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Cawthorn, Auchinleck and British Counter-measures against the Indian National Army

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ABSTRACT

This article challenges the depiction of the Indian National Army (INA) as either having played a direct and central military role in India's independence struggle, or as an irrelevance in the fighting in Asia after 1942. It argues that British fears about the INA's psychological threat to the Indian Army's loyalty persuaded the Commander in Chief India (C-in-CI), General Claude Auchinleck, to sponsor a series of countermeasures named JOSH (pronounced JOASH), and the Director of Military Intelligence (DMI), Major General W. J. Cawthorn, to champion a policy that would have profound implications in 1945 and arguably accelerated the end of British Rule in India, the Raj.

Following Britain's defeats in Asia in 1942, the INA was raised from Indian Prisoners of War (PoWs) to fight alongside Japan with the aim of expelling the British from India. It was the Indian Army's largest mutiny since 1857.¹ Despite the INA's negligible tangible success during the war, in late 1945 the decision to prosecute three INA officers, a Hindu, Sikh and a Muslim, and in public at the Red Fort in Delhi, a resonant symbol of the 1857 uprising, provoked public and political outrage that seemingly took the British by surprise and arguably hastened the end of the Raj.²

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¹Chandar S. Sundaram, 'The Indian National Army: Towards a Balanced and Critical Appraisal', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 1, 30, (July 2015), pp. 21-24.

²Christopher Bayly and Tim Harper, *Forgotten Armies*, (London: Penguin, 2005), p. 402; Daniel Marston, *The Indian Army and the End of the Raj*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 117-118; John Connell, *A Biography of Field-Marshal Sir Claude Auchinleck*, (London: Cassell, 1959), pp. 797-819; Nirad C. Chaudhuri, 'Subhas Chandra Bose: His Legacy and Legend', *Pacific Affairs*, 4/26 (1953), pp. 349-357; Sundaram, 'Appraisal', p. 23; Hugh Toye, *Subhas Chandra Bose: The Springing Tiger*, www.bjmh.org.uk

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The historiography of these events can be loosely divided into three camps. Earlier works describing the INA's heroic contribution to independence are dominated by the role of Subhas Chandra Bose, one of India's leading nationalists.³ Facing prosecution for promoting the overthrow of the Raj, Bose fled to Germany in 1941 to enlist Axis support for India's independence.⁴ He returned to Asia in mid-1943 to lead the INA before dying in an airplane crash in August 1945. The uproar at the trials is seen as vindication of his and the INA's efforts which had been thwarted by Japanese duplicity during the war. The INA's effectiveness has since been challenged, with some volunteers depicted as being motivated less by nationalism or admiration for Bose as by the shock of defeat, lack of trust in British officers, grievances over service conditions, fear of their captors, and the slow pace of the Indianisation which was believed to reflect British racism and insincerity.⁵ More recent works, focussing on the Indian Army's revival in Asia after 1943, consequently make little reference to the INA.⁶ The British authorities, the Indian Army's leadership and the Government of India (GoI), appear dismissive of the INA, an impression vividly reinforced by Field Marshal Sir William Slim's description of an INA surrender in early 1945 as its single

(Bombay: Jaico, 1959), pp. 249-256; Lieutenant General Sir Francis Tuker, *While Memory Serves*, (London: Cassell, 1950), pp. 60-72.

³S. A. Ayer, *Unto Him A Witness*, (Bombay: Thicker, 1951), pp. ix-x, pp. 1-4 & pp. 295-297; Major-General Mohammad Zaman Kiani, *India's Freedom Struggle and The Great INA*, (New Delhi: Reliance, 1994), pp. xv-xvi, pp.xx; Chaudhuri, 'Bose', pp. 349-357; Toye, *Tiger*, pp. 256-257; Leonard Gordon, *Brothers Against the Raj*, (New Delhi: Rupa, 2012), pp. 613-618; K.K. Ghosh, *The Indian National Army*, (Meerut: Meenakshi Prakashan, 1969), pp. v-vi, pp. 258-267; Peter Ward Fay, *The Forgotten Army* (New Delhi: RUPA, 1997), pp. 8-10.

⁴Toye, Bose, pp. 83-86; Gordon, *Brothers*, pp. 412, pp. 417-21.

⁵Tarak Barkawi, 'Culture and Combat in the Colonies: The Indian Army in the Second World War', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 41/12, (2006), pp. 325-355; Joyce Chapman Lebra, *The Indian National Army and Japan*, (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2008), pp. 20, p. 217; Tan Kia Lih, 'The Indian National Army: A Force for Nationalism?' (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, National University of Singapore, 2011), pp. 3-4, pp. 40-82; Chandar S. Sundaram, 'A Paper Tiger: The Indian National Army In Battle, 1944-5', *War & Society*, 13/1, (1995), pp. 35-59; Note: Indian officers trained at Sandhurst received King's Commissions before the Indian Military Academy opened in 1932 for Indian Commissioned Officers (ICOs). Indianisation here means the process for increasing the number of ICOs.

⁶T. R. Moreman, *The Jungle, The Japanese and the British Commonwealth Armies at War 1941-45*, (Oxford: Frank Cass, 2005); Daniel P. Marston, *Phoenix from the Ashes* (Westport: Praeger, 2003); Raymond Callahan, *Burma 1942-1945*, (London: Davis-Poynter, 1978); Alan Jeffreys and Patrick Rose (eds), *The Indian Army 1939-47: Experience and Development*, (London: Ashgate, 2012).

biggest contribution to either side during the war.⁷ A common theme of all three camps is that the British were taken completely unawares by the uproar surrounding the Red Fort trials.

It is indisputable that the INA's direct military or espionage impact was negligible. However, this article will show that by 1942 the British were acutely concerned about any perceived threat to the Indian Army's loyalty and consequently felt compelled to implement numerous countermeasures against the INA's threat between 1942-1945. It will be demonstrated that the British authorities had actively considered how maintaining one of these countermeasures in 1945, a news blackout, would impact post-war India and, by dismissing concerns about its possible consequences they directly contributed to public anger in 1945.

British concern in part reflected a growing appreciation of India's importance to the war effort for manpower, supplies, geographic proximity to the battle zones and India's apparent security from attack.⁸ Britain's reliance on India is typically characterised in terms of India's undoubtedly huge manpower contribution, with the often quoted statistic that the Indian Army was the largest volunteer force in the world by 1945.⁹ In 1939 the Indian Army was larger than the combined forces of the four dominions and by mid-1940 the Chiefs of Staff concluded they required 'all the troops which India can provide'.¹⁰ The army's rapid expansion from 1941 created problems, including a shortage of ICOs, inadequate training, poor equipment and grievances concerning ICOs' powers of punishment of white troops, promotion, pay, rations and family

⁷Field Marshal Sir William Slim, *Defeat into Victory* (London: Pan, 2009), p. 492.

