



The Grand Old Man: Dadabhai Naoroji and the Evolution of the Demand for Indian Self-Government

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*The Grand Old Man:
Dadabhai Naoroji and the Evolution of the Demand for Indian Self-Government*

A dissertation presented by

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to

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Self-Government

Abstract

This dissertation traces the thought and career of Dadabhai Naoroji, arguably the most significant Indian nationalist leader in the pre-Gandhian era. Naoroji (1825-1917) gave the Indian National Congress a tangible political goal in 1906 when he declared its objective to be self-government or *swaraj*. I identify three distinct phases in the development of his political thought. In the first phase of his career, lasting from the mid-1860s until the mid-1880s, Naoroji posited the “drain of wealth” theory, which argued that British colonialism was dramatically impoverishing India by siphoning off its resources. Naoroji embedded a political corollary into his economic ideas, arguing that empowering Indians through political reform was the only way to stop the drain. As early as 1884, Naoroji declared that the ultimate objective of such reform was Indian self-government. Naoroji contended that the best chance for achieving political reform lay through influencing the British Parliament. In the second stage of his career, beginning in 1886, Naoroji took up this task by contesting a parliamentary seat. He constructed a broad alliance among various progressive British leaders—Irish home rulers, socialists, and women’s rights activists—and relied upon them and Indian allies to win election to the House of Commons in 1892. In Parliament, Naoroji pushed for the implementation of simultaneous civil service examinations, which he envisaged as the first step toward Indian self-government. Naoroji’s time in the Commons, however, was brief and

disappointing, and in the third and final phase of his career, beginning in 1895, he radicalized considerably. He propounded his views on Indian poverty with renewed force while strengthening his ties with socialists and anti-imperialists in Britain and abroad. Concluding that imperialism was inherently economically exploitative, Naoroji declared that only swaraj could stop the drain of wealth.

For S.R. Mehrotra

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Note on Terminology

The English renderings of nineteenth century Indian names vary widely. In this dissertation, I have tried to adopt the most commonly used spellings for particular individuals. Parsis and many other Indians did not begin using standardized surnames until the late nineteenth century; therefore, some individuals, such as Navrozji Fardunji, are referred to by their given name (Navrozji, in this case) in subsequent references.

To avoid confusion, I have retained the colonial spellings for Indian cities; therefore, Mumbai remains Bombay, Kolkata remains Calcutta, Chennai remains Madras, and so on.

I have employed the term “Anglo-Indian” to mean Britons resident in India. To describe individuals of mixed Indian and European heritage, I have used the term “Eurasian.”

Abbreviations

BL – British Library

DNP – Dadabhai Naoroji Papers

IOR – India Office Records

MSA – Maharashtra State Archives

NAI – National Archives of India

NNR – Native Newspaper Reports

NMML – Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

RPPM – R.P. Patwardhan manuscripts

WDP – William Digby Papers

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Indian Nationalism Before Gandhi

I. ‘Self Government under British Paramountcy’

Dadabhai Naoroji, popularly known as the “Grand Old Man of India,” was arguably the most significant Indian nationalist leader before Mohandas K. Gandhi (Image 1). During a political career spanning over five decades, he directed almost all aspects of the emerging nationalist movement in India and authored some of the most powerful arguments against British imperial rule. In the late 1850s, he began lobbying authorities for the admission of Indians into the country’s colonial civil services, hitherto monopolized almost entirely by Britons. In the early 1860s, he started to forge ties with British politicians who supported Indian political reforms, something that would lead to Naoroji’s broader engagement with the British public on Indian political demands. By the end of the decade, Naoroji formulated a scathing critique of imperialism known as the “drain of wealth” theory. British colonialism, he argued, was steadily depleting India of its material resources and transferring this wealth to the metropole. Instead of bringing prosperity and contentment to their subjects, as British authorities proclaimed, Naoroji alleged that colonial authorities were responsible for the rapid impoverishment of the Indian people, the collapse of India’s economy, and a devastating cycle of famines that was killing millions.



Image 1: Oil on canvass portrait of Dadabhai Naoroji by M.F. Pithawala. Reproduced from *Portrait of a Community* with the permission of Shireen Gandhi and Chemould Gallery.

British policy in India, as Naoroji realized by the 1870s, was “evil.”¹ Having reached this conclusion, Naoroji responded in two ways. Firstly, in 1885, he helped found the Indian National Congress, a formal organization for advancing Indian political rights. Secondly, he sailed to London in order to stand for Parliament. Within Parliament, Naoroji reasoned, he could influence British Indian policy and push for some of the most critical reforms for alleviating Indian poverty. In 1892, after years of campaigning as a Liberal Party candidate, Naoroji finally won election to the House of Commons, becoming the first Indian to sit in Parliament.² From the floor of the Commons, he spoke powerfully about the drain of wealth and pleaded for the British government to reform India’s administration. Ten thousand miles away in India, Naoroji’s election and parliamentary record boosted the hopes of nationalists, who believed that a new era of reform had dawned.

It was not to be. In 1895, Naoroji lost his seat in Parliament. Worse still, the general elections brought into power a Conservative government that initiated a particularly reactionary phase in Indian administration. While millions of Indians³ perished from famines and a plague epidemic that swept through large swaths of the subcontinent from 1896 through 1900, the government of British India shut the door on

¹ Dadabhai Naoroji, “Poverty of India, Part II,” in *Essays, Speeches, Addresses and Writings (on Indian Politics) of the Hon’ble Dadabhai Naoroji*, ed. Chunilal Lallubhai Parekh (Bombay: Caxton Printing Works, 1887), 245.

² As Michael Fisher points out, David Ochterlony Dyce Sombre (1808-1851), a Eurasian and the foster-child of Begum Sombre of Sardhana state, was technically the first Indian to sit in Parliament, in 1841. Dyce Sombre, however, identified himself as a European, as both of his parents had mixed European-Indian ancestry. See Michael H. Fisher, *The Inordinately Strange Life of Dyce Sombre: Victorian Anglo-Indian MP and a “Chancery Lunatic”* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010).

³ Estimates for the death toll in the famine of 1896-97 range as high as 5,150,000. Leela Visaria and Pravin Visaria, “Population (1757-1947),” in *The Cambridge Economic History of India*, ed. Dharma Kumar, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 531.

political reform and refused to modify its financial practices. Naoroji reeled from these setbacks. In 1901, in an attempt to highlight his drain theory, he published his most famous work, *Poverty and UnBritish Rule in India*, a compendium of his writings from the past thirty years. He addressed British audiences, speaking in anguished tones about India's deepening impoverishment. "India is bleeding to death," Naoroji told attendees at a famine relief meeting in northeast London. "You have brought India to this condition by the constant drain upon the wealth of that country."⁴

By 1903, after eight years of Tory rule, India's prospects seemed hopelessly grim. Naoroji struggled to find a way forward. He searched for a clear political objective for the Congress, something that would unite nationalist voices against the might of the British Indian government. Then, in July of that year, he received a letter from a fellow Congress leader, Romesh Chunder Dutt. Dutt's note alarmed him: the Bengali leader focused on high rates of land taxation and argued that this was the real cause of Indian poverty. Naoroji believed this to be fundamentally incorrect. Financing the British-dominated administration, he claimed, caused the drain of wealth and thus perpetuated a never-ending spiral of worsening impoverishment. "It is not the *quantity* of the revenue that kills," Naoroji stated in one of several letters he wrote in response to Dutt. "It is the *increasing incapacity* to bear the burden." Thirty years beforehand, Naoroji continued, he had similarly investigated the causal relationship between land revenue and poverty, but had quickly realized that he "was on the wrong course." The real cause was "much

⁴ Dadabhai Naoroji, "Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji at Walthamstow," in *Poverty and UnBritish Rule in India* (London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co., 1901), 643, 645.

deeper.” “My ideas were a gradual evolution,” he stated, “till I saw light and the bed-rock of all our miseries—i.e. the employment of foreign plundering services.”⁵

Naoroji, displaying a remarkable force of conviction, implored Dutt to change his course. “Your letter makes me write to you the *more and more* earnestly to wish that you will take advantage of my experience or mistakes to avoid the loss of time and energy which I have made,” he stated. But Dutt’s letter also prompted Naoroji to return to the question of a clear political objective for the Congress. Any agitation about land revenue, Naoroji feared, would help Anglo-Indians in “drawing away the attention of the world from the plunder” that they caused.⁶ It would distract the Congress from the true cause of India’s misery: the drain of wealth.

And so Naoroji made a momentous proposal. Now, “with the proof of the evil by famines and pestilences,” there could be no further obfuscation about the ultimate aim of the nationalist movement. “The time is come,” Naoroji declared to Dutt, “when an agitation must be begun for ‘Self Government under British Paramountcy.’” Only self-government could stop the drain of wealth. Naoroji announced that the Congress must commence educating Indians about “the true cause at the bottom” and lead them “to demand the cessation of that cause.” “Of one thing I feel certain—that if once the mass of the people understood the cause and raised the cry—the British rulers will very soon understand the situation and climb down to meet,” he predicted. “The British will have

⁵ Emphasis is Naoroji’s. Dadabhai Naoroji to Romesh Chunder Dutt, 5 July 1903, NAI, Romesh Chunder Dutt Papers, serial no. 4.

⁶ Emphasis is Naoroji’s. Ibid.; Naoroji to Dutt, 3 July 1903, *ibid.*, serial no. 3.

either to leave precipitately, or be destroyed in India, or ... save the Empire by putting an end to the Drain” by granting self-rule to the Indian people.⁷

The struggle would be long and arduous. “The work will be slow,” Naoroji admitted, “but every effort needs to be concentrated on this purpose.” Approaching his eightieth year, the Grand Old Man of India now directed all of his efforts toward rallying Congressmen, especially prominent leaders such as Dutt, to the cause of self-government. “At my age it will not be my lot to take any long part in this great battle,” he noted. “I am therefore the more anxious to see that younger hands and hearts set themselves to work.”⁸



After dispatching his letters to Romesh Chunder Dutt (see Appendix A for the full correspondence), Dadabhai Naoroji embarked on a frenzy of activity for popularizing the demand for Indian self-government. In August 1904, he traveled to Amsterdam in order to participate in the International Socialist Congress, where he condemned British imperial policy and called for self-rule (once more “under British paramountcy”). Early in 1906, after a decade of Tory rule finally came to a close, Naoroji fired off a series of letters to the new Liberal prime minister, Henry Campbell Bannerman. “The necessity of self-government is a matter of life and death to India,” he professed, before laying out a detailed plan for the steady transfer of positions from British to Indian hands over a period of thirty years. Naoroji offered a variety of justifications for extending self-rule to Indians, ranging from the “rights of British citizenship” to “the reparation which Britain

⁷ Naoroji to Dutt, 5 July 1903, *ibid.*, serial no. 4.

⁸ Naoroji to Dutt, 5 July 1903, *ibid.*, serial no. 5.

owes to India for the evils, wrongs and injustices of about the past 150 years.”⁹ Finally, in December 1906, Naoroji journeyed to Calcutta in order to preside at the annual session of the Congress. Now 81 years old and too frail to speak, he handed his script over to a prominent moderate nationalist, Gopal Krishna Gokhale. With the assistance of Gokhale’s more robust vocal chords, Naoroji officially established the Congress’ political objective to be “‘Self-Government’ or *Swaraj* like that of the United Kingdom or the Colonies,” the latter category referring to the dominions of Canada, South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand. “Self government is the only and chief remedy,” Naoroji concluded. “In self-government lies our hope, strength and greatness.”¹⁰ After stepping away from the Congress *pandal* (enclosure), Naoroji spent one final year in London fighting for Indian political reform before ill health compelled him to retire from public life in November 1907.

Naoroji’s call for *swaraj* at the 1906 Congress was definitely not the first time an Indian leader had made that demand. As the Swadeshi Movement in Bengal transformed Indian politics in the first few years of the twentieth century, self-government became the rallying cry for countless other nationalists. Many went further than the Grand Old Man by omitting any reference to “British paramountcy” and calling for the country’s full separation from the British Empire, by violent means if necessary. However, Naoroji’s words in Calcutta were significant for their own reasons. They constituted the most prominent and publicized demand for self-government to date, one that bound the entire Congress organization to this objective. By the conclusion of the Calcutta session,

⁹ Naoroji to Henry Campbell-Bannerman, 1906 [no precise date], NAI, DNP, C-38 (1); Naoroji to Campbell-Bannerman, 3 April 1906, *ibid.*, C-38.

¹⁰ Dadabhai Naoroji, “Ninth Congress—Lahore—1893: Presidential Address,” in *Speeches and Writings of Dadabhai Naoroji*, ed. G.A. Natesan, second edition (Madras: G.A. Natesan & Co., 1917), 73, 95.

Naoroji had taken a Congress agenda of piecemeal reforms—simultaneous examinations, reconstitution of legislative councils, and the election of Indian MPs to the British Parliament—and reconfigured these demands toward the achievement of one concrete, overarching political goal.

The idea of self-government thus defined Dadabhai Naoroji’s career between 1903 and 1907. And the Grand Old Man’s declaration at Calcutta set off a chain of events that transformed the nationalist movement, leading to the Congress’ eventual adoption of *purna swaraj* (“complete” self-rule or independence) as its objective in 1930.¹¹ Keeping in mind this long-term influence on the direction of Indian politics, the present dissertation investigates the genesis of Naoroji’s ideas. How did the early nationalist leader arrive at the conclusion that self-government was the only political option for India? I demonstrate that Naoroji’s conceptualization of *swaraj* began well before his correspondence with Romesh Chunder Dutt in July 1903. In both published essays and private correspondence, we can establish his support for self-government as early as 1884. Furthermore, antecedents to this demand are clearly apparent in Naoroji’s writings as far back as 1867.

Tracing the evolution of his political thought, this dissertation demonstrates that Naoroji’s political career was divided into three distinct phases.¹² These were phases that were defined, respectively, by theorization, application, and agitation. The following

¹¹ See “Draft Declaration for January 26,” 10 January 1930, *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol. 42 (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Trust, 1970), 384–5.

¹² Partha Chatterjee’s *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993) has served as an inspiration for my analysis of Naoroji’s career. This career dovetails and conflicts with Chatterjee’s three “moments” in the evolution of Indian nationalism. In an earlier essay, I argued that Naoroji’s career could be divided into four phases. I have since collapsed one phase, his engagement with Indian princely states, into Naoroji’s broader theorization of the drain of wealth. “Dadabhai Naoroji and the Evolution of the Demand for *Swaraj*” (Occasional Paper, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi, 2013).

chapters are primarily concerned with the first two phases and how they contributed to the final stage of his career, when Naoroji struggled with the question of nationalist objectives and finally established self-government as the Congress' declared policy. Each phase, as we will see, was closely bound up with the issue of Indian poverty.

Naoroji's career began and ended with the drain. The first phase—theorization—extended from the mid-1860s through 1885. Over these two decades, Naoroji developed his theory on the drain of wealth, singling out British imperialism for the steady depletion of material resources from the subcontinent. It was here that Naoroji first made the claim he would enunciate to Dutt in 1903: that an Indian bureaucracy dominated by Britons bore primary responsibility for this loss of expenditure. Toward the late 1870s, Naoroji responded to British dominance of the bureaucracy by establishing what I term the political corollary to the drain theory. If more Indians were employed in the civil services, he argued, less Indian expenditure would be siphoned off to Britain via remittances, pensions, and other expenses. The magnitude of the drain, therefore, was inversely proportional to the number of Indians in government posts. This was a powerful argument for civil service reform, which had long been a rallying cry for an early generation of Indian political leaders, and it served a clear polemical purpose: it justified the steady transfer of authority from British to Indian hands. In formulating both the drain theory and its political corollary, Naoroji paid particular attention to the semi-autonomous Indian princely states. He argued that these states were largely buffered from the drain and therefore more prosperous and stable than British-administered territories. The political and economic success of several princely states influenced Naoroji to speak

enthusiastically about the eventuality of Indian self-government by the end of the first part of his career.

Aside from a brief foray into the administrative affairs of one princely state, Baroda, Naoroji increasingly trained his sights on Westminster. He had conceptualized the cause of the drain and its solution—Indianizing the civil services. It was now time to move from theory to practice. During the second stage of his political career, lasting from 1886 until 1895, Naoroji attempted to directly influence Indian policy in the metropole by winning a seat in the House of Commons. He realized that Parliament was the ultimate arbiter of India's fate. "All the most fundamental questions on which hinge the entire form and character of the administration here are decided by Parliament," he declared in his presidential address to the Calcutta Congress of 1886. "No matter what it is, Legislative Councils, the Services,—nothing can be reformed until Parliament moves and enacts modifications of the existing Acts."¹³ Standing for Parliament, however, required Naoroji to broaden his horizons beyond exclusively Indian concerns. He had to engage with the dynamic and chaotic political processes of late Victorian Britain. Naoroji reached out to the leaders of various progressive movements—organized labor, socialism, feminism and female suffrage, and Irish home rule—in order to popularize Indian political demands and turn Indian affairs into a voter issue. Political exigencies made him momentarily prioritize issues such as Irish home rule over Indian self-government. These efforts paid off in 1892 when, after a long and hard-fought campaign, Naoroji was elected to the House of Commons as the MP for Central Finsbury, a London constituency.

¹³ Dadabhai Naoroji, "Second Indian National Congress," in *Essays, Speeches, Addresses and Writings (on Indian Politics) of the Hon'ble Dadabhai Naoroji*, ed. Chunilal Lallubhai Parekh (Bombay: Caxton Printing Works, 1887), 341.

In the Commons, Naoroji returned to the issue of Indian poverty. With the political corollary to the drain theory in mind, he formulated a distinctly Indian legislative agenda that prioritized the institution of simultaneous civil service examinations. Simultaneous examinations, which promised to remove the practical difficulties Indian candidates faced when exams were held exclusively in faraway London, would speed along the process of Indianizing the bureaucracy, laying the foundations for eventual self-government. The Indian MP now appealed to his fellow legislators for support by couching civil service reform in the language of Indian loyalty and gratitude. At the height of his political power and influence, Naoroji maneuvered the Commons to adopt a resolution in favor of simultaneous examinations. He then embarked on a successful tour through India timed with the Lahore Congress of 1893, providing a forceful demonstration of popular support for political reform. But these efforts came to naught. By 1894, he recognized that the Commons' resolution on simultaneous examinations, along with so many other British pledges and promises to Indians, was a "dead letter."¹⁴ He lost his seat in the general election of the following year. Thus ended the second phase of Naoroji's career—his attempts to apply the drain theory to British Indian policy had failed. Embittered and disillusioned by his engagement with British parliamentary politics, Naoroji embarked on the final phase of his political career, one of sustained agitation, which led him into his fateful correspondence with Romesh Chunder Dutt in July 1903.

By the end of his career, Naoroji had cemented his reputation as the most prominent nationalist leader of the pre-Gandhian era, someone who enjoyed a broad

¹⁴ Isidore Harris, "An Indian Reformer on Indian Affairs," *Great Thoughts*, 31 August 1895 (republished as pamphlet), 3, in NAI, DNP, Part III, G-17.

degree of support on both sides of the Congress' moderate-extremist divide. Furthermore, as this dissertation argues, Naoroji became the first truly national political leader in modern India. He enjoyed support from across the country. Unlike other Congress leaders, whose fortunes were inextricably tied to particular regions such as Bombay or Bengal, the Grand Old Man was identified with pan-Indian political concerns and national aspirations.

But Naoroji was not only just a politician—there were many other dimensions to his life and career. Throughout this dissertation, I focus on the different roles that he performed in India and the United Kingdom. For the citizens of Bombay at the midpoint of the nineteenth century, he was first and foremost an educator and social reformer. To the British public, he acted as an Indian emissary—a resource for information on his homeland and a corrective to Anglo-Indian bias. And, for hundreds of Indians who traveled to Great Britain for study and work during the late Victorian and early Edwardian eras, he was a valued mentor and community leader. Throughout all of these activities, Naoroji displayed a clear impulse for reform and progress. In a sense, Naoroji's understanding of India's desperate material poverty served as a powerful motivating force. It motivated him to imbue Britons with a sensitivity toward the real interests of their colonial subjects. But more significantly, it drove Naoroji to train up new generations of Indians, making sure that they had the intellectual resources and political self-confidence necessary to truly enjoy the fruits of self-government.

II. A Neglected Chapter in Indian History

Dadabhai Naoroji was born in Bombay in 1825, only a handful of years after the East India Company had extinguished Maratha authority in the Deccan. He spent nearly four decades of his life in the United Kingdom, participating in the vibrant British public sphere while immersing himself in an international network of anti-imperialists. With equal fervor he dabbled in Indian political affairs, economic analysis, Bombay civic undertakings, Zoroastrian scholarship, Parsi community affairs, Freemasonry, and a variety of other activities. By the time of his death in 1917, India was only three decades away from independence. Here was a man who, in his earlier years, had sparred with a participant in Lord Lake's 1803 capture of Delhi—John Crawford—and who, in his last years, made a deep impression upon both Mohandas K. Gandhi and Muhammad Ali Jinnah. Naoroji's life and career therefore form vital components of the histories of modern India, Victorian Britain, the late British Empire, and global anti-imperialism.

And yet there has been a paucity of popular and scholarly writing on him. Only a few biographical works have been attempted. We know that Gopal Krishna Gokhale intended to write about his life.¹⁵ The Poona leader, however, died before he could commence this project. In 1939, Rustom Pestonji Masani, a Bombay civic leader, published a detailed account, *Dadabhai Naoroji: The Grand Old Man*. Although hagiographic, Masani's book remains the best and most detailed biography. In many ways, it is impossible to attempt a work of similar detail: Masani relied on personal recollections, interviews with Naoroji's relatives and associates, as well as countless letters that have long since vanished from the archives. Since then, there have been few

¹⁵ Rustom Pestonji Masani, *Dadabhai Naoroji: The Grand Old Man of India* (London: G. Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1939), 10–11.

other books of note. Munni Rawal published a brief biography in 1989, and Omar Ralph, a civil servant in Islington—the London borough that now includes the erstwhile Central Finsbury constituency—brought out another account eight years later.¹⁶

So much for biographical works. Elsewhere, scholars have examined elements of Naoroji's economic thought as well as his engagement with parliamentary politics. Naoroji features prominently in Bipan Chandra's monumental dissertation on economic nationalism as well as Manu Goswami's investigation of the "political economy of nationhood."¹⁷ B.N. Ganguli's detailed work identifies both an "external" and "internal" drain in Naoroji's economic thought, while Savak Katrak's dissertation analyzes the drain theory in order to understand how imperialism was "viewed from below."¹⁸ Meanwhile, Antoinette Burton, Julie Codell, David Mellor, and Sumita Mukherjee have written on events from Naoroji's Central Finsbury campaign and brief career in the Commons. Mukherjee's work stands out for its deft analysis of race in British media responses to the elections of Naoroji in 1892 and Mancherji M. Bhownaggee—the second Indian to sit in the Commons—in 1895.¹⁹

¹⁶ Munni Rawal, *Dadabhai Naoroji, a Prophet of Indian Nationalism, 1855-1900* (New Delhi: Anmol Publications, 1989); Omar Ralph, *Naoroji, the First Asian MP: A Biography of Dadabhai Naoroji, India's Patriot and Britain's MP* (St. John's, Antigua: Hansib, 1997).

¹⁷ Bipan Chandra, *The Rise and Growth of Economic Nationalism in India: Economic Policies of Indian National Leadership, 1880-1905* (New Delhi: People's Publishing House, 1966), chap. 8; Manu Goswami, *Producing India: From Colonial Economy to National Space* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), chap. 7.

¹⁸ B.N. Ganguli, *Dadabhai Naoroji and the Drain Theory* (New York: Asia Publishing House, 1965); Savak Jehangir Katrak, *Imperialism Viewed from below: A Study of the Political and Economic Ideas of Dadabhai Naoroji* (Harvard University, 1971).

¹⁹ Antoinette M. Burton, "Tongues Untied: Lord Salisbury's 'Black Man' and the Boundaries of Imperial Democracy," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 42, no. 3 (July 2000): 632–61; Julie Codell, "Decentring and Doubling Imperial Cosmopolitan Discourse in the British Press: Dadabhai Naoroji and M.M. Bhownaggee," *Media History* 15, no. 4 (2009): 371–84; David Charles Mellor, "The Parliamentary Life of Dadabhai Naoroji, the Great 'Parsi Patriot' between 1885-1895: With Special Reference to the *Voice of India* and *Indian Spectator*," *Journal of the K.R. Cama Oriental Institute*, no. 52 (1985): 1–113;

Scholarship on early Indian nationalism, anti-colonialism, the British Indian community, and the Parsi community provide us with the last arenas where Naoroji's career has been addressed. In many accounts on early nationalism and the Congress, he plays a surprisingly small and timid role.²⁰ One exception is S.R. Mehrotra's work—for reasons that shall be addressed below.²¹ C.A. Bayly has recently provided deft insight into Naoroji's thought and early nationalist activity within the context of liberalism in India.²² Turning to scholarship on anti-colonialism, Jonathan Schneer examines Naoroji's parliamentary career and the activities of the British Committee of the Indian National Congress.²³ Nicholas Owen similarly investigates the British Committee in order to tell a larger story about connections between the political left in Britain and Indian nationalists.²⁴ In a recent volume, Mira Matikkala includes Naoroji within her analysis of William Digby's career and economic thought.²⁵ Sukanya Banerjee, meanwhile, offers a different perspective, that of imperial citizenship, and classifies Naoroji as a "true

Sumita Mukherjee, "'Narrow-Majority' and 'Bow-and-Agree': Public Attitudes towards the Elections of the First Asian MPs in Britain, Dadabhai Naoroji and Mancherjee Merwanjee Bhowanagree, 1885-1906," *Journal of the Oxford University Historical Society* 2 (2004): 1–20.

²⁰ For example, Anil Seal, *The Emergence of Indian Nationalism: Competition and Collaboration in the Later Nineteenth Century* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1968); John R. McLane, *Indian Nationalism and the Early Congress* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977).

²¹ S.R. Mehrotra, *The Emergence of the Indian National Congress* (Delhi: Vikas Publications, 1971); S.R. Mehrotra, *A History of the Indian National Congress* (New Delhi: Vikas Pub. House, 1995).

²² C.A. Bayly, *Recovering Liberties: Indian Thought in the Age of Liberalism and Empire* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), chap. 6–7.

²³ *London 1900: The Imperial Metropolis* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), chap. 8.

²⁴ *The British Left and India: Metropolitan Anti-Imperialism, 1885-1947* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), chap. 1.

²⁵ *Empire and Imperial Ambition: Liberty, Englishness and Anti-Imperialism in Late-Victorian Britain* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011), chap. 3.

imperial citizen.”²⁶ Within scholarship on the British Indian community, Rozina Visram’s magisterial *Asians in Britain* considers Naoroji alongside Bhownagree as well as Indian revolutionaries residing in the imperial metropole.²⁷ Finally, Naoroji figures in several works on the Parsi community.²⁸ The Grand Old Man was heavily involved in the religious and secular affairs of his fellow Zoroastrians, both in India and Iran.²⁹ John Hinnells has explored both Naoroji’s political activities and his leadership of the Parsi community in Britain during the Victorian era.³⁰

The overwhelming majority of these works have one major limitation: they only engage with Naoroji’s published works. They do not utilize his voluminous private correspondence. The Dadabhai Naoroji Papers, held in the National Archives in India, constitute one of the most spectacular modern historical collections in India and also one of the most neglected.³¹ The collection consists of at least 25,000 accounted items.³² Each

²⁶ *Becoming Imperial Citizens: Indians in the Late-Victorian Empire* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), chap. 1.

²⁷ Rozina Visram, *Asians in Britain: 400 Years of History* (London: Pluto Press, 2002), chap. 5.

²⁸ Most notably, see Eckehard Kulke, *The Parsees in India: A Minority as Agent of Social Change* (München: Weltforum Verlag, 1974); and Jesse S. Palsetia, *The Parsis of India: Preservation of Identity in Bombay City* (Leiden: Brill, 2001).

²⁹ This is a topic that I have unfortunately not been able to adequately address in this dissertation, aside from detailing Naoroji’s social and religious reform activities during Young Bombay (see Chapter One, Section III). Naoroji played a prominent role in helping to ameliorate the conditions of oppressed Iranian Zoroastrians—he twice met with the shah of Persia in order to lobby for reforms such as the abolition of the *jiziya* tax against non-Muslims. In Bombay, Naoroji helped lead several community organizations, such as the Rahnumae Mazdayasnan Sabha and the Gayan Uttejak Mandli. He also arbitrated disputes, such as a quarrel between two priestly *tolas*, the Sanjanas of Udvada and the Bhagarsaths of Navsari, over responsibility for performing religious rites in the village of Khergam. These instances, and much more, shall be dealt with in future work.

³⁰ See especially *Zoroastrians in Britain* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996). Hinnells has recently completed a chapter on Parsis and politics for a new manuscript on the history of the Parsi community.

³¹ For more information on the Naoroji Papers and the history of the collection, see S.R. Mehrotra, “The Dadabhai Naoroji Papers,” *Indian Archives* LIV, no. 1–2 (2006): 1–18. I have authored a similar survey of the Naoroji Papers in the introductory essay to our forthcoming volume of *Dadabhai Naoroji Correspondence*.

item can range in size from a one-line note to a diary volume. And herein lies the most probable reason for the collection's neglect. It is forbiddingly vast.

The researcher is faced with many other obstacles while working with the Naoroji Papers. Firstly, the Papers are badly organized. The one typewritten index, prepared in the 1970s, is riddled with errors.³³ Many important items, therefore, are miscataloged and can only be discovered by going through the entire collection. Secondly, several thousand items have never been cataloged. This includes Naoroji's Gujarati correspondence, a few items in Hindi, Urdu, and Persian, and more material in English. Thirdly, a significant portion of the collection is in bad condition. Most of the correspondence from before 1886 had already disintegrated by the time of Naoroji's death. Surviving material suffered extreme wear and tear as the Papers were shuffled between godowns and offices in London, Bombay, Poona, and finally New Delhi between 1907 and 1968. Since arriving at the National Archives, there has evidently been no attempt to properly treat the Papers for acid damage. Consequently, the most important items—Naoroji's outgoing letters, which survive as tissue-paper-thin press copies—are in a particularly precarious state. Hundreds are barely legible or entirely unreadable. Other items have been damaged due to improper preservation methods, notably lamination, which is still widely employed in libraries and archives across India. A microfilm run of the Naoroji Papers, prepared by the Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute in the early 1980s, is incomplete and of poor quality.

³² An additional two hundred letters are to be found in the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library in New Delhi.

³³ I have been preparing a new index in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet format.

Due to these challenges, few individuals have ever attempted to properly engage with the Naoroji Papers. After Masani's consultation for his biography, a fellow Bombay Parsi, Jehangir P. Wadia, began combing through the Papers in 1943. Wadia intended to compile an index of contents, but this plan quickly fell through.³⁴ R.P. Patwardhan, former director of public instruction for Bombay province, started wading through the Papers in 1952 with the hope of publishing a series of selected correspondence. After fifteen years of labor, Patwardhan prepared manuscripts for four volumes, two of which were published in 1977.³⁵ He died in 1980 and the two remaining manuscripts were, at the time, presumed to be lost. In the meanwhile, S.R. Mehrotra had begun thorough consultation of the Papers for his volumes on the history of the Congress. Mehrotra recognized that no work on early nationalism could be complete without proper engagement with Naoroji's correspondence. His work continues until today and, with his generous help, I have now become the fifth individual to attempt a comprehensive examination of this collection.³⁶

To date, I have consulted around 15,000 items in the Dadabhai Naoroji Papers. I have directed my research toward two ends. Firstly, with Mehrotra, I have prepared and co-edited a forthcoming volume of Naoroji's selected correspondence.³⁷ This volume

³⁴ Jehangir P. Wadia to president of the board of trustees, Naoroji Memorial Prize Fund, 1943. S.R. Mehrotra discovered this correspondence among the discarded papers of the Bombay Presidency Association. He handed these papers to me as I was completing the introductory essay for our forthcoming volume of Naoroji selected correspondence. I donated these letters to the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library in 2013.

³⁵ *Dadabhai Naoroji Correspondence*, vol. II, parts 1 & 2 (New Delhi: Allied, 1977). This consists of Naoroji's correspondence with Dinsha Wacha.

³⁶ I have recently been joined in this work by Vikram Visana, a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Cambridge, who is also preparing a dissertation on Dadabhai Naoroji.

³⁷ To be published by Oxford University Press as *Dadabhai Naoroji: Selected Private Papers*.

builds upon Patwardhan's unpublished manuscripts, which Mehrotra located in Mumbai in 1990. Our hope is that this publication will increase scholarly engagement with Naoroji's correspondence and also generate interest in the Papers' long-term preservation. Secondly, I have prepared the dissertation that is now before you. This dissertation draws on Naoroji's private correspondence in order to highlight the dynamism and constant evolution of his thought. These are dynamics that can only be truly appreciated through sustained archival research. Otherwise, as in the case of so much else that has been written about Naoroji, the scholar runs the risk of applying Naoroji's published views across the entire duration of his long and varied career.

Drawing on my work with the Dadabhai Naoroji Papers—and with other collections in India, Great Britain, and Ireland—I trace the evolution of Naoroji's political thought over seven chapters. In Chapter One, I investigate how Naoroji's reformist ethos was shaped by a distinct educative tradition in Bombay. This tradition provided fertile ground for the Young Bombay movement during the late 1840s and 1850s, where Naoroji helped make the spread of education the central pivot of religious and social reform activities. Chapter Two moves our story forward to the first phase of Naoroji's career. I argue that Naoroji fashioned his drain theory for polemical purposes. The political corollary, which established a direct link between a British-dominated bureaucracy and the poverty of India, made self-government the ultimate objective of civil service reform. In addition, I examine how princely states fit into Naoroji's economic thought, focusing on his brief stint as *diwan* or prime minister of Baroda in late 1873 and 1874. Chapter Three introduces the second stage of Naoroji's career, his attempts to win election to Parliament. After tracing the history of Indian demands for

parliamentary representation, I explain how Naoroji constructed broad-ranging networks across the British political landscape in order to secure the Liberal candidacy in Holborn in 1886. I also demonstrate how Naoroji built solid alliances with the leaders of various progressive movements in Britain, winning support for Indian reform among socialists, feminists and suffragists, and Irish home rulers.

Chapter Four provides an interlude to this political narrative. Delving into the thousands of letters that Naoroji exchanged with ordinary Indians and Britons, I examine how he participated in the vibrant British public sphere, how the everyday life of early nationalist leaders unfolded, and how Naoroji acted as a community leader for the growing number of Indians resident in the United Kingdom. In Chapter Five, I return to the campaign trail. The issue of race, I argue, increasingly dominated Naoroji's long and difficult parliamentary campaign in Central Finsbury. Four distinct groups—progressive allies in Britain, Indian allies, Liberal Party powerbrokers, and ordinary British electors—determined Naoroji's political fate largely through their promotion of or reactions to racial politics. Naoroji's short parliamentary career is the focus of Chapter Six. Finally in a position to apply his economic thought to British Indian policy, Naoroji lobbied for the implementation of simultaneous civil service examinations, a reform critical to the process of moving India in the direction of self-government. Opponents once more deployed racial politics against him, this time in order to undercut his claims to be a "Member for India" and thus represent Indian political opinion. Chapter Seven returns to the final phase of his career, when Naoroji agitated for self-government while navigating the emerging divisions between moderate and radical factions in the Congress. A concluding chapter considers the broader legacy of his political and economic thought.



Before concluding, a few words must be offered in defense of the genre of biography. The present dissertation does not attempt to be a biography *per se*, but it is biographical in nature. By writing on Naoroji, after all, I am attempting to refocus attention on a figure who has been surprisingly neglected and quite often misunderstood in scholarly literature. This endeavor comes with certain risks. Firstly, many scholars have taken a relatively dim view of early Indian nationalist leaders. In my conversations with fellow academics over the past several years, I have heard Naoroji being described as a “comprador,” a “collaborator,” or—less imaginatively—a “proto-nationalist.” Secondly, South Asian historians have been particularly reluctant to take up biographical projects. The dominance of Marxist historical interpretations, coupled with the influence of the Subaltern Studies movement, have until recently resulted in the almost instinctive shunning of political elites. Consequently, there are gaping holes in the literature on important South Asian leaders. “It is striking how some of the most influential figures in modern India have yet to find their biographers,” remarks Ramachandra Guha.³⁸

Due to the revival of interest in intellectual history, South Asianists have begun once again to explore the biographical genre. Several scholars have, furthermore, recognized the utility of biography in exploring complex social themes. In a recent work on pre-colonial Deccan society, Richard Eaton has made deft use of “the lives of vivid personalities as instruments to investigate and illuminate social processes” in the region.³⁹ Similarly, Judith Brown has drawn on “individual life histories” in order to “probe broad

³⁸ “A Bare Cupboard,” *The Times Literary Supplement*, 30 August 2002, 12.

³⁹ Richard Maxwell Eaton, *A Social History of the Deccan, 1300-1761: Eight Indian Lives* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 4.

historical themes, and to anchor more theoretical discussions in the lived experiences of real people.”⁴⁰ Brown makes several powerful arguments supporting a “biographical turn.” Biographies, she notes, promise to open new sources for the historian. Unlike many official documents, valiantly protected from the light of day by the twin forces of byzantine regulation and bureaucratic thick-headedness, private papers are quite often not subject to the same degree of institutional control. Methodologically, biography can compensate for the shortcomings of other approaches. “Acknowledging the collapse of many grand narratives of history, and the historical hollowness of some recent theoretical approaches,” Brown argues, scholars can instead employ the biographical genre as “a more nuanced methodology that allows the historian to shift gaze from the general theme and theory to the particular and precise experience of people and groups.”⁴¹

My justifications are similar. I have used Naoroji as a lens for understanding two broader phenomena: trends and networks. Since Naoroji was a political elite—perhaps *the* premier political elite in India before Gandhi—his correspondence serves as an encyclopedic resource on the broader social, political, and cultural world of the late nineteenth century. This dissertation is not exclusively concerned with trends in Indian nationalism. With insights from the Naoroji Papers, I have been able to engage with historical works on colonial education, the Indian diaspora, British feminism, and racial attitudes in Victorian society. By reconstructing the networks in which Naoroji was a participant, I have attempted to throw light on numerous non-elites and how they influenced larger events: working class British voters who supported Indian political

⁴⁰ *Windows into the Past: Life Histories and the Historian of South Asia* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2009), 3.

⁴¹ Judith M. Brown, “‘Life Histories’ and the History of Modern South Asia,” *American Historical Review* 114, no. 3 (2009): 587.

reform, Naoroji's tireless campaign secretaries and assistants, and the thousands of Indians who agitated in favor of civil service reform in 1893 and 1894.

I have relied on biographical methods in order to demonstrate the richness and complexity of numerous lived experiences, not just that of Dadabhai Naoroji. It is only through such methods that we can bring alive the debates, discussions, and activities of a generation of Indians and Britons who, at the high noon of British imperialism, set in motion India's journey toward self-government and freedom.

The School Master Abroad

Dadabhai Naoroji and Colonial Bombay's Educative Tradition

I. Introduction

In 1904 in London, as he approached his eightieth year of life, Dadabhai Naoroji momentarily set aside a litany of urgent tasks—his ongoing parliamentary campaign in North Lambeth, preparing for the International Socialist Conference in Amsterdam, and flooding the India Office with memos on Indians in South Africa—in order to pen a brief memoir of his youth in faraway Bombay. Naoroji's autobiographical article, carried in a journal titled *Mainly About People*, turned the clock backward some seventy years. He reflected on his education in one of the new government-administered schools that began dotting Bombay from the 1820s onward. In particular, Naoroji highlighted how his particular educational experience—in a public school partly supported by tax revenues—influenced his subsequent public career. “I realised that I had been educated at the expense of the poor, to whom I myself belong,” he noted. “The thought developed itself in my mind that as my education and all the benefits arising therefrom came from the people, I must return to them the best I had in me. I must devote myself to the service of the people.”¹

¹ Dadabhai Naoroji, “The Days of My Youth,” *M.A.P. (Mainly About People)*, 1904, NAI, DNP, uncataloged item.

A researcher sifting through the Naoroji Papers in New Delhi quickly realizes that Indian education was an extremely important and lifelong concern for the so-called Grand Old Man. Aside from shaping his decision to pursue public service, as his autobiographical piece claims, educational issues featured prominently in all phases of Naoroji's career. Across India and in Great Britain, Naoroji was best known for his political activities and economic writings. But in Bombay, he was always primarily associated with his multifarious educational pursuits and initiatives: his professorship at Elphinstone College, mentorship to young Indians pursuing higher education at home and in Great Britain, propagation of Parsi religious reform, and, above all, his leadership in promoting female education. Quite appropriately, Naoroji's last-ever public appearance occurred in January 1916 when the University of Bombay awarded the nonagenarian political leader with an honorary doctorate in law. During the public procession that followed the university ceremony, Naoroji, seated in the back of a motorcar, halted outside at least three girls schools along the route. Female pupils greeted him with songs and members of the Gujarati Hindu Stri Mandal (women's association) draped garlands over his frail shoulders, while the female principal of the Young Ladies' High School in Fort handed him a bouquet of flowers.² Thus, even at the end of his life, Naoroji was strongly identified in Bombay with his educational initiatives.

This chapter turns back the clock once more, returning to a time well before Naoroji penned his autobiographical article or received his honorary doctorate, and analyzes the formative role of education in Naoroji's youth and young adulthood. It

² "Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji: Degree of L.L.D. Conferred," *Times of India*, 29 January 1916.

explores how Naoroji was both a product of—and a significant contributor to—a distinct “educative tradition” in western India. Naoroji entered school at an important juncture in the educational history of the region. In Bombay, Poona, and other major population centers stretching from Bhuj to Belgaum, indigenous schools—*pathshalas*, *madrastas*, and other places of learning—began to give way to new institutions with British or British-trained instructors, western pedagogy, and occasionally instruction in the English language. Naoroji was one of thousands of young children in Bombay who, in the 1830s, left the care of the *mehta* or indigenous instructor for these new schools run by foreign missionaries, enterprising British tutors, or the government. Many later commentators interpreted the appearance of these schools as a dramatic break from the past, a moment when knowledge and learning began rooting out pervading ignorance in western India. “As far as education was concerned there was darkness or at the best visible darkness,” Dinsha Wacha, one of Naoroji’s closest political colleagues, remarked about the early 1800s.³

This was, to say the least, quite an exaggeration. If western education proved popular among Naoroji’s generation in Bombay, then its success can be partly attributed to rich networks of indigenous education that prevailed beforehand in Gujarati- and Marathi-speaking districts. Bombay’s educative tradition had deep roots. Educational reports and surveys carried out by the Bombay government in the 1810s and 1820s offer some tantalizing clues about the scope and extent of these indigenous schools. Far from documenting a dim, benighted world of pervading ignorance, such reports point to

³ Dinsha Edulji Wacha, *Shells from the Sands of Bombay; Being My Recollections and Reminiscences, 1860-1875* (Bombay: K.T. Anklesaria, 1920), 362.

diverse systems of schooling that reached a relatively wide spectrum of western Indians.⁴ After the British defeated the Maratha *peshwa* in 1818, Mountstuart Elphinstone (1779-1859), the new governor, recognized the importance of these educational networks—and state patronization of education—in the Company’s newly-annexed domains. Noting the “present abundance of people of education,” Elphinstone worried that “unless some exertion is made by the Government, the country will certainly be in a worse state under our rule than it was under the Peishwa’s [*sic*]” due to a large number of teachers now without a royal patron. From this position of relative vulnerability, the governor sketched out a policy for supporting vernacular medium schools throughout the presidency, publishing schoolbooks in vernacular languages, and also pursuing a limited program in English-language education for Indian schoolchildren.⁵ Thus, compared to the situation in contemporary Bengal—where British officials became embroiled in the Orientalist-Anglicist controversy—Elphinstone’s educational policies were shaped much more by immediate political realities and influenced far less by ideological considerations.

The comparison with early nineteenth century Bengal is important. Bombay of the mid-1800s—with Dadabhai Naoroji’s school and teaching career as significant reference points—presents us with a markedly different perspective on Indian educational history. Studies of education in colonial Bengal have tended to concentrate on British officials and instructors and how particular imperialist ideologies in turn shaped pedagogy and

⁴ See “Introduction” in Ramchandra Vithal Parulekar ed, *Survey of Indigenous Education in the Province of Bombay (1820-1830)*, vol. 1 (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1951), xxi.

⁵ “Extract Minute by the Hon. Mountstuart Elphinstone, Governor of Bombay, dated December 13, 1823,” *Appendix to the Report from the Select Committee of the House of Commons on the Affairs of the East-India Company, 16th August 1832, and Minutes of Evidence* (J.L. Cox and Son, 1833), 367.

curricula. Examination of Naoroji's experience as a student and teacher, in contrast, helps us shift focus away from ideology and back to Indians themselves, emphasizing the important agency that Indians exercised as instructors, patrons, financial donors, administrators, and consumers of knowledge. Hayden Bellenoit has recently demonstrated how missionary schools in northern India were, to a large degree, dependent upon Indian agency. "Rather than serving as a hegemonic colonial undertaking," Bellenoit argues, "mission schools were subject to Indian agency and contestation. Indians were alert to the advantages of western educational institutions introduced under British rule and appropriated them to reproduce their own social and intellectual foundations."⁶

Bombay and its government schools provide a much more pronounced example of Indian agency and, frequently, leadership in colonial-era educational endeavors. The Bombay Native Education Society (BNES), which administered government schools, had a relatively equal number of British and Indian directors, and the Indian directors included some of the city's most influential *shetias* (merchant elites). These shetias, as well as princes, originally endowed Elphinstone College, where Naoroji was a student in the early 1840s; together, they helped dictate the institution's general academic focus. Within Elphinstone's classrooms, Naoroji was instructed by two highly qualified Indian assistant professors. The remaining faculty members, mostly of Irish and Scottish extraction, were remarkably intent on promoting Indian talent—an important factor, no doubt, in Naoroji's appointment in 1854 as the first-ever Indian professor at an Indian

⁶ Hayden J.A. Bellenoit, "Missionary Education, Religion, and Knowledge in India, c. 1880-1915," *Modern Asian Studies* 41, no. 2 (March 2007): 393.

government college. At Elphinstone and other government schools in Bombay, there was limited scope for imperial ideologies or missionary polemics—subjects in studies such as Gauri Viswanathan’s *Masks of Conquest*—to influence instruction and pedagogy. As students, Naoroji and his peers were instead attracted to particular rationalist schools of thought, while as recent graduates they sought to reshape popular social and religious practice upon rationalist lines.

Education was also an important component of public life in Bombay. In the 1840s and 1850s, during what is now known as the Young Bombay movement, Naoroji and his peers made education the central pivot in an ambitious program of religious and social reforms. Through newspapers, journals, and cheap publications, they sought to widely disseminate knowledge that they hoped would undermine the basis of supposedly irrational or “inauthentic” social and religious practices. But Young Bombay’s greatest undertaking was the promotion of female education. Here, Naoroji laid the foundations for a truly unique movement in colonial India: the creation of a network of girls’ schools that were funded, administered, and taught almost entirely by Indians themselves, under the auspices of the Students’ Literary and Scientific Society, composed of Elphinstone students and recent graduates. Unlike in Madras, Bengal, and other parts of India, educated Indians—rather than foreign missionaries or British instructors—pioneered female education on a mass scale.⁷ This is a topic that has largely escaped scholarly

⁷ By the mid-1860s, missionaries and the government provided the bulk of annual expenditure on girls’ schools outside of Bombay. In Bengal, Indians provided only Rs. 132 during 1865-6, while the presidency government expended Rs. 29,000. A further Rs. 41,000 was inputted from other sources, including missionaries. In the North-West Provinces, the government expended Rs. 35,000 during 1865-6, while missionaries appeared to provide around half of the Rs. 23,000 from other sources. In Madras, the government spent Rs. 5,500 during 1866-7, while missionary donations accounted for nearly all of the Rs.

attention.⁸ These schools, as well as other reformist activities, were sustained by close cooperation between young reformers and particular shetias, a factor that undermines previous scholarly treatment of Young Bombay as a case of competing elites. Cooperation among elites, with limited regard to linguistic and religious affiliation, was in fact a hallmark of reform movements that existed under the umbrella of Young Bombay.

There were, of course, visible gaps in the alliances that Naoroji helped forge between reformers, shetias, and other elites. Muslims were, for the most part, conspicuously absent, although Konkani Muslims such as Ibrahim Muckba had played an important role in the BNES. The alliances of the 1840s and 1850s were relatively high-caste affairs, and there is no evidence of contact between Naoroji and Jyotirao Phule, the champion of lower castes in the Deccan, who labored under far more trying circumstances to fund and maintain girls' schools in nearby Poona. In spite of these absences, the educational landscape of mid-century Bombay had far-reaching effects: it helped propel the public careers of Naoroji and several of his friends and acquaintances, and helped consolidate a distinct political space in western India. This dynamic was not simply limited to Naoroji's generation. Rather, in the second half of the nineteenth century, we witness the emergence of several other "scholar-statesmen," all products of Bombay's educative tradition. Some were slightly senior to Naoroji. Navrozji Fardunji,

36,000 arriving from other sources. Meanwhile, in Bombay, the presidency government expended only Rs. 341 for 1866-7. In contrast, Indians during the same year provided Rs. 40,000. Missionary contributions were negligible. Dadabhai Naoroji to Stafford Northcote, 5 February 1868, NAI, DNP, N-1 (17).

⁸ Geraldine Forbes's chapter on "Education for Women," for example, has surprisingly little information on Bombay prior to Pandita Ramabai. *Women in Modern India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

for example, taught at Elphinstone before launching his varied public career. Bhau Daji, a respected doctor and public citizen, also started out at Elphinstone as an assistant professor of chemistry and natural philosophy. Others rose to prominence after Young Bombay. Kashinath Trimbak (K.T.) Telang, a judge of the Bombay high court and a leader in the Congress and Bombay Presidency Association, was a Sanskritist and Indologist of high repute. Rounding out this group of leaders were Mahadev Govind Ranade and Gopal Krishna Gokhale: the former was an assistant professor of English and history before beginning his judicial career, and the latter taught English literature and mathematics within the halls of Poona's Fergusson College until 1902.

Western India, of course, did not have an absolute monopoly on such scholar-statesmen. In Bengal, Rammohun Roy stands out as perhaps the earliest example in modern India of such a public figure. Additionally, Romesh Chunder Dutt, while still within the employ of the Indian civil service, translated the Rigveda and Sanskrit works and labored on a three-volume series on ancient Indian civilization. And in north India, Sayyid Ahmad Khan charted a political philosophy for Muslim Indians upon the bedrock of liberal education. In order to paint a fuller picture of early Indian politics and early nationalism, we need to further explore the educative traditions of other areas of the subcontinent. The colonial classroom, as well as its indigenous antecedents, were essential to the process of launching—and tying together—projects for religious, social, and political reform.

II. Elphinstone College and the Historiography of Colonial Education

Dadabhai Naoroji was part of a generation of Bombay schoolchildren that received a distinctly hybrid education: partly in the indigenous school of the mehta, and partly in a new classroom presided over by English schoolmasters. This unique upbringing shaped Naoroji into a particularly promising student while also influencing many of his early academic interests and pursuits. Naoroji's mother initially enrolled her young son in one of Bombay's numerous Gujarati indigenous schools, which were known for producing students remarkably adept in mathematics. Naoroji did not prove an exception. His mehta was in the habit of exhibiting Naoroji's mathematical prowess on the streets of Bombay "amid the loud *wawas* (cries of bravo) of the admiring audience," as he later recalled.⁹

But sometime in the 1830s, at the urging of the very same mehta, Naoroji's mother withdrew her son from the indigenous school and placed him in the new central English school run by the Bombay Native Education Society. Here, Naoroji and his fellow pupils confronted a curriculum that was, in many ways, new and unusual: featuring subjects such as geography, English history, and western classics. In 1838, Naoroji played the part of the Roman senator Sempronius, opposite another Indian student donning the robes of Cato, in a school production.¹⁰ In spite of such examples of the stark foreignness of the new classroom environment, there were many commonalities

⁹ "Extract from the Seventh Report (1832) of the Bombay Native Education Society," Ramchandra Vithal Parulekar and C.L. Bakshi, eds., *Selections from Educational Records (Bombay): Part II, 1815-1840* (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1955), 122; Naoroji, "The Days of My Youth."

¹⁰ R.P. Patwardhan, ed., *Dadabhai Naoroji Correspondence*, vol. II, part 1 (New Delhi: Allied, 1977), xiv.

that linked together the BNES school with the old institutions run by mehtas. A large group of Indian monitors and tutors at the central English school helped mediate and explain lessons, oftentimes also translating concepts into vernacular languages. And the indigenous school's flexibility and informality were complemented in the western school by a surprising absence of discipline. "So lax was discipline that often we would coolly march out of school and spend the whole day in games," Naoroji remembered, adding that, while bunking class and heading out to Bombay's wide grassy Esplanade, he developed particular skill in *gilli danda*, commonly referred to as Indian cricket.¹¹

While not sharpening his skills in *gilli danda*, Naoroji demonstrated enough academic promise to merit the attention of his teachers at the central English school. They recommended him for a course of further education, which, in Bombay, meant attending Elphinstone College. Established in 1835, the college represented the educational hopes of both the government and a broad spectrum of the indigenous elite: it originated in 1827 when, upon Mountstuart Elphinstone's departure for England, Bombay's shetias pledged an endowment for one or two professorships, giving the outgoing governor the privilege of filling the chairs with scholars of his choice. Princes in outlying parts of the presidency added a considerable sum to this endowment, Rs. 215,000, signaling their desire to promote knowledge of "the languages, literature, sciences, and moral philosophy of Europe."¹² In 1839, the BNES included Naoroji's

¹¹ Naoroji, "The Days of My Youth."

¹² "Extract from the Fourth Report (1827) of the Bombay Native Education Society," Parulekar and Bakshi, *Selections from Educational Records (Bombay): Part II, 1815-1840*, 105–07. The maharaja of Satara made the largest single donation, totaling Rs. 17,000. "Introduction," *ibid.*, xxiii.

name in a list of students—alongside other future notables of Bombay such as Atmaram Pandurang, who became the founder of the reformist Prarthana Samaj; Keru Laxman Chhatre, later a professor at the Deccan College; and Ardeshir Framji Moos, who would join Naoroji in numerous reform activities within the Parsi community—for possible transfer to the college.¹³ On 1 May 1840, Naoroji was formally enrolled as an Elphinstonian and awarded a Clare scholarship that totaled the then-princely sum of sixteen rupees.¹⁴

Naoroji entered Elphinstone College when the institution was in great flux. During the previous year, the board of directors of the East India Company ordered the institution to close on the pretext of low enrollment figures, a diktat met by loud protests from the shetias involved in the BNES. In the ensuing administrative tussle, a new Bombay Board of Education (BBE) replaced the BNES and merged the college with the BNES' schools; the college continued to exist *de facto*, but only as the upper division of a newly created Elphinstone Institution, which included a lower division, as well. The upshot of this reshuffling was that the two British teachers at the central English school were elevated to professors, providing a larger faculty for entering college students like Naoroji.¹⁵

¹³ “Extract from the Bombay Secretariat Records: G.D. Volume 485 of 1839,” Ramchandra Vithal Parulekar and C.L. Bakshi, eds., *Selections from Educational Records (Bombay): Part III, 1826-1840* (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1957), 252.

¹⁴ “Bombay Board of Education Report Excerpts,” 1842-1844, NAI, DNP, uncataloged item.

¹⁵ For more information on the complexities of administrative reshuffle, see chapter three in Naheed Ahmad's dissertation, *A History of Elphinstone College, 1827-1890: A Case Study in the Early Formation of an English-Educated Intelligentsia in Bombay* (Wolfson College, Oxford, 1982).

Elphinstone College was therefore at a critical stage of development in the early 1840s: it had a ready group of professors and assistant professors, the support of Bombay's indigenous elite, and a talented yet admittedly small cadre of pupils. Its difficulties were mostly caused by dithering administrators in London and Bombay Castle, the government headquarters of the presidency. Ultimately, cooperation between students and instructors, as well as the patronage and activism of shetia members of the new BBE, helped put the institution on a much more solid footing by the 1850s, when Naoroji was a member of the college's faculty. Indians thus played a critical role during the college's first few volatile years. In this sense, study of the evolution of Elphinstone College has much greater historical relevance beyond simply understanding the institution that produced Naoroji and other members of Young Bombay: it offers an interesting counter-perspective to dominant themes in the historiography of colonial education in India, which has tended to emphasize pronounced ideological motives behind pedagogy while relegating Indians to the role of passive consumers of knowledge. Gauri Viswanathan wrote her influential work, *Masks of Conquest*, on the premise that "it is entirely possible to study the ideology of British education quite independently of an account of how Indians actually received, reacted to, imbibed, manipulated, reinterpreted, or resisted the ideological contest of British literary education."¹⁶ Elphinstone College in the 1840s and 1850s—including Naoroji's experiences as both a student and instructor—serves to undermine elements of this premise, contextualizing the role of ideology and shifting focus back to Indians themselves.

¹⁶ Gauri Viswanathan, *Masks of Conquest: Literary Study and British Rule in India* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), 9.

Much of the literature on colonial education has relied on problematic generalizations, both chronological and regional. Yet colonial education was hardly a hegemonic endeavor. Elphinstone College sprung out of an educational environment in the Bombay Presidency that was, in important ways, quite different from other areas of the subcontinent, such as Bengal. Before 1854, when Charles Wood's despatch to Calcutta roused some handwringing about governmental responsibility for mass education, authorities in Bengal had confined their educational efforts to a tiny cohort, mostly in Calcutta proper, being taught in English, while allowing a free hand to European missionaries to open vernacular and English schools in both the city and mofussil.¹⁷ In Bombay, in contrast, while Mountstuart Elphinstone had articulated a policy of state support for schools, Indians were the real agents in spreading western education. The Bombay counterparts of Alexander Duff, Calcutta's leading missionary educationist, had a far more circumscribed influence on education in Naoroji's time.¹⁸ Indians taught students and played an important role in financing new institutions: authorities in Bombay Castle forked over absurdly paltry funds¹⁹ despite Elphinstone's

¹⁷ For more on state educational policy in Bengal in the mid-nineteenth century, see the introduction in Parna Sengupta, *Pedagogy for Religion: Missionary Education and the Fashioning of Hindus and Muslims in Bengal* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011).

¹⁸ While giving testimony before the House of Lords in 1853, Erskine Perry, former president of the BBE, noted that "a very inferior number" of students in the Bombay Presidency attended missionary schools in comparison to government schools. *Second Report from the Select Committee of the House of Lords Appointed to Inquire into the Operation of the Act 3 & 4 Will. 4, C. 85, for the Better Government of Her Majesty's Indian Territories* (London: House of Commons, 1853), 15.

¹⁹ In 1845, Bombay's educational expenditure was Rs. 168,226 versus Rs. 477,493 in Bengal. This differential is all the more striking when taking into account that education was far more broad-based in the Bombay Presidency. That same year, 10,616 students in the presidency were enrolled in government schools in contrast to only 5,570 in Bengal—a marked contrast, considering that the population of the Bombay Presidency was only 10.5 million while Bengal's hovered around 37 million. Of all the students in

lofty pronouncements, regularly requiring Indians to bear the full cost of new school buildings and other infrastructure.²⁰ Indians also constantly pressed the government to open more schools and increase educational expenditure.

In the case of Elphinstone College, Indians even set the tone for curriculum. Following up on their 1827 pronouncement that the Elphinstone professorships should be used for teaching European sciences and arts, shetia members of the BNES in 1831 advocated instruction of the English language “as a branch of classical education to be esteemed and cultivated in this country as the classical languages of Greece and Rome are in the Universities of Europe.”²¹ With great irony, Indian elites—rather than the imperial ideologues or missionaries, like Duff, portrayed in Viswanathan’s work—led the campaign for introducing English literature as a proper academic subject. For their part, British officials in Bombay Castle, including John Malcolm, the governor, argued in favor of instruction in far more prosaic and technical subjects such as mathematics, astronomy, hydraulics, or mechanics.²²

Indians, therefore, were hardly passive actors in the diffusion of western education through institutions such as Elphinstone College and schools run by the BNES—and it is difficult to elide their influence as financial benefactors, teachers, and

government schools, only 761 were taught in English in Bombay versus 3,953 in Bengal. Veena Naregal, *Language, Politics, Elites and the Public Sphere: Western India under Colonialism* (London: Anthem, 2002), 138.

²⁰ “Introduction,” Parulekar and Bakshi, *Selections from Educational Records (Bombay): Part III, 1826-1840*, xvii.

²¹ Ahmad, *A History of Elphinstone College*, 43.

²² “Extract from the Sixth Report (1830) of the Bombay Native Education Society,” Parulekar and Bakshi, *Selections from Educational Records (Bombay): Part II, 1815-1840*, 120–1.

stakeholders. One other important element set apart the college during the mid-nineteenth century: its professors. Unlike Duff at Calcutta's General Assembly Institution or later members of the Indian education service, professors at the college during the mid-nineteenth century evinced little missionary zeal and can hardly be considered as torchbearers for many imperialist ideologies. As Naheed Ahmad notes in her study of the institution, "in their ideas the Elphinstone College professors were far from being aligned to the Raj."²³ The college was, in fact, regularly assailed by missionaries as an insidiously anti-Christian establishment. In 1854, one American missionary in Satara, William Wood, urgently pleaded for the establishment of more missionary schools in the Bombay Presidency since "the rising generation of this land, educated in the Government schools, are *educated infidels*." Instructors at the Elphinstone and Poona colleges, Wood continued, produced "teachers [that] are thoroughly infidel in sentiment; and they are assiduous in their efforts to instill their infidel sentiments into the minds of their pupils."²⁴ Similarly, in 1850, George Bowen, another American attracted to western India in the hope of winning over hapless native souls, charged that the principal of Elphinstone College was "an infidel and freely ridicules the Christian religion before the pupils."²⁵

²³ Ahmad, *A History of Elphinstone College*, 218.

²⁴ Royal Gould Wilder, *Mission Schools in India of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, with Sketches of the Missions among the North American Indians, the Sandwich Islands, the Armenians of Turkey, and the Nestorians of Persia* (New York: A.D.F. Randolph, 1861), 188. Thanks to Dan Sheffield for pointing out this reference.

²⁵ Robert E. Speer, *George Bowen of Bombay, Missionary, Scholar, Mystic, Saint* (New York: Missionary Review of the World, 1938), 170.

Who were these professors? Between the 1830s and at least the 1870s, the college faculty was dominated by a notably large number of Scotsmen and Irishmen, many of whom exhibited a decisively progressive and liberal political bent. Intellectually, several of these instructors were distant heirs to the rational schools of thought from the Scottish enlightenment. For example, John Harkness, the college's principal during Naoroji's school years—as well as the target of George Bowen's vitriol—studied moral philosophy at the University of Edinburgh, where he came under the influence of James Pillans, a prominent classicist and educational reformist who was a student of the philosopher Dugald Stewart. As Dinsha Wacha recalled, Harkness was greatly attracted to the philosophical thought of William Hamilton, another Edinburgh don who was in turn influenced by Immanuel Kant.²⁶

Unsaddled by particular prejudices, many of these instructors established close and lasting relationships with their pupils, something that heightened their intellectual influence on Bombay society. John Bell, a Scotsman who taught Naoroji natural philosophy and chemistry, was effusive in his praise for his students. “It would be difficult for any teacher to be otherwise than kind to the youth of an Indian Seminary,” he noted before a large audience of Britons, Indian alumni, and students in May 1846, “where insolence and disobedience are unknown; where the scholar is as eager and anxious to learn, as the instructor is to teach; and where, consequently, the business of instruction is not so much an irksome task, as a delightful social enjoyment.”²⁷

²⁶ Wacha, *Shells from the Sands of Bombay*, 529.

²⁷ “Address to Professor Bell,” *Bombay Times and Journal of Commerce*, 16 May 1846.

Joseph Patton, an Irishman and graduate of Trinity College who taught mathematics, was wildly popular with Naoroji's generation of Elphinstonians—and deeply mourned after his premature death in 1852. Along with the professor of English literature and history, Richard Tuohill Reid, another Irishman and Trinity graduate, Patton was closely involved in Young Bombay through the Students' Literary and Scientific Society, which was inaugurated in 1848. "It is to Patton we owe all the new life the Parsees got in the early 50s," Khurshedji Rustomji (K.R.) Cama, the Parsi scholar who was Naoroji's junior at the college, noted retrospectively.²⁸ Well after Naoroji left Elphinstone for business opportunities in Britain, Francis Guy Selby, professor of logic and moral philosophy, exercised great influence on Mahadev Govind Ranade (who nevertheless had deep misgivings about how Selby's agnosticism might rub off on his Indian students²⁹) and—in Poona—Gopal Krishna Gokhale, both of whom became prominent nationalist leaders. William Wordsworth, professor of English and grandson of the poet, was another close friend of Ranade, Naoroji, Wacha, Navrozji Fardunji, Kashinath Trimbak Telang, and Behramji M. Malabari. In January 1885, he hosted at his Breach Candy bungalow some of the first discussions for the founding of the Indian National Congress.³⁰ Ahmad argues that the influence of Elphinstone's professors at midcentury was so great precisely because they were "so accessible, so personal, and in effect, so vastly different to the aloof *sahibs* of the Raj who the Indians normally

²⁸ Khurshedji Rustomji (K.R.) Cama to Naoroji, 25 October 1901, NAI, DNP, C-21 (1).

²⁹ *The Miscellaneous Writings of the Late Hon'ble Mr. Justice M.G. Ranade* (New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1992), 66.

³⁰ "The Agitation of Indian Questions," *Times of India*, 20 January 1885.

beheld”—but notes that these dynamics began to change in the ensuing decades.³¹ Tellingly, upon the death of John Harkness in 1883, the *Native Opinion* lamented that his generation “radically differed from the educationists of the present day.”³²

The records and legacies of men like John Harkness, Joseph Patton, and Richard Tuohill Reid point to a much more complex, varied educational landscape in nineteenth century India than has been portrayed in the scholarly literature (as well illustrating a diversity of British attitudes toward Indians). Curiously, this literature has also paid scant attention to the fact that many college instructors in places such as Bombay and Poona were actually Indian. Naoroji was deeply influenced by two remarkable assistant professors at Elphinstone, Bal Gangadhar Shastri Jambhekar (1812-1846) and Navrozji Fardunji (1817-1885), who both had a formative role in the development of Young Bombay. Indeed, it was Jambhekar who formally selected Naoroji for admission into the college—in spite of Naoroji’s junior standing and, according to Masani, the prejudices of one instructor at the central English school who ranked his pupil “very near the bottom” on account of the poverty of the Dordi family.³³ Like Naoroji, Navrozji and Jambhekar

³¹ Ahmad, *A History of Elphinstone College*, 217.

³² “The Native Papers: The Late Mr. Harkness,” *Times of India*, 19 November 1883.

³³ In a letter that Naoroji wrote in 1909 to one of Jambhekar’s family members, he noted that, “To him I owe one incident in my life for which I am ever grateful to him. Owing to his kindly interest in me, and favourable opinion of me, I was transferred from school to college earlier than I would otherwise have been.” G.G. Jambhekar, *Memoirs and Writings of Āchārya Bāl Gangādhar Shāstri Jāmbhekar, 1812-1846: Pioneer of the Renaissance in Western India and Father of Modern Mahārāshtra*, vol. 3 (Poona: G.G. Jambhekar, 1950), 332. If Rustom Pestonji Masani’s account is to be believed, Naoroji deeply resented how his impoverished family background disadvantaged himself against other classmates. “Although he was the brightest boy of the class, he was put very near the bottom. The teacher of the class had a partiality for the sons of rich people, a common failing of the school-masters of that type. Poor as he was, Dady could not stand it. It was not in his nature to conceal resentment; he often rebelled against such injustice, but it made matters worse for him. Bal Gangadhar, however, picked him out with unerring judgement [*sic*] and

were products of a hybrid education. Jambhekar, whose family hailed from the southern Konkan coast, was most likely educated in Sanskrit by his father, a well-known *shastri*, before he was brought to Bombay in 1826 by Sadashiv Kashinath Chhatre, the native secretary of the BNES, and enrolled in the BNES' central English school.³⁴ Navrozji, meanwhile, attended a vernacular school in Bharuch, moved onto Surat to receive further instruction from a British missionary, and finally enrolled in the central English school in Bombay in 1830.³⁵

Inducted as assistant professors at Elphinstone College mere years after finishing their schooling, both men established a polymathic tradition of academic study at the institution. Surviving educational records tell us little about Navrozji's time in Elphinstone; nevertheless, in his other activities he displayed an obvious facility for languages, serving as a translator for Alexander BurnBombay Presidency doomed mission to Kabul and later helping to compile the first ever Gujarati-English dictionary.³⁶ Jambhekar juggled responsibilities in multiple subjects: aside from instructing Naoroji and his classmates in advanced mathematics and optics, he assisted John Harkness in lecturing on the merits of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* and *The Merchant of Venice* as

pronounced him fit for the higher form." Rustom Pestonji Masani, *Dadabhai Naoroji: The Grand Old Man of India* (London: G. Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1939), 31.

³⁴ G.G. Jambhekar, ed., *Memoirs and Writings of Āchārya Bāl Gangādhar Shāstri Jāmbhekar, 1812-1846: Pioneer of the Renaissance in Western India and Father of Modern Mahārāshtra*, vol. 1 (Poona: G.G. Jambhekar, 1950), iv, viii.

³⁵ Aroon Tikekar, "Naoroji Furdoonji and the 'Young Bombay Party': Reflections on the Early Debate on Reform in Western India," in *Mārga: Ways of Liberation, Empowerment, and Social Change in Maharashtra*, ed. Masao Naitō et al. (Delhi: Manohar, 2008), 198; "The Elphinstone Memorial: Report of Proceedings of a Public Meeting of the Students and Ex-Students of the Elphinstone College and Institution on the 11th January 1860 in Honor of the Late Hon'ble Mountstuart Elphinstone" (Bombay, 1864), 1–2.

³⁶ B.B. Patell, ed., *Pārsī Prakāsh*, vol. 1 (Bombay: Duftur Ashkara Press, 1888), 481.

well as Alexander Pope's *Essay on Man*.³⁷ When Elphinstone's mathematics professor, Arthur Orlebar, went on furlough to England due to ill health, Jambhekar took over his responsibilities and specially tutored two of his star pupils, Naoroji and Atmaram Pandurang, in integral calculus and analytical geometry, catching Orlebar by surprise upon his return to Bombay. "On no occasion before I left India have so many been able to pass examinations in the higher mathematics," a rejuvenated Orlebar praised his temporary replacement.³⁸ Jambhekar dabbled in astronomy, journalism, Marathi etymology and grammar, and paleography—he frequently contributed papers to the Bombay branch of the Royal Asiatic Society although, as an Indian, he was barred from entering its premises—before succumbing to typhus at the tragically young age of thirty-three.

Under the mentorship of Jambhekar, Navrozji, and progressively inclined Scotsmen and Irishmen like Harkness and Patton, Dadabhai Naoroji thrived academically. Like his two Indian professors, he distinguished himself as a polymath. Elphinstone's faculty in 1843 recognized him as one of the top students in chemistry, natural philosophy, and history; the "most promising pupil" in the study of optics; and—importantly—deserving of a prize for his performance in political economy.³⁹ In a letter of recommendation dating from 1846, a tattered scrap of which survives in the Naoroji Papers, John Harkness alluded to Naoroji's broad talents: "In point of scholarship, and

³⁷ *Report of the Board of Education for the Years 1840, 1841* (Bombay: American Mission Press, 1842), 4.

³⁸ *Report of the Board of Education for the Year 1844* (Bombay: Government Press, 1845), 5–6.

³⁹ *Report of the Board of Education for the Year 1843* (Bombay: Government Press, 1844), 5, 6.

attainments in the different branches of literature & sciences, he has all along maintained the highest character with his different teachers; & has repeatedly carried off the first prizes at the successive Annual Examinations.”⁴⁰

After joining Elphinstone’s teaching staff in November 1845 as an “assistant master”—responsible for elaborating upon the lectures delivered by his British superiors, and occasionally translating them into vernaculars—Naoroji broadened his academic interests and pursuits. One of his old classmates, Dadoba Pandurang, invited Naoroji to demonstrate various chemistry experiments before his class at Bombay’s normal school, which had been founded by Jambhekar to train new generations of Indian teachers.⁴¹ At public gatherings, many which were organized by the Students’ Literary and Scientific Society, Naoroji lectured in turn on diverse topics such as the workings of the steam engine, “Advantages to be Derived from the Study of Mathematics,” astronomical principles, and “The Duties of a Teacher.” By 1849, Naoroji had become highest ranked non-professorial instructor in the college, commanding a salary of a hundred rupees a month;⁴² in 1851, he rose to the rank of assistant professor, filling the post that had lain

⁴⁰ This letter survives as a transcription made by Naoroji. It is in an extremely damaged state and is not even properly cataloged in the Naoroji Papers; I stumbled upon it while sifting through several boxes of uncataloged correspondence. I cannot fully authenticate that John Harkness was the author of this letter. I was only able to make out the first two letters of the first name in the transcribed signature of the author—“Jo”—but, based on this, and the fact that the author mentions that he has known Naoroji for ten years, first as a pupil and then as an assistant at Elphinstone, there is little reason for me to doubt that Harkness wrote the original letter. John Harkness, 30 April 1846, NAI, DNP, uncataloged item.

⁴¹ Bhawanishankar Shridhar Pundit, ed., *Rāosaheb Keshav Shivrām Bhāwlkar Yānche Ātmavrutta* (Nagpur: Vidharbha Samshodan Mandal, 1961). Thanks to Murali Ranganathan for bringing this source to my attention.

⁴² The next highest-ranking instructor, Bomanji Pestonji, earned only 55 rupees even though he had one year of seniority over Naoroji. Naoroji’s old classmate, Ardeshir Framji Moos, had a salary of 40 rupees. MSA, Elphinstone College Records, vol. 9.

vacant since Jambhekar's death. Identifying Jambhekar's old pupil as "one of the most experienced as well as able men ever educated within the walls of the Institution," the Elphinstone faculty stated in their annual report that, "We have a strong hope that he will fill in a worthy manner the place of his esteemed predecessor."⁴³

Surviving reports of the Bombay Board of Education provide a glimpse of Naoroji's teaching career at Elphinstone, where he lectured on mathematics, astronomy, and physics (or, as it was referred to in that era, "natural philosophy"). In examination papers, he asked his pupils to prove the value of π , perform integral calculus, define particular theorems, and solve complex trigonometric problems: "What is the declination of the Sun, when he is on the horizons of Bombay and Madras at the same instant; their respective latitudes being $18^{\circ} 56'$ N., and $13^{\circ} 5'$ N.; and their longitudes $72^{\circ} 57'$ E., and $80^{\circ} 21'$ E.?"⁴⁴ Fulfilling the hopes of other faculty members at Elphinstone, Naoroji, like Jambhekar, displayed an infectious enthusiasm for teaching and a strong dedication toward engagement with his students. He spoke eloquently in favor of the many benefits derived from studying mathematics, arguing that a student of this discipline "is inured to strict inquiries, is enabled to guard himself against credulous simplicity, and the meanness of yielding a slavish submission to the absolute dictates of authority or of any

⁴³ *Report of the Board of Education from January 1, 1850 to April 30, 1851* (Bombay: Bombay Education Society's Press, 1851), 31.

⁴⁴ "Annual report of the Elphinstone Institution, Bombay, for the year 1852," in *Report of the Board of Education, Bombay, from May 1, 1852, to April 30, 1853* (Bombay: Bombay Education Society's Press, 1853), 67; *Report of the Board of Education, Bombay, from May 1, 1854 to April 30, 1855* (Bombay: Bombay Education Society's Press, 1855), 84.

species of mental tyranny.”⁴⁵ Mathematics, in other words, provided excellent training in rational thought, and it was through the study of mathematics that Naoroji passed along the rationalist ideas of his teachers to a new generation of students.

Not satisfied with confining his instruction within the four walls of the classroom, he took his students on an “outdoor lesson”—under the night sky—in order to reinforce instruction of particular astronomical principles. While lecturing on mechanics, Naoroji relied on texts from Trinity College in Dublin but, after noticing that his students “did not acquire a sufficiently clear comprehension” of the workings of the steam engine and locomotive, complemented these lessons with several field trips. He convinced two leading members of the famous Wadia family of shipbuilders, Ardaseer Cursetjee Wadia and Hirjibhai Merwanji Wadia, to allow his pupils to see the dockyard facilities at Mazagaon and the inside of a steamer anchored here. Later, Naoroji brought his students to the Bori Bunder station in order to inspect that great modern wonder, the steam locomotive, which plied along the brand new Great Indian Peninsula Railway, India’s first railroad.⁴⁶

Through his dedication and creative teaching methods, Naoroji succeeded, like Jambhekar, in molding a new generation of Indian educators, men who would shape the contours of education across western India for the remainder of the nineteenth century. Among his pupils were Ramakrishna Gopal Bhandarkar, the prominent Indologist and social reformer who taught at both the Elphinstone and Deccan colleges; Mahipatram

⁴⁵ Dadabhai Naoroji, “Advantages to be Derived from the Study of Mathematics,” *Jame Jamshed*, 28 December 1906 (republication), NAI, DNP, Part III, G-3.

⁴⁶ *Report of the Board of Education, Bombay, from May 1, 1854 to April 30, 1855*, 54–5.

Rupram Nilkanth, future principal of the Gujarat Training College in Ahmedabad, which supplied instructors for the proliferating number of primary schools across Gujarat; and Javerilal Umiashankar Yajnik, an active member of various scholarly associations in the presidency, a witness for the 1882 Commission on Indian Education (Hunter Commission), and, later in life, a member of the Bombay Municipal Corporation and Bombay legislative council. Finally, Naoroji began putting his own stamp on educational policy in western India when he was appointed as a member of the Bombay Board of Education in 1851, where, although still in his late twenties, he worked alongside some of the most eminent Indian and European civic leaders in the city.

Naoroji's meteoric rise at Elphinstone was facilitated by two important factors. Firstly, both students and instructors, whether Indians or Britons, enjoyed remarkably cooperative relations at the college. Secondly, due to the important agency that Indians exercised as instructors and financial benefactors, the educational infrastructure in Bombay was to a great degree geared toward the promotion of Indian talent. In their original endowment of the Elphinstone professorships in 1827, shetia and princely benefactors had specifically stipulated that the posts were to be held by Britons "until the happy period arrives when natives shall be fully competent to hold them."⁴⁷ These were not empty words: the donors, many of whom were members of the BNES and BBE, had enough influence and clout to enforce this stipulation and determine when such a "fully competent" candidate materialized. When, in 1854, Elphinstone's faculty formally appointed Naoroji as a full professor of mathematics and natural philosophy—making

⁴⁷ "Extract from the Fourth Report (1827) of the Bombay Native Education Society," Parulekar and Bakshi, *Selections from Educational Records (Bombay): Part II, 1815-1840*, 57.

him the first-ever Indian professor at a government college in the subcontinent—they described his appointment as “a measure so entirely in accordance with both the letter and spirit of the resolution” of the 1827 endowment.⁴⁸

Particular British officials also assisted in the promotion of Indian talent, broadening this cooperative environment into elements of the educational bureaucracy. Naoroji was very close to Erskine Perry, the chief justice of the Bombay supreme court and president of the BBE, who had actively encouraged Naoroji to apply for the professorial position at Elphinstone.⁴⁹ In the late 1850s and early 1860s, George Birdwood (1832-1917), a professor at Grant Medical College and the registrar of the University of Bombay, was widely respected for his willingness to cross racial barriers and forge lasting friendships with both his students and Bombay’s leading shetias. This environment of close cooperation did not last, of course: by the mid-1860s, when Indian influence in the educational bureaucracy began to wane, following the deaths of some leading shetias and the commercial crisis precipitated by the end of the American Civil War, Bombay bureaucrats became much more interested in employing fellow Britons in the college rather than seeking out Indian talent.⁵⁰ But while it did last, the unique

⁴⁸ *Report of the Board of Education, Bombay, from May 1, 1854 to April 30, 1855*, 26.

⁴⁹ “I have surely done nothing hitherto to show the world that I have any good claim to apply for such a place,” Naoroji demurred in response. Naoroji to Erskine Perry, 5 May 1852, NAI, DNP, N-1.

⁵⁰ As Naheed Ahmad notes, “With the spread of education, Indians of academic accomplishment were appearing on the scene in ever greater numbers, but they were noticeably absent in the higher teaching positions at prestigious institutions like the Elphinstone College. Indeed, it appears that the very increase of qualified Indian academics raised barriers against their employment as full professors. It was all very well, in the 1840s and 1850s, to have Indian professors when very few Indians were qualified to apply for the position. But within two decades it was feared that once the principle of Indian professors was accepted, the floodgates would be opened to the Indianisation of the higher ranks of the education service.” *A History of Elphinstone College*, 131–2.

environment at Elphinstone College propelled the so-called “Young Bombay” generation to the fore, ushering in a moment of social, religious, and nascent political reform. As the next section will detail, the progressive, liberal agenda of Young Bombay was firmly tied to the classroom: Naoroji and his colleagues made education a central feature of their reform projects.

III. Young Bombay: Cooperation in the Pursuit of Reform

What, precisely, was “Young Bombay”? The term was sparingly used during the midpoint of the nineteenth century and—when it was used at all—was often deployed in a negative way. For example, in September 1851, the *Times of India* contemptuously sneered, “We were not till now aware that Chuckerbuttyism had taken root amongst us,—that there was a Young Bombay as well as a Young Bengal, desirous of reforming the abuses amongst themselves with a view to their release from the foreign thralldom under which they and their fathers have been restrained from the national pastime of robbing and cutting each other’s throats when it so pleased them!” “Chuckerbuttyism” and the *Times*’ general tone of derision aside, the comparison with Young Bengal was telling. It linked a rising generation in Bombay with students of the Hindu College in Calcutta who, under the brilliant Eurasian instructor Henry Louis Vivian Derozio, began in the 1820s to vociferously attack orthodox social and religious conventions.

Jim Masselos has identified Young Bombay specifically as the generation of Elphinstone graduates from the late 1840s and 1850s that began championing a distinctly new agenda of social, religious, and—eventually—political reform. Masselos argues that

these individuals had “a corporate sense of identity” born out of “an acceptance of the intrinsic value of a liberal Western education and of the knowledge which it imparted.”⁵¹ As in Bengal, these students were positioned in opposition toward a bulwark of orthodoxy. In her detailed study of Bombay in the mid-1800s, Christine Dobbin pins the weight of this social and religious orthodoxy upon the shetias, thereby framing an intrinsic conflict between the old shetia elite and the new intelligentsia.⁵² This seems a little overstated. Naoroji and his western-educated peers—men such as Navrozji Fardunji, Bhau Daji, Ardeshir Framji Moos, and Karsondas Mulji—certainly consolidated a distinct sense of identity through associations such as the Students’ Literary and Scientific Society and their commitment to social and religious reform. But they also forged strong alliances with the shetia elite, many of whom actually supported and bankrolled their reformist programs.

Instead of classifying Young Bombay as yet another case of competing elites—or even clear generational conflict (as in Young Bengal)—it is more useful to see the movement as the product of cooperation between Naoroji’s fellow Elphinstone graduates and certain liberal-minded shetias. On account of the decades of Indian leadership in educational activities—in the BNES, BBE, and elsewhere—Young Bombay was in many ways the natural outcome of the strong educative tradition in western India, a tradition that produced receptivity to reform. Several shetias were important actors in this process.

⁵¹ *Towards Nationalism: Group Affiliations and the Politics of Public Associations in Nineteenth Century Western India* (Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1974), 28.

⁵² See especially chapters two and three in Christine E. Dobbin, *Urban Leadership in Western India: Politics and Communities in Bombay City, 1840-1885* (London: Oxford University Press, 1972).

If the late 1840s and early 1850s can be defined as a liberal moment, then it was liberal precisely because it was tied to the educational project championed by Indian elites: many of the movement's key reformist planks were centered around the further extension of education and learning to underprivileged constituencies, most notably women.

Dadabhai Naoroji stands out during this period for his involvement in creating a new institutional fabric for Bombay. Between 1848 and 1855, he took a leadership role in a wide range of new associations: he was the founder and first editor of the Parsi Lekhak Mandli, a society for Parsi writers; a founding member of the Parsi Natak Mandli, which, through its performance of a Gujarati rendition of *Rustom and Sohrab* in October 1853, opened the curtains for that great cultural institution of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Parsi theater; and was instrumental in raising funds for the Framji Cowasji Institute, which gave Bombay citizens a new forum for lectures and public gatherings.⁵³

His first foray into institution building was also one of his most significant. In the summer of 1848, Naoroji took great pains to revive Elphinstone's Native Literary Society—over which Bal Gangadhar Shastri Jambhekar had presided—by roping students and professors into a new and more ambitious organization, the Students' Literary and Scientific Society. While professors Joseph Patton and Richard Tuohill Reid served as mentors to the new group, Naoroji chalked out a detailed agenda that went well beyond fortnightly lectures on academic and social topics. One of the specific objectives of the SLSS was the dissemination of knowledge and learning, and to this end the Society

⁵³ K.R. Cama to Naoroji, 25 October 1901, NAI, DNP, C-21 (1); Patell, *Pārsī Prakāsh*, 1888, 1: 624–5; Masani, *Dadabhai Naoroji*, 68–9.

welcomed corresponding members in distant locations such as Surat and Dharwar. In July 1849, Patton challenged student members to create a body of “National Literature,” enjoining young Elphinstonians to “write for the people” and produce works “which would influence the native mind.”⁵⁴

Naoroji was already busy laying the groundwork for this effort. Three months after the inauguration of the SLSS, he helped create the Dnyan Prasarak Mandli (Society for the Diffusion of Knowledge), a branch of the Society that held public lectures and produced popular journals in Gujarati and Marathi. Naoroji and his co-organizers specifically intended for these journals “to promote the diffusion of knowledge among the uneducated masses” and therefore kept prices very low to ensure wide distribution.⁵⁵ As the first president of the Mandli and editor of its Gujarati journal, Naoroji deepened working relationships with fellow Elphinstonians such as Karsondas Mulji and Ardeshir Framji Moos, who would remain lifelong friends and confidantes on political and social reform issues.

But he also relied extensively on the support of an energetic shetia, Kharshedji Nasarvanji Cama (1815?-1885) (Image 2). Naoroji and Cama's collaboration serves as perhaps the best example of how shetias and young Elphinstonians cooperated to achieve particular reforms. A member of one of Bombay's wealthiest and most prominent Parsi mercantile families, Cama lacked a formal education and spoke halting English. Many of his closest relations were strictly orthodox and looked at the young Elphinstonians with

⁵⁴ “Students’ Literary and Scientific Society,” *Bombay Times and Journal of Commerce*, 28 July 1849.

⁵⁵ *Proceedings of the Students’ Literary and Scientific Society, Bombay, for the Years 1854-55 and 1855-56* (Bombay: Bombay Gazette Press, 1856), 5.



Image 2: Kharshedji Nasarvanji Cama. From Kaikhosro N. Kabraji, *Ehvāle ‘Rāst Goftār’ yāne ‘Rāst Goftār tathā Satya Prakāsh’ (History of the Rast Goftar and Satya Prakash)*, 6.

suspicion. In spite—or because—of these handicaps, he threw himself into the task of widening the distribution of the Mandli’s publications. “It was his worship, his love of human intellect,” Naoroji recalled, years later, as the reason behind Cama’s zeal for reformist activities. Cama (with Naoroji’s additional contribution) paid out of his own pocket the monthly salaries of the Mandli’s writers; beginning in the early 1850s he sponsored monetary prizes for Gujarati language essays on topics such as “the

importance of smallpox vaccinations” (*shītlā kahadhāvavānī jarūrīāt*) and “the wrong superstitions of astrologers” (*joshīonā khothā veham*).⁵⁶

Kharshedji Nasarvanji Cama was involved in two other endeavors that Naoroji helped begin in 1851, the Rahnumae Mazdayasnan Sabha (Society of the Guides of the Mazdayasnan Path) and the Gujarati newspaper *Rast Goftar* (*Truth Teller*). Both the Sabha and *Rast Goftar* waded into the deeply treacherous waters surrounding Parsi religious and social reform, something that put Naoroji and his colleagues into direct confrontation with the orthodox Parsi priesthood and laity. The Sabha, with Naoroji serving as secretary and Navrozji Fardunji as president, gave itself the task of protestantizing aspects of Zoroastrianism by removing supposedly foreign and inauthentic customs and practices. In this regard, Navrozji was a logical choice to head the organization: in the wake of earlier Christian missionary attacks on Zoroastrian religious texts and doctrine, an affront to the community that culminated in the Scottish reverend John Wilson’s conversion of two Parsi boys in 1839, he had taken a leading role in defending the faith and disputing missionaries’ allegations. As Daniel Sheffield has pointed out, Navrozji drew on a wide variety of sources—ranging from Voltaire and Thomas Paine to contemporary European orientalist scholarship—to rebut missionary polemics and characterize Zoroastrianism as a religion marked by reason and rationality.⁵⁷ Here, Naoroji, as secretary for the Sabha, threw his support behind the

⁵⁶ Patell, *Pārsī Prakāsh*, 1888, 1: 512.

⁵⁷ Daniel Jensen Sheffield, *In the Path of the Prophet: Medieval and Early Modern Narratives of the Life of Zarathustra in Islamic Iran and Western India* (Harvard University, 2012), 173–4.

rationalist perspectives of his old teacher and also launched his own career as a Parsi religious reformer.

But the activities of the Sabha were momentarily forgotten when, barely two months after its inaugural meeting, Bombay was convulsed by riots between the Parsi and Muslim communities after a Parsi journalist published an insensitive account of the life of Muhammad alongside a depiction of the prophet. In the wake of the riots, where many Parsis felt that both the government and community's Parsee Panchayet had offered them inadequate protection, Naoroji published his first edition of the *Rast Goftar*, which was bankrolled by Kharshedji Nasarvanji Cama. While its initial numbers dealt exclusively with the fallout from the riots, the *Rast* moved on to take up a diverse array of reformist positions such as the discontinuance of child marriages, the inappropriateness of nautches, and the rights of women in adopting certain items of European clothing (the paper was a particularly staunch defender of Parsi women who, somewhat bizarrely, desired to wear stockings in the heat and humidity of Bombay).⁵⁸ Together, Naoroji's paper and the Sabha evolved into strong mouthpieces for certain reforms that went well beyond the limits of the tiny Parsi community, influencing western Indian society at large.

In the larger narrative of the nexus between reform and education in Bombay, the *Rast Goftar* and the Rahnumae Mazdayasnan Sabha were significant for three major reasons. Firstly, the activities of Dadabhai Naoroji and Navrozji Fardunji—identifying and weeding out supposedly foreign aspects of practiced Zoroastrianism—bore the clear

⁵⁸ Kaikhosro N. Kabraji, *Ehvāle 'Rāst Goftār' yāne 'Rāst Goftār tathā Satya Prakāsh'* (*History of the Rast Goftar and Satya Prakash*) (Bombay: Duftur Ashkara Press, 1901), 48, 51, 52.

imprint of ideas and philosophies learned within the walls of Elphinstone College. Aside from portraying Zoroastrianism as a rational faith, they helped usher in a very Protestant search for doctrinal authenticity. The one unfortunate consequence of this development was that both men succumbed to orientalist stereotypes of Hindu and Islamic decadence and corruption, something that had visibly crept into Elphinstone’s curriculum. Thus, Navrozji specifically and deliberately tarred certain Parsi practices he found undesirable—particular marriage and funerary customs, various forms of black magic, and superstitions—as borrowings from the two major religions of India, further underscoring their inauthenticity and harmfulness.⁵⁹ For better and for worse, therefore, Young Bombay’s reforming impulse was guided by lessons learned in the classroom.

Secondly, both the *Rast* and the Sabha envisioned themselves as pedagogical instruments for combatting ignorance and spreading knowledge. They had a clear educational agenda and purpose, as is evidenced from the language they deployed. At the Sabha, Naoroji charged certain orthodox Parsis as being “ignorant (*anjāṃṇpaṇ*) or following traditions without understanding (*vagar shamaj*);” meanwhile, Navrozji prescribed that “their thoughts should be reformed, and arrangements should be made to fill them with precious and useful knowledge (*teonāṃ mannā vīchar sudhārvā tathā tevone kīmtī ane faedā bharelum ganeān melvvāni buddhī thāe tehevī tajvīj karvī*).”⁶⁰ The

⁵⁹ Navrozji clarified: “many customs of Hindus and Muslims have come into our Zoroastrian community. These customs are not up to the mark of our ancestors. But when we investigate this subject further, we discover that these customs are improper, bad, and cause harm and have no link with our religion.” *Rāhānumāe mājdīsna eheve nāmnī sabhānī pehelī, bījī tathā trījī bethaknī ūpaj nīpajno ehevāl* (*Proceedings of the First, Second, and Third Meetings of the Rahnumae Mazdayasnan Sabha*) (Bombay: Duftur Ashkara Press, 1851), 8–9, 5.

⁶⁰ Transliteration here reflects the unstandardized Parsi Gujarati that was employed throughout this document. *Ibid.*, 3, 9.

