We're marchin' on relief over Injia's sunny plains,
A little front o' Christmas time an' just be'ind the Rains,
Ho! get away, you bullock-man, you've 'eard the bugle blowed,
There's a regiment a-comin' down the Grand Trunk Road.
Rudyard Kipling, "Route Marchin"

An' I'll get a swig in hell from Gunga Din!
Yes, Din! Din! Din!
You Lazarushian-leather Gunga Din!
Though I've belted you and flayed you,
By the living Gawd that made you,
You're a better man than I am, Gunga Din!
Rudyard Kipling, "Gunga Din"

European conflicts embroiled indigenous peoples and foreign trading companies into eighteenth-century wars of imperial conquest. In 1746, Marquis de Joseph Dupleix captured Madras during the War of Austrian Succession and augmented French forces with native Indian soldiers (Sepoys). The French Compagnie des Indes and the English East India Company actively recruited native alliances for the next
fifteen years in their struggle to control the Coast and the adjacent Carnatic province. The French capture of Madras showed the English the military necessity for an East India Company Sepoy army. In 1756, Clive marched 1,200 Madras Sepoys and 800 East India Company soldiers and secured Bengal for the company. The Seven Years War produced two changes for the East India Company: the French Compagnie des Indes surrendered its holdings in India and the East India Company assumed political and military control of India. Ninety-six years after the Treaty of Paris (1761), the East India Company's Sepoy army turned against its masters.

The revolt of 1857 was not the first mutiny. British regular and European East India Company troops revolted in 1766: the Sepoys remained steadfast and entertained no equivocation of duty. When the British violated the Sepoys' enlistment promises, the Sepoys reacted and mutinied. At Vellore in 1806, at Barrackpur in 1824 and 1852, in the North-West Provinces in 1844, and in the Punjab in 1849-50, the Sepoy solders mutinied in order to right military grievances. A long grievance list produced the tumultuous, violent results of 1857.

Individuals had widely differing motivations for enlisting in the army. European and Indian ranks and files evolved from distinct military cultures. European troops entered military service as a last resort: to escape from poverty, domestic crisis, or to evade criminal or civil justice. Indians, despite caste or religion, entered the East India Company's regiments for mercenary reasons and status. Peers who examined government records concluded that Indian soldiers committed less crime, were rarely arrested on drunk and disorderly charges, and displayed higher moral standards than English Commonwealth soldiers. were the reasons for mutiny as multifarious as those for enlisting?

What reasons provoked the Sepoys to mutiny? The Illustrated London News, of August 22, 1857, stated:

The public begin to perceive that not two or three, but a thousand, causes have been at work, and that if we are to retain India a radical reform, not only of our military and administrative systems, must be introduced, but our social and political relations with the Indian tribes, peoples, races, and nations, must undergo a change large and thorough enough to merit the name of a Revolution.

The Illustrated London News voiced many of the mutiny's root causes within the framework of the East India Company's military and administrative departments, but naively missed the main cause-reform. East India Company employees and officers, both military and administrative, introduced many reforms. Social reforms produced animosities and distrust among the native people. The English outlawed "Thuggee" and "Dakoiti" cults as a method to control lawless and dangerous behavior. Familial reforms targeted Sati, infanticide, and the husband's right to
execute his wife. Company directors abolished slavery. Missionaries implemented education (in English language and writing), and established orphanages. Both Hindus and Muslims viewed these "improvements" as methods to convert the people to Christianity. But, the people viewed the British anti-caste behavior and attitude as the greatest threat to the native religion and culture.\(^{(7)}\)

Some social reforms directly destabilized local political hegemony. Local land reform, European settlement, tax farming, and the East India Company's policies of annexation outwardly appear as social reforms, but represented political agendas. Early in the nineteenth century, the English began land reforms in the North-West provinces. Feudal landlords watched in horror as the Company gave land to the peasantry and collected taxes from them. The landlords lost their lands and tax revenue. During the 1857 Mutiny, the Bundelkhand thakurs (landlords) also rebelled against the English. These landlords operated independently from the actions of the Sepoy mutineers and the local rebelling potentates.\(^{(8)}\) European settlement and tax farming produced animosities from the local elite, local merchants, and the local peasantry. The policy of annexation, especially the Oudh situation, created bitter hatred toward the Company and formed major military problems.

