

SOME SUGGESTIONS

FOR

**The Reorganisation of the Indian Territorial and
Auxiliary Forces ;**

AND FOR

**THE ADOPTION OF A DEFINITE PROGRAMME
FOR PREPARING INDIA FOR SELF-DEFENCE,
WITHIN TEN YEARS ;**

LAI D BEFORE

**The Committee on Reorganisation of the Indian
Territorial Force.**

BY

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"Kaiser-i-Hind"

FOREWORD.

For a good many years, we have advocated the military training of all Parsee youths, realising the risks to which a small community is exposed in times of trouble, and to that end, have recommended the formation of Parsee Cadet Corps, Rifle Clubs, and Volunteer Battalions, for communal self-defence, and also for rendering timely help to the Government and the Public, if called upon to do so, in any emergency. We have thus for long tried to educate, guide and represent Parsee public opinion on the subject of Voluntary Military Training. Recently we have been favoured with an invitation to offer our views on the subject, and also to represent Parsee public opinion before the Committee on Reorganisation of the I. T. F., as may be seen from the following.

At the end of last June, the Editor of the *Kaiser-i-Hind*, was kind enough to forward to us a letter he had received from Sir Jamsedji Jijibhoy, Bart., the Head of the Parsee Community of Bombay, and President, the Provincial Advisory Committee, I. T. F., Bombay District, saying that: "I have much pleasure in informing you that the Advisory Committee have resolved to submit the name of your Special Military Correspondent, Dr. Kaikhushroo Kersasp Dadachanji, to give evidence before the Indian Territorial Force Reorganisation Committee."

"The Advisory Committee of the Parsee Battalion propose to submit a representation, setting forth their views before the Reorganisation Committee. Before doing so, however, the Committee is anxious to have your views as well as those of Dr. Dadachanji, and I shall feel obliged if you could put your views down in writing, and send them to me at your early convenience. I enclose herewith a copy of the letter which I have received from Government, on the question, and I have to draw your particular attention to para 2 (v), viz., "improvement of the Force generally, having regard to the role for which it has been constituted. I need hardly add that the role for which it has been constituted is to supply a Second Line of Defence in case of emergency." In accordance with the desire expressed by Sir Jamsedji Jijibhoy in the said letter, we have put down our views in writing. It would be as well to explain here the basis for the views expressed by us. Having read the debates in the Legislative Assembly on the subject, as also the criticism of our public journals, we could come to but one conclusion, viz., the whole subject was enveloped in a fog of words, which indicated muddled thinking. We prefer to follow the exact method of science and logic, in dealing with this subject of national importance, e.g., practical suggestions are wanted for the Improvement of the I. T. Force, under four Heads, prescribed by the Committee on Reorganisation.

From the scientific and logical point of view, one cannot consider the improvement of the Second Line, i.e., the I. T. F., except in relation to the First Line, i.e., the Regular Army; nor can one make suggestions for the improvement of the Second Line without considering their effect on the First Line, as

both the Lines are so closely inter-related. We have therefore followed the scientific method of considering the two inter-related Lines together. Further, we do not assume, as the Government of India seems to do, that there is no need for improvement of the First Line, because such an assumption cannot be justified by the logic of facts.

We have considered the subject under the four Heads above mentioned, and discussed these, at length, under several sub-headings. Under (I)—Pay and Allowance, we have suggested the approximation of the Pay and Allowance of Indian Ranks to that of British Ranks. Under (II)—Popularity of the Force (page 6), the subject is considered under 14 sub-headings. The attention of the Committee is particularly drawn to the humiliating conditions of Service in the I. T. F., compared with those of the British T. F., and to the significant contrast between the two. A comparison has also been made between the relevant Sections of the India Army Act 1911, and the I. T. F. Act 1920, and Rules under both the Acts, and the British Army Act and the Territorial and Reserve Forces Acts, and the need for making necessary alterations in the former, and correspondingly in the I.A.F. Act, emphasised. Some of the obsessions of the military experts of the Government of India have been laid bare, and the fallacy of their arbitrary classification of Indians into martial and non-martial classes has been exposed. Attention is drawn to a practical lesson in militarisation of all classes of the Nation, taught by modern Japan, and its application to India.