⁸The National Archives (hereinafter TNA) AVIA 22/3271, *Expansion of Munitions Production in India*, Meeting at India Office 25 June 1940, Amery Letter 19 June 1940 & Viceroy's Telegram 7 June 1940; British Library, London (hereinafter BL) IOR/L/MIL/17/5/4261, *India's Part in the War*, pp. 10-12; BL IOR/L/E/8/3477, *War Trade Supply: Eastern Group Conference Recommendations Leading to the Establishment of a Supply Council, Central and Local Provision Officers*, Memorandum on the organisation of Provision Production and Distribution of Supply within the Eastern Group.

⁹Philip Mason, *A Matter of Honour*, (New York: Nolt, Rinehart and Winston, 1994), pp. 13; Yasmin Khan, *The Raj at War* (London: Vintage, 2015), p. xii; Stephen P. Cohen, *The Indian Army: Its Contribution to the Development of a Nation*, (California: University of California Press, 1971), p. 143; Ashley Jackson, 'The Evolution and Use of British Imperial Military Formations', in Jeffreys and Rose (eds) *Indian Army*, pp. 24-25.

¹⁰TNA CAB 66/10/22, *Preparation of More Troops in India for Service Overseas*; BL IOR/L/MIL/17/5/4262, *India's War Effort*, p. 2; Elizabeth Mariko Leake, 'British India British India versus the British Empire: The Indian Army and an impasse in Imperial Defence, circa 1919-39', *Modern Asian Studies*, 48/1, (2013), pp. pp. 301-329.

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support, that encouraged some Indian PoWs to join the INA.¹¹ In fact British concern about the reliability of Indian troops pre-dated the defeats in Asia in 1942, as shown by the response to four mutinies involving the Indian Army in Egypt, Malaya, Bombay and Hong Kong between 1939-41. The limited historiography concerning these mutinies examines them purely in the context of why PoWs joined the INA.¹² While the mutinies cannot be covered here, the official investigations appeared to reveal links between the mutinies and a wider plot to suborn the Indian Army by Sikh revolutionaries, stoking British concerns about the Indian Army's reliability.¹³ The resonance of these events on the British authorities should not be underestimated, especially given Cawthorn, India's future DMI, was involved in the investigations and later played a central role in shaping the Raj's response to the INA. While recognising the importance of addressing the grievances previously mentioned when considering the army's revival from 1942, it is also necessary to recognise that those steps were taken alongside, not instead of, measures deemed necessary to tackle what was perceived at that time to be a credible threat of subversion.¹⁴

It is also important to emphasise that Britain's reliance on India was not restricted to manpower.¹⁵ From 1941 India was the base for, and fulfilled over half the requirement

¹¹BL IOR/L/MIL/17/5/4262, *War Effort*, p. 5; F.W. Perry, *The Commonwealth Armies*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), pp. 103-107, pp. 114-117; Major-General J.G. Elliott, *A Roll of Honour*, (London: Cassell, 1965), p. 132; Mason, *A Matter of Honour*, p. 465; Kaushik Roy, 'Expansion and Deployment of the Indian Army During World War II: 1939-45', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, 88/355, (2010), pp. 248-268; Lih, 'Indian National Army', pp. 53-54; Kaushik Roy, *Sepoys against the Rising Sun*, (Leiden: Brill, 2015), p.8.

¹²Chandar S. Sundaram, 'Seditious Letters and Steel Helmets', in Kaushik Roy (ed.), *War and Society in Colonial India, 1807-1945*, (New Delhi: OUP, 2010), pp. 126-60; Mason, *Matter of Honour*, pp. 513-514.

¹³BL IOR/L/WS/1/303, *War Staff 'WS' Series Files: File WS 3306*, Disaffection of Sikh Troops; Indian National Archive, Abhilekh Patal, New Delhi (hereinafter AP), Identifier PR_000003010554, *Indiscipline among RIASC Personnel in Egypt, 1940*, p. 71; AP PR_000003010730, *Interrogation of Sadhu Singh of the RIASC and Bharat Singh alias Sultan Singh with a view to determining the part played by the Group of Communists who controlled the publication of the 'Kirti Lehr' in subverting the army, 1940*, p. 3; BL IOR/L/P&J/12/641, *Unrest among Sikhs in Hong Kong, October 1940-October 1941*.

¹⁴Roy, *Sepoys*, p.8.

¹⁵Kaushik Roy, *India and World War II - War, Armed Forces and Society, 1939-45*, (New Delhi: OUP, 2016), pp. 66-75; Srinath Raghavan, *India's War: The Making of Modern South Asia, 1939-1945* (London: Allen Lane, 2016), pp. 214, pp. 320-326.

for troops east of Suez, a quarter of the entire imperial strength.¹⁶ The War Cabinet was informed that India was unique in its ability to bring both 'man-power and material to bear upon the war effort'.¹⁷ Humiliating defeats in Asia led to fears that an invasion would disrupt India's industrial heartland and hamper the wider war effort, a concern aggravated by growing defeatism amongst India's population.¹⁸ Recognising Britain's growing reliance on India by 1942 sheds light on why the perceived threat of the INA would be taken so seriously.

The British sense of vulnerability in Asia was also driven by concerns about Japanese espionage. Aldrich's challenge to the view that Japanese espionage at this time was ineffective is borne out by intelligence reports describing extensive Japanese espionage in India as war approached.¹⁹ In 1938, these reports identified Japanese links with Indian nationalists, and the threat was taken increasingly seriously as India's role in the war expanded such that, by 1941, every Japanese was assumed to be 'a potential spy'.²⁰ Harrowing stories from Indian refugees fleeing Burma then aroused nationalist fury, causing anxiety that India's population would not resist an invasion.²¹ The *Gol* described the Quit India violence in August 1942 as the most serious challenge since 1857 and, importantly, as 'a mine laid directly under enemy influence', although no

¹⁶TNA AVIA 22/3271, *Expansion*, Memo on ToR Rogers Mission; TNA WP (42) 54, *India's War Effort*, p. 4.

¹⁷TNA WP (42) 54, *India's War Effort*, p. 6.

