



IN SERVICE OF SECURITY

THE POLITICS AND EVERYDAY EXPERIENCES
OF MILITARY LABOUR ACROSS ASIA

25-26 January 2024

For more information | www.ari.nus.edu.sg/events/military-labour/

This workshop is organized by the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore (NUS); with support from the NUS Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences.

This workshop focuses on military labour since the decolonizing decades of the 20th century (1950s to the present) in both inter-and intra-Asian contexts. By using military labour as a generative lens, we aim to explore the fundamental interplay between security institutions and societal dynamics in Asia. Our inquiry includes a diverse range of state security institutions and actors, such as the Cold War-era Thai Border Police, the resettled Kuomintang soldiers in Taiwan, the pervasive presence of Gurkha soldiers within South and Southeast Asian militaries and police forces, the dynamics of the postcolonial Indian army and paramilitaries etc. We are also interested in how these state security institutions blur with a range of other actors, infrastructures, imaginaries, and connections in their everyday lives, shaped by sociocultural and historical dynamics. The workshop will bring together scholars from different fields in the social sciences and humanities to discuss situated cases of military labour and explore the inter-Asian and global circulations of ideas, people, and technologies, and legacies of war. Through this exploration, we aspire to transcend conventional, limited notions of military history and strategic studies, revealing military labour as a dynamic ethno-historical field that extends beyond traditional security perspectives and narrow frontline narratives.

By placing empirically grounded research projects on the labours of soldiering in conversation with theoretical work on militarism, imperialism, decolonization, and nationalism, the workshop will center questions of labour, gender, race, class, and citizenship in the understanding of security state formation and legacies of war and colonialism in Asia. In decentering both a 9/11-centered genealogy of contemporary security regimes and a traditional strategic studies approach to security, the workshop thus invites explorations grounded in regional histories, lived experiences, and gendered political economies in/of Asia. As such, the workshop and its resultant publications seek to rethink the sites, relations, and stakes of military labour.

We invite original and previously unpublished submissions that explore themes and subjects related to soldiering in Asia within the broad context of historical and post-colonial linkages; transnational interactions; gender and family dynamics; everyday experiences; emotions and affect; visual cultures, and, citizenship, belonging and identity. Papers need not be limited to but should seek to address one or more of the following questions:

- How do ethnicity, race, class, caste, and gender shape roles, trajectories, and experiences within security institutions and popular understandings of them?
- In what ways are security institutions and military labor sites of producing identity and belonging, including those tied to citizenship?
- How are everyday lives in spaces of dwelling such as military camps, family quarters, and translocal households constitutive of soldiering and security institutions? What are the wider social, economic, legal and political implications for families who become connected to soldiering?
- How are various security institutions (e.g., army, police, paramilitaries, third country nationals, etc) connected to postcolonial nation-state formation, possibly involving inter-Asian connections?
- What role does affect (e.g., loyalty, love, grief) play in shaping the value of military labour and linking it to citizenship?
- What role does visibility and visual cultures play in making meaning and value in relation to military labor?
- How can we understand the intersections between civilian and military spheres, and in what ways does it produce inequalities and impact rights, entitlements, welfare benefits, and citizenship pathways?
- Within the context of inter-Asian expertise and flows, what are the trans/national economies, connections, and politics that shape training, technologies, governance, and experiences of soldiering as well as antimilitarism and anti-war struggles?

WORKSHOP CONVENORS

Dr Hema Kiruppalini | Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore

Asst Prof Sahana Ghosh | Department of Sociology & Anthropology, National University of Singapore

PROGRAM AT-A-GLANCE

DATE	TIME (SGT)	PANEL SESSION
25 Jan 2024 (Thu)	10:00 – 10:20	WELCOME & INTRODUCTORY REMARKS
	10:20 – 12:20	PANEL 1 – CITIZENSHIP, INEQUALITIES, HIERARCHIES
	13:30 – 15:30	PANEL 2 – FRAMING SOLDIERING
	16:00 – 17:15	KEYNOTE ADDRESS
	18:00 – 19:30	WORKSHOP DINNER <i>(For Speakers & Chairpersons only)</i>
26 Jan 2024 (Fri)	09:30 – 11:30	PANEL 3 – CIVILIAN (AS) COMBATANTS: RETHINKING SECURITY ACTORS
	12:30 – 14:30	PANEL 4 – INTER-ASIA IMAGINARIES AND MEMORY POLITICS
	15:00 – 16:50	PANEL 5 – IDEOLOGIES AND INSTITUTIONS: DECOLONIZATION AND ITS LEGACIES
	17:00 – 18:00	SUMMARY & CLOSING REMARKS

25 JANUARY 2024 • THURSDAY

10:00 – 10:20	WELCOME AND INTRODUCTORY REMARKS Tim Winter <i>National University of Singapore</i> Hema Kiruppalini <i>National University of Singapore</i> Sahana Ghosh <i>National University of Singapore</i>
10:20 – 12:20	PANEL 1 – CITIZENSHIP, INEQUALITIES, HIERARCHIES
<i>Chairperson</i>	Hema Kiruppalini <i>National University of Singapore</i>
	The Indian Army's <i>Sahayak</i> System and the Practices and Politics of Categorizing Military Labor Taveeshi Singh <i>Syracuse University</i>
<i>online</i>	Loyalty without Patriotism: The Case of the Nepali Gorkha Soldiers in the Indian Army Amit Ahuja <i>University of California - Santa Barbara</i>
	Soldiers as Second Class Citizens? Japanese Self-Defense Forces Personnel during the Cold War Period Hiroko Matsuda <i>Kobe Gakuin University</i>
<i>online</i>	Recasting Military Heroism during the 2017 Marawi War (Philippines): Implications for Women in the Force Rosalie Arcala Hall <i>University of the Philippines Visayas</i>
	COMMENTS BY DISCUSSANT Noah Coburn <i>Goddard College</i>
	DISCUSSION
12:20 – 13:30	LUNCH

13:30 – 15:30	PANEL 2 – FRAMING SOLDIERING
<i>Chairperson</i>	Jacob Rinck <i>National University of Singapore</i>
	Diary and Photo: The Experience of the Netherlands Army in West Sumatra 1949-1950s Erniwati <i>Universitas Negeri Padang</i> Zulfa Saumia <i>Universitas Jambi</i>
	Working through Tweets: Social Media and Self-fashioning for the Indian Border Security Force Sahana Ghosh <i>National University of Singapore</i>
<i>online</i>	We Become What We See: Transforming Masculinized Military Labour in Post-war Sri Lanka Thilina Madiwala <i>University of Queensland</i>
	The Economic and Social Life of Thai Soldiers in the Cold War Years Viriya Sawangchot <i>Walailak University</i>
	COMMENTS BY DISCUSSANT Sabine Frühstück <i>University of California - Santa Barbara</i>
	DISCUSSION
15:30 – 16:00	TEA BREAK
16:00 – 17:15	KEYNOTE ADDRESS
<i>Chairperson</i>	Sahana Ghosh <i>National University of Singapore</i>
	The Labor of Peace in Japan and Elsewhere Sabine Frühstück <i>University of California - Santa Barbara</i>
	QUESTIONS & ANSWERS
17:15	END OF DAY 1
18:00 – 19:30	WORKSHOP DINNER (<i>For Speakers & Chairpersons only</i>)