The 1857 rebellion centered on the Company's annexation of Oudh. In 1818, Sir John Malcolm had exiled the Mahratta Peshwa, Baji Rao, on an £80,000 annual pension to the kingdom of Oudh. Baji Rao sired two sons, both of which died as infants. Hindu law required a son to officiate at the funeral and release the father's soul. The custom with the Hindu allowed an adopted son to fulfill this sacred duty. Raji Rao adopted Nana Sahib (Nana Govina Dhondu Pant), a son of friend, an affinal relative and of the same caste as the Peshwa. After the Peshwa's death, Nana Sahib petitioned the East India Company for the annual pension of his adopted father. The East India Company refused to grant the annuity and Nana Sahib sent emissaries to England on his behalf. Nana Sahib's emissaries failed and complained that all India's gold could not out-bribe the East India Company's power over the Crown and Parliament.\(^{(9)}\)

Sixty-year old William Sleeman toured the Oudh countryside and drafted evidence of misrule. Governor-General Dalhousie composed an ultimatum to Wajid Ali Shah: turn over the Kingdom of Oudh or the British would use military force. Wajid Ali Shah refused to sign the document in the name of his son, Birjis Qadr. In response, the Company annexed Oudh.\(^{(10)}\)

The key link to these two ousted dynasties rested in the Nana Sahib's Muslim secretary, Azimuth. Azimuth, highly educated in English and diplomacy, petitioned the British Crown in Nana Sahib's behalf. Azimuth utterly hated the British. Azimuth's intrigues linked not only two dynasties but two religions, Hindu
and Muslim. Azimullah printed pamphlets that called for a *Jihad* against the infidel. Azimullah gathered disaffected Indian officers (Hindu and Muslim) and presented seditious ideas. Azimullah expressed the extent of his intrigues and seditious plans to the Turkish general Umar Pasha in 1856, to garner Turkish support. It was Azimullah who formed an infrastructure of Indian agents to distribute seditious anti-British propaganda and not Russian agents, as the British believed. In July 1857 *The Illustrated London News* wrote:

we have the strongest reasons to suspect, that Russian emissaries are, and have long been, at work, not only at the outposts and frontiers of our Indian Empire, but in the very heart of the country, in exciting dissatisfaction against British rule, and in stirring up the native population against us..... [T]hose who know Russia best, and India most, do not treat this supposition with scorn; but, on the contrary, find too many reasons for believing that every act of hostility against us ...is more or less connected with Russian intrigues and Russian money.\(^{(11)}\)

British arrogance refused to accept the idea that the Company produced the anti-British sentiments and that the Indians themselves could mastermind a rebellion.

Sepoy disaffection reflected a long list of varied grievances and a long history of errors. In 1796 the British forced "all sorts of novelties" upon the Sepoy army.

[The Sepoy] was to be drilled after a new English fashion..., dressed after a new English fashion..., shaved after a new English fashion.... They were stripping him, indeed, of his distinctive Oriental character.\(^{(12)}\)

Before the 1796 Sepoy reorganization, British officers commanding Sepoy troops knew the language and respected the culture of the Sepoy troops. Officers and enlisted Sepoys dressed in oriental style. The Company utilized the "irregular system" principle: Sepoy officers commanded the companies and British officers commanded the regiments and brigades. Reorganization regulated the Sepoy officers into inferior positions and introduced British line officers into the Sepoy companies. Promotions of Sepoy officers followed the English establishment-seniority over merit-consequently, few able young Sepoy officers received promotions. English officers also failed to inspire the native troops, nor found the needed respect of the Sepoys.\(^{(13)}\) Even the British press and public recognized the failings of the Company's officers.

The East India Company recruited young individuals to fill vacancies within the regimental officer corps. These English officers had no prior military experience nor did these officers know the language, customs, or even the faces of the men under their command.\(^{(14)}\) The majority of the officers were ignorant of the military drills, looked down upon the enlisted natives, and refused to associate with the native soldiers.\(^{(15)}\) Consequently, British sergeants and native Indian officers commanded
the regiments. "The average regimental officer was 'a youngster who makes curry, drinks champagne and avoids the sun.' Leaving their Indian troops to the care of Indian officers and British sergeants, European officers became increasingly remote and disdainful ...carried the moods of schoolboys into the work of men." (16) Failing to gain respect from the individual native soldier, regimental officers faltered in preventing mutiny and rebellion.

