

The “steel which gives them edge”:
German-Speaking Soldiers and the British East India Company in the Eighteenth Century

On September 10, 1746 Fort St. George and Madras capitulated to a French force after a three-day siege. The surrender marked the nadir of the British East India Company's (EIC) fortunes during the First Carnatic War (1746-1748), the first Anglo-French conflict on the Indian subcontinent. Without the opposition of the British Royal Navy squadron under Thomas Griffin, the French were able to land an army consisting of 1,100 European, 400 African, and 400 Indian troops along with 1,800 marines in reserve on the accompanying fleet.¹ Besides capturing the fortification and city, the French seized nearly 200,000 pounds sterling worth of military supplies, weapons, gold, silver, and trade commodities. Ironically, it had been the British government, confident in its naval superiority, that first broke the long-standing policy of neutrality between the EIC and its French counterpart, *Compagnie des Indes*.²

The humiliating defeat at Madras, the inability to retake the city or capture Pondicherry, even with renewed naval superiority and reinforcements from other parts of India and Europe, and the precarious position of the remaining British installations on the Coromandel Coast caused by the lack of troops, pressed both EIC officials in London as well as on the subcontinent to invest aggressively in expanding the company's army. The vast majority of the EIC's military expansion during its rise as a territorial power in India was through hiring Indian soldiers and

¹ Robert Johnson, ““True to their salt’ Mechanisms for Recruiting and Managing Military Labour in the Army of the East India Company during the Carnatic Wars in India” in *Fighting for a Living: A Comparative History of Military Labour 1500-2000*, ed. Erik-Jan Zürcher (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2013), 287; Robert Orme, *A History of the Military Transactions of the British Nation in Indostan, From the Year MDCCXLV[1745]* (3 vols., London: John Nourse, 1763), i, 66-68, 71; Bruce P. Lenman, *Britain's Colonial Wars 1688-1783* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 92.

² Orme, *A History of the Military Transactions of the British Nation in Indostan*, i, 60-62; Lenman, *Britain's Colonial Wars*, 75, 92; Jeremy Black, *Britain as a Military Power, 1688-1815* (London: UCL Press, 1999), 98.

copying the French idea of training them in European tactics and organizing them into European-style units.³ Yet, the European contingent of the EIC's army also rapidly rose in the second half of the eighteenth century. Contemporary military and civil leaders saw a growing European armed force within India as vital to the security of the EIC's settlements and trade. Due to its struggles recruiting within the British Isles, the EIC turned frequently to the European continent, especially the Holy Roman Empire and Swiss cantons, to fill its ranks. Germanophone soldiers became a regular presence in EIC installations across India and the recruitment of such men spiked during times of war and crisis, like the Carnatic Wars (1746-1763) and the Second Anglo-Mysore War (1780-1784). German-speaking soldiers were critical agents in transforming the EIC into the dominant power on the subcontinent. In turn, the presence of thousands of Germans in India and the return of many of them back to their homelands provided German-speaking Europe with a direct and often durable connection to South Asia and life in an overseas European colony.

The centrality of German-speaking soldiers in the defense and expansion of eighteenth-century British India and their ubiquitous presence in the battle formations and garrisons reveals the limitations of judgement by both contemporaries and most modern scholars who view the peoples of German-speaking Central Europe as being removed from overseas colonial experiences.⁴ While German-speaking states' attempts at establishing colonies and transoceanic

³ The British East India Company had roughly 3,000 sepoy soldiers at the cessation of the First Carnatic War in 1748 and approximately 100,000 in 1783. G.J. Bryant, "Indigenous Mercenaries in the Service of European Imperialists: The Case of the Sepoys in the Early British Indian Army, 1750-1800," *War in History* 7, no. 1 (2000), 3; Chen Tzoref-Ashkenazi, *German Soldiers in Colonial India* (London: Chatto & Pickering, 2014), 33. Contemporaries recognized several advantages in utilizing Indian troops. They were immediately available, cheaper to recruit and maintain, and already adapted to the tropical conditions. Bryant, "Indigenous Mercenaries in the Service of European Imperialists," 6; Lenman, *Britain's Colonial Wars*, 92; Johnson, "'True to their salt'," 270, 279.

⁴ For example, Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994); Susanne Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies: Conquest, Family, and Nation in Precolonial Germany, 1770-1870* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997); Sebastian Conrad, *German Colonialism: A Short History* (Cambridge University Press, 2012).

trading companies were short-lived and limited, prior to the mid-nineteenth century Germans actively participated in the creation of the increasingly global European empires, especially those of the Dutch and British.⁵ The German presence in the Dutch colonies has a growing historiography,⁶ but the presence in the British Empire remains largely unacknowledged and unexplored.⁷ Through examination of these experiences in Dutch and British colonies, scholars must integrate Germanophone Central Europe and its peoples into the long eighteenth-century histories of overseas empire, globalizing trade, and revolutionary and counter-revolutionary struggles.⁸

The paper first examines further the events and ideas that motivated the EIC to expand its European troop presence on the Indian subcontinent as well as the legal and political problems in Great Britain that encouraged the company to find its military manpower in German-speaking

⁵ Ulrich van der Heyden, *Rote Adler an Afrikas Küste: Die Brandenburgisch-Preußische Kolonie Großfriedrichsburg in Westafrika* (2nd edition, Berlin: Salignow, 2001); Florian Schui, "Prussia's 'Trans-Oceanic Moment': The Creation of the Prussian Asiatic Trade Company in 1750," *The Historical Journal* 49, no. 1 (March, 2006), 143–60.

⁶ Jürgen G. Nagel, "Kapsiedler, Molukkenhändler, Japanreisende. Deutsche in Führungspositionen der niederländischen Ostindien-Kompanie" in *Deutsche Eliten in Übersee* ed. Markus A. Denzel (St. Katharinen: Scripta Mercaturae Verlag, 2006), 291-318; Femme S. Gaastra, "Soldiers and Merchants: Aspects of Migration from Europe to Asia in the Dutch East India Company in the Eighteenth Century" in *Migration, Trade, and Slavery in an Expanding World: Essays in Honor of Pieter Emmer*, ed. Wim Klooster (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 99-116, esp. 108-111; Chen Tzoref-Ashkenazi "German auxiliary troops in the British and Dutch East India Companies" in *Transnational Soldiers: Foreign Military Enlistments in the Modern Era*, ed. Nir Arielli and Bruce Collins (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 32-49.

⁷ Stephen Conway's recent work makes an important and noticeable exception to this situation. Stephen Conway "Continental European Involvement in the eighteenth-century British Empire" in *Kommunikation und Kulturtransfer in Zeitalter der Personalunion zwischen Grossbritannien und Hannover*, ed. Arnd Reitemeier (Göttingen: Universitätsverlag Göttingen, 2014), 123-141; Stephen Conway "Continental European Soldiers in British Imperial Service, c. 1756-1792," *English Historical Review* 129 (February 2014), 79-106. The rich literature on German migration to British North America has largely ignored the imperial dimensions and motivations of these migrations, the migrants, and their British neighbors and authorities. A. G. Roeber, *Palatines, Liberty, and Property: German Lutherans in Colonial British America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993); Aaron Spencer Fogleman, *Hopeful Journeys: German Immigration, Settlement, and Political Culture in Colonial America, 1717-1775* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996); Marianne S. Wokeck, *Trade in Strangers: The Beginnings of Mass Migration to North America* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999); Philip Otterness, *Becoming German: The 1709 Palatine Migration to New York* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004).