Rast Goftar adopted an almost populist tone in its first edition, mourning a general atmosphere of ignorance and resolving to “spread the practice and habit of reading a paper among the poor people (*patro vāchvāno māhāmvaro tathā shok garīb lōkōmām felāe*).”⁶¹ To this end, both the the Sabha and *Rast* followed the lead of the Dnyan Prasarak Mandli by aiming for mass distribution: while Navrozji resolved to publish inexpensive educational pamphlets for the Sabha, Kharshedji Nasarvanji Cama shouldered the costs for free distribution of a thousand copies of the first numbers of the *Rast*, an unprecedented circulation in those days.⁶²

Cama’s largesse brings us to the last, and perhaps most important, point of significance for the *Rast Goftar* and the Rahnumae Mazdayasnan Sabha: they drew together a wide spectrum of reform-minded elites who would sustain much of Bombay’s civic life over the next fifty years—and many of whom would prove themselves as vital interlocutors in Naoroji’s future political career. At the *Rast* and in the Sabha, Naoroji relied on the support of Parsi Elphinstonians, men such as Sorabji Shapurji Bengali, who became one of the most ardent voices of social reform in Bombay; and K.R. Cama, the pioneering Parsi scholar of Zoroastrianism who, later in his career, helped popularize in India new philological methods of religious study brought from Europe. In later years, Karsondas Mulji became one of the eight members of the “syndicate” that ran the *Rast*, enabling it to break out of an exclusively Parsi mold, while other Bombay notables like

⁶¹ Ratan Marshall, *Gujarātī patrakāritvno itihās* (Surat: Sahitya Sangam, 2005), 111.

⁶² Masani, *Dadabhai Naoroji*, 61.

Dadoba Pandurang, Vishwanath Narayan Mandlik, and Javerilal Umiashankar Yajnik contributed columns in English.⁶³

Several prominent mofussil Parsis were on the rolls of the Sabha. Manekji Limji Hataria, for example, was listed as a committee member in 1851: as the Parsi emissary to Iran's impoverished Zoroastrian community for much of the latter half of the nineteenth century, he took the reforming spirit of Bombay across borders by instituting key changes in Iranian Zoroastrian religious practice and, more significantly, opening the first Zoroastrian schools there, which stimulated the spread of modern education in Iran.⁶⁴ Aside from potentially shaping Manekji's reformist views, membership in the Sabha also provided the earliest known contact between Manekji and Naoroji, laying the foundations for Naoroji's future involvement in Iranian and Iranian Zoroastrian affairs. Also in the Sabha was Mervanji Nasarvanji Bhownagree—father of Mancherji M. Bhownagree, the Conservative MP in the House of Commons from 1895 to 1906—who was the Bombay agent to the ruling *thakur* of Bhavnagar state.⁶⁵ The senior Bhownagree was one of many individuals who played a role in establishing strong connections between the Bombay elite and the *darbars* of particular princely states.

Aside from young Elphinstonians, Parsi reformers, and prominent Parsis with roots outside of Bombay, Naoroji counted on assistance from some of Elphinstone's European faculty members. Joseph Patton, keen on seeing his former student's *Rast*

⁶³ Patell, *Pārsī Prakāsh*, 1888, 1: 586.

⁶⁴ *Rāhānumāe mājdīsna*, 16.

⁶⁵ Patell, *Pārsī Prakāsh*, 1888, 1: 569.

Goftar succeed, apparently “used his personal influence with the leading natives to make them subscribers.” Naoroji, bereaved at the loss of this pillar of support in 1852, eulogized Patton in the *Rast* as his “father and protector.”⁶⁶ Finally, a number of shetias other than Kharshedji Nasarvanji Cama—as well as several other members of the Cama family—sustained both the *Rast* and the Sabha. The Sabha, for example, benefited in the early 1850s from the largesse of prominent Parsi merchant families such as the Banajis, Petits, and the Readymoneys.⁶⁷

However, the greatest single example of Young Bombay’s cooperative spirit was the endeavor to promote female education, something that drew in shetias and the educated youth from several communities. Before the American Missionary Society and Scottish Missionary Society opened the first girls’ schools in Bombay in the late 1820s and early 1830s, government reports could point to only a few scattered instances in the presidency of elite Muslim and Parsi families educating their daughters at home.⁶⁸ It is remarkable how quickly opinion shifted in favor of girls’ schools thereafter.

Unfortunately, few sources survive to tell us what, precisely, motivated some Indian men to start extending the fruits of learning to women. As Sanjay Seth argues, the

⁶⁶ R.P. Karkaria, “Revival of the Native Press of Western India: The *Rast Goftar*,” *Calcutta Review*, October 1898, 238.

⁶⁷ The 1852 records of the Sabha show donations from Manekji Nasarvanji Petit, Cowasji Jehangir Readymoney, and several members of the Banaji family, including the heirs of Framji Cowasji Banaji, who had recently passed away. The Sabha’s meetings were also held in Framji Cowasji’s old offices. *Rāhānumāe mājdāsna eheve nāmnī sabhānī navmī bethaknī ūpaj nīpajno ehevāl* (Bombay: Mumbai Samachar, 1852), 37–8, 1.

⁶⁸ J.P. Naik, ed., *A Review of Education in Bombay State, 1855-1955* (Poona: Director, Government Printing, Publications and Stationery, Bombay State, 1958), 2; “Second Annual Report (1817) of the Bombay Education Society,” Parulekar and Bakshi, *Selections from Educational Records (Bombay): Part II, 1815-1840*, 7; Dobbin, *Urban Leadership in Western India*, 57.

welfare of women was probably not their top priority.⁶⁹ Many Elphinstonians were fired by the ideal of national regeneration. In this vein, one of Bal Gangadhar Shastri Jambhekar's students, Govind Vitthal Kunte, better known as Bhau Mahajan, criticized the government for inaction in the columns of his Marathi weekly, *Prabhakar*. "To this date, the Government has not started any schools for girls," he wrote in 1843. "This must be done without any delay, for so long as our women remain in ignorance there is no hope for the progress of this country."⁷⁰ Other young reformers worried about how ignorant mothers would raise their sons. "It is needless to dilate on the advantage of female education," opined Kaikhoshru Hormasji, a student at Elphinstone in 1850. "It will suffice us if we were to mention that philosophers like Bacon, and linguists like Jones, who afterwards became so famous for their learning, were indebted in their early lives to their learned and intelligent mothers, under whose care their youthful minds were formed."⁷¹ Lastly, as R.P. Masani suggests, the new crop of young educated men rued the domestic unhappiness caused by uneducated wives: "No wonder several of them were driven to seek pleasure outside the home."⁷²

Naoroji probably agreed with all of these observations (indeed, his own marriage appeared to be unhappy partly due to the fact that his wife, Gulbai, was illiterate and

⁶⁹ Sanjay Seth, *Subject Lessons: The Western Education of Colonial India* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), 137.

⁷⁰ J.V. Naik, "Bhau Mahajan and His *Prabhakar*, *Dhumketu* and *Dnyan Darshan*: A Study of Maharashtrian Response to British Rule," *Indian Historical Review* 13–14, no. 1–2 (July 1986): 147.

⁷¹ *Report of the Board of Education from January 1, 1850 to April 30, 1851*, 267.

⁷² Masani, *Dadabhai Naoroji*, 44.

possessed little interest in being educated).⁷³ While none of Naoroji's writings from the 1850s on female education have survived, we can glean some of his motivations from his statement to the Indian Education or Hunter Commission of 1882. Like Kaikhoshru Hormasji, Naoroji believed that "Good and educated mothers only will raise good and educated sons." But he also possessed notably progressive views on female education, arguing that it was a fundamental pillar for establishing gender equality. He believed that Indians would one day "understand that woman had as much right to exercise and enjoy all the rights, privileges, and duties of this world as man, each working towards the common good in her or his representative sphere."⁷⁴ While the archive is largely silent on the most important stakeholders in Indian female education—women themselves—we do know that Naoroji's illiterate mother, Manekbai, who had made the critical decision to enroll Naoroji in a school run by the Bombay Native Education Society, was a staunch supporter of female education.⁷⁵ Similar to the case of Behramji M. Malabari, who credited his widowed mother for making him a champion of women's rights, or Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar in Bengal, Naoroji was probably deeply influenced by that most resilient of characters in the Indian family, the strong-willed and independent-

⁷³ Ibid., 85.

⁷⁴ Dadabhai Naoroji, "A Note Submitted to the Education Commission of 1882 by Dadabhai Naoroji," in *Evidence Taken by the Bombay Provincial Committee, and Memorials Addressed to the Education Commission (Bombay, Vol II)* (Calcutta: Superintendent of Government Printing, India, 1884), 104.

⁷⁵ Mary Carpenter, "On Female Education in India," *Journal of the National Indian Association*, November 1871, 230.

minded *amma*.⁷⁶ “She helped me with all her heart in my work for female education and other social reforms against prejudices of the day,” Naoroji recalled in his autobiographical piece in *Mainly About People*. “She made me what I am.”⁷⁷

Since Bombay Castle refused to extend government support for girls’ schools, members of the Students’ Literary and Scientific Society decided to intervene. In October 1849, Dadabhai Naoroji joined twelve other Maharashtrian and Parsi Elphinstonians in opening up six schools—three for Parsi girls and three for Hindu Maharashtrian girls—run under the umbrella of the SLSS (Image 3). Naoroji and one of his college students were initially in charge of a girls’ school located outside of Fort’s walls. From 1849 until the early 1850s, this band of thirteen ran the schools on a purely voluntary basis: they went door-to-door pleading with parents to send their daughters to the new schools (Naoroji recalled to his grandchildren that a few fathers, outraged by the idea of educating their female offspring, threatened to throw him down the steps leading to their homes) and, early in the morning, before Elphinstone’s doors opened, taught the handful of girls who assembled in makeshift classrooms.⁷⁸

A number of shetias soon stepped in to lend support. One of the first donors was Jagannath Shankarsheth, a respected merchant and a founding member of the BNES. Jagannath, who had educated his own daughters at home, bequeathed to the SLSS a

⁷⁶ At roughly the same time, another strong-willed Indian mother, Meheribai Hormusjee Shroff, defied threats and ostracism in Bombay by enrolling her daughter, Dosebai, in a European girls’ school. Dosebai Cowasjee Jessawalla, *The Story of My Life* (Bombay: Times Press, 1911), 32.

⁷⁷ Naoroji, “The Days of My Youth.”

⁷⁸ Patell, *Pārsī Prakāsh*, 1888, 1: 506–07. *Proceedings of the Students’ Literary and Scientific Society*, 9; Masani, *Dadabhai Naoroji*, 45.



Image 3: Parsi girls' school from the late 1880s or early 1890s, Bombay. Reproduced with permission of the Islington Heritage Service.

building on his estate to be used as a girls' schoolhouse. Other financial donors included Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy; Framji Cowasji Banaji, another leading businessman who had served in the BNES for decades, and who offered strong moral encouragement to Naoroji to persist in educating girls;⁷⁹ Cowasji Jehangir Readymoney, then emerging as one of

⁷⁹ Naoroji described his meeting with an aged and ailing Framji Cowasji in a speech delivered to mark the inauguration of the Framji Cowasji Institute: "I have had but once for all a talk with him, but the impression that the single visit made upon me, and my friend Ardaseer [Moos], shall never wear off. It was for the purpose of asking support to our female schools, and how could I now describe a scene that could only be seen? Yet I shall try. We approached with great trepidation—we knew not what should be the result of the visit; for we knew not the man, and it was our first visit. But Framjee showed that he was always prepared to receive even a child with pleasure the brought good tidings of any kind. Many were the sound advices he gave us as to our conduct in the undertaking—many hopes did he raise in us, and showed great concern that he could not stretch out as good an helping hand as he was wont to do before." Quoted in Mary Carpenter, *Six Months in India*, vol. 2 (London: Longmans, Green, 1868), 32.

the city's chief philanthropists; and members of the Wadia family of shipbuilders.⁸⁰ But it was Naoroji's connections with the Camas that proved most critical. The Camas threw their support behind female education—"This is a happy day for me," Naoroji recalled Kharshedji Nasarvanji saying when he first broached the subject of opening girls' schools—and presented the SLSS with the whopping sum of Rs. 4,800, enabling the Society to cover rent for its Hindu and Parsi schools and also pay its teachers.⁸¹ The Camas were, therefore, instrumental in making sure that the SLSS' girls' schools were put on solid and permanent footing.

While Naoroji's fellow Parsis initially led the way with female education, they were soon joined by members of other communities from across the presidency. Gujarati Hindu traders endowed a girls' school outside Fort in 1851; three years later, Mangaldas Nathubhai, a progressively minded Bania merchant and banker (he supported Karsondas Mulji during the so-called Maharaj libel case of the early 1860s), inaugurated another institution. Support for female education spread quickly around the presidency. In Ahmedabad, the city's powerful Jain *nagarsheth* or head merchant expressed his "heartfelt gratification" at the success of girls' schools in Bombay and transmitted funds to the SLSS' coffers, while another wealthy benefactor, Maganbhai Karamchand, liberally donated Rs. 20,000 to open two girls' schools in the erstwhile capital of Gujarat. Further south, in relatively remote Ahmednagar, Dadoba Pandurang, Naoroji's old

⁸⁰ Patell, *Pārsī Prakāsh*, 1888, 1: 507.

⁸¹ In the official proceedings of the SLSS, the donors of this Rs. 4,800 are mentioned anonymously as "four Parsi gentlemen." Naoroji in 1885 identified these donors as Kharshedji Nasarvanji Cama, his father Nasarvanji Mancherji Cama, brother Dhanjibhai Nasarvanji Cama, and Framji Nasarvanji Patel. *Proceedings of the Students' Literary and Scientific Society*, 10–11; "The Late Mr. C.N. Cama," *Times of India*, 9 February 1885, 6.

classmate, noted in the mid-1850s the existence of two private girls' schools and reported on some Muslim girls attending a Muslim religious school.⁸²

All of these developments had profound implications for Naoroji. Naoroji's role in laying the groundwork for female education, and his strong ties to prominent shetia philanthropists such as the Camas, augmented his position of leadership in Bombay society. Naoroji, for example, had enough clout in the early 1850s to convince Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy to loosen his purse strings and pledge greater support for educating girls; his Benevolent Institution subsequently opened up four girls' schools.⁸³ Naoroji's leadership also earned him support from powerful British officials. Erskine Perry, in his last full year as secretary of the Bombay Board of Education, harangued the chief engineer of the Bombay public works to give Naoroji assistance in building a girls' schoolhouse outside

⁸² *Proceedings of the Students' Literary and Scientific Society*, 13–14, 40–1; Naik, *A Review of Education in Bombay State*, 388; Vaman Pandurang Khanolkar ed and Ramchandra Vithal Parulekar ed, *Indigenous Elementary Education in the Bombay Presidency in 1855 and Thereabouts (being a Departmental Survey of Indigenous Education)* (Bombay, : Indian Institute of Education, 1965), 106–07.

⁸³ In 1885, the *Indu Prakash* carried a letter by “A Political Rishi,” believed to be Narayan Ganesh Chandavarkar, which provided a colorful—and perhaps apocryphal—account of Naoroji's efforts to lobby Jamsetjee: “On one occasion—which, I daresay, Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji now recollects as a memorable one in the history of female education among the Parsis—he put his thoughts on the subject on paper and wrote to Sir Jamsetji Jijibhoy, requesting the favour of an interview. Mr. Dadabhai received a prompt answer from the generous Baronet. The young champion of female education was desired to meet at the office of the Parsi Punchayet. The Baronet arranged that Mr. Dossabhoy Sorabjee Munshi, a leading but strongly conservative Parsi of the day, should be present at the interview. The interview took place. Sir Jamsetji asked Mr. Dadabhai to state his thoughts; and when they were stated, he turned to Mr. Dossabhoy saying:— ‘Well, Moonsee Sahib, what do you say to that?’ The Moonsee sahib of course could not quite relish the novel idea of educating females. He said in words such as these:—‘The young man wants to educate females. But what do females want education for? It will only spoil them. You see, you should not supply more oil to a lamp than it can bear, for, otherwise the light is sure to extinguish itself.’ The comparison, however, was turned to advantage by the Baronet most ingeniously. Turning to the Moonsee he said:—‘Well, Moonsee Sahib, I quite agree with you there—the lamp should have no more oil than it can bear. But you see this young man does not wish that females should receive more knowledge than they want. He wants to give them a moderate education. So your illustration supports what he wishes.’ The Moonsee opposite thus disarmed and Sir Jamsetji promised Mr. Dadabhai to [...] matter. Shortly after, Sir Jamsetji opened four schools for Parsi girls in connection with his Benevolent Institution.” “Religious & Social Reform,” *Indu Prakash*, 23 March 1885, in Sorabji Bamanji Munshi to Naoroji, 1 March 1902, NAI, DNP, M-210 (25).

of Fort's ramparts. When the chief engineer proved noncommittal, Perry contacted the governor, Lord Falkland, for help and convinced him to make an official visit to the girls' school that Naoroji managed.⁸⁴ Naoroji evidently reached out to the darbars of princely states, as well, for financial contributions: he received a small sum from the *diwan* of Indore "for prizes to some good girls in the Fort [Parsi] school."⁸⁵ Contacts with princely states, British officials, and a broad spectrum of shetias and educated youth all hint at how Naoroji, still in his late twenties, vigorously pursued an agenda of social reform by creating an expansive and diversified network of support.

These networks sustained Young Bombay's final turn toward political reform in 1852, when Elphinstonians joined hands with shetias to form the Bombay Association. While Jagannath Shankarsheth presided over the organization—drawing in fellow commercial elites such as Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy, Muhammad Ali Roghay, and the Baghdadi Jewish magnate David Sassoon—the younger generation, including Dadabhai Naoroji, Navrozji Fardunji, and Bhau Daji, set an agenda for policy enquiry and petitioning the government over various grievances. Like the Students' Literary and Scientific Society, Rahnumae Mazdayasna Sabha, and *Rast Goftar*, the Bombay Association placed great faith in the transformational and regenerative qualities of education. Its inaugural meeting was, appropriately, held at Elphinstone College. In his first address as president, Jagannath specifically pointed to the institution and the city's Grant Medical College as proof of the beneficial aspects of British rule, asking,

⁸⁴ Perry to Naoroji, 11 April 1851, *ibid.*, P-106 (8); Perry to Naoroji, 6 May 1854, *ibid.*, P-106.

⁸⁵ *Proceedings of the Students' Literary and Scientific Society*, 33.

rhetorically, how the Association could ever be in opposition to a government that endowed these places of learning.⁸⁶

But Indians could advise on improving governance, and to this effect, members of the Association—led by Navrozji Fardunji, Bhau Daji, and possibly Naoroji—began drafting a petition to the British Parliament in relation to the renewal of the East India Company’s charter in 1854. In comparison to the petitions sent by its sister organizations, the Native Association of Madras and the British Indian Association of Calcutta, the Bombay Association’s memorial was remarkably brief. But, while all three organizations complained about official miserliness toward schools, the Bombay Association made education a central plank of its petition to Parliament, proposing the establishment of universities in India and boldly arguing that “all the reforms and all the improvements sought for; or in the power of your honourable House to make, are but secondary in importance compared with the necessity of introducing a complete system of education for the masses of the people.”⁸⁷

This was a significant call to action, and it indicated how the petitioners sought to ingrain Bombay’s educative tradition within government policy. We have no direct evidence that Naoroji helped draft the Bombay Association petition. However, its strong language, and its central demand for both broadening and deepening the extent of

⁸⁶ “Inauguration of ‘the Bombay Association,’” *Bombay Times and Journal of Commerce*, 1 September 1852.

⁸⁷ “The Humble Petition of the Members of the Bombay Association, and Other Native Inhabitants of the Presidency of Bombay,” in *First Report from the Select Committee on Indian Territories; Together with the Minutes of Evidence, and Appendix* (London: House of Commons, 1853), 480.

education within Indian society, certainly suggests that he played an important role. These were, after all, ideas that Naoroji would actively champion for the rest of his life.

IV. Conclusion

Dadabhai Naoroji embarked on his first voyage to Great Britain at precisely 6pm on Tuesday, 26 June 1855, boarding the steamer *Madras* at Bombay's Apollo Bunder. We know the details of this event because of its momentousness: he was one of four Indians, all Parsis, sailing that day to the center of empire for reasons of business and government service, and it therefore made the newspapers. Aside from a bright young candidate for the East India Company's medical service, Rustomji Behramji Parakh, Naoroji was joined on the steamer by his friend, K.R. Cama, and another Cama relative, Mancherji Hormusji Cama. Together, the three Parsis hoped to begin the first Indian-owned mercantile firm in the United Kingdom. The Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy Philosophic Institute marked their departure with a special lecture on "The probable effects upon India of the new Mercantile relations between India and England formed by the establishment of a Parsee Mercantile firm in London." Heralded as representatives of a new educated, professional class of Indians—Young Bombay out to make its mark on the world—Naoroji and his fellow passengers caused severe traffic jams on the streets of Bombay due to the throngs of people wanting to see them off.⁸⁸

The initial phase of Naoroji's career, where he concentrated his energies on being an educator, religious reformer, and social reformer, ended once the *Madras* slipped

⁸⁸ "Chetavnī," *Pārsī Mītr*, 30 June 1855, 238, 239; Patell, *Pārsī Prakāsh*, 1888, 1: 676–7.

beyond view from Bombay's shores. Archival sources indicate that Naoroji had hoped to keep his sojourn in England brief and eventually resume his professorial duties: after signing on to the Camas' firm, he filed a request with the Bombay Board of Education for a simple two-year leave of absence from the college. For the Board, retaining Naoroji's services was such a serious matter of concern that administrators consulted the governor, who summarily gave his opinion in June 1855 via a new medium of communication inaugurated earlier in the year, the telegraph.⁸⁹ But Naoroji never returned to teach at Elphinstone. Regardless, the year 1855 did not mark the end of Naoroji's involvement with educational matters in Bombay. As he embarked on a business career and began his earliest political activities in London, Naoroji remained engaged with friends advancing the cause of female education back home. For example, when Manockjee Cursetjee, who had helped finance many of the activities of Young Bombay in the early 1850s, opened the city's first English medium girls' school, the Alexandra Native Girls' Institution, Naoroji solicited support from philanthropically-inclined Londoners.⁹⁰ Around 1864, Naoroji joined his old friend and financial benefactor, Kharshedji Nasarvanji Cama, in

⁸⁹ The request ran afoul of stipulations barring East India Company employees—and Naoroji was, technically, a servant of John Company—from working for banks and mercantile firms. The governor was therefore bound to reject it. C.J. Erskine, director of public education in the presidency, conveyed news of the rejection to the BBE, stating that “the loss of his valuable services will be a cause of great regret to them and”—adding hopefully—“that in the event of his return to this country with enlarged knowledge and an undiminished zeal for science he will have a very strong claim indeed to consideration in the Department of Education.” MSA, General/Education/No. 717.

⁹⁰ B.B. Patell, ed., *Pārsī Prakāsh*, vol. 2 (Bombay: Sanj Vartaman Press, 1910), 64; Mary Carpenter, *Six Months in India*, vol. 1 (London: Longmans, Green, 1868), 251.

attempting to establish a fellowship for Indian students at the recently opened University of Bombay.⁹¹

Naoroji's educational concerns, simultaneously, broadened to include the entire subcontinent. During the early 1860s, he floated an idea for a loan company, "intended for the benefit of all India," which would finance Indian students traveling to Great Britain and other European countries for education and vocational training.⁹² Naoroji also befriended Mary Carpenter, an advocate of British penal reform and the founder of the "ragged school" movement for the street children of the United Kingdom. As Carpenter's educational interests turned to India—particularly, the establishment of normal schools for training female teachers⁹³—Naoroji assisted with her fact-finding visits to the subcontinent. In 1871, he helped inaugurate the London branch of her National Indian Association in Aid of Social Progress in India, designed "To coöperate with enlightened natives of India, in the efforts for the improvement of their countrymen."⁹⁴ Under

⁹¹ Flush with profits from the cotton boom that coincided with the American Civil War, Naoroji supplied Rs. 50,000 out of a total of Rs. 175,000 pledged for the endowment. This endowment, unfortunately, quickly evaporated after Bombay's share mania transformed into severe commercial crisis with the conclusion of hostilities in the United States, dashing Naoroji's hopes of putting university education within the reach of a larger circle of young Indians. "Parsee Munificence," *Manchester Guardian*, 2 March 1864; Masani, *Dadabhai Naoroji*, 92.

⁹² Like the fellowships for the University of Bombay, the loan company idea foundered upon the shoals of the financial crisis during the mid-1860s. Dadabhai Naoroji, "Admission of Educated Natives into the Indian Civil Service (East India Association)," in *Essays, Speeches, Addresses and Writings (on Indian Politics) of the Hon'ble Dadabhai Naoroji*, ed. Chunilal Lallubhai Parekh (Bombay: Caxton Printing Works, 1887), 88.

⁹³ Naoroji summed up the problem in 1861: "At present, a girl enters school when about six years old, and leaves it before she is eleven or twelve. The institution of early betrothal and marriage is at present an obstacle to the supply of female teachers." Dadabhai Naoroji, *The Manners and Customs of the Parsees: A Paper Read before the Liverpool Philomathic Society 13th March 1861* (London: Printed by Pearson & Son, 1862), 22.

⁹⁴ "Annual Meeting of the National Indian Association," *Indian Magazine and Review*, May 1892, 225; "The Indian Association," *Journal of the National Indian Association*, January 1871, 3.

Carpenter's successor, Elizabeth A. Manning, the National Indian Association evolved into one of the most important organizations dedicated to the welfare of Indian students enrolled in British schools and universities.

Thus, in the decades following his departure from Bombay amidst crowds of well-wishers on Apollo Bunder, Dadabhai Naoroji continued to shape—and be shaped by—Bombay's distinct educative tradition. It was a tradition where Indians exerted great influence and agency. When, in 1916, Naoroji received his honorary doctorate from the University of Bombay, the university's vice-chancellor praised him as the exponent of the “new intellectual life” that animated the city and its hinterlands.⁹⁵ This, of course, was a slight exaggeration for a few reasons. We have seen how this “new intellectual life” had its roots in a much longer tradition of vernacular education in western India; how two gifted Indian teachers, Bal Gangadhar Shastri Jambhekar and Navrozji Fardunji, along with a progressive group of primarily Scottish and Irish teachers at Elphinstone College, helped nurture Young Bombay, set high bars of academic success for their Indian students, and set an agenda for reform; and how Naoroji and his fellow graduates worked closely with certain shetias in establishing girls' schools and popularizing religious and social reforms through educational literature.

The dynamic educational landscape of mid-nineteenth century Bombay provides us with some perspective on previous literature on colonial education. Historians of social and educational matters in Bombay have tended to over-rely on periodicals and reports authored by Britons—not surprising, considering the destruction and loss of so

⁹⁵ “Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji: Degree of L.L.D. Conferred.”

much vernacular material from the nineteenth century—but such sources, replete with patronizing and moralizing language on how Indians did not appreciate the value of education, or how Indians needed to be coaxed into supporting schools and colleges, must be used with care. Read uncritically, they facilitate scholarship that privileges the role of imperial ideologies and assigns far too much influence to British officials and instructors. Closer inspection and interrogation of available sources reveals a definite gap between rhetoric and reality in the sphere of British Indian educational policy. The legacy of Indians educational leadership and philanthropy in Bombay—and, particularly, Naoroji's role in facilitating reform movements based on education, and his establishment of girls' schools that were independent of government assistance—shows us how Indians compensated for this gap. It shows us how our historical narratives of Indian education, many based on sources filled with biases and inaccuracies, need a measure of revision.

By the 1860s, Naoroji began speaking publicly about the colonial government's relative indifference to schools for Indian pupils, both male and female. From the standpoint of his subsequent political career, this was a significant development: education became the subject for some of Naoroji's earliest and most hard-hitting critiques of colonial policy. It also became the site for some of his most progressive and farsighted policy proposals. In 1868, he submitted a petition to the India Office on female education, complaining to the secretary of state for India about official indifference to girls' schools in Bombay. Marshaling facts and figures to his advantage, he showed that, while the governments of Bengal, Punjab, and the North-West Provinces each annually

expended around Rs. 30,000 on girls' schools, Bombay Castle had forked over precisely Rs. 341 in the past year. This stood in marked contrast to the endowments funded by Indians of Bombay, which he estimated were in excess of Rs. 340,000.⁹⁶ By 1871, growing increasingly impatient with non-responsive Bombay officials, Naoroji decided to set his sights significantly higher. In evidence submitted before the parliamentary Select Committee on East Indian Finance, he called for a "comprehensive plan of national education, both high and popular," in India.

By demanding a program of "national education," Naoroji could highlight the Indian government's abject negligence of its educational responsibilities. He composed his most sweeping attacks in a memorandum submitted in 1882 to the Hunter Commission on Indian Education, convened under the watch of Lord Ripon, the viceroy. Characteristically, Naoroji focused on female education. Drawing upon censuses and government reports, he calculated that only around 75,000 girls were formally enrolled in schools in India, out of a total female school-going population of anywhere from 13 to 20 million. The government, therefore, was "leaving nearly the whole mass untouched."⁹⁷ Statistics for primary education, male as well as female, were equally abysmal.

Here, the former mathematics professor presented some startling comparisons. Gathering data on the number of children receiving primary education in the United Kingdom, United States, Australia, the British West Indies, and India, Naoroji divided

⁹⁶ Naoroji to Stafford Northcote, 5 February 1868, NAI, DNP, N-1 (17).

⁹⁷ Naoroji raised this figure to 100,000 in order to account for girls attending private schools not accounted for in government statistics. Naoroji, "A Note Submitted to the Education Commission of 1882 by Dadabhai Naoroji," 103, 104, 105.

these figures by total population estimates in order to yield proportional school-going populations in each country. For the first four countries, Naoroji concluded that the proportions were relatively consistent, ranging from a high of one in six in the United States to a low of one in eleven in the West Indies. India, by contrast, was a stark outlier, with only one in 114 attending primary school, a figure that meant that “nearly 25,000,000 children needing primary education only grow up in ignorance.” Naoroji then proceeded to divide total population figures by expenditure on education—both private and public—in order to arrive at another set of bleak numbers. Whereas the United States lavished six shillings per head on education, and the United Kingdom lagged slightly behind with four shillings and three dimes per head, India could only muster “the wretched 8 3/4 pies per head of population, or *hardly a penny*, from all sources—voluntary, and taxation and rates or cesses.” These statistics told “a sad, sad tale ... about India—wretched as she is materially, still more wretched is she educationally.” Armed with these appalling figures, Naoroji challenged the Indian government to take up “the broad question of the high and primary education of some 40,000,000 or more ... of school-going population,” further enunciating what was one of the earliest demands for a concerted program of mass public education in India.⁹⁸

But Naoroji’s views on mass public education probably dated from much earlier than the 1882 Hunter Commission or the Select Committee of 1871. We return, in conclusion, to Naoroji’s autobiographical piece in *Mainly About People*, where he

⁹⁸ Ibid., 88–9, 91.

reflects on his schooling at the Bombay Native Education Society's central English school:

The education was then entirely free. Had there been the fees of the present day, my mother would not have been able to pay them. This incident has made me an ardent advocate of free education and of the principle that every child should have the opportunity of receiving all the education it is capable of assimilating, whether it is born poor or with a silver spoon in its mouth.⁹⁹

As he addressed the crying need for more schools across the subcontinent, Dadabhai Naoroji drew, once more, on Bombay's educative tradition and the opportunities it made possible for a poor boy from the city's Native Town.

⁹⁹ Naoroji, "The Days of My Youth."

Of Poverty and Princes

The Drain Theory and its Political Corollary

I. Introduction

To this day, Dadabhai Naoroji is best known for his writings on Indian poverty and his enunciation of the drain theory, which held that British imperialism was steadily siphoning off India's wealth. For Naoroji, poverty was not simply a remote academic topic—it was a lived reality. Like millions of others across the subcontinent, members of his ancestral Dordi family of Navsari were subject to steady impoverishment during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Earlier family members had been prominent Zoroastrian priests and wealthy merchants. In 1618, two of these priests, bearing goblets of Navsari's famous *attar* (perfume), presented themselves before the Mughal emperor Jehangir at Ahmedabad, receiving in return a *jagir* (revenue grant) of a hundred *bighas* of land and money.¹ Framroze Sorabji, meanwhile, became a leading Parsi merchant in Surat in the mid-seventeenth century, while his brother's son, Behramji Mehernosji, was reckoned to be Navsari's wealthiest man.² However, the decline of Surat as a great industrial port; skirmishes between the British, the Marathas, and local potentates; and, critically, the decimation of Navsari's indigenous textile industry deeply impoverished the Dordi family.

¹ The Dordis of Navsari kept Jehangir's *firman* as a prized heirloom until at least the 1920s. Jivanji

² *Ibid.*, 5–6, 10, 15–17.

Naoroji's father and grandfather led relatively humble lives as farmers in Dharampur, a princely state southwest of Navsari. His father and mother moved to Bombay, perhaps part of a vast exodus from Gujarat as famine gripped the region in 1824 and 1825.³ There they settled into a small house in one of Bombay's most congested, and least salubrious, districts. And, as the previous chapter has noted, had the Bombay Native Education Society charged fees, Naoroji would not have been able to attend its central English school.

So poverty, or at least relative poverty, defined Naoroji's childhood years, and it remained a topic of concern throughout his early life. He recognized that he had been "educated at the expense of the poor."⁴ As early as 1852, while still an assistant professor at Elphinstone College, he spoke about the poverty of peasants throughout the Bombay Presidency.⁵ While embarking upon a business career in Liverpool and London after 1855, he must have been struck by the stark economic differences between metropole and colony, and—through his involvement in the cotton industry—he would have witnessed how Indian resources enriched England. All of these experiences no doubt influenced Naoroji to further investigate the economic conditions of his homeland. Between the late 1860s and early 1880s, he produced a prodigious amount of literature—containing detailed calculations, international comparisons, compilations of historical evidence, and refutation of government pronouncements and statistics—highlighting the stark

³ While Kutch, Kathiawar, and northern Gujarat were the worst hit—due to the failure of rains—Jim Masselos tells us that areas further south like Bharuch, Surat and Jambusar were impacted as well. See "Migration and Urban Identity: Bombay's Famine Refugees in the Nineteenth Century," in *Bombay: Mosaic of Modern Culture*, ed. Sujata Patel and Alice Thorner (Bombay: Oxford University Press, 1996), 29.

⁴ Dadabhai Naoroji, "The Days of My Youth," *M.A.P. (Mainly About People)*, 1904, NAI, DNP, uncataloged item.

⁵ *Minute of Proceedings of the Bombay Association* (Bombay: Bombay Gazette Press, 1852), 18.

impoverishment of Britain's Indian subjects. And, significantly, he established a direct causal link between poverty and British rule. "So far as my inquiries go at present, the conclusion I draw is, that wherever the East India Company acquired territory, impoverishment followed their steps," he argued.⁶

This was the basis for the drain theory. For Indian nationalism, the drain theory was a foundational concept: it highlighted the exploitative nature of colonialism and demolished contemporary claims that British rule was beneficial to India. As the noted economic historian Bipan Chandra remarks in his classic study, *The Rise and Growth of Economic Nationalism in India*, "It was the anvil on which the hammer of Indian nationalism was to be made to strike with all its concentrated energy."⁷ By the early 1870s, Naoroji pronounced British policy in India to be "evil": by continuing to extract the country's wealth and resources, India's colonial rulers were precipitating an ever-worsening cycle of poverty, deprivation, and mass famine. This was, understandably, not a terribly popular observation within the halls of power in London and Calcutta.

Naoroji was not, of course, the first individual to claim the existence of a drain of wealth. In his speeches and writings, he made liberal references to the several British Indian officials, from earlier eras, who had observed the same phenomenon. Throughout his career, Naoroji was particularly fond of quoting John Shore. As a young Company writer in Bengal during the late eighteenth century, Shore assessed the wealth of Company nabobs and the plight of famine-stricken Bengalis, concluding that there were

⁶ Dadabhai Naoroji, "Financial Administration of India," in *Essays, Speeches, Addresses and Writings (on Indian Politics) of the Hon'ble Dadabhai Naoroji*, ed. Chunilal Lallubhai Parekh (Bombay: Caxton Printing Works, 1887), 140.

⁷ Bipan Chandra, *The Rise and Growth of Economic Nationalism in India: Economic Policies of Indian National Leadership, 1880-1905*. (New Delhi: People's Publishing House, 1966), 688.

certain “evils inseparable from the system of a remote foreign dominion.”⁸ The drain was also a widely discussed topic among educated Indians. In his first work on Indian poverty and the drain, “England’s Duties to India,” Naoroji mentioned that, as a student, he knew of a “small band of Hindu students and thoughtful gentlemen [who] used to meet secretly to discuss the effects of British rule upon India,” including “home charges and the transfer of capital from India to England in various shapes.” J.V. Naik has identified three members of this “small band” as Naoroji’s seniors at Elphinstone College who, during the early 1840s, produced work in English and Marathi that identified the drain and excoriated the impoverishing effects of British rule.⁹ They were hardly alone. By the 1860s and 1870s, as S.R. Mehrotra notes, complaints about the siphoning of India’s wealth had become “the stock-in-trade of the Indian press.” Indians in Punjab, Bengal, Maharashtra, and Gujarat imbibed these ideas and initiated a proto-*swadeshi* movement, of sorts, during the same era, shunning foreign goods and supporting the production and patronization of indigenous manufactures.¹⁰

Naoroji, therefore, was not the sole author of the drain theory. Nor was he the only Indian to discuss poverty and Indian economic affairs in a nationalist frame. Mahadev Govind Ranade certainly measured up to Naoroji in terms of the volume and sophistication of his economic work—and his advocacy of industrial development and protectionism had a tangible influence on the ideas of later nationalists as well as post-

⁸ See, for example, Dadabhai Naoroji, “On the Commerce of India,” in *Essays, Speeches, Addresses and Writings (on Indian Politics) of the Hon’ble Dadabhai Naoroji*, ed. Chunilal Lallubhai Parekh (Bombay: Caxton Printing Works, 1887), 122–3.

⁹ J.V. Naik, “Forerunners of Dadabhai Naoroji’s Drain Theory,” *Economic and Political Weekly*, 24 November 2001, 4428.

¹⁰ S.R. Mehrotra, *The Emergence of the Indian National Congress* (Delhi: Vikas Publications, 1971), 133–4.

independence economic policy. Ranade agreed with Naoroji about the severity of the drain, holding that more than a third of India's national income was robbed by its colonial masters, but offered a complex array of additional factors to explain Indian poverty.¹¹ A fellow Maharashtrian, Ganesh Vyankatesh Joshi, collaborated with Ranade in bringing economic affairs before readers of the *Journal of the Poona Sarvajanic Sabha*; in later years, he served as an economic tutor to Gopal Krishna Gokhale.¹² In Bengal, Bholonath Chandra thundered against the pauperization of India in a series of articles published in the early 1870s, while Romesh Chunder Dutt made poverty and the drain central themes of his volumes on the economic history of India, published in the first years of the twentieth century. Numerous other political figures—many of whom have yet to receive adequate attention by scholars—drew on India's economic plight to formulate political critiques of British rule. Navrozji Fardunji, for example, joined Naoroji in conducting detailed economic surveys in western India and denouncing British economic policies before audiences in London. The names of the two men were regularly mentioned together in the press.

All of these figures, both through descriptive prose and the methodologies of “statistical liberalism,”¹³ established poverty as a central issue in early nationalist politics. Bipan Chandra has interrogated their writings in order to argue for the emergence of a distinct “economic nationalism” in India during the late nineteenth century.¹⁴ Manu

¹¹ Chandra, *The Rise and Growth of Economic Nationalism in India*, 640–1.

¹² Joshi tutored Gokhale before the latter left for London to testify before the Welby Commission of 1897. Gopal Krishna Gokhale to Naoroji, 8 October 1897, NAI, DNP, G-64 (12).

¹³ C.A. Bayly's term. *Recovering Liberties: Indian Thought in the Age of Liberalism and Empire* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 105.

¹⁴ *The Rise and Growth of Economic Nationalism in India*, 7.

Goswami, meanwhile, considers these thinkers—and their “modernist, nativist, and organicist spatiotemporal discourses,” drawing heavily from the ideas of Friedrich List—to be instrumental in the creation of “the very idea of India as a bounded national space and economy.”¹⁵

What, then, was the particular significance of Naoroji’s ideas on Indian poverty and the drain? Earlier scholars have not been too charitable on this front. While acknowledging that Naoroji was the pioneer and “high-priest” of nationalist economic critiques, they have puzzled over his specific views on what, precisely, contributed to the drain of wealth. In his speeches and writings, Naoroji attributed the overwhelming bulk of the drain to just one source, the preponderance of Britons employed in the Indian civil service. British officers, Naoroji believed, caused incalculable harm by taking their salaries and pensions from Indian taxpayers and remitting them to Britain. This, too, was not an entirely novel argument: Rammohun Roy and Karl Marx had made similar observations.¹⁶ But to Stanley Wolpert, Naoroji’s views were “tempting oversimplifications,” something that a more serious student of economics like Ranade would never formulate.¹⁷ Chandra evaluated Naoroji’s arguments with deep skepticism, charging that his fixation on the Indian civil service was “narrow-mindedness to the length of inanity.” It was a “blindspot” and an “absurdity” to simply focus on remittances. He ultimately concluded that “Dadabhai was an extremist by nature,” more

¹⁵ *Producing India: From Colonial Economy to National Space* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 5, 9, 11.

¹⁶ *The English Works of Raja Rammohun Roy: With an English Translation of ‘Tuhfatul Muwahhiddin’* (Allahabad: Panini Office, 1906), xxvi–xxvii; Chandra, *The Rise and Growth of Economic Nationalism in India*, 668–9.

¹⁷ *Tilak and Gokhale: Revolution and Reform in the Making of Modern India*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1962), 107.

concerned with making polemical arguments than with performing a rational and objective calculation of India's economic losses under colonialism.¹⁸

It is true that Naoroji, in his day, made many a polemical argument against imperialism. However, what Chandra and other historians seem to have missed is the critical link between the drain theory and the other idea that Naoroji brought into the Indian political mainstream: *swaraj* or self-government. Naoroji's views on the drain and Indian poverty were hardly static. Rather, they were dynamic—much more so than other nationalist contemporaries—and dramatically evolved over time. Between the late 1860s and early 1880s, Naoroji progressively drew upon Indian poverty and the drain theory in order to justify political reform in the direction of *swaraj*. The key link between these ideas was the Indian civil service. From the very beginning of his political career, Naoroji expressed uneasiness with the fact that Britons, to the exclusion of his own countrymen, dominated every branch of the government of India. Consequently, by the late 1850s, Naoroji began advocating civil service reform that would allow for the partial Indianization of the bureaucracy.

Civil service reform figured in some of Naoroji's earliest writing on Indian poverty. But it was not until the 1870s that he argued that the drain was the result of the “excessive employment” of Britons as officials. Here, Naoroji crafted what I call the “political corollary” to the drain theory. If the employment of Britons was depleting the country's wealth and worsening Indian poverty, then the solution to the drain would be to employ Indians instead, whose earnings would circulate back into the Indian economy. This was a powerful argument in favor of political reform.

¹⁸ *The Rise and Growth of Economic Nationalism in India*, 651–2.

Naoroji's writings on poverty and the drain were therefore polemical in nature: while firmly rooted in data and detailed empirical observations, they were not meant to be neutral, objective analyses of the Indian economy. Through the political corollary, Naoroji used India's grim economic realities for explicitly political ends: justifying the Indianization of the bureaucracy and, eventually, more concrete steps toward swaraj. The political corollary, therefore, helps explain the nationalist preoccupation with civil service reform, something that other historians, such as Anil Seal, have chalked up to the self-interest of elites for employment and greater social standing.¹⁹ And this corollary explains other arenas of early nationalist activity that have been mostly overlooked by scholars. One such arena was nationalist engagement with Indian princely states. Starting in the late 1860s, Naoroji forged close relationships with the *darbars* (courts) of several princely states, especially those in Gujarat and Kathiawar. Since such states enjoyed a degree of autonomy from Calcutta and had bureaucracies that were staffed by Indians rather than Britons, Naoroji theorized that they were buffered from the drain of wealth and, consequently, more economically robust than British India. They could, therefore, serve as laboratories for experiments in Indian political and economic reform—experiments that were impossible to undertake in British India as long as the civil service remained a nearly exclusive British club. In 1873, Naoroji accepted the position of *diwan* or prime minister for Baroda state and sought to catalyze key administrative reforms and modernizations. Significantly, he recruited several products of Young Bombay in order to help with implementation.

¹⁹ *The Emergence of Indian Nationalism: Competition and Collaboration in the Later Nineteenth Century* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1968).

The first phase in the evolution of Naoroji's political philosophy unfolded partly in Britain, partly in British India, and partly in princely India. It involved pauperized Indian peasants, British civil servants that Naoroji characterized as "European leeches,"²⁰ and reform-minded maharajas. And it dramatically pushed forth the agenda of an emerging band of Indian nationalists.

II. Calculating the Poverty of India

Calculating Indian poverty was hardly Dadabhai Naoroji's most difficult task. His most difficult task, rather, was simply convincing British audiences that substantial poverty existed, in the first place, in their Indian territories. During the second half of the nineteenth century, this notion went against conventional wisdom. How was poverty possible in a land that produced the nabobs of the previous century, one that continued to buoy the fortunes of the City? Weren't the docks of London, Liverpool, and Aberdeen, after all, bursting with the riches of the subcontinent—cotton, jute, spices, and luxury items of every sort? Could India really be a poor country when, year after year, an increasing number of Indian professionals, princes, and wealthy merchants streamed into London, consorting with the commercial and political elite of Britain and the Empire? As naïve as these observations might seem to us today, they were important components of British imperial imagination, and were premised on the common belief that India, precisely because of its abundant wealth, was the linchpin of the Empire's prosperity and political, economic, and military strength. There was, of course, much evidence to the

²⁰ Dadabhai Naoroji, "Condition of India," in *Essays, Speeches, Addresses and Writings (on Indian Politics) of the Hon'ble Dadabhai Naoroji*, ed. Chunilal Lallubhai Parekh (Bombay: Caxton Printing Works, 1887), 487.

contrary. As Naoroji began speaking about India's economic fragility, he pointed to the numerous British Indian officials who, from Clive's time onward, had recorded their observations of famine, collapsing industry, withering trade, and peasants reduced to hapless penury.

But the British Indian government, as a whole, did not make Naoroji's task any easier. Speaking before London's Society of Arts in 1871, he mentioned a recent India Office return given to Parliament that contained a paragraph on the "General Prosperity" of India, declaring as proof a "great excess of exports above imports," a stunning 188 percent increase in exports during the 1840s and 1850s, and a 227 percent increase in imports in the same period. These were, an incredulous Naoroji stated, "fallacious statements." And they were also symptomatic of a much larger problem. "I am constrained to say, after my residence in this country for fifteen years, that the knowledge of the public here about India is not only imperfect, but in some matters mischievously incorrect," he declared. Due, in part, to such reports and statistics, there was "the almost universal belief that India is rich and prosperous, when it is not so."²¹ Naoroji's attempts to hammer away at this universal belief were hampered by many factors other than ignorance, bad information, and rosy official pronouncements. There were, for example, particular derisory attitudes among Britons toward Indians. One irate Anglo-Indian, writing to the *London Review* after Naoroji's first exposition on Indian poverty—"India's Duties to England," presented before the East India Association in 1867—complained that Naoroji's paper was simply "the common native argument that the English have drained India of its treasure and reduced it to misery." What truly outraged the writer was

²¹ Naoroji, "On the Commerce of India," 112, 114.

that an Indian had the audacity to make these claims before an audience of eminent Britons—Henry Rawlinson, Lord Lyveden, and “many practical men”—and then publish the paper for distribution, something that suggested “a most mischievous character.”²²

Such were the attitudes that greeted Naoroji’s first foray into discussion of Indian economic matters. During the late 1860s and, especially, the 1870s, Naoroji began speaking about Indian poverty and the drain of wealth as interconnected phenomena. This chapter addresses both topics in turn, since it is clear that Naoroji first sought to establish the gravity of Indian poverty in order to highlight the country’s inability to bear outflows of its meager resources and finances. His immediate task, therefore, was clearly polemical in nature: urging swift policy changes that would recognize and address the destitute state of the subcontinent. As far as we can tell, Naoroji made no public statements on Indian poverty prior to delivering “England’s Duties to India” in 1867. There are also no surviving letters, before this date, where he addresses the topic. Two factors might explain his sudden outspokenness. Firstly, in 1865-67, large areas of southern and eastern India were gripped by a terrible famine, the so-called Orissa famine, that sent millions to their graves. Secondly, and much closer to home, Bombay faced financial ruin as “share mania” came to a grinding halt upon the termination of the American Civil War. Naoroji, understandably, focused on the first and far greater calamity, framing it within the broader questions of the advantages and disadvantages of British colonial rule. “Security of life and property we have better in these times [under the British], no doubt,” he stated, “but the destruction of a million and a half lives in one famine is a strange illustration of the worth of the life and property thus secured.” While

²² “The East India Association,” *London Review*, 21 September 1867, 325.

he lavished praise upon the British for granting India several supposed boons—“law and order,” “the enlightenment of the country” through western education, and a “new political life”—Naoroji grappled with a fundamental tension between, on one hand, piecemeal social and political advancement and, on the other, general impoverishment.

“England’s Duties to India” was significant because it established Naoroji’s quantitative, statistical approach for proving the existence of Indian poverty. While his focus in this paper was India’s heavy financial tribute to its colonial master, he soon turned his attention toward the economic condition of the Indian people themselves. In “The Wants and Means of India,” delivered in July 1870 before a London audience, Naoroji asked a basic question: “Is India at present in a condition to produce enough to supply all its wants?” In order to answer this question, Naoroji developed several innovative methods for quantifying and describing India’s stark poverty. Firstly, and most significantly, he made the first-ever estimates of the country’s gross income per capita (technically, gross production per capita). His calculations were simple and difficult to disprove. “The whole produce of India is from its land,” Naoroji observed.²³ Working backward, he took land revenue figures for the year 1870-71 and, by noting that the government collected around one-eighth of total produce in the form of land revenue, calculated that the gross product of the country per annum was in the neighborhood of £168 million. Adding gross revenue from opium, salt, and forest products, and factoring in coal production as well as revenue from appropriated land, Naoroji set a very conservative final estimate of £200 million. By simply dividing this amount by the total population of India, he arrived at a figure that caused scandal in London: a paltry 27

²³ Naoroji was careful to note that industrial manufacturing in India was at an infant stage, and that adding in total industrial production had a negligible effect on his calculations.

shillings per Indian subject (average income per head in the United Kingdom, in comparison, stood around £33). Naoroji offered a more conservative estimate of 40 shillings per head in order to account for any industry and manufacturing, which he held to be negligible. Either figure, Naoroji cautioned, was undoubtedly too high, due to the concentration of wealth in a microscopic upper and middle class. “Can it be then a matter of any surprise,” he asked his audience, “that the very first touch of famines should so easily carry away hundreds of thousands as they have done during the past twelve years?”²⁴

Naoroji’s second method involved perfecting the art of statistical comparison. Figures on Indian poverty might startle and shock members of the British public, but well-formulated comparisons could also make them viscerally uncomfortable. In “The Wants and Means of India,” Naoroji devised some of his first economic comparisons between India and other countries, especially the United States and the United Kingdom.²⁵ But it would take a few more years for Naoroji to make some of his most striking statistical comparisons. In “Poverty of India”—delivered in 1873 to a parliamentary committee, the Select Committee on East India Finance, but not published until 1876—Naoroji compared the plight of the average Indian peasant unfavorably with that of an Indian prisoner or coolie emigrant. Once more, Naoroji’s method of calculation was simple, turning the limited official statistical data on the country to his advantage.

²⁴ Dadabhai Naoroji, “The Wants and Means of India,” in *Essays, Speeches, Addresses and Writings (on Indian Politics) of the Hon’ble Dadabhai Naoroji*, ed. Chunilal Lallubhai Parekh (Bombay: Caxton Printing Works, 1887), 97, 102–3; Naoroji, “The First Indian National Congress,” in *ibid.*, 327.

²⁵ Naoroji compared India’s balance of trade, where exports far outstripped imports, with that of the United States, Australia, and Canada. He also noted that average government revenue per head in the United Kingdom was 48 shillings—in other words, nearly double of India’s entire production per head. Naoroji, “The Wants and Means of India,” 100, 103.

Consulting government reports, he located figures for basic provisions—food, clothing, and bedding—provided to inmates at Indian penitentiary facilities, and recommended for coolies making their outward sea voyage from Calcutta. These provisions, Naoroji emphasized, were for “simple animal subsistence,” allowing for “not the slightest luxury ... or any little enjoyment of life.” Yet, he declared, they were beyond the reach of the vast majority of Indians. Naoroji illustrated, province by province, how the simple cost of living in a government jail could, in some cases, be twice as high as figures for per capita production. “Even for such food and clothing as a criminal obtains,” Naoroji concluded, “there is hardly enough of production even in a good season, leaving alone all little luxuries, all social and religious wants, and expenses of occasions of joy and sorrow, and any provision for a bad season.”²⁶

Statistics, however, could only go so far in convincing interested parties in Britain and India. Therefore, Naoroji increasingly relied on a third and final strategy, what C.A. Bayly has referred to as the “turning of the defence witnesses.”²⁷ While speaking on Indian poverty, Naoroji began employing the testimony of British Indian officials to

²⁶ Naoroji relied on provisions standards for coolie emigrants that were set by S.B. Partridge, the government medical inspector of emigrants in Calcutta, as well as figures from Bengal administrative reports for 1870-71. Naoroji was careful to note that the provisions were meant for individuals in “a state of quietude;” i.e., they were not sufficient for individuals engaged in labor. Taking these provisions estimates, he relied on the Bombay government gazette in order to calculate total prices of particular goods, estimating that the total annual provisions cost was Rs. 62-2 per individual. This figure, Naoroji noted, was about seventeen rupees higher than the lowest possible amount needed for subsistence in the Bombay Presidency, as calculated by Kazi Shahabudin, one of Naoroji’s closest colleagues during the 1860s and 1870s. Moving onto jails, Naoroji relied on government statistics of provisions expenses by province. Relying on age demographics supplied by the Bengal census of 1872, Naoroji devised a simple equation to translate jail cost figures into something commensurate to the general population of India, accounting for the presence of dependent children outside of the jail environment. Naoroji estimated that provisions costs per head for the general population was about three-fourths of provisions costs per inmate in jail. Dadabhai Naoroji, “Poverty of India, Part I,” in *Essays, Speeches, Addresses and Writings (on Indian Politics) of the Hon’ble Dadabhai Naoroji*, ed. Chunilal Lallubhai Parekh (Bombay: Caxton Printing Works, 1887), 184–90.

²⁷ C.A. Bayly, *Recovering Liberties: Indian Thought in the Age of Liberalism and Empire* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 196.

prove his own points.²⁸ This required assiduous research. We know that some officials, such as Erskine Perry and Mountstuart Elphinstone Grant-Duff, gave Naoroji free access to the India Office library in the 1860s and 1870s—something that the latter official eventually came to regret. Here in the India Office, as well as elsewhere in London and Bombay, Naoroji must have combed through legions of reports, memoirs, records of parliamentary debates, and other sources.

In “Poverty of India,” Naoroji assembled from these sources a set of particularly damning testimonies on Indian impoverishment. Some material had long been used by imperial skeptics and critics of Indian policy: the observations of John Shore, an East India Company writer and later governor-general of Bengal, who arrived in India in 1769 amid famine and Company plunder; Lord Cornwallis’s early identification, in 1790, of a drain of wealth; or Montgomery Martin’s famous remark that India was characterized by “first, the richness of the country surveyed; and second, the poverty of its inhabitants.” But Naoroji dug deeper into the archives, uncovering, with great irony, descriptions of stark poverty in some of the “Material and Moral Progress” reports issued by provincial governments. Further investigation yielded offhand remarks by some of the highest-ranking officials—John Lawrence, Lord Mayo, and Grant-Duff himself—acknowledging the destitute state of their Indian subjects. It was understandably difficult for the Indian government and India Office to contradict such statements.²⁹

²⁸ Bipan Chandra also recognized this technique, although he does not mention Naoroji’s use of it. “The method most commonly used by the Indian national leaders to prove the existence of poverty in India was to quote short extracts from the writings of British Indian administrators, believing, obviously, that the devil could be hoisted with his own petard.” *The Rise and Growth of Economic Nationalism in India*, 15.

²⁹ Naoroji, “Poverty of India, Part I,” 197–8, 200, 204, 205, 207.

In spite of these occasional admissions by the ruling *sahibs*, Naoroji still had to contend with those “fallacious statements” in government reports and statistical abstracts that suggested India’s prosperity. Naoroji now concentrated his energies on undercutting these statements by calling official statistics into question. In “Poverty of India,” he detailed the extreme difficulty of formulating a cohesive economic picture of the subcontinent: most Indian provinces could not supply complete sets of statistics on agricultural prices and productivity. The few available statistics, furthermore, suffered from a fatal flaw. As Naoroji explained, provincial governments calculated average commodity prices by adding up prices in each district and then simply dividing by the number of districts. Similar methods, employing straightforward division, were used to formulate other vital statistics, such as average produce per acre. Thus, government statisticians entirely ignored important ground realities: that some districts were bigger than others, that quantities of produce might differ by locality, that area under cultivation and land productivity were not uniform. “The result, therefore, is wrong, and all arguments and conclusions based upon such averages are worthless,” Naoroji declared, adding, “these averages are not only worthless, but mischievous.”³⁰

Having dismissed government statistics, Naoroji came full circle to his attempts from 1871 to calculate India’s gross production per capita. While government estimates for average prices and production were “fallacious,” he realized that the raw data used to make these estimates could, instead, be utilized to bolster his claims about Indian poverty. This was a tactic that Naoroji would consistently employ for the rest of his political career: the use of official data to debunk official pronouncements. And, with

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 162.

each subsequent estimate of total production, Naoroji took care to incorporate more and more raw data, producing increasingly sophisticated calculations that stood in vivid contrast to vague government declarations of general prosperity. Thus, in “Poverty of India,” he relied on facts and figures collected by officials in the intervening years—commodity prices, patterns of land cultivation, crop patterns and crop yield, and acreage under irrigation—to make detailed estimates of total production by province. Naoroji processed a staggering array of figures and indicators. He backed up his calculations with detailed tables enumerating produce down to bushels and *maunds*. In the case of Madras, he factored in differing crop acreage based on thirty identified grades of soil. While—unlike in 1871—he acknowledged some value accrued from industry and manufacturing, Naoroji once more pointed out that India’s gross economic product was essentially its agricultural product. He declared that India’s total production could be no more than £340 million—which left 40 shillings per head “for an average *good season*,” though, given the recent cycles of drought, famine, and pestilence, much more likely to be 30 shillings per head. This, of course, was not far off from his earlier estimate of 27 shillings.³¹

In 1880, Naoroji concluded over a decade of focused economic study by producing one final estimate of gross production, addressed to the secretary of state for India and later published as a thick pamphlet, “Condition of India.” This study, based on his most detailed and extensive calculations to date, merits a closer look. It indicates how Naoroji’s economic analysis developed in three distinct stages: approximations based on scanty data such as land revenue, as was undertaken in “The Wants and Means of India;”

³¹ Emphasis is Naoroji’s. *Ibid.*, 174, 183.

estimates based on rigorous analysis of official raw data, seen in “Poverty of India;” and, finally, Naoroji’s supplementation of this raw data with his own collected statistics and observations, enabling even more nuanced estimates and pointed refutation of government figures. In “Condition of India,” Naoroji limited his calculation of gross production to just one province: Punjab. He had, so far as we know, never set foot in the land of five rivers. Nevertheless, by focusing on Punjab, Naoroji could test his thesis about Indian poverty in one of the country’s most productive and prosperous agricultural regions—one that had also, due to its relatively recent annexation, suffered less from the drain of wealth.

“Condition of India” analyzed production in Punjab through 21 key agricultural commodities, 15 types of manufactured goods, and other activities such as mining and livestock—even taking into account marginal occupations such as fishing. Evidently, Naoroji had by 1880 developed a deep familiarity with—and almost encyclopedic knowledge of—agricultural products and yield patterns on the subcontinent. Interrogating figures on Punjab’s cotton production per acre, for example, he pointed out that officials had not differentiated between unclean seed cotton and the final product, thereby inflating total production. Turning to sugar, Naoroji identified flaws in average price figures listed in a government publication. “The average price, as obtained on the basis of the prices given in the Report, is, for ‘1st sort’ or what is called Misri,” he explained. “But there are different qualities of sugar, viz., Gol, Red Sugar, ordinary 2nd sort sugar, and best or 1st sort sugar.” Impressive figures for sugar yield per acre in relatively arid Delhi district, furthermore, were evidently a “mistake;” how could they be higher than in comparatively more fertile Ludhiana? Aside from this intense scrutiny of existing

government data, Naoroji appears to have relied on sources on the ground, who supplied additional data and observations. He alluded to at least one anonymous “Punjab farmer” who provided missing data on certain commodities and assessed figures collected by the Indian finance department. Wading through these numbers and making necessary corrections, Naoroji determined that Punjab’s total annual production was £35.33 million, working out to £2 or Rs. 20 per head. This was precisely 40 shillings, Naoroji’s more conservative estimate from 1871 for all of India. Thus, even in “one of the best Provinces of India,” Naoroji declared poverty to be stalking the land. As a point of conclusion, he shifted the burden of acknowledging India’s impoverishment back to the government. “It is only when such complete information is furnished by the Indian authorities, that any true conception can be formed of the actual material condition of India from year to year,” he stated.³²

Did Naoroji succeed in getting Britons to abandon or at least modify their notions of a wealthy, prosperous India? Although it is impossible to assess broader attitudinal changes in the metropole, it is clear that, between delivering “England’s Duties to India” in 1867 and publishing “Condition of India” in 1881, he put Anglo-Indians on the defensive. Some of them, such as James Mackenzie Maclean, editor of the *Bombay Gazette*, challenged Naoroji’s figures and the methodologies behind them. Maclean charged, for example, that Naoroji’s dismal numbers in “Poverty of India” had failed to account for Bombay’s booming cotton goods manufacturing sector. This was easy enough to disprove: Naoroji simply reached into his large storehouse of collected data

³² In the course of his research on Indian agriculture, Naoroji most likely contacted and corresponded with a range of knowledgeable individuals across the subcontinent. Kazi Shahabudin, a friend and the former diwan of Kutch, supplied his calculations on costs of living for agricultural laborers in the Bombay Presidency. While calculating Bengali rice production for “Poverty of India,” Naoroji relied upon the observations of a Parsi manager at a Port Canning rice mill. *Ibid.*, 186–7, 171.

and, using Maclean's own numbers on Bombay cotton mills, recently published in the Scotsman's *Guide to Bombay*, proved manufactured cotton goods output to be relatively insignificant. In subsequent years, prominent British Indian officials—men like Juland Danvers, government director of the Indian Railway Companies, and James Caird, a well-known agricultural expert who served on the Indian famine commission of 1878-79—penned detailed and sophisticated responses to Naoroji's estimates, suggesting that he did not take into account various other sectors of vital economic importance to the country.³³ These rebuttals, at least, acknowledged the existence of *some* level of poverty in India by arguing in favor of modest additions to gross production.

Not all critiques, however, addressed the specifics of Naoroji's papers. Several respondents were simply unable to muster statistics and economic observations to their side of the debate. Instead, grasping at straws, they resorted to mockery, weak arguments based on race, and that most favorite Anglo-Indian tactic: charges of political disloyalty. Maclean, evidently frustrated at being outwitted, thundered in the *Bombay Gazette* that Naoroji and Navrozji Fardunji were promulgating "the extraordinary doctrine that the British Government of this country was an unmitigated curse."³⁴ Meanwhile in London, Hyde Clark, a member of the Society of Arts, took offense at Naoroji's references to the British as foreign rulers. "It is strange, too, that these reproaches come from the Parsees," Clark stated, "who are equally foreigners in their relations to the other races, and who

³³ Dadabhai Naoroji, "Poverty of India, Part II," in *Essays, Speeches, Addresses and Writings (on Indian Politics) of the Hon'ble Dadabhai Naoroji*, ed. Chunilal Lallubhai Parekh (Bombay: Caxton Printing Works, 1887), 277–8. For Naoroji's rebuttal of Danvers's views, see Naoroji, "Condition of India," 441–64. Naoroji particularly sought to disprove Danvers's argument that railways generated wealth for India.

³⁴ Navrozji responded by protesting Maclean's "base insinuation that I am a discontented and disloyal subject." "To the Editor of the 'Bombay Gazette,'" *Times of India*, 28 December 1876.

owe their present freedom to us.”³⁵ William Sowerby, author of a treatise on drainage in Bombay (though evidently not of the economic variant), complained—with irony that was probably lost on him—that statistics were “the greatest delusion of the age.” He sarcastically laid out a future scenario where Naoroji would preside over the liquidation of the Raj, order all Europeans to depart India on troop ships, tear up the railways and return them to Britain, and finally invite the Americans to India to demonstrate “how to establish a republic.” Sowerby concluded his fulminations with a crude appeal to Naoroji’s racial instincts, arguing that, if the British were to leave India’s shores, “before one revolution of the moon every Parsee in Bombay would be either murdered, beggared, or wandering about the country as a homeless fugitive.”³⁶

Such accusations and hollow arguments only went so far. In time, Naoroji found confirmation of changing attitudes toward Indian poverty among Britons. And it came from a relatively unexpected source: Evelyn Baring, the future Lord Cromer. As finance member under Lord Ripon, Baring made the government of India’s first official estimate of India’s gross production. We have no concrete evidence to prove that the finance member’s undertaking was in direct response to Naoroji’s outpouring of economic analysis, but this was likely the case. Baring concluded that average income per head could be no more than Rs. 27, not significantly higher than Naoroji’s various figures. “Though I am not prepared to pledge myself to the absolute accuracy of a calculation of this sort,” he noted, “it is sufficiently accurate to justify the conclusion that the tax-paying community is *exceedingly poor*.” Naoroji, understandably elated to see official

³⁵ “Enterprise in the East Indies,” *Journal of the Society of Arts*, 16 September 1870.

³⁶ “The Condition of India Question,” *Times of India*, 1 August 1876.

acknowledgment of widespread indigence, dashed off a note to Baring and requested to see his calculations. Baring, not surprisingly, declined the request, and the government of India never published the full estimate.³⁷ Calcutta, it seems, was eager to forget about the finance member's statistical exercise and pretend that it had never happened in the first place. Indian officials, in general, were largely silent on the matter of Indian poverty until Lord Curzon entered the fray two decades later. Thus, even when British officials acknowledged the destitute state of their Indian subjects, they did so in an exceedingly grudging manner. But this acknowledgment was a key victory for Naoroji: it further propelled debate and discussion of the drain theory.

III. 'The Country is Being Continually Bled': The Evolution of the Political Corollary

With little surprise, we find that Dadabhai Naoroji's views on Indian poverty evolved in tandem with his views on the Indian civil service. Naoroji did not enunciate the political corollary to the drain theory until the 1870s; however, we can trace its roots back to his maiden political speech, delivered at the inauguration of the Bombay Association in August 1852. In this speech, Naoroji, then in his late twenties, suggested a link between faulty governance and poverty. The impoverishment of the *kunbis* or peasants, he noted, might be the product of "bad administration." Naoroji was not simply referring to specific policy decisions; rather, he questioned the very structure and makeup of the colonial bureaucracy. Government administrators, "being drawn from England, do not, except after a long residence and experience, become fully acquainted with our

³⁷ Dadabhai Naoroji, "The Indian Civil Service," in *Essays, Speeches, Addresses and Writings (on Indian Politics) of the Hon'ble Dadabhai Naoroji*, ed. Chunilal Lallubhai Parekh (Bombay: Caxton Printing Works, 1887), 500.

wants and customs.” Consequently, these British officers were “often led, by their imperfect acquaintance with the country, to adopt measures calculated to do more harm than good.” The Bombay Association, Naoroji hoped, could investigate the problematic government policies they instituted and present detailed findings before British authorities.³⁸

Thus, from the early 1850s, amid debates over the renewal of the East India Company’s charter, Naoroji took a detailed interest in the efficacy of the Indian civil service. This interest soon ripened into reformist activity. Continuing to voice concern that the Indian administration was almost entirely made up by Britons, he campaigned on behalf of some of the first Indians to attempt entering the civil services. In 1859, some four years after relocating to Great Britain, he took up the case of the very first Indian candidate, Rustomji Hirjibhai Wadia, who was unceremoniously barred from taking the civil service exam by the India Office’s last-minute reduction of the age limit. Although, in Wadia’s case, his pleas to authorities fell on deaf ears,³⁹ Naoroji persisted in speaking and writing about the need for more Indian administrative officers. Like many other political reformers in Calcutta, Bombay, Madras, and elsewhere, he concentrated his energies on protesting the formidable difficulties faced by Indian candidates: a low age limit; the fact that exams were only held in England, necessitating a long and costly voyage from the subcontinent; and the content of the exams, which privileged knowledge of European classics and literature over subjects like Arabic and Sanskrit, where Indian candidates would have a significant advantage. These biases fueled debate in the London

³⁸ *Minute of Proceedings of the Bombay Association*, 18–19.

³⁹ J. Cosmo Melvill to Naoroji, 29 March 1859, NAI, DNP, I-13 (2). Years later, Naoroji assisted Heerjeebhai H. Wadia, the grandson of Rustomji Hirjibhai Wadia, in his preparations in London for the Indian civil service examinations. Serene M. Cursetji to Naoroji, 19 March 1895, *ibid.*, C-303 (4).

Indian Society,⁴⁰ which Naoroji founded in the 1860s to complement political bodies in the subcontinent such as the Bombay Association and the British Indian Association of Calcutta. They also pushed Naoroji—along with other members of the Association, such as Navrozji Fardunji, W.C. Bonnerjee, and a young Pherozeshah M. Mehta—to agitate for change. In 1865, the India Office reversed its decision to further deemphasize Arabic and Sanskrit in exams after Naoroji submitted a petition on the topic, questioning the government’s commitment to fairness for aspiring Indian officers. Naoroji increasingly framed the civil service issue as one of Indian rights, dropping his earlier arguments about the problematic consequences of an Indian administration dominated by Britons unfamiliar with Indian culture and opinion.

Naoroji’s first public address on Indian economic affairs, “England’s Duties to India,” represented another important transformation in his views about the civil service and poverty. Speaking before the East India Association, which was founded the year beforehand as a successor organization to the London Indian Society, Naoroji suggested, for the first time, that India’s desperate poverty was the result of a pronounced economic drain. While he did not use the term “drain,” specifically—he spoke of financial tribute and “home charges”—Naoroji asserted that British rule had resulted, to date, in the transfer of a whopping £1.6 billion from the subcontinent to imperial coffers. Relying on parliamentary returns, he calculated that Great Britain continued to siphon, conservatively, £33 million each year from its Indian possessions, or roughly one-fourth of Indian revenues.

⁴⁰ Not to be confused with the London Indian Society that existed from the late 1870s onward, which was a community organization for Indians resident in the imperial capital.

The drain and its devastating impact upon India constituted the first half of his paper. In the second half, Naoroji dwelled on the political injustice that Indians faced under British rule, with the civil service as the main grievance. “Either the educated natives should have proper fields for their talents and education opened to them in various departments of the administration of the country,” he warned, “or the rulers must make up their minds, and candidly avow it, to rule the country with a rod of iron.” The best way to secure Indian officers was with simultaneous examinations; in other words, ensuring that the exams of “a portion, however small at first,” of candidates take place in India as well as Britain. Thus, Naoroji continued to think of civil service reform mostly in terms of the rights of Indians. But he made one critical observation: that a European-dominated civil service was a major source of the drain, since these Britons regularly sent portions of their salaries home and also drew pensions after they retired to the British Isles. Examining government revenues, Naoroji tallied the salaries of British bureaucrats, administrators, and soldiers, concluding that India annually lost about £4.36 million through remitted salaries. This was, of course, far short of his calculations for the annual drain, and Naoroji therefore had to account for additional sources. He suggested a profoundly unfavorable trade imbalance.⁴¹ In a later paper, delivered after the Abyssinian War, where Great Britain borrowed Indian troops and then served the Indian government with a bill for expenses, Naoroji placed blame upon the great costs of maintaining a large

⁴¹ Dadabhai Naoroji, “England’s Duties to India,” in *Essays, Speeches, Addresses and Writings (on Indian Politics) of the Hon’ble Dadabhai Naoroji*, ed. Chunilal Lallubhai Parekh (Bombay: Caxton Printing Works, 1887), 50, 38, 29.

military.⁴² By 1871, he was focusing on land tenure, arguing that unduly high rates of assessment were imperiling both *zamindars* and *ryots*.⁴³

During the late 1860s and early 1870s, Naoroji's proposed solutions to the drain were relatively limited in scope. Although he denounced how "the country is being continually bled" and judged present British Indian policy to be "suicidal," he believed, somewhat incredibly, that part of the drain was justified.⁴⁴ In exchange for the supposed political, moral, and social benefits of British rule, it was "inevitable" that India had to sacrifice some of its wealth. While delivering his paper "On the Commerce of India" before the Society of Arts in London in 1871, Naoroji reasoned that, "If India is to be regenerated by England, India must make up its mind to pay the price." He reiterated figures on Britain's cumulative drain from India but added, somewhat apologetically, that "I do not mean this as a complaint; you must have a return for the services rendered to India."⁴⁵ The critical problem was that the drain, while impoverishing ordinary Indians, also sapped India of capital that could otherwise support indigenous commerce and industry and, consequently, lighten the effects of this financial tribute. If India were economically more robust, it would be easier for the country to bear the burden of the drain.

⁴² Dadabhai Naoroji, "Expenses of the Abyssinian War," in *Essays, Speeches, Addresses and Writings (on Indian Politics) of the Hon'ble Dadabhai Naoroji*, ed. Chunilal Lallubhai Parekh (Bombay: Caxton Printing Works, 1887), 53.

⁴³ See Naoroji, "Financial Administration of India," 146–9. Naoroji also called attention to the unfairness of the salt tax.

⁴⁴ Naoroji, "England's Duties to India," 31; Naoroji, "On the Commerce of India," 126.

⁴⁵ Naoroji, "On the Commerce of India," 123, 134. In a later work, Naoroji referred to something called the "legitimate portion of the drain." Naoroji, "Financial Administration of India," 138.

In order to further clarify this relationship between the drain, capital, and Indian poverty, Naoroji turned to John Stuart Mill's *Principles of Political Economy*. "Land and labour are both useless unless we have sufficient capital," Naoroji stated. "Mr. Mill distinctly proves that industry is limited by capital, that law and government cannot create industry without creating capital. Capital, then, is the great and imperative want of India, as much for the existence of the foreign rule as of the people themselves." Since the drain robbed India of its own capital, Naoroji suggested that Great Britain finance, through long-term loans, major public works projects in the country to stimulate growth. "If sufficient foreign capital is brought into the country," he declared, "all the present difficulties and discontent will vanish in time." Naoroji stored particular faith in the transformative effects of railways, irrigation projects, and similar "*large public works*."⁴⁶

While speaking on the drain and championing a solution through public works, Dadabhai Naoroji did not lose sight of civil service reform. After delivering a memorial to the India Office on the topic in 1868, he spoke out vigorously against British opponents who charged that Indians were not mentally fit, capable, or trustworthy enough to hold high administrative positions.⁴⁷ Once more, Naoroji adopted a relatively conservative position on reforming the services. "If India wants England to rule it for a long time, for its own regeneration and benefit," he declared, "it stands to reason that the English service must be in the majority, and that certain places of high executive power should remain in their hands only." Retaining a British majority of two-thirds or three-

⁴⁶ As Naoroji noted, this was the opinion of Bartle Frere, former governor of Bombay, as well. Naoroji, "The Wants and Means of India," 105, 106, 103.

⁴⁷ Dadabhai Naoroji, "Admission of Educated Natives into the Indian Civil Service (East India Association)," in *Essays, Speeches, Addresses and Writings (on Indian Politics) of the Hon'ble Dadabhai Naoroji*, ed. Chunilal Lallubhai Parekh (Bombay: Caxton Printing Works, 1887), 75.

fourths of the services, Naoroji believed, was sufficient.⁴⁸ He steadfastly denied support for any moves toward self-government and the full transfer of administrative posts to Indians. Before the East India Association in 1871, he stated that, “In my belief a greater calamity could not befall India than for England to go away and leave her to herself.”⁴⁹ At the same time, Naoroji returned to his observation of 1867—that a European-dominated civil service constituted a large portion of the drain—and began thinking about how this particular burden could be lightened. Addressing the Select Committee on East India Finance, authorized by Parliament in 1871, he established the economic benefit to India of employing his fellow countrymen:

Supposing that the native official was paid as highly as his English colleague, the mere fact that all the earnings of the native official remain in the country, as he has no remittances to make to a foreign land for the education or maintenance of his children or family, or of his savings, is in itself so far an economical and, therefore, a financial advantage to the country; and it is the bounden duty of the English rulers to allow India this economical saving, consistently with their political supremacy.

But Naoroji was already beginning to modify his views on how this political supremacy could be maintained. Discarding his earlier stance that “high executive power” should be the sole province of the British, he now called for the appointment of Indians to legislative councils, the India Office, and “all grades” of the government. For Naoroji, it was a simple question of government efficiency: how was it possible for British officials, who rotated in and out of the country, to properly administer an entire subcontinent? This system, furthermore, denied Indians any opportunities to gain experience in governance and administration. Here, we see the germ of what Naoroji later

⁴⁸ Dadabhai Naoroji, “Admission of Educated Natives into the Indian Civil Service (Memorandum),” in *Essays, Speeches, Addresses and Writings (on Indian Politics) of the Hon’ble Dadabhai Naoroji*, ed. Chunilal Lallubhai Parekh (Bombay: Caxton Printing Works, 1887, 496.

⁴⁹ Naoroji, “On the Commerce of India,” 132.

termed the “moral drain”: the loss of administrative experience whenever a British official retired and left India, further condemning India to misgovernance. Indianizing the civil services could, therefore, remedy a drain that had both moral and financial components. Importantly, for Naoroji, civil service reform was no longer just a question of Indian rights.⁵⁰

During these early speaking engagements, Naoroji also began to reflect—on a somewhat abstract level—on India’s particular predicament of being colonized by a European power. In *Producing India*, Manu Goswami has noted how Naoroji stressed the “incommensurability of extant classical economic theories and the socioeconomic condition” of a colonized India.⁵¹ But British rule, in Naoroji’s analysis, did much more than just upturn accepted economic wisdom: it created a distinct historical disjuncture. The administration of both company and crown had a strange, decisively foreign quality that deviated from patterns of previous imperial conquest and rule on the subcontinent, a trait that was undermining India’s national cohesiveness. In “England’s Duties to India,” Naoroji appeared to accept *carte blanche* the orientalist notion that, prior to the reigns of the first British governors-general, the subcontinent had been subjected to “the usual Oriental despotism,” resulting in “utter stagnation and gradual retrogression.” Nevertheless, he observed that, “When all other foreign invaders retained possession of the country, and became its rulers, they at least became *of* the country.” They did not remain foreign and aloof, and, consequently, their administration was not economically extractive. “If they plundered the rich and screwed the ryot, the wealth was still *in* the

⁵⁰ Naoroji, “Financial Administration of India,” 145, 144.

⁵¹ Goswami, *Producing India*, 212.

country,” Naoroji noted. “If individuals were plundered or oppressed, the country remained as rich as ever. But entirely different has been the case with the foreign rule of the British.” By electing to remain a distinctly foreign power, the British were sapping the country’s “vital blood”—not simply its material wealth—and endangering its very “vitality and vigour.”⁵² This was a serious indictment of British colonialism that could not be expressed in purely economic or political terms.



“Poverty of India,” as we have seen, constituted an important turning point in Naoroji’s efforts to highlight the impoverishment of the subcontinent. Delivering this paper in 1873 before the Select Committee on East India Finance, Naoroji painted a grim picture of India’s economic condition by arguing that the average Indian fared far worse than a prisoner or emigrant coolie. He identified grave errors in the government’s methods of calculating statistics while harvesting official raw data to confirm his earlier calculations on income per capita. In terms of the evolution of Naoroji’s thoughts about the drain, “Poverty of India” was also a landmark document. It is quite likely—although we have no surviving archival documents to confirm this—that Naoroji was radicalized by a tour in Gujarat, Kathiawar, and Kutch that he undertook during the 1871 monsoon “with a view to acquaint himself personally with the condition of the agricultural classes of those provinces.”⁵³ There is some evidence that, along with Navrozji Fardunji, he undertook a follow-up survey in Gujarat in early 1873. Regardless, Naoroji emerged before the Select Committee with far sharper views on poverty and the drain, shorn of

⁵² Naoroji, “England’s Duties to India,” 26, 30–1.

⁵³ “Summary: Bombay,” *Pioneer*, 26 June 1871.

many of his earlier beliefs regarding possible solutions. The committee chairman, Acton Smee Ayrton—and, most likely, Mountstuart Grant Duff, undersecretary of state for India—balked at the contents of his submitted statement and refused to publish it in the committee’s final report. It was not until 1876 that Naoroji delivered this statement, in two parts, before the Bombay Branch of the East India Association and published it as a pamphlet.⁵⁴

In this work, Naoroji argued that Indian impoverishment was “the question, or rather the most serious question, of the day.” While he had been sharply condemnatory of British Indian administration in the past, it was only in these papers that Naoroji began directly referring to colonial policy as “evil.” Turning to the drain, he identified as causes exclusively “two elements”: salaries and pensions paid to British officials and remittances made by Anglo-Indian civilians. He made no mention of other factors such as military expenses. Gone, furthermore, was any discussion of the supposedly “legitimate” portion of the drain that India was obligated to pay.⁵⁵ Naoroji had also now abandoned his faith in public works projects, especially railroads: the necessary British capital injected into India, Naoroji realized, would most likely land up in the pockets of Britons and British interests. This foreign capital, paradoxically, would further feed the drain of

⁵⁴ Naoroji, *Poverty and Un-British Rule in India* (London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co., 1901), 1. We can take “Poverty of India” as an accurate representation of his views in 1873, since Naoroji claims to not have revised his statement before delivering it as talks in 1876 before the Bombay Branch of the East India Association. “These notes were written two to three years ago. I lay them before you as they are. If necessary, I shall consider hereafter any modification that the light of subsequent events may suggest, either in confirmation or refutation of the views expressed in them.” Naoroji, “Poverty of India, Part I,” 160.

⁵⁵ This “legitimate drain” made a curious reappearance in Naoroji’s “Condition of India,” first published in 1881: “I should not be misunderstood. That for a good long time, a reasonable amount of payment for British rule is necessary for the regenerations of India, is true, and no thinking native of India denies this. It is the evil of excessive payment that India has to complain of.” This statement was made in a letter to Lord Harrington, the secretary of state for India, and this circumstance might explain Naoroji’s relapse. Naoroji, “Condition of India,” 446–7.

wealth. Providing an innovative spin on Mill's *Principles of Political Economy*, Naoroji concluded that the drain produced an ever-worsening spiral of impoverishment. "The candle burns at both ends," he noted, "capital going on diminishing on the one hand, and labour thereby becoming less capable on the other, to reproduce as much as before." Thus, the burden of the drain became heavier and more lethal with each passing year.⁵⁶

In order to highlight the unique nature of India's predicament, Naoroji began drawing international comparisons. He was particularly intrigued by the experience of the United States: by the mid-1870s, Naoroji began to pore through US government reports and statistical data. It was during this time that he most likely initiated his correspondence with Washington officials—officers and directors in the Army Corps of Engineers and the departments of Agriculture, Treasury, and the Interior—which continued through the early 1900s.⁵⁷ Naoroji turned to the flurry of railway construction in America to illustrate how India would not benefit from a similar construction program. In the creation and operation of the American railway network, he observed, "every man is an American; every farthing taken out of the produce of the country for its conveyance remains in the country." Americans reaped the wealth derived from increased production, while the interest upon loans cycled back into the national economy. This was not the case in India. British railway loans, Naoroji noted, largely went to the Britons building and operating the Indian network. Interest on these loans, similarly, went "out of the country" and back into British coffers. While explaining these dynamics of the drain, Naoroji expanded upon his earlier statements about the nefarious effects of a foreign rule.

⁵⁶ Naoroji, "Poverty of India, Part I," 196, 210, 212.

⁵⁷ Naoroji's earliest surviving correspondence with Washington is from 24 January 1882, when an official at the Bureau of Statistics in the Treasury Department dispatched to Naoroji a report on the internal commerce of the United States.

“Our condition is a very anomalous one,” he remarked, “like that of a child to which a fond parent gives a sweet, but to which, in its exhausted condition, the very sweet acts like poison, and as a *foreign substance* by irritating the weak stomach makes it throw out more, and causes greater exhaustion.” To drive home this point about an externally-produced drain, Naoroji sketched out another international comparison—with pre-reformation England. As a tributary to the Pope, he argued, England withered from an “Italian drain,” weighed down by an alien clergy and heavy remittances to Rome. The system also exacted a heavy toll in terms of England’s political and intellectual advancement. “India cannot but share the same fate under similar causes,” warned Naoroji.⁵⁸

As he suggested in his comparison with England and the Catholic church, Naoroji held that the drain could not simply be measured in terms of sterling. The drain of wealth, rather, was a “triple evil.” British policy caused the “loss of wealth, wisdom, and work to India,” constituting a peculiarly noxious combination of financial and “moral” outflow. Here, Naoroji fully elucidated the concept of a “moral drain,” explaining how the preponderance of British civil servants both robbed Indians of employment and crippled Indians’ abilities to develop administrative and political experience. “All experience and knowledge of statesmanship, of administration or legislation, of high scientific or learned professions, are drained away to England, when the persons possessing them give up their service and retire to England,” he declared. This situation further highlighted the strange, unnatural nature of European colonial rule: skilled Indians were denied an outlet for their talents in their own country. “All the talent and nobility of intellect and soul,

⁵⁸ Italics are Naoroji’s. Naoroji, “Poverty of India, Part I,” 210.

which nature gives to every country, is to India a lost treasure.” Naoroji buttressed his argument through more “turning of the defence witnesses,” citing various British Indian officials who agreed that Indians were being denied their rightful place in the government: Thomas Munro, John Malcolm, and Bartle Frere.⁵⁹

Having explained the terrible effects of the economic drain and put forth his arguments about a moral drain, Naoroji presented a trump card of sorts. In the years and decades after 1857, Anglo-Indians and British officials remained terrified about the possibility of another mutiny.⁶⁰ Individuals such as Allan Octavian Hume—in his Congress circulars published in the late 1880s and early 1890s—and Henry M. Hyndman—in his fiery speeches and published works from the early twentieth century—well understood these colonial anxieties and drew upon them for their respective political purposes. Decades beforehand, we find Naoroji engaging in much the same strategy, deftly raising the specter of rebellion if no serious attempts were made to reverse the process of impoverishment in India. Naoroji, in fact, first deployed this strategy as early as 1867, warning his East India Association audience that “no prophet is required to foretell the ultimate result of a struggle between a discontented two hundred millions, and a hundred thousand foreign bayonets.”⁶¹ In subsequent papers, he spoke openly about the

⁵⁹ Ibid., 212–14.

⁶⁰ Thomas Metcalf speaks of a “growing fearfulness that could never wholly be quelled” among Anglo-Indians after 1857. *Ideologies of the Raj* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 160. For a recent piece on how memories of the Mutiny fueled colonial information panics and an atmosphere of general paranoia, see Kim Wagner, “‘Treading Upon Fires’: The ‘Mutiny’-Motif and Colonial Anxieties in British India,” *Past and Present*, no. 218 (February 2013): 159–97.

⁶¹ Naoroji, “England’s Duties to India,” 35.

drain being “the principal rock on which British rule will wreck” and the inevitability of “an Indian difficulty in time.”⁶²

After “Poverty of India,” Naoroji modified his tactics by channeling colonial anxieties that were specifically about educated Indians. Education, Naoroji explained, was uniting Indians of different castes and creeds, and a growing political consciousness welded them even closer together, making divide and rule tactics increasingly ineffective. While Naoroji declared that educated Indians were, at present, staunchly loyal to the crown, he worried about how their faith was being steadily eroded by exclusion from the civil service and observation of the drain of wealth. “It will be a *very, very* short step from loyalty to disloyalty,” he cautioned. For added effect, Naoroji brought up the Russian bogey, skillfully playing on another source of colonial paranoia. In case the Cossacks began streaming over the Khyber, he asked, how could British suzerainty be assured when the masses were impoverished and the educated were disillusioned?⁶³

Hence, by pursuing current policies, the British Raj was sowing the seeds of its own destruction. How, then, was it possible to remedy the multiple evils resulting from the drain? Naoroji responded to this question by setting out the first plank of his political corollary. He had already singled out “the excessive employment of Europeans” as the cause of so much economic and political turmoil. The solution, therefore, was that “such employment needs to be limited to some reasonable extent,” with Indians taking the place of Britons. In other words, the civil services needed to be thoroughly and comprehensively Indianized. Naoroji noted that, even if Indian bureaucrats received as

⁶² Naoroji, “Financial Administration of India,” 141; Naoroji, “The Wants and Means of India,” 102.

⁶³ Naoroji, “Condition of India,” 468–9, 477.

substantial salaries as their British counterparts, “the economical result to India will be pure gain, as all such payments will continue and remain as the wealth and capital of the country.”⁶⁴ Thus, in one stroke, Naoroji used the drain to formulate a powerful argument in favor of civil service reform. Indianization was not simply a matter of Indian rights; it was the answer to the country’s dire financial and economic straits. Within a few years, Naoroji began referring to the issue as a “question of life and death to India.”⁶⁵ Maintaining the status quo meant risking certain economic disaster and, eventually, rebellion. On the other hand, by putting Indians in charge of their own government, authorities in London and Calcutta would be “increasing [India’s] capital and prosperity,” ensuring that India “may be strengthened and confirmed in its loyalty and gratitude to the British nation.”⁶⁶ How could policymakers not fail to make the correct choice?

There was a second and obvious plank to the political corollary of the drain theory: that the drain decreased in proportion to the reduction of the number of Britons who ruled India. Through the remainder of the 1870s and the 1880s, Naoroji continued to clamor for simultaneous examinations in Britain and India, something that would quickly increase the proportion of Indians in the government. However, at the same time, he began taking this second plank to its logical conclusion. There was a fine line between championing a government where Indians were proportionately in the majority and a one where, with the exception of a handful of spots at the very top reserved for Britons, Indians occupied *all* posts. Naoroji crossed this line in 1884, less than ten years after presenting “Poverty of India” to Bombay audiences. That year, as Lord Ripon would

⁶⁴ Naoroji, “Poverty of India, Part II,” 275.

⁶⁵ Naoroji, “The First Indian National Congress,” 325.

⁶⁶ Naoroji, “Poverty of India, Part II,” 275.

down his relatively liberal viceroyalty, he penned a memo on the Indian civil service that was submitted “for the consideration of the late and present Viceroys, and some other high Officials.”

In this document, Naoroji drew upon Ripon’s most forward-looking proposal—“local self-government” at the provincial level—in order to sketch out a far more ambitious scheme. He envisioned a day when simultaneous examinations would give way to examinations held exclusively in India, with only select positions such as the viceroy and governorships “mainly reserved” for Britons. In order to clarify the power dynamics of such a political structure, Naoroji made quite a bold declaration: “*Never* can a foreign rule be anything but a curse to any country, except so far as it approaches a native rule.”⁶⁷ A few months later, at a speech in Bombay to mark Ripon’s retirement, Naoroji invoked, for the first time in public, the goal of self-government for India. Linking together the ideas of the drain and political autonomy, he stressed that the “greatest questions” facing the country were “our material and moral loss, and our political education for self-government.” He nevertheless looked forward to a day when India was “a self-governing and prosperous nation”—albeit one that was still “loyal to the British throne.”⁶⁸

Naoroji chose his words carefully, couching them in declarations of loyalty and gratitude, but there was no mistake about the significance of his message. Thus, in the middle of the 1880s, at the high noon of British imperialism, we can witness the birth of the idea of swaraj within mainstream Indian nationalist politics.

⁶⁷ Italics are Naoroji’s. Naoroji, “The Indian Civil Service,” 502, 501.

⁶⁸ Dadabhai Naoroji, “Retirement of Lord Ripon,” in *Speeches and Writings of Dadabhai Naoroji*, ed. G.A. Natesan, second edition (Madras: G.A. Natesan & Co., 1917), 168–9.

IV. Applying the Political Corollary: Princely States and the Baroda Diwanship

Between the late 1860s and the early 1880s, as we have seen, Dadabhai Naoroji deployed the drain theory in order to justify political reform in the direction of Indian self-government. The drain served as a powerful causal link between British rule and poverty, as well a convincing argument that India would become more economically robust once the bureaucracy was significantly Indianized. At precisely the same time, Naoroji became immersed in the affairs of several Indian princely states. This was no coincidence. Naoroji's involvement with these princely states—ranging from lobbying efforts in London to his diwanship in Baroda in 1873-74—was, in many ways, the practical application of the political corollary to the drain theory. Princely states were an arena where Naoroji attempted to put into practice many of the ideas he expounded within lecture halls in London and Bombay. This is an aspect of western Indian political reform and early nationalism that has been almost completely unnoticed. In both scholarship and popular imagination, princes have often been characterized as mere stooges of the British—and their states depicted as petty fiefdoms distinguished by autocratic governance and social and political retrogression of the worst sort. A handful of works, however, have pointed to the diversity of princely India, a patchwork of over 600 states with varying degrees of political autonomy and administrative sophistication.⁶⁹ Political reformers in Bombay quickly recognized this diversity: after all, roughly half of all princely states, around 361 in number, were located in their immediate vicinity,

⁶⁹ See, especially, chapter six in Barbara N. Ramusack, *The Indian Princes and Their States* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

constituting one-third of the territory of the Bombay Presidency exclusive of Sindh.⁷⁰ And within this assemblage, Naoroji and his colleagues sought out what Barbara Ramusack has termed the “progressive” states, larger realms with rulers keen on administrative modernization.⁷¹ Here, by the early 1870s, Naoroji hoped to test both the drain theory and his ideas for political reform.