26 JANUARY 2024 • FRIDAY

09:30 – 11:30	PANEL 3 – CIVILIAN (AS) COMBATANTS: RETHINKING SECURITY ACTORS
<i>Chairperson</i>	Jacob Rinck <i>National University of Singapore</i>
	Gangsters or Guerrillas?: Naga Military Labor and Shadow Governance after Global War and Decolonization in India's Eastern Borderlands Aditya Kiran Kakati <i>University of Amsterdam and SOAS, London University</i>
<i>online</i>	Farmers, Soldiers, and Ghostheads: Laboring in the Minefields of Cambodia Darcie DeAngelo <i>University of Oklahoma</i>
	Gendered Military Labour as a Site for Rethinking In/Security: A Study of Indian Army Wives' Security Narratives Kiran Chauhan <i>Jawaharlal Nehru University</i>
	The Interplay between Ethnicity, Religion, and Subnational Citizenship in Shaping Military Labor during Insurgency Period: Case of Tentara Neugara Aceh (TNA) during 1976-2005 Wasisto Raharjo Jati <i>National Research and Innovation Agency</i>
	COMMENTS BY DISCUSSANT Ameem Lutfi <i>Lahore University of Management Sciences</i>
	DISCUSSION
11:30 – 12:30	LUNCH
12:30 – 14:30	PANEL 4 – INTER-ASIA IMAGINARIES AND MEMORY POLITICS
<i>Chairperson</i>	Sahana Ghosh <i>National University of Singapore</i>
	Arms and Arms That Carry Them: Microhistory of Military Labor Market in Interwar Persian Gulf Ameem Lutfi <i>Lahore University of Management Sciences</i>
	Cemeteries as Method: Unearthing Subalternity through Gurkha 'Family Lines' in British Malaya Hema Kiruppalini <i>National University of Singapore</i>
	"A Militant's Life is Short": The Hukawng as a Political Geography of Indigenous 'Rebel' and 'Security' Cosmopolitanisms across India, Burma and China Jasnea Sarma <i>University of Zurich</i>
<i>online</i>	Dying for Whom? The Politics of Death Commemoration and Vietnamese Identity during the First Indochina War Andrew Bellisari <i>Fulbright University Vietnam</i>
	COMMENTS BY DISCUSSANT Gyanesh Kudaisya <i>National University of Singapore</i>
	DISCUSSION
14:30 – 15:00	TEA BREAK

15:00 – 16:50	PANEL 5 – IDEOLOGIES AND INSTITUTIONS: DECOLONIZATION AND ITS LEGACIES
<i>Chairperson</i>	Hema Kiruppalini <i>National University of Singapore</i>
	Perspectives on Military Education and Institution-building in India: 1947-1960 Vipul Dutta <i>Indian Institute of Technology - Guwahati</i>
	Black Skin, White Cause: <i>Belanda Hitam</i> and <i>Force Noire</i> in Indochina and Indonesia during World War II Yvonne Tan <i>Independent Researcher</i>
	“Keep Watching on University Students, Workers, Civil Officers, and Traitors among Us”: Ideology and Perception of the Thai Army during the Communist Insurgency Period (1973-1976) Pattarat Phantprasit <i>Science, Technology, and Innovation Policy Institute</i>
	COMMENTS BY DISCUSSANT Matthew Reeder <i>National University of Singapore</i>
	DISCUSSION
16:50 – 17:00	BREAK
17:00 – 18:00	SUMMARY & CLOSING REMARKS Sahana Ghosh <i>National University of Singapore</i> Hema Kiruppalini <i>National University of Singapore</i>
18:00	END OF WORKSHOP

The Indian Army's *Sahayak* System and the Practices and Politics of Categorizing Military Labor

Taveeshi Singh
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In this paper, I spotlight the figure of the *sahayak* (translated from Hindi as “assistant/helper”, formerly referred to as “batman/orderly”), a combatant soldier in the Indian army, officially responsible for providing operational support to officers in the field service, but who functions, in a practical sense, as a state-sponsored domestic servant. The paper explores the ways in which labor ideologies are encoded and reproduced in discourses of/about the military and the army's *sahayak* system through idioms of work and its valuations as they relate to the figures of the *jawan* (in Hindi, soldier) and the *sahayak*.

During the period of December 2016 – June 2017, the question of what it means for a *jawan* (in Hindi, soldier) to do household labor as an officer's *sahayak* erupted as a matter of great controversy in the Indian news media, governmental, and military spheres. Thrown into crisis by the controversy over *sahayaks* performing menial work, the question arose of how the image of the *jawan*, deemed the symbolic protector of the nation, could be redeemed. Restoring the figure of the *jawan* from a state of humiliation to honor, I show, involved recasting the *sahayak* discursively as the officers' “support staff” or “buddy” in morally acceptable roles that conceal the implications of servility and subjugation in the everyday practice of the *sahayak* system.

By closely examining the practices and politics of categorizing military labor and work in relation to these figures, I move the *sahayak* system outside the bounds of the strategic and practical concerns over its appropriate use and situate it in the broader context of Indian society's ideas about work. This approach denaturalizes hierarchies of labor that privilege the status of combatant and enables a critical assessment of “the value and recognized worth of particular kinds of work” (Butt, Hayat, and Sargent, 2020).

Straddling the ambiguous area between free and unfree, martial and menial, and masculinized and feminized labor, the figure of the *sahayak* emerges as the locus of nationalist and military discourses of labor, grounded in notions of dignity, humiliation, kinship, and security. In essence, I contend, the *sahayak* controversy poses a threat to the culturally revered status of the *jawan*, necessitating the creation of new soldierly figurations, and brings to the fore moral anxieties about citizenship, masculinity, and India's postcolonial trajectory.

Taveeshi Singh is a PhD candidate in the interdisciplinary Social Science Program, with a designated specialization in Women's and Gender Studies, at Syracuse University's Maxwell School of Citizenship & Public Affairs. Her current research project, *Domestic Exertions: Soldier-servants, Military Elites, and Securitized Labor in India*, examines the politics of gender, caste, labor and nation in the Indian Army's *sahayak* system. Singh's research and teaching interests include Gender and Labor, Critical Militarization and Security Studies, Race, Caste, Class and State, International Development and Critical Globalization Studies, Transnational, U.S. Women of Color and Anti-caste Feminisms, Decolonial, Ethnographic and Feminist Methodologies, and South Asia. Her work is published in *Gender, Place, and Culture: A Journal of Feminist Geography*, *Films for the Feminist Classroom*, *Humanities and Social Sciences Online*, and by *Haymarket Publications*. Singh is co-editor of the *Feminist Freedom Warriors* project and was previously a visiting instructor of Women's and Gender Studies at Hamilton College. She has received several awards for her research, teaching and service, including the Loren Frankel Memorial Scholarship, the Women of Color Leadership Fellowship, the Democratizing Knowledge Fellowship, the Diane Lynden Murphy Bread and Roses Award, and the Maxwell Citizenship Initiative Research Grant.

Loyalty without Patriotism: The Case of the Nepali Gorkha Soldiers in the Indian Army

Amit Ahuja

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The Nepali presence in the Indian Army should have ended at the end of the British Raj. It did not. Instead, it steadily increased over time. The participation of Nepali Gurkhas in the Indian Army is puzzling at multiple levels. India is a labor surplus country in which military jobs are seriously oversubscribed. Still, the Indian Army recruited Nepali Gorkhas denying her own citizens jobs in the military. Gorkhas, on their part, did not serve in the Indian Army in search of a path to Indian citizenship. They also did not serve as mercenaries. They participated in all of India's wars and numerous internal security operations with distinction. Drawing on in-depth interviews with Nepali Gorkha soldiers and Indian officers who have commanded these soldiers, my paper will explain the roots of this unique relationship and the institutional norms that sustained it. It will also consider the implication of this relationship for our understanding of national armies.

