Youth Movements and Mobilisations in Post-colonial India, circa 1930-1970

Tom Wilkinson

A thesis submitted to the Department of International History of the London School of Economics and Political Science for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, London, 23rd March 2022

Declaration

I certify that the thesis I have presented for examination for the MPhil/PhD degree of the London School of Economics and Political Science is solely my own work other than where I have clearly indicated that it is the work of others (in which case the extent of any work carried out jointly by me and any other person is clearly identified in it). The copyright of this thesis rests with the author. Quotation from it is permitted, provided that full acknowledgement is made. This thesis may not be reproduced without my prior written consent. I warrant that this authorisation does not, to the best of my belief, infringe the rights of any third party. My thesis was proofread for conventions of spelling by Jonathon Sutclife. I declare that my thesis consists of 99,996 words.

Statement of inclusion of previous work

I can confirm that sections from chapter 6 are published in an article in the 2019 "Student Politics in South Asia" special edition of South Asia Multidisciplinary Academic Journal (SAMAJ).

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements

PhD. I would also like to extend my thanks to the archival staff at the British Library in London and at the United Nations Archives in New York.

Of course, I thank my closest friends because without them there is little purpose or joy to any success. Their love and encouragement have kept me going in the right direction: William O'Donnell, Jacob Leeming, Lydia Entwistle, William Guicheney, Phillip Havmose, Mariajosé Nieto, and Dimitris Thomson.

Finally, I give my sincerest gratitude to my partner and family. Daniel Callaghan has been on much of this path with me - you have kept my life in perspective and the best outcome of this stage of my life has been finding you. To Nikki Wilkinson and Deirdre Jacks, thank you for being there for me and for sharing your perspectives and experiences with me, I value them deeply. To Helen Wilkinson and Gareth Wilkinson, thank you for your patience and endless support in so many aspects of my life. I am deeply grateful to have such a special sister and brother. To my late mum who died fifteen years ago after fighting a battle and never got to see my academic journey, and to my dad who has always done his very best to support our family, I dedicate this PhD to you.

Key Abbreviations

The All-India Student Federation (AISF)

The All-India Youth Federation (AIYF)

The Auxiliary Cadet Core (ACC)

The Bharat Sevak Samaj (BSS)

The Communist Party of India (CPI)

The International Union of Students (IUS)

The National Cadet Corps (NCC)

The National Congress Student Organisation (AISC)

The University Film Club (UFC)

The World Assembly of Youth (WAY)

The World Federation of Democratic Youth (WFDY)

The Youth Hostel Association of India (YHAI)

Abstract

Indian historians have examined colonial childhoods and the role of youth movements in anti-colonial politics, but the history of the Indian youth in the post-colonial period is almost entirely unexplored. This PhD thesis examines the history of youth movements and mobilisations in India during the early post-colonial period. Young people had previously been energetic players in the freedom struggle and the powerful association between the youth and the nation was not new, although the realisation of a post-colonial state gave politicians, policy makers, and social leaders the levers of power to organise a novel and state-sponsored youth order. The enormity of this demographic group, the tremendous future role assigned to them, and their supposed state of indiscipline meant that the Indian youth became the object of renewed political and cultural interest in the decades following independence. The need to organise a mass movement for the country's future citizenry became understood throughout the layers of the Government of India. This logic held that the volunteer movements of the colonial era could now only touch the fringes of India's "youth problem" and it was accepted that the newly independent state must accept overall responsibility for the organisation of the national youth movement.

This PhD traces the origins, growth, and consequences of these state-sponsored movements, including the National Cadet Corps, the Labour and Social Service Camps, the Bharat Sevak Samaj, the Bharat Scouts and Guides, the Youth Hostel Association of India, the Interuniversity Youth Festival, and the University Film Club. I will also explore the political protests and responses of two communist youth movements, and look at the way the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s unfolded in India from the perspective of the All-India Student Federation and the All-India Youth Federation. This PhD will analyse how colonial conceptions of the Indian youth were adapted and repudiated during the early post-colonial period by referring to the final phase of the colonial era, and how the shifting notion of "youth" had a profound effect on the building of the nation-state at large. It will be organised according to five themes — defence, development, social service, leisure, and student politics — which will allow us to explore the processes of growing up and the way the rich idealisations of youth became embedded in political discourses.

There are five arguments that this PhD thesis will advance. Firstly, the undisciplined youth is key to understanding the 1950s and 1960s in India. Politicians, officials, academics, youth leaders, and journalists developed and spread a discourse that imagined the collective behaviour of Indian youths as falling well below what was expected of them. Secondly, a state-organised youth sector emerged in the post-colonial period and its role as the bureaucratic guarantor of the provision of youth services increased during the period at hand. Government departments launched new youth movements and the Five-Year Plans sponsored mobilisations that sought to harness and channel the voluntary efforts

of youths. The varied apparatus of the Government of India sought to coordinate and direct the post-colonial youth order, but these efforts did not amount to an attempt to take it over.

Thirdly, these youth movements and mobilisations had a comprehensive nation-state building character. From the British Raj era Scouting movement to the Nehruvian era Bharat Sevak Samaj, the movements this PhD thesis explores represented an ongoing exercise in building national youth institutions that sought to tie future citizens to a nation-state identity. Fourthly, the unequal pathways of youthhood in independent India and the ways youths were included and excluded on a differentiated basis from these movements and mobilisations is illuminated. There was an uneven inclusion of the rural youth, women, and Dalits because their (more limited) participation was often accompanied by a patriarchal and patronising reproduction of their "traditional" roles in the official and popular discourses.

Finally, this is a research project not only about Indian youth but also the larger questions of post-colonial internationalisms and the way that Indian youth movements were shaped by processes and relationships that transcended the borders of the nation-state. These youth movements and mobilisations sought to play a role, integrate themselves into, or draw upon, larger "post-imperial" or "neo-imperial" internationalisms.

Chapter 1. Introduction

The central concern of this thesis is that widespread anxieties about the indiscipline of youth collided with the urgency of national freedom to initiate a scale of state-sponsored youth movements and mobilisations in the early post-colonial period that was exceptional relative to the colonial era. These were exceptional because of the way they imagined the undisciplined behaviour of youths, brought the states and civil society into collaboration, embodied the emergent forms and functions of postcolonial nationalism, included and excluded this social body from the nation-state project, and integrated themselves into larger "post-imperial" or "neo-imperial" internationalisms. These are the five core arguments of this PhD.

In terms of scale, officials claimed that when Lord Mountbatten took over as the final Viceroy of India he was "amazed" that during the first half of 1946, over 413 thousand youths were permanent members of the 12 most important all-Indian youth movements.[1] Historians have rightly focused on the role of youths in the freedom struggle, as will be soon explored, but mobilisations of youth during the post-colonial period were more far-reaching. The Government of India organised over 10,000 youth camps, each with around 100 youths, for the purposes of village development between the mid-1950s and mid-1960s.[2] Development projects would sometimes put over 10,000 youths to work on a single project at the same time, such as with the Kosi River Project camp.[3] The National Cadet Corp, launched by the Constituent Assembly only months after independence, was established with an initial strength of 135,000, and reached 3 million by the mid-60s.[4]

Young people had been energetic players in the freedom struggle and the powerful association between the youth and the nation was of course not something new, although the realisation of a post-colonial state gave Indians the levers of power to organise a novel and state-organised youth order. A widespread anxiety developed throughout the layers of the Government of India about the need to organise a mass movement for the country's future citizenry. This logic held that the volunteer movements of the colonial era could now only touch the fringe of India's "youth problem" and the idea that the newly independent state must accept overall responsibility for it.

This PhD will trace the origins, growth, and consequences of these state-sponsored movements, including the National Cadet Corps, Labour and Social Service Camps, the Bharat Sevak Samaj, the

---

[1] Distribution of Major Volunteer Organizations (Mid – 1946) in Provinces, 1940, IOR, L/PJ/12/66, British Library

[2] Madan, G.R. 1967. *Indian Social Problems: Social Disorganization and Reconstruction*. New Delhi: Allied Publishers p.145

[3] Meeting of the Advisory Committee of the NCC- Minutes of the Meeting, 1954, Ministry of Education, F-15-3/54 D3, National Archives of India (Henceforth, NAI)

[4] "3 million Students Covered by NCC: 700 CAMPS HELD LAST YEAR".1965. The Times of India, Jan 11, (https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/3-million-students-covered-ncc/docview/347114374/se-2?accountid=9630).

Bharat Scouts and Guides, the National Social Service Scheme, the Youth Hostel Association, the Interuniversity Youth Festival, and the University Film Club. I will also explore the political protests and responses of two communist youth movements, and look at the way the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s unfolded in India from the perspective of the All-India Student Federation and the All-India Youth Federation. This PhD analyses how colonial conceptualisations of the youth were adapted and repudiated during the early post-colonial period by referring to the final phase of the colonial era, and how the shifting notion of "youth" had a profound effect on the building of the nation-state at large. It evokes the ways that the Indian nation-state came of age following a particularly violent and intense rite of passage in 1947 and stepped out into the post-colonial world. This thesis is organised according to five themes, which will allow for an exploration of the ways this life stage was negotiated and experienced: defence, development, social service, leisure, and student politics.

Defining Youth

There is a tendency amongst historians to divide human life into a series of stages rather than seeing it as a single trajectory. However, the precise boundaries of what constitutes youthhood are rightly a question of academic curiosity. Emile, Or Treatise on Education, (1762) by Jean-Jacques Rousseau was one of the earliest works to present this life stage as a period of experimentation and training. The image of a bohemian, suicidal and sentimental modern European adolescent was further popularised by the *bildungsroman* of Van Goethe at the turn of the nineteenth century.[5] In the Indian context, this resonates with the "awakening" felt by the Young Bengalis following the establishment of Hindu College in Calcutta. Their beef-eating parties that ridiculed Hinduism, adoration of Shakespearean couplets and embrace of enlightenment thinking at once captures the caricature of *enfant terrible* taking up intergenerational rebellion.[6]

The founding president of the American Psychological Association, G. Stanley Hall, first popularised the term "adolescence" and foregrounded this period as an object of study just after the turn of the 20th century.[7] In 1906, the prominent French pedagogist, Gabriel Compayré, stated "the psychology of adolescence is a fine subject for study but a new one, too. A few lines by Aristotle, then nothing for 2000 years until Mr. Stanley Hall's 1300 pages".[8] Hall viewed this life stage as a period of "storm" to

---

[5] Koops, Willem and Michael Zuckerman. 2013. "A historical developmental approach to adolescence." *The History of the Family* (8) 3: 345-354. Also see, Koops, Willem and Michael Zuckerman. 2005. *Beyond the century of the child: History and developmental psychology.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
[6] Raychaudhuri, Tapan. 1999. *Perceptions, Emotions, and Sensibilities: Essays on India's Colonial and Post-Colonial Experience*s. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Chaudhuri, Rosinka. 2002. *Gentlemen Poets in Colonial Bengal: Emergent Nationalism and the Orientalist Project*. Calcutta: Seagull Books
[7] See, Stanley Hall, Granville. 1904. *Adolescence: Its psychology and its relation to physiology, anthropology, sociology, sex, crime, religion and education.* New York: Appleton and Company
[8] Compayre, Gabriel. 1906. *La psychologie de l'adolescence*. Paris: Revue Philos p.x

imply the adolescents' reduction in self-control and "stress" to imply their heightened sensitivity.[9] These early psychologists, developing the ideas of Rousseau, held the transition to adulthood to be a period of "storm and stress", "normative turmoil" and "oscillations and oppositions" that led to an inevitable period of conflict with parents, emotional disruption, and dangerous behavior. Fundamental to Hall's thinking was the notion that this transition to adulthood corresponded to the beginning of a modern civilization. He broadly equated adolescence with an inferior race, with adulthood being equated to a superior race, and the human life cycle to be a recapitulation of a social Darwinist racial history.[10]

The Rousseau-Hall "storm and stress" understanding of adolescence is rife across the significant body of scholarship produced by academic circles throughout the late colonial and early post-colonial period in India. One scholar of social work, Katayun Cama, wrote in 1941 that this life stage in the Indian context was distinguished by a "lack of harmony", "disturbances" and the "greatest lack of imbalance".[11] The academic added, though, "it seems probable that the 'storm and stress' period can be handled carefully and wisely in their infancy and childhood".[12]

Another academic in this field, Lalita Kumarappa, was of the opinion that "adolescence is a whirlpool, a maelstrom of shifting, swirling impulses".[13] While in 1951, N.F Kaikobad, similarly defined youthhood as "the period of storm and stress. It is the time when drives for independence and self-determination are most intense".[14] These hegemonic articulations of adolescence in Indian academia tended to be gendered. That is, the process of growing up for men was articulated as fiery and rebellious, and for women it was articulated as fanciful, romantic, and sexualised. Lalita Kumarappa wrote that young women would "build up idealistic dreams about sex, love, marriage, and dream about [a] 'Prince Charming' who will one day come and claim her".[15] Katayun Cama claimed, "the problem particularly of the adolescent girl has acquired a new complexion because of the ease with which sex knowledge is available".[16]

---

[9] Koops, Willem, and Michael Zuckerman. 2013 "A historical developmental approach to adolescence". For a history of the concept of youth, see Alexander, Kristine, and Simon Sleight. Forthcoming. *A Cultural History of Youth in the Modern Age.* London: Bloomsbury

[10] Koops, Willem, and Michael Zuckerman. 2013 "A historical developmental approach to adolescence" p.4

[11] Cama, Katayun. 1941. "The Problem of Adolescence" *The Indian Journal of Social Work* 2 (3): 335

[12] Ibid. p. 337

[13] Kumarappa, Lalita. 1944. "The Teen- Age: Its Traits and Training" *The Indian Journal of Social Work* 5 (1): 44

[14] Kaikobad, N.F 1951. Youth Welfare. *The Indian Journal of Social Work* 11 (3): 53

[15] Kumarappa, Lalita. 1944. "The Teen- Age: Its Traits and Training" *The Indian Journal of Social Work* 5 (1): 53

[16] Cama, Katayun. 1941. "The Problem of Adolescence" *The Indian Journal of Social Work* 2 (3): 335

Despite the Indian academy increasingly recognising the importance of society in the shaping of this life stage and advocating a gentler and more sympathetic approach to adolescence throughout the decades following independence, influential educationalists endorsed the "storm and stress" approach to the social body of the Indian youth. The Secretary of the Ministry of Education, K.G Saiyidain, shared his understanding of this life stage in the Indian context in 1961: "in dealing with modern youth, with their emotional and psychological stresses and strains and their lack of adjustment to a rapidly changing and challenging world in which many of them have lost their moorings, we are, as it were, playing with dynamite".[17]

It is now widely accepted across disciplines that as they pass from childhood to adulthood, youths take a number of different paths, many of which are not as tumultuous as Stanley Hall once claimed.[18] The field of youth studies holds there are multiple pathways and timings of entry into and out of youthhood and they are dependent on societal and historical constraints.[19] I want to foreground two insightful definitions put forward by leading historians of youth that capture a flexible, intuitive, and broad approach to conceptualising this social group. Richard Jobs and David Pomfret make the point that youth is no "mere staging ground for adulthood" or a "preliminary phase," but a "definitive category of experience in its own right". They insist on the "the instability of the very category" because "the production of youth as a concept and social body was fraught with tensions and contradictions between ideology and practical exigencies, between state and non-state actors, local and central government, indigenous resistance and colonial indigenization".[20] Kristine Alexander, Mischa Honeck and Isabel Richter contend,

> To wit, as well as representing a life-stage, a shared experience, and a positive attribute or a
> failing, 'youth' has also been deployed across the twentieth century and up to the present day
> to denote the relative age of an individual, a quality of being, an aspiration, a catchall term for

---

[17] Saiyidain, K.G. 1961. *National Service for Youth*. New Delhi: Government of India Press p.2

[18] Koops, Willem and Michael Zuckerman. 2013 "A historical developmental approach to adolescence."

[19] There are simply too many sociological and anthropological schools that have made a vital contribution to understandings of youthhood during the twentieth century, but these are some of the most well-known studies and schools that illuminate the rich history of the concept at hand. Bronisław Malinowski and Margaret Mead established youth as an accepted cultural and anthropological topic of investigation. See, Malinowski, Bronisław. 1929. *The Sexual Life of Savages in North-Western Melanesia.* London: George Routledge & Sons. Mead, Margaret. 1928. *Coming of Age in Samoa.* London: William Morrow and Co. A vibrant sociology of youth emerged from the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies in Birmingham during the 1970s and 1980s that explored young people's cultural practises and working-class sub-cultures. See, Willis, Paul. 1977. *Learning to Labour.* Farnborough: Saxon House. Gilroy, Paul. 1987. *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack.* London*:* Hutchinson. This British tradition can be contrasted with the American school, that emanated from the University of Chicago, which foregrounded youth crime, deviancy, and its consequences. See, Becker, Howard. 1963. *Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance.* New York: The Free Press of Glencoe

[20] Ivan Jobs, Richard and David F. Pomfret. *Transnational Histories of Youth in the Twentieth Century*. London: Palgrave Macmillan p.15

anyone not considered adult, an ideology of difference, and a gendered norm often equated with male activities.[21]

I will now outline the conceptual parameters of "youth" for this PhD thesis. Firstly, youth exist across a wide range of ages (including both pre-and post-adolescence). Secondly, youth bear some relation to puberty and biological measures. It is, however, best to avoid the term "adolescent" because the focus here is largely on the social and political conceptualisation of youth rather than on biological developments. Adolescence is too broad (because universalised) or too narrow (because psychologised). Thirdly, and this will be greatly expanded in the arguments section, gender, caste, class, race, and religion shape the pathways of Indian youthhood. Fourthly, the concept of youth in the Indian context has a relationship to processes of modernity that diffused novel norms. That is, the colonial connection and nationalist project produced critical sites for the interpretation and negotiation of this life stage. Franziska Roy maintains that, "youth as a relevant category entered the Indian arena around the same time as it did in the colonial metropole—an entangled development that became successively more important from just after the turn of the twentieth century".[22]

This final point concerns the translatability of youth, as a concept, in the Indian context. Non-indigenous words can be inscribed with new meanings in the writing of history, but youth was a word used widely in the colonial and national public discourse in India. The articulation of this concept in English underscores that youth was a (albeit differentiated and diverse) widely accepted cultural category and social body. Youth has a lexiconic overlap, and imparts interrelated understanding, with the Hindi word *jawan*, which historically means "youngster", "youth", and "soldier", and this will be explored further in chapter 2.

Movement and Mobilisations

This PhD thesis traces the establishment and evolution of various youth movements and mobilisations, and these concepts require definition. This PhD considers the ways the youth participated to varying degrees in the following movements: The National Cadet Corps, the Labour and Social Service Camps, the Bharat Sevak Samaj, the Bharat Scouts and Guides, the National Social Service Scheme, the Youth Hostel Association of India, the All-India Student Federation, and the All-Indian Youth Federation. Many of these organisations that I explore encompass elements of "mobilisation" and elements of "movement" and depending on which element I am speaking to, I will use that term. The two are not interchangeable because the term mobilisation is often used to denote a

[21] Alexander, Kristine, Mischa Honeck, & Isabel Richter. 2010. "Introduction: Mapping Modern Rejuvenation." *Journal of Social History* 53 (4): 875-88

[22] Roy, Franziska. 2019. "International Utopia and National Discipline: Youth and Volunteer Movements in Interwar South Asia." p.155 in *The Internationalist Moment: South Asia, Worlds, and World Views 1917–39,* edited by Ali Raza, Franziska Roy, and Benjamin Zachariah. London: Sage Publishing

statist thrust and the way its activities sit above the realm of civil society, which is where movements thrive. Each chapter tells the story of one or more movement but, together, this thesis tells the story of how young people were mobilised by the post-colonial state in addition to the ways communist youth and student leaders instigated mobilisations.

The scholar of Scouting, Allen Warren, provides an insightful definition of "movement" in his history of Scouting, and I will adopt this definition for this study. He states movements are,

> social and education phenomena in providing voluntary training and development programs for children and young adults, often based outdoors, and with an under -girding value system. Emphasising standards of personal conduct, health, honour, loyalty, and faith, alongside a commitment to helping others, the philosophy and approach are held together through their relative Promises and Laws, to which members commit themselves. At another level, these movements provide a lens through which to observe in a close and particular fashion how many of the great events and ideas of the twentieth century were received, mediated and used. [23]

The concept of mobilisation is related to readying military troops and conscription, but historians of youth do not restrict its use to defence, and they use a more expansive definition to denote a state - sponsored thrust to youth mobilisations. Susan Whitney holds youth mobilisations in interwar France were, "used to impart new values, encourage new allegiances, and reconfigure the relationship between young people and the state and family".[24] Anne Raffin's exploration of youth mobilisations, which for her includes educational, paramilitary and sports activities, in French Indochina uses the concept of mobilisation to denote the way "colonial authorities attempted to shape the bodies, behaviours , and attitudes of the young to defend and serve the interests of the empire".[25] This author will employ these definitions, but the focus here is not so much on the family, as in Whitney's work. As for Raffin's definition, I will replace "empire" with the "nation-state". In sum, the state-sponsored mobilisations of youth in India I will explore sought to impart new values, encourage new allegiances, develop new behaviours and attitudes, shape the body, and reconfigure the relationship between young people and the post-colonial nation-state.[26]

---

[23] Warren, Allen. 2009. "Understanding Scouting and Guiding After a Hundred Years" p. XVII in *Scouting Frontiers: Youth and the Scout Movement's First Century,* edited by Nelson. R. Block and Tammy. M. Proctor. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing

[24] Whitney, Susan. 2009. *Mobilizing Youth: Communists and Catholics in Interwar France.* Durham: Duke University Press p.1

[25] Raffin, Ann. 2008. *Youth Mobilization in Vichy Indochina and Its Legacies, 1940 to 1970.* New York: Lexington Books p.9

[26] Ibid.

Archives and Methods

Those who set out to research the post-colonial period in India may well face numerous challenges. They may find a paucity of material, missing or redacted documentation, and lament the abject state of the archives. This can lead historians to pursue archival leads outside of public organisations, as it did for me. This thesis found its initial direction at the National Archives of India in New Delhi. Skimming the archival catalogues for references to "youth" and "student" led me to official documents relating to the establishment and expansion of India's far-reaching post-colonial youth movements and mobilisations, and I developed an initial understanding about the National Cadet Core, the Bharat Sevak Samaj, the Labour and Social Service Camps, the Bharat Scouts and Guides, the Interuniversity Youth Festival, and the University Film Club in addition to the coercive techniques targeted at the All-India Student Federation.

Furnished with a letter of introduction from my supervisor, and with upper intermediate Hindi skills, I went in search of their New Delhi headquarters to gather more archival materials. This sometimes resulted in success, as in the case of the NCC, the Bharat Scouts and the AISF, but sometimes there was no archival materials remaining or organisation to be found anymore. To further bring to light the exciting histories of these movements I also drew upon academic articles and books, official reports and non-official reports, legislative proceedings and political speeches, pamphlets and newspaper articles, youth magazines and their advertisements. I mostly found these in Teen Murti Bhavan, Marwani Public Library, the Communist Party of India Head Quarters (Ajoy Bhavan), The NCC Safdarjung Barracks, the British Library, and the LSE library, and the specific methodological details of my investigation will be further elaborated in each chapter. These archives have enabled an investigation into the discursive constructions of youth, their symbolic meanings and the history of the movements that channelled their energies.

The single biggest contribution of the history of childhood and youth is their methodological debate about the importance of and limitations to the concept of agency, and their highlighting of possible alternatives to it such as emotional, spatial, and experiential approaches. Many scholars in this field historically believed that the recuperation of the agency of these groups was the primary objective of the field, but I endorse the view that the field must move beyond its obsession with agency.[27] While this researcher has always attempted to hear and retrieve the Indian youth's voice, emotions, and experiences wherever possible, this project is more concerned with unpacking the way knowledge

---

[27] Gleason, Mona. 2016. "Avoiding the agency trap: caveats for historians of children, youth, and education." *History of Education Society* 45 (4): 446-459. Maza, Sarah. 2020. "The Kids Aren't All Right: Historians and the Problem of Childhood." *The American Historical Review* 125 (4): 1261–1285. See, Maynes, Mary Jo. 2008. "Age as a Category of Historical Analysis: History, Agency, and Narratives of Childhood." *Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* (1): 114–24

about this social group constituted discourse and the way a huge variety of actors from the Indian socio-political landscape sought to mobilise the Indian youth.

Inherent in the historical exploration of youth movements and mobilisations is the challenge of exploring agency. Ann Stoler's questions about how historians should read archival materials and how to make sense of not having the archival sources they would wish to possess are important to this PhD thesis.[28] The youth themselves appear as objects of the archive rather than agents of history and the active voice of the youth is almost entirely lacking.[29] Adult actors usually determine, ascribe, or deny agency to their youthful subjects. Encapsulating this methodological quandary about finding the youth's voice, and extending Spivak's dilemma, Kristine Alexander asks "can the girl guide speak"?[30] Contrary to Spivak, this is a question that she ultimately answers in the positive.

She argues exploring sources produced by girls and reading adult-produced sources against the grain, coupled with literary or visual material, can go a long way to retrieving the voices of the young. Kristine Alexander insists historians must, as Spivak also suggests, measure and interpret silence.[31] Meanwhile, Mona Gleason invites historians to adopt "emphatic inference" that requires scholars to "imagine and to interpret historical events and sources from the point of view of young people" to resolve the issue of finding the child's voice.[32] Locating the voice of marginalised groups has similarly been a central concern of historians of south Asia over the last four decades.

It was Ranajit Guha and the Subaltern Studies Collective that first taught us that tracing the history of downtrodden groups is a viable historiographical project.[33] The deluge of scholarship on life stages shows that archives are not an obstacle that prevents the writing of histories about youth and childhood. No, the methodological issue in this field of childhood and youth studies is the fetishist pursuit of agency.[34] The pursuit of agency often amounts to a search for the subversion of the norm. This focus on excavating acts of resistance can lead to a reproduction of caricatures and to a neglect of the very norms that historians set out to discover. I have found that a great many youths did not revolt against parental or governmental authority. Instead, their social actions occupy the vast terrain

---

[28] Stoler, Laura Ann. 2009. *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense*. Princeton: Princeton University Press

[29] See, Maynes, Mary Jo. 2008. "Age as a Category of Historical Analysis."

[30] Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. 1994. "Can the Subaltern Speak?" pp. 67-111 In *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader*, edited by Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman. Hertfordshire: Harvester Wheatsheaf. For an introduction of Subaltern Studies, see Chakrabarty, Dipesh. 2000. "Subaltern Studies and Postcolonial Historiography" *Nepantla: Views from South* 1 (1): 9-32

[31] Alexander, Kristine. 2012. "Can the Girl Guide Speak? The Perils and Pleasures of Looking for Children's Voices in Archival Research." *Jeunesse: Young People, Texts, Cultures* 4 (1): 132-145

[32] Gleason, Mona. 2016. "Avoiding the agency trap: caveats for historians of children, youth, and education."

[33] Chakrabarty, Dipesh. 2000. "Subaltern Studies and Postcolonial Historiography."

[34] Lynn, Thomas M. 2016. "Historicising Agency" *Gender & History* 28 (2): 324-339

of action in between full-scale revolt and outright obedience (and obedience is a legitimate form of agency) that can be overlooked.[35]

Mona Gleason insists historians of childhood and youth have for too long skirted around the edges of an "agency trap". That is, she claims the search for agency creates a "binaried interpretive framework" that juxtaposes "adult actions and perspectives against those of children and youth" and reproduces adult-child, good-bad, and powerful-powerless binaries.[36] Moreover, scholars highlight agency is methodologically unsatisfactory because it is circumscribed by liberal-utilitarian principles of selfhood. It rests on falsified homo-economicus assumptions that humans are "free-thinking" or "rational-thinking" in the first place.[37]

Methodological and theoretical insights from the history of emotions have given scholars new and alternative ways to explore the history of childhood and youth. The question behind this "emotional turn" is how historians can better understand the thoughts and feelings of historical subjects and what their significance is. Karen Vallgårda, Kristine Alexander and Stephanie Olsen devised the concept of "emotional formation" in their book *Childhood, Youth and Emotions in Modern History.* This approach allows historians to understand how emotional experiences and expressions of children and youths at the individual and group level could be instrumentalised for nation-building and national morale.[38]

Moreover, there has been a spatial turn that has brought the insights of everyday geographies into the history of childhood and youth by foregrounding, for example, children's street cultures or spaces of play.[39] The category of "experience" is another analytical approach that historians of youth and childhood have adopted as an alternative to agency.[40] Even though Joan Scot dismisses this experiential turn as little more than a "linguistic event", I believe it pushes historians to think harder about the intersectionality of the texture, the fabric, and the feel of quotidian life.[41]

It is not, therefore, necessarily through a focus on agency that the role of youths as contributors to historical change is best illuminated. The focus of this PhD thesis is less on "what is actually going on

---

[35] Miller, Susan A. 2016. "Assent as Agency in the Early Years of the Children of the American Revolution" *Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* 9 (1): 48-65

[36] Gleason, Mona. 2016. "Avoiding the agency trap: caveats for historians of children, youth, and education."

[37] Society for History Childhood and Youth Wesbite. "Against Agency", Retrieved December 10, 2020. (https://www.shcy.org/features/commentaries/against-agency/)

[38] Alexander, Kristine., Stephanie Olsen and Karan Vallgårda. 2015. "Emotions and the Global Politics of Childhood." pp.12-35 in *Childhood, Youth and Emotions in Modern History: National, Colonial and Global Perspectives*, edited by Stephanie Olsen. London: Palgrave

[39] Sleight, Simon. 2014. "The city in the child: Colin Ward, urban becoming and the shift to experience." pp. 19-32 in *Education, Childhood and Anarchism: Talking Colin Ward*, edited by Catherine Burke and Ken Jones. New York: Routledge

[40] Boddice, Rob and Mark Smith. 2020. *Emotion, Sense, Experience.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

[41] Scott, Joan W. "The Evidence of Experience" *Critical Inquiry* 17 (4): 793

inside the youths' head", something that historians can never articulate accurately, even if we can get close; but on the ways that the post-colonial Indian nation-state documented its efforts to transform youthful subjects into citizens. It will seek to unpack the way knowledge about this social group constituted discourse and the way youths were objects and participants of development programmes, economic policy, and welfare schemes. This PhD thesis will focus on the shifting political agendas that took the Indian youth as their target-object and how these juvenile citizens became culturally emblematic of the nation-state project. This PhD thesis is a political, social, and cultural exploration of Indian youth, one that will shine a light on the contested meanings and continuities of the transition from childhood to adulthood, in addition to being a history that allows scholars to better comprehend defence, development, social service, leisure, and student politics in post-colonial India. Now, the focus will shift to the existing literature on the history of Indian childhood and youth.

Existing Literature on Youth and Childhood

From physical culture to leisure activities to campus politics, many topics intersect in the historiography of the Indian youth, but it cannot be said to be a field in its own right. Hitherto, there have not been scholarly works that seek to tell the history of India specifically through this social category. The existing literature that brings to light political, volunteer, and philanthropic youth movements of the colonial era provides an exciting "pre-history" to this study. However, this literature almost exclusively focuses on the freedom struggle and largely overlooks the competing state-sponsored discourses about this wider social group. My contribution, nevertheless, rests atop these works in so far as it explores how the state mobilised, imagined, and categorised young people in the post-colonial period, and the ways that novel state-sponsored youth movements emerged during the decades following independence. Principally, this project interacts with the history of childhood and youth and the history of India. My PhD research forms a bridge between the existing works that focus on the history of childhood in the Indian context, but ignore the post-childhood passage to adulthood; and the histories of anti-colonial politics and volunteer movements that generally do not look at youth movements beyond 1947 as if youth movements cease with independence and where the category of the youth is assigned to play second fiddle to other historical topics.

The literature on the history of childhood in India

Sarah Maza, a leading historian of childhood, wrote in The American Historical Review in 2020, "what defines childhood as a historical category is not age—a wildly variable marker of a group that can include the not yet born and stretch into a third decade—but time: unlike any other category of human identity, childhood is a vanishing act".[42] Maza, perhaps by mistake or intentionally, makes the

---

[42] Maza, Sarah. 2020. "The Kids Aren't All Right: Historians and the Problem of Childhood." *The American Historical Review* 125 (4): 1271

customary error of entirely omitting that there is a life stage in between childhood and adulthood and at once captures the tendency amongst historians of childhood to conflate these two distinct stages. A question one may immediately posit is, well, how distinct are they?

One reason for the scholarly oversight of the Indian youth is that academics might have supposed that youthhood might not exist in the Indian context because this group regularly married or entered the employment market early. This logic holds, therefore, that they bypassed the "quarantine" of youth. Autobiographies, novels, official documents, and political pamphlets show that youth is indeed a life stage in India. My archival research immediately found that the category of youthhood provided the varied apparatus of the Government of India with an organising category that it used to structure movements and mobilisations during the decades before and after independence. Historians of childhood have nevertheless overlooked the post-childhood passage to adulthood as a distinctive life stage in the Indian context.

Historical understanding about the social body of the Indian youth cannot exist in a vacuum and the historical research into childhood provides the most appropriate scholarly arrival point for this investigation. These works collectively seek to understand the evolving conceptualisation of the child in the context of an emergent Indian modernity. As the late Satadru Sen described, "In India between the 1850s and the 1930s, the 'child' was re-examined and reinterpreted in the cultural and intellectual climate of colonialism. The 'new children' that emerged from these interrogations found various new uses in colonialist and nationalist projects".[43] The relationship between childhood and modernity has been extensively researched, yet the novel diffusion of norms relating to youth, which occurred with the colonial connection and the nationalist project, remain far less explored. Historians of Indian childhood have studied the shaping of the young Indian mind, the legal status of children, child marriage, educational institutions, and child criminality, and I will now explore each of these themes

Psychological themes pervaded early studies into Indian childhood. Sudhir Kakar explores what Freud called the "burden of culture", the cultural traditions that are internalized during childhood, in the Indian context.[44] He outlined the wide range of rituals involving children, designed to mark the stages of their spiritual advance as well as to ward off disease and evil spirits. He claims *Moksha, Karma* and *Dharma* are the three sanctioned patterns that allow one to makes sense of the inner experience of early life and, in doing so, he essentialises the male Brahmin child as the Indian child. Meanwhile, Ashis Nandy critiques the metaphorical use of childhood to rationalise imperialism. He foregrounds three understandings of the Indian child: the child as a reincarnation, especially of a parent; the male

---

[43] Sen, Satadru. 2012. "A Juvenile Periphery Childhood and Literature in Colonial Bengal. p.42. in *Disciplined Natives: Race, Freedom and Confinement in Colonial India*, edited by Satadru Sen. New Delhi: Primus Books
[44] Kakar, Sudhir. 1978. *The Inner World: A Psycho-analytic Study of Childhood and Society*. Oxford: Oxford University Press

child as a continuation of patriarchal lineage; and the child as a source of old-age insurance.[45] It is both a major and parochial enterprise to decipher Hindu identity formation during childhood, one with a clear danger of slipping into the territory of unfounded, sweeping, generalisation. Both Sudhir Kakar and Ashis Nandy are open to such accusations.

Education has been a key theme in the history of Indian childhood. Catriona Ellis argues that "despite the extensive literature on the history of education in colonial India, historians have confined their arguments to very narrow themes linked to colonial epistemological dominance and education as a means of control, resistance and dialogue".[46] Much of the historicization of education does not theorise about the life stage of Indian childhood, but there are notable works which do. Catriona Ellis studies the methodological challenge of agency by retrieving the child's memories of formal education in the Madras presidency.[47] Further, Karen Vallgårda examines the Danish Missionary Society schools, in order to bring to light the emotions and ideas invested in childhood by South Indians and Danes, particularly in light of global changes in perceptions of this life stage. [48] This literature reveals that education was a fractious site in which officials, teachers and missionaries socially constructed childhood and the colonial project itself. [49]

Scholarly work on the history of family, household and kinship in India is full of references to "child-brides" and "infant marriages", and scholars have explored the evolving legal status of the Indian child.[50] For instance, Ishita Pande has problematised the intertwining issues of child marriage, child rape and the introduction of contentious colonial era laws through an investigation into the Age of Consent Act 1891 and the Child Marriage Restraint Act 1929.[51] She claims the role of age was central to the construction of "legal subjectivities, colonial governmentality and humanitarian accounting in late colonial India".[52] I found that participation in post-colonial state-sponsored youth movements was

---

[45] Nandy, Ashis. 1984. "Reconstructing Childhood: A Critique of the Ideology." *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political* 10 (3): 359-375

[46] Ellis, Catriona. 2009. "Education for All: Reassessing the Historiography of Education in Colonial India." *History Compass* 7 (2): 363

[47] Ellis, Catriona. 2011. "'Snapshots' of the classroom: Autobiographies and the experience of elementary education in the Madras Presidency, 1882-1947." *Childhood* 18 (3): 384-401

[48] Vallgårda, Karen. 2004. *Imperial Childhoods and Christian Mission: Education and Emotions in South India and Denmark*. London: Palgrave Macmillan. Also see, Sudipa, Topdar. 2017. "The Corporeal Empire: Physical Education and Politicising Children's Bodies in Late Colonial Bengal." *Gender & History* 29 (1): 176-19

[49] Kumar, Krishna. 1991. *Political Agenda of Education: A Study of Colonialist and Nationalist ideas*. New Delhi: Sage Publications

[50] Sankar, Tanika. 2000. "A Prehistory of Rights: The Age of Consent Debate in Colonial Bengal." *Feminist Studies* 26 (3): 601–622; Kolsky, Elizabeth. 2010. "The Rule of Colonial Indifference: Rape on Trial in Early Colonial India, 1805–57." *The Journal of Asian Studies* 69 (4):1093-1117

[51] Pande, Ishita. 2013. "Sorting Boys and Men: Unlawful Intercourse, Boy Protection and Child Marriage Restraint Act in Colonial India." *Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* 6 (2): 314-340

[52] Pande, Ishita. 2012. "Coming of Age: Law, Sex and Childhood in Late Colonial India." *Gender & History* 24 (1): 205-230

often more related to belonging to the broader categories of youth, or student, and belonging to an educational institution rather than the precise numerical values and specificities of chronological age.

The terms Indian "vagrant", "orphan" and "juvenile" have featured in the literature on colonial childhoods in India.[53] Satadru Sen holds that because the figure of the "oriental child" was the product of the colonised it was construed to be (in Rudyard Kipling's words) "half devil and half child". His investigation into the discursive and cultural construction of Indian childhood in the "experimental zones" of schools, reformatories, and literature reveals that the metropolitan assumptions about Victorian childhood, its plasticity, and its innocence, were especially destabilised and fluid during the late colonial era.[54]

While hugely insightful, there are two issues with Sen's study. Firstly, Sen's central argument is that Indian childhood was produced in a "periphery" of "production zones at the edge of modernity". The scholar successfully places the colonial child within wider discourses and colonial power relations in the metropole and periphery. However, his inconsistent use of modernity undermines the "juvenile periphery" as a theoretical and conceptual tool. This is because he concurrently argues that childhood is produced at the edge of modernity, yet it was also central to and representative of colonial and nationalist modernity.

The second point of criticism is that Satadru Sen fails to define and distinguish between the institutionalised child and the juvenile youth. My research found that the colonial state in India did not classify children as juveniles and, therefore, it is clumsy to lump child criminals and child convicts together as "juveniles" simply to create an academic shorthand. To take one of Sen's own examples, the legislative council of late colonial era Madras defined a "child" as being under the age of fourteen and a "young person" was between fourteen and eighteen, but his research nevertheless conflates the two classifiable groups.[55] Multiple definitions of childhood and understandings of age prevailed in different provinces and disciplinary institutions, and this should be the starting point for investigations into childhood and youth. My finding is that the meanings and understandings of "youth" were rarely, if ever, fixed from one youth institution or youth movement to another.

---

[53] Arnold, David. 1979. "European orphans and vagrants in India in the Nineteenth century." *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History."* 7 (2): 104-127. Fischer-Tine, Harald. 2009. *Low and Licentious Europeans: Race, Class, and "White Subalternity" in Colonial India.* Hyderabad: Orient Black Swan.
[54] Sen, Satadru. 2005. *Colonial Childhoods: The Juvenile Periphery of India 1850-1945*. London: Anthem Press; Sen, Satadru. 2004. "Juvenile Periphery: The Geographies of Literary Childhood in Colonial Bengal." *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* 5 (1): 11- 26. Sen, Satadru. 2004. "A Separate Punishment: Juvenile Offenders in Colonial India." *The Journal of Asian Studies* 63 (1): 81-104
[55] Sen, Satadru. 2005. *Colonial Childhoods: The Juvenile Periphery of India 1850-1945* p.40

The literature on the history of Indian youth movements

An abundance of literature that locates the youth in other regions of the Global South has begun to emerge, but the history of the Indian youth remains almost entirely unwritten.[56] The second half of this literature review will explore the scholarly work on volunteer youth movements, social service movements, anti-colonial movements, and campus politics. These groups are precisely the antecedents to the movements and mobilisations this thesis explores, and some of them remained key actors in the post-colonial youth order.

Historians have investigated volunteer youth movements in colonial India. The Scouting movement, the Girl Guide movement and the YMCA have been the focus of scholarly attention, and I will explore each in turn. These works invariably construct a narrative about the ways these late-colonial era youth movements adopted "modernised" physical exercise schemes and the colonial state and nationalists alike sought to harness or feared the energies of the Indian youth.

Firstly, Carey Watt claims the rise of the early Indian Scouting movement was greeted with "colonial consternation" and fears about them becoming "seditious samitis".[57] He highlights the overlap between imperial social reformers and nationalist or Hindu reformers during the early Scouting movement. Their idealisation of the supple male body with "no showy muscles" contributed to the success of Scouting in the Indian population where questions of manliness, bodily culture, and physical cultures were prominent during the early 20th century.[58] Watt's work reveals the Scouting movement sought to construct "manly" bodies in colonial India, but there has also been a focus on how the Guides constructed a feminised physical culture.

Secondly, Kristine Alexander's study on the British, Canadian, and Indian Guide movements explores meanings of modern girlhood, gender, and empire during the 1920s and 1930s.[59] Alexander examines adult discourses about young women, social norms, and cultural change and how they interact with

---

[56] These works give a sense of the exciting way scholars have approached state-sponsored youth mobilisations and countercultures in Latin America and East Asia. See: Song, Mingwei. 2015. *Young China: National Rejuvenation and the Bildungsroman, 1900-1959*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. Chatani, Sayaka. 2018. *Nation-Empire: Ideology and Rural Youth Mobilization in Japan and Its Colonies*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. Barr-Melej, Patrick. 2020. *Psychedelic Chile: Youth, Counterculture, and Politics on the Road to Socialism and Dictatorship.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press. Pensado, Jaime M. 2013. *Rebel Mexico: Student Unrest and Authoritarian Political Culture During the Long Sixties.* Redwood City: Stanford University Press

[57] Watt, Carey. 2007. "The promise of 'character' and the spectre of sedition: The boy scout movement and colonial consternation in India, 1908–1921." *Journal of South Asian Studies* 22 (2): 37-62
[58] Watt, Carey. 2009. "'No Showy Muscles': the Boy Scouts and the Global Dimensions of Physical Culture and Bodily Health in Britain and Colonial India." pp. 121-143 In *Scouting Frontiers: Youth and the Scout Movement's First Century*
[59] Alexander, Kristine. 2018. *Guiding Modern Girls: Girlhood, Empire, and Internationalism in the 1920s and 1930s*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press

14

early 20th century debates about nationalism, physicality, and modernity. She argues the Guide lay at the centre of a "conservative modernity" which promoted a universal ideal of girlhood and emphasised similarity on the one hand yet underlined racial, class-based and gendered differences on the other.[60] Alexander interrogates the conflation of the "imperial" with the "international" and notes the ironic and paradoxical link between how these organisations ascribed, "children and youth with futurity and hope while describing huge swathes of the earth as Britain's possessions".[61]

This thesis will discuss the changing internationalism of the Bharat Scouts and Guides in chapter 4. I argue that the post-colonial leaders of the movement integrated themselves into the international Scouting organisations on far more egalitarian terms and they took advantage of the opportunities offered by the expanding Scouting internationalism to make India a prime space for international scouting activity. Moreover, my research explores the shifts in the Bharat Scouts and Guide's undergirding value system, promotion of novel forms of postcolonial nationalism, and social service activity during the decades following independence.

Thirdly, Harald Fischer-Tiné found the early American-dominated YMCA in India to be rife with imperial tropes or what he calls "somatic orientalism", predicated on the idea of a fundamental difference between Europeans and south Asians.[62] Describing a "pidginization" of its fitness regime, he argues the Y's sports agenda turned out to be far less American than its bridgeheads wanted and "sportified" versions of local games emerged instead.[63] He claims American YMCA secretaries stressed the scientific, liberal, and egalitarian character of their "physical programme" which offered an attractive alternative to the more "imperial sports" associated with the British.[64]

This literature on the Scouting movement, the Girl Guide movement, and the YMCA collectively reveals how ideas about building healthy bodies and strong characters could be interacted with sceptically by state officials, dovetail into the programmes of nationalists, and that local traditions of physicality shaped the emergence of colonial era youth movements. This literature, moreover, highlights how these physical fitness regimes that had their origins in colonial society were rooted in the reproduction of colonial difference. This PhD thesis will trace the evolution of state-sponsored discourses relating to physical education in the post-independence period and bring to light the ways state-sponsored youth movements sought to negotiate the physicality of youth. It will be argued that the varied apparatus of the Government of India idealised and promoted the "dignity of manual

---

[60] Ibid. p. 9
[61] Ibid. p. 5
[62] Fischer-Tiné, Harald. 2018. "Fitness for Modernity: the YMCA and physical education schemes in late colonial South Asia (c. 1900–1940)." *Modern Asian Studies* 53 (2): 512-559
[63] Ibid.
[64] Ibid.

labour" during the late 1940s and 1950s. Further, I will argue an imagery of a physicalised youth, as a student camper hard at labour on a development project or engaged in physical drill as a NCC cadet, for example, regularly came to be constructed as India's model citizen.

There has been academic research into the thriving social service movements in India during the late colonial period. Carey Watt highlights the "untidy overlap" between so-called "living traditions" such as a *dana, seva, karmayoga,* and *brahmacharya* and modern ideals about active citizenship, civil society, and healthy young bodies.[65] His exploration of the Arya Samaj, the Theosophical Society, the Seva Samiti, and the Servants of India reveals, "an expanding and growing culture of association provided important spaces through which great numbers of people — especially youth — entered into public life. This also encouraged a patriotic sense of civic engagement that was latently political". [66] These movements subscribed to ideas about the national inefficiency of youth, Hindu racial decline, and social Darwinism. This rich associational life enhanced the possibilities for sociability and facilitated the creation of cross-caste, cross-class, transregional and urban to rural solidarities. This sociability is evident in the youth movements and mobilisations that this PhD thesis explores, and my work seeks to foreground the unequal pathways of youthhood in independent India that prevailed, and the ways youths were included on unequal terms from these mobilisations and movements.

The studies that explore the youth political volunteer movements in colonial India are pertinent to this exploration of post-colonial youth movements and mobilisations. Franziska Roy and Raza Ali have examined the conceptualisation of youth military service that became an element of every political party in India after the First World War.[67] The most prominent paramilitary movements include the Seva Dal, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, the Khaksars, and the Muslim League National Guards. These youth movements of the 1930s and 1940s provided paramilitary training, offered social service, and performed violence in the public sphere, especially leading up to partition. Roy and Ali hold these organisations harboured "ambitions to create the ideal citizen soldier […] thereby reshaping notions of what the relationship between the state and the citizen ought to be".[68]

These scholars explore the *premise of youth- citizenship* in the colonial period, whereas this thesis will focus on the transition of the youth from subjecthood to citizenship that followed independence. These studies explore the earlier organisational (largely paramilitary) forms of Indian youth mobilisations that were adapted or discontinued with the onset of independence. This PhD thesis will trace some of the genealogical developments of the national youth movement in India into the post-colonial period. It will do this by bringing to light the paradoxical and distinctive idealisations about

---

[65] Watt, Carey. 2005. *Serving the Nation: Cultures of Service, Association, and Citizenship.* Oxford: Oxford University Press p.8
[66] Ibid.
[67] Raza, Ali and Franziska Roy. 2015. "Paramilitary Organisations in Interwar India." *Journal of South Asian Studies* 38 (4): 671-689
[68] Ibid.

16

the youth; the novel forms of collaboration between the Government of India and volunteer movements, and the state-sponsored postcolonial nationalism that these movements promoted.

There have been studies that explore the role of the Indian youth and youth movements in anti-colonial politics. These histories collectively reveal the student and youth loomed large in the minds of nationalist leaders and colonial officials because of their potential and actual role in the freedom struggle. While relevant to this study of post-colonial Indian youth movements, they do not explicitly seek to write a history of Indian youth or take this category as the principal object of their enquiry. These studies include that by Durba Ghosh which has explored "Bhadralok dacoits" in colonial Bengal and how the wider anti-colonial youth movement began with a small number of Bengali terrorists using assassinations, armed robberies, and other violent methods to force the British out of India.[69] Meanwhile, Chris Moffat has written an account of Bhagat Singh and traces the revolutionary promise of his "afterlife" as the ideal youthful revolutionary in today's India.[70]

Kama Maclean holds that the appeal of Bhagat Singh and his fellow revolutionaries to "the inchoate body referred to as 'the youth movement'" stemmed largely from their "alienation and impatience".[71] She foregrounds violent youth activism in provoking colonial responses and makes the argument that this introduced urgency into the project of constitutional reform within the Indian National Congress.[72] Franziska Roy and Benjamin Zachariah uncover the state's (disproportionate) fear of losing control of youths and students and the state's repressive reaction to leftist students throughout the 1920s and the early 1930s.[73]

These works that explore aspects of political youth movements in India reveal that there was a far-reaching injection of radicalised youth into the larger freedom struggle especially after the events of 1919 that continued until the 1940s, yet these works invariably draw to a close in 1947 as if political youth movements cease with independence. These studies can be critiqued, moreover, for generally extrapolating the experiences of freedom fighters to the entire social body of youth and constructing an uncomplicated narrative about the freedom struggle being a collective period of political "storm and stress" in line with the flawed Rousseauean-Hall paradigm discussed earlier in this chapter. These scholars do not adequately disaggregate the political attitudes of youths or consider the numerous

---

[69] Ghosh, Durba. 2017. *Gentlemanly Terrorists: Political Violence and the Colonial State in India, 1919-1947.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

[70] Moffat, Chris. 2020. *India's Revolutionary Inheritance Politics and the Promise of Bhagat Singh.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

[71] Maclean, Kama. 2015. *A Revolutionary History of Interwar India: Violence, Image, Voice and Text.* Oxford: Oxford University Press pp. 5-6

[72] Ibid.

[73] Roy, Franziska and Benjamin Zachariah. 2013. "Meerut and a Hanging: "Young India," Popular Socialism, and the Dynamics of Imperialism." *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 33 (3): 360-377

pathways to adulthood that prevailed, a great many of which did not involve participation in political volunteer bodies.

The field of scholarship concerned with the history of students in India is modest but growing. An earlier generation of scholars offered historical accounts of the features of Indian higher education and narratives of student resistance against the British Raj.[74] A recent special issue of the South Asia Multidisciplinary Academic Journal (SAMAJ) represented an important coming together of scholars covering the youths' experiments with campus-based politics in Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan.[75] Defining the boundaries and giving direction to the field, the key contribution of this special issue was to put forward the concept of *generational communities* to denote the "partly ascriptive, partly self-selected communities in which a set of networked and youthful cohorts are engaged, directly or indirectly with formal or informal education", and this thesis's exploration of student movements will use this conceptual framework to draw the parameters of what constitutes a student movement.[76] This thesis makes a contribution to the field of the history of students through an examination of the AISF and the AIYF. I bring to light the communist students' political protests and critiques of their country's government and make the case they represented a dramatic symbol of oppositional politics from the mid-1930s to the late-1960s.

Studies associated with the history of students in India have included works that explore student radicalism in Kolkata and in Delhi University, the Indian Coffee House as a site of student resistance, and the way students and labourers worked together as a pressure group.[77] There has, moreover, been work that has explored the 1960s and 1970s through the lens of a variety of social movements such as the Naxalite Movement, the Navnirman Andolan, the Dalit Panthers and agrarian political movements. These studies are not concerned with state-sponsored movements or mobilisations, nor do they necessarily take the youth or the student as their principal vehicle of exploration (rather their focus is on, say, the campus, the city the coffee house, or identity politics).[78]

---

[74] Hazary, Subas Chandra. 1987. *Student Politics in India*. New Delhi: South Asia Books. Altbach, Phillip G. 1968. *Turmoil and Transition: Higher Education and Student Politics in India*. New York: Basic Books

[75] Martelli, Jean-Thomas and Kristina Garalyté. 2009. "Student Politics in South Asia" *South Asia Multidisciplinary Academic Journal* [henceforth *SAMAJ*] (22) (https://journals.openedition.org/samaj/6486) Accessed: 01/04/2020

[76] Martelli, Jean-Thomas and Kristina Garalyté. 2019. "Generational Communities: Student Activism and the Politics of Becoming in South Asia", *SAMAJ* (22) (https://journals.openedition.org/samaj/6486) Accessed: 01/04/2020

[77] Plys, Kristin Victoria Magistrelli. 2020. *Brewing Resistance: Indian Coffee House and the Emergency in Postcolonial India.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Rudolph, Lloyd. 1987. *In Pursuit of Lakshmi: The Political Economy of the Indian State.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp.290- 312. Samaddar, Ranabir. 2018. "Student Radicalism in Kolkata and the Occupation of College." *Slavic Review* 77 (4): 904-911. Oommen, T. K. 1974. "Student Politics in India: The Case of Delhi University." *Asian Survey* 14 (9): 777-794

[78] Samaddar, Ranabir. 2018. *From Popular Movements to Rebellion: The Naxalite Decade*. London: Routledge. Varshney, Ashutosh. 1995. *Democracy, Development, and the Countryside: Urban-Rural Struggles in India.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Bhagat-Ganguly, Varsha. 2014 "Revisiting the Nav Nirman Andolan

The history of leisure is a vast and complex field that contains within it a few notable works that theorise about leisure activities and the Indian youth and, therefore, overlaps with the historiography of this social group. In terms of film, Kaushik Bhaumik's far-reaching article on youth culture and Bombay cinema in the 1920s argues that bohemian "cultures of the young" pushed the growth of the Indian public sphere, and I endorse his argument that the habits and activities of the young are significant for understanding the cultural developments of India.[79] In terms of travel, Nandini Chandra's exploration of Hindi-language children's journals in the late colonial period reveals a "nationalist pedagogy" that sought to negotiate "disciplined tourists, and to orient them towards a love of the country and the rural in tandem with a reformist nationalist agenda".[80] In a similar vein, in chapter 5, this thesis will argue that The Youth Hostel Association (YHAI) of India sought to orient this social group towards a love of Indian nature and rural life. The YHAI had a nation-building character that promoted an Indianness based on a love of the Indian countryside and rural life and orientated youths towards what I term postcolonial romantic nationalism.

On youth advertisements and consumption, Douglas Haynes reveals that vernacular capitalist firms targeted sex-related advertisements to young Indian men during the late colonial period and locates these within the contemporary discourse on *Brahmacharya*.[81] The Modern Girl Around the World Research Group takes the heuristic category of the "modern girl" to provide a means to identify commonalities of gendered modernity and its relationship to consumption in India and elsewhere.[82] I agree that advertisements offer a unique keyhole into the shifting consumption practises and attitudes of youthful consumers. They give insights into the evolution of the youth cultural order of consumption, media constructions or depictions of youthhood and how capitalist actors sought to negotiate the youth market. This thesis will contribute to the literature on leisure by illuminating the ways the varied apparatus of the Government of India sought to mould how this social group spent their free time during the early post-colonial period. I will argue they promoted novel forms and functions of postcolonial nationalist cultural politics through the sponsoring of a national hostel association, non-curricula competition, and films of the highbrow variety.

---

of Gujarat." *Sociological Bulletin* 63 (1): 95-112. Contursi, Janet A. 1993 "Political Theology: Text and Practice in a Dalit Panther Community." *The Journal of Asian Studies* 52 (2): 320-339

[79] Bhaumik, Kaushik. 2010. "At Home in the World: Cinema and Cultures of the Young in Bombay in the 1920s." pp.136-155 *In Towards a History of Consumption in South Asia*, edited by Douglas Haynes, Abigail McGowan, Tirthankar Roy and Haruka Yanagisawa. New Delhi: Oxford University Press

[80] Chandra, Nandini. 2007. "The Pedagogic Imperative of Travel Writing in the Hindi World: Children's Periodicals (1920-1950)." *Journal of South Asian Studies* 30 (2): 293-325

[81] Haynes, Douglas. 2010. "Creating the Consumer: Advertising, Capitalism and the Middle Classes in Urban Western India, 1914-1940." p.186 in *Towards a History of Consumption in South Asia,* edited by Haynes et al. New Delhi: Oxford University Press

[82] Barlow, T. E., M. Yue Dong, U. G. Poiger, P. Ramamurthy, L. M. Thomas, and A. Eve Weinbaum. 2005. "The Modern Girl around the World: A Research Agenda and Preliminary Findings." *Gender and History* 17 (2): 245-294

The history of the Indian youth remains largely unwritten. The challenge of deciphering the history of youth is multifaceted: it requires the identification and classification of a variety of sources, such as youth magazines or official documents, from which a historical narrative can be constructed; the articulation of connections between political, cultural, and economic processes; an interrogation of the reformulations of the social space that youths occupied; and an investigation into the changing discourses and idealisations of this social categorisation. This study has attempted these tasks, and by centring the category of Indian youth, and their state-sponsored and student-led movements and mobilisations, it will provide a starting point for future scholarly investigations into the history of a social group that makes up more than half of India today. This PhD thesis is, therefore, foremost an attempt to put forward insights and theories about the history of Indian youth and the history of post-colonial India, and the five key arguments of this PhD thesis will now be outlined.

Arguments of the PhD Thesis

1.   The Indiscipline of Youth

Underpinning all these youth movements and mobilisations was a discursive critique that imagined the collective behaviour of this social group as falling well below what was expected of them. The undisciplined Indian youth is key for understanding the early post-colonial period because politicians, officials, academics, activists, and journalists invested into this figure their anxieties about the long-term future of the newly established nation-state. Unless this crisis of youth could be remedied, the narrative went, then the potential of Indian independence and its first generation of citizens could not be realised. This imagery was tied up with cycles of student unrest, but this discursive formation was often extended to include the entire social body of Indian youths.

Humayun Kabir, a renowned poet, novelist, educationist, and politician, was the Education Advisor to the Government of India tasked with analysing and making recommendations on the unrest and indiscipline of students and youths in early post-colonial India. His report on the matter was approved by Maulana Abdul Kalam and the Central Advisory Board of Education, and summing up the problem, he wrote in 1953,

> There have recently been some instances of grave indiscipline among students that have
> attracted the attention of national leaders as well as educationists at all levels. In some cases,
> things have gone so far that the teachers in schools or invigilators have been attacked. In
> others, there have been clashes with the police or sections of the public. *Apart from such*

extreme examples of indiscipline, there has been a spirit of general turbulence and rebellion among large sections of the younger generation.[83]

Kabir's comments about the Indian youth's engagement in "rebellion" and their "spirit of general turbulence" dovetails with the contemporary "storm and stress" conceptualisations of youth, outlined earlier in my "Defining Youth" section. Indeed, this discourse about the indiscipline of youth in the decades following independence fed into the emergent notion that this group was somehow pre-inclined and predisposed to undisciplined behaviour. Moreover, this was a top-down and national discourse and those who propagated it rarely attempted to spatially differentiate the country. As one US scholar studying this phenomenon during the first half of the 1960s, Joseph Di Bona, noted, "with rare exceptions, evaluations do not deal with specific cases, concrete in time and place, but attempt to relate the phenomenon to a general understanding of Indian society".[84] He added, revealing the scope of this discourse, "[i]n India no subject has been of more compelling public concern than indiscipline among college and university students".[85]

The implication is not that this behavioural phenomenon is "real" nor that it did not exist, or that these concerns were irrational or not genuine, but that this is a paramount discursive "representation" essential to understanding the history of Indian youth and the social landscape of independent India. As Benjamin Zachariah states, "whether politicians or ideologues believe what they say is often beside the point. Ideas which form the basis of the accepted political rhetoric of public arenas are ideas which define the boundaries of publicly acceptable political behaviour […] This creates the basis for public debate".[86] This study similarly takes language as the constitutive component of social reality through an exploration of the discursive meanings attached to the social body of Indian youth.

One question to ask is, did this discourse about the indiscipline of youth emerge in the independence-era or did it exist in the colonial period? The answer to this question is that this discourse at hand was not a direct continuation of one that existed in the colonial period, but it did have antecedents, and colonial era nationalists expressed similar sentiments that overlapped with the ones that shall be explored throughout this thesis. For example, the Mahatma's attitudes towards *brahmacharya* and his ascribing of life-giving power to semen constitute a Gandhian social construction of sexual discipline.[87] Moreover, Gandhi claimed, for instance, that the masses must maintain discipline to achieve *swaraj* and infamously responded to the violence of Chauri Chaura by suspending the Non-

---

[83] Kabir, Humayun. 1955. *Student Indiscipline.* Delhi: Albion Press, p.1. Italics added for affect.
[84] Di Bona, Joseph. 1966. "Indiscipline and Student Leadership in an Indian University." *Comparative Education Review* 10 (2): 306
[85] Ibid. p.306

[86] Zachariah, Benjamin. 2005. *Developing India: An Intellectual and Social History, c. 1930-50.* Oxford: Oxford University Press p.6
[87] Alter, Joseph. 2000.*Gandhi's Body: Sex, Diet, and the Politics of Nationalism.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press pp. 3-28

Cooperation Movement in February 1922. In July 1929, Gandhi declared that he did not see "the discipline required for him to lead a movement on his terms".[88]

Leading freedom fighters expressed their anxieties that youths were not sufficiently disciplined to advance the freedom struggle during the interwar years. Motilal Nehru wrote in 1929: "we are living in critical times and the youth of the country are our only hope, but that hope rests entirely on their strict sense of discipline".[89] According to Jawaharlal Nehru, during the Civil Disobedience Movement, a great many volunteers "had little discipline and there was no uniformity in their training and their organisation".[90] Franziska Roy, crucially, makes the point that the "youth" and the "volunteer" were almost entirely synonymous and interchangeable in nationalist and government correspondence.[91] A additional point to make with regard to earlier and alternative usages, is that "discipline" was used in other contexts by government officials and nationalist politicians, such as in relation to the army and wider society, but the point is it was most associated in public discourse with the younger generation.

There are a few key differences between the early and later usages of this categorisation of the youth as undisciplined. Firstly, underlying the indiscipline of youth during the colonial era was the idea and feeling that youths would not and could not adequately follow the political instructions and methods of revolt set out by the leadership of the mainstream nationalist movement. Following 1947, however, the employment of some methods of political struggle (a great many of which had previously been legitimate during the colonial era) came to be seen as undisciplined behaviour. Secondly, there was a greater preoccupation and proliferation of writings and speeches in official circles about the indiscipline of youth and this "problem" began to feature more prominently in policy planning. Thirdly, there was a greater academicization of this idea following independence and increased efforts to understand this indiscipline as a social phenomenon with causes and remedies.[92] Therefore, this discourse took on a novel and distinctive shape during the initial years following Indian independence in 1947, crystallised during the early 1950s, and there was a continued build-up of public concern that lasted throughout the 1960s. That is not to suggest that this discourse dissipated then, but it will be left to other scholars to chart its history beyond this.

Student indiscipline is the theme of an article by Dipesh Chakrabarty, and he holds the efforts to discipline young citizens in the early post-colonial period ran against what constituted the political in

---

[88] Maclean, Kama. 2015. *A Revolutionary History of Interwar India* p.154
[89] Ibid. p.157
[90] Ibid. p.214
[91] Roy, Franziska. 2019. "International Utopia and National Discipline: Youth and Volunteer Movements in Interwar South Asia." pp.155-56
[92] For a greater outline of the history of the academicisation of this idea, See: Dutt, T. K. 1966. *The Revolt of Indian Students: Discussing Students' Unrest, Its Causes and Remedial Measures.* New Delhi: Nehru Foundation. Krishna Rao, G.P. 1955. "Problem of Student Discipline" *The Indian Journal of Social Work* 16 (3): 176-191

colonial India: that is, cycles of popular and nationalist mass-mobilisations in opposition to colonial rule (followed by acts of retribution by the British who sought to assert colonial sovereignty). [93] He argues that what was considered indiscipline in the 1950s has become accepted as normal popular politics in contemporary India. Chakrabarty writes, "how Nehru and his like came to *lose this debate* is a complex history that has not been researched yet".[94] This wider history on the debates about post-colonial youths and students is precisely one of this PhD's principal focuses. I would contend, contrary to Chakrabarty, that those who devoted time and energy to the youth problem did not consciously believe they were "losing the debate" or were unsuccessful in their endeavours. Moreover, a sceptical student of history may legitimately question his drawing of a straight line between forms of protests by youths in the 1950s and contemporary Indian politics today.[95]

Lloyd Rudolph claims that the rate of "student indiscipline", which he takes as an indicator of the mobilisation of this "class", was still rising at the beginning of the 80s.[96] He charts the rise of student "unrest" and "indiscipline", through quantitative measurement, in the period after Nehru's death where this study broadly begins to terminate, claiming, "the incidence of student agitations and violence rose steadily throughout the 1960s, accelerated exponentially after the fourth general election in 1967 to a crescendo in 1974, the year before the emergency, receded with the emergency, rose to new heights in the late 1970s, and remained high in the early 1980s".[97] He claimed the rapid expansion of higher education without regard to adequate resources, coupled with the consequently low prospects associated with attending these universities, created an even more "undisciplined" body of educated youth in independent India.

I would dispute Rudolph's claim that, "students, including educated unemployed youth […] caught the country's attention in the mid- and late 1960s, when student 'unrest' and 'indiscipline' began to affect state and national politics".[98] I would state that the "problem" of youth indiscipline caught the country's attention in the early 1950s as a variety of adult actors began claiming that student unrest was unbefitting for a young nation-state and took this social group as the target object of a range of youth welfare policies that will be explored in the subsequent chapters. The early history and origins of this discourse, which Rudolph overlooks, and Chatterjee fails to historicise, will be charted in this chapter, in addition to the broad range of youth welfare policies that sought to socially regulate the next generation of citizens. Another intervention into the study of youth indiscipline, Franziska Roy has highlighted that the principal purpose of interwar youth volunteer movements was to inculcate

---

[93] Chakrabarty, Dipesh. 2007. "'In the Name of Politics': Democracy and the Power of the Multitude in India." *Public Culture* 19 (1): 35–57
[94] Ibid. p.55. Italics added for affect.
[95] Ibid.
[96] Rudolph, Lloyd. 1987. *In Pursuit of Lakshmi*

[97] Ibid. p. 299
[98] Ibid. p.291

"discipline" in youths.[99] Roy, however, uses the word "discipline" to denote the physical drill and uniform and other features of the paramilitary movement but does not specifically explore its shifting meaning and significance of the phrase in the ideological formations of these volunteer movements.

2.   The State-organised Youth Sector

The varied apparatus of the Government of India sought to coordinate and direct the post-colonial youth order, but these efforts did not amount to an attempt to take it over. I will argue that a state-sponsored youth sector emerged in the post-colonial period and its role as the bureaucratic guarantor of the provision of youth services increased during the period at hand. Government departments launched new youth movements and the Five-Year Plans sponsored mobilisations that sought to harness and channel the voluntary efforts of youths. Endeavours emanating from the state intertwined with and sought to collaborate and complement the efforts of civil society (in addition to international society), and the boundaries between them were fuzzy. I may refer to specific movements as state-sponsored to denote their relationship to the Government of India, but I refer to the collective of these movements as the state-organised youth sector.

The upper echelons of the bureaucracy held it to be especially vital to avoid the duplication of the provision of youth schemes, training, and welfare programmes because of the miniscule resources of the Government of India. Therefore, this web of youth movements was never envisioned as catering for all youths. As Gulzarilal Nanda, leader of the Bharat Sevak Samaj and twice acting Prime Minister of India, noted, the "resources of the Government, both at the centre and in the states […] are so meagre […] it would not be feasible for years to meet even a fraction of the demand in respect of the range of services which a welfare state is called upon to perform".[100]

This hotchpotch of interlacing and centrally coordinated youth movements, state-sponsored to differing degrees and different in size, says something about the larger issues of state formation and modern Indian society. That is, it reveals that the state-sponsored initiatives in many instances sought to foster the efforts of civil society rather than marginalise them, as the scholarship that will imminently be explored has often claimed. It also shows that state-civil society relations were very often distinguished by an attempt to work together. The example of the Labour and Social Service Camp movement, which will be explored in chapter 3, provides one example of the blurry state-civil society relationship. Funded by the Five-Year Plans, the quasi-state NCC and the BSS ran the youth camps on the ground with their societal counterparts the Bharat Scouts and Guides, and alongside

---

[99] Roy, Franziska. 2019. "International Utopia and National Discipline: Youth and Volunteer Movements in Interwar South Asia." pp. 150–87

[100] Public Cooperation for National Development – Bharat Sevak Samaj, 1952, Ministry of States, 33/ (28) /Economic, 1952, NAI

universities. That is, a uniformed and militaristic mobilisation of youth sponsored by the Department of Defence, the NCC, the Planning Commission's volunteering arm, the BSS, a freshly amalgamated volunteer youth movement with a record of eschewing anti-British politics, the Bharat Scouts and Guides, and the rapidly expanding network of universities, together, delivered the Nehruvian-era camp movement.

The process of building new youth movements was generally more driven by state or quasi-state actors, which coalesced together to initiate novel and distinctive organisations, yet which also sought to complement existing volunteer-led youth movements. Their establishment was invariably rooted in an attempt to plug gaps where society was "lacking" or because the movement served a distinctive need of the nation-state. One way of visualising this cluster of intertwined organisations, centrally coordinated and state-sponsored to differing degrees, that I explore, is to understand it as a *post-colonial archipelago of youth movements.* That is, these youth movements can be seen as islands within a larger ocean. They are different in size, their mass can change with time, sometimes the boundaries between them were shallow and barely distinguishable, and the archipelago is some distance from being connected with neighbouring clusters of land that i.e., other national youth movements.

Partha Chatterjee's theory of the "passive revolution", whereby the space which was occupied by civil society institutions in the colonial era comes to be taken over by institutions of political society with a close affiliation with the state, has some utility here, and he rightly highlights the role of the state as "autonomous" and "directing".[101] This PhD's exploration of the youth sector adds a layer of complexity by making the case that the state sought to work together with societal efforts. Rather than a process of "etatisme", as he calls it, here, the civil society institutions, in addition to institutions with a close affiliation with the state, powerfully overlapped and the boundaries between the two were blurry and distinguished by fluidity.[102] To that extent, the concept of a state-organised youth sector best captures the process of organising the post-colonial youth order.