Unlike the drain theory, where we can at least rely on a steady stream of published talks and papers from the late 1860s onward, it is extremely difficult to reconstruct the evolution of Naoroji’s thought with regard to princely states. With the exception of one East India Association paper, some India Office records, and fragments of Gujarati and English correspondence, there is hardly any relevant surviving material prior to Naoroji’s arrival in Baroda in late 1873. But some of Naoroji’s earliest associations offer us clues about influences on his thought in the 1850s and 1860s. A few of his seniors in Elphinstone College—the same “small band of Hindu students and thoughtful gentlemen” who discussed the steady impoverishment of India under British rule—spoke vigorously in defense of princely states’ autonomy. For example, Bhaskar Pandurang, the brother of Naoroji’s classmate Atmaram Pandurang, loudly condemned the annexation of Satara in 1848.⁷² The British policy of annexation, pursued aggressively by Lord Dalhousie during the final years of Company rule, simultaneously caused deep discomfort among a small group of Britons and Anglo-Indians—the so-

⁷⁰ Ian Copland, *The British Raj and the Indian Princes: Paramountcy in Western India, 1857-1930* (Bombay: Orient Longman, 1982), 1.

⁷¹ Ramusack, *The Indian Princes and Their States*, 174.

⁷² J.V. Naik, “An Early Appraisal of the British Colonial Policy,” *Journal of the University of Bombay, Arts Number 44-5*, no. 80-1 (1976-1975): 253, 256. Some Bombay newspapers also spoke vocally against the policy of annexation pursued by Lord Dalhousie. The *Bombay Samachar* labeled Dalhousie as “that notorious pindaree and plunderer of the Rajas.” Mehrotra, *The Emergence of the Indian National Congress*, 85.

called “friends of India”—that Naoroji joined by the early 1860s. One of these Britons was John Dickinson (1815-1876), a furious critic of British Indian policy who in 1853 founded the India Reform Society in London. Dickinson and his Society took a particularly favorable view toward Indian rulers. A Society pamphlet from 1853, titled “The State and Government Under its Native Rulers” (later republished by Henry M. Hyndman’s Twentieth Century Press, with an introductory note penned by Naoroji), contrasted the prosperity and stability of India under Akbar, Shivaji, and Hyder Ali with the economic ruin and political chaos that the British brought upon Bengal after Plassey. It thundered against contemporary British policy toward Satara and Awadh.⁷³

We have limited information on Naoroji’s precise relations with Dickinson, though there is little doubt that this friend of India was an important mentor. But we know much more about another associate, Evans Bell (1825-1887), a major in the Madras Staff Corps stationed in Nagpur through the 1850s. Bell was a particularly zealous defender of princely states and their rulers: after Nagpur was annexed in 1853, he fought tirelessly for proper reparations for the deposed Bhosle family, a task that led him to be charged with insubordination shortly after the Mutiny.⁷⁴ Back in London, and probably already acquainted with Naoroji, Bell turned to writing, producing a prodigious amount of literature decrying the policy of annexation. The extinction of further states, he reasoned, increased Indian discontent, diminished chances of fostering enlightened Indian polities, and harmed imperial security. Annexation, he concluded, was “exceptionally

⁷³ “The State and Government of India under Its Native Rulers,” *India Reform*, no. IX (London: Twentieth Century Press, 1899), 14–15, 17–18, 19–20, 24–27, 28, 36.

⁷⁴ Sorabji Jehangir, *Representative Men of India* (London: W.H. Allen & Co., 1889), 139–41.

unjust, injurious, imprudent, and unprofitable.”⁷⁵ Consequently, he wielded his pen against attempts in the 1860s to dispossess the Wodeyar house of Mysore state (already under direct British rule for some thirty years), as well as similar moves against the *nizam* of Murshidabad and the *raja* of Dhar. Along with Dickinson, Bell became one of the earliest members of Naoroji’s East India Association, ensuring that the affairs of princely states remained a prominent topic of discussion in London’s political circles.

Through the influence of John Dickinson and Evans Bell, Naoroji in the late 1860s focused his energies on imminent threats to various princely domains. In 1867, he joined the chorus of protest against British policy toward Mysore. While acknowledging a degree of misgovernance by the Wodeyars before direct British rule, Naoroji pinned greater blame on British Indian administrators. “The picture of an Englishman holding off the savage ruler from his victim is no doubt a very pretty and gratifying one,” he told an audience of the East India Association, “but unfortunately there is a little want of truth in it, and a little daub in it.” At the same time, he charged, direct British rule and the threat of dispossession constituted gross violations of treaty terms between Calcutta and Mysore. Were the viceroy and secretary of state in danger of “sink[ing] down to the level of the despotic Hindu rulers” they so roundly disparaged? Naoroji also cited Mysore as a dangerous example of British imperial overreach, comparing dispossession and possible annexation with London’s simultaneous enlargement of the empire outside of the subcontinent:

To destroy the native rule in Mysore it is pressed that as Englishmen have settled there, it ought to be taken into English possession. This I suppose is an invention of the nineteenth century. What a fine prospect this opens up of conquering the whole world without much trouble. Some Englishmen have only to go and settle

⁷⁵ Evans Bell, *The Mysore Reversion: ‘An Exceptional Case’* (London: Trübner & Co., 1865), iv.

in a country, and then the English government has simply to say, ‘You see English people cannot be managed by you, therefore you should give up the country to us;’ and there is a conquest! But, unfortunately for the inventor, those stupid fellows the French and other continentals, the Americans and such others, won’t see it.⁷⁶

Mysore was not the only state that concerned Naoroji. In the northern reaches of the Bombay Presidency was Kutch, where Kazi Shahabudin (1832-1900), one of Naoroji’s political associates, was serving as diwan to the ruling *maharao*, Pragmalji II. Working with Kazi, Naoroji helped diffuse a tense standoff between Calcutta and Bhuj: when, in 1868, the Indian government proposed investing local *bhayads* or zamindars with greater administrative authority vis-a-vis the maharao, Pragmalji threatened to resign and hand over authority of Kutch to the British. Naoroji counseled British Indian authorities to rethink their proposal, arguing that diminishing the maharao’s powers would set a terrible precedent for relations with other princely states. “The policy of weakening the power of any Native Ruler, except for the introduction of constitutional checks is a retrograde movement,” he cautioned. Instead, Naoroji urged British officials to preserve the authority and ruling power of princes, allowing for the centralization of resources and the development of an “efficient administration” in the domains over which they presided.⁷⁷

Thus, Naoroji followed the lead of Dickinson and Bell by directly entering the fray between troubled princes and the British Indian state. Between 1868 and 1873, however, he began to build on his mentors’ ideas about the political and economic significance of princely India, factoring these states into discussion of the civil service and Indian poverty. The darbars and bureaucracies of princely states, Naoroji realized,

⁷⁶ Dadabhai Naoroji, “Mysore,” in *Essays, Speeches, Addresses and Writings (on Indian Politics) of the Hon’ble Dadabhai Naoroji*, ed. Chunilal Lalubhai Parekh (Bombay: Caxton Printing Works, 1887), 65, 61.

⁷⁷ “Kutch: Relations of the Rao with His Bhyad,” 2 October 1868, BL, IOR, L/PS/6/560, Coll. 12.

were excellent proving grounds for the administrative capabilities of Indians. There was, by and large, no British-dominated civil service with which to contend, no *angrez* sahibs to stymie Indian talent. In his 1868 memo, “Admission of Educated Natives into the Indian Civil Service,” Naoroji reminded Stafford Northcote, the secretary of state, that several highly regarded Indian ministers had emerged from princely darbars: Salar Jung in Hyderabad, Dinkar Rao in Gwalior, and T. Madhava Rao in Travancore.⁷⁸ As he laid out his drain theory before British and Indian audiences, Naoroji suggested that the princely states, as semi-autonomous units, possessed a degree of immunity to this hemorrhaging of finances and resources. Aside from a relatively small tribute—which, Naoroji calculated, was a comparatively trifling sum of £720,000 per year for all states combined—they did not have to bear the burden of paying salaries to British officers. Nor did they have to contend with a moral drain. Furthermore, Indian merchants, rather than British ones, largely controlled the economies of these domains, ensuring that profits from trade did not get siphoned off to London.⁷⁹

Consequently, Naoroji revived an old debate that had been contested by reformers and civil servants alike—whether princely India was more prosperous than British India—and came out in favor of the former. Naoroji’s views on the subject most likely crystallized in the early 1870s in tandem with the political corollary. He observed that native states, especially the cotton-producing ones in Gujarat and opium-producing entities in Rajputana, constituted some of the most important economic engines of the subcontinent. As a result, merchants and capital from princely states played a significant

⁷⁸ Naoroji quoted Richard Temple, who described these individuals as examples of “really capital administrators.” Naoroji, “Admission of Educated Natives into the Indian Civil Service (Memorandum),” 493.

⁷⁹ Naoroji, “Poverty of India, Part I,” 194.

role in the commercial activities of British India, and especially in Bombay.⁸⁰ Convinced of the wealth of princely states, Naoroji sought to leverage these financial resources for Indian political reform. During his extended tours through India between 1871 and 1873, which had such a transformative role on his views on Indian poverty, Naoroji succeeded—perhaps somewhat ironically—in securing vast subscriptions in princely domains for the East India Association. Pragmalji of Kutch, no doubt grateful to Naoroji for his role in resolving the bhayad controversy, transferred Rs. 50,000 into the Association’s coffers, while smaller yet still substantial donations came from maharaja Holkar of Indore, the maharaja of Patiala, the *nawab* of Junagadh, the *jam sahib* of Nawanagar (Jamnagar), and the rulers of several smaller states in Kathiawar. Wealthy subjects in these states furnished additional subscriptions.⁸¹

And then there was Baroda. Sometime in 1872, Naoroji approached Malharrao (1831-1882), the newly installed ruling *gaikwad*, for financial assistance for the East India Association. The *gaikwad* expressed little interest in donating but, some months later, hurriedly summoned Naoroji, then in Indore, to his darbar and brought up an

⁸⁰ We get a more detailed idea of his views from an article published much later, in 1887. Naoroji, “Sir M.E. Grant Duff’s Views about India,” in *Essays, Speeches, Addresses and Writings (on Indian Politics) of the Hon’ble Dadabhai Naoroji*, ed. Chunilal Lalubhai Parekh (Bombay: Caxton Printing Works, 1887), 566, 577–8.

⁸¹ Mahadev Govind Ranade noted the following about the East India Association’s life members: “More than twenty-five of these life-members are the leadings Sirdars and Chiefs in the Southern Maratha Country, and the provinces of Gujerath and Kattywar. Three of the Chiefs of this latter province have been our most munificent patrons. All this shows the sympathy for the work of the East India Association is not confined to the classes who have partaken of the benefit of an English education, but that the leading Chiefs and Princes of India, either of their own accord, or under the guidance of wise Ministers, have come to perceive that the usefulness of the East India Association for promoting the interests of India was great beyond measure, and deserved their fullest sympathy and co-operation.” “Bombay Branch of the East India Association,” *Journal of the East India Association* 6 (1872): 245. Naoroji to Ishvarlal Ochumanty, 5 September 1871, NMML, DNP, II, #493; “Annual Meeting of the East India Association,” *Journal of the East India Association* 6 (1872): 226; “Important Letter from the Maharaja Holkar,” *ibid.*, 223; Naoroji to Haji Ahmad Isaji, 23 February 1872, NMML, DNP, II, #497; list of members of the East India Association in Junagadh, 1872, NAI, DNP, uncataloged item.

entirely different topic of concern. Malharrao was currently embroiled in a tense standoff with Bombay Castle over seating arrangements. The gaikwads had long enjoyed the privilege of seating visiting British dignitaries, such as the governor of Bombay, to their left in darbars and other ceremonies. William Vesey-Fitzgerald, the current governor, now insisted on sitting to the gaikwad's right, infuriating Malharrao and triggering a flurry of heated correspondence between London, Bombay, and Baroda. The gaikwad turned to Naoroji for assistance in resolving this diplomatic row. Drawing upon his experience of defending the authority of the maharao of Kutch, Naoroji produced a carefully worded *yad* (memorial) dispatched to the India Office, urging the secretary of state not to rob Baroda of prestige, which would cause the state "to be degraded in the eyes of all India at your Lordship's hands."⁸² Naoroji's interference appeared to soften the resolve of Bombay Castle, and a grateful Malharrao summarily pledged a reward of Rs. 50,000 in the form of a trust for the children of his Parsi advisor. This gift set in train two distinct series of events. In London, Naoroji became firmly—and suspiciously—identified with the interests of princely states. British officials accused him of being a paid agent of the gaikwad and other rulers, while, in the House of Commons, Naoroji was buttonholed by a member who warned, "If you are going to give any evidence about Native Princes, I should look out for you." Naoroji was finally compelled to make a public statement in August 1873 before the East India Association, justifying his acceptance of the monetary reward and denying that he was a secret operative for any darbar.⁸³ Meanwhile, in Baroda, as officials in the *khazana* (treasury) drew up the trust

⁸² "Memorial of Gaekwar Regarding His Position in Relation to Governor of Bombay," 1873, MSA, Political/Baroda/No. 1856.

⁸³ "Annual Meeting of the East India Association," *Journal of the East India Association* 7, no. 2 (1873).

deed, Malharrao dangled another offer in front of Naoroji. He invited him to be diwan of the state.

Malharrao had, apparently, long been interested in employing Naoroji to modernize the state's bureaucracy and establish better relations with the government of India.⁸⁴ And, in spite of warnings from Bartle Frere and Erskine Perry about significant political problems within the gaikwad's realm, Naoroji leapt at the opportunity try his had at actual administration. By early November 1873, he had departed London and was in Italy, moving south toward Brindisi in order to catch a Bombay-bound steamer.⁸⁵ Both before and after arriving in Baroda, Naoroji worked fast to assemble a cabinet of skilled ministers and bureaucrats. Here, he relied heavily upon his links to Young Bombay and the subsequent generations of educated Indians produced by Elphinstone College and other western Indian institutions of learning. In order to prove the administrative capabilities of Indians, Naoroji looked to some of the brightest minds in the Bombay Presidency. Ministerial candidates included Nana Moroji, Naoroji's classmate at Elphinstone who had subsequently distinguished himself as a Marathi educator and a presidency magistrate; Vishwanath Narayan Mandlik, another Elphinstone contemporary who dabbled in journalism (he edited *Native Opinion*) and government service before becoming a highly successful lawyer at the Bombay High Court; and a young Mahadev

⁸⁴ Masani quotes a letter from Kharshedji Nasarvanji Cama dated 5 January 1872: "I have heard from reliable sources that Mulharrao Gaekwar has had conversations with prominent persons and has formed a high opinion of you. It is their belief that if you become his Dewan it would not only be mutually beneficial to you and the Maharaja but would also lead to friendly relations of the State with the British Government." I have been unable to locate this letter in the Naoroji Papers. Rustom Pestonji Masani, *Dadabhai Naoroji: The Grand Old Man of India* (London: G. Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1939), 141.

⁸⁵ Naoroji to Erskine Perry, 2 November 1873, NAI, DNP, N-1 (2471).

Govind Ranade, an active member of the Bombay Branch of the East India Association, then just beginning his judicial career.

None of these three individuals, unfortunately, were willing or able to leave their careers for the uncertainty of the Baroda darbar. But Naoroji's eventual cabinet included other equally prominent names. Kazi Shahabudin, having resigned as the diwan of Kutch, took control of the gaikwad's revenue department. Bal Mangesh Wagle (d. 1887), one of Naoroji's students at Elphinstone—and along with Ranade, among the first graduates of the University of Bombay—left his position as an advocate before the Bombay High Court to become chief justice. As chief magistrate, Naoroji chose a fellow Parsi, Hormusjee Ardeseer Wadya (1849-1928), a Kathiawar barrister who probably first met the new Baroda diwan while studying at University College in London. Naoroji clarified to his ministers that they were not simply working for Malharrao, but rather for the welfare and advancement of princely India. “We have not come to serve the man; we have come to serve the cause,” he advised Wadya.⁸⁶

From the limited surviving evidence about the actual diwanship, it appears that Naoroji and his colleagues concentrated their efforts on reducing the financial burdens and obligations placed upon some of Baroda's poorest subjects. Economic considerations, as well as the promotion of administrative efficiency, motivated their policies. Firstly, they overhauled the judicial system, making it more transparent, accountable, and accessible. Wagle, the chief justice, began eradicating practices such as *nazarana*—the pledging of gifts to the gaikwad—which had degenerated into a method of buying justice in courts. He also forbade judges from privately interviewing witnesses

⁸⁶ Masani, *Dadabhai Naoroji*, 146, 148.

and instead ordered all cases to be conducted in public. Wadya, meanwhile, prosecuted local officials accused of corruption and the general mistreatment of peasants. This move, Naoroji alleged, “was simply astonishing to the people, to see Vahivatdars and Fozdars and other officials (supposed to possess influence at high quarters) accused of corruption or oppression, tried in open Court or thoroughly cross-examined as witnesses, and made to feel the weight of law and justice when found guilty.” Naoroji, Wagle, and Wadya furthermore began preparing new criminal, civil, and penal codes modeled on English ones.⁸⁷ The ministry’s second target of reform was the revenue system. Kazi Shahabudin conducted a detailed survey on revenue collection and subsequently ordered the remission of one-fourth of land assessments,⁸⁸ specially requiring all local revenue officers “to notify and explain to the cultivators the object of this Proclamation.”⁸⁹ In his survey, Kazi had admitted that land assessments were, in many cases, too high—rates had not been reduced since the time of the American Civil War, when the demand for Baroda cotton burgeoned—and proposed a reduced settlement until the time when “the available statistics might be expected to be efficiently reliable to form the basis of a more scientific measure.”⁹⁰ Taking account of all of these achievements, Naoroji, after he resigned as diwan, defended his ministry in a statement he dispatched to the British Parliament:

I am speaking in no spirit of boastfulness, but I may say, that the mark we have left and the confidence we have inspired among all classes of the people, (except the harpies, the intriguers and their dupes), by showing the difference between pure and impure justice in general administration, and between honesty of purpose and shams and intrigues, and by the progress we actually made in a short time, and against tremendous difficulties, will take a long time to be forgotten.⁹¹

⁸⁷ Dadabhai Naoroji, “The Baroda Administration in 1874,” in *Essays, Speeches, Addresses and Writings (on Indian Politics) of the Hon’ble Dadabhai Naoroji*, ed. Chunilal Lalubhai Parekh (Bombay: Caxton Printing Works, 1887), 395.

⁸⁸ *Times of India*, 14 December 1874, 2.

⁸⁹ “Revenue Reforms of the State of Baroda,” 1874, MSA, Political/Baroda/No. 1848.

⁹⁰ Lewis Pelly to the Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department, 19 December 1874, *ibid*.

⁹¹ Naoroji, “The Baroda Administration in 1874,” 394.

Of course, the mere fact that the ex-diwan felt a need to defend his ministry before MPs—leave alone make reference to “harpies, intriguers and their dupes”—indicates that something also went terribly wrong in Baroda. Naoroji, unfortunately, could not have picked a worse time to come to the state. In 1873, Baroda was being torn asunder by two of the worst systemic features of Indian princely states: the concentration of power within the ruling family and the presence of a British resident who could freely interfere in the affairs of the darbar. When Naoroji arrived in Baroda, he was immediately drawn into a bitter war between ruler and resident—which was, as Ian Copland has argued, part of a larger struggle between the Bombay government and the government of India.⁹² Malharrao’s rule had been, admittedly, disastrous: during his three short years on the *gadi* (throne), the gaikwad had alienated the peasantry through high taxation and tolerance of corruption, lost the trust of many *sirdars* and other elites, and surrounded himself with a coterie of venal yet sycophantic ministers and advisors—many who were close relations. The gaikwad, furthermore, did not seem to be a very pleasant man: Ian Copland remarks that his “propensities to violence and sadism were well-known.”⁹³ Not surprisingly, the British resident, Robert Phayre (1820-1897), successfully convened a special government commission to examine misrule and corruption in the state.

But Phayre was no model official, either.⁹⁴ A self-righteous, fault-finding figure with a touch of messianic Christianity, Phayre had a tendency to exceed his brief. He had also established a track record, of sorts, of grievously offending Indian princes. In August

⁹² Ian Copland, “The Baroda Crisis of 1873-77: A Study in Governmental Rivalry,” *Modern Asian Studies* 2, no. 2 (1968): 97–8.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 101.

⁹⁴ Ian Copland describes Robert Phayre as “honest, averagely intelligent, zealous in the execution of his duties, and somewhat tactless when dealing with ‘inferiors’”. At the same time he possessed qualities of drive, audacity and initiative which set him apart from the mass of his professional colleagues.” This appears to be a far too sympathetic assessment of the man. Further exploration of archival materials in India and United Kingdom, and consideration of Naoroji’s own records, has led me to judge Phayre as a much more complex—and occasionally devious—character. *Ibid.*, 102.

1870, the panicked commissioner of Sindh informed the governor of Bombay that Phayre, then a political superintendent in the frontier region, had hurled unsubstantiated accusations against the *khan* of Kalat, subsequently opening lines of communication with rebel sirdars in exile in Afghanistan.⁹⁵ Bombay Castle removed Phayre from his post and later, in a decision that betrayed either severe incompetence or a sharp sense of irony, assigned him to the Baroda residency. Here, Phayre trained his sights on Naoroji. Before even boarding his Bombay-bound steamer at Brindisi, the future diwan received a telegram that the resident had prohibited his entry into Baroda.⁹⁶ Phayre had taken a dim view of Naoroji's advocacy of princely states. "It is impossible not to be deeply impressed with a sense of the mischief which political adventurers like this Dadabhoy Nowrojee are doing amongst the native princes & chiefs of India," he wrote to the Bombay government in April 1873.⁹⁷ While he eventually allowed Naoroji to enter the city, Phayre remained deeply suspicious of him and his new ministers: in a report from May 1874, he labeled them as "artful intriguers from England" bent on placing the

⁹⁵ W.L. Merewether to Seymour Fitzgerald, 25 August 1870, "Col. Phayre's Official Quarrel as Pol. Supdt. Upper Scinde Frontier, with Col. Sir W. Merewether Commissioner in Sind, 1870," 1870, BL, IOR, R/2/536/312, File II.

⁹⁶ Naoroji to Perry, 2 November 1873, NAI, DNP, N-1 (2471).

⁹⁷ *Sic*. Like many Anglo-Indians, Phayre was deeply suspicious of Naoroji's acceptance of the Rs. 50,000 award from the gaikwad: "I cannot express my sense of utter paralysis of all that is healthy, wise & useful that soi disant Pollagents of the Dadhabhoy Nowrojee stamp are accomplishing in native states under pretence of defending the rights of Native Princes; against whom or what, it is hard to say. Their object; or at all events the result of their advice & conduct; is to raise the tone of the petty potentate, even to inflation; & as a necessary consequence to lower the wholesome influence & authority of the Local Govt and resident Poll Agents. Having effected this; it is necessary; in order to secure their own ultimate object—money—to ferret out any sore that may exist; persuade the Chief; or Prince; as the case may be; that their Sovereign rights have been trampled on; & that the only course open is to appeal against such tyranny to the Home authorities; & to employ the Speaker as their agent—that England is a very expensive place & that heaps of bribes have to be paid; therefore that the pay must be liberal. The Bait taken—£5000 as a retaining fee for such valuable service is a mere nothing—& the Agent retires perfectly satisfied with the result of his labours, whilst the hard working, overtaxed, & in too many instances misgoverned people of our Native States have their rights sill further trampled on than they were before in order to pay the utterly unjust bill." Phayre to C. Gonne, 29 April 1873, "Confidential Letters. Administration Report for 1872-73," 1873, BL, IOR, R/2/481/55, Item 377, No. 1.

gaikwad “in direct antagonism to the British Government.” Naoroji and Kazi Shahabudin were particularly suspect since both were “prominent members of the East India Association in London.”⁹⁸ Consequently, Phayre took the incredible step of not recognizing Naoroji’s appointment, crippling the diwan’s abilities to govern and communicate with administrators in Bombay and Calcutta. The resident apparently warned Malharrao that Naoroji’s diwanship meant “war not peace, and that it would bring about His Highness’ ruin in three months.”⁹⁹

Malharrao did not make his diwan’s tasks any easier. Masani’s biography—which drew on extensive interviews with Wadya—provides us with the most detailed portrait of machinations within the darbar.¹⁰⁰ And what is clear from this account is that the gaikwad never fully put his authority behind Naoroji’s program of reform. Family members, friends, and other *darbaris* exercised enough influence over Malharrao to stonewall major administrative changes. Even the Bombay government realized this: early in 1874, one of its sharper officials correctly predicted that “The Gaekwar and his agents would be enabled to shelter themselves behind Mr. Dadabhai’s reputation, and he would be powerless for any reform of abuses.”¹⁰¹ Malharrao was unwilling to purge the darbar of previous officials and ministers, creating the absurd situation of Baroda possessing, in Phayre’s words, a “duplicate Cabinet,” with each of Naoroji’s selected ministers having a counterpart from the old regime. Naoroji was not spared: the gaikwad created a new

⁹⁸ Phayre to Gonne, 7 May 1874, “Historical Sketch of Our Relations with the Baroda Government from 1820 to 1874,” 1874, BL, IOR, R/2/481/55, Item 377, No. 2.

⁹⁹ Naoroji, “The Baroda Administration in 1874,” 406.

¹⁰⁰ See chapters seven through nine.

¹⁰¹ Secretary to the Government of Bombay to the Secretary to the Government of India, 5 March 1874, *East India (Baroda). Report of the Commission Appointed to Inquire into the Administration of the Baroda State* (London: Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1875), 64.

position, that of the *pratinidhi*, in order to retain his old diwan, Shivajirao Khanvelkar, who was also his brother-in-law.¹⁰²

The resident, for his part, exploited the situation to the hilt. In reports dispatched to Bombay, he condemned Naoroji for being unable to rid the court of corrupt older officials. He then embraced the same officials as allies against the diwan. Between a weak gaikwad, a spiteful resident, and resentful darbaris—Phayre claimed that “the whole of the old Karbharees rose up in arms at the idea of a Foreigner becoming Dewan in a Mahratta State, that foreigner too being a Parsee commercial Agent unaccustomed to executive administration of any kind”¹⁰³—Naoroji had little room for maneuver. His only bargaining chip was threat of resignation, something that would put Malharrao further at the mercy of the resident. Time after time, Naoroji and his ministers tendered their resignations in order to maintain or achieve particular reforms: for example, in July 1874, when Malharrao tried to undo judicial reforms; and in early August, when the ruler vacillated on abolishing nazarana and dismissing the duplicate cabinet. In each case, the gaikwad was the first to blink.

But in late December 1874, when Naoroji ordered Malharrao to replenish the exhausted public exchequer through the privy purse, the ruler let his diwan follow through on his threat to resign.¹⁰⁴ Naoroji and his colleagues departed Baroda via train on 11 January 1875. It was, in hindsight, an eminently fortuitous decision. Affairs in Baroda were rapidly taking on a markedly bizarre—and murky—quality. Around six in the

¹⁰² “Baroda Administration Report for 1873/74,” 1874, BL, IOR, R/2/481/55, Item 377.

¹⁰³ *Sic. Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ Dinshah Ardeshir Taleyarkhan, *The Revolution at Baroda, 1874-75* (Bombay: Hormusjee Sorabjee & Co., 1875), 17–18.

morning of 9 November 1874, Phayre took two or three sips of his daily glass of pomelo juice, sensed a “most unpleasant metallic taste in the mouth,” and quickly spat out the contents before being taken over by dizziness and “confusion of thought.” The resident quickly telegraphed Bombay: “Bold attempt to poison me.” Chemical tests performed at the Grant Medical College in Bombay revealed the juice to contain traces of arsenic and powdered glass or quartz.¹⁰⁵ After Phayre began sending out a stream of correspondence loudly accusing Malharrao of being behind the plot, Calcutta intervened and, perhaps with Phayre’s conduct in faraway Kalat in mind, finally decided to remove the resident from his post. Naoroji enjoyed excellent relations with the new resident, Lewis Pelly, and both men cooperated closely in investigating the poison attempt. In the final days of Naoroji’s diwanship, they started to stumble upon evidence that Phayre’s accusations against Malharrao might not have been so baseless, after all. On 14 January, a proclamation was published at Fort William stating that the government of India had temporarily taken control of affairs at Baroda. British troops swooped down into the city and arrested Malharrao. The deposed gaikwad was eventually convicted of attempting to poison Phayre and sent into exile in Madras.¹⁰⁶ A parliamentary inquiry in Westminster finally closed this sordid chapter in the history of Baroda.

¹⁰⁵ Confidential letter from Phayre, 9 November 1874; telegram from Phayre to Secretary to the Government of Bombay, 9 November 1874; chemical analysis from Grant College Laboratory, 11 November 1874; in “Attempt to Poison Coll. Phayre the Resident,” 1874, MSA, Political/Baroda/Vol. XVIII, No. 28

¹⁰⁶ In February and March, a committee of three Anglo-Indians and three Indians—consisting of Dinkar Rao, the former diwan of Gwalior; the maharaja of Gwalior; and the maharaja of Jaipur—decided the deposed gaikwad’s fate. Not surprisingly, the committee was split down the middle: the three Anglo-Indians pronounced him guilty while the Indian members found the evidence to be insubstantial. Officials in Calcutta, however, had the final say and tipped the balance in favor of a guilty verdict. *East India (Baroda, No. 5). Correspondence Connected with the Deposition of Mulhar Rao* (London: Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1875), 7.

Thus, Naoroji—a staunch advocate of princely interests, a vocal opponent of British intervention in princely states, and a strong proponent of experimenting with political reform in these domains—discovered that some “progressive” states were not so enlightened, after all. He experienced first-hand the sheer difficulty of achieving significant reform against the will of ruler and resident, and witnessed the extraordinary deposition of a ruling gaikwad by the British. There was little scope for testing the drain theory, or applying its political corollary, when Baroda was riven by internal dissent and ruled over by a man suspected of attempted murder.

While understandably embittered by the experience, Naoroji, quite remarkably, did not allow his Baroda diwanship to diminish his enthusiasm for princely states or his resolve to advocate their interests. The Naoroji Papers reveal an incredible amount of correspondence with various rulers, diwans, and darbaris in the years after 1875. Within Gujarat and Kathiawar, Naoroji was in regular contact with the courts of Bhavnagar, Nawanagar, Gondal, and Kutch. Under Malharrao’s successor, Sayajirao, Naoroji enjoyed excellent relations with Baroda. There are scattered letters from Hyderabad, Indore, Mysore, and Travancore hinting at broader correspondence now lost. A number of minor states sought assistance from Naoroji. Suchet Singh, a contender for the throne of Chamba, a Himalayan fastness between Jammu and Lahaul, exchanged letters in Hindi with Naoroji, who advised him on financial affairs.¹⁰⁷ Tulaji Raje Bhosle, heir to the throne of Akalkot—the state where, decades beforehand, a young Bal Gangadhar Shastri Jambhekar had served as a royal tutor—turned to Naoroji for help in a conflict with the

¹⁰⁷ Naoroji to Suchet Singh, 25 August 1887, NAI, DNP, N-1 (759).

India Office.¹⁰⁸ Naoroji mediated a dispute between Dharampur, where his father and grandfather had lived as agriculturalists, and the Rajput state of Alirajpur (after Naoroji's 1892 election, the ruler of Dharampur asked the new MP to bring the matter before Parliament).¹⁰⁹ By the early 1880s, Naoroji and an English friend, W. Martin Wood, established a formal agency in London for lobbying the India Office on the affairs of princely states. Over time, a reciprocal relationship developed between rulers and early nationalists like Naoroji: the politicians lobbied on behalf of princely interests, while the princes—as Chapter Five will demonstrate—helped fund the politicians and their activities.

Beyond issues of finance, Naoroji continued to incorporate these states in his political thought with regard to poverty, the drain, and swaraj. During his first parliamentary campaign in 1886, for example, he compared W.E. Gladstone's proposal for Irish home rule with the “native states which possessed Home Rule” in India, arguing that there was room for political autonomy within the empire.¹¹⁰ And, in the 1880s, he returned to the question of whether princely India was more prosperous than areas of the subcontinent under direct British administration. Once more amassing statistics and other forms of data, Naoroji demonstrated that several states were, in comparison to British India, able to raise far greater revenues at much lower rates of taxation. This was, as he stated in an article published in the *Contemporary Review* in 1887, a sure sign of “improved government, and of the increasing prosperity of the people.” “I have no doubt

¹⁰⁸ Tulaji Raje Bhosle Naoroji, 21 September 1897, *ibid.*, B-128.

¹⁰⁹ Maharana Shri Buldevji Naraindevji to Naoroji, 14 July 1892, *ibid.*, uncataloged item.

¹¹⁰ Dadabhai Naoroji, “The Hon. Dadabhai Naoroji at the Town Hall,” in *Addresses and Writings (on Indian Politics) of the Hon'ble Dadabhai Naoroji*, ed. Chunilal Lallubhai Parekh (Bombay: Caxton Printing Works, 1887), 313–14.

that Native States will go on rapidly increasing in prosperity as their system of government goes on improving,” he declared. “I know from my own personal knowledge as Prime Minister of Baroda for one year that that State has a very promising future indeed.” Without a significant drain of wealth, states like Baroda, Bhavnagar, and Gondal were building their own railways—largely with their own capital and labor, unlike neighboring territories under Calcutta’s thumb—while Gwalior was lending large sums of money to the Indian government. “Will this ever be in British India under the present policy?” Naoroji asked rhetorically. “No.”¹¹¹ Princely states, therefore, continued to figure prominently in Naoroji’s campaign for Indian political reform—and these states exercised the imaginations of other early nationalists, too. As Hormusjee Ardeseer Wadya declared to the ex-diwan of Baroda, “there is no cause better calculated to secure India’s national regeneration in her present circumstances than the ensured wellbeing and independent progress of our Native States.”¹¹²

V. Conclusion

Exactly two decades elapsed between when Dadabhai Naoroji introduced the drain theory in “England’s Duties to India” and when he wrote about the wealth of princely states in the *Contemporary Review*. These twenty years represented a period of staggering intellectual activity for Naoroji, something that had a deep and lasting impact on early Indian nationalism. As we have seen, Naoroji’s economic writings from this

¹¹¹ Naoroji, “Sir M.E. Grant Duff’s Views about India,” 566, 573, 577–8, 572.

¹¹² Like Naoroji, Wadya remained a strong advocate of princely states’ interests in spite of his Baroda experience. As a barrister based in Rajkot, Wadya assisted in legal and political matters involving Palitana, Wankaner, and other states in Kathiawar. Kazi Shahabudin also continued his political services to princely states, serving as diwan of Baroda after Malharrao’s deposition. Hormusjee Ardeseer Wadya to Naoroji, 3 November 1894, NAI, DNP, W-12 (9).

period had strong political motivations. These writings were, after all, polemical in nature, as Bipan Chandra had suspected. By calculating the extent of India's impoverishment, Naoroji significantly destabilized a key ideological justification of imperialism: that British rule brought stability, development, and prosperity to India. Furthermore, by attacking government statistics and exposing faulty methods of calculation, he put Anglo-Indians on the defensive, forcing many of them to acknowledge India's devastated economic landscape. Naoroji's detailed economic analysis and formulation of the drain theory—demonstrating the depletion of Indian capital; revealing the abysmally low per capita income of Indians, lower than the cost to sustain a prisoner or migrant coolie; and explaining the death of millions from mass famine—gave teeth to the argument that British policy in India was “evil” in nature. This was a landmark moment in the development of anti-imperialist thought. Colonized subjects, after all, had rarely dared to publicly condemn their rulers in such a direct manner, and Robert Phayre's behavior in Baroda stands as a testament to how Naoroji's outspokenness rankled particular officials. The political corollary to the drain theory, meanwhile, provided a solution to India's woes, establishing a firm relationship between the progressive Indianization of the civil service and the country's prosperity. Simultaneously, Naoroji looked to Indian princely states—buffered from the drain—for validation of his political and economic ideas.

Naoroji has hitherto been seen as a founding father and leading figure of an explicitly economic form of nationalism. However, an analysis of his views on poverty, the drain, and princely states shows that this is a somewhat naïve assumption. There was no clear dichotomy between economic nationalism and its political variant; rather,

political and economic arguments were deeply embedded in one another during the early nationalist era. Naoroji and his peers did not address Indian poverty and the Indian civil service as separate issues: they saw both as integral components of a single, unified demand for fundamental political reform, which Naoroji eventually conceptualized as *swaraj*. Thus, we can perceive a logical progression of thought from Naoroji's early activism for admitting Indians to the civil service, to his enunciation of the drain theory, and through his diwanship in Baroda.

Several historians have called for a new history of economic ideas in South Asia—one that breaks out of the traditional narrative of *swadeshi* nationalism, advocacy of protectionism, rejection of industrialization, and the eventual imposition of inwardly-directed economic policies; and one that takes into account transnational influences.¹¹³ Analysis of Naoroji's thought and activities, from the late 1860s through the late 1880s, helps us achieve this goal, shining light on a remarkably creative period of early Indian nationalism that went far beyond academic discussion of economic issues. Even within the lecture hall, we can detect the influence of diverse strains of thought. Naoroji forged his economic and political views in response to the earlier writings of Indians and Britons. He wrestled with the criticisms and counter-arguments of Anglo-Indians such as James Mackenzie Maclean, Juland Danvers, James Caird, and Mountstuart Elphinstone Grant-Duff—and he refuted their arguments through comparisons with the United States. While speaking on the drain, Naoroji made liberal reference to the ideas of John Stuart

¹¹³ Sugata Bose, "Pondering Poverty, Fighting Famines: Toward a New History of Economic Ideas," in *Arguments for a Better World: Essays in Honor of Amartya Sen*, ed. Kaushik Basu and Ravi Kanbur, vol. II (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 435; C.A. Bayly, "Afterword," *Modern Intellectual History* 4 (2007): 163–69.

Mill. Finally, while we have no direct evidence, it is quite likely that Naoroji encountered the writings of Friedrich List and Karl Marx, as their ideas bore many similarities.

In June 1879, Naoroji, back in London, penned a short letter to his son, Ardeshir. “Much agitation and a greater interest has now arisen here in Indian matters,” he mentioned, “and it seems as if the labour of my life is now bearing fruit.”¹¹⁴ Consequently, Naoroji contemplated winding up his firm in the City and retiring to Bombay in order to continue writing and speaking about Indian poverty.¹¹⁵ But events were pulling him in another direction. As Naoroji spoke more about political reform for India, he was drawn further into the political landscape of mid-Victorian Great Britain. And he quickly developed friendships with politicians whose interests and responsibilities were not just limited to subcontinental affairs. One such politician was Henry M. Hyndman (1842-1921), the so-called Father of British Socialism. In the late summer of 1878, Hyndman came across “Poverty of India,” in pamphlet form, at King’s parliamentary bookseller in Westminster.¹¹⁶ He drew heavily upon Naoroji’s work, especially the drain theory, in his *Nineteenth Century* article, “The Bankruptcy of India,” and by the end of August the two men were in correspondence, with Naoroji sharing his

¹¹⁴ Dadabhai Naoroji to Ardeshir Naoroji, 13 June 1879, NAI, DNP, Part I, 52 (1879).

¹¹⁵ In connection to Ardeshir’s impeding marriage, Naoroji wrote, “You know that I had only 3 ideas in my mind for the remainder of my life. Of these one I now give up as not within the bounds of possibility. I mean my desire to pay my moral debts of my failure of 1866. I have not enough at present to pay even my present debts, much less can I hope to pay the old ones. The other two ideas or desires, are as you are well aware, my children’s happiness and a remedy for India’s poverty.” Dadabhai Naoroji & Co. was closed in 1881, and Naoroji sailed back to Bombay, intending to spend the remainder of his life back in India. Dadabhai Naoroji to Ardeshir Naoroji, 21 February 1879, *ibid.*, Part I, 13 (1879).

¹¹⁶ Hyndman reminisced in 1901: “I undertook to write my first article for the *Nineteenth Century* & just when I had completed it was lucky enough to tumble across your pamphlet at King’s the Parliamentary Bookseller. Later came our acquaintance wh: has now gone on steadily for so many years.” *Sic.* Henry M. Hyndman to Naoroji, 12 September 1901, *ibid.*, H-221 (98).

figures and economic calculations.¹¹⁷ Through the 1880s, Hyndman's views and concerns largely paralleled those of Naoroji: he chalked up the drain of wealth to the preponderance of Britons in the civil service and believed that princely states were wealthier than British India.¹¹⁸ They fought off the same adversaries and introduced one another to political allies: in 1881, for example, Hyndman informed Karl Marx that "I want you very much to meet Mr Dadabhai Naoroji to whom I am much indebted for facts and ideas about India."¹¹⁹ As Naoroji's criticism of British policy became bolder, so did Hyndman's. By 1884, as Naoroji labeled foreign rule a "curse" and spoke of the eventuality of Indian self-government, Hyndman charged that British rule in India was "the coldest and the cruellest economic tyranny which has been seen since the days of ancient Rome."¹²⁰ The Anglo-Indian press was quick to pick up on their collaboration. The *Pioneer*, for example, identified Naoroji as "the inspirer of the pessimistic articles on the 'Bankruptcy of India,' which the Socialist, Mr. H.M. Hyndman, wrote for the *Nineteenth Century*."¹²¹

Friends like Hyndman helped Naoroji take the second major step in his political career: engaging Parliament and the British electorate on the topic of Indian reform. The father of British socialism counseled Naoroji on Westminster's pivotal importance in crafting policy for the Indian empire. But this was something that Naoroji already well

¹¹⁷ Hyndman to Naoroji, 30 September 1878, *ibid.*, H-221 (1).

¹¹⁸ Hyndman to Naoroji, 25 April 1880, *ibid.*, H-221 (3).

¹¹⁹ Marcus Morris, "From Anti-Colonialism to Anti-Imperialism: The Evolution of H.M. Hyndman's Critique of Empire, c.1875-1905," *Historical Research* 87, no. 236 (May 2014): 293–314.

¹²⁰ Quoted in Gregory Claeys, *Imperial Sceptics: British Critics of Empire, 1850-1920* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010), 114.

¹²¹ "A Parsi Candidate for Parliament," *Pioneer*, 7 June 1886.

understood. “We must remember that *all* the great principles of Indian administration must be ultimately decided in England,” he informed the Bombay Branch of the East India Association in 1872. “The fountain-head of power is in England, and there only have all Indian interests their ultimate fate.”¹²² Thus began, as the next chapter will detail, Naoroji’s engagement with Parliament, where he sought to take discussion of Indian poverty and political reform to the floor of the House of Commons—as an MP.

¹²² “Bombay Branch of the East India Association,” 244, 245.

Turning Toward Westminster

Network and Coalition-Building During and After the Holborn Campaign of 1886

I. Introduction

Why would an Indian want to stand for the British Parliament, and how could he expect any chance of election? These were questions that vexed many of Dadabhai Naoroji's friends and well-wishers as he made plans to sail to London in early 1886. And they have continued to intrigue writers and scholars up to the present. For R.P. Masani, writing in 1939, the answer lay in Naoroji's supposedly abiding faith in British justice; that the British people, once convinced of the injustice of their government's policy toward India, would not fail to make amends. Naoroji was to take up the mantle of "educating the British public," and this public would naturally carry him into the House of Commons.¹ Writing six decades later, Jonathan Schneer argues that Naoroji and several fellow Indians contested Parliament as part of a "search for respect and respectability." They waged their electoral campaigns in the hope of establishing that "Indians *deserved* to be treated by the Britons as equals."² In a more recent work,

¹ Rustom Pestonji Masani, *Dadabhai Naoroji: The Grand Old Man of India* (London: G. Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1939), 56–7, 97, 98.

² Jonathan Schneer, *London 1900: The Imperial Metropolis* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 196.

Sukanya Banerjee has instead put forth the idea of “imperial citizenship.” An Indian subject like Naoroji, she asserts, knocked on Westminster’s door with the “liberal premise of citizenship that presented itself as a viable mode of self-presentation by racialized colonial subjects well before the envisaging of an autonomous nation-state.”³

It is true that Naoroji often proclaimed his faith in a uniquely British sense of justice. Yet, most of these exhortations were made specifically for British audiences or the British reading public, suggesting that they were employed, at least in part, as a rhetorical tactic. And Naoroji was not so naïve as to trust that the supposed magnanimity of Britons would win him a seat in the Commons. It is certainly true that Naoroji and other early nationalists were eager to gain a modicum of respect from their often-racist colonial masters. Considered as equals, they had a stronger case to make for the Indianization of the civil service and representative reforms. However, as indicated by Naoroji’s detailed investigation of Indian poverty, respect was definitely not his primary concern, and it had little utility when millions continued to starve to death from chronic famine. Finally, it is tempting to see Naoroji’s parliamentary campaigns as part of a demand for imperial citizenship. After all, he occasionally classified political reforms as “our birthright as British subjects.”⁴ Imperial citizenship, nevertheless, is a difficult concept to define, and presumes that subjects understood the empire in the same way as the rulers. For Naoroji and many early nationalists, furthermore, declarations of British subjecthood in no way precluded their vision of India as a nation.

³ Sukanya Banerjee, *Becoming Imperial Citizens: Indians in the Late-Victorian Empire* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 5.

⁴ Dadabhai Naoroji to Samuel Smith, 13 June 1886, NAI, DNP, N-1 (580).

So why, then, did Dadabhai Naoroji decide to stand for Parliament? Why, after having closely engaged with princely states in the 1870s, and after having broached the topic of Indian self-government in the early 1880s, did he decide to leave all this behind and sail away to London? What explains this second phase in his political career? For answers, we must consider the newly established Indian National Congress. Buoyed by the relative liberality of Lord Ripon's rule, and encouraged by his support for "local self-government," political leaders across the subcontinent scrambled to coordinate their activities. Surendranath Banerjea (1848-1925) had played an early role in this process, especially through the Calcutta-based Indian Association.⁵ By the final months of Ripon's viceroyalty, however, momentum had passed onto an energetic Scotsman, Allan Octavian Hume (1829-1912), and the locus of activity had shifted westward to Bombay. Hume spent the winter of 1884-85 in the city, where he, Naoroji, and other western Indian leaders began constructing the foundations of "a National Indian Association" to articulate political demands.⁶ With a formal organization, Naoroji would have a solid platform for amplifying his calls for the Indianization of the bureaucracy and fleshing out his ideas about the eventuality of self-government.

But there was a significant obstacle. In spite of Ripon having briefly raised some hopes, Indian nationalists remained deeply skeptical about their ability to wrest any concessions from the government of India. The preserve of some of the most reactionary and racist Anglo-Indians, the colonial bureaucracy saw no need to reform its authoritarian

⁵ See chapter five in S.R. Mehrotra, *The Emergence of the Indian National Congress* (Delhi: Vikas Publications, 1971).

⁶ *Ibid.*, 382-4.

ways. It brooked no opposition, and leaders from across the subcontinent understood this all too well. From Madras, M. Viraraghavachariar, co-founder of the *Hindu*, declared that, “I do not think that our Viceroys and Governors can do anything for India so long as they are surrounded by that wretched civil service whose sole aim is self aggrandizement.”⁷ From Bombay, Dinsha Wacha sensed the grave threat to India posed by Anglo-Indian officialdom. “They are forging stronger iron chains for us so that we may not be able to unfetter ourselves for the next century to come.”⁸ Naoroji agreed with these sentiments. “The authorities in India can never be expected to desire to move in that direction [toward reform],” he stated. “On the contrary they would do all to thwart.”⁹

The prospects for achieving reform within India, therefore, appeared grim. For this reason, the founding generation of the Congress looked for alternative paths. The best path seemed to lie through Westminster. Parliament, after all, possessed authority over the government of India, and it had the right to modify Indian policy. Within the Commons, there were several MPs, like John Bright, who had long track records of speaking in favor of Indian reform. Furthermore, going to Parliament was not a new idea. Under Company rule, Indians had taken their disputes to both houses, occasionally winning their cases while rattling the nerves of directors sitting in East India House. Many Indians, including Rammohun Roy, had pressed the case for Indian parliamentary representation. Naoroji already possessed a long resume of petitions addressed to

⁷ M. Viraraghavachariar to Naoroji, 29 February 1888, NAI, DNP, C-113.

⁸ R.P. Patwardhan, ed., *Dadabhai Naoroji Correspondence*, vol. II, part I (New Delhi: Allied, 1977), 30.

⁹ Naoroji to William Wedderburn, 20 August 1886, NAI, DNP, N-1 (633).

Parliament and testimony given before its committees. Importantly, since the late 1860s, he had also worked behind the scenes to advocate Indian interests in the Commons, operating through sitting British MPs who agreed to be a “Member for India.” Thus, for the Congress, Parliament was a weapon of the weak, but it was nevertheless a weapon that had yielded some modest results in the past. Here lay the most promising hope for pursuing the new body’s agenda. It was for this reason that, in the months prior to the formal establishment of the Congress in December 1885, Hume based himself in London, holding a marathon series of meetings with MPs, Liberal Party officials, and members of the press in order to drum up support for the association.¹⁰

Naoroji’s decision to stand for Parliament, therefore, was absolutely in keeping with the early policy of the Congress. Moreover, his first-ever campaign, waged in Holborn during June and July 1886, was very much a Congress endeavor. The organization played an indispensable role in giving Naoroji a fighting chance to win election. Members of the Congress coordinated support from India and provided Naoroji with vital contacts in Great Britain. In fact, being Indian actually *helped* Naoroji during his early electoral work: he capitalized on the many personal and professional connections with India that these contacts possessed, winning influential allies and making inroads into the Liberal Party establishment. With these new allies, the prospective candidate began constructing broad-ranging networks across the British political sphere, securing support from various constituencies. Both during and after his

¹⁰ For more on Hume’s meetings with prominent Liberals, see Mehrotra, *The Emergence of the Indian National Congress*, 402–3.

unsuccessful attempt at Holborn, Naoroji made special effort to reach out to progressive movements. He struggled to interest socialists, workingmen, and even suffragists in the need for political reform in India, hoping to win allies while also broadcasting his political agenda among a public unfamiliar with affairs in their largest colony. Support from these constituencies, in turn, helped bolster the standing and public recognition of the Congress.

But the constituency that Naoroji courted with the greatest zeal was the Irish. During the 1880s, Irish home rule—specifically, the creation of a separate parliament in Dublin—dominated British headlines, especially after William Gladstone in 1885 indicated his intention to bring a home rule bill before Parliament. In seeking alliances with the Irish, Naoroji was once more treading upon familiar ground. A handful of scholars have investigated the deep links that existed between Irish and Indian political activists.¹¹ “Probably no other country in the world has exercised greater influence on the course of Indian nationalism, both as an example and as a warning, than Ireland,” notes S.R. Mehrotra.¹² Naoroji’s activities in the 1880s indicate the sheer breadth of Indian nationalist interest in England’s oldest colony. Irish leaders had, similarly, been intrigued by the commonalities experienced under British rule: famine, worsening poverty, and

¹¹ See Howard Brasted, “Indian Nationalist Development and the Influence of Irish Home Rule, 1870–1886,” *Modern Asian Studies* 14, no. 1 (1980): 37–63; Mary Cumpston, “Some Early Indian Nationalists and Their Allies in the British Parliament, 1851-1906,” *English Historical Review* 76 (April 1961): 279–97; Carla King, “Michael Davitt, Irish Nationalism and the British Empire in the Late Nineteenth Century,” in *Victoria’s Ireland? Irishness and Britishness, 1837-1901*, ed. Peter Gray (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2004), 116–30; Jennifer Regan-Lefebvre, *Cosmopolitan Nationalism in the Victorian Empire: Ireland, India and the Politics of Alfred Webb* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); Michael Silvestri, *Ireland and India: Nationalism, Empire and Memory* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

¹² *The Emergence of the Indian National Congress*, 324.

authoritarian governance. These were commonalities that Naoroji now foregrounded on the campaign trail in order to declare himself an ardent Irish home ruler. Thus, in the second phase of Naoroji's political career, we witness a curious development in his thought and strategy. He temporarily abandoned conceptualization of Indian self-government in order to champion home rule for Ireland. It was a tactical move that, in the long run, increased Naoroji's chances of returning to Indian matters as a sitting MP.

II. The Idea of Indian MPs: Campaigning for Indian Representation in Parliament

Indian interest in the British Parliament—and the interest of some Britons in seeing a few Indian representatives sitting in the House of Commons—had a long history. It developed well before Lalmohan Ghosh (1849-1909), a Calcutta barrister and member of that city's Indian Association, became the first-ever Indian to stand for Parliament,¹³ standing as a Liberal from Deptford in 1885. The idea of parliamentary representation for the subcontinent was, fundamentally, part of a long tradition of Indian engagement with Westminster in order to modify and influence policy. Michael Fisher notes how Indians, by the early nineteenth century, had become adept at using Parliament as a lever in their favor in disputes with the East India Company.¹⁴ They were quick in appreciating the

¹³ Of course, as Michael Fisher points out, David Ochterlony Dyce Sombre (1808-1851), a Eurasian and the foster-child of Begum Sombre of Sardhana state, was technically the first Indian to sit in Parliament, in 1841, and thus technically the first Indian to contest a seat. See Michael H. Fisher, *The Inordinately Strange Life of Dyce Sombre: Victorian Anglo-Indian MP and a "Chancery Lunatic"* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010).

¹⁴ Indians, Fisher notes, regularly traveled to Great Britain "expressly to bypass British colonial controls and advocate their own cases to the higher authorities there." Aside from Parliament, Indians appealed to law courts and the directors and stockholders of the Company. *Counterflows to Colonialism: Indian Travellers and Settlers in Britain, 1600-1857* (Delhi: Permanent Black, 2004), 15.

value of petitions, memorials, and occasional visits to the imperial metropole in order to make up for the deficit of political power at home.

As early as 1781, an Indian—Humund Rao or Hanumantrao, a representative of the deposed Maratha *peshwa*, Ragnath Rao—gave evidence before a select parliamentary committee. Edmund Burke lent assistance to Humund Rao and his two fellow agents in their attempts to recruit military support from the Company.¹⁵ During the early 1820s, Cursetjee Manockjee—the father of Manockjee Cursetjee, one of Naoroji's allies in promoting female education in the Parsi community in the 1850s and 1860s—took his commercial dispute with the Company to both houses of Parliament, arguing that the Company's trade monopoly infringed on his rights as a British subject. As C.A. Bayly notes in relation to Cursetjee's case, "The debate about rights among the first generation of Indian liberals occurred as concepts appropriated from Locke, Smith and Bentham became current in newspaper discourse in the subcontinent."¹⁶ This discourse was also animated by discussion of persistent racial and religious discrimination in government institutions. A few years later, in 1828, Rammohun Roy dispatched petitions to both houses of Parliament protesting the Company's intention to restrict membership in grand juries only to Christians, a matter that he vigilantly pursued in Westminster after sailing to Great Britain in 1830. Recognizing the broad public significance of his agitation

¹⁵ Rozina Visram, *Asians in Britain: 400 Years of History* (London: Pluto Press, 2002), 33–4.

¹⁶ *Recovering Liberties: Indian Thought in the Age of Liberalism and Empire* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 83–4.

against the jury act, Prasanna Kumar Tagore hailed Rammohun as India's unofficial MP.¹⁷

Such pronouncements hinted at an important development in modern Indian political thought: the belief that Indians' rights as British subjects extended to representation at the highest levels. This was a step beyond the rights of property and trade invoked by individuals such as Cursetjee Manockjee. Shut out of government affairs in their own country, Indians could maneuver around the Company administration and aspire to something as lofty as a parliamentary seat, from where they could exercise influence over policy in a much more direct and effective manner. As Lynn Zastoupil has detailed, elites in both Calcutta and London fostered hopes that Rammohun—whose period of residence in Great Britain coincided with the failure of a parliamentary franchise reform act in 1831 and the passing of the Reform Act of 1832—would contest a seat in the Commons. Amid the clamor and debate over widening the franchise, Joseph Hume and Robert Montgomery Martin argued in favor of imperial representation in Parliament, including representation for India. Hume's colleague in the reformist Parliamentary Candidate Society, Jeremy Bentham, proposed Rammohun as an MP for India who would sit alongside “a half caste, and a negro” in order to lend some voice to British imperial subjects and “subdue the prejudices of colour.” The idea of an Indian MP, therefore, fit in with movements in Britain for parliamentary reform, popular representation, and early experiments with conceptualizing an imperial federation,

¹⁷ Lynn Zastoupil, *Rammohun Roy and the Making of Victorian Britain* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 127.

although India always sat at the very margins in such schemes. Rammohun, for his part, was apparently ready to take a seat in the House for a few months so as to “pave the way for his countrymen.”¹⁸

Rammohun’s death in 1833 robbed India of any chances of claiming a pre-Victorian parliamentary candidate, although his close friend, Dwarkanath Tagore, kept the subject alive by debating the merits of Indian MPs with William Gladstone in the 1840s.¹⁹ It is quite likely that Rammohun played an indirect role in influencing Bombay’s growing interest in Parliament: long after his death, the city’s newspapers continued to discuss the Raja’s ideas and political activities. In 1848, Gopal Hari Deshmukh or Lokahitawadi—one of Naoroji’s contemporaries and a fellow social reformer—wrote in favor of Indian MPs in a Marathi newspaper.²⁰ These ideas filtered down into Young Bombay. In early 1852, the Young Bombay clique of the Bombay Association—which might have included Naoroji—made a list of sweeping demands for political reform, which included “admission of representatives into the British Parliament” alongside the Indianization of the civil service, reform of the revenue system, the creation of municipal corporations, and mass education.²¹ Thus, parliamentary representation began to be popularly discussed in the subcontinent, a component of a broad reformist agenda forged by a new generation of educated Indians.

¹⁸ Ibid., 127–8, 151–2.

¹⁹ Ibid., 162.

²⁰ Richard Philip Tucker, *Ranade and the Roots of Indian Nationalism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972), 75.

²¹ Manockjee Cursetjee, *A Few Passing Ideas for the Benefit of India and Indians* (Bombay: Bombay Education Society’s Press, 1853), 3–4.

While Indian interest in parliamentary affairs naturally increased after the assumption of crown rule in 1858, public discussion of Indian parliamentary representation tapered off, perhaps on account of overabundant caution following the Mutiny-Rebellion. It was Naoroji who eventually revived the conversation. In his “England’s Duties to India,” read before the East India Association in May 1867, Naoroji neatly tied together the idea of Indian parliamentary representation with the inability of Indians to take part in or influence their own government. He then linked these issues to broader questions brought up earlier by Cursetjee Manockjee, Martin, Hume, and Bentham: the supposed rights of British subjects, the expansion of the franchise, and representation of other imperial domains in Parliament. Naoroji framed these questions from the standpoint of the Indian taxpayer, underscoring the fundamental injustice of the current system:

There is again the almost total exclusion of the natives from a share and voice in the administration of their own country. Under former rulers there was every career open for the talented. For the voice of a few small boroughs Parliament has been wrangling for years, while the Indian budget of over 40 millions is voted before scarcely a dozen honourable members, and without a single voice to represent the millions who pay taxes. Why should not 200 millions of your fellow-subjects who contribute so largely to your wealth and prosperity, and who form an integral part of the British empire, have a few representatives in the Imperial Parliament to give their voice on imperial questions?²²

Although Naoroji's proposal mustered little response from his British audience, it continued to be pressed forward by an increasing number of Indians involved in political activities in Britain. Naoroji's East India Association in London served as an important

²² Dadabhai Naoroji, “England’s Duties to India,” in *Essays, Speeches, Addresses and Writings (on Indian Politics) of the Hon’ble Dadabhai Naoroji*, ed. Chunilal Lallubhai Parekh (Bombay: Caxton Printing Works, 1887), 31.

forum for debate on parliamentary representation, which took place in the context of broader discussion on whether Indians could enjoy the same political rights and freedoms as their colonial rulers. For example, two months after Naoroji read “England’s Duties to India,” W.C. Bonnerjee (1844-1906) took to the Association’s lectern and delivered a remarkable speech calling for the immediate institution of representative institutions for his countrymen. Invoking Mazzini and rubbishing the claims of Macaulay and John Stuart Mill that Indians were unfit for liberal government, Bonnerjee declared the “common people of India” to be as intelligent as the average Briton and held up *panchayats*—institutions of “self-government *par excellence*”—as an example of how Indians had long enjoyed a modicum of democracy at the village level.²³ While several British members expressed incredulousness about the young Bengali barrister’s ideas and attempted to cut off further discussion, Bonnerjee’s speech evoked a chorus of support from Naoroji, Navrozji Fardunji, and two other young lawyers in the audience, Pherozeshah Mehta and Badruddin Tyabji. Significantly, a former Irish MP, Thomas Chisholm Anstey, a champion of Irish Catholic interests and a supporter of Daniel O’Connell, also rose in the chamber to voice his support for Bonnerjee’s proposal. “There is no nation unfit for free institutions,” Anstey declared, recalling that he had, decades beforehand, “stood almost alone in the House of Commons” in advocating representative government in British India.²⁴

²³ Bonnerjee also referenced Henry Maine’s writings on panchayats. “Representative Government for India,” *Journal of the East India Association* 1 (1867): 85, 82, 86, 84.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 90, 91.

Having made the case for representative institutions in the colony, members of the East India Association returned to Naoroji's proposal for seating Indian MPs in Westminster. In early 1874, a five-member committee—including Navrozji Fardunji, John Dickinson, and Edward B. Eastwick, a Conservative MP and former member of the Bombay civil service—began hammering out a petition to the Commons on the subject. The petition revealed the extent to which the idea of Indian parliamentary representation was evolving: in addition to invoking earlier British liberal thinkers, committee members looked to models of imperial governance in other European empires and referenced recent technological advances that made Indian representation increasingly feasible. Navrozji and his colleagues enumerated advocates of Indian representation such as Joseph Hume and Edward Creasy, a historian and former chief justice of Ceylon, and even claimed Adam Smith as a supporter of sending Indians to Parliament. Eight seats in the Commons, they felt, would be sufficient: two members each for Calcutta, Madras, and Bombay, and one each to the North-West Provinces and Punjab. In this sense, Indian subjects would enjoy similar rights of representation to those of other colonized people in the French, Spanish, and Portuguese empires. Committee members noted that the French National Assembly included fifteen colonial representatives, including one from France's Indian possessions, while colonial representatives also sat in the *cortes* in Madrid and Lisbon.²⁵ The glaring absence of similar representation for an empire as large as British India was, in contrast, "calculated to increase the dissatisfaction which is undoubtedly felt

²⁵ It is quite likely that Navrozji was aware of the election of Bernardo Peres da Silva, a Goan, to the Portuguese Cortes in 1826, at the very end of the liberal revolution in Portugal.

by our own fellow-subjects there.” Recent inventions, furthermore, had removed obstacles that stood in the way of calling Indian MPs to sit in the Commons. Steamships and the Suez Canal reduced travel time between India and Britain to three weeks while the telegraph facilitated rapid correspondence between London and India’s major urban centers. With speedier transportation and communication, “a representative of India would be practically in a better position, so far as regards contiguity to those who elected him, than were the representatives of the more distant parts of Scotland and of Ireland at the beginning of the present century.”²⁶

The East India Association’s petition excited interest in the subcontinent. Contacts in Bombay and Calcutta eagerly telegraphed their support to Dickinson while the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha dispatched a further petition to Westminster, signed by over 21,000 individuals in the Deccan, demanding eighteen Indian seats.²⁷ Unfortunately, the Association’s petition never made it to Parliament. In spite of Navrozji’s strong advocacy, other members of the Association found the proposal too “revolutionary” and,

²⁶ Minute book entry, 11 March 1874, BL, IOR, East India Association Papers, MSS Eur F 147/27. The argument is remarkably similar to those made around the same time in favor of parliamentary representation for Canada. Ged Martin, “Empire Federalism and Imperial Parliamentary Union, 1820–1870,” *The Historical Journal* 16, no. 1 (1973): 79.

²⁷ The Sabha’s petition made similar reference to colonial representation in the legislative bodies of other European imperial powers. “Your Petitioners are of opinion that a political experiment which has been found to succeed so well in those parts of India which are administered by the French and Portuguese Governments, will not fail in British India, especially when the system of education pursued in British India is admitted to be so much more liberal than what obtains in the French and Portuguese possessions, and the interests at stake are so much more important.” “Petition to Parliament for the Direct Representation of India in the British Legislature,” 21 October 1874, minute book entry, BL, IOR, East India Association Papers, MSS Eur F 147/27. Tucker claims that Ranade might have secured 200,000 signatures for this petition, which appears to be an error. *Ranade and the Roots of Indian Nationalism*, 75–6.

simultaneously, “impracticable” and “utterly hopeless.”²⁸ It was ultimately withdrawn. In debates over creating an imperial federation or a truly imperial Parliament, demands for representation for white settler colonies such as Canada, Australia, and New Zealand took significant precedent over any similar proposals regarding India.

The idea of an Indian MP failed to go away, however. Beginning in the late 1860s, Naoroji, Bonnerjee, and certain British allies increasingly sought out the next best thing: relying on a sitting MP to advocate Indian political demands. The strategy had a clear precedent. In the 1830s, the assembly of Lower Canada hired John Arthur Roebuck, MP for Bath, as its agent; New South Wales later appointed Francis Scott, MP for Roxburghshire, to bring its business before Parliament. While John Bright had long advocated Indian concerns in the Commons, the mantle of “Member for India” eventually fell upon Henry Fawcett (1833-1884), the blind MP for Brighton, a professor of political economy at Cambridge and a radical Liberal. Not surprisingly, given their shared academic interest in economics, Fawcett pursued in the Commons many of the same issues that Naoroji was addressing in public meetings in Britain and India. Fawcett expounded upon the dire poverty of India, called for the Indianization of the civil service, protested against India being burdened with the expenses of imperial military adventures in Abyssinia and Afghanistan, and questioned the India Office’s free reliance on the Indian exchequer for numerous dubious purposes.²⁹

²⁸ Minute book entry, 11 March 1874, BL, IOR, East India Association Papers, MSS Eur F 147/27.

²⁹ In 1867, for example, he caused significant embarrassment to the Conservative ministry by asking repeatedly why the “toiling peasant” in India was being required to pay for a lavish ball held in London for the sultan of Muscat. Leslie Stephen, *Life of Henry Fawcett*, 3rd ed. (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1886), 343–4.

Naoroji worked closely with Fawcett on two critical matters. First, in 1868, Fawcett introduced a resolution into the Commons on simultaneous civil service examinations, which he subsequently continued to bring up every year. Secondly, he called for the formation of a select committee of Parliament to inquire into Indian financial issues, which sat in the early 1870s but was finally dissolved before it could issue a report (Naoroji's "Poverty of India" was originally a submission to this committee). For his steadfast advocacy of Indian interests, Fawcett enjoyed great popularity in India. When the "Member for India" lost his actual seat in Brighton in 1874, public associations in India raised £400 for Fawcett to use in contesting another constituency.³⁰ Several years after Fawcett's death in 1884, Bonnerjee, working with Eardley Norton, an Anglo-Indian lawyer from Madras and a member of the Congress, recruited Charles Bradlaugh as the new "Member for India."³¹ Bradlaugh was a leading radical figure who, as a declared atheist, courted controversy in Victorian society. Indian

³⁰ Ibid., 385.

³¹ Opinion in India was divided over Bradlaugh. Wacha was an enthusiastic supporter. "I repeat my former conviction that for hard logic and thrusting nails home Bradlaugh is our man," he wrote to Naoroji in July 1887. "He will extort blood from stone." Malabari was much more circumspect. In October 1888, he questioned Naoroji about "yr alliance with Mr Bradlaugh. It may be that I do not understand Mr Bradlaugh. But his views, so far as I know, may prove a blight upon our shallow pated patriotism of school and college. This alliance has fairly dismayed several of our friends but we had better leave it to be vindicated by time. I dare say you have thought well before accepting or courting it—in such matters you shd use yr unaided judgment in spite of what the caucus may dictate." Naoroji's response indicated that he also had some reservations. "The alliance with Mr Bradlaugh became a necessity," he wrote. "It was Mr Bonnerjee and Mr Norton who were endeavoring to get some M.P. to take up Indian questions vigorously and continually. They could not get any better man to undertake this, and they selected him." There are no details about why some individuals were opposed to Bradlaugh, although it is likely that his professed atheism was one reason. Patwardhan, *Dadabhai Naoroji Correspondence*, II, part I: 17; Behramji M. Malabari to Naoroji, 5 October 1888, NAI, DNP, M-32 (90); Naoroji to Malabari, 25 October 1888, *ibid.*, N-1 (1255).

political leaders, therefore, continued to find friends amongst some of the most advanced radicals in Parliament.

One sympathetic advocate in the Commons was, of course, hardly enough. Beginning with the general election of 1880, Indian political leaders borrowed an Irish nationalist tactic and attempted to influence the way that British electors voted. While the Indian Association of Calcutta and the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha distributed appeals to the electorate in the United Kingdom, others in Calcutta and Bombay collected a further Rs. 9,000 to go towards Fawcett's reelection campaign. The Indian Association sent Lalmohan Ghosh, renowned as a particularly powerful orator, to Great Britain in order to lecture on behalf of India's interests and, most significantly, to stand for Parliament.³² Indian political associations stepped up their efforts for the next general election, held in 1885. Once more, Ghosh was at the fore and secured the Liberal candidacy in Deptford, a working class and Irish constituency created by the Third Reform Act of 1884. In India, meanwhile, political associations busied themselves with two tasks: raising campaign funds for Ghosh and William Digby—who, through his pamphleteering, sought to make India a major electoral issue—and, secondly, lobbying voters. Three Indians—Narayan G. Chandavarkar from the Bombay Presidency Association, S.R. Mudaliar of the Madras Mahajana Sabha, and Manmohan Ghosh representing the Indian Union of Calcutta—embarked on a speaking tour across Britain.

As S.R. Mehrotra notes, the “most controversial step” taken during the election was the decision of the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha and Bombay Presidency Association to

³² Mehrotra, *The Emergence of the Indian National Congress*, 296.

publicly support and oppose particular candidates for Parliament.³³ Naoroji, not surprisingly, was closely involved in this task. In late September 1885, he maneuvered the Bombay Presidency Association to endorse eight Liberal candidates beyond Ghosh and Digby—including Lord Hartington, John Bright, John Slagg, and Wilfrid Scawen Blunt—and oppose Richard Temple, Lewis Pelly, and three other Conservatives. In an impassioned speech on the importance of the elections, he singled out the importance of Parliament in achieving Indian reform. “Almost entirely we have to depend upon the people and Parliament of England to make those great reforms which alone can remove the serious evils from which we are suffering,” he declared. “It is in Parliament that our chief battles have to be fought. The election of its members, especially those who profess to speak on Indian matters, requires our earnest attention.”³⁴ As the deliberations of the inaugural Congress session would demonstrate, Naoroji was becoming one of the strongest advocates of an Indian nationalist strategy premised on achieving political reform almost exclusively through Westminster and Whitehall.

Naoroji spoke with feeling on the topic because, by the fall of 1885, he was eagerly awaiting his own opportunity to contest a seat. Only a few years after advocating Indian MPs in his “England’s Duties to India,” Naoroji began to seriously consider his prospects for election to the Commons. In a letter to W. Martin Wood in October 1884, Naoroji revealed that he “had laid a sort of foundation” for a parliamentary run as early as

³³ Ibid., 580–1.

³⁴ Dadabhai Naoroji, “India’s Interest in the General Election (1885),” in *Essays, Speeches, Addresses and Writings (on Indian Politics) of the Hon’ble Dadabhai Naoroji*, ed. Chunilal Lallubhai Parekh (Bombay: Caxton Printing Works, 1887), 292–3.

1872, just before getting caught up in affairs in Baroda. Responding to Wood's encouragement to once more look toward Westminster, he confessed that he did not, at the moment, have sufficient funds for a campaign and that the deliverance of such funds depended on the largesse of a Kathiawadi prince. Naoroji informed Wood that he had "done some work for a Prince," and, although this business had been successfully concluded, "saving both 'Izat' [honor] and money to the Prince," he had not received the promised payment from the *darbar*.³⁵

In a subsequent confidential letter sent to a contact in Rajkot, Gopalji Surbhai Desai, Naoroji revealed that the prince in question was the nawab of Junagadh. "The Junagar Durbar not having fulfilled their promises with me I am unable to carry out my wishes to try to get into Parliament," he complained to Desai in late January 1885.

As far as I am personally concerned I am willing to give my labour and the rest of my active life to the accomplishment of some of [...] the most pressing reforms needed by us. And this can be done only in England and best in Parliament. I have not the necessary means. I can only offer my personal work and those who have means must supply them.

He indicated that a mutual friend, Mansukhram Surajram Tripathi, was corresponding with two other potential princely donors, the rulers of Kutch and Bhavnagar.³⁶ While the Naoroji Papers do not reveal how he eventually procured funds—letters from Desai and Behramji M. Malabari indicate that the darbars of Junagadh and Bhavnagar may have

³⁵ Naoroji provided an idea of how much money he was owed by the darbar and, consequently, the funds he required in order to contest a parliamentary seat: "In my case it is not enough that I should have a couple of thousand pounds for election expenses but I must have the means of living in England while there, and this I have not to spare. Or it would not have been very difficult for me to secure enough for election purposes." Naoroji to W. Martin Wood, 2 October 1884, NAI, DNP, N-1 (180).

³⁶ Naoroji to Gopalji Surbhai Desai, 25 January 1885, RPPM.

eventually come through on their respective obligation and promise—by early April 1885 Naoroji was speaking confidently about returning to Britain.³⁷ Friends in London provided further encouragement. “I should like to see you in this country trying to get into Parliament,” wrote Nasarvanji J. Moolla from his office on Old Broad Street in the City. “They ought to send you here from Bombay instead of that lazy fellow [Lalmohan] Ghose.”³⁸

Naoroji eventually decided against sailing to Britain ahead of the general elections held in November-December of 1885. He was undoubtedly compelled to stay in Bombay due to the imminent first meeting of the Congress—and he probably also wanted to assess how Lalmohan Ghosh fared at the polls. Regardless of these factors, the long history of Indian interest in parliamentary affairs and parliamentary representation demonstrates that Naoroji’s decision to contest a seat in 1886 was hardly taken on the spur of the moment. The idea of Indian parliamentary representation grew out of a long tradition of leveraging Westminster against the East India Company and, later, the India Office. It also gained currency due to Indians’ relative powerlessness in their own country and their assessment that the government of India was unlikely to deliver key reforms. Over time, Indian political leaders and their British allies inserted their campaign within broader debates over imperial parliamentary representation and parliamentary reform, harnessing the language of rights crafted by liberal thinkers ranging from John Locke to Jeremy Bentham. Indians keenly observed the widening of

³⁷ Malabari to Naoroji, 8 April 1885, NAI, DNP, M-32 (54).

³⁸ Nasarvanji J. Moolla to Naoroji, 27 February 1885, RPPM.

the franchise in Britain and, as is demonstrated by Rammohun Roy's contemplated stand after the 1832 Reform Act and Lalmohan Ghosh's campaign following the reforms of 1884, placed great hope in new electors' abilities to sympathize with Indian political concerns. They also looked abroad and considered how other colonies and colonized subjects were represented in the legislative bodies of Britain's imperial rivals.

Naoroji recognized the confluence of these ideas and influences as he exhorted Indians to take active interest in the 1885 elections, although he himself had to observe the election from a great distance. In any case, Naoroji likely felt that he did not have to wait long for the next electoral tussle. With the Liberal prime minister, William Gladstone, intent on introducing his controversial Irish home rule bill before Parliament, Naoroji gambled on the likelihood of a fresh poll. He sailed from Bombay in late March 1886, arriving in London on 12 April amid frigid weather and the "great excitement" caused by the home rule bill, and immediately began reconnecting with old Liberal contacts while dispatching letters of introduction to prospective new allies.³⁹ For the next two months, Naoroji kept a frenetic schedule of meetings, interviews, and dinner appointments with party leaders, journalists, and key public figures. As the next section will detail, his persistent networking helped Naoroji land a nomination from Holborn once new elections were announced in late spring.

³⁹ Naoroji to Wedderburn, 16 April 1886, NAI, DNP, N-1 (533).

III. ‘A Forlorn Hope’: The Holborn Campaign of 1886

“I appeal not only to you, the constituents of Holborn, but to the whole English nation, on the behalf of 250 millions of your fellow subjects—a sixth part of the human race, and the largest portion of the British Empire, before whom you are but as a drop in the ocean; we appeal to you to do us justice, and to allow us a representative in your British Parliament.”

- Naoroji, 27 June 1886, Holborn Town Hall⁴⁰

On the morning of 25 June 1886, hardly ten days before electors in his constituency went to the polls, Naoroji wrote a lengthy letter to William Wedderburn, pronouncing his campaign in Holborn to be “a forlorn hope”—an arduous trial necessary in order to advance his cause. Naoroji was not being unduly pessimistic. Holborn, the congested warren of streets sandwiched between the Strand and Bloomsbury in central London, was difficult territory for a Liberal candidate (Image 4). Its electors—a mix of non-resident shopkeepers, lawyers from Lincoln’s Inn and Chancery Lane, wealthy homeowners clustered around Russell Square, and less fortunate individuals huddled in the tenements of St. Giles—were overwhelmingly Conservative.⁴¹ Moreover, as Naoroji readily admitted, the incumbent MP, Francis Duncan, was a “popular man,” having won by a comfortable margin in the previous general election. Naoroji, in contrast, was an unfamiliar character in Holborn. “The great difficult I have to contend with,” he informed Wedderburn, was that “‘we don’t know you, we cannot experiment at present,’ is the reply I get” from electors.⁴²

⁴⁰ Dadabhai Naoroji, “The Hon. Dadabhai Naoroji’s Great Speech,” in *Essays, Speeches, Addresses and Writings (on Indian Politics) of the Hon’ble Dadabhai Naoroji*, ed. Chunilal Lallubhai Parekh (Bombay: Caxton Printing Works, 1887), 309–10.

⁴¹ Henry Pelling, *Social Geography of British Elections, 1885-1910*. (London: Macmillan, 1967), 35.

⁴² Naoroji to Wedderburn, 25 June 1886, NAI, DNP, N-1 (600).

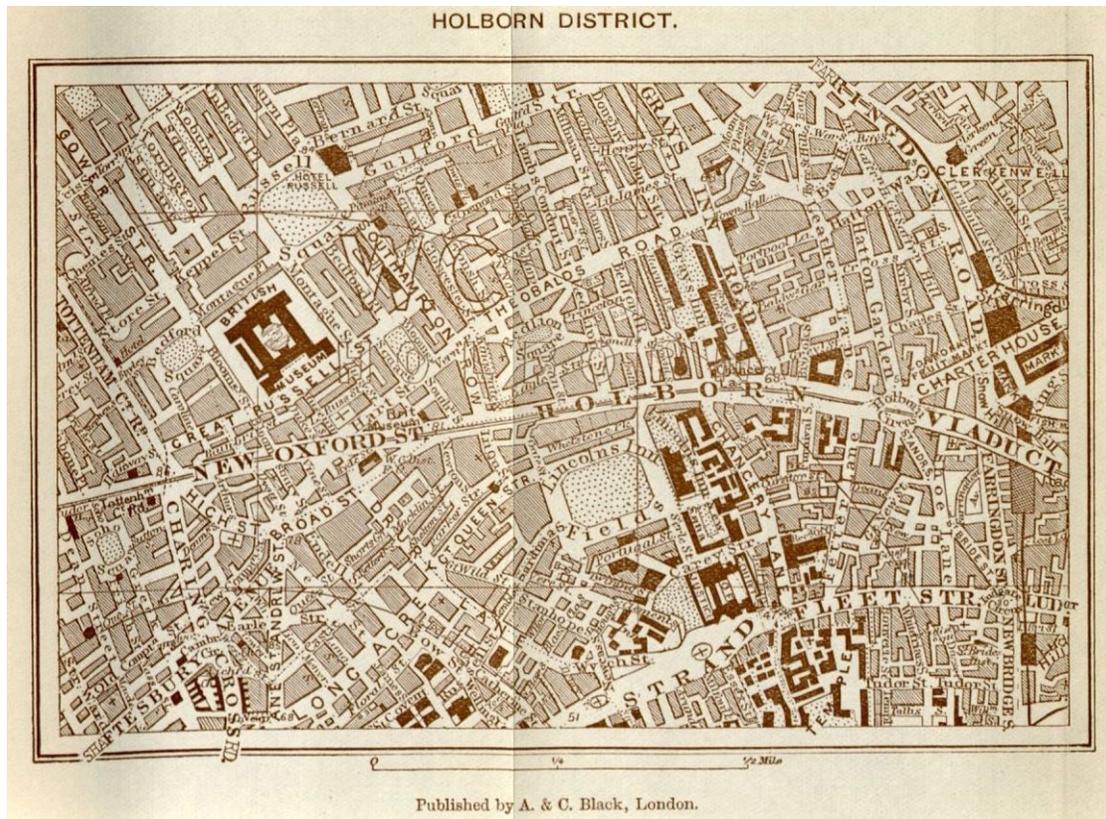


Image 4: Map of Holborn. The British Museum is at center-left while Strand and Fleet Street are at the bottom right. From Walter Besant and G.E. Mitton, *The Fascination of London: Holborn and Bloomsbury*.

Holborn was, indeed, a “forlorn hope,” but it was a calculated risk on Naoroji’s part. During the 1886 general election, his primary objective was not to win, but rather to make his name known among Liberal powerbrokers and electors—and thereby position himself for the next poll. Naoroji was also motivated by the opportunity to advertise Indian political demands while on the hustings. “Success or failure, the Indian cause will be advanced a stage this election,” he reassured Wedderburn.⁴³ But India was important for another reason. In order to forge relations with Liberal Party officials and leaders,

⁴³ Ibid.

Naoroji relied heavily upon their Indian connections. After all, many senior party members—men like Lord Ripon and the Duke of Argyll—had also been senior Indian administrators, while other prominent MPs—such as John Bright—had long records of speaking on Indian affairs. In this sense, being an Indian was actually politically advantageous for the prospective candidate: Naoroji could rely upon several mutual friends and acquaintances for appointments and letters of introduction. And these friends and acquaintances—many from Bombay or with important ties to the city—formed the first of several overlapping networks of support that allowed Naoroji to gradually penetrate to the very core of the Liberal establishment. Between early April and late June 1886, when Gladstone finally dissolved his government and called for general elections, Naoroji leveraged these networks in order to assemble a broad base of support across the British political spectrum. Aside from Liberal stalwarts, this support base included a smattering of Conservative contacts and a large contingent of Irish leaders. Holborn might have been a “forlorn hope,” but it succeeded in facilitating Naoroji’s emergence as a recognized figure in late Victorian politics.

Naoroji’s first network of support was the Congress leadership, based mostly in Bombay. The so-called “inner circle” of the Congress—men who had taken the lead in establishing the organization, with Allan Octavian Hume at its head—specifically assisted with Naoroji’s foray into Liberal politics. Behramji M. Malabari, for example, was a close confidante of Lord Ripon, and probably helped Naoroji reconnect with the ex-viceroy in London. William Wedderburn, then employed at the Bombay secretariat, facilitated contact with individuals at the India Office, where Lord Kimberley, a chief

ally of Gladstone, was secretary of state. But it was Hume who provided the most important contacts. While promoting the new organization in the United Kingdom during the summer and autumn of 1885, he had become acquainted with some of the most powerful and influential figures in the Liberal establishment. He now passed along to Naoroji a thick file of letters of introduction before the latter departed Bombay in March 1886. Addressees included parliamentarians and party seniors such as John Bright; Joseph Chamberlain; John Morley; Lord Dalhousie, a navy admiral and supporter of Irish home rule; Robert T. Reid, a Scottish MP and critic of Indian policy; and a young Alfred Milner, the future imperial proconsul in South Africa. There were important media figures, as well: C.P. Scott, editor of the *Manchester Guardian*; Henry Yates Thompson, owner of the *Pall Mall Gazette*; and Henry Dunckley, editor of the *Manchester Examiner and Times*. Hume introduced Naoroji to Florence Nightingale—the “lady with the lamp” had an interest in Indian affairs dating from the 1860s. Finally, he penned letters to prominent anti-imperialists, such as Richard Congreve, a disciple of Auguste Comte and a longstanding champion of the political liberation of India and Ireland. Another contact was Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, who had taken up the cause of Egyptian nationalists on the eve of the Anglo-Egyptian War of 1882 and, the following year, attended the conference of Surendranath Banerjea’s Indian Association in Calcutta.⁴⁴

With Hume’s letters in hand, Naoroji immediately set to work making appointments. Five days after arriving in London, he called upon John Bright. The aged radical agreed that “it would be good if Indians got into Parliament” but cautioned that

⁴⁴ Allan Octavian Hume to Naoroji, 22 March 1886, *ibid.*, H-199.

“the difficulties were great” for a non-Briton. When Naoroji pressed him for active support of his parliamentary ambitions, Bright hesitated, “but it appeared from the general tone of his conversation that if a good movement were made, he might help.”⁴⁵ Other individuals were more forthcoming. Reid, for example, mused enthusiastically about the effect that an Indian MP would have upon Parliament. Naoroji expressed his fears that he would have little traction with other members of the Commons, but Reid immediately dismissed his concerns. “Oh! there is no fear about it,” Naoroji recorded Reid’s reply in a letter to Wedderburn. “The House is sure to listen to you as an Indian.”⁴⁶ Here, Reid indicated his commitment to Naoroji’s prospective campaign: he offered to “write to Birmingham.” This meant approaching the National Liberal Federation, one of the party’s two great nodes of power, commanded over by its formidable secretary, Francis Schnadhorst. Milner was equally supportive and enthusiastic. Over a three-hour-long breakfast, he explained to Naoroji that he wished, at all costs, to prevent India from becoming another Ireland—a hotbed of radicalism and sedition. “As regards India he said he should never like to see matters driven so far as they had been with Ireland,” Naoroji noted in his diary. “India’s desires should be met in good time and with good grace.” Milner pledged to “do all he could to help” Naoroji. He approved of Reid’s outreach to the National Liberal Federation, hoping that Naoroji could land a large speaking event in Birmingham.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Naoroji diary, 17 April 1886, *ibid.*, Part V, 3-21.

⁴⁶ Naoroji to Wedderburn, 7 May 1886, *ibid.*, N-1 (541).

⁴⁷ Naoroji diary, 6 May 1886, *ibid.*, Part V, 3-21

Thus, largely through Hume's contacts, Naoroji steadily made inroads into the Liberal establishment. But he kept his political options open. George Birdwood, another old friend from Bombay, expressed his determination to get Naoroji into Parliament "by one door or another," and offered to set up meetings with leading Conservative politicians.⁴⁸ Through one of Hume's contacts, Naoroji learned that Benjamin Disraeli had supported the idea of electing an Indian candidate from an English constituency.⁴⁹ There is some evidence that Naoroji briefly mulled over the prospect of standing as a Tory—he discussed the matter with Scawen Blunt, who counseled that Naoroji had "no chance" with the party.⁵⁰ On the far left of the political spectrum, Naoroji reconnected with Henry M. Hyndman, who introduced him to the secretary of the Social Democratic Federation, Henry Hyde Champion. Naoroji, however, treaded carefully with his socialist friend, conscious of "the disfavour in which his name was among the people and the Press," since Hyndman had recently been charged with sedition.⁵¹

But one party continued to attract Naoroji: the Irish nationalists. The general election of 1886, as Naoroji well understood, was largely a referendum on Gladstone's proposal for Irish home rule. And Ireland had dominated his discussions with Liberal leaders. Bright had confided to Naoroji that he could see "no satisfactory settlement of

⁴⁸ Birdwood offered to organize two luncheons at the St. Stephen's Club. One of the two luncheons, however, was to be with Radical Liberal MPs, indicating Birdwood's associations across party lines. George Birdwood to Naoroji, 18 May 1886, *ibid.*, B-140 (1).

⁴⁹ Frederick W. Chesson conveyed this information to Naoroji. Naoroji diary, 17 May 1886, *ibid.*, Part V, 3-21.

⁵⁰ Naoroji diary, 29 April 1886, *ibid.*

⁵¹ Hyndman offered to dedicate a new edition of his *The Bankruptcy of India* to Naoroji. After consulting with friends, Naoroji turned down Hyndman's offer. Naoroji to Wedderburn, 7 May 1886, *ibid.*, N-1 (541).

the Irish question.”⁵² Milner, who had despaired about India becoming another Ireland, argued with Naoroji about the viability of a separate Irish legislature. Naoroji had no such qualms, identifying himself as a firm supporter of Gladstone’s home rule bill. After all, in his analysis, Ireland, like India, was beset by poverty and famine caused by illiberal governance. In strikingly similar language to his earlier examinations of India’s economic woes, Naoroji declared the current administration of Ireland to be “a *certain evil*” and maintained that, with home rule, “Ireland would rise in prosperity.”⁵³

Naoroji was, therefore, deeply invested in Irish political concerns. And, luckily, many Irish parliamentarians also expressed great interest in the political affairs of the subcontinent, allowing Naoroji to once more use Indian connections to his advantage. During his earlier periods of residence in London, he had become acquainted with two of the most towering leaders in the Irish camp, Charles Stuart Parnell (1846-1891), head of the Home Rule Party, and Michael Davitt (1846-1906), founder of the Irish National Land League.⁵⁴ In 1883, Davitt had even suggested to Parnell that Naoroji stand for Parliament from an Irish constituency.⁵⁵ Naoroji now actively worked to renew his friendship with the two men. He also reached out—through one of Hume’s contacts—to

⁵² Naoroji diary, 17 April 1886, *ibid.*, Part V, 3-21.

⁵³ 6 May 1886, *ibid.*

⁵⁴ Naoroji most likely knew Frank Hugh O’Donnell, as well, but I have found no communication between the two men. Mary Cumpston claims that they were introduced to one another in Paris, but does not list her source. O’Donnell claimed to be the foremost champion of Irish-Indian solidarity (and somewhat bizarrely asserted that he had laid the foundations of the Indian National Congress). O’Donnell also remarked on the similar incidences of famine in India and Ireland. Cumpston, “Some Early Indian Nationalists and Their Allies in the British Parliament, 1851-1906,” 282.

⁵⁵ Michael Davitt, *The Fall of Feudalism in Ireland; Or, the Story of the Land League Revolution* (London and New York: Harper & Brothers, 1904), 447.

T.P. O'Connor, a Parnellite MP from Liverpool, who subsequently offered to give Naoroji "the Irish vote in some constituency where we are powerful."⁵⁶ Furthermore, Naoroji sought out speaking engagements on Ireland, desiring to publicly associate his name with the home rule cause. William Digby tried to land Naoroji a seat at a Liberal Party conference supporting Gladstone's policy; Henry Hyde Champion, meanwhile, offered to include Naoroji in a home rule demonstration being staged by Irish MPs.⁵⁷

With expanding networks of support among both Irish home rulers and prominent Liberal MPs, Naoroji now focused his attention on the key powerbrokers in the Liberal Party and allied clubs and associations. In late May, Francis Schnadhorst agreed to meet with him. This gave Naoroji a significant boost: the National Liberal Federation secretary pledged to work with Digby in order to search for a suitable constituency.⁵⁸ Naoroji also turned to the Federation's sister organization in London, the Liberal Central Association. Indian connections once more proved useful: the Association's secretary, Francis Wyllie, was an ex-civil servant from Bombay. Florence Nightingale, meanwhile, helped Naoroji get in touch with Arnold Morley, the party's chief whip, and Ripon strengthened Naoroji's hand by sending Morley a letter of endorsement.⁵⁹ Morley summoned Naoroji

⁵⁶ Henry Richard Fox Bourne to Naoroji, 2 June 1886, NAI, DNP, B-238.

⁵⁷ Naoroji diary, 28 April 1886, *ibid.*, Part V, 3-21; Henry Hyde Champion to Naoroji, 15 June 1886, *ibid.*, C-99.

⁵⁸ It is unclear whether the meeting actually took place. Naoroji noted that Schnadhorst was "very much occupied at present in the present excitement" caused by the home rule bill, and Digby might have secured the arrangement for seeking out a constituency. Naoroji to Wedderburn, 24 May 1886, *ibid.*, N-1 (554); Naoroji to Wedderburn, 28 May 1886, *ibid.*, N-1 (561).

⁵⁹ Nightingale put Naoroji in touch with Harry Verney, who in turn introduced Naoroji to Morley. Francis Wyllie to Naoroji, 20 May 1886, *ibid.*, L-55; Naoroji diary, 16 April 1886, *ibid.*, Part V, 3-21; Naoroji diary, 3 May 1886, *ibid.*

to the Association's chambers and evaluated his fitness for standing in an election. Did he have the necessary funds? "I said I was fully prepared," replied Naoroji. How would he, an Indian, appeal to British electors? "I had explained to him that though India was my chief subject I was not quite a stranger to English politics," he responded, "as I had spent the best part of my manhood in this country" (in order to further bolster his credentials, Naoroji appears to have taken up tutorials on British politics with a journalist friend).⁶⁰

Naoroji now turned to Manchester, an important Liberal stronghold with a large Irish population. Here, in the great industrial center whose fortunes were so dependent on the flow of raw materials from the subcontinent, he received a warm welcome. Arthur Symonds, secretary of the National Reform Union, an assemblage of Liberal-leaning merchants and manufacturers, promised to assist Schnadhorst in finding Naoroji a constituency. The heads of two influential city organizations, the Reform Club and the Athenaeum, invited Naoroji to deliver talks on India before their members. Finally, Naoroji left a favorable impression with Hume's media contacts, C.P. Scott and Henry Dunckley, thereby assuring that the *Guardian* and *Examiner and Times* were on his side.⁶¹

Thus, by the beginning of June 1886, Naoroji had assembled a vast and diverse group of supporters and well-wishers. Irish home rulers, sitting Liberal MPs, critics of

⁶⁰ D. Havelock Fisher, who appears to have been the editor of a publication called *Christian World*, promised to make Naoroji "'au fait' with current politics." The tutorial was a business arrangement, and at the conclusion of the Holborn campaign, Naoroji sent a check for £50. Naoroji diary, 3 May 1886, *ibid.*; D. Havelock Fisher to Naoroji, 9 June 1886, *ibid.*, F-43 (1); Fisher to Naoroji, 15 June 1886, *ibid.*, F-43 (3); Naoroji to Fisher, 7 July 1886, *ibid.*, N-1 (610).