⁸ David Blackbourn, "Germany and the Birth of the Modern World, 1780-1820," *Bulletin of the German Historical Institute* 51 (Fall 2012), 9–10.

Europe. This first section also addresses some of the challenges that came with recruiting in Central Europe. The following section reviews the activities of German soldiers in South Asia and their often tense relationship with local officials, especially when they served in distinct Swiss or German units. Despite these tensions, the German-speaking troops appeared to have fulfilled the tasks the EIC assigned to them and they earned repeated praise from their contemporaries. The final pages briefly outline the connections forged between German-speaking Europe and India through the soldiers' movements and their correspondence.

I

The company was in constant need of troops because of the instability in India and the French threat. Following Nadir Shah of Persia's invasion of the Moghul Empire and sacking of Delhi in 1739, a struggle began among a variety of nawabs, viziers, nizams, and other rulers over land, revenues, and influence within the empire. EIC officials feared that the company might be dragged into these conflicts or their territory invaded should their previous land grants and protections no longer be recognized. Contemporaries saw European troops as critical to the company's security in the face of a growing number of threats. More than forty years after the fall of Delhi, Henry Dundas, a member and later chairman of the government's Board of Control formed to oversee the EIC in India in 1784, recommended that "a large European Force must at all times be kept in India" and that the European force's size should be equal to that of rivals' European forces in Mauritius, Pondicherry, Ceylon, and elsewhere in the Indian Ocean basin. He recommended an immediate addition of 4,000 to 5,000 European troops, since recruitment would be disturbed whenever war broke out in Europe. Dundas admitted that he could envision a

reduction of the EIC's Indian forces, but never its European forces.⁹ General Eyre Coote, the EIC's commander-in-chief in India, estimated in the early 1780s that there needed to be 10,000 European troops stationed within the EIC's three presidencies.¹⁰

Besides matching the size of rival European powers and Indian states' European army contingents, EIC and government officials saw European troops as necessary for military maneuvers that could not be entrusted to Indian and mixed race troops. These administrators also believed European troops were necessary to ensure the effectiveness of the EIC's large number of sepoys. Europeans were skeptical of indigenous soldiers' courage, discipline, and loyalty. Britons attributed Indians' lack of bravery to their natural effeminacy and servility. Even after being trained in European tactics and being placed under British officers, commanding officers hesitated to pit Indian sepoys directly against Europeans in battles.¹¹ While a major uprising of sepoys did not occur until the 1809 Vellore Mutiny, there were still incidents that gave the British pause. In 1748 an Indian commander and ten of his officers leading a contingent of 400 sepoys sent from Tellicherry to Fort St. David were sentenced to a lifetime of slavery on St. Helena for conspiring to have the force desert the garrison upon the approach of the French army and then join the enemy.

Commanders considered European troops necessary to ensure Indian troops did not panic in the face of heavy combat or bombardment and that they remained disciplined and loyal to the

⁹ "Copy of a Letter from Mr Dundas to Lord Sydney," November 1784, British Library (hereafter BL), India Office Records (hereafter IOR) H/389, f. 90-91; Memorandum of Henry Dundas in *Correspondence of Charles, First Marquis Cornwallis*, ed. Charles Derek Ross, (3 vols., London: J. Murray, 1859), i, 330-331.

¹⁰ William Fullarton to Lord Macartney and Select Committee, Pondicherry, January 1785, BL, IOR H/84, f. 385.

¹¹ Tzoref-Ashkenazi, *German Soldiers in Colonial India*, 5-6; "Earl Cornwallis to H.R.H. The Duke of York," Calcutta, November 10, 1786 in Ross, *Correspondence of Charles, First Marquis Cornwallis*, i, 225; Bryant, "Indigenous Mercenaries in the Service of European Imperialists," 19; Johnson, "'True to their salt,'" 269; Letter of D. Price, Oxford, May 29, 1771, BL, IOR E/1/55, f. 526v.

EIC.¹² Alexander Davidson, a committeeman on the Madras Council observed that “Viteran Sepoys are the Iron of the Army, and the Europeans the steel which gives them edge Take the strength of the Europeans from the Army, the Sepoys will lose that confidence in themselves so requisite in the moment of danger.”¹³ Governor of Madras, Thomas Rumbold, gave similar council to the Court of Directors when he noted in a 1778 letter that “for however useful your black Forces may be, yet they have ever wanted the example of Europeans to lead them on, and I wish you not to be mislead by the numbers in a Return, but to make a just distinction between the Seapoy and European Battalions, tis on the latter alone you must ultimately depend.”¹⁴

Due to the perceived weaknesses of indigenous troops, the EIC assigned European soldiers to special combat and security roles. Charles, Earl Cornwallis, when Governor-General of India (1786-1793, 1805), recommended that Europeans troops be used in any instance of revolt as he did not trust indigenous troops to suppress their fellow Indians.¹⁵ Military officers routinely placed European units at the point of attack against enemy lines and ordered them to make the first assaults into breached fortifications. The Europeans’ bravery was envisioned as crucial to spurring indigenous units to follow through on the attack or storming.¹⁶ Throughout the eighteenth century, British tactics dictated that their armies storm fortifications in India as

¹² Bryant, “Indigenous Mercenaries in the Service of European Imperialists,” 7; Orme, *A History of the Military Transactions of the British Nation in Indostan*, i, 87-88; “The Consultation & Diary Book of John Hinde Esq Deputy Governor & Council of Fort St. David Being their Transactions in the Affairs of the Honble the United Company of Merchants of England trading to the East Indies,” BL, IOR G/18/6, f. 30-31.

¹³ Minute of Alexander Davidson, Fort St. George, October 22, 1782, BL, Western Manuscripts (hereafter Western MSS), Additional Manuscripts (hereafter Add MSS) 22423.

¹⁴ Thomas Rumbold to the Court of Directors, Fort St. George, March 15, 1778, BL, IOR E/4/308, f. 167.

¹⁵ Earl Cornwallis to the Court of Directors, On the Ganges, August 18, 1787 in Ross, *Correspondence of Charles, First Marquis Cornwallis*, i, 523-524.