Under (III)—Methods of selecting Candidates for Commission (page 26), the present system of selection of Officers and Non-Com.'s is condemned as productive of inefficiency and unpopularity of the I. T. F. Suggestions have been made for the selection of candidates for Commission by Provincial Military Boards of Examiners, and also for the establishment in India of Military Schools and Colleges for the training of an Indian Officers' Training Corps. Attention is also drawn to the Regulations, under which both University candidates and Officers in the Territorial Army can obtain Commissions in the Regular British Army, as the outcome of the Report of the Haldane Committee, issued by the War Office, London. It is shown that, even in England, the Army is no longer a preserve for the aristocrat, but is now open to the democrat. If India is to be prepared for Self-Defence, an I. T. O. C., of 40,000 will be required (see Table on page 34).

Under (IV)—Improvement of the Force generally, having regard to the role for which it has been constituted, (page 32), the question is considered under three sub-headings. Because an efficient Second Line should be (A) adequate in numbers to support and supplement the Regular Army; (B) organized and trained on a Divisional basis, and provided with a complete Divisional Staff, like the Regular Army; (C) provided with equipment and armament, identical with that of the Regular Army. Under (A) we have shown the absolute inadequacy of the I. T. F. for which a limit of 20,000 has been arbitrarily fixed, and the need for raising the limit to 300,000. The attention of the Committee on Territorial Reorganization is particularly drawn to the Table of Comparative Strength

of the Army in England and in India (page 34). In the third column of the Table, a tentative proposal is made for reorganizing the Armed Forces of the Indian Empire, from which it will be seen that, if adopted, every 10 years will see an addition of 1,712,500 men trained to Arms, thus rendering India competent for Self-Defence, without British aid. As to relative cost, 1) British Battalion costs as much as 4) Indian Regular Battalions, and 32) I. Territorial Battalions (page 39). Proper emphasis is laid on the *unmistakable warnings given by the Government of India, and its military experts, that Britain may not be able to help India in future wars, as she used to in the past, and so on the need for preparing India for Self-Defence, within a period of 10 years.* Further, the fallacy of the Military Experts has been exposed, *viz., "that India cannot be fitted for Self-Defence, she is not within three generations (i.e., ninety years) of it."* In contrast with this opinion of the Government, is that of the representatives of the people, who have expressed the hope, in some of the Resolutions passed by the Indian Legislative Assembly, that India may be prepared for Self-Defence, within 10 to 20 years. Thus the contrast between the two points of view is quite glaring. We may point out that, like time and tide, wars wait for no man; they wait neither to satisfy the political expediencies of Governments, nor the well-spun theories of Military Experts, but break out any day, without warning, like a thief in the night. Hence, we have suggested, as the solution of the problem, a ten years' Programme of Reorganisation of all the Armed Forces of India. We believe that the motive, underlying the appointment of the Committee on Reorganisation of the I. T. F., is rooted in the healthy aspirations of all classes of Indians, for being prepared for shouldering the burden of National Self-Defence. Hence, we suggest to the Committee that the problem of Reorganisation of the I. T. F. be considered *only as a part of the problem of Indian Self-Defence.*

Under (B) we have suggested that the I. T. F. should be trained on a Divisional basis, and that all Arms of the Service should be open to members of the I. T. F. and I. A. F., and that all essential Ancillary Services should be completely organised for the I. T. F., on the scale of the Regular Army. Under (C) we have suggested that the I.T.F. should be provided with equipment and armament, identical with that of the Regular Army, to enable it to act as an efficient Second Line. Men without munitions, or munitions without men are equally useless, and so, Indianization of the Military Services should be accompanied by *Indianization of the Military Industries, and thus provide employment for a million and a half of Indians.*

Finally, we have brought to the notice of the Government, and the Committee, "the reasonable complaints and grievances of the (Parsee) 11th and 12th Battalions, 2nd Bombay Pioneers, I. T. F." and have suggested the transfer of both the Battalions from the I. T. F. to the I. A. F. We wish to emphasise the fact, that we have not asked for any special preferential treatment for the Parsees, apart from our Indian fellow-subjects, for, in these democratic days, it would not do, nor is there any need, to ask for any such preference. Our democratic suggestion is for the (D) removal of all Racial Distinctions, and the

