M.S.A., Government of Bombay, General Department, vol. 87 of 1904, #5789.

49. India's Contribution to the Great War (Calcutta: Superintendent Government Printing, India, 1923), pp. 96-97, 286-290, and 295.
Total enlistment was 1,401,350. Up to 31st October 1918, 943,344 Indians served with Expeditionary Forces overseas: 13,517 Indian officers and warrant officers, 538,794 Indian other ranks, and 391,033 non-combatants.

50. Kolhapur State Archives, Shahu papers, Rumal no. 30, 1917, letter no. 6180-181, from Shahu Chhatrapati to L. J. Mountford.

51. A. B. Latthe, Memoirs of His Highness Shri Shahu Chhatrapati Maharajah of Kolhapur, vol. II (Bombay: The Times Press, 1924), p. 412.

52. Ibid., p. 420.

53. A Short Record of Bombay Recruiting, 1914-1919, vol. I, p. 18.

54. Ibid., p. 49.

55. Harold V. Mann and N. V. Kanitkar, Land and Labour in a Deccan Village, study no. 2, University of Bombay Economic Series, no. III (London: Oxford University Press, 1921), pp. 110-111.

56. Indian Army Lists, January 1918, 1921, 1922.

57. Dr. Ambedkar Collection, Bombay University, notes on 111th Mahars; M.S.A., Government of Bombay, Home Department, E Branch, #1114 of 1922 (see App. G, part 3); Col. V. Longer, manuscript, p. 57.

58. Letter to author from S. S. Savant, Kolhapur, 23 July 1980. (Son of S. K. Savant)

59. Longer, Red Coats to Olive Green, pp. 82-83.

60. Ibid., p. 24.

61. Longer, Manuscript, p. 53.

62. Dr. Ambedkar, Writings & Speeches, p. 262.

63. Ibid.

64. Keer, Dr. Ambedkar, p. 69.

65. Ibid., p. 71.

66. Longer, Manuscript, p. 65; Keer, Dr. Ambedkar, pp. 59 & 79.
Savarkar, like Ambedkar, advocated abolition of untouchability and the caste system, although they differed on other questions. Specifically, Ambedkar was not an advocate of violence, while Savarkar, and the Hindu Mahasabha of which he was a leader, were implicated in terrorist acts, including (possibly) the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi.

67. Longer, Red Coats to Olive Green, chap. X.

68. Ibid., pp. 72-73.

69. Ibid., p. 73.

70. Keer, Dr. Ambedkar, p. 339.

71. Questionnaires, April-August 1980; interview with former soldiers, Kolhapur, 20 April 1980.

72. Longer, Manuscript, p. 75, quoting a resolution in the legislative assembly by Piare Lall Kureel Talib of the United Provinces, 1943.

73. Ulysses Lee, The Employment of Negro Troops, vol. 8, pt. 8, Special Studies, United States Army in World War II (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History, United States Army, 1966), p. 18, quoting Ballou letter to Asst. Comdt. Gen. Staff College, 14 March 1920.

74. Mary Penick Motley, The Invisible Soldier: The Experience of the Black Soldier, World War II (Detroit: Wayne State U. Press, 1975), foreword, p. 12; Lee, Employment of Negro Troops, p. 17; Brooke Hayward, Haywire (New York: Bantam Books, 1977), pp. 113 and 119.
When Colonel Hayward died some years later, fifty former soldiers of the 369th Infantry attended his funeral. Colonel Hayward was awarded the Croix de Guerre and Legion of Honour.

75. Motley, The Invisible Soldier, foreword, p. 14; Lee, Employment of Negro Troops, pp. 5 and 8.
The regimental band of the 369th Infantry, under Drum-Major Noble Sissle, became famous in its own right as "the band that introduced jazz to France."

76. Maj. Gen. Robert L. Bullard, memoirs, 1925; quoted in Lee, Employment of Negro Troops, p. 15.

77. Lee, Employment of Negro Troops, p. 15.

78. Ibid., ch. II, "Peacetime Practices and Plans," pp. 38-50.

79. Jack D. Foner, Blacks and the Military in American History: A New Perspective (N.p.: Praeger, 1974), p. 131.
The five officers were three chaplains, and Colonel Benjamin O. Davis, Sr., commanding a National Guard unit in Harlem, and Lieutenant Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., West Point 1936, commanding the ROTC at Tuskegee Institute.

80. Foner, Blacks and the Military, pp. 136-137.

81. Stephen P. Cohen, "The Untouchable Soldier: Caste, Politics, and the Indian Army," Journal of Asian Studies 28 (May 1969):462.

82. Lee, Employment of Negro Troops, p. 516; Motley, The Invisible Soldier, pp. 73-74.

83. Lee, Employment of Negro Troops, p. 549.

84. Master Sgt. Irvin H. Lee, Negro Medal of Honor Men (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1967), p. 107.

85. Motley, The Invisible Soldier, pp. 194-196.

86. Ibid., p. 152.

87. John D. Stevens, From the Back of the Foxhole: Black Correspondents in World War II; Journalism Monographs, no. 27, February 1973; Association for Education in Journalism, Lexington, Kentucky, pp. 10-11 and 60.

CHAPTER VI

MILITARY SERVICE TODAY

The Indian Army

India became an independent republic in 1947, just two years after the end of World War II. The transfer of power from British to Indian hands took place so rapidly, and under conditions of such violence, that existing civil and military authorities had to cope with massive disorder followed by simmering conflict with Pakistan over Jammu and Kashmir. The armed forces of the republic of India had to adjust to a new role as defenders of a secular, democratic nation, rather than servants of an imperial power.

Many of the necessary changes were organizational and institutional: dividing up regiments, equipment, and ordnance factories between India and Pakistan, rebuilding (or creating *de novo*) training institutions, replacing the remaining British officer corps with Indian officers, and establishing a National Cadet Corps and Territorial Army were immediate and urgent concerns.[1] Of particular concern to the Mahars and other low castes was the decision, announced on February 1, 1949, that "with a view to eliminating communal and caste differences in the Indian Army so as to make it representative of all nationals in the country, it had been decided to abolish class composition based on fixed percentages and [make] recruitment to the Army . . .

open to all classes."[2] The new Commander-in-Chief and Chief of the Army Staff, General K. M. Cariappa, publicly declared the martial races theory to be nonsense. Thus the principle of equal access as citizens to military service, for which the Mahars had worked for over fifty years, was established as official policy.

There has not, however, been a wholesale restructuring of the Indian Army to abolish or reconstitute the many older regiments which recruit wholly or primarily from a particular community: the Gurkha regiments, the Sikh Regiment and the Sikh Light Infantry (scheduled caste Sikhs). Other regiments have separate "class" or "caste" companies; the Rajputana Rifles has separate Jat Hindu and Muslim companies. There would be considerable opposition to any drastic changes in the composition of these units, but as a matter of policy no more single-class regiments have been sanctioned,[3] and newer regiments are likely to be mixed-class in fact if not in name. For example, the Kumaon regiment includes many Ahirs, but is known by the district name rather than as a caste unit.[4]

The Indian Army has resisted communal demands for any new class regiments, although there have been demands for a Bhil unit, an Ahir or Yadav regiment, and a re-formation of the Chamar Regiment (formed during, and disbanded after World War II).[5] The Mahar Regiment was the last caste-based regiment to be raised, and its retention was probably due to the political activism of the Mahar community and the personal prestige of its leader Ambedkar. Ideally, from a democratic and representative standpoint, mixed regiments recruited without reference to caste or

class are preferred, but communities which have a strong military tradition would resent losing their special units.

In the Mahar community today the existence of the Mahar Regiment is a source of considerable pride and satisfaction, in that the Mahars have finally achieved an independent identity as soldiers. Their services are acknowledged and rewarded, and anything that Mahar soldiers do is attributed to their community and not lost in a general-enlistment regiment. This view is shared by other low-caste communities, such as the Mazhbi Sikhs, and is behind the demands for separate Ahir and Chamar units. Communal identity remains an important fact for many Indians. For those of low or untouchable background, denying this background involves great emotional and social costs; a more appealing strategy is to enhance the status and reputation of the entire group.[6]

Military service is not, and is not considered, a panacea. It is respectable and decent employment, but by no means a guarantee of security or fortune. Benefits are largely transient, and limited to the time a man is actually in service. Several ex-soldiers did mention that they were able to educate their children while in the army. Most did not feel that they had achieved any permanent change in their status as a result of military service.

Since Independence, the Mahar Regiment has served in every military campaign of the Indian Army. Detachments of the Mahar Regiment served as escorts for refugees during the period of partition. The regiment served in Jammu and Kashmir, the various

conflicts with Pakistan, and the India-China conflict of 1962. Mahar troops also served as part of India's contribution to the United Nations peacekeeping force in Korea. Officers who had served with the regiment stated that the soldiers generally performed very well. Their reputation seems to be derived largely from team work, discipline, and a willingness to stick to their posts under extreme pressure. Several soldiers of the Mahar Regiment have won awards for gallantry. A few incidents have been cited recently in published material on the regiment, and are becoming part of the Mahar military tradition. These include the case of a young machine gunner who continued to fire his weapon after being decapitated, and the defence of a small outpost by a Mahar detachment which was wiped out to the last man.

The Mahar Regiment was selected for conversion to a machine gun regiment shortly after World War II, a point of considerable pride for the soldiers of the regiment. During its service as a machine gun regiment, the Mahars often supplied platoons for duty with other regiments. The regiment has now been reconverted to regular infantry, as the modern Indian Army does not require special machine gun units.

In 1956 the Mahar Regiment was amalgamated with the Punjab Border Regiment, another recently formed unit. This was done primarily for reasons of efficiency, but it provoked considerable apprehension and indignation among the officers (primarily Marathas) and men then serving. The officers got a fairly detailed explanation of the reasoning behind the amalgamation, and seemed

to have accepted it without any problem.[7] The soldiers then serving with the regiment were apprehensive that the Punjabis would be favoured over them in promotions and in other respects, and believed that personal bias on the part of the officer commanding was involved. This seems very improbable, but several soldiers who were with the regiment then and are now retired believed it quite sincerely.[8] Although none of the men interviewed mentioned this specifically, it is quite likely that some of them were aware of the amalgamation of the 111th Mahars with the Punjabi Christians and its aftermath, which was the disbandment of the Mahars. In any case the apprehension appears to have been unfounded. The Mahar Regiment is currently made up of sixteen battalions, each approximately one thousand men, making it the largest infantry regiment in the Indian Army. Eight battalions are pure Mahar, while the other eight include men recruited from all parts of India. Since junior commissioned officers are normally promoted within the battalion, it would not seem that the prospects for promotion of Mahar soldiers have been affected. The Mahar battalions are officered at least up to the JCO level entirely by Mahars.

Since its formation in 1941, the Mahar Regiment has developed a regimental identity and spirit which incorporates two somewhat inconsistent themes, the soldierly qualities of the Mahars and the representative, secular nature of the regiment. Regimental histories and traditions include many references to the achievements of Mahar soldiers in the old Bombay Army, such as the defense of Dubrai and the battle of Koregaon. The origi-

nal cap badge of the regiment was the Koregaon pillar. Since Independence this aspect of Mahar tradition has been somewhat downplayed; the Koregaon pillar (thought an inappropriate object for an Indian regiment to commemorate) has been replaced by a Maratha dagger. More recent achievements of Mahar soldiers have been selected for commemoration in published accounts and at the regimental centre, where the Officers' Mess features paintings of Mahar heroes in action. Since the amalgamation with the Punjab Border Regiment, non-Mahar soldiers are also featured in regimental materials, without any commentary on caste origin, although it is often fairly obvious on the basis of name and other incidental information whether a particular individual is or is not Mahar.

The officers of the regiment have made special efforts to foster a regimental identity which transcends its caste name. The regimental centre features the Gyan Mandir, a place of worship featuring Buddhist, Hindu, Jain, and Christian symbols and open to all soldiers (the Sikhs, however, have their own gurudwara and priest). Regimental celebrations involve a bara khanna, or formal meal shared by officers and men of all castes, a symbolic affirmation of equal status. On my visit to the Regimental Centre it was emphasized to me that the regiment enlisted men from every province of India and was therefore really representative of the nation.

All of this seems a rather forced and artificial kind of "brotherhood," but is a sincere effort to respect both Mahar (now Neo-Buddhist) sensibilities and democratic and secular values.

A sore point mentioned by some former soldiers was that there are as yet no Mahar generals. In point of fact there do not appear to be any Mahar officers above the rank of captain. Although a few Mahar JCOs have been promoted to the commissioned ranks, such promotion seemed to come rather late in service, as a prelude to retirement. Although one ex-soldier described such a promotion as "just like getting a garland,"[9] that is, a symbolic gesture conferring no real status, honorary captains and lieutenants do draw the pension of the higher rank, which is substantially more than a JCO's pension. However it does seem to be true that few, if any, Mahars have gained commissioned rank early enough in their careers to have a real prospect of attaining high rank. In this respect the disparaging "garland" analogy is probably valid.

There is no restriction on the enlistment of Mahars in other regiments of the army, or in the other armed services. Nor is there any reason why a young Mahar cannot apply for officer training. However it would seem that the majority of Mahars in the army do in fact serve with the Mahar Regiment, or with some support and service units. Whether this is due entirely to their own choice, to the fact that they feel a strong identity with the Mahar Regiment, or whether there is de facto discrimination against them in other branches of the service, is beyond the scope of this study. Possibly all factors are involved. There is strong evidence[10] that Mahars and other untouchable or low-caste men have not had equal consideration in applying for officer training. Whether this is indeed so, and if so whether

it represents a conscious decision on the part of recruiting personnel, or is the result of unconscious bias, is an issue that the Indian Army may have to deal with, if political considerations become a factor in the selection of officer candidates. Educational and other qualifications for the officer corps of the Indian Army are quite high, and there is a great deal of competition for positions in the military academy and officer training college. It would seem safe to assume that in general young men from families with a military tradition, who speak English at home, and who have been educated from a fairly early age in a private British-style school, have a far better chance of success should they opt for a military career. This would place young men of untouchable background at a considerable disadvantage in many cases.