Amit Ahuja is Associate Professor of Political Science at the University of California, Santa Barbara. His research focuses on the processes of inclusion and exclusion in diverse societies. He is the author of *Mobilizing the Marginalized: Ethnic Parties without Ethnic Movements* and the co-editor of *Internal Security in India: Violence, Order, and the State*, both published by Oxford University Press (New York). He is currently working on a book manuscript titled *Building National Armies in Multiethnic States*.

Soldiers as Second Class Citizens? Japanese Self-Defense Forces Personnel during the Cold War Period

Hiroko Matsuda

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Today, the Japanese Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) is considered one of the most powerful militaries on earth, with over 1,400 military aircraft and 111,000 vehicles. It was established in 1954 based on the National Safety Forces (Hoantai) and the National Police Reserve (Keisatsu Yobitai) that had been set up by order of the Supreme Commander for the Allied Power (SCAP) soon after the Korean War broke out. From the beginning, the legal status of the JSDF has been questioned because Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution formally renounces the sovereign right of belligerency, stating, “land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained.” Despite its controversial legal status, the JSDF has gained popular support to date. However, social discrimination against JSDF personnel became an issue during the 1960s and 1970s. For instance, some university offices, including national (public) universities, refused the enrolment of JSDF personnel to their programs. Several local governments refused JSDF personnel’s resident registration, in effect barring them from receiving any government-provided social services. In exploring JSDF personnel’s experiences of social discrimination, it elucidates the political and social backgrounds behind this phenomenon. I argue that the discriminatory treatment against JSDF personnel was a product of social conflicts over ideological rivalries during the 1960s and 1970s in Japan. My paper then elaborates the ways in which the civil-military (JSDF) relationship was formed during the Cold War era.

Hiroko Matsuda is Professor at the Faculty of Contemporary Social Studies of Kobe Gakuin University, Japan. She received her doctoral degree in History from the Australian National University. She was a postdoctoral fellow of Asia Research Institute (2007-2008) and the Institute of Taiwan History, Academia Sinica (2008-2010). She is the author of *Liminality of the Japanese Empire: Border Crossings from Okinawa to Colonial Taiwan* (University of Hawai’i Press, 2019) and the co-editor of *Rethinking Postwar Okinawa: Beyond American Occupation* (Lexington Books, 2017). Her recent publications in Japanese include: “Kôdo Keizai seichôki Nihon no gunjika to chiiki shakai: Ishikawa-ken Komatsu-shi no Jettoki kichi to bôei hakurankai (Militarization of Japanese Local Communities during the High Economic Growth Period: On the SDF Air Base and Komatsu Defense Exhibition, Ishikawa Prefecture)” in *Shakaigaku hyoron (Japanese Sociological Review)* 72 (3) and “Tôkyô Tachikawa hikojô e no jieitai ichû wo meguru kichi hunsô, 1968-1978 (Base Politics over the Relocation of the Japan Self-Defense Forces to Tachikawa Airfield (1968-1978))” in *Ritsumeikan Heiwa Kenkyû (The Ritsumeikan Journal of Peace Studies)* vol. 24.

Recasting Military Heroism during the 2017 Marawi War (Philippines): Implications for Women in the Force

Rosalie Arcala Hall

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Women have been integrated as commissioned officers and enlistees in the Philippine military since 1994. Various changes were instituted allowing them into infantry and armor units deployed for internal security missions. To increase their number, the army posed a 10% quota on female recruitment and provided for separate facilities for them in operational units. While still generally shut out from combat roles, females in the force have a strong presence in combat arms support and service units, and long experience in frontline deployment alongside male cohorts for civil-military operations. The 5-month Marawi war against ISIS-linked terrorists in 2017 was an apogee with the deployment of all-female *hijab* troopers, enlisted non-Muslim women with head covering, in evacuation centers and checkpoints. The *hijab* troopers were cited as instrumental in swaying public opinion towards supporting the military in its armed campaign.

This paper looks into the polymorphism trend in heroism discourse pointing to accommodation of non-combat roles and legitimacy-seeking focus of military institutions, with openings for the functional and symbolic values of female uniformed personnel. Using the 2017 Marawi war as case study, the paper traces shifts in the social construction of heroism in the Philippine military accommodating civilian protection as heroic tasks alongside the feminine whose caring image was vital in the military's goal of gaining public approval. The paper draws data from 21 interviews of line commanders and 32 separate FGDs with male and female officers and enlisted personnel from the Army special forces and select infantry units, in line with a Philippine Army commissioned research on women integration, and an Australian National University-funded research on civil-military engagements during the Marawi war in 2017-2018. The data was content analyzed extracting key themes on heroism.

Rosalie Arcala Hall is Professor of Political Science and Scientist III at the University of the Philippines Visayas (UPV) Miagao, Iloilo. She completed her Masters's degree in Political Science (1998) and PhD in International and Public Affairs (2002) at Northeastern University, Boston, Massachusetts, USA, on a Fulbright-Hayes scholarship. She completed research projects on civil-military relations, female and rebel integration in the army, Bangsamoro security arrangements, and irregular forces with grants from Toyota Foundation, Toyota Foundation, Austrian Exchange Services, and the Australian National University. Her most recent works are co-edited volumes *Pathways for Irregular Forces in Southeast Asia: Mitigating Violence with Non-State Armed Groups* (Routledge, 2021) and *Military Operation and Engagement in the Domestic Jurisdiction* (Brill, 2022). She is a member of the Philippine Commission on Higher Education Technical Committee on Political Science, and past President of the Philippine Political Science Association (2019-2021).

Diary and Photo: The Experience of the Netherlands Army in West Sumatra 1949-1950s

Erniwati

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Much research has been carried out regarding the presence of the Dutch Army in Indonesia after Indonesia proclaimed independence on 17 August 1945. Remy Limpach studied the violence in the Dutch Army, while Oostindie focused on the daily life of Dutch Soldiers in Indonesia. Hidskes documents his father's experiences as a Dutch soldier in Sulawesi. This study inspired researchers to write an article about the life of a Dutch soldier who served in West Sumatra at the end of the Indonesian Revolution. Due to their time in the Dutch Army, soldiers faced more than their share of war, violence, and the demands of their superiors. They should also involve aspects of everyday life, which we will cover in this article. This includes their exercise routines, recreational activities, and maintaining spiritual strength despite war situations. Do not forget how they felt after returning to their home country and reorganising their lives after the 1950s. This article uses a historical approach by relying on photos, diaries and NEFIS documents as primary sources. The source of the photo is explained in the diary, showing how the photo depicts events from another person's perspective. Halbwachs stated that these memories can provide an accurate picture of the experiences of a group of people with similar memories of an event. Such memories will be saved if they leave a special impression; otherwise, they will be forgotten. Therefore, whether we keep or forget a memory depends on its emotional impact on us and its significance.