omission of the word 'European', wherever it occurs in the Auxiliary Forces Act, 1920, and also the omission of the words 'not being a European British subject' from § 5 (I) of the Indian Territorial Forces Act, 1920. Thus eliminating "all racial distinctions in the constitution of the non-regular military forces in India, including the Indian Auxiliary Force," and so removing the root of racial bitterness between European and Indian subjects of the Empire, as also the unpopularity of the I. T. F., arising out of such humiliating distinctions. We hope that the Government will observe the solemn pledge given to the Parsees by its authorized agent, who acted as the Director, I. A. and T. Forces, Bombay District, and thus vindicate the eternal principles of justice and equity. We need not remind the Government of the services rendered by the Parsee Community during the last War, in the contribution of men, munitions and money, out of all proportion to its small numbers. And we appeal to its sense of justice and fair-play to remove the grievances of the Parsee Battalions, by sanctioning their transfer from the I. T. F. to the I. A. F., for reasons explained at length in the Appendix; and we hope that the Committee on Reorganisation of the I. T. F. will see the justice of our claim, and take the necessary steps for its vindication.

We were favoured with a copy of the Questionnaire by the Secretary, the Auxiliary and Territorial Forces Committee, in September last, some time after we had sent our Suggestions for printing. We believe that, having expressed at length our independent views on the question, and also seeing that, some of the Suggestions in the Questionnaire coincide with ours, it would be superfluous for us to send a detailed reply to it. Moreover, on certain questions of principle, as will be noticed, we hold views which do not correspond with those expressed in the Questionnaire, which we believe, is based on a very narrow interpretation of motives, which led to the appointment of the Committee on Reorganisation.

I concur with the striking and original Suggestions presented here so ably by Dr. Kaikhushru K. Dadachanji, who has been contributing Special Articles on Military subjects to my journal, for the last many years.

ERACHSHAW R. HEERJIBEHEDIN, J.P.,
Editor and Proprietor, the "Kaiseri-Hind".

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APPENDIX.

Below are reproduced two articles from the "*Kaiser-i-Hind*", the leading representative organ of the Parsi Community, which furnish the particulars, desired by the Government of India, of reasonable complaints and grievances of the (Parsi) 11th and 12th Battalions, 2nd Bombay Pioneers, I. T. F.

A PARSİ MILITARY BETRAYAL. (—I)

Our fight for British Military Rights.

JUSTIFIED BY THE SIMLA COMMUNIQUE.

Who Is right?—The Commender-in-Chief

or

The Southern Command?

Important Correspondence with Col. Lavie.

Nemesis has at last overtaken the calumniators of truth, with regard to the status, position and responsibilities of the Bombay Parsi Pioneer Battalions (Territorial), and they are now trying to wriggle out of the evil net of their own design, by making scapegoats of those, who in season and out of season have championed the cause of truth, justice and military rights of the Parsi community. This journal has for nearly a decade been advocating the military training of all Parsi youths, both for self-defence and for the defence of the King and country, in times of emergency. If any proof were needed, the columns of this journal for the last ten years bear ample testimony to the fact. During the world-war, it was this journal which led the Parsi community in the path of duty, and succeeded in raising nearly half a battalion of recruits who would have no doubt given a good account of themselves, in any field they might have been called upon to serve.

Next, when the Government of India passed the Auxiliary and Territorial Forces Acts, we were the first and foremost to advocate the raising of Parsi Auxiliary Battalions, on the same terms and conditions, as enjoyed by the Parsi Auxiliary Company of the Bombay Battalion. It would thus be seen that we have consistently been the advocates of the military training of the Parsis for the last ten years, and we have also consistently insisted on all the British rights and privileges belonging to the Parsi community for the last fifty years. As is well known, Parsi Volunteers have been attached to British Regiments in Bombay, Poona, Karachi, and other centres, for the last half century.

In 1921, we were the first to advocate the recruiting of Parsi youths for the Auxiliary Battalion, but at the same time we gave a distinct warning to the Parsi community, that if under the misguidance of certain interested parties, Parsi youths were foolish enough to join any Territorial Battalion then proposed to be formed—the Parsis would lose all their British rights and privileges, as they would be subject to the Indian Territorial Forces Act, and not the Indian