¹⁶ Bryant, “Indigenous Mercenaries in the Service of European Imperialists,” 19; Letter of Alexander Davidson, Tanjore, August 14, 1781, BL, Western MSS, Add MSS 22416; Letter of General Hector Munro, Nagapatnam, November 18, 1781, BL, Western MSS, Add MSS 22417; William Fullarton, *A View of the English Interests in India; An Account of the Military Operations in the Southern Parts of the Peninsula, during the Campaigns of 1782, 1783, and 1784. In Two Letters; Addressed to the Right Honourable Earl of ******, and to Lord Macartney and the Select Committee of Fort St. George (London: T. Cadell, 1787), 123-124; Johnson, ““True to their salt’,” 269-270.

quickly as possible to preserve the initiative as well as to avoid exposing the army in the field to disease outbreaks that could cripple the force.¹⁷

The EIC also entrusted its artillery to European soldiers as much as possible. Field artillery remained an advantage European trading companies enjoyed and did not wish to relinquish. The effective use of it enabled EIC and British army forces in India to travel between installations in relative security as well as to frequently defeat Indian states' much larger armies that were often comprised predominantly of horsemen.¹⁸ Some of the earliest German-speaking troops sent to India were artillerists. Seventy Protestant German non-commissioned officers (NCOs) and privates sailed in 1752 to reinforce the Madras Presidency's recently established artillery company and a second party sent out in 1753 joined the Bombay Presidency's artillery.¹⁹

To keep this vital force effective, there had to be a constant flow of new men from Europe to fill the numerous vacancies created by battle casualties, diseases, and desertions. The death rate was much higher for Europeans serving in tropical environments. Into the early nineteenth century death rates were seven times higher for soldiers in India than those in Britain. British recruits in the King's service tried to avoid serving in such insalubrious climates, and a regiment of Highland Scots mutinied in 1778 when they heard rumors that the regiment was going to be sold to the EIC and would be setting sail for the East Indies.²⁰ Several EIC directors

¹⁷ Black, *Britain as a Military Power*, 31-32, 187, 243.

¹⁸ Earl Cornwallis to the Court of Directors, Calcutta, March 6, 1789 in Ross, *Correspondence of Charles, First Marquis Cornwallis*, i, 543; Johnson, "'True to their salt'," 281-282; Lenman, *Britain's Colonial Wars*, 101; Black, *Britain as a Military Power*, 133-135, 149.

¹⁹ Draft of the Company's General Letter to Fort St. George, London, January 24, 1753, BL, IOR E/4/861, f. 217; "A List of Men Dead, Discharged, Deserted Inlisted gone to Subordinate Factorys and Entered in the Marine Service belonging to the Artillery Company from the 1st April 1753 to the 5th December 1753," BL, IOR L/MIL 12/120.

²⁰ Arthur N. Gilbert, "Recruiting and Reform in the East India Company Army, 1760-1800," *Journal of British Studies* 15 No. 1 (Autumn, 1975), 91-92; Johnson, "'True to their salt'," 273; P.J. Marshall "British Society in India under the East India Company," *Modern Asian Studies* 31 No. 1 (February 1997), 94.

estimated that each regular army regiment serving alongside company forces in India needed 200 new men each year to remain at full strength.²¹

The EIC naturally turned to the British Isles for its soldiers, but recruiting there remained a persistent challenge throughout the eighteenth century. The EIC had to compete with the British armed forces for men. The regular army, in particular, was concerned that the EIC might be able to out-recruit them due to higher bounties, wages, and shorter terms of service. The regular army successfully blocked the EIC from publically recruiting in the British Isles for most of the eighteenth century.²² Since the EIC had no legal recourse to recapture deserters, the company had to employ measures like keeping recruits locked up in ships or houses until fleets were ready to sail for the Indian Ocean. The EIC also relied heavily on crimps, private agents who recruited men in lieu of formal recruiting officers. The EIC usually paid crimps a set fee for each man raised and crimps relied heavily on kidnapping and enlisting convicts to turn a profit.²³ Despite these methods, recruiting numbers plunged when both Great Britain and the EIC went to

²¹ Henry Fletcher, Nathaniel Smith, and John Harrison to Thomas Townshend, East India House, October 10, 1782, BL, IOR H/163, f. 287-288. Military rolls from both the late eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth century show that the death rate among Europeans in EIC and regular army units remained constant in a range between just under four percent to a little over seven percent. Johnson, “‘True to their salt’,” 284; Gilbert, “Recruiting and Reform in the East India Company Army,” 92 n.7; W.H. Sykes, “Vital Statistics of the East India Company’s Armies in India, European and Native,” *Journal of the Statistical Society of London* 10 No. 2 (May 1847), 144 Table 9, 115 Table 11.

²² Gilbert, “Recruiting and Reform in the East India Company Army,” 109; Johnson, “‘True to their salt’,” 273, 284. Only during the War of American Independence (1775-1783) was the EIC allowed to start disciplining its recruits on British soil and EIC recruiting officers were able to publically recruit and then only in Ireland. Parliament started to give annual licenses to the EIC to recruit a set number of men. However, the limits were lowered during war years and the EIC always failed to raise their full limit of men from the British Isles. Finally, in 1799 the regular army took over recruiting for the EIC and gave a set number of recruits each year, but the army never met its promised internal quotas for the EIC. Gilbert, “Recruiting and Reform in the East India Company Army,” 100-101; Johnson, “‘True to their salt’,” 277-278; “Licenses to the East India Company to raise Men for five Years,” BL, IOR H/389, f. 307; “Number of Recruits raised in the following Season under Warrants from the Secretary of State,” BL, IOR H/389, f. 311.

²³ Gilbert, “Recruiting and Reform in the East India Company Army,” 93-95; Johnson, “‘True to their salt’,” 284; Peter Way, “‘The scum of every county, the refuse of mankind’ Recruiting the British Army in the Eighteenth Century” in *Fighting for a Living: A Comparative History of Military Labour 1500-2000*, ed. Erik-Jan Zürcher (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2013), 295.

war at the same time and the pool of British manpower available to the EIC shrank as the British Army and Navy expanded rapidly.²⁴

When the British Isles could not provide the soldiers the EIC thought necessary it turned to continental Europe, especially German-speaking territories. As the Court of Directors noted in a letter to their government in Madras during the Seven Years' War, "Finding it extremely difficult to raise Recruits for Our Forces in England, We have since Writing[...]sent Baron de Vaserot and Frederick William Elerson to raise about Two hundred Men in and about Hamburg, Lubeck and Bremen."²⁵ Recruiting Germans and Swiss offered the EIC several advantages. First, German-speaking soldiers had long served in foreign armies and lots of them looked for employment. Imperial cities in particular were popular recruiting sites as they attracted steady streams of laborers from surrounding areas and they were politically weaker than territorial rulers within the Holy Roman Empire. One EIC agent recruiting in Hamburg estimated in 1770 that there were several thousand potential soldiers within the city.²⁶ Second, particularly after the Seven Years' War, many of these recruits had previous military training and war experience. Elias Buzaglo²⁷ offered to recruit solely military veterans for the EIC in the northern parts of the Holy Roman Empire in his 1770 proposal to the company. On several occasions, the EIC sought to hire hundreds of men or even entire regiments from German states demobilizing their forces.²⁸ Third, the EIC could select Protestant recruits, whose identification with the

²⁴ Gilbert, "Recruiting and Reform in the East India Company Army," 93-94, 99; Johnson, "'True to their salt'," 276-277; Way, "'The scum of every county, the refuse of mankind'," 291.