Scholars have produced an idea about a preeminent state that thwarted the efforts of civil society, but these descriptions do not necessarily capture the post-colonial youth order. Sudipta Kaviraj does not even allow for the existence of a civil society in India. He begins at a radical starting point that in independent India, "the state became omnipresent, since it was performing functions left to the institutions of civil society" and it was "wholly monological […] and unresponsive to public sensitivity".[103]

---

[101] Chatterjee, Partha. 1986. *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, see chapter 5
[102] Ibid. p.132
[103] Kaviraj, Sudipta. 2010. *The Imaginary Institution of India: Politics and Ideas*. New York: Columbia University Press p. 25

An earlier generation of scholars concerned with the Indian state, civil society and development constructed a caricature of a top-down, state-led, and botched post-colonial development programme that was embodied by the supposedly omnipresent first Prime Minister of India Jawaharlal Nehru.[104] This earlier generation of scholars neglected the ways the development apparatus could instigate forms of bottom-up popular participation and was driven by the channels of society. Scholars have more recently begun to deconstruct what Daniel Immerwahr calls their "modernization comes to town" narratives that overlook smaller-scale and community-based approaches to development.[105] They have sought to disaggregate the Indian state, and this is consistent with Fred Cooper's call to analyse concrete historical instances of development rather than creating "generalizations" and "metacritique".[106]

3.   The Nation-State, Postcolonial Nationalism, and the Indian Youth as the Model Indian Citizen

The youth movements and mobilisations that will be explored had a comprehensive nation-state building character. From the British Raj era Bharat Scouts and Guides to the Nehruvian period BSS, the movements I explore represented an ongoing exercise in building national youth institutions that sought to tie future citizens to a nation-state identity. Each of these organisations laid emphasis on their representative nature, diversity-promoting functionality and made a claim to express the cultural diversity of the country. They promoted anti-casteism, secularism, developmentalism, and a historicization of the freedom struggle that emphasised the sacrifice of youths. In something akin to what Benedict Anderson calls a "gauge and emblem" relationship, because these youth movements were designed to give a visual display of and imbue into their participants the forms and functions of postcolonial nationalism, these young citizens became the idealised social servant of the post-colonial nation-state.[107]

Srirupa Roy has explored the ways the entity of the Indian nation-state assumed its form, authority, and meaning, and makes the case that state institutions, structures, and agents have been the ones

---

[104] Frankel, Francine R. 2006. *India's Political Economy: The Gradual Revolution 1947-2004*. Oxford: Oxford University press, 2nd edition. Chatterjee, Partha. 1999. "Development Planning and the Indian State." In *State and Politics in India*, edited by Partha Chatterjee. Oxford: Oxford University Press

[105] Immerwahr, Daniel. 2015. *Thinking Small: Modernization, Development and Community*. Massachusetts: Harvard University Press p.13. Also see: Sherman, Taylor. 2016. "A Gandhian answer to the threat of communism? Sarvodaya and postcolonial nationalism in India." *Indian Economic and Social History Review* 53 (2): 249-270. Siegel, Benjamin. 2015. "'Self-Help which Ennobles a Nation': Development, citizenship, and the obligations of eating in India's austerity years" *Modern Asian Studies* 50 (3): 975-1018

[106] Cooper, Frederick. 2010. "Writing the History of Development." *Journal of Modern European History* 8 (1): 5-23

[107] Anderson, Benedict. 1991. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso pp. 6–7

promoting postcolonial nationalism in India, albeit often in a muddled and sometimes futile way.[108] The actors that led and made up these youth movements under study also provide examples of the cultural and symbolic forms and practises of postcolonial nationalism. The archives utilised allow us to gather not only the ways the nation-state sought to negotiate, as Srirupa Roy writes, "citizens as spectators of their nation, their state, and their ideal selves", but specifically how youths themselves practised their citizenship and nation-state building.[109] This PhD will explore the post-colonial reorientation of the mobilisational energies of Indian youths, a larger project to transform undisciplined youths into obedient citizens, to bring to light this social group's role in the discourses and practices of nation-state building.

The Indian youth had a symbolic relationship to the imagining of the wholeness of the nation-state, a great future role assigned to them, and became associated with concepts of hope in the post-colonial world. From the First Kashmir War to the Kumbh Melas to the Kosi River project, the young citizen and their mobilisational energies in development, social service and defence became a visual and metaphorical embodiment of the ideals of the nation-state. A great many Indian youths were expected to give up their evenings each week and their summer holidays to participate in these programmes. In exchange, they received not only a subsidized or free uniform, train fares, and lodgings at camps, but he (and the figure was far more frequently male than female) became the model Indian citizen who embodied the nation-state ideologies of physical fitness, secularism, anti-casteism and national discipline. There has been historical work on *Bharat Mata* or Mother India, but how the youth became a unifying symbol for the country's diverse communities has been overlooked by scholars.[110]

As it had during the colonial era, the post-childhood passage to adulthood continued to be imagined as a stage of life for voluntarily and enthusiastically participating in social service activity. R. Srivatsan notes, in the Indian context, the term "service", historically speaking, has an alias of *seva* and is conceptually equivalent to charitable service.[111] This PhD will argue the Indian Scout, to take one example, was depicted as having a youthful urge to devote himself to the service of others and applauded as a duty-oriented model citizen who would instinctively go beyond reasonable expectation, even putting himself in danger, to work for the standing of his country and to serve others. He is designated as having agency to make a difference through his roles as volunteer, healthy citizen, and an agent of social service.

---

[108] Roy, Srirupa. 2007. *Beyond Belief: India and the Politics of Postcolonial Nationalism.* Durham: Duke University Press
[109] Ibid. p.104
[110] Ramaswamy, Sumathi. 2010. *The Goddess and the Nation: Mapping Mother India.* Durham: Duke University Press. Kaviraj, Sudipta. 2005. "On The Enchantment of the State: Indian thought on the role of the state in the narrative of modernity." *European Journal of Sociology* 46 (2): 263-296
[111] Srivatsan, R. 2014. *Seva, Saviour and State*. New Delhi: Routledge p.2

The imagery of the Indian youth determined to defend their threatened nation-state similarly came to be constructed as a model citizen. My exploration in chapter 6 of the civil defence campaign run by communist students belonging to the AISF during the Second World War reveals that the Indian male student was held to be the ideal form of the air raid warden. Underlying this representation was the idea that the Indian youth was distinctly passionate and especially willing to sacrifice their leisure and study time for India's defence. Similarly, in the years following independence, officials, academics, and politicians regularly described cadets from the newly created NCC as "assets to the nation" and these marching and beret-fashioning youths would be showcased at Independence Day Parades, at Kumbh Melas and to villages during their camps.[112]

In sum, the Indian youth was depicted as a national allegory for the developmentalist and defensive potential of the nation-state and a representation of the wholeness of the country. But, on the other hand, as outlined in the first argument of this section, the collective behaviour of this social group was imagined as falling well below what was expected of them following the ousting of the British. My arguments about the symbolism of the Indian youth, therefore, draw attention to the paradoxical meanings invested into this life stage.

4.   The Unequal Pathways of Indian Youth

I will explore the unequal pathways of youthhood in independent India and the ways youths were included on unequal terms in these mobilisations and movements. A double tier system of Indian youthhood permeated each of the spaces I have explored: one programme and ideology for the privileged few and another for the uneducated masses prevailed in late colonial and post-colonial India. The state-organised youth sector overwhelmingly focused on students rather than non-educated and rural youths, and it was intended for the country's future intelligentsia, although this imperative lessened throughout the period at hand. The central argument here is that there was a differentiated and uneven inclusion of rural youth, women, and Dalits because their (more limited) participation was often accompanied by a patriarchal and patronising reproduction of their "traditional" roles in the discourses. A tension lay at the heart of these movements and mobilisations that I call the *conservative progressivism of independent India*. That is, the Indian youth was expected to embody the congress imbued "progressive" values of secularism and anti-casteism through their social service, physical training, and public activity, but they were also expected to conform to the social and political norms of the colonial era, which reproduced social divisions amongst India's young citizenry.

---

[112] Proposal from G.G. Bevoor, Director of NCC. He claimed that NCC cadets were "asset to the nation". In Military Education in Universities Suggestion for Improvement, 1953, Ministry of Education, D3/F-55-69, NAI

A significant body of scholarship on citizenship has highlighted its differentiated legalistic conceptualisation, the settlement of refugees, the making of the citizen-refugee, and the way constitution-making included the poorer sections of society.[113] Anupama Roy brings to light the idealisation of Indian citizenship as a levelling mechanism but highlights the legalistic recognition of difference that has prevailed in post-colonial India.[114] Partha Chatterjee argues that poor citizens operate in the realm of political society, made up of "disturbed zones of citizenship", rather than the space of civil society where a modern-liberal democratic citizenship can play out.[115] These movements and mobilisations I will explore sought to absorb this huge category of Indian youths into the rank of citizens and this PhD thesis will explore the myriad, unequal and contested ways in which democratic citizenship in India was practised amongst the youth.

These movements and mobilisations negotiated a hierarchy of youth citizenship that simultaneously challenged and reproduced urban-rural, male-female and caste-based points of social difference, and I will now briefly unpack each of these in turn. Firstly, these movements and mobilisations generally placed the onus to develop the rural youth and their village onto the student because of their superior education. They reveal the educated youth was the agent of development and the villager the object of development. A dialectical friction arose, proceeding from the paradoxical meanings invested into this life stage, that served to include on different terms the urban and rural youth from the post-colonial nation-state project at the same time. The social body of Indian youth was simultaneously held to be educated and uneducated, governable and ungovernable, undisciplined and disciplinable, strong and physically weak, hard at work for the development of India or in need of being developed. There was, however, a broad shift towards a less objectifying depiction of rural youths during the period at hand and a limited amount of agency was increasingly recognised for them in the process of development.

Secondly, in the post-colonial era youth movements and mobilisations I will explore, there is an inclusion of Dalits in the discourse, though it is limited, and there is evidence that it often did not amount to physical participation in a meaningful way.[116] The attempts of the movements that I explore to emancipate and empower Dalits simultaneously represented a reproduction of what Jon Lawrence calls a conservative modernity that reproduced "entrenched ideas about supposedly natural social

---

[113] For each of these themes, in turn, see: Jayal, Niraja Gopal. 2013. *Citizenship and Its Discontents: An Indian History.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press. Zamindar, Vazira Fazila-Yacoobali. 2010. *The Long Partition and the Making of Modern South Asia Refugees, Boundaries, Histories*. New York: Columbia University Press. Shani, Ornit. 2017. *How India Became Democratic: Citizenship and the Making of the Universal Franchise.* Cambridge University Press: Cambridge

[114] Roy, Anupama. 2010. *Mapping Citizenship in India.* New Delhi: Oxford University Press

[115] Chatterjee, Partha. 1997. "Beyond the Nation? Or Within?" *Economic and Political Weekly* 32 (1): 30-34. Chatterjee, Partha. 2004. *The Politics of the Governed: Reflections on Popular Politics in Most of the World.* New York: Columbia University Press

[116] Watt, Carey. 2005. *Serving the Nation: Cultures of Service, Association, and Citizenship* p.8

hierarchies".[117] I have always attempted to listen to the experiences and voices of young Dalits throughout my investigation, even if one cannot often hear them. However, the stigma of caste, unlike differences based on rurality or gender, is a social reality far less well-voiced in the official archives of the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s or, when it is voiced, it tends to be the caste-Hindu conceptualisation of "youth" that is articulated.

Thirdly, in terms of gender, these movements and mobilisations reflected a dramatic change to the idea of what young woman could do, and should be, in newly independent India. They provided a generally diminutive, relative to their male counterparts at least, yet ever-increasing throughout this period, number of young women with opportunities to participate in Indian public life. On the other hand, they simultaneously fostered a gendered allocation of work and remade the young women's domesticity. They bring to light the circumscribed and conditional freedom which was a social reality for a great many young women in early post-colonial India. Deeming it incompatible with the role of women, many families did not permit their daughters to participate in extracurricular activities. The Defence Minister, for example, did not even introduce an initial target of strength for the girls' division of the NCC in 1948 because he predicted parents would have a prejudice against a movement dedicated to building up the physique of young women.[118]

These movements promoted two basic and conflicting idealisations of the young woman during the early independence period. She was paradoxically, on the one hand, trained to fill her newly expanded role in India's public life but, on the other, trained for and imagined in her domestic role. The "good" female citizen had an independent mind and was encouraged to find her voice, but she had to simultaneously uphold her housekeeping, maternal responsibilities, and matrimonial capacities. She was imagined exercising her rights and duties that accompanied independence, yet her traditional and domestic role conflicted with fulfilling these. The young woman was expected to challenge the social and political norms that kept women back in India, but simultaneously she was encouraged to conform to patriarchal power structures that were themselves being rearranged and recast. The historian of Guiding Kristine Alexander's notion of a "conservatively modern ideal of the girlhood", that combines "an older emphasis on maternalism and domesticity with an emphasis on bravery, independence, and female masculinity" resonates with my idea that conflicting conceptions of female youthhood were embedded into the political discourses.[119]

5.   Internationalism, Integrationalism and the Indian Youth Movement

[117] Alexander, Kristine. 2018. *Guiding Modern Girls* p.9
[118] Full text of the statement made by the Defence Minister on 13.3.1948 in the Constituent Assembly (Legislative) on NCC, 1948, Constituent Assembly Proceedings Volume 3, Central Secretariat, New Delhi
[119] Alexander, Kristine. 2018. *Guiding Modern Girls: Girlhood, Empire, and Internationalism in the 1920s and 1930s* p.9

Finally, this is a PhD not only about Indian youth but also the larger questions of post-colonial internationalisms and the way that Indian youth movements were shaped by processes and relationships that transcended the borders of the nation-state. Akira Iriye stressed that "the study of different age groups and activity associations" is a most important object of study for future researchers in his *Global and Transnational History: The Past, Present and Future*.[120] The central argument here is that post-colonial youth movements and mobilisations in India sought to play a role, integrate themselves into or draw upon larger "post-imperial" or "neo-imperial" internationalisms.

There has been a flourishing of work on Christian, liberal, radical, labour, fascist and leftist internationalisms, and the approach that centres around internationalisms is one way historians have attempted to de-nationalise and de-centre the nation-state in the writing of history.[121] Talbot C. Imlay provides a useful definition of internationalism as, "clusters of activity, some interconnected and some not, occurring in multiple spaces, at various speeds and intensities, and with different durations […] these clusters are directed by identifiable historical actors/agents (governments, corporations, NGOs, etc.), many of whom, moreover, are rooted in a particular state". He suggests, "it is more useful to treat internationalism not as a fixed entity, goal, or destination but as a practice".[122]

The mid-twentieth century global youth infrastructure was not simply a handmaiden of "neo" imperialist relations. I want to attempt to go beyond the boundaries of neo-imperial relationship frameworks by suggesting that a myriad of transnational networks fostered academic ideas, popular discourses and praxis of mobilisation that reverberated throughout the Indian youth order in a more egalitarian, reciprocal and mutually beneficial way.[123] These youth movements, combining Indian, British and global social actors, or what Eric Wolf calls "bundles of relationships", reflected the cultural milieu of India, yet simultaneously interacted with global youth institutions and forces emanating largely, though not exclusively, from the West.[124] As Richard Ivan Jobs and David Pomfret state, "youthful activities, mobilities, and identities were produced in a complex dynamic between local and national contexts, and across trans-colonial and metropolitan networks".[125]

Student leaders, youth leaders and adult leaders who were intent on building youth movements invariably sought to participate in the emergent international organisations of the mid-twentieth century and take advantage of the opportunities offered by the expanding international sphere of

---

[120] A. Iriye. 2013. *Global and Transnational History: The Past, Present and Future*. London: Palgrave Macmillan pp. 70–71

[121] Sluga, Glenda and Clavin, Patricia. 2017. *Internationalism: A Twentieth-Century History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

[122] Imlay, Talbot C. 2018. *The Practice of Socialist Internationalism: European Socialists and International Politics, 1914-1960*. Oxford: Oxford University Press pp.10-11

[123] Sen, Anupam. 1982. *The state, industrialization and class formations in India: a neo-Marxist perspective on colonialism, underdevelopment and development*. London: Routledge

[124] Wolf, Eric R. 1982. *Europe and the People without History*. Berkeley, University of California Press p.3

[125] Ivan Jobs, Richard and David F. Pomfret. *Transnational Histories of Youth in the Twentieth Century* p.2

politics. Not only did Indian youths and their leaders engage in periodic participation in international events, but India regularly provided the space for the interactive elements of these internationalisms. Further, even when there was often little in the way of practical cooperation mainly due to financial stringency, there was a solidarity with the international youth movements, and this became central to the political imagination and the international ideology of these movements. Sentiments related to the Nehruvian vision for a common destiny for all humankind, for "One World", often echoed throughout these youth movements.[126] The internationalist and integrationist tendency of post-colonial Indian youth movements resonates with Manu Bhagavan's argument that India sought to and, he argues, did shape the formation of the United Nations and the post-Second World War international discourses on human rights.[127]

Chapter Outline

This PhD will be organised according to five themes: defence, development, social service, leisure, and student politics. Indian youths fought and marched, constructed and levelled, stewarded and taught, relaxed and busied themselves in fun, and protested and fashioned propaganda. In addition to exploring the numerous ways youths transitioned to adulthood in newly independent India, these social activities function as a keyhole into the rich meanings that are invested in "youth" and enable us to view India's youth order and discuss its meanings for the post-colonial world.

The aim of following the young person through these spaces allows us to better locate where the processes of growing up occur and discover how the rich idealisations of youth become national symbols embedded in political discourses. Historians of childhood and youth may take as the subject of their enquiry the campus, the classroom, the courtroom, or consumption habits. For example, Ruby Lal explores the space of the forest, the school, the household, and the rooftops where the girl-child could negotiate their subjectivity in 19th century India.[128] Satadru Sen examines the "experimental zones" of schools, reformatories, and children's literature to reveal the cultural construction of oriental childhood during the first half of the 20th century.[129]

Exploring movements at the national level, without a strict regional focus, leads to necessary questions about scale and spatiality especially in a country as vast and diverse as India. My archival approach has inevitably privileged the national level, but this is nevertheless a scale which is best suited for exploring the intra-national and inter-national networks of these movements. Researching archives at the national level allows historians to maintain in their view the multiple scales at which

---

[126] Bhagavan, Manu Belur. 2013. *India and the Quest for One World: The Peacemakers*. London: Palgrave Macmillan

[127] Ibid.

[128] Lal, Ruby. 2013. *Coming of Age in Nineteenth Century India: The Girl-Child and the Art of Playfulness.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

[129] Sen, Satadru. 2005. *Colonial Childhoods*

the movements operated; the local, regional, national, and international; and these varied scales are vital for understanding the very large processes of change that occurred within the national youth order. David Harvey holds space may be "relational" in the sense of being embedded in the many processes that converge to give meaning to any given space or time, and I would put forward that this conceptualisation of space is useful for understanding the thick web of social connections contained within the movements I explore. [130]

This PhD does not claim to be an all-encompassing account of Indian youth movements and mobilisations. The focus of this research is on those movements and mobilisations that were somewhat state-sponsored, and it also focuses on the way communist students were mobilised. The reason for the focus on the state-sponsored element is because, firstly, my initial investigation at the National Archives of India led to a natural demarcation of a historical space and, secondly, there are limitations to the temporal resources of a PhD student. One result of this is that there are notable volunteer movements, such as the RSS or Seva Dal, that rarely feature in this thesis. In any case, the arguments I am making will have utility for understanding these movements.

The second chapter will explore the relationship between the Indian youth and the national defence of independent India. After an exploration of how the late-colonial period had been distinguished by several attempts to introduce mass and compulsory military training, this section will explore the establishment and expansion of the National Cadet Corp during the 1950s and 1960s. Chapter 3 will explore the relationship between the Indian youth and the national development of independent India through an examination of the Labour and Social Service Camp movement from the mid-1950s until the mid-1960s. This student camp movement required students to learn the "dignity of manual labour", offer *shramdan* (physical voluntary contribution) and experience rural life. The state endorsed physical pedagogy aimed at youths and the way the camp movement brought urban and rural youths together in an encounter that negotiated binary subjectivities will be explored.

Chapter 4 will explore social service activity in relation to youth movements during the early post-colonial period, with a specific focus on the Bharat Scouts and Guides. This youth movement represented one of the largest national youth organisations during the period under study and a huge area of their activity was social service. The social service activities of youths took on new forms in independent India, and the passage to adulthood was imagined as a period of service to the post-colonial nation-state. In the decades following 1947, social service activities increasingly became directed by the channels of the state and took on meanings that embodied postcolonial nationalist ideologies. There is an obvious overlap between chapters three and four and, indeed, the activities of youths cannot always be neatly compartmentalised. They are nevertheless separated to thematically

---

[130] Harvey, David. 2006. "Space as Keyword," pp. 270–294 *In David Harvey: A Critical Reader*, edited by Noel Castree and Derek Gregory. Malden: Wiley-Blackwell

organise the project, to interact more closely with the historical themes of development and social service, and to explore how the post-childhood passage to adulthood is negotiated and experienced in relation to these themes.

Chapter 5 will examine Indian youth and the politics of leisure during the first three decades after independence, helping to illuminate the ways the varied apparatus of the Government of India promoted postcolonial nationalist cultural politics and sought to mould the way in which this social group spent their free time. I will explore various movements, such as the National Youth Welfare Movement, the Youth Hostel Association of India, the Interuniversity Youth Festival, the University Film Club, in addition to analysing advertisements for leisure activities from a variety of youth magazines to shape my arguments about youth and leisure during the post-colonial period.

The final two chapters will explore student movements and look at the story of the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s as they unfolded in India from the perspective of the All-India Student Federation and the All-India Youth Federation. Chapter 6 will explore the rise and disintegration of the AISF from the mid-1930s until the mid-1950s. It initially represented a successful attempt at consolidating the existing student organizations in colonial India and a dramatic indication of student power at the national level. However, Indian students and their student leaders responded to wider political change, especially the power configuration of political parties, with a search for distinct political spaces during the final phase of the British Raj. The second half of this chapter will discuss the international ideas of the AISF, their impact on the student group's identity and how practical cooperation between these communist movements manifested itself at the everyday level and through periodic participation in international events.

Chapter 7 explores global processes of the 1960s from the perspective of the AIYF. Their political protests and critiques of their country's government were dramatic symbols of oppositional politics. The AIYF mobilised sizeable contingents of students and youths behind utopian socialist ideas, Third World solidarity, an anti-congress agenda and behind the idea that independence had proven to be a hoax for India's first generation of free citizenry. This chapter argues the dissidence of communist youths and students amounted to a powerful counter-political culture.

Chapter 2. The Indian Youth, the Defence of the Nation, and the National Cadet Core

The introduction of state-sponsored physical training, drill and rifle practice for Indian youths was deemed an entirely unacceptable concept of youth mobilisation by the Viceroy during the late-colonial era. Following independence, however, this came to be understood as desirable and necessary by the Government of India. This chapter will begin with an interrogation of the failed attempts to introduce compulsory state military training in schools and universities during the mid-interwar years and the various reports that legitimised and underpinned these efforts. The reports on the Indianisation of the Indian Army in addition to the subsequent National Cadet Core Committee, led by Pandit H. N. Kunzru, developed the idea that the Indian youth was inferior to the British youth and generally did not possess the leadership qualities required to become officers. A central argument of this chapter is that the colonial military establishment fostered this idea, one that persisted into the first decade of the post-colonial period, that the Indian youth was lacking in terms of military competence.

This chapter will explore the relationship between the Indian youth and the national defence of independent India through an exploration of the early history of the National Cadet Core (NCC). The Constituent Assembly passed the National Cadet Core Act in April 1948 and it allowed for the raising of a junior, senior, and girls' division that would together constitute a youth wing of the Indian Armed Forces. This chapter will put forward four arguments. Firstly, the establishment and expansion of the NCC exemplifies the state-organised thrust of the post-colonial youth order, but it also shows the way the leaders of these novel youth movements sought to complement the voluntary efforts that emanated from civil society. The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Defence, for instance, designated that the NCC should hold a "distinctive place" amongst the volunteer youth movements of India, rather than compete with the existing provision of youth training, and it should be especially careful to collaborate with the Bharat Scouts and Guides.[1] Secondly, this space of youth gives valuable insights into the emergent forms and functions of postcolonial nationalism and their relationship with youthhood. This uniformed and militaristic mobilisation of youth, directed through the channels of the state, was intended to function as a "unifying force" and to flatten the social differences amongst Indians during their post-childhood passage to adulthood.

Thirdly, the widespread support for the incorporation of compulsory military training into the everyday life of youths is an overlooked aspect of early-postcolonial India. The Defence Minister,

---

[1] The Report of The NCC Committee: The National Cadet Corps and Youth Service, 1947, Rajputana Agency (Political), P-193, NAI p.23 (Henceforth, the Report of The NCC Committee)

Sardar Baldev Singh, initially introduced the NCC on a voluntary basis, yet the question of whether it should be compulsory proved central to debates on the NCC during the period at hand. Moreover, the genealogical overlap of the NCC with the paramilitary youth movements that distinguished the late-colonial period will be explored. I will argue the NCC represented a reimagining and evolution of many of the organisational forms associated with what the historians of South Asia Ali Raza and Franziska Roy call the "ascendant fascist repertoire of Europe".[2] Fourthly, the NCC became the principal movement for mobilising Indian youths for the purpose of national defence and the relationship between the two tightened and loosened depending on whether India was mobilising for war. The Indo-Pakistani War of 1947–1948 created an urgent impetus for the Constituent Assembly to pass the National Cadet Core Act in April 1948. The Ministry for Defence introduced the NCC on a compulsory basis after the Sino-Indo War of 1962 and, following the Indo-Pakistani War of 1965, it remained mandatory for students until 1969. During the relative peace of the "long 1950s", in contrast, the political rationality of the NCC shifted towards the physical development of the Indian youth.[3] The NCC, therefore, shrank or enlarged according to India's perceived geopolitical security.

Existing Literature

The NCC is a youth movement that is both part of the armed forces and larger society. By extension, this chapter will have utility for scholars of Indian military and offer insights into the larger issues of state formation and modern Indian society. Historical explorations of the Indian army during the colonial period have examined the introduction of Indians into the commissioned ranks of the army, but the Indian youth is missing from these accounts.[4] This is surprising because the wider category of youth was central to the issue of creating an officer class and the Indian youth became an especially racialised subject during the late colonial era.[5] Further, the debates about Indianisation occurred against a backdrop of Indian nationalists demanding compulsory drill and rifle practise for youths, which has been overlooked.

A seminal intervention by Steven Wilkinson into the Indian army during the post-colonial era has drawn attention to this scholarly field.[6] He explores why Pakistan and India descended into military or

---

[2] Raza, Ali and Franziska Roy. 2015. "Paramilitary Organisations in Interwar India,"

[3] For the long 1950s, Kudaisya, Gyanesh. 2017. *A Republic in the Making: India in the 1950s.* New Delhi: Oxford University Press India

[4] Gutteridge, William. 1963. "The Indianisation of the Indian Army 1918-45." *Race & Class* 4 (2): 39-46. Cohen, Stephen. 1979. *The Indian Army: Its Contribution to the Development of a Nation.* Oxford: Oxford University Press. Sundaram, S. Chandar. 2019. *Indianization, the Officer Corps, and the Indian Army: The Forgotten Debate, 1817–1917.* New Delhi: Lexington Books

[5] Also see Barkawi, Tarak. 2017. *Soldiers of Empire: Indian and British Armies in World War II.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

[6] Wilkinson, Steven. 2015. *Army and Nation: The Military and Indian Democracy Since Independence.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press

democratic rule respectively and the way political elites balanced religious, regional, and caste categories following independence. He claims the answer lies in India's endeavour to and Pakistan's failure to rebalance their armed forces. The focus in *Army and Nation* is on the relationship between the elites in the army and state. I maintain, therefore, that the "nation" in the title is rendered somewhat of a misnomer. This is not because the scholar makes incorrect assumptions about the nation but there is little attempt to untangle the meanings of this civil-military relationship for the nation-state. Moreover, his work is not concerned with the youth wing of the Indian Armed Forces or the Indian cadet.

There has been some limited research on the NCC by V.Longer and Man Mohan Sharma. Their use of interviews with the Director-Generals of the NCC makes these useful, albeit normative and dated, contributions.[7] These are "nationalist" accounts of the NCC that fail to problematise the rationalities of the organisation or interact with its meaning for the history of Indian youth or post-colonial India. Furthermore, there has been historical interest in the 46 youth cadets that joined Subhas Chandra Bose's Indian National Army (INA).[8] Bose sent these so-called Tokyo Cadets to the Army or Air Force Academy in Japan. As a result, this unit received extensive propaganda coverage, out of all proportion to its less than 50 recruits, because these youths were destined to be the future commanders of Bose's Indian National Army.

The material for this chapter has been drawn from four sources. Firstly, the National Archives of India contained official reports, pamphlets, journals, and letters relating to the NCC. Secondly, I managed to locate a small number of sources from the NCC barracks in Safdarjung, New Delhi, with the help and support of various military officials. The archives on the NCC were invariably concerned with proposals, costings, and a great many were either partially or entirely missing. They rarely, if ever, referred to the everyday experiences of cadets beyond their schedules and programmes, and the archives did not contain any texts created by the cadets themselves. Because the NCC forbade any distinction based on caste, one methodological issue is the complete absence of caste or class in the archives and, for this reason, it is unclear from which social groups the cadets came from. Thirdly, I located reports concerning the Indianisation of the army from the British Library and at the LSE library which offer an important context for understanding the rationale behind the establishment of the NCC. These included the Esher Committee 1920, the Rawlinson Committee (or Shea Committee) 1921, and the Report of the Indian Sandhurst Committee (the Skeen Committee) 1926. A fourth (somewhat heterogeneous) source is newspapers and biographical accounts.

---

[7] Longer, V. 1983. *Youth in Step: History of the National Cadet Corps.* Lancer International: New Delhi. Sharma, Man Mohan. 1980. *The National Cadet Corps of India*. New Delhi: Vision Books
[8] Bhargava, Moti Lal .1986. *Indian National Army: Tokyo cadets.* New Delhi: Reliance Publishing House. Also see, Bose, Sugata. 2011. *His Majesty's Opponent. Subhas Chandra Bose and India's Struggle Against Empire.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press

Proposals for State Compulsory Military Training, The Reports on Indianisation and the Inadequacy of the Indian Youth during the Late-colonial Period

There were several failed attempts to introduce state compulsory military training in schools and universities during the mid-interwar years. Balakrishna Shivram Moonje, a leader of the Hindu Mahasabha, used provincial and central legislative spaces to voice calls for the introduction of compulsory military training for Indian males between the age of twelve and twenty.[9] Three attempts to introduce compulsory physical training, drill and rifle practice were vetoed - in 1927, in 1928 and in 1930 - by the Viceroy and the Legislative Department. These bills would have prohibited any boy from attending their final examinations if they did not undergo the prescribed course of military training and the only exceptions would have been for boys declared physically unfit to undertake the training by a medical professional. These bills represented the earliest and most significant attempts to use the state apparatus to introduce this type of training before independence.

B.S. Moonje, who led the calls for the for the introduction of compulsory military training, did not invoke his well-known Hindutva thinking about the physical and military regeneration of the Hindu boys or the alleged increase in militancy of the Muslim minority in these debates. Moonje stressed India could not become an independent country without the wherewithal to train its younger generation of Indian officers. The proposal of these bills, as the NCC would be, was rooted in the necessity to Indianise the army and remedy the alleged inadequacy of Indian youths. B.S Moonje claimed only the introduction of compulsory military training could "remove the defects in the character training of Indian youths" that he believed prevailed in late-colonial India.[10]

There was widespread support in the national legislature for the provision of youth military training during the interwar period, and the support for these bills came from surprising quarters. The "English unofficial group" in the Legislative Assembly voted for the measure on one occasion. Their spokesman, Colonel Crawford, went so far as to submit an amendment in support of one of these bills.[11]The Viceroy, however, considered the legislation to introduce compulsory military training

---

[9] Dr. B. S. Moonje first attempted to introduce a bill to this effect in the Central Legislature in 1927/1928, although sanction for the introduction of the bill was refused by the Legislative Department. His associates in the Central Provinces also attempted to concurrently pass identical versions of this bill. These bills were introduced by V.V. Kalikar, Y.M. Kale, and R.A. Deshmukh between 1927-1928. These bills were formally rejected by the Legislative Department because it dealt with a central subject. Moonje again brought a resolution forward in 1930 to the Legislative Assembly on the question of compulsory military which passed the floor of the legislative chamber, but it was again vetoed by the Viceroy. See, The Indian Boys Compulsory Physical and Military Training Bill by Dr. B.S. Moonje M.L.A, 1928, Home Department Political (henceforth, HDP), F-238 Part-IV, NAI. See: Proposed Bills in the Central Provincial Legislative for Compulsory Physical Training, 1930, HDP, F-238 Part-II, NAI. Resolution in the Legislative Assembly Recommending the Introduction of Compulsory Physical Training, Games and Drill in Indian Colleges and Schools and the Provision of Miniature Rifle Ranges, 1930, HDP, 238/I-30- Poll, NAI

[10] Resolution in the Legislative Assembly Recommending the Introduction of Compulsory Physical Training, Games and Drill in Indian Colleges and Schools and the Provision of Miniature Rifle Ranges, 1930, HDP, 238/I-30- Poll, NAI

[11] Ibid.

entirely incongruous with the British Raj's internal security imperatives. He repeatedly vetoed the different variations of the same bills that B.S.Moonje and his parliamentary associates introduced in the Imperial Legislative Council and in the Central Province Legislature. One official from the Legislative Department, J. C Berar, noted, "for the British Government to sponsor a bill to provide for the compulsory military training among students seems to be an act which is likely to result in cutting their own throats".[12]

B.S Moonje pointed to the Shea Committee 1921 and Skeen Committee 1926 as evidence that young educated Indians were was physically inadequate.[13] Sir John Shea, the Chief of General Staff, foregrounded the shortage of Indian schools with a suitable ethos necessary for young Indians to pass Royal Military College Sandhurst and it emphasised the poor performance of those Indians who attended Sandhurst.[14] The Shea committee recommended the establishment of an Indian military college to provide an education, of the English public-school type, to prepare young men to become commissioned officers.[15] Out of the first 83 so called "gentlemen cadets", who received the Kings Commission to train at Sandhurst, of whom incidentally 35 were from the Punjab and 12 from the Bombay Presidency, approximately 30%, as opposed to the British 3%, failed to pass out.[16] In March 1932, the Prince of Wales Royal Indian Military College was opened at Dehradun with a capacity of 70. Moreover, military officials feared that an Indian of one race, caste or class could refuse to follow another man from a different race, caste, or class even if they were a commissioned officer. As Lord Rawlinson asked, "will we ever get a young educated Indian to lead a charge of veteran Sikhs against a *sangar* held by *mahsud*, and if he did, would the Sikhs follow him?".[17] Lord Rawlinson is suggesting the youthfulness of an Indian officer further reified his (in)ability to command Indians of a different category.

The leader of the Hindu Mahasabha, B.S Moonje, also pointed to the Skeen committee 1926 which stressed the educational system produced youths generally inadequate to join the commissioned ranks of the army. It held the educational system responsible, "for the lack of the power of leadership, general aptitude for dealing with and controlling men, spirit of initiative, love of discipline and general sportsmanly character seen in the Indian boys".[18] To summarise, these reports on Indianisation published during the interwar years reveal that the senior command of the military

---

[12] Ibid.

[13] The Esther Committee, 1920, IOR/ L/PO/4/5, British Library

[14] The Indian Military Requirements and Indianisation of the Army, 1921, IOR/L/MIL/17/5/1763. (Sometimes referred to as the Lord Rawlinson Committee because it was also published under the Commander-in-Chief's name)

[15] Ibid.

[16] Gutteridge, William. 1963. "The Indianisation of the Indian Army 1918-45."

[17] The Indian Military Requirements and Indianisation of the Army, 1921, A sangar is a temporary fortified position constructed of stones or sandbags.

[18] The Skeen Committee, 1926, LSE Library Government Publications, 42 (3111), LSE Archive.

establishment created a narrative that the Indian youth was weaker than the British youth. The Indian education system and the Indian youth themselves were held to be fundamentally inadequate. These committees concerned with the Indianisation of the army, especially the Esther Committee 1920, the Shea Committee 1921, and the Skeen Committee 1926, made the claim that the supply of able-bodied and able-minded Indian youths did not exist.

Indianisation, the Inadequacy of the Indian Youth and the Second World War

The large-scale emergency recruitment of Indians that occurred during the Second World War prompted a discourse about an acute shortage of youths able enough to become officers. The Secretary for the Department for Western Indian States reflected in 1946,

> During the recent war, difficulty was experienced in finding a sufficient number of suitably qualified Indian officers for the armed forces. Although, a large number of applicants for commission came forward, the greater proportion were lacking in the necessary qualities of initiative and self-confidence and a sense of responsibility. These essential ingredients of leadership, which are as necessary in an officer as physical courage and bodily fitness, do not necessarily develop naturally, nor is it always easy to develop them after a man's character has formed. They are usually to be brought out by training during the impressionable years of a man's life [19]

The Second World War further perpetuated the idea that an adequate supply of Indian youths for the purposes of defence did not exist. He went on, "it is believed that the institution throughout India of a national cadet corps might go far towards putting that right".

During the Second World War and in the years leading up to independence, the Government of India placed advertisements in student and youth magazines to recruit this social group to the army (see figure 1). Advertisements offer a unique keyhole into how the Army Department sought to influence the attitudes of youthful readers and consumers. Contrary to adverts that promised young people shortcuts to success or lucrative careers in financial and insurance services which were common in youth magazines in the late-colonial period, these job adverts more modestly note the provision of "free food, clothing and accommodation" for those who joined the three armed services. The advert requests youths to call today at their nearest technical recruiting office, and claims "excellent opportunities exist for young men who wish to learn a useful trade".

These advertisements show the Army Department used adverts to incentivise the armed forces amongst the educated sections of society. It offers a vocational pathway for the student, or a route "to become a first-class technician in the services". They served as a pedagogical project that sought to

---

[19] Letter regarding the establishment of the NCC from the Secretary to His Excellency the Crown, Western Indian States Agency, 1946-48, Ministry of Education, D/17-74, NAI

coach youthful consumers in the idea that the army was no longer the preserve of the so-called martial races and could guarantee a stable career for educated young Indians.[20] Notwithstanding that the Indian Army was better placed to handle the sudden fall in British officers than other Asian and African colonies following the withdrawal of the British, because of the large-scale emergency recruitment that occured during the Second World War, the question of Indianisation and the alleged inadequate supply of youths to become officers grew in consequence as India edged closer towards independence.

Figure 1: Advert for the Armed Services, The Student: The Monthly Organ of the All-Indian Student Federation, July 1942, CPI HQ Ajoy Bhavan, New Delhi

Figure 1: Advert for the Armed Services, The Student: The Monthly Organ of the All-Indian Student Federation, July 1942, CPI HQ Ajoy Bhavan, New Delhi

---

[20] For advertisements as a pedagogical project in India see: Rajagopal, Arvind. 2011. "Advertising in India: Genealogies of the Consumer Subject." pp.217-28 in *Handbook of Modernity in South Asia*, edited by Saurabh Dube and Ishita Banerjee-Dube. Oxford: Oxford University Press

The Kunzru Committee, the First Kashmir War and the Birth of the National Cadet Core

The National Cadet Core Committee, led by Pandit H. N. Kunzru, which led to the establishment of the movement, further developed the idea that the Indian youth was inferior to the British youth and generally did not possess the leadership qualities required to become an officer. The NCC was, from its inception, closely tied up with Pandit H.N Kunzru. He chaired all six meetings of the NCC Committee, in the South Block of New Delhi, in addition to touring the European continent to explore the different types of youth training they offered, after its formation on 29th September 1946.[21] L.P. Sen, later known for his leadership in the first Kashmir conflict, was appointed the committee's secretary. However, historian V.Longer claims that initially Lt Col Iskander Mirza, the Joint War Secretary, presided over the committee. [22] This sudden change in the committee's makeup is unclear although perhaps the reason for it can be attributed to the election of the Congress-majority interim Government of India that was formed in September 1946.

Hailing from a nationalist family of Kashmiri pandits, Pandit Kunzru was a senior and independent parliamentarian and one biographical account states, "he was regarded by one and all […] not only as a non-party man but as one who was perennially non-partisan".[23] Foremost amongst this public intellectual's areas of expertise was defence and youth policy, and for this reason he was appointed chairman of the committee that led to the creation of the National Defence Academy at Khadahvasla (near Pune, Maharashtra) in addition to the NCC committee.[24] He was also the first National Commissioner of the Bharat Scouts and Guides and the first President of the Children's Film Society in addition to serving as the President of the Servants of India society and a prominent leader in the Seva Samiti of Allahabad and the Uttar Pradesh Harijan Sevak Sangh.[25]

Less than one year before India achieved independence, the Army Department created a committee led by Pandit Kunzu to make recommendations for the establishment of a cadet organisation in schools and universities and to give recommendations on the future of the University Officer Training Core (UOTC). This NCC Committee revealed the UOTC had failed to adequately train youths for leadership positions in the armed forces and The National Cadet Core Act 1948 abolished the existing UOTC scheme. On the UOTC, the committee noted,

> The cadets showed lack of imagination, knowledge of the basic principles of imparting
> instructions were lacking and the cadets were 'book bound' and inclined to repeat a lesson

---

[21] Longer, V. 1983. *Youth in Step: History of the National Cadet Corps* p.11
[22] Delhi National Cadet Core. date unknown. *Youth Power: NCC in India.* New Delhi: Data McGraw-Hill Education p.32
[23] Rajan, M.S. 1978. "Pandit Hriday Nath Kunzru: A Memoir." *India Quarterly* 34 (4): 444
[24] Ibid. p 442
[25] Ibid. p 443

parrot wise, the cadets were lacking self-confidence, there was a lack of discipline amongst the cadets […] the actual efficiency has not improved much, and the title practically proved to be a misnomer.[26]

The Kunzru committee attributed the failure of the UOTC to the poor voluntary efforts and public cooperation of parents in India. They attributed the success of the youth movement in the United Kingdom, "to the generosity of public-spirited persons and the zeal of a large team of voluntary workers which made it possible to establish and maintain youth organisations long before Government recognised its own responsibility in the matter". [27] He ungenerously added, "the atmosphere of warm and active sympathy in which the youth movements thrive in England exists in few places in India".[28] He claimed the failure of the UOTC could be explained by two reasons, it was "due partly to the apathy of the government and partly to the poverty of the people and the failure of society to realise the important part which youth organisations can play in building up national life".[29]

The Kunzru committee maintained parents in India demonstrated a reluctance to expose their boys to physical drills and training, especially outside of the so-called "martial classes", because the army was not considered a genuinely "national army" during the colonial period.[30] Besides these political concerns, the report commented on the widespread complaints about parents rarely attending parades and about parents preferring their boys (and the UTOC did not have a girls' division) to devote their time to studying rather than participating in youth movements. When the cadets reported that they found the "rations unpalatable" or training "lacking in variety", parents allowed their boys to stop attending rather than encouraging participation or compelling attendance. [31]

The figure of Pandit Kunzru is useful for understanding the state-organised youth sector and the NCC's role within it. Kunzru repeatedly rejected government assistance in the non-governmental organisations he ran fearing that public opinion would assume the functioning of the institutions would be affected because of governmental assistance. He once remarked, "if the public cannot support the institution, I would prefer it to be closed down, rather than look to the government for help!".[32] M.S. Rajan claims Kunzru rejected India's highest title *Bharat Ratna* on the 16th Republic Day in 1968 because of his firm belief in the separation of society and the state. Kunzru advocated firmly in favour of the development of non-statist institutions yet also recognised, like with the case of the NCC, that state-led mobilisations of youth were sometimes both necessary and desirable. The

---

[26] The Report of The NCC Committee
[27] Ibid.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Ibid.
[30] Ibid.
[31] A report on the UOTC prepared by the Director of Military Training, 1947, Rajputana Agency (Political), P-193, NAI
[32] Rajan, M.S. 1978. "Pandit Hriday Nath Kunzru: A Memoir." p.446

committee highlighted the special responsibility of the Ministry of Defence to provide this type of training to, above all other factors, remedy the shortage of adequate officer recruits for the Indian army.

The NCC, as the largest state-sponsored youth movement, had a unique role in the state-organised youth sector. The first Director of the Corps explained his idea which formed a principal basis for the introduction of the NCC, he claimed, "the stage has now come when the government should accept overall responsibility for the welfare of youth and the threefold partnership of the state, the local education authorities and the national volunteer youth organisations should be created".[33] Despite the state-sponsored nature of this movement, the NCC leaders were conscious of its place within the wider archipelago of national youth movements. The Ministry of Defence's officials took great care to ensure that the provision of NCC training programmes that they envisioned would not replicate or conflict with that offered by the Indian Scouting movement. This reflected the founding committee's recommendation that, "the NCC as envisaged by us will not be a rival to existing youth organisations but will occupy a distinctive place among them".[34] The imperial headquarters of the Boy Scout Association in London endorsed this view by informing the NCC committee that there was "sufficient scope" for "all youth building movements" in India.[35] The privileged provisions that would be offered to the cadets, such as free uniforms, boots and rail fare to camps, in addition to the way that politicians would go on to regularly describe these youths as "assets to the nation", reflects the "distinctive place" of the NCC in the post-colonial youth order. [36]

The NCC committee intended this youth movement to go some way towards resolving the lack of enthusiasm in society for the Indian army. Bringing to light the cynicism amongst the youth towards the military, the Vice-chancellor of the University of Calcutta commented, "that the country after independence has to mould her own army from the sons of the soil has not been properly understood by the younger generation of West Bengal".[37] Jawaharlal Nehru and Baldev Singh issued a joint radio appeal in November 1946 to youth across the country, at the behest of Kunzru after he took over as Chairman of the NCC Committee, to request Indians to change their attitudes towards the armed forces and they took this opportunity to outline the poor condition of youth. The text of their address read,

---

[33] The National Youth Welfare Movement in India (Allocation of Funds for Youth Welfare Programme), 1954, Ministry of Education, 6-7/54- D6 (Department D), NAI
[34] The Report of The NCC Committee
[35] Ibid.
[36] G.G. Bevoor, Director of NCC. claimed that NCC cadets were "asset to the nation". In Military Education in Universities Suggestion for Improvement, 1949, Ministry of Education, D3/F-55-69, NAI

[37] Letter from the Calcutta University to the Secretary of the Government of West Bengal, specific date unwritten, 1953/1954. In Proposal for the NYWM by the Director of the NCC for consideration by the state governments, 1954, Ministry of Education, 6-7/54- D6 (Department D), NAI

there has continued the barrier between civilian populations and the armed forces of the country. Because of this the best young men in India have not offered themselves for commissions in anything like sufficient numbers. It has been found necessary to reject a high percentage of recent candidates because they did not possess the qualities necessary for leadership in the army or the navy or the air force".[38]

The radio address by Nehru and Singh, perhaps somewhat contradictory, set out to remedy the lack of enthusiasm amongst swathes of youths by underscoring their general inadequacy as a social group and their lack of leadership skills.

Besides the necessity to introduce Indians into the commissioned ranks of the Indian army, the Defence Minister stressed in the Constituent Assembly that the immediate impetus for establishing the NCC was the threat of Pakistan. Baldev Singh said, on the 13th March 1948,

> We cannot fail to recall the misery and horror inflicted on so many of our countrymen, women and children when hordes of well-armed tribesmen and others trained in the use of arms were let loose on our civil population from the neighbouring dominion. We have, therefore, to proceed to train our young men in the use of arms so that our citizens shall never again be exposed to such risks and danger. [39]

An overlooked outcome of the first Kashmir conflict was the initiation of a mass mobilisation of young people. The hastiness in which the bill was passed in the constituent assembly, only six months after independence and amidst the Kashmir conflict, demonstrated the new importance attached to mobilising youth for the purposes of defence.

An immediate reason for the establishment of the NCC lay in creating a reservoir of trained and youthful manpower for the possible event of another war with Pakistan. Referring to the first Kashmir conflict, which witnessed tribal militias overrun swathes of the territory, the newly established NCC Directorate noted, "the new weapons of war have shown us that there will not be time in any next war for the armed forces to be expanded in the same slow methodological way which was possible in past wars". The "new weapons of war" relates to India's fear of Pakistan's ability to mobilise armed insurgents across the border. The NCC Directorate held it became necessary that, "every citizen must be trained and disciplined and possess knowledge of the use of weapons and of self-protection against

---

[38] "Make army your own and send best young men to it: Appeal to Indians by Mr Nehu and Sardar Baldev Singh". 1949. The Times of India, November 23rd (https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/make-army-your-own-send-best-young-men/docview/501467497/se-2)

[39] Full text of the statement made by the Defence Minister in the Constituent Assembly (Legislative)

the enemy".[40] The Directorate also maintained that those cadets who had undergone training in the NCC but not joined the armed services would still be available in a national emergency to provide a "reserve of leaders to enable the armed forces to expand the war".[41]

The National Cadet Core Act, and the Raising of the Junior, the Senior and the Girls' Division of the NCC

The Constituent Assembly (Legislature) passed the National Cadet Core Act in April 1948. The NCC would have a Central Advisory Committee, presided over by the Defence Minister, in addition to Provincial Advisory Committees in each state. The NCC Act prescribed the formation of a junior, senior, and girls' division. The junior division training, intended for boys of school age, would form part of the school curriculum, and impart a more educational training, which would be less military in character, and had a strong resemblance with that given by the Bharat Scouts but coupled with the study of military subjects and rifle handling.[42] The NCC committee suggested the junior division would be established with an initial strength of 135,000. This largest branch of the NCC would build up the physique of Indian boys and stimulate their interest in the defence of the country. As their *NCC: What it is and Why* pamphlet for parents claimed, "it is hoped that they will develop those qualities which are currently lacking in our schoolboys".[43]

The senior division provided training for university and college students. This consisted of parades, exercises, and camps, in addition to visits to army establishments. The NCC Act instructed units of the University Officer Training Corps, which had been raised under the Indian Territorial Force Act 1930, to disband or merge into the senior division of the NCC by the 15th of July 1948.[44] The senior division formed with an initial strength of 32,500 (30,00 for the army wing, 1,500 for the air force wing, 1,000 for the naval wing). Figure 2 is a picture of Jawaharlal Nehru passing the NCC flag to a cadet during his visit to a parade and Figure 3 shows the junior division and senior division stood together for a photograph at St. Paul's High School Belgaum, Karnataka, in the mid-1950s.

The foremost objective of the senior division was to build up a potential reserve of officers from undergraduate students and increase the supply of suitable candidates seeking admission to the National Defence Academy and the Indian Military Academy. These cadets could be granted direct commission into the army if they fulfilled the prescribed conditions. Officials in the Ministry of Education sought to incentivise the movement during the early 1950s by allowing undergraduates to

---

[40] National Cadet Core: What it is and Why (Published by the NCC Directorate), 1948, NCC Safdarjung Enclave in New Delhi
[41] Ibid.
[42] The Report of The NCC Committee
[43] Ibid.
[44] Full text of the statement made by the Defence Minister in the Constituent Assembly (Legislative)

receive academic credits for NCC training and pushed for "military science" to be an optional subject for university examination.[45] These officials wanted to make the NCC more popular with the students in general and bring in youths who may otherwise be less committed to the military pathway.[46]

University academics raised objections because they believed a military science subject option might make it easier for cadets to get a higher grade, which the Ministry of Education records reveal was precisely the purpose of introducing such an option for students. The final point to make with regards to the junior and senior division is that they focused on those youths in education rather than non-educated and rural youths. Intended largely for the country's future intelligentsia, it shows the double tier system of Indian youthhood that provided one programme for the privileged few and another for the uneducated masses in early post-colonial India.

The establishment of the NCC brings to light the way young women were included on unequal terms from this movement. The Defence Minister did not introduce an official target of strength for the girls' division. This was because of the deficiency of female officers, the predicted lack of popularity and the idea that parents would have a prejudice against a movement dedicated to building up the physique of young women.[47] The NCC committee reported,

> in the course of time the girls' cadet unit would become more popular provided the training prescribed for the girls was such as to develop their special aptitudes [...] the object of this division is to develop the personality of the girls, to make them self-reliant, to build up their physique and to enable them to, in an emergency, to take upon themselves some of the duties.[48]

The girls' division set out to train this group in the operation of the wireless and the telephone exchange in addition to developing skills to assist the post and telegraph department. The military and rifle-handling training was a minor aspect for the women, and, unlike the male cadets, the Directorate did not compel them to handle arms if they had a conscientious objection. In contrast to the junior or senior division, the purpose of women's NCC training was not about stimulating interest in defence, instilling a sense of discipline, or joining the army. There was far less conflation of "girlhood" with "defence" or "military" by the officials at the Ministry of Defence and the NCC Directorate and this illustrates their cultural understandings about the domestic role of Indian women. Rather, the focus was on successfully fostering the women's "personalities" and their "special aptitudes".[49] The programme of the girls' division emphasised a limited participation in physical training, but it also fostered a gendered allocation of work and remade her domesticity. The inclusion of women in the

---

[45] Introduction of Military Education in Universities, 1952, Ministry of Education, F-49-12, NAI
[46] Ibid.
[47] The Report of The NCC Committee
[48] Ibid.
[49] Ibid.

NCC was accompanied by a patriarchal reproduction of their "traditional" roles, and I call this tension the *progressive conservativism of independent India*. Figure 2 is a picture of Jawaharlal Nehru inspecting one of the early units of the girls' division, although the caption only notes that the picture was taken in the mid-1950s.

Members of the NCC Committee expressed their reservations about raising a girls' division. Their report noted some members felt, "there was no shortage of manpower in the country and as such it was hardly necessary to impart military training to girls".[50] This minority group claimed the Bharat Scouts and Guides could adequately meet the requirements of young women. Progressive voices, on the other hand, rejected the idea that the NCC should be a single-sex organization. Shrimati Lilavati Munshi spoke in the Constituent Assembly,

> Sir, I do not know why girls are in such a small number. I think, Sir, at a time of disturbance it is the girl who would require to know the art of self-protection and there should not be any difference so far as this is concerned between the boys and the girls. And for this reason, Sir, I should say that there should certainly be a […] a separate committee to look at the progress of this movement among girls. Otherwise, in a man-made world, they never have any chance. As against so many thousands of male cadets, there are only 270 girls[51]

The girls' division represented a symbolic women's movement that reflected the changing role of women in independent India, yet in actuality it offered few opportunities for their participation. A paper prepared by the Director of the NCC proposed that a girls' division of 90 female cadets should be raised in Bombay, East Punjab, and Central Provinces in January 1949. [52]

There were, moreover, tensions in these early efforts to build this youth movement. Only 96 units of the Senior Division had been raised by 1948. These comprised one armoured corps, three artillery, five engineer, two signals and two medical units in addition to 83 companies of infantry. Further, there were some administration difficulties and initial procrastination in Madras and United Provinces, but the longest delay took place in Bihar because there was a student strike there which had been going on for three months and the government of Bihar wanted every student to be verified by the police prior to enrolment.[53] The communist-leaning AISF claimed in 1949 that the recently established NCC amounted to a "monstrous machinery of suppression" and sought "to make the

---

[50] Ibid.
[51] Full text of the statement made by the Defence Minister on 13.3.1948 in the Constituent Assembly (Legislative) on NCC, 1948, Constituent Assembly Proceedings Volume 3, Central Secretariat, New Delhi
[52] Longer, V. 1983. *Youth in Step: History of the National Cadet Corps* p.31-38
[53] National Cadet Core Website, Retrieved February 12, 2020 (https://indiancc.nic.in/genesis/)

slaves of capitalism accept increasing hardships and miseries". They made the claim and bewailed that 59 percent of the total expenditure of the Government of India was on its armed forces.[54]

The Issue of Compulsion and the Evolution of the "Fascist Repertoire" in India

The Government of India initially introduced the NCC on a voluntary basis, yet whether it should be compulsory proved to be a vital question for policy makers. There was a notable absence of ideological predispositions against mass military training from officials in the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Education, Vice-Chancellors of universities, and politicians.[55] The Defence Minister Baldev Singh declared in 1948, "there are radical limitations, both financial and technical […] but there is no limits to the future development of the Corps".[56] Once the initial quotas of 135,000 and 35,000 had been achieved, he instructed "You can expand it to half a million, you can expand it to a million or you can make the training compulsory for all the boys and girls compulsory if you so desire and if your finances permit […] this is the beginning".[57]

In the Constituent Assembly, a great many members argued the scheme must be introduced on a compulsory basis and complained that the scheme did not go far enough. One member, Seth Govind Das, remarked, relative to India's size, this NCC proposal represented only a "a drop in the ocean".[58] A lack of finances, the shortage of training staff and the NCC committee's expert recommendations meant the NCC did not become compulsory until 1962.

Politicians in the provinces put forward plans that went far beyond the NCC committee's proposals. According to letters sent to the Defence Minister seen by V.Longer, the Education and Labour Minister of the United Provinces, Dr Sampurnanand, intended to introduce his own programme of compulsory military training in the United Provinces.[59] He also claims the Chief Minister of Bombay, K.G Kher, outlined his ambition to introduce the NCC scheme on a compulsory basis during the committee's visit to his province in 1948.[60] The NCC committee rejected the concurrent existence of military schemes in the centre and the provinces. Iskander Mirza, who was the NCC committee chairperson briefly before Kunzru, had stressed that provincial governments must not be allowed to raise "local armies of their own" and they must implement the NCC scheme rather than implement provincial plans.[61]

Therefore, almost thirty years after B.S. Moonje had first attempted to introduce this type of physical training, military drill and rifle practice on a compulsory basis, similar demands echoed in the central

---

[54] Report of the AISF Secretariat: 12th Conference, Calcutta, 23rd to 27th July. 1949. P.C Joshi Archive, JNU
[55] Constituent Assembly Proceedings on 13.3.1948
[56] Ibid.
[57] Ibid.
[58] Ibid.
[59] Longer, V. *Youth in Step: History of the National Cadet Corps* p.23
[60] Letter written by Sampurnanand to Defence Minister on February 6th, 1948. Ibid. p.23
[61] Ibid. p.14

and provincial legislatures in the initial years following independence. The NCC emerged after a period where it is widely accepted Indian youth movements had a relationship with what Roy and Ali call "the ascendant fascist repertoire of Europe".[62] Paramilitary youth movements became an element of every political party in India during the interwar years. Franziska Roy claims youth movements such as the Seva Dal, the RSS, and the Khaksars, "provided paramilitary training and were available for use not only for various "social service" activities, but also political intervention and, when necessary, for displays of violence".[63] They argue this was most evident during the Second World War and during the communal violence leading up to partition and Indian independence. One question to pursue is whether the NCC shared organisational forms with paramilitary youth movements that immediately preceded its establishment or whether there is any relationship.

The NCC represented a reimagining and evolution of many of the organisational forms associated with the fascist repertoire. The essential structures and organisational forms have much in common with the movements of the 1930s and 1940s, and at the experiential level altered very little in many ways. The NCC and the paramilitary youth movements were tied up with the promotion of physical culture of Indian boys and drill practice. This newly established youth movement became available for, as I will explore in the following paragraphs and to borrow Francesca Raza's phrasing, "social service" activities and "political intervention", albeit state-sponsored, for, say, Independence Day parades or the marshalling of state organised events. The boys similarly wore short-sleeve shirts, shorts, and knee length socks in the NCC and other movements.

Did this state-sponsored and uniformed youth organisation, intent on fostering an interest in the military amongst schoolboys and students, represent an initiation of a trajectory that had become undesirable in most of western Europe after the Second World War? There are clearly genealogical overlaps and shared characteristics, yet it absolutely cannot be stated that the NCC represented a fascist organisation. Roy and Ali underscore the ascendancy of paramilitary youth movements and a "fascist repertoire" during the late-colonial period but, vitally, these trends declined with the onset of independence. The NCC may have been concerned with promoting the physical culture of Indian men, but there was a notable absence of scientism and Social Darwinism that had been prevalent in youth political movements during the interwar years.[64]

Furthermore, the archival record does not allow historians to draw a direct line between the NCC and the earlier organisational forms of Indian youth mobilisations. There is no evidence to suggest that

---

[62] Roy, Franziska. 2013. *Torchbearers of Progress: Youth, Volunteer organisation and National Discipline in India, c. 1918-1947.* PhD thesis, University of Warwick p.1

[63] Raza, Ali and Franziska Roy. 2015. "Paramilitary Organisations in Interwar India"
[64] See: Zachariah, Benjamin. 2010. "Rethinking (the Absence of) Fascism in India, c. 1922-45." pp. 178-209 in *Cosmopolitan Thought Zones. South Asia and the Global Circulation of Ideas*, edited by Sugata Bose and Kris Manjapra. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan

boys swapped uniforms or that the NCC sought to envelop the political and militaristic mobilisations that intensified in the years leading up to partition. It is clear, however, that the NCC alone represented a much larger scale of youth mobilisation than those initiated during the freedom struggle. Ten years after independence, in 1957, the Central Directorate estimated that the NCC alone had 150,000 cadets and it's auxiliary wing, known as the Auxiliary Cadet Core, that will shortly be explored, had 750,000 cadets. [65] This is more than double the estimated permanent membership of the twelve most important all-India youth movements during the first half of 1946. [66] The state-sponsored youth movements of the early post-colonial period were of a much larger scale than the colonial era volunteer youth movements.

The National Cadet Core and Nation-Building in Post-colonial India

The establishment and expansion of the NCC had a comprehensive nation-building character, and this section will explore the ways this youth institution sought to tie future citizens to a nation-state identity. Having been designed by the military officials of the British Raj, the University Officer Training Core, something of a precursor to the NCC, had naturally eschewed the forms of anti-colonial Indian nationalism that flourished amongst students and youths following the First World War. The NCC, however, promoted ritual practices of postcolonial Indian nationalism and cadets saluted the Indian flag and sang the Indian national anthem during training sessions during the two decades following independence.[67] In 1955, officials in the Ministry of Education commented these would serve the purpose of instilling in the cadets, "the spirit of service, sacrifice, discipline, and patriotism".[68]

The NCC motto, adopted in December 1957, with an undeniable Foucauldian resonance, was "unity and discipline". The Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Education determined that "God" would be omitted from the oath taken by all cadets. The NCC central advisory committee strictly forbid any distinction based on caste or creed.[69] The Central Advisory Committee meeting with Defence Minister V.K. Krishna Menon in 1957 determined the Auxiliary Cadet Core (ACC), that will be explored in the next section, would have a pledge stating, "I promise that I will honestly and faithfully serve my country and as a member of the ACC, I will attend all parades and camps which I may be required to attend". The ACC cadets wore a badge with the motto *Desha Seva* (Service to the Country) to create their *esprit de corps*. [70] Ideas about national defence, discipline, physical training, and secularism coalesced into a youth movement that became the largest in the post-colonial youth sector. Unlike the

---

[65] Central Advisory Committee for the NCC 10th Meeting, 1957, Ministry of Education, F-15-3/57 D3, NAI
[66] Distribution of Major Volunteer Organizations (Mid – 1946) in Provinces, 1940, IOR, L/PJ/12/66, British Library
[67] See, Roy, Srirupa. 2007. *Beyond Belief: India and the Politics of Postcolonial Nationalism*
[68] Songs in Hindi and Regional language for NCC/ACC, 1955, Ministry of Education, 7/7/55 D-3, NAI

[69] 5th State Representative Conference, 19th July 1954, Ministry of Education, 15-04/1954 (D7), NAI
[70] Ibid.

constitution making of India which acceded to political demands relating to the diverse identities and multiple cultures that existed, these mottos demonstrate one way that the NCC sought to mainly eliminate and level differences rather than accommodate them.[71]

The public intellectual Sir Jadunath Sarkar, who Dipesh Chakrabarty describes as "a name every educated Indian knew […] the most highly regarded Indian historian" with "a very strong public presence in late- colonial India", offered his insights into the nation-building function of the NCC.[72] In 1954, he claimed the Israeli *Gadna's* programme of games, drill and military training had made a vital contribution to developing an appreciation of Israel's national values in their youth. He said, "in this way the new tiny state of Israel is creating one united nation out of newcomers from 74 different countries".[73] He claimed the NCC must replicate this for the Indian nation. He wrote, "the common life which all the cadets share in weal and woe, the common code of conduct and moral principles that they are taught must inspire them to cast away provincial prejudices and jealousy."[74]

Sir Jadunath Sarkar claimed the NCC would be India's "unifying force" and claimed it could provide an antidote to linguistic politics. He warned in 1954, "today the greatest danger threatening India is the mass passion for local autonomy and linguistic separation. There is no true patriot or devotion to India as a whole. Today students speaking one language are mobbing students within their provincial limit only because they speak another dialect".[75] Emphasising its representative nature and function, he claimed the NCC could become, "the alchemist in which all our different linguistic and provincial groups of youth will be melted and fused into one uniform pattern of Indian nationality."[76] Sir Jadunath Sarkar intended this youth movement to create something like what Benedict Anderson would call an "imagined community", made up of Indian male youths, that could bind together the nation. In sum, the NCC had the objective to inculcate a common nationalist identification, through their shared uniform, drill practise and their patriotic credo, amongst the body of cadets in addition to the wider citizenry. [77]

The early developments of the NCC, a movement which was an exercise in creating a national institution bound together by principles of postcolonial nationalism such as secularism and diversity-promotion, can be contrasted with the post-colonial developments of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). This alternative youth movement employed forms of exercise, types of uniform and

---

[71]See: Shani, Ornit. 2017. *How India Became Democratic* De, Rohit. 2018. *A People's Constitution*. For an alternative view see, Bajpai, Rochan. 2011. *Debating Difference*
[72] Chakrabarty, Dipesh. 2015.*The Calling of History: Sir Jadunath Sarkar and His Empire of Truth*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press p.1

[73] Letter from Dr Jadunath Sarkar to the NCC, 1954, Ministry of Education, 1954, F-15-3/54 D3, NAI
[74] Ibid.
[75] Ibid.
[76] Ibid.
[77] Anderson, Benedict. 1991. Imagined Communities

52

military training which Joseph Alter argues were all "prototypically colonial" and "unambiguously Western", but in contrast to the NCC, it explicitly promoted Hindu nationalism, Hindu culture and rejected Western ideologies.[78] These two divergent youth mobilisations, similarly fledgling relative to what they would become in the 1960s, despite similarities at the experiential level, were tied up with diametrically opposed models of nation building. Indicative of this is the RSS's early opposition to the Indian tricolour. Their weekly newspaper, *The Organiser*, declared in July 1947 that the Indian tricolour would "never be respected and owned by the Hindus. The word three is in itself an evil, and a flag having three colours will certainly produce a very bad psychological effect and is injurious to a country."[79]The correspondence between M. S. Golwalkar and Jawaharlal Nehru about the role of the RSS in independent India occurred during the same winter of 1948 as the Constituent Assembly passed the NCC Act. Golwalkar wrote to Nehru after his release from prison in 1948 claiming the RSS, as a structure for guiding the young, was his best ally against communism. Nehru claimed that the government had proof the RSS's activities were communal and, therefore, in his view, anti-national. He instructed Golwalkar in his response that the RSS ban was a matter for the Home Minister.[80] A Government of India communique announced in 1949 that the ban on the RSS was to be reversed because Golwalkar had given an undertaking that the RSS would be loyal to the constitution and the flag.[81] Christophe Jaffrelot argues that the RSS's ideology gradually lost its attraction during the 1950s, despite partition appearing to have created favourable conditions, because of the Prime Minister's staunch campaign against communalism both inside and outside the Congress.[82]

The NCC and the RSS have been contrasted here to inject tension into the early history of the NCC, as a nation-building exercise, and to explore the simultaneous developments of two youth movements that shared organisational forms yet also had antagonistic ideological foundations, but it has also been raised because the threat of the RSS loomed large in the minds of officials in the Ministry of Defence. To ensure that right-wing communalist groups did not infiltrate the NCC, the Central Advisory Committee introduced several prohibitions relating to who could enrol as a cadet and who could be granted commission as an officer from its establishment in 1948. They disallowed active members of political or communal organisations or any person belonging to an organisation believing in "violence" or "communal disharmony" from joining the Corps.[83] In 1959, however, the Central

---

[78]Alter, Joseph. 1994. "Somatic Nationalism: Indian Wrestling and Militant Hinduism." *Modern Asian Studies* 28 (3): 567

[79] Salam, Ziya Us. 2018. *Of Saffron Flags and Skullcaps: Hindutva, Muslim Identity and the Idea of India.* New York: SAGE Publications p.59

[80]-Rakesh, Ankit. 2012. "How the Ban on the RSS was lifted" *Economic and Political Weekly* 47 (16): 71-78
[81] Ibid p.80

[82] Jaffrelot, Christophe. 1996. *The Hindu Nationalist Movement and Indian Politics: 1925 to the 1990s : Strategies of Identity-building, Implantation and Mobilisation (with Special Reference to Central India).* London: Hurst & Co, see chapter 2

[83] Letter to the Chief Secretaries of all Part "A" States, April 1950, Mysore Residency (War), 1946, 215/D, NAI

Advisory Committee reversed this decision because a strict application of this rule prohibited the involvement of a great many citizens that belonged to a political party.[84]

Figure 1: Thiagarajar College of Arts and Science Madurai, Date unknown, "Jawaharlal Nehru inspecting the girls Corp", (https://tcarts.in/academics/army/index.php) Retrieved December 21/11/2020

---

[84] Meeting of the Central Advisory Committee held on April 17th, 1961, NCC Safdarjung NCC Barracks New Delhi

Figure 2: Jawaharlal Nehru passing the NCC flag to a cadet, DATE UNKNOWN,
(https://tcarts.in/academics/army/about.php Accessed 21/11/20)
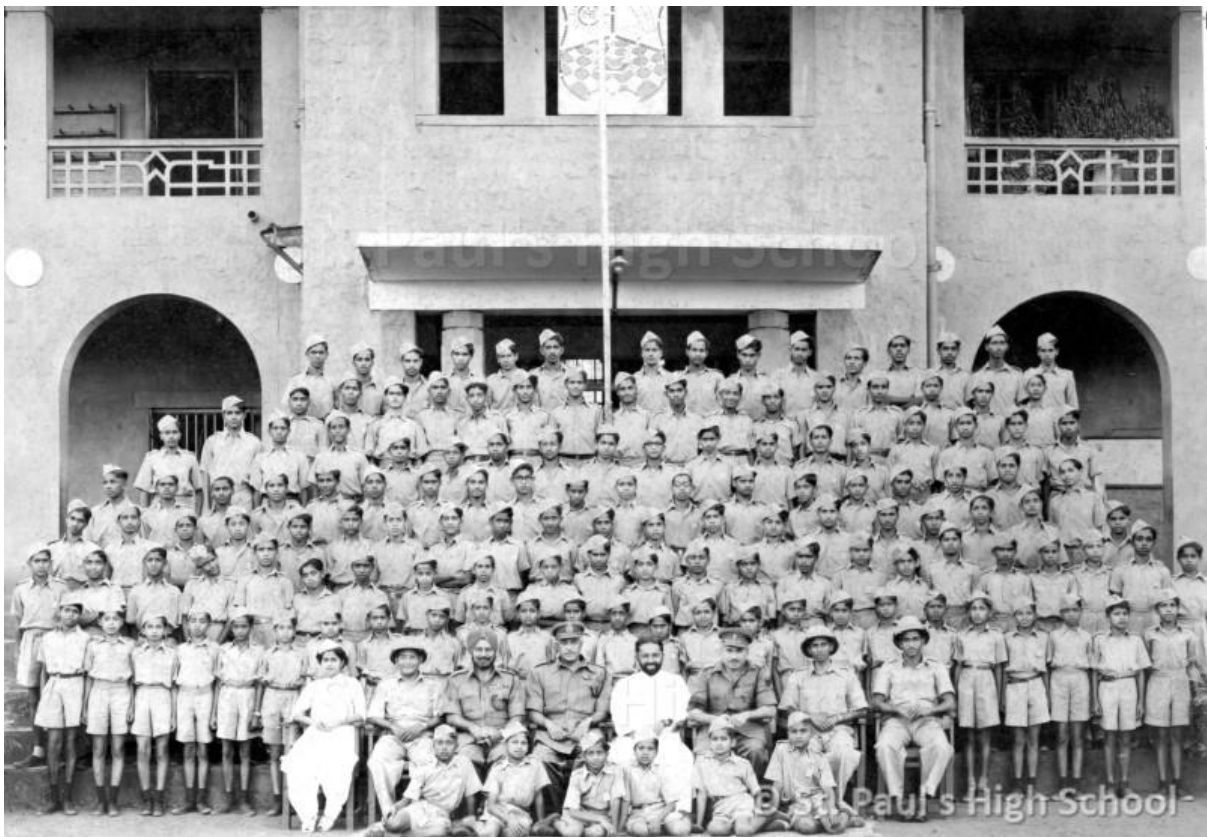
Figure 3: "The early beginnings of ACC", mid-1950s, Courtesy of the official site of St. Paul's High School Belgaum (https://www.sphs.edu.in/gallery-pics/gallery-extra-curriculars-from-the-archives/ Accessed 21/11/20)

The NCC, the Emergence of the Auxiliary Cadet Core and the 1950s

During the relative peace of the 1950s, the political rationality embedded in the discourses of the NCC shifted away from national defence towards the physical development of the Indian youth. This shift in the political rationality of the youth wing of the Indian Armed Forces is reflected in the emergence and expansion of the Auxiliary Cadet Core (ACC) throughout the 1950s. Designed to expand the organisational capacity of the NCC, the Director of the NCC claimed it would "lay special stress on building up [the] youths mentally, morally and physically and making them good and disciplined citizens by developing their character and capacity for leadership".[85]

Initially called the National Youth Welfare Movement, the ACC was a scheme that provided a more limited programme of physical training, with less focus on uniforms, military training, and rifle practise, to a much larger body of students from 1952 onwards. Central to the syllabus was the "dignity of manual work" that, the NCC Central Advisory Committee's report noted would, "be a corrective to over regimentation". [86] The NCC and ACC became key organisers of the Labour and Social Service Camps, and this will be explored in the next chapter. In her chairperson's address at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Smt Hansaben Mehta summed up the distinction between the NCC and ACC,

> The NCC and the ACC are also youth organisations for students. So far as the NCC is concerned, the emphasis is on military training with an idea of training students for military service if a need arose. The ACC on the other hand gives a semi-military training, its purpose being more physical development of the students. These organisations have also camps where students do manual work as well as render some kind of social service[87]

The political rationality underlying this state-sponsored provision of youth training shifted away from national defence towards the physical training of this social group from the early-1950s onwards. That the responsibility for the implementation of the ACC lay with the Ministry of Education, rather than the Ministry of Defence as with the NCC, is evidence of this changing rationality. The Prime Minister commented on the purpose of this youth training on November 28[th,] 1954, "I do not think of this

---

[85] Letter addressed to all Vice- Chancellors of all Indian Universities from the Head of the NCC, General G.G. Beevor, In Ibid.