Auxiliary Forces Act. Repeatedly we warned the Parsi community that the hysterical propaganda carried on by a certain Parsi journal, whose monopoly is that of ignorance, abuse and lack of foresight, would assuredly lead to the inevitable end, *viz.* the loss of all the British military rights and privileges, and degradation to the level of the Native Indian Army. Not only did that Parsi journal carry on an hysterical propaganda, based on falsehood and misrepresentations and unmerited abuse of this journal, but it reproduced from time to time, according to its own vain-glorious statements, *the authoritative guarantees* given by Lieut.-Col. Lavie, the O. C. of the P. P. Battalion, *that all British rights and privileges were definitely and irrevocably secured for ever for the Parsi community* through the powerful influence of Lieut.-Col. Lavie, in spite of the fact that, the P. P. B. was and is designated a Territorial Battalion. As it was our duty, we pointed out distinctly, that under the Acts passed by the Legislatures, not even the Commander-in-Chief of India was given either the authority or the privilege to grant Auxiliary, *i.e.* British rights, to Territorial battalions, under any circumstances whatever, the reason for which is perfectly plain,—that every other Territorial Battalion would demand the same. For this statement of the true position of the P. P. B., we were abused and villified, and even threatened with a prosecution by Col. Lavie, as will be evident from the correspondence we publish below, for the information of the Parsi community, whose cause we have always championed and shall always champion without fear or favour, and without being intimidated by any threats from any quarter, depending for our justification on the righteousness of our cause. Not only have we been showered with abuse, but our writer on military affairs has been maligned by certain malicious parties.^o He is too good a veteran fighter and a determined servant of the public, to be deterred from his duty by the most damnably scurrilous abuse of his malicious opponents, who, to gain the fleshpots of military favour, have betrayed and are still betraying the military rights and privileges, which the Parsi community has enjoyed for the last fifty years.

We have exposed till now all the falsehoods and frauds of our malicious detractors, and we are determined to follow that policy, *till we succeed in regaining for the community those military rights and privileges*, which have been battered away by its betrayers, who pose as well-wishers, and act as enemies of the community.

We now reproduce below the correspondence that has passed between the Editor of this journal and Col. Lavie.

7th October 1922.

From

Mr. Erachshaw R. Heerjibehedin, J.P.,
Editor and Proprietor,
The Kaiser-i-Hind.

To,

Lt.-Col. H. E. Lavie, D.S.O.,
I. G., Auxiliary and Territorial Forces,
Bombay District.

Dear Sir,

As you are aware my paper has always taken a keen interest in the question of military training of Parsi youths, for years together, and the prominent part it took in recruiting for the 1st and 2nd Parsi P. T. Battalions is too well known to the public to need any further reference. My paper has always been distinguished for its policy of independent criticism of men and measures, without fear or favour, and as such, my office has been inundated with a number of complaints—oral and written—from some of the members of the Battalions, for some time. I have thought fit to hold back these complaints from publication in order to give those concerned sufficient time, and a fair chance of removing all causes of complaint. Also in deference to the wishes of a deputation of certain members of the Advisory Committee and Officers of the

Battalion, who specially called upon me, I withheld the publication of all such complaints, until I heard of a bomb having been thrown into the camp, with the result that a general feeling of dissatisfaction has again prevailed amongst them, by the issue of your order, that officers and men of the two battalions are now deprived of their British Commissions and Designations already granted to them, and instead, they are now granted only Native Commissions and Designations.

You have repeatedly stated from the platform, and in your interview with a representative of a Parsi journal, given the public to understand that all ranks of the Parsi Battalion were entitled to the same rights and privileges as the British Auxiliary Battalions. How then could one reconcile the new Order about depriving the Parsi Battalions of British designations and substituting Native ones, with the assurances and promises alleged to have been held out to them by you? I am informed, that bitter discontent now prevails amongst all ranks of the two Battalions, and I am afraid there will be an end to further recruiting for the Battalions, unless some satisfactory course is adopted to redress the grievance.

Another question is "Why have the military authorities adopted the strange method of enrolling Parsis in Territorial Battalions, and promising them auxiliary rights,—and withdrawing same at their pleasure—instead of adopting the more sensible course of enrolling Parsis in Auxiliary Battalions, knowing that an Auxiliary Company of Parsis has been in existence since 1920, and that Parsi Volunteers have been attached to British Regular and Volunteer Battalions for the last 50 years?"

Was the Advisory Committee ever given to understand, that the mere prefix of "Pioneers" added to the designations of Territorial Battalions entitled them to claim the terms of Auxiliary Battalions, and if so under which section of the Indian Territorial Forces Act?

Another question is, "Is it a fact that B. O.'s Commissions have been given to a number of persons, without their being made to pass through the tests, put down in Army Regulations, and if so why, and what were the guiding principles?"

There are many other questions awaiting explanation, but for the present, these will suffice.