Erniwati is currently a lecturer at Padang State University in the History Education study program and Postgraduate study program. Scientific publications over the last 5 years, namely, Ofianto, Erniwati, Azmi Fitriana, et al 2023, "Development of Online Local History Learning Media Based on Virtual Field to Enhance the Use of Primary Source Evidence", *European Journal of Education Research*, 2 Vol 12. Erniwati, "Everyday life of the Chinese in Revolutionary Padang 1945-1948" in Bambang Purwanto et al (ed), 2023, *Revolutionary Worlds : Local Perspective and Dynamics During the Indonesian Independence War 1945-1949*, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, p 355- 378, Erniwati, Arie Ulfa, Yelda Syafrina, Zulfa Saumia, Hendra Naldi, Surtani, Khairul Nizam, The Changes Spread of Settlements of Chinese Padang, Indonesia, *Indonesian Journal of Geography* Vol 55, No.2 (2023), p.264- 274. Erniwati, Zulfa Saumia, 2020, *Menghisap Tembakau*, Padang: Adityawarman Museum, Erniwati, et al, 2019, *Samaun Bakri: Fighting for the Republic Until the End of Life*, Yogyakarta: Gee Publisher.

Zulfa Saumia is currently a lecturer at Jambi University in the History study program. Scientific publications over the last 5 years, namely, Erniwati, Arie Ulfa, Yelda Syafrina, Zulfa Saumia, Hendra Naldi, Surtani, Khairul Nizam, The Changes Spread of Settlements of Chinese Padang, Indonesia, *Indonesian Journal of Geography* Vol 55, No.2 (2023), p.264-274; Zulfa Saumia, Early Records of Chinese Kongs in Tanjungpinang in the Early 20th Century, *Lembaran Sejarah* 17 (2), 146-158), Zulfa Saumia, E Erniwati, Tiong. Hwa Hwe Koan (THHK): Association of Chinese People During the Dutch East Indies in Padang, *Jurnal Penelitian Sejarah dan Budaya*, 9 (1), 27-46. Saumia, Zulfa. 2023. Orang Tionghoa, Perkebunan Gambir, Lada Dan Kontestasi Di Tanjungpinang Abad KE-19. *Paradigma: Jurnal Kajian Budaya* 13, no. 2 (August). 10.17510/paradigma.v13i2.1067. Erniwati, Zulfa Saumia, 2020, *Menghisap Tembakau*, Padang: Adityawarman Museum.

Working through Tweets: Social Media and Self-fashioning for the Indian Border Security Force

Sahana Ghosh

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In an age of digital image making and storytelling, state security institutions have turned to social media as platforms through which to communicate with citizenry and shape public perceptions, often bypassing traditional print news media. In this paper, I analyze a dataset I have assembled of tweets by the Indian Border Security Force's (BSF) official handle (2015-2022). The BSF is an armed force and numerically the largest border guarding force in the world; it was established in 1968 at a time when the postcolonial Indian state was reimagining its security institutions in the aftermath of two wars. At a descriptive level the paper presents key trends: what kinds of work are the BSF soldiers shown doing? What are the sites at which BSF soldiers are depicted operating? With what kinds of emotions and messaging are images framed in the accompanying text? Building from this empirical analysis, the paper identifies tensions and contradictions that surface in the BSF's self-fashioning and work over almost a decade: notably, around soldiering as heroic and difficult work on the one hand and humanitarian service to compatriots and country on the other hand. Paying close attention to the gendered and affective terms in which the work of the BSF is characterized in tweets, the paper argues that social media is not only a medium but becomes a site where these questions of meaning making and the value of soldiering – salient to all security institutions in democratic societies – in need of continuous consolidation, and always open to being contested, are worked out.

Sahana Ghosh is Assistant Professor with the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at the National University of Singapore. She received her PhD in Sociocultural Anthropology and Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies from Yale University. Her primary research interests are borders and borderlands, mobility, gender and sexuality, critical security studies, ethnography of the state, transnational and postcolonial feminism, South Asia, space and value, labor studies, and feminist and decolonial pedagogy. She is currently researching the gendered labors of soldiering in India and the transnational governance of labor migration through the prism of Bangladesh.

We Become What We See: Transforming Masculinized Military Labour in Post-war Sri Lanka

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During the fourteen years since the civil war of Sri Lanka ended, the military has adopted the provision of military labour through new strategies to expand the militarization of the Sri Lankan society. These strategies especially by the Sri Lanka Army range from running beach resorts, farming to building Buddhist temples which is different from the mainstream masculinized role of the combat fighting or even saving civilian lives during natural disasters. The Rajapakse brother who was the former Defence Secretary during the end of the civil war getting elected as the President ten years after the end of the war, saw a new chapter of the Sri Lanka Army and the provision of its military labour. Media publicity adopted by the Sri Lanka Army played a significant role in the politics and everyday experience of military labour in Sri Lanka which manifested a new narrative. This paper seeks to explore this new narrative through images from the Sri Lanka Army calendar for year 2022 which were shared on social media. This paper further seeks to understand how the Sinhala Buddhist society make meaning and value of military labour through their everyday experiences of visualized military labour. By critically engaging with constructions of gender and the critical implications of gendered language and representations that are developed and invoked in such every day depictions, I argue that through these images, the Sri Lanka Army portray its provisioning of military labour to shift from a militarised masculine role to a benevolent masculine role.

Thilina Madiwala is a Sri Lankan feminist peacebuilder, an accredited mediator in Australia and a Master's student in Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Queensland. She is a Deputy Editor of the *Australian Women and Gender Studies Association Journal*, portfolio Co-Lead for Intersectionality and a post-graduate representative. Her undergraduate dissertation was on the impact of NGO-based Microfinance on women-owned small businesses and the socio-economic aspect of their household in Sri Lanka. Before arriving in Australia, she was a founder-director of a Sri Lankan registered women's organisation, a freelance trainer, facilitator, researcher, counsellor, fundraiser, a lobbyist and an activist for women and girls' rights. She continues her online activism through #WeVoice, a Facebook group created for women in all diversities to voice their lived experiences. Her research interests are on intersectionality, militarised masculinities, First Nations women's access to justice, feminist peace research and conflict-related sexual violence.

The Economic and Social Life of Thai Soldiers in the Cold War Years

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Recently, there has been much public information about Thai veteran soldiers who fought in the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and the Laotian Civil War. Most of this information concentrated on stories of battlefield and fighting experiences. There are few focuses on the economic and social life of Thai soldiers in these periods. In addition, I would like to argue that the Laotian Civil War, not the Vietnam War, should be a central narrative that illustrates the reason that the Thai army engaged in the Cold War in Southeast Asia from 1961 to 1974.

Therefore, this paper seeks to fill the gaps in the narratives of the war in Laos by delving into the life of Colonel Prayoon Sawangchote (1931-2013), my father and his fellow who held the Thai army unit to early engage in the Laotian Civil War conflict in 1961. All of them had to resign from the Thai Royal Army because there were no foreign soldiers in the Laotian Civil War (1959-1975). Actually, they had, and my father was one of them. And it was his first war. Additionally, the paper explores the narrative of Tahan Sue Pran, a new form of Thai armed volunteer who served in Laos between 1970 and 1974. The differences in the forms of military labour and identities of these two groups will be discussed in terms of values, rewards, and prestige, reflecting the economic, social, and cultural entanglements at the peaks of the Cold War in Southeast Asia. The differences in the forms of military labor and identities of these two groups will be discussed in terms of values, rewards, and prestige, reflecting the economic, social, and cultural entanglements at the peaks of the Cold War in Southeast Asia.