[86] Meeting of the Advisory Committee of the NCC - Minutes of the Meeting, 1954, Ministry of Education, F-15-3/54 D3, NAI.

[87] Mehta, Hansaben. 1962. "Chairman's Address on National Social Service for Youth by Smt Hansaben Mehta." *The Indian Journal of Social Work* 22 (4): 353-4

training as training for war or necessarily even for military or like purposes. But essentially I consider this training as necessary for good citizenship […] Therefore I am greatly interested in the NCC and its Auxiliary".[88] This is a decisive shift in tone from Baldev Singh's rallying cry to train all youths in case of war with Pakistan in the NCC debates in the Constituent Assembly in 1948.[89]

Jawaharlal Nehru's comments about the purpose of ACC-NCC training being for the purpose of good citizenship rather than strictly for military purposes resonate with Steven Wilkinson's scholarly argument that there was a strong emphasis on keeping the military out of public life in the years after independence. He claims the post-colonial elite did not aspire to have the army as the embodiment of the nation.[90] Moreover, the shifting rationality of the NCC is related to the dissipation of the discourse by the mid-1950s about the shortage of youths able enough to become commissioned officers. The makeup of the Indian army had become increasingly balanced due to the significant reduction in recruitment of the "martial classes".[91] Furthermore, this change in the rationality of the NCC during the 1950s occurred within the context of India's introduction of the policy of so-called non-alignment, India's argument for peace in the Afro-Asian World, and the reduction in the perceived threat of Pakistan.[92]

Underlying the expansion of this programme of physical training was a discourse about the indiscipline and inadequacy of the Indian youth and the interrelated idea that the Government of India must remedy this. The Director of the NCC commented in 1954, "students in schools and colleges lack discipline, character and leadership and their general physique is poor […] The urgent necessity for providing proper outdoor training to the youth cannot be neglected any longer".[93] The desire to make this social group the target-object of this training was that, as the Director of the NCC stated, "youth is the most impressionable and formative period of a man's life".[94]

It was partly this believed malleability of this life stage and the alleged problems of Indian youth that interacted to further expand the NCC's provision of training, giving rise to the formation of the ACC, during the 1950s. As the Director of the NCC stated, "now the time has come when individual efforts to meet the needs of a particular group of adolescents have to be properly coordinated and the welfare of youth has become a national commitment complementary to the provision of formal education". As with the state's rarely questioned commitment to providing free education, yet similarly largely neglected, an idea was emerging that framed the provision of physical training to be an obligation of

---

[88] The Cadet, January 1955, NCC Safdarjung Barracks
[89] Full text of the statement made by the Defence Minister in the Constituent Assembly (Legislative)
[90] Wilkinson, Steven. 2015. *Army and Nation*
[91] Ibid.
[92] Dutt, Vidya Prakash. 1984. *India's Foreign Policy.* New Delhi: South Asia Books
[93] In Proposal for the NYWM by the Director of the NCC for consideration by the state governments, 1954, Ministry of Education , 6-7/54- D6 (Department D), NAI
[94] Ibid.

the state and an entitlement reserved for India's young citizenry. However, to return to the girls' division of the NCC during the decade at hand, by 1st July 1955, the girls' senior and junior divisions only numbered a meagre 2,670 and 2,760 respectively.[95] During the first half of the 1950s, in contrast to the expanding provision of NCC-ACC training which was overwhelmingly intended for males, the girls' division was more of an imagined space, one designed to facilitate women's expanded role in India's public life, yet this conflicted with her traditional and domestic role and the practise of building such a space was of secondary importance to policy makers.

The miniscule resources of the Government of India meant that officials at the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Education regularly busied themselves debating over whether the financial burden for the NCC and the ACC would be borne by the centre or the province and the costing of railway fares, camp rations and uniforms throughout the 1950s. The Director of the NCC stated, "The present financial situation in the country demands that this scheme should be run cheaply and as far as possible, on a no cost basis. Maximum use should be made of existing resources including instrumental staff".[96] The NCC Directorate, Vice Chancellors and a great many officials in the Ministry of Education favoured a compulsory dimension to the ACC military training yet the principal obstacle was the financial impracticalities. Despite the centre providing the additional funds with the provinces for the expansion of the ACC on a fifty-fifty basis, schools, colleges, and universities regularly raised issues of financial stringency in their correspondence.[97]

As the Government of India increased its role as the bureaucratic guarantor of the provision of youth services and its developmental capacity grew during the period at hand, the NCC became further integrated into the second Five-Year Plan and the cadet became a category in the domain of development policy. In 1957, the planning commission authorised the finances for a major expansion of the NCC from an estimated 150,000 cadets at the rate of 50,00 cadets per year to an estimated 350,000 cadets at a cost of Rs.27 crores. The cheaper ACC would expand from 750,000 cadets at the rate of 250,000 per year to 20 lakhs at a cost of 38.R Crores.[98] The planning commission report noted, "The NCC is now functioning in all the states in India and this movement has now reached practically every large town, college and university".[99] Nikhil Menon writes, in his critique of the existing literature on Indian development, "the popular and persistent image of the Planning Commission has been that of aging upper crust men, dressed in Congress khadi and *topis* or tailored suits, discussing

---

[95] The Introduction of Compulsory Physical Education, Ministry of Education, 1958, D5-21-60/57D3, NAI
[96] Ibid.
[97] NCC- 5th States Representative conference -19th July, 1954, Education (D7)15/04/1954, NAI
[98] Central Advisory Committee for the National Cadet Corps 10th Meeting, Ministry of Education, 1957, F-15-3/57 D3, NAI
[99] Ibid.

dams and steel plants in the boardrooms of Lutyen's Delhi".[100] The incorporation of the NCC into the Five-Year Plans brings to light the, hitherto largely overlooked, state-sponsored effort to mobilise the youth on a massive scale for the purposes of defence.

The National Cadet Core, the Sino-Indo War of 1962 and the Indo-Pakistani War of 1965

The NCC's organisational capacity expanded as India had to mobilise for war throughout the 1960s. The Sino-Indo war of 1962 and then the Indo-Pakistani war of 1965 gave a sustained necessity to making the NCC compulsory and the raison d'être of the NCC-ACC swung away from the training of youths to the national defence of India. This occurred alongside the doubling in size of the Indian army in the three years following the Sino-Indo war of 1962. Steven Wilkinson argues the post-colonial civil- military control strategies to rebalance the armies were challenged following India's defeat by China in October and November 1962.[101] The political leadership and bureaucrats in the Ministry of Defence defaulted back to recruiting the "martial classes" for reasons of haste and military efficiency, yet Wilkinson claims they sought to hide this from the public.[102]

A vast expansion of the mobilisational capacity of the NCC followed the Sino-Indo war of 1962. The Senior Division strength of the NCC increased to about one million students for the remainder of the 1960s.[103] This can be put in the context of the total population of students in India which the Secretary to the Ministry of Education claimed was around 2.75 lakhs in 1961-62 and around 4 lakhs in 1965-66.[104] This enlarged NCC intended that every male Indian student went through the corps in either their first or second year of college or university. The centre and the state offered Rs. 100 and Rs. 60 respectively for each cadet that enrolled in the scheme. There was, however, opposition to the compulsory dimension of the NCC and one journalist noted, "It was a programme designed merely to work up war-mindedness amongst the public after the Chinese attack […] a grand dramatic gesture, all sound and fury, signifying nothing".[105] One ex-army officer enquired about the scheme, "What kind of teeth to tail ratio is that?" He believed there was little necessity for such a huge supply of "tail" (the Indian youth) for the "tooth" (the Indian soldiers).[106]

---

[100] Menon, Nikhil. 2018. "'Help the Plan—Help Yourself': Making India Plan-Conscious." In *The Postcolonial Moment in South and Southeast Asia*, edited by Gyan Prakash, Michael Francis Laffan, and Nikhil Menon. London: Bloomsbury Press
[101] Wilkinson, Steven. 2015. *Army and Nation* p.125
[102] Ibid

[104] Saiyidains, K.G 1961. *National Service for Youth*. p.73
[105] Rungachary, Santha. "National Service Corps: Yet another Programme for Youth?". 1968. The Times of India, Apr 8th.
[106] Ibid.

The Ministry of Defence mobilised young people on a massive scale again during the Indo-Pakistan war 1965. V.Longer found that 63,000 NCC cadets engaged in relieving the police, the territorial army, and the defence services during the conflict and 30,000 cadets became directly employed in the civil defence of the country. The largest number of cadets worked in the Punjab where over 10,000 of them were employed every day to aid in the implementation of the black outs, to minimise outdoor light, in preparation for expected bombings.[107] It was also in 1965 that Defence Minister M.Y.B Chavan informed the Lok Sabha he was proposing selective conscription to the army. The proposal involved selecting 10,000 graduates that had recently completed their time in the senior division of the NCC by lottery every year. They would then be put through the usual selection procedure to select 2,000 persons fit to become commissioned officers.[108] He maintained, however, that this did not amount to a reaction to the threat of China or Pakistan. The main idea behind the proposal was to discipline the younger generation and instil a consciousness of defence responsibilities. The measure intended, "to impress upon every individual […] his liability to serve in the defence of the country". [109] The Government of India introduced the National Fitness Corps to replace the Auxiliary Cadet Corps and a short-lived National Discipline Scheme from July 1965.[110]

The Disestablishment of the NCC, the Introduction of the Social Service Corp and the Issue of Compulsion

A committee set up by the Cabinet Secretary to study national service for students recommended a compulsory national service scheme should replace the compulsory NCC for university students in 1969. [111] One crore rupee was put at the disposal of both schemes to introduce them in ten universities with a limit of 100,000 youths during the implementation year of 1969. [112] It recommended male students in the first or second year of their degree course must participate in either the National Service Corps (NSC), National Sports Programme (NSP) or the NCC for 150 hours during the term and attend a camp for twenty days, yet it would be optional for girls, as the NCC had been between 1962 and 1968. Underlying the formation of these social service and sports schemes was the idea that not all students were "temperamentally inclined" towards military training.[113]

---

[107] Longer, V. 1983. *Youth in Step: History of the National Cadet Corps* p.88
[108] "Conscription & National Service Schemes Outlined.". 1965. Times of India, 11th December (https://search.proquest.com/docview/347133581?accountid=9630)
[109] Ibid.
[110] "New Youth Plan: National Fitness Corps".1966. The Times of India, 1st January (https://search.proquest.com/docview/744383023?accountid=9630)
[111] National Service Programme – Pilot Project for 1968 for University Students. In Civilian rifles training scheme facilities of training to Non NCC students and to Civil Defence organisations. Home Department (Police- IV), 25-05-1968, NAI
[112] Ibid.
[113] Note from T. Bakshi, Director General of Civil Defence, Ministry of Home Affairs, to the Directors of Civil Defence in States and Union Territories, New Deli (10th July 1968), 1969, Home Department (Police- IV), 25-05-1968, NAI

The pendulum had swung away from the urgent need to train youths for defence by the end of the sixties and this equated to a disestablishment of the NCC in favour of a mass programme of national development and social service. The Ministry of Defence introduced an objective to shrink the movement from ten lakhs to three lakhs during the first three years of the 1970s. This was intended to save financial resources that could be used for the development of the other two streams. The Director of the NCC, General D.S. Kalha, claimed it would ensure the NCC remained a corps d'elite.[114] He outlined his determination to introduce greater variety to the "routine" syllabus of a more specialised and selective NCC. He wanted the cadets to be familiarised with modern weaponry, learn military geography, participate in adventure training and trekking, and those with an interest in flying could attend *Vayu Sainik Camps* (Air Soldier Camps).[115] Steven Wilkinson claims the weakening of the "Congress system", especially after Nehru's death in 1964 and again following the Sikh militancy of Indira Gandhi's premiership, prompted a desire amongst the post-colonial elite to keep the military out of public life. This smaller corps was to be raised in the political context of increased anxiety about the danger of generals entering the political fray.[116]

The year 1969 witnessed the NCC face its first instance of outright revolt as students from Tamil Nadu refused to follow orders from their unit commander. Amid the anti-Hindi agitation that raged during that year, youths began to reject the use of Hindi words of command. The NCC sought to resolve identity conflicts in favour of a national Indian identity, yet on this instance it also could become a space for the confronting and challenging of the nation-building settlement of India. This culminated in the full suspension of NCC training in Tamil Nadu in February 1969. The Cabinet Commission on Internal Affairs recommended that commands should be given in English, so cadets "would be able to participate efficiently in parades in either language".[117]

Conclusion

This chapter has explored the relationship between the Indian youth and defence in the late-colonial and early post-colonial period with a particular focus on the NCC. The NCC reveals the novel imaginations, meanings and mobilisations of youth that occurred during the early independence period. I have made five key arguments. Firstly, I held that the colonial era military establishment initiated a discourse that Indian youths did not possess the qualities necessary to become officers and, in turn, to defend independent India. A discourse about the inadequacy of youth continued to

---

[114] The National Service Programme, In Civilian Rifles Training Scheme Facilities of Training to Non NCC Students and to Civil Defence organisations. Home Department (Police- IV), 25-05-1968, NAI
[115] "NCC to be Reorganised make it Selective".1968. The Times of India, 2nd July (https://search.proquest.com/docview/614774784?accountid=9630)
[116] Wilkinson, Steven. 2015. *Army and Nation*
[117] V. Longer, *Youth in Step: History of the National Cadet Corps* p.95

permeate official records during the decades following 1947, although the focus was less on their ability to become officers, as the Indian army had become fully Indianized by the early 1950s.

Secondly, the NCC's incorporation into the Five-Year Plan and the way the cadet became an object of development policy captures what I call the state-organised youth order. The reason the establishment and expansion of the movement was overwhelmingly directed by the state was because only the centre could resolve the questions of national physical fitness, the shortage of officer recruits for the Indian army, and had the obvious responsibility for mobilising a potential second line of defence. Moreover, as the Kunzru committee revealed, its establishment was based on a notion that an inadequate volunteer ethos prevailed in India as I explored in the first section of this chapter.

Thirdly, this youth movement, directed through the channels of the state, represented an exercise in creating a national institution bound together by principles of postcolonial nationalism. The officials that established and expanded the NCC held the uniformity of training, dress code and identity of the corps, based around ideals of postcolonial nationalism, could eradicate linguistic and other social differences in favour of a national identity. This youth movement sought to tie its young citizenry to the state-form, one that defined the nation in terms of its constitutive diversity, and the youth became a symbol of the nation which could support in the post-colonial elite's management of diversity in India.

Fourthly, the widespread support for the incorporation of compulsory military training into the everyday life of youths is an overlooked aspect of early-postcolonial India and the NCC represented a reimagining and evolution of many of the organisational forms associated with Ali Raza and Franziska Roy's "ascendant fascist repertoire of Europe".[118] Finally, the NCC shrunk or enlarged depending on whether India was preparing for war. To that end, the late 1940s and the first half of the 1960s can be contrasted with the so-called "long 1950s". The establishment of the Auxiliary Cadet Core during the early 1950s and the Indian labour camp that will be explored in the next chapter demonstrate this pendulum swing.

The next chapter's exploration of the Nehruvian-era student labour camp movement will substantiate the arguments outlined in this chapter further. I will argue the camp movement represented an attempt to shape the national physical fitness of the youth through its promotion of the "dignity of manual labour". As with the NCC, the student camp movement represented an important attempt by the varied apparatus of the Government of India to (re)organise the national youth sector and became a key element of the state-organised youth order during the period at hand. Like the cadet, the young camper came to be widely depicted as a model citizen and a figure held to be the embodiment of the young independent nation-state. Having argued in this chapter that the development of the NCC

---

[118] Raza, Ali and Franziska Roy. 2015. "Paramilitary Organisations in Interwar India"

reveals the ways that young women were excluded from this movement, the next chapter will argue the labour camp similarly reproduced the differences of Indian youth according to gender, caste, and along urban-rural lines.

Chapter 3. The Student Labour Camp Movement and Postcolonial Development

In the last chapter, I illustrated that the NCC is a prime example of a youth movement that brings to light the post-colonial state-organised youth order. This was a youth movement intended to function as a "unifying force" and to flatten the social differences amongst young Indian citizens during their post-childhood passage to adulthood. The Indian student labour camp movement is similarly an overlooked chapter in the history of nation-building, national development, citizenship and youthhood in India. The Government of India organised over ten thousand student camps for the purposes of village development between the mid-1950s and the mid-1960s. Incorporated into the Five-Year Plans and launched in 1954, the Labour and Social Service Camps required students to learn the "dignity of manual labour", offer *shramdan* (physical voluntary contribution) and experience rural life. The imagery of the toiling and vigorous camper committed to serving the newly created nation-state came to be constructed as India's model citizen, and this figure embodies the emergent forms of postcolonial nationalist politics and ideologies of the 1950s and 1960s. This youthful labour force was depicted in the developmentalist imagination of India as literally building and metaphorically embodying the nation-state, and its ideologies of physical fitness, secularism, anti-casteism and national discipline.

This chapter will argue that camp life reproduced a hierarchy of citizens that made the educated youth the agent of development and the villagers the object of development. The running of these camps by quasi-state volunteer movements, such as the National Cadet Core and the Bharat Sevak Samaj, brings to light how the developmental apparatus in India worked, or did not work, in practise upon the students and the rural youths. The final section of this chapter will explore the youth development activities of the BSS because this organisation typifies the nature of the post-colonial state-organised youth sector. The BSS organised by far the most camps, it retooled the programme during the late 1950s to include youths from the poorer classes and it led the mobilisation of students supporting the Government of India's war effort in 1962. By the mid-1960s, the fetishisation of village manual labour carried out by youths as envisioned by Mahatma Gandhi had entered a cycle of marginalisation, and various committees revealed the simple balm of deploying the future generation of citizens to rural settings was not the development solution planners had hoped for.

Existing Literature

The Indian youth has been missing from the history of Indian development. As outlined in the introduction, the first generation of scholars generally studied Indian development using the top-down lens of the state planners, but they neglected popular participation.[1] This led to the emergence of a grand narrative about India's botched and bureaucratized industrialisation that was embodied by the

---

[1] Frankel, Francine R. 2006. *India's Political Economy: The Gradual Revolution (1947-2004)*. Chatterjee, Partha. 1999. "Development Planning and the Indian State."

supposedly omnipresent first Prime Minister of India Jawaharlal Nehru. A second generation of scholars has begun to deconstruct this caricature of postcolonial development as basically bureaucratic and to disaggregate the Indian state.[2] This study of the student labour camp movement will show that top-down and state planning and village-level community development were often two sides of the same coin of early post-colonial development initiatives.

Therefore, the camp movement reconciles the Gandhian-Nehruvian binary put forward by historians of India, such as Partha Chatterjee and Benjamin Zachariah, that creates two standpoints, with, a Gandhian romanticism about village self-sufficiency on the one end and a scientific and socialistic industrialisation strategy on the other end.[3] Directed by the Planning Commission and funded by the Five-Year Plans, this programme put tens of thousands of students to work on rural development projects and incorporated the youth into the political imagining of India's linear modernisation. Even so, as will be explored, Gandhian ideas about student-led and village-level community development, as the morally and economically best course for India, were also key lines of thinking behind the student labour camps.

Regarding the archives that I have explored for this chapter, they have been drawn overwhelmingly from the National Archives of India, and I have also utilised evidence from Government Reports, the Indian Journal of Public Administration, The Indian Journal of Social Work, The Social Welfare Journal, The Nehru National Youth Centre, The Times of India, and The Bharat Sevak Samaj website.

Student Labour Camps, the Model Indian Citizen and Serving the Post-colonial Nation State

This section will argue that, though the linkage between youth and the nation was clearly not something new, the Indian camper came to be constructed as a model citizen and they had a special role in the nationalist and developmentalist political imagination of India. The fetishisation of manual labour demonstrates the vast physical potential imagined in this population of young citizens, of a group almost but not yet there. For the most part, the figure of the camper is depicted as a toiling, enthusiastic, hard-working, jolly, disciplined and an occasionally rowdy young man committed to the principles of the Five-Year Plan. The imagery of him, and the figure was far more frequently a male than a female, hard at work developing villages or labouring on projects - as servants to the Indian nation-state - is one in which officials, academics, educationalists, and politicians conjured up. They claimed this group to be an embodiment of the spirit of the Indian nation-state and a modern and secular role model for an imagined community where a diverse citizenry remained strangers to each

---

[2] Immerwahr, Daniel. 2015. *Thinking Small: Modernization, Development and Community*. p.13. Sherman, Taylor. 2016. "A Gandhian answer to the threat of communism? Sarvodaya and postcolonial nationalism in India." Siegel, Benjamin. 2015. "'Self-Help which Ennobles a Nation': Development, citizenship, and the obligations of eating in India's austerity years"
[3] Chatterjee, Partha. 1986. *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse*. New York: Columbia University Press. Zachariah, Benjamin. 2005. *Developing India: An Intellectual and Social History, c. 1930-50*

other. Before expanding this argument though, the way the labour camps worked in practice will be discussed.

Students in their late teens and twenties, who attended college or university across India, participated in the camps during their vacations for up to three to four weeks on a voluntary basis. The Bharat Scouts and Guides, the National Cadet Core and universities were heavily involved in organising the camps, but it was the Planning Commission's propaganda and volunteering arm the Bharat Sevak Samaj (BSS) that organised the largest number of camps. In the year 1957, for example, state governments or universities organised 192, the NCC Directorate organised 138, and voluntary organisations like the BSS and the Bharat Scouts and Guides ran 655 out of a total of 995 camps. [4] Camp organisers initially determined that the proportion of non-students, if admitted, should not exceed twenty percent of the campers.[5] This state-endorsed physical pedagogy, centred around manual labour, was intended for the country's future intelligentsia. Everyday camp life entailed the building of soak pits, village meeting places, digging wells and above all the construction of roads.[6] One senior official at the Ministry of Education commented on the urgency of the student's road building efforts,

> No one who has travelled into the distant and "out of the way" parts of the country can have failed to notice the deplorable conditions of roads, and to experience the jerks and jolts which almost break the bones and to have come across bits which could only be covered on foot [...] So, a large number of youths have constructed roads and it is a popular item in the camp programme, fulfilling one of the great needs of our country[7]

The activities of the camp sought to tackle the "backwardness" left by the British Raj and to provide a way for the youths to escape "modern" life through contact with villages which was construed as the "real India".

The student labour camp movement forged a powerful link between the social body of youth and the development of India in what Sudipta Kaviraj calls the "political imagination" of independent India.[8] Development has had many usages in the Indian context and Benjamin Zachariah claims the idea was

---

[4] Labour and Social Service Camps 1958-1959, In Expansion of Scouts and Guides during the 2nd Five-Year Plan, 1958, Ministry of Education, 9-23/PE2, NAI
[5] Youth Camps and Labour service (1954- 55) Bharat Sevak Samaj Report, 1954, Ministry of Education, F-14-3- 54/D4, NAI
[6] Ibid
[7] The Additional Secretary to the Government of India Writing to all Vice Chancellors of the Indian Universities and Education Departments of all State Governments, June 1954, Labour and Social Service Camp Policy, 1954, Ministry of Education, 1-3/55 D7, NAI
[8] Ibid. p. 288

broadly used to "conceptualize a future or possible Indian nation—a nation in the act of becoming".[9] A prophetic vision of a rebuilt, modern and developed independent country underpinned this youth movement, and the mantel of developing India often fell to Indian youths in the popular and official discourse. As the General Secretary of the Indian National Congress Seva Dal and Camp Organiser, S.N Agarwal, stated, "A new India is in the making. The task of rebuilding our ancient country is of the greatest responsibility as it is most exciting. Much of this responsibility will soon fall on those who are young today, especially students. So, they must prepare themselves for their coming responsibility".[10] This youth mobilisation was tied up with the expectation that this future generation must play the leading role in developing the economy.

The tremendous future role assigned to these citizens and the potential invested in them meant that the Indian youth became an important (and hitherto overlooked) category in the domain of development policy. Because of their role in the freedom struggle, there was a special responsibility to ensure that their energies could be channelled into the building of a post-colonial nation-state. A report from a United Nations Conference on Youth held in the hill station of Shimla in 1955 recorded, "particular attention was directed to the fact that young people had participated actively in the struggle for national independence and to the need for opening up new opportunities for them to participate creatively in the building up of their countries"[11]. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, a leader of the Indian independence movement and India's first Education Minister, said, "If we are to develop the present generation of youth into disciplined and responsible citizens of democracy, it is essential that we should view this problem imaginatively and take all necessary steps to win their confidence and cooperation".[12] The camp movement became the principal outlet for securing the cooperation of youths for national development during the late 1950s and early 1960s in India. By the end of the third Five-Year Plan, 10,713 camps had taken place.[13]

This mobilisation of youth had a comprehensive nation-state building character and sought to integrate the first generation of citizens into a wider nationalist project. The camp movement represented the construction of a space of youth that brought together postcolonial nationalist ideologies – secularism, anti-casteism and developmentalism – into a state-structure. The Labour and Social Service Camps objective was to "eradicate the bias of caste, creed, religion and untouchability, and develop a sense of social justice, equality, national solidarity and international understanding and

---

[9] Zachariah, Benjamin. 2005. *Developing India: An Intellectual and Social History, c. 1930-50* p.6
[10] S.N Agarwal writing to All Pradesh Congress Committee RE Youth Camps, Labour and Social Service Camp Policy, March 15th, 1955, Ministry of Education, 1-3/55 D7, NAI
[11] Unofficial report on the United Nations Seminar of Youth Welfare held at Shimla from 1st to 21st November 1951. Nos. 9-6. D.7-1956, NAI
[12] The National Youth Welfare Movement in India (Allocation of Funds for Youth Welfare Programme), 1954, Ministry of Education, 6-7/54- D6, NAI
[13] Madan, G.R. 1967. *Indian social problems social disorganization and reconstruction* p.145

appreciation of different cultures and ways of life".[14] The first President of India Dr Rajendra Prasad inaugurated one summer camp with an appeal to students to use the camp to, "develop a broad outlook and a liberal attitude".[15] Besides being a village development initiative, this was a youth welfare scheme that desired to inculcate nationalist ideologies into those undergoing their post-childhood passage to adulthood precisely because, as one camp leader asserted, during these years they could "train his mind and body".[16]

The camp movement had a strong Gandhian flavour. Mahatma Gandhi had heralded, "students can, by learning the art of voluntary discipline, fit themselves for leadership in the various branches of the Nation's work. They can set apart a certain time every week if not every day for service in a village or villages nearest to their institution and during the vacation devote a certain time daily for National Service".[17] Gandhian ideas about the primacy of the urban youth in rural development and the village as a socio-economic unit became institutionalised in the Labour and Social Service Camp. His preoccupation with discipline through sexual abstinence and dietary reform, though, faded away into obscurity in the state-sponsored youth movements that this PhD charts. Gandhi became a central legitimizing icon of the programme and its first objective was to, "inculcate in the youth the spirit of selfless and patriotic service, dignity of labour and proper utilisation of their life and leisure according to the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi".[18] One irony of the camp movement is that Gandhian ideas about village youth mobilisations were coordinated by a centralised, often unwieldly, system of state planning and state power (that I refer to as the state-organised youth sector) but he himself would have opposed many aspects of it.

The Indian National Congress became an important ally to the student labour camp movement. The All-Indian Congress Committee (AICC) requested Congressmen and Congresswomen to give their fullest cooperation in implementing the camp programme and achieving its targets.[19] The AICC instructed each of its subcommittees to form another sub-committee with members of the Youth Congress and Seva Dal to cooperate with the organisations that ran the camp, such as the BSS and NCC, to arrange camps and to establish camps if they did not exist.[20] It requested its young members to make a special effort to enlist students for the camps. This is another example of the Congress

---

[14] Outline of the Work Camps by the Bharat Sevak Samaj, To All RCCs and Zonal and Regional Camp Organisers, B.S.S. 23rd July 1958. In A Set of Instructions issued by BSS to their Regional Camp Committee Organisation of Camp, 1958, Ministry of Education, PE1 -1958 -F-10-47
[14] Ibid.
[15] 4th Interuniversity Youth Festival Report, 1957, Ministry for Education, 13-69/57- D7, NAI
[16] Letter from Behari Sahai to Abul Kalam Azad, 8th March 1955. In Labour and Social Service Camp Policy, 1955, Ministry of Education, 1-3/55 D77, NAI
[17] Narayana Naidu, M.D. 1978. *Rural Reconstruction: Activities of the National Service Scheme*. Tirupati: The Gita Press p.A
[18] Outline of the Work Camps by the Bharat Sevak Samaj, 1958, Ministry of Education, PE1 -1958 -F-10-47
[18] Ibid.
[19] S.N Agarwal writing to All Pradesh Congress Committee RE Youth Camps
[20] Ibid.

68

youth movements eschewing their tradition of anti-state protest in favour of development activity promoted by the Congress governments.

These instructions to mobilise the Congress party to support the camp movement would have been sanctioned at the highest levels of Government. The scholar N. V. Gadgil wrote in 1957, "it is almost an impossibility for the AICC to pass any resolution which is opposed by the Prime Minister, or by the Congress High Command".[21] The largest camp organiser, the Bharat Sevak Samaj, came to be viewed as an embodiment of the Congress state. One scholar of community development argued, "the preponderant membership of this body may have been drawn from the Congress workers, active or passive, or Congress sympathisers; and non- party social workers may have been kept away in large numbers".[22] This relationship between the camp movement and Congress demonstrates the blurry nexus that existed between the dominant political party of the 1950s and 1960s, the development apparatus, and state politics in early post-colonial India.

Underpinning the labour camp was a widespread idea that Indian students had become undisciplined in the initial years following 1947. This critique of the youth was tied up with the idea that the political methods of protest of the pre-independence period had wrongly continued into the post-independence period.[23] This became translated into a long-term anxiety about the future of the newly established nation-state and the physical labour-cum-training of the camp programme was a response to this "youth problem". One educationalist, Behari Sahai, claimed the camps aimed to "to take away the inhibitions of the educated ones".[24] The principal of the University of Travancore, Dr C.S Venkateswaram, held the features of camp life could effectively remedy any undisciplined behaviour. He recorded, "the youths caused some problem of discipline in the early stages; but within a week of common living, dining, and work they ceased to be a problem".[25] In her chairperson's address at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Hansa Mehta claimed a form of camp social service had become especially necessary in India "in the face of the rising tide of indiscipline amongst students".[26]

The figure of the undisciplined youth and the figure of the productive camper draws attention to the conflicting notions of "youth" that existed in independent India. Adult actors in positions of authority - politicians, officials, academics, activists, and journalists - developed and spread two contradictory discourses: one that imagined the collective behaviour of this social group as falling well below what

---

[21] Gadgil, V. N. 1957. "The Government and the Party." *Indian Journal of Public Administration* 3 (4): 353

[22] Bulsara, J. F. 1957. "Public Co-operation—Role of Voluntary Organisations." *Indian Journal of Public Administration* 7 (3): 362

[23] Chakrabarty. Dipesh. 2007. "'In the Name of Politics.'"

[24] Letter from Behari Sahai to Abul Kalam Azad, 8th March 1955

[25] Letter from Dr C S Venkateswaram Principal of University of Travancore, Camps Evaluation Committee (From BSS to the Ministry of Education). In Labour and Social Service Camps, 1956-1957, Ministry of Education, 18-32-1956-D.4 (YS.1), NAI

[26] Mehta, Hansaben. 1962. "Chairman's Address on National Social Service for Youth by Smt Hansaben Mehta." The Indian Journal of Social Work 22 (4): 354

was expected of them following the ousting of the British; and another depicting them as an embodiment of India's future. The Indian youth was simultaneously held to be educated and uneducated, governable and ungovernable, undisciplined and disciplinable, strong and physically weak, hard at work for the development of India or engaging in narrow political pursuits. This dialectical friction, proceeding from the paradoxical meanings invested into this life stage, served to include and exclude the social body of youth from the postcolonial project at the same time.

Leading politicians and policymakers made different recommendations on a compulsory programme of social service and whether the labour camp should be expanded on a compulsory basis during the "long 1950s" between independence and the Sino-Indo war of 1962, although financial and practical limitations prevented this.[27] The Radhakrishnan Commission 1949 had initially suggested an alternative to military training but it claimed that conscription for social service would be "a contradiction in terms". The Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru said in 1958,

> it would be very good for our people to have a period of compulsory service for all young men and women between certain age limits, say 19 to 22 [...] That period should be one year and for say six months and everyone should live in camps under some kind of military discipline. This will give them discipline, physical health, and capacity for manual work and to work together for productive schemes [...] Another advantage of this will be to bring together everyone on the same level, whether he is rich or poor, and make him do exactly the same type of work, part of which will be manual. The only objection that I can think of to such a scheme would be the difficulty of finding money for it [28]

The Deshmukh Committee 1959 put forward an ambitious proposal for a compulsory work camp for all young men and women without any exemption for a period of nine months.[29] The education minister, K.L. Shrimali, subsequently tabled for such a scheme that year in the Lok Sabha, but it did not have adequate support in the House of the People.[30] A widespread support for the incorporation of compulsory state-sponsored physical training into the everyday life of youths is an overlooked aspect of early-postcolonial India. Leading Indian educationalists contrasted this with Europe as will now be discussed.

The K.G. Saiyidain Report 1961 provided an important ideational intervention into the debate on compulsory youth social service and this report explored what was being done in the field of youth service in India and European countries. The Secretary at the Ministry of Education, K.G. Saiyidain,

[27] Kudaisya, Gyanesh. 2017. *A Republic in the Making: India in the 1950s*
[28] Jawaharlal Nehru's letter to Chief Ministers on 9th June 1958, Retrieved March 3rd, 2020 (https://archive.org/stream/letterstochiefmi05nehr/letterstochiefmi05nehr_djvu.txt)
[29] Saiyidain, K.G 1961. *National Service for Youth* p.72
[30] "National Service Scheme: ONE-YEAR PERIOD FOR STUDENTS".1959. The Times of India, Aug 06, (https://search.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/national-service-scheme/docview/366071930/se-2?accountid=9630)

found there was no movement for the introduction of any form of compulsory labour-intensive social service of the kind contemplated by Indian policy makers in France, Germany, Britain, Yugoslavia, and the Scandinavian countries. He found, "there is a strong feeling against any kind of compulsion for youth because, in their mind, compulsion is associated with the memories of Hitler's authoritarian regime which has left unhealed scars on the national mind".[31] In some European countries he travelled to, however, there was compulsory military service for a period of one to two years. These European countries distinguished between a necessary system of enlistment for defence and compulsory social service schemes for nation building, and Saiyidain noted, "some of them, at least, appreciated the anomalous irony of this position".[32]

K.G. Saiyidain advanced the idea that the introduction of a state-sponsored social service scheme must be understood as a part of a larger provision of youth services. He claimed,

> The National Service Scheme that we are considering in India will prove of the maximum benefit […] when it is envisaged as a part of —an important part of— the total network of activities that have been in operation in this country for several years—like Scouting, A.C.C., N.C.C., National Discipline Scheme and the University Village Apprenticeship Scheme.[33]

This comment resonates with my argument that the state-organised youth sector was distinguished by an effort to ensure a variety of youth movements and the state's role was to coordinate these movements to prevent overlaps.

On the relationship between state-sponsored social service movements for youths and voluntary youth movements, one youth leader, ex Major.T.Ramachandra, claimed in 1962,

> This post-independence period in India is one of intense planning and reconstruction and in this, the youths have as much, if not a greater role to play […] what then is the role of voluntary agencies in this great endeavour? It is impossible for the Government of India, with their programme of economic development to undertake a total programme of social welfare through government sponsored and paid agencies or departments […] It is only through the voluntary self-efforts of youths and teachers and the community that can bring about tangible results. Besides, what is done by the state will always be construed as 'compelled' or 'doled' out programmes and not [the] people's own. [34]

---

[31] Saiyidain, K.G. 1961. *National Service for Youth* p.7
[32] Ibid. p.54
[33] Ibid. p. 5
[34] Ramachandra, T. 1962. "NSS for youth and role of voluntary organisations." *The Indian journal of Social Work* 22 (4): 367

Besides reflecting his notion of the youth's key role in Indian development, this quote demonstrates the idea that the early post-colonial state should not attempt to provide all youth services because, firstly, it did not have the bandwidth to provide such a far-reaching programme and, secondly, because it did not want to be the type of state that "compelled" or "doled" out such programmes that would not be understood as the "people's own". He gives special importance to the role of the voluntary efforts of youths themselves, teachers, and communities, or what can be termed civil society, in the state-organised youth sector.

The Government of India's miniscule resources meant they did not introduce the camp movement on a compulsory basis and the programme ran on a shoestring budget. The Planning Minister Gulzarilal Nanda said the resources of the Government of India, "are so meagre […] it would not be feasible for years to meet even a fraction of the demand in respect of the range of services which a Welfare State is called upon to perform".[35] Ministry of Education officials made regular attempts to make reductions in the daily expenditure incurred on the cost of messing. Jawaharlal Nehru personally intervened to encourage efforts to reduce the rate of expenditure of Rs2/8 per day per cadet in camps.[36] Even by the standards of the times that was a tiny amount to accommodate and feed the participating youths. Indian camp life more closely resembled the workhouses of Victorian England than, say, the youth summer camps that flourished across the USA during the same period.[37]

The establishment of a post-colonial Indian camp movement can be juxtaposed with the contemporary camp movement in the United States. These Indian camps under discussion did not represent a "back-to-nature" trend like that which developed on both sides of the Atlantic from the middle of the 19th century.[38] Nor is there evidence that middle class identity became closely associated with summer labour camps as it did in North America where these summer camps were integral to white, middle-class American culture. The key difference is Indian camps recruited middle-class Indians, the composite of the educated classes, but they did not aim to create carefree youth-campers or in any way cater for the "leisured classes".

The US summer camp was invariably a leisure camp in contrast to the Indian labour camp. The Indian camp organisers did not fundamentally tie their programme up with an anti-modernist sentiment, nor did they romanticise anything directly equivalent to "frontier life". An important similarity, however, is that both movements wanted to bring youths into contact with nature and nature was construed as the "real India" or "true America". Moreover, interracial camps were identified to improve race

---

[35] Public cooperation for National Development – BSS written by G. L. Nanda, 1952, Ministry of States (Economic), 33/ (28) /Econ, 1952, NAI

[36] Meeting of the Advisory Committee of the NCC - Minutes of the Meeting, Ministry of Education, F-15-3/54 D3, NAI

[37] See: Ayres Van Slyck, Abigail. 2006. *A Manufactured Wilderness: Summer Camps and the Shaping of American Youth, 1890–1960.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota

[38] Ibid.

relations in the US from the 1940s onwards. In India, similarly, they were a means to advance nation-building imperatives, such as anti-castism from the mid-1960s onwards as will be explored in the next section. A great many histories on the Scouting movement and the US camp movement have been written, although, reflecting the structural imbalance of global historiographical focus, the history of the Nehruvian-era Indian youth camp has been hitherto overlooked by scholars.[39]

The Dignity of Manual Labour, the Differences of Indian Youth and Everyday Camp Life

On May 3rd 1954, a troop of 50 student cadets from the girls' division of the NCC pitched their tents near a rural and mountainous village in the Pachmari District of Madhya Pradesh in central India to prepare for a twelve day "social welfare experiment".[40] This NCC camp sought to bring about sustained and meaningful contact between two groups of women purportedly wholly unacquainted with each other's way of life. The village-camp required the students to teach first aid, home nursing, and sewing classes to the rural folks. The organisers steadfastly assigned the male student with learning the "dignity of manual labour", yet the work allotted to these young women by the organisers reflected their stereotypical view of women

The villagers, however, viewed with suspicion and confusion the girl cadets dressed in berets, khaki shirts and trousers setting about clearing rubbish from the village streets and "teaching" home nursing. One cadet Joy D'Souza said they, "were first greeted with closed doors and shocked faces. The poor people could hardly decide whether we were boys or girls, policeman or an invading army". The camp report heralded a moment of unity between the students and the villagers after they overcame these initial misunderstandings. Joy D'Souza said, "we dug deep into our resources and produced our sweetest smiles to lure them out. This, combined with our practical demonstrations of the girl's intentions, won the day".[41] Figure 1 is an image of the NCC girls instructing a group of young village women who are observing purdah.

This section will explore who the camp programme worked upon and how it worked at the everyday level. The camp movement, in practise, reproduced and reified a hierarchy of citizens that reproduced urban-rural and male-female divisions. The archives tend to tell a story of the student being initially viewed with suspicion before being eventually well received by the villagers; and the narrative outlined at the start of this section at once epitomises this. The villagers often did not engage in labour themselves to support the student's work, as the programme intended, because they believed it to infringe upon caste hierarchies. This section will scrutinise the dominant trope of the villager, who is

---

Philip, Deloria J. 1998. *Playing Indian*. New Haven: Yale University Press. Cupers, Kenny. 2008, "Governing through nature: camps and youth movements in interwar Germany and the United States." *Cultural Geographies* 15 (2): 173-205

[40] Author Unknown. 1954. "NCC Girls Camps." *Social Welfare Journal*, November 1 (8): 28

[41] Ibid.

depicted as "backward" and "steeped in tradition" and explore how the camp movement successfully put youths to work *en masse* on large-scale development projects, such as the Kosi Project Area camp. Besides the development of the village and the villagers, this scheme amounted to a youth welfare programme that aimed to turn the students themselves into disciplined and healthy citizens - even if they did not always respond in the way camp planners intended.

The Indian youth became a bridgehead between state-sponsored development movements that organised the camps and the rural masses who could not easily be reached. However, the arrival of small contingents of between 50 and 100 students and their agenda of village development was often met with scepticism. The villagers regularly believed that these "youths on the spot" must be paid government workers rather than volunteers. The principal of Victoria College in Gwalior recounted,

> the villagers, as a rule, do not cooperate with the party even though the party may be engaged in some important works, like the construction of roads. The chief reason is suspicion that the party is sponsored by the government and that the members would be rewarded for their service. No amount of persuasion could dispel that misunderstanding[42]

The camps sought to teach the "dignity of manual labour" to students and called for villagers to support this work, but the notion of labour and labouring did not have much dignity attached to it for a great many caste-Hindus. The villagers frequently refused to support the camp's work as a consequence. Caste, indeed, is rarely mentioned in official reports of the 1950s or 1960s, it is a silent yet pervasive social discrimination, but these accounts tacitly reveal many villagers felt hard labour should be the work of lower-caste and Dalit groups (historically characterised as "untouchables"). One camper recounted that when her group of women students began to sweep the village streets and clear away rubbish, the rural folks, "enquired pityingly whether we were orphans or persons employed by the Government as sweepers".[43] The implication is that this type of labour ought to be undertaken by those belonging to the sweeper's caste. In another instance, one university professor recounted that the caste-Hindu villagers had requested the students to build a motorable road but refused to participate in the work because they deemed labour beneath them. He wrote,

> When the students reminded the villagers about their promise to participate, they immediately hired some *Harijan* [the Gandhian term for those once called Untouchables] workers to work with them [the students] […] When the students realised the fact that the villagers were steeped in tradition, they began a slow and cautious approach to convince the youth of the

[42] Reponses from K. L Saksensa, Principal of Victoria College, Gwalior. In Labour and Social Service Camp Policy, 1955, 1-3/55 D7, NAI

[43] Author Unknown. 1954. "NCC Girls Camps". *Social Welfare Journal*, November 1 (8): 28

village and some elders, regarding the necessity for them to participate in the road work for their own benefit [44]

Indeed, prevalent in the official archives is a popular trope about the villagers who are "steeped in tradition" or need to be "awakened". The Principal of Victoria College in Gwalior said, "it is my belief and conviction now that students at University can reawaken the villagers from their age long slumber of ignorance and fatalism".[45] Daniel Immerwahr argues post-colonial community development projects maintained the structures of casteism and patriarchalism, but the camp programme assigned the youths a special responsibility to break down these structures of inequality.[46] This was tied up with a discourse about morally "uplifting" these "backward" rural classes to "develop" India, and these objectives seem uncannily familiar to the civilizing missions of the colonial era. But far from being simply "ignorant" or "asleep", and also in contrast to the anecdotes contained in official reports as outlined above about the villager's reluctance to engage in labour, the villagers decisively pushed back against the anti-casteism agendas of the camp movement.

The camp programme placed the onus to develop the village on the student because of their superior education, but they did not receive the adequate training and they commonly exhibited hubris. The social work scholar Dr L.N Welingkar, claimed the students viewed the camps, "as opportunities to make an exhibition of their superior knowledge". He went on, "they behave in a manner which make them thoroughly unpopular with the villages. This is largely because the students are not properly briefed before they go to camps […] it is the result of a reluctance on the part of the teachers to accompany their students in sufficient numbers to maintain proper discipline".[47]

A Miss P.R Reddy noted, the student, "has the tendency to assign a role for himself without realising that the receiver has a role to play too. He frames certain messages which do not take into consideration the interest and needs of the recipients".[48] The student's claim to superior education, therefore, did not necessarily make them best suited to the role of educator. Figure 2 shows a BSS woman camper "explaining", as the caption notes, some aspects of the spinning process to the villager. There is, though, a high likelihood that this villager, who is the one working the cotton-spinning machinery, may not require this lecture.

---

[44] Srinivasa, R. Rao. 1978. "Youth and the Eradication of Illiteracy." p. 26 In *Rural Reconstruction: Activities of the National Service Scheme*, edited by M.D Narayana Naidu. Tirupati: The Gita Press (henceforth *in Rural Reconstruction*)

[45] Reponses from K. L Saksensa, Principal of Victoria College, Gwalior. In Labour and social service camp policy, 1955, 1-3/55 D7, NAI

[46] Immerwahr, Daniel. 2015. *Thinking Small: Modernization, Development and Community*. Massachusetts: Harvard University Press p.87

[47] Welingkar, L.N. 1962. "National Social Service – Its Impact on the education of students." *Indian Journal of Social Work* 22 (4): 360

[48] Reddy, P.R. 1978. "Human Communication in Nutrition Extension Services to Rural Population" p. 46 In *Rural Reconstruction*

The assignment of camp work remade the domesticity of young Indian women. The Ministry of Education instructed the girl campers may take "reasonably hard manual work if they feel up to it". They specified, "there are other tasks as well which girls can undertake more profitably and with a greater measure of success…these are intimately connected with the villages and with the lives of people, especially women and children".[49] The work of the female campers generally consisted of teaching first aid, home nursing, childcare, sanitation, dietetics, sewing, and tailoring. Their alleged feminine traits, which included "considerable tact, common sense and sincerity of purpose … resourcefulness, presence of mind and efficiency in meeting emergencies", made them uniquely suited to these tasks. [50]

The women's camp movement fostered a gendered allocation of work, but it also reflected a dramatic change to the idea of what young woman could do and should be in newly independent India. Campers belonging to the NCC girls' division fashioned a pioneering uniform consisting of a khaki shirt, high belt, trousers and a beret during labour camp parades, and Figure 3 is a picture of Jawaharlal Nehru inspecting cadets in this aesthetic. This programme offered a small yet increasing number of young women opportunities to participate in camp life and, more broadly, to undertake an initiation in the postcolonial nation-building project. However, the organisational capacity of the women's camp movement was relatively diminutive. One official expressed his doubt that as many as 100 could be organised in 1958. This can be contrasted with the 900 camps intended for males that year.[51] The lack of expertise to operate the girls' camps, coupled with the adult attitudes that regularly only ever envisioned a limited role for young female citizens in public life, contributed to their participation only ever being a limited affair.

Everyday Camp Life and the Workings of the Camp

The unequal pathways of the youth in independent India and the ways youths were included on a differentiated basis from the camp movement has been explored, and the focus of this section will now shift to how the camp movement worked in practise. The camp movement put youths to work on larger-scale development projects in rural and urban settings during the 1950s, of which the Kosi Project Area camp is the most notable example. The NCC organised this camp in 1955 to accommodate 12,000 youths to work on two vital sectors of the 147 miles of earthen embankment that aimed to confine the river to a defined course. [52] These camps can be located within the Government of Indian's fiscal imperative to preserve foreign currency reserves that the purchase of large earth-moving equipment would have required, whereas this youthful labour force was unpaid and uncostly.

---

[49] Labour and Social Service Camp Policy, 1954, Ministry of Education, 1-3/55 D7, NAI
[50] Ibid.
[51] Labour and Social Service Camps, 1956-1957, Ministry of Education, 18/ 32, 1956/ D.4 (YS.1), NAI
[52] Sain, Kanwar. 1955. "People's Co-operation in the Kosi Project." *Indian Journal of Public Administration* 1 (2): 134

Established at Supaul, Bihar, each camp was divided into several units of approximately one thousand. In each of these colonies, the camp organisers constructed thatched huts and tube wells to supply drinking water to the cadets. They built community halls where the youth leaders played films during the evening and made reading materials available. They also provided radio sets and played music during the day to lighten the monotonous labour.[53]

Politicians touted the Kosi Project camp as a huge success and linked this to the efforts of the students who plugged labour shortages on sectors that had fallen behind schedule, and again the camper was imagined as the model citizen that the rest of Indian society should imitate. Dr Rajendra Prasad, the President of India, claimed in 1954 he, "wanted the public to imbibe the spirit of discipline, cooperation and self-help from them [the campers]".[54] He praised the cadets,

> who were working for the love of labour [...] the quality of their finished work was of a very high order and compared very favourably with that of the professional labourer… these camps have been of great educational value to the cadets and have helped in infusing in them a spirit of nationalism and selfless service

Though the President of India and the BSS touted Kosi as a huge success, independent observers articulated doubts over the numerical claims made abouts the projects effectiveness.[55]

The camp programme sought to produce a healthy generation of future citizens. One way of realising this objective was to record, monitor and raise their weight. The Regional Camp Committee Organisers instructed, "the weights of the campers should be taken on the day of their arrival and departure to find out the gain or loss during the camp period. It is expected that nearly all campers would gain some weight due to healthy camp life and an adequately balanced diet".[56] This youth movement enabled the intervention of the governmental state into the biopolitics of its youthful population. In this way, this young independent nation-state was figuring out its own biopolitical potential through a negotiation of the physicality of its citizens.[57]

The regimentation of camp life was designed to negotiate a disciplined social body of youth. The campers wore the "simple dress of labourers" and followed a strict daily routine.[58] The morning programme consisted of physical training, common prayer, the national anthem, and breakfast. The

---

[53] Ibid.
[54] Meeting of the advisory committee of the NCC, 1954, Ministry of Education, F-15-3/54 D3, NAI
[55] "People's Participation in Kosi Project" *The Economic Weekly*, June 4, 1955. In Menon, Nikhil. 2018. "'Help the Plan—Help Yourself': Making India Plan-Conscious."
[56] A Set of Instructions issued by BSS to their Regional Camp Committee Organisation of Camp, 1958, Ministry of Education, PE1 -1958 -F-10-47, NAI
[57] Foucault, Michel. 2004. *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France*, 1978-1979. London: Palgrave Macmillan, edited by Michel Senellart
[58] Labour and Social Service Camps, 1958-1959

77

campers did four hours of intensive village work followed by a bath, their lunch and compulsory rest. Thereafter, they attended study classes for two hours where lectures, on such themes as Rural Development, First Aid or Home Nursing, would have been delivered. After tiffin, a light tea-time meal, the students spent two hours on schoolwork; and in the evening the camp organisers arranged youth clubs, drama, games, and exercise.[59] Figure 3 shows young members of the BSS undertaking rhythmic physical exercise. The pedagogical philosophy of the camp held it could tutor its citizens in physical fitness, nationalism and developmentalism through this regime.

Camp life was, however, commonly distinguished by the students' lack of punctuality and their evasion of work. BSS officials stressed the necessity to handle rule breakers with firmness and any lack of punctuality, "must be ruthlessly eradicated so as to infuse the spirit of discipline in our campers".[60] Reports from unexpected visits revealed that organisers regularly did not know the whereabouts of the campers when they should have been undertaking work. In one instance in Bombay, eighteen campers had been tasked with digging a village well. When the inspectors arrived to survey the youth's work, they instead found, "nine villagers were busy digging a well without any assistance from the campers. They told us they are paid Rs2 a day per head and food".[61] The students had simply paid the rural youths to complete the labour for them. The campers responded to the prescribed labour in tactical ways and took shortcuts to make life more convenient. As Michel de Certeau highlights, social actors rarely respond in the way Michel Foucault assumed or planners intended.[62] The state-organised youth sector, despite its noble intentions and top-down and bureaucratic planning apparatus, could at the everyday level be distinguished by unruliness, even chaos.

---

[59] Labour and Social Service Camps, 1956-1957, Ministry of Education, 18-32/ 1956/ D4 (YS.1), NAI
[60] To all Secretaries RE BSS Students and Youth Camp Committees from Ministry of Education, Labour and Social Service Camps, 1956-1957, Ministry of Education. 18/32/ D4 /56 (YS.1), NAI
[61] Request to Confirm the Proceedings of the 18th Meeting of the Committees on Labour and Social Service Schemes held on the 28th of April 1958. See Adverse Remarks in Appendix D, 1959, Ministry of Education. 1/4/59- PE I, NAI
[62] De Certeau de, Michel. 2011. *The Practice of Everyday Life.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 3rd Edition

Figure 1: NCC girls instruct a group of young village women who are observing purdah in the Pachmari District of Madhya Pradesh. The magazine caption said, "the old meets the new, NCC girls with jaunty hats teach the feminine arts to a group of village women".[63]
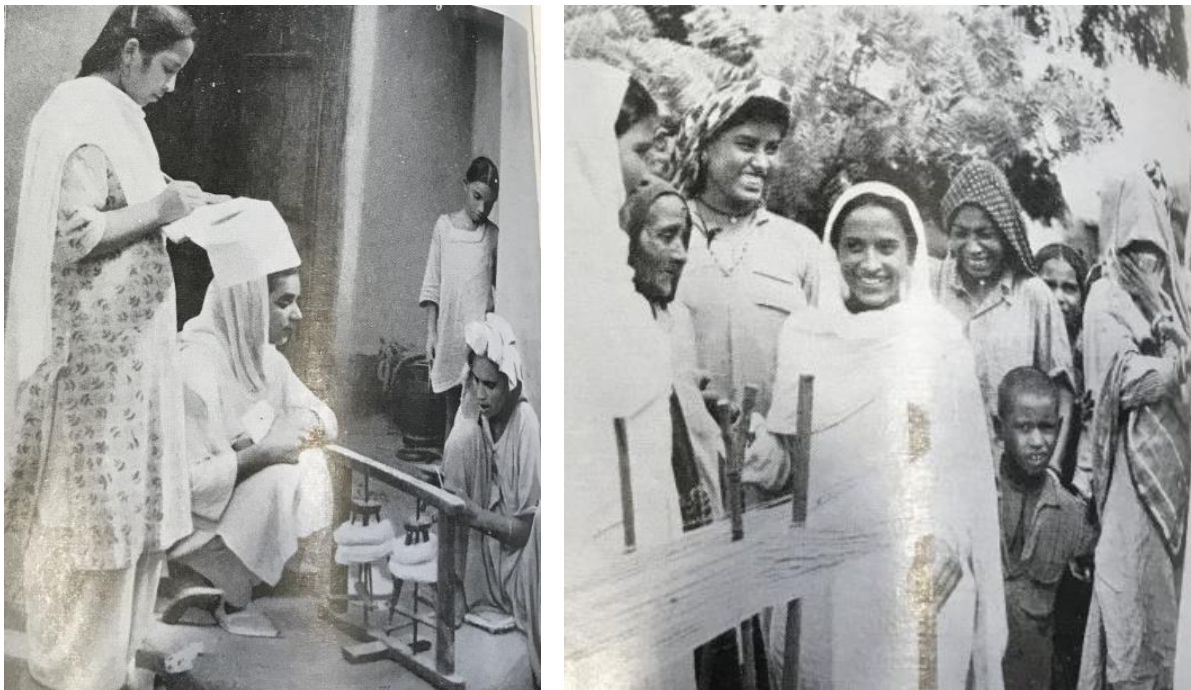
Figure 2: A volunteer "explaining" some aspects of the carding process to a young man who is spinning cotton.[64]

---

[63] Author Unknown. 1954. "NCC Girls Camps." *Social Welfare Journal*, November 1 (8): 28
[64] Kaur, Kamajit. 1956. "Bharat Sevak Samaj." *Social Welfare Journal*, March 11 (12): No page numbers for this article

Figure 3: Young village women smiling and laughing whilst being photographed. The magazine caption noted, "purdah does not stand in the way of enlisting women's co-operation".[65]
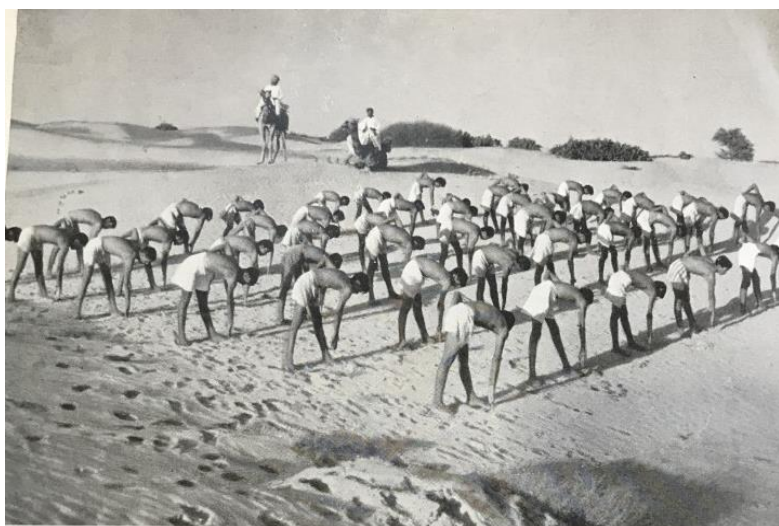
Figure 5: Young men undertaking "rhythmic physical exercise" during a BSS camp.[66]

Figure 6: The logo of the BSS

The Youth Camp, the Bharat Sevak Samaj (BSS) and the State-organised Youth Sector

The Bharat Sevak Samaj's (BSS) organisation of the camp movement functions as a keyhole into the workings of the development apparatus, how it harnessed the efforts of India's citizens, and it gives insights into what I call the state-organised youth sector. The BSS organised by far the most camps, it retooled the programme during the late 1950s to include youths from the poorer classes and the camp movement mobilised students to support the government's war efforts during the Sino-Indian conflict of 1962. By the mid-1960s, however, mounting criticism about mishandled organisation led the Planning Commission to increasingly view the student camp scheme as a failure.

The establishment of the BSS was rooted in a discourse about a lack of public cooperation in post-colonial Indian society. Gulzarilal Nanda, the founding chairman of the BSS and the Planning Minister charged with mobilising the voluntary efforts for the Five-Year Plans, held the public cooperation of citizens in the post-colonial era was lacking. He claimed in 1952, "the active elements find themselves in a largely negative, non-cooperative and destructive mood and as regards to the

---

[65] Ibid.
[66] Ibid.

80

masses we are still faced with their age-long ignorance and inertia".[67] Nanda, who became the interim Prime Minister of India twice for less than two weeks in 1964 and 1966, wrote a pamphlet outlining six reasons for the poor levels of public association in India, and these were as follows: firstly, the insufficient evidence of a firm and consistent social purpose in the policies and administration of the state. Secondly, the absence of substantial signs of progress and achievements and a series of unexplained and inexplicable failures and mistakes. Thirdly, the confusion and demoralisation created by the play of power politics around narrow personal and sectional ends. Fourthly, the frequent appeals to the people's patriotism and self-sacrifice but no suitable avenues were provided through which this may receive satisfactory expression. Fifthly, the sight of too many people engaging in selfish pursuits and unsocial acts, creating feelings of despair amongst the general public. Sixthly, the unsettling effects of unemployment and under-employment in the case of a large number of educated and semi-educated persons.[68]

Therefore, Nanda held the public perceptions which were developing around poor governance, illicit activity, and economic difficulties created a crisis of public cooperation in post-colonial India. Consequently, on the recommendation of the Indian Planning Commission, the Parliament of India unanimously established the BSS in 1952. It had "the object of enabling individual citizens to contribute, in the form of an organised co-operative effort, to the implementation of the National Development Plan".[69] The BSS's constitution held India's biggest resource was its manpower and its task was to draw out the available time and energy of Indians, especially young people. [70]

Acharya J.B Kripalani took an interest in Nanda's morbid assessment of civil society in India and claimed this lack of public cooperation affected Indian youths in particular. Responding to his pamphlet in a strictly confidential note and claiming not to be writing in a spirit of opposition, J.B Kripalani, on the activities of the political class in post-colonial India, asserted

> unless, therefore, a radical reduction is made in our emoluments and standard of living and comfort, the call for austerity and self- sacrifice will sound hollow on our lips. It will not enthuse the young. If they come, they will come for ulterior motives. Today the young see that the selfish are the ones who prosper in public service [71]

---

[67] G. L. Nanda, BSS: Public Cooperation for National Development (Measures to Secure the Public Association and Co-operation), 1952, Ministry of States, 33 (28) - Economic, 1952, NAI

[68] Ibid.

[69] Bharat Sevak Samaj synopsis, Retrieved February 12, 2019 (http://www.bssve.in)

[70] BSS: Public Cooperation for National development (Appendix B) written by G. L. Nanda, 1952, Ministry of States, 33 (28) - Economic, 1952, NAI

[71] Strictly Confidential Note on the Bharat Sevak Samaj by Acharya J.B Kriplani, 1952, Ministry of States, 33 (28) - Economic, 1952, NAI

In his letter, J.B Kripalani referred to U.P ministers receiving new cars despite there being no faults with their current cars and one minister transferring U. P's finest cow as constituting "corruption". Perhaps he is exaggerating or smearing Govind Ballabh Pant's U.P Ministry, whom he identifies in his note, nevertheless he outlines his belief that a "climate of degradation" has "zapped the country of its volunteering spirit" and "disheartened the young".[72] William Gould investigates the long- term practices and discourses of corruption in India and the lower echelons of government at the everyday level from the 1930s to the 1960s. He notes, "discussion of government servant misconduct and transgression of professional norms presupposes the existence of rules frameworks".[73] For Kripalani, the way post-colonial elites broke the established rules for political conduct through forms of corruption triggered "low morale" amongst the youth and across wider society.

The BSS promoted the idea that young citizens should play a vital role in the achievement of the government's economic plan. The BSS's logo of a muscular and healthy man fashioning a loincloth, hands over his head and ready to strike with a pickaxe, reflects the centrality of manual labour and youthful vigour to this national development organisation (see figure 6). One BSS objective was to support the existing youth organisations, "carry out their programmes in a more comprehensive and effective manner". With regards to the country's future intelligentsia, it noted its objective, "the student movement should be encouraged and helped to extend its programme to include physical fitness, recreation, intellectual and cultural activities, [the] development of hobbies and interests in applied sciences [,] and social services in various forms". [74] To these ends, it established the *Bharat Yuvak Samaj* (the India Youth Society) for the "ideological remoulding of the youth, for building up a Socialistic Pattern of Society" [75].

The BSS played a vital role in promoting enthusiasm and understanding about the Five-Year Plans during the early post-colonial period. Nikhil Menon argues the BSS's work to popularise the Five-Year Plans amounted to a "pedagogical state" that used the discourse of planning as a principal "lever of postcolonial nationalism".[76] The BSS's *Jan Jagran Vibhag's (*Peoples Awakening Department) sought to make citizens "plan minded", support their "sense of self-reliance and cooperative efforts", "mobilize public cooperation to implement the plan", and "inculcate national discipline" during the

---

[72] Ibid.
[73] Gould, William.2011. *Bureaucracy, Community and Influence: Society and the State in India, 1930-1960s*. London: Routledge p.4
[74] Ibid.
[75] Bharat Sewak Samaj. 1957. *Bharat Sewak Samaj: What It Represents, What It Does*. New Delhi: Publications Department
[76] Menon, Nikhil. 2018. "'Help the Plan—Help Yourself': Making India Plan-Conscious." p.222

1950s.[77] This was, after all, the decade that witnessed the emergence of a discourse that imagined the collective behaviour of Indian society, and especially youths and students, to be undisciplined.

The BSS set up the *Lok Karya Kshetras* (People's Work Zones) in 1958 to secure public participation in rural development programmes, especially those covered by the BBS's Community Development Programme.[78] The programme's basic assumption was that "development" was a matter of attitude that could be built up slowly and steadily through subtle processes of community organisation. Moreover, the Government of India provided a grant-in-aid to support the work of these BSS organisations. The BSS placed a strong emphasis on decentralisation and its constitution stated, "the principle of decentralisation will be applied to the utmost extent, the basic unit for the purpose of administration being a village or compact locality in at town".[79] The BBS's ambition to mobilise society from the bottom-up is a prime example of the popular participation that has been until recently largely ignored by scholars of Indian development.[80]

The Planning Commission charged the BSS with coordinating the various camp providers and developing the movement's organisational capacity. The BBS set up Camp Pradesh Committees with the vice-chancellors of universities, members of the provincial assemblies, and officers from government departments to oversee the running of the camp in each province. Underlying this mushrooming of the camp programme was their training of specialised youth workers to manage the camps, and the rise of this scheme coincided with the increased recognition of social workers and youth workers as a new and distinct profession in India. In 1955/56, for example, the BSS held 20 training camps for professional camp organisers that focused on how to inculcate discipline and how to secure local cooperation in the villages.[81] The BSS reported in 1956 that, "we are confident that the camp programme was extended to nearly every district and *tehsil* [administrative division] in the country".[82] The report boasted, "it is the considered opinion of the leading educationalists as well as public-men that the BSS camps have secured [a] very great public response and have stimulated the spirit and active participation by the students throughout the country."[83]

The organisation of the camp movement provides insights into what I call the state-organised youth sector. It provides a key example of the way that new youth movements, built in the early post-colonial period, were driven by state or quasi-state actors yet their boundaries with non-state volunteer

---

[77] Bharat Sevak Samaj - Bharat Seva Journal in Hindi and English - Reports for the year, 1960-61, Ministry for Information and Broadcasting (Policy Planning), 1-11, NAI.
[78] "BSS Constitution, Schedule One". Retrieved February 12, 2019
(https://www.bharatsevaksamaj.org/BSSConstitution.html)
[79] Ibid.

[80] See footnote 2 of this chapter
[81] Labour and Social Service Camps 1956-1957
[82] Ibid.
[83] Ibid.

movements were generally blurry or fuzzy. Funded by the Five-Year Plans, the quasi-state BSS led the NCC, also quasi-state, in running the youth camps on the ground with their societal counterparts the Bharat Scouts and Guides and alongside universities. That is, the Planning Commission's volunteering arm, the BSS, a uniformed and militaristic mobilisation of youth sponsored by the Ministry of Defence, the NCC, a freshly amalgamated volunteer youth movement with a record of eschewing anti- British politics, the Bharat Scouts, and the rapidly expanding network of universities, together, delivered the Nehruvian-era camp movement. Demonstrating the way these youth movements were interwoven, the NCC and the Bharat Scouts ran the camps yet the programmes they delivered were generally devised by the BSS. Moreover, revealing their overlapping nature, the BSS was established to promote the economic plans of the Government of India although the Bharat Scouts and the NCC similarly incorporated efforts to make the next generation of citizens "plan minded" in their camp programmes.

The BSS retooled the camp programme to include youths from marginalised castes. Its revised programme claimed that the Indian youth's sharing of life, work, study, recreation, and social service, without any caste distinction, and under the guidance of trained social workers, could create a camp experience free from caste prejudices.[84] They stipulated in 1957 that ten *Harijans* should attend every camp.[85] This ambition encapsulated an idealisation of the secularist-nationalist ideology of anti-casteism. However, despite this inclusion in the official discourses, the caste-based discrimination suffered by Dalits was especially prevalent in the rural setting and the village-camp served to reproduce these inequalities. Village elders would on occasion refuse entrance to this group because of their lack of caste and these Dalits would have to be transferred to a different BSS camp. [86]

The BSS launched a wide variety of camps to include poorer youths during the final years of the 1950s. These included the *Tehshil* Camps for Boys and Girls, Tribal Students Camps for Boys and Girls, Rural Folk (Youngmens) Camps, Rural Folk (Girls-Home-Workers) Camps, and Village Local Camps (or sometimes called *Gram Milap Shivir*).[87] In addition to the introduction of some limited participation of these marginalised groups, the focus of the programme was broadened to include the urban poor and their living environments rather than singularly focusing on the rural areas and the village as the object of development. The same objectives of instilling the dignity of labour and *shramdan* remained, but from 1958 the camp also sought to, "promote cooperation and mutual

---

[84] See Outline of the Work Camps by the BSS, 1958, Ministry of Education, PE1 -1958 -F-10-47, NAI

[85] BSS Objectives, Programme and Instructions for Local Student Camp, Labour and Social Service Camps, 1956-1957, Ministry of Education. 18-32/ 1956/ D.4 (YS.1), NAI

[86] Request to confirm the proceedings of the 18th meeting of the committees on labour and social service schemes held on the 28th April 1958. See Adverse Remarks in Appendix D, 1959, Ministry of Education. 1/4/59- PE I, NAI

[87] BSS Objectives, Programme and Instructions for Local Student Camp, Labour and Social Service Camps

appreciation between students and urban intelligentsia and rural population and dwellers in city slums".[88]

The modification of the programme was partly a response to the criticism about the labour camp's initial fetishisation of student mobilisations in the villages. A principal from Ajmer in Rajasthan noted, in the mid-1950s, "it is not necessary to go to the villages in order to render social service. Half of the population of the state of Ajmer stay in the towns and the people of the towns are in greater need of assistance than the people in the villages".[89] One Mr Gorwalla argued, at a symposium organised by the Bombay Women Graduate Union, that the scheme amounted to, "nothing but a fad, the faddiest of all fads".[90] He stressed manual labour would create amongst students a "cult of conformity" and made the case that seventy-five percent of students who passed the secondary school examinations came from villages, and ordering them to work in the villages was like "taking coals to Newcastle".[91] Mr Pavri, a headmaster in a city school, attacked the scheme as he said it isolated the students in "concentration camps". From his experience of overseeing voluntary labour in villages by students, they developed a "disgust" for it because of its "unimaginative planning".[92]

I will now briefly make the case that a Hindu bias can be recognised in the BSS. The most obvious feature is that its name and its sub-organisations all drew extensively on a Sanskritised Hindi language. More than that, though, its appeal to the masses generally had a Hindu character. For example, the BSS's All Indian Gram Pracharaks Camps sought to mobilise "village missionaries" to promote participation in the Five-Year Plan. Their training consisted of an "ashram life" where *Pracharaks* (volunteers) received post-prayer speeches every morning and night from a *Shivir Acharya* (camp religious instructor), and they had to affirm that "they would dedicate their lives to the selfless service of simplicity and austerity and shall not drink or indulge in similar vices". This training resonates more loudly with the type of training received by the *Pracharaks* of the Hindu Nationalist Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh rather than the volunteer arm of an allegedly rational, scientific, and secular Planning Commission. The BSS made use of *Sadhus* (Hindu holy men) in their efforts to make citizens more "plan conscious" but, to say nothing of Christian or Sikh leaders, there was no similar attempt to harness the imam, mufti, or mullah to this end. Nor did the BSS draw upon Urdu language or Muslim iconography and ideology like it did for the Hindu community.[93]

---

[88] Ibid.

[89] Response to letter from Miss S.J Narasian to all Vice Chancellors of the Indian universities and Education Departments, All state governments. In Labour and social service camp policy, 1955, Ministry of Education, 1-3/55 D7, NAI

[90] Staff, A, R. "National Service Scheme for Students: DISCUSSIONS AT SYMPOSIUM". 1960. The Times of India, Sep 23, (https://search.proquest.com/docview/609127429?accountid=9630)

[91] Ibid.

[92] Ibid.

[93] BBS -Programme of Plan Publicity during Haridwar Kumbha Mela, 1959, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 1- 64/61, NAI

85

The camp movement mobilised students to support the government's war efforts during the Sino-Indo war of 1962, and the BSS led the retooling of the camp movement for the purpose of national defence. The Chief Camp Organiser of the BSS, M.M Wakhare, said, "when there is danger to our country, it becomes the duty of each and every citizen, of each organisation – social or political, to adjust their programmes in such a way that can be helpful to overcome a crisis".[94] The system of labour camps over the previous eight years had, he said, ensured the nation was, "in a position to mobilise the youths systematically and train them in auxiliary programmes in a very short time". The BSS introduced a simple three-point *Shradam Shivirs* (labour camps) programme that focused on putting students on a war footing, and consisted of physical drills, first aid and national solidarity.[95]

The BSS mobilised youths to support the government's war efforts against China and they urged young people to join their Bharat Sevak Dal. A clause in the BBS constitution allowed for the rendering of a special corps of volunteers during national emergencies. This Bharat Sevak Dal, made up largely but not exclusively of young people, functioned to spread state-sponsored information for the Government of India during the conflict. They encouraged a "mass youth pledge of self-denial", the idea behind which was that this social group should forgo their own interests to support the needs of the war, against the Chinese. They tasked their volunteers with disseminating the "correct information" and counteracting "false rumours". Their stated role was to "face down the anti-social elements in society" and to create "a climate of ethical and moral conduct and for mobilising public opinion against corruption".[96] The youthful volunteer became a moral arbiter tasked with confronting forms of dissent, untruths, and mischief during the early 1960s.