¹⁸BL IOR/L/PO/10/17, *Private telegrams between the Secretary of State for India and the Viceroy*, 19 February, 16 March 1942; BL IOR/L/P&J/12/509, *DIB Reports on activities of Germans, Italians and Japanese in India 1941-42*, Surveys 47, 48 & 49; BL IOR/L/WS/1/1433, 'WS' Series Files, File 6637, *Current Feeling in India* 13 & 27 March 1942; BL IOR, L/WS/1/317, *War Staff "WS" Series Files: WS 3475: 1940-43*, General and Air Headquarters India No. 619/DMI 8 February 1942; Bayly and Harper, *Forgotten Armies*, pp. 123, pp. 193-197.

¹⁹Richard J. Aldrich, *Intelligence and the War against Japan*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 41-43; Douglas Ford, *Britain's Secret War Against Japan, 1937-45*, (London: Routledge, 2006), p. 176; Douglas Ford, 'Strategic Culture, Intelligence Assessment and the Conduct of the Pacific War', *War in History*, 14/1, (2007), pp. 63-96; Duff Hart-Davis, *Peter Fleming* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1974), p. 283.

²⁰TNA KV/3/251, *Japanese Espionage in the East Indian Archipelago and Straits Settlement and India, 1934-1938*; BL IOR/L/P&J/12/507, File 1080/A/36 - *DIB Reports on activities of Germans, Italians and Japanese in India 1940*, Surveys 1, 2, 4 & 5; BL IOR/L/P&J/12/508, File 1080/A/36 - *DIB Reports on activities of Germans, Italians and Japanese in India November 1940-November 1941*, Surveys 1, 2, 4 & 18.

²¹Bayly and Harper, *Forgotten Armies*, pp. 181-190.

evidence was ever unearthed of Axis complicity.²² The conclusion was that that 'for the duration of the war.... India must be considered as an occupied and hostile country'.²³ Indeed, even before learning of the INA's existence, the British instituted a news blackout of reports of the German sponsored Indian Legion in Europe, a small force formed by Bose from Indian PoWs captured in North Africa.²⁴ This desire to prevent the Indian Army and India's population from learning that Indian troops had joined the Axis powers provided a template for events in Asia.

It was against this backdrop of the growing appreciation of India's importance to the war effort, concerns about the loyalty of segments of the Indian army and population and Japan's espionage threat that the INA was formed in Malaya in late 1941 following the capture of Captain Mohan Singh of the 1/14 Punjab Regiment.²⁵ Sponsored by Major Iwaichi Fujiwara, a Japanese army intelligence officer, Mohan Singh announced his intention to create an army from Indian PoWs. The historiography of the INA at this stage focusses on its integration with expatriate Indian nationalists and a subsequent rupture with the Japanese that led to Mohan Singh's imprisonment in December 1942.²⁶ The British were largely unaware of these events. Lieutenant-Colonel A. A. Mains, who worked in Military Intelligence in India at the time, wrote that knowledge from Japanese-held territories in mid-1942 was negligible.²⁷ Intelligence reports in early 1943 stated that detailed information about the INA was 'still on the meagre side', challenging Fujiwara's assertion that British intelligence was very concerned about his activities.²⁸ Given Japan's startling military successes in early

²²BL IOR/L/P&J/8/628, *Coll 117/C27/Q Pt 2; Gandhi, 'Quit India' Movement and Disturbances, Calendars of Events, Narratives, Reports and Other Information Compiled in India to Assist Secretary of State in Replying to Parliamentary Questions*, Home Department History of the Congress Rebellion p. 1, p. 72.

²³Milan Hauner, *India in Axis Strategy* (Stuttgart: Klett Cotta, 1981), p. 542.

²⁴Hauner, *Strategy*, pp. 583-592; Aldrich, *Intelligence*, pp. 150-151; Rudolf Hartog, *The Sign of the Tiger*, (New Delhi: Rupa, 2001).

²⁵TNA WO 208/833, *Captain Mohan Singh Indian National Army Report, 'S' Section CSDIC Report 15 November 1945*, pp. 1-14; Iwaichi Fujiwara, *F. Kikan: Japanese Intelligence Operations in Southeast Asia during World War II*, (Hong Kong: Heinemann Asia, 1983); Fay, *Forgotten Army*, pp. 74-75; Hugh Toye, 'The First Indian National Army, 1941-42', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 15/2, (1984), pp. 365-381.

²⁶Toye, *Tiger*, pp. 10-20; Gordon, *Brothers*, pp. 467-472; Bayly and Harper, *Forgotten Armies*, pp. 255-258; Lebra, *Japan*, pp. 75-101.

²⁷Lieutenant-Colonel A. A. Mains, 'Indian Intelligence, 1930-1947', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, 79/317, (2001), pp. 63-82.

²⁸BL IOR/L/P&J/12/511, *File 1080/A/36 – DIB Reports on Activities of Germans, Italians and Japanese in India, January-July 1943*, Survey 4; Fujiwara, *Kikan*, p. 138.

1942, however, the British feared that fifth columnists were operating with 'enormous efficiency, scope and danger', while security against such activity was deemed ineffective.²⁹ This fifth columnist threat was gradually linked to concerns that the Japanese had created an underground force in India similar to the Burma Freedom Army which they had sponsored to help the invasion of Burma.³⁰

Escaped soldiers and Axis radio broadcasts provided patchy information about 'traitor troops' supporting the Japanese and, by July 1942, it was concluded that Japan was 'fostering a movement of dangerous potentialities among Indians in the Far East'.³¹ Not until mid-August did the INA merit its own section in the weekly intelligence reports which revealed that apparently significant numbers of enemy agents had successfully entered India in an escalating espionage campaign.³² These assessments compelled the Indian Army to begin addressing some of the previously mentioned grievances and to acknowledge that the majority of new ICOs were likely to be nationalists.³³ Late September brought reports of INA agents landing by submarine near Madras and on India's west coast.³⁴ These landings had a powerful impact on the British authorities, yet they are either ignored by historians or depicted as unimportant given the focus on the INA's espionage activities.³⁵ In fact initially believing that many of these agents had evaded capture, the British rapidly implemented measures to improve coastal

²⁹BL IOR/L/P&J/12/509, 1941-42, Survey 6; BL IOR/L/WS/1/1433, File 6637, Summary No. 19, 13 March 1942.

³⁰BL IOR/L/P&J/12/510, File 1080/A/36 - DIB Reports on Activities of Germans, Italians and Japanese in India, May-December 1942, Survey 19; Andrew Selth, 'Race and Resistance in Burma, 1942-1945', *Modern Asian Studies*, 20/3, (1986), pp. 483-507. Note: This refers to the Burma Independence Army, later re-named the Burma National Army.