The Indian Army has traditionally been limited to a strictly military role, and neither the army itself nor politicians and other civilians have expressed much interest in using the military for explicit social-welfare ends.[11] This may not always be the case; current events in the Punjab have placed a great deal of strain on the political neutrality of the army, especially its large Sikh component.

Unlike other forms of government service, the armed forces do not have any system of reservations or quotas for depressed or backward classes. Admission to officer training is officially and formally based solely on merit, whatever unofficial or unconscious bias may in practice be involved. The decision to avoid using military recruitment and staffing policies to serve politi-

cal and social ends seems a clear trade-off to avoid politicizing the armed forces. Constitutionally the military cannot refuse entry to any qualified citizen of India on caste, class, or religious grounds, but there is no obligation to redress past wrongs, or institute affirmative action or reverse discrimination to create a totally representative military. Nor can civilian politicians interfere with issues directly related to morale and efficiency by forcing the acceptance of officer candidates in order to provide equal opportunities.

Current pay scales and conditions of service in the Indian Army make service in the infantry a reasonable alternative for men with relatively little education and few other job prospects. The army no longer is a source of primary education for soldiers, as a minimum of eighth standard is required for enlistment in the ranks. The Navy, Airforce, and undoubtedly the more technical branches of the Army, have higher educational standards. Soldiers get a rate of pay roughly comparable to class four civil servants,[12] their food, lodging, clothing, and medical expenses are provided, and some provision is made for their families in case of death in service. On the other hand, they do have to serve away from home for extended periods, both at the Regimental Centre, Saugor, Madhya Pradesh (a compromise location chosen when the Mahar M.G. Regiment was amalgamated with the Punjab Border Regiment), which is distant from the major areas of Mahar population, and at border posts on the North-West and Himalayan frontiers. There are some subsidiary benefits to military service; ex-soldiers get a preference for grants of government

wasteland, for instance. However servicemen are fourth in priority, behind landless and handicapped persons among others, and the land granted is generally three to five acres of unirrigated land, which is not of great value. In addition, widows, or wives of soldiers away on service, apparently are often subjected to harassment over their land.[13] None of the ex-soldiers interviewed mentioned land or the acquisition of land as a factor in their enlistment, and only one or two mentioned having received any land. This would not appear to be a major factor.

The regiment itself provides certain services and benefits to its soldiers and ex-soldiers. These include a rehabilitation wing, which operates a tailor shop, a print shop, a work shop producing metal boxes and trunks, a soap manufacturing operation, and the manufacture of squashes, jams, pickles, and agarbattis (incense sticks). These work shops provide low-cost goods and services to the officers and men of the regiment, and also provide some practical training for men nearing their discharge. The assumption is that they can use skills acquired to set up small businesses of their own, and apparently some have done so. Whether this project is of significant benefit to Mahar soldiers is not clear. None of those whom the author met mentioned having attempted to set up any kind of business of their own, although apparently Punjabi soldiers of the regiment have. It is possible that the Mahar soldiers do not take as much advantage as they might of opportunities the regiment attempts to provide for them. The regimental center also features a kindergarten operated by several officers' wives to accommodate the preschool-aged chil-

dren of soldiers, a memorial hostel which provides residential schooling for sons of soldiers killed in action, and a scholarship program to provide for daughters of deceased soldiers. Ex-soldiers also get preference for government employment at the levels for which they are qualified, so a number of ex-soldiers of the Mahar Regiment are employed as watchmen at Shivaji University in Kolhapur. A few had higher-level positions as clerks or storekeepers. Many, however, were unemployed or working as agricultural labourers. Army service is probably an advantage in attaining employment, but is by no means a guarantee.

It may well be that the new generation of college-educated Mahars will take up the issue of equal access to officer training. At the moment this does not appear to be a major issue. Quotas, reserved seats, and reserved spaces, common in many institutions and organizations in India, do not figure in officer selection and training, which is still based on merit and competition. An institutional bias towards English-educated, middle- to upper-class young men as officer material certainly exists.

The junior commissioned officer is another problematic legacy from the British. The main rationale for this rank--to serve as an intermediary between British officer and native soldiers, interpreting each to the other--no longer exists. This rank does still fulfill one function it had under the British; it provides an outlet for able and ambitious soldiers who do not have the educational background to qualify for regular commissions. If the JCO rank were abolished, there would probably be much more pressure from low-caste Indians (like the Mahars) to

admit members of their communities to the officer corps, either by admission to the National Defence Academy or by promotion from the ranks. As it is, the JCO rank allows some advancement to better-educated (matriculation) soldiers, while strictly controlling promotion to commissioned ranks.

The Bene Israel, who lost interest in the army after their dismissal in 1893, now play a very minor role. As citizens they can and do enlist, but there has been significant immigration to Israel in recent years, and the Bene Israel may well disappear entirely as a separate Indian community. One Indian Jew who has achieved high military rank, Major General J. Jacob, is a Baghdadi.[14]

Although the Indian Army has made important adjustments to its new role as a national army, traditional values--both those of Indian society and those developed in the armies of British India--continue to affect its policies and practices. The military traditions inherited from the British, while fostering continuity, stability, and a strong sense of esprit-de-corps, may also inhibit changes necessary to accommodate increased demands for equity and social justice.

The American Army

Recognizing the failure of segregation as good military policy, shortly after World War II the War Department appointed a board of officers under Lieutenant General Alvan C. Gillem, Jr. to study the question of the employment of Negro troops. This board recognized that segregation had been a major factor contributing to the inefficiency of black combat units; its report

advocated integrating smaller black units into white units; black platoons into white companies, black companies into white regiments, and so on (reminiscent of the class-company regiments of the Indian Army); assignment of individual blacks to special and overhead units; equal opportunities for black officers and a black/white ratio of one to ten. This last was the only proposal actually adopted and it was used to restrict re-enlistment of blacks after the end of the war.[15]

Even before the Gillem report was completed, the Chief Historian of the Army, Dr. Walter L. Wright, Jr. wrote that given the social disadvantages and low average education of Negro troops, they required "absolutely first-class leadership from their officers (either white or Negro) . . . white officers . . . who have some sympathy with them as human beings." He commented on the tendency of the army to "follow Southern rather than Northern practices in dealing with the problem of segregation," and the unfortunate fact that most training camps were in the South where the "unfamiliar Jim Crowism was exceedingly unacceptable to Northern Negroes." Although War Department employment of Negroes paralleled their employment in civilian society, the civilian status of Negroes was improving rapidly, and it should eventually be possible to assign Negroes as individuals wherever they were qualified.[16]

All of these factors--the success of limited integration in combat conditions, the conclusions of the Gillem board and Dr. Wright's independent viewpoint--combined with growing pressure from both black organizations and white liberals to end segrega-

tion in the military. Nominally executive order #9981, issued by President Truman in July 1948, established "equality of treatment and opportunity for all persons in the armed services without regard to race, color, religion, or national origin."[17] In practice full integration, especially in the army, was not achieved until 1954, hastened by the practical demands of the Korean War. A major research undertaking, "Project Clear" found that integrated units functioned well, black and white soldiers served together without incident, and "integration enhances the effectiveness of the Army."[18]

By 1954 the armed services were effectively integrated, although problems remained for black service personnel. Off-base housing, schools, and other facilities in many areas were still segregated and little or no effort was made by military authorities to assist black personnel in dealing with discriminatory practices off-post. Within the services, blacks were still concentrated at the lower ranks and in unskilled occupations.[19]

During the late 1950s the military had actually moved far ahead of society in racial integration. Black men were eligible for all ranks and specialties in the armed forces, on the basis of merit rather than racial quotas. The irrational, wasteful, and humiliating (to blacks) system of segregated training, living, and recreational facilities had been abolished. Dire predictions that integration would be "a terrific blow to the efficiency and fighting power of the armed services . . . increase the numbers . . . disabled through communicable diseases . . . increase the rate of crime committed by servicemen,"[20] had not

come true. Military service attracted a high proportion of young black men, indicating that pay, benefits and prestige were still competitive with (admittedly limited) civilian jobs. However major problems remained with the Selective Service process and with equitable representation in all grades and specialties of the armed forces.

Questions of racial balance, equality of access and opportunity, and equitable sharing of the burdens of national defense are still important in the American Army. The immediate, simple goal of integration at all levels had been met by 1954, but other problems remain.

By the end of the Vietnam War, many of the objectives of earlier generations had been achieved. Blacks had full access to all roles in an integrated military system, at least in theory. Black servicemen were acknowledged at last to be the equal of whites as fighting men. However equal access in principle had not produced equitable representation; blacks now served in disproportionate numbers in combat specialties, as they had earlier served in labour and service specialties, but were still underrepresented at higher ranks and in technical specialties.

The all-volunteer American Army (since 1973) has become less, rather than more, racially balanced, reflecting the greater attraction of military service for young blacks than young whites, and also reflecting continuing economic and educational inequalities. In 1981 about twenty per cent of all military personnel, 410,000, were black, compared to eleven to twelve per cent of the whole population. One of every three Army G.I.s and

one of five enlisted Marines is black. About forty per cent of all eligible young black males enter the military.[21] Whether this is, or is not, a problem is a matter of interpretation and opinion. On one hand, young blacks are getting access to employment, education, and vocational training; on the other hand, they will bear a disproportionate share of the burden of any military action. There are concerns, perhaps exaggerated, over the political reliability of an unrepresentative force, over the calibre of an army with many soldiers from socially-disadvantaged backgrounds,[22] and over the possibility that allies and potential opponents may regard a "black" army as inferior. Nevertheless the military is committed in principle to being representative. "Our obligation to the American people is to strive to field an Army which is both representative of them and acceptable to them,"[23] was the idealistic goal of Army Secretary Howard H. Calloway; more realistically, his successor John D. Marsh said, " . . . service in the U.S. Army is not only a privilege, it is a duty of every citizen . . . it is not fair for that burden to be unequally borne . . . a national military force should represent . . . some cross-section . . . "[24]

The great change between 1866 and 1984 is that the interests, concerns, rights, and duties of black citizens cannot be disregarded or treated as secondary to white prejudice or theories about military efficiency.

Conclusions

Between World War I and the present, the role of the mili-

tary in the United States and India has undergone great changes and has diverged very markedly. As discussed earlier, in the late 19th century both armies performed similar, limited roles in defending and extending national borders and conducted small external compaigns furthering national/imperial interests. Both became involved in two world wars in defense of abstract principles rather than immediate national concerns.

Since the end of World War II the United States has emerged as a military superpower, with major commitments to international bodies such as N.A.T.O. India's military involvements have been limited to her ongoing dispute with Pakistan over Kashmir (flaring into brief open warfare on two occasions), a military invasion of Pakistan on behalf of Bangladesh, and a short conflict with China in 1962. From the Indian viewpoint, these were all defensive actions forced on her by hostile neighbours, though India's unwillingness to compromise over Kashmir or over the border with China have been contributing factors. Indian military commitments beyond her own borders have been limited to participation in United Nations peacekeeping activities. This difference is shown clearly by relative defense expenditures; in the early 1970s the United States spent about 50 times as much, to support 2.5 million armed forces personnel, as India did to maintain just under 1 million. India's defense expenditures, while large, are relatively modest considering the size and population of the country (nearly one-third of the central government budget, about one-sixth of total state and central expenditures),[25] while the United States spent over one-quarter of a

much larger national budget on defense.[26] This difference must be remembered, as it suggests much greater importance in the United States of the so-called "military-industrial complex" which supports a very large and technically very advanced military.

For the purposes of this study, a more significant difference is in the attitude to caste/racial segregation. It appears ironic that the Mahars worked for decades to get and keep a segregated Mahar regiment, while American blacks were fighting to get into segregated military institutions and de-segregate the forces generally. This suggests a major contrast in the way caste/race discrimination is perceived.

It was pointed out earlier that the Mahars originally asked (in the Kamble petitions) for a separate regiment or separate companies, not because they especially wanted separate units (they had never had them before), but because this was the only way they could be accommodated at all in an army composed of caste-based regiments. By the 1920s and 1930s, and continuing to the present, the Mahars had come to believe that a separate unit was and is necessary to allow Mahar soldiers to serve without suffering caste discrimination and to earn honour for the community. Caste units such as the Mahar Regiment and the Sikh Light Infantry have the added advantage of performing well and having good morale. Caste in India is often closely linked with language, religion, food habits, and regional identity, so recruitment on a caste basis (if not carried to the excesses found under the "martial races" theory) has some real advantages

as far as morale and efficiency are concerned. It is also important that Mahars and other low-caste or untouchable men are not limited to enlistment solely in caste regiments; Mahars can and do enlist in other corps, especially supply and service units, and at least in theory they can enlist wherever they qualify. Caste regiments therefore fulfil some important community needs (for those castes who have them) for recognition and respect, as well as offering a useful source of employment.

Individual aspirations may be less well served by caste regiments. The very existence of such units may weaken any arguments for introducing a quota system or preferential access to officer training or advanced technical training, on the grounds that it is already possible for Mahars to become officers if they are good enough. This is true enough in principle, but in practice does not alter the fact that few Mahars have the requisite educational advantages to compete on equal terms with men of traditional "martial class" background <u>or</u> with men from highly-educated communities such as the Bengalis. Nor does this system do anything about institutional or personal bias against low-caste candidates for higher positions, assuming that such exists (and it would be very surprising if it were totally absent).

Military segregation in the American Army had far less to recommend it. During the Civil War, black regiments recruited on a local basis made a certain amount of sense, and some developed a strong unit identity. During the late 19th century the existence of four black army regiments at least guaranteed some black

participation and were a source of community pride. However the segregated military became increasingly "ideologically resented and militarily inefficient,"[27] primarily because the ascriptive definition of race imposed on blacks bore little relation to educational standards, socio-economic background, religious or cultural standards, or indeed much of anything except ancestry (not even always skin colour). The present situation, of a fully-integrated military under considerable pressure actively to redress past inequities, comes much closer to satisfying both group demands for equal access and individual needs for consideration of socio-economic handicaps, but total racial equality has not been achieved, either in civilian life or in the military.