⁶¹ Naoroji to Wedderburn, 6 June 1886, *ibid.*, N-1 (569).

imperialism, socialists, and Manchester civic leaders had all—through a common interest in Indian affairs—been enticed by the prospect of an Indian sitting in Parliament. Naoroji and his friends now set to work finding a constituency that was similarly amenable to the idea. Contacts suggested a broad range of locales. Hodgson Pratt, a peace activist and former member of the Bengal civil service, believed that he should try in Scotland. “The Scotch were far more liberal than the liberals of England,” he advised.⁶² Meanwhile, Frederick W. Chesson, secretary of the Aborigines Protection Society, recommended an Irish seat.⁶³ Others proposed Manchester; Oldham, a hub of cotton textile manufacturing; or even somewhere in Cornwall.⁶⁴ By the middle of June, various local Liberal associations were actively courting Naoroji. St. Albans offered him their ticket, but Naoroji, aware that the constituency had polled heavily Conservative in the previous election, rejected their overtures, choosing instead to investigate leads in North Paddington and South Kensington.⁶⁵

⁶² Pratt also thought that Naoroji would be fit to stand for a university seat. Naoroji diary, 17 April 1886, *ibid.*, Part V, 3-21.

⁶³ Naoroji, confident that Irish home rule was imminent, dismissed the idea. “I explained that an Irish Constituency would be no use to me even if I got it, as in case of the bill passing afterwards, and the Irish Members being wholly partially removed from Parliament, I must go too.” Naoroji diary, 17 May 1886, *ibid.*

⁶⁴ Samuel Slagg, a Liberal MP, suggested that Naoroji contest James Fergusson’s seat in Manchester. Digby proposed Oldham. A journalist friend, John MacDonald, suggested to Naoroji that he contact Charles A.V. Conybeare, a Liberal MP from Cornwall, about his prospects for standing in the region. Naoroji to Wedderburn, 7 May 1886, *ibid.*, N-1 (541); Naoroji to Wedderburn, 10 June 1886, *ibid.*, N-1 (585); Naoroji to Charles A.V. Conybeare, 15 June 1886, *ibid.*, C-238.

⁶⁵ Wilfrid Scawen Blunt appears to have helped introduce Naoroji to the Liberal association in North Paddington. Naoroji to Wedderburn, 10 June 1886, *ibid.*, N-1 (585); Naoroji to Wedderburn, 17 June 1886, *ibid.*, N-1 (587).

While Naoroji continued to search for constituencies, events moved quickly in Westminster. On 8 June, the House of Commons defeated Gladstone's home rule bill on its second reading, leaving the prime minister with little option but to dissolve Parliament and call new elections. Naoroji, relatively sanguine about the bill's chances of success, was clearly caught off guard. "The dissolution came upon me too soon," he admitted to Wedderburn on 17 June. "The plan now is to select the least expensive Constituency I can get and try a chance, and considering over the whole matter, my present intention is to do so."⁶⁶ As Naoroji mulled over his prospects in South Kensington, Henry Hyde Champion, Hyndman's lieutenant, suddenly alerted him about a vacancy in Holborn. Although the Liberal candidate here had been soundly defeated in the previous election, when Parnell had called upon his supporters to abandon Gladstone's party, Champion believed that the current Liberal-Irish alliance gave Naoroji a fighting chance. "*The Irish vote I imagine would secure you the seat,*" he declared.⁶⁷ On 18 June, Naoroji, citing this sizeable Irish electorate as his deciding factor, formally approached the Holborn Liberal Association, which unanimously endorsed his candidature.⁶⁸ Naoroji was now officially standing for Parliament.

There was, however, little time to celebrate this achievement. Since Gladstone was on the verge of officially dissolving Parliament, it was a matter of weeks, if not days, before polling places were expected to open. Immediately after nominating their

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Champion to Naoroji, 15 June 1886, *ibid.*, C-99.

⁶⁸ Naoroji, "The Hon. Dadabhai Naoroji's Great Speech," 302.

candidate on the evening of 18 June, the Holborn Liberal Association drafted, printed, and distributed fliers introducing Liberal electors to Naoroji, describing him as “an eminent native of India.”⁶⁹ Naoroji hurriedly published a circular letter the following day. “To many of you I am a man of strange name and race,” he acknowledged. But, Naoroji continued, “With English life and English politics I am familiar; I have voted at British Elections; I have worked for Liberal Candidates.”⁷⁰

This was the essence of Naoroji’s first strategy on the campaign trail: he played up his long residence in the United Kingdom, as well as his previous associations with British politics. Similarly, he proclaimed himself to be a fervent admirer of certain British values, something that no doubt helped compensate for his foreignness. During the Holborn contest, we find some of Naoroji’s most florid pro-British statements, which sometimes jarred uncomfortably with his earlier opinions expressed in his writings on Indian poverty and the drain of wealth. “I have lived in this country actually for twenty years,” he declared before a packed audience at Holborn Town Hall. “And I say that if there is one thing more certain than another that I have learned, it is that the English nation is incompatible with tyranny.”⁷¹ Naoroji adopted two other strategies in Holborn. He embraced his role as a spokesman for India, hoping electors would sympathize with the cause of Indian political reform. In fliers and speeches (Image 5), he asked Holborn electors to help “two hundred and fifty millions of your fellow subjects in India to have a

⁶⁹ Harry T. Eve, circular, 15 June 1886, NAI, DNP, H-140.

⁷⁰ Naoroji, “The Hon. Dadabhai Naoroji’s Great Speech,” 303.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 304.

IV-11
HOLBORN ELECTION, 1886.

THE HON. D. NAOROJI.

Extracts from the "PALL MALL GAZETTE,"
25th June, 1886.

If the 254 millions of Her Majesty's subjects in India are ever to be represented by one of their own people in the Imperial Parliament it would hardly be possible to find among them all one more worthy of the position or more fitted by his great attainments and experience than the Hon. Dadabhai Naoroji.

It is unnecessary to follow Mr. Naoroji's career in great detail. From the public thanks of the town council of Bombay to the enthusiasm he aroused for Lord Ripon at the latter's departure from India, it has been one of unbroken public service. At the present moment he is a member of the Legislative Council of Bombay, and when Lord Reay nominated him to be a member of this important body his private secretary wrote to Mr. Naoroji that if he accepted the seat "it would give his Excellency much pleasure to nominate you thereto; and he is sure that your appointment, while securing the continued representation of the Parsee community in the Legislature, would also be generally acceptable, and that both Government and the public would derive much benefit from the advice and assistance which your ability and experience would enable you to render."

Mr. Naoroji is a Gladstonian in Irish policy. On all other matters he is a thorough Liberal. He is not only a scholar, but also a man with a highly distinguished political career, whose whole life has been spent in training which fits him for the position to which he aspires. Into Parliament he is certain to go sooner or later, and it will reflect great credit upon the electors of Holborn if they place him there now.

Extracts from Mr. NAOROJI's first speech to the Holborn Electors at the Town Hall, June 24th.

I really do not know how I can thank you, from the bottom of my heart, for the permission you have given me to stand before you as a candidate for your borough. I appreciate the honour most highly. I will not take up more of your time on this point, because you may believe me when I say that I thank you from the bottom of my heart. It is really and truly so. Standing as I do here, to represent the 250,000,000 of your fellow-subjects in India, of course I know thoroughly well my duty; for if I am returned by you, my first duty will be to consult completely and fully the interests of my constituents. I do not want at present to plead the cause of India. I am glad that that cause has been ably and eloquently pleaded by our worthy chairman, by Mr. Wilfrid Blunt, and by Mr. Bryce. But the time must come, if I am returned, to lay before you the condition of India—what little we want from you; and with little we are always satisfied. For the present, therefore, I would come to the burning question of the day—the Irish Home Rule.

The question now before you is whether Ireland shall have its Home Rule or not. The details are a different question altogether. I will therefore confine myself to those particular points which affect the principle of Home Rule. The first thing I will say is something about Mr. Gladstone himself. Grand Old Man he is—and not only all England, but all India says so.

Image 5: Holborn campaign flier. Reproduced with permission of the National Archives of India.

voice in the Imperial Parliament.”⁷² Naoroji was careful to note that, as an MP, “my first duty will be to consult completely and fully the interest of my constituents” in Holborn, but he did not conceal his intentions to concentrate on Indian affairs if he got into the Commons.⁷³

Lastly, Naoroji identified himself as an enthusiastic supporter of Irish home rule. Most of his campaign speeches, in fact, addressed Ireland rather than India. He heaped praise on the Irish: “if ever I have found a warm-hearted people in the world, I have found the Irish.” He railed against the rampant prejudice to which the Irish were subjected. “If they are bad now, it is your own doing,” Naoroji scolded Englishmen. “You first debase them, and then give them a bad name, and then want to hang them.” And he recruited Irish MPs, including Michael Davitt, to speak at his rallies.⁷⁴ But he was also careful to make Ireland a component of his two other strategies. For example, Naoroji cast home rule as a patriotic cause. It was something that would endow British history with “a brighter chapter than any it at present contained,” since it vindicated the Englishman’s characteristic commitment to justice.⁷⁵ He also dismissed fears that home rule would put Ireland on the path toward complete secession: the Irish would not want to relinquish “a share in the most glorious Empire that ever existed on the face of the earth.” Turning to subcontinental affairs, Naoroji struggled to link Irish home rule with

⁷² Naoroji, circular, 30 June 1886, NAI, DNP, N-1 (605).

⁷³ Naoroji, “The Hon. Dadabhai Naoroji’s Great Speech,” 303.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 307, 308; Naoroji to Wedderburn, 25 June 1886, NAI, DNP, N-1 (600).

⁷⁵ Dadabhai Naoroji, “The Hon. Dadabhai Naoroji at the Town Hall,” in *Essays, Speeches, Addresses and Writings (on Indian Politics) of the Hon’ble Dadabhai Naoroji*, ed. Chunilal Lallubhai Parekh (Bombay: Caxton Printing Works, 1887), 315.

political reform in India. India, like Ireland, he reminded voters, lacked representative government. The plight of both countries demonstrated that “no one race of people can ever legislate satisfactorily for another race.” As polling day approached, Naoroji increasingly conflated Irish and Indian affairs. At a meeting on 28 June, he appealed for electors’ votes “on behalf of the five millions in Ireland and 250,000,000 of India.”⁷⁶

Naoroji’s efforts to get into Parliament had begun with the Congress’ inner circle, and it was the inner circle that now helped him conclude the Holborn campaign. Here, Behramji M. Malabari took the lead. Utilizing the National Telegraphic Union, a Congress organ designed to counteract the influence of Anglo-Indians upon the British media, Malabari started to organize a uniquely transnational movement in the 1886 general election. Toward the end of June, he fired off telegrams to Congress leaders and newspaper editors across the subcontinent, from Madras to Lahore, imploring them to organize local demonstrations in favor of Naoroji and, to a noticeably lesser extent, Lalmohan Ghosh (who had been nominated once more as the Liberal candidate in Deptford). “Pray delay not public meetings, Bombay holds last,” read one such message that radiated across the telegraph lines spanning India.⁷⁷

By the final days of the month, replies began trickling back into Bombay. From Calcutta, the Indian Union and the Indian Association transmitted resolutions of support for Naoroji and Ghosh, expressing gratitude to Holborn and Deptford for considering

⁷⁶ Naoroji, “The Hon. Dadabhai Naoroji’s Great Speech,” 305, 308; Dadabhai Naoroji, “The Hon. Dadabhai Naoroji at the Store-Street Hall,” in *Essays, Speeches, Addresses and Writings (on Indian Politics) of the Hon’ble Dadabhai Naoroji*, ed. Chunilal Lallubhai Parekh (Bombay: Caxton Printing Works, 1887), 311.

⁷⁷ Malabari to Naoroji, 29 June 1886, NAI, DNP, M-32 (98).

their candidacies. From Agra and Karachi, correspondents reported “enthusiastic” public meetings. Locals in Dhulia (Dhule) and Ratnagiri organized more public demonstrations of support, while, further south, the inland town of Dharwar hosted a “monster and influential meeting of more than 2,000 people.”⁷⁸ Malabari transmitted these reports to Naoroji, who incorporated them into his final campaign speeches. Through the Telegraphic Union, he also sent the reports to major British dailies and press associations, adding that the demonstrations represented all parts of India and all communities. Consequently, Naoroji’s name—and the ringing endorsements he received from across India—appeared in numerous British papers in early July, ranging from the *Pall Mall Gazette* and *Daily News* of London to local broadsheets in Yorkshire and Devon.⁷⁹

As polling day for Holborn, 5 July,⁸⁰ approached, there were some encouraging signs. The *Daily News* reported that Naoroji was receiving “an increasing amount of support for his candidature.”⁸¹ Hyndman agreed with the assessment. “It is a pity you have not more time as you certainly gain ground as you go along,” he wrote to Naoroji after attending an evening rally.⁸² In the last few days of campaigning, Naoroji stepped up his efforts. He knocked on electors’ doors in the daylight hours and held multiple

⁷⁸ “Editorial Notes,” *Indian Spectator*, 4 July 1886; “The Indian Parliamentary Candidates,” *Times of India*, 30 June 1886.

⁷⁹ “India and England,” *Pall Mall Gazette*, 2 July 1886; “The General Election: Holborn,” *Daily News*, 3 July 1886; “India and the English Elections,” *Huddersfield Daily Chronicle*, 1 July 1886; “India and the English Elections,” *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 1 July 1886.

⁸⁰ Polling in the general elections took place between 1 July and 27 July 1886, with different constituencies voting on different days.

⁸¹ “The General Election: Holborn,” *Daily News*, 2 July 1886.

⁸² Hyndman to Dadabhai Naoroji, 25 June 1886, NAI, DNP, H-221 (137).

open-air meetings each evening, shuttling between different corners of Holborn and other areas of London until well after 10pm.⁸³

But it was still not enough. According to the official tally, ready by the early morning hours of 6 July, the Tory incumbent, Francis Duncan, polled 3,651 votes, while Naoroji mustered 1,950.⁸⁴ In light of electoral trends across the country, the defeat was hardly surprising. Once the general election came to an end in late July, the Gladstonian Liberals had been utterly routed, defeated by an alliance of Conservatives and breakaway Liberal Unionists that had stood firmly against Irish home rule. “The present defeat is entirely general of the Gladstonian party,” Naoroji wrote to Malabari on 23 July.⁸⁵

Holborn was, indeed, a “forlorn hope”: Naoroji emerged from the general elections as a much stronger contender for a future race. He had polled a decent amount in spite of being a foreign figure and a complete outsider in Holborn. While on the campaign trail, he had leveraged connections with Liberal and Irish leaders, and had consequently built up a popular following in central London. “The Irish and the working men I think did fairly well for me,” he remarked about the Holborn electorate.⁸⁶ And Naoroji had generated a great deal of publicity, both through his outspokenness on Irish

⁸³ On 3 July, for example, Naoroji took part in a rally at Mount Pleasant at 5pm, proceeded to a meeting at Shaftesbury Avenue at 8pm, and then commuted to a candidates’ meeting in Southwark, arriving at 10pm, after the meeting had ended. Naoroji diary, 2 July 1886, *ibid.*, Part V, 3-21; Naoroji diary, 3 July 1886, *ibid.*

⁸⁴ Suffrage in the late Victorian era was, of course, highly restricted, meaning that electorates were quite trifling in size. Holborn had 9,802 registered voters for the 1886 election. Results indicate that voter participation was not terribly good, either. “The General Election,” *The Times*, 6 July 1886.

⁸⁵ Naoroji to Malabari, 27 January 1888, RPPM.

⁸⁶ Naoroji to Sarah S. Gostling, 8 July 1886, RPPM.

affairs and the demonstrations of support in India that had been orchestrated by the Congress. Hyndman had observed as much when he penned a short note to Naoroji just before voting commenced. “You have made a gallant fight; you have got your name well before the political world; you will, I am sure, poll well, even if you do not win,” he wrote. “Win or lose, you have made an excellent propaganda for India in the heart of London, besides being certain of a seat next time.”⁸⁷ In the aftermath of defeat, Naoroji now looked toward this next opportunity to take a seat in Parliament.

IV. After Holborn: A Politics of Empathy and the Beginnings of a Progressive Political Coalition for Indian Reform

With the general elections behind him, Naoroji weighed two possible courses of action. He could return to India—at least for the short term—and take a wider role in the work of the Congress. Conversely, he could stay on in the United Kingdom in order to not waste a minute preparing for the next opportunity to enter the Commons. The choice seemed obvious to Naoroji. “Every day advices and conviction force themselves upon me that my work is here, and more so because there is nobody else here, European or Indian, to do this work,” he wrote to Wedderburn from London. “The labours of the last National Congress of Bombay, or of any other similar Congress, cannot bear any fruit unless there is somebody here to work for and support them. For all the objects resolved upon in that Congress can be attained only here.”⁸⁸

⁸⁷ Hyndman to Naoroji, 4 July 1886, NAI, DNP, H-221 (10).

⁸⁸ Naoroji to Wedderburn, 20 August 1886, *ibid.*, N-1 (633).

Some members of the Congress' inner circle in India, however, had a different perspective. In the months after the Holborn defeat, they increasingly began to resent Naoroji's insistence on staying in Britain. "From this distance it is difficult to judge, but for the most part we regret your determination to remain in England," Wedderburn replied from Poona. "There is so much work to be done here & no one so well fitted to do it as yourself."⁸⁹ Malabari claimed that Naoroji's absence was taking a visible toll on the Congress. "You are the only cohesive plaster for the body politic with its numerous disintegrating diseases," he argued. "*All* have confidence in you—which few have in few others. Splendid opportunities are going by for lack of organized action." While Malabari agreed that the Congress must train its focus on Parliament, he reminded his friend that necessary logistical, financial, and organizational work could only be carried out in India. Naoroji, in sum, had to be in two places at once. "The trouble is we are unable to help you in the good cause without yr being here helping us to help the country."⁹⁰

Other Congressmen offered far more blunt criticism. In September 1886, Malabari warned Naoroji that two of the inner circle's sharpest legal minds, K.T. Telang and Pherozechah Mehta, were deeply unhappy about his continued absence from Bombay.⁹¹ They expressed their unhappiness in sharper terms some months later, when Malabari called on them at their respective houses. "Telang has no belief in yr mission to England," he informed Naoroji. "You are wanted here, he says. With this as his

⁸⁹ Wedderburn to Naoroji, 13 September 1886, *ibid.*, W-48 (7).

⁹⁰ Malabari to Naoroji, 3 August 1886, *ibid.*, M-32 (102).

⁹¹ Malabari to Naoroji, 30 September 1886, *ibid.*, M-32 (108).

conviction, it was useless proceeding with arguments.” Mehta—interrupted during his bath—“showed himself more firm even than Telang in his *conviction*.”⁹²

However, by the middle of 1887 Naoroji was receiving help, of sorts, from unexpected quarters in winning over his critics. The viceroy, Lord Dufferin, who had originally welcomed the foundation of the Congress, began turning against the organization. In Bombay, rumors circulated about the government’s intentions to discourage higher education and rein in the powers of the city’s municipal corporation. Meanwhile, in Madras, the governor, Mountstuart Grant-Duff, was busy distinguishing himself as one of the most unpopular Anglo-Indian officials in living memory. Prospects for reform in India looked even more grim. These developments convinced members of the inner circle to renew their faith in Naoroji’s parliamentary ambitions. “I am therefore even more convinced than before that the hope of India lies on your side,” Wacha wrote to Naoroji. There was no point in even trying to reason with reactionary officials such as Dufferin, whom Wacha described as being “as vindictive as a woman.” (Hume, in equally colorful language, offered the view that “His lordship is an ass, & a weak & touchy ass to boot.”)⁹³

With opposition from inner circle members receding, Naoroji stepped up his activities in London. He already possessed strong contacts with Liberal officials and MPs. He had demonstrated himself to be an effective and persuasive campaigner, and his name was increasingly well known within British political circles. This was enough to

⁹² *Sic*. Malabari to Naoroji, 7 March 1887, *ibid.*, M-32 (130).

⁹³ Patwardhan, *Dadabhai Naoroji Correspondence*, II, part I: 45; Hume to Ripon, 13 January 1889, BL, LRP, Add MSS 43616.

secure the Liberal nomination in some constituency or another. But in order to get nominated for a truly competitive seat—one where he had a fighting chance—Naoroji needed to do more. From the late 1880s onward, Naoroji began forging ties with a variety of progressive constituencies in Great Britain. He sought support from anti-imperialists and colonial critics as well as from camps more removed from colonial affairs, ranging from religious nonconformists and positivists to anti-vivisectionists and temperance advocates. This section will focus on three of the most important constituencies in Naoroji's emerging coalition. First, there were the Irish nationalists, amongst whom Naoroji was already a known entity and a recognized friend. Second were the working class and its socialist and trade unionist advocates. The third constituency—somewhat unexpectedly, since they were denied the vote—consisted of women's rights activists and early suffragists. Naoroji labored to connect these various causes to the struggle for Indian political reform, stressing commonalities across disparate movements. Consequently, Naoroji developed a distinct politics of empathy, one that put him at the center of networks with various progressive causes.

In the months and years after the Holborn run, Naoroji, quite understandably, focused on solidifying his ties with Irish leaders. Ireland remained important for two main reasons. Firstly, in spite of Gladstone's defeat, the issue of Irish home rule continued to dominate the political agenda in Westminster. Secondly, Naoroji hoped to raise the prominence of Indian political demands through direct association with the Irish cause. "The Irish question naturally brings into the front the Indian question," he wrote to Wedderburn in late August, "and we must be ready and on spot to take every favourable

opportunity to push on the Indian question as far as we can.”⁹⁴ Consequently, Naoroji joined Irish organizations, such as the United Kingdom Home Rule League, and, as he informed Wacha, began an extensive course of study of Irish history.⁹⁵

He took an increasingly prominent role in Irish rallies and demonstrations. In June 1888, for example, Naoroji presided at a large meeting in Clerkenwell protesting the imprisonment of John Dillon, the nationalist leader who was behind a prolonged campaign of land agitation in Ireland.⁹⁶ Around two months later, Naoroji presided at another Irish meeting, where he confessed to the audience that he could not understand how the British, “the most strenuous advocates of self government,” had, for over seven hundred years, “made every possible effort to exterminate the Irish people instead of making them feel as brethren.”⁹⁷ When Charles Conybeare, a radical Liberal MP, was arrested for feeding bread to dispossessed tenants in Donegal—a crime under the draconian Irish Coercion Act—Naoroji’s name, not surprisingly, figured amongst his core group of supporters.⁹⁸ In short, Naoroji labored to demonstrate his thorough commitment to Ireland and Irish causes, a commitment that extended well beyond the 1886 home rule bill.

⁹⁴ Naoroji to Wedderburn, 20 August 1886, NAI, DNP, N-1 (633).

⁹⁵ “United Kingdom Home Rule League,” *Freeman’s Journal*, 12 August 1886; Patwardhan, *Dadabhai Naoroji Correspondence*, II, part I: 43.

⁹⁶ “The Imprisonment of Mr. John Dillon, M.P.,” *Weekly News and Chronicle*, 30 June 1888; Naoroji to Arthur J. Balfour, 29 June 1888, NAI, DNP, N-1 (1056).

⁹⁷ “Mr. Naoroji on Home Rule,” *Weekly News and Chronicle*, 22 September 1888.

⁹⁸ “The Conybeare Demonstration,” *Reynolds’s Newspaper*, 30 June 1889.

These activities succeeded in catching the attention of the Irish nationalist leadership. In May 1888, Davitt—who in 1883 had privately floated the idea of Naoroji standing for an Irish seat—revived the possibility of an Indian MP for Ireland. Significantly, he did so in a very public manner, while stressing Irish-Indian solidarity. Writing to the *Freeman's Journal*, Ireland's leading newspaper and a nationalist organ, Davitt proposed that Naoroji stand from an open seat in Sligo, on the island's northwestern coast. "What I write to you, sir, to propose is, that Ireland shall give in Westminster what England denies in India to these myriads of our fellow-sufferers—a direct vote and voice," Davitt addressed the paper's editor. The Irish, he held, must make common cause with the Indian struggle for political rights:

A proposal of this kind may, at first sight, appear to ask too much from an Irish Nationalist constituency; but I venture the opinion that the more it is pondered over the more strongly will it recommend itself to every Irishman who is anxious to win for his country a reputation for active sympathy with every people 'rightly struggling to be free,' while every Nationalist who hates and despises the butchering and plundering rule of England should be glad of any and every opportunity to help the friends of liberty or to strengthen the hands of the enemies of oppression.

Naoroji, Davitt reminded readers, was "honestly devoted to the cause of Home Rule," and would thereby become a vocal pro-Irish voice in the Commons. The prospective Indian candidate, furthermore, had pledged himself to support and vote with Parnell.⁹⁹

Naoroji appears to have been an enthusiastic collaborator in Davitt's scheme. Shortly after the *Freeman's Journal* ran the letter, he wrote a short note to Parnell,

⁹⁹ Michael Davitt, "India and Ireland," *Freeman's Journal*, 28 May 1888.

offering to meet and enclosing biographical material.¹⁰⁰ Parnell seems to have been receptive to the idea of Naoroji standing from Sligo. But there were mixed reactions from other quarters. George Birdwood was horrified, arguing that Naoroji's alignment with Parnell would taint the Congress with Irish radicalism. "Let it never come to accepting the patronage of Parnellites—never—never—never," he cautioned his old friend. "Give up yr. Parliamentary career rather."¹⁰¹ Some Congress leaders, as Malabari informed Naoroji from Bombay, evidently agreed with Birdwood's assessment. "It will doubtless help you with the Irish, but will make you unpopular with the English official class, here and in England, who will say the Indians wish to take up the Irish role," Malabari worried.¹⁰² "You give our enemies a handle."¹⁰³ Wacha, meanwhile, despaired that "Dadabhai and Davitt will become synonymous, one for fomenting Indian and the other for the Irish rebellion."¹⁰⁴ To the relief of Birdwood, Malabari, Wacha, and others in the Congress, no formal offer materialized from Sligo. By mid-July, Naoroji confided to Malabari that there was "*very little*, if any, chance" of him getting an Irish seat.¹⁰⁵ This turn of events had no appreciable effect on Naoroji's interest in Ireland—he continued to weave home rule into his speeches and writings. And, in late August 1889, Naoroji may

¹⁰⁰ Naoroji to Charles Stuart Parnell, 6 June 1888, NAI, DNP, N-1 (1035).

¹⁰¹ Birdwood to Naoroji, 31 May 1888, *ibid.*, B-140 (8).

¹⁰² Malabari to Naoroji, 19 June 1888, *ibid.*, M-32 (173).

¹⁰³ Malabari to Naoroji, 10 July 1888, *ibid.*, M-32 (176).

¹⁰⁴ Letter to Naoroji dated 26 June 1888, quoted in Anil Seal, *The Emergence of Indian Nationalism: Competition and Collaboration in the Later Nineteenth Century* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 284.

¹⁰⁵ Naoroji to Malabari, 13 July 1888, RPPM.

even have joined a special Home Rule League delegation to Dublin.¹⁰⁶ Thus, while Davitt's proposal fizzled, Naoroji still benefited handsomely from the press coverage and a direct association with the top brass of the home rule party.

Given the large number of Irish voters in urban constituencies, Ireland was a politically expedient cause to champion. The working class was, similarly, an important demographic. While suffrage in Britain had long remained a highly limited privilege, subject to certain property qualifications, the Third Reform Act of 1884 had given the vote to many laborers, and had amplified their voice through the redistribution of constituencies. Significantly, their enfranchisement and empowerment occurred as labor unions and socialist organizations gained ground. Due, in part, to his long association with Hyndman, Naoroji was familiar with both socialists and the labor movement. Holborn had given Naoroji further exposure: Henry Hyde Champion helped him reach out to working class voters and, in the local Liberal association, Naoroji befriended Sidney Webb, the leading light of the Fabian Society.¹⁰⁷

Naoroji now worked to actively identify himself as a champion of labor and supporter of certain socialist causes. At public demonstrations, his name increasingly appeared in the speakers' roster alongside some of the most prominent socialist and labor voices of the day. Among those sharing the platform with Naoroji at a November 1888

¹⁰⁶ The delegation was scheduled to arrive in Ireland on 26 August and spend eight to nine days in the country. I have found no evidence confirming participation. He might have retired from the trip in order to prepare for a visit to Switzerland in September. Naoroji to Wedderburn, 2 August 1889, *ibid*.

¹⁰⁷ Champion told Naoroji that "with the working class element you will be very popular when they find out who you are." Champion advised Naoroji to seek coverage in certain publications that were popular with the working class. Champion to Naoroji, 21 June 1886, NAI, DNP, C-99 (1).

rally at Clerkenwell Green—a favored venue for radical protests—were William Morris, the famous designer and founder of the Socialist League; Eleanor Marx Aveling, a labor and women’s rights activist, as well as the daughter of Karl Marx; and Robert Bontine Cunninghame Graham, the first openly socialist MP and a founder of the Scottish Labour Party (and eventually the Scottish National Party).¹⁰⁸ The following month, Hyndman’s Social Democratic Federation booked Naoroji as a speaker at a midnight rally for unemployed Londoners. Naoroji was once more in esteemed company: fellow speakers included John Burns, the militant labor leader, and a young Annie Besant, a recent convert to socialist thought who would later become an outspoken leader in the Indian nationalist movement.¹⁰⁹ Naoroji, therefore, had adeptly maneuvered himself into the front ranks of British socialism.

Before these audiences, Naoroji declared his support for a handful of policy proposals designed to ameliorate the conditions of the British working class. He championed free education, fairer workers’ contracts, the eight-hour workday, and a “free breakfast table”—the abolition of duties on essential foodstuffs.¹¹⁰ He condemned how “the rich became richer, and the poor poorer,” and asserted the need for “a better distribution of wealth.” In October 1888, Naoroji turned to Sidney Webb for coaching on rent and land policy, subsequently delivering two speeches that broached the hot-button

¹⁰⁸ “The Clerkenwell-Green Meeting,” *Weekly News and Chronicle*, 17 November 1888.

¹⁰⁹ “Midnight Meeting of the Unemployed on Christmas Eve,” *Reynolds’s Newspaper*, 23 December 1888.

¹¹⁰ “The Honorable D. Naoroji on Poverty,” *Weekly News and Chronicle*, 20 October 1888; “The Split in Clerkenwell,” *Finsbury and Holborn Guardian*, 14 June 1890.

topics of land redistribution and land nationalization.¹¹¹ While cautioning against direct confiscation of land, he condemned the avarice of the landed aristocracy, citing John Stuart Mill to argue that laborers were the rightful owners of the soil upon which they worked. “There should be some compulsion,” Naoroji believed, “by which the land should provide food in sufficient abundance for the people to live upon it.”¹¹²

In a related vein, Naoroji endorsed the Lockean concept of property in labor; that is, the ownership rights of producers of material goods. Elaborating on this idea in an 1890 pamphlet, “The Rights of Labour,” he advocated the creation of special industrial courts to ensure that laborers received a fair share of profits from their employers. Naoroji’s proposal was of special significance, since it revealed his steady embrace of socialist ideas. He rejected certain principles of classical economics: the laborer’s fair share, Naoroji maintained, could not be adduced from the price of a good, but was rather the product of “the practical facts of the social resistances and frictions of people’s necessities and circumstances.” Industrial courts, Naoroji believed, should be given extensive powers to determine such needs and circumstances, as well as to investigate costs of production. Trade unions, he continued, could closely assist in the work of these courts.¹¹³

In his speeches and writings directed to the British working class, Naoroji made no explicit references to Indian labor. But he did not hesitate from bringing Indian

¹¹¹ Naoroji to Sidney Webb, 18 October 1888, NAI, DNP, N-1 (1234).

¹¹² “The Honorable D. Naoroji on Landlordism,” *Weekly News and Chronicle*, 3 November 1888; “The Honorable D. Naoroji on Landlordism and Ground Rents,” *Weekly News and Chronicle*, 3 November 1888.

¹¹³ Naoroji, “The Rights of Labour,” pamphlet, 1890, NAI, DNP, Part III, G-25, 4, 5.

political grievances to the attention of laborers and labor leaders. For example, Naoroji actively courted John Burns' support of Indian political reform, sending him copies of Congress publications. "The information contained therein has whetted my appetite for more," Burns replied enthusiastically after reading the report of the Congress' 1887 Madras session.¹¹⁴ In time, Naoroji found many more sympathizers for Indian reform among labor leaders, including James Keir Hardie, a key founder of the Labour Party.¹¹⁵

Naoroji also made frequent reference to Indian grievances in his talks to working class audiences. While addressing skyrocketing unemployment rates in central London, he assured listeners that "however deep the poverty was here they could form no conception of what it was in India." Here, he employed an innovative method to drive home his point. Britain, he contended, also suffered from a drain of wealth, a drain that was actually caused by the persistence of poverty in spite of the nation's wealth. Poverty exacted significant social and financial tolls in various ways. British authorities, for instance, spent vast sums every year prosecuting petty criminals, many whom were poor laborers by profession. Poor rates—taxes levied in order provide some meager support to the burgeoning underclass—drained wealth away from property owners. Added to these expenses were general losses of production and consumption. Finally, the liquor trade—which profited overwhelmingly from the poor's misfortunes—dissolved over £13 million that could otherwise be deployed for more productive uses.¹¹⁶ Naoroji let his audience

¹¹⁴ John Burns to Naoroji, 6 September 1888, NMML, DNP, I, #137.

¹¹⁵ The earliest correspondence between Keir Hardie and Naoroji appears to date from 1905, although they were most likely already familiar with one another.

¹¹⁶ "The Honorable D. Naoroji on Poverty."

reflect on how the drain of wealth in India—so much larger and so much more invidious—caused an unending spiral of social problems and deeper impoverishment for an already destitute people. Through such stark comparisons, he pulled at the heartstrings of British electors, especially those newly enfranchised working class voters who were familiar with the curse of poverty. Perhaps they, like the Irish, could sympathize with Indians and extend a hand of support.

Naoroji's emerging progressive coalition, therefore, embraced two large and influential blocs in the political landscape of Victorian Britain. The third constituency in this coalition, however, was quite different from the working class or the Irish. They were a small but dedicated band of women's rights activists and suffragists. Naoroji's associations with these women dated from much earlier than his alliances with the Irish or laborers: they were a natural outgrowth of his leadership in female education and social reform during Young Bombay in the late 1840s and early 1850s. Since the worlds of Indian social reform and British feminism overlapped, as Antoinette Burton has demonstrated, Naoroji was most likely familiar with many suffragists well before his return to London in 1886.¹¹⁷ This overlap, furthermore, enabled the prospective Liberal candidate to forge especially strong links between the causes of British women and the campaign for Indian political rights.

One particular social reform endeavor facilitated some of the first ties. Shortly after the Holborn defeat, Naoroji joined hands with women's rights activists in order to

¹¹⁷ See chapter one in Antoinette M. Burton, *Burdens of History: British Feminists, Indian Women, and Imperial Culture, 1865-1915* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994).

protest the draconian Contagious Diseases (C.D.) Acts in India. First implemented in 1868, the C.D. Acts were meant to counter spiraling rates of syphilis and other venereal diseases among soldiers of the British Indian army, by giving sweeping powers to the government to register and compulsorily examine prostitutes as well as so-called “kept women.” Given the difficulty of defining who, precisely, fit into these categories, many Indian social reformers roundly condemned the acts, arguing that they transgressed upon privacy and liberties of Indian women. Meanwhile, in London, Naoroji found a ready ally in Josephine Butler (1828-1906). Butler, one of the most prominent British social reformers of the Victorian era, had earlier worked with Florence Nightingale to overturn the United Kingdom’s own C.D. Acts, and was now secretary of the International Federation for the Abolition of State Regulation of Vice, which crusaded against similar legislation across western Europe.

Naoroji and Butler’s alliance was mutually beneficial. For Butler, Naoroji provided a vital link to the Indian political elite. In December 1887, for example, the International Federation formally requested Naoroji to coordinate an organized movement for repeal of the C.D. Acts among the “leading natives of India.” “We believe that no one could be more powerful than you in assisting to produce such an expression of opinion,” Butler and her associates declared.¹¹⁸ Naoroji did not disappoint. As the secretary of state for India began to consider the possible repeal of the acts, Naoroji reached out to Malabari, Wacha, and Hume, stressing the need for concerted action among Indian political associations. After all, “what can all our struggles to improve the

¹¹⁸ Josephine E. Butler and James Stuart to Naoroji, 3 December 1887, NAI, DNP, *ibid.*, B-284 (3).

position of woman be worth if she is publicly and legally declared to be only worth satisfying the vice of man,” he asked Malabari.¹¹⁹ Significantly, Naoroji remained committed to the cause of the International Federation well after the C.D. Acts were suspended in July 1888. The following year, in the middle of September, he traveled to Geneva in order to serve as a delegate to its congress.

Naoroji’s association with Josephine Butler appears to have facilitated further involvement with women’s rights activities in Britain. By the 1890s, for example, he was serving as a vice president of two major feminist associations, the Women’s Progressive Society, a socialist organization that targeted parliamentary candidates opposed to women’s suffrage, and the International Women’s Union, which had members in the United States and Europe as well as India, Iran, Brazil, and Japan.¹²⁰ Naoroji also had a longstanding association with the Women’s Franchise League, which was led by some of the most prominent suffragists of the late Victorian era, including Elizabeth Clarke Wolstenholme Elmy, Emmeline Pankhurst, and Ursula Bright. Surviving correspondence indicates that Naoroji was a council member of the League and was regularly sought by Elmy and Bright to speak in public. In 1890, for example, he delivered a lecture on the condition of Indian women at a major conference organized by the League, the “International Conference on the Position of Women in All Countries,” held at

¹¹⁹ Naoroji to Malabari, 15 June 1888, *ibid.*, N-1 (1044).

¹²⁰ Alice Grenfell to Naoroji, 15 July 1892, *ibid.*, W-141 (1); Helen New to Naoroji, 22 January 1895, *ibid.*, I-37 (3); Julie Carlier, “A Forgotten Instance of Women’s International Organising: The Transnational Feminist Networks of the Women’s Progressive Society (1890) and the International Women’s Union (1893-1898),” in *Gender History in a Transnational Perspective*, ed. Oliver Janz and Daniel Schönplugg (New York: Berghahn Books, 2014), 80, 81, 88.

Westminster Town Hall. A draft program for this conference lists Naoroji, remarkably, alongside Rukhmabai, the child bride who had kicked up a legal storm in Bombay after refusing to cohabit with her husband, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, the American suffragist, as distinguished attendees.¹²¹

By the early 1890s, therefore, Naoroji was part of a broad network of feminist leaders and organizations—one that embraced women’s activists and prominent sympathizers from across the world. But what advantages, precisely, did the prospective candidate derive from his association with people who still did not possess the vote? Firstly, just as Butler relied on Naoroji for access to Indian leaders during the anti-C.D. Acts agitation, Naoroji benefited from feminists’ access to prominent radical Liberals and major public opinion makers. Ursula Bright, for instance, was the wife of a sitting MP, Joseph Bright, and the sister-in-law of John Bright. Mynie and Tina Bell—the widow and daughter, respectively, of Evans Bell, Naoroji’s old ally in the cause of princely state autonomy, and ardent suffragists in their own right—inducted Naoroji into their wide circle of activist and freethinker friends, which included George Jacob Holyoake, leader of the secularist movement, who later gave public support to Naoroji during his Central Finsbury campaign. And, in early 1888, as Naoroji stepped up his efforts to find a suitable constituency, Butler helped re-introduce Naoroji to T.P. O’Connor, the Irish MP and journalist. Naoroji profited from this important connection between a feminist and an Irish leader. O’Connor, Butler recounted, subsequently declared to her that “we must get

¹²¹ Women’s Franchise League, “International Conference on the Position of Women in All Countries,” conference program, July 1890, NAI, DNP, W-135 (10).

Mr. Naoroji into Parliament.”¹²² Disenfranchised women, therefore, were vital facilitators in Naoroji’s efforts to cobble support together from a variety of constituencies that did possess the vote.

Secondly, Naoroji found feminists to be especially receptive toward the cause of Indian political reform. The lack of the vote, the absence of absolute legal rights, and the utter nonexistence of any form of representation no doubt played a major role in fostering empathy and a sense of common cause between the two movements. Surviving correspondence indicates that Naoroji very deliberately tried to provoke interest in India among his feminist contacts. In December 1886, for example, he began sending his papers and essays to Josephine Butler. Butler was greatly moved by the issues of Indian poverty and misgovernance, comparing the situation to that in Ireland. She quickly promised to write letters to the *Liverpool Daily Post*, *Newcastle Leader*, and other Liberal papers, advocating immediate reforms for India. Significantly, Butler also began querying Naoroji on touchy historical subjects—such as the “morality” of the British conquest of India and the chief reasons for the Mutiny-Rebellion of 1857—indicating that Naoroji helped nudge along her growing skepticism about imperialism.¹²³ A little over a year later, Butler was still writing to Naoroji about her journalistic activities—this time, her attempts to counsel the influential editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, William T. Stead, to be more sympathetic toward Indian political matters.¹²⁴

¹²² JButler to Naoroji, 12 January 1888, NMML, DNP, I, #141.

¹²³ Butler to Naoroji, 19 December 1886, NAI, DNP, B-284 (1).

¹²⁴ Butler to Naoroji, 14 January 1888, *ibid.*, B-284 (4).

Thus, among his British feminist contacts, individuals who already possessed an interest in Indian social reform, Naoroji found powerful and influential allies in the cause of Indian political reform. These women's sympathies for Indian concerns, bountifully evident in Naoroji's correspondence, also add complexity to scholarly understanding of the relationship between feminism and empire. Burton argues that imperialist and Social Darwinist notions influenced the Indian social reform activities of British feminists.¹²⁵ While these factors might have played a role, it is quite clear that many women's rights activists were also motivated by a deep sense of injustice, whether it was committed at home or in Britain's imperial domains, and were not solely bound by imperial considerations. Butler, for example, adopted and espoused Naoroji's equation between the rights of British women and the rights of Indians, suggesting an almost universal struggle for justice. She saw Naoroji's political career as a reflection of this struggle:

It has long been very much on my heart that you should gain a seat in Parliament, and I should like to add my little word of testimony to others which you have received in regard to the confidence we have in you. It is not so much as a mere Liberal that I hope for your election, but because you are one of the most uncompromising friends of womanhood. You have already upheld the necessity of equal law for men and women, and your moving appeals on several occasions at our meetings have sunk deeply into our hearts. We have at this moment more than ever painfully the interests of your country women and our fellow-subjects in India on our hearts and I hope that our efforts may result before long in a greater measure of legal justice for the women of India. Your clear insight into all that is false and unequal in our British laws regarding women has not been, to my mind, surpassed in any instance, even of our own countrymen experienced in these matters.¹²⁶

¹²⁵ *Burdens of History*, 2.

¹²⁶ Butler to Naoroji, 25 June 1892, NAI, DNP, B-284 (13).

By pursuing a politics of empathy, premised on a shared sense of injustice, Naoroji won allies among diverse constituencies and placed India within the ranks of the leading progressive causes in late Victorian Britain. Consequently, in the years after Holborn, he helped promote a surge of interest in Indian political affairs among Britons—especially among the Irish, workingmen, and women’s rights activists. Finally and importantly, as Butler’s comments indicate, he also won some valuable, well-connected friends who were eager to see Naoroji elected to Parliament during the next general election.

V. Conclusion

“*Lo, the poor Indian’ has a poet said—
 ‘Low’s the poor Indian’ is my reading new
With haughty glances and with high-held head
 I mark your presence, pitiful Hindoo.
You may be cultured, worthy, and the rest,
 You may no quality of virtue lack,
But though, of course, you try to do your best,
 You’re Black, my friend, you’re Black!’*”

- “To ‘Black Men’ Generally: A Salisburian Address,” *Funny Folks*, 15 December 1888¹²⁷

From the vantage point of the late 1880s and early 1890s, as Dadabhai Naoroji prepared for the next general election, we are better able to answer those questions with which this chapter began: why would an Indian want to stand for the British Parliament, and how could he expect any chance of election? Naoroji’s campaign in Holborn, as we have seen, was the product of a long history of Indian engagement with Westminster, as well as a growing hopelessness among Congress leaders about achieving political reform

¹²⁷ “To ‘Black Men’ Generally: A Salisburian Address,” *Funny Folks*, 15 December 1888, *ibid.*, Part IV, 24, 394.

within India itself. During the first part of his political career, Naoroji had established—through the political corollary to the drain theory—how reform would help plug the drain of wealth. Since the government of India was unlikely to change its political course, Naoroji, in the second phase of his career, attempted to take his case directly to Westminster, thereby completely bypassing the reactionary (and immovable) Anglo-Indian *sahibs* who ruled from Calcutta and Simla. In London, there was at least some hope of achieving reform, and mounting a viable parliamentary campaign was a difficult but relatively straightforward endeavor. The early Congress, in spite of its political infancy, displayed a remarkable ability to leverage important political connections. Members of the inner circle provided Naoroji with extensive contacts in the United Kingdom, mostly Liberal Party leaders with strong personal and professional ties to India. With these new allies, Naoroji was able to construct a vast network of support among progressive constituencies that, even if they possessed no direct link with India, could at least empathize with the cause of Indian reform.

Naoroji's timing was also important. During the 1880s, with the expansion of the franchise and birth of mass politics, Great Britain passed through an especially fruitful moment of reformist activity, one where various progressive causes overlapped and converged. Within this convergence lay great opportunities for an Indian leader to build political alliances. Naoroji's allies, after all, included the old guard of anti-slavery activists, men like Frederick W. Chesson, who now turned their attention to Indian reform; longtime India reformers, such as Evans Bell, who were involved in the secularist movement; secularists, most notably George Jacob Holyoake, who moved in suffragist

circles; and suffragists, especially Josephine Butler, who possessed Irish home ruler contacts. Hyndman appeared to know everyone. The 1880s were, furthermore, a moment of many “firsts” in Westminster—a direct consequence of the parliamentary reforms of 1832. T.P. O’Connor’s election in 1885 made him the first-ever Irish Catholic MP returned by an English constituency. The first openly socialist MP, Cunningham Graham, took his seat in the Commons in 1888. Bradlaugh, an avowed atheist, became the first individual to sit in Parliament without taking a religious oath. An Indian candidate was still a far more unexpected figure than an Irish Catholic, socialist, or an atheist, but electors appeared open to new possibilities. Congress leaders in the subcontinent, who closely monitored metropolitan political developments, were savvy enough to recognize these shifting dynamics. And they were shrewd enough to see the potential for advancing a reformist Indian agenda through these expanding networks among progressive causes.

Thus, by the late 1880s, Naoroji, as well as his views on Indian politics, had become quite well known within British activist circles and among the political elite. For workingmen and Irishmen in London, he had become a familiar figure at rallies and association meetings. But something much more significant was happening: Naoroji was developing popular recognition among the British public. His name—albeit frequently misspelled—appeared with more regularity in the columns of British newspapers; his pamphlets and writings circulated widely and gained greater readership; his speaking invitations increasingly emanated from locations far removed from the imperial capital. Even *The Times* grudgingly admitted that Naoroji was now a “well-known”

personality.¹²⁸ But it was none other than Lord Salisbury, the Conservative prime minister, who truly illustrated the extent to which the Indian leader had shot to national prominence. At noon on 29 November 1888, Salisbury began addressing a large audience that had assembled in Edinburgh's Corn Exchange. In the course of a long and rambling speech, the prime minister, accomplished in the art of making verbal gaffes, alluded to the 1886 contest in Holborn:

Colonel Duncan was opposed to a black man (laughter), and, however great the progress of mankind has been and however far we have advanced in overcoming prejudices, I doubt if we have yet got to that point where a British constituency will elect a black man to represent them. (Laughter.) Of course, you will understand that I am speaking roughly and using language in its ordinary colloquial sense, because I imagine the colour is not exactly black; but at all events he was a man of another race who was very unlikely to represent an English community.¹²⁹

Thus transpired the so-called “black man incident,” which kicked off a furious storm of protest in Britain and India.¹³⁰ Through this jibe, Salisbury did not simply acknowledge public recognition of Naoroji—he perversely did Naoroji a tremendous favor by greatly enhancing it. In the days and weeks that followed, the prime minister and the so-called black man were splashed across the pages of newspapers and journals from Dublin through Calcutta (Image 6). The *Pall Mall Gazette* expressed shock and dismay, recommending that Salisbury lather his tongue with Pears’ soap; the *Weekly Dispatch* joined several other broadsheets in finding Naoroji utterly unworthy of the insult; the

¹²⁸ “The Royal Grants,” *The Times*, 22 July 1889, 6.

¹²⁹ “Lord Salisbury in Edinburgh,” *The Times*, 1 December 1888, 8.

¹³⁰ For a detailed discussion of the domestic implications of the black man incident, see Antoinette M. Burton, “Tongues Untied: Lord Salisbury’s ‘Black Man’ and the Boundaries of Imperial Democracy,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 42, no. 3 (July 2000): 632–61.



Image 6: The “black man incident.” Front page of the London humor magazine *Funny Folks* for 15 December 1888. The cartoon depicts a rather swarthy, scruffily dressed Lord Salisbury tarring a statue of a very white Naoroji. Naoroji kept a copy of this edition in his personal papers (reproduced with permission of the National Archives of India).

Daily News fretted over how this would deepen Indian grievances about British rule; and *Punch* had a grand time satirizing the fallout.¹³¹ Far too many column-inches of print were spent debating whether the Parsi candidate was, in fact, lighter in complexion than the swarthy prime minister. Regardless, the black man incident achieved something that Naoroji had long struggled to achieve: truly wide-ranging, favorable, and sympathetic press coverage. R.P. Masani obviously exaggerates when he claims that Naoroji's name "was on the lips of everyone throughout the United Kingdom" in the aftermath of the Edinburgh speech, but he is not far off the mark.¹³²

Critically, many newspapers wondered how the black man incident would impact Naoroji's chances at the next general election. And it was the *Freeman's Journal*, the home ruler periodical where Michael Davitt had suggested Naoroji's nomination for an Irish seat, which made the boldest prediction. "One result of Lord Salisbury's insulting taunt is that Mr. Naoroji is almost certain to be returned to Parliament at the next general election," the paper declared. "This, indeed, is the only real reparation that can be made to the Indian people."¹³³ Amid similarly encouraging pronouncements from friends and allies, Naoroji now set course for a new campaign in a new constituency, Central Finsbury.

¹³¹ *Lord Salisbury's "Blackman"* (Lucknow: G.P. Varma and Brothers Press, 1889), 4, 10–11, 26, 12 ; "Essence of Parliament," *Punch*, 15 December 1888, 287; "In Their Christmas Hampers," *Punch*, 29 December 1888, 303.

¹³² Masani, *Dadabhai Naoroji*, 264.

¹³³ "London Correspondence," *Freeman's Journal*, 11 December 1888.

Across the Kala Pani

Dadabhai Naoroji, the British Public Sphere, and the British Indian Community

I. Introduction

Early in the morning of 2 January 1891, Dadabhai Naoroji might have been rudely woken up by a telegram from the London police. Sometime the previous evening, a C.K. Desai—one of hundreds of Indians resident in Great Britain as students, professionals, or menial laborers—was arrested for public drunkenness and thrown in a cell at the Vine Street police station. It was here, around 1am, that Desai dictated a brief telegram to a police inspector indicating that he wanted Naoroji to post his bail.¹

We do not know if Naoroji complied with his poor, hung-over compatriot's request, nor do we know if C.K. Desai even knew Naoroji personally. But the telegram from the London police, now brittle with age, is much more than a bizarre find in the archive. It is part of a large trove of material in the Dadabhai Naoroji Papers that allow for a detailed, vivid reconstruction of British Indian life in the late Victorian era. Out of the 30,000 or so documents in the collection, the overwhelming majority of items date from Naoroji's residence in London from 1886 until 1907. This includes around two thousand letters to or from recognized Indian political figures—Behramji M. Malabari, Dinsha Wacha, William Wedderburn, and others. Correspondence with prominent social

¹ R. Ruff to Dadabhai Naoroji, telegram, 2 January 1891, NAI, DNP, uncataloged item.

and political figures in Britain, such as those discussed in Chapter Three, make up a few hundred additional items. But the rest of the correspondence involves individuals who, like Desai, are for the most part completely forgotten today: fellow British Indians as well as minor Liberal Party functionaries, leaders and secretaries of social and fraternal organizations, doctors, book sellers, journalists, and ordinary Britons.

These letters indicate precisely how Naoroji's career unfolded in the imperial metropole—and the methodologies he employed to advocate India's interests. Naoroji, it is apparent, took on myriad social and cultural responsibilities in addition to his political tasks. Well before the black man incident with Lord Salisbury propelled the prospective MP to the front pages of British dailies, he was publicly recognized as a spokesman and authority on subjects and concerns related to India and Indians. As early as the 1860s, Naoroji began playing the role of an Indian emissary, a resource for Britons on political and cultural issues, a leader in organizations advocating Indian interests, and an outspoken critic of contemporary racial attitudes in the metropole toward his co-nationals. This was a role that he fine-tuned after 1886. Within his correspondence, we find British businessmen seeking Naoroji's opinions on business ventures in India, churches and local political associations requesting literature on India, and journalists interviewing Naoroji on matters as diverse as vegetarianism and Indian children's games. For Britons, Naoroji was clearly much more than a political figure.

The Papers also shine important light on Naoroji the politician. Due to the sheer volume of material dating from his parliamentary campaigns and early Congress work in Britain, we can observe how Naoroji became an active participant in the vibrant British public sphere. He joined numerous social, fraternal, and political associations that, while

having no direct link to Indian political affairs, nevertheless helped him enhance his political and social standing. By wading through Naoroji's miscellanea—thousands of ordinary receipts, subscription notices, and circulars—we can reconstruct the specific networks within which he operated. Moreover, such miscellanea tell us about Naoroji's daily itineraries and the routine operations of his candidacies and early Congress activities—the everyday life of political leaders and political movements. Advocating Indian interests in the metropole was an arduous endeavor. It required marathon schedules of letter writing, endless cycles of meetings and appointments, close coordination with colleagues scattered around India, deft networking within local branches of the Liberal Party and numerous other associations, and constant travel. This was a schedule that Naoroji maintained into his early eighties, although it took a noticeable toll on his health. Analysis of this everyday life reveals how early Indian nationalism was not simply a matter of abstract high politics: it was a movement sustained by a furious stream of on-the-ground activity. And it was, in Britain, firmly embedded within the public sphere.

Finally, the Naoroji Papers introduce us to hundreds of C.K. Desai's fellow British Indians. In their meticulously researched accounts, Rozina Visram and Michael H. Fisher have detailed the emergence of South Asian diaspora settlements across the British Isles during the nineteenth century.² John Hinnells's work has, meanwhile, focused on British Parsis, a tiny but influential component of the Indian community.³ This chapter complements the work of Visram, Fisher, and Hinnells by examining the lives of students

² *Asians in Britain: 400 Years of History* (London: Pluto Press, 2002); *Counterflows to Colonialism: Indian Travellers and Settlers in Britain, 1600-1857* (Delhi: Permanent Black, 2004).

³ *Zoroastrians in Britain* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996).

and professionals who, around the 1840s, began flocking to the metropole in increasing numbers. Moreover, I demonstrate how Naoroji played a pivotal role in constructing networks and organizations that gave the community—composed of Indians from different regional, religious, and linguistic backgrounds—a sense of cohesion. Letters from countless British Indians indicate how Naoroji was acknowledged as a community leader. Students and professionals turned to Naoroji for mentorship, advice, and financial assistance. He was also the first point of contact for many visitors from South Asia as well as other diaspora settlements. Naoroji’s office and drawing room hosted a dazzling array of guests: Anagarika Dharmapala, the Buddhist revivalist from Ceylon; Prafulla Chandra Roy, the eminent chemistry professor and entrepreneur from Calcutta; Sister Nivedita, Swami Vivekananda’s Irish-born disciple; and, of course, Mohandas K. Gandhi, who benefited from Naoroji’s political connections during his 1906 stay in London.⁴ Their letters of introduction show, once more, how Naoroji was much more than a political figure. They indicate how, while in Britain, Naoroji performed many roles for many different people, serving as an emissary to the British public as well as a potential stand-in for the bail bondsman.

⁴ Dharmapala, who had recently arrived in London after eighteen months in the United States, wished to see Naoroji to discuss a school he wanted to open in Banaras. Ray mentioned that he was in the United Kingdom to visit chemical laboratories and learn more about new research methodologies. Romesh Chunder Dutt introduced Naoroji to Sister Nivedita, and subsequent correspondence indicates that Naoroji sent her a copy of his *Poverty and UnBritish Rule in India*. For more information on Gandhi’s relations with Naoroji, see Ramachandra Guha, *Gandhi before India* (London: Allen Lane, 2013). Anagarika Dharmapala to Naoroji, 1 February 1904, NAI, DNP, A-47c; Prafulla Chandra Ray to Naoroji, 19 November 1904, *ibid.*, R-111 (1); Romesh Chunder Dutt to Naoroji, 16 March 1901, *ibid.*, D-161 (15); W. Douglas Hall to Naoroji, 18 October 1904, *ibid.*, H-9 (181).

II. Emissary, Not Mediator: Naoroji and the British Public

Over the past two decades, historians of colonial India have lumped together many western-educated Indian elites under the banner of “mediators” and “interpreters.” This has been especially the case for Parsis. “Leaders of the Parsi community in Bombay ... saw themselves as cultural mediators between the English and the Hindus,” Antoinette Burton claims, contributing to their attitude of “aloofness” from the rest of Indian society.⁵ This is a misleading characterization. Admittedly, there were a number of wealthy, Anglicized Parsis—their chests brimming with imperial medallions, their names suffixed with CIEs and KCIEs—who at least proclaimed themselves to fulfill such roles; and who, by the early twentieth century, were making ridiculous suggestions that they shared more affinities with the Englishman than with their fellow Indian neighbors, friends, and business partners.

But there was a marked difference between rhetoric and reality. The labels of “interpreter” and “mediator” presume a certain neutrality and detachedness on the part of elites, traits that they might very well express in published English works for metropolitan readership. However, upon further examination of private correspondence, it is clear that many such elites were firmly embedded within the broader currents of Indian society, quite regularly affirming their Indian identity and a sense of patriotism. This is the case for a supposedly confirmed cultural mediator like Behramji M. Malabari,⁶ and it is certainly so for Dadabhai Naoroji. Naoroji, and the many other Indian

⁵ *At the Heart of Empire: Indians and the Colonial Encounter in Late-Victorian Britain* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 157.

⁶ See Gráinne Goodwin, “A Trustworthy Interpreter between Rulers and Ruled: Behramji Malabari, Colonial and Cultural Interpreter in Nineteenth-Century British India,” *Social History* 38, no. 1 (2013): 1–25.

elites who closely interacted with Britons, both in India and the metropole, played far more nuanced and complex roles. We might better think of them as emissaries. Aside from advocacy of Indian political interests, they promoted knowledge of Indian society and culture, facilitated Indians' contact with British elites, and supported certain economic endeavors. They were sought after by Britons interested in the politics, business environment, history, cultures, and religions of the subcontinent. During the late Victorian and early Edwardian eras, Naoroji was, unquestionably, India's chief emissary in (and to) the United Kingdom.

Naoroji first took upon this role through his work as an educator. While employed at the Cama family firm in London and Liverpool during the late 1850s, the former Elphinstone professor—like his business partner and Young Bombay colleague, K.R. Cama—distinguished himself for his ability to be easily distracted from commercial matters. In 1859, Cama traded the counting house for the classroom, plunging into the world of ancient Iranian studies and working under some of its leading scholars.⁷ Naoroji, although he did not fully cease mercantile activities, also made forays into the western academy, once more taking up the duties of a professor. In March 1856, he was appointed as professor of Gujarati at University College in London.⁸ In this capacity, Naoroji soon became the Gujarati examiner for Indian civil service candidates, where he sat alongside the orientalist Friedrich Max Müller, who tested candidates' Sanskrit abilities, and the

⁷ Interestingly, Susan Stiles Maneck states that it was Naoroji who in 1859 encouraged K.R. Cama to study with some of these scholars. I have been unable to corroborate her assertion. *The Death of Ahriman: Culture, Identity, and Theological Change among the Parsis of India* (Bombay: K.R. Cama Oriental Institute, 1997), 230.

⁸ University College employed many Indians as professors of South Asian languages. One of Naoroji's colleagues was Syed Abdoollah, who taught Hindustani; in a few years they were joined by Ganendra Mohan Tagore, who was a professor of Bengali as well as Indian law. Fisher, *Counterflows to Colonialism*, 427.

legal scholar Henry Maine, who administered papers on law.⁹ Naoroji was, consequently, quickly drawn into circles that included some of the most prominent thinkers and scholars of the Victorian era. He joined leading institutions such as the Royal Asiatic Society, the Liverpool Athenaeum, and the London Ethnological Society. These associations were, as Tristram Hunt argues in his monumental work on the Victorian city, instrumental in the creation of a “rational public sphere” at the very heart of the empire.¹⁰ Within these societies, Naoroji emerged as an academic and eventually popular authority on all matters subcontinental.

In 1861, Naoroji was invited by two Liverpool societies to address British audiences. His first talks were, appropriately, on his own community, the Parsis, and its recent experiments with social and religious reform. On 13 March 1861, he presented “The Manners and Customs of the Parsees” before the Liverpool Philomathic Society, and then, on 18 March, read a paper on “The Parsee Religion” to the Liverpool Literary and Philosophical Society. Naoroji provided his audiences with a unique, first-hand account of some of the activities of Young Bombay while also producing his own translations and interpretations of Zoroastrian religious texts. As these were some of the few English language sources on Zoroastrianism composed by an actual follower of the faith, the papers gained wide popularity in the United Kingdom after they were published as pamphlets. Naoroji’s talks were quoted extensively and cited as recommended reading on Zoroastrianism in various books, magazines, and encyclopedias—oftentimes alongside the works of the most prominent Zoroastrian scholars of the time. They also

⁹ *Eighth Report of Her Majesty’s Civil Service Commissioners* (London: George E. Eyre & William Spottiswoode, 1863), xviii.

¹⁰ Tristram Hunt, *Building Jerusalem: The Rise and Fall of the Victorian City* (London: Phoenix, 2005), 158.

provoked a warm response from Max Müller.¹¹ Thus, Naoroji continued to be drawn into networks of intellectuals in Great Britain.

These talks could have helped Naoroji launch a promising career in religious studies, perhaps even as a counterpart to his old friend K.R. Cama. But the Liverpool- and London-based cotton trader was far more focused on immediate political concerns. From the mid-1860s onward, he helped create institutional space in the imperial capital for discussion of Indian affairs. In 1871, for example, he assisted Mary Carpenter—the founder of the British “ragged schools” movement for street children, who had recently taken a lively interest in Indian educational matters—in inaugurating the London branch of her National Indian Association in Aid of Social Progress in India. The Association aimed “to coöperate with enlightened natives of India, in the efforts for the improvement of their countrymen.”¹² Naoroji was also an active member of the Northbrook Indian Society, founded in 1880, which arranged social activities for Indian students, professionals, and Britons with India connections. These institutions served a particularly significant function: they allowed Indians and Britons to socialize, converse, and debate issues on a relatively level playing field, free from the social and racial hierarchies that bedeviled other societies in the metropole and subcontinent.

Naoroji’s most significant contributions to the capital’s institutional life began in 1865 when he helped established the London Indian Society, superseded the following year by the East India Association. This association, as S.R. Mehrotra has noted, constituted “the most ambitious attempt ever made to set up a comprehensive

¹¹ “The Modern Parsis,” in *Chips from a German Workshop*, vol. 1 (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1891), 167.

¹² *Sic.* “Annual Meeting of the National Indian Association,” *Indian Magazine and Review*, May 1892, 225; “The Indian Association,” *Journal of the National Indian Association*, January 1871, 3.

organization in London of all those who took any interest in India.”¹³ Aside from its political mission—lobbying MPs on Indian policy—the East India Association was designed to promote general knowledge of the country and its inhabitants, serving almost like a cultural bureau. Naoroji stocked its Westminster premises with an extensive library and promoted the Association as a clearinghouse for information on India, a resource for the public as well as Parliament.

The body’s membership reflected its diverse functions. The East India Association brought together British Indian officials and Indian political leaders: Lord Salisbury and Navrozji Fardunji; Henry Rawlinson and Mahadev Govind Ranade; William Wedderburn and W.C. Bonnerjee. But Naoroji also recruited a galaxy of other individuals. There were industrialists like Jamsetji N. Tata and Rancchodlal Chhotalal, scholars such as Rajendralal Mitra and Ramakrishna Gopal Bhandarkar, journalists including Robert Knight and Kristodas Pal, and educators and social reformers like Sayyid Ahmad Khan and Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar. Several members of the Tagore family were in its ranks—Debendranath, Prasanna Kumar, Jatendra Mohan, and others—as were numerous Indian merchants in Hong Kong. Indian princes rounded out the membership rosters.¹⁴

For its era, the East India Association was unique in the sense that it did not exclusively draw members from a narrowly defined region; say, Bombay and its hinterlands or Bengal. Politically, it flopped. By the early 1870s, a conservative Anglo-

¹³ S.R. Mehrotra, *The Emergence of the Indian National Congress* (Delhi: Vikas Publications, 1971), 224.

¹⁴ The East India Association also brought together, for the first time, several leaders of the early nationalist movement. Here, Naoroji and W.C. Bonnerjee, well established in London, were joined by a younger generation including Pheroza Shah Mehta, William Wedderburn, and Mahadev Govind Ranade. “List of Members and Report for 1867-8,” *Journal of the East India Association* 2 (1868): 3–9.

Indian clique had captured control of the association, ending any ambitions that it would serve as a progressive political lobby.¹⁵ But, through this body, Naoroji significantly advanced Indian interests in other ways, putting its leaders, businessmen, cultural figures, and educators in the same social circles as the British elite.

Naoroji did not entirely give up on the idea of a central, London-based institution for Indian political, economic, cultural, and social affairs. After becoming a member in 1886, Naoroji made the National Liberal Club a locus of India-related activity. The British Committee of the Indian National Congress helped fulfill this purpose from the late 1880s onward. After the Imperial Institute opened in 1893, Naoroji, a member of its governing board, helped orchestrate its Indian agenda and programming. By the 1880s, however, Naoroji had fully taken on the mantle of Indian emissary and carried out much of this work by himself. Within the Naoroji Papers, we encounter letters from countless Britons seeking information and assistance on matters concerning India. Political issues, not surprisingly, dominated: numerous churches, social clubs, guild and fraternal organizations, and political associations invited Naoroji to address their members on the need for Indian political reform.¹⁶ Other bodies, like the Warwick and Leamington

¹⁵ As Mehrotra notes, the Anglo-Indian press encouraged Anglo-Indians to “provide a counterpoise” to “the most dangerous fallacies” of Naoroji and his allies. Mehrotra judges that the “experiment of having a central organization in London, presiding over and co-ordinating the activities of the various local associations in India, was a fiasco.” Mehrotra, *The Emergence of the Indian National Congress*, 225, 295.

¹⁶ On 25 March 1888, for example, Naoroji addressed the London Patriotic Club on “the present condition of India.” On 7 December 1888, he was invited to chair the annual dinner of the Goldsmiths and Jewellers Annuity and Asylum Institution. A few days later, on 18 December, he was at the Zion Chapel in Clerkenwell, where he spoke on local self-government in London and Bombay. Moving forward several years to 1899, we find Naoroji lecturing to audiences in Halifax in Yorkshire on 9 October. On the morning of 14 April 1901, he spoke before John Page Hopps’s universalist congregation in Croydon. These are just a few, scattered examples of Naoroji’s many speaking engagements on political topics. W. Hardaker to Naoroji, 20 April 1888, NAI, DNP, H-33; Naoroji to William Wedderburn, 8 December 1888, *ibid.*, N-1 (1271); “Mr. Naoroji on Local Self-Government,” *Weekly News and Chronicle*, 22 December 1888; Naoroji to Henry M. Hyndman, 11 October 1899, NAI, DNP, N-1 (2668); John Page Hopps to Naoroji, 9 April 1901, *ibid.*, H-166 (8).

Women's Liberal Association, simply enquired about recommended reading on current Indian affairs.¹⁷

Yet Indian politics was not the only topic of concern. In November 1892, the secretary of the Society for the Suppression of the Opium Trade asked Naoroji to join their deputation to Lord Kimberley. The Society desired “to make China, not India, the prominent subject on this occasion,” but felt that Naoroji’s participation would give “some indication of the real feeling of educated India on the question.”¹⁸ The following month, James Hole, a member of the Association of Chambers of Commerce of the United Kingdom, asked Naoroji to review his draft book chapter on Indian railways.¹⁹ Hole’s fellow businessmen and industrialists flooded the mailbox of India’s emissary. A textile manufacturer in Stockport, near Manchester, floated a proposal to harvest rhea or ramie fiber—“of which there is an unlimited quantity in the Native States”—and start a new textile industry in India, one that could possibly generate stiff competition for English cotton goods.²⁰ Two young friends from Brixton, meanwhile, sought an appointment with Naoroji to discuss their plans to emigrate to India and enter the building trade.²¹ Other correspondents sought diverse forms of assistance. A London publisher, binding several books for India, asked Naoroji to identify the language in which they were written (“sent transliterations of 2 booklets,” Naoroji noted in the letter margin).²² And in the fall of 1889, Naoroji helped a West Kensington Park resident, a

¹⁷ S.E. Garrington to Naoroji, 21 November 1892, NMML, DNP, #12.

¹⁸ Joseph G. Alexander to Naoroji, 31 October 1892, *ibid.*, #2.

¹⁹ James Hole to Naoroji, 24 December 1892, *ibid.*, #10.

²⁰ T. Campbell to Naoroji, 10 May 1894, NAI, DNP, C-39 (1).

²¹ Charles H. Hill and J. Hunt Stanford to Naoroji, 7 October 1893, *ibid.*, H-113.

“Mrs. Pogosky,” fulfill her wish of acquiring a vessel of *ganga jal* or holy water from the Ganges.²³

In addition to letters from the general public, Naoroji was constantly barraged by interview requests from the British media. During his journeys to and from India, some enterprising journalists even went to the extent of telegraphing the next port of call of Naoroji’s steamer in order to scoop a story on Indian political developments.²⁴ But, like Pogosky, these writers and newspapermen also reached out to Naoroji for matters of social and cultural interest. On 22 October 1894, Naoroji sat down with W.J. Frost, a reporter from *Chums*, a “high class boys paper,” to discuss “What Indian Boys Play At.” Frost and Naoroji explored the similarities between Indian and British childhood games: *chandani andhari*, for example, was very similar to tug-of-war, while they discovered that Bombay boys played marbles with different methodologies than their London counterparts. Naoroji grew particularly animated while discussing *chopat*, a board game that was “so exciting that it was played by men as well as boys,” and he reminisced about childhood *gilli danda* matches. But, he concluded, games had changed considerably since his childhood, and “at the present time Indian boys go in largely for English games (cricket especially).”²⁵

²² Tom B. Chant to Naoroji, 30 May 1895, *ibid.*, C-105 (1).

²³ Naoroji to Mrs. Pogosky, 4 November 1889, *ibid.*, N-1 (1530).

²⁴ Upon Naoroji’s departure from Bombay following the 1893 Lahore Congress, one particularly enterprising Reuters journalist, Frederick W. Emmett, wrote to and telegraphed these ports, seeking a statement. “May I ask you not to give any information to my other Press men until you have communicated your statement to me.” Emmett offered to meet Naoroji dockside at Dover, Tilbury, or Plymouth. to Dadabhai Naoroji, 23 January 1894, *ibid.*, E-48.

²⁵ W.J. Frost to Naoroji, 11 October 1894, *ibid.*, F-89; “What Indian Boys Play At,” *Chums*, 15 May 1895, 604.

Four years later, in 1898, *The Vegetarian*—edited by Mohandas K. Gandhi’s close friend, Josiah Oldfield—interviewed Naoroji about Indian eating habits. The interview was conducted by a Raymond Blathwayt, who, incidentally, had earlier relied on Naoroji for procuring certain Indian contacts.²⁶ It began in a somewhat unusual manner:

‘You are a Vegetarian, I presume, are you not?’ I said.
‘No,’ replied Mr. Naoroji, ‘I am not.’
‘That’s rather awkward!’ I said, ‘because I am not one either.’

After this rather unpromising start, Naoroji, claiming that he was too old to give up his meat-eating ways, offered a spirited defense of India’s vegetarian traditions. “The wonderful thought and philosophy and the highest intellect of India are, I think, due to Vegetarianism,” he maintained. When Blathwayt suggested that a lack of meat weakened “both the physical and moral fibre” of Indians, Naoroji shot back at once, debunking this classic imperialist argument. Laborers who carried massive cotton bales in Bombay, after all, “are entirely Vegetarians,” while amongst Brahmins and Buddhists, vegetarianism had cultivated a high moral regard for life. The problem lay instead with the overindulgent Englishman. “The English who go to India eat far too much meat; there is no doubt that they would be stronger and healthier if they took less, and also drunk less, or not at all.” In Britain, meanwhile, excessive meat-eating had made people “much more ferocious than is either right or desirable.” “And are we here in this world only to fight and grab?” he questioned Blathwayt. “Is that your highest ideal of patriotism?”²⁷ Naoroji,

²⁶ Raymond Blathwayt to Naoroji, 30 December 1897, NAI, DNP, B-153.

²⁷ Raymond Blathwayt, “Hap-Hazard Vegetarianism: A Talk with Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji,” *The Vegetarian*, 29 January 1898, 73.

ever the politically minded individual, could not resist an opportunity to rebuke Britain on its imperialist ways, even within a conversation on dietary habits.



Blathwayt concluded his interview with a discussion of a portrait he saw in Naoroji's possession showing the former MP next to Lord Salisbury, with a line of text underneath asking, "Which is the Black Man?" Reference to the notorious black man incident of 1888, as well as Blathwayt's stereotypical assessment of Indian vegetarianism, brings us to one of Naoroji's greatest responsibilities as an Indian emissary: responding to and combating the prejudiced, racist attitudes that many Britons exhibited toward their Indian subjects. Naoroji was a particularly vocal "counter-preacher," to adopt C.A. Bayly's phrase.²⁸ While taking on some of the Victorian era's greatest exponents of bigotry, he drew heavily upon his own academic training and the scholarly networks he had forged since Young Bombay.

His first foray into Victorian racial politics had taken place as early as 1866, when he delivered a paper titled "The European and Asiatic Races" before the London Ethnological Society. Naoroji's paper constituted a lengthy rebuttal to the rants of the Society's octogenarian president, John Crawfurd (1793-1868), a politically influential, self-styled orientalist who, in papers with titles such as "Colour as the Test of the Races of Man," exhibited some of the worst racial prejudices of his time. In spite of his extreme positions, Crawfurd was a formidable opponent: his close friends included men of power

²⁸ C.A. Bayly, *Recovering Liberties: Indian Thought in the Age of Liberalism and Empire* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 9.

and influence such as Mountstuart Elphinstone, Henry Thomas Colebrooke, Wilhelm von Humboldt, and Alexander von Humboldt.²⁹

It appears that a lecture that Crawford delivered on 13 February 1866, “On the Physical and Mental Characteristics of the European and Asiatic Races of Man,” particularly riled Naoroji and provoked him to respond. The Scotsman declared “Asiatics,” broadly defined, to be markedly inferior to Europeans in terms of judgment, taste, imagination, creativity, enterprise, and perseverance. Aside from deploying hackneyed theories of oriental despotism and superior European physical prowess—“The most natural attitude of the European is to stand erect, that of the Asian to sit”—Crawford declared that Asian societies lacked some of the basic elements of civilization, such as great literary traditions. He singled out the *Shahnameh*, one of Naoroji’s favorite literary sources during his childhood, and claimed that it was simply “a series of wild romances of imaginary heroes, and is of such slender merit that no orientalist has ever ventured on presenting it in a European translation.” In a series of sweeping generalizations, Crawford also declared that Asians lacked any moral sense, enjoyed no good government, and were habitual polygamists, meting out especially cruel treatment toward women.³⁰

It took Naoroji a few weeks to produce a suitable rejoinder. Sometime after eight o’clock in the evening of 27 March 1866 he took to the lectern at the Ethnological Society, hammering away at Crawford’s racial arguments well into the late night hours. By propounding on the innate inferiority of Asians, Crawford had made a grave mistake,

²⁹ Rev. Thomas Thomson, “Crawford, John, F.R.S.,” *A Biographical Dictionary of Eminent Scotsmen* (London: Blackie and Son, 1870), 592–3.

³⁰ John Crawford, “On the Physical and Mental Characteristics of the European and the Asiatic Races of Man,” in *Transactions of the Ethnological Society of London (1861)*, vol. 5 (London: John Murray, 1867), 59, 60, 64, 71, 76–7.

“one of those which foreign travellers and writers are very apt to fall into from superficial observation and imperfect information.” Naoroji ranged about him diverse sources on the histories of Arabia, Persia, India, and China. He spoke of the literature of Kalidasa and Confucius, cited authorities ranging from Strabo to Abu’l Fazl, and assembled together parliamentary testimony on current educational advances in India. Jesus, he reminded Crawford, was technically an Asian. Delving into contemporary scholarship, he quoted freely from William Jones’s work on ancient Indian grammatical analysis, John Malcolm’s descriptions of the literary output of ancient Persia, and Andrew Crichton’s arguments on the west’s indebtedness to Arab science.³¹ This careful and detailed research, standing in vivid contrast to Crawford’s motley collection of stereotypes and crank racial theories, made Naoroji’s rejoinder all the more powerful.

Naoroji, furthermore, skillfully employed one particular intellectual tradition, that of ancient Iran and Zoroastrianism, in order to disprove claims that Crawford indiscriminately applied to an entire continent. Here, Naoroji had a critical advantage: he possessed immense knowledge of his own religious tradition and, significantly, had built up a wide network of scholarly contacts. He liberally cited from his personal correspondence with these scholars in the course of his paper. In order to address Crawford’s claims about the supposed lack of literary output from Asian civilizations, Naoroji focused on the Scotsman’s assault on the *Shahnameh*. He turned to Edward B. Eastwick—an influential voice on Persian affairs, translator of Sa’di’s *Golestan*, and personal friend—who opined that Firdausi’s epic poem was on par with Homer’s *Iliad*.

³¹ Dadabhai Naoroji, “The European and Asiatic Races,” in *Essays, Speeches, Addresses and Writings (on Indian Politics) of the Hon’ble Dadabhai Naoroji*, ed. Chunilal Lallubhai Parekh (Bombay: Caxton Printing Works, 1887), 1, 3, 2, 5.

Refuting Crawford's assertion that the Shahnameh had merited no proper European translation, Naoroji produced personal correspondence with Julius von Mohl, K.R. Cama's old tutor at the Collège de France and currently the secretary of the Société Asiatique in Paris. Mohl, Naoroji read from a letter, was in the process of producing his fifth volume of a French translation of the Shahnameh. The Paris-based scholar also offered a sharp rebuke to Crawford's Eurocentric attitudes. "Oriental literature can only take its place in the universal literature of mankind," Naoroji quoted from Mohl's letter, "when intelligent historians show its value for history in its largest sense ... and show, too, how large has been the past of the East, and how great in some respects its influence."³²

Naoroji must have been particularly perturbed by Crawford's generalized comments on women. Addressing his declarations on the polygamous tendencies of Asians, Naoroji—after asking his opponent to consider the case of Mormonism in the west—pulled out letters from Friedrich Spiegel, the respected professor of oriental languages at Erlangen and another former teacher of K.R. Cama. Spiegel, Naoroji noted, could not find any evidence of polygamy in the Zoroastrian religious texts and agreed with his correspondent that Parsis had always been largely monogamous. Lastly, in order to draw from another Asian intellectual tradition and thereby argue in favor of the universal value of truthfulness, Naoroji instanced correspondence with his colleague at University College, Theodor Goldstücker, professor of Sanskrit, who pointed to how truth was celebrated, and untruthfulness condemned, in the Rigveda and Yajurveda.³³

³² Ibid., 1–5.

³³ Ibid., 14, 11.

Having offered a defense of Asian civilizations, Naoroji moved in for the attack. He asked his audience to consider how an Asian, resident in London for a period of time, might perceive European culture and civilization. Cleverly using the observations of an anonymous Parsi friend, Naoroji took the opportunity to elaborate on the many social problems evident in Victorian Britain, problems which rendered hypocritical any claims of western moral and civilizational superiority. He spoke of the extreme poverty in the cities, the abundance of illicit activities in London, corruption in politics, the duplicitous dealings of merchants, soaring crime rates, and rampant marital infidelity. Moreover, he pointed out, these were the same people who had conquered a nation on the premise of trade, who drew exorbitant revenues from it every year, taxed its people to death, and still managed to claim that they had great moral purpose in ruling India. This Parsi friend, Naoroji claimed, had ultimately concluded that “the only God the English worshipped was gold; they would do anything to get it ... If it were discovered that gold existed in human blood, they would manage, with good reasons to boot, to extract it from thence.”³⁴ Given his emerging views about Indian poverty and the drain of wealth, it is possible that Naoroji, himself, was the anonymous Parsi observer of British life and society. Regardless, he was able to conclude that, if Crawford could declare Europeans to be superior to Asians, then an Asian could declare London to be the most immoral and hypocritical place on earth.

By the end of the evening’s deliberations, Naoroji had decisively turned the tables against John Crawford, mobilizing a barrage of evidence to challenge him on his own ground of scholarly authority, within the very society where he was president. The

³⁴ Ibid., 16-17.

transactions of the Ethnological Society, unfortunately, do not provide us with any idea of Crawford's reactions to Naoroji's paper, although one contemporary journal remarked on "the interchange of vigorous and forcible repartees, of a sort not usually encountered in scientific transactions."³⁵ Naoroji's rejoinder seems to have taken the steam out of the octogenarian president, who delivered a scant few more papers—none of them featuring the vitriol and stark prejudice that marked his earlier rants—before passing away in May 1868.

Crawford's death, of course, did not bring to an end racial debates or the Indian emissary's participation in them. As Indian nationalist demands became bolder, prejudicial attitudes in Britain only seemed to worsen. Hardly a month after Crawford breathed his last, Naoroji took up Anglo-Indian and British criticism of a petition he had dispatched to the India Office, one that called for the Indianization of the civil service. Perturbed by his critics' allegations that Indians lacked the integrity necessary for positions of power, he urged an audience at the East India Association to "observe a little more around themselves, observe the amount of fraud and 'doing' in this metropolis." How could Britons talk about the integrity of others when there were "convictions for false weights, the puffs of advertisements, the corruption among the 'independent and intelligent electors,'" and many other such sordid examples under their very noses?³⁶ Some years later, before the Hunter Commission on Indian Education, Naoroji, exhausted by the persistence of prejudiced attitudes regarding civil service reform, declared that "the time for this excuse of native unfitness and want of command of influence and

³⁵ "Reviews," *Medical Times and Gazette*, 11 May 1867, 506.

³⁶ Dadabhai Naoroji, "Admission of Educated Natives into the Indian Civil Service (East India Association)," in *Essays, Speeches, Addresses and Writings (on Indian Politics) of the Hon'ble Dadabhai Naoroji*, ed. Chunilal Lallubhai Parekh (Bombay: Caxton Printing Works, 1887), 81.

respect is gone.”³⁷ These were obviously not the words of an impartial mediator or cultural interpreter.

Naoroji continued to combat bigots and bigotry after returning to London in 1886. Barely two months before Lord Salisbury uttered the words “black man” before an Edinburgh audience, Naoroji felt compelled to deliver a talk on Zoroastrianism—a modified version of his 1861 papers—on account of “prejudice raised against me on the score of religion,” most likely in relation to his recent nomination as the Liberal candidate for Central Finsbury (see Chapter Five, Section III).³⁸ The black man incident, therefore, did not occur in isolation. It was part of a long chain of events that put Naoroji at the center of vicious racial politics in Britain. And it was but one example of how xenophobia cut uncomfortably close to home for India’s chief emissary.

III. Interrogating Miscellanea: The Everyday Life of Political Leaders and Political Movements

The Naoroji Papers provide stunning detail of how the Parsi leader carried out his duties as emissary. This is because, after arriving in London in mid-April 1886, he appears to have kept all incoming correspondence, regardless of importance. This correspondence—from 1886 until his final departure from London in 1907—constitutes the overwhelming bulk of the cataloged items in the Naoroji Papers. Consequently, letters of great political importance jostle alongside ordinary commercial receipts, subscription forms, medical prescriptions, random press clippings, and the nineteenth century

³⁷ “A Note Submitted to the Education Commission of 1882 by Dadabhai Naoroji,” in *Evidence Taken by the Bombay Provincial Committee, and Memorials Addressed to the Education Commission (Bombay, Vol II)* (Calcutta: Superintendent of Government Printing, India, 1884), 96.

³⁸ Naoroji to Malabari, 12 October 1888, NAI, DNP, N-1 (1225).

equivalent of junk mail. Within the archive, the researcher is confronted with a veritable mountain of miscellanea. We learn from an eyeglass prescription from 1894 that, politics aside, Naoroji really was far-sighted.³⁹ A note from William Hutchinson & Co., a Charing Cross-based banking firm, informs us that in October 1901 Naoroji's account was overdrawn by £7.17s.10d.—an embarrassing personal drain of wealth that occurred just a month or so after *Poverty and UnBritish Rule* was published.⁴⁰ A different sort of drain had plagued Naoroji a few months earlier: F.W. Ellis, a plumbing contractor from Upper Norwood, gravely informed him that his toilet was plugged.⁴¹ And, shortly after returning from the 1906 Calcutta Congress, where he had endorsed the Swadeshi Movement, an octogenarian Naoroji entered into correspondence with Messrs. Jacobs & Clark of Camden Town for the purchase of a decisively *videshi* (foreign) article, “English and American Artificial Teeth.”⁴² Reams of newspaper and journal clippings, meanwhile, reveal a man with a broad range of interests. Amidst pieces on British South African policy, American Progressive politics, and alien labor laws in British Columbia, we stumble upon a yellowing article praising the qualities of that versatile South American pack animal, the llama.

It is easy to dismiss such documents as trivial and unimportant, having little value other than providing occasionally humorous anecdotes. Put together, however, these random items help us reconstruct, to a startlingly detailed degree, the activities and routines of Naoroji and his political allies in London. They help us understand the

³⁹ R. & J. Beck Ltd. to Naoroji, 31 January 1898, *ibid.*, B-72 (5).

⁴⁰ William Hutchinson & Co. to Naoroji, 28 October 1901, *ibid.*, H-213 (8).

⁴¹ F.W. Ellis to Naoroji, 24 April 1901, *ibid.*, E-42.

⁴² A. Jacobs to Naoroji, 2 April 1907, *ibid.*, J-4.

everyday life of political leaders and political movements. Fulfilling the duties of an Indian emissary, standing for Parliament, and nurturing the Congress were, after all, no easy tasks. As correspondence in the Naoroji Papers indicates, they required Naoroji and his colleagues to maintain grueling schedules, balancing hours of letter-writing with private meetings, participation in London's public sphere, speech and article drafting, speaking engagements, fundraising activity, and financial accounts work. There were cultural challenges, as well. Working in London necessitated adjustment to a society, physical climate, and urban environment that were vastly different from the familiarities of Bombay. Naoroji had to contend with nuisances such as pollution-laden fog, bone-chilling winters, vast commutes, bad food, a dramatically higher cost of living, and the occasional overzealous Christian evangelist. And, prior to shutting down Dadabhai Naoroji & Co. in 1881, he had to do all of this while running his own business. Through the miscellanea in the Naoroji Papers, we gain an unrivaled perspective on the everyday life of a major Indian nationalist, as well as how this everyday life undergirded the broader nationalist movement.

Archival material indicates that, for an Indian elite in London, Naoroji maintained a comparatively simple lifestyle, something that most likely complemented his workaholic ways. W.C. Bonnerjee settled his family into a sprawling house in Croydon, which he named "Kidderpore," while Mancherji M. Bhownagree lodged in the tony new garden suburb of Bedford Park in Chiswick.⁴³ Naoroji, meanwhile, chose to reside where he worked: in July 1886, he rented a room at the National Liberal Club in Westminster,

⁴³ Prior to 1893, Bhownagree resided a house named Jessville on Priory Road in Bedford Park. After 1894, his residence was Jasmine Lodge on Spencer Road in Chiswick. Mancherji M. Bhownagree to Naoroji, Christmas greeting card, December 1891, *ibid.*, B-130 (3); Bhownagree to George Birdwood, 5 May 1894, BL, IOR, George Birdwood Papers, MSS Eur F 216/65.

where he conducted most of his meetings and interviews, where he had easy access to Parliament and the India Office, and where he became a fixture in the letter-writing room. It was an arrangement that allowed Naoroji to take on even more tasks and responsibilities. He was evidently a man in a hurry. One visiting reporter at the National Liberal Club expressed amazement at the rapidity in which Naoroji spoke, especially while delivering an analysis of Indian exports. At the end of the MP's monologue, the reporter wryly commented that, "Here Mr. Naoroji paused to perform an operation known as breathing, which, I am informed by medical friends, is a process that human beings cannot safely neglect for any length of time."⁴⁴

The National Liberal Club was not Naoroji's only place of work. After entering into the electoral fray in Central Finsbury, he set up an office at 8 Percival Street in Clerkenwell. This was an unadorned building surrounded by "the homes of clockmakers, chainmakers, and of goldsmiths, public-houses, lodging-houses, and the abodes of dog-fanciers."⁴⁵ From 8 Percival Street, he was at close quarters to the lecture halls, workingmen's clubs, and union offices where he was regularly in demand as a speaker or chief guest.

We know much more about Naoroji's life at 72 Anerley Park, or Washington House, a larger abode near the Crystal Palace where he lived between 1898 and 1904 (Image 7). Here, as a fellow Indian reported, there were "loaded bookshelves" and "piles

⁴⁴ "Commercial Conversations. XXXVI.—With Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji, M.P.," *Commerce*, 7 March 1894, 361, in NAI, DNP, Part IV, 80.

⁴⁵ I am not quite sure what is meant by "dog-fanciers." The writer and artist completing an article on "houses of celebrated people" evidently looked upon the vicinity with disdain: "fearing to penetrate into this locality, lots were drawn as to which should go, with the result that the artist went and the other stayed at home." They continued: "No. 8, Mr. Naoroji's house, is not a castle in dimensions, but on the lower window, in large black letters, is painted 'Mr. Naoroji's Office,' and doubtless it is thither that many of his constituents come and air their grievances." This house no longer survives. Warren E. Bell, "The Houses of Celebrated People, Part II," *Windsor Magazine*, December 1895, 227.



Image 7: A 2012 photograph of 72 Anerley Park, London. This was Naoroji’s residence between 1898 and 1904. Photograph by author.

of books arranged against the walls of almost every room.”⁴⁶ Although a septuagenarian at the time, Naoroji continued to maintain a punishing schedule. He began wading through correspondence at ten in the morning—Naoroji admitted that “I am not what is called an early riser”—arrived at another office in Lambeth by two o’clock, and returned

⁴⁶ Judging from Naoroji’s marginal comments in this article, he seemed somewhat perturbed by the author’s claim that there was “not a single volume of poetry” in his book collection. M.J.C. Mukerji, “Dadabhai Naoroji: A Character Sketch,” *Hindustan Review*, September 1910, in NAI, DNP, Part IV, 207.

home by midnight, oftentimes putting in an extra one or two hours' work before sleeping. It was probably in this Lambeth office that, in 1906, he met with Mohandas K. Gandhi, who described it as a garret approximately eight feet by six feet in size, "with hardly room in it for another chair." As for holidays and breaks from work, Naoroji claimed not to know them. When, in 1903, a journalist expressed skepticism and pressed him on the matter, Naoroji admitted that he had taken a month's leave at the seaside resort of Bournemouth—about fourteen years beforehand, and due to his doctor's strict orders that he leave London and conduct no work. He appears, nevertheless, to have violated these orders. A note from his campaign secretary, R.M.H. Griffith (d. 1906) indicates that, while in Bournemouth, Naoroji delivered at least one public address on Indian affairs.⁴⁷

In order to maintain his frenetic schedule, Naoroji relied heavily on the assistance of Griffith and a number of other agents and secretaries. One of these secretaries was Indian, J.C. Mukerji, who appears to have worked for Naoroji during the late 1890s and early 1900s.⁴⁸ All the others were Englishmen. For his 1886 campaign in Holborn, Naoroji employed Thomas P. Gower, who appears to have had a long association with the local Liberal association in the constituency. Unfortunately, there is hardly any surviving correspondence between Naoroji and Gower. The few extant letters, however, provide an estimate of how much money it took to run for Parliament in the late Victorian

⁴⁷ Naoroji told the reporter that he went to Bournemouth in either 1888 or 1889, but it appears, from archival records, that he actually went in December 1890. Rustom Pestonji Masani, *Dadabhai Naoroji: The Grand Old Man of India* (London: G. Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1939), 7; "A Day of My Life—No. 26—Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji, Indian Patriot and Statesman," *Household Words*, 27 June 1903, 519, NAI, DNP, Part IV, 148; R.M.H. Griffith to Naoroji, December 1890, *ibid.*, G-116 (257).

⁴⁸ The earliest evidence of Mukerji's residence in the United Kingdom dates from 1890, when Naoroji sent him a check. Mukerji was later involved in the London Indian Society. Dadabhai Naoroji to J.C. Mukerji, 5 February 1890, *ibid.*, N-1 (1569); "Meeting of London Indian Society (24 May 1901)" BL, IOR, L/PJ/6/570, File 970.

era. Naoroji's campaign, in spite of being a little more than two weeks in duration, was a relatively expensive affair. Two days after polls closed, Gower calculated expenses totaling around £454, subsequently sending in an additional bill for £52 "for services rendered as Election Agent."⁴⁹

Gower quickly disappears from the Naoroji Papers. In contrast, Naoroji's correspondence with Griffith, his secretary during the Central Finsbury campaigns, runs to around two thousand letters, spanning some fifteen years. Most of these letters detail the everyday workings of Naoroji's second parliamentary campaign between 1888 and 1892. This correspondence serves as an encyclopedic resource for the constituency, shedding light on long-forgotten local power brokers and the feuds that animated Clerkenwell politics. It also provides us with a vividly detailed picture of how an ordinary Englishman, someone with no outside connection to India, worked with Naoroji for the same political cause. Griffith was, evidently, fiercely devoted to the Central Finsbury candidate. "You may rely upon my loyalty to the end," he concluded one letter, penned in July 1889 while some local Liberal Party powerbrokers hostile to Naoroji attempted to push him out of the race.⁵⁰

He was also, like his employer, a consummate workaholic. His letters, written in a tearing hurry, read like colossal run-on sentences; he evidently had no time for punctuation. In his daily dispatches to Naoroji, often sent only by the midnight post, Griffith's taxing schedule unfurls before the researcher: meetings at various local political associations, which occasionally descended into near brawls and shouting

⁴⁹ Thomas P. Gower to Naoroji, 7 July 1886, NAI, DNP, G-96 (1); Gower to Naoroji, 17 July 1886, *ibid.*, G-96 (2).