²⁵ Draft of the Company's General Letter to Fort St. George, London, December 29, 1756, BL, IOR E/4/861, f. 656.

²⁶ Peter H. Wilson, "The Politics of Military Recruitment in Eighteenth-Century Germany," *The English Historical Review* 117 (2002), 543; John Haberkorn to Peter Mitchell Esq., Hamburg, November 20, 1770, BL, IOR E/1/54, f. 378r.

²⁷ Also spelled Buraglo in some contemporary sources.

²⁸ Elias Buzaglo to the Court of Directors, London, August 16, 1770, BL, IOR E/1/54 f. 87; Minutes of the Committee of Secrecy, August 25, 1781, BL, IOR H/244, f. 410-412; Frederick's Case Concerning his Transactions with the East India Company, c. 1773, BL, Western MSS, Add MSS 23680.

company was thought to be far stronger than Catholic, Muslim, or Hindu troops, especially in conflicts with the French and Indian states.²⁹ The constant demand for European recruits and the promise of recruiting Protestant soldiers meant, as Deputy Chairman of the EIC, John Purling noted, that recruiting in German-speaking Europe “was not a temporary expedient, but a permanent one.”³⁰

In order to secure this manpower from the continent, the EIC relied on a combination of contracts with agents to raise a set number of men or an entire unit, sending their own officers or employees to recruit in the Holy Roman Empire and Swiss cantons, and British government-mediated contracts with states and individuals. Veteran military officers and other entrepreneurs submitted a steady stream of recruiting proposals to the Court of Directors. Baron Charles de Freudenberg, a Protestant Hessian who had served as an officer for sixteen years in the services of the Landgrave of Hesse, the King of Prussia, the Prince of Waldeck, and the Dutch Republic, sent three different proposals to the EIC in 1757. He offered to raise a company of *Jägers*³¹ with 69 men and officers in three months or a 140-man infantry company including 30 *Jägers* in three months. He also outlined a permanent recruiting operation based in Hamburg from which he and several recruiting sergeants would travel to Hamburg, Lübeck, and other German states, in exchange for a salary for himself, expenses for himself and his officers, and a per capita bonus.³²

Samuel Vallyamoz, a Swiss officer from Lausanne, who had served seventeen years with a Swiss

²⁹ Philip J. Stern, *The Company State* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 38, 117; Bryant, “Indigenous Mercenaries in the Service of European Imperialists,” 8; Tzoref-Ashkenazi, *German Soldiers in Colonial India*, 36.

³⁰ Frederick’s Case Concerning his Transactions with the East India Company, c. 1773, BL, Western MSS, Add MSS 23680.

³¹ *Jäger*, a German word for hunter, huntsman, or gamekeeper, was used in the eighteenth century to describe members of elite light infantry units that were becoming a regular part of European armies. Most of these soldiers were professional *jägers* prior to their enlistments.

³² “Proposal of Baron Freudenberg to raise Company of German Hunters of the Company’s Service,” c. 1757, BL, IOR E/1/40, f. 324-325r; “Proposal of Baron Freudenberg to raise a Company of German Foo[t] for the Company’s Service in the East Indies,” c. 1757, BL, IOR E/1/40, f. 326-327; “Scheme of an Annual Levy of German Protestant Soldiers, for the Service of the East India Compagny,” c.1757, BL, IOR E/1/40, f. 355-356.

regiment before joining the British Royal American Regiment and afterwards entered the Polish service as a lieutenant colonel, offered in 1770 to raise men in Hamburg, Lübeck, Bremen, and Frankfurt am Main and send them to England. Vullyamoz estimated he could raise 500 men in Frankfurt alone.³³

When the Court of Directors accepted one of these independent proposals, they usually offered terms designed to raise men rapidly and limit the EIC's expenses and exposure to financial risk. The EIC often provided some money in advance to a contractor to help cover initial recruiting costs, but almost never offered a second advance until the first advance was paid for by the money the entrepreneurs earned through sending recruits to Britain.³⁴ Contracts specified the age, height, religion, health, and experience requirements of potential recruits. The Court of Directors contracted agents to raise the stipulated number of men within three or four months so that the men would arrive quickly and just before an EIC fleet made its twice yearly passage to India. Quick recruiting reduced maintenance costs as the EIC paid all the expenses of recruits once they reached Britain. The company also had to deal with the legal ambiguities of housing recruits in Great Britain and preventing desertions. With the risk squarely on the contractor's shoulders, they routinely went into debt to fulfill the contract. When there were fewer recruits, unforeseen expenses, or legal troubles, contractors often faced significant financial losses or even personal ruin.³⁵

³³ Lord Pembroke to Lord Barrington, London, September 25, 1770, BL, IOR E/1/54, f. 296; Samuel Vullyamoz to Lord Barrington, Leicesterfield, September 20, 1770, BL, IOR E/1/54, f. 297; Letter of Samuel Vullyamoz, London, November 16, 1770, BL, E/1/54, f. 336; "Mr. Vullyamoz's First Proposals," c. 1770, BL, IOR E/1/54, f. 299; "Answer to Sir George Colebroke on the informations he has desired to have," London, 1770, BL, IOR E/1/54, f. 339; L. Forrer, "A Few Notes on Swiss Officers and Mercenary Regiments in the Pay of England," *British Numismatic Journal* 25 (1947), 225.

³⁴ Frederick's Case Concerning his Transactions with the East India Company, c. 1773, BL, Western MSS, Add MSS 23680.

³⁵ Frederick's Case Concerning his Transactions with the East India Company, c. 1773, BL, Western MSS, Add MSS 23680; Elias Buzaglo to Peter Mitchell, Bassum, November 18, 1770, BL, IOR E/1/54, f. 366-367; Petition of Gabriel Muller to the Court of Directors, c. 1773, BL, IOR E/1/57, f. 516, 517v.

In addition to contracting with independent entrepreneurs or retired or veteran officers in continental European services, the EIC sent its own officers and agents throughout the Holy Roman Empire and Swiss confederacy to raise men. In 1756 the EIC sent Baron de Vaserot, a Swiss nobleman who had previously served as a lieutenant in Alexander de Ziegler's Swiss company in India, along with Frederick William Elerson to raise two hundred men in Hanseatic port cities.³⁶ In 1781, the EIC accepted veteran military officer James Francis Erskine's proposal to raise a 1,000-man unit of Swiss troops to reinforce the company's precarious position in southern India. Henry Wittmann, a German EIC soldier who served several years in India in the early 1770s, returned to Europe in 1776 and proposed to the Court of Directors the raising of a unit of German artificers, primarily men with experience in mining, to join the EIC's artillery battalions. Wittmann received 300 pounds sterling in advance for the endeavor, but he ultimately secured just 31 men for the unit. The EIC nonetheless kept him on as a recruiter on the continent until 1779.³⁷

The EIC also sought the British government's assistance in raising continental units. Sir Luke Schaub, a native of Basel who had a decades-long diplomatic career in the British service, arranged the hiring of several companies of Swiss soldiers to serve in India.³⁸ The troops were primarily Germanophone and Francophone Swiss, but there were also Germans and a few Dutch

³⁶ "A Muster Roll of Swis[s] Company of Military for the month november[November] 1753," Bombay, October 31, 1753, BL, IOR L/MIL 12/120; Commission of David Baron de Vasserot and Frederick William Elerson, December 8, 1756, BL, IOR H/24, f. 110-111.