In conclusion, both the Indian and United States armies have attempted through their recruitment policies to accommodate communal demands for representation and democratic egalitarian ideals. The totally different means taken to achieve nominally similar goals reflects a fundamental social difference. Indian society is so structured that equality is sought on a group basis, with individual rights secondary though still important. The loose structure and individualistic tendencies of American society have made adherence to a caste-like racial structure morally unacceptable, and emphasis has therefore been on improving individual access to opportunities, even when the mechanism used is a quota system.

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17. Martin Binkin et al., Blacks and the Military (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1982), p. 26.

18. Ibid., p. 29.

19. Foner, Blacks and the Military, pp. 193-199; Binkin et al., Blacks and the Military, pp. 31-33.

20. Senator Richard B. Russell, Georgia, quoted in Binkin et al., Blacks and the Military, p. 26, n. 52.

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22. A polite way of referring to street-smart youths from black urban ghettos; this fear seems very like the concern of British officers over line-boys who were intelligent but of poor moral character.

23. Binkin et al., Blacks and the Military, p. 4; statement made March 1975.

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By comparison with some of her Asian neighbours, India's defense expenditures are modest.
India spent $8.64 per capita on defense, 1984-5.
Indonesia spent $16.23 per capita on defense, 1983-4.
Pakistan spent $21.00 per capita on defense, 1983-4.
Malaysia spent $146.12 per capita on defense, 1984.

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CONCLUSION

The right to serve in the military was an important issue for the Mahars and for American blacks, less so for the Bene Israel, who had other avenues for advancement. For blacks, the right and obligation to serve in the army was associated with other rights and obligations as citizens; much as they resented being denied rights for which they had fought, they continued to insist on their "right to fight." For the Mahars, military service was a definite advantage economically and educationally, and also offered better access to government officials, a guarantee of at least a fair hearing, and a chance to abandon the "watandar-balutedar" role for a more prestigious one.

In the last third of the nineteenth century the "buffalo soldier" and the Indian sepoy--particularly the low-caste sepoy--occupied similar niches in their respective armies. Lacking the showier martial traditions of the military academy or the warrior clan, and restricted in access to the more glamorous military careers, they served competently in frontier garrisons and small campaigns.

The popularity of pseudo-rational, pseudo-scientific racial theories contributed to the erosion of the role of the black combat soldier, and the elimination of the Mahar and other "non-martial" Indians from the army. The shibboleth of efficiency justified limitations on recruiting and utilization of supposedly "inferior material." The failure to make adequate use of objec-

tive criteria (such as educational and physical standards) to select the best individuals of all classes and races (rather than arbitrarily eliminate certain of them en masse) indicates that important social ends were being served; the maintenance of caste- or race-based social relationships favoured by the dominant class.

The case of the Bene Israel provides indirect evidence of the fundamental irrationality of this process. The Bene Israel had been classified as "non-martial," but their impressive record as native officers belied this. The offer of a separate Bene Israel company may be seen as tacit acknowledgement that the classification was purely arbitrary and unrelated to their actual performance. No other community was offered this concession.

There is a sharp divergence in black and Mahar military experience, beginning in the late 1890s and accelerating after World War I. American blacks were trying to improve their position within the military, particularly access to officer training and combat duty, while the Mahars were trying to get back into the army as ordinary soldiers, with no aspirations beyond VCO rank.

As early as 1890-1914, the American Army had in embryonic form what would eventually become a full-fledged parallel black military. At this early period this amounted to no more than a token few black officers and a single black college with an ROTC program, but the idea that blacks had to be allowed some share, however minute, was clearly there.

The Indian Army, built up of regiments which were expected to be self-contained and self-sufficient, offered no such token opportunities to low-caste Indians. The regiment, a lopsided but recognizable reflection of Indian society, had a place for menials, performing their traditional roles as menials, not as token soldiers. Eventually of course this pattern had to accommodate Indian officers, but only those Indians whose class and educational background mirrored those of their British counterparts. Technical advances in weapons and equipment required more training for Indian soldiers, therefore attendance at specialized schools, but up to World War II it was still expected that most regiments would be responsible for recruiting their own men from designated classes, sending them off for extra training, and taking them back, the regiment remaining their home for the duration of their service.

In the area of benefits, Indian sepoys and American soldiers received roughly comparable pay and benefits, considering social differences. Military service was considered more prestigious in India than in the United States, which did not have a strong tradition of a martial class or caste. In both instances military service was of special value to men from low-status groups, who otherwise had limited opportunities for higher-status employment. Soldiering, especially with the relatively simple technology of the nineteenth century, required little education or extraordinary gifts; any man of normal intellect and physique could enlist, and with hard work and a little luck could count on long-term security and reasonable chances of promotion. This

prospect may have held limited appeal to men who had many choices of employment, but it was attractive to those whose other options were limited to low-paid factory work or agricultural labour.

As a class Mahars benefited more than American blacks from military service. A few thousand army openings for a population of millions had relatively little impact on the black population as a whole, especially since blacks, unlike Mahars, were not actively recruited from a limited territory. The economic impact was therefore both small and diffuse. Similarly, though black veterans were a source of community leadership, they were not concentrated in one area and therefore did not form a focal point for political organization as Mahar VCOs did. The black community also had other institutions which provided strong leadership: churches, schools and colleges, businesses. Lacking these alternatives, Mahar VCOs took a more dominant leadership role than their black counterparts. The critical contribution of military service to Mahar upward mobility was the provision of a relatively educated, articulate, politically energized group of leaders in the late nineteenth and earlier twentieth centuries. Military service also contributed, albeit indirectly, to the development of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, the most influential leader of India's untouchables and indeed one of India's most respected figures. Military service is still important as a source of communal pride and to a small extent as a source of employment, but the greatest contribution occurred before 1893. The delistment of 1893, providing a focus for political activity, was also a factor in keeping up interest in organizations for caste uplift. For

blacks, on the other hand, the questions of equal access and fair treatment in the military were a small part of their overall struggle for equality, not a central issue and organizing force.

Military service has a symbolic value, providing heroic images of courage and self-sacrifice to counter the stereotypical view of the black as lazy, irresponsible, and childlike, and the Mahar as dirty, quarrelsome, and of little value. How important this really is cannot readily be quantified. For blacks, it was certainly important, during the Civil War and the generation after, that they had fought for freedom and had continued to serve their nation as free citizens. After World War I and very markedly by World War II, one gets a strong impression from popular studies that black Americans felt they had sufficiently paid their dues and expected more recognition of their services than was usually forthcoming. The Mahars used the Koregaon pillar as a symbol of their martial service, both in the abstract and as an actual scene for public rallies, until after Independence when such an obvious reference to imperial rule became unfashionable; the heroic Mahar machine-gunner became a later symbol of the regiment's valour, and more recent exploits have contributed to the "brave Mahar" image (the regimental magazine is titled "Vir Mahar").

The symbolic importance of combat service is underlined by the neglect, in many military studies and in popular representations of warfare, of the follower or non-combatant. The doolie-bearers, bhisties, syces and gun-lascars of the Indian Army died as fast as the soldiers did under enemy fire and campaign hard-

ships, but are rarely mentioned except en masse and seldom got individual recognition. Similarly, labour and quartermaster battalions may work on the battlefield and share the hazards of war, but have not generally been considered especially "brave." Simply doing one's duty under fire does not ordinarily earn the kudos that shooting back does. This may well represent a warping of the idea of courage, but doubtless explains why Mahars and blacks both placed so much emphasis on being able to serve as combat soldiers.

The post-World War II era has seen an even greater divergence between the Indian and American armies and the way blacks and Mahars perceive military service. The American Army has grown enormously in size and technological sophistication, while the Indian Army has remained (relative to the size of the country) fairly stable in size and modest in its technology. The Indian Army has also not had to deal with the strains on morale and the political buffeting engendered by the Vietnam war; India's wars since Independence have been limited and perceived as necessary for national security. (This may be changing, due to long-term army involvement in Assam and current unrest in the Punjab.) The American Army is also a much bigger employer than the Indian Army, and offers considerably better pay and benefits (again, relative to population and living standards). Army service is still a fairly attractive option to Mahars, although there is a continuing fear that caste Hindus will (or do) keep Mahars out of higher positions in the army.

American blacks have, in the past thirty years, seen vir-

tually complete reversal of their situation since World War II. Desegregation in the 1950s, the ending of the draft in 1973, and economic recession (affecting blacks more severely than whites) have produced an army in which blacks are over-represented both in total numbers and in the higher-paid (and higher-risk) combat specialties. From the point of view of many American blacks, it may seem that, from being denied the privilege of defending their country, they are now taking more than their fair share of the burden, not by free choice but out of economic necessity.

It seems that, while both the Mahars and black Americans achieved their objectives--enlistment in their own regiment in the former case, integration in all branches of the military in the latter--they have not yet reached the further goal of equity and fair representation at all levels. Changes in recruiting practices and admission to officer training, or even the use of quotas and protective discrimination with the military, could (assuming social reform is considered a responsibility of the military) correct obvious inequities. The American Army is committed to such policies in principle, while the Indian Army is not, but ultimately long-standing social injustices will have to be corrected outside the military structure.

The author has, in this study, compared the military experiences of three communities: the Mahars, the Bene Israel, and black Americans. The military history of the Mahars, although fairly well known in outline within that community, is very little known elsewhere, and has not previously been subjected to detailed, objective study. The Bene Israel have received more

scholarly attention and have had their own historian to record their military service, but are rarely mentioned in military studies. Black history has become an important field in recent years, so many studies, both scholarly and popular, have been produced, and extensive official documentation is available (although only a small portion was available to the writer). The difficulties of drawing comparisons on the basis of very different kinds of information are obvious, and the author is well aware that any conclusions so reached must be tentative indeed. Nevertheless the author considers the comparisons, particularly between black Americans and the Mahars, to have some value.

Considering the case of the Mahars in isolation, or even with other Indian castes, it would be easy to ascribe their recruitment difficulties solely to the peculiarities of the Indian caste system and/or British racial prejudice. Setting their case beside that of the black soldier, it is seen that many of the arguments and suppositions advanced to prove that blacks should not be allowed any larger role in the army resembled very closely those advanced to limit the participation of Indians in the Indian Army. A study prepared for the Army Chief of Staff in 1922 noted that although blacks must be used in combat as well as service units, because to do otherwise would mean that the entire brunt of military service would be borne by the white population, black troops would perform well only with white officers. The study also emphasized that black officers should never be allowed to command white troops. This was very similar to the British assumption that, while Indian troops could fight as well as, or

almost as well as, European troops, they would do so only if led by British officers. Indians of any caste or community could attain nothing higher than VCO status, and could never command British troops. This policy was only beginning to change in World War I, when a few Indian officer candidates graduated from Sandhurst. It is worth emphasizing that these attitudes were widespread, reflecting a general belief in white (European) superiority to blacks, Asians, and other "people of colour," and not solely the products of specific American institutions or of British imperialism.

There is also some importance in the lack of impact of military service on the Bene Israel--surprising considering their very impressive contribution as VCOs. The Bene Israel differed from the other two communities in social status; unlike blacks or Mahars, they were not segregated or considered ritually "unclean," nor did they suffer from any legal or social disabilities. They also benefited from the philanthropic activities of wealthier American and English Jews, and from the interest of Christian missionaries. Military service was, therefore, of marginal importance in practical terms. By the 1890s they were not even interested in preserving limited access to the army; if they could not be officers they could not be tempted to serve in the ranks. This suggests very strongly that it was not specifically Indian factors such as caste, or a claim to Kshatriya status that produced in the Mahar community such a concerted effort to regain their enlistment rights, but the depressed social status and related disabilities which they shared with the

blacks, though in a different social context.

Ultimately the relationship between military service and social mobility may be, very simply, that in serving as soldiers, members of a menial or depressed class can be taken seriously in a role considered appropriate for men of higher status, and therefore lay claim to that status for themselves. Economic benefits and vocational opportunities earned through military services may be very important, but the symbolic value of offering one's life in the service of the state is perhaps even more so. If one thinks of the ritual significance of a black woman sitting on the front seat of a bus, or a group of Mahars entering the precincts of a Hindu temple, the symbolic and ritual value of a soldier's uniform can be recognized. It is a sign that the wearer has accepted an obligation and earned respect for it. It is this demand to be acknowledged and respected for their service that characterizes both the Mahar and the black struggle for equal rights and particularly the "right to fight."

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APPENDIX A

NAME AND CASTE IDENTIFICATION

At various points in this thesis I have assumed that it is possible to determine the caste of an Indian officer or soldier on the basis of his name. This is by no means an obvious conclusion and indeed it met with some scepticism from various people in India. However, I believe that my identifications are accurate within a reasonable margin of error, which I have explained below. I have based my conclusions primarily on a sample of 1,250 Indian officers whose names are taken from the Bombay army lists for the period 1877 to 1900. I obtained these names by going through the army lists approximately every third year for that period. For a few regiments disbanded in 1882 I took the names of officers for each year. Since the rate of turnover was slow (except when a regiment was on active service), only a few men are likely to have been missed in the two or three year gaps between samplings. I believe that I have been able to identify the caste or community of 1,091 out of the 1,250 Native Officers of the Bombay Infantry and Sappers and Miners who comprised my sample. This is 87.3 per cent. I have also made use of occasional other information found in the military records and other sources. The caste break-down on the basis of names and occasional other identification is as follows:

Caste	Number	Per Cent
Marathas	362	29.0
Muslims	286	22.9
Sikhs/Rajputs	121	9.7
Brahmins	76	6.0
Mahars (Parwaris)	67	5.4
Bene Israel	66	5.2
Mochis (Chamars)	31	2.5
Christians	22	1.8
Telingas	20	1.6
Other Castes	40	3.2
Uncertain	159	12.7
TOTAL	1,250	100.0

Caste identification was confirmed by a comparison with the caste breakdown shown in the Caste Return. The "Other Castes" are men whose caste identity is clear from their names but who are not listed in the Caste Returns. The Returns for instance have no separate category for Sonars, Lohars, Malis, Telis or Banias, but a few individuals from these communities can be identified.