Finally, I hope that you will be so kind as to expedite a reply to the above, with a view to clear away the misunderstandings from the minds of the members of the Parsi community, for whom you have been evincing such deep and heartfelt interest.

Yours truly,

ERACHSHAW R. HEERJIBEHEDIN, J.P.

Editor and Proprietor,

The Kaiser-i-Hind.

Headquarters, Bombay District.

Bombay, 11th October 1922.

To,

Mr. Erachshah R. Heerjibehedin, J.P.,

Editor and Proprietor,

The Kaiser-i-Hind.

Dear Sir,

Reference your letter dated 7th October 1922.

Please note British rights have been accorded and not withdrawn from the Parsis, also the officers have been given Honorary King's Commissions which gives them the same status as other officers.

The reasons why Parsis cannot be enrolled in Auxiliary Forces is purely political, if the Parsis are enrolled in the Auxiliary Forces,—why not the other communities in India?

With reference to a scurrilous article signed Chestnut, I am forwarding this to the Government of Bombay with the purpose of having action taken, as it is against the interests of the service to have such harmful matter and false reports being published, and also holds the Battalion up to the ridicule of the public of India. The sooner members of the Battalion either leave the battalion or begin to soldier the better.

Yours faithfully,
H. E. LAVIE,
Lt.-Colonel.

Bombay, 11th October 1922.

To,

The Secretary to the Government of Bombay,
Secretariat,
BOMBAY.

Dear Sir,

Reference the attached correspondence.

I beg to point out that it is having a very detrimental effect on the members of the 1st and 2nd Parsee Pioneers.

They have been accorded with British rights as follows :—

British Clothing
" Rations
" Accommodation including hospital accommodation.

Authority Southern Command letter No. 25548-5-Terr. dated 11th January 1922. The Officers will be given Viceroy's and Honorary King's Commissions. The authority for this has not yet been received but the statement is official, and has been published as such both by the "Pioneer" and the "Times of India".

Can anything be done to put a stop to this and to make an example of 'Chestnut'?

H. E. LAVIE,
Lieut.-Colonel for Major—
General Commanding,
Bombay District.

From :—

Mr. Eracnshaw R. Heerjibehedin, J.P.

To,

Lieut.-Col. H. E. Lavie,
Inspector-General,
Auxiliary and Territorial Forces,
Bombay District.

Dear Sir,

I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated the 11th October, in reply to mine of 7th October 1922.

You point out that the "British rights have been accorded and not withdrawn from the Parsis". On reference to the enclosure with your letter, you distinctly define British rights, accorded to Parsis as :—

" British Clothing
" Rations
" Accommodation "

and nothing more. I beg to point out that nowhere in my letter have I suggested that these elementary rights have been withdrawn. Further I beg to point out that these rights are not exclusive British rights in any sense of the term. For, as you are aware, the Government of India has adopted the policy of upholding the inalienable rights of every community to its own social usages and customs, with reference to clothing, food and accommodation, etc. As you are aware the style of Parsi clothing, food, etc. approximates to those of Europeans, and not to those of Hindus and Mahomedans, and further, for the last fifty years the Parsis have enrolled as British Volunteers, they have been entitled to those inalienable rights of their community. So this disposes of your contention that these are exclusive British rights. Apart from these inalienable rights of the Parsis, what are the other real rights and privileges, which are the inalienable rights and privileges of all British troops, whether Regular or Auxiliary, accorded to the Parsis? Surely, *the Parsi Battalion being a Territorial Battalion is and will be subject only to the rules and regulations formed under the Indian Territorial Forces Act 1920, and so the only rights the Parsis will have will be under the Act*, which is the contention of our correspondent as well.

I beg to point out emphatically that in my letter of 7th October, I have distinctly stated that "Officers and men of the two Battalions are now deprived of their British Commissions and Designations, already granted to them, and are now granted only Native Commissions and Designations". As a distinguished Military authority, you can see that what I meant was Substantive Commissions, and not Honorary. If, as your letter seems to assume, there is no distinction between Substantive and Honorary Commissions, why all this bother, and why have officers been deprived of their substantive British Commissions and Designations?

Your assertion is that "the officers have been given Honorary King's Commissions which gives them the same status as other officers". If that is so, why are their substantive Commissions only Native Officers' Commissions, which according to Indian Army Regulations, rank below the British Officers' Commissions? This is exactly the view, put forward by my correspondent.