³⁷ "State of Transactions between the Chairman & Deputy Chairman of the East India Company & James Francis Erskine Esquire, relative to the raising of a Regiment of Swiss Troops," BL, IOR H/244, f. 1-12; H. Wittman to the Committee of Correspondence, London, March 10, 1779, BL, IOR E/1/64, letter 48; "Extract of the General Letter from Bombay dated 23d July 1776. Paragraph 74," BL, IOR E/1/64, letter 49; Commission of Charles Henry Wittman, December 5, 1777, BL, IOR H/24, f. 196-197; H. Wittmann to Directors of the East India Company, London, June 23, 1778, BL, IOR E/1/62, f. 347.

³⁸ Philip Woodfine, 'Schaub, Sir Luke (1690–1758)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/24798>, accessed 16 Feb 2016]; Tzoref-Ashkenazi, *German Soldiers in Colonial India*, 34-35; Forrer, "A Few Notes on Swiss Officers and Mercenary Regiments," 214.

in the ranks as well.³⁹ The Swiss companies provided the EIC with an immediate influx of European soldiers during the Second Carnatic War (1749-1754). In Bombay, upon a Swiss company's arrival, they represented almost a third of all European soldiers in the city.⁴⁰

News of Haidar Ali's invasion of British-held parts of the Coromandel Coast and his victories in the field against company forces at the start of the Second Anglo-Mysore War led the EIC in 1781 to turn directly to the British monarchy for assistance in recruiting in German-speaking troops. Initially, the EIC requested 3,000 regular army troops be sent that year to replenish already depleted ranks from recent conflicts with the Marathas. The Court of Directors resolved, after learning that just 1,000 regular troops could be sent, to apply to the British government and George III to help procure "on as advantageous terms as possible, 2000 German Protestants, to proceed to, & be employed in the Company's Pay and Service in the East-Indies, under their ow[n] officers."⁴¹ Whereas George III and the electoral government rejected a previous proposal in 1770 to enable the EIC to recruit in the Electorate of Hanover, George III in 1781 was willing to help broker an agreement.⁴² In May, the EIC's Chairman and Deputy Chairman agreed to preliminaries that the King, as Elector of Hanover, would form two 1,000-man regiments in this capacity with the EIC paying for the raising, arming, clothing, and maintaining of the regiments during their term of service.⁴³ Hanoverian officers who volunteered led the regiments, but Hanoverian subjects were barred from serving in the ranks. George III and

³⁹ "Separate List of Men Inlisted Dead Deserted Discharged gone to Subordinate factory and Entered in the Marine Service of the Swis[s] Company of the Infantry of Bombay Since the 1st November to the 1st December 1753," BL, IOR L/MIL 12/120.

⁴⁰ "State of the Military of Bombay October the First 1752," BL, IOR L/MIL 12/120; Tzoref-Ashkenazi, *German Soldiers in Colonial India*, 36.

⁴¹ "At a Court of Directors held on Wednesday the 4th April 1781," BL, IOR H/244, f. 200.

⁴² Frederick's Case Concerning his Transactions with the East India Company, c. 1773, BL, Western MSS, Add MSS 23680; Behr to Colonel Stewart, London, October 9, 1770, BL, IOR E/1/54, f. 233; Behr to Colonel Stewart, London, October 9, 1770, BL, IOR H/102, f. 539.

⁴³ "At a Committee of Secrecy," May 25, 1781, BL, IOR H/244, f. 266-267.

the Hanoverian government did not want the electorate's own defense and manpower to be drained defending overseas colonies that had little importance to the territory. So the rank-and-file were foreign volunteers from Hanoverian regiments and those recruited throughout the Holy Roman Empire.⁴⁴

Recruiting in the Holy Roman Empire and Swiss cantons also came with its own set of challenges. On the continent, the EIC was not just competing with the British army and navy for men, but with continental states and trading companies to the East and West Indies. Within the empire, Austria, Prussia, and Bavaria had well-developed networks of recruiters; and the Dutch, French, and Sardinians had long-established recruiting relationships with many Swiss cantons.⁴⁵ Recruiting agents frequently attempted to lure away their competitors' recruits as they marched across the countryside and through various borders to reach mustering points and ports. A party of 180 Swiss recruits raised to form one of the new Swiss companies in 1751 dwindled to just 114 men by the time they enlisted, thanks to rival agents encouraging desertion and inducing some of the Swiss to enlist with their militaries. In March 1771 at Vught in the Dutch Republic, Dutch East India Company (VOC) agents kidnapped several men from a party of Württemberg army veterans bound for EIC service in India and local magistrates refused to help the EIC contractor get them back. Agents also attempted to block their counterparts from recruiting in territories at all. An unknown recruiter tried to prevent a train of EIC recruits from entering

⁴⁴ Memorandum to all Cavalry and Infantry Regiments, Hannover, June 11, 1781, Niedersächsisches Landesarchiv-Hannover (hereafter NLA Hannover), Hann. 38 C, C Nr. 1, f. 3-4; "Actum Herrnhausen in der Behausung des herrn Feld-Marschalls von Hardenberg Excellenz," June 9, 1781, NLA Hannover, Hann. 38 C, C Nr. 1, f. 20-21; "Stam-Rolle Von des Herrn Hauptmann von Zastrow Compagnie des 14ten Infante Regiment," Nienburg, June 5, 1786, NLA Hannover, Hann. 38 C, C Nr. 24, f. 121.

⁴⁵ Wilson, "The Politics of Military Recruitment in Eighteenth-Century Germany," 544; John McCormack, *One Million Mercenaries: Swiss Soldiers in the Armies of the World* (London: Leo Cooper, 1993), 142.