⁵⁰ Griffith to Naoroji, 3 July 1889, *ibid.*, G-116 (8).

matches; appointments with important constituents, Liberal Party leaders, and members of the Metropolitan Liberal and Radical Federation; and constant negotiations with printers, publishers, and operators of public halls. Interspersed in this correspondence are Griffith's urgent telegrams to Naoroji hinting at numerous crises encountered and diffused (13 May 1890: "Not tonight can you call this afternoon;" 25 September 1890: "Crowded court reporters present makes suppression undesirable;" 13 April 1891: "Special messenger coming on to you now").⁵¹

Griffith, more than any other individual, helped transform the Indian emissary, a foreign figure with a name unpronounceable for many Clerkenwell locals, into a worthy parliamentary representative for a working class, central London neighborhood. It was Griffith, for example, who suggested that the candidate to go by "D. Naoroji," which would be "shorter and easier."⁵² He made countless other decisions on relatively trivial matters that, taken together, ingratiated Naoroji with his would-be constituents. Wading through the reams of letters from local residents and associations, Griffith decided which meetings Naoroji should attend, which social causes Naoroji should support, and even what type of attire he should wear to particular functions.⁵³ Once Naoroji was elected to Parliament, the secretary's work took a markedly different direction. He shielded the busy MP from numerous frivolous requests, such as that of a "little old lady" who, in July 1893, wanted to press her claims that the British government owed her £300 million.⁵⁴

⁵¹ Griffith to Naoroji, telegram, 13 May 1890, *ibid.*, G-116 (155); Griffith to Naoroji, telegram, 25 September 1890, *ibid.*, G-116 (212); Griffith to Naoroji, 13 April 1891, *ibid.*, G-116 (315).

⁵² Griffith to Naoroji, 26 April 1890, *ibid.*, G-116 (154).

⁵³ For example, with regard to a local concert, Griffith advised Naoroji that "evening dress is *not* necessary and perhaps may be the exception." Griffith to Naoroji, 15 November 1891, *ibid.*, G-116 (430).

⁵⁴ Griffith to Naoroji, 31 July 1893, *ibid.*, G-116 (780).

Conscious that “people have a particular notion of what a Parsi is and sometimes misunderstandings arise,” Griffith took care to edit Naoroji’s speeches, adding references to certain universalist religious principles.⁵⁵ And, while Naoroji was deep in mourning after the sudden death of his son, Ardeshir, in October 1893 in India, he took charge of the MP’s correspondence and stood in for him at several appointments and social functions.⁵⁶ In the everyday life of Naoroji’s parliamentary campaigns and career, therefore, Griffith was a simply indispensable figure—someone who, although virtually unknown outside of Clerkenwell in his day, and now entirely forgotten, played a vital role in the propagation of India’s political demands. It was therefore entirely appropriate that, in his address to the Lahore Congress of 1893, Naoroji paid tribute to his tireless secretary, singling him out as “one of my best friends and supporters.”⁵⁷

As a parliamentary candidate, MP, and Congress leader—someone with one ear to the ground in England and the other directed toward India—the rhythms of Naoroji’s workday were dictated by the dispatch and delivery of three particular items: letters, telegrams, and newspapers. Correspondence with Griffith and other London contacts was swift and easy—mail was delivered several times a day—but letters to and from India were another matter altogether. The early Congress was, in terms of its organizational and geographic breadth, a path-breaking movement: its leaders sought to coordinate activity between London and the far-flung cities of the subcontinent. But this was no easy task. “The Mail”—it was deliberately referred to as a proper noun—came on weekly

⁵⁵ Griffith to Naoroji, 6 September 1893, *ibid.*, G-116 (1795).

⁵⁶ Griffith to Fram M. Dadina, 13 October 1893, *ibid.*, G-116 (831).

⁵⁷ “Twenty-Second Congress—Calcutta—1906: Presidential Address,” in *Speeches and Writings of Dadabhai Naoroji*, ed. G.A. Natesan, second edition (Madras: G.A. Natesan & Co., 1917), 23.

steamers that plied between London and Bombay, Madras, or Calcutta. In the Naoroji Papers, we notice a frantic burst of letter-writing activity before mail was collected and dispatched either eastward or westward. Nationalist political activity, therefore, happened in spurts: if Naoroji asked Malabari to collect Congress donations and subscriptions in western India, he would have to wait a minimum of two weeks for any response. Rather simple activities took months to coordinate. For example, it took around five months to prepare and print the official report of the first Madras Congress, held in December 1887, since its authors and contributors were dispersed between Madras, Bombay, and London.⁵⁸

To overcome such delays, as well as the frequent miscarriage of letters and packages, Naoroji and his Congress colleagues increasingly relied on the telegraph. This was not a faultless technology, either: Malabari occasionally complained about unanswered telegrams, while operators sometimes garbled the content of their messages.⁵⁹ Newspapers, at least, seemed to arrive relatively regularly at Naoroji's offices. He received a steady stream of the principal papers and journals published in London and Bombay, as well as others such as the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* (published out of Calcutta) and the *Hindu* (printed in Madras). Correspondence, receipts, and subscriptions provide an idea of other periodicals on his reading list: occasional editions of the *New York Sun* and *New York Post*, the *Women's Suffrage Record*, and the *Journal of the Indian Mathematical Society*.

⁵⁸ Naoroji to Malabari, 11 May 1888, NAI, DNP, N-1 (1010).

⁵⁹ For example, in response to Malabari's telegram asking about whether Naoroji had been selected as the official Liberal candidate in Central Finsbury, Naoroji telegraphed "undecided." Malabari, however, received the message as "Malabari undecided," causing some confusion. Naoroji to Malabari, 16 August 1888, *ibid.*, N-1 (1116).

Receipts and subscriptions also tell us that, between the late 1880s and early 1900s, Naoroji was deeply involved in a variety of societies and organizations across the United Kingdom (see Appendix B). At first glance, it is difficult to fathom his motivations for maintaining certain affiliations. Why would an Indian emissary join the Church of England Burial, Funeral, and Mourning Reform Association—dedicated to objectives like the institution of cheaper, decomposable coffins, limited floral decoration, and curtailed funereal feasting—or serve as a vice president of London’s Goldsmiths and Jewellers’ Annuity and Asylum Institution? What, precisely, was the Independent Order of Rechabites and why was Naoroji an honorary member?

For answers, we must take into account Britain’s vibrant public sphere during the late Victorian era. Through participation in this public sphere, Naoroji fraternized with the British elite, forged myriad connections with other movements, and burnished his own political and social standing in and beyond his constituency (Central Finsbury, for example, had a high concentration of goldsmiths and jewelers). Masonry, as Vahid Jalil Fozdar has noted, was an extremely important institution for Naoroji and other early nationalists, both in India and Britain. Naoroji had been a founder, secretary, and the first Indian master of the Marquis of Dalhousie lodge in London.⁶⁰ Correspondence indicates that he was also a member of at least two Crusaders’ lodges. In February 1893, he joined lodge No. 1677, which met, appropriately, at a tavern in Finsbury.⁶¹ R.M.H. Griffith was a fellow Mason who ran a “Masonic and General Business Newspaper” in Clerkenwell. In their voluminous surviving correspondence, we learn much—perhaps too much—

⁶⁰ Vahid Jalil Fozdar, *Constructing the ‘Brother’: Freemasonry, Empire and Nationalism in India, 1840-1925* (University of California, Berkeley, 2001), 435–9.

⁶¹ He had been a member of the Crusaders’ Lodge No. 1159 until December 1871. Alfred F. Goode to Naoroji, 13 November 1894, NAI, DNP, C-293 (2); Goode to Naoroji, 30 November 1894, *ibid.*, G-13 (1).

about Finsbury Masonic life. But Naoroji was involved in many other fraternal organizations. He seemed particularly active in those dedicated to temperance, such as the Independent Order of Good Templars, where he was a lodge president in 1900 (the Rechabites, mentioned earlier, were also against drink).⁶² Other affiliations confirm Naoroji's progressive political leanings. He was a fellow committee member with Keir Hardie in the Democratic Club, joined Sidney Webb's Fabian Society, and was a vice president of the Free Land League, committed to the abolition of primogeniture and customary tenure.⁶³ More surprisingly, we find the septuagenarian MP serving as the president of the Central Finsbury Football Club and vice president of the North London Institute Cricket Club.⁶⁴ For Naoroji, the public sphere evidently included the sports field.

These receipts and subscriptions tell us about one other important way that he took part in the public sphere: through liberal philanthropy. From 1886 through his retirement in 1907, the Indian emissary clearly had access to large reserves of funds that he used, in part, to donate to various British institutions, associations, and charities (see Appendix C). Some of this money was, most likely, from India, from a number of rich benefactors who had pledged support for political activity in Britain (see Chapter Five, Section IV). Some also came from shrewd investments. Naoroji held shares in a number of British publications, presses, and commercial firms (see Appendix D). John Chapman, proprietor and editor of the *Westminster Review*—the forum for Herbert Spencer, John Stuart Mill, and Eleanor Marx Aveling—recruited Naoroji as a company director and

⁶² T. Cumner [?], 11 October 1900, *ibid.*, C-295.

⁶³ Democratic Club, flier, n.d., *ibid.*, D-76 (1); Edward R. Pease to Naoroji, 7 July 1906, *ibid.*, F-1 (4); F.A. Creed to Naoroji, 8 November 1894, *ibid.*, F-86.

⁶⁴ Griffith to Naoroji, 1 September 1893, *ibid.*, G-116 (803); Naoroji to Griffith, 16 March 1892, *ibid.*, N-1 (2252).

relied upon him to enlist further Indian shareholders.⁶⁵ Naoroji might also have invested in First Garden City, Limited, the company that built Letchworth, and an enterprise constructing Buenos Aires' tram system.

Naoroji developed a distinct philanthropic strategy, donating to institutions within his chosen electoral constituencies and those that complemented his political and social interests. As the Liberal candidate and MP for Central Finsbury, he signed relatively large checks for local hospitals, labor union chapters, dispensaries, almshouses, and schools. Outside of the constituency, Naoroji's donations tended to go toward unions, educational endeavors, women's associations, and temperance activities. Philanthropy is, of course, a two-way process. Naoroji donated to causes with which he sympathized, but we also know that the leaders of such causes identified him as a sympathizer and actively sought his support. From analysis of donation sources, we can, furthermore, observe a distinct pattern of political radicalization. In the early 1890s, Naoroji donated to numerous Liberal Party affiliates and organizations, many in the vicinity of Finsbury. By the end of the decade, he was donating to, and receiving requests for donations from, outfits that were much further to the left: Hyndman's Social Democratic Federation, the London Socialist Sunday School Union, and a First of May Celebration Committee ("Representing Trade Unions, Socialist Bodies, and other Working Class Societies").

While wading through the miscellanea, we can discern one final, especially critical factor in the everyday lives of Naoroji, his Congress peers, and other associates: health. Individuals in the Naoroji Papers regularly signed off their letters by wishing good

⁶⁵ Chapman noted: "The Review has often dealt with Indian subjects; and in proposing that you should be requested to become one of the Directors, I was influenced by the consideration that you are especially competent to represent the interests of India and, therefore, to offer suggestions of Indian subjects which you may think it especially desirable to have discussed in the Review." *Sic.* Annie Chapman to Naoroji, 8 December 1899, *ibid.*, C-107 (1); John Chapman to Naoroji, 25 July 1892, *ibid.*, F-34 (26).

health to their correspondents. This was no mere formality. Due to overwork, constant travel, and the particular urban environments in which they lived, early Indian nationalists were extremely vulnerable to sickness. Naoroji was particularly affected by London's pollution as well as cold spells, regularly complaining of colds and throat infections. In letters dispatched to William Wedderburn in the late 1880s, he occasionally gave equal weight to his search for a parliamentary constituency and his latest consultations with a throat specialist in New Cross, J.W. Bond.⁶⁶ While residing at the National Liberal Club, Naoroji was literally in the thick of the city's noxious fog, and also next to the fetid Thames. Consequently, he seized upon a handful of opportunities to escape the heart of the metropolis. One refuge was the home of a Parsi friend, Nasarwanji J. Moolla, who resided in Lee, a suburb due south from Greenwich. Here, Naoroji enjoyed a few days in "pure air—out of the smoke of London," while still being able to commute to appointments in Westminster.⁶⁷ Health, it appears, was the prime reason that Naoroji vacated his room at the National Liberal Club and, eventually, relocated to Anerley Park.⁶⁸ But sickness still haunted him: during the so-called "khaki election" of 1900, he was too ill to contest a seat.⁶⁹

Halfway across the world in India, Naoroji's correspondents fared little better. Hume complained of constant indisposition.⁷⁰ Malabari was afflicted by a bizarre

⁶⁶ See, for example, Naoroji to Wedderburn, 16 July 1886, *ibid.*, N-1 (617).

⁶⁷ Naoroji to Malabari, 25 August 1887, *ibid.*, N-1 (760).

⁶⁸ "Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji's—A Contradiction," n.d., *ibid.*, Part III, G-20.

⁶⁹ R. P. Patwardhan, ed., *Dadabhai Naoroji Correspondence*, vol. II, part I (New Delhi: Allied, 1977), xxxiii.

⁷⁰ Hume seemed particularly sick during the latter half of 1887. Naoroji to Malabari, 11 November 1887, NAI, DNP, N-1 (849).

recurrent fever “which comes on 2nd or 3rd year regularly.”⁷¹ And Gokhale, who suffered a concussion of the heart while on a train en route to London in early 1897, sent terrifying reports of the plague upon returning to Poona, excusing himself from political work in order to look after two recently widowed aunts and a cousin “in a precarious condition.”⁷²

Naoroji’s personal papers indicate how, amid the gloom of Victorian London and receipt of these depressing missives from India, he attempted to maintain a healthy lifestyle. From the presence of a few vegetarian recipes, for example, we can surmise that he altered his diet.⁷³ From letters written to physicians and health experts, we learn about Naoroji’s daily exercise regimen: light weightlifting in the morning and evening, several half-hour walks, and some aerobics.⁷⁴ A note from 1906 even raises the possibility that Naoroji practiced *hatha* yoga.⁷⁵ These materials give us little indication of the efficacy of Naoroji’s lifestyle choices. But—when considered alongside the receipts, subscriptions, and ordinary correspondence that make up the bulk of his personal papers—they help humanize Naoroji as well as other early Indian nationalists, who have otherwise been portrayed as staid, remote, and even downright dull figures.

Furthermore, by piecing together the everyday functions of political movements, namely the early Congress and Naoroji’s parliamentary campaigns, we grasp how Indian leaders participated in the British public sphere in order to further their political objectives. This is significant: such participation demonstrates that early nationalists were

⁷¹ Malabari to Naoroji, 25 September 1887, *ibid.*, M-32 (155).

⁷² Gopal Krishna Gokhale to Naoroji, 3 May 1897, *ibid.*, G-64 (4); Gokhale to Naoroji, 29 September 1899, *ibid.*, G-64 (13).

⁷³ “Vegetarian Dishes,” London Vegetarian Society, recipes, n.d., *ibid.*, Part III, A-206 (1).

⁷⁴ Naoroji to P.J. Smith, 15 January 1898, NMML, DNP, II, #635.

⁷⁵ R.K. Tarachand to Naoroji, 17 May 1906, NAI, DNP, T-11 (11).

not solely dedicated to issues of remote high politics, and that the early Congress was not simply a debating chamber for elites. Rather, early nationalists were deeply involved in a program of broad public engagement—with *multiple* publics. The early Congress did have a popular dimension, but not just in India. In Britain, its leaders worked assiduously to make authoritarian imperial policy a subject that was debated in newspaper columns, discussed in local clubs and societies, and considered by British voters before they went to the polls.

Finally, miscellanea in the Naoroji Papers provide spectacular insight into the life of an individual Indian in Britain. The Papers also shed significant light on hundreds of other Indians who lived, worked, and studied in the imperial metropole during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As the next section will demonstrate, Naoroji played a critical role in sustaining an emerging community of Indian students and professionals in the United Kingdom.

IV. Indians in Britain: Naoroji as a Community Leader

During his over four decades of residence in Britain—off-and-on between 1855 and 1907—Dadabhai Naoroji was acknowledged as the leader of the growing British Indian community. Both Britons and Indians recognized him as their first point of contact in the event of any problems or other urgent matters. Consequently, Naoroji's London letterbox was regularly filled with notes, requests, entreaties, and friendly letters from Indians scattered across the British Isles, in addition to countless other dispatches announcing the imminent arrival of students, professionals, dignitaries and tourists from the subcontinent. Indians in Britain beseeched Naoroji for a variety of forms of

assistance. Many requested academic guidance or professional advice. Others pleaded for emergency loans. Numerous Indians hoped to take advantage of Naoroji's political connections by asking for tickets to the House of Commons' gallery or admission into the National Liberal Club. They asked repeatedly for letters of recommendation. In between such routine requests came many others: advice on where to bank, assistance in managing the affairs of Indians who died in Britain, help in getting out of a lunatics' asylum, and even how to get an audience with the queen.

Within the Naoroji Papers, there are thousands of such letters, emanating from over 360 British Indian correspondents that I have identified to date. Our earliest reference to an Indian in Britain dates from 1839—one Englishman informed Naoroji about a certain Jehanger Naorodjee from Bombay, who attended a London meeting “on Indian questions” on 6 July of that year⁷⁶—and letters from London addresses continued to arrive at Naoroji's Versova residence through at least 1915. These letters provide matchless insight into the lives of British Indians as well as how the British Indian community—and, in particular, the Parsi community in Great Britain—developed in the late Victorian era.

It should be noted that not all British Indians communicated with Naoroji. As Rozina Visram has demonstrated, small settlements of lascars (sailors) had emerged in the dock areas of London, Glasgow, Cardiff, and Liverpool by the early twentieth century.⁷⁷ These lascars, along with the sizeable number of Indian ayahs and menial servants also resident in the United Kingdom, rarely figure in the Naoroji Papers. Rather, the Indians who inhabited Naoroji's world in Britain were mostly elites who conversed in

⁷⁶ J. Hyslop Bell to Naoroji, 17 February 1891, NAI, DNP, B-84.

⁷⁷ *Asians in Britain*, 57.

English, attended Oxbridge, studied for the bar, or worked in the City. Then there were the Indian princes, who began vacationing in England in the late nineteenth century or, in the case of the *thakur* or prince of Gondal, Bhagvatsinhji, stayed on in order to earn multiple academic degrees. These are the individuals who inhabit the Naoroji Papers, and—while not representative of the entire British Indian community—they nevertheless provide us with clues about how Indians lived, worked, socialized, quarreled, made money, and went bankrupt in a foreign land. They tell us about the societies that Indians founded, the restaurants they frequented, and the businesses they ran. They speak of the hopes, fears, successes, and failures of an early generation of British Asians, one that inhabited a society awash with both vast opportunities and grave difficulties.

Where, and how, did Indians live in Britain during the Victorian era? The Naoroji Papers indicate a number of patterns and trends. Those Indians who sailed to Britain in the 1850s and 1860s tended to engage in lucrative fields like the cotton trade and, therefore, congregated in great commercial centers such as London and Liverpool. Cama and Company, which Naoroji and his colleagues founded in 1855, had its offices in precisely those two cities. Not uncommonly, furthermore, these Parsi businessmen lodged together, no doubt for reasons of convenience and cultural familiarity. In many ways, their lifestyles here mirrored processes of reform and change that the Parsi community was undergoing in India during Young Bombay. Naoroji and the Camas were divided along lines of religious and social practice. While Naoroji and K.R. Cama, as Young Bombay leaders, were reformists who urged the relaxation of purity laws that inhibited certain social contact with non-Parsis, their senior, Muncherji Hormusji Cama, was strictly orthodox. Consequently, Muncherji Cama stipulated that they must have

Parsi cooks and servants, since orthodox practice required all food to be prepared by a co-religionist.⁷⁸ Furthermore, none of the partners brought along their wives or children: until the 1840s and 1850s, it was virtually unthinkable for a Parsi man to bring women and dependents out of Bombay and Gujarat, no matter if his destination was Calcutta or Cardiff.

Such prohibitions waned with time. In 1865, Naoroji brought along his wife, aged mother, and young son and daughter to live with him in Hornsey Rise in north London. Furthermore, he employed English servants at home. One of these servants, incredibly, named her own children after Naoroji's son and daughter, meaning that there was an English boy named Ardeshir and an English girl named Shireen in late Victorian London.⁷⁹ Naoroji christened the Hornsey Rise abode "Parsee Lodge." It was an appropriate name: continuing the tradition of communal lodging, Naoroji hosted several Parsis who came through the imperial capital. There were a few other important centers of Parsi life in Victorian London, such as Muncherji Cama's home, which hosted some of the earliest meetings of the community's Zoroastrian Fund, and the commercial offices of Cama, Moolla & Company on Old Broad Street in the City, which provided accommodations for the Fund by the 1880s and 1890s. Near Earl's Court station, there existed a Batliboi House, which was a popular lodging place for Parsis. Batliboi House was Naoroji's last known London residence: he stayed here before his final trip back to Bombay in October 1907. In 1911, British government agents monitored the house since one of its lodgers, Perin Naoroji, Naoroji's granddaughter, was known to be an active

⁷⁸ Masani, *Dadabhai Naoroji*, 71.

⁷⁹ Naoroji to Bombay family members, 11 June 1888, NAI, DNP, Part I, 29 (1888).

sympathizer of the militant nationalist Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, who had recently arrested at Victoria Station.⁸⁰

As the Indian community grew in size, it changed in nature from isolated residential clusters defined by caste and community to a diverse network of students and professionals scattered across London and the rest of the country. In 1885 and 1887, the *Indian Magazine*, published by the National Indian Association, counted around 160 Indians resident in Britain, no doubt a significant underestimate.⁸¹ There was extremely high turnover in the community, the *Magazine* noted, with an increasing number of students studying law at the expense of those preparing for careers in medicine, science, and engineering.⁸² This is borne out in the Naoroji Papers, where many correspondents listed their mailing address as Lincoln's Inn or the common room at Gray's Inn. A large number of these students found lodging in Bayswater, which, as Visram notes, began to be dubbed as "Asia Minor." Professionals, on the other hand, could afford to leave the congested, smoky confines of central London. In June 1890, for example, Behramji M. Malabari scribbled a hasty note to Naoroji mentioning that he was giving up accommodations in Bayswater in favor of suburban St. Catherine's Park. "London [is] intolerable," Malabari groused.⁸³

⁸⁰ The precise address of Batliboi House was 16 Trebovir Road. "Sedition. Failure of Miss Perin A.D. Naoroji, a Friend of the Anti-British Extremist in Paris, to Obtain an Appointment in the Bikaner State. Precautionary Measures to Prevent Her Employment in Rajputana," June 1911, NAI, Foreign Department proceedings, 48, deposit.

⁸¹ The list was comprised exclusively of students and professionals, highlighting the isolation of these groups from other Indians who worked as lascars, servants, or menial laborers.

⁸² "Indians in England," *Indian Magazine*, February 1887, 57.

⁸³ Malabari to Naoroji, 6 June 1890, NAI, DNP, M-32 (214).

Outside of London—and aside from the expected concentrations of Indians at Oxford and Cambridge—Naoroji had Indian correspondents in a variety of locales. Between 1901 and 1904, he was in touch with a Parsi doctor, K.D. Cooper, training as a medical officer in Lincoln and Bradford. More Indian medical students were to be found in Edinburgh, while a few other co-nationals were scattered elsewhere around Scotland. One of the most colorful characters in the Naoroji Papers is Aziz Ahmad (b. 1854), a Lucknowi Muslim who, while an indentured laborer in Trinidad, converted to Christianity; then shuttled between British Guiana and Venezuela; enrolled for at least one term at the Yale Theological Seminary; and later moved to Glasgow. In Glasgow, he printed two newspapers—*Missions*, dedicated to converting other Indian Muslims to Christianity, and *Asia*, which supported the Congress (Image 8). Writing to Naoroji in 1891, Ahmad mentioned that there was an Indian on the opposite coast in Perth who sold “*chutnee*.”⁸⁴ And in 1898, Naoroji received an appeal from an Englishwoman, a “Miss Horscroft,” asking him to contribute to a fund for P.R. Valladares, originally from Bombay, who, “during his residence in Brighton for the past ten years, has made himself very popular,” but had recently lost his sight. “It is hoped that the testimonial will serve, not only as a personal tribute, but also as a proof of the good feeling which English people entertain towards India, & the Indians,” Horscroft added.⁸⁵

Aside from medicine, law, engineering, and training for the Indian civil service, a number of Indians took up an additional vocation: standing for Parliament. Indeed, one of

⁸⁴ Ahmad also told Naoroji, “In Glasgow I know of 3 oriental shops, an advertisement from all of them I hope to publish soon. These firm[s] represent Jerusalem, Constantinople & Japan.” *Sic.* Aziz Ahmad to Naoroji, 20 November 1891, *ibid.*, A-91 (51).

⁸⁵ E. Horscroft to Naoroji, 21 April 1898, *ibid.*, H-187.

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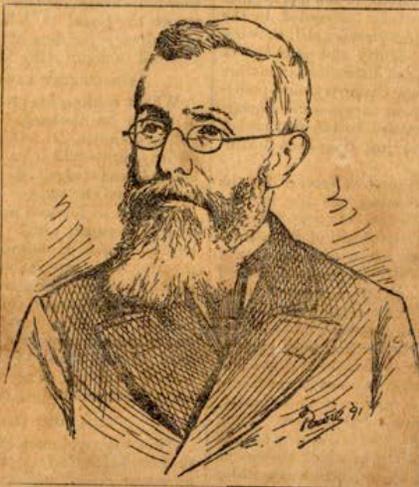
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Dwarflike, compared to London.
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English and Indians one people!

THE HON. DADABHAI NAOROJI.

"AN INDIAN SUBJECT OF THE QUEEN."

SUCH was the description which Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji gave of himself upon a recent occasion. It would be equally true and just to speak of him as an honoured trustee of India's highest interests.

He was born at Bombay on 4th September, 1825, and he is the son of a Parsee priest, though from the death of his father, when he was only four years old, his training devolved upon the mother and an uncle, who appear to have manifested the deepest solicitude for his welfare. To the credit of the former, although in common with most Indian women of the time, she had not personally enjoyed the blessings of a sound education, she determined that her son should have the best in her power. And to that first of all educa- tions, a good home training, she decided to add

the culture of a liberal academical career, and she accordingly placed him where his natural abilities would have full scope for development. He was accordingly entered as a scholar of the school which subsequently developed into

THE ELPHINSTONE INSTITUTION.

The Presidency of Bombay had for a period of eight years as its Governor the renowned and enlightened Mountstuart Elphinstone, who left behind him, at the close of his brilliant administra- tion, such a lasting tenure of affection in the native heart that the classes and the masses of Western India determined to perpetuate his memory. The manner of this spontaneous testimony to the worth of one who had done so much for the Indian population took the form of an endowment of professorships at the Elphinstone Institution. To this end £20,000 was raised, "for the purpose of teaching the Indians the English language, and

THANKS of *Asia* are due to EDWARD SCOTT, Esq., of Jamaica Street, New City Road, and Charing Cross Mansions, Glasgow, and of King Street, Stirling, for his public-spirited liberality which he showed as a patriot and as a patron of learning by contributing £20 towards the expenses of the last number, of which 30,000 copies were printed. Thus we were able to distribute free a great many copies towards the cause of Imperial interests and general enlighten- ment. We hope that this noble example will be followed by other sensible merchant princes of this city and empire. We are sure that our readers will join us in wishing Mr. Scott success and happiness.—Aziz Ahmad.

Image 8: A page from the October 1891 edition of *Asia*, edited by Aziz Ahmad of Glasgow, featuring Naoroji (reproduced with permission of the National Archives of India).

the most striking observations to be made in the Naoroji Papers is that Dadabhai Naoroji was hardly alone in hoping that a British constituency would return him to the House of Commons. Perhaps the best known of these candidates was Lalmohan Ghosh, who stood as the Liberal candidate for Deptford in 1885 and 1886 and, although unsuccessful, mustered impressive support. Naoroji's contacts, however, seemed to relish meditating on the reasons behind Ghosh's ultimate failure. Frederick W. Chesson, a prominent abolitionist and one of Ghosh's mentors, apparently felt that he had a "want of social energy."⁸⁶ Meanwhile, in his diary entry for 19 April 1886, Naoroji transcribed damning criticism offered by William Digby: that Ghosh was "very lazy" and that "the only thing he seemed to care for was smoking and drinking."⁸⁷ Importantly, Naoroji noted that Ghosh harbored ambitions to make a third run after his 1886 defeat, mentioning in a letter to William Wedderburn that Ghosh was returning to Calcutta to work off campaign debts and wait for a suitable opportunity to return to Britain.⁸⁸

While this did not come to pass, several other prominent Bengalis tested the waters. W.C. Bonnerjee ran as a Radical Liberal from Barrow-in-Furness in Cumbria in 1895. Before the next general elections, in 1900, Liberal Party officials approached Romesh Chunder Dutt (1848-1909) about contesting a seat from Yarmouth. Dutt enthusiastically agreed to the proposal and Naoroji even offered to extend Dutt an emergency loan for campaign expenses, but party officials evidently never followed up. Correspondence indicates that Naoroji might have encouraged Dutt in 1903 to consider

⁸⁶ Mynie Bell to Naoroji, 3 December 1887, *ibid.*, B-85 (18).

⁸⁷ Naoroji diary, 19 April 1886, *ibid.*, Part V, 3-21.

⁸⁸ Naoroji to Wedderburn, 6 August 1886, RPPM.

another campaign.⁸⁹ Another candidate who appears in the Naoroji Papers is Nandalal Ghosh. This individual, about whom we know next to nothing, offered himself to the electors of Tiverton in Devon in 1885.⁹⁰ In January 1888, he was accepted as the Liberal candidate for North Lambeth—the constituency from where Naoroji would make his final run in 1906—but he seems to have dropped out before the 1892 elections.⁹¹ An undated letter offers us clues on why this happened: Ghosh informed Naoroji that his “health has utterly broken down” and that his doctors had urged him to leave England “without another week’s delay.” Before departing to catch a steamer from Liverpool, however, Ghosh wished to talk to Naoroji “about Lambeth.”⁹² Lastly, Aziz Ahmad, Naoroji’s Christian convert friend in Glasgow, twice mentioned a “Bábú Kristna Lál Dátta” who, “when he was in his teens,” offered to stand as a candidate from Bridgeton constituency in Glasgow, and merited a degree of support.⁹³

As is evident from both the places that they worked and the constituencies from which a few chose to stand for Parliament, the geographical spread of the British Indian community was wide. However, this community was bound together by several associations and organizations that provided for rich social and intellectual life. Naoroji was the longtime president of the London Indian Society, which organized get-togethers,

⁸⁹ Dutt to Naoroji, 7 September 1900, NAI, DNP, D-161 (11); Dutt to Naoroji, 21 September 1900, *ibid.*, D-161 (12); Dutt to Naoroji, 25 September 1900, *ibid.*, D-161 (13); Dutt to Naoroji, 2 May 1903, *ibid.*, D-161 (35).

⁹⁰ W.E. Williams to Naoroji, 15 August 1887, NMML, DNP, #12.

⁹¹ Naoroji wrote to Malabari that, “You may have read in the papers that Mr Nand Lal Ghosh has been accepted by the North Lambeth Constituency. What his chances are I cannot say. Some think that he has none, while there seem to be some chances.” *Sic.* Naoroji to Malabari, 27 January 1888, RPPM.

⁹² Nanda Lal Ghosh to Naoroji, n.d., NAI, DNP, G-41 (1).

⁹³ Ahmad to Naoroji, 5 September 1891, *ibid.*, A-91 (10); Ahmad to Naoroji, 2 October 1891, *ibid.*, A-91 (44).

debates, and conferences for the London Indian community. It was a popular venue for students.⁹⁴ Many students also took part in the activities of the National Indian Association and the Northbrook Indian Society. At Cambridge, there was the Indian Majlis, which invited Naoroji to its annual dinners, while further north was the Edinburgh Student Association, which, in its “syllabus of meetings” for 1901 and 1902, featured a number of debates on contemporary Indian affairs.⁹⁵ Finally, in the late 1880s, some sports-minded individuals formed the National Indian Cricket Club, which played against other local London teams on Saturday afternoons. The club’s captain was Pandit Uma Sankar Misra, a Congress skeptic who had quarreled with Naoroji in the columns of *The Times*. Cricket appeared to have soothed relations between the two men.⁹⁶

The Parsi community had a particularly dense network of associations. As Hinnells has noted, the Zoroastrian Association or Zoroastrian Fund, established in London in 1861, was the first Asian religious organization in Britain.⁹⁷ Following a pattern typical in newly established Parsi settlements in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the Fund was primarily concerned with providing a separate, sanctified space for the burial of the dead, and in 1862 it purchased land at Brookwood Cemetery in Woking from the London Necropolis Company. Under Naoroji’s long presidency, which lasted from 1864 until 1907, the Fund remained limited in its scope and activities:

⁹⁴ This is not to be confused with the London Indian Society that was founded in 1865 and preceded the East India Association.

⁹⁵ “Syllabus of Meetings,” Edinburgh Indian Association, flier, 1901 [?], NAI, DNP, E-15.

⁹⁶ Misra, a former deputy collector in the North-West Provinces, published an article in *The Times* of London on 26 May 1888 that criticized the Congress as being unrepresentative and too radical. Naoroji responded with a letter that was published on 31 May. In the meanwhile, Misra invited Naoroji to watch one of the club's matches in Kensington. W.W. Hunter to Naoroji, 26 May 1888, *ibid.*, H-207 (9); Pandit Uma Sankar Misra and Manmohan Ghose to Naoroji, 29 May 1888, *ibid.*, N-49 (1).

⁹⁷ *Zoroastrians in Britain*, 107.

correspondence indicates that it continued to focus on funerary arrangements for Zoroastrian co-religionists. Occasionally, the Fund organized a social event such as a *navroze* (Persian new year) or *pateti* (Parsi new year) dinner. A dinner for *navroze* 1906, for example, was held at the fashionable Café Royal on Regent Street, with each plate costing seven shillings “exclusive of wine.”⁹⁸

But it was clear that the growing community found these few dinners inadequate. In 1906, one member, Shapoorji A. Kapadia, formed a separate organization, the Parsi Club, for social get-togethers. Kapadia, it appears, founded the Club with Naoroji’s approval, for Naoroji agreed to preside at its inaugural dinner on 1 May 1906, held at the Florence Restaurant on Rupert Street. A flier for this dinner survives in the Naoroji Papers, informing us that guests dined on “Mulligatawny,” “Kari de Mouton à la Bombay,” and “Glace à la Parsi.”⁹⁹ The Parsi Club was not the only new community group to be founded that year. Around the same time as the inaugural dinner, Naoroji received a letter from Rustom H. Appoo in Scotland, informing him of the establishment of the Edinburgh Parsi Union. The Union was meant to serve a different social purpose—providing a common meeting space for Parsi medical students in the city—and Appoo consequently asked Naoroji to become a patron and lend financial assistance so that the Union could purchase quarters.¹⁰⁰ Thus, by the end of 1906, the British Parsi community, which probably numbered no more than a hundred, boasted three separate organizations.

⁹⁸ Nasarvanji M. Cooper to Naoroji, 12 March 1906, NAI, DNP, C-249 (3).

⁹⁹ Shapoorji A. Kapadia to Naoroji, 23 April 1906, *ibid.*, P-45.

¹⁰⁰ Appoo’s letters indicate that the Edinburgh Parsis, like the community in London, were concerned about what to do in the event of the death of a co-religionist. The recent death of a Parsi helped prompt the formation of the Union. Rustom H. Appoo to Naoroji, n.d., *ibid.*, E-17; Appoo to Naoroji, 14 May 1906, *ibid.*, E-17 (1); Appoo to Naoroji, 31 May 1906, *ibid.*, E-17 (3).

Parsis across the country, furthermore, were united by their own newspaper, the *Parsi Chronicle*, edited by Nasarvanji Maneckji Cooper of Ilford. Cooper ran the paper from at least 1909 until 1911, when, tragically, he drowned himself in the Thames off Victoria Embankment.



Cooper's suicide brings up an important point. In spite of the relative wealth of British Indians—and in spite of their educational achievements, degrees, professional qualifications, and links with the westernized elite back in India—life in Britain could often be difficult and miserable. Community organizations and social clubs could not entirely mitigate these hardships. Newspaper accounts suggest that Cooper might have been distraught over a dispute he had with Mancherji M. Bhownagree.¹⁰¹ But he could easily have been impacted by the racism, profound cultural differences, financial difficulties, sense of isolation, and homesickness that daily assaulted many of his fellow Indians. All of these problems are alluded to in Naoroji's correspondence with Indian students and professionals across Britain. In spite of the fact that Indians found Britons in the United Kingdom much warmer and more welcoming than their Anglo-Indian counterparts on the subcontinent, racism remained a problem. K.D. Cooper, the Parsi doctor, complained to Naoroji in 1901 that “the prejudice the Indians have to overcome in this country are great and therefore I consider myself lucky to get into a hospital as an A.M.O. [assistant medical officer?] in such a strict & cathedral city as Lincoln. Matters

¹⁰¹ Bhownagree was summoned to Guildhall for using insulting language toward Cooper. Cooper's body was recovered with a suicide note. Thanks to Alexandra Buhler for this reference. “Parsee Editor and Ex-M.P.,” *Daily Telegraph and Deccan Herald*, 14 August 1911, 5; “Parsee Editor's Tragic Death,” *Daily Telegraph and Deccan Herald*, 19 August 1911, 5.

are not so bad in London as out here.”¹⁰² Shankar Abaji Bhisey (1867-1935), a brilliant inventor from Bombay, had the misfortune of having one of his inventions evaluated by technical experts the day after Madan Lal Dhingra, an Indian revolutionary, assassinated Curzon Wyllie, a former British Indian official, at the Imperial Institute. Owing to the fact that “the racial feeling was very tense in the city,” Bhisey told Naoroji that he did not receive an objective review.¹⁰³

Cast away from family, friends, and all the familiarities of home, many Indians sunk into deep depression. “I am a stranger and quite friendless,” S. Chelliah, an arts graduate from Calcutta now studying medicine in London, confided to Naoroji.¹⁰⁴ Arthur Howell, perhaps a Eurasian, solicited help in finding a job: no one would hire him in spite of his distinction of serving under Robert Knight as a sub-editor for the *Calcutta Statesman*. “I am starving & overwhelmed by the awful loneliness of this great city,” he wrote.¹⁰⁵ An Indian residing at East India Dock Road, most likely a lascar, complained of being “a perfect stranger in England[,] penniless & friendless & not having come here of my free-will.”¹⁰⁶ Such sentiments were echoed by other correspondents from Aberdeen down through London. Another agonizing facet of life abroad was the remoteness and slow speed of communication from home. Naoroji, for example, only learned of his son’s sudden death in Kutch via a series of telegrams. Similarly, in 1901, the inventor Bhisey received a message by regular post informing him that his 18-month old son had passed

¹⁰² K.D. Cooper to Naoroji, 8 December 1901, NAI, DNP, C-248.

¹⁰³ Shankar Abaji Bhisey to Naoroji, 16 July 1909, *ibid.*, B-126 (60).

¹⁰⁴ S. Chelliah to Naoroji, 14 February 1902, *ibid.*, C-125.

¹⁰⁵ Arthur Howell to Naoroji, July 1894, *ibid.*, H-185.

¹⁰⁶ B. Collie to Dadabhai Naoroji, 4 August 1893, *ibid.*, C-217.

away.¹⁰⁷ Distance, coupled by the impossibility of frequent and instant communication, must have compounded their grief. Both Naoroji and Bhisey knew that a return home to be with family was itself a proposition fraught with financial and practical difficulties.

Amidst the isolation and uncertainty of British Indian existence, Naoroji played a vitally important role. He acted as a central hub of community life, mentoring and supervising students, dispensing professional and educational advice, counseling on cultural adjustment issues, extricating Indians from financial and legal difficulties, establishing and presiding over community-wide organizations, and facilitating a sense of national consciousness among Indians cast across the isles. He was, in the words of one medical student, the “Chief of all Indians in England.”¹⁰⁸ In this sense, the Naoroji Papers offer an unrivaled perspective on the most intimate of problems and concerns affecting the British Indian community—and, in a few instances, detailed information on how Naoroji helped his fellow Indians in overcoming their difficulties.

For a young Indian traveling to Britain for educational reasons, Naoroji was often his (and, increasingly, her) first point of contact. A desire to supervise and encourage students was, in fact, one of Naoroji’s prime motivators for quitting his Elphinstone professorship and coming to London in 1855. In an interview that he granted in 1895 to the magazine *Great Thoughts*, he recalled that “I was induced to give up my mathematical chair in Bombay and enter into business here, partly in order that I might take charge of the young men who come to England to compete for these Services [Indian civil service examinations], and the very first year I had several under my

¹⁰⁷ Bhisey to Naoroji, 13 June 1901, *ibid.*, B-126 (7).

¹⁰⁸ Chelliah to Naoroji, 14 February 1902, *ibid.*, C-125.

care.”¹⁰⁹ Naoroji’s correspondence from the subsequent decades bristles with hundreds of letters of introduction from associates across the Indian subcontinent, who informed him of the imminent arrival in Britain of a relative, a family friend, a bright pupil, or a recent acquaintance. Indeed, prominent nationalists and political activists—such as Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Dinsha Wacha, Romesh Chunder Dutt and Behramji M. Malabari—were especially keen to put promising students in touch with Naoroji, asking him to facilitate their smooth introduction to life in Britain and monitor their academic progress.

Others, who possessed no direct links with Naoroji, nevertheless wrote to him and asked for appointments or some form of help. Gandhi, for example, sailed to Britain in September 1888 with a letter of introduction to Naoroji from a Maharashtrian doctor who professed to not even know the intended recipient. “The fact is, you need no introduction to him,” the doctor informed Gandhi. “Your being an Indian is sufficient introduction to him.”¹¹⁰ Jivanlal Desai, who would later help Gandhi establish his first ashram in India, wrote to Naoroji in 1883—while he was still in high school in Ahmedabad—asking Naoroji for a loan so he could come to London for the civil service examination; his parents were unwilling to foot the bill due to caste restrictions.¹¹¹

Desai’s request illustrates how Naoroji was widely recognized as a vital point of contact for ambitious Indians, no matter how young. “No student could come up to England for his studies without a desire to be introduced & recommended to you,” remarked Hormusjee Ardeseer Wadya in 1896 while informing Naoroji of a young

¹⁰⁹ Isidore Harris, “An Indian Reformer on Indian Affairs: Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji Interviewed,” *Great Thoughts*, 31 August 1895, *ibid.*, Part III, G-17.

¹¹⁰ Masani, *Dadabhai Naoroji*, 7.

¹¹¹ Jivanlal Desai to Naoroji, 6 October 1883, NAI, DNP, D-87.

colleague in Kathiawar traveling to Britain for law studies.¹¹² Wadya had, himself, benefited from Naoroji's mentorship while a student at University College in the late 1860s. Around the same time, Naoroji met and mentored two other promising students from India. The first was Romesh Chunder Dutt. Naoroji advised him to concentrate on studying for the civil service examinations first before taking up other activities—presumably, his desire to become involved in the East India Association.¹¹³ Dinsha Davar, later a justice on the Bombay high court, was the second. “The first day I arrived in England I came to you for assistance & help,” Davar recalled in a letter from 1897.¹¹⁴ As the cases of Wadya, Dutt, and Davar illustrate, Naoroji remained in close contact with many of his mentees, several of whom became important political allies.

Aside from mentorship and guidance, Naoroji performed a variety of roles for Indian students as well as professionals. This included rather mundane tasks like writing references, letters of recommendation, and certificates of good conduct. In 1898, for example, he provided a character reference to the owner of a house that Dutt rented in Forest Hill.¹¹⁵ Similarly, if Britons needed to contact anyone in the Indian community—or required references before they sealed business partnerships or rental agreements with any Indian resident—they dispatched letters to Naoroji's address. But one of Naoroji's most important tasks was dispensing financial assistance (see appendices C and E). London was an extremely expensive place for Indians, and many of them soon found themselves in deep financial trouble. In June 1902, for example, an S. Ghosh, introducing

¹¹² Hormusjee Ardeseer Wadya to Naoroji, 17 March 1896, *ibid.*, W-12 (13).

¹¹³ Naoroji to Dutt, 31 January 1871, NAI, Romesh Chunder Dutt Papers, serial no. 1.

¹¹⁴ Dinsha D. Davar to Naoroji, 27 August 1897, NAI, DNP, D-42 (1).

¹¹⁵ Dutt to Naoroji, 8 May 1898, *ibid.*, D-161 (2).

himself as a civil service candidate residing in Bayswater, informed Naoroji in a tone of quiet desperation that his wealthy relatives back in India had entirely failed to send him promised monetary aid. Ghosh pleaded for an appointment in order to discuss how to raise funds in Britain. His acute embarrassment concerning his situation was well apparent. “I cannot express, sir, what pains I feel in having to write such a letter as this,” Ghosh confided.¹¹⁶

The Naoroji Papers are littered with instances of the Parsi leader handing out loans and donations to other Indians in desperate straits: a £10 loan to N.B. Wagle, who had come to Britain in 1902 to study glassmaking; a £50 loan to S.P. Kelkar, traveling to Rochdale to purchase “machinery that will help our hand-loom industry in India;” a £2 donation to Aziz Ahmad to help *Asia*, his struggling Glasgow-based newspaper.¹¹⁷ Even Gopal Krishna Gokhale, coming up short for cash during his 1897 visit to London, approached Naoroji for funds, and Naoroji seems to have given him a whopping £81 to cover expenses related to his testimony to the Welby Commission.¹¹⁸ Naoroji’s financial responsibilities extended to arranging for the return voyages of Indians stranded in Britain. As such, in 1894, he helped begin a public subscription to pay ship passage for a Manmohan Ghose and also contributed toward a return ticket for the widower of Anandibai Joshi, the first Indian woman to earn a western medical degree.¹¹⁹ But even

¹¹⁶ S. Ghosh to Naoroji, 9 June 1902, *ibid.*, G-42.

¹¹⁷ Many of these loans were probably never paid off. Four years after loaning money to Kelkar, Naoroji was still sending him reminders to him, written in “strong terms,” about repayment. N.B. Wagle to Naoroji, 16 October 1902, *ibid.*, W-14 (17); S.P. Kelkar to Naoroji, 22 November 1900, *ibid.*, K-18; Kelkar to Naoroji, 20 August 1901, *ibid.*, K-18 (8); Ahmad and Naoroji, bill, 1 October 1891, *ibid.*, A-91 (14); G.K. Gadgil to Naoroji, 19 May 1905, *ibid.*, G-2 (5).

¹¹⁸ Gokhale to Naoroji, 12 July 1897, *ibid.*, G-64 (6).

¹¹⁹ Ghose to Naoroji, 23 May 1894, *ibid.*, G-39a (1); S. Chapman to Naoroji, 7 July 1894, *ibid.*, C-112.

relatively wealthy and well-off professionals benefited from Naoroji's largesse. Out of the stacks of letters asking for a helping hand, one of the most interesting is from George Edalji, a Birmingham lawyer and the son of a Parsi convert to Christianity. At the close of December 1902, he dashed off a note stating that he was "in great distress through what is really no fault of my own" and beseeched Naoroji for "*any aid, no matter how slight.*" Edalji was soon after accused of mutilating horses in the so-called "Great Wyrley outrages," precipitating a lengthy and racially charged court case. Naoroji offered Edalji ten shillings.¹²⁰

As the locus of the community, Naoroji also regularly became a mediator in personal, financial, and family disputes that sometimes spanned the very ends of the British Empire. Correspondence indicates that Naoroji settled a number of disputes between members of the British Indian community as well as those involving British debtors or commercial partners. He appears to have offered advice to Bhagvatsinhji, who in the early 1890s was sued by an Englishwoman for "alleged seduction" and supposedly fathering her son, the rather royally named Albert Edward Bhagvat Sinhjee.¹²¹ But disputes became far more complex when they involved British Indians and their families back in the subcontinent. In 1901, for example, Naoroji rallied to the defense of Navrozji Fardunji's grandson, Phirozsha D.C. Furdoonjee, a student at University College, when his father in Bombay threatened to cut off financial support. All seemed well by November 1901, when the father expressed satisfaction that Naoroji and George Birdwood had helped his son secure an apprenticeship in Liege in Belgium. Once this

¹²⁰ George Edalji to Naoroji, 1 January 1903, *ibid.*, E-10 (1).

¹²¹ "Action against an Indian Prince," *Times of India*, 28 July 1891, 7; "Action Against the Thakur of Gondal," *Times of India*, 16 August 1892, 6; Naoroji to Malabari, 12 August 1891, NAI, DNP, N-1 (1949).

apprenticeship fell through, however, family pressure upon Phirozsha redoubled. Naoroji had to finally convince him to return home to Bombay.¹²²

Phirozsha Furdoonjee's plight had, at least, been about money and academic performance. But most Indian parents were worried about the "vices" and "temptations" their children would encounter in the west, with conversion to Christianity, abandonment of Indian wives and families, or marriage to a Briton topping the list of undesirable outcomes. When parents' worst fears materialized, Naoroji was often quickly dragged into the mess. Thus, in April 1886, the despondent family of Shapurji D. Bhabha—who had converted to Christianity and moved to London—asked Naoroji to "*samjhāo*" or convince him to come home and return within the fold of Zoroastrianism.¹²³ Naoroji did eventually meet with Bhabha and presented him with letters from his family, but he quickly recognized that the convert's Christian fervor was far too great to expect any religious reversion. Regardless, he told Bhabha that he could not help but sympathize with his father's "agony."¹²⁴ Many years later, in 1898, Naoroji agreed to arbitrate a dispute involving a J.B. Dubash of Earl's Court, who had sailed from Bombay in 1881, leaving behind a young wife. Dubash's wife and family—after a period of seventeen years—now pressed Naoroji to convince Dubash of his financial responsibilities to those remaining at home.¹²⁵ While the final outcome of the dispute is not known, it is clear that Naoroji was pulled into murky family politics while arbitrating.

¹²² Dadabhoy Cursetjee Furdoonjee to Naoroji, 2 November 1901, *ibid.*, F-94 (1); Furdoonjee to Naoroji, 5 April 1902, *ibid.*, F-94 (2).

¹²³ Malabari to Naoroji, 30 April 1886, *ibid.*, M-32 (89)

¹²⁴ Naoroji to Shapurji D. Bhabha, 30 January 1890, *ibid.*, N-1 (1339).

¹²⁵ J.B. Dubash to Naoroji, 22 April 1898, *ibid.*, D-148 (1).

Perhaps the most delicate situations involved interracial marriages. While Naoroji was socially liberal and seems not to have frowned upon marriages between Parsi men and British women, he nevertheless received a number of letters from parents in India anxious to avoid gaining English daughters-in-law. The situation became even more complex when Indian women started traveling to Britain in greater numbers. In June 1890, the Bombay-based family of Mary D.R. Colah, lodging at a “Bombay House” in New Cross, put out several feelers to Naoroji. Colah, as Naoroji was informed, had recently startled her family with the news that she was about to go to Australia in order to marry an Englishman. Colah’s uncle begged Naoroji to intervene and convince her to not take a step that “will never do her any good and disgrace all her relatives.”¹²⁶ He was, however, fortunate in the sense that his niece at least kept in touch with her Bombay family. Naoroji received many other anguished letters from parents in India asking if he knew anything about why their children had stopped sending homeward letters altogether.

By taking on the role of a mentor, guardian, and liaison between students and families, Dadabhai Naoroji often experienced some of the most unsavory and heart-wrenching aspects of life as an Indian in Britain. His incoming letters reveal that, in spite of its outward markers of success and prosperity, the British Indian community was stalked by many issues of dislocation and cultural confusion that were common to diasporic settlements. But this correspondence also reveals something else: that Naoroji—through his multifarious interventions in community affairs—took keen and active interest in pushing British Indians to fulfill their professional and academic

¹²⁶ C.D. Furdoonjee to Naoroji, 6 June 1890, *ibid.*, F-93.

potentials. For both his co-nationals and co-religionists, he constructed and maintained community infrastructure while trying to minimize the overwhelming challenges that they faced in a foreign and unfamiliar environment. In this sense, Naoroji played a pivotal role in strengthening the community's foundations, allowing for further growth and consolidation during the twentieth century.

V. Conclusion

Naoroji, as we have seen, took on a variety of unexpected responsibilities in the United Kingdom. For Britons, he became an Indian emissary: a trusted source of information on the subcontinent, a vocal commentator on Indian policy, and a familiar figure in charged debates about race and racial superiority. As an emissary, parliamentary candidate, and MP, Naoroji carved out a prominent place for himself within the British public sphere, participating in societies both academic and fraternal, speaking at associations for both the learned elite and workingmen, donating to the Reform Club on Pall Mall as well as the Scottish Miners' Wives and Children Fund, and presiding over the East India Association and a local football club. Within this public sphere, Naoroji brought forward Indian political demands before both the high and low of Victorian Britain.

One question remains. What compelled Naoroji—already an emissary, parliamentary candidate, and Congress leader—to take on the responsibilities of a British Indian community leader? Why did this already far-too-busy man get so deeply involved in the community's affairs? Politics might provide us with an answer. It is quite apparent that Naoroji considered these community responsibilities to be a part of his broader

political mission. He labored in the hope that British Indians, once they returned home, would become the successful civil servants, administrators, lawyers, engineers, doctors, and businessmen that India so desperately needed. A growing class of Indian professionals—trained in some of Britain’s best universities and apprenticed in its best law firms or biggest businesses—could help challenge Anglo-Indian dominance in matters both political and commercial, thereby stanching what Naoroji considered to be the source of all of India’s woes: the drain of wealth.

To this end, Naoroji took special care to politically influence the British Indian community, imbuing it with a nationalist consciousness. He inducted numerous young Indians into the National Liberal Club, where they could meet Indian political reformers such as William Wedderburn, William Digby, and Allan Octavian Hume. He invited Indians to political rallies and employed them as canvassers during his parliamentary elections. Naoroji gave explicit political direction to the London Indian Society, where, toward the end of the 1890s, he organized annual conferences that condemned aspects of British Indian policy and called for increased Indian political rights. These conferences provided early political platforms for men such as Bipan Chandra Pal and, eventually, caught the attention of the India Office, which sent an undercover agent to monitor proceedings.¹²⁷

But it was through his individual relationships with British Indians that Naoroji probably exercised the greatest influence. Naoroji’s influence on aspiring lawyers, such as Mohandas K. Gandhi and Muhammad Ali Jinnah, is relatively well known.¹²⁸ He

¹²⁷ “Report on a Meeting of the London Indian Society,” 2 January 1899, BL, IOR, L/PJ/6/499, File 66.

¹²⁸ For example, in November 1921 Gandhi told an audience in Colombo, “And Dadabhai Naoroji. How can I describe my debt to him? He took me to his bosom when I was an unknown and unbefriended youth in England, and today his grand-daughters are a tower of strength to me in my khadi work.” Verifying

sought to familiarize all Indian contacts—regardless of their vocations—with the salient political issues affecting their country. Thus, while the inventor Shankar Abaji Bhisey tinkered in London with electrical apparatuses for projecting store advertisements, he received Naoroji’s pamphlets on the reasons behind India’s dire impoverishment. “I really feel ashamed for not being sufficiently aware of the real state of my beloved country and the true causes of our poverty—which are so evidently and ably brought to bear on the subject by you that any *conscientious* man is bound to admit,” Bhisey acknowledged after going through these pamphlets.¹²⁹ In subsequent meetings with Naoroji, the Maharashtrian inventor seemed as keen to discuss political issues as his progress in inventing a more efficient typewriter.¹³⁰

Naoroji’s correspondence with a young Cambridge law student from Bombay, Joseph Baptista (1864-1930), also reveals the degree to which he encouraged the political awakening of a new generation of Indians. Having read Naoroji’s copies of Congress reports and spoken at a London Indian Society conference in 1898, Baptista pledged

Jinnah’s interaction with Naoroji is much more difficult. S.R. Mehrotra has, in my conversations with him, cast doubt on the extent of Jinnah’s relations with Naoroji. Wolpert claims: “Jinnah listened from the Commons gallery to Dadabhai’s maiden speech [to Parliament] in 1893 [*sic*] and ‘thrilled’ as he heard the Grand Old Man extol the virtues of ‘free speech.’ As Jinnah noted, ‘there he was, an Indian, who would exercise that right and demand justice for his countrymen.’ Without freedom of speech, Jinnah wisely understood any nation would remain ‘stunted’ or wither ‘like a rose bush that is planted in a place where there is neither sunshine nor air.’ Thanks to Dadabhai’s inspiring example, Jinnah entered politics as a Liberal nationalist, joining Congress soon after he returned to India.” Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, “Speech to Parsis, Colombo,” in *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol. 35 (New Delhi: Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 1969), 292; Stanley A. Wolpert, *Jinnah of Pakistan* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 11.

¹²⁹ Bhisey to Naoroji, 13 June 1901, B-126 (7).

¹³⁰ Bhisey is a fascinating example of the interconnectedness between Indian nationalist politics, diaspora affairs, efforts for the promotion of Indian business. Bhisey was introduced to Naoroji through Dinsha Wacha. In London, Naoroji became Bhisey’s principal financial supporter, issuing regular loans so that the inventor could continue to work on a dazzling variety of inventions. Naoroji also introduced Bhisey to Henry M. Hyndman, who provided further financial support. After both Naoroji and Hyndman ran out of loanable cash, Bhisey reached out to Gopal Krishna Gokhale, who introduced him to Ratan J. Tata. Tata and Bhisey subsequently formed a syndicate, Tata Bhisotype, which funded Bhisey’s work on improving typewriter technology.

himself to nationalist politics. “I mean to devote my time fully to the work of our country after I have paid off the debt I have incurred,” he wrote to Naoroji in 1899 before sailing home.¹³¹ Baptista did not disappoint. In 1901, he won a seat on the Bombay Municipal Corporation, which he held for several years. It was a start of a promising nationalist career: Baptista became a close associate of the radical leader Bal Gangadhar Tilak and a founder of the All-India Trade Union Congress. One of Baptista’s campaign flyers, from 1900, survives in the Naoroji Papers. Not surprisingly, the flyer prominently includes a brief letter of recommendation by Naoroji—one of hundreds of letters that Naoroji no doubt penned during his decades of residence in Great Britain. But this letter had significant consequences for Baptista: he acknowledged after his election victory that there was “no doubt that your name has won for me many supporters and helpers.”¹³² Thus, in even that most mundane of tasks—writing recommendations—Naoroji wielded his pen in a manner consonant with his political ideologies and hopes. It is in this sense that Naoroji’s community responsibilities in Britain were validated by an overarching political philosophy of Indian self-reliance and, eventually, Indian self-rule, a self-rule that became more tenable with each qualified and educated Indian sailing back home.

¹³¹ Baptista and Naoroji were also both members of the Fabian Society. Joseph Baptista to Naoroji, 26 June 1899, NAI, DNP, B-42 (4).

¹³² Baptista to Naoroji, 8 March 1901, *ibid.*, B-42 (10).

The Central Finsbury Campaign

Electors, Powerbrokers, and the Challenges of being an Indian Candidate for an English Constituency

I. Introduction

During the second phase of his career, Dadabhai Naoroji's political statements began taking on a markedly more loyalist and pro-British tone. Gone were references to British Indian policy being "evil." He largely abandoned his practice of quoting from the writings of John Shore, Montgomery Martin, and other British Indian officials who had, in their day, observed the plunder of Company rule and the deepening poverty of Indian subjects. The term "self-government," which Naoroji began to employ in his writings in 1884, disappeared from his letters and publications by the following year.¹ Instead, Naoroji spoke of the blessings of British rule, the justice and fair-mindedness of the British people, and the gratitude of Indians toward their colonial masters. Delivering his presidential address to the Calcutta Congress in December 1886, he exhorted his political allies to loudly demonstrate their loyalty. "I put the *question* plainly," he stated. "Is this Congress a nursery for sedition and rebellion against the British Government (cries of no,

¹ The last reference that I have found is from Naoroji's letter to John Slagg of 8 February 1885: "Never can a foreign rule be anything but a curse to any country, excepting only so far as it approaches a Native Rule. Unless Britain sees this and with the exception of the higher power of control, leaves India to be ruled by the Natives themselves, nothing on Earth can improve their prosperity." NAI, DNP, N-1 (244).

no); or is it another stone in the foundation of the stability of that Government (cries of yes, yes)?”²

The Indian leader had not taken a sudden conservative turn. Naoroji maintained his political views but now took care about when and where he explicitly stated them. During the first Congress session in December 1885, for example, he spoke about the “desire to have the actual government of India transferred from England to India”—but did not use the term self-government.³ Along with allies such as Allan Octavian Hume, Naoroji relegated discussion of major political objectives to private conversation. “Though we do not thus designate them as do the Irish,” Hume wrote to Naoroji in a private letter from 1887, “after all[,] all our efforts are directed towards Home Rule.”⁴

What motivated this sudden cautiousness of speech among nationalist leaders? For Naoroji, at least, the answer is fairly clear: his continued ambition to win a seat in the House of Commons. After the Holborn campaign of 1886, Naoroji had consolidated a broad pro-Indian alliance amongst feminists, socialists, and leaders of the Irish cause. But in order to secure an actual constituency, he had to appeal to a broader audience: various Liberal Party functionaries as well as the British electorate at large. For obvious reasons, Naoroji judged that stressing Indian loyalty, rather than outright condemnation of British policy, was more likely to win him favor among this audience. Similarly, open discussion of Indian self-government was unlikely to improve his electoral prospects. Irish home

² Dadabhai Naoroji, “Second Indian National Congress,” in *Essays, Speeches, Addresses and Writings (on Indian Politics) of the Hon’ble Dadabhai Naoroji*, ed. Chunilal Lallubhai Parekh (Bombay: Caxton Printing Works, 1887), 332.

³ Dadabhai Naoroji, “The First Indian National Congress,” in *Essays, Speeches, Addresses and Writings (on Indian Politics) of the Hon’ble Dadabhai Naoroji*, ed. Chunilal Lallubhai Parekh (Bombay: Caxton Printing Works, 1887), 324.

⁴ Quoted in S.R. Mehrotra, “Dadabhai Naoroji and the Demand for Swaraj” (unpublished paper, n.d.), 8.

rule, after all, remained an extremely divisive issue. As Naoroji looked forward to the next general election and cobbled together his campaign platform, he framed Indian political demands in loyalist and occasionally patriotic language.

No amount of caution and moderation, however, could offset what became the most contentious issue in Naoroji's campaign: race. Although he secured the Liberal nomination for the London constituency of Central Finsbury in August 1888, Naoroji gained a band of determined opponents within the Liberal Party who employed race and racist sentiment against the candidate. Naoroji's Indianness—already subjected to Lord Salisbury's choice opinions—became the defining issue in a bitter intra-party dispute that carried on until just before the general election of 1892. The irony of this situation was probably not lost on Naoroji: Central Finsbury enjoyed the reputation of being one of the most radical, progressive constituencies in the country, which was probably a major reason for why the Indian candidate considered standing here in the first place.

During this fraught campaign, Naoroji's political fate rested in the hands of four distinct groups. The first, as Chapter Three has demonstrated, included the leaders of various progressive movements—champions of Irish home rule, the labor and socialist movements, feminism and women's suffrage—who embraced the cause of Indian political reform and integrated it within their agendas. Political allies in India constituted the second group. Congress members, especially Behramji M. Malabari, drummed up popular and media support in the subcontinent for Naoroji's prospective campaign. They also solicited funds for Naoroji's electoral coffers. Third were Liberal Party powerbrokers. High-ranking leaders, such as Francis Schnadhorst of the National Liberal Federation, figured within this category, but of equal importance were officials in local

constituency associations, who controlled the process of nominating candidates. The last group was also the largest and most heterogeneous: ordinary British electors. In order to make Indian reform into an electoral issue, Naoroji undertook a program of mass outreach to voters across the country. He advertised Indian political grievances through speaking tours, the publication and distribution of pamphlets and Congress reports, and other journalistic endeavors. He strove, above all, to make Indian reform a popularly discussed issue among the electorate. And, in spite of the racial barbs employed by his opponents, Naoroji's efforts met with a notable degree of success.

II. Electors: Working Class Support for India

Even before the black man incident catapulted Naoroji and India into the headlines, there were signs that his mass outreach to electors was bearing fruit. Naoroji placed great faith in the conscience of the average Briton, as well as his ability to convince these Britons of the immediate necessity of Indian political reforms. "We Indian people believe," he often stated before British audiences, "that, although John Bull is a little thick-headed, once we can penetrate through his head into his brain that a certain thing is right and proper to be done, you may be quite sure that it will be done."⁵ While such optimism might strike the modern reader as naïve—especially when, as Naoroji himself pointed out, the very same Britons starved and impoverished their colonial subjects—the Naoroji Papers indicate a degree of popular receptivity toward Indian demands. In the late 1880s, Naoroji established himself as a wholesale distributor of information on India, mailing out thousands of copies of pamphlets and reports in a

⁵ Rustom Pestonji Masani, *Dadabhai Naoroji: The Grand Old Man of India* (London: G. Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1939), 97.

veritable publications blitzkrieg. To cite only two examples, he appears to have distributed 8,000 copies of his 1887 essay “Sir M.E. Grant Duff’s Views about India,” a scathing attack on the former governor of Madras, and at least 10,000 copies of the 1887 Madras Congress report.⁶ These materials—as is indicated by incoming correspondence—were posted to universities, reading rooms, local Liberal associations, and workingmen’s clubs across the British Isles.

And they generated an active readership. Many of these readers penned brief notes to Naoroji, thanking him for bringing Indian affairs to their attention, and occasionally remarking on how such literature had shaped or transformed their views. Having leafed through the report of the 1886 Calcutta Congress, Henry Lee, a resident of Sedgley Park in Manchester, concluded that “our Indian fellow subjects should be admitted to a much larger share in the government of their own country than they now enjoy.” An affiliate of Rawdon College near Leeds declared that he felt “much sympathy” for the Congress. He vowed to “take an early opportunity of mentioning the movement for some share of self government by our fellow subjects in India” to the Liberal Council of Pudsey. Meanwhile, Archibald Duff, a professor at Airedale College in Bradford, took his copy of the Calcutta Congress report to the pulpit of his church, delivering a sermon on Indian political rights. “May the day of Home Rule in India soon come with stronger bonds than ever between all parts of the brotherhood gathered round the Queen, aye gathered round God’s throne,” the professor wrote to Naoroji.⁷ As is indicated by Duff’s language, as well as the common references to fellow subjecthood,

⁶ Dadabhai Naoroji to Allan Octavian Hume, 11 November 1887, NAI, DNP, N-1 (849); M. Viraraghavachariar to Naoroji, 29 February 1888, *ibid.*, C-113.

⁷ Henry Lee to Naoroji, 6 August 1887, NMML, DNP, III, #747; J. George Brooke to Naoroji, 9 January 1888, NAI, DNP, B-228; Archibald Duff to Naoroji, 17 February 1888, NMML, DNP, #293.

Britons, rather than Indians, were often the ones who conceptualized a notion of imperial citizenship. They approved of the idea that colonial subjects deserved some rights, and they took it upon themselves to advocate this cause. Significantly, Naoroji's correspondents suggested that increased rights would strengthen the bonds of empire, rather than disintegrate them.

Not surprisingly, many of the ordinary electors who corresponded with Naoroji were workingmen and Irishmen. Their letters imply that Naoroji did not simply limit his outreach efforts to the Irish and labor leadership in London. For example, one Irishman in Merseyside, F.L. Crelly, appears to have received and enthusiastically digested several of Naoroji's publications. "A greater interest will attach to the books you have sent me," Crelly declared, "owing to the great similarity between your demand & the demand of Ireland for Home Rule & which particularly recommends the cause of India to my sympathy as an Irishman." Another batch of reports and publications found its way to the Working Men's Club in Swansea, an important social institution for the laborers of this Welsh industrial center. Here, they caught the attention of a port employee, G.E. Wade. In late November 1887, Wade pressed Naoroji for more material on India, since he was anxious "to study at further leisure with my companions."⁸

In the Naoroji Papers, we can locate many other letters from ordinary British workingmen. These letters shine light on issues of race and class in late Victorian Britain. Sumita Mukherjee suggests that the election of Naoroji in 1892—or even that of Mancherji M. Bhownaggree in 1895—implies a "lack of prejudice" in heavily working class constituencies, something that might not be the case in more affluent areas of the

⁸ F.L. Crelly to Naoroji, 5 June 1888, *ibid.*, I, #129; G.E. Wade to Naoroji, 24 November 1887, *ibid.*, III, #747.

country.⁹ The British working class, as scholars like Jonathan Schneer have pointed out, had complex and often-contradictory attitudes toward race and empire. A labor leader like John Burns could whip up a crowd both with heavy doses of anti-Semitic sentiment and declarations of solidarity with the Indian or Chinese people. Workers took pride in the empire while also realizing that it sustained a system of mass exploitation—one that kept them poor. Ben Tillett, a leader of the great strike that crippled the London Docklands in 1889, ridiculed “the coolies and the Hindoos” to resounding applause.¹⁰ But, as is evident from their correspondence, workers addressed Naoroji and his fellow Indians with the greatest respect. If correspondents broached the topic of race, it was usually from the standpoint of well-meaning curiosity about the diverse inhabitants of the subcontinent.

Naoroji benefited from this ambiguity. Some workers were involved in industries dependent on Indian raw material and, therefore, were particularly keen to learn more about the colony’s political grievances. James Blackwell, a resident of the gritty textile manufacturing center of Blackburn in Lancashire, wrote to Naoroji after reading copies of his speeches, pamphlets, and *India*, the magazine of the British Committee of the Indian National Congress. “I am quite took up [*sic*] with the way in which you have from time to time placed matters before the English public and I am quite satisfied that by

⁹ “‘Narrow-Majority’ and ‘Bow-and-Agree’: Public Attitudes towards the Elections of the First Asian MPs in Britain, Dadabhai Naoroji and Mancherjee Merwanjee Bhowanagree, 1885-1906,” *Journal of the Oxford University Historical Society* 2 (2004): 7–8. In a remarkably similar instance, we notice strong working class support for John Archer, a black political activist from Battersea in the early twentieth century. These supporters loudly protested when the British media made an issue of Archer’s race. In 1909, Archer became the mayor of Battersea, the first black to hold this position in a London borough. See Barry Kosmin, “Political Identity in Battersea,” in *Living in South London: Perspectives on Battersea, 1871-1981*, ed. Sandra Wallman (Aldershot: Gower, 1982), 17–51.

¹⁰ Jonathan Schneer, *London 1900: The Imperial Metropolis* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 257–9, 59, 60.

continuously working on it will have its effect,” he reassured Naoroji. Significantly, Blackshaw’s interest in India translated into political activity. “I may tell you that I as a working man am doing all I can not only by putting in circulation what printed matter I can by speaking at meetings myself and also by advising them I come in contact with to do the same as me,” he noted. Over the past two months, Blackshaw continued, he had spoken at several meetings, and he thought “that Lancashire people are beginning to see that it is to the advantage of the Empire at large” for Indians to receive a greater stake in governing their country. Individuals like Blackshaw demonstrated that sympathetic workers could, on occasion, become important foot soldiers in the movement for Indian reform.

Other working class supporters came from less expected quarters of the labor pool—and oftentimes had no outward connection with or interest in Indian affairs. They, instead, identified Naoroji as a trusted friend of the workingman. Thus, shortly after his election to the House of Commons in 1892, Naoroji received a note from Charles W. Barker, who organized farm laborers in rural Northamptonshire. Indicating the extent and diversity of Naoroji’s support among the working class, Barker assured that “you may be sure that by no class of our Countrymen is your return to Parliament a matter for greater congratulation than it is among our agricultural workers.” Barker’s claim might seem a little curious at first, but it made sense in light of Naoroji’s vocal support for rent reform and his criticism of the landed aristocracy. These positions, Barker noted, resonated with the Northamptonshire farmhands, and also made them sympathetic toward their agricultural brethren in India. While the laborers “could not pronounce your name,”

Barker continued, they instantly recognized Naoroji as “Lord Salisbury’s black man,” and entreated him to send out a speaking invitation.¹¹

Salisbury’s remarks in December 1888 had, perversely, only helped further ingratiate the “black man” with the common man. Naoroji and Indian politics became a regular topic of letters to the editors of major British dailies. For instance, J. Page Hopps, a minister in Leicester, wrote to the *Daily News* that Naoroji “ought to be offered a safe seat for Parliament.” Only he, after all, could “confirm the loyalty of India, and ... satisfy the millions who also are already beginning to whisper the pregnant phrase, ‘Home Rule.’” Salisbury, by contrast, had stumbled upon “the way to lose India.”¹² Aside from such printed letters, Naoroji’s inbox at the National Liberal Club overflowed with correspondence. By the end of December 1888, a month after the prime minister’s verbal gaffe, he had received over 3,800 letters, cablegrams, and telegrams of sympathy and support. Some were dispatched from India, Germany, Italy, the United States, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and South Africa.¹³

But the bulk was likely sent by British voters who were embarrassed and rattled by their prime minister’s coarse language. Members of local clubs and political associations transmitted resolutions condemning Salisbury’s comments and inviting Naoroji to address their audiences. During the winter of 1888-89, Naoroji took up many of these invitations, receiving warm receptions across the country. He addressed

¹¹ Charles W. Barker to Naoroji, 19 July 1892, NAI, DNP, B-47 (6).

¹² John Page Hopps, “Hottentots, Criminals and Black Men,” *Daily News*, 6 December 1888.

¹³ “Lord Salisbury and Mr. Naoroji,” *Reynolds’s Newspaper*, 30 December 1888.

audiences in Maidstone, Glasgow, North Ayrshire, and Cambridge.¹⁴ In Newcastle, where he delivered several talks, he was honored with a special breakfast at the city's Reform Club. Here, Robert Spence Watson, a prominent reformer and educationist, compared Naoroji to two previous honorees, an American abolitionist and a leader of the Hungarian revolution of 1848.¹⁵ Naoroji's audience in Loughborough, meanwhile, passed a resolution calling for "all reasonable demands of the Indian National Congress" to be met by Parliament and the government of India.¹⁶

With an outpouring of support for Naoroji and Indian political reform, Liberal Party powerbrokers entered the fray (Image 9). W.E. Gladstone wove the black man incident into a speech he delivered in Limehouse in the East End on 15 December 1888. He blasted Salisbury for giving "deep offence to many millions of our fellow-subjects in India" (but did a disservice to another subject race by claiming that Indians were certainly not Hottentots).¹⁷ His son, Herbert Gladstone, quipped before an audience that, "I knew Mr. Naoroji very well, and I know Lord Salisbury by sight, and I am bound to say that of the two Lord Salisbury is the blackest."¹⁸ In their attempt to make the most political capital out of the incident, powerbrokers allowed Naoroji to appear, before the public, on the same platforms as its highest-ranking leaders. On 19 February 1889, Naoroji took a

¹⁴ Naoroji and several Liberal MPs addressed a rally ahead of a by-election in Maidstone. "The Maidstone Election," *Freeman's Journal*, 12 December 1888; Naoroji to Behramji M. Malabari, 15 [?] February 1889, RPPM; Jag Mohan Lal to Naoroji, 24 March 1889, NAI, DNP, J-11.

¹⁵ "Mr. Naoroji in Newcastle," *Times of India*, 11 March 1889, 6.

¹⁶ The latter was quite likely Louis Kossuth. "Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji at Loughborough," *Nottingham Evening Post*, 19 March 1889, 4.

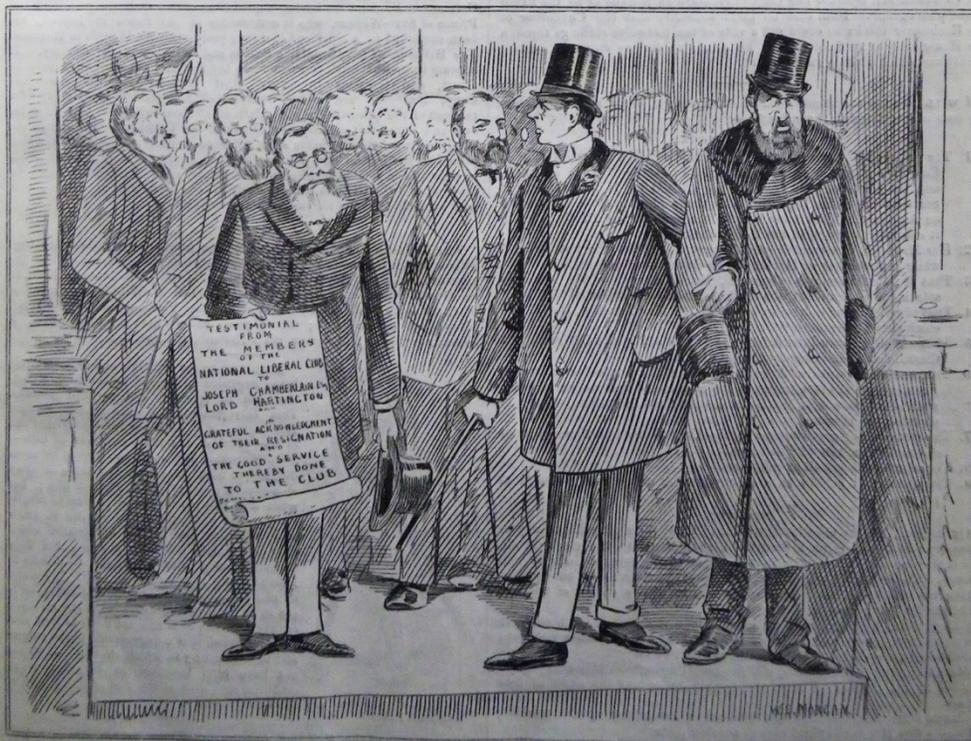
¹⁷ "Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji's Trouble: Lord Salisbury's Explanation," *Times of India*, 8 January 1889, 6.

¹⁸ *The Indian National Congress Cartoons from the Hindi Punch (from 1886 to 1901)* (Bombay: Bombay Samachar Press, 1901).

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The Black Man “Giving the D—l his Due.”

Image 9: Turning the “black man incident” into political capital. Front page of the *Liberal and Radical*, a Liberal Party newspaper, for 12 January 1889. Reproduced with the permission of the University of Bristol Library, Special Collections.

seat alongside Lord Rosebery, foreign secretary in Gladstone's last ministry, at a large rally held at precisely the same location where Salisbury delivered his infamous remark, the Edinburgh Corn Exchange.¹⁹ Laden with symbolism, this event conveyed a strong message of Liberal Party solidarity with Naoroji. The National Liberal Club also organized a special dinner in Naoroji's honor. The dinner, held in the Club's lavish new accommodations along the Embankment, was presided over by Lord Ripon and attended by several MPs, a Canadian delegate, and the consul-general of the United States.²⁰

All of this enhanced Naoroji's stature before the British electorate, consolidating their sense of goodwill toward him. Naoroji's correspondents were, of course, a self-selected group. Nevertheless, their support and sympathy illustrates how the Indian candidate's foreignness was not entirely a liability on the campaign trail. Foreignness could occasionally be a marker of distinction, something that aroused curiosity. There are a few possible reasons for explaining Naoroji's popularity amongst ordinary Britons. A handful of scholars have alluded to an "anti-racist" undercurrent in Victorian society, something that was propelled by politically radical leaders active in causes such as feminism, vegetarianism, and socialism.²¹ Public attitudes toward Naoroji indicate that this anti-racist undercurrent was much broader, embracing many non-elites. Such individuals, especially from the working class, held relatively tolerant views about race, sympathized with Naoroji's claims that Indians deserved the same political rights as Britons, and were deeply disturbed by the black man incident. It helped, furthermore,

¹⁹ "Lord Rosebery in Edinburgh," *The Times*, 20 February 1889, 9.

²⁰ "Lord Salisbury's 'Black Man': Banquet to Mr. Naoroji," *Freeman's Journal*, 22 January 1889.

²¹ See, for example, Caroline Bressey, "Victorian 'Anti-Racism' and Feminism in Britain," *Women: A Cultural Review* 21, no. 3 (2010): 279–91.

when racial differences were counterbalanced by familiar cultural and social traits. One Briton defended Naoroji against racist barbs by describing him as a “a highly cultured politician, an accomplished scholar, a refined thinker, and *essentially an English gentleman*.”²² Naoroji’s Anglicized ways, his demonstrated erudition, and his fluency in British social and political matters made Salisbury’s remark seem all the more reprehensible. And this disjuncture most likely prompted even more Britons to reconsider their attitudes toward Indians in general, something that further boosted Naoroji’s appeal and improved public receptivity to his political demands.

Both the Indian leader and Indian reform continued to be in the headlines through early 1889. Ahead of Naoroji’s arrival in Newcastle in mid-February, Watson, who organized the breakfast at the city’s Reform Club, spoke enthusiastically about how Salisbury’s black man was generating wide media coverage and amassing speaking invitations. “I am really delighted to see how the Congress is taken up now by the English press,” he noted. “I am half jealous of the places which are to have you before you come north.”²³ From the Midlands to Scotland, and from the great industrial conurbations to rural agricultural settlements, Naoroji began to enjoy a broad degree of popularity and public recognition. In order to get into Parliament, of course, he needed to concentrate this popularity and goodwill within a specific constituency, winning over both electors and local powerbrokers.

²² Italics are mine. Hopps, “Hottentots, Criminals and Black Men.”

²³ Robert Spence Watson to Naoroji, 29 December 1888, NAI, DNP, D-77.

III. Powerbrokers: Insurgent Candidacies and Racial Motivations

This was where matters became more complex. In the search for a new constituency, Naoroji entertained offers from local powerbrokers in Deptford, where Lalmohan Ghosh had twice stood unsuccessfully, and Holborn, where at least one Liberal association, the Holborn Gladstonian Club, pledged its support.²⁴ But he was increasingly drawn toward a constituency just to the north, Central Finsbury. Given Naoroji's progressive leanings, this constituency was an extremely attractive choice. Finsbury, alternatively known as Clerkenwell, was a solidly working class district of some 70,000 people that stretched northwest of the City, nearly touching King's Cross and giving way to Islington around Angel (Image 10). In spite of having a sordid reputation for crime, poverty, and overcrowding (Image 11)—Charles Dickens's *Oliver Twist* roamed its narrow bylanes—Finsbury was home to a large population of skilled artisans, especially watchmakers, jewelers, and goldsmiths. And it was a hotbed of radicalism. In the 1840s, Clerkenwell had been a major epicenter of Chartism, the working class movement for parliamentary reform, and by the 1880s its residents were flocking to Hyndman's Social Democratic Federation. In between, in 1867, the neighborhood played host to an audacious attempt to blast away the walls of the local prison in order to free a few Irish Fenian revolutionaries incarcerated there.²⁵

While Central Finsbury electors were overwhelmingly radical Liberal and socialist in their political outlook, the constituency's local party branch, the Liberal and

²⁴ Naoroji to William Digby, 16 August 1888, RPPM; J.R. Bennett to Naoroji, 18 September 1888, NAI, DNP, H-136.

²⁵ This incident was the so-called "Clerkenwell Outrage," which killed several innocent people. Andrew Whitehead, "Red London: Radicals and Socialists in Late-Victorian Clerkenwell," *Socialist History* 18 (2000): 4, 5–6, 3, 1, 9.

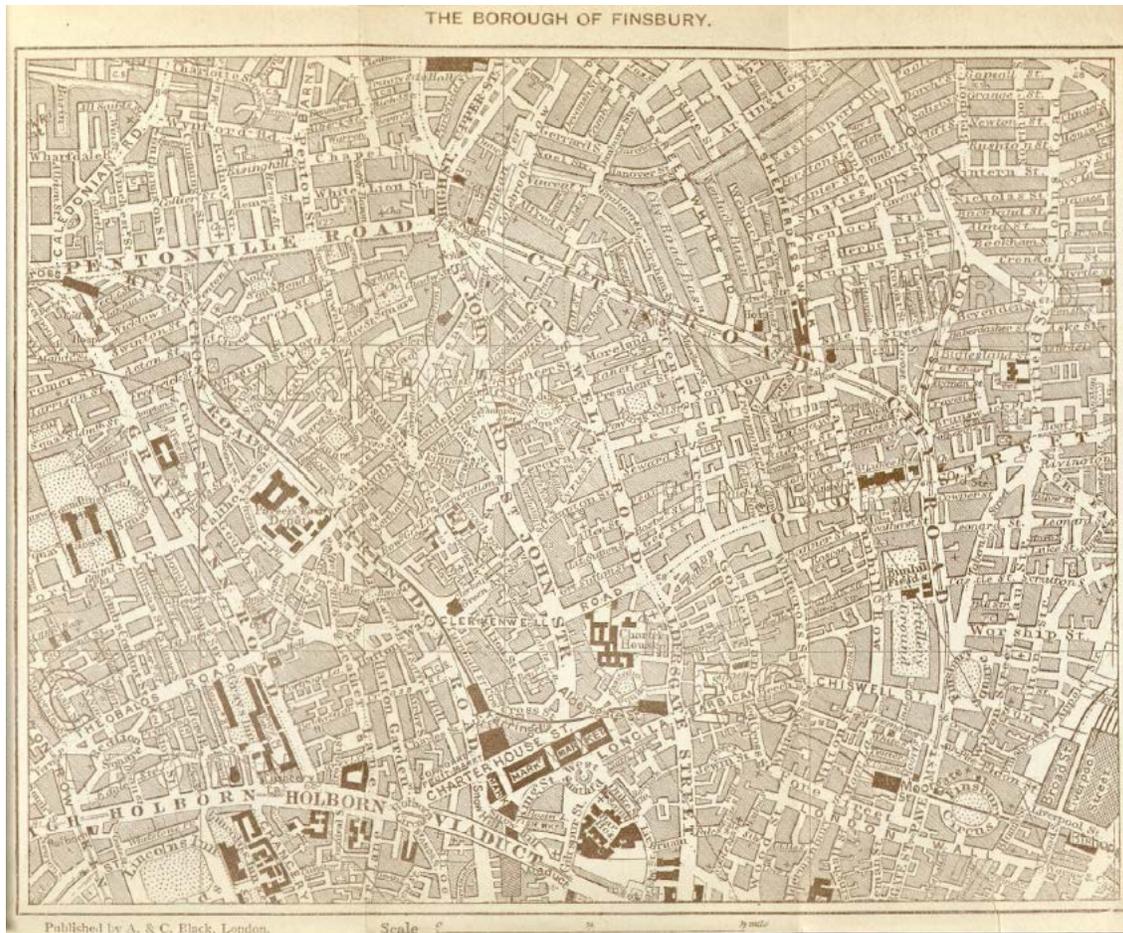


Image 10: Map of Finsbury. Lincoln's Inn and High Holborn are at the bottom left. At bottom right is Finsbury Circus. From G.E. Mitton, *The Fascination of London: Clerkenwell and St. Luke's*.

Radical Association, was hopelessly fractured. Due to incessant infighting between powerbrokers, the Liberal candidate during the 1886 general elections had lost to Frederick Thomas Penton (1851-1929), a Conservative and, worse yet, a large landowner with significant property in the neighborhood (Finsbury's northern fringe continues to this day to be known as Pentonville). Amid the rancor and deadlock, the Association withered from neglect and became even more dysfunctional. Its general committee—tasked with selecting candidates—was significantly hobbled by the fact that many of its

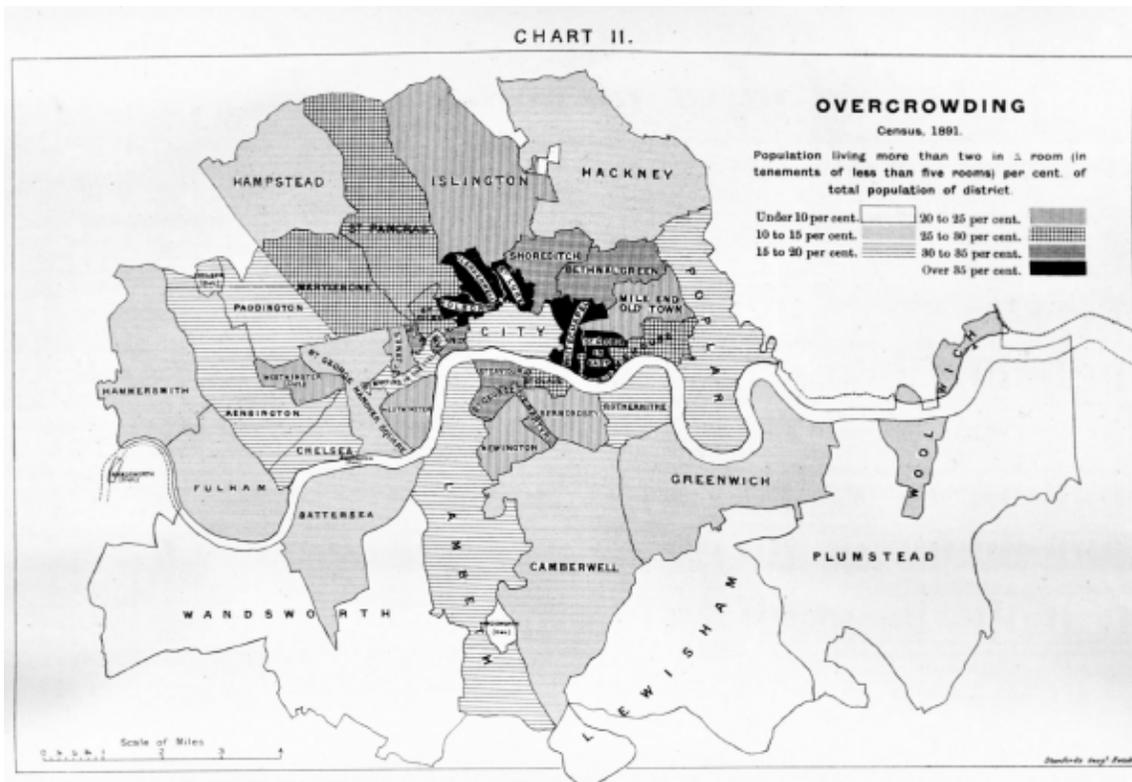


Image 11: Overcrowding in London, 1891 census. Clerkenwell was one of three boroughs to the north of the City colored black to represent overcrowding. In these boroughs, over 35 percent of the total population lived two to a room. From *London Statistics, 1893-94*.

three hundred listed members were dead.²⁶ Barring supernatural intervention, it was therefore quite difficult for the Association to reach a quorum when it came time to endorse someone for election, even if a good number of its living members rallied to a particular individual.

Naoroji appears to have stumbled unawares into this morass. In February 1888, at the suggestion of some friends, he began investigating his chances in Central Finsbury, subsequently lecturing “at 4 or 5 places on India, in Clerkenwell and Islington,” in

²⁶ “Correspondence: The Split in Central Finsbury,” *Weekly News and Chronicle*, 22 September 1888, 3.

March.²⁷ He quickly earned the support of the Finsbury and Islington Radical Federation, most likely a splinter organization, which endorsed Naoroji as the “ablest and most experienced” among various contenders.²⁸ By the end of July, Naoroji was shortlisted for consideration by the Association’s general committee. And, on the evening of 15 August, general committee members trooped into the Association’s hall on St. John Street in order to select a candidate. Members heard short speeches from Naoroji and three other individuals on the shortlist. The committee then held three separate votes, with Naoroji topping the list in all counts. By all appearances, therefore, Naoroji had just been selected as the official Liberal candidate for Central Finsbury.

It is difficult to piece together what happened next. According to many sources, after the last vote had been tabulated, pro-Naoroji committee members rejoiced at his selection and began filing out of the hall. One disgruntled member, however, charged the “Naorojians” with “creating so much disorder” throughout the entire meeting as to render the proper tabulation of votes impossible. He further alleged that, after the final vote, “the Naorojians broke up the meeting,” thwarting any attempt at a recount.²⁹ The chairman of the general committee (who acknowledged that he had backed a rival nominee) made similarly damning claims against the Indian candidate and his supporters. In his opinion, the three votes of that evening were null and void since, following the standard protocol of any good Victorian association, they needed to be ratified by a final motion and embodied in a resolution. But a motion had been impossible since Naoroji’s supporters

²⁷ Naoroji to Hume, 5 April 1888, RPPM; “Mr. Naoroji and His Candidature for Central Finsbury,” *Weekly News and Chronicle*, 15 September 1888, 2.

²⁸ “Gossip,” *Weekly News and Chronicle*, 18 August 1888, 4.