Viriya Sawangchot is a senior researcher at the Center of Geosocial and Cultural Research (CGCR), Walailak University, Thailand. His research interests are in modern Asian thought, popular music in Asia, and creative industries. He is the editor of the forthcoming commentary on Thai popular music, *Made in Thailand*, by Routledge.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

The Labor of Peace in Japan and Elsewhere

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This talk describes a core paradox of Japan's security make-up. Whether the preliminary result of a much longer term "salami tactic" (Richard Samuel), "evolutionary change" (Sheila Smith), a "radical military trajectory" (Chris Hughes) or triggered by the current situation in the region, Japan's Prime Minister Kishida Fumio's administration released in 2022 three national security documents that collectively aim to "fundamentally reinforce national defense capabilities" through massive increases in military funding, a new commitment to counterstrike capabilities, and ultimately the ability to sustain prolonged combat operations. For three generations and more, however, popular support for the military has been fragile. Military public relations specialists have carefully crafted the image of the service member as ordinary laborer for peace. Particularly since the Kobe-Awaji earthquake on 17 January 1995 and the triple disaster in northeastern Japan on 11 March 2011, recruits have been drawn to the charge of rescuing and caring for survivors of natural disasters across the archipelago and/or, in the context of peacekeeping operations, of armed conflict far beyond rather than being imbued with the will to kill and die. How do the legacies of empire, longstanding anti-militarist social values, and the worldwide increasing ambivalence of the young generation towards the state shape the human element in service of security?

Sabine Frühstück is the Koichi Takashima Chair and Professor of Modern Japanese Cultural Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara. She mostly studies modern and contemporary Japanese culture in its global context, believes in building synergies, aims to rethink the conventions of scholarly work, and likes to probe national, cultural, and disciplinary boundaries. Key publications include *Gender and Sexuality in Modern Japan* (Cambridge UP, 2023), *Playing War: Children and the Modern Paradoxes of Militarism in Japan* (UC Press, 2017), and *Uneasy Warriors: Gender, Memory and Popular Culture in the Japanese Army* (UC Press, 2007) along with special issues on queer Japan in *Asian Anthropology* (2022) and on children in East Asian history in the *Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* (2023). Her scholarship has also appeared in Japanese, French, Russian, and German.

Gangsters or Guerrillas?: Naga Military Labor and Shadow Governance after Global War and Decolonization in India's Eastern Borderlands

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Naga nationalism's genesis traces back to the World Wars, notably WWII, that mobilized Nagas inhabiting the British Indo-Burmese frontier. Post-WWII, Nagas ambiguously employed colonial and imperial military identities to challenge Indian decolonization (1945-1955). Civil disobedience, led by anti-colonial WWII veterans like A.Z. Phizo, evolved into violent secessionism in 1954-55 when the Naga Republic was declared, sparking guerrilla warfare and brutal Indian counterinsurgency measures that fractured Naga society.

Contrary to binary views of Naga rejection of Indian state-building, using historical approaches, I argue that Naga dissatisfaction with decolonization using WWII Naga veterans, accelerated Indian securitization initially, followed by incremental nation-building in the 1960s. Erstwhile "frontier governance" shifted to heightened securitization and militarization via coercive development, plunging Naga society into a state of "total war." This brutal approach drew from British decolonization experiences in Kenya and Malaya and incentives that fueled factionalism and violence within the Naga movement, establishing new hierarchies involving coercion and co-option with the postcolonial state, that newly re-employed military laborers.

The violent shift reactivated armed actors and international mediators, leveraging wartime ties. Non-state armed actors navigated the state's shadows, shaping conflict and peace-building, and yielding contested, competing, and fragmented sovereignty. Competing opponents were termed "gangsters" and "hostiles" by states to delegitimize sovereignty claims. Shifting political alignments of loyalties blurred distinctions between state and non-state, couched in new decolonial state-making vocabularies.

In the shadows of the state, remobilized non-state armed actors exhibited agency by drawing from WWII's globalized guerrilla doctrines and loyalties. This reactivation led to a prolonged, multifaceted struggle for sovereignty and legitimacy. It culminated in the first Indo-Naga ceasefire in 1964, spurred by the 1962 Sino-Indian conflict, both influencing military identities and labor, perpetuating the "ceasefire capitalism" era shaping Naga citizenship today. I trace these trajectories using historical examination through a range of public and private archives.

Aditya Kiran Kakati is a visiting scholar, University of Amsterdam (UvA) and an affiliate research fellow at the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS) and at The Highland Institute, Kohima, Nagaland. Aditya works as an Associate Editor for *The Highlander Journal*, which seeks to promote conversations on global highlands to push the boundaries of traditional area studies. His postdoctoral project at UvA and SOAS was titled, *Blind Spots and Blank Spaces: Borderworlds and Frontiers at Large (1944-1962)*, asks how certain places become 'remote' locations despite being part of events with global repercussions like the Second World War (WWII) and decolonization. His dissertation was titled *Living on the Edge: How encounters with global war (WWII) re-made the Indo-Burma frontiers into bordered-worlds*, which is under revision as a book manuscript. Aditya hails from Assam, India, and holds a PhD in International History (with Minor in Anthropology and Sociology) from the Graduate Institute, Geneva.

Farmers, Soldiers, and Ghostheads: Laboring in the Minefields of Cambodia

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Today, Cambodian veterans describe a series of shifting loyalties that occurred over decades of civil war. When one army took over a regime, its generals conscripted villagers who had been fighting on the opposite side. In these armies, villagers-turned-soldiers installed millions of landmines in their country's soil. In the contemporary, the landmines must be unearthed safely, and many of these soldiers find employment disarming the country. But the stigma of war and death and the distrust of state authorities throw even acts of demining the country under a shadow of suspicion. Villagers equate deminers with the violence of soldiers. Indeed, sometimes the state deploys these deminers to enforce border patrols and land grabs. Likewise, the demining platoons (as they are called) often have people who have undergone multiple conscriptions, resulting in teams where former enemies must learn to work together. This paper profiles typical career trajectories for deminers, assessing their transitions from civilian to military to post-conflict lives. Drawing from ethnographic data among deminers, it considers how legacies of the past find purchase in stigmas the deminers face as well as the ongoing state violence villagers face such as land grabbing and forced migration. It considers the potential for increasing state legitimacy and decreasing the stigma of former combatants through demining, but also acknowledges the current atmospheres of suspicion even in the field of disarmament.

Darcie DeAngelo is Assistant Professor in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Oklahoma. As an environmental and medical anthropologist trained in visual methods, her work engages with human-nonhuman relations such as the love between landmine detection rats and their handlers, the excitement of dogs and humans as they hunt for rats in cities, and the kinship of humans and their sourdough starters. She is currently the Annie Clark Tanner Fellow in Environmental Humanities at the University of Utah where she is writing her second book, *For the Love of Rats*, which explores the surprising relationships between rats and humans across time and space. She also edits the journal, *Visual Anthropology Review*. Find more of her work here: <https://www.darcie-deangelo.com/>

Gendered Military Labour as a Site for Rethinking In/Security: A Study of Indian Army Wives' Security Narratives

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In the realm of military affairs, the focus remains towards soldiers in the war or training fields, safeguarding the state's security. However, this paper delves into women's perspective of security by examining the gendered "military labour" of Indian Army wives. Beyond the conventional battlefronts, the home front and military cantonment areas emerge as crucial sites of military labor. Here, army wives shoulder the responsibilities of the 'home front,' shifting the referent of security from the state to the people and community. This labor, undertaken individually and collectively, unfolds within the confines of cantonment areas, intimately entwined with notions of in/security in the "home front."