So far as your opinion is concerned that the article by Chestnut is scurrilous and contains harmful matter and false reports, not all will agree with it. I for one honestly consider it to be a fair comment on a matter of public interest.

In your letter, you assert that "The reasons why Parsis cannot be enrolled in Auxiliary Forces, is purely political". But as I pointed out in my letter, the Auxiliary Company of Parsis already exists since 1920, and if in this case, the higher authorities had been properly informed, they would have certainly conceded the right of Parsis to join Auxiliary Forces on the basis of a long precedent of the last 50 years.

Finally, pray allow me to point out that your letter of 11th October practically ignores some of the questions which are agitating the minds of all ranks of the Parsi Battalions, and which my paper, as the representative organ of the Parsis, and as one keenly interested in the subject of military training for Parsis, for the last many years, consider as a duty to bring to your notice, for proper solution to soothe the ruffled feelings of those concerned. So I hope that you will be good enough to spare time to send categorical replies to the questions in my letter of the 7th October and oblige.

Yours truly,

ERACHSHAW R. HEERJIBEHEDIN.

Headquarters, Bombay District,
Bombay, 18th October 1922.

To,
The Editor,
The Kaiser-i-Hind,
Sassoon Building,
Elphinstone Circle, Fort.

Dear Sir,

Please note that I refuse to argue, write or express any remarks regarding the Parsi Units. Those men who wish to soldier can soldier, who do not can resign.

Everything in my power is being done and as I am doing my best for the Parsis every minute of the day,—I can do no more.

Yours faithfully,
H. E. LAVIE,
Lt.-Colonel,
Commandant, Auxiliary Force, Bombay.

From the above correspondence, the Parsi public will be able to judge for itself, that we have done our best according to our capacity to champion the Parsi cause against its betrayers, and that Col. Lavie has tried to evade giving a single definite reply, for the simple reason, as we suppose, that he was not in a position to do so, in spite of all the promises and guarantees that he had given in public and in the special interview granted to a contemporary of ours, who has ruined the Parsi cause, through his absolute ignorance of all military matters, and whose responsibility was all the greater as he was and is a member of the Advisory Committee of the P. P. B.

We hear that the self-complacence of the Advisory Committee has been utterly upset by the Communiqué issued by the Military Headquarters at Simla, and in which every word of what we had said with regard to the status and responsibilities of the P. P. B. has been justified, and for which we take natural pride in using our foresight and judgment, in place of short sight and hysteria of our maligners.

We are surprised that in a printed manual, called the Standing Orders of the P. P. B., the local military authorities stated distinctly that the military training for the P. P. B. is limited to what is required for aiding the Civil Power in times of emergency, which means in other words that the P. P. B. is meant for the purposes of internal security only, *i. e.*, is on the same basis as the Auxiliary Battalions, as stated by the Commander-in-Chief, during the recent debate in the Legislative Assembly, from which we had given an excerpt the other day. Now the question is:—Who is right?—the Commander-in-Chief or the Southern Command, under whose direction the Standing Orders are issued by the local authorities. The C.-in-C. distinctly stated that the Territorial Battalions were the reserve of the Indian Army and meant for service wherever required, even outside the limits of India, and he made no exception whatever of the P. P. B. Therefore, we suggest to the Southern Command and the Publicity Officer of the local Government, to clear this evident contradiction between the highest and the local military authorities.

A PARSI MILITARY BETRAYAL. (—II)

What is the Sequel?

THE REMEDY—DISBAND THE PIONEERS (TERRITORIAL), AND RE-ENLIST IN THE AUXILIARY FORCE.

The Communal Cry—"Restore our British Rights and Status".

In our issue of 29th July, we dealt with the grave question of the Parsee Military Betrayal. Since then, our attention has been drawn to the Memorandum addressed to the Parsee Battalions by Major J. St. Abyn King, in which the Major has tried in his own words to remove "some misconceptions which appeared to exist regarding the conditions of service in the 11th and 12th Battalions, 2nd Bombay Pioneers I. T. F." Having carefully considered the explanation given by the Major, we have to draw his attention to the fact that no such misconceptions have been fostered by us in our paper, and that the Memorandum merely repeats what we have already said as to the conditions of service in the P. P. Battalions. We need not repeat all the arguments put forward in our issue of July 29th, but we have to remind the Major once more, that if anybody has any misconceptions of service in the Battalions, it is not we, but the Major himself and the self-appointed self-seeking Advisory Committee, and Colonel Lavie, the late Inspector-General of I. T. F. and A. F. I., and the Southern Command, under whose authority the Standing Orders of the Battalions have been issued. So we shall try to remove these misconceptions, and put our case bluntly and clearly before the Military authorities and the public.