³¹BL IOR/L/P&J/12/510, 1942, Surveys 23, 28 & 29; AP Identifier PR_000003013856, *Interrogation of Mohan Chand Thakuria suspected of being an enemy agent and possessing technical knowledge of enemy espionage methods*, 1945, pp. 64-70;

³²BL IOR/L/P&J/12/510, 1942, Surveys 30, 35.

³³BL IOR/L/MIL/7/19158, Collection 430/118 *Powers of Command of Indian Officers Holding the New Form of Commission; Grant to Indian Officers of Powers of Punishment over British Personnel, 1942-1948*, War Cabinet Conclusions 31 August 1942; BL IOR/L/WS/1/1433, File 6637, Summary No. 27 8 May 1942.

³⁴BL IOR/L/P&J/12/510, 1942, Summary 35.

³⁵Azharudin Mohamed Dali, 'The Fifth Column in British India: Japan and the INA's Secret War, 1941-45' (Unpublished PH.D. Thesis, SOAS, University of London, 2007), pp. 213-215; Hauner, *Strategy*, p. 594; Michael Howard, *British Intelligence in the 2nd World War*, (London: HMSO, 1990), Vol. 5, pp. 206-207; Toye, 'Indian National Army', p. 376.

defences and publicise rewards for the apprehension of enemy agents.³⁶ Cawthorn, by now DMI, led the debate about the fate of captured agents, the need to prevent sensitive information leaking during trials and how to avoid any public backlash against death sentences.³⁷ The result was The Enemy Agents Ordinance (No 1, 1943) permitting trials *in camera*. This facilitated the turning of agents to go back and gather intelligence, which was regarded as essential since, as Cawthorn wrote, 'we do NOT at present know the full Japanese plan for the use of these agents'.³⁸ This early evidence of security concerns and rapidly implemented countermeasures highlights the importance of expanding any assessment of the INA beyond its direct military or espionage effectiveness to its impact on the British authorities actions. This becomes ever clearer with the reaction of those authorities following the capture and interrogation of Major M. S. Dhillon.

Dhillon, a senior member of the INA's espionage wing, defected in October 1942 when leading an espionage group into India. The INA's then Chief of Staff wrote that Dhillon had taken with him 'a complete set of INA establishments, to be made a present to the British'.³⁹ Historians have focussed on how Dhillon's defection led to a rupture in INA-Japanese relations and a hiatus in INA activity before Bose's arrival in mid-1943.⁴⁰ It is illuminating to demonstrate how his disclosures influenced British policy for the rest of the war. For the first time, the British understood the INA's scope, its senior personnel, details of its strategy and how Quit India had stimulated INA recruitment. The INA was now understood to represent a 'lurking danger.... [for which] a little real or imaginary grouse, a little subversive propaganda, and a reverse to the allies have their possibilities', prompting immediate countermeasures focussed

³⁶AP Identifier PR_000003015754, *Steps against the Infiltration of Enemy Agents from the Coast – Question of Paying Rewards to the Local Inhabitants of the Seaboard for the Reporting the Presence of Enemy agents*, 1943, pp. 6-16; AP Identifier PR_000003014063, *Announcement of Rewards for Apprehension of Enemy Agents*, 1942, pp. 7-10.

³⁷AP Identifier PR_000003014009, *The Enemy Agents ordinance (No 1 of 1943) and the Enemy Agent (Amendment) ordinances (No XV of 1943 and No XI of 1944)*, 1944, pp. 5-11; BL IOR/L/P&J/7/5689, *The Enemy Agents (Amendment) Ordinance*, 1944, Memo to Chief Secretaries of the Provinces 2 February 1943.

³⁸AP Identifier PR_000003014009, *Enemy Agents*, pp. 6, 16

³⁹Kiani, *INA*, p. 67.

⁴⁰Toye, 'Indian National Army', pp. 378-379; Dali, 'Fifth Column', pp. 255-259; Gajendra Singh, 'Between Self & Soldier - Indian Sepoys and Their Testimony During The Two World Wars', (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Edinburgh, 2009), pp. 130-32.

on the Eastern Army that was then planning the first offensive campaign since the Burma retreat in the Arakan.⁴¹

Early the following month, on 4 November, GHQ India (GHQI) circulated the memo 'Indian National Army – Counter Measures' to alert the army commands of the INA.⁴² This revealed the formation of a new combined police and security section to develop, recommend and execute policies against the INA. Comprehensive countermeasures were being formulated. In the interim front line troops were to be instructed to guard against Japanese Fifth Columnist tactics, without mentioning the INA itself, to use passwords at night and in the jungle, to wear recognition devices and to treat anyone on the front line with suspicion. This was followed, on 6 November, by a memo examining the reliability of Sikh troops given Sikh dominance in the INA's leadership and fears of Japan exploiting Sikh concerns about the possible creation of a post Indian independence Pakistan.⁴³ That same day the Weekly Intelligence Summary provided a comprehensive overview of the INA's apparent links with Indian nationalists and its goal of expelling Britain from India through a combination of military force, subversion of Indian troops, and the activity of fifth columnists already in India and preparing for a Japanese invasion.⁴⁴ To prevent INA agents infiltrating the army disguised as genuine PoW escapers, Forward Interrogation Centres were established on the border to screen returnees. On 12 November, responding to the Eastern Army's request for urgent countermeasures against the risks of sepoys encountering the INA on the front line, Cawthorn circulated further countermeasures given the 'grave potentialities as regards the loyalty and fighting efficiency of the Indian Army'.⁴⁵ Cawthorn outlined a serious psychological threat to the army, compounded by ineffective British counter-propaganda, with agents posing as escaped PoWs successfully returning to their units and forming subversive cells. Enemy agents were believed to be entering India disguised as refugees while segments of India's population were assessed as being profoundly anti-British. Cawthorn described how the INA provided Japan with both a political screen, garnering nationalist support, and a tactical screen by suborning Indian PoWs and troops. He questioned whether the 'new type' of ICO, recruited during

⁴¹BL IOR/L/WS/1/1576, 'WS' Series Files, File 13104, Appendix 'B' to CSDIC (I) No. 2 Section Report No. 19 Dated 6-11-42.

⁴²BL IOR/L/WS/1/1433, File 6637, Indian National Army - Counter Measures 4 November 1942.

⁴³BL IOR/L/WS/2/44, *Other War Staff Files, Notes on Sikhs dated 6 November 1942*; AP Identifier PR_000003013919, *Report on the Situation in Akyab and other Places in Burma, Deputation of Mr Shah, ICS, For Purposes of organising Resistance to Japanese in Arakan, 1942*, p. 53-56.