In 1838 the British Indian army invaded Afghanistan. This invasion resulted from British fears of Russian and Persian plots with Dost Mohamed, the Afghanistan Amir. Governor-General Lord Auckland decided to replace the Amir of Afghanistan. Kabul fell and the mission seemed accomplished, but the Afghanistan people did not want their Amir replaced. The British Indian army at Kabul, now found themselves besieged by the Afghanistan people and retreated back to India. India no longer viewed the British military as an invincible power. Britain lost the respect of the Indian people and especially the Sepoys.(17)

As respect and military discipline for the British dimmed after the Afghanistan affair, reform movements targeted the military. The British maintained military discipline by stern corporal punishments for even minor infractions of military protocol. Reformers viewed military justice as unusually cruel and thought the use of the lash as unnecessary in the Bengal army. The East India Company recruited high caste Bengal individuals for the Sepoy army and discouraged low caste members of society.

The eighteenth-century Bengal army took into its ranks what were available, and these tended to be the traditional military peasantries of North India which comprised dominant land-owning and land-controlling groups who combined with seasonal military employment. Membership in these societies was consolidated through the adoption (or invention in some cases) of ritual and practices intended to mark them out as exclusive and elevated above the rest of rural society. Such customs, in British eyes, subsequently came to define these recruits as being from the higher castes. British officers were convinced that the sense of honour they identified as pervading these groups made for a superior recruit, one who would be impelled to obey and perform well by his own sense of self-respect, and not by the draconian discipline believed necessary in regiments of European soldiers.(18)

Bengal military courts had never emphasized the "lash" for infractions of military duty. In 1835 Governor-General Lord William Bentinck outlawed corporal punishment in all the Sepoy armies. In 1845 Governor-General Lord Hardinge rescinded Bentinck's order and reestablished flogging.(19) Reinstatement of flogging insulted the Sepoy soldiers and especially the Bengals.

When a Sepoy enlisted, the East India Company granted him certain privileges. One of these privileges existed in the enlistment's geographical extent. Six Sepoy
regiments enlisted with the provision calling for foreign service, and the other regiments would serve in India only. The Barrackpur mutinies (1824 and 1852) resulted when Bengal regiments received orders to fight in Burma. According to one historian, if the British had used enlisted foreign service regiments, or the high command had called forth volunteers for the Burma expedition, the Sepoys would not have revolted.\textsuperscript{(20)}

The kingdom of Oudh constituted the centerpiece for the 1857 Mutiny. On February 7, 1856 the East India Company annexed Oudh and over ninety percent of the Bengal army (and a large portion of the Bombay army), the Company recruited had come from Oudh villages. Sepoys employed by the Company enjoyed a unique privilege. Prior to annexation, Oudh Sepoys possessed the right of petition to the British Resident at the Court of Lucknow (Lakhnoa). Malleson writes that, "this right of petition was a privilege the value of which can be realised by those who have any knowledge of the working of courts of justice in a native state. The Resident of Lakhnau was, in the eyes of the native judge, the advocate of the petitioning Sepoys."\textsuperscript{(21)} This produced prestige and benefits for the Sepoy. Villagers regarded this privilege highly and, consequently, almost every family had a representative to the court in the form of a Sepoy. Oudh's annexation deprived this immemorial privilege and destroyed the Sepoy's position of importance and influence in his own country. When the Mutiny broke-out in May 1857, Oudh's Sepoys displayed great hatred toward the British.\textsuperscript{(22)}

Religion played a significant part in the Mutiny. The Indian people, whether Hindu or Muslim, viewed Christianity with suspicion and loathing. Indian people viewed missionary schools and orphanages as institutions that only benefitted the British by making Christian converts. British officers and/or their wives distributed bibles and religious tracts to Sepoys. The native people viewed reform of Sati and infanticide as methods to destroy indigenous beliefs. Hindus felt extreme bitterness and hatred about British attempts at caste dismantlement. Religion isolated the British from the native people, who viewed the English as hypocritical practitioners of Christianity. The Indian people and Sepoys especially targeted missionaries and proselytizing military officers during the Mutiny.\textsuperscript{(23)} Indian religious retribution required an atonement with the lives of British men, women, and children.