Any attempt at a similar analysis of modern names would produce much less reliable results, as few Indians of low-caste origins continue to use surnames or suffixes which clearly mark them as low-caste. Indeed, this analysis was possible for nineteenth century data only because the army apparently continued to use caste-specific forms of names, whereas the same men in civil life may have abandoned this form of name.

Muslims, the second largest group among the native officers, are also among the easiest to identify. I did not attempt to differentiate among the eight categories of Muslims shown in the caste returns; in any case only three are significant: Sunni Muslims from the Bombay provinces and Muslims from Hindustan and

the Punjab; Shi'as from Bombay are numerically insignificant and Afghans, Pathans, and various tribal Muslims together made up less than ten per cent of the Bombay infantry.

Christians, one of the smallest discrete communities, are also very easy to identify. Nearly all of these men were of Indo-Portuguese background and had Portuguese names. There were only three Indo-British, also easily spotted. If any of the native Christians in and around Bombay enlisted, they must have done so under their original caste names, for no native Christians appear in the army lists nor does the Caste Return have any such category.

Some officers were identified as Brahmins by elimination plus a name which, if not inarguably Brahminical, was at least possible, such as Kunhya Lal. Not all Brahmins have now, or had a century ago, distinctive surnames and the caste groupings used by the army further complicate matters by including not only two categories of Brahmins (Deccani and Hindustani), but also a category of Purdasies which includes Brahmins, Ahirs, Kunbis, Khetris, Mochis and several other castes. However, certain names are very unlikely to be anything but Brahmin, such as Pande, Dube, Tribedi, Chaube and Upadhya. The great majority of Brahmins serving in the Bombay army were either Hindustanis or Purdasies, likely from the United Provinces or elsewhere in north India by origin. Very few Deccani Brahmins are listed at all and no Chitpavan (Konkani) Brahmins.

I have arbitrarily lumped Rajputs and Sikhs together since it is not possible to distinguish between them on the basis of

name alone, and the process of elimination is too crude to be of much assistance. All the Singhs (except for those found in the process of elimination to be of some other caste) have been grouped together as Sikhs and Rajputs. In some cases, a guess might be made on the basis of personal names, but I felt that this was too uncertain to be of much value. In any case, for the purposes of this study, Sikhs and Rajputs may reasonably be considered as one group, both having a martial tradition.

The most common system of nomenclature in Maharashtra uses a first name, patronymic and surname. Three examples given here will illustrate this system.

The first example is that of the Maratha Admiral Kanhoji Angrey. His family originally came from the village of Angarwadi near Poona. Angrey is derived from "Angarkar" or possibly "Angarwadkar." The original family name was Sankpal and the surname Angrey was adopted when the family left Angarwadi to move to the coast. Kanhoji's father Tukoji, son of Sekhoji, was known as Tukoji Sekhoji Sankpal and was first mentioned as a sea captain about the year 1640. Kanhoji, born about 1669, was known as Kanhoji Tukoji Angrey. It would appear likely that the family adopted the surname Angrey to distinguish themselves from another family named Sankpal; it means simply, "we are a family coming from Angarwadi."[1]

The second example comes from a Sanad granted by Raghoji Angrey (who was the son of Manaji and therefore a grandson of Kanhoji Angrey) to a Bene Israel, Elloji Bin Musaji, Israel, Teli, Jhiratkar, approximately 1831-32. This actually is a

capsule history of the individual and his family rather than just a name. It could be expanded to read Elloji (Elijah or Eli), son of Moses of the community of the Bene Israel or children of Israel, oil man from the village of Jhirat.[2] The elements of the name include the personal name, father's name, community or sect, occupational name and village name. Some Bene Israel families also used hereditary titles, such as Naik or Kaji. Exactly what selection of names would be used on a particular occasion would depend on the particular circumstances. In a formal document, probably the entire range of names would be used to ensure against misidentification.

The third example is that of the family of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar. Doctor Ambedkar's family came originally from the village of Ambavade in the Ratnagiri district and their village name, therefore, was Ambavadekar. The family also had the surname Sakpal. Dr. Ambedkar's father was known as Ramji Maloji Sakpal, Ramji being his personal name and Maloji his father's name. In his army records, however, Ramji was identified as Ramnak Malnak. The "ji" suffix is merely a polite suffix in common use. Ramji's three sons were Balaram, Anandrao, and Bhim, also later called Bhimrao. All three had their father's personal name Ramji as their patronymic. When the boy Bhim attended high school at Satara he was apparently registered under his surname Ambavadekar but his Brahmin teacher, whose name was Ambedkar, took a great fancy to the boy and changed his surname to Ambedkar in the school records.[3] Dr. Ambedkar's family therefore had a family name "Sakpal," and a village name "Ambavadekar," and Dr. Ambedkar

himself used a different surname derived from his teacher. Army records, however, did not use any of these surnames but merely identified men of the family by their personal name and patronymic, with the Nak suffix used by Mahars. It would be pointless to say that one or another name was the correct name since most families then, and many families today, may have an equal claim to several different names which are used for different purposes.

The Bene Israel (Konkani Jews), another small community but one with disproportionately large representation in the corps of native officers, characteristically used Old Testament names, often with a Hinduized spelling (Moses rendered as Moosajee, Samuel as Samaji). It is apparent from other sources[4] that the Bene Israel community had adopted the regional custom of using a personal name, patronymic and surname. In their case the surname was usually derived from a place or village but sometimes it was an occupational name or clan name. The army, however, recorded only the personal name and the second name, which was usually either the patronymic or "Israel" used as a "caste" name. Benjamin J. Israel, a contemporary Bene Israel writer, has noted that his family was unusual among military families in retaining "Israel" as a surname.[5] For example, Subadar-Major Binniaminji Israel of the 25th Native Infantry was otherwise and more correctly known as Benjamin Shalom Nagawkar (Benjamin, the son of Shalom from Nagaw).[6]

Chamars (Mochis) and Mahars (Parwaris) both used characteristic suffixes ("Mehtar" for Chamars, "Nak" for Mahars), and used the typical Maharashtrian naming system, although as in the case

of the Bene Israel, army records showed only the first name and, usually, the patronymic. The origin and meaning of the "Mehtar" suffix are obscure but its use by Chamars is shown in the military records by the few instances which identify these men by caste: Subedar Luximonmeter Mhadmeter of the 24th Native Infantry was identified as a Mochi in his personal records, cited in an investigation regarding a pension for his widow; the same records list his brother as Bhim Mehter.[7] The "Nak" suffix to Mahar names is variously derived from "Nag" (referring to a snake deity or totem) or "Naik" or "leader" derived from their military service under Shivaji. Records in the National Archives of India of the compulsory retirement of fifteen native officers of both castes in 1895 show six as Mochis (all using the Mehter suffix) and the others as Mahars or Parwaris, (seven of the nine using the Nak suffix).[8] The majority of the Chamars and Mahars, therefore, have been so identified on the basis of the caste suffix alone although a few Mahars are identified from other sources (e.g., the other two from the above-mentioned list in the N.A.I.). It may be worth mentioning, however, that by the end of the nineteenth century few Mahars were still using the Nak suffix, as can be seen from the names affixed to the Kamble petition of 1904-06. Army usage seems to have preserved a form which was already on the decline in civilian life, and certainly is uncommon today. In this connection it is of interest that Mr. Bhaskar Vishram Sawadkar, whose family can claim seven generations of army service, listed his immediate forebears as Damodar Vishram and Gangadhar Vishram (his brothers), Vishram Gangaram Sawadkar

(father), and Ganganak Bhagnak Mahar (grandfather), illustrating not only the surviving system of patronymics but also the exact point at which the family stopped using Mahar as a surname and adopted the territorial and neutral designation of Sawadkar (for Sawad, the village in Kolaba district where the present Mr. Sawadkar still lives). The grandfather, serving in the army from 1885 to 1914, still called himself Mahar; his son, serving from 1911 to 1933, did not.[9] It is tempting to suppose that some member of this family, possibly the grandfather, was the "Subhedar Savadkar" mentioned by Zelliott[10] and this may indeed be so, but the available evidence does not constitute proof. Some degree of acquaintanceship is very probable.

The largest single group, Marathas, have been identified primarily on the basis of surnames which are known to be in common use among Marathas. Some of these surnames are also fairly commonly used by Mahars, Kunbis, or other Maharashtrian castes. I would therefore consider it very probable that some men whom I have identified as Marathas, are in fact Mahars, Kunbis or possibly from other castes somewhat lower in social status. However, the army seems to have accepted them as Marathas so I feel no particular problem in also doing so. Some of the surnames appearing in the Maratha group are Gaekwar, Maney, Morey, Scindey, Chawan, Powar, Jadhav, Ghorpuray, Sawant, Dongrey, Ghatgey, Bhonsla, Salvi and Sirke. Many names appear under various spellings. The British officers who recorded recruits' names usually spelled them phonetically, sometimes with very odd results. Toward the end of the nineteenth century spellings

became more standardized and resembled the modern forms much more closely.

Robertson notes that a number of Mahar surnames are shared with Kunbis, Brahmins or Marathas. Surnames shared with the Marathas and Kunbis include Bhonsle, Jadhava, Gaikwadj, Pawar, Shelke, Shinde and Thorat. Names shared by Mahars and Brahmins include Chitale, Gadre, Joshi, Lokhande, Tande.[11] About the only surname I have found to be generally accepted as used by Mahars only and no one else, is Kamble. All of this merely underlines the difficulty of separating out Mahars, Marathas, and Kunbis in particular on the basis of surname alone. The officers I have identified as Mahars, I think are virtually certain to be Mahars. However it is likely that they are somewhat under-represented, due to a possible confusion between Mahars and Marathas on the basis of names.

The last group which I have attempted to identify are Telingas. This category in the army lists, I suspect includes a number of South Indian castes. They are identified primarily on a linguistic basis. Of the twenty Telingas whom I identified from the army lists, nine served in the Sappers and Miners. They were identified by elimination and by the use of the "appa" suffix on their names, which seems characteristic. Some of these men were probably actually Coorgs from Karnataka.

Sources

1. Manohar Malgonkar, The Sea Hawk: Life and Battles of Kanhoji Angrey (New Delhi: Orient Paperbacks, n.d.), pp. 10-11.

2. Haeem Samuel Kehimkar, The History of the Bene-Israel of India (Tel Aviv: Dayag Press Ltd., 1937), p. 43.

3. Dhananjay Keer, Dr. Ambedkar, Life and Mission, 3rd ed. (Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1971), pp. 10-14.

4. Kehimkar, History of Bene-Israel, passim; Rev. J. Henry Lord, The Jews in India and the East (Kolhapur: Mission Press, 1907; reprint ed., Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, Publishers, 1976), Appendix II, p. 11.

5. Benjamin J. Israel, "Bene Israel Surnames and Their Village Links," in The Bene Israel of India: Some Studies. New York: Apt Books, 1984, pp. 124-125.
   He also observes that village names have been retained for ritual use in the synagogue, even where the family has adopted another name for other purposes and has no existing connection with the village.

6. Kehimkar, History of Bene-Israel, p. 207.

7. I.O.L., Government of India, Department of Finance and Commerce, No. 312 of 1887. Correspondence re: grant of family pension.

8. N.A.I., Military Proceedings, September 1895, #1263, p. 392.

9. Questionnaire completed by Mr. Bhaskar Vishram Sawadkar, August 14, 1980.

10. Eleanor Zelliott, "Mahar & Non-Brahman Movements in Maharashtra," Indian Economic and Social History Review 7 (March 1970):401.

11. Alexander Robertson, The Mahar Folk: A Study of Untouchables in Maharashtra (Calcutta: Y.M.C.A. Publishing House, 1938), p. 54.

APPENDIX B

MILITARY APPOINTMENT OF KAMALNAC WITNAC, JEMADAR, 1847

The photostat certificates of the grant of the rank of Jemadar and Subadar to Kamalnac Witnac (Cumblenac Witnac) are reproduced as under:-

The Governor in Council of Bombay

To Cumblenac Witnac Greeting

By virtue of the power and Authority to us given We do hereby constitute and appoint you Cumblenac Witnac to be a Jemadar in the Service of the East India Company on the Bombay Establishment. You are therefore carefully and diligently to discharge the Duty of Jemadar by doing and performing all and all manner of things thereunto belonging; and you are to observe and follow such Orders and Directions, from time to time, as you shall receive from Us the Governor in Council for the time being or any other your Superior Officer, according to the Rules and Discipline of War: and you are to rank as Jemadar on the list of Jemadars on the Bombay Establishment, from the First day of January One Thousand Eight Hundred and Forty Seven

Dated in BOMBAY CASTLE, the first day of June One Thousand Eight Hundred and Forty Seven.

Registered, by Order, in the Secretary's Office 4 Signatures

Military Department (not legible)

sd/illegible Lieut. Col. Secy to Govt Mily Dept.