Indian youths, therefore, became important bridgeheads, temporarily and strategically, deployed to extend the reach of state-sponsored information, and bolster the overnment's war-effort, amongst the masses who could not easily be reached. The Seven-Point Programme of the BSS, launched shortly after the outbreak of the war, is a prime example of this. These seven points included the (i) provision of assistance to the families of military personal (such as collecting cash for their assistance) (ii) maintenance of the morale and solidarity of the community (this included taking a pledge of self-denial and disseminating correct information) (iii) supporting of the construction efforts required for the needs of defence (iv) assistance in the prevention of rises in prices (v) provision of service in an emergency (vi) mobilisation of savings of citizens towards the National Defence Fund (vii) pushing of

---

[94] Letter from the chief camp organiser entitled, "Defence Measure Through Camp Programme", 1962, Ministry for Information and Broadcasting (Policy Planning), 1--53/62 PP, NAI
[95] Ibid.
[96] Bharat Sevak Samaj Kendriya Pradhan Manual, 1964, Information and Broadcasting, 1-12-64- PP (Policy Planning), NAI

the sale of Defence Saving Certificates and Gold Bonds) (viii) collaboration with any committees formed to support the war.[97]

The BSS mobilised the youthful vigour and the high energies of those not quite yet of fighting age to support the government's war efforts through *prabhat pheris* (morning chanting or sloganeering), singing patriotic songs, and eulogising about national heroes.[98] Demonstrating its privileged position among volunteer movements, the Prime Minister commended the Seven-Point Programme and urged the BSS to go ahead with it. [99] Thirty-five other volunteer organisations, including the NCC, ratified these seven points. Further, the BSS continued to mobilise young people to defend India's borders throughout the early 1960s. The Union Law Minister, Ashoke Sen, instigated the central Lok Karya committee to extend the Lok Karya Kshetras (People's Work Zones) into the border areas of West Bengal, Rajasthan and Kashmir following 1962, though this work did not begin until 1964. The BSS established the Lok Karya Kshetras in collaboration with educational institutions and universities to harness the energies of students and young people in particular.[100] This is one of the activities for which the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting gave grants-in-aid under the guise of "mass-contact activities".[101]

The task of these new Lok Karya Kshetras in the border areas was to i) give a sense of participation in national welfare, security, and social service activities ii) fulfil the felt needs of the people in each locality and iii) organise and harness youth energies as trained units for emergency relief and social service activities. It was, indeed, the category of the youth that the BSS was especially concerned with mobilising. These volunteers, very often youths, provided only with a battery set by the BSS, presumably for a radio or torch, were given the responsibility of protecting the border areas in remote India against false propaganda. Again, throughout the early 1960s, these young volunteers were tasked with being the bridgeheads to advance the Government of India's activities in the areas most difficult to reach.

There was increased awareness of the shortcomings of the BSS-run camps during the final years of the programme, and camp surveyors stressed that everyday conditions often fell well below accepted norms. Many reports described the food as being innutritious and unbalanced. They regularly noted the absence of medical assistance and accommodation facilities. The programme of manual labour could be confused and change quickly due to mishandled organisation. There was an inadequate

---

[97] Bharat Sevak Samaj Seven Point Programme for National Defence, 1962, Ministry for Information and Broadcasting (Policy Planning), 1--53/62 PP, NAI

[98] Ibid.

[99] The Prime Minister in a letter dated 27th October 1962. In Bharat Sevak Samaj Seven Point Programme for National Defence, 1962, Ministry for Information and Broadcasting, 1--53/62 PP (Policy Planning)

[100] Ibid.

[101] Proposal to Proposal to Intensify Lok Karya Activities in the border areas, 1964, Information and Broadcasting, 1-12-64- PP (Policy Planning), NAI

number of instructors and staff that frequently prevented the functioning of the camps.[102] A lecturer in English at Gujarat College, Shree.H. A. Mistry, reported in 1959 that there were only two gentlemen to supervise the whole camp of around 100 students. The two salaried employees of the BSS did not attend for certain reasons that remained unknown to her. The BSS appointed two teachers impromptu, but they both ultimately left the camp a couple of days after its commencement. A lecturer at Nagpur University, Shri M.A Chausarkar, reveals his lively experience of camp life,

> The boys had to sleep in the open space nearby infested by poisonous snakes. One such snake was killed in my presence at about 10:30 in the night … the arrangements for the supply of water were not satisfactory. The boys had to pull out water from a deep well. No facilities for storage were provided by the Block Development Officer. The stock register was not maintained. Accounts were not maintained for food and incidentals etc. The camp ended abruptly one day early. No single and definite project had been taken. So, progress of the work could not be judged. It was unsatisfactory.[103]

Hasty planning, inadequate preparation and wasteful expenditure led to the scheme being wound down in the mid-1960s. A Times of India reporter said this was a "moribund" and "clumsy" scheme that petered out "because of inefficient organisation and a delay in receipt of grants".[104] The Planning Commission's Committee on Plan Projects in 1959 described the camps as "defective".[105] The report claimed the BSS mishandled the expenditure allocated by the Planning Commission, and noted the "frequent changes in the estimates, schemes of work, locations and duration of camps leading to difficulties in matters of accounts and inspection".[106] A second report in 1963 claimed that because of impracticalities, this project ended up being different to what it was intended to be.[107]

In 1964, the Government of India accepted the recommendations of a committee led by Pandit Kunzru, a figure closely tied up with the establishment of the NCC as outlined in the previous chapter, that the control and the organisation of the camps should rest with educational organisations rather than the BSS.[108] Besides criticism about it being poorly planned, a pendulum swing in the *raison d'etre* of the wider state-organised youth sector away from national development towards national defence had occurred following the Sino-Indo war of 1962. Resources shifted to funding the compulsory NCC that remained at a strength of 1,000,000 for the rest of that decade. The idea of the

---

[102] Adverse Remarks in Appendix D, 1959, Ministry of Education. 1/4/59- PE I
[103] Ibid.
[104] Ibid.
[105] Rungachary, Sangtha. "National Service Corps: Yet Another Programme for Youth". 1968. The Times of India, Apr 08, (https://search.proquest.com/docview/499940220?accountid=9630)
[106] Ibid.
[107] Madan, G.R. 1967. *Indian social problems social disorganization and reconstruction* p.145
[108] Ibid.

village youth camp mobilisation entered into a cycle of marginalisation, only to emerge again with the Ministry of Education's introduction of the Social Service Scheme in 1969.

Conclusion

The Indian labour youth movement is an overlooked chapter in the history of nation building, national development, and citizenship in India and the post-colonial world, and the history of the camp itself. Independence gave the post-colonial elite the levers of power to organise a novel and vast state-organised youth movement and created a new relevance for this social group that the camp movement gave form to. The Indian youth came to be widely depicted as a model citizen and held to be the embodiment of the young independent nation-state. This state mobilisation of young men and women, of the country's future intelligentsia, an exemplification of what Sumit Sarkar calls the "democratic and populist-socialistic impulses" of Nehruvian developmentalism, offers a different representation to that of older male state planners who have hitherto been central to the histories of Indian development.[109]

In the next chapter I will further examine the emergence of a state-organised youth sector through an exploration of the Bharat Scouts and Guides and, thereby, present a key example of the way volunteer movements and state actors collaborated. The labour camp movement also had a distinct social service dimension because *shramdan* (physical voluntary contribution), an experience of rural life, and the development of the village through physical labour were central to its programme. The next chapter will further focus on youth social service practices, its evolution into the post-colonial period, and the way youth movements imbued into the life stage of youth social service meanings related to postcolonial nationalist ideologies.

The labour camp reproduced the differences of Indian youth. Inherent in the production of the reports by camp or college staff is the creation of a subject-object dichotomous discursive frame along urban-rural lines. The archives in many cases tell a story of the student being treated and viewed as a paid government worker, though they were volunteers offering *shramdan*, and the young villagers are cautious to keep the students at a distance and reluctant to support their work. The students, on the other hand, generally believed villages to be "dens of ignorance" and held it was their task to develop their rural kinsmen. A double tier system of Indian youth permeated the camp scheme. One programme and ideology for the educated few and another for the uneducated and poor masses prevailed in independent India. It is regrettable, though, that the active voice of these campers is so often missing.

---

[109] Sarkar, Sumit. 2009. "Nationalism and Poverty: discourses of development and culture in 20th century India." In *Development and Cultural Nationalism*, edited by Radhika Desa. New York: Routledge

Historians of youth and childhood must always listen for the subjects of their study, even if they can rarely hear them. They should nevertheless resist obsessing about locating the "voice" assigned to the youth by adult actors or the youths' subversions of the norm. This can serve to reproduce caricatures about stormy teenagers or lead to a neglect of the very norms of life stages that we set out to discover. This chapter has read along the "archival grain" to disentangle meanings, biases and emotions from reports, magazines, journals, and newspapers written by adult actors. [110] This has brought to light the way youths flouted the camp schedule, shirked their labour, suffered caste prejudice and how the students often exhibited hubris when dealing with villagers. The nexus of discourses that met in the camp movement evoke the vast developmentalist potential invested in the citizens of the post-colonial world, and the way the figure of the youth became a powerful symbol of nation-statehood and the horizons of futurity that came with independence

---

[110] Stoler, Laura Ann. 2009. *Along the Archival Grain*

Chapter 4. The Indian Youth, Social Service to the Postcolonial Nation, and the Bharat Scouts and Guides

This chapter will explore youth social service in relation to the Bharat Scouts and Guides during the two decades following independence. This movement represented one of the largest national volunteer youth movements; a huge area of their activity was youth social service, and the idea of working for others was central to their practise. The Bharat Scouts and Guides had its roots in imperial civil society, but as a variety of Scouting groups only unified into this movement in 1951, the model of Scouting that emerged in the independence period was neither a continuation from the colonial period or a transplantation from elsewhere. This chapter will begin by exploring the transition of the Bharat Scouts and Guides from the colonial to the post-colonial era, the coalescence of the various movements into the national movement, and its integration into the state-organised youth sector. The Bharat Scouts and Guides provides an example of the way youth movements became increasingly linked to the Government of India, as it's varied apparatus collectively took a greater responsibility for the coordination of what I call the state-organised youth sector, and the way youth movements imbued meanings related to postcolonial nationalist ideologies into the experience of youth social service.

This chapter will bring to light the social service practices of the Bharat Scouts and Guides during the decades following independence, with a particular focus on the Kumbh Melas. It will be argued the programmes designed for and ideas about Dalit youths, village youths and Guides served to include in the movement these social groups on a differentiated basis because their inclusion tended to be distinguished by patronising discourses and uneven participation. A tension lay at the heart of the Bharat Scouts and Guides that can be called *conservative progressivism* because this movement could be simultaneously a radically norm-building yet also a norm-carrying movement. Born into a web of deep cultural connections with the West, the Bharat Scouts and Guides inherited transnational relationships with the British and international Scouting organisations from which it did not seek to extract itself, and the movement's leaders sought to further integrate into the post-colonial Scouting internationalism.

Existing Literature

R. Srivatsan provides a useful definition for "service" in the Indian context. He notes, "the term 'service', historically speaking, has an alias, seva which recurred in different contexts in the period 1900-1950 … more precisely, however, seva is conceptually equivalent to charitable service." Noting

the "fuzziness" of the concept, Srivatsan uses it as a "meta-concept …that holds together clusters of terms describing identical or related activity".[1] Besides the moral-economic dimension, he argues seva secured the hegemonic rise of the caste-Hindu elite during colonial rule and could be used as an instrument against untouchable and tribal politics in the four following ways: firstly, seva was a principle of nationalist commitment to social reform of the depressed classes and tribes; secondly, this led to seva becoming an implicit principle of criticism of colonial rule; thirdly, it became an aesthetic principle where the *sevak's* performance was a demonstration of commitment or a deep piety; and fourthly, seva was one of the "implicit governmental principles of the policy orientation of the national state in India". Regrettably, caste is rarely mentioned within the Bharat Scouts and Guides archives. This movement nevertheless pledged itself, as an ideal of social service, to the social reform or uplifting of Dalits, and this will be discussed in this chapter.

This PhD thesis has thus far argued that a set of actors from across the socio-political landscape advanced a discourse that independence meant that youths should engage in defence and development work, eschew political activities that were regularly construed as "undisciplined" behaviour, and another vital alternative area of activity that this social group was directed towards was social service. In the independence-era, the Bharat Scouts and Guides, much like the NCC and the labour camp movement, provided newly configured youth movements where these future citizens could perform and actualise – in the eyes of adult actors at least – their dedication to nationalist ideologies through social service to the postcolonial nation. R.Srivatsan claims *seva* was an "implicit governmental principle of the policy orientation of the national state in India", and this chapter will explore how this "governmental principle" could be realised, imagined and exercised through state-sponsored volunteer youth movements such as the Bharat Scouts and Guides.

The scholarly writings on the *seva samitis* [service societies] in India interact with the theme of social service. As outlined in the introduction, Carey Watt argues the social service activities of colonial era youth movements, such as the Arya Samaj, the Theosophical Society, the Seva Samiti, and the Servants of India, enhanced the possibilities for sociability and facilitated the creation of cross-caste, cross-class, transregional and urban to rural solidarities in the decades leading up to independence.[2] However, the rich associational life present in late-colonial northern India described by Carey Watt is contrary to the critique of the post-colonial voluntary efforts encapsulated by Kunzru, Nanda and Kriplani that have been outlined in the previous two chapters.

One similarity between the colonial era social service movements examined in the existing literature and the post-colonial era social service movements that I explore is that they both sought to provide

---

[1] Srivatsan, R. 2014. *Seva, Saviour and State* p.2
[2] Watt, Carey. 2005. *Serving the Nation*

youths with opportunities to learn about the duties of citizenship, subscribed to ideas about the national inefficiency of this social group, and promoted healthy young bodies and patriotic action as attributes of good citizenship.[3] Notwithstanding these shared objectives and organisational forms between the Bharat Scouts and Guides and these antecedents of the colonial era, a key difference, however, is the state-sponsored nature of the movement under study in this chapter that resulted from its incorporation into the domain of state planning and development policy.

There has been a fair amount of literature on the Scouting movement and the YMCA in India that interacts with this investigation into post-colonial Scouting. This research collectively reveals how local Indian traditions of physicality shaped the programmes of youth movements that had their origins in Britain and the United States.[4] As I outlined in the introduction, they bring to light their uneasy (as with the nationalist Scouting movements) or collaborative (as with the pro-British Scouting movements and generally with the YMCA) relationship with the colonial state.[5] These histories are, though, almost entirely concerned with the colonial period and often seek to theorise about the colonial encounter. This chapters tracing of the Bharat Scouts and Guides into the post-colonial period allows us to chart how the Scouting movement took deeper roots in independent India, the development of its organisational forms, the shifts in its undergirding value systems and their promotion of postcolonial nationalism.

Further, this literature has highlighted the powerful influences of the colonial discourse of race and underlines the racial differences imbued into the imagining of the Scout during the colonial period.[6] Crucially, they are not manifest in the archives of the Bharat Scouts and Guides. Rather, and this is not to claim that they did not exist, the issue of race-based hierarchies had been nominally resolved in the written discourses following the full Indianisation of the movement that occurred after 1947. Previous discourses that were predicated on the idea of a fundamental difference between Europeans and south Asians were omitted in the official discourses following independence, if not even a couple of decades before. Therefore, both the racialised formations of the Scout and the Guide in India and the articulations of nationalism invested in them changed with India's independence and the Indianisation of the Scouting movement.[7] With regards to the archives utilised for this chapter, I have drawn upon documents, leaflets and magazines from the Bharat Scouts and Guides Headquarters in

---

[3] Ibid.

[4] Watt, Carey. 2007. "The promise of 'character' and the spectre of sedition." Fischer-Tiné, Harald. 2018. "Fitness for Modernity."

[5] Alexander, Kristine. 2018. *Guiding Modern Girls*. Block, Nelson R and Tammy M. Proctor. 2009. *Scouting Frontiers*

[6] Watt, Carey. 2007. "The promise of 'character' and the spectre of sedition" Fischer-Tiné, Harald. 2018. "Fitness for Modernity."

[7] Barlow, T. E et al. 2005. "The Modern Girl around the World: A Research Agenda and Preliminary Findings." *Gender and History* 17 (2): 245-294

New Delhi. I have also explored the documents pertaining to this movement in the National Archives of India in addition to reports from the Times of India.

Scouting in India and the Transition to Independence

Before charting the history of the Bharat Scouts and Guides and its social service activities and agendas during the early post-colonial period, the amalgamation of the colonial era Scouting movements and their relationship with the colonial state, I will first argue that the Bharat Scouts and Guides was incorporated into the state-organised youth sector during the decade following independence. I will also argue that there were vital efforts to ensure that this volunteer movement complemented those with an even closer affinity to the Government of India.

In 1951, a variety of Scouting groups unified into the Bharat Scouts and Guides. Education Minister Maulana Abul Kalam Azad facilitated the creation of this movement after thirty years of unsuccessful efforts by colonial officials, freedom fighters and the founder of the scouting movement in the UK, Lord Baden-Powell. Baden-Powell had presided over efforts to establish a "National Organisation" in India in 1921.[8] The Indian Scout Association led by Dr. Annie Besant merged with smaller Scout groups to form a Boys Scout Association patronised by the Government of India. The large Seva Samiti Scout Association, led by S. R. Bajpai, Madan Mohan Malviya and H. N. Kunzru, however, opted to stay out, rejecting a Scout promise that required "loyalty to the King".[9]

Carey Watt claims the rise of early Indian Scouting movements was initially greeted with "colonial consternation" and fears about them becoming "seditious samitis".[10] There was incoherence to these different Scouting groups and confusion about whether Indians could join amongst the missionaries, YMCA volunteers, colonial officials and self-help association leaders that initiated these movements. Elsewhere, Watt highlights the overlap between imperial social reformers and nationalist or Hindu reformers during the early Scouting movement. Their idealisation of the supple male body with "no showy muscles" contributed to the success of Scouting in the Indian population where questions of manliness, bodily culture, and physical cultures were prominent during the early 20th century.[11]

The Scouting movements that eschewed nationalist politics promoted the model Scout as one who was apolitical and enjoyed a privileged position in the eyes of the colonial state. One college principal stated in his opening address at the All-India Scout Mela 1934, "however attractive the excitement of

---

[8]Nath, Dharmendra, A. *2010. Scouting and Guiding in India.* New Delhi: A Publication of the Bharat Scouts and Guides National pp.27-28

[9] Ibid.
[10] Watt, Carey. 2007. "The promise of 'character' and the spectre of sedition."
[11] Watt, Carey. 2009. "'No Showy Muscles'." In *Scouting Frontiers* edited by Nelson R. Block and Tammy M. Proctor Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing. Also see, Alter, Joseph. 1994. *Somatic Nationalism: Indian Wrestling and Militant Hinduism*

politics may be to people of a certain temperament, a Scout has no politics, and you have done well in declaring that your organisation is entirely non-political".[12] This principal's idea that the Scout was above politics, in actuality, meant that they did not interact with the nationalist movement. These groups swore an allegiance to the King-Emperor and the Indian princes who acted as chief Scouts, and this allegiance was too, of course, a political act. They participated in Durbars, and as the Viceroy noted in 1938, rendered "a very valuable service in inculcating loyalty to His majesty [...] A service that is frequently far from being rendered by certain other associations which profess to fulfil much the same purpose as the boy Scouts".[13] `

Lord and Lady Baden Powell, the Chief Scout of the World and the Chief Guide of the World, returned in 1937 to attempt to unify the divergent Scouting movements. The regional movements with a more nationalist outlook instead merged into a new organisation called the Hindustan Scout Association in 1938. The horrors of partition coupled with the emergent idea that the duplication of societal efforts would be unjustifiable in the independence era, provided the leaders of the largest Scout movements, Pandit Kunzru and Justice Vivian Bose, with the necessary impetus for unification.

The newly-Indianized Bharat Scouts fell into the policy orbit of the Ministry of Education and the Planning Commission, and it was throughout the 1950s and 1960s that this movement became incorporated into what I call the state-organised youth sector. For instance, the Planning Commission funded 62 Labour and Social Service Camps for Scouts during what the officials called the "reasonably weathered months" of October 1958 and April 1959.[14] It offered a cheaper means to run labour camps for the camp planners because the Bharat Scouts only used unpaid and volunteer work and they consequently extended the length of the camps from ten to fourteen days. [15] The Five-Year plans also financed training camps for Scout masters, Rover leaders, sub-masters, and state Scout officers. [16]

There were also vital efforts to ensure these youth movements complemented each other. India's first Prime Minister, who attended most of the National Jamborees until his death in 1964, expressed an apprehension that the growth of the NCC and the ACC could interfere with the growth of the Bharat Scouts during the first half of the 1950s.[17] He stopped short, however, of endorsing a Ministry of

---

[12] Opening address by P. Seshadri Principal of Government College Ajmer at the Sixth All India Seva Samiti Boy Scout Mela, Ajmer, In Boy Scouts - Sewa Samiti Boy Scouts, 1934, Rajputana Agency, 316- P, 1934, NAI
[13] Scouts- regarding boy Scouting in India (contains miscellaneous papers on the progress of the Scout movements in Rajputana states), 1938, Jaipur Residency, 387, NAI
[14] Expansion of Scouts and Guides during the 2nd Five-year plan, 1958, Ministry of Education, 9-23 PE-II, 1958, NAI
[15] Ibid.
[16] Editorial: Citizens of tomorrow and 3rd All Indian Jamboree, Bharat Scout and Guide, February 1961
[17] Meeting of the advisory committee of the NCC - minutes of the meeting, 1954, Ministry of Education, F-15-3/54 D3, NAI

Education official's proposal to relate the strength of the ACC in each state to the strength of the Bharat Scouts.[18]

The agendas of the officials within the Ministry of Education and the leaders of the Bharat Scouts overlapped during the decades following independence. The Bharat Scouts' explicit aim was to improve the outlook and efficiency of future citizens of the country. Their new post-amalgamation constitution stated,

> Our aim is to train the boys irrespective of race, creed, or caste, to become good and loyal citizens, reverencing God and subordinating personal interest to the welfare of others, abstaining from violence, to form their character by training them in habits of observation, obedience and self-reliance, and to teach them services useful to the public and handicraft useful for themselves. [19]

Notwithstanding the difference between policy and everyday lived realities, the new Scouting organisation's ideational turn was consistent with the larger Congress-led anti-caste, anti-communalist and secularist trends associated with the postcolonial nation-state building project. Officials in the Ministry of Education laid emphasis on and endorsed in their reports the movement's ambition to be entirely free from any hint of political or communal partisanship.[20] Jawaharlal Nehru declared in the year 1952 that the Bharat Scouts were responsible for "instilling in the minds [of youth] the spirit of working together and considering India a unified whole".[21]

Like with the NCC and the student labour camp movement, underlying the Bharat Scouts was also a widespread critique about the poor volunteering ethos of parents in independent India. One senior Scout from the Punjab, Hardir Singh, noted after a tour of Europe, in 1952, "I find in these countries' parents take a very keen interest in Scouting. They readily become members of group committees, local associations, and district associations. They frequently attend troop meetings and patrol meetings".[22] This level of parental support, he held, endorsing Pandit Kunzru's view, rarely prevailed in India. Throughout the 1950s, leaders of the Scouting movement stressed difficulty obtaining financial subscriptions and claimed Indian parents failed to understand the necessity of financial contributions. Provincial Chief Commissioner, G.C. Chatterjee, recorded, "the general public has made very poor responses to the appeals we have issued from time to time […] A youth movement in

---

[18]Ibid.

[19] Merger of Boy Scouts association and Guides into Bharat Scouts and Guides, 1953, Ministry of Education, F-8-6/53-D3 1953, NAI

[20] Merger of the Hindustani Scout- Assam Bay Scout Association etc. Minutes of the meeting held on 29th May 1948, Ministry of Education, 1948, 73-211/48 D-2, NAI

[21] Ibid.

[22] Bharat Scouts and Guide, April 1952

any country can never be self-supporting".[23] He went on, "youth organisations, particularly those with a political bias, had better finances, and people were attracted more to such institutions than to Scouting". G.C. Chatterjee felt the Bharat Scouts missed out on vital finances and support because they eschewed involvement with political parties.

Bharat Scouts and Guides, Indian Youth and Social Service

> A Scout in Jhansi, Uttar Pradesh, stopped a pickpocket who was making away with a purse containing Rs 5,000 belonging to a helpless Japanese tourist. The kind lady full of appreciation for his deed handed him crisp notes to which the lad replied apologetically: 'Madam, my duty is to serve.' This incident may pass off lightly, but it has won the gratitude of a visitor to this country, and raised its prestige [24]

This narrative from the Social Welfare Journal in 1955 portrays not only the Scout's urge to devote himself to the service of others, but also a duty-oriented model citizen who would instinctively go beyond reasonable expectation, even putting himself in danger, to work for the standing of the country and to serve others. This is a common type of representation in the adult discourses constructed by officials, politicians and Scout leaders that held the Scouting movement could realise the nation-building potential of the Indian youth. The figure of the Scout is designated with agency to make a difference in the roles played by him as volunteer, healthy citizen, and social servant. The post-childhood passage to adulthood continued, as it had been during the colonial era, to be imagined as a stage of life for voluntarily and enthusiastically participating in social service activity. I will now bring this to light through an exploration of their role in the Kumbh Melas during the 1950s.

The Scouting movement mobilised young people to serve at Hindu religious festivals during the 1950s. 3,000 Bharat Scouts and Guides volunteered at the Solar Eclipse Mela held at Kurukshetra in February 1952.[25] The Scouts surveyed the geography of the Mela grounds before the festival began to be able to assist the pilgrims and established a Scout Information Bureau at the Mela Central Enquiry Office (and a great many achieved their Pathfinders Badge as a result). The Public Health Department assigned them the task of sanitation and cholera detection work.[26]

The Mela organisers assigned Scouts the role of rescuing those who got into difficulty swimming in the sacred water as "ghat observers". As the ability to swim was not common in India, it was an impressive feature of youth and a universalised mark of a model Scout that is rooted in one of the founding tales of the movement. Baden-Powell had been motivated to establish the youth organisation after witnessing a woman drown in the Hampstead Heath ponds in London while youthful spectators

---

[23] Punjab State Commissioners Review 1951-52, The Bharat Scouts and Guides, June 1952
[24] Subba Rao, K.B. 1955. "On Boy Scouts". *Social Welfare Journal* 2 (2): page numbers unavailable
[25] Kurukshetra: Solar Eclipse Mela, The Bharat Scouts and Guides Bulletin of Punjab, 1952-53 edition
[26] Ibid.

merely looked on. His advice in *Scouting for Boys*, the foundational text and instruction book, urged Scouts to, "plunge in boldly and look to the object you are trying to attain and don't bother about your own safety".[27] These instructions valorised the Scout who endangered his own life to ensure the safety of others who had gotten into difficulty. At the Kurukshetra Tank in 1952, for example, one Scout undertook a daring rescue operation to untangle a woman's foot from some seaweed and save the drowning woman's life. Like the hapless Japanese tourist from the first anecdote, the woman is a passive actor in jeopardy. The youth, in contrast, was heralded as a hero for his "gallantry efforts to swim", and the article celebrated his fearlessness. Because of the article's emphasis on his daring, the implication is that he could barely swim himself![28]

Despite being potentially deadly, the ability to sacrifice oneself in the service of others was an idealised characteristic of the Scout and the Guide. The Guides were similarly expected to face danger in the pursuit of social service through their maintaining of the safety of pilgrims in the ladies' ghats at the Melas. Guide leaders requested the young women to keep a strict watch on the bathing steps for female pick pockets at the 1952 Mela, and there was an expectation they would arrest the thieves if they caught them in the act. The small number of 21 Guides that attended the Mela relative to the 3,000 Scouts, however, points to their diminutive role at the Melas. [29] Rooted in the cruel reality that young people in India drowned in large numbers because of their inability to swim, the founder's advice was fortunately rejected in favour of a more sensible approach by the Bharat Scouts in the early 1960s. Thereafter, the Indian Scouting magazine promoted the US swimming instructor Fred Lanoue's "drownproofing" methods that guides youths to survive in water disaster scenarios without sinking. [30]

The All-Indian Boy Scouts Association, a renegade movement that refused to join the Bharat Scouts, also held a Social Service Camp at the Kumbh Mela in 1954. These Scouts administered first aid, attended to enquiries, registered missing pilgrims, and took on the role of fire fighters.[31] It was noted, "the Scouts rendered a remarkable service on four occasions in controlling fires that broke out at different sites during the period… a few of them also were slightly hurt while extinguishing the fire". [32] Again, as in the anecdote at the beginning of this section, the fire-extinguishing Scout is depicted as being ineluctably devoted to the service of others even if it means he is placed in harm's way.

---

[27] Baden-Powell, Robert. 1908. *Scouting for Boys: A handbook for instruction in good citizenship.* London: Horace Cox p.195
[28] Kurukshetra: Solar Eclipse Mela, The Bharat Scouts and Guides Bulletin of Punjab, 1952-53 edition
[29] Ibid.
[30] Not waterproof – but drown proof: From the Boy Scouts of America comes a six-step plan for the Lanoue Method by Dhri-Saroj Shosh, The Bharat Scout and Guides, May 1961
[31] Activities of All India Boy Scouts Association, 1953, Ministry of Education, F- 1-5-54-D7, NAI
[32] Ibid.

The All-Indian Boy Scouts Association instructed these young men to control the human traffic to avoid stampedes at the 1954 Mela, although they did not always manage this successfully. Far from these efforts being meticulously organised, the Scouts executed this work on an informal and ad-hoc basis and the Kumbh could be for a scene of calamity. Kama Mclean writes on the1954 Kumbh Mela stampede, that "[s]adly, hundreds of pilgrims died on the biggest bathing day, mainly as a result of crowd mismanagement, which the subsequent inquiry blamed largely on the aggressive actions of a band of sadhus. The findings of the official inquiry were not well accepted, as attested to by a thriving oral tradition which maintains that there was a cover-up in the inquiry".[33] Scouts had the tragic task of organising an improvised fencing area near the police station tent and arranging the bodies of the 800 dead, the figure put forward by the Kumbh Inquiry Committee, following the Kumbh Tragedy.[34]

The Scouting movement's mobilisation of youths for the Melas underscores their Hindu undertone. There is no evidence for a similar attempt by them to support Islamic festivals. The Scouting movement made claims to represent the nation, that youths from any religious group could join, yet their partiality for the marshalling of large-scale Hindu events demonstrates a skew-whiff commitment to secular nationalism.[35] Moreover, the Ministry of Education voiced concerns about local Scout committees being taken over by the RSS and the Jan Sangh and becoming "Hindutva bodies". This National Archives of India file has permanently disappeared for "tressing" (and the implication of and condemnation of the RSS activities leads one to be suspicious about why).[36]

The distinctive neckerchief-based uniform marked the Scouts as being different from other youths at the Melas and signified trust, a set of moral values and hard work. By the end of one Mela, it was said "the Scout uniform has now come to be recognised by pilgrims and the priests as a symbol of trust".[37] Ministry of Education officials heralded the impressive work schedule of the Scouts. They noted, "the minimum duty allotted to a Scout was of six hours duration in two shifts. But a large number of them voluntarily worked for more than twelve hours and some remained at their posts for twenty-four hours".[38] The Scouts were held to idealise a resolute dedication to the service of others and to embody a remarkable work ethic, even if it meant it compromised their own sleep and health. This uniform could express difference within and between international Scouting groups, and the

---

[33] Maclean, Kama. 2008. *Pilgrimage and Power: The Kumbh Mela in Allahabad, 1765-1954*. Oxford: Oxford University press. Page number unavailable in online book, see chapter six: The Sarkari Mela

[34] Kumbh Inquiry Committee by U.P. Govt to inquire into Kumbh Tragedy, Private papers, File No. 16, NAI
[35] For the Congress's relationship with secularism and Hinduism, see: Gould, William. 2004. Hindu Nationalism and the Language of Politics in Late Colonial India. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

[36] Merger of Boy Scouts association and Guides into Bharat Scouts and Guides, 1953, Ministry of Education D3, F-8-6/53-D3 1953, NAI
[37] Kurukshetra: Solar Eclipse Mela, The Bharat Scouts and Guides Bulletin of Punjab, 1952-53 edition
[38] Ibid.

Bharat Scouts inserted a *Dharma Chakra* into the middle of the *Fleur-de-Lis badge* following the 1951 amalgamation.[39]

Jai Prakash Narayan applauded the Gandhian character of the Bharat Scout and Guides' nation-building activity which he contrasted unfavourably with the NCC, the ACC, and the student labour camp movement that I have explored in the previous two chapters. Addressing the National Jamboree in 1961, the independence activist commended the Indian Scouts as "soldiers of peace". He said, "to be in touch with six lakhs of minds is a heavy responsibility… Unfortunately, in our country, in spite of the traditions and the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi, military attitudes are coming up and being introduced through the NCC, ACC and work camps and so on".[40]

Jai Prakash Narayan, moreover, pointed to the collapse of democracy in post-colonial Africa in his speech to warn the Scouts about the dangers associated with the national military for newly independent countries. Referring to the military mutiny by Congolese soldiers against their officers in the garrisons of Léopoldville and Thysville in July 1960, he told the Scouts about "what is happening in the Congo [...] It is not the common people who are responsible for the upsurge. It is the soldiers who are supposed to display discipline, that have started all the trouble".[41] In this speech to the National Jamboree, Jai Prakash Narayan revealed his mistrust of the Indian Army's organisation of youth movements, and his fear that the newly established state-sponsored movements risked inculcating militaristic values into Indian youths.

Despite their prototypically colonial era shirts and shorts aesthetic, and their promotion of physical culture and exercise drills, the Bharat Scouts had little overlap with what Roy and Ali call the "fascist repertoire of Europe".[42] The Bharat Scouts were not linked with the labour-oriented and militarist features of the Nehruvian youth order that has been outlined in chapters 2 and 3. This can be contextualised within the International Scout Bureau's attempts to remodel the movement following the Second World War. They sought to shift the programme away from the defensive nationalism associated with Baden-Powell, and towards a more pacifist and anti-war stance. A historiographical debate about whether the original purpose of the Boy Scouts was fundamentally militaristic or about promoting civilian citizenship occupied the pages of the *English Historical Review* during the late 1980s. Allen Warren argued that Baden-Powell's objective in forming the Boy Scouts was to promote civilian citizenship, with a stress on education and learning through play, while John Springfield countered with the assertion that the Scout movement was fundamentally militaristic. He claimed that

---

[39] Merger of the Hindustani Scout- Assam Bay Scout Association etc. Minutes of the meeting held on 29th May 1948, Ministry of Education, 1948, 73-211/48 – D2, NAI

[40] Soldiers of Peace by Shri Jai Prakash Narayan (addressing the Jamboree on 28.12.1960), Bharat Scout and Guide, February 1961

[41] Ibid.

[42] Raza, Ali and Franziska Roy. 2015. "Paramilitary Organisations in Interwar India", *Journal of South Asian Studies* 38 (4): 671-689

prior to 1920 the movement's intention was to train "soldiers of the future" for the British nation and empire.[43]

The Indian Scouting Movement, Dalits, and Rural Youth

This section will bring to light the unequal pathways of youthhood in Independent India through an exploration of the ways the Scouting movement in the Indian context prescribed different programmes or types of activity for Dalits and rural youths. The Bharat Scouts and Guides included those from marginalised backgrounds in their discourse about an inclusive fellowship of Scouting. Their promotion of these norm-changing narratives, so closely related to post-colonial nationalist ideologies, represented somewhat of a shift from entrenched ideas about social differences.[44] Their 1951 rule change emphasised inclusivity, noting "a Guide/Scouter is a friend to all, and a brother and sister to every other Scout, no matter what his country, class or creed he/she may belong to".[45] The Bharat Scouts Headquarters, claimed, "we do not want to perpetuate a backward class, a scheduled caste, a depressed class, Adivasis, Vanavasis etc. The organisers will serve the cause better by encouraging common meetings and common rallies and camps for them rather than having activities arranged exclusively for one class".[46]

The quotation below from the Bharat Scouts and Guides Magazine concerns 33 Dalits, aged between 13-15, who were put forward by the Bombay Labour Welfare Department and who joined the Bharat Scouts and Guides Jamboree in December 1960.

> They are ever eager to pull their weight in life, not seeking concessions in the name of their handicaps, but going ahead briskly on merit and actual achievement … these handicapped Harijan children living in an un-healthy environment could not be expected to come to the level of children who have every advantage of birth and prosperity. Yet these children won the praise of everybody in the Jamboree on account of their devotion to the spirit of Scouting.[47]

This quote reveals those Dalits who accessed the widening opportunities provided by Scouting found a youth movement distinguished by patronising discourses about "handicapped harijans" and their "un-healthy environment". Therefore, the inclusion of Dalits in the official discourse did not equate to

---

[43] See: Warren, Allen. 1986. "Sir Robert Baden-Powell, the Scout Movement and Citizen Training in Great Britain, 1900-1920." *The English Historical Review* 101 (399): 376-398. Springhall John. 1987. "Baden-Powell and the Scout Movement before 1920: Citizen Training or Soldiers of the Future?" *The English Historical Review* 102 (405): 934-942

[44] Alexander, Kristine. 2018. *Guiding Modern Girls.* Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press. p.7

[45] Merger of Boy Scouts association and guides into Bharat Scouts and Guides, 1953, Ministry of Education D3, F-8-6/53-D3, NAI

[46] Scouting amongst the Handicapped and Neglected, Bharat Scouts and Guides Annual Report 1953

[47] Slum Children by the Editor, Bharat Scout and Guide Magazine, February 1961

equal participation of Dalits in the activities of Scouting. The post-colonial Scouting movement, on the one hand, claimed to facilitate a national brotherhood of youths that cut across the boundaries of caste but, on the other hand, foregrounded caste-based points of difference. As R. Srivatsan explains with The Harijan Sevak Sangh (HSS), the caste-Hindu ideological character of voluntary activism became a political instrument that reproduced new forms of marginalisation of the Dalit, and these initiatives imagined the Dalit as a passive and malleable object of social service.[48]

The All-Indian Boys Scout Association, a renegade organisation that refused to amalgamate with the Bharat Scouts and Guides, similarly established a discourse about the inclusion of Dalits in the movement during the early 1950s. For example, the activities of the "Harijan Welfare Rover Scouts", made up of the oldest section in terms of age, reveals the way that Dalits were taken as the target-object of their welfare programme.[49] These rovers visited the residential areas of Dalits to impart instructions in "first aid, hygiene, and temperance". The Rovers advised the Dalits to adopt commercial, engineering, and agricultural careers and informed their fellow youths that the Rovers might be utilised for "helping and guiding them from time to time".[50] It seems though that there was little in the way of attempting to recruit these poorer classes to the All-Indian Boys Scout Association.[51] These Scouts took Dalits as the object of development and understood themselves as the agent of their development. This was a programme of social service activities, designed for the educated, urban, and more privileged youth, that claimed to centre around the alleviation of Dalit groups, but it simultaneously served to reproduce their exclusion.

In terms of the inclusion of rural youths, the Bharat Scouts committed to promoting the movement throughout rural areas and to those young men not in education throughout the 1950s. Underlying this objective, however, was the prevalence of a discourse about rural people being fascinated with the uniformed organisation. The narratives in official magazines held that participation in Scouting served as a signifier of social difference and marked the Scout out as a source of captivation in the eyes of the villagers. It was reported that at the Chandigarh Rally of the Punjabi Scouts in February 1952, "No day passed when parties of both men and women did not throng in large numbers to see the Scouts at work and play. During the campfires, they came in hundreds and joined in the fun under perfect discipline".[52] One account described a Guide group's visit to a refugee children's centre to distribute fruit in West Bengal in March 1955, where the children were so joyous that "at the conclusion of each trip the children chased the bus full of Guides and implored them to return".[53] These anecdotes reveal

---

[48] This process is best described in: Ambedkar, B.R. 2017. *What Congress and Gandhi did to the Untouchables.* New Delhi: Kalpaz Publications, 3rd edition

[49] Activities of All India Boy Scouts Association, 1953, Ministry of Education D7, F- 1-5-54, NAI

[50] Ibid.

[51] Ibid.

[52] The Bharat Scouts and Guides Bulletin, April 1952 p.4

[53] Guiding Among Refugees by M. Sen Asst. State Commissioner (Jullundur Guides Division), The Bharat Scouts and Guides, December 1958

some children and youths participated within the Bharat Scouts and Guides whilst others observed and participated from the outside. These congratulatory official narratives served the function of reproducing a double tier system of Indian youth that perpetuated the idea that those outside of the Scouting movement that belonged to poorer or marginalised communities were the "other".

The combined number of Scouts, Guides, Cubs, and Bulbuls in the rural areas amounted to 45,000 in 1958 and, contrasting this with the roughly 600,000 that belonged to the Boy Scouts alone, this reveals the movement was largely an urban phenomenon.[54] Scouting leaders stressed the poverty of rural areas and the difficulty in obtaining financial subscriptions to explain this trend. To avoid these poorer families incurring the cost of a uniform, the Bharat Scouts trialled a neckerchief-only dress code in rural areas to bolster participation throughout the late 1950s, but it did not receive the positive response expected. This is because the rural youths allegedly attached little value to the certificate culture of the Scout movement.[55] The archives reveal that patronising attitudes prevailed towards the villagers, as they did with Dalits, and Scout leaders felt the techniques of Scouting required special modifications to cater to the rural youths. Rather than the normal programme of training, it was recommended in rural areas, "the organisers should first concentrate on small attractive programmes like community songs, puppet shows, campfires, and acts of service organised through short camps and rallies".[56]

The Conference of Scout Commissioners in 1959 determined that the movement must expand into rural areas to meet the increased demand created from the expansion of schools.[57] The Bharat Scouts instructed Scout workers from urban groups to establish village groups within a five-mile radius of their own. They instructed them to attend "Village Scout Organiser's Training Courses" and advised their leaders to gain the support of *Panchayats, Gram Sabhas* and local schoolteachers in forming Scout groups.[58] It was noted that in the villages, "discipline will be a great problem among the Rover Crews for some years but perseverance with the Scout methods and programme will overcome the difficulties gradually".[59]

One key argument of this thesis is that during the two decades following independence, a discourse emerged that imagined the behaviour of Indian students and youth as undisciplined, and this critique reverberated throughout the Bharat Scouts and Guides too. One article from 1961 noted, capturing this narrative, "governors, ministers and other political leaders tell us that students are lacking in

---

[54] Scout-Guide Movement in Rural India, The Bharat Scout and Guide, April 1958
[55] Discussion with the Director of the Bharat Scouts and Guides at the Delhi HQ in November 2018 on their programmes in the 1950s
[56] Ibid.
[57] All Indian Scout Commissioners and Secretaries Conference: Scouting in Rural Areas, The Bharat Scout and Guide, July 1959
[58] Ibid.
[59] Ibid.

discipline and periodically announce plans to inculcate the discipline in the students".[60] This discourse was generally extrapolated to include the entire social group from across the whole country, but the Scouting movement is somewhat uncommon in so far as it sought to extent this idea to include the rural youth in particular. The Scouting movement regularly depicted the urban Scout as an embodiment of the nation's future intent on service to the nation-state and this can be contrasted with the figure of the would-be Scout from rural areas who was prone to indiscipline by virtue of an obliviousness to the ways of Scouting. This investment of paradoxical meanings reveals the dialectical friction invested into this life stage that simultaneously served to include and exclude the social body of youth from this youth movement at the same time.

It is difficult to gain insights into which social groups participated in Scouting, yet examining the intersection between Scouting, railway workers, class and caste can shed light on this. The authorities of the North-western Railway, a giant employer, adopted Scouting for the "physical and moral development" of the families of their employees in 1926.[61] Dharmendra Nath found the railway administration contributed greatly to the popularity of Scouts among their own employees and they formed huge Scouting movements. The National Executive Committee of the Bharat Scouts and Guides sanctioned the seven Zonal Railways of India becoming Scouting Associations in themselves in 1957. Scholars studying the railways have identified that a great number of lower but upwardly social mobile caste clusters worked in the railways and one can, therefore, make the case that this type of person historically made up a great many in these Scouting associations.[62] Further, the intertwined history of Scouting and the army in India would be a fascinating avenue of investigation, and again give insights into which social groups participated in Scouting, but there is a dearth of archives on this topic.

The Indian Scout and Guide Movement and the Young Indian Woman

Despite the joining together of the Scouts and Guides in 1951, historically prohibited by Lord Baden-Powell, the Bharat Scouts and Guides remained largely separated into male and female spaces during the early 1950s. This section will argue the Guiding movement faced forms of discrimination in the male-dominated Bharat Scouts and Guides. Moreover, this section will argue the Guiding movement simultaneously broke down barriers, in terms of the imagining of young women in early independent India, yet it also reproduced them and at the centre of the movement lay a *conservative progressivism*. That is, there was a progressivist tendency because it provided opportunities for young women to

---

[60] Bharat Scouts and Guides Bulletin, February 1961
[61] Nath, Dharmendra, A. 2010. *Scouting and Guiding in India.* pp.69-71
[62] Burnett-Hurst, A.R. 1925. *Labour and Housing in Bombay: A Study in the Economic Conditions of the Wage-Earning Classes of Bombay*. London: P.S. King and Son

participate in public life but, on the other hand, there was also a disposition towards conservatism because it promoted "traditional" notions of gender roles and the guides faced inequalities.

The number of Guides remained small relative to the Scouts during the early post-colonial period. During his visit to the Scout Conference in 1952, Jawaharlal Nehru jokingly remarked, "certainly, I hope there is no dearth of girls in our country."[63] As the first Governor of Punjab, Sir Chandulal Madhavlal Trivedi, stated,

> I do wish to say that we ought to make a point of having joint rallies, where both the Scouts and Guides participate fully and on equal terms and I think it is the duty of men who are in the show to see they [the Guides] are not ignored or left behind. There has unfortunately been an impression that the Guides do not have a fair deal and I do hope that such a thing will not take place in the future.[64]

Accounts of the Scout campfires show the prevalence of sheepishness and embarrassment amongst the boys and their leaders towards the idea of young woman, and this reveals their difficulty in accepting women's participation. One Scout leader wrote in 1953, "one notable characteristic about the Camp Fire was the absence of 'She Woman'… any song, any talk and any word concerning the opposite sex was strictly banned".[65] He noted that any time anything about the opposite sex was mentioned then the boys would raise their voices to stifle it out.[66] Another narration brings to light one of the first mixed camps which until then, this Scout leader claimed, had been a "dream" and "unrealistic" because of gendered attitudes in India. He said, during the mixed camp, "the lads allotted the manual part of the work to themselves, leaving the girls other jobs like the 'lady of the camp'''. [67] The Scouting programme, in practise, continued to reflect and reproduce the assigned domesticity of womanhood and reproduce the gender roles of young women.

The Guide movement, nevertheless, provided a small yet increasing number of young women opportunities to participate in Indian public life, especially in the decades following 1947. The Guides assisted with development programmes during the early 1950s such as the Grow More Food Campaign, the Each One Teach One campaign to spread education to villages, the National Small Savings Scheme, and the Women's Savings Campaign.[68] One Guide leader wrote on the Guides' participation in the National Savings Scheme in 1955,

---

[63] Nath, Dharmendra, A. *2010. Scouting and Guiding in India* p.63
[64] President Chandulal Madhavlal Trivedi (first Governor of Punjab) addressing the Scouts and Guides at Farewell State Rally, Chandigarh 25th Feb to March 3rd, The Bharat Scouts and Guides, April 1953
[65] Tara Devi News: Training Camp for Students of Punjab Government College of Physical Education in Rupar, The Bharat Scouts and Guides, May and June edition, 1953
[66] Ibid.
[67] Subba Rao, K.B. 1955. "On Boy Scouts". *Social Welfare Journal* 2 (2): page numbers unavailable
[68] Contribution of the Indian Guides and Scouts to the Five-Year Plan – through the women's savings campaign, The Bharat Scouts and Guides, May 1955

The scope for social service under the scheme is indeed limitless. The entire proceeds of the National Savings Campaign are utilized for financing the Five-Year Plan [...] It is most encouraging that the Bharat Scouts and Guides has actively responded to this call of national service with a sum of Rs. 14,07,945[69]

These programmes, which generally promoted engagement with the rural masses, coached Guides in the changing everyday duties and responsibilities associated with being a good citizen in early post-colonial India. They facilitated the strategic deployment of young women as agents of development to raise money for the Government of India and to spread state-sponsored information to the masses.

Adverts for the National Saving Scheme were a particularly prominent feature of *Sarasvati* magazine, a Hindi literary magazine renowned for its youth readership, during this period.[70] Sarasvati was not exclusively a youth magazine, although it is clear from its content that it had a large readership amongst the youth and a great many of its adverts are aimed at this social group. The advertisement in Figure 1 notes, "the fight against shortage and lack of knowledge can only be won through making the Five-Year Plans a success". It claimed these government investments would increase the speed of building the nation and ensuring "progress" for the general public. Advertised by the Information Department of Uttar Pradesh for the National Saving Scheme Department, this saving bond would, allegedly, "increase your future happiness." These public awareness adverts were generally framed in utilitarian terms. They promoted the idea that participation in the National Saving Scheme, as a type of social service action, would support the individual citizen, their family, and the development of the nation. The Indian youth had a unique role in this post-colonial democratic developmentalism because young and educated citizens, like those who read *Sarasvati,* and those who participated in Guiding, as the future intelligentsia of the nation, were deemed likely to participate in and be receptive to these schemes.

Sponsored by the World Association of Girl Guides, the Bharat Scouts and Guides introduced guiding amongst the refugees in Punjab and West Bengal in 1953.[71] Speaking of the Jullundur Refugee centre, one report said "many activities in connection with Guiding were often held in the Refugee centers. The Guiders are full of enthusiasm and zeal and take an active part in all the functions relating to Guiding in schools". It also noted that, "the girls were keen but sometimes felt a little dejected due to their lack of uniforms as they could not afford to get them made [...] most of them were orphans and unattached children who had hardly got over the effects of 'partition'".[72] Another article made a brief

---

[69] Ibid.
[70] The adverts analysed here are drawn from the early years of the 1960s and the magazines can be found in Marvani Public Library in Chandhi Chowk, New Delhi
[71] Guiding Among Refugees by M. Sen Asst. State Commissioner (Jullundur Guides Division), The Bharat Scouts and Guides, December 1958
[72] Ibid.

note that in Pakistan too, "Guiding in refugee camps was training women to be self-supporting".[73] It is regrettably difficult to decipher the attitudes of Guide-refugees themselves, because although they appear in the historical documents, their active voices are rarely written down. Moreover, the articles in the Guiding magazines do not reveal the scale and complexity of Guiding amongst refugees.

The provision of Guiding as an informal welfare scheme can be understood as a practice of rehabilitation that is emblematic of the "thick" aspect of refugee citizenship. This can be contrasted to the "thin" (or formal) elements of refugee-citizenship such as the right to vote and legal status.[74] Uditi Sen argues that the refugee rehabilitation policy lagged behind the ground realities and became "a richly contested sphere of governance where refugee visions of rights and belonging clashed with official ideals of governance and citizenship".[75] Anjali Bhardwaj Datta has examined the sexual violence, dislocation and forced opportunities endured by young refugee women. Resonating with my argument that a double tier system of Indian youthhood was determined by gender, amongst other cleavages of social difference, Datta claims the Indian state's training of refugee women reproduced their domestic roles and that officials did not see this group as playing a meaningful role in nation-building.[76]

There was an idea throughout the 1950s that the parents of Guides had little interest in the movement. In 1955, Lakshmi Mazumdar noted that one lakh of senior Guides had passed out from companies across the country since 1947 yet the movement was handicapped by a shortage of trained personnel in India.[77] She held the exodus left a huge burden on the very few, that tended to be unmarried, who remained to lead the Guide companies and feared Girl Guiding would collapse in India unless the movement could keep their Guides on as leaders. She claimed their inability to form parent group committees across the country meant the movement was failing in its core objectives. Mrs.C. Mohini, the National Organising Commissioner of Guides, stated on the difficulty of keeping their Guides on as leaders,

> The biggest problem of today concerning the Ranger branch is: where do those thousands of girls whom we train as Guides year after year go? [They] Disappear. Why cannot we keep them after they enter a certain age-group?[78]

[73] Youths Contribution through Guiding by Ann Basil, "The Bharat Scouts and Guides Journal Official Organ of Bharat Scouts and Guides, March 1955

[74] Sen, Uditi. 2018. *Citizen Refugee: Forging the Indian Nation After Partition.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press p.14

[75] Ibid. p.3

[76] Datta, Anjali Bhardwaj. 2019. "'Useful' and 'Earning' Citizens? Gender, State, and the Market in Post-Colonial Delhi." *Modern Asian Studies* 53(6): 1924–55

[77] The Girls of Today: Is Girl Guiding fully able to meet the needs and requirements of the girls of today by Mazumdar, Lakshmi, The Bharat Scouts and Guide, August 1955

[78] Recruitment and Training of Rangers Leaders by Mrs C Mohini, National Organising Commissioner of Guides, Bharat Scouts and Guides Journal, August 1955

The answer to the question posed by Mrs.C. Mohini likely lies in the responsibilities of marriage and homemaking that were seemingly deemed at odds with the duties of Guiding for a great many women.[79] Indeed, this quarantine of youth often terminated with marriage and the experience of the Guide tended to end abruptly according to these report in the Bharat Scouts and Guides magazine.

The Guiding movement's practice and ideology sought to train this social group for their domestic roles, holding that, "when a girl is enrolled, she promises to serve God, her country, other people and to try to keep the ten Guide laws. The aim is to prepare a girl to become a useful and loyal citizen, to cope with emergencies and to make a good future wife and mother".[80] The idea of being a good father and husband rarely, if ever, featured in the discursive representations of the Scout. These young women who entered the fray of public life through the medium of the guiding movement had, therefore, a variety of competing social expectations placed on them. These are the double standards that characterised womanhood in the initial decades of post-colonial India.

Lakshmi Mazumdar, who was the National Commissioner of the Bharat Scouts and Guides between 1964 and 1983, increasingly championed women's views and rights throughout her tenure. She discussed the far-reaching role of women in the mass civil disobedience campaigns and celebrated that a great many youths gave up their purdah during the final phase of the colonial era, thus enabling them to participate more fully in society.[81] In 1959 Mazumdar celebrated the increase in the share of political power possessed by women and the advance in their economic status during the first decade of the Republic.[82] She pointed to the Objectives Resolution of 1947, articles 14, 15 and 16 of the Fundamental Rights of the Constitution confirmed in January 1950 and the Hindu Code Acts of the early 1950s as legal rights that empowered Indian women.[83] She claimed the high positions achieved by women including Cabinet Minister, Deputy Minister, Ambassador, Deputy Speaker and Parliamentary Secretary marked a cause for celebration for the Guides.

The discourse embedded in the organisational imagination an envisionment of the Guide as being at the centre of these processes of political and cultural change and Mazumdar held her Guides had a part to play in these advances. Her predecessor as National Commissioner, Pandit Kunzru, similarly remarked in 1961 about the increased possibilities for women in terms of attending rallies. He said "what is most of interest is that the parents have so much confidence as to send their daughters in ever increasing numbers to these Jamborees. We have three thousand Guides, nearly half of the number of Scouts in the Jamboree".[84] These numbers of young woman attending jamborees would have been

---

[79] Ibid.
[80] The Girls of Today, The Bharat Scouts and Guide, August 1955
[81] Women in India by Lakshmi Mazumdar, The Bharat Scouts and Guide, July 1959
[82] Ibid.
[83] Ibid.
[84] Scouting as a Unifying Force by National Commissioner Dr H N Kunzru, Bharat Scout and Guide, February 1961 p.11

108

entirely unimaginable only ten years earlier. The Guiding movement, therefore, brings to light the growing "progressivist" tendency that could prevail in the post-colonial youth sector, and it reveals the dramatic changes to the idea of what the girl Guide in independent India could do and should be.

The official organ of the Bharat Scouts and Guides also advanced a progressive discourse that reimagined womanhood and promoted an activist conception of female citizenry in independent India.[85] One short story called "Women in Free India" offers an inspiring dialogue to promote the idea that young women should reject the "tyranny of man".[86] The story begins with three generations of women from the same family sitting together. Lila reveals that she heard her father ask his wife, her mother, to vote for his preferred candidate in the forthcoming elections. The daughters challenge their mother – who had been imprisoned for her role during the freedom struggle – for her willingness to vote for a candidate she herself dislikes. The problem with the candidate, Shri Be Pendi Ka Lota, is indeed, that he is, *bependi ka lota* or "without a base". The daughters, Asha and Lila, challenge their mother and grandmother's ambivalent views about the father issuing instructions to the women of the house to vote in accordance with his political preferences.

> Asha [Daughter one]: Then, how can you vote for him?
> Mother: I have never disobeyed him in my life.
> Lila [Daughter two]: But this is not a domestic question.
> Asha: It is a question of the political rights of women as free citizens in free India.
> Lila: We should refuse to act like dumb, driven cattle.
> Asha: Mother! You should not vote [for] the candidate that you know to be worthless.
> Mother: You are very naughty.
> Lila: It is a matter of our rights. It is a question of men vs women

The mother agreed to think about her daughter's request to vote independently of her husband's preferences. Lila, one of the two daughters, then informed her sister that the father had, in fact, also requested her to vote for Shri Be Pendi Ka Lota. The father lost his temper when she responded with, "Well father, I will think it over".

> Father: This is the result of your education? This is how you show your respect for your parents.
> Lila [told the few women she was sitting with that]: Sister, where there is a question of rights of women. I am a woman first, and daughter second.
> Asha: If men make us dance at their will, all the charm of democracy will be at an end. It will be the tyranny of man [all] over again.

---

[85] Women in Free India by A.N Gupta, Bharat Scout and Guide, June 1962
[86] Ibid.

> Granny: My God, this is really the Kali age. Daughter is defying the wishes of her father, and is proud of it at that, Oh the Kali age prevails.
>
> Asha: Granny, this is not the dark 15th Century. We are living in the enlightened 20th Century.

This discourse again reveals the circumscribed freedom that distinguished social reality for a great many young women in early post-colonial India. The dialogue exposes the way that men could, in some instances, attempt to influence the voting behaviour of their wives and daughters and the way social pressure, from the older generations in particular, to conform to patriarchal power, could be exercised within the home. Deeming it incompatible with their gendered role, many families did not permit their daughters to go beyond primary school education, nor did they permit participation in extra-curricular activities such as Guiding because they deemed them incompatible with their gendered role.

To conclude this section, Indian Guiding promoted two basic and conflicting idealisations of the Guide during the early independence period. The Guide was, on the one hand, trained to fill her newly expanded role in India's public life but, on the other, trained for and imagined in her domestic role. The "good" female citizen had an independent mind and was encouraged to find her voice, but she had to simultaneously uphold her home keeping, mothercraft and matrimonial capacities.

The Internationalism of Post-colonial Indian Scouting

There has been some literature on anti-imperial or anti-colonial internationalisms and their discursive construction of a distinctly future-oriented politics in the colonial and post-colonial world.[87] Scholars have, however, been largely blind to the existence of such per contra internationalist networks that centered around neo-imperial or post-imperial international movements that envisaged a less radical future for their countries or avoided explicitly treading into the realm of politics. This section will theorise about one such neo-imperial or post-imperial youth internationalism. The Bharat Scouts and Guides was born into deep cultural connections with the West. It inherited a web of transnational connections with the British and international Scouting organisations. Far from extracting itself from these colonial era networks, the movement's leaders sought to further integrate themselves into the Scouting internationalisms. This section will argue the freshly amalgamated Bharat Scouts and Guides participated in the global scouting internationalism on far more egalitarian terms. Demonstrating the way India became a space for internationalist activity, New Delhi proudly hosted the 17th World Scout

---

[87] Manjapra, Kris. 2011. "From Imperial International Horizons: A Hermeneutic Study of Bengali Modernism." *Modern Intellectual History* 8 (2): 327–59. Gopal, Priyamvada.2019. *Insurgent Empire: Anticolonial Resistance and British Dissent.* London: Verso. Iriye, Akira. 2005. "Beyond Imperialism: The New Internationalism." *Daedalus* 134 (2): 108-116

International Conference in the summer of 1959.[88] It occasionally received former imperialists, grand old men and women of the Scouting movement, who were greeted with much Scouting pomp and circumstance, yet it welcomed them back into the fold as an independent country and movement on their own terms.

There are examples of an early fluidity and cooperation between the Scouting movements of India, Nepal, and Pakistan. The Nepalese government expressed a desire to establish a Scouting movement, and it was the Bharat Scouts and Guides that organised their initial Scout leader training camp in Nepal in 1952.[89] Furthermore, with regards to the relationship between the Indian and Pakistani Scouting movements, the Ministry of Education acknowledged the hospitality received by the Indian contingent when they attended the inaugural ten-day long Pakistan National Jamboree in December 1952.[90] The Pakistan Government sanctioned a budget of Rs59 lakh for the Jamboree to fund the "increased fraternisation between the two wings of the Dominion" in addition to issuing invitations to delegations from all Commonwealth and Muslim countries.[91] The High Commissioner for India in Pakistan, an old Scouter himself, wore his neckerchief and uniform. Miss Fatima Jinnah awarded him a jamboree shield.[92]

The Pakistani Scouts returned the visit to India the following year in 1953 and this represents another example of collaboration between the Indian and Pakistani movements. At this rally Justice Vivian Bose noted, "as a tiny acorn grows into a big oak tree, in the same way, the seed of friendship sown between India and Pakistan in the Scouters INDABA last year has grown into a healthy tree of friendship between India and Pakistan".[93] Historian Pallavi Raghavan challenges the idea that animosity governed the early relations between the two successor states of the British Raj, India and Pakistan. She points to the signing of the "Minorities Pact" between Nehru and Liaquat Ali Khan and the Indus Waters negotiations as evidence for bilateral engagement and cooperation between the two sides during their mutually constituted process of state-making.[94] These interdominion exchange of Scouting delegations can be understood as a further example of this more collaborative spirit.

---

[88] "'One World' Free from Tensions Commended: Premier's Call at Scouts Conference in Delhi". 1959. The Times of India, Jul 30, (https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/one-world-free-tensions-commended/docview/346643844/se-2?accountid=9630).

[89] Merger of Boy Scouts Association and Guides into Bharat Scouts and Guides, 1953, Ministry of Education, F-8-6/53-D3 1953, NAI

[90] Ibid.

[91] "PAKISTAN SCOUT JAMBOREE".1952. The Times of India, Sep 24, (https://www-proquest-com.gate3.library.lse.ac.uk/historical-newspapers/pakistan-scout-jamboree/docview/739308583/se-2?accountid=9630).

[92] Ibid.

[93] Mr Justice Vivian Bose addressing the Scouts and Guides at the Farewell State Rally, Bharat Scout and Guide, March and April 1953

[94] Raghavan, Pallavi. 2020. *Animosity at Bay: An Alternative History of the India-Pakistan Relationship* London: Hurst & Co

New Delhi hosted the 17th World Scout International Conference in the summer of 1959. It welcomed nearly 200 delegates and observers from 40 countries.[95] This was the first time the International Bureau of Scouts had held its international conference in an Asian country. In his inaugural address, the Prime Minister, commended the ideal of "One World" which he declared could be free from the tensions and conflicts airing out of "narrow and egotistical nationalism". "Let us have faith in a future based on co-operation, brotherhood and common humanity and work for it", he said. The conference offered the Prime Minister a platform to make claims about his vision of the future. Manu Bhagavan explores Nehru's concept of "One World", named after the notable book by the American Wendell Willkie, and he claims India shaped the emergent United Nations and the global discourse on human rights far more than scholars have hitherto understood.[96]

The Scouting movement was far from immune from guru-centric and hierarchical tendencies, and it focused its idolisation on Lord Baden-Powell. The arrival of foreign visitors was greeted with much Scouting pomp and circumstance before and after 1947, and the homage paid to the founders of Scouting left many youths affected. Mrs J.I Soloman stated, reminiscing at the golden jubilee of Scouting in 1961, "the first visit of the Chief Scout and Chief Guide in 1921 was the most thrilling and exciting incident of my life! I was right in the inner most circle around her when we welcomed her in Madras".[97] Even Nehru claimed that the Government of India attached great importance to the ideals of Lord Baden-Powell and their embodiment in the Scout movement. He called Baden-Powell "a great man" who "caught the right psychological moment to launch this great movement".[98]

The great respect for Baden-Powell persisted in the Scouting movement despite him embodying the British imperial order and having supposedly voiced racist comments that had offended many during a trip to India in May 1937. He had allegedly claimed that Scouting in India was devoid of honour, character, and unity. The Chief Scout of the World subsequently broadcast a message on the BBC to India, whilst in erstwhile Bombay, to deny the statements attributed to him by Reuters news agency.[99] In any case, Baden-Powell's agenda was manipulated and negotiated by Indians in the colonial and post-colonial context and the creation of a reverence for him was one means to enable that process. The Bharat Scouts also reproduced a veneration for national leaders, especially for Nehru and Gandhi, and the President of India became its Patron-in-Chief in 1960.

---

[95] "'One World' Free from Tensions Commended: Premier's Call at Scouts Conference in Delhi". 1959. The Times of India, Jul 30

[96] Bhagavan, Manu Belur. 2013. *India and the Quest for One World: The Peacemakers*. London: Palgrave Macmillan

[97] Reminiscence of my Guide Life by Mrs J.I Soloman, The Bharat Scouts and Guide 1961 Golden Jubilee Souvenir Edition, 1961

[98] "'One World' Free from Tensions Commended: Premier's Call at Scouts Conference in Delhi"

[99] "The Chief Scout's Explanation: Accepted in Bombay. Lord Baden-Powell to Broadcast Tomorrow."1937. The Times of India, Jun 26 (https://www-proquest-com.gate3.library.lse.ac.uk/historical-newspapers/chief-scouts-explanation/docview/325404913/se-2?accountid=9630)

The British and Indian Scouting movements retained a powerful connection and colonial era leaders who had fostered Scouting continued to be welcomed back into the fold. The former superintendent of police in Calcutta, Col. J.S. Wilson, had a rally in India named in his honour to demonstrate the Bharat Scout and Guides' high regard for him.[100] The former superintendent of police in Calcutta went onto become the Director of the Boy Scout International Bureau. He synchronised his trip to India in the winter of 1953 with the visit of the Director of the World Bureau of Girl Guides, Dame Leslie Wheatley. Demonstrating old colonial habits die hard, Lady Olave Baden-Powell, Col. J.S. Wilson and Dame Whateley all toured the country extensively during their visits.[101] Baden-Powell had made his final visit to India aged 80 in 1937, and his wife Lady Olave Baden-Powell thereafter visited India in 1960, 1966 and 1968 to open various Scouting buildings in the country.[102]

Conclusion

This chapter has brought to light how Indian youthhood was imagined as a period of social service and mobilised to that end by the Bharat Scouts and Guides. It has sought to provide insights into the ways India's young citizenry were mobilised for the purpose of social service and the ways these youth movements provided an opportunity for youths to undertake an initiation in the postcolonial nation building project and realise a form of youth citizenship premised on social service. This author has sought to excavate the quotidian life and voices of the young volunteer wherever possible, through an exploration of the Scout's experiences at the Kumbh Mela, around the campfire, and their reminiscences of interactions with Baden-Powell. Regrettably, however, the archives explored tended not to record the class and caste backgrounds of their membership. Moreover, these youth movements provide a perspective into the lives and views of India's national leaders, such as Jai Prakash Narayan and Lakshmi Mazumdar, in addition to Scouting leaders at the local and regional level. They also give insights into the evolution and unfolding of national and international Scouting events, social service agendas, and ideas about social categories during the post-colonial period.

An exploration of youth and social service has not been the only purpose of this chapter and this exploration of the Bharat Scouts and Guides has brought to light this thesis's key arguments about the relationship between this social body and postcolonial nation-state building; the emergence of a state-organised youth sector in independent India; and the way these mobilisations were shaped by processes and contexts that transcended the borders of the nation state. Firstly, the movement's promotion of disciplined youths, good citizenship and progressive discourses had much attractiveness for officials at the Ministry of Education and leading politicians in India who invariably lamented the "problem" of Indian youth. Secondly, a corollary of this was that the movement became a category in

---

[100] The Bharat Scout and Guide, September and October 1952 p.15
[101] Nath, A Dharmendra. *2010. Scouting and Guiding in India* p.63
[102] Ibid.

the domain of planning in the provision of youth welfare and incorporated into the state-organised youth sector.

Thirdly, rural youths, female youths and Dalit youths were included on a differentiated basis from this movement. Despite the discourses that advocated for a greater inclusion of these groups, their programmes and experiences tended to be distinguished by patronising narratives and social inequality. The Guide, for instance, was imagined as exercising her rights and duties that accompanied the new dawn of womanhood, yet her traditional and domestic role conflicted with fulfilling these. The Guide was expected to challenge the social and political norms that kept women back in India, but the way she was viewed simultaneously encouraged a conformism to patriarchal power structures that upheld her home keeping, mothercraft and matrimonial role and responsibilities

Finally, I have argued that the Scouting movement sought to play a role, integrate themselves into and draw upon the larger internationalisms and, following independence, the freshly amalgamated Bharat Scouts and Guides participated in the scouting internationalism on far more egalitarian terms. This chapter has explored youth social service activity, and the focus of the next chapter will be on the relationship between youth and leisure activities during the early post-colonial period. It will bring to light the cultural component of the state-organised volunteer youth movement.
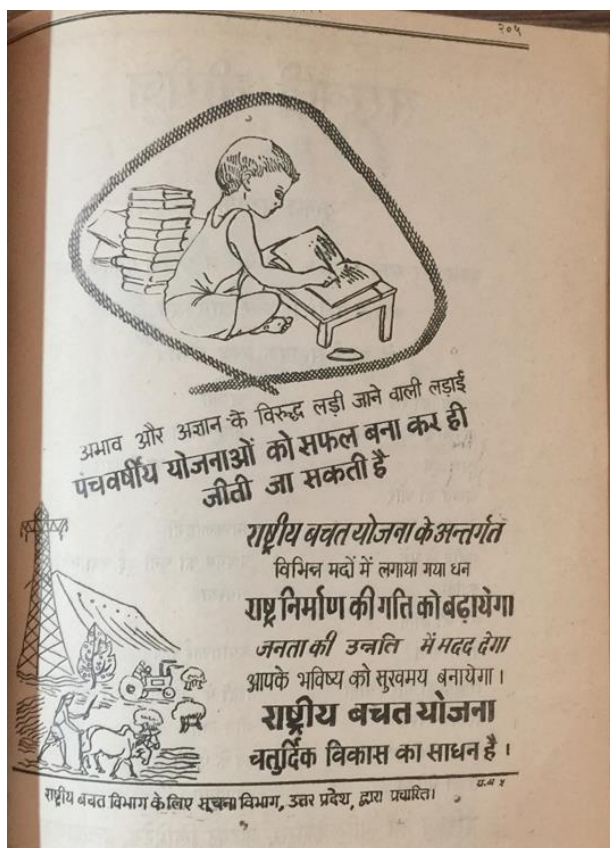

Figure 2: Sarasvati, August 1962

Chapter 5. Indian Youth and the Politics of Leisure

This chapter will examine the relationship between Indian youth and the politics of leisure during the first two decades following independence, helping to illuminate the ways the varied apparatus of the Government of India promoted postcolonial nationalist cultural politics and sought to mould how this social group spent their free time. The previous three chapters have explored a variety of state-sponsored youth movements that wanted to primarily negotiate the physicality of the Indian youth, but senior officials and politicians held the shaping of their cultural norms and leisure time to be a similarly pressing concern. There was a cultural component to the state-organised youth order of post-colonial India, in addition to the defence, development, and social service elements already explored. I will explore the National Youth Welfare Movement, the Youth Hostel Association of India, the Interuniversity Youth Festival, and the University Film Club, in addition to analysing advertisements for travel from a variety of youth magazines to substantiate my arguments. In doing so, this chapter will consider the shifting cultural and political role of travel, non-curricula competition, and films during the early post-colonial period.