Using religion, conspirators spread anti-British propaganda. This propaganda addressed both Hindu and Muslim. Azimullah printed seditious material against the British, but an Oudh thakur (the Maulavi of Faizábád, named Ahmad-ullah, or Ahmad Shah) promoted and fomented the most extensive network of propaganda. The Maulavi recruited many other learned men and priests to pass information across the countryside. Ahmad-ullah manufactured and disseminated rumors, both personally and through this network. One rumor claimed that the British intended to marry Crimean War army widows to Sepoy troops. The marriage of a Sepoy to a
white women would have destroyed the Sepoy's caste and force the Sepoy to accept Christianity. Another rumor circulated about money, currency made from leather and not paper or specie. Accepting this currency would have destroyed the Hindus' caste. The British inadvertently issued the best propaganda tool of Ahmadullah: the 1853 Pattern Enfield rifle and the new .577 Metford-Pritchitt cartridge. The cartridge produced the spark to inflame the Sepoys into mutiny. Kaye explains that there was one thing wanting to the conspirators—the means, the instrument—with which to kindle to action the great body of their countrymen.... [W]hen they heard of the new cartridge—a cartridge smeared with animal fat and which they were told was bitten, [they had] the weapon they wanted.... To tell a body of Hindus, already suspicious of their foreign master, that they would be required to bite a cartridge smeared with the fat of their sacred animal, and to tell Muhammadans that they would be required to bite a cartridge smeared with the fat of an animal whose flesh was forbidden to them, was tantamount to tell them that their foreign master intended to make them break with their religion.... In this lesser sense, then, and in this only, did the cartridges produce mutiny. They were the instruments used by conspirators; and those conspirators were successful in their use of the instruments only because ...the minds of the Sipáhis and of certain sections of the population had been prepared to believe every act testifying to bad faith on the part of their foreign masters. (25)

The anti-British rumor/propaganda implementation epitomized the skill and daring of the rebellion's leaders.

The 1857 India Mutiny resulted from changing British attitudes. Initially, Britain maintained a conservative attitude towards India. Edmund Burke and Adam Smith argued for control over the East India Company's affairs in India. Pitt's India Act (1784) established reorganization and regulation of the East India Company's Indian administration, and placed the company under Parliament's responsibility. The thrust of Pitt's India Act rested in principles to preserve and promote India's practices, institutions and traditions. George Bearce writes, "Burke understood that the right ordering of society depended on 'a limited state and a prescribed use of powers' and that the political order existed to free not to oppress men." British attitudes toward India eroded from Burke's enlightened approach. When Parliament chose Lord Cornwallis as Governor-General of India (1786-93, 1805-28), Cornwallis implemented imperial policies instead of limited or conservative policies and introduced British principles and institutions. Whig governmental theory dominated Cornwallis's administrative aims to prevent corruption in India. Cornwallis lacked faith and trust in the Indian governmental institutions and Anglicized the Indian political administration. Administration changes produced the first reforms and led the way for further reforms.
Imperial sentiments emerged during the era of the French Revolution, the Napoleonic wars, and the Industrial Revolution. Evangelical Christian missionary zeal introduced controversial elements for both advocates and opponents of imperialism. Initially, Indian missionary work evoked opposition from both the imperialists and the anti-imperialists as detrimental to the welfare of India. By the 1830s, imperial sentiments altered. New intellectual attitudes replaced conservative Burkean ones. Adam Smith expounded on the economic theory of laissez-faire, Jeremy Bentham's theories spawned the Utilitarian movement, and John Wesley inspired various British religious sects with missionary zeal. Consequently, from the 1830s to the 1857 Mutiny, humanitarian reformers and Christian missionaries flooded India and incensed the Indian people.

The Mutiny and the aftermath produced British public opinion changes. Initial reports of the massacre of English women, children and soldiers galvanized the British public. Britain wanted revenge for the deaths of British white subjects. On July 18, 1857, *The Illustrated London News* wrote, "after the suppression of the revolt, and the punishment of the ringleaders ...there must be no smouldering discontent left unnoticed and unsuspected.... [W]hat the Sword of Might has gained, the Sword of Right must preserve." But, the British public also questioned revenge as a method of policy from the rebellion's outbreak.

We owe the people of India much. We owe them peace, we owe them security, we owe them good government; and if we pay them these debts many blessings will follow. By these means we may be enabled to make amends for the arbitrariness of our rule by its justice and its beneficence. Let us not make the mistake of thinking that we owe them Christianity, and of endeavouring to force it upon them before they are ripe to receive it. Christianity was never yet successfully inculcated by the sword, and never will be. Soldiers and railroads are what are needed in India; and, if the savage outbreak of Meerut and Delhi prove of providing both, that Mutiny, distressing as it is, will have, in all probability, the great merit of being the last, and of preparing the way for the permanent pacification and real prosperity of India.

