

Anatomy of an Elite. The influence of Indian Civil Service officers on the foreign relations of independent India.

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The research project investigates the influence of the British trained elite cadre of the Indian Civil Service (ICS) on the foreign policy of independent India. Firstly, it analyses the political thinking of a number of Indian officers of the service during the colonial period. It seems to have been characterized by ambivalence regarding the colonial power, combined with anti-communist and anti-American attitudes. Secondly, after all top ranks in the Ministry of External Affairs and the majority of missions abroad had been occupied by ICS officers after August 1947, it investigates to what extent this mindset had repercussions on Indian foreign policy. There is going to be a special focus on the latent conflict between Prime Minister Nehru and his most influential advisor V.K. Krishna Menon on the one hand and ICS officers on the other hand. Whereas there was a consensus regarding the USA, they differed about the USSR and socialism in general. The research project is based on official documents of British India and the Ministry of External Affairs together with private papers of Indian and British ICS officers.