⁴⁴BL IOR/L/WS/1/1433, File 6637, Summary No. 53.

⁴⁵BL IOR/L/WS/1/1576, File 13104, General Staff Branch (M.I. Directorate The Problem of the Indian National Army.

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the Indian Army's rapid expansion, would fight against INA forces which contained family, friends or former comrades. Mohan Singh's brother-in-law served in the Indian Army at this time, while the brother of Major K. S. Thimayya, the first Indian officer to lead an Indian Infantry Brigade in battle, had joined the INA.⁴⁶

Cawthorn recommended maintaining rewards for escapers but limiting any publicity to facilitate ongoing surveillance of returning agents and maximise the chances of turning those agents, a strategy that only became effective from late 1944.⁴⁷ He also wanted to prevent questions concerning the loyalty of the wider Indian Army, a recurring concern. Recognising that manpower needs made the rapid redeployment of returnees inevitable, despite the risk they might include INA agents, Cawthorn proposed increased surveillance of all returnees, especially ICOs. Payments to known INA members should cease, although allotments for dependents in India should continue to avoid domestic unrest. For the same reason, he opposed the death penalty for captured agents. Addressing counter-propaganda, the 'essential corollary' to the defensive measures already proposed, Cawthorn excoriated the failure to counter Japanese propaganda which was demoralising Indian soldiers and civilians. He recommended that the General Staff take over this responsibility, establish a broadcasting station focused on the INA and systematise leaflet dropping in Burma. Cawthorn also outlined the imminent deployment of units on the border equipped with loudspeakers able to broadcast propaganda over a range of 600 yards. Notably, he also advocated seeking, and acting on, the advice of Indian officers like Dhillon. Failure to do so, Cawthorn wrote, risked prolonging India's suffering 'long after the war is ended'. As will be seen, he signally failed to heed his own advice. By 6 December the C-in-CI had approved Cawthorn's proposals and promoted him from Brigadier to Major General, reflecting the increasing importance of his role.⁴⁸ The Gol had similar concerns and took parallel steps to reinforce domestic security and ensure the loyalty of police and railway workers.⁴⁹ The rapid adoption of these countermeasures demonstrates the acute British concern at Dhillon's disclosures, a concern that endured and led to further countermeasures in 1943 and beyond. This challenges the characterisation of the INA's threat as diminishing by late 1942 given that it had

⁴⁶Humphrey Evans, *Thimayya of India* (New York: Harcourt, Bruce, 1960), p. 226; BL IOR/L/WS/2/44, *War Staff Files*, Appendix A.

⁴⁷Howard, *British Intelligence*, p. 207.

⁴⁸BL IOR/L/WS/1/1576, *File 13104*, The Indian National Army Problem Memo dated 6 December 1942.

⁴⁹AP Identifier PR_000003014195, *The Hon'ble Home Members Statement on the Internal Situation at the Meeting of the National Defence Council Held In Nov 1942*, pp. 12-16; AP Identifier PR_000003015819, *Statement on Congress and the Internal Situation made by the Hon'ble Member in the April 1943 Session of the National Defence Council*, p. 3.

seemingly missed the opportunity to take advantage when the British in India were most vulnerable.⁵⁰

Throughout 1943 intelligence reports warned of INA efforts to subvert the Indian Army and foment civil unrest.⁵¹ Fears about collapsing army morale following 'perhaps the worst managed British military effort of the war', the first Arakan campaign, led to questions about how to protect the sepoys' fighting spirit given that 'patriotism is clearly a less vital source of [their] offensive spirit than it is with the average Britisher' and to the General Staff making 'urgent representations for special measures to deal with the potential menace'.⁵² However, the INA's historiography for 1943 is dominated by its internal difficulties, Bose's arrival in Asia and his efforts to position the INA as an ally, rather than a supplicant of Japan.⁵³ Yet the British were, in fact, deeply concerned about a Japanese Intelligence or 'I' Offensive gathering strategic intelligence and undermining the morale of the Indian Army and population. While Howard is correct that the INA was closely watched from 1943, his assertion that it was heavily infiltrated is questionable given the enduring debate about the scale of the INA threat between 1943-45.⁵⁴ British intelligence concerning the INA remained heavily dependent on captured agents and Axis radio broadcasts.⁵⁵ Between May and September 1943 intelligence reports spoke of 'justifiable grounds for anxiety' given the difficulty of finding information about Indians being trained by the Japanese as spies, while referring also to Mohan Singh's 'alleged' arrest the previous December, and revealing that it remained impossible to confirm rumours of trouble between the INA

⁵⁰Aldrich, *Intelligence*, p. 151; Hauner, *Strategy*, pp. 543–549, pp. 595–596.

⁵¹ BL IOR/L/P&J/12/511, 1943, Survey Nos 1, 4, 7 & 15; BL IOR/L/P&J/12/512, File 1080/A/36 - DIB Reports on Activities of Germans, Italians and Japanese in India, July–December 1943, Survey Nos. 26, 39, 41, 45 & 49.

⁵²Callahan, *Burma*, p. 59; TNA WO 208/804 (A), *Indian Traitors*, Memorandum on the work done by the P.R. Central Group and its future; BL IOR/L/MIL/17/5/4271, *Other War Staff Files, Report to the Combined Chiefs of Staff by the Supreme Allied Commander South-East Asia 1943-46, Rear Admiral the Viscount Mountbatten of Burma* Vol 2, p. 24; BL IOR/L/WS/1/317, WS 3475, General and Air Headquarters India 5 January 1943.

⁵³Cohen, *Indian Army*, pp. 148–152; Fay, *Forgotten Army*, pp. 201–215; Lebra, *Japan*, pp. 97–101, pp. 114–136; Hauner, *Strategy*, pp. 599–607; Tøye, *Tiger*, pp. 130–149; Ghosh, *Second Front*, pp. 122–197.

⁵⁴BL IOR/L/WS/1/1576, File 13104, Memo to All Commanding Officers of Indian Army Units, May 1944; TNA WO 208/804 (A), *Traitors*, WIS Summary No. 153 6 October 1944; Howard, *British Intelligence*, p. 207.

⁵⁵BL IOR/L/P&J/12/511, 1943, Surveys 9, 11–13, 17, 20 & 22; BL IOR/L/P&J/12/512, File 1080/A/36, Surveys 26–28, 31–33 & 36.

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and Japan.⁵⁶ This enduring concern prompted further countermeasures, and, importantly, began a debate that had profound implications in 1945 regarding a news blackout of the INA for both the Indian public and military. Cawthorn was central to this debate.