Focusing on the context of Indian Army wives, the study centers on the Army Wives Welfare Association (AWWA). Challenging prevailing narratives, this paper seeks to explore the agency of army wives in providing security and unravel the nuanced dynamics overlooked by assumptions of their irreversibly militarized status.

By analyzing AWWA programs, published works by army wives, and conducting semi-structured interviews, the research aims to reveal the multifaceted roles and contributions of army wives. It acknowledges their pivotal role in the militarization process while challenging the marginalization of women's perspectives on security. This paper positions their labor as a significant site for understanding alternative narratives of security within a heavily militarized context.

Kiran Chauhan is a PhD candidate in the International Politics division of the Centre for International Politics, Organization and Disarmament (CIPOD), School of International Studies at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. His doctoral research is centered on war widows in India, where he delves into the intricate interplay of gender, state, and security narratives. His work critically examines the multifaceted role of gender in shaping and defining the Indian Military from diverse perspectives, with a particular emphasis on women's contributions and positions within the organization. He is particularly interested in the gendered narratives and the discursive politics surrounding military sacrifice, investigating how notions of bravery and sacrifice are gendered. Furthermore, he is a graduate student member of the Feminist Theory and Gender Studies Section in the International Studies Association. In addition to his academic pursuits, he is currently engaged as an intern with South Feminist Futures, a transnational feminist organization, working with feminists from the global south on multiple projects of the organization.

The Interplay between Ethnicity, Religion, and Subnational Citizenship in Shaping Military Labor during Insurgency Period: Case of Tentara Neugara Aceh (TNA) during 1976-2005

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During 1976-2005, Aceh was declared an area of "area of special military operations" (Daerah Operasi Militer) or DOM by the Indonesian government due to insurgency led by GAM (Free Aceh Movement). This rebellion was mainly conducted by the military wing of GAM, namely the Tentara Neugara Aceh (TNA). It was a consolidated armed ethnic organization that came up in Indonesia that was able to revitalise Acehnese identities after joining the Republic of Indonesia. Previously, Acehnese militias, the predecessor of TNA, fought Dutch forces during the Aceh War from 1873-1904. These previous war experiences had ingrained a legacy for the Acehnese to fight to defend their nationhood and culture till the end. Dissatisfied with Jakarta, especially how it treated Aceh, especially restricting Islamic sharia, had invoked Acehnese identity and nationhood through TNA. The TNA reunified all Acehnese males and females to be voluntarily conscripted into TNA. The female section of TNA, which was locally known as "Inong Balee", consisted of young females and housewives alongside their male counterparts who fought Indonesian soldiers during the insurgency period. In this case, the emergence of TNA was the result of an interplay between emotional Acehnese identity and Acehnese nationhood feeling. In addition, this interplay was also supported by strong Islamic values that encouraged all Acehnese people to labour into TNA forces militarily. It was made up of strong subnational citizenship bonding that was able to fight fiercely against the Indonesian military for almost 30 years. In line with the above, this paper used historical analysis to deeply analyse the Interplay of Acehnese Identity and Islamic values in shaping military labor into Tentara Neugara Aceh (TNA) from 1976 to 2005.

Wasisto Raharjo Jati is a researcher at Centre for Politics - the Indonesian National Research and Innovation Agency and also a research fellow at the Indonesia NGO Forum for International Development. He earned a bachelor's degree in politics and government studies from Universitas Gadjah Mada in 2012 and a master's degree in political science from the Australian National University in 2020. He has research interests in Indonesian local politics, especially Aceh and Papua.

Arms and Arms That Carry Them: Microhistory of Military Labor Market in Interwar Persian Gulf

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Historically, Baloch people from areas now split between Iran and Pakistan have utilized military service as a conduit for mobility across the Indian Ocean since the 16th century. By the 20th century, the British Empire curtailed many such pathways, pushing for local recruitment, yet they persisted in recruiting soldiers for military operations in the Persian Gulf. This apparent continuity masked a profound transition: the transformation of freelance soldiers into waged military labor. What drove this change? What resistance did it encounter? And how did it influence 20th-century international norms surrounding the commerce of violence?

In this paper, I delve into these questions by revisiting a forgotten microhistorical case: a Baloch recruit from the inaugural Bahrain Levy Force murdered his Indian drill instructor, underlining a fundamental tension between the two regarding their conceptions of work within the Levy Force. The recruit then surrendered but determinedly withheld the murder weapon. As the Gulf-Balochistan axis of the early 20th century became a focal point for covert arms trade, the British intensively examined this event, fearing it jeopardized their control over both weaponry and soldier movements. Their investigation, painting a vivid portrait of soldiers' everyday lives and networks, becomes a lens through which I analyze the broader shift in nature of military work.

Central to this change was the strategy of recruiting via long-standing migrant channels, yet without providing weapons, and tightly controlling state-issued armament, essentially dispossessing them of their means of production. Through the microhistory I suggest the transformation was engendered not just through small changes in recruitment rules but radical alterations in the nature of military work. Moreover, I argue that experience of handling soldiers' resistance ultimately also laid the grounds for the 20th century international norm in which arms transitioned to private trade, while the soldiers largely became state monopolies.

Ameem Lutfi is Assistant Professor of History and Anthropology at Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS). His scholarship explores issues of mobility, trade, and protection in the Indian Ocean. Lutfi is currently completing his book manuscript, entitled *Conquest Without Rule: Baloch Portfolio-Soldiers and the Indian Ocean*, which examines state-building in the region from the perspective of a diasporic group that has had a strong presence in the military infrastructure of various littoral states since the 16th century, despite not having a state of their own. He holds a PhD in Cultural Anthropology from Duke University. Before joining LUMS, he served as the Arabia-Asia Cluster Head at the Middle East Institute, National University of Singapore, and as Postdoctoral Fellow at the Oriental Institute at the Czech Academy of Sciences.

Cemeteries as Method: Unearthing Subalternity through Gurkha 'Family Lines' in British Malaya

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In 1948, following the aftermath of India's independence, the ten battalions of Nepali Gurkhas that had long served the British Raj were reconstituted. While six battalions remained in India, four were transferred to Britain and subsequently, the 'regimental home' of the 'British Gurkhas' – as they came to be known – moved to Malaya. From the late 1940s till the early 1970s, British Gurkhas were actively involved in the Malayan Emergency (1948-1960), Brunei Rebellion (1962) and *Konfrontasi* (1963-1966) and there is no dearth of books on their military involvement during the period of decolonization in Southeast Asia. This paper, in contrast, seeks to uncover the lesser-explored social history of transnational soldiering. By adopting Gurkha cemeteries both as an archival source and a subject of ethnographic study, it endeavours to illuminate the impact and enduring significance of military mobility on the colonial present. During the period of decolonization, Gurkha families sojourned in various parts of Malaya and Singapore and resided in 'family lines' as a gated community. Tracing cemeteries across Singapore to Sungei Petani, the research aims to foster a nuanced understanding of the intersections between colonial histories, military migration, and the socio-cultural and religious dynamics of Gurkha families. In so doing, it offers a history from below deliberating on how these cemeteries not only function as sites of historical memory but showcase the negotiation of socio-cultural identities and religious practices within the Gurkha community.