Contemporary newspapers challenged the East India Company's administrative methods: "what shall be said of the fitness of the East India Company to rule, or of the efficacy of the Board of Control to keep the Company right when, from motives of economy, sheer apathy, carelessness, or ignorance, it manifests an inclination to go wrong?" After the brutal suppression of the Mutiny, British opinion against the East India Company's administration policies produced direct Crown rule and administration. The Mutiny shattered Company rule over India and, ironically, the suppressed Mutiny achieved one of its goals. After the Mutiny, while [s]tanding guard over Green [probably, Jamie Green, native cook of a Mutinied regiment, condemned for treason and spying] and Sarvur Khan as they awaited
execution, Forbes-Mitchell prevented his fellow Highlanders from procuring "pork from the bazaar to break their castes" and provided the condemned men with a last meal and a hookah. Out of gratitude, Green confessed to Forbes-Mitchell that he was no native Christian but Mohamed Ali Khan, the Rohilkhand nobleman who had accompanied Azimullah to London and Constantinople, where together they had "formed the resolution of attempting to over throw the Company's Government. "Thank God," Mohamed Ali said, "we have succeeded in doing that, for from the newspapers which you lent me, I see that the Company's rule has gone, and that their charter for robbery and confiscation will not be renewed." He and Sarvur Khan were hanged the next morning.(33)

From the eighteenth century, the East India Company set in motion the causes for the 1857 Mutiny. Religion played a central role in shaping Indian animosity. Reform measures, well intentioned, alienated both Sepoys and the populace. British defeat in the Afghanistan campaign, destroyed Sepoy confidence in British invincibility. Company annexation of Oudh produced loathing and hatred for English policies. Into this volatile brew, add two individuals-Azimullah and the Maulavi of Oudh-both masters of propaganda and the end result equals rebellion. The East India Company generated the seeds of the 1857 rebellion-as the Company exchanged its role as trader/merchant to imperial/trader/nation administrator, the Mutiny grew.


4. Douglas M. Peers, "Sepoys, Soldiers and the Lash: Race, Caste and Army Discipline in India, 1820-50," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 23 (May 1995): 213-4, points out that though British regular soldiers resembled the Victorian image as the scum of the earth, the East India Company regiments contained a higher class of individuals (craftsmen, artisans, and clerks) and enlisted as a means to better their position.


6. Peers, "Army Discipline in India," 213-33. Keay, *The Honourable Company*, 205, notes that the East India Company always had a serious alcohol abuse problem: "Fort Marlborough's quite astronomical liquor bills which in one month alone came to more than the value of all the pepper exported that year. 'The monstrous month' in question was July 1716 ...during which the nineteen covenanted servants entitled to the Company's table appeared to have consumed '74 dozen and half of wine [mostly very expensive Claret], 24 dozen and a half of Burton Ale and Pale beer, 2 pipes (240 gal. !) and 42 gallon of Madeira wine, 6 flasks of Shiraz [Persian wine], 274 bottles of toddy, 3 Leaguers and 3 Quarters of Batavia arrack, and 164 gallons of Goa [toddy].' "

7. Dan M. Hockman, "The Sepoy Rebellion" (M.S. thesis, Eastern Illinois University, 1963), 63-71. "Thuggee was an organized system of murder and robbery directed by professionals who accomplished their tasks systematically and artistically.... Dakoiti was similar to thuggee in that it had a hereditary caste and religious rites.... Dakoits went in bands of thirty or forty.... [M]urder was merely incidental to the main purpose of robbery.... Sati was a


10. Ibid., 64-6.


16. Ward, Our Bones are Scattered, 10-1.

17. Ibid., 16-21.


19. Ibid., 211-4. For a contrary view, endorsing the need for corporal punishments, see "Errors of Indian Policy," The Illustrated London News, Aug. 22, 1857, 1: "Another mistake, which has excited the disapproval of calm and humane men such as Colonel Hodgson, was the abolition, from misjudging philanthropy, of flogging in the native army, by which discipline has relaxed, and the European officer rendered powerless to inflict punishment.... [C]orporal punishment could not be abolished without the greatest detriment to the service."


21. Ibid., 15.


27. Ibid., 19.

28. Ibid., 34-51.

29. Ibid., 60-4.


33. Ward, Our Bones are Scattered, 537.