In early March 1943, Cawthorn received a proposal to replace an existing news blackout for the wider army and public with a publicity campaign to discredit Japan and the INA given that failing to warn Indian troops about the INA would create huge risks if they met in battle.⁵⁷ A publicity campaign would stop dangerous rumours, hamper INA recruitment and sow doubts in INA ranks by stressing that those aligning with Japan faced disgrace. Loyal soldiers needed to be convinced that those joining the INA had done so from expediency, not patriotism, and that its leadership faced extreme penalties when caught. While Cawthorn considered the proposal, GHQI issued the memo 'Subversive Activities Directed Against the Indian Army' on 18 March which outlined further countermeasures against INA agents.⁵⁸ This described threats to the morale and loyalty of Indian troops from both the INA and Congress, although links between the two remained unproven. It was believed troops were being politicised by a 'considerable number' of agents already in India; and warned that the army's stability had already been undermined by rapid expansion and the lack of experienced British officers and it was essential therefore to convince Indian soldiers that a Japanese victory would be calamitous for India. It also highlighted that an unanticipated consequence of the existing news blackout was that many British officers did not recognise the INA threat. To combat this complacency, limited information about the INA would now be shared with British and trusted Indian officers. Lieutenant-Colonel Himmat Singh of GHQI would act as liaison officer to improve co-ordination of anti-INA measures, while Army commanders were ordered to appoint officers to assist him given the task's importance.

On 31 March, Cawthorn then circulated further countermeasures supplementing those already extant which had failed to deal adequately with the threat.⁵⁹ Regardless of the risk of miscarriages of justice, Cawthorn recommended the immediate demotion or dismissal of any suspect individuals. He also proposed using Gurkhas against the Japanese given that they were less prone to subversion. Cawthorn then stated that the imperative of understanding more about INA activities inside India from captured agents overrode the Eastern Army's request for their rapid trial and

⁵⁶BL IOR/L/P&J/12/511, 1943, Surveys 18. 21; BL IOR/L/P&J/12/512, File 1080/A/36, Survey 37.

⁵⁷BL IOR/L/WS/1/1576, File 13104, Publicity and Propaganda in India re I.N.A 31/3/43.

⁵⁸Ibid., Subversive Activities Directed Against the Indian Army March 18, 1943.

⁵⁹Ibid., Measures to Counter the Japanese Sponsored Attack on the Loyalty of the Indian Army, DMI/4746 31/3/43.

punishment. He then rejected the notion of the deterrent value of publicity about any punishments which instead risked antagonising nationalists and creating distrust between British and Indian troops. While supporting GHQI's proposals for sharing information regarding the INA with select officers, he rejected the earlier proposal for a broader lifting of the news blackout given that it was 'not likely to increase confidence either...in the value of the Indian Army or of the Indian Army in itself'.

On 7 April Cawthorn then circulated a letter he had received from an unnamed Indian officer who claimed that ICOs were either strongly nationalist (60%) or dissatisfied with Britain (40%), and were unlikely to wholeheartedly support fighting simply to perpetuate British rule.⁶⁰ This officer recommended: equalising the pay of British and Indian officers; improving that of VCOs and sepoy; and broadcasting to Japanese-occupied territories that the allotments and property of INA volunteers would be confiscated. On 3 May, Cawthorn's recommendations were all approved, as was the proposal to publicise the confiscation of property of those joining the INA. It was agreed that the public news blackout should remain in place, although it was decided to inform all Indian troops about the INA, while the terms 'INA' or 'Indian National Army' were only to be used in a derogatory manner.⁶¹ Furthermore, any Indian Army soldier captured by the Japanese was asked to join the INA as an expedient to gather intelligence while planning to escape. On the same day, in a vivid demonstration of how seriously the INA's threat was taken, the Department of Public Relations (DPR) then proposed a campaign to build the Indian soldiers' fighting spirit and increase their hostility towards both Japan and the INA.⁶²

This campaign, jointly run by DPR and DMI, became known as JOSH, the Urdu for spirit or enthusiasm.⁶³ Initially approved on 15 May for six months under the joint control of DPR and Cawthorn as DMI, JOSH then remained in place until the war's end. JOSH was a critical tool for building the resistance of Indian troops to subversion and for generating confidence that they would fight effectively in 1944-45, essential given that Indian troops comprised 70% of Slim's Fourteenth Army.⁶⁴ The army's recovery from 1943 has largely been explained by factors including its learning culture, training improvements and improved doctrine, overshadowing the importance of JOSH. Little or no mention is made of JOSH when describing Slim's undoubted brilliance in building morale, which focusses typically on his work with British, rather

⁶⁰*Ibid.*, Note by an Indian ECO.

⁶¹*Ibid.*, Subversive Activities Against The Indian Army 3 May 1943.

⁶²*Ibid.*, Memorandum re publicity and propaganda against the INA.

⁶³*Ibid.*, Statement of Case for the Provision of a Counter-Propaganda Staff 14 May 1943.

⁶⁴Perry, *Commonwealth Armies*, pp. 71-73; Roy, *Sepoys*, p. 1.

than Indian, troops.⁶⁵ While biographies of Auchinleck describe his empathy for Indian troops, they omit any mention of JOSH, despite Auchinleck himself describing it as 'a matter of the first importance'.⁶⁶

The papers of Lieutenant Colonel J. A. E. Heard highlight the essential role played by JOSH.⁶⁷ Heard ran JOSH from mid-1943, and expressed delight on learning from the memoirs of one of the Red Fort defendants, that, in 1945, Indians knew little about the INA because of the effective propaganda 'that had been my responsibility to the Army of India'.⁶⁸ Reflecting concerns that Bose's arrival in Asia would galvanise the Indian diaspora and increase the tempo of subversive activities, Heard was personally briefed by Cawthorn and then interviewed by Auchinleck, who he described as always 'the most encouraging force' in promoting JOSH.⁶⁹ They convinced Heard of the importance of JOSH because '.... suddenly into the field of war came the realisation of the propaganda value [for the INA] of Independence... Thus was born JOSH, an Indian word meaning spirit – enthusiasm – zeal, difficult to translate by one word, but well known as the quality possessed by every Hero'.⁷⁰ Heard confirmed that desertions during the Arakan campaign had caused a vivid realisation of the INA's danger and the need to convince Indian soldiers to 'think of the [INA] as the Japanese Indian Fifth Column (JIFC or JIF) and its leaders as Traitors'.⁷¹

⁶⁵Mason, *Matter of Honour*, pp. 498-499; Patrick Rose, 'Indian Army Command Culture and the North-West Frontier 1919-39', in Jeffreys and Rise (eds), *The Indian Army 1939-47*, (London: Routledge, 2016), pp. 31, pp. 54-55; Graham Dunlop, 'The Re-Capture of Rangoon, 1945: The Last and Greatest Victory of the British Indian Army' in Jeffreys and Rose (eds.), *Indian Army*, pp. 137-156; William Franklin, 'The Genius of Leadership: Why Did the 14th Army Fight For 'Uncle Bill'? (Unpublished Masters Thesis, University of Buckingham, 2015); John Masters, *The Road Past Mandalay*, (New York: Harper, 1961), pp. 43-45; Robert Lyman, *Slim, Master of War - Burma and the Birth of Modern Warfare*, (London: Constable & Robinson, 2004), pp. 63-67.