²⁹ “Central Finsbury: Some More Facts about and Protests against Mr. Naoroji’s Selection,” *Star*, 20 August 1888, 2.

had already abandoned the meeting. In any case, the chairman continued, Naoroji's claims to winning were hollow since less than one-third of all three-hundred general committee members were present that evening—and only half of those had raised their hands for Naoroji.³⁰

Predictably, Naoroji's camp offered a different perspective. One supporter reminded the chairman that many of the absentee general committee members were dead.³¹ Another suggested that the anti-Naoroji powerbrokers in Finsbury were in the pocket of a major Finsbury landholder, and were therefore actively working in favor of another candidate.³² Naoroji, meanwhile, maintained all along that the votes on the evening of 15 August had been legitimate. To prove this, he called a mass meeting and produced a letter from the secretary of the Central Finsbury Liberal and Radical Association, offering his congratulations. Unfortunately for Naoroji, the secretary was in attendance and revealed that he had written the letter at the candidate's request. This caused an immediate uproar. According to one newspaper account, the revelation caused Naoroji's allies to be "DROWNED IN THE HOOTS" of the audience. "The meeting appeared to have resolved into a zoological collection, judging from the innumerable varieties of noises with which the speaker's remarks were accompanied."³³ Amid more shouting and recrimination, the anti-Naoroji contingent of the general committee, along with the Association's chairman, broke away and decided to hold a fresh vote for a candidate. Naoroji and his supporters on the committee branded this move as illegal and

³⁰ "Central Finsbury: No Candidate yet Properly Selected," *Star*, 18 August 1888, 2.

³¹ "Correspondence: The Split in Central Finsbury," 3.

³² W. Martin Wood, "Central Finsbury," *Star*, 23 August 1888, 4.

³³ "East Finsbury," *Star*, 11 September 1888, 2.

declined to attend the vote. As a result, a coterie of general committee members assembled on 3 September for an evidently stage-managed meeting, one where there was only a single candidate to consider: Richard Eve (1831-1900), the runner-up to Naoroji in the 15 August vote.³⁴ Eve won handily. The chairman, furthermore, made sure to carry out the necessary formalities of passing a motion and embodying the results in a resolution.³⁵

Thus, by early September 1888, local powerbrokers in Central Finsbury were more divided and polarized than ever. There were now two Liberal candidates, both claiming to have official support. But matters were to take an even uglier turn. Naoroji soon found himself at the heart of a controversy involving two of the leading Liberal newspapers of London. One of these papers, the *Star*, began vigorously attacking Naoroji's candidacy, alleging that the support he had won among some Finsbury powerbrokers was the result of "skilful manoeuvring [*sic*]," possibly even "mechanical wire-pulling and sharp and skilful intrigue."³⁶ The allegations must have deeply shocked the Indian candidate—not only because of their gravity and lack of substantiation, but also because their provenance. The *Star*, after all, was a radical paper, in line with most

³⁴ We know very little about Richard Eve, who was a native of Kidderminster and a solicitor by training. A profile in the *Liberal and Radical* described Eve as "one of the best known men in London, one of the truest and best Liberals the party has in it, one of the most unselfish and most ardent politicians ... If any man deserves a safe seat for the work he has done for Liberalism, it is Richard Eve." Eve had tried and failed to get into Parliament four times before his attempt at Central Finsbury. One of Eve's greatest claims to fame was that, at the request of Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, he had traveled to Cairo in order to defend Ahmad 'Urabi, leader of the revolt against the Egyptian khedive. Like Naoroji, he was a dedicated Freemason. *The New House of Commons, with Biographical Notices of Its Members and of Nominated Candidates. 1885.* (London: George Edwar Wright, 1885), 80; "Mr. Richard Eve," *Liberal and Radical*, 13 October 1888, 227; "A Sprig of Acacia," *Freemason's Chronicle*, 21 July 1900, 32.

³⁵ "The Central Finsbury Liberal and Radical Association: Selection of a Candidate. Stormy Proceedings," *Weekly News and Chronicle*, 8 September 1888, 2.

³⁶ "What We Think," *Star*, 17 August 1888, 1; "What We Think," *Star*, 18 August 1888, 1.

of Naoroji's positions, and had been founded by T.P. O'Connor, a friendly acquaintance. Soon enough, the *Pall Mall Gazette* intervened, condemning the *Star*'s aspersions as "treason to the Liberal cause" and boldly hinting that the paper was subordinating "the interests of the party to those of an individual."³⁷ By attacking Naoroji so vociferously, could the *Star* have been promoting the cause of a rival candidate? This is a very real possibility. It appears quite likely that a major shareholder of the *Star*—and the "individual" to which the *Pall Mall Gazette* alluded—was none other than Richard Eve.³⁸

If the *Star* was, indeed, the mouthpiece of an Eve clique, then we have a probable answer as to why Naoroji evoked such strong opposition among certain Finsbury powerbrokers. Race was at the heart of the matter. The *Star* played up Naoroji's foreignness, claiming that it was a liability that would "make a present of the seat to the Tories." Eve's backers simply did not believe that electors in their constituency would vote for an Indian. "The experiment of running an Indian native for a London constituency has been already tried, and with disastrous results," the *Star* claimed, alluding to Naoroji and Lalmohan Ghosh's previous runs.³⁹ It would be similarly disastrous, these powerbrokers reasoned, if a foreign candidate with a difficult name caused them to lose Central Finsbury once more.

³⁷ "Occasional Notes," *Pall Mall Gazette*, 23 August 1888, 4.

³⁸ The *Weekly News and Chronicle* quotes a general committee member as saying "Mr. Eve has 500 shares in the *Star*," and also claims that the *Star* was "personally interested" in the Central Finsbury contest. Notably, in its response to the *Pall Mall Gazette*, the *Star* denied that it was representing the interests of an individual, but at the same time completely avoided the issue of Eve's influence over the paper. The *Star* maintained all along that its position was that all Liberal candidates for Central Finsbury, Naoroji and Eve included, should retire from the field. "The Central Finsbury Liberal and Radical Association: Selection of a Candidate. Stormy Proceedings," 2; "Gossip," *Weekly News and Chronicle*, 1 September 1888, 3; "What We Think," *Star*, 24 August 1888, 1.

³⁹ "What We Think," 18 August 1888, 1.

Yet, Eve's supporters and the *Star* were not motivated by electoral calculus alone. There was something more sinister at work. Whenever Naoroji responded to allegations published in the *Star*, the paper and Eve's supporters fell back on the standard line that he was, ultimately, an outsider, and therefore unable to appreciate proper political practices of conduct. An unfamiliar man was forcing himself on the constituency. One general council member commented that "Mr. Naoroji's long residence here has not taught him the rules."⁴⁰ More disturbingly, it appears that his opponents, keen to further highlight his foreignness, descended to the level of calling him a "nigger, Indian, Hottentot, blackman, &c."⁴¹ These developments were transpiring two months *before* Lord Salisbury's remarks, within Liberal Party circles, and in one of the most progressive constituencies in the country. Thus, we can observe an important distinction in the political landscape of late Victorian Britain. While many ordinary Liberal and radical voters did not allow Naoroji's foreign extraction to interfere with their support of him, Liberal powerbrokers were oftentimes beholden to some of the most prejudicial attitudes of the era and therefore made race a central issue of the campaign. In their ability to single out and malign Naoroji with racial epithets, party officials in Central Finsbury gave stiff competition to the Conservative prime minister.

Naoroji chose to respond in a few ways. Firstly, he reached out to some of his progressive allies, such as John Burns, who sent Naoroji a message of support and encouraged him to "not worry yourself unnecessarily" about the *Star*'s attacks.⁴² Labor

⁴⁰ "Correspondence: Selection of a Liberal Candidate for Central Finsbury," *Weekly News and Chronicle*, 25 August 1888, 3.

⁴¹ "Central Finsbury: No Candidate yet Properly Selected," 2; "The Candidature of Mr. Naoroji," *Weekly News and Chronicle*, 29 September 1888, 5.

⁴² John Burns to Naoroji, 6 September 1888, NMML, DNP, I, #137.

leaders were not the only ones to respond to Naoroji's call. In late September, around two thousand local workingmen gathered on Clerkenwell Green in order to protest against the Eve clique and pass a resolution recognizing Naoroji as the official Liberal candidate in their constituency.⁴³ Secondly, with the help of another ally, William Digby (1849-1904), Naoroji reached out to a senior powerbroker, Francis Schnadhorst (1840-1900). From his desk at the National Liberal Federation, Schnadhorst dashed off a note to Digby that expressed his disgust at the *Star's* campaign. "The object is of course to force Eve on the Constituency," he judged. "In my opinion although Parsee is much handicapped in an English Constituency, Naoroji is not only the best man and politician of the two, but is more likely to win. Naoroji will become liked the better he is known. Eve just the opposite." Schnadhorst followed up this letter with a note to Naoroji, promising to do "any thing I can" to help him in Central Finsbury. "You have been fairly selected and it is our duty to support you," he declared.⁴⁴

With support from Schnadhorst, Naoroji's position was strengthened. And, in the aftermath of the black man incident, the groundswell of Liberal support for Naoroji appeared to take the wind out of Richard Eve and his supporters. Naoroji enjoyed widespread identification as the sole, legitimate candidate for Central Finsbury. Nevertheless, by mid-1889, as Salisbury's remarks faded into memory and Liberal Party leaders were distracted by events in other constituencies, Eve reemerged, holding fast to his claims of candidacy. At the end of June, R.M.H. Griffith, Naoroji's indefatigable

⁴³ "The Candidature of Mr. Naoroji," 5.

⁴⁴ Schnadhorst also met with Naoroji on 5 September, counseling him "in very strong terms" not to quit the Finsbury race. If he quit, he would lose the confidence of supportive powerbrokers there, and thus would "not have any chance with any other Constituency." Francis Schnadhorst to William Digby, 18 August 1888, BL, IOR, WDP, MSS Eur D 767/1/121; Schnadhorst to Naoroji, 18 August 1888, *ibid.*, MSS Eur D 767/1/122; Naoroji to Digby, 25 May 1891, *ibid.*, MSS Eur D 767/1/93-94.

campaign secretary, informed the Indian candidate that pro-Eve powerbrokers were organizing a deputation “whose object is to ask you to *retire* from the field.” Griffith did not appear too ruffled—“one expects opposition from political opponents”—though he judged the tactics of Eve’s supports to be “simply disgusting.” The following month, on 30 July, a placard was placed upon a window of the Central Finsbury Liberal and Radical Association’s office, proclaiming, “Mr. Richard Eve is the Selected Candidate for Central Finsbury.” More ominously, Griffith reported on rumors that the Eve clique was also attempting to lobby the National Liberal Federation—going to Arnold Morley, the party whip, rather than Schnadhorst.⁴⁵

But, in retrospect, these appear to have been final acts of desperation by a flailing movement. The archival record is silent for much of the remainder of 1889 and the first months of the following year. However, in the final week of June 1890, the *Star* ran a brief announcement that Richard Eve had decided to accept the Liberal candidacy in another constituency, St. Georges in the East in the Docklands, and was subsequently quitting the Central Finsbury race.⁴⁶ It was a moment of understandable relief for Naoroji. We have little information for understanding precisely why Eve chose to retire. With no general election in sight, and with Naoroji refusing to bow out, he might have run out of both endurance and resources. Pro-Eve powerbrokers might also have come under outside pressure to terminate his candidacy. One local paper, the *Finsbury and Holborn Guardian*, reported in early 1890 that “Socialists” had warned one of the Eve campaign’s chief ringleaders, the colorfully named “Mr. Wildbore,” that, “if Mr. Eve is

⁴⁵ Griffith to Naoroji, 30 June 1889, NAI, DNP, G-116 (3); Griffith to Naoroji, 30 July 1889, *ibid.*, G-116 (32).

⁴⁶ Griffith to Schnadhorst, 1 July 1890, *ibid.*, G-116 (175).

chosen by the Council as the Candidate for Central Finsbury they will run a Labour Candidate.”⁴⁷ Could Naoroji and his supporters have relied upon an important progressive ally, Hyndman and his Social Democratic Federation, to outflank their rivals? It is impossible to know for certain. Regardless, as Eve departed Clerkenwell for the East End, Griffith wrote a letter to Schnadhorst, seeking an assurance that Naoroji “not be again impeded” by the actions of hostile local powerbrokers.⁴⁸ Schnadhorst, as Naoroji later recalled, agreed that the National Liberal Federation would lend no support to any possible rival, promising that he “would endeavour to leave the road clear for me.”⁴⁹

Griffith’s cautionary measure suggests that anti-Naoroji powerbrokers were not likely to give up so easily. They had, in any case, taken over the Central Finsbury Liberal and Radical Association—or at least its name, given that the body was for all practical purposes defunct—pushing Naoroji partisans to set up a rival Central Finsbury Liberal and Radical Council. Beginning in January 1891, the old Eve clique began stirring to life once more, perhaps having used the previous few months to organize a more effective assault against Naoroji’s campaign. In place of the *Star*, the clique’s mouthpiece now appeared to be the *Finsbury and Holborn Guardian*, which adopted remarkably similar language in its descriptions of Naoroji. The Indian candidate, the paper declared, was “a carpet bagger of the first water.” There were more claims of Naoroji’s supposed campaign misconduct, conveniently without much elaboration. And, once more, Naoroji was portrayed as an outsider. If Indians stood for election, the *Guardian* asserted, “they must abide by the same rules as other Liberal Candidates.” Then, the punch line: “This is

⁴⁷ “Notes by ‘Invisible,’” *Finsbury and Holborn Guardian*, 11 January 1890, 5.

⁴⁸ Griffith to Schnadhorst, 1 July 1890, NAI, DNP, G-116 (175).

⁴⁹ Central Finsbury Liberal and Radical Council, handbill, 6 August 1891, *ibid.*, C-79 (2).

a case,” the paper concluded, “of ‘England for the English,’ and we hope that he will see his way to stand out of the way and permit a fair fight.”⁵⁰ Thus, the familiar self-serving logic of the *Star*: Naoroji was conducting his campaign in an improper manner; he was doing so because he was a foreigner; and a foreigner would never be elected.

Anti-Naoroji powerbrokers had swung back into action. Moreover, they had a new candidate: Frederick A. Ford (1849?-1910), Central Finsbury’s popular member of the London County Council, and a man as radical and progressive in his political outlook as Naoroji.⁵¹ Ford, incidentally, had polled third at the general committee’s meeting of 15 August 1888, behind Naoroji and Eve. After his defeat, he had given assurances that he would stay out of the race. However, in January 1891, Ford suddenly and unexpectedly reversed his course. “Mr. Ford ... a few weeks ago stated that he had no such intention [to run],” a panicked Naoroji wrote to Malabari. “He now comes out again by beginning with a personal attack upon me without any cause or provocation.” Armed with strong connections within the Liberal Party establishment, Ford proved himself to be a far more serious threat than Richard Eve. He set about trying to, in Naoroji’s words, “pack an association”—which adopted the name of the Central Finsbury Liberal and Radical Association—“that would pass a resolution to resist my candidature.” The Association, furthermore, was laboring to get official recognition from the Liberal Party, something

⁵⁰ “The Central Finsbury Liberals,” *Finsbury and Holborn Guardian*, 10 January 1891.

⁵¹ Ford was the husband of the well-known Victorian feminist Florence Fenwick Miller. According to Fenwick Miller’s biographer, Ford had been active in Clerkenwell politics since at least 1884, when he was asked to stand for Parliament from Central Finsbury. He subsequently declined the offer, but left open the possibility that he would run in the future. He was elected to the London County Council in 1889. A local newspaper described Ford as “a well-known Radical pledged to Home Rule, Eight Hours for Miners, Free Education, One Man, One Vote, Reform of the House of Lords, Disestablishment, and, indeed, every plank in the advanced Liberal programme is claimed as part of the political platform on which he stands.” Rosemary T. Van Arsdel, *Florence Fenwick Miller: Victorian Feminist, Journalist, and Educator* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), 214–15; untitled article from *Finsbury and Holborn Guardian*, 18 April 1891, in Naoroji to Digby, BL, IOR, WDP, MSS Eur D 767/1/15-16.

that would push Naoroji's rival Council to the sidelines. Naoroji surveyed the looming challenge:

There is thus a pretty good work looming for me. If the attempt succeeds, they will try to press me to retire, which of course I will not do. Then there are diverse pains and penalties threatened. I am told that if I persisted to go to the poll as an independent candidate, the party would put me in their black list of I.L.s [Independent Liberals], give me no help, and ... me from getting into any constituency which is connected with the leading Liberal organization—the [National] Liberal Federation. Here is a fine prospect! Well, we shall see.⁵²

Subsequent developments bore out Naoroji's worst fears. Through the spring of 1891, Ford and anti-Naoroji powerbrokers transformed their attacks into a vicious program of slander. Joseph Walton, chairman of the revived local Association, distributed circulars among Finsbury voters that accused Naoroji of peddling influence through "a lavish expenditure of money disbursed in the interest of the Native Indian Congress [*sic*]." In an interview with the *Finsbury and Holborn Guardian*, Ford similarly charged that his rival was "buying votes"—again, with no substantiation. Some of Ford's other comments could have come straight out of the columns of the *Star*'s editions from August and September 1888. Naoroji "had not the slightest chance of being elected," Ford claimed. "He can only succeed in making the Tories a present of the seat of a Radical borough." Other Finsbury officials eschewed indirect references to Naoroji's foreignness and went straight to the heart of the matter. At a meeting held inside a local schoolhouse, a "Mr. Dighton," a man "strongly imbued with the idea of Nationality," delivered a speech where he "told the audience he did not want any foreign blackmen." Thus, anti-Naoroji powerbrokers once more employed racism—both subtle and direct—as their weapon of choice. Significantly, many ordinary electors objected to these tactics,

⁵² Naoroji to Malabari, n.d. [most likely January 1891], RPPM.

once more highlighting how powerbrokers and electors often had starkly different views on race. Dighton, for example, was shouted down by his audience and forced to “desist” from further speechmaking.⁵³

Recoiling in horror from these attacks, Naoroji decided to reach out to Schnadhorst, seeking delivery of those promises made after Richard Eve’s retirement. Schnadhorst had, after all, been supportive of Naoroji since his campaign in Holborn. Now, more than ever, the Indian candidate needed this support in order to reign in an increasingly vindictive opposition. Unfortunately for Naoroji, Ford and the anti-Naoroji powerbrokers appear to have beaten him to the offices of the National Liberal Federation. Schnadhorst never responded to Naoroji. Week after week, as his rivals gained power and support, Naoroji struggled to connect with the Federation secretary, recruiting William Digby to open up additional channels of communication. But Schnadhorst remained mysteriously silent, increasing Naoroji’s suspicions that his opponents had won him over. Naoroji’s letters to his friends and allies began to take on a markedly and uncharacteristically desperate tone by the summer of 1891. “Mr. Schnadhorst has been primed with a pack of falsehoods,” he fumed to Digby. Matters worsened by early June, when the rival Association decided to formalize Ford’s campaign through a petition signed directly by electors. Naoroji immediately flung serious allegations of voter fraud at the rival camp. “I do not know how many signatures will be forged by the Canvassers, as they have done with the signatures for the Wards,” he worried. In spite of worsening circumstances, Naoroji stubbornly refused to concede to his opposition. “I cannot after

⁵³ Joseph Walton and Alfred Harper, “Central Finsbury Liberal & Radical Association: Report of the Special Committee on Ward Elections, 1891,” 20 March 1891, in BL, WDP, IOR, MSS Eur D 767/6; “A New Candidate for Central Finsbury: A Chat with Mr. F.A. Ford,” *Finsbury and Holborn Guardian*, 23 May 1891; “Notes by ‘Invisible,’” *Finsbury and Holborn Guardian*, 21 February 1891, 5.

such a life as I have spent, and with the stakes I have upon me, allow myself to be flung away in the dunghill like a dead cat,” he stated.⁵⁴ Determined to stay in the race, and unable to count on direct support from the National Liberal Federation, Naoroji surveyed his slender remaining options for salvaging a campaign under ferocious attack.

IV. Indian Allies: In Pursuit of Party Support and Princely Sums

Many of these options carried great risks or had extremely low chances of success. For example, Naoroji considered bypassing the National Liberal Federation altogether and instead appealing to a higher authority. In correspondence with Digby, he raised the possibility of writing to “Mr G.”—W.E. Gladstone—and involving him in the dispute.⁵⁵ But Gladstone’s support was not guaranteed, and even if the ex-prime minister decided to wade into the fracas in Central Finsbury, his intervention would likely antagonize Schnadhorst. It was best if Naoroji avoided gaining new enemies at this stage. He turned to progressive allies like the Irish home rulers, seeking another constituency in case Central Finsbury became truly unwinnable. In early 1892, Naoroji approached Michael Davitt and asked him to find “a safe seat in Ireland for the next general election.” Davitt, unfortunately, replied from Dublin that it would be “impossible” at the moment for “so complete an ‘outsider’ as yourself” to run on the home rule ticket. The Irish Political Party, after all, was in the midst of a bitter leadership dispute that had erupted in 1890 after Parnell’s relationship with a married woman was revealed. With

⁵⁴ Naoroji to Digby, 11 June 1891, BL, IOR, WDP, MSS Eur D 767/1/90-92; Naoroji to Digby, 23 April 1891, *ibid.*, MSS Eur D 767/1/15-16.

⁵⁵ Naoroji to Digby, 4 May 1891, *ibid.*, MSS Eur D 767/1/24-25.

extramarital affairs distracting from political affairs, Davitt reasoned that “the country could not be educated up to the diplomatic level of returning you for an Irish seat.”⁵⁶

As Naoroji’s electoral prospects reached their nadir in the latter half of 1891, his Indian allies rallied to his side. Naoroji’s India connections, which had played such an important role in his networking activities prior to the Holborn campaign of 1886, now proved invaluable in helping him struggle through an especially trying phase of the Central Finsbury contest. Opponents had long charged that the Congress was filling Naoroji’s electoral coffers—Richard Eve snidely insinuated that “Indian tea” was buying off voters in Clerkenwell.⁵⁷ While a large amount of Naoroji’s funding did indeed emanate from the subcontinent (there is no evidence, however, of direct involvement of the Congress organization), Indians also influenced the faraway electoral competition in a variety of other ways. In Calcutta, for example, Rustomji Dhunjibhai (R.D.) Mehta, one of the city’s most successful mill owners, served as a liaison between Naoroji and the Bengali political elite. With Mehta’s help, Naoroji secured letters and resolutions of support from Calcutta’s political associations, which were summarily forwarded to the British press and public.⁵⁸ Dinsha Wacha volunteered to relocate to London in order to serve as Naoroji’s private secretary and, by early 1892, William Wedderburn, having left both the civil service and Bombay, became an active participant in the campaign.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Naoroji to Michael Davitt, 16 February 1892, RPPM; Davitt to Naoroji, 18 February 1892, *ibid.*

⁵⁷ Eve was specifically referring to support channeled through “Craven St.,” i.e., the British Committee of the Indian National Congress. Digby to Naoroji, 18 August 1891, *ibid.*

⁵⁸ Naoroji to Rustomji Dhanjibhai (R.D.) Mehta, 3 March 1887, *ibid.*

⁵⁹ Malabari to Naoroji, 29 August 1887, NAI, DNP, M-32 (149); Naoroji, personal note, 28 January 1892, RPPM.

But Naoroji's most significant Indian ally was Behramji Malabari, a man who became known in his day as "the right hand of Dadabhai Naoroji."⁶⁰ Without Malabari, the Naoroji campaign would have likely collapsed for want of logistical, financial, and moral support during the winter of 1891-92. It is a little surprising that the Parsi social reformer chose to take upon himself such weighty duties. By 1887, after all, he had left the Congress, publicly breaking with Naoroji over the organization's exclusion of social reform from its agenda.⁶¹ Their strong friendship most likely tempered these differences: Malabari looked after Naoroji's family during the latter's absences in London, and in letters he fondly addressed the Indian candidate as "Dad." He threw himself into electioneering work with enthusiasm and dedication matched only by R.M.H. Griffith and the candidate himself.⁶²

From his spacious offices on Hornby Road in Bombay, over 4,000 miles away from the crowded tenements of Clerkenwell, Malabari took on diverse roles and functions. He served as the primary interlocutor between Naoroji and a host of political leaders, newspaper editors, and well-wishers scattered across the subcontinent. Due to his extensive contacts with British political figures and his deep knowledge of metropolitan politics—in spite of never having set foot on English soil before 1890—he regularly

⁶⁰ Dayaram Gidumal Shahani, *The Life and Life-Work of Behramji M. Malabari* (Bombay: Bombay Education Society's Press, 1888), xciv.

⁶¹ Naoroji had stated his views in his presidential address to the 1886 Calcutta Congress. Malabari responded: "But what do Mr. Dadabhai's remarks on the social question imply? Is it wise to draw a sharp line between social and political progress? It is certainly not consistent; for certain political leaders were telling us only last year that the two questions were only branches of one large question. If the telegram represents Mr. Dadabhai correctly, we understand him to say that the Congress is a political body. But why should it be political any more than social or economical? ... Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji is so accustomed to look straight at things, even though he many not always see into them, that we can scarcely believe he has blinked at an obvious duty in this instance." "Editorial Notes," *Indian Spectator*, 2 January 1887, 5-6.

⁶² This is a facet of Malabari's career that has been completely unnoticed by scholars.

primed Naoroji with advice and intelligence. And, on occasion, he made his own unique contributions to the struggle for Indian parliamentary representation. When Richard Eve made his last attempt to wrest away the Liberal candidacy, Malabari encouraged Naoroji to consider running for Parliament from an entirely different locale: Bombay. Inspired by a letter recently submitted to his journal, the *Indian Spectator*, Malabari investigated Charles II's charter of 1669 that granted the island of Bombay, then part of the royal dowry, to the East India Company. Noting that this charter recognized the island as part of the royal manor of East Greenwich, Malabari and a few friends argued that Bombay residents therefore had "all the rights and privileges of persons abiding and born in England." This included parliamentary representation.⁶³

The argument that "the Island of Bombay is, by the Charter, virtually *in* England" might strike contemporary readers as bizarre—and certainly not something likely to rouse hopeful interest among Indian nationalists. But it fired Naoroji's imagination. Eager to test its possibilities, he asked Malabari to employ the city's sharpest legal minds—K.T. Telang, Pherozeshah Mehta, and Badruddin Tyabji—to verify the soundness of the proposition. "If it be a right that can be demanded by Bombay, to be represented in Parliament, it ought not to be lost," Naoroji argued, "but used as a splendid argument for representation for all India."⁶⁴ Nothing further appears to have transpired from this correspondence—perhaps Bombay's famous legal trio weighed against utilizing

⁶³ Legal scholars have noted that the manor of East Greenwich was referenced in many royal charters of American colonies, including those made for the Virginia Company, Hudson's Bay Company, and settlers in New England and the Carolinas. "Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji," *Indian Spectator*, 17 March 1889, 215; B.H. McPherson, "Revisiting the Manor of East Greenwich," *American Journal of Legal History* 42, no. 1 (January 1998): 35.

⁶⁴ Naoroji also claimed to have relied upon Charles II's charter "in my paper on the Ilbert Bill." "Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji," 215; Naoroji to Malabari, 12 April 1889 [?], RPPM.

Charles's proclamation. However, in 1890, R.M.H Griffith employed similar logic while trying to prove Naoroji's British subjecthood in a local court. "Mr. Naoroji is a native of Bombay," Griffith stated, "and Bombay, although in India, is technically a part of the parish of East Greenwich."⁶⁵

Although he was unable to establish that the residents of *urbs prima in Indis* had an inviolable stake in some Kentish constituency, Malabari was extremely successful in another endeavor: harnessing the Indian media for Naoroji's cause. As Ford's insurgent candidacy made inroads in Central Finsbury through the summer of 1891, Indian media support became a critical component of Naoroji's electoral strategy. He began actively styling himself as an Indian representative, someone who had the confidence of India's teeming millions. This was a strategy that had worked remarkably well in the past. At rallies and meetings, Central Finsbury electors had enthusiastically received Naoroji's predictions of "the blessings that the 250,000,000 of India would heap upon the constituency if it gave them a voice in Parliament." The London correspondent of the *Indian Spectator* reported that such exhortations "brought down the house." Even the *Star* admitted that Naoroji's claims to represent a subcontinent, and the ready evidence of support emanating from India, constituted his "trump card."⁶⁶

Malabari was just the man to insure the continuance of such support. As one of India's most celebrated journalists, he enjoyed strong relations with editors and proprietors of newspapers scattered across the country. And Naoroji had been quick to

⁶⁵ An anti-Naoroji powerbroker, "Mr. Shaw," appears to have challenged Naoroji's claim to be on a voting register list in Central Finsbury, prompting a hearing at the Central Finsbury revision court. At the hearing, Naoroji's subjecthood was recognized. "Mr. Naoroji's Vote," *Northampton Mercury*, 26 September 1890, 2.

⁶⁶ "East Finsbury," 2; "Our London Letter (London, September 14, 1888)," *Indian Spectator*, 7 October 1888, 810.

recognize this fact. Shortly after the black man incident, he asked Malabari, in not too subtle language, to actively encourage the production of sympathetic editorials in Indian dailies. “One thing will tell very powerfully here,” he wrote from London, “viz. that the whole Native Press should express a desire that I should succeed in getting into Parliament.”⁶⁷ He made a similar plea in December 1891, as Ford continued to gain ground and Francis Schnadhorst remained silent. Naoroji argued that “moral support” from Indian papers “would have a good effect here.” Such press coverage, he continued, would resonate with local electors. “If the Congress, and the *whole* Indian Press, took up the matter warmly, that will help much here,” Naoroji asserted. “A strong loud voice from India must be raised.”⁶⁸

Upon receipt of these messages, Malabari set to work. He dispatched two confidential circulars to editors and proprietors across India, informing them of the Indian candidate’s dire straits in Central Finsbury. What Naoroji now desperately needed was “a strong and unanimous verdict in his favour.” “Pray give it now and again in an emphatic authoritative manner,” he urged. Malabari went so far as to suggest specific language. The Indian media, he believed, should warn the Liberal establishment that its mistreatment of Naoroji was jeopardizing educated Indians’ allegiances to the party. “If we cannot afford to alienate the Liberal Party in this matter, can they afford to alienate us all in India?,” Malabari asked, rhetorically. “This is a line of argument likely to strike them.”⁶⁹ Remarkably, Malabari felt that Indians, in spite of their complete and utter

⁶⁷ Naoroji to Malabari, 25 January 1889, RPPM.

⁶⁸ Naoroji to Malabari, 18 December 1891, NAI, DNP, N-1 (3190).

⁶⁹ Malabari, circular, 27 January 1892, NMML, DNP, II, #519; Malabari, circular, 9 December 1891, *ibid.*, II, #521.

disenfranchisement, could exert influence over events in distant Westminster. He envisioned a sustained media offensive to rouse the attention of Schnadhorst, Gladstone, and other leaders.

By early February of 1892, Malabari's circulars had provoked a good response. "The Native press is taking up yr question well now," he informed Naoroji. From across the subcontinent, editors mailed in clippings of articles they had run in their papers. Malabari, meanwhile, scurried to find translators in Bombay in order to render vernacular material into English, which could then be forwarded for use in London. The Naoroji-Malabari correspondence gives us no indications of the identities of these newspapers and journals, although Malabari assured the Indian candidate that it consisted of a "goodly lot of papers."⁷⁰ Nor do we have much idea of the specific content of these articles. But we can gather some clues from a Gujarati-language editorial published in the 31 January edition of Bombay's *Kaiser-i-Hind*, most likely run in response to the circulars. The Anglo-Gujarati weekly criticized Liberal Party leaders for their current indifference to Naoroji's plight after having profited from the black man incident and resultant public outcry. It was now the duty of all Indians, the paper continued, to hold large demonstrations in support of Naoroji, appealing to Central Finsbury voters that the candidate was the unanimously supported representative of the country.⁷¹ Aside from such pieces, Naoroji benefited from a resolution passed at the 1891 Nagpur Congress that formally endorsed his candidacy.⁷² And, following the dispatch of the two circulars, the

⁷⁰ *Sic.* Malabari to Naoroji, 13 February 1892, NAI, DNP, M-32 (281).

⁷¹ "Candidature of Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji," *Kaiser-i-Hind*, 31 January 1892, 3.

⁷² This resolution was, in turn, utilized by the Central Finsbury Liberal and Radical Council, which recognized in it "a plea from over two hundred millions of our fellow-subjects for some justice and consideration." "Comments," *Tribune*, 21 February 1892, 3.

Poona Sarvajanik Sabha informed Malabari that the organization wanted to directly “appeal to the electors” of Central Finsbury in some manner.⁷³ Thus, by the early spring of 1892, Naoroji had at his disposal a battery of testimonials from India that he could employ in speeches, pamphlets, and other publications. A letter from Griffith indicates one way that these testimonials were utilized: a Clerkenwell publisher, he informed Naoroji, had just printed off two thousand copies of a leaflet entitled “Message from India” that was to be distributed to electors.⁷⁴

Naoroji’s campaign, therefore, received a much-needed shot in the arm from Malabari’s journalist contacts. And, at roughly the same time, another set of Malabari’s contacts raised Naoroji’s hopes about rallying the party leadership to his side. In the course of his social reform activities, Malabari had forged strong relations with Liberal politicians who had served in the government of India. Foremost among these was Lord Ripon (1827-1909). While touring the United Kingdom during the final few months of 1891, Malabari requested Ripon to lobby Liberal Party leaders on Naoroji’s behalf. “I should rejoice to see an Indian gentleman chosen by an English Constituency,” Ripon replied to Malabari, but cautioned that “there are special difficulties in the way of the success of such a candidate.” Ripon believed that the best course of action was for Naoroji to retire from Central Finsbury on Schnadhorst’s explicit promise of assistance in finding him another constituency.⁷⁵ By October 1891, according to Malabari, Ripon had begun setting this plan in motion, presumably negotiating with the National Liberal Federation chairman. A few months later, Naoroji received word that Ripon had

⁷³ Malabari to Naoroji, 13 February 1892, NAI, DNP, M-32 (281).

⁷⁴ Griffith to Naoroji, 7 March 1892, *ibid.*, G-116 (465).

⁷⁵ Ripon to Malabari, 23 September 1891, BL, Lord Ripon Papers, Add MSS 43616.

embarked upon a much more ambitious course of action, and was now “endeavoring to get Mr Ford out, and to get the Party managers to declare for me.”⁷⁶ Regardless of what, precisely, happened behind closed doors at the National Liberal Federation’s offices, Ripon’s interventions at least gave Naoroji some encouragement and hope of success. As he explained to Malabari, his only other option vis-à-vis Schnadhorst was publishing their correspondence, which would reveal the chairman’s previous assurances of support. It would be a highly risky move, and there was no guarantee of it doing anything to change the dynamics of the split in Central Finsbury. Fortunately, Naoroji remarked, “this new, kind intervention of Lord Ripon” had “shut up my mouth.”⁷⁷

One other subject weighed heavily on Naoroji’s mind: money. When Malabari first broached the topic of Naoroji’s campaign with Ripon, he revealed that the candidate had already expended nearly “a lakh of money” on electioneering.⁷⁸ By early 1892, Naoroji had been canvassing Central Finsbury for three-and-a-half years, and there were still no indications of a general election occurring anytime soon. Engaged a protracted campaign that had evolved into a veritable drain of wealth, where could Naoroji expect to receive the necessary funds? The answer once more lies with Malabari. Financial assistance was the last, and perhaps most critical, arena in which the Parsi social reformer aided the aspiring MP. Since at least September 1886, mere months after Holborn, Malabari had been actively soliciting donations in India and coordinating large transfers of cash to London. Finding adequate campaign funding had, from the start, been a

⁷⁶ Malabari, circular, 9 December 1891, NMML, DNP, II, #521; Naoroji to Malabari, 11 March 1892, RPPM.

⁷⁷ Naoroji to Malabari, 10 February 1892, *ibid.*

⁷⁸ Malabari to Naoroji, n.d. [most likely early October], NAI, DNP, M-32 (270).

persistent source of worry for Naoroji and his Indian allies.⁷⁹ Friends such as Hume had pointed out that Naoroji's coffers would largely have to be filled by supporters in India. But at the same time, Hume despaired of any significant contributions from north India or Bengal, which had coughed up a relatively trifling sum in aid of Lalmohan Ghosh.⁸⁰ Furthermore, any donations from the subcontinent automatically lost one-fifth of their value on exchange.⁸¹ Faced with these challenges, Malabari opened a special account in Bombay, the Dadabhai Naoroji Public Work Fund, and began actively searching for committed donors, primarily in western India.⁸²

He first sought out support among fellow Zoroastrians. However, this was an activity that came with a particular hazard; namely, having to deal with cantankerous old Parsis. Dinshaw Petit, the Bombay mill baron, kicked up a fuss when he was approached for a donation. Malabari summarized his interaction with one of India's wealthiest sons, a man recently honored with his own hereditary baronetcy: "Why shd I pay?" asks this logical knight. Further, it appears he is anxious to have his contribution made public—which I have told him distinctly on no account to do." In the end, Petit handed over a trifling Rs. 500.⁸³ Padamji Pestonji, a wealthy co-religionist in Poona, appeared greatly disturbed by the idea of bankrolling any nationalist activity. "The fact is Poona Parsis as

⁷⁹ By February 1889, Naoroji was anticipating financial collapse, something that would necessitate his withdrawal from the race in Central Finsbury. Masani, *Dadabhai Naoroji*, 321.

⁸⁰ According to Hume, "Bengal gave no more than Rs 11,000" to Ghosh. Hume seemed so concerned about the difficulties of raising funds for Naoroji that, in the course of a lengthy conversation, Malabari "dropped the matter" entirely with him. Malabari to Naoroji, 12 October 1886, NAI, DNP, M-32 (109).

⁸¹ In the year 1890-91, council bills and telegraphic transfers were sold in London at the rate of 18.089 pence per rupee. By 1892-93, this had dropped to 14.985 pence per rupee. Masani, *Dadabhai Naoroji*, 321.

⁸² Malabari to Naoroji, 25 September 1887, NAI, DNP, M-32 (155).

⁸³ *Sic.* Malabari to Naoroji, 16 November 1888, *ibid.*, M-32 (197); Malabari to Naoroji, 29 August 1887, *ibid.*, M-32 (149).

others in the mofussil not only do not appreciate the work but say it is a sin for Parsis to risk their all on Hindus & Mahomedans,” an exasperated Malabari informed Naoroji.⁸⁴ There are indications that Malabari also approached Jamsetji N. Tata, but we have no evidence that the industrialist ever wrote out a check in the name of the Public Work Fund.⁸⁵ In the end, Malabari, bitter from his experiences with Parsis, looked outside of the community. He canvassed “upcountry Hindus and Mahamadans” while, in Bombay, he hoped to receive better responses from leading Muslims such as Fazulbhoj Visram and Rahimtullah Sayani.⁸⁶ Malabari also made his own donations to Naoroji’s electoral fund, transmitting at least Rs. 5,000 and perhaps as much as Rs. 20,000.⁸⁷

Such funds, collected from industrialists, merchants, and professionals across India, helped somewhat defray mounting campaign expenses in Central Finsbury. But Malabari’s greatest coup, something that single-handedly kept Naoroji in the race, was his success in winning financial support from the princely states of Gujarat and Kathiawar. It is apparent that a group of princes—many of whom had known and worked with Naoroji for decades, and some of whom had earlier donated to the East India Association—provided Naoroji with the overwhelming bulk of his financial reserves. We have limited evidence about their donations: Naoroji, Malabari, and the princes very

⁸⁴ Malabari to Naoroji, 15 August 1887, *ibid.*, M-32 (147).

⁸⁵ Tata’s donation to a separate Congress fund was, in any case, relatively trifling, totaling Rs. 500. Malabari to Naoroji, 7 March 1887, *ibid.*, M-32 (130); Jamsetji N. Tata to Naoroji, 27 November 1889, *ibid.*, T-20 (1).

⁸⁶ Naoroji to Malabari, 30 September 1887, RPPM; Malabari to Naoroji, 15 August 1887, NAI, DNP, M-32 (147).

⁸⁷ In November 1888 Malabari ordered Dinsha Wacha to “sell a paper he holds for me & send you Rs 5000/.” In late August 1887 Malabari promised to send “up to 15,000 at short notice,” though it is unclear if this consisted of collected donations or money out of Malabari’s own pocket. Malabari to Naoroji, 16 November 1888, *ibid.*, M-32 (197); Malabari to Naoroji, 29 August 1887, *ibid.*, M-32 (149).

deliberately kept the transactions as secret as possible. A few passages and cryptic references in the Naoroji-Malabari correspondence, however, provide us some clues. In seeking the support of princes, Malabari once more turned to his co-religionists: many Parsis were employed as ministers and advisers to Gujarati and Kathiawari rulers. As early as 1885—a year before Naoroji sailed from Bombay—Malabari had begun relying on this network of Parsi officials to lay the groundwork for princely support, approaching the *darbars* of Kutch, Junagadh, and Jamnagar.⁸⁸

These early discussions paid off. By 1890, Naoroji appears to have been in possession of a substantial sum from “H.H. Rao,” most likely Khengarji III, *maharao* of Kutch. Later, in 1892, Malabari played a role in securing several installments of cash—the first being for £1,000—from Sayajirao III of Baroda. R.P. Masani informs us that, on the heels of the *gaikwad*’s donation, the darbars of Bhavnagar and “other Indian States” provided “substantial help.” “There is no need to go into details,” Masani remarks mysteriously, perhaps confirming that this help was substantial indeed.⁸⁹ However, it was another prince who provided Naoroji with the most liberal assistance: Bhagvatsinhji, the *thakur* of Gondal. The progressive ruler enjoyed excellent relations with both Malabari and Naoroji. It helped, furthermore, that while Naoroji waged his campaign in Central Finsbury, Bhagvatsinhji was conveniently in residence in Great Britain, earning a medical degree from Edinburgh. We know that the thakur presented a “big instalment,”

⁸⁸ Malabari mentioned arranging meetings for Naoroji’s “big affair”—his planned parliamentary run—with Sheikh Bavdinbhai, vizier of Junagadh; Manibhai Jashbhai, *diwan* of Kutch, and “the Rao,” most likely Khengarji III of Kutch. A few days later, Malabari mentioned the ruling *jam sahib* of Jamnagar. Malabari also encouraged Naoroji to pay a visit to Kathiawar. Malabari to Naoroji, 2 April 1885, *ibid.*, M-32 (51); Malabari to Naoroji, 15 April 1885, *ibid.*, M-32 (56).

⁸⁹ These donations arrived late in 1892 and early 1893, and helped Naoroji offset post-election expenses, which he claimed to find more burdensome than campaign expenses. Masani, *Dadabhai Naoroji*, 321, 325; Malabari to Naoroji, 28 October 1892, NAI, DNP, M-32 (312).

later revealed to be a lakh of rupees, to Naoroji in 1888.⁹⁰ More arrived throughout 1891. In a letter from January of that year, Malabari let Naoroji know that “K.”—most probably Kavasji Desai, the Parsi employed as Bhagvatsinhji’s private secretary—would shortly send him a check for “25”—Rs. 25,000. Upon receipt, Naoroji was instructed to thank “the T.”—the thakur—and then, following Desai’s instructions, “ask for 50 more.” By the end of the year, as Ford pressed his claims against Naoroji, Bhagvatsinhji appears to have made yet another large donation totaling at least Rs. 50,000.⁹¹

Thus, princely states, which figured so prominently in Naoroji’s political and economic thought, helped plug up a very different drain of wealth, thereby influencing electoral dynamics in Central Finsbury. It is appropriate that some of the most enlightened Indian princes, men who had embarked on significant reforms in their states, provided the greatest help. They were no doubt motivated by a shared enthusiasm for political reform across India, as well as a deep interest in seeing an Indian in Parliament. But what other reasons help explain the particular liberality of a Sayajirao or a Bhagvatsinhji?

Bhagvatsinhji, at least, clearly understood that he enjoyed a reciprocal relationship with nationalist leaders, who lobbied on behalf of his interests before authorities in Bombay, Calcutta, and London. By no coincidence, the thakur cut checks for Naoroji just as the Central Finsbury candidate was trying to convince India Office

⁹⁰ Malabari to Naoroji, 23 February 1888, RPPM; Malabari to Naoroji, 29 November 1890, NAI, DNP, M-32 (222).

⁹¹ Malabari to Naoroji, 3 January 1891, *ibid.*, M-32 (226a); Naoroji to Bhagvatsinhji, 10 August 1891, RPPM.

officials to raise the number of honorary salutes offered for Gondal state.⁹² Additionally, both Naoroji and Malabari closely advised the thakur as he became embroiled in a paternity suit in Scotland in 1892.⁹³ This reciprocal relationship, therefore, worked exceedingly well for all parties.

Regardless of particular motivations, Indian allies proved themselves to be absolutely indispensable during all phases of the Central Finsbury campaign, furnishing Naoroji with much-needed logistical assistance, press coverage, and, of course, the vast sums of money needed to sustain his candidacy. By March of 1892, rumors were growing of an imminent dissolution of Lord Salisbury's Conservative government, which would trigger the much-delayed general election. Naoroji responded accordingly, stepping up his correspondence with Malabari and making inquiries with Lord Ripon about the progress of negotiations with Francis Schnadhorst. And, not surprisingly, he penned a brief note to Bhagvatsinhji, requesting another sizeable donation. "The coming Election and the opposition I have to fight against, entail upon me very heavy expenses," Naoroji explained. "Your help is my only support."⁹⁴

V. Conclusion: The General Election of 1892

In the span of around fifteen weeks, between late March and early July of 1892, Dadabhai Naoroji's parliamentary campaign went through its final, climactic stage. During this stage, the four groups that had influenced the course of events in Central

⁹² Malabari was, predictably, involved as well. In their correspondence, Naoroji and Malabari referred to the raising of salutes as "the object." Naoroji to Malabari, 4 March 1892, NAI, DNP, N-1 (2232); Malabari to Naoroji, 26 March 1892, RPPM.

⁹³ See, for example, Naoroji to Bhagvatsinhji, 14 February 1892, NAI, DNP, N-1 (2212).

⁹⁴ Naoroji to Bhagvatsinhji, 17 March 1892, *ibid.*, N-1 (2254).

Finsbury since 1888—progressive British allies, ordinary electors, Liberal Party powerbrokers, and Indian allies—pushed and pulled in various contradictory ways, creating a decidedly schizophrenic electoral denouement for Naoroji. The *Standard* of London predicted the Central Finsbury competition to be “the hardest struggle in the Metropolis.”⁹⁵ And, throughout this struggle, events transpired that caused the Indian candidate’s electoral prospects to constantly rise and fall by increasingly dizzying proportions.

Powerbrokers cast the first shot. Toward the end of March, Ripon finally announced to Naoroji the results of his discussions at the National Liberal Federation. In a lengthy letter, the ex-vicey counseled Naoroji to accept arbitration in his dispute with Ford. Ripon offered to search out “an able and impartial person, of good position in the Party and entirely without bias” in order to judge who should become the universally recognized Liberal candidate from Central Finsbury.⁹⁶ Naoroji was clearly stunned by the contents of Ripon’s letter. For nearly six months, he had nursed hopes that Ripon was working toward a decisive show of support from the Party leadership. Instead, Ripon had suggested a course of action that Naoroji’s opponents most preferred and had long advocated. Arbitration, as was explained by J.E. Searle, one of his election agents, was simply a byword for forced retirement, compliments of senior powerbrokers:

You have all to lose and nothing to gain. The answer to any arbitration would be ‘We are very sorry Mr. Naoroji. But we think you had better retire although we think you have acted very well. The Party is split and therefore there is a risk of the loss of a seat. You must be the one sacrificed.’ I know their ways quite well.⁹⁷

⁹⁵ “The General Election,” *Standard*, 23 June 1892, 3.

⁹⁶ Ripon to Naoroji, 17 March 1892, RPPM.

⁹⁷ J.E. Searle to Naoroji, 30 April 1892, RPPM.

Thus, Naoroji penned a brief and somewhat terse reply to Ripon, flatly ruling out the proposed arbitration. “I shall now go on as I think best for my honor and conscience,” he concluded.⁹⁸ This meant publishing his correspondence with Schnadhorst, which would reveal the latter’s clear statements of support for the Naoroji campaign made in 1888 and again in 1890. In early April, Central Finsbury electors received this correspondence in the form of a pamphlet, “Mr. D. Naoroji and Mr. Schnadhorst.” The pamphlet elicited a strongly worded letter from Arnold Morley, the Liberal Party whip, who threatened to bring the full force of the National Liberal Federation against Naoroji if he did not accept immediate arbitration.⁹⁹ It appears that Naoroji dismissed the threat: Griffith responded by sending Morley copies of Naoroji’s electoral handbills and pamphlets, assuring the Party whip that on account of the candidate’s “continued and increasing popularity, we are very hopeful indeed of winning the Central Finsbury seat for him and our common cause.”¹⁰⁰

Aside from antagonizing Morley, the pamphlet caused “much hurt” to Schnadhorst.¹⁰¹ Several Liberal newspapers also criticized Naoroji for his actions.¹⁰² By mid-April, it appeared as though Naoroji had made a fatal misstep, giving Ford and anti-Naoroji powerbrokers the upper hand. Yet, the precise opposite seems to be the case. It is unclear what, precisely, transpired within the Liberal Party in late April and May of 1892. It is very likely that, aside from antagonizing a few key figures, Naoroji’s pamphlets

⁹⁸ Naoroji to Ripon, 18 March 1892, NAI, DNP, N-1 (2256a).

⁹⁹ Naoroji to Digby, 29 April 1892, BL, IOR, WDP, MSS Eur D 767/1/152-3.

¹⁰⁰ Griffith to Arnold Morley, 6 May 1892, NAI, DNP, G-116 (480).

¹⁰¹ Naoroji to Digby, 11 June 1892, BL, IOR, WDP, MSS Eur D 767/1/95-96.

¹⁰² H.E. Fox-Bourne to Naoroji, 14 April 1892, RPPM.

made the National Liberal Federation and the Ford campaign realize that the Indian candidate quite simply would not go down without a fight. And, given the very real possibility of a Conservative victory in Central Finsbury if two Liberal candidates remained in the race, an even messier fight was precisely what the Federation was trying to avoid. On the morning of 11 June, Richard Causton, the Liberal MP for Southwark, paid a surprise visit to Naoroji at the National Liberal Club. Acting as an emissary of the Federation, Causton asked for “some overture for peace.”¹⁰³ As the Ford campaign prepared for what would be, in hindsight, their last major meeting—deliberately designed to conflict with another local event featuring Naoroji—Causton all but acknowledged the legitimacy of Naoroji’s nomination, giving assurances that the Federation would work for him and expend “every effort” to repair divisions in the constituency so as to overcome the Conservative challenge. “He said he wanted to see me in the House and would do what he can,” Naoroji informed Digby.¹⁰⁴

And thus, sometime during the second week of June, Frederick A. Ford quietly and without explanation dropped out of the race, largely disappearing from subsequent historical record.¹⁰⁵ Anti-Naoroji powerbrokers, who had for so long argued that Naoroji was unelectable, were finally brought to heel by senior officials at the National Liberal Federation—who finally recognized their insurgent campaign as the true impediment. “Mr. F.A. Ford has formally announced his own retirement from the unequal contest,” announced one local paper with evident relief, “and consequently Mr. Naoroji’s

¹⁰³ Naoroji to Digby, 11 June 1892, BL, IOR, WDP, MSS Eur D 767/1/95-96.

¹⁰⁴ Naoroji to Digby, 12 June 1892, *ibid.*, MSS Eur D 767/1/97-98.

¹⁰⁵ By the mid-1890s Ford had most likely divorced Florence Fenwick Miller, and thereafter he slipped into obscurity. Van Arsdell, *Florence Fenwick Miller: Victorian Feminist, Journalist, and Educator*, 215.

candidature is no longer hampered by any rival in this direction.”¹⁰⁶ The Naoroji campaign now worked rapidly to overcome four years of bitterness and factionalism. “I am breaking down ALL the barriers—and making firewood of them to keep enthusiasm warm and comfortable—things could not well be proceeding better,” Griffith enthusiastically reported to his boss by mid-month. “Am glad to say that the tension is practically all over now so rest easy and prepare for the campaign in *quiet* earnest, it is all right now.”¹⁰⁷

We have evidence that at least one anti-Naoroji powerbroker eventually made amends with the Indian candidate. Henry Mundy, presumably an Irishman, wrote a brief note to Naoroji after Ford’s retirement. “I may disagree with the manner you have thought right to pursue,” Mundy stated, but “it becomes my duty and [that of] all other men calling themselves Radicals, not only to support but to work hard for the next few days to return you to the House of Commons by a large majority, which will gladden the hearts of all true Irish People, and crown with success the work of one of the greatest statesman ever lived—W.E. Gladstone [*sic*].”¹⁰⁸ Party sentiment, and the desire for a decisive victory against the Conservatives, ultimately helped some of Naoroji’s enemies overcome any lingering prejudice, mending some of the divisions among Central Finsbury Liberals.

In order to rally electors, Naoroji now turned to progressive and Indian allies. Women were at the forefront. He asked Emmeline Pankhurst and Florence Nightingale to

¹⁰⁶ “A Great Demonstration,” *Holborn and Finsbury Guardian*, 18 June 1892, 2.

¹⁰⁷ Griffith to Naoroji, 17 June 1892, NAI, DNP, G-116 (499); Griffith to Naoroji, 17 June 1892, *ibid.*, G-116 (498).

¹⁰⁸ Henry Mundy to Naoroji, 27 June 1892, *ibid.*, C-82.

speak and write on his behalf.¹⁰⁹ Naoroji also won the endorsement of at least one feminist publication, the *Woman's Herald*. "Whenever women want his help it is freely given, and we would appeal to women in return to secure his election," the journal advised.¹¹⁰ Many women, evidently, responded to the *Herald's* call. Several wealthy women seem to have loaned their carriages for election day so that Naoroji's volunteers could drive Liberal voters to the polls.¹¹¹ In the meanwhile, women volunteers canvassed Clerkenwell on behalf of the Indian candidate. An "army of ladies," Griffith remarked, filed into the campaign offices in order to manage various tasks and affairs.¹¹² Farther afield in Bombay, Malabari worked with Indian allies to orchestrate another strong show of support from Indian political associations and the media. From his Hornby Road office, he dispatched urgent telegrams across the subcontinent to Poona, Allahabad, Nagpur, Calcutta, Lahore, Madras, and other cities, carrying instructions for immediate action. "Pray wire immediately, thro Dadabhai or Digby message of cordial thanks to the electors urging them also to carry Dadabhai through for India's sake," he commanded. "I pay cost of wire if required."¹¹³ Princes helped as well: Sayajirao

¹⁰⁹ It appears that Pankhurst was to address a meeting at a local school; however, she had to cancel due to sickness. Health also prevented Nightingale from doing anything. "I am entirely a prisoner to my rooms from illness," she responded to Naoroji. Emmeline Pankhurst to Naoroji, 23 June 1892, *ibid.*, P-20; Florence Nightingale to Naoroji, 24 June 1892, *ibid.*, N-107 (1).

¹¹⁰ "Editorial Notes," *Woman's Herald*, 9 January 1892, 8.

¹¹¹ W. Bethell to Naoroji, 12 July 1892, NAI, DNP, C-82 (17).

¹¹² Foremost among these was Mynie Bell, the widow of Evans Bell, who had tirelessly canvassed for Naoroji over the past several months. Griffith to Naoroji, 17 June 1892, *ibid.*, G-116 (499).

¹¹³ *Sic.* Malabari to Naoroji, 7 July 1892, *ibid.*, M-32 (295).

purchased the services of twenty carriages, which on election day plied the streets of Clerkenwell alongside the coaches loaned by Naoroji's female supporters.¹¹⁴

Finally, it was the turn of the electors of Central Finsbury to bring a long and tumultuous campaign to its conclusion. With polling day in Clerkenwell set for 6 July, voters—inundated with leaflets and pamphlets, sifting through messages from India, and attending to house calls from women's activists—weighed their choices carefully. Both candidates emphasized policy issues, although Masani claims that the Tories also tried to whip up racial sentiment against Naoroji.¹¹⁵ Frederick Thomas Penton, the Conservative incumbent, stressed the dangers of Irish home rule, cast doubt upon the eight-hour workday, and reminded his voters of the Conservative ministry's attempt to protect the British watchmaking industry—a critical component of the Clerkenwell economy—from foreign competition.¹¹⁶ Naoroji's agenda began with "Home Rule for Ireland" and ending with "Reforms for India." In between were declarations of support for "Free Education," public control of public utilities and "ALL other Municipal necessities" in London, electoral reform consistent with the principle of "One Man One Vote only," "Legal Eight Hours" for workers, and "Abolition of the Hereditary System of Legislature."¹¹⁷

From the few extant letters penned by voters around the time of the election, it appears that Clerkenwell Liberals cast their ballots for Naoroji on account of his agenda and broader party considerations. There were hardly any references to Naoroji's

¹¹⁴ Masani mentions that Frederick Penton, the Conservative candidate, was supplied with carriages by Lord Salisbury and "other shining lights of the aristocracy." Masani, *Dadabhai Naoroji*, 276.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 278–9.

¹¹⁶ Frederick Penton, "To the Electors of Central Finsbury (Clerkenwell)," handbill, University of Bristol Library, Special Collections, Arts and Social Sciences, Restricted Material 668.

¹¹⁷ "Central Finsbury Parliamentary Election, 1892," *Finsbury and Holborn Guardian*, 2 July 1892, 4.



Image 12: “Black man” in the Commons. *Punch* satirizes Naoroji as Othello and Lord Salisbury as the “Doge of Vestminster.” 23 July 1892, 33.

ethnicity. Edward Breen, of 39 Gloucester Street, announced that he was cutting short a visit to Dover in order to vote for the Indian candidate. “I feel keenly anxious that Clerkenwell shall not again be misrepresented by a Tory,” Breen mentioned, offering to volunteer for the campaign on polling day.¹¹⁸ Another local, George Bateman of 45 Millman Street, cited “the admirable manner in which you have supported the demands of labour—English Irish and Indian,” and also placed his services at Naoroji’s disposal.¹¹⁹ In spite of the disarray of the long and drawn-out intraparty dispute, and in

¹¹⁸ Edward Breen to Naoroji, 30 June 1892, *ibid.*, B-204.

¹¹⁹ George Bateman to Naoroji, 7 July 1892, *ibid.*, B-61.

spite of the official candidate's foreign extraction, Clerkenwell Liberals rallied to Naoroji as a natural exponent of the district's progressive, radical political traditions.

The election was almost a dead heat. In the late evening hours of 6 July, tabulators announced the final results: 2,959 votes for Naoroji and 2,956 for Penton.¹²⁰ Naoroji had unseated the Conservative incumbent by three votes (Image 12). But he had won nonetheless. As night descended over central London, a crude contraption of electrical lights, mounted on the tower of the National Liberal Club along Victoria Embankment, flashed one more win for Gladstone's party.¹²¹ And, halfway across the world, Behramji Malabari heard of the victory while at the offices of the *Bombay Samachar*, having just called on Naoroji's wife and children at their Khetwadi house. Seated at home, Malabari began writing a long letter to Naoroji. "The real work begins now," he reminded the new member for Central Finsbury.¹²²

¹²⁰ The margin of victory was later widened to five. After losing the election, Penton filed a petition for a recount, an expensive affair that further drained Naoroji's financial resources. The recount confirmed the slightly wider margin. Masani, *Dadabhai Naoroji*, 282, 323.

¹²¹ Political Sub-Committee Minutes, 2 July 1892, National Liberal Club Papers, National Liberal Club.

¹²² Malabari to Naoroji, 7 July 1892, NAI, DNP, M-32 (295).

Member for India

Parliamentary Politics, Simultaneous Examinations, and the Making of an Indian Leader

I. Introduction

“The appearance of a native of India in the British Parliament is an interesting and almost romantic event, if romance can enter into politics. The experiment will be watched with attention none the less, because it cannot in the nature of things be frequently repeated.”

- *The Times* of London on Naoroji’s election, July 1893¹

In the days and weeks following the election at Central Finsbury, Dadabhai Naoroji’s letterbox was inundated with congratulatory letters and telegrams. Notes streamed in from all corners of the subcontinent: Lahore, Calcutta, Srinagar, Hyderabad, Madras, Bombay and points in between (Image 13). These ranged in size from pithy telegraphed messages to formal, multi-paged declarations. The residents of Chikmagalur, a small hill town in Mysore state, penned a testimonial to the electors of Central Finsbury, offering them “our sincere and heartfelt thanks for the honour done to India.”² More items were received from diasporic Indian communities scattered around the globe: the Indian Association of Edinburgh, the “British Indian Community” of Zanzibar,

¹ *The First Indian Member of the Imperial Parliament, Being a Collection of the Main Incidents Relation to the Election of Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji to Parliament* (Madras: Addison & Co., 1892), 111.

² People of Chikmagalur to Electors of Central Finsbury, 25 July 1892, NAI, DNP, C-132.



Image 13: “To the Electors of Central Finsbury, London.” Front page of an album of Bombay, sent from its leading citizens to thank the electors of the constituency for returning Naoroji to the House. The four signatures on the right are, from top to bottom, of Dinshaw Manockji Petit, Pherozechah M. Mehta, Dinsha Wacha, and Narayan Chandavarkar. This album is now on display in the Islington Museum in London—the borough of Islington includes the erstwhile constituency of Central Finsbury. Reproduced with the permission of the Islington Heritage Service.

“Zoroastrians of Shanghai,” and a family of miners and contractors in Johannesburg.³ Indians in Georgetown, British Guiana, gathered in October to append their signatures to a congratulatory statement to the new MP. “We need hardly say,” their statement began, “that altho’ we are thousands of miles separated from you, it will be ever our foremost

³ Indian Association, Edinburgh to Dadabhai Naoroji, 7 July 1892, *ibid.*, I-14 (1); British Indian Community, Zanzibar to Naoroji, 19 July 1892, *ibid.*, B-222 (a); Zoroastrians of Shanghai to Naoroji, 3 August 1892, *ibid.*, Z-8; C. Dadabhoy to Naoroji, 22 October 1892, *ibid.*, C-236.

interest to read of your career, and earnestly trust that success will attend your undertakings both politically and otherwise.”⁴

Naoroji had long played the role of an Indian emissary (see Chapter Four, Section II). While in the House of Commons, however, he declared himself to be an Indian representative, someone who enjoyed support from across the subcontinent. These testimonials helped strengthen Naoroji’s position. Most of the Indian media also looked up to the new MP as a leader of national standing. The *Kaiser-i-Hind* affirmed that, in the House, Naoroji would be “the representative of the whole country and not of any particular class or community.”⁵ Significantly, it was around this time that the press began to refer to Naoroji as the “Grand Old Man of India,” a figure of similar stature and prominence to Britain’s Grand Old Man, W.E. Gladstone.⁶ Letters from ordinary Britons, as well as editorials carried in Liberal British broadsheets, likewise identified Naoroji with the political destiny of all of India. “Strange that nearly 300,000,000 of people shd. not have had a representative in the House of Commons up to now!,” remarked Thomas Davies, a working man from the mill town of Warrington.⁷

But not all Britons shared Davies’s sentiments about the election’s implications for India. Nor could many see their way to offer grudging acceptance of Naoroji’s victory, as *The Times* had done. Several Tory papers expressed noticeable unease about the presence of an Indian in the Commons. “Is he the first link forged in a chain of Home Rule for India?,” asked the *Bristol Times*. More worryingly, could Britons “wake up one

⁴ British Guiana East Indian Institute to Naoroji, 6 October 1892, *ibid.*, B-220.

⁵ “Dadabhai Naoroji, M.P.,” *Kaiser-i-Hind*, 10 July 1892, 1.

⁶ *The First Indian Member of the Imperial Parliament*, 105, 108.

⁷ Thomas Davies to Naoroji, 7 July 1892, NAI, DNP, D-50.

fine morning to find that English members are in a minority in the Imperial Parliament”?

Alarmed at Naoroji’s election, many Conservatives sought to undermine claims that he could be an Indian representative. And they attempted to do so through the language of race. The *Spectator* held that “a Parsee is no more a representative of Indians, than a Nestorian Christian would be of Ottomans.” *St. Stephen’s Review*, meanwhile, offered the most damning verdict: “Central Finsbury should be ashamed of itself at having publicly confessed that there was not in the whole of the division an Englishman, a Scotchman, a Welshman or an Irishman as worthy of their votes as this Fire-Worshipper from Bombay.”⁸

These differing responses to Naoroji’s election set the tone for the rest of the MP’s short term in Parliament, from the summer of 1892 until the next general elections held in mid-1895. His ability to represent Indians became a subject of occasionally fierce contestation. Furthermore, as the comments of the *Spectator* and *St. Stephen’s Review* reveal, Naoroji’s opponents seized on his Parsi identity in order to undermine his claims to be Member for India: how could a Parsi, a member of a miniscule ethno-religious minority, possibly represent a territory that was mostly Hindu and Muslim? As in the Central Finsbury campaign, race continued to figure in Naoroji’s political career. However, the MP’s return to the subcontinent during the winter of 1893-94, when he served as the president of the Lahore Congress, largely dissipated any doubts about Naoroji being a popularly recognized Indian representative. During a whistle-stop train tour from Bombay to Lahore, Naoroji was welcomed by massive demonstrations that affirmed his broad and diverse support base. Decades before Mohandas K. Gandhi used

⁸ *The First Indian Member of the Imperial Parliament*, 111, 112, 114.

India's railway network for political purposes, Naoroji embarked on a train journey that confirmed an emerging mass appeal for nationalist activities.

The whistle-stop tour, along with the congratulatory letters and Indian newspaper editorials after his election, had larger implications. They helped confirm Naoroji's status as the first modern Indian political leader of a fundamentally *national* standing. The Parsi MP was, of course, identified with Bombay and its political milieu, but his name was associated with pan-Indian interests, causes, and aspirations rather than regional ones. This was perhaps best expressed by G.P. Pillai, a Malayali leader of the Congress. "If India were a Republic and the Republic had the right to elect its own President, the man who by the unanimous voice of his countrymen would be elected its uncrowned king is Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji," Pillai wrote in 1899. "Others there are who have an Indian reputation but their provincial reputation is even greater than their Indian reputation. To Mr. Naoroji alone is accorded the proud privilege of belonging to all India. Though born in Bombay, Bombay cannot claim him as her son any more than Calcutta or Madras."⁹

Although an Indian leader, Naoroji was also the duly elected representative of a populous London constituency. By all accounts, Naoroji enthusiastically threw himself into parliamentary work concerning domestic British affairs. He was present for nearly every vote in the Commons and regularly spent twelve-hour days in Westminster, "all the time working and listening in the House to understand how to vote on every question." In 1894, Naoroji, himself a colonial subject, cast a vote in favor of Irish home rule. The following year, he was one of the key supporters behind a series of bills for improving the infrastructure of metropolitan London. Aside from these legislative activities in

⁹ I am grateful to S.R. Mehrotra for this reference. G.P. Pillai, *Indian Congressmen* (Madras: Price Current Press, 1899), 1.

Parliament, Naoroji performed diverse other functions for his constituents, such as helping a Clerkenwell mother purchase her son's discharge from the Royal Navy and supporting costermongers (fruit and vegetable hawkers) facing eviction from a major local thoroughfare.¹⁰

However, these activities did not distract him from advancing an Indian parliamentary agenda. From the very beginning of his career in the Commons, Naoroji made the institution of simultaneous civil service examinations his primary legislative objective. This was not meant to be a sop to indigenous "competition wallahs." Rather, through invocation of his drain theory, Naoroji understood simultaneous examinations as the first step on the long road to self-government. It was, moreover, a first step that had a fighting chance of being achieved through Parliament. In his political corollary to the drain theory, Naoroji had established that the drain of wealth from India could be stanching if more Indians replaced Britons in the civil service (see Chapter Two, Section III). A greater portion of expenditure on the Indian civil service would, therefore, cycle back into the Indian economy instead of being siphoned off to the metropole via remittances and pensions. Simultaneous examinations—which would open the doors for countless Indian candidates unable to afford a lengthy sojourn in London—would begin the irreversible process of Indianizing the civil service. Thus, as he prepared to take his seat in Parliament, Naoroji harked back to the first phase in his political thought, reestablishing Indian poverty as his chief concern.

¹⁰ Naoroji, election pamphlet, 5 July 1895, NAI, DNP, F-34 (37); Rustom Pestonji Masani, *Dadabhai Naoroji: The Grand Old Man of India* (London: G. Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1939), 325; R.V. Barrow et. al., 18 February 1895, NAI, DNP, H-178 (1); Christianna Cameron to Naoroji, 23 July 1893, *ibid.*, C-31.

II. An Indian Parliamentary Agenda

As Member for India, Naoroji acquired a second set of constituents far removed from those in Clerkenwell: a vast network of Indian political actors that included Congressmen, princely officials, and local community leaders. These individuals transmitted petitions, political intelligence, and statements of grievances to Naoroji, who then made use of this material on the floor of the Commons or in discussions with key Liberal ministers. Political actors in the subcontinent consequently influenced the shape and direction of Naoroji's emerging parliamentary agenda for India.

The first component of this agenda involved empowering Indians against colonial officials. With Naoroji in the Commons, Indians gained powerful new leverage against the British Indian bureaucracy. Thus, in early February 1893, M. Viraraghavachariar, co-founder of the *Hindu* and a Madras Congress official, informed Naoroji of the government's attempts to exclude Indian candidates for the position of Sanskrit professor at Madras Presidency College, as well its efforts to politically influence high court judges by appointing them as members of the governor's executive council.¹¹ Around the same time, ministers of the *nizam* of Hyderabad most likely sought Naoroji's assistance in exposing the British resident's reliance on a corrupt intermediary who was extorting large sums from the *darbar*. Naoroji brought up these matters in Parliament in the form of questions to the undersecretary of state for India, exerting high-level pressure upon the India Office for their resolution.¹² In the matter of the Sanskrit professorship in Madras,

¹¹ M. Viraraghavachariar to Naoroji, 9 February 1893, *ibid.*, C-113 (1).

¹² "The Professorship of Sanscrit at Madras College," 3 March 1893, *Parliamentary Debates*, vol. 9, Fourth Series (London, 1893), col. 958–9; "The British Resident at Hyderabad," 30 March 1893, *Parliamentary Debates*, vol. 10, Fourth Series (London, 1893), col. 1494–5.

at least, this pressure resulted in a favorable outcome: the appointment went to an Indian.¹³

Indians in the diaspora recognized Naoroji as their representative, as well, and regularly sought his assistance. Members of the diaspora were some of the first to reach out to the Central Finsbury MP after his election. “I hope Mr. Dadabai Naoroji [*sic*] will not only represent the East Indians residing in India, but will also take an interest in those who have emigrated to this and other parts of the world,” Veera Sawmy, an Indian in British Guiana, wrote in the columns of a British Indian journal in September 1892.¹⁴ Sometime later that year, Naoroji received a memorial from the tiny and obscure Indian community of Madagascar, which loudly protested the British government’s forfeiture of their interests upon the creation of a French protectorate on the island. Aside from bringing the memorial to the attention of the foreign secretary, Naoroji pursued the matter in Parliament, questioning the Foreign Office in 1894 on how it planned to respond to a spate of French attacks on Indian subjects.¹⁵

Like their conationals in Madagascar, Indians in South Africa quickly opened lines of communication with Naoroji. In the dusty mining town of Kimberley, Haji Ojer Ally, chairman of the newly constituted Coloured Agitation Committee, fired off letters protesting the Cape Colony’s new Franchise and Ballot Act, championed by Cecil

¹³ Naoroji deemed this success important enough to mention in his address to the 1893 Lahore Congress. He might also have played a role in influencing the India Office to appoint an Indian successor, Pramada Charan Bannerji, to Sayyid Mahmud as judge of the Allahabad high court. Naoroji, “Ninth Congress—Lahore—1893: Presidential Address,” in *Speeches and Writings of Dadabhai Naoroji*, ed. G.A. Natesan, second edition (Madras: G.A. Natesan & Co., 1917), 22–3.

¹⁴ Aziz Ahmad to Naoroji, newspaper clipping from *Asia*, n.d. [late-September 1892], NAI, DNP, A-91 (31).

¹⁵ Editor, *Madagascar News*, circular, 21 October 1892, *ibid.*, M-6; Edward Gibbs to Naoroji, 7 December 1892, *ibid.*, G-45; Mola Kadibhoy Alibhoy to Naoroji, 24 September 1894, *ibid.*, uncataloged item; *Parliamentary Debates*, vol. 28, Fourth Series (London, 1894), col. 447.

Rhodes to diminish the political power of Indian residents. Ally specifically sought Naoroji's help in convincing Lord Ripon, now colonial secretary, to advise Queen Victoria to withhold royal assent for the act—Indians' only hope for defeating Rhodes's measure.¹⁶ Further to the southeast in Durban, representatives of an Indian mercantile firm, Haji Mohamed Haji Dada & Co., apprised Naoroji of worsening conditions for Indians in the colony of Natal. "Now that you are in the House we confidently hope you will make it a special duty to protect your countrymen wherever they may be situated," they implored.¹⁷

Around two years later, another Indian in South Africa approached Naoroji: a self-described "inexperienced and young" barrister by the name of Mohandas K. Gandhi. As Transvaal followed the lead of the Cape Colony and readied its own bill to disenfranchise Indians, Gandhi turned to Naoroji for advice. "You will ... oblige me very greatly if you will kindly direct and guide me and make necessary suggestions which shall be received as from a father to his child," he wrote in July 1894. Thus commenced around a decade of regular correspondence between the future Mahatma and Naoroji, who helped transmit Gandhi's South African dispatches to British ministers, Indian Congress members, and the press. Like Veera Sawmy in British Guiana and the Durban merchants of Haji Mohamed Haji Dada & Co., Gandhi understood Naoroji's political duties to extend to the entire Indian diaspora. He was confident that the MP would come

¹⁶ Haji Ojer Ally to Naoroji, 24 October 1892, NAI, DNP, A-35.

¹⁷ Haji Mohamed Haji Dada & Co. to Naoroji, 28 October 1892, *ibid.*, H-3 (1).

to the assistance of Natal Indians, using his influence “that always has been and is being used on behalf of the Indians, no matter where situated.”¹⁸

Enjoying the support and confidence of Indians dispersed around the globe, Naoroji now began formulating a distinctly Indian legislative agenda. It was here that he finally returned to the question of Indian poverty. The Indian MP began by distributing copies of his booklet, *Poverty of India*, to ministers in Gladstone’s government.¹⁹ He attempted to access confidential reports and statements on Indian poverty—occasionally meeting with stony silence or the rebukes of incredulous India Office officials.²⁰ In speeches to the House, he chided Britons for “not giv[ing] a single thought to the sufferings of men who are being ground to the very dust” by India’s “extreme poverty.” On occasion, he spoke in bolder terms about the drain of wealth and the consequences of foreign rule. “Lord Macaulay has said that ‘the heaviest of all yokes is the yoke of the stranger,’” Naoroji told the chamber on the evening of 28 March 1893, provoking an angry chorus of “Oh, oh!” from Conservative benches. “So long as this House does not

¹⁸ Tragically, this is not among the twelve of Gandhi’s letters that survive in the Naoroji Papers. Within this collection, I have not been able to locate any of Naoroji’s outgoing letters to Gandhi, although several are to be found in the collections of the Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad. Masani, *Dadabhai Naoroji*, 468–9. For more information on Gandhi’s early interactions with Naoroji, see Ramachandra Guha, *Gandhi before India* (New Delhi: Allen Lane, 2013), 76. As Guha notes, Naoroji’s election was interpreted in different ways by Indians and white settlers in Natal. In his Open Letter to Natal Legislators, dispatched in 1894, Gandhi bolstered Indians’ claims for the franchise by noting “the fact of an English constituency returning an Indian to the British House of Commons.” But, as Guha continues, Naoroji’s election also “acted as a warning to the whites, who were determined not to allow a similar situation in their colony. For if Indians were allowed to vote, how soon would it be before one or even several Indians sat in the Legislature?”

¹⁹ Published in 1888, the booklet includes the two papers of the same name delivered in 1876 before the Bombay Branch of the East India Association. R.M.H. Griffith to Naoroji, 21 October 1892, NAI, DNP, G-116 (553).

²⁰ Naoroji was successful in receiving an item entitled “Confidential Reports in the Inquiry on the Condition of the Poorer Classes,” published in February 1888 by the government of India. He was unsuccessful in getting the India Office to part with its official statistics on the Indian economy, embodied in returns of 1881 and 1891. Naoroji to Lord Reay, 16 March 1894, *ibid.*, N-1 (2509); “East India (Civil and Military Services)—Resolution,” *Parliamentary Debates*, 1893, vol. 10, col. 1387.

understand that the yoke as it at present exists practically in India is ‘the heaviest of all yokes,’ India has no future, India has no hope. (Loud cries of ‘Oh, oh!’) You may say ‘Oh, oh!’ but you have never been, fortunately—and I hope and pray you may never be—in the condition which India is placed in your hands. (‘Oh, oh!’).”²¹

Careful to avoid provoking the full wrath of Conservative opponents—as well as alienating many Liberal allies—Naoroji scrupulously avoided any mention of self-government for India. Irish home rule, after all, continued to bitterly divide both Parliament and the British electorate. As Behramji Malabari clearly understood, it was impossible to articulate any significant Indian political demands until Irish affairs were resolved and “out of our way.”²² But Naoroji could instead lay the foundations of self-rule through relatively moderate measures: the Indianization of the civil services. Beginning in 1893, Naoroji’s principal legislative objective became the institution of simultaneous civil service examinations in Great Britain and India, something that he had championed for nearly the past three decades. By lobbying Parliament to endorse simultaneous examinations, Naoroji could strike at the heart of the drain of wealth—Indian revenue expended on the salaries of British officers. He could furthermore initiate the rapid Indianization of the entire administration, as he had outlined in his 1884 memo, “The Indian Civil Service.”

A relatively moderate and seemingly unambitious proposal, simultaneous examinations enjoyed support among a broad spectrum of British and Indian political figures. Its moderateness, Naoroji hoped, would mask more ambitious ends. But some

²¹ “East India (Civil and Military Services)—Resolution,” 21 October 1892, *ibid.*, vol. 10, col. 1388, 1386, 1384–5.

²² Behramji M. Malabari to Naoroji, 22 September 1893, NAI, DNP, M-32 (357).

more astute political observers were able to call the MP's bluff. In an interview for the London-based *Pearson's Weekly*, Naoroji dismissed speculation that he had in mind anything more ambitious than civil service reform. "Home rule is scarcely the word; we don't want anything in the least like what the Irish want," he affirmed. His interviewer shot back: "Come, Mr. Naoroji, do you mean to say that the end and object of all political agitation in India is to get a handful of young men into the Civil Service!" Naoroji's reply must have confirmed the reporter's suspicions. "Ah no," he stated, "it means a great deal more than you recognize."²³

On 1 March 1893, Naoroji tabled a bill in the House of Commons that called for the simultaneous holding in India and Great Britain of the first round of civil service examinations. The bill, however, lacked enough support to advance to its second reading, where it could have been debated by MPs.²⁴ Undaunted by this failure, Naoroji began pursuing his next best option: introducing a resolution supporting simultaneous examinations. A resolution, of course, was nonbinding, but it would initiate debate and thereby force Gladstone's ministry to take a stance on the topic. It also provided some symmetry to Naoroji's career: in 1868, after all, Naoroji had worked behind the scenes to support the first Member for India, Henry Fawcett, as he introduced a similar resolution before the Commons. Immediately after the failure of his bill, therefore, Naoroji began assiduously lobbying his fellow MPs on the subject of Indian civil service reform. In this task he was assisted by his old friend and ally, William Wedderburn, who earlier in the year had won a Scottish seat in Parliament through a by-election. Wedderburn and

²³ Masani, *Dadabhai Naoroji*, 335–6.

²⁴ "Civil Services (East India) Bill," 1 March 1893, *Parliamentary Debates*, 1893, vol. 9, col. 764.

Naoroji continued to call on members through early summer, in spite of establishing—via a question put to the undersecretary of state for India—that their government was steadfastly opposed to the principle of simultaneous examinations.²⁵

Naoroji chose to confront this opposition by catching government ministers unawares. Late in the night of 2 June 1893—well after most sensible parliamentarians had departed Westminster for their homes—Herbert Paul, the Liberal MP for Edinburgh South, introduced Naoroji’s resolution on the floor of the Commons. After Paul’s speech, which clearly bore Naoroji’s stamp, the member for Central Finsbury rose to second the amendment. He framed civil service reform as something that would restore “the good name of the British people” among a skeptical Indian public. Naoroji was careful to lay full blame for Indian misrule upon Anglo-Indian officials, who were guilty of “subterfuges and unworthy and un-English means.” Members of the Commons, he concluded, had an opportunity to rectify the unfortunate situation and thereby strengthen the empire, ensuring that “their power might rest upon the strongest foundation of the contentment of the people ... which would be unshakable for ever.”²⁶

Conservative MPs did not take the bait. In particular, two Tories—George Chesney (1830-1895), a retired Anglo-Indian official who was now member for Oxford, and George Curzon (1859-1925), the future viceroy—provided the most vociferous opposition, deploying racial arguments against the inclusion of more Indians in the bureaucracy. “It would be in the highest degree undesirable to flood India with Bengalee civil servants,” Chesney cautioned, while Curzon maintained that Europeans were more

²⁵ “Indian Civil Service Examinations,” 13 April 1893, *Parliamentary Debates*, vol. 11, Fourth Series (London, 1893), col. 202.

²⁶ *Sic.* “Civil Service of India (Examination)—Resolution,” 2 June 1893, *Parliamentary Debates*, 1893, vol. 9, col. 116, 113.

likely to have the requisite “high moral character” and “wide culture and experience.” Yet it was George Russell, undersecretary of state for India, and a fellow Liberal MP, who attacked Naoroji’s resolution with the most obnoxious racial arguments. Citing the “great, fundamental, racial difficulty” as the primary reason for the government’s opposition to simultaneous examinations, Russell asserted that Indians were, “as a race, ... less richly endowed with the gifts of government.” The undersecretary of state was also skilled in the art of self-contradiction. India, he continued, was “not composed of one race but of many,” and once more singled out Bengalis for particular contempt. The “fierce, turbulent races” of the north and west, Russell stated, “would resent, and very strongly resent, any attempt on the part of the Bengalese [*sic*] natives to exercise administrative control over them.”²⁷ It was best to keep the Englishman at the helm.

After Russell, Chesney, and Curzon had delivered their blows against the resolution, Herbert Paul moved for a vote, no doubt anticipating that the late-night session would be capped off with an embarrassing defeat. After all, aside from Naoroji and Wedderburn, no one else in the chamber had spoken in favor of the resolution. Naoroji, however, was far more sanguine. He had canvassed support from a large number of MPs, and had ensured that—unlike so many members of the government and numerous Tories, who had long ago retired for the night—they stayed put in the chamber. These MPs might have stayed silent during the debate, but they were present for the vote. Once the speaker had tallied the ayes and nays, 84 votes for the resolution and 76 against, the undersecretary of state for India realized to his utter horror that embarrassing defeat

²⁷ “Civil Service of India (Examination)—Resolution,” 2 June 1893, *Parliamentary Debates*, 1893, vol. 11, col. 123, 139, 138, 127, 129, 127–8.

was his fate, not Paul's. The vote marked the first defeat for Gladstone's ministry since the 1892 general elections. And it had been brought about by his fellow Liberals.²⁸

Naoroji had not simply caught the government unawares—he had quite literally caught his opposition asleep. On 5 June, members in the Commons peppered a red-faced Gladstone with questions on how the government would react to the successful resolution. The prime minister could only respond that he needed a few days to consider the matter. In the subcontinent, Anglo-Indian organs, jolted out of a similar state of somnolence about civil service reform, reacted with trepidation. With Naoroji gaining allies in the Commons, they fretted over the broader implications of increased parliamentary intervention in Indian affairs. “In these days,” rued the *Pioneer* of Allahabad, “we may wake to find that the Opium Revenue cut off or the machinery of the administration revolutionised by a snap vote, secured by men who make no pretence to knowledge.”²⁹ Indian papers, meanwhile, celebrated a rare victory over the ruling *sahibs*. “Whatever the decision now, the final issue is clear enough; it is only a question of sooner or later” for the institution of simultaneous examinations, the *Indian Spectator* confidently predicted. “India cannot be too thankful to the House for their righteous resolution.”³⁰

²⁸ “The Indian National Movement,” *Bombay Gazette*, 16 January 1894, in *India and Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji: An Account of the Demonstrations Held in His Honour as M.P. for Central Finsbury, during His Visit to India* (Bombay: Commercial Press, 1898), 111–12.

²⁹ *Sic*. “Indian Civil Service Examinations,” *Pioneer*, 6 June 1893, 1; “Indian Civil Service Examinations,” *Pioneer*, 7 June 1893, 1; *Pioneer*, 8 June 1893, 1.

³⁰ *Indian Spectator*, 11 June 1893, in NNR, Bombay, 17 June 1893, BL, IOR, L/R/5/148.

III. ‘Young India’: Demonstrations for Civil Service Reform, a Whistle-Stop Tour, and the Lahore Congress

A non-binding resolution, passed in the teeth of government opposition, and voted upon when relatively few MPs were present, did not constitute any guarantee for the speedy institution of simultaneous examinations. Recognizing the weakness of their position, Naoroji and his Indian allies sought to force the government’s hand by coordinating mass demonstrations of support across the subcontinent. In response to those classic arguments of his opponents—the unfitness of Indians to rule, the superior moral character of the European, and the “racial difficulty,” as George Russell had put it, of Bengalis ruling over their more warlike cousins—Naoroji hoped to unleash a powerful, unified movement displaying popular enthusiasm for civil service reform.

Starting in the summer of 1893, we once again witness how early nationalists constructed sophisticated and wide-ranging networks for achieving their political objectives. Their efforts received a shot in the arm shortly after the passing of the civil service resolution, when Naoroji signaled his willingness to serve as the president of the Congress at its Lahore session in December 1893. Congress leaders set to work to turn Naoroji’s homecoming—his first time on Indian soil since entering Parliament—into another demonstration of support for simultaneous examinations. These political activities unfolded on a scale hitherto unseen in India, both in terms of popular reach and geographic breadth. Agitation for civil service reform, which swept across the country between mid-1893 and late 1894, constituted a significant achievement for the early nationalist movement: it demonstrated that the Congress was not simply a debating chamber for a handful of elites.

Naoroji and Malabari once more acted as central nodes. Early in May, a month before Herbert Paul introduced the resolution in the Commons, Malabari had already dispatched a “private circular” on civil service reform to members of the Indian press, urging them to “discuss the subject heartily.” By early July, he reported to Naoroji that “the press has taken up the question earnestly.”³¹ In the National Liberal Club’s writing room in London, meanwhile, Naoroji furiously drafted letter after letter addressed to Congress branches across the country, urging demonstrations, meetings, and petitions in favor of simultaneous examinations. “This is a supreme moment,” he wrote in one letter dispatched to Surendranath Banerjea in Calcutta. “Write to every part of India, rouse it up ... All the moral forces and exertions of the past 40 years from 1853 when the first political associations were formed in India have now come to fruition.” Naoroji wanted nothing short of “petitions innumerable” to “pour into the Commons.”³²

Replies came in waves through the remainder of summer. From Madras, M. Viraraghavachariar discussed plans to hold public meetings “all over the Presidency,” subsequently claiming that signatures for petitions were being collected “in every town & village.”³³ From Barisal in eastern Bengal, the secretary of the local Congress standing committee informed Naoroji of the imminent dispatch of several petitions to Parliament.³⁴ And from Agra, Ahmedabad, Allahabad, Lucknow, Meerut, Poona, and elsewhere came more petitions, reports of meetings, and messages of support. Even

³¹ Malabari to Naoroji, 6 May 1893, NAI, DNP, M-32 (337); Malabari to Naoroji, 7 July 1893, RPPM.

³² Masani, *Dadabhai Naoroji*, 335.

³³ M. Viraraghavachariar to Naoroji, 28 June 1893, NAI, DNP, C-113 (3); Viraraghavachariar to Naoroji, 20 September 1894, *ibid.*, C-113 (4).

³⁴ Aswini Kumar Datta to Naoroji, 9 July 1893, *ibid.*, D-39.

villagers from Vengurla, a Konkan coastal hamlet situated a few miles away from the northern border of Goa, canvassed neighboring towns for signatures and informed Naoroji of their progress.³⁵ Seeking support for the resolution, Naoroji did not limit his correspondents to political elites in presidency cities. He was, as these replies demonstrate, in touch with a broad range of Indians dispersed around the country.

As the Central Finsbury MP started arranging his travel plans for the Lahore Congress, his Conservative and Anglo-Indian opponents attempted to pick away at the movement for simultaneous examinations. In early August of 1893, the *Pioneer* somehow came into possession of one of Naoroji's earlier letters to the Madras Congress committee, where he had exhorted committee members to commence agitation via public meetings and petitions. Publishing the full letter on its front page, the *Pioneer* cited the correspondence as proof that the recent popular demonstrations in India were nothing more than shams stage-managed by "Graduates and Lawyers."³⁶ *The Times* of London gleefully republished the Allahabad paper's "exposure," claiming that "the whole agitation is artificial and is merely the work of the Congress wirepullers obeying Mr. Naoroji's detailed instructions."³⁷

A month later in the Commons, George Chesney complemented the actions of *The Times* and the *Pioneer* by launching a lengthy *ad hominem* attack against Naoroji. He ridiculed his fellow MP for having "taken up the position as a sort of general Representative of India." Many others in Parliament, Chesney continued, had "a much

³⁵ Madan Mohan Malaviya to Naoroji, 23 August 1893, RPPM; Jivanlal Desai to Naoroji, 26 July 1893, NAI, DNP, D-87 (2); Gopal Krishna Gokhale to Naoroji, 9 November 1894, *ibid.*, G-64; Raghunath S. Ingle to Naoroji, 18 September 1894, RPPM.

³⁶ *Pioneer*, 8 August 1893, 1.

³⁷ "An Indian 'Agitation,'" *The Times*, 9 August 1893, 3.

larger and much more recent experience of India and Indian affairs than the hon. gentleman who represents Finsbury,” acknowledging in the course of his speech that he figured prominently in this august group of individuals. Naoroji’s problem was that he was a “stranger.” “I would remind him that as regards the people of India he belongs to an alien race,” Chesney remarked. Parsis were “aliens separated from the people of India by religion, by race, by caste, by tradition, and by history,” and if British rule were ever to collapse, “they would assuredly be driven out of India” on the heels of the English.³⁸

Chesney’s remarks were only the latest in a long string of attacks premised on Naoroji’s Parsi ethnicity. Similar words offered by Lepel Griffin, a retired Punjab official—“As to the people of India, Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji no more represents them than a Polish Jew settled in Whitechapel represents the people of England”—were still fresh in memory.³⁹ By dismissing Naoroji as an alien, the member for Oxford played an unwitting role in shaping the Indian MP’s itinerary and reception upon his return to native shores. In order to rebut these attacks and highlight public support for simultaneous examinations, Naoroji decided to turn his upcoming journey to Lahore into a whistle-stop tour of western and northern India. By halting at various cities and towns on the route northward, and by visiting locations of importance to Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs, Naoroji hoped to demonstrate not only his popularity among all Indians, but also the representative nature of the Congress movement and the agitation for civil service reform. He was, for example, insistent on active Muslim participation in the Lahore Congress. Conscious of simmering opposition to simultaneous examinations from some

³⁸ “East India Revenue Accounts,” 20 September 1893, *Parliamentary Debates*, vol. 17, Fourth Series (London, 1893), col. 1773.

³⁹ “Lord Ripon and Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji,” *The Times*, 23 January 1889, 8.

quarters of the community, Naoroji issued strict instructions to Lahori Congressmen via Malabari: “Impress upon them to have as many Mahamadans with them as possible in all their doings.”⁴⁰ Naoroji was careful to include Aligarh on his railway itinerary, reach out to the Aga Khan, and organize a mass meeting with the *qazi* of Bombay. The MP therefore shaped his India itinerary with Chesney and other British political opponents clearly in mind.

In spite of such public overtures toward Muslim leaders, it would be wrong to see Naoroji’s brief tour through northern and western India as nothing but a choreographed event. Congress organizers—or “wire pullers,” as *The Times* would have it—did indeed plan a few receptions in Bombay, Lahore, and elsewhere. However, neither they nor Naoroji were prepared for the overwhelming public response that ensued. Chesney’s barbs played a role in galvanizing Indian public opinion as the MP departed London in late November for Bombay. Naoroji’s return to India was marked by mass demonstrations of a scale routinely described in the press as “unparalleled,” “unprecedented,” and “historical.” Even *The Times* was forced to concede that they were “striking.”⁴¹ The MP’s brief halts at Ahmedabad, Delhi, Amritsar, Allahabad and elsewhere drew in thousands of spectators, while in Bombay and Lahore he literally brought these cities to a halt. These demonstrations provided unequivocal refutation to claims made by Chesney, Lepel Griffin, and others. They cemented Naoroji’s reputation as an Indian leader, someone who enjoyed visible mass support across the subcontinent.

⁴⁰ *Sic.* Naoroji to Malabari, 6 December 1893, NAI, DNP, B-97.

⁴¹ *India and Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji*, 447, 204, xiii.

And lastly, they demonstrated how early nationalism and the Congress movement were exciting a degree of mass participation across the country.