This chapter will put forward three main arguments. Firstly, it was a corollary of the tremendous future role assigned to them and their supposed state of indiscipline that the Indian youth became the object of increased cultural interest in the early post-colonial period. Secondly, these movements bring to light the cultural component of the state-organised youth sector and the way state and voluntary initiatives intertwined in early-post colonial India. The apparatus of the Government of India, or to further disaggregate this, the Planning Commission, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry for Information and Broadcasting, the University Grants Commission, and the Children's Film Society invested resources into the provision of leisure activities to promote a cultural politics, raise cultural standards and broaden the minds of young people in accordance with the ideologies of postcolonial nationalist politics. The focus here is on the widespread efforts and concerns from across the Indian (and international) socio-political landscape that sought to establish, coordinate, and expand the provision of leisure activities for this social group.

Thirdly, each of these movements had a nation-building character and these social activities function as a keyhole into the rich and myriad ways youths could perform their Indian social and cultural identity. Indeed, Indian youths went to heritage sites and hiked, stayed in hotels and hostels, danced and debated, watched films and discussed cinema, and they relaxed and busied themselves in the politics of fun. However, historical studies of Indian youth have tended to overlook forms of public activity and how youths spent their everyday lives. This is perhaps rooted in a misplaced historical lens that understands every aspect of life in the colonial and post-colonial world to be centred around (a somewhat narrowly defined) political struggle. Fourthly, these movements sought to take the future

intelligentsia as their principal target and bring to light a double tier system of Indian youth that permeated these youth movements.

Existing Literature

The history of leisure is a vast and complex field where many perspectives intersect. The largest clusters of scholarship are concerned with films, sports, music, theatre, consumption, and travel. Because of the diverse range of scholarship that converges here, it is difficult to theorise about the field's core argument, methodology and contributions. There are nevertheless a few notable works that theorise about leisure activities and Indian life stages. All these works focus on the late colonial period whereas the early post-colonial period remains entirely overlooked. In terms of film, Kaushik Bhaumik's far-reaching essay on youth culture and Bombay cinema in the 1920s claims that bohemian "cultures of the young" pushed the growth of the Indian public sphere, and this author endorses the argument that the habits and activities of the young are significant for understanding the cultural developments of India.[1] In terms of travel, Nandini Chandra's exploration of Hindi-language children's journals in the late colonial period reveals a "nationalist pedagogy" that sought to create "disciplined tourists, and to orient them towards a love of the country and the rural in tandem with a reformist nationalist agenda".[2] In a similar vein, this chapter will argue that the Youth Hostel Association of India (YHAI) sought to orient this social group towards a love of Indian nature and rural life. The YHAI had a nation-building character that promoted an Indianness based on a love of the Indian countryside and rural life, and orientated youths towards what I term postcolonial romantic nationalism.

On youth advertisements and consumption, Douglas Haynes reveals that vernacular capitalist firms targeted sex-related advertisements to young Indian men during the late colonial period and locates these within the contemporary discourse on *Brahmacharya*.[3] The Modern Girl Around the World Research Group takes the heuristic category of the Modern Girl to provide a means to identify commonalities of gendered modernity and its relationship to consumption in India and elsewhere.[4] I agree that advertisements offer a unique perspective into the shifting consumption practises and attitudes of youthful consumers. They give insights into the evolution of the youth cultural order of consumption, media constructions or depictions of youthhood and how capitalist actors sought to harness the youth market. This chapter will push the historiography on leisure in a new direction by

---

[1] Bhaumik, Kaushik. 2010. "At Home in the World: Cinema and Cultures of the Young in Bombay in the 1920s." p.136-155 *In Towards a History of Consumption in South Asia*, edited by Douglas Haynes et al
[2] Chandra, Nandini. 2007. "The Pedagogic Imperative of Travel Writing in the Hindi World: Children's Periodicals (1920-1950)." *Journal of South Asian Studies* 30 (2): 293-325
[3] Haynes, Douglas. 2010. "Creating the Consumer: Advertising, Capitalism and the Middle Classes in Urban Western India, 1914-1940." p.186
[4] Barlow, T. E et al. 2005. "The Modern Girl around the World: A Research Agenda and Preliminary Findings."

exploring some of the ways the varied apparatus of the Government of India sought to shape the leisure and recreational preferences of the next generation of Indian citizens.

There has been quite a bit of research on European hostelling, and this research provides an important context for the emergence of the YHAI.[5] Richard Ivan Jobs found that following the Second World War, "hostel networks were organized in Western Europe to facilitate travel by the young for the purpose of promoting international understanding and cooperation among populations who had been engaged in brutal and repeated warfare… Western European governments invested significant resources into welcoming young travellers from abroad through the establishment, expansion, and transformation of their national youth hostel networks".[6] This foremost scholar of the history of youth highlights how the experience of travel within European youth culture helped to shape a politicized continent-wide and transnational identity during the late 1960s (encapsulated by the year 1968) amongst this social group.

Richard Ivan Jobs argues the hostel network was an important mechanism in the history of European integration following the Second World War.[7] In the Indian context, there has only been limited research on tourism, drawing on travelogues, travel writings and adventure stories, and it tends to be concerned with the early colonial period.[8] The history of Indian youth travel is in its incipient stages of study, and the YHAI provides an exciting lens to understand this cultural phenomenon during the early post-colonial period. For this chapter, I have used sources from the National Archives of India, The Times of India, Social Welfare Journal, youth magazines, advertisements, and various autobiographical and biographical accounts to bring to light these various youth leisure schemes of the 1950s and 1960s.

The National Youth Welfare Movement and the Rise of the State-organised Youth Sector

In 1954, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, a leader of the Indian independence movement and India's first Education Minister, communicated his concerns about the Indian youth in a letter to his Education Ministers and outlined the rationale behind a state-sponsored programme of recreational activities that he intended to introduce to remedy this crisis.

---

[5] Grassl, Anton and Heath, Graham. 1982. *The Magic Triangle: A Short History of the World Youth Hostel Movement*. London: International Youth Hostel *Federation*

[6] There are four critical interventions in this field of western youth travel although the history of Indian youth travel remains unexplored. Jobs, Richard Ivan. 2006. "Youth Movements: Travel, Protest, and Europe in 1968." *American Historical Review*. 114 (2): 376-404. Jobs, Richard Ivan. 2007. *Riding the New Wave: Youth and the Rejuvenation of France After the Second World War*. Stanford: Stanford University Press. Jobs, Richard Ivan and David M Pomfret. 2015. *Transnational Histories of Youth in the Twentieth Century*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. Jobs, Richard Ivan. 2017. *Backpack Ambassadors: How Youth Travel Integrated Europe.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press

[7] Jobs, Richard Ivan. 2006. "Youth Movements: Travel, Protest, and Europe in 1968."

[8] Dyson, Ketaki Kushari. 2006. *A Various Universe: A Study of the Journals and Memoirs of British Men and Women in the Indian Subcontinent 1765–1856.* New Delhi: Oxford University Press

We have all been seriously exercised about the progressive deterioration of the standards of discipline and good behaviour amongst a considerable section of the youth population. If we are to develop the present generation of youth into disciplined and responsible citizens of democracy, it is essential that we should view this problem imaginatively and take all necessary steps to win their confidence and cooperation and organise a varied programme of social, creative, and recreational activities which will fill their leisure time profitably and give them suitable opportunities of self-expression[9]

The Indian Planning Commission approved such a scheme in the following year of 1955, and it was called the National Youth Welfare Movement (NYWM). Its objective was to resolve youth indiscipline and to negotiate the next generation of Indian citizens through grants-in-aid and financial support for recreational and leisure activities for youths. Funded with one hundred lakh rupees, as will be explored in this chapter, ambitious schemes including a national youth hostel association, annual intercollegiate festivals for students, and summer labour camps became available to Indians in their teens and twenties across the entire country throughout the subsequent Five-Year Plan. It also funded a national survey of the living standards of young people but regrettably there are no surviving archives relating to this.

The NYWM is an example of how policy makers and politicians sought to re-organise the post-colonial youth order and took this social body as a category in the domain of development policy. A report on the NYWM noted that, "The Bharat Scouts and Guides, Balkan-Ji-Bari and the NCC have only touched the fringe of *the problem* and financial considerations completely overrule the scope of these organisations…and prevent these schemes being widened".[10] The NYWM reflected the Government of India's anxiety about the need to organise a mass youth movement and the idea that the newly independent state must accept overall responsibility for it. This logic held the volunteer movements of the colonial-era could now only touch the fringe of India's "youth problem".

The NYWM focused on educated youths rather than non-educated and rural youths. A Ministry of Education report relating to the NYWM stated, "considering the limited resources at the disposal of the Government it has been decided to concentrate special attention on the needs of student youths in school and colleges in the first instance, in so far as this group is easily approachable and is likely to provide the future leadership of this country".[11] The report on the NYWM noted that facilities for the recreational and cultural pursuits of non-educated youths was entirely lacking in India. It categorised non-educated youths into two groups: those employed in factories, shops, domestic service; and

---

[9] To all the Education Ministers in India from A. K. Azad, 12th August 1954. In The National Youth Welfare Movement in India, 1954, Ministry of Education , 6-7/54- D6, NAI
[10] Ibid. Italics added for effect.
[11] Proposal regarding Youth Welfare Programme 1956-1957, Ministry of Education, 1-2/55 D-7, NAI. Italics added.

118

youths in rural areas.[12] This bureaucratic rationalisation of Indian youths reduced whole swathes of (socially disadvantaged) youths to a decipherable type in order to simplify the functions of nation-state building. One central argument of this PhD is that one programme and ideology for the educated few and another for the uneducated masses prevailed in post-colonial India and a double tier system of Indian youth permeated each of these spaces of youth.

There are only scattered archives pertaining to the NYWM in the National Archives of India and the scheme seemingly amounted to little more than a short-lived umbrella name for various programmes that ultimately had a life of their own. To further explore the varied apparatus of the Government of India's efforts towards shaping the cultural preferences of Indian youth, the focus will now shift to two flagship programmes, that had been linked with the NYWM during their early history, that became available to Indians in their teens and twenties across the entire country throughout the Second and Third Five-year plan: the Indian Youth Hostel Association and the Interuniversity Youth Festival.

The Youth Hostel Association of India, the Politics of Leisure and the Shaping of Indian Youth During the Long 1950s

In 1955, an interviewer from *Social Welfare* asked the Founding National Secretary of the Youth Hostels Association of India, R.G Padki, to define what makes a good youth hostel and about the objectives of the movement in India, and his response provides a good starting point for this section that will explore the establishment and development of this youth movement throughout the 1950s. He answered, a "good hostel" was,

> A good holiday home for travelling youths where simple sleeping accommodation is provided and is mainly intended for tourists. It exists to help young people to know and love the countryside… The object shall be to help all, especially young people of limited means, to a greater knowledge, love and care of the countryside, particularly by providing hostels and other simple accommodation for them on their travels and thus promote their health, rest and education[13]

The YHAI's promotion of travel as a feature of youth culture in India gives insights into youth tourism in the early post-colonial period. This space of youth encouraged expressions of Indianness based on touring across the countryside and sought to orient this social group towards a love of Indian nature and rural life. The YHAI had a nationalising tendency, a nation-building character, that promoted an Indianness based on a love of the Indian countryside and rural life and its embrace of democracy, volunteerism, non-political and anti-sectarian ideologies overlapped with those of the

---

[12] Ibid.
[13] Staff Reporter. May 1955. "The Story of the Indian Youth Hostels" *Social Welfare* 2 (2): 21

post-colonial elite; and it will be put forward that the YHAI orientated youths towards what I term postcolonial romantic nationalism.

Sponsored by the Planning Commission, incorporated into the Five-Year Plans and overseen by the Ministry of Education, the YHAI represents the cultural component of what I call the state-organised youth sector and brings to light the way state and voluntary efforts intertwined in early-post colonial India. I will explore the fascinating circulation and flows of people that affected this movement. This is, indeed, a section about not only the young Indian hosteller but also the larger question of youth movements and post-imperial transnationalism.

Youth travel was of course not a phenomenon new to the independence period. One founder of the YHAI, Mr Praki, commented that in ancient times young Indians undertook pilgrimages in stages, spending their nights at *Dharamshalas* and this history "would help popularise the movement in India".[14] There had been clubs such as the Banares Tourist Club and the Indian Himalayan Expedition Club of Delhi, established in 1924 and 1934 respectively, that facilitated travel to sites not marked on the British traveller's roadmap. [15]Nehru and Gandhi had, incidentally, both famously toured India. They wrote in their autobiographical narratives that their travels across India had been fundamental to the development of their ideals of cultural nationalism and claimed it increased their common identification with the very idea of Indianness or, to use Nehru's phrase, their own "discovery of India".[16]

The first argument I will advance is that the emergence of the YHAI was shaped by processes and relationships that transcended the borders of the Indian nation-state. The Indian hostel movement was shaped by "bundles of relationships", international in nature, made up largely of Indian and British social actors.[17] The creation of the YHAI was the consequence of a fascinating collaboration between E.ST. John Catchpool and R.G Padki during the early1950s.[18] Catchpool had recently retired after serving 21 years as the Secretary of the English Youth Hostels Association and twelve years as President of the International Youth Hostel Federation when he arrived in India to attend a United Nations Seminar on Youth at Shimla in 1951.[19] He had seen the membership of the Youth Hostels Association in England grow from a few thousand to a total of one million during his stewardship. At

---

[14] Ibid. p. 26

[15] Chandra, Nandini. 2007. "The Pedagogic Imperative of Travel Writing in the Hindi World: Children's Periodicals (1920-1950)."

[16] Majeed, Javed. 2007. *Autobiography, Travel and Postnational Identity: Gandhi, Nehru and Iqbal*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan

[17] Wolf, Eric R. 1982. *Europe and the People without History*. Curthoys, Ann and Marilyn Lake. 2005. *Connected Worlds: History in Transnational Perspective.* Jobs, Richard Ivan and David M. Pomfret. 2015. *Transnational Histories of Youth in the Twentieth Century*

[18] Also see, John Catchpool, E.ST. *1966. Candles in the Darkness: The Memoirs of E St John Catchpool.* London: The Bannisdale Press

[19] Report on the United National Seminar on Youth Welfare in Southeast Asia held at Shimla from 1.10.51 to 21.11.51, 1956, Ministry of Education, 9-6-D7, NAI

the UN conference in Shimla, this grand old man of the global YHA movement met the promising hosteler and hiking enthusiast, Padki. Padki had played a key role in establishing the first Indian Youth Hostel Association in Mysore alongside another Englishman called, Professor W.G. Eagleton.[20]

In 1949, Professor W.G. Eagleton from the University of Mysore led the efforts to establish the first Youth Hostel Association of India in collaboration with R.G Padki.[21] This was sometimes referred to as the *Yuvajana Charana Sanstha* and it had the laudable motto of *Chandran vai Madhu vindati* (wandering, one gathers honey).[22] Padki claimed Eagleton was the "spirit behind the introduction of youth hostels in India" because Eagleton had convened a meeting of all persons interested in youth welfare activities in Mysore and placed before them a proposal of starting a youth hostel movement.[23] Besides being a leader in the Scout movement, Padki had been the District Organising Secretary of the Adult Education Council of the Mysore State and Eagleton had been the Vice-President of this organisation. Padki, claimed, "as he found in me a sort of inclination and aptitude for Youth Welfare activities, he chose me to be the first Secretary of the YHAI".[24] The efforts of Eagleton and Padki, one a Cambridge graduate who supported the freedom struggle and the other a Scout master and educationalist, is an example of the way that actors and efforts from across the international cultural and socio-political landscape met to initiate a process of youth movement building in post-colonial India.

Here I will take a brief tangent to remark on accounts of Professor Eagleton's sexuality because it reveals something of the attitudes towards homosexuality that prevailed amongst students and youths more generally in the 1950s in addition to bringing to life a historical actor who played a key role in this early movement. M.V. Krishnaswamy, a Mysore-born Kannada filmmaker, notes in his memoirs that Eagleton, who had come to Mysore in 1937 aged only 26 years old, "was a homosexual and that was known to everybody, but nobody spoke about it openly".[25] During his youthhood, Krishnaswamy claimed, "[homosexuality] was not just hated, but there was even fear to speak about it. If you were a homosexual that was the worst name that you could have had. You can now well imagine the plight of students in a college if one of their professors was homosexual…They were afraid to go to his house even if they were invited. But I used to go to his house and quite enjoyed my conversations with

---

[20] Request for a grant for the shifting of National Office of Youth Hostels association of India from Mysore to Delhi, 1954, Ministry of Education, 16-2-D7, NAI

[21] Ibid.

[22] Krishnan, Visalam R. "Youth Hostels Help Young Hikers".1959. The Times of India , Nov 15 (https://www-proquest-com.gate3.library.lse.ac.uk/historical-newspapers/youth-hostels-help-young-hikers/docview/346479507/se-2?accountid=9630).

[23] Staff Reporter. May 1955. "The Story of the Indian Youth Hostels." p.21

[24] Ibid. p.22

[25] Krishnaswamy, M.V. 2007. "Mysore, Once Upon A Time - Remembering the time at the Mysore Maharaja's College" *Outlook India* (https://www.outlookindia.com/website/story/mysore-once-upon-a-time/23437) Retrieved April 1st, 2020

him".[26] Krishnaswamy's recollection reveals that a prejudice against homosexual men emanated from many Indian youths, it reveals that gays were the object of discussion amongst students, and, on occasion, that some youths could break with the norms that surrounded the figure of the homosexual by engaging in a limited acceptance of and interaction with them.

John Catchpool returned to India in September 1952 to accede to R.G Padki's request to support him in his task of expanding a youth hostel network in India, and their descriptions of each other speaks of their admiration. Padki, sparing subtleties, held his English co-founder to be, "the cornerstone of the proposed great edifice in this country. The Youth Hostel association of India would have been greatly handicapped if Mr Catchpool's cooperation and hand of assistance were not forthcoming". Catchpool remarked on his Indian collaborator simply, "Padki is of an outstanding quality".[27]

The top official at the Ministry of Education, Mr Saiyidain, furnished Catchpool with a letter of introduction, and he travelled to numerous universities where he claimed to find a great interest for the YHAI – and this type of collaboration demonstrates the links and connections that occurred between the officials and volunteers that was the essence of the state-organised youth sector. Greeted with such enthusiasm, he noted, "had there been any proper enrolment forms or a handbook available, I could have enrolled many hundreds of members in the course of that tour".[28]

Catchpool drafted a constitution for the YHAI National Association and the State Associations, and the newly formed YHAI National Executive approved both. He prepared two handbooks about the youth hostels of India and paid for 2,500 copies of the second handbook to be printed in 1954 at his own expense.[29] Membership rose threefold from 11 life members and 163 ordinary members in 1954 to 32 life members and 450 ordinary members in 1955.[30] The membership had grown to around 1,000 in 1956 and 2,000 by 1961.[31]

Catchpool, as a former President of the International Youth Hostel Federation, which had a membership of 1.5 million in 1955, facilitated a close relationship between the global organisation and the YHAI.[32] Like the Bharat Scouts explored in the previous chapter, and the Republic of India itself, the YHAI forged close networks with the relevant supranational federation during the decades

---

[26] Ibid.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Letter from E.ST. John Catchpool to Miss Narsian, RE Grant-in-aid to Youth Hostels Association of India, 22nd November 1954. In Request for a Grant for the Shifting of National Office of Youth Hostels Association of India from Mysore to Delhi, 1954, Ministry of Education, 16-2-D7, NAI

[29] Ibid.

[30] Copy of the letter from the Chairman of the YHA of India addressed to the Secretary of the Government of India. 2.12.1955, Ministry of Education, 16-2- D7, NAI

[31] "YOUTH HOSTEL CONFERENCE". 1961. The Times of India, Dec 30 (https://www-proquest-com.gate3.library.lse.ac.uk/historical-newspapers/youth-hostel-conference/docview/346969998/se-2?accountid=9630)

[32] Letter from E.ST. John Catchpool to Miss Narsian, 19th November, 1954, Ministry of Education, 16-2-D7, NAI

following 1947. Padki went to Europe to participate in the International Youth Hostel Federation Conference on a United Nations grant in either 1953 or 1954, which of these years is unclear, and he remarked on how the trip proved to be a source of inspiration,

> All through the return journey I was dreaming of the days when the YHA of India could play such a vital role in providing such healthy recreational facilities to youth as in these countries. I was ruminating over the many possibilities and prospects and the way I could and should put my rich experiences to fruitful service of the Youth Hostel movement in particular, and the youth movement in general[33]

A YHAI membership card meant Indian youths were eligible to stay at 3,000 hostels in 28 countries across western Europe, North Africa, USA, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. Demonstrating the way this youth movements drew upon larger internationalisms, the YHAI encouraged hostellers to apply for a special United Nations Grant, provided by the UNESCO Educational Youth Travel Grants Department, that funded young Indians to explore foreign youth hostels during the 1950s.[34] Moreover, the Ministry of Education issued instructions to students who studied abroad on Government of India scholarships that they should study the workings of the youth hostel movement in that country "by closely associating themselves with it".[35] This YHAI, UN and Government of India partnership fostered youth mobility across national boundaries and this kind of international friendship and knowledge building that the transnational hostelling network fostered was in line with the Government of India's Nehruvian era project of internationalism.[36]

The YHAI and Postcolonial Romantic Nationalism

The YHAI possessed a nation-building character in so far as it encouraged youth travel to, firstly, inculcate an appreciation of nature, the countryside and rural life amongst this social group and, secondly, because it sought to be a democratising force and an antidote to regionalism. That is, it aspired to overcome provincial and communal differences by introducing India's youthful and diverse citizenry to each other through the cultural phenomenon of youth travel. Because it combined postcolonial nationalist ideologies and romantic nationalist ideologies, I will argue this amounted to the promotion of what can be termed *postcolonial romantic nationalism*. That is, this movement sought to integrate the next generation of citizens into a wider nationalist project, and to foster a collective national identity, strongly related to age, based on a romantic understanding of the natural wonder and natural diversity of India. The YHAI facilitated such mass leisure and travel that intended to have a unifying effect and to shape the cultural preferences of youths. By 1958/1959, for instance,

---

[33] Staff Reporter. May 1955. "The Story of the the Indian Youth Hostels" *Social Welfare* 2 (2): 26
[34] Letter from E.ST. John Catchpool to Miss Narsian, 22nd November 1954
[35] Staff Reporter. May 1955. "The Story of the the Indian Youth Hostels"
[36] Bhagavan, Manu Belur. 2013. *India and the Quest for One World*

the YHAI provided sleeping accommodation to over 25,000 persons, 3,500 of whom were foreigners, and had a network of 150 hostels across India.[37]

In 1954, after two and a half years of voluntary service in India, where he also became a leader of the Delhi Quaker Centre, John Catchpool informed R.G Padki that he intended to return to his family in England. Prior to his departure, he managed to arrange a meeting with Jawaharlal Nehru and secured him officially as the YHAI's Chief Patron. Ministry of Education officials made a summary of their discussion which gives a sense of the YHAI's early objectives and the forms of nationalism associated with the youth movement.[38] The conversation between Nehru and Catchpool reveals three foundational ideas underlying the YHAI that the pair agreed on, and these included i) youths being able to travel freely with minimal expense across India ii) urban youths better understanding rural India and iii) to introduce travel as a youth leisure activity. Each of these will now be expanded on in turn.[39]

Firstly, the YHAI sought to allow youths from different states, especially those from poorer backgrounds, to have the chance to travel freely with a minimum of expenditure. It was held this would increase mutual understandings despite the immense distance between many of the states and would help overcome provincial and communal differences. Secondly, the YHAI would enable urban young men and women to develop a greater appreciation of their country's history and beauty. They expressed their hope that they would learn the importance of agriculture which, they noted, by far the largest section of India's population was engaged in. Thirdly, this new national organisation would enable young people to develop an "intelligent use of their leisure time". It was hoped youths would build, restore, and maintain their own youth hostels without waiting for the state to undertake such tasks for them. Besides furthering individual initiative amongst the young, this would be a valuable training in democratic practise, the pair agreed.

One young hosteller, Dharam Yash Dev, set out his understanding of the YHAI and summarised it as follows, stating the main objectives were,

> the fostering of inter-state contacts and international contacts in the health atmosphere of Youth Hostels. It not only aims to promote a love of the country-side and active outdoor life among the city youth but also helps them to see, know and understand the people and this great country of ours. It helps them to comprehend the problems of people in differrent parts and different walks of life.[40]

---

[37] Krishnan, Visalam R. "Youth Hostels Help Young Hikers."
[38] Request for a grant for the shifting of National Office of Youth Hostel Association of India from Mysore to Delhi, 1954, Ministry of Education, 16-2- D7, NAI
[39] Ibid.
[40] Dev, Dharam Desh. January 1957. "Youth Hostel Movement" *Social Welfare* 3 (10): 17

The Ministry of Education stressed the programmatic emphasis of Indian hostelling should be on enabling young people to visit "special places" in India. The Adviser on Youth Welfare to the Government of India, S.M. Hadi, noted in 1955, the purpose of their support was the, "establishment of a chain of such hostels in places of natural scenic beauty, historical and cultural importance, major industrial and engineering enterprises etc. […] which in turn will contribute towards the proper growth of the future generation".[41] The officials possessed an ambition that a shared youth identity might arise through these hostellers seeing India's most remarkable places.

The YHAI inspired travel to places of historical interest, such as Agra and Ajanta, and hill resorts, such as Shimla and Darjeeling, and places of interest related to the Five-Year Plan, such as the Damodar Valley Corporation area or the Tungabhadra Dam.[42] There is no evidence that the hostels near the projects of the Five-Year Plans were built but it indicates their role, as India's first Prime Minister infamously heeded, as "temples of modern India". Like the ancient wonders of Bharat, experiencing the steel plants, power plants, and dams of the Republic of India was intended to be a rite of passage for Indian citizens.

After Catchpool left Delhi, Shanti Kabir became the Chairperson of the YHAI. This noted freedom fighter and the wife of former Union Minister Humayun Kabir, who for a very brief period was also the Chairperson of the YHAI, both of whom were close associates of Abul Kalam Azad, emphasised the democratising force of the hostel movement. In February 1954, she wrote,

The youth hostels movement has been welcomed in India as a definite force in the functioning of this new democracy. The youth hostels help to break down barriers and prejudices which keep alive separatist tendencies for a long time. Everyone here recognises that youth hostels provide great opportunities to bring together young people of different racial, cultural and language groups. Within the precincts of the youth hostel the rich and poor, the Hindu and the Muslim, the Brahmin and the non-Brahmin, the southerner and the northerner all share the simple good life without any distinctions.[43] I have set out to hear the Indian youth's experiences of journeying back and forth across India, towards or away from danger and allure, to discover Hindu heritage sites and to hike in the Himalayas, and bring to light the paths trodden by footloose Indian youths and young travellers from abroad that became available because of the YHAI – even if such accounts are rarely forthcoming.

---

[41] Letter from S.M. Hadi, Hon Adviser on Youth Welfare, Sports and Physical Education to the Government of India, to the Deputy Secretary to the Goverment of Madras. In Conference with Ministry of Transport in connection with the building of Youth Hostels, 1955, Ministry of Education, 12-02-2019-D7, NAI
[42] Ibid.
[43] Kabir, Shanti. 1957. "Youth Hostels Come to India." *World Travel - Tourisme Mondial: International Union of Official Travel Organisations* March/April (23), (https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/pdf/10.18111/worldtravel.1957.7.23.1) Retrieved February 1st, 2020

The experiences of Dharam Yash Dev give insights into youth hostelling at the everyday experiential level. She wrote, "We were five of us; we had been walking the best part of the day; the day had been long and sunny; we were tired and we all needed a cup of tea, some supper and a bed to make it the 'perfect day', At the Hostel we were greeted by the warden's cheerful 'hallo' and a warm friendly handshake". She went on, the next morning "Everybody was busy, cleaning, washing up, tidying up the bunks, cooking breakfast… and off we went, to another village, to some other landscape…white road before us, light of heart and light of purpose, as someone put it".[44]

Dharam Yash Dev provides a commentary on his experience of a long and tiresome day hiking and depicts the youth hostel as a convivial refuge distinguished by a jolly warden and bustling youths. This historical actor does not give insight into her interiorized selfhood or reflect on her social interaction, but this idyllic account is the only type to be found by this researcher in the archives. There is little conflict or tension in this testimonial piece, but then again the actions of most youthful subjects tend to occupy the vast space in between outright revolt and the obedience required by the rulebooks.

The YHAI and the State-organised Youth Sector

The varied apparatus of the Government of India coordinated and directed what I describe as the state-organised youth sector and the YHAI brings to light the cultural component of this network of youth movements. As outlined above, the YHAI professed to be a non-political, non-sectarian, and non-profit making organization and their nation building agendas overlapped with those of the post-colonial elite. Sponsored by the Planning Commission, incorporated into the Five-Year Plans and overseen by officials at the Ministry of Education, yet simultaneously shaped by bundles of activists and supported by societal organisations that emanated from inside and outside the boundaries of the Indian nation-state, the YHAI brings to light how the efforts, funds and initiative of government and volunteers intertwined to expand a novel youth movement throughout the 1950s. Moreover, the YHAI signals a shift in the recognised function of the state to equalise opportunities for recreation by subsidising tourism for Indian youths, and it illustrates how the planning apparatus became an important lever for cultural mobilisations of Indian youths.

The YHAI was nominally incorporated into the state-organised youth sector under the Ministry of Education's National Youth Welfare Movement (outlined in the first section). One official report noted, with regards to the provision of youth welfare activities, "the youth hostels association of India has done some pioneering work in this field". The report held the emergent YHAI sought to "offer greater opportunities to young men and women to inculcate a spirit of adventure and daring, and to develop a deeper love for the beauty and greatness of the country".[45] Praki claimed that the Ministry

---

[44] Dev, Dharam Desh. January 1957. "Youth Hostel Movement." p.15
[45] The National Youth Welfare Movement in India, 1954, Ministry of Education, 6-7/54- D6, NAI

of Education had sanctioned them a grant of Rs. 8,000 for administrative purposes in May 1955.[46] In the same year, the national office transferred from Mysore to Mehrauli in New Delhi and the first YHAI National Conference took place in 1956.[47]

Pradki claimed the Youth Welfare Adviser to the Government of India, a position created to oversee the expanding network of youth movements associated with The National Youth Welfare Movement, Mr Sondhi, had rendered the YHAI, "immense help…besides giving us the inspiration of his buoyant personality".[48] The YHAI became more fully integrated into the Second Five-Year Plan. In 1955/56, the Planning Commission offered substantial assistance of one crore rupees for administrative expenditure and purchased a Youth Hostel in Dalhousie at a cost of Rs 20,000. [49] The Planning Commission proposed to set up hostels by offering co-operation to the state governments by matching their funding on a 50-50 basis.[50]

The early history of the YHAI illuminates the hotchpotch of state and voluntary efforts that combined to support the expansion of novel youth movements during the 1950s. The YHAI accommodation was augmented by many of the state governments which allowed the use of their *dak bungalows* [travellers' rest house], forest houses, or other state-owned properties; and Mr Praki heralded West Bengal as the state to follow.[51] In terms of private sector support, Shanti Kabir claimed the House of Tata, the biggest industrial family in India, had "been helping the Youth Hostels Association of India for the last four years" in 1957, but the extent or specificities of their help is not expanded on in the article in *Social Welfare*.[52] In terms of hostellers, the membership fee and hostel charges, which in 1958 stood at only three rupees per year and eight annans for each night stay respectively, a miniscule amount by the standrds of the time for those youths who could afford to travel and would very likely have been ipso facto middle class, did not, according to the accounts of the movement's leaders, contribute a great deal to the resources of the movement. These cheap prices, as the young hosteller Dharam Yash Dev claimed, rather, sought to make "it possible for persons of even very limited means to join the great fraternity of adventurous youth the world over".[53]

The YHAI represented a novel youth travel phenomenon in the independence period in so far as it sought to facilitate a secular and democratising network of hostels intent on nation-building and popularising youth travel for travel's sake of as a leisure activity. It imagined itself as a force for

---

[46] Staff Reporter. May 1955. "The Story of the Indian Youth Hostels." p.22

[47] Conference with Ministry of Transport in connection with the building of Youth Hostels, 1955, Ministry of Education, 12-02-2019 D7, NAI

[48] Staff Reporter. May 1955. "The Story of the Indian Youth Hostels." p. 22

[49] "Development of Youth Hostels: Rs 1. Crore Set Apart".1956. The Times of India, Feb 09 (https://www-proquest-com.gate3.library.lse.ac.uk/historical-newspapers/development-youth-hostels/docview/501577907/se-2?accountid=9630)

[50] The National Youth Welfare Movement in India, 1954, Ministry of Education, 6-7/54- D6, NAI

[51] Staff Reporter. May 1955. "The Story of the Indian Youth Hostels" p. 22

[52] Kabir, Shanti. 1957. "Youth Hostels Come to India."

[53] Dev, Dharam Desh. January 1957. "Youth Hostel Movement." p.17

127

acquainting youths with the beauty of their own country and with other youths from different parts of the country, especially poorer and middle-class youths, and preparing these young citizens for their future duties. It promoted a form of post-colonial romantic nationalism, that set out to inculcate a love of nature, the countryside and rural life, in addition to agendas and ideologies that overlapped with the post-colonial elite, such as anti-castism and anti-regionalism. The establishment and expansion of the YHAI did not usher in the rise of mass youth tourism during the 1950s, but its expansion did facilitate the practice of independent youth travel becoming more widespread and becoming more closely associated with being a leisure activity.

Advertisements, the Politics of Leisure and Youth Travel

Advertisements for boat, train and air travel offer a unique perspective into the leisure activities and shifting youth travel culture of early post-colonial India. The study of advertisements is a developing historical field of south Asian history, yet travel is something yet to be explored by the band of scholars concerned with consumption history and advertisements are yet to be utilised as an archive by those scholars concerned with Indian travel and leisure.[54] I have analysed adverts from youth magazines to discover insights into youth leisure consumption, media constructions of young tourists and how capitalist actors have understood and sought to create a youth travel market in India and also promoted postcolonial romantic nationalism.[55] By capitalist actors, I mean the magazine editors, the advertising agencies and the producers or merchants.[56] These ads drawn from youth magazines tended to cater to the well-to-do enclave market of students who had more discretionary money and they reveal the vernacular separation of Indian youth that permeated the youth order of consumption.

This section will argue advertisements give historical insights into the decline of sea travel and the rise of air travel and the way these industries targeted young consumers. The onset of commercial airlines during the 1950s seemingly opened the way for some youths to use air travel for holidays. Moreover, ads increasingly promoted the flow of youthful tourists to heritage sites and promoted the phenomenon of sightseeing. I will argue it was during the early post-colonial period that young people were encouraged by capitalist actors to use travel networks to begin to move back and forth across the

---

[54] Haynes, Douglas et al. 2010. *Towards a History of Consumption in South Asia*

[55] These include (italics added for clarity): *The Student: The All-Indian Student Federation Newspaper*, Ajoy Bhavan, the Communist Party of India Archives, New Delhi. The *New Generation, A Youth and Students Monthly Journal,* Ajoy Bhavan, the Communist Party of India Archives, New Delhi. *The Bharat Scout and Guide Magazine,* Scouts and Guides National HQ, Lakshmi Mazumdar Bhavan, New Delhi (This official monthly organ of the organisation Started its publication in January 1955. For historians of Scouting, it conveniently picks up where the NAI records largely cease. Finally, *The Young Men of India, Burma and Ceylon,* YMCA Archives, New Delhi (This was the official organ of the council of the YMCA in South Asia. It became known as the *Association Men* in the late 1950s. It later became *Yuvak: National YMCA Youth Journal* in the 1970s).

[56] Haynes, Douglas.2010. "Creating the Consumer: Advertising, Capitalism and the Middle Classes in Urban Western India, 1914-1940." p.186

country, in greater numbers, to expand their cultural horizons and for the purposes of leisure. The adverts pertaining to sea travel, hotels and airlines stressed the comfortable experience they could provide and coached these youthful consumers in notions of luxury and comfort and equated them with the good life. Reasoning with the economic limitations of students, though, these ads simultaneously noted the low fares and value for money and publicised the idea that luxurious consumption could be affordable for young Indians.

Advertising agencies and businesses placed publicity relating to sea travel in Indian student and youth magazines during the late colonial and early post-colonial period. The Anchor Line Cruise Ship's long-running commercial series in the YMCA's magazine provides a useful example that brings to light youth sea travel culture in late colonial India. It offered transport from Bombay to Liverpool, calling at Suez, Port Said, Marseille, and Gibraltar (see Figure 1). The advert requested students answer the ad by mentioning the YMCA. This gives some insight into the way they measured take-up even though the decision-making processes behind the placing of these adverts is sadly lost to the historian.[57]

Travel advertisements sought to associate this type of leisure activity with comfort, luxury, and pleasure. Anchor Line Cruise Ships declared their steam ships provided, "a very high standard of comfort, service and efficiency" (see Figure 1). They advertised their steam vessels' amenities as being cutting edge and drew attention to their tilted swimming pool with under water illuminations to corroborate this. The Anchor Line was also "the Comfort Line" because "the service is excellent – the food unequalled and the fares are moderate". Figure 2 is an advertisement for the Aurangabad Hotel, which holds the hotel to be "situated amidst old-world charm, this gracious and luxurious hotel is a fascinating retreat for tourists". By appealing to the "old-world charm", this ad explicitly links together an elite lifestyle and luxurious consumption of the Mughal world. Arvind Rajagopal holds the advertising world in India sought to "coach consumers in the appropriate styles of expenditure, and to render ubiquitous the signposts that equate consumption with the good life".[58] A pedagogical strategy aimed towards the social body of Indian youth that sought to promote a (middle-class) idealisation of comfortable travel is evident in this youth cultural order of consumption.

The magazine editors and advertising agents targeted these ads at well-to-do Indian youths. Subscribers to English-language magazines would have been more likely to have had the discretionary money to board a steam-powered liner to pursue employment or educational opportunities abroad. Arvind Rajapogal draws a binary between the so-called "vernacular" and

---

[57] Ibid.

[58] Rajagopal, Arvind. 2011. "Advertising in India: Genealogies of the Consumer Subject."

[58] Similar collections can also be located at Delhi Public Library, Sarojini Nagar, New Delhi

"enclave"' spheres of advertising, and this seemingly holds true for the leisure adverts I have explored.[59]

The advertisements for branded travel experiences demonstrate a sophisticated stratification of the youth market existed throughout the early post-colonial period. This historical finding runs contrary to the grain of Indian historiography that generally contends that the anglophone domain of advertising, and the "license Raj" era marketplace more generally, failed to respond to the interests of the market prior to the 1980s.[60]

The good life, however, did not always equate with a high price. Thriftiness, or value for money, is a key theme in the adverts that targeted the Indian youth market. Even many of those that focused on the enclave market would have faced constraints, both culturally and economically, that affected their ability to purchase travel. The publicity for luxury steam ship travel, for example, claimed the prices were "extremely moderate" (see Figure 1). Prashant Kidambi shows how economic insecurity led to a preoccupation with the avoidance of luxury in late colonial Bombay.[61] Douglas Hayne similarly argues that during the interwar years economic limitations coupled with prevalent Gandhian critiques about the expenditure of high-end goods worked against the flaunting of "conspicuous consumption".[62]

Travel agents and air travel companies increasingly targeted youths throughout the first two decades following independence. It is regrettable that there has been so little written on the history of commercial air travel more generally in post-colonial India, especially on the rise of Air India International.[63] The growth of commercial airlines coupled with the subsequent reduction in fares for European travel seemingly opened the way for youths to use air travel for holidays. As with hotel and steam ship adverts, airlines stressed the comfortable and luxurious in-flight experience and their low fares. As Figure 3 states about the tall and glamorous woman being chaperoned by a tiny man wearing a turban with pointy shoes, "she looks like a million but pays the same". It also interacted with the nationalist consciousness of consumers by having a mascot wearing a turban. Travel companies often associated their brands with the Indian tricolour and the Indian nationalism, and the ads by "Jai Hind Travel" (lit. trans Salute the Nation Travel) in the YMCA Magazine, are a prime example of this.[64]

Sightseeing as a leisure activity was also an important aspect of the youth tourism culture in post-colonial India. Private travel companies and the early Department of Tourism, formally established in

---

[59] Ibid.
[60] Ibid.
[61] Kidambi, Prashant. 2010. "Consumption, Domestic Economy, and the Idea of the 'Middle Class' in Late Colonial Bombay." pp. 108-136 in *Towards a History of Consumption in South Asia*
[62] Haynes, Douglas.2010. "Creating the Consumer: Advertising, Capitalism and the Middle Classes in Urban Western India, 1914-1940."
[63] Prasada, Shankar. 1956. "Indian Airlines Corporation" *Indian Journal of Public Administration* 2 (1): 34–49
[64] Association of Men, December 1961

1966, both publicised domestic tourism amongst the youth market. In Figure 5, the Department of Tourism advert publicises "Towers of renown, Monuments of Glory". The advert poetically expresses India's wide range of attractions, "Wherever you turn, wonders to see. From Kashmir to Kanya Kumari, from sea to sea". One travel company publicised "seats in a car" for tours of Delhi and Agra for Rs. 15 per head in the year 1965 (see Figure 6). The "Aurangabad Hotel" ad in Figure 2 sought to persuade its would-be consumers with the chance to see, "the world-famous caves at Ajanta and Ellora".

Some ads relating to tourism attempted to associate the life stage of youth with travelling. As the Sita World Travels ad notes, "Youth is a time of promise, a time for looking forward, a time for forging ahead to new horizons". Sita World Travel claimed to be able to enable youths to travel to these new horizons (see Figure 3). In sum, these ads sought to inspire travel to places of historical interest and more broadly promoted postcolonial romantic nationalism. That is, as a pedagogical project, the adverts served the purpose of attempting to mobilise youths to become more broadly acquainted with their country. These adverts indicate tourist companies sought to associate travel with a wider nationalist project, strongly related to age, and premised on the natural wonder and natural diversity of India.

Figure 1: Anchor Line Cruise Ship, The Young Men of India, Burma and Ceylon, July 1937

Figure 2: Aurangabad Hotel, Bharat Scouts and Guides, February 1961
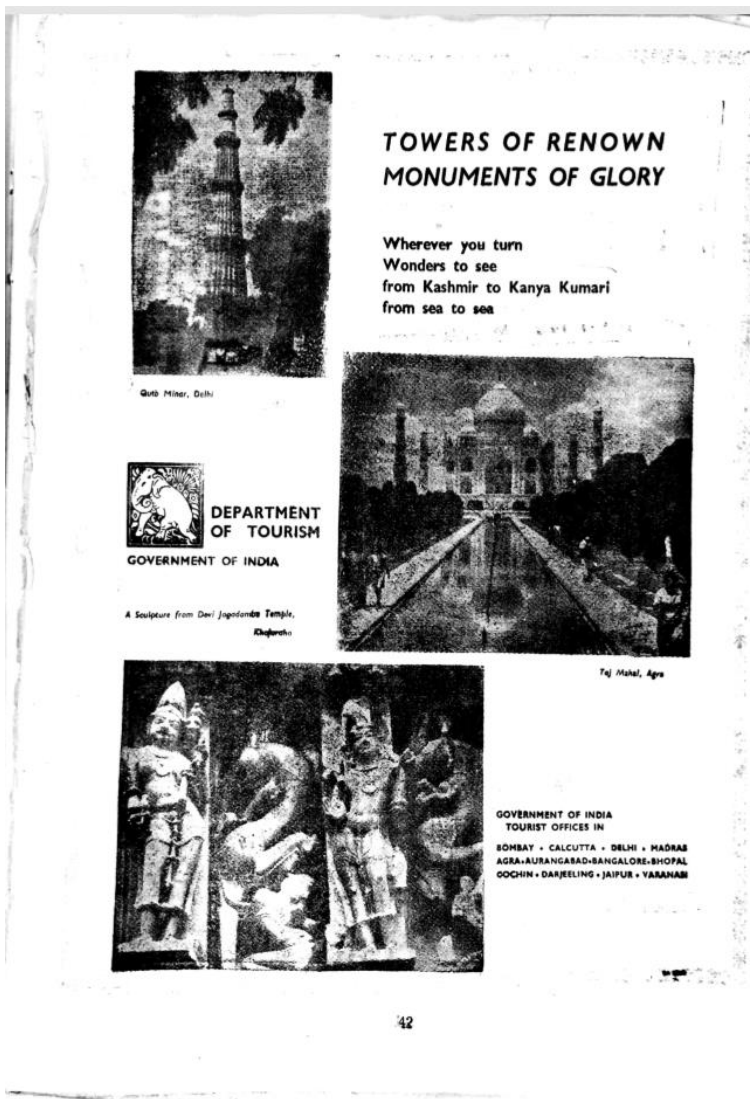
Figure 3: Air India, Association of Men, December 1961

Figure 3: Sita Travels, New Generation, All Indian Youth Federation Magazine, May 1965

Figure 5: Department of Tourism, Association of Men, December 1961

133
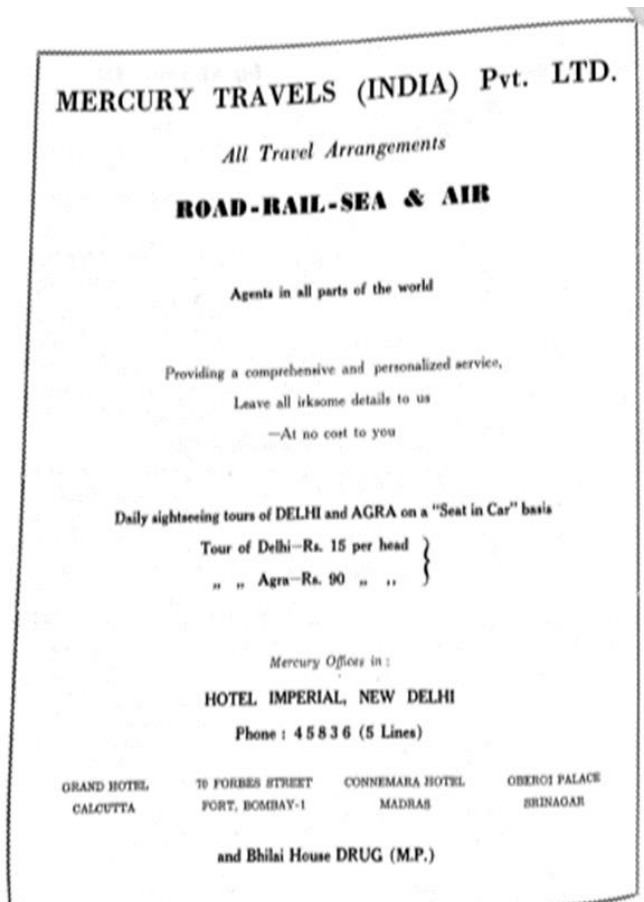
Figure 6:   Mercury Travels, New Generation, All Indian Youth Federation Magazine, May 1965

The Interuniversity Youth Festival, the Shaping of Indian Youth and the Politics of Leisure

> Three attractive figures, their vivid saris fluttering in the breeze, emerged from one of the
> tents and walked across to the front gate of the Talkatora Gardens. They were obviously
> intending to 'do' the town but were extremely willing to pause for a chat. I almost thought I
> had committed a faux pas in asking them which University they came from, since the
> question seemed so immaterial to them. But their reply unexpectedly revealed the spirit
> behind the Third International Youth Festival. Actually each of us is from a different
> university, but as far as we are concerned, we're from the university of India[65]

This conversation between the youngest reporter of *Social Welfare,* a journal established by the
Central Social Welfare Board in 1954, and the students in New Delhi in 1957 at once captures the
widespread discourse that imagined a powerful sense of national identity, belonging and community
being produced by the Interuniversity Youth Festival, henceforth Youth Festival. Journalists, officials,

---

[65] Hejmadi, Padma. January 1957. "Our Youngest Reporter Looks at the youth festival." *Social Welfare* 3 (10) :
18-20

134

politicians, and youths themselves constructed an image of an undifferentiated cohort of model Indian students – excelling in cultural pursuits, embracing India's diversity, and eschewing politics – that became a symbol of the country's future. Bringing together this exhibition of cultural activities and extracurricular competition was understood to be a way of moulding the next generation of intelligentsia and their cultural preferences and leisure time from above. The Youth Festival became an annual occasion for national leaders to address the competitors, the wider student population, and the country at large. These speeches function to give us an insight into the rich and contested meanings that are invested in "youth" in post-colonial India, allowing us to contrast the hope placed in these citizens-to-be with the anxiety about their undisciplined behaviour.

The most talented university students up to the age of 22 assembled to compete in the fields of painting, drawing, photography, handicrafts, singing, classical music, instrumental music, classical dance, group dance, group singing, drama and Hindi elocution. The Ministry of Education brought together 780 students from 26 universities for the first Youth Festival in 1954. These numbers increased to 1600 students from 38 universities in 1957 compared to 1441 students from 31 universities in 1956 and from 270 students from 25 universities in 1955. The Youth Festival promoted extra academic activities amongst Indian students with the aim of providing a holistic education, moulding their personality, and promoting higher forms of leisure as an end in themselves. Rajendra Prasad said in his opening remarks in 1955, "cultural activities give joy and zest to life and thus have a deep intrinsic value of their own. But, what is more, they are the best means of giving a complete education".[66]

These cultural activities came to be described as synonymous with broadening the youth's mind. The Youth Festivals were a way to ensure, as one official stated, "the door of a richer and fuller life can be opened to the young".[67] Their necessity was, indeed, rooted in the idea that, "during the period of adolescence, there are many creative and constructive urges that struggle for expression but are not fully catered for in the normal programmes of education".[68] The onus to shape the next generation of citizens and the believed malleability of this life stage collided in a way to bring about the establishment and expansion of these cultural youth programmes.

The Youth Festival was intended to be a cultural competition that represented the diversity of India, embodied the wholeness of the country, and a national allegory for the Indian nation-state. The thirty-acre lawn of Delhi's Talkatora Gardens, where it was held during its initial years before beginning to move around the country, was applauded as becoming a "miniature India".[69] In 1955, Rajendra Prasad claimed the programme amounted to, "the opportunity to not only to join in friendly rivalry in

---

[66] 2nd Interuniversity Youth Festival Museum, 1955, Ministry for Education, 21-25/55- D7, NAI
[67] Ibid.
[68] 4th Interuniversity Youth Festival Report, 1957, Ministry for Education, 13-69/57- D7, NAI
[69] Ibid.

cultural pursuits, but what is more, presented them with a vision of new India. Out of this vision was born a deep realisation of the unity [that] underlies the rich diversity of the Motherland".[70] In 1956, the President stated, again, that the Youth Festival "epitomised young India and is symbolic of our nation's resurgence".[71]

In addition to being held to represent the collective national identity of independent India, the Youth Festival became a space for the future intelligentsia, or rather the culturati, from different parts of the country to become acquainted with each other. The report-cum-brochure of the Youth Festival, Lead on Youth, stated,

> Many of them coming from universities in the south met for the first time on intimate terms students from the extreme east of India. It was in this that in Talkatora Gardens, venue of the festival, the inter-mingling of the cultures of the various regions took place! Although girls and boys shared their separate tented accommodation, they mixed freely both in the camp and outside…here one sees the students striking sincere and lasting friendships, the unnatural provincial and linguistic barriers crumbling down and a vision of India in its impressive wholeness emerging into reality[72]

Female students historically faced impositions on their ability to participate in the Youth Festival. This account below reveals a perception that in recent years the obstacles imposed by families on their attendance had reduced; but it also reveals the lack of freedom that distinguished social reality for a great many young women. The reporter said in 1957,

> I was told that in most cases there was very little family opposition. If now and then the mothers and their elderly relatives were rather hesitant about sending their girls to Delhi, the fathers thought that this was too splendid an opportunity to be missed. 'The two previous Youth Festival paved the way for us', my informer continued. 'Everybody has got used to the idea by now and few people raised any objections'[73]

This young woman's anecdote - contrary to the Guide's accounts of her father's attempt to control the female members of the household's political participation as outlined in the previous chapter - portrays the father as the one who sanctions attendance, as the empowerer, and the mother as the one

---

[70] 2nd Interuniversity Youth Festival Museum, 1955, Ministry for Education, 21-25/55- D7, NAI
[71] "Youth Festival President's Greetings."1956. The Times of India, Oct 22 (https://www-proquest-com.gate3.library.lse.ac.uk/historical-newspapers/youth-festival-presidents-greetings/docview/614733940/se-2?accountid=9630).
[72] 4th Interuniversity Youth Festival Report, 1957, Ministry for Education, 13-69/57- D7.
[73] Hejmadi, Padma. January 1957. "Our Youngest Reporter Looks at the youth festival." Social Welfare 3 (10): 18-20

who cautions against attendance. There was a widening of opportunities for well-to-do young women following independence that is evident in the establishment of these cultural and leisure programs. However, this anecdote also brings to light that young woman faced obstacles to their participation in public life. The process of cultural change had limitations for a great many because these new roles were not in keeping with gendered expectations relating to home keeping and mothercraft.

The Youth Festival became an annual occasion for national leaders to issue a political message to the competitors and invariably lament the rise of student indiscipline. At the Youth Festival in October 1955, Maulana Azad devoted his entire written address to student indiscipline, and he advised them to not let political parties influence their minds.[74] Jawaharlal Nehru gave expression to a feeling of being isolated from the student community. A wall, he said, seemed to have appeared between him and the students with the result that he was finding it increasingly difficult to communicate with them.[75] One newspaper columnist noted Nehru's deliberate decision in his 1955 speech to omit any explicit reference to the student agitations that had taken place that year in Allahabad and Patna to strike a conciliatory note with the festival participants.[76]

On August 30th, 1955, one month earlier, Nehru had told a group of students in Patna following an episode of university protest, "I cannot tolerate this at all. Is India a nation of immature, childish people? … We must behave like an adult, mature, independent nation".[77] This statement at once represents the way politicians connected the life stage of youthhood and their negative behaviour with the future of the nation-state. The undisciplined student became a metaphor to evoke the ways this young nation state was misstepping out into the post-colonial world and coming of age in a way that he believed was unbefitting. If the nation-state was to realise its "maturity", as Nehru called it, or to progress into the subsequent life-stage, then the alleged indiscipline of this social group had to be dealt with.

Jawaharlal Nehru more clearly articulated his ideas on the indiscipline of youth in a letter to his chief ministers one year earlier.[78] In August 1954, Nehru wrote,

> …you are aware of the unrest and turbulence that has characterized student activities in
>
> different parts of the country in recent years. Sometimes there have been ugly manifestations

---

[74] "Students Must Face Challenge of Times: Mr. Nehru Opens Youth Festival in Delhi". 1955.The Times of India, Oct 24, (https://www-proquest-com.gate3.library.lse.ac.uk/historical-newspapers/students-must-face-challenge-times/docview/517359553/se-2?accountid=9630).

[75] Ibid.

[76] "Students Must Face Challenge of Times: Mr. Nehru Opens Youth Festival in Delhi"

[77] Nehru, Jawaharlal. 1984. The Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru. Vol 29. Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund p.70

[78] Kabir, Humayun. 1955. *Letters on Indiscipline. Foreword by J. Nehru*. Delhi: Albion Press p.2

of indiscipline as in the clash at Lucknow last year or at Indore only a few weeks ago…the indiscipline amongst students, the fall in standards and the general deterioration in universities is largely due to party factions and political intrigues which disfigure academic life.[79]

The supposed state of indiscipline of the wider student body was inevitably a major theme of the organised student debates at the Youth Festival. India's top pedagogue, Dr Humayan Kabir, brought together students for a symposium on indiscipline at the 1955 festival. Kabir expressed his disappointment that nine out of the twenty-five participating universities could not put-up speakers on the theme.[80] One newspaper reporter made the point this, "suggests how difficult it is for students to enter on the self-criticism that such an inquiry requires".[81] The failure to report on the details of the speeches given by the fourteen who spoke on the issue reveals how little importance was given to the voices of youths and the recourse of adult actors to reduce the youthful subject to a discursive object.

This imagery of the youth lacking in discipline was tied up with occasional cycles of student unrest and the Youth Festival in Mysore 1959 itself became the site for far-reaching student agitations. The Times of India stated, the "lawlessness that prevailed in the State capital of Mysore for four days from Dec 7 had no parallel in the State in post-freedom years". This unrest nominally arose because, according to a newspaper report, firstly, the students believed they should be given a holiday to attend the 10-day festival and, secondly, admission for students should be free. The reporter said, "the immediate cause for the sudden outbreak of rowdyism was the feeling, rightly or wrongly, developed in large sections of students that they were being kept out of the festival".[82]

The discursive formation of the undisciplined youth was not necessarily extended to include the students present at the Youth Festival. In 1957, The first President of India inaugurated the festival camp with an appeal to students to use the camp to, "develop a broad outlook and a liberal attitude". [83] He described the young as the "most valuable wealth of a nation" and appealed to students to eschew narrow mindedness by accepting principals of equality and by rising above factionalism, provincialism, casteism and class discrimination.[84]

Mr. C.D. Deshmukh, chair of the University Grants Commission, expressed a similar sentiment that same year, claiming that the youth festival allayed his worries about the reports of over-engrossment

---

[79] Ibid. p.2
[80] "Students indiscipline". 1955. Free Press Journal, October 31
(https://www.freepressjournal.in/analysis/students-indiscipline)
[81] Ibid.
[82] "Public Attention Student Unrest: Arrangements For Youth Festival Criticised". 1959. The Times, Dec 26
(https://www-proquest-com.gate3.library.lse.ac.uk/historical-newspapers/public-attention-student-unrest/docview/346457063/se-2?accountid=9630).
[83] 4th Interuniversity Youth Festival Report, 1957, Ministry for Education, 13-69/57- D7, NAI
[84] Ibid.

of students in politics and dispelled any kind of pessimism about the capabilities and behaviour of Indian students.[85] C.D. Deshmukh's Janus-facing comments, that simultaneously imbue indiscipline and hope into this social body, draw attention to the conflicting notions of 'youth' that existed in independent India. This dialectical friction, proceeding from the paradoxical meanings invested into this life stage, that held them to be either exhibiting cultural excellence or engaging in narrow political pursuits, served to include and exclude the social body of youth from the post-colonial project at the same time.

At the 1961 Youth Festival, Nehru urged youths to sign an "integration pledge" due to his fear of a rising communal tension. He claimed they were the future leaders responsible for crushing "the evil of communalism" and asked them to destroy it "root and branch" inside their universities. [86] In 1964, Lal Bahadur Shastri advised students to fight communalism, linguism, provincialism and casteism and said the next Youth Festival must take place in a village to "bring the students and kisans together".[87] Prime ministers Shastri's "short, concise and staring from the heart speech" can be contrasted with his predecessor's 1956 75 minute long speech which moved between Hindi and English and where he admittedly resorted to rambling and lecturing but claimed "he did not mind". Believing the country's future intelligentsia to be pre-disposed to liberal-elitist forms of postcolonial nationalism, the speeches given by the post-colonial elite at the Youth Festival sought to educate, regulate, and secure the cooperation of the social body of youth in their nation-building efforts.

This programme of the Youth Festival was, however, greeted with criticism by commentators in the media. One Times of India reporter expressed her bewilderment at this huge waste of resources that represented a distraction for the students from their academic studies and their acquisition of hard skills which India desperately required.[88] They claimed, "in the difficult task of apportioning our scanty resources to the large needs in education, the time and energy expended on these festivals are disproportionate. And the good they accomplish is small in comparison with the harm they do".[89]Another critic held that it excluded rural youths by fixing the upper age limit at 22. Making the point that the festival was wrongly only catering for the educated and urban youth, she held rural

---

[85] Ibid.

[86] "Nehru Urges Youth to Sign Integration Pledge: Future Leaders Told to Crush Communalism". 1961. The Times of India, Oct 26 (https://www-proquest-com.gate3.library.lse.ac.uk/historical-newspapers/nehru-urges-youth-sign-integration-pledge/docview/750682382/se-2?accountid=9630)

[87] "Next Youth Festival in A Village, PM Says." 1964. The Times of India, Nov 15 (https://www-proquest-com.gate3.library.lse.ac.uk/historical-newspapers/next-youth-festival-village-pm-says/docview/516303967/se-2?accountid=9630)

[88] John, V. V. "Youth Festivals." 1959. The Times of India, May 31 (https://www-proquest-com.gate3.library.lse.ac.uk/historical-newspapers/youth-festivals/docview/346729249/se-2?accountid=9630)

[89] Ibid.

youths tended to, "take their degrees at a higher age than the students from urban areas. The upper age limit, if any, should therefore be 25".[90]

The Youth Festival's ambition to showcase the cultural activities and promote a variety of extracurricular activities gives insights into the way the varied apparatus of the Government of India sought to shape its future intelligentsia from above, mould their cultural preferences and promote idealised forms of leisure time. The tented township was imagined as a space of youth where a cohort of young people, chosen because of their excellence, was conceived to be an embodiment of the Indian nation-state and a youthful secular role model that the rest of India could imitate. The powerful association between this social group and the nation was something with roots in the colonial period, yet officials, newspaper reporters, politicians, and the young participants themselves forged a powerful discursive link between these educated young citizenry and the unity, diversity, and progressivism of India in the national political imagery.

The University Film Club, Promoting "Good Taste" in Cinema and the Politics of Leisure

> In 1956, I was invited by the Principal of Gaya College (Patna University) to go to the small town of Gaya. I expected a small select group of people, perhaps fifty; so, I took with me three film-society-type films - distinctly 'highbrow'. Imagine my astonishment when at one day's notice 4,000 people came to see them! These people stood up and cheered - they liked the films so much! Subsequently, I received a letter giving a summary of the opinions of a majority of the 4,000. They all wanted me to request the Government of India to support the production of films of this kind.[91]

This official at the Film Appreciation Department at the British Film Institute, Marie Seton, recounts the good taste in cinema she found at Patna University and the popular demand for films of the "highbrow" type amongst Indian students that gave rise to the creation of a University Film Club (UFC) in 1960. She claims the students petitioned her to request the Government of India to support the production of films. The focus of this section is not, though, on the state sponsoring of such films themselves but on the way the efforts of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, the Children's Film Society and the University Grants Commission coalesced to cultivate and promote an elitist conception of cinema amongst the future intelligentsia of India. This youth movement catered to the educated few, an enclave market made up of students insulated from society at large in terms of their cinematic preferences and sought to promote high art cinema as an alternative form of leisure activity to the Bombay film industry. The UFC is another example of the cultural component in the state-

---

[90] DESAI, M. 1955. "Youth festival: To the editor". The Times of India, Sep 17 (https://www-proquest-com.gate3.library.lse.ac.uk/historical-newspapers/youth-festival/docview/517267771/se-2?accountid=9630)
[91] Seton, Marie. 1959. "Letter to the Editor 1 -- no Title: Film Clubs." The Times of India, Oct 16 (https://www-proquest-com.gate3.library.lse.ac.uk/historical-newspapers/letter-editor-1-no-title/docview/346377649/se-2?accountid=9630)

organised youth sector and brings to light the way government and volunteer initiatives promoted a university film culture as a leisure activity in the second decade after independence.

The UFC was established to screen films considered to be outstanding and to promote good cinematic taste amongst Indian students. As one report by the Information and Broadcasting Ministry stated, they hoped to, "create a mental disposition which would accept nothing less than the highest in films art and technique".[92] Another patron declared his logic, "since we are putting up good films before children, I have no doubt that the bad films will disappear".[93] The desire to promote pluralist cinematic influences and high art film amongst the Indian students was rooted in the idea that the cultural preferences of the future intelligentsia could be shaped during this most impressionable period of their life.

The relationship between youth and Bollywood has been explored by Kaushik Bhaumik who claimed a new cinematic cultural order of consumption emerged after the First World War and argues the "cultures of the young" pushed the growth of the Indian public sphere, yet his narrative of intergenerational cultural conflict between a progressive youth and their conservative parents is underpinned by peculiarly whiggish assumptions and a determinism familiar in the early social histories of youth. Moreover, it neglects the progressivism of non-youths who played prominent roles in the film industry network.[94] Rochona Majumdar claims during the first two decades after independence the wider and fledgling Indian film society movement viewed their contribution to public life as promoting aesthetically sophisticated films and cultivating good taste in cinema, followed by good cinema being redefined as politically engaged from the mid-1960s onwards, and I would argue the UFC can be located within this earlier imperative.[95]

Underlying the UFC was a critique of Bombay cinema and the idea that the standards of Indian film production needed improving in independent India. An official at the Department for Information and Broadcasting stated,

> The influence of the film in shaping mental attitudes and forming behaviour patterns has long been recognised. Whereas, invariably, this influence has been described as one tending to inculcate [the] wrong and distorted sense of values in young and immature minds.[96]

---

[92] Scheme For University Film Club.1960, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 15-4/60-FC, NAI
[93] (Hindi translation). Found in a Hindi Question and Answer (9.12.59)/ Agrahayana 18, 1981 (Saka) uncorrected – Not for Publication Q.No.704, 1959, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 15-4/60-FC, NAI
[94] Bhaumik, Kaushik. 2010. "At Home in the World: Cinema and Cultures of the Young in Bombay in the 1920s."
[95] Majumdar, Rochona. 2012. "Debating Radical Cinema: A History of the Film Society Movement in India." *Modern Asian Studies* 46 (3): 731-767
[96] Scheme For University Film Club. 1960, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 15-4/60-FC, NAI

In 1959, the Editor of the Times of India stated about the UFC that "to raise the standards of film production in the country it is necessary first to improve the standards of film appreciation". He went on,

> …as things are today the student has no opportunity to see any avant-garde or experimental film or documentary. The result is that most of them have never seen a picture from countries like Japan, France, Italy and Poland which have produced some of the most impressive films in the last fifteen years.[97]

One film connoisseur recommended the UFC began by screening "The Seventh Seal" or "Wild Strawberries" (both Swedish), "Kanal" (German) or "Cranes Are Flying" as a corrective to the "evils of the ordinary Indian film" and the country's "slothful film industry".[98] Those involved with the establishment of the UFC invariably claimed the trilogy of Bengali films by Satyajit Ray, as the gold standard of Indian film, to be essential viewing for Indian students.[99]

These cinema groups were not designed for their film choices to be imitated by larger society and they remained insulated from larger youth population. A strong line of demarcation, such as those imagined by Ashis Nandy and Arvind Rajapogal; between the urban elite and underclass, anglophone and vernacular public sphere, or an enclave and mass market; cannot be easily drawn here because a great many students no doubt consumed popular cinema like the non-student populations in addition to films of the highbrow variety.[100] Nevertheless, the UFC amounted to a space of youth, pivoting around high art film, that served as an alternative public sphere for the educated few, albeit one with fuzzy boundaries.

The Children's Film Society, an organisation founded by non-other than Pandit Kunzru in 1955, a man heavily involved with the NCC and the Bharat Scouts, launched the UFC in 1960 and fourteen universities joined the scheme that year.[101] This was sponsored by a grant of Rs 5,000 to start film clubs from the University Grants Commission and the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting made a commitment to roll out the scheme to every higher educational institution of the country [102]

[97] "Film Clubs."1959. The Times of India, Oct 14 (https://www-proquest-com.gate3.library.lse.ac.uk/historical-newspapers/film-clubs/docview/346802919/se-2?accountid=9630)

[98] Mehta, Ashvin. 1959. "Film Clubs: To the Editor", Nov 05 (https://www-proquest-com.gate3.library.lse.ac.uk/historical-newspapers/film-clubs/docview/613300368/se-2?accountid=9630)

[99] "Film Clubs".1959. The Times of India, Oct 14 (https://www-proquest-com.gate3.library.lse.ac.uk/historical-newspapers/film-clubs/docview/346802919/se-2?accountid=9630)

[100] Nandy, Ashis. 1980. "Introduction: Indian Popular Cinema as a Slum's Eye View of Politics." pp. 1–19. In *The Secret Politics of Our Desires: Innocence, Culpability, and Popular Indian Cinema*, edited by Ashis Nandy. New Delhi: Zed Scholar

[101] Scheme For University Film Club, 1960, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 15-4/60-FC, NAI

[102] "Film Clubs."1959. The Times of India, Oct 14 (https://www-proquest-com.gate3.library.lse.ac.uk/historical-newspapers/film-clubs/docview/346802919/se-2?accountid=9630)

In terms of its practical workings, the trial of the UFC scheme envisaged the screening of sixteen films, twelve foreign and four Indian, over the academic year. It encouraged the selection of contemporary and classic films not available on the commercial market and for group discussions or lectures by experts to follow the screening. The idea was that each club would build up a library of significant documentaries and films on a wide variety of themes over time. Those in support of the scheme emphasised its simplicity and one supporter noted,

> All that a university has to do is to buy a projector, reserve a large lecture hall in one of its buildings for the showing of the films in the evenings, and appoint a person who will attend to correspondence… Thus, the universities have nothing to lose and the students have everything to gain from film clubs.[103]

This movement formed a small chink in the state-organised youth sector that exemplifies the way the varied apparatus of the Government of India sought to cultivate good taste, in terms of an aesthetic commitment to cinema, amongst the educated few. The UFC was only ever envisaged as having a finite impact on society and its ambition was to mould the educated few, turn them away from Bollywood, and shape the cinematic preferences of the future intelligentsia.

Conclusion

The movements explored in this chapter would be a useful starting point for any student interested in the relationship between cultural politics, leisure, and youth in early post-colonial India. The focus has been on how the varied apparatus of the Government of India interacted with civil society to create and expand novel youth movements which promoted cultural and leisure activities. This chapter has brought to light the cultural component of the state-organised youth sector and the way they explicitly sought to take the future intelligentsia as their principal target object. In line with the forms and functions of postcolonial nationalist politics, these movements had a nation building character and sought to foster Indian political integration. The early Government of India sought to promote a cultural politics, raise cultural standards, and broaden the minds of young people in accordance with the ideologies of postcolonial nationalism.

I have examined four youth movements in this chapter that bring to light the cultural component of the state-organised youth sector: the NYWM, the YHAI, the Youth Festival and the University Film Clubs. Firstly, the NYWM captures the Government of India's concerns about the desire to resolve youth indiscipline through leisure activities and the view amongst officials in the Ministry of Education that there was a need to organise a mass youth movement and the idea that the newly independent state must accept overall responsibility for it. Secondly, the YHAI brings to light the way government funds were used to promote travel as a feature of Indian youth culture and this movement sought to

---

[103] Ibid.

orient the Indian youth towards a love of Indian nature and rural life. Thirdly, the Youth Festival reveals how the varied apparatus of the Government of India sought to shape its future intelligentsia from above, mould their cultural preferences and promote idealised forms of leisure time. Fourthly, the University Film Club reveals an attempt by officials to promote cinematic preferences as an alternative form of leisure activity to the Bombay film industry to an enclave market made up of students insulated from society at large.

Underpinning all of these state-sponsored movements that emerged throughout the decade's following independence hitherto explored in this thesis was an idea that there was a "problem" with the Indian youth: that this social group were undisciplined, and their physicality and cultural tastes required shaping. It was also held that, despite the aforementioned point, that they simultaneously embodied the defensive, developmentalist, social service and future cultural tastes and inclinations of the nation-state. To that end, even if widely considered to be generally undisciplined, the Indian youth was regularly conjured up as the ideal citizen and had a symbolic relationship to the imagining of the wholeness of the nation-state.

The next chapter will explore the AISF and the AIYF which also held the Indian youth to be the ideal citizen, albeit the communist youth, and possessed a powerful conception and vision of service to the nation-state, yet it differed markedly and shifted according to the positions of the Communist Party of India (CPI). I will argue these communist youth movements, like the other youth movements explored, heralded a dissolution of urban-rural, male-female and caste-based points of difference but also inadvertently reproduced them.

In the previous chapters hitherto, I have showed that the establishment and expansion of various youth movements amounted to the emergence of a state-organised youth sector. The communist movement offers the student perspective on the political developments of this period and lamented this web of state-sponsored movements that has been explored. They concluded, in contrast to the state-driven narratives, that the political and economic promises of the freedom struggle had proven to be a hoax and their outlook about independent India increased in gloominess as they faced the coercive capacities of the state and unemployment levels (which did ebb and flow), amongst the educated youths remained high throughout the period of this study.

Chapter 6. The Rise and Fragmentation of the All-India Student Federation (AISF) and India's Communist Student Internationalism

The All-India Student Federation (AISF) represented the most far-reaching attempt to create a national student movement during India's colonial period. From its establishment in 1936, throughout its years of revolutionary struggle following independence, to its sending of a delegation to the Fourth World Festival of Youth and Students in 1953, the AISF's organisational capacity represented a dramatic indication of student power. The student movement acquired a new significance in India's freedom struggle and for the colonial and post-colonial state during this period. By the beginning of the Second World War, the AISF boasted 1,000 affiliated organisations and 80,000 student members.[1] Its national character was differentiated, multi-layered, and reflected regional specificities. This chapter will first explore the rise and fragmentation of the AISF and then the AISF's communist student internationalism between 1936–1955. The next chapter of this PhD will explore the All-India Youth Federation (AIYF), the AISF's sister organisation and another organ of the CPI, and the AIYF communist student internationalism between 1959 and 1969.