SOURCE: Regimental History of the Mahar M. G. Regiment, Appendix B, p. 91

APPENDIX C

MONTHLY COST OF A REGIMENT OF NATIVE INFANTRY

Number	Regiment of the Line	Pay			Addit. Batta if in Sind	
		Total of each	Amount	Total	Total of each	Total
		Rs.As.P.	Rs.As.P.	Rs.As.P.	Rs.As.P.	Rs.As.P.
2	Subadars, 1st class	100 0 0	200 ---		15	30
2	Subadars, 2nd class	80 0 0	160		15	30
4	Subadars, 3rd class	67 ---	268		15	60
4	Jemadars, 1st class	35 ---	140		7-8	30
4	Jemadars, 2nd class	30 ---	120		7-8	30
40	Havildars	14 ---	560		5	200
40	Naiks	12 ---	480		5	200
16	Drummers	7 ---	112		1-8-	24
600	Privates	7 ---	4,200		1-8-	900
24	Boys	3 8 0	84 -		-----	-----
736	Total			6,324		
	Staff Allowance					
	1 Native Adjutant	-----	17-8-		-----	-----
	1 Subadar-Major	-----	25 -		-----	-----
	1 Havildar-Major	-----	7 -		-----	-----
	1 Drill Havildar	-----	5 -		-----	-----
	1 Drill Naick	-----	2-8-		-----	-----
	8 Color Havildars	2 -	16 -		-----	-----
	8 Pay Havildars	5 -	40 -		-----	-----
	1 Drum-Major	-----	5 -		-----	-----
	1 Fife-Major	-----	5 -		-----	-----
	1 Quartermaster Havildar	-----	14 -		-----	-----
	Mess Allowance	-----	100 -		-----	-----
				237--		
	Educational Establishment					
1	Schoolmaster	-----	20 - -			
1	Do.	-----	12 - -			
1	Do.	-----	8 - -			
	School Allowance		19-2-8	59-2-8		

MONTHLY COST OF A REGIMENT OF NATIVE INFANTRY - Continued

Number	Subordinate Medical and Fixed Hospital Establishment	Pay			Addit. Batta if in Sind	
		Total of each Rs.As.P.	Amount Rs.As.P.	Total Rs.As.P.	Total of each Rs.As.P.	Total Rs.As.P.
2	Hospital Assistants	25 - -	50 - -		5 - -	10 - -
1	Native Medical Pupil	- - -	8 - -		- - -	2 - -
1	Do. do.	- - -	7 - -		- - -	2 - -
1	Goorgah	- - -	5 - -		- - -	2 - -
1	Cook	- - -	7 - -		- - -	2 - -
1	Washerman	- - -	6 - -		- - -	2 - -
2	Bhisties	7 - -	14 - -		2 - -	4 - -
2	Sweepers	5 - -	10 - -		2 - -	4 - -
1	Leechman	- - -	10 - -		- - -	2 - -
4	Dooly-bearers	6 - -	24 - -		1 - -	4 - -
				141 - -		
	Native Followers					
8	Bhisties	7- 8-	60 - -		1- 8-	12 - -
1	Chowdry	- - -	16 - -		- - -	5 - -
2	Weighmen	5 - -	10 - -		2 - -	4 - -
				86 - -		
	Conservancy Establishment	5 -	40 -			
1	Cart } Paid at	1				
8	Sweepers } Narrick Rates					
				6847-2-8		1,559 -
				Rupees 8406-2-8		

SOURCE: National Archives of India, Military Proceedings, 1881 March 945.

APPENDIX D

RANKS IN THE INDIAN ARMY

The Indian Army had a special rank, the Viceroy's commissioned officer (VCO), the equivalent for Indians of the King's commissioned officer (KCO). The term VCO seems to date from the late nineteenth century, although I have not been able to determine when, or if, it was officially adopted. Native officers received their commissions from the Governor-General (Viceroy), or (at least in the earlier nineteenth century) from the Governor of the Presidency, while KCOs received theirs from the Crown. The VCO was not quite equal to a KCO, as he could not command British troops, but within his regiment he was not a glorified warrant officer but an officer in every sense of the word, and was a figure of considerable power. Ranks open to Indians were, in descending order:

Subadar-major	equivalent to KCO major
Subadar	" " " lieutenant
Jemadar	" " " second-lieutenant

<u>Noncommissioned Ranks</u>	
Quartermaster havildar	(various levels)
Havildar-major	equivalent to sergeant-major
Havildar	" " sergeant
Lance-naik	" " corporal
Rifleman	" " private

Cavalry ranks differed in name, but had a similar hierarchy.

Generally an Indian Army company would have one KCO who was first in command, with all other commissioned-officer positions filled by VCOs. British Army companies, by contrast, had six

KCOs. Some regimental positions were held by VCOs; however, they were never promoted beyond the regimental level.

The VCO provided a link between the British officer corps and the sepoy; offered an outlet for ambitious and able Indians; and enabled the British to officer an army for far less than it would have cost to use only British officers.

This structure is parallel to the civil service structure, which also employed Indians at all low-level positions and some middle-level positions, but reserved all command positions above a certain level for British personnel. An Indian could rise within the system, but he would always be in some sense inferior to a British officer of equivalent rank. The one unalterable distinction was that a British officer could command either British or Indian troops, while the Indian officer could never command British troops.

The modern Indian army retains the same ranks, now called Junior Commissioned Officers (JCOs). It is now possible, though not common, for a JCO to be promoted to a full commission.

Sources

Stephen P. Cohen, The Indian Army: Its Contribution to the Development of a Nation (Berkeley, Calif.: U. of California Press, 1971), pp. 42-44.

K. M. L. Saxena, The Military System of India, 1850-1900 (Delhi: Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1974), pp. 200-205.

APPENDIX E, PART 1

To

J. Nugent Esquire C.S.

Revenue Commissioner, S.D.

Dapoli 8th February 1894

Respected Sir,

We, the undersigned pensioned Native Officers of the Bombay Army beg most respectfully to request you to use your influence to settle the difficulty in which we find ourselves with regard to the education of our sons.

2) We are by caste Chambars and Mahars.

3) Since July 1892 we have been trying to get our boys taken into the municipal Marathi school in Dapoli.

4) Since that date what has taken place is this:

I. On July the 1st 1892, we sent a petition on the subject to the Dapoli Municipality.

On August the 5th, 1892, we received the answer that if our boys were taken into the school, all the other boys would leave.

II. On September 8th, 1892, we again sent a petition to the municipality when we were told that our boys could not be taken in.

III. On November 21st, 1892, we made an application to the Assistant Collector. The answer to this was that an arrangement would be made.

IV. On January 1st, 1893, we made a similar application to the Collector. The answer to this came through the Municipality to the effect that the present school would be enlarged to provide room for our boys if we would consent to contribute Rs. 50/-to the cost of the enlargement. We were willing to do this.

V. As nothing was done in the matter we again, in November 1893, addressed the Assistant Collector on the subject, but we have received no definite information as to what is going to be done.

5) As some of our boys are growing up without the education that we should like to give them, but under present circumstances cannot, we most respectfully beg you, Sir, to issue such orders as you may deem necessary in order to quickly put within our reach that which we so much desire.

We most respectfully beg to subscribe ourselves your most humble and obedient servants.

*12th reg't----------Bd/Pensioner Subedar Major Bahadur Gungnak Duinak. (English)
Subedar Soorennak Conednak. (English)

*21st reg't----------Pensioner Subedar Jayenak Harnak. (English)
Pensioner Subedar Sewnak Changnak. (English)
Pensioner Subedar Ramnak Deonak. (Marathi)

Pensioner Khodmehetar Harmhetar

Khonda. (Modi)

Khod Mehtor Subedar Pensioner. (English)

**7th reg't----------*Pensioner Subedar Ramnak Malnac.

(English)

Sipnak Koknak Jemadar Pensioner.

(Marathi)

(Original application in an artistic style written in Hand)

I have seen the original signatures. Those in English are written in a good, well-formed hand. The Marathi and Modi signatures are as far as I can judge also well-written. The petition itself appears to have been drafted by a professional writer.

A. B. March 17/80

*Regimental affiliations are derived from the Bombay Army Lists.

**I believe this is Subadar-Major Ramji Sakhpal, father of B. R. Ambedkar.

APPENDIX E, PART 2

Confidential

Belgaum

June 30th 1894

My dear Lee Warner,

I send you these papers and shall be very much obliged if you will let me know your opinion on the subject and also what action Government would probably take if I submitted the papers officially for orders.

I do not adopt this latter course in the first instance because if Government said they saw no cause for interference or deprecated any further action, or for any reason decided not to support me, I should be doing the cause of the Education of low caste boys more harm than good. The fact that I had represented the matter to Government and that Government refused to take any steps or did not concur in my views would of course leak out and the Dapoli and other Ratnagiri school boards and Municipalities which are of course practically controlled by the Brahmin and high caste element would go back instead of going forward, would withdraw what tiny concessions they have already given, and would soon quietly and effectively manage to exclude all Mahar boys and other low caste boys from the schools. It is to avoid this possible result that I now write d.o. [demi-officially]

The facts of the case are stated in my communication to the Collector of Ratnagiri amongst the papers, G.O. 1108 of March 14th and G.O. 1909 of May 2nd last. They are unquestioned when I was at Dapoli in February and a large deputation of pensioned Native officers interviewed me. There was not a single low caste boy in the school and not a boy of that description could obtain admission. An illusory and unsatisfactory offer to provide a separate school had been made by the municipality and had been and with reason rejected by the Native officers who wished their sons to be decently educated and not all huddled up in a single class in a small school under one lowly paid teacher, resting under the stigma of being unfit to associate even at a distance with boys of higher castes.

I spoke seriously to Mr. Barve, the President of the Municipalities and Chairman of the School Committee. He was profuse in his promises when I found he was in earnest, and engaged to arrange for the admission to the school of the low caste boys. He said they should be admitted into the school room and permitted to join the classes being only required to sit on separate benches. I agreed to this but entirely disapproved of the verandah arrangement suggested, under which the low caste boys would have had to sit in an outer verandah, the floor of which is on a lower level than the floor of the school room and is separated from the latter by a dwarf wall some three feet high. If out in the verandah the low caste boys neither see no hear well what is going on in the school room, could not be efficiently taught and would be effectually cut off from the classes

to which they were supposed to belong.

The moment my back was turned and I left for Hurnai and Kanara, Barve proceeded to disregard his promises and seems to have carried out the objectionable verandah arrangement which is a practical negation of the wishes and rights of the Native officers and other low caste rate payers of Dapoli. His excuse is that the reform must be introduced by degrees, that public opinion is at present opposed to the introduction of low caste boys into the classrooms and that the example of the missionary school is being followed. My answer would be that the Government withdraw its grant and the Local Board had to follow suit. The Higher caste Hindus would soon be brought to their senses. I would rather have the school with low caste boys in it than have the school closed, and that assuming Barve's question about the mission school procedure to be correct, (which I doubt) this would furnish no justification for excluding, even for the present, low caste boys from the classrooms of the Dapoli school. The Mission school is a private institution run to combine education of boys with profit to the Mission Society. Mr. Gadney and his staff, as far as I could judge, are a purely Educational agency making practically no attempt to proselytise. They simply keep a large private boarding and day school, and are free to adopt any policy which they deem best and most profitable. The Dapoli school is on the other hand, an institution mainly supported by public money in the shape of Provincial and Local funds grants and is subjected to the Government rules. Moreover

if Barve's representation of what occurred at the Mission school is accurate, it proves that public opinion at Dapoli is already educated up to the point of ceasing to object to Mahar boys sitting in school with other caste boys.

The late and the present state of affairs, I attribute in great measure to the apathy and laisser-faire policy of the Collector and his assistant, Crump Drew is disposed to be indolent likes the dolce far niente form of existence, and is, I think, governed in most matters by his officers. He and Crump let things slide on as they will, were easily satisfied and did not care to exert themselves in the matter sheltering behind such excuses as Drew puts forward in his letter to me of May 9th last. If I had not stirred up the matter myself I feel convinced that nothing would have been done and low caste boys would still have been excluded from the school. Drew is easily satisfied, if he is content with the existing state of affairs, I am not, nor are those deserving and intelligent men, the Native Pensioned Officers. The orders of Government seem to me quite clear on the point.

Yours ever

Sd/-J. Nugent

(Copy of D.O. letter from the Hon'ble M. J. Nugent, Commissioner South Division dated 30th June 1894)

SOURCE: Maharashtra State Archives, Educational Department, #63 of 1895.

APPENDIX F, PART 1

PETITIONS FOR RE-ENLISTMENT

[Translation of the Marathi Petition of Gopal Baba Walangkar, into English by Mr. V. W. Moon, Founder, Dr. Ambedkar Research Institute, Nagpur - 9].

To

His Excellency, the Commander in Chief of Bombay Presidency at Puna from Anarya Dosh Pariharak Mandal at Dapoli.

Respected Sir,

We most humbly and respectfully take the liberty of writing these few lines for excellencies favourable consideration. We have the honour to request the favour of your kindly submitting application to inform that [Translation of the Marathi Petition].

In the beginning it was the practice and order of the Honourable East India Co. to recruit native people in the company's military force. That time the orthodox Hindus and the Muslims did not volunteer to work in the houses of the Officers or in military department, because the officers of East India Company were foreigners and of foreign religions, were beef-eaters and pork-eaters. The food was considered as prohibitive for both the religions. Our ancestors were Kshatriya. In about the year 1396 there was a great famine for about 12 years which was called Durgadevi famine. That time our ancestors survived by eating whatever they could find. Therefore, they were considered low caste under the Peshwa Rule. Under the Company Government our ancestors sought employment for military and as home servants. They helped Company Government by their valour and honesty in the war without caring for their own lives. This can be seen from the names recorded on the pillar erected at Koregaon who fought against the Hindus on the side of the company troops. The honesty and war-like qualities impressed upon the officer of the military department created trust in their minds. Not only our ancestors proved their valour, even in the domestic affairs, they did not allow anything to fall short, in their duty. In the early native Infantries our so-called inferior people outnumbered the regular recruits because whenever the war broke out our Parwari Mochi and Mang people were ready to travel through water. Because unlike others they had no scruples of religious restrictions on travel, bathing, worshiping or cooking. They could cook

any time and get prepared for fighting. In case of any non-availability or fleeing of any servant, our people helped the soldiers for preparing food. If any officer was wounded, our people used to serve him their own water etc. and also looked after them. The officers therefore, very much loved them. That time the Head of Regiment used to inquire about the well-being of commissioned and non-commissioned officers of our castes in the annual inspection and used to order additional recruitment, in case their number fell short. Thus the Company Government used to respect our caste men with the result several men became Sardars and Killedars.