The MP's reception in Bombay provided for a dramatic beginning. According to one account, half a million people lined Bombay's streets to mark his arrival on Indian soil on the afternoon of 3 December 1893—an exceptionally significant number considering that the city's population hovered around a million. Standing and salaaming to the crowds from within a carriage, Naoroji commenced a four-mile procession from Apollo Bunder through the lanes of Fort, Bhuleshwar, and Girgaum to his home in Khetwadi. Bystanders heaped flowers into his carriage, while more petals streamed down from windows, balconies, and rooftops lined with spectators. So great were these offerings that one reporter quipped that Naoroji was “nearly asphyxiated with the flowers.” As the procession entered Hornby Road, Parsi priests from Dadyseth Agiary offered benedictions to the MP in the sacred languages of Avestan and Pahlavi. Naoroji was next greeted by “the performance of some ceremony peculiar to the Madrassesees,” parties of laborers and millworkers, and the cheers of passengers on trams that had been haplessly stranded amidst the crowds. Proceeding onto Bhuleshwar, Brahmin priests emerged from a temple to offer their blessings. It took around two hours for the procession to reach its destination, where Naoroji was hurried into his dwelling amid a surge of more well-wishers. Finally, sometime before reaching home, he received a telegraphed message from Madras, announcing that 10,000 people had gathered in the

capital of the southern presidency to welcome his return, give “emphatic denial to the gross misrepresentations of Colonel Chesney,” and request that the MP visit their city.⁴²

By featuring participants of diverse ethnic, religious, and socioeconomic backgrounds, Bombay set the tone for future demonstrations honoring Naoroji. Similar ovations followed in Poona and the cities of Gujarat. After a three-mile procession through Poona’s streets—a “miraculous welcome” attended by residents “without any distinction of class or caste”—Bal Gangadhar Tilak greeted Naoroji at the Hirabaug town hall. “I think he would be best described by calling him the great teacher of the new religion—the new political religion of India,” Tilak spoke of Naoroji before an audience that included Gopal Krishna Gokhale and the city’s municipal commissioners. Naoroji passed some days at home in Bombay before boarding the Ahmedabad Mail at Grant Road Station and commencing his journey northward. At Surat, crowds gathered at one o’clock in the morning to witness Naoroji’s brief halt, while in Baroda he was greeted by the *diwan* and the city’s *nagarsheth* or head Jain merchant. Arriving at Ahmedabad the next morning, Naoroji surveyed a crowd of nearly 10,000 people that had gathered opposite the station. As the *Times of India* records, “the mills stopped work for two hours, and thousands of mill-hands were present.” Naoroji paid his respects to Rancchodlal Chhotalal, founder of the city’s first cotton mill, and praised the success of Ahmedabad’s indigenous industrial economy.⁴³

⁴² “Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji, M.P., in Bombay,” *Advocate of India*, 4 December 1893, in *ibid.*, 425; “Interview with Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji, M.P.,” *India*, 1 March 1894, in *ibid.*, 533; “Arrival of Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji, M.P.,” *Times of India*, 4 December 1893, in *ibid.*, 25–26c, 55.

⁴³ *Sudharak*, 18 December 1893, in NNR, Bombay, 23 December 1893, BL, IOR, L/R/5/148; “Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji in Poona,” *Bombay Gazette*, 19 December 1893, in *India and Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji*, 91; “Mr. Naoroji’s Reception in the Punjab,” *India*, 1 February 1894, in *ibid.*, 215; “Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji, M.P.,” *Times of India*, 22 December 1893, in *ibid.*, 141, 142.

After Ahmedabad, Naoroji passed outside of the limits of the Bombay Presidency and his traditional political base. But the demonstrations did not abate. Beawar in Rajputana staged illuminations as Naoroji's train pulled into the town station at one o'clock in the morning. Ajmer awoke to the strain of an "excellent band" at two o'clock. Delhi's reception, in the words of a correspondent for the Lahore *Tribune*, marked "a new era in the history of upper India." In spite of a civil service officer's discouragement for staging any celebrations, members of the city's municipal committee, a delegation from Awadh, and around 5,000 to 8,000 residents packed the station to welcome Naoroji. From here, Naoroji was put at the head of a procession of four hundred carriages that moved down Chandni Chowk. More demonstrations followed in Ambala, Ludhiana, Phagwara, and Jalandhar before Naoroji took a longer halt in Amritsar. The city of Amritsar responded with the biggest demonstrations the MP had experienced since Bombay. Around 50,000 people lined its bazaars and streets, according to one estimate telegraphed to the *Tribune*. Naoroji was conducted to the Golden Temple, where Sikh *granthis* led a special service, invested the MP with a "sacred cloth," and fastened golden and pink scarves to his Parsi headgear. After taking a sip of holy water from the pool, Naoroji was escorted to the window of the Temple's *darshani* gate where "cheers and acclamations[—]wah! wah! jai! jai!—burst forth from the vast assemblage of 20,000 men and women."⁴⁴

Naoroji's train finally pulled into Lahore Junction at midday on 26 December. Denizens of the Punjabi capital marked the end of Naoroji's journey with another demonstration that powerfully reaffirmed the MP's cross-communal popularity. A

⁴⁴ "Mr. Naoroji's Reception in the Punjab," *India*, 1 February 1894, in *India and Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji*, 215, 216; "Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji, in the Punjab," *Tribune*, 27 December 1893, in *ibid.*, 172, 173, 174–5.

correspondent for the *Manchester Guardian* reported that the railway station's entrances were completely blocked by crowds extending half a mile into the distance. "Nothing approaching this demonstration has ever before been witnessed in the Punjab," he observed.⁴⁵ From the station—where the Congress president was met with loud cries of "DADABHAI NAOROJI KI JAI!" and "Long live electors of Central Finsbury"—Naoroji was taken on a four-hour procession. This procession, which "rolled on like a turbulent river" through Anarkali Bazaar and the walled city, led Naoroji past mosques, temples, and gurudwaras, whose entrances, courtyards, and balconies were packed with the followers of Lahore's three main faiths. Quite often, the demonstrations took on an explicitly religious form: individuals stopped Naoroji's carriage to perform *aarti*, give *ashirvad*, and sing *bhajans*. A famous *mithaiwala*, Surjan Singh, upturned a giant plate of sticky *bedana* over spectators. In an open square next to Lahore's waterworks, the poet Syed Nazir Hussain Nazim read out verses in Urdu that he had composed for the occasion, using the MP's name to draw "an augury that henceforth *naoroz* (*new era*) would dawn on India." As the poet finished his recitation, delegations streamed in to present addresses to the MP: groups of students, civic leaders, and a deputation of Lahori Muslims asking Naoroji to bring "the special grievances of the Mahomedans" to the attention of the Commons.⁴⁶

Naoroji's journey through Punjab had taken him through its biggest cities and into some of its most sacred sites. But on the morning of 27 December, when he delivered his presidential address before the Congress, he returned to the domain of high politics. The

⁴⁵ *Sic.* "The Member for India': Enthusiastic Reception at Lahore," *Manchester Guardian*, 27 December 1893, 5.

⁴⁶ "Arrival of Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji at Lahore," *Tribune*, 27 December 1893, 2–4.

MP's address served as a response to ovations he had received across India, and also provided Naoroji with an opportunity to assess India's political progress. This was a speech of great significance—not simply because it marked the conclusion of a long journey from the halls of Westminster back to the Congress *pandal*. Rather, the Congress address was significant because it perfectly encapsulated the second phase in the evolution of Naoroji's political thought. It was the best expression of the early nationalist strategy for achieving Indian reform in Great Britain and, specifically, through Parliament. And it marked the high point of Naoroji's confidence in British institutions and the British electorate.

As he approached the Congress *pandal*, Naoroji knew that he had to speak to two audiences—one in India and the other in faraway Westminster. At first he attempted to speak to both: he spelled out necessary political reforms while carefully noting that these demands did not undermine Indians' fundamental loyalty to the crown. The MP thanked members of the Punjab Congress committee for inviting him—"not a Punjabi, not a Muhammadan, nor a Sikh"—to preside. By choosing him as president, Naoroji continued, Punjabis had also affirmed their support for simultaneous examinations, "the only method in which justice can be done to all the people of India." Naoroji proceeded to speak of the gravity of Indian poverty and the great difficulties of bringing this to the attention of British legislators and voters. In this arduous task, he stated, Indians could thankfully rely on the assistance of various progressive allies. Singling out the Irish for their steadfast support, Naoroji read out a message from Michael Davitt, who informed Congress delegates that "every one of Ireland's Home Rule Members in Parliament is at your back." In spite of difficulties and setbacks, the MP urged Congressmen to maintain

faith. “Our faith in the instinctive love of justice and fair play of the people of the United Kingdom is not misplaced,” he professed.⁴⁷

Although in the shadow of the Badshahi Masjid, and with nearly a thousand Congress delegates before him, Naoroji began to direct his speech more and more toward his parliamentary audience in London. The presidential address soon took on the form of a final, earnest appeal to the Gladstone ministry to sanction simultaneous examinations. Civil service reform, he argued, fitted in with the “moderate and reasonable” agenda of the Congress and would immensely benefit both India and the empire at large. Here, the MP characterized simultaneous examinations as being fundamentally in the interest of the metropole. “I regard the enormous European Services as a great political and imperial weakness,” Naoroji continued, noting that the drain of wealth was breeding disaffection. Instead of perpetuating a cycle of poverty and discord, Naoroji held up an alternative imperial vision. With a reformed civil service and a reduced drain of wealth, India would prosper, allowing the empire to be held together through mutually beneficial economic ties rather than military force. A prosperous India that traded on equal terms with Britain, Naoroji believed, would mean that “the United Kingdom would not for a long time hear anything about her ‘unemployed.’” Partnered with an economically strong India, Great Britain could also “defy half-a-dozen Russias.” This was the message—*economic and political security for the United Kingdom*—that Naoroji sought to convey to his fellow MPs. He concluded with the hope of seeing “the British holding out the hand of true

⁴⁷ Naoroji, “Ninth Congress—Lahore—1893: Presidential Address,” 21, 28–9, 31.

fellow-citizenship and of justice to the vast mass of humanity of this great and ancient land of India with benefits and blessings to the human race.”⁴⁸

As he stepped away from the pandal and toward the cheering crowds that had assembled on this cold Punjabi morning, Naoroji’s thoughts were in London. He had stated his case to MPs, outlining how simultaneous examinations would strengthen India, the empire, and, most fundamentally, Great Britain. Naoroji now eagerly awaited a response from the Liberal ministry.



After departing Lahore, Dadabhai Naoroji passed another three weeks traveling around India. He embarked eastward to Kanpur, Agra, Aligarh, and Allahabad—where his procession included a herd of elephants. With time running short, the MP abandoned plans to journey further onward to Calcutta and Madras, instead returning to Bombay before boarding a Europe-bound steamer on 20 January 1894.

Naoroji’s nearly two months in the subcontinent elicited a wide variety of responses and reactions. The Indian media put forth several interpretations of the ovations that were staged from the southern coast through the plains of Punjab. There were, of course, direct references to George Chesney and his ilk, with several newspapers noting how Naoroji’s Parsi ethnicity had not precluded him from winning enthusiastic support from a broad spectrum of Indians. In Calcutta, the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* insisted that Naoroji was not simply “a Member of Parliament but *our own* member.” The *Gujarati*, meanwhile, argued that “he is as much a Hindu and a Mahomedan as he is a Parsi and all the races are equally proud of the great Parsi patriot who has risen superior

⁴⁸ Ibid., 27, 48, 41, 42, 64.

to all racial prejudices.” Bal Gangadhar Tilak’s English broadsheet, the *Mahratta*, agreed: “The fact can no longer be denied by the most prejudiced Anglo-Indian, and even a Chesney ... will find it difficult in future to forget that Mr. Dadabhai is the real representative of the whole of India.”⁴⁹ Chesney’s remarks had evidently rankled many Indians, who were loath to forget the Anglo-Indian’s words.

A few publications, both in India and Britain, argued that the public demonstrations signified popular support for simultaneous examinations. Here, it was Naoroji, who was desirous of pressing this interpretation upon fellow MPs and the British public at large, who offered the most enthusiastic commentary. “The whole foundation of the British rule rests mainly on the confidence in its honor,” the MP scribbled in a press statement drafted aboard his Europe-bound steamer, “and of this honor the people regard the Resolution for simultaneous examinations as signal proof.”⁵⁰ This proved to be a difficult claim to make. Back in London, a journalist, C.S. Bremner, interviewed Naoroji and frankly expressed her doubts. “I can’t say that the concession appears to me a sufficient explanation for an outburst of enthusiasm from a great nation,” she offered, “though it is very modest of you to attribute it to that source.” Naoroji was not flattered. While “to the outsider,” he maintained, it appeared “a small cause to produce an effect so great; yet it is the real explanation.”⁵¹

⁴⁹ *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 10 December 1893, 2; *Gujarati*, 3 December 1893, in *India and Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji*, 354; “A New Awakening,” *Mahratta*, 24 December 1893, in *ibid.*, 499.

⁵⁰ Naoroji, draft press statement, included in Frederick W. Emett to Naoroji, 23 January 1894, NAI, DNP, E-48.

⁵¹ “Interview with Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji, M.P.,” *India*, 1 March 1894, in *India and Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji*, 532–3.

In spite of Naoroji's steadfast claims, the true significance of the visit lay elsewhere. It was not merely a riposte to Anglo-Indian prejudice, nor was it just a show of support for simultaneous examinations. As newspapers across India noticed, the whistle-stop tour and Lahore Congress had generated palpable nationalist sentiment. There was now excited talk about "Young India," heralded by the erstwhile leader of Young Bombay. Early nationalism was engendering unified demands for political reform. As the *Sahachar*, a Bengal weekly in Calcutta, remarked, "This time the Hindu, the Musalman, the Sikh, the Bengali, the Hindustani, the Maharatti, the Parsi, the Panjabi and the Madrasi have spoken with one voice."⁵² Moreover, this new spirit was, by and large, not hobbled by the particularities of religion, race, or region. The *Tribune* of Lahore waxed eloquently about the symbolism of Naoroji's reception in the capital of Punjab. "It seemed like a dream: all Lahore turning out to greet not a Governor, not a Prince Royal, not a Maharaja with brocaded troops and regiments on elephants—but a Parsi gentleman, ... who had devoted himself to the service of his country," the paper noted. "Seeing the sight and understanding its true import, no one need despair of the future of India."⁵³

At the same time, there had been an undeniable popular dimension to the demonstrations greeting the Member for India. Papers noted that the "rich and the poor, the educated and uneducated" had welcomed Naoroji. Among the crowds that Naoroji attracted on his railway journey northward, the English-educated elite could only have made up a fraction. The MP had been greeted by millworkers, laborers, and other ordinary Indians—who had then conveyed him to locations associated with authority and

⁵² *Sic.* 3 January 1894, in NNR, Bengal, 13 January 1894, BL, IOR, L/R/5/20.

⁵³ "Arrival of Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji at Lahore," 2.

legitimacy, such as the broad imperial avenue of Chandni Chowk or the Golden Temple. Surveying the full extent of Naoroji's reception in India, the *Native Opinion* pointed to its obvious significance. "Can we not take this," it asked, "as the surest indication ... that a new life is coming over the country, that a new awakening has obtained a sure footing, not only in a microscopic minority but in the masses too, and that it is rapidly filtering down and down still?"⁵⁴

IV. Conclusion: Disillusion, Drain, Defeat

Dadabhai Naoroji's brief stay in India in 1893-94 thus stirred something perceptibly "new" in the country: amplified political interest and participation, an expanded base of support for the Congress, and widening interest in political reform. It bred a moment of increased confidence and optimism in India's political future. These sentiments were shared across diverse regions of the subcontinent. The Congress, for its part, hoped to build on its success at Lahore by attracting a high-profile Irish nationalist leader for its next session in Madras, thereby augmenting its international prominence and strengthening its transnational links.⁵⁵ Naoroji looked upon these developments with great favor. In his presidential address, he stated that "my main underlying principle and the desire of my heart is to promote, as far as I can, good fellow-feeling among all my

⁵⁴ "If Not a New Awakening What is It?," *Native Opinion*, 21 December 1893, in *India and Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji*, 405, 406.

⁵⁵ Naoroji tried to interest Michael Davitt in serving as president of the Madras Congress, but he ultimately declined, worried that his presence in India would adversely impact the organization. Davitt noted in his diary: "Think it would be a big risk for the Congress movement for me to accept this invitation. The Anglo-Indian press would howl with frantic madness at such an event, while the Times & Co would scarcely be able to write from indignation. This, however, would not affect me much. The question is would my presiding at this Congress help the cause of the Indian people?" Naoroji to Davitt, 2 October 1894, Trinity College, Dublin, Michael Davitt Papers, 9347/514; Davitt, diary, *ibid.*, 9556/336-7. Thanks to Carla King for sending me a transcription of this diary entry after I had lost my own transcription.

countrymen.” It was here, after all, that Naoroji delivered one of his most famous quotations: “Whether I am a Hindu, a Muhammadan, a Parsi, a Christian, or of any other creed, I am above all an Indian. Our country is India, our nationality is Indian.”⁵⁶

Naoroji was primarily concerned with how such increased nationalist activity would impact affairs in Westminster. During the second stage of his political career, he recognized Parliament as the ultimate arbiter of India’s destiny. As Member for India, Naoroji’s activities were driven all the more by parliamentary considerations. By the time of his return voyage to London, after eighteen months in office, Naoroji believed that he had laid the groundwork for sustained political reform. Indian political actors, both in the subcontinent and the diaspora, had recognized his position of power in London and pressed their claims against British authorities. They, too, seemed to acknowledge the importance of Parliament in resolving their disputes. In responding to Indian grievances in Madagascar or South Africa, Naoroji could turn to his friend and fellow Liberal, Lord Ripon, in the Colonial Office. Meanwhile, he had scored a significant victory against the India Office by successfully carrying a resolution in favor of simultaneous examinations.

In order to build on this groundwork, Naoroji now looked forward to working with the Gladstone ministry on executing civil service reform. He was confident that the Liberal government would eventually come around on the issue. “Of course the Indian Government is against carrying the resolution into effect,” he conceded to a *Daily News* correspondent upon returning to London, “but it must be carried into effect,” as the ruling sahibs could not ignore the will of Parliament. India’s enthusiastic response to the

⁵⁶ Naoroji, “Ninth Congress—Lahore—1893: Presidential Address,” 55, 59.

resolution added further moral weight. “All things have now become possible,” Naoroji remarked optimistically to another reporter.⁵⁷

But the MP’s optimism was not to last. If the whistle-stop tour and Lahore Congress had been triumphs for Naoroji—an affirmation of faith in a British parliamentary strategy for Indian reform—then his return to the Commons in early 1894 came like a crash. The strategy of pursuing Indian reform in Britain, after all, came with one major risk. Indians could petition Parliament or speak forcefully and eloquently about the need for political change, but there was no guarantee that MPs would actually listen to them. And members of Liberal ministry had clearly chosen not to heed Naoroji’s presidential address in Lahore. Month after month, the government remained stonily silent on the issue of simultaneous examinations. “If the Simultaneous Exam. question has to hang fire like this, you will have to make a fresh fight about it,” Behramji Malabari suggested to Naoroji in April 1894.⁵⁸ However, Indian civil service reform was not simply hanging fire—it was steadily retreating into the distant background. Indian affairs were crowded out by debate and the subsequent failure of the second Irish home rule bill in early 1894, the resignation of Gladstone, and Lord Rosebery’s ascent to the position of prime minister.⁵⁹ Correspondingly, Naoroji’s letters to fellow Congressmen began taking on a markedly desperate tone. In July 1894, he pleaded with Surendranath Banerjea for more active demonstration of support in India for simultaneous examinations. “This is the

⁵⁷ “Return of Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji, M.P.,” *India*, 1 March 1894, in *India and Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji*, 538; “Interview with Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji, M.P.,” *India*, 1 March 1894, in *ibid.*, 533.

⁵⁸ Malabari to Naoroji, 21 April 1894, NAI, DNP, M-32 (377).

⁵⁹ For a comprehensive study of Liberal Party politics during the transition from Gladstone to Rosebery, see chapters one and two in Peter Stansky, *Ambitions and Strategies: The Struggle for the Leadership of the Liberal Party in the 1890s* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964).

supreme moment of India's fortunes," he declared. "If we fail, our doom of slavery is fixed for generations." Naoroji was not simply asking Banerjea for further petitions and meetings. He wanted sustained agitation. "What is *absolutely necessary*," he instructed, "is that the agitation should be *unceasing*."⁶⁰

Desperation gave way to bitterness, and bitterness emboldened Naoroji. As the headiness of the Lahore Congress slipped into memory, Naoroji began forcefully propounding the drain theory from the floor of the Commons, throwing to the wind the relative caution and moderation he displayed during earlier debates. Reviving his positions of the late 1870s and early 1880s, he pronounced British policy in India to be "evil." Once more, he began liberally citing the observations of men such as John Shore, who had first identified in British India those certain "evils inseparable from the system of a remote foreign dominion." During another late night session in Westminster in mid-August 1894, only around thirteen months after the vote on simultaneous examinations, Naoroji launched a lengthy tirade against the impoverishing effects of British administration. "If there was any condemnation of the existing system" in India, Naoroji held, "it was in the result that the country was poorer than any country in the world." Repeating his arguments from "Poverty in India" about how the European-dominated civil service resulted in an economic and "moral" drain, he charged that "the evil of the foreign rule involved the triple loss of wealth, wisdom, and work. No wonder at India's material and moral poverty!"⁶¹

⁶⁰ Naoroji to Banerjea, 26 July 1894, RPPM.

⁶¹ "Resolution," 14 August 1894, *Parliamentary Debates*, 1894, vol. 28, col. 1055, 1059, 1061.

The Central Finsbury MP then embarked upon a risky strategy. He pinned the blame of India's gross poverty upon several contemporary MPs and government officials, a few of whom were perhaps in the chamber that night. Lord Salisbury was among the first. Naoroji latched onto a statement from 1881, where the Tory leader had proclaimed that "India must be bled." While sardonically praising Salisbury for laying bare the central premise of British policy in the subcontinent, Naoroji unequivocally warned that "this bleeding of India must cease." The Member for India also cast his eye toward Government House in Calcutta, training his focus on Lord Lansdowne, the viceroy. Naoroji reminded the viceroy that his grandfather had, through his sponsorship of the charter act of 1833, attempted to "break our chains" and promote the true welfare of Indians. Nevertheless, Lansdowne "now riveted back those chains upon us" by coming out in opposition to simultaneous examinations. "Look upon this picture and upon that!" Naoroji exclaimed. "And the Indians were now just the same British slaves."⁶²

However, the full extent of Naoroji's disillusionment only became evident when he turned to the honorable member for Midlothian—W.E. Gladstone. Though no longer prime minister, the 84-year old statesman was still a formidable presence in the Commons. Naoroji commended Gladstone's efforts to grant Irish home rule, quoting extensively from his speeches on the unwisdom of holding Ireland in bondage through military power and political oppression. But "this applied to India with a force ten times greater" than Ireland, Naoroji reminded him. For Indians, the Liberal government's refusal to allow simultaneous examinations "meant rivetting back upon them every chain." Was Gladstone preparing to end his six-decade long political career, "while

⁶² Ibid., vol. 28, col. 571, 1056 .

giving emancipation to 3,000,000 of Irishmen,” with the perpetuation of an unjust policy that would “only further enslave the 300,000,000 of India?” He put a similar question toward Lord Rosebery: “Would he begin his promising career as Prime Minister by enslaving 300,000,000 of British subjects?”⁶³

Naoroji increasingly dwelt on the idea of slavery, occasionally offering vivid comparisons with other subject peoples. Replying to the Queen’s Speech on 12 February 1895, he proclaimed, “In a way a great mass of the Indians were worse off than the slaves of the Southern States. The slaves being property were taken care of by their masters. Indians may die off by millions by want and it is nobody’s concern.”⁶⁴ By early 1895, however, it was unclear if anyone in the Commons was seriously paying attention to Naoroji. Shortly after the Queen’s Speech, the *Illustrated London News* offered a pathetic description of the MP. “Mr. Naoroji clings with affecting tenacity to the belief that the House of Commons can be induced to listen to speeches about India,” the paper scoffed. “So he delivered to empty benches a plaintive wail about the financial condition of the Indian Empire.”⁶⁵ *Punch* also mocked the Member for India. “Read a paper of prodigious length; beat the tom-tom for nearly an hour,” the comic magazine summarized Naoroji’s parliamentary performance. “In churches, an incumbent sometimes reads himself in. NAOROJI reads his congregation out. Mayn’t be quite so black as the MARKISS painted him, but he’s quite as long-winded as could have been expected.”⁶⁶

⁶³ Ibid., vol. 28, col. 1063–4, 1065.

⁶⁴ “Address in Answer to Her Most Gracious Majesty’s Speech,” 12 February 1895, *Parliamentary Debates*, vol. 30, Fourth Series (London, 1895), col. 570.

⁶⁵ “The House of Commons,” *Illustrated London News*, 16 February 1895, 195.

⁶⁶ The last line is in the form of a quote from “(almost) Reverend Jemmy Lowther.” “Markiss” of course refers to Lord Salisbury. “Essence of Parliament,” *Punch*, 15 December 1888, 95.

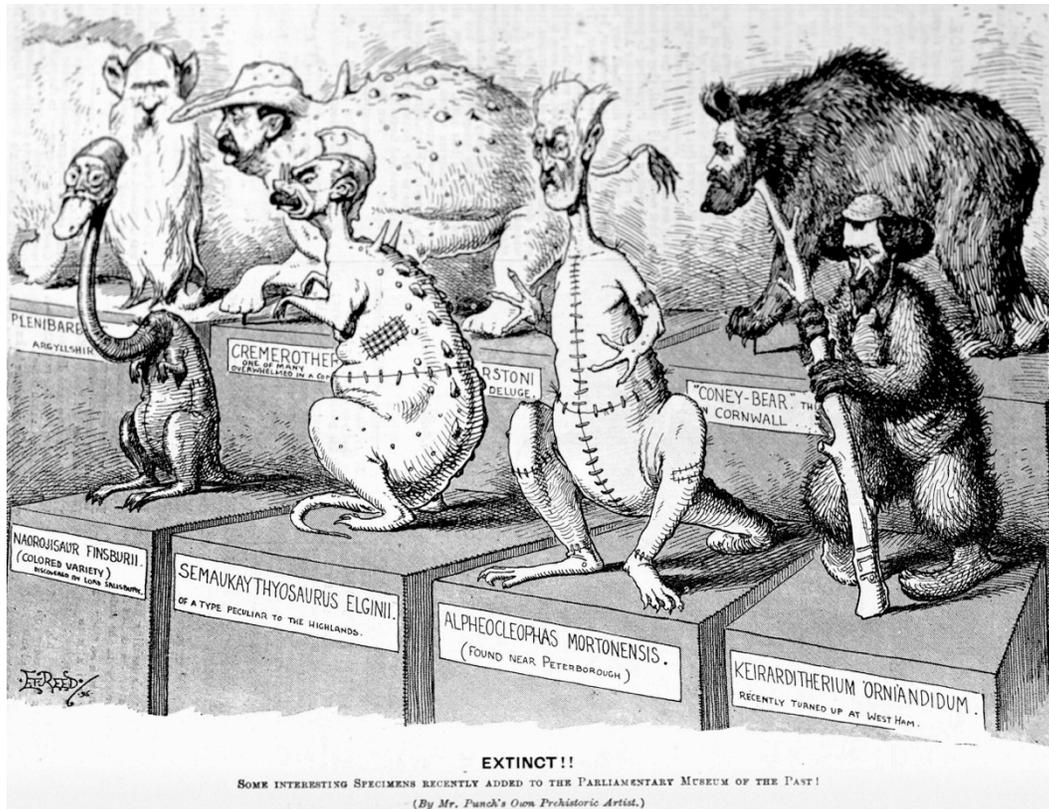


Image 14: “Extinct!!” Cartoon from *Punch*, featuring MPs defeated during the 1895 general elections. Naoroji is at far left on the bottom row. 3 August 1895, 3.

The most humiliating blows came in July 1895, during the general elections. Naoroji lost his seat in Central Finsbury, one of dozens of Liberal MPs swept out of power during a Conservative torrent that put Lord Salisbury back into office as prime minister (Image 14). Even worse, the Tories now had their own Member for India: Mancherji M. Bhownagree, who had been returned from Bethnal Green, another working class constituency.⁶⁷ A fellow Parsi, Bhownagree identified himself as a staunch Conservative. Although he had campaigned for Naoroji in 1892 and celebrated his victory, he had quickly found the Central Finsbury MP far too radical in his politics.

⁶⁷ John McLeod is currently finishing a biography of Bhownagree.

Bhownaggee, who had found powerful sympathizers within the Conservative Party, utterly dismissed “the Congress fad of Radicalism.”⁶⁸ And now he had the ear of the Commons. Reeling from Bhownaggee’s election and his defeat, Naoroji reached out to his longstanding allies. “A reactionary Indian is in the House,” he wrote to Michael Davitt in January 1896. “May I ask you to help me obtain an Irish Seat.”⁶⁹ However, the Irish Parliamentary Party was still in the midst of a leadership crisis and Davitt himself was fast losing his faith in parliamentary methods. Naoroji’s longtime Irish supporter could offer him no help.

Out of the Commons, coming to terms with the strong Tory ministry now in charge of Indian policy, and with his parliamentary strategy for Indian reform lying in tatters, Dadabhai Naoroji surveyed his options. Thus began the final stage in his political career.

⁶⁸ Mancherji M. Bhownaggee to George Birdwood, 9 March 1894, BL, IOR, George Birdwood Papers, MSS Eur F 216/65.

⁶⁹ Naoroji to Michael Davitt, 15 January 1896, Trinity College, Dublin, Michael Davitt Papers, 9348/529.

Swaraj

I. Agitation, the Specter of Rebellion, and the Transnational Reach of Naoroji's Thought

In August 1895, a month after his unsuccessful attempt at reelection to the House of Commons, Dadabhai Naoroji sat down for an interview with *Great Thoughts*, a London journal. In the course of the interview, the former MP dwelt on the government's failure to act on the parliamentary resolution for simultaneous examinations. This failure, he argued, was part of a much longer history of broken pledges made to the Indian people. "The violation of the pledges made to India time after time has been scandalous," Naoroji stated. His interviewer queried Naoroji about the long-term impact of these violations upon British rule: "And what do you think must be the ultimate result of such a policy?" Naoroji's reply was immediate and direct. It set the tenor for the final phase of his political career, when Naoroji abandoned the cautious language he had adopted over the past ten years. "I prophesy," Naoroji began, "that this constant violation of pledges, this persistent opposition to Indian interests, and the deterioration and impoverishment of the country by an evil administration, must lead, sooner or later, to a rebellion."¹

During the final stage of his career, Dadabhai Naoroji championed *swaraj* or Indian self-government, although he did not begin publicly enunciating this demand until 1903, following his correspondence with Romesh Chunder Dutt (see Appendix A). And it was not until 1906 that he was able to establish self-government as the objective of the

¹ Isidore Harris, "An Indian Reformer on Indian Affairs," *Great Thoughts*, 31 August 1895 (republished as pamphlet), 5-6, NAI, DNP, Part III, G-17.

Congress. In the years leading up to this, Naoroji, frustrated and embittered from four decades of attempts to bring about Indian reform through constitutional means, warned that Indian disaffection would soon manifest itself in the form of a violent uprising. Events seemed to confirm Naoroji's grim forecast. Following the weak monsoons of 1895 and 1896, famine began stalking the land, spreading from Bundelkhand in the North-West Provinces into the Central Provinces, Bombay Presidency, Rajputana, Punjab, and parts of Bengal and Madras. In Bombay, plague followed on the heels of famine, and the government's high-handed response compounded the general misery. "The Govt had ceased to be British Govt & had assumed the *role* of Russian Govt.," Gopal Krishna Gokhale protested, surveying the situation in his native Poona.² On the evening of 22 June 1897, two Maharashtrian revolutionaries assassinated the special plague commissioner in Poona, Walter Charles Rand, and his military escort, Charles Egerton Ayerst. The murders prompted many of Naoroji's allies to echo his views of impending revolution. "How long do you think the present system in India will last now?," Henry M. Hyndman asked Naoroji. "From what I can hear, there is a growing feeling among the dominant class here that we are on the verge of a *serious crisis*."³ Allan Octavian Hume spoke with greater certainty. "I fear that the time for constitutional agitation has passed," he wrote to Naoroji. He saw only one possible trajectory for India: "oceans of blood."⁴

² *Sic.* Gopal Krishna Gokhale to Dadabhai Naoroji, 6 August 1897, *ibid.*, G-64 (7).

³ Henry M. Hyndman to Naoroji, 22 January 1900, *ibid.*, H-221 (67).

⁴ Allan Octavian Hume to Naoroji, n.d. [enclosed in letter from William Wedderburn dated 8 November 1903], *ibid.*, W-48 (171).

As this dissertation has demonstrated, Naoroji's political thought was marked by constant evolution. Unlike so many other political leaders, he grew more radical as he aged. In his maiden political speech—delivered before the Bombay Association in 1853—Naoroji had expressed strong confidence in the British administration and the ability of Indians to influence the policies of their rulers. “When we see that our Government is often ready to assist us in everything calculated to benefit us,” he stated, “we had better than merely complain and grumble, point out in a becoming manner what our real wants are.”⁵ During the first stage of his career, as he fine-tuned his drain theory, Naoroji steadily tempered this optimism. He finally realized that British policy in India was “evil” and that it was imperative to begin moving in the direction of self-government. “Never can a foreign rule be anything but a curse to any country, excepting only so far as it approaches a Native Rule,” he told a British friend, John Slagg, in 1885.⁶ The second period of his career, where he engaged with parliamentary processes in an attempt to apply the political corollary to his drain theory, had yielded few tangible results. Failure in Parliament prompted further radicalization. And it marked the beginning of the third and final phase of his career, one marked by sustained agitation.

What did it mean to agitate? “Agitation is the civilised, peaceful weapon of moral force, and infinitely preferable to brute physical force when possible,” Naoroji remarked.⁷ It meant constant protest, mass meetings, petitioning, and demonstrations. These were, of course, hallmarks of all the previous stages of Naoroji's career. What distinguished the

⁵ Dadabhai Naoroji, “Twenty-Second Congress—Calcutta—1906: Presidential Address,” in *Speeches and Writings of Dadabhai Naoroji*, ed. G.A. Natesan, second edition (Madras: G.A. Natesan & Co., 1917), 82.

⁶ Naoroji to John Slagg, 8 February 1885, NAI, DNP, N-1 (244).

⁷ Naoroji, “Twenty-Second Congress—Calcutta—1906: Presidential Address,” 89.

final twelve years of his public life, however, was the sheer scale of activity upon which Naoroji embarked. In spite of advancing years—he marked his seventieth year shortly after the interview with *Great Thoughts* in 1895—Naoroji threw himself into work. Friends urged him to slow down. “I see you are down to speak *in the open air* on Peckham Rye!!,” Hyndman wrote to Naoroji in September 1901, referring to a popular venue for demonstrations in Southwark. “This is, believe me, most dangerous for you,” he counseled, worrying that the exercise would exacerbate Naoroji’s persistent respiratory problems.⁸ But Naoroji displayed a steady reluctance to let health and advanced age determine his pace of activity.

Between 1895 and 1903, Naoroji spoke and wrote constantly about India being on the cusp of another great uprising. While he earnestly believed that violence was inevitable, he also understood the political value of making such statements. Conscious of Whitehall and Westminster’s widening recognition of Indian disaffection, Naoroji played upon British fears of a second Mutiny in order to urge immediate and sweeping political concessions for India.⁹ The language of loyalty and gratitude had failed to woo a Liberal ministry; perhaps a tone of fear and foreboding would prompt some reflection among members of the ruling Tory government.

Naoroji began by joining hands with Hyndman for what was termed, appropriately enough, a “serious agitation” to mark the famine and plague epidemic in

⁸ Hyndman to Naoroji, 20 September 1901, NAI, DNP, H-221 (99).

⁹ Naoroji made deft use of the “Mutiny-motif” and British paranoia about a repeat of the events of 1857. For a discussion of how the Mutiny played on British anxieties, see Kim Wagner, “‘Treading Upon Fires’: The ‘Mutiny’-Motif and Colonial Anxieties in British India,” *Past and Present*, no. 218 (February 2013): 159–97.

India.¹⁰ Hyndman initiated the movement by distributing across the United Kingdom 200,000 copies of a brief manifesto, “The English-Made Catastrophe in India,” which predicted India’s “economic and social collapse” due to the “deliberate policy of greed and oppression pursued by the Queen’s Government.”¹¹ Then, on 10 February 1897, they organized a massive protest meeting in Westminster, held under the auspices of the Social Democratic Federation. In this meeting, Hyndman and Naoroji succeeded in bringing together some of the country’s leading leftist figures to loudly condemn British policy. Speakers included Ramsay MacDonald, the future prime minister; Tom Mann, the union leader who had led the great London Dock Strike of 1889; Robert Bontine Cunninghame Graham, founder of the Scottish Labour Party; and Edward Spencer Beesly, a confidante of Marx. These leaders, and others, further popularized the idea of impending rebellion in India. Michael Davitt called British rule a “curse” and predicted that Indians “would take measures to relieve India from that rule.” Hyndman, who endowed Victoria with the colorful moniker of “the Empress of Famine and the Queen of the Black Death,” linked rebellion in India with a looming social revolution at home, noting that “the same class who sweated the Indian people sweated the English workers.” Naoroji, for his part, refrained from repeating his dire predictions, instead demanding that Britain infuse ten or twenty million pounds in the form of famine and plague relief.¹²

Through the winter and early spring of 1897, Naoroji and Hyndman continued to hold rallies in cities across Britain. Simultaneously, Naoroji opened new fronts in his

¹⁰ Hyndman to Naoroji, 23 October 1896, NAI, DNP, H-221 (17).

¹¹ Hyndman to Naoroji, 2 February 1897, *ibid.*, H-221 (22); “The English-Made Catastrophe in India,” *Justice*, 23 January 1897, 4.

¹² “The Indian Famine—S.D.F. Indignation Meeting,” *Justice*, 20 February 1897, 4.



Image 15: Indian famine victims. Engraving from October 1900 found in the Dadabhai Naoroji Papers. The handwriting at the bottom is Naoroji's. Reproduced with permission of the National Archives of India.

campaign of agitation. To Lord Welby, chairman of a newly appointed royal commission for investigating Indian financial affairs,¹³ Naoroji composed seven open letters that laid out, with renewed force, his drain theory. "The British people stand charged with the blood of the perishing millions and the starvation of scores of millions," he concluded.

¹³ There is, unfortunately, not enough room in this dissertation to discuss this royal commission in full. During its first session in 1885, the Congress had passed a resolution calling for a royal commission to investigate how Indian expenditure was utilized. While in the House of Commons, Naoroji campaigned for the appointment of such a commission. In 1895 the Liberal ministry instituted the Royal Commission on the Administration of the Expenditure of India, known as the Welby Commission since Lord Welby served as the chair. Among the commissioners were Naoroji, William Wedderburn, and George Curzon (who resigned after being appointed as viceroy). Naoroji delivered his own evidence and encouraged both Dinsha Wacha and Gopal Krishna Gokhale to travel to London to serve as witnesses. Not surprisingly, Naoroji and Wedderburn's opinions on the grave financial condition of India were in the minority, and in India the commission was largely judged to be a failure. For more on the Congress' demand for a commission, see S. R. Mehrotra, *A History of the Indian National Congress* (New Delhi: Vikas Pub. House, 1995), 23. For the findings of the commission, along with a minority report by Naoroji and Wedderburn, see *Final Report of the Royal Commission on the Administration of the Expenditure of India, Vol. IV*. (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1900).

Naoroji ridiculed the Indian government's piecemeal attempts at famine relief, maintaining that British administrators were, themselves, responsible for the calamity (Image 15). They, after all, were perpetuating the drain of wealth. "The great question is not merely how to meet a famine when it occurs—by taxing the poor people—but how to prevent the occurrence of the famine," he noted. Turning once more to the theme of rebellion, Naoroji asked Welby, "Is it possible for any sane man to think that any one nation can hold another in slavery and yet expect loyal devotion and attachment from it?" Naoroji's letters were pervaded by a strong sense of urgency. "Events," he cautioned, "are moving fast."¹⁴

In spite of being granted a position of authority in an important commission, Welby was a relative non-entity. Naoroji's real targets lay elsewhere. They were stationed inside the imposing ministry buildings that lined Whitehall: the various ministers, secretaries, and under-secretaries, all exuding an arch-imperialist bent of mind, who now commanded portfolios that had a direct impact upon India. Naoroji realized that constructive engagement with these individuals was highly unlikely—he had counted many of them amongst his most fervent of opponents while in Parliament. So he embarked on a different tactic, one of deliberate provocation. Through lengthy correspondence, he sought to expose the hypocrisy and racism that undergirded British policy in India. To Lord Lansdowne, the former Indian viceroy now serving as secretary of state for war, Naoroji fired off a battery of letters accusing the British army of a policy of "race-distinction" that prevented the promotion of non-Europeans. Flustered officials at the War Office eventually declined to continue correspondence, leaving Naoroji's

¹⁴ Dadabhai Naoroji, "Royal Commission on the Administration of Expenditure in India," in *Poverty and Un-British Rule in India* (London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co., 1901), 386, 387, 389.

charges unrefuted. Naoroji subsequently embodied the War Office's tacit acknowledgment of "race-distinction" in a widely-distributed pamphlet.¹⁵

To Lord George Hamilton, secretary of state for India, Naoroji protested against similar racial bars that kept Indians out of all arms of the bureaucracy. And he sought to unsettle bureaucrats at the India Office by once more raising the specter of rebellion. Violation of promises and pledges, Naoroji warned, provided for "the sowings of bitter seeds; and although their bitter fruit may not be reaped in our time, the bitter fruit must and will come in some form or other."¹⁶ He elaborated in another note. "What will naturally happen will be secret societies and assassinations," Naoroji confidently predicted. "Your European Civil Service and all Civilian Europeans are your greatest weakness. In the midst of the hundreds of millions, the European Civilian population will be swept away. You have had some experience of it in that unfortunate mutiny."¹⁷ In attempting to provoke a response from the secretary of state, Naoroji employed language that, in India, would likely have been declared treasonous.

Fortunately for Naoroji, Hamilton took the bait and responded. The secretary of state lashed out at his opponent. "You announce yourself as a sincere supporter of British rule; you vehemently denounce the conditions and consequences which are inseparable from the maintenance of that rule," he wrote. These conditions and consequences were, of course, maintenance of a British-dominated civil service and the transfer of Indian

¹⁵ "Copies of Correspondence between the War Office and Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji," pamphlet, in "Correspondence with Mr Dadabhai Naoroji regarding the Eligibility of Natives of India for Appointments made by the S of S in England to [1] the Educational Department [2] the Police Department [3] the Public Works Department from Cooper's Hill," BL, IOR, L/PJ/6/555, File 2168.

¹⁶ Naoroji to George Hamilton, 12 October 1900, in *ibid.*

¹⁷ Naoroji to Hamilton, 26 February 1901 [included in Naoroji to Lord Morley and Lord Minto, 25 June 1908], NAI, DNP, E-72 (98).

revenue to Great Britain. While acknowledging that “heavy annual remittances have to be made to this country [the United Kingdom] for services rendered and monies borrowed,” Hamilton steadfastly disavowed the existence of a drain and loudly denied that India was becoming more impoverished. “I assert you are under a delusion,” he continued, remarking that—in spite of “periodic visitations of pestilence and famine”—conditions in India had vastly improved under British rule.¹⁸ Naoroji used Hamilton’s inconsistent statements to great effect. As he had done with the War Office correspondence, he published the letters in full. Hamilton’s remarks, not surprisingly, generated indignant responses from India, still reeling from mass famine and plague.¹⁹

By 1898, the India Office responded to Naoroji’s radicalized tenor by sending spies to some of his public meetings. At least two spies were dispatched to separate meetings that Naoroji organized for the Indian community in London. As president of the London Indian Society, Naoroji sought to politicize the community and thus widen his program of agitation. Meetings included debates on resolutions that condemned various aspects of Indian policy, such as the curtailment of local self-government in Calcutta and the institution of a repressive new sedition law in 1898. The reports of India Office spies provide us with more pronouncements—by Naoroji and his colleagues—of looming disaster in the homeland. But they serve another important purpose: the reports tell us about the individuals who attended these meetings. At a late December 1898 gathering, we read of “a young African native with English friends” in the audience.²⁰ In May 1901,

¹⁸ “Correspondence between Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji and Lord G. Hamilton,” *India*, 24 May 1901, 249, 250.

¹⁹ M. Viraraghavachariar to Hamilton, 20 June 1901, in “Comments on Correspondence between the S. of S. and Mr Dadabhai Naoroji,” BL, IOR, L/PJ/6/572, File 1174.

²⁰ “Report on a Meeting of the London Indian Society,” 2 January 1899, BL, IOR, L/PJ/6/499, File 66.

a spy at another London Indian Society meeting remarked of attendees that “quite 2/3 of them were women.” One of the speakers was “an Indian born in South Africa” (“evidently with some negro blood,” he added).²¹

These reports hint at one final component of Naoroji’s program of agitation. As he intensified his protests against Indian policy, Naoroji embraced numerous other emancipatory causes. He remained steadfastly involved in the movements for British women’s rights, Irish home rule, and Indian rights in South Africa. But he also cast his sights further, forging links with anti-imperialist leaders and movements around the world. In London, Naoroji participated in a vibrant undercurrent of anti-colonial and anti-racist activity. And he took special interest in the affairs of the African diaspora—which perhaps explains the attendance of the “young African native” at a London Indian Society event. While still in Parliament, Naoroji befriended Catherine Impey, the founder of *Anti-Caste*, a journal that campaigned against all forms of racial prejudice and drew particular attention to lynchings in the American South.²² It was through Impey that Naoroji later met Ida B. Wells, the black American journalist and civil rights activist who toured

²¹ H.J. Tozer, “Meeting of London Indian Society (24 May 1901),” 25 May 1901, in “Resolutions Passed at a Meeting of the London Indian Society,” BL, IOR, L/PJ/6/570, File 970.

²² Impey sought Naoroji’s involvement in her Society for the Furtherance of Human Brotherliness. She sketched out her admirable agenda in a letter to Naoroji: “The direct object & intention of those who are forming the Association is to cultivate a broader spirit (sentiment?) of *justice & brotherliness regardless* of differences of colour & ‘race’, so called. I believe myself in *one ‘race’* (the *Human* race) one family, the ‘Human Family’, of which *all* are members; and the injustice & persecution & isolation to which those differing in colour & nationality &c from our English people are subject has awakened not only a feeling of sorrowful indignation but of personal responsibility urging to all possible efforts to awaken others to the need of cultivating a more righteous & nobler public sentiment among our people at home, in India, & in our colonies. To this end a little paper called ‘Anti-Caste’ has been published for the past six years, & recently stimulated by the increasing horror of Lynch-law in the USA, the readers & supporters of this paper have begun to organize groups of those friendly to our views—in order as it were to provide a platform from which protest may be issued in defence of *any* who suffer injustice on *the ground of race prejudice*. The cause of India (the Indian *people* I mean) has been kept to the front in all the preliminary deliberations of those who are moving in this matter.” *Sic*. Catherine Impey to Naoroji, 29 June 1893, NAI, DNP, I-9.

Britain and spoke forcefully about lynch mob violence. Wells and Naoroji subsequently figured among the co-founders of an English Anti-Lynching Committee.²³

Impey and Wells might have also introduced Naoroji to the growing number of black activists in the imperial capital. Among these individuals was Henry Sylvester Williams, a Trinidadian, who in 1900 organized the Pan-African Conference in London. This Conference, which drew delegates from Africa, the West Indies, and the United States, including W.E.B. DuBois—featured discussion on self-government for British African colonies. DuBois authored a proclamation condemning imperialism and the exploitation of “the black world.” While hardly any evidence on the Conference survives, it is clear that Naoroji played some role in its organization. Williams occupied an office next-door to the British Committee of the Indian National Congress.²⁴ Shortly before the Conference convened, Williams sent a brief note to Naoroji, thanking him for a donation.²⁵ The Indian leader continued to take an interest in Williams’s work long after the Conference had concluded. During the 1906 election, Naoroji assisted Williams in searching for a parliamentary constituency. Although unsuccessful in this endeavor, he

²³ Caroline Bressey, “A Strange and Bitter Crop: Ida B Wells’ Anti-Lynching Tours, Britain 1893 and 1894” (Occasional Paper, Centre for Capital Punishment Studies, London, 2003). Also see Caroline Bressey, “Victorian ‘Anti-Racism’ and Feminism in Britain,” *Women: A Cultural Review* 21, no. 3 (2010): 279–91.

²⁴ As Jonathan Schneer points out, there were clearly many links between Indian and black activists in London. Naoroji might have known another prominent black activist, Celestine Edwards. By demanding the rights enjoyed by British subjects while condemning European imperial conquest, Both Edwards and Williams adopted language that was remarkably similar to Naoroji’s. Jonathan Schneer, *London 1900: The Imperial Metropolis* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 210, 216, 224.

²⁵ Henry Sylvester Williams to Naoroji, 18 July 1900, NAI, DNP, P-15.

helped Williams and John Archer, another black activist, win elections to London municipal councils the same year.²⁶

Outside of London, Naoroji engaged with numerous individuals who took an interest in his economic thought, particularly the drain theory. In July 1902, for example, he received a request from Cyprus for a copy of his *Poverty and UnBritish Rule in India*. “Here in Cyprus, we have been discussing the question ‘whether the net effect of British rule has been to impoverish Cyprus,’” remarked one M. Sevasly of Nicosia. “We have had no famines so far, but we are fast approaching hopeless indebtedness. We are studying the matter by analogy.”²⁷ Across the Atlantic in New York, another individual was proposing a British Indian analogy to his country’s recent imperial exploits. George Freeman, a reporter for the *New York Sun*, was an Irish-American whose letters betrayed strong antipathy toward Great Britain and the British Empire. Beginning in 1897, he entered into a lengthy correspondence with Naoroji, drawing the Indian leader into anti-imperialist networks in the American continent. Naoroji, in turn, inducted Freeman into his network of Congress allies.

Around the turn of the century, therefore, we witness the beginnings of an enduring alliance between American anti-imperialists and Indian nationalists. With Naoroji’s assistance, Freeman established contact with Indian journalists and began receiving Indian newspapers at his lower Manhattan residence. This opened further doors. He initiated correspondence with M. Viraraghavachariar of the *Hindu* and soon

²⁶ In 1913, Archer was elected mayor of Battersea, becoming the first black to hold this position within London. Rozina Visram, *Asians in Britain: 400 Years of History* (London: Pluto Press, 2002), 137–8.

²⁷ Sevasly added: “I had the honour while in London laboring for the cause of Armenia to meet you at the National Liberal Club where I was privileged to make your acquaintance.” M. Sevasly to Naoroji, 23 July 1902, NAI, DNP, S-88a.

met with Bipin Chandra Pal, the radical Bengali leader who toured America in 1900.²⁸ Freeman, for his part, distributed Naoroji's writings to political leaders, universities, public libraries, and newspapers across the United States.²⁹ He introduced Naoroji to prominent critics of the United States' imperial ambitions—men such as Edward Atkinson, the Boston-based founder of the American Anti-Imperialist League.³⁰ And he began sending copies of the *Sun* and other American papers, such as the *Springfield Republican*, to Naoroji as well as the offices of the *Hindu*, *Madras Standard*, and the *Tribune* of Lahore.³¹

But Freeman's interest in Naoroji and India was not simply motivated by his anti-British sentiment. In Naoroji's writings on Indian poverty, Freeman detected a stern warning against American imperial overreach. Amid the yellow journalism and jingo sentiment that celebrated the United States' recent victory in the Spanish-American war—and its acquisition of the Philippines, Guam, Cuba, and Puerto Rico—Freeman predicted that American's new colonial subjects would soon suffer from the same withering poverty that British rule had inflicted upon India. And it was likely that this impoverishment would stoke a violent rebellion similar to the one that Naoroji foresaw in India's future. As he mentioned in a letter to Naoroji a few months after the end of the war, he and his friends worried that “the moneyed class is pushing the U.S. government

²⁸ Naoroji suggested that Freeman receive the *Champion*, *Advocate of India*, and the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*. George Freeman to Naoroji, 11 April 1899, *ibid.*, F-87 (30); Freeman to Naoroji, 2 March 1900, *ibid.*, F-87 (54).

²⁹ Freeman to Naoroji, 7 February 1899, *ibid.*, F-87 (21).

³⁰ Freeman to Naoroji, 18 August 1899, *ibid.*, F-87 (44).

³¹ From another letter, we know that the *Madras Standard* began reproducing several of Freeman's articles from the *Sun*. Freeman to Naoroji, 18 December 1899 [?], *ibid.*, F-87 (50); Freeman to Naoroji, 17 March 1899, *ibid.*, F-87 (28).

into the grabbing of tropical territory with semi-civilised populations for American ‘boys’ of the political carpet-bagger class to be sent out to govern and exploit.” Naoroji’s literature “contains a clear warning against it.”³² For this reason, Freeman persuaded the Indian leader to dispatch copies of his writings to members of the US Senate.³³ He also forwarded Naoroji’s pamphlets to William Jennings Bryan, the leading voice of the American Progressives, who seems to have quoted Naoroji in at least one of his speeches.³⁴ Thus, in the final phase of Naoroji’s career, we notice a unique application of his economic thought: attempts by American anti-imperialists to use the drain theory to influence US foreign and colonial policy. Naoroji’s ideas had spread well beyond the perimeter of the British Empire.

II. Rebellion to Self-Government, Congress Divisions, and the Radical Challenge to Naoroji

“The Extremists of to-day will be the Moderates of to-morrow, just as the Moderates of to-day were Extremists yesterday.”

- Bal Gangadhar Tilak, “Tenets of the New Party,” 2 January 1907³⁵

Between 1895 and 1903, therefore, Naoroji’s activities were guided by the fear of an Indian rebellion and his deepening interest in other emancipatory and anti-colonial struggles around the world. Something changed by 5 July 1903, when Naoroji ended his correspondence with Romesh Chunder Dutt by calling for “Self Government under

³² Freeman to Naoroji, 15 December 1898, *ibid.*, F-87 (16).

³³ Freeman to Naoroji, 25 April 1899, *ibid.*, F-87 (32).

³⁴ Freeman to Naoroji, 12 December 1898, *ibid.*, F-87 (15); Hyndman to Naoroji, 6 February 1899, *ibid.*, H-221 (60).

³⁵ Bal Gangadhar Tilak, *Bal Gangadhar Tilak: His Writings and Speeches*, ed. Aurobindo Ghosh (Madras: Ganesh & Co., 1919), 55.

British Paramountcy.” In his speeches and writings after that date, Naoroji made fewer references to a future rebellion. There are a handful of possible reasons. While the likelihood of an uprising continued to deeply trouble him, Naoroji might have worried that his statements were being misinterpreted as an endorsement of violence. “My desire and aim has been not to encourage rebellion but to prevent it, and to make the British connection with India a benefit and a blessing to both countries,” he wrote to Hyndman, who had actually begun exhorting Indians to violently rise against their colonial masters.³⁶ Change would come to India “either by peaceful organisation or by revolution,” as he informed a London audience in November 1904, and Naoroji insisted that the former must prevail.³⁷

Equally likely, Naoroji might have been roused by developments elsewhere in the world. In South Africa, the British concluded the Boer War in 1902 by promising the restoration of self-government to the Orange Free State and the Transvaal (while absorbing these entities into the empire).³⁸ That same year, Naoroji’s American contacts probably informed him of the US Congress’ decision to grant a modicum of representative government to Filipinos.³⁹ These concessions, granted so quickly to former antagonists, made the continuance of authoritarian British rule in India appear all the more egregious. Naoroji alluded to this in his speech to the 1906 Calcutta Congress. “The Boers have already obtained self-government in a few years after conquest,” he noted,

³⁶ Rustom Pestonji Masani, *Dadabhai Naoroji: The Grand Old Man of India* (London: G. Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1939), 400.

³⁷ Dadabhai Naoroji, “The Indian National Congress,” in *Speeches and Writings of Dadabhai Naoroji*, ed. G.A. Natesan, second edition (Madras: G.A. Natesan & Co., 1917), 260.

³⁸ This was arranged through the Treaty of Vereeniging, signed in May 1902.

³⁹ Outlined in the so-called Cooper Act or Philippine Organic Act of 1902, instituted at the conclusion of the Philippine-American War that followed the Spanish-American War.

“while India has not yet received self-government though it is more than 200 years from the commencement of the political connection.”⁴⁰ Instead of dwelling upon gloomy portents of the future, Naoroji quite likely felt that it was time to issue a clear political demand.

Events in Bengal provided a third influence upon Naoroji’s thought. In December 1903, the government of India made public its intentions to partition the sprawling province—a plan that had been nursed by the viceroy, Lord Curzon. A wave of resentment built up among Bengalis once the government’s motives became clear: to fashion a border that would, in the words of one Anglo-Indian official, “split up and thereby weaken a solid body of opponents to our rule.”⁴¹ During a moderate phase of protest that preceded the actual partition, large numbers of Bengalis began staging demonstrations and mass meetings across the province.⁴² From London, Naoroji—who expressed his opposition to the partition plans—observed Bengali activity with immense satisfaction. Bengal’s reliance upon largely peaceable agitation, rather than violence, greatly encouraged him about future prospects for broadening the nationalist movement into a truly popular cause. Naoroji had long believed that self-government was only possible if Indians invested enough time, energy, and resources into a determined agitation. Now, Bengal appeared to be showing the rest of India how to proceed.

Naoroji embodied these thoughts in a speech he delivered to the London Indian Society in May 1905, shortly before Curzon formally partitioned Bengal. “I regard the

⁴⁰ Naoroji, “Twenty-Second Congress—Calcutta—1906: Presidential Address,” 69.

⁴¹ Quoted in Sumit Sarkar, *The Swadeshi Movement in Bengal, 1903-1908* (New Delhi: People’s Publishing House, 1973), 18.

⁴² See *ibid.*, 35–47.

day on which the first Calcutta meeting was held as a red-letter day in the annals of India,” he stated. “I am thankful that I have lived to see the birthday of the freedom of the Indian people.” Those last few words were significant. In his speech, Naoroji drew a direct link between protests in Bengal and the agitation needed for self-government. Bengalis, Naoroji claimed, “have now broken the ice, they have declared that they will not be governed as slaves.” Their agitation, he believed, was primarily directed toward highlighting the unjust, authoritarian nature of the Indian government. Naoroji chose to conclude this portion of his speech on a note more reminiscent of the second phase of his career: “Now let them [Bengalis] show a spirit of determination, for, I have very little doubt that, if the British public were once satisfied that India is determined to have self-government, it will be conceded.”⁴³

Bengal’s partition, however, would unleash transformations that were of far greater consequence than Naoroji’s decision to make self-government, rather than imminent rebellion, the central theme of his public pronouncements. The partition unleashed a wave of political activity that, ultimately, dictated the course of Naoroji’s final years of public life. Curzon’s division of the province was, first and foremost, a fillip to a rising generation of radical and revolutionary Indian nationalists. These men (and, increasingly, women) did not share Naoroji’s optimism about the goodwill of the British people, nor did they believe that Britons would so readily concede self-government, as Naoroji had remarked in his May 1905 speech. As agitation in Bengal matured into the Swadeshi Movement, the radicals—willing to speak enthusiastically

⁴³ Dadabhai Naoroji, “The Legacy of Lord Curzon’s Regime,” in *Speeches and Writings of Dadabhai Naoroji*, ed. G.A. Natesan, second edition (Madras: G.A. Natesan & Co., 1917), 276, 278.

about *both* rebellion and self-government—began loudly to criticize Naoroji’s methods and political views as being too moderate.

This was a major development, and one that unfolded at breakneck speed between roughly 1904 and the 1906 Calcutta Congress. Throughout his political career, Naoroji had represented the vanguard of Indian nationalist thought. Many of his pronouncements and actions had deeply unsettled moderate leaders. To such men, Naoroji *was* the radical. Congress officials, such as Behramji Malabari and Dinsha Wacha, had fretted over Naoroji’s alliance with Michael Davitt in the late 1880s (Chapter Three, Section IV). In January 1898, Wacha scolded Naoroji for chairing a meeting in London where young Indian radicals had employed “intemperate” and “violent” language while discussing British rule. “The bounds of moderation were greatly exceeded,” he remarked. Wacha noted that some of his colleagues in Bombay had even stronger reactions to Naoroji’s conduct. “Many of our own friends seem to think we should enter a public protest against you and your meeting!,” he related, noting that Narayan Chandavarkar, an eminent lawyer, and two others were pushing the Bombay Presidency Association to initiate such action.⁴⁴

Naoroji continued to unsettle moderate voices through the first years of the twentieth century. In October 1904, for example, W.C. Bonnerjee reacted with horror when Naoroji proposed that the journal of the British Committee of the Indian National Congress, *India*, feature language on the British “plundering” of India that was evidently judged too provocative. “The Congress party in India is looked upon even now as violent & unreasonable in many quarters & if its organ in this country speaks as Mr Dadabhai

⁴⁴ R.P. Patwardhan, ed., *Dadabhai Naoroji Correspondence*, vol. II, part II (New Delhi: Allied, 1977), 597–8.

wishes it to do I think the party would fall into real disgrace & be looked upon as altogether irreconcilable,” Bonnerjee complained to William Wedderburn.⁴⁵ The emergence of political leaders that appeared more radical than Naoroji, therefore, was a relatively new development. During the 1890s, men such as Bal Gangadhar Tilak of Maharashtra, Aurobindo Ghosh of Bengal, and Lala Lajpat Rai of Punjab established their more extremist credentials, but—with the possible exception of Tilak—they posed no serious challenge to Naoroji, nor did they affiliate Naoroji with established moderates such as Gopal Krishna Gokhale or Pherozeshah Mehta.

What is striking is that Naoroji personally knew many of these radicals, and remained on amicable terms with a few of them for the remainder of his political career—even as they began to speak against him. Some of the most prominent radical leaders had grown up around Naoroji during the 1890s and early 1900s. They had looked to him as a mentor or friend. Bipan Chandra Pal (1858-1932) participated in the 1898 London Indian Society meeting that was monitored by an India Office spy: the Bengali extremist, identified in the spy’s report as a “Brahmo lecturer,” sat just to the right of Naoroji upon the dais.⁴⁶ Shyamji Krishnavarma (1857-1930), who edited the *Indian Sociologist* and excoriated the moderates in its columns, by his own admission had known Naoroji “for nearly thirty years.”⁴⁷ In 1905, Naoroji helped inaugurate India House in London—which later became a hotbed of student radicalism—alongside

⁴⁵ W.C. Bonnerjee to Wedderburn, 17 October 1904, NAI, DNP, B-180 (37).

⁴⁶ “Report on a Meeting of the London Indian Society,” 2 January 1899, BL, IOR, L/PJ/6/499, File 66.

⁴⁷ “The Indian National Congress and Its President: A Professional Politician Once More to the Front,” *Indian Sociologist*, November 1906, 41.

Krishnavarma and Lala Lajpat Rai.⁴⁸ Finally, Bhikaiji Cama (1861-1936), the Parsi revolutionary who based herself in France, looked after Naoroji's granddaughter, Perin, while she pursued higher education at the Sorbonne. She invited Naoroji for a "Parsee lunch" when visiting London and, as late as January 1906, requested Naoroji for a ticket to the House of Commons' gallery so that she could see King Edward VII formally open Parliament.⁴⁹ This was only a year before she addressed the International Socialist Congress in Stuttgart, where she denounced the British monarch's rule and unfurled the flag of an independent India.⁵⁰

Many of these leaders had grown radical from the very same experiences that so embittered Naoroji at the turn of the century: the reactionary policies of the Indian government during the Tory ministry, famine and plague, Curzon's imperious viceroyalty. But, contrary to their effect on Naoroji, these experiences had extinguished any hope among radicals of achieving Indian political rights through Parliament, lobbying the British public, and other aspects of a nationalist strategy that concentrated its activities in the metropole at the expense of the colony. In spite of his disillusionment with parliamentary processes after losing his seat in the Commons in 1895, Naoroji stubbornly clung to his faith in British institutions and the British people. A constitutional strategy for political reform, one that shunned extralegal tactics and abhorred any use of violence, necessitated that he keep this faith alive. For this reason, while he celebrated the

⁴⁸ Harald Fischer-Tiné, *Shyamji Krishnavarma: Sanskrit, Sociology and Anti-Imperialism* (New Delhi: Routledge, 2014), 62.

⁴⁹ Bhikaiji Rustomji Cama to Naoroji, 22 November 1906, NAI, DNP, C-13 (7); Cama to Naoroji, 27 January 1906, *ibid.*, C-13 (1).

⁵⁰ For more on Cama, see Nawaz Mody, "Madame Bhikaiji Rustom Cama: Sentinel of Liberty," in *The Parsis in Western India: 1818 to 1920*, ed. Nawaz Mody (Bombay: Allied Publishers, 1998), 46–79.

fact that Bengalis had embarked upon a sustained agitation that could lead to self-government, Naoroji continued to place the burden of responsibility upon British shoulders—and hope that, this time, they would not disappoint. “I hope that the next Government we have will reconsider the whole position, and will see and understand the changes that have taken place in the condition, knowledge, and intelligence of the Indian people,” Naoroji concluded his speech of May 1905 to the London Indian Society.⁵¹

Some radicals urged Naoroji to change his tactics and recognize that many in India were no longer willing to hold out hope for Britain to deliver on long-promised reforms. Prominent in this group was Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856-1920), who had warmly welcomed Naoroji to Poona in December 1893 during his whistle-stop tour between Bombay and Lahore. In September 1906—as moderate Congressmen equivocated over whether or not to support the boycott of foreign goods, patronization of *swadeshi* articles, and other new methods of protest that were sweeping through Bengal—Tilak penned a lengthy letter to Naoroji. He addressed the senior nationalist in tones of respect and deference, stating, “You are the *guru* of us all in political matters & I need not say that I highly value the privilege of receiving advice from you.” But he adamantly maintained that a difference existed between them, and that “the present controversy is one of methods.” Tilak pleaded for Naoroji to shift the focus of Congress activities from Great Britain to India. “All that the Congress has been hitherto doing is to pass resolutions every year & submit the same to Govt.,” he argued. “This was supplemented by educating the public opinion in England. Can we not go a step further?” What Tilak had in mind, specifically, was “self-help” and “self-reliance” for the Indian people. “Svadeshi

⁵¹ Naoroji, “The Legacy of Lord Curzon’s Regime,” 283.

[sic], boycott, strikes, national education, are pointed out as instances or directions in which the Congress may do useful work,” he continued, referring to the activities over the past year in Bengal. While he assured Naoroji that “no one has the least idea of taking to the revolutionary methods,” Tilak ended his letter on a note of desperation. “We have prayed & petitioned so long,” he stated. There was, in his mind, no logic in continuing to confine the nationalist movement to purely constitutional methods, ones that a new generation of radicals branded as sheer mendicancy.⁵²

Other radicals, unlike Tilak, decided to directly attack Naoroji. From 1905 onward, his fiercest and most persistent critic was Shyamji Krishnavarma. Originally from Kutch, Krishnavarma had served as the *diwan* of Junagadh before relocating to the United Kingdom, where he became an admirer of Herbert Spencer and befriended Henry Hyndman. In 1904, he founded a monthly paper, the *Indian Sociologist*, which quickly evolved into the mouthpiece of Indian radicals and revolutionaries in Great Britain. In its columns, Krishnavarma praised Naoroji’s economic analysis of Indian poverty, but argued that his political career had been “by no means so advantageous to the cause of his countrymen.”⁵³ Indian representation in the House of Commons, Krishnavarma believed, would achieve nothing; it could even “retard India’s progress towards freedom and independence” by distracting from calls for representative government at home. With Naoroji’s campaign fundraising experiences clearly in mind, he denounced “wasting the resources of India on a few Indians’ admission into the British Parliament.”⁵⁴ Naoroji’s

⁵² Bal Gangadhar Tilak to Naoroji, 21 September 1906, NAI, DNP, T-73 (1).

⁵³ “Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji and Indian Politics,” *Indian Sociologist*, November 1906, 44.

⁵⁴ “Indians’ Admission into British Parliament Retards India’s Progress,” *Indian Sociologist*, January 1906, 1.

steadfast faith in the British people, and his continued declarations that Indians would eventually receive justice from British hands, further repelled Krishnavarma. “If Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji thinks that the liberty and justice which the English so much love will be extended to India, he is sadly mistaken.”⁵⁵

But Krishnavarma saved his most damning criticisms for a later edition of the *Indian Spectator*, published in November 1906. Here, he surveyed Naoroji’s long career of five decades and asked what he had achieved. The East India Association, where Naoroji had enunciated many components of his drain theory during the late 1860s and early 1870s, had fallen into the hands of Anglo-Indians. The organization was “now altogether inimical to Indian interests.” Naoroji’s signal achievement in the House of Commons, the resolution in favor of simultaneous examinations, had resulted in no tangible results. Krishnavarma took issue with the very idea of simultaneous examinations, arguing that it was unwise to encourage Indian youths to join the civil services and thereby “become unjust agents of an oppressive foreign government.” Indianization of the bureaucracy, Krishnavarma held, would not alter the fundamental power dynamics of an authoritarian British Indian government. “It causes us no pleasure to say unpalatable truths about a man who for many years had the reputation of laboring in his country’s cause,” he remarked. He then delivered his final blow. Having evaluated Naoroji’s various activities, Krishnavarma pronounced, “we find that his political work has been a sad failure.”⁵⁶

⁵⁵ “The President-Elect of the Indian National Congress: The Fable of the Monkey and the Two Cats,” *Indian Sociologist*, December 1906, 45–6.

⁵⁶ Many radicals found Krishnavarma’s views on Naoroji too extreme. Some suggested ulterior motives. Lala Lajpat Rai remarked that “Mr. Shyamji is jealous of Naoroji and wants to pull him down in the estimation of Indians.” “The Indian National Congress and Its President: A Professional Politician Once More to the Front,” 41; Fischer-Tiné, *Shyamji Krishnavarma*, 129.

Shyamji Krishnavarma's devastating verdict was prompted by yet more events unfolding in Bengal. The Congress' 1906 session was scheduled to meet in late December in Calcutta, the epicenter of the Swadeshi Movement, where the widening chasm between moderate and radical nationalists was daily apparent. Through the summer of 1906, members of the Calcutta Congress committee tackled the thorny issue of who should serve as president. Radicals pushed vigorously for Tilak, someone who was completely unacceptable to the moderate establishment. But the rising tide of swadeshi activism—given added fuel by the new secretary of state for India, John Morley, who refused to modify the partition of Bengal—added weight to their demands. The Congress movement appeared dangerously close to a rupture. From Calcutta, Naoroji began receiving frantic messages from moderate leaders. "Tilak's nomination will be strenuously opposed by a large section of our Congress friends and will infallibly lead to a split in our camp," Surendranath Banerjea warned. Banerjea, therefore, pleaded for Naoroji's assistance: would he agree to preside at the Calcutta session? Naoroji, it was hoped, would be equally acceptable to moderates and radicals. "Your Presidentship will be universally and loyally accepted by all and will avert a split," Banerjea professed. Bhupendranath Basu concurred. "Without the presence of a man of your personality, the whole Congress movement will be split beyond rehabilitation," he averred. In September 1906, Naoroji signaled that he was willing to travel to Calcutta and accept the presidency.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ Surendranath Banerjea to Naoroji, 13 September 1906, NAI, DNP, B-33 (5); Bhupendranath Basu to Naoroji, 13 September 1906, *ibid.*, B-59 (2).

III. The Calcutta Congress

Banerjea and Basu were correct. With the exception of Krishnavarma, whose remarks on Naoroji's "sad failure" were part of a much longer tirade against his proposed presidency, radicals approved of Naoroji's selection. Tilak withdrew his name from consideration and conveyed his support in a letter to William Wedderburn. "Mr. Dadabhai is coming here to preside at the next session & *there is no one in the Congress who will venture to go against his wishes*," he stated.⁵⁸ By the fall of 1906, therefore, Naoroji found himself in a peculiar situation. Moderate leaders continued to find him too radical. Radical leaders found him too moderate. Both factions, however, accepted his leadership of the Congress. Furthermore, in the months leading up to the Calcutta session, both factions attempted to appropriate Naoroji. Moderate organs believed that Naoroji would save the Congress from falling into extremist hands. The *Hindi Punch*, for example, featured a cartoon where "Lady Congress," perched at the edge of a cliff, peered down into the murky depths of "extremist views," while "Mr. Punch" led her away on the path "to moderation."⁵⁹ Tilak, meanwhile, wrote in his Marathi paper, *Kesari*, that "there is practically no difference between the views of Mr. Dadabhai and those entertained by the extreme party in the Congress." Naoroji's most recent pronouncements "bear evidence of a feeling of utter exasperation" with British intransigence. "His published opinions," Tilak concluded, "show that he is an advanced extremist himself."⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Emphasis is Tilak's. Tilak to Wedderburn, 21 September 1906, *ibid.*, T-73 (2).

⁵⁹ "On Giddy Heights," Barjorjee Nowrosjee, ed., *Cartoons from the Hindi Punch (for 1906)* (Bombay: Bombay Samachar Press, 1906), 72.

⁶⁰ *Kesari*, 18 December 1906, in NNR, Bombay, 22 December 1906, BL, IOR, L/R/5/161.

Such remarks, emanating from both the moderate and radical camps, placed an enormous weight of expectation upon Dadabhai Naoroji's frail shoulders. On 29 November 1906, Naoroji, now 81 years old, boarded a train in London and commenced his long journey eastward to India.⁶¹ Once more, his arrival in Bombay was marked by mass demonstrations of support and a long procession through the city, winding its way from Apollo Bunder to Hornby Road and through Girgaum and Khetwadi.⁶² Once more, Naoroji embarked on a whistle-stop train tour through India, this time cutting through the Deccan en route to Calcutta.

But something was also different, signifying the vast changes of the past few years. While in Bombay, Naoroji inaugurated a cooperative store for swadeshi goods at Bori Bunder.⁶³ He received a message from Indian students in Japan, welcoming his return to the subcontinent with the cry "BANDE MATARAM!"⁶⁴ Those words—"bande mataram" or "Hail, Mother," an invocation to the motherland popularized during the Swadeshi Movement—echoed across railway platforms thronged with well-wishers as Naoroji's train proceeded toward Bengal.⁶⁵ And, at the Nagpur railway station, a group of local residents thrust into Naoroji's hands a memorial. "We all have not come to see you

⁶¹ Nowrosjee, *Cartoons from the Hindi Punch (for 1906)*, 86. Naoroji's day might have begun with a breakfast with Mohandas K. Gandhi. Gandhi and H.O.A. Ally were in London in order to meet with British officials such as Lord Morley. Thanking him for his support, Gandhi invited Naoroji to a breakfast at the Cecil Hotel at 10:30am on 29 November. In Paris, meanwhile, Bhikaiji Cama arranged for Naoroji's granddaughter, Perin, to meet Naoroji as his train pulled into the city. Perin Naoroji was, at the time, in the care of Cama as well as S.R. Rana, a Gujarati radical leader. Mohandas K. Gandhi to Naoroji, 26 November 1906, NAI, DNP, G-10 (5); Cama to Naoroji, 22 November 1906, *ibid.*, C-13.

⁶² At a meeting held to organize Naoroji's Bombay reception, a Kalbadevi Road jeweller, Kanji Mulji, "signified his intention to welcome Mr. Dadabhai by showering real pearls on him." "Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji: Arrangements for Reception," *Times of India*, 10 December 1906, 7.

⁶³ "Bombay Swadeshi Stores: Opened by Mr. D. Naoroji," *Times of India*, 18 December 1906, 5.

⁶⁴ "Indian Students" to Naoroji, 1 December 1906, NAI, DNP, I-23.

⁶⁵ "Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji: Departure for Calcutta," *Times of India*, 24 December 1906, 8.

here as Dadabhoy or a member of Parliament, or a gentle-man living so long in England but as a protector of poor Indians, who are surrounded on all sides, by the cruel enemies or English rulers,” the memorial began. The Nagpur residents, who had probably suffered through both the famine and plague, pleaded with Naoroji to outline a bold, decisive agenda for the Congress at Calcutta. “Be not prejudiced by the interpretence [impertinence] of Hon. Gokhale or Mehta or Waccha,” they counseled. They offered their own take on where Naoroji figured in the moderate-extremist spectrum, maintaining that “if there are any men, who are struggling for the welfare of India ... they are you, Tilak, Lala Lajpatrai or Bipin Chundrapal & Shamji Krishnaji.” And they hoped that, if Naoroji effected the necessary changes to the Congress, he would thereafter be “worshipped as Sivaji”—the Maratha king who had made his own bold declaration of swaraj centuries beforehand.⁶⁶

It was with much anticipation, therefore, that Indians of different political persuasions awaited Naoroji’s presidential address. Would he support the new methods of protest employed during the Swadeshi Movement, or would he plead for a return to petitions and memorials? Would he boost the moderates or the radicals, or would he try to forge some sort of consensus that could avert a split in the Congress? What would he say about how self-government could be achieved? Naoroji, no doubt, was also deeply worried and anxious about how best to carry out his heavy responsibilities. For five decades he had worked to advance Indian political demands. He had been a principal architect of the Congress and the chief exponent of its strategy for achieving reform through Westminster. Now, in the last few years of his life, he had to issue a call that

⁶⁶ *Sic.* “Your Indians” to Naoroji, 23 December 1906, NAI, DNP, I-13a.

would take into account both the radical challenge to this strategy and his own bitter experience of engaging with British institutions. He had to account for a movement in Bengal that was popular and broad-based but threatened to embrace both political extremism and violence. As he prepared his address, Naoroji weighed the various economic and political ideas he had developed during the three stages of his career. He composed a speech that, in many ways, reflected the evolution of his own thought, focusing on the drain, the need to Indianize the civil services, and the necessity of influencing Parliament and the British public. But he also built on these ideas in order to present a clear roadmap for the achievement of self-government.

Around 10,000 individuals gathered to hear the presidential address on 26 December.⁶⁷ Naoroji spoke a few words, sat down, and handed his speech to Gopal Krishna Gokhale, who read the address on his behalf. Through the voice of Gokhale, Naoroji began by drawing upon the first two phases of his career. He rued the relentless continuation of the drain, reminding his audience that, through the maintenance of a British-dominated bureaucracy, “a three-fold wrong is inflicted upon us, i.e., of depriving us of wealth, work and wisdom, of everything, in short, worth living for.” Naoroji’s views on the drain had now advanced to the point where he demanded “reparation” from Great Britain “for our past sufferings.” Turning to parliamentary politics, Naoroji declared that India continued to enjoy strong support from allies such as the Irish and radical Liberals. Events of the past few years had even yielded India new friends, members of the recently-founded Labour Party, who appeared particularly concerned about affairs in the subcontinent. In spite of his own disheartening experience in the

⁶⁷ “Indian National Congress: Presidential Address,” *Irish Times*, 27 December 1906, 5.

Commons, Naoroji urged Congress members to support the election of more Indian MPs. “We must have many Indian Members in Parliament till we get self-government,” he stated.⁶⁸

Naoroji then began to draw upon his experiences from the last few years. Building upon his conversations with George Freeman and other anti-imperialists, he placed the Indian nationalist movement in the context of a broad range of emancipatory movements around the world. He noted the achievements of the Russian Revolution of 1905, where peasants had brought about the establishment of a representative parliament, the Duma. Russians, subject to the whims of “the greatest autocrat in the world,” the czar, had proven that there were no prerequisites for representative government. Therefore, Naoroji believed, “it is futile to tell me that we must wait till all the people are ready” for a similar form of government in India. “We can never be fit till we actually undertake the work and the responsibility.” Developments elsewhere strengthened the case for immediate and significant political concessions for India. “China in the East and Persia in the West of Asia are awakening and Japan has already awakened,” Naoroji noted. The Qing Empire in China was quickly reforming in a desperate attempt to fend off Sun Yat-sen and his fellow nationalists; the Constitutional Revolution in Persia had, just a few months beforehand, led to the creation of a representative Majles; and Japan had done the unthinkable—the defeat of a European power—during the Russo-Japanese War, while steadily pursuing reform at home. During these “present times of spreading

⁶⁸ Naoroji, “Twenty-Second Congress—Calcutta—1906: Presidential Address,” 71–2, 76, 85.

emancipation,” Naoroji asked, were Indians to remain “under the barbarous system of despotism, unworthy of British instincts, principles and civilization?”⁶⁹

In light of these developments, Naoroji declared that India must have “‘Self-Government’ or *Swaraj* like that of the United Kingdom or the Colonies.” His wording was significant. Naoroji deployed the vernacular term that Tilak had popularized, which in turn harked back to the declarations made by Shivaji. He offered no qualification of “British Paramountcy” for self-government, and his reference to “the United Kingdom or the Colonies” was, quite probably, deliberately vague. It left open the possibility that India could evolve into a self-governing territory like Australia or Canada, which remained in the Empire, or a truly autonomous nation like Britain. Critically, in previous statements—such as a message he addressed to the Banaras Congress of 1905—Naoroji had only referred to “self-government like that of the colonies.”⁷⁰

Naoroji proceeded to do something highly unusual for a Congress presidential address, which normally took the form of a review of developments over the past year. Having raised the demand for *swaraj* from the Congress *pandal*, thereby binding the organization to this objective, he laid out a concrete agenda for the future transfer of administrative responsibilities from British to Indian hands. There were four key components of this agenda. First, not surprisingly, was the civil service. The time had come for the investiture of “all administration in every department in the hands of the people of India.” “Not only has the time fully arrived,” he added, “but [it] had arrived long past.” Simultaneous examinations were to be immediately instituted, but only for a

⁶⁹ Ibid., 78, 79.

⁷⁰ Dadabhai Naoroji, “Message to the Benares Congress,” in *Speeches and Writings of Dadabhai Naoroji*, ed. G.A. Natesan, second edition (Madras: G.A. Natesan & Co., 1917), 671.

short period, when all civil service examinations were to be held in India. By going a step beyond simultaneous examinations, a cause he had championed for nearly four decades, Naoroji took his political corollary of the drain theory to its logical conclusion. The full Indianization of the bureaucracy would eliminate what Naoroji believed to be the most significant part of the drain. The second component of his agenda was the military. This was another source of the drain: instead of defending the country, whole divisions of the army were deployed abroad and utilized “entirely for British imperial purposes.” Responsibility for financing the military, therefore, was to be at once transferred from Indian taxpayers to British ones.⁷¹

Representative institutions constituted the third component. Here, Naoroji returned to a point he had made earlier: it was a fallacy to claim that Indians were “not ready” to enjoy such institutions. After all, he pointed out, this argument had been deployed against much of the middle and working class in Britain until recently, and it was still being employed to deny the franchise to British women. Naoroji did not elaborate on the scope of Indian enfranchisement but warned against limiting the vote to the English-educated elite. The spread of vernacular education and literature, he pointed out, had made a large mass of the Indian populace fluent in contemporary political matters. And this led to the final component of Naoroji’s agenda for self-government. “Education must be most vigorously disseminated among the people—free and compulsory primary education, and free higher education of every kind,” he declared. Education, he believed, “will bring the accomplishment of self-government far more speedily than many imagine.” This was a deeply personal issue for Naoroji. “It was free

⁷¹ Naoroji, “Twenty-Second Congress—Calcutta—1906: Presidential Address,” 74, 77, 80.

education that I had at the expense of the people,” he noted, “that made me and others of my fellow-students and subsequent fellow-workers to give their best to the service of the people for the promotion of their welfare.”⁷² In his last major political speech, Naoroji thus vindicated the experiments of the Bombay Native Education Society during the 1830s, which had once made education accessible to a young boy from a poor Parsi family.

So far, Naoroji’s presidential address had encouraged many of the radicals in the audience. In spite of lengthy quotations from British statesmen and detailed references to British historical precedents, he had spoken of steps to be taken in India, not Westminster. He had demanded that the British government immediately begin transferring authority to Indians, not to effect piecemeal change, but in order to achieve self-government. Naoroji next turned to the question of methods. His initial statements, once more, buoyed radical hopes. He endorsed swadeshi enterprise. “‘Swadeshi’ is a forced necessity for India in its unnatural economic muddle,” Naoroji claimed. But that was as far as he was willing to go. Naoroji avoided taking a position on the boycott of foreign goods, national education, strikes and other elements of the agenda of “self-reliance” and “self-help” that Tilak had outlined in his earlier letter. Instead, Naoroji clung to his established position of constitutional agitation. He called for more “petitions, demonstrations and meetings, all quite peacefully but enthusiastically conducted.” With regard to influencing Parliament, Naoroji believed that “the fact that we have more or less failed hitherto, is not because we have petitioned too much but that we have petitioned too little.” And so he called for a “Petition of Rights” to be drawn up in India

⁷² *Ibid.*, 77–8.

and dispatched to the king and Parliament. Speakers should be dispatched “to all the nooks and corners of India” in order to “inform the people in their own languages of our British rights and how to exercise and enjoy them.” Another delegation would travel to Great Britain in order undertake that much-attempted task, lobbying the British public.⁷³

At this point in his speech, Naoroji must have anticipated the swell of disappointment among radical Congressmen. So he chose to recount his own doubts and frustrations, especially those from the last phase of his career, when he began speaking of an imminent rebellion due to mass disaffection in India. “I have been for some time past repeatedly asked whether I really have, after more than half a century of my own personal experience, such confidence in the honour and good faith of British statesmen and [the] Government,” he related. “Since my early efforts,” Naoroji continued, “I must say that I have felt so many disappointments as would be sufficient to break any heart and lead one to despair and even, I am afraid, to rebel.” These disappointments had “not been of the ordinary kind” but, rather, “far worse and keener.” Citing the simultaneous examinations resolution in the House of Commons as an example, Naoroji noted that the government had been unwilling to countenance any defeat. “I fought and won on several occasions,” Naoroji claimed, “but the executive did not let us have the fruit of those victories—disappointments quite enough, as I have said, to break one’s heart.”⁷⁴

“But I have not despaired,” Naoroji told his audience. His disappointments, failures, and frustrations had taught him the value of perseverance, and he urged members of the Congress to not let similar failures push them to extremes. “You cannot

⁷³ Ibid., 91, 89, 86–7.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 81, 82.

stop at any stage, disappointments notwithstanding, or you lose all you have gained and find it far more difficult afterwards even to begin again. As we proceed, we may adopt such means as may be suitable at every stage, but persevere we must to *the end*.” And so, in conclusion, Naoroji urged the Congress to reject the temptations of violent methods and proceed along constitutional lines. “Agitate, agitate over the whole length and breadth of India in every nook and corner—peacefully of course—if we really mean to get justice from John Bull.”⁷⁵

IV. Conclusion

By the conclusion of the Calcutta session, the Congress had passed resolutions endorsing swadeshi, supporting the boycott of foreign goods, and condemning the partition of Bengal. It passed a further resolution on self-government, though it watered down Naoroji’s language and referred only to the system of government prevailing in the “British Colonies.”⁷⁶ Moderate and radical leaders did not come to blows, as many had feared, although their differences were clearly apparent in oftentimes-raucous committee proceedings. Bipan Chandra Pal’s paper, *Bande Mataram*, attacked Pherozeshah Mehta for his “high handedness” during debates on various resolutions.⁷⁷

Yet there was consensus that the Calcutta session had pushed the Congress into a new stage of its evolution. This opinion was propounded well beyond the confines of the Congress pandal. Aside from filling the columns of Indian and British papers, Naoroji’s

⁷⁵ Ibid., 83, 90.

⁷⁶ “The 22nd National Congress: Third Day’s Proceedings,” *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 29 December 1906, 4–5.

⁷⁷ “Stormy Scenes in Subjects Committee: Threatened Split in Congress Camp,” *Tribune*, 30 December 1906, 4.

speech garnered international attention. In Ireland, nationalists latched onto Naoroji's declaration of self-government. "Mr. Redmond and Mr. Naoroji have clasped hands across continents, and both have behind them peoples well united and determined," the Dublin correspondent of the *New York Times* commented, referring to John Redmond, who now occupied Charles Stuart Parnell's place as the leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party.⁷⁸ In Washington, D.C., W.E.B. DuBois, who six years beforehand had attended the Pan-African Congress in London, printed excerpts of Naoroji's address in his magazine, *Horizon*. "The speech of Naoroji before the National Congress of India was worthy of men who want to be free," DuBois remarked. "The dark world awakens to life and articulate speech. Courage, Comrades!"⁷⁹

Not surprisingly, Naoroji's address was closely followed by British Indian officials. The ruling *sahibs* of Calcutta cast a weary eye toward Naoroji. The viceroy, Lord Minto, found his speech "very long and unpractical." "He seemed to attempt to foreshadow an administration which he knows to be impossible," Minto informed John Morley, the secretary of state for India.⁸⁰ Minto was also stung by the Congress president's refusal to pay him a visit at Government House. "Naoroji much to my surprise went off home without attempting to see me," he complained in another letter to Morley. "I fully expected he would ask for an interview which I would gladly have given him, and I suspect his not doing so was out of regard to 'extremist' susceptibilities."⁸¹

⁷⁸ "Notes from Dublin," *New York Times*, 20 January 1907, 8.

⁷⁹ "India," *Horizon*, February 1907, 8, 9.

⁸⁰ Lord Minto to John Morley, 2 January 1907, BL, IOR, Letters from Minto to Morley, MSS Eur D 573/11/f13.

⁸¹ Minto to Morley, 16 January 1907, *ibid*.

Aside from Minto's grumblings, Morley relied on the testimony of Samuel Smith, a former Liberal MP, who attended the Congress while in Calcutta for a temperance conference. Smith was much more than an interested bystander: he had known Naoroji for some fifty years, starting from when both men were involved in the Liverpool cotton trade. On the evening of 26 December, Smith put down his thoughts about his old friend's address. "It was a remarkable sight," he told Morley. "The huge tent was crowded with at least 12,000 people. The most perfect quietness and order prevailed." Naoroji, whose words conveyed "a deep feeling of disappointment at recent events," made "a thoroughgoing demand for full Indian self-government: very logical, very well expressed, and founded upon our promises and precedents." While Smith offered his own reservations over the feasibility of self-government in India, he could "feel the force of the appeal. No one with a sense of humanity could but feel the great wave of emotion which is carrying India towards an unknown future. It was an epoch-making occasion." Indians, he concluded, were fast losing their patience with Great Britain, and Naoroji's demands had accentuated the "universal feeling that national self-consciousness was at last awakened." The India Office could no longer stymie political progress. "Action of some kind," Smith warned Morley, "will be expected before long."⁸²

It was left to the Indian press to muse over whether the presidential address had helped the radicals or the moderates. Opinion was bitterly divided among papers in both camps. In some cases, even a single paper provided starkly different takes. "The Congress has been saved," proclaimed the *Jame Jamshed* of Bombay, a moderate organ.

⁸² This was quite likely the last letter that Samuel Smith ever wrote: within 48 hours he was dead. Smith was to preside at the All-India Temperance Conference. Samuel Smith to Morley, 26 December 1906, BL, IOR, John Morley Papers, MSS Eur D 573/50.

“To Mr. Dadabhai belongs the credit of having rescued it from utter and irreparable wreck this year.”⁸³ But, in another column, the *Jame* recoiled at the contents of his speech. The paper was “sorely disappointed” that Naoroji did not deliver “prudent and sober advice to the extremists.” It pronounced him guilty of having “flattered the Bengalis,” a high crime among non-Bengali moderates who viewed the Swadeshi Movement with pronounced skepticism. “He said not a word against the mischievous boycott agitation in Bengal, nor did he ask the Bengalis to wisely accept the partition as a ‘settled fact,’” the *Jame* averred.⁸⁴ While offering different perspectives on his speech, most other moderate organs agreed with the *Jame* that Naoroji had headed off a split in the Congress. The Calcutta session had “secured a permanent stability for the movement,” commented the *Behar Herald* of Patna. “Neither the Moderates nor the Extremists have cause for complaint.”⁸⁵ Calcutta’s *Amrita Bazar Patrika* celebrated the consolidation of a “strong, united Congress.”⁸⁶

A number of radical organs condemned Naoroji’s speech, worrying that the Calcutta Congress represented an undesired compromise with the moderate old guard—one that would pour cold water upon promising sparks of rebellion. “Never was the speech of a President of the Congress so insipid, meaningless and timid as that delivered by Mr. Dadabhai this year,” charged the *Vihari*, a Marathi weekly. Instead of preaching “mendicancy,” the paper wished that Naoroji had spoken of the “armed resistance” of the

⁸³ *Jame Jamshed*, 1 January 1907, in NNR, Bombay, 5 January 1907, BL, IOR, L/R/5/162.

⁸⁴ *Jame Jamshed*, 27 December 1906, in NNR, Bombay, 29 December 1906, BL, IOR, L/R/5/161.

⁸⁵ *Behar Herald*, 5 January 1907, in NNR, Bengal, 12 January 1907, BL, IOR, L/R/5/33. David Boyk informs me that the *Herald* was a fair representative of moderate political views prevalent in the city. See his dissertation, *Provincial Urbanity: Intellectuals and Public Life in Patna, 1880-1930* (University of California, Berkeley, 2015), chap. 3, 4.

⁸⁶ *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 1 January 1907, in NNR, Bengal, 12 January 1907, BL, IOR, L/R/5/33.

Boers or even tactics that the English had employed in the past against their rulers, “such as rising in rebellion against them or banishing or beheading them.”⁸⁷ Meanwhile, in Calcutta, Bipan Chandra Pal’s *Bande Mataram* labeled Naoroji’s faith in constitutional methods as “cheap patriotism.” Italy could never have wrested its freedom through mere petitions and demonstrations; Japan, furthermore, had shown in its recent conflict with Russia that “moral force” alone was not enough.⁸⁸ Shyamji Krishnavarma republished Pal’s words in the *Indian Sociologist* and offered his own stinging remarks.⁸⁹ In studied contrast to the *Vihari*, *Bande Mataram*, and *Indian Sociologist* was *Kal*, a Poona broadsheet. Due to sedition laws, this paper claimed that Naoroji had embedded a “secretly intended meaning” in his words. “Mr. Dadabhai is an extremist himself,” *Kal* noted, and by mentioning how his disappointments had almost pushed him to rebel, he had signaled to other Indians that self-government could be achieved by “having recourse to violent remedies.” Consequently, “the extremist party has achieved a signal victory this year in the Congress.”⁹⁰

In its last declaration, *Kal* might have been closer to the mark. While many radicals dwelled gloomily upon Naoroji’s refusal to endorse violent methods, Tilak appeared pleased by the presidential address. According to him, Naoroji, through his clear declaration of swaraj, had unmistakably shifted momentum within the Congress movement from the moderates to his camp. “Very few amongst the moderates ever dreamt that he would go so far as he has done, but as the new position has been most

⁸⁷ *Vihari*, 31 December 1906, in NNR, Bombay, 5 January 1907, BL, IOR, L/R/5/162.

⁸⁸ Quoted in *Punjabee*, 5 January 1907, in NNR, Punjab, 5 January 1907, L/R/5/189.

⁸⁹ “The Presidential Address Dissected,” *Indian Sociologist*, April 1907, 13–15.