The first half of this chapter will begin with an outline of the origins and the early rise of the AISF. Secondly, I will outline the way the student movement splintered along the lines of political and religious identities shortly after its establishment. Rather than framing this in terms of a sectarian or communal struggle, the early unravelling of this student movement can be understood as a pluralisation of student politics and as a search for novel spaces of youth identity in India. This student movement, therefore, further brings to light the differentiated, uneven, and unequal pathways of youthhood that prevailed in late colonial India and the ways that contested forms of political and religious identities (re)produced social divisions

Thirdly, it will be put forward that the Second World War and the imperative of India's defence upturned the onus of the student movement. As with the post-colonial state-organised youth sector, the relational thread between the AISF and the defence of India tightened and loosened depending on whether India was mobilising for war. The AISF emerged as a significant political force inside and outside the campus during the Second World War and its political activities give insights into the shifting ways that communist students conceptualised service to the Indian nation and nation-building. These conceptions could align or misalign with those of the Government of India and, indeed, the Indian National Congress Party throughout the period at hand, and the AISF's shift in its objectives and energies throughout the year of 1942 illustrates this.

---

[1] The Student, December 1943

Fourthly, the relationship between the Indian student, the educational state, and the varied coercive apparatus of the Government of India will be explored. I will argue these AISF groups became a convergence point for the late colonial and early post-colonial state-sponsored coercive network.[2] From the imprisonment of communist student leaders at the outbreak of the Second World War to the mass university dismissals of the students-cum-militants who participated in the Quit India movement, the Indian students became the target-object of a range of penal tactics. This reveals the potential and the actual capacities of the coercive network of the varied apparatus of the Government of India to intervene into youth and student movements. Fifthly, a widespread idea about the indiscipline of Indian youth was prevalent in the decades following 1947. This critique of the social body of youth as "undisciplined" was another penal tactic aimed at the Indian youth and the construction of this discourse enlarged the state's repertoire of control. After independence, the Congress political elites' rhetorical approach to this social group depicted the militant tactics of the AISF as fundamentally unsuitable for an independent and democratic country.

The second half of this chapter will explore the international dimensions and the international ideas of the AISF. In doing so, it will seek to bring to light India's relationship with the communist international youth order and the content, functioning and practices of the communist student internationalism from the perspective of the AISF. The AISF was shaped by transnational flows of people and ideas, that moved backwards and forwards, across communist networks and structures, especially the Soviet Union-aligned World Federation of Democratic Youth (WFDY) and the International Union of Students (IUS). The AISF sought to play a role, integrate themselves into and draw upon larger anti-imperial internationalisms. This final section will unpack the international ideas of the AISF, their impact on the student group's identity and how practical cooperation between these communist movements manifested itself at the everyday level and through periodic participation in international events.

Existing literature

Theories derived from the political and social sciences have dominated the study of Indian students, and the field of scholarship concerned with the history of students in India is only modest. The first generation of literature offers historical accounts of the features of Indian higher education and narratives of resistance against the British Raj.[3] Almost thirty years after the last major scholarly interventions into this field, student politics is once again emerging as an area of study in south Asian history and a recent special issue has represented an important coming together of scholarly works.[4] Defining the boundaries and giving direction to the field, Jean-Thomas Martelli and Kristina Garalytė

---

[2] See Sherman, Taylor. 2010. *State Violence and Punishment in India*. London: Routledge p.3

[3] Altbach, Phillip G. 1968. *Turmoil and Transition: Higher Education and Student Politics in India.* Hazary, Subas Chandra. 1987. *Student Politics in India*

[4] Martelli, Jean-Thomas and Kristina Garalyté. 2009. "Student Politics in South Asia."

have put forward the concept of *generational communities* to denote the "partly ascriptive, partly self-selected communities in which a set of networked and youthful cohorts are engaged, directly or indirectly with formal or informal education", and the exploration of student movements here will use this conceptual framework to draw the parameters of what constitutes a student movement.[5] These authors hold that generational communities include a broader range of actors that may include non-students, teachers, alumni, peers, and more formal organisational linkages, including political parties whose cadres and leaders may overlap with student political movements and the boundaries of the campus.

This history of the AISF presented in this chapter will also give historiographical insights into four other fields of Indian history. Firstly, there has been a recent scholarly focus on paramilitary and youth volunteer movements in colonial India, although the student has been overlooked in these histories.[6] This chapter will argue that the trends of youth militancy and ideologies of social service converged in the Indian student movement. Secondly, I will explore the valuable role of students in the final phase of the independence movement and during the political struggles of the early post-colonial period.[7] This youth movement became an arena for the competing efforts of adults and youths to mobilise students, especially by the Communist Party of India (CPI) and the Congress Socialist Party (CSP).[8] Thirdly, historians of the Second World War will find the divergent mobilizations of students for and against the war effort insightful for understanding the social history of WWII and the Indian home front.[9] Fourthly, there have been notable works on communist-socialist internationalisms as will be explored in the final section, but their focus has almost exclusively concentrated on their workings in the European context and there is much research to be done on the subject in India and the Global South.[10] This second half of the chapter will explore the very idea of the communist student internationalism from the AISF's perspective.

---

[5] Martelli Jean-Thomas and Kristina Garalyté. 2019. "Generational Communities: Student Activism and the Politics of Becoming in South Asia" p.2

[6] Watt, Carey. 2005. *Serving the Nation.* Raza, Ali and Franziska Roy. 2015. "Paramilitary Organisations in Interwar India". Roy, Franziska and Benjamin Zachariah. 2013. "Meerut and a Hanging: 'Young India', Popular Socialism, and the Dynamics of Imperialism."

[7] Hazary, Subas Chandra. 1987. *Student Politics in India.* Pandey, Gyanendra. 2002. *The Ascendancy of the Congress in Uttar Pradesh: Class, Community and Nation in Northern India, 1920–1940.* London: Anthem Press

[8] For literature on communist youth, see: Cornell, Richard. 1982. *Revolutionary Vanguard: The Early Years of the Communist Youth International 1914–1924.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press. Chattopadhyay, Suchetana. 2011. *An Early Communist: Muzaffar Ahmad in Calcutta, 1913–1929.* New Delhi: Tulika Books. Cross, Richard, Norry Laporte, Kevin Morgan, and Matthew Worley. 2012. *Communism and Youth (Twentieth Century Communism).* London: Lawrence & Wishart

[9] Singh, Gajendra. 2014. *The Testimonies of Indian Soldiers and the Two World Wars: Between Self and Sepoy.* London: Bloomsbury. Khan, Yasmin. 2015. *The Raj at War: A People's History of India's Second World War.* London: Penguin

[10] Babiracki, Patryk and Jersild Austin. 2016. *Socialist Internationalism in the Cold War: Exploring the Second World.* Palgrave Macmillan: London. Imlay,C Talbot. 2018. *The Practice of Socialist Internationalism: European Socialists and International Politics, 1914–1960.* Oxford: Oxford University Press

This chapter has drawn on three categories of materials. The principal source of materials for this paper has come from the student organisation's official documents, pamphlets, and their highly insightful weekly journal. These materials can be found at Ajoy Bhavan, the CPI Archives, and at P.C. Joshi Archives, which is based at Jawaharlal Nehru University, and they offer narratives of AISF student leaders and student activists and reveal their shifting relationships with various political parties. The second category consists of government surveillance reports, located in the National Archives of India and Teen Murti Bhavan, that provide summaries of developments in the student movement and of the communist movement in particular. It was, indeed, useful for this researcher that the colonial and the post-colonial state considered left-wing student movements a prime object of suspicion and left detailed archival accounts of their activities. A third (somewhat heterogeneous) category comprises a range of sources which were used to further analyse the unfolding of relevant events. These included newspapers, letters, and autobiographies.

The Establishment of and the Early Fragmentation of the AISF, 1936-1942

The establishment of the AISF represented a far-reaching attempt to consolidate the existing student organisations and their diverse political activities at the national level.[11] Rajimwale's (2005) interviews with student leaders reveal that this moment of student unity sought to offset an attempt by the British to establish a state-sanctioned student umbrella organisation. There had been previous attempts at the establishment of an Indian student movement but never had annual conferences been successively convened and a constitutional framework established.[12] At the first conference of the AISF, in Lucknow in 1936, Jawaharlal Nehru inaugurated the proceedings while Mohammed Ali Jinnah presided. Nehru issued a stark warning: "When you are trying to build up a student's federation you cannot afford to make it narrow and shut out persons holding different views".[13] Within only two years, however, the national student movement had begun to fragment along political and religious lines. This fragmentation of the AISF can be explained through an

---

[11] The constitution of the AISF established that any person, between the age of 14 and 30, studying in a university institution that subscribed to the aims of the ASIF could join the national student movement (pending payment of two *annas* per year). The Provincial Federations elected delegates to the All-Indian Students Council of the AISF and to attend the All-Indian Student's Conference of the AISF. The working committee was the executive authority, led by the General Secretary, that had responsibility for putting into effect the policy and programme laid down by the All-Indian Students Council and the Conference. See, The Constitution of the All-India Students Federation (as amended at the Indian Students Conference at Calcutta 1939), Ajoy Bhavan.

[12] There had been a previous, short lived, attempt to create an Indian student organisation, called the All-Indian College Student Conference (AICSC). Established in Nagpur in December 1920, its creation represented the first coalescing of regional Indian student movements. The momentum of the Non-cooperation Movement gave impetus to their successive conferences, often held alongside the Indian National Congress's annual conferences, although by the mid-1920s the student organisation had lost momentum and ceased to exist. *The Bombay Chronicle* recorded, "The Nagpur Conference is thus the first step forward of Indian college students as a whole into the field of politics." Author unknown, *The Bombay Chronicle*, November 20, 1920 In Rajanwale, Anil. 2001. *History of the Student Movement in India*. New Delhi: Manak Publications, chapter 3

[13] The Student, December (2nd edition) 1944

examination of the different ideological perspectives, political networks and religious identities that prevailed amongst the students.[14]

The establishment of the AISF gave rise to a wave of nationwide student activities between 1937 and 1939. The initiative of provincial student leaders together with the support of adult political leaders brought about the setting up of seven All India Student Provincial Federations (AISPF) to coordinate national campaigns during this period. The campaign to support the Andaman hunger strikers, particularly in Bengal but also across the country, is the first notable example of coordinated countrywide student action. Moreover, groups of students organised informal networks within the AISF to support the campaigns of political parties in the provincial legislature elections of 1937. The most prominent groups to emerge were the communists and Congress socialist factions. The communist students worked closely and aligned with the larger CPS group during these initial years. Both strongly anti-colonial and socialistic in character, fluidity distinguished the membership between the two factions at the student level in the year following the formation of the AISF. For a very brief period, it became an arena that fostered political cooperation and contained competition amongst communist and Congress students.

The student movement, however, splintered along the lines of religious identity shortly after its establishment and the fragmentation of the AISF gives insights into the way that the student movement became an arena for the negotiation of political and religious youth identities. Rather than framing this in terms of a sectarian or communal struggle, the early unravelling of this student movement can be understood as a pluralisation of student politics. Students and their student leaders responded to wider political change, especially the power configuration of political parties, with a search for distinct political youth movements. The struggle for control and secessions from the organisation brought about not only the fragmentation of the AISF but the creation of several novel student movements that engaged in political competition with each other.

I will now explore the breakaway of The All-India Muslim Student Federation and the disagreements between the communist and the Congress student leaders that led to a split in the AISF along the lines of political parties. At the first conference of the AISF, whilst presiding over the proceedings alongside Jawaharlal Nehru, Muhammad Ali Jinnah dubbed the Congress "a Hindu Body".[15] He referred to Muslims as a "separate entity" during his address to the students. The leader of the Muslim League went onto encourage the Muslim members to organise themselves separately to the Hindu members. The widening rift between the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League became

---

[14] For a critique of factions as a form of "traditional" patron-client relation, see Hardiman, David. 1989. "The Indian 'Faction': A Political Theory Examined." pp. 198–231 in *Subaltern Studies I: Writings on South Asian History and Society*, edited by Ranajit Guha. New Delhi: Oxford University Press

[15] Zaman, Mukhta. 1976. "The Origins of the All-India Muslim Students' Federation." *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society* 24 (3): 217

apparent to the conference delegates and this was the last time Nehru and Jinnah would share a platform.

The student movement increasingly became a political space where students negotiated questions of religious identity through performative language and clothing. Muslim students voiced concern about the failure to include adjournments to offer Prayers and voiced concern about the singing of *Vande Mataram*.[16] Muslim students were encouraged to wear black *sherwanis* [long coat-like garments] and Jinnah caps to demonstrate their support for the Muslim League. Like those Congress supporters fashioning Gandhi caps, the clothing of students projected their exclusive political identities to other students. The AISF promoted a "Muslim-Hindu Student Unity" campaign that sought to quell the rise of what they referred to as, "communal politics." Figure 1 represents the AISF's poster celebrating its acclaimed ability to unify different social groups through anti-British protest on Independence Day. However, the Muslim student leaders spurned a campaign that equated the struggle for minority rights as communal politics.

Militant students associated with the Hindu Mahasabha and Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) increasingly held protests within the AISF conferences and often triggered cycles of student protests or violence. It was not until 1949, though, that the RSS-aligned Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad came into existence. The rise of these anti-Muslim student movements triggered Muslim students to leave the AISF. It served to antagonise this group during a period that their social identity had become contested and fragile. Despite the AISF leadership's rejection of Hindu nationalist politics and their campaigns for unity (see Figure 1), Muslim students stressed their general sense of frustration with the national student movement, the AISF. They created a discourse that represented themselves as an object of suspicion in a Hindu-dominated student movement and called the AISF the "baby of the Congress".[17] One student leader, Mukhtar Zaman, recollected his experiences of the AISF, "the right-wing Hindus dominating the Congress were driving the Muslims into the corner and were not prepared to tolerate them except on their own terms".[18]

The AISF lost a large part of its Muslim support at the moment that a group of students from Aligarh Muslim University established The All-India Muslim Student Federation in 1937. The draft resolution submitted at the AMU Student Union outlined their ambition to create a common platform for Muslim Students, and "to bring about closer social contact, better cultural, political, economic and religious understanding and a deeper sense of common relationship." [19] Thereafter, the AIMSF discouraged participation of Muslim students in AISF activities. It campaigned for separate electorates in

---

[16] See the reports of the Dacca student riots 1943 for a comprehensive narrative: *The Student,* February 1943
[17] Zuberi, Mohammad Amin. 1949. *Siyasat-i-Milliah*. Agra: Azad Press p.19
[18] Zaman, Mukhta. 1976. "The Origins of the All-India Muslim Students' Federation." *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society* 24(3): 228
[19] Ibid. p. 211

university elections and for reserved seats in the student assemblies.[20] These Muslim students also made strategic alliances with the AISF (communist) during the Second World War and after the CPI endorsed the creation of Pakistan. The Punjab Muslim Students Federation and the All-Bengal Muslim Students Association benefited from the political space vacated by the Congress post-1942 and won over important pockets of support. These students developed a capacity for organisation and mobilisation along the lines of religious identity that allowed them to establish a position of strength in anticipation of the post-Second World War order.

Ideological and partisan disagreements between the communist and the Congress student leaders resulted in the fragmentation of the AISF into two rival groups. The restrictions imposed by Mahatma Gandhi on student strikes during his individual *satyagraha* [non-violent resistance] campaign in 1940 became the central disagreement. The Congress-leaning AISF General-Secretary, M. L. Shah, supported Gandhi's demand. AISF student strikes, therefore, could only proceed if the authorities closed the institutions, students decided to give up their studies entirely or they had Gandhi's personal permission. The communist group, on the other hand, supported the escalation of strikes to curtail Britain's war effort and, in doing so, demonstrated their increasing alignment with the CPI.

The communist and Congress student factions also disagreed strongly about the AISF's early position on the Second World War. The Congress group generally sought to differentiate between the Allied and the Axis powers, and many within this group supported the notion of assisting the early British war effort on certain terms. Those Congress-leaning students supporting elements of the "August Offer" of 1940 were ridiculed by communist students as attempting to "establish a [Indian] government of national betrayal".[21] The communist group vehemently denounced the "imperialists' war." They equated British colonial rule with Germany's fascism and rejected any cooperation with the British government between 1939 and the summer of 1941.[22]

The communist student leaders substituted their strategy of cooperation for one of control throughout the year 1939.[23] Communist students launched a largely underground recruitment drive, organised auxiliary cells and a propaganda campaign amongst the eighty-thousand student members of the AISF. The Bombay leadership of the CPI, encouraged by The Communist International (Comintern), issued instructions to the student leadership to gain influence over the student movement. The CPI-

---

[20] The Student, January 1943

[21] Chandra, Bipan, Mridula Mukherjee, Aditya Mukherjee, K.N. Panikkar and Sucheta Mahajan. 1989. *India's Struggle for Independence*. Gurgaon: Penguin Books p.105

[22] "War and the World Situation Statement by the Central Committee, January 1941, Report of the 6th AISF Conference, Ajoy Bhavan

[23] In another blow to the AISF's wholeness, the All-India Students Bloc was formed in 1939 by Subhas Chandra Bose after his resignation from the Presidency of the Congress. Unlike the AISF or the AIMSF, however, this never became a national organisation. The Forward Bloc supporters generally remained in the AISF (communist) until the Quit India movement of 1942 triggered the majority to join the AISF (Congress). See, Rajanwale, Anil. 2001. History of the Student Movement in India. New Delhi: Manak Publications

leadership adopted similar strategies with the national peasant movements and labor movement: The All-Indian Kisan Sabha and The All-Indian Trade Union Congress.

The Comintern instructed the CPI to focus their efforts on the educated youth and gain control of their student movements; and it deemed this course of action to be "peculiarly necessary and significant".[24] The Indian student was designated to be central to the revolutionary vanguard. Their educational background, and their perceived propensity to intellectual change, made them targets of young communist workers. Indeed, during the militant "BTR" period of the CPI, from 1948 to 1950, the earlier attempts by the CPI to focus their energies on students were held to have displaced the centrality of class to the communist ideology.[25]

The communist student leaders successfully expanded and institutionalised their power in the AISF throughout the year 1939. It was reported by one state official in 1940, "that the communist influence among students has spread beyond all recognition compared with the pre-war period and out of all proportion to the numerical strength of the Communist Party".[26] This official attributed their success to "the comparative apathy of the non-communists as contrasted with the zeal and better organisation of communist workers."[27]

The communist student leaders then commenced a power struggle against their Congress socialist rivals at the AISF Conference in Nagpur on December 25, 1940. The extent to which the communist group planned the split is unclear, and the division between the CPI and CPS aligned factions arose nominally over the question of obedience to Gandhi and the issue of student strikes. The communist faction, led by Muqimuddin Farooqui, passed a motion rejecting the Gandhian approach, claiming, "He [Mahatma Gandhi] charged us with indiscipline and has warned us that we hinder the national cause by acting on our own and frittering away our energy on ineffective and thoughtless demonstrations…*We the Indian students are in the vanguard of the world student movement*".[28]

The Nagpur split symbolised the strained relationship between Gandhi and the bulk of Indian students. The overwhelming majority of the regional delegates at the AISF conference supported the motion that directly condemned Gandhi's approach.[29] This occurred despite Jawaharlal Nehru and Jai Prakash Narayan's appeal to students to obey his instructions about student strikes. Both had been widely considered to be radical Congress politicians and generally popular with Indian youths. At this point the political authority of Gandhi amongst students had reached its lowest point since he took leadership of the Congress 20 years earlier. The newly elected General Secretary of the AISF,

---

[24] Monthly Surveys Outlining Communist Activities of the CPI, January 1941, HDP, HD/7/1/41, NAI
[25] Rajanwale, Anil. 2001. *History of the Student Movement in India*. New Delhi: Manak Publications
[26] DIB's note on Communism in India—A Survey of Recent Developments, November 1939, HDP, 7/7/39, NAI
[27] Ibid.
[28] Monthly Surveys Outlining Communist Activities of the CPI, January 1941, HDP, HD/7/1/41, NAI. Italics added for emphasis.
[29] Bannerjee, Raman. 1946. *This is the AISF*. Bombay: New Age Printing Press. p.24

Muqimuddin Farooqui, subsequently refused Gandhi's summons to his Wardha ashram to discuss the splitting of the national student movement. The AISF's split reveals that the Indian national movement was characterised by an often-overlooked intergenerational political tension and support for the Congress movement became increasingly age differentiated during the late 1930s. After all, studenthood is a transitionary stage, lasting three or four years, and this generation of students had not experienced the earlier mass movements.

The Congress group, led by M. L. Shah, held a rival conference in a different venue to protest at the rejection of Gandhi's approach by the communist students. In doing so, they inadvertently handed over the official conference *pandal* [marquee], and therefore the organisational structures, to the rival communist group. Those Congress-leaning students whose political identity was linked with Gandhi created an alternative political movement that was tantamount to a "rump" in student politics during most of 1941. Both groups had been attempting to institutionalise their respective positions within the organisational structures of the AISF during the initial years of the Second World War. The communists successfully turned their influence into control over the direction and organs of the AISF at the Nagpur conference 1940.

Political differences between the moderate (usually Congress) and radical (usually communist) students widened, Indian youths increasingly understood their partisanship in terms of essence rather than degree. Both the AISF groups claimed to be the sole representative organisation of the Indian students. The communists referred to the Congress group as the "unofficial" student movement and this group officially became the National Congress Student Organisation (AISC) in 1945. Its constitution held, "The AISC is an organization of genuine nationalist students who have given their allegiance to Gandhiji and the Congress".[30] This inception of new spaces of youth politics was prompted by the power configuration of political parties. The fragmentation of the AISF set in motion a process whereby student movements would be organised along party lines in early post-colonial India.

The student leaders of the AISF developed an increasingly close relationship with the youthful CPI leaders after the Congress students departed in December 1940. Young men in their 30s rising through the ranks of the communist organisation, such as the younger associate of Bhagat Singh and the General Secretary of the CPI after independence, Ajoy Ghosh, and B. T Ranadive, fostered close collaboration with the communist leaning AISF leadership. Their militant approach, their support for the Soviet Union and their general youthfulness had much appeal in the student movement. The AISF consequently became a vital entry point into the public sphere because the CPI remained outlawed until 1942.

---

[30] *All India Student Congress Bombay Students Activities in the Freedom Struggle*. August 22, 1946. All India Congress Committee, 22/46, Nehru Memorial Museum & Library(henceforth, NMML)

The AISF's provocative resolution to fight against the British Raj during the Second World War represented a vital alignment of policy with the outlawed CPI. After the Nagpur split in December 1940, in the absence of the Congress students, the communist group passed a resolution claiming, "the duty of all the students…is to drive the imperialist oppressors from our [Indian] soil".[31] The AISF's outright denunciation of the British war constituted a radicalisation of the national student movement's position. Within one year, however, the AISF (communist) substituted their revolutionary project for unconditional support for fighting Nazi Germany.

Germany's invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941 revealed the close partnership between the AISF, the CPI, and Moscow. At the AISF conference in December 1941 in Patna, in a dramatic reversal of policy, the AISF declared its support for the British war effort. It held, "the war must be waged in defense of the land of socialism and for the purpose of crushing Hitler's fascism".[32]As the "imperialist war" morphed into the "people's war" with the participation of the Soviet Union, many members felt perplexed, and it lost considerable support amongst the students.[33] A great number joined the AISF (Congress) in anticipation of mass action against the British.

The rigid alignment in their policy on the Second World War suggests strong coordination between the AISF and CPI in India. It shows their loyalty to Moscow trumped their commitment to fighting British colonialism, although the gap of a few months that occurred between the CPI's support for the war and the AISF's decision to fully support the war effort indicates the student leaders resisted pressure to avoid the embarrassing turnaround. Like the ferocious debates that occurred over student strikes despite the CPI-CPS cooperation pact (the "United Front Policy"), student conflicts regarding support for the war effort did not always align directly with the political parties. Student-level conflicts often had a life of their own and student political groupings in the AISF expressed their own ideological agendas and interests.

Female activists were always small in number relative to male students during the period at hand and they faced discrimination in the male dominated AISF. The Student, the AISF's monthly magazine, for instance, claimed the women students attending the national conference did so in their "holiday mood".[34] It was claimed they spent the sessions visiting relatives, drinking cold coffee, or taking manicures whilst the male students would be "half starving" in the conference hall. These accounts reveal the female student was subjectivised as gossiping, family oriented and unenthusiastic in contrast to the debating, country-oriented and enthusiastic male student.[35] These discursive pronouncements, however unfavorable, give glimpses into the political spaces of female youth and of

---

[31] Monthly Surveys Outlining Communist Activities of the CPI, January 1941, HDP, HD/7/1/41, NAI
[32] The Student (Conference Number), February 1942
[33] Monthly Surveys Outlining Communist Activities of the CPII
[34] The Student, January 1943
[35] Ibid.

154

their laudable acts of resistance against the male-dominated student movement. A great many of these young women, who challenged the norms of respectability in India, may have taken personal risks, perhaps by disobeying their families, to join left-wing student politics. It is, however, difficult to decipher the attitudes of the women youth because, although they sometimes appear in the historical documents of the AISF, their voices are rarely heard.[36]

Activism, Agitation and the Second World War, 1942 -1945

The second argument this chapter will advance is that the imperative of India's defence upturned the onus of the student movement. As with state-sponsored youth movements, as especially demonstrated in chapter 2 on the NCC, the relational thread between student movements and mobilisations and the defence of India loosened and tightened depending on whether India was mobilising for war. Both branches of the AISF emerged as a significant political force inside and outside the campus during the Second World War and their political activities give insights into their conceptions of what service to the nation ought to be and the ways war shaped their rationalities, objectives, and everyday activities.

 The AISF (communist) and AISF (Congress) launched divergent mobilisations during WWII: One of activism to support the war effort, and one of agitation against colonial rule. The communist group's new position stressed the urgency of civil defense against the potential Japanese invasion and rejected agitation against the British. Thereafter, the CPI and the colonial state worked together to attempt to harness the energies of students for the purposes of the war effort. The Congress students, on the other hand, assumed positions of leadership in the freedom struggle after the outbreak of the Quit India movement of 1942. As the colonial state rapidly arrested the leaders of the INC, students and youths launched a far reaching, intense and often violent struggle against the British. This section will explore these mobilisations at the everyday level and examine the range of penal tactics employed to check the political resistance of students.

The communist leaning AISF became an important instrument for the British war effort and the category of the student acquired a novel significance for the colonial state. The AISF established Student Patriotic Propaganda Squads to bolster support for the British war effort, against Nazism, and to propagate the threat of a Japanese invasion. Their policy held Indian Independence both unfeasible and undesirable for the duration of the war, and they engaged in *prabhat pheris* [early morning rounds], organised slogan-shouting, street corner meetings, and torchlight processions to spread the pro-Soviet and British message.[37] The AISF also established Student Defense Committees on university campuses to encourage students to join civil defense efforts during their exam season and vacations.

---

[36] For discussion on the girl-activist, see Taft, Jessica. 2011. *Rebel Girls: Youth Activism and Social Change Across the Americas.* New York: New York University Press
[37] The Student (National Defense Number), May/June 1942

The central government authorised for the training of students in arson prevention, anti-panic control, evacuations, and Air Raid Precautions (ARP). ARP constituted the primary activity in the student's civil defense campaign. Undeterred by inadequate arrangements to protect subjects from Japanese bombing, student wardens in eastern India and some larger cities set about drilling with firefighting equipment and setting up shelters. Recruitment posters and magazines held the ideal form of the air raid warden to be a young man. *The Student* proclaimed, "By virtue of our youth, our education, our organisation and sense of discipline…we the students are called upon to shoulder a special responsibility in building our Air Raid Precautions".[38] Underlying this representation was the idea that students were distinctly passionate and more willing to sacrifice themselves for India's defense.

The authorities recruited formerly young communist dissidents for liaison work between the army and the people.[39] The army trained student units in matters of civil defense, specifically for patrol duty, evacuations, and air raid work, and organised limited "guerrilla training camps". The colonial state was aware of the security risks of putting communist students on a war footing and instructions were given to military officers who had dealings with these left-wing youths to be conscious of their communist sympathies.[40] Nevertheless, as Japanese troops approached the borders of India throughout 1942, the colonial state opted to strengthen relationships with those organisations who pursued a policy of cooperation during the war. It recognised the potential of this leftist student movement to agitate against the Japanese in the event of an invasion.[41]

The AISF sought to mobilise students for relief work during the Bengal famine between 1942 and 1944. The AISF's Peoples Food Committee collected cash, food, and clothes from across the country, and sent relief delegations to the affected areas. Through propaganda campaigns they sought to promote awareness about the scale of the famine and to promote student solidarity. Figure 3 is an AISF poster depicting a woman and her baby, the personification of Bengal, lying on the land of Bengal with a menacing Japanese invader portrayed as a hog lurking in the background. The pro-British war effort campaign urges Indians to "Unite…To Feed the People and to Save the Nation". Mother Bengal, it implies, can only be saved from the horrors of invasion and famine through the unity of Indians. Figure 2, meanwhile, presents an emotive sketch of a starving student from Chittagong and reveals the terrible effect of the famine on Bengali students.

The AISF and the All-Indian Muslim Student Federation established the Student Joint Relief Board to dispatch squads of medical aid to the affected areas across Bengal (see Figure 4). Indeed, as the INC went underground (post-1942), such opportunities for new combinations of student politics arose between the groups. This student relief and civil defense work were largely concentrated in Bengal.

---

[38]The Student (National Defense Number), May/June 1942
[39]Proposed Use of Military of the A.I.S.F, 1943, HDP, 69/43, NAI
[40] Ibid.
[41]Meeting of the National Defense Council, 1942, HDP, 15/9/42, NAI

For this reason, the AISF called for a return of "the old and glorious seva samiti tradition of service".[42] There has been much focus on the volunteer movements or *seva samitis* in India, yet the latently political social service of the student movements has been forgotten in these histories.[43]

On August 8, 1942, the All-India Congress Committee's endorsement of the "Quit India Resolution" triggered an alternative mobilisation of Indian students against the British. The following day, Gandhi issued his instruction: "Do or Die. We shall either free India or die in the attempt".[44] He said, "If the students want to join the struggle only to go back to their studies after a while, I would not invite them to it…In all fights for freedom, the world over, the students have made very large contributions".[45] Gandhi requested students to profess to their university academics their loyalty to Congress and, if determined enough, leave their studies.

Student leaders, having limited communication with the jailed Congress leadership following Gandhi's *Karo ya Maro* speech in 1942, took the initiative to escalate the militant nature of Congress's underground struggle. Lord Linlithgow, the Viceroy of India, believed that students, had "deliberately seized control and exceeded the instructions of the Congress…*What matters now is that youth is in command and has been putting into existence a revolutionary programme*".[46] Recognising the increased possibilities for protest offered by the Congress-led struggle, and disillusioned by the AISF's (communist) support for the British, students joined the Congress student movement in large numbers.

A wide range of anti-British activity intermingled in violent and non-violent protest, especially throughout August and September 1942.[47] Narratives of these AISF (Congress) struggles are sadly missing because journals and pamphlets ceased to be published at the moment the students went underground. The non-violent protest included the boycotting of colleges and almost daily mass processions or sit-ins on university campuses. The violent protests included acts of sabotage at railway stations, telegraph offices, and clashes with the police.[48] These clashes escalated in a dialectical way: that is, the state's attempts to exact reprisals were quickly met with increased student

---

[42] The Student (National Defense Number), May/June 1942
[43] Watt, Carey. 2005. *Serving the Nation*. Raza, Ali, and Franziska Roy. 2015. "Paramilitary Organizations in Interwar India."
[44] Gandhi, Mohandas. 1942. "Gandhi's 'Quit India' Speech." p. 181 in *Gandhi: "Hind Swaraj" and Other Writing*, edited by A. Parell. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
[45] Ibid. p.186
[46] Secret telegram from Viceroy Linlithgow to Secretary of State for India Amery, August 22, 1942, Quit India Collective, 6664, NMML. Moreover, the Forward Blocists had generally remained closer to the AISF (communist) but after August 1942 they also joined the M.L shah led AISF (Congress). Emphasis added.
[47] Ibid.
[48] For Quit India see Hutchins, Francis G. 1973. *India's Revolution, Gandhi, and the Quit India Movement*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press

violence.[49] This culture of student-state violence intersected between local campus networks, the political structures of the AISF or Congress, and the coercive apparatus of the state.

The most militant year of the student movement was 1942. The youthful groundswell of anti-British activity represented an unprecedented exhibition of student politicisation. It is estimated that 10% of the student population of India was involved in the day-to-day organisational work of the anti-colonial struggle.[50] This included a swelling of women students that challenged the political norms of respectability in India. The scale of the protest succeeded in closing most of India's universities throughout 1942. University attendance in Bombay, for example, dropped to less than 20% in September 1942.[51] A great many students no doubt pursued less obvious forms of intransigence or "everyday resistance" throughout the Quit India movement that targeted imperial authority. These acts of popular sedition included reading anti-imperial student propaganda, observing processions, or boycotting the university timetable.

The AISF and the Government of India's Coercive Network during the 1940s

The relationship between the Indian student, the educational state, and the varied coercive apparatus of the Government of India will now be explored. I will argue these AISF groups became a convergence point for the colonial and early-post colonial state's coercive network.[52] From the imprisonment of communist student leaders at the outbreak of the Second World War to the mass university dismissal of the students-cum-militants who participated in the Quit India movement, the students became the target of a range of penal tactics. The coercive aspect of the imperial encounter for the communist group of the AISF declined following their support for the British war effort, but for the Congress group of the AISF it increased in a substantial way following the launching of the Quit India movement. However, after the Second World War, in a dramatic reversal of categorisation, the colonial government's much-needed ally became the post-colonial government's feared adversary. The National Congress Student Organisation, established in 1945, was largely committed to the idea of supporting a Government of India led peaceful transition to political freedom whereas the communist AISF, on the other hand, became the renewed object of the state's coercive techniques during an intense period of student agitation and industrial strife.

The colonial government responded to this widespread tendency amongst students to politically agitate with a range of penal tactics. Fearing the dangerous possibilities of the student movement, the student became a convergence point for the colonial state's coercive network.[53] The imperial strategies towards students, rarely coordinated or cohesive, oscillated between the employment of

---

[49] See Miscellaneous Reports on Student Activities, 1941, HDP, 246/1941 NAI
[50] Altbach, Phillip G. 1968. *Turmoil and Transition* p. 256
[51] Khan, Yasmin. 2015. *The Raj at War: A People's History of India's Second World War*
[52] Sherman, Taylor. 2010. *State Violence and Punishment in India*
[53] Ibid.

state violence and sanctions using the educational state. The violent repression aimed at student agitation included arrest, imprisonment, tear gas and lathi-charges. Elements within the colonial state bureaucracy were inclined to limit the excesses of the violent response against young people because it often served to spur further cycles of protest.

The Intelligence Bureau routinely labeled these students "political agitators".[54] The student movement, neither militaristic nor uniformed, however, occupied a grey area of the law. They were not outlawed like many other youth organisations had been for the duration of the war. The authorities utilised the Seditious Meetings Act and Criminal Law Amendment Act to crack down on elements within the organisation. Under the Defense of India Act in 1939, the colonial state introduced additional provisions that allowed for the interrogation of communist student leaders who were detained on the outbreak of war. Students could receive these punishments on the orders of the local District Magistrates without any right of appeal. However, these processes, invariably quasi-judicial in nature, were not the same across India. Universities often resisted on the grounds of the severity of the punishment.[55]

The central Government of India aimed to prevent large-scale protests through their control of the educational state and aspects of everyday student life. Students that engaged in political activity could be disqualified from sitting their exams or dismissed from their place of study at college or university. The scale of events in 1942 rendered these sanctions redundant, but universities again began employing penal techniques after students began returning to their studies in the months following the revolt.

Many institutions that reopened in September 1942 refused admittance to those students who had participated in the political activities. In Kerala, for instance, all except two of the universities reopened in September 1942, yet hundreds of students – including prominent AISF activists – were expelled from their universities ahead of the start of the term. In a rare display of solidarity, the Congress and Communist AISF groups organised a petition on a memorandum against the mass dismissals.

Even though the AISF (communist) expressly supported the war effort, the Keralan Education Department banned membership of the AISF by a special circular.[56] At Bombay College, 109 students were informed that their admissions had been cancelled, including Comrade Sanzgiri of the AISF Working Committee and Comrade Arvind Mehta of the BSU. [57] The Bombay authorities sent a circular to all guardians and students demanding the payment of college fees within the 3 days prior to

---

[54] Meeting of the National Defense Council, 1942, HDP, 15/9/42 NAI
[55] Proposal to Withhold the Government Grant to the BHU in view of Political Activities of its Students, 1933, HDP, 141/33, NAI
[56] The Student, September-October 1942
[57] Ibid.

the start of term to prevent them engaging in political activities during term time.[58] 12 students at Loyola College, in erstwhile Madras, were expelled and 30 students refused admissions to their hostels, "to restore the normal life of the college and ensure against a recurrence of the undesirable happenings of the last term".[59]

Moreover, the colonial state had a record of threatening to reduce the government grants to universities that failed to sanction their politically active students or to even close the universities in the event of political agitation. Banaras Hindu University became the target of such threats because of proclaimed excessive political activities by its students.[60] These efforts to reduce the boundaries of the political in India by punishing the entire social body of students ran contrary to the self-proclaimed colonial philosophy of governing individuals.

During the final two years of colonial rule, the leadership of the CPI and the AISF became more radical and the relationship between the two organisations tightened.[61] The growth in AISF militancy is linked to the dramatic increase in support for armed revolution that occurred in the CPI. The increasingly militant leadership of the CPI provoked a radicalisation of various political struggles after the Second World War. Two notable examples include the Royal Indian Navy Mutiny of 1946 and the Telangana Rebellion between 1946 and 1951.[62] In December 1947, the radical B. T. Ranadive replaced the more moderate P.C. Joshi as General Secretary of the CPI. The CPI's official position became one of armed struggle against the independent Government of India.

The focus of this chapter is on the AISF student campaigns although this was closely linked to the large upsurge in union strike activities that followed the Second World War. In an effort designed to confront communist power in India, Vivek Chibber argues the Congress leaders sought to demobilise and control the labour unions to quell the upsurge in strikes during the transition to independence. The Government of India enacted tough labour laws (such as the Industrial Disputes Act of 1947) that undermined collective bargaining. The Congress launched its own rival union federation to face down the increasingly CPI-led AITUC which created a split in the Indian union movement.[63]

The AISF's militant activity increased together with the Indian state's deployment of coercive techniques during the transition to independence. Many of the provincial governments banned the CPI

---

[58] The Student, November 1942
[59] Ibid.
[60] Proposal to Withhold the Government Grant to the BHU in view of Political Activities of its Students, 1933, HDP, 141/33, NAI
[61] Report of the AISF secretariat at the 12th Conference in Calcutta, July 23-27, 1949, P.C. Joshi Archives. Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi (henceforth, PCJA, JNU)
[62] Firstly, the CPI in Bombay "fanned the flames" of the naval mutiny, the subsequent civilian rioting, and solicited wider rebellion. Secondly, the CPI encouraged an armed "socialist revolution" in Telangana after the Nizam of Hyderabad had been overthrown in September 1948 by Indian troops. See , Spence, Daniel Owen. 2015. "Beyond Talwar: A Cultural Reappraisal of the 1946 Royal Indian Navy Mutiny." *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 43(3):489–508.
[63] Chibber, Vivek. 2006. *Locked in Place: State-Building and Late Industrialization in India*

and did not differentiate the student movement from the political party. In Autumn 1948, Bombay police officers raided the AISF headquarters, and the student leaders were arrested (although released shortly after).[64] The Bombay Province imposed a ban on the AISF weekly newspaper The Student and their other publications printed by the CPI's New Age Printing Press. The authorities also prohibited the convening of the national AISF conference, which had been an annual event since the Nehru-Jinnah inception in 1936. The surveillance techniques of intercepting telegrams, letters and circulars and spying on student processions and public meetings seemingly continued unabated after 1947. The transition to independence witnessed a powerful continuity in the state-student interaction, and the coercive functions of the surveillance network altered little. Scholars have examined the surveillance of Indian student revolutionaries in the UK, and London's significance as the most liberal centre of anti-colonial student agitation within the British Empire, although the spying network aimed at Indian students and its persistence into the post-colonial era has been overlooked.[65]

Police violence targeted at the student movement prompted distinct outrage in newspaper articles. The Indian youth had, after all, been central to the nationalist discourse about the future nation-state. On December 31, 1948, the national newspaper, The Free Press Journal asked, "Is the Bombay public to believe that the student delegation had to be *lathi* charged, tear-gassed, and fired at for the peace of the city and the security of the students themselves?"[66] This clash occurred after the AISF attempted to convene their conference illegally, and this newspaper article illustrates that police violence against students was often depicted as especially unjustifiable. The AISF alleged that the National Congress Student Organisation (NCSO), on the other hand, eschewed protest in favor of activity that promoted the Congress governments. For this, the AISF designated the NCSO as "shameless agents of the bourgeois government and its police" in 1949.[67]

Moreover, the Government of India ordered those passports of activist communist youths to be refused or confiscated from them in their attempt to curtail their involvement with international communist movements and networks. Moraji Desai, the Chief Minister of Bombay, revealed his government's policy aptly, "I am not going to allow anyone to go out of the country to make propaganda against the government".[68] Communist students could not enter India either. The visas of foreign students it considered "dangerous", especially from the USSR, were regularly rejected.[69]

---

[64] The Student, April 1948
[65] Popplewell, Richard. 2008. "The Surveillance of Indian Revolutionaries in Great Britain and on the Continent, 1905–14." *Intelligence and National Security* 3(1): 56–76. Schaffel, Paul. 2012. "Empire and Assassination: Indian Students, 'India House,' and Information Gathering in Great Britain, 1898–1911." PhD dissertation, Department of History, Wesleyan University (https://wesscholar.wesleyan.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://www.google.co.in/&httpsredir=1&article=1904&context=etd_hon_theses) Accessed 1st September 2018
[66] Free Press Journal, January 1, 1949
[67] Report of the AISF secretariat at the 12th Conference in Calcutta, July 23-27, 1949, PCJA, JNU
[68] The Student, October 1948
[69] Ibid.

The Indiscipline of Indian Youth

One of the key themes of this PhD thesis has been that a widespread idea about the indiscipline of Indian youth was prevalent in the decades following 1947. This critique of the social body of youth was another penal tactic aimed at the Indian youth and the (re)construction of this discourse enlarged the state's repertoire of control. Politicians and state officials collectively framed the Indian student as "rowdy" and "undisciplined" as leftist students continued to pursue radical politics. Dipesh Chakrabarty held that efforts to discipline young citizens ran against the history of what constituted the political in colonial India.[70] Jawaharlal Nehru explained in a letter to his Chief Ministers in 1954 that "unrest and turbulence has characterised student activities in different parts of the country in recent years." He claimed, "the indiscipline amongst students, the fall in standards and the general deterioration in universities is largely due to party factions and political intrigues which disfigure academic life".[71]

The CPI-dominated AISF qualified as such a menace in their capacity as a leading national student movement, and AISF magazines and pamphlets addressed the charge of indiscipline levelled at the Indian youth. This left-wing student movement with a close association with the CPI is not representative of all young people yet it is nevertheless one set of student voices that challenged this widespread discourse under discussion. Moreover, the public image of student indiscipline was tied up with the upsurge in the number of cases of left-wing student unrest and violence (and then extrapolated to include all students) and for this reason their voice is an important one to retrieve. The point here is that youths and students did not simply accept this charge and these AISF students understood their alleged indiscipline quite differently. They wrote in 1949,

> The rapid growth of the militant student movement of India, the ever-developing student struggles and the growing unity of the student movement with the toiling masses has struck panic in the hearts of the Government. *The entire bourgeois gentry and the paid "nationalist" press shrieks about 'indiscipline' among students.* But neither bayonets and bullets of the Government nor its hypocritical propaganda have succeeded in crushing the student movement […] The glorious student movement of India led by the AISF has irrevocably gone "astray". It is irrevocably turning its face away from the capitalist class and has ranged itself in direct opposition to the Government of this class[72]

The nuance-flattening discourse about the inadequacy of the Indian youth failed to distinguish between the different politics of students. The National Congress Student Organization (NCSO), for

---

[70] Chakrabarty, Dipesh. 2007. "'In the Name of Politics.'"
[71] Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to his Chief Ministers, August 28 1954. In Kabir, Humanyan. 1956. *Letters on Indiscipline*. New Delhi: Ministry of Education Government, see foreword
[72] THE N.U.S The Student I.N.T.U.C, P.C Joshi Archives (178), 1949 PCJA, JNU p.10. Italics added.

example, in contrast to the AISF, had a reputation during the early post-colonial period for generally eschewing protest in favor of development activity that was promoted by the Congress governments. The NCSO proposed the establishment of a National Union of Students to achieve unity in 1949 which was, allegedly, they claimed, "imperative to save the active students from going astray".[73] Framing the behaviour of their fellow students as having "gone astray" reveals the way Congress student leaders endorsed the narrative about their own social group's indiscipline. For their purported subservience to the Government of India, the AISF designated the NCSO as a part of their "machinery of suppression".[74]

The AISF and the "Failures" of Independence, 1947-1952

This section will explore the way the AISF constructed and propagated novel anti-government discourses during the early post-colonial period. Their overall narrative shifted from one of supporting independence to one about the failure of independent India's democracy and economy. The AISF Annual Conference of 1949 declared that the ideas of the freedom struggle were "being belied and expectations are being shattered".[75]

As hundreds of communists jailed by the interim Government of India for violent trade union activities went on hunger strikes, the AISF launched a campaign to support their comrades that invariably had links to the CPI and protested about the conditions under which they were incarcerated. The communist prisoners were not, however, classified as "political prisoners" in jails like the congressmen and women had been by the British. The post-colonial state did not apply the category of "political prisoner" to this group because, as the legitimate boundaries of the political had been drawn with independence, the CPI and the AISF were not deemed freedom fighters in independent India

The AISF rhetoric focused on the hardships faced by students following independence. It highlighted the rising costs of stationery and college fees in addition to the high youth unemployment that they claimed distinguished the years following 1947. They stressed that school and college fees had been increased following independence in practically every province despite the rising cost of living and growing unemployment. They claimed that from June 1949, college fees had increased in West Bengal by 100 to 150 percent, in Assam between 50 and 100 percent, in Bombay between 30 to 50 percent and in Bihar by 35 percent. Moreover, they claimed that many academic books were only available through exchange on the black market.[76] The AISF also lamented the failure of the educational state to adequately train students in the technical skills required by independent India and

---

[73] Ibid. p.10
[74] Report of the AISF Secretariat, 1949 p.3
[75] The Student, 31st May 1949
[76] Report of the AISF secretariat at the 12th Conference in Calcutta, July 23-27, 1949, PCJA, JNU p.6

lamented that only 15 or 16 percent of applicants were admitted to technical institutions. They wrote of the way Indian students felt disheartened following their engineering studies,

> They enter the institutions after hard competitions with hopes and aspirations; their guardians spend enormous money to educate those who are the future hopes of their families. But when they come up to the final year, they get disheartened and become uncertain about their future. The spectre of unemployment looms large before their eyes. Of the total students coming out successful every year, it has been estimated that not more than 15% get government and military services. The rest… are forced to accept posts which are not befitting real graduate engineers. Continued unemployment for months or years together leaves no other choice for them.[77]

The AISF sought to raise awareness about the plight of refugees, their lack of access to education, and they claimed there were one million refugees in camps without access to education following partition. The 1949 AISF conference reported,

> Nearly 30,000 refugee students from West Punjab alone were forced to leave their studies in the middle because they could not bear the heavy expenses of education and there was not enough accommodation in the educational institutions. The refugee students were promised Education Loans in the beginning but the new rules and the restrictions that have been imposed from time to time restrict the number of those entitled to get Education Loans to nearly 5 per cent of the refugee students[78]

The communist student group decried India's "deepening economic crisis", "steep rise in the cost of living" and the "growing unemployment in the industrial regions" that it claimed distinguished the early years following independence. They sought to raise awareness about the way, because of the aforementioned factors, "students have to share the growing poverty and impoverishment of their families".[79] The AISF conference noted, in 1949, "with education for girls still looked at as a luxury, girl students are generally the first victims of the rising cost of living and increasing fees." Further, they reprinted an article from a Calcutta newspaper, *The Nation*, printed in June 1949, that reported as many as 50,000 young men, including thousands of graduates, had applied for 314 bus conductor posts in the Transport Directorate of the West Bengal Government within ten days of the notification.[80] Moreover, it raised awareness about the way students were forced to raise cash outside of their studies, and wrote about the experiences of students-cum-newspaper boys in Poona,

---

[77] The Student, December 1952 p.26
[78] Report of the AISF secretariat at the 12th Conference in Calcutta p.9
[79] Ibid. p.7
[80] Ibid. p.5

One out of every three Poona newsboys is a student. These newsboys [...] go around the city in the early morning delivering papers to their regular customers and selling them on the streets. Their work keeps them busy for two to three hours before they return to their homes by 9 o'clock to prepare to go to school. Some of them sell about 30 copies, others a few more - bringing them a daily income of eight annas to a rupee - not much considering the present cost of living [81]

The women's student activist network of the AISF developed a widespread organisational capacity and increasingly mobilised their own political campaigns separate to the male students during the years following independence. In 1948, for example, students at Delhi's women's university, Indraprastha College, went on strike to demand the reinstatement of teachers who had been dismissed. The AISF claimed the female students in Guwahati, Tezpur and Sylhet also came out onto the streets to support the women of Delhi. Female Meerut students led processions to support different strike action in the Modi Mills, while in Madras, student activists collected money for the female workers participating in the mill strikes. After an attack on the women students in Lucknow in 1948, Aligarh Muslim women, "hitherto kept in purdah and under medieval feudal restrictions," came out to demonstrate. The AISF conference declared: "In every major struggle, the girl students stood shoulder to shoulder with the boys, faced tear gas bombs and bullets".[82]

Between 1948 and 1950, the membership of the CPI fell from around 90,000 to around 9,000, and the AISF's membership also diminished substantially.[83] The CPI committed itself to participate in the forthcoming general elections and to operate within the democratic boundaries of the Republic of India after the ousting of General Secretary B. T Randative in 1950. By this time, the AISF had been reduced to a rump of communist youths. The lack of mass appeal of its left-wing adventurism coupled with the government's crackdown on its activities had pushed the organisation to the fringes of campus politics. The AISF no longer functioned as a truly national movement nor published its pamphlets or journal. Ten years earlier, at the start of the Second World War, it had been a mass movement claiming 80,000 student members and had represented a dramatic indication of student power.

To summarise, this first half of this chapter has provided a historical snapshot into the Indian student movement by exploring a largely forgotten attempt to consolidate the disparate student organisations of colonial India, its fragmentation, and the way this group negotiated the transition to independence. The initiative of provincial student leaders together with the support of adult political leaders brought about the inception of the AISF in 1936. This moment of national student unity quickly dissipated

---

[81] Ibid. p.6
[82] Ibid. p.19
[83] Rajimwale, Anil. 2005. *Glimpses of CPI History: Through Party Congresses*. New Delhi: Peoples Publishing House

with the fragmentation of the AISF along the lines of religious and political identities. As political parties sought to harness the energies of youth, the AISF shattered into conflicting student movements that created divergent political pathways of youth and partisanship intensified amongst students in India and, for a great many, their identity increasingly coalesced around political and religious identity.

The AISF represented an organisational capacity that enabled students to play a larger role in political life in India. The Government of India, however, feared the dangerous possibilities of the student movement and consequently the student became a convergence point for the state's coercive network during the period at hand. Finally, the AISF's novel anti-government discourses of the early post-colonial period have been explored and it has been argued that their overall narrative shifted from one of supporting independence to one about the failure of independent India's democracy and economy.

Figure 1: This AISF Student Unity campaign poster depicts a moment of unity that occurred in the Bengal Province on Independence Day 1945 where the AISF, the All-India Muslim Student Federation, The National Congress Student Organisation, and the women students of the AISF came together to protest. The specific location is unknown. See The Student, February 1945

A Student from Chittagong—
he still looks like this !
(A sketch from life by Chittaprosad—Aug. 44)
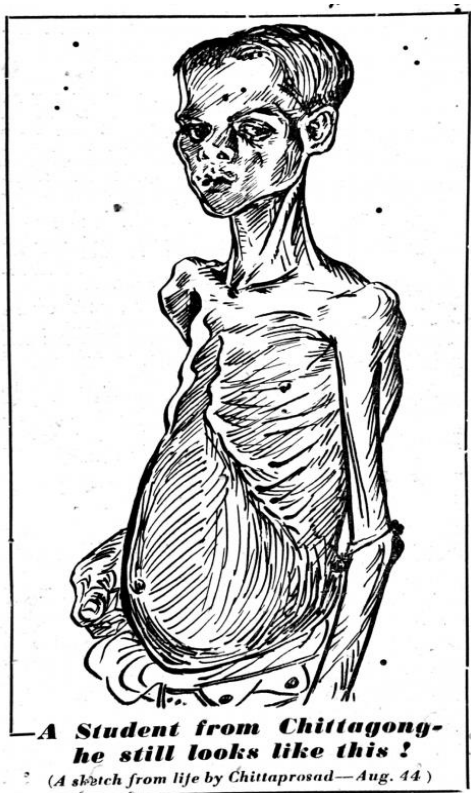
Figure 2: A sketch of a starving student from Chittagong during the Bengal famine. See, The Student, March 1943

167

Figure 4: "To Feed the People and Save the Nation," a slogan of the AISF's Peoples Food Committee campaign to collect cash, food and clothes from across the country. See, The Student, October 1943

Figure 5: This poster represents the coming together of the Bengal Provincial Students Federation and the All-Bengal Muslim student League to form the Student Joint Relief Board. The headline reads "Bengal Student's Federation and Muslim League—Unity Achieved" See, The Student, February 1944

Figure 6: Four young women, probably students, shouting slogans during the Quit India movement, August 1942. Courtesy of GandhiServe

169

Figure 6: The opening ceremony of the World Youth Conference at the Royal Albert Hall on the 10.11.1945 where Ahmed Sader spoke to encourage youths of the industrially advanced countries to support India's freedom struggle. Courtesy of Sputnik

Figure 7: The four leading delegates of the World Federation of Democratic Youth: R. Tomovic from Yugoslavia, J. Lautissier from France, O.M. Olegen from Denmark, and a Russian journalist and Southeast Asianist O. Chechetkina. They spent two months in India then travelled on to Southeast Asia See, The Student, 31st May 1947 p.2

170

The AISF's Communist Student Internationalism, circa 1945- 1955

The second half of this chapter will explore the international dimensions and the international ideas of the AISF between circa 1945 and 1955. In doing so, it will seek to bring to light India's relationship with the post-Second World War communist international youth order and interact with the very idea of communist student internationalism. Much of the student politics that this chapter has so far explored occurred at the level of and within the spatial scope of India, yet the Indian student movements were shaped by processes and relationships that transcended the borders of the colonial and early post-colonial state. The AISF was shaped by transnational flows of people and ideas, that moved backwards and forwards, across communist networks and structures.

There has been a flourishing of work on Christian, liberal, radical, labour, fascist and leftist internationalisms, and the study of internationalism is one way historians have attempted to de-nationalise and de-centre the nation-state in the writing of history.[84] There have been notable works on socialist internationalisms, but their focus has almost exclusively concentrated on their workings in the European context and there is much research to be done on the subject in India and the Global South.[85] Further, with the notable exception of Patryk Babiracki and Jersild Austin's contribution, there have been few works that have explored the specificities of communist internationalisms without confusing this category of investigation with socialist or leftist youth internationalisms.[86]

This is an account of the content, functioning and practices of the communist student internationalism from the perspective of the AISF. Patrizia Dogliani contends that internationalism was a praxis central to socialist groups "that could be found in daily activity and in periodic participation in major international events".[87] Likewise Talbot C. Imlay states, "it is more useful to treat internationalism not as a fixed entity, goal, or destination but as a practice".[88] Imlay provides a useful definition of internationalism as, "clusters of activity, some interconnected and some not, occurring in multiple spaces, at various speeds and intensities, and with different durations… these clusters are directed by identifiable historical actors/agents (governments, corporations, NGOs, etc.), many of whom, moreover, are rooted in a particular state".[89]

---

[84] Sluga, Glenda and Patricia Clavin. 2017. *Internationalism: A Twentieth-Century History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

[85] Imlay,C Talbot. 2018. *The Practice of Socialist Internationalism: European Socialists and International Politics, 1914–1960.* Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2018. Dogliani, Patrizia. 2016. "The Fate of Socialist Internationalism." pp. 38-60 In *Internationalisms: A Twentieth-Century History* edited by Glenda Sluga and Patricia Clavin. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

[86] Babiracki, Patryk and Jersild Austin. 2016. *Socialist Internationalism in the Cold War: Exploring the Second World*

[87] Dogliani, Patrizia. 2016. "The Fate of Socialist Internationalism." p.55

[88] Imlay,C Talbot. 2018. *The Practice of Socialist Internationalism.* p.11

[89] Ibid. p.10

This section will unpack the international ideas of and global events that affected the AISF, their impact on its group identity and how practical cooperation between national communist movements manifested itself at the everyday level and through periodic participation in international events. This communist student internationalism was a dynamic space for internationalist activity between the AISF and a variety of national student and youth movements, overwhelmingly socialist or communist in complexion especially from the final two years of the 1940s onwards. The main structures for this internationalism were the World Federation of Democratic Youth (WFDY) and the International Union of Students (IUS). The AISF was the principal Indian representative in this emergent international communist youth order during the period at hand.

Deeply rooted in anti-imperial ideology, the AISF turned its energies to supporting and raising awareness about alternative independence movements in Southeast Asia and elsewhere following the Second World War. There was a widespread discourse about the AISF's solidarity with anti-colonial movements and about the centrality of the student in these struggles. Furthermore, India was an important space for the interactive element of the communist student internationalism. India hosted a WFDY Youth Commission in February 1947, a gathering of youth leaders at the Inter-Asian Relations Conference in March 1947 and, an event which has captured the attention of historians because it immediately preceded the launching of the CPI's insurrection, the Conference for the Youth of Southeast Asian Countries in February 1948.

During the transition to independence, the varied apparatus of the Government of India generally accommodated the WFDY and the IUS's activity within India, and leading congressmen and women cultivated relationships with its leadership. However, the interplay between the AISF, the WFDY-IUS, and the Government of India changed because central and regional authorities believed that the communist student internationalism was a means for the AISF to give instructions for insurrection to the CPI. The AISF's physical participation in the international communist youth order was only ever a limited affair, but its discourses around anti-imperial and pan-student solidarity assigned a sense of meaning to the students of this communist student movement.

This account inevitably privileges the institutional or organisational voice of the AISF at the national level because the primary archives I have utilised are reports, magazines and conference proceedings written by national student leaders (in addition to official central government reports and national newspapers). However, I will also explore the activities of AISF groups to bring to light how the AISF's communist student internationalism played out at the everyday level on and off the campus. But, in any case, even if there is a privileging of the national level here, which is nevertheless probably best suited for understanding the international networks of the AISF, one objective of this section is to give insights into the multiple scales that the AISF's communist student internationalism operated: the campus, the national and the international – and to understand the criss-crossing of

people and ideas that occurred across these spaces and the way international events affected the movement. Because this account is from the perspective of the AISF, I refer to it as the AISF's communist student internationalism and I generally refer to the larger networks and structures of the international communist youth movement as the international communist youth order.

The AISF, the Second World War and their International Struggles

Let us begin with an exploration of the international events and ideas that shaped and affected the AISF's communist student internationalism during the Second World War. As the AISFs position shifted to one of cooperation with the British throughout 1942, it launched a vehemently anti-fascist and anti-Japanese aggression campaign. There was a regular celebration of the Guerrilla forces in British Malaya fighting the Japanese. There was also an early idolisation of Sun-Yat-Sen and Chiang Kai-shek and their campaigns of resistance, although this gave way to a repudiation of the Kuomintang following the end of the Second World War and the rise of the communists in China. It is, though, perhaps too early to speak of an international communist youth order until early or mid-1947 or even 1948 because these movements had not yet taken their vehemently pro-Soviet turn and the non-communist youth organisations were at this point participating in these structures.

In the few years following 1945, in any given AISF magazine or conference, there would be an article or resolution that condemned British imperialism in Egypt, the reassertion of French colonialism in Vietnam or Franco's regime in Spain. Practically every activity the AISF engaged in included in its agenda the question of solidarity with the Indonesian youth fighting for independence. The Japanese had occupied the erstwhile Dutch East Indies from March 1942 but, despite the promulgation of an Indonesian Republic, the Dutch attempted to reassert colonial authority until 1949.

In 1947, two years after Sukarno had signed the Proclamation of Indonesian Independence, the AISF Working Committee appealed to all students and youth organisations of Asia to observe the 17th of August as Indonesia Day to "show the fighting solidarity of the new youth of Asia and to raise the common voice of vehement protest against the criminal designation of the imperial powers in Asia".[90] The AISF launched nationwide protests in campuses and public spaces against the Dutch attempts to reassert colonialism in Indonesia during the late 1940s. The Dutch ambassador repeatedly complained to the Indian government that the police were failing to provide security to the building. One protest culminated in a group of AISF students commandeering the Coat of arms of the Netherlands from the embassy doorway in 1949.[91]

There was little in the way of practical cooperation between the AISF and other communist student groups abroad in the years following the Second World War, but solidarity with other imperial

---

[90] The Student, August 15th 1947 p.4
[91] Indian Student Protest at Dutch Aggression in Indonesian, 1949, Department for External Affairs, 40–FEA, NAI

struggles became central to the political imagination and the international ideology of the AISF. Youths fighting the colonial yoke, in Indonesia and Vietnam in particular, became a unifying symbol for the AISF's communist student internationalism. This life stage came to embody the universalist aspirations of nationalism in the AISF's political imagining of other freedom struggles.

The post-Second World War discourse around national liberation in Southeast Asia invested into youthhood a sense of political purpose for the students of soon-to-be independent India. As The Student recorded in 1949, "today the progressive youth of every country looks at the heroism of the youth of the Asian countries with admiration".[92] The emergence of this post-colonial pan-Asian collective student identity and solidarity can be understood as an anti-imperial internationalism that improvised a distinctly future-oriented politics where the youth was an embodiment of the horizon of future possibilities.[93] This anti-colonial and anti-imperial rhetoric, moreover, closely reflected the language of the CPI and the Soviet Union.

The AISF critiqued the relationship between foreign students and the colonial-era educational state during the final years of the British Raj. They raised awareness about the plight of Indian students abroad and the way India House in London failed students in the UK. This campaign was initiated by the alleged deterioration of their conditions and reports that groups of students newly arrived from India were forced to sleep in tents in London as an emergency measure.[94] The London Majlis of Indian students characterised the conditions of Indian students in London as "physical torture" and demanded that a "commission of non-official Indian educators should investigate the conditions under which Indian students in Britain are living!"

The London Majlis of Indian students passed a resolution condemning the "growing incompetence, lethargy and red tape methods of the Education Department of India House, London", and declared that "…unless the Educational Department of the India House is completely overhauled and recast and manned by officials more in touch with the thoughts, feelings and ideals of Indian youth, Indian students in Britain will remain neglected and forsaken".[95] The conditions of Indian students abroad proved to be a rallying point for the AISF to display pan-student solidarity and to critique the Government of India.

The AISF-WFDY-IUS Relationship

The AISF devoted much energy to raising awareness about their participation in the emergent post-Second World War international communist youth order. This participation brings to light the way this student movement sought to integrate itself and participate in the emergent international youth

---

[92] The Student, August 1949
[93] Goswami, Manu. 2012. "Imaginary Futures and Colonial Internationalisms."
[94] The Student, 13th Feb 1947
[95] Ibid.

organisations of the mid-twentieth century and take advantage of the opportunities offered by these expanding international spheres of youth politics. The founding congress of the WFDY, an international youth movement that would come to be aligned with the Soviet Union, took place in October 1945 following the World Youth Conference in London's Royal Albert Hall.[96] The UK Home Office had been sceptical about London hosting the event but when they found out that the US State Department was "actively supporting the preparatory work", and believed it had Eleanor Roosevelt's blessing, they authorised the conference.[97]

The AISF reported that delegates from 67 nations attended the World Youth Conference in London. The AISF claimed to be represented by Ketayun Boomla, Vidya Kanuga, and A.H. Sader, with M Raschid as an observer. All were based in London and active workers of the Federation of Indian Students Societies in England.[98] Figure 6 shows the opening ceremony of the World Youth Conference, which the ASIF report held, "was an impressive sight and 5,000 gathered to welcome the delegates with their national flags and in their national dress – Mongolian robes, Indian saris, Magyar caps".[99]

The AISF reported that Ahmed Sader spoke to encourage youths of the industrially advanced countries to support India's freedom struggle. Speaking of the British Raj, he addressed the 1945 conference, "the imperialist oppressors jailed our leaders, suppressed our organisations and beheaded our revolutionaries Hindus and Muslims alike… the right to freedom of all colonial peoples must not only be recognised but actively translated into practice".[100]

The AISF became the principal Indian representative in the International Union of Students (IUS), an international university student organisation that became aligned with the Soviet Union, in addition to the WFDY. Philip.G. Altbach, a leading scholar of student movements, writes, "the IUS began to discriminate among student groups on the basis of their political views [...] the fairly representative All-India Students' Congress was excluded in favor of the much smaller and more isolated All-India Students' Federation, a Communist Organization".[101] Similarly, a 1951 report by the Royal Institute of International Affairs noted about the IUS, "India was represented then, as it has been ever since, by the very left-wing All-India Student Federation … The All-India Student Congress (A.I.S.C.) was denounced by the I. U.S. as 'unrepresentative'" despite, he notes, having "500,000 members against

---

[96] The Student, 30th November 1945 p. 9
[97] Krabbendam, Hans and Giles Scott-Smith. 2004. *The Cultural Cold War in Western Europe, 1945-60.* Routledge: London p.112
[98] The Student, 30th November 1945 p. 9
[99] Ibid.
[100] Ibid.
[101] Altbach, Philip G. 1970. *The Student Internationals. An Analysis of International and Regional Student Organizations.* Washington, D.C: U.S. Office of Education p.27

the 100,000 claimed by the A.I.S.F.".[102] The AISF's central role in the communist international youth order was linked directly to the politics of the Cold War and premised on the idea that they would promote the foreign policy interests of the Soviet Union.

The AISF repeatedly maintained that the AISC had refused to join the IUS and WFDY, but the AISC claimed that it was refused entry to these international youth movements on reasonable terms. The communist perspective held that the AISC would not join because, "the World Students Congress [the organisation that led to the establishment of the WFDY] refused to be blackmailed into recognising the AISC as the 'sole representative organisation of Indian students'".[103] The Congress or the WFDY-IUS perspective remains unknown, but the AISF claimed that the disagreement nominally arose over the AISC's perceived efforts to deliberately suppress Pandit Nehru's message at the World Students Congress in Prague 1946. The AISF vehemently denied this, claiming it was a procedural error. They accused the AISC of spreading "slander" and "lies" about the WFDY-IUS. Josef Grohman, President of the IUS, released a statement to clarify the matter on behalf of its executive committee in January 1947,

> It is said in India that the message sent by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the (then) President of the INC was read only after the personal intervention of Mr. Russel Austin, the leader of the American Delegation at the [World Students] Congress. This is absolutely untrue. It is a fact that messages were only read at Plenary sessions, so that everyone was present, the plenaries did not take place every day. It is therefore possible, that the message was read two days after it had arrived, together with other messages, which came daily. On the contrary, it was given more publication than other messages as it was printed in all Czechoslovak newspapers and several times read through [on] the Czechoslovak Broadcast.[104]

The AISC set up the Asiatic Students Conference on December 31st, 1946, but the AISF did not receive an invitation to participate. The AISC claimed delegates from Malaya, Iran, Indonesia, Vietnam, China, and "Arabia" came to India, but the AISF refuted this and claimed most were students from India rather than "foreign delegates". They dismissed the Asiatic Conference as the AISC trying to "set up a puppet organisation for factional purposes", claiming it was "a move against the IUS rather than a move to unite Asiatic students and to fight side by side with students of the rest of the world for a free and peaceful future".[105]

The WFDY Youth Commission's Visit to India

---

[102] Royal Institute of International Affairs.1952. "Students in World Politics: The Role of the I.U.S". *The World Today* 7 (8): 346-356 (https://www.jstor.org/stable/40392442?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents) Accessed 20th October, 2019.
[103] The Student, 26th January - AISF Conference Independence Day Number p.8
[104] The Student, 8th January 1947 p.11
[105] The Student, 26th January - AISF Conference Independence Day Special Number p.8

India was an important space for the functioning of the AISF's communist student internationalism. The WFDY Youth Commission's tour of the country in early February 1947 is a key example of the way the interactive element of the AISF's communist internationalism played out within the national boundaries of India. The four leading delegates of the Commission, who can be seen in Figure 7 - R. Tomovic from Yugoslavia, J. Lautissier from France, O.M. Olegen from Denmark, and a Russian journalist and Southeast Asianist O. Chechetkina - spent two months in India then travelled onto Southeast Asia. The AISF reports emphasised the rousing reception they received in Lucknow and the efforts of the AISC, The All-India Muslim Student Federation, and the All-India Forward Bloc in addition to the AISF to make the commission feel welcome during their tours through Lucknow, Calcutta, Madras and finally Delhi.[106] The extract from *The Student* below at once captures the fanfare the commission received,

> What was the most unexpected and surprising was the thumping reception at the way side stations between Cawnpore and Calcutta. At the dead of night on the 14th Feb, the delegates had to wake up at Allahabad station which was resounding with the slogans of 'Youth of the World Unite', 'long Live WFDY', etc.
>
> 'Sorry to disturb you but this is the only chance for Allahabad students to meet you', the students told the commission.
>
> In the early morning the delegation was taken aback by the huge mobilisation of 3,000 students, workers and citizens at Gaya Station. Congress, League and the workers Red Flags were to be seen. As far as the mass of students are concerned there are countless examples of the enthusiastic welcome they have given at the commission.[107]

Not only did the WFDY Youth Commissions visit provide opportunities for the creation of student networks, but it enabled interactions between the leaders of the WFDY and leading Indian politicians. Maulana Azad and Jawaharlal Nehru greeted the Commission when they arrived in Delhi and Nehru invited them to meet him for lunch. The AISF claimed he showed keen interest in the WFDY Youth Commission's programme. He promised the Commission help and cooperation and presented them with his new book, *The Discovery of India*.[108]

During the WFDY Youth Commission's tour, Mrs Vijaya Laxmi Pandit paid a warm tribute to the WFDY as representing a welcome force for democracy and peace. Presiding over the reception meeting in Lucknow, she said, the "emergence of an organisation like WFDY is a healthy sign in a world torn in conflict and confusion".[109] However, the coming together of young political activists

---

[106] The Student, 6th March 1947 pp.5- 6
[107] Ibid. pp. 5- 6
[108] Ibid. p.1
[109] Ibid. pp. 5-6

177

was not only about creating international student solidarity. Indeed, Larisa Efimova reveals that Olga Chechetkina created a secret report on the prospects of a revolution in Burma, Malaya and Indonesia and received secret instructions from the Komsomol to raise support for the national liberation struggles in India, Vietnam, Indonesia, and Egypt.[110]

The goodwill of the Congress leadership was not, according to the AISF, however, reflected by the Congress student leaders during a particular incident that took place in Lucknow. The AISF claimed that the only incident that marred the trip of the WFDY Youth Commission occurred when Sj. Ram Sumer Sukla, ex-President of the AISC, tried to prevent the Youth Commission from attending the Lucknow reception and, "to once again rake up old slanders against the WFDY and IUS".[111] This public escapade was rooted in the 1946 Prague conference incident where, the Congress student leaders alleged, as already explained earlier in this section, Nehru's message to the conference had been ignored. However, the Prime Minister himself, revealing the way that adult politicians could be willing to attempt to intervene in the politics of Indian students and the intimate relationship between the Congress student leaders and their adult politicians, sent a telegram directly to Mr.R. K Sinha, the new General Secretary of the AISC, saying, "Suggests Students Congress full cooperation with International Youth Delegation visit and tour".[112]

One methodological challenge to researching youth or student histories is that their active voice is often missing. Historians of youth must, nonetheless, set out to hear the youth wherever possible. The members of the WFDY Youth Commission's accounts of their experiences travelling India provides one such opportunity. They do not discuss the machinations of student politics or their dealings with the AISF, rather their testimonies give insight into how these leaders of the international communist youth order viewed the social and economic landscape of India itself.