With the help of our ancestors, the Honourable East India Company slowly and steadily settled all over the country and the Hindus and Muslims and the Kings of this Land realised the strength and power of the Government which strengthened day by day. The Hindus and Muslims who claimed to be high and pure joined the military service of East India Company and also entered the domestic service of the English Officers. In the Bengal province also the low caste people had helped the Company Government in establishing the hold on the people but high caste Hindus and Muslims occupied the high offices under the Government and impressed upon the company officers that they are superior and pure to the low caste. Their treachery was not immediately understood. The low caste men could not explain the origin of religion and of high caste to the company officers because they were illiterate. Led away by the high caste employees they employed more high caste officers in the military service. With the result every Battalion was dominated by high caste Sardars and they got religious freedom in every respect. In the beginning the religious fanaticism of rites and rituals was not in existence in the military department but with the spread of religious freedom in the military, the high castes dominated the services. According to Hindu religion, Brahmin should be worshipped as God and all others should act according to his dictates. After consolidating complete hold over the low caste people under the name of religion the high caste people spread rumours under the name of religion and treacherously revolted against the Company Government and killed the innocent women and children of the English people. Our Government has not yet forgotten this incident.

In the Bombay Presidency also the so-called high caste people in the regiment tried to convince the European officers under the pretext of religious superiority of Brahmin Kshatriya caste that the low caste sepoy should be removed from the military services. They could manoeuver the employment of their own caste more than anybody else. Thus where these people were more in numbers those regiments became traitors. On the contrary the regiments in which our people outnumbered remained honest and faithful.

The revolt of the high caste religious-minded people was brought under control by the Company Government by employing

more personnel in the Bombay regiment. Thus peace was restored throughout the country. The Company Government could have acted in revenge. But in 1859 the Queen's Government took over the control of the whole of India by passing a new act in the British Parliament. After the introduction of this act in the Country so-called high caste people have found some pretext under the name of religion. When these people are free they acted against the religious doctrine yet their religion is not doomed but in case any Government official tells them to do a particular thing, they start complaining and crying against the officer alleging that he interfered with his religious belief. Our ancestors helped the Company Government to spread their rule. They served at home and also in the field. They came closer to the high caste officer of the Company Government. Hindus felt that this Government would enrol low caste men who will be offered high offices, naturally they will take revenge against us of our attitude towards them. Therefore under the pretext of the religion we should not allow this to happen. On the contrary we should take revenge. They have, therefore, prohibited our children from entering the Government's schools under the name of religion. They also prevented our men from securing good jobs, business or other employment by poisoning the ears of the Government officers. This is how the high caste people are taking revenge against our Parwari and other subjects of the benevolent and impartial Government. They have made us completely destitute and they are still doing it. Still we did not pay heed to these religious-minded fanatic people because we had some place in the military service. Despite the efforts of the caste Hindus preventing us from taking education, we used to secure some knowledge. With the knowledge, our people had started improving their own condition and also tried to make progress. The Government have given freedom of religion to all people. After reading the religious book and careful consideration can we find that the so-called high caste people are really high and pure? We found the origin of them. We wish to communicate the origin of the high caste and also their treachery in religion, in brief in the following paragraphs which will not be difficult to follow.

The so-called high caste and pure people's ancestors were as degraded as our people and were used to eat flesh of cow and beef. They wrote their own religious scriptures. They did not observe high and low divisions. The high caste people of the South are progeny of Australian Semitic Anaryas and African Negroes whereas the high caste people from North are mixture of several castes. The King of Madhogad by name 'Wam Raja' deployed two Jakh twenty thousand Brahmins for performing the Yadna (sacrifice). Several castes of foreign origin became high caste Hindus by giving up beef-eating. The Chitpavan Brahmins of Konkan came from the Jewish race. They fled from Africa for fear of their lives by the invaders and their ship was wrecked nearby Malabar coast. Their children and women drowned and died in the sea. Those men who survived, married the native low caste women. The progeny of these people was called Gabit and were fishermen

by profession but when they became rulers, they called themselves Brahmins. The high caste Marathas who considered themselves as Kshatriya, were Turks in the early period who came to India for stay. They were invited by a Dravid Drahmin named Shankar for eliminating the Buddhists and Jains of this country. They were assimilated in Hindus and were called Rajputs. Later some of them were called Marathas. They had kept several low caste women as concubines from whom different low caste Marathas were born. This is the opinion of various European and Hindu scholars.

The Peshwas were originally of low caste. With the help of several low caste Maratha Kings from the Bhosala Dynasty, the Peshwas became rulers by treacherous means. With a view to wipe out and conceal their low status, by treachery, they tyrannized the others during the last 100 years in the name of religion. They ruled that the food from Shudras and Untouchables should not be accepted. Even their shadow should not be tolerated. They should be prohibited from social intercourse. They should be considered lowest and impure than any other foreign caste or even the animals. The non-Brahmins were also prohibited from taking education.

The God did not like tyranny and opression of these people. He therefore sent the most benevolent and impartial Government from thousands of miles away to this land for destroying these wicked people. With their arrival the knowledge became free for all and we could learn something through the military services. With knowledge we could understand the religious scriptures, customs and traditions of other religions and realise that the God created man as the greatest among the animals. In the eyes of God there is no high or low. Mere rites and rituals or different habits of eating and dress do not make man low or high but he becomes high or low by his intelligence even then he cannot be called untouchable. With purity in heart if a person worships God, he is considered great. With such knowledge, we started realising our rights. During the last five years we have been publishing booklets since 1889 and published 3 advertisements, swearing in the name of cow who is Goddess of the Hindus, asking the Hindus to explain as to how and under what rules of Shastras we are considered low. We challenged them to give satisfactory reply within the period of six months. We also questioned whether there are any solutions for removal of lowness in Hindu religion. With all our challenges none of the Hindu orthodox authorities or the Shankaryacharyas has come forward to reply to any of our questions.

If we are low because of beef-eating, how is it that the foreigners who eat flesh of any animal and still have opportunity to trade among the Hindus? Even there are several castes among the Hindu religion who eat flesh of any animal but they have no stigma of untouchability. But under the veil of religion, Hindus are very cruel to us even against the law of nature. Although there are thousands of people amongst us whose forefathers never knew what beef-eating was, still the Hindus

treated them inhumanly.

Taking into consideration all these factors, we had decided to quit this religion which considers man as low. Mere worship of God is enough to get equal treatment according to this religion of the God [means Christianity]. The Government which treats its subjects with law and justice is like God but if it does not interfere with the religion which is unjust to us, it will increase our suffering. The Government must treat their subjects like their children. Nowadays we do not understand as to why the highest officers have prohibited the entry of our people in the military service and why we have been deprived of our rightful position according to our ability.

We want to know our benevolent and compassionate Government as to how the descendents of our forefathers who staked their lives in the service of this Government in the war against enemy, have become useless and incompetent to be enrolled in military service only at the time of peace under the Government of the Queen. We want to know this because it never happened before and how the present Government have made distinction between high and low? We suspect that some high caste persons must have poisoned the high officials in the military department. We, therefore, request that the matter should be inquired into and our petition be considered favourably. A couple of illustrations from the Kandahar War will be useful to show as to how the high caste people retracted from action at the time of war.

1) During the battle of Kandahar, it was experienced that the high caste soldiers refused to go on the front for combat on some religious pretext regarding cooking, bathing, etc. Consequently, the low caste men had to be sent in their place.

2) The 19th Bombay Infantry Battalion was constructing a road from Jacobabad, Left Wing Commander, Major Trench was in charge of Rolan Pass Division. He had no butler but he was accompanied by one Parwari for looking after a horse, and a washerman. Both of them used to cook food for their master but this caused inconvenience to Major Trench who had to employ another Parwari and a Christian for his assistance but the high caste people did not come to his help. When he reached Kandahar his butler and another butler of Adjutant Lieutenant Stenner had left their job. That time two Parwaris were employed by these officers as their domestic servant. Both these officers died on 16th August, 1880 in a combat at Dekhoja village near Kandahar. At death time, they asked for water but the high caste soldiers refused to serve water to them as it would pollute them. Rather they started calling the watermen. Immediately another soldier of Parwari caste came forward and served water to the officer. Thereafter they died peacefully.

Another Wing Commander Major Waudby died at Dabria post in fire from Pathana while commanding the road from Kandahar to

Chaman. He had one butler and a horseman from Parwari caste. Both of them died with their master but did not flea away.

4) The 19th Bombay Infantry regiment came back two stations from Kandahar and stationed at Takhatpool after the Kandahar battle which ended in 1880. The Brigade under the control of General Ferr also on its way to Kandahar came to Chaman. It had one European Battalion. The luggage and tents of this force however were delayed. The soldiers were hungry and thirsty. Having known that there are alleys they came closer and asked for food and water. They even offered one rupes per cake of bread but the high caste Marathas did not spare them either food or water out of fear of pollution and ran away with their utensils. Some sepoys of Parwari caste were taking their food just nearby. They called the soldiers and offered them food and water without taking a single penny and prepared fresh food for themselves.

When the war breaks out, the military forces need hundreds of labourers. These labourers who accompany armed forces belong mostly from Shudra and untouchable communities. If they do not volunteer to join the services, the Government forcibly catch hold of them and employ. These men usually look after maintenance of animals or carry palanquins at the battle field. While carrying these things they are either killed or injured but they never leave their luggage and run away. At such time do the high caste people come to the aid of Government? At the most these people take huge salary and empty the Government treasury. The military officers should, therefore, think over this problem carefully.

So our low caste backward men and women serve the Government at the time of war as well as in peace. They serve the officers and their wives and children from the beginning till today. How a such honest people useful for all purposes are now considered unsuitable for employment in military service? Did these people ever put up lame excuses of religion at the battle field or did they run away from it, or did they behave dishonestly in service or refused to work like the employees of high castes? We, therefore, request the Government to find out whether some high caste persons prejudiced the Government officials and the Government has acted accordingly to prevent our low caste men from entering into military service.

Second important point towards which we want to draw attention is that, if this huge country of India is to be kept under control permanently, the Government should employ only the Europeans in military service as officers, under those command the native forces should be formed of those people who have real war-like characters. Those who consider valour as the religion and who think that death at the battle field is like heavenly bliss, they alone should be employed in the native army. Those who traditionally were warriors for the battles on the land and on the water who never cared for religious restrictions of cook-

ing, bathing, etc. and stood by the side of the master under the most adverse conditions, they cannot think of any treachery against the Government. The Government had declared in 1859 that such castes will be given due preference. In view of that promise, Government should employ in civil, military and police department without any discrimination these faithful and honest persons. They should also be given education and proper opportunity for suitable posts in the department. We also suggest that those people who were of low birth in ancient times but followed all restrictions of food and bathing and consider themselves the highest of all the people and who consider that this country will some day come under their rule should be formed into a separate military regiment because these people demand that they should be given political and military training. These people have no faith in the Central Government. They had applied for voluntary services but Government refused. Such caste-minded and religious-minded people should not be trusted because they will bring this Government in trouble very soon. Some high caste people demand political rights and if the high caste persons with religious dogmas are employed in military department they might be encouraged for mutiny even on flimsy grounds. We, therefore, request the Government to employ the low caste men side by side and allow them to mix with the high caste orthodox people who will eat common food from each other. As these people do not consider it taboo, the eating of food on a way to England or from Konkan to Bombay or in the railway compartment, so also they will drink water from the same cistern at the time of war. They will not put up any excuse about religious practice to the Government officer. High caste orthodox should be mixed up with low caste so that their complex of being high will perish and their desire to become the rulers of this land will cease and then these people will never consider either the Government or foreigners of other religions, or the men of this country as low. We, therefore, humbly request the highest officers of the military department to read our petition carefully from beginning to end and consider it impartially and sympathetically. We express regrets for the trouble we have given (Marathi portion complete).

And for this act of excellency kindness we shall ever prey for excellencies prosperity and happiness.

Your most obedient servant and

Secretary of

Anarya Dosh Pariharak Mandali

APPENDIX F, PART 2

The Conference of the Deccan Mahars
1373, Cantonment, Poona
Bombay Presidency,
India.

Poona, November, 1910.

To

The Right Honourable

The EARL OF CREWE,

K.G., P.C., M.A., F.S.A.,

Secretary of State for India,

LONDON.

HUMBLY SHEWETH,

We, the Mahar inhabitants of India, residing in the Bombay Presidency, have experienced the vitalising influence of the general awakening of our Indian people, and long to participate in the new privileges which have been granted by our illustrious Emperior and King to the people of our country, in accordance with the declarations of our late Empress, Queen Victoria the Good, in the celebrated Proclamation of 1858. We do not aspire to high political privileges and positions, since we are not educationally qualified for them, but humbly seek employment in the lowest grades of the Public Service, in the ranks of Police Sepoys and of soldiers in the Indian Army.

2. We are making no new demands; we do not claim employment in services in which we have not been engaged before. Indeed, some few of our people do still hold positions in the Police Force, and have acquitted themselves most honourably. So also have our people been employed in the Indian Army from the very commencement of the British Raj in our country, and they have risen to the highest positions by their valour and good conduct.

3. But the present changes in the Indian Army have been most prejudicial to the interest of our people. We have been excluded from the Military Service entirely, for reasons unknown to us. If the Maratha Kunbis (cultivators) have been admitted

into the Army, why should not Maratha Mahars (i.e., petty peasants) be allowed the same privilege? We rendered valuable service, as we have observed above, in the capacity of soldiers in times past, and we humbly claim the right of rendering the same service at present.

4. If the other castes of the Hindus should object to our enlistment in the same Regiments with them, for reasons of unjust sectionalism, we would request that separate regiments of our people might be created, or separate companies of our people might be attached to Muhammadau Regiments. The Muhammadans, by reason of their religion and social organization, are superior to the Hindus, both socially and morally, and are capable of recognising our manhood and the justice of our claims, to enjoy equal rights of citizenship with them, under the auspices of the British Raj. And we confidently expect justice and generosity from the British nation and the British Government at the present critical juncture, when there is a general political awakening in the world.

5. And it is most encouraging to know that the Honourable House of Commons, as constituted in these times, is composed, to some extent, of the representatives of the lower strata of English society, the workingmen, who, only a quarter of a century ago, were regarded as but Mahars and Paryas by the more educated and affluent classes of their nation. If the Brahminical castes and the Muhammadans have been given the full rights of British citizenship, we must be given the same. As British subjects we cannot, we should not submit to ordinances which are entirely foreign to British ideas of public justice and public honor. We are sick of the bondage which the barbarism of Hindu custom imposes upon us; we long to enjoy the perfect freedom which the British nation and British Government desire to offer impartially to all those who are connected with them as British subjects.