We have been the advocates of military service for more than a decade; we have claimed the right of our community to military training, as the lineal descendants of an ancient martial race of world-renown; and we have preached it as the duty of the Parsi community to be prepared for war, as the only means of preserving peace, and escaping communal annihilation; and finally as the citizens of the greatest Empire of to-day, we consider it a privilege to be prepared for rendering loyal and worthy service to the Government established by law, in times of trouble. Granting all these, let us say emphatically that we are dead against what we call the Parsee Military Betrayal in our issue of 29th July, for the following substantial reasons:—

In the first place, we have protested against the unrepresentative character of the self-seeking Advisory Committee which has brought the hopeful Parsi military movement to such a sad pass, within a year, according to our assured prognostications. Secondly, we have protested against the *absolutely unreasonable, and, as we shall show, unstatesmanlike policy* of Colonel Lavie. Remembering that Parsis are only a small community with such limited numbers, it should have been obvious to any military man with even the least experience, that to expose the youth of such a small community to the undoubted and the assured risk of annihilation at the hands of the enemy on the field of war—particularly with the modern, scientific, destructive armaments of war,—it was absolutely unjustifiable on the part of Colonel Lavie to suggest that Parsi youths should be enrolled in Pioneer Battalions, and let us repeat expose them to an almost certain risk of annihilation. That the Southern Command should have acquiesced in this obviously ill-advised arrangement took away our breath, and *so we have been protesting, ever since the inception of these Battalions, against such a preparation for communal suicide*, on a scale unknown in the history of any small community like ours. We are not cowards and we are not against all reasonable risks involved in military service. But

we know what happened in all previous wars, that the Pioneer Battalions bear the brunt of enemy attack and are practically annihilated. We have at our disposal, the figures of the last war, which are quite well-known to the Indian Military Authorities, so we need not reproduce them here.

PHYSICAL DISQUALIFICATION OF MIDDLE-CLASS PARSIS FOR ENROLMENT IN PIONEER BATTALIONS.

Not only was Colonel Lavie not justified by the paucity of our numbers in enrolling our boys in *Pioneer Battalions*, but as a distinguished Military officer of many years' standing, he should have realised that the poor physique of the Parsee youths and the knowledge of their sedentary habits and the deteriorating influence of school and college life on the physique of Indian students—which is known to the Military as well as Civil authorities of Government, could not possibly justify a military authority in recruiting boys of such poor physique, sedentary habits and low stamina for *Pioneer Battalions*, which require the best physique, active habits and magnificent vitality, which are supposed to be the hall-mark of qualifications for Pioneers.

Our third objection to Colonel Lavie's unreasonable arrangement is against the enrolment of youths of an educated community belonging to the middle class as *mere Sepoys* of Territorial Battalions, who are held in low estimation by Indian public opinion. The *sepoys'* ranks are supposed to be filled in from the masses and not from the classes, and we consider it a degradation for Parsis to be reduced to the position of *sepoys*, after enjoying for 50 years the privileges and rights of British soldiers, who are held in higher estimation by Indian public opinion.

Personally we believe that the *conditions of service* in the I. T. F. cannot and do not preserve the self-respect of our educated, intelligent and progressive community. Not only so, but we may venture to say that amongst the 75 Battalions of the British Army in India, there is not one which can boast of the same standard of education and of life as the P. P. Battalions. We see no reason why our cultured youths should be reduced to the level of illiterate *sepoys*, whose conditions of service are *naturally unsuited to our traditions and habits of life*.

Our fourth objection we have repeatedly put forward in our columns time and again, and we are sorry to say, that we have again to draw the attention of the higher authorities, to the misdirection of Colonel Lavie and misrepresentation of the conditions of service to the Parsi recruits.

In Standing Orders of the P. P. B. on page 4, section 4, sub-section 2, it is clearly stated that "If the C. O. is satisfied that the applicant (recruit) *understands the questions put to him, and consents to the conditions of service*, he shall sign a certificate to that effect on the said Form, and the applicant shall thereupon be deemed enrolled".