⁶⁶Philip Warner, *Auchinleck*, (Barnsley: Pen & Sword Military, 2006), pp. 176-186; Connell, *Auchinleck*, pp. 752-764; Liddell Hart Centre for Military Archives, London (hereinafter LH), GB0099 KCLMA, *Heard, Lt. Col. J.A.E., I I*, Auchinleck Letter 8 July 1943.

⁶⁷LH GB0099 KCLMA, The Heard Collection; Lawrence James, *Raj: The Making and Unmaking of British India*, (London: Little, Brown, 1997), pp. 576-578.

⁶⁸LH Heard, 12, *Notes on Books re INA Activities*.

⁶⁹BL IOR/L/WS/1/1576, *File 13104*, Recent Activities of Subhas Chandra Bose 14 July 1943; LH Heard, 20, *Heroes or Traitors*, pp. 33, 48.

⁷⁰LH Heard, 20, *Traitors*, pp. 33, 41.

⁷¹LH Heard, 20, *Traitors*, pp. 33, 37.

In designing the JOSH campaign, Heard stressed the need to deploy carefully selected and well trained officers in order to engage effectively with Indian officers and men. British officers involved were instructed to 'shed the Kipling attitude'.⁷² By December 1943 the instruction was given to prioritise the use of Indian officers of the rank of Captain or Major, with a sound knowledge of Urdu or the vernacular of the relevant unit, to ensure the widest possible coverage by JOSH.⁷³ JOSH courses addressed how factors including poor leadership, low pay, postal delays and health grievances had contributed to the vulnerability to subversion.⁷⁴ To build fighting spirit, copious material was provided on Japan's broken promises and mistreatment of Indian PoWs and civilians. Information rooms, described by Heard as recreation rooms rather than classrooms, displayed the latest war news in a way that was accessible and would interest the men, including the use of pictures and maps.⁷⁵ By May 1944 GHQI described JOSH as 'the strongest and most effective counter-propaganda model yet evolved to combat the "I" Offensive against the morale and loyalty of Indian troops'.⁷⁶ Weekly Talking Points were also produced to build camaraderie between British and Indian troops; and visual images depicted Japan as a rat nibbling at India 'because [the Rat] reminds us of our enemy', with the INA depicted as Japan's dishonourable ally.⁷⁷ The 15 February 1944 issue included:

We know how you feel about the JIFs. To you it is inconceivable that a soldier who holds the honour of his country and his ancestors in trust should sell this valuable trust to the enemy...[who] is your own personal enemy and anyone who helps him is equally your own enemy...for those who deliberately help the enemy there can be neither forgiveness nor pity.⁷⁸

By 1945, sepoys were said to 'despise JIFs when they see any JIF at work, they consider it their duty to give the 'Namakharam' (untrue to his salt) his due – the bullet'.⁷⁹ Indian troops were reported as regarding JIFs with 'genuine contempt'.⁸⁰ Dick Romyne, while serving with Deception Division in Burma, recalled how his troops

⁷²LH Heard, 1, *Ledger of JOSH Courses, Visits, General Contacts*.

⁷³BL IOR/L/WS/1/1576, *File 13104*, Revised Instructions for Anti-Jap Verbal Propaganda.

⁷⁴LH Heard, 1, *Ledger of JOSH Courses, Visits, General Contacts*.

⁷⁵*Ibid.*, *Why Are We Fighting Japan?*.

⁷⁶BL IOR/L/WS/1/1576, *File 13104*, Memo to All Commanding Officers of Indian Army Units May 1944.

⁷⁷LH Heard, 2, *JOSH Weekly News sheets*, February 1944.

⁷⁸LH Heard, 2, *JOSH*, 22 February 1945.

⁷⁹LH Heard, 2, *JOSH*, 16 April 1945.

⁸⁰BL IOR/L/WS/1/1576, *File 13104*, Cipher Telegram from C-in-C India 19 February 1944.

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almost murdered a surrendering INA officer who began to make excuses for his treachery.⁸¹ Lieutenant General Sir Reginald Savory tells a similar story of JIF 'hunts' in February 1944 and the execution of a JIF captive.⁸²

The perceived severity of the INA's threat prompted further measures in parallel with JOSH. New unit security instructions required the reporting of possible subversive activities, placing suspects under observation, censoring mail while preventing access to confidential information, overseas postings or forward areas.⁸³ Concerns about a climate of suspicion developing in the army, though, demanded discretion in accusing soldiers, and it was emphasised that the army was not concerned with political views unless they undermined loyalty, discipline or morale.⁸⁴ In October 1943 the Subversive Activities Ordinance (no. XXXIV) 1943 was promulgated, providing for the death penalty or up to twenty years transportation for the attempted subversion of army personnel, a measure strongly supported by Cawthorn.⁸⁵ That same month a further Ordinance conferred new powers on commanders to prevent activities which risked disrupting offensive action in forward areas, a measure described by the C-in-CI as 'essential for the successful conduct of operations'.⁸⁶ Underlining the ongoing threat, in February 1944 the Gol reaffirmed that the public news blackout would continue, a stance the C-in-CI and Cawthorn supported given reports of the 'I' Offensive growing to 'enormous proportions', with enemy agents at large in India and reports of sepoy being captured by the INA at the front and then quickly released to suborn their colleagues.⁸⁷

In July 1944, GHQI issued the directive 'Psychological Warfare against the INA and JIFs in Enemy Occupied Territories', designed to run in parallel with a Gol propaganda campaign directed at Indian civilians in Japanese occupied territories..⁸⁸ Leaflets would

⁸¹National Army Museum, London (hereinafter NAM) 2005 04 09, *Romyn Oral History Transcript*, p. 31.

⁸²NAM 7603-93-70, *Papers of Lt. Gen. Sir Reginald Savory*, 17 February 1944.