Hamburg by spreading rumors that the men were not recruits, but rather settlers about to illegally emigrate from the Holy Roman Empire.⁴⁶

Geopolitics also disrupted recruiting in Central Europe as diplomatic pressure or wars shut down the ability to raise and move men. Territorial rulers and magistrates of imperial cities had the final say over who was allowed to move through their lands or recruit within them. There were a host of penalties, including the seizure of property and death, for those who recruited illegally or agreed to serve in a foreign army without permission.⁴⁷ Thus, the recruiting process was frequently delayed, as contractors, British diplomatic officials, and EIC agents worked to secure the required permissions and passports from the multitude of states and cantons in order to raise men and march them to friendly garrisons and ports. The Hamburg Senate during the Seven Years' War and the War of American Independence resisted British efforts to recruit, move, or house men in its territory, as the city was deeply reliant on the Habsburg emperors' goodwill and protection.⁴⁸ EIC army officer James Francis Erskine complained in 1781 that the French ambassador at Soleur was working ceaselessly to stop his recruiting efforts and to punish Erskine and the Swiss for agreeing to sign up with the EIC. Erskine alleged that the ambassador succeeded in convincing the cantons of Berne and Zürich to pressure the magistrates of Stein to violate their signed agreement with Erskine and return all the men and officers from those two cantons to face punishment.⁴⁹ Perhaps most dramatically, the French invasion of Hanover in

⁴⁶ John Chabbert to the Court of Directors, c. 1751, BL, IOR E/1/36, f. 256; Frederick's Case Concerning his Transactions with the East India Company, c. 1773, BL, Western MSS, Add MSS 23680.

⁴⁷ Wilson, "The Politics of Military Recruitment in Eighteenth-Century Germany," 557; Frederick's Case Concerning his Transactions with the East India Company, c. 1773, BL, Western MSS, Add MSS 23680.

⁴⁸ Manuel Mathias to James Mathias, Hamburg, July 26, 1757, BL, IOR E/1/40, f. 301-302r; Manuel Mathias to James Mathias, Hamburg, July 29, 1757, BL, IOR E/1/40, f. 303; H. Wittmann to the Court of Directors, London, June 23, 1778, BL, IOR E/1/62, f. 347; Wilson, "The Politics of Military Recruitment in Eighteenth-Century Germany," 545-547.

⁴⁹ Minutes of the Committee of Secrecy, September 17, 1781, BL, IOR H/244, f. 467, 469.

1757 and Hamburg's shutting its borders to the British effectively ended EIC recruiting efforts in Germanophone Europe for several years.⁵⁰

In the 1790s the company started recruiting large numbers of German-speaking soldiers through another means: hiring units and individuals in the Indian Ocean basin presently or previously in the service of another European trading company. This practice was likely spurred by the resumption of conflicts in both Europe and Asia in response to the French Revolution, which in turn created the usual collapse in recruiting numbers from the British Isles as well as heightened demand for soldiers by all the major European powers and trading companies. French military victories and territorial expansion closed the familiar recruiting grounds in Central Europe for the EIC.⁵¹ The company sent Lieutenant John Owen along with a Lieutenant Mason to the Cape of Good Hope following its fall into British hands in 1795, "in the hope of obtaining a further Supply of German Soldiers from that Garrison."⁵² Owen quickly found 225 German troops willing to sign a five-year term of service with the EIC in exchange for a bounty of five guineas. He also believed that 500 to 600 more German soldiers at the Cape's garrison could be enlisted, as many had expressed a willingness to serve the EIC if they could receive the same terms under which they had served the VOC. By the time of his recall to India in 1797 Owen had enlisted almost 800 men, almost all of them Central Europeans. In addition, the EIC's forces at St. Helena sent a recruiting party to the Cape in 1796 and secured 100 men to serve on the island.⁵³ Similarly, the British state negotiated with the Swiss de Meuron Regiment in Ceylon to

⁵⁰ Manuel Mathias to James Mathias, Hamburg, July 26, 1757, BL, IOR E/1/40, f. 302v; Manuel Mathias to James Mathias, Hamburg, July 29, 1757, BL, IOR E/1/40, f. 304r.

⁵¹ Gilbert, "Recruiting and Reform in the East India Company Army," 103, 107, 109-110, 110 n. 91.

⁵² "Extract of Military Letter from Bengal dated 1st February 1796," BL, IOR F/4/3/634.

⁵³ "Copies of Minute of the Commander in Chief, and Resolutions of Council upon it, respecting Lieutenant Owen: also Copy of a Letter from the Company's Agent at the Cape of Good Hope," January 22, 1796, BL, IOR F/4/3/634; "Extract of Letter from Mr. John Pringle, at the Cape of Good Hope, dated the 7th Sept.r[September] 1796," BL, IOR F/4/3/634; "Extract of Military Letter from Bengal dated 30th June 1796," BL, IOR F/4/3/634.

have the unit leave VOC service and fight alongside the British Army in India, like the Hanoverian regiment the decade before.⁵⁴ A major appeal of the transfer, especially for the rank-and-file, was that the unit had months of back pay due and the VOC was bankrupt. The EIC agreed to pay off the soldiers' outstanding wages and place the unit on the British Army's pay scale.

II

The thousands of Germanophone troops serving in India, especially those in distinct Swiss or German units, did not always find conditions to their liking. As early as the 1750s, men in the Swiss companies routinely complained that they did not receive equal treatment from local authorities, despite a stream of orders from the Court of Directors that the units be treated like any other Europeans in the EIC's army.⁵⁵ Captain Alexander de Ziegler protested that the barracks assigned to his company were in disrepair and local EIC officials in Bombay did not offer alternative housing, nor were they willing to give Ziegler an additional allowance to rent other housing for his men and officers.⁵⁶ Hanoverian officers made similar remarks about unequal treatment in the 1780s, although they were contracted to have the same wages, benefits, and privileges as regular army officers and soldiers. Lieutenant Colonel Carl Ludwig Reinbold, the first commander of the two Hanoverian regiments, complained in 1783 that much of his regiment was living in tents due to a lack of quarters at Fort St. George. He also later observed that both British Army and EIC officers seemed to be promoted at a much faster speed than his

⁵⁴ "Capitulation between the British Government, and the Count Charles De Meuron," BL, IOR F/4/78/1728; Forrer, "A Few Notes on Swiss Officers and Mercenary Regiments," 221.

⁵⁵ "Extract of General Letter to Fort St. George, dated 6th December 1751," BL, IOR H/244, f. 111; Draft of the Company's General Letter to Fort St. George, London, January 24, 1753, BL, IOR E/4/861 f. 219.

⁵⁶ Memorial of Alexander de Ziegler to the East India Company, Bombay, February 24, 1753, BL, IOR E/1/37, f. 276.

Hanoverian officers, as well as the fact that the EIC appeared to pay the Hanoverians' arrears in wages and *batta*⁵⁷ more slowly than to their British colleagues.⁵⁸

One area where the Swiss and Hanoverian units insisted on being different from their fellow soldiers was military justice. The EIC directors conceded that the Swiss companies should be under their own military code, noting that armies throughout Europe who hired Swiss forces accepted this arrangement and the Swiss military code was seen as crucial to their units' renowned good order and discipline.⁵⁹ In the negotiations for raising the two Hanoverian regiments the EIC agreed that they would also be under their own martial law. While British officers might arrest offenders, judgment and punishment rested with the Hanoverian officers. A British officer's recourse in these matters rested in either a negotiated settlement between the British and Hanoverian commanding officer, or an appeal to the king.⁶⁰ Central European officers bristled against perceived violations of their jurisdiction. Captain Ziegler noted that the commander of EIC forces in Bombay, Thomas Rich, prevented him and the other captains from disciplining their own men. Ziegler charged that Rich's laxness was encouraging insubordination and drunkenness. Furthermore, the Governor of Bombay, Richard Bouchier had on several

⁵⁷ *Batta* was a South Asian practice of rulers granting allowances to both civil and military officials under their authority. The British adopted the practice and made it a form of supplemental payment to officers and soldiers when they were in the field to cover the added expenses of being on campaign.