⁹⁰ *Kal*, 4 January 1907, in NNR, Bombay, 5 January 1907, BL, IOR, L/R/5/162.

clearly defined by their own idol, they have to make the best of the situation,” Tilak noted in the columns of *Kesari*.⁹¹ Indeed, Naoroji had quite literally put the word “self-government” in the mouth of Gokhale, the radical leader’s chief moderate rival. Another radical Congressman had noticed that Pherozeshah Mehta left the Congress “perfectly discomfited.”⁹² With Gokhale and Mehta in mind, Tilak declared that “the Congress and *swarajya* are now so indissolubly connected together that however much the moderates may dislike the combination, they will have to put up with it.”⁹³ Naoroji’s presidency had, indeed, been a “signal victory” for the radicals, as *Kal* had claimed.

In two speeches delivered in Calcutta a few days after the Congress had dispersed, Tilak broached the topic of methods. Like the editor of *Kal*, he fixated upon Naoroji’s remarks about his disappointments and the temptation to rebel. The younger generation, Tilak maintained, “were entitled to draw their own conclusion from his disappointments.” By relying only upon “petitions and prayers,” they would find it “impossible to gain any concessions.”⁹⁴ But Tilak, unlike Pal or Krishnavarma, did not hold up violent methods as the necessary alternative. Instead, he drew upon Naoroji’s economic thought to justify another way forward. “Your industries are ruined utterly, ruined by foreign rule; your wealth is going out of the country and you are reduced to the lowest level which no human being can occupy,” he reminded his audience, borrowing Naoroji’s familiar

⁹¹ *Kesari*, 8 January 1907, in NNR, Bombay, 12 January 1907, *ibid*.

⁹² The identity of this leader is not known. Krishnavarma identified him as “one of the principal leaders of the New Party.” This leader also remarked, “I must say that Mr. Dadabhai was sympathetic towards the aspirations and programme of the New Party, though in his address he did not go in for it completely.” “Sir Pherozeshah Mehta Discomfited,” *Indian Sociologist*, April 1907, 15.

⁹³ *Kesari*, 8 January 1907, in NNR, Bombay, 12 January 1907, BL, IOR, L/R/5/162.

⁹⁴ This was Tilak’s speech on the “New Party” delivered before students at College Square on 3 January 1907. *Mahratta*, 13 January 1907, in NNR, Bombay, 19 January 1907, *ibid*.

language on the drain of wealth. “The venerable leader who presided over the recent Congress was the first to tell us that the drain from the country was ruining it, and if the drain was to continue, there was some great disaster awaiting us.” Invoking Naoroji’s drain theory, Tilak urged supporters to widen the boycott of foreign goods and propagate *swadeshi*. Nonviolent boycott was now India’s best response to the drain. “We are not armed, and there is no necessity for arms either,” he urged. “We have a stronger weapon, a political weapon, in boycott.”⁹⁵

Naoroji, it is true, had remained conspicuously silent about the boycott in his speech. This did not matter to Tilak. “Mr. Dadabhai, in openly declaring his adherence to *swadeshi* as best adapted to the unnatural economic conditions prevailing in this country, has tacitly given his support to boycott,” he claimed.⁹⁶ Regardless of whether this was true, there was something significant about Tilak’s words. In pressing the radical cause onward, something that would lead to the splintering of the Congress in less than twelve months, the senior-most radical leader had looked to Dadabhai Naoroji for legitimacy. In their interpretations of his presidential address, many moderates had assailed Naoroji for being too extreme, and many radicals had pilloried him for being too timid. But for Tilak, who would dominate the next phase of the nationalist movement, Naoroji was an essential part of the way forward.

⁹⁵ Tilak, *Bal Gangadhar Tilak*, 63, 64.

⁹⁶ *Kesari*, 1 January 1907, in NNR, Bombay, 5 January 1907, BL, IOR, L/R/5/162.

Indian Nationalism After Naoroji

Dadabhai Naoroji returned to London in January 1907 in hopes of resuming his various political responsibilities: lobbying members of Parliament and ministers in the new Liberal government, supervising the work of the British Committee of the Indian National Congress, and speaking about India before the British public. But it was not to be. Almost immediately after completing his exhausting visit to India, Naoroji's health gave out. Correspondence from early 1907 deals almost exclusively with his persistent health problems, no doubt compounded by the frenzy of activity he undertook in the last phase of his political career. By August, a month shy of turning 82, Naoroji realized that it was impossible to continue working. He decided to retire to Bombay. George Birdwood, Naoroji's longtime friend, agreed with this decision. "And it is in India you should die," Birdwood remarked. "That will give the necessary dramatic unity to your life."¹ Later in the month, rumors reached Bombay that Naoroji had taken a turn for the worst and was on the verge of death. "Shops, libraries, and places of business were closed or about to be closed, and the people were preparing for universal mourning for a national calamity," reported the *Hindi Punch*. "From all parts of the country, from temples, mosques[,] churches and every household prayers will go up to Heaven to the Giver of all Good for the speedy recovery of the great and beloved patriot," the *Madras Standard* proclaimed.²

¹ George Birdwood to Dadabhai Naoroji, 26 August 1907, NAI, DNP, B-140 (66).

² *Hindi Punch*, 18 August 1907, 19; "The Vigil," *ibid.*, 17.

Naoroji pulled through. He returned to Indian shores in November 1907 and spent the final decade of his life residing with his family at a seaside bungalow in Versova, then a tiny fishing village far removed from the noise and bustle of Bombay. Retirement must have been a difficult endeavor for someone so used to being at the center of Indian political life. During the Surat Congress in December 1907, a Maratha *chappal* (slipper), flung from the crowd at Pherozeshah Mehta and Surendranath Banerjea, brought to an end the vaunted unity of the Congress that moderate papers had so confidently announced a year beforehand. The Congress session dissolved into the chaos and the radical faction, with Bal Gangadhar Tilak at its head, formally seceded from the organization.³ Naoroji maintained absolute silence, refusing to comment on the split.

Occasionally, however, he caused panic among friends and relatives by threatening to reengage with political matters. In 1912, he composed lengthy letters to Lord Crewe, the secretary of state for India, and Lord Hardinge, the viceroy, stating once more his demand for self-government. Hormusjee Ardeseer Wadya, who had served as chief magistrate during Naoroji's Baroda diwanship, intervened and asked him to desist. "If serious attention were paid it might lead you into a controversy which we all desire you now to avoid," Wadya pleaded.⁴ Three years later, in September 1915, Naoroji enraged Dinsha Wacha and Pherozeshah Mehta by agreeing to become president of the Home Rule League, a new organization set up by Annie Besant. Besant, head of the Theosophical Society in Adyar and a political firebrand, was hardly a popular figure among Bombay moderates. "You don't know how far mischief has already been caused

³ For a detailed and riveting account of the Surat Congress, as well as a description of that fateful Maratha chappal, see Henry W. Nevins, *The New Spirit in India* (London: Harper & Brothers, 1908), chap. 13.

⁴ Hormusjee Ardeseer Wadya to Dadabhai Naoroji, 5 November 1912, NAI, DNP, W-12.

by your acceptance of the Presidentship of the Home Rule League,” Wacha scolded Naoroji. “We have been so much embarrassed that you can’t realise it.”⁵ Finally, in November 1915, Naoroji learned of efforts to reintegrate Tilak and other radicals into the Congress, as well as the push to reach a consensus between the Congress and the Muslim League. There is a chance that he might have been invited to attend and witness what became known as the Lucknow Pact. By now, however, even Naoroji had realized the limitations that came with advanced age. “I shall not be able to accept any office,” he regretfully informed William Wedderburn.⁶ Naoroji was, after all, ninety.

Dadabhai Naoroji died on 30 June 1917. He did not live to witness self-government, the curtailment of the drain of wealth, or even the institution of simultaneous civil service examinations. Was his career, therefore, a “sad failure,” as Shyamji Krishnavarma had alleged? This is a difficult claim to sustain. True, he failed to change specific policies of the British Indian government. But in attempting to do so, Naoroji became a principal architect of the Indian nationalist movement. He left an indelible mark upon the Indian National Congress, winning the organization key support from Irish, socialist, Liberal, and Labour figures—as well as surprisingly broad support from the British public. He provided nationalists with a powerful critique of colonialism, the drain theory, and made India’s deepening impoverishment the rallying cry for political reform. It was left to future leaders, men such as Mohandas K. Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru, to fashion Indian poverty into justification for India’s independence (Image 16). His career, furthermore, served as an inspiration to the next generation of

⁵ R.P. Patwardhan, ed., *Dadabhai Naoroji Correspondence*, vol. II, part II (New Delhi: Allied, 1977), 908.

⁶ Naoroji to William Wedderburn, 27 November 1915, NAI, DNP, N-1 (3100).



Image 16: An impoverished Mother India. Cartoon from *Gujarati Punch* run on 7 October 1901, shortly after the publication of Naoroji’s *Poverty and UnBritish Rule in India*. Reproduced with permission of the National Archives of India.

nationalists. For Gandhi, even Naoroji’s failures could be inspirational. Addressing his colleagues in South Africa in November 1903, Gandhi held up Naoroji as a model of perseverance. “If we would but remember that Mr. Dadabhai has been struggling for the last forty years or more, we would find in the thought a great deal to console us that, after all, our struggle has only just commenced, and that we have not been without silver linings to the clouds which have hung over us,” he wrote in his paper, *Indian Opinion*.⁷

Lastly, Naoroji was responsible for making self-government—a political objective that he had enunciated as far back as 1884—the established goal of the

⁷ Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, “The Grand Old Man of India,” in *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol. 4 (New Delhi: Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 1960), 50.

Congress. The Calcutta session of 1906 became a momentous event in the history of the organization. “No speech delivered by a president of the National Congress ever had more far-reaching effects than that of Dadabhai in 1906,” remarked C.F. Andrews, yet another Briton who sided with Indian nationalists, and one of Gandhi’s closest friends. By the time that Andrews penned those words, in 1938, he recognized that Naoroji’s address had actually contributed to the split of the Congress and the diminishing influence of the moderates. The tone of Naoroji’s demand also had far-reaching implications. “It was not only that Lokmanya Tilak’s phrase had been adopted, and that ‘self-government’ was now put forward as a right,” Andrews continued, “but it was also for the first time, in such a place, that the form and nature of India’s demand was expressed by an Indian word, *Swaraj*, the meaning of which could be easily understood throughout the length and breadth of India by the simplest villager as well as by the educated class.”⁸

This was something that had also been recognized by, of all people, Bipan Chandra Pal, who had been one of Naoroji’s fiercest detractors. Before the Calcutta Congress, Pal had ridiculed Naoroji’s declared goal of “Self Government under British Paramountcy.” “Either British paramountcy would mean nothing,” he argued, “or self-government would mean nothing.” He similarly mocked Naoroji’s idea of self-government as it existed in white-settler colonies like Australia or Canada. But Pal, it seems, was eventually won over by the Grand Old Man. He was deeply encouraged by Naoroji’s insistence that self-government could be “as in the United Kingdom,” opening up the possibility of complete national autonomy for India. “This is really the same idea

⁸ C.F. Andrews and Girija Mukerji, *The Rise and Growth of the Congress in India* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1938), 210, 211.

that had been proclaimed by us,” he told fellow radicals. It was the use of the term “swaraj,” however, that truly moved Pal. This had emotion and power that could appeal to the nation. Speaking in Madras in mid-1907, Pal recalled a few passing words that Naoroji made to delegates at the very end of the Calcutta session. “He declared that as the result of the labour of the last 50 years, this generation had been able to discover this great national ideal of Swaraj,” Pal stated. “He said, the generation that is passing away gives you, youngmen, this idea. It devolves on you to work it out in practice.”⁹ And so Pal came to see Naoroji’s Calcutta speech as an inspiring call to action.

Lastly, what about methods? By the time of the 1906 Calcutta Congress, it is true, petitioning and related methods were largely discredited. But Naoroji’s strategy of achieving reform through Whitehall and Westminster remained an essential component of the nationalist movement. Both Tilak and Lala Lajpat Rai sought support from members of the Labour Party. By 1919, Tilak himself was in London, working with the British Committee of the Indian National Congress.¹⁰ Other Indian leaders engaged with metropolitan politics to various degrees. In 1922, Shapurji Saklatvala followed in the footsteps of Naoroji and Mancherji M. Bhownaggree by becoming the third Indian—and the third Parsi—elected to the House of Commons. Like Naoroji, Saklatvala ran from a progressive and working class constituency, Battersea, and plunged into British political affairs. He joined the Communist Party of Great Britain, became a well-known figure in the British labor movement, and served as the British representative for the All-India

⁹ *Sic.* Bipinchandra Pal, “The Gospel of Swaraj,” in *Swadeshi & Swaraj (the Rise of New Patriotism)* (Calcutta: Yugayatri Prakashak Limited, 1954), 150, 157, 158.

¹⁰ S.R. Mehrotra, *A History of the Indian National Congress* (New Delhi: Vikas Pub. House, 1995), 99, 104–05.

Trade Union Congress.¹¹ V.K. Krishna Menon also blazed a trail in Britain very similar to that of Naoroji. Under the banner of the India League, which he founded in London in 1922, Menon lobbied the British public through speeches to working class audiences, women's groups, and church congregations. The League forged an alliance of sympathetic MPs who pressed Parliament for *purna swaraj* (complete independence) for India. In 1934, Menon, running on the Labour ticket, was elected as a councilor in the London borough of St. Pancras, next door to Finsbury.¹²

Even Gandhi had to look to Westminster and the British public. During the Second Round Table Conference of 1931, while he negotiated with the Labour ministry of Ramsay MacDonald, Gandhi famously toured the East End of London and visited millworkers in Lancashire. Of course, Gandhi's other methods were not so strictly constitutional. But Gandhi believed that Naoroji would have approved of them. Perhaps this is appropriate for a man who called Naoroji a "Mahatma" and the "Father of the Nation."¹³ In 1924, a year before the centenary of Naoroji's birth, he urged Indians to honor the Grand Old Man by spinning swadeshi *khadi* cloth. "People should ... get together on that day and totally eschew foreign cloth, wear khadi made of hand-spun yarn alone, reaffirm their determination to spin every day for at least half an hour and collect funds for the spread of khadi," Gandhi informed readers of the Gujarati-language *Navajivan*. Referring to the *charka* or spinning wheel that became a symbol of Gandhi's

¹¹ For more on Saklatvala, see Mike Squires, *Saklatvala: A Political Biography* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1990).

¹² These are just a few of the parallels between Menon and Naoroji. For more on Menon, see Rozina Visram, *Asians in Britain: 400 Years of History* (London: Pluto Press, 2002), 320–40.

¹³ Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, "Resolutions at Gujarat Political Conference--I," in *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol. 14 (New Delhi: Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 1963), 67.

methods of noncooperation and nonviolence, he remarked that “all activities which encourage its use amount to an imitation of Dadabhai’s virtues.”¹⁴

Gandhi also clearly understood that Naoroji’s political thought was marked by constant evolution—and that the Grand Old Man became more radical as he aged. Thus, it is tempting to ask: if Naoroji had lived and remained active in politics for some more years, would he have adopted Gandhi’s methods? Would there have been a fourth stage in his political career? Gandhi clearly thought so. In his biography of Naoroji, Rustom P. Masani recalled a conversation he had with Gandhi in December 1931, while returning from London to Bombay after the Second Round Table Conference. “Don’t you think,” Masani asked, “Dadabhai’s policy, which the present generation ridicules as a mendicant policy, was the right one, considering the circumstances prevailing”? “Yes,” Gandhi replied. He then quickly added, “And I believe that if he were alive today he would follow the same policy that I have been pursuing for the last few years.”¹⁵

¹⁴ Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, “Dadabhai Centenary,” in *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol. 28 (New Delhi: Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 1968), 11.

¹⁵ Rustom Pestonji Masani, *Dadabhai Naoroji: The Grand Old Man of India* (London: G. Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1939), 11–12.

Key Individuals

BHAGVATSINHJI OF GONDAL (1865-1944): reigned 1870-1944. Recognized as one of the most progressive of Indian princes. One of Naoroji's most steadfast financial supporters during his campaign in Central Finsbury.

BONNERJEE, WOMESH CHUNDER (W.C.) (1844-1906): First president of the Congress. Moderate leader who resided primarily in London and helped steer the British Committee of the Indian National Congress. Stood as a Liberal candidate for Parliament in the 1892 general elections.

BUTLER, JOSEPHINE (1828-1906): Prominent British women's rights activist. Took an active interest in Indian political affairs in connection with her work to repeal the Indian Contagious Diseases Act.

CAMA, KHARSHEDI NASARVANJI (1815?-1885): Wealthy Parsi sethia who served as Naoroji's colleague and financial benefactor in numerous Young Bombay endeavors. Provided financial support for the Dnyan Prasarak Mandli, Rahnumae Mazdayasnan Sabha, and the girls schools operated by the Students' Literary and Scientific Society. Co-founded *Rast Goftar* with Naoroji in 1851.

CHAMPION, HENRY HYDE (1859-1928): Early supporter of Henry M. Hyndman and his Social Democratic Federation (SDF). Served as the editor of the SDF's official

publication, *Justice*, and involved with the SDF's branch in Clerkenwell. Expelled from the SDF in 1888 due to his criticism of Hyndman after which he associated himself with individuals who helped establish the Independent Labour Party in 1893. Later migrated to Australia.

CHESNEY, GEORGE (1830-1895): Indian army officer involved in opening the Royal Civil Engineering College at Coopers Hill in 1871. Retired from India in 1891. Elected as the Conservative member for Oxford in 1892. Became one of Naoroji's most vocal opponents in the Commons.

CRAWFURD, JOHN (1783-1868): British diplomat in Java and Siam, later appointed to fill Stamford Raffles's post in Singapore in 1823. Served as president of the London Ethnological Society. Naoroji's paper "On the European and Asiatic Races" was in response to Crawford's racist rants about the inferiority of Asians in comparison to Europeans.

DAVITT, MICHAEL (1846-1906): Outspoken Irish nationalist leader, founder of the Irish Land League, and MP. Allied with Charles Stuart Parnell during the 1880s. Close friend of Naoroji. Keenly interested in Indian affairs, Davitt suggested offering an Irish seat in Parliament to Naoroji in 1883 and 1888. Asked by Naoroji for help in finding an Irish seat in 1892 and 1896.

DIGBY, WILLIAM (1849-1904): Social campaigner and a journalist. Edited the *Madras Times* before returning to London. Stood unsuccessfully for Parliament in 1885 and 1892. One of Naoroji's most important supporters during the Holborn and Central Finsbury campaigns: Digby acted as an intermediary between Naoroji and Francis Schnadhorst. Secretary of the British Committee of the Indian National Congress and editor of *India* between 1890 and 1892. Published '*Prosperous*' *British India* in 1901.

DUTT, ROMESH CHUNDER (1848-1909): One of the earliest Indian members of the civil service, retiring as divisional commissioner of Burdwan in 1897. President of the 1899 Lucknow Congress. Authored two-volume *Economic History of India* during residence in London, where he participated in the British Committee of the Indian National Congress. Contemplated standing for Parliament in 1900. Argued with Naoroji about the causes of Indian poverty and the drain, prompting Naoroji to declare in July 1903 that "Self Government under British Paramountcy" should be the goal of the nationalist movement.

EVE, RICHARD (1831-1900): Solicitor and unsuccessful Liberal candidate for Parliament. Eve polled second to Naoroji in the disputed vote of the Central Finsbury Liberal and Radical Association of 15 August 1888. Subsequently, Eve's candidacy was supported by an anti-Naoroji clique within the Association. Retired from the Central Finsbury race in June 1890 in order to accept the Liberal candidacy in St. Georges in the East.

FAWCETT, HENRY (1833-1884): Professor of political economy at Cambridge and Liberal MP. Known as the “Member for India” in Parliament for his advocacy of Indian interests. Appointed as postmaster-general in 1880.

FORD, FREDERICK A. (1849?-1910): Represented Central Finsbury in the London County Council from 1889 until 1892. Husband of well-known Victorian feminist Florence Fenwick Miller. Ford polled third in the 15 August 1888 vote at the Central Finsbury Liberal and Radical Association. Entered the Central Finsbury race in early 1890 as a rival Liberal candidate, posing a much more serious threat to Naoroji than Richard Eve. Dropped out of the race, most likely due to Liberal Party pressure, in June 1892, just weeks ahead of the general election.

GANDHI, MOHANDAS K. (1869-1948): Most prominent Indian nationalist of the twentieth century. Lived in London between 1888 and 1891, where he studied for the bar and met Naoroji for the first time. Began lengthy correspondence with Naoroji after he relocated to South Africa in 1893. Naoroji helped distribute Gandhi’s reports detailing discriminatory activity against Indians in South Africa. Naoroji assisted with Gandhi’s 1906 deputation to London.

GHOSH, LALMOHAN (1849-1909): Member of the Indian Association of Calcutta. Became the first Indian to stand for election for the British Parliament. Ran unsuccessfully as the Liberal candidate for Deptford in 1885 and 1886. President of the 1903 Madras session of the Congress.

GLADSTONE, WILLIAM EWART (1809-1898): The “Grand Old Man” of England, leader of the Liberal Party in the late Victorian era, serving as prime minister four times. Naoroji’s election to the Commons coincided with Gladstone’s fourth and last ministry.

GOKHALE, GOPAL KRISHNA (1866-1915): One of the most prominent leaders of the moderate faction of the Congress in the early twentieth century. Mentored by Mahadev Govind Ranade, Gokhale joined the Congress in 1889 and served as its president at its 1905 Banaras session. Served as a professor at Fergusson College in Poona. Worked closely with Naoroji during the Welby Commission; traveled to London along with Dinsha Wacha in order to deliver evidence.

GRIFFITH, ROBERT MORGAN HOLT (R.M.H.) (D. 1906): Campaign secretary for Naoroji during his first campaign in Central Finsbury. Distinguished himself as one of Naoroji’s most loyal and steadfast supporters, helping him navigate local political divisions in Clerkenwell. Also proprietor of the *Weekly News and Clerkenwell Chronicle*.

HAMILTON, LORD GEORGE (1845-1927): Appointed as secretary of state for India in 1895 by the Conservative ministry of Lord Salisbury. Became the longest serving secretary of state for India, leaving office only in 1903. Widely disliked by Naoroji and other nationalists, who blamed him for relative indifference to the famine and plague epidemic of the late 1890s.

HUME, ALLAN OCTAVIAN (1829-1912): Scotsman considered as the “Father of the Indian National Congress.” Arrived in India in 1849 and joined the civil service, being first stationed in Etawah. Resigned from the civil service in 1882 and thereafter served as an advisor to Lord Ripon during his viceroyalty. Worked with Naoroji and other Bombay political leaders to begin preliminary organization of the Congress in January 1885. Visited the United Kingdom in the summer of 1885 in order to drum up support for the proposed Congress. Naoroji relied on Hume’s extensive contacts after arriving in London in 1886 with the intention of contesting a seat in Parliament.

HYNDMAN, HENRY M. (1842-1921): Socialist leader and founder of the first socialist political party in Great Britain (the Democratic Federation, established in 1881, which in 1884 became the Social Democratic Federation). Most likely first met Naoroji in 1878 after reading his “Poverty in India.” Adopted Naoroji’s views on the drain of wealth. Published *The Bankruptcy of India*, in 1886, a compilation of earlier articles carried in the *Nineteenth Century*. Embarks on speaking tour with Naoroji in 1897 in order to highlight catastrophic famine in India. Attended the 1904 International Socialist Congress in Amsterdam with Naoroji. Grows increasingly critical of Naoroji and the Congress’ political moderation and instead exhorts Indians into open rebellion against British rule.

JAMBHEKAR, BAL GANGADHAR SHASTRI (1812-1846): Assistant professor at Elphinstone College and one of Naoroji’s instructors. Responsible for selecting Naoroji for admission into Elphinstone College. Originally from the south Konkan coast, Jambhekar was brought to Bombay in 1826 and educated at the Bombay Native Education Society’s

central English school. Recognized as a brilliant polymath, Jambhekar taught subjects ranging from Shakespeare to integral calculus.

KAZI SHAHABUDIN (1832-1900): Served as diwan of Kutch until 1874. Resided in London in the early 1870s where he became involved in the East India Association. Served as head of revenue department in Baroda state during Naoroji's diwanship. Served as diwan of Baroda from 1883-86. Appointed to Bombay Legislative Council in 1886.

KRISHNAVARMA, SHYAMJI (1857-1930): Radical nationalist influenced by Herbert Spencer. Founder of the Indian Home Rule Society, India House in London, and editor of the *Indian Sociologist* in London and, later, Paris. Became Naoroji's most virulent critic by 1905.

MALHARRAO GAIKWAD OF BARODA (1831-1882): reigned 1870-1875. Appointed Naoroji as his diwan in 1873, accentuating conflict between the gaikwad and the British resident, Robert Phayre. Retained corrupt darbaris in spite of Naoroji's attempts to appoint his own ministers and institute administrative reform. Allowed Naoroji to follow through on his threat of resignation in December 1874. Removed from throne in 1875 and convicted of involvement in attempted poisoning of Phayre. Died in exile in Madras.

MEHTA, PHEROZESHAH M. (1845-1915): one of the most dominant figures in Bombay politics during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. President of the Congress

in 1890. Opposed Naoroji's decision to stay in the United Kingdom after the Holborn defeat of 1886.

NAVROZJI FARDUNJI (1817-1885): Journalist, assistant professor at Elphinstone College, co-founder of the Bombay Association, and one of the earliest and most prominent social and religious reformers in the Parsi community. Popularly known as the "Tribune of the People." Served as a mentor to Naoroji and other members of Young Bombay. Worked closely with Naoroji in promoting female education, establishing the Rahnumae Mazdayasnan Sabha, and running the *Rast Gofdar*. Active participant in the East India Association, both in Bombay and London. Involved in Bombay municipal affairs in the 1870s and 1880s as a member of the town council.

O'CONNOR, THOMAS POWER (T.P.) (1848-1929): Journalist and Irish nationalist MP who began his parliamentary career as a Parnellite. Supported Naoroji during and immediately after his Holborn run, although his newspaper, the *Star*, furiously attacked Naoroji after his disputed 1888 nomination for Central Finsbury.

PAL, BIPAN CHANDRA (1858-1932): Prominent radical leader of the Congress. Became acquainted with Naoroji while in London in the late 1890s, but soon after becomes one of his staunchest critics, finding Naoroji's politics far too moderate. Criticized Naoroji for ruling out violent methods for achieving self-government.

PENTON, FREDERICK THOMAS (1851-1929): Elected as the Conservative MP for Central Finsbury in 1886 in spite of the constituency's radical Liberal leanings. Opposed by Naoroji in 1892 and narrowly defeated. Initiated a lengthy recount and voter scrutiny that ultimately validated Naoroji's election. Descended from a prominent Clerkenwell landholding family.

PHAYRE, ROBERT (1820-1897): Resident of Baroda during Naoroji's diwanship. Suspicious of Naoroji's political activities in London, Phayre skillfully took advantage of divisions in the Baroda *darbar* in order to thwart many of Naoroji's efforts at reform. Removed from his post in 1874 after an attempted poisoning, later linked to Malharrao.

RANADEV, MAHADEV GOVIND (1842-1901): Noted economic thinker, social reformer, and leader of the Congress. Graduate of Elphinstone College and the University of Bombay. Served as judge on the Bombay high court. Naoroji tried to recruit Ranade as a minister during his Baroda diwanship. Naoroji and Ranade both served on the Bombay legislative council in 1885-86. Helped found the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha; remained a member until Bal Gangadhar Tilak seized control of the organization in 1896. Thereafter, Ranade and Gopal Krishna Gokhale founded the Deccan Sabha.

RIPON, MARQUESS OF (GEORGE FREDERICK SAMUEL ROBINSON) (1827-1909): Indian viceroy from 1880 to 1884. Popular among early Indian nationalists due to his comparatively progressive and reformist stance on Indian policy. Attempted to lobby National Liberal Federation officials on Naoroji's behalf during Frederick A. Ford's

insurgent Liberal candidacy in Central Finsbury. Served as secretary of state for the colonies from 1892 until 1895.

SALISBURY, MARQUESS OF (ROBERT ARTHUR TALBOT GASCOYNE-CECIL) (1830-1903): Conservative leader; secretary of state for India from 1866 to 1867 and from 1874 to 1878; prime minister from 1885 to 1886, 1886 to 1892, and from 1895 to 1902. Labeled Naoroji as a “black man” in November 1888, triggering widespread support for Naoroji and boosting his candidacy in Central Finsbury.

SCHNADHORST, FRANCIS (1840-1900): Secretary of the Liberal Central Association and the National Liberal Federation, which functioned as headquarters for the Liberal Party. Offered assistance to Naoroji in finding a constituency for the 1886 general elections and, in 1888, pledged to support to Naoroji against Richard Eve’s insurgent Liberal candidacy in Central Finsbury. Relations between Naoroji and Schnadhorst frayed during Frederick A. Ford’s insurgent candidacy, pushing Naoroji to publish a pamphlet, “Mr. D. Naoroji and Mr. Schnadhorst,” in early 1892.

TILAK, BAL GANGADHAR (1856-1920): Radical Indian nationalist, editor of the English-language *Mahratta* and Marathi-language *Kesari*. Pioneered a brand of Hindu nationalism through development of public celebrations of Ganpati and the birthday of Shivaji. Captured the Poona Sarvajanic Sabha from moderate leaders in 1896. Suspected of involvement in the 1897 assassinations of Walter Charles Rand, special plague commissioner in Poona, and Charles Egerton Ayerst, his military escort. Subsequently

imprisoned for sedition. Emerged as one of the leading radical nationalists during the Swadeshi Movement. Pleaded with Naoroji to adopt tenets of the radical camp, such as the boycott of foreign goods and national education. Proposed by radicals as president of the 1906 Calcutta Congress but stood aside when Naoroji received the nomination. Led the radical faction to split from the Congress at its 1907 session at Surat. Imprisoned between 1908 and 1914. Rejoined the Congress at the 1916 Lucknow session.

WACHA, DINSHA (1844-1936): General secretary of the Congress and a long-serving member of the Bombay Municipal Corporation. Along with Behramji M. Malabari, Wacha was one of Naoroji's closest confidantes. Served as an editor of the English columns of the *Kaiser-i-Hind*.

WEDDERBURN, WILLIAM (1838-1918): One of the Congress' earliest guiding figures, along with Naoroji and Allan Octavian Hume. Joined the Bombay civil service in 1860. Helped Naoroji found the Bombay Branch of the East India Association in 1869. Retired from the civil service in 1887, thereafter serving as president of the Congress at its 1889 Bombay session. Elected to Parliament in 1893, serving alongside Naoroji in the Commons for two years. Served as commissioner for the Welby Commission, once more alongside Naoroji. Retired from the Commons in 1900.

WOOD, W. MARTIN (1828-1907): one of Naoroji's closest friends and a longtime political ally. Editor of the *Times of India* in the early 1870s. Joined Naoroji in lobbying the India

Office on behalf of the interests of various princely states. Member of the British Committee of the Indian National Congress.

Timeline

1820s

4 September 1825 – Naoroji is born in Khadak, Mandvi, Bombay.

1830s

1834 – Elphinstone College founded.

1839 – Naoroji goes through the Zoroastrian *navar* ceremony (first initiatory ceremony for the Zoroastrian priesthood) at Wadia Atash Behram, Bombay.

1840s

1 May 1840 – Naoroji, age 16, appointed the Clare Scholarship for the Elphinstone College.

1845 (?) – Sir Erskine Perry proposes to send Naoroji to England to be trained as a barrister; idea is shot down by orthodox Parsis in light of recent conversion controversy.

1 November 1845 – Naoroji appointed as assistant master at Elphinstone College.

1848 or 1849 – Naoroji appointed as assistant professor at Elphinstone College.

1848 – Naoroji leads efforts to found Students' Literary and Scientific Society.

1849 – Baharkot Parsi girls' school established.

1849 – first monthly edition of Gujarati *Dnyan Prasarak*.

1850s

20 January 1851 – Naoroji appointed to Bombay Board of Education.

3 August 1851 – Naoroji helps found Rahnumae Mazdayasnan Sabha along with Navrozji Fardunji.

7 October 1851 – Parsi-Muslim riots begin.

15 November 1851 – first edition of *Rast Goftar*.

October 1852 – Naoroji appointed as acting professor of mathematics and natural philosophy at the Elphinstone Institution, upon the departure of the previous professor, John Patton, due to severe illness.

26 August 1852 – Naoroji gives his maiden political speech at the meeting that inaugurates the Bombay Association.

1854 – Naoroji appointed as full professor of mathematics and natural philosophy at Elphinstone Institution (4 November 1878, Dadabhai Naoroji to Erskine Perry, DNP, N-1 (55)).

Tuesday, 27 June 1855, 6pm – Naoroji, along with Muncherji Framji Cama, Kharshedji Rustamji Cama, and Dr. Rustomji Behramji, leave on the steamer *Madras* for England. Naoroji and the Camas sail to England in order to set up the first Indian firm in Great Britain, Cama & Company.

22 August 1855 – Naoroji arrives in Southampton.

1858: Naoroji resigns from Cama & Company and returns to India.

1859 – Ardeshir Naoroji, Naoroji's first and only son, is born in Bombay.

1859 – Naoroji begins agitation over sudden change of age limit for Indian civil service exam, barring Rustamji Hirjibhai Wadia. Marks the beginning of his lifelong involvement with civil service issues.

9 January 1859 – Naoroji leaves Bombay for England.

Post-January 1859—sets up Dadabhai Naoroji & Company in London.

1860s

22 September 1861 – Meeting at Muncherji Hormusji Cama's house in London that forms Zoroastrian Fund. Cama elected chairman and Naoroji elected a trustee.

1864 – Naoroji outlines proposals to set up fellowships and scholarships for Indian college graduates to continue studies for professional careers. A few Indian donors come forth with money but government refuses to give a share. “Students' Loan Company” set up to encourage Indians to visit England to learn trades or professions. Ensuing commercial crash destroys this scheme.

29 April 1865 – Naoroji sails from Bombay to England, taking mother, wife, son Ardeshir and baby daughter Shirin.

19 December 1865 – Naoroji presides over London Indian Society meeting discussing secretary of state's decision to lower the age limit for Indian civil service candidates. (1865-12-19 London Indian Society)

27 March 1866 – Naoroji delivers his paper “European and Asiatic Races”

1 December 1866 – Naoroji helps found East India Association (Masani, 100).

2 May 1867 – First meeting of East India Association. Naoroji delivers his first paper before the East India Association, “England’s Duties to India”

10 October 1868 – second daughter Manekbai born in Bombay (Masani, 95).

1870s

27 July 1870 – “Wants and Means of India” read before East India Association (Patwardhan, *Correspondence*, xxiii)

1871 – submits evidence to the Select Committee on East India Finance.

15 February 1871 – “Commerce of India” read before the East India Association.

Late 1871 – Naoroji sails to India to canvass support for the East India Association.

Before July 1873 – Naoroji arrives back in London from Bombay.

July 1873 – Malharrao Gaikwad sends a dispatch on the darbar controversy, written by Naoroji, to the secretary of state for India. In return for his services, the *gaikwad* gives Naoroji Rs. 50,000 in the form of a trust for the education of his children

Early December 1873 – Naoroji arrives at Baroda in order to begin his diwanship.

23 December 1873 – Malharrao sends note to Robert Phayre, the resident, stating that Naoroji had begun his duties as *diwan*.

27 December 1873 – Naoroji signs a proclamation asking subjects to report any cases of oppression or bribe-taking by government servants in Baroda.

Early July 1874 – Naoroji offers to resign as dewan after Gaekwar orders him to revive the older, more corrupt judicial system and to collect outstanding fees owed to Gaekwar from suits under the older regime (Masani, 157)

31 July 1874 – Naoroji lists his demands to Gaekwar for reforms in Baroda state, including the abolition of *nazaranna*, the resignation of particular *darbaris*, and his involvement in any future government appointments.

9 August 1874 – Naoroji and his colleagues tender their resignations. Malharrao blinks and, in Naoroji’s words, brings “such a pressure of entreaty” that they withdraw their resignations.

11 August 1874 – Phayre sends message to Malharrao advising him not to appoint Naoroji as diwan.

14 August 1874 – Malharrao sends *yad* to Phayre informing him that Naoroji has been diwan since December 1873 and asking, once more, for military honors to be extended to him.

2 November 1874 – Malharrao dispatches *kharita* asking for the removal of Phayre as resident.

9 November 1874 – attempted poisoning of Phayre.

21 December 1874 – Naoroji and his ministry offer their resignation from office.

11 January 1875 – Having resigned, Naoroji and his colleagues depart Baroda.

Late January 1875 – Malharrao deposed as gaikwad of Baroda by the British Indian government.

July 1875: Naoroji elected member of the Bombay Municipal Corporation and town council.

1876 – reads papers on the “Poverty of India” before the Bombay Branch of the East India Association.

Post-September 1876 – Naoroji sails to England (Patwardhan, *Correspondence*, xvi)

1880s

1880 – Naoroji publishes “Condition of India”, containing his correspondence with the secretary of state for India.

April 1881 – returns to Bombay from England, intending to stay in India for good, after closing down his business in London.

Late 1881: Naoroji closes Dadabhai Naoroji & Co. in London (Masani, 214)

1882 – Naoroji submits statement to the Hunter Commission on Indian Education.

January 1883—at instance of William Wedderburn, Naoroji starts *Voice of India*, with Behramji M. Malabari as its editor.

29 November 1884 – Naoroji delivers a speech in Bombay to mark the retirement of the viceroy, Lord Ripon. Invokes, for the first time in public, the idea of self-government for India.

January 1885 – Allan Octavian Hume meets with Naoroji and other Bombay political leaders in order to discuss setting up the Indian National Congress.

31 January 1885 – Bombay Presidency Association inaugurated with Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy as president and Naoroji as one of the vice presidents.

September 1885 – Naoroji appointed to Bombay legislative council by Lord Reay

December 1886 – First Congress session held in Bombay.

April 1886 – Naoroji returns to London with the ambition of standing for Parliament.

18 June 1886 – Naoroji unanimously endorsed as the Liberal candidate for Holborn by the Holborn Liberal Association.

24 June 1886, Thursday – Naoroji holds his first public meeting as the official Liberal candidate for Holborn, held at Holborn Town Hall at 8pm.

5 July 1886 – Polling day in Holborn. Naoroji defeated.

11 November 1886 – Naoroji scheduled to leave London via the steamer *Malwa* for Bombay, staying in India for around three months.

December 1886 – Naoroji serves as president of the Congress' second session, held in Calcutta.

Late-February 1886 —Friends suggest Naoroji should look into standing for Parliament from Central Finsbury due to a recent vacancy.

5 March 1888 – first round of voting for the Liberal candidate for Central Finsbury takes place, with Naoroji's name at the top.

25 May 1888 – Michael Davitt writes to *Freeman's Journal* proposing that Charles Stuart Parnell choose Naoroji to stand for the open parliamentary seat in Sligo, Ireland.

15 August 1888 – Council of the Central Finsbury Liberal and Radical Association meets to select Liberal candidate. Naoroji's name is at the top in all three rounds of voting and is duly selected, though the proceedings of the meeting are eventually challenged.

18 August 1888 – Francis Schnadhorst writes letter to William Digby, criticizing the *Star's* treatment of Naoroji and acknowledging that it is meant to get Richard Eve into the race.

5 September 1888 – Naoroji has interview with Schnadhorst, who advises Naoroji not to retire or give into calls for arbitration in Central Finsbury.

29 November 1888 – Lord Salisbury, in Edinburgh, calls Naoroji a “black man.”

21 January 1889 – complimentary banquet given to Naoroji at the National Liberal Club in response to Lord Salisbury's “black man” remark. Lord Ripon presides.

July 1889 – British Committee of the Indian National Congress founded in London.

26 August 1889 – Naoroji might have gone for 8-9 days to Ireland as part of a Home Rule League delegations .

Mid-September 1889 – Naoroji attends Congress Against State Regulation of Vice in Geneva, Switzerland. (noted from recipient addresses in R.M.H. Griffith's letters to Naoroji, DNP: 11 September 1889, G-116 (63); to 14 September 1889, G-116 (65)).

1890s

Late June 1890 – Richard Eve retires from Central Finsbury campaign. He is invited to contest St. George's-in-the-East instead.

16 July 1890 – Naoroji speaks at the International Conference of the Women's Franchise League in London.

January 1891 – Signs that Frederick A. Ford is attempting to launch an insurgent candidacy against Naoroji in Central Finsbury.

23 September 1891 – Naoroji asks Malabari to get Lord Ripon to counsel the Liberal Party establishment on his behalf with regard to dispute over the Liberal candidacy in Central Finsbury.

18 March 1892 – Naoroji expresses surprise that Ripon suggests arbitration with his rival in Central Finsbury.

11 June 1892 – Richard Causton visits Naoroji and asks for “some overture for peace” to resolve the dispute in Central Finsbury.

Mid-June 1892 – F.A. Ford drops out of race, leaving Naoroji as the recognized Liberal candidate in Central Finsbury.)

6 July 1892 – Naoroji wins election as M.P. for Central Finsbury

1 March 1893—Naoroji tables bill in House of Commons for simultaneous civil service examinations.

2 June 1893 – Resolution for simultaneous civil service examinations passed in the House of Commons (Patwardhan, *Correspondence*, xxxii).

7 October 1893—Naoroji's son Ardeshir passes away in Kutch.

17 November 1893 – Naoroji departs from London's Charing Cross station en route to India.

3 December 1893 – Major and spontaneous demonstrations for Naoroji in Bombay as he arrives in the city and travels to his house.

17 December 1893 – Naoroji visit Poona.

25 December 1893 – Naoroji arrives in Lahore in the afternoon, where he is greeted by large demonstrations of support.

27 December 1893 – Lahore Congress opens.

16 July 1895 – Naoroji defeated during the general elections.

January 1897 – Naoroji and Henry M. Hyndman begin discussing the organization of mass meetings in order to highlight the famine in India.

10 February 1897 – Naoroji and Hyndman hold a mass meeting on the Indian famine at St. James' Hall, London, which is attended by Ramsay MacDonald, Michael Davitt, and several other prominent leftist leaders.

1900s

1900 – Naoroji, suffering from illness, declines to stand for Parliament during the general election.

October 1901 – *Poverty and UnBritish Rule*, a compilation of Naoroji's writings from the past thirty years, published.

3-6 July 1903 – Naoroji corresponds with Romesh Chunder Dutt and declares "Self Government Under British Paramountcy" to be the ultimate goal of the Nationalist Movement.

May 1904 – Naoroji solicits endorsements of labor unions as he begins his final parliamentary campaign, standing from North Lambeth.

August 1904 – Naoroji attends the International Socialist Congress in Amsterdam along with Hyndman. Supports resolution for Indian self-government.

Late 1905 – Lord Curzon's partition of Bengal gives rise to the Swadeshi Movement.

January 1906 – Polling in North Lambeth for the general elections. Naoroji, running as an independent Liberal candidate in a three-way contest, loses.

12 July 1906 – Surendranath Banerjea appries Naoroji of the possibility of a split in the Congress between moderate and radical factions. Asks Naoroji to preside at the Calcutta session in 1906 in order to bring both factions together.

8 November 1906 – Naoroji joins Gandhi and his Transvaal Indian Deputation in meeting Lord Elgin at the Colonial Office.

13 November 1906 – Reception Committee for the Calcutta Congress unanimously invites Naoroji to preside.

22 November 1906 – Naoroji joins Gandhi and the Transvaal Indian Deputation for a meeting with John Morley at the India Office.

29 November 1906 – Naoroji departs London en route to India for the Calcutta Congress.

26 December 1906 – Naoroji delivers his presidential address at the Calcutta Congress, calling for *swaraj*.

January 1907 – Naoroji leaves Bombay for London, hoping to continue his political work in the imperial capital.

7 November 1907 – Naoroji, weakened by severe illness, arrives back in Bombay and retires from public life.

30 June 1917 – Naoroji dies in Palitana House, Cumballa Hill, Bombay.

Naoroji-Dutt Correspondence, July 1903

The following letters have been reproduced from collections at the National Archives of India. In this correspondence, Dadabhai Naoroji justifies the establishment of “Self Government under British Paramountcy” as the stated objective of the Indian nationalist movement.

—1—

Romesh Chunder Dutt Papers, serial no. 3

Washington House,
72, Anerley Park,
London. S.E.
3rd July 1903

Dear Mr. Dutt

I have no doubt you will believe me when I say how I rejoice at the energy and work which you are doing. But I cannot help saying that the more I think the more I feel that all this energy and work cannot bear fruit in ameliorating the condition of India. As long as the drain of the “Foreign Invasion” continues no such palliatives as even reduction in land tax will do good or prevent India from going on sinking. What may be 1/6th or 1/8th today may, as the capacity to produce sinks lower and lower, become again 1/4th or 1/3rd or 1/2 and the same stone will have to be rolled up again, and famines and pestilences only will restore the balance.

But what is still worse is, that your agitation about land tax is the very thing that the Anglo Indians welcome. It draws a red herring across the *real evil* at bottom—the bleeding—and gives them the opportunity of keeping up a futile discussion and drawing away the attention of the world from the plunder or bleeding of which they themselves are the authors.

Pray do not be annoyed, but I cannot help regretting from my point of view all the loss of so much work, and the throwing in the background of the real cry—the cry of unceasing plunder. Till the bleeding ceases and India is moving towards self government and self enjoying her own resources, there is no hope of better days. But I shall hope.

Your's truly
Dadabhai Naoroji

R.C. Dutt
14 Redcliffe Street.
Redcliffe Square SW

14, Redcliffe Street,
Redcliffe Square, S.W.
4 July 1903

My dear Mr. Dadabhai,

I have received a further letter from Mr. Stead, which I enclose. I have asked him to communicate his *final decision* to you, so that you may communicate it to Madras.

I have never lost a single chance of urging that the drain from India is *the* cause of her poverty;—I have said this again and again in my *Economic History, 1757-1837*; quoting from Edmund Burke[,] Governor Verelst, Mr Shore, Montgomery Martin & others. And I am going to say this still more emphatically in my *Economic History, 1837-1900*,¹ which will appear next year. But this drain will not be stopped until you stop its main source,—the land-revenue; and therefore by endeavouring to restrict the land-revenue, I am doing exactly the same work which you are doing in endeavouring to stop the drain.

Curiously enough, I am doing now exactly the same work which you were doing 30 years ago. I am reading your evidence before the Parliamentary Committee of 1873,² and I notice how eloquently you pleaded against the excessive land-assessment of Indapur and other Talukas of Poona. If the Government had listened to you in 1873, the Poona-Riots of 1875³ would have been avoided. If you were right in combining the Land-Revenue question with the drain-question in 1873, I am right in doing the same in 1903.

Lastly, there is a strong feeling in every Province of India against excessive land-assessments,—a feeling which I am glad to find is filtering down to the masses, and will therefore become irrepressible very soon. The Bombay cultivators have this feeling; in Madras there is a ceaseless struggle against over-assessment, and away in Northern India the agitation is going on. And we should be untrue representatives of our countrymen if we did not voice this feeling which is so universal and so deep-rooted in our country. I travelled all over India last cold season except the Punjab, and I felt more than ever that if we wish to be in touch with our countrymen, and to be their true representatives, we cannot neglect the land question.

You will no doubt perceive from these facts that (1) I have precisely the same object that you have; that (2) I am following the same method that you did in 1873; and that (3) I am seeking to represent and voice the universal feeling of our countrymen.

Yours sincerely
Romesh Dutt

¹ Published as *The Economic History of India, Volume II: In the Victorian Age, 1837-1900* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1904).

² Parliamentary Committee on Indian Finance or Fawcett Committee.

³ These were the so-called Deccan Riots of 1875, concentrated in Poona and Ahmednagar districts and beginning in May of that year.

The following letter appears in a bound volume. It has been misarranged and is missing at least one page. S.R. Mehrotra and I have arranged the surviving parts of this letter to the best of our abilities.

Washington House,
72, Anerley Park,
London. S.E.
5th July 1903

Dear Mr Dutt

I am very glad indeed to receive your reply about land controversy. My puzzle about [it] is somewhat solved.

You say “But this drain will not be stopped until you stop its main source,—the land revenue; and therefore by endeavouring to restrict the land revenue I am doing exactly the same work which you are doing in endeavouring to stop the drain.”

True that I took up at one time the subject of land revenue, and for the matter of that also, that of “development of resources”—extension of public works and other subjects that were on the surface. But as I studied each and went into it to [a] certain extent, I saw that I was on the wrong course, and that the real cause was actually outside and much deeper than these subjects and I dropped them one after another naturally. My ideas were a gradual evolution, till I saw light and the bed-rock of all our miseries—i.e. the employment of foreign plundering services—both in India and here. We are simply subject to an unceasing foreign invasion carrying away unceasingly our wealth. No alteration in land revenue, or extensions of public works, or the so called “development of resources” or any of the palliatives on the fringe can in the least affect the bleeding by the European services and as long as that remains untouched, unattacked and discontinued nothing on earth can relieve India. Not only the land revenue, but the whole revenue in absolute quantity is but a bagatelle. India if left with its own produce can pay two or three times its present revenues without any suffering but with much benefit.

The Europeans plunder and take away the wealth—the capacity of the people becomes weakened, and the taxation becomes oppressive. The Government wants its pound of flesh for the European services—increases the rate of taxation—the whole vicious circle goes on revolving. The Fundamental *cause*, the cause of the whole mischief is the “Foreign domination” and as long as that continues, there is no hope. It was after much progress in my study and work in Indian matters that I fully realised Sir John Shore’s little para which I frequently quote, the last words of which are “There is reason to conclude that the benefits are more than counterbalanced by evils inseparable from the *system of a remote foreign dominion*.”⁴

This is the whole and very cause of all other troubles and diseases—oppressiveness of the land revenue (light though it is) and of every other source of

⁴ Emphasis is Naoroji’s.

revenue. It is not the *quantity* of the revenue that kills. It is the *increasing incapacity* to bear the burden. Every year the same burden becomes heavier and heavier. Your letter makes me write to you the *more and more* earnestly to wish that you will take advantage of my experience or mistakes to avoid the loss of time and energy which I have made.

You are the only man at present who is devoting yourself to the *main* fight of removing the true and fundamental cause of India's woes. The course you have taken is very round-about, if it will ever produce the result you expect—viz., that if the land revenue is curtailed and government does not get enough of money, government will think of, or will be obliged to remove the European services. No, Government will go on [with] exactly what it wants, as long as we do not create a great agitation that "Foreign dominion" by foreign services must cease, except so far as to allow only supreme control or paramountcy. If we begin the fight for it today, it may be half a century or a century perhaps, that the object will be attained. I shall not live and perhaps you will not live to see the day. The course you have taken will simply delay the end much longer.

The drain is *the* Cause and *only* cause—all others are consequences, direct and indirect. The *Cause* must be removed or the evil will *never* be remedied. It is now high time—after the proof of the evil by famines and pestilences—that the fundamental agitation must be vigorously commenced, and instead of the people in India being misled into the idea, that land revenues or any other administrative work is the cause of their sufferings, they must be taught the true cause at the bottom, and must be led to demand the cessation of that cause—The Drain. It will need *no little* and *no short* effort, first to teach the people themselves to realise this position and then to raise the cry and agitation for the remedy. Of one thing I feel certain—that if once the mass of the people understood the cause and raised the cry—the British rulers will very soon understand the situation and climb down to meet. There are many Englishmen who fully realise the situation who know that if the people of India once understood their condition and their strength the British will have either to leave precipitately, or be destroyed in India, or if they see the danger of the disaster in good time and apply the remedy, to save the Empire by putting an end to the Drain, and finding their true benefit in trade with a prosperous and vast people—as Mr Bright⁵ so strongly insisted on as the only right course. To *trade* with India, and not to *plunder* India.

It is not enough that you refer to the drain. It must be the *chief* and *most prominent* subject of the fight—the other subjects coming in illustration and enforcement of the chief argument. The more I think, the more I feel that any other course is a red-herring and delay and a serious injury to the people of India, instead of a service to them. [...]

⁵ John Bright.

Washington House
72, Anerley Park,
London. S.E.
5th July 1903

Dear Mr. Dutt

I mentioned in my other letter today that Lord George Hamilton has made a dead set to get the Indians out of the higher services. He is employing every subterfuge for that purpose to increase the Europeans in the services.

Things are growing critical. I have every fear that the attempt which Lord Lytton's government openly made to stop Indians from competing for the Civil Service *here*—and which Lord Cranbrook nipped in the bud under Sir Erskine Perry's inspiration, will be sooner or later carried out if the present Conservative Government continues for any length of time. The time is come when an agitation must be begun for "Self Government under British Paramountcy." The work will be slow, but every effort needs to be concentrated on this purpose. The bleeding must begin to stop.

At my age it will not be my lot to take any long part in this great battle—and I am therefore the more anxious to see that younger hands and hearts set themselves to work

Your's truly
Dadabhai Naoroji

14, Redcliffe Street,
Redcliffe Square, S.W.
July 6. 1903

My dear Mr. Dadabhai,

Mr. Stead forgot to enclose the letters of the Swami and of Sir W. Wedderburn in his letter,—which I send you again (you may keep it)—but if you want to see them, Mr Stead will be very glad to send them to you if you ask.

I have not arranged to see Frederick [sic] Harrison yet,—being confined to my house for the last 2 or 3 days by a pain. Perhaps you will communicate direct with Mr. Harrison as well as with Mr. Stead.

I shall be *very glad* if you can induce a man of Mr Harrison's great literary power & influence to preside at Madras.

I have read your long, earnest, and most impressive letter, and will never forget the great object which you hold forth to view,—SELF-GOVT. UNDER BRITISH RULE,—which will of itself cure the economic bleeding. I have urged this in my past works, and will urge it more emphatically and continuously in my future works. But I cannot drop

the question of the land revenue, on which the hearts of millions of my countrymen are set, without proving untrue to them and to myself after this five years' fight. I cannot desert the cause of those who have taken me to their homes and fields, shewed me their poverty & misery under a grinding assessment, and relied upon my endeavours for some limitations to the Land Tax imposed on them. And, as I said before, their object is the same as ours, and a limit to the Land Tax will necessarily mean a limit to the Economic Drain. While *I promise you* therefore to do the utmost I can in the future to expose the exhausting and fatal effects of the Economic Drain,—which you rightly call *the cause* of the material ruin of India,—I must combine with it my exposure of the excessive and uncertain Land Tax which falls directly on the million[s], and which helps this Economic Drain.

I am sure you will now see clearly that my object is the same as yours. Thanking you again for your very kind and instructive letter, and promising you again that I will not prove untrue to our main object, viz *Self Government under British Rule*,

I remain
Ever Yours Sincerely
Romesh Dutt

Sample Membership and Publication Subscriptions

The following information, based mostly on receipts and subscriptions found in the Naoroji Papers, gives us an idea about the organizations that Naoroji joined and the publications that he read. Subscriptions listed below were compiled between January 2011 and October 2013. This is not an exhaustive list.

I have identified, in parentheses when not already apparent, subscriptions to organizations and publications in parliamentary constituencies that he contested.

Before decimalization, money in Great Britain was divided into pounds, shillings (“s.” or “/-”), and pennies (“d.”). A pound was equal to 20 shillings and 240 pennies. A guinea was equal to 21 shillings (£1.1s.). Sums that consisted of shillings and pennies only were noted with a forward slash (i.e., 10/6 means ten shillings and six pennies).

UNITED KINGDOM

Central Finsbury Football Club, London

21 September 1893: 10/6

22 October 1894: 10/6¹

Central Finsbury Radical Club, London

1893: 8/- shillings, subscription for 1893

12 March 1898: 8/6²

Central National Society for Women’s Suffrage, London

6 June 1894: £1

13 July 1896: £1

12 February 1897: £1.1³

Central and Western Society for Women’s Suffrage, London

May 1899: £1.1s. Promises to double his subscription for the next three years

6 February 1900: £2.2s.⁴

Church of England Burial, Funeral, and Mourning Reform Association, London

1892: 5/-⁵

Crusaders' Lodge No. 1677, London (Central Finsbury)
November 1895: £3.3s. ⁶

England Land Restoration League/English League for the Taxation of Land Values,
London
October 1902: £2.6s. ⁷

The English Labourers' Chronicle, Leamington
February 1894: £2 ⁸

Fabian Society, London
7 July 1906: 5/- ⁹

Financial Reform Association, Liverpool
March 1888: 5/-
April 1890: 5/-
January 1899: 10/6
5 January 1901: unspecified subscription
27 January 1902: unspecified subscription
11 August 1903: 5/-
16 July 1904: 5/- ¹⁰

Free Land League, London
November 1894: unspecified subscription ¹¹

Imperial Institute, London
February 1894: £2
February 1894: unspecified subscription
April 1896: £1.24s. ¹²

Institute of Journalists, London
March 1893: £1.1s. for conference reception fund
February 1894: 10/6
September 1904: 10/6
February 1906: 12/6 ¹³

International Federation for the Abolition of State Regulation of Vice, British Committee,
London
2 July 1898: £2.2s.
11 April 1899: 9/-
2 December 1902: 2 guineas
17 December 1903: £2.2s.
8 December 1904: £1.1s. ¹⁴

Irish National League, London
April 1896: unspecified subscription

May 1897: unspecified subscription¹⁵

Justice, organ of the Social Democratic Federation, London
 October 1899: £1.2s.11d.¹⁶

Vernon Lodge, No. 1738, Independent Order of Good Templars, London
 November 1895: 5/-¹⁷

Women's Franchise League, London
 February 1890: £2.2s.
 February 1892: £2.2s.
 1 March 1895: 1 guinea
 18 March 1898: £1.1s.¹⁸

Women's Liberal Federation, London
 1895: 1 guinea
 May 1895: unspecified subscription
 1896: 1 guinea
 1897: 1 guinea
 8 December 1899: £1.1s.
 December 1905: 10/6¹⁹

Women's Progressive Society, London
 February 1892: 10 /-²⁰

Women's Suffrage Record, London
 24 July 1906: 2/-²¹

¹ Central Finsbury Football Club to Dadabhai Naoroji, 21 September 1893, NAI, DNP, C-76 (1); Central Finsbury Football Club to Naoroji, October 22, 1894, *ibid.*, C-76 (2).

² Central Finsbury Radical Club to Naoroji, 16 May 1898, *ibid.*, C-82 (3); Central Finsbury Radical Club to Naoroji, 1892, *ibid.*, C-82 (20).

³ Central National Society for Women's Suffrage to Naoroji, 6 June 1894, *ibid.*, C-88; Central Finsbury Football Club to Naoroji, 22 October 1894, *ibid.*, C-76 (2); Central National Society for Women's Suffrage to Naoroji, 13 July 1896, *ibid.*, C-88 (5).

⁴ L. Baxter to Naoroji, 2 May 1899, NMML, DNP, III, #865; Central and Western Society for Women's Suffrage, flier, 5 February 1900, NAI, DNP, C-90 (2).

⁵ F. Lawrence to Naoroji, 31 December 1892, *ibid.*, E-51.

⁶ Alfred F. Goode to Naoroji, 13 November 1894, *ibid.*, C-293 (2).

⁷ Frederick Verinder to Naoroji, 1 October 1902, *ibid.*, E-55.

⁸ T. Wager to Naoroji, 7 February 1894, *ibid.*, E-53.

⁹ Edward R. Pease to Naoroji, 7 July 1906, *ibid.*, F-1 (4).

¹⁰ Fred L. Creely to Naoroji, 10 March 1888, *ibid.*, F-29; R.G. Williams to Naoroji, 16 April 1890, *ibid.*, F-29 (1); [illegible] to Naoroji, 2 January 1899, *ibid.*, F-29 (4); J.W.S. Callie to Naoroji, July 1903, *ibid.*, F-29 (6); Callie to Naoroji, July 1904, *ibid.*, F-29 (7).

¹¹ F.A. Creed to Naoroji, 8 November 1894, *ibid.*, F-86.

¹² J.R. Somers Vine to Naoroji, 3 February 1894, *ibid.*, I-6 (2); Vine to Naoroji, 7 February 1895, *ibid.*, I-6 (9); Vine to Homi M. Dadina, 28 March 1896, *ibid.*, I-6 (15).

¹³ Robert George Emery to Naoroji, 9 March 1893, *ibid.*, I-26 (17); Samuel J. Fisher to Naoroji, 20 February 1894, *ibid.*, I-26 (26); Herbert Cornish to Naoroji, 26 September 1904, *ibid.*, I-26 (53); Arthur W. Beckett to Naoroji, 12 February 1906, *ibid.*, I-26 (55).

¹⁴ Josephine E. Butler and James Stuart to Naoroji, 1 July 1898, *ibid.*, F-13 (3); Butler and Stuart to Naoroji, 11 April 1899, *ibid.*, F-13 (7); Butler and Stuart to Naoroji, November 1902, *ibid.*, I-32 (3); Butler and Stuart to Naoroji, December 1903, *ibid.*, I-32 (6); Butler and Stuart to Naoroji, December 1904, *ibid.*, I-32 (10).

¹⁵ Robert I. Streeby to Naoroji, 28 April 1896, *ibid.*, I-43 (13); Streeby to Naoroji, 5 May 1897, *ibid.*, I-43 (14).

¹⁶ *Justice* to Naoroji, 5 October 1899, *ibid.*, J-107 (2).

¹⁷ George [?] Osborne to Naoroji, 28 November 1895, *ibid.*, I-10b.

¹⁸ Alice Cliff Scatcherd to Naoroji, 25 February 1890, *ibid.*, W-135; Scatcherd to Naoroji, 22 February 1892, *ibid.*, W-135 (18); Scatcherd to Naoroji, March 1895, *ibid.*, W-13 (27); Scatcherd to Naoroji, March 1898, *ibid.*, W-13 (28).

¹⁹ Margaret Bunney to Naoroji, 4 May 1895, *ibid.*, W-138 (1); Annie Chapman to Naoroji, 8 December 1899, *ibid.*, C-107 (1); Eva McLaren, circular, 1895, *ibid.*, W-138 (4); McLaren to Naoroji, 22 December 1905, *ibid.*, W-138 (7).

²⁰ [illegible] to Naoroji, 1 February 1892, *ibid.*, F-29 (4).

²¹ Edith Palliser to Naoroji, 1906, *ibid.*, W-141a.

Sample Philanthropic Donations

The following list represents what is, most likely, only a handful of donations that Dadabhai Naoroji made during his lifetime. I have tabulated most of these donations from my research with the Naoroji Papers between January 2011 and October 2013, when I was able to consult approximately half of the 30,000 items in the collection. Donations in India are significantly underrepresented for three reasons. Firstly, very little archival material survives from Naoroji's periods of residence in Bombay. Secondly, Naoroji's non-English correspondence has yet to be fully catalogued, making it extremely difficult to use. I have been able to consult and catalogue only a small part of this correspondence. Thirdly, I have not as yet been able to make an exhaustive list of donations found in *Parsee Prakash*, which lists many of Naoroji's donations in Bombay.

I have identified, in parentheses when not already apparent, donations that Naoroji made to people and organizations in parliamentary constituencies that he contested.

See the introduction to Appendix B for information on British currency before decimalization.

INDIA

Alexandra Native Girls English Institution, Bombay
30 June 1863: Rs. 501¹

Elphinstone College, Bombay
25 January 1864: Rs. 50 for fund for Sanskrit library²

Harkness, John: professor at Elphinstone College, Bombay
11 May 1862: Rs. 600 for gift celebrating Harkness's 27 years in education in Bombay³

Keru Chhatre Memorial, Bombay
April 1884: Rs. 25 for memorial fund⁴

The Mar Dionysius Seminary, Kottayam
16 October 1903: Copy of *Poverty and Un-British Rule in India*⁵

Mountstuart Elphinstone Testimonial Fund, Bombay
1864: Rs. 200⁶

Native Opinion, Anglo-Marathi paper started in 1864 by V.N. Mandlik, Bombay
After 1864: Naoroji promises an annual donation of Rs 2,000⁷

Relief fund for victims of November 1854 storm, Bombay
1 November 1854: Rs. 10⁸

UNITED KINGDOM

Anglo-Indian Temperance Association, London
May 1902: 1 guinea⁹

Asia (newspaper run by Aziz Ahmad), Glasgow
September 1891: £2 for expenses of September edition¹⁰

Bennett Widow Fund, London
December 1890: 1/-¹¹

Cabdrivers' Benevolent Association, London
30 October 1902: 10/-
20 May 1903: £1¹²

Cabmens Mission Sunday School, London
4 June 1897: 10/-
24 May 1898: 10/-
29 May 1899: 10/-¹³

Central Association for Stopping the Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on Sunday, London
27 September 1904: 2/6¹⁴

Central Club Society, London (Central Finsbury)
5 September 1897: £1.1s.¹⁵

Central Finsbury Liberal and Radical Association, London
17 May 1894: £10¹⁶

Central Finsbury Radical Club, London
3 January 1890: 12/-¹⁷

Central Finsbury United Liberal and Radical Association, London
18 July 1893: £20
9 August 1894: £10¹⁸

Central London Ophthalmic Hospital
7 May 1899: £1.1s.¹⁹

Chelliah, S.: Indian medical student, London
6 February 1906: 10/- to help Chelliah finish medical studies²⁰

Chesson, Frederick W., London
13 April 1889: £5.5s. for memorial fund to support widow of Chesson²¹

Chest Hospital, London (Central Finsbury)
30 April 1896: £1.1s. for fundraising concert²²

Clerkenwell Benevolent Society, London (Central Finsbury)
December 1890: 21/-²³

Clerkenwell Democratic Club (Central Finsbury)
No date: 2 guineas²⁴

Clerkenwell Parochial Schools, London (Central Finsbury)
June 1893: 10/-²⁵

Committee of the Amwell Street Schools, London (Central Finsbury)
July 1891: unspecified donation²⁶

Crusaders' Lodge No. 1677, London (Central Finsbury)
18 January 1895: £1.1s. for boys' school charity²⁷

Curtain Road Fire Fund Society Committee, London (Central Finsbury)
13 November 1892: 5/-²⁸

Democratic Club, London
April 1894: 1 guinea²⁹

Dock, Wharf, Riverside and General Labourer's Union of Great Britain and Ireland,
London
20 June 1894: 5/-³⁰

Dulwich Liberal and Radical Association, London
23 April 1902: £1.6s.
14 May 1903: unspecified donation
14 October 1904: 5/-³¹

East Finsbury Radical Club, London
March 1894: 10/6 for Children's Dinner Fund³²

Edalji, George: son of Parsi Christian convert, Birmingham
31 December 1902: 10/- for financial assistance³³

Evans, Fred W.: formerly general secretary of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants and vice-president of Seamen's Union, London
January 1906: £2.2s. for testimonial for old-age support³⁴

Eve, Henry Weston, London (Holborn [?])
26 September 1899: £1.1s. for memorial fund for helping a school purchase a cricket and football playing field³⁵

Evelina Hospital for Sick Children, London (North Lambeth)
12 December 1899: 5/-
30 December 1901: 5/-³⁶

Federation of House Painters and Decorators, Clerkenwell Branch, London (Central Finsbury)
May 1890: unspecified donation³⁷

Federation of Trades and Labour Unions Connected with the Shipping, Carrying & Other Industries, London
September 1892: 5/- for benefit concert³⁸

Female Mission to the Fallen and Female Aid Society (mission to prostitutes), London
8 November 1894: 5/-³⁹

Finsbury Dispensary, London (Central Finsbury)
March 1892: £3.3s.
March 1902: £2.2s.
13 March 1903: 1 guinea
March 1905: 10/6
17 March 1906: 5/-⁴⁰

First of May Celebration Committee ("Representing Trade Unions, Socialist Bodies, and other Working Class Societies"), London
April 1901: 10/6⁴¹

Foresters' Asylum or Home (Ancient Order of Foresters), Bexley Heath, Kent
July 1901: £2 for building fund
2 January 1903: 10/6⁴²

Fox Court Ragged Schools and Mission, London (Central Finsbury)
June 1889: 5/- for Children's Day in the Country program and Country Holiday Fund⁴³

Funds of the Royal Free Hospital, London (Central Finsbury)
1894: £1.1s., patron for Annual Ball for the Funds
10 November 1895: £1.1s., patron for Annual Ball for the Funds
26 August 1896: 10/6 for Annual Ball for the Funds

- 26 November 1898: 10/6 for Annual Ball for the Funds
 11 September 1900: unspecified donation
 November 1905: £1.1s. [?] ⁴⁴
- Ghose, Manmohan: Indian residing in London
 May 1894 [?]: unspecified donation. Ghose, who claims he is “stranded in England,” asks for contributions to a subscription fund for paying for return passage to India. ⁴⁵
- Gladstone Hall, London
 October 1890: £2.2s. ⁴⁶
- Goldsmiths and Jewellers’ Annuity and Asylum Institution, London (Central Finsbury)
 12 December 1891: 7/-
 12 December 1891: £2.2s.
 February 1894: £1.11s.6d.
 January 1896: unspecified donation
 December 1896: unspecified donation
 October 1899: unspecified donation
 December 1901: £1.1s. ⁴⁷
- Good, Alfred: past master of Crusaders Lodge, Clerkenwell, London (Central Finsbury)
 October 1902: 10/- for testimonial fund ⁴⁸
- Green, H: resident at 95 Rosebery Avenue, London (Central Finsbury)
 25 September 1903: 2/-. Green, who seems to have known Naoroji, mentions that he is out of work and very poor, and asks for monetary support. ⁴⁹
- Highland Land Law Reform Association, London
 April 1894: 10 /- ⁵⁰
- Holborn Gladstonian Club, London
 1888 [?]: £5 for the Building & Funding Fund ⁵¹
- Holborn Industrial Exhibition, London
 October 1889: £1.1s. ⁵²
- Home Rule Union (“To Support the Irish Nation in its demand for Home Rule”), London
 23 December 1887: £3.3s.
 August 1889: £1.1s.
 April 1895: £2.2s. ⁵³
- Hon. Howard Spensley Lodge, London (Central Finsbury)
 September 1888: 10/6 for regalia fund ⁵⁴

Hospital for Diseases of the Throat, London
 June 1889: £3.3s.; serves as steward for dinner⁵⁵

Hospital for Sick Children, London
 May 1895: 10/- ⁵⁶

Hunter, W.W., Oxford
 £8 for memorial fund⁵⁷

Increased Armaments Protest Committee, London
 November 1897: 10/6 ⁵⁸

Institute of Journalists, London
 23 March 1893: £1.1s. for Orphan Fund
 May 1894: £1.1s. for Orphan Fund
 March 1894: £1.1s. for Orphan Fund
 April 1901: £5 donation for fund for building permanent hall for the Institution
 July 1901: 1 guinea for Orphan Fund
 24 October 1905: unspecified donation for Orphan Fund
 11 August 1906: 10/6 for Orphan Fund⁵⁹

Irish National Banquet, London
 February 1906: 8 /6 ⁶⁰

Irish National League, London
 March 1892: unspecified donation for St. Patrick's Day concert and ball
 August 1894: unspecified donation to Irish Parliamentary Fund
 October 1894: unspecified donation
 June 1895: unspecified donation to voter registration fund⁶¹

Joshee, Gopal Vinayak: widower of Dr. Anandibai Joshee, London
 6 July 1894: £1 for return passage to India⁶²

Justice, organ of the Social Democratic Federation, London
 September 1889: £3
 April 1890: £2.3s.
 October 1890: £2.6s.8d.
 February 1891: £1.10s. ⁶³

London Socialist Sunday School Union
 31 May 1903: 5/-
 27 April 1906: 2/- for May Day Children's Demonstration
 7 August 1906: 2/6 for summer outing to Theydon Bois, New Forest⁶⁴

North London Auxiliary to the Printer's Almshouse
 February 1891: 1 guinea

- 20 September 1898: 1 guinea
 October 1902: unspecified donation
 October 1903: unspecified donation⁶⁵
- North London Masonic Ball
 January 1912: unspecified donation⁶⁶
- Old Wilmington Harriers, London (Central Finsbury)
 August 1893: 10/-⁶⁷
- Pan African Conference Committee, London
 July 1900: unspecified donation⁶⁸
- Parnell Defense Fund (for Charles Stuart Parnell), London
 September 1888: £5.5s. donation made under a pseudonym⁶⁹
- Progressive School Board Election Council, London
 18 October 1900: 1 guinea⁷⁰
- “Radical and Labour Members,” House of Commons, London
 14 April 1893: 10/-⁷¹
- Reform Club, London
 January 1888: £3⁷²
- Rose, Reverend J.H., London [?] Memorial (U.K.)
 April 1899: 10/- for memorial fund⁷³
- Royal Hospital for Incurables, London
 20 May 1894: unspecified donation⁷⁴
- Scottish Miners’ Wives and Children Fund, London
 17 August 1895: 1 guinea to provide food for families of strikers who are entering their seventh week of striking⁷⁵
- Social Democratic Federation, London
 February 1897: £10
 14 September 1900: £50 to Henry M. Hyndman⁷⁶
- Stanton Fund, London [?]
 December 1890: 5/-⁷⁷
- University College of Wales, Aberystwyth
 28 February 1892: ½ guinea for fund for proposed permanent hall of residents for women students⁷⁸

Unnamed old persons' asylum, Dalston, London (name unknown)
22 July 1892: £1.1s.⁷⁹

Valladares, P.A.: Indian resident in Brighton
25 April 1898: 10/- for subscription fund to support Valladares, who has lost his sight⁸⁰

Women's Trades Union – Provident League, London
April 1889: unspecified donation for weavers' strike⁸¹

¹ B.B. Patell, ed., *Pārsī Prakāsh*, vol. 2 (Bombay: Sanj Vartaman Press, 1910), 65.

² Rustam Barjorji Paymaster, ed., *Pārsī Prakāsh*, vol. 4 (Bombay: Frasho-Gard Printing Press, 1923), 94.

³ Patell, *Pārsī Prakāsh*, 1910, 2: 35.

⁴ Naoroji to Mahadev Govind Ranade, 23 April 1884, NAI, DNP, N-1 (161).

⁵ Fr. V.J. Givargese to Naoroji, 18 September 1903, *ibid.*, G-53.

⁶ "The Elphinstone Memorial: Report of Proceedings of a Public Meeting of the Students and Ex-Students of the Elphinstone College and Institution on the 11th January 1860 in Honor of the Late Hon'ble Mountstuart Elphinstone" (Bombay, 1864).

⁷ S.P. Sen, ed., *Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. II (Calcutta: Institute of Historical Studies, 1973), 41.

⁸ B.B. Patell, ed., *Pārsī Prakāsh*, vol. 1 (Bombay: Duftur Ashkara Press, 1888), 650.

⁹ Anglo-Indian Temperance Association to Naoroji, 13 June 1903, NAI, DNP, A-52 (4).

¹⁰ Aziz Ahmad and Naoroji, bill, 1 October 1891, *ibid.*, A-91 (14).

¹¹ R.M.H. Griffith to Naoroji, 4 December 1890, *ibid.*, G-116 (247).

¹² Cabdrivers' Benevolent Association to Naoroji, 4 April 1903, *ibid.*, C-1 (1); Cabdrivers' Benevolent Association to Naoroji, 20 May 1903, *ibid.*, C-1 (4).

¹³ Cabdrivers' Benevolent Association to Naoroji, 20 May 1903, *ibid.*, C-1 (4); Cabmens Mission Sunday School to Naoroji, 4 June 1897, *ibid.*, C-2 (1); Cabmens Mission Sunday School to Naoroji, 24 May 1898, *ibid.*, C-2 (2).

¹⁴ Central Association for Stopping the Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on Sunday to Naoroji, 27 September 1904, *ibid.*, C-68 (1).

¹⁵ Central Club Society Ltd. to Naoroji, 3 September 1897, *ibid.*, C-69.

¹⁶ Thomas Wildbore to Naoroji, 17 May 1894, *ibid.*, C-78 (1).

¹⁷ James B. Garrod to Naoroji, 3 January 1890, *ibid.*, C-82 (10).

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- ¹⁸ Griffith to Naoroji, 18 July 1893, *ibid.*, G-116 (774); Griffith to Naoroji, 9 August 1894, *ibid.*, G-116 (970).
- ¹⁹ Central London Ophthalmic Hospital to Naoroji, 7 May 1899, *ibid.*, C-87.
- ²⁰ S. Chelliah to Naoroji, 14 February 1902, *ibid.*, C-125.
- ²¹ P.W. Bunting to Naoroji, April 1889, *ibid.*, C-128 (8).
- ²² W. Goodpound to Naoroji, 27 April 1896, *ibid.*, D-58.
- ²³ Griffith to Naoroji, 4 December 1890, *ibid.*, G-116 (247).
- ²⁴ W.E. Glen to Naoroji, n.d., *ibid.*, E-27.
- ²⁵ Clerkenwell Parochial Schools to Naoroji, 29 June 1893, *ibid.*, C-243.
- ²⁶ Committee of the Amwell Street Schools to Naoroji, 25 July 1891, *ibid.*, C-242.
- ²⁷ Crusaders' Lodge No. 1677 to Naoroji, 18 January 1893, *ibid.*, C-293.
- ²⁸ E.F. Sheridan to Naoroji, 12 November 1892, *ibid.*, C-109 (7).
- ²⁹ William Johnson to Naoroji, 30 April 1894, *ibid.*, D-76 (6).
- ³⁰ P.P.S. Hescott to Naoroji, 20 June 1894, *ibid.*, H-95.
- ³¹ George Fitzpatrick to Naoroji, 21 April 1902, *ibid.*, D-151 (1); Arthur Perkin to Naoroji, 12 May 1903, *ibid.*, D-151 (4); P.A. Spong to Naoroji, 13 October 1904, *ibid.*, D-151 (12).
- ³² Walter Boynes to Naoroji, 30 March 1894, *ibid.*, E-1 (1).
- ³³ George Edalji to Naoroji, 31 December 1902, *ibid.*, E-10.
- ³⁴ H. Sheridan-Bickers to Naoroji, 30 January 1906, *ibid.*, F-83.
- ³⁵ Appeal Committee to Naoroji, 1899, *ibid.*, H-88.
- ³⁶ Evelina Hospital, flier, 1899, *ibid.*, E-70; Evelina Hospital, flier, 1901, *ibid.*, E-70 (1).
- ³⁷ J. Hutchiner [?] to Naoroji, 13 May 1890, *ibid.*, F-14.
- ³⁸ H. Fitzgerald to Naoroji, 19 September 1892, *ibid.*, F-17.
- ³⁹ R.D.D. Hay to Naoroji, 7 November 1894, *ibid.*, H-69.
- ⁴⁰ R. Moreland to Naoroji, 31 March 1892, *ibid.*, F-33; W.H. Pratt to Naoroji, n.d., *ibid.*, F-33 (1); Pratt to Naoroji, n.d., *ibid.*, F-33 (2).
- ⁴¹ Mary Gray to Naoroji, 30 April 1901, *ibid.*, F-39.
- ⁴² A.C Rawlings to Naoroji, 10 July 1901, *ibid.*, F-58; Rawlings to Naoroji, 31 December 1902, *ibid.*, F-58 (3).
- ⁴³ Thomas Fagg to Naoroji, 21 June 1889, *ibid.*, F-65 (1).
- ⁴⁴ T.W. Holmes to Naoroji, 26 August 1895, *ibid.*, H-153; Holmes to Naoroji, 8 November 1895, *ibid.*, H-153 (1); Holmes to Naoroji, 24 August 1896, *ibid.*, H-153 (2); Holmes to Naoroji, 14 November 1898,

ibid., H-153 (4); Holmes to Naoroji, 3 September 1900, ibid., H-153 (6); Holmes to Naoroji, 6 November 1905, ibid., H-153 (7).

⁴⁵ Manmohan Ghose to Naoroji, 23 May 1894, ibid., G-39a.

⁴⁶ Henry Esmond to Naoroji, 27 October 1890, ibid., E-59 (1).

⁴⁷ Goldsmiths and Jewellers' Annuity and Asylum Institution to Naoroji, 14 December 1891, ibid., G-68; Goldsmiths and Jewellers' Annuity and Asylum Institution to Naoroji, 8 February 1894, ibid., G-68 (1); Goldsmiths and Jewellers' Annuity and Asylum Institution to Naoroji, 10 January 1896, ibid., G-68 (6); Goldsmiths and Jewellers' Annuity and Asylum Institution to Naoroji, 11 December 1896, ibid., G-68 (8); Goldsmiths and Jewellers' Annuity and Asylum Institution to Naoroji, 18 October 1899, ibid., G-68 (12); Goldsmiths and Jewellers' Annuity and Asylum Institution to Naoroji, 10 December 1901, ibid., G-68 (15).

⁴⁸ James Speller, 1 November 1902, ibid., J-22.

⁴⁹ H. Green to Naoroji, 23 September 1903, ibid., G-104.

⁵⁰ Donald C. Fraser to Naoroji, 9 April 1894, ibid., H-112 (1).

⁵¹ J.R. Bunness to Naoroji, 1888, ibid., H-136 (5).

⁵² F.W. Speaight to Naoroji, 19 October 1889, ibid., H-138 (5).

⁵³ Thomas Lough to Naoroji, 23 December 1887, ibid., H-157 (1); E.J.C. Morton to Naoroji, 3 August 1889, ibid., H-157 (4); Morton to Naoroji, 9 April 1895, ibid., H-157 (6).

⁵⁴ Alfred Perralt to Naoroji, 18 September 1888, ibid., H-184.

⁵⁵ W. Thornton Sharp to Naoroji, 7 June 1889, ibid., H-173; W. Thornton Sharp to Naoroji, 8 July 1889, ibid., H-173 (4).

⁵⁶ C. Phillips to Naoroji, 7 May 1895, ibid., H-174.

⁵⁷ Francis Henry Skrine to Naoroji, 24 December 1900, ibid., H-205 (1).

⁵⁸ R. Spence Watson to Naoroji, November 1897, ibid., I-10 (3).

⁵⁹ Herbert Cornish to Naoroji, 23 March 1893, ibid., I-26 (21); Cornish to Naoroji, 15 May 1894, ibid., I-26 (33); Cornish to Naoroji, 23 March 1895, ibid., I-26 (38); Arthur W. Beckett to Naoroji, April 1901, ibid., I-26 (41); Arthur Spurgeon to Naoroji, 12 July 1901, ibid., I-26 (43); G.F. Gratwicke to Naoroji, 19 February 1906, ibid., I-26 (56); Cornish to Naoroji, 9 June 1906, ibid., I-26 (57).

⁶⁰ M. Keating, flier, February 1906, ibid., I-41.

⁶¹ E.G. McAuliffe to Naoroji, 16 March 1892, ibid., I-42 (2); F.X. O'Brien to Naoroji, 11 August 1894, ibid., I-43 (10); H.V. Lloyd to Naoroji, 18 October 1894, ibid., I-42 (6); W. Thomas Collins to Naoroji, 20 June 1895, ibid., I-42 (7).

⁶² S. Chapman to Naoroji, 7 July 1894, ibid., C-112.

⁶³ A.P. Hazell to Naoroji, 25 September 1889, ibid., H-76 (1); Hazell to Naoroji, 3 April 1890, ibid., H-76 (2); Hazell to Naoroji, 20 October 1890, ibid., H-76 (3); Hazell to Naoroji, 9 February 1891, ibid., H-76 (5).

⁶⁴ Mary Gray to Naoroji, May 1903, ibid., F-39; Hazell to Naoroji, 20 April 1906, ibid., L-111 (1); Hazell to Naoroji, 31 July 1906, ibid., L-111 (2).

⁶⁵ H.N. Golding to Naoroji, 19 February 1891, *ibid.*, G-67; Golding to Naoroji, 28 September 1898, *ibid.*, G-67 (1); Golding to Naoroji, 26 September 1899, *ibid.*, G-67 (2); Golding to Naoroji, 6 October 1902, *ibid.*, G-67 (3); Golding to Naoroji, 5 October 1903, *ibid.*, G-67 (5).

⁶⁶ G.J. Edwards to Naoroji, 9 January 1912, *ibid.*, E-24.

⁶⁷ Griffith to Naoroji, 14 August 1893, *ibid.*, G-116 (793).

⁶⁸ Henry Sylvester Williams to Naoroji, 18 July 1900, *ibid.*, P-15.

⁶⁹ Naoroji explained that he used a pseudonym because he did not want his motivations for donating to be misunderstood. Naoroji to Edward Evans, Jr., 3 September 1888, *ibid.*, N-1 (1145).

⁷⁰ John Burns, circular, October 1900, *ibid.*, C-189.

⁷¹ J.A. Jacoby, 10 April 1893, *ibid.*, J-7.

⁷² Naoroji to Thomas B. Potter, 14 January 1888, *ibid.*, N-1 (910).

⁷³ M. Allen to Naoroji, 8 April 1899, *ibid.*, E-58.

⁷⁴ Alban G.H. Gibbs to Naoroji, 19 May 1894, *ibid.*, G-44.

⁷⁵ A. Birrell to Naoroji, 15 August 1894, *ibid.*, B-144.

⁷⁶ Henry M. Hyndman to Naoroji, 9 February 1897, *ibid.*, H-221 (23); Hyndman to Naoroji, 13 September 1900, *ibid.*, H-221 (90).

⁷⁷ Griffith to Naoroji, 4 December 1890, *ibid.*, G-116 (247).

⁷⁸ Naoroji to J.R. Ainsworth Davis, 28 February 1892, *ibid.*, D-56 (1).

⁷⁹ Stratford J. Drinkwater to Naoroji, 21 July 1892, *ibid.*, D-147.

⁸⁰ E. Horscroft to Naoroji, 21 April 1898, *ibid.*, H-187.

⁸¹ Clementina Black to Naoroji, 10 April 1889, *ibid.*, B-146.

Sample Investments

The following is a non-exhaustive list of Dadabhai Naoroji's investments. Investments listed below were compiled between January 2011 and October 2013, relying mostly upon material found in the Naoroji Papers. This is not an exhaustive list.

See the introduction to Appendix B for information on British currency before decimalization.

UNITED KINGDOM

Bhise Patents Syndicate, London

1901-09: £2,600 to support the inventions of Shankar Abaji Bhisey¹

Buenos Ayres Electric Tramways Company, London

March 1900: Shareholder [?]²

Central Finsbury Radical Club, London

21 April 1888: £5 (20 shares)

22 September 1888: £5 (20 shares)³

First Garden City, Limited, London

July 1904: Shareholder [?]⁴

Imperial Press, Ltd., London

February 1894: Shareholder⁵

Islington Printing and Publishing Company, London

May 1891: Shareholder⁶

Journalist, organ of the Institute of Journalists, London

July 1889: Purchases five shares of £1 each⁷

Motor Manufacturing Company/London Steam Omnibus Company/Motor Traction Company, London

1896-1902: Invested £152.5s. worth of shares between 1896-1902⁸

Twentieth Century Press, operated by the Social Democratic Federation, London

October 1892: Shareholder⁹

The Walsall Co-Operative Cart Gear, Chain & Hame Manufacturing Society, Ltd.,
Walsall

November 1890: £1¹⁰

Westminster Review, London

November 1886: £50 (two shares)¹¹

The Workers Cry, London

7 August 1891: Forwards an application to become a shareholder on 7 August
1891¹²

¹ Gopal Krishna Gokhale to Ratan Tata, 12 May 1909, NAI, DNP, G-64 (23).

² Buenos Ayres Electric Tramway Company, 2 March 1900, *ibid.*, B-249.

³ James B. Garrod to Naoroji, September 22, 1888, *ibid.*, C-83 (7); Garrod to Naoroji, n.d., *ibid.*, C-83.

⁴ Thomas Adams to Naoroji, 27 July 1904, *ibid.*, A-13 (2).

⁵ Francis [?] Heath to Naoroji, 15 February 1894, *ibid.*, I-7.

⁶ S. Rathbone Southerton to Naoroji, 28 May 1891, *ibid.*, I-47.

⁷ H.G. Reid to Naoroji, 29 July 1889, *ibid.*, N-1 (1471a).

⁸ Defence Association of Shareholders to Naoroji, 8 December 1902, *ibid.*, D-71.

⁹ A.A. Watts to Naoroji, October 1892, *ibid.*, T-126.

¹⁰ W.G. Harrison to Naoroji, 20 November 1890, *ibid.*, H-58.

¹¹ John Chapman to Naoroji, 10 November 1886, *ibid.*, C-109 (1).

¹² W.Z. Crozier to Naoroji, 27 November 1891, *ibid.*, C-291.

Sample Loans

The following is a non-exhaustive list of loans that Dadabhai Naoroji offered to friends, business associates, and other contacts. Loans listed below were compiled between January 2011 and October 2013, replying mostly upon material found in the Naoroji Papers. This is not an exhaustive list.

I have identified, in parentheses, loans that Naoroji made to people and organizations in parliamentary constituencies that he contested.

See the introduction to Appendix B for information on British currency before decimalization.

UNITED KINGDOM

Bell, Mynie: wife of Evans Bell, London

1887: £25 for covering medical expenses of Evans Bell¹

Kelkar, S.P.: Indian visiting London, Manchester, and Rochdale

August 1901: £50 for purchasing handloom machinery for use in India²

Framji, Jehangir: Indian student in London

Year unknown: ten guinea loan upon passing examinations³

Gokhale, Gopal Krishna: witness for Welby Commission, London

July 1897: £81 for his expenses during stay in the United Kingdom

July 1897: £16 [?], request for additional funds⁴

Griffith, R.M.H.: campaign secretary for Naoroji, London (Central Finsbury)

June 1893: £5.5s. loan

June 1893: £10.10s. loan

August 1893: £8 loan

August 1893: £7.10s. loan

June 1896: £10 loan

December 1896: £5 loan⁵

Moolla, Nasarwanji J.: Indian businessman resident in London

Before May 1890: £2,000⁶

Norton, S. Walter: *The Political World*, London

October 1888: £40 loan⁷

Singh, Suchet: contestant to the throne of Chamba, in residence in London and Paris
By June 1890: approximately Rs. 10,000 in loans⁸

Taylor, William: former commissioner of Patna, in residence in London
28 February 1879: £40 loan
May 1880: £50 loan⁹

Wagle, N.B.: Indian resident in London
21 October 1902: £10 loan¹⁰

Weekly News and Clerkenwell Chronicle, newspaper run by R.M.H. Griffith, London
(Central Finsbury)

April 1893: £10.10s. loan
May 1893: £12 loan
May 1893: £12.10s. loan
June 1893: £12.10s. loan
June 1893: £12.10s. loan
June 1893: £5.10s. loan
July 1893: £5.10s. loan
July 1893: £5.10s. loan
July 1893: £8.10s. loan
August 1893: £8.10s. loan
September 1893: £6.10s. loan
September 1893: £7 loan
September 1893: £7 loan
September 1893: £10.10s. loan
February 1894: £10 loan
February 1894: £10 loan
February 1894: £8.10s. loan
March 1894: £10 loan
March 1894: £8 loan
March 1894: £8.10s. loan
March 1894: £10 loan
April 1894: £10 loan
11 June 1896: £10 loan¹¹

¹ Mynie Bell to Dadabhai Naoroji, 14 October 1887, NAI, DNP, B-85 (14).

² S.P. Kelkar to Naoroji, 20 August 1901, *ibid.*, K-18 (8).

³ Jehangir Framji to Naoroji, n.d., *ibid.*, F-74.

⁴ Gopal Krishna Gokhale to Naoroji, 12 July 1897, *ibid.*, G-64 (6).

⁵ R.M.H. Griffith to Naoroji, 13 June 1893, *ibid.*, G-116 (755); Griffith to Naoroji, 22 June 1893, *ibid.*, G-116 (760); Griffith to Naoroji, 10 August 1893, *ibid.*, G-116 (785); Griffith to Naoroji, 15 December 1896, *ibid.*, G-116 (1312); Naoroji to Griffith, 11 June 1896, *ibid.*, N-1 (2609).

⁶ Nasarvanji J. Moolla to Naoroji, May 29, 1890, *ibid.*.

⁷ Naoroji to S. Walter Norton, 3 October 1888, *ibid.* C-27 (172a).

⁸ Naoroji, 16 June 1890, RPPM.

⁹ R.K. Tarachand to Naoroji, 17 May 1906, NAI, DNP, T-11 (11); Naoroji to William Tayler, 27 May 1880, RPPM.

¹⁰ N.B. Wagle to Naoroji, 16 October 1902, NAI, DNP, W-14 (17)..

¹¹ Griffith to Naoroji, 29 April 1893, *ibid.*, G-116 (701); Griffith to Naoroji, 3 May 1893, *ibid.*, G-116 (716); Griffith to Naoroji, 11 May 1893, *ibid.*, G-116 (714); Griffith to Naoroji, 1 June 1893, *ibid.*, G-116 (749); Griffith to Naoroji, 15 June 1893, *ibid.*, G-116 (757); Griffith to Naoroji, 29 June 1893, *ibid.*, G-116 (762); Griffith to Naoroji, 7 July 1893, *ibid.*, G-116 (765); Griffith to Naoroji, 21 July 1893, *ibid.*, G-116 (776); Griffith to Naoroji, 28 July 1893, *ibid.*, G-116 (778); Griffith to Naoroji, 18 August 1893, *ibid.*, G-116 (795); Griffith to Naoroji, 1 September 1893, *ibid.*, G-116 (801); Griffith to Naoroji, 1 September 1893, *ibid.*, G-116 (803); Griffith to Naoroji, 15 September 1893, *ibid.*, G-116 (811); Griffith to Naoroji, 21 September 1893, *ibid.*, G-116 (817); Griffith to Naoroji, 8 February 1894, *ibid.*, G-116 (856); Griffith to Naoroji, 15 February 1894, *ibid.*, G-116 (863); Griffith to Naoroji, 22 February 1894, *ibid.*, G-116 (870); Griffith to Naoroji, 7 March 1894, *ibid.*, G-116 (882); Griffith to Naoroji, 15 March 1894, *ibid.*, G-116 (890); Griffith to Naoroji, 26 March 1894, *ibid.*, G-116 (897); Griffith to Naoroji, 14 April 1894, *ibid.*, G-116 (902); Naoroji to Griffith, 11 June 1896, *ibid.*, N-1 (2609).

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