6. And Sir John Muir-Mackenzie, lately of the Bombay Government Executive Council, most justly as well as most judiciously observed at a farewell meeting held in his honor by the Ladies' Committee of the Depressed Classes Mission that "it is the cardinal principle of the British administration that no man should be kept down by reason of the accident of birth; that every one from the very lowest and humblest should be given the freest scope for the development of the opportunities which life brings to him. To bodies and associations which preach such a gospel as this no Government in British India would refuse countenance and encouragement.....You know our Governor, Sir George Clarke, well enough to be sure that his Government are not one whit less anxious than you are that every disability under which the depressed classes labour should be mitigated and removed, and every advantage which the other communities enjoy should be extended to them as far as may be possible."

Sir John referred on the occasion on which he spoke as above to the alleged incompetency of Mahars, to fill positions of

authority on the ground that "the higher castes would not obey their orders." He declared from his personal observation that there was not much truth in the allegation, for, he said, "whatever might have been the case a good many years back, things were a good deal altered in that respect now. The other day on the Godavery Canal work I was shewn a Mahar, who had held and worked large contracts for, I think I am right in saying, over a lakh of rupees, certainly running into many thousands. A man who can creditably run large contracts must be able to exercise authority and manage men."

7. This is what the Hon'ble Mr. R. A. Lamb, of the Bombay Governor's Executive Council, declared at the last Annual Prize Distribution of the Poona School for the Depressed Classes in October 1910, about the Mahar heroes that fought bravely and successfully for the British Government in the battle of Koregaon of 1818, which made the British masters of Poona:

"The Deputation's Address justly pointed out that a small but increasing number of untouchables had under the equal rights of citizenship bestowed by the British Government risen to positions of credit and even of distinction; and personally every time that I read the inscription on the "Jaya Stambha" on the banks of the Bhima opposite Koregaon, which I visit, at least, once in each rainy season and note there the many names of Mahars who fell wounded or dead fighting bravely side by side with Europeans and with Indians who were not outcastes, I regret that one avenue to honourable work has been closed to these people."

8. And surely the hundreds of Mahar Non-Commissioned Officers of the Old British Army could not have held their positions with efficiency and honor unless they were competent "to exercise authority and manage men." The former Englishman was not so much under the dominance of the Brahminical institution of caste as the present, and he found brave men like himself among all the people that he approached with faith and sympathy. The Mahar has all the elements in his nature which the other castes and races of this great country possess, and under the kindly influence of British justice and British sympathy they can be awakened and developed as they have been in their brethren of the so-called higher classes. Are not the Brahman, the Muhammadan and the Parsi holding the highest positions under the Administration with success, simply because they have been courageously trusted?

We would give here a list of a few of the Mahar Non-Commissioned Officers that served in the Indian Army in olden times, to demonstrate in a clear and tangible form the justice of our claim.

1st GR. BOMBAY INFANTRY

Subedar Ragnak Mahadnak	Subedar Dhondnak
Do. Parasnak	Jamedar Gannak Parasnak

2nd GR. BOMBAY INFANTRY

Subedar Major Dharmnak Sabnak	Jamedar Bhagnak Gangnak
Subedar Ittnak	Do. Shivnak Gounnak
Do. Harnak Bhagnak	Do. Bhagnak
Do. Ragnak Deonak	Do. Ittnak

4th BOMBAY RIFLES

Subedar Shivnak Changnak	Jamedar Gangnak Roopnak
Do. Shivnak Pandnak	Do. Sudanak Ramnak
Do. Sudanak	Do. Kootnak Dulnak
Do. Jivank	Do. Krishnnak
Do. Ragauk Jivnak	Do. Shivnak
Do. Bapnak Ragnak	

5th BOMBAY LIGHT INFANTRY

Subedar Changnak Ramnak	

6th BOMBAY INFANTRY

Subedar Major Ramnak Namnak	Subedar Dharmnak Ramnak
Subedar Major Sakhanak	Do. Ramnak Mahadnak
Do. Jannak Ramnak	Jamadar Sakhanak Ramnak
Do. Ragnak Namnak	Do. Arjoonnak Laknak
	Do. Laknak Ramnak

7th BOMBAY INFANTRY

Subedar Ramnak Malnak	Subedar Gavornak Dadnak
Do. Deonak Changnak	Do. Mahadnak Malnak

8th BOMBAY INFANTRY

Subedar Major Changnak	Subedar Sudaknak
Subedar Gondnak Ittnak	Do. Dharmnak Ittnak

9th BOMBAY INFANTRY

Subedar Major and Sardar Bahadur Ittnak Bhiknak	Jamedar Laknak Bhiknak
	Do. Saknak Bhiknak
Subedar Changnak Gondnak	Do. Ittnak

10th BOMBAY INFANTRY

Subedar Laknak	

12th BOMBAY INFANTRY

Subedar Major and Bahadur Gangnak Sajannak	Subedar Kesnak Gondnak

13th BOMBAY INFANTRY

Subedar Dharmnak Deonak	Jamedar Tannak

14th BOMBAY INFANTRY

Subedar Harnak	Jamedar Laknak Sonnak

15th BOMBAY INFANTRY

Subedar Ittnak Laknak	Jamedar Dharmnak
Jamedar Arjoonnak Deonak	

17th BOMBAY INFANTRY

Subedar Bhiknak Jannak	Subedar Gannak Balnak
Do. Roopnak	Do. Kannak
Do. Babnak Changnak	Do. Mannak
Do. Gannak Mannak	Jamedar Gangnak Gannak
Do. Gonnak Gannak	

18th BOMBAY INFANTRY

Subedar Bhivnak Gonnak	

19th BOMBAY INFANTRY

Subedar Bahadur Gangaram Krishnaji	Subedar Gowarnak Kalnak
Subedar Ramnak Luknak	Jamedar Soannak Toolnak
Do. Krishnnak Bapnak	Do. Kalnak
Do. Samnak Javanak	Do. Ittnak
Do. Ramnak Gangnak (Gallantry service at Multan)	Do. Laknak
Do. Ittnak Malharnak	Do. Jannak
Do. Somnak Shankarnak	Do. Pandnak
Do. Bhagnak Ramnak	

20th BOMBAY INFANTRY

Subedar Major Ramnak Changnak	Subedar Soamnak Hirnak (Talwar Bahadur)
Subedar Laknak Harnak (Talwar Br.)	Do. Saknak

21st MARINE

Subedar Major Dahivadkar	Subedar Jannak, Balnak
Subedar Sudaknak Kamalnak	Jamedar Balnak Kalnak
Do. Deonak Gundnak	Do. Jannak Gannak
Do. Jainak Harnak	Do. Gondnak Ramnak
Subedar Ramnak Babnak	Do. Babnak Ramnak
Do. Doolabnak	Do. Narayan
Do. Kamalnak	Do. Sayaganmkar (Sappers and Miners) Order of Merit.
Do. Shivnak Hirnak	

24th BOMBAY INFANTRY

Subedar Yasnak Dadnak	

26th BOMBAY INFANTRY

Subedar Deonak Malnak	

28th BOMBAY INFANTRY

Subedar Mannak Yasnak	Jamedar Amritnak

9. We are not essentially inferior to any of our Indian fellow-subjects. Those of us who have had opportunities of improving their material and mental condition have conspiciously distinguished themselves in every walk of life. Such of us as have attended schools and colleges, as Christian converts, have attained distinction in the Indian University Examinations, and hold positions of Pleaders, Doctors, Professors, Magistrates, and

Judges in this and other Presidencies, while quite an army of Pastors and Evangelists adorns the Indian Christian Church. Most of the Pastors from Bombay and Madras have risen from the ranks of Mahars and Paryas, and officiate as ordained priests for the benefit of the converts of the higher castes, among whom Brahmans are both numerically and educationally very strong; and we hear that there is a near prospect of some of our converted people being consecrated as Bishops, who would exercise Episcopal authority not only over the Native Clergy of all Indian castes, but even over Europeans in the Christian Ministry.

10. The British Government could not mean that we should change our religion that we might enjoy our just and lawful rights as British subjects. Our benevolent Government might bestow them upon us as honest advocates of our own national traditions and customs. We dare not say that the Bombay Government was justified in refusing Police appointments to us on the ground stated by them openly in the following extract from their answer to us? "It is impossible to enlist more men in an increased proportion than the one existing at present. Caste prejudice has also made it impossible for Mahars to be in authority over men of other castes." This plea does not do honor to a powerful, as well as a just and magnanimous Government like the British. The recognition of the tyranny of caste in the Government service is not only dishonorable to the Government, but dangerous to its very existence, as is clear from the catastrophes of 1857. Dalliance with such a Moloch of injustice and cruelty is always ruinous. It has been so in the past, and it will be so in the future.

11. We would, therefore, earnestly appeal to the Imperial Government to move on our behalf. We have long submitted to the Jagannath of caste; we have for ages been crushed under its ponderous wheels. But we can now no longer submit to the tyranny. We must emancipate our manhood. We may be poor, feeble, ignorant, but we are still human beings; we are, besides, British subjects, and we seek our inalienable rights as British subjects from the British Government.

12. The Indians in Africa are unjustly treated by aliens--the white Afrikanders, while we have been subjected for centuries to indescribable cruelty and wrong in our own country, and by men of our own race and religion.

13. Our Hindu rulers did not recognise our manhood, and treated us worse than their cattle; and shall not that nation which emancipated the Negro at infinite self-sacrifice, and enlightened and elevated the poorer people of its own commonwealth, condescend to give us a helping hand?

The kindly touch of the Christian religion elevates the Mahar at once and for ever socially as well as politically, and shall not the magic power of British Law and British Justice produce the same effect upon us, even as followers of our own

ancestral faith?

14. His Excellency Sir George Clarke, our present Governor, has been most generous in helping us in our attempts to improve ourselves, and the late Miss Clarke raised funds for us by holding concerts, etc. And we know that there are thousands in happy England who could show us the same generous sympathy and exert their influence upon the Rulers there on our behalf. We would beg them to help us to obtain from the Imperial Government the privilege of serving under it in this country. We are so poor and helpless that we would gladly serve even in the very lowest departments of the Military Service, - in the Baggage Train, the Supply and Transport, the Mule Corps and similar branches, in the capacity of hamals, drivers, etc. We performed these functions before; but we are replaced now by men from other parts of the country. It is because of our freedom from caste prejudices that we are still employed in the Regimental Bands; the higher castes of Hindus refuse to use the musical instruments.

15. It would appear that it was Lord Kitchener that reduced the number of the non-combatants that formed an essential part of the Indian Army, to the detriment, it is declared by a competent authority, to the efficiency of the Army. The "Times of India" has thus observed on the change:

"The Indian Army has had many old and experienced commanders and by them was evolved a system whereby all extraneous work, whether ambulance, transport, commissariat, officers' servants, etc., was performed by non-combatants, leaving the fighting strength of a regiment free and intact to fight. Lord Kitchener coming from other fields where such arrangements were perhaps impossible, became obsessed with the idea that the Army was swamped by followers and proceeded in characteristic fashion, without further to do, to cut them down wholesale. Amongst those to suffer was the ambulance corps. Formerly on any Indian campaign there was a trained and highly efficient corps of dhooly-bearers, men born and bred to the job, who performed with the greatest gallantry and sang froid their duties in action. These disappeared before the Kitchenerian scythe and in their place were enlisted attenuated cadres of inexperienced carriers, men who had never seen a dhooly and certainly never wanted to carry one. The first experience of the new experiment was in the small expeditions on the N. W. Frontier of last year, and assuredly the result was not encouraging. According to eye-witnesses exactly what General Kuropatkin describes in the Russian Army occurred in our own, though in a less marked degree. For every serious casualty at least six fighting men had to be withdrawn from the ranks to carry the wounded man to the rear, and these six, however willing, rarely had a change of rejoining the ranks in time to be of any value. The corps of amateur dhooly-bearers to whom the wounded man next fell were entirely incompetent and his sufferings were greatly augmented thereby. To feed a large number of useless mouths on service is wrong, but the old dhooly-

bearer amongst others was gallantly worth his feed and liberated the fighting man for his true work."

16. We need not refer to the noble part which Japan has played in the elevation of its outcastes. Its Government by its omnipotent fiat of transcendent justice and humanity, has broken asunder the fetters of caste which bound them, and offered to them the full rights of citizenship. They form now respectable and useful members of the Japan State and Japan Society, contributing in no small degree to the strength of the nation. Might not the British nation and the Imperial Government act the same noble part towards us? We claim not from them any social or religious rights or privileges, but only civic and political, which are absolutely necessary for us for our deliverance from our present most abject condition of distress and degradation. We are too poor to engage in agricultural pursuits or trade to any extent, though we have sinews and brains to perform any honest work that we are qualified for in our present condition of illiteracy.

17. Even the Brahmans who treated us for centuries with supreme contempt have begun to feel the injustice of their attitude towards us, and their chief leader in Bombay, the Honourable Mr. G. K. Gokhale, B.A., thus expressed himself at a public meeting at Dharwar in 1903:

"I think all fair-minded persons will have to admit that it is absolutely monstrous that a class of human beings with bodies similar to our own, with brains that can think and with hearts that can feel, should be perpetually condemned to a low life of utter wretchedness, servitude and mental and moral degradation and that permanent barriers should be placed in their way so that it should be impossible for them ever to overcome them and improve their lot. This is deeply revolting to our sense of justice. I believe one has only to put oneself mentally into their places to realize how grievous this injustice is. We may touch a cat, we may touch a dog, we may touch any other animal, but the touch of these human beings is pollution? And so complete is now the mental degradation of these people that they themselves see nothing in such treatment to resent, that they acquiesce in it as though nothing better than that was their due. Moreover, is it, I may ask, consistent with our own self-respect that these men should be kept out of our houses and shut out from all social intercourse as long as they remain within the pale of Hinduism, whereas the moment they put on a coat, and a hat and pair of trousers and call themselves Christians we are prepared to shake hands with them and look upon them as quite respectable? No sensible man will say that this is a satisfactory state of things."