⁵⁸ Report of Colonel Reinbold, Madras, March 21, 1783, NLA Hannover, Hann. 38 C, C Nr. 20, f. 41; Carl Ludwig Reinbold to General in Chief, Madras, December 10, 1784, NLA Hannover, Hann. 38 C, C Nr. 20, f. 99,108; Carl Ludwig Reinbold to Governor Macartney, Madras, February 17, 1785, NLA Hannover, Hann. 38 C, C Nr. 20, f. 149-150.

⁵⁹ Draft of the Company's General Letter to Fort St. George, London, January 24, 1753, BL, IOR E/4/861, f. 218-219; "Extracts of General Letter of Fort St. George, dated 24th January 1753," BL, IOR H/244, f. 115-116; McCormack, *One Million Mercenaries*, 130-131; Alfred Donati, "Das schweizerische Söldnerwesen," in *O mein Heimatland Chronik für Schweizerische Kunst und Literatur*, ed. Gustav Grunau (Bern: Dr. Gustav Grunau, 1935), 209.

⁶⁰ "Regulation concerning the two Batallions of Our Electoral Troops during the Time of their Service in the East Indies," BL, IOR H/244, f. 397-400.

occasions punished some Swiss troops without even informing Ziegler; and Bouchier's punishments, according to Ziegler, were unused by any European service.⁶¹

Given this constant friction, it is perhaps not surprising that the EIC attempted to integrate the distinctly continental European units into the company's forces as quickly as possible. Within four years of their formation in 1755, the Court of Directors decided to no longer recruit specifically for the Swiss companies. Swiss captains would retain their units until the expiration of their terms of service; at that point the remaining Swiss troops and officers would serve within EIC European units.⁶² In 1761, the Court of Directors wrote "It is a real Satisfaction to us That Wee have now no Swiss Company, subsisting as the Officers have been the occasion of much trouble both at home and abroad by their constant Craving and unreasonable Expectation and Demands."⁶³ Governor-General Cornwallis, while a strong proponent of a robust European troop presence in EIC territories, strongly preferred British troops and doubted the ultimate reliability of foreign European soldiers. He quietly sought through Dundas to have the Hanoverian regiments return to Europe in the late 1780s, as he thought their expenses outweighed their usefulness. The Hanoverians stayed because of their ongoing enlistments; and ultimately Cornwallis had to direct the regiments' commander, Colonel Christian Ludwig von Wangenheim, to recruit his men to stay additional years as the EIC was desperate for soldiers when war with Mysore broke out again in 1789.⁶⁴

⁶¹ Memorial of Alexander de Ziegler to the East India Company, Bombay, February 24, 1753, BL, IOR E/1/37, f. 276.

⁶² Draft of the Company's General Letter to Fort St. George, London, December 19, 1755, BL, IOR E/4/861, f. 553-554.

⁶³ Draft of the Company's General Letter to Fort St. George, London, March 13, 1761, BL, IOR E/4/862, f. 258.

⁶⁴ "Extract of a Letter from Lord Cornwallis to the Court of Directors," Ganges, November 16, 1787, BL, IOR F/4/3/634; Earl Cornwallis to Henry Dundas, Calcutta, November 30, 1786, in Ross, *Correspondence of Charles, First Marquis Cornwallis*, i, 233-234; Earl Cornwallis to Sir William Fawcett, Fort St. George, December 30, 1790, in Ross, *Correspondence of Charles, First Marquis Cornwallis*, ii, 64.

Whatever the challenges Germanophone troops posed to EIC officers and officials, both in India and Great Britain, they served their primary purpose of defending EIC possessions and providing order within them. Swiss companies were half of Robert Clive's European contingent in his larger invasion force to retake Calcutta and they played a critical role in the decisive Battle of Plassey in 1757.⁶⁵ By the end of the Carnatic Wars in 1763, continental Europeans comprised fifteen percent of the Madras Presidency's army.⁶⁶ Hanoverian troops were initially deployed to defend Madras and surrounding areas, but then were attached to various offensive operations against the EIC's enemies. Eight companies of Hanoverians served in the campaign to retake Cuddalore in 1783; they led the successful attack on a French redoubt that enabled British forces to begin bombarding the city directly.⁶⁷ Other Hanoverian detachments during the Second Anglo-Mysore War participated in the capture of Mysore-controlled Cannanore, the suppression of rebellious Polygar chiefs in southern India, and the invasion of Mysore through its southern border.⁶⁸ After the war, Hanoverian companies performed primarily garrison duty, but also quelled emerging unrest at Fort Pondomalle, fifteen miles from Madras; ensured the enforcement of the terms of peace with the new ruler of Mysore, Tipu Sultan; and oversaw the Northern Circars' transition from the Nizam of Hyderabad to the EIC.⁶⁹ After agreeing to serve under the

⁶⁵ Tzoref-Ashkenazi, *German Soldiers in Colonial India*, 35; McCormack, *One Million Mercenaries*, 151-152.

⁶⁶ Maya Jasanoff, *Edge of Empire: Conquest and Collecting in the East, 1750-1850* (London: Fourth Estate, 2005), 48-49.

⁶⁷ Letter of Colonel Reinbold, In camp near Velout, January 20, 1783, NLA Hannover, Hann. 38 C, C Nr. 20, f. 31, 35; Report of Colonel Reinbold, Fort St. George, August 8, 1783, NLA Hannover, Hann. 38 C, C Nr. 20, f. 50-51; Tzoref-Ashkenazi, *German Soldiers in Colonial India*, 43-44.

⁶⁸ Report of Colonel Reinbold; Fort St. George, August 8, 1783, NLA Hannover, Hann. 38 C, C Nr. 20, f. 52, 55; Report of Colonel Reinbold, Fort St. George, September 3, 1783, NLA Hannover, Hann. 38 C, C Nr. 20, f. 65; Report of Colonel Reinbold, Fort St. George, September 30, 1783, NLA Hannover, Hann. 38 C, C Nr. 20, f. 67; Report of Colonel Reinbold, Fort St. George, January 20, 1784, NLA Hannover, Hann. 38 C, C Nr. 20, f. 78; Report of Colonel Reinbold, Fort St. George, January 30, 1784, NLA Hannover, Hann. 38 C, C Nr. 20, f. 82-83; Fullarton, *A View of the English Interests in India*, 101-102, 121-124, 134; Tzoref-Ashkenazi, *German Soldiers in Colonial India*, 44.