⁸³BL IOR/L/WS/1/1576, *File 13104*, Document No. B-3256 Unit Security Instructions.

⁸⁴*Ibid.*

⁸⁵AP Identifier PR_000003052121, *Subversive Activities Ordinance (xxxiv) of 1943 Extension to Excluded Areas*, p. 10.

⁸⁶BL IOR/L/P&J/8/566, *Coll 117/A27 Military Operational Area (Special Powers) Ordinance 1943*, Gol to Secretary of State 18 September 1943, Viceroy to Governor of Bengal 13 October 1943, Ordinance No. [blank] of 1943.

⁸⁷AP Identifier PR_000003015943, *Use by Provincial Government of Rule 38 A Prohibiting the Publication of Matter Derived from Enemy Sources, 1943*, pp. 16-17; TNA WO 208/804 (A), *Traitors*, 27 April, 3 May 1944.

⁸⁸TNA WO 208/804 (A), *Traitors*, Directive on Psychological Warfare against the So-Called Indian National Army and JIFs 15 July 1944.

be dispersed by air, by artillery and by agents, alongside transmissions by Field Broadcasting Units and radio to undermine INA morale and portray its followers as dupes betrayed by their leaders and on the losing side. Deserters were reassured that they would not be shot, with Auchinleck signing the leaflets 'THIS IS MY PROMISE'. The British believed that JOSH's effectiveness meant that Indian troops wanted to fight JIFs and consequently avoided offering a general pardon to prevent any impression of leniency. Japanese trust in the INA would simultaneously be undermined by suggestions of its widespread infiltration by British agents. The extensive countermeasures taken from late-1942 show how seriously the British authorities took the need to counter the INA's threat to the loyalty of the Indian Army, notwithstanding the reality that the INA was ill-equipped in every sense to threaten India militarily. Finally, it will now be shown that while these measures had helped prepare the army for the fighting of 1944-45, one critical element, the news blackout, would leave India's public woefully unprepared for what they were told about the INA in late 1945.

In late 1945, the British decided to court-martial the INA's senior officers.⁸⁹ The first trial was held at the Red Fort in Delhi, the former palace of the Mughal emperors. The first three INA defendants, all former Indian Army officers who had been captured by the Japanese early in the war, represented India's three largest religious communities. The location and the choice of defendants served as a potent rallying cry for Indian nationalists,

While the British may have been astonished by the vehemence of the public reaction to the Red Fort trials, it is inaccurate to say that they had not entertained the possibility that this would happen.⁹⁰ Suggestions that lifting the news blackout was first considered in 1945 fail to recognise that between 1943-45 the British authorities periodically debated its merits. In 1943, a senior official had written presciently against focussing counter-propaganda on the army because 'the army comes from the people. It is the people as well as the army that must be convinced ...'.⁹¹ However, as already shown, Cawthorn was adamant about the need to maintain the public news blackout. In August 1944 he circulated a further memo 'Publicity About JIFs and INA' in which he revealed that the question of publicity about the INA had been exhaustively discussed between November 1943 and March 1944.⁹² Cawthorn continued to

⁸⁹Chaudhuri, 'Bose', pp. 349-352; Rafe McGregor, 'Enemy of My Enemy', *Military History*, (May 2016), p. 71.

⁹⁰Mason, *Matter of Honour*, pp. 520-522.

⁹¹BL IOR/L/WS/1/1711, War Staff 'WS' Series Files: File WS 29299, Most Secret letter 1 January 1943.

⁹²TNA WO 208/804 (A), *Traitors*, DMI View Publicity about JIFs and INA 21 August 1944.

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support the news blackout for India's public, stating that it was still 'too early to be certain that Bose and the INA are a busted flush', and that maintaining secrecy about JIF captives also supported ongoing operations and counter-espionage. For Cawthorn there was no half-way house between no publicity and full publicity. For him there was absolutely no merit in changing a successful policy at a critical stage in the war when Japan's plans for the INA remained unclear and anti-British sentiment amongst the Indian public remained high. Cawthorn argued that any publicity meant losing control of the topic to a hostile vernacular press, raising awkward questions about the fate of INA captives and risking 'a sensation throughout the country' that would reflect badly on the Indian Army while boosting the INA. He urged that 'we do nothing to stir up interest'.⁹³

In August 1944 a DPR memo written by its Brigadier Ivor Jelu, argued unsuccessfully against Cawthorn for a controlled lifting of the news blackout to show the Indian public that the INA, as Japan's allies, were India's enemies.⁹⁴ Any sympathy subsequently shown towards the INA by the press meant they would be regarded as helping the enemy. The DPR memo emphasised that the news blackout would be unsustainable in peacetime when, in India, 'the political pot' would inevitably begin to boil again. Failure to commit India's press or politicians to at least tacit hostility towards the INA would allow it to play a 'distasteful' part in post-war events.⁹⁵ The uncontrolled emergence of news about the INA would drown out the truth as 'facts' about its supposed military exploits would generate sympathy and support from segments of India's population. The DPR argued that acting now would avoid 'very undesirable results when control has to go...If left too late I anticipate very unwelcome repercussions the future'. Cawthorn won the debate and the public news blackout continued. In 1945 the DPR's fears were realised.

This article has shown that the INA's influence on the British authorities has been understated and in fact prompted a series of countermeasures to diminish the perceived threat to both the Indian Army and the Indian public, most notably JOSH and the news blackout. In championing the news blackout, Cawthorn had considered, but completely underestimated, the consequences which contributed directly to the furore surrounding the Red Fort trials. This lacuna in the historiography has possibly been caused by several factors; they include the focus on steps taken to revive the Indian Army in 1943, the negligible direct impact of INA operations and Bose's presence which acquired 'the magic of a sorcerer's spell' both at the time and subsequently.⁹⁶ It is also possible that the exclusion of many INA volunteers from the

⁹³TNA WO 208/804 (A), *Traitors*, 21 August 1944.

⁹⁴TNA WO 208/804 (A), *Traitors*, 28 August 1944.

⁹⁵Ibid.

⁹⁶Chaudhuri, 'Bose', p. 356.

post-independence Indian and Pakistani armies has played a role.⁹⁷ Finally, Slim's dismissive writing on the INA may have inadvertently discouraged a fuller exploration of this topic. What is evident, though, is that by taking the action they did, the British authorities were complicit in creating a mythology concerning the INA that was not merited by its actual operational capability or results, yet which nonetheless had profound consequences for Britain by contributing to an accelerated timeline for Indian independence.

⁹⁷Singh, 'Soldier and Self', p. 150; Kiani, *INA*, p. 204.