Hema Kiruppalini is a research fellow with the Inter-Asia Engagements Cluster at the Asia Research Institute (ARI), National University of Singapore. She is a historian with a particular interest in migration and transnationalism. Her research focuses on the trans-Himalayan region and its connections to Southeast Asia and delves into critical questions surrounding empire, race, gender, soldiering, and socio-cultural histories. Her doctoral dissertation, which focused on reconstructing the social history and transnational life worlds of Nepali Gurkha families in Asia, has received scholarly accolades such as the BNAC PhD Dissertation Prize and the Craig A. Lockard Prize for Best Journal, among others. Previously, she worked as a research associate at the Institute of South Asian Studies. Currently, at ARI, she is working collaboratively with a research team on a project, 'Archiving the Underclasses: Knowledge, Law, and Everyday Agency in Modern Southeast Asia', which seeks to yield insights into the lives of marginalized communities in the region.

**“A Militant’s Life is Short”:
The Hukawng as a Political Geography of Indigenous ‘Rebel’ and ‘Security’
Cosmopolitanisms across India, Burma and China**

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Multiple closely collaborating indigenous and ethnic armed organizations (EAOs) — Kachin, Assamese, Arakanese, Chin, Naga, Manipuri, and Mizo among others, have been actively mobile across the Hukawng Valley between India, Myanmar, and China since the late 1970s. Labelled as ‘militants’, ‘insurgents’ and ‘rebels’ escaping to seek political refuge across borders and collaborate with other ‘rebels.’ Their solidarity, although shunned as ‘terrorist operations’ by states, far transcended the transfer of arms, drugs, and revolutionary exchanges. They, in fact, occupied — and produced — deeply cosmopolitan political geographies in the jungled terrains of Myanmar, not unlike what modern international students might experience in major multicultural cities like Singapore, London, and NYC thereby turning ‘remote’ and ‘dangerous’ spaces into multicultural zones of knowledge, personal, familial, historical, and cultural transmissions. Time and again, this indigenous ‘rebel’ cosmopolitanism ‘encountered’ security and paramilitary forces — who were themselves part of a different kind of cosmopolitanism — with soldiers from different parts of the country forming societies in borderland regiments to ‘serve’ in the ‘last’ frontiers. These encounters, albeit more often violent than not (as canonized in the phrase ‘encounter killings’ and specifically ‘secret killings’ in Assam) went beyond unambiguous accounts of militarized violence. They spoke to a different set of hopes and desires about nation, security and selves.

Based on fieldwork and oral histories from individuals linked with, or part of the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), the United Liberation Frontier of Assam (ULFA); as well as the security personnel who ‘encountered’ them, this paper explores alternate place-making accounts of agentive and personal confusions in the (often masculinist) service and enactment of states and armed revolutions in peculiarly cosmopolitan spaces beyond states and borders. In doing so, this paper conceptualizes the Hukawng borderlands between India, Myanmar, and China — as a convergent borderworld political geography of both ‘rebel’ and ‘security’ cosmopolitanisms — that was — and still is, in perpetual schism, and which generates particular subjectivities from ‘rebels’ and security personnel in an inter-Asian territory.

Jasnea Sarma is a lecturer in Political Geography at the University of Zurich. Her research is on themes of infrastructures, surveillance, militarisation, resource extraction and border-urban frontiers, and has been published in major international journals such as *International Journal for Urban and Regional Research* (IJURR), *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, *Territory Politics and Governance*, *Political Geography* etc. Her ongoing book project draws from her doctoral research, a multi-year ethnography based on multi-lingual and sited fieldwork in Myanmar's border worlds with India and China, which won the Wang Gungwu Award for best PhD dissertation in the Humanities and Social Sciences at the National University of Singapore in 2021. Jasnea currently serves as the review and forum editor of [Geopolitics](#) and is an editor with the Burma Studies blog, [The Tea Circle](#).

Dying for Whom? The Politics of Death Commemoration and Vietnamese Identity during the First Indochina War

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During the First Indochina War (1946-1954), France assembled one of the world's largest multi-ethnic, multi-confessional armed forces to preserve its empire in Southeast Asia. A key element of France's strategy against Hồ Chí Minh's self-proclaimed Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) was the creation in 1949 of the State of Vietnam (SVN)—a nominally autonomous entity within the greater French Union. Together, French policymakers and SVN officials worked to mobilize hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese men to serve in a newly created Vietnamese National Army that would give armed substance to the SVN project and fight alongside the French Far East Expeditionary Corps against the People's Army of Vietnam.

As efforts to make real the State of Vietnam and its military intensified during the war, French military officials and Vietnamese bureaucrats had to wrestle with a mundane, but symbolically important administrative question: should the deaths of Vietnamese soldiers killed in action be recorded using the classic French formula of having "Died for France" (Mort pour la France) or should a new formula be devised to represent the State of Vietnam's own aspirations as an independent nation? This paper explores the wider context for such a debate as well as the greater stakes involved in the politics of death commemoration for Vietnamese identity at a moment when two radically different ideas of an independent Vietnam—the State of Vietnam and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam—were actively competing to mobilize young Vietnamese men to their respective causes. Although the State of Vietnam has long been dismissed as "puppet state," this paper joins emergent research that attempts to take the State of Vietnam seriously on its own terms and return agency to those within its civil and military administration as they confronted the everyday realities of managing a civil war. This paper's hope is to contribute to the conference's broader themes by highlighting the ways ideas about commemoration, concepts of citizenship and loyalty, and competing efforts at mobilizing military labor intersected with one another during one of Southeast Asia's most consequential wars of decolonization.

Andrew Bellisari is Assistant Professor of History and founding faculty member at Fulbright University Vietnam. His research explores the political, social, and cultural dimensions of decolonization, particularly in French North Africa and Southeast Asia. His current book project, *The Loose Ends of Empire: The Logic and Logistics of Decolonization in Algeria*, analyzes the everyday mechanics of decolonization to understand how wars end and transfers of power operate. In Vietnam, Dr. Bellisari has begun his next project, which examines the complex networks of French colonial subjects from across North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, and Indochina who fought in the French military against the Việt Minh during the First Indochina War (1946-1954). Dr. Bellisari has served as a Vietnam Program Fellow at the Harvard Kennedy School and is an affiliate of the École Française d'Extrême-Orient in Hồ Chí Minh City. His research has been supported by grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Krupp Foundation, and the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs.

Perspectives on Military Education and Institution-building in India: 1947-1960

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The draft paper will highlight the early twentieth century military institution-building landscape in the Indian subcontinent that laid the foundations for the regularization, standardization and professionalisation of military education in the mid to late twentieth century. It will also specifically focus on the period after the 1947 partition of the subcontinent and the establishment of two independent states of India and Pakistan. It will discuss and compare the continuities and disruptions that have shaped policy designs and official attitudes towards the socialization of India's officer corps. The central research agenda of the paper will be to assess the role played by diplomacy and politics in the construction of a nationalist 'ideal' for an armed force and the deployment of its labour across the domains of security and military diplomacy. The draft paper will delineate the impact of geopolitical forces on institution-building in order to provide a wider international context on the collaborative inter-state practices that helped India acquire its training institutions. The draft paper is based on a study of archival data housed in repositories in the UK and India. It is framed largely as an exercise in the investigation of the historical context through which perspectives on military institution-building should be viewed.

Vipul Dutta is Assistant Professor in the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences at Indian Institute of Technology - Guwahati. He combines teaching and research interests in South Asian economic and military history. He is the author of *Making Officers out of Gentlemen: Military Institution-building in India, 1900-1960* (OUP, 2021).