We have been positively informed by many Parsi recruits, that Colonel Lavie himself as well as his subordinates, distinctly gave them to understand at the time of signing the Form of enrolment, that they were not going to be enrolled in Territorial Battalions, but in Auxiliary Battalions, and the forms actually supplied by the Colonel and his subordinates were Auxiliary Forms of Enrolment; not only so, but Colonel Lavie's own words and promises on the platform and his interviews reproduced in his favourite journal—the "Jam-e-Jamshed," meant only one thing if anything at all—that *the conditions of service for the Parsee recruits were exactly the same as those of British Territorial Battalions*, and that it was only for the sake of formality, that the Parsi Battalions were called Territorial Battalions instead of Auxiliary. In our correspondence with Colonel Lavie, which we reproduced in our issue of 29th July last, Colonel Lavie takes a somersault, and tells us that "the reasons why Parsis cannot be enrolled

in A. F. I., is purely political". Further, he showed absolute discourtesy to us in replying that "I refuse to argue, write or express any remarks regarding the Parsi Units". His refusal means that he was unable to give any explanation, and we therefore suggest to the higher military authorities at Simla and the Southern Command, to demand an explanation from Colonel Lavie as to his inexplicable attitude in refusing to give an explanation to a journal of our standing, when it is the declared policy of the Government to seek the help of independent journals, which are always loyal to the cause, and secondly to demand an explanation for putting before recruits *unauthorised conditions of service*, and taking their consent on such evident misrepresentations, which are public property in the shape of Colonel Lavie's own words reproduced in the "Jam-e-Jamshed". We want to say positively that we are not making any false charges against Colonel Lavie, but we have protested before and again protest against such misrepresentations of the conditions of service by a Commanding Officer in the position of Colonel Lavie; for it is quite certain, that Colonel Lavie *would not have obtained a single recruit*, if he had told the Parsi recruits that they were to be enrolled as sepoys, without the British rights of soldiers, which our community has enjoyed for the last 50 years, and that they were to be enrolled in a *Pioneer Battalion*, which was going to be exposed to the almost certain risk of annihilation at the very beginning of any war.

**Summary and Conclusions. Disband the P. Pioneers (I. T. F.),
and re-enlist in the Auxiliary Forces. Modify the Conditions of Service,
to suit our limited numbers and capacity. Restore our
British Rights and Status.**

The only conclusion we can arrive at from the facts above-mentioned, is that, the only remedy for the existing dissatisfaction prevailing amongst all ranks of both the Parsi Battalions, as evident from general absence on parade, except of a dozen or two privates, is that the Battalions are getting quite disorganised, and are bound to break up in a short time. To anticipate such a certain eventuality, the only resource left to the military authorities is to disband both the Battalions, and re-enlist those members who are willing to do so, in ordinary Infantry Battalions of the Auxiliary Force. The talk of political reasons against such an arrangement is all nonsense. For we Parsis have enjoyed the right of Volunteering as British soldiers for the last fifty years, so that the long precedent, combined with the fact, that already there is in existence, a Parsi Company of the Auxiliary Force in Bombay, is a sufficient reason for enlisting Parsis in Auxiliary Battalions.

The efficiency and progress shown by the intelligent and smart Parsi recruits of the Pioneer Battalions, was testified to by H. E. the Governor of Bombay after a special parade, at which he was present to take the salute. So that the willingness and the military efficiency of Parsi youths are not, and never have been questioned. The record of our Parsi Volunteers for the last 50 years, and the record of war service of Parsis during the world-war are too-well-known to need recapitulation here. If the Government and the Military Authorities desire our military services as volunteers which we are willing to offer, *the conditions of service must be those of the Auxiliary Forces, modified to suit* (1) our limited numbers, (2) our physical disqualification as rough Pioneers, (3) our inability to supply any further drafts in case of heavy casualties in war—these three reasons suggest that our services should be reserved for Home Defence—(4) our moderate stake in the country, compared to that of our sister communities; (5) our disinclination to serve in the humble capacity of sepoys of the I. T. F.—a humiliating status, which no educated and enlightened community could ever accept under any circumstances. Otherwise we can anticipate without much doubt, that the two Pioneer Battalions, with their sadly dwindling ranks, will melt away into nothing, by following the advise of Colonel Lavie, who in his reply to us dated 18th October 1922, *gave them the option of resigning at will, e.g., "those men who wish to soldier can soldier, who do not can resign"*.