18. The famous Bengali Reformer, Baboo Keshav Chandra Sen, thus spoke about the impudence and arrogance of the caste system:

"It is an audacious and sacrilegious violation of God's

law of human brotherhood.

"It makes civil distinctions inviolable divine institutions and in the name of the Holy God sows perpetual discord and enmity among His children. It exalts one section of the people above the rest, gives the former, under the seal of divine sanction, the monopoly of education, religion, and all the advantages of social pre-eminence, and visits them with the arbitrary authority of exercising a tyrannical sway over unfortunate and helpless millions of human souls, trampling them under their feet and holding them in a state of miserable servitude.

"It sets up the Brahminical order as the very vicegerents of the Deity, and stamps the mass of the population as a degraded and unclean race, unworthy of manhood and unfit for heaven."

19. And the abomination of caste, which sins both against God and man, has no authority in the Bedas, the venerable Fountain of Hindu religion; and this fact is thus forcibly stated by the late Professor Max Muller:

"There is no authority whatever in the hymns of the Veda for the complicated system of castes.

"There is no law to prohibit the different classes of the people from living together, from eating and drinking together; no law to prohibit the marriage of people belonging to different castes; no law to brand the offspring of such marriages with an indelible stigma. There is no law to sanction the blasphemous pretensions of a priesthood to divine honours, or the degradation of any human being to a state below the animals." Chips. Vol. II.

20. This is what the Dnyanodaya, an Anglo-Vernacular paper, conducted by the American Missionaries of Bombay, says about the duty of the Indian Government in regard to the claims of the Mahars and the outcastes, and the necessity for agitation to induce the Government to give them complete redress:

"The Indian in South Africa is championed (and rightly so). Now let these same organs of Indian thought and would-be patriotism use no uncertain language in calling on the Bombay Government to ignore the caste prejudices of the higher castes and give the Mahar an equal chance in the Army, and in all other positions possible for them. Let the National Congressman grow hoarse condemning the Brahman for refusing to let the Mahar boy sit on the same bench with his sons, and for refusing to him the public wells where even a dog has free access."

21. The following extract from the "Times of India," 13th July 1904, is worthy of serious consideration by the Imperial Government and the British nation.

"It needs no words to commend to the sympathetic consideration of Government the reasonable Memorial presented to Lord Lamington by the Mahars of the Presidency at Poona last week. The deadening and depressing conditions amidst which the lower

castes have to live, the entire lack of hope for them under the hard and rigid social system of the Hindus, give them an unimpeachable claim upon the generous consideration of any administration which is guided by a desire to hold the scales even. Moreover the Mahars have established a special claim upon the British Government by virtue of the loyal support they have always given to them. The memorialists, as was natural, dwell entirely upon the dark side of the picture. They take no account of the improvement made in their status and position under the British raj. Yet that those changes have not been entirely nebulous is evidenced by one case of caste intolerance cited as proof of their pitiable condition. In May of 1902 the second class Magistrate of Jamkhed fined a Mahar eight rupees for polluting the water of a public spring. On a reference from Mr. R. A. Lamb, Collector of Ahmednagar, the case was brought before the High Court who quashed the conviction and ordered the fine to be refunded. In this particular instance the law ultimately gave the Mahars justice in full measure.

"But whatever progress has been made is slight in comparison with the great social wrong which has to be adjusted. In asking for themselves equality of opportunity for public employment, and for their children educational facilities, the Mahars advanced claims whose equity cannot be disputed, and which no civilised Government would disregard."

In conclusion, we would beg to specify, in brief, the favours we humbly venture to solicit at the hands of the British Government:

1. We may be re-employed in the Indian Army as soldiers. We have been declared by the highest Government authorities in the Bombay Presidency as competent, both physically and morally, for employment in the capacity of soldiers. Separate Regiments might be made of us, as there are separate regiments made of the "Mujbis" in the Panjab and of the "Mers" in Rajputana, or separate companies of our people might be annexed to existing regiments with the privilege for our people, as before, of rising to the position of native officers.

2. And, secondly, we may be employed in the Police Force on equal terms with the other races in this country.

By doing this kindness to their memorialists, the Imperial Government and the Indian Government will lay them under lasting obligations.

As in duty bound,
Your Memorialists shall ever pray.

GANGARAM KRISHNAJEE
Subhedar Bahadur,
President.

SHIVRAM JANBA KAMBLE,
Secretary.

MILITARY PENSIONERS SIGNING KAMBLE PETITION

Name	Rank/Unit	District
Gangaram Krishnajee	Subadar Bahadur *19th Bo. Infy.	Kolaba
Ramnak Changnak	Subadar-Maj. 120th Bo. Infy.	Ratnagiri
Bhagnak Ramnak	Sub. *19th Bo. Infy.	Ratnagiri
Jayanak Harnak	Sub. *21st Bo. Infy.	Ratnagiri
Ramjee Malojee	Sub. *7th Bo. Infy.	Satara
Bhaguram Vitul	Jemadar ----	Satara
Essnak Dadnak	Jem. 124th Infy.	Ratnagiri
Gungnak Ramnak	Qrm-mr. Hav. 119th Infy.	Ratnagiri
Arynak Bhagnak	Hav. 119th Infy.	Ratnagiri
Limnak Jannak	Hav. 108th Infy.	Satara
Shivaram Kalujee	---- ----	Ratnagiri
Bhagnak Gungnak	---- ----	Ratnagiri
Bhagnak Saknak	---- ----	Ratnagiri
Krishnajee Ramjee Mobaratkar	Color Havildar	Kolaba
Motiram Arjun	Hav. 14th Bo. Infy.	Konkan
Vitu Bhicu	Hav. 108th Bo. Infy.	Konkan
Rama Pandu	Naik 119th Bo. Infy.	Konkan
Dhondu Ganu	Band Hav. 108th Bo. Infy.	Konkan
Anand Pandurang	---- 102nd Bo. Infy.	Konkan
Kumlajee Bhivajee	---- 28th Pioneers	Konkan
Babajee Jiwajee	---- 16th Bo. Infy.	Konkan
Narayan Ramjee	Hav. 26th Bo. Infy.	Ahmednagar
Dugdu Krishna	Naik Sappers & Miners	Konkan

Name	Rank/Unit	District
Govind Vitul	Naik 3rd Bo. Infy.	Konkan
Govind Ramjee	---- 3rd Bo. Infy.	Konkan
Bhagu Tanu	---- 6th Bo. Infy.	Konkan
Bhagujee Vitul	---- 125th Bo. Infy.	Konkan
Ramjee Sujnu	Hav. 2nd Bo. Infy.	Konkan
Kondiram	Hav. 2nd Bo. Infy.	Konkan
Mahadu Haree	Hav. 2nd Bo. Infy.	Konkan
Govind Kalu	---- 20th Bo. Pioneers	Konkan
Shivram Sujna	---- 19th Bo. Infy.	Konkan
Ramjee Kanu	Band Hav. ----	Konkan
Shivram Pusnajee	---- 26th Bo. Infy.	Konkan
Gunput	---- 20th Bo. Infy.	Konkan
Vishnu	Naik 20th Bo. Infy.	Konkan
Govind Pandu	Bugle(?) Major 20th Bo. Infy.	Konkan
Yesu Maya	Drum Major, 8th Bo. Infy.	Konkan
Vitul Ramjee	Drummer 1st Grenadiers	Konkan
Krishna Mulbarie	---- 1st Grenadiers	Konkan
Mahadu Haree	Hav. ----	Satara
Mubarak Ramnak Balnak	---- 20th Bo. Infy.	Poona

*indicate regiment filled in from Army Lists; not shown in original petition.

APPENDIX F, PART 3

HOME DEPARTMENT. E BRANCH.

File No. 1114 of 1922 (First Series)

Subject: Mahar Battalion.
Maintenance of--

Mahar Battalion.
Maintenance of--

To--His Excellency Sir George Ambrose Lloyd, G.C.I.E., D.S.O. Governor President in Council, Bombay.

May it please Your Excellency,

The humble memorial of the undersigned who are Mahars by caste and who did their bit in the late world-war by inducing their caste men to enlist in His Majesty's Army and thus helped to complete the Mahar Battalion known as 111th Mahars, beg to lay the following few lines for Your Excellency's consideration:

1. That the Mahar Battalion was formed during the Great War, when the Empire was in the greatest need of men.

2. That before this Battalion was formed the Army authorities and the Recruiting Officers were under the impression that Mahars were a most orthodox people and that they would not come in, if the privilege of enlisting was granted to them.

3. That the memorialist and their sympathisers helped by Mr. L. J. Mountford, C.B.E., I.C.S., now Commissioner, C.D., and Mr. P. R. Cadell, C.S.I., I.C.S., as Secretary of the Provincial Recruiting Board, had to convince the Army authorities through Your Excellency's predecessor His Excellency Lord Willingdon of Ratton, G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E., G.B.E., that the demand for enlistment was genuine and was actuated by patriotic motives to serve the Empire and to regain the privilege of enlistment which the community had once enjoyed and had lost some years ago on account of certain religious prejudices towards their community on behalf of other Hindu Societies.

4. That it was on account of their keen desire to serve His Majesty's Government that the privilege was extended to them and a separate Battalion was formed during the Great War to guard against any opposition by the sister Hindu communities serving in the Army on the ground of caste.

5. That when the War stopped, the 1st Battalion was complete and there was a demand for a second Battalion.

6. That the memorialists are now grieved to hear that the Battalion is now going to be reduced and that only two companies of Mahars are to be kept and they are to be joined to some Indian Christian Companies of Punjab.

7. That if the two Companies are to be disbanded, the sepoys of these Companies will be out of employment and there will be a feeling of great disappointment amongst the Mahar community throughout the Presidency on account of the curtailment of a privilege of a full regiment, specially because the community worked hard during the War to secure recruits and complete the Battalion.

8. That the memorialists further hear that the Depot of the 111th Mahars which was located in Belgaum was quite recently transferred to Ferozpore on account of certain caste troubles raised by the other Hindu communities serving in the Army.

9. That the memorialists further hear that the same kind of trouble is being raised at Ferozpore where the Depot of 111th Mahars has now been transferred.

10. That the memorialists therefore pray (A) that Your Excellency with a view to preserve the tree planted by Your Excellency's own Government will kindly move the Army authorities to preserve the full Mahar Battalion known as 111th Mahars and treat the Mahar Battalion as a separate unit so that there could be no trouble on account of caste prejudices.

(B) That if the Battalion has to be unfortunately reduced Your Excellency is requested to move the Army authorities to join the companies of Mahars to some Bombay Indian Christian Companies of Telugu Christian or Madras Christian companies so that there may not be any trouble at all on account of caste prejudices and recruitment of Mahars would be facilitated.

(C) That Your Excellency would kindly see that the name "Mahar" appearing in the name of Battalion is changed to some suitable name so that the word "Mahar" itself should not carry any religious prejudices wherever the regiment goes.

For this act of justice and kindness Your Excellency's petitioners shall as in duty bound ever pray.

Belgaum, 24th December 1921.

C Home 553 (Sd.) Papana Jalliat

1. Papana Jalliat.

2. Kalesh Yeshvant Dhale.

3. Gundo Sattoji Pale.

4. Gunoo Tulasiram.

5. Bhikaji Gangaji Pensioner (Hawaldar).

6. Bhujang Sakharam Hawaldar.
   110th Mahratta Light Infantry.

7. Ranuji Ratujee Pensioner Jemidar 111th Mahars

Note 1. First 6 signed in English; last in Marathi.

Note 2. The author wishes to thank Douglas E. Haynes, University of Pennsylvania, for bringing this item to her attention.

APPENDIX G, PART 1

QUESTIONNAIRES DISTRIBUTED BETWEEN APRIL-AUGUST 1980

Questionnaire for Former Soldiers of the Mahar Community

NAME: DATE:

RESIDENCE: AGE:

WHAT WAS THE TIME OF YOUR ARMY SERVICE?

AT WHAT AGE DID YOU ENTER THE ARMY?

IN WHAT REGIMENT/BATTALION DID YOU SERVE?

WHAT RANK DID YOU REACH?

DID YOU WIN ANY SPECIAL AWARDS OR DISTINCTIONS?

IN WHAT COUNTRIES DID YOU SERVE IN THE ARMY?

WHAT WERE YOUR REASONS FOR JOINING THE ARMY?

DID SERVING IN THE ARMY BENEFIT YOU AND YOUR FAMILY? OR NOT?

IN WHAT WAYS?

IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU WOULD LIKE TO SAY ABOUT YOUR ARMY SERVICE?

WHAT IS YOUR PRESENT POSITION?

APPENDIX G, PART 2

Questionnaire for People having Ancestors in the Army

NAME: DATE:

RESIDENCE:

WHAT WAS THE NAME OF YOUR ANCESTOR WHO SERVED IN THE ARMY?

WHAT WAS HIS EXACT RELATION TO YOU?

WHAT WAS HIS NATIVE PLACE?

IN WHAT REGIMENT DID HE SERVE?

WHAT RANK OR POSITION DID HE REACH?

AT ABOUT WHAT TIME DID HE SERVE IN THE ARMY?

DID HE WIN ANY SPECIAL AWARDS OR DISTINCTIONS?

WHAT WAS HIS POSITION IN HIS FAMILY?

WAS ARMY SERVICE OF BENEFIT TO THE FAMILY OR NOT?

IN WHAT WAYS?

IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU WOULD LIKE TO SAY ABOUT YOUR FAMILY'S CONNECTION WITH THE ARMY IN THE OLD DAYS?

DO ANY MEMBERS OF YOUR FAMILY NOW SERVE IN THE ARMY?

WHAT IS YOUR PRESENT POSITION?

Original questionnaires were in English and Marathi. English version only is given due to unavailability of Devanagri typeface.