Black Skin, White Cause: *Belanda Hitam* and *Force Noire* in Indochina and Indonesia during World War II

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African troops played a significant role in the history of Southeast Asia's colonial troops but are hardly noted within the Southeast Asian region. Largely informed by the racial categorisation of the "effeminate" Asiatic natives that could not defend themselves, the "warrior race" of West Africa was then instead conscripted into the armed forces. *Belanda Hitam*, Indonesian for "Black Dutchmen" was the colloquial term given to the African recruits who were mostly Ashanti and Akan peoples of West Africa in the Royal Netherlands East Indies Army, while the *force noire* was globally recruited into the French Army to defend its colonies all over the world including Indochina.

Indonesia and Indochina were quickly lost to Japan in 1942 during World War II where most of the African troops were spent in internment or prisoner-of-war camps alongside the civilian population of European and Indo-European ancestry. When Japan lost, most were repatriated or were allowed to live in their segregated African Villages. Despite much interest in the *Belanda Hitam* since *The Two Hearts of Kwasi Boachi* (1997) and *force noire*, the image of the West African soldier is lost during WWII and in their last defence of the imperial powers.

This brings us to the two most significant events that followed the end of the war that resulted in direct clashes and the struggle for independence between the colonials and colonised — the First Indochina War and Indonesia National Revolution, which the Japanese stoked the flames given its "Asia for Asians" policy that deeply imbued anti-West sentiment. Thus, this paper aims to reclaim the continuation of racial imperialism from the colonial enterprise, the Imperial Japanese Army and then by the once colonised. Caught in the colonial mimicry of refashioning the "violent savage" as a recognisable Other for the imperialist cause, the West African soldier is now punished once again in the network of empires and nation states, experiencing layers of power on the most intimate plane. A comparative analysis of these two countries that eventually conducted revolutionary uprisings against the colonial regime that resulted in their independence, it is integral in interrogating the figure that was in the middle of such crossfires subjugated into firing the weapon through the lens of Franz Fanon's phobogenic object.

Yvonne Tan is a freelance writer and researcher based in Kuala Lumpur interested in dynamics of challenging imperial inequalities, labour migration and mythologies. Some of her notable contributions include histories of resistance against colonialism in *Racial Difference and the Colonial Wars of 19th Century Southeast Asia* edited by Farish Noor and Peter Carey (Amsterdam University Press, 2021) and *Battlefields and Homefronts: An Anthology of Food and Warfare, 1500-Present* (University of Arkansas Press, 2021). Additionally, she also edited *509: The People Have Spoken* (SIRD, 2018) which has been published in three languages and also has bylines in *Malaysiakini*, *MalaysiaNow* and *Malaysia Insight*.

“Keep Watching on University Students, Workers, Civil Officers, and Traitors among Us”: Ideology and Perception of the Thai Army during the Communist Insurgency Period (1973-1976)

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The 14th October 1973 uprising was a crucial moment in Thai army history because the military regime, which had held political power in Thai politics from 1932 to 1973, was overthrown by a university student-led democratic movement. However, on 6th October 1976, three years later, a horrifying massacre occurred in the heart of Bangkok. Right-wing paramilitaries injured and killed students and leftists. At the end of the day, the military staged a coup d'état and reclaimed its power.

To date, academics studying 1970s Thai politics have mainly concentrated on the role of right-wing paramilitaries, the authoritarian regime, student protests, and the role of the monarch. Thus, this work proposes an alternative viewpoint by investigating the army and military ideology in the 1970s. It employs a historical approach to examine documents such as training manuals and books published by military-related organisations in the sociopolitical context of 1973-1976 in Thailand. It is discovered that (1) the downfall of the junta government led to the confirmation of the army's service in politics and national development; (2) the status of “monarch” was limitedly defined by the army as symbolic, even though the influence of King Bhumibol was rising and became a political rival of the army; and (3) there is a specific definition of ‘national enemy,’ referring specifically to university students, workers, civil officers, and military men as suspicious individuals soldiers needed to monitor.

The case of the Thai army could be an example to demonstrate the construction of military ideology at a time of political and legitimacy crisis. It also displays that military ideology is more than merely an issue of men in uniform circulated within the barracks; it is also very much related to society at large under the disguise of ‘national service’.

Pattarat Phantprasit is currently a researcher at the Science, Technology, and Innovation Policy Institute (STIPI), Bangkok, Thailand. She obtained her PhD in Area Studies from Kyoto University's Graduate School of Asian and African Area Studies in 2022. Her dissertation, "The Making of Honour and Masculinity in the Siamese Army from the 1900s to 1932", examines how the military ideology of the Siamese/Thai army was constructed and contested. Pattarat's interest in Thai military ideology continues after she finished her PhD. She received a grant from the Sumitomo Foundation in Japan (2023-2024) to conduct research on how military-led collaborations between Thailand and Japan during the Second World War affected the everyday lives of Thai female civilians in Chiang Mai, Thailand. Her research interests also include Thai military ideology in other periods, such as the age of Communist insurgencies and Thai military's diverse interactions with civilians.

ABOUT THE MODERATORS & DISCUSSANTS

Ameem Lutfi is Assistant Professor of History and Anthropology at Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS). His scholarship explores issues of mobility, trade, and protection in the Indian Ocean. Lutfi is currently completing his book manuscript, entitled *Conquest Without Rule: Baloch Portfolio-Soldiers and the Indian Ocean*, which examines state-building in the region from the perspective of a diasporic group that has had a strong presence in the military infrastructure of various littoral states since the 16th century, despite not having a state of their own. He holds a PhD in Cultural Anthropology from Duke University. Before joining LUMS, he served as the Arabia-Asia Cluster Head at the Middle East Institute, National University of Singapore, and as Postdoctoral Fellow at the Oriental Institute at the Czech Academy of Sciences.

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Gyanesh Kudaisya is Associate Professor in the South Asian Studies Programme, Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences at the National University of Singapore (NUS). His current research is focused on India's territorial reorganisation between 1947 and 1966, and aspects of India's diplomatic history in the 1950s and beyond. He is also interested in questions of border-making and geopolitics. He has authored *A Republic in the Making: India in the 1950s* (Oxford University Press, 2017) and *Region, Nation, Heartland: Uttar Pradesh in India's Body Politic* (Sage, 2006) and co-authored *The Aftermath of Partition in South Asia* (Routledge, 2000). He has also co-edited three volumes of *Partition and Post-Colonial South Asia* (Routledge, 2008) under the Routledge 'Major Works Series'.

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Hema Kiruppalini is a research fellow with the Inter-Asia Engagements Cluster at the Asia Research Institute (ARI), National University of Singapore. She is a historian with a particular interest in migration and transnationalism. Her research focuses on the trans-Himalayan region and its connections to Southeast Asia and delves into critical questions surrounding empire, race, gender, soldiering, and socio-cultural histories. Her doctoral dissertation, which focused on reconstructing the social history and transnational life worlds of Nepali Gurkha families in Asia, has received scholarly accolades such as the BNAC PhD Dissertation Prize and the Craig A. Lockard Prize for Best Journal, among others. Previously, she worked as a research associate at the Institute of South Asian Studies. Currently, at ARI, she is working collaboratively with a research team on a project, 'Archiving the Underclasses: Knowledge, Law, and Everyday Agency in Modern Southeast Asia', which seeks to yield insights into the lives of marginalized communities in the region.

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