The French member of the delegation, Jean Lautissier, expressed his astonishment at the "paradox of poverty and plenty" which he found. He stated,

> The outstanding memory I will carry away would be of the small children working in factories and the young mothers going to work carrying their babies on the back. I now understand why the death rate is so high in India. I have seen workers working with almost prehistoric implements and tools. That explains why India has made no headway in industrial prosperity. I was astonished at the handicaps under which the workers are carrying their struggle for better living conditions.[113]

---

[110] Efimova, Larisa. 2009. "Did the Soviet Union Instruct Southeast." *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 40 (3): 454
[111] The Student, 6th March 1947 pp.5- 6
[112] Ibid. pp.5-6
[113] The Student, 31st May 1947 p.2

The Danish member of the delegation, O.M. Olegen, referred to "the contradictions in Indian life". He said,

> There are economic, political, social and linguistic contradictions. But the one common bond is poverty, which is glaringly manifested in the children of five and six who work for five annas a day of five hours.[114]

Do these members of the WFDY Youth Commission give an ungenerous account of Indian life and unfairly represent Indian culture and society? Edward Said wrote about the way Westerners can create contemptuous or patronising discursive constructions of the East.[115] The point here is not to moralise, but it seems like one common outcome of these young European communists travelling to India was an essentialising discourse about poverty and the (re)construction of a static and timeless conceptualization of Indian life that necessitated sympathy.

It was at the Asian Relations Conference in Delhi 1947, on 27th March, that the WFDY Youth Commission met representatives of youth organisations from different Southeast Asian countries. This represents another instance that the interactive element of the AISF's communist student internationalism played out within the national boundaries of India. The AISF reported, "the meeting was an informal one primarily for the purpose of exchanging information".[116] The Indonesian Youth Congress, the National Union of Indonesian students, Representatives of the Burmese Youth League, the All-Burma Student Union, The Karen Youth Organisation, the Malayan Youth Organisation were all present.

Delegates from Vietnam also attended the Asian Relations Conference in Delhi, and this was applauded by the communist students because of the dangers they faced in attending the conference. Vietnam was represented by the young commander-in-chief of the guerrilla forces, Mr Tran Van Gia. The AISF celebrated the arrival of the two representatives of Ho Chi Minh's proclaimed independent Democratic Republic of Vietnam who managed to attend the Asian Relations Conference despite the extreme danger they faced. They claimed if they had been captured by the French it would have meant certain death.[117]

The AISF viewed the AISC as their principal rival in student politics at the national-level, but during the year that India transitioned to independence the communist student movement had a more ambiguous relationship with the Congress-led interim Government of India's foreign policy. The AISF applauded "the Interim Government for making a break with the traditional Imperialist Foreign

---

[114] The Student, 31st May 1947 p.2
[115] Said, Edward W. 1979. *Orientalism*. Vintage Books: New York
[116] The Student, 17th May 1947 p.3
[117] The Student, 17th May 1947 p.3

179

Policy of Britain".[118] The AISF conference of early January 1947, referring to India placing the apartheid regime on the UN agenda for the first time, greeted "the great victory won by the Indian delegation led by Mrs Laxmi Pandit in the UNO against the South African Government on the issue of racial discrimination".[119] It also celebrated the Indian UNO delegation's stand to not establish any relations with Franco's dictatorship in Spain.

The AISF and Indian Participation in the World Youth Festivals

The AISF faced limitations in participating in the interactive elements of its communist internationalism, and this is demonstrated by the AISF's inability to send a delegation to the First World Youth Festival in Prague in July 1947 despite receiving an invitation. The First World Youth Festival was an event organised by the WFDY and the IUS that brought youths from across the world together. The AISF attempted to raise funds amongst Indian workers but, ultimately, they could not afford to send an official representation, and this reveals the financial limitations they faced in participating in the communist international youth order.[120] Philip Altback emphasises the financial subsidies offered by the Soviet Union and the United States meant that they were able to control the international youth order, but he overlooks the difficulties student movements in poorer countries faced.[121] It is not possible to decipher exactly how much money the AISF received for, say, travel and publications with the archives available. It is clear, in any case, that financial support was not available until the final years of the 1940s and the early 1950s.

The AISF report reveals that the Indian contingent to the First World Youth Festival 1947 consisted only of two individual student athletes who were funded directly by the IUS. These included India's 400-meter hurdles champion and captain of the Bombay University athletics team, V.V. Vazander, and 1500- and 5000-meters Interuniversity champion, H.H. Ghatradyal, of Karnatak College.[122]

Even though India was only represented in a sporting capacity, Indian independence was an important topic of discussion at the First World Youth Festival. Jean Jacques Recht, a member of the Republic Youth of France, for instance, claimed that he asked the conference, "Why have Nehru and Gandhi agreed to India being split up?" He went on to report,

> the same question was asked by youth representatives from Liberated China, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and many other countries. Some of them did not express much surprise at the fact that Gandhiji had accepted the idea of division[,] but they could not understand Nehru

[118] The Student, 26th January 1947 p.9
[119] Bhagavan, Manu Belur. 2013. *India and the Quest for One World*, see chapter 4
[120] The Student, August 31st 1947 p.16
[121] Altback, Philip G. 1970. *The Student Internationals* p.4
[122] The Student, August 31st 1947 p.16

reconciling himself to it. This is because Nehru has always been regarded as the most progressive of India's national leaders by progressive forces in Europe.[123]

The World Youth Festivals became pro-communist mass youth gatherings that took place every two or three years, and they became increasingly aligned to the Soviet Union rather than seeking to include the student movements from the Western bloc. Philip Altbach notes as many as 35,000 young people attended these festivals and estimated they could cost up to $100 million each.[124] In a telegram from one leader of the international communist student movement, Ranjit Guha, presumably intercepted because it is unlikely the AISF would hand it over to the Ministry of External Affairs, he encouraged the AISF to develop an "overall campaign for the 2nd World Youth Congress and the Festival" and informed them this would result in the "further popularising [of] our federation among the youth of your country".[125] Regrettably, due to the pauses in print of *The Student*, there is little evidence pertaining to the Second World Youth Festival from the AISF's perspective.

The Third World Youth Festival of 1951, held in East Berlin, was greeted with some scepticism in the Indian press. David Laidlaw, a Times of India reporter, asked, "The festival is supposed to cost between 300 and 350 million marks. Where does this money come from?"[126] The newspaper commentator lamented the East German Communist State's request that workers and employees of state-owned factories should give one hour's pay to the World Youth Festival fund over a ten-week period. He described the event as "Stalinistic" and claimed, "the political intentions of the festival are hardly camouflaged". Indeed, as the tone of the communist international youth order shifted towards a more anti-US line by the turn of the decade, the student movements from the Western bloc overwhelmingly refused to participate in these Soviet-backed youth festivals.[127]

The first time that India sent a large delegation was the Fourth World Festival of Youth held in Bucharest in the summer of 1953. The Joint-Secretary of the AISF, B. Narsing Rao, reminisced about the festival, "The friendly exchange of views, of gifts between delegations, the cultural performances, sports contests, the colourful parade of Romanian youth and the atmosphere of friendship and cordiality were so overwhelming".[128] Moreover, India sent a 200-strong delegation including footballers, cyclists, and other athletes to participate, although whether the AISF played any role in

---

[123] The Student, 1st October 1947 p.10
[124] Altbach, Philip G. 1970. *The Student Internationals*
[125] Extract from a letter dated 11.4.49 from Ranjit Guha, for Bureau of Youth Fighting Against Colonialism, Paris, to All India Students Federation, In World Assembly of Youth - Succession to the international Youth Conference, 1949, External Affairs United Nations -1, 9 (91)- 1949, NAI
[126] Laidlaw, D. " Berlin World Youth Festival". 1951. The Times of India, Aug 5th (https://www-proquest-com.gate3.library.lse.ac.uk/historical-newspapers/berlin-world-youth-festival/docview/516492522/se-2?accountid=9630)
[127] Kotek, Joel. 1996. "The World Youth Festival of Berlin, 1951." pp. 189-199 In *Students and the Cold War*, edited by Kotek Joel. London: Palgrave Macmillan,
[128] The Student, December 1954 p.12

organising the participation of the sportsmen and sportswomen is unclear.[129] It is clear, though, that a great many Indian students not aligned to the CPI organs often ended up going to the Soviet-funded events in their capacity as athletes.

Jeremiah Wilson has written about the Sixth World Youth Festival held in 1957 in Moscow and contends that it fostered connections between the "socialist world" and Indian public opinion.[130] He argues that as a "nonaligned potential friend", and because of its leading role among the countries of Asia, especially after the Bandung conference 1955, India was the de facto guest of honour and enjoyed certain privileges at the festival

India had the largest delegation on the International Preparatory Committee (IPC) of the Sixth World Youth Festival. The chairperson of the inaugural meeting of the IPC in Moscow on August 14th, 1956, was the head of the Bharat Yuvak Samaj, Govind Sahai.[131] The beginning of the festival was broadcast in Hindi, Bengali and English through separate radio waves.[132] Wilson claims the festival was successful in propagandizing a narrative of Soviet progress and modernity and enabling the expansion of contacts of networks of Indians and students from around the world. However, he does not adequately unpack the contours of Indian public opinion or the varied and complex elements to communist networks at the festival. In sum, even if participation was often limited, the World Youth Festivals were important events in the political imagination of the AISF's communist student internationalism.

The WFDY-IUS 1948 Calcutta Conference and the Government of India's Withdrawal of Cooperation to the AISF's Communist Youth Order

India again became an important space for the functioning of the AISF's communist student internationalism when Calcutta played host to the Youth of Southeast Asian Countries Conference from 19th to 26th February 1948. Run jointly by the WFDY and the IUS, according to Soviet records, there were 93 participants who represented various communist-socialist youth movements from 25 countries.[133] However, police reports held more than 500 communist delegates arrived in Calcutta and they held that many of this number arrived through underground rather than official routes. It is difficult to know the exact number, but the reports indicate that the communist international student network mobilised to ensure that a great many of their supporters attended the conference. Some of the more radical elements of the conference proved to be an offensive presence to the more moderate

---

[129] "WORLD FESTIVAL OF YOUTH". 1953. The Times of India, Jun 29 (https://www-proquest-com.gate3.library.lse.ac.uk/historical-newspapers/world-festival-youth/docview/516278831/se-2?accountid=9630)
[130] Wilson, Jeremiah. 2016. "Peace and Progress: Building the Indo-Soviet Friendship" pp.251-271 In *Socialist Internationalism in the Cold War: Exploring the Second World*, edited by Patryk Babiracki and Austin Jersild
[131] Ibid. p.254
[132] Ibid. p.254
[133] Efimova, Larisa. 2009. "Did the Soviet Union Instruct Southeast."

delegations. For example, the attendance of the Burmese communist revolutionary leader H. N. Goshal prompted the official Burmese delegation to return to Rangoon in protest.[134]

Delegates came to the Youth of Southeast Asian Countries Conference from Pakistan, Malaya, Indonesia, Vietnam, Ceylon, Philippines, and China in addition to observers or guests from North Korea, Mongolia, the Soviet Asian republics, Canada, Britain, France, and the USSR.[135] The Calcutta conference passed resolutions that condemned "American warmongers", the Dutch and French attempt to reassert imperialism in Indonesia and Vietnam, and the way China, Egypt, South Korea and Iran restricted democratic rights.[136] It was determined at this conference that the 21st of February would be a worldwide celebration of youth and a day of solidarity with those youths fighting colonialism.[137] However, The West Bengal authorities banned the student gathering mid-conference and the reports indicate that the conference went awry. The Times of India noted: "The public sessions of the conference ended in disorder and under a ban of the West Bengal authorities".[138]

Historian Philip Altbach claims that even though the Calcutta conference permitted delegates of communist organisations to debate some aspects of Soviet policy, the event marked the Soviet Union tightening its grip on the WFDY-IUS.[139] Larisa Efimova argues that the agenda set by the Soviets was followed closely and found a Soviet report that claimed, "the Conference on every issue adopted resolutions which are in accordance with the 'Instructions' given to the Soviet delegation".[140] Demonstrating the way the Soviet Union sought to isolate non-communist forces, documents from the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party reveal that the Soviet youth delegation was warned about "efforts on the part of leaders of some bourgeois national organisations to divide the youth".[141] Almost undoubtedly the Congress qualified as such a "bourgeois national organisation".

The Calcutta conference represented a turning point in the Government of India's relationship with the WFDY-IUS. A secret report by the Ministry of External Affairs claimed the groups in attendance were, "all communist in political complexion" and that the IUS and the WFDY had become "fashioned after the youth movement of the USSR".[142] The officials wrote that the Soviet Union understood these youth conferences as an "important and simple" means of spreading propaganda throughout India. The secret report held it was at the Calcutta conference that the CPI received

---

[134] "Calcutta, base of communist underground movement: Revelations about S.-E. Asia Youth Conference." 1948. The Times of India, Nov 04 (https://www-proquest-com.gate3.library.lse.ac.uk/historical-newspapers/calcutta-base-communist-underground-movement/docview/500310086/se-2?accountid=9630)
[135] Efimova, Larisa. 2009. "Did the Soviet Union Instruct Southeast."
[136] Ibid. p. 464
[137] The Student, June/July 1954 p.5
[138] "Calcutta, base of communist underground movement: Revelations about S.-E. Asia Youth Conference"
[139] Altbach, Philip G. 1970. *The Student Internationals.* p.24
[140] Efimova, Larisa. 2009. "Did the Soviet Union Instruct Southeast" p.466
[141] Ibid. p.465
[142] SEA Youth Conference, Calcutta 15th -20th Feb 1948, External - United Nations 9 (42)- 1948, NAI

instructions to launch an underground struggle against the Government of India. It claimed the youth conference was ostensibly held to discuss "the common problems of youth in Southeast Asian countries, but it turned out to be an auspice for the communists to review the revolutionary situation". It went on,

> A plan of action was drawn up which visualised intensification of anti-government activities and preparations for an armed insurrection. Observers from the USSR (who travelled under diplomatic passports) are reported to have brought important documents containing instructions for the CPI. The outcome of that conference is well known to [the] provincial Governments – an increasing hostility against Government and the intensification of efforts to cause chaos and confusion in the country[143]

The State Government of West Bengal believed that during the conference the Soviet Union communicated, "elaborate plans for Communist activities - the results of which have been [already] visited on Burma, Malaya, Viet Nam and Indonesia".[144]

In November 1948, meanwhile, The Times of India said that "according to Police and Consular officials in Calcutta the so-called 'South-East Asian Youth Conference' held in March this year was in reality, a staff meeting of leading Communist agitators in South-East Asia". It also transpired that a suspiciously large sum of Rs 1,00,000 had reached Calcutta from an unknown source via New Delhi to meet the running costs of the conference.[145]

When the Government of India was approached about hosting a similar conference again in 1949, it made the decision not to grant visas to likely delegates and that no facilities should be offered to the IUS-WFDY. It claimed, "there is every reason to suspect that if such a youth Congress is held, opportunity will be taken to intensify the subversive plans of the CPI in this country".[146] The Government of India, therefore, refused to support the IUS-WFDY because it now deemed them to be a threat to national security.

The Calcutta conference is an event which has captured the attention of historians because it immediately preceded the launching of the CPI's insurrection, the Conference for the Youth of Southeast Asian Countries in February 1948. For the six decades following the conference, scholars could only speculate about the Government of India's proposition that this event was pivotal to the CPI's launching of an armed underground uprising.[147] Larisa Efimova's investigation of declassified documents of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party, however, reveals there is no

---

[143] Ibid.
[144] "Calcutta, base of communist underground movement: Revelations about S.-E. Asia Youth Conference"
[145] Ibid.
[146] SEA Youth Conference, Calcutta 15th -20th Feb 1948, External - United Nations 9 (42)- 1948, NAI
[147] See, Altbach, Philip G. 1970. *The Student Internationals* p.24

surviving documentation that endorses the view that the Soviet Union leadership called upon Asian communists to fight against their newly independent governments. She claims the Soviet involvement in the Calcutta Youth Conference reflected "their desire to increase information and links" and also there was a "degree of caution over the prospects of local parties".[148]

As outlined earlier in this section, leading congressmen and women cultivated relationships with the WFDY and the IUS in the two initial years following independence, and the Government of India gave permission to the WFDY to host the Calcutta conference in 1948. However, the idea that the Soviet Union had given instructions to the CPI to lead an insurrection at the Calcutta youth conference led to their mistrust towards the WFDY-IUS youth movements. The Government of India's withdrawal of cooperation to the international communist youth order was mirrored by Western countries who too recognised the youth movements as instruments of Soviet Union power during the early 1950s.[149]

The AISF Communist Student Internationalism during the Early 1950s

It was around late 1948 and early 1949, when the CPI elected Ranadive as its general secretary, as outlined earlier, that the party launched its policy of "left adventurism" and *The Student* stopped publishing. After a hiatus of two years when the CPI launched its underground struggle, where little is known about the AISF activities at the national level, The Student returned to print for a few issues in 1952 and 1953 and these magazines give us some insights into the AISF's communist internationalism in the early 1950s. The internationalist activity of the AISF reduced during the early 1950s compared to the two years following the Second World War, and they had an even more limited physical participation in the WFDY-IUS.

The AISF promoted several potential international events set to take place in India, but these did not come to pass. The AISF reported that the IUS had proposed to hold an Asian, Australian and Middle Eastern Student Games in India in November 1953 in Calcutta, and this represented an exciting development for the communist students in Indian. It was, however, an event that did not seem to have occurred.[150] Revealing the limited participation in internationalist activities, their report noted that Indian students had not before participated in any of the IUS student games. The AISF writers claimed this was because, demonstrating their low opinion of their countries provision of sporting

---

[148] Efimova, Larisa. 2009. "Did the Soviet Union Instruct Southeast."
[149] Westad, Odd Arne. 2005. *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
[150] There is a typo in this article. It states that the games would be held on November 1952 but actually it must have meant November 1953, because this magazine was published in December 1952 and it reported that India would play host to the Executive Committee of the IUS in January 1953. See The Student, December 1952 p.25

facilities, "it was not to be encouraged. It is known to all that the standard of Indian Sports in comparison with other countries is much inferior".[151]

Moreover, in another example of a failed attempt to bring international activity to India, the AISF reported that India would play host to the Executive Committee of the IUS in January 1953. They claimed that the session would have a particular focus on the holding a Eastern Student Games in India.[152] However, there is no evidence that either the IUS meeting or the games took place.

I will now explore the AISC's rejection of the WFDY, and their emergent relationship with the World Assembly of Youth (WAY), because this gives insights into Congress's uneasy relationship with the communist international youth order. The AISC held the WFDY to be a "purely communist organisation" and they developed a relationship with the WAY during the early 1950s.[153] Founded in London in 1948 by national youth movements from Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Holland, the UK, and the US, the WAY was designed as a counterweight to the Soviet-led WFDY. The AISC refused to send any delegates to the World Festival of Youth during the first half of the 1950s. The leaders of AISC requested guidance from the Prime Minister in 1955 or 1956, precisely which year is unclear in the archival materials, on the issue of why Congress students should participate in the WAY while refusing to participate in the WFDY as India's national foreign policy was one of non-alignment with either of the power blocs. Nehru informed the AISC student leaders that there is no need to change their approach.[154]

It is useful, I think, to take a brief tangent here to discuss the privileging of India's first Prime Minister in this chapter's narrative of the AISF's communist internationalism. Taylor Sherman has made a far-reaching historical contribution by deconstructing the idea that Nehru single handedly constructed the foundation stones of independent India.[155] The grain of modern south Asian history has, indeed, too often focused on Gandhi or Nehru in a way that ignores a great many other lesser privileged actors. It is the case that Nehru features in this narrative on a number of occasions: the account of the First World Youth Festival that claims he had betrayed his progressive credentials by approving partition, the way that the overlooking of his greetings to the First World Youth Congress triggered bad will on the part of the AISC towards the WFDY, his telegram to the new General Secretary of the AISC in Lucknow, and the way AISC asked for his advice on their balancing of the WAY and the WFDY. The reason for this is that the archives favour interactions with India's dominant post-colonial politician and he features prominently in the archives.

---

[151]The Student, December 1952 p.25
[152] Ibid.
[153] Reports of Sh. R. K Bajaj on his visit to Europe to attend the World Assembly of Youth seminars on Youth and the peaceful use of atomic energy, 1956, Ministry of Education, 18-36 D4, NAI
[154] Ibid.
[155] Sherman, Taylor. Forthcoming. *Nehru's India: A History in Seven Myths* Princeton: Princeton University Press

An entirely new Indian National Committee of WAY was established in 1954 which was made up of the Congress student and youth organisations. Dr George Carter, the Asian secretary of WAY, had requested the Congress to assemble a representative committee that could attend future WAY conferences. He noted that the Indian delegation, made up of youth movements affiliated to the Congress in addition to the Socialist Youth League, to the previous WAY Conference, held earlier in 1954 in Singapore, could not adequately prove that their delegation had been "a real and effective national committee during the last three years… within the meaning and purpose of the WAY charter".[156] This was partly because these movements had recently changed their official names, although there was also an allegation that the travel grants (six full return tickets) were misused. The accusation was that the travel grant had been used to fly youths who were not mandated by any accredited youth or student organisation and that public funds designated for the Indian delegation had been wrongfully used.[157]

During the early 1950s, the central Government of India, like the Congress, withdrew its cooperation from the WFDY and it demonstrated a presumption in favour of cooperating with the WAY. A Ministry of Education report in 1955 claimed the WFDY, "did not adhere to the spirit of their directives and abused the status and privileges for partisan activities".[158] It noted, "no communist countries are members of the WAY as yet, but that is mainly because of their own policy… Unlike the WFDY, the WAY is not attached to any particular power bloc".[159] The Ministry of Education held WAY had a non-political character and held the fact that it enjoys consultative status with several national and international organisations, such as the UN, as proof of this.[160] It funded students in the mid-1950s to attend WAY-sponsored seminars in Europe and these students provided reports to the Ministry of Education on topics such as "Youth and the Peaceful use of Atomic Energy".

Conclusion

The AISF's communist student internationalism was a space of anti-imperial, anti-government and pro-communist activities and rhetoric, and communist student solidarity, that imagined itself as a part of a larger international communist youth order. It inspired activities at the campus, national and global level. Its in-person participation was only ever a limited affair, but the internationalist discourses invested into the communist youth gave this student movement a new sense of purpose and meaning in the post-colonial world.

Much of the interplay between AISF and other communist international movements, especially the WFDY-IUS, occurred at the ideational level and within the political imagination of the AISF. Their

---

[156] Reports of Sh. R. K Bajaj on his visit to Europe to attend the World Assembly of Youth seminars on youth
[157] Ibid.
[158] Ibid.
[159] Ibid.
[160] Ibid.

reporting of international events and ideas and celebrations of interactions and conferences reproduced common understandings about international activity and introduced and reinforced expectations about what it meant to be a communist student. The national student leaders of the AISF generally wanted to model the agenda of student politics along the Soviet lines of international politics and to enhance the image of the Soviet Union, but their campaigns and activities also reflected the specificities of this organisation's history of fighting for independence and their role as an organ of the CPI.

The AISF became the principal Indian representative in the WFDY-IUS. Its communist internationalism was distinguished by support for other liberation movements, especially in Southeast Asia. It understood itself vis-a-via its national rivals, especially the AISC, and these students were excluded from and generally refused to participate in the communist international youth order. I have highlighted the way that India was an important space to the emerging international communist youth order and the way that Indians participated, albeit only to a very small degree, in the WFDY-IUS events. The role of Moscow and the CPI, and the finances and resources they offered, however, is something of a spectre haunting the AISF's communist internationalism. That is, the evidence relating to the role of Moscow and the CPI in funding and providing instructions to the AISF is difficult to locate.

Historian Jeremiah Wilson has highlighted that the AISF continued to promote Soviet foreign policy objectives during the mid-1950s, and he discusses the way the AISF responded to the Hungarian Revolution of 1956.[161] Using archives based in Russia, Wilson noted that a Soviet observer present at the International Preparatory Committee for the Sixth World Youth Festival of 1957 in Moscow claimed, "the attitude of the members of the All India Student Federation to the Soviet Union remained positive". Wilson claims at the same time, Saljit Sen Adel, president of the AISF, instructed the student movement's leadership to send out letters to their branches regarding the events of the Hungarian Revolution of 1956 suggesting that the matter was an internal affair and the "students federation should not be involved in them and condemn the behaviour of the Soviet Union".[162]

The next chapter will further bring to light India's communist student internationalism by exploring the All-India Youth Federation's (AIYF), another youth movement linked to the CPI, notion of international struggle. It will elucidate how communist students shaped the internationalisation of global struggles in India and the way they negotiated the transnational flows of people and ideas during the 1960s. Specifically, the AIYF's response to the Indo-Sino war of 1962, the Indo-Pakistani War of 1965, and the repression of students in East Pakistan will be explored. The next section will

---

[161] Wilson, Jeremiah. 2016. "Peace and Progress: Building the Indo-Soviet Friendship." p.263
[162] Ibid.

first highlight the AIYF's political protests and critiques of their country's government, and I will argue this group represented a dramatic symbol of oppositional politics throughout the 1960s.

Chapter 7. The All-India Youth Federation (AIYF) and the 1960s in India

> Disillusioned, the young people came forward and joined the ranks of the fighting people with a determination to put a stop to the discredited Congress rule. The country thus had witnessed the most militant and determined mass actions during this decade, unique and unprecedented in nature during the post-independence period of our history.
>
> New Generation: A Youth and Student Monthly, November 1969

In the last chapter I outlined the way the AISF splintered along the lines of political and religious identities shortly after its establishment; how its conceptions of service to the Indian nation and nation-building efforts differed markedly from those of the state-organised youth movement; how it became a convergence point for the colonial and early-post colonial state-sponsored coercive network; its contestations of the widespread idea about the indiscipline of Indian youth; and how it was shaped by and participated in communist international networks and structures, especially the WFDY and the IUS.

This chapter looks at the story of the 1960s as they unfolded in India from the perspective of The All-India Youth Federation (AIYF), from the group's establishment in 1959 until the split of the Congress party in 1969. This is a decade tied up with commemorative imaginings of student revolt and youthful counterculture in popular and academic discourses around the world, but these most notable years have surprisingly been overlooked by historians of India. This may be because there is no Indian city that immediately strikes scholars as a major node of the global 1960s like Paris, Prague, and Mexico City did or because no single campus amounted to a left-wing hub like the Sorbonne, Berkely and the London School of Economics so clearly did. Nevertheless, the Indian communist students' political protests and critiques of their country's government, as dramatic symbols of oppositional politics, must be integrated into our understanding of the global processes of the 1960s.

From the CPI offices to campuses and cities across India, the AIYF mobilised sizeable contingents of students and youths behind utopian socialist ideas, Third World solidarity, an anti-Congress agenda and behind the idea that independence had proven to be a hoax for India's first generation of free citizenry. At once captured by the quote above, the central argument of this chapter is that the dissent of communist youths and students amounted to a powerful counter-political culture until 1969. Thereafter, the group developed an ambivalent relationship with the regime of Indira Gandhi that is captured in their statement in their *New Generation* magazine: "we laud her for her progressive politics adopted recently, but at the same time stand guard against any compromise with the vested interests".[1]

---

[1] The New Generation, November 1969 p.3

This chapter will begin by outlining the establishment and early activities of the AIYF. The focus of this chapter will shift away from the narrative about the indiscipline of youth as constructed by bureaucrats, politicians, and journalists to the way students and youths viewed the Government of India and their political activities of the 1960s. These young people claimed the political and economic settlement of the post-colonial period had failed to meet the promises of the freedom struggle and their outlook about independent India increased in despair as unemployment grew throughout this decade.

Thereafter, this exploration of the AIYF will advance and be structured according to three of this thesis' key arguments, as outlined in the introduction: the state-organised volunteer youth sector; the double-tier system of Indian youth; and the relationship between this youth movement and their communist internationalism. These key lines of exploration will now be briefly substantiated. Firstly, the AIYF advanced a far-reaching critique of the Government of India's provision of youth activities and welfare services, and this chapter reveals this communist youth movement's perspective on the state-organised youth sector that has been explored throughout this thesis.

Secondly, the AIYF's foregrounding of economic, cultural, and gendered differences brings to light the unequal pathways of Indian youthhood and this youth movement reveals the political divisions amongst this social body. Thirdly, I will explore the way communist students responded to regional and global events of the 1960s, especially the Sino-Indian Border War 1962 and the Indo-Pakistani War of 1965. The final section will bring to light the content, functioning and practices of the communist student internationalism from the perspective of the AIYF and their interaction with and understanding of the events of the 1960s.

Existing Literature

This chapter contributes to the historical scholarship on, firstly, student movements during the 1960s in India and, secondly, the so-called "global 1960s". Firstly, as outlined in the previous chapter, the scholarly history of communist youth movements in the early post-colonial period remains largely unexplored. This study into the AIYF, as a left-wing youth movement, will offer an entry point into a broader discussion about the meanings of the 1960s in India. There have been several studies that overlap with this chapter's theme of student politics during the 1960s.[2] These studies have explored student radicalism in Kolkata and in Delhi University, the Indian Coffee House as a site of student resistance, and the way students and labourers worked together as a demand group. There has, moreover, been work that has explored the 1960s and 1970s through the lens of a variety of social

---

[2] Plys, Kristin Victoria Magistrelli. 2020. *Brewing Resistance*. Rudolph, Lloyd. 1987. "Students as a Demand Group." Samaddar, Ranabir. 2018. "Student Radicalism in Kolkata and the Occupation of College.", Oommen, T. K. 1974. "Student Politics in India: The Case of Delhi University."

movements such as the Naxalite Movement, the Navnirman Andolan, the Dalit Panthers, and agrarian political movements.[3]

Secondly, this chapter will interact with the idea of the "global 1960s". The existing literature on the global 1960s, and especially the year of 1968, a year that holds no special significance in the history of pro-Moscow communist youth movements in India, is shorthand for student revolt, youthful counter cultures and labour unrest. Historians of youth have, therefore, naturally been drawn to the study of this period. During the past two decades, scholars of the 1960s have sought to unpack the global processes of the 1960s to reveal the way local, national, and international issues interconnect. Eric Zolov claims this emergent concept of a global 60s "reflects a new conceptual approach to understanding local change within a transnational framework, one constituted by multiple crosscurrents of geopolitical, ideological, cultural, and economic forces".[4]

The Routledge Handbook of the Global Sixties is an attestation to the far-reaching nature of this historiographical approach. Despite the 640 page volume claiming to foster such a global perspective, there is sadly no chapter on India or any south Asian country.[5] This investigation of Indian communist students alters the picture of the 1960s by revealing that India too witnessed far-reaching demonstrations and protests that drew, albeit only to a limited extent, inspiration from the wider global youth movement and by revealing that the Indian communist student's organisational capacity represented a dramatic indication of student power at the national level during this decade.

For this chapter I have used sources from the AIYF's archive in the CPI's headquarters in New Delhi that have never been utilised by historians of youth as far as this researcher is aware. The principal source of materials has come from conference reports, pamphlets and the student organisation's journal, *The New Generation: A Youth and Student Monthly*. Even though only a miscellaneous collection of documents remains, and the monthly magazine would periodically go out of print, these archives provide a fascinating historical trail that allows us to construct this narrative of communist youth politics during the 60s.

It is also useful to address the AIYF's relationship with the AISF, the youth movement that has been explored in the previous chapter. The paucity of archives for the AISF at the CPI HQ for the 1950s and 1960s suggest that it functioned to a far less extent at the all-Indian level, even if powerful regional groups remained active across the country, such as those in Bengal, Kerala, and the Punjab. Where it did have organisational capacity, there was close cooperation between the two movements

---

[3] Samaddar, Ranabir. 2018. *From Popular Movements to Rebellion: The Naxalite Decade*. Varshney, Ashutosh. 1995. *Democracy, development, and the countryside urban-rural struggles in India.* Bhagat-Ganguly, Varsha. 2014 "Revisiting the Nav Nirman Andolan of Gujarat." Contursi, Janet A. 1993. "Political Theology: Text and Practice in a Dalit Panther Community."

[4] Eric Zolov. 2014. "Introduction: Latin America in the Global Sixties." *The Americas* 70 (3): 354

[5] Jian, Chen., Martin Klimke, Masha Kirasirova, and et al. 2018. *Handbook of the Global Sixties: Between Protest and Nation-Building*. London: Routledge

during the decade under study. As will be explored throughout this chapter, at the national level, they organised campaigns together, most notably the campaign against unemployment and democratic rights during the final years of the 1960s and held their conferences together at the same time.

The AIYF and the AISF were both strongly linked to the CPI, amounting to its de-facto youth and student wing, the principal difference between the two being that one nominally catered to students and the other to the broader category of youths. Despite being established in 1959, the AIYF had only held four national conferences by 1969 and its exact membership figures are regretfully not possible to retrieve. So much is clear, however, the AIYF launched a series of far-reaching struggles that involved thousands of youths against the central government in India and their discourses provide powerful insights into student oppositional politics during the 1960s.

The Emergence of the All-Indian Youth Federation

This chapter will begin by outlining the establishment and early activities of the AIYF. It will bring to light the way these students and youths viewed the Government of India and their political activities of the 1960s. The AIYF emerged at the turn of a decade where the Delhi center of the communist youth movement had practically collapsed, and the movement had been rendered virtually obsolete at the national level. The AISF was formed on the 3rd of May 1959, but there are no surviving archives that bring to light this inaugural conference. The earliest surviving sources provide an account, however, of the second conference held in Hyderabad between 19th and 21st May 1961 and these give valuable insights into the early praxis of the organisation.

The 306 delegates of the second AIYF conference were made up of representatives from the CPI organs – which included the AISF, the All-Indian Kisan Sabha and the All-Indian Trade Union Congress – in addition to workers from, amongst others, the Bharat Yuva Samaj and the Youth Hostel Association of India (these two organisations are explored in chapters three and four).[6] "Fraternal delegates" from the WFDY, the Czechoslovak Youth Union, the Sri Lankan Freedom Party, and the Youth League of Ceylon also attended the conference. They lamented the refusal of the Youth Department of the All-India Congress Committee (AICC) and the World Assembly of Youth (WAY) to take part in the forum. They noted, "this alone will not surprise anybody, as WAY has established a record of refusing all proposals for East-West cooperation amongst the youths".[7] Like the AISF, the AIYF understood Congress youths as their principal political opponents and these two coalitions of youths were allied to the respective international youth organisations of the USSR and the US, the WFDY and WAY.

---

[6] The New Generation, July 1961 p.2
[7] Ibid.

193

The establishment of the AIYF arose from i) a sentiment that the left had let down youths during the 1950s and ii) an effort to build unity across this social group. Firstly, this student movement criticised the lack of persuasive policies and organisational capacity offered by socialist-communist student groups during the previous decade. It claimed of the left movements of the 1950s, "though we have discussed a lot about those possibilities, programme and organisations [,] nobody could dare proceed with sufficient boldness".[8]

Secondly, it claimed nominally that its objective was to bring all the sections of youth together into a coalition because the youth movement had become fragmented following independence. They claimed,

> India became independent in 1947. As time passed, the youth and the student organisations found themselves faced with the problem of putting before the masses a clear perspective and an inspiring slogan. As opinions differed on this matter, various organisations appeared on the scene with different slogans and, of course, biased ideologies towards different political parties[9]

However, the previous chapter reveals that besides a moment of unity in 1936, the student movement had been characterised by factionalism throughout the late colonial period. The AIYF, nevertheless, remembered the freedom struggle, in their political imagination, as a period of relative unity. Moreover, there was a sentiment that the decades following 1947 had been squandered by divisions and the youth movement had been characterised by a search for unity that had failed to ever manifest. One student writer, Sudhir Chatterji noted,

> The slogan of 'student unity zindabad' has been sustaining and extending the disunity over [a] long period …therefore I can see time and again every organisation calling the students belonging to other organisations unity to forge coming 'under the banner of this particular organisation'. But the attempt to unite all banners of all the student organisations is absent[10]

Sudhir Chatterji accepted that the communist youth movement itself was guilty of this charge. They were ever striving for the unity of the wider social body of students during the 1960s, albeit only ever under their banner.

From its establishment the AIYF had strong links to the CPI and used their printing press (and indeed their archives remain based at the CPI's headquarters in New Delhi), but it did not outwardly declare its allegiance to a political party or faith in any definite ideology until the Pondicherry conference of 1966. Despite their clear communist leanings, like the AISF, they claimed to be a space for the

---

[8] The New Generation, May 1964 p. 10-1. The grammatical inaccuracies here belong to the original quote.
[9] Ibid. Article: Significance of Pondicherry, no page number
[10] The New Generation, Jan-Feb 1964 p.21. The grammatical inaccuracies here belong to the original quote.

building of broad cooperation, and to have links with a variety of political parties. The General-Secretary of the AIYF said, somewhat disingenuously, "I would say our federation is not averse to political parties we do realise the necessity of political parties in our country and many a time, in the past, we have taken positions which correspond to that of one or the other political party".[11] This author has not, however, found evidence of a policy position that does not align with the CPI.

The AIYF claimed of its branches, again somewhat disingenuously, "one can find a number of youth and student organisations working among them, preaching different ideologies and biases towards various political parties".[12] This is slightly insincere because its writings reveal the movement had an undeniable communist-socialist, anti-Congress and anti-government character throughout the 1960s. One member admitted of this approach, "by this we have thrown the students, who believe in Congress ideology, and even the neutrals, outside [the] periphery of our organisation".[13]

For the AIYF, the early 1960s was a period of pessimism about the future of independent India and they held that the social and political settlement of the post-colonial period had proven to be a hoax. They claimed that new forms of US imperialism and the rise in communalism that followed the end of formal colonialism had meant the hopes of the freedom struggle had been belied. They assigned a particular social determinism to the leadership of Indian youths in the struggle against the "powerful forces" of imperialism, capitalism, and communalism. Understood within the context of a romanticisation of the youth's role in the freedom struggle, they further outlined their understanding of the challenges of the early 1960s and the Indian youth's role in countering these forces:

> imperialism with its persistent efforts to change our policies, powerful elements in our country who want to grab all the fruits of freedom and the forces of disunity -communalism, casteism, regionalism […] it is particularly incumbent upon the youth of our country to play its due role in our present struggles, just as it did for the liberation of the motherland [14]

In the previous chapter, I argued that the AISF's overall narrative shifted from one of supporting independence to one about the failure of independent India's economy during the initial years following 1947. Unsurprisingly for a Marxist student organisation that subscribed to theories of economic determinism, there is a clear continuation of this lamentation of the malign forces of capitalism and of the running of India's economy during the early 1960s.

The AIYF believed that Indian youths had become more troubled by the turn of the decade and pointed to the "leap-forward" in the number of suicides occurring amongst youths, allegedly resulting

---

[11] The New Generation, August 1963 p.3
[12] The New Generation, May 1966 (Article: Significance of Pondicherry, no page number)
[13] The New Generation, July 1964 p.4
[14] Ibid. p. 2

from their "utter disappointment", as evidence for this.[15] They claimed, "he looks upon the world around him with a sense of agony and desperation. His intellect is covered in the fumes of problems".[16] The communist student group claimed in 1961, even prior to the employment crisis of the late 60s, "unemployment has already become a chronic disease in our country, with the swelling army of educated unemployed youth thrown on the streets of our cities".[17]

During the early 1960s, at the national level, the federation campaigned for the abolition of the Compulsory Deposit Scheme (CDS) and for the nationalisation of the banks, the oil industry and foreign trade.[18] Moreover, at the regional level, the AIYF campaigned on economic issues affecting youths and students. In the summer of 1963, for example, the Kerala Students' Federation, a branch of the AISF that was closely linked to the AIYF, alongside representatives from the Progressive Students Union, formed a joint action council to mobilise the student body across Kerala to campaign against increased bus fares. In the first joint student agitation since the dismissal of the communist government in 1959, they claimed, "political differences faded out and a new unity was found among the people, especially among the youth and students of the state".[19]

In summer 1965, the Calcutta unit of the AIYF mobilised "gigantic uprisings and mammoth student demonstrations" against the British-owned tram company's plans to raise fares.[20] Despite their claim that the "people were moving peacefully and constitutionally with extremely genuine demands for effective measures to stop [the] price rise", they claimed to have witnessed, "common people hurling back the bureaucratic police repression, streets were paraded by armed police with their battle-kits, forces from the neighbouring states were mobilised to quell down the mass discontent".[21]

Again in 1965, on 9th August, the Martyrs Day of the CPI, members of the AIYF in Patna protested about the government's plans to increase tuition fees and the rising living costs faced by students in Bihar. In response, the police, "mercilessly opened lathi charged, teargas shelled, and fired […] resulting in the death and serious injury of many". These student demonstrations, usually held jointly by the AISF and the AIYF, very often resulted in police-student clashes. The narratives of the AIYF invariably claim that the students were unexpectedly attacked, but the police claimed in contrast that these were violent protests.[22]

The AISF discourse focused on the failures of the education system to provide enough opportunities for India's future generation of citizens. *The New Generation* claimed in 1961,

---

[15] The New Generation, October 1963 p.12
[16] Ibid.
[17] The New Generation, June-July 1961 p.2
[18] The New Generation, August 1963 p.3
[19] Ibid. p.10
[20] The New Generation, August -September 1965 p.4
[21] Ibid.
[22] Ibid. p.8

Even after 14 years of independence, about 76per cent of our population … can neither read nor write. And among those who are fortunate enough to get into the educational institutions, there is a good section who find that either they have to abandon their education, thanks to the rising costs, or if they complete their education, their training and their talents are left to rust without being absorbed in[to] [the] national reconstruction activities.[23]

The AIYF claimed India entered the 1960s with an acute shortage of technical trained youths. The imparting of technical skills to this social group was discursively linked to post-colonial national development and India's capacity to successfully implement the Five-Year Plans. Although applauding the launching of Indian Institutes of Technology in Kharagpur, Bombay, Madras, Kanpur and Delhi, one youth leader wrote, "one has to confess with heartfelt grief and sorrow, that the developments…in the field of technical and engineering education for our national reconstruction are too microscopic to fulfil the present needs".[24]

In addition to the Government of India they also laid the blame with the British for the shortage of technical trained youths. The AIYF claimed, "the colonialists took great care to deny the technical basis of which would help the Indians break the main chain of slavery [...] The necessity of technically equipping the 'useless' Indian youth [...] never entered the sharp skulls of these bureaucrats".[25] The Kothari Commission of 1964, a commission requested to examine the education system in India, endorsed the view that the education system continued to train youths as if for imperial administration and its orientation was not related to the needs of the country.[26]

The cynicism about the social and political settlement of independent India intensified during the second half of the 1960s. The AIYF's outlook about the economic prospects increased in pessimism following the devaluation of the rupee in 1966 and as the youth employment crisis deepened. They laid the blame for this with their principal political opponent, The Indian National Congress Party. Writing ahead of the 1967 election, they wrote,

Twenty years of Congress rule have made the future of our country dark and prospects bleak. Frustration and disillusionment are gradually overwhelming the youths of our country for they see a hopeless future in front of them [...]The rosy picture of a future free India, drawn by our great national movement, offering the youth, a new system of education, scientific in approach and patriotic in content, equal opportunity in all walks of life and full employment lay shattered [27]

---

[23] The New Generation, June-July 1961 p.2
[24] The New Generation, October November 1964 p.17-18
[25] The New Generation, May 1966 (Article: Technical education of young workers., no page number)
[26] Mitra, Sarda. 1969. *Youth Challenge Unemployment*. New Delhi: New Generation Publication p.13
[27] New Generation, February 1967, p.1

The cynicism about the future of India amongst these young citizens increased as the crisis of unemployment deepened during the late 1960s, and the AIYF-AISF launched nationwide struggles against unemployment during 1969 and the early 1970s. In December 1969, the AIYF-AISF ran the National Convention on Unemployment which claimed, "mass unemployment is the single biggest factor for the countrywide youth unrest today".[28] On November 17th, 1969, the AIYF organised a march from Talkatora Gardens to parliament of 20,000 jobless young men and women from across the country to submit a petition signed by an estimated one million youths demanding employment relief.[29] The report claimed students chanted, "*Rojar do ya gaddi choro* […] Give us jobs or quit the coveted office you hold".[30] The demonstrators carried two effigies that depicted the Syndicate-Swatantra-Jana Sangh coalition, one portrayed Sanjiva Reddy, Balraj Madhok and Rajaji and the other portrayed S. K. Patil, Morarji Desai, Atulya Ghosh; and they wrote of these, the "bonfire of the effigies was greeted with thunderous applause".[31]

1970 witnessed the communist youth movement's campaign against unemployment reach a crescendo. The AIYF organised four *jathas*, a word deriving its meaning from armed bands of Sikhs, beginning in Trivandrum, Bombay, Amritsar and Bohar to raise awareness about the employment crisis in villages, towns, cities, industrial centres, and centres of education. Together, they covered around 20,000 miles and addressed about 2 million citizens. 10,000 youths and students converged in New Delhi to squat and picket in front of the parliament on the May 15th 1970.[32] On 5th September, the communist youth movement organised half a million students from across the country to come out of their educational institutions to protest the lack of job opportunities.[33] At the end of their observance of a AIYF-AISF protest day to focus attention on unemployment in November 1970, the Times of India reported police had placed 500 youths and students in custody in different parts of the country.[34]

The growing unemployment in India, invariably placed in the political context of youth, became an important issue for the other political parties and student movements in the year 1970.[35] The Indira Gandhi group of the All-India Congress Committee declared it would generate half a million jobs every year at their Patna conference. Meanwhile, Jagjivan Ram, the Congress President, claimed, "the unemployment problem has assumed an alarming magnitude […] A long period of unemployment

---

[28] Mitra, Sarda. 1969. *Youth Challenge Unemployment* p.1
[29] The New Generation, December 1969 p. 3
[30] Ibid. Italics added for Hindi quotation.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Author unknown. 1970. *Fight Against Unemployment for a New Social order*. New Delhi: New Generation Publication
[33] Ibid.
[34] "500 held in youth stir against unemployment". 1970. The Times of India, Nov 26 (https://www-proquest-com.gate3.library.lse.ac.uk/historical-newspapers/500-held-youth-stir-against-unemployment/docview/500546581/se-2?accountid=9630)
[35] Author unknown. 1970. *Fight Against Unemployment for a New Social order*

sows the seeds of discontent, particularly among the youth".[36] The Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad of the Jan Sangha called upon youths to agitate against the Government of India. The Shiv Sena in Bombay ran a slogan claiming that they would promote employment only for their own "sons of the soil" to rally the Marathi youth. The Telangana movement, the movement that campaigned for the creation of a state for Telugu-speakers, according to the AIYF, also "whipped up unemployment" as one of their main issues. The Veer Lachit Sena, political party in Assam, claimed that the Bengali youths were "taking the jobs" of the Assamese youth.[37]

The State-organised Youth Sector and the AIYF

The AISF advanced a far-reaching critique of the Government of India's provision of youth activities and youth welfare schemes, and this reveals the youth's perspective on the state-organised youth sector that has been explored in the first five chapters. In 1961, the AISF lambasted, "the meagre amount spent on these schemes and the manner in which these schemes were implemented" and claimed "they have barely touched the fringe of the vast masses of our youth".[38] They endorsed the All-India Congress Committee's proposal for the establishment of a youth department or ministry to coordinate the provision of youth services.[39] They claimed the biggest achievement of the Government of India, in the field of youth activities and schemes, was the Interuniversity Youth Festival, which I have explored in chapter 5, but they criticised the way this scheme had been "suddenly abandoned" in the early 1960s without consulting the AIYF.[40]

The varied apparatus of the Government of India, especially The Planning Commission and the Ministry of Education, which coordinated and directed the post-colonial youth order, was not inclined to include communist youth movements in their provision of youth schemes. The AISF claimed the idea that the provision of youth schemes should be a joint effort between voluntary and state sectors was a mockery and they criticised their marginalisation from the state-organised provision of youth schemes. They noted,

> It is quite paradoxical that while the government talks of mass cooperation for youth welfare schemes it is neither heeding to offers of voluntary cooperation of various youth organisations for implementing these schemes and pushing them forward nor is it utilising the funds which it itself has decided to spend along these lines[41]

---

[36] "Rams Wants Unemployment Ended Soon". 1970. The Times of India, Oct 14 (https://www-proquest-com.gate3.library.lse.ac.uk/historical-newspapers/ram-wants-unemployment/docview/496938783/se-2?accountid=9630)
[37] Ibid.
[38] The New Generation, June-July 1961 p.3
[39] Ibid.
[40] Ibid.
[41] Ibid.

There were voices in *The New Generation* who wanted to further involve the AISF students and youths in state-sponsored youth movements. For instance, Pratul Lahiri claimed,

> [the] government has [a] youth welfare department under the education ministry … the proper utilisation of this financial allotment can be a major task of the student's movement. Apart from this, a semi-official organisation [the] Bharat Sevak Samaj, conduct[s] certain activities. Student leaderships should take keen interest in making students active in the activities of the BSS and its youth department the Bharat Yuvak Samaj[42]

However, the prevailing approach within the AIYF held that they should mobilise youths separately to the state-sponsored youth movements. On their relationship with the government's youth schemes, they noted,

> In conducting activities for realise in the economic, social, and cultural needs of the youth and in mobilising them for national reconstruction work we have only depended upon our organisational efforts and upon the resource[s] and the sympathy of the local people we have never paid attention to the possibilities offered by the government[43]

By the end of the 1960s, the AISF concluded that the 1960s had been a failed decade for the national youth movements at large. In 1969 they claimed,

> The Five-Year Plans, [and the] welfare activities of the government, failed to inspire the younger generation, for a brighter future, as they were all helping the growth of monopoly capitalism in India. Unemployment, poverty, illiteracy, regional imbalances, shattered hopes etc [all] grew.[44]

The Divisions of Indian Youth

The focus will now turn to the AIYF's foregrounding of economic, cultural, and gendered differences. The writings of the AIYF illuminate the unequal pathways of Indian youthhood that prevailed in the 1960s. The AISF itself was run by a small group of educated and privileged students. They noted, "our activities are restricted among the middle-class youth in most of the states. The task now is to unite large numbers of young workers and peasants in our organisation". Even though the AIYF acknowledged its elitist make up, they invariably failed to address the issue of caste or caste discrimination in India. Sadly, the voices of Dalits are conspicuously absent in all the AIYF's writings that I have explored, and this is one important limitation to this archive as a perspective into the political counterculture of the 1960s.

---

[42] The New Generation, July 1964 p.4. Inaccuracies belong to the original quote.
[43] Ibid.
[44] The New Generation, December 1969 p.5

The AIYF's accounts reveals their perception that village youths, industrial youths and female youths were the most excluded from the state-sponsored youth movements throughout the 1960s. They regularly stressed the way that the Government of India's provision of cultural, leisure and sports facilities were still far beyond the reach of young industrial workers. Furthermore, the AIYF reported that the Young Farmers Conference called upon the government to popularise their schemes amongst farmers and rural people. They claimed these schemes were failing to "embrace the broader section of rural youth masses in the activities of rural upliftment".[45] The AIYF, in a slightly misworded statement, called upon the Government of India to, "give some special concession to the rural girls to cope with [the] speed of change in the urban areas and to help them in contributing to the nation building task".[46]

There was a widespread sense during the 1960s that the labour unions were losing ground among the Indian youth. Perhaps unsurprising for a communist movement that understood this class as the vanguard of the revolution, the AIYF lamented the poor mobilisation of young workers and worked with the organs of the CPI to build a coordinated workers and youth movement. They claimed the main reason for the lack of a movement among industrial labour, where young workers predominated, was "the lack of specialised talent for this sort of activity in the local trade unions".[47] S. A Dange, Chairman of the CPI, led the proceedings of a Conference of Young Workers in Bombay 1962, and sought to focus the energies of the communist movement on resolving their inadequate support amongst the working classes. Jointly hosted by the CPI-affiliated All-India Trade Union Congress (AITUC), the Conference adopted an Appeal to the Young Workers and constituted a Continuation Committee of the Young Workers Conference.[48] One more outcome of the conference was that the AITUC and the AIYF established a Young Workers Committee to accelerate the unionisation of young workers.

The AIYF and the AITUC feared the RSS's increasing success in recruiting from the social body of young workers during the 1960s. The RSS-cum-AIYF member Abhai Kumar Maurya wrote about the RSS's "catch them young and poison their innocent minds scheme" and their strategies of "poisoning young developing mind[s] with communal venom… Hindu jingoism". [49] *The New Generation* noted,

> It is tragic but nevertheless true that the rabid, communal fascists of the RSS have recruited
> from among the young industrial and office workers, a considerable number of cadre[s] in

---

[45] The New Generation, January 1965 p.4
[46] The New Generation, May 1964 p.4
[47] The New Generation, January-February 1964 p.10
[48] The New Generation, January 1962 (Young Workers Conference, page unknown)
[49] The New Generation, May 1969 p.14

almost all the industrial centres in India […] The inability of the progressive forces to organise the working youth, in fact, provided a fertile ground to communal reaction. [50]

Moreover, the AIYF foregrounded the gendered differences of Indian youth. They claimed, for young women, the 1960s began with the much-heralded Dowry Prohibition Act of 1961. The AIYF celebrated the number of women entering office jobs and the number of women attending clubs or engaging in recreational activities in cities like Calcutta, Bombay, Delhi, and Madras during this decade. They noted, however, "middle-class and lower middle-class [women] are still precluded from such ventures. And, of course, there are hardly any clubs of their own".[51] *The New Generation* stated,

> The young educated women in urban areas do have some privilege of marrying by choice, of divorce and remarriage. This freedom stems essentially from one advantage, that of economic independence of this section of women. […] For the bulk of our people, social prejudices and old-fashioned thinking still have the sway.[52]

The AIYF discourse thus taps into the lack of freedom that distinguished social reality for a great many young women during the 1960s. The educated few were granted opportunities unimaginable to an earlier generation, but most families could not imagine their daughters studying at university or picking their own husbands, deeming it incompatible with their gendered understandings of a woman's role in Indian society.

The AIYF had an ambivalent relationship with Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. On the one hand, though they lauded the Congress losses of 1967, a great many communist youths supported Indira Gandhi's increasingly radical rhetoric and policies during the late 1960s. Even prior to the Congress split, the CPI notably supported Indira Gandhi's decision to endorse Varahagiri Venkata Giri, a leader of the Indian labour movement, as opposed to the Congress Syndicate's favourite Neelam Sanjiva Reddy, in the Presidential election of 1969. It was in 1969 that the grand old party of Indian politics broke up into the Congress (Organisation) led by the so-called Syndicate and the Congress (Requisitionists) led by Indira Gandhi, and the AIYF increasingly praised her party's shift towards a more socialist orientation.

They cautiously applauded her efforts to revitalise the Congress's (Requisitionists) Indian Youth Congress (IYC) which was led by her son Sanjay Gandhi from the early 1970s. This is because the IYC were now fighting the Congress (Organisation) who were considered decidedly to the right of the Congress (Requisitionists).[53] The New Generation hailed her government's nationalization of fourteen banks and the abolition of the privy purse that put an end to the allowances given by the central

---

[50] The New Generation, January -February 1964 p.10
[51] The New Generation, March-April p. 11
[52] Ibid.
[53] The New Generation, December 1969 p.1

government to the royal families. They wrote about her appeal amongst the younger generation and recognised Indira Gandhi as an opportunity for the Left. *The New Generation* noted in 1969,

> It is now the duty of the progressive, left and democratic sections to further accelerate the process by unleashing mass movements from a broad platform, so that the commitments which the Congress Party has made to the nation are fulfilled and other demands of the people are conceded.[54]

It was not quite a coalition or an alliance between the CPI-AIYF and the Congress (Requisitionists)-IYC in 1969, though that would emerge during the emergency, rather there was a vague aspiration to cooperate and support Indira Gandhi because she was held by the AIYF to embody progressive possibilities.

On the other hand, the AIYF maintained scepticism about Indira Gandhi and the Congress (Requisitionists). Even following the 1969 split, they outlined that, "the class character of the party remains the same as before" and held that Indira Gandhi should be brought before the "people's court".[55] They noted, "the Indian Youth Congress as an organisation has played a very reactionary role in the past under its discredited pro-imperialist leadership and with its notorious association with the CIA sponsored WAY".[56] Moreover, enthusiasm for the Prime Minister's regime decreased amongst a great many youths during the early years of the 1970s. One student leader, S.G. Dardesai, claimed, "there was a certain subsidence between 1969 to 1972 due to the great expectations aroused by the split in Congress and Srimati Indira Gandhi's campaign on the slogan of Garabi Hatao. Those expectations were not fulfilled".[57]

Chandrajit Yadav, a communist-leaning member of the Lok Sabha and the Minister for Steel in the Indira Gandhi ministry, wrote a pamphlet in 1974 aimed at the pro-Moscow communist youths in which he suggested they should support Indira Gandhi's agenda.[58] He claimed there was a "new phase of confrontation" coming in which "the scales [were] heavily loaded against progressive forces" and "their opponents [were] militarily very powerful; economically they [were] far stronger".[59] He persuades the educated readers of his leaflet by offering a favourable conception of Indian youth that is in contrast to the unfavourable conception that was generally propagated by the leaders of the state-sponsored youth movements. He states, "the gigantic reversal of the tides of colonialism, imperialism and political exploitation […] owed much of its steam-power to youth". He goes on, "the

---

[54] The New Generation, December 1969 p.1
[55] Ibid.
[56] Ibid.
[57] Dardesai, S.G. 1974. *Student Upsurge and Indian Revolution.* New Delhi: All India Youth Federation p.2. Italics added.
[58] Yadev, Chandrajit. 1974. *Youth and Social Change in the Developing Countries.* New Delhi: Publisher unknown p.7
[59] Ibid.

203

achievements of every youthful generation in every country are the results of sustained struggle: struggle and youthful activity are synonyms".[60]

On the brink of the emergency, he makes an almost contractual request to the communist youths. He asked youths to spearhead this forthcoming struggle on two fronts – internally and externally. Externally, he encouraged them to cooperate with the bloc of socialist countries and the non-aligned countries. Internally, he writes, "youth should try to become the symbol of the new economic and social order which the people in general look forward to […] because of their [the youths] conviction that it would provide for them a better and a brighter future".[61] As if he knows that the Proclamation of the Emergency is imminent, he asks communist youths to join Indira Gandhi's fight against imperialism and the bourgeoise elite. In June 1975, less than a year after the leaflet was published, Indira Gandhi declared a state of emergency across India. The CPI was the only prominent party to extend support to the Congress during The Emergency.

The AIYF's Communist Youth and Student Internationalism and the Global Sixties

Communist youthhood and studenthood in India was infused with notions of international struggle during the 60s. This final section will explore the content, functioning and practices of the communist youth-student internationalism from the perspective of the AIYF. It will elucidate how communist students shaped the internationalisation of global struggles in India and the way they negotiated the transnational flows of people and ideas. This section will first explore the AIYF's response to the Sino-Indo War of 1962. This was the biggest international issue that faced the communist youths during the early 1960s and this event triggered an ideological tussle that split the communist movement. However, the way the 1964 split in the Communist Party of India played out at the level of students and youths has been hitherto largely overlooked in the literature.[62]

This section will argue the AIYF advanced the idea that the policy of non-alignment lay in tatters from the Sino-Indo War of 1962 onwards and claimed the Government of India had become the stooge of US imperialism. It will be argued, as with the Second World War and the Sino-Indo War of 1962, the Indo-Pakistani War of 1965 led again to a shift in the communist student's conceptualisation of service to the nation-state which became centred around defence in their political imagination. The AIYF's response to these conflicts reveals that the onus of service to the nation-state shifted between defence or social service, development, and protest during the post-colonial period depending on whether or not the Government of India was mobilising for war. Furthermore, the AIYF publicised the news of freedom struggles elsewhere during the 1960s. Solidarity with the students of

---

[60] Yadev, Chandrajit. 1974. *Youth and Social Change in the Developing Countries*. pp.1-2
[61] Ibid. p.7
[62] Wood, John. B. 1965. "Observations on the Indian Communist Party Split". *Pacific Affairs* 38 (1): 55

East Pakistan and the Vietnam War became the largest and most important rallying points for this movement during the 1960s.

Firstly, however, I will explore the relationship between the AIYF and the communist youth order. In the previous chapter, I argued that the AISF's communist student internationalism was shaped by periodic participation in the WFDY and the IUS. The AIYF participated less throughout the 1960s in the communist international movements than the AISF during the late 1940s and early 1950s as examined in the previous chapter. One student reflected on the AIYF's lack of physical participation in international movements throughout the early 1960s and he said in 1964, "then comes the question of student[']s participation in [the] peace movement. As far as I remember, except a student-youth sectional conference at the time of [the] Afro-Asia Conference in 1959, there is a big zero in the credit side of our account".[63]

There were only a few examples of physical participation by AIYF members in the communist youth internationalism during this decade. The AIYF sent one delegate to the World Youth Forum in Moscow 1964, and this will be discussed in more detail shortly when I explore the 1964 split in the Indian communist youth movement. Further, Govinda Pillai worked as the vice-president of the WFDY Bureau in Budapest in 1966/7 and he was presented with the WFDY gold ring for his services. The AIYF deputed Sushil Chakravarty in his place to take over the duties of the WFDY vice-presidentship when he stood down.[64] A delegation of the AISF attended the Ninth Congress of the IUS in Ulaan Baatar, the capital of Mongolia, in March 1967.

Moreover, the AIYF occasionally publicised the news of WFDY-IUS events. For example, they reported the International Preparatory Committee's (IPC) decision to hold the 9th World Festival of Youth and Students in Sofia in 1968. They noted, referring to "propaganda" allegedly put out by WAY, "the decision of the IPC will put an end to the sinister propaganda of the pro-western youth organisation which predicted the collapse of the festival movement".[65] This comment reveals the perception that throughout the 1960s, as the global Cold War intensified, any inclusion of the Western bloc in the pro-Soviet youth movement, something previously symbolised by the early World Festivals of Youth, further decreased.

Philip Altback, a leading scholar of Cold War era international youth movements, has argued the Prague-based International Union of Students (IUS), which was financed by the United States until its demise in 1968, sought to develop a presence in New Delhi during the early 1960s. They supported an Asian Student Press Bureau which functioned as a clearing house for Asian student news and issued press releases to student newspapers in Asia. He claims that the,

---

[63] The New Generation, July 1964 p.4
[64] The New Generation, February 1967 p. 7
[65] Ibid. p.17

The IUS gave substantial aid to the anti-Communist National Council of University Students of India […] while the IUS provided similar assistance to its Indian affiliate, the All-India Students' Federation[66]

The biggest international issue facing the student movement during the early 1960s was the Sino-Indian war of 1962 and this event had a far-reaching impact for the communist youth movement in India. The AIYF Executive Committee passed a resolution in November 1962 that condemned the Chinese aggression and gave full support to the Government of India's defence efforts. They claimed that progressive youths had undergone "a great mental struggle" because they "never expected this from a country like China".[67] The AIYF accepted the war necessitated a "change of emphasis in the policy of national advance and even [a] temporary suspension of its programmes".[68] It supported the proclamation of a national emergency for the initial period of the conflict, which had begun on 26 October 1962, when "the security of India" was declared as being "threatened by external aggression". However, in August 1963 it withdrew its backing claiming that its continuation would "mean the end of our democratic system".[69] The national emergency would go onto last until 10th January 1968.

During 1962, as with the AISF during the Second World War as outlined in the previous chapter, the AIYF supported the government's national defence efforts. The regional federations in Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Punjab, Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Bihar, and Kerala collected funds, enrolled volunteers for the donation of blood and held youth meetings to garner the opinions of this social group in support of the war.[70] Notwithstanding their support for the war, a great many communists, including the ex-General Secretary of the CPI in West Bengal Nanda Gopal Bhattacharya, were arrested on the outbreak of the conflict. *The New Generation* reported, "leaders of student unions in different educational institutions started facing victimisation due to reactionary attacks".[71] Moreover, the AIYF student leaders expressed their frustration at being excluded from the "Youth and Student Defence Committees" that emerged across the country. In Bombay city, for example, the official committee made a statement asking its members not to cooperate with the AIYF in their defence work.[72]

The Sino-Indo War of 1962 triggered a huge division in the communist youth movement between the pro-Chinese and pro-Moscow factions. The New Generation reported delicately on the conference of 1963: "the bold debate on the perspective of the movement, which took up most of the time, remained

---

[66] Altbach, Philip G. 1970. *The Student Internationals* p.50
[67] The New Generation, October 1963 p. 2
[68] The New Generation, August 1963 pp.2-3
[69] Ibid. p.4
[70] The New Generation, October 1963 p. 2
[71] The New Generation, October-November 1964 p.18
[72] The New Generation, October 1963 p. 2

inconclusive, it has unleashed a serious discussion among the council members. No doubt this question will be discussed further by the rank and file in all the states".[73]

The AIYF then decided to hold a series of conferences to settle the disagreements amongst their members on their movement's relationship with China following the 1962 war.[74] In May 1964, the New Generation announced, after a pause in print for six months, that "new elements have been injected into the movements of youth and students in our country", and it referred to these as the "entry of splitters". A contrasting view is that China's invasion of India triggered a search for a new political space amongst the pro-Peking youths and allowed for different ideologies and counter-political cultures to emerge. As a result, for the duration of the 1960s and beyond, the newly formed pro-Beijing and pro-Maoist Students' Federation of India became an important enemy for the pro-Moscow AIYF.

Besides veiled references like those outlined above, it is difficult to retrieve the details of how the tussle played out in the AIYF units. The Kerala AIYF branch, though, ceased to exist between 1965 and 1968 allegedly due to "factional activities".[75] The West Bengal AIYF lamented the way pro-Chinese students set about "openly violating the norms of the organisation".[76] They wrote in 1964,

> We note the fact with deep regret that a section of students, who started sowing the seeds of disruption in the unity of progressive students' movements, has not yet ceased to continue the devasting course of action in the student movements. Ignoring all constitutional provisions, - without caring a little for the unity of the movement, they suddenly convened a parallel conference before [the] commencement of sessions in different colleges, which only strengthened the hands of the local reactionaries [77]

The AIYF likened the pro-Chinese student dissidents to the Chinese invaders. They said, "as in the days of Chinese aggression, when the youth and students of the country dedicated themselves to the defence of the country, so today we must dedicate once again for the launching of an unrelenting struggle against the enemies within".[78] Between 1962 and 1964, a discourse about the "enemy within", "separatist elements" and "splitters" emerged within the AIYF movement to denote the pro-Chinese elements. When 32 members of the CPI's National Council meeting walked out in April 1964, which was followed by the creation of the CPI (Marxist) in Calcutta in November 1964, *The New Generation* claimed the Indian communist movement was now split between the pro-Moscow

---

[73] The New Generation, August 1963 p.1
[74] Ibid.
[75] The New Generation, November 1969 p.7
[76] The New Generation, October-November 1964 p.18
[77] Ibid.
[78] The New Generation, May 1964, p.1

CPI's "democratic socialism" and the pro-China group's "communist totalitarianism". They held the victim of this split was "secularism" itself, and the victors were the "bourgeoise".[79]

The split of the communist youth movement aligned with the actions of the adult political actors of the CPI. A subsequent report by the CPI's Central Control Commission revealed that the November 1962 resolution that condemned Chinese aggression led to the organisation of an "all-India parallel centre" which held the CPI's National Council to be "thoroughly right revisionist" and "bitterly anti-China". In June 1963, the S.A Dange-group majority in the National Council of the CPI passed a resolution that demanded disciplinary action must be taken against the "parallel centre".[80] The report outlined the disruption they caused to various provincial organisations and noted the appearance of four language weeklies in Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam, and Bengali that were subservient to the "parallel centre".[81]

On a rare occasion of physical participation in the international communist internationalism, the AIYF sent one delegate to the World Youth Forum in Moscow 1964. They witnessed first-hand the dissidence of the Chinese delegation and the Moscow-Peking split play out in the international communist youth order. They claimed, there was, "an attempt made by the Chinese delegation to derail the forum, obstruct its deliberations and resolutions".[82] They reported that the Chinese delegation maintained their "glum faces" even when Khrushchev entered the Kremlin Palace of Congresses to address the communist youths. The AIYF delegate reported that the Chinese communist youth organisations had earlier decided to establish a pro-China international youth body that would hold an alternative forum in Peking immediately after the present forum, and even booked 200 seats on a Moscow-Peking flight.[83]

I will now argue the AIYF advanced the idea that the policy of non-alignment lay in tatters especially from the Sino-Indo War of 1962 onwards. Nehru's formal request for modern weaponry from the US during the 1962 war was deemed by the AIYF as a betrayal of India's policy of non-alignment. The US's large-scale military assistance to India came in the form of infantry weapons, ammunition, planes, equipment, and an aircraft carrier to the Bay of Bengal.[84] The AIYF claimed this military aid from the US amounted to a significant turn towards the Western bloc in India's foreign policy and to a far greater influence of one superpower over the other. It held, in a slightly misworded statement, the,

> The policy of non-alignment[,] the sheet anchor of our development programme[,] is being
> sought to be thrown to the four winds and pressure is being put to hustle our country into the

---

[79] The New Generation, July 1964, p.3
[80] Wood, John. B. 1965. "Observations on the Indian Communist Party Split."
[81] Ibid.
[82] New Generation, October November.1964 p.1
[83] Ibid.
[84] Brecher, Michael. 1979. "Non-Alignment Under Stress: The West and the India-China Border War." *Pacific Affairs.* 52 (4): 612-630

camp of the West … into groupism, internal conflict and other maladies, Congress is being incapacitated. [85]

The AIYF held the early 1960s was distinguished by a Janus-faced crisis of non-alignment: one side being US economic capitalism, which they held to be a form of economic imperialism, which was allegedly supported by the forces of communalism, and the other being the geopolitical crisis initiated by the Chinese invasion that pushed India further into the arms of the US. They noted, "On one side China is threatening to gobble up our territory and on the other imperialism is trying to install neo-colonialism in our country [which is] aided by the right reactionary forces".[86]

The Government of India's acquisition of high-powered radio transmitters from the US to counter China's propaganda in the Indian border regions and in Southeast Asia represented a significant symbolic breach in India's non-alignment to the AIYF. The government's decision to collaborate with the US's agency for radio propaganda abroad, Voice of America (VOA), became one of the salient issues of student politics during the summer of 1963 and triggered a fierce reaction from the AISF. The leader of the Punjab Naujawan Sabha, a communist sister organisation of AIYF, Yash Pal, claimed the AIR -VOA deal represented, "an offer to the American imperialists to establish a strong foothold on Indian soil".[87] The Punjab Naujawan Sabha leadership, the AIYF report held,

> …decided to send a colourful cyclist demonstration to Delhi to join the proposed demonstration [against the Government of India's acquisition of high-powered radio from the US]. The team will consist of 100 young cyclists carrying banners and festoons of the Youth Federation and its slogans for the movement. The demonstration will start from Bathinda and will travel more than 200 miles for 5 days and will cover nearly 100 villages during their tour[88]

Furthermore, the Bengal Provincial Student's Federation held a political rally and demonstrations to protest the AIR-VOA deal in July 1963, but they stated the anti-VOA procession of students were attacked by the police. The Calcutta respondent of *The New Generation*, Dilip Mitra, claimed the attack on the students was pre-planned and "fascist-like" and the role of the police was "motivated". They made the accusation that Congress "goondas" had planned the assault and claimed,

> The assault on the demonstration was planned and executed under direct supervision and participation of top leaders of the Congress led Chatra Parishad [...]While meeting the Chatra

---

[85] The New Generation, August 1963 p.1
[86] Ibid. p.1
[87] Ibid. p.8
[88] Ibid. p.8

209

Parishad leaders, one leading Congress MLA, Nepal Roy, praised them for 'heroically beating up the Students Federation demonstrators'[89]

This is another example of the state-student interaction, from the communist perspective, that reveals their understanding of an ineluctably coercive state and the alleged anti-communist motives that lay behind the state's attempt to exact reprisals. From the communist's perspective, these clashes did not assume what they would consider to be a dialectical form: that is, the state's attempt to exact reprisals, from their viewpoint, did not arise from any fault of the students and they allegedly did not respond with student violence.

Solidarity with the students of East Pakistan became one of the most important international dimensions of the AIYF during the 1960s. The existence of a pan-Bengali identity is evident in the writings of Bengalis in *The New Generation*. There had been much cooperation between communist students on either side of the international border and there was a movement of these students between Dhaka and Calcutta before the border hardened during the late 1950s and 1960s. The AIYF heralded the student activism of East Pakistan Students as especially courageous and the repression they faced by the Government of Pakistan provoked distinct outrage.[90]

The AIYF hailed the 22-point charter of students demands put forward by the Pakistan Student's Union, Pakistan Students League, and the National Student Federation of Pakistan at a joint meeting in September 1964 of these movements in Dacca as an important achievement. These Pakistani student organisations took the decision to observe September 17th, Education Day in Pakistan, as "Demands Day".[91] *The New Generation* noted in November 1964, the "fascist-like repression and torture of the students of east Pakistan by the Pakistan government in recent days have outdone all other oppressive examples in any country […] mass student arrests, lathi-charge, tear gas, water hose charge, firing etc., have become everyday affairs in the educational life of Pakistan".[92]

The AIYF praised the emergence of communist leaning groups in East Pakistan from across the border. They urged progressive youths that had belonged to organisations which had been banned by the Pakistani government following the post-1958 military coup to join the Pioneer Youth League during the mid-1960s. It claimed in October 1964, exemplifying their similar international ideas, "the youth rally in Dhaka sharply condemned the US aggression on North Vietnam and strongly demanded the Pakistani Government to withdraw itself from the notorious SEATO and CENTO Pact".[93]

---

[89] Ibid. p.9
[90] New Generation, October-November.1964 p.1
[91] Ibid.
[92] New Generation, October-November.1964 p.11. The inaccuracies here belong to the original quote.
[93] Ibid. p.15

As mentioned in the introduction, there is a patchiness to the AIYF's *The New Generation*, and the magazine went out of print for most of 1966. Therefore, their accounts about the intensification of violence against students from spring 1966 when President Ayub Khan denounced the autonomy movement in East Pakistan and arrested Sheikh Mujibur Rahman are not available.