⁶⁹ "Extract of Bombay General Consultations the 4th May 1784," BL, IOR H/84, f. 231; Report of Colonel Reinbold, Madras, February 5, 1785, NLA Hannover, Hann. 38 C, C Nr. 20, f. 11; Major Spangenberg to Field

EIC, de Meuron's regiment moved to India and it participated in the Fourth Anglo-Mysore War (1798-1799), including the storming of the capital Seringapatnam as well as the Second Anglo-Maratha War (1803-1805).⁷⁰

Germanophone troops earned much praise from their contemporaries in India, which helps explain why the EIC regularly returned to Central Europe for troops despite all the challenges in recruiting and managing these forces. The Madras government wrote to the Court of Directors shortly after the Swiss companies began arriving in India "that the Swiss, who have been in action, have behaved very gallantly."⁷¹ Contractor Felix Frederick, in his arguments for why the EIC should take on the additional recruits he had raised in Hamburg, noted that General David Wedderburne was already impressed with the discharged Württemberg army veterans Frederick previously recruited.⁷² The Hanoverian regiments were recognized over their decade of service in India in the general orders and comments of General James Stuart, Colonel William Fullarton, Governor Archibald Campbell, and the Madras government.⁷³ The bravery shown by the Hanoverians as they attacked the main redoubt outside Cuddalore on June 13, 1783 drew the attention of both friend and foe as several captured French officers proclaimed the Hanoverian troops to be "Cesars" on that day for having braved the fire of cannons and muskets head-on twice to take the position.⁷⁴

Marshal von Reden, Fort St. George, September 29, 1788, NLA Hannover, Hann. 38 C, C N. 26, f. 29; Report of Colonel von Wangenheim, Madras, April 6, 1789, NLA Hannover, Hann. 38 C, C Nr. 26, f. 73.

⁷⁰ "Extract of Military Letter from Fort St. George Dated 22d Janry[January] 1800," BL, IOR F/4/78/1728; Forrer, "A Few Notes on Swiss Officers and Mercenary Regiments," 214, 221.

⁷¹ "Extract of General Letter from Fort St. George dated the 3d. of November 1752," BL, IOR H/244, f. 123.

⁷² Frederick's Case Concerning his Transactions with the East India Company, c. 1773, BL, Western MSS, Add MSS 23680.

⁷³ "Extract from the Genl. Order of the 23 Febre[February]. 1783," NLA Hannover, Hann. 38 C, C Nr. 20, f. 43; Report of Colonel Reinbold, Madras, September 18, 1784, NLA Hannover, Hann. 38 C, C Nr. 20, f. 95; Archibald Campbell to Colonel Reinbold, Fort St. George, May 8, 1786, NLA Hannover, Hann. 38 C, C Nr. 20, f. 121; "Extract of a General Letter to the Honble the Court of Directors Date 28th January 1791," NLA Hannover, Hann. 38 C, C Nr. 27, f. 142.

⁷⁴ Report of Colonel Reinbold, Fort St. George, August 8, 1783, NLA Hannover 38 C, C Nr. 20, f. 51.

III

The deployment of thousands of German-speaking troops to the Indian subcontinent during the second half of the eighteenth century also generated new connections between Germanophone Central Europe and India. Families and communities with relatives, friends, and neighbors serving the EIC struggled to find information about their men and the region they were being sent to. To help encourage volunteers and assuage the fears of relatives and neighbors, the *Hannoverisches Magazin* published a series of articles about India. In 1781 it carried excerpts of Guillaume Le Gentil's writings on his Indian travels as well as German Lutheran missionary Wilhelm Christian Gericke's 1770 portrait of Haidar Ali. In 1782 the magazine published parts of William Macintosh's contemporaneous travelogue related to India. Not coincidentally, almost half of all articles about India in the eighteenth-century German press were published in the 1780s.⁷⁵

The soldiers abroad wrote and carried back anecdotes and observations about the subcontinent. Hanoverian troops wrote almost thirty pieces during their stationing in India that were printed in German publications: *Hannoverisches Magazin* and *Neues Hannoverisches Magazin*, *Politisches Journal*, *Stats-Anzeigen*, *Niederelbisches historisch-politisch-litterarisches Magazin*, *Neues militärisches Journal* and *Hanauisches Magazin*. Many of these publications enjoyed circulations in the thousands and copies were staples of libraries and reading societies in the Holy Roman Empire. These articles and reports discussed current events, Indians and their culture, and natural history. Several officers published memoirs in the years and decades following their terms of service in India.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ Tzoref-Ashkenazi, *German Soldiers in Colonial India*, 52, 59.

⁷⁶ Tzoref-Ashkenazi, *German Soldiers in Colonial India*, 10, 49-50, 59, 99.

Some soldiers remained connected to India even after their return home, remaining in contact with colleagues who continued to live in India or applying what they learned abroad in their future endeavors. Frederick Leaber from Ansbach arrived in India in 1759 to fight for the EIC as a lieutenant and returned to Europe several years later, due to hearing loss and grapeshot wounds to his right arm. Leaber maintained a correspondence with the Madras-based Thomas Pelling who kept Leaber informed both of major political and military events as well as of their mutual friends.⁷⁷ Georg Friedrich Gaupp, a native of Baden who took over command of a Swiss company from John Chabbert, returned to Baden and established a successful *indienne*⁷⁸ factory in Lörrach, using knowledge he gained and connections he forged as an EIC army officer.⁷⁹

The breakdown of the Mughal Empire's authority and rise of the French *Compagnie des Indes* created great geopolitical instability on the Indian subcontinent as well as security risks to the EIC's possessions there. The defeats at the hands of the French during the First Carnatic War catalyzed a concerted effort by the EIC to build up its military forces, including units comprised of Europeans. British metropolitan and colonial military officers and politicians saw European troops as essential to the successful defense and peaceable possession of the EIC's East Indian territories. This increased demand for European soldiers, as well as the inability of the EIC to legally recruit or find sufficient numbers of men in the British Isles, moved the company to look to the continent to find soldiers. The EIC became another player in the mature military labor market of Central Europe and, like the VOC, drew thousands of Germanophone recruits into its army to serve in its Asian colonies. In addition, thousands of other German troops fought

⁷⁷ Thomas Pelling to Frederick Leaber, Madras, October 14, 1765, BL, IOR E/1/69, f. 272-273; Frederick Leaber to the Chairman, Deputy Chairman & Directors of the EIC, November 6, 1781, BL, IOR E/1/ 69, f. 266, 275.

⁷⁸ *Indienne* was a popular European textile in the eighteenth century that was printed or painted to copy designs, patterns, and figures commonly found on imported Indian textiles.

⁷⁹ Tzoref-Ashkenazi, *German Soldiers in Colonial India*, 35.

alongside EIC forces in India, while nominally being a part of the British Army's command structure. These soldiers enabled the EIC to defend its positions, rapidly scale up its armies during major conflicts and moments of crisis, and win battles that led to the company's status as the dominant power on the subcontinent by the early nineteenth century.