In 1969, the AIYF began campaigning for the Pakistan Student Action Committee's 11-point charter of demands. There was an understanding that the struggles of left-wing youth movements on either side of the border were intertwined. The AIYF claimed,

> As for us across the frontiers, the most fitting tribute to our brothers in Pakistan would be a firm resolute to annihilate the reactionary exploiters in this country [...] Glory to the militant youth and students in Pakistan! [94]

Furthermore, the AIYF mobilised students in support of the Government of India's war with Pakistan in 1965. The AIYF called, "upon the students all over the country to stand solidly for national defence at this hour of national emergency when the entire nation is facing aggression from Pakistan". They went on, "it is clear that the whole move is engineered by [the] reactionary government of Pakistan in connivence with [the] Anglo–American block".[95] Their efforts consisted largely of encouraging blood donation and mobilising student opinion.[96] The AIYF were, however, keen to note that the students of East Bengal were not the enemy of India. They publicised the students of Dacca's "we are not at war with India" demonstration that occurred on the 7th of September 1965. They reminded their readers that, "Dacca students have always been playing a very significant role in the forefront of these democratic movements of Pakistan [...] Dhaka has always been a 'problem' for Pindi [meaning Rawalpindi] in recent times".[97]

The AIYF asserted that Kashmir was an integral part of India and the attempt by Pakistan to seize it in 1965 was deemed illegitimate. These young communists supported the government's efforts to "mop up the infiltrators in Kashmir".[98] The AIYF, like the CPI, and youths associated with the Congress and the RSS, endorsed the Government of India's narrative about the 1965 conflict with Pakistan. Unlike the Sino-Indo War of 1962, there is little evidence of dissent or difference of opinion with regards to the Indo-Pakistani War of 1965 within the CPI youth movement or between the younger and older generation of communist leaders. These left-wing youths deemed the regime of Pakistan as illegitimate because it was a military dictatorship and had a close relationship with the US. Moreover, like with the Second World War and the Sino-Indo War of 1962, this conflict reveals the conception

---

[94] New Generation, May 1969 p.14
[95] New Generation, August -September 1965 p.13
[96] Ibid.
[97] Ibid.p.19. Inaccuracies belong to the original quote.
[98] Ibid.p.13

of service to the nation-state amongst communist youths shifted between defence or protest during the post-colonial period depending on whether the Government of India was preparing for war.

Vietnam was one of the largest and most important rallying points for communist youths and students from the mid-1960s onwards. The Punjab Nau Jawan Sabha, a communist sister organisation of the AIYF, notably burnt effigies of President Lyndon Johnson and President Ayub Khan on 1st September 1965 to protest American atrocities in Vietnam.[99] The AIYF celebrated Vietnam Day annually on April 18th following the unanimous decision at the 1965 National Convention for Peace in Vietnam to organise demonstrations and meetings to protest against US imperialism on that day.[100]

By the final years of the 1960s, the AIYF boasted it had generated, "the biggest Vietnam solidarity movement in India organised from [a] youth platform".[101] Furthermore, the AIYF, as an anti-US youth movement, continued to make the claim at the same time that the Government of India had "fallen into the charm of the free world". By accepting US aid in the form of the USPL-480 food programme, the US-India Educational Foundation, through plant fertiliser deals and through the World Bank, they claimed India had become the stooge of the US and the Congress had proven it could not "safeguard our economic and political independence".[102]

Even though the physical participation in the communist youth internationalism decreased throughout the 1960s, a solidarity with other anti-imperial struggles remained central to the political imagination of the AIYF. In 1969, *The New Generation* reported on their support for the international struggles throughout the 1960s:

> The national days observed by the AIYF to express solidarity with Vietnamese people, the number of other solidarity actions taken up by it in support of the Arab people, people of South Africa, Southern Rhodesia, the people of Portuguese colonies, etc, and its campaign for the recognition of the GDR and the demonstration it organised in front of the Inter-Parliamentary Union to denounce that organisation's pro-imperialist policies were its actions during this period upholding the banner of anti -imperialism[103]

The coverage of these struggles assigned a sense of meaning to the students of this communist movement. They fostered a pan-Asian and African collective student identity. This solidarity can be understood as an anti-imperial internationalism that improvised a distinctly future-oriented politics where the communist youth was an embodiment of the horizon of future possibilities.[104] Roberto

---

[99] Ibid. p. 6
[100] The New Generation, March-April,1965 p.2
[101] The New Generation, December 1969 p.5
[102]The New Generation, February 1967, p.14
[103] The New Generation, December 1969 (Article: For a militant youth movement, page number unidentifiable). The inaccuracies here belong to the original quote.
[104] Goswami, Manu. 2012. "Imaginary Futures and Colonial Internationalisms."

Schwarz's theorisation of post-colonial "thirdworldism" to denote a sense shared by those living in non-aligned countries that they constituted a vanguard of anti-imperialism resonates with the AIYF's discourses on the struggles of the 1960s.[105]

Conclusion

This chapter contributes to the historical scholarship on student movements and national politics during the 1960s in India and will conclude with a reference to one of the most influential scholarly works of this decade in India. Selig Harrison's *India: The Most Dangerous Decades* (1960) became renowned amongst scholars and pundits during the 1960s for its claim that "the most dangerous decades" for a country are "those decades after an underdeveloped country has discovered progress, or the hope of progress, but before progress comes rapidly enough to satisfy rising aspirations".[106] This chapter has explored the ways communist youths in India held that their aspirations for their country and for their social group had been unfulfilled by the 1960s. They lamented the failed nation-building project and the economic settlement of the post-colonial period.

Selig Harrison's prediction that India would face a Balkanization or military rule unless another prime minister of Jawaharlal Nehru's stature would emerge did not come to pass during this decade or in subsequent decades. The AIYF's repertoire of oppositional politics, at the national level, did not include fostering linguistic and regional divisions nor advocating militarism. Harrison's prophecy about the emergence of the politics of linguistic division or political forces in favour of military rule does not reverberate in these student writings because the AIYF fundamentally rejected both. The 1960s in India was not a decade of national revolution, as Selig Harrison predicted and as the AIYF hoped them to be. It was, though, a period of dramatic political protests and powerful critique and this oppositional politics of communist youths should be intimately bound up with the historical imaginings and understanding of the 1960s in India and the global 1960s.

This chapter has explored how the politics of the 1960s unfolded from the perspectives of communist youths, and it has advanced four key arguments of this PhD thesis. Firstly, the AIYF held the economic and political settlement of the post-colonial period had fallen short of what the freedom struggle had promised, and the economic turndown of the second half of the 1960s accelerated this discourse of dissatisfaction. This represents an alternative account, a reversal almost, of those discourses about the indiscipline and inadequacy of youth as promoted by those adult actors whose efforts coalesced into the novel youth movements of the early post-colonial period that have been explored in the first four chapters. Secondly, this PhD thesis has discussed the rise of a state-organised

---

[105] Langland, Victoria. 2018. "Transnational connections of the global sixties as seen by a historian of Brazil." p.20 In *Handbook of the Global Sixties: Between Protest and Nation-Building*

[106] Harrison, Selig S. 1960. *India: the most dangerous decades.* Princeton: Princeton University Press p.5

youth sector during the early post-colonial period and has brought to light this youth movements pessimistic perspective on this. Thirdly, the AIYF's foregrounding of economic, cultural, and gendered differences brings to light the unequal pathways of Indian youthhood and this political space of youth reveals the political divisions amongst this social body.

Finally, the AISF has offered an entry point into broader discussions about the meanings of the global politics of the 1960s in India. The interactive elements of the AIYF's communist student internationalism, through periodic physical participation in the WFDY and the IUS, decreased during the 1960s compared to the involvement of the AISF between the mid-1940s and mid-1950s as explored in the previous chapter. Moreover, the AIYF held that the 1960s amounted to a clear deviation from India's foreign policy of non-alignment. They pointed to India's acquisition of high-powered radio transmitters from the US and how India increasingly became a recipient of various forms of US aid as evidence for this. Solidarity with the students of East Pakistan became one of the most important dimensions of the AIYF's international ideology. Deemed a stooge of the US and the blatant aggressor in Kashmir, and under military rule, the students placed Pakistan towards the bottom of their hierarchy of international legitimacy. These ideas and responses to international events of the 1960s invariably aligned with the adult actors within the CPI and the thinking of the communist youth order.

During the 1960s, the AIYF referred to the idea that the attitudes of youths were changing because of the expansion of higher education, the media of mass communication and the technological revolution in India and around the world. An AIYF publication stated these specific processes meant this was becoming, "a period when the younger generation is more radical in their thinking and are discarding many of the old values and searching for new value in life".[107] Interestingly, the oppositional politics to the events of the 1960s under study did not amount to a counterculture that promoted an alternative lifestyle. Sexual liberation, drug use, and pop music are conspicuously absent from the communist youth politics hitherto explored. But some writers in *The New Generation* referred to the effects of the wider global shifts in the cultural consumption of youths. C.K Chandrappan, noted,

> The growing youth and student movements in the capitalist countries, the phenomenal growth of hippies, mods and beatles in the West, the split in the international communist movement, the advent of the new left armed with their highly romantic and extremely adventuristic slogans, the ideological offensive of the thoughts of Mao, Marcuse and Che Guevara, the talk about the people's capitalism flourishing in the free world et cetera have their impact on the minds of our younger generation[108]

---

[107] Author unknown. 1970. *Fight Against Unemployment for a New Social order*
[108] The New Generation, December 1969 (Article: For a militant youth movement, page number unidentifiable). The grammatical inaccuracies here belong to the original quote.

214

Though certainly not the first generation to make claims about intergenerational conflict, these young Indians felt that this decade was one of global change: nationally and globally. This chapter has brought to light the ways a committed group of young Indians exploited the politics of the pen to respond to the changes of the 1960s and initiated far-reaching youth-led protest movements in response to them.

Chapter 8. Conclusion

This PhD thesis has examined state-sponsored youth movements and student movements that sought to combat the "youth problem" and harness the potentiality of youth. There are two historical questions that this investigation set out to answer: What happened to "the youth movement" after independence? How did the post-colonial "state" seek to mobilise this group? The answer to these questions is that policy makers, politicians, and youth leaders began to establish a novel post-colonial youth order to adjust this social group to the demands of independence and citizenship. A variety of figures inside and outside of the government developed an anxiety about the need to organise a mass youth movement and developed the idea that the newly independent state must accept overall responsibility for it. Furthermore, the youthful counterculture of the AISF and the AIYF reveals that the state-organised youth movement was matched by political protests and critiques by Indian communist students about their country's government and the international political economy.

This PhD has traced the origins, growth, and consequences of the National Cadet Corps, the Labour and Social Service Camps, the Bharat Sevak Samaj, the Bharat Scouts and Guides, the National Service Scheme, the Youth Hostel Association, the Interuniversity Festivals, and the University Film Club. It has also explored the responses and unrest of two communist youth movements, and looked at the way the 40s, 50s, and 60s unfolded in India from their perspective. By referring to the final phase of the colonial era, this PhD has analysed how pre-independence era conceptions and organisational forms of movements were adapted and repudiated during the early post-colonial period. The establishment and expansion of these youth movements coincided with a momentous episode in south Asian history: the shift from colonial rule to independence in India, presided over by a generation of (largely Congress) freedom fighters, and the transition of tens of millions of youths from subjecthood to citizenship. Independence created a new relevance for this life stage. It became a point of competing negotiation for nationhood, citizenship and imagining the future.

The principal historiographical contribution of this PhD has been to offer a history of youth movements and mobilisations in post-colonial India. It has put forward that young people continued to be lively players and pivotal actors in Indian national politics. Hitherto, this has been a subject that has been almost entirely unexplored. This study will provide a starting point for future academic investigations into the history of a social group that makes up more than half of India today. This study has offered academic insights into the key themes of each chapter: defence, development, social service, leisure, and student politics during the early colonial era, and it builds a bridge between the existing works that explore the colonial childhoods and the youth movements of the late colonial period.

The arrival point for this investigation into Indian youthh has been via the scholarly debates set out by historians of childhood about the issue of agency. The history of childhood and youth are inseparable

and the history of this latter phase of life would be far less fully understood in all its implications and manifestations without appreciating the historicization of the previous life stage. This thesis began with an exploration of the works that demonstrated the political potency of colonial childhood. Through an examination of the legal status of children, child marriage, educational institutions and child criminality, the relationship between childhood and modernity has been extensively researched.[1] The novel diffusion of norms relating to youth, however, that occurred with the colonial connection and the nationalist project, remains largely unexplored because these scholars of childhood have not taken the subsequent post-childhood passage to adulthood as the object of their study.

The history of youth has emerged as a vast field of history in the West ever since the 1970s and 1980s when "social history" and "history from below" caught the imagination of a generation of scholars.[2] The field has moved beyond its Eurocentric origins in the last two decades and scholars of Africa, Asia and Latin America have examined student protests, youth movements, and this social group's counter cultures.[3] In the Indian context, there have been several works that bring to light the political, volunteer, and social service mobilisations of youth. Student and youth participation in the nationalist movement has been well documented in popular and academic history: these groups actively participated in Gandhi's Non-cooperation Movement, the Civil Disobedience Movement, and the "Quit India" Movement.[4] The youth assumed positions of leadership when the Government of India incarcerated the Congress elders. Vijay Prashad captures the symbolism invested in this social group when he claims the Indian freedom movement emerged "from the revolutionary idealism of young people".[5] The role of young revolutionaries outside of the mainstream freedom struggle has also been explored, especially the activities of Bhagat Singh and the networks of *Bhadralok* revolutionaries.[6]

However, these studies fail to understand youth as a social body that was made up of differentiated political attitudes and fail to historicise the multiple pathways of youth that prevailed. A variety of philanthropic and social service movements that emanated from colonial society, from the Seva Samiti and the Servants of India to the Scouting movement, have been explored and this literature has brought to light the ways they advanced a patriotic sense of civic engagement and introduced

---

[1] Vallgarda, Karen.2004. *Imperial Childhoods and Christian Mission: Education and Emotions in South India and Denmark*. Pande, Ishita. 2013. "Sorting Boys and Men: Unlawful Intercourse, Boy Protection and Child Marriage Restraint Act in Colonial India." Sen, Satadru. 2005. *Colonial Childhoods*
[2] Graff, Harvey. 1973. "Patterns of Dependency and. Child Development in the. Mid-Nineteenth Century City: A Sample from Boston 1860." Kett, Joseph. 1979. *Rites of Passage: Adolescence in America 1790 to the Present*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Gillis, John. 1981. *Youth and History: Tradition and Change in European Age Relations, 1770-present*. New York: Academic Press
[3] Ivan Jobs, Richard and David F. Pomfret. *Transnational Histories of Youth in the Twentieth Century* p.2
[4] Maclean, Kama. 2015. *A Revolutionary History of Interwar India: Violence, Image, Voice and Text* pp.5-6
[5] Prashad, Vijay. 2007. *The Darker Nations: A People's History of the Third World.* Princeton: New Press People's history p. 12
[6] Ghosh, Durba. 2017. *Gentlemanly Terrorists: Political Violence and the Colonial State in India, 1919-1947*
[6] Moffat, Chris. 2020. *India's Revolutionary Inheritance Politics and the Promise of Bhagat Singh*

217

programmes of physical training. As these studies invariably focus on the colonial period, they are important "pre-histories" to my study that explores the post-colonial period.

None of these works, moreover, seek to take the Indian youth as their principal object of enquiry. They have a powerful relevance to this field because they interact to some degree or the other with this social category. To a great extent, indeed, this fledgling history of Indian youth is a place where alternative historical themes can intersect. It is something of a "magpie subject" that is to say an academic subject which at its "base contains other pearls of wisdom" while also nurturing "insights, theories and empirical research of its own", but it is very much in its incipient stage.[7] This study has, therefore, broken new historiographical ground by centring the Indian youth, as a category in its own right, during the early post-colonial period in a historical investigation.

The precise parameters of this life stage have been largely left to the historical agents themselves and the conceptual parameters of youth that I drew in the introduction have allowed for a flexible, intuitive, and broad-brush approach to defining this life stage. The articulation of this concept in the English language in the Indian public discourse underscores that youth was a cultural category and social group, albeit a highly differentiated and diverse one. The contemporary academic conceptualisations are a useful starting point for understanding the characteristics of the Indian youth and adolescence. Despite increasingly recognising the social constructivist nature of this life stage, educationalists and theorists of social work generally endorsed the Rousseau-Hall paradigm throughout the period at hand that held adolescence to be a period that involved conflict with parents, emotional disruption, and dangerous behavior.[8]

Age is a relevant chronological marker for this study, because as Steven Mintz notes, "age provided modern bureaucratic societies with a seemingly impartial organizing category that can be used to structure institutions".[9] For the movements that I have studied, youth existed across a wide range of ages (including both pre-and post-adolescents). It had a clear relationship to being in high school, college or university in the movements I have explored but, of course, not all youths attend educational institutions. The starting point for any investigation into youth is that innumerable post-childhood pathways of adulthood prevailed, and they can take on countless forms. In the Indian context, they are invariably determined by gender, dalithood, rurality, caste, class, religion, and other social differences.

Far from the holy grail scholars once claimed it to be, the pursuit of agency is laudable but actually quite limiting. Let me take an example of agential action that I explored in chapter 5 to illustrate this

---

[7] Mukherjee, Utsa. 2020. "Towards a Critical Sociology of Children's Leisure". International Journal of the Sociology of Leisure 3 (3): 219 – 239

[8] Koops, Willem and Michael Zuckerman. 2013. "A historical developmental approach to adolescence."

[9] Mintz, Steven. 2008. "Reflections on Age as a Category of Historical Analysis." *The Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* 1(1): 91-94

point. Following ten days of cultural competitions amongst students at the 1957 Interuniversity Festival, officials condemned the student's "obstructive ejaculations and other symptoms of student impatience". They commented on "the very miscreants who booed what was tedious" and claimed, "the stray cat calls and whistles during performances did not prove that students were serious in their mission".[10] These taunts and derisions, most likely aimed at female students, because that is what generally constitutes catcalling, serve to highlight forms of resistance against the festivals schedule and they can be interpreted as an expression of agency and allows us to make plausible inferences about everyday sexism towards female students.

However, notwithstanding the way is adds necessary and illuminative anecdotal colour, it is also an example of the way that the search for the youth's deviation from the norm can obscure the very norms of life stages that we set out to discover. A corollary of the search for agency is that it can reproduce caricatures about rebellious teenagers and the normative assumptions of parents, youth leaders and officials. Providing neither the youth's point of view on the performance or the festival, this anecdote says more about the way adult actors determine, ascribe, or deny agency to the youthful subject. There is a vast space between outright rebellion and obedience (which is itself an overlooked form of agency) that the agential hunt means is too often overlooked. The question of the youth's agency should not simply be about whether they rebelled against adults.

The point of view of the young person himself or herself is rarely revealed in the late colonial and early post-colonial era documents relating to Indian youth movements that have survived. Autobiographies or life narratives are one of the obvious ways to resolve the issue of finding the youth's voice. But these genres involve adults performing to adult audiences and they tend to reveal more about the period of writing rather than the life stages of childhood and youth. It is for these reasons that there has been a powerful argument within the field that we should think differently about agency and access the voices of the children and youths in new ways. The "experiential" approach has pushed historians to think harder about the texture, the fabric, and the feel of quotidian life. As Stephanie Olsen points out, "emotions allow us to access children's agency and children's voices in a new way".[11] However, like with the agency trap that I have already explored, this concept could again lead to an "experience trap" that results in the reproduction of narratives about deviations from the "normal" experience.[12] The theoretical insights from experiential, emotional and spatial approaches have given the history of childhood and youth much to consider, but any intersectional reconciliation of these scholarly debates are in their early stages and are now ripe for such theoretical creativity. [13]

---

[10] 4th Inter University Youth Festival Report, 1957, Ministry for Education, 13-69/57- D7, NAI
[11] Olsen, Stephanie. 2015. *Childhood, Youth and Emotions in Modern History: National, Colonial and Global Perspectives* p.3
[12] Gleason, Mona. 2016. "Avoiding the agency trap: caveats for historians of children, youth, and education."
[13] Boddice, Rob and Mark Smith. 2020. *Emotion, Sense, Experience*s

Notwithstanding the difficulty of retrieving the youths voice and the complication of the agency debate, this PhD has illuminated a myriad of actions, emotions, and experiences from those who participated in the multiple forms of movement and mobilisations initiated in the name of solving the "youth problem". These have included catcalling, heckling, and shirking of the camp rules, expressions of elation after a hiker's arrival back to their youth hostel, and anti-state protests and the assertion of political identity. Together, despite the flaws of the concept of agency I have already set out, these add necessary anecdotal colour and help to bring historical participants and movements to life. This research has also highlighted the silences in the archives, especially those left by socially marginalised groups, and the gaps in our ability to find out which social groups participated and their degrees of involvement.

This PhD has unpacked the way discourse about this social group constituted knowledge and the way youths were objects and participants of development programmes, economic policy, and welfare schemes. It has focused on the shifting political agendas that took the Indian youth as their target-object and how these juvenile citizens became culturally emblematic of the nation-state building project. This exploration of Indian youth movements and mobilisations has shone a light on the contested meanings invested in the transition from childhood to adulthood in addition to being a history that allows us to better comprehend the history of defence, development, social service, leisure, and student politics in post-colonial India. Throughout these chapters, I have argued these mobilisations of youth and the various ways young people responded to them offer insights into the larger issues of post-colonial state formation and modern Indian society. I will now restate these through a brief explanations of this PhD's five key arguments.

The first argument was that widespread and dramatized concerns emanated from across the Indian socio-political landscape about the alleged "indiscipline of youth". The imagery of the youth lacking in discipline was tied up with cycles of student unrest and the idea that the methods of protest used during the pre-independence period had wrongly continued into the post-independence period, but this discursive formation was often extended to include all Indian youths and it became translated into a long-term anxiety about the future of the newly established nation-state.

The second argument was that this sentiment about this social group led to the establishment of a state-organised youth sector. The ministries of the Government of India launched new youth movements and the Five-Year Plans sponsored mobilisations that sought to harness and channel the voluntary efforts of youths. The processes of building new youth movements were generally more driven by state or quasi-state actors, yet they sought to complement existing voluntary youth movements. Their establishment was invariably rooted in an attempt to plug gaps where society was "lacking" or because the movement served a distinctive need of the nation-state. The NCC, for example, a movement organised almost entirely by the Ministry of Defence, served partly to remedy

the shortage of officer recruits for the Indian army. However, its leaders were conscious of the NCCs place within the wider youth movement. The Ministry of Defence's officials took great care to ensure their provision of training programmes did not replicate or conflict with that offered by the Bharat Scouts, for example. Its founding committee held, "the NCC as envisaged by us will not be a rival to existing youth organisations but *will occupy a distinctive place* among them".[14]

This research has revealed the ways quasi-state actors, in an almost autonomous way, coalesced together to initiate novel and distinctive youth movements. For instance, the University Film Club, an organisation designed to promote films of the "high art" type, arose in concert with the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, the Children's Film Society, the University Grants Commission, and specific university departments.[15] Furthermore, the Bharat Sevak Samaj and The National Youth Welfare Movement are key examples that reveal the complex, hotchpotch, overlapping and interwoven character of the state-organised youth sector. They did not seek to marginalise civil society but imagined themselves as enabling it.

Thirdly, these youth movements and mobilisations had a comprehensive nation-state building character. Each of these organisations laid emphasis on their representative nature, diversity-promoting functionality and made a claim to express the cultural diversity of the country. There are broadly two different strategies of nation-state building evident in these movements and mobilisations. The first was the ambition to eliminate and level difference and this was adopted by the NCC, the Labour and Social Service Camps, the Bharat Scouts, and the National Social Service Scheme. The second was to celebrate the irreducible diversity of the post-colonial nation and this is best encapsulated by the Interuniversity Youth Festival, Youth Hostel Association, and the University Film Club.

The young citizen and their mobilisational energies in development, social service and defence became a visual and metaphorical embodiment of the ideals of the nation-state. The figure of the Nehruvian-era camper, for instance, is depicted as a model young man toiling, enthusiastic, hard-working, jolly, disciplined and occasionally rowdy yet committed to the principles of the Five-Year Plan. My exploration of the civil defence campaign ran by the AISF during the Second World War reveals that the Indian male student was held to be the ideal form of the Air Raid Warden. Underlying this representation was the idea that Indian youths were distinctly passionate and more willing to sacrifice themselves for India's defence.[16] In comparison, officials, academics, and politicians

---

[14] The Report of The NCC Committee. Emphasis added.
[15] Scheme For University Film Club, 1960, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 15-4/60-FC, NAI
[16] Wilkinson, Tom. 2020. "Student Politics in British India and Beyond: The Rise and Fragmentation of the All India Student Federation (AISF), 1936–1951."

regularly described NCC cadets as "assets to the nation" and these marching and beret-wearing youths would be showcased at Independence Day parades, at Kumbh Melas and to villages during their camps.[17]

In terms of social service, the Indian Scout was depicted with a youthful urge to devote himself to the service of others and applauded as a duty-oriented citizen who would instinctively go beyond reasonable expectations. This argument seeks to draw attention to the paradoxical meanings invested into this social group because they were simultaneously imagined as being a national allegory for the developmentalist potentiality of the nation-state and a representation of the wholeness of the country in addition to being imagined as fundamentally undisciplined

The fourth argument is that an unequal pathway of youthhood prevailed in independent India. A double tier system of Indian youthhood prevailed in late colonial and post-colonial India and permeated each of the spaces I have explored: one programme and ideology for the privileged few and another for the uneducated masses. For example, the "Harijan Welfare Rover Scouts" visited Dalit residential areas to impart instructions in first aid, hygiene, and temperance, but there was little in the way of attempting to recruit these poorer classes to the All-India Boy Scouts Association. Understood as the segment of youth most likely to provide the future leadership of the country, all these movements overwhelmingly took the educated male youth as their principal target recruit with little provision for the uneducated masses.

A limited amount of agency was increasingly recognised for rural youths in the process of development in the late 1950s and 1960s. For example, the camp movement increasingly sought to cater for the poorer and rural youths themselves rather than them only being the object of the camp. For instance, the Bharat Sevak Samaj, the largest camp organiser, launched Tehsil Camps, Tribal Students Camps, Village Local Camps (also referred to as *Gram Milap Shivir*), and Rural Folk Camps for the categories of so-called "Youngmens" and "Girls-Home-Workers".[18] Previously the camp movement had only catered to educated youths, but it set about training these poorer and more marginalised youths in the "dignity of labour", *shramdan* and rural upliftment.

Fifthly, this is a PhD thesis about not only Indian youth but also the larger questions of youth internationalism. Indian youth movements in post-colonial India were shaped by processes and relationships that transcended the borders of the nation-state. The central argument here is that these youth movements and mobilisations sought to play a role, integrate themselves into or draw upon larger "post-imperial" or "neo-imperial" internationalisms.

---

[17] Military Education in Universities, 1955, Ministry of Education, D3/F-55-69, NAI
[18] BSS Objectives, Programme and Instructions for Local Student Camp, Labour and Social Service Camps, 1956-1957, Ministry of Education. 18-32/ 1956-7/ D.4 (YS.1), NAI

The examples of the Bharat Scouts and Guides and the Youth Hostel Association of India as outlined in chapter 4 and 5 serve to exemplify how this integrationism worked in practice. Firstly, the Scouting movement was born into deep transnational cultural connections with Britain and the West, from which it never entirely extracted itself, but following independence the freshly amalgamated Bharat Scouts and Guides participated in the scouting internationalism on far more egalitarian terms. Demonstrating the way India became a space for internationalist activity, New Delhi proudly hosted the 17th World Scout International Conference in the summer of 1959.[19] It occasionally received former imperialists, and grand old men and women of the Scouting movement, who were greeted with much Scouting pomp and circumstance, and it welcomed them back into the fold as an independent country and movement on their own terms. This is perhaps best illustrated by the visits of Lady Olave Baden-Powell, the first Chief Guide for Britain and the wife of the founder of Scouting and Girl Guides, who visited India in 1960, 1966 and 1968 to open various Scouting buildings.[20]

Secondly, the creation of the Youth Hostel Association is the consequence of fascinating transnational relationships and internationalisms. The idea of establishing a hostelling network to facilitate low-cost travel emerged from a United Nations seminar on Youth in Shimla in 1951 that brought together a range of interesting actors interested in promoting youth welfare activities in India. Two Englishmen, one Secretary of the English Youth Hostels Association and the other a Professor at Mysore University, E.ST. John Catchpool and W.G. Eagleton, and an Indian hiking enthusiast called R.G Padki established the first hostels.[21] The integrationalist tendency of the movement was further demonstrated through their involvement with the UNESCO Educational Youth Travel Grants and their participation in the International Youth Hostel Federation.

Communist studenthood in India was also infused with notions of international struggle. The content, functioning and practices of the communist youth-student internationalism from the perspective of the AISF and AIYF, as explored in chapters 6 and 7, brings to light the intergrationalist tendency of Indian youth movements and the way India was an important space for the interactive elements of the communist student internationalism, especially during the late 1940s. India hosted a WFDY Youth Commission in February 1947, a gathering of youth leaders at the Inter-Asian Relations Conference in March 1947 and, an event which has captured the attention of historians because it immediately preceded the launching of the CPI's insurrection, the Conference for the Youth of Southeast Asian Countries in February 1948.

There are several fascinating historiographical avenues future scholars interested in the category of Indian youth might desire to pursue. The chronological frame of any one of the chapters of this PhD

---

[19] "'One World' Free from Tensions Commended: Premier's Call at Scouts Conference in Delhi"
[20] Nath, Dharmendra, A. 2010. *Scouting and Guiding in India.* p.15
[21] National Office of Youth Hostels Association, 1954, Ministry of Education, 16-2-D7, NAI

could be expanded. Alternatively, rather than focusing on the national level, scholars could focus the spatial scope of any one of this PhD's themes more on the international, regional, or local level. This PhD has brought to light India's national youth order, but it could be situated within a transnational perspective by discussing its relevance amongst the global spectrum of early, late, or post-colonial youth regimens in the 19th century or the first or second half of the 20th century.

Further, the works that explore the youth movement during the late colonial period have been discussed and this PhD has charted the youth movement during the early post-colonial era in the Indian context. The academic history of India in the 1980s and 1990s remains largely unwritten and the far-reaching youth movements that emerged during that period would offer a profound perspective on this period. Popular historians such as Ramachandra Guha and Gurcharan Das have studied India's first decade of economic liberalisation, although the cultural and political history of this period has not been the object of academic inquiry.[22] It is accepted wisdom that the 1990s was a character-altering decade for independent India and represents the subsequent life stage for the Indian nation and state, although this thesis requires academic scrutiny and continuities must also be explored. The category of youth and youth movements, such as those associated with The Mandel Commission and Babri Masjid, would provide an exciting vehicle to write a cultural and political history of India in the 1990s.

---

[22] Guha, Ramachandra. 2007. *India After Gandhi.* New Delhi Pan: Macmillan. Das, Gurcharan. 2000. *India Unbound.* New Delhi: Penguin Books.

224

Bibliography

Primary Sources Archive

New Delhi

National Archives of India, Delhi [NAI]

External Affairs Department

Home Department Police

Home Department Political

Ministry of Education

Ministry of States

Ministry of Information and Broadcasting

Rajputana Agency

P.K. Malaviya Private Papers

Western Indian States Agency

PC Joshi Archive, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi [PCJA]

Communist Party of India Collection

Central Secretariat Library, New Delhi

Constituent Assembly Proceedings

The Nehru Memorial Museum & Library [NMML]

All-India Congress Committee Papers

The Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru

Quit India Collective

Lakshmi Mazumdar Bhavan, Bharat Scouts and Guide HQ, New Delhi

Ajoy Bhavan, the Communist Party of India Archives, New Delhi

New Delhi YMCA, New Delhi

National Cadet Core Safdarjung Enclave, New Delhi

Marwari Public Library, New Delhi

New Delhi Public Library, New Delhi

Jawaharlal Nehru National Youth Center, New Delhi

London

Oriental and India Office Records, British Library [IOR]

Information Department Records Public & Judicial Department

Parliamentary Branch Records

Private Office Papers

Public & Judicial Department Records

Records of the Military Department

London School of Economics and Political Science [LSE]

Indian Journal of Public Administration

LSE Library Government Publications

Social Welfare magazine

The Indian Journal of Social Work

New York

United Nations Archives

Department of Economic and Social Affairs

United Nations Executive Office of the Secretary-General

<u>Other Archives</u>

Student and Youth Magazines

Sarasvati

The Bharat Scout and Guide Magazine

The Cadet

The New Generation: A Youth and Students Monthly Journal,

The Student: The All-Indian Student Federation

The Young Men of India, Burma and Ceylon: National YMCA Youth Journal

World Travel Magazine

Newspapers and Magazine

Free Press Journal

The Times of India

Online Source

Bharat Sevak Samaj.

Accessible online via https://www.bharatsevaksamaj.org

Jawaharlal Nehru's letter to Chief Ministers

Accessible online via https://archive.org/details/letterstochiefmi05nehr

National Cadet Core Website

Accessible online via https://indiancc.nic.in/genesis/

Society for History Childhood and Youth 2020

Accessible online via https://www.shcy.org/features/commentaries/against-agency/

Secondary Sources

<u>Published</u>

Agamben, Giorgio. 2005. *The State of Exception.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press

Alexander, Kristine. 2012. "Can the Girl Guide Speak? The Perils and Pleasures of Looking for Children's Voices in Archival Research." *Jeunesse: Young People, Texts, Cultures*, 4 (1): 132-145

Alexander, Kristine, Mischa Honeck, & Isabel Richter. 2010. "Introduction: Mapping Modern Rejuvenation." *Journal of Social Histor*y 53 (4): 875-88

Alexander, Kristine., Stephanie Olsen and Karan Vallgårda. 2015. "Emotions and the Global Politics of Childhood." pp.12-35 in *Childhood, Youth and Emotions in Modern History: National, Colonial and Global Perspectives, edited by* Stephanie Olsen. London: Palgrave

Alexander, Kristine. 2018. *Guiding Modern Girls: Girlhood, Empire, and Internationalism in the 1920s and 1930s*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press

Altbach, Phillip G. 1968. *Turmoil and Transition Higher Education and Student Politics in India.* New York: Basic Books

Altbach, Philip G. 1970. *The Student Internationals. An Analysis of International and Regional Student Organizations.* Washington, D.C: U.S. Office of Education

Alter, Joseph. 1994. "Somatic Nationalism: Indian Wrestling and Militant Hinduism." *Modern Asian Studies* 28 (3): 557-588

Alter, Joseph. 2000.*Gandhi's Body: Sex, Diet, and the Politics of Nationalism.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania

Ambedkar, B.R. 2017. *What Congress and Gandhi did to the Untouchables*. New Delhi: Kalpaz Publications, 3rd edition

Anderson, Benedict. 1991. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism.* London: Verso

Anderson, Clare. 2004. *Legible bodies. Race, Criminality and Colonialism in South Asia.* London: Bloomsbury Printing Press

Anderson, Clare. 2009. *Subaltern Lives: Biographies of Colonialism in the Indian Ocean*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Anderson, Clare 2012. *The Indian Uprising of 1857-8: Prisons, Prisoners and Rebellion.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Aries, Phillip. 1996. *Centuries of Childhood*: *A Social History of Family Life*. Pimlico: London, 2nd edition

Arnold, David 1993. *Colonizing the Body: State Medicine and Epidemic Disease in Nineteenth Century India*. Berkeley: University of California Press

Arnold, David. 1979. "European orphans and vagrants in India in the Nineteenth century' *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History."* 7 (2): 104-127

Arnold, David. Stuart Blackburn. 2004. *Telling Lives in India: Biography, Autobiography, and Life History.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press

Arnold, David. 2015. "Labouring for the Raj: Convict Work Regimes in Colonial India, 1836–1939." pp. 229-278 in *Global Convict Labour*, edited by Christian De Vito and Alex Lichtenstein. Leiden: Brill

Arnold, David. 1994. "The Colonial Prison: Power, Knowledge and Penology in Nineteenth-Century." pp. 148-184 in *Subaltern studies VIII: essays in honour on Ranajit Guha*, edited by David Arnold. Oxford: Oxford University Press

Ayres Van Slyck, Abigail. 2006. *A Manufactured Wilderness: Summer Camps and the Shaping of American Youth, 1890–1960.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota

Babiracki, Patryk and Jersild Austin. 2016. *Socialist Internationalism in the Cold War: Exploring the Second World*. London: Palgrave Macmillan

Baden-Powell, Robert. 1908. *Scouting For Boys: A Handbook for Instruction in Good Citizenship.* London: Horace Cox

Bajpai, Rochana. 2011. *Debating Difference: Group Rights and Liberal Democracy in India.* New Delhi: Oxford University Press

Bannerjee, Raman. 1946. *This is the AISF*. Bombay: New Age Printing Press

Barbara Metcalf. 1982. *Islamic Revival in British India: Deoband, 1860- 1900.* Princeton: Princeton University Press

Barkawi, Tarak. 2017. *Soldiers of Empire: Indian and British Armies in World War II.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Barlow, T. E., M. Yue Dong, U. G. Poiger, P. Ramamurthy, L. M. Thomas, and A. Eve Weinbaum. 2005. "The Modern Girl around the World: A Research Agenda and Preliminary Findings." *Gender and History* 17 (2): 245-294

Barr-Melej, Patrick. 2020. *Psychedelic Chile: Youth, Counterculture, and Politics on the Road to Socialism and Dictatorship.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press

Becker, Howard. 1963. *Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance* New York: The Free Press of Glencoe

Beth, Sarah. 2007. "Hindi Dalit Autobiography: An Exploration of Identity" *Modern Asian Studies* 41 (3): 545-574

Bhagat-Ganguly, Varsha. 2014 "Revisiting the Nav Nirman Andolan of Gujarat." *Sociological Bulletin* 63 (1): 95-112

Bhagavan, Manu Belur. 2013. *India and the Quest for One World: The Peacemakers*. London: Palgrave Macmillan

Bharat Sewak Samaj. 1957. *Bharat Sewak Samaj: What It Represents, What It Does*. New Delhi: Publications Department

Bhargava, Moti Lal .1986. *Indian National Army: Tokyo Cadets.* New Delhi: Reliance Publishing House

Bhaumik, Kaushik. 2010. "At Home in the World: Cinema and Cultures of the Young in Bombay in the 1920s." pp.136-155 *In Towards a History of Consumption in South Asia*, edited by Douglas Haynes, Abigail McGowan, Tirthankar Roy and Haruka Yanagisawa. New Delhi: Oxford University Press

Boddice, Rob and Mark Smith. 2020. *Emotion, Sense, Experience.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Bose, Sugata. 2011. *His Majesty's Opponent. Subhas Chandra Bose and India's Struggle Against Empire*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press

Botre, Shrikant, and Douglas Haynes. 2017. "Sexual Knowledge, Sexual Anxieties: Middle-class males in western India and the correspondence in Samaj Swasthya, 1927–53." *Modern Asian Studies* 51 (4): 991-1034

Bourdieu, Pierre and Richard Nice. 1972. *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Brecher, Michael. "Non-Alignment Under Stress: The West and the India-China Border War." *Pacific Affairs.* 52 (4): 612-630

Brunner, Michael Philipp. 2018. "Manly Sikhs and Loyal Citizens: Physical Education and Sport in Khalsa College, Amritsar, 1914–47." *Journal of South Asian Studies* 41 (1): 33-50

Burnett-Hurst, A.R. 1925. *Labour and Housing in Bombay: A Study in the Economic Conditions of the Wage-Earning Classes of Bombay*. London: P.S. King and Son

Catchpool, John E.ST. 1966. *Candles in the Darkness: The Memoirs of E St John Catchpool.* London: The Bannisdale Press

Chakrabarty, Dipesh. 2015.*The Calling of History: Sir Jadunath Sarkar and His Empire of Truth*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press

Chakrabarty, Dipesh. 2006 *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*. Princeton: Princeton University Press

Chakrabarty, Dipesh. 2000. "Subaltern Studies and Postcolonial Historiography" *Nepantla: Views from South* 1 (1): 9-32

Chakrabarty, Dipesh. 2007. "'In the Name of Politics'": Democracy and the Power of the Multitude in India." *Public Culture* 19 (1): 35–57

Chandra, Bipan, Mridula Mukherjee, Aditya Mukherjee, K.N. Panikkar and Sucheta Mahajan. 1989. *India's Struggle for Independence*. Gurgaon: Penguin Books

Chandra, Nandini. 2007. "The Pedagogic Imperative of Travel Writing in the Hindi World: Children's Periodicals (1920-1950)." *Journal of South Asian Studies* 30 (2): 293-325

Chatani, Sayaka. 2018. *Nation-Empire: Ideology and Rural Youth Mobilization in Japan and Its Colonies*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press

Chatterjee, Partha. 1986. *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press

Chatterjee, Partha. 1999. "Development Planning and the Indian State". In *State and Politics in India*, edited by Chatterjee, Partha. Oxford: Oxford University Press

Chatterjee, Partha. 1997. "Beyond the Nation? Or Within?" *Economic and Political Weekly* 32 (1): 30-34

Chatterjee, Partha. 2004. *The Politics of the Governed: Reflections On Popular Politics in Most of the World.* New York: Columbia University Press

Chattopadhyay, Suchetana. 2011. *An Early Communist: Muzaffar Ahmad in Calcutta, 1913–1929.* New Delhi: Tulika Books

Chibber, Vivek. 2006. *Locked in Place: State-Building and Late Industrialization in India.* Princeton: Princeton University Press

Chopra, Radhika, Caroline Osella and Filippo Osella. 2004 *South Asian masculinities: context of change, sites of continuity.* New Delhi. Kali for Women

Cohen, Lawrence. 1988. *No Aging in India: Alzheimer's, The Bad Family, and Other Modern Things*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Cohen, Stanley. 2011. *The Creation of the Mods and Rockers.* London, Routledge Classic, 3rd edition

Cohen, Stephen. 1979. *The Indian Army: Its Contribution to the Development of a Nation.* Oxford: Oxford University Press

Colin Heywood. 2003. *A History of Childhood: Children and Childhood in the West from Medieval to Modern Times.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Contursi, Janet A. 1993 "Political Theology: Text and Practice in a Dalit Panther Community." *The Journal of Asian Studies* 52 (2): 320-339

Cooper, Frederick. 2010. "Writing the History of Development." *Journal of Modern European History* 8 (1): 5-23

Cornell, Richard. 1982. *Revolutionary Vanguard: The Early Years of the Communist Youth International 1914–1924*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press

Cross, Richard, Norry Laporte, Kevin Morgan, and Matthew Worley. 2012. *Communism and Youth (Twentieth Century Communism)*. London: Lawrence & Wishart

Cupers, Kenny. 2008, "Governing through nature: camps and youth movements in interwar Germany and the United States." *Cultural Geographies* 15 (2): 173-205

Curthoys, Ann and Marilyn Lake. 2005. *Connected Worlds: History in Transnational Perspective.* Canberra: Australian National University Press

Datta, Anjali Bhardwaj. 2019. "'Useful' and 'Earning' Citizens? Gender, State, and the Market in Post-Colonial Delhi." *Modern Asian Studies* 53(6): 1924–55

Dardesai, S.G. 1974. *Student Upsurge and Indian Revolution*. New Delhi: New Generation Publication

De Certeau de, Michel. 2011. *The Practice of Everyday Life.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 3rd Edition

De, Rohit. 2018. *A People's Constitution: The Everyday Life of Law in the Indian Republic.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Di Bona, Joseph. 1966. "Indiscipline and Student Leadership in an Indian University". *Comparative Education Review* 10 (2): 306-319

Dogliani, Patrizia. 2016. "The Fate of Socialist Internationalism." pp. 38-60 In *Internationalisms: A Twentieth-Century History* edited by Glenda Sluga and Patricia Clavin . Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Dutt, Vidya Prakash. 1984. *India's Foreign Policy.* Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan India

Dutt, T. K. 1966. *The Revolt of Indian Students: Discussing Students' Unrest, Its Causes and Remedial Measures.* New Delhi: Nehru Foundation

Dyson, Ketaki Kushari. 2006. *A Various Universe: A Study of the Journals and Memoirs of British Men and Women in the Indian Subcontinent 1765–1856.* New Delhi: Oxford University Press

Efimova, Larisa. 2009. "Did the Soviet Union Instruct Southeast". *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 40 (3): 449-469

Ellis, Catriona. 2009. "Education for All: Reassessing the Historiography of Education in Colonial India." *History Compass* 7 (2): 363-375

Ellis, Catriona. 2011. "'Snapshots' of the classroom: Autobiographies and the experience of elementary education in the Madras Presidency, 1882-1947." *Childhood* 18 (3): 384-401

Eric Zolov. 2014. "Introduction: Latin America in the Global Sixties" *The Americas* 70 (3): 349-362

Fischer-Tiné, Harald. 2018. "Fitness for Modernity: the YMCA and physical education schemes in late colonial South Asia (c. 1900–1940)." *Modern Asian Studies* 53 (2): 512-559

Fischer-Tine, Harald. 2009. *Low and Licentious Europeans: Race, Class, and "White Subalternity" in Colonial India.* Hyderabad: Orient Black Swan

Frankel, Francine R. 2006. *India's Political Economy: The Gradual Revolution (1947-2004)*. Oxford: Oxford University press, 2nd edition

Gandhi, Mohandas. 1942. "Gandhi's 'Quit India' Speech." p. 181 in *Gandhi: "Hind Swaraj" and Other Writing*, edited by A. Parell. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Ghosh, Durba. 2017. *Gentlemanly Terrorists: Political Violence and the Colonial State in India, 1919-1947.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Gillis, John. 1974. *Youth and history: Tradition and change in European age relations, 1770 – present*. London: Academic Press

Gilroy, Paul. 1987. *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack.* London: Hutchinson

Gleason, Mona. 2016. Avoiding the agency trap: caveats for historians of children, youth, and education. *History of Education Society* 45 (4): 446-459

Gooptu, Nandini. 2017. *Enterprise Culture in Neoliberal India Studies in Youth, Class, Work and Media.* London: Taylor & Francis

Gopal, Priyamvada. 2019. *Insurgent Empire: Anticolonial Resistance and British Dissent.* London: Verso

Goswami, Manu. 2012. "Imaginary Futures and Colonial Internationalisms." *The American Historical Review* 117(5): 1461–85

Gould, William, Taylor Sherman & Sarah Ansari. 2013. "The Flux of the Matter: Loyalty, Corruption and the 'Everyday State'." *Past & Present* 219 (1): 237-279

Gould, William. 2004. *Hindu Nationalism and the Language of Politics in Late Colonial India.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Gould, William.2011. *Bureaucracy, Community and Influence: Society and the State in India, 1930-1960s*. London: Routledge

Graff, Harvey. 1973. "Patterns of adolescence and child dependency in the mid-nineteenth century city: A sample from Boston, 1860." *History of Education Quarterly* 1 (13): 237-256

Graff, Harvey 1985. "Early Adolescence in Antebellum America: The Remaking of Growing Up", *The Journal of Early Adolescence* 5 (4): 663-683

Grassl, Anton and Heath, Graham. 1982. *The Magic Triangle: A Short History of the World Youth Hostel Movement*. London: International Youth Hostel Federation

Gutteridge, William. 1963. "The Indianisation of the Indian Army 1918-45." *Race & Class* 4 (2): 39-46

Gupta, Akhil.2012. *Red Tape: Bureaucracy, Structural Violence and Poverty in India*. Durham: Duke University Press

Hardiman, David. 1989. "The Indian 'Faction': A Political Theory Examined." pp. 198–231 in *Subaltern Studies I: Writings on South Asian History and Society*, edited by Ranajit Guha. New Delhi: Oxford University Press

Harrison, Selig S. 1960. *India: the most dangerous decades.* Princeton: Princeton University Press

Harvey, David. 2006. "Space as Keyword," pp. 270–294 In *David Harvey: A Critical Reader*, edited by Noel Castree and Derek Gregory. Malden: Wiley-Blackwell

Haynes, Douglas. Abigail McGowan, Tirthankar Roy, Haruka Yanagisawa. 2010. *Towards a History of Consumption in South Asia*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press

Haynes, Douglas.2010. "Creating the Consumer: Advertising, Capitalism and the Middle Classes in Urban Western India, 1914-1940." pp.185-243 in *Towards a History of Consumption in South Asia,* edited by Douglas Haynes, Abigail McGowan, Tirthankar Roy, Haruka Yanagisawa. Delhi: Oxford University Press

Haynes, Douglas. 2015. "Advertising and the History of South Asia." *History Compass* 13 (8): 361-374

Hazary, Subas Chandra. 1987. *Student Politics in India*. New Delhi: South Asia Books

Hendrick, Harry. 2001. *Children, Childhood and English Society, 1880-1990*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Huebner, Stefan. 2016. *Pan-Asian Sports and the Emergence of Modern Asia, 1913-1974*. Singapore: National University of Singapore Press

Hutchins, Francis G. 1973. *India's Revolution, Gandhi, and the Quit India Movement*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press

Imlay, Talbot C. 2018. *The Practice of Socialist Internationalism: European Socialists and International Politics, 1914-1960.* Oxford: Oxford University Press

Imlay, C Talbot. 2018. *The Practice of Socialist Internationalism: European Socialists and International Politics, 1914–1960.* Oxford: Oxford University Press

Immerwahr, Daniel. 2015. *Thinking Small: Modernization, Development and Community*. Massachusetts: Harvard University Press

Iriye, Akira. 2005. "Beyond Imperialism: The New Internationalism." *Daedalus* 134 (2): 108-116

Iriye, Akira. 2013. *Global and Transnational History: The Past, Present and Future*. London: Palgrave Macmillan

Ivan Jobs, Richard and David F. Pomfret. *Transnational Histories of Youth in the Twentieth Century*. London: Palgrave Macmillan

Jaffrelot, Christophe. *1996. The Hindu Nationalist Movement and Indian Politics: 1925 to the 1990s : Strategies of Identity-building, Implantation and Mobilisation (with Special Reference to Central India).* London: Hurst & Co

Jain, Kajri. 2007. *Gods in the Bazaar: The Economies of Indian Calendar Art.* Durham: Duke University Press

James. 1998. *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed.* Yale: Yale University Press

Jayal, Niraja Gopal. 2013. *Citizenship and Its Discontents: An Indian History.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press

Jeffery, Patricia & Jeffery, Roger. 2007. *Degrees without Freedom? Education, Masculinities, and Unemployment in North India*. Stanford: Stanford University Press

Jeffrey, Craig. 2007. *Timepass: Youth, Class and the Politics of Waiting in India.* Stanford: Stanford University Press

Jian, Chen. Martin Klimke, Masha Kirasirova, Mary Nolan, Marilyn Young, Joanna Waley-Cohen. 2018. *Handbook of the Global Sixties: Between Protest and Nation-Building*. London: Routledge

Jobs, Richard Ivan. 2006. "Youth Movements: Travel, Protest, and Europe in 1968." *American Historical Review* 114 (2): 376-404

Jobs, Richard Ivan. 2007. *Riding the New Wave: Youth and the Rejuvenation of France After the Second World War*. Stanford: Stanford University Press

Jobs, Richard Ivan, and David. M Pomfret. 2015. *Transnational Histories of Youth in the Twentieth Century*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan

Jobs, Richard Ivan. 2017. *Backpack Ambassadors: How Youth Travel Integrated Europe.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press

Kabir, Humayun. 1955. *Student Indiscipline.* Delhi: Albion Press

Kabir, Humayun. 1955. *Letters on Indiscipline. Foreword by J. Nehru*. New Delhi: Albion Press

Kakar, Sudhir. 1967. *The Inner World: A Psycho-analytic Study of Childhood and Society*. Oxford: Oxford University Press

Kaviraj, Sudipta. 2010. *The Imaginary Institution of India: Politics and Ideas.* New York: Columbia University Press

Kaviraj, Sudipta. 2005. "On the enchantment of the state: Indian thought on the role of the state in the narrative of modernity." *European Journal of Sociology* 46 (2): 263-296

Kett, Joseph 1976. *Rites of Passage: Adolescence in America 1790 to the Present*. Princeton: Princeton University Press

Khan, Yasmin. 2015. The Raj at War: A People's History of India's Second World War. London: Penguin

Kidambi, Prashant. 2010. "Consumption, Domestic Economy, and the Idea of the 'Middle Class' in Late Colonial Bombay." pp. 108-136 in *Towards a History of Consumption in South Asia,* edited by Douglas Haynes, Abigail McGowan, Tirthankar Roy and Haruka Yanagisawa. New Delhi: Oxford University Press

Kolsky, Elizabeth. 2010. "The Rule of Colonial Indifference: Rape on Trial in Early Colonial India, 1805–57." *The Journal of Asian Studies* 69 (4): 1093-1117

Koops, Willem and Michael Zuckerman. 2013. "A historical developmental approach to adolescence." *The History of the Family* (8) 3: 345-354

Koops, Willem and Michael Zuckerman. 2005. *Beyond the Century of the Child: Cultural History and Developmental Psychology.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press

Krabbendam, Hans and Giles Scott-Smith. 2004. *The Cultural Cold War in Western Europe, 1945-60.* London: Routledge

Krishna Rao G.P. 1955. "Problem of student Discipline." *The Indian Journal of Social Work* (XV)

Kudaisya, Gyanesh. 2017. *A Republic in the Making: India in the 1950s.* New Delhi: Oxford University Press India

Kumar, Krishna. 1991. *Political Agenda of Education: A Study of Colonialist and Nationalist ideas* London: SAGE Publications

Kumar, Udaya. 2016. *Writing the First Person: Literature, History and Autobiography in Modern Kerala. New* Delhi: Permanent Black

Lal, Ruby. 2013. *Coming of Age in Nineteenth Century India: The Girl-Child and the Art of Playfulness.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Lambert-Hurley, Siobhan and Anshu Malhotra. *2015. Speaking of the Self: Gender, Performance, and the autobiography in South Asia.* Durham: Duke University Press

Langland, Victoria. 2018. "Transnational connections of the global sixties as seen by a historian of Brazil." Pp 15-27. In *Handbook of the Global Sixties: Between Protest and Nation-Building*, edited by Jian, Chen. Martin Klimke, Masha Kirasirova, Mary Nolan, Marilyn Young, Joanna Waley-Cohen. London: Routledge

Longer, V. 1983. *Youth in Step: History of the National Cadet Corps.* New Delhi: Lancer International

Lukose, Ritty. 2009. *Gender, Youth and Consuming Citizenship in India.* Durham: Duke University Press

Maclean, Kama. 2015. *A Revolutionary History of Interwar India: Violence, Image, Voice and Text.* Oxford: Oxford University Press

Maclean, Kama. 2008. *Pilgrimage and Power: The Kumbh Mela in Allahabad, 1765-1954*. Oxford: Oxford University press

Madan, G.R. 1967. *Indian Social Problems: Social Disorganization and Reconstruction*. New Delhi: Allied Publishers

Majeed, Javed. 2007. *Autobiography, Travel and Postnational Identity: Gandhi, Nehru, and Iqbal*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan

Majumdar, Rochona. 2012. "Debating Radical Cinema: A History of the Film Society Movement in India" *Modern Asian Studies* 46 (3): 731-767

Malinowski, Bronisław. 1929. *The Sexual Life of Savages in North-Western Melanesia.* London: George Routledge & Sons

Manjapra, Kris. 2011. "From Imperial International Horizons: A Hermeneutic Study of Bengali Modernism." *Modern Intellectual History* 8 (2): 327–59

Martelli, Jean-Thomas and Kristina Garalyté. 2009. "Student Politics in South Asia." *South Asia Multidisciplinary Academic Journa*l (22) (https://journals.openedition.org/samaj/6486)

Martelli, Jean-Thomas and Kristina Garalyté. 2019. "Generational Communities: Student Activism and the Politics of Becoming in South Asia." *South Asia Multidisciplinary Academic Journal* (22) (https://journals.openedition.org/samaj/6486)

Maza, Sarah. 2020. "The Kids Aren't All Right: Historians and the Problem of Childhood." *The American Historical Review* 125 (4): 1261–1285

Mead, Margaret. 1928. *Coming of Age in Samoa.* London: William Morrow and Co

Menon, Nikhil. 2018. "'Help the Plan—Help Yourself': Making India Plan-Conscious." pp. 221-243 In *The Postcolonial Moment in South and Southeast Asia*, edited by Gyan Prakash, Michael Francis Laffan, & Nikhil Menon. London: Bloomsbury Press.

Metcalf, Barbara. 2002. *Traditionalist' Islamic Activism: Deoband, Tablighis, and Talibs*. Leiden: International Institute for the Study of Islam

Metcalf, Barbara and Thomas Metcalf. 2015. *A Concise History of Modern India.* Vancouver: Crane Library

Mills, James H and Satadru Sen. 2004. *Confronting the Body: The Politics of Physicality in Colonial and Post-colonial India*. London: Anthem Press

Mintz, Steven 2008. Reflections on Age as a Category of Historical Analysis. *The Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* (1): 91–94

Mitra, Sarda. 1969. *Youth Challenge Unemployment*. New Delhi: New Generation Publication

Moffat, Chris. 2020. *India's Revolutionary Inheritance Politics and the Promise of Bhagat Singh.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Nandy, Ashis. 1980. "Introduction: Indian Popular Cinema as a Slum's Eye View of Politics." pp. 1–19. In *The Secret Politics of Our Desires: Innocence, Culpability, and Popular Indian Cinema*, edited by Ashis Nandy. New Delhi: Zed Scholar

Nandy, Ashis. 1984. "Reconstructing Childhood: A Critique of the Ideology." *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political* 10 (3): 359-375

Nandy, Ashis. 2009. *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self Under Colonialism.* New Delhi: Oxford University Press India, 2nd edition

Narayana Naidu, M.D. 1978. *Rural Reconstruction: Activities of the National Service Scheme*. Tirupati: The Gita Press

National Cadet Core. Date Unknown. *Youth Power: NCC in India.* New Delhi: Data McGraw-Hill Education

Nath, Dharmendra, A. *2010. Scouting and Guiding in India.* New Delhi: A Publication of the Bharat Scouts and Guides National

Nigam, Sanjay. 1990. "Disciplining and policing the 'criminals by birth', Part 2: The development of a disciplinary system, 1871-1900" .*Indian Economic Social History Review* 27 (3): 257-287

Oommen, T. K. 1974. "Student Politics in India: The Case of Delhi University." *Asian. Survey* 14 (9): 777-794

Pande, Ishita. 2012. "Coming of Age: Law, Sex and Childhood in Late Colonial India." *Gender & History* 24 (1): 205-230

Pande, Ishita. 2013. "Sorting Boys and Men: Unlawful Intercourse, Boy Protection and Child Marriage Restraint Act in Colonial India." *Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* 6 (2): 314-340

Pande, Ishita. 2003. "Phulmoni's Body: The Autopsy, the Inquest and the Humanitarian Narrative on Child-Rape in Late Colonial India," *South Asian History and Culture* 4 (1): 9-30

Pandey, Gyanendra. 2002. *The Ascendancy of the Congress in Uttar Pradesh: Class, Community and Nation in Northern India, 1920–1940.* London: Anthem Press

Pensado, Jaime M. 2013. *Rebel Mexico: Student Unrest and Authoritarian Political Culture During the Long Sixties.* Redwood City: Stanford University Press

Philip, Deloria J. 1998. *Playing Indian*. New Haven: Yale University Press

Plys, Kristin Victoria Magistrelli. 2020. *Brewing Resistance: Indian Coffee House and the Emergency in Postcolonial India.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Popplewell, Richard. 2008. "The Surveillance of Indian Revolutionaries in Great Britain and on the Continent, 1905–14." *Intelligence and National Security* 3(1): 56–76

Prashad, Vijay. 2007. *The Darker Nations: A People's History of the Third World.* Princeton: New Press People's history

Raffin, Ann. 2008. *Youth Mobilization in Vichy Indochina and Its Legacies, 1940 to 1970.* New York. Lexington Books

Rajan, M.S. 1978. "Pandit Hriday Nath Kunzru: A Memoir." *India Quarterly* 34 (4): 441-456

Rajagopal, Arvind. 2011. "Advertising in India: Genealogies of the Consumer Subject." pp.217-28 In *Handbook of Modernity in South Asia*, edited by Saurabh Dube and Ishita Banerjee-Dube. Oxford: Oxford University Press

Rajimwale, Anil. 2001. *History of the Student Movement in India*. New Delhi: Manak Publications

Rajimwale, Anil. 2005. *Glimpses of CPI History: Through Party Congresses*. New Delhi: The Peoples Publishing House

Rakesh, Ankit. 2012. "How the Ban on the RSS was lifted." *Economic and Political Weekly* 47 (16): 71-78

Ramaswamy, Sumathi. 2010. *The Goddess and the Nation: Mapping Mother India.* Durham: Duke University Press

Rao, Anupama. 2010. *The Caste Question: Dalits and the Politics of Modern India.* Berkeley: University of California Press

237

Raychaudhuri, Tapan. 1999. *Perceptions, Emotions, and Sensibilities: Essays on India's Colonial and Post-Colonial Experience*s. Oxford: Oxford University Press

Raza, Ali and Roy, Franziska. 2015. "Paramilitary Organisations in Interwar India." *Journal of South Asian Studies* 38 (4): 71-689

Robinson, Francis 1993. *Separatism Among Indian Muslims: The Politics of the United Provinces Muslims 1860-1923*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press

Rudolph, Lloyd. 1987. "Students as a Demand Group: Educational Policy and Student Mobilization." p.290- 312 in *Pursuit of Lakshmi: The Political Economy of the Indian State.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press

Chaudhuri, Rosinka. 2002. *Gentlemen Poets in Colonial Bengal: Emergent Nationalism and the Orientalist Project.* Calcutta: Seagull Books

Royal Institute of International Affairs.1952. "Students in World Politics: The Role of the I.U.S". *The World Today* 7 (8): 346-356 (https://www.jstor.org/stable/40392442?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents)

Roy, Anupama. 2010. *Mapping Citizenship in India.* New Delhi: Oxford University Press

Roy, Franziska and Benjamin Zachariah. 2013. "Meerut and a Hanging: 'Young India',Popular Socialism, and the Dynamics of Imperialism." *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 33 (3): 360–377

Roy, Franziska. 2019. "International Utopia and National Discipline: Youth and Volunteer Movements in Interwar South Asia." pp. 150–87 in *The Internationalist Moment: South Asia, Worlds, and World Views 1917-39,* edited by Ali Raza, Franziska Roy, and Benjamin Zachariah. London: SAGE

Roy, Srirupa. 2007. *Beyond Belief: India and the Politics of Postcolonial Nationalism.* Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press

Said, Edward W. *1979. Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books

Saiyidains, K.G. 1961. *National Service for Youth*. New Delhi: Government of India Press

Salam, Ziya Us. 2018. *Of Saffron Flags and Skullcaps: Hindutva, Muslim Identity and the Idea of India.* London: SAGE Publications

Samaddar, Ranabir. 2018 "Student Radicalism in Kolkata and the Occupation of College." *Slavic Review* 77 (4): 904-911

Samaddar, Ranabir. 2018. *From Popular Movements to Rebellion: The Naxalite Decade.* London: Routledge

Sankar, Tanika. 2000. "A Prehistory of Rights: The Age of Consent Debate in Colonial Bengal." *Feminist Studies* 26 (3): 601–622

Sarkar, Sumit. 2014. *Modern India 1885-1947.* Delhi: Pearson Education India

Sarkar, Sumit. 2009. "Nationalism and Poverty: Discourses of Development and Culture in 20th Century India." In *Development and Cultural Nationalism*, edited by Radhika Desai. New York: Routledge

Scott, Joan W. 1986. "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis." *The American Historical Review* 91 (5): 1053–1075

Scott, Joan W. "The Evidence of Experience" *Critical Inquiry* 17 (4): 773-797

Sen, Satadru. 2005. *Colonial Childhoods: The Juvenile Periphery of India 1850-1945*. London: Anthem Press

Sen, Satadru. 2012. "A Juvenile Periphery Childhood and Literature in Colonial Bengal". pp.42-69 In *Disciplined Natives: Race, Freedom and Confinement in Colonial India*, edited by Satadru Sen. New Delhi: Primus Books

Sen, Satadru. 2004. "Juvenile Periphery: The Geographies of Literary Childhood in Colonial Bengal." *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* 5 (1): 11- 26

Sen, Satadru. 2004. "A Separate Punishment: Juvenile Offenders in Colonial India." *The Journal of Asian Studies* 63 (1): 81-104

Sen, Satadru. 2004. "The Geographies of Literary Childhood in Colonial Bengal." *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History*, 5 (1): 11- 26

Sen, Uditi. 2018. *Citizen Refugee: Forging the Indian Nation After Partition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Sengoopta, Chandak. 2003. *Imprint of the Raj: How Fingerprinting was Born in Colonial India*. London: Macmillan

Shani, Ornit. 2017. *How India Became Democratic: Citizenship and the Making of the Universal Franchise*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Sharma, Man Mohan. 1980. *The National Cadet Corps of India*. New Delhi: Vision Books

Sherman, Taylor. 2016. "A Gandhian answer to the threat of communism? Sarvodaya and postcolonial nationalism in India." *Indian Economic and Social History Review* 53 (2): 249-270

Sherman, Taylor. 2009. "From Hell to Paradise? Voluntary Transfer of Convicts to the Andaman Islands, 1921–1940." *Modern Asian Studies* 43 (2): 367-388

Sherman, Taylor. 2010. *State Violence and Punishment in India*. London: Routledge

Sherman, Taylor. 2009. "Tensions of Colonial Punishment: Perspectives on Recent Developments in the Study of Coercive Networks in Asia, Africa and the Caribbean." *History Compass* 7 (3): 659-677

Siegel, Benjamin. 2015. "'Self-Help which Ennobles a Nation': Development, citizenship, and the obligations of eating in India's austerity years" *Modern Asian Studies* 50 (3): 975-1018

Singh, Gajendra. 2014. *The Testimonies of Indian Soldiers and the Two World Wars: Between Self and Sepoy*. London: Bloomsbury

Singh, Ujjwal Kumar. 2001. *Political Prisoners in India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press

Sleight, Simon. 2014. "The city in the child: Colin Ward, urban becoming and the shift to experience," pp. 19-32. in *Education, Childhood and Anarchism: Talking Colin Ward*, edited by Catherine Burke and Ken Jones. New York: Routledge

Sluga, Glenda and Patricia Clavin. 2017. *Internationalism: A Twentieth-Century History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Song, Mingwei. 2015. *Young China: National Rejuvenation and the Bildungsroman, 1900-1959*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press

Spence, Daniel Owen. 2015. "Beyond Talwar: A Cultural Reappraisal of the 1946 Royal Indian Navy Mutiny." *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 43(3):489–508

Springhall John. 1987. "Baden-Powell and the Scout Movement before 1920: Citizen Training or Soldiers of the Future?" *The English Historical Review* 102 (405): 934-942

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. 1994. "Can the Subaltern Speak?" pp. 67-111 In *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader*, edited by Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman. Hertfordshire: Harvester Wheatsheaf

Stanley Hall, Granville. 1904. *Adolescence: Its psychology and its relation to physiology, anthropology, sociology, sex, crime, religion and education.* New York: Appleton and Company

Stearns, Peter. 2011. *Childhood in World History*. Milton: Taylor & Francis Group

Stoler, Laura Ann. 2009. *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense*. Princeton: Princeton University Press

Srivatsan, R. 2014. *Seva, Saviour and State*. New Delhi: Routledge

Sudipa, Topdar. 2017, "The Corporeal Empire: Physical Education and Politicising Children's Bodies in Late Colonial Bengal." *Gender & History* 29 (1):176-19

Sundaram, Chandar S. 2019. *Indianization, the Officer Corps, and the Indian Army: The Forgotten Debate, 1817–1917*. New Delhi: Lexington Books

Taft, Jessica. 2011. *Rebel Girls: Youth Activism and Social Change Across the Americas.* New York: New York University Press

Thompson, Kenneth. 1988. *Moral Panics*. London: Routledge

Vallgarda, Karen.2004. *Imperial Childhoods and Christian Mission: Education and Emotions in South India and Denmark*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Varshney, Ashutosh. 1995. *Democracy, development, and the countryside urban-rural struggles in India.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Walsh, Judith. 1983. *Growing up in British India: Indian Autobiographies on Childhood and Education under the Raj*. New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers

Watt, Carey. 2005. *Serving the Nation: Cultures of Service, Association, and Citizenship.* Oxford: Oxford University Press

Watt, Carey. 2007. "The promise of 'character' and the spectre of sedition: The boy scout movement and colonial consternation in India, 1908-1921" *Journal of South Asian Studies* 22 (2): 37-62

Watt, Carey. 2009. "'No Showy Muscles': the Boy Scouts and the Global Dimensions of Physical Culture and Bodily Health in Britain and Colonial India." pp.121-143 in *Scouting Frontiers: Youth and the Scout Movement's First Century,* edited by Nelson R. Block and Tammy M. Proctor, Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Warren, Allen. 2009. "Foreword: Understanding Scouting and Guiding After a Hundred Years." pp. XI-XXXIII in *Scouting Frontiers: Youth and the Scout Movement's First Century,* edited by Nelson R. Block and Tammy M. Proctor. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Warren, Allen. 1986. "Sir Robert Baden-Powell, the Scout Movement and Citizen Training in Great Britain, 1900-1920." *The English Historical Review* 101 (399): 376-398

Westad, Odd Arne. 2005. *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Whitney, Susan. 2009. *Mobilizing Youth: Communists and Catholics in Interwar France.* Durham: Duke University Press

Wilkinson, Steven. 2015. *Army and Nation: The Military and Indian Democracy Since Independence.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press

Wilkinson, Tom. 2019. "Student Politics in British India and Beyond: The Rise and Fragmentation of the All-India Student Federation (AISF), 1936–1951." *SAMAJ* (22) (https://journals.openedition.org/samaj/6486).

Willis, Paul. 1977. *Learning to Labour.* Farnborough: Saxon House

Wilson, Jeremiah. 2016. "Peace and Progress: Building the Indo-Soviet Friendship" p.263 In *Socialist Internationalism in the Cold War: Exploring the Second World*, edited by Patryk Babiracki and Jersild Austin

Wolf, Eric R. 1982. *Europe and the People without History*. Berkeley: University of California Press

Wood, John. B. 1965. "Observations on the Indian Communist Party Split." *Pacific Affairs* 38 (1): 47-63

Yadev, Chandrajit. 1974. *Youth and Social Change in the Developing Countries*. New Delhi: New Generation Publication

Yang, Anand. 1987. "Disciplining 'Natives': Prisons and Prisoners in Early Nineteenth Century India." *Journal of South Asian Studies* 10 (2): 29-45

Zachariah, Benjamin. 2010. "Rethinking (the Absence of) Fascism in India, c. 1922-45." pp. 178-209 in *Cosmopolitan Thought Zones. South Asia and the Global Circulation of Ideas*, edited by Sugata Bose and Kris Manjapra. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan

Zachariah, Benjamin. 2005. *Developing India: An Intellectual and Social History, c. 1930-50.* Oxford: Oxford University Press

Zaman, Mukhta. 1976. "The Origins of the All-India Muslim Students' Federation." *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society* 24(3): 211-230

Zamindar, Vazira Fazila-Yacoobali. 2010. *The Long Partition and the Making of Modern South Asia Refugees, Boundaries, Histories*. New York: Columbia University Press

Zuberi, Mohammad Amin. 1949. *Siyasat-i-Milliah*. Agra: Azad Press

Unpublished

Alexander, Kristine, and Simon Sleight. Forthcoming. *A Cultural History of Youth in the Modern Age.* London: Bloomsbury

Schaffel, Paul. 2012. *Empire and Assassination: Indian Students, 'India House,' and Information Gathering in Great Britain, 1898–1911*. PhD dissertation, Department of History, Wesleyan University. (https://wesscholar.wesleyan.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://www.google.co.in/&httpsredir=1&article=1904&context=etd_hon_theses)

Sherman, Taylor. Forthcoming. *Nehru's India: A History in Seven Myths* Princeton: Princeton University Press

Roy, Franziska. 2013. T*orchbearers of Progress: Youth, Volunteer organisation and National Discipline in India, c. 1918-1947*. PhD thesis, Department of History, University of Warwick. (http://wrap.warwick.ac